



2020

# State Index on Youth Homelessness



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# About True Colors United

True Colors United implements innovative solutions to youth homelessness that focus on the unique experiences of LGBTQ+ young people.

In the United States, 4.2 million youth experience homelessness each year, with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ+) youth 120% more likely to experience homelessness than their non-LGBTQ peers. True Colors United is committed to changing that.

If we can ensure that services are safe for and affirming of the most impacted young people, we can be confident that they'll be safe and affirming for everyone. We believe that youth homelessness is a community issue. Real change can happen when people come together with a shared vision.

For more information about True Colors United and to access research publications such as this Index, please visit its website at [truecolorsunited.org](https://truecolorsunited.org).

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# About The National Homelessness Law Center

The National Homelessness Law Center is the only national organization dedicated to using the power of the law to end and prevent homelessness. The Law Center works to expand access to affordable housing, meet the immediate and long-term needs of those who are homeless or at risk, and strengthen the social safety-net through policy advocacy, public education, impact litigation, and legal training and support.

Our vision is for an end to homelessness in America. A home for every family and individual will be the norm and not the exception, a right and not a privilege. For more information about the Law Center and to access publications such as this report, please visit its website at [www.nlchp.org](http://www.nlchp.org).

National Homelessness Law Center

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# Letter from the Authors

Dear reader,

If our annual updates to the State Index on Youth Homelessness were the only media you had access to, you could be forgiven for thinking that 2020 was a year of insignificance. While the landscape of youth homelessness systems, laws, and policies have changed little on the surface, young people across the US and the agencies who serve them—and indeed all of us including those beyond the field of housing justice—have had our worlds turned upside down.

Shortly after the release of last year's report, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged as the public health crisis of our lifetimes and the economic crisis of a generation. Not long after, the entire nation began to once again reckon with the legacy of white supremacy in the United States. And now, as we work to prepare this report for publication, we're witnessing the climax of a years-long political movement to normalize fascism and dismantle democracy.

For all of the past year, we've lived and worked, struggled and triumphed, in a world that is a strange perversion of the one we once knew. We won't dare guess what the next few years will hold, even within our relatively small subject-matter expertise of youth homelessness; we can only take what comfort we can and what care we need and continue to work with all of you to build a future where every young person has what they need to thrive.

Increasingly, the authors of this report have grappled with a shifting understanding of what that future requires of us today. If we have any hope of success, we must move forward with the shared understanding that the greatest of challenges can only be met by the fearless step into darkness that precipitates bold transformation.

In the world of housing and homelessness, we know that a disaster can be used as a tool to accelerate inequity and drive profit for the most powerful people in our nation. One only has to look to these authors' shared home state of Louisiana, where post-Katrina development was marked by a dramatic influx of capital and a laissez-faire approach to equity, resulting in the catastrophic redistribution of land, housing, and wealth from low-income Black and brown residents to wealthy developers whose hands are still clenched tightly around the neck of our beloved Crescent City. What is COVID-19, if not a disaster that threatens an equally devastating economic impact in every single community across the United States?

We have no easy solutions to offer. Instead, we urge you, whatever your assigned role is in advancing housing justice for youth and young adults, to be bold, to act decisively and speak courageously, and to demand more.

As we continue to audit our own commitment to transformation, the State Index on Youth Homelessness may be transformed as well, and it's possible that the report we're sharing with you today will look different in early 2022. We invite any interested person to reach out to us if you have ideas to offer, questions to ask, or for any other reason.

With hope,  
Dylan Waguespack and Brandy Ryan

# Glossary Of Terms

True Colors United and the National Homelessness Law Center were intentional when choosing the terms found throughout the Index. This included incorporating language that youth experiencing homelessness may use to describe themselves, as well as ensuring that the chosen terms accurately convey how the community wants to be—and should be—represented. To provide clarity, below is a list of commonly used terms and acronyms, arranged alphabetically, found throughout the Index.

## C

### Child

The Index is about youth experiencing homelessness. It uses various non-legal terms, such as “young people,” “youth,” “youth on their own,” and “unaccompanied youth.” References to these terms include youth who have not reached the legal age of majority and/or who have left home, either at the demand or request of parents or guardians, or of their own volition. By referring to “youth” or “young people,” rather than “children,” we attempt to recognize the unique developmental stage and needs of older children and young adults. The terms “child,” “children,” or “minor” are also used where legally significant in order to track terms that

are used in state statutes, codes, and regulations. Most states define these terms to include youth up to the age of 18, but a growing majority have raised the age for youth either in foster care, the juvenile legal system, or both.

### Cisgender

Denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex.

### Couch surfing

The act of moving from one temporary living arrangement to another without having a secure and stable place to be.

## E

### Environment

For the specific purposes of this report, use of the term “environment” refers to the physical, social, or economic factors that influence state homeless youth policy/program implementation.

## F

### Federal Runaway & Homeless Youth Act

The federal law that provides funding for three pillars of early intervention to address youth experiencing homelessness: street outreach, basic centers, and transitional living.

## G

### Gender Identity

One’s individual concept of self as male, female, a blend of both, or neither. How one perceives themselves and what they call themselves. One’s gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

### Gender Expression

External appearance of one’s gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

## H

### Homeless

Refers to experiences of sleeping in places not meant for living, staying in shelters, staying in hotels, motels, or campgrounds due to a lack of alternatives staying in cars, parks, or public spaces, or temporarily staying with others (“couch surfing”) while lacking a safe and stable alternative living arrangement. This term can also refer to experiences of living in unsafe or substandard housing, or experiences of chronic housing instability.

## L

### LGBTQ+

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer and/or questioning.

## M

### McKinney-Vento

Refers to the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 11431.

## R

### **Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA)**

For the purposes of the Index, the term RHYA is used as shorthand for a law or series of laws at the state level that provides a significant level of prevention, identification, and/or funded early intervention services (drop-in centers, street outreach, community programs, etc.), coordinated entry and assessment (emergency/crisis response, shelters, host homes, transitional housing, etc.), or tailored housing solutions (non-time limited affordable housing, short-term assistance, etc) specifically for unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness.

## S

### **Sexual Orientation**

An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people.

## State

The use of the terms “state” and “states” include the District of Columbia, unless otherwise noted.

### **Status offense**

Status offenses are behaviors or actions that are legal for adults but punishable by law when performed by legal minors, under the age of 18, e.g., truancy or running away from home.

## System

For the specific purposes of this report, the term “system” refers to features of an institution or organization that influence state homeless youth policy/program implementation.

## U

### **Unaccompanied youth**

Youth not in the physical custody of their parent, guardian, or custodian.

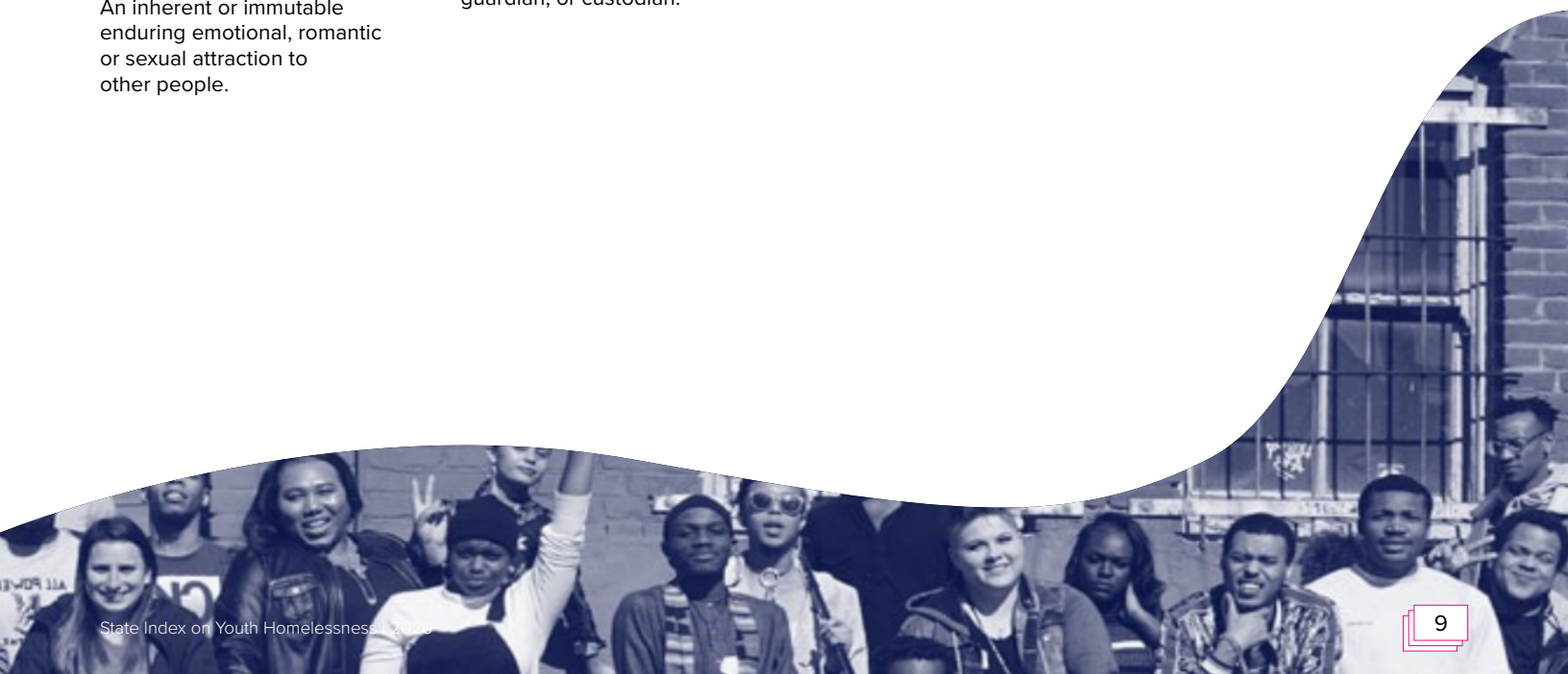
## Y

### **Youth**

Unless otherwise defined within the text, when we use the terms “youth” we are specifically referring to young people ages 12-18.

### **Young Adults**

Unless otherwise defined within the text, when we use the terms young adults we are specifically referring young people ages 18-24.



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# Introduction

Each year, True Colors United and the National Homelessness Law Center collaborate to publish an annual State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) that measures and reports on the systems, environment, and laws of all states as they relate to preventing and ending youth homelessness. The Index paints a broad picture of where states currently stand in these categories and how they can collectively and individually improve their efforts to end and prevent youth homelessness. These assessments should serve as a guide for policymakers and advocates to make changes to existing policies, systems, and services towards ending and preventing youth homelessness at the state level.

The goal of the Index is to support advocates, policymakers, and young people themselves by identifying where states' laws, systems, and environments fall short of what's necessary to facilitate ending youth homelessness and making recommendations for addressing these problems based on both well-proven and promising practices in other jurisdictions. The Index also establishes a baseline that can be used for measuring annual progress and encouraging and supporting continual improvement in states' laws, systems, and services toward ending youth homelessness.

The 2020 State Index on Youth Homelessness is the third such report, and important milestones were reached during its development. For the first time, one of the jurisdictions included in the report earned the equivalent of an A grade. The District of Columbia, consistently a top scorer, broke out of the pack to achieve a score of 90/100 points. This is an incredible accomplishment that DC stakeholders should be proud of, especially given the distinction was earned by the only jurisdiction scored in the Index where non-statehood status further complicates the lawmaking process. Additionally, across all fifty states and DC, scores improved from 2019 enough to raise the average score above 50% for the first time. In 2020, the average state earns 51% of available points, up from 48% in 2019.

In most states, however, growth in the Index was stunted by the circumstances of 2020. Many states had shortened legislative sessions, and capacity for administrative rulemaking was limited as state agencies whose responsibilities included health and human services stayed in crisis mode through most of the year as they led state efforts to curb the spread of coronavirus. The authors of this report would urge state law and policymakers to consider some recommendations in the Index as appropriate emergency measures in response to coronavirus.

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## States should consider the State Index as they respond to COVID-19.

The long-term economic devastation awaiting the generation of young people currently entering the workforce places them, more than any other age group, at risk of long-term poverty and homelessness. Just as the cohort of teens and 20-somethings who were coming of age during the economic crisis of the 1980s are now overrepresented among people experiencing chronic adult

homelessness, today's young people could face the consequences of this pandemic for the rest of their lives. Our actions today to provide meaningful economic support and relief to young people and their families could make or break efforts to end homelessness among all populations in 30 years.

Equally important is the hastening of efforts to ensure that young people are included in a Housing First model of service delivery. COVID-19 has made obvious some of the longstanding challenges of a shelter-based system, chief among them right now that congregate and group settings place youth at increased risk of contracting COVID-19. As the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other experts continue to call for safe, individual housing options for people experiencing homelessness, providers and others should be sure not to hear an exception to this for young people where there isn't one. The health consequences of this virus are still not well-understood, but what's increasingly clear is that youth and young adults who do become ill with COVID-19 can face serious complications, including permanent heart damage and severe psychological symptoms.

The metrics included in the State Index are critical to ensuring that youth and young adults experiencing homelessness can access the housing and health services they need to stay safe. As state and local governments work to provide housing and rental assistance to impacted individuals, they should consider updating laws or opening emergency rulemaking to ensure that minors who can live independently can sign legal contracts, like leases, and apply for health insurance and receive health care services without parental consent.

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## Disproportionate homelessness among LGBTQ+ and BIPOC youth is still occurring at crisis levels.

Among youth and young adults, LGBTQ+ people continue to experience homelessness at significantly higher rates than their straight and non-transgender peers. An estimated 40% of youth experiencing homelessness self-identify as LGBTQ+, and LGBTQ+ youth are more than 120% more likely to experience homelessness.<sup>1,2</sup> Transgender youth represent around 1% of the general youth population, yet a study conducted by the Family and Youth Services Bureau, published by the Administration for Children and Families in 2016, found that 6.8% of youth served by RHY Street Outreach grantees are transgender.<sup>3</sup> Among those youth, nearly one-third disclosed that they do not identify as either male or female.

Among transgender people of all ages, one-third report experiencing homelessness at some point in their life, and 12% report experiencing homelessness in the previous year.<sup>4</sup> And while the vast majority of homelessness service providers are valiantly working to serve everyone with dignity, respect, and cultural sensitivity, without appropriate laws and regulations, discrimination still occurs. Transgender Americans report distressing levels of



discrimination in attempting to access services while experiencing homelessness. Seven out of ten respondents to the 2015 U.S. Trans Survey—the largest survey of transgender Americans ever conducted—who stayed in a shelter in the previous year reported some form of mistreatment, including being harassed, sexually or physically assaulted or kicked out because of being transgender.<sup>5</sup>

Annually, one in 30 youth ages 13 to 17 and one in 10 young adults ages 18 to 25 endure some form of homelessness, and youth of color are disproportionately represented.<sup>6</sup> Latinx youth make up 33% of 18- to 25-year-olds reporting homelessness. Black youth are also overrepresented, with an 83% increased risk of having experienced homelessness over youth of other races or ethnicities. Black youth who identify as LGBTQ+—especially young men aged 18 to 25—reported the highest rates of homelessness. Nearly one in four Black young men, ages 18 to 25, identifying as LGBTQ+ reported homelessness in the last 12 months, and this does not even include those who only reported couch-surfing.<sup>7</sup> These findings are consistent with the disparities that have been found among in-school suspensions, incarceration, and foster care placement.<sup>8</sup>

This report provides a starting place to explore challenges and solutions on the state level in addressing and preventing youth homelessness. State and local advocates, officials, and others should feel free to contact the authors of this State Index report to ask questions, provide feedback, or discuss additional resources and strategies that can be used to advance best practices in youth homelessness laws, policies, systems, and environments.

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# 120%

**increased risk LGBTQ+ youth have of experiencing homelessness compared to youth who identify as heterosexual and cisgender.**

# 33%

**of 18-25 year olds reporting homelessness identify as Latinx.**

# 83%

**increased risk Black youth have of experiencing homelessness over youth of other races or ethnicities.**



<sup>1</sup> Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

<sup>2</sup> Choi, S.K., Wilson, B.D.M., Shelton, J., & Gates, G. (2015). Serving Our Youth 2015: The Needs and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Experiencing Homelessness. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors United.

<sup>3</sup> Administration for Children and Families. Street Outreach Program Data Collection Study Final Report. April 2016.

<sup>4</sup> National Center for Transgender Equality. U.S. Trans Survey. December 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Id., see also Morton, M. H., Samuels, G. M., Dworsky, A., & Patel, S. (2018). Missed opportunities: LGBTQ+ youth homelessness in America. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

<sup>6</sup> Id. at Missed Opportunities.

<sup>7</sup> Id., see also Morton, M. H., Samuels, G. M., Dworsky, A., & Patel, S. (2018). Missed opportunities: LGBTQ+ youth homelessness in America. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

<sup>8</sup> Id. at Missed Opportunities.



# Results & Findings

The Index seeks to evaluate each state and the District of Columbia's investment towards preventing and ending youth homelessness on certain metrics and benchmarks across laws and policies, systems, and environment. These metrics may look discrete at first blush, but they often overlap and inform each other in practice. And they certainly do not exist in a vacuum. The metrics included in the Index are not an exhaustive list of all issues that states must address in order to prevent and end youth homelessness, but they are an integral part of a more comprehensive solution to achieving this goal. In fact, some states are already taking innovative approaches to address youth homelessness that are outside the scope of the Index. While the Index may not capture the full dynamics of how a state tackles youth homelessness, it provides a snapshot, with the metrics tied to constructive steps states could take in order to improve their laws, policies, systems, and environments for youth experiencing homelessness. Annual updates of the Index will include additional metrics as states begin to make progress and as innovative practices start to become more commonplace. States should address the gaps identified by the metrics and, if possible, incorporate lessons learned from innovative approaches happening on the local, state, and/or federal levels. Some notable legislative achievements that complement the metrics are included in the Index. The Index also provides overall recommendations that apply to all states.

To find out how each state performed against the Index's metrics and the existing gaps that need to be addressed, please refer to the individual state scorecards in Appendix A and the detailed state scoring spreadsheet, available online at: [bit.ly/2020index](https://bit.ly/2020index). Each scorecard provides individual states' quick facts and statistics that break down their ranking, their overall score, and their performance for each category in Law and Policy, Systems, and Environment. The scorecard also provides key highlights on how each state has moved the needle on addressing youth homelessness and some recommendations in order to improve their performance. The detailed scoring spreadsheet shows which of the 61 metrics each state meets, so that youth, lawmakers, providers, and advocates can prioritize the policy changes that are most pressing in their communities.

A close look at the results of the Index show that a majority of states are failing youth experiencing homelessness. Only 29 states scored higher than 50 points out of 100. Only seven states—the District of Columbia, Washington state, Connecticut, Massachusetts, California, New York, and Maine—earned passing grades of higher than 70 points. The remaining 27 states scored critically low, earning less than half of the available points.

## Results

State	Score / 100	Ranking / 51
District of Columbia	90	1
Washington	84	2
Connecticut	79	3
Massachusetts	79	3
California	77	5
New York	76	6
Maine	72	7
Louisiana	66	8
New Mexico	65	9
Colorado	64	10
New Jersey	62	11
Oregon	59	12
Minnesota	58	13
Missouri	58	13
Kentucky	57	15
Hawaii	56	16
Utah	56	16
Wisconsin	56	16
Texas	55	19
Vermont	55	19
West Virginia	54	21
Florida	52	22
Oklahoma	52	22
Delaware	51	24
Illinois	50	25
Tennessee	50	25

State	Score / 100	Ranking / 51
Indiana	49	27
Michigan	48	28
Kansas	47	29
Maryland	47	29
New Hampshire	47	29
Arizona	46	32
Nevada	46	32
Iowa	45	34
Alabama	43	35
Georgia	43	35
Rhode Island	43	35
South Dakota	43	35
Mississippi	42	39
Montana	42	39
Wyoming	42	39
Virginia	40	42
Alaska	38	43
Arkansas	37	44
Nebraska	37	44
Idaho	36	46
North Carolina	35	47
Ohio	34	48
Pennsylvania	33	49
South Carolina	32	50
North Dakota	28	51

# Recommendations & Analysis

The following section lists each metric measured in the State Index followed by brief case studies based in real life that demonstrate the importance of the principles behind the metrics. The metrics bolded in each subsection below are weighted more heavily in the calculation of final scores due to their critical importance. For more information on scoring, please refer to Appendix A: Detailed Methodology.

Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied or who have run away from home, face numerous legal and systemic barriers that complicate their ability to seek and receive critical supports and services that would allow them to escape the intergenerational cycle of homelessness and poverty. Laws, policies, and systems vary from state to state but they can provide important protections and benefits for young people experiencing homelessness—making the exit from homelessness easier and faster and the time spent experiencing homelessness safer.

Alternatively, state laws and policies can impose punishments, and systems and environmental factors create barriers that make it more difficult to exit homelessness and make youth less safe while experiencing homelessness. The Index divides metrics into Law & Policy, Systems, and Environment sections, with the Law & Policy section further broken into 5 major categories. Below, each of these categories and subcategories is listed along with the metrics that fall within them. Additionally, in some of these categories, the report highlights states that are ahead of the curve compared to the rest, but not all categories have such a state to highlight.

Some of these case studies show the consequences of a state's failure to consider these issues. Others show the beneficial outcomes that can be achieved by young people when they have appropriate services and support.

# Law and Policy

**The state has comprehensive laws, policies, and regulations ensuring supports & services for youth experiencing homelessness.**

**Perfect scores:** None

**Honorable mentions:**

Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Washington, Oregon, New Jersey, Maine, District of Columbia, Colorado, California

**Lowest marks:**

Rhode Island, Montana

## Scored Metrics:

- The state includes a specific definition of the term “youth.” [1 point]
- The state defines the term “runaway.” [1 point]
- The state explicitly defines the terms “homeless child,” “homeless youth,” “homeless minor,” or “homeless student.” [1 point]
- **The state establishes the age of childhood as encompassing persons older than 18 (outside of a “homeless youth” definition, but includes youth in jurisdiction of child welfare or juvenile court). [4 points]**
- The state defines “sex” and/or “gender” which includes gender identity within its RHYA State licensing agency regulations. [1 point]
- **The state has a state Runaway & Homeless Youth Act. [4 points]**

## Key Recommendations:

**Enacting comprehensive laws that provide a significant level of prevention, identification, and early intervention services,** including drop-in centers, street outreach, community programs, coordinated entry and assessment (emergency/crisis response, shelters, host homes, transitional housing), or tailored housing solutions (non-time limited affordable housing, short-term assistance, etc.) specifically for unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness with a corresponding appropriation. Such a state law, sufficiently funded and working in tandem with funding provided by HHS and HUD on the federal level will provide the necessary infrastructure and resources to address youth homelessness.

- » Enacting a state law similar to the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) will provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- » While authorizing these new programs is important, adequately funding them is key. An annual appropriation that provides support for RHYA programs ensures that there is state accountability and investment in preventing and ending youth homelessness.

**Recognizing youth experiencing homelessness in state laws, policies, and regulations.** Key definitions need to be adopted, and they, along with other relevant laws and policies need to be more inclusive, developmentally and culturally appropriate, non-judgmental, and youth-centric.

- » States should establish a definition of “youth” that is distinct from “child;”
- » Eligibility for publicly-funded opportunities and supports available to children and youth should be extended to include young adults through age 24;
- » The terms “runaway youth,” “homeless youth,” and “runaway child” should be specifically defined in both criminal and civil statutes, using the definition of homelessness found in the education subtitle of the federal McKinney-Vento Act.

## Case Study 1:

Meena was a 16-year-old who lived in a state that doesn't have funding, licensure, and state-level regulations over nonprofits that provide services to young people experiencing homelessness. As a result, very few social services agencies there are willing to work with unaccompanied youth for fear of legal liability and the challenges that come with operating in a legal grey area. After Meena was kicked out of her family home, she went to a homeless shelter to try and access services. The homeless shelter would not allow her to stay overnight because of her age and instead called the state child welfare agency to make a report.

Meena, not wanting to be placed in a foster home away from her school, friends, and extended family, left before a case worker arrived. She was able to find friends who were willing to take her in the short term, but eventually she ran out of people she felt comfortable asking for help. She had to resort to sleeping outside. Within a few months, Meena, who was an As and Bs student, dropped out of school because she was embarrassed not to have somewhere to clean up or money to buy lunch and feared that if she went to a teacher, she would be placed in foster care somewhere far away. By the time Meena turned 18, she had found ways to make money but was still housing insecure. It would be a long time before she would trust a service provider enough to access services, and once she did, she was placed at the end of a long waiting list for housing assistance. When her peers were graduating from college, Meena was moving into her first apartment and beginning to work on her GED. The accumulated trauma of her experiences and the loss of her educational opportunities will likely

## State Spotlight

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Louisiana emerged as a leader in systems-level work to end homelessness across the US. In the late 80s, HOPE NWLA was founded in Shreveport, Louisiana for homelessness service providers to coordinate on the community level. It was, in essence, the first Continuum of Care in the country. Around the same time, the Louisiana State Legislature was creating a system of regulatory oversight and liability protections for runaway and homeless youth services, forming a state interagency council on homelessness, and raising the profile of homelessness as a priority issue in the state of Louisiana. Today, more than 30 years later, Louisiana still stands out for its robust legal and policy infrastructure around supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness. While the state's laws could use updating, especially to remove the current restriction against state funding for youth services, Louisiana still leads the pack alongside Massachusetts, Minnesota, and New York.

impact her socioeconomic status for the rest of her life.

### Case Study 2:

Meanwhile, Simone, a 17-year-old in a state that regulates, licenses, and funds runaway and homeless youth services, left home after her mom lost her job and was struggling to care for her and her three siblings. Simone couch-surfed for a while with friends and extended family, but eventually decided that she wanted to find a place to live where she wouldn't have to be dependent on the people in her life who cared for her. Simone called a national runaway and homeless youth helpline that a friend told her about, and the counselor on the helpline gave her the address of a shelter for youth and young adults in her city. Simone went there and was able to move in the same day. For a few weeks, she shared a room with a roommate, which she didn't love. Soon, a spot in an apartment opened up, and she was able to leave the shelter to enter into a housing program for young people experiencing homelessness. Simone had her own room, was expected to go to school every day, and always had food, toiletries, and other basic necessities. She graduated high school with a 2.9 GPA and went on to community college, where she joined the swim team and earned an Associates degree in accounting. She transferred to a public four-year university, used her financial aid refund to pay for her own apartment, and graduated with honors. She had to make monthly student loan payments, but she'd learned at her housing program how to budget her income, how to draft a resume, and how to interview for jobs, and shortly after graduating, she was hired as an accounting assistant at a mid-sized firm. She plans on going back to school for her MBA once she has a few years of work experience.

### Youth's contact with the criminal and juvenile legal systems are limited/prevented.

**Perfect scores:** None

**Honorable mentions:**

New York, Massachusetts, Florida, New Hampshire

**Lowest marks:**

West Virginia, Ohio, South Carolina, Idaho

### Scored Metrics:

- The state has a "Child in Need of Supervision" (CHINS) related statute. [1 point]
- The state prohibits mingling of CHINS youth taken into custody with delinquent youth. [1 point]
- The state provides opportunities for CHINS to receive diversion services without court involvement. [1 point]
- The state does not explicitly authorize courts to force CHINS to pay fines and/or restitution. [1 point]
- The state does not explicitly authorize courts to force CHINS to undergo drug screening. [1 point]
- The state does not explicitly authorize courts to force CHINS to relinquish their driver's license or suspend driving privileges. [1 point]
- The state allows unaccompanied homeless youth to request services independently under CHINS. [1 point]
- **The state does not consider runaway youth as delinquent or a status offender. [4 points]**
- The state does not explicitly allow police to take runaway youth into custody. [1 point]
- The state does not explicitly allow runaway and homeless youth to be detained in secure facilities. [1 point]
- Truant youth are not classified as status offenders or delinquents. [1 point]
- The state does not have curfew laws. [1 point]
- The state does not criminalize harboring a runaway youth or concealing a minor. [1 point]
- The state does not criminalize interfering with custodial rights. [1 point]
- **The state allows shelters to take in homeless youth with a delay or waiver of notification requirements. [4 points]**

### Key Recommendations:

**Preventing and limiting youth experiencing homelessness contact with the criminal and juvenile legal systems and connecting them to critical supports and services.** Punitive approaches to unaccompanied youth should be avoided and court involvement minimized. Court sanctions such as fines, fees,

drug screening, and suspended driving privileges increase the probability of more court involvement. Rather than punishing youth, states should provide them with the opportunity to access diversionary supports and services. The juvenile legal system should not be used for providing youth services related to housing or homelessness when a youth has committed no crime and there is no other reason for a youth to interact with the juvenile legal system.

Youths' safety should be the paramount concern. States should rely less on law enforcement and more on service providers to address the needs of youth experiencing homelessness. Youth should only be taken into custody in limited circumstances and with their consent, or if they are in immediate physical danger. States should adopt more nuanced policies that cover youth experiencing homelessness in different circumstances, including those who are on their own and those in families that need services. At no point should law enforcement or any entity force youth to return home against their will as this could put them at an even greater risk of harm.

Running away and truancy should be decriminalized. The juvenile legal system should not bear the responsibility for the safety and care of youth experiencing homelessness who run away from home. Communities should work with schools to ensure youth experiencing homelessness have access to safe, adequate, and appropriate transportation and that school policies accommodate the needs of these students.

- » Curfews for youth experiencing homelessness should be eliminated and states should find ways to provide adequate and appropriate shelter to those youth who call the streets their home, rather than issuing fines and citations.
- » Service providers, "Good Samaritans," and other professionals should be protected from civil or criminal liability when they render medical care or service in good faith to unaccompanied youth.

## On the Criminalization of Youth and Young Adults:

While there are a few states which have earned scores equivalent to a B letter grade in this subsection, we want to be clear that there are no states which have adequately reduced disparities in juvenile legal system or criminal legal system involvement among young people or which have adequately disinvested in policing or prisons in favor of meaningful supports for young people that increase public safety. In every state, Black, brown and indigenous youth and LGBTQ+ youth are funneled into our criminal legal system, with devastating consequences for young people, their families, and entire communities. LGBTQ+ youth who are Black, brown, or indigenous face the greatest threat of incarceration and police violence. The State Index captures where some of the entry-points to incarceration and homelessness commonly exist in the overlap of the criminal legal system and the youth homelessness response system. A passing grade in this section should not be considered an endorsement of any state's juvenile and criminal legal system policies, and the authors of this report assert that ending incarceration in favor of investing in meaningful social and economic support for families and youth will be a prerequisite to ending homelessness.

## Case Study 1:

Josh is a 14-year-old high school freshman who attended a charter school for students who are talented in the arts. He's a dancer and was often bullied by other students over his perceived sexual orientation. One day before gym class, another student pushed Josh against the lockers hard while using a slur used against gay people. Josh, who'd been harassed by this student and others for weeks at this point, punched him in the face and broke his nose. When the student reported him, Josh was suspended from school for a week. Before he could return to school, he was arrested on felony battery charges and brought to a juvenile detention center.

Josh's parents had no idea that someone his age could be arrested for something as small as a fight. They couldn't afford an attorney to represent him, so they got him a public defender. He was sentenced to serve two months in juvenile detention. Shortly after arriving, Josh was targeted by other young people and employees over his perceived sexual orientation. Josh ended up getting into more fights, mostly in self-defense. Each time, his sentence was extended, and he was pointed to as "the problem." Eventually, his sentence extended to his 18th birthday. In all the time he was there, he was expected to go to school, but the educational program was so poor that he only had the equivalent of 2.5 years of high school credits by the time he was released, four years later.

At midnight on his 18th birthday, Josh was handed a grey sweatshirt to change into and a bus voucher. He was released from detention but not provided transportation or any counseling on what to do next. His parents couldn't take him back because their landlord evicted anyone he found out had a criminal record. He spent the next several years cycling between unsheltered homelessness and survival sex.

## Case Study 2:

Meanwhile, Keisha, a 16-year-old in a state that has actively prioritized reducing contact between young people and law enforcement, got in a fight at school after 15-year-old Amelia made fun of her for her hairstyle. Her school system had recently divested from a contract with the city police in favor of funding a school social worker position on every campus. Amelia and Keisha were asked to sign an agreement that they would both see the school counselor for weekly sessions together to resolve their conflict. It took a while, but the "courageous space" the counselor was able to create for them eventually led to both of them willing to be vulnerable and honest about their own feelings and to feel empathy for one another. The two girls never became close friends, but neither of them got in a fight at school again. And because the school engaged them in a transformative justice process instead of calling the police, they didn't have an increased risk of youth homelessness as a consequence of one relatively minor mistake.

## The state provides unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.

**Perfect scores:** Alabama, Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee

**Lowest marks:**  
New Mexico, Nevada

### Scored Metrics:

- The state has an established process for emancipation. [1 point]
- The state recognizes emancipation in limited circumstances. [1 point]
- The state can waive or not require parental consent for emancipation. [1 point]
- The state has no age restrictions for emancipation. [1 point]
- **The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities). [4 points]**

### On the Legal Emancipation of Minor Youth:

Emancipation should be approached cautiously; among other concerns it can terminate parents' responsibility for a young person and leave them with no legal rights to demand support or care from parents or receive benefits upon their death. Nonetheless, emancipation can be critically important for unaccompanied youth, as it permits them to function as adults in many circumstances, including controlling their own finances, entering into contracts, renting property, and consenting to medical treatment. The availability of emancipation and the ability to contract for necessities is crucial for those youth experiencing homelessness who live independently, either by choice or because there are no adults available to support them. Youth experiencing homelessness should be given authority to make important decisions about their own health, safety, and welfare. Unaccompanied minors able to live on their own should be allowed to contract for necessities, including real property, employment, student loans, admission to school, medical and mental health care treatment, bank accounts, cell phones, insurance, and admission to shelter, housing, and supportive service programs.

### Key Recommendations:

Legally permitting unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness to live on their own if reunification with family or appointment of a guardian is not feasible or is not appropriate. Barriers to emancipation, such as blanket minimum age restric-

tions or parental consent without exceptions, should be reviewed, revised, and in most cases, repealed.

States should consider establishing emancipation procedures to remove minimum age restrictions in favor of individualized assessments of each youth's ability and need to live independently. Emancipation procedures should permit courts the maximum flexibility to grant emancipation according to the best interests of the youth. Likewise, youth should be allowed to initiate the procedures independently and should not have to obtain parental consent.

- » In some cases, neglectful or abusive parents may withhold consent to punish their children. The law should not permit such a harmful outcome, as emancipation may be essential for youth to live independently.
- » Procedural safeguards should be in place to ensure the process is fair and accessible to youth and to prevent abuse of the process by parents.
- » In cases of extreme family conflict, it can be advantageous for youth to become emancipated from their parents. Emancipation can ensure that financial benefits to which a youth is entitled go directly to a youth who is managing their own care, rather than to parents or guardians.

### Case Study:

Taylor was a 16-year-old high school junior. After school and on the weekends, she made \$22.00/hour at a medical clinic where she filed charts and assisted the front desk. She loved her job and wanted to major in biology so that she could work in the healthcare field after college. The office manager let her study and do homework when business was slow. Before taxes, she made almost \$3000 each month. Taylor was motivated in part by her home life. It was just her and her mom, who was emotionally abusive and frequently terrorized Taylor without provocation or warning. It's not the kind of situation that child welfare services will get involved in, but she knew that her long-term mental health was being harmed and that two more years at home felt impossible. She decided to file for emancipation and contacted an attorney. The attorney explained to Taylor that because she was 16, she likely wouldn't be allowed to emancipate, even though she met the other criteria set by the family court—social and emotional maturity, an income she can support herself on, and a clear explanation for why she wants to live independently. The reason, he shared, is that youth under 17 have to have parental consent to emancipate in her state.

Taylor knew that if she asked her mother for consent, the most likely outcome was that things at home would get worse, fast. She decided to wait the eight months until her 17th birthday, and while she waited, she saved the majority of the money she earned at work. By the time she filed the paperwork with the court, she had \$15,000 in savings and had already found a landlord who said he'd be willing to lease her an apartment. Taylor's emancipation was granted. Afterward, she often had challenges convincing people to allow her to do something that normally you would need to be 18 for, like enrolling in a health insurance plan or signing paperwork for school, but her attorney wrote her a letter that helped her push through red tape. Sometimes she's still overwhelmed by the amount of responsibility she has taken on for herself, but she says that she's grateful for what it's taught her. She says that without knowing there was an end in sight to her situation at home, she likely would have run away, forfeiting her job and school, and isn't sure where she would be today. Taylor is about to graduate a year early from college with honors. She starts medical school in the fall.



## The state addresses the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness.

**Perfect scores:** Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Kentucky, Maine, Montana, New Mexico, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, West Virginia

### Lowest marks:

Arkansas, Georgia, Hawaii, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Wisconsin

### Scored Metrics:

- The state's dispute resolution process has been amended to reflect ESSA's changes to McKinney-Vento. [1 point]
- **The state explicitly allows partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations. [4 points]**
- The state has laws or regulations that promote access to higher education for homeless youth. [1 point]

### Key Recommendations:

#### Complying with the federal requirements to ensure access to education for youth experiencing homelessness.

- » The federal McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, recently updated by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, requires states to meet the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness. States must ensure proper implementation of the law in order to ensure homeless youth do not experience any barriers to accessing free, appropriate public education. Under the 2015 amendments, states must adopt statutes or regulations to improve access to education for youth experiencing homelessness.
- » States should implement a robust dispute resolution process that would protect the education rights of students experiencing homelessness and allow them and their families to appeal negative decisions should there be a dispute in regards to eligibility, school placement, or enrollment. States also should find ways to help homeless youth stay and succeed in school, including permitting them to accrue credits for work previously done in another school and promoting access to postsecondary education.

### Case Study:

Sarah, 20, is a college sophomore at a regional public 4-year college in her state majoring in computer science. When Sarah was a high school student, she earned good grades but was held back because she moved schools frequently. She had to retake four different classes from the beginning after getting most of the

way through the semester before changing schools. At her second high school, she was connected to a teacher who said that she also worked for the school as its "McKinney-Vento liaison," and that teacher helped make sure she was able to get bus transportation and connected her family to services, resulting in Sarah's family receiving rapid re-housing and rental assistance. Sarah graduated with a 3.4 GPA. When she was applying to college, her school's college counselor found out about a tuition assistance program that would cover her tuition at any public college in her state. And when she filed out her FAFSA, she learned that federal aid would cover the cost of her housing. Sarah is living in an off-campus apartment and completing a work study at her school's IT Help Desk. She wants to work for a social media company after she graduates.

## State Spotlight:

At this time, a number of states have updated their laws and policies to reflect the changes made in the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, which provided new supports and protections for students experiencing homelessness, including a dispute resolution process for when there is conflict related to what school a young person should be enrolled in, as well as a process for students to earn partial credits or alternative credits toward their high school diploma, an important measure to keep students who move schools frequently on track to graduate. Some states have gone beyond the minimal measures outlined in ESSA to give students experiencing homelessness the support they need not just to graduate from high school, but to graduate from college as well. Since 1991, Florida students experiencing homelessness are exempt from paying tuition and fees at workforce training centers, community colleges, and public 4-year universities. While many states are only just beginning to consider how to use public policy to achieve a greater rate of higher education completion among youth with lived experience of homelessness, Florida has provided tuition-free higher ed for nearly thirty years!

## The state allows youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services.

**Perfect scores:** None

**Honorable Mention:** Kentucky

**Lowest Marks:** Alaska, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Rhode Island

### Scored Metrics:

- **The state explicitly allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent. [4 points]**

- The state allows unaccompanied youth to consent to mental health treatment (without parental consent). [1 point]
- The state allows minors to consent to non-residential treatment for substance use (without parental consent). [1 point]
- The state explicitly allows minors to consent to the diagnosis and treatment of STIs (without parental consent). [1 point]
- The state allows minors, regardless of their legal status, to consent to examination and treatment relating to a sexual assault (without parental consent). [1 point]
- The state has transition planning for children exiting the juvenile legal system. [1 point]
- The transitional planning specifically addresses housing needs. [1 point]
- The state addresses custody after discharge from the juvenile legal system. [1 point]
- The state requires permanency planning for committed adjudicated youth. [1 point]
- The state provides transportation home after discharge from the juvenile legal system. [1 point]
- The state subsidizes child care for eligible minors when employment or school is required under TANF. [1 point]
- The state has exemptions from TANF's family living and/or work/education requirements. [1 point]
- State provides cash incentives for youth who graduate high school or earn a GED. [1 point]
- TANF recipients are categorically eligible for SNAP. [1 point]
- The state explicitly allows homeless youth to use SNAP to buy hot restaurant meals or prepared meals. [1 point]

## Key Recommendations:

**Removing barriers facing youth experiencing homelessness in accessing critical supports and services.** States should authorize or require the provision of healthcare, education, and other needed support and services to youth experiencing homelessness in cases where obtaining parental consent is not possible or necessary. In addition to financial barriers that may exist and obstacles associated with confidentiality of services, homeless youth should be given authority to consent for their own care. Youth should be able to access care and services for health conditions, without the significant deterrent of parental consent and notification requirements.

States should ensure discharge-planning and aftercare procedures are in place for youth in juvenile detention facilities so that they are not at risk of experiencing homelessness upon release. Youth should not be released into unsafe or temporary living situations that could lead to homelessness; states should focus on appropriate release procedures that include adequate support and services that foster reintegration of youth discharged from the juvenile legal system. Combating youth homelessness upon release can benefit youth who are at-risk of displacement and also reduce rates of youth re-entering juvenile legal systems.

State laws, policies, and regulations implementing federal benefits such as SNAP and TANF should provide exemptions to their eligibility and retention requirements that account for the precarious circumstances of youth experiencing homelessness.

## Case Study 1:

Journée is a 16 year old living in the suburbs on the West Coast. She is part of a transitional living program for youth experiencing homelessness. It's a small program, and most of the transitional living participants are a few years older than her, but she gets along with everyone. A year ago, Journée started getting major headaches. They would come on suddenly, and when they did, she would have to stop whatever she was doing and take some ibuprofen and lie down. Journée's case manager told her that she needed to see a doctor and set up an appointment for her at a local clinic. When she got there, they looked at her ID and told her that they needed to talk to a parent before they could treat her. They also tried to submit a Medicaid application for her, but they realized that she couldn't sign it because she wasn't 18. Journée's case manager followed up with the clinic to find out if she could sign off on the consent forms, but they said it had to be a parent or guardian. Her next headache was so severe that she had to go to the Emergency Room, where they could treat her because of the urgency of her health needs, but because she didn't have health insurance, she was stuck with more than \$13,000 in bills from the diagnostic tests, doctor's time, and medication. Now, her case manager is worried about her transition to her own apartment because most landlords conduct credit checks, and the medical debt would be added to her credit report. Journée is considering launching a GoFundMe fundraiser to cover the cost of her medical bills, but is uncomfortable with sharing private information about her health and finances publicly. She still isn't sure what she will do.

## Case Study 2:

Mateo, 17, is a high school student in a large city in the Midwest. Last year, when he was 16, Mateo was arrested on the scene of a robbery. He hadn't done anything wrong, but he was held in juvenile detention for two months before the police arrested a different suspect and the DA dropped the charges. His relationship with his father was already strained, and when they were preparing to release him, a case worker called to ask if he would be coming to pick Mateo up. Mateo's father told them that he didn't want Mateo at home. Suddenly, housing rose to the top of the list of things to take care of for Mateo's transition out of detention. The case worker made a dozen phone calls before finally securing him a spot in an independent living program where he would share an apartment with two other young people. He was paired with a mentor, was re-enrolled in school, and started taking life skills classes to learn how to cook meals, clean, budget, and pay bills. The independent living director also encouraged him to try and repair his relationship with his father and offered to facilitate conversations between them to see if they could resolve their differences. When that seemed like it wasn't going to be successful, he worked with Mateo to identify extended family members who might be able to provide him some support. One of his aunt's became very interested in helping Mateo, and now he has dinner at her house twice a week and sometimes babysits his little cousins after school. They are discussing whether it might make sense for him to move in next year once he's done with the independent living program and starting classes at community college.

# Systems

**Perfect scores:** Washington, Kentucky

**Honorable Mention:** California, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Wisconsin

**Lowest Marks:** Ohio, Arkansas, Delaware, Idaho, Louisiana

## Scored Metrics

- **There is a current state plan to end homelessness. [4 points]**
- **The state plan has a “youth” component. [4 points]**
- The state plan has a LGBTQ+ youth component. [1 point]
- **There is a state entity (Office of homeless youth services, homeless youth state coordinator, commission on homeless youth, etc.) that focuses solely on youth homelessness. [4 points]**
- The state provides tuition waivers for foster youth. [1 point]
- The State Department of Transportation has systems in place to address proof of residency requirements to receive a state-issued identification card. [1 point]
- The state does NOT require parental consent for youth to obtain a state-issued identification card. [1 point]
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness. [1 point]
- A statewide housing needs assessment that identifies groups at greatest risk for homelessness has been implemented. [1 point]

## State Spotlight:

Kentucky’s legislature passed the law creating the Kentucky Interagency Council on Homelessness in 2016. By 2018, the council had created a draft 10 year plan to end homelessness in Kentucky, which identified ending LGBTQ+ youth homelessness among the commonwealth’s top priorities. Kentucky has recently emerged as a leader in the work to end youth homelessness, and two of the Commonwealth’s three Continuums of Care have participated in HUD’s competitive Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project. They are a state to watch over the next few years.

## Key Recommendations

**Creating a state entity—such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services, Homeless Youth State Coordinator, or a Commissioner on Youth Homelessness, etc.—that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.**

By creating this kind of state entity, public officials can ensure that there is adequate capacity, subject-matter expertise, and prioritization of youth services necessary to make a significant impact.

**Creating and appointing a State Interagency Council on Homelessness, similar to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness,** to convene state agencies to develop and carry out a multi-sectoral approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness, consistent with the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness’s (USICH) criteria and benchmarks for ending youth homelessness.

**Develop a state plan to end homelessness** that identifies groups at greatest risk of homelessness and includes specific strategies to address homelessness within those groups, including youth, and specifically LGBTQ+ youth.

# Environment

**Perfect scores:** District of Columbia

**Lowest Marks:** Florida, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Carolina, Wyoming

## Scored Metrics

- **The state maintains a community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy. [4 points]**
- Ending youth homelessness is a goal at the Executive branch (Governor). [1 point]
- **The state requires training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems. [4 points]**
- The state has a public awareness campaign/common messaging for local awareness campaigns for youth homelessness. [1 point]
- **The state establishes protected class status based on one's sexual orientation and gender identity for runaway and homeless youth programs. [4 points]**
- The state establishes protected class status based on one's sexual orientation and gender identity for juvenile legal programs. [1 point]
- The state establishes protected class status based on one's sexual orientation and gender identity for child welfare programs. [1 point]
- Conversion therapy for minors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression is banned. [1 point]

## Key Recommendations

**Organizing and maintaining a self-governing youth action council**—including significant representation of youth who are currently experiencing homelessness or who have experienced homelessness in the recent past—to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.

**Providing protections against discrimination for youth who are seeking services**, implementing policies that ban controversial and ineffective services for LGBTQ+ youth such as conversion therapy, and creating a statewide strategy to prevent and end youth homelessness that is inclusive of LGBTQ+ youth. Such strategy should also include explicit prohibition on discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in state statutes and regulations specific to child welfare, juvenile legal, and runaway and homeless youth systems.

## Case Study:

Daniella is a 21 year old trans woman in a Southern state that doesn't protect LGBTQ+ youth from discrimination in foster care or the juvenile legal system. When she was 16, she went into foster care after her mom passed away. At the time, Daniella was out as trans, had a good relationship with her mother, and was making good grades in school. After she entered foster care, her situation spiraled out of control quickly. Daniella's foster mom had a boyfriend who didn't like the way she dressed and spoke. He attacked her, and she ran away from the foster home. A couple of weeks later, Daniella showed up at a child welfare agency office and asked for food. Instead of getting Daniella some food and then figuring out how to help her, the social worker went off on her for running away, and in frustration, Daniella yelled and knocked some books off a bookshelf nearby. The social worker called the police, and Daniella was taken into custody. This set off a chain of events that resulted in months of detention in male facilities, hospitalizations, and institutional placements. The child welfare agency at many points said that they didn't want sole jurisdiction over her case (as opposed to dual jurisdiction with the criminal legal system) because they didn't have a single family placement in the state who was willing to take a trans teen. When a vetted gay couple stepped up to provide an emergency placement for her in hopes that she could be released from detention, the children's court judge refused to provide them with emergency certification. In two years of this, the only people who affirmed Daniella's identity as a trans girl were her attorneys. When Daniella finally aged out of foster care, she struggled with homelessness off and on for two years. In all that time, she hadn't had the opportunity to build stable supportive relationships with adults, and the capacity of her attorneys to help was limited because of high caseloads. Daniella is okay now, but she experienced years of trauma needlessly in a system that didn't value LGBTQ+ youth enough to protect them from abuse and will probably experience lifelong effects.

## State Spotlight:

In the District of Columbia, significant effort has been undertaken to advance equity for LGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness. In 2014, the DC Council passed the Ending Youth Homelessness Act, which specifically tasked the administration with producing a plan to end youth homelessness in the District by 2022 (see Systems recommendations above). Among the tactics identified in the plan, DC indicated that they would not only provide training to youth providers on LGBTQ+ identity and nondiscrimination and enforce nondiscrimination laws, they would begin a "secret shopper" site monitoring program to ensure that youth and young adults were safe accessing services. They also prioritized ensuring that youth voices were included in all agency boards overseeing youth services and on the Interagency Council on Homelessness. While equity work is never finished, DC has invested in significant infrastructure to support this work under the leadership of the Mayor and the Council.

# Appendix A:

## Detailed Methodology & Outline Of Metrics

Each state was evaluated on metrics and recommendations listed in the Index. Out of a possible 100 points, over half (52%) of the points were distributed across the following 13 key metrics, which are indicative of states' overall approaches toward youth homelessness. The remaining metrics and detailed scoresheet are available at [bit.ly/2020Index](https://bit.ly/2020Index).

1. The state establishes the age of childhood as encompassing persons older than 18 (outside of a "homeless youth" definition, but includes youth in jurisdiction of child welfare or juvenile court).
2. The state has a Runaway & Homeless Youth Act—or similar legislation—with corresponding funding.
3. Youth experiencing homelessness have partial or full contract rights.
4. Running away is declassified as a status or delinquent offense.
5. The state allows shelters to take in homeless youth with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.
6. The state explicitly allows partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth.
7. Unaccompanied youth under 18 can apply for health insurance coverage on their own.
8. There is a state entity (office of homeless youth services, homeless youth state coordinator, commission on homeless youth, etc.) that focuses solely on youth homelessness.
9. There is a current state plan to end homelessness.
10. The current state plan to end homelessness includes a "youth" component with youth-specific strategies.
11. The state maintains a self-governing youth action council—including significant representation of youth currently experiencing homelessness or who have experienced homelessness in the past—to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
12. The state requires training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual, development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.
13. The state establishes protected class status based on one's sexual orientation and gender identity for runaway and homeless youth programs.

These recommendations are critical to effectively addressing youth homelessness on the state level. How states perform on each of these metrics is indicative on a broader scale of how their laws, policies, systems, and environments treat youth experiencing homelessness. The remaining metrics, grouped by law and policy, systems, and environment, were weighted equally. Additional metrics may be included in future iterations as states make progress on tackling youth homelessness, in order to better evaluate each state's commitment to preventing and ending youth homelessness.

The Index does not examine state practices and how they implement laws and policies. Many states that have employed innovative models and approaches to address youth homelessness are not fully captured in the Index. The Index also does not address or measure the pace of advocacy efforts over time. Some states that may not have performed well in the Index but have ramped up efforts to address youth homelessness should not be discouraged. Even though these dynamics are outside the scope of the Index, states should continue to pursue these efforts.

Additionally, there may be cases where a state has a specific policy in place, but does not earn points for it. Circumstances under which this may occur include (1) if the state follows a policy directive that is not codified in regulation or law, and therefore is not easily available to researchers and (2) if the state meets only part of a metric, e.g. sexual orientation included as a protected class in child welfare, but not gender identity.

The metrics are researched first by a team of pro bono attorneys, who scour state statutes, regulations, and plans for relevant information. After this first round of research, initial findings are sent out to key stakeholders in each state for review, feedback, and corrections.

For more information on the research methodology, see the 2018 and 2019 State Indices.

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## Appendix B: State Scorecards

### Note on State Scorecards:

On the following pages are scorecards for each individual state, indicating the state's scores, explanations of strengths and weaknesses, and recommendations for improving in the future. They are intended to be taken as handouts for advocates to provide policymakers with a quick reference to a state's performance on youth homelessness and how it can be efficiently and effectively improved.

# Alabama

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**35**

Overall score 2020:

**43**

Overall score 2019:

**34**

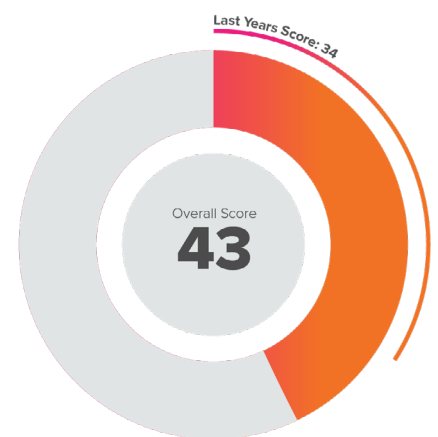
### Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 60% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 50% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 29% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 100% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 83% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 78% of metrics met

**Systems:** 22% of metrics met

**Environment:** 0% of metrics met





## State Highlights

Recommendations  
for Improvement

## Overview

**Alabama** has moved the needle relative to other states in addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness and providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.



There is room for significant improvement throughout the metrics for the **Yellowhammer State** across all categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, crafting statewide plans to address homelessness that contains a youth-specific component, designating agencies to develop and enforce these plans, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.

## Law &amp; Policy

- The state has extended foster care to age 21 and allows young adults under 21 to opt back into services after exiting if needed.
- The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).
- The state allows partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.
- The state explicitly allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage (without parental consent).



- The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.
- The state should decriminalize running away as a status offense.
- The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.

## Systems

- None



- The state should create a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth, and specifically LGBTQ+ youth.
- The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.

## Environment

- None



- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board. The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).
- The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.
- The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.

# Alaska

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**43**

Overall score 2020:

**38**

Overall score 2019:

**39**

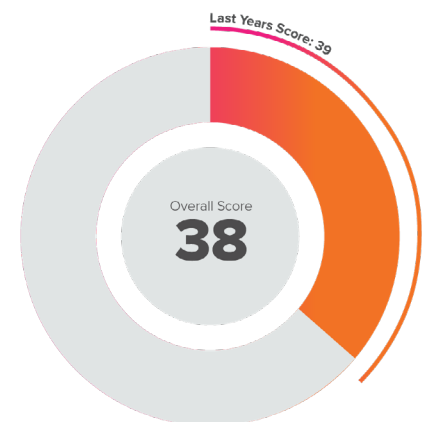
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 51% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 42% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 52% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 83% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 28% of metrics met

**Systems:** 28% of metrics met

**Environment:** 0% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p><b>Alaska</b> has moved the needle relative to other states in providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics in the <b>Last Frontier state</b>, with emphasis on the Environment category. Protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state doesn't consider running away a criminal offense.</li> <li>• The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).</li> <li>• The state explicitly allows partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).</li> <li>• The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>

# Arizona

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**32**

Overall score 2020:

**46**

Overall score 2019:

**44**

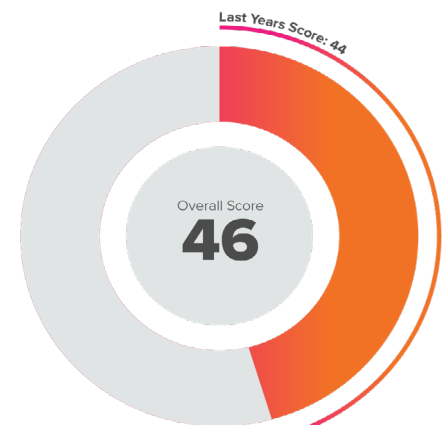
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 63% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 42% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 52% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 100% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 67% of metrics met

**Systems:** 22% of metrics met

**Environment:** 6% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>Some areas where <b>Arizona</b> has moved the needle relative to other states include providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently and addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics in the <b>Grand Canyon State</b>, with emphasis on the Systems and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, decreasing contact with the criminal justice system, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state has extended foster care to age 21 in certain circumstances and allows young adults under 21 to opt back into services after exiting if needed.</li> <li>• The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).</li> <li>• The state explicitly allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage (without parental consent).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>• The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).</li> <li>• The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>

# Arkansas

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness—particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**44**

Overall score 2020:

**37**

Overall score 2019:

**39**

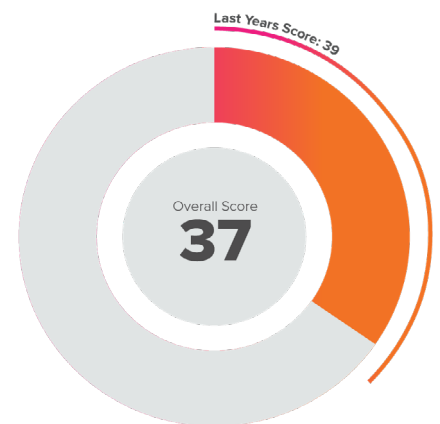
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 52% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 62% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 17% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 50% of metrics met

**Systems:** 17% of metrics met

**Environment:** 0% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>Some areas where <b>Arkansas</b> has moved the needle relative to other states include limiting contact by youth experiencing homelessness with the criminal and juvenile justice systems and providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement across the metrics for the <b>Natural State</b>. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, addressing their educational needs, and protecting the rights and interests of vulnerable youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state has extended foster care to age 21 in certain circumstances and allows young adults under 21 to opt back into services after exiting if needed.</li> <li>• The state doesn't consider running away a criminal offense.</li> <li>• The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).</li> <li>• The state explicitly allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage (without parental consent).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).</li> <li>• The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>



# California

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**5**

Overall score 2020:

**77**

Overall score 2019:

**78**

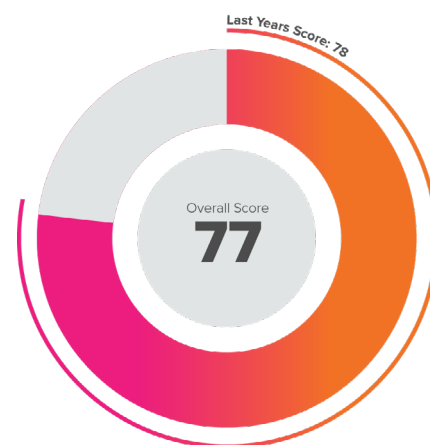
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 66% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 83% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 24% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 100% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 83% of metrics met

**Systems:** 94% of metrics met

**Environment:** 100% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>Some areas where <b>California</b> has moved the needle relative to other states include authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness and promoting safety and inclusion by providing protections for LGBTQ+ youth within key state programs.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Golden State</b>, with emphasis on the Law &amp; Policy and Systems categories. Reducing contact with the courts and amending the statewide plan to end homelessness to include an LGBTQ+ youth-specific component should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state has a state Runaway &amp; Homeless Youth Act.</li> <li>• The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).</li> <li>• The state explicitly allows partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> <li>• The state explicitly allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage (without parental consent).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should decriminalize running away as a status offense.</li> <li>• The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a current state plan to end homelessness.</li> <li>• The state plan has a “youth” component.</li> <li>• There is a state entity (Office of homeless youth services, homeless youth state coordinator, commission on homeless youth, etc.) that focuses solely on youth homelessness.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state plan to end youth homelessness should be updated to include a plan to end homelessness among LGBTQ+ youth.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state maintains a community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy.</li> <li>• The state requires training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• There are nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>

# Colorado

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

## Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 63% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 83% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 52% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 100% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 44% of metrics met

**Systems:** 83% of metrics met

**Environment:** 47% of metrics met

## Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

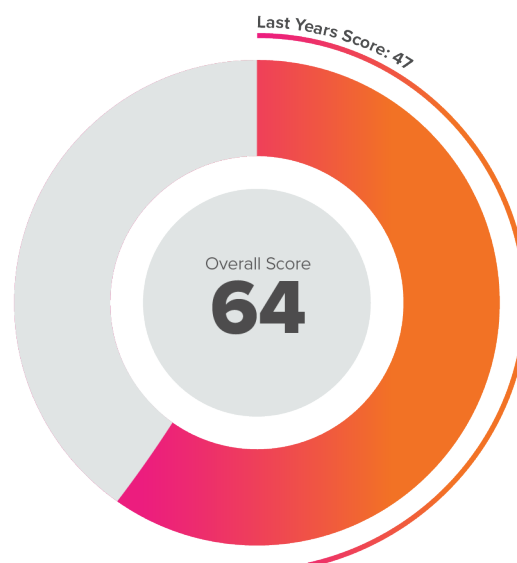
**10**

Overall score 2020:

**64**

Overall score 2019:

**47**



## State Highlights

Recommendations  
for Improvement

## Overview



Some areas where **Colorado** has moved the needle relative to other states include authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, elevating the voices of youth who have experienced homelessness by partnering with them throughout policy development, and promoting safety and addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness.

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the **Centennial State**, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Protecting the rights and interests of vulnerable youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.

## Law &amp; Policy



- The state has a state Runaway & Homeless Youth Act.
- The state doesn't consider running away a criminal offense.
- The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).
- The state explicitly allows partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.

- The state should explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.
- The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.

## Systems



- There is a state plan to end homelessness that includes a youth component.
- There is a state entity (Office of homeless youth services, homeless youth state coordinator, commission on homeless youth, etc.) that focuses solely on youth homelessness.

- The state plan to end homelessness should be updated to specifically include strategies to end homelessness among LGBTQ+ youth.
- The state should allow youth to obtain state-issued identification without parental consent.

## Environment



- The state maintains a community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy.

- The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.
- The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.

# Connecticut

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**3**

Overall score 2020:

**79**

Overall score 2019:

**62**

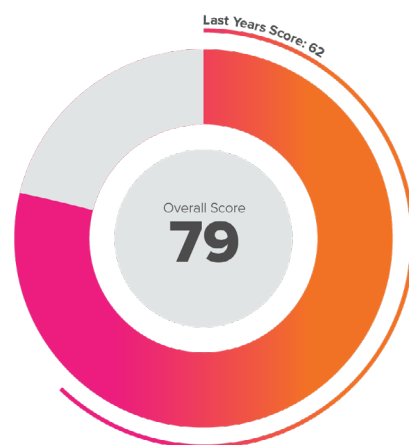
### Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 82% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 92% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 71% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 100% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 78% of metrics met

**Systems:** 78% of metrics met

**Environment:** 71% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>Some areas where <b>Connecticut</b> has moved the needle relative to other states include addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness and elevating the voices of youth who have experienced homelessness by working with them throughout policy development.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Constitution State</b>.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state explicitly allows partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> <li>State law provides partial or full contract rights for youth experiencing homelessness.</li> <li>The state allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.</li> <li>The state has extended foster care to age 23 in certain circumstances and allows young adults to opt back into services after exiting if needed.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state should allow minors, regardless of their legal status, to consent to examination and treatment relating to a sexual assault without parental consent.</li> <li>The state should explicitly allow youth experiencing homelessness to use SNAP benefits to buy hot restaurant or prepared meals.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains youth-specific strategy components.</li> <li>The state has systems in place to address proof of residency requirements to receive a state-issued identification card and allows youth to obtain state-issued identification without parental consent.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state maintains a self-governing youth action board or council that informs youth homelessness policy.</li> <li>The state has banned conversion therapy for minors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.</li> <li>The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> </ul>

# Delaware

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**24**

Overall score 2020:

**51**

Overall score 2019:

**54**

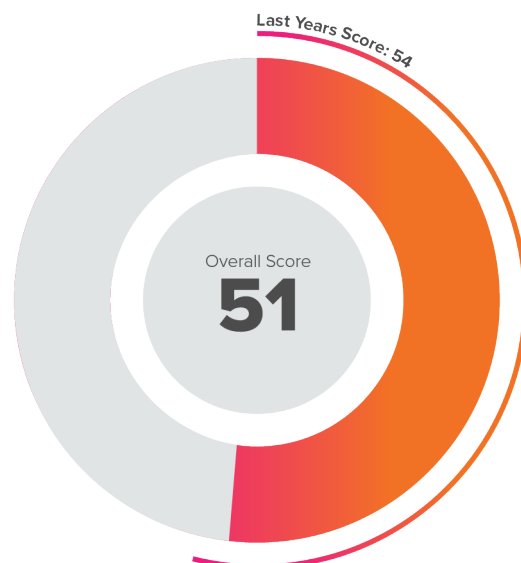
### Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 69% of metrics met





- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 50% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 62% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 100% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 78% of metrics met

**Systems:** 17% of metrics met

**Environment:** 18% of metrics met





State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p><b>Delaware</b> has moved the needle relative to other states in providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently and addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>First State</b>, with emphasis on the Systems and Environment categories. Laws protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized, and the state should develop a plan to end homelessness that is inclusive of youth.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state doesn't consider running away a criminal offense.</li> <li>• The state allows shelters to take in homeless youth with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>• The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).</li> <li>• The state explicitly allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).</li> <li>• The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>

# District of Columbia

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**1**

Overall score 2020:

**90**

Overall score 2019:

**75**

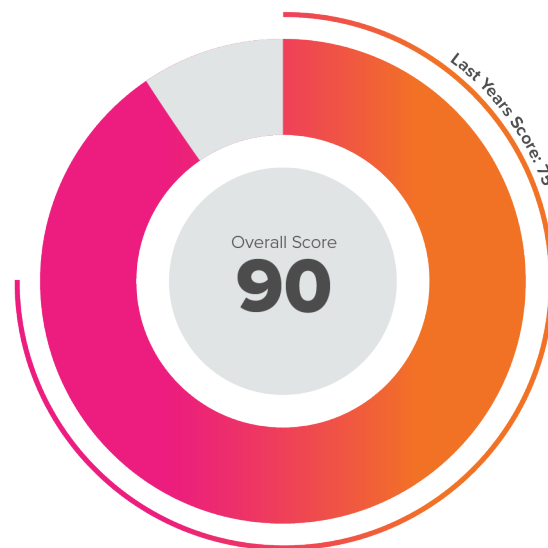
### Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 86% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 92% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 76% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 100% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 94% of metrics met

**Systems:** 94% of metrics met

**Environment:** 100% of metrics met



## State Highlights

Recommendations  
for Improvement

## Overview

The **District of Columbia** has moved the needle relative to other states in every category and is the first jurisdiction to earn the equivalent of an “A” grade on the State Index on Youth Homelessness.



There is limited room for improvement throughout the metrics for the **District**.

## Law &amp; Policy

- The District has RHY statutes similar to the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) that provides funding for emergency services and other supports to prevent and end youth homelessness.
- The District does not specifically criminalize running away and limits contact between youth experiencing homelessness and the criminal justice system.
- The District provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- The District allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



- The District should remove age restrictions for emancipation and waive parental consent requirements for emancipation.
- The District should prohibit police from taking runaway youth and youth experiencing homelessness into custody.

## Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains youth-specific and LGBTQ+ youth-specific strategy components.
- There is an interagency council on homelessness.
- There is a District entity (Office of homeless youth services, homeless youth state coordinator, commission on homeless youth, etc.) that focuses solely on youth homelessness.



- The District should ensure that youth can obtain district-issued identification cards without parental consent.

## Environment

- The District requires training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- The District promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- The District has banned conversion therapy for minors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.



- None

# Florida

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

## Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 72% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 50% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 81% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 100% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 61% of metrics met

**Systems:** 28% of metrics met

**Environment:** 0% of metrics met

## Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

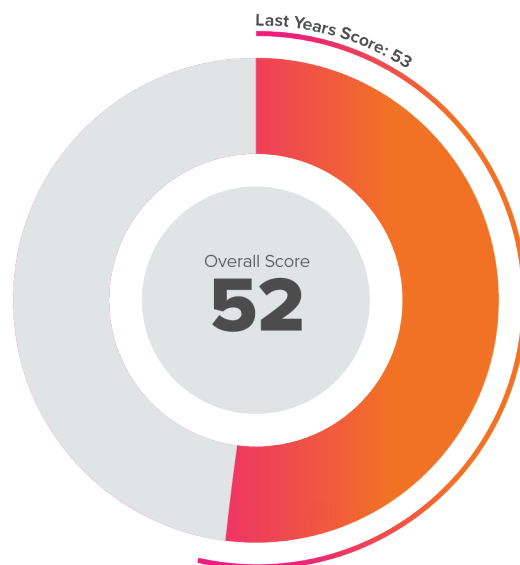
**22**





Overall score 2020:

**52**

Overall score 2019:

**53**



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>Some areas where <b>Florida</b> has moved the needle relative to other states include authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, preventing their contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems, and providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Sunshine State</b>, with emphasis on the Systems and Environment categories. Creating a statewide strategy to end homelessness that includes a youth-specific component and protecting the rights and interests of vulnerable youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state doesn't consider running away a criminal offense.</li> <li>• The state allows shelters to take in homeless youth with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>• The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).</li> <li>• The state explicitly allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should develop a public plan to prevent and end youth homelessness that includes a plan to address homelessness among LGBTQ+ youth.</li> <li>• The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>

# Georgia

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**35**

Overall score 2020:

**43**

Overall score 2019:

**42**

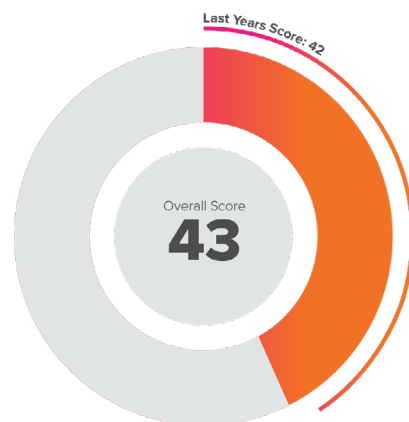
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 57% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 50% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 48% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 17% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 72% of metrics met

**Systems:** 28% of metrics met

**Environment:** 6% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>Some areas where <b>Georgia</b> has moved the needle relative to other states include providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently and allowing them to access critical supports and services.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement across the metrics for the <b>Peach State</b>. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, preventing their contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state has extended foster care to age 21 under certain circumstances and allows young adults under 21 to opt back into services after exiting if needed.</li> <li>• The state doesn't consider running away a criminal offense.</li> <li>• The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).</li> <li>• The state explicitly allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage (without parental consent).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>• The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).</li> <li>• The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>



# Hawaii

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**16**

Overall score 2020:

**56**

Overall score 2019:

**47**

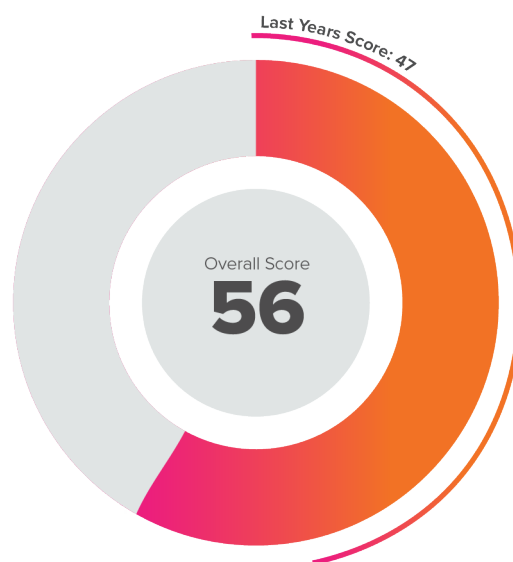
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 49% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 48% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 17% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 61% of metrics met

**Systems:** 89% of metrics met

**Environment:** 47% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>One area where <b>Hawaii</b> has moved the needle relative to other states is providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Aloha State</b>, with emphasis on the Law &amp; Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, addressing their educational needs, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state allows shelters to take in homeless youth with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>• The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).</li> <li>• The state explicitly allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage (without parental consent).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>• The state should decriminalize running away as a status offense.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.</li> <li>• There is a state entity (Office of homeless youth services, homeless youth state coordinator, commission on homeless youth, etc.) that focuses solely on youth homelessness.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ+ youth.</li> <li>• The state should allow minors to obtain state-issued ID without parental consent.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state maintains a community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>

# Idaho

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**46**

Overall score 2020:

**36**

Overall score 2019:

**27**

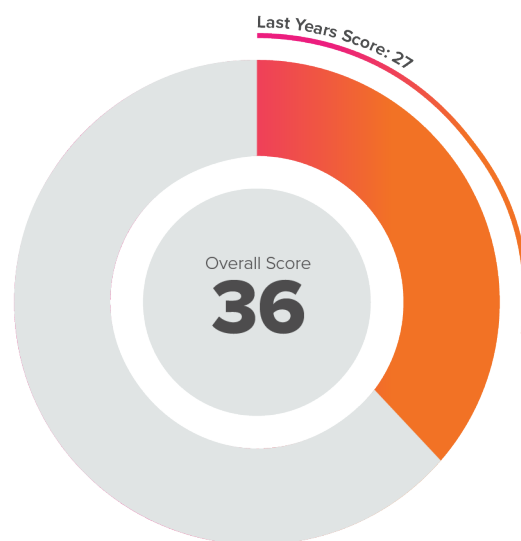
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 45% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 50% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 14% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 72% of metrics met

**Systems:** 17% of metrics met

**Environment:** 24% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p><b>Idaho</b> has not moved the needle relative to other states in any key areas, but there are some individual policies worth highlighting.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement across metrics for the <b>Gem State</b>. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, preventing their contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems, addressing their educational needs, creating a statewide strategy to end homelessness that includes a youth-specific strategy, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.</li> <li>The state allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>The state should decriminalize running away as a status offense.</li> <li>The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state should develop a comprehensive statewide plan to end homelessness that includes a strategy to prevent and end youth homelessness and LGBTQ+ youth homelessness.</li> <li>The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state maintains a community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>

# Illinois

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**25**

Overall score 2020:

**50**

Overall score 2019:

**42**

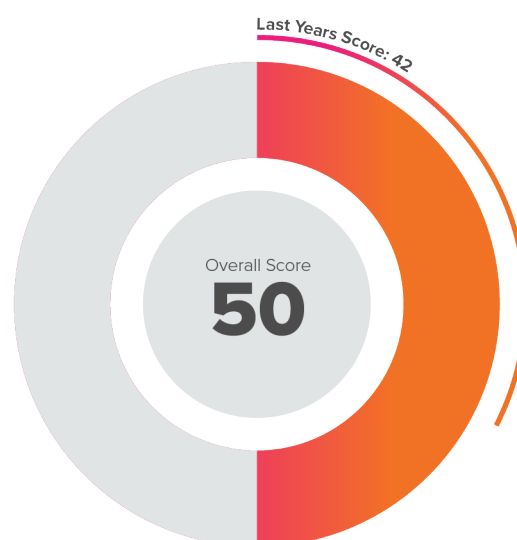
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 60% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 42% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 57% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 72% of metrics met

**Systems:** 44% of metrics met

**Environment:** 18% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>Some areas where <b>Illinois</b> has moved the needle relative to other states include providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and allowing them to access critical supports and services.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Prairie State</b>, with emphasis on the Law &amp; Policy category. Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness should be of importance, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state doesn't consider running away a criminal offense.</li> <li>• The state allows shelters to take in homeless youth with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>• The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).</li> <li>• The state explicitly allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage (without parental consent).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a state entity (Office of homeless youth services, homeless youth state coordinator, commission on homeless youth, etc.) that focuses solely on youth homelessness.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>

# Indiana

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**27**

Overall score 2020:

**49**

Overall score 2019:

**55**

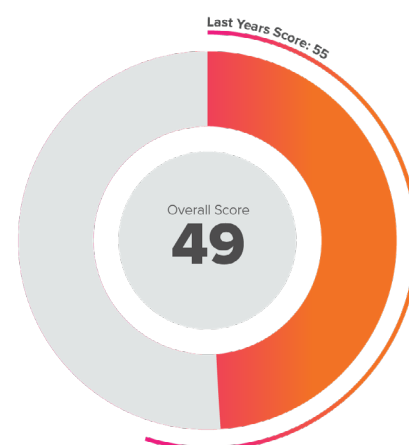
### Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 55% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 58% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 48% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 100% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 50% of metric

**Systems:** 39% of metrics met

**Environment:** 35% of metrics met





## State Highlights

One area where **Indiana** has moved the needle relative to other states is in providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.

## Recommendations for Improvement

## Overview



There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the **Hoosier State**, with emphasis on the Law & Policy category. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness should be prioritized. Additionally, protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.

## Law &amp; Policy



- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- The state allows shelters to take in homeless youth with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.

- The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.
- The state should decriminalize running away as a status offense.
- The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.
- The state should explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.

## Systems



- There is a current state plan to end homelessness.

- The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).
- The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.

## Environment



- The state maintains a community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy.

- The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.
- The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.

# Iowa

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**34**

Overall score 2020:

**45**

Overall score 2019:

**32**

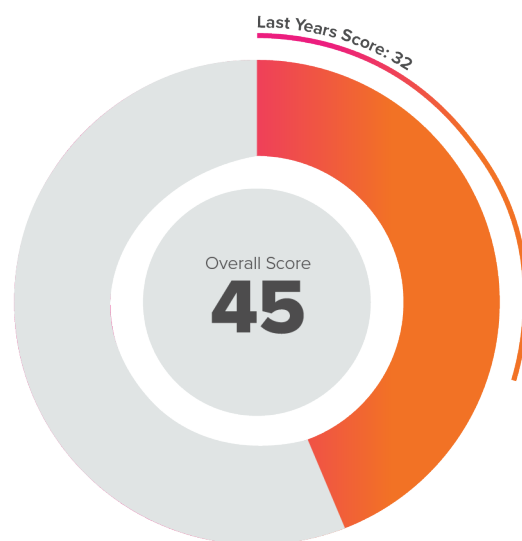
### Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 60% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 58% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 48% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 83% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 56% of metrics met

**Systems:** 22% of metrics met

**Environment:** 12% of metrics met



## State Highlights

Recommendations  
for Improvement

## Overview

Some areas where **Iowa** has moved the needle relative to other states include providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, addressing their educational needs, and allowing them to access critical supports and services.



There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the **Treasure State**, with emphasis on the Law & Policy category. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness should be prioritized. Additionally, protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.

## Law &amp; Policy

- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- The state explicitly allows partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.



- The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.
- The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.
- The state should explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.

## Systems

- None.



- The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).
- The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.

## Environment

- None.



- The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).
- The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.
- The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.

# Kansas

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**29**

Overall score 2020:

**47**

Overall score 2019:

**43**

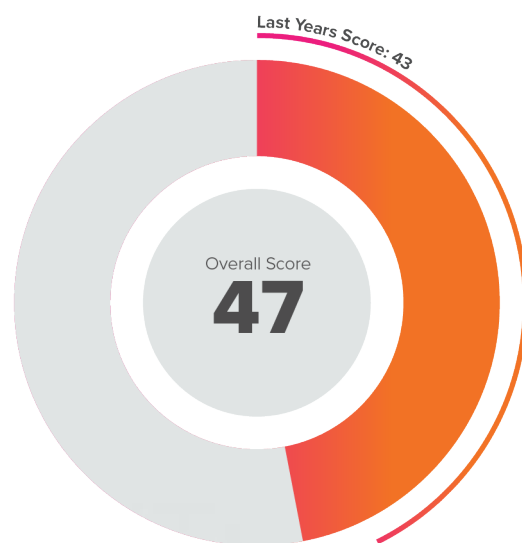
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 62% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 58% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 52% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 100% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 83% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 50% of metrics met

**Systems:** 39% of metrics met

**Environment:** 0% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>Some areas where <b>Kansas</b> has moved the needle relative to other states include providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently and addressing the educational needs of youth.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Sunflower State</b>, with emphasis on the Law &amp; Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness should be prioritized. Additionally, protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State law does not specifically criminalize running away.</li> <li>State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.</li> <li>The state has a grievance process for homeless students in compliance with federal law and allows partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>The state should explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a state entity (Office of homeless youth services, homeless youth state coordinator, commission on homeless youth, etc.) that focuses solely on youth homelessness.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>

# Kentucky

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**15**

Overall score 2020:

**57**

Overall score 2019:

**48**

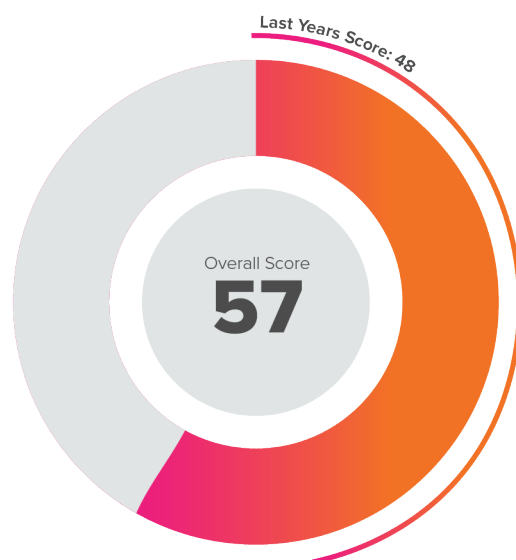
### Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 58% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 42% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 24% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 100% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 84% of metrics met

**Systems:** 100% of metrics met

**Environment:** 6% of metrics met



## State Highlights

Recommendations  
for Improvement

## Overview

Some areas where **Kentucky** has moved the needle relative to other states include creating systems to address the needs of youth experiencing homelessness, providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, and addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness.



There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the **Bluegrass State**, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.

## Law &amp; Policy

- State law provides partial or full contract rights for homeless youth.
- The state explicitly allows partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.
- The state explicitly allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage (without parental consent).



- The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.
- The state should decriminalize running away as a status offense.
- The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.

## Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- The state has systems in place to address proof of residency requirements and does not require parental consent for youth to obtain state-issued identification cards.
- There is a state entity (Office of homeless youth services, homeless youth state coordinator, commission on homeless youth, etc.) that focuses solely on youth homelessness.



- None.

## Environment

- None.



- The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).
- The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.
- The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.



# Louisiana

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**8**

Overall score 2020:

**66**

Overall score 2019:

**64**

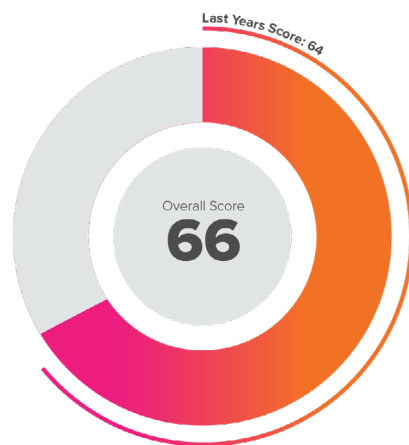
### Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 69% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 92% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 57% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 100% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 50% of metrics met

**Systems:** 39% of metrics met

**Environment:** 82% of metrics met



## State Highlights

Some areas where **Louisiana** has moved the needle relative to other states include providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, creating systems to address the needs of homeless youth, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth.

## Recommendations for Improvement

## Overview



There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the **Pelican State**, with emphasis on the Law & Policy category. Limiting opportunities for contact between youth experiencing homelessness and the juvenile and criminal justice systems should be prioritized.

## Law &amp; Policy



- The state has a state Runaway & Homeless Youth Act.
- The state allows shelters to take in homeless youth with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.
- The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).
- The state explicitly allows partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.

- The state should decriminalize running away as a status offense.
- The state should explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.

## Systems



- There is a current state plan to end homelessness.

- The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).
- The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.

## Environment



- The state maintains a community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy.
- The state requires training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.
- There are nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.

- The Executive Branch (Governor's Office) should set a goal of ending youth homelessness.
- The state should ban conversion therapy for minors.
- The state should develop a public awareness campaign on youth homelessness.

# Maine

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**7**

Overall score 2020:

**72**

Overall score 2019:

**64**

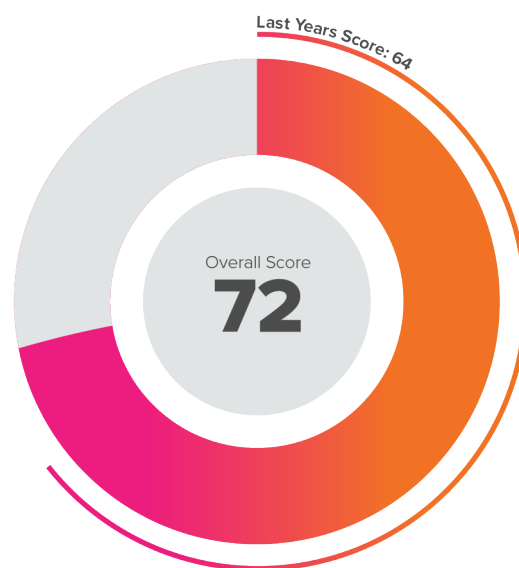
### Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 80% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 83% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 67% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 100% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 83% of metrics met

**Systems:** 78% of metrics met

**Environment:** 35% of metrics met



## State Highlights

Recommendations  
for Improvement

## Overview



Some areas where **Maine** has moved the needle relative to other states include laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, allowing them to access critical supports and services, and promoting safe and inclusive environments by providing protections for LGBTQ+ youth in key programs.

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the **Pine Tree State**, with emphasis on the Environment category. Protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.

## Law &amp; Policy



- The state has RHY statutes similar to the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) that provides funding for emergency services and other supports to prevent and end youth homelessness.
- State law does not criminally punish youth who run away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- The state allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.

- The state should allow youth experiencing homelessness to use SNAP benefits to purchase hot restaurant or prepared foods.
- The state should provide transportation home after discharge from the juvenile legal system.

## Systems



- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.

- The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.

## Environment



- The state maintains a community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy.

- The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.
- The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.

# Maryland

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**29**

Overall score 2020:

**47**

Overall score 2019:

**52**

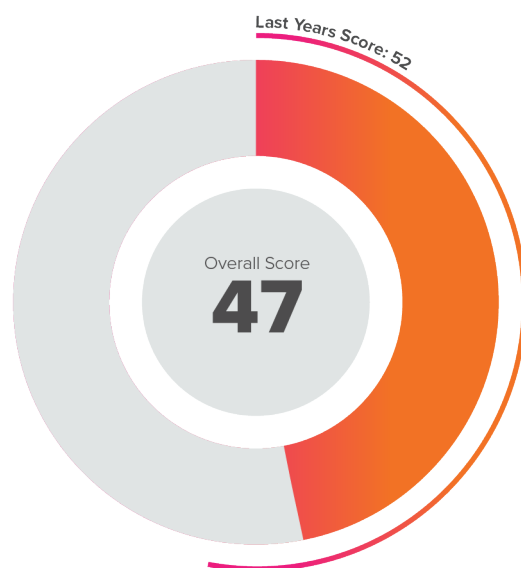
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 55% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 50% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 57% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 56% of metrics met

**Systems:** 44% of metrics met

**Environment:** 18% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>Some areas where <b>Maryland</b> has moved the needle relative to other states include providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently and creating systems to address the needs of youth experiencing homelessness.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement across the metrics for the <b>Old Line State</b>, with emphasis on the Law &amp; Policy category. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness should be prioritized. Additionally, protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state doesn't consider running away a criminal offense.</li> <li>• The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).</li> <li>• The state explicitly allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage (without parental consent).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>• The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a state entity (Office of homeless youth services, homeless youth state coordinator, commission on homeless youth, etc.) that focuses solely on youth homelessness.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>

# Massachusetts

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

3

Overall score 2020:

79

Overall score 2019:

78

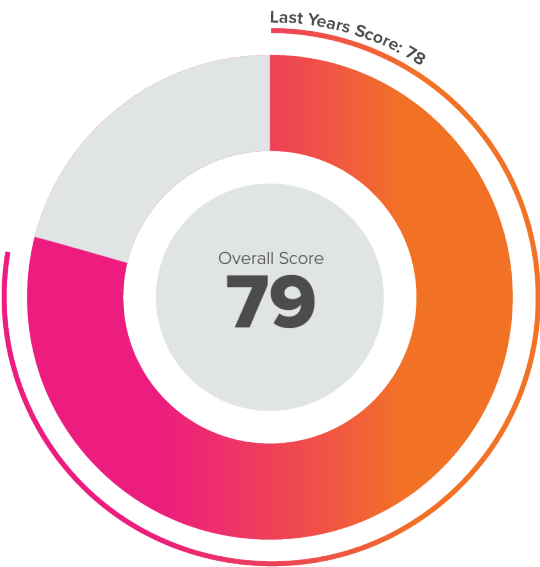
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 75% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 92% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 86% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 67% of metrics met

**Systems:** 94% of metrics met

**Environment:** 76% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>Some areas where <b>Massachusetts</b> has moved the needle relative to other states include addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness, preventing their contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems, allowing them to access critical supports and services, creating systems to address their needs, and promoting safe and inclusive environments by providing protections for LGBTQ+ youth in key programs.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Bay State</b>, with emphasis on the Law &amp; Policy category.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state has RHY statutes similar to the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) that provides funding for emergency services and other supports to prevent and end youth homelessness.</li> <li>• The state allows shelters to take in homeless youth with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>• State law does not specifically criminalize running away.</li> <li>• State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component which addresses the needs of LGBTQ+ youth.</li> <li>• The state has created an entity that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should allow youth to obtain state-issued ID without parental consent.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state maintains a community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy.</li> <li>• The state requires training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>



# Michigan

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**28**

Overall score 2020:

**48**

Overall score 2019:

**48**

## Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 54% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 50% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 43% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 17% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 67% of metrics met

**Systems:** 61% of metrics met

**Environment:** 12% of metrics met

## State Highlights

Some areas where **Michigan** has moved the needle relative to other states include providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently and creating systems to address the needs of youth experiencing homelessness.

## Recommendations for Improvement

## Overview



There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the **Great Lakes State**, with emphasis on the Law & Policy category. Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness should be prioritized.

## Law &amp; Policy



- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- The state allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.

- The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.
- The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.
- The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.

## Systems



- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.

- The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.

## Environment



- None.

- The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).
- The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.
- The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.

# Minnesota

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**13**

Overall score 2020:

**58**

Overall score 2019:

**61**

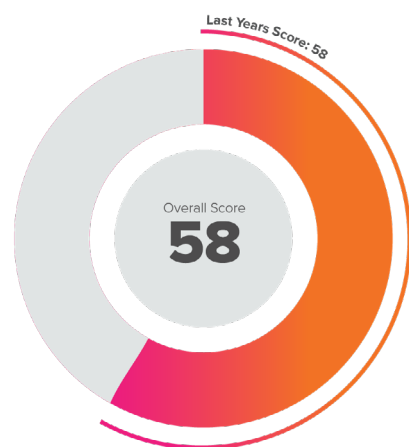
### Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 52% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 92% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 52% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 17% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 33% of metrics met

**Systems:** 89% of metrics met

**Environment:** 47% of metrics met



## State Highlights

Recommendations  
for Improvement

## Overview



Some areas where **Minnesota** has moved the needle relative to other states include laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, allowing them to access critical supports and services, and implementing a multi-sector approach to addressing youth homelessness.

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the **North Star State**, with emphasis on the Environment category. Creating a more welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment for youth experiencing homelessness should be prioritized.

## Law &amp; Policy



- The state has RHY statutes similar to the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) that provides funding for emergency services and other supports to prevent and end youth homelessness.
- State law does not criminally punish youth who run away.
- The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).

- The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.
- The state should explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.

## Systems



- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- The state has created an entity that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.

- The state should allow minors to obtain state-issued ID without parental consent.
- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ+ youth.

## Environment



- The state requires training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.

- The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).
- The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.

# Mississippi

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**39**

Overall score 2020:

**42**

Overall score 2019:

**42**

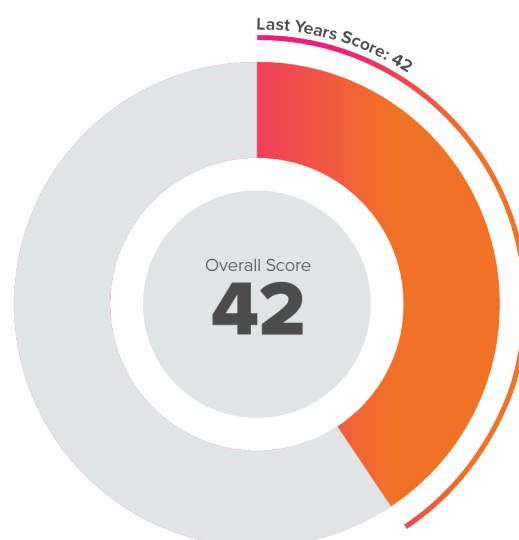
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 54% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 50% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 48% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 100% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 17% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 56% of metrics met

**Systems:** 33% of metrics met

**Environment:** 6% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>One area where <b>Mississippi</b> has moved the needle relative to other states is in providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Magnolia State</b>, with emphasis on the Law &amp; Policy and Environment categories. Policies authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State law provides partial or full contract rights for youth experiencing homelessness.</li> <li>The state doesn't consider running away a criminal offense.</li> <li>The state allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> <li>The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a current state plan to end homelessness.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).</li> <li>The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>

# Missouri

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. For a complete list of metrics, see Appendix**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**13**

Overall score 2020:

**58**

Overall score 2019:

**59**

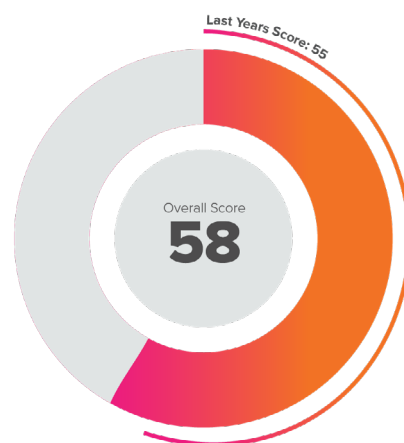
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 63% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 50% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 57% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 83% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 61% of metrics met

**Systems:** 94% of metrics met

**Environment:** 0% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>Some areas where <b>Missouri</b> has moved the needle relative to other states include providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently and addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement across the metrics for the <b>Show-Me State</b>, with much more state support needed to prevent and end youth homelessness. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state allows shelters to take in homeless youth with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>• The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).</li> <li>• The state explicitly allows partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> <li>• The state explicitly allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>• The state should decriminalize running away as a status offense.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.</li> <li>• There is a state entity (Office of homeless youth services, homeless youth state coordinator, commission on homeless youth, etc.) that focuses solely on youth homelessness.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state plan to end homelessness should be updated to include strategies specific to LGBTQ+ youth.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>



# Montana

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**39**

Overall score 2020:

**42**

Overall score 2019:

**42**

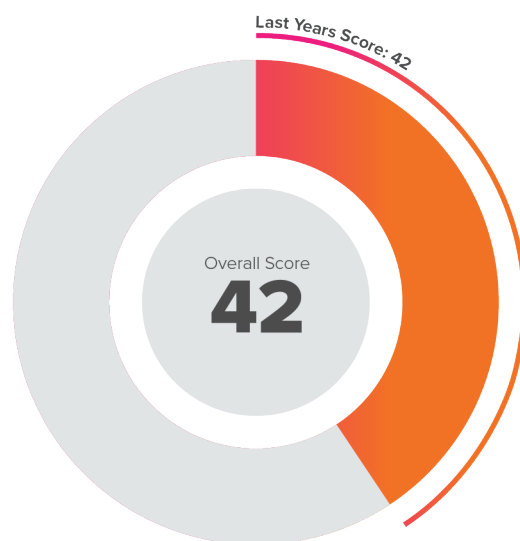
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 58% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 17% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 57% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 100% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 61% of metrics met

**Systems:** 22% of metrics met

**Environment:** 0% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>Some areas where <b>Montana</b> has moved the needle relative to other states include not relying on the criminal justice system to provide services to youth experiencing homelessness, maintaining a state plan to end homelessness, and providing youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Treasure State</b>, with emphasis on the Systems and Environment categories. Protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state allows shelters to take in homeless youth with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>• State law does not specifically criminalize running away.</li> <li>• State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.</li> <li>• The state explicitly allows partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).</li> <li>• The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>

# Nebraska

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**44**

Overall score 2020:

**37**

Overall score 2019:

**30**

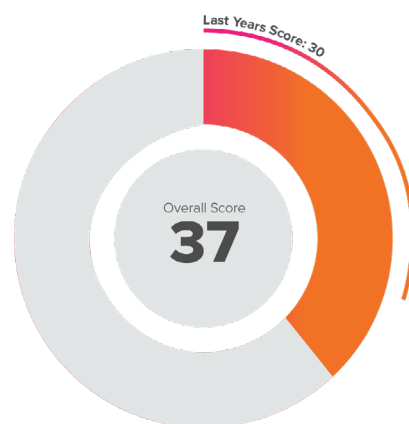
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 40% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 42% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 48% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 38% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 33% of metrics met

**Systems:** 61% of metrics met

**Environment:** 0% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p><b>Nebraska</b> has not moved the needle relative to other states in any key areas, but there are some individual policies worth highlighting.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Cornhusker State</b>, with emphasis on the Law &amp; Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State law does not specifically criminalize running away.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state should fund and provide oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>The state should give minors contract rights OR allow them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes.</li> <li>The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual.</li> <li>The state should allow youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>

# Nevada

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. For a complete list of metrics, see Appendix**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**32**

Overall score 2020:

**46**

Overall score 2019:

**48**

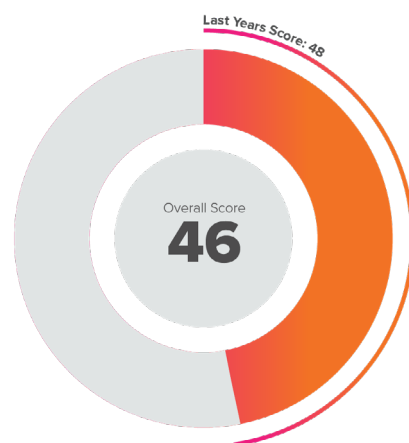
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 52% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 58% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 38% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 38% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 78% of metrics met

**Systems:** 50% of metrics met

**Environment:** 18% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>Some areas where <b>Nevada</b> has moved the needle relative to other states include authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, and allowing youth to access critical supports and services.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Silver State</b>, with emphasis on the Environment category. Protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state doesn't consider running away a criminal offense.</li> <li>• The state explicitly allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>• The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>• The state should give minors contract rights OR allow them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities)</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a state entity (Office of homeless youth services, homeless youth state coordinator, commission on homeless youth, etc.) that focuses solely on youth homelessness.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>

# New Hampshire

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**29**

Overall score 2020:

**47**

Overall score 2019:

**48**

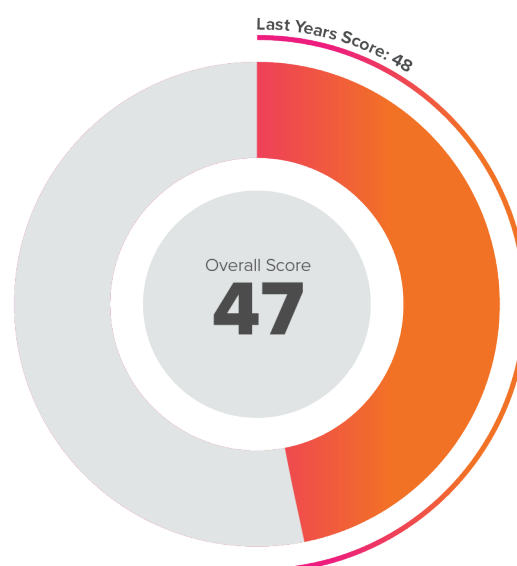
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 63% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 42% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 81% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 56% of metrics met

**Systems:** 22% of metrics met

**Environment:** 12% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>One area where <b>New Hampshire</b> has moved the needle relative to other states include minimizing opportunity for youth experiencing homelessness to come in contact with the courts.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Granite State</b>, with emphasis on the Environment category. Protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state allows shelters to take in homeless youth with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>• The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).</li> <li>• The state doesn't consider running away a criminal offense.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).</li> <li>• The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>



# New Jersey

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**11**

Overall score 2020:

**62**

Overall score 2019:

**57**

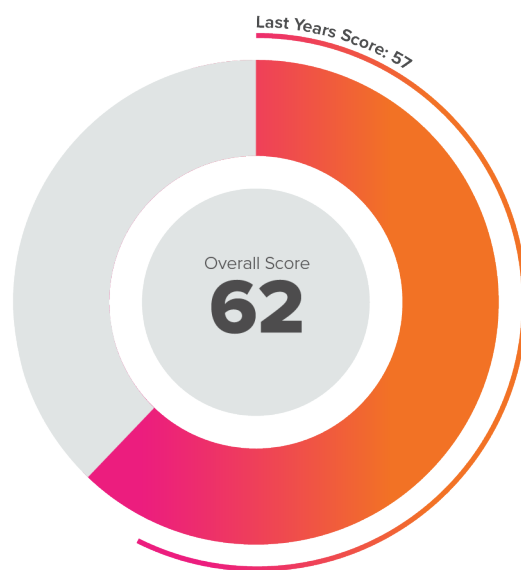
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 68% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 83% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 76% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 17% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 56% of metrics met

**Systems:** 83% of metrics met

**Environment:** 18% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>Some areas where <b>New Jersey</b> has moved the needle relative to other states include preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems and providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Garden State</b>, with emphasis on the Environment category.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state has a law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.</li> <li>• State law does not specifically criminalize running away.</li> <li>• State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.</li> <li>• The state allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.</li> <li>• The state allows shelters to take in homeless youth with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.</li> <li>• There is a state entity that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should update the state plan to end homelessness to include strategies specific to LGBTQ+ youth.</li> <li>• The state should allow youth to obtain state-issued ID without parental consent.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>

# New Mexico

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

9

Overall score 2020:

65

Overall score 2019:

54

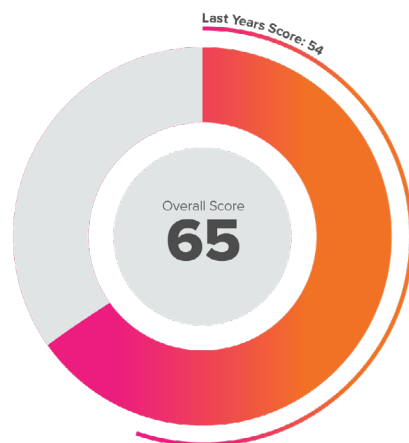
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 63% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 50% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 52% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 38% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 100% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 83% of metrics met

**Systems:** 67% of metrics met

**Environment:** 71% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>Some areas where <b>New Mexico</b> has moved the needle relative to other states include addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness and allowing them to access critical supports and services.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Land of Enchantment</b>, with emphasis on the Law &amp; Policy category. Enacting and funding a state RHYA law, implementing a coordinated state government response to youth homelessness, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state doesn't consider running away a criminal offense.</li> <li>• The state explicitly allows partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> <li>• The state explicitly allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage (without parental consent).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>• The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>• The state should give minors contract rights OR allow them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state maintains a community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy.</li> <li>• The state establishes protected class status based on one's sexual orientation and gender identity for runaway and homeless youth programs.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> </ul>

# New York

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**6**

Overall score 2020:

**76**

Overall score 2019:

**72**

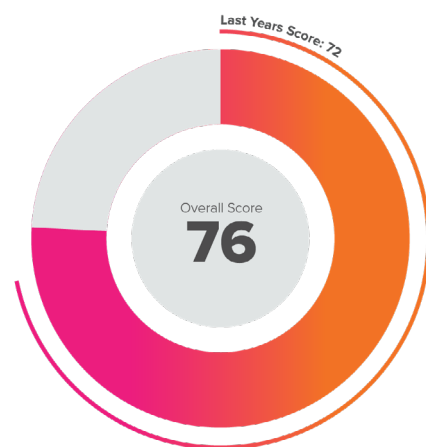
### Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 72% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 92% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 86% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 56% of metrics met

**Systems:** 94% of metrics met

**Environment:** 71% of metrics met



## State Highlights

Some areas where **New York** has moved the needle relative to other states include having a state RHYA, decriminalizing youth homelessness, granting homeless youth contract rights, and promoting safety and inclusion by providing protections for LGBTQ+ youth within key state programs.

## Recommendations for Improvement

## Overview



There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the **Empire State**, with emphasis on the Environment category. Elevating the leadership of youth with lived experience of homelessness in state policymaking should be prioritized.

## Law &amp; Policy



- The state has RHY statutes similar to the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) that provides funding for emergency services and other supports to prevent and end youth homelessness.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- The state allows shelters to take in homeless youth with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.
- The state doesn't consider running away a criminal offense.

- The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.
- The state should explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.

## Systems



- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific and LGBTQ+ youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state entity that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ+ youth.

## Environment



- The state requires training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.
- The state establishes protected class status based on one's sexual orientation and gender identity for runaway and homeless youth programs.

- The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).

# North Carolina

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**47**

Overall score 2020:

**35**

Overall score 2019:

**36**

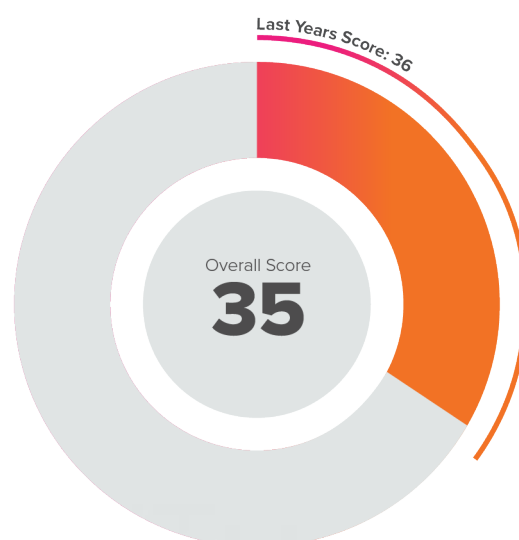
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 46% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 42% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 43% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 17% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 44% of metrics met

**Systems:** 28% of metrics met

**Environment:** 0% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>One area where <b>North Carolina</b> has moved the needle relative to other states is in providing youth the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Tar Heel State</b> across all categories. Enacting and funding a state RHYA law, implementing a coordinated state government response to youth homelessness, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state allows youth in foster care to access extended foster care services to age 21 under certain circumstances and allows youth who have exited the foster care system after 18 to re-enter through the age of 21.</li> <li>• State law does not specifically criminalize running away.</li> <li>• State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>• The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).</li> <li>• The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>



# North Dakota

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**51**

Overall score 2020:

**28**

Overall score 2019:

**40**

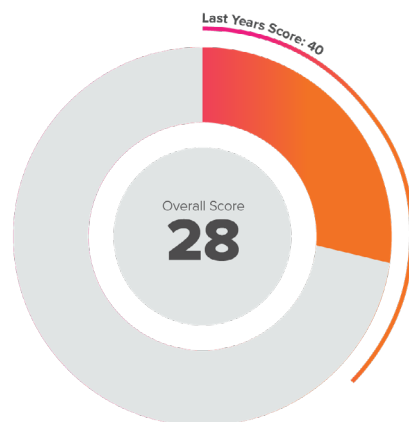
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 37% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 50% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 33% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 17% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 28% of metrics met

**Systems:** 22% of metrics met

**Environment:** 0% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement	
<p><b>North Dakota</b> has not moved the needle relative to other states in any key areas, but there are some individual policies worth highlighting.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p> 	<p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Peace Garden State</b>, with emphasis on the Law &amp; Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state allows youth in foster care to access extended foster care services to age 21 under certain circumstances and allows youth who have exited the foster care system after 18 to re-enter through the age of 21.</li> <li>• State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>• The state should decriminalize running away.</li> <li>• The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow youth under 18 to apply for health coverage without parental consent.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ+ youth.</li> <li>• The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>

# Ohio

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**48**

Overall score 2020:

**34**

Overall score 2019:

**36**

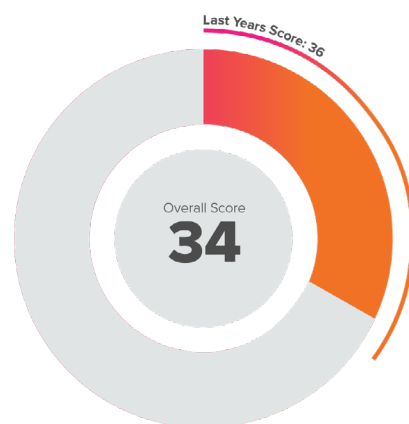
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 40% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 42% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 10% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 83%
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 50% of metrics met

**Systems:** 11% of metrics met

**Environment:** 35% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>Some areas where <b>Ohio</b> has moved the needle relative to other states include providing youth the opportunity to seek legal independence, allowing youth to access critical supports and services, and maintaining a multi-sector approach to ending homelessness.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Buckeye State</b>, with emphasis on the Law &amp; Policy and Environment categories. Enacting and funding a state RHYA law, implementing a coordinated state government response to preventing and ending youth homelessness, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state allows youth in foster care to access extended foster care services to age 21 under certain circumstances and allows youth who have exited the foster care system after 18 to re-enter through the age of 21.</li> <li>• State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.</li> <li>• The state allows youth to earn partial or alternative school credit.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.</li> <li>• The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>• The state doesn't consider running away a criminal offense.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).</li> <li>• The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state maintains a community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>

# Oklahoma

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**23**

Overall score 2020:

**52**

Overall score 2019:

**32**

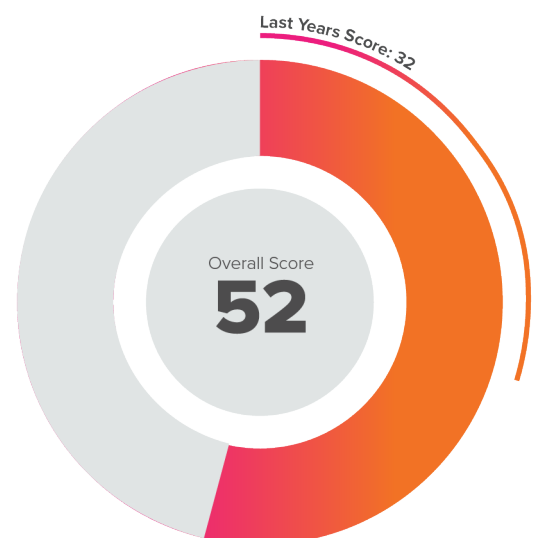
### Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 62% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 50% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 67% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 100% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 17% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 61% of metrics met

**Systems:** 44% of metrics met

**Environment:** 24% of metrics met



## State Highlights

Some areas where **Oklahoma** has moved the needle relative to other states include allowing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness to live independently and maintaining a multi-sector approach to ending homelessness.

## Recommendations for Improvement

## Overview



There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the **Sooner State**, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, as well as protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.

## Law &amp; Policy



- The state doesn't consider running away a criminal offense.
- The state allows shelters to take in homeless youth with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.
- The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).
- The state explicitly allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.

- The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.
- The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.

## Systems



- There is a current state plan to end homelessness.

- The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).
- The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.

## Environment



- The state maintains a community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy.

- The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.
- The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.

# Oregon

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**12**

Overall score 2020:

**59**

Overall score 2019:

**58**

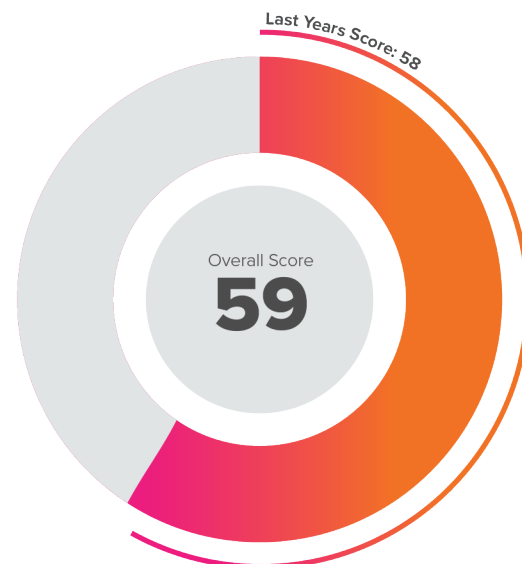
### Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 60% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 83% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 48% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 56% of metrics met

**Systems:** 89% of metrics met

**Environment:** 24% of metrics met



## State Highlights

Some areas where **Oregon** has moved the needle relative to other states include providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, minimizing barriers to their access to comprehensive supports and services, and addressing their educational needs.

## Recommendations for Improvement

## Overview



There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the **Beaver State**, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Preventing contact between youth experiencing homelessness and the criminal and juvenile justice systems and promoting safety and inclusion by providing protections for LGBTQ+ youth within key state programs should be prioritized.

## Law &amp; Policy



- The state explicitly allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.
- The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).
- The state allows shelters to take in homeless youth with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.
- The state doesn't consider running away a criminal offense.

- The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.
- The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.

## Systems



- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific component.
- There is a state entity (Office of homeless youth services, homeless youth state coordinator, commission on homeless youth, etc.) that focuses solely on youth homelessness.

- The state should establish an interagency council on homelessness to support coordination across agencies.
- The state plan to end homelessness should be updated to include strategies specific to LGBTQ+ youth.

## Environment



- None.

- The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).
- The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.
- The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.



# Pennsylvania

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**49**

Overall score 2020:

**33**

Overall score 2019:

**22**

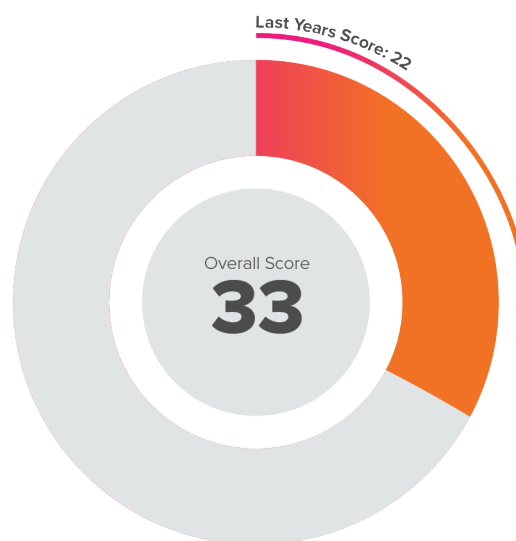
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 45% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 52% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 17% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 39% of metrics met

**Systems:** 22% of metrics met

**Environment:** 0% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p><b>Pennsylvania</b> has not moved the needle on youth homelessness relative to other states, but there are some policies worth highlighting.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Keystone State</b>, with emphasis on the Law &amp; Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state allows youth in foster care to access extended foster care services to age 21 under certain circumstances and allows youth who have exited the foster care system after 18 to re-enter through the age of 21.</li> <li>• The state doesn't consider running away a criminal offense.</li> <li>• The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> <li>• The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).</li> <li>• The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>

# Rhode Island

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**35**

Overall score 2020:

**43**

Overall score 2019:

**39**

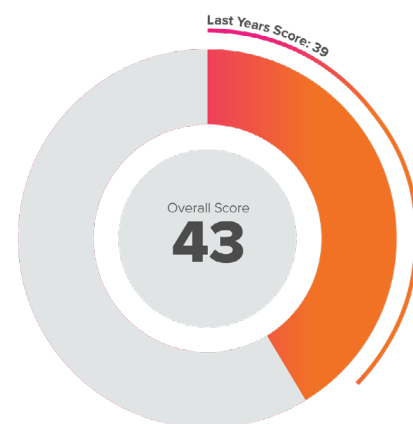
### Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 42% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 8% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 52% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 33% of metrics met

**Systems:** 72% of metrics met

**Environment:** 18% of metrics met



## State Highlights

Some areas where **Rhode Island** has moved the needle relative to other states include providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently and enacting a multi-sector approach to ending homelessness.

## Recommendations for Improvement

## Overview



There is room for improvement across categories in the **Ocean State**, with emphasis on the Law & Policy category. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness and preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems should be prioritized.

## Law &amp; Policy



- The state allows youth in foster care to access extended foster care services to age 21 under certain circumstances and allows youth who have exited the foster care system after 18 to re-enter through the age of 21.
- The state allows shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.
- The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).

- The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.
- The state should explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.
- The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.

## Systems



- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.

- The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.

## Environment



- None.

- The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).
- The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.
- The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.

# South Carolina

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

## Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 35% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 42% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 10% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 17% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 50% of metrics met

**Systems:** 50% of metrics met

**Environment:** 0% of metrics met

## Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

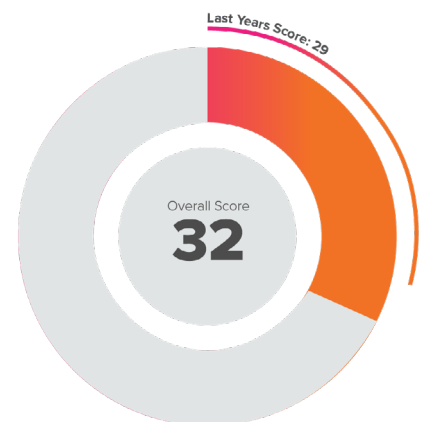
**50**





Overall score 2020:

**32**

Overall score 2019:

**29**



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p><b>South Carolina</b> has moved the needle relative to other states in providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Palmetto State</b>, with emphasis on the Law &amp; Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, addressing their educational needs, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state allows youth in foster care to access extended foster care services to age 21 under certain circumstances and allows youth who have exited the foster care system after 18 to re-enter within 12 months of exiting care.</li> <li>• The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>• The state should decriminalize running away.</li> <li>• The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a current state plan to end homelessness.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).</li> <li>• The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>

# South Dakota

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**35**

Overall score 2020:

**43**

Overall score 2019:

**44**

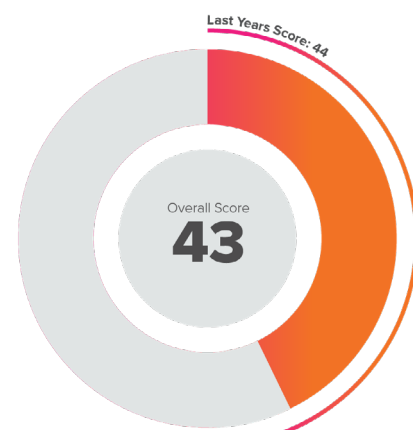
### Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 48% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 50% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 48% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 17% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 39% of metrics met

**Systems:** 61% of metrics met

**Environment:** 6% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>One area where <b>South Dakota</b> has moved the needle relative to other states is in providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.</p>	<p>There is room for improvement in the <b>Mount Rushmore State</b> across each category. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, addressing their educational needs, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state allows youth in foster care to access extended foster care services to age 21 under limited circumstances.</li> <li>• State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.</li> <li>• The state doesn't consider running away a criminal offense.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>• The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>



# Tennessee

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**25**

Overall score 2020:

**50**

Overall score 2019:

**57**

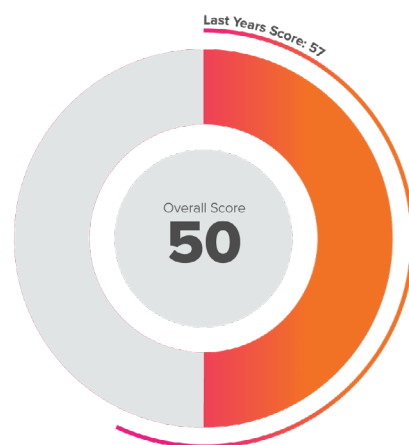
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 52% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 42% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 24% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 100% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 100% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 56% of metrics met

**Systems:** 78% of metrics met

**Environment:** 12% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>Some areas where <b>Tennessee</b> has moved the needle relative to other states include providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently and addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Volunteer State</b>, with emphasis on the Law &amp; Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).</li> <li>• The state explicitly allows partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>• The state should decriminalize running away as a status offense.</li> <li>• The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.</li> <li>• There is a state entity that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The State Department of Transportation should put systems in place to address proof of residency requirements to receive a state-issued ID card and allow minors to obtain state-issued ID without parental consent.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>

# Texas

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**19**

Overall score 2020:

**55**

Overall score 2019:

**44**

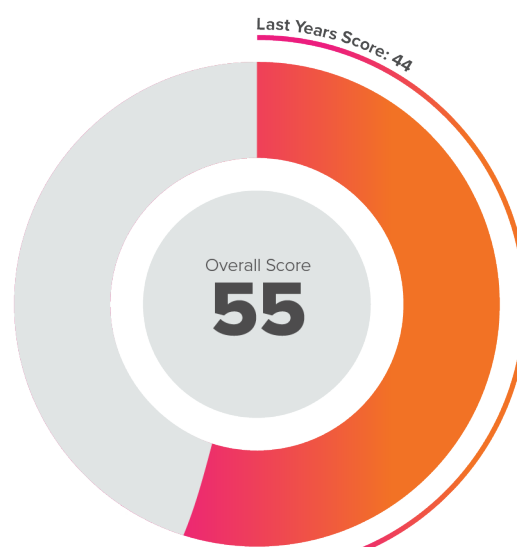
### Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 63% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 50% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 52% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 100% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 61% of metrics met

**Systems:** 72% of metrics met

**Environment:** 6% of metrics met



## State Highlights

Recommendations  
for Improvement

## Overview

Some areas where **Texas** has moved the needle relative to other states include providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently and addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness.



There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the **Lone Star State**, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, addressing their educational needs, and protecting their rights and interests, including the rights and interests of LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.

## Law &amp; Policy

- The state allows youth in foster care to access extended foster care services to age 21 under certain circumstances and allows youth who have exited the foster care system after 18 to re-enter care before 20 years and 11 months of age.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- The state explicitly allows partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.
- The state doesn't consider running away a criminal offense.



- The state should explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.
- The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.

## Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that includes strategies to address homelessness among youth.



- The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.

## Environment

- None.



- The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).
- The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.
- The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.

# Utah

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**16**

Overall score 2020:

**56**

Overall score 2019:

**54**

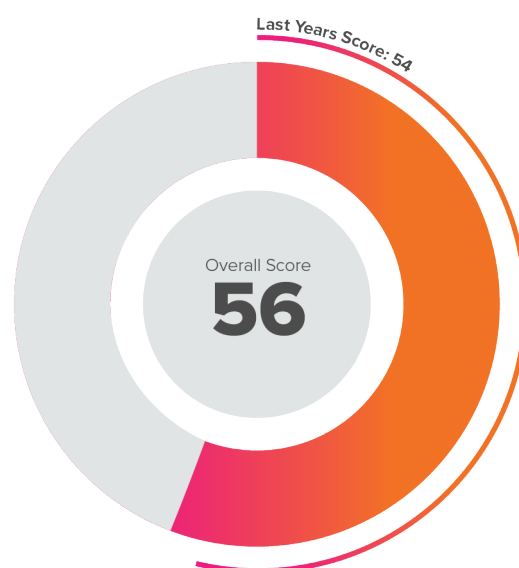
### Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 65% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 58% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 76% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 83% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 39% of metrics met

**Systems:** 67% of metrics met

**Environment:** 6% of metrics met



## State Highlights

Recommendations  
for Improvement

## Overview

Some areas where **Utah** has moved the needle relative to other states include providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently and implementing a multi-sectoral approach to preventing and ending homelessness.



There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the **Beehive State**, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness and protecting their rights and interests, including the rights and interests of LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.

## Law &amp; Policy

- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights for homeless youth.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- The state allows youth in foster care to access extended foster care services to age 21 under any circumstances and allows youth who have exited the foster care system after 18 to re-enter care until age 21.
- The state allows shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.



- The state should explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.
- The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.

## Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.



- The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.

## Environment

- None.



- The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).
- The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.
- The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.

# Vermont

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**19**

Overall score 2020:

**55**

Overall score 2019:

**65**

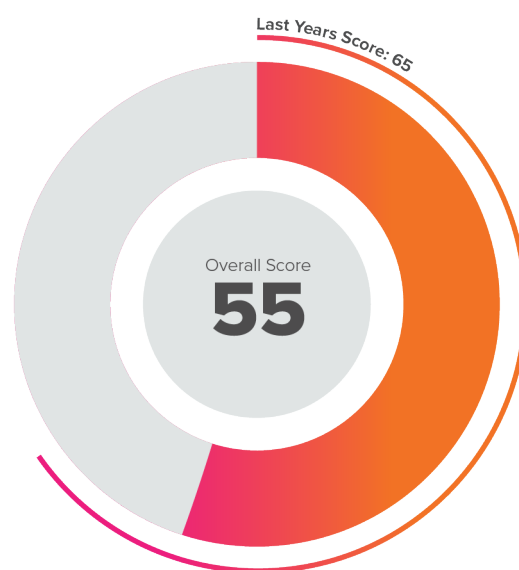
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 62% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 50% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 48% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 83% of metrics met

**Systems:** 39% of metrics met

**Environment:** 47% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p>Some areas where <b>Vermont</b> has moved the needle relative to other states include providing unaccompanied youth opportunities to seek legal independence and allowing access to critical supports and services.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Green Mountain State</b>, with emphasis on the Law &amp; Policy and Environment categories. Educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state explicitly allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage (without parental consent).</li> <li>• The state gives minors contract rights OR allows them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes (e.g. necessities).</li> <li>• The state doesn't consider running away a criminal offense.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> <li>• The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a current state plan to end homelessness.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).</li> <li>• The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a state-level Youth Action Board of youth with lived experience of homelessness who inform state policy-making on youth homelessness.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>



# Virginia

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**42**

Overall score 2020:

**40**

Overall score 2019:

**42**

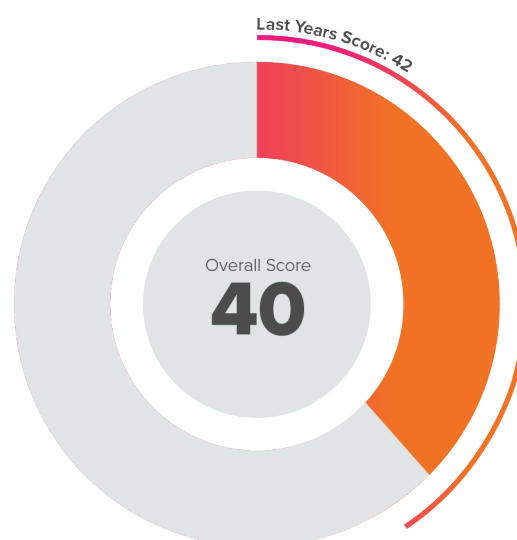
### Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 54% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 42% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 48% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 61% of metrics met

**Systems:** 22% of metrics met

**Environment:** 6% of metrics met



## State Highlights

**Virginia** has moved the needle relative to other states in providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.

## Recommendations for Improvement

## Overview



There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the **Old Dominion State**, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ youth, should be prioritized.

## Law &amp; Policy



- The state allows youth in foster care to access extended foster care services to age 21 under some circumstances and allows eligible youth who have exited the foster care system after 18 to re-enter care until age 21.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.

- The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.
- The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.
- The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.
- The state should explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.

## Systems



- None.

- The state should create and adopt a public plan to end homelessness that includes youth (and specifically LGBTQ+ youth).
- The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.

## Environment



- None.

- The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).
- The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.
- The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.

# Washington

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**2**

Overall score 2020:

**84**

Overall score 2019:

**66**

## Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 77% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 92% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 67% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 100% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 67% of metrics met

**Systems:** 100% of metrics met

**Environment:** 94% of metrics met

## State Highlights

Recommendations  
for Improvement

## Overview

Some areas where **Washington** has moved the needle relative to other states include laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness, and promoting safety and inclusion by providing protections for LGBTQ+ youth within key state programs.



There is limited room for improvement throughout the metrics for the **Evergreen State**. State officials should focus on preventing interaction between youth and the courts system and allowing youth to access critical supports and services.

## Law &amp; Policy

- The state has RHY statutes similar to the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) that provides funding for emergency services and other supports to prevent and end youth homelessness.
- The state allows youth in foster care to access extended foster care services to age 21 under some circumstances and allows eligible youth who have exited the foster care system after 18 to re-enter care until age 21.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- The state allows shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.
- The state explicitly allows partial and alternative school credit accrual for youth experiencing homelessness.
- The state allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



- The state should allow youth to use SNAP benefits to purchase hot restaurant or prepared foods.
- The state should require permanency planning for committed adjudicated youth, provide transportation home after discharge from the juvenile legal system, and account for housing in transition planning.
- The state should allow minors, regardless of their legal status, to consent to examination and treatment relating to a sexual assault without parental consent.

## Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- The state has created an entity that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



- None.

## Environment

- The state maintains a community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy.
- The state requires training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.
- The state establishes protected class status based on one's sexual orientation and gender identity for runaway and homeless youth programs.



- The state should consider developing a public awareness campaign to draw attention to the issue of youth homelessness and build momentum behind the work to end youth homelessness.

# West Virginia

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**21**

Overall score 2020:

**54**

Overall score 2019:

**53**

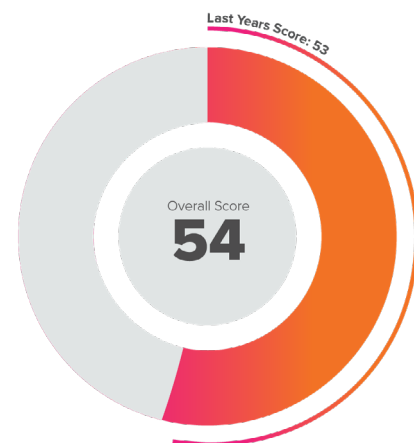
### Performance Breakdown:

**Law & Policy:** 51% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 42% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 5% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 100% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 78% of metrics met

**Systems:** 67% of metrics met

**Environment:** 53% of metrics met



## State Highlights

## Recommendations for Improvement

## Overview

Some areas where **West Virginia** has moved the needle relative to other states include providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and to access critical supports and services.



There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the **Mountain State**, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, preventing homeless youth's contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems, and protecting the rights and interests of LGBTQ+ youth should be prioritized.

## Law &amp; Policy

- The state allows youth in foster care to access extended foster care services to age 21 under some circumstances and allows eligible youth who have exited the foster care system after 18 to re-enter care until age 20.
- State law provides partial or full contract rights for homeless youth.
- The state allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.



- The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.
- The state should decriminalize running away as a status offense.
- The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.

## Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.



- The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.

## Environment

- The state requires training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.
- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.



- The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).

# Wisconsin

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**16**

Overall score 2020:

**56**

Overall score 2019:

**35**

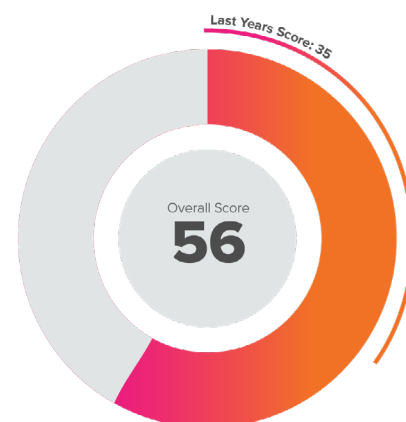
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 54% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 52% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 17% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 67% of metrics met

**Systems:** 94% of metrics met

**Environment:** 24% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p><b>Wisconsin</b> has moved the needle relative to other states in allowing youth experiencing homelessness access to critical supports and services and building systems to comprehensively address homelessness.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Badger State</b>, with emphasis on the Law &amp; Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness and protecting the rights and interests of LGBTQ+ youth should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state allows youth in foster care to access extended foster care services to age 21 under some circumstances and allows eligible youth who have exited the foster care system after 18 to re-enter care until age 21.</li> <li>The state allows shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>The state allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> <li>The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.</li> <li>There is a state entity (Office of homeless youth services, homeless youth state coordinator, commission on homeless youth, etc.) that focuses solely on youth homelessness.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state should provide public college tuition waivers to youth who were in foster care anytime after their 13th birthday.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state maintains a community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>



# Wyoming

## Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States. Youth experiencing homelessness — particularly those who are unaccompanied — face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting their basic needs and accessing services. Every level of government has a role in removing these barriers, addressing the challenges youth are facing, and ultimately ensuring that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness on the state level.** The Index also provides state officials, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with recommended steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and growing opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes.

**This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100.**

### Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking:

**39**

Overall score 2020:

**42**

Overall score 2019:

**37**

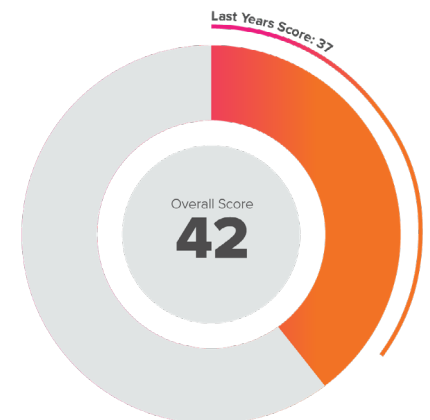
### Performance Breakdown:





**Law & Policy:** 48% of metrics met

- Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 33% of metrics met
- Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
- Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
- Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 61% of metrics met

**Systems:** 61% of metrics met

**Environment:** 0% of metrics met



State Highlights	Recommendations for Improvement
<p><b>Wyoming</b> has moved the needle relative to other states in providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.</p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p>  <p>There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the <b>Equality State</b>, throughout the Law &amp; Policy, Systems, and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services, and protecting the rights and interests of LGBTQ+ youth should be prioritized.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.</li> <li>• State law does not specifically criminalize running away.</li> <li>• State law provides partial or full contract rights for homeless youth.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Law &amp; Policy</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should pass a law that funds and provides oversight and regulation to youth homelessness services.</li> <li>• The state should allow shelters to take in youth experiencing homelessness with a delay or waiver of notification requirements.</li> <li>• The state should explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for homeless youth through regulations.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Systems</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should create an entity – such as an Office of Youth Homelessness Services – that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state should establish and maintain a stipended community advisory board for youth that informs youth homelessness policy (Youth Action Board).</li> <li>• The state should require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development or issues specific to LGBTQ+ youth for staff working in RHY Systems.</li> <li>• The state should establish nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ+ youth in youth homelessness services.</li> </ul>

