

# the Sillerman Center

FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF PHILANTHROPY

## HOMELESS YOUTH: A Guide to High Impact Investments



### Homeless Youth: The Facts

On any given night 1.3 million homeless youth, ages 12-24, who lack parental, foster, or institutional care, are living unsupervised on the streets, in abandoned buildings, with friends or with strangers.



Other factors contributing to youth homelessness are reaching the maximum age for foster care, exiting the juvenile justice system, and economic hardship. Some parents force youth out of their homes because they are pregnant or have identified as LGBTQ.



46% report being physically abused

17% report being forced into unwanted sexual activity by a household member

38% report being emotionally abused

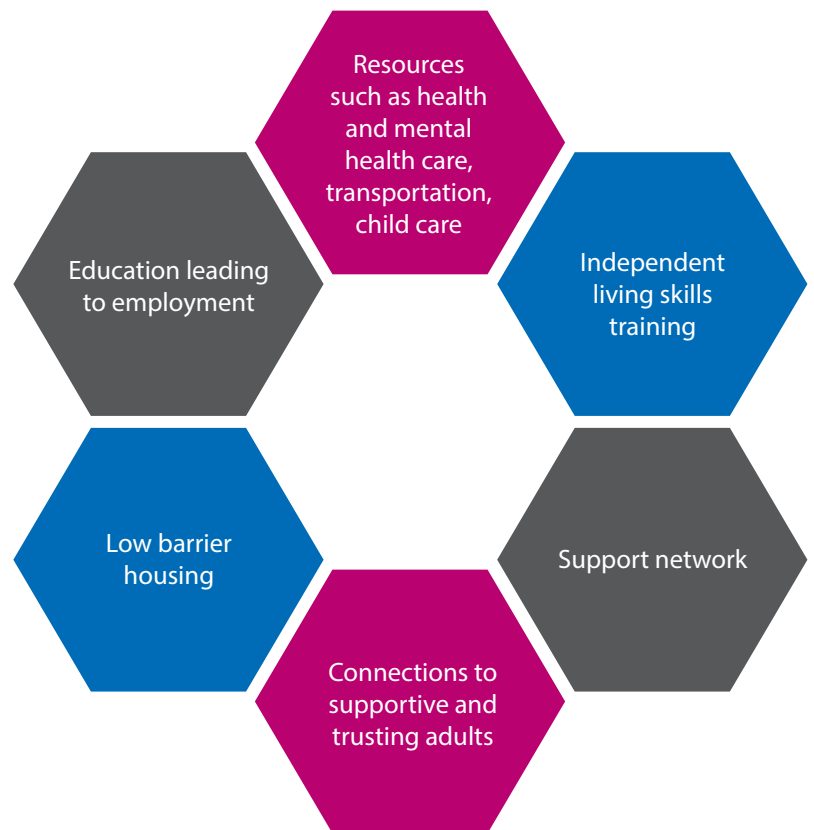
- 75 percent of homeless or runaway youth have dropped out or will drop out of school.
- Homeless youth are at a higher risk for physical abuse, sexual exploitation, mental health disabilities, substance abuse, and death.
- 5,000 unaccompanied youth die each year as a result of assault, illness, or suicide.
- Outcomes for LGBTQ homeless youth are worse in every category.

# What is a Strong Homeless Youth Prevention Program?

- **PRIORITIZES** interventions that provide homeless youth with physically, mentally, and emotionally safe housing and supportive services and opportunities
- **WORKS WITH SYSTEMS**, like foster care, mental health, and juvenile justice to prevent youth from living on the streets.
- **VIEWES** youth as whole people who need connection with caring adults, healing, and an array of academic and skill-building supports and opportunities to thrive
- **ADVOCATES** for resources for emergency shelters, housing accessible to youth, youth input into decision making about their lives, education that helps lead to employment, on-going support services, and family preservation and reunification
- **USES DATA** to determine what difference the program is making and why, and to improve practice
- **PROVIDES** services to address areas such as, education, trauma and mental health, employment skills, long-term self sufficiency, HIV testing and safe sex programs, opportunities to give back to the community

## High Performing Programs Should Aim to Address the Following Areas:

Goals: The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness' report, Opening Doors: the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, sets the goal of ending youth homelessness by 2020 by advocating that these youth receive the following:



While not all programs will successfully address each of these areas, high performing programs will aim to focus on as many as possible. When programs are successful, we should see youth in stable and physically and emotionally safe housing, working toward attainment of high school or college credentials and having developed employment competencies that help them earn a living wage.

For more information please visit:

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+ The Sillerman Center draws upon scholarship and practitioner experience to engage and inform members of the philanthropic community committed to moving social justice work forward.