



Youth Transitional Housing Program Report

**Illinois Department of Human Services
Youth Transitional Living Housing Program Report
Report to the General Assembly
Calendar Year 2021**

I. INTRODUCTION

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) has compiled the Youth Transitional Housing Program Report to the General Assembly in accordance with [P.A. 100-0162](#) . (Full text of P.A.100-0162 is also included as Appendix A.)

To track the number of youth referred to a youth transitional housing program (YTHP) for whom parental consent is not obtained, [P.A. 100-0162](#) requires that the Department of Human Services (DHS) provided an annual report to the General Assembly. The report must include the following elements:

1. Number of homeless minors referred to YTHPs.
2. Number of youths referred to YTHPs but YTHP was unable to provide services; what steps were taken to an appropriate alternative program.
3. Number of youths determined to be ineligible and reason(s) why; what steps were taken to refer youth to an appropriate alternative program.
4. Number of homeless minors voluntarily left or were dismissed from the program while under age 18; what steps were taken to refer youth to an appropriate alternative program.

To provide historical and current context, this report includes:

- Nationwide data trends on Homeless Youth;
- Illinois data provided to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD);
- Illinois data provided by the IDHS Emergency and Transitional Housing Program
- Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) licensing information.*

*“The Illinois Department of Human Services doesn’t receive HUD money for Youth Transitional Living Housing programs, therefore doesn’t fund these type of services”

This data is estimated and should not be construed to represent the total unaccompanied youth homeless population. **While the data indicates a need to address unaccompanied homeless youth, there are no longer any providers who hold a DCFS Youth Transitional Housing License.**

Moving forward, if the Youth Transitional Housing Program continues, consideration should be given to shifting this reporting responsibility to the DCFS who, as the licensing agent, has full authority to request the required data from its licensed entities.

II. NATIONWIDE TRENDS

In 1974, Congress passed the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA), recognizing the nation's shared responsibility to care for young people who live on the streets or apart from a safe and stable home. The RHYA provides foundational support through grants administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to address youth who experience homelessness or are at risk of homelessness by providing a basic set of services including:

- Education, treatment, counseling and referrals to vital services through **Street Outreach**
- The provision of temporary shelter, counseling, family reunification services and aftercare services through **Basic Centers**, and
- The provision of longer-term housing with supportive services through **Transitional Living Programs**.

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) acknowledged in 2013 that “while we have been able to make progress towards ending homelessness, we recognize that more work must be done across the board to provide support and stability for children and youth experiencing homelessness” and “unaccompanied youth homelessness remains a persistent challenge for our nation.” Every night, thousands of youth lack the security of a family or a home. Many of these youth are impacted by trauma, struggle with multiple aspects of daily living and lack opportunities for positive supports. The USICH developed a youth framework to outline what was needed to be done to address and end youth homelessness by 2020. (Full text available [here](#))

The framework is built on two primary strategies, getting better data on the numbers and characteristics of youth experiencing homelessness and building capacity for impact by strengthening and coordinating federal, state, and local systems to act effectively and efficiently toward ending youth homelessness. To accelerate progress toward the 2020 goal, a national policy and research initiative, [Voices of Youth Count \(VoYC\)](#), was designed to bring actionable evidence. This initiative provided data that estimate, nationwide, one in thirty youth under the age of 18 (approximately 700,000 youth) experiences some form of homelessness over the course of a year. This data was published as the first a series of “research to impact” briefs, [Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America](#). The report enumerates factors contributing to homelessness including race, gender identity, economic hardship, conflict, abuse and neglect. To provide a permanent solution to homelessness, these youth require not only a safe and secure place to stay, but also support services tailored to their individual, developmentally-appropriate needs.

III. COVID-19 IMPACT ON YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

A report published by UC Berkeley, *On the COVID-19 Front Line and Hurting*, stated that:

“COVID-19 poses an enormous threat to the physical health and wellbeing of youth experiencing homelessness (YEH), not only as an infection, but to a far greater extent, as a threat to their ability to meet their basic needs for shelter, food, and safety. From a life course perspective, however, the greatest risk to this group of adolescents and emerging adults is that the COVID-19 pandemic has placed additional obstacles in youth’s paths to becoming independent adults.”¹

The report also listed the following needs for youth experiencing homelessness: clean and sanitary public restrooms, shower and laundry facilities, easy access to masks and packaged food, decriminalization of homelessness and access to information and services. It also found that, to support youth experiencing homelessness, for providers for Homeless Youth Services, needs included funding for cleaning supplies, personal protective equipment including masks, mental health support and on-demand COVID-19 testing for both the youth and providers.

IV. ILLINOIS DATA

a. Continuums of Care (CoC) Homeless Assistance Programs Data

Each year, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides its Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to the U.S. Congress. The report provides nationwide estimates of homelessness, including information about the demographic characteristics of homeless persons, service use patterns, and the capacity to house homeless persons. This data is reported to the HUD by its funded Continuums of Care (CoC) homeless assistance programs.

To receive federal funding for homeless assistance from HUD, applicants are required to build a coalition of local organizations and individuals with an interest in preventing and ending homelessness. The role of this coalition known as the “CoC” is to strategize and plan a coordinated, comprehensive approach to providing housing and services. The CoC distributes the federal funds to local agencies and is required to gather and submit specific data on people experiencing homelessness and the housing and homeless services they receive.

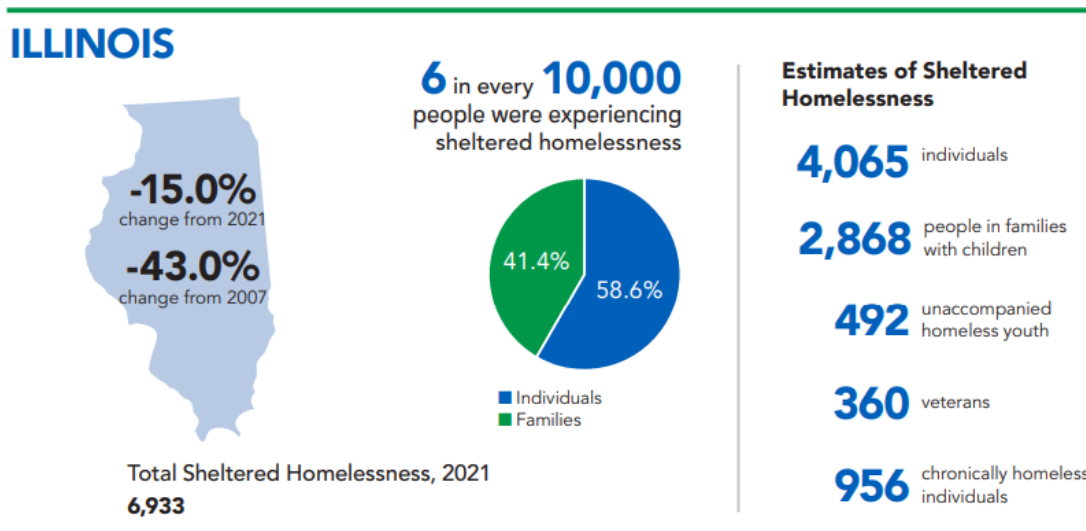
¹ <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.12.111>

The largest CoC in Illinois, the Chicago Continuum of Care, is a membership organization comprised of more than 100 organizations and individuals. Current members come from a

variety of sectors, including health care, education, employment, and criminal justice. Refer to [Homeless Continuum of Care Consortia and Contacts in Illinois | HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#).

b. Estimates of Homelessness

The [2021 AHAR: Part 1 - PIT Estimates of Homelessness in the U.S. - HUD Exchange](#) indicated the following:



c. IDHS Emergency and Transitional Housing Program Data

The Illinois Emergency and Transitional Housing (ETH) Program was developed to provide immediate food and shelter to homeless persons and families or persons and families at imminent risk of becoming homeless. The ETH Program was designed to provide meals, beds and supportive services through not-for-profit organizations to homeless individuals and families to assist them to return to self-sufficiency.

The following information regarding the IDHS Bureau of Basic Supports; Emergency and Transitional Program was taken from the IDHS Illinois Emergency & Transitional Housing Program, Report to the General Assembly, State Fiscal Year 2021. *It is important to note that this program is separate from the Youth Transitional Housing Program that will be discussed later in this document.*

Number of Homeless Persons		
Listed below is the total number of adults and children under the age of 18 that utilized ETH during the 2019, 2020 and 2021 fiscal years:		
2019		
Adults*	Children Under 18	Total
22,549	8,351	30,900
2020		
Adults*	Children Under 18	Total
19,923	6,711	26,634
2021		
Adults*	Children Under 18	Total
14,890	5,208	20,098

*For the purposes of this report, Emancipated Minors or Unaccompanied Youth were counted as adults. Emancipated or Unaccompanied Youth are defined as: emancipated minors, unaccompanied youth, married youth and/or a youth with a child.

V. ILLINOIS EFFORT TO COMBAT YOUTH HOMELESSNESS THROUGH YOUTH TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMS

One mechanism by which Illinois has sought to combat unaccompanied youth homelessness is to provide housing for eligible minors experiencing homelessness is through a Youth Transitional Housing Program (YTHP). To increase youth’s access to these services, [P.A. 100-0162](#) was passed, amending both the Emancipation of Minors Act and the Children and Family Services Act. Language was provided to increase the scope of services, amend consent to services, and amend eligibility requirements. Agencies wishing to provide these services must apply for a special license, described below.

a. Emancipation of Minors Act

In 1980, the State of Illinois adopted what is now known as [Emancipation of Minors Act \(750 ILCS30/1 et seq.\)](#). This act provides “a means by which a mature minor who has demonstrated the ability and capacity to manage his own affairs and to live wholly or partially independent of his parents or guardian may obtain the legal status of an emancipated person with power to enter into valid legal contracts.”

The act also provides for “partial emancipation” under which the mature minor only has those rights and responsibilities specified in the order of the court. Originally, the purpose of partial emancipation was primarily *“to provide a means by which a homeless minor could have the authority to consent, independent of his or her parent or guardian, to receive services and shelter or housing through a youth transitional housing program.”* This language was removed so that an eligible minor youth would not have to petition the court for partial emancipation in order to receive homeless services.

b. Youth Transitional Housing Program (YTHP) License

A YTHP is defined as a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) licensed program that provides shelter or housing, and services to eligible homeless minors. Transitional care services include the provision of shelter or housing within a transitional living facility with laundry facilities, bathroom facilities (sink, toilet, shower), food and the adult supervision of such services when they are in operation and available to the recipients of these services. [P.A. 100-0162](#) amended the Children and Family Services Act (20 ILCS 505/4b) to include language regarding other services that may be provided by a YTHP. These include a service assessment, individualized case management and life skills training.

[The DCFS Licensing Standards for Youth Transitional Housing Programs](#) set forth the standards for YTHP licensure and the application process. The YTHP may operate in a DCFS licensed child care facility or another facility not licensed by the Department that meets the licensing standards. A critical component of the licensing standards is the requirement that the sleeping quarters of YTHP be separate from the sleeping quarters of residents in the licensed facility. When the YTHP is located within a facility serving other homeless individuals, the sleeping quarters and other activities must be separate from those individuals 21 years and older.

The [DCFS Executive Statistical Summary Licensing Data Report](#), July 31, 2022, indicates that there are no current Youth Transitional Housing licenses. Historically, only one Youth Transitional Housing License had been issued in Illinois (Cook County.) This provider reports that they no longer hold this license.

c. Eligibility Requirements

In addition to amends listed above, [P.A. 100-0162](#) also amended the Children and Family Services Act (20 ILCS 505/4b) eligibility requirements for youth transitional housing programs to the following:

A homeless minor is eligible if:

1. He or she is at least 16 years of age but less than 18 years of age
2. The homeless minor lacks a regular, fixed and adequate place to live
3. The homeless minor is living apart from his or her parent or guardian
4. The homeless minor desires to participate in a licensed YTHP
5. A licensed youth transitional program is able to provide housing and services
6. The YTHP is able to provide housing and services
7. Either the homeless minor's parent has consented to the transitional housing program or the minor has consented after:
 - a) A comprehensive community-based youth service (CCBYS) agency has provided crisis intervention services to the homeless minor under was unable to achieve either family reunification or an alternative living arrangement.
 - b) The Department has not filed a petition alleging that the homeless minor is abused or neglected, and the minor does not require placement.
 - c) The YTHP or CCBYS agency has made reasonable, documented efforts to notify the homeless minor's parent or guardian of the minor's intent to enter the YTHP.

d. Status of the Youth Transitional Living Program (2021)

In 2021, there were no providers with a Youth Transitional Living Program.

As has been reported for several years, only two agencies in Illinois had ever been licensed for the Youth Transitional Living Program. Neither provider served any emancipated or partially emancipated youth under this program. Both providers chose not to renew their license.

An interview with the previous provider yielded the following information:

- The process of obtaining the license involves having administrative and program procedures in place that meet the standard. The license is renewed every four years, at which time the agency undergoes a review of personnel files; the State Fire Marshall conducts an inspection to make sure the facility is in compliance and a site visit is done to ensure cleanliness. In the words of the provider, "These are all standard and is easier to maintain than a standard group home license, which requires many more documents to review."
- The provider agency served a "few" clients several years ago but has not served anyone who meets the criteria since then.
- The provider indicated that the program was cost-prohibitive because of the requirement for separate sleeping quarters and separation of services.
- The provider also cited the lack of referrals as a barrier to providing services.

VI. SUMMARY

Although the Youth Transitional Living Program has not yet yielded the anticipated results, it is obvious that the need exists for unaccompanied youth to have access to shelter and services. [P.A. 100-0162](#) has removed some of the barriers preventing youth from consent to services; however, providers and other stakeholders must find a way to address the separation requirements required by licensure and must find avenues by which the program can be promoted.

APPENDIX A

Public Act 100-0162

HB3212 Enrolled

LRB100 08595 HEP 18728 b

AN ACT concerning children.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The Children and Family Services Act is amended by changing Section 4b as follows:

(20 ILCS 505/4b)

Sec. 4b. Youth transitional housing programs.

(a) The Department may license youth transitional housing programs. For the purposes of this Section, "youth transitional housing program" means a program that provides shelter or housing and services to eligible homeless minors. Services provided by the youth transitional housing program may include a service assessment, individualized case management, and life skills training who are at least 16 years of age but less than 18 years of age and who are granted partial emancipation under the Emancipation of Minors Act. The Department shall adopt rules governing the licensure of those programs.

(b) A homeless minor is eligible if:

(1) he or she is at least 16 years of age but less than 18 years of age;

(2) the homeless minor lacks a regular, fixed, and adequate place to live;

(3) the homeless minor is living apart from his or her parent or guardian;

(4) the homeless minor desires to participate in a licensed youth transitional housing program;

(5) a licensed youth transitional housing program is able to provide housing and services;

(6) the licensed youth transitional housing program has determined the homeless minor is eligible for the youth transitional housing program; and

(7) either the homeless minor's parent has consented to the transitional housing program or the minor has consented after:

(A) a comprehensive community based youth service

agency has provided crisis intervention services to the homeless minor under Section 3-5 of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 and the agency was unable to achieve either family reunification or an alternate living arrangement;

(B) the Department has not filed a petition alleging that the homeless minor is abused or neglected and the minor does not require placement in a residential facility, as defined by 89 Ill. Adm. Code 301.20;

(C) the youth transitional housing program or comprehensive community based youth services agency has made reasonable efforts and documented its attempts to notify the homeless minor's parent or guardian of the homeless minor's intent to enter the youth transitional housing program.

(d) If an eligible homeless minor voluntarily leaves or is dismissed from a youth transitional housing program prior to reaching the age of majority, the youth transitional housing program agency shall contact the comprehensive community based youth services agency that provided crisis intervention services to the eligible homeless minor under subdivision (b) (7) (A) of this Section to assist in finding an alternative placement for the minor. If the eligible homeless minor leaves the program before beginning services with the comprehensive community based youth service provider, then the youth transitional housing program shall notify the local law enforcement authorities and make reasonable efforts to notify the minor's parent or guardian that the minor has left the program.

(e) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to require an eligible homeless minor to acquire the consent of a parent, guardian, or custodian to consent to a youth transitional housing program. An eligible homeless minor is deemed to have the legal capacity to consent to receiving housing and services from a licensed youth transitional housing program.

(f) The purpose of this Section is to provide a means by which an eligible homeless minor may have the authority to consent, independent of his or her parents or guardian, to receive housing and services as described in subsection (a) of this Section provided by a licensed youth transitional housing

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program that has the ability to serve the homeless minor. This Section is not intended to interfere with the integrity of the family or the rights of parents and their children. This Section does not limit or exclude any means by which a minor may become emancipated.

(Source: P.A. 93-105, eff. 7-8-03; 93-798, eff. 1-1-05.)

Section 10. The Emancipation of Minors Act is amended by changing Sections 2, 4, 5, 7, and 9 as follows:

(750 ILCS 30/2) (from Ch. 40, par. 2202)

Sec. 2. Purpose and policy. The purpose of this Act is to provide a means by which a mature minor who has demonstrated the ability and capacity to manage his own affairs and to live wholly or partially independent of his parents or guardian, may obtain the legal status of an emancipated person with power to enter into valid legal contracts. ~~This Act is also intended (i) to provide a means by which a homeless minor who is seeking assistance may have the authority to consent, independent of his or her parents or guardian, to receive shelter, housing, and services provided by a licensed agency that has the ability and willingness to serve the homeless minor and (ii) to do so without requiring the delay or difficulty of first holding a hearing.~~

This Act is not intended to interfere with the integrity of the family or the rights of parents and their children. No order of complete or partial emancipation may be entered under this Act if there is any objection by the minor, his parents or guardian. ~~No petition may be filed for the partial emancipation of a homeless minor unless appropriate attempts have been made to reunify the homeless minor with his or her family through the services of a Comprehensive Community Based Youth Services Agency.~~ This Act does not limit or exclude any other means either in statute or case law by which a minor may become emancipated.

(g) Beginning January 1, 2019, and annually thereafter through January 1, 2024, the Department of Human Services shall submit annual reports to the General Assembly regarding homeless minors older than 16 years of age but less than 18 years of age referred to a youth transitional housing program for whom parental consent to enter the program is not obtained. The report shall include the following information:

(1) the number of homeless minors referred to youth transitional housing programs;

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(2) the number of homeless minors who were referred but a licensed youth transitional housing program was not able to provide housing and services, and what subsequent steps, if any, were taken to ensure that the homeless minors were referred to an appropriate and available alternative placement;

(3) the number of homeless minors who were referred but determined to be ineligible for a youth transitional housing program and the reason why the homeless minors were determined to be ineligible, and what subsequent steps, if any, were taken to ensure that the homeless minors were referred to an appropriate and available alternative placement; and

(4) the number of homeless minors who voluntarily left the program and who were dismissed from the program while they were under the age of 18, and what subsequent steps, if any, were taken to ensure that the homeless minors were referred to an appropriate and available alternative placement.

(Source: P.A. 93-105, eff. 7-8-03.)

(750 ILCS 30/4) (from Ch. 40, par. 2204)

Sec. 4. Jurisdiction. The circuit court in the county where the minor resides, is found, owns property, or in which a court action affecting the interests of the minor is pending, may, upon the filing of a petition on behalf of the minor by his next friend, parent or guardian and after any hearing or notice to all persons as set forth in Sections 7, 8, and 9 of this Act,

~~enter a finding that the minor is a mature minor or a homeless minor as defined in this Act and order complete or partial emancipation of the minor. The court in its order for partial emancipation may specifically limit the rights and responsibilities of the minor seeking emancipation. In the case of a homeless minor, the court shall restrict the order of emancipation to allowing the minor to consent to the receipt of transitional services and shelter or housing from a specified youth transitional program and its referral agencies only.~~

(Source: P.A. 93-105, eff. 7-8-03.)

(750 ILCS 30/5) (from Ch. 40, par. 2205)

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Sec. 5. Rights and responsibilities of an emancipated minor.

(a) A mature minor ordered emancipated under this Act shall have the right to enter into valid legal contracts, and shall have such other rights and responsibilities as the court may order that are not inconsistent with the specific age requirements of the State or federal constitution or any State or federal law.

(b) A mature minor ~~or homeless minor~~ who is partially emancipated under this Act shall have only those rights and responsibilities specified in the order of the court.

(Source: P.A. 93-105, eff. 7-8-03.)

(750 ILCS 30/7) (from Ch. 40, par. 2207)

Sec. 7. Petition. The petition for emancipation shall be verified and shall set forth: (1) the age of the minor; (2) that the minor is a resident of Illinois at the time of the filing of the petition, or owns real estate in Illinois, or has an interest or is a party in any case pending in Illinois; (3) the cause for which the minor seeks to obtain partial or complete emancipation; (4) the names of the minor's parents, and the address, if living; (5) the names and addresses of any guardians or custodians appointed for the minor; (6) that the minor is ~~(i)~~ a mature minor who has demonstrated the ability and capacity to manage his own affairs ~~or (ii) a homeless minor who is located in this State;~~ and (7) that the minor has lived wholly or partially independent of his parents or guardian. ~~If the minor seeks emancipation as a homeless minor, the petition shall also set forth the name of the youth transitional housing program that is willing and able to provide services and shelter or housing to the minor, the address of the program, and the name and phone number of the contact person at the program. The petition shall also briefly assert the reason that the services and shelter or housing to be offered are appropriate and necessary for the well-being of the homeless minor.~~

(Source: P.A. 93-105, eff. 7-8-03.)

(750 ILCS 30/9) (from Ch. 40, par. 2209)

Sec. 9. Hearing on petition.

(a) Mature minor. Before proceeding to a hearing on the petition for emancipation of a mature minor the court shall advise all persons present of the nature of the proceedings, and their rights and responsibilities if an order of

emancipation should be entered.

If, after the hearing, the court determines that the minor is a mature minor who is of sound mind and has the capacity and maturity to manage his own affairs including his finances, and that the best interests of the minor and his family will be promoted by declaring the minor an emancipated minor, the court shall enter a finding that the minor is an emancipated minor within the meaning of this Act, or that the mature minor is partially emancipated with such limitations as the court by order deems appropriate. No order of complete or partial emancipation may be entered under this Act if there is any objection by the minor, his parents or guardian.

~~(b) (Blank). Homeless minor. Upon the verified petition of a homeless minor, the court shall immediately grant partial emancipation for the sole purpose of allowing the homeless minor to consent to the receipt of services and shelter or housing provided by the youth transitional housing program named in the petition and to other services that the youth transitional housing program may arrange by referral. The court may require that a youth transitional housing program employee appear before the court at the time of the filing of the petition and may inquire into the facts asserted in the petition. No other hearing shall be scheduled in the case of a petition affecting a homeless minor, unless, after notice, a parent or guardian requests such a hearing. If such a hearing is requested, then the homeless minor must be present at the hearing. After the granting of partial emancipation to a homeless youth, if the youth transitional housing program determines that its facility and services are no longer appropriate for the minor or that another program is more appropriate for the minor, the program shall notify the court and the court, after a hearing, may modify its order.~~
(Source: P.A. 93-105, eff. 7-8-03.)

(750 ILCS 30/3-2.5 rep.)

(750 ILCS 30/3-2.10 rep.)

Section 15. The Emancipation of Minors Act is amended by repealing Sections 3-2.5 and 3-2.10.

Effective Date: 1/1/2018