

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 24, 2025

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.  
Secretary  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Secretary Kennedy:

We are writing to express our concerns about recent changes to the application for *Runaway and Homeless Youth Act* (RHYA) grant programs.

In 1974, Congress enacted the RHYA to address youth and young adult homelessness across our nation. It includes essential programs, such as the Basic Center Program, which provides short-term crisis housing and goods and services, including food and clothing. It also helps to reunite children under the age of 18 with their families when it is safe and appropriate. The Transitional Living Program provides longer-term housing and services, such as employment, education, and mental health services, and the Street Outreach Program funds outreach to help prevent sexual exploitation and human trafficking. These are important programs that have helped to support the more than four million youth and young adults across our nation who are experiencing homelessness.

We understand that the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) released the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 applications for the RHYA grant programs two weeks ago. The applications included a number of significant changes and new requirements, including the elimination of the Street Outreach Program as a standalone program and a requirement that organizations must sign a memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement agencies. These changes require significant time to review, identify partnerships, and ensure legal compliance. However, amid these significant changes, HHS has reduced the application period from 60 days to 19 days.

We are concerned that organizations that typically receive RHYA funding now will be unable to adjust to these new requirements before the application deadline. This could result in a loss of critical federal funding and service disruptions for youth and young adults who are experiencing homelessness. In fact, we have heard from organizations that already have opted not to apply for grant renewals because some of the changes in the FY 2025 applications cannot be addressed within this significantly shortened application period.

We reintroduced the *Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act* (S. 2012) to modernize and increase the authorization levels for the RHYA programs because the current programs are unable to fully meet the needs of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness across our nation. We strongly urge HHS to act to ensure these programs remain accessible and effective by extending the RHYA application deadline to at least 30 days, restoring the Street Outreach Program as a standalone program, and ensuring that any other mandates are consistent with the scope of RHYA's core mission: to support our nation's homeless youth and young adults.

Sincerely,



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Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



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Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator