

**Local Law 86 of 2018 Report to the Speaker of the City Council**

**Introduction**

The Department of Youth and Community Development’s (DYCD) funds community-based organizations to provide services designed to protect runaway and homeless youth (RHY) and reunite them with their families whenever possible. The first part of this report consists of a description of the demographics and services from the residential programs. The second part is the DYCD plan to provide shelter services to all RHY who request shelter.

**Demographics and Services Fiscal Year 2018**

Crisis Services Programs (Crisis Services), emergency services for runaway and homeless and Transitional Independent Living (TIL) longer term support programs. During Fiscal Year 2018, 2,267 youth were served in Crisis Services Programs and 827 were served in Transitional Independent Living support programs. Additional services include Drop-In Centers and Street Outreach and Referral Services. More information about these services can be found at the end of the report.

DYCD RHY providers offer specialized programming to runaway and homeless youth who are pregnant and parenting, sexually-exploited and or who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Questioning and Intersex (LGBTQI) youth. The agency and its funded providers are committed to providing runaway and homeless young people with the resources they need to stabilize their lives and prevent street homelessness.

**Description of the size and characteristics of the current populations of RHY including but not limited to gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, pregnancy and parenting status, and disabilities.**

<b>Age (at time of enrollment)</b>	<b>Crisis Services</b>	<b>TIL</b>	<b>Total *</b>	
16-17	187	42	229	7%
18-20	1,956	735	2,691	87%
Infants	124	50	174	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,267</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>3,094</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Please note that some youth are served in both Crisis Services and TIL, so the total TIL served includes youth served in both service areas.

Reported Gender Identity				
	Crisis Services		TIL	
Male	1,030	45%	440	53%
Female	1,237	55%	387	47%

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation				
	Crisis Services		TIL	
LGBT	571	25%*	213	26%*

\*Percentage of the total youth served.

Pregnant and Parenting Status				
	Crisis Services		TIL	
Parents	118	5.2%	66	8%
No. of Children	124	5.5%	50	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>242</b>		<b>116</b>	

Ethnicity and Race				
	Crisis Services		TIL	
White/Non-Hispanic	121	5%	62	7%
Black	1,221	54%	473	57%
Hispanic	642	28%	239	29%
Native American/Alaskan	5	0.2%	2	0.2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	18	1%	12	1%
Other	260	11%	39	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,267</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>100%</b>

DYCD does not collect data on participants' disabilities. Accommodations are communicated and provided at the contractor level.

**Description of service needs of the current population of runaway and homeless youth including but not limited to educational assistance, TASC preparation, medical services, mental health services for sexually exploited children and temporary shelter.**

Young people become homeless for many complex reasons including family conflict, shortages of affordable housing, and family poverty. Youth run away for many reasons including violence, abuse or neglect in the home; mental illness or substance abuse among family members; or challenges at school. Others are rejected by their families or experience family conflict as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity, an unplanned pregnancy, use of drugs or alcohol, or inability to comply with parent/caretaker rules. Lacking the financial resources and basic life skills needed to live independently, they can experience criminal victimization, including commercial sexual exploitation and labor trafficking, resulting in traumas that jeopardize their well-being and development into thriving, self-sufficient adults.

The service information below demonstrates how the RHY providers address some of these adverse experiences.

**Fiscal Year 2018 THRIVE NYC Services**

In November 2015, New York City launched ThriveNYC, an initiative to address New Yorkers' mental health and substance use. All DYCD-funded RHY residential programs and drop-in centers received funding enhancements from ThriveNYC to offer mental health services directly and through referral, including mindfulness activities, counseling and psychological evaluations. DYCD RHY providers offered mental health services to 2,802 individuals during Fiscal Year 2018. Youth participated in psychological evaluations, service referrals, individual and group therapy.

<b>ThriveNYC Youth Served</b>	<b>Fiscal 2018</b>
Drop-in (Unduplicated)	<b>1,449</b>
Crisis (Unduplicated)	<b>831</b>
TIL (Unduplicated)	<b>522</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,802</b>

### Educational Services

Below is a table showing the educational status of young people upon entry into RHY residential programs.

Educational Status at Intake				
	Crisis Services		TIL	
Attending School	520	23%	173	21%
High School Graduate/GED	662	29%	297	36%
Attending College/Voc Program	47	2%	55	7%
Other/College grad	6	0%	2	0%
Not Attending School	906	40%	225	27%
Unreported	126	6%	75	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2267</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>100%</b>

In January 2018, DYCD began tracking educational outcomes of youth exiting the programs. Providers report the number of young people assisted to attend or complete school or an educational program. Educational services were provided to 37% of the young people exiting Crisis Services Programs and 62% exiting TILS for the period of January 2018 to June 2018.

### Services for Sexually Exploited Children

The data below reflects young people who report having been sexually exploited. Youth have multiple opportunities to disclose episodes of abuse and exploitation throughout their service tenure. Young people are interviewed during assessment at intake and at during regular case management sessions. At the time of disclosure, the young people can be referred to a range of specialized mental health services.

Fiscal 2018 Young People Reporting Sexual Exploitation	
Crisis Services	408
TILS	98
Drop In	376
<b>Total</b>	<b>882</b>

Please note that these are aggregate reports and may be duplicated across the RHY system.

A breakdown of dispositions of runaway and homeless youth who exited the temporary shelter system in the previous calendar year disaggregated by categories including, but not limited to, transitioning from a runaway and homeless youth Crisis Services Program to a TIL; reconnected with family; transitioning to a private apartment and exited to an unknown location.

Dispositions for Youth Who Have Exited a DYCD Funded Program				
	Crisis		TIL	
<b>Total number of youth who exited</b>	<b>3,055</b>		<b>538</b>	
Exited to a TIL	778	25%	52	10%
Exited to a Crisis Services Program	446	15%	104	19%
Reconnected with Family	397	13%	176	33%
Own Apartment/Supportive Housing	57	2%	75	14%
Other Residential Care/Hospitalization	484	16%	22	4%
DHS Facility	37	1%	28	5%
Non DYCD Crisis/TIL	21	1%	3	1%
Dispositions Undisclosed	835	27%	78	14%

A description of public resources available to serve runaway and homeless youth including any new services established since the submission of the previous report required pursuant to this section and any existing services that will be expanded.

Funding for RHY programs has increased from \$17M in FY15 to \$33M in FY18, a \$22M increase. The budget will continue to grow to \$42M in FY19, bringing the total number of RHY beds to 813, and ensuring there is a 24 hour drop-in center in every borough. Specifically, between FY17 and FY18, funding increased from \$27M to \$33M. These investments included bringing the number of online residential beds from 465 to 557, increases to funding for drop-in centers, and a rate enhancement that brought all RHY TIL and Crisis bed providers up to a standard “model-budget” rate. In accordance with the new state law and regulations, the maximum length of stay increased for both Crisis Services and Transitional Independent Living programs, giving youth more time to stabilize in RHY programs.

### Crisis Services Programs

Crisis Services Programs are voluntary, short-term residential programs that provide emergency services and crisis intervention aimed at reuniting youth with their families or, if family

reunification is not possible, arranging appropriate transitional and long-term placements. Services are offered to runaway and homeless youth aged 16 to 20. As of January 1, 2018, youth can remain in Crisis Services for 60 days, with a maximum stay not to exceed 120 days. Prior to this time, Crisis service program stays could not exceed 60 days.

In FY18, DYCD opened 20 additional Crisis Service beds bringing the total to 236 Crisis services residential beds. A total of 2,267 unduplicated youth received residential services through the Crisis Services programs.

### **Transitional Independent Living**

In FY18, Transitional Independent Living (TIL) programs provided homeless youth aged 16 to 20 with support and shelter as they work to establish independence. Youth may stay in the Transitional Independent Living facilities for up to 24 months.

In FY18, DYCD opened 72 additional Transitional Independent Living beds bringing the total to 321 TIL beds. A total of 827 unduplicated youth received residential services through the TIL programs.

### **Drop-In Centers**

RHY Drop-In Centers serve as the main point of entry to residential services. Drop-In Centers are in each of the five boroughs of New York City; three of the seven RHY drop-in centers are in Manhattan. In partnership with NYC's Unity Project, DYCD was able to fund a second 24-hour Drop-In Center in Queens, representing an expansion of drop-in services. Twenty-four-hour drop-in centers operate every calendar day. With Unity Project's support, the department will be able to fund and operate three additional 24-hour Drop-in Centers which are scheduled to open in early FY19.

Drop-In Centers provide youth ages 14-24 with food, clothing, access to counseling and mental health services, referrals to shelter and other relevant services pertaining the youths' physical health or legal needs.

In FY 18, the Drop-In Centers provided 15,737 unduplicated youth with a variety of services and provided 1,110 unduplicated youth with individual case management services.

### **Street Outreach**

DYCD funds citywide Street Outreach Services to identify and distribute information about available services to RHY and youth at-risk for homelessness, provide food, clothing and other resources, make referrals to other service providers, and encourage youth to accept transport to their homes, to Crisis Shelters, or to other safe locations as appropriate. By developing rapport with young people in the streets and elsewhere, outreach workers provide direct information about RHY programs and refer those in need of services to the Drop-In Centers and

Crisis Shelters. In FY18, Street Outreach Services contacted more than 12,000 (includes duplications) young people, and 18 of those young people accepted transportation to a shelter or residential program.

### **Streamlined Referral to DHS Shelter**

In October 2017, DYCD, in partnership with DHS, launched a direct referral process to allow youth exiting DYCD-funded residential programs, who are interested in DHS shelter, to more easily transition to the DHS shelter system. This practice was codified in Local Law 81. The Streamlined Referral process allows DYCD funded programs to refer interested young people directly to DHS shelters, bypassing the need for youth to report to the intake centers while maintaining a continuity of services.

In FY 18, nineteen (19) runaway and homeless youth were referred through the Streamline process. Sixteen were placed in DHS shelters, with 11 placed in DHS youth shelters; three (3) refused the placement.

### **Supportive Housing for Homeless Youth**

The NY/NY III supportive housing agreement between NYC and NY State provides 400 permanent supportive housing beds for youth. Within the City's new Supportive Housing initiative, NYC 15/15 aims to develop 15,000 new supportive housing units by 2030, including a set-aside of nearly 1,700 units for young people (including RHY and youth leaving foster care).

**DYCD PLAN TO PROVIDE SHELTER SERVICES TO ALL  
RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH (RHY) WHO REQUEST SUCH SHELTER**

**Overview of DYCD-funded Services for RHY**

Young people become homeless for many complex reasons including family conflict, shortages of affordable housing, and family poverty. Youth run away for many reasons including violence, abuse or neglect in the home; mental illness or substance abuse among family members; challenges at school. Others are rejected by their families or experience family conflict as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity, an unplanned pregnancy, use of drugs or alcohol, or inability to comply with parent/caretaker rules. Lacking the financial resources and basic life skills needed to live independently, they can experience criminal victimization, including commercial sexual exploitation and labor trafficking, resulting in traumas that jeopardize their well-being and development into thriving, self-sufficient adults.

For more than a decade, DYCD has worked to develop an integrated and coordinated set of funded services for RHY comprising Street Outreach Services, Drop-In Centers, Crisis Services Programs, and Transitional Independent Living (TIL) programs. The continuum is designed to make it easier for youth to access services and receive needed supports. In keeping with the New York State (State) law and RHY regulations, when it is inappropriate or unrealistic to reunite youth with their families, the aim is to help them move from crisis to transitional care to independent living, while helping youth set goals and develop the skills needed to reach their full potential.

DYCD funds and administers residential, street outreach and drop-in services for NYC's Runaway Homeless Youth (RHY) through contracts with nonprofit providers. Under the leadership of Mayor de Blasio, DYCD has tripled the City's investment in RHY services. Within this portfolio, there are specific programs designed to meet the needs of young people including: LGBTQ youth, transgender and gender-expansive youth, young parents, and sexually exploited youth.

ThriveNYC is a citywide plan of action to support the mental health and well-being of New Yorkers. All DYCD-funded RHY residential programs and drop-in centers received funding enhancements from ThriveNYC to offer mental health services directly and through referral, including mindfulness activities, counseling and psychological evaluations.

**Residential Programs**

Crisis Services Programs and Transitional Living Programs are certified under the regulations of the NYS Runaway Homeless Youth Act which calls for a range of services in youth-centered and



developmentally appropriate settings such as, “homelike environments of 20 beds or less.” In FY19, DYCD funds 252 Crisis Services Program beds, or short-term programs, and 501 Transitional Independent Living program beds (longer-term programs) for youth ages 16-20 years old. Currently, 606 of the 753 beds are operational for youth, and the remaining 148 are expected to open by June 30, 2019, pending certification from OCFS.

### **RHY Drop-In Centers**

As described in the previous section, DYCD funds seven Drop-In Centers, permitting at least one in each borough, to meet basic needs, offer supportive programming and provide referrals to additional services in the areas of housing, education, employment, health and mental health, and life skills. In FY19, three more Centers will be funded to operate 24/7, resulting in one 24/7 Drop-In Center in each of the five boroughs. Services are designed to connect young people to educational and career opportunities that will help them establish self-sufficiency while supporting their social and emotional needs.

### **Street Outreach Services**

As described in the previous section, DYCD funds citywide Street Outreach Services to identify and distribute information about available services to RHY and youth at-risk for homelessness, provide food, clothing and other resources, make referrals to other service providers, and encourage youth to accept transport to their homes, to Crisis Shelters, or to other safe locations as appropriate.

### **2018 Changes to New York State Executive Law and City Laws**

On January 1, 2018, several changes in the New York State Executive Law for Runaway and Homeless Youth were put into effect. There were two significant changes: (1) the State allowed New York City to extend the maximum length of stay length in residential programs to 120 days and 24 months, for Crisis Services and TIL programs, respectively. DYCD implemented that change immediately, with a notification to providers on January 2, and (2) the State allowed New York City to include homeless young adults, ages 21-24 in residential programming.

In conjunction with those allowances, the City Council passed laws requiring DYCD to include in the continuum of runaway and homeless youth services some services for homeless young adults, ages 21-24; and which codified the maximum lengths of stay in residential programs.

The City intends to preserve existing beds, as certified, to meet the demand from 16-20-year olds, and accommodate the extended lengths of stay. It also allocated funding in FY19 for 60 new beds to serve homeless young adults (HYA). DYCD issued an RFP for homeless young adult beds in August, and anticipates contracts to begin on January 1, 2019, and site planning and certification in the spring of 2019.

## **DYCD RHY Residential Demand and Capacity**

### **Runaway and Homeless Youth Services Access Report**

On July 31, DYCD submitted its first semi-annual report to the Council on access to DYCD residential services. The report showed that from January to June 2018, 1,098 youth ages 16-20 sought a bed in a DYCD program. Of those, 998 youth (91%) were placed in an RHY bed; 19 youth (1.7%) were not able to access a bed on the day they requested service; and 81 youth (7.3%) were offered a bed, but changed their mind or refused a bed outside their preferred program.

### **Vacancy Analysis**

Although DYCD is reporting that some young people are unable to secure a bed on the night that they sought the bed, DYCD's utilization rate continues to hover at approximately 90% - with approximately 50 available beds on average each night. While most of the time a young person can secure a bed, there are occasions where availability does not suit the youth's needs (based on gender, or the need for mother/child beds). DYCD anticipates that when all 753 beds are opened in FY19, and with continued training and guidance to providers, the number of youth on the shelter access report will decline.

### **Impact of Extended Length of Stay**

In line with changes in State law, in January 2018, DYCD implemented the new maximum extended lengths of stay for residential programs. The impact of this policy change on bed-utilization is under review. Preliminary assessment data shows that the average length of stay in Crisis Services Programs from went from 29 days to 32 days, and the TIL average length of stay went from 127 days to 155.

### **Citywide Approach to Youth Homelessness**

Recognizing that young people have different needs, and one-size may not fit all, the City offers a range of services for runaway and homeless youth through several Agencies.

### **Supportive Housing for Homeless Youth**

The NY/NY III supportive housing agreement between NYC and NY State provides 400 permanent supportive housing beds for youth. Within the City's new Supportive Housing initiative, NYC 15/15 aims to develop 15,000 new supportive housing units by 2030, including a set-aside of nearly 1,700 units for young people (including RHY and youth leaving foster care). Like the City, the State's commitment for new permanent supportive housing emphasizes the needs of runaway and homeless youth as well as youth leaving foster care.

### **Department of Homeless Services (DHS) Support for Homeless Youth**

DHS is the agency charged with providing shelter, housing and support services to homeless families with children, families without children and single adults. DHS operates five 24-hour

drop-in centers serving adults over 18 and a comprehensive street outreach program deploying teams 24/7 across the City with the goal of assisting people to move from the streets into housing. Governed by a unique "right to shelter" mandate for homeless families with children and individuals, NYC is required to provide shelter to families and individuals who lack housing alternatives. No one is put on a waiting list or turned away due to lack of shelter capacity. DHS provides shelter for more than 60,000 people per night including single adults, families with children and adult-only families.

### **Streamlined Access to Adult Shelters from DYCD Funded Programs**

In accordance with the new City Council law, on July 1, 2018, DYCD submitted a report on the new streamlined referrals process to DHS shelter for youth in DYCD RHY programs. The Streamlined Referral process allows DYCD funded programs to refer interested young people directly to DHS shelters, bypassing the need for youth to report to the intake centers while maintaining a continuity of services. Between January and June 2018, 19 youth were referred through this process and 16 were placed in DHS (3 changed their mind). DHS offers 89 youth-specific beds at two sites within the adult shelter system that are designed to serve young adults, and in 2017 DHS opened the first ever shelter for LGBTQ young adults aged 18 to 30 in the Bronx, with capacity to shelter 81 people per night. Of the 11 single adults (not mother/child) that were placed through the streamlined referral process, all were placed in DHS young adult shelters.

### **Department of Social Services (DSS) Support for Homeless Youth**

DSS has several initiatives in place to prevent and end youth homelessness, as follows.

- ***Homebase & Right to Counsel***  
DSS is responsible for the administration and oversight of 24 "Homebase" programs, a city-wide prevention model that provides counseling and financial assistance to help residents avoid homelessness. Last year, as a mechanism to prevent evictions and entry into homelessness, New York City passed the "Right to Counsel" for any person or family who cannot afford legal assistance in housing court.
- ***Housing for Youth Leaving Foster Care***  
The City provides housing resources to youth aging out or recently discharged from foster care including Administration for Children Services (ACS) Housing Subsidies, and priority status for selection to units in NYCHA public housing.
- ***CityFHEPS***  
In July, the City announced that it is streamlining its rental assistance programs, consolidating seven different initiatives into one, to make it easier for New Yorkers in need to get back on their feet or remain in their homes and simpler for landlords to participate in the programs, opening doors of opportunity. The new City Fighting

Homelessness & Eviction Prevention Supplement (CityFHEPS) program will replace all of the current Living in Communities (LINC I, II, III, IV and V) programs – as well as the Special Exit and Prevention Supplement (SEPS), and City Family Eviction Prevention and Exit Plan Supplements (CityFHEPS) – with a single unified rental assistance program, to simplify the process of identifying and securing permanent housing opportunities that enable New Yorkers experiencing housing instability to exit shelter or avoid entering shelter altogether.

- **Coordinated Assessment Placement System (CAPS)**

In addition to the initiatives outlined above, DSS-HRA has created a coordinated entry system, Coordinated Assessment Placement System (CAPS), for young adults 18 years old and older to access supportive housing. HRA is working with DYCD to pull RHY homeless data into CAPS so that all previous stays in youth shelters would be counted in histories of homelessness. NYC is using a Standardized Vulnerability Assessment (SVA) in CAPS, and by the end of 2018 will have a specific assessment tool for youth.

#### **Private Investments: Senior Coordinator of Youth Homelessness in New York City**

In March 2018, Deutsche Bank privately funded a full-time temporary position of Senior Coordinator for Youth Homelessness in New York City. This position reports to the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, who provides oversight to all of DSS and therefore most of the services provided to homeless individuals in New York City. Under her leadership, the City has created an Interagency Homelessness Accountability Council (IHAC) consisting of all health and human service commissioners as well as the commissioners for DYCD, HPD and NYCHA to advance the City's coordinated efforts. Within the IHAC is a youth-specific working group facilitated by the Senior Coordinator. The Youth Homelessness Taskforce will release recommendations in October, and finalize a comprehensive plan for addressing youth homelessness in January 2019.

#### **Summary**

The Council requires a plan for how all youth who present to DYCD-funded programs can be provided with shelter service. With the combined resources of DYCD, ACS, DHS, HRA and DSS, all youth who present to DYCD-funded programs, ages 16-24, have access to a system of supports in New York City. More than 98% of youth who sought a bed were offered a bed. With the additional 156 DYCD-funded RHY beds for youth ages 16-20 expected by the end of FY19, we anticipate that the number of youth reported as unable to access an RHY bed when sought will decline.

At the same time as the expansion in beds for youth ages 16-20, as described above, the City is expanding resources for youth ages 21-24, including: (1) 60 newly funded beds to be contracted in FY19 for homeless young adults, (2) more outreach to youth approaching age 21 in DYCD funded programs to participate in streamlined access to adult shelter, as needed, (3) commitment to additional supportive housing units for youth, and (4) commitment to help homeless youth in DYCD-funded programs to access housing subsidies.

We appreciate our longstanding partnership with the City Council to address the needs of runaway and homeless youth.