

H.B. 18 – 1021
ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF YOUTH WHO ARE
EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN COLORADO

Sponsors: HOUSE: Rep. Edie Hooton, Rep. Lois Landgraf
SENATE: Sen. Don Coram, Sen. John Kefalas

Why This Is Important:

- 1 in 10 young adults ages 18 to 25 endures some form of homelessness in a year. (Chapin Hall Nov 2017).
- 1 in 30 adolescent minors ages 13 to 17 endures some form of homelessness in a year. (Chapin Hall Nov 2017).
- Youth experiencing homelessness have a greater risk of severe anxiety and depression, suicide, poor health and nutrition, and low self-esteem.
- 46% of homeless youth reported being physically abused, 38% reported being emotionally abused, and 17% reported being forced into unwanted sexual activity (NCSL, 2013).
- Young Americans ages 16-24 are experiencing unemployment rates that are twice the national average. The youth unemployment rate in the United States is 11.2% compared to the overall unemployment rate of 5.0% at the end of December 2015 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).
- Young people who have been in child welfare or justice systems, or lack a high school diploma, are at especially high risk of homelessness.

The Issue
Youth Homelessness In
Colorado

“Youth homelessness remains a persistent challenge for our nation. Every night, thousands of unaccompanied young people go to sleep without the safety, stability, and support of a family or a home. Homelessness is not just an adult phenomenon.

(United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, Framework to End Youth Homelessness: A Resource Text for Dialogue and Action (2013))

What This Legislation Would Do:

- Establish a taskforce to examine and create a state plan to:
 - More effectively leverages existing independent efforts within Colorado’s system of services.
 - Identify opportunities to coordinate and align effort to increase stability and outcomes for youth experiencing homelessness.
 - Ensure a statewide strategy that prevents and ends youth homelessness.
 - Develops options for quality shelter, services and housing for youth who are less than 25.
- Incorporate homeless youth providers into existing collaborative systems in local interagency oversight groups.

Adolescence and young adulthood represent a key developmental window. Every day of housing instability represents missed opportunities to support healthy development and transitions to productive adulthood.

Why This Matters:

Youth Homelessness is a broad and hidden challenge that is solvable issue. Because of the complexity no one system can alone can address youth homelessness. To end youth homelessness it is essential that Colorado implement a robust coordinated response. This bill will ensure that state leaders and stakeholders study the issue and set a plan that achieve measurable benchmark with a goal of preventing homelessness youth of Colorado.

Who we are:

Colorado Network to End Youth Homelessness: A network of runaway and homeless youth serving agencies and individuals working to prevent and end youth homelessness by promoting youth development and quality services to runaway and homeless youth and their families.