

Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. (ACAM)
Association for Family and Community Integrity, Inc.
Behavioral Health Alliance of Texas
Bering Omega Community Services
Care for Elders
Career and Recovery Resources, Inc.
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston
CHILDREN AT RISK
Children's Defense Fund
Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris Co., Inc.
Coalition of Behavioral Health Services
Collaborative for Children
Communities In Schools
Community Family Centers
Community Health Choice, Inc.
Covenant House of Texas
DePelchin Children's Center
Depression & Bipolar Support Alliance Greater Houston (DBSA)
Easter Seals of Greater Houston, Inc.
Family Services of Greater Houston
Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse, Inc.
Good Neighbor Healthcare Center
Greater Houston Healthconnect
Harris County Healthcare Alliance
Healthcare for the Homeless-Houston
Houston Area Association for the Education of Young Children
Houston Area Community Services
Houston Area Women's Center
Houston Food Bank
Houston Methodist Hospital
IntraCare Behavioral Health
Jewish Family Service
League of Women Voters Houston
Legacy Community Health, Services Inc.
Lesbian Health Initiative
March of Dimes
Memorial Assistance Ministries (MAM)
Memorial Hermann Healthcare System
Mental Health America of Greater Houston
NAMI Greater Houston
National Association of Social Workers-Houston
Neighborhood Centers, Inc.
New Hope Housing, Inc.
Northwest Assistance Ministries
Phoenix Houses of Texas, Inc.
Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast
Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services
Santa Maria Hostel, Inc.
SEARCH Homeless Services
Spaulding for Children
Spring Branch Community Health Center
Springfield College School of Human Services
St. Joseph House
Texas Children's Hospital
Texas Health Institute
Texas Hunger Initiative
The Arc of Greater Houston
The Council on Alcohol & Drugs Houston
The Immunization Partnership
The Living Bank
The Network of Behavioral Health Providers
The Rose
The Walk for Mental Health Awareness-Houston
The Women's Home
United Way of Greater Houston
Vita-Living, Inc.
Wesley Community Center
Worklife Institute
YMCA of Greater Houston



Children and Youth
Strengthening the Ability of Stakeholders to Prevent Youth Homelessness

Position Statement Approved by One Voice Texas: December 10, 2014

Issue/Concern:

Homeless youth in the state of Texas are vulnerable to human trafficking and other negative outcomes associated with not having a safe and stable environment where they can reside. These youth are not always literally homeless, but do not have a permanent residence and are forced to move from place to place in search of stability. The challenges that drive these young people to the street are often a result of abuse or neglect or other instability in their home environment. Because many of these youth are not in shelters and are instead "couch surfing" or are otherwise not easily detectable to organizations that participate in homeless counts, there is a scarcity of information on the number of youth who face these challenges. Although antidotal evidence suggests the numbers are much higher than what information we currently have, determining the scope of the problem would lead to a more accurate picture and therefore viable solutions for helping this vulnerable population of young people.

Specific Policy Recommendations:

- Establish a state definition of homeless youth that mirrors the federal McKinney Vento Act;
- Direct the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, Department of Family and Protective Services, and the Texas Education Agency, to conduct a study on homeless youth that will enable the state of Texas to understand the extent of the problem and what viable solutions are available.

What Can Be Accomplished?

A unified state definition of youth homelessness, in addition to a study on the issue, would support a coordinated effort to address the problem.

How Will This Impact State Funding?

State agencies and other stakeholders will have the information they need to efficiently utilize state and federal dollars on best practice for preventing or intervening early with youth homelessness.

Supporting Facts/Research Resources:

- ✓ National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 2012. *Alone without a home: A state-by-state review of laws affecting unaccompanied youth*. Available at: <http://www.nlchp.org/content/pubs/Alone%20Without%20A%20Home1.pdf>

Contact:

Katherine Barillas, Ph.D.
Director of Child Welfare Policy
One Voice Texas
(713) 480-3937 / kbarillas@onevoicetexas.org