



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
ADMINISTRATION ON CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES
1250 Maryland Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20024

September 5, 2014

Dear RHY Grantee,

In recent months, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has been made aware of the need for official guidance from the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) on the appropriate provision of services for youth who run away from, or age out of, foster care custody or who run from juvenile justice system placement. Specifically, questions have been raised as to whether or not Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) funded Basic Center Programs (BCP) can or should provide services to these youth and what process a BCP should follow to determine the youth's status as well as an appropriate timeframe to coordinate the youth's return to placement.

Guidance was also requested regarding what system(s) has financial responsibility of covering costs while the youth is sheltered in an RHY program and how that program can request reimbursement. Additionally, as youth age out of the foster care system, many Transitional Living Programs (TLP) need guidance on how best to work with the foster care system to avoid the abrupt end of placement once a youth turns 18 years.

Recognizing guidance is needed, it is important to stress there is currently nothing in the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) or in corresponding regulation or policy that prohibits RHY funded programs from providing services (shelter and otherwise) to foster care or juvenile justice system youth who have run from placement. Should a "system" youth require shelter in an RHY program, the program should make every effort to determine the youth's status and coordinate with the appropriate system to return the youth to a safe and appropriate placement.

Moving forward, FYSB will be working with ACF's Children's Bureau to provide more specific guidance on the complex issues raised above. FYSB will be mindful that RHY programs, foster care and juvenile justice systems are subject not only to Federal funding laws and regulations, but also state and local laws, regulations and policies.

Again, detailed guidance is forthcoming. If you have specific questions or concerns you would like FYSB to consider as we formulate guidance on these issues, please submit that information, no later than September 15, 2014, to Rebecca Eichelberger, RHY Program Specialist at: Rebecca.Eichelberger@acf.hhs.gov.

Sincerely,

William H. Bentley
Associate Commissioner
Family and Youth Services Bureau