



## Stats & Stories

Some knowledge about youth homelessness and understanding the work that Covenant House does is helpful in preparing you or your family or group for this event. The resources below can help make your experience (and fundraising appeals) more meaningful.

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### Statistics

#### How many young people are homeless?

There is a youth homelessness crisis in America. Here are just a few of the staggering statistics:

- 3.5 million young adults (ages 18-25) and 700,000 adolescent minors (ages 13-17) experience a form of homelessness in a given year – that’s 1 in 10 young adults and 1 in 30 adolescent minors.
- In total, 4.2 million young people (ages 13-25) experience a form of homelessness in a given year, from couch surfing to living on the streets.
- Youth homelessness affects kids in urban and rural environments at similar levels – which means there are kids experiencing homelessness in all kinds of communities.
- Half of the youth who experienced homelessness in the past year did so for the first time, and 42% went on to experience two or more episodes of homelessness.

#### Why do kids become homeless and who’s the most at-risk?

While the reasons that force a kid to the streets are incredibly diverse, here are a few of the most common, critical issues surrounding youth homelessness.

##### Foster Care

- Each year, 20,000 young people “age out” of the foster care system – usually on their 18th birthday. Many are not yet equipped with the resources and knowledge necessary to live on their own, and nearly 40% become homeless.
- More than one-third of kids who live at Covenant House come from the foster care system. We help them build the skills they need to transition from homelessness to independent adulthood, and advocate for a system that helps those still too young to care for themselves.

### Juvenile Justice System

- Each year, about 100,000 young people exit the juvenile justice system. Most are discharged back to families struggling with domestic violence, substance use, unresolved mental health disabilities, and poverty.
- For these at-risk kids, the juvenile justice system is a revolving door that returns them to the environment where their problems began.
- Covenant House offers these young people stability while we work with them to understand and resolve legal issues.

### Employment and Low Living Wages

- Youth in households making less than \$24,000 a year have a 162% higher risk of homelessness.

### LGBTQ Youth

- 40% of youth experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQ.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning youth have a 120% higher risk of homelessness than their straight peers.

### Other Risk Factors

- 46% of kids facing homelessness are fleeing violence at home.
- Youth lacking a high school diploma or GED have a 346% higher risk of homelessness than those who completed high school.
- Unmarried parenting youth have a 200% higher risk of homelessness.
- Black or African American youth have an 83% higher risk of homelessness, and Hispanic, non-White youth have a 33% higher risk.

[Learn more about what causes a kid to live on the street.](#)

### What's being done to address these issues?

To put it simply, a lot. Covenant House is committed to providing a place of shelter and support for every at-risk youth who passes through our doors. We offer free primary health care, legal assistance, education and job training in addition to the love and compassion that all kids deserve. Each day that a young person wakes up, not on the streets but instead in a warm bed here at Covenant House, we will help them rebuild their lives.

[See what services Covenant House offers kids in need](#) and stay informed about recent news and developments by [following our blog](#).

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# Stories

## Watch: Stories from Covenant House Kids

**Jason & Ebony:** [This short video](#) tells the story of two Covenant House residents.

**Hannah & Teray:** [In this 6-minute video](#), two Covenant House residents share their stories.

**VICE Documentary Films Presents SHELTER:** SHELTER tells the raw and emotional stories of our brave young people as they seek help and hope at Covenant House. [Watch the full-length documentary here](#) (please note that content may not be appropriate for all ages).

**SHELTER Clip - Matthew's Story:** [Hear from one of the young people featured in SHELTER](#), the VICE documentary. After, be sure to [watch an update from him here](#) (please note that content may not be appropriate for all ages).

**I Was Homeless:** Tony shared his journey with storybooth, who created [this animated video](#).

**Get to Know Us:** Covenant House kids may not be who you think they are. Get to know them better in [this short video](#).

## Recommended Reading

[Almost Home: Helping Kids Move from Homelessness to Hope](#) was written by Covenant House President Kevin Ryan & former New York Times Writer Tina Kelley. It tells the stories of six extraordinary young people who, despite almost unimaginable suffering and adversity, exceeded almost everyone's expectations. The book is suitable reading materials for ages 13 and up, and includes [discussion questions](#) and a [quiz about homelessness](#) to guide a family conversation.

## More Stories

Our kids come from around the world to Covenant House shelters across North America. [Read about their journeys.](#)