

## DEFINITION


*Homeless youth* is the number of Rhode Island youth ages 13 to 17 who are homeless or at risk for homelessness, have run away from home or have been thrown out of their homes and are not allowed to return.

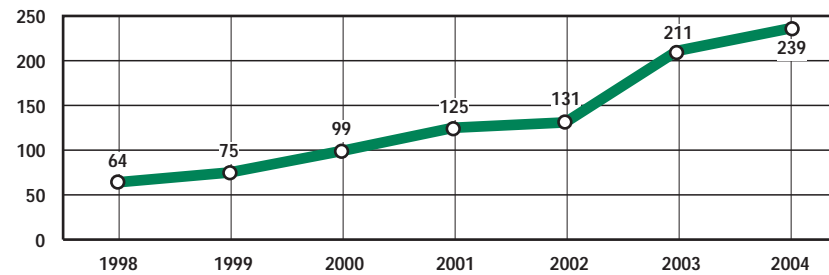
## SIGNIFICANCE

Homelessness among youth has a number of causes, including family problems (such as strained relationships and physical abuse), family homelessness and residential instability resulting from foster care and institutional placements.<sup>1</sup> Nationally, in 2004 46% of callers to the National Runaway Switchboard identified themselves as victims of problematic family dynamics or abuse.<sup>2</sup> Some runaway youth are considered to be throw-aways who were told or forced to leave a household, or were abandoned by their parents or guardians.<sup>3</sup>

Homeless youth are at risk of being physically and/or sexually victimized, abusing drugs and alcohol, attempting suicide, becoming victims or perpetrators of crime, receiving money for sex to meet their basic survival needs, and contracting HIV/AIDS.<sup>4</sup>

Although estimates vary, it is projected that there are between 1 million and 1.3 million U.S. youth run away from home each year.<sup>5</sup>

  
**Homeless Youth Ages 13 - 17,  
in Rhode Island's Emergency Shelter System, 1998-2004**



Source: Rhode Island Emergency Shelter Information Project, Annual Reports 1998 – 2004.

◆ **Between July 1, 2003 and June 30, 2004, 239 youth entered the Rhode Island Emergency Shelter system accompanied by a parent or another adult. This is an increase of 273% since 1998. This is an underestimate of homeless youth in the state because the Emergency Shelter system in Rhode Island does not accept unaccompanied children over the age of 12 and does not have an overnight shelter for runaway youth.<sup>6</sup>**

◆ **During 2004, 169 Rhode Island youth ages 13 to 17 accessed crisis management services offered by Crossroads Rhode Island, and 1,073 calls were made to the Crossroads SAFELINE for runaway youth.<sup>7</sup> In 2004 the National Runaway Switchboard received 380 calls from Rhode Island and the Covenant House crisis hotline documented 1,648 crisis calls from Rhode Island.<sup>8,9</sup>**

◆ **As of December 31, 2004, there were 111 individuals under age 19 in the Department of Children, Youth and Families care who were classified as unauthorized absence/runaways.<sup>10</sup>**

## References for Homeless Children Indicator

<sup>1,3</sup> *Homeless families with children* (Fact Sheet #7). (2001). Washington, DC: National Coalition for the Homeless.

<sup>2,8,9,10</sup> Lowe, E. (2004). *Hunger and homelessness survey: A status report on hunger and homelessness in America's cities*. Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Mayors – Sodexo USA.

<sup>4</sup> *Homeless in America: A children's story, part one*. (1999). New York, NY: Homes for the Homeless and the Institute for Children and Poverty.

<sup>5,6</sup> *What about the needs of children who are homeless?* (n.d.) National Resource Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness. Retrieved January 2004 from [www.nrchmi.samhsa.gov](http://www.nrchmi.samhsa.gov).

<sup>7</sup> *Homeless children: America's new outcasts*. A public policy report from the Better Homes Fund. (1999). Newton, MA: The Better Homes Fund.

<sup>11,12,13,14</sup> Rhode Island Emergency Shelter Information Project, July 1, 2003-June 30, 2004. (2005). Providence, RI: RI Emergency Food and Shelter Board.

<sup>15</sup> Cohen, C., Mulroy, E., Tull, T., White, C. & Crowley, S. (2004). Housing *plus* services: Supporting vulnerable families in permanent housing. In R. A. White & D. J. Rog (Eds.), *Child welfare*. 83(5), 509-528.

<sup>16</sup> *What is supportive housing?* (2004). Retrieved February 2005, from [www.csh.org](http://www.csh.org).

<sup>17,18</sup> Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation, February 2005.

## References for Homeless Youth Indicator

<sup>1,3</sup> Son, A. J. (2002). Information packet: Runaway and homeless youth. New York, NY: Hunter College School of Social Work, National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning.

<sup>2</sup> *2004 National Demographics*. (n.d.). Retrieved February 16, 2005 from the National Runaway Switchboard at [www.nrscrisline.org](http://www.nrscrisline.org).

<sup>4</sup> Administration for Children and Families. (1995). Youth with runaway, throwaway, and homeless experiences: Prevalence, drug use, and other at-risk behaviors. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Service Bureau.

<sup>5</sup> *How many young people run away from home each year?* (n.d.). Retrieved February 16, 2005 from [www.acf.dhhs.gov](http://www.acf.dhhs.gov).

<sup>6</sup> Rhode Island Emergency Shelter Information Project, July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Crossroads Rhode Island, Providence, RI, Year-End Reports, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> National Runaway Switchboard, Region 1 Statistics, 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Covenant House, Year End Nine-line Statistics, FY 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, December 2004.