

DEFINITION

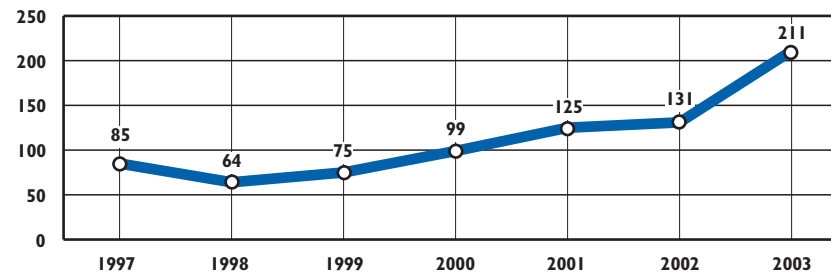
Homeless youth is the number of Rhode Island youth ages 13 to 17 who received emergency housing services at emergency homeless shelters and domestic violence shelters between July 1, 2002 and June 30, 2003.

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.¹ Some runaway youth are considered to be throw-aways who were told or forced to leave a household, or were abandoned or deserted by their parents or guardians.² 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.³

Although estimates vary, it is projected that there are between 1 million and 1.3 million U.S. youth who run away from home each year.⁴ Rhode Island does not have an overnight shelter for runaway youth.


**Homeless Youth Ages 13 - 17,
in Rhode Island's Emergency Shelter System, 1997-2003**



Source: Rhode Island Emergency Shelter Information Project Annual Reports FY 1997 – FY 2003. Providence, RI: Emergency Food and Shelter Board.

◆ Between July 1, 2002 and June 30, 2003, 211 youth ages 13 to 17 entered the Rhode Island Emergency Shelter system accompanied by a parent or another adult. This is an increase of 148% since 1997. 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 12.⁵

◆ During 2003, 728 calls from Rhode Island youth were made to the Traveler's Aid SAFELINE for runaway youth.⁶ In 2003 the National Runaway Switchboard received 266 calls from Rhode Island youth, and the Covenant House hotline documented 394 crisis calls from Rhode Island, with approximately 60% coming from youth, youth advocates, or parents of youth.^{7,8}

◆ As of December 31, 2003, there were 120 individuals under age 19 in DCYF care who were classified as unauthorized absence/runaways.⁹

References for Homeless Children Indicator

- ¹⁴ *Homeless Families with Children NCH Fact Sheet #7*. (June 2001). Washington, DC: National Coalition for the Homeless.
- ²⁹ *Homeless Children: America's New Outcasts*. (1999). Newton, MA: The Better Homes Fund.
- ³ *A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities*. (December 2003). U.S. Conference of Mayors.
- ^{5, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18} Rhode Island Emergency Shelter Information Project. July 2002-June 2003. (2004). Providence, RI: RI Emergency Food and Shelter Board 8.
- ⁶ *Homeless in America: A Children's Story, Part One*. (1999). New York, NY: Homes for the Homeless and The Institute for Children and Poverty.
- ^{7, 8} *What About the Needs of Children Who Are Homeless? National Resource Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness*, www.nrchmi.samhsa.gov/fact/facts_question_5.asp. Retrieved, January 2004.
- ¹⁷ National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2001.
- ¹⁹ Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2003.

References for Homeless Youth Indicator

- ¹ *NCH Fact Sheet #11: Homeless Youth*. (1999). Washington, DC: National Coalition for the Homeless.
- ² Son, A. Jia (May 2002). *Information Packet: Runaway and Homeless Youth*. New York, NY: National Resource Center for Foster Care Permanency and Planning at the Hunter College School of Social Work.
- ³ *Youth with Runaway, Throwaway, and Homeless Experiences: Prevalence, Drug Use, and Other At-Risk Behaviors*. (1995). Washington, DC: Family and Youth Service Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- ⁴ *How Many Young People Run Away From Home Each Year?* The Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/fysb/YP-runaway.htm, January 2004.
- ⁵ Rhode Island Emergency Shelter Information Project, July 1, 2002 – June 30, 2003 (2004). Providence, RI: Rhode Island Emergency Food and Shelter Board.
- ⁶ Travelers Aid, Providence, RI, Year-End Reports, 2002.
- ⁷ National Runaway Switchboard, 2002 Region 1 Statistics, www.nrscriisline.org.
- ⁸ Covenant House, Year End Nine-line Statistics, FY 2002.
- ⁹ Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, December 2003.