



# NATIONAL RUNAWAY PREVENTION MONTH

## 2019 Toolkit

[1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM](http://1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM)



**FYSB** Family & Youth  
Services Bureau



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**4.2 million people ages 13–25 endure some form of homelessness every year. In a classroom of 30 students, at least one of them will experience homelessness in a year. These numbers are staggering, but we can work together to address this crisis.**

November is National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM), a public awareness campaign designed to “Shine a Light” on the experiences of runaway and homeless youth that too often remain invisible. It is also an opportunity to spotlight the resources available to support youth in crisis throughout the nation. As part of the campaign, individuals, organizations and communities across the nation are encouraged to work together to prevent youth homelessness.

This toolkit was created to help people get involved with National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM). It also offers ways to engage with stakeholders and community members in order to bring awareness to the issues runaway and homeless youth face.

This awareness campaign will equip communities with the knowledge and action plans to come together to provide early intervention and prevention for runaway, homeless and at-risk youth.

**Interested in becoming a NRPM partner? Fill out our partnership form at [1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM-partner](https://1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM-partner).**

Please reach out to Rachel Reynolds, Outreach & Prevention Specialist, at [rreynolds@1800RUNAWAY.org](mailto:rreynolds@1800RUNAWAY.org) or call 773-289-1723 with any questions.



# Goals and History

## **NRPM GOALS**

1. To raise awareness of the runaway and homeless youth crisis and the issues that young people face.
2. To educate the public about solutions and the role they can play in runaway prevention and ending youth homelessness.

## **NRPM HISTORY**

In October of 2002, President Bush hosted the landmark White House Conference on Exploited and Runaway Children, where leaders from across the country met to discuss issues and challenges related to the runaway and homeless youth crisis. In connection with this conference, they recognized National Runaway Prevention Week, which has since been expanded into a month-long prevention and awareness campaign.

Over the years, members of Congress have supported NRPM. Most recently, U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT), along with Senators Patty Murray (D-WA), Pat Roberts (R-KS) and Jack Reed (D-RI), introduced and passed a bipartisan resolution to recognize November as National Runaway Prevention Month.

NRPM is spearheaded each year by the National Runaway Safeline (NRS), a non-profit organization based in Chicago committed to ensuring youth are safe and off the streets, with the support of the Family and Youth Services Bureau.

## **ABOUT THE NATIONAL RUNAWAY SAFELINE**

Founded in 1971, the National Runaway Safeline (NRS) is a national non-profit organization committed to ensuring that runaway, homeless and at-risk youth are safe and off the streets. NRS serves as the national crisis and communication system for at-risk youth ages 12-21. Each year, NRS makes approximately 100,000 connections to help and hope through hotline (1-800-RUNAWAY), online (1800RUNAWAY.org) and offline services, which are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The National Runaway Safeline also provides the free, evidence-based Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum for schools and youth-serving organizations. For more information, visit [1800RUNAWAY.org](https://1800RUNAWAY.org) and connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

## Who Should Use This Toolkit?

### **THIS TOOLKIT IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE FOR A VARIETY OF AUDIENCES:**

- **Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) organizations**, such as street outreach, emergency shelters and long-term transitional living, maternity group home programs and other organizations that work directly with youth are encouraged to participate in NRPM. Staff, young people and board members from these organizations see firsthand the magnitude of this issue and can help bring awareness and also highlight the support and resources available for those who are struggling.
- **Schools and after school programs** are an important part of reducing the number of runaway and homeless youth. Often serving as a hub of resources and connections in communities, schools and after-school programs are in a unique position to implement early intervention and prevention tools, assist with drawing awareness to the issue and serving as an important link to information and available services.
- **Youth** are critical to the success of NRPM and it is essential to include their voices and perspectives. Youth have the capacity to impact their peers, support their friends through participation in this campaign by showing them they are not alone and raising awareness. As a campaign dedicated to runaway and homeless youth, youth leadership and involvement is a key component for success in the planning, execution and sustainability of NRPM activities and efforts.
- **Local leaders, organizations and anyone committed to supporting youth and families** can bring awareness to the issues faced by runaway and homeless youth. With the support of local leaders and organizations, NRPM can bring key issues to the forefront and ensure local engagement.



## Events and Activities

**Each year, National Runaway Prevention Month partners host creative events to engage communities, raise awareness and build support for available services. These events are an effective way to spotlight resources for youth and inform communities on how to get involved with local and national organizations and efforts to end youth homelessness.**

### GREEN LIGHT PROJECT

Green is the official color of NRPM. The Green Light Project is an effort to “shine green lights” across the country as symbols of support and beacons of hope. This has included everything from lighting entire buildings and spaces green in communities across the country to replacing regular light bulbs with green bulbs to wearing green. Some examples on how to plan a green light event are:

- Host a green light event/ceremony and purchase and distribute green light bulbs in your community. Green light bulbs are available at most local hardware stores.
- Secure a landmark or well-known building in your community to be lit green in November. Requests to turn a public space or building a specific color often need to be made many months in advance of the lighting date.
- Create green awareness ribbons and distribute them to local government officials and/or local businesses.

### INVOLVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Invite local government representatives (mayor, city councilperson, congressman, etc.) to attend your event or to sign a proclamation to declare November as National Runaway Prevention Month in your city. Having a respected and notable person in attendance adds credibility to your event and potentially brings press coverage. Visit [1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM](https://1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM) for a sample proclamation.

### COMMUNITY PRESENTATION

Present to a community group (schools, civic groups, faith based organizations, etc.) on the challenges facing runaway and homeless youth and the resources available. Click here for sample presentation slides.





## Events and Activities

CONTINUED

### **PANEL DISCUSSIONS**

Convene a group of youth, service providers, experts and stakeholders to lead a community discussion about runaway and homeless youth issues.

### **COMMUNITY DISPLAY**

Develop a display of statistics and [promotional materials](#) (i.e., bookmarks and brochures) that community members can take and share. You might try a public building, business establishment, library or school. The National Runaway Safeline has FREE educational materials available for your use at [1800RUNAWAY.org](http://1800RUNAWAY.org).

### **HOST A FUNDRAISER**

Organize a fundraiser at your office, place of worship, school, or social club. The funds collected can be donated to a local runaway and homeless youth program or a local youth-serving organization in your community.

### **PARTNER WITH A LOCAL ORGANIZATION**

Collaboration and support to local organizations dedicated to runaway and homeless youth is a key element of NRPM. Runaway and Homeless Youth programs in your area may be hosting a local NRPM event. Learn about the RHY programs in your community and see how you can support them through a partnership or volunteer opportunity. You can find local RHY programs on the FYSB website at [www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb).

### **USE THE LET'S TALK: RUNAWAY PREVENTION CURRICULUM**

Our Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum helps youth explore difficult subjects while building life skills and resiliency in youth. Visit [1800RUNAWAY.org](http://1800RUNAWAY.org) to download the curriculum for free and see the Messaging Guide section below to see some recommended Let's Talk activities.



## Tips for Hosting Events

### **COLLABORATE:**

Connect with your local RHY providers and other youth-serving organizations to see if they already have something planned that you can support. Find a local provider on the [FYSB website](#).

### **MAKE IT TANGIBLE:**

Focus your event on a specific call to action. This can be a fundraiser, creating a community taskforce, getting involved with local RHY providers, etc.

### **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA:**

While in-person events are a lot of fun, online events may also work well for you, and your supporters and may be an opportunity to engage a larger audience. Host a Facebook Live event, Twitter Chat or online fundraiser. Get creative!

### **TIE THE EVENT TO THE ISSUE:**

Organize a fun event or challenge that will draw people in while relating it back to the issues of runaway and homeless youth. This will provide extra motivation for people to participate. If you're a service provider, include quotes or a story from your youth. You can also use available statistics and findings from research to motivate people to get involved. See our messaging guide below for updated statistics and information.

### **INVOLVE YOUTH:**

Incorporate the voices and leadership of youth in your efforts. Youth are experts of their own experiences and will know best how your campaign and/or event can further resonate with young people.

# 2019 National Events

Here is a list of national events for you and your community to participate in throughout November. Connect with a [local RHY provider](#) and check out our [NRPM partners](#) to plan or participate in national and other events in your area.

## **NOVEMBER 1ST: FACEBOOK PROFILE PICTURE DAY**

Kick off National Runaway Prevention Month by adding the #NRPM2019 Frame to your Facebook Profile Picture. To do this, visit [facebook.com/profilepicframes](https://www.facebook.com/profilepicframes) search for NRPM, and upload it as your picture. Encourage your networks to do this as well – including staff, board, youth, donors, community leaders, etc.

## **NOVEMBER 4TH - 8TH: EDUCATION WEEK**

During this week, the National Runaway Safeline will lead an online educational series to inform the public about runaway and homeless youth (RHY) issues. This will include providing current statistics, exploring what RHY means and what it can look like for individuals, and discussing the challenges of navigating different systems. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) ahead of time to join the conversation.

## **NOVEMBER 5TH: TWITTER CHAT (2:00 PM CT)**

NRS, their partners and individuals will be hosting a Twitter Chat where they will engage in a discussion about runaway and homeless youth. Follow along and participate @1800RUNAWAY and use the hashtag #NRPMChat.

## **NOVEMBER 12TH: WEAR GREEN DAY**

Dress in green on this day. For added impact, post the picture with a message about your commitment to supporting runaway and homeless youth and include the hashtag #NRPM2019

## **NOVEMBER 19TH: LIGHT THE NIGHT COMMUNITY EVENTS**

Youth service agencies, community groups, and individuals across the country will host events to “Shine a Light” on the issues and show solidarity with youth in crisis. Previous events included resource fairs, sleep outs, open mic nights, walks, and more.





# Spreading the Word

**Whether your NRPM campaign revolves around a fundraiser, an event or a social campaign, it is important to consider how you will communicate your message. On the right, you will find resources and tips on how to spread the word about NRPM and your events.**

## KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

It is important to know who you want to attend your event or engage with your campaign. Your audience will not only guide the type of event you host, but will also influence how you communicate your message.

Examples of who your audience may be include:

- Youth
- Parents
- Service providers
- Law enforcement
- Key stakeholders
- Advocates
- Donors

## HOW TO SPREAD THE WORD

There are so many different ways to communicate your NRPM message. See our Resources section below for our free materials that we encourage you to integrate into your campaign, including sample social media posts and graphics.

## YOUR COMMUNICATION CHANNELS MAY INCLUDE:

- Social Media
  - Facebook
  - Instagram
  - Twitter
  - LinkedIn
  - Youtube
- Print Publications
- Blogs
- Radio
- Television
- Billboards
- Signage
- Word of Mouth
- E-mail
- Podcasts
- Advertising on Social Media
- Public Relations - write a press release or letter to the editor to your local newspaper.



# Campaign Resources

Every year we provide a number of resources and materials that everyone can use to spread the word about National Runaway Prevention Month. All of the materials listed are available at [1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM](http://1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM).

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Press Release & Media Pitch Template
- Media Pitch Tip Sheet
- Sample Proclamation
- Proclamation Request Letter

## PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

- Event Flyer
- NRPM Logos
- Community Presentation

## SOCIAL MEDIA

- Graphics
- Sample posts
- Facebook Cover
- Twitter Header
- Facebook Profile Picture Frame



# Messaging Guide

**This messaging guide is intended to serve as a resource that allows participating organizations and individuals to easily access content and statistics during NRPM.**

## **ABUSE**

- According to an ACF/FYSB Street Outreach Program Study one of the top three reasons reported for youth becoming homeless was due to physical abuse (23.8%).<sup>16</sup>
- The National Runaway Safeline's National Trends on Youth in Crisis in the United States report found that there was a 65% increase in young people who connected with NRS' hotline and online services who experienced abuse and neglect in the last 5 years.<sup>11</sup>
- Homeless youth are at high risk for involvement in the criminal justice system. Homeless youth who have been physically abused are almost twice as likely to be incarcerated compared to homeless youth without a history of physical abuse.<sup>18</sup>
- A 2015 study looking at homeless youth in Minnesota found that over half of their homeless youth population had been physically abused, sexually abused, or neglected at some point in their childhood.<sup>5</sup>
- **Recommended activity from our [Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum](#):** "Healthy Relationships" activity in Module 4: Peers and Healthy Relationships.



## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- According to an ACF/FYSB Street Outreach Program Study almost a fourth of participants (24.1%) said that they had “agreed to be sexual” with someone in exchange for money, and 27.5% had “agreed to be sexual” with someone in exchange for a place to spend the night.<sup>16</sup>
- In 2018 over 23,500 runaways were reported to NCMEC and one in seven were likely victim of child sex trafficking.<sup>9</sup>
- In a 2013 study The Institute of Medicine found that homelessness is the largest risk factor for CSEC and sex trafficking of minors.<sup>4</sup>
- In two different studies where trafficked youth were surveyed, nearly all had experienced homelessness or housing instability.<sup>5</sup>
- People of color and LGBTQ youth are disproportionately recruited into trafficking situations.<sup>5</sup>
- **Recommended activity from our [Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum](#):** “Runaway Risks” activity in Module 6: Runaway Reality.

## SYSTEM INVOLVED YOUTH

- Of the nearly 25,000 runaways reported to NCMEC in 2017, 88% were in the care of social services when they went missing. Learn more about children missing from care.<sup>8</sup>
- Approximately 12 to 36% of youth ages 18 or 21 exiting the foster care system become homeless, which in 2010 translated to approximately 28,000 youth.<sup>3</sup>
- Within the first two to four years of leaving the system, more than 25% of former foster children become homeless.<sup>2</sup>
- According to report from Coalition for Juvenile Justice and National Network for Youth, more than 80% of providers reported that juvenile justice involvement was a top contributor to youth homelessness.<sup>10</sup>
- **Recommended activity from our [Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum](#):** “Who’s On Your Bus” activity in Module 3: Personal Influences.



## LGBTQ YOUTH

- According to the 2017 Missed Opportunities report by Chapin Hall:<sup>7</sup>
  - LGBTQ youth are at a disproportionate risk of experiencing homelessness compared to youth who identify as heterosexual and cisgender.
  - LGBTQ youth have a 120% higher risk of experiencing homelessness
- Up to 40% of the total homeless youth population are LGBTQ youth, whereas when looking at the general population LGBTQ account for about 7% of the population.<sup>15</sup>
- **Recommended activity from our *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum*:**  
“Becoming an LGBTQ Ally” in Module 12: Sexuality & Sexual Orientation.



LGBTQ youth have a  
**120% higher**  
risk of experiencing homelessness.

According to the Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness In America report from Chapin Hall.



#NRPM2019

Learn more at [1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM](https://1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM)



**1 in 30**  
youth ages 13-17 experience  
homelessness every year

According to the Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness In America report from Chapin Hall.



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Learn more at [1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM](https://1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM)

Visit [1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM](https://1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM) to download our NRPM social media graphics.

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