



**NATIONAL  
RUNAWAY  
PREVENTION  
MONTH**

# **PARTNER TOOLKIT 2023**

**[1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM](https://1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM)**



**FYSB** Family & Youth  
Services Bureau

# 2023 PARTNER TOOLKIT

Approximately 4.2 million young people ages 13 to 25 experience some sort of homelessness in the United States each year, with considerably more experiencing crises that put them at risk of facing similar housing insecurity.<sup>1</sup> Some youth, including young people who identify as Black and/or African American, LGBTQIA2S+, non-White, and/or unmarried and parenting, experience homelessness at significantly higher rates compared to their peers. Once a young person faces the instability associated with homelessness, whether they are couch surfing, staying in shelters, or sleeping on the streets, the consequences can be far-reaching. We need to do more to prevent homelessness and support young people in crisis.

November is National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM), a public awareness campaign designed to “shine a light” on the experiences of youth who have run away and experienced homelessness that too often remain invisible. It is also an opportunity to spotlight the resources available to support youth in crisis throughout the nation. **The campaign empowers individuals, organizations, and communities to take action, work together, and help prevent youth homelessness.**

NRPM is spearheaded by the National Runaway Safeline (NRS) with the support of the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) and other national and local partners.

## BECOME AN OFFICIAL NRPM PARTNER

National Runaway Prevention Month is successful due to the incredible community of partner organizations who support the campaign every year. Join us as an official NRPM partner by filling out our partnership form at [1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM](https://1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM).

National Runaway Prevention Month partners receive:

- NRPM updates and useful information/resources;
- A social media toolkit containing tips, sample social media posts and graphics;
- Direct, timely support from NRS staff;
- Possible spotlight of your organization on NRS’s digital channels;
- Invitations to partner calls where we share best practices and offer support to help you engage your community in a fun and informative campaign; and
- Invitations to NRPM events and activities organized by NRS and FYSB, such as Lunch and Learn webinars and Wear Green Day.

Contact Christopher Smith at the National Runaway Safeline at [csmith@1800RUNAWAY.org](mailto:csmith@1800RUNAWAY.org) or 773-289-1716 with any questions.

1. Morton, M. H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G. M. (2017). Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from [http://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ChapinHall\\_VoYC\\_NationalReport\\_Final.pdf](http://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ChapinHall_VoYC_NationalReport_Final.pdf)

# GOALS & HISTORY

## GOALS

To raise awareness of the issues facing young people who have run away, are experiencing homelessness or at risk of other adverse outcomes, and the importance of preventing and reducing factors contributing to runaway incidents and youth homelessness.

To educate the public about solutions and the role they can play in reducing runaway incidents, preventing youth homelessness, and supporting youth experiencing crisis.

To increase the visibility of the services and resources provided by the National Runaway Safeline and other youth-serving organizations nationwide.

## HISTORY

In October 2001, national leaders met at the White House Conference on Exploited and Runaway Children to raise public awareness of the steps that parents, law enforcement and communities could take to make America’s children safer. The conference culminated in the launch of National Runaway Prevention Week, which has since expanded into a month-long prevention and awareness campaign.

National leaders continue to advance efforts to assist youth and families in crisis and end youth homelessness. For example, U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Dan Sullivan (R-AK), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Tim Scott (R-SC) and others passed the bipartisan Senate Resolution 442, which designated November 2019 as National Runaway Prevention Month.

## ABOUT THE NATIONAL RUNAWAY SAFELINE

Founded in 1971, the **National Runaway Safeline (NRS)** works to keep youth who have run away, experience homelessness, or are at-risk of other adverse outcomes safe and off the streets. NRS serves as the national crisis communication system for youth ages 12 to 21 who are contemplating running away, or have run away and are experiencing homelessness. Trained staff and volunteers provide support to youth and families 24/7 via the **1-800-RUNAWAY** (1-800-783-2929) hotline and online crisis services at **[1800RUNAWAY.org](https://1800RUNAWAY.org)**, including live chat, email, and forum.

In addition, NRS offers free prevention and educational materials, including the evidence-based *Let’s Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum*, which teaches young people critical problem-solving skills, with the goal of preventing runaway incidents.

For more information, visit **[1800RUNAWAY.org](https://1800RUNAWAY.org)** and connect with us on **[Facebook](#)**, **[Instagram](#)**, **[Threads](#)**, **[LinkedIn](#)**, and **[TikTok](#)**.



# WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOLKIT?

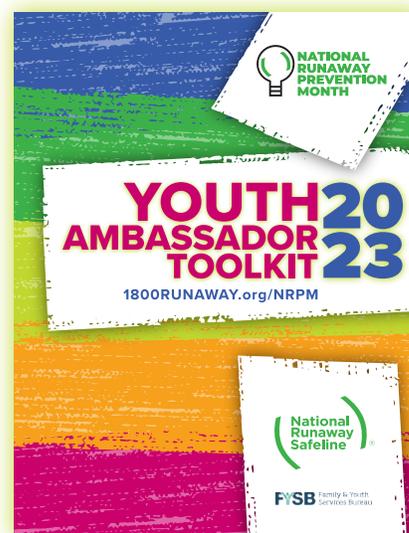
This toolkit is designed for a range of organizations as well as individuals who join the NRPM partner community to support vulnerable youth. The contents of this kit will help NRPM partners, such as:

- **Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) organizations**, including street outreach, emergency shelters and transitional living programs, child welfare organizations, maternity group home programs, and national partners who work directly with youth.
- **Schools and after school programs** play an important role in reducing runaway incidents and preventing youth homelessness by serving as a community hub of resources and connections.
- **Community leaders**, such as city and county officials, librarians, clergy, and service providers all have an ability to positively interact with and inspire youth.
- **Young people looking to share their stories, spread awareness and prevention tools, or highlight resources in their community** help ensure messaging reaches a younger audience.

## ENGAGE YOUTH IN NRPM AS YOUTH AMBASSADORS

Do you work directly with youth? Does your organization have a youth advisory board? Engage them as NRPM Youth Ambassadors to greatly expand the impact of your campaign. NRPM Youth Ambassadors are provided with the NRPM Youth Toolkit, a resource designed to help young people create their own NRPM campaign.

Please have interested youth register as Youth Ambassadors to ensure they receive the toolkit and other forms of support offered by NRS. The Youth Toolkit can be found on the [NRS website](https://www.nrs.org).



# WHAT ARE PARTNER CALLS?

The NRPM partner community is a truly special and important group. In the months leading up to NRPM, we invite partners to join frequent calls where NRS provides guidance and an opportunity to brainstorm and share ideas. Together, we discuss strategies and tips to engage communities in the issues of NRPM.

This year, five partner calls are scheduled in September and October; all will take place on Zoom at 1:00 PM ET/12:00 PM CT. [Register as an NRPM partner](#) to receive the Zoom links, and participate in as many as you are able. Partner call dates and topics include:

<p><b>THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7</b> <b>Introduction to NRPM 2023</b></p>	<p><b>THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5</b> <b>Securing Media Coverage and Local Support</b></p>
<p><b>THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14</b> <b>Using NRPM Resources (Toolkit, Webpage, etc.)</b></p>	<p><b>THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19</b> <b>Tips and Tricks for Social Media Success</b></p>
<p><b>THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28</b> <b>Hosting Creative and Informative Events</b></p>	<p><b>REGISTER FOR NRPM PARTNER CALLS TODAY</b></p>

It is always inspiring to hear from others who have executed successful NRPM programs. If you are proud of past NRPM successes and are willing to share with other partners, we would love to include you as a guest speaker during a partner call. Contact Christopher Smith at [csmith@1800RUNAWAY.org](mailto:csmith@1800RUNAWAY.org) for more information.

# NATIONAL EVENTS

In 2022, NRPM was supported by more than 200 partners and 25 Youth Ambassadors who participated in national events organized by NRS and executed their own creative events and activities locally. We encourage you to participate in any or all this year's national events and to spread the word to your supporters about these opportunities.

## NOVEMBER EVENTS

### **NOVEMBER 1** Social Media Kick-Off

Kick off National Runaway Prevention Month by posting on social media! We have provided several assets to make raising awareness easy and fun. Find sample messaging and graphics, and valuable tips in our Social Media Toolkit, which you can [download here](#). And of course, remember to use the hashtag #NRPM2023 when posting.

### **NOVEMBER 2** National Resource Day

Throughout the day, use social media to spotlight critical resources in your own communities, showing youth and families how they can access help. Use the hashtag #NRPM2023, and NRS may highlight what you share.

Use graphics and posts in our [Social Media Toolkit](#) on National Resource Day and throughout the month!

### **NOVEMBER 6–10** Education Week

All week, the National Runaway Safeline leads an online educational series to inform the public about runaway and homeless youth issues. We provide current statistics, explore existing issues, offer resources, and touch upon the challenges of navigating different systems.

Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Threads](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [TikTok](#) ahead of time to join the conversation.

### **NOVEMBER 16** Wear Green Day

Dress in green to show your support for NRPM and post pictures on social media with a message about your commitment to youth who have run away or are experiencing homelessness. Have fun with it - spark a friendly competition among co-workers, invite local elected officials or law enforcement to dress head to toe in green, and dress your pets in your favorite shade of green. The more creative, the greater the impact!

## NATIONAL EVENTS CONTINUED

### NOVEMBER EVENTS

#### **NOVEMBER 17** Light The Night Community Events

NRPM partners across the country host Light the Night community events to raise awareness of youth homelessness and engage individuals and communities in efforts to support youth who are considering running away or are experiencing housing instability.

Previous events have included resource fairs, sleep outs, candlelight ceremonies, open mic nights, walks, and more. Need help? Please reach out to Christopher Smith for more information or tips on hosting successful events, [csmith@1800runaway.org](mailto:csmith@1800runaway.org).

#### **NOVEMBER 21** Live Chat On Instagram & Threads

The National Runaway Safeline will host a Live Chat on Instagram and Threads at 3:00 PM ET / 2:00 PM CT to discuss a range of topics related to youth homelessness. Follow along and participate @1800RUNAWAY and use the hashtag #NRPMChat. Registered partners will receive Chat questions in advance.

#### **TBD** Virtual Lunch and Learns

The National Runaway Safeline will host three virtual Lunch and Learns covering topics related to runaway and homeless youth. In previous years, NRS staff have been joined by experts to discuss the intersection of mental health and youth homelessness and new data reports developed by NRS and Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

Lunch and Learn dates, topics and guest speakers will be announced as soon as possible. Please visit [1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM](https://1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM) to find the latest details and registration information.

# ADDITIONAL AWARENESS-BUILDING ACTIVITIES

## GREEN LIGHT PROJECT

During NRPM, partners support the Green Light Project, a coordinated nationwide effort to illuminate landmarks – public spaces, monuments, bridges, stadiums, and buildings – in green as symbols of support and beacons of hope. These lightings provide excellent visuals for sharing on social media.

While there are usually no fees associated with illuminating a public space or building a specific color, these requests often need to be made months in advance of the date(s) you want the lights turned on. Search online to determine which local buildings are equipped to light up in a specific color, who you should contact and what the process is.

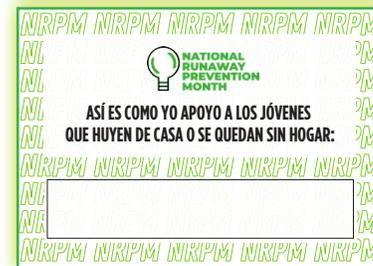
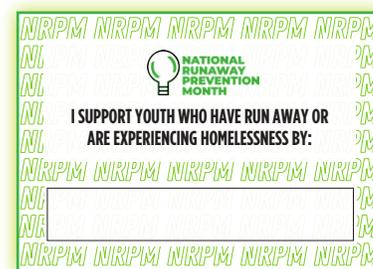
Another “bright” idea? Swap out regular light bulbs for green ones (available online or at most hardware stores) at your home, shelter, office building, library, or other space.

Let us know about your Green Light Project plans! NRS can help spread the word by publicizing your lighting activities on social media.

## COMMITMENT CARDS

Show your support for ending youth homelessness by completing a commitment card and posting a photo of it on social media. Or record a short video explaining to friends and followers how you plan to support runaway and homeless youth. Be sure to hold your commitment card on camera and use the hashtag #NRPM2023 in your post. Download the Commitment Cards [here](#).

Want to do more with commitment cards? A wall displaying commitment cards at your office, school, library, or another popular location makes a big statement! Ask people to complete a commitment card and then hang them in a high-traffic area, such as an entryway or on a window facing the street. Commitment wall photos and video collages are great content on social media. Tag NRS @1800RUNAWAY and we may share your posts!



# AWARDS CEREMONY AND CELEBRATION

At the culmination of the campaign, the National Runaway Safeline hosts the NRPM Awards Ceremony and Celebration to recognize our collective success and the outstanding partners and Youth Ambassadors. Representatives from the Family and Youth Services Bureau and NRS present awards, and each winner speaks about their organization and NRPM activities.

The December 2023 event will recognize the most creative and active NRPM participants, and we will present the following awards:

★ **OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT** ★

★ **GREENEST TEAM** ★

★ **YOUTH AMBASSADOR** ★

★ **MEDIA MASTER** ★

★ **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** ★

★ **YOUTH ENGAGEMENT** ★

★ **SOCIAL MEDIA** ★

★ **"SHINE A LIGHT"** ★

More details about the awards ceremony will be available in the coming months.

# TOOLS AND RESOURCES

We provide tools and resources to help ensure your NRPM campaign's success. These tried-and-tested resources are effective ways to raise awareness and educate people about youth homelessness.

## PROCLAMATIONS

We encourage you to request from your local government officials a proclamation - a ceremonial document that serves, in part, to officially highlight the importance of an event - recognizing November as National Runaway Prevention Month in your city and/or state. Visit [1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM](http://1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM) to see a sample proclamation.

If you secure a proclamation for National Runaway Prevention Month, please let us know by emailing Beth Richman at [brichman@1800RUNAWAY.org](mailto:brichman@1800RUNAWAY.org). We may recognize your local efforts the NRS social media platforms.

## MEDIA RELATIONS



Generating publicity in your local newspaper, on talk radio stations or on TV is an effective way to highlight your organization's work, the compelling stories of youth with lived experience, and your NRPM activities. We encourage you to publicize your NRPM news in advance of and during NRPM. For your convenience, we provide a sample press release and media alert, which can be found here, and will host a partner call to share how to secure media coverage.

## DIGITAL MEDIA RESOURCES

Every November, NRS, partners, and Youth Ambassadors bring NRPM to life on social media. Using your social media feeds is an easy, fun, and cost-effective way to reach a large audience with NRPM messages.

New for NRPM 2023, we have created a Social Media Toolkit, packed with valuable tips and tricks as well as fantastic graphics to help keep your social media followers interested in and engaged with your NRPM campaign. The Social Media Toolkit can be downloaded here and mark your calendar for the partner call focused on social media success on October 19th.

## EDUCATIONAL & OUTREACH MATERIALS

The National Runaway Safeline offers free educational and outreach materials for sharing with key audiences in your community. You might consider displaying materials at your events or in public places, such as libraries and local retailers.

Order your materials no later than October 1st to ensure they arrive before the start of NRPM. You can order materials or download them by clicking [here](http://here).



## TOOLS AND RESOURCES CONTINUED

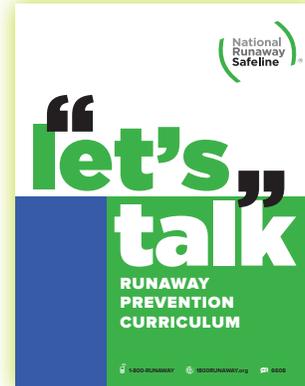
### LET'S TALK: RUNAWAY PREVENTION CURRICULUM

Our Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum helps youth explore difficult subjects while building life skills and resiliency. If you engage with youth directly, consider incorporating this curriculum into your work. Download the free, updated curriculum from the [Let's Talk homepage](#).

### "LET'S TALK" PODCAST

Each season of the "Let's Talk" Podcast features interviews with guests who discuss their perspectives and knowledge on topics related to youth homelessness. Host Christopher Smith speaks with youth with lived experience, representatives from youth-serving organizations, representatives from governmental agencies, and much more. Throughout November 2023, NRS will release weekly podcast episodes featuring NRPM partners and Youth Ambassadors. Sharing the podcast episodes with your supporters is an added value to them.

Episodes can be found on the NRS podcast webpage ([1800RUNWAY.org/podcast](https://1800RUNWAY.org/podcast)), [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), and [Google Podcasts](#).



You likely know best about the activities and events that work well in your community, so be creative and build awareness during NRPM in ways that work for you. But you also may find inspiration from past partners who have experienced great success through the following:

- Encouraging local businesses to set up a green window display for NRPM.
- Posting flyers in your local parks or on community bulletin boards.
- Contacting your local school district about distributing materials and supporting NRPM on their social media platforms.
- Hosting fundraisers, such as retail partnerships: one partner secured a percentage of sales from local retailers, and another held a month-long online auction.

# TIPS FOR HOSTING EVENTS

## COLLABORATE

Connect with local RHY providers and other youth-serving organizations to see if they have appropriate events planned that you can support or if there are opportunities to create a new NRPM event or activity together. By joining forces, you can reach more potential attendees, pool resources, and strengthen and amplify your messages.

## USE SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a fun, easy way to spread the word about your “In Real Life/Time” events. It is also a great place to host a virtual event, so chose your preferred platform, such as a Facebook Live, line up your speakers and agenda, and promote your plans. Engage your virtual networks to bring the experiences of runaway and homeless youth to light.

## INVOLVE YOUTH

NRPM events present an opportunity to educate audiences about the complex issues vulnerable youth face today and the necessary solutions. We encourage you to incorporate the youth voice in your events (and let’s be real, through nearly everything you do). You might include young people as event speakers or share quotes and testimonials from youth you serve in event materials.

Please encourage young people who support your NRPM efforts to register as a Youth Ambassadors on the NRS website.

## FUNDRAISERS

Fundraising events are an ideal way to engage your supporters in the issues around NRPM while raising funds for your organization.

If you are participating in NRPM as an individual, consider hosting a supply drive to benefit a local nonprofit organization that supports youth experiencing housing insecurity. Contact organizations, such as shelters, to find out what they need, determine how to collect the items, and then share the information with your networks.



## TIPS FOR HOSTING EVENTS CONTINUED

### KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

When you know about your audience – who they are, what they like doing, how they prefer you communicate with them – you’ll make strong, productive connections. When planning an event, identify who you want to attract and what type of events they enjoy.

Recognizing that your audience may include people experiencing homelessness, approach your messaging in a respectful, informed manner. Through NRPM, we aim to reduce stigma and ensure that those experiencing homelessness know they are not invisible and their story matters.

Examples of who your audience may be include:

- Youth
- Parents and guardians
- Service providers
- Law enforcement
- Advocates
- Donors
- General public

### SPREAD THE WORD

People get news and information from a variety of sources today. Use a combination of communication channels to reach your target audiences:

- Social media posts (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Threads, TikTok, LinkedIn, YouTube)
- Social media advertising
- Newspapers, magazines, and news websites
- Blogs
- Radio stations
- Podcasts
- Television stations
- Billboards
- Signage
- Word of mouth
- E-mail
- Your own website

**We are very excited to work with a strong, passionate community of partners who are advocating for and supporting our country’s vulnerable youth. We appreciate your partnership and look forward to another successful NRPM campaign!**