

# Homelessness: What You Should Know and How the GSA Can Help

It is estimated that of the 1.6+ million homeless youth in the United States, 40% of them identify as LGBTQ. LGBTQ youth experience homelessness for a variety of other reasons, including the intersection of homophobia & transphobia, poverty, and other factors like family issues.

While youth experiencing homelessness all have needs, LGBTQ youth also have needs specific to their identities.

## For LGBTQ Youth:

- Housing (26%)
- Acceptance/Emotional Support (19%)
- Employment (18%)
- Health Care (18%)
- Education (7%)
- Other (13%)

## For Transgender Youth:

- Housing (28%)
- Transition-Related Services (26%)
- Employment (19%)
- Health Care (13%)
- Education (7%)
- Other (8%)

## What does it mean to be homeless?

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Health and Human Services, homelessness is defined as the following:

- An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence;
- An individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;
- An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including hotels and motels paid for by Federal, State or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations, congregate shelters, and transitional housing);



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- An individual who resided in a shelter or place not meant for human habitation and who is exiting an institution where they temporarily resided;
- An individual or family who will imminently lose their housing (as evidenced by a court order) resulting from an eviction action that notifies the individual or family that they must leave within 14 days
- Being “doubled up,” “couch surfing” or “couch-homeless,” a term that refers to a situation where individuals are staying with a series of friends and/or extended family members

### How can the GSA help?

- Visit your local community shelter and ask about volunteer opportunities
- Organize a clothing, food, or hygiene drive for your local community organizations serving homeless youth
- Educate your school and community about the true definition of homelessness, and how LGBTQ youth are at higher risk of experiencing homelessness
- Work with your local community organizations to provide cultural competency trainings and LGBTQ-101 presentations, so they are better equipped to help LGBTQ youth who are experiencing homelessness
- Research and create a list of LGBTQ friendly places in your community where youth can go to receive support. This could include shelters, churches, community centers, food pantries, local businesses, etc.
- Organize a professional development training for your school’s educators and administrators on the importance of knowing how to identify youth who may be at risk of experiencing homelessness, and how to support them
- Be creative! This is just a quick list to get you started!



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