



## HOMELESSNESS AFTER FOSTER CARE

When young people age out of the foster care system without being connected with permanent family, we have often nowhere to go but the same messed-up family that landed us in foster care in the first place. Therefore it is not surprising that **one in five foster care alumni** report being homeless for some period of time after emancipating from foster care.

Investing in homeless youth is a financially wise decision, because it is cost-effective to establish programs for homeless youth between the ages of 18-25 years old. Without investment, the cycle will continue: **1 in 4 homeless adults is a former foster child.**

Homeless young adults differ from the adult homeless population, because they have unique developmental needs. Sadly, there continues to be a lack of specialized services to engage and empower transitional youth in acquiring stable housing. This is unfortunate, because with a bit of support and the right resources, it's possible to empower young people and build them into future leaders.

Homeless youth are vulnerable to recruitment by gangs, exposure to drugs and sexual exploitation by adults. Being a young person in a homeless shelter filled with families and single adults, youth can feel out of place and are often unwelcome. For a young adult, the odds of being turned away at a shelter because there is not enough room for you are very high.

When youth couch-surf at someone's house or apartment, the situation might prove to be unsafe. The host might develop unsavory motives. Domestic violence might occur.

Experiencing homelessness makes young adults invisible as well: Not only are homeless young people often either ignored or lumped in with the rest of the adult homeless population - but it's difficult to get accurate statistics on just how many young people are experiencing homelessness at any point-in-time.

**ALUMNI OF CARE TOGETHER IMPROVING OUTCOMES NOW**

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