

ADOPTED**AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION****COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS AND POVERTY
COMMISSION ON YOUTH AT RISK****REPORT TO THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES****RESOLUTION**

1 RESOLVED, That the American Bar Association supports the development of
2 integrated, systemic approaches within administrative, civil, and criminal court
3 contexts to address the special needs of youth and young adults experiencing
4 homelessness.

5
6 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the American Bar Association urges lawmakers at
7 federal, state, local, territorial and tribal levels to work with the legal profession to:
8

- 9 1. promote and support efforts to identify and address the unmet legal needs
10 of unaccompanied minors and young adults experiencing or at risk of
11 experiencing homelessness, including ensuring that all youth experiencing
12 homelessness have access to a lawyer;
- 13 2. encourage the development of specialized legal services programs, pro
14 bono projects and law school legal clinics;
- 15 3. collaborate in the identification and removal of legal barriers for homeless
16 children and youth to benefits, education, employment, housing,
17 identification, treatment and other services;
- 18 4. review and revise laws, regulations, policies, practices and systems of
19 care that may act as legal barriers; and
- 20 5. implement preventive strategies such as pre-booking diversion programs,
21 expungement and/or sealing of juvenile and criminal records, and
22 alternatives to the criminalization of child and youth homelessness.

23
24 FURTHER RESOLVED, That youth and young adults experiencing or at risk of
25 experiencing homelessness should have input where appropriate, in efforts to
26 increase access to justice; and
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28 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the American Bar Association urges federal, state,
29 local, territorial and tribal governments as well as the legal community and public
30 and private funders to financially support these efforts.

REPORT

“Lawyers can and should play a critical role in addressing youth homelessness.”

-Report accompanying ABA Policy regarding the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (Resolution 105b, approved by the ABA House of Delegates in February 2010)

Background

Youth experiencing homelessness are often called a “hidden population,” and there are limited national data on how many youth and young adults experience homelessness each year. Some reports estimate that 1.7 million youth leave home or are forced out each year, and that approximately 550,000 of those young people experience homelessness for more than one week.¹ The majority of these young people have been involved with the legal system before experiencing homelessness, due to their involvement in foster care, juvenile or criminal justice matters, or in other ways.² They have often experienced physical and sexual violence before and while experiencing homelessness, leading to trauma, educational disruption, and many other challenges.³ Youth of color, lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender and questioning/queer youth, and youth with disabilities experience homelessness at disproportionate rates and often need legal advocacy to fight discrimination in housing, education, and employment.

Lawyers are in a unique position to help address the circumstances that lead to and prolong homelessness in a wide range of ways, from ensuring access to education and assisting with record expungement to open doors to employment, to fighting housing discrimination and helping youth access basic necessities like food and identification documents. In addition to enforcing existing law, lawyers can craft new policies to minimize the barriers that can lead to homelessness or to help young people exit homelessness quickly and permanently.

Role of the ABA and legal community

The American Bar Association, and the American legal community, have a long history of working on behalf of underserved individuals, including people experiencing poverty and homelessness, and children who are separated from their families due to abuse, neglect, family conflict, or other reasons. In 2016, through the generous support of the ABA Enterprise Fund, the ABA Commission on Homelessness & Poverty launched the Homeless Youth Legal Network with the support of the Commission on Youth at Risk, the Section of Litigation Children’s Rights Litigation Committee, the Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service, and the Fund for Justice and Education, recognizing that

¹ National Alliance to End Homelessness. An Emerging Framework for Ending Unaccompanied Youth Homelessness (2012).

² Family and Youth Services Bureau; Administration for Children and Families; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Street Outreach Program Data Collection Study Final Report (April 2016).

³ Ibid.

legal and policy advocacy have the potential to prevent or end homelessness for youth. This initiative brings together the resources and expertise of the ABA and its members to focus on meeting the legal needs of unaccompanied minors and young adults experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, homelessness. Also in 2017, ABA President Hilarie Bass chose youth homelessness as one of her Presidential areas of focus, and launched the Legal Rights of Homeless Youth Initiative, encouraging and equipping attorneys to provide free legal services to youth and young adults experiencing homelessness.

These initiatives build upon previous ABA work and policy. The ABA's Commission on Homelessness and Poverty, Commission on Youth at Risk, Litigation Section Children's Rights Litigation Committee, and Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Services—along with the numerous other entities that make up the ABA Coordinating Committee on the Legal Needs of Homeless Youth—regularly undertake efforts and initiatives relevant to special populations such as youth experiencing homelessness.

ABA Homeless Youth Legal Network: Best Practices and Model Programs

In 2017, the American Bar Association selected 12 Model Programs across the country as part of its Homeless Youth Legal Network (HYLN) pilot initiative:

- *Arizona Legal Women and Youth Services (ALWAYS), Arizona*
- *Bay Area Legal Aid, California*
- *Center for Children's Advocacy, Connecticut*
- *Community Legal Services of Philadelphia (CLS), Pennsylvania*
- *Family & Youth Law Center at Capital University School of Law, Ohio*
- *Homeless Persons Representation Project Homeless Youth Initiative, Maryland*
- *Homeless Youth Legal Clinic, Utah*
- *Legal Counsel for Youth and Children (LCYC), Washington*
- *Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid Youth Law Project, Minnesota*
- *Pegasus Legal Services for Children, New Mexico*
- *Peter Cicchino Youth Project, Urban Justice Center, New York*
- *Legal Services Center, The Door, New York*

These pilot sites were chosen strategically to showcase not only individual programs that do important, holistic work in their own communities, but also to highlight the variety of models worthy of replication that exist across the country. Each program developed a narrative description of their work providing legal services to youth and young adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness (available at ambar.org/HYLN). Those profiles, and the other data and information the Model Programs shared with the ABA as part of their engagement in the HYLN pilot initiative, illustrate numerous common challenges

and successful strategies among the organizations, as well as some unique innovations.

The range of models used by the programs illustrate that there are many different ways to successfully represent youth experiencing homelessness. Several Model Programs are youth-specific projects or departments within larger general civil legal services organizations, while others are located within social services providers/homelessness programs. Others are housed within smaller legal organizations with a specific focus on children or homelessness, and one is part of a law school.

Most programs serve both minors, some as young as 10 or 12, and young adults, generally through their mid-twenties. Youth of color, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning youth, and youth with disabilities have a higher likelihood of experiencing homelessness, and most Model Programs report serving a higher proportion of youth in these populations.⁴ Several also note that they served many youth who have been involved with the foster care and/or justice system, and several said that a substantial portion of their clients have been victims of a crime.

All the Model Programs provide direct legal services, with many providing regular clinics at homeless youth programs—providing comprehensive, holistic services in partnership with community-based providers. Types of services offered include full representation, brief advice and referral, and assistance with pro se representation, with most programs offering a mix of services depending on client needs.

The Model Programs all engage in systemic advocacy and/or legal education and outreach as well. This ranges from “know your rights” presentations to sitting on key advisory groups. Directly representing clients experiencing homelessness can help attorneys identify systemic issues, and help put into place practice or policy changes that can reduce the number of clients who are struggling with the same challenges over and over again.

Model Programs are supported by a range of funding sources including: private foundations, local/state bar associations, Legal Services Corporation funds, local government, and individual donations. As discussed below, several also use volunteer attorneys and/or fellows paid for by outside organizations/foundations. Program budgets range from less than \$15,000 to over \$1.5 million.

Not surprisingly, nearly all the Model Programs discuss challenges relating to generating sufficient resources to meet the legal needs that they see. Several groups supplement their own staff capacity by working with pro bono lawyers, or by obtaining legal fellows through national or community foundations. Several

⁴ Not all programs collect this demographic information.

programs use volunteer attorneys to extend their program's capacity to serve youth. This ranges from having volunteer attorneys support staff attorneys on cases with more unusual legal issues (e.g., estate law, federal litigation), to having pro bono lawyers staff clinics and provide brief consultation, to placing cases with volunteer lawyers for full representation.

Homeless Youth Legal Clinic (HYLC) is staffed completely by volunteer attorneys, and finds that while their attorneys generally have the substantive legal knowledge they need to represent youth, providing training and education on the culture, lifestyle, and common experiences of homeless youth is essential for building trusting attorney-client relationships. All HYLC's volunteer attorneys receive training on trauma-informed advocacy and several other topics.

At **Pegasus Legal Services for Children**, volunteer attorneys conduct telephone consultations with youth twice weekly. These volunteers are frequently able to provide the necessary advice to resolve the youth's issue. They also gather information to forward to the Pegasus attorney when further representation is necessary. In addition to expanding Pegasus' capacity to serve more youth generally, these phone consultations allow the program to serve youth in rural areas.

The Door's Legal Services Center utilizes pro bono attorneys in all areas, particularly with cases for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. Two local firms send them new associates to work full-time at The Door for three to 18 months, and they have about ten additional pro bono partner law firms.

Many programs highlight their relationships with community-based programs as a key to their success. Youth experiencing homelessness have cross-cutting needs and therefore collaboration is essential to achieving good outcomes. Along the same lines, many of the programs underscore the importance of efforts to educate key partners, youth, and the larger community about legal issues to make their work easier and more effective. Successful programs emphasize the importance of holistic and expansive advocacy, so that attorneys can help the youth resolve not only the legal issue that brought the youth to them, but other challenges in the youth's life that may not be able to be resolved with legal assistance. Programs that do not have the in-house capacity to meet every legal need presented have developed a network for referrals, to ensure that youth receive the right services. Several of the pilot programs have social workers on staff, and those that don't often partner with social services agencies that provide case management support. One program mentioned that sending lawyers with different legal knowledge impacts what needs they identify and address for young people. For example, a benefits attorney at a homelessness program will

find that a lot of young people need assistance with benefits, while a family law attorney may find civil harassment or restraining order cases.

All the programs in the pilot emphasize the importance of meeting youth where they are. This can mean having an office in a part of town that's easily accessible, or holding clinics in places youth experiencing homelessness are already going (e.g., a meals program or drop-in center). Several programs also work hard to reach out to youth who may be not be well-connected to services and support systems.

A number of programs also highlight the value of youth input to their work. Beyond simply directing their own representation, as all clients do, youth can help shape a program and can make a huge difference in systemic advocacy.

The **Center for Children's Advocacy** worked with youth from the Youth Advisory Board of a local youth-serving agency to create a design and mural for the exterior of their Mobile Law Office's van that would draw in and be welcoming to homeless youth. Youth who were homeless helped the Center plan the project's social media and online outreach strategies, and helped develop a teen-friendly website and social media pages by advising the Center on terms used, selecting the website logo and providing suggestions about presentation.

The **Homeless Persons Representation Project Homeless Youth Initiative** in Baltimore engages clients and other youth experiencing homelessness in systemic advocacy in several ways. Their advocacy agenda is informed by trends identified in individual legal cases and by asking youth about their priorities. They also survey youth about specific systemic issues and collect their stories, provide workshops on the state legislative process and lobbying, solicit youth input on bill drafting and other substantive decisions, and take youth to their state capital to meet with elected officials and testify on legislation.

There is no one right way to serve youth experiencing homelessness, but the HYLN Model Programs discussed here illustrate that lawyers, working in collaboration with youth and other service providers, can resolve many of the issues that lead youth to become homeless, or prevent them from overcoming homelessness. The HYLN Model Programs provide concrete examples of effective methods to launch and grow a legal services practice for homeless youth, and the ABA Homeless Youth Legal Network is available to support attorneys and organizations who want to engage in this work. Learn more at www.ambar.org/HYLN.

Relevant ABA policy

Although there is no previous ABA policy specifically targeted at the provision of legal services to youth experiencing homelessness, there are many other policies

that support the role of the bar in addressing youth homelessness, including a [2010 policy supporting the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act](#) (Resolution 105b, approved by the House of Delegates in February 2010) and a [2007 policy condemning the criminalization of homelessness](#) (Resolution 106, approved by the House of Delegates in February 2007). ABA policy has also called for an expansion of the federal definition of homelessness (2006)—an issue which particularly impacts unaccompanied youth⁵--and for the progressive realization of the human right to adequate housing (2013).

Numerous ABA policies address the provision of legal assistance to underserved populations, as well as issues specific to homelessness, housing, and funding for federal programs that provide housing and support services. There are also many ABA policies that touch on the common legal issues faced by youth experiencing homelessness (see below), such as education rights, child welfare, safety issues, diversion of juvenile status offenders, transitioning from foster care, and coordination of services for at-risk youth.

Common legal needs and issues⁶

Common legal needs of young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness include the following:

Identification

Accessing housing, employment, education, or public benefits can be virtually impossible for young people who do not have access to their birth certificate, social security card and/or a state-issued photo ID. Obtaining these documents can be a complicated process for young people who are no longer living with their parents, and/or who do not have a stable address or money to pay required fees. Most states do not allow minors to request their own birth certificate, so youth must have an immediate family member or legal representative make the request. Individuals requesting birth certificates usually also must provide photo ID, creating a catch-22 for young adults who lack identification.

Family Law

Family conflict is the most common cause of homelessness among youth and seventy percent of all homeless youth report experiencing some form of abuse

⁵ In a letter to Congress supporting the Homeless Children and Youth Act of 2011 (HCYA), which would have broadened the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of homelessness to be in line with the definition used by federal child and youth-serving programs such as education programs under the McKinney-Vento Act, Head Start programs, and Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs, ABA Governmental Affairs Office Director Thomas Susman said that without HCYA “many of these vulnerable American children and youth – and their families – will be able to access support from only a small portion of homelessness prevention dollars, leaving 97% of federal homeless assistance funds out of their reach.

⁶ This section adapted from the 2017 ABA publication “Access to Justice for Youth Experiencing Homelessness: Meeting the Legal Needs of Youth to Prevent or End Youth Homelessness,” available at www.ambar.org/hyln.

before leaving home. Many youth are able to identify adults other than their parents—including relatives and nonrelatives—with whom they could safely reside, but may need assistance making these arrangements legal. Youth who are parents themselves may also need help with parenting plans, child support agreements, and with defending their own parental rights.

Child Welfare (Child Protective) System Involvement

Some youth may leave home because they were kicked out, or were not safe, and may want to access services through their local child welfare (protective) system but need assistance doing so. Others may be under the jurisdiction of the child welfare system but find their placements unsafe or unsuitable. Additionally, young parents who do not have stable housing may need assistance preserving their parental rights.

Juvenile or Criminal Justice Involvement

Many jurisdictions make it illegal to sleep, sit, or eat in public spaces, effectively criminalizing homelessness. Young people may also seek shelter in private buildings and be charged with trespassing. They may also steal money or goods so that they can purchase food or a safe place to sleep. These actions may lead to arrests, tickets or fines that youth cannot pay, and ultimately to outstanding warrants. Even after youth finish their justice involvement, juvenile or criminal records may follow them and interfere with employment or housing.

Status Offenses

Status offenses are acts that are only illegal for minors, such as running away, repeatedly skipping school (truancy), being “ungovernable” or “unruly,” or violating a municipal curfew. These behaviors are frequently triggered by family conflict or a youth’s lack of safety at school or home. These acts may lead youth to become involved with the juvenile justice or child welfare system (depending on state law), or to become homeless. Research shows that community-based approaches are most effective for addressing status offenses, yet many states continue to place youth in secure confinement instead, making legal and policy advocacy on behalf of these youth critical.

Education

Although federal law provides youth experiencing homelessness with many protections, including the right to stay in their home school, youth often do not know about their rights, or are unable to enforce them. Youth with disabilities, and youth who are pregnant or parenting may also need assistance accessing relevant services and protections. Overly harsh school discipline, such as “zero tolerance” policies, or overuse of suspension and expulsion, can keep young people, particularly youth of color and girls, out of school, and lead to juvenile or criminal justice involvement. When youth exit the juvenile justice system, they often face challenges re-enrolling in school or receiving services needed to catch up on what they missed.

Housing/Shelter and Employment

In many states, minors are not able to enter or remain in shelters without parental consent and cannot enter into contracts such as rental agreements. Even after they reach age 18, young adults may have trouble obtaining housing because of unresolved credit issues or juvenile or criminal records. These issues, as well as poor educational attainment caused by lack of stability, can also keep youth from obtaining the employment needed to pay for housing. Once housed, youth may also need assistance fighting eviction or enforcing their rights against landlords who fail to meet basic safety standards. Overbroad statutes prohibiting “harboring” runaway youth may also interfere with young people’s access to safe shelter, calling for case-level and policy advocacy.

Public Benefits

There is no specific federal or state public benefits safety net designed specifically for unaccompanied youth. While some programs may contain provisions that anticipate young applicants, public assistance systems are generally designed for adults, and obtaining benefits can be a confusing and complicated process. Yet with assistance, many young people are able to successfully secure benefits to meet their basic needs through programs such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/formerly known as food stamps).

Race, Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity/Expression, and Disability

An estimated 30 - 40% of youth experiencing homelessness are African American,⁷ and up to 40% of youth experiencing homelessness are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer/questioning. Further, seventeen percent of homeless students were identified as students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), compared to 13 percent of all public school students (see indicator [Children and Youth With Disabilities](#)).⁸ These youth face systemic and implicit bias, as well as outright discrimination, as they seek safe housing, and the education, employment and other resources that will allow them to afford that housing. Attorneys can help enforce legal protections against discrimination, as well as help to develop policy that ensures all youth and young adults are safe and have equal opportunities as they transition to adulthood.

⁷ As with youth homelessness generally, there is a dearth of good data on the race and ethnicity of youth experiencing homelessness. In a recent study of youth experiencing homelessness in 11 cities across the United States, 41% identified as Black or African-American and almost 26% identified as Hispanic or Latino/Latina. (Note that these categories were not mutually exclusive.) Family and Youth Services Bureau; Administration for Children and Families; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Street Outreach Program Data Collection Study Final Report (April 2016).

⁸ NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS, HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS (May 2017), https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_tgh.asp.

Immigration

Unaccompanied youth without legal immigration status may require help obtaining legal status and/or advocacy in removal (deportation) proceedings, in addition to all of the needs outlined above. Youth with lawful immigration status may also experience homelessness and need strong advocacy, particularly if their parents are deported, creating a lack of adult connections and support.

Health

Youth frequently report that substance use and mental health issues (their own and their caregivers) lead or contribute to homelessness. Irregular access to medical care, malnutrition, sleeping in unsafe spaces and other circumstances experienced by homeless youth can lead to or aggravate physical health issues as well. Young people's lack of financial resources and social disconnectedness can also create barriers to accessing health care. Youth under age 18 experience significant additional barriers due to their status as minors and lack of an adult caregiver willing to provide consent. Youth exiting the juvenile justice system or transitioning from foster care may be eligible for Medicaid, but need help applying, as well as assistance obtaining their own—often widely scattered—medical records.

Credit and Debt

Young people may find that they are unable to obtain housing due to credit or debt issues. These may be the result of identity theft, such as when a parent, guardian, or stranger uses the young person's information for a credit card, utilities, or their own housing. It may also be due to the young person taking on a car or other loan—sometimes with unfair terms—and being unable to pay. Attorneys can help young people discharge debt that was not theirs in the first place, or negotiate payments plans or better terms for legitimate amounts owed.

Conclusion

Assuring meaningful access to justice for all persons is a key objective of the American Bar Association. Youth experiencing homelessness are perhaps the most vulnerable segment of our population. These young people have the capacity to successfully transition to adulthood if they are given a fair chance to obtain the resources and support that they need. Lawyers and the legal community can make access to justice a reality for the over 1 million young people who experience homelessness by engaging in advocacy for individual clients and at the systemic level in collaboration with community-based partners, as described in this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Craig H. Baab
Chair, Commission on
Homelessness & Poverty
February, 2018

GENERAL INFORMATION FORM

Submitting Entity: Commission on Homelessness & Poverty

Submitted By: Craig H. Baab, Chair

1. Summary of Resolution(s). The American Bar Association supports the development of integrated, systemic approaches within administrative, civil, and criminal court contexts to address the special needs of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness.
2. Approval by Submitting Entity. November 15, 2017
3. Has this or a similar resolution been submitted to the House or Board previously?

No

4. What existing Association policies are relevant to this Resolution and how would they be affected by its adoption?

Although there is no previous ABA policy specifically targeted at the provision of legal services to youth experiencing homelessness, there are many other policies that support the role of the bar in addressing youth homelessness, including a 2010 policy supporting the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, and a 2007 policy condemning the criminalization of homelessness. ABA policy has also called for an expansion of the federal definition of homelessness (2006)—an issue which particularly impacts unaccompanied youth—and for the progressive realization of the human right to adequate housing (2013).

Numerous ABA policies address the provision of legal assistance to underserved populations, as well as issues specific to homelessness, housing, and funding for federal programs that provide housing and support services. There are also many ABA policies that touch on the common legal issues faced by youth experiencing homelessness (see below), such as education rights, child welfare, safety issues, diversion of juvenile status offenders, transitioning from foster care, and coordination of services for at-risk youth.

This policy provides not only a call to action to the lawmakers and the legal community that is specific to youth and young adults experiencing homelessness, but also highlights the critical components to successfully improving outcomes for this vulnerable population—through integrated, systemic approaches and increased funding.

This policy will not adversely impact or conflict with existing ABA policy. Rather, this policy will supplement existing policy by filling gaps and focusing specifically on the special legal needs of this population.

5. If this is a late report, what urgency exists which requires action at this meeting of the House?

N/A

6. Status of Legislation. (If applicable)

While no pending legislation currently focuses on meeting the legal needs of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness, there is pending legislation (and additional legislation on the horizon—including the forthcoming Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act) that the ABA is likely to weigh in on with regards to removing regulations, policies, practices and systems of care that may act as legal barriers—including S.611 – The Homeless Children and Youth Act of 2017 which seeks to amend the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to meet the needs of homeless children, youth, and families, and honor the assessments and priorities of local communities.

7. Brief explanation regarding plans for implementation of the policy, if adopted by the House of Delegates.

There has been a great deal of interest among national, state, and local partners—including lawmakers, providers, and both legal and non-legal advocates—to prevent and end youth homelessness. The emerging ABA Homeless Youth Legal Network is collaborating with stakeholders across the country to galvanize the legal community to meet the special needs of homeless youth.

The approval of this recommendation would further enhance the ABA's commitment to access to justice by supporting the Commission on Homelessness and Poverty's efforts through the Homeless Youth Legal Network to foster the creation of new and expanded legal services through technical assistance and future pilot efforts (based on the Commission's successful track record of utilizing ABA policies to foster replication of the Homeless Court Program, Veterans Treatment Courts, and alternatives to the criminalization of homelessness). The proposed recommendation is intended to give jurisdictions guidance on the critical components of successful integrated, systemic efforts while allowing flexibility for jurisdictions to innovate based on their resources and unique challenges.

113

8. Cost to the Association. (Both direct and indirect costs)

None. Existing Commission and Governmental Affairs staff will undertake the Association's advocacy on behalf of these recommendations, as is the case with other Association policies.

9. Disclosure of Interest. (If applicable)

There are no known conflicts of interest with this resolution.

10. Referrals.

The recommendation has been referred to the following ABA entities:

Administrative Law Section
Forum on Affordable Housing and Community Development
Section of Civil Rights and Social Justice
Criminal Justice Section
Standing Committee on the Delivery of Legal Services
Commission on Disability Rights
Commission on Domestic and Sexual Violence
Government and Public Sector Lawyers Division
Commission on Immigration
Section of International Law
Commission on Law and Aging
Law Student Division
Standing Committee on Legal Aid and Indigent Defendants
Section of Litigation
Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service
Section of Real Property, Trust and Estate Law
Senior Lawyers Division
Commission on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
Solo, Small Firm and General Practice Division
Section of State and Local Government Law
Young Lawyers Division
Commission on Youth at Risk

11. Contact Name and Address Information. (Prior to the meeting. Please include name, address, telephone number and e-mail address)

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12. Contact Name and Address Information. (Who will present the Resolution with Report to the House? Please include best contact information to use when on-site at the meeting. *Be aware that this information will be available to anyone who views the House of Delegates agenda online.*)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Summary of the Resolution

The American Bar Association supports the development of integrated, systemic approaches within administrative, civil, and criminal court contexts to address the special needs of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness.

2. Summary of the Issue that the Resolution Addresses

Youth and young adults experiencing homelessness often encounter legal barriers to benefits, education, employment, housing, identification, treatment and services. The bench and the bar are in a unique position to help address the circumstances that lead to and prolong homelessness in a wide range of ways, from ensuring access to education and assisting with record expungement to open doors to employment, to fighting housing discrimination and helping youth access basic necessities like food and identification documents. In addition to enforcing existing law, lawyers and lawmakers can craft new policies to minimize the barriers that can lead to homelessness or to help young people exit homelessness quickly and permanently.

3. Please Explain How the Proposed Policy Position Will Address the Issue

This recommendation would enhance the Association's efforts to foster the creation of integrated, systemic approaches to address the special legal needs of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness by providing not only a call to action to the lawmakers and the legal community that is specific to youth and young adults experiencing homelessness, but also highlights the critical components to successfully improving outcomes for this vulnerable population—through integrated, systemic approaches and increased funding.

4. Summary of Minority Views or Opposition Internal and/or External to the ABA Which Have Been Identified

None to date