



American Bar Association launches National Homeless Youth Legal Network

WASHINGTON, June 26, 2017 — Homeless youth in the United States remain a largely invisible segment of the homeless population, though researchers estimate that nearly eight percent of youths experience living on the streets.

The American Bar Association is a nationally recognized leader in addressing the legal needs of vulnerable populations, including homeless youth. Lawyers play a critical role in improving outcomes for homeless youth by enforcing existing laws as well as advancing new policy and removing legal barriers to benefits, education, employment, health care, housing, identification, treatment and services.

In an effort to increase legal services for this vulnerable population, the ABA Commission on Homelessness & Poverty, Commission on Youth at Risk, and Section of Litigation Children's Rights Litigation Committee announced today the official launch of the ABA Homeless Youth Legal Network. HYLN is designed to serve:

- Homeless youth seeking legal assistance
- Service providers working with homeless youth
- Lawyers seeking training or technical assistance

"The Homeless Youth Legal Network is a fine example of how the American Bar Association can link youth experiencing homelessness with experts in the legal community who can help," ABA President Linda A. Klein said. "This project, made possible with a grant from the ABA Enterprise Fund, shows how we can harness the power and reach of the ABA to improve access to justice by providing much-needed legal assistance to vulnerable populations."

In the past few months, the HYLN:

- Launched a website with information about the network and resources related to meeting homeless youth's legal needs
- Surveyed more than 300 individuals and groups about the legal needs of youth in their community
- Launched a listserv for attorneys and other advocates for homeless youth with more than 250 members
- Began providing training and technical assistance to legal services providers and homelessness programs

The Homeless Youth Legal Network has identified 12 model programs across the country to highlight promising practices, and to illustrate the value of providing legal services to homeless youth. These programs will document best practices, serve as models for replication, provide technical assistance to emerging programs and share data on legal barriers and improved outcomes resulting from legal advocacy:

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

For more information on the ABA Homeless Youth Legal Network, contact Jennifer Kildee at 202-662-1732 or Jennifer.Kildee@americanbar.org.

For more information on the Center for Children's Advocacy's work on behalf of youth experiencing homelessness, contact Stacey Violante Cote at 860-570-5327 or sviolante@cca-ct.org.

