

BEFORE - What would be helpful things to think about and prepare for if a youth may end up on their own? **This time is an opportunity to think things through carefully and make choices while weighing consequences.**

AFTER - What does a youth on their own need to think about in order to stay safe and healthy? **Meeting basic needs and doing it safely is the plan for every day.**

Safety

Get a 911 phone - ANY cell phone that you can charge will call 911 even without a paid plan

Gather all numbers that might be needed, neighbors, friends, teachers etc.

1 (800) RUNAWAY is available 24 hrs, they also offer a message relay service so you can have them call a parent/guardian for you and you can call back in and get a returned message

Text the zip code of where you are and the word "SAFE" to 69866 and they will text back within seconds (www.safeplace.org) the location of the closest Youth Services Agency and also a chat number if you need to talk to someone

Program Taxi and safe ride service, bus or transit numbers into your phone

Call 2-1-1 for basic resources, shelter locations, youth resources, food pantries etc.

Money – save up before leaving, budget wisely while on own, where will you keep it safe?

Weather- know how to find out what it will be and how to prepare for it

Documents

State ID, Birth Certificate, School ID, SS card and/or number, official school transcript, job check stubs, statement from landlord verifying having lived there, bank account numbers, Immunization records

Know how to cash checks from work, SSI or other benefits. Where will mail be sent?

Have a list of references ready for applying for jobs or apartments

Connections

A plan for where to go (with a back-up plan in case the first does not work out) include 3 - 4 places if possible

Who is the social worker or guidance counselor or other trusted adult at school? Identify other trusted adults in the community (clergy, relatives, friends, coaches, youth workers etc.)

Identify the Youth Services programs in the areas where may be staying.

What personal item will help keep you grounded? Photos, trinkets that hold memories, etc.

Use the Public Library Reference desk for information also local Chamber of Commerce

Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous, and Alanon/Alateen have open groups where anyone is free to attend. These groups can provide a network of support for youth with alcohol/drug abuse issues.

Risks

If you cross state lines your status and that of anyone with you may change, state laws vary with regard to runaways, reporting and harboring etc.

You should never have to trade your body for a place to stay. Know the warning signs, familiarize yourself with the power and control wheel. (Nat'l Center Domestic Sexual Violence, 512.407.9020, www.ncdsv.org)

Strategy for coming out? Who can you share this with and continue to stay safe? Can you pass for straight if you are staying in an adult homeless shelter?

School

McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act says UY: Have the right to enroll immediately without documents. (enrolled means fully participating), have the right to be provided supplies needed to participate equally with housed peers, the right to Free Lunch for the remainder of the school year, the right to transportation comparable to housed students and to access to all programming available to housed peers. Every District must have a Homeless Liaison. Seek this person out for enrolment and other supports. If you are 18 you can excuse your own absences.

Resources

Food	Food Pantries, Free Lunch at School (not ALL items are included, youth need someone to tell them which items are included), Food Share, Free meal sites (locations days, times)
Laundry	Where to wash and dry? How to pay for it? Laundry soap, bag for carrying. Can laundry be done at school?
Health	Self care – shower, at school or where? Hair care, personal hygiene items Prescriptions -how to fill them how to pay for them, glasses, contacts Medical insurance – how to access it, where are free clinics, locations hours Plan for safe sex or birth control if needed? What to do if sick or hurt? Where to go?
Clothes	Dress for the weather. Where to get clothing, sox, underwear? How to carry clothes? What places are available for storing clothes and other personal items during the day?
Housing Shelter	Places to go that might be safe: Emergency Room waiting rooms, 24hr restaurants, 24hr stores, Public Safety Buildings, Shelter, Neighbors, Friends, Faith communities, Youth organizations Prepare yourself to rent, understand tenant rights and tenant vocabulary (Tenant Resource Center http://www.tenantresourcecenter.org)
Transportation	What are the local bus routes, costs of tickets or passes, other transit options like night time safe ride services, taxis, Greyhound and National Switchboard will provide return home ride (1800-RUNAWAY)