

Homelessness Among Youth and Young Adults



YOUTH HOMELESSNESS SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT
Building Pathways, Uniting Systems, Empowering Futures

N CENTER ON CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND THE LAW

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The speakers certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials presented in this training.

Learning Objectives

 <p>Define youth homelessness and identify risk factors that contribute to youth homelessness.</p>	 <p>Describe trauma-informed and youth-centered engagement strategies to build safety and increase trust.</p>	 <p>Identify evidence-based approaches for addressing youth homelessness.</p>	 <p>Describe how to coordinate care and referrals with education, housing, and community-based systems.</p>
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Agenda

- 01 What does youth homelessness look like?
- 02 How many youth and young adults experience homelessness?
- 03 Why does youth homelessness occur? And who is most at risk to experience youth homelessness?
- 04 What Challenges do YEH experience?
- 05 What is the role of behavioral health providers in prevention and intervention?
- 06 What resources are available in Nebraska?



What does youth homelessness look like?

In this section we will:

- Explore our biases and stereotypes
- Hear personal experiences from individuals with lived experience
- Discuss common definitions for “youth homelessness”



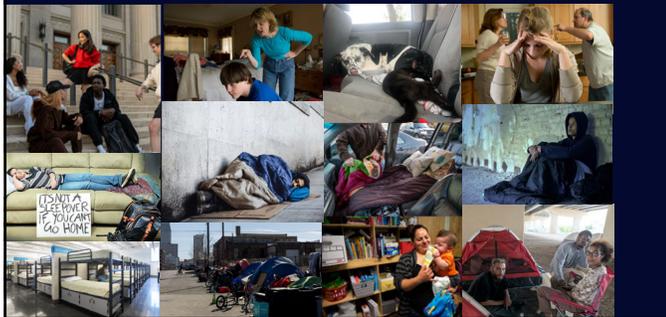
Self-Reflection

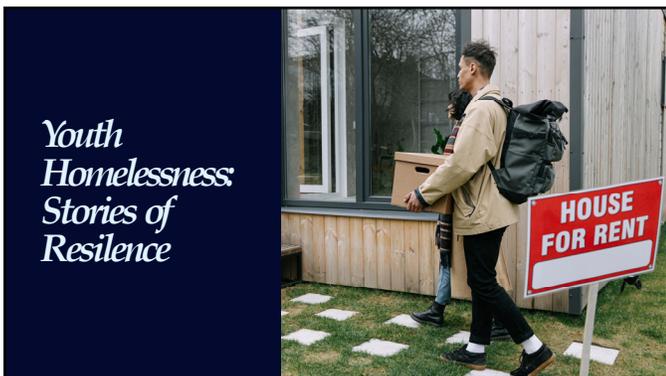


- On your own please write down what images or thoughts come to mind when you hear the term “youth homelessness”
 - Why do you think a youth or young adult might experience homelessness?
 - What do you think youth/young adults need to exit homelessness ?
 - Imagine you are walking down the street and you see a young adult sleeping on the street what are you immediate thoughts/actions?



Youth Homelessness: A Spectrum of Experiences





Youth Homelessness Defined

Definition and age varies across research and federal programs. Key components across definitions:

- 1. **Unaccompanied** (not experiencing homelessness with a parent or guardian)
- 2. **Age**
 - Most often between 14-25
- 3. **Experiencing homelessness**
 - McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness: *individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence*
 - Places not meant for human habitation (outdoors, abandoned buildings, cars, etc.)
 - Doubled up/couch surfing
 - Hotels/motels
 - Emergency shelters
 - Transitional Housing Programs



Key Definitions and Considerations

Final Considerations on Definitions

Homelessness is a living situation that young people may experience. It is NOT a character trait or personal attribute.

For the majority of young people homelessness is a temporary living situation.

While the experience of homelessness is associated with many potential challenges, many young adults are able to overcome significant challenges and thrive.

We NEED systems of care that don't let vulnerable youth fall through the cracks



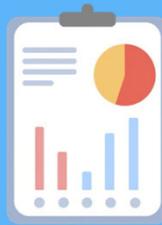
How many youth and young adults experience homelessness?

In this section we will:

- Discuss challenges with data collection and estimates.
- Explore common data sources
- Explore data specific to Nebraska

Challenges measuring youth homelessness

- Given the transient and sometimes hidden nature of homelessness it can be difficult to estimate the true prevalence.
- Youth and young adults may be reluctant to share their housing status.
- Youth and young adults may not recognize their living situation as being "homeless"
- Unsheltered youth and young adults may not come into contact with agencies.



Helpful Tips



When trying to determine whether a young person may be experiencing homelessness consider asking questions about their living situation rather than asking about "homelessness."

- In the past month how many places have you slept?
- Where did you sleep last night?
- Do you have a safe and consistent place to sleep at night?
- In the past _____ how many nights have you spent in:
 - someplace outdoors (cars, street, tent, abandoned building, etc.)
 - doubled up with friends or family (i.e. couch surfing)
 - an apartment/house with your own room/private space
 - an emergency shelter
 - hotel/motel
 - jail/juvenile detention
 - the hospital
 - a treatment center for substance use and/or mental health condition

Common Measures of Homelessness

Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

- Point in Time Count (PIT)
- Housing Inventory Count (HIC)
- Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS)

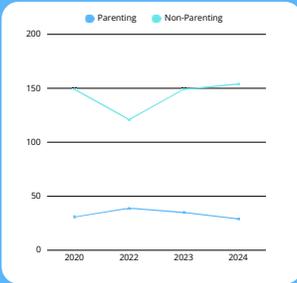


Prevalence Estimates

- Can vary across studies depending on method
- Chapin Hall Voices of Youth Count



Nebraska Youth PIT-C



Point In Time Count

Federal programs often use the Point-in-Time Count (PIT-C) to track homelessness across time

Annual count of how many people are experiencing homelessness on a single night in January.

Annual PIT reports are available at: <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/coc-homeless-populations-and-subpopulations-reports/>

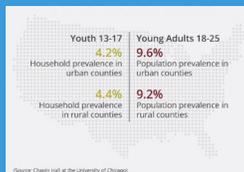


Nationwide Prevalence

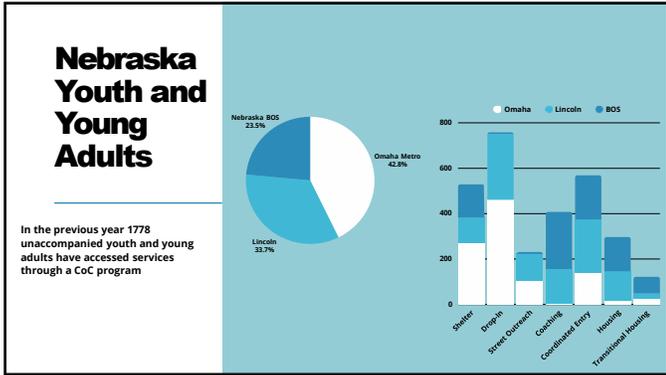
Voices of Youth Count provides the most comprehensive 12-month prevalence estimate to date.

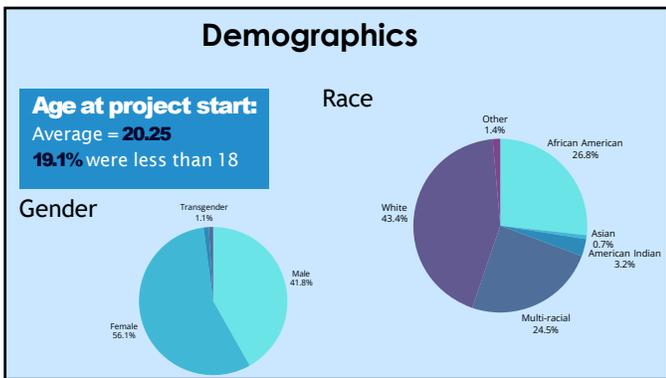
A large nationally representative sample of youth 13-25 were asked about experiences of homelessness in the prior year.

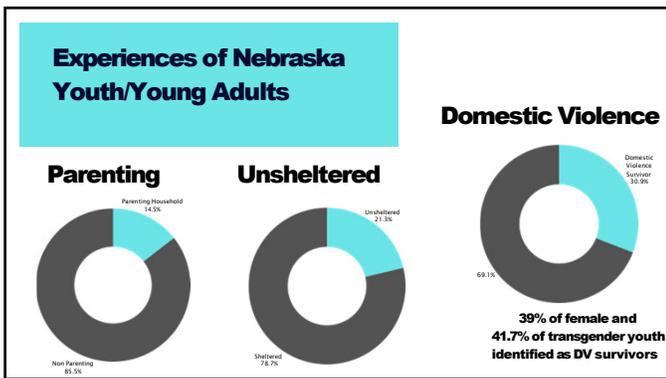
- About 1 in 10 young adults (18-25) experienced homelessness.
- About 1 in 30 adolescents (13-17) experienced homelessness.



Source: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago







Check out CCFL Community Services for more Data





Live Data Dashboards for Lincoln and BOS



PIT-C, HIC, and other reports

Why does youth homelessness occur and who is more likely to experience homelessness as a youth or young adult?

In this section we will discuss:

- Social Ecological Theory
 - Individual Factors
 - Relational Factors
 - Community Factors
 - Policy Factors



Social Ecological Model



Social Ecological Theory can provide a useful framework for understanding the complex interplay of factors that contribute to youth homelessness.

Youth experience homelessness in our society because we lack robust social safety nets for vulnerable youth.

Addressing youth homelessness requires solutions across all level of systems.

Individual Factors

Factor	Percentage
Developmental or intellectual disability	4%
Behavioral health or mental health diagnosis	7%
LGBTQ+	8%
Racial or ethnic minority	16%

Similar to homelessness in general, racial and ethnic minorities are over-represented.

- 11% of American Indian/Native American Youth
- 7% of Black/African American Youth
- 7% of Hispanic Youth
- 4% of White Youth

Sexual orientation and gender identity are also associated with increased risk of homelessness.

Rates of developmental and intellectual disabilities are higher among youth experiencing homelessness compared to general population.

Rates of behavioral health and mental health diagnoses are higher among youth experiencing homelessness compared to general population.

Family and Relationships

Family conflict

Majority of youth experiencing homelessness report high rates of family conflict and experiences of abuse and/or neglect.

- Parental substance use
- Over 50% report physical abuse
- 34-47% report sexual abuse

Low Social Support

Youth who experience homelessness often have experiences that may result in having less robust social support networks.

- Family economic hardship
- Residential instability
- Multiple caretaker transitions
- Death of a parent/caregiver

Youth who lack social support may also experience more challenges while homeless.

- Increased mental health symptoms
- Higher rates of suicidal thoughts and behaviors
- Longer lengths of homelessness
- Increased risk of victimization

Family and Relationships

Many youth who experience homelessness are also parents.

- Chapin Hall estimated 1.1 million children had a young parent who experienced homelessness in the last year.

Pregnancy and Parenthood are Common Among Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Gender	Age Group	Percentage
FEMALES	13-17	10%
	18-25	44%
MALES	13-17	3%
	18-25	19%

Source: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Studies consistently find YEH have elevated ACE scores.

- Barnes et al (2021) found 32.9% of unaccompanied homeless students had an ACE score of 4 or higher compared to 2.7% of housed peers.
- Middleton et al (2021) found 66% of YEH had ACE scores of 4 or higher.

1. Did you feel that you didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, or had no one to protect or take care of you?	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Did you lose a parent through divorce, abandonment, death, or other reason?	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Did you live with anyone who was depressed, mentally ill, or attempted suicide?	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Did you live with anyone who had a problem with drinking or using drugs, including prescription drugs?	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Did your parents or adults in your home ever hit, punch, beat, or threaten to harm each other?	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Did you live with anyone who went to jail or prison?	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Did a parent or adult in your home ever swear at you, insult you, or put you down?	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Did a parent or adult in your home ever hit, beat, kick, or physically hurt you in any way?	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Did you feel that no one in your family loved you or thought you were special?	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Did you experience unwanted sexual contact (such as fondling or oral/anal/vaginal intercourse/penetration)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your ACE score is the total number of checked responses	

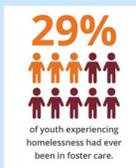
Organizational Factors

Foster Care Experience

Prior child welfare involvement is associated with significant risk of experiencing youth homelessness.

The Voices of Youth Count reported 29% of YEH had prior foster care involvement.

Youth who age out of foster care are at especially high risk of experiencing homelessness with studies finding 31 to 46% experience homelessness by age 26.

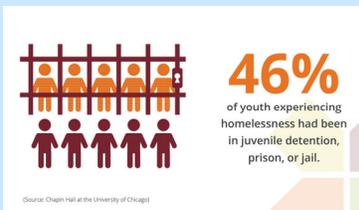


Organizational Factors

Criminal Justice System Involvement

Youth experiencing homelessness often report higher rates of criminal justice system involvement than their peers.

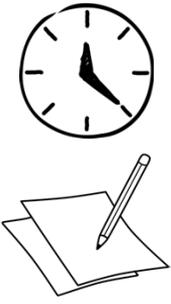
- Similar to foster care, youth who age out of juvenile justice care may be at increased risk.
- Criminal records can make it more difficult to find housing/employment.
- Survival crimes
 - Sleeping outside can be criminalized
 - Stealing to meet basic needs



Self Reflection

Think about the first time you lived on your own.

- How old were you?
- Did you live alone or with roommates?
- Did you pay your own rent?
- How did you learn to look for an apartment/house?
 - How did you know what to look for?
 - How did you know what you could afford?
- Who taught you what to say to the landlord and how to complete an application?
- Did you need a co-signer on your lease?
- How did you know how to set up your utilities?
- How did you get furniture?



Fewer than half of adults under 30 say that they are completely financially independent from their parents

% of young adults saying they consider themselves financially independent from their parents

	Completely	Mostly	Net
All young adults	45	23	68
Men	44	18	62
Women	45	28	74
Ages 18-24	16	19	35
25-29	44	29	73
30-34	67	18	85

Note: Young adults include those ages 18 to 34 who have a living parent. Other response options included "Somewhat," "A little" and "Not at all." Figures may not add to subtotals due to rounding. Source: Survey of U.S. young adults conducted Oct. 24-Nov. 5, 2023. "Parents, Young Adult Children and the Transition to Adulthood" PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Community Factors

Adolescence and the transition to adulthood is a challenging time for most individuals.

In modern society it is typical for individuals to need significant emotional and financial support to navigate this developmental period.

Youth at-risk for homelessness often come from family situations that involved abuse, parental loss, and/or economic hardship. Thus, may lack the natural supports most young adults rely on during this developmental period.

Societal Factors

Underfunded social safety nets for vulnerable children and families.

Our systems often fail to recognize at-risk youth and youth fall through the cracks.

Despite the well known risk of system involved youth, we still lack robust policies to support youth aging out of systems.

- Foster Youth Initiative Vouchers



What are common challenges experienced by youth?

In this section we will discuss common challenges experienced by youth experiencing homelessness.

01 Trauma and Victimization

02 Domestic Violence

03 Human Trafficking

04 Substance Use and Mental Health

Trauma and Victimization

The experience of homelessness is traumatic

- Chronic stress of trying to meet basic needs
- Stigma
- Social exclusion

Youth and young adults are especially vulnerable to experiencing victimization while homeless.

- 52 to 94% report physical victimization
- 21 to 35% report sexual victimization



Human Trafficking

Youth experiencing homelessness are vulnerable to sex and labor trafficking.

- 19 to 40% across studies.
- Early experiences of trauma
- Need to meet basic needs

Rates of "survival sex" are high and youth may not recognize themselves as victims.

Did You Know?

Since 2015 Nebraska has had a multi-disciplinary team dedicated to addressing trafficking throughout Nebraska.



Intimate Partner Violence

Many youth report family conflict was the reason they left/were forced to leave home.

Youth and young adults experiencing homelessness are at increased risk of experiencing domestic violence in their romantic relationships as well.

- Females are more likely to report IPV
- Youth with histories of child abuse were more likely to report IPV

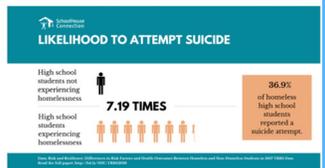


Mental Health and Substance Use

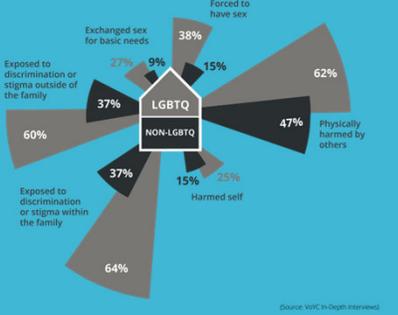
Studies consistently find rates of substance use and mental health disorders are higher among youth experiencing homelessness compared other housed peers.

Substance use can be a way to cope with the stress of homelessness.

Suicide is the leading cause of death among youth experiencing homelessness.



LGBTQ Youth



(Source: VAWC in-Depth Interviews)

What is the role of behavioral health providers in prevention and intervention?

In this section we will discuss:

- Recognizing at-risk youth
- Intervention strategies
- Existing resources in Nebraska



Recognizing At-Risk Youth

True prevention requires intervening before a youth experiences homelessness.

- High conflict families
- Victims of abuse
- Parental substance use
- LGBTQ Youth
- System involved youth
- Youth exiting psychiatric care or substance use treatment



A critical intervention point may be the first time a youth has run away from home.

Prevention should focus on creating a safe home and family environment.

Self-actualization

desire to become the most that one can be

Esteem

respect, self-esteem, status, recognition, strength

Love and belonging

friendship, intimacy, family, sense of connection

Safety needs

personal security, employment, resources, health

Physiological needs

air, water, food, shelter, sleep, clothing, reproduction

Intervention Strategies

There is significant variation in the level of support youth may need to exit homelessness.

Regardless of support needs approaching intervention through a "housing first" framework is helpful.

Trauma-informed approach is also essential for effective care.

What did youth have to say about their experiences?

Youth identified how housing stability helped them feel better

"I was trying to stay afloat. Hard to eat and sleep. But when you guys came and helped me out, it was easier for me to do a lot more and be able to sleep and eat and all that stuff and I wouldn't have to worry about where I would have to lay my head and all of that."

"Once I got my house I just started thinking about what to do with myself and everything. The comfort and security helped me sleep more."

The relationship with their advocate was also important

"Just the fact that you guys, you know, you sat there and listened, you know, to help me out."

"[advocate name] was really like going with me from complex to complex... that actually gave me a sense of importance, like I actually matter?"

Housing is essential but not sufficient...

Resources to Learn More

Research Brief

Missed Opportunities: Evidence on Interventions for Addressing Youth Homelessness

October 2019

The graph is a series of Research to Impact Briefs by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago on understanding and addressing youth homelessness.

Source: An earlier research report estimated that nearly 52 million youth and young adults in America experience some form of homelessness every 111 seconds. Youth homelessness is a complex and persistent problem. Addressing their developmental needs and providing them with the resources and support they need to succeed in life are the challenges we face. This research to impact brief provides a review of the current research on youth homelessness and offers practical strategies to address this issue.

www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Review-Brief.pdf

Clinical and Practical Tips

Mental Health & Addiction Interventions for Youth Experiencing Homelessness: Practical Strategies for Front-line Providers

Edited by: Dr. Steven Paul Frensch, Jeff Kessler, and Susan Grier
Foreword by Sam Tombrina

homelesshub.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/COH-MentalHealthBook_0.pdf



Care Coordination and Referrals: Housing



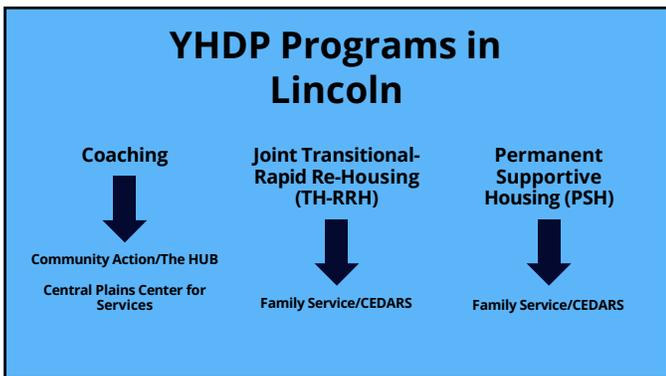
- All Doors Lead Home Coordinated Entry
 - Lincoln and Balance of State
- Threshold Coordinated Entry: Omaha-Metro
- Public housing authorities

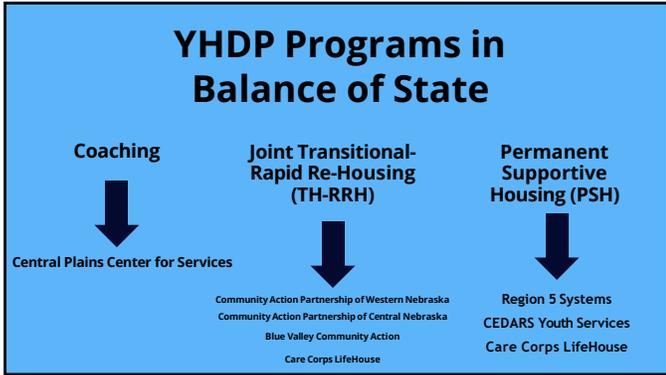


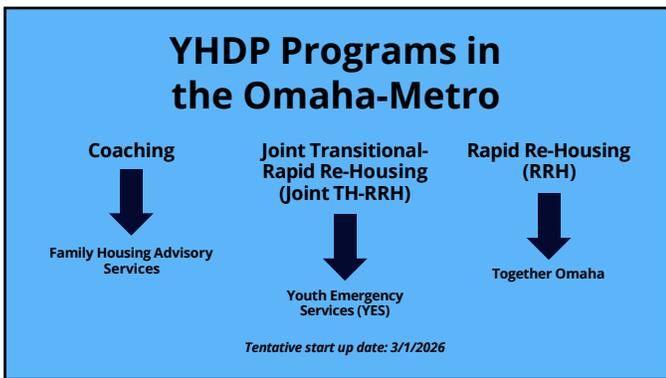
ADLH CE



Threshold CE









Education Resources

McKinney-Vento liasons at school
Support staff at colleges and universities
School social workers/counselors
Education Quest

Nebraska Youth Action Boards

Regional YAB Facilitators in Nebraska

Central & Eastern YAB
Whitney Kinross
whitkin@centralyab.org
402-339-4496

Tribal YAB
Pamela Angela Peterson
p.peterson@tribalyab.org
402-371-8834

Tribal YAB
Wendy Madsen - Kaitlin Lewis
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Western YAB CAPWN

Region 1

Region 2

Region 3

Region 4

Region 5

Sentry & Douglas Counties YAB
Taylor Novak
taylor@sentriyab.com
402-281-9470

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Angela Gethardt
agethardt@lincolnyab.org
402-413-1810

**Submit Question/
Request to YAB**

Agebhardt@unl.edu

**Check us out on
Facebook
YAB4housinglincoln**

**Eastern Nebraska YHSI
YAB**

**Central Nebraska Youth
Action Board.**

Opportunities for Involvement!

**Join your regional
Continuum of Care
(Lincoln or Rural
Nebraska)**

Monthly Meetings held via
zoom
Email: Jschalk3@unl.edu

**Join Nebraska YHSI
Quarterly Meetings held
via zoom**

Email: cgressley@unl.edu

Other Resources

- PALS Coaching - Central Plains Center for Services
- Connected Youth Initiative (CYI) - Nebraska Children and Families Foundation
- Foster Youth to Independence Housing Voucher - Public Housing Authorities/DHHS CFS
- b2i - DHHS Child and Family Services (CFS)
- The HUB Central Access Point for Young Adults - GED, volunteer opportunities, support funds
- CEDARS Youth Services - Youth Opportunity Center & emergency shelter
- People's City Mission Safe Place - emergency shelter for those 18 & under in Lincoln
- Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska (CAPWN) Youth Shelter
- American Job Centers - career resources



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