

# ***National Runaway and Homeless Youth Prevention Month***

## **November 2022**

**WHEREAS**, preventing youth homelessness and providing safe, stable, and permanent housing for runaway and homeless youth is a family, community, county, state, and national priority; and

**WHEREAS**, youth homelessness is complex and distinct from adult homelessness, and leading factors include family disruption, conflict, abuse, neglect, exposure to domestic violence and poverty in their homes; and

**WHEREAS**, Black Americans make up 10.7% of Alameda County's general population, but make up nearly half of Alameda County's unhoused population, and it is crucial that our systems of care address that Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) youth are at a greater risk of experiencing homelessness and face higher barriers to getting resources due to the systematic, institutional, interpersonal and internalized perpetuation of racism; and

**WHEREAS**, there is also an overrepresentation – compared to the general youth population – of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) youth in Alameda County's youth homelessness population; and

**WHEREAS**, the idea that teens who run away from home can easily return if they wanted to is a myth and many youth who run away from home do not have anywhere to return to; and

**WHEREAS**, youth who are experiencing homelessness are at an increased risk of becoming victims of sex trafficking; and

**WHEREAS**, at least 31% of all people currently experiencing homelessness first experienced homeless before their 25th birthday, and youth with former involvement in child welfare and juvenile justice systems have an increased risk of experiencing homelessness; and

**WHEREAS**, youth experiencing homelessness between the ages of 12 and 24 become disconnected from educational systems and graduate at far lower rates than their peers, which has significant negative implications for career trajectories and lifetime earnings; and

**WHEREAS**, there are at least 832 unaccompanied minors and youth under age 25 experiencing homelessness in Alameda County **on any given day** in 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, the February 23, 2022 Point in Time (PIT) Count counted 735 transitional-aged youth (TAY) between the ages of 18-24, and 97 unaccompanied children under the age of 18 **on a single night**- both sheltered and unsheltered - in Alameda County; and

**WHEREAS**, the population of youth experiencing homelessness continues to increase, and while youth and young adults (YYA) make up at least 11% of the homeless population, only 4.5% of beds are dedicated to youth; and

**WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 Pandemic has put a spotlight on the service and resource gaps for youth experiencing homelessness, with providers serving youth struggling to meet the needs of young people who have no safe spaces to shelter in place and an inadequate safety net to hold them; and

**WHEREAS**, the Alameda County Youth Advisory Board (YAB) and Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) Executive Team completed a Coordinated Community Plan (CCP) called *Youth Action a Way Home* which identified five priorities within the CCP to prevent and end youth homelessness in Alameda County; and

**WHEREAS**, a coordinated system of robust diversion and prevention strategies, housing services, education and workforce programs, and health and wellness supports, all tailored to the unique needs of young people, and that are designed for and by youth with lived experience, are key requirements to preventing and ending youth homelessness.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors does hereby proclaim **November 2022** as **National Runaway and Homeless Youth Prevention Month** and affirms its commitment to ensuring Alameda County develops a well-resourced, coordinated, and supportive continuum of responses to meet the complex and multifaceted needs of young people experiencing homelessness and ultimately end youth homelessness in Alameda County.

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Supervisor, Fifth District

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