



**Office of Children
and Family Services**

Runaway & Homeless Youth Funds Claiming Guide

Program Year 2024-25

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SECTION I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This guidance is developed for municipal youth bureaus to support their understanding of how to allocate and claim their runaway and homeless youth (RHY) state aid. It is a companion document to the youth development funds claiming documents found on the Quality Youth Development System (QYDS) landing page, and it replaces other Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) guidance documents specific to the use of RHY funds. If, after reviewing this guidance, you have additional questions on RHY funding, please contact the OCFS RHY team at RHY@ocfs.ny.gov. We're here to help!

Runaway and Homeless Youth

Each year, thousands of New York's youth run away from home, are told to leave their homes, or experience homelessness. Youth face these challenges not just in cities, but in suburban and rural communities as well. Often, youth are trying to escape [abuse, neglect, or conflict](#) in their homes.

Youth are still developing and, when they experience homelessness, are less likely to complete their education, develop general life skills, and [obtain employment](#). On the street, youth can become [victims of violence](#), struggle with [mental health challenges](#), engage in [substance use](#), and [trade sex for basic needs](#).

RHY services are grounded in the [positive youth development](#) framework. They focus on supporting and developing healthy relationships to enhance youth's existing strengths and resiliency, while incorporating youth voice and leadership in programming. Programs recognize that youth are the experts in their own lives and support them in making choices that improve their safety and personal development.

OCFS administers state RHY funds, which can be used to support the following program models:

Crisis Services Programs, subject to 9 NYCRR 182-1

Residential RHY crisis services programs are certified by OCFS to provide temporary shelter to runaway and homeless youth. Generally, programs are certified to serve youth who are either under age 18, from the age of 16 up to age 21, or up to age 25. The main goal of RHY crisis services programs is to support a safe reunification of a youth with their guardians, when appropriate. There are two types of residential crisis services programs:

1. Runaway and Homeless Youth Shelters

Often referred to as 'crisis shelters' or 'youth shelters,' these programs offer short-term emergency housing for up to 20 youth. In general, youth can stay in these programs for up to 30 days but in some circumstances may stay as long as 120 days.

2. Interim Family Programs

Interim family homes provide short-term emergency shelter for up to two youth in the home of an individual or family with extra space to share. Interim family homes are inspected and supervised by interim family programs that are licensed by OCFS. Interim family programs are local agencies with expertise in the needs and development of runaway and homeless youth.

They ensure safe and appropriate living conditions for the youth that stay in the interim family homes they support.

Transitional Independent Living Support Programs (TILPs), subject to 9 NYCRR 182-2

Residential TILPs are programs that provide longer-term housing to homeless youth between the ages of 16 and 21, or up to age 25 in some municipalities. These programs are designed to support homeless youth progress from crisis to independent living. There are two types of residential TILPs:

1. Supported Residences

Supported residences provide an environment that resembles independent living (generally an apartment) for a maximum of five homeless youth of the same gender.

2. Group Residences

Group residences provide an environment that encourages the development and practice of independent living skills for a maximum of 20 homeless youth of any gender.

There are also a wide variety of **non-residential services and supports** designed specifically to meet the needs of youth who are homeless or have run away from home. To learn more about RHY programs and how OCFS partners to support them, visit <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/youth/rhy/>.

SECTION II. RHY ALLOCATION BASICS

Allocations

As of program year 2024-25,¹ 24 counties and New York City receive an RHY allocation from OCFS. Allocations are communicated to municipal youth bureaus through a Local Commissioner's Memoranda (LCM). All LCMs can be found on OCFS's webpage here:

<https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/policies/external/#LCM>.

OCFS enters county allocations into QYDS. RHY allocations can support a wide variety of expenses incurred by eligible programs. Reimbursable and non-reimbursable expenditures are defined in 9 NYCRR 182-1.16 and 182-2.15.

Counties in which only non-residential RHY programs operate received a flat allocation of up to \$15,000 per year. Counties in which residential programs operate will see a modest fluctuation in their allocation year to year, based on the number of certified beds that were operating in the county on the last day of the prior year compared to the number statewide.

A certified residential RHY program opened/closed in my county. Will our RHY allocation change next year?

Very likely, yes. Allocations are calculated, in part, based on the number of certified beds operating both statewide and in each municipality. If the number of beds in a county changes, the next year's allocation will likely change for that county – and all other counties – as well.

Changes to County Allocations

In rare instances, a county may identify mid-year that it has been allocated RHY funds that it cannot spend or claim. When this occurs, counties are encouraged to contact OCFS as soon as possible. Sharing this information with OCFS may allow those unused funds to be reallocated to another county with RHY programming and demonstrated fiscal need.

Counties demonstrate fiscal need – and therefore may become eligible to receive additional funds should they become available – by accurately completing the fields described in the *Assigning Funding Values to Programs* subsection of section III.

County Match

Per 9 NYCRR 182-1.16(b) and 182-2.15(b), counties are responsible for at least 40% of the cost of their RHY programs, with the state providing a maximum of 60%. This 40% is called the local, or county, match. Up to half of that match requirement (or 20%) can be met through donations or in-kind resources. The balance of the county's match (20% or more) must be cash from the county's budget. The county's cash match requirement can include funds from other county departments; the

¹ Program year 2024-25 covers the period of October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025.

cash does not need to come from the youth bureau specifically. County match responsibilities must be met by the county; counties are not permitted to require RHY programs or agencies to fund the county's match responsibility.

The in-kind portion of the county match is typically provided in the form of office space, salary, fringe benefits, etc. provided by the county to the RHY service coordinator. Please be aware, however, that if OCFS RHY funds are used to support administrative costs, those costs cannot also be used toward the county's in-kind match.

Examples of County Match

Example 1:

County's OCFS allocation (state aid): \$27,365 (60%)

County's match responsibility: \$18,243 (40%)

Minimum county cash responsibility: \$9,121.50 (20%)

Maximum in-kind from county: \$9,121.50 (20%)

County's total RHY budget (OCFS allocation + total county match): \$45,608 (100%)

County's minimum total RHY budget in cash (OCFS allocation + county cash): \$36,486

If the county's OCFS allocation (state aid) is \$27,365 the county could meet its 40% match requirement through the following options:

\$18,243 (40%) in cash

Up to \$9,121.50 (20%) in in-kind contributions, with cash to total \$18,243 (40%)

Both options result in the municipal RHY budget totaling \$45,608 (OCFS allocation + total county match)

Example 2:

County's OCFS allocation (state aid): \$60,000 (60%)

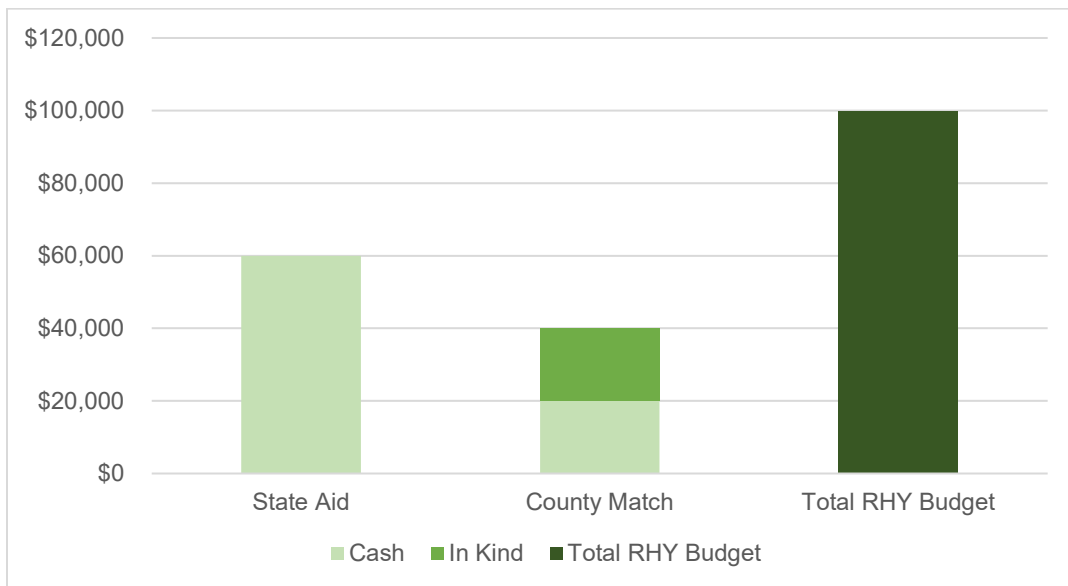
County's match responsibility: \$40,000 (40%)

Minimum county cash responsibility: \$20,000 (20%)

Maximum in-kind from county: \$20,000 (20%)

County's total RHY budget (OCFS allocation + total county match): \$100,000 (40%)

County's minimum total RHY budget in cash (OCFS allocation + county cash): \$80,000



SECTION III: RESOURCE ALLOCATION PLAN (RAP)

Once the county has decided how it will allocate its RHY funds among local programs, a RAP is submitted to OCFS for approval in QYDS. One application must be submitted via the RAP for each program that will receive funds. For additional details on QYDS and RAPs, please review the guidance documents found on the QYDS landing page or consult with OCFS’s youth development team at YouthBureau@ocfs.ny.gov.

Within QYDS, a municipality’s allocation is assigned to the category of “RHY I” or “RHY II.” RHY I funds are used to support crisis services programs, and RHY II funds are used to support TILPs. For counties with non-residential services only, funds are entered in RHY I. For counties with residential programs, funds are entered into either RHY I or II based on the number and type of certified beds in the county as of 12/31/2023. Counties may move funds between RHY I and RHY II based on local need.

Assigning Funds to Programs

Municipal youth bureaus are responsible for distributing their RHY allocation and county match to eligible RHY service providers. When making these decisions, counties must consider the needs that were identified by the county in the RHY section of the current Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP) and the local services that can best meet those identified needs.

In order for a municipality to allocate OCFS RHY funds to a program, the program must, at minimum:

1. be included in the RHY section of the current CFSP,
2. have been approved for funding by OCFS as part of the RAP, and
3. be certified by OCFS (residential programs only).

Municipalities may impose additional criteria on programs when determining how the allocation will be distributed locally, so long as those criteria don’t contradict or contravene the regulations or policies of OCFS.

How to Move RHY Funds Between RHY I and RHY II

Prior to RAP submission, the county must enter a note in QYDS containing the following information in the notes section:

- Justification for transfer of funds between RHY I and RHY II based on local need and programming
- Amount of funds being moved between RHY I and RHY II

If the funds have already been allocated to a program within QYDS and the funds need to be moved after this allocation, please enter a note in QYDS containing the following information in the notes section:

- Justification for transfer of funds between RHY I and RHY II (statement of local need and programming)
- QYDS ID number and name of program funds will be removed from
 - Amount decreased by
 - New program total
- QYDS ID number and name of program that will receive the funds
 - Amount increased by
 - New program total

The county may move funds to or from multiple programs. In this case, all applicable QYDS ID numbers for programs losing/receiving additional funds must be listed and described as stated above.

Applications for RHY Funds

- An application must be submitted for each RHY program that will receive funds. Eligible residential programs are those that have been issued operating certificates; eligible non-residential programs are identified in the county's CFSP.
- Backup documentation is required (described in section IV, below).
- The Services, Opportunities and Supports (SOS) selection in QYDS should reflect Life Area 6: Community. (Please refer to the coding document in QYDS for definitions of each SOS and their performance measures.)
- For programs to be directly implemented by the county, the county must be selected as the implementing agency.
- The program and agency contacts provided (names and contact details) must be accurate and current.
- Many residential RHY programs also offer non-residential services. If the county wishes to fund both residential and non-residential services from the same agency, applications must be submitted for each residential and non-residential program/services.

Applications for Residential RHY Programs

- An application must be submitted for each certified residential RHY program, with the exception of certain TILP – supported residences (see more information on this below).
- For certified residential RHY programs, the program name and address must be entered exactly as they appear on the OCFS-issued operating certificate.
- The value entered for the projected daily attendance in the projected enrollment section cannot exceed the program's maximum bed capacity as certified by OCFS.
- The ages entered in the projected enrollment section must align with the ages the program is certified to serve by OCFS. If the program is certified to serve youth and their dependent children, the ages entered should reflect both the parenting youth and their dependent children.
- If the program is certified to serve only a single gender, the gender entered in the projected enrollment section must align with the gender the program is certified to serve.
 - Note: OCFS is no longer issuing programs operating certificates for specific genders, but those programs that were certified as gender-specific in the past may continue to operate this way, until their operating certificate changes.
- The information provided in the program summary and youth development features sections must accurately describe how each program functions. An example of a strong program summary is below:

XXXX Transitional Living Program is an OCFS-certified program for homeless youth aged 16 through 20 years old in XXXX County. The program welcomes youth of all genders, as well as pregnant and parenting youth. The program uses a positive youth development approach to provide participants with a healthy, safe, supportive environment in which they can thrive. In addition to providing safe, secure apartments or

dormitory-style living, the program meets critical needs and helps participants set and meet their own goals. The program offers comprehensive case management and coaches youth to develop life skills and supportive networks that will help them successfully transition to independent living in the community.

- *Exceptions for TILP - supported residence applications:* A single application may be submitted for TILP-supported residence programs where multiple units are certified at the same site/within the same building, so long as the necessary information is provided as described below.
 - Program information:
 - Program title: Agency name, TILP – supported residence
 - Program Site:
 - For multiple supported residence programs that operate in the same building*
 - Site Type: Select TILP – supported residence.
 - Address Line 2: Provide all unit numbers that correspond with the operating certificate numbers provided under site type (ex. “units 1-8”).
 - In the program summary, list each program’s operating certificate number as they appear on the OCFS-issued operating certificates.
 - For multiple supported residence programs that operate as scattered-site apartments, one program site must be completed for each certified program (typically an apartment).*
 - In the program summary, list each program’s operating certificate number as they appear on the OCFS-issued operating certificates.
 - Under site information, provide each address as a unique site. The address should be entered exactly as it appears on the OCFS-issued operating certificate.

Applications for Non-Residential RHY Programs

A wide range of non-residential RHY programs can be supported with RHY state aid. Each program requires its own application.

- In order for a non-residential program to be eligible for state aid, it must be included in the county’s CFSP.
- Many residential RHY programs also offer non-residential services. If the county wishes to fund both residential and non-residential services from the same agency, applications must be submitted for each residential and non-residential program/services.
- For a local hotline to be eligible for RHY state aid, it must be answered by a live, local support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Such a number cannot be answered by an answering service or go to voicemail.
- When a county’s only RHY programming is non-residential supports and those supports are provided directly by the RHY service coordinator, the application should list the municipal youth bureau as the implementing agency.

Applications for the Municipal RHY Service Coordinator

RHY administrative costs, including the salary for a municipal RHY service coordinator, may be supported with RHY state aid. However, funds used for this purpose are limited to a maximum of **10%** of the county’s RHY allocation; the remaining 90% must go towards RHY programming. Costs associated with the RHY service coordinator should be assigned to RHY I funds.

An exception may be made when the only RHY service in a county is non-residential programming provided directly by the RHY service coordinator. In this instance the work of the coordinator is both administrative and programmatic, thus the 10% cap does not apply.

Please note that local dollars used to support a municipal RHY service coordinator's functions can be used towards the county's match requirement as in-kind.

Assigning Funding Values to Programs

Each application requires the county to enter three funding amounts: total program amount, OCFS funds requested, and OCFS funds allocated.

- The *total program amount* is the program's operating budget for the year. Counties will need to get this information from each program for which they are submitting an application.
- *OCFS funds allocated* is the amount of OCFS RHY funding the county is allocating to support the program. This figure should not reflect funds allocated to the program from the county match; it is specific to state funds.
- *OCFS funds requested* is the amount of funding the agency/program is requesting of the county to support the program. This amount may be higher than the amount of state funding the county allocated to the program and can be used to demonstrate unmet funding needs. This value cannot exceed the total program amount.

Accurately completing the fields below in QYDS may make your county eligible for additional RHY funds, should they become available.

Fund Amounts

Total Program Amount:	\$400,000.00
OCFS Funds Allocated:	\$61,295.00
OCFS Funds Requested:	\$70,000.00

Programs are paid directly by the youth bureau. Youth bureaus are reimbursed for approved, eligible expenses through the claiming process, described in the following section.

SECTION IV. FISCAL MONITORING & CLAIMING

Monitoring

Youth bureaus are responsible for monitoring their contracts to ensure funds are spent appropriately and services are implemented appropriately. Backup documentation is required for all RHY applications.

OCFS requires through its rules and regulations and the CFSP process that municipal youth bureaus develop systems to

- monitor the operations and services of non-municipal, OCFS-funded programs included in the county's RAP,
- monitor its own operation and the degree to which CFSP objectives are implemented, and
- assist in and/or ensure the monitoring of municipal programs funded by OCFS included in the county's RAP.

For more information about monitoring and evaluation, please contact your regional specialist or YouthBureau@ocfs.ny.gov.

Additionally, municipal youth bureaus have a variety of monitoring and oversight responsibilities related to RHY services. The municipal RHY service coordinator has specific responsibilities articulated in 9 NYCRR Subparts 182-1 and 182-2. These duties are most notably (although not exclusively) articulated in 9 NYCRR 182-1.15 and 182-2.14.

Claiming

In order for RHY expenses paid by a youth bureau to be reimbursed from the OCFS RHY allocation, a claim must be submitted to OCFS. Claims may only include incurred and paid expenses. RHY claims are due within 9 months of the calendar quarter in which services were delivered, and no later than **3/31/2026**; however, counties are encouraged in the strongest terms to submit claims as quickly as possible in order to demonstrate the importance of and need for this state allocation. Counties can track paid claims and program balances in QYDS.

The backup documentation that must be submitted by the municipal youth bureau to OCFS for reimbursement of approved RHY expenses is listed below. All OCFS forms can be found at <https://ocfs.ny.gov/forms/>.

County-Implemented Programs

- An original State Aid Voucher (AC-1171), with boxes 4 through 8 completed and an original authorized signature
- Supporting backup documentation, which may include, but is not limited to:
 - Program Expenditure Summary (OCFS-3125)
 - Program Expenditure Report – Salaries (OCFS-3126)
 - Program Expenditure Report – Fringe Benefits (OCFS-3127)
 - Program Expenditure Report – Contracted Services & Stipends (OCFS-3128)
 - Program Expenditure Report -- M&O and Facility Repairs (OCFS-3129)
 - Additional documentation provided by the municipality (ex. payroll register), so long as the documentation provided includes all information required on the OCFS forms

Note: For any voucher(s) covering more than one program, a Program Expenditure Summary (OCFS-3125) and the applicable Program Expenditure Report(s) (OCFS-3126 through OCFS-3129) must be submitted for *each program*.

Non-profit/Voluntary-Agency-Implemented Programs

- In addition to the documents listed above for county-implemented programs, information regarding the check(s) provided to the implementing agency, including the date, check number, and to whom the check was payable.

RHY claims must be sent to:

Office of Children & Family Services
Youth Programs Audit Unit, Room 204
52 Washington Street – South Building
Rensselaer, NY 12144

OCFS Audits of Claims

OCFS audits RHY fiscal claims. If an error or discrepancy is discovered during an audit, form OCFS-2069, *Report of Pre-audit of State Aid Claim* will be sent to the fiscal officer of the municipality and the appropriate OCFS regional staff. Counties are encouraged to respond as quickly as possible to allow for claims to be reimbursed. Delays in response to this form, or other requests for information from OCFS, may delay or prevent payment.

SECTION V. POINTS OF CONTACT

Topic Area	Contact	Mailing Address
Financial operations (claiming questions)	ocfs.sm.bfo.finance@ocfs.ny.gov (518) 486-7167	52 Washington Street 204 South Rensselaer, NY 12144
QYDS Help Desk, including password reset	(800) 697-1323	
RHY and youth bureau program support	Bureau of Youth Development and Well-Being RHY@ocfs.ny.gov YouthBureau@ocfs.ny.gov 518-474-9879	52 Washington Street 338 North Rensselaer, NY 12144

SECTION VI. ADDITIONAL RHY RESOURCES

In addition to the RHY allocation, there are other funding streams and resources available to support RHY programs to support youth. Some of those options include:

Resource	How it can help	Funding considerations
1-800-RUNAWAY	<p>1-800-RUNAWAY is a hotline and chatline that operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to support young people who are thinking about leaving or have already left home or who are experiencing homelessness. These services are also available online at 1800RUNAWAY.org.</p> <p>Local programs can make sure the hotline has their current information by visiting https://www.1800runaway.org/service-providers/partner-with-us</p>	This is a free resource supported by federal funding.
Let's Talk curriculum, a resource of 1-800-RUNAWAY	<p>Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum is an evidence-based interactive curriculum intended to educate young people about alternatives to running away as well as to build life skills so that youth can resolve problems without resorting to running away or unsafe behavior.</p>	This is a free resource supported by federal funding.
Educational and outreach materials	<p>The National Runaway Safeline offers brochures, street outreach cards, bookmarks, flyers, and more that are designed to inform youth about services and empower them to seek help.</p>	This is a free resource supported by federal funding.
Supervision and Treatment Services for Juveniles Program (STSJP)	<p>Each county may elect to use STSJP funds to support services that prevent the detention and placement of youth. As youth who run away from home are at risk of becoming PINSs, runaway prevention and intervention activities are an allowable use of STSJP funds when included in a municipality's OCFS-approved STSJP Annual Plan.</p>	Municipalities may receive up to 62 percent state reimbursement of the cost of the approved STSJP services and expenditures, up to the municipality's STSJP allocation cap.
Child Welfare Preventive Funds	<p>Each local department of social services has access to uncapped child welfare preventive funding in accordance with Section 409-a of Social Services Law. Many youth in need of RHY supports may be at risk of a foster care placement.</p>	Municipalities may receive up to 62 percent state reimbursement of the cost of allowable expenses for eligible youth.
Local Community	<p>The New York State Unified Court System supports local non-profits in each county to provide mediation</p>	These services are available to youth and

Dispute Resolution Centers	and other dispute resolution supports. These Community Dispute Resolution Centers (CDRC) can support mediation between youth and their families to address conflict that could result or has resulted in runaway episodes or youth being forced to leave their homes.	families at little or no cost. Contact your local CDRC for more information.
Youth Development Program (YDP) funds	Each county receives youth development program (YDP) funds to support services, opportunities, and supports for youth in their community. These supports can include a wide variety of non-residential RHY services, with prior OCFS approval.	County match for state YDP funds is not required but is encouraged.
Safe Harbour: NY	Each county has the opportunity to receive Safe Harbour funds to support community-wide practice that addresses child trafficking and exploitation. As youth who are unstably housed are at higher risk of trafficking and exploitation, Safe Harbour funds can be used to support RHY prevention activities, with prior OCFS approval.	County match for state Safe Harbour funds is not required but is encouraged.
Youth Sports and Education Opportunity Funding	Each municipal youth bureau receives an annual allocation to support sports and physical recreation for underserved young people, including unstably housed youth. Funded activities are intended to keep youth positively engaged in their communities and encourage healthy lifestyles. RHY programs are encouraged to partner with sports education programs to meet the health and recreation needs of unstably housed youth.	County match for state Youth Sports and Education Opportunity funds is not required but is encouraged.
Private funding	Grants, foundations, donations, and other sources of private funds can be used by counties or programs to support a wide variety of local services.	N/A