

# YOUNG, ALONE, AND HOMELESS IN THE LONE STAR STATE

POLICY SOLUTIONS TO END YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN TEXAS



## WHY CREATE THIS REPORT

- To raise awareness
- To identify drivers to youth homelessness
- To identify policies and programs that work
- To identify gaps in services and resources
- To identify opportunities to build capacity
- To recommend policy and priority changes

## CONTENT

- FAQs
- Education
- Juvenile/Criminal Justice
- Foster Care
- Physical & Behavioral Health
- Services & Supports
- Policy Recommendations Throughout

# EDUCATION FINDINGS



- Texas is identifying more homeless students but some districts are not identifying any.
- Schools are important to identifying youth homelessness and connecting to resources.
- Homeless liaisons are not adequately resourced.
- Students experiencing homelessness experience poor academic outcomes.
- Students experiencing homelessness receive exclusionary discipline at disproportionate rates.

# JUVENILE JUSTICE FINDINGS

- Increased risk of victimization for youth who are homeless
- Varying responses among counties to runaways
- High number of reoccurring runaways
- Criminalization of symptoms and survival behavior lead to cycle of system involvement
- Transition out of a facility is a point of risk of homelessness

# PHYSICAL/BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FINDINGS

- Trauma looms large for youth experiencing homelessness
- Minor consent laws are confusing and unnecessarily complicated
- Economic barriers prevent youth from obtaining health care



# FOSTER CARE FINDINGS

Too many youth in foster care are:

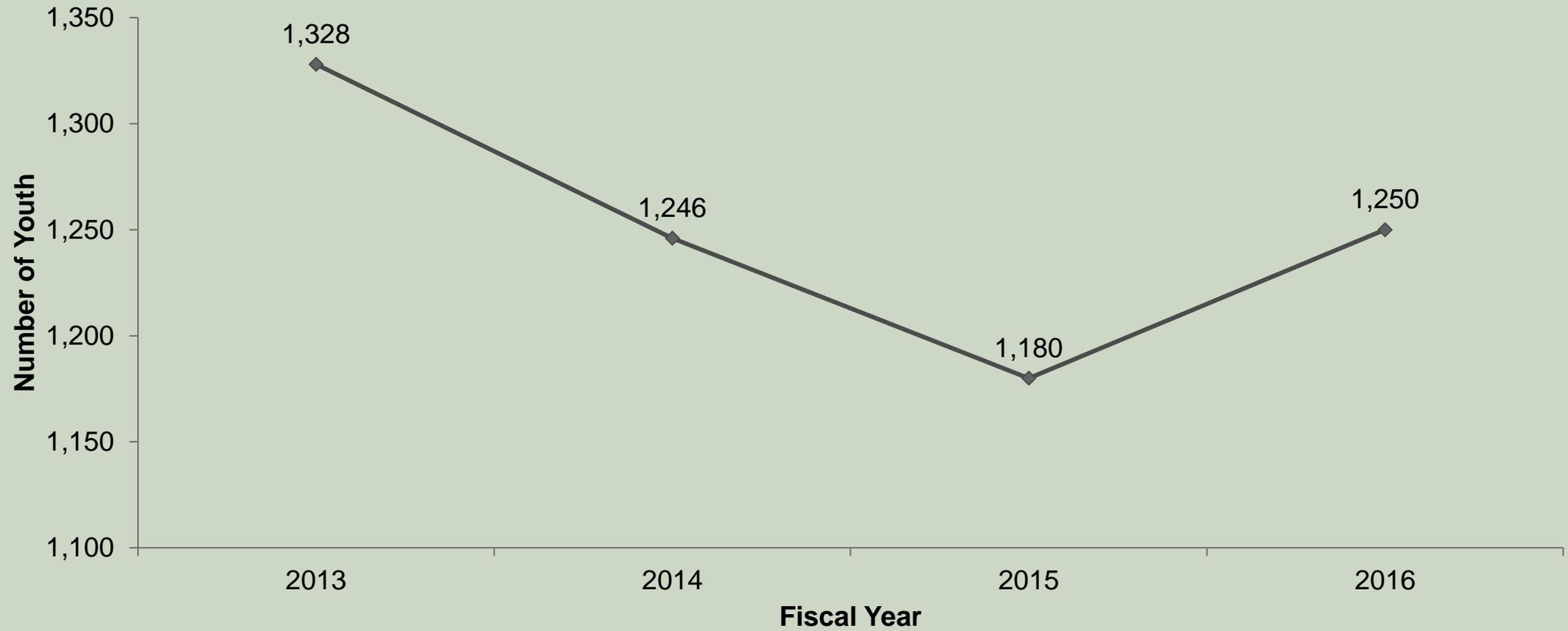
- Without an appropriate placement
- Running away
- Vulnerable to trafficking
- Aging out into homelessness
- Not “opting in” to Extended Foster Care
- Not able to access Supervised Independent Living
- Also involved in the juvenile justice system and therefore at heightened risk of homelessness



## TOP 15 COUNTIES WITH HIGHEST NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO RAN AWAY FROM A DFPS PLACEMENT (FY 2016)

| Rank | County     | Number of Children that Ran Away |
|------|------------|----------------------------------|
| 1    | Bexar      | 129                              |
| 1    | Harris     | 129                              |
| 3    | Dallas     | 81                               |
| 4    | Tarrant    | 70                               |
| 5    | Travis     | 39                               |
| 6    | Lubbock    | 24                               |
| 7    | El Paso    | 21                               |
| 8    | Nueces     | 19                               |
| 9    | Hidalgo    | 18                               |
| 10   | Webb       | 17                               |
| 11   | Cameron    | 16                               |
| 12   | Galveston  | 15                               |
| 13   | Bell       | 14                               |
| 13   | Montgomery | 14                               |
| 15   | Tom Green  | 13                               |

## Youth Who Aged Out of Foster Care (FY 2013-2016)



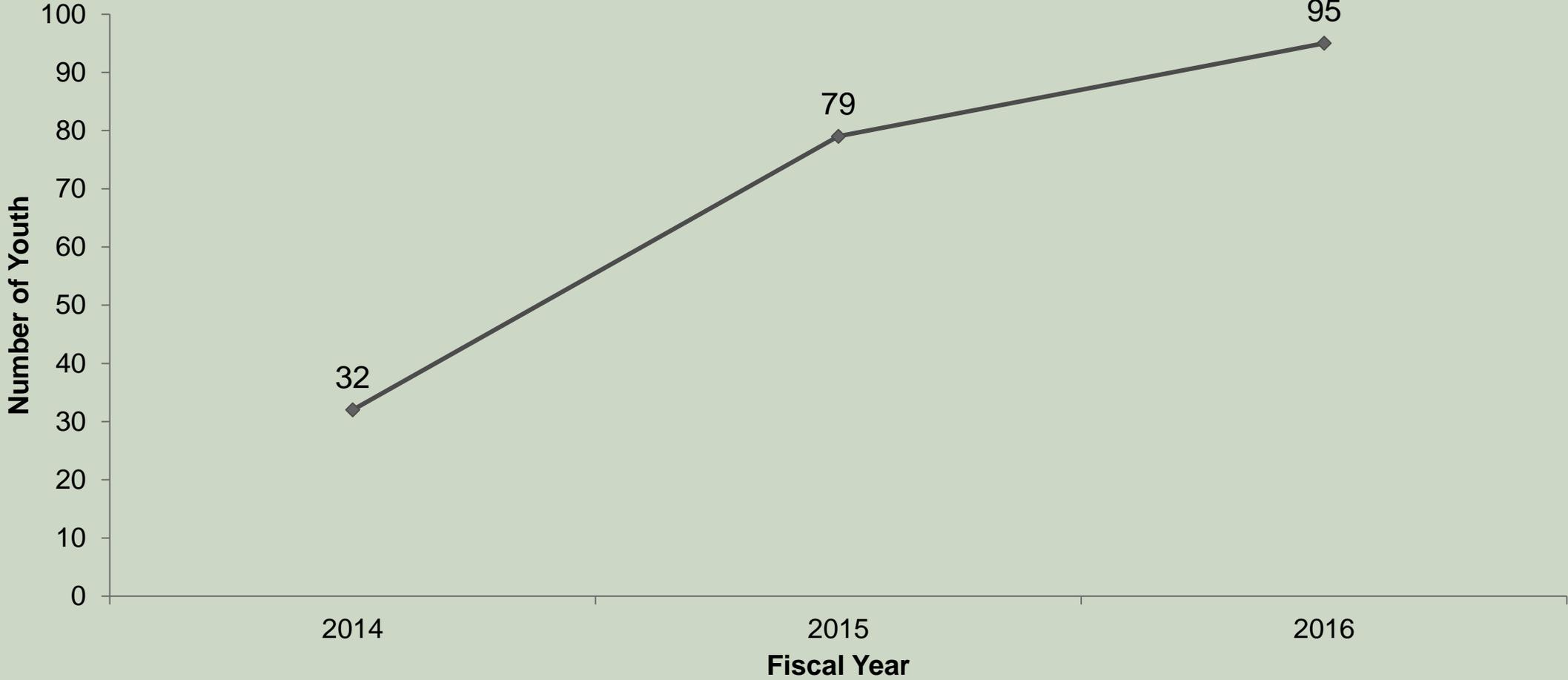
## YOUTH AGED OUT OF FOSTER CARE BY REGION, STATEWIDE (2016)

| Rank | Region Name (Region Number) | Number of Youth Aged Out |
|------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1    | Arlington (3)               | 257                      |
| 2    | Houston (6)                 | 237                      |
| 3    | San Antonio (8)             | 204                      |
| 4    | Austin (7)                  | 158                      |
| 5    | Edinburg (11)               | 99                       |
| 6    | Tyler (4)                   | 93                       |
| 7    | Lubbock (1)                 | 72                       |
| 8    | Midland (9)                 | 38                       |
| 9    | Abilene (2)                 | 37                       |
| 10   | Beaumont (5)                | 23                       |
| 11   | El Paso (10)                | 22                       |
|      | Grand Total                 | 1,250                    |

## TOP 15 COUNTIES WITH HIGHEST NUMBER OF YOUTH AGED OUT OF FOSTER CARE, STATEWIDE (2016)

| Rank | County      | Number of Youth Aged Out |
|------|-------------|--------------------------|
| 1    | Harris      | 163                      |
| 2    | Bexar       | 136                      |
| 3    | Dallas      | 98                       |
| 4    | Tarrant     | 83                       |
| 5    | Travis      | 52                       |
| 6    | Montgomery  | 29                       |
| 7    | Hidalgo     | 28                       |
| 8    | Williamson  | 24                       |
| 9    | Bell        | 22                       |
| 10   | El Paso     | 21                       |
| 10   | Webb        | 21                       |
| 12   | Potter      | 18                       |
| 13   | Cameron     | 17                       |
| 13   | Lubbock     | 17                       |
| 13   | McLennan    | 17                       |
|      | Grand Total | 1,250                    |

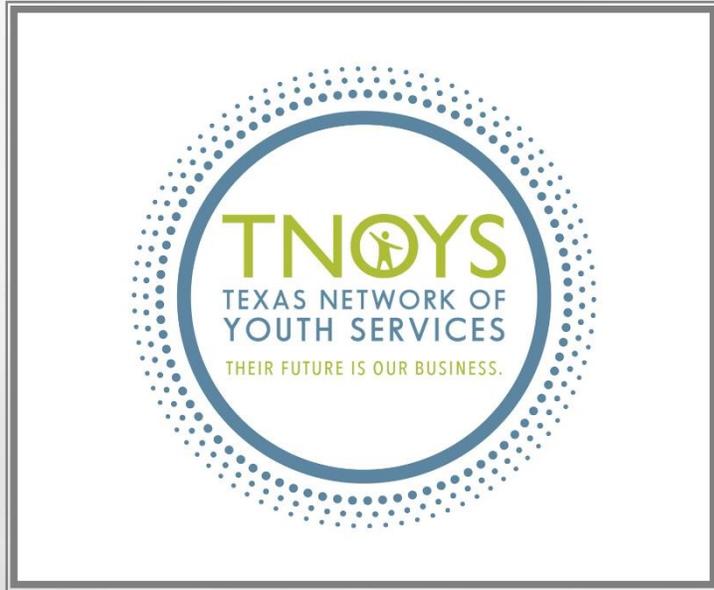
# Average Monthly Number of Texas Youth in SIL (FY 2014-2016)



# COMMUNITY SERVICES AND RESOURCES

- There is substantial research on best practices for serving homeless youth and young adults.
- Texas has a strong infrastructure of nonprofit CBOs providing these services.
- Exiting programs are under-funded and cannot meet demand; they are also at risk.
- The State of Texas does not have appropriate funding specifically for serving youth who are homeless.
- It is unclear in Texas who is responsible for serving homeless youth.
- Although federal funding is growing, it remains insufficient.

# CONTACT INFORMATION



[www.tnoys.org](http://www.tnoys.org)

**CHRISTINE GENDRON**  
[CGENDRON@TNOYS.ORG](mailto:CGENDRON@TNOYS.ORG)



[www.texasappleseed.org](http://www.texasappleseed.org)

**BRETT MERFISH**  
[BMERFISH@TEXASAPPLESEED.NET](mailto:BMERFISH@TEXASAPPLESEED.NET)

**GABRIELLA M<sup>c</sup>DONALD**  
[GMCDONALD@TEXASAPPLESEED.NET](mailto:GMCDONALD@TEXASAPPLESEED.NET)