

# PUBLICATION

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## Responding to LGBTQ Youth Homelessness

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At Baker Donelson, we are committed to intentional action geared toward upholding an inclusive Firm culture. BakerPride, our employee resource group for LGBTQ attorneys and staff, as well as non-LGBTQ identifying allies, is an integral piece of our mission toward uplifting diverse communities. We believe that a vital part of supporting LGBTQ communities is educating ourselves and those around us about critical issues affecting the LGBTQ community. This requires having tough conversations, learning more about uncomfortable topics, and using our voices to spread awareness. In this article, we will briefly examine LGBTQ youth homelessness and highlight tangible and actionable ways to help. This is an incredibly complex issue that cannot be fully addressed in a short article; therefore, we encourage you to broaden your personal knowledge on the topic with continued research outside of this article.

### LGBTQ+ Youth Experience Homelessness at an Alarming Rate

According to the 2021 [Encyclopedia of Queer Studies in Education](#), LGBTQ youth are approximately 120 percent more likely to experience homelessness and 40 percent of youth experiencing homelessness in the U.S. identify as LGBTQ. These concerning statistics raise the question: why are LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness at such high rates? There are many issues that put LGBTQ youth at a disproportional risk of homelessness.

The website [youth.gov](#) cited a separate [study](#), published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, that distinguishes four main causes for LGBTQ youth homelessness:

1. Emotional and financial neglect;
2. Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse;
3. Family rejection resulting from sexual orientation or gender identity; and
4. Aging out of the foster care system.

Experts and advocates suggest that the key to addressing this phenomenon is to address the struggles commonly faced by LGBTQ youth before they become unhoused. Establishing concrete emotional, financial, and community support could potentially prevent at-risk youth from losing reliable access to safe home environments. Housing instability and homelessness are associated with a laundry list of increased physical dangers and health risks. It is therefore critical to protect these youth from the instability and potential mental harm that can stem from experiencing homelessness.

### How to Get Involved

In order for diversity and inclusion efforts to be truly meaningful and impactful, they must include and prioritize steps for future action. Talking about the issue is only the first step. Below is a list of ways both organizations and individuals can help support LGBTQ youth facing housing instability.

- Facilitate partnerships with LGBTQ communities to build connections between youth and adult LGBTQ role models.
- Volunteer with organizations dedicated to supporting LGBTQ youth such as the [Trevor Project](#). This can be done virtually!

- Continue reading and engaging with articles such as this one that spotlight struggles within LGBTQ communities.
- Encourage your employer to publicly advocate for at-risk populations.
- Consider donating to organizations, such as [True Colors United](#), which are committed to finding unique, effective solutions to LGBTQ youth homelessness.

### **Resources for Further Reading**

- [National Center for Homeless Education Resource Guide on LGBTQ Youth Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- [National Coalition for the Homeless Information Guide](#)
- [Human Rights Campaign Article](#)
- [The Trevor Project Report](#)

*Lillian Jordan is a Diversity & Inclusion intern at Baker Donelson.*