

National Communication System for Runaway and Homeless Youth Data Collection

**OMB Information Collection Request
0970 – 0610**

Supporting Statement Part A - Justification

August 2026

Reinstatement with No Changes

Submitted By:
Family and Youth Services Bureau
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

The Family and Youth Services Bureau's (FYSB) Runaway and Homeless Youth Division has a legislative requirement to fund a National Communication System, which is currently operated by the National Runaway Safeline (NRS). The NRS provides information, referral services, crisis intervention, and prevention resources to vulnerable youth and families of youth at risk of running away and/or becoming homeless at no cost. When necessary, the NRS refers runaway and homeless youth to shelters, counseling, medical assistance, and other vital services. The NRS collects information from all contacts with youth and adults connecting with the NRS (i.e., parents, family members, legal guardians, service providers) on a voluntary basis to inform crisis services and develop an annual report on the information collected during calls, chats, emails, and forum posts from young people who reached out to the NRS's crisis services.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA), as reauthorized by the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 (P.L.110-378) through FY 2013 and more recently reauthorized by the Juvenile Justice Reform Act through FY 2019, mandates the Secretary shall make grants for a national communication system to assist runaway and homeless youth in communicating with their families and with service providers.

The NRS is required to have a system for collecting and analyzing data on calls, emails, chat, texts, and online messages received as well as other information, such as prevention resources, referrals, demographics, and visitors to the NRS website. The NRS must submit monthly and semi-annual reports that includes the following:

- Number of calls received, answered, and missed.
- Number of chats, emails, and texts received; number of chats, emails, and texts answered; and number of chats, emails, and texts that were missed and did not receive a response, in which the users are youth in crisis, runaway youth, and youth experiencing homelessness.
- Number of parents, legal guardians, and service providers contacting the NRS and the type of resources, interventions, and technical support/assistance requested and provided.
- Number and type of prevention materials disseminated to communities, especially to underserved populations.
- Number and type of unique visitors to the NRS' website.
- Information on referrals provided and where youth were referred for services.
- Information on the callers' or users' demographics and where they were located when contacting the NRS.
- Information on the prevention materials developed and disseminated by the NRS.
- Information and analysis of the latest trends and their impact on runaway prevention.

The NRS uses two forms, one form to collect relevant information disclosed during calls, emails, and forum posts, and then a second form to collect information from chats. All data will be provided to FYSB in the aggregate and no personally identifiable information are collected.

2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

Information will be collected by the NRS from youth, young adults, and other callers when they connect through emails, chat, texts, and online messages. The NRS uses two forms to collect information from callers. The first form collects information pertaining to what is shared by the caller during calls, emails, and forum posts. The second form collects information from individuals who participate in the chats.

All voluntarily reported data will be analyzed by the NRS and will inform an annual report. The annual report will highlight the demographics of those who reached out for support, the nature of the crises experienced by contacts, and the resources provided by the NRS crisis services team. The data will also be provided to FYSB in the aggregate without personally identifiable data to strengthen strategies to increase visibility of the NRS services among youth in crisis, youth experiencing homelessness, and youth who have runaway. The data will also be included in the Biennial Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Report to Congress that is legislatively required.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act requires that all grant recipients are to “keep adequate statistical records profiling the youth and family members whom it serves,” and must provide “statistical summaries describing the number and the characteristics of the homeless youth who participate in such project, and the services provided to such youth.” Further, the collection of demographic information, including race and sex is directly tied to the statutory requirement to report on the “characteristics” of homeless youth served.

3. Use of Improved Information Technology and Burden Reduction

The NRS is required to have a system to collect all information from calls, emails, chat, texts, and online messages received from contacts. The NRS system supports the Youth in Crisis form and the Live Chat form and each form is completed by the NRS services team.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication and Use of Similar Information

The NRS fulfills the RHYA legislative requirement to fund a National Communication System and is the only entity that collects the information from calls, emails, chat, texts, and online messages received from contacts.

5. Impact on Small Businesses or Other Small Entities

Not applicable.

6. Consequences of Collecting the Information Less Frequently

The NRS offers crisis services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year to youth and families via the 1-800-RUNAWAY hotline and at 1800RUNAWAY.org, offering live chat, email, forums, and texting services. Contacts connect with trained staff and volunteers who offer non-judgmental and non-directive support, provide connections to resources, such as shelters and mental health services, and help young people resolve their crises and reach safety. The NRS voluntarily collects information from each contact that is used to inform an annual report, the Biennial RHY Report to Congress, and to better understand types of services needed by youth contacts and support outreach and prevention strategies.

If the NRS collects less information or collects it less frequently, FYSB could not accurately identify critical strategies to support youth experiencing housing instability, homelessness, youth who runaway, and youth in crisis and inform the RHY Report to Congress.

7. Special Circumstances Relating to the Guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.5

Does not apply.

8. Comments in Response to the Federal Register Notice and Efforts to Consult Outside the Agency

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations at 5 CFR Part 1320 (60 FR 44978, August 29, 1995), ACF published a notice in the Federal Register announcing the agency's intention to request an OMB review of this information collection activity. This notice was published on April 27, 2026 (91 FR 22538) and provided a sixty-day period for public comment. We did not receive comments.

Efforts to consult includes that NRS regularly reviewing the forms with the Crisis Services Team to ensure they are addressing any concerns or particular needs that may be new or changing. Additionally, the NRS has included members of the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) to review their data and data collection system to ensure they are getting their perspective and feedback. The NRS will continue to involve the Crisis Services Team and the YAB in ongoing review processes.

9. Explanation of Any Payment or Gift to Respondents

There is no remuneration, of any kind, for NRS contacts. Participation in data collection is voluntary.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality Provided to Respondents

The Privacy Act of 1974 provided privacy protection to contacts. The NRS does not collect names from contacts and will keep information private to the extent permitted by law.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

There is some NRS information collected that may be considered sensitive. This information pertains to the demographics of each caller to include age, race, and sex. All information collected from the NRS is voluntary.

This collection of this information is extremely critical for FYSB to ensure the effective delivery of services to youth experiencing homelessness and that services are developmentally appropriate. It is also essential to assess the efficacy of outreach and prevention efforts in reaching youth experiencing homelessness and capture early identification of trends and challenges in the field of RHY.

12. Estimates of Annualized Burden Hours and Costs

Estimated Burden Hours

The NRS uses two forms, one form to collect relevant information disclosed during calls, emails, and forum posts, and then a second form to collect information from chats. The number of respondents for the Youth Crisis Form is estimated based on the average number of youth contacts logged by the NRS. The response time is estimated by the average number of minutes it takes for the completion of the Youth Crisis Form. Similarly, the number of respondents for the NRS Live Chat Form is estimated based on the average number of contacts logged by the NRS. The response time is estimated by the average number of minutes it takes for the completion of the NRS Live Chat Form.

Information Collection Title	Total Number of Respondents	Total Number of Responses Per Respondent	Average Burden Hours Per Response	Total Burden Hours	Annual Burden Hours	Average Hourly Wage	Total Annual Cost
Youth in Crisis Form	47,175	1	.23	10,850	3,617	N/A	N/A
NRS Live Chat Form	29,679	1	.65	19,291	6,430	N/A	N/A
Estimated Annual Burden and Costs Total:					10,047	Total:	N/A

Estimated Cost to Respondents

The cost to youth respondents was entered as N/A as these are runaway, street, or homeless youth of which many include minor youth who are being connected to school and older youth who are learning life skills and leaning job skills after being on the street.

13. Estimates of Other Total Annual Cost Burden to Respondents and Record Keepers

To collect, store, analyze and provide the agency with this data collection, NRS maintains dedicated website to allow respondents to interface via text/chat, collect the data in ICarol and Five9, and utilize Power BI to help analyze data. The cost of these systems is \$112,949 annually and the cost associated with the data collection and storage within these systems and running of the hotline is 20% of the total cost for an annual cost of \$22,589

14. Annualized Cost to the Federal Government

The total estimated cost to the Federal government over the next three years is \$5,400,000. The annualized cost to operate the NRS per year is \$1,800,000. These costs cover all aspects of the grant/cooperative agreement to support crisis services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year to youth and families via the 1-800-RUNAWAY hotline and at 1800RUNAWAY.org, offering live chat, email, forum and texting services. Contacts connect with trained staff and volunteers who offer non-judgmental and non-directive support, provide connections to resources, such as shelters and mental health services, and help young people resolve their crises and reach safety.

The costs associated with the life cycle of data collection includes the creation of forms, building of forms in the ICarol system, training and supervision of data collection, quality assurance reviews, running reports, analyzing data, submitting monthly reports, and creating and designing state snapshots and annual reports. This includes a portion of Crisis Hotline staff and volunteers responding to calls and text/chat. It also includes Program Leadership's time which includes CEO, Director, Program Manager, two Program Supervisors, Data Analyst and external contractors that include researchers and graphic design. Total salary and fringe expenses for these positions is \$1,039,000 annually and the costs directly associated with data collection are 70% of Data Analyst x 71K (Salary and Fringe).

The annualized cost to the Federal Government for data collection, analysis and reporting, which a portion of funds made available through the cooperative agreement supporting the RHY National Communication system, is \$124,009.

Position	Annual Cost	Data Cost
Crisis Staff & Volunteers	Employee Salary = 375,000*	X .04** = \$15,000
Data Analyst	Employee Cost = \$71,000	X .70 = 49,700

Leadership Time/Contractors	Employee/Subcontractor = \$593,090	X .10 = 59,309
	Total Employee/Subcontractor Cost	\$124,009

*This number only reflects salaries of paid staff.

**Percent of an FTE paid staff's time associated with recording keeping.

15. Explanation for Program Changes or Adjustments

This is a reinstatement with no changes. The estimated time per response remains the same. ROCIS has been updated to correctly show annual burden, as opposed to total burden.

16. Plans for Tabulation and Publication and Project Time Schedule

The NRS will utilize the information collected from the crisis services to inform and enhance their crisis services practices and service delivery, as well as outreach and prevention activities. The collected data are also disseminated on an annual basis to the public to increase awareness and education on issues related to running away incidents and youth homelessness.

The information collected from the crisis services will be published and disseminated to the public as an annual report. The data collected will be also integrated as part of the RHY Report to Congress by FYSB, as required by Federal law (RHY Act).

Project Time Schedule (Occurs each FY):

The following is the NRS schedule for each Fiscal Year:

- NRS reviews data collection system and provides any training to staff working on the crisis services
- NRS collects information from contacts
- NRS assesses, cleans, and analyze data
- NRS sends data to FYSB
- NRS shares annual report with FYSB
- NRS releases annual crisis services and prevention report
- FYSB provides NRS data to include in the RHY Report to Congress

17. Reason(s) Display of OMB Expiration Date is Inappropriate

Not applicable: The OMB expiration date will be displayed at the bottom of the first page of the Youth in Crisis form and the NRS Live Chat form.

18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

No exceptions are necessary for this information collection.