



# Office of Children and Family Services

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## Administrative Directive

<b>Transmittal:</b>	20-OCFS-ADM-03
<b>To:</b>	Certified Residential Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs
<b>Issuing Division/Office:</b>	Youth Development and Partnerships for Success
<b>Date:</b>	January 23, 2020
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Runaway and Homeless Youth Provider Training on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, and Queer Cultural Competency</b>
<b>Suggested Distribution:</b>	Municipal Youth Bureaus, Runaway and Homeless Youth Service Coordinators, OCFS Regional Offices
<b>Contact Person(s):</b>	See section V.
<b>Attachments:</b>	None

### Filing References

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	NYS Regs.	Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref.	Manual Ref.	Misc. Ref.
16-OCFS-ADM-02 16-OCFS-INF-10			Executive Law § 532-e(7)		

### I. Purpose

The purpose of this Administrative Directive (ADM) is to inform certified residential runaway and homeless youth (RHY) programs of the requirement for all staff to complete training in cultural competence for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) population, as this training is described in Executive Law § 532-e(7), which became effective January 1, 2020.

### II. Background

LGBTQ youth are disproportionately overrepresented in programs serving runaway and homeless youth. They also have higher vulnerability to adverse outcomes,<sup>1</sup> as compared to their heterosexual and cisgender peers due to familial and institutional rejection based

<sup>1</sup> Durso, L.E., & Gates, G.J. (2012). *Serving Our Youth: Findings from a National Survey of Service Providers Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth Who Are Homeless or At Risk of Becoming Homeless*. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with The Palette Fund and True Colors United.

on their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression (SOGIE). While research indicates that six to eight percent of the general population identify as LGBTQ,<sup>2</sup> between 20 and 40 percent of the homeless youth population identify as LGBTQ,<sup>3</sup> in large part due to familial and institutional rejection. Research also shows that LGBTQ runaway and homeless youth face a unique set of risk factors in comparison to their non-LGBTQ counterparts, including: alcohol and drug abuse,<sup>4</sup> depression,<sup>5</sup> post-traumatic stress disorder,<sup>6</sup> suicidal thoughts and attempts,<sup>7</sup> sexually transmitted infections,<sup>8</sup> and a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS.<sup>9</sup> Based on experiences of rejection, some LGBTQ youth utilize unstable housing options such as staying with a stranger or on the street, rather than reside in a general population homeless shelter.<sup>10</sup> This results in an increased risk of being exploited. When LGBTQ youth are served in RHY programs, there is a unique opportunity to create safe and supportive relationships that can reduce their vulnerabilities and enhance their resiliency.

### III. Program Implications

The regulations governing RHY programs in New York State require staff of certified residential RHY programs to receive training on youth development and youth issues. This policy further defines “youth issues” to include cultural competency for the LGBTQ youth population.

The training curriculum is expected to enhance RHY staff’s knowledge about challenges unique to the LGBTQ population. By gaining a greater understanding of these challenges through the training materials, staff at RHY programs will be better equipped to form inclusive, positive relationships with LGBTQ youth to assist them in forming their own lasting network of supports and services that will serve to reduce adverse outcomes.

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) provides a recorded training in the Human Services Learning Center (HSLC) at <https://www.hslcnys.org/hslc/> titled *LGBTQ+ Inclusive Case Management*. This training is approved to meet the LGBTQ cultural competence training requirement.

Certified residential RHY programs must develop a plan for OCFS approval to ensure all staff receive the required trainings, offer their staff training that meets the standards described below, and maintain documentation of staff training pursuant to the regulations

<sup>2</sup> Kann, L., Olsen, E. O., McManus, T., Harris, W. H., Shanklin, S. L., & Flint, K. H., et al. (2016). *Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health-Related Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9–12 - United States and Selected Sites, 2015*. MMWR Surveillance Summaries, 65(No. SS-9), 1–202.

<sup>3</sup> Durso, L.E., & Gates, G.J. (2012). *Serving Our Youth: Findings from a National Survey of Service Providers Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth Who Are Homeless or At Risk of Becoming Homeless*. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with The Palette Fund and True Colors United.

<sup>4</sup> Hunt, J. (2012). *Why the Gay and Transgender Population Experiences Higher Rates of Substance Abuse*. Retrieved from [https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2012/03/pdf/lgbt\\_substance\\_abuse.pdf](https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2012/03/pdf/lgbt_substance_abuse.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Rusow, J.A., Goldbach, J.J., Rhoades, H., Bond, D., Lanteigne, A., & Fulginiti, A. (2018). “Homelessness, Mental Health and Suicidality Among LGBTQ Youth Accessing Crisis Services.” *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*, 49(4), 643-651. <https://doi-org.avoserv2.library.fordhamn.edu/10.1007/s10578-018-0780-1>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Dolamore, S., & Naylor, L.A. (2018). “Providing Solutions to LGBT Homeless Youth: Lessons From Baltimore’s Youth Empowered Society.” *Public Integrity*, 20(6), 595-610. <https://doi-org.avoserv2.library.fordhamn.edu/10.1080/10999922.2017.1333943>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Maccio, E.M., & Ferguson, K.M. (2016). “Services to LGBTQ Runaway and Homeless Youth: Gaps and Recommendations.” *Children and Youth Services Review*, 63, 47-57. <http://doi-org.avoserv2.library.fordhamn.edu/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2016.02.008>

governing RHY programs. Acceptable documentation includes a certificate of completion of a training that used curricula provided or approved by OCFS. This documentation must be maintained by the program for each of its staff and made available for OCFS review upon request.

#### IV. Required Action

To meet the new LGBTQ training requirement, all staff who work in certified residential RHY programs must be trained through a curriculum provided or approved by OCFS for this purpose. All staff must receive this training on or before June 30, 2020. Staff hired after January 15, 2020 must receive this training within six months of their hire date. Additionally, all staff must receive follow-up training on LGBTQ cultural competency every second year, at minimum. Follow-up trainings must address one or more of the content areas defined below but need not include all of them.

Each program must develop and submit to OCFS for review a training plan by February 28, 2020. The plan must articulate how all staff will receive the necessary training by June 30, 2020, specify the curricula to be used pursuant to this training requirement, and a description of how the program will track the completion of required follow-up trainings for all staff. This plan is to be submitted to the program's regional office for review.

Programs that elect to use a curriculum other than the *LGBTQ+ Inclusive Case Management* training available in HSLC must first seek approval from OCFS. To obtain approval for a training curriculum, training materials must address each of the following areas:

- Appropriate terminology to be used with youth
- Challenges experienced by LGBTQ youth, including why LGBTQ youth are disproportionately homeless
- Strategies to address homophobia or transphobia from other youth in programs and to create affirming environments for youth of all SOGIE
- Confidentiality protections for youth in RHY programs with an emphasis on protecting confidentiality of LGBTQ information
- Strategies for how to address and work with families of LGBTQ youth

Training curricula may be submitted to OCFS for approval by emailing the materials to [RHY@ocfs.ny.gov](mailto:RHY@ocfs.ny.gov). To be considered, the materials must include, at minimum, an outline, training objectives, and training materials to be used in the presentation such as handouts or slides with speaker notes.

#### V. Contacts

Bureau of Health and Well-Being: [RHY@ocfs.ny.gov](mailto:RHY@ocfs.ny.gov) or (518) 474-4110 during normal business hours

Buffalo Regional Office - Amanda Darling (716) 847-3145

[Amanda.Darling@ocfs.ny.gov](mailto:Amanda.Darling@ocfs.ny.gov)

Rochester Regional Office - Karen Lewter (585) 238-8201

[Karen.Lewter@ocfs.ny.gov](mailto:Karen.Lewter@ocfs.ny.gov)

Syracuse Regional Office - Sara Simon (315) 423-1200

[Sara.Simon@ocfs.ny.gov](mailto:Sara.Simon@ocfs.ny.gov)

Albany Regional Office - John Lockwood (518) 486-7078

[John.Lockwood@ocfs.ny.gov](mailto:John.Lockwood@ocfs.ny.gov)

Westchester Regional Office - Thalia Wright (845) 708-2498

[Thalia.Wright@ocfs.ny.gov](mailto:Thalia.Wright@ocfs.ny.gov)

Native American Services - Heather LaForme (716) 847-3123

[Heather.LaForme@ocfs.ny.gov](mailto:Heather.LaForme@ocfs.ny.gov)

Youth Development and Partnerships for Success – New York City Office – Jewel Brown-Gregory (212) 383-1828

[Jewel.Brown-Gregory@ocfs.ny.gov](mailto:Jewel.Brown-Gregory@ocfs.ny.gov)

**VI. Effective Date**

This policy is effective immediately.

*/s/ Nina Aledort, PhD, LMSW*

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**Issued by:**

Nina Aledort, PhD, LMSW

Deputy Commissioner

Division of Youth Development and Partnerships for Success