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**Contact:** Katie Mintz  
Communications  
651-431-5605  
[Kathryn.Mintz@state.mn.us](mailto:Kathryn.Mintz@state.mn.us)

### **New research indicates nearly 1 in 5 foster youth experience homelessness**

*Study highlights need for permanent homes for foster kids*

New research recently released indicates that 20 percent of former foster youth experienced homelessness. Additionally, foster youth who have experienced homelessness also experienced a higher rate of moves within the foster care system than their peers who did not experience homelessness.

“The fact that one in five foster youth have experienced homelessness is a stark reminder to all of us involved in the child welfare system that we have a lot of work to do,” said Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) Commissioner Lucinda Jesson. “The findings underscore the importance of initiatives like NorthStar Care for Children that help foster youth find permanent homes.”

Launched after the 2013 legislative session, NorthStar Care for Children is a DHS initiative to increase the number of children who leave foster care for safe and permanent homes by making it easier for families to adopt. In 2014 it provided permanent families to an estimated 100 vulnerable children who would otherwise age out of foster care.

Additionally, Gov. Mark Dayton is proposing an additional \$2 million per biennium to Minnesota’s Homeless Youth Act to help the more than 4,000 homeless youth in Minnesota. This is a nearly 33 percent increase over current funding and will assist those already homeless with emergency shelter and longer term housing and support services.

#### **About the research**

The department matched data from the state Social Service Information System (SSIS) with the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and Hennepin County homelessness data from 2006 to 2012 for more than 4,700 youth, aged 14- to 17-years-old who spent at least 30 days in foster care during 2006. Findings included that:

- African American and American Indian youth who experienced homelessness were disproportionately represented
- Female youth experienced homelessness at a higher rate than males
- Youth who became homeless had a higher average number of placement moves than their non-homeless counterparts within foster care
- Those who left foster care without achieving permanency – by reunifying with family or being adopted – were more likely to experience homelessness than those who achieved permanency before exiting foster care.

According to the research, before becoming homeless, youth were more likely to have been in out-of-home care due to neglect in their homes. Twice as many female compared to male youth experienced homelessness for more than six months at a time, while male youth experienced a larger number of homeless episodes, between one to two days at a time.

The research will be used to further the work of Gov. [Dayton's Heading Home: Minnesota's Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#), an interagency council of 11 state commissioners working with community, public, private and government partners to identify the barriers of and create solutions for those without permanent housing.