



Thousands of LGBT youths are homeless, report says

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by amy zimmer / metro new york

CITY HALL — Roughly 8,400 young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) may find themselves homeless in the city this winter, according to a study released yesterday by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Nationally, 3 to 5 percent of the population calls itself gay or lesbian while 42 percent of homeless youth are in that group, the report said. There are between 15,000 and 20,000 homeless youth here, according to local groups.

“The report underscores there is an epidemic of homelessness of LGBT youth,” said Matt Foreman, executive director of the task force. “And New York is the place many of these homeless LGBT youth come to.”

Nicholas Ray, the report’s author, said “institutionalized homophobia” contributes to the high percentage of LGBT youth that become and remain homeless.

“Family conflict is the primary cause,” he said, citing a study that found 50 percent of gay male teens who came out to their parents experienced a negative reaction and 26 percent were thrown out.

The city earmarked \$1.2 million last year to aid the three shelters that provide beds to homeless LGBT youth: the Ali Forney Center, Green Chimneys and Sylvia’s Place. This year, they set aside \$2.6 million to fund LGBT programs. The City Council also allocated \$50,000 for a homeless youth count this spring.

“We really don’t have an overall plan,” City Council Speaker Christine Quinn said at a news conference yesterday. “But we have begun to recognize the problem and we’ve begun to make a financial commitment [to address it].”