

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/youth-who-chronically-awol-from-foster-care-why-they-run-where-they-go-and-what-can-be-done>

Policy Issue Resources

Publication

Adolescents who leave foster care without permission may encounter dangerous situations and place burdens on many government agencies, including child welfare and police. Using data from New York City's Administration for Children's Services, Vera researchers interviewed adolescents with chronic AWOL histories as well as staff at foster care facilities. The report shows that most teens going AWOL from group care stay with friends and return to care voluntarily but that one-third are involved in high-risk situations such as drug use or physical violence. The study suggests that group care staff could provide more activities to counteract the boredom that drives many teens to run away.

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