

## PRESS RELEASES

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### Homeless Youth Handbook - Minnesota Provides Resources and Information for State's Vulnerable Youth

ST. PAUL, Minn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Ecolab, the law firms of Baker & McKenzie and Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services today released *Homeless Youth Handbook - Minnesota*, a new comprehensive online and print resource to support the legal needs of Minnesota's homeless youth and the individuals and organizations who support this vulnerable population.

For most children in Minnesota, the start of a new school year is a time of excitement, promise and activity. Unfortunately, too many Minnesota youth go back to school without a safe and stable home. Without resources and support, the devastating effects of homelessness can put these young peoples' futures at risk. Critical needs go unmet, greatly compromising the health, education and emotional well-being of these youth and leaving them legally vulnerable.

"On any given night in Minnesota, an estimated 1,500 youth are homeless. Hundreds to thousands more are on the verge of homelessness, couch surfing or living in unstable family situations," said Carol Bros, volunteer attorney coordinator, Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services. "This can leave many unmet critical needs for safety and stability beyond housing, including health care, emotional, education and legal."

Developed pro-bono by legal experts at the three sponsor organizations with additional support from the Children's Law Center of Minnesota, the *Homeless Youth Handbook - Minnesota* is designed to help the state's homeless youth navigate the issues and options they may face on a daily basis. "The complex challenges these youth face require the best thinking, study, creativity and advocacy the community can provide," said Jim Seifert, executive vice president, general counsel and secretary, Ecolab. "The handbook is a powerful resource to help Minnesota's disadvantaged youth access the support they need to live healthy, happy and productive lives despite their current situations."

This first-of-its-kind resource in Minnesota provides a collection of valuable, practical legal information in a youth-friendly question-and-answer format, covering everything from health care and housing to consumer and credit issues.

"The handbook and mobile website help homeless youth access information to get their lives back on track," said Dieter Schmitz, partner, Baker & McKenzie. "We were pleased to partner with Ecolab and Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services to develop these important tools. And, as a native of Minnesota, I am personally most grateful to provide such a valuable resource for some of the neediest individuals in our state."

*Homeless Youth Handbook - Minnesota* is modeled after the successful handbook developed in 2013 for the state of Washington by Baker & McKenzie, Starbucks and Columbia Legal Services.

The digital version of *Homeless Youth Handbook - Minnesota* can be found at [www.homelessyouth.org](http://www.homelessyouth.org). Print copies of the *Handbook* and posters promoting the website will be distributed to organizations serving homeless youth in Minnesota. Copies of the *Handbook* and promotional posters can be requested through [www.homelessyouth.org](http://www.homelessyouth.org).

The art found in the handbook and online was provided by Foster Art Company. All artwork is created by youth from a variety of age groups. Proceeds from the sale of the reproduced art work benefits local and national organizations that support foster children. For more information, visit [www.fosterartcompany.com](http://www.fosterartcompany.com).

#### About Ecolab

A trusted partner at more than one million customer locations, Ecolab (ECL) is the global leader in water, hygiene and energy technologies and services that protect people and vital resources. With 2013 sales of \$13 billion and 45,000 associates, Ecolab delivers comprehensive solutions and on-site service to promote safe food, maintain clean environments, optimize water and energy use and improve operational efficiencies for customers in the food, healthcare, energy, hospitality and industrial markets in more than 170 countries around the world. For more news and information, visit [www.ecolab.com](http://www.ecolab.com).

#### About Baker & McKenzie

Founded in 1949, Baker & McKenzie advises many of the world's most dynamic and successful business organizations through 4,250 locally qualified lawyers and 5,300 professional staff in 76 offices in 47 countries. The Firm is known for its global perspective, deep understanding of the local language and culture of business, uncompromising commitment to excellence, and world-class fluency in its client service. Our pro bono practice engages the Firm's lawyers and professionals locally and globally to challenge barriers to the rule of law, access to resources and human rights for the most vulnerable populations. For more information, visit [www.bakermckenzie.com](http://www.bakermckenzie.com).

#### About Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services

Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services (SMRLS) provides free legal representation and advice in critical civil matters to low income people living in the 33 counties of southern Minnesota, including the Twin Cities East Metro. SMRLS mission is to ensure clients maintain freedom from hunger, homelessness, sickness and abuse; case priorities include access to public assistance, obtaining and maintaining shelter and protection from domestic abuse. Other projects focus on education law, fair housing and discrimination, citizenship and youth victims of domestic violence. SMRLS closes approximately 10,000 cases annually, serving an additional 20,000 persons each year through community outreach and education activities. For more information, visit [www.smrls.org](http://www.smrls.org).

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