

Press Release

New Handbook Helps Texas Homeless Youth Understand Legal Rights

Attorneys with Weatherford, Texas Appleseed and Baker & McKenzie co-author handbook

Houston, USA, December 08, 2016 – In a joint pro bono effort, Weatherford, Texas Appleseed and Baker & McKenzie partnered to create The Texas Homeless Youth Handbook, a guide to help homeless youth better understand their legal rights, responsibilities and resources. Texas will be the fourth state in the U.S. to have this particular resource, found at www.homelessyouth.org/texas.

A team of more than 50 lawyers and staff dedicated hundreds of hours to research, write and edit the book, which covers critical topics such as education, healthcare, housing, parenting, and consumer credit issues. This comprehensive guide will debut in Houston on December 8 at Covenant House Texas, a shelter for homeless youth.

“Covenant House Texas is very appreciative of this new resource for homeless youth. As an organization where advocacy for young people is one of our core values, this handbook, that helps homeless youth be aware of their legal rights, is invaluable. CHT will certainly work toward making this resource known to our young people and the youth of Texas,” said Ronda G. Robinson, Executive Director/CEO of Covenant House Texas.

Nearly 10 percent of the nation’s homeless youth live in Texas, according to the National Center on Family Homelessness. This handbook was designed to help empower well over 100,000 youth experiencing homelessness in the state with Texas-specific knowledge.

“Weatherford is committed to making a difference in the communities in which we live and operate. It was our team’s honor to provide counsel and support in making this valuable resource for the disadvantaged youth of our community,” said Natalia Shehadeh, Weatherford Vice President and Chief Compliance Officer. “Together, we hope to make a lasting positive impact in these young people’s lives.”

The online resource, also available in print, was designed in a youth-friendly question-and-answer layout. The resource will be shared with schools, libraries, public agencies, social advocates and others throughout Texas and will be available online starting in December at the specially designed mobile-friendly website, homelessyouth.org/texas. The online version of the handbook is also easily adaptable should Texas laws change.

“We have youth who are fleeing abusive situations at home or whose parents have kicked them out of the house, and we know these young people are seeking help and guidance as they try to transition off of the streets,” said Gabriella McDonald with Texas Appleseed. “We know from research that a smart phone is one of the last lifelines these youth have, so having the handbook online was extremely important to our plans.”

Baker & McKenzie partnered with other organizations to produce three prior editions in the series — handbooks for Washington, Minnesota and Illinois.

“The Homeless Youth Handbook project is an excellent example of how organizations can combine their resources to have a greater community impact. No one organization could have been this effective. Baker & McKenzie is grateful to the teams at Weatherford and Texas Appleseed for their collaboration. We also appreciate Covenant House Texas for their support of our event and applaud the service they provide to the homeless youth in Texas,” said Rick Hammett, Baker & McKenzie’s North American Managing Partner.

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About Baker & McKenzie

Founded in 1949, Baker & McKenzie advises many of the world's most dynamic and successful business organizations through our 13,000 staff in 77 offices in 47 countries. Global revenues for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2016, were US\$2.62 billion. Paul Rawlinson is Chairman of the Executive Committee. (www.bakermckenzie.com)

About Texas Appleseed

Texas Appleseed is a public interest justice center that works to change unjust laws and policies that prevent Texans from realizing their full potential. The nonprofit conducts data-driven research that uncovers inequity in laws and policies and identifies solutions for lasting, concrete change. For more information, visit TexasAppleseed.org.

About Weatherford

Weatherford is one of the largest multinational oilfield service companies providing innovative solutions, technology and services to the oil and gas industry. The Company operates in over 100 countries and has a network of approximately 1,000 locations, including manufacturing, service, research and development, and training facilities and employs approximately 31,000 people. For more information, visit www.weatherford.com and connect with Weatherford on LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube and Facebook.