



Maine State Housing Authority Homeless Initiative Gaps and Needs Analysis: Youth Addendum Report

Draft Report, November 2019



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Executive Summary

Background

The Maine State Housing Authority (MaineHousing), on behalf of the Maine Continuum of Care (MCoC), commissioned a gaps and needs analysis of homeless initiatives in the state. The goal of the analysis was to take a comprehensive look at the services, resources, and housing available to and needed by people and families experiencing homelessness in Maine and to better understand the barriers they face and their unmet needs. An additional goal was to better understand the issues that contribute to becoming and remaining homeless in Maine. Presented here is an addendum report focused on youth who are homeless in Maine.

Methodology and Approach

To conduct this study and develop recommendations for Maine, we analyzed data from the 2018 and 2019 *Point-in-Time (PIT) Counts Youth Survey Addendum* (referred to as the Youth Survey in this report), which targets unaccompanied youth under the age of 25. These data are collected during the annual US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) PIT Counts. We supplemented the data from the Youth Survey with data specific to unaccompanied youth and young adults under the age of 24 that was collected and reported in the main report produced for this study: the *Maine State Housing Authority Homeless Initiative Gaps and Needs Analysis*. The *Homeless Initiative Gaps and Needs Analysis* used a mixed-methods approach that consisted of four main elements:

- reviewing documents and reports;
- conducting focus groups throughout Maine with current or past guests of shelters funded by the MaineHousing Emergency Shelter and Housing Assistance Program (ESHAP);
- conducting interviews with a range of key informants; and
- conducting surveys with staff from MaineHousing-funded shelters and the McKinney-Vento Liaisons in school districts throughout Maine.

Key Findings

Youth Homelessness in Maine

On a single night in January 2019 there were 1,215 people experiencing homelessness in Maine. Over one third were people in families or households with children.

According to data provided by the US Department of Education, during the 2016-2017 school year, the most recent year for which there are publicly available data, there were 2,515 children and youth in Maine public schools who were homeless.

In terms of unaccompanied youth—people under age 25 who are not accompanied by their parent or guardian during their episode of homelessness—the PIT counts reveal that on a single night in January 2018 and 2019 there were 69 and 81 unaccompanied youth in Maine, respectively. Meanwhile, the Youth Survey was completed by 121 youth in 2018 and 129 youth in 2019; the greater number of youth counted in the Youth Survey may be attributed, at least in part, to the fact that it includes youth who are in unstable housing arrangements, such as those who are couch surfing.

Based on our discussions with stakeholders, however, there may be an undercount of people in rural areas, unaccompanied youth, and those who are unsheltered. Thus, the numbers of youth (accompanied and unaccompanied) in Maine who are homeless may be higher than presented here.

Demographics of Youth Facing Homelessness

Age. The majority of youth who completed the Youth Survey in Maine in 2018 and 2019 were between the ages of 18 and 24; most were between the ages of 18 and 20. The youngest age of the youth in both 2018 and 2019 was 14.

Gender. In 2018 over half of the youth were males; in 2019, close to half were females. In 2019 there was an increase in the number of youth who identified as transgendered.

Sexual Identity/Orientation. The majority of the youth in 2018 and 2019 reported that their sexual identity/orientation as straight; 20% in 2018 and 19% in 2019 identified as bisexual; and 5% in 2018 and 9% in 2019 identified as lesbian or gay.

History of Homelessness

The majority of youth in 2018 and 2019 reported that it was not their first time homeless.

Living Situation

Most of the youth in 2018 and 2019 were living in an emergency shelter, transitional housing for the homeless, or in some other housing situation—including staying with families and friends and couch surfing—on the night of the Youth Survey.

The majority of the youth reported that in the last 30 days they had stayed: on the couch of a family member, friend, or someone else; in an apartment where they could be asked to leave without notice; or in some other housing situation, with most youth reporting that they had lived in a shelter or transitional housing.

History of Stable Housing or Living Situations

Last Stable Housing. Over a third of the youth in 2018 and 2019 reported that it had been more than a year since they last lived in safe and stable housing (a place where they had lived longer than six months). Some of the youth reported that they have never felt stably housed.

The majority of the youth reported in 2018 and 2019 that they had lived with family members the last time they lived in stable housing. More youth in 2019 reported that the last time they lived in a stable housing they were living alone or with a partner or with a significant other or another person such as a non-family member.

Reasons for Leaving Stable Housing. Over half of the youth in 2018 and 2019 reported that they were forced to leave their last stable housing.

Situations Faced to Stay in Housing. Over half of the youth in 2018 and 2019 reported that they had stayed with someone they did not feel safe with, and 40% in both years reported they had stayed with someone that they didn't know or trust. The reporting of both of these situations increased in 2019. Some of the youth also reported in 2018 and 2019 that they had stayed with a sexual partner they would not have otherwise stayed with.

Risk Factors for Youth Homelessness

The youth that responded to the Youth Survey in 2018 and 2019 reported risk factors that have been associated with both homelessness and prolonged homelessness (extended durations and multiple episodes of homelessness)¹ among youth.

Involvement with Child Welfare System. Over a third of the youth in 2018 and 2019 reported that they had been previously placed in foster care or stayed in a group home.

Involvement with Criminal Justice Systems. Close to 30% of the youth in 2018 and 20% of the youth in 2019 reported that they had stayed overnight or longer in jail, prison, or a juvenile detention facility.

Dropping Out of School. Over 20% of the youth in 2018 and 19% of the youth in 2019 reported that they had dropped out of school; and most indicated they had dropped out more than 6 months ago. Meanwhile, 7% in 2018 and 12% in 2019 reported that they attended school irregularly. Over one quarter of youth in 2018 and 2019 reported that they were attending school regularly, and some were not enrolled in school because they had graduated from high school or obtained a GED.

Barriers to enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school were examined in the *Homeless Initiative Gaps and Needs Analysis* study. Forty percent of the school survey respondents noted that it was a barrier to graduate students who are homeless from high school.

¹ <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/257806/RiskFactorsAssociatedProlongedHomelessness.pdf>

Focus group participants in youth shelters and stakeholders also discussed barriers to unaccompanied youth attending and/or succeeding in school. Some of the youth noted that it would be helpful to have services (i.e., classes or GED courses) available within the shelter itself, and that this would make it easier for them to participate in educational services. Some of the youth noted that they preferred to do education within the shelter. One youth noted lack of transportation as a barrier to getting to school.

Stakeholders noted that some of the youth, if they attended more than one school, have very fractured educational histories. Some of the youth are also behind in school and may be one, two, or more years behind other youth their age. This may be a cause of embarrassment for the youth. Also according to a stakeholder, many of the youth are seen as not fitting the mold of the kids that sit in classrooms during the day; some would do better with shorter and less intensive days.

It was noted that entities are supposed to work with school districts on the education of youth though the youth may not be successful being back in school and may have already failed in several different schools. A challenge for providing educational services to youth within shelters is that local school departments are required to pay for the education of the youth; if a school is not providing the education for the youth but another entity is, that entity would need to get funding for that youth.

Over half of the school survey respondents identified transportation and free or reduced meals as school-related services and supports needed by students who are homeless in Maine. Close to half of the school survey respondents identified the need for mental health and/or substance use services to be provided within the school. Transportation was cited by most respondents of the school survey as the most needed service/support.

Sources of Income. Not many youth in 2018 and 2019 reported that they received a disability check, such as from Social Security (SSI or SSDI) or Veteran Disability Compensation; though the number and percent that did was higher in 2019 than in 2018. The youth reported that they made money or income from full-time or part-time employment, working under the table, getting money from friends and families or from government programs. More youth reported in 2018 than in 2019 that their sources of income came from selling weed or drugs, hustling, or sex work. Other sources of income identified by the youth included doing odd jobs/chores/temp work, doing some type of employment or job program, selling goods, dumpster diving/or collecting bottles.

Many of the youth who participated in the focus groups noted that having low or no income was a barrier for getting housing. Some noted that getting employment was challenging and that more jobs were needed.

Health and Behavioral Risk Factors Faced by Youth Who Are Homeless

Youth who experience prolonged homelessness have been shown to be at greater risk for substance use, mental health challenges, and health factors.² Homelessness and prolonged homelessness among youth have also been shown to be related to exposure to abuse, violence and neglect, and child maltreatment.³ Studies have also found that prolonged homelessness among youth is associated with risky sexual behaviors.⁴

Youth who participated in the focus groups reported that facing mental health issues and having substance use issues were contributing factors for their homelessness.

Previous Stay in Treatment or Healthcare Facility. In 2018, over half of the youth in the Youth Survey reported they had stayed overnight or longer in a treatment or healthcare facility. The percentage decreased by 6% in 2019.

Mental Health. Over 80% of the youth in 2018 and 2019 reported that they had received mental health services or felt they needed help with their mental health.

Victims of Abuse. The majority of the youth in 2018 and 2019 reported they had experienced physical, emotional, or sexual abuse from a relative or another person they had stayed with (e.g., spouse, partner, brother or sister, or parent) (69% and 70%, respectively).

Youth who participated in the focus groups reported that having experienced trauma such as from abuse from parents or other family members or not being taken care of by their family was a contributing factor for their homelessness. It was noted that many of the youth have experienced a great deal of abuse and trauma in their short lives.

Some stakeholders identified that more work could be done to make sure that the system is more trauma-informed and person-centered. One stakeholder that works with youth noted that many youth are labeled as being “bad,” and that people tend to say to youth “What’s wrong with you?” instead of asking “What’s happening?”

Unprotected Sex. Over half of the youth in 2018 and 2019 reported they had unprotected sex in the past year.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases/Infections. Over one third of the youth in 2018 and 2019 reported they had been tested for or were concerned about a sexually transmitted disease or infection in the past year; the percentage decreased between 2018 and 2019.

² <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/257806/RiskFactorsAssociatedProlongedHomelessness.pdf>

³ <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/257806/RiskFactorsAssociatedProlongedHomelessness.pdf>

⁴ <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/257806/RiskFactorsAssociatedProlongedHomelessness.pdf>

Services and Supports Received, Needed and Barriers

Services and Supports Received. Close to 80% of the youth in 2018 and 2019 reported that they received free meals from soup kitchens and food pantries. Close to or over half of the youth in 2018 and 2019 reported receiving mental health services, housing services, and drop-in/day services in the past year. There may be a need for more services by the youth since the percent of youth that reported receiving mental health services is lower than the percent that reported having received mental health services or that they had needed help with mental health at some time.

Youth who participated in the focus groups reported that they received services at the shelter, through outreach programs, or in the community. Transportation was the service reported by most of the youth, though they also noted that obtaining transportation services was still challenging. The youth also noted receiving support from case management including to obtain identification and benefits such as MaineCare.

Services and Supports Needed. Many of those surveyed or interviewed for this study—including respondents to the school and shelter surveys, stakeholders, and youth who participated in the focus groups—identified transportation as a service that was needed within Maine, and that this issue is more critical in rural areas.

Over half of the school survey respondents identified mental health, physical health and/or dental, substance use treatment, and job training and/or employment as services needed by students and families who are homeless in Maine.

Over one third of the shelter survey respondents that worked in shelters that serve youth identified medication management and dental services as a critical gap. Only 14% of the respondents in shelters that serve youth identified mental health services, substance use services, assistance with getting benefits and entitlements, and employment-related services as a critical gap. Shelter survey respondents also identified the need for services for young adults with developmental disabilities and Housing First models for youth.

Barriers to Receiving Services and Supports. The barrier identified by most youth in 2018 and 2019 for receiving services and supports was the lack of transportation. Two other barriers identified by most of the youth in 2018 and 2019 were not having identification and not knowing where to go for services. Close to or one quarter of the youth in 2018 and 2019 reported that being placed on waiting lists, not having health insurance, and not being able to access services because of age were barriers for receiving services and supports. Some of the youth identified being asked to leave services because of behavior issues and not qualifying for services as barriers. A third of the youth in 2019 reported that having moved or relocated was a barrier for receiving services and supports. Compared to 2018, a smaller percentage of youth in 2019 reported having no issues or barriers to receiving services and supports.

The youth who participated in the focus groups reported that a barrier to obtaining services was not having MaineCare or health insurance. One youth noted that once

someone turns 18 they lose MaineCare. Another youth noted that the process to obtain MaineCare is a barrier, sharing that though they were able to obtain MaineCare with the assistance of a case manager, the process took 3 months.

The barrier noted by most of the survey respondents from shelters that serve youth was services having insufficient capacity. Close to two thirds of the survey respondents also identified transportation issues and needed services not being available. Half of the survey respondents identified clients being unable to engage in services due to cognitive, physical, and/or mental health limitations.

Barriers to Getting and Keeping Employment & Housing

Youth who are homeless may face many barriers to getting and keeping employment and housing. Over half of the youth in 2019 reported that they faced an issue such as alcohol or drug use, physical or mental disabilities, mental health, learning difficulties, sexual orientation, gender identity, or HIV/AIDS that kept them from getting a job or obtaining or staying in stable housing. The percent reporting that these issues kept them from getting a job or getting and keeping stable housing was lower in 2018.

Respondents of the shelter and school surveys, focus group participants, and stakeholders identified that barriers faced by children/students and families who are homeless and unaccompanied youth included: getting vouchers/subsidies; finding vacant and available housing; lack of affordable housing; lack of money for rent deposits; housing vouchers/subsidies insufficient to meet market rents; landlords not accepting vouchers/subsidies; housing not passing inspections (i.e., meeting the housing quality standards set by HUD); and people having bad or no credit or references and a criminal background.

When the respondents of the shelter survey for shelters that serve youth were asked to identify the top three resources needed to fully meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness, the first resource identified by all 14 respondents was related to housing: 7 of the shelters identified the need for more housing/affordable housing, 5 identified the need for more vouchers, and 1 identified the need for Housing First options for youth/young people.

Focus group participants and stakeholders discussed that it is very difficult to find landlords who are willing to rent to young people. Both focus group participants and stakeholders also noted that once housed, sometimes youth lose their voucher or housing because of issues of “door control” (that is, youth opening their doors to friends who are still homeless and allowing them to stay over longer than what is allowed or having parties).

Homeless and Housing Services for Youth Who Are Homeless

Housing for Youth in Maine. According to the Housing Inventory Count reported by the MCoC in 2018, there were 5,481 year-round beds and units available; of these, 138 were youth beds dedicated to housing homeless youth age 24 and younger.⁵ All the beds that are available for youth are either in emergency shelters or transitional housing.

ESHAP-funded Shelters Serving Youth. MaineHousing currently funds 36 shelters through the Emergency Shelter and Housing Assistance Program (ESHAP). Of these, 3 only serve youth: New Beginnings Emergency Shelter (Lewiston, Androscoggin County); Preble Street, Joe Kreisler Teen Center (Portland, Cumberland County); and Shaw House Emergency Youth Center (Bangor, Penobscot County).

Stakeholders and focus group participants discussed the need for shelters for younger youth. It was noted by stakeholders that it was not ideal to have younger youth (e.g., 14-year-olds) in the same shelter as 18-year-olds, as the needs of these youth tend to be very different and younger youth are exposed to riskier behaviors and attitudes being around older youth. It was also noted by a stakeholder that in order to make room for a 14-year-old, sometimes shelters will move an 18-year-old to an adult shelter. This stakeholder noted that it is not appropriate for some 18-year-olds to be in an adult shelter; they recommended shelters for youth ages 14-17 and for youth ages 18-21.

Shelter survey respondents noted the housing resources and services available within the ESHAP-funded shelters. Shelters that serve youth reported providing assistance to apply for housing vouchers/subsidies and for housing, locating housing, working with potential landlords/homeowners, and making referrals and connections to permanent housing. Most of this assistance is provided by housing navigators or case managers/workers. Stakeholders identified the housing navigators as a game changer in helping people obtain and keep housing. Rent Smart (a renter education course) or similar tenant education course was provided by most of the shelters that responded to the shelter survey. Focus group participants who were familiar with the course noted that it was very helpful.

Shelter survey respondents also noted the supportive resources and services available in ESHAP-funded shelters. All of the shelters serving youth provide assistance with obtaining benefits and entitlements. The majority of the shelters serving youth also provide case management services, transportation, financial management skills or education, and independent living skills development/education.

Involvement of Services Users in the System

Some current and past shelter guests of youth shelters who participated in the focus groups wanted more forums to provide feedback and to engage in advocacy activities.

⁵ Ibid.

One stakeholder identified the need to involve more youth and their families, including representation on statewide groups like the Statewide Homeless Council. Others wanted more forums to provide feedback and to engage in advocacy activities.

Recommendations

Within the *Homeless Initiative Gaps and Needs Analysis* final report we identified recommendations to address the needs of unaccompanied youth. Those recommendations still stand based on our analysis of data from the *Youth Survey Addendum*. The recommendations are to:

- Provide more prevention services to prevent youth homelessness;⁶
- Provide more family reunification and family intervention services to help end youth homelessness;⁷
- Provide more supports to facilitate exits into safe, stable, and sustainable housing and communities; and
- Provide more supports to help youth stay in or complete school.

Additional recommendations based on the findings of the *Youth Survey Addendum* for ending and preventing youth homelessness are to:

- Provide more interventions that increase housing stability;⁸
- Provide more interventions that address health and behavioral factors;⁹
- Provide more trauma-informed interventions and services for youth¹⁰; and
- Provide more interventions that provide educational and employment supports.¹¹

⁶ See the following for examples https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/Chapin-Hall_VoYC_Child-Welfare-Brief_2019-FINAL.pdf and <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Ending-Youth-Homelessness-Promising-Program-Models.pdf>

⁷ See the following for examples <http://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/family-intervention-for-unaccompanied-youth.pdf>

⁸ See the following for examples: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/257801/InterventionsProlongedYouthHomelessness.pdf>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ See the following for examples: <https://www.nctsn.org/treatments-and-practices/trauma-treatments/interventions?search=youth&modality=All>

¹¹ See the following for examples: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/257801/InterventionsProlongedYouthHomelessness.pdf>

Background and Methods

Background

Between March and September 2019, HSRI conducted a gaps and needs analysis of homeless initiatives in Maine (referred to as the *Homeless Initiative Gaps and Needs Analysis* in this report). The goal of the analysis was to take a comprehensive look at the services, resources, and housing available to and needed by people and families experiencing homelessness in Maine and to better understand the barriers they face, unmet needs and the issues that contribute to becoming and remaining homeless in Maine. That project was commissioned by the Maine State Housing Authority (MaineHousing) on behalf of the Maine Continuum of Care (MCoC). The Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) was designated as the organization to carry out the project in partnership with the Technical Assistance Collaborative. This report is an addendum report that focuses on youth who are homeless. It is hoped that the findings described in this report will provide a rich foundation for the upcoming needs assessment for the recently HUD-funded Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP).

Methods

For this report, the study team analyzed data from the 2018 and 2019 *Point-in-Time (PIT) Counts Youth Survey Addendum* (referred to as the Youth Survey in this report) collected during the annual US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) PIT Counts. The survey is taken from model surveys provided by HUD to Continuums of Care (CoC) to help communities better collect data on youth experiencing homelessness during the PIT count.¹²

The Youth Survey data was supplemented with some data that was specific to unaccompanied youth and young adults under the age of 24 that was collected and reported in the *Homeless Initiative Gaps and Needs Analysis*. For the *Homeless Initiative Gaps and Needs Analysis* we utilized a mixed-methods approach that consisted of four main elements:

- reviewing documents and reports;
- conducting focus groups throughout Maine with current or past guests of shelters funded by the MaineHousing Emergency Shelter and Housing Assistance Program (ESHAP);
- conducting interviews with a range of key informants; and
- conducting surveys with staff from MaineHousing-funded shelters and the McKinney-Vento Liaisons in school districts throughout Maine.

¹² <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5183/model-pit-count-surveys-for-youth-experiencing-homelessness/>

For more detailed information on the specific sources used and the methods utilized for entering, cleaning, and analyzing the Youth Survey data, please refer to Appendix A of this addendum report. Also included in the appendix are the limitations of the Youth Survey data and the *Homeless Initiative Gaps and Needs Analysis*.

Findings

In this section, we provide a description of youth homelessness in Maine and the factors that contribute to youth homelessness. We also describe homeless and housing resources and services, and we discuss the gaps and needs that are relevant to youth that are homeless, identified through analysis of the Youth Survey data and the *Homeless Initiative Gaps and Needs Analysis* project.

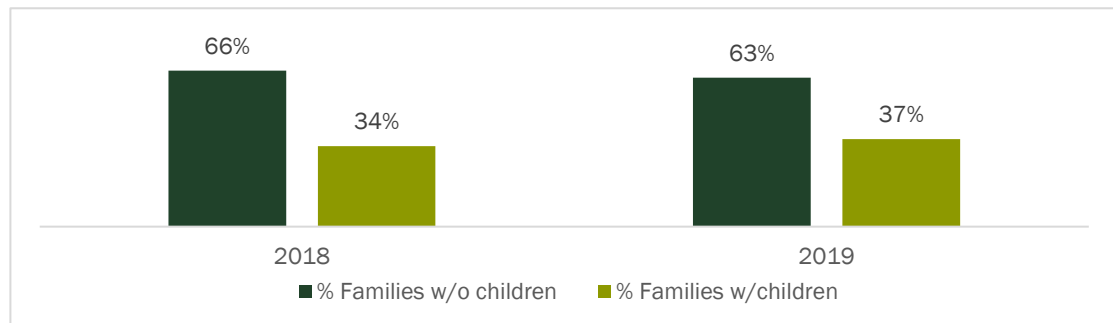
Youth Homelessness in Maine

People in Families With Children

Each year, Continuums of Care (CoC), such as the Maine CoC, conduct annual point-in-time (PIT) counts of homeless persons sheltered and unsheltered on a single night in January (during one of the last ten days of the month). The PIT counts for Maine in 2018 and 2019 were 1,125 and 1,215, respectively. Exhibit 1 shows that on a single night in 2018 and 2019, over one third (34% and 37%, respectively) of the homeless people in Maine were people in families with children.

Exhibit 1

Percent of People in Families With and Without Children, 2018-2019

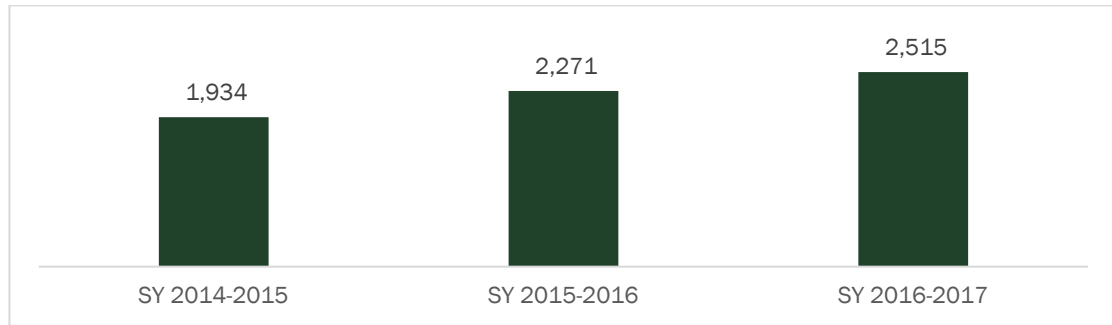


Sources: Maine Homelessness Survey: 2018 Point-in-Time Count (n= 1,125) available at: http://www.mainehousing.org/docs/default-source/housing-reports/2018-point-in-time-survey--statewide.pdf?sfvrsn=553fbe15_6
2019 Point-in-Time Count (n= 1,215) available at: http://www.mainehousing.org/docs/default-source/housing-reports/2019-point-in-time-survey.pdf?sfvrsn=6d6fb415_4

Children/Youth Enrolled in Public Schools

The US Department of Education tracks the number of children and youth who are homeless in Maine public schools. As shown in Exhibit 2, that number grew between the 2014-2015 school year and the 2016-2017 school year, which is the last year for which there is publicly available data.

Number of Children/Youth Who Are Homeless and Enrolled in Public Schools



Source: Data available from the U.S. Department of Education's EDFacts Initiatives, obtained from <http://profiles.nche.seiservices.com/StateProfile.aspx?StateID=25;>

Note: Included are all children and youth in grades Pre-K through 12 who are homeless.

Unaccompanied Youth

MAINE ESTIMATES

The term 'unaccompanied youth' refers to people under the age of 25 who are not accompanied by their parent or guardian during their episode of homelessness. There are two sources of data on unaccompanied youth in Maine. The first source comes from the PIT counts. On a single night in 2018 and 2019 there were 69 and 81 unaccompanied youth in the PIT count, respectively.¹³ The second source is the *Youth Survey Addendum*. In 2018 and 2019 the Youth Survey was completed by 121 and 129 unaccompanied youth, respectively. The higher numbers of unaccompanied youth in the Youth Survey may be because it includes youth who were staying with family and friends and were couch surfing. Within this report, we focus on the data collected from unaccompanied youth through the Youth Survey.

During our discussions with stakeholders, a common theme that arose was the difficulty of counting people who are homeless in rural areas. Homelessness in rural areas is not as visible and is more hidden—and is therefore more difficult to count, especially during the winter months when the PIT count is conducted. Thus, unaccompanied youth in rural areas may be undercounted in the PIT count. Moreover, in general stakeholders identified unaccompanied youth as being a population that is generally undercounted because they tend to do more couch-surfing/hopping and thus are not considered homeless by the general homeless system, though they are considered homeless within the public school system. Stakeholders also identified that the federal definition of homelessness, which does not include people who are staying with friends and families or couch-surfing/hopping, contributes to the undercount of people who are homeless in Maine. Because of Maine's winter climate, fewer people are likely to be found living in the streets. Some stakeholders noted that the PIT counts drive activity within the

¹³ http://www.mainehousing.org/docs/default-source/housing-reports/2019-point-in-time-survey.pdf?sfvrsn=6d6fb415_4

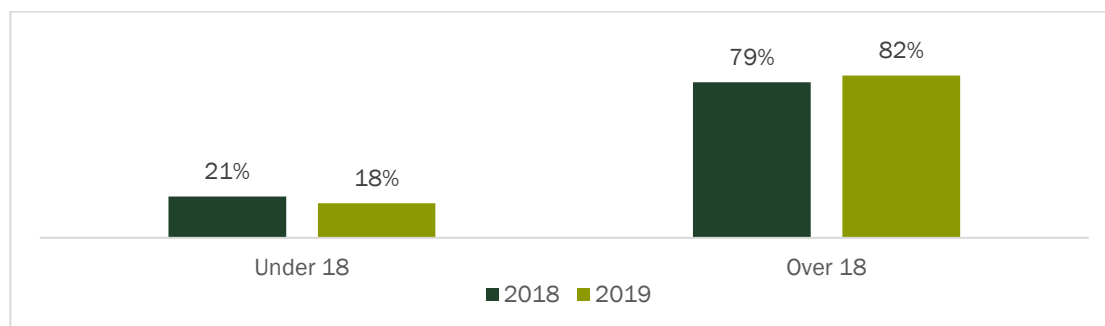
MCoC and that the data are showing that homelessness is dropping in the state; in some other areas, however, that is not seen as the case.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Ages of Youth. The majority of youth who completed the Youth Survey in 2018 and 2019 were between the ages of 18 and 24 (79% and 82%, respectively) (Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 3

Percent of Youth by Age Group, 2018 and 2019

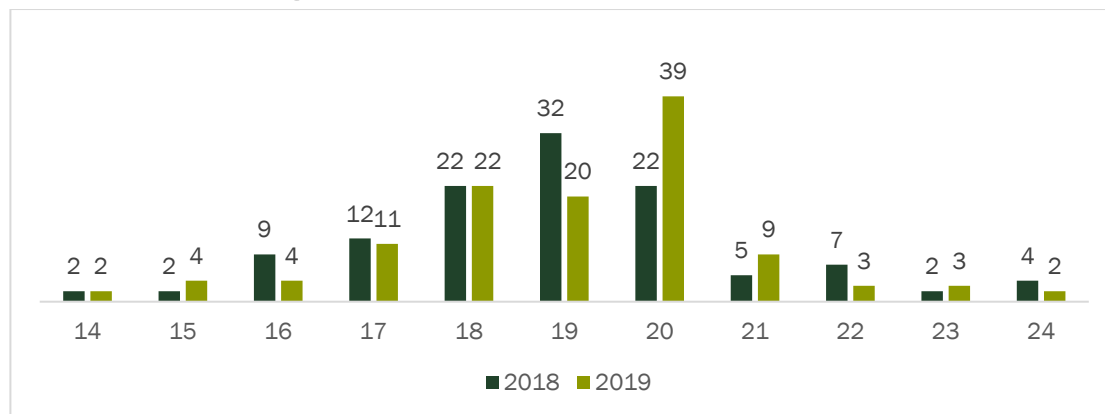


Source: 2018 (N= 119) and 2019 (n=125) Youth Survey

The age of the youngest youth who completed the surveys in 2018 and 2019 was 14. As shown in Exhibit 4, the majority of the youth who completed the survey in 2018 and 2019 were between the ages of 18 to 20.

Exhibit 4

Counts of Youth by Age, 2018 and 2019



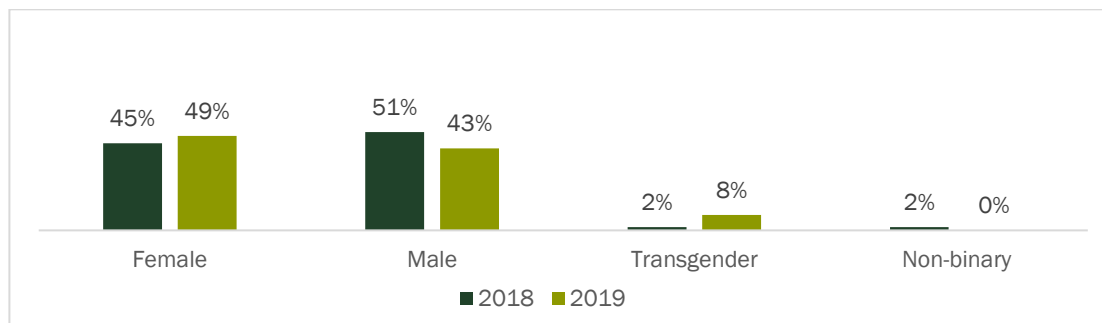
Source: 2018 (N= 119) and 2019 (n=119) Youth Survey

Note: Age was calculated based on date of birth compared to the PIT date 1/23/2018 (for 2018) and 1/22/2019 (for 2019).

Gender Identity. Males accounted for over half of the youth who were homeless and responded to surveys in 2018 (51%). In 2019, however, males composed a smaller percentage (43%), while nearly half were female (49%). In 2018 and 2019, a small percent of the youth reported identifying as transgendered or as non-binary (Exhibit 5); a greater percentage of youth identified as transgender in 2019 than in 2018 (8% versus 2%).

Exhibit 5

Percent of Youth by Gender Identity, 2018 and 2019



Source: 2018 (N= 119) and 2019 (n=124) Youth Survey Addendum

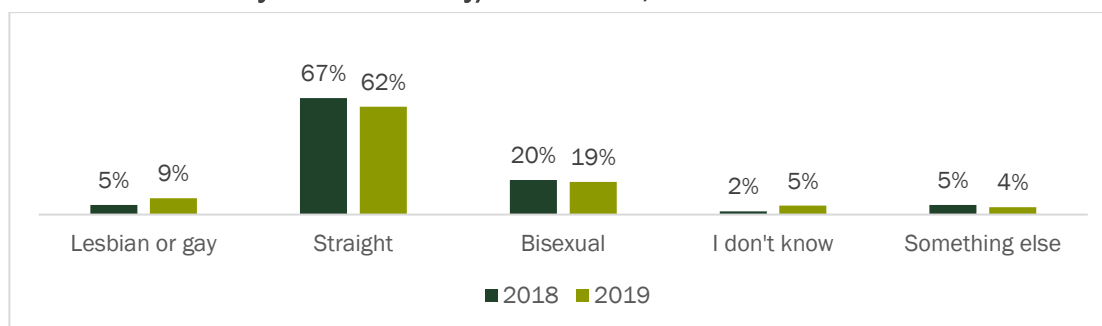
Note: Youth who self-identified as transgender or non-binary in response to Q4 ("Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself?") are reported here as such regardless of how the interviewer recorded their gender.

Sexual Identity/Orientation. In both 2018 and 2019, the majority of the youth who responded to the Youth Survey reported their sexual identity/orientation as straight (67% and 62%, respectively) (Exhibit 6), while 20% in 2018 and 19% in 2019 identified as bisexual. A total of 5% in 2018 and 9% in 2019 identified as lesbian or gay. A small percent of the youth reported that they did not know how to identify themselves or identified themselves as having a different sexual identity/orientation.

It was noted by youth during focus groups that being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning (LGBTQ) and not accepted at home was a contributing factor for youth homelessness.

Exhibit 6

Percent of Youth by Sexual Identity/Orientation, 2018 and 2019



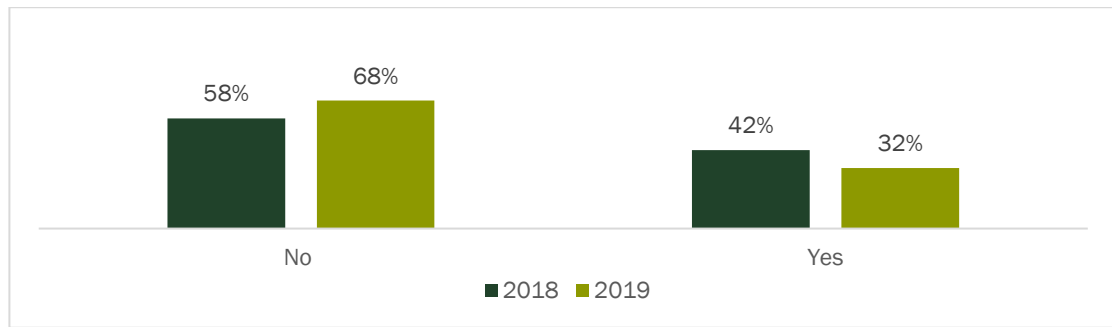
Source: 2018 (N= 110) and 2019 (n=117) Youth Survey Addendum

HISTORY OF HOMELESSNESS

The majority of the youth who responded to the Youth Survey in 2018 and 2019 reported that it was not their first time being homeless (58% and 68%, respectively) (Exhibit 7). The percent who reported having a previous episode of homelessness increased between 2018 and 2019.

Exhibit 7

Percent of Youth by First Time Homeless, 2018 and 2019



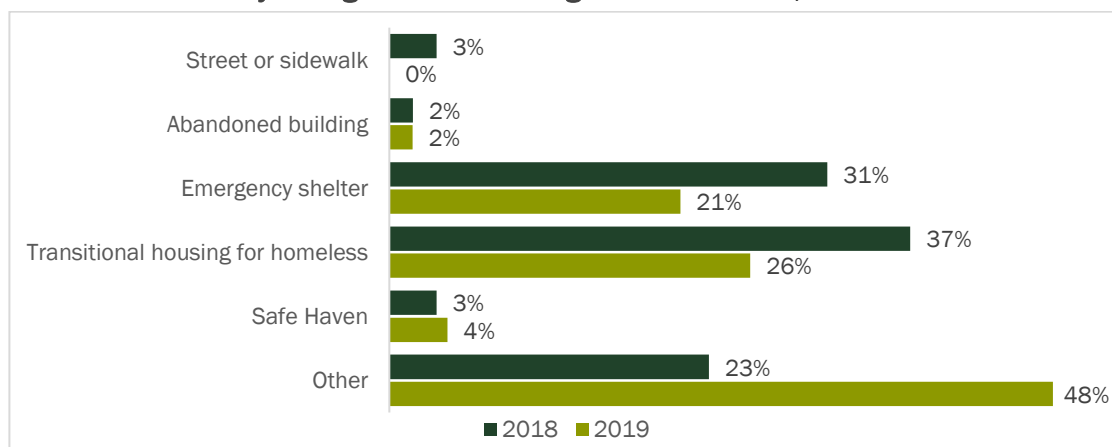
Source: 2018 (N= 108) and 2019 (n=115) Youth Survey Addendum

LIVING SITUATION ON NIGHT OF PIT COUNTS

Over half of the youth who responded to the Youth Survey in 2018 were staying in an emergency shelter (including in a hotel paid for by a voucher) or in transitional housing for homeless persons on the night of the survey (Exhibit 8). In 2019, there was a decrease in the percent of youth living in an emergency shelter or transitional housing, whereas the percent who responded that they were living in some other living situation doubled between 2018 and 2019 (from 23% to 48%) (Exhibit 8). Some of the other living situations identified were staying with families and friends (in apartments, houses, or dorms), couch-surfing, living in a barn, and staying at a food pantry. In both years, only a small percent of the youth reported living on the street, in an abandoned building, or Safe Haven.

Exhibit 8

Percent of Youth by Living Situation on Night of PIT Counts, 2018 and 2019



Source: 2018 (N= 118) and 2019 (n=120) Youth Survey Addendum

LIVING SITUATION IN THE LAST 30 DAYS

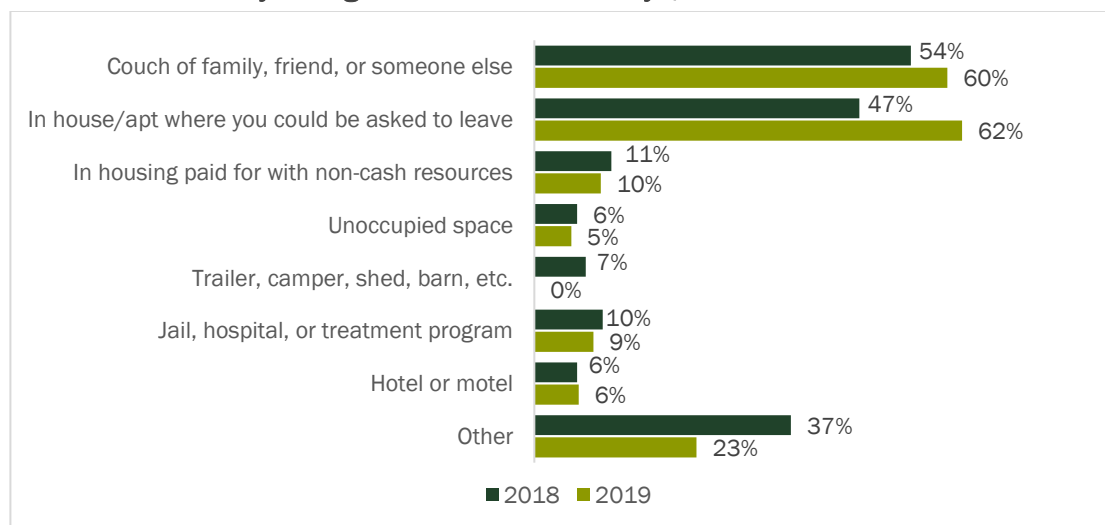
As shown in Exhibit 9, over half of the youth responding to the Youth Survey in 2018 and 2019 reported they had stayed on the couch or other extra space of a friend, family member, or someone else in the last 30 days (54% and 60%, respectively). In 2018, close to half (47%) reported that they had stayed somewhere where they were

not on the lease and could be asked to leave without notice; by 2019, the percentage had climbed to 62%. Roughly 10% (11% in 2018 and 10% in 2019) reported that in the last 30 days they had spent time in housing which they had to pay for with non-cash resources (e.g., food stamps, sex, drug trafficking/sales, criminal activity, etc.). Similar percentages (10% in 2018 and 9% in 2019) reported they had been in jail, a hospital, or in a treatment program in the past 30 days.

A total of 37% of the youth in 2018 and 23% in 2019 reported that in the last 30 days they had lived in other housing situations where they could be asked to leave without notice. Some of the youth identified having lived at a shelter (n=25) or in transitional housing (n=13) in the last 30 days.

Exhibit 9

Percent of Youth by Living Situation Last 30 Days, 2018 and 2019



Source: 2018 (N= 108) and 2019 (n=115) Youth Survey Addendum

HISTORY OF STABLE HOUSING OR LIVING SITUATIONS

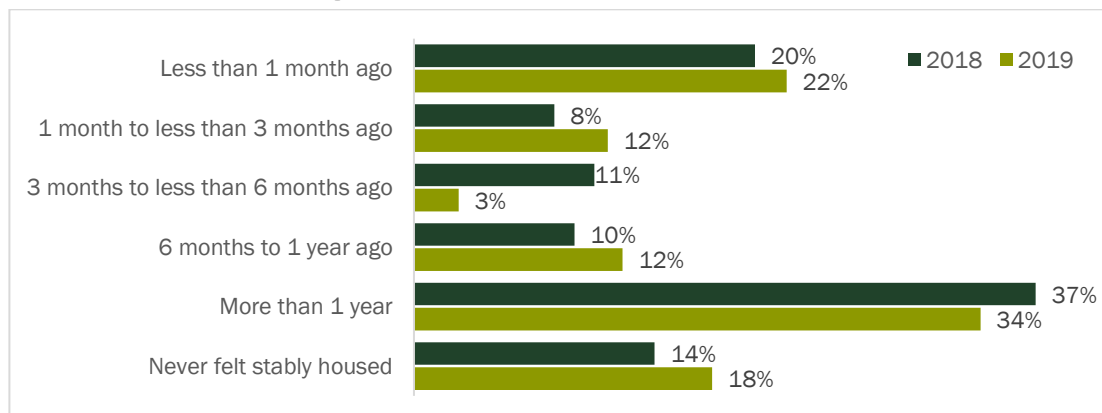
The data above shows that the youth who responded to the 2018 and 2019 Youth Survey lived in housing or living situations that were not stable for at least 30 days. In the section below, we discuss data on when the youth reported they were last in a stable housing and living situation.

Last Time Stably Housed. Over a third of the youth responding to the Youth Survey in 2018 and 2019 (37% and 34%, respectively) reported it had been more than one year since the last time they lived in safe and stable housing (a place where they had lived longer than six months) (Exhibit 10). Notably, 14% of youth in 2018 and 18% of the youth in 2019 reported they have never felt stably housed. Studies have shown that youth who experience prolonged homelessness experience a greater degree of instability in housing and living situations.¹⁴

¹⁴ <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/257806/RiskFactorsAssociatedProlongedHomelessness.pdf>

Exhibit 10

Percent of Youth by Length of Time Last Felt Stably Housed, 2018 and 2019

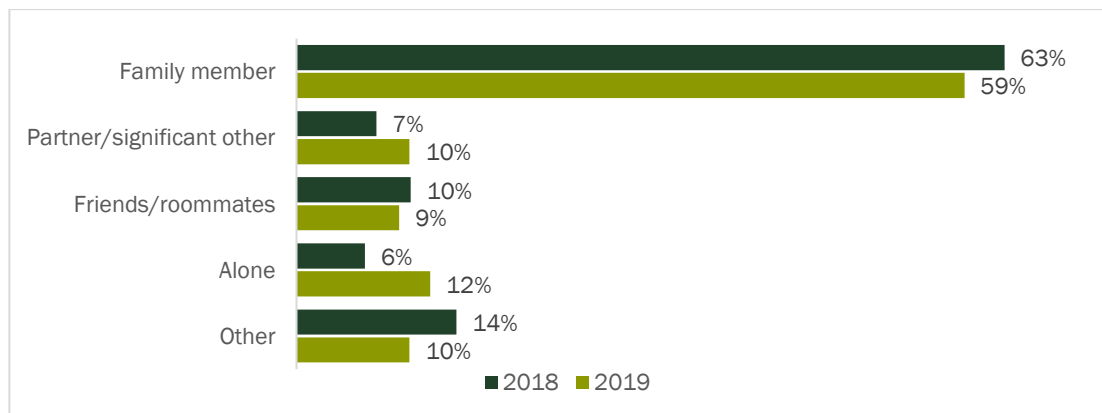


Source: 2018 (N= 84) and 2019 (n=113) Youth Survey Addendum

The majority of the youth reported in 2018 and 2019 that they had lived with family members the last time they lived in stable housing (63% and 59%, respectively) (Exhibit 11). However, in 2019, there was an increase in the percent of youth who reported the last time that they lived in stable housing they were living alone, with a partner or significant other, or with another person.

Exhibit 11

Percent of Youth by Who Lived With Last Time Lived in Stable Housing, 2018 and 2019

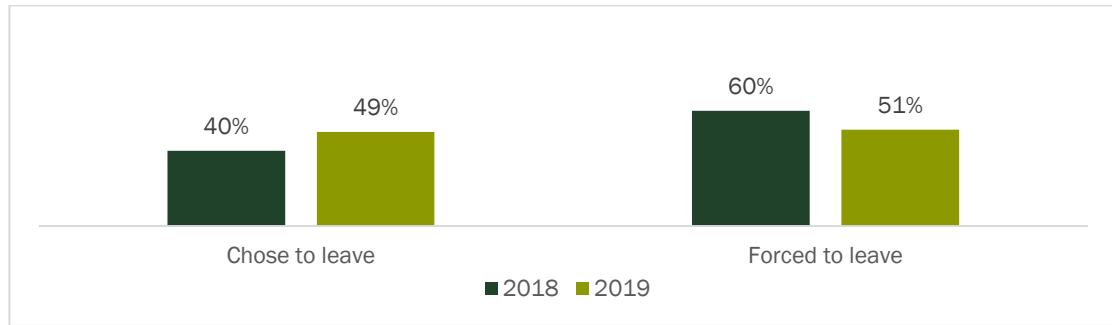


Source: 2018 (N= 99) and 2019 (n=110) Youth Survey Addendum

Reasons for Leaving Stable Housing. While many youth reported in 2018 and 2019 that they chose to leave their last stable housing, over half reported they were forced to leave their last stable housing situation (Exhibit 12). The percent of youth reporting they were forced to leave decreased between 2018 and 2019 (from 60% to 51%).

Exhibit 12

Percent of Youth by Reason for Leaving Stable Housing, 2018 and 2019



Source: 2018 (N= 91) and 2019 (n=79) Youth Survey Addendum

Some of the youth who participated in the focus groups for the study reported that they were kicked out of their homes by their family. It was also noted during a focus group that youth sometimes have their own apartment and let friends stay with them, which results in a violation of the lease and youth losing apartments.

Some of the youth in the focus groups reported that they chose to leave their homes or stable housing because of issues with families and roommates. One youth noted that they ended up homeless because both parents had died.

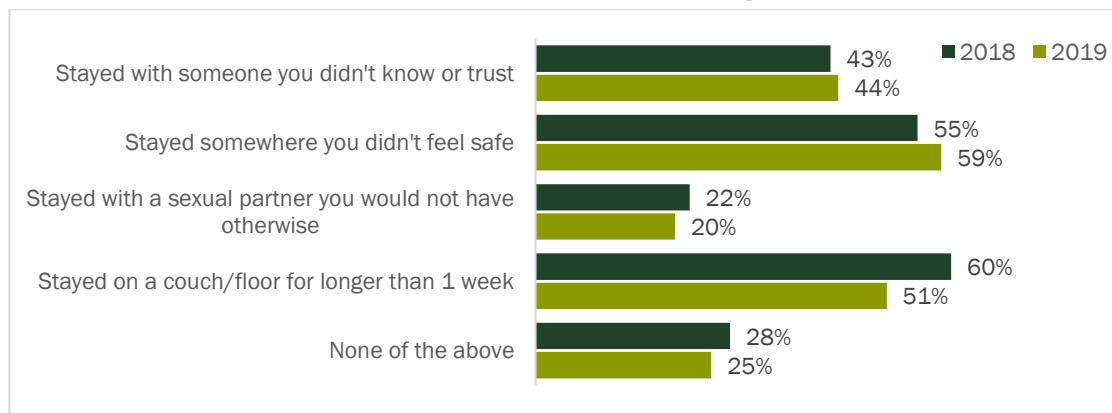
The distinction between youth who chose to leave their last stable home and those who are forced to leave is an important one. Stakeholders noted that there were two types of youth who are homeless: those who experience some type of crisis or issue at home and who can possibly be reunited with their families if provided with appropriate supports; and those who cannot be reunited with their families. With regard to the first group, stakeholders noted that prevention and reunification efforts can be utilized with the youth and families to prevent the youth from entering and staying in homelessness. For the second group, stakeholders recommend removing youth from the streets and younger youth from shelters in order to decrease the chances of the youth adjusting to and liking the “lure of the streets” and its freedoms and subsequently being thrown into homelessness cycles that include involvement with the criminal and juvenile justice system.

Situations Faced to Stay in Any Housing Situation. Over half of the youth responding to the Youth Survey in 2018 and 2019 reported that they had stayed with someone they did not feel safe with in order to stay in a housing situation (55% and 59%, respectively). Over 40% reported that to stay in a housing situation they have stayed with someone they didn’t know or trust (43% and 44%, respectively). The reporting of both of these situations increased in 2019. Some of the youth also reported in 2018 and 2019 that to stay in a housing situation they stayed with a sexual partner they would not have otherwise stayed with (22% and 20%, respectively) (Exhibit 13).

Many youth in 2018 and 2019 reported that they had stayed on a couch or floor for more than one week (60% and 51%, respectively).

Exhibit 13

Percent of Youth by Situations Faced to Stay in Housing, 2018 and 2019



Source: 2018 (N= 103) and 2019 (n=114) Youth Survey Addendum

RISKS FACTORS FOR YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

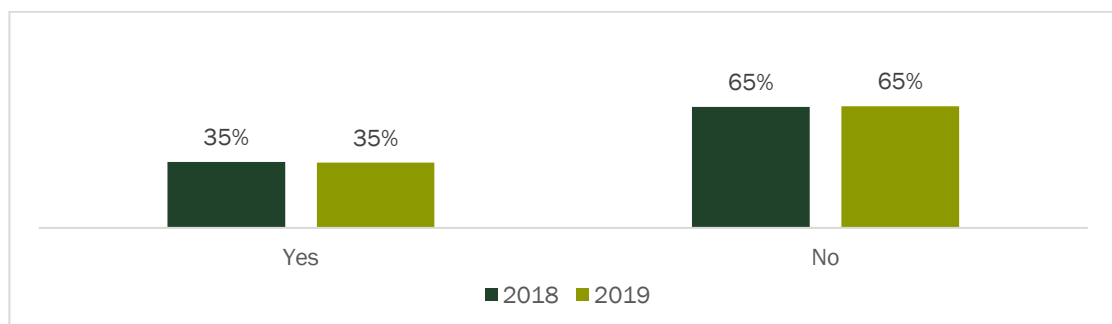
In this section we report on risk factors that were reported by the youth in 2018 and 2019 and that have been noted in the literature to be associated with youth experiencing homelessness and prolonged homelessness, which includes extended durations and multiple episodes of homelessness.¹⁵

Involvement in the Child Welfare and Criminal Justice Systems. Youth with a history of foster care involvement who are homeless are more likely to report prolonged homelessness.¹⁶ Over a third of the youth who responded to the Youth Survey in 2018 and 2019 reported they had been previously placed in foster care or had stayed in a group home (35% in both years).

Youth who participated in the focus groups reported that aging out of systems was a contributing factor for their homelessness. Stakeholders also noted that the shortage of foster care placements in the state contributed to youth homelessness.

Exhibit 14

Percent of Youth Placed in Foster Care or Stayed in Group Home, 2018 and 2019



Source: 2018 (N= 102) and 2019 (n=120) Youth Survey Addendum

¹⁵ <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/257806/RiskFactorsAssociatedProlongedHomelessness.pdf>

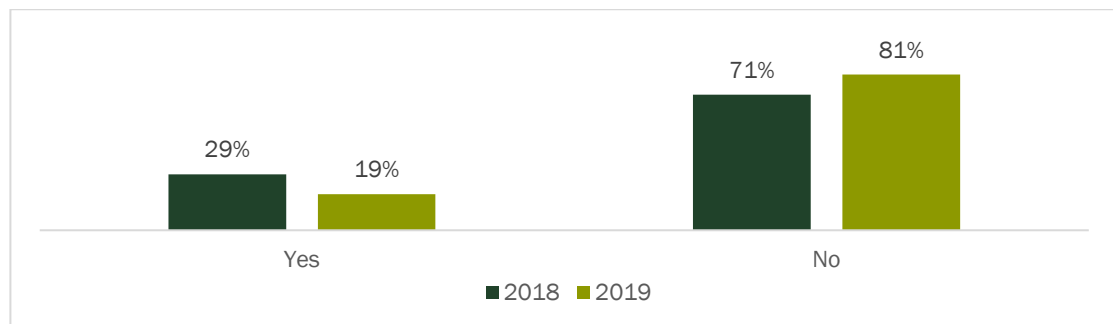
¹⁶ Ibid.

Involvement with the criminal justice system has also been shown to be associated with prolonged homelessness among youth.¹⁷ Close to 30% of the youth in 2018 and 20% of the youth in 2019 who responded to the Youth Survey reported that they had stayed overnight or longer in jail, prison, or a juvenile detention facility.

Participants of the focus groups conducted throughout Maine discussed the criminalization of homeless behaviors. The criminalization of homeless behaviors has led to arrest records and fines and fees that further stand in the way of people getting jobs or housing. One youth at a focus group noted they had accumulated many fines and fees and were looking at possible jail time for nonpayment.

Exhibit 15

Percent of Youth Who Have Gone to Jail, Prison, or Juvenile Detention Facility, 2018 and 2019



Source: 2018 (N= 106) and 2019 (n=117) Youth Survey Addendum

Enrollment in School & Education. Prolonged homelessness among youth has also been found to be associated with a greater likelihood of dropping out of school.¹⁸ Over 20% of the youth in 2018 and 19% of the youth in 2019 reported that they had dropped out of school, and most of these had dropped out more than 6 months ago (Exhibit 16); meanwhile, 7% in 2018 and 12% in 2019 reported they attended school irregularly (Exhibit 16). Studies have shown that youth who have been away from home longer than six months are less likely to be attending school than youth who are newly homeless.¹⁹

In both 2018 and 2019, over one quarter of the youth who responded to the Youth Survey reported that they were attending school regularly (28% and 25%, respectively) (Exhibit 16). Some reported that they were not enrolled in school because they had graduated from high school or obtained a GED (Exhibit 16).

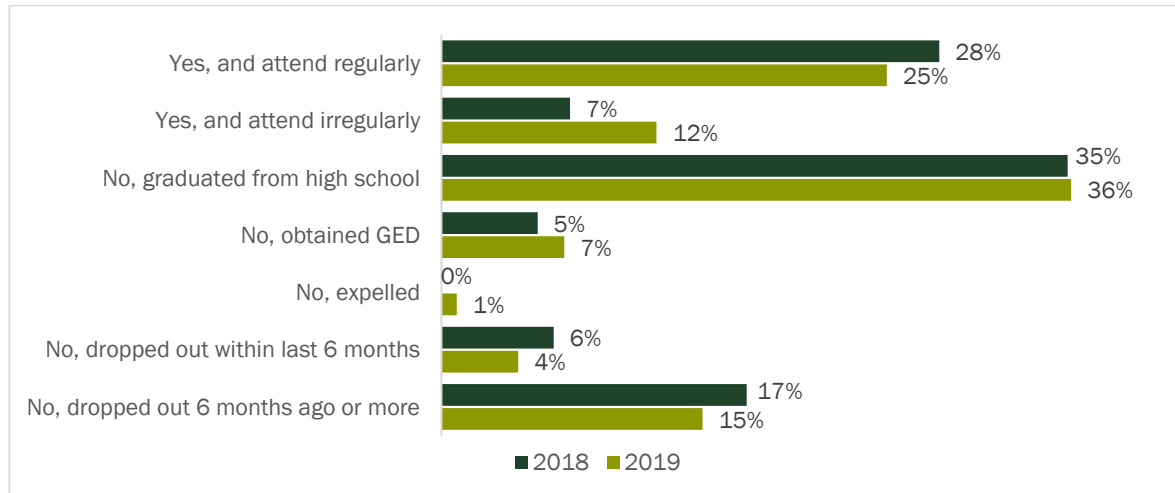
¹⁷ <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/257806/RiskFactorsAssociatedProlongedHomelessness.pdf>

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/257806/RiskFactorsAssociatedProlongedHomelessness.pdf>

Exhibit 16

Youth Survey Responses to “Are you enrolled in school?”, 2018 and 2019

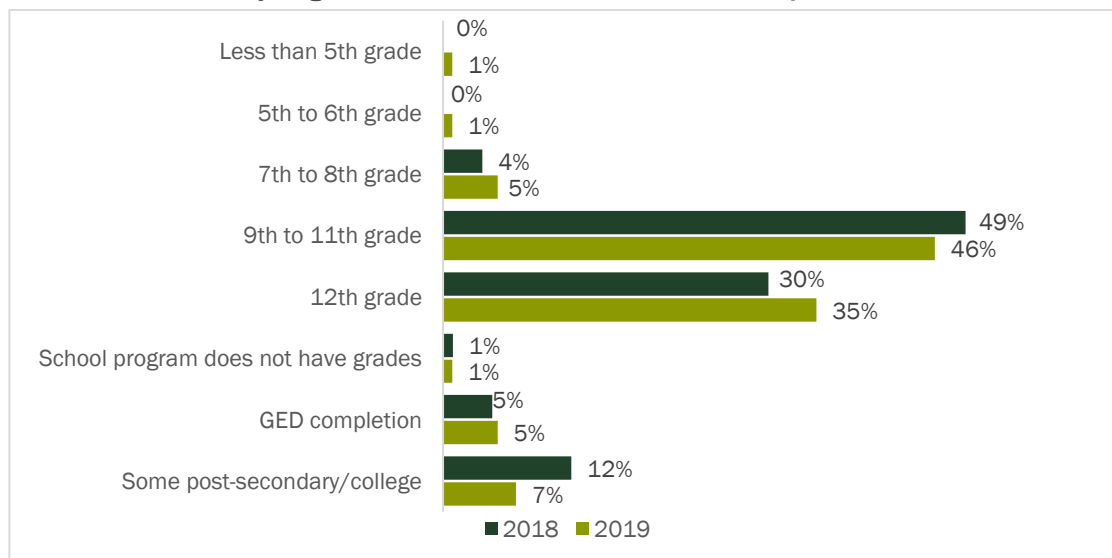


Source: 2018 (N= 110) and 2019 (n=115) Youth Survey Addendum

As shown in Exhibit 17, in both 2018 and 2019 close to half of the youth who responded to the Youth Survey had completed the 9th to 11th grade (49% and 46%, respectively), and 30% in 2018 and 35% in 2019 reported that 12th grade was the highest grade or level of school they had completed. A small percent of the youth in 2018 and 2019 reported completing the GED. Some reported they had completed some post-secondary or college work (12% in 2018 and 7% in 2019).

Exhibit 17

Percent of Youth by Highest Grade or Level of School Completed, 2018 and 2019



Source: 2018 (N= 109) and 2019 (n=118) Youth Survey Addendum

Barriers to Enrolling, Attending and Succeeding in School. Barriers to enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school were examined in the school survey. Over half of the respondents of the school survey identified that having emotional, mental health, and/or SUD issues and lacking the support of a caring adult are barriers that unaccompanied youth who are homeless face in enrolling, attending

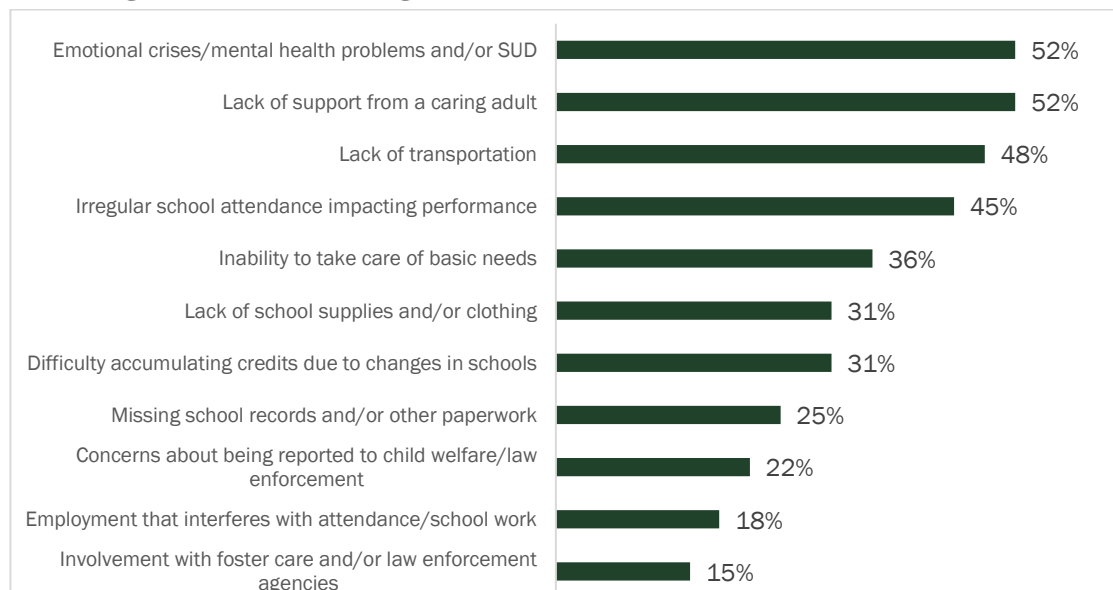
and/or succeeding in school (Exhibit 18). Close to half of the school survey respondents identified the lack of transportation as a barrier for enrolling, attending and/or succeeding in school.

Focus group participants in youth shelters and stakeholders also discussed barriers to unaccompanied youth attending and/or succeeding in school. Some of the youth noted that it would be helpful to have services (i.e., classes or GED courses) available within the shelter to make it easier for them to participate in educational services. Some of the youth noted preferring to do education within the shelter. One youth noted that the lack of transportation was a barrier to getting to school.

Stakeholders noted that some of the youth, if they attended more than one school, have very fractured educational histories. Some of the youth are also behind in school and may be one, two, or more years behind other youth their age. This may be a cause of embarrassment for the youth. Also according to a stakeholder, many of the youth are seen as not fitting the mold of the kids that sit in classrooms during the day; some of the youth would do better with shorter and less intensive days. It was noted that entities are supposed to work with school districts on the education of youth though the youth may not be successful being back in school and may have already failed in several different schools. A challenge for providing educational services to youth within shelters is that local school departments are required to pay for the education of the youth. Therefore, if a school is not providing the education for the youth but another entity is, that entity would need to get funding for that youth.

Exhibit 18

Barriers Faced by Unaccompanied Youth Who Are Homeless in Enrolling, Attending, and/or Succeeding in School



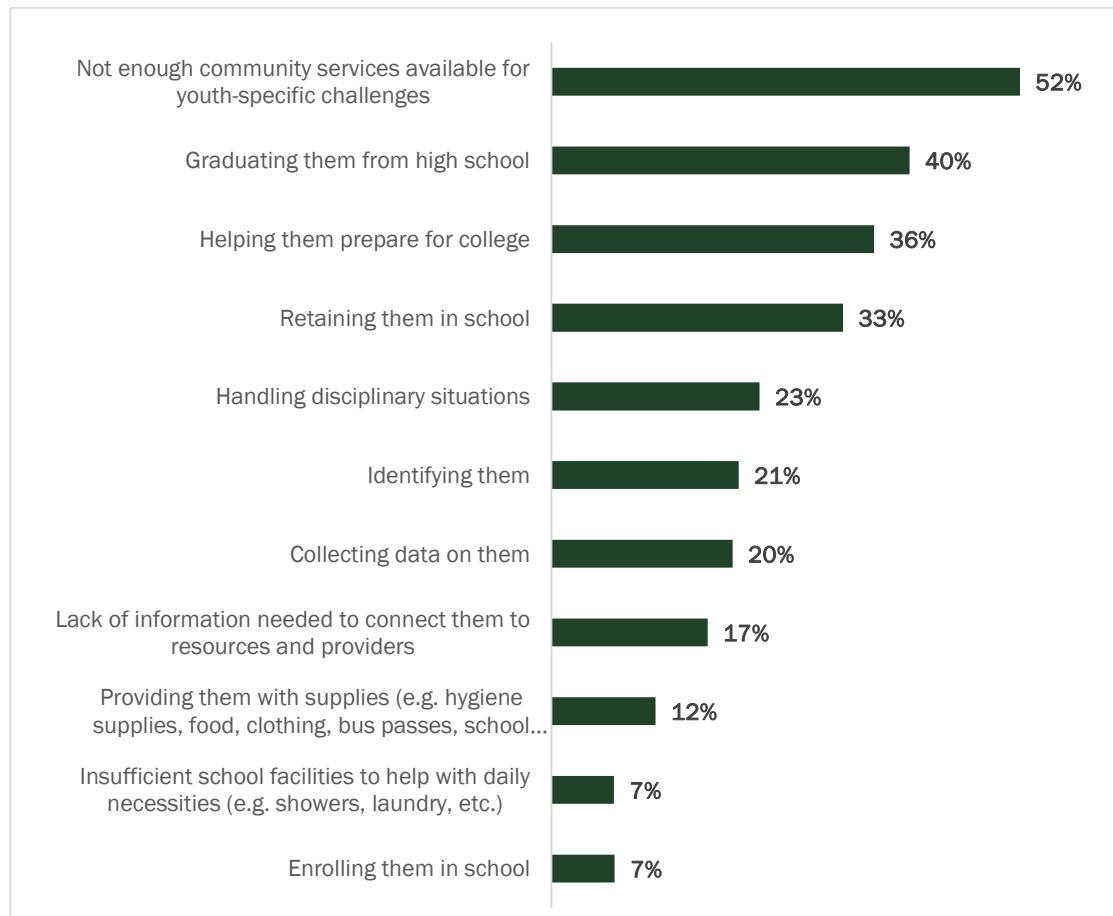
Source: School Survey, N=87 respondents

Note: Percent is for those that indicated a barrier or major barrier; Respondents could check all that apply so percentages do not add to 100%.

Over half of the respondents to the school survey identified that not having enough services available in the community tailored to youth-specific challenges was a challenge faced by the school districts (Exhibit 19).

Exhibit 19

Challenges Schools Face in Serving Unaccompanied Youth Who Are Homeless



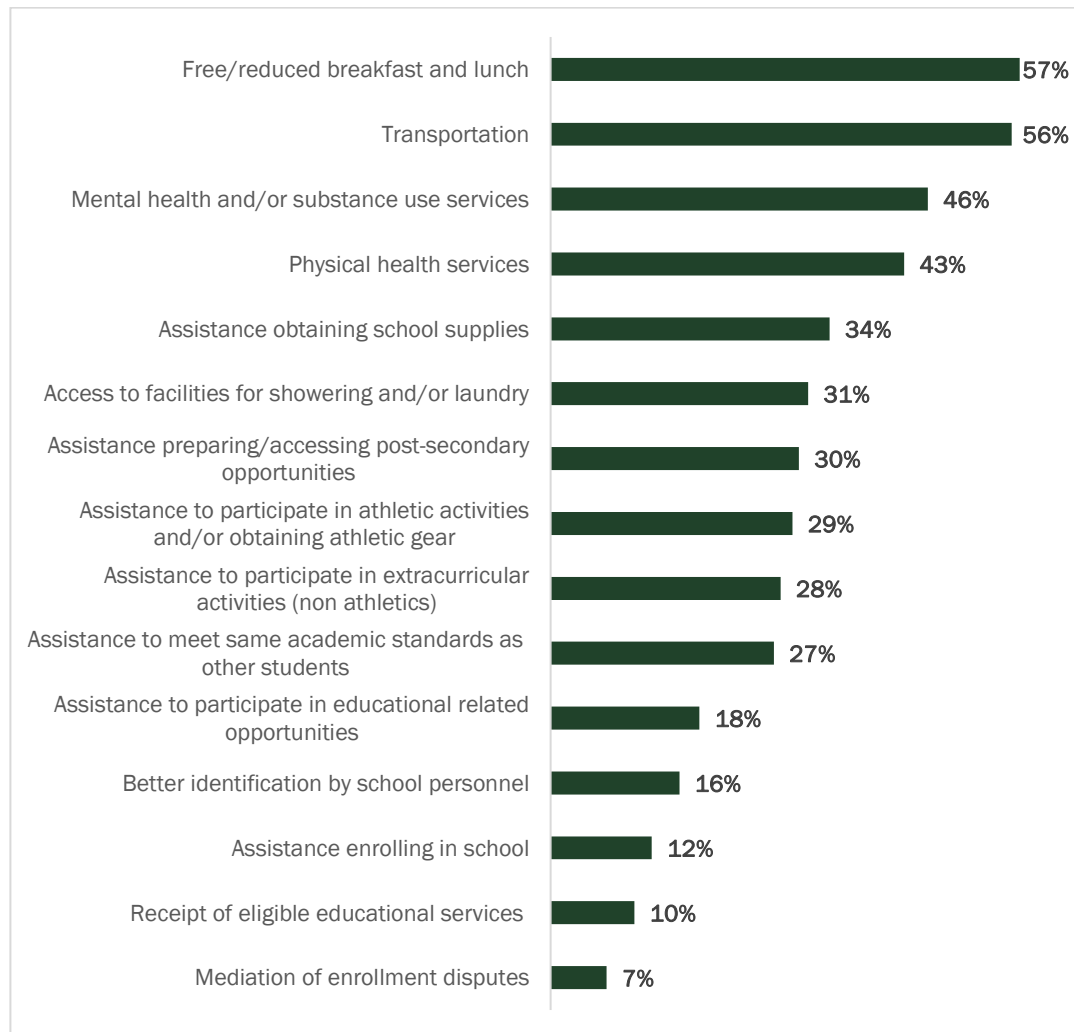
Source: School Survey, N=86 respondents

Note: Percent is for those that indicated that the item was challenging or extremely challenging; Respondents could check all that apply so percentages do not add to 100%.

Services and Supports Needed by Students. Over half of the respondents to the school survey identified that students who are homeless in Maine needed the following school-related services: transportation and free or reduced meals (see Exhibit 20). Close to half identified the need for mental health and/or substance use services to be provided within the school. When asked in an open-ended question to identify the greatest need for school-related services/supports for students who are homeless in Maine, respondents cited transportation most frequently.

Exhibit 20

School Related Services and Supports Needed by Students Who Are Homeless in Maine



Source: School Survey, N=90 respondents

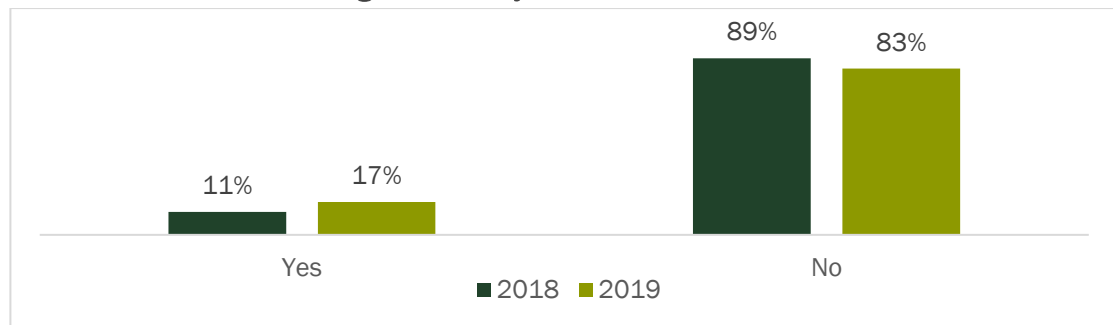
Note: Percent is for those that indicated a need or major need.

SOURCES OF INCOME

In this section we describe the sources of income reported by youth responding to the Youth Survey in 2018 and 2019. Very few youth reported that they received a disability check, such as from Social Security (SSI or SSDI) or Veteran Disability Compensation; however, the number and percent who reported receiving a disability check was higher in 2019 than in 2018 (17% versus 11%, respectively) (Exhibit 21).

Exhibit 21

Percent of Youth Receiving a Disability Check, 2018 and 2019

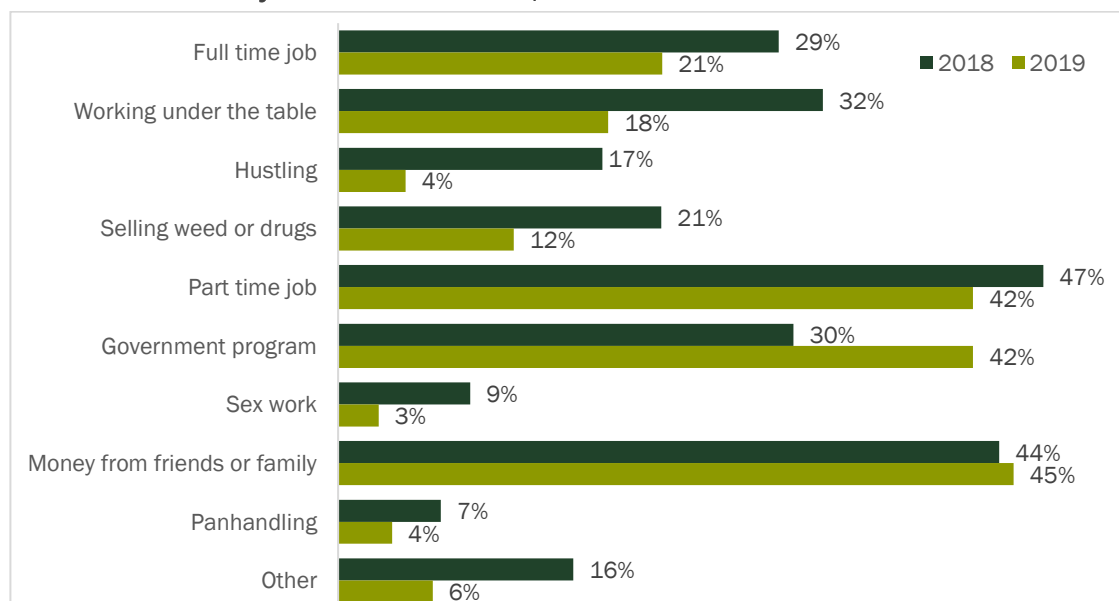


Source: 2018 (N= 105) and 2019 (n=121) Youth Survey Addendum

Youth reported that they made money or income from different sources. The majority reported that their income came from full-time or part-time employment, working under the table, getting money from friends and families or from government programs. More youth reported in 2018 than in 2019 that their sources of income came from selling weed or drugs (21% versus 12%), hustling (17% versus 4%), or sex work (9% versus 3%). Under other sources of income, the youth identified: not having an income, doing odd jobs/chores/temp work, doing some type of employment or job program, selling goods, dumpster diving/or collecting bottles, etc.

Exhibit 22

Percent of Youth by Sources of Income, 2018 and 2019



Source: 2018 (N= 103) and 2019 (n=112) Youth Survey Addendum

Many of the youth who participated in the focus groups noted that having low or no income was a barrier for getting housing. Some noted that getting employment was challenging and that more jobs were needed. Some of the youth reported being involved with job services such as Take 2 Youth Build and Job Corps, but their experiences with the job services were mixed.

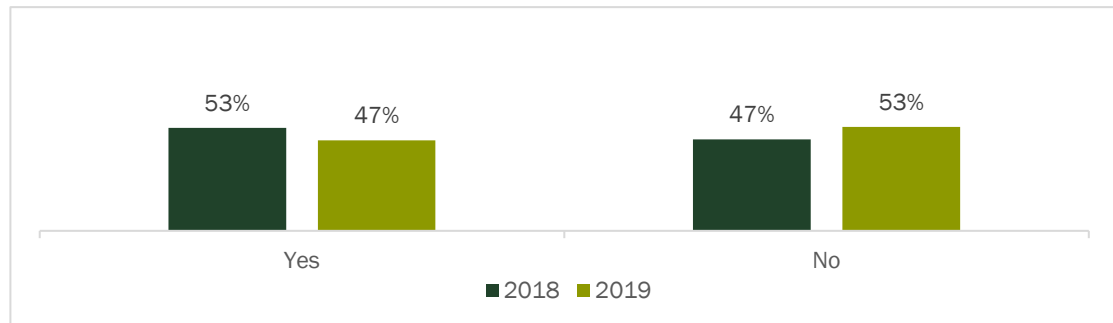
HEALTH AND BEHAVIORAL FACTORS

Youth who experience prolonged homelessness have been shown to be at greater risk for substance use, mental health challenges and health factors.²⁰ Youth who participated in the focus groups reported that facing mental health issues and having substance use issues were contributing factors for their homelessness.

Previous Stay in Treatment or Healthcare Facility. Over half of the youth that responded to Youth Survey in 2018 (53%) reported they had stayed overnight or longer in a treatment or healthcare facility. This figure decreased in 2019 to 47% (Exhibit 23).

Exhibit 23

Percent of Youth Staying Overnight or Longer in Treatment of Healthcare Facility, 2018 and 2019



Source: 2018 (N= 100) and 2019 (n=116) Youth Survey Addendum

Mental Health. Over 80% of the Youth Survey respondents in 2018 and 2019 reported they had received mental health services or felt they needed help with their mental health (85% and 84%, respectively) (Exhibit 24). Studies have shown that mental health disorders such as mood disorders, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder are more prevalent in youth that experience homelessness than in youth in the general population.²¹ Studies have also shown that youth that experience prolonged homelessness have higher levels of serious mental illness, trauma and other risk behaviors.²²

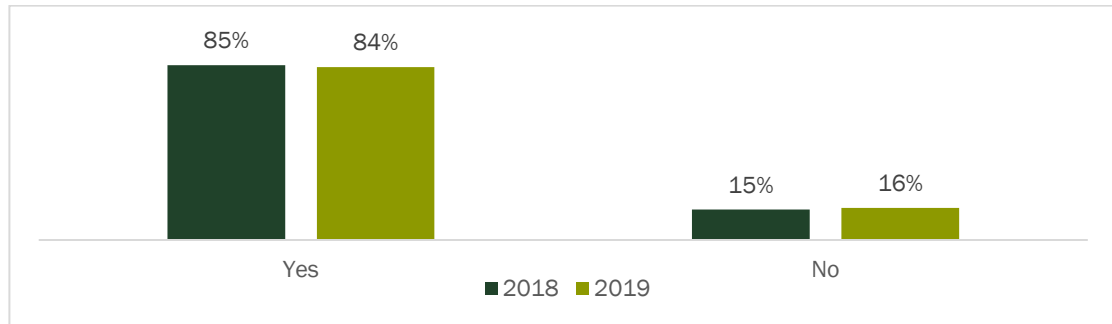
²⁰ <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/257806/RiskFactorsAssociatedProlongedHomelessness.pdf>

²¹ <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/257811/SMIProlongedYouthHomelessness.pdf>

²² Ibid.

Exhibit 24

Percent of Youth Who Have Received Mental Health Services or Need Help with Mental Health, 2018 and 2019



Source: 2018 (N= 108) and 2019 (n=115) Youth Survey Addendum

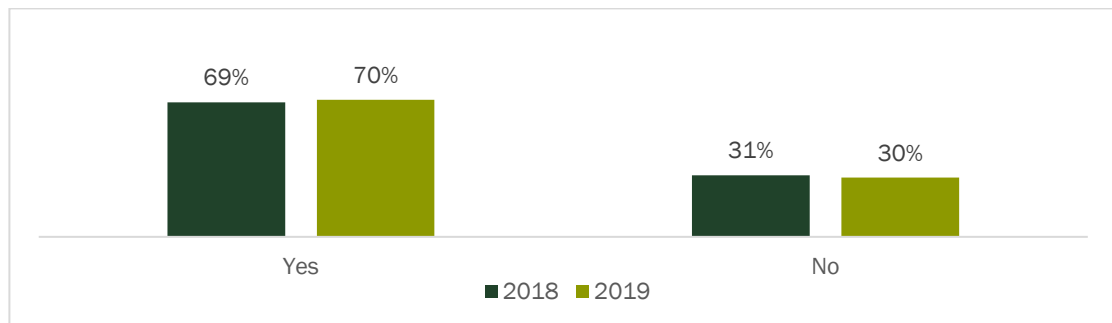
Victims of Abuse. Homelessness and prolonged homelessness among youth has been shown to be related to exposure to abuse, violence and neglect, and child maltreatment.²³ The majority of respondents to the Youth Survey in 2018 and 2019 reported they had experienced physical, emotional, or sexual abuse from a relative or another person they had stayed with (e.g., spouse, partner, brother or sister, or parent) (69% and 70%, respectively) (Exhibit 25).

Youth who participated in the focus groups for the *Homeless Initiative Gaps and Needs Analysis* reported that having experienced trauma such as from abuse from parents or other family members or not being taken care of by their family was a contributing factor for their homelessness. It was noted by many of the youth that they had experienced a great deal of abuse and trauma in their lives.

Some stakeholders for the *Homeless Initiative Gaps and Needs Analysis* identified that more work could be done to make sure that the system is more trauma-informed and person-centered. One stakeholder who works with youth noted that many youth are labeled as being “bad,” and that people tend to say to youth “What’s wrong with you?” instead of asking “What’s happening?”

Exhibit 25

Percent of Youth Experiencing Physical, Emotional or Sexual Abuse, 2018 and 2019



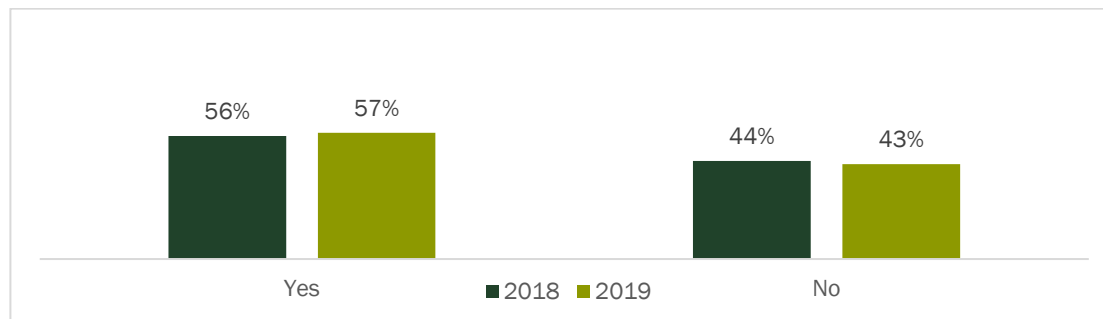
Source: 2018 (N= 105) and 2019 (n=116) Youth Survey Addendum

²³ <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/257806/RiskFactorsAssociatedProlongedHomelessness.pdf>

Unprotected Sex. Studies have also found that prolonged homelessness among youth is associated with risky sexual behaviors.²⁴ Over half of the respondents to the Youth Survey in 2018 and 2019 reported they had unprotected sex in the past year (56% and 57%, respectively) (Exhibit 26).

Exhibit 26

Percent of Youth Having Unprotected Sex in the Last Year, 2018 and 2019

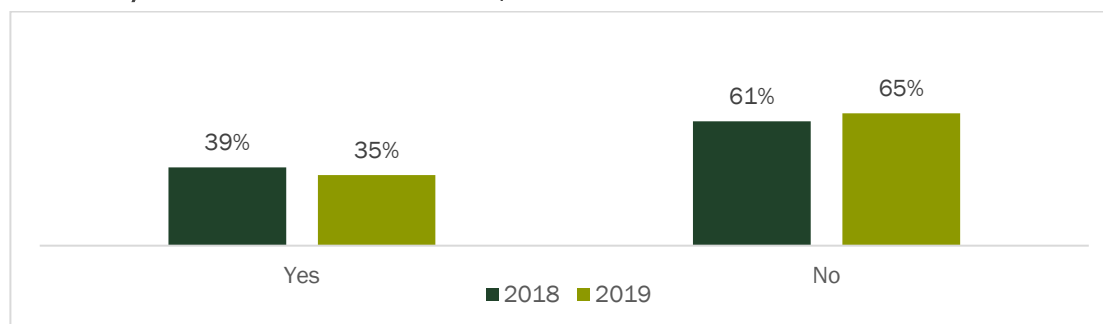


Source: 2018 (N= 97) and 2019 (n=98) Youth Survey Addendum

Sexually Transmitted Diseases/Infections. Over one third of the respondents to the Youth Survey in 2018 and 2019 reported they had been tested for or were concerned about a sexually transmitted disease or infection in the past year. The percent declined between 2018 and 2019 (from 39% to 35%) (Exhibit 27).

Exhibit 27

Percent of Youth Tested for or Concerned About Sexually Transmitted Diseases/Infections in the Last Year, 2018 and 2019



Source: 2018 (N= 101) and 2019 (n=95) Youth Survey Addendum

SERVICES AND SUPPORTS RECEIVED, NEEDED AND BARRIERS

In this section we discuss the services and supports that youth facing homelessness receive and need, and the barriers encountered in receiving services.

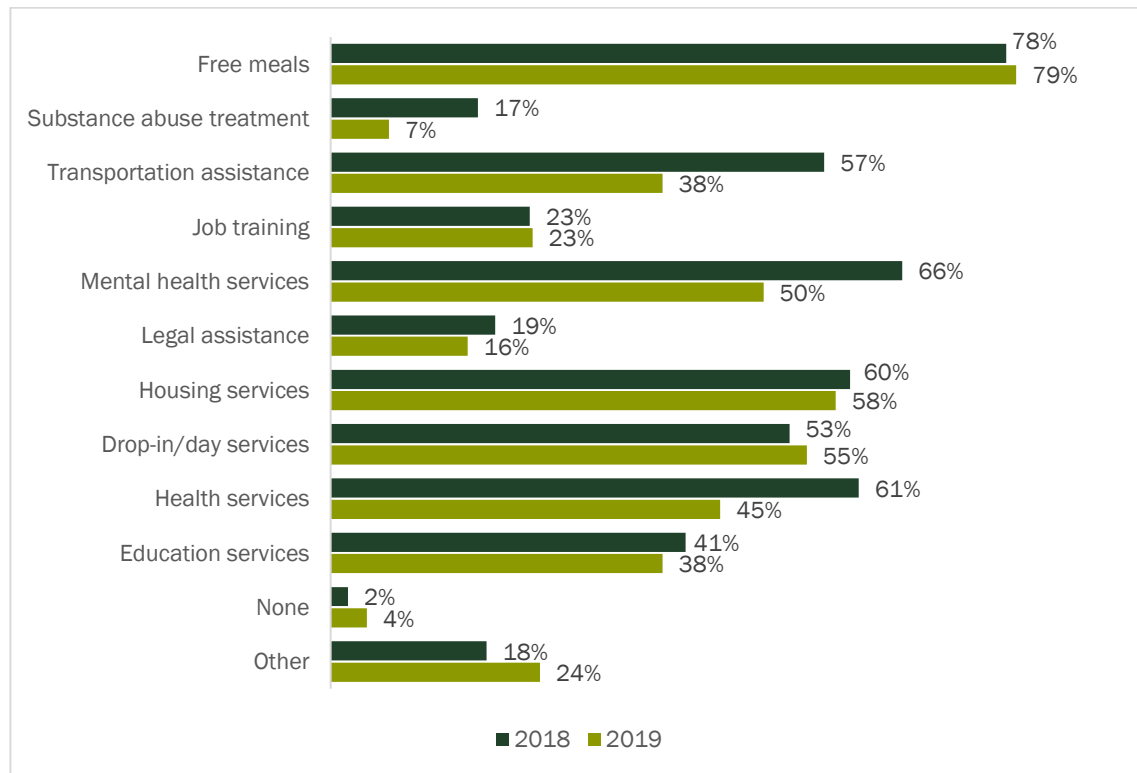
Services and Supports Received. Close to 80% of the respondents to the Youth Survey in 2018 and 2019 reported that they received free meals. Close to or over half reported receiving mental health services, housing services, and drop-in/day services in the past year (Exhibit 28). There may be a need for more services by the youth since the percent of youth who reported receiving mental health services is lower than

²⁴ <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/257806/RiskFactorsAssociatedProlongedHomelessness.pdf>

the 85% and 84% who reported having received mental health services or that they had needed help with mental health at some time (Exhibit 24).

Exhibit 28

Percent of Youth by Services and Supports Received in Past Year, 2018 and 2019

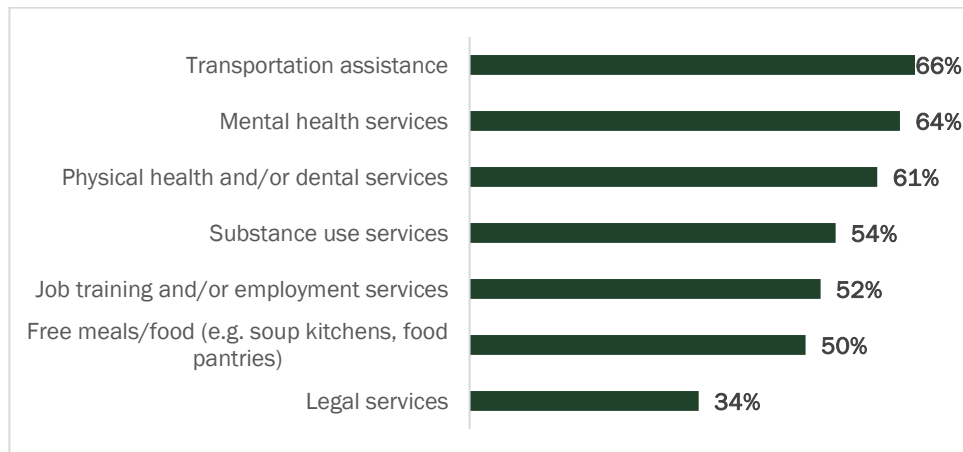


Source: 2018 (N= 100) and 2019 (n=120) Youth Survey Addendum

Youth who participated in the focus groups reported that they received services at the shelter, through the outreach programs, or in the community. Transportation was the service reported by most of the youth, though they also noted that obtaining transportation services was still challenging. The youth also noted receiving support from case management, including to obtain identification and benefits such as MaineCare.

Services and Supports Needed. In the school survey, respondents were asked to identify non-school-related services and supports needed by students and families who are homeless in Maine. Two thirds of the respondents identified transportation assistance as the non-school-related service and support needed by students and families who are homeless in Maine (Exhibit 29). Over half identified mental health, physical health and/or dental, substance use treatment, and job training and/or employment as services needed by students and families who are homeless in Maine.

Non-School-Related Services and Supports Needed by Students and Families Who Are Homeless in Maine



Source: School Survey, N=90 respondents

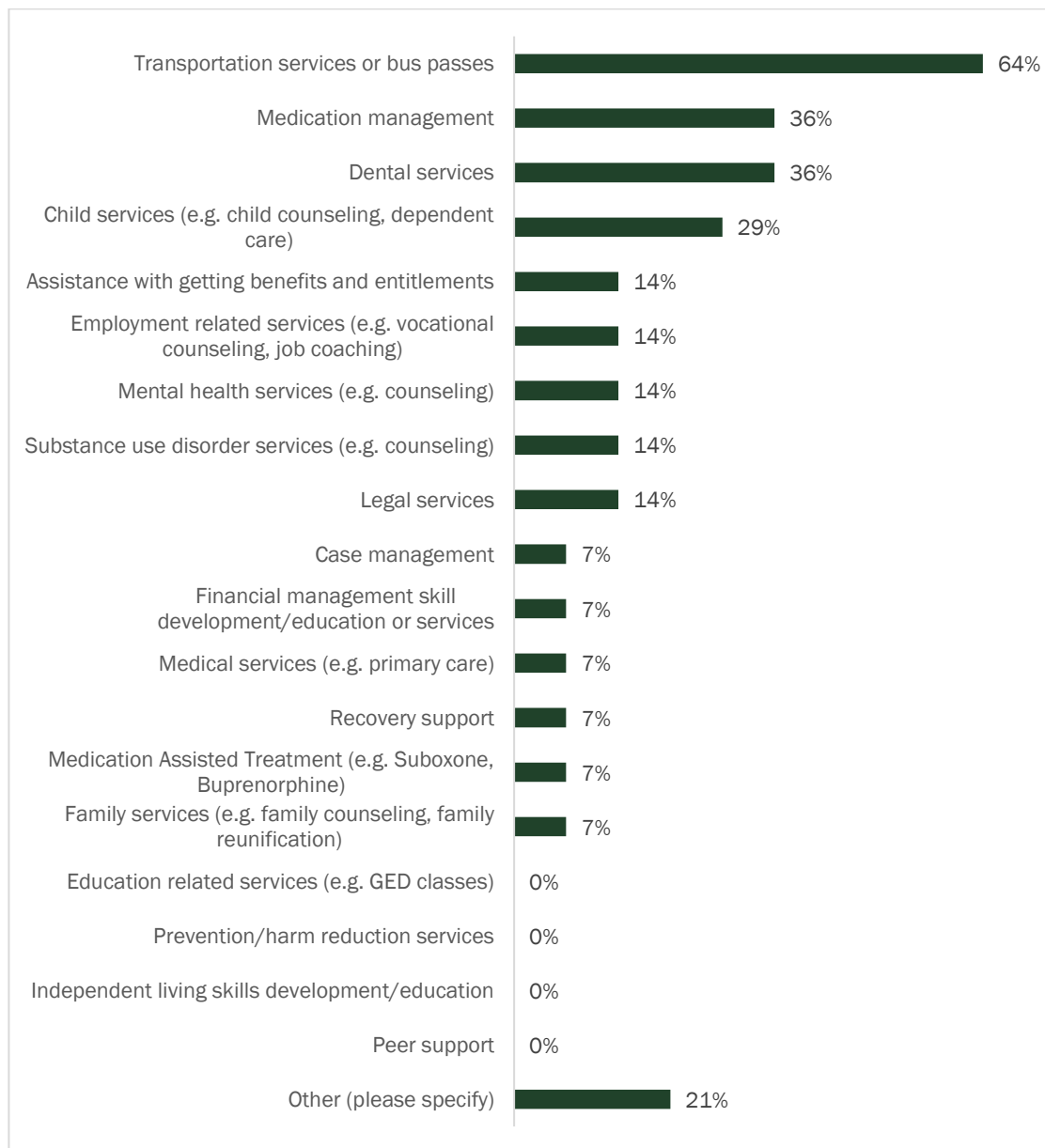
Note: Percent is for those that indicated a need or major need.

Respondents to the shelter survey were asked to identify three services that represented the most critical gaps for services available to guests of the shelters (see Exhibit 30). Close to a third of the respondents who work in shelters that serve youth noted transportation services or bus passes as a critical gap. Youth who participated in the focus groups noted that transportation was challenging and that, even with public transportation, getting around was challenging because of issues with schedules. Key stakeholders also identified transportation as a critical issue throughout the state, though especially in rural areas. Some of the stakeholders in more rural areas noted that transportation was available from organizations or services, but that it was typically limited to medical appointments or to people who have MaineCare.

Over one third of the shelter survey respondents identified medication management and dental services as a critical gap. Only 14% of the respondents in shelters that serve youth identified mental health services, substance use services, assistance with getting benefits and entitlements, and employment-related services as a critical gap. Under the “Other” category, respondents identified: services for young adults with developmental disabilities and Housing First models for youth.

None of the respondents from the shelters that serve youth identified education-related services as a critical gap.

Most Critical Gaps in Services for Guests of ESHAP-Funded Shelters



Source: ESHAP Shelter Survey, N=14 respondents. Only includes data for shelters that responded that they served unaccompanied youth under the age of 18 and young adults ages 18 to 24.

Barriers to Receiving Services and Supports. Youth who are homeless may face many barriers to receiving services and supports. Transportation was the barrier identified by most youth in 2018 and 2019 (49% and 54%, respectively) (Exhibit 31). Two other barriers that were identified by most of the youth in 2018 and 2019 were not having identification and not knowing where to go for services (Exhibit 31). Close to or a quarter of the youth in 2018 and 2019 reported that being placed on waiting lists, not having health insurance, and not being able to access services because of age were barriers for receiving services and supports. Some of the youth identified being asked to leave services because of a behavior issue and not qualifying for services as

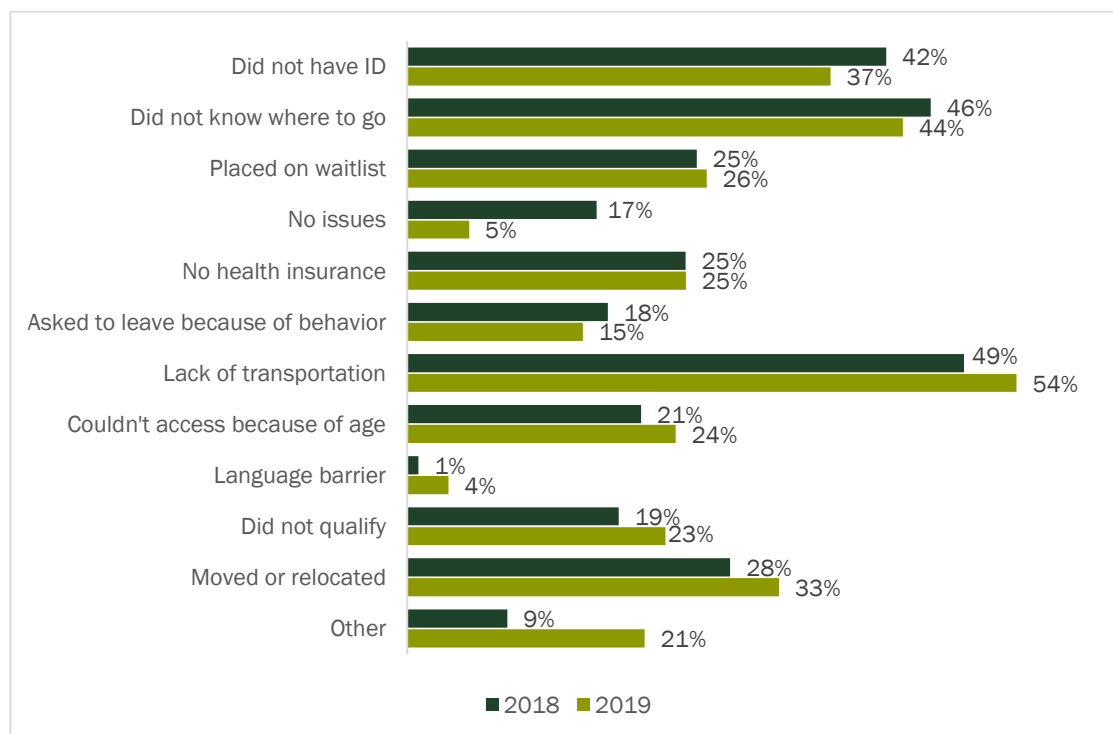
barriers for receiving services and supports. One third of the youth in 2019 reported that having moved or relocated was a barrier for receiving services and supports.

The percentage of youth who reported not having any issues with receiving services or supports in the last year dropped from 2018 to 2019, from 17% to 5% (Exhibit 31).

The youth who participated in the focus groups reported that a barrier to obtaining services was not having MaineCare or health insurance. One youth noted that once someone turns 18 they lose MaineCare. Another youth noted that the process to obtain MaineCare is a barrier, explaining that they were able to obtain MaineCare with the assistance of a case manager, but the process took 3 months.

Exhibit 31

Percent of Youth by Barriers to Receiving Services and Supports in Past Year, 2018 and 2019

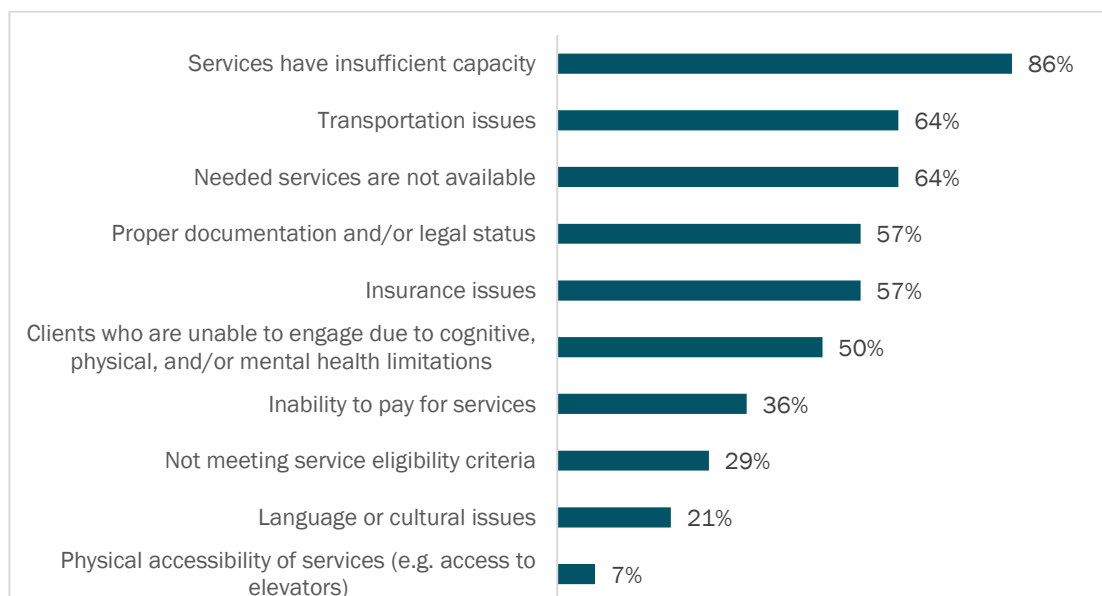


Source: 2018 (N= 102) and 2019 (n=110) Youth Survey Addendum

The respondents of the shelter survey identified many barriers faced by people who are experiencing homelessness when obtaining needed services (Exhibit 32). The barrier noted by most of the survey respondents from shelters that serve youth was services having insufficient capacity. Close to two thirds of the survey respondents also identified transportation issues and needed services not being available. Half of the survey respondents identified clients being unable to engage in services due to cognitive, physical and/or mental health limitations as a barrier.

Exhibit 32

Barriers to Obtaining Needed Services Faced by People Experiencing Homelessness



Source: ESHAP Shelter Survey, N=14 respondents. Only includes data for shelters that responded that they served unaccompanied youth under the age of 18 and young adults ages 18 to 24.

Note: Percent is for those that indicated a barrier or major barrier; Respondents could check all that apply so percentages do not add to 100%.

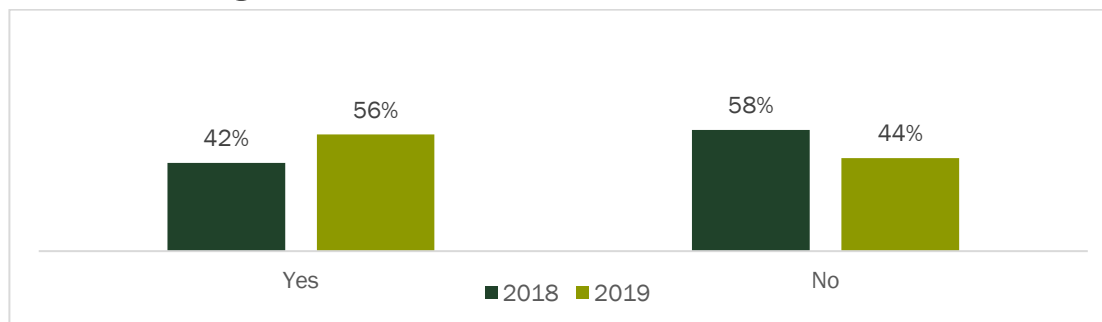
BARRIERS TO GETTING AND KEEPING EMPLOYMENT & HOUSING

Youth who are homeless may face many barriers to getting and keeping employment and housing.

In 2018, 42% of the youth responding to the Youth Survey reported that they faced an issue such as alcohol or drug use, physical or mental disabilities, mental health issues, learning difficulties, sexual orientation, gender identity or HIV/AIDS that has kept them from getting a job or obtaining or staying in stable housing. The percentage was higher in 2019, at 56% (Exhibit 33).

Exhibit 33

Percent of Youth Who Faced Issues That Kept Them From Getting or Keeping Job or Stable Housing, 2018 and 2019



Source: 2018 (N= 102) and 2019 (n=115) Youth Survey Addendum

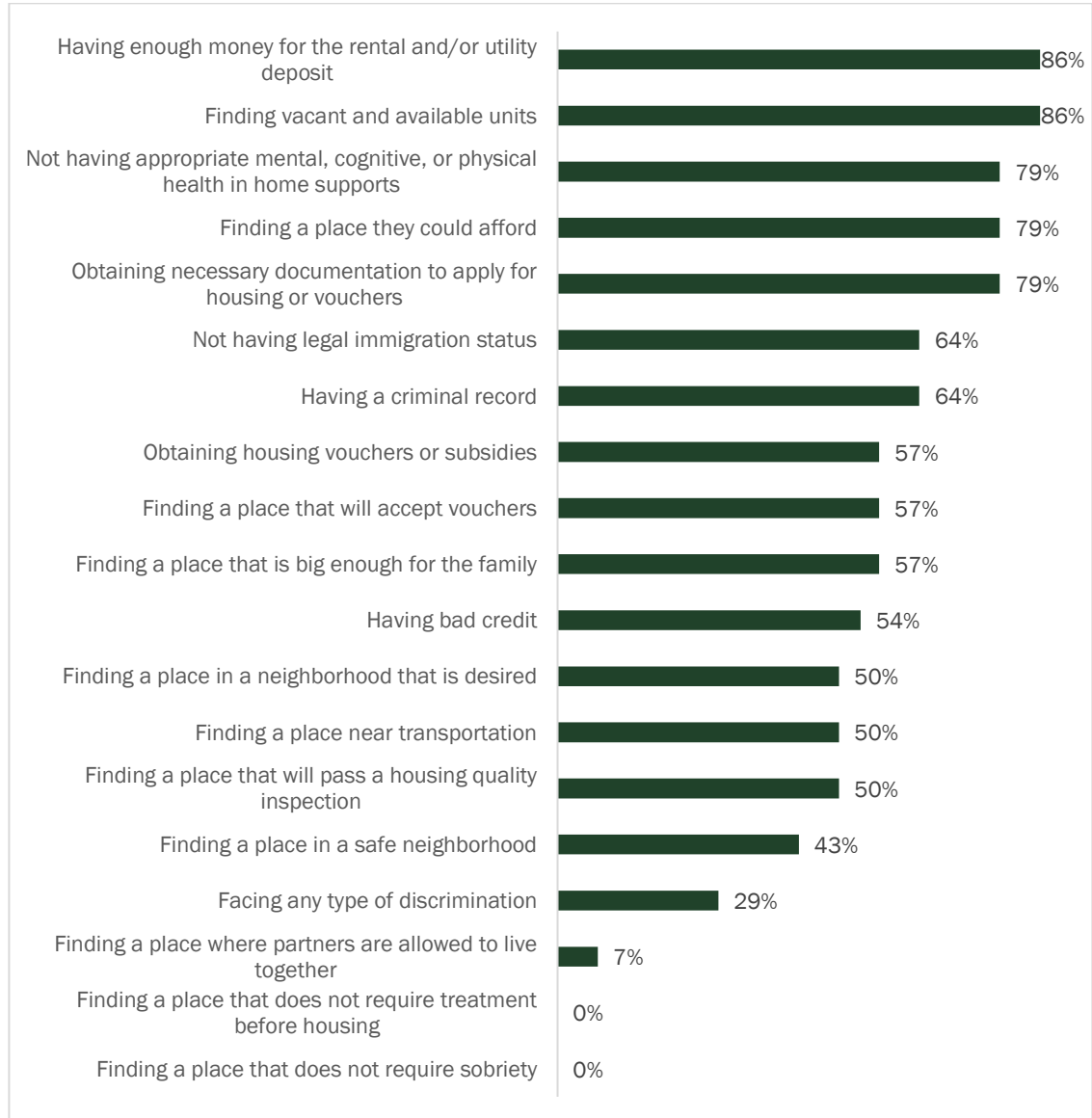
Respondents to the shelter survey were asked to identify barriers faced by people who are homeless when looking for housing. Close to 90% of the respondents for shelters that serve youth identified the following as being a barrier for finding housing: having enough money for the rental and/or utility deposits and finding vacant and available units (Exhibit 34). Over three quarters of those respondents identified the following as barriers: not having home supports for mental, cognitive, or physical health issues; finding a place they can afford; and having the documentation to apply for housing or vouchers. Almost two thirds of the respondents noted not having legal immigration status and having a criminal record as a barrier for obtaining housing. Close to or over half identified the following as barriers for finding housing: being able to obtain housing vouchers or subsidies, finding a place that will accept vouchers, not finding a place big enough for the family, having bad credit, finding a place in a desired neighborhood, finding a place near public transportation, and finding a place that will pass the housing quality inspections (Exhibit 34).

In the “Other” category, respondents noted that barriers for young adults are age and a lack of rental history. Another barrier that was noted was finding places that will allow pets, even those that are emotional support animals but not service animals.

When the respondents from shelters that serve youth were asked to identify the top three resources needed to fully meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness, the first resource identified by all 14 respondents was related to housing with: 7 identifying the need for more housing/affordable housing, 5 identifying the need for more vouchers, and 1 identifying the need for Housing First options for youth/young people.

Exhibit 34

Housing Barriers Faced by People Experiencing Homelessness

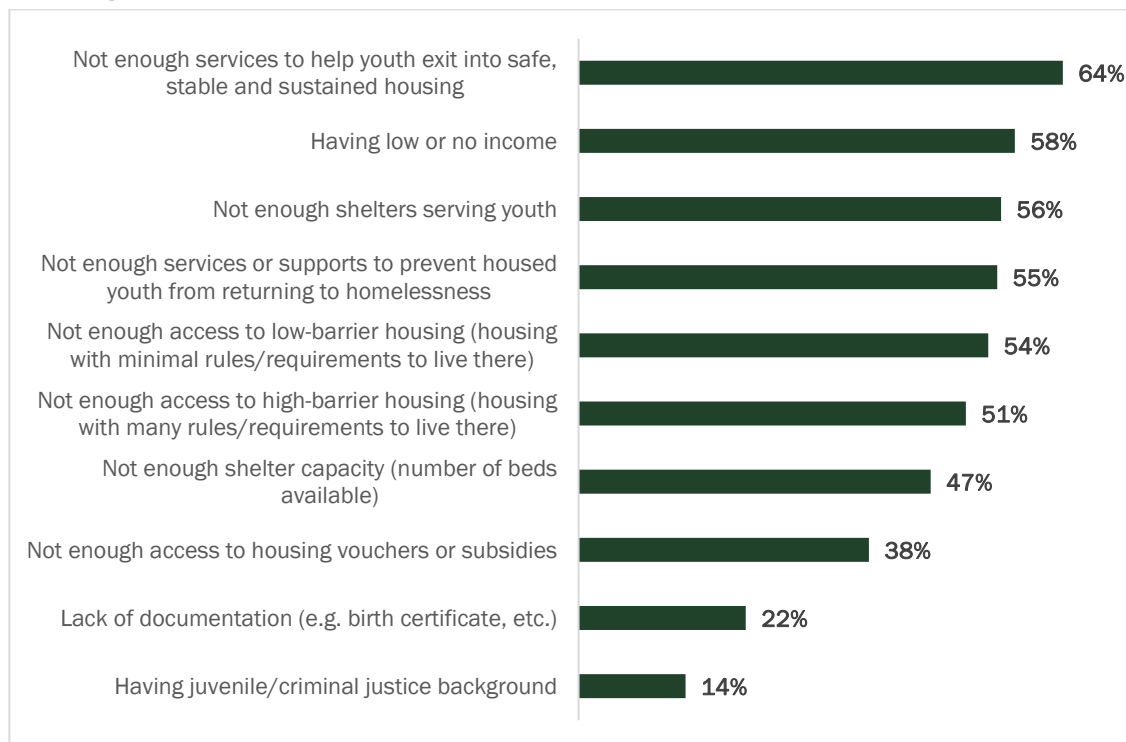


Source: ESHAP Shelter Survey, N=14 respondents. Only includes data for shelters that responded that they served unaccompanied youth under the age of 18 and young adults ages 18 to 24.

Note: Percent is for those that indicated a barrier or major barrier; Respondents could check all that apply so percentages do not add to 100%.

Exhibit 35 shows the housing barriers faced by unaccompanied youth who are homeless, as identified by respondents of the school survey. Close to two thirds of respondents noted there were not enough services available to help youth exit into safe, stable, and sustained housing. Over half identified the following housing barriers: having no or low income; not enough shelters to serve youths; not enough services or supports to prevent housed youth from returning to homelessness; and not enough access to low-barrier housing (housing with minimal rules/requirements to live there) and high-barrier housing (housing with many rules/requirements to live there).

Housing Barriers Faced by Unaccompanied Youth Who Are Homeless



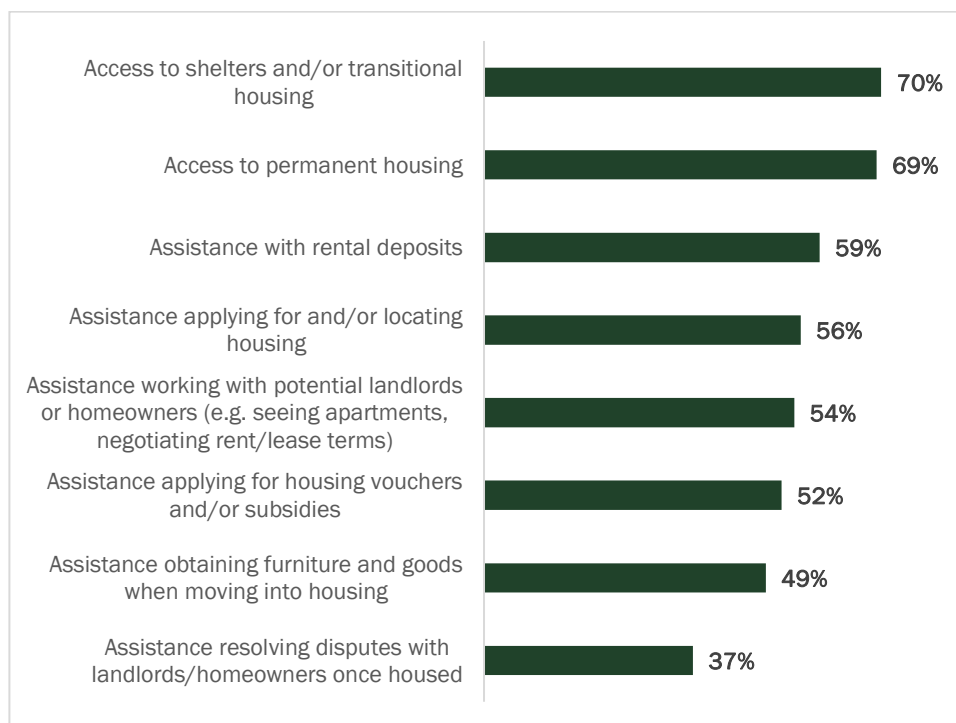
Source: School Survey, N=86 respondents

Note: Percent is for those that indicated a barrier or major barrier; Respondents could check all that apply so percentages do not add to 100%.

Respondents of the school survey were asked to identify the housing supports and needs of students and families that are homeless. Over two thirds identified a need for access to shelters and/or transitional housing and permanent housing (Exhibit 36). Over half noted a need for assistance with rental deposits, applying for and locating housing, working with potential landlords or homeowners, and applying for housing vouchers and/or subsidies.

Exhibit 36

Housing Supports and Services Needed by Students and Families Who Are Homeless



Source: School Survey, N=90 respondents

Note: Percent is for those that indicated a need or major need.

A stakeholder who works with youth noted that some youth do not want to be in structured settings like residential treatment; they prefer to be in shelters where they can go in and out during the day. This stakeholder also noted that there are some youth shelters that are run more like group homes.

Focus group participants and stakeholders discussed that it is very difficult to find landlords who are willing to rent to young people. Both focus group participants and stakeholders also noted that once housed, sometimes youth lose their voucher or housing because of issues of “door control” (youth opening their doors to friends who are still homeless and allowing them to stay over longer than what is allowed or having parties).

Homeless and Housing Services for Youth Who Are Homeless

In this section we discuss some of the homeless and housing services that are available for youth who are homeless in Maine.

Housing for Youth in Maine

A Housing Inventory Count (HIC) is reported annually by each CoC across the nation. The HIC occurs annually in January and tallies the number of beds and units available on the night of the count by program type.²⁵ Beginning in 2018, the report included data on beds dedicated to subpopulations.²⁶ Of the 5,481 year-round beds and units reported in the 2018 HIC count, 138 were youth beds dedicated to housing homeless youth age 24 and younger.²⁷ All the beds that are available for youth are either in emergency shelters or transitional housing.

ESHAP-FUNDED SHELTERS SERVING YOUTH

MaineHousing currently funds 36 shelters through the Emergency Shelter and Housing Assistance Program (ESHAP). Of these shelters, 3 only serve youth: New Beginnings Emergency Shelter (Lewiston, Androscoggin County); Preble Street, Joe Kreisler Teen Center (Portland, Cumberland County); and Shaw House Emergency Youth Center (Bangor, Penobscot County).

Stakeholders and focus group participants discussed the need for shelters for younger youth. It was noted by stakeholders that it was not ideal to have younger youth (e.g., 14-year-olds) in the same shelter as 18-year-olds, as the needs of these youth tend to be very different and the younger youth are exposed to riskier behaviors and attitudes being around older youth. It was also noted by a stakeholder that in order to make room for a 14-year-old, sometimes shelters will move an 18-year-old to an adult shelter. This stakeholder noted that it is not appropriate for some 18-year-olds to be in an adult shelter; they recommended shelters for youth ages 14-17 and for youth ages 18-21.

Housing Resources and Services. As shown in Exhibit 37, the respondents to the shelter survey from shelters that serve youth noted that many resources and services are provided within the shelter. All respondents noted that shelters were providing assistance with: applying for housing vouchers/subsidies, locating and applying for housing, working with potential landlords/homeowners, making referrals and connections to permanent housing, and providing assistance to resolve disputes with landlords/homeowners. Most of the respondents to the shelter survey indicated that many other types of assistance and referrals/connections are provided to shelter guests (Exhibit 37), and many shelters noted they have Housing Navigators or case

²⁵https://files.hudexchange.info/reports/published/CoC_HIC_State_ME_2018.PDF

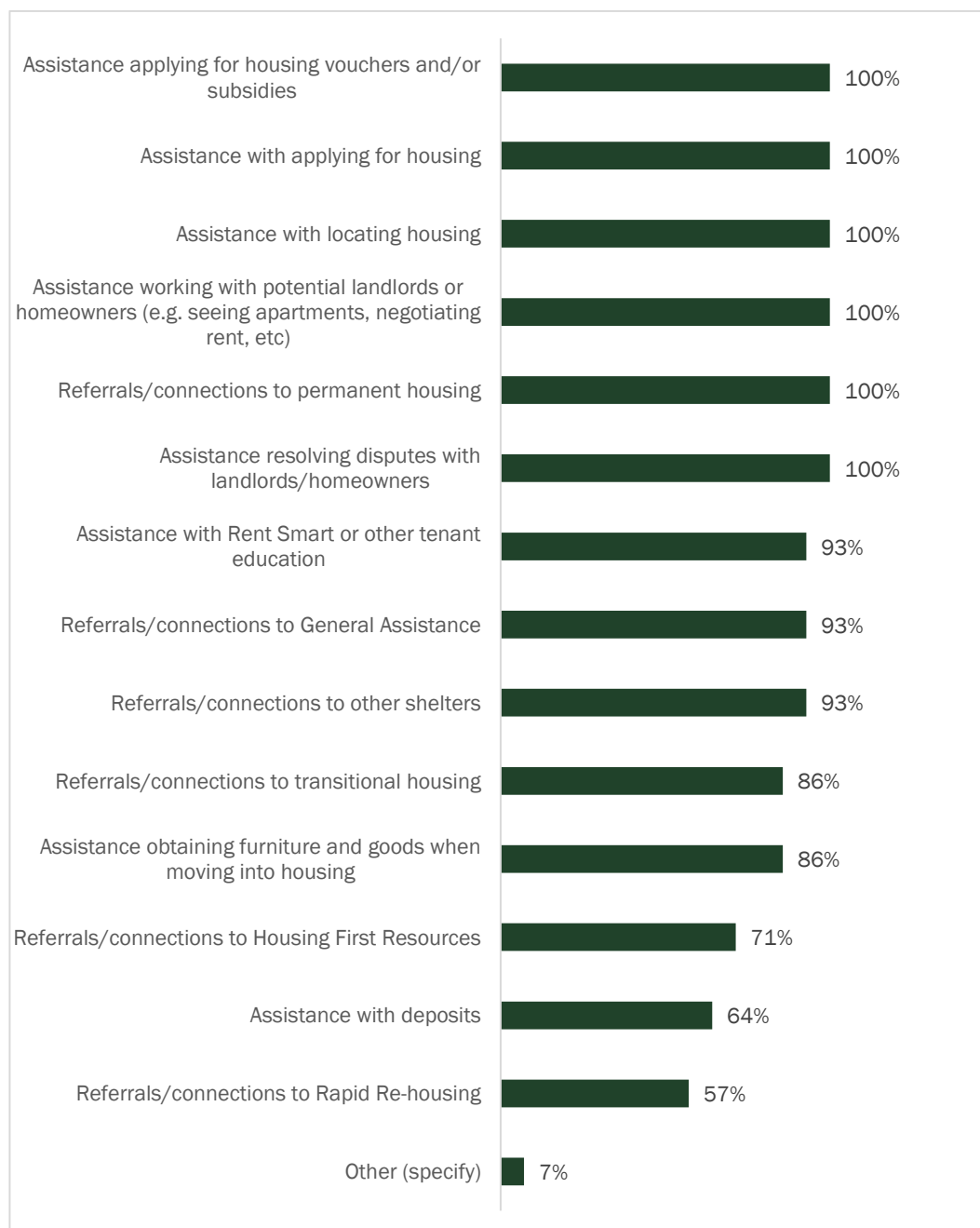
²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

managers/case workers that help people apply for housing vouchers and/or subsidies and help connect them with permanent and transitional housing. Rent Smart (a renter education course) or similar tenant education course was provided by almost all of the shelters that serve youth and that responded to the survey.

Exhibit 37

Housing Resources and Services Provided Within ESHAP-Funded Shelters Serving Youth



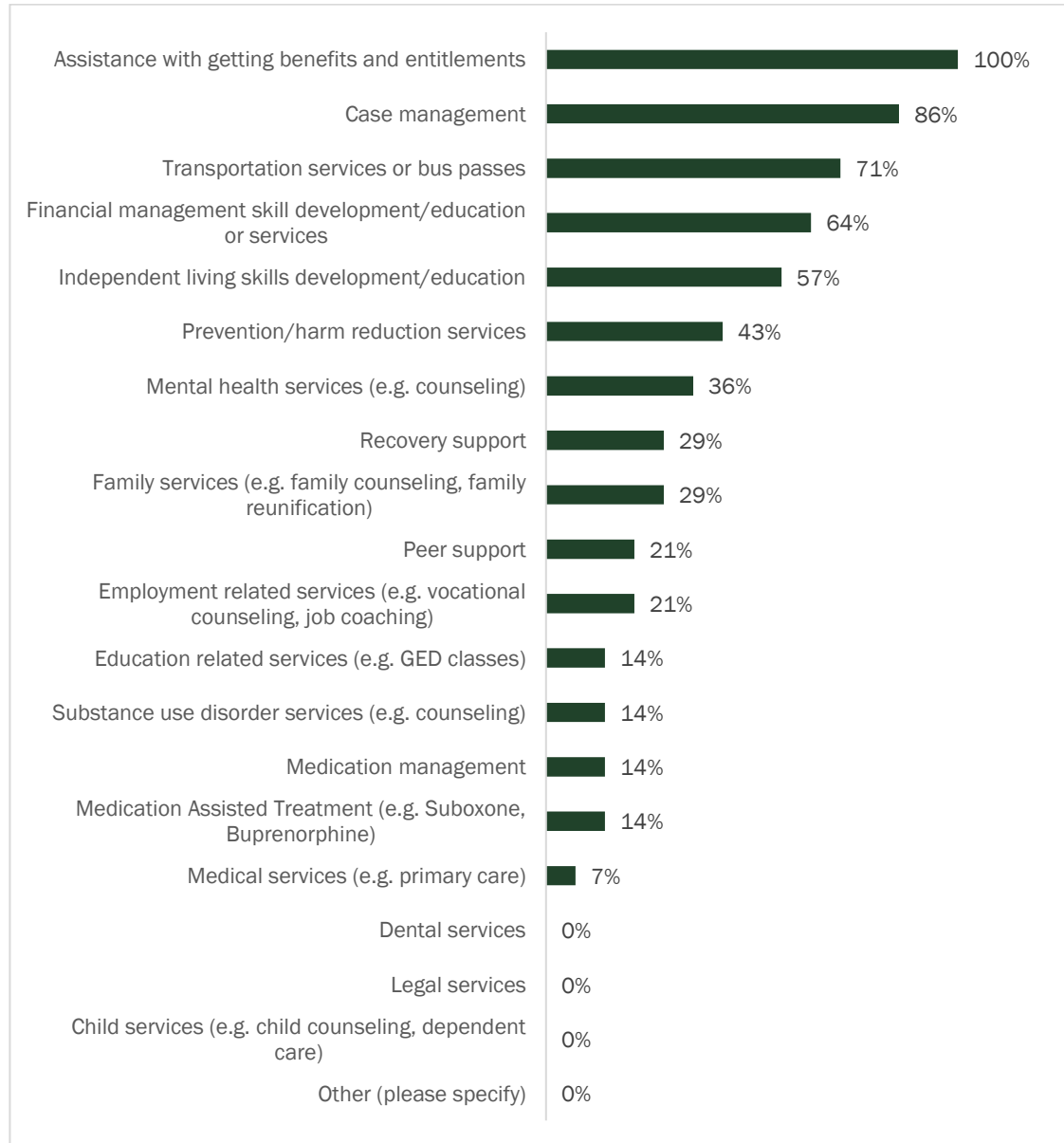
Source: ESHAP Shelter Survey, N=14 respondents. Only includes data for shelters that responded that they served unaccompanied youth under the age of 14 and young adults ages 18 to 24.

Note: Respondents could check all that apply so percentages do not add to 100%.

Supportive Services. Exhibit 38 lists the supportive services that shelter survey respondents from shelters that serve youth reported as being provided in the shelters. All of the respondents noted that assistance was provided to help shelter guests obtain benefits and entitlements. The majority of the shelters provide case management services, some type of transportation service or bus passes, financial management skill development or education, and independent skills development or education.

Exhibit 38

Supportive Services Provided Within ESHAP-Funded Shelters



Source: ESHAP Shelter Survey, N=14 respondents. Only includes data for shelters that responded that they served unaccompanied youth under the age of 18 and young adults ages 18 to 24.

Involvement of Services Users in the System

Some current and past shelter guests of youth shelters who participated in the focus groups wanted additional forums to provide feedback and to engage in advocacy activities. One stakeholder identified the need to involve more youth and their families, including representation on statewide groups like the Statewide Homeless Council.

Recommendations

Within the *Homeless Initiative Gaps and Needs Analysis* final report we identified recommendations to address the needs of unaccompanied youth. Those recommendations still stand based on analysis of data from the *Youth Survey Addendum*. The recommendations are to:

- Provide more prevention services to prevent youth homelessness; ²⁸
- Provide more family reunification and family interventions services to help end youth homelessness; ²⁹
- Provide more supports to facilitate exits into safe, stable and sustainable housing and communities; and
- Provide more supports to help youth stay in or complete school.

Additional recommendations based on the findings of the *Youth Survey Addendum* for ending and prevention youth homelessness are to:

- Provide more interventions that increase housing stability;³⁰
- Provide more interventions that address health and behavioral factors;³¹
- Provide more trauma-informed interventions and services for youth³²; and
- Provide more interventions that provide educational and employment supports.³³

²⁸ See the following for examples https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/Chapin-Hall_VoYC_Child-Welfare-Brief_2019-FINAL.pdf and <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Ending-Youth-Homelessness-Promising-Program-Models.pdf>

²⁹ See the following for examples <http://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/family-intervention-for-unaccompanied-youth.pdf>

³⁰ See the following for examples: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/257801/InterventionsProlongedYouthHomelessness.pdf>

³¹ Ibid.

³² See the following for examples: <https://www.nctsn.org/treatments-and-practices/trauma-treatments/interventions?search=youth&modality=All>

³³ See the following for examples: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/257801/InterventionsProlongedYouthHomelessness.pdf>

Appendix A: Data Sources Utilized in the Youth Addendum Report

As previously noted, our approach for this *Youth Addendum Report* was to analyze the 2018 and 2019 *Point-in-Time (PIT) Counts Youth Survey Addendum* and to supplement that data with data sources used for the *Homeless Initiative Gaps and Needs Analysis* that pertained to homelessness among youth. Described below are the data sources that were used for this report.

PIT Count Youth Survey Addendum

A single staff member entered responses from the 2018 and 2019 surveys into a standardized Excel template developed for this purpose. Client names were blacked out on the paper forms and were not recorded in the template. If multiple responses were selected for questions intended to have only one response, they were entered as missing. A second staff member reviewed all data entered against the paper surveys for quality control. The data were imported into SPSS for data cleaning and analysis.

The table below shows the number of survey records by year and those excluded from analysis.

	2018	2019
Total PIT Youth Survey Addendum collected	121	129
Number age 25 or older (excluded from analysis)	1	3
Number with data analyzed in this report	120	126

Below are details of the data cleaning performed.

- Age was calculated as the difference between birth date and the PIT date (January 23, 2018 for the 2018 survey and January 22, 2019 for the 2019 survey). Data for individuals over age 24 were excluded from analysis (N=4). Age was crosschecked with Q1 (“Under 18” or “18-24”); in cases of discrepancies we used Age to clean Q1 responses. If a survey contained an implausible date of birth (e.g., a date in 2019) we set the date of birth to missing.
- We crosschecked gender with Q4 (“Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself?”) because some respondents reported being transgender or non-binary which are gender identifications. In these instances, we used respondents’ self-identified gender to clean the ‘gender’ field as recorded by the interviewer.
- Questions 11-13 have two parts. Interviewers should have asked the second part of each question only if the respondent answered “Yes” to the first part. We set to missing any responses for the second part (“If you left in the past 3 years, did anyone help you get housing?”) if the response to the first part was “No” or missing.

- For questions in which the respondent could select multiple responses (Q2, Q20, Q21, Q22), we coded “No” to options not checked if there was at least one option checked; if none of the options were checked, we set all to missing.
- For all questions for which “Doesn’t Know/Refused to Answer” was a response option, we set this response to missing for analysis.

Shown in the table below are the number of Youth Surveys that were collected by the agency in 2018 and 2019.

Agency Name	2018	2019	Total
Bangor Area Homeless Shelter	0	4	4
HOME Inc. Emmaus Homeless Shelter	0	3	3
KBH	9	4	13
New Beginnings	35	73	108
Penobscot Community Health Center	12	2	14
Penobscot Community Health Center, Hope House	0	2	2
Preble Street	11	18	29
Preble Street and Joe Kreisler Teen Shelter	0	1	1
Rumford Group Homes	2	0	2
Rumford Group Homes TLP	3	0	3
Seeds of Hope	0	2	2
Shaw House	14	0	14
Sweetser	1	0	1
Vet Center	0	1	1
Name Missing	34	19	53
Totals	121	129	250

LIMITATIONS OF THE YOUTH SURVEY DATA

For some survey items the “Other (Specify)” category was the dominant response; in some cases, the response written in should have been coded by the interviewer in one of the available response options. This suggests a need for improved training for future survey implementations. We made an effort to recode these qualitative responses but could not address all due to time constraints. There were other indications of the need for interviewer training: for example, sometimes “No” was selected for consent to continue the survey but it was continued anyway. On some surveys it appeared the youth respondent took the survey themselves rather than having it administered by an interviewer. Multiple responses on question items intended to have only one response resulted in missing data.

Due to time and resource constraints, we performed only basic frequencies of the data. Further analyses could examine differences by age group, gender, shelter location, or other characteristics.

Homeless Initiative Gaps and Needs Analysis Data Sources

EXISTING DOCUMENTS

MaineHousing staff and key informants we interviewed identified and sent us existing documents, presentations, summary reports, and spreadsheets containing information related to Maine homeless and housing resources and services.

Documents reviewed are listed in Appendix C of the *Homeless Initiative Gaps and Needs Analysis report*. Data from the following sources were included in our analysis.

Point-in-Time (PIT) Data: Data on sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness in Maine during one day in January for 2015 through 2019. Also data on subpopulations experiencing homelessness in Maine in 2018 and 2019.

U.S. Department of Education (DOE): Data on children and youth in Maine who were homeless and enrolled in public schools for school years 2014-2015 through 2016-2017.

HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) Housing Inventory Count (HIC): Data on beds and units available in temporary/transitional and permanent housing in Maine in January 2018.

FOCUS GROUPS

The second major source of data for the *Maine State Housing Authority Homeless Initiative Gaps and Needs Analysis* report consisted of focus groups with current and former guests of ESHAP-funded shelters or persons involved with programs affiliated with the shelter—so that we could understand the homeless and housing system from a service user or client perspective.

The sample for the focus groups was purposive. The approach for selecting the shelters for the focus groups included geographic spread across the three Homeless Regions, including shelters in rural and urban counties, high- and low-barrier shelters, and a good spread of types of populations served. For the recruitment process, an introductory email was sent to the Executive Director describing the purpose of the focus groups, inquiring about potential dates, and inquiring into willingness to recruit participants for the focus groups. The focus groups were conducted in May and June 2019. Focus groups were conducted with guests from single and family shelters; low- and high-barrier shelters; and shelters for youth and adults.

In a few cases, the focus groups took place in programs or offices affiliated with the shelters rather than in the shelters themselves. The programs involved were outreach programs and a resource center in a major city. Some of the organizations that had more than one ESHAP-funded shelter brought guests from the different shelters, in some instances transporting the clients to the focus group location.

All focus group participants were provided a \$15 incentive for participating in the focus group, and in almost all the focus groups, participants were served a light snack.

The exhibit below shows information regarding the number of focus groups conducted, the number of shelters/programs involved, and the number of participants that participated from each Homeless Region. A total of 18 focus groups were conducted: 6 in each of the three homeless regions. A total of 24 shelters or programs participated. A total of 140 individuals participated. On average, each focus group had 8 participants. Two focus groups were conducted with unaccompanied youth under the age of 18 and young adults ages 18 to 24 with a total of 20 youth participants. Other youths participated in the focus groups conducted in adult and family shelters, but the number of youth was not tracked.

The focus group participants were identified by shelter or program staff. The focus groups were conducted by a team of two staff. One staff member conducted the interview while the other took notes. The focus groups were audio recorded if recording was approved by all focus group participants. The Focus Group Guide that was used for all groups is included in Appendix E of the *Maine State Housing Authority Homeless Initiative Gaps and Needs Analysis* report.

Information of Focus Groups Conducted: Number Conducted by Homeless Region, Number of Shelters/Programs Involved, and Number of Participants

Homeless Region	# of Focus Groups Conducted	# of Focus Groups Conducted with Youth	# of Shelters/Programs Involved	# of Total Participants	# of Youth Participants*
Region 1	6	0	7	45	0
Region 2	6	1	8	43	10
Region 3	6	1	9	52	10
Totals	18	2	24	140	20

*This number is only for the youth that participated in focus groups in youth shelters. The number does not reflect youth who participated in focus groups held at non-youth shelters/programs.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

The third major source of data for this report consisted of interviews with key informants. Most of the key informants were identified by MaineHousing; a few were identified by stakeholders. The scheduling and key informant interviews began in May 2019 and ended in August 2019. Please refer to Appendix E of the C of the *Homeless Initiative Gaps and Needs Analysis report* for a copy of the Key Informant Interview Guide used for these semi-structured interviews.

For the recruitment process for the telephone interviews, we sent an introductory email to describe the purpose of the interview and to request information on potential dates for conducting the interview. Individuals who did not respond to the introductory email received follow-up emails and in some cases phone calls. The research team attempted to contact and schedule interviews with a total of 37 individuals identified as possible key informants. Of those, 28 individuals were successfully reached and interviewed—representing a response rate of 76%. There

were 9 individuals who either did not respond or were unable to schedule a time during the project timeframe; only 3 individuals declined to participate. Appendix E identifies the organizations/types of stakeholders and titles or roles within Maine system who completed a key informant interview.

SURVEYS

ESHAP Shelter Survey: Data from ESHAP shelters were collected through a web-based survey which was administered in June 2019. This survey was developed for the needs and gaps analysis and was reviewed and approved by MaineHousing. The purpose of the survey was to collect information from ESHAP shelters regarding the types of shelter, populations served, shelter rules, housing services and resources provided within the shelter, supportive services and resources provided within the shelter and available in the community, barriers faced by people who are homeless when looking for housing, barriers faced by people who are homeless when obtaining needed services, and collaboration and coordination with CoC, coordinated entry system, and other systems. The survey also included open-ended questions including one inquiring about changes that would make the housing and homelessness system in Maine work better.

The recruitment process for the web-based survey included sending the recruitment email to the Executive Directors of the shelters and two follow-up emails that included a link to access the survey. The survey was sent to all 36 ESHAP shelters and it was completed by 31 of the shelters for an 86% response rate. In this report we only included data from 14 of the shelters; those are the shelters that noted that they served unaccompanied youth under the age of 18 and young adults ages 18 to 24.

School Survey: Data from Maine public schools were also collected through a web-based survey, administered in May and June 2019. This survey was developed for the needs and gaps analysis and was reviewed and approved by MaineHousing. The survey was also reviewed by the Maine Department of Education. The purpose of the survey was to collect information from each School Administrative Unit (SAU) of Maine public schools regarding how students who are homeless are identified and enrolled in school, characteristics of students served, school-related services and supports needed by students who are homeless, services in the community needed by students and families who are homeless, barriers faced by and to serving unaccompanied youth, collaboration and coordination with internal school resources and other systems, and technical assistance received and needed. The survey also included open-ended questions about changes that would make the housing and homelessness system in Maine work better for accompanied children and youth and unaccompanied youth served in the SAU.

The recruitment process for the web-based survey included sending the recruitment email to the McKinney-Vento Liaison at each SAU/school district within Maine and two follow-up emails that included a link to access the survey. The survey was sent to all 234 individuals with some individuals being responsible for more than one SAU/school district; it was completed for 102 SAU/school districts (44% response rate).

LIMITATIONS OF THE *HOMELESS INITIATIVE GAPS AND NEEDS ANALYSIS*

It must be noted that the study was conducted over a short time period that began with a kick-off meeting in March 2019. While a significant amount of quantitative and qualitative data was gathered and analyzed, timeframe and resource constraints prohibited us from obtaining and examining all of the existing data we had initially desired and making sure that all key informants were interviewed.

With more time and resources, we would have conducted primary analysis of data from the HMIS and the DOE instead of relying on existing reports. Additional resources and time would have also allowed us to present more data at the county level.

Another limitation is that most of the information collected from ESHAP shelter staff was obtained through the *Shelter Survey* and some limited in-person and telephone discussions. With additional time and resources, we would have: conducted interviews with staff in all ESHAP-funded shelters; and interviewed staff from shelters that do not receive ESHAP funding and other community resources that exist throughout Maine. Many of these shelters and community resources are available from faith-based communities. One final limitation is that this study did not examine homelessness and housing issues within Native American tribes and communities within Maine.