



The Housing Status of Individuals Leaving Institutions and Out-of-Home Care:

A Summary of Findings from Washington State

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AT BOTH THE STATE AND NATIONAL LEVEL, there is great interest in connecting individuals to needed housing assistance as they leave institutional and out-of-home care settings. Using national Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data, the 2011 Annual Housing Assessment Report to Congress provides the proportion of *housing assistance recipients* entering the homeless system from institutions (11.5 percent nationally).¹ However, HMIS data alone cannot tell us what proportion of *individuals leaving institutions* experienced homelessness and received needed housing assistance. To answer this question, the DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division (RDA) prepared a series of reports for the Washington State Department of Commerce using the state's HMIS data linked with the DSHS Integrated Client Database.² Across five study populations, we identified rates of homelessness and housing assistance penetration over a 12-month period following exit from an institutional or out-of-home care setting in State Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011.

Key Findings

- 1. The rate of homelessness among individuals leaving institutional and out-of-home care settings is quite high.** More than one-quarter of all five study populations experienced homelessness at some point over a 12-month follow-up period. By contrast, only 9 percent of the DSHS client population as a whole was homeless in SFY 2010 ($n = 184,865$ of $1,946,302$).³
- 2. Individuals leaving residential chemical dependency treatment facilities and prisons represent particularly high opportunity populations.** They were more likely—in both proportion and volume—to experience homelessness but as likely as other groups to exit to permanent housing when they received housing assistance recorded in HMIS.
- 3. Across the five groups, the proportion of individuals in need of housing who received it was highest for youth aging out of foster care (at 35 percent).** Given that the Independent Youth Housing Program is dedicated to providing housing to youth in their transition out of foster care, this finding suggests that targeting housing resources to specific at-risk populations can have an impact on housing assistance penetration rates. This has also been demonstrated with the state's Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) program.⁴

¹ Culhane, Dennis, et al. (2012), The 2011 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, http://www.usich.gov/media_center/news/hud_releases_2011_annual_homeless_assessment_report/.

² DSHS Integrated Client Database, Olympia, WA: <http://publications.rda.dshs.wa.gov/1461/>.

³ Shah, et al. (2012). Identifying Homeless and Unstably Housed DSHS Clients in Multiple Service Systems, Olympia, WA: Research and Data Analysis Division, <http://publications.rda.dshs.wa.gov/1457/>.

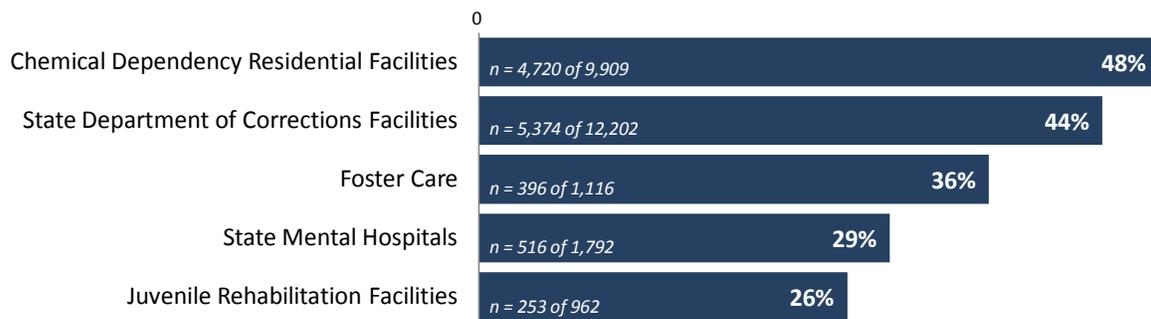
⁴ See p. 2, Mancuso, et al. (2013). Washington State's Housing and Essential Needs Program: Impacts on Housing Status, Use of Food Assistance, Arrests, Incarcerations, and Health Outcomes, Olympia, WA: DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division, <http://publications.rda.dshs.wa.gov/1476/>.

Rates of Homelessness

Homelessness was identified using an indicator that combines data from five different information systems, including the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).⁵ In addition to capturing homelessness as defined narrowly, this measure also identifies individuals in unstable living arrangements (such as “couch surfers”). Across the five study populations, it is clear that individuals discharged from residential chemical dependency treatment facilities and those released from state prison are more likely than other groups examined to experience homelessness in the year after exit. These two groups also represent the largest volume of individuals experiencing homelessness among the five groups studied, which is not surprising given that both of these populations were substantially larger than the other three groups studied.⁶

Proportion of Institutional or Foster Care Exiters Experiencing Homelessness

In 12-Month Period Following Exit

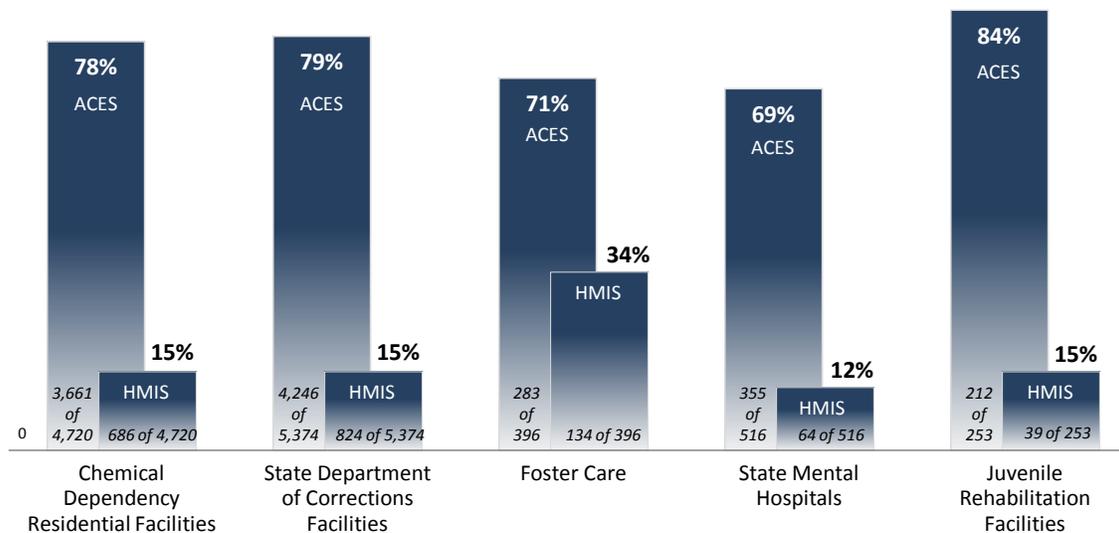


Sources of Identified Homelessness

Across all five study populations, the majority of homelessness was identified through the DSHS Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES), which DSHS financial eligibility workers use to determine eligibility for public assistance. This suggests the importance of augmenting HMIS data with information from other administrative data to identify homeless individuals.

Proportion of homelessness identified in ACES and HMIS

In 12-Month Period Following Exit



⁵ Shah, et al. (2012). Identifying Homeless and Unstably Housed DSHS Clients in Multiple Service Systems, Olympia, WA: DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division, <http://publications.rda.dshs.wa.gov/1457/>.

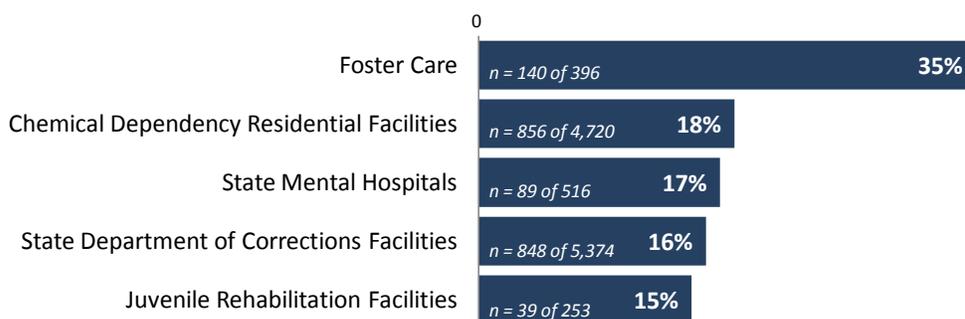
⁶ We did not un-duplicate across populations, so individuals may be counted in more than one group. This is especially likely to be the case for homeless ex-offenders given that two-thirds of them had an identified substance use problem.

Housing Assistance Penetration Rates

We examined the proportion of individuals with identified homelessness in the 12 months following exit from an institutional or out-of-home care setting who received housing assistance recorded in HMIS. We included the following types of assistance in this measure of penetration: Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing, and Permanent Supportive Housing. Housing assistance penetration rates were generally low across groups, but youth who had recently aged out of foster care did stand out as having a relatively higher penetration rate than the other groups. The proportion of homeless former foster youth who received housing assistance was more than double that of homeless youth who had recently been released from Juvenile Rehabilitation facilities. This may reflect the targeted housing resources available to former foster youth through the Independent Youth Housing Program.⁷

Proportion of Homeless Exiters Receiving HMIS-Recorded Housing Assistance

In 12-Month Period Following Exit

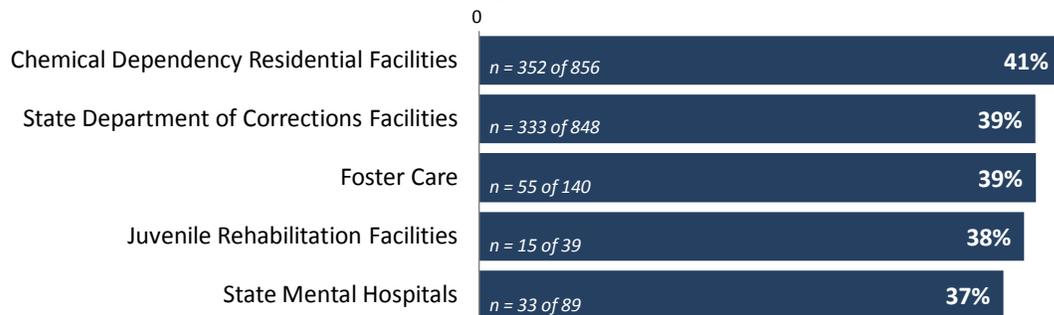


Exit to Permanent Housing

Among individuals who received housing assistance recorded in HMIS, we identified individuals as having permanent housing if they 1) had a “destination at exit” code indicating they had left to a permanent housing situation by the last month of the 12-month follow-up period or 2) were receiving rent assistance or Permanent Supportive Housing at the end of the follow-up period. The proportion of housing assistance recipients who had permanent housing by the end of the follow-up period was approximately 40 percent across all five groups. Performance metrics produced by the Department of Commerce suggest that recipients of rent assistance and transitional housing were probably much more likely than emergency shelter recipients to exit to permanent housing.⁸

Proportion of Housing Assistance Recipients Exiting to Permanent Housing

In 12-Month Period Following Exit from Institutional or Out-of-Home Care



⁷ The penetration rate was even higher for former foster youth when we included receipt of subsidized housing recorded in ACES. Former foster youth between the ages of 18 and 21 are categorically eligible for participation in the Family Unification Program, which provides them up to 18 months of housing assistance through vouchers obtained through local Public Housing Authorities.

⁸ Schwartz, Mary (2013). Homeless System Performance Measures: January 1-March 31, 2013, Olympia, WA: Washington State Department of Commerce, <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/Documents/2013%20State%20Dashboard.pdf>.

SOURCES



Identifying Homeless and Unstably Housed DSHS Clients in Multiple Service Systems State Fiscal Year 2010

APRIL 2012 • Ford Shah, Black, Felver

This report combines administrative data from multiple service systems to identify homeless and unstably housed DSHS clients. By leveraging data from the Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES) and four other data systems, we identify an additional 39,267 (or 27 percent more) homeless DSHS clients in SFY 2010 than when ACES is used alone. Homeless clients are more likely than those in the overall DSHS client population to be African American or Native American, live in high density urban areas, have mental illness and/or substance abuse problems, receive treatment for injuries, and receive cash and/or food assistance.

<http://publications.rda.dshs.wa.gov/1457/>



The Housing Status of Individuals Discharged from Behavioral Health Treatment Facilities

JULY 2012 • Ford Shah, Black, Felver

This report examines the housing status of individuals following their last discharge from a behavioral health treatment facility in SFY 2010. Over a 12-month follow-up period, we find that nearly half of the 9,909 clients discharged from residential chemical dependency treatment facilities had an indication of housing need, yet only 18 percent of those in need received housing assistance recorded in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Similarly, while approximately 30 percent of the 1,792 clients discharged from state mental health hospitals had an indication of housing need, only 17 percent of those in need received housing assistance recorded in HMIS.

<http://publications.rda.dshs.wa.gov/1460/>



Impact of Homelessness on Youth Recently Released from Juvenile Rehabilitation Facilities Housing Status, Criminal Involvement, Health, Mortality, Public Assistance Use and Employment Outcomes

JUNE 2013 • Ford Shah, Black, Felver, Albrecht, Beall

Identifies characteristics of youth released from a Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) institution or community residential facility who experienced homelessness and compares them to youth released from JR facilities who did not have an identified housing need following release. Individuals who were 18 years-old or older at the time of release were at greater risk of experiencing homelessness, and were more likely to be arrested, convicted, re-admitted to a JR institution, and receiving JR parole supervision and services. Homeless released youth also had significantly greater behavioral health, medical, and mortality risk.

<http://publications.rda.dshs.wa.gov/1483/>



Achieving Successful Community Re-Entry upon Release from Prison Housing and Medical Assistance as Keys to Reduced Recidivism and Improved Employment Outcomes

JULY 2013 • Ford Shah, Black, Felver

Examines the experience of individuals over a 12-month period following release from State Department of Corrections facilities in SFY 2010 or 2011. Homeless ex-offenders who received housing assistance and transitioned to permanent housing had lower rates of criminal recidivism and higher rates of employment, Medicaid coverage, and substance abuse treatment, compared to other homeless ex-offenders. Ex-offenders who received housing assistance were more likely to have Medicaid coverage, and treatment penetration rates were relatively high among substance abusers with coverage. Homeless ex-offenders with Medicaid coverage were less likely to be incarcerated or have a felony conviction.

<http://publications.rda.dshs.wa.gov/1484/>



The Housing Status and Well-Being of Youth Aging Out of Foster Care in Washington State

SEPTEMBER 2013 • Ford Shah, Albrecht, Felver

This report identifies individuals who aged out of foster care in State Fiscal Year 2010 or 2011. It examines the following measures over a 12-month period following exit from out-of-home placement: housing status, receipt of public assistance, prevalence of substance abuse and mental illness, rates of employment and arrest, and average earnings. We find that approximately one-third of youth who aged out of foster care experienced homelessness in the following year. Youth who experienced homelessness were more connected to social and health services but also experienced a higher prevalence of risk factors relative to their peers who did not have identified housing needs.

<http://publications.rda.dshs.wa.gov/1489/>

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Copies of this paper may be obtained at www.dshs.wa.gov/rda/ or by calling DSHS' Research and Data Analysis Division at 360.902.0701. Please request REPORT NUMBER 11.200