

# Joint Ways & Means Human Services Subcommittee

## Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program Follow-Ups

March 30, 2023

**Question:** Do we have data on Youth Experiencing Homelessness in Oregon at the county/city level? What is the methodology for arriving at the 8,300, and is that methodology different from other states?

**Answer:** There is no comprehensive youth homelessness data source that shows data at the county/city level. The [Statewide Homeless Youth Needs Assessment](#) (page 2) provides data by region:

	SB1 statewide systems: <18	SB1 statewide systems: 18-24	HMIS* 13-17	HMIS* 18-24	Education K-12
Southern	155	90	647	475	622
Mid-Vally North Coast	313	169	899	807	1372
Eastern OR	48	21	358	382	198
Central/Gorge	52	36	76	93	129
Metro	243	74	461	2723	1122
other	131	25	0	0	0
	942	415	2441	4480	3443
	<18 statewide	3383			
	18-24 statewide	4895			
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>8278</b>			

To arrive at this estimate, The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) analyzed:

- Data from Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
- Annual point-in-time counts
- Federal “runaway and homeless youth” program data
- McKinney-Vento data
- Parole release data from the Oregon Youth Authority

- Administrative data from state programs that serve youth.

Pages 7 and 8 of the assessment detail the methods for analysis. To the Oregon Department of Human Services' (ODHS) knowledge, this type of comprehensive assessment of youth homelessness needs is unique to Oregon, though similar modeling has been used elsewhere at the local level.

For more localized data, the Oregon Department of Education reports [McKinney-Vento Program data<sup>1</sup>](#) which specifically identifies youth experiencing homelessness in the K-12 school system. The data can also be visualized by county in the [Oregon Child Integrated Dataset](#). This data set only captures youth enrolled in and attending school and who have come to the awareness of their McKinney-Vento liaison, and thus leaves out a large portion of the youth experiencing homelessness population, but it can provide additional local perspective.

**Question:** Can you provide a breakdown of YEHP services at the city/county level?

**Answer:** [A current list of current grantees](#) and the services offered by each is available online.

**Question:** Are we primarily serving youth 19-24, and are they emancipated? Are those youth working? What variables play into their homelessness other than family instability? If a young person under 18 is homeless, do they enter foster care?

**Answer:** House Bill 2001 funds the Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program to serve youth ages 14 to 24, and the Host Homes program serves youth 16 to 21. There are some differences in how services are provided for youth under 18 and youth over 18. For youth under 18 (also called unaccompanied minors):

- The parent/guardian must be notified if a young person under 18 seeks shelter. The parent/guardian would approve for the young person to temporarily stay at the shelter. All shelters serving youth under 18 must be licensed Child-Caring Agencies.
- If the young person reports that it is unsafe to return home to do threat of harm, Child Welfare must be informed.
- Legal Child Welfare involvement is determined on a case-by-case basis when minor youth requests services and their return home is unsafe. This is accomplished using

---

<sup>1</sup> Scroll down to "Homeless Student Data" for previous years <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/schools-and-districts/grants/esea/mckinney-vento/pages/default.aspx>

trauma-informed planning and harm avoidance. Forcing a young person into foster care, or Behavioral Rehabilitation Services, who solely presented with a service/housing need has an inherent risk of youth completely disengaging from contact for all supports, creating further long-term risks.

As mentioned, the YEHP program also serves youth 18 to 24. These services are very important because, although technically “adults,” these young people have significant hurdles to overcome to reach stability. The factors that forced them to leave home – such as substance use, family violence, and rejection due to sexual orientation or gender identity – coupled with the traumatic experience of homelessness, puts them at higher risk for negative outcomes.

Reasons why youth ages 18 to 24 need supports and services include, but are not limited to:

- Individuals ages 18 to 24 have brains that are still developing, which impacts judgment and decision-making and increases the likelihood of risky or unsafe behaviors. This in turn puts them at higher risk of dangers like human trafficking.<sup>2</sup>
- Experiences of childhood trauma can further impact brain development and increase the risks above.<sup>3</sup>
- Both youth experiencing homelessness and youth who have experienced childhood trauma have higher rates of mental health conditions and substance use disorders.<sup>4</sup>
- Youth who grow up in unstable home environments may not have had the same opportunities to develop important life skills required to take care of themselves and achieve economic stability.

Many youth in this age range are either employed or seeking employment, but they need additional support to find and sustain work. Reasons for this include:

- The youth lacks social modeling from caring adults in areas such as education and employment.
- The youth needs safe, stable and affordable housing to find and keep a job.
- The youth can only find low-wage jobs and do not have the social supports their peers might have when struggling to make ends meet.
- The youth doesn't have their basic needs met (i.e. adequate food, transportation to/from work, basic hygiene necessities).

The longer the period a young person experiences homelessness, the more their challenges compound. By intervening at this age and providing youth the support and connections they

---

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset\\_library/Homelessness\\_in\\_America\\_Youth.pdf](https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Homelessness_in_America_Youth.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

need, the likelihood increases that they can be diverted from entering the mainstream adult homelessness system.