Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Addendum to
Oregon Revised Statute 417.799
Report to the Oregon Legislature

November 22, 2022

Self-Sufficiency Programs
Oregon Department of Human Services

Oregon Department of Human Services

www.oregon.gov/dhs

The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) submits the attached report as an addendum to the ORS 417.799 Runaway and Homeless Youth report submitted in September 2022. The information contained in the attached report is pursuant to House Bill 4013 (2022) Section 5 which provides:

> SECTION 5. In its 2022 report to the interim legislative committees required under ORS 417.799, the Department of Human Services shall include recommendations for legislation to reduce the numbers of youth experiencing homelessness by at least 25 percent over a five-year period. The department shall develop the recommendations under this section in consultation with the Housing and Community Services Department. The recommendations must include descriptions of new programs to address youth homelessness or options for extending access to existing adult programs to youth, together with estimates of additional Enrolled House Bill 4013 (HB 4013-A) Page 3 funding necessary to implement or extend the proposed programs. The report must also include a projected 20-year estimate of cost savings to state and local health, education, corrections and public safety programs if the 25 percent reduction in youth homelessness over five years is achieved.

ODHS Self-Sufficiency Programs, with support from the Oregon Housing and Community Services, contracted with the Corporation for Supportive Housing to provide a report that responds to the above requirement. The attached report provides an illustration of the potential positive outcomes that could result if youth homelessness is prevented and reduced through the implementation of a range of evidence-based interventions. The report also shows the potential for costs to be avoided by the state of $16,683,411 annually, if a 25 percent reduction in youth homelessness is realized.

For additional information:
Contact Roberto Gutierrez
ODHS Government Relations Manager
Roberto.gutierrez@dhsoha.state.or.us
971-317-1265

Oregon Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program
Oregon Department of Human Services – Self Sufficiency
Cost Analysis Report

October 31, 2022

The information contained in this report is designed to provide an illustration of the potential positive outcomes that could result and the costs that could be avoided if youth homelessness is prevented and reduced in Oregon through the implementation of a range of evidence-based interventions. The timeframe to obtain data for this report was compressed and Oregon specific data related to utilization and cost was not available for all systems. A combined de-duplicated data set was not available to perform comprehensive analysis. Therefore, there are some variations in how each system defines youth and young adults for purposes of the data included. Where data was unavailable, we made assumptions based upon the existing national evidence base. While this is not a research product, the report nevertheless shows the potential for costs to be avoided and the lives of young people to be improved as the State of Oregon moves forward with implementing the recommendations.

Introduction

Youth Cost Study and Purpose

The state of Oregon's Department of Human Services (ODHS) has been leading work to understand the statewide level of need for youth and young adults experiencing homelessness; as well as the policy and programmatic strategies to prevent and end youth homelessness in Oregon. In 2021, ODHS's Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (YEHP) partnered with the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) to complete a Statewide Needs Assessment for Youth Experiencing Homelessness. This work helped to establish the level of need for housing and services interventions for youth experiencing homelessness statewide by engaging young people and local partners in system modeling at the regional level. Other momentum around the state has been building to implement solutions for youth experiencing homelessness including funding allocated from the state legislature in 2021 to provide rental assistance for young people and a Direct Cash Transfer pilot program for youth which began implementation in early 2022.

Building on this work, the Oregon Legislature requested a report as part of the Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Grant Program. This report aims to provide recommendations toward the goal of reducing youth homelessness by 25% over five years with a particular focus on cost avoidance that may be realized across public systems as a result. ODHS contracted with CSH to provide this legislative report and cost analysis, which follows in this report. The cost analysis includes an overview of the youth

homelessness landscape, nationally and in Oregon as it relates to broader system impacts, costs, and recommendations for achieving meaningful outcomes for young people.

Before considering the cost implications of youth experiencing homelessness, it is critical to acknowledge that youth homelessness is a broad and systemic challenge that intersects many systems including Child Welfare, Healthcare, Education, and Housing. Youth experiences of homelessness also fall within the broader context of structural racism and disparities that must be addressed as part of any solution. Although the 2021 statewide needs assessment and this cost analysis are focused on housing and service interventions, youth homelessness has been created by many systemic factors, and therefore will not be solved by a single system. Stable housing is a critical and necessary component of a successful transition into adulthood for any young person, and it's important to not look at homelessness in isolation. **Solving for housing instability is not the only variable for putting young people on a similar path as their stably housed peers; each system has a role to play, and this analysis illustrates the intersection of housing with equity, healthcare, education, and employment.**

Understanding the experiences of youth experiencing homelessness as well as the composition of the population is critical when creating programs and policies to prevent and end homelessness for young people. Much of what is known about the scope and scale of youth homelessness in the United States has been established by a groundbreaking, multicomponent study, The Voices of Youth Count (VoYC) from Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.[1] Since 2017, Chapin Hall has published several seminal reports on the experience of youth homelessness and the research has been principally informed by the interviews with young people sharing each of their unique experiences of homelessness. The VoYC research is cited frequently in this analysis as a tool to understand contributing factors and the impact of youth homelessness.

The VoYC study establishes that young people experiencing homelessness face significant interpersonal and systemic adversity and that there are many paths to homelessness for youth. Nationally, 35% of young people experiencing homelessness have experienced the death of at least one primary caregiver, a very high proportion have been placed in foster care, and almost 25% have experienced homelessness in their families as a child.[2] Within the broader context of the trauma that youth experiencing homelessness have endured, there are certain groups of young people who are at greater risk. Young people who are disproportionally impacted by homelessness include:

[1] Matthew Morton, Melissa Kull, and Amy Dworsky, "Voice of Youth Count," Chapin Hall, accessed October 1, 2022, https://www.chapinhall.org/project/voices-of-youth-count/.

[2] "Missed Opportunities in Youth Pathways through Homelessness" (Chapin Hall, June 2019), https://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ChapinHall_VoYC_Youth-Pathways-FINAL.pdf.

- Youth of Color, Black/African American and Hispanic, non-white youth
- Unmarried or parenting youth
- LGBT youth
- Low-income youth
- Youth with less than a high school diploma or GED[3]

These same disproportionalities exist in Oregon as well.[4] This means that any solution, including prevention strategies, must consider which young people statewide are more likely to experience homelessness. The VoYC highlights the intersectionality of structural racism, systemic prejudice, and multiple system failures as factors that contribute to youth homelessness. Ultimately, it is vital to review the equity implications of funding and policies to ensure they will help to reduce disparities among young people experiencing and at risk of homelessness.

Impact of Youth Homelessness on Public Systems

In addition to the impact that youth homelessness has on young people's lives, it also impacts several public systems, including the high-cost interventions of crisis response (e.g. juvenile detention, inpatient hospitalizations, foster care placements). Not only are these interventions costly, but in many cases, they may not result in improved outcomes. The following cost analysis illustrates that there is an opportunity for the state of Oregon to realize cost avoidance by connecting young people with the right combination of housing aligned with supportive services. **While there is strong evidence that supportive housing for chronically homeless adults saves governments and taxpayers money in the near term (within one year) [5], preventing and ending youth homelessness will realize cost avoidance over a longer time horizon.** This is primarily because young people experiencing homelessness often have not yet reached the high levels of system involvement that we see in adults.

For instance, a chronically homeless adult experiencing multiple inpatient hospitalizations in a year will demonstrate a significant decrease in their utilization of crisis services (and costs) once they become stably housed. For young adults, however, the largest public cost offsets are realized over time as stable housing with supports leads to improved education and employment outcomes. For example, a study in Minnesota demonstrated that taxpayers would break even on their investment in housing and services for youth formerly in foster care within one year if just 6% of young people at risk of homelessness

[3] "National Estimates - Voices of Youth Count" (Chapin Hall), accessed October 3, 2022, https://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ChapinHall_VoYC_NationalReport_Final.pdf.
[4] "Runaway and Homeless Youth," State of Oregon: Runaway and Homeless Youth (Oregon Department of Human Services Homeless Youth Advisory Committee, August 2016), https://www.oregon.gov/DHS/CHILDREN/Homeless-Youth/Pages/index.aspx.
[5] "Ending Chronic Homelessness Saves Taxpayers Money" (National Alliance to End Homelessness), accessed October 3, 2022, https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Cost-Savings-from-PSH.pdf.

achieve self-sufficiency.[6]

This analysis will explore the current public costs within each system that impact youth experiencing homelessness in both the short and long term; as well as provide a framework for the State of Oregon to realize the potential public cost avoidance of supportive housing for youth and young adults.

The landscape of youth experiencing and at risk of homelessness in Oregon

The Statewide Homeless Youth Needs Assessment completed in October of 2021 for YEHP establishes the total number of young people experiencing and at risk of experiencing homelessness in Oregon. The Needs Assessment included data from a statewide systems dashboard (known at the time as "Senate Bill 1 Dashboard, SB1") which includes young people likely to experience homelessness based on their level of public systems involvement.

To comprise the total level of housing and services needed statewide, youth ages 13-24 were included. However, the total population was separated by those under the age of 18 (13-17) and those over the age of 18 (18-24) due to the different housing program models, interventions, and services available to young people depending on their age. Data on youth experiencing homelessness from the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) was referenced in the assessment but was not included as part of the overall level of housing and services needed because the state is not able to control for duplication across systems. Below is the summary from the Needs Assessment based on service-use from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for all young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness statewide that will establish the level of housing and services needed for Oregon youth for the cost analysis:

	SB1 statewide systems: <18	SB1 statewide systems: 18-24	HMIS* 13-17	HMIS* 18-24	Total under 18	Total over 18	Education K-12
Southern	155	90	647	475	802	565	622
Mid-Vally North Coast	313	169	899	807	1212	976	1372
Eastern OR	48	21	358	382	406	403	198
Central/Gorge	52	36	76	93	128	129	129
Metro	243	74	461	2723	704	2797	1122
other	131	25	0	0	131	25	0
	942	415	2441	4480	3383	4895	3443

<18 statewide	**3383**
18-24 statewide	**4895**
Total:	**8278**

[6] Steven Foldes and Andrea Lubov, "The Economic Burden of Youth Experiencing Homelessness and the Financial Case for Investing in Interventions to Change People's Lives," YouthLink MN, April 2015, https://www.youthlinkmn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/the-economic-burden-of-homeless-youth-in-hennepin-county.pdf.

Costs related to youth experiencing homelessness in Oregon, by system:

Physical and Behavioral Health

National data on youth experiencing homelessness and youth in foster care indicate large disparities in physical and behavioral health outcomes compared to their stably housed counterparts. Disparities in health outcomes persist for LGBTQIA2S+ (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, two-spirit, plus others) youth experiencing homelessness, who encounter more trauma, discrimination, and adversity than their non-LGBTQIA2S+ counterparts.[7]

Youth experiencing the trauma of homelessness and foster care systems have poorer health outcomes than their stably housed peers, and often the traumas they experience have lifetime consequences including a greater risk of developing chronic health conditions and premature mortality.[1] The precarious nature of homelessness can force youth into unsafe situations, including exchanging sex for basic needs such as housing and food, or being sexually exploited. Consequently, these youth are at disproportionate risk for pregnancy and HIV. Compared to their housed counterparts, homeless youth are three times as likely to be pregnant, to have impregnated someone, or to already be a parent. Youth experiencing homelessness are also sixteen times as likely to be diagnosed with HIV and seven times more likely to die from AIDS.[8]

In addition to poor physical health outcomes, unaccompanied youth and youth in foster care also experience higher rates of mental health disorders, more outpatient visits, and longer inpatient stays than their stably housed counterparts. Reported rates of mental health difficulties for unaccompanied youth range from 45%-69%.[8] **Rates of major depression and PTSD are three times higher among homeless youth than the general population, and 32% report attempting suicide.[1]** Despite these high rates of mental health disorders, youth experiencing homelessness report accessing mental health services less than their stably housed peers. In one study, only 9% of youth reported having accessed any mental health services.[1] This carries into adulthood, where one Oregon study of Medicaid recipients with a history of foster care involvement reported greater rates of mental health struggles than their non-foster care counterparts but reported accessing mental health services at similar rates.[9] A lack of access to preventative mental health services, such as individual counseling, could result in more costly interventions downstream, such as a psychiatric hospitalization.

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[7] "LGBTQIA2S+" (National Association of Social Workers), accessed October 1, 2022, https://www.socialworkers.org/practice/lgbt.
[8] Darla Bardine, "Consequences of Youth Homelessness ," National Network for Youth, March 2008, https://www.nn4youth.org/wp-content/uploads/Issue-Brief_Consequences-of-Youth-Homelessness.pdf.
[9] Vartanian, Kerri, Hannah Cohen-Cline, Kyle Jones, Sheetal Sulkarni-Rajasekhara, and Amy Campbell. Foster Care Life Course Experiences, Health, and Health Care. *Center for Outcomes and Research on Education*, October 2017. https://www.healthshareoregon.org/storage/app/media/documents/Health%20Equity/Reports/Foster%20Care%20Study_Final%20Report.pdf.

Youth experiencing homelessness or the foster care system are at disproportionate risk for substance use disorders (SUD), often beginning as a coping strategy.[1] A SAMHSA report from 2019 puts substance misuse among youth experiencing homelessness as high as 70%.[10] Despite these high rates of alcohol and drug use, only 10-15% of unaccompanied youth report ever receiving SUD treatment.[8]

Premature death rates are much higher for youth experiencing homelessness. A 2016 report on youth in the Bay Area found the mortality rate for homeless and unstably housed youth was 10x higher than California's general youth population.[11] Of particular concern, LGBTQIA2S+ youth have an early death rate over twice that of all youth experiencing homelessness.[1]The primary causes of death were "suicide and/or alcohol- or drug-related."[11] Other studies cite suicide as the leading cause of death among street youth.[8]

As noted above, people who have high ACE scores have a greater risk of developing chronic health conditions and have greatly reduced life expectancy, ranging from 1.5 - 11.5 times greater than the general population.[12] One study found that for those with a high ACE score (4+) life expectancy may be reduced by up to 20 years.[13] Beyond the cumulative risk of a high ACE score, poverty, and parental separation have been connected to additional risk for premature mortality.[12]

State-level data reinforces national studies that indicate unmet physical and behavioral health needs in childhood persist through adulthood. In a recent study of adults in the Oregon Medicaid population, 87% of respondents with foster care histories report chronic physical health diagnoses, mental health diagnoses, or both.[9] Since 2014, youth aging out of Oregon Tribal foster care systems at age 18 are eligible for the Former Foster Care Youth Medical (FFCYM) Program from ages 18-26. **Despite the availability of extended Medicaid, recent data from the National Youth in Transition Database indicates that 70% of youth in Oregon who spent time in foster care have health insurance at age 19, and this number drops to 65% by age 21, far below youth in the general population.**[14] While all youth in foster care are not an identical population to youth experiencing homelessness, one in four youth in foster care become homeless within four years of emancipation from the foster care program.[15]

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[10] Brandon Green, Frances Lee Kim, and David Dean, "Substance Use and Treatment among Youth Experiencing Homelessness: 1992–2017," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 67, no. 6 (2020): pp. 786-792, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.04.019.

[11] Colette L. Auerswald, Jessica S. Lin, and Andrea Parriott, "Six-Year Mortality in a Street-Recruited Cohort of Homeless Youth in San Francisco, California," *PeerJ* 4 (2016), https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.1909.

[12] Yu, Jing, Reeya A. Patel, Denise L. Haynie, Pablo Vidal-Ribas, Theemeshni Govender, Rajeshwari Sundaram, and Stephen E. Gilman. "Adverse Childhood Experiences and Premature Mortality through Mid-Adulthood: A Five-Decade Prospective Study." T*he Lancet Regional Health* - Americas, 2022, 100349. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lana.2022.100349.

[13] Cancel, Sixto, Sarah Fathallah, Marina Nitze, Sarah Sullivan, and Emily Wright-Moore. " Aged out: How We'Re Failing Youth Transitioning out of Foster Care. Think of Us." Think of Us, n.d. https://assets.website-files.com/60a6942819ce8053cefd0947/62bf491fa9a621536ea81bd9_Aged%20Out%20Report%202022%206-30.pdf.

[14] "National Youth in Transition Database ," The Administration for Children and Families, accessed October 17, 2022, https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/reporting-systems/nytd.

[15] "Homelessness & Foster Youth." NFYI. The National Foster Youth Institute, May 27, 2021. https://nfyi.org/issues/homelessness/#:~:text=Foster%20Youth%20Facts%20%26%20Figures%3A%20An%20average%20of,of%20

Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the unique struggles and disparities for young people in foster care since they are at-risk of becoming homeless.

In a 2011 and 2012 study of homeless youth in Minnesota, the average healthcare cost to DHS for unaccompanied youth was $3,059 per member per year (PMPY), inclusive of $510 of uncompensated care. This is $794 more PMPY than privately insured youth.[6] Seventy-nine % of unaccompanied youth in this study had at least one emergency department claim, compared to 13% of youth with private insurance.[6] The high cost of healthcare for young people experiencing homelessness, as well as the poor health outcomes, illuminate the need for systemic change. The adverse outcomes in healthcare also reflect the lasting impacts of the child welfare system.

Cost Impact

According to a data request made to the Oregon Health Plan's (OHA) Children's System of Care data team, the total annual cost incurred by hospitals for Emergency Department (ED visits) for young adults in Oregon ages 14-24 enrolled in Medicaid with a behavioral health primary diagnosis code is $6,516,094. These costs are sourced from Oregon Hospital Discharge Data, which includes ED visits addressing behavior healthcare and does not represent what was actually billed to Medicaid. OHA estimates that on average 5.4% of young people in this Medicaid cohort with ED visits also have Child Welfare System involvement, which accounts for $351,869* in costs annually.

Research has shown that for child-welfare involved youth experiencing homelessness who have access to housing and services, there is a potential for up to a 26% decrease in healthcare costs[16]. This represents health system cost avoidance for the state of Oregon of $91,486.

***the OHA Systems of Care data team noted that these cost data are likely a gross underestimate of total Medicaid costs for ED visits among the youth and young adult population enrolled in Medicaid. This is because the OHA cost data available at the time of this report includes an estimate of the operating expenses incurred by the hospital; not what was billed to Medicaid or what was paid.*

Child Welfare

As stated previously, there is a high level of overlap between youth who experience homelessness and those with a history of involvement in the child welfare system. National studies have found one in ten

being%20emancipated%20from%20the%20foster%20care%20system.

[16] Foldes, Steven, and Andrea Lubov. "Youthlink MN: From Homeless to Hopeful." Youthlink, October 10, 2022. https://www.youthlinkmn.org/.

young adults ages 18 to 25 experienced a form of homelessness in 12 months.[17] Of the estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults who experience homelessness each year, one-quarter to one-third of them had a history of foster care.[1] In recent data released by the Children's Bureau, 25% of Oregon youth who were in foster care at age 17, and who were surveyed at age 21, experienced homelessness in the past two years.[17]

Youth involved in the child welfare system experience homelessness when they transition out of the foster care system at the age of 18, however, they also experience homelessness following family reunification or adoption.[18]

Recent studies have also found that there is an association between youth homelessness in childhood or adolescence and housing stability as an adult. Focusing on the 24 % of Oregon youth who have had child welfare involvement and who have experienced homelessness in the past two years is not only a short-term strategy but also a long-term strategy. More specific service strategies to identify and address the risks of homelessness for Oregon youth involved with the child welfare system is an important step in reducing youth homelessness in the state.

Cost Impact

In 2021, 3,216 youth and young adults exited the child welfare system in Oregon.[16] Based on Oregon-specific outcomes from the National Youth in Transition Database[14], 24% (772 youth) report an experience of homelessness after leaving the child welfare system.

According to the 2021 Needs Assessment, the average annual cost of a shelter bed for a young person experiencing homelessness is $12,617. Preventing homelessness for these 772 youth could result in avoided costs equal to $9.7M in emergency/crisis response within the state.

When youth experiencing homelessness are connected directly with housing and services, evidence shows the potential for up to an 27% of direct cost reductions based on reduced utilization of emergency shelter.[1] This represents a potential annual cost avoidance of $2.6M for the state of Oregon.

Legal System Involvement

Along with the child welfare system, the legal system can also have severe and lasting impacts on youth

[17] " Data Snapshot FY2017-2021." Oregon. National Youth in Transition Database: 2022.

[18] A Dworsky et al., "Missed Opportunities: Pathways from Foster Care To Youth Homelessness in America," Voices of Youth Count (Chaplin Hall, 2019), https://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/missed-opportunities-pathways-from-foster-care-to-youth-homelessness-in-america/.

experiencing homelessness. Across the U.S. and in Oregon, youth and young adults experiencing homelessness have higher rates of legal involvement than their peers. This is due to a variety of risk factors including experiences of trauma, personal loss, child welfare involvement, and mental health disorders.[19] Legal system involvement among youth experiencing homelessness disproportionately impacts BIPOC youth, mirroring the disproportionality present in the homelessness system. Nationally, nearly half of all young people experiencing homelessness have had some involvement with the legal system. According to the Voices of Youth Count Research, 46% of youth experiencing homelessness had been in juvenile detention, prison, or jail.[20] Research focusing on youth in foster care found that one in five young people who had been in foster care placements was arrested within one year, with an average of two arrests per young adult, representing 2000 days spent in jail across the foster youth cohort.[6]

In Oregon, young people with legal system involvement have high levels of overlap with the child welfare system and often experience homelessness. The National Youth in Transition database shows that among young people exiting the Oregon child welfare system in 2020, 36% reported an experience of homelessness and 23% of Oregon youth reported having been incarcerated at least once in their lifetime.[21] Legal system-involved young people in Oregon also face high levels of behavioral health challenges, with 89% of young people in the custody of the Oregon Youth Authority having a diagnosed mental health disorder and over two-thirds of the population struggling with substance use disorder.[22] The racial disparities seen nationally among systems-involved youth are also present in Oregon, particularly among African American youth who represent only 4% of young people in Oregon but make up 15% of the overall population in the custody of the state's juvenile legal system.[23]

In addition to the impact that legal system involvement has on young people themselves, there is also a significant cost associated with this intervention. The cost to the state of Oregon for youth in legal custody is $350 per day according to the Oregon Youth Authority, with an average length of stay of 298 days for youth 13-17.[22] Additionally, some youth with legal system involvement are charged with offenses and committed into custody as adults, effectively bridging them directly from the juvenile legal system into the adult corrections system. In Oregon, this represents 8% of the overall juvenile legal

[19] Gina Samuels et al., Report (Chapin Hall, 2019), https://www.chapinhall.org/research/young-people-experience-significant-disruption-and-loss-both-before-and-during-their-homelessness/.
[20] Kennedy, Lesley. "Homeless Youth Policy Scan." Youth Homelessness. National Conference of State Legislatures , November 21, 2019. https://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/homeless-youth-policy-scan.aspx.
[21] "Data Snapshot FY 2016-2020 Oregon," Oregon (National Youth in Transition Database, November 2020), https://www.oregon.gov/dhs/CHILDREN/Documents/15-Chafee-FY16-20-NYTD-Data-Snapshot.pdf.
[22] "Statistics about OYA Youth," Oregon Youth Authority (State of Oregon), accessed October 1, 2022, https://www.oregon.gov/oya/aboutoya/Pages/stats.aspx.

system population. Additionally, youth committed into custody as adults have an average length of stay in the state Department of Corrections of 1,627 day.[22]

Since it's well documented that young people experiencing homelessness are at greater risk of interacting with the legal system, there is an opportunity for the state of Oregon to connect legal system-involved young people experiencing homelessness with housing and services. This has the potential to result not only in avoided costs but also in better outcomes for youth.

Cost Impact

The average cost of detention in the Oregon Juvenile legal system (serving young people age 12-24) is currently $350/day for youth and young adults in close custody placements with the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) and the average length of stay as of July, 2022 was 298 days. Based on the average number of young people annually in OYA close custody (452 as of July 2022)[23], this represents a total cost of $47,143,600 to the state of Oregon.

When youth experiencing homelessness are connected directly with housing and services, evidence shows the potential for up to an 87% of direct cost reductions to the juvenile legal system. [24] **This represents a potential cost avoidance of over $41M for the State of Oregon.**

Education and Employment

Both the education and employment systems also play a large role in future outcomes for youth. It is well documented that the experience of homelessness or housing instability interferes with important developmental tasks for children and youth. Completing education and preparing for employment are part of those developmental tasks or milestones that are impacted and interrupted by homelessness. [18] As with all aspects of youth homelessness, racial inequities also exist among outcomes related to education and employment. Chapin Hall found that BIPOC 18- to 25-year-olds who experience homelessness obtain a GED or high school diploma, obtain some college credit, and complete college at lower rates than their white peers.[18] Additionally, research shows that:

[23] "Oregon Youth Authority Quick Facts." Oregon Youth Authority . Accessed October 28, 2022. https://www.oregon.gov/oya/Publications/QuickFacts.pdf.

[24] "Benefit-Cost Results." WSIPP Reports. Washington State Institute for Public Policy. Accessed October 28, 2022. https://www.wsipp.wa.gov/BenefitCost?topicId=1.

1. Family issues in the lives of youth often prompt disruptions that contribute to experiences of homelessness and educational disconnection.
2. Reduced educational attainment increases the likelihood of homelessness, and experiences of homelessness reduce the likelihood of school completion.
3. Youth experiencing homelessness are less likely to be enrolled in 4-year colleges and a considerable number of college students struggle with homelessness.[18]

Nationally, Chapin Hall found that 34 % of 18- to 25-year-olds who experienced homelessness lacked a high school diploma or GED compared to 14 % for this age group in the general population.[18] The National Workgroup on Foster Care and Education found that only 50 % of youth in foster care complete high school by age 18.[25] In the same research study, 84 % of 17-18-year-old youth in foster care want to go to college, but only 2 to 9 % complete a bachelor's degree. Although the foster youth population is not necessarily analogous to the population of youth experiencing homelessness, it is important to note that the foster care system is an indicator of youth who are at-risk of becoming homelessness with 25% of youth exiting foster care experiencing homelessness in the four years following exit from the child welfare system.[15]

These lower rates of educational attainment among homeless youth mean that they miss out on the long-term economic, health, and well-being benefits of educational achievement. Youth in, or coming from, foster care face greater challenges in completing education which then impedes employment and career goals. Longitudinal research on midwestern youth aging out of foster care demonstrates a positive association between additional years a youth remains in foster care from ages 18-21 and higher wages, likely attributable to more time to attain a high school diploma, GED, or to begin college courses.[26]

Research from Child Trends reinforces the link between education and employment. Prior research indicates that young people with foster care involvement who have a high school diploma or GED are twice as likely to be employed as those without these credentials and that those with some college experience are more than three times as likely to be employed."[27] The effects of lower educational attainment among youth of color persist into post-foster care employment rates. A 2010 study of youth

[25] "Research Highlights on Education and Foster Care," Foster Care & Education, 2014, http://www.fostercareandeducation.org/DesktopModules/Bring2mind/DMX/Download.aspx?EntryId=1933&Command=Core_Download&method=inline&PortalId=0&TabId=124.

[26] Jennifer L. Hook and Mark E. Courtney, "Employment Outcomes of Former Foster Youth as Young Adults: The Importance of Human, Personal, and Social Capital," *Children and Youth Services Review* 33, no. 10 (2011): pp. 1855-1865, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2011.05.004.

[27] Rachel Rosenberg, Maia O'Meara, and Mya' Sanders, "Education and Skills Training May Ease Transition to Adulthood for Young People Involved in Foster Care," Child Trends, October 15, 2020, https://www.childtrends.org/publications/education-and-skills-training-may-ease-transition-to-adulthood-for-young-people-involved-in-foster-care.

who aged out of foster care found that at age 24, white youth had higher rates of employment than their Black peers. Black youth are about three times as likely as white youth to be looking for work.[25] The higher rates of justice involvement for Black youth addressed in a previous section must be considered as a contributing factor.

The 2017 Voices of Youth Count found that youth experiencing homelessness are employed, but there was not a strong correlation between employment and homelessness.[1] This indicates that there are more factors involved in youth exiting homelessness beyond obtaining employment. Indeed, a 2010 study found that foster youth who age out of care to unstable housing earn lower wages than their stably housed peers and were often underemployed.[25] These studies underscore the importance of supporting both youth aging out of foster care and youth experiencing homelessness with educational attainment to obtain better-paying, sustainable jobs that can help them exit or avoid homelessness. Additionally, youth experiencing homelessness in rural areas lack economic opportunity, adding another barrier to finding employment with a sustainable income.[1]

A recent look at youth (14-23) in Oregon who received at least one Independent Living service found that 23% reported being employed full or part-time[14], which is significantly lower than reports from previous, pre-pandemic, periods. This data is echoed in a 2020 Foster Club national poll, which found that 65% of current and foster youth (18-24) who were employed pre-pandemic had been laid off or had their hours reduced.[28] Underemployment and unemployment at this critical stage of development impacts creates additional barriers to future stability and economic mobility.

A Minnesota study attempting to quantify the cost of youth who are currently or at risk of homelessness estimated that between Federal, State, and local taxes, in addition to Social Security taxes, these youth each represent a tax loss of $1,215 per year compared to what the general youth population paid.[6] The mean wage of these youth (16-24) was $3,930, compared to the general youth population at $12,458. When multiplied by the number of young people in the study, the total tax lost comes to over $1.7 million. A similar study in Nevada places the total lost tax revenue (federal, state, and local) at $4.7 million in 2014.[29] They put the total economic loss (unattained economic impact + uncollected tax revenue) at $35.8 million in 2016.[28]

[28] Johanna K. Greeson et al., "The Experiences of Older Youth in and Aged out of Foster Care during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Material and Financial Well-Being by Foster Care Status, Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation, Ethnicity, and Race.," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 92, no. 3 (2022): pp. 334-348, https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000615.

[29] Jaewon Lim et al., "Examining the Economic Cost of Youth Homelessness in Southern Nevada," 2018.

Cost Impact

Based on the data quantifying annual lost tax revenue and lost wages for youth experiencing homelessness adjusted for 2022 increases, the 8,278 young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness represent an overall potential reduction in economic impact for Oregon of over $99M. Conservatively estimating that at least 23% of young people will become employed when connected with housing and services, as demonstrated with Oregon's data on independent living services, this minimally represents $22.8M in lost economic impact for the state.

Summary of Cost Impacts for Youth and Young Adults

The potential value case highlighted in this report represents just a portion of what could result if the State takes concrete steps to address youth homelessness and housing stability. While cost is an important component of this analysis, it is also worth noting the potential importance of outcomes that are more challenging to quantify, such as improved quality of life for youth. Other research has shown that **when youth experiencing homelessness are connected directly with housing and services, evidence shows the potential for up to 27% of direct cost reductions based on reduced utilization of emergency shelter. This represents a potential annual cost avoidance of $2.6M for the state of Oregon.**

The cost numbers included reflect annual amounts, but in most cases, we would expect these costs to continue to be incurred for multiple years because, without intervention, many young adults will continue to experience poor outcomes. On this basis, if homelessness was ended for just 25% of the youth included in our analysis, we would expect to see $10.9M in avoided costs annually from the reduction in healthcare, justice, and child welfare and $5.7M from increased economic impact due to employment. If homelessness was ended for all the youth in our analysis, we would expect to see at least $66.5M in avoided costs and increased economic impact. See Appendix 1 for additional details on these calculations.

Additionally, there is an entire range of potential benefits of housing aligned with services for youth that are not included because robust outcomes and cost data are not yet available. These include, but are not limited, to:

- Increased ability to manage health leading to a reduced probability of the onset of health conditions such as diabetes and COPD
- Improved well-being through making progress toward self-identified goals
- Increased involvement in and connection with the community

- Improved relationships with family and friends
- Improvement in overall health

Emerging practices and considerations

Youth experiencing homelessness require a variety of supports to meet their diverse needs and circumstances. The emerging practices highlighted below offer insight into innovative programs that meet youth where they are and that can specifically benefit those disproportionately affected by youth homelessness. Research indicates that successful implementation of these models requires shared leadership that centers youth voice. Each of these programs represents research-backed, cost-effective options.

Direct Cash Transfer (DCT) Programs

DCT programs are a poverty reduction measure that provides cash directly to participants and offers a path for youth to sustainably exit homelessness. DCT programs have long been implemented globally and are well-researched, with over 300 studies published. They have been shown to reduce housing instability, boost savings, increase school attendance, and contribute to improved mental health.[30] DCT programs are more cost effective than traditional youth homelessness interventions, require low overhead, and are easily accessible.[31] Additionally, DCT programs are flexible and can be created to fit the unique needs of each community in terms of the amount of assistance, delivery format (in person, debit card, direct deposit via app), and length of assistance.

For youth experiencing homelessness, Direct Cash Transfer programs foster autonomy. Youth can choose how to receive their funds, and the frequency with which they receive them, and have the freedom to spend the funds in the way that best serves their individual needs. Programs can offer optional support ranging from financial advice and peer support to traditional case management. Importantly, DCT programs offer the opportunity to increase equity by addressing the needs of youth historically excluded or harmed by traditional homeless services, including BIPOC, LGBTQIA2S+, and youth with undocumented immigration status.[32] The Coalition om Homelessness and Housing in Ohio states that "racism and discrimination has resulted in disparities in the ways in which housing programs and homeless services impact BIPOC individuals and families…Part of this work is developing innovative,

[30] "Cash Research Explorer [300+ Scholarly Articles]." GiveDirectly. Accessed October 1, 2022. https://www.givedirectly.org/cash-evidence-explorer/.
[31] "Direct Cash Transfers: Youth Homelessness Interventions," Point Source Youth, accessed October 7, 2022, https://www.pointsourceyouth.org/directcashtransfers.
[32] Boshart, Abby, and Fay Walker. "Direct Cash Transfers Can Deliver Housing Assistance More Efficiently and Equitably." Housing Matters, May 25, 2022. https://housingmatters.urban.org/articles/direct-cash-transfers-can-deliver-housing-assistance-more-efficiently-and-equitably.

person-centered and trauma-informed services that have the potential to create transformative outcomes. Direct Cash Transfer provides an opportunity to efficiently and quickly provide assistance to those most disproportionately affected by homelessness. Cash Transfer is one tool for advancing equity by offering this type of assistance to BIPOC that have been underserved by other cash stimulus programs."[33]

There are several pilot DCT[34] youth programs underway, including the South San Francisco Guaranteed Income program[35], which prioritizes youth transitioning out of foster care; the Trust Youth Initiative in New York City[36], the first study focused on youth experiencing homelessness; and the Santa Clara Universal Basic Income Pilot[37] which focuses on youth exiting foster care and was recently renewed to extend into 2023. Launching in April 2023, Santa Clara will begin another pilot program which will provide $1000 per month for five months to high school youth experiencing homelessness. Locally, a DCT pilot program in Oregon is currently underway, providing 60 young people with $1000 per month for a year, and an additional 20 youth with $750 per month for a year.[38]

Rural homelessness and host homes

Host homes are a primarily short-term (1-6 months) intervention for youth experiencing homelessness. Point Source Youth's Host Home Handbook states that "The goal of short-term host homes is to provide a safe, temporary, welcoming space…where the young person has time to repair their relationships with self-identified family or make decisions about other housing options with the support of a caring housing case manager."[39]

Like DCT programs, host-home programs are a scalable and cost-effective intervention. They rely on minimal staffing and are heavily volunteer run, centering on community members opening their homes. Providing the option of modest stipends to cover increased costs for food and utilities opens the door for a more diverse group of hosts, particularly those from historically marginalized identities, to

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[33] "Direct Cash Transfer." COHHIO. Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio, January 19, 2022. https://cohhio.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Day1-RFP-DCT-_08.01.22.pdf#:~:text=Traditionally%2C%20systemic%20racism%20and%20discrimination%20has%20resulted%20in,to%20fund%20and%20support%20these%20types%20of%20initiatives./.

[34] "Global Map of Basic Income Experiments: Stanford Basic Income Lab," The Stanford Basic Income Lab, accessed October 17, 2022, https://basicincome.stanford.edu/experiments-map/.

[35] "City of South San Francisco," Guaranteed Income, accessed October 17, 2022, https://www.ssf.net/departments/economic-community-development/economic-development/guaranteed-income.

[36] "Public-Private Partnership Launches the First Direct Cash Transfer Study for Addressing Young Adult Homelessness." Chapin Hall, June 17, 2021. https://www.chapinhall.org/news/public-private-partnership-launches-the-first-direct-cash-transfer-study-for-addressing-young-adult-homelessness/.

[37] "County of Santa Clara's Basic Income Pilot: 'This Program Is Changing ...," accessed October 18, 2022, https://news.sccgov.org/county-santa-claras-basic-income-pilot-program-changing-lives.

[38] "Homeless High School Seniors in Santa Clara County to Receive Monthly Guaranteed Basic Income in Pilot Program." Basic Income Today, August 23, 2022. https://basicincometoday.com/homeless-high-school-seniors-in-santa-clara-county-to-receive-monthly-guaranteed-basic-income-in-pilot-program/.

[39] "Host Homes: Youth Homelessness Interventions," Point Source Youth, accessed October 17, 2022, https://www.pointsourceyouth.org/host-homes.

participate. This increases the opportunity for youth who disproportionately experience homelessness (BIPOC and LGBQIA2S+ youth) to connect with caring adults with similar identities in an affirming home. Host home programs exist across the United States, including both coasts: Venice, CA to Baltimore, MD; the South: Louisville, KY; and the Midwest, including Cincinnati, OH, and Minneapolis, MN. House Bill 2544 was passed in the 2021 Oregon legislative session, authorizing ODHS to award $1.5 million to host home programs.

Host homes have been identified as uniquely useful to address the needs of youth experiencing homelessness in rural areas, where a severe lack of youth-focused services and shelters forces youth to rely on informal and sometimes unsafe networks of support.[40] Rural youth are twice as likely to couch surf and more likely to sleep outside than their urban peers.[41] While rates of homelessness in rural communities are similar to those of their urban counterparts (4.4% for youth 13-17 and 9.2% for young adults 18-25), the lack of services contributes to the 'hidden' nature of rural youth homelessness and is likely an undercount.[39]

A Voices of Youth Count brief notes that beyond a lack of youth-oriented services, there are significantly fewer economic opportunities in rural communities, affecting the ability of youth to find gainful employment to stabilize. This study also finds that 57% of work-age youth experiencing homelessness in rural communities are not in school and are not working, compared to 46% of youth in more urban areas. As noted earlier in this report, youth experiencing homelessness experience higher rates of justice involvement than their stably housed peers. This trend is starkly illustrated in rural youth, with a 9% higher rate of justice involvement than youth experiencing homelessness in more urban areas.[39] Additionally, Black and Latine youth also experience disproportionate rates of homelessness in rural areas[39] and report experiencing racism in public systems.[38]

Recommendations & Conclusion

The findings of this cost analysis further underscore the recommendations from the 2021 Needs Assessment and demonstrate the impact that is possible for Oregon if the state adequately addresses the level the housing and services needs of youth experiencing homelessness. Positive outcomes for young people can result in cost avoidance for the state, and more importantly, better outcomes for youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness in which their health and housing needs are more fully

[40] Erin Carreon, Matthew Morton, and Jonathan Brodie, "Rural Communities Need Funding and Support to Address Rural Youth Homelessness," Chapin Hall, 2020, https://www.chapinhall.org/research/addressing-rural-youth-homelessness/.

[41] Morton, Matthew H, Amy Dworsky, and G Samuels. "Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America." Voices of Youth Count, 2017. https://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/national-estimates-of-youth-homelessness/.

addressed by the systems meant to care for them. For the legislative, budgetary, and programmatic support to continue its momentum and continue to meet the needs of youth in Oregon, all housing and services solutions must be co-created and implemented by young people themselves. Following the recommendations from the 2021 Needs Assessment, ODHS is working to establish a statewide Youth Advisory Board (YAB); which will have a key leadership role in implementing any new housing and services resources dedicated to youth experiencing homelessness. The following recommendations provide a roadmap for the YAB and ODHS to prioritize funding, policy, and programmatic solutions toward ending youth experiences of homelessness statewide.

Funding

ODHS and its partners should continue to advocate for additional funding appropriations toward the goal of ending and preventing youth homelessness. Much of the roadmap for additional funding has been established through the 2021 Needs Assessment which outlines not only the level of investment, but the types of housing and services interventions needed. Funding housing and services in accordance with the need is a resounding and consistent recommendation from Chapin Hall and other research in the field. This cost analysis further establishes the value case for a significant investment in housing and services considering the potential for over $39M in cost avoidance annually with even a 25% reduction in youth experiencing homelessness. It will be critical that any new funding and housing/services program to address youth homelessness be directed by the YAB so that young people with lived expertise have a lead role in the creation and implementation of new solutions.

Cross-Department Collaboration

Youth and young adult experiences of homelessness are highly correlated with their involvement with other public systems beyond the housing system. Even with additional state funding for housing and services according to the current level of need, youth experiences of homelessness will continue to occur until Oregon builds prevention efforts into its juvenile justice, child welfare, and education systems. While young people are in the care of the state, they are often involved with multiple systems, and the research points to clear risk factors that lead to current or future experiences of homelessness such as early experiences of homelessness, parenting youth, and not completing a high-school level of education. It is also known that certain groups of young people are at greater risk of homelessness, especially youth of color which can be addressed through targeted prevention and early intervention efforts. These efforts cannot be effective though if they are isolated within a single system; it is clear that the cost impact of youth homelessness accrues across multiple systems, so prevention efforts and funding need to involve all of the systems responsible for young people in care. This is another

opportunity to engage the YAB and establish a structure in which youth and young adults are embedded within different state departments to advise on what each system needs to do to implement effective solutions. Many local and state-level YABs have accomplished this by directly employing young people with lived expertise within each department that serves youth and are co-creating the programs and policies to address youth homelessness more holistically.

Data Integration

The 2021 Needs Assessment recommended that the state of Oregon explore how key changes in its data systems could better inform the level of need for young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Specifically, the recommendations included that the state integrates the statewide data dashboard (which was in the process of becoming publicly available) and integrates with the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data. The data integration will inform the extent to which system-involved young people eventually end up in the broader homelessness system. This information is critical for the YAB and statewide partners as they create and implement prevention efforts. In 2022, the state of Oregon implemented with its Children's System of Care Dashboard, which is an invaluable tool to understand the scale of youth system involvement, including the scale of youth at risk of experiencing homelessness. A dashboard is a tool that truly has the potential to inform systems-level change because it integrates data across departments, rather than just looking at a single system. In future updates to the System of Care Dashboard, statewide partners should integrate the data from the HMIS and education systems. If this data can be unduplicated, it will create a clearer picture of how young people are impacted and involved with statewide systems. Additionally, it will inform where the inflection points are for targeted prevention, housing, and services interventions. Lastly, the state of Oregon should explore the integration of public-system costs into the Systems of Care Dashboard. Including intervention costs in the dashboard will enable to state to better understand the costs of youth experiences of homelessness, and importantly the potential for cost avoidance as Oregon implements additional funding and programs to address youth homelessness. Generally, homeless youth count numbers are imprecise and, often, an undercount. While data integration is crucial to inform broader systems-change, it is vital to note that for youth who do not engage with these systems, but experience homelessness, will not be counted.

Scaling and Capacity Building

ODHS should work closely with the YAB and statewide partners to prioritize new housing and services investments toward designing and scaling interventions that work for young people. This includes an expansion of long-term rental assistance and services as well as outreach, crisis response, and

permanent supportive housing as indicated by the 2021 Needs Assessment. The YAB must be in a leadership role when it comes to decisions about the level of investment and program design for youth experiencing homelessness because their expertise will inform the programmatic changes that need to be implemented for housing and services to meet the needs of young people. In addition to scaling what works, ODHS and its partners should be tracking closely those interventions currently being piloted, tested, and adjusted for youth experiencing homelessness such as Host Homes and the DCT model. These interventions have proven to be both cost-effective and scalable, and it will be important to understand how to create the right policy and program conditions for these programs to meet the needs of more young people in the state. Along with scaling additional housing and services for young people experiencing homelessness, ODHS and its partners will need to build the capacity of the service provider network across the state to implement new funding and programs. When considering capacity building and training, the state should look beyond just the homeless service providers for opportunities to leverage additional system resources. When prioritizing capacity-building resources, ODHS and partners should focus on how to bolster crisis, housing, and services in rural areas of the state as this continue to be a gap for young people nationally and in Oregon.

Building upon existing efforts and legislative momentum, ODHS and its partners are well-positioned to address youth experiences of homelessness at the state level. CSH looks forward to our continued collaboration, including supporting ODHS in establishing the YAB which will be the key advisory and decision-making body for existing and additional investments in housing and services to prevent and end youth homelessness. This analysis highlights not only the economic opportunity for Oregon when it comes to implementing prevention, housing, and services solutions for young people, but also the opportunity for the state to invest in better outcomes for each young person, family, and community across the state.

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Appendix A
Oregon Cost Study for Youth Experiencing and At-Risk of Homelessness
Data Collection Chart: Cost Drivers

System	Cost Driver & Unit Type	Average Unit Cost Per Person	Avg Units Per Person	Average Number of Youth Impacted	Percentage of Youth Population Impacted	Potential Reduction (Utilization)	Status Quo Service Cost (Annual)	Potential System Cost Avoidance (Annual)	System Cost Avoidance Based on a 25% Reduction in Youth Homelessness (Annual)
Juvenile Justice	•Jail Stays •Number of Jail Days	$350	298	452		87%	$47,143,600	$41,014,932	$10,253,733
Health	•Hospital-Incurred Costs* •Number of ED Visits				5.4%	26%	$6,516,094	$91,486	$68,615
Child Welfare	•Emergency Shelter •Annual Shelter Costs	$12,617	1	3,216	24%	27%	$9,738,305	$2,629,342	$657,336
Education and Employment	•Under or Unemployment •Annual Tax/Wage Loss	$11,983	1	8,278	100%	23%	$99,195,274	$22,814,913	$5,703,728
							Total Current Service Cost: $162,593,273	***Total Cost Avoidance:*** $66,550,673	***Total Cost Avoidance (with 25% Reduction):*** $16,683,411

*For youth with a behavioral health diagnosis as a primary diagnosis

Oregon Department of Human Services

For additional information:
Contact Roberto Gutierrez
ODHS Government Relations Manager
roberto.gutierrez@dhsoha.state.or.us
971-317-1265