A Profile of Housing Assistance Recipients in Washington State: History of Arrests, Employment, and Social and Health Service Use
SFY 2006-2010

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HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS ACROSS WASHINGTON STATE served 54,036 unique individuals during State Fiscal Year 2010 (SFY 2010), as recorded in the state's Department of Commerce (Commerce) Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). These programs are designed to serve families and individuals who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Most of these individuals (an estimated 85 percent) also received a service administered through the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) at least once between SFY 1999 and SFY 2010. To gain a better understanding of the needs and challenges faced by housing assistance clients who had received DSHS services, this report examines trends in social service use, publicly funded medical coverage, employment, and arrests in the five years leading up to and including the year in which the client received housing assistance. In addition to looking at the overall group, we explore differences between recipients of four types of housing assistance services: (1) Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing (HPRR), (2) Emergency Shelter, (3) Transitional Housing, and (4) Permanent Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing.[1]

KEY FINDINGS | HMIS-DSHS Clients

HMIS-DSHS clients—people who received housing assistance in SFY 2010 and at least one DSHS service since July 1998—experienced the following over the five years from SFY 2006 to SFY 2010:

- Social and health service use rose markedly from SFY 2006 through SFY 2010, with participation rates highest for food assistance and medical coverage in each year:
  - Basic Food enrollment increased from 45 to 89 percent *(+98 percent change)*
  - DSHS medical coverage increased from 49 to 79 percent *(+70 percent change)*
  - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participation increased from 18 to 35 percent *(+94 percent change)*
  - Working Connections Child Care subsidy use rose from 9 to 17 percent *(+96 percent change)*
  - General Assistance/Disability Lifeline (GA/DL) receipt increased from 5 to 13 percent *(+135 percent change)*
  - Medical coverage for disabling physical or mental health conditions increased from 13 to 27 percent *(+107 percent change)*
- Employment rates peaked at 42 percent in SFY 2008 and declined to 33 percent by SFY 2010
- Arrest rates among adolescent and adult clients (ages 15 years and older) increased gradually to a high of 19 percent in SFY 2010

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[1] Permanent Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing are combined in this report due to small numbers of Permanent Housing recipients.

KEY FINDINGS | Housing Assistance Subgroups

Interesting patterns also emerged from our comparison of demographics, risk factors, and social service utilization across recipients of different types of housing assistance services. Together, the findings suggest that profiles of clients tend to be quite similar for recipients of HPRR and Transitional Housing services, and that profiles also tend to be similar for Emergency Shelter and Permanent and Permanent Supportive housing recipients.

Relative to other housing assistance recipients, HPRR and Transitional Housing recipients are:

- Comprised of a greater proportion of children and women of child-bearing age
- Slightly more likely to receive Basic Food
- More likely to receive TANF and Working Connections Child Care, though this is especially true for Transitional Housing recipients
- Less likely to receive cash assistance and medical coverage due to disabilities
- More likely to be employed (among those of working age)
- Less likely to be arrested (among those ages 15 years and older)

By contrast, Emergency Shelter and Permanent and Permanent Supportive clients are:

- Comprised of more men and older adults
- More likely to receive cash assistance and medical coverage due to disabilities
- Less likely to be employed (among those of working age)
- More likely to be arrested (among those ages 15 years and older) than clients in the other two housing programs in most of the five-year period, though arrest rates rose over time among Emergency Shelter recipients and declined among those receiving Permanent and Permanent Supportive housing, especially in the most recent year

STUDY QUESTIONS | Risk Factors and Social and Health Service Use

In this report, we examine:

1. Patterns of Basic Food receipt, DSHS medical coverage, TANF participation, use of Working Connections Child Care, General Assistance (GA)/Disability Lifeline (DL), and disability-related medical coverage.
2. Rates of employment and arrest from SFY 2006 to SFY 2010 among HMIS-DSHS clients overall and for recipients of the four types of housing assistance programs listed above.

These analyses improve our understanding of the particular needs and challenges faced by persons who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. They also demonstrate how recipients of the major types of housing assistance programs differ. While these differences may be well known to providers of housing services, statistical documentation of these patterns is far more limited. This report and the ongoing collaboration between Commerce and DSHS is an attempt to fill this knowledge gap.

STUDY POPULATIONS | SFY 2010 Housing Assistance Clients

Of the 54,036 individuals who received housing assistance in SFY 2010 as recorded in HMIS, 78 percent (42,104) provided consent and sufficient identifying information (valid last name and social security number or date of birth) to be linked to DSHS administrative data. Of these 42,104 housing assistance recipients, 85 percent (35,908) were found to have received at least one DSHS service since July 1, 1998.[2] (See Technical Notes for more detail.)

This report focuses on the 35,908 recipients of housing assistance who appear in the DSHS database ("HMIS-DSHS Clients"). We examine characteristics of these clients according to the type of housing assistance received during SFY 2010, based on the four service categories noted above:

1. Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing (HPRR),
2. Emergency Shelter,
3. Transitional Housing, and
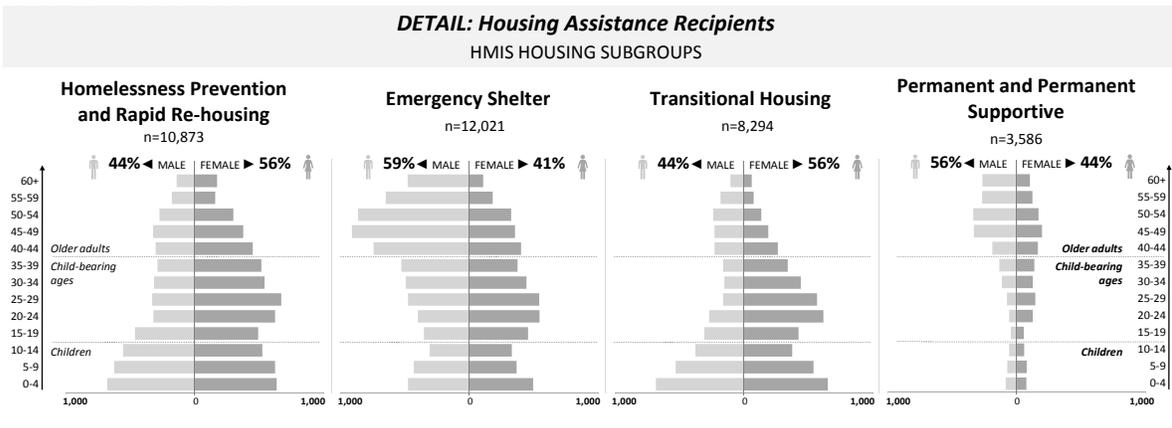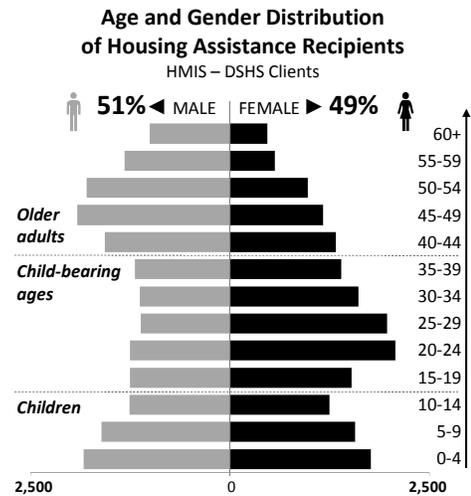4. Permanent and Permanent Supportive Housing clients.

A person is counted in each category of housing assistance in which he or she received at least one service during the year.

The population pyramid to the right shows that young adult housing assistance recipients are more likely to be female, while older adult recipients are more likely to be male. In particular, 59 percent of recipients between ages 15 and 39 are female compared to 41 percent who are male. Conversely, among recipients over 40 years of age, 63 percent are male compared to 37 who are female.

The four population pyramids below show age and gender distributions for each of the four housing assistance subgroups, reflecting the unique characteristics of the populations that each housing program serves.

For example, the pronounced swell to the right of the axis in the child-bearing age groups for the HPRR and the Transitional Housing programs demonstrates the degree to which these programs serve women in this demographic.

Age and Gender Distribution of Housing Assistance Recipients
HMIS – DSHS Clients

In contrast, the Emergency Shelter population contains many more men, particularly in the older ages. And, the Permanent and Permanent Supportive housing programs serve a predominantly older population and considerably more men than women. The basic demographic differences will help explain some of the other patterns we observe for each of these groups in terms of employment, arrest rates, and social service utilization.

DETAIL: Housing Assistance Recipients
HMIS HOUSING SUBGROUPS

Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing n=10,873

Emergency Shelter n=12,021

Transitional Housing n=8,294

Permanent and Permanent Supportive n=3,586

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[2] We excluded individuals who only linked to the DSHS integrated client database because of their involvement with Child Support Enforcement.

FINDINGS | Basic Food Program Enrollment

The federally funded Basic Food program is intended to ensure that low-income families do not go hungry. There was a ramp up in Basic Food participation rates over the five-year period across all groups, with 89 percent of HMIS-DSHS clients (and between 88 to 93 percent of each subgroup) enrolled in SFY 2010. Although some clients may have qualified for food assistance but did not apply for or receive it for some reason, differences in income eligibility thresholds for these programs may also be a factor.[3]

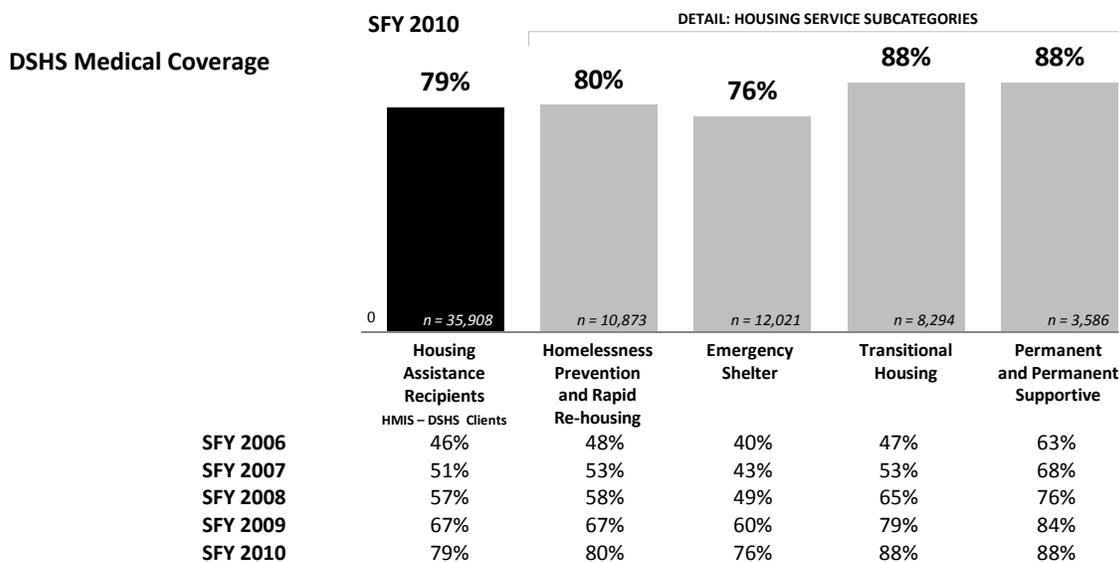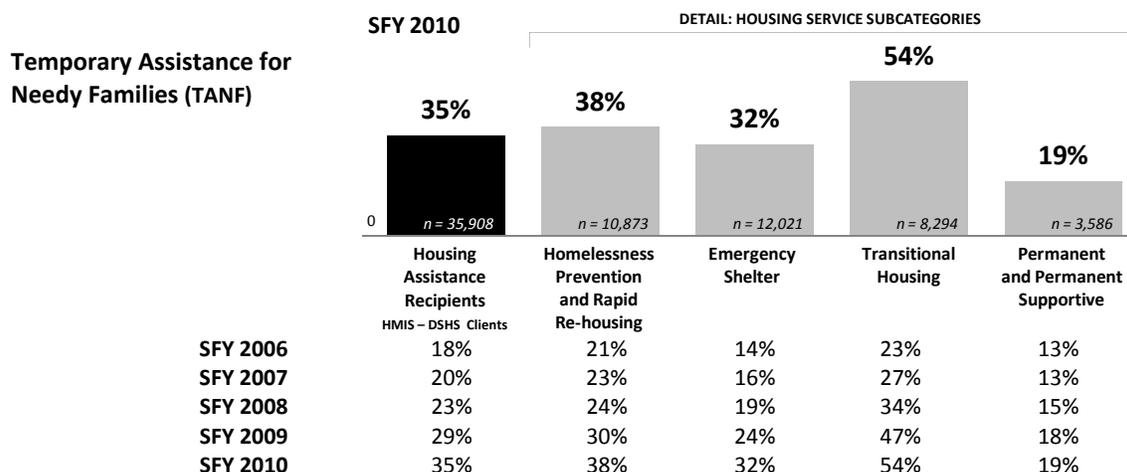|	SFY 2010	DETAIL: HOUSING SERVICE SUBCATEGORIES			
Basic Food	**89%**	**91%**	**88%**	**93%**	**89%**
	n = 35,908	n = 10,873	n = 12,021	n = 8,294	n = 3,586
	Housing Assistance Recipients HMIS – DSHS Clients	**Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing**	**Emergency Shelter**	**Transitional Housing**	**Permanent and Permanent Supportive**
SFY 2006	45%	46%	41%	43%	62%
SFY 2007	50%	51%	45%	49%	67%
SFY 2008	58%	58%	52%	62%	74%
SFY 2009	73%	73%	67%	80%	84%
SFY 2010	89%	91%	88%	93%	89%

FINDINGS | DSHS Medical Coverage

DSHS provides medical coverage—primarily through the Medicaid program—to individuals who meet income eligibility requirements or have disabling medical conditions. DSHS medical coverage increased for all groups over the five years. Medical coverage rates were highest for Permanent and Permanent Supportive clients, who are often covered due to disabling conditions, and for Transitional Housing recipients, who are more likely to be covered under Medicaid programs for families with children.

	SFY 2010	DETAIL: HOUSING SERVICE SUBCATEGORIES			
DSHS Medical Coverage	**79%**	**80%**	**76%**	**88%**	**88%**
	n = 35,908	n = 10,873	n = 12,021	n = 8,294	n = 3,586
	Housing Assistance Recipients HMIS – DSHS Clients	**Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing**	**Emergency Shelter**	**Transitional Housing**	**Permanent and Permanent Supportive**
SFY 2006	46%	48%	40%	47%	63%
SFY 2007	51%	53%	43%	53%	68%
SFY 2008	57%	58%	49%	65%	76%
SFY 2009	67%	67%	60%	79%	84%
SFY 2010	79%	80%	76%	88%	88%

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[3] As of October 1, 2008, the income threshold for Basic Food eligibility is 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), though it was 130 percent FPL prior to that. The eligibility threshold for housing programs is 50 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI), so it is possible to qualify for housing assistance but not Basic Food. For example, in King County, 200 percent of the FPL for a family of three was $36,620 in SFY 2010, while 50 percent of the AMI was $38,550. Families of three with earnings in between would qualify for housing but not food assistance.
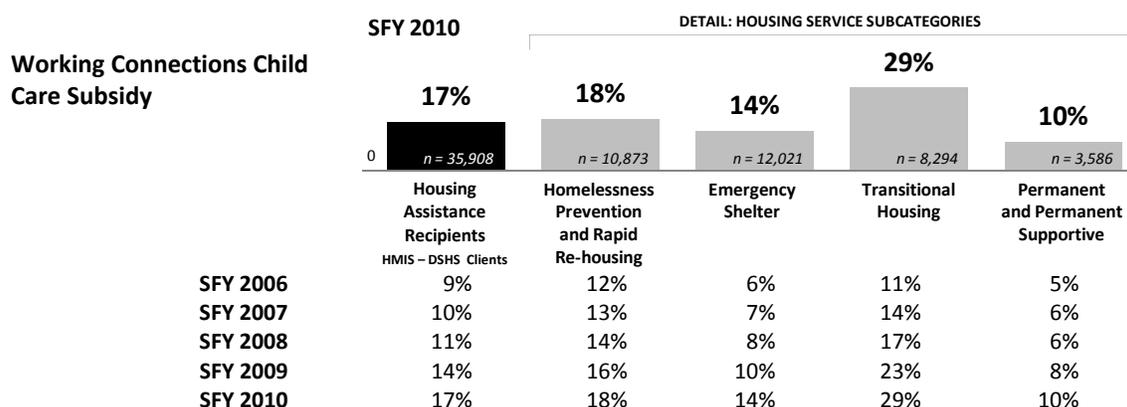
FINDINGS | Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Participation Rates

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program provides cash assistance to low-income families and aids parents in gaining employment and achieving economic self-sufficiency.[4] HPRR and Transitional Housing recipients tend to have the highest rates of TANF receipt compared to the other subgroups. Clients in these two housing programs are also more likely to be women of child-bearing ages and children and so would be most likely to qualify for TANF benefits. In contrast, Permanent and Permanent Supportive housing clients are least likely to receive TANF, perhaps because they are more likely to be male and over age 40. The Emergency Sh3elter population is a mixture of older adults and families with children; one-quarter of this group received TANF in SFY 2009 and one-third in SFY 2010.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

	SFY 2010	DETAIL: HOUSING SERVICE SUBCATEGORIES			
	35%	**38%**	**32%**	**54%**	**19%**
	n = 35,908	n = 10,873	n = 12,021	n = 8,294	n = 3,586
	Housing Assistance Recipients HMIS – DSHS Clients	**Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing**	**Emergency Shelter**	**Transitional Housing**	**Permanent and Permanent Supportive**
SFY 2006	18%	21%	14%	23%	13%
SFY 2007	20%	23%	16%	27%	13%
SFY 2008	23%	24%	19%	34%	15%
SFY 2009	29%	30%	24%	47%	18%
SFY 2010	35%	38%	32%	54%	19%

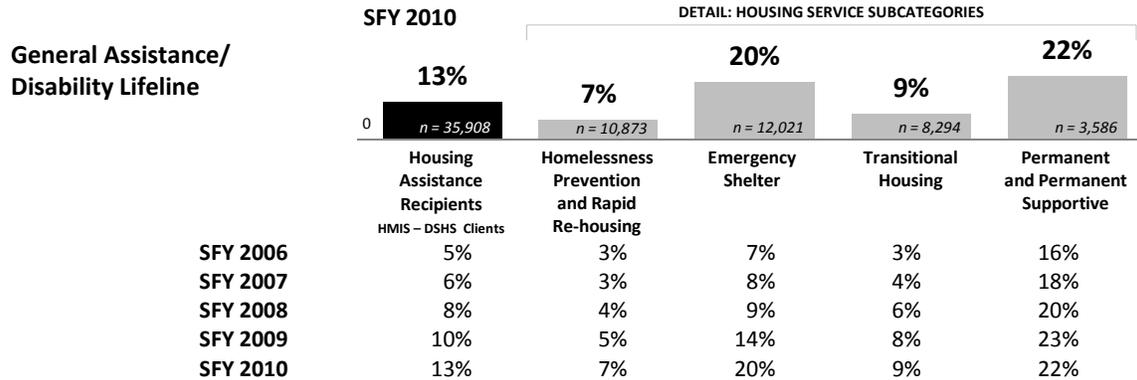## FINDINGS | Working Connections Child Care Subsidy Receipt

The Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) subsidy helps low-income families pay for child care while they work or meet WorkFirst participation requirements by engaging in work-related activities or barrier-removal activities under the TANF program. The state pays part of the cost of care, while the family pays a co-payment. As expected, patterns of WCCC receipt mirror those of TANF receipt. Of the four housing assistance groups, Transitional Housing recipients were the most likely to be TANF recipients (54 percent) and also to receive WCCC subsidies (29 percent) in SFY 2010.

Working Connections Child Care Subsidy

	SFY 2010	DETAIL: HOUSING SERVICE SUBCATEGORIES			
	17%	**18%**	**14%**	**29%**	**10%**
	n = 35,908	n = 10,873	n = 12,021	n = 8,294	n = 3,586
	Housing Assistance Recipients HMIS – DSHS Clients	**Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing**	**Emergency Shelter**	**Transitional Housing**	**Permanent and Permanent Supportive**
SFY 2006	9%	12%	6%	11%	5%
SFY 2007	10%	13%	7%	14%	6%
SFY 2008	11%	14%	8%	17%	6%
SFY 2009	14%	16%	10%	23%	8%
SFY 2010	17%	18%	14%	29%	10%

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[4] On July 1, 2008, the TANF grant amount increased by 3 percent, which would have allowed working families to qualify at slightly higher income levels, based on the earned income disregard, after this point in time.
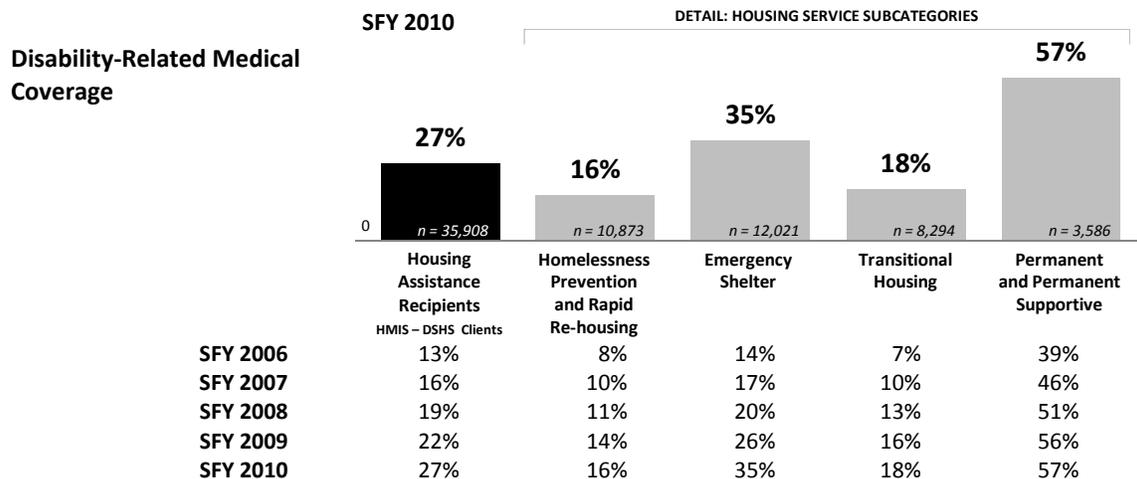
FINDINGS | General Assistance/Disability Lifeline Cash Assistance

The Disability Lifeline (DL) program (formerly General Assistance, GA) is a state-funded program that provides cash assistance and medical benefits for individuals who are physically or mentally disabled and unable to work for 90 days from the date of application. In SFY 2010, the two housing assistance categories with the highest percentage of DL recipients were Emergency Shelter and Permanent and Permanent Supportive housing. About one in five recipients in these two groups were DL clients in SFY 2010. In addition, the Emergency Shelter category experienced the biggest increase in the proportion who received GA/DL over the five-year period.

	SFY 2010	DETAIL: HOUSING SERVICE SUBCATEGORIES			
General Assistance/ Disability Lifeline	**13%** n = 35,908	**7%** n = 10,873	**20%** n = 12,021	**9%** n = 8,294	**22%** n = 3,586
	Housing Assistance Recipients HMIS – DSHS Clients	**Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing**	**Emergency Shelter**	**Transitional Housing**	**Permanent and Permanent Supportive**
SFY 2006	5%	3%	7%	3%	16%
SFY 2007	6%	3%	8%	4%	18%
SFY 2008	8%	4%	9%	6%	20%
SFY 2009	10%	5%	14%	8%	23%
SFY 2010	13%	7%	20%	9%	22%

FINDINGS | Disability-Related Medical Coverage

The degree to which individuals served in different types of housing programs may be disabled can also be examined by looking at enrollment in DSHS medical programs that provide medical coverage due to specific physical or mental health disabilities. This includes individuals who receive federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. As might be expected, patterns of disability-related medical coverage mirror those of GA/DL receipt. In particular, recipients of Permanent and Permanent Supportive housing and Emergency Shelter are most likely to have disability-related medical coverage (57 percent and 35 percent, respectively, in SFY 2010).

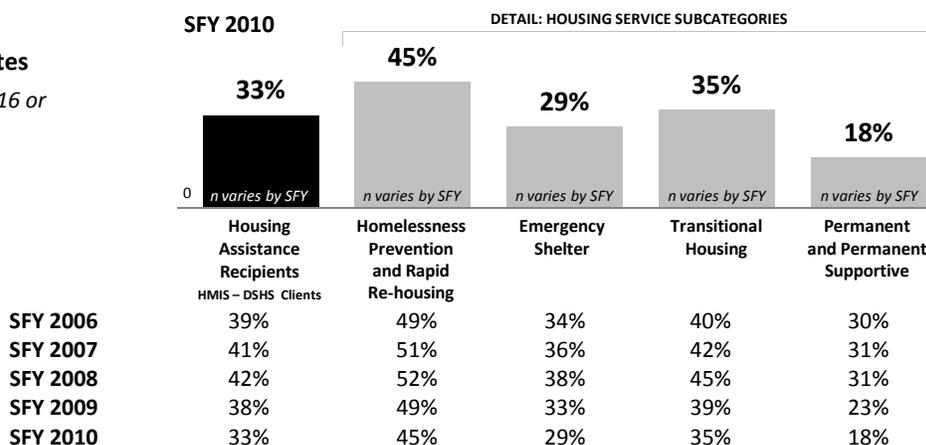|	SFY 2010	DETAIL: HOUSING SERVICE SUBCATEGORIES			
Disability-Related Medical Coverage	**27%** n = 35,908	**16%** n = 10,873	**35%** n = 12,021	**18%** n = 8,294	**57%** n = 3,586
	Housing Assistance Recipients HMIS – DSHS Clients	**Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing**	**Emergency Shelter**	**Transitional Housing**	**Permanent and Permanent Supportive**
SFY 2006	13%	8%	14%	7%	39%
SFY 2007	16%	10%	17%	10%	46%
SFY 2008	19%	11%	20%	13%	51%
SFY 2009	22%	14%	26%	16%	56%
SFY 2010	27%	16%	35%	18%	57%

FINDINGS | Employment Trends

Overall, employment rates—the proportion of clients age 16 and over with any earnings reported in the Employment Security Department's Unemployment Insurance wage database—are low across all groups compared to the employment rate for the state's general population (61 percent in November 2010). This suggests poverty is likely to be a persistent problem for many of these clients. Despite low levels of employment across the board, employment rates were higher for HPRR and Transitional Housing clients over the five-year period compared to those in the other two housing groups. Recipients of all programs appear to have been hit by the recent economic downturn, since their highest employment rates during these five years tended to occur in SFY 2008 and their lowest level in SFY 2010. The largest drop in the two years (13 percentage points) was for Permanent and Permanent Supportive housing recipients.

Employment Rates

Among those age 16 or older in each SFY

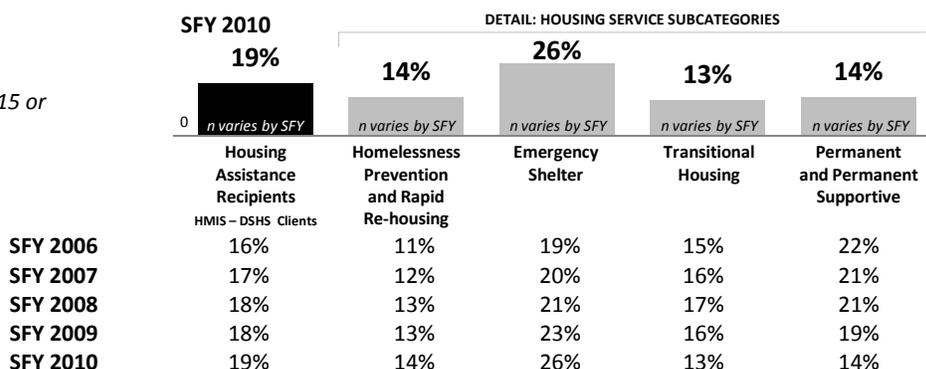|	SFY 2010	DETAIL: HOUSING SERVICE SUBCATEGORIES			
	33%	**45%**	**29%**	**35%**	**18%**
	n varies by SFY	*n varies by SFY*	*n varies by SFY*	*n varies by SFY*	*n varies by SFY*
	Housing Assistance Recipients HMIS – DSHS Clients	Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Permanent and Permanent Supportive
SFY 2006	39%	49%	34%	40%	30%
SFY 2007	41%	51%	36%	42%	31%
SFY 2008	42%	52%	38%	45%	31%
SFY 2009	38%	49%	33%	39%	23%
SFY 2010	33%	45%	29%	35%	18%

FINDINGS | Arrest Trends

Arrest rates[5] ranged from 16 to 19 percent over the five-year period for adolescents and adults (ages 15 years and older) who were HMIS-DSHS clients. Arrest rates among Emergency Shelter recipients increased from 19 percent in SFY 2006 to 26 percent in SFY 2010, which was the highest arrest rate among the four housing subgroups in the most recent year. In contrast, arrest rates among recipients of Permanent and Permanent Supportive housing declined from a high of 22 percent to a low of 14 percent, with the largest decline (5 points) in SFY 2010, the year in which they are identified as having received housing assistance. This decline may reflect the benefits of providing permanent housing, and in many cases supportive services, to this high-risk population. Arrest rates among HPRR recipients tended to be lower than those for the other housing groups in all years except SFY 2010 when recipients of HPRR and Permanent and Permanent Supportive services experienced the same arrest rate of 14 percent among those aged 15 years and over. In SFY 2010, individuals who required temporary housing through the Emergency Shelter program were almost twice as likely to be arrested compared to those receiving other types of housing assistance services.

Arrest Rates

Among those age 15 or older in each SFY

	SFY 2010	DETAIL: HOUSING SERVICE SUBCATEGORIES			
	19%	**14%**	**26%**	**13%**	**14%**
	n varies by SFY	*n varies by SFY*	*n varies by SFY*	*n varies by SFY*	*n varies by SFY*
	Housing Assistance Recipients HMIS – DSHS Clients	Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Permanent and Permanent Supportive
SFY 2006	16%	11%	19%	15%	22%
SFY 2007	17%	12%	20%	16%	21%
SFY 2008	18%	13%	21%	17%	21%
SFY 2009	18%	13%	23%	16%	19%
SFY 2010	19%	14%	26%	13%	14%

[5] Arrest rates are based on Washington State Patrol data that include primarily felonies and gross misdemeanors but not less serious misdemeanors.

STUDY POPULATION

This report provides an analysis of individuals who received a housing assistance service recorded in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in SFY 2010 and who linked to DSHS data at some point after July 1, 1998. We explore risk factors and patterns of social service receipt from SFY 2006-2010 for this overall "HMIS-DSHS Clients" group, as well as for four subgroups of these clients who received one of the following services: (1) Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing (HPRR), (2) Emergency Shelter, (3) Transitional Housing, and (4) Permanent and Permanent Supportive Housing.

DATA SOURCES

- The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) provided personal identifiers and data on receipt of housing assistance services.
- RDA's Client Services Database provided data on client demographics, social service use, and a common identifier for linking client information from multiple data sources contained within RDA's Integrated Client Database (ICDB).
- Office of Financial Management (OFM) eligibility data provided information on whether or not individuals had DSHS medical coverage.
- Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) Unemployment Insurance wage data provided information on quarterly earnings, which was used to create a measure of employment status (an individual was considered employed if he or she had greater than zero earnings in a year).
- Arrest data from the Washington State Patrol (WSP) identified clients who had been arrested. Local law enforcement agencies are generally required to report only felony and gross misdemeanor offenses into the WSP arrest database. This report somewhat understates the full volume of arrest events because our data excludes some arrests for misdemeanor offenses that are not required to be reported in this database.

DATA LINKAGE

Commerce's Community Services and Housing Division provided data from HMIS for people who received housing services between July 2009 and June 2010. A total of 54,036 unique individuals were identified in the HMIS records who received one or more of the six housing program types included in this analysis.

Note that five of the six program types are included in the subgroup analyses presented throughout the report, though Permanent and Permanent Supportive services are collapsed into a single category due to the small number of clients in the former group. A sixth housing program type, non-housing services provided through housing providers, is included in the overall HMIS-DSHS linked group but not presented as a subgroup of interest.

Of the 54,036 HMIS records received in the October 2010 extract, 42,104 (78 percent) provided consent and sufficient identifying data to be linked to DSHS records. Personal identifiers are essential to successful linkage of records between different information systems. To consider a record as "linkable," DSHS staff evaluated the combination of full or partial information in the HMIS record for each person's name, date of birth, and social security number. To be linkable, the client's record had to have at least (1) a valid Last Name with at least two characters and (2) full (9 digits) or partial (4 digit) SSN or valid Date of Birth.

The HMIS name fields were considered not useable for linkage if they were blank, listed as "Unknown" or "Refused," or contained non-alphabetical characters. The date of birth was classified as invalid for the date 1/1/1900, which was commonly used in HMIS to represent a missing or unknown date.

Information was missing, invalid, refused, or incomplete for the following identifiers: 11,563 records (97 percent) for name, 11,515 (97 percent) had missing SSNs, and 1,582 (13 percent) had missing Date of Births, with some of these records having insufficient information for more than one of these fields.