

Homelessness Among Youth Exiting Systems of Care in Washington State

AUGUST 2025

These measures were produced by the DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division in collaboration with the Washington State Department of Commerce

About this Report

This report provides information on the housing status of a cohort of youth (ages 12 to 17) and young adults (ages 18 to 24) exiting Washington State inpatient behavioral health, foster care, and criminal legal systems in calendar year 2022. Youth and young adults aging out of foster care, discharged from publicly funded inpatient mental health or substance use disorder treatment, or released from Juvenile Rehabilitation institutions or Department of Corrections facilities are followed over a 12-month period post-release using state administrative data. Housing status information available in state administrative data systems is used to estimate homelessness rates within 12 months of discharge/release. A profile of youth exiters and county-level breakdowns are provided by homelessness status post-exit.

The results presented here are based on the most up-to-date methods and data and should not be compared to previous editions of this report.

Youth Populations

Three populations are examined: 1) youth and young adults exiting publicly funded inpatient treatment for mental health or substance use; 2) young adults (ages 18 to 21) who "age out" of foster care; and 3) youth and young adults released from state Juvenile Rehabilitation institutions and young adults released from state Department of Corrections facilities.

Homelessness

Youth and young adults are determined to be homeless if they 1) are identified as homeless based on living arrangement or address information in the Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES); 2) received a housing service targeting homeless individuals that was recorded in the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS); or 3) were identified as homeless based on ProviderOne medical claims data.

CONTRIBUTORS

Veronica Varela
Taylor Danielson
Barbara Felver

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NOTE: This report replaces the "Housing Status of Youth Exiting Foster Care, Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice Systems" (Report 11.240) previously produced by RDA.

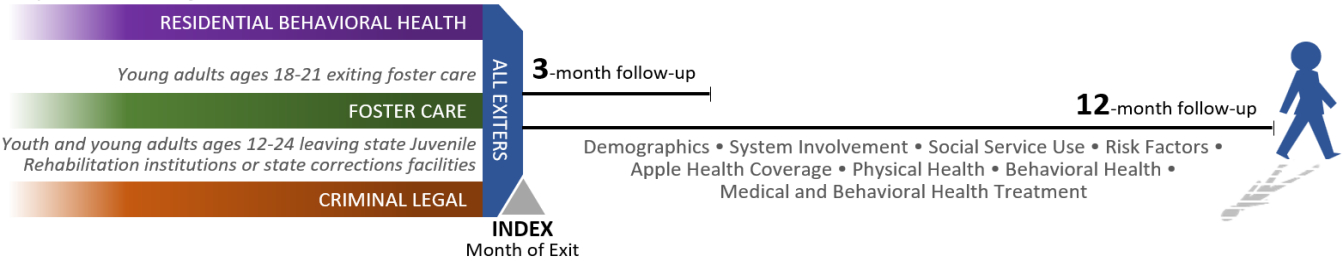
RDA Report Number 11.254

Youth and Young Adult Homelessness At-a-Glance

Calendar Year 2022

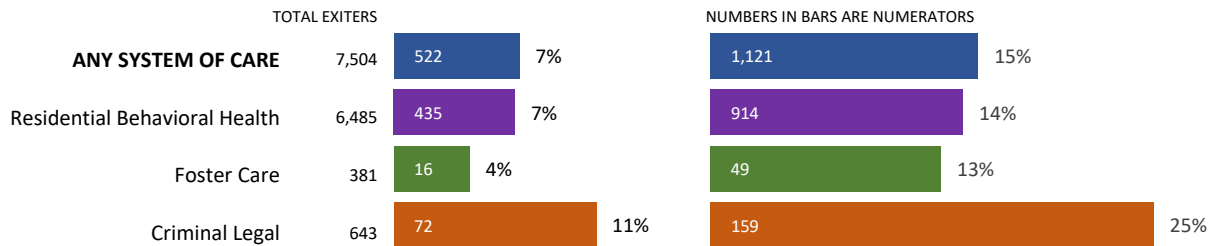
Three study populations are followed for 12 months after program exit . . .

Youth and young adults ages 12-24 exiting publicly funded inpatient treatment for mental health or substance use

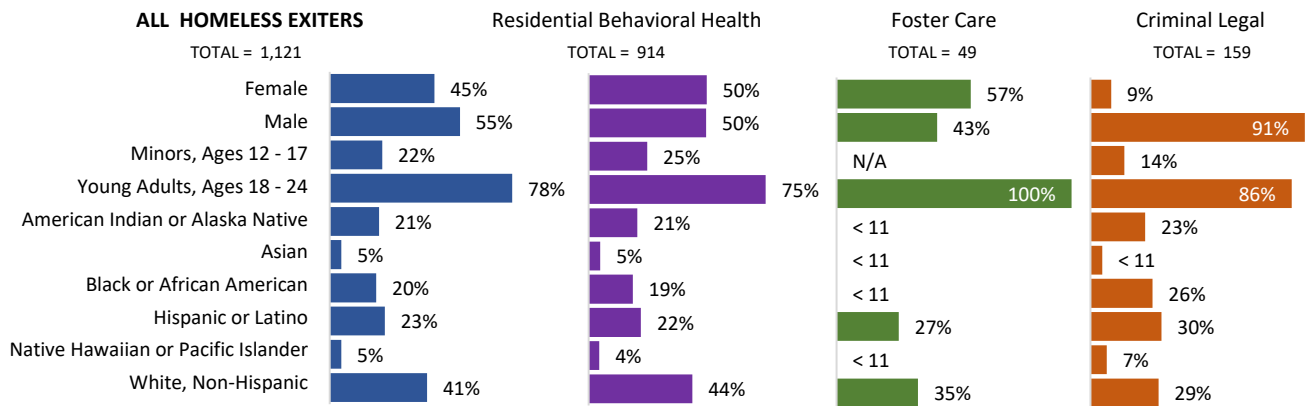


Percent who were homeless within 3 months after exit . . .

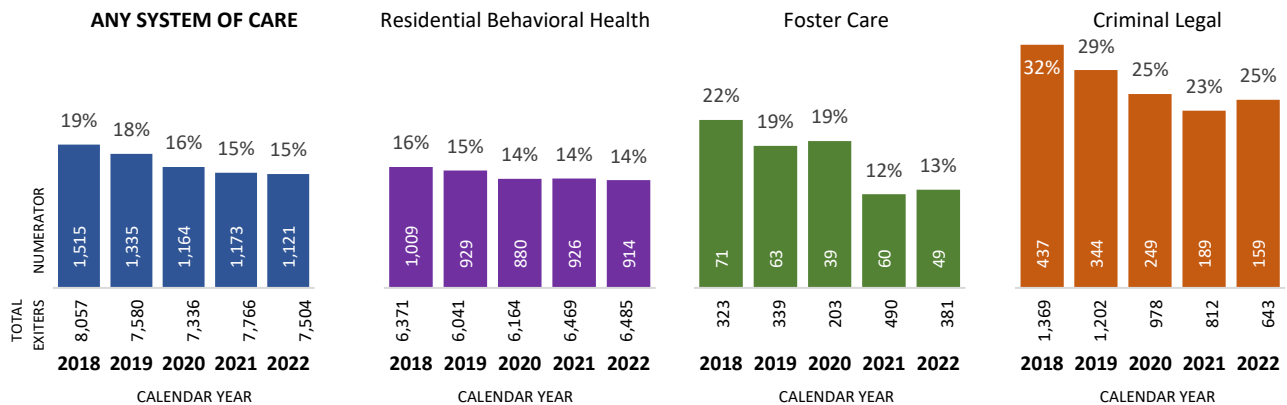
within 12 months after exit . . .



Demographic characteristics of homeless exiters by system of care . . .



5-year trend in homelessness by system of care . . .



NOTE: Exiters were assigned to the last system of care they were affiliated with in the year. Individuals who exited multiple systems of care during their index month have been attributed to each of these systems. Consequently, the sum of exiters by system of care will not equal the total number of all exiters from any system of care.

SOURCE: Integrated Client Databases

CONTACT: Barbara Lucenko, DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division, 360.902.0890

Youth and Young Adults Exiting State Systems of Care by Housing Status

Calendar Year 2022

Exiters Who Were Not Homeless within 12 months							Risk Ratio Rate in Homeless Population Relative to Housed Population
Exiters Who Were Homeless within 12 months					NUMBER	PERCENT	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT			
Population Size	7,504		1,121		6,383		
Demographics							
Minors, Ages 12 - 17	2,839	38%	250	22%	2,589	41%	0.55
Young Adults, Ages 18 - 24	4,665	62%	871	78%	3,794	59%	1.31
American Indian or Alaska Native	1,232	16%	235	21%	997	16%	1.34
Asian	419	6%	56	5%	363	6%	0.88
Black or African American	1,276	17%	222	20%	1,054	17%	1.20
Hispanic or Latino	2,006	27%	263	23%	1,743	27%	0.86
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	374	5%	55	5%	319	5%	0.98
White, Non-Hispanic	3,243	43%	465	41%	2,778	44%	0.95
Unknown Race/Ethnicity	56	1%	< 11	—	**	—	—
Female	4,061	54%	500	45%	3,561	56%	0.80
Male	3,443	46%	621	55%	2,822	44%	1.25
System Involvement, 24 Months Prior to Exit							
Child Welfare (DCYF)	2,675	36%	449	40%	2,226	35%	1.15
Foster Care (DCYF)	606	8%	106	9%	500	8%	1.21
Received Behavioral Rehabilitation Services	114	2%	24	2%	90	1%	1.52
Detained in a Juvenile Rehabilitation Facility	367	5%	84	7%	283	4%	1.69
Detained in an Adult Correctional Facility	447	6%	118	11%	329	5%	2.04
Any Psychiatric Inpatient Services (HCA, DSHS)	2,251	30%	379	34%	1,872	29%	1.15
Any Substance Use Disorder Inpatient Services (HCA)	1,095	15%	258	23%	837	13%	1.76
Engaged with 2+ Systems of Care	762	10%	191	17%	571	9%	1.90
Social Services, 24 Months Prior to Exit							
Any State or Federal Cash/Food Assistance (DSHS)	5,155	69%	844	75%	4,311	68%	1.11
Basic Food	4,240	57%	724	65%	3,516	55%	1.17
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)	842	11%	147	13%	695	11%	1.20
Housing and Essential Needs (HEN)	52	1%	< 11	—	**	—	—
Apple Health Coverage, 24 Months Prior to Exit							
Any Medical Assistance	7,076	94%	1,023	91%	6,053	95%	0.96
Medical History - Physical Health, 24 Months Prior to Exit of Those with Medical Assistance							
Emergency Department Outpatient Visits (1 or more)	4,908	69%	781	76%	4,127	68%	1.12
Emergency Department Outpatient Visits (4 or more)	1,805	26%	351	34%	1,454	24%	1.43
Any Inpatient Hospitalization in a General Medical Setting	2,683	38%	474	46%	2,209	36%	1.27
Any Admission to a Medical Detoxification Facility	521	7%	133	13%	388	6%	2.03
Medical History - Behavioral Health, 24 Months Prior to Exit of Those with Medical Assistance							
Any Indication of a Mental Illness	6,073	86%	882	86%	5,191	86%	1.01
Any Indication of a Substance Use Disorder (SUD)	3,210	45%	646	63%	2,564	42%	1.49
Any Indication of a Co-Occurring Mental Illness and SUD	2,970	42%	589	58%	2,381	39%	1.46
Risk Factors							
Any Indication of Neglect or Abuse Prior to Exit	4,483	60%	746	67%	3,737	59%	1.14
Any Indication of Homelessness Prior to Exit	3,452	46%	695	62%	2,757	43%	1.44
Ever Arrested or Charged for a Crime Prior to Exit	3,196	43%	698	62%	2,498	39%	1.59
Never Employed 24 months prior to exit, of those 18 and older	1,647	35%	323	37%	1,324	35%	1.06

Youth and Young Adults Exiting a State System of Care by County and Housing Status

Calendar Year 2022

Exiters Who Were Homeless within 12 Months			
	All Exiters		
	Number	Number	Percent
WASHINGTON	7,504	1,121	15%
Adams	18	< 11	**
Asotin	23	< 11	**
Benton	192	37	19%
Chelan	80	13	16%
Clallam	85	13	15%
Clark	510	84	16%
Columbia	< 11	< 11	**
Cowlitz	169	19	11%
Douglas	49	< 11	**
Ferry	17	< 11	**
Franklin	66	< 11	**
Garfield	< 11	0	0%
Grant	119	16	13%
Grays Harbor	122	16	13%
Island	55	< 11	**
Jefferson	21	< 11	**
King	1,293	190	15%
Kitsap	225	41	18%
Kittitas	50	11	22%
Klickitat	14	< 11	**
Lewis	139	21	15%
Lincoln	< 11	< 11	**
Mason	93	13	14%
Okanogan	46	< 11	**
Pacific	18	< 11	**
Pend Oreille	21	< 11	**
Pierce	955	150	16%
San Juan	13	< 11	**
Skagit	138	21	15%
Skamania	16	0	0%
Snohomish	723	102	14%
Spokane	991	147	15%
Stevens	65	< 11	**
Thurston	370	43	12%
Wahkiakum	< 11	< 11	**
Walla Walla	56	13	23%
Whatcom	227	32	14%
Whitman	37	< 11	**
Yakima	451	82	18%
Unknown	18	0	0%

** Percent of homeless exiters was suppressed to prevent recalculation of counts between 1 and 10.

TECHNICAL NOTES

Data Sources: Identification of the study population, system involvement, information on inpatient services, homelessness, and incarceration records are based on information from the Integrated Client Databases (ICDB). The ICDB was developed and is maintained by RDA. The ICDB combines measures derived from the following administrative systems, among others: ProviderOne (medical claims, diagnoses, and behavioral health inpatient admissions), FamLink (foster care), Automated Client Tracking (juvenile rehabilitation institutions and community facilities), the Behavioral Health Data System (behavioral health inpatient admissions), the Automated Client Eligibility System (economic services and homelessness), and the Homeless Management Information System (housing services and homelessness).

Population: Youth and young adults who exited from any of the following state systems in calendar year (CY) 2022.

1. **Foster Care:** Young adults who exited a foster care placement, were 18 to 21 years of age at the time of exit, and did not return to foster care.
2. **State-Operated Correctional Facility:** Youth ages 12 and older who exited a Juvenile Rehabilitation institution or community placement facility or young adults ages 18 to 24 exiting a Department of Corrections facility.
3. **Inpatient Behavioral Health:** Youth or young adults ages 12 to 24 treated in a state or federally funded treatment inpatient psychiatric facility (i.e., community mental health hospitals, evaluation and treatment facilities, the Children's Long-Term Inpatient Program, the Child Study and Treatment Center, or the state hospitals), inpatient substance use disorder treatment setting, or medical managed withdrawal service facility.

Multiple System Involvement: In situations where a youth or young adult exited multiple state systems of care, they were attributed to the last system of care that they were affiliated with during that year. Individuals who exited multiple systems of care during their index month have been attributed to each system.

NOTE: A value of "< 11" indicates that the contents of a cell have been suppressed in accordance with the Health Care Authority's suppression rules because the total youth or young adult count in that cell was less than or equal to 10. A value of "***" indicates that the contents of a cell have been suppressed because the value can be used to calculate the suppressed values representing 1 to 10 individuals.

NOTE: Currently, state data systems do not systematically collect information on all gender identities. Only male and female gender categories are provided in this report.

MEASUREMENT PERIODS

The month in which a youth or young adult is released or discharged from a facility or ages out of foster care is the reference month (Month 0). Housing status is reported for Month 0 through Month +3 (i.e., Homeless within 3 months) and for Month 0 through Month +12 (i.e., Homeless within 12 months). Demographic information is reported as of the reference month. Case history lookback windows begin in the month prior to the reference month (Month -1) and go back through Month -24 (e.g., mental health treatment need), or over a youth's entire history (e.g., maltreatment).

NOTE: In prior versions of these analyses, an individual was identified as homeless if they experienced a new homelessness event in the 3 or 12 months *after* the month of exit (i.e., Month +1 through Month +3/+12). In these updated analyses, we include YYA who experienced a new homelessness event in the month of exit or the following months. This change has resulted in an increase in the number of YYA identified as experiencing homelessness post-exit.

MEASURES

Homeless Status: This is determined based on the following: 1) client living arrangement (Homeless without Housing, Emergency Shelter, Battered Spouse Shelter, Inappropriate Living Situation) from the Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES); 2) address information in ACES indicating that a youth or young adult was listed as homeless (e.g., a youth's or young adult's address was "homeless"); 3) WorkFirst participation data in the Electronic Jobs Automated System (eJAS); 4) housing service information recorded in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); or 5) information from ProviderOne medical claims data. Youth and young adults were identified as homeless if they experienced a homeless spell in the 12 months following exit from a state system of care and they were not homeless on the month of exit; or if they were homeless on the month of exit they, were not homeless in the month immediately before exit.

County: Assigned as of the last month that a youth or young adult exited any state system of care.

Risk Ratio. The risk ratio indicates the likelihood of a particular characteristic or outcome being present/occurring among exiters who experienced homelessness in the 12 months following system exit relative to those who did not. A risk ratio of 1.0 suggests no difference in risk between the two groups, while a ratio greater than 1.0 signifies higher risk among the homeless population and a ratio less than 1.0 indicates lower risk. For example, if the risk ratio for TANF receipt is 1.2, it implies that exiters who experienced homelessness are 1.2 times as likely to have received TANF compared to those who did not experience homelessness.