



# ENDING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN TUCSON AND PIMA COUNTY

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF HOMELESS YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS IN PIMA COUNTY

2019

PREPARED BY  
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**Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness:  
Needs Assessment of Homeless Youth and  
Young Adults in Tucson/Pima County, Arizona**

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# Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness: Needs Assessment of Homeless Youth and Young Adults in Tucson/Pima County, Arizona - March 2019

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- \* Tucson Preparatory School
- \* Youth on their Own



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# Executive Summary

Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness (TPCH) is a coalition of community and faith-based organizations, government entities, businesses, and individuals working to end homelessness and address issues related to homelessness in Pima County, Arizona. TPCH is the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) for the geographic area of Tucson/Pima County, Arizona (AZ-501). LeCroy & Milligan Associates, Inc. was contracted by Our Family Services on behalf of TPCH to conduct the 2019 Homeless Youth Needs Assessment. This Needs Assessment focuses on homeless youth ages 12 to 24 in Pima County. Appendix A provides federal definitions and key terms that were used for this Needs Assessment to define youth and young adults who are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing.

The primary audiences for this Needs Assessment include the (1) TPCH board and committees for use in community planning and (2) TPCH member agencies and community partners for use in program, agency, and community planning. Secondary audiences include: (1) elected officials and other policy-makers for the purposes of understanding and incorporating issues surrounding youth homelessness into their work and planning; (2) researchers and other community practitioners for use as a data set and in developing community recommendations and initiatives; and (3) the general public for the purposes of better understanding youth homelessness and the experiences of homeless youth in Tucson/Pima County CoC. This Needs Assessment reports on and synthesizes data collected through:

- Youth Surveys;
- Youth Focus Groups;
- Interviews with key service providers and allied systems; and
- Analysis of existing data on homeless youth.

## Purpose of the TPCH Homeless Youth Needs Assessment

### To further understand the:

- Prevalence and characteristics of homeless youth ages 12-24 in Pima County;
- Unmet service needs and strategies used to meet those needs;
- Beliefs about and barriers to accessing services;
- Social service and mainstream benefits participation;
- Educational and employment engagement;
- Developmental assets and positive influences; and
- Other factors that may help improve local strategies to prevent and end youth homelessness.



## Needs Assessment Key Findings

### Prevalence and Characteristics of Youth Homelessness in Tucson/Pima County, AZ

Area	Key Findings: Prevalence and Characteristics of Youth Homelessness
<p><b>Extent of Youth Homelessness and Unstable Housing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 747 unduplicated youth completed a <b>VI-SPDAT</b> in 2017 and 546 unduplicated youth completed this tool in 2018. In both years combined, 72% of youth identified as White, 12% as Black or African American, 8% as Native American, and 5% as mixed race. Additionally, 34% identified as being from a Hispanic/Latinx ethnicity.</li> <li>• <b>Common living situations</b> reported on the VI-SPDAT in 2017-2018 include sleeping outside (30%), staying with friends and family (22%), couch surfing (12%), or staying in a shelter (10%).</li> <li>• <b>55%</b> of VI-SPDAT assessed young people in 2017-2018 were considered <b>most at risk and qualified for permanent supportive housing</b>, 39% qualified for rapid re-housing/transitional housing, and 6% did not qualify for assistance.</li> <li>• The <b>2018 Point-in-Time (PIT) count</b> identified 1,380 homeless individuals in Pima County, Arizona, of whom <b>104 (8%) were unaccompanied youth under age 18 or young adults ages 18 to 24.</b></li> <li>• Of the 13 service providers interviewed, most felt that <b>youth homelessness is a bigger issue than currently captured in the PIT count data.</b> Interviewees suggested that TPCCH should consider counting homeless youth in ways other than the PIT count.</li> <li>• Service providers interviewed identified differences between the experience youth have with homelessness and unstable housing in <b>rural areas</b> of Pima County, citing that rural young people are more often couch surfing with friends or relatives, as compared to the Tucson metro area. However, most informants had limited information about the extent of youth homelessness in rural areas.</li> <li>• A total of <b>132 beds</b> are available for youth and young adults in <b>youth dedicated housing programs</b>, according to the 2018 Housing Inventory Count (HIC).</li> <li>• Of 154 youth and young adults surveyed for this Needs Assessment, in the <u>last 30 days</u> <b>90%</b> had experienced from <b>1 to 7 and an average of 2 different homeless or unstable housing situations.</b></li> </ul>



Area	Key Findings: Prevalence and Characteristics of Youth Homelessness
<b>Youth Survey Demographics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents to the youth survey ranged from <b>13 to 24 years of age</b>, with an average and median age of 20 years. 88% of youth surveyed are <b>18 years old or older</b>.</li> <li>• 52% of respondents identified as <b>White</b>, 15% identified as <b>Black or African American</b>, 12% as <b>mixed race</b>, and 10% as <b>Native American</b>. Additionally, 47% identified their ethnicity as <b>Hispanic/Latinx</b>.</li> <li>• 57% of youth surveyed are <b>single</b> and 38% are in a <b>relationship</b> but not married.</li> <li>• 46% identified as <b>cisgender female</b>, 41% as <b>cisgender male</b>.</li> <li>• 21% identified as <b>LGBTQ</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Homeless or Unstable Housing Situations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most common situation experienced by 80% of youth in the <u>last 30 days</u> or within the <u>last year</u> was <b>doubling up or staying overnight with friends, relatives, or someone they did not know well</b> because they did not have a regular, adequate, and safe place to stay at night.</li> <li>• 69% of youth reported having stayed overnight <b>in a car, park, public place, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or a similar place</b> because they did not have a regular, adequate, and safe place to stay at night.</li> <li>• 30% of youth surveyed are <b>pregnant and/or parenting</b>.</li> <li>• The average age when youth first became homeless was <b>16.7 years old</b>, with a wide range from <b>4 to 24 years old</b>. Respondents have experienced homelessness an average of <b>4 times in their lives</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Reasons for Youth Homelessness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The predominant reasons for youth homelessness or unstable housing reported by more than half of youth surveyed include: (1) they experienced <b>financial hardship</b>, including intergenerational poverty, family eviction, job loss, and lack of skills/education to obtain employment; (2) they experienced <b>abuse, neglect, abandonment</b>, and/or family conflict and violence; and/or (3) they were <b>kicked out</b> of their family’s home for various reasons, including rejection due to gender identity and/or sexual orientation. These reasons are consistent with those reported by service providers who completed interviews as well as national data on youth homelessness (USICH, 2018).</li> <li>• Having experienced <b>abuse and neglect</b> as a reason for youth homelessness was <b>significantly correlated to other reasons for youth homelessness</b> including: family and youth substance abuse and mental health issues; death of their caregiver; youth leaving other housing with no place to stay; youth being kicked out of their family’s home; and youth being released from incarceration with nowhere to go.</li> </ul>



Area	Key Findings: Prevalence and Characteristics of Youth Homelessness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth who identified as <b>LGBTQ</b> were significantly <u>more likely</u> to be homeless because they were <b>kicked out of their family home</b> or due to their <b>own substance abuse or mental/physical health issue</b>, compared to youth surveyed who identified as heterosexual/cisgender.</li> <li>The main barrier that has prevented 86% of survey respondents from having stable or permanent housing is a <b>lack of sufficient income</b>, either from not having employment or not earning enough money from current employment to cover housing costs. Other common barriers are related to accessing housing because respondents have <b>no or poor rental history</b> (including bad credit history) or they <b>cannot find a place to affordably rent</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Concerns with Current Living Situation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A main concern with their current living situation, shared by 37% of respondents, was the <b>lack of permanency</b>, fearing that they could be kicked out at any time.</li> <li>32% were concerned about <b>poor housing conditions</b>, including lack of cleanliness (e.g., in emergency housing), presence of pests (e.g., rats, cockroaches), unsecure living spaces (e.g., non-locking doors), and physical damage (e.g., broken windows, holes in wall).</li> <li>31% expressed concerns for their <b>personal safety</b> and/or the <b>safety of their children</b> in their current living situation.</li> <li>Youth who identified as <b>LGBTQ</b> were significantly <u>more likely</u> than youth who identified as heterosexual/cisgender to express <b>concerns for their personal safety</b> in their current living situation (55% vs 46%), specifically <b>fear of being sexually assaulted</b> (24% vs 7%). This finding is consistent with <b>national data</b> on the unique concerns facing LGBTQ homeless youth (see Morton, et al, 2018; USHIC, 2018).</li> <li>Service providers interviewed expressed <b>similar concerns</b> about the unstable living situations of youth they serve. Their young age and developing brains make them especially vulnerable to others who will take advantage of their situations.</li> </ul>



## Service and Benefits Participation of Homeless and Unstably Housed Youth

Area	Key Findings: Service and Benefits Participation
<b>Services Used to Meet Basic Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services used in the <u>past 90 days</u> to meet basic needs included: <b>transportation</b> (67%) (e.g., access to a bus pass); access to <b>food items</b> (57%) (e.g., food boxes, snack packs, groceries); access to <b>toiletries</b> (53%) (e.g., body care products); receipt of <b>clothing items</b> (36%); and <b>meals</b> at community places (31%).</li> <li>• <b>Focus group youth</b> generally reported that they are able to meet their food needs through <b>snack packs, community food pantries, and food boxes</b>.</li> <li>• Regarding housing services used in the <u>past 90 days</u>, 29% have utilized <b>longer-term housing services</b> to stay for 6+ months; 28% stayed in <b>short-term shelter</b> or <b>emergency housing</b>; and 23% received <b>financial assistance</b> to get into housing.</li> </ul>
<b>Services Used to Meet Health Care Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 74% of respondents receive <b>Medicaid</b> through <b>AHCCCS</b>.</li> <li>• Of health care services used in the <u>past 90 days</u>, 40% utilized <b>medical</b> services; 28% utilized <b>behavioral health</b> care services; and 12% utilized <b>dental care</b> services. 33% reporting getting medical care from <b>Urgent Care</b> and 29% from the <b>Emergency Room</b>.</li> <li>• Respondents who have <b>Medicaid/AHCCCS</b> were significantly <u>more likely</u> than those who do not have this insurance to report using an <b>Urgent Care</b> (39% vs 18%) or the <b>ER</b> (34% vs 13%) for health care.</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement in Education and Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45% of youth surveyed are currently enrolled in an <b>education program</b> (such as classes to complete a GED or high school) and 11% are enrolled in a <b>formal job training</b> program for a profession. 24% are <b>currently employed</b>.</li> <li>• In the <u>past 90 days</u>, 26% received assistance in <b>finding a job</b>; 21% received help in <b>obtaining documents</b> needed for employment and/or education, such as and identification, birth certificate, or social security card; and 19% have participated in programming for <b>job training</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Income and Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of youth - 40% - receive money from <b>family or friends</b> as a source of income, 26% earn money from <b>odd or non-traditional jobs</b>, and 23% earn money from <b>selling personal belongings</b>.</li> <li>• Youth who identified as <b>LGBTQ</b> were significantly <u>more likely</u> than heterosexual/cisgender youth (15% vs 4%) to have engaged in paid sex activities or escort work as a source of income. This finding is consistent with national data on the unique concerns facing LGBTQ homeless youth (see Morton et al, 2018; USHC, 2018).</li> </ul>



Area	Key Findings: Service and Benefits Participation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>monthly income</b> of young people surveyed ranges from <b>\$0 to \$1,900</b>, with an <b>average monthly income of \$413</b>, and <b>median monthly income of \$230</b>.</li> <li>• 65% receive <b>Food Stamps/SNAP</b>. Other common benefits received by youth who meet program eligibility criteria include <b>WIC (16%)</b>, <b>money or stipend from an agency (15%)</b>, and <b>free or reduced-price lunch (10%)</b>.</li> </ul>

**Unmet Service Needs and Barriers to Accessing Services**

Area	Key Findings: Gaps and Barriers to Accessing Services
<p><b>Unmet Basic Needs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Housing</b> - 29% of youth surveyed reported unmet housing needs in the past 90 days. Specifically, 21% could not get financial assistance for housing in past 90 days; 17% could not get into longer-term housing; and 16% could not access short-term housing or emergency shelter. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Most informants interviewed said that a lack of housing available for youth and young adults was a primary unmet need in Tucson/Pima County. Interviewees reported the need to have multiple housing options for youth, youth friendly shelters, and LGBTQ youth-friendly shelters.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Food</b> - 29% of youth surveyed don't get enough to eat. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Barriers to accessing food include 85% didn't have enough money to buy food; 47% use up SNAP benefits before the end of the month; 43% don't have transportation to access places to buy food; and 30% don't know where free food is available.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Child Care</b> - 30% of youth surveyed are pregnant (6%) and/or parenting (27%) and need access to child care. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 24% of pregnant and parenting youth said they needed child care in the past 90 days but could not get it. 45% of pregnant and parenting youth said lack of childcare keeps them from achieving their employment and education goals.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Other gaps</b> observed in needed services were access to <b>laundry facilities (19%)</b>, <b>transportation (13%)</b>, <b>clothing items (12%)</b>, and <b>toiletry products (10%)</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Focus group youth</b> and <b>service providers</b> reported consistent unmet needs of homeless and unstably housed youth.</li> </ul>





Area	Key Findings: Gaps and Barriers to Accessing Services
<b>Unmet Health Care Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 52% of respondents reported having have unmet <b>dental care</b> needs; 33% have unmet <b>medical care</b> needs; and 26% have their <b>behavioral health care</b> needs.</li> <li>• Unmet health care needs in the <u>last 90 days</u> include: <b>dental</b> (18%), <b>medical</b> (11%), <b>vision/eye care</b> (10%), <b>sexual health</b> (8%), and <b>behavioral health</b> (7%).</li> <li>• A gap identified in <b>health insurance access</b> is that 26% of youth surveyed are <u>not enrolled</u> in <b>Medicaid/AHCCCS</b>, when they are likely eligible for this program.</li> </ul>
<b>Unmet Education and Employment Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over half (56%) of survey respondents <b>ages 18-24 have less than a high school education</b>.</li> <li>• <u>Only 38%</u> of young adults <b>ages 18-24 are currently enrolled in an education program</b>, such as classes to complete a GED or high school.</li> <li>• 69% of respondents are <b>looking for work</b>.</li> <li>• The highest percentage of respondents who needed a service related to education and employment but could not get it at least one time in the <u>past 90 days</u> was for assistance in <b>obtaining identifying documents</b> (16%).</li> <li>• Other gaps noted in needed services in the <u>past 90 days</u> include <b>help finding a job</b> (10%), access to <b>job training programs</b> (10%), and classes to complete a <b>GED or high school education</b> (8%).</li> </ul>
<b>Gaps in Income and Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20% of youth surveyed reported that they had <b>no sources of income</b>.</li> <li>• Possible <b>gaps identified in benefits utilization</b> include: <b>Hispanic/Latinx youth</b> were significantly <u>less likely</u> than non-Hispanic/Latinx youth to report receiving <b>Medicaid/AHCCCS</b> (67% vs 82%). <u>Only 39%</u> of <b>pregnant and parenting youth</b> surveyed reported receiving <b>WIC</b>, a program for which they are eligible.</li> </ul>
<b>Barriers to Meeting Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lack of Income</b> - 86% reported no steady income as primary reason for not having permanent/stable housing; 85% don't have enough money to buy food; and 40% don't get needed medical care because it is too expensive.</li> <li>• <b>Lack of Transportation</b> - 46% did not have transportation to get to a health care provider's office; 43% said lack of transportation was a barrier to getting adequate food.</li> <li>• <b>Lack of Awareness</b> - 30% of youth surveyed reported that they don't know where free food is available; 29% don't know where to get free or low-cost health care; 18% don't know how to set up a health care appointment; 9% don't know how to apply for government programs that provide medical care.</li> </ul>



## Youth Supportive Networks

Area	Key Findings: Developmental Assets and Positive Influences
Supportive Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 71% of youth surveyed reported that they have one or more <b>professional service providers</b> with whom they could talk to about important matters or turn to for help.</li> <li>• Respondents who are <b>18-24</b> were significantly <u>more likely</u> than those under 18 years (75% vs 47%) to have one or more <b>professional support persons</b>.</li> <li>• <b>LGBTQ</b> were significantly <u>more likely</u> to report have one or more <b>professional support persons</b> (85% vs 68%) than heterosexual and cisgender youth.</li> <li>• A combined 69% have one or more <b>family members</b> as support persons, 68% have one or more <b>friends their age</b> to turn to, and 62% have one or more <b>older friends</b> to turn to as supportive networks.</li> <li>• Young respondents ages <b>13-17 years</b> were significantly <u>more likely</u> than those over age 18 (90% vs 64%) to have one or more <b>friends their age</b> that they can talk to about important matters or turn to for help.</li> </ul>

## Needs Assessment Recommendations

Area	Recommendations and Innovative Ideas to Improve Local Strategies to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness
Enhance Service Provision and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-locate services to better engage and help youth navigate resources that meet their needs.</li> <li>• Utilize youth peer mentors to support programming and outreach of homeless youth serving agencies.</li> <li>• Consider offering an incentive for youth to stay in touch to update their contact information, which could help pay for phone service.</li> <li>• Determine strategies other than the PIT count to understand the extent of youth homelessness.</li> </ul>
Identify Strategies to Reduce Gaps and Barriers to Youth Meeting Their Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify strategies to increase youth knowledge of how to access and utilize community services to meet basic and health care needs.</li> <li>• Identify strategies to improve youth access to and use of transportation.</li> <li>• Identify strategies to more effectively engage youth in education opportunities.</li> <li>• Identify strategies to increase youth income earning opportunities.</li> <li>• Identify strategies to ensure youth access all benefits for which they are eligible.</li> </ul>



Area	Recommendations and Innovative Ideas to Improve Local Strategies to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness
<b>Create youth and LGBTQ-affirming services and Safe Spaces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide direct housing to LGBTQ homeless youth. Ensure housing is youth-centered and LGBTQ-affirming, offering a Safe Space.</li> <li>• Get the word out about available resources through social media.</li> <li>• Provide youth services in a non-clinical, comfortable setting.</li> </ul>
<b>Provide Community Staff with Training on Youth Specific Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide staff of youth serving agencies with more formalized training or information on how to identify and assist homeless youth.</li> <li>• Integrate assessment/referral for reproductive health needs into the intake process for youth.</li> <li>• Ensure staff are compassionate, appropriately trained, and experienced in working with youth; staff should be transparent with youth about what services look like and their availability.</li> </ul>
<b>Improve the Response of Schools to Homeless Youth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify homeless youth as quickly as possible. Youth are then referred to a designated staff member for a private conversation to determine their needs.</li> <li>• Train school registration staff in possible indicators of homelessness.</li> </ul>
<b>Provide Skill Development Opportunities for Youth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage youth more directly in leading and implementing strategies, such as elevating the work of the TPCH Youth Action Committee.</li> <li>• Offer youth training in life skills and employment training.</li> <li>• Provide youth with skills to navigate the system and work with different agencies to get what they need – being persistent, self-advocating, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Suggestions from Focus Group Youth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide resources to help youth who are aging out of program/service to make smooth transition to other assistance.</li> <li>• Don't make program requirements too strict; encourage students who show improvement in academic achievement with additional monetary assistance.</li> <li>• Ensure that agencies that provide monetary assistance to youth do so in a timely manner.</li> <li>• Be patient with youth and try to understand the situation that they are going through.</li> <li>• Refer youth to resources or provide them with a resource list. If youth are on street, take them to get needed resources, such as clothes.</li> <li>• Promote longer term results through strategies such as case management.</li> </ul>



# Introduction

Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness (TPCH) is a coalition of community and faith-based organizations, government entities, businesses, and individuals working to end homelessness and address issues related to homelessness in Pima County, Arizona. TPCH is the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) for the geographic area of Tucson/Pima County, Arizona (AZ-501). LeCroy & Milligan Associates, Inc. was contracted by Our Family Services on behalf of TPCH to conduct the Homeless Youth Needs Assessment. This Needs Assessment focuses on homeless youth ages 12 to 24 in Pima County. Appendix A provides federal definitions and key terms that were used for this Needs Assessment to define youth and young adults who are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing.

The primary audiences for this Needs Assessment include (1) TPCH board and committees for use in community planning and (2) TPCH member agencies and community partners for use in program, agency, and community planning. Secondary audiences include: (1) elected officials and other policy-makers for the purposes of understanding and incorporating issues surrounding youth homelessness into their work and planning; (2) researchers and other community practitioners for use as a data set and in developing community recommendations and initiatives; and (3) the general public for the purposes of better understanding youth homelessness and the experiences of homeless youth in Pima County. This Needs Assessment reports on and synthesizes data collected through:

- Youth Surveys;
- Youth Focus Groups;
- Interviews with key service providers and allied systems; and
- Analysis of existing data on homeless youth.

## Purpose of the TPCH Homeless Youth Needs Assessment

### To further understand the:

- Prevalence and characteristics of homeless youth ages 12-24 in Pima County;
- Unmet service needs and strategies used to meet those needs;
- Beliefs about and barriers to accessing services;
- Social service and mainstream benefits participation;
- Educational and employment engagement;
- Developmental assets and positive influences; and
- Other factors that may help improve local strategies to prevent and end youth homelessness.



# Methodology

To gather a variety of perspectives on the needs of youth experiencing homelessness and unstable housing, LeCroy & Milligan Associates employed a mixed methods research design, which was consistent with homeless youth needs assessments conducted in communities across the U.S. (see Ending Community Homelessness Coalition [ECHO], 2016; Gray, 2016; Sones, 2018; Wright et al., 2016). The research team collected quantitative and qualitative data from youth experiencing homelessness and unstable housing, as well as key service providers in the community from various sectors who work with these youth on a regular basis (e.g., health care providers, educators, crisis counselors). The team also reviewed secondary data sources collected by Pima County. Data from all sources were triangulated and reviewed collectively to determine key findings and develop recommendations and innovative ideas for improving the Tucson/Pima County CoC's response to the unique needs of youth.

## YOUTH SURVEY

### Survey Instrument

The TPCCH Homeless Youth Survey was developed by LeCroy & Milligan Associates in collaboration with members of the TPCCH Homeless Youth Sub-Committee, the TPCCH Youth Action Committee, and key community partners. The instrument was refined and finalized through three virtual meeting sessions and individual feedback received verbally and/or by email from community partners. The TPCCH Homeless Youth Sub-Committee approved the final survey instrument.

The youth survey gathered information from youth and young adults up to age 24 who are currently or have recently experienced homelessness or unstable housing. The survey is a structured instrument that includes the following sections: four pre-survey questions completed by the surveyor prior to administration; six eligibility screening questions completed to determine the person's eligibility to complete the survey in accordance with HUD youth homelessness criteria; and 49 survey items covering the prevalence of youth homelessness; educational and employment engagement; income and benefits receipt; services and/or strategies used to meet basic needs, employment and education needs, and housing and health care needs; gaps in services to meet these needs; social support resources; and demographic characteristics of persons surveyed. The survey is available in Appendix B.

### Data Collection

LeCroy & Milligan Associates conducted two data collection trainings in person and virtually with staff from TPCCH community partner agencies. Training materials that LeCroy & Milligan Associates developed and distributed included a *Surveyor Training Guide* and a 10-minute online video on how to administer the online survey. Survey data was collected from youth and

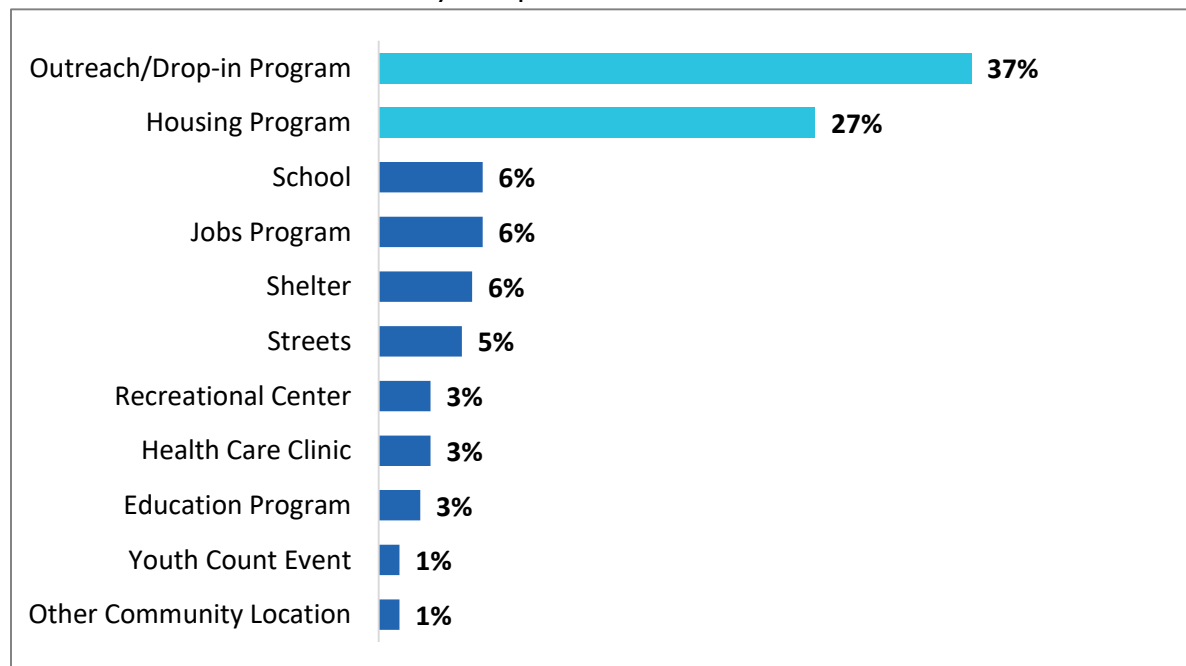


young adults by staff who completed this training, including members of the TPCCH Homeless Youth Sub-Committee and other community partners.

The survey was administered through in-person interviews recorded on a paper instrument or through Qualtrics online survey collector. Youth who agreed to participate in the survey were asked several screening questions to determine if their situation fit within the HUD Categories 1-4 definitions of homelessness (see Appendix A), which was the eligibility criteria for completing the survey. Youth were asked if they experienced specific living situations because they “did not have a regular, adequate, and safe place to stay at night” in the last 30 days, not in the last 30 days but within the last year, or if it did not apply to them.

A total of 160 youth were invited to participate, of whom: 154 youth were eligible and completed the survey; three were eligible but declined to complete the survey; and three were not eligible to complete the survey. It should be noted that the sampling strategy for the survey was a convenient sampling of youth served by TPCCH partner agencies. This study did not employ a randomized sampling design, thus the results are not generalizable to the larger homeless youth population in Tucson/Pima County CoC. However, the results provide insight into common experiences of homeless and unstably housed youth in the CoC in order to inform the TPCCH of current youth needs. In 58% (n=85) of surveys completed, the surveyor knew the youth prior to the survey. Eligible youth who completed the survey received a \$5 gift card and a voucher redeemable for clothing and household items at a local “Community Closet.” Exhibit 1 shows the locations where youth surveys were completed, with most youth surveyed at outreach/drop-in programs or housing programs.

**Exhibit 1. Location of Youth Survey Completion**



(n=154)



## YOUTH FOCUS GROUPS

LeCroy & Milligan Associates conducted four focus groups with youth and young adults representing young people with different types of situations and utilizing a variety of services in the CoC. Focus groups lasted an hour in duration and youth received a \$10 gift card to thank them for their participation. To protect confidentiality, youth demographics were not gathered from focus group participants. Focus groups were held at the following locations:

- METRO 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Center in Tucson, AZ with eight youth and young adults who utilize the drop-in services of the [METRO Youth Program](#), a program of Goodwill of Southern Arizona. This program serves youth and young adults ages 16-24 years seeking employment and education in the community. METRO's 4<sup>th</sup> Ave Center is a drop-in center that offers access to computers, training workshops, and social events with peers.
- [Youth On Their Own \(YOTO\)](#) in Tucson, AZ with five youth who participate in YOTO. YOTO is a dropout prevention program that supports the high school graduation and continued success of homeless, unaccompanied youth in Pima County, AZ.
- Indian Oasis School District in Sells, AZ with four youth living on the Tohono O'odham Reservation who participate in [YOTO](#) as students under the McKinney-Vento Act (see Appendix A); and
- [Community Partners, Inc.](#) with six young adults who are residents of the Frontiers Program, which provides a Permanent Supportive Housing program for young adults designated as having a serious mental illness (SMI).

Focus group facilitators asked participants to respond to open-ended questions regarding the following topics (see Appendix C for the Focus Group Protocol):

- (1) Perceptions of unmet service needs and strategies used to meet those needs by youth experiencing homelessness;
- (2) Beliefs and perceptions about barriers to accessing services;
- (3) Perceptions about the benefits of social services; and
- (4) Identification of other factors that may help improve local strategies to prevent and end youth homelessness.





## SERVICE PROVIDER AND STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

LeCroy & Milligan Associates completed 13 interviews with youth-serving professionals working in the social service, education, health care, and government sectors. Interviews were conducted by telephone and one key informant responded in writing to the interview questions. Interviews lasted from 20 minutes to 60 minutes in duration. The interview protocol included questions addressing the factors causing youth homelessness; characteristics of homeless youth; services provided and their effectiveness; challenges encountered; unmet needs; and how TPCCH and local government could better serve this population. The key informant interview protocol is available in Appendix D. Themes are presented throughout this Needs Assessment and a complete list of themes is included in Appendix E.

## SECONDARY DATA REVIEW

LeCroy & Milligan Associates reviewed select secondary data and reports identified by key stakeholders, including research literature, Pima County Homelessness Management Information Systems (HMIS) data, Point-in-Time (PIT) Count and Housing Inventory Count (HIC) data from 2017-2018, and Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI - SPDAT) data collected in 2017-2018. The sources of secondary data are described in the next section of this report and cited literature is listed in the Reference section of this report.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data from youth surveys and secondary data sets was analyzed using SPSS 24 to produce descriptive analysis of data collected. Descriptive analysis includes frequency counts and percentage distributions of response options, means and standard deviations of continuous data, and analysis and categorization of open-ended responses into common themes. Bi-variate analyses, including Pearson's Correlations and Crosstabulation/Chi Square tests were performed to further explore relationships between key variables, such as demographic characteristics of youth, including age, ethnicity, LGBTQ identity, and pregnant/parenting status. P-values were deemed significant if they were less than or equal to .05. Qualitative data was analyzed using a thematic approach. Inter-rater reliability was established, and research team members analyzed qualitative data from interviews and focus groups by identifying emerging themes from questions. Data from all sources were triangulated and results were reviewed and confirmed by key stakeholders.



# Prevalence and Characteristics of Youth Homelessness in Tucson/Pima County

Four sources of secondary data on youth homelessness are presented in this section of the Needs Assessment, in efforts to assess the prevalence and characteristics of youth homelessness in the Tucson/Pima County CoC. These include:

- \* Point-in-Time (PIT) Count data from 2018;
- \* Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI - SPDAT) data collected from youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in 2017 and 2018;
- \* Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) data on youth utilization of youth dedicated housing programs in 2017 and 2018; and
- \* Housing Inventory Count (HIC) of beds available in youth dedicated housing programs in 2018.

Service providers interviewed noted that it is often difficult for them to identify whether youth are homeless, because they may not readily share information on their living situation, and that the full scope of youth homelessness may be underreported in the official data. An informant who works in a public library shared, “I think [it’s] a big issue. You don’t see homeless youth as much as homeless adults. Homeless youth stay with friends, may not even identify as homeless... Sometimes it’s hard to know whether they’re homeless.” An informant from a local school district reported that the full scope of youth homelessness is unknown because of the varying definitions of homeless youth used by different non-profits and government agencies.

## YOUTH DATA AND DEMOGRAPHICS

### Point-in-Time Count

Since 2005, HUD has required all CoCs to complete the Point-in-Time (PIT) count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January. This count is completed annually in Pima County in the last week of January and includes a street count of unsheltered homeless persons in addition to a count of all clients in emergency and transitional beds. The 2018 PIT count identified a total of 1,380 homeless individuals in Pima County, of whom 104 (8%) were unaccompanied youth under age 18 or young adults ages 18 to 24. Exhibit 2 shows PIT count data for total homeless persons and unaccompanied youth and young adults in Tucson/Pima County CoC from 2015 to 2018. A general trend is that the number of total persons counted has decreased steadily over time, however the number of unaccompanied youth has not decreased in the same pattern, suggesting that unaccompanied homeless youth remains a need to be addressed by the Tucson/Pima County CoC. Of the 13 service providers interviewed, most felt that youth homelessness is a bigger issue than currently captured in official data and that PIT count numbers may be misleadingly low because of the point in time



methodology. An informant from a youth-serving non-profit stated, “The issue is larger than the street count captures.” Another informant similarly reported, “The issue has always been there, and we don’t know the true extent. The number of youth couch hopping is unknown. Homeless youth counts are low. It’s a hidden concern, which makes it challenging, and why people may not be aware.”

**Exhibit 2. Count of Total Persons and Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adults in Tucson/Pima County CoC, 2015-2018 PIT Counts**

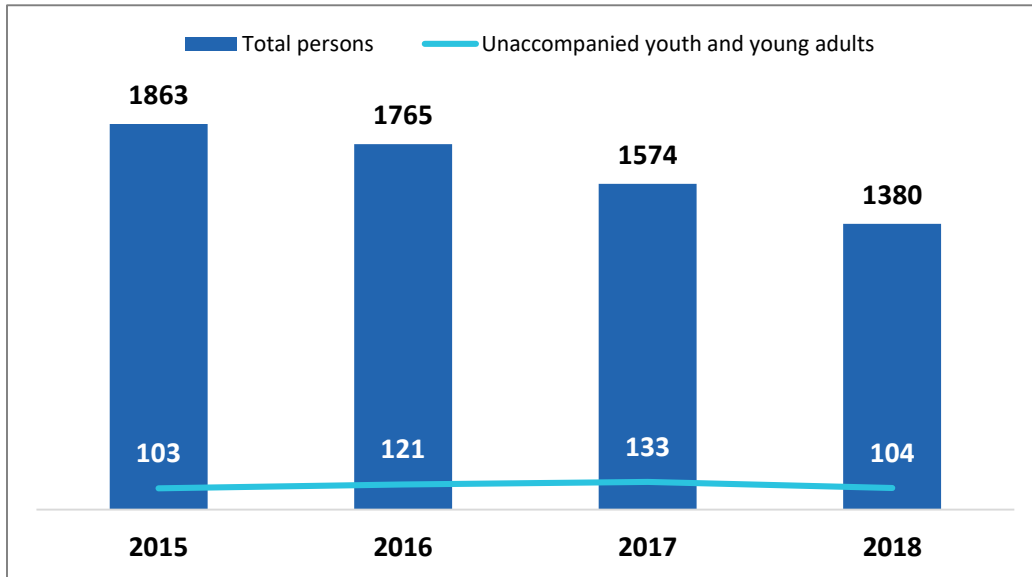
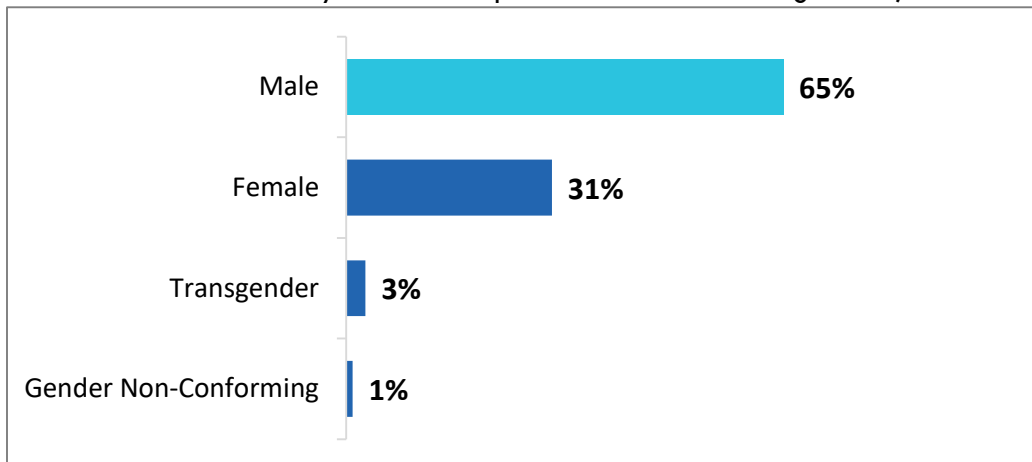


Exhibit 3 shows the gender identity of unaccompanied youth and young adults in the 2018 PIT count. Two thirds identified as cisgender male, while about a third identified as cisgender female. A small proportion of young people counted in 2018 identified as transgender or gender non-conforming.

**Exhibit 3. Gender Identity of Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adults, 2018 PIT Count**

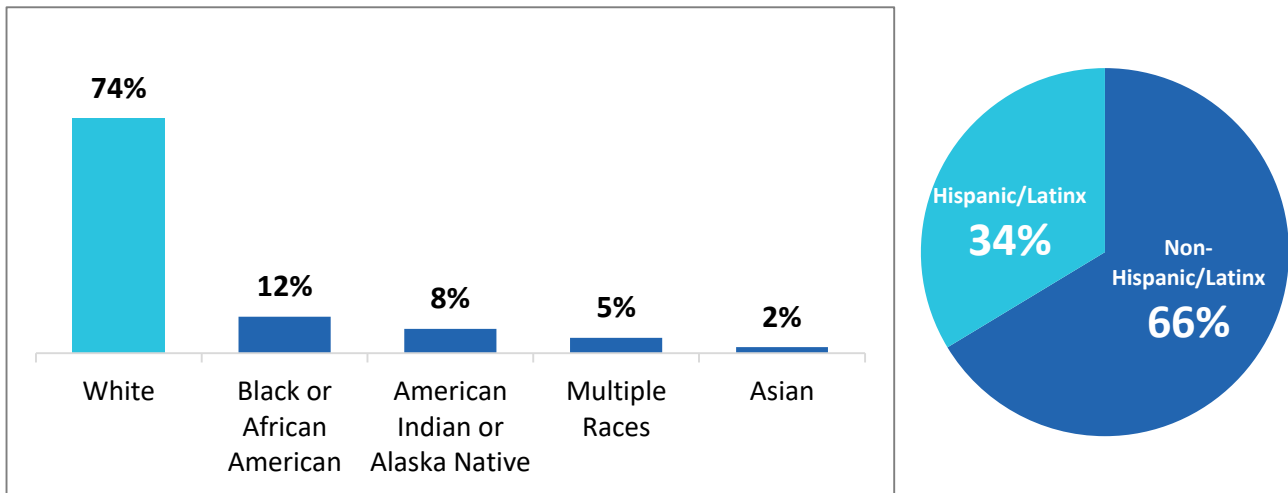


(N=104)



Exhibit 4 shows that during the 2018 PIT count, 74% of unaccompanied youth and young adults identified as White, followed by 12% who identified as Black or African American, 8% who identified as Native American, and 5% as mixed race. Additionally, 34% identified as being from a Hispanic/Latinx ethnicity. In comparison, 2018 U.S. Census Bureau population estimates for Pima County shows that 85.1% are White, 4.3% are Native American, 4.1% are Black or African American, 3.3% are Asian, 2.9% are two or more races, and 37.3% identify as Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.

Exhibit 4. Race and Ethnicity of Unaccompanied Youth/Young Adults, 2018 PIT Count



(N=104)

### Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool Data

Exhibit 5 shows the number of youth and young adults ages 17 to 24 who completed the TPCH’s common assessment tool in 2017, 2018, and combined. The tool used by the TPCH is the Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT), which is used for adults experiencing homelessness. Additional versions of the tool include the Family (F-VI-SPDAT), which is a family-specific assessment completed when a family of two or more adults and/or children seeks services, or the Transition Age Youth (TAY-VI SPDAT), which is the assessment specific for youth ages 18 to 24. As there are many agencies providing services to people who are experiencing homelessness, some agencies may by practice use the VI-SPDAT on youth when the TAY-VI-SPDAT may be more appropriate. In 2017, 747 unduplicated youth completed a VI-SPDAT and in 2018, 546 unduplicated youth completed this tool.

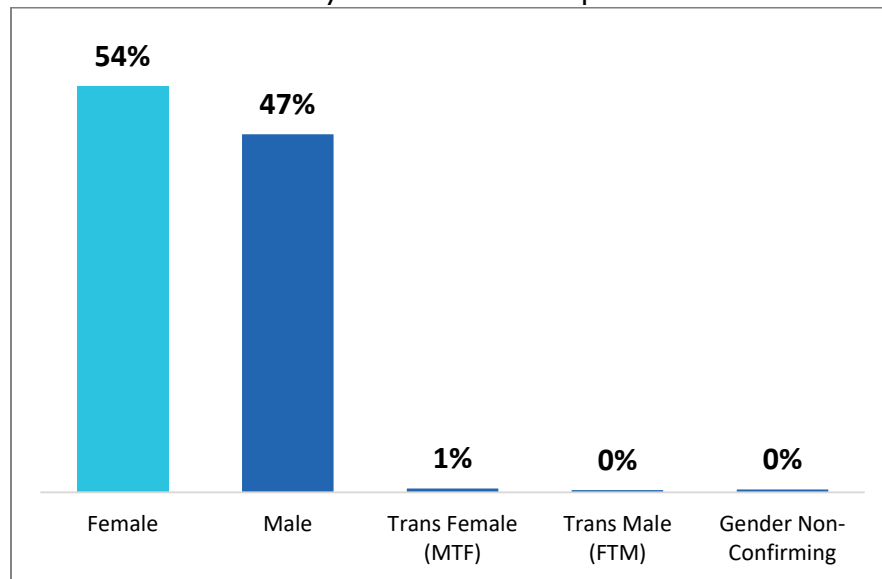


Exhibit 5. VI-SPDAT Breakdown by Age and Type in 2017, 2018, and Combined

SPDAT	CALENDAR YEAR 2017					CALENDAR YEAR 2018					CY 2017 & 2018 COMBINED				
	F	TAY	VI	COMBINED		F	TAY	VI	COMBINED		F	TAY	VI	COMBINED	
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>1,293</b>	<b>%</b>
17	0	0	0	0	0%	0	1	0	1	0%	0	1	0	1	0%
18	14	2	18	34	5%	6	56	6	68	12%	20	58	24	102	8%
19	16	77	27	120	16%	11	34	13	58	11%	27	111	40	178	14%
20	18	58	40	116	16%	11	43	25	79	14%	29	101	65	195	15%
21	34	53	47	134	18%	25	27	18	70	13%	59	80	65	204	16%
22	37	43	49	129	17%	17	23	29	69	13%	54	66	78	198	15%
23	35	30	59	124	17%	17	37	38	92	17%	52	67	97	216	17%
24	17	41	29	87	12%	21	33	55	109	20%	38	74	84	196	15%

Exhibit 6 shows the gender identity of youth (ages 17 to 24) who completed any of the three VI-SPDAT assessment types in 2017 and 2018 combined. While most of the youth identified as either cisgender male or female, 1% (n=16) of respondents identified as either transgender or gender non-conforming. Cisgender females (54%, n=692) accounted for the majority of young people who completed an assessment in these two years.

Exhibit 6. Gender Identity of Youth who Completed a SPDAT in 2017 and 2018, Combined

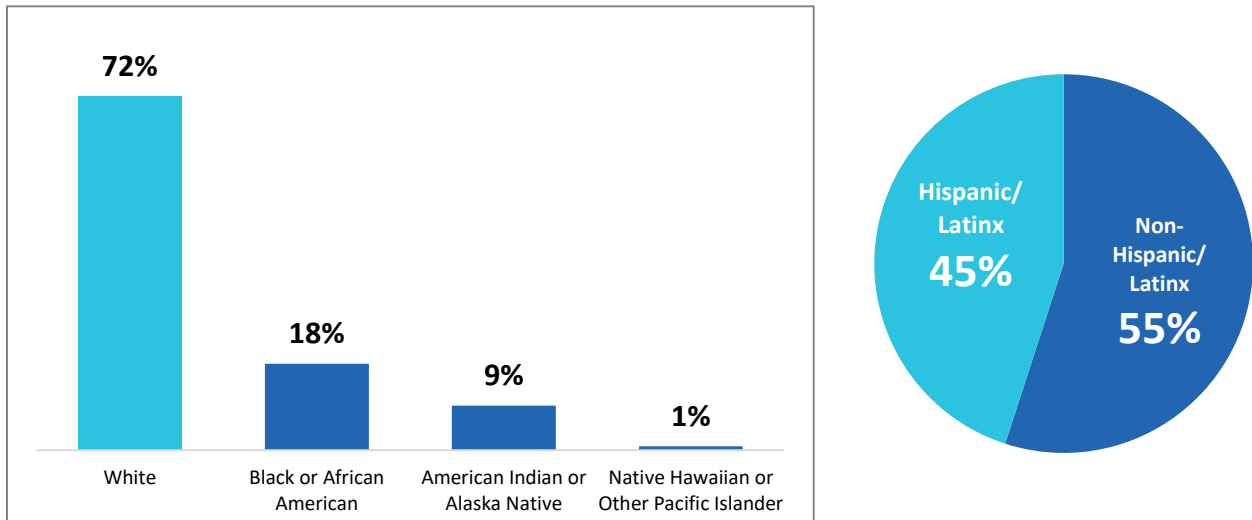


(N=1,318; Percentages exceed 100% as potential duplication existed for youth who completed separate assessments in each calendar year.)

Exhibit 7 shows that 72% (n=936) youth who completed the VI-SPDAT in 2017 and 2018 identified as White, followed by 18% who identified as Black or African American, and 9% who identified as Native American. Moreover, 45% (n=588) identified their ethnicity as Hispanic/Latinx.



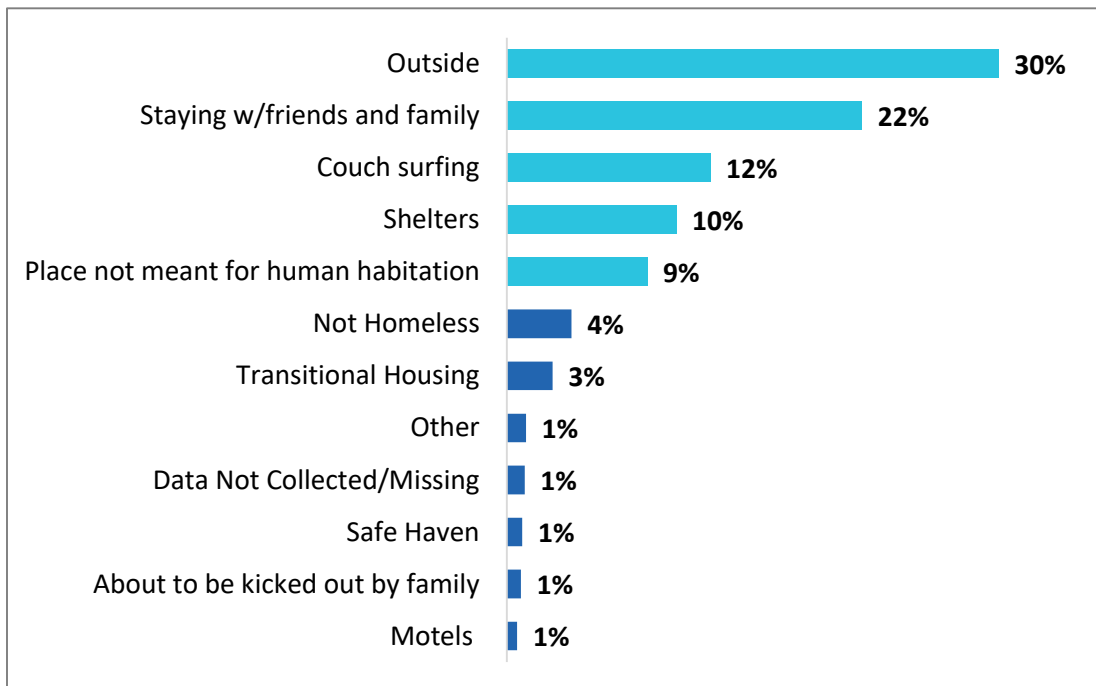
Exhibit 7. Race and Ethnicity of Youth who Completed a SPDAT in 2017 and 2018, Combined



(N=1,293, Percentages do not total to 100% because youth could select more than one option that applied to them.)

The VI-SPDAT assessments capture where youth are primarily sleeping before housing interventions are offered. Exhibit 8 shows that in 2017 and 2018, most young people experiencing homelessness either slept outside (30%, n=389), stayed with friends and family (22%, n=281), couch surfed (12%, n=161), stayed in a shelter (10%, n=134), or another place not meant for human habitation (9%, n=111).

Exhibit 8. Location Where Youth Sleeps Most Frequently, 2017 and 2018 Combined



(N=1,236)



The objective of all VI-SPDAT assessment tools is to assess and rank the level of vulnerability of a person experiencing homelessness. A youth with a score of 0-3 does not qualify for housing assistance through coordinated entry. A score of 4-7 allows a youth to get into Rapid Re-housing (RRH) or Transitional Housing (TH). If a youth scores an 8 or above, they are considered the most vulnerable and qualify for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). In 2017 and 2018 combined, 55% (n=732) of assessed youth were considered most at risk and qualified for PSH, 39% (n=515) qualified for RRH/TH, and 6% did not qualify for housing assistance. The definitions for housing and supportive services are shown in the box to the right.

### Statistics from 2017-2018 VI-SPDAT Data on Youth and Young Adults

- 73% of youth reported some form of emotional, physical, psychological, sexual abuse, and or trauma to be the cause of their homelessness.
- 49% of homeless youth have been to the ER in the last 6 months. 33% of youth took an ambulance to the hospital.
- 37% of youth are currently involved with the legal system.
- 34% of youth have been attacked or beaten up since becoming homeless.
- 29% of youth have tried to harm themselves or others since being homeless.
- 24% of youth are not able to meet their basic needs – bathing, clean clothes, food/water.
- 23% of youth report difficulty maintaining housing due to mental health.

### Definitions of Housing and Supportive Services

**Emergency Shelter** – Any facility whose primary purpose is to provide temporary shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless.

**Permanent Supportive Housing** – Long term, community-based housing that has supportive services for homeless persons with disabilities. This type of supportive housing enables special needs populations to live as independently as possible in a permanent setting. Permanent housing can be provided in one structure or in several structures at one site or in multiple structures at scattered sites.

**Rapid Re-housing** – An intervention designed to help individuals and families that don't need intensive and ongoing supports to quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing. Assistance is offered without preconditions and resources and services are tailored to the unique needs of the individuals.

**Transitional Housing** - A project that has as its purpose facilitating the movement of homeless individuals and families to permanent housing within a reasonable amount of time (usually 24 months).

**Street Outreach Program** – Agency staff engage with visibly homeless youth living on the streets. These youth are likely disconnected or alienated from mainstream services and supports. Outreach strategies require the development of an understanding of the individual circumstances and needs, as well as cultural barriers that may prevent people from accessing either mainstream services or those that target people who experience homelessness.





## YOUTH DEDICATED HOUSING

### Housing Inventory Count of Youth Dedicated Housing Programs

The Housing Inventory Count (HIC) is a calculation of the numbers of beds and housing units in the Tucson/Pima County CoC on one night per year. Exhibit 9 shows the number of beds available in youth dedicated housing programs in 2018. A total of 132 beds are dedicated for youth in these programs. It should be noted that while there were no youth-dedicated RRH projects reported in 2018, RRH projects have since been implemented locally.

Exhibit 9. Number of Beds Available in Youth Dedicated Housing Programs, HIC 2018

Housing Program	Youth Transitional Housing	Youth Permanent Supportive Housing	Youth Emergency Shelter*	Total
Number of beds dedicated to youth and young adults with children	51	23	0	74
Number of beds dedicated to youth and young adults alone (without children)	19	35	4	58
<b>Total Youth Dedicated Beds</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>132</b>

\*The youth dedicated Emergency Shelter is a crisis shelter for abused, homeless, and runaway teens, ages 12 – 17.

### Utilization of Youth Dedicated Housing Programs

Data on housing program service utilization of unaccompanied youth (ages 12-17 years) and young adults (ages 18-24 years) during the time frame of 7/1/2017-6/30/2018 was provided by the Tucson/Pima County CoC Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS). As required by HUD, HMIS is an electronic database utilized by members of the CoC to track service provision and needs of homeless people within the geographic boundary of Pima County. HMIS data was reported to the research team in aggregate by youth dedicated program type to protect confidentiality. While program level data represents unduplicated individuals, total numbers across programs likely represent duplicate counts of individuals who have utilized more than one service during this time frame. Therefore, aggregated data across all programs is not reported.

Exhibit 10 shows the total number of unaccompanied young adults, youth, and children (of parenting young adults) who received services from youth dedicated housing programs during this time frame. Youth street outreach encountered the highest number of people served by program type, which is to be expected as these young people are re-connected with family or referred to housing programs, with the goal of establishing permanent housing stability. It should be noted that while there were no youth-dedicated RRH projects reported in HMIS during the period, RRH projects have since been implemented locally.



Exhibit 10. Unaccompanied Young Adults, Youth, and Children Served by Youth Dedicated Programs, HMIS Data 7/1/2017 - 6/30/2018

Age Range	Youth Street Outreach	Youth Transitional Housing	Youth Permanent Supportive Housing	Youth Emergency Shelter
18-24 Years*	229	68	53	17
12-17 Years	4	1	3	36
< 5 Years (children of parenting youth and young adults)	55	38	13	4
<b>Total Individuals Served</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>57</b>

\*18-24-year-old counts include a few individuals who turned 25 while in the program.

Exhibit 11 shows the gender identity of youth and young adults who were served by the four program types. The majority of young people served identified as cisgender male or female, with a small percentage identifying as transgender female (male to female), transgender male (female to male), or gender non-conforming. Over half of young people served by youth dedicated street outreach and TH programs were female, while over half of those served by PSH and emergency shelters were male.

Exhibit 11. Gender Identity of Youth and Young Adults by Youth Dedicated Programs

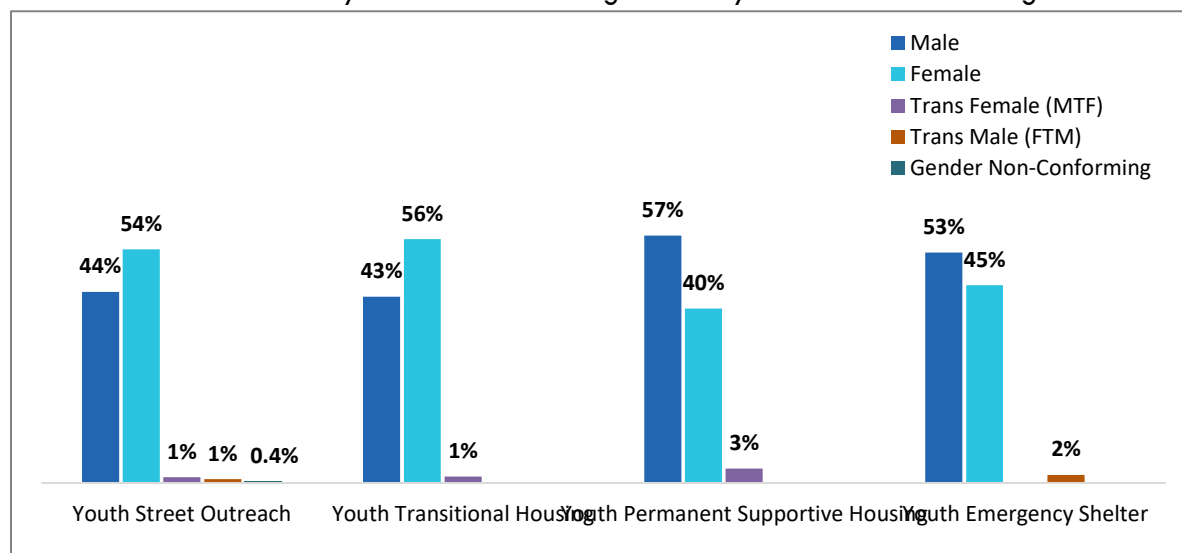
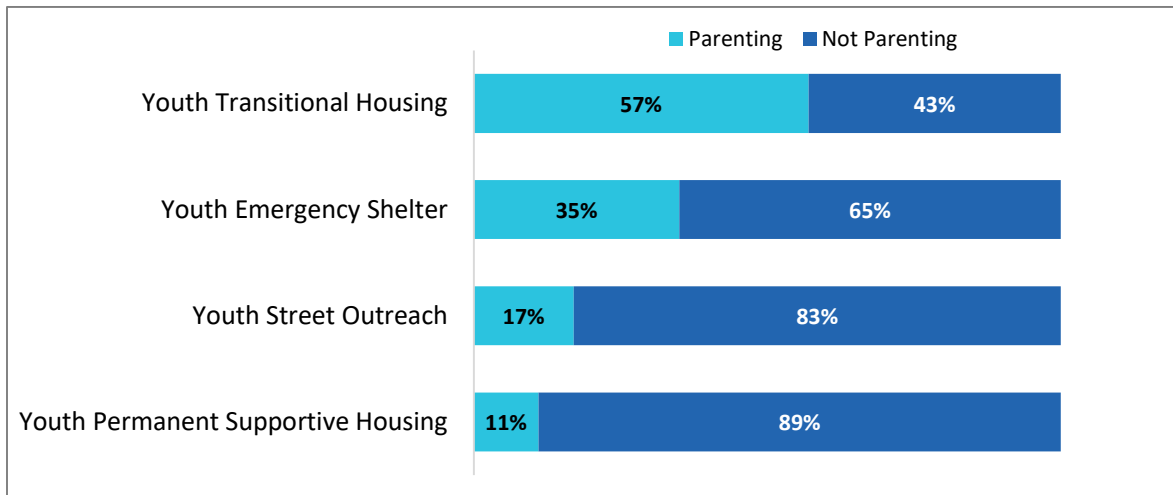


Exhibit 11 show the percentage of young adults ages 18-24 who are parenting by youth dedicated services (none of the young people ages 12-17 were reported in HMIS to be parenting). Youth dedicated TH programs served the highest proportion of young adults (57%) who were parenting children under the age of five years, which reflects that these programs specifically focus resources on housing parenting youth. A general trend across program types is that most parenting young adults are female.



Exhibit 12. Percentage of Parenting Youth Ages 18-24 by Youth Dedicated Programs



## SERVICE PROVIDER PERSPECTIVES ON YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN RURAL AREAS

National survey data from Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago shows that homelessness affects youth living in rural, suburban, and urban communities at similar rates (Morton, Dworsky & Samuels, 2017). Service providers interviewed for this Needs Assessment identified differences between the experience youth have with homelessness in a rural area as compared to an urban area; however, most informants had limited information about the extent of youth homelessness in rural areas. The Chapin Hall (2017) study showed that youth who experience homelessness in rural communities are more likely to be couch-surfing with friends and family, compared to youth in urban and suburban communities who are more likely to be in shelters. The national study noted that this difference may be due to a lack of shelters in rural areas.

Service providers interviewed for this Needs Assessment corroborated this finding. One informant stated, “Rural homelessness looks quite different, it involves more couch surfing than urban homelessness and services for homeless youth are sparse and often difficult to get to with fewer transportation options.” Service providers from the education sector also noted challenges homeless youth in rural areas face because they may not meet HUD eligibility definitions for Category 1 homelessness (see Appendix A). One person reported, “[In] school districts in rural areas, youth may not meet a homeless definition because they are staying with someone else,” referring to youth who are couch surfing. This informant further commented that youth in rural areas face gaps in services due to lack of transportation and a lack of shelter resources.

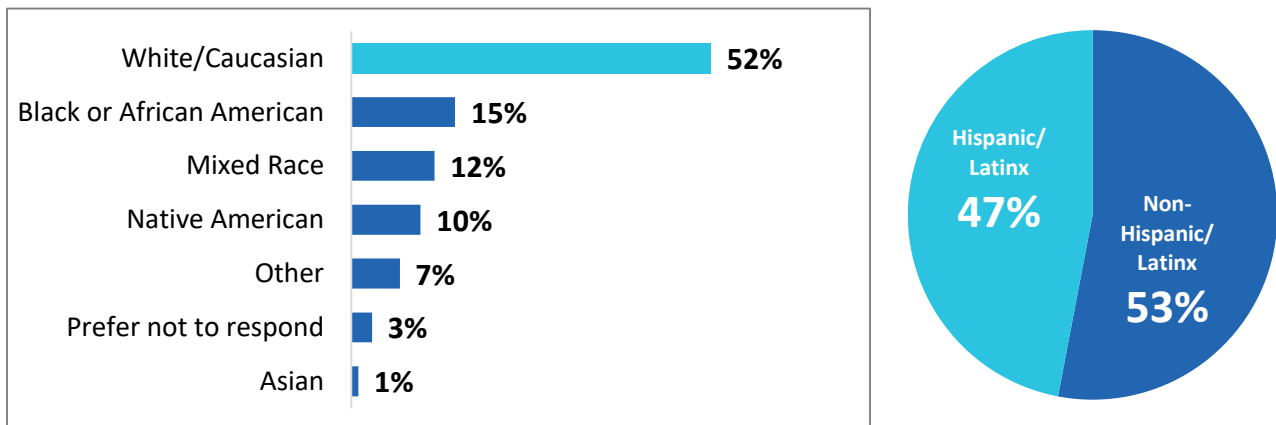


# Youth and Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness or Unstable Housing

## DEMOGRAPHICS OF YOUTH SURVEYED

The demographic characteristics of youth surveyed are consistent with youth who completed the VI-SPDAT in 2017 and 2018 and the 2018 PIT count. Exhibit 13 shows that over half (52%, n=80) of respondents identified as White/Caucasian, followed by 15% (n=23) who identified as Black or African American, 12% (n=18) who identified as mixed race, and 10% (n=16) who identified as Native American. Additionally, 47% (n=73) identified their ethnicity as Hispanic/Latinx. Respondents ages ranged from 13 to 24 years of age, with an average and median of 20.1 years (2.9 SD). Most youth surveyed are 18 years of age or older (88%, n=135).

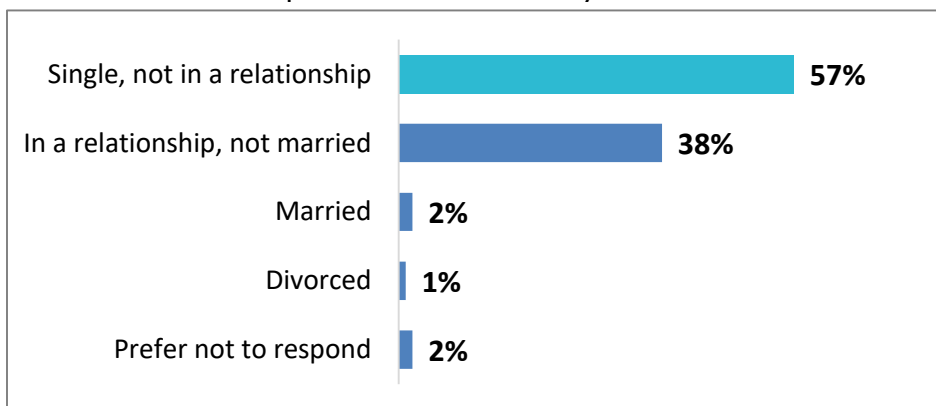
Exhibit 13. Race and Ethnicity of Youth Surveyed



(N=154)

Over half of youth surveyed are single (57%, n=88) and 38% (n=59) are in a relationship but not married (Exhibit 14). A low percentage of survey respondents are married, divorced, or chose not to respond to this question.

Exhibit 14. Relationship Status of Youth Surveyed

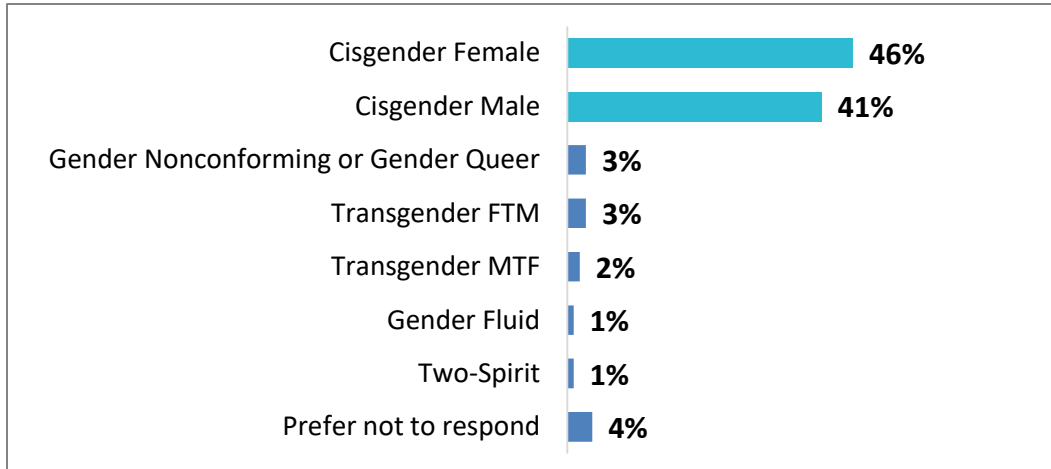


(N=154)



Exhibit 15 shows that almost half (46%, n=70) of youth surveyed identified as cisgender female and 41% (n=63) identified as cisgender male. Approximately 10% (n=14) identified as gender non-conforming, gender queer, transgender, gender fluid, or two-spirit.

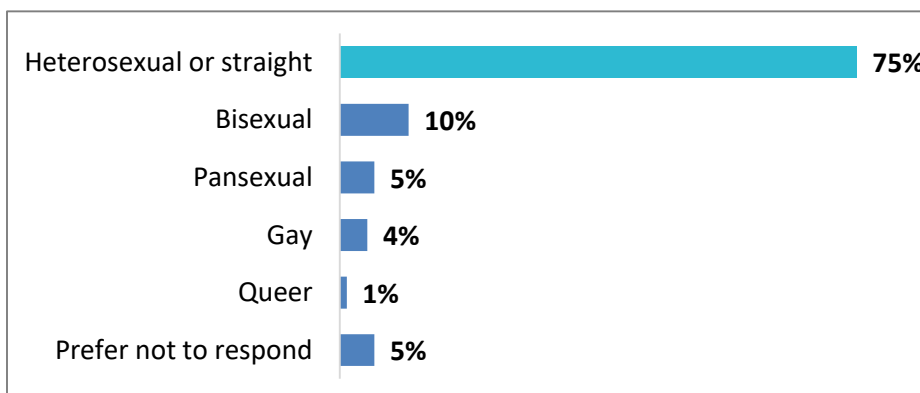
Exhibit 15. Gender Identity of Youth Surveyed



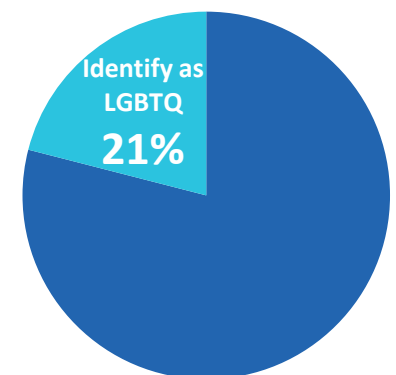
(N=154)

Exhibit 16 shows that 75% (n=115) of youth surveyed identified as heterosexual or straight, while a combined 20% (n=30) identified as bisexual, pansexual, gay, or queer. Overall, 21% (n=33) of youth surveyed identified as LGBTQ, which is an acronym used to refer to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (questioning) community, or someone who identifies as a member of that community. The findings from this survey are consistent with national survey data showing that LGBTQ youth make up about 20% of all youth experiencing homelessness (Morton, Samuels, Dworsky & Patel, 2018). Additionally, the risk for LGBTQ youth to experience homelessness is 120% higher than their peers who do not identify as LGBTQ. Two service providers interviewed for this Needs Assessment also highlighted that the scope of the problem is especially large for LGBTQ youth, with one stating, “There is a disproportionate representation of LGBTQ in homeless youth population. A lot more are unstably housed or houseless than we know.”

Exhibit 16. Sexual Orientation and LGBTQ Identity of Youth Surveyed



(N=154)

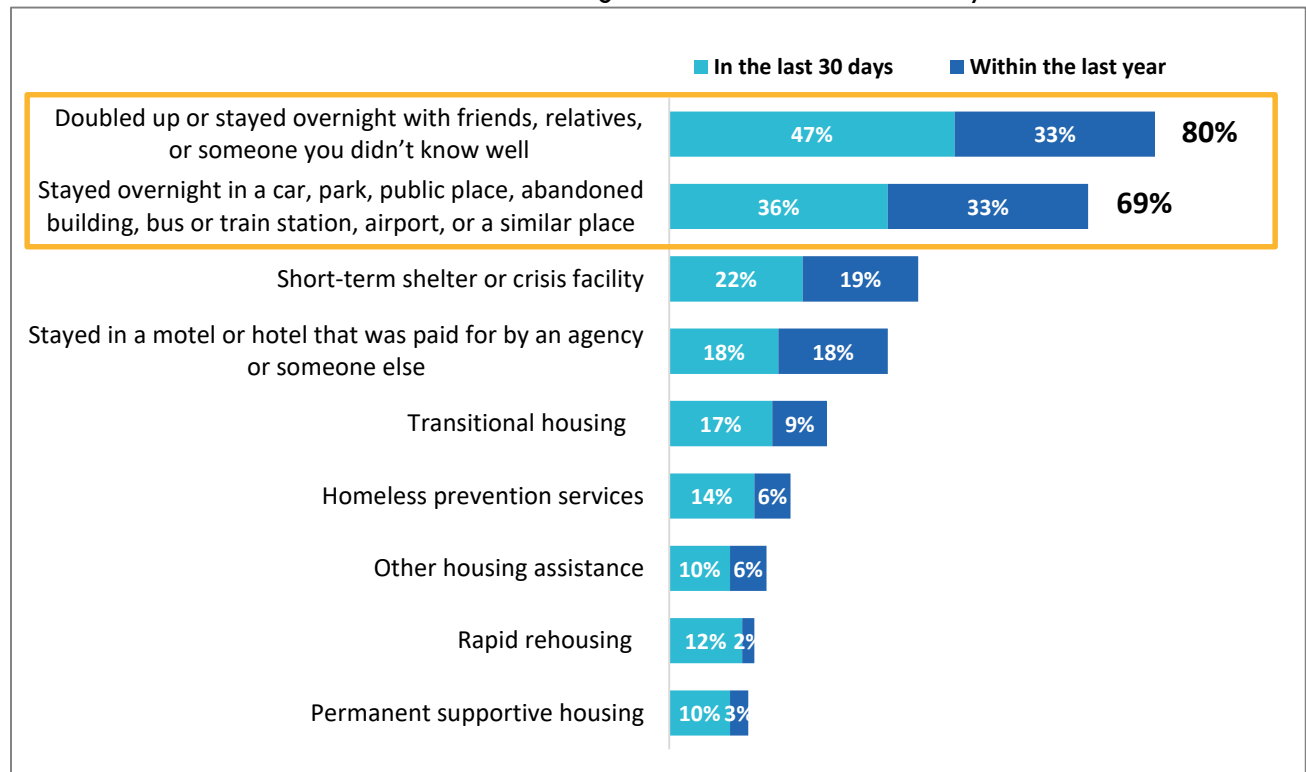


## HOMELESS AND UNSTABLE HOUSING SITUATIONS

Youth surveyed were asked if they had experienced specific living situations because they “did not have a regular, adequate, and safe place to stay at night” in the last 30 days, not in the last 30 days but within the last year, or if it did not apply to them. Most (90%, n=139) of youth surveyed had experienced between one and seven different homeless or unstable housing situations in the last 30 days, with an average of two different situations experienced. Exhibit 17 shows the percentage of youth who experienced each type of living situation in the last 30 days or within the last year, sorted by the total percentage of youth who experienced either time frame. The living situations reported by survey respondents are consistent with those reported by youth on the VI-SPDAT in 2017 and 2018 (see Exhibit 8) and are consistent with national data on youth homelessness (Morton, Dworsky & Samuels, 2017; USHIC, 2018). The most common situation experienced by 80% (n=122) of youth in the last 30 days or within the last year was doubling up or staying overnight with friends, relatives, or someone they did not know well because they did not have a regular, adequate, and safe place to stay at night. Additionally, 69% (n=106) of youth reported having stayed overnight in a car, park, public place, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or a similar place because they did not have a regular, adequate, and safe place to stay.

Within the last year, youth experienced between **1 and 9 different homeless or unstable housing situations**, with an average of 3 different situations.

Exhibit 17. Youth Homeless or Unstable Housing Situations In the Last 30 Days or Within the Last Year

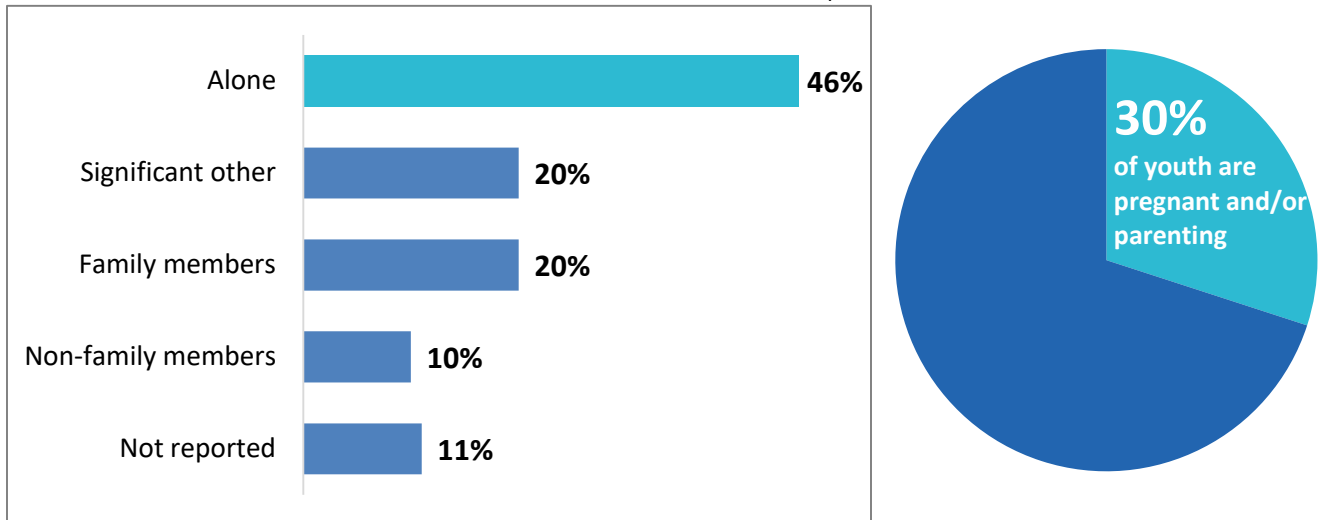


(N=154)



Youth surveyed were asked who they were homeless with, as well as if they are pregnant and/or parenting. Exhibit 18 shows that almost half of youth (46%, n=71) reported being homeless by themselves, and 20% each reported being homeless with family members (n=32) or a significant other (n=31). Youth were able to select all the options that applied to their situation, so the percentages do not total to 100%. Also shown in Exhibit 12, almost a third of youth (30%, n=46) reported that they are pregnant (6%, n=9) and/or parenting (27%, n=42).

**Exhibit 18. Others with Whom Youth are Homeless and Pregnant/Parenting Status**

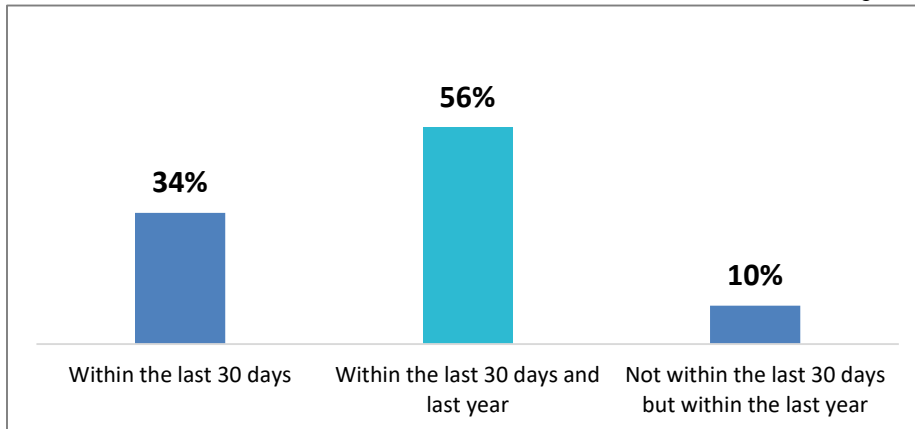


(N=154; Percentages do not total to 100% because youth could select more than one option.)

## HOMELESSNESS FREQUENCY AND DURATION

Looking at the length of time youth experienced homelessness, Exhibit 19 shows that 34% (n=53) of youth experienced one or more homeless situations only in the last 30 days; over half (56%, n=86) experienced one or more situations in the last 30 days and within the last year; and 10% (n=15) experienced one or more situations within the last year, but not within the last 30 days.

**Exhibit 19. Time Frame of Youth Homelessness and Unstable Housing**



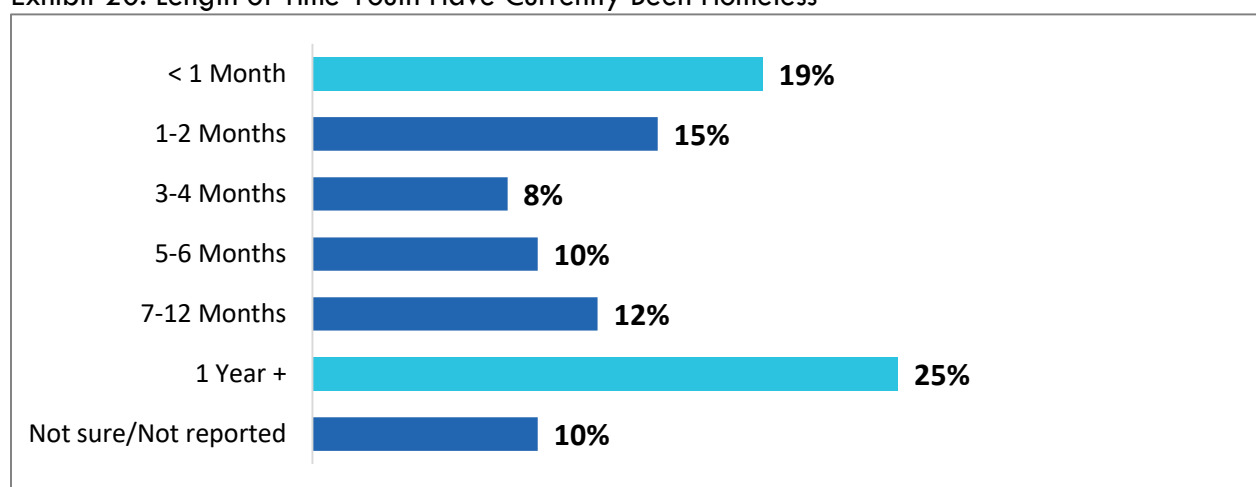
(N=154)





The average age when youth surveyed first became homeless was 16.7 years old (3.2 SD), with a wide range from 4-24 years old. This wide range is reflected in one interviewee's comments who works at a local school district. She noted that over the years, she has seen the age range of homeless youth widen, with even kindergarteners experiencing family homelessness. Only 3% of youth (n=4) surveyed reported being homeless for the first time, while 97% (n=146) had been homeless 1 to 20 times before. Overall, youth surveyed have experienced homelessness an average of four times (3.8 SD) including their current situation. Exhibit 20 shows the length of their current homeless situation. The data shows a split between the two majority groups, with 19% (n=30) having recently become homeless and 25% (n=39) having been homeless for more than one year.

Exhibit 20. Length of Time Youth Have Currently Been Homeless



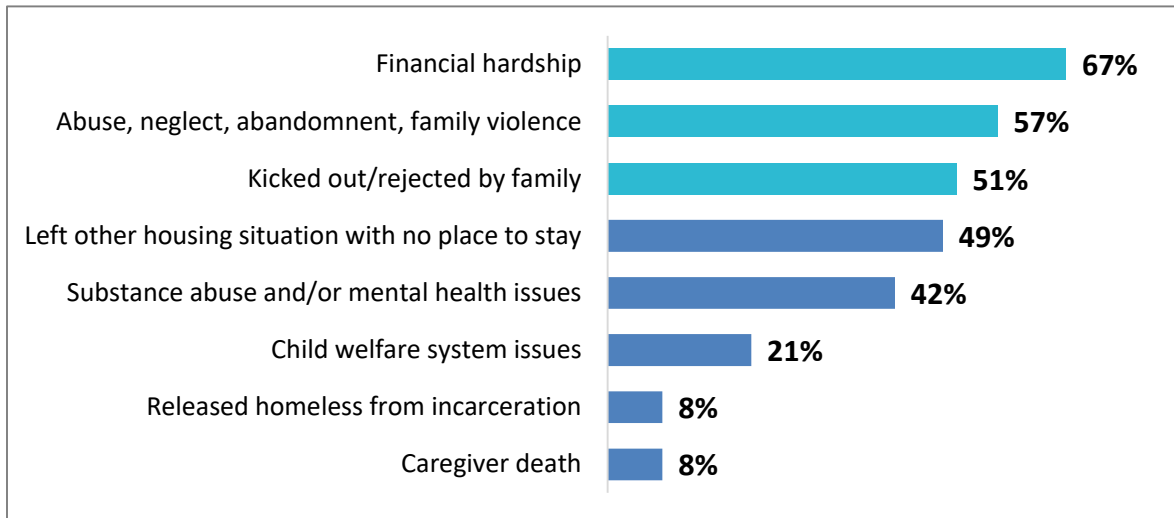
(N=154)

## REASONS FOR YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Exhibit 21 shows the primary reasons why youth became homeless, categorized from the multiple choice and open-ended responses reported by youth. Most respondents (84%, n=130) indicated multiple reasons for their homelessness (providing an average of 5 reasons and a range of 2-19 reasons). Because youth could report more than one reason, the percentages do not total to 100%. Specific responses are discussed further under each main category area below. The top reasons given by more than half of youth surveyed include: they experienced **financial hardship**, including intergenerational poverty, family eviction, job loss, and lack of skills/education to obtain employment; they experienced **abuse, neglect, abandonment, and/or family conflict and violence**; and/or they were **kicked out of their family's home** for various reasons, including rejection due to gender identity and/or sexual orientation. The reasons for youth homelessness reported through this survey are consistent with those identified nationally by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH, 2018). Given the diverse reasons for youth homelessness, the research team examined how demographic characteristics of youth, including age, ethnicity, LGBTQ identity, and pregnant/parenting status may be related to different reasons. Significant findings are noted.



**Exhibit 21. Primary Reasons for Youth Homelessness**



(N=154)

Exhibit 22 shows a Pearson’s Correlations matrix of reasons for youth homelessness. Each shaded box shows two reasons (in the column heading and row heading) for youth homeless and unstable housing that the survey data shows are significantly likely to occur together. For example, having experienced abuse and neglect as a reason for youth homelessness was significantly related to other reasons for youth homelessness including: family and youth substance abuse and mental health issues; death of their caregiver; youth leaving other housing with no place to stay; youth being kicked out of their family’s home; and youth being released from incarceration with nowhere to go.

**Exhibit 22. Correlations Between Reasons for Youth Homelessness**

	Financial Hardship	Abuse, neglect, etc.	Kicked out/ Rejected by Family	Left Other Housing	Substance Abuse/ Health	Child Welfare Issues	Released from Incarceration	Caregiver Death
Financial Hardship	-							
Abuse, neglect, etc.		-						
Kicked out/Rejected by Family			-					
Left Other Housing				-				
Substance Abuse/ Health					-			
Child Welfare Issues						-		
Released from Incarceration							-	
Caregiver Death								-



## Financial Hardship

The most commonly reported reason for youth homelessness, as given by 67% (n=103) of survey respondents, was that they had experienced some form of financial hardship related to intergenerational poverty and/or loss of or limited access to employment opportunities. This larger category encompasses both youth and family level financial hardship, with most youth reporting having experienced more than one type. Types of financial hardship related to intergenerational poverty that resulted in youth homelessness include:

- 50% (n=77) of youth could not support themselves financially;
- 29% (n=44) of families could not support the youth financially;
- 28% (n=43) of families were evicted from their home; and
- 4% (n=6) of youth reported in an open-ended comment that they either lost their job or were unemployed due to lack of skills and/or education.

Financial hardship was not significantly correlated to any of the other main reasons for youth homelessness, suggesting that for some youth it is a stand-alone reason for their homelessness and not related to other main reasons reported in this Needs Assessment. This survey finding is supported by key informant interviews who cited family poverty or financial instability as a major factor for youth homelessness, with parents not being able to meet the basic needs or provide financial support for their children, youth, and young adults.

## Experienced Abuse, Neglect, Abandonment, and/or Family Violence

Most unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness have significant experience with trauma (Gwadz et al, 2007). Youth often leave home because of multiple types of abuse and neglect, severe family conflict, and exposure to violence. Over half (57%, n=87) of young people surveyed reported that their homelessness or unstable housing situation occurred as a result of experiencing abuse, neglect, abandonment, and/or family conflict and violence. Types of abuse that respondents have experienced, with most having experienced more than one type include:

- 31% (n=47) experienced verbal abuse;
- 27% (n=42) were abandoned/neglected by their caregiver;
- 24% (n=37) did not feel safe at home;
- 23% (n=36) experienced physical abuse;
- 12% (n=19) experienced sexual abuse;
- 3% (n=4) experienced family violence and conflict in the home.

Having experienced abuse and neglect as a reason for youth homelessness was significantly correlated to other reasons for youth homelessness including: family and youth substance abuse and health issues (p=.00); caregiver death (p=.01); youth leaving other housing with no place to stay (p=.02); youth being kicked out of their family's home (p=.02); and youth being released from incarceration with nowhere to go (p=.03). This survey finding is supported by key informants interviewed who reported abuse, conflict, violence, or a "toxic environment" in the home as playing a major role youth homelessness.

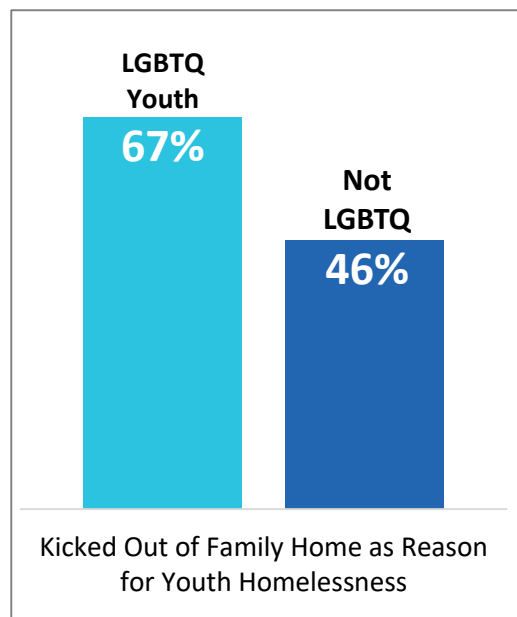


## Kicked Out/Rejected by Family

The third reason for youth homelessness, as reported by 51% (n=78) of survey respondents, was that they were kicked out of their family's home. Young adults between the ages of 18-24 (54%) were significantly more likely than minors under age 17 (26%) to have been kicked out of their family home ( $\chi^2=5.134$ ,  $p=.02$ ). Exhibit 23 shows that youth surveyed who **identified as LGBTQ are significantly more likely to be homeless - 67% - because they were kicked out of their family home, compared to 46% of youth surveyed who did not identify as LGBTQ and were homeless for this reason** ( $\chi^2=4.311$ ,  $p=.04$ ).

Coming out at a young age is associated with increased risk for longer time spent homeless (Rosario et al, 2012). LGBTQ youth often come out to significant negative reactions from their families and are rejected and put out of their homes as a result of sharing their sexual orientation or gender identity (Durso & Gates, 2012). This survey finding is supported by key informants interviewed. According to one informant, “[Youth] are told they have to leave home by whomever they’re living with, most commonly their parents, when they come out as trans, queer, gay, or they are outed.” Youth being kicked out of their family’s home and/or rejected by their family, regardless of LGBTQ identity, was significantly correlated to youth having experienced abuse, neglect, abandonment and/or family violence as a reason for their homelessness ( $p=.02$ ).

Exhibit 23. LGBTQ Identity and Being Kicked Out of Family Home as Reason for Youth Homelessness



## Left Other Housing Situations with No Place to Stay

Almost half of youth (49%, n=76) reported that they became homeless because they left another housing/living situation without having a secure place to stay. This larger category encompasses specific housing/living situations, including:

- 33% (n=57) left their family’s home as their own decision (e.g., the youth ran away);
- 16% (n=27) recently moved to the Tucson/Pima County area from another location and did not have any place to stay; and
- 10% (n=15) exited a transitional or supportive housing program with nowhere to go.

Youth leaving other housing with no place to stay was significantly correlated to youth having experienced abuse, neglect, abandonment and/or family violence ( $p=.02$ ) and faced issues related to child welfare involvement as reasons for their homelessness ( $p=.00$ ).



## Substance Abuse and/or Health Issues

A total of 42% of youth (n=64) reported that their homelessness was due to substance abuse and/or health issues faced by themselves and/or a family member. Specific reasons for youth homelessness related to this larger issue, with many youth reporting more than one reason, include:

- 20% (n=31) of youth had a mental or physical health issue;
- 15% (n=23) of youth had an alcohol or drug use disorder;
- 18% (n=28) had a caregiver with an alcohol or drug use disorder;
- 15% (n=23) had a caregiver with a mental or physical health issue;
- 5% (n=8) of youth exited a substance abuse or mental health treatment program with nowhere to go.

Exhibit 24. LGBTQ Identity and Youth Substance Abuse/Health Issue as Reason for Youth Homelessness

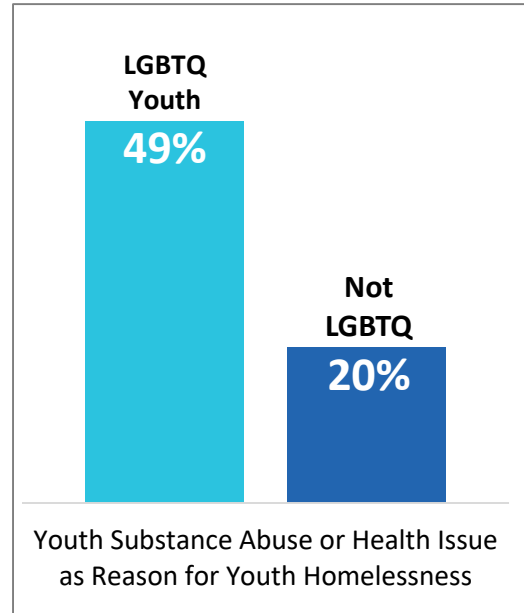


Exhibit 24 shows that youth surveyed who identified as **LGBTQ** are significantly more likely to be homeless – 49% – because of their own substance abuse issue or mental/physical health issue, compared to 20% of youth surveyed who did not identify as LGBTQ and were homeless for this reason ( $\chi^2=11.07$ ,  $p=.00$ ). Youth homelessness due to substance abuse and mental health issues, regardless of LGBTQ identity, was significantly correlated to youth homelessness due to experiencing abuse, neglect, abandonment and/or family violence ( $p=.00$ ); issues related to child welfare involvement ( $p=.00$ ); and death of their caregiver ( $p=.04$ ).

## Child Welfare Involvement Issues

Almost a quarter of youth (21%, n=33) became homeless because of reasons related to being involved with the child welfare system, with many reporting more than one reason:

- 15% (n=23) reported that they aged out or opted out of the child welfare system with nowhere to go; and
- 14% (n=21) faced issues with their child welfare placement that led them leave the placement with nowhere to go.

Youth homelessness related to child welfare involvement was significantly correlated to youth homelessness due to substance abuse and/or mental health issues ( $p=.01$ ); leaving other housing situations with nowhere to go ( $p=.00$ ); and death of their caregiver ( $p=.00$ ).



## Released from Incarceration

Youth released from detention or correctional facilities often do not have support networks or stable housing. Of the youth surveyed, 8% (n=13) reported that they became homeless because they were released from jail or prison with nowhere to go. Youth homelessness due to incarceration release with nowhere to go was significantly correlated to youth homelessness due to experiencing abuse, neglect, abandonment and/or family violence (p=.03).

## Caregiver Death

Additionally, a low percentage of youth surveyed (8%, n=13) reported that a reason for their homelessness was the death of their caregiver. Youth homelessness related to caregiver death was significantly correlated to youth homelessness due to leaving other housing situations with nowhere to go (p=.00); experiencing abuse, neglect, abandonment and/or family violence (p=.01); and substance abuse and/or mental health issues (p=.04).

## Service Provider Perspective on Factors Contributing to Youth Homelessness

Thirteen key informants were interviewed to gain their perspectives on the causes of youth homelessness. Factors identified by interviewees mirror those reported by youth survey respondents and identified nationally (USICH, 2018). Many informants cited family poverty or financial instability as a major factor for youth homelessness. A related community-level factor is a lack of affordable housing. One informant noted that low-income housing typically has negative characteristics such as high rates of substance use and crime that make it unstable for families. Parental issues, including substance abuse, mental health, incarceration, deportation, or death are also related to a family's financial and housing instability.

Additionally, many interviewees cited family conflict, domestic violence, or a "toxic home environment" as playing a major role youth homelessness. This environment may be related to a young person's sexual orientation or gender identity, teen pregnancy, or other people in the home who create tension. Additionally, teen pregnancy often leads to conflict in the home, with young parents being kicked out or choosing to leave because their family is not supportive with pregnancy outside of marriage and/or they don't want to raise a child in an unstable environment. One interviewee explained, "When a youth finds out she's pregnant, she decides to leave and not to raise child in this [toxic] environment." Additionally, some young people run away at an early age because they can't handle their parents' rules, or they are not comfortable with other adults in the home. For example, one interviewee stated that youth have told her, "I can't go home [because] my Mom has new boyfriend that I don't like." Informants also described situations in which turning 18 or 21 years old results in youth homelessness because they become an "adult" and/or lose access to benefits that only younger people can access through service providers. School-enrolled youth may lose some access to some available resources upon graduating or dropping out of school. Or an LGBTQ youth may be allowed to remain at home as a "compromise, but only until they turn 18 years old."



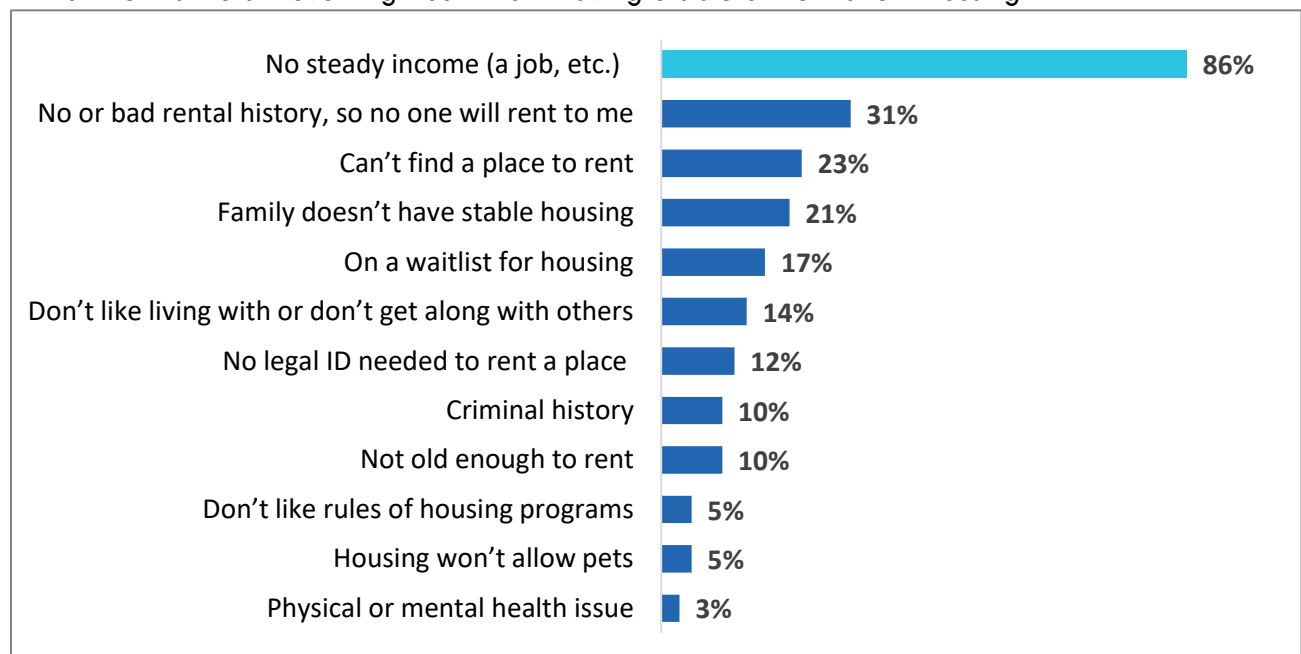


According to another informant, school-aged homeless youth are particularly vulnerable as they may be hiding from authorities/family and are placed in vulnerable positions because they can't legally get their own apartments or sign for themselves. Youth transitioning through different types of homelessness is also a theme of some respondents. Families may live in overcrowded, "doubled up" situations where they rotate through staying in their car, at hotels, or staying with other families. Youth who are "couch surfing," especially long-term, can become homeless on the streets. One informant explained, "A youth staying on a cousin's or friend's couch may exhaust that option and then move on to other friends and acquaintances that they don't know well. It may not be safe. With this population, housing stability is shaky in regard to having place to stay and can change quickly." They are often obligated to contribute money, food, or labor where they are staying, causing them to feel like a burden to those they are living with, yet face challenges working while going to school.

## BARRIERS PREVENTING STABLE AND PERMANENT HOUSING

According to youth survey data, the primary barrier that has prevented 86% (n=132) of respondents from having stable or permanent housing is a lack of sufficient income, either from not having employment or not earning enough money from employment to cover housing costs (see Exhibit 25). One respondent commented on the survey, "as a single parent of several children, I cannot afford to pay for a deposit, first and last month's rent, and other move-in costs." Other common barriers are related to limited access to housing because respondents have no or poor rental history (including bad credit history) or they cannot find a place to affordably rent.

Exhibit 25. Barriers Preventing Youth from Having Stable or Permanent Housing



(N=154)

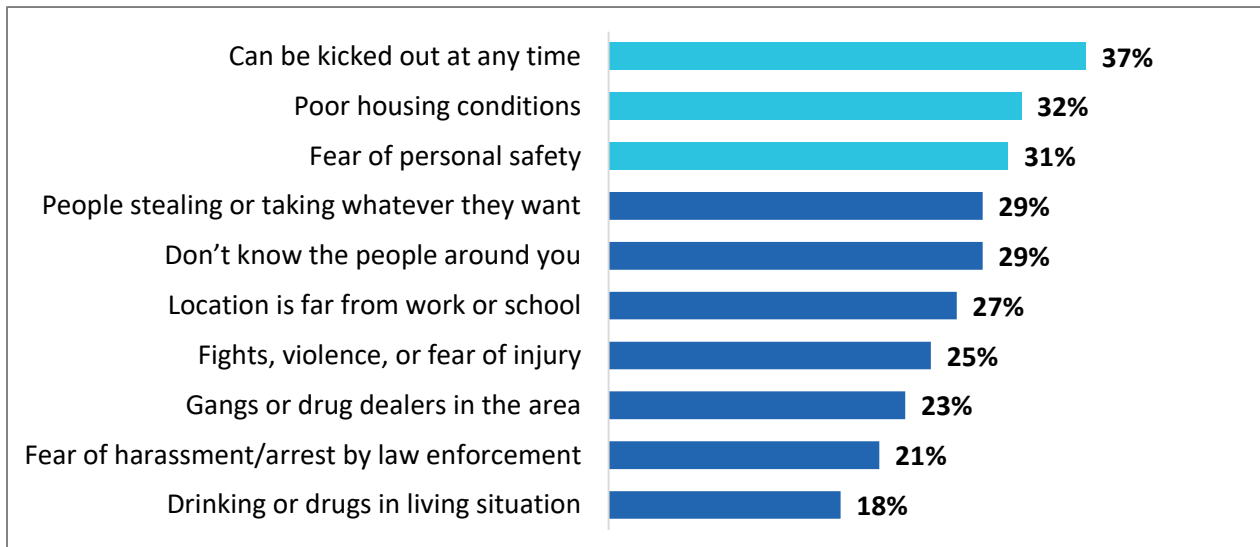




## CONCERNS WITH CURRENT LIVING SITUATION

Exhibit 26 shows the common concerns that survey respondents reported having with their current living situation. Respondents could select all the options that applied to them as well as provide open-ended comments, with most respondents listing multiple concerns. The main concern shared by over a third of respondents (37%, n=57) was the lack of permanency of their current situation, fearing that they could be kicked out at any time. Nearly a third (32%, n=50) were concerned about poor housing conditions, including lack of cleanliness (e.g., in emergency housing), presence of pests (e.g., rats, cockroaches), unsecure living spaces (e.g., non-locking doors), and physical damage (e.g., broken windows, holes in wall). Additionally, nearly a third (31%, n=48) expressed concerns for their personal safety and/or the safety of their children. Specific safety concerns included exposure to fights, violence, and fear of injury (25%, n=39), and fear of being sex trafficked (5%, n=8), sexually assaulted (11%, n=17), or killed (14%, n=21). Youth who identified as LGBTQ (55%, n=18) were significantly more likely to express concerns for their personal safety in their current living situation, specifically fear of being sexually assaulted (24% vs 7%,  $\chi^2=7.456$ ,  $p=.01$ ), than youth who identified as heterosexual and cisgender (46%, n=30) ( $\chi^2=10.698$ ,  $p=.00$ ). This finding is consistent with national data on the unique concerns facing LGBTQ homeless youth (Morton et al, 2018; USHIC, 2018).

Exhibit 26. Concerns with Current Living Situation



(N=154)

Service providers interviewed for this Needs Assessment expressed similar concerns with the unstable living situations of youth they serve. Informants commented that their young age and developing brains make them especially vulnerable to others who will take advantage of their situations. Echoing this sentiment, one study found that exposure to trauma and other negative environmental factors may contribute to homeless youth being more susceptible than their peers to impairments in executive function and impulse control, and increase risk-taking behaviors (Piche, Kaylegian, Smith & Hunter, 2018).



# Service Utilization and Unmet Needs

## BASIC NEEDS

Survey respondents were provided with a list of services in Tucson and Pima County to ascertain which services they have used to meet their needs in the past 90 days, as well as gaps in services that respondents needed in the past 90 days but at least once could not get.

### Services Used in Past 90 Days to Meet Basic Needs

Exhibit 27 shows that primary services and resources that over half to two thirds of respondents have used in the past 90 days to meet their basic needs include: transportation (67%, n=103) (e.g., access to a bus pass); access to food items (57%, n=88) (e.g., food boxes, snack packs, groceries), and access to toiletries (53%, n=81) (e.g., body care products). Approximately a third of respondents utilized services to receive clothing items (36%, n=55) and to get meals at community places (31%, n=48). Regarding housing specific services, 29% (n=44) have utilized longer-term housing services where a person can stay for 6 months or more; 28% (n=43) stayed in short-term shelter or emergency housing, and 23% (n=36) received financial assistance to get into housing.

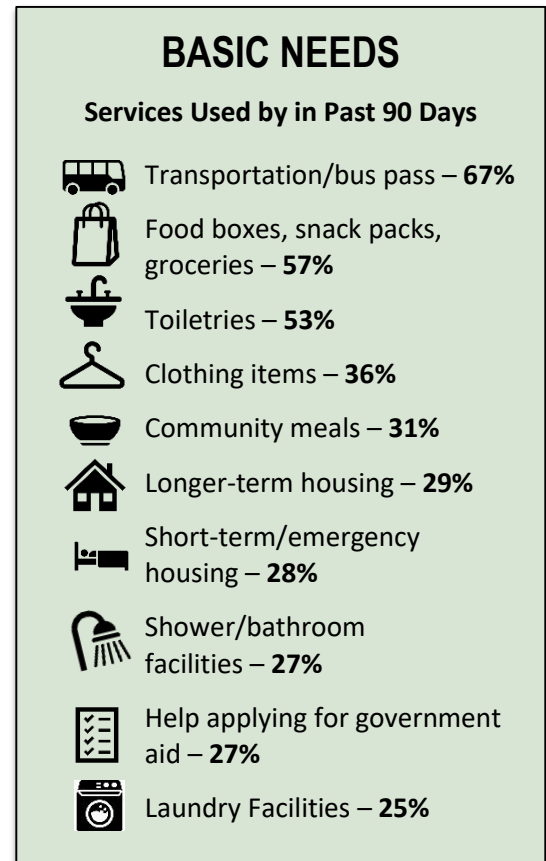


Exhibit 27. Basic Needs Service Use and Gaps in Access

Services in Tucson/Pima County	Used Service in Past 90 Days % (n)	Needed Service in Past 90 Days but Could Not Get At Least Once % (n)
Transportation, such as a bus pass	67% (103)	13% (20)
Food, such as food boxes, snack packs, groceries	57% (88)	8% (12)
Toiletries such as shampoo or toothbrush	53% (81)	10% (15)
Clothing items	36% (55)	12% (18)
Meals at community places	31% (48)	8% (13)
Longer term housing program	29% (44)	17% (26)
Short-term shelter or emergency housing	28% (43)	16% (24)
Shower and bathroom facilities	27% (41)	7% (11)



Services in Tucson/Pima County	Used Service in Past 90 Days % (n)	Needed Service in Past 90 Days but Could Not Get At Least Once % (n)
Help applying for government aid	27% (41)	7% (10)
Laundry facilities	25% (38)	19% (29)
Financial assistance to get into housing	23% (36)	21% (32)
Feminine hygiene products	23% (36)	8% (12)
Message/mail/phone services	21% (32)	9% (14)
Help with legal issues	12% (18)	6% (9)
Child care for minor children	7% (11)	10% (15)
Food or veterinary care for a pet	7% (10)	6% (9)
Money to leave town	0% (0)	8% (12)

### *Services Used to Meet Needs of Focus Group Youth*

The services used by focus group youth is consistent with those used by survey respondents.

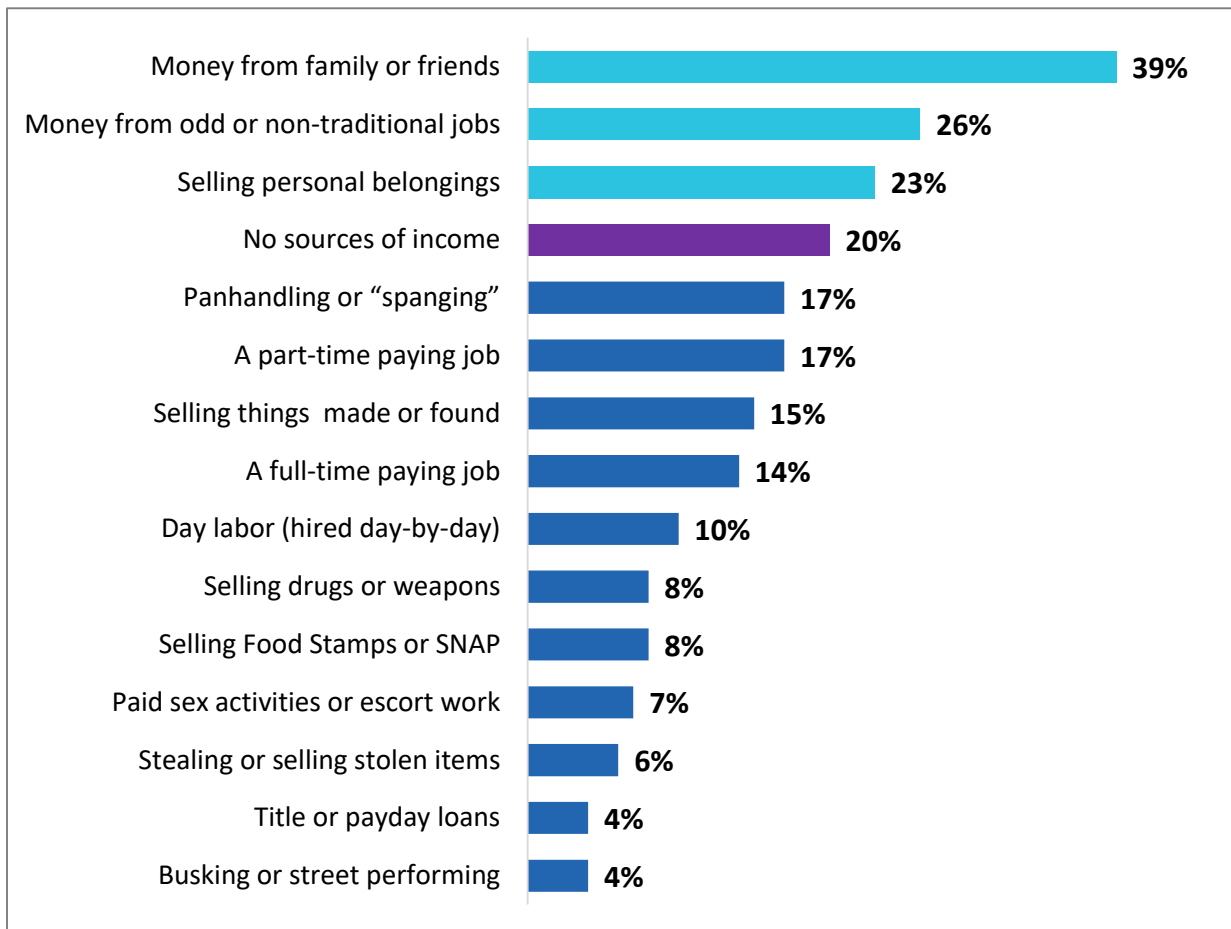
- Some youth receive services from more than one agency, with agencies referring youth to other agencies for services they do not provide.
- Youth access resources and services from organizations not solely serving individuals experiencing homelessness, such as local food banks, higher education community programs, and free non-profit shopping resources.
- Youth are most commonly able to get a bus pass for transportation, however taking the bus can result in a long commute time and requires careful time management and planning.
- Most youth have a cell phone, but few have a data plan. Youth often depend on free wireless networks and agency computers (library, drop-in center, etc.) to access the internet.
- Youth who age out of foster care or other programs for youth face the continued challenge of finding new ways to meet their needs that were previously met by programs.
- Homeless youth who are also designated as having a serious mental illness (SMI) are able to access multiple job and soft skills training through a Permanent Supportive Housing program.



## Sources of Income in Past 30 days

From youth survey data, Exhibit 28 shows the various sources from which respondents earned income in the past 30 days. Youth were able to select all that applied to them, so the percentages do not total to 100%. The highest percentage reported, nearly 40% (n=60) receive money from family or friends as a source of income. Roughly a quarter earn money from odd or non-traditional jobs (26%, n=40) or from selling personal belongings (23%, n=35). Of concern is that 20% (n=30) of youth surveyed reported that they had no sources of income. The average monthly income of young people surveyed ranges from \$0 to \$1,900, with an average of \$413, and median of \$230. Given the diverse sources of income earned by youth surveyed, the research team examined how demographic characteristics of youth, including ethnicity, LGBTQ identity, and pregnant/parenting status may be related to types of income earned. Consistent with national data (Morton et al, 2018; USHIC, 2018), youth surveyed who identified as LGBTQ (15%) were significantly more likely to have engaged in paid sex activities or escort work as a source of income than heterosexual and cisgender youth (4%) ( $\chi^2=5.185$ ,  $p=.02$ ).

Exhibit 28. Sources of Income from Past 30 Days



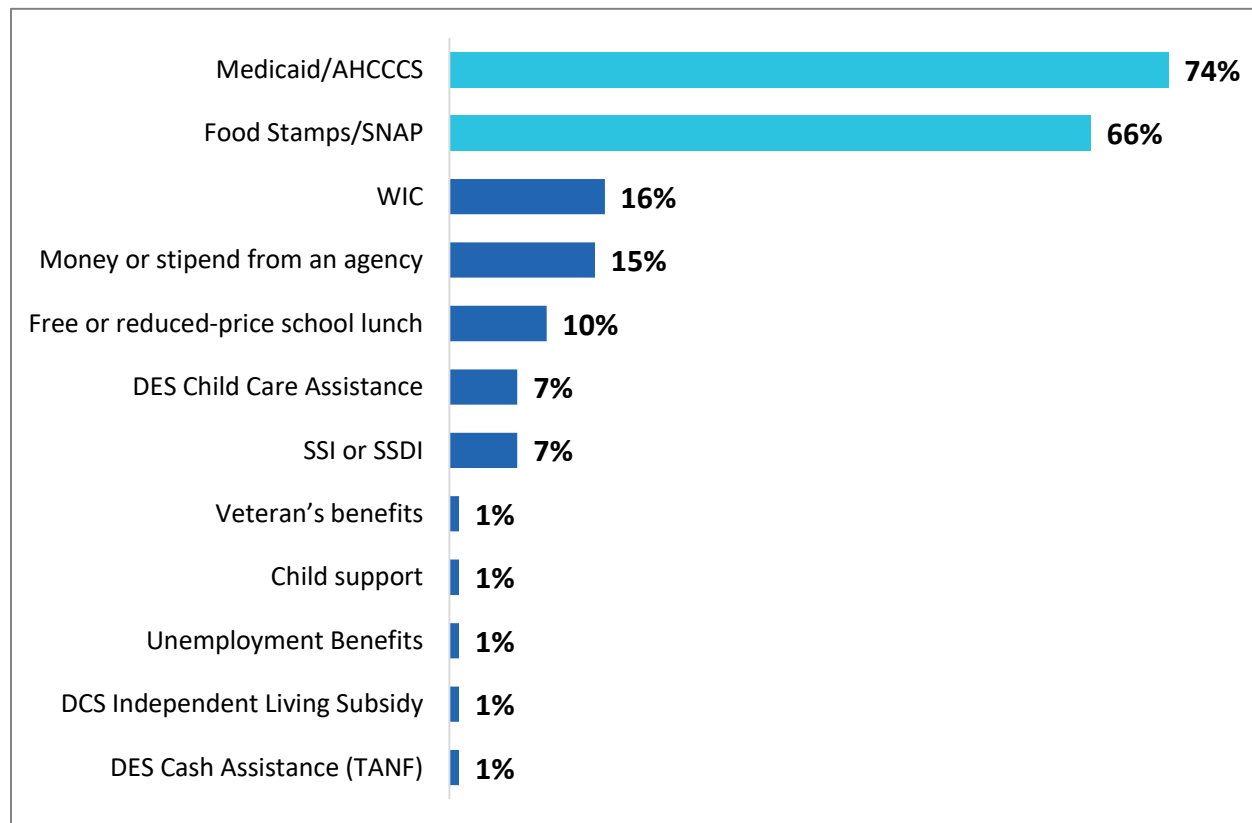
(N=154)



## Benefits Received

Exhibit 29 shows that the different benefits that survey respondents reported receiving. Most respondents surveyed receive AHCCCS/Medicaid (74%, n=114) and Food Stamps/SNAP (65%, n=101). Other common benefits received by a low proportion of youth surveyed who meet program eligibility criteria include WIC (16%, n=24), money or stipend from an agency (15%, n=23), and free or reduced-price lunch (10%, n=16). Consistent with survey findings, focus group youth also reported receiving benefits such as AHCCCS, Food Stamps, and Social Security/Disability Income. Tribal youth who participated in focus groups also reported that they have access to Indian Health Services (IHS) medical and dental care. Given the variety of benefits reported by youth surveyed, the research team examined how demographic characteristics of youth may be related to benefits received. Interestingly, youth who identified as non-Hispanic/Latinx were significantly more likely to report receiving Medicaid/AHCCCS (82%, n=65), compared to Hispanic/Latinx identifying youth (67%, n=49) ( $\chi^2=4.648$ ,  $p=.03$ ). Not surprisingly, pregnant or parenting youth were more likely to report receiving WIC (39%, n=18) ( $\chi^2=26.719$ ,  $p=.00$ ); of concern is that 39% is a low proportion of pregnant and parenting youth accessing this program for they are eligible.

Exhibit 29. Benefits Received by Survey Respondents



(N=154)



## Unmet Basic Needs

Of the services available to meet basic needs, the highest percentage of survey respondents who needed a service but could not get it at least once in the past 90 days was for financial assistance for housing (21%, n=32). Gaps in access to housing were also noted for longer-term housing (17%, n=26) and short-term housing or emergency shelter (16%, n=24). All service providers interviewed for this Needs Assessment specifically noted that a lack of housing available for youth and young adults was a primary unmet need in the Tucson/Pima County. Interviewees reported the need to have multiple housing options for youth, youth friendly shelters, and specifically LGBTQ youth-friendly shelters. Other gaps observed in needed services were access to laundry facilities (19%, n=29), transportation (13%, n=20), clothing items (12%, n=18), and toiletry products (10%, n=15).

Access to child care for children and access to financial resources to help a young person leave town to get to permanent housing out of the area (e.g., live with a family member out of state) were two services in which the percentage of those who could not get the service was greater than the percentage of those who received the service in the past 90 days.








## Unmet Needs Identified by Focus Group Youth

Youth who participated in focus groups discussed having similar unmet needs of youth surveyed. While many programs/ organizations have multiple services and basic needs items available, eligibility requirements vary by organization and program. Key unmet needs of focus group youth include:



- Lack of dental care and dental insurance;
- Lack of stable housing;
- Not having a good paying job or enough experience to get a job;
- Lack of services for youth who age out of or are not eligible for programs;
- Limited transportation options - youth have access to bus passes, but would like assistance with getting a car, learning to drive, and getting a driver's license;
- Lack of laundry facilities located within their housing; and
- Running out of toiletries.

## GAPS IN BASIC NEEDS SERVICES

### Services that Respondents Needed in the Past 90 Days but Couldn't Get

	Financial assistance for housing – <b>21%</b>
	Laundry Facilities – <b>19%</b>
	Longer-term housing – <b>17%</b>
	Short-term shelter/emergency housing – <b>16%</b>
	Transportation/bus pass – <b>13%</b>
	Clothing items – <b>12%</b>
	Toiletries – <b>10%</b>

### Services Where the % Needing the Service was > the % that Used the Service in the Past 90 Days

	<b>Child care</b> for minor children – used by <b>7%</b> , needed by <b>10%</b>
	<b>Money to leave town</b> to obtain permanent housing – used by <b>0%</b> and needed by <b>8%</b>



### Unmet Youth Needs Identified by Service Providers

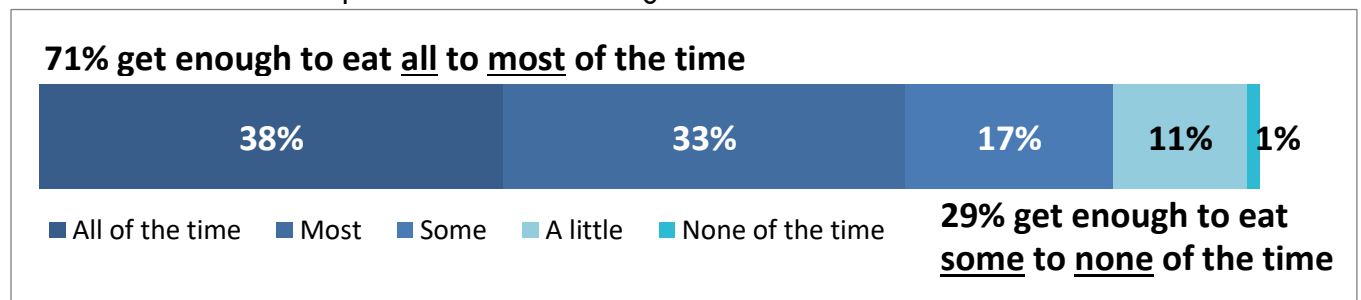
Service providers interviewed (N=13) identified similar unmet needs of homeless youth. One direct service provider reported that most youth have experienced some level of trauma, are living day by day, and struggle with depression and anxiety. Access to mental health care is unmet need identified by service providers, which is compounded by the fact that the behavioral health system is not easy to navigate or easily accessible, especially to minors who are disconnected from their parents. Subsets of youth also have high needs for behavioral health and other wraparound services that are difficult to obtain and/or require an SMI designation. An informant who is an expert on youth trafficking reported, “There needs to be different types of therapeutic support, different from case management, for the more complex clients who cannot stop being in crisis, to begin to transition them into normal life.”

Commenting on the need to make reproductive health care more accessible to homeless youth, one person reported that they are coordinating with local homeless youth-serving agencies to have a reproductive health assessment integrated into in the agencies’ intake processes as part of the discussion of youths’ life goals. Additionally, youth-serving agencies should provide soft skills (e.g., employment, life, and parenting skills) to help youth transition into adulthood. There is also a need for transitional services to be available for youth when they graduate from high school or age out of programs but are still facing the same inherent situation.

### Getting Enough to Eat

Inquiring specifically about access to food as a basic need, survey respondents were asked how often they are able to get enough to eat, using a 5-point scale from “all of the time” to “none of the time.” Exhibit 30 shows that nearly three of four respondents (71%, n=104) reported that they get enough to eat “all of the time” to “most of the time.” Of concern is that 29% (n=43) said they get enough to eat “some of the time” to “none of the time.” Focus group youth generally reported that they are able to meet their food needs through local agencies that provider snack packs, community food pantries, and food boxes.

Exhibit 30. Extent that Respondents Can Get Enough to Eat



(N=154)

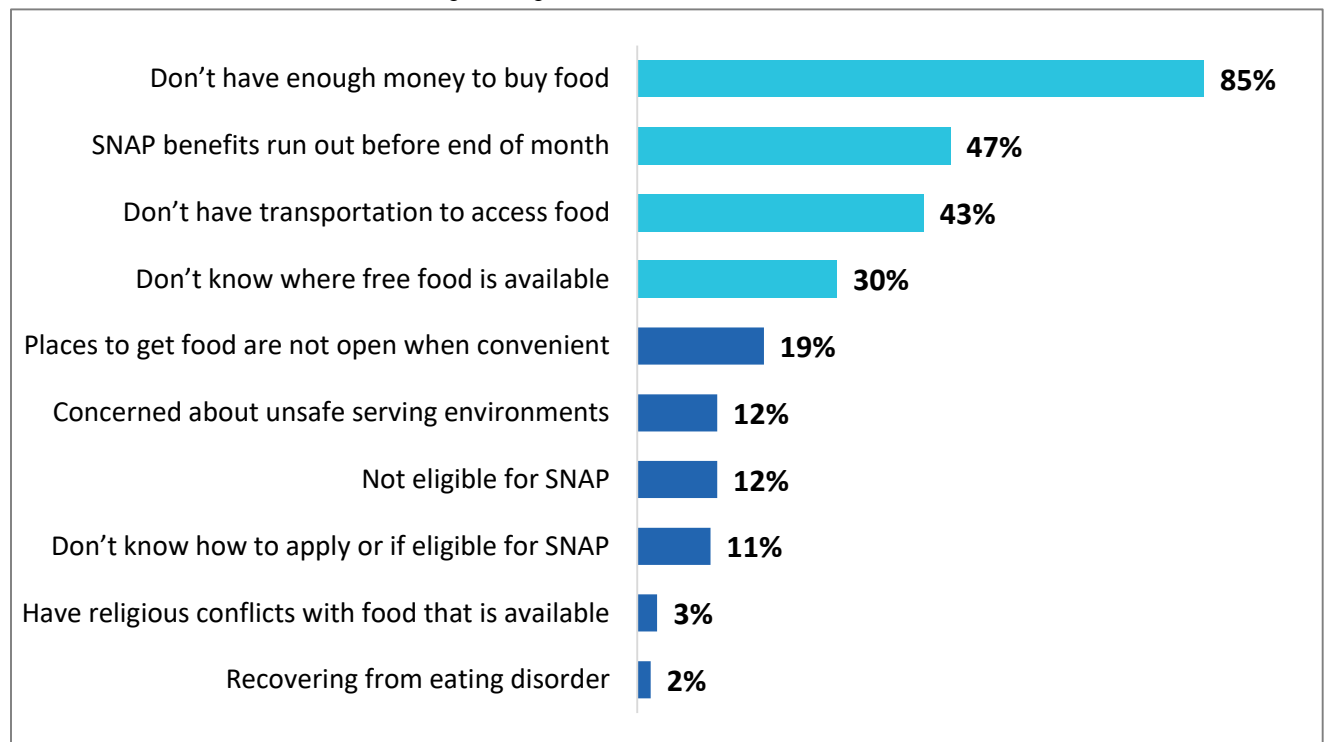




### Barriers to Getting Enough to Eat

Of survey respondents who had any difficulty in getting enough to eat (N=95 reported getting enough to eat “most of the time” to “none of the time”), Exhibit 31 shows that 85% (n=81) didn’t have enough money to buy food. This response is consistent with lack of finances as a primary barrier to not having permanent and stable housing. Additionally, 47% (n=45) use up their SNAP benefits before the end of the month. Another common reason for not getting enough to eat is not having transportation to access places to buy food (43%, n=41). One respondent commented that there are limited grocery stores within walking distance to where they live. Of concern is that 30% (n=28) reported not knowing where free food is available. Some respondents (19%, n=18) also noted that places to get free food are not open at convenient times, with some giving the example of shelter meal times not being conducive to their work schedule.

Exhibit 31. Reasons for Not Getting Enough to Eat



(N=95 of respondents who reported getting enough food “most of the time” to “none of the time.”)



## MEDICAL, DENTAL, AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE

Over a quarter of young people who responded to the survey (28%, n=43) rated their health as excellent to very good; two thirds (66%, n=101) rated their health as good to fair; and 6% (n=9) rated their health as poor (see Exhibit 32).

In addition to their health rating, respondents were asked how often they are able to meet their health care needs, utilizing the same 5-point scale from “all of the time” to “none of the time,” including a “don’t need” option if the person does not need this service. Exhibit 33 shows that the health care service that nearly half of respondents (42%, n=65) can get “all of the time” is medical care, with only 9% (n=14) reporting that they are not able to get the medical care that they need. Regarding behavioral health care, almost a third (31%, n=47) can access this service “all of the time,” 12% (n=18) are not able to get needed behavioral health services, and 31% (n=48) reported not needing this service. A noticeable service gap is that only 25% of respondents are able to get the dental care they need “all of the time.” Whereas 32% (n=49) are not able to access the dental care they need.

Exhibit 32. Respondents Rating of Their Health

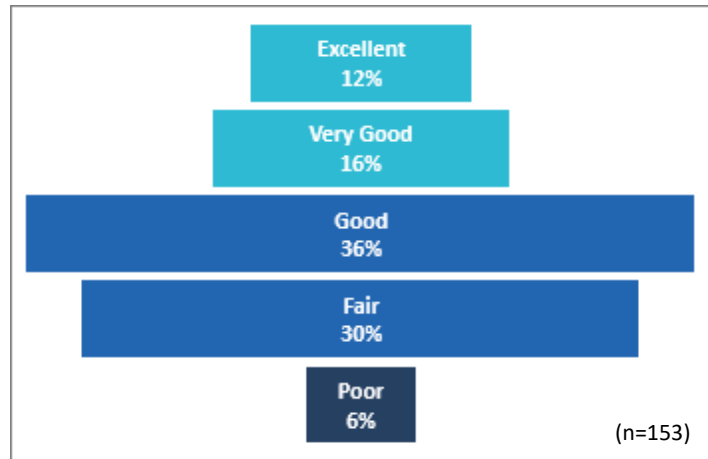
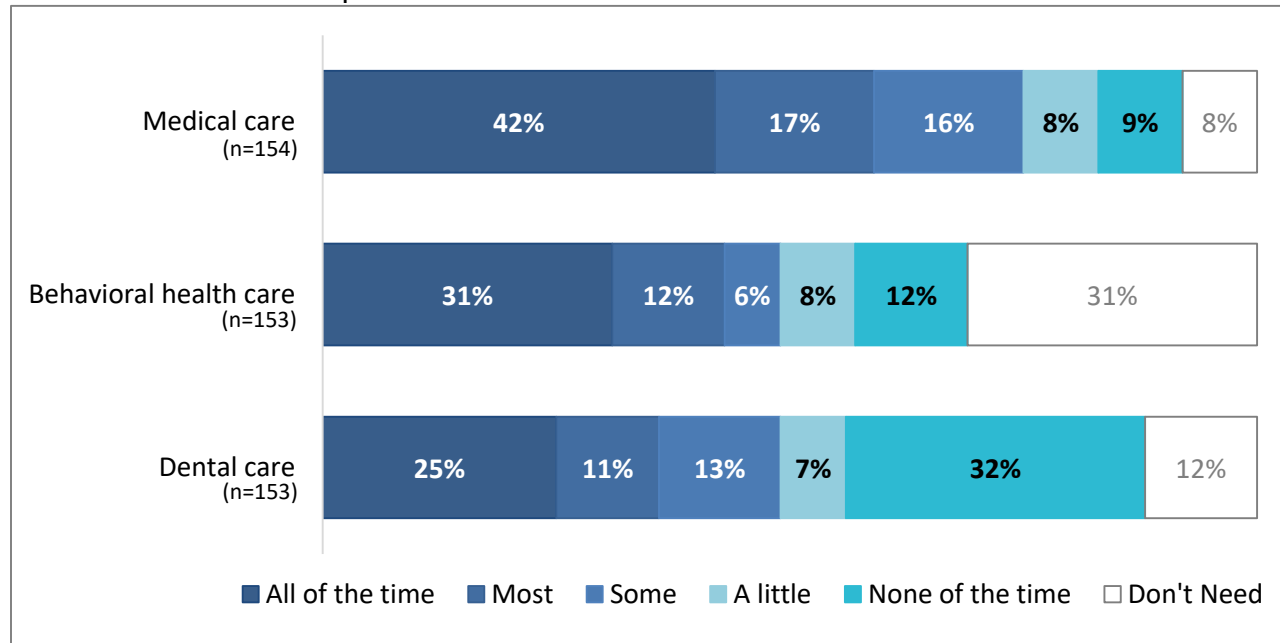


Exhibit 33. Extent that Respondents Can Meet Health Care Needs

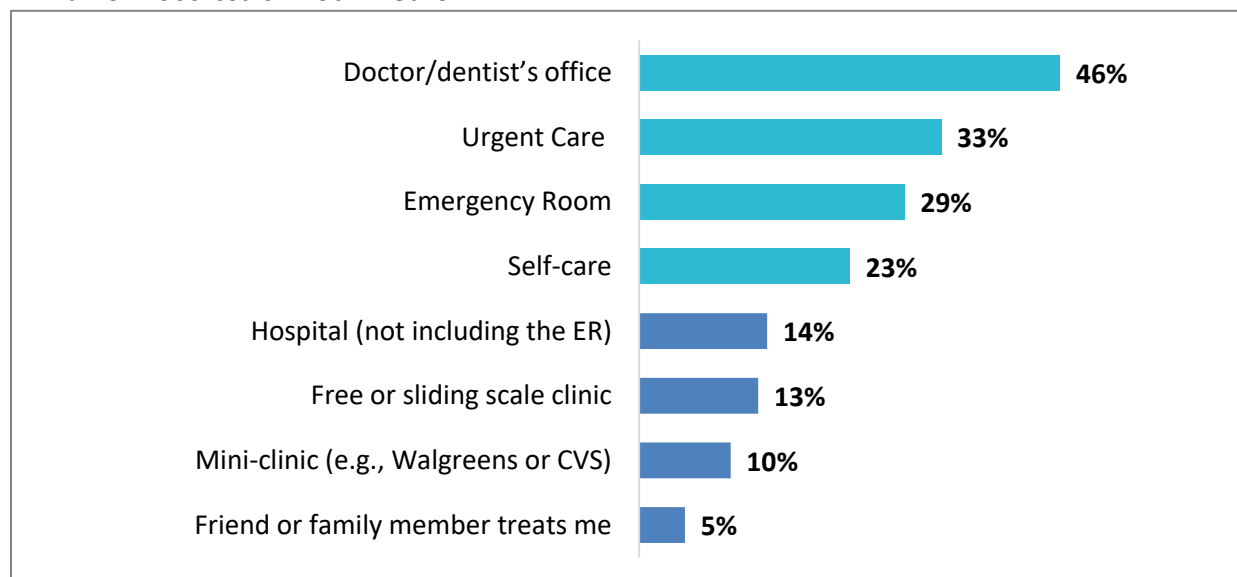


## Health Care Services

Three out of four survey respondents (74%, n=114) reported that they receive Medicaid through the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). Other sources of health insurance were not explicitly reported, however a few people indicated in open-responses that they receive health care through Indian Health Services.

Respondents were given a list of health care service options and were asked to select the ones they use to receive care. From this list, Exhibit 34 shows that 46% (n=71) access medical and/or dental care from a doctor's office or a dentist's office, followed by Urgent Care (33%, n=51), the Emergency Room (ER) (29%, n=44), and self-care/home strategies (23%, n=35). Respondents who have Medicaid/AHCCCS were significantly more likely than those who do not have this insurance to report using an Urgent Care (39% vs 18%) ( $\chi^2=5.950$ ,  $p=.02$ ) or the ER (34% vs 13%) ( $\chi^2=6.839$ ,  $p=.01$ ) for health care.

Exhibit 34. Sources of Health Care



(N=154)

## Services Used in Past 90 Days to Meet Health Care Needs

Research shows that youth who are homeless have a high prevalence of chronic physical health conditions including asthma, hypertension, tuberculosis, diabetes, and hepatitis (Wilder Research, 2005). Youth experiencing homelessness and unstable housing also experience higher rates of depression and other mental health disorders (Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999), as well as high rates of substance use disorders (Whitbeck et al., 2001). While survey respondents were not asked about specific health ailments, they were asked to indicate which type of health care service they used to meet their needs in the past 90 days, as well as gaps in health care services that respondents needed in the past 90 days but at least one or more times could not get it.



Exhibit 35 shows that the most commonly used health care service in the past 90 days was medical care, accessed by 40% (n=62) of respondents, followed by behavioral health services, accessed by 28% (n=43) of respondents. Fewer respondents, ranging from 8% to 12%, have utilized other health care services inquired about in the past 90 days, including dental, sexual health, vision, substance use services, and access to Naloxone or Narcan.

Exhibit 35. Health Care Utilization and Gaps in Access






	Used Service in Past 90 Days % (n)	Needed Service in Past 90 Days but Could Not Get At Least Once % (n)
Medical Care	40% (62)	11% (17)
Behavioral Health Care	28% (43)	7% (10)
Dental Care	12% (18)	18% (27)
Vision/Eye Care	11% (17)	10% (15)
Sexual Health Care	11% (17)	8% (12)
Substance Use Services	10% (16)	4% (6)
Access to Naloxone or Narcan	8% (13)	1% (2)

### Unmet Health Care Needs


Of the health care services listed, the highest percentage of respondents who needed a service but could not get it at least one time in the past 90 days was for dental care (18%, n=27). Dental care was the only health care service in which the percentage of those who needed the service but could not get it was greater than the percentage of those who received the service in the past 90 days (12%, n=18). Other gaps in health care services include 11% (n=17) of respondents needed but could not get medical care and 10% (n=15) who needed but could not get vision/eye care.

#### GAPS IN HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Services that Respondents Needed in the Past 90 Days but Couldn't Get

-  **Dental – 18%**
-  **Medical – 11%**
-  **Vision/Eye – 10%**
-  **Sexual Health – 8%**
-  **Behavioral Health – 7%**

Services Where the % Needing the Service was > the % that Used the Service in the Past 90 Days

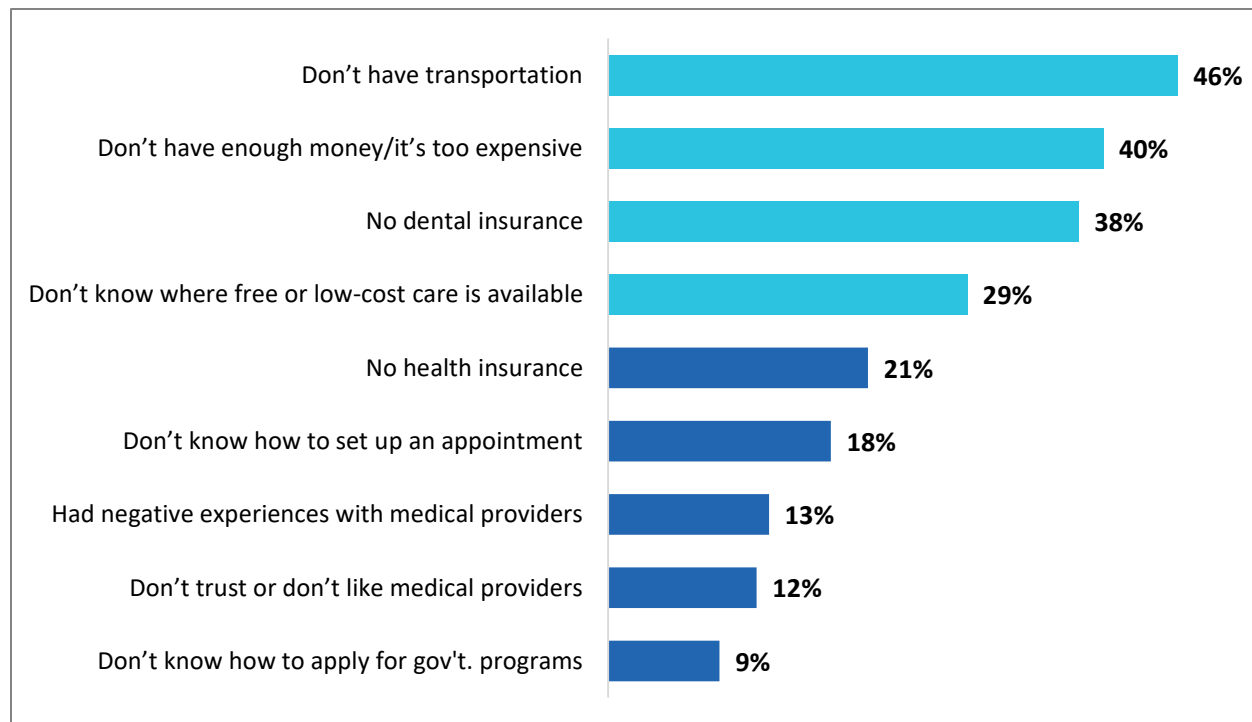
-  **Dental Care – used by 12% and needed by 18%**



## Barriers to Accessing Needed Health Care

Of respondents who had any difficulty in meeting their medical, dental, or behavioral health care needs (n=117 reported getting the care they needed “most of the time” to “none of the time”), Exhibit 36 shows the reasons why respondents are not able to get the health care that they need. The top reason provided by almost half of respondents (46%, n=54) is that they did not have transportation to get to a health care provider’s office. This response is consistent 43% who said lack of transportation was a barrier to getting adequate food. Additionally, 40% (n=47) said that health care is cost prohibitive, which is a consistent barrier reported to not having permanent and stable housing or getting enough to eat. Over a third (38%, n=44) of respondents said not having dental insurance is a barrier to getting needed dental care, while 21% (n=25) cited not having health insurance as a barrier to not getting medical and behavioral health care. Respondents also reported a lack of awareness as a barrier to health care, in terms of where to get free or low-cost services (29%, n=34), how to set up an appointment (18%, n=21), or how to apply for government programs that provide medical care (9%, n=10).

Exhibit 36. Barriers to Accessing Needed Health Care



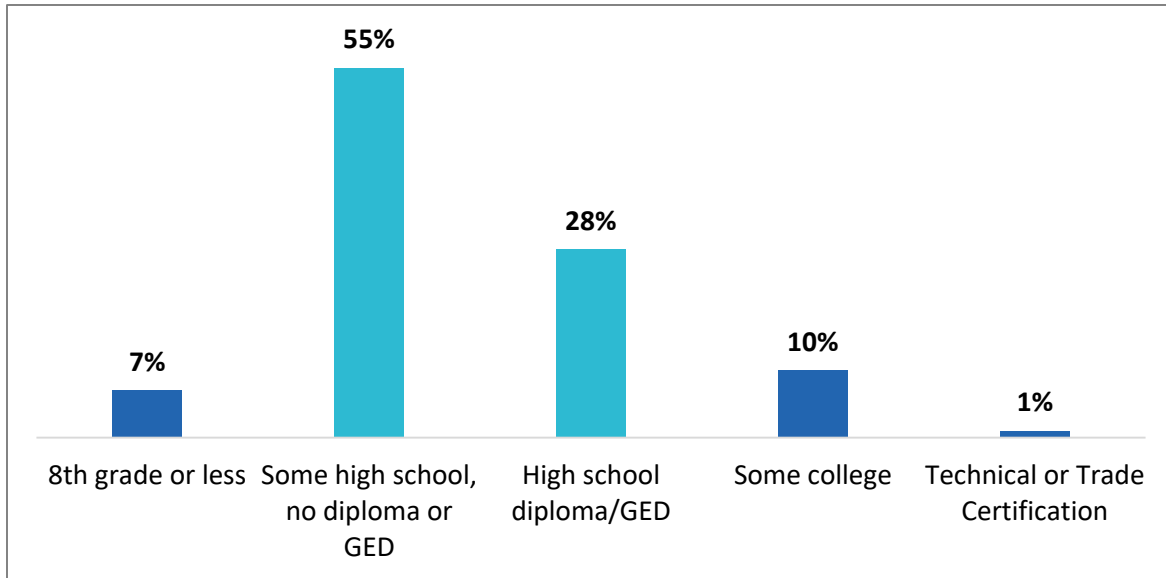
(n=117)



# Education and Employment Engagement and Gaps

Exhibit 37 shows the highest level of education achieved by survey respondents. Nearly two thirds (62%, n=95) of survey respondents have less than a high school education, which includes all youth surveyed who are under 17 (n=19) and 56% (n=76) of young adults ages 18-24. Over a quarter of young adults (18-24), 28% (n=43), have completed high school and 11% (n=16) combined have taken some college courses or completed technical or trade certification.

Exhibit 37. Highest Level of Education Completed



(N=154)





Almost half of youth surveyed (45%, n=69) are currently enrolled in an education program (such as classes to complete a GED or high school), which includes 95% (n=18) of youth under age 17 and only 38% (n=51) of young adults 18 years old or older. Additionally, 11% (n=17) are enrolled in a formal job training program for a profession, all of whom are 18 years old or older. A quarter of survey respondents (24%, n=37) reported that they are currently employed and 69% (n=80) are looking for work, the majority of whom are in the age range of 18-24 years.

## SERVICE USED IN PAST 90 DAYS RELATED TO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Exhibit 38 shows the services that respondents have used in the past 90 days to meet their education and employment needs. Over a quarter of youth are taking classes to finish their GED or high school education

**EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

**Services Used by in Past 90 Days**

-  Finish GED/High School – 27%
-  Help finding a job – 26%
-  Help getting documents such as an ID, birth certificate, or social security card – 21%
-  Job training – 19%



(27%, n=42), and 26% (n=40) have received assistance in finding a job. Additionally, 21% (n=33) have received help in obtaining documents needed for employment and/or education, such as and identification, birth certificate, or social security card. While 19% have participated in programming for job training (n=29).

Exhibit 38. Education and Employment Service Use and Gaps in Access





	Used Service in Past 90 Days % (n)	Needed Service in Past 90 Days but Could Not Get At Least Once % (n)
Classes to get a GED or finish high school	27% (42)	8% (13)
Help finding a job (e.g., resume development)	26% (40)	10% (15)
Help getting documents (e.g., ID, birth certificate, SSC)	21% (33)	16% (24)
Job training	19% (29)	10% (15)
Help getting into college	8% (13)	6% (9)
Help with reading	8% (12)	1% (2)
Help getting into a technical or vocational training program	7% (11)	5% (7)

## UNMET EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

Of the education and employment services listed, the main services utilized by respondents were also the main ones that others reported not being able to get in the past 90 days. The highest percentage of respondents who needed a service but could not get it at least one time in the past 90 days was for assistance in obtaining identifying documents (16%, n=24). Other gaps noted in needed services included help finding a job (10%, n=15), job training programs (10%, n=15), and classes to complete a GED or high school education (8%, n=13).

### GAPS IN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

**Services that Respondents Needed in the Past 90 Days but Couldn't Get**

-  Help getting documents such as an ID, birth certificate, or social security card – **16%**
-  Help finding a job – **10%**
-  Job training – **10%**
-  Finish GED/High School – **8%**

## BARRIERS TO ACHIEVING EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT GOALS

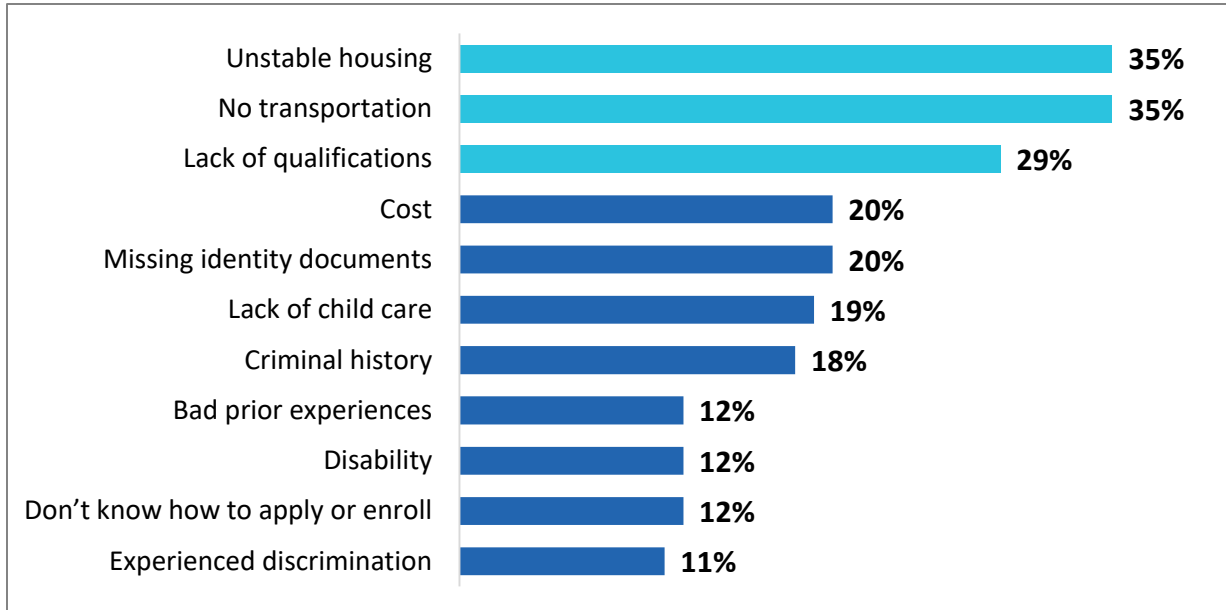
Exhibit 39 shows that approximately a third of respondents (35%, n=55) indicated that unstable housing and a lack of transportation were barriers to them achieving their education and





employment goals. Additionally, 29% (n=45) cited that they lacked the qualifications to achieve their goals. Other deterrents included cost (20%, n=31), missing identity documents (20%, n=31), lack of child care (19%, n=28), and criminal history (18%, n=27).

**Exhibit 39. Barriers to Achieving Education and Employment Goals of Youth Surveyed**



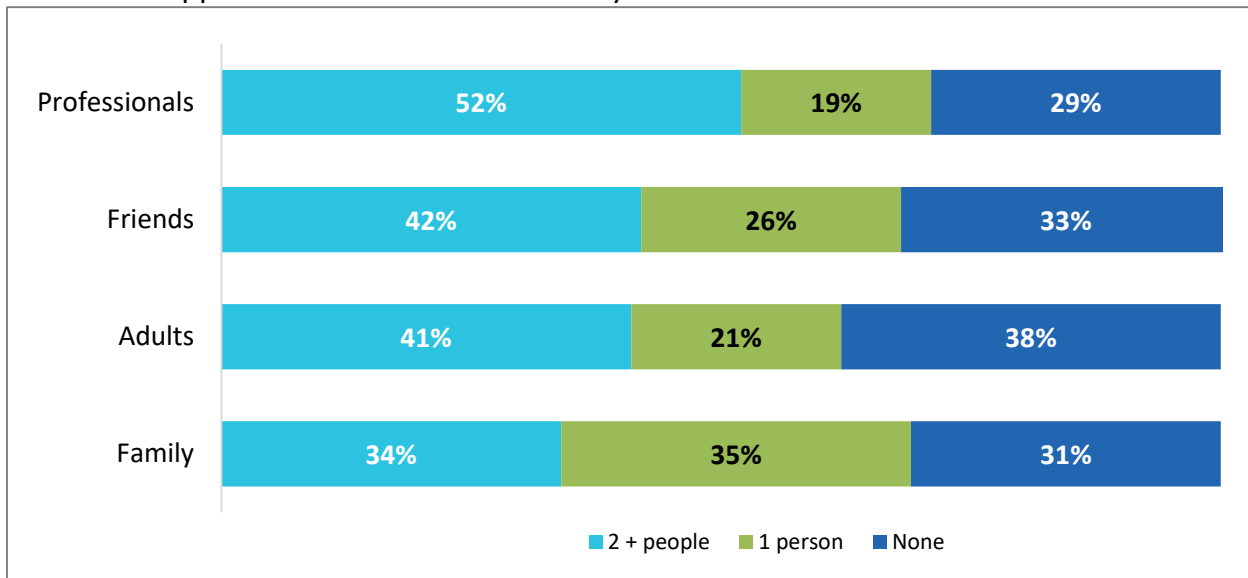
(N=154)

## Youth Supportive Networks

Nearly three out of four youth surveyed (71%, n=109) reported that they have one or more professional service providers with whom they could talk to about important matters or turn to for help (see Exhibit 40). This high proportion may have been a function of this survey being administered to youth by service providers. Additionally, a combined 69% (n=105) have one or more family members as support persons, 68% (n=103) have one or more friends to turn to, and 62% (n=93) have one or more older friends to turn to as supportive networks.



Exhibit 40. Supportive Networks of Youth Surveyed



(N=154)

Youth demographics were examined by supportive networks, comparing those who reported having at least one supportive person in each category by those who reported having no supportive person in each category. A few significant relationships were found. Young people ages 13-17 years (90%) were significantly more likely than those ages 18-24 (64%) to have one or more friends their age that they can talk to about important matters or turn to for help ( $\chi^2=4.839$ ,  $p=.03$ ). However, respondents ages 18-24 (75%) were significantly more likely than those under 18 years (47%) to have one or more professional support persons ( $\chi^2=6.035$ ,  $p=.01$ ). Additionally, youth who identified as LGBTQ (85%) were significantly more likely to report have one or more professional support persons than heterosexual and cisgender youth (68%) ( $\chi^2=3.802$ ,  $p=.05$ ).



## Services for Homeless Youth

Appendix F shows the variety of services offered to homeless and unstably housed youth by the organizations of key informants interviewed. Please note that this list is not exhaustive and may not account for agency services that the key informant did not mention. Please refer to individual programs for specific services provided.

### EFFECTIVE SERVICES AND PRACTICES

Several informants highlighted the importance of using youth-friendly practices and establishing youth friendly spaces when working with homeless youth. An informant from a direct service provider stated, “It’s important that it’s a non-clinical setting, one-on-one...Introducing services in a space that’s comfortable can make a big difference.” An informant from another youth-serving organization noted that if an organization is not youth-friendly in its practices, and youth who come to the agency have a bad experience, they may never again attempt to get assistance.

Speaking based on her experience in the Pima County library, another informant offered her perspective on how the library could best assist homeless youth: “Make teen spaces safe for teens to act like teens, where they can talk with friends. Don’t correct language, no ‘Sit in the chair the right way.’” The informant added that a homeless youth in such a space may think “Hey, this is a comfortable place. These people like me,” and be more likely to open up about their needs to a librarian. An informant from a medical provider shared that youth-friendly practices they employ to provide reproductive health care to youth, some of whom are homeless. The provider is conducting a pilot study involving locating telehealth portals at youth service providers’ sites. Using the portal, youth may quickly contact a medical provider about reproductive health needs and schedule an appointment through them, as needed. The pilot program has also put in place a teen-only appointment line and teen-only reproductive health clinic hours (staffed in part by teen mentors).

A common theme in the responses of a few informants was that youth-serving organizations and spaces should have specific staffing characteristics. There should be consistent staffing over time (i.e., youth will come in contact with the same people) and staff should be compassionate, appropriately trained, and experienced working with youth. Related to steady staffing, some informants noted the importance of developing trust with youth and being clear and honest in communication with them. An informant who works as a direct service provider described meeting one-on-one with youth in an office setting where various needs can be reviewed. The informant emphasized the importance of being transparent with youth about what services look like and their availability.



A third notable theme of the key informants’ responses was that spaces that serve homeless youth are most effective if they offer a variety of services or assistance in one location, so that youth can be better engaged and steered to activities or resources that meet their needs.

## YOUTH RECOMMENDED OUTREACH STRATEGIES

Young people surveyed were asked what the best ways were to get information to them about community services available. Exhibit 41 shows that the top outreach strategies recommended include email, text messages, through social media, phone calls, and word of mouth.

Exhibit 41. Youth Recommended Outreach Strategies to Inform Them about Community Services

Strategy	%	N
Email	65%	100
Text messages	55%	84
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)	52%	80
Phone calls	49%	76
Word of mouth	43%	66
Posters, flyers, or brochures in community places (stores, library, etc.)	38%	58
Signs on buses or bus stops	38%	58
Events or street outreach	34%	52
Community Resource Center	32%	49
Talking with community organization staff on the street	25%	39
Radio	25%	39
Teachers or counselors at school	25%	39

## CHALLENGES IN PROVIDING SERVICES TO HOMELESS YOUTH

The challenges that key informants reported covered a wide range of issues and approached the meaning of the word “challenge” from the perspective of both homeless youth and the agencies assisting them. Several informants touched on challenges related to identifying youth as being homeless, which has been previously noted can be influenced by the degree of trust between assisting staff and youth, as well as adequate staff training. An informant from the education sector mentioned the importance of identifying youth as being homeless quickly. She related that at one local school she is familiar with registration staff are trained in possible indicators of homelessness, such as if youth are lacking documentation or proof of residency. In such cases, they are referred to a designated staff member for a private conversation to determine their needs. Another informant from the education sector reported that districts and schools may not



fully assess a student to identify that they are homeless and which resources they should be referred to while at the same time the student may be forthcoming about their living situation.

Homeless youth may also be reluctant to reveal their living situation when seeking employment, making it more challenging to assist them. An informant from the Pima County Public Library related that teens won't use the library's job help assistance if they see adults getting such help. She added that although the library has such services, teens don't think to ask about them and suggested that the library offer teen-specific job help. As was previously noted, some youths who come to Pima County employment assistance services won't identify at intake that they're homeless. Their case manager may only learn of their situation later after trust has been developed between them.

Transportation is another challenge identified for homeless youth. One informant from a direct service provider noted that homeless youth can't afford a bus pass that would enable them to get to housing appointments. An informant from the education sector reported that for homeless families with school-going children, a lack of transportation can make it difficult to get to intake appointments for services.

A few informants mentioned lack of phone service as an issue for homeless youth. An informant pointed out that youth who are on a waiting list for housing or services need access to a phone to be contacted by the agency assisting them. Additionally, intake for shelters happens early in the morning when youth are in school. They cannot receive information about the opportunity for housing if they don't have a phone for contact. Another informant reported that it is generally hard to contact homeless youth for follow-up because they move around. His experience has been that although youth provide a phone number, when he calls them, he finds their phone is off or he later finds out it was lost. He added that most youth he's worked with have phones with data and that some use the library's wi-fi. An informant who provides direct services similarly affirmed that there can be problems following up with a youth after completing a VI-SPDAT because the youth has no cell phone or e-mail access.

Providing staff at agencies and other sites that serve youth appropriate training in how to assist homeless youth is another theme found in informants' responses. An informant from the Pima County Public Library stated, "There is no in-service about serving homeless youth. The library could be better about helping teens know they can ask us. It takes different ways to engage youth than adults. Staff needs to be trained carefully how to say things." An academic researcher offered a more expansive perspective regarding training that views training as being a natural result of agencies' need to respond to changing conditions to better serve youth: "Sometimes service providers get stuck in the pattern of what they have always done and realizing there are new ways to do things and new problems that are emerging among their clients (like sex trafficking) has been complicated to approach and bring training to the staff of the organizations."



A few informants mentioned systems navigation as a challenge for homeless youth. An informant from the Pima County Public Library noted that youth must follow up and that sometimes it may take them numerous calls to finally reach a program able to help them. Many youths lack the ID needed to access services. For unaccompanied minors, lack of ID and various legal requirements make it especially difficult to obtain health care, find employment, or rent an apartment. LGBTQ youth face special challenges in regard to housing. An informant reported that their housing stability is shaky in regard to having place to stay and can change quickly. Additionally, many LGBTQ youth view emergency shelters as being dangerous places for them and, therefore, avoid them.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVED COLLABORATION TO BETTER MEET NEEDS OF YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESS AND UNSTABLE HOUSING**

Informants were asked to offer their ideas on how TPCCH could collaborate to better meet the needs of youth experiencing homelessness or unstable housing. Some informants stated that TPCCH needs to place more emphasis on the needs of homeless youth. One informant from a youth-serving agency suggested that there needs to be more communication between TPCCH's Homeless Youth Subcommittee and local shelters. According to the informant, the representatives from the shelters do not come to the subcommittee's meetings. He reported, "They say, 'When it's an adult, send them to (name of provider).'" He suggested that more communication regarding openings would enable more of a warm hand-off of 18-24-year-olds in need of shelter. An informant from the Pima County Public Library recommended that TPCCH should put more attention into understanding what is a barrier for youth versus adults with the intention of reducing barriers to services for youth. An informant from a service providing organization suggested that there is need for more support of youth-friendly non-clinical spaces where youth can receive multiple services. Other ideas raised by informants included providing direct housing to LGBTQ homeless youth, integrating assessment/referral for reproductive health needs into the intake process for youth, and getting the word out about available resources through social media. Additionally, TPCCH prioritize supporting youth to stabilize their education, in part by providing school districts information about where housing openings and/or affordable housing is available.

Informants did not have many suggestions regarding how the City of Tucson and Pima County could better assist TPCCH in meeting the needs of youth experiencing homelessness. A few suggestions centered around funding. One informant would like to see local government provide resources for youth-specific projects. Another informant echoed this sentiment, adding that such funding should incentivize agencies to partner on services and programs. Another informant recommended that local government fund more behavioral health services for homeless youth to include more specialized providers. Others suggested that there be more focus on prevention rather than meeting immediate needs.



# Key Findings and Recommendations

LeCroy & Milligan Associates was contracted by Our Family Services on behalf of TPCCH to conduct this Needs Assessment focused on homeless youth ages 12 to 24 in Pima County. Data collected for this assessment include: 154 youth surveyed; four youth focus groups; interviews with 13 key service providers; and review of secondary data for the CoC.

## KEY FINDINGS

Exhibit 42 summarizes the key findings from this Needs Assessment in the areas of:

- Prevalence and Characteristics of Youth Homelessness in Tucson/Pima County
- Service and Benefits Participation of Homeless and Unstably Housed Youth
- Unmet Service Needs and Barriers to Accessing Services
- Developmental Assets and Positive Influences

Exhibit 42. Summary of TPCCH Homeless Youth Needs Assessment Key Findings

Area	Key Findings: Prevalence and Characteristics of Youth Homelessness
<p><b>Extent of Youth Homelessness and Unstable Housing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 747 unduplicated youth completed a <b>VI-SPDAT</b> in 2017 and 546 unduplicated youth completed this tool in 2018. In both years combined, 72% of youth identified as White, 12% as Black or African American, 8% as Native American, and 5% as mixed race. Additionally, 34% identified as being from a Hispanic/Latinx ethnicity.</li> <li>• <b>Common living situations</b> reported on the VI-SPDAT in 2017-2018 include sleeping outside (30%), staying with friends and family (22%), couch surfing (12%), or staying in a shelter (10%).</li> <li>• <b>55%</b> of VI-SPDAT assessed young people in 2017-2018 were considered <b>most at risk and qualified for permanent supportive housing</b>, 39% qualified for rapid re-housing/transitional housing, and 6% did not qualify for assistance.</li> <li>• The <b>2018 Point-in-Time (PIT) count</b> identified 1,380 homeless individuals in Pima County, Arizona, of whom <b>104 (8%) were unaccompanied youth under age 18 or young adults ages 18 to 24</b>. Of the 13 service providers interviewed, most felt that <b>youth homelessness is a bigger issue than currently captured in the PIT count data</b>. Interviewees suggested that TPCCH should consider counting homeless youth in ways other than the PIT count.</li> <li>• Service providers interviewed identified differences between the experience youth have with homelessness and unstable housing in <b>rural areas</b> of Pima County, citing that rural young people are more often couch surfing with friends or relatives, as compared to the Tucson metro area. However, most informants had <b>limited information</b> about the extent of youth homelessness in rural areas.</li> </ul>





Area	Key Findings: Prevalence and Characteristics of Youth Homelessness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A total of <b>132 beds</b> are available for youth and young adults in <b>youth dedicated housing programs</b>, according to the 2018 Housing Inventory Count (HIC).</li> </ul>
<b>Youth Survey Demographics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents to the youth survey ranged from <b>13 to 24 years of age</b>, with an average and median age of 20 years. 88% of youth surveyed are <b>18 years old or older</b>.</li> <li>• 52% of respondents identified as <b>White</b>, 15% identified as <b>Black or African American</b>, 12% as <b>mixed race</b>, and 10% as <b>Native American</b>. Additionally, 47% identified their ethnicity as <b>Hispanic/Latinx</b>.</li> <li>• 57% of youth surveyed are <b>single</b> and 38% are in a <b>relationship</b> but not married.</li> <li>• 46% identified as <b>cisgender female</b>, 41% as <b>cisgender male</b>.</li> <li>• 21% identified as <b>LGBTQ</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Homeless or Unstable Housing Situations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of 154 youth and young adults surveyed for this Needs Assessment, in the <u>last 30 days</u> <b>90%</b> had experienced from <b>1 to 7 and an average of 2 different homeless or unstable housing situations</b>.</li> <li>• The most common situation experienced by 80% of youth in the <u>last 30 days</u> or within the <u>last year</u> was <b>doubling up or staying overnight with friends, relatives, or someone they did not know well</b> because they did not have a regular, adequate, and safe place to stay at night.</li> <li>• 69% of youth reported having stayed overnight <b>in a car, park, public place, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or a similar place</b> because they did not have a regular, adequate, and safe place to stay at night.</li> <li>• 46% of youth reported being homeless <b>by themselves</b>, and 20% reported being homeless with a <b>significant other or family members</b>. 30% of youth surveyed are <b>pregnant and/or parenting</b>.</li> <li>• The average age when youth first became homeless was <b>16.7 years old</b>, with a wide range from <b>4 to 24 years old</b>. Respondents have experienced homelessness an average of <b>4 times in their lives</b>.</li> </ul>



Area	Key Findings: Prevalence and Characteristics of Youth Homelessness
<p><b>Reasons for Youth Homelessness</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The predominant reasons for youth homelessness or unstable housing reported by more than half of youth surveyed include experiencing:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Financial hardship</b>, including intergenerational poverty, family eviction, job loss, and lack of skills/education to obtain employment;</li> <li>○ <b>Abuse, neglect, abandonment</b>, and/or family conflict and violence; and/or</li> <li>○ <b>Kicked out of their family’s home</b> for various reasons, including rejection due to gender identity and/or sexual orientation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• These reasons are consistent with those reported by <b>service providers</b> who completed interviews as well as <b>national data</b> on youth homelessness (USICH, 2018).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reasons for Youth Homelessness</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having experienced <b>abuse and neglect</b> as a reason for youth homelessness was <b>significantly correlated to other reasons for youth homelessness</b> including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ family and youth substance abuse and mental health issues;</li> <li>○ death of a caregiver;</li> <li>○ youth leaving other housing with no place to stay;</li> <li>○ youth being kicked out of their family’s home; and</li> <li>○ youth being released from incarceration with nowhere to go.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Youth who identified as <b>LGBTQ</b> were significantly <b>more likely</b> to be homeless because they were <b>kicked out of their family home</b> or due to their <b>own substance abuse or mental/physical health issue</b>, compared to youth surveyed who identified as heterosexual/cisgender.</li> <li>• The main barrier that has prevented 86% of survey respondents from having stable or permanent housing is a <b>lack of sufficient income</b>, either from not having employment or not earning enough money from current employment to cover housing costs. Other common barriers are related to accessing housing because respondents have <b>no or poor rental history</b> (including bad credit history) or they <b>cannot find a place to affordably rent</b>.</li> </ul>



Area	Key Findings: Prevalence and Characteristics of Youth Homelessness
<p><b>Concerns with Current Living Situation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A main concern with their current living situation, shared by 37% of respondents, was the <b>lack of permanency</b>, fearing that they could be kicked out at any time.</li> <li>• 32% were concerned about <b>poor housing conditions</b>, including lack of cleanliness (e.g., in emergency housing), presence of pests (e.g., rats, cockroaches), unsecure living spaces (e.g., non-locking doors), and physical damage (e.g., broken windows, holes in wall).</li> <li>• 31% expressed concerns for their <b>personal safety</b> and/or the <b>safety of their children</b> in their current living situation.</li> <li>• Youth who identified as <b>LGBTQ</b> were significantly <u>more likely</u> than youth who identified as heterosexual/cisgender to express <b>concerns for their personal safety</b> in their current living situation (55% vs 46%), specifically <b>fear of being sexually assaulted</b> (24% vs 7%). This finding is consistent with <b>national data</b> on the unique concerns facing LGBTQ homeless youth (see Morton, et al, 2018; USHIC, 2018).</li> <li>• Service providers interviewed expressed <b>similar concerns</b> about the unstable living situations of youth they serve. Their young age and developing brains make them especially vulnerable to others who will take advantage of their situations.</li> </ul>

Area	Key Findings: Service and Benefits Participation
<p><b>Services Used to Meet Basic Needs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services used in the <u>past 90 days</u> to meet basic needs included: <b>transportation</b> (67%) (e.g., access to a bus pass); access to <b>food items</b> (57%) (e.g., food boxes, snack packs, groceries); access to <b>toiletries</b> (53%) (e.g., body care products); receipt of <b>clothing items</b> (36%); and <b>meals</b> at community places (31%).</li> <li>• <b>Focus group youth</b> generally reported that they are able to meet their food needs through <b>snack packs, community food pantries, and food boxes</b>.</li> <li>• Regarding housing services used in the <u>past 90 days</u>, 29% have utilized <b>longer-term housing services</b> to stay for 6+ months; 28% stayed in <b>short-term shelter or emergency housing</b>; and 23% received <b>financial assistance</b> to get into housing.</li> </ul>



Area	Key Findings: Service and Benefits Participation
<b>Services Used to Meet Health Care Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 74% of respondents receive <b>Medicaid</b> through <b>AHCCCS</b>.</li> <li>• Of health care services used in the <u>past 90 days</u>, 40% utilized <b>medical</b> services; 28% utilized <b>behavioral health</b> care services; and 12% utilized <b>dental care</b> services.</li> <li>• 33% reporting getting medical care from <b>Urgent Care</b> and 29% from the <b>Emergency Room</b>.</li> <li>• Respondents who have <b>Medicaid/AHCCCS</b> were significantly <u>more likely</u> than those who do not have this insurance to report using an <b>Urgent Care</b> (39% vs 18%) or the <b>ER</b> (34% vs 13%) for health care.</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement in Education and Employment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 45% of youth surveyed are currently enrolled in an <b>education program</b> (such as classes to complete a GED or high school) and 11% are enrolled in a <b>formal job training</b> program for a profession.</li> <li>• 24% of respondents are <b>currently employed</b>.</li> <li>• In the <u>past 90 days</u>, 26% received assistance in <b>finding a job</b>; 21% received help in <b>obtaining documents</b> needed for employment and/or education, such as and identification, birth certificate, or social security card; and 19% have participated in programming for <b>job training</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Income and Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of youth - 40% - receive money from <b>family or friends</b> as a source of income, 26% earn money from <b>odd or non-traditional jobs</b>, and 23% earn money from <b>selling personal belongings</b>.</li> <li>• Youth who identified as <b>LGBTQ</b> were significantly <u>more likely</u> than heterosexual/cisgender youth (15% vs 4%) to have engaged in paid sex activities or escort work as a source of income. This finding is consistent with national data on the unique concerns facing LGBTQ homeless youth (see Morton et al, 2018; USHIC, 2018).</li> <li>• The <b>monthly income</b> of young people surveyed ranges from <b>\$0 to \$1,900</b>, with an <b>average monthly income of \$413</b>, and <b>median monthly income of \$230</b>.</li> <li>• 65% receive <b>Food Stamps/SNAP</b>. Other common benefits received by youth who meet program eligibility criteria include <b>WIC</b> (16%), <b>money or stipend</b> from an agency (15%), and <b>free or reduced-price lunch</b> (10%).</li> </ul>



Area	Key Findings: Gaps and Barriers to Accessing Services
<p><b>Unmet Basic Need</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Housing</b> - 29% of youth surveyed reported unmet housing needs in the past 90 days. Specifically, 21% could not get financial assistance for housing in past 90 days; 17% could not get into longer-term housing; and 16% could not access short-term housing or emergency shelter. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Most informants interviewed said that a <b>lack of housing available</b> for youth and young adults was a primary unmet need in Tucson/Pima County. Interviewees reported the need to have <b>multiple housing options</b> for youth, <b>youth friendly shelters</b>, and <b>LGBTQ youth-friendly shelters</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Food</b> - 29% of youth surveyed don't get enough to eat. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Barriers to accessing food include 85% didn't have enough <b>money</b> to buy food;</li> <li>○ 47% use up <b>SNAP benefits</b> before the end of the month;</li> <li>○ 43% don't have <b>transportation</b> to access places to buy food; and</li> <li>○ 30% don't know where <b>free food</b> is available.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Child Care</b> - 30% of youth surveyed are <b>pregnant (6%) and/or parenting (27%)</b> and need access to child care. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 24% of pregnant and parenting youth said they needed child care in the <u>past 90 days</u> but could not get it.</li> <li>○ 45% of pregnant and parenting youth said lack of childcare keeps them from achieving their <b>employment and education goals</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Other gaps</b> observed in needed services were access to <b>laundry facilities (19%), transportation (13%), clothing items (12%), and toiletry products (10%)</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Focus group youth</b> and <b>service providers</b> reported consistent unmet needs of homeless and unstably housed youth.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Unmet Health Care Needs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 52% of respondents reported having have unmet <b>dental care</b> needs; 33% have unmet <b>medical care</b> needs; and 26% have their <b>behavioral health care</b> needs.</li> <li>• Unmet health care needs in the <u>last 90 days</u> include: <b>dental (18%), medical (11%), vision/eye care (10%), sexual health (8%), and behavioral health (7%)</b>.</li> <li>• A gap identified in <b>health insurance access</b> is that 26% of youth surveyed are <u>not enrolled</u> in <b>Medicaid/AHCCCS</b>, when they are likely eligible for this program.</li> <li>• <b>Hispanic/Latinx youth</b> were significantly <u>less likely</u> than non-Hispanic/Latinx youth (67% vs 82%) to report receiving <b>Medicaid/AHCCCS</b>.</li> </ul>



Area	Key Findings: Gaps and Barriers to Accessing Services
<p><b>Unmet Education and Employment Needs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over half (56%) of survey respondents <b>ages 18-24</b> have <u>less than a high school education</u>.</li> <li>• <u>Only 38%</u> of young adults <b>ages 18-24</b> are <b>currently enrolled in an education program</b>, such as classes to complete a GED or high school.</li> <li>• 69% of respondents are <b>looking for work</b>.</li> <li>• The highest percentage of respondents who needed a service related to education and employment but could not get it at least one time in the <u>past 90 days</u> was for assistance in <b>obtaining identifying documents</b> (16%).</li> <li>• Other gaps noted in needed services in the <u>past 90 days</u> include <b>help finding a job</b> (10%), access to <b>job training programs</b> (10%), and classes to complete a <b>GED or high school education</b> (8%).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gaps in Income and Benefits</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20% of youth surveyed reported that they had <b>no sources of income</b>.</li> <li>• Gaps identified in <b>benefits utilization</b> include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Hispanic/Latinx youth</b> were significantly <u>less likely</u> than non-Hispanic/Latinx youth to report receiving <b>Medicaid/AHCCCS</b> (67% vs 82%).</li> <li>○ <u>Only 39%</u> of <b>pregnant and parenting youth</b> surveyed reported receiving <b>WIC</b>, a program for which they are eligible.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Barriers to Meeting Needs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lack of Income</b> - 86% reported no steady income as primary reason for not having permanent/stable housing; 85% don't have enough money to buy food; and 40% don't get needed medical care because it is too expensive.</li> <li>• <b>Lack of Transportation</b> - 46% did not have transportation to get to a health care provider's office; 43% said lack of transportation was a barrier to getting adequate food.</li> <li>• <b>Lack of Awareness</b> - 30% of youth surveyed reported that they don't know where free food is available; 29% don't know where to get free or low-cost health care; 18% don't know how to set up a health care appointment; 9% don't know how to apply for government programs that provide medical care.</li> </ul>



Area	Key Findings: Developmental Assets and Positive Influences
<b>Supportive Networks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 71% of youth surveyed reported that they have one or more <b>professional service providers</b> with whom they could talk to about important matters or turn to for help.</li> <li>• Respondents who are <b>18-24</b> were significantly <u>more likely</u> than those under 18 years (75% vs 47%) to have one or more <b>professional support persons</b>.</li> <li>• <b>LGBTQ</b> were significantly <u>more likely</u> to report have one or more <b>professional support persons</b> (85% vs 68%) than heterosexual and cisgender youth.</li> <li>• A combined 69% have one or more <b>family members</b> as support persons, 68% have one or more <b>friends their age</b> to turn to, and 62% have one or more <b>older friends</b> to turn to as supportive networks.</li> <li>• Young respondents ages <b>13-17 years</b> were significantly <u>more likely</u> than those over age 18 (90% vs 64%) to have one or more <b>friends their age</b> that they can talk to about important matters or turn to for help.</li> </ul>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Exhibit 43 summarizes the recommendations and innovative ideas put forth by youth and service providers as strategies that TPCCH should consider to prevent and end youth homelessness. These areas are consistent with those recommended by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH, 2013) in their *Federal Framework to End Youth Homelessness*.

Exhibit 43. Summary of Recommendations and Innovative Ideas to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness

Area	Recommendations and Innovative Ideas to Improve Local Strategies to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness
<b>Identify Strategies to Reduce Gaps and Barriers to Youth Meeting Their Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify strategies to increase youth knowledge of how to access and utilize community services to meet basic and health care needs.</li> <li>• Identify strategies to improve youth access to and use of transportation.</li> <li>• Identify strategies to more effectively engage youth in education opportunities.</li> <li>• Identify strategies to increase youth income earning opportunities.</li> <li>• Identify strategies to ensure youth access all benefits to which they are eligible.</li> </ul>





Area	Recommendations and Innovative Ideas to Improve Local Strategies to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness
<b>Enhance Service Provision and Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-locate services to better engage and help youth navigate resources that meet their needs.</li> <li>• Utilize youth peer mentors to support programming and outreach of homeless youth serving agencies.</li> <li>• Consider offering an incentive for youth to stay in touch to update their contact information, which could help pay for phone service.</li> <li>• Determine strategies other than the PIT count to understand the extent of youth homelessness.</li> </ul>
<b>Create youth and LGBTQ-affirming services and Safe Spaces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide direct housing to LGBTQ homeless youth. Ensure housing is youth-centered and LGBTQ-affirming, offering a Safe Space.</li> <li>• Get the word out about available resources through social media.</li> <li>• Provide youth services in a non-clinical, comfortable setting.</li> </ul>
<b>Provide Community Staff with Training on Youth Specific Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide staff of youth serving agencies with more formalized training or information on how to identify and assist homeless youth.</li> <li>• Integrate assessment/referral for reproductive health needs into the intake process for youth.</li> <li>• Ensure staff are compassionate, appropriately trained, and experienced in working with youth; staff should be transparent with youth about what services look like and their availability.</li> </ul>
<b>Improve the Response of Schools to Homeless Youth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify homeless youth as quickly as possible. Youth are then referred to a designated staff member for a private conversation to determine their needs.</li> <li>• Train school registration staff in possible indicators of homelessness.</li> </ul>
<b>Provide Skill Development Opportunities for Youth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage youth more directly in leading and implementing strategies, such as elevating the work of the TPCH Youth Action Committee.</li> <li>• Offer youth training in life skills and employment training.</li> <li>• Provide youth with skills to navigate the system and work with different agencies to get what they need – being persistent, self-advocating, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Suggestions from Focus Group Youth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide resources to help youth who are aging out of program/service to make smooth transition to other assistance.</li> <li>• Don't make program requirements too strict; encourage students who show improvement in academic achievement with additional monetary assistance.</li> <li>• Ensure that agencies that provide monetary assistance to youth do so in a timely manner.</li> <li>• Be patient with youth and try to understand the situation that they are going through.</li> </ul>



Area	Recommendations and Innovative Ideas to Improve Local Strategies to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer youth to resources or provide them with a resource list. If youth are on street, take them to get needed resources, such as clothes.</li> <li>• Promote longer term results through strategies such as case management.</li> </ul>

## STUDY LIMITATIONS

It should be noted that the sampling strategy for the survey was a convenient sampling of youth served by TPCCH partner agencies. This study did not employ a randomized sampling design, thus the results are not generalizable to the larger homeless youth population in Tucson/Pima County CoC. However, the results provide insight into common experiences of homeless and unstably housed youth in the CoC in order to inform the TPCCH of current youth needs. Additionally, experiences of youth living in rural areas may not be adequately captured in this needs assessment because the majority of survey respondents were from the Tucson metro area. One focus group was held in Sells, AZ, however these youth live on the Tohono O’odham Reservation and receive access to services, such as Indian Health Services medical and dental care services, that youth who are not on the reservation often lack access to.



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# Appendices

## APPENDIX A. KEY FEDERAL TERMS AND DEFINITIONS OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG YOUTH

Homelessness is defined in several different ways. Below are federal definitions and key terms that are used when talking about youth and young adults who are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing ([United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, February 2018](#)). For the purposes of TPCCH's Coordinated Entry, a youth who is unstably housed is defined as a young adult, between the ages of 18-24, who is unaccompanied by a parent, prior guardian, or other individual who has responsibility for their well-being. While they do not meet the HUD Category 1 (literally homeless) or 4 (fleeing domestic violence) definition of homelessness, they are unstably housed as evidenced by couch hopping/surfing, episodic homelessness, inability to maintain their current housing (imminent risk of homelessness), or by unsafe living situations (i.e. overcrowded living situations, trafficking situations).

### U.S. Department of Education

Subtitle VII-B of the **McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act** defines *homeless children and youths* as follows (42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)). The term "*homeless children and youths*" –

- A. means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 11302(a)(1) of this title); and
- B. includes –
  - i. children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
  - ii. children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 11302(a)(2)(C) of this title);
  - iii. children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
  - iv. migratory children (as such term is defined in section 6399 of title 20) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

The term "*unaccompanied youth*" includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian (42 U.S.C. § 11434a(6)).



## U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

HUD defines homelessness for their program into four categories. The categories are:

- **Category 1 - Literal Homelessness:** Individuals and families who live in a place not meant for human habitation (including the streets or in their car), emergency shelter, transitional housing, and hotels paid for by a government or charitable organization.
- **Category 2 - Imminent Risk of Homelessness:** Individuals or families who will lose their primary nighttime residence within 14 days and has no other resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.
- **Category 3 - Homeless Under Other Statutes:** Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not meet any of the other categories but are homeless under other federal statutes, have not had a lease and have moved 2 or more times in the past 60 days, and are likely to remain unstable because of special needs or barriers.
- **Category 4 - Fleeing Domestic Violence:** Individuals or families who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking and who lack resources and support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

## Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

- The Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Act (42 USC 5701 § 387) defines “homeless youth” as individuals who are not more than 18 years of age if seeking shelter in a Basic Center Program, or not more than 21 years of age or less than 16 years of age if seeking services in a Transitional Living Program, and for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative, and who have no other safe alternative living arrangement.



# APPENDIX B. TPCCH HOMELESS YOUTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

## Pre-Survey Questions – Please complete before you start the Survey Eligibility Screen with a youth.

1. Date Completed (MM/DD/YYYY): \_\_\_\_\_
2. Location of Survey (check one):  Streets  Rec Center  Jobs Program  Outreach/Drop-In Program  
 School  Education Program  Shelter  Housing Program  Library  Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
3. Surveyor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Have you met this youth before?  Yes  No

## Survey Eligibility Screen

Hi, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ from the Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness. **[SURVEYOR: You can revise this intro if you already know the youth.]** We're doing a survey with youth and young adults up to age 24 who are currently or have recently experienced homelessness or unstable housing, so that we can get ideas on what kinds of services and programs they need. The results of this survey will be used to TPCCH to develop a community-wide plan to prevent and end youth homelessness. **Have you completed this survey with anyone yet?**  Yes  No

**[SURVEYOR: If "Yes", thank them for completing the survey already. If "No", proceed with screening questions.]**

I have a few screening questions to see if your situation makes you eligible to complete the survey. People who are eligible and complete the survey will receive a \$5 gift card and Community Closet Voucher in appreciation of their time. **Can I ask you the survey eligibility questions?**  Yes  No

1. **Have you doubled up or stayed overnight with friends, relatives, or someone you didn't know well because you didn't have a regular, adequate, and safe place to stay at night in the last 30 days or within the last year?**  
 Yes, in the last 30 days  Not in the last 30 days but, in the last year  No
2. **Have you stayed overnight in a car, park, public place, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or a similar place because you didn't have a regular, adequate, and safe place to sleep in the last 30 days or within the last year?**  
 Yes, in the last 30 days  Not in the last 30 days but, in the last year  No
3. **Have you stayed in a motel or hotel that was paid for by an agency or someone else because you had nowhere else to sleep in the last 30 days or within the last year?**  
 Yes, in the last 30 days  Not in the last 30 days but, in the last year  No
4. **In the last 30 days or within the last year, have you stayed in:**
  - a) **A short-term, shelter, or crisis facility**  
 Yes, in the last 30 days  Not in the last 30 days but, in the last year  No
  - b) **Transitional housing**  
 Yes, in the last 30 days  Not in the last 30 days but, in the last year  No
  - c) **Rapid rehousing**  
 Yes, in the last 30 days  Not in the last 30 days but, in the last year  No
  - d) **Permanent supportive housing**  
 Yes, in the last 30 days  Not in the last 30 days but, in the last year  No
  - e) **Homeless prevention services**  
 Yes, in the last 30 days  Not in the last 30 days but, in the last year  No
  - f) **Receives housing assistance but unsure of type**  
 Yes, in the last 30 days  Not in the last 30 days but, in the last year  No

**[SURVEYOR: If respondent answers "yes" to at least one of the eligibility questions, proceed with the survey. If respondent answers "No" to all eligibility questions, say "Unfortunately you're not eligible to take this survey, but I thank you for taking the time to talk with me."]**

LeCroy & Milligan Associates, Inc. \_\_\_\_\_

Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness

Needs Assessment of Homeless Youth and Young Adults in Tucson/Pima County – Final Report – March 2019





## **Survey Introduction**

Thank you for sharing that information. You are eligible to take the survey and once we complete it, you'll get a gift card and Community Closet Voucher. The survey is anonymous, meaning that nothing a person says will be connected to their name. You can skip any question that you don't want to answer.

**Are you willing to take the survey?**  Yes  No

**[SURVEYOR: If YES, continue the survey. If NO, say, "Thank you for your time."]**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. Your feedback is very important to us. We'd like to make sure we only do one survey with each person and keep track of who we give gift cards and vouchers to. To do that, we're creating a unique survey ID using your initials and birthdate. This information is confidential and will only be used to remove any duplicate surveys.

1. What is your first initial? \_\_\_\_\_ middle initial? \_\_\_\_\_ and last initial? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your birthday (MM/DD/YYYY)? \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

**First, I have some questions about your current living situation. For this question and others, I'll read you a list of answer choices. Please tell me "yes" for all that are true for you.**

3. Are you homeless: **[SURVEYOR: Read each option and check all that apply.]**
  - With family members **[PROMPT: such as your parents or siblings.]**
  - With non-family members or friends
  - With a significant other **[PROMPT: such as with a boyfriend, girlfriend, partner, or spouse.]**
  - Alone
4. Are you pregnant or parenting? **[SURVEYOR: Listen and check all that apply.]**
  - Yes, pregnant
  - Yes, parenting
  - No
  - Prefer not to respond
5. How old were you the first time you became homeless? \_\_\_\_\_ years old
6. How many times have you been homeless in your life, including this time? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How long have you been homeless this time? **[PROMPT: that is, continuously homeless since your last permanent housing]. [SURVEYOR: Listen and check one. Read options if needed.]**
  - Less than one month
  - 1-2 months
  - 3-4 months
  - 5-6 months
  - 7 months to 1 year
  - More than 1 year
  - Not sure



8. What are the main reasons you became homeless? **[SURVEYOR: Listen and check all that apply. Prompt with options as needed. Verify with the youth the options you have checked.]**

- Kicked out of house
- Left on their own (ran away, disagreed with rules, etc.)
- Family was evicted
- Abandoned by parents/caregiver/guardian
- Parents/caregiver/guardian died
- Recently moved here and don't have anywhere to stay
- Had problems with child welfare/foster care/group home placement
- Aged out or opted out of foster care
- Released from jail or prison with nowhere to go
- Exited from a transitional or supportive housing program with nowhere to go
- Exited substance abuse or mental health treatment with nowhere to go
- Didn't feel safe at home
- Family couldn't support you financially
- Couldn't support yourself financially
- Experienced physical abuse
- Experienced sexual abuse
- Experienced verbal abuse
- Rejected by family because of sexual orientation
- Rejected by family because of gender identity
- Alcohol or drug use by a family member
- Mental or physical health issues with a family member
- Your alcohol or drug use
- Your mental or physical health

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

9. What barriers prevent you from having stable or permanent housing? **[SURVEYOR: Listen and check all that apply. Prompt with options as needed. Verify with the youth the options you have checked.]**

- No steady income (a job, etc.)
- Can't find a place to rent
- No or bad rental history, so no one will rent to me
- On a waitlist for housing
- Don't like living with or don't get along with others
- Housing won't allow pets
- Not old enough to rent
- No legal ID needed to rent a place
- Family doesn't have stable housing
- Don't like rules of housing programs
- Criminal history

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_



10. I'm going to read you a list of concerns you may have in your current living situation. Please tell me "yes" for the ones that are true for you. **[SURVEYOR: Read list and check all that apply.]**

- Don't know the people around you
- The location is far, for example, not close to where you work or go to school
- Poor housing conditions (rats, roaches, holes in walls, etc.)
- Housing is not secure (no locks, broken windows, etc.)
- People stealing or taking whatever they want
- Fights, violence, or fear of injury
- Drinking or drugs in your living situation
- Can be kicked out at any time
- Gangs or drug dealers in the area
- Fear of being sexually assaulted
- Fear of being forced into prostitution or sex trafficked
- Fear of harassment from law enforcement
- Fear of being arrested for trespassing
- Fear of being killed

Anything else? \_\_\_\_\_

- None/No concerns **[SURVEYOR: DO NOT READ. Check only if no concerns are given.]**

**Now I have some questions about how you meet your basic needs for things like food and health care.**

11. How often are you able to get enough to eat? **[SURVEYOR: Read each option and check one.]**

- All the time **[Skip to #13]**     Most of the time     Some of the time     A little of the time     None of the time

12. What keeps you from getting enough to eat? I'll read you a list of answer choices. Please tell me "yes" for all that are true for you. **[SURVEYOR: Read list and check all that apply.]**

- Don't have enough money.
- Don't have transportation.
- Don't know where free food is available.
- Don't know how to apply for food stamps (SNAP).
- Not eligible for food stamps (SNAP).
- Don't know if you are eligible for food stamps (SNAP).
- SNAP benefits run out before the end of the month.
- Places to get food are not open when you have time to get to them.
- Concerned about dirty or unsafe serving environments.
- Have religious conflicts with food that is available.

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

13. How would you rate your health? **[SURVEYOR: Read each option and check one]**

- Excellent     Very good     Good     Fair     Poor



14. From where do you get medical or dental care? I'll read you a list of answer choices. Please tell me "yes" for all that are true for you. **[SURVEYOR: Read list and check all that apply.]**

- A mini-clinic (like at Walgreens or CVS)
- An Urgent Care
- An Emergency Room (ER)
- A doctor/dentist's office
- A hospital (not including the Emergency Room)
- A free or sliding scale clinic (including a mobile clinic)
- A friend or family member treats me
- Self-care/treat myself

Anything else? \_\_\_\_\_

- None/Does not receive medical or dental care **[SURVEYOR: DO NOT READ. Check only if respondent does not receive medical or dental care.]**

15. When you need medical care, not including behavioral health, how often are you able to get it? **[SURVEYOR: Read each option and check one.]**

- All the time     Most of the time     Some of the time     A little of the time     None of the time  
OR  You don't need medical care

16. How often are you able to get the dental care you need? **[SURVEYOR: Read each option and check one.]**

- All the time     Most of the time     Some of the time     A little of the time     None of the time  
OR  You don't need dental care

**[SURVEYOR: If the youth doesn't need medical AND dental care, skip to #18.]**

**[SURVEYOR: If the youth answers "All of the time" to receiving medical AND dental care, skip to #18.]**

17. What keeps you from getting any medical or dental care that you need? I'll read you a list of answer choices. Please tell me "yes" for all that are true for you. **[SURVEYOR: Read list and check all that apply.]**

- No health insurance
- No dental insurance
- Don't have enough money/it's too expensive
- Don't have transportation
- Don't know where free or low-cost care is available
- Don't know how to apply for government programs that provide medical care
- Don't know how to set up an appointment
- Don't trust or don't like medical providers
- Had negative experiences with medical providers
- Immigration status

Anything else? \_\_\_\_\_



18. When you need mental or behavioral health care, including any substance abuse treatment, how often are you able to get it? **[SURVEYOR: Read each option and check one.]**

- All the time **[Skip to #20]**    Most of the time    Some of the time    A little of the time    None of the time

OR

- You don't need mental or behavioral health care **[Skip to #20]**

19. What keeps you from getting the mental or behavioral health care that you need? I'll read you a list of answer choices. Please tell me "yes" for all that are true for you. **[SURVEYOR: Read list and check all that apply.]**

- No health insurance
- Don't have enough money/it's too expensive
- Don't have transportation
- Don't know where free or low-cost care is available
- Don't know how to apply for government programs that provide medical care
- Don't know how to set up an appointment
- Don't trust or don't like medical providers
- Had negative experiences with medical providers
- Disagree with my diagnosis

Anything else? \_\_\_\_\_

**Now I have some questions about your work and education.**

20. Are you currently employed?                       Yes **[Skip to #23]**                       No

21. Are you currently looking for a job?                       Yes **[Skip to #23]**                       No

22. What are reasons you are not seeking employment at this time? I'll read you a list of answer choices. Please tell me "yes" for all that are true for you. **[SURVEYOR: Read list and check all that apply.]**

- Already have a job or another way to make money
- Financial needs are met through services, programs, or benefits
- Financial needs are met by family or friends
- In school/student
- Being a caretaker (e.g., for a child or another person)
- Immigration status
- Not old enough to work
- Don't have a resume
- Don't want a job

Anything else? \_\_\_\_\_

23. What is the highest level of education you have completed? **[SURVEYOR: Listen and check one.]**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8 <sup>th</sup> grade or less       | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate's degree               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some high school, no diploma or GED | <input type="checkbox"/> Technical or Trade Certification |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school diploma/GED             | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some college                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree or higher        |



24. Are you currently enrolled in an education program [**PROMPT: such as high school, GED, or college classes**]?  
 Yes  No

25. Are you currently enrolled in any formal job training program for a profession [**PROMPT: such as a cosmetologist, mechanic, or electrician?**]  Yes  No

26. I'm going to read you a list of things that may keep you from achieving your employment and/or education goals. Please tell me "yes" for the ones that are true for you. [**SURVEYOR: Read each option and check all that apply.**]

- Don't know how to apply or enroll
- No transportation
- Unstable housing
- Lack of qualifications
- Missing identity documents (ID, SSN, birth certificate)
- Immigration status
- Experienced discrimination
- Disability
- Cost
- Criminal history
- Lack of child care
- Planning to move out of the area
- Bad prior experiences

Anything else? \_\_\_\_\_

- None/No barriers [**SURVEYOR: DO NOT READ. Check only if no barriers are given.**]

27. Now I'm going to read you a list of ways people may have earned income in the past 30 days. Please tell me "yes" for the ones that are true for you. [**SURVEYOR: Read each option and check all that apply.**]

- A full-time paying job
- A part-time paying job
- Day labor (hired day-by-day)
- Money from odd or non-traditional jobs
- Money from family or friends
- Panhandling or "spanging"
- Busking or street performing
- Selling Food Stamps or SNAP
- Selling personal belongings
- Selling things made or found
- Selling drugs or weapons
- Stealing or selling stolen items
- Title or payday loans
- Paid sex activities or escort work

Anything else? \_\_\_\_\_

- No sources of income [**SURVEYOR: DO NOT READ. Check only if no income sources are given.**]



28. From the following list of benefits, please tell me “yes” for the ones you receive. **[SURVEYOR: Read each option and check all that apply.]**

- SSI or SSDI **[PROMPT: social security benefits]**
- DES Cash Assistance **[PROMPT: TANF]**
- DES Child Care Assistance
- DCS Subsidy **[PROMPT: DCS Independent Living Subsidy]**
- Medicaid/AHCCCS
- Unemployment Benefits
- Food Stamps/SNAP
- WIC **[PROMPT: Women, Infants and Children]**
- Free or reduced-price school lunch
- Worker’s compensation
- Child support
- Veteran’s benefits
- Money or stipend from an agency

Anything else? \_\_\_\_\_

- No benefits **[SURVEYOR: DO NOT READ. Check only if respondent reports receiving no benefits.]**

29. On average, what is your monthly income, including any benefits? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

30. Now I’m going to read you a list of services in Tucson and Pima County. Please tell me if you have received any of these free or low-cost services related to **basic needs** in the past 90 days or three months. Also, please tell me if you needed the service in the past 90 days, but one or more times couldn’t get it.

**[SURVEYOR: Be sure to ask the question from both columns.]**

	Have you used this service in the past 90 days?	Have you needed this service in the past 90 days, but <u>one or more times</u> couldn’t get it?
a) Meals at community places	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Food, such as food boxes, snack packs, groceries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Transportation, such as a bus pass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Laundry facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Clothing items	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Message/mail/phone services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Shower and bathroom facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Toiletries such as shampoo or toothbrush	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Feminine hygiene products	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Child care for minor children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k) Money to leave town	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

31. Of the services I just asked you about, which are the most important to you?





32. Please tell me if you have received any of these free or low-cost services related to **employment and education** in the past 90 days. Also, please tell me if you needed the service in the past 90 days, but one or more times couldn't get it. **[SURVEYOR: Be sure to ask the question from both columns.]**

	Have you used this service in the past 90 days?	Have you needed this service in the past 90 days, but <u>one or more times</u> couldn't get it?
a) Help getting documents, such as an ID, birth certificate, or Social Security card	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Job training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Help finding a job, such as resume development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Classes to get a GED or finish high school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Help getting into college	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Help getting into a technical or vocational training program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Help with reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

33. Of the services I just asked you about, which are the most important to you?

34. Please tell me if you have received any of these free or low-cost services related to **housing and health care** in the past 90 days. Also, please tell me if you needed the service in the past 90 days, but one or more times couldn't get it. **[SURVEYOR: Be sure to ask the question from both columns.]**

	Have you used this service in the past 90 days?	Have you needed this service in the past 90 days, but <u>one or more times</u> couldn't get it?
a) Financial assistance to get into housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Short-term shelter or emergency housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Longer term housing program where you can stay for 6 months or more	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Medical care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Dental care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Sexual health care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Vision/eye care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Mental or behavioral health services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Substance use services, including treatment or harm reduction (needle exchange, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Access to Naloxone or Narcan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k) Help to apply for government aid, such as social security, food stamps/SNAP, or Medicaid/AHCCCS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l) Food or veterinary care for a pet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m) Help with legal issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

35. Of the services I just asked you about, which are the most important to you?



36. Are there any other services that I didn't mention that you have used in the past 90 days (3 months)?
37. Are there any other services that I didn't mention that you have needed in the past 90 days (3 months) but one or more times couldn't get it?
38. Which of the following are the best ways to get information to you about community services available? Please tell me "yes" for all that are true for you. **[SURVEYOR: Read list and check all that apply.]**
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)
  - Text messages
  - Phone calls
  - Email
  - Posters, flyers, or brochures in community places (stores, library, etc.)
  - Talking with community organization staff on the street
  - Community Resource Center
  - Word of mouth
  - Signs on buses or bus stops
  - Radio
  - Teachers or counselors at school
  - Events or street outreach

Anything else? \_\_\_\_\_

39. What language do you prefer to receive services in? **[SURVEYOR: Listen and check one.]**
- English
  - Spanish
  - Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**Now I have some questions for you about the people you spend time with and rely on.**

40. Do you have family members you can talk to about important matters or turn to for help? **[PROMPT: people who are related to you by birth or marriage]. [SURVEYOR: Read options and check one.]**
- No, none
  - Yes, 1 person
  - Yes, 2 or more people
41. Do you have friends your age you can talk to about important matters or turn to for help? **[SURVEYOR: Read options and check one.]**
- No, none
  - Yes, 1 person
  - Yes, 2 or more people



42. Do you have older friends you can talk to about important matters or turn to for help? **[PROMPT: Older than 25 years of age]. [SURVEYOR: Read options if needed.]**

- No, none
- Yes, 1 person
- Yes, 2 or more people

43. Do you have professionals you can talk to about important matters or turn to for help? **[PROMPT: Professionals include people who provide health care, social services (including homeless service providers), or other professional services]. [SURVEYOR: Read options if needed.]**

- No, none
- Yes, 1 person
- Yes, 2 or more people

**Finally, I have some questions about you.**

44. What gender do you identify with? **[SURVEYOR: Listen and check one. Read list if needed.]**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cisgender Female (female gender identity matches the female sex assigned at birth) | <input type="checkbox"/> Two-Spirit (identify as having both a masculine and a feminine spirit) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cisgender Male (male gender identity matches the male sex assigned at birth)       | <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Nonconforming / Gender Queer                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transgender MTF (male to female)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Fluid   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transgender FTM (female to male)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: (please specify): _____   |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to respond <b>[DO NOT READ]</b>                             |

45. Do you identify as Hispanic or Latinx? **[SURVEYOR: Listen and check one.]**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to respond **[DO NOT READ]**

46. What is your race? **[SURVEYOR: Listen and check one. Read list if needed.]**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaskan Native | <input type="checkbox"/> Hawaiian/Pacific Islander                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Asian American              | <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed race                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify: _____               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White/Caucasian                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to respond <b>[DO NOT READ]</b> |

47. What best describes your sexual orientation? **[SURVEYOR: Listen and check one. Read list if needed.]**

- Heterosexual or straight
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Queer
- Pansexual
- Bisexual
- Asexual
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to respond **[DO NOT READ]**



48. What is your relationship status? **[SURVEYOR: Listen and check one. Read list if needed.]**

- Single, not in a relationship
- In a relationship, not married
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Prefer not to respond **[DO NOT READ]**

49. Are there any services, needs, or goals that we haven't talked about today?

**That was my final question. Thank you so much for taking the time to complete this survey with me.**

**[SURVEYOR: Give the youth the gift card and Community Closet Voucher in appreciation of their time. Please track incentive distribution according to your agency.]**



# APPENDIX C. TPCH HOMELESS YOUTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

## Instructions for Focus Group Facilitator

- a. Thank everyone for attending
- b. Introduce facilitator, note taker and give a brief overview of LeCroy & Milligan Associates
- c. Explain the purposes of the focus group:
  - We are helping the Tucson Pima Collaboration to End Homelessness learn more about services that youth who are experiencing homelessness currently need and use. We'd would like to hear your ideas about these issues to help us better help youth experiencing homelessness.
  - Today's group discussion will take about 90 minutes. We will finish by \_\_\_\_.
  - To show our appreciation for your participation, you will receive a gift card at the end of today's meeting.
- d. Set Guidelines: We have some guidelines that we find work well with focus groups and we'd like to suggest these:
  - This is a brainstorming activity. There are no wrong answers. We're happy to hear a range of opinions and it's fine if people have different ones.
  - We'd appreciate it if only one person talks at a time. Please do not interrupt or cut off other participants when they are sharing.
  - Everyone should get an opportunity to speak to every question and no one should dominate the conversation; everyone has something important to share.
  - So that people can feel free to share their opinions and out of respect for everyone's privacy, we ask that you do not at a later time share with anyone anything said here today by another participant.
  - Please turn off your cell phones or switch them to vibrate.
  - Please feel free to quietly get up to use the rest room or get yourself something to drink or eat at any time. The rest rooms are located \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ASK: Do you have any other grounds rules you'd like to suggest?
- e. To help us document the information you share.....
  - Please speak loud enough so everyone in the room can hear.
  - We are going to be writing your ideas down so please try not to speak too fast.
  - Because it's hard to catch everything when we're writing, and your opinions are important to us, we are going to record this discussion group. Only our research team will be able to listen to the recording.
  - When we share your ideas with others, we will not say, "Charlie said this," or, "Beverly said that." Everything will be anonymous. We will identify people as something like "a participant at a focus group."



- Here's how we'd like the focus group to go today: I will read a question. Then we would like you to discuss and respond to the question. It's not necessary to go around the room in order. Imagine you are sitting together somewhere else talking with each other about this subject, rather than talking to me as an interviewer. I will only add something if I have a follow-up question based on what people have been saying.

- f. Ask if there are any questions
- g. Have participants introduce themselves/icebreaker
- h. Turn on tape recorder and start the group discussion.

### Youth Focus Group Questions

1. What services or programs do you currently use to meet your needs, such as for food, shelter, supplies, access to the internet, health care, etc.?
  - a. How did you find out about these services or programs?  
[PROBE – Repeat food, shelter, medical care, behavioral health care, dental care, access to the internet, anything else?] [PROBE] For youth still in school there are other possible needs – clothes, shoes, backpack, notebooks, pens, computer, etc.]
2. How do you think using these programs or services help you in the short-term (over the next few months)?
  - a. How about in the long-term (more than 6 months, etc.)?
3. What types of services or other help do you need but have not been able to get?
4. [Internal barriers] What kind of things prevent you from getting the services or other help that you need?
  - a. [External barriers]
5. What are the best ways to get information to you about community services available? [PROBE – Friends, other on-line research, phoning, posters put up in the community.] [PROBE – Does everyone have a cell phone with a data plan?]
6. How could services and programs improve to better help youth who are experiencing homelessness?
7. How could services and programs improve to prevent youth from becoming homeless?
8. If you could give the adults who try to help you, such as school, case manager, housing program, etc., one piece of advice in helping young people in your situation (e.g., homeless, unstable housing, MV, in transition), what would that be?



## APPENDIX D. TPCH HOMELESS YOUTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ End Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee's Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ from LeCroy & Milligan Associates. We are working with TPCH to conduct a homeless youth needs assessment. As part of this effort, we are interviewing people with expertise in working with youth and young adults up to age 24 in Pima County who are or have recently experienced homelessness or unstable housing. TPCH suggested that you would be a good person to interview for this needs assessment. Would you be willing to do a short interview over the phone? It will take about 20 minutes.

### [If they say "yes"]

Is this a good time to talk?

### [If they say "yes"]

Great. I'd like to make sure you know that:

- There are no right or wrong answers;
- Your participation is voluntary; and
- You can choose to not answer any question or end the interview at any time.

I'd like to record our conversation, so we can capture what you say accurately. Is that okay?

[if they say "yes" - thank them]

Okay, let's start.





- 1) Based on your experience, what are the causes of or factors that contribute to youth homelessness or unstable housing?
- 2) How big of an issue is youth homelessness or unstable housing in Tucson and Pima County?
  - a. How, if at all, has the scope of the problem changed over time?
  - b. Is there a difference in the extent of youth homelessness in urban areas compared to suburban/rural areas in Pima County?
- 3) How would you describe the youth you serve who are experiencing homelessness, such as age, race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, or other characteristics?
  - a. How do any of these characteristics make youth more vulnerable to experiencing homelessness or unstable housing?
- 4) What services or programs does your agency provide to youth who are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing?
- 5) How has your agency's services or programming for youth who are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing changed over time?
- 6) How effective do you feel your agency's services or programming are at meeting the needs of youth who are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing?
  - a. For what reasons do you feel services or programming are effective/ineffective?
- 7) What have you found has worked well for providing those services or programs to youth who are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing? **[PROBE - strategies for getting information to homeless youth about what you offer, engaging homeless youth in services or programs and keeping them engaged, effectively delivering services, location or timing of service, etc.]**
- 8) What challenges have you encountered in providing services or programs to youth who are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing?
- 9) What needs have you observed youth who are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing have that are not being adequately met?
- 10) How could TPCH collaborative better meet the needs of youth who are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing? **[PROBE - seeking out additional grants, reallocating HUD CoC grant funding, prioritizing certain needs, etc.]**
- 11) How could the City of Tucson and Pima County better assist TPCH in meeting the needs of youth experiencing homelessness?



## APPENDIX E. THEMES FROM KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

What are the causes of or factors that contribute to youth homelessness or unstable housing?
• Parents not supporting children and basic needs.
• Child abuse/neglect.
• Family poverty/financial instability.
• Lack of income.
• Parental substance abuse.
• Parental behavioral health issues.
• Youth substance abuse.
• Youth behavioral health issues.
• Conflict or violence in the home.
• Parent incarceration.
• Parent death.
• Affordable housing.
• Geographic challenges.
• Parents' lack of educational resources.
• Family non-acceptance of child's sexual orientation (LGBTQ).
• Dysfunctional foster care system.
• Upheaval in the household.
• Trafficking.
• Living in low-income housing.
• Parents' deportation.
• Overstaying welcome with relatives.
• Youth running away to gain independence.
• Fleeing probation requirements.
• Youth reaching an age (18+) at which parents or group home consider it appropriate for them to move it.
• Parents or other caregiver unaccepting of a youth being pregnant outside of marriage or unable to financially support.
• Parent starts a relationship with someone youth does not like.

How big of an issue is youth homelessness or unstable housing in Tucson and Pima County?
• Larger than the street count captures.
• Full scope is unknown because of the varying definitions of homeless youth.
• Many homeless youths are not visible/identifiable.
• Large for LGBTQ youth.



**Is there a difference in the extent of youth homelessness in urban areas compared to suburban/rural areas in Pima County?**

- Lack of resources in rural areas, including transportation.
- Rural and suburban youth put up with staying in less-than-desirable couch-surfing situations.
- Rural youths migrate to cities.
- Schools in rural areas have fewer resources available for McKinney-Vento youths.
- Youth in rural areas may be staying with a relative and, therefore, may not meet the homeless definition to qualify for McKinney-Vento services.

**How would you describe the youth you serve who are experiencing homelessness, such as age, race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, or other characteristics?**

- School-going homeless youth face special challenges such as having to contribute financially or with helping out at the house where they stay.
- Homeless youth who are minors face legal barriers in fulfilling needs such as housing.
- LGBTQ youth are highly represented in the homeless youth population.
- From poor households.
- Youth of color make up a notable proportion of homeless youth.
- More young women.
- Pregnant or parenting youth.
- Trafficked.
- Abused or neglected by family.
- Involved in juvenile justice system.
- Substance users.
- Have mental health issues.
- Lack social support
- Aged out of foster care system.

**How effective do you feel your agency’s services or programming are at meeting the needs of youth who are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing?**

- Has changed ways food is distributed to youth to make it more effective.
- Stipend is not large enough to pull out of poverty but helps make ends meet.
- McKinney-Vento program is effective because needs met are specific to school/district.



<b>What have you found has worked well for providing those services or programs to youth who are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing?</b>
• Youth need trust/relationship with assisting adults.
• Need youth-friendly and dedicated spaces, practices.
• Have multiple resources youth need/want in one location.
• Youth should be assisted by same staff over time.
• Staff should be experienced, well-trained in dealing with youth, and knowledgeable of resources available.
• Staff should be respectful in their communication and honest about resource/service availability.
• Facilitating quick and easy access to medical care and reproductive health care.
• Local government offering grants that encourage agencies to collaborate in serving vulnerable populations.
• Use of peer mentors.
• Providing free transportation to get to services.
• Not requiring parental presence to receive certain services (e.g., reproductive health services).
• Having a single case manager/advocate/navigator for all services.
• Maintaining up-to-date information on services that is easily available to youth.
• Utilizing community volunteers to support youth.
• Street outreach.
• Collaboration with workforce industries to build employment and other future success skills (i.e., “soft skills”).
• Case management, communication, and service strategies
• Trauma-informed care is vital to supporting youth.
• Using positive youth development/motivational interviewing/client driven case planning approaches.
• Early identification of homeless status and need.
• Reducing stigmatization from being labeled “homeless” for school-going youth.

<b>What challenges have you encountered in providing services or programs to youth who are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing?</b>
• Youth want to work with people they know/trust/are comfortable with.
• Lack of transportation.
• Inability to identify youth as homeless or, if identified, what their needs are.
• Youth lack ongoing reliable ongoing phone/e-mail service.
• Lack of training on how to assist homeless youth for staff who work at places that do not provide direct services for such youth but who come into contact with them.
• Few housing resources available for homeless youth.
• Fear and lack of acceptance of emergency shelters.
• A youth’s needs can change fast.
• Lack of homeless youth-specific data.
• Many homeless youths have low level of education attainment.
• Lack of engagement/retention.
• Unstable housing situation can lead to move at any time and interfere with assistance efforts and be a problem for employment applications.
• Need for/lack of accessibility to mental health services for youth, particularly minors.
• Lack of ID and other legal documents.



**What challenges have you encountered in providing services or programs to youth who are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing?**

- Navigating the system is difficult.
- Difficult for minors to get services if they disconnected from their parents.
- Youth-serving staff need to understand the differences between youth and adult barriers.
- Do not have clothing for youth available in all sizes.
- State has limited overall funding for McKinney-Vento – not all districts can be served.
- Lack of flexible funding.
- Conflicting definitions of homelessness.
- Service providers get stuck in pattern of doing things as they always have.
- Service providers not recognizing new emerging problems.
- Sex-trafficked youth have high needs beyond housing.

**What needs have you observed youth who are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing have that are not being adequately met?**

- Need for better assessment, more referral for school-going youth
- More assistance in helping youth reconnect with family.
- Housing.
- Services for LGBTQ youth.
- Integrating assessment of reproductive health needs into all intakes.
- Quick access to medical and reproductive health care.
- Youth aging/graduating out of youth services without having other services in place.
- Youth have needs beyond scope of McKinney-Vento law.
- Need for greater collaboration with workforce industries to help youth build employment and “soft skills.”
- Youth resource guide.
- Supportive housing (with other services) for high needs youth.
- Lack of flexible funding for services and programs.
- Lack of funding for youth with behavioral health issues but no SMI determination.
- Special supports for sex-trafficked youth.

**How could TPCCH collaborative better meet the needs of youth who are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing?**

- Focus more on youth homelessness.
- More coordination with/participation with Homeless Youth Subcommittee by organizations than run shelters for adults. They may have assistance available for older youths.
- Support community spaces serving youth.
- Support LGBTQ-specific programs.
- More coordination with health providers.
- More support/interaction with LEAs (school districts' McKinney-Vento liaisons).
- Getting word out about available resources through a paper and interactive on-line resource guide.
- Screen for SMI as part of coordinated entry.
- Work more to identify youth in unstable housing and prevent from becoming fully homeless.



**How could TPCCH collaborative better meet the needs of youth who are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing?**

- More training for direct providers and others who assist youth at community sites such as the library.
- Improve count of homeless youth.
- Prioritize assisting youth who've experienced sex trafficking.

**How could the City of Tucson and Pima County better assist TPCCH in meeting the needs of youth experiencing homelessness?**

- Develop innovative collaborative funding strategies for youth-specific projects.
- Improve accessibility to agencies and youths to youths' vital records.
- Focus on prevention.
- Improve sharing of housing openings.

Note. The bulleted themes are drawn from the responses of one or more key informant.



## APPENDIX F. SERVICES PROVIDED BY KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEWED

Appendix F shows the variety of services offered to homeless and unstably housed youth by the organizations of key informants interviewed. Please note that this list is not exhaustive and may not account for agency services that the key informant did not mention. Please refer to individual programs for specific services provided.

Service	Amphitheater United School District (McKinney-Vento)	Arizona Dept. of Education (McKinney-Vento)	Community Partners, Inc.	El Rio Health Care	Eon Lounge <sup>+</sup>	Goodwill Metro	One-Stop Youth Employment Center	Our Family Services	Presidio School (YOTO Liaison)	Pima County Public Library	SIROW <sup>++</sup>	Teen Outreach Pregnancy Services	Tucson Preparatory School	Youth on Their Own
Apartment rental assistance			X					X						
Basic needs assistance	X	X*	X		X	X		X	X	X*****				X
Case management			X				X	X				X		
Cash assistance/ stipend														X
College and career assistance	X						x				X		X	X
Computer access						X							X	X
Drop-in center					X	X					X			X
Emergency shelter								X						
Free or reduced lunch and/or breakfast	X	X							X		X			
Funding for or provision of afterschool activities, sports	X	X							X					
Furniture (e.g., bed)							X							X
GED or HS diploma classes						X	X						X	





Service	Amphitheater United School District (McKinney-Vento)	Arizona Dept. of Education (McKinney-Vento)	Community Partners, Inc.	El Rio Health Care	Eon Lounge+	Goodwill Metro	One-Star Youth Employment Center	Our Family Services	Presidio School (YOTO Liaison)	Pima County Public Library	SIROW++	Teen Outreach Pregnancy Services	Tucson Preparatory School	Youth on Their Own
Gift cards	X								X****					X
Health care		X***									X			
Parenting and life skills classes								X				X		
Permanent Supportive Housing			X					X						
Provision of behavioral health services+++		X						X						
Rapid Rehousing								X						
Referrals to behavioral health services	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Referrals to community resources	X	X**	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Reproductive health services				X								X		
School supplies	X								X					X
Support and rehabilitation service for SMI youth			X											
Support groups for LGBTQ youth											X			
Training for job and other skills			X				X							
Transitional Housing								X					X	
Transportation assistance	X	X	X		X			X	X		X			X



\*Services have been provided as part of the Homeless Youth Program. \*\* SIROW provided the resources listed under the ANCHOR Project, which has ended. +++Capacity varies by district and school.  
\*Partnerships with Walmart, Lens Crafters, etc. for clothing, food, eyeglasses, and other basic need items and services. \*\* To food banks health/nutrition programs, mental health, and housing. \*\*\* In house triage in schools/districts as available – e.g., mobile health units onsite. \*\*\*\*Through community partnerships \*\*\*\*\*Snacks only.

