

Massachusetts Youth Count

2022

A report from the Massachusetts Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth on homelessness, housing instability, and access to services among youth and young adults under the age of 25 in the Commonwealth.



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¹ The Massachusetts Youth Count involves extensive collaboration, including in the development of this report. Analysis and writing of this report was completed by Laurie Ross, PhD, Professor of Community Development and Planning at Clark University, with consultation and involvement from the network of regional youth homelessness service providers, Continuums of Care (CoCs), Massachusetts Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (Commission), and the Commission’s Identification and Connection Working Group, which is co-chaired by Kelly Turley and Gordie Calkins. Special thanks also go to Linn Torto, Executive Director of the Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness and Alice Colegrove, Ayala Livny, and Lisa Nieves-Kim from the MA State Plan to End Youth Homelessness, to Tina Baptista and Luke Benson from the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless as well as the Commission’s young adult consultants: Savannah, Cat and Jasper. The Executive Office of Health and Human Services allocated \$150,000 from its FY’22 administrative line item (4000-0300) to continue the state’s commitment to understand the scope of homelessness among unaccompanied youth. This report is submitted as part of those efforts.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The YOUth Count is an annual survey sponsored by the Massachusetts Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (Commission) to learn about the scope, needs, and demographics of youth and young adults under the age of 25 who are unstably housed or experiencing homelessness. The 2022 YOUth Count was held from April 4th through May 4th; a total of 1,083 usable surveys from 145 different cities and towns were collected through a range of outreach strategies. Of these surveys, 634 from 111 cities and towns met the Commission’s definition of an unaccompanied young person currently experiencing homelessness (UHY)²:

- 314 (49.5%) UHY stayed at a shelter, transitional housing, or a hotel/motel the night before the Count
- 216 (34.1%) UHY were doubled up or couch surfing with family, a partner, or a friend
- 104 (16.8%) UHY reported being “unsheltered”, meaning they stayed outside or in a place not meant for human habitation. Table One provides an overview of how characteristics of 2022 respondents compare with prior years.

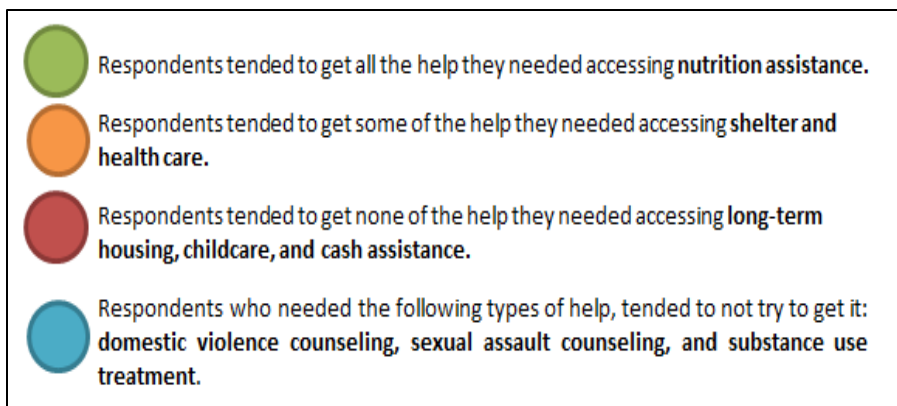
Table One: Annual Results of YOUth Count	2022	2021	2019	2018	2017
Total # Surveys	1083	471	1957	2150	2711
Total % (#) UHY/Commission Definition	58.5%	56%	27.0%	34.3%	18.5%
LGBTQ+	30%	36.2%	24.7%	23.5%	22.7%
BIPOC	60.2%	63.7%	69.5%	71.0%	68.4%
Foster care	34.7%	36.2%	31.2%	26.4%	29.9%
Juvenile/Criminal justice	26.4%	31.3%	25.1%	33.6%	26.4%
Parenting with custody/Pregnant	20.6%	13.9%	24.0%	26.2%	17%
Not in school & no diploma	25.8%	15.5%	19.0%	22.4%	23.8%
Left home before 18	33.7%	34.7%	30.2%	30.4%	N/A
Ever exchanged sex for needs (ESN)	18.2%	16.9%	11.9%	14.4%	13.5%

Major Findings include:

- **Housing:** As compared to 2019, the percent of youth staying in shelter, transitional housing, or hotel was 13% lower while the percent of unsheltered youth was 38% higher. 88% of UHY sought help with shelter and transitional housing in the past 12 months, yet, only 23% of respondents reported that they received all of the help they needed. 80% of respondents reported that they sought help with Section 8 or public housing but only 16% reported that they got all of the help they needed. **The demand for shelter, transitional housing, and long-term housing outpaces supply.**
- **Education:** While 28% of UHY respondents were currently in school—including high school, professional training, or college, **there was an almost 36% increase in UHY who were not in school and did not have a diploma as compared to 2019.** UHY without a diploma and not in school were much more likely than other UHY to be unsheltered, to have no income, and to not get the help they sought.

² The Commission defines an unaccompanied homeless youth or young adult (UHY) as a person who: Is 24 years of age or younger; and is not in the physical custody or care of a parent or legal guardian; and lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

- **Benefits:** Cash assistance usage by UHY declined in 2022; this is in spite of a higher number of surveys from pregnant and parenting UHY. Ineligibility was a major barrier they reported.
- **Income:** Close to 50% of survey respondents experiencing homelessness were working a full- or part-time job and yet could not access to safe and stable housing. The frequency UHY reported having ever exchanged sex or sexual content for to meet their needs increased as compared to last year's Count.
- **Services and Barriers:** The four top most sought-out services in 2022 were shelter/transitional housing, long-term housing, nutrition assistance, and employment assistance. Transportation, wait lists, eligibility requirements, and not hearing back from providers were the most significant barriers for accessing shelter, long-term housing, employment, and education help. For mental health counseling, family support, sexual assault counseling, and domestic violence counseling, the most frequently encountered barriers were not feeling comfortable or safe and feeling too overwhelmed to seek help. Not knowing where to go for help was a significant barrier for every type of service. Respondents with justice system involvement, pregnant or parenting, and foster care system involvement reported needing more types of help at higher levels than UHY as a whole. LGBTQ+ respondents were most likely to say they received all of the help they sought. Respondents who did not have a high school diploma and who were not currently in school were most likely to report receiving none of the help they needed.



Leaving Home as a Minor

In 2022, we added additional focus on the experiences of UHY who left home as minors. **34% of UHY YOUTH Count respondents had left home permanently before the age of 18; for those who left before 18, the average age that these respondents left home permanently as minors was 15.6 years old.** We found that the respondents who left home as minors were less likely to be sheltered, have a high school degree, or to receive the help they need, and more likely to have no income sources at all. In focus groups, YYA who experienced housing instability or homelessness as minors described feeling unimportant and unvalued in their communities, as well as being afraid and not knowing where to go for help. In spite of challenging family situations, they are often still connected to their families and at times do not seek help because they fear doing so could make their relationship with their family worse. They were aware of resources in their communities, but believed that many of these resources may not provide the actual type of help that they needed.

1.0 THE 2022 MASSACHUSETTS YOUTH COUNT OVERVIEW

The Massachusetts YOUth Count is an annual survey used to learn about the scope, needs, and demographics of youth and young adults under the age of 25 who are unstably housed or experiencing homelessness. The Massachusetts Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (Commission) provides oversight for the Count and is responsible for annual reports on its progress to the Governor’s Office, the Legislature, and the Office of the Child Advocate.

The Commission defines an unaccompanied homeless youth or young adult (UHY) as a person who:

- 1) Is 24 years of age or younger; and**
- 2) Is not in the physical custody or care of a parent or legal guardian; and**
- 3) Lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.**

The 2022 YOUth Count was held from April 4th through May 4th both in person and online. Regions were able to continue surveying at special events through early June. Stipends were provided by the Commission to young people who filled the survey out on line; many local providers offered incentives to YYA who filled out the survey in person. Any young person under the age of 25 who had ever experienced homelessness or housing instability was eligible to complete the survey. Regions relied on networks of service providers, Youth Ambassadors,⁴ and trained street outreach workers to survey youth in programs and in places where young people were known to congregate.⁵ Based on feedback from Youth Ambassadors and Youth Commissioners, compensation to complete the survey was increased from \$10 in 2021 to \$20 in 2022. A total of 1,083 usable surveys were collected. Of these surveys, 634 met the Commission’s definition of an unaccompanied young person currently experiencing homelessness (UHY). The high percentage of surveys collected that met the Commission definition (58%) is likely a function of the eligibility criteria used for the Count and not solely due to trends in youth homelessness.

Table One presents the total number of included surveys and the total number of respondents meeting the Commission’s definition. All numbers listed below “Total # Commission definition” are in relation to the 634 youth and young adults who met the Commission definition. However, the survey reveals an additional degree of homelessness and

Table One: 2022 Overview	State
Total # surveys	1083
Total # UHY based on Commission definition	634
# under 18	42
# BIPOC	387
# LGBTQ+	191
# foster care	220
# juvenile/criminal justice ³	168
# pregnant and/or parenting	131
# not in school/no diploma	164

³ Two questions on the survey determine juvenile and criminal justice system involvement, “Have you ever stayed overnight or longer in juvenile detention -- a secure facility or residential program for young people -- as a result of criminal behavior or police involvement?” and “Have you ever stayed overnight or longer in an adult jail or prison?”

⁴ Youth Ambassadors are young people who have experienced homelessness or housing vulnerability and who are trained to partner with the regional agencies administering the Count.

⁵ See Attachment One for the Youth Count methodology.

housing vulnerability among respondents. For example, 114 respondents were experiencing homelessness and accompanied by a parent or guardian. Thirty-two of the housed respondents reported not having a safe place to stay for the next 14 days. Another 364 respondents reported experiencing homelessness at some point in the past.

Table Two provides an overview of how the 2022 respondents compare with prior years⁶.

Table Two: Annual Results of YOUth Count	2022	2021	2019	2018	2017
Total # Surveys	1083	471	1957	2150	2711
Total % (#) UHY/Commission Definition	58.5% (634)	56% (265)	27.0% (529)	34.3% (738)	18.5% (501)
LGBTQ+	30.0%	36.2%	24.7%	23.5%	22.7%
BIPOC	60.2%	63.7%	69.5%	71.0%	68.4%
Foster care	34.7%	36.2%	31.2%	26.4%	29.9%
Juvenile/Criminal justice	26.4%	31.3%	25.1%	33.6%	26.4%
Parenting with custody/Pregnant	20.6%	13.9%	24.0%	26.2%	17.0%
Not in school & no diploma	25.8%	15.5%	19.0%	22.4%	23.8%
Left home before 18	33.7%	34.7%	30.2%	30.4%	N/A
Ever exchanged sex for needs (ESN)	18.2%	16.9%	11.9%	14.4%	13.5%

There were several troubling findings from the 2022 YOUth Count survey as compared to findings from before the pandemic. For example, as compared to 2019 findings:

- The percent of youth in shelter, transitional housing, or hotel was 13% lower while the percent of youth who were literally unsheltered was roughly 38% higher.
- There was an almost 36% increase in UHY who were not in school and did not have a diploma.
- Cash assistance usage by young people experiencing homelessness continued to decline in 2022; this is in spite of a higher number of surveys from pregnant and parenting UHY.

Two focus groups were conducted with UHY to gain deeper understanding into these and other findings. Explanatory themes and direct excerpts from the focus groups are woven into this report.

⁶ Due to COVID-19, the Commission did not conduct a 2020 YOUth Count.

2.0 HOUSING STATUS AND REASONS FOR HOMELESSNESS

In 2022, 314 out of the 634 (49.5%) UHY respondents had stayed at a shelter, transitional housing⁷, or a hotel/motel on the night before the Count. Throughout the report we refer to this group as “Sheltered”. The next most common response was staying with family, a partner, or a friend, with 216 or 34.1% of UHY respondents. Throughout the report we refer to this group as “couch surfing” or “doubled-up”. Ninety-three (43%) of the respondents who were couch surfing or doubled-up either knew that they did not have a safe place to stay for the next 14 days or were unsure whether they did. One hundred and four (104) 16.8% of the respondents reported being “unsheltered”, meaning they stayed outside or in a place not meant for human habitation. Chart One provides a seven-year picture of the percentages of where respondents who met the Commission definition stayed the night before the survey in terms of being sheltered, couch surfing/doubled up or unsheltered.

As compared to 2019, the percent of youth in shelter, transitional housing, or a hotel was 13% lower while the percent of youth who were literally unsheltered was roughly 38% higher.

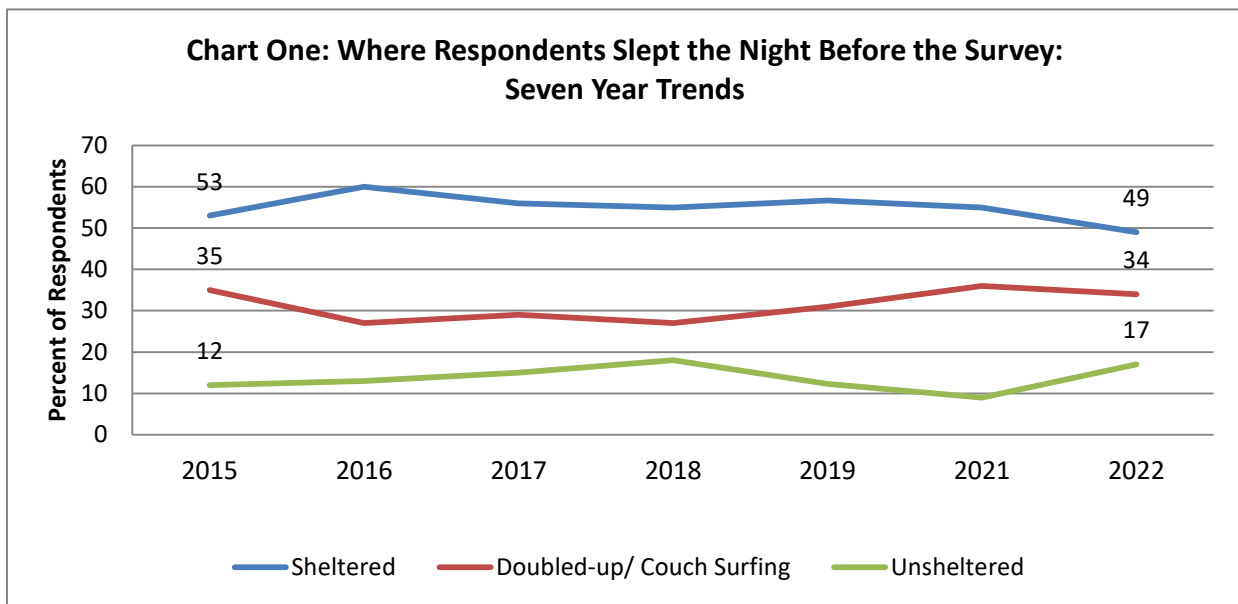
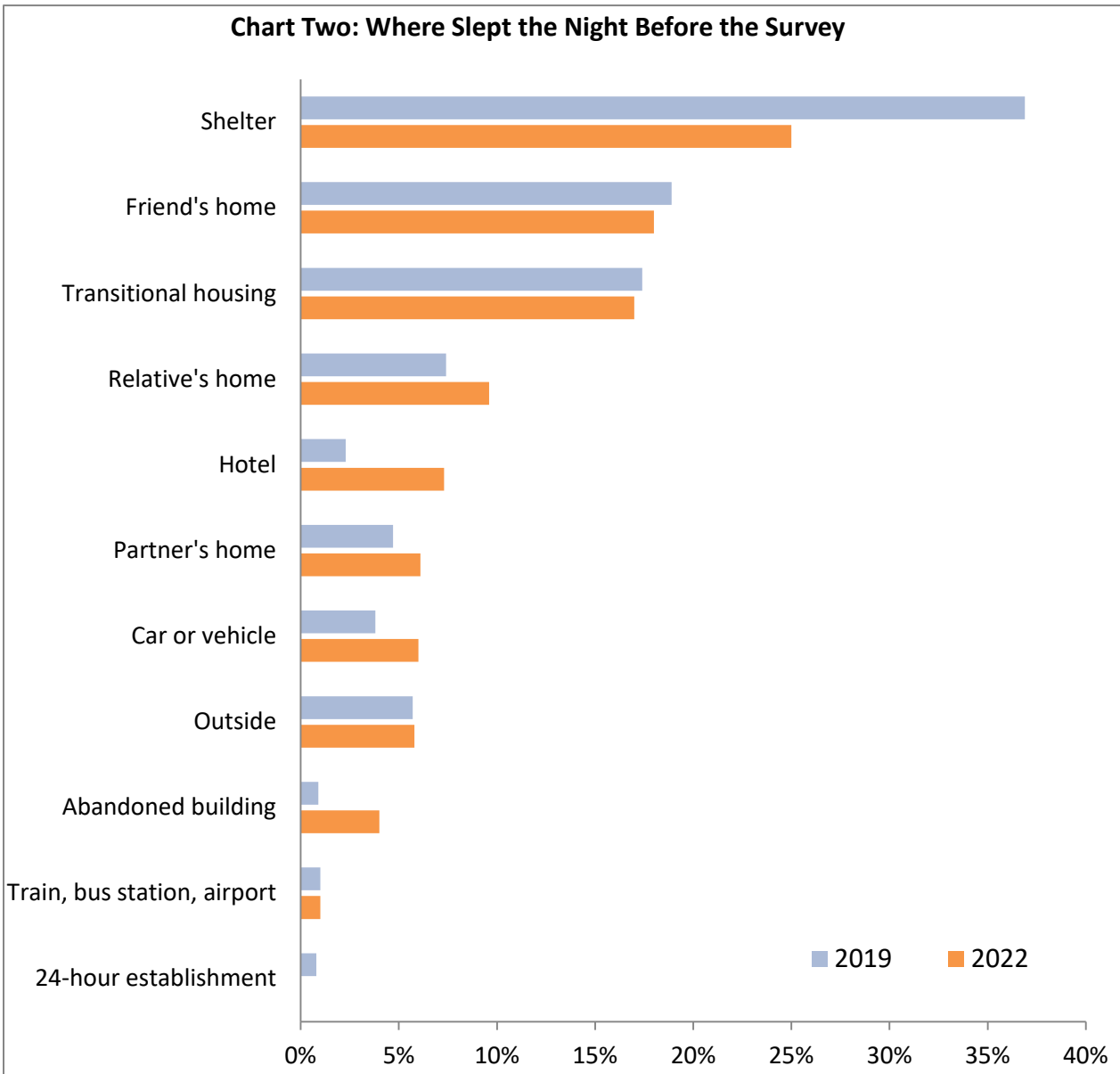


Chart Two provides more detailed information on where the respondents from 2022 slept the night before taking the survey as compared to 2019. Due to the pandemic, there was no YOUTH Count survey in 2020. In Chart Two we do not present 2021 data because pandemic conditions prevented regions for engaging in the direct outreach needed to connect with unsheltered youth.

⁷ The transitional housing category includes 24 young people who indicated that they were experiencing homelessness and living in a college dorm. The UHYC sponsors two programs that provide college housing to young people experiencing homelessness, and these respondents would be experiencing homelessness if not for this program.



Overall, the percent of sheltered youth was 13% lower. It appears that the lower rates in shelter and transitional housing usage are not from a lack of demand; 88% of respondents reported they sought help with shelter and transitional housing. That only 23% of respondents reported that they received all the help they needed suggests that the issue is a lack of supply or lack of access to shelter. Section Five of this report describes the barriers different sub-populations faced trying to access housing resources.

Table Three provides information about where different subpopulations slept the night before taking the survey. Pregnant and parenting UHY were more likely to be sheltered (54.2%) than UHY overall. LGBTQ youth also were more likely to be in shelter the night before the Count. Justice system-involved respondents were more likely to be couch-surfing than UHY respondents as a whole. Youth under 18 were disturbingly more likely to be unsheltered than UHY as a whole. System involved respondents were more likely to be unsheltered than UHY overall as well.

Table Three: Where Subpopulations Slept the Night Before the Survey									
	UHY	Average Age	Pregnant/ Parenting	Foster system	Justice system	LGBTQ	Under 18	Left home as minors	BIPOC
Sheltered (314)	49%	20.7	54.2%	49.5%	41.6%	52.9%	42.9%	46%	53.2%
Couch surfing/ doubled-up (216)	34%	20.7	32.8%	30.4%	38.7%	35.1%	26.2%	36%	31.8%
Unsheltered (104)	17%	21.2	13%	20%	19.6%	12%	30.9%	18%	15%
All UHY respondents (634)		20.8	20.6%	34.7%	26.4%	30%	7%	33.4%	60.2%

"Help our age group of people get assistance we need so we don't have to work 3 jobs, become homeless or addicts or stressed out. We were never given an opportunity to get set up to start our lives. We didn't ask to be born then thrown into a sea of sharks and unknown. We just tryna live and get by. Help the young adults have fair access to actual helpful assistance. Make wait lists shorter. Increase funding. I bet violence, drugs, crimes, and poor communities will drop significantly."

--Survey respondent

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⁸ All quotations throughout this report *in this font* are in response to the final question on the survey, "Do you have any other comments or insights you would like to share with the Massachusetts Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth?"

3.0 EDUCATION

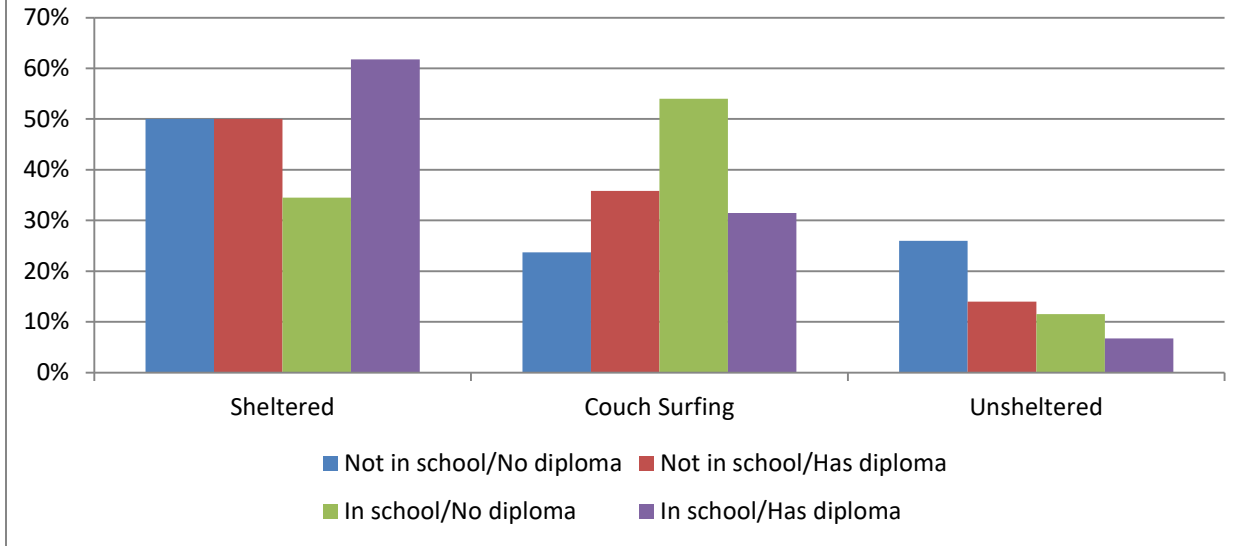
The survey included questions regarding school enrollment and educational attainment. Table Four presents the education status of UHY respondents.

Table Four: Education Status	UHY	Average current age (20.8)	Average age left home permanently (17.8)
High school diploma and currently in school	89 (14%)	20.9	18.7
High school diploma, not currently in school	282 (44%)	21.4	18.1
No diploma and currently in school	87 (13.7%)	18.6	16.9
No diploma, not currently in school	164 (26%)	20.8	17.0

- 27.7% of UHY respondents were in school (i.e., either high school or post-secondary); indicating that in spite of housing instability, these young people were engaging in education.
- 58.8% of UHY respondents had a high school diploma or equivalent.
 - Eighty-nine (89) of these young people were enrolled in some form of post-secondary education program at the time of the survey, including four-year colleges (52), other training (16), or community colleges (7).
- 13.7% of UHY respondents did not have a diploma, but were in school.
 - These respondents tended to be younger; their average age was 16.9 and 67% were enrolled in high school. HISET and other training were other common responses for this group. Ten of these young people were living in an abandoned building, outside, or in a car.
- 26% of respondents did not have a diploma and were not in school. **This is a 37% increase from 2019.** Given that the average age they left home for good was 17, it is possible that COVID-19 exacerbated their housing instability and inability to complete school.

Looking at the educational level by type of homelessness young people were experiencing is also informative. Chart Three shows that unsheltered respondents were least likely to be in school and have a diploma. Doubled-up respondents were more likely to be in school and not have their diploma. Sheltered youth were more likely to have a diploma than doubled-up and unsheltered youth. This higher rate of high school completion among sheltered YOUth Count respondents could in part be a function of engagement in the UHYC college housing scholarship programming.

Chart Three: Education by Housing Status

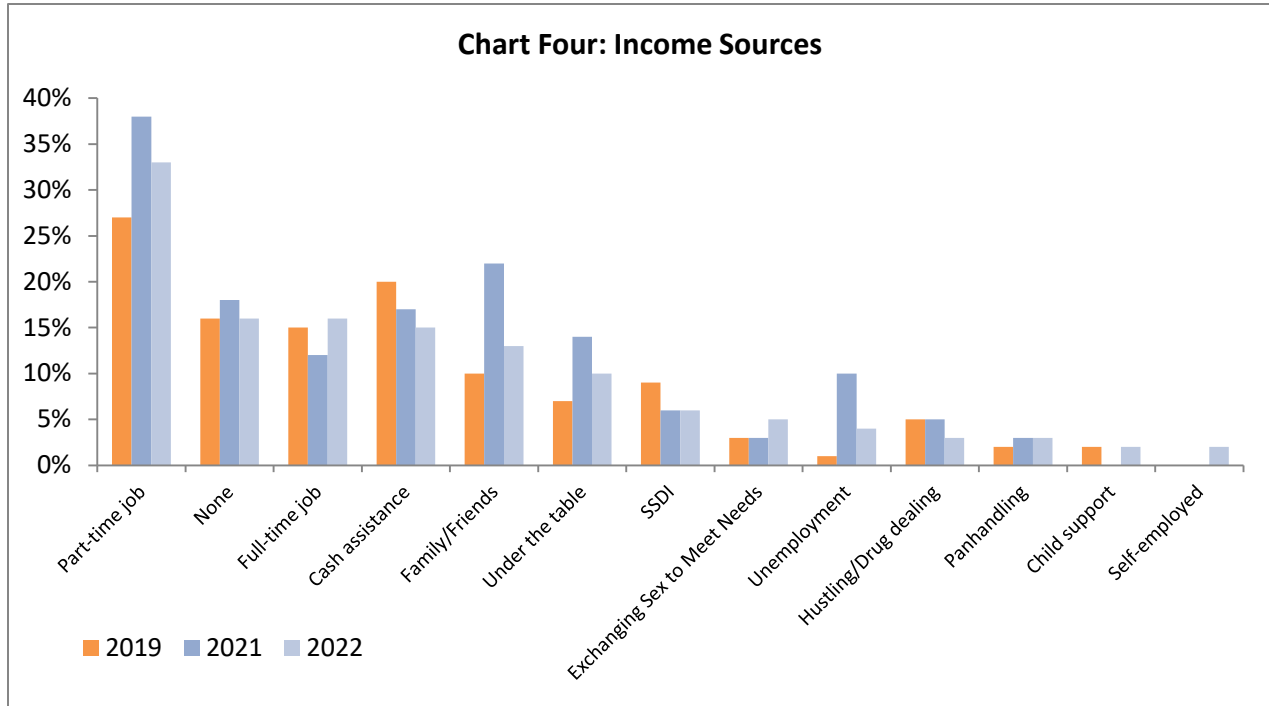


"Bumping youth homelessness after people with kids on housing waiting lists would be a great help. I feel like most of youth homelessness is caused because there was no guidance or help of any sort and we haven't started our lives yet. Most of us want to even go back to school and don't have resumes to get good jobs."

--Survey Respondent

4.0 EMPLOYMENT AND OTHER INCOME SOURCES

In 2022, respondents were asked about their current sources of income. They could choose as many sources as were relevant to them. Chart Four provides details about the number of respondents who reported receiving income from each source. It is important to note that 53% of respondents utilized multiple strategies to have income. Data are provided from 2019 and 2021 to see trends in income sources in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Chart Five breaks down income source by housing status (i.e., sheltered, couch surfing, or unsheltered)⁹.



More frequently used since COVID-19

- Part-time job
- Full-time job
- Family and friends
- Under the table work
- Exchanging sex to meet needs (ESN)¹⁰
- Unemployment
- Panhandling

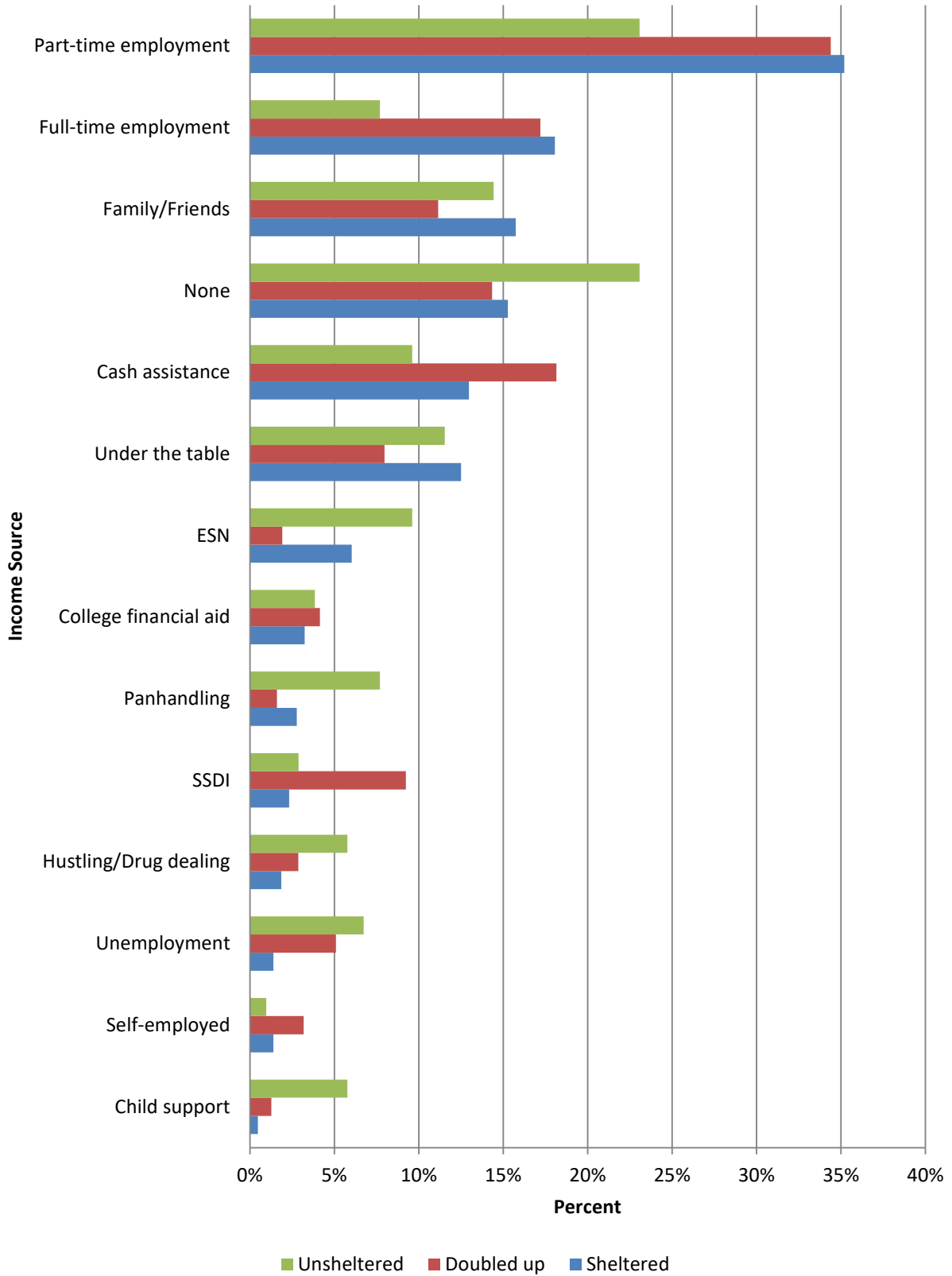
Less frequently used since COVID-19

- Cash assistance
- SSDI
- Hustling/Drug dealing

⁹ In this discussion Cash Assistance includes resources from DTA and DCF. Note: 2022 was the first year the survey included a question about self-employment.

¹⁰ To determine the number of young people who had ever exchanged sex to meet their needs (ESN), we included the following question, “Have you ever exchanged sex (including sexual intercourse, oral sex, or any sexual interaction including phone calls, photographs, or video uploads) for food, a place to stay, money or other necessities”.

Chart Five: Income Sources by Housing Status

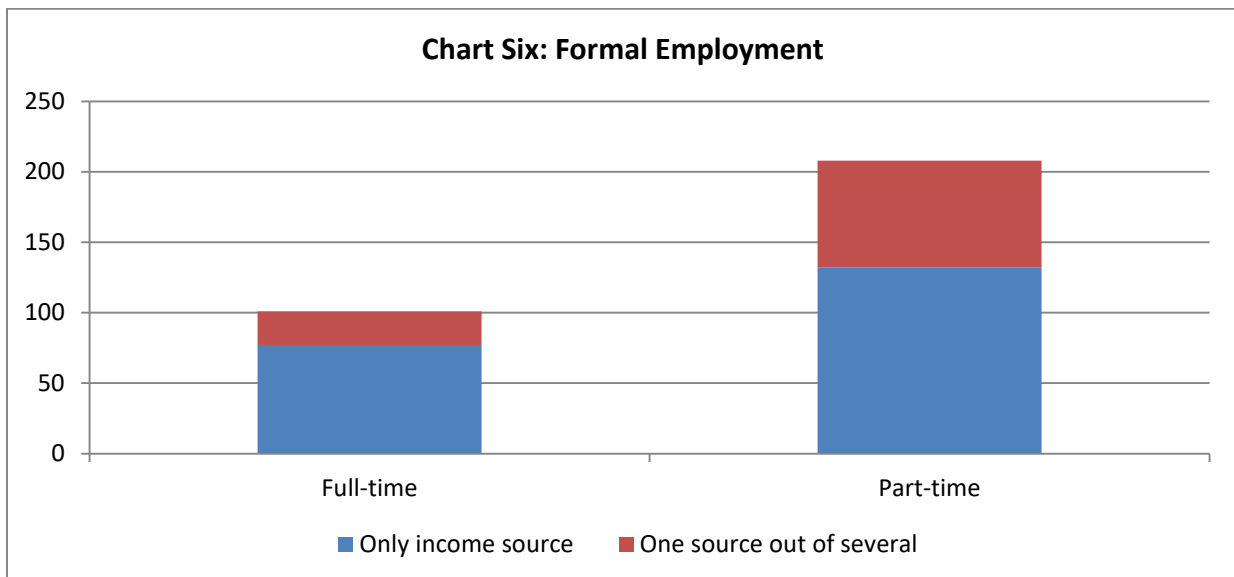


FORMAL EMPLOYMENT

Part-time employment. Roughly one-third of the respondents reported working at a part-time job. This represented the largest source of income for unaccompanied youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. Of the 208 respondents who were working part-time, 37% of them had other income sources as well, including cash assistance, SSDI, college financial aid, a full-time job, money from family or friends, and under-the-table work. Respondents who were sheltered or doubled-up were more likely than unsheltered youth to have a part-time job, yet 23% of respondents who were unsheltered were working part-time.

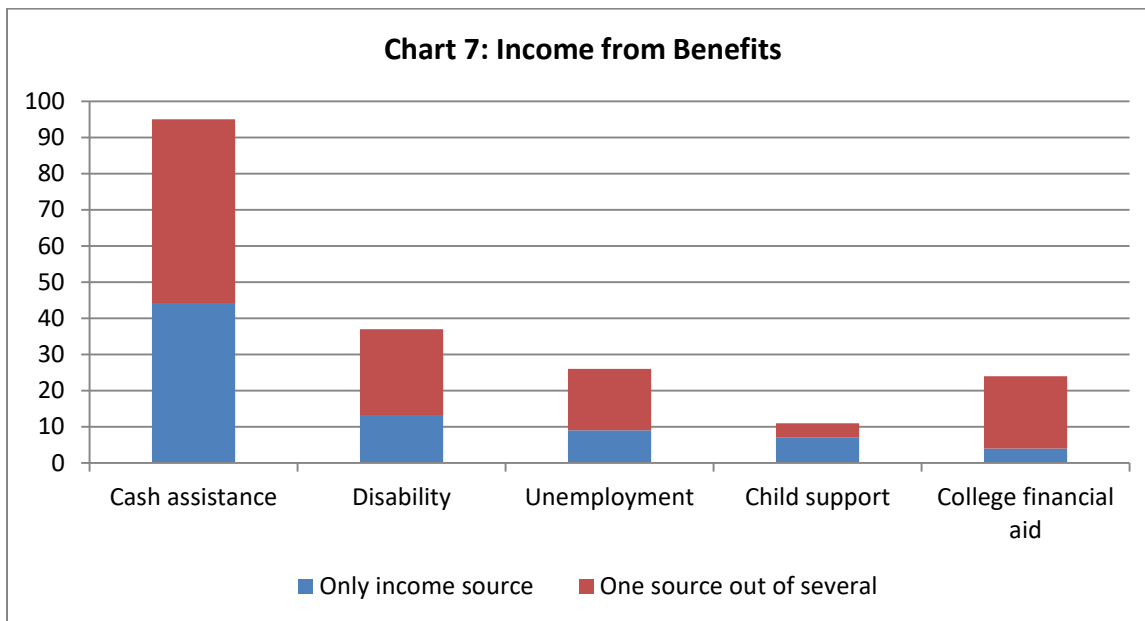
Full-time employment. Sixteen percent of the respondents had income from a full-time job. Of the 101 with full-time employment, 23% had other income sources including part-time work, cash assistance, and child support. Eight percent of those who were unsheltered were working full-time.

In general, engagement in formal employment was reported more frequently now than before the pandemic. This is likely a function of the post-pandemic labor shortage. It is important to note that while many respondents who were working full- or part-time had other income sources, as a group, the other income tended to be from benefits, money from family or friends, or under-the-table work. Respondents who worked full- or part-time tended not to report engaging in exchanging sex, drug dealing, or panhandling. Of the respondents with part-time or full-time employment, 32% had sought help with employment over the past year and 45% of them had gotten all the help they needed. Yet, **in spite of high numbers of young people who are working, they are likely not receiving a living wage as evidenced by the fact that many need multiple income sources and they remain without safe and stable housing.**



CASH ASSISTANCE, DISABILITY, UNEMPLOYMENT, CHILD SUPPORT, AND COLLEGE FINANCIAL AID

In total, 95 out of the 634 UHY respondents reported receiving cash assistance¹¹; for 44 of them, it was their only income source. Thirty-seven respondents reported receiving disability payments; for 13 of them it was their only income source. Twenty-six respondents reported receiving unemployment benefits; for 9 of them it was their only income source. Of the 131 pregnant and/or parenting respondents, only 11 reported receiving child support; for 7 of them it was their only income source. Twenty-four respondents reported receiving college financial aid; for four of them it was their only income source.



As Chart 4 indicates, receiving cash assistance continued to decline as an income source, even as the number of pregnant/parenting respondents was higher in 2022 as compared to 2021. There are some subpopulations of YYA who are entitled to receive cash benefits including: pregnant and parenting YYA, young adults with disabilities, and young adults who have voluntarily signed on with DCF for extended care. Unfortunately, YOUth Count respondents reported both structural and eligibility barriers that prevented them from accessing these benefits. Structural barriers might prevent an eligible person from getting available benefits, and may include where programs are located, how they are organized, or what they require of applicants. Eligibility barriers are often embedded in federal or state policy and may include the criteria for who

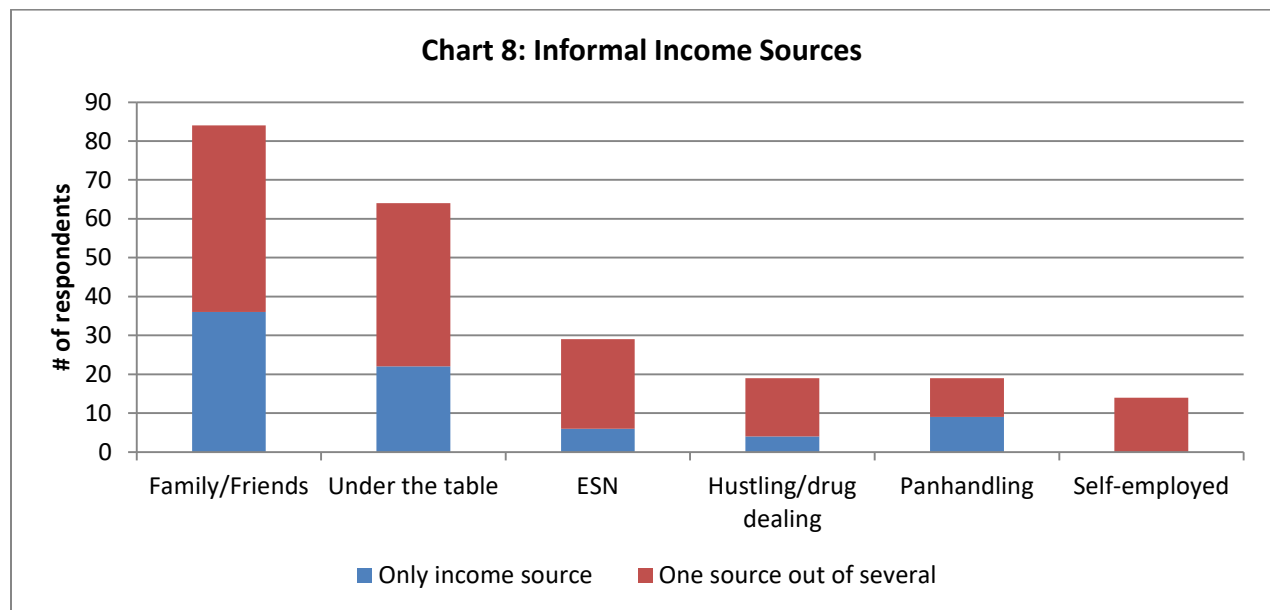
Of the 353 respondents who tried to get cash assistance in the past 12 months, only 29% reported getting all the help they needed, 36% said they got none of the help they needed.

¹¹ Only pregnant or parenting people are eligible for DTA cash benefits; EAEDC is cash assistance for individuals with disabilities.

may receive the benefit as well as time and age limits on how long those benefits may be accessed. There are additional eligibility barriers where a young adult desires and needs cash assistance but is not part of one of the eligible populations and therefore does not qualify. Of the 353 respondents who reported needing cash assistance (e.g., DTA, DCF or SSDI), only 29% got all the help they needed and 36% said they got none of the help they needed. The biggest barriers for those who got no help with cash assistance were that they did not qualify for help, they lacked identification, and they did not hear back. Doubled-up respondents were more likely to be receiving disability income and cash assistance than sheltered respondents. Overall, usage of cash assistance and disability benefits have declined since the start of the pandemic.

INFORMAL INCOME SOURCES

In this category we include respondents who received money from family or friends, worked under the table, exchanged sex to meet their needs (ESN), engaged in hustling or drug dealing, panhandled, or who were self-employed (See chart 8). Respondents in 2022 were less likely to be receiving help from family or friends than in 2021, but the number is still higher than pre-pandemic levels. As shown in Chart 5, respondents who were unsheltered were more likely to be panhandling, engaging in ESN, and hustling/drug dealing than young people who were doubled-up or sheltered. Yet, some young people who were unsheltered were also working; eight had full-time jobs and 24 had part-time jobs.



NO INCOME

In total, 102 (16%) UHY respondents said they had no income sources. These respondents were most likely to be unsheltered. In fact, having no income was the most frequent response for unsheltered respondents. As Table Five shows, having no income is associated with **justice system involvement; not having a diploma and not being in school; and being young**:

- UHY under 18 were over twice as likely to be without income than UHY as a whole.
- 55% of those with no income do not have a high school diploma.
- The average age young people with no income had left home for good at 17.8, which is 3 years earlier than UHY as a whole.
- Of respondents without income who sought help with employment, 29% got none of the help they needed. 23% of them said they needed help with employment, but did not try to get it.
- Of respondents without income who sought help with cash assistance, 49% of them got none of the help they needed and 28% needed the help but did not try to get it.

Table 5: No Income Sources by Subpopulations	2022 UHY Overall	2022 UHY with No Income
Total # Surveys	634	102
Under 18	7%	14.7%
LGBTQ+	30%	31.3%
BIPOC	60.2%	61.7%
Foster care	34.7%	30.3%
Juvenile/Criminal justice	26.4%	29.4%
Parenting with custody/Pregnant	20.6%	17.6%
Not in school & no diploma	25.8%	36.3%
Left home before 18	33.7%	39.2%
Average age left home for good	20.8	17.8

"I'm on the streets right now because I had little or no care when I was growing up after been taken by social services. I hope the people in charge take more care of people under social services care."
 --Survey Respondent

EXCHANGING SEX OR SEXUAL CONTENT FOR MONEY AND NECESSITIES¹²

Respondents were asked whether they had ever exchanged sex for money, housing, or other necessities (ESN). One hundred and sixteen (18%) responded yes to this question. This is the same rate as in 2021. This year we also asked respondents if they have exchanged sexual content, such as video uploads, for needs; 121 (19%) reported that they had. Ninety-two respondents reported having done both. Twenty-four only exchanged sex for needs and twenty-seven only exchanged sexual content for needs. In total, 22% of respondents had exchanged sex or sexual content to meet their needs.

¹²To determine the number of young people who had ever exchanged sex to meet their needs (ESN), we included the following question, "Have you ever exchanged sex (including sexual intercourse, oral sex, or any sexual interaction including phone calls, photographs, or video uploads) for food, a place to stay, money or other necessities?"

As Table Six shows, the following groups were more likely to have ever exchanged sex or sexual content for needs than respondents as a whole: LGBTQ+ youth; Youth who were unsheltered at the time of the survey; Youth with justice system involvement; Youth with foster care system involvement; and Youth born outside of the United States.

Table 6: ESN by Subpopulations	2022 UHY Overall	2022 UHY who Exchange Sex for Needs
Total % (#) UHY/Commission Definition	58.5% (634)	22.5% (143)
Under 18	7%	1%
LGBTQ+	30%	56.6%
BIPOC	60.2%	53.8%
Foster care	34.7%	49.6%
Juvenile/Criminal justice	26.4%	42.6%
Parenting with custody/Pregnant	20.6%	21.6%
Not in school & no diploma	25.8%	25.2%
Left home before 18	33.7%	44.1%
Born outside of the United States	7.7%	11.2%

"I hope this finds you well. Am good too just a bit frustrated with my life. I need to share something with you, if you can help I'll appreciate. If you can't at least I'll have shared my story with you.

Flashback to 2021, I lost my job due to Covid 19. That's when I began sex work and now, am currently pregnant. I know how crazy this sounds but just understand. With my financial situation, all the HIV and STDs around, I still had unprotected sex? No, I was raped. For fear of the police and what would happen to me especially being an undocumented immigrant, I couldn't report it.

I went for checkups and luckily, there were no infections. I thought of abortion after realizing that I was pregnant but I could not afford it nor bear the consequences that would come with it. It's so hard coz I still have siblings to take care of. With the high cost of living am currently in no position to afford housing, food, medication and even clothing for these innocent kids. I have sold everything I could just to survive."

--Survey Respondent

5.0 SERVICE NEEDS AND BARRIERS

A major goal of the Massachusetts YOUTH Count is to gain a better understanding of the kinds of services unaccompanied young people experiencing homelessness need and the challenges they face accessing them. The 2022 survey tool included the following overview and question to assess this:

In this section, we ask about different types of help, services, or supports you may have needed in the past year. Please let us know if you needed each type of help, and if you got all, some, or none of the help you needed. We also ask if you needed the help but didn't try to get it. For any service you did not get all of the help you needed, we ask what kept you from getting help.

Table Seven summarizes the response to the services sought part of the question. The four most sought-out services in 2022 were shelter/transitional housing, long-term housing, nutrition assistance, and employment assistance.

Table Seven: Service Needs	UHY needing help		Yes, Got All Help Needed	Yes, Got Some of Help Needed	Yes, But Got None of Help Needed	Needed Help but Didn't Try to Get It
	#	%				
Shelter/Transitional housing	558	88%	23%	36%	30%	11%
Long term housing	507	80%	16%	27%	40%	17%
Nutritional assistance	482	76%	50%	24%	17%	9%
Employment support	406	64%	35%	27%	25%	13%
Cash assistance	361	57%	29%	17%	36%	18%
Health care services	355	56%	38%	34%	18%	9%
Mental health counseling	342	54%	34%	26%	25%	15%
Educational support	279	44%	38%	22%	20%	19%
Family support	235	37%	24%	23%	33%	19%
Domestic violence counseling	158	25%	28%	19%	29%	24%
Sexual assault counseling	146	23%	29%	18%	28%	25%
Substance use or alcohol treatment	139	22%	32%	19%	27%	22%
Childcare	133	21%	33%	21%	38%	8%

Table Eight connects service types and barriers. The dark red cells are the 20 top barriers faced by UHY respondents across service types. Cells shaded in light red represent the top five barriers for each service type that did not fall into the top twenty overall. The shading helps us see clusters of barriers associated with particular types of services. For example, being put on a wait list was a top barrier for shelter and long-term housing. Not knowing where to go was a top barrier for four service types: shelter, long-term housing, cash assistance, and mental health counseling. Not feeling comfortable or safe and feeling too overwhelmed to get help were top barriers for domestic violence and sexual assault counseling.

Table Eight: Service Barriers by service type	Shelter/ Transitional	Long-term housing	Nutrition	Employ -ment	Cash (DTA or SSDI)	Health	Mental health	Education	Family Support	DV	Sexual assault	Substance use	Childcare
Transportation	26%	20%	22%	30%	14%	21%	19%	24%	12%	12%	12%	13%	19%
Put on waiting list	27%	33%	8%	12%	9%	14%	18%	13%	8%	9%	8%	9%	18%
Didn't hear back	22%	23%	8%	24%	17%	16%	15%	10%	16%	15%	10%	7%	18%
Didn't have money	29%	30%	18%	20%	14%	24%	18%	21%	13%	9%	14%	14%	22%
Didn't know where to go	25%	24%	21%	18%	24%	22%	25%	20%	20%	15%	22%	13%	20%
Lack of ID/documents	16%	16%	22%	17%	22%	19%	11%	10%	9%	8%	13%	12%	9%
COVID-19 restrictions	9%	6%	5%	11%	7%	9%	6%	5%	11%	10%	11%	8%	7%
Didn't qualify for help	10%	11%	14%	9%	22%	10%	3%	6%	6%	1%	5%	1%	8%
Didn't ask for help	11%	10%	9%	5%	11%	7%	12%	10%	13%	15%	11%	14%	5%
Paperwork	13%	17%	16%	11%	17%	20%	13%	14%	9%	7%	10%	10%	11%
Didn't follow through for services	7%	6%	8%	4%	4%	8%	10%	7%	4%	8%	2%	4%	1%
Didn't feel comfortable/safe	17%	11%	5%	6%	8%	8%	15%	7%	20%	26%	28%	13%	2%
Didn't have regular access to a phone or email	9%	8%	9%	5%	7%	8%	4%	7%	6%	3%	1%	2%	3%
Program closure due to COVID-19	3%	3%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	4%	1%	4%	2%	0%	1%
Sent somewhere else	7%	6%	3%	7%	6%	7%	5%	7%	8%	8%	6%	9%	8%
Didn't have health insurance	5%	4%	1%	3%	3%	16%	7%	2%	7%	4%	10%	4%	3%
Language barrier	1%	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%	2%	9%	7%	5%	6%	4%	3%
Felt too overwhelmed	19%	15%	13%	12%	11%	17%	22%	13%	21%	28%	24%	16%	5%
# UHY needing this type of help	544	498	470	394	353	348	342	279	235	158	146	139	133
# UHY needing it but not getting all they needed	418	418	237	256	250	215	220	168	173	110	101	91	88
% UHY needing it but not getting all the help they needed	77%	84%	50%	65%	71%	62%	64%	60%	74%	70%	69%	65%	66%

Not qualifying for help was a top barrier only for getting cash assistance, which is not surprising given established eligibility criteria for cash assistance. Several barriers we inquired about did not prove to be significant for most respondents. These include:

- Didn't follow through for services
- Didn't have regular access to a phone or email
- Program closure due to COVID-19
- COVID-19 restrictions
- Sent somewhere else
- Didn't have health insurance

The following pages review each service type. They are presented in order by the number of respondents needing each type of service. First, the percent of UHY who needed each form of support is presented. Then, the amount of help UHY reported getting from each service type is summarized. A subpopulation analysis is provided to understand more about which groups tended to need each form of help, and the extent to which they received the help they needed. This analysis helps us see that several subpopulations are consistently less likely to get the help they need (e.g., UHY who left home as minors, justice-involved respondents, BIPOC, and those not in school¹³). It is important to highlight that within the subpopulation analysis, situations such as foster care involvement or justice system involvement could indicate either current or a history of involvement. Finally, the barriers specific to each form of help is provided. This analysis only includes respondents who needed each form of help.

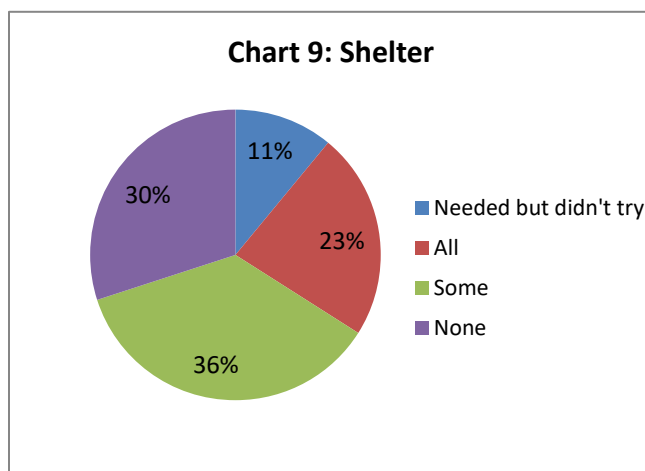
SHELTER

Overall, 85% of respondents reported needing shelter or transitional housing, making it the top sought service. Chart 9 shows how much help with shelter respondents tended to receive. Overall, 23% of respondents received all of the help they needed with shelter, but 30% reported receiving none of the help they needed.

Subpopulations

The following subpopulations were more likely than UHY as a whole to report needing shelter:

- pregnant/parenting (94%)
- foster care involved (92%)
- those without a high school diploma and not in school (91%)
- justice system involved (91%)



¹³ This report does not present intersectional data analysis and as such does not report on overlapping social identities and life experiences such as BIPOC-LGBTQ youth or pregnant and parenting minors. We will present such intersectional data in a future report.

In terms of getting the help they needed:

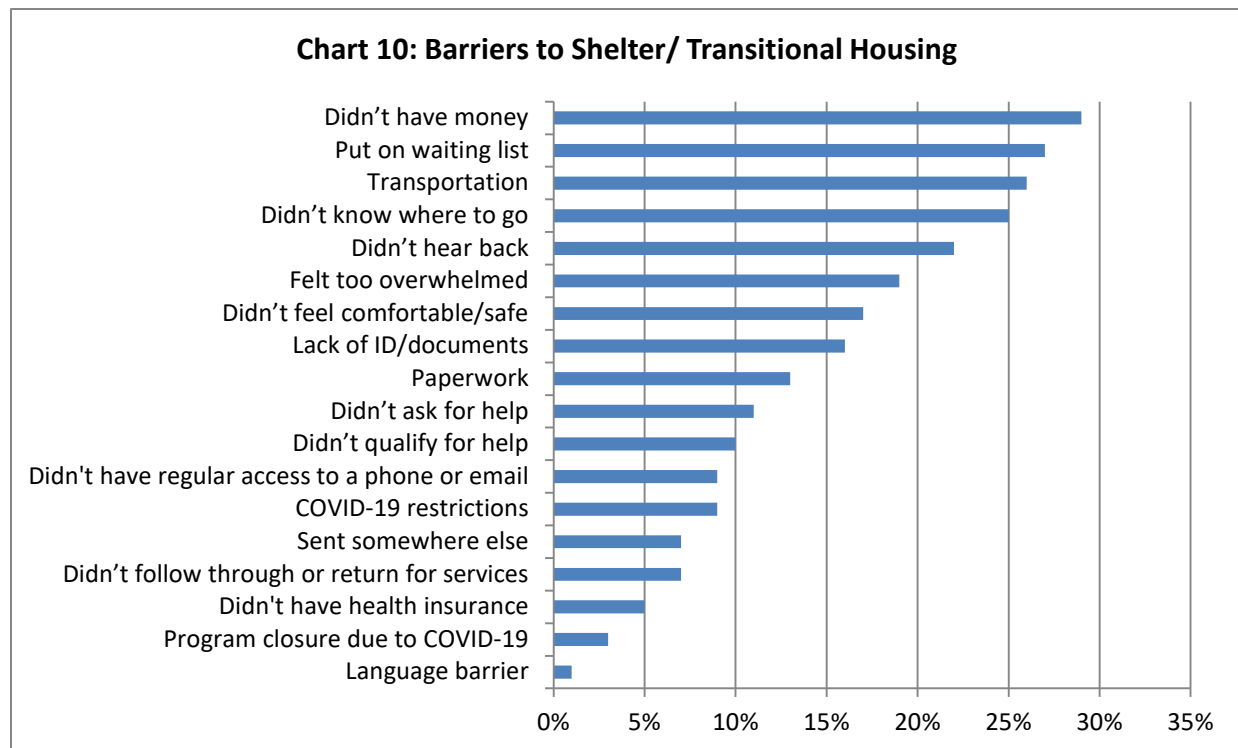
- LGBTQ+ respondents were most likely to report receiving all the help they need (32%). This finding aligns with LGBTQ+ respondents being sheltered at higher rates than UHY as a whole.
- Respondents not in school and with no diploma were the most likely to receive none of the help they needed (41%), aligning with the finding that those not in school and without a diploma were most likely to be unsheltered.
- BIPOC respondents needing shelter were the group more likely to not try to get help (12%).
- Pregnant and parenting respondents were among those who most needed help with shelter, but were also among those most likely to report receiving none of the help they needed (37%).

- *"I need a safe and dry place to be all the time"*
- *"I want the Massachusetts government to help us with shelter and feeds, it's so cold out here."*
- *"More youth shelters in Boston"*
- *"Quicker way to move into transitional housing for the homeless"*

--Survey Respondents

Barriers

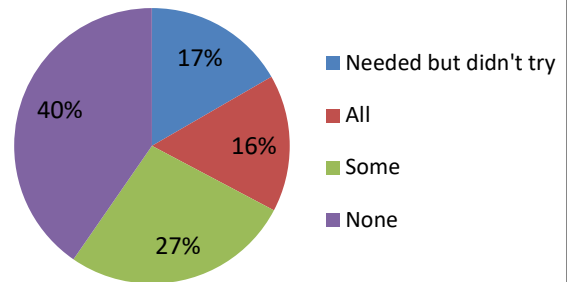
The most significant barriers respondents faced accessing shelter were: not having money, being put on a wait list, transportation, not knowing where to go for help, and not hearing back from the provider. Chart 10 shows the frequency each barrier was experienced.



LONG-TERM HOUSING

Overall, 80% of respondents reported needing long-term housing support, like public housing or a Section 8 voucher. Chart 11 shows how much help with long-term housing respondents tended to receive. Forty percent of respondents got none of the help they needed with long-term housing. Only 16% received all of the help they needed, making long-term housing the 2nd most needed resource but the resource respondents were least likely to receive.

Chart 11: Long-term Housing



Subpopulations

The following subpopulations were more likely than UHY as a whole to report needing long-term housing:

- pregnant/parenting (88%)
- foster care-involved (84%)
- justice system-involved (82%)

In terms of getting the help they needed:

- LGBTQ+ respondents were most likely to report receiving all the help they need (19%); however, they were also the group most likely to say they needed help with long-term housing but didn't try to get it.
- Pregnant and parenting respondents were most likely to need long-term housing, and also were most likely to get none of the help they needed (48%).
- Respondents who left home as minors and those without a diploma/not in school were also more likely than other UHY to not get any of the help they needed.

"We need more apartments without credit checks or more things for first time renters especially 18 and 19 year olds who have to go years jumping through hoops to afford the credit for their own place to live."

--Survey Respondent

Barriers

The most significant barriers respondents faced accessing long-term housing were being put on a wait list, not having money, not knowing where to go for help, not hearing back, and transportation. Chart 12 shows the frequency each barrier was experienced. Due to the frequency with which waitlists came up in the survey, we wanted to understand more about the experiences young people have with housing waitlists and explored this topic in a focus group.

The focus group participants reported waiting for months and years on waitlists for housing. Some of them expressed appreciation for the help they received with the paperwork to get on the lists. Others found the paperwork to be overwhelming:

“It asks like so many things about like your income, and things like that and you don't have it available. So, it's just like a whole process that makes you like not want to continue with it.” – Focus group participant

They all expressed frustration about the lack of communication about where they were on the waitlist over time. The stress of being in a shelter was compounded by the lack of information they were receiving about when they might be able to leave shelter and get into permanent housing. One participant expressed:

“I'm on the waitlist for housing right now. [My case worker] helped me out with all the paperwork and stuff but yeah, it's like we filled out the paperwork in July. And nothing since then. I've called a few times and they're like, 'no, you moved up a few spots, but you're still like way down the list. We'll call you know when you're on the top.' But, you know, like I said it's been months it's kind of frustrating to be in the situation.”

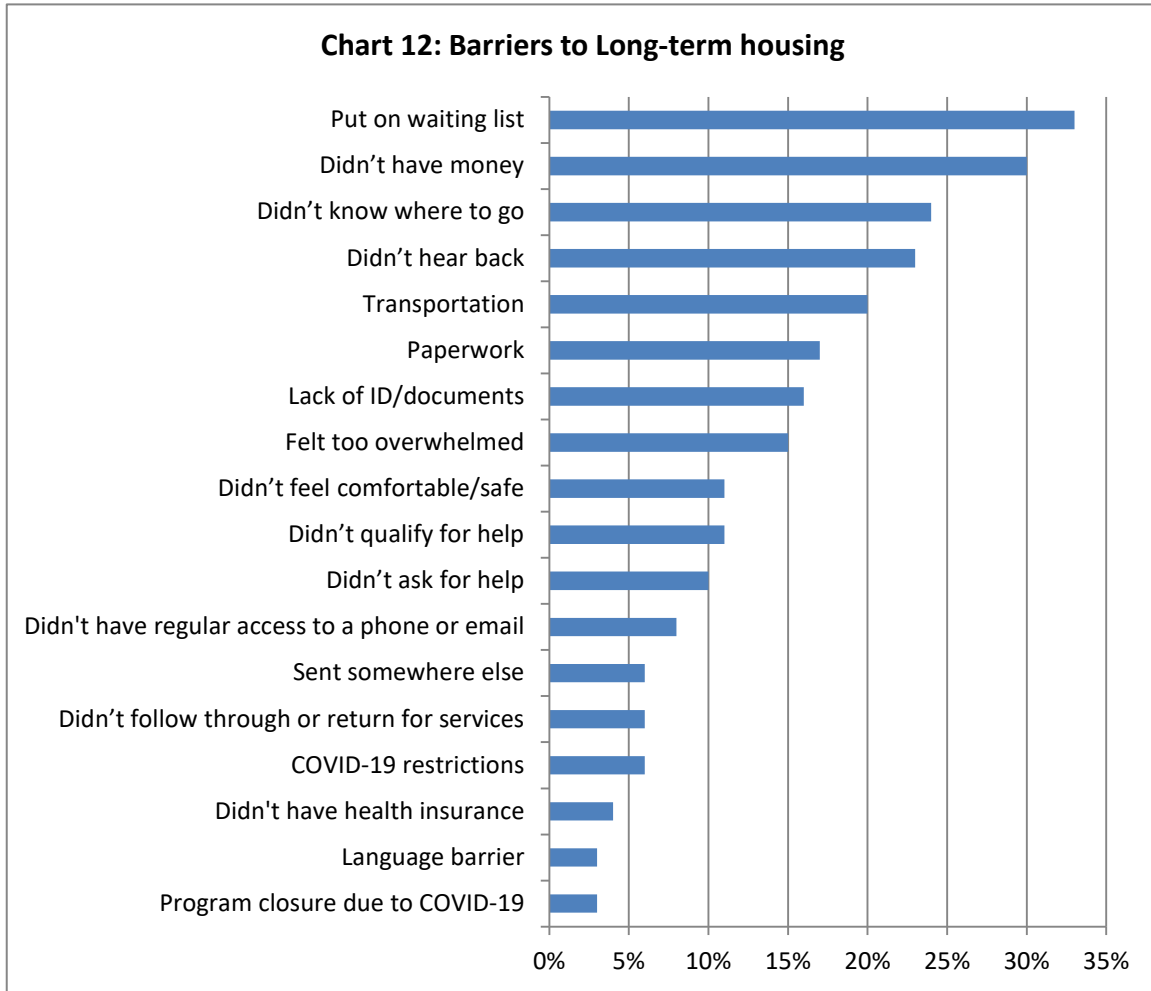
Another participant shared the following about the lack of communication:

“The communication really sucks a lot of the time. They're not on top of keeping you updated. I'd like to know that there's no update to my status, you know? It's very frustrating that they can't keep me updated. Like I don't know what's going on. I'd rather know there's no update than not knowing anything at all.”

One focus group participant shared how having autism compounds an overwhelming situation. She shared:

“So, like in my experience, what overwhelms me a lot navigating housing is the fact that like social workers and things aren't very inclusive. While I was homeless, I was homeless with autism, and it's extremely hard to navigate things with autism. And I know that a lot of times, a lot of people don't know how to assist the people with autism, and it gets very, like I can't think of a word, but it just makes me very reluctant to talk to people because not a lot of people are very understanding.”

The focus group deepened our understanding of the stress people experience while working through the required paperwork and navigating the housing system while young and perhaps with a disability. Then, when young people complete the application process, they experience frustration as they wait for housing resources in a context of limited communication.



- *"A real place to stay"*
 - *"Get people off the waiting list faster "*
 - *"Help getting housing"*
 - *"Having more housing to access for youth."*
 - *"Section 8"*
 - *"Need an apartment for my family"*
 - *"I think that would help more is trying to find or help us find more places we can stay in terms of apartments to stay in"*
- Survey Respondents*

NUTRITION

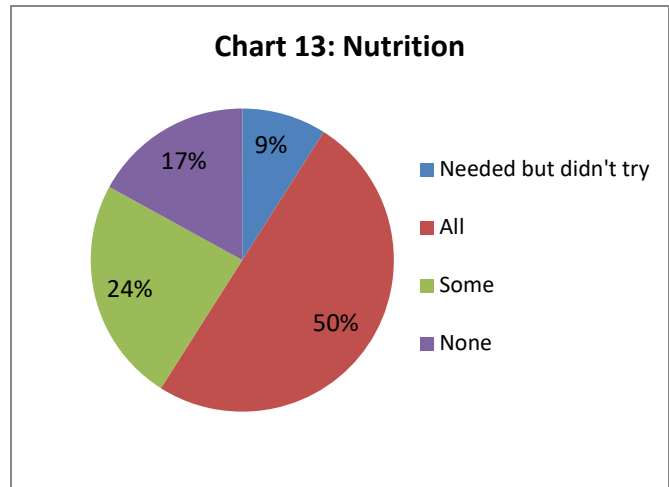
Overall, 76% of respondents reported needing nutritional assistance, including getting SNAP and free meals. Chart 13 shows how much help with nutrition respondents tended to receive.

Nutrition is noteworthy in that the majority of respondents got all of what they needed. Only 17% reported receiving none of the help they needed and only 9% of those who needed it did not try to get it.

Subpopulations

The following subpopulations were more likely than UHY as a whole to report needing help with food and nutrition:

- pregnant/parenting (84%)
- LGBTQ+ (82%)
- justice system-involved (79%)



In terms of receiving the help needed:

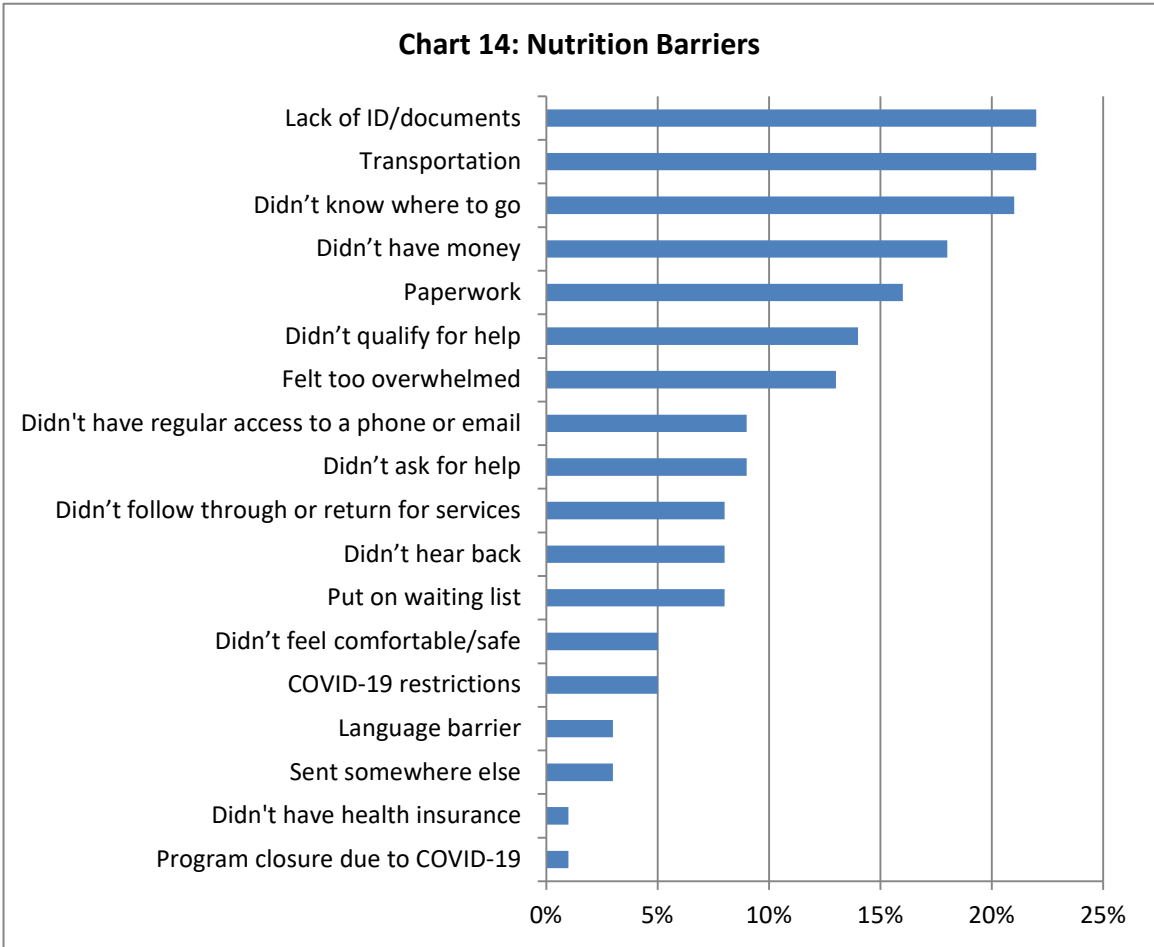
- Respondents who were LGBTQ+ (55%), pregnant or parenting (55%), justice system involved, and foster care system involved were most likely to report receiving all the help they need.
- Respondents who left home as minors (23%) and those without a diploma/not in school (22%) were more likely than other UHY to not get any of the help they needed with nutrition.

Barriers

The most significant barriers respondents faced accessing nutrition support were transportation, lack of ID, not knowing where to go, not having money, and paperwork. For the groups who were less likely to receive any help, transportation, not hearing back, not having money, being put on a wait list, and not having identification were more significant barriers than for UHY as a whole. Chart 14 shows the frequency with which each barrier was experienced for UHY.

"Snacks should be provided by all shelters for people who either do receive but don't have or don't receive food stamps at all."

--Survey Respondent



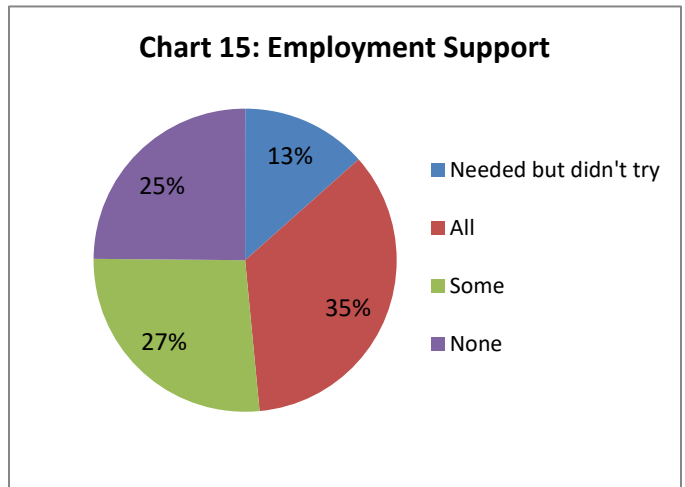
EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

Overall, 64% of respondents reported needing help with employment or job training. Chart 15 shows how much help with employment respondents tended to receive. Overall, 35% of respondents received all of the help they needed with employment, yet a quarter did not get any of the help they needed.

Subpopulations

The following subpopulations were more likely than UHY as a whole to report needing help with employment:

- pregnant/parenting (69%)
- foster care system-involved (67%)
- justice system-involved (67%)



In terms of receiving the help needed:

- Respondents who were pregnant or parenting (42%) and those who left home as minors (40%) were most likely to report receiving all the help they need.
- Respondents without a diploma/not in school (37%) were more likely than other UHY to not get any of the help they needed with employment.

"There's a lot of homeless people out there especially young people who have to resort to malicious things in order to obtain a roof over their head. I also feel like some people who have housing don't deserve it and that's just my opinion, the amount of young people I've seen on the streets, sleeping outside and in alleys are ridiculous and Massachusetts and Boston is doing nothing about it. "

"Boston puts us through a lot of trials and tribulations just to obtain housing and god forbid we're making a little bit more than we're supposed to we can't get any benefits. It's a struggle living in Boston, and Massachusetts has the nerves to charge \$1500-2000 for a run down, non-renovated, and infested apartment! "

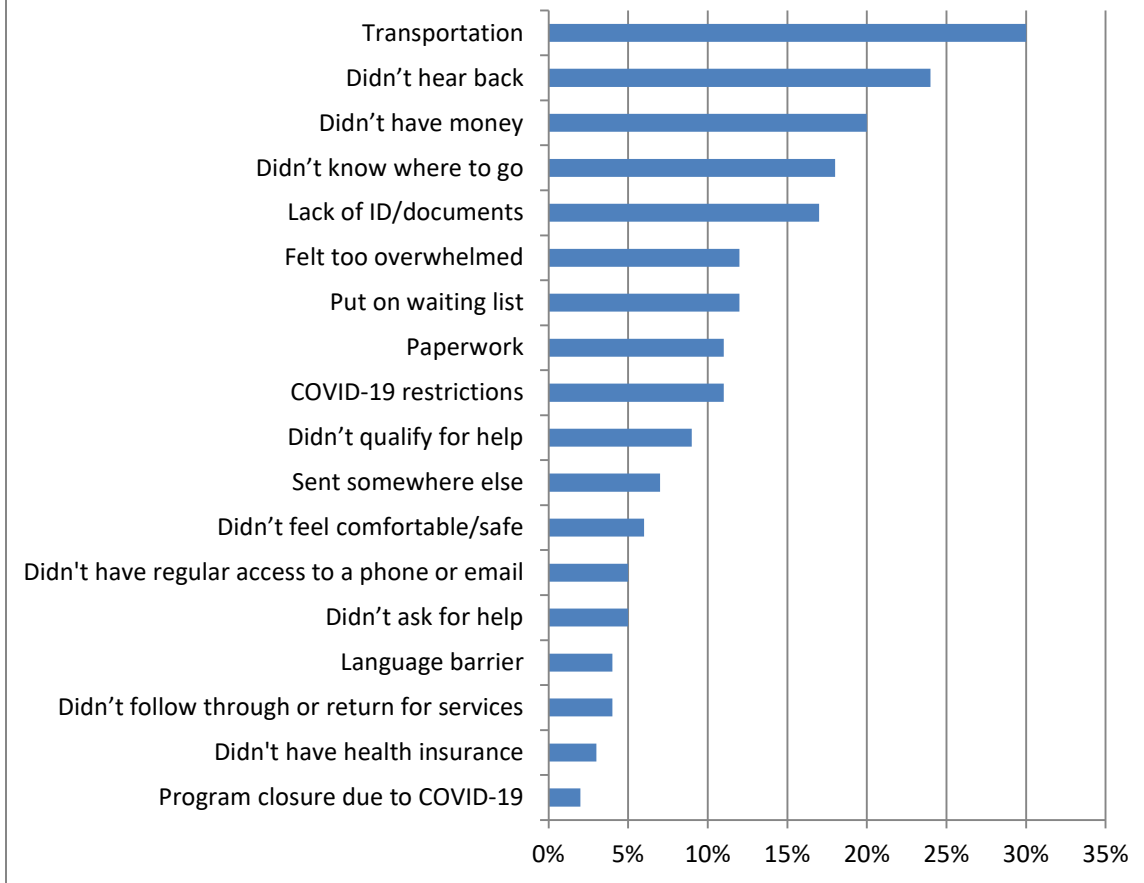
"A lot people are living check to check and can barely survive with how expensive it is to live here. That's one of the reasons why there's a lot of homeless youth. Things drastically need to change because everything's been going downhill but COVID made it much worse. We just need more affordable housing in Boston."

--Survey Respondents

Barriers

The most significant barriers respondents faced accessing employment support were transportation, didn't hear back, didn't have money, didn't know where to go, and lack of ID/documents. Chart 16 shows the frequency each barrier was experienced.

Chart 16: Barriers to Employment Support



*"Hire more [young adults], pay them salary and if they don't work in office give them a membership to a place similar to Work Bar."
--Survey Respondent*

CASH ASSISTANCE

Keeping in mind the structural and eligibility barriers YYA face when trying to access cash assistance discussed on page 15, overall, 58% of respondents reported needing help with cash assistance. Chart 17 shows how much help with cash assistance respondents tended to receive. 29% of respondents received all of the help they needed with cash assistance and 36% received none of the help they needed.

Subpopulations

The following subpopulations were more likely than UHY as a whole to report needing help with cash assistance:

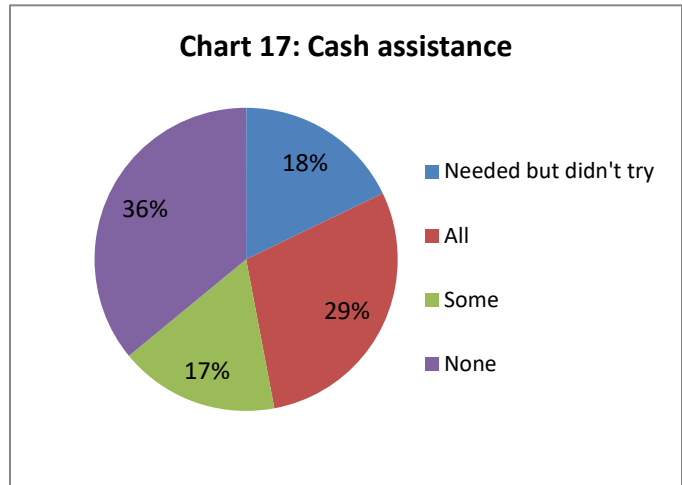
- pregnant or parenting (71%)
- justice system-involved (65%)
- foster care system-involved (64%)

In terms of getting the help needed:

- Of the groups that needed cash assistance at the highest rates, justice system-involved respondents were much less likely to receive all the help they needed (24%).
- On the more positive side, close to 40% of the pregnant/parenting respondents got all the help they needed with cash assistance.
- The far more common experience was getting no help. The following groups were more likely to not receive any help:
 - Those not in school and with no diploma (42%)
 - LGBTQ+ respondents (39%)
 - BIPOC respondents (38%)
 - Foster care-involved respondents (38%)

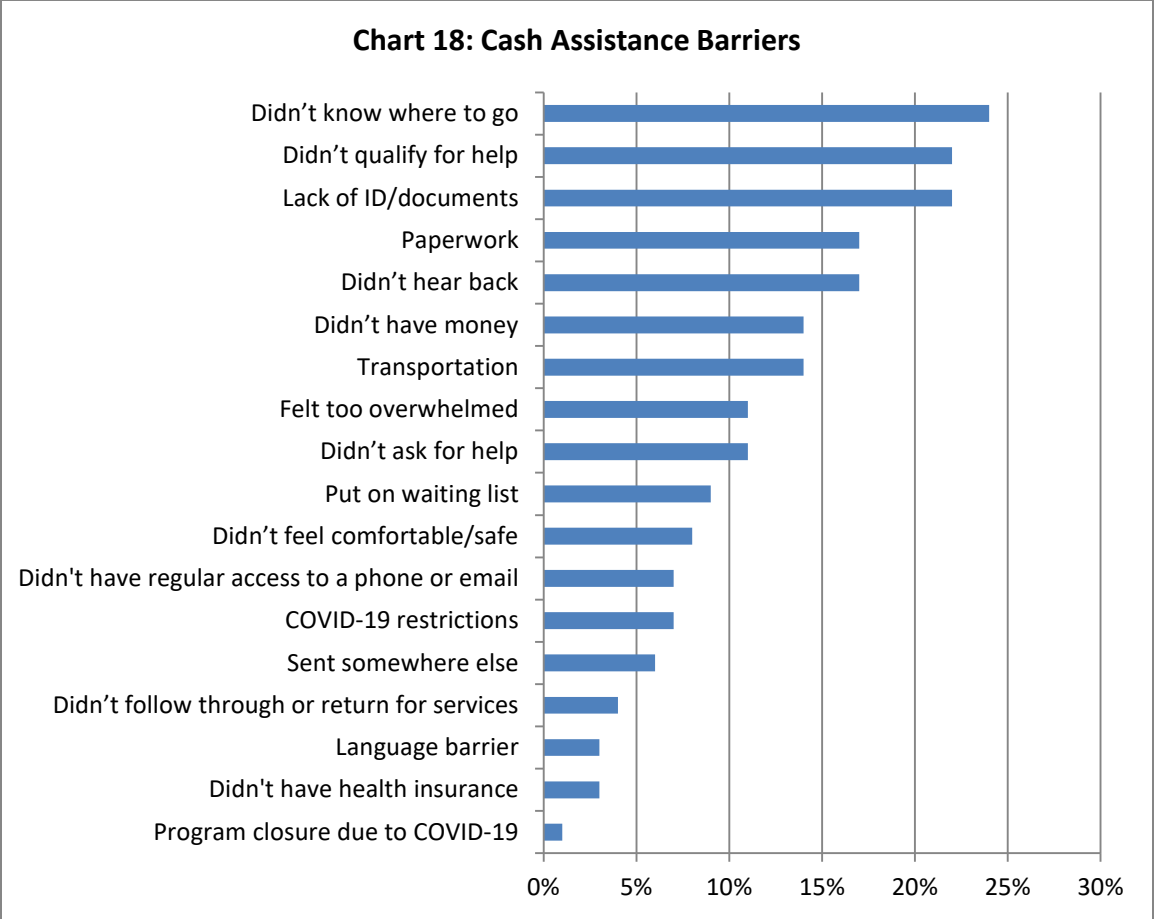
Barriers

The most significant barriers respondents faced accessing cash assistance were not knowing where to go, lack of identification, not qualifying for help, not hearing back, and paperwork. Chart 18 shows the frequency each barrier was experienced.



"Please help me with some funds to buy groceries, some clothes and medication for my asthma."

--Survey Respondent



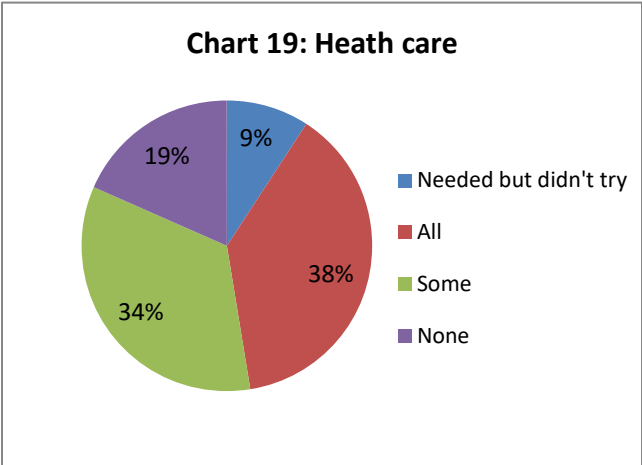
HEALTH CARE

Overall, 57% of respondents reported needing help with health care. Chart 19 shows how much help with health care respondents tended to receive. Overall, 38% of respondents received all of the help they needed with health care, an additional 34% got at least some of what they needed, making it one of the more helpful resources.

Subpopulations

The following subpopulations were more likely than UHY as a whole to report needing help with healthcare:

- justice system-involved (67%)
- LGBTQ+ (65%)
- foster care system-involved (63%)
- those without a diploma and not in school (59%)



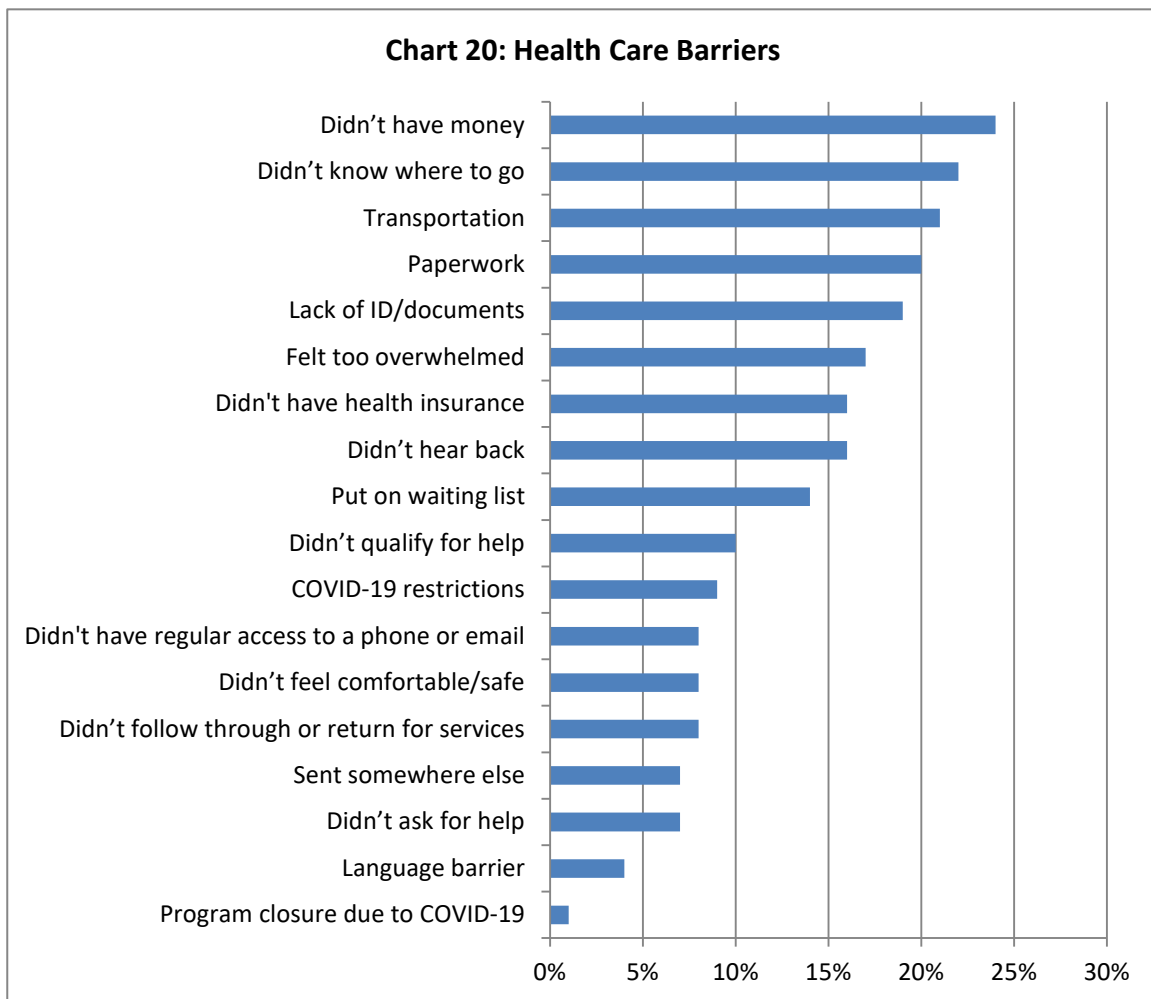
Most of these subpopulations tended to report that they received all the help they needed, with the exception of those without a diploma and who are not in school (30%).

While 46% of those who were pregnant or parenting got all the help they needed, 25% reported that they did not get any of the help they needed, making that the second largest group unable to access healthcare. Respondents who left home as minors were the third largest group not to receive this kind of help.

Groups that needed healthcare but didn't try to get it at higher rates than UHY as a whole were those not in school and without a diploma (13%), justice system-involved (12%), foster care system involved (11%), and those that left home as minors (10%).

Barriers

The most significant barriers respondents faced accessing health care were: didn't have money, didn't know where to go, transportation, paperwork, and lack of ID/documentation. Chart 20 shows the frequency each barrier was experienced.



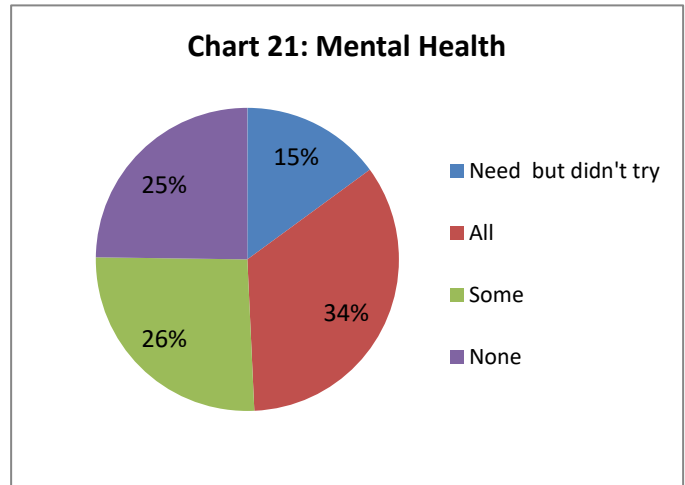
MENTAL HEALTH

Overall, 54% of respondents reported needing help with mental health. Chart 21 shows how much help with mental health respondents tended to receive. Overall, 34% of respondents received all of the help they needed with mental health, and a quarter received none of the help they needed.

Subpopulations

The following subpopulations were more likely than UHY as a whole to report needing help with mental health:

- LGBTQ+ (71%)
- Justice system-involved (56%)
- Pregnant/parenting (56%)



In terms of getting needed help:

- The following subpopulations tended to get all the help with mental health at higher rates than UHY: foster care system-involved youth (41%), BIPOC respondents (39%), pregnant/parenting (38%), and LGBTQ+ (36%).
- Only 19% of those without a diploma and not in school got all the help they needed; this group was most likely to not get any help at 41%.
- BIPOC respondents were more likely to report needing this type of help but not seeking it out than UHY as a whole.

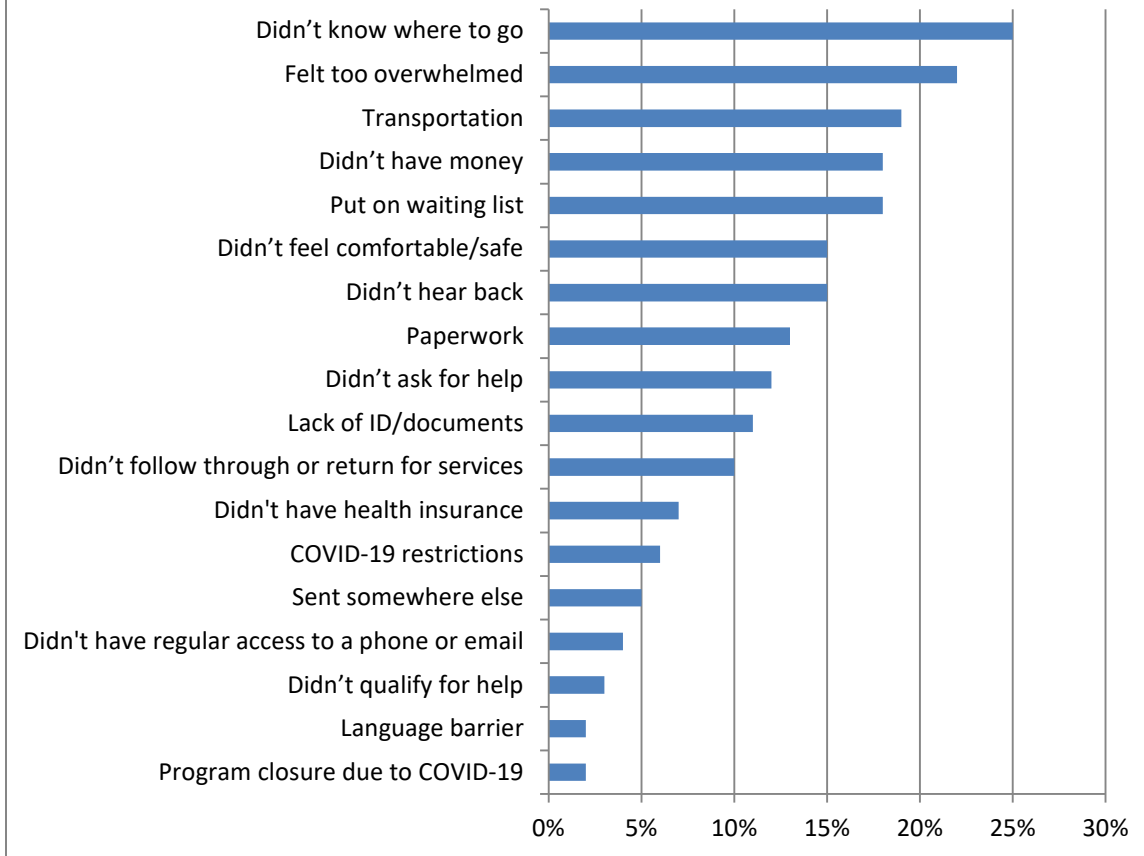
Barriers

The most significant barriers respondents faced accessing mental health services were not knowing where to go, feeling too overwhelmed to seek help, transportation, being put on a wait list, and not having money. The focus groups also shed light on young people's worries about seeking mental health support. They expressed concern that they would be judged and that the counseling would not be helpful. In some cases, it appears young people talk themselves out of even trying counseling: "I think it was more on me on why like I felt uncomfortable. I think it was just me overthinking things." Chart 22 shows the frequency each barrier was experienced.

"More youth counselors who can understand and try to help as much as possible. There are too many for just one to bounce from shelter to shelter when there's youth in different places who need the help and care."

--Survey Respondent

Chart 22: Barriers to Mental Health Supports



EDUCATION

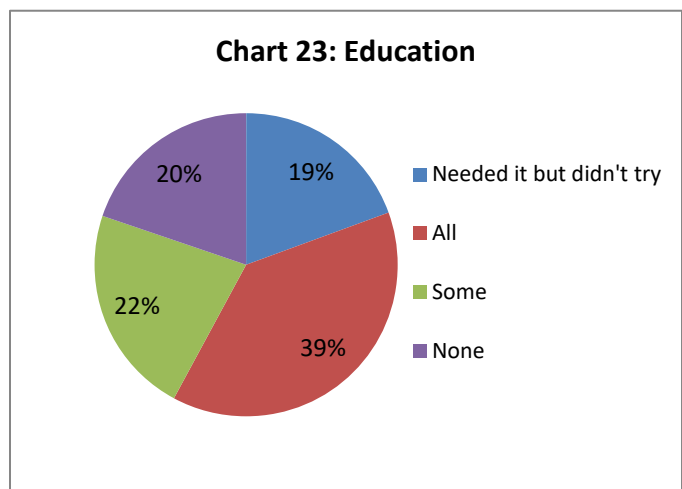
Overall, 44% of respondents reported needing help with education. Chart 23 shows how much help with education respondents tended to receive. Overall, 39% of respondents received all of the help they needed with education and 20% received none of the help they needed.

Subpopulations

The following subpopulations were more likely than UHY as a whole to report needing help with education:

- those without a diploma and not in school (61%)

Chart 23: Education



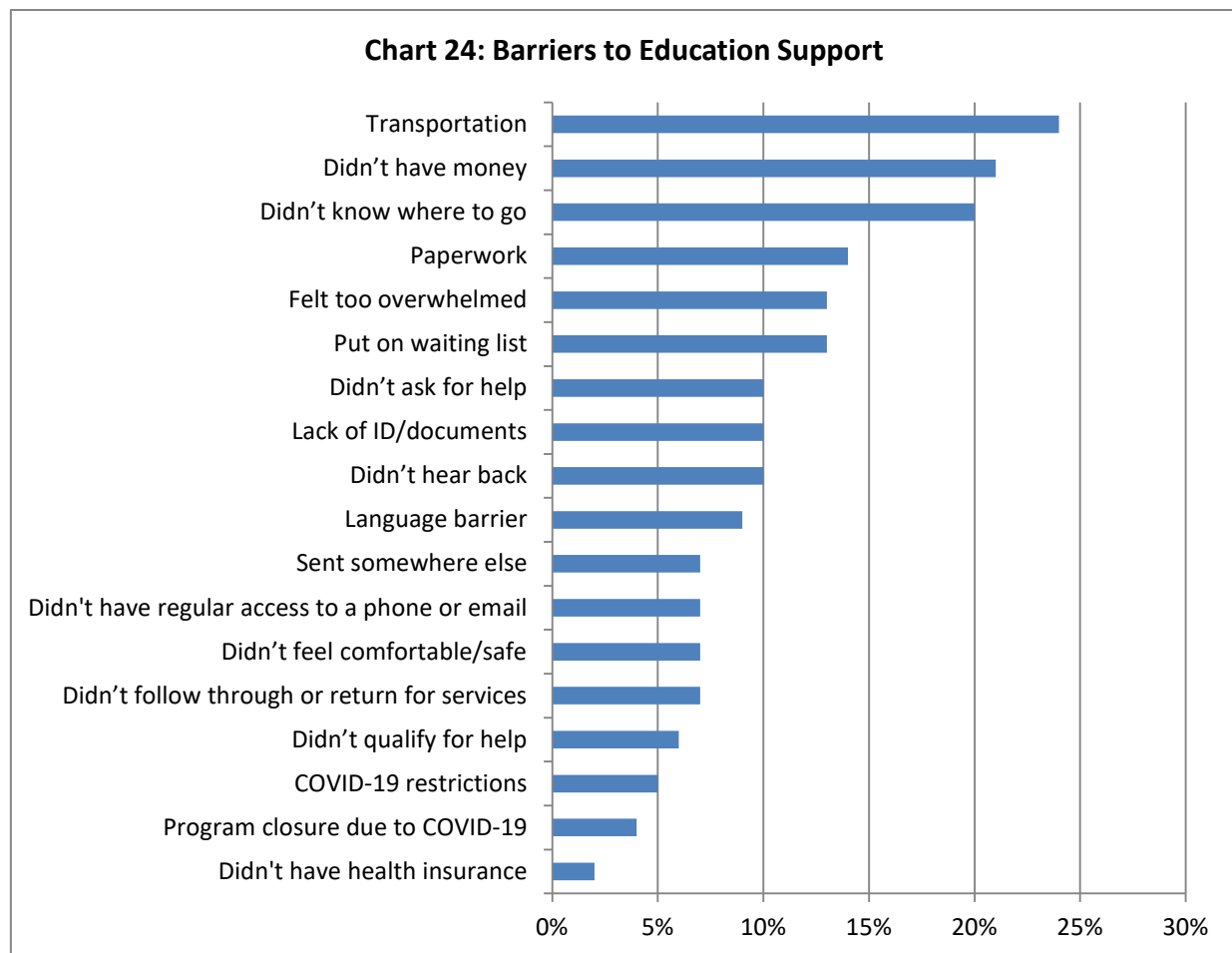
- those that left home as minors (51%)
- those who are pregnant or parenting (47%)

The following subpopulations tended to get all the help with education at higher rates than UHY: pregnant/parenting; those who left home as minors, and BIPOC respondents.

Only 16% of those without a diploma and not in school got all the help they needed; this group was most likely to not get any help at 31%. Another 30% of this subpopulation needed the help but did not try to get it.

Barriers

The most significant barriers respondents faced accessing education were transportation, didn't have money, didn't know where to go, paperwork, being put on a waiting list, and feeling too overwhelmed to seek help. Chart 24 shows the frequency each barrier was experienced.



"The Commission should help with food and education, I want more education but no one helps, [not] even the government."

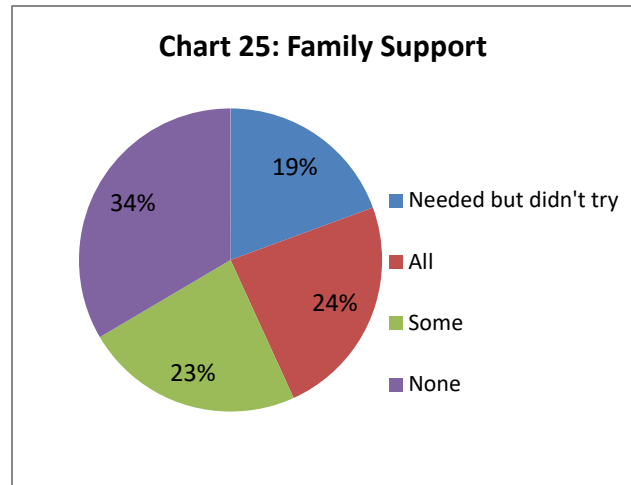
--Survey Respondent

FAMILY SUPPORT (E.G. CONFLICT MEDIATION OR PARENTING SUPPORT)

Overall, 37% of respondents reported needing help with family support. Chart 25 shows how much help with family support respondents reporting receiving. Only 24% of respondents received all of the help they needed with family support and 34% received none of the help they needed.

Subpopulations

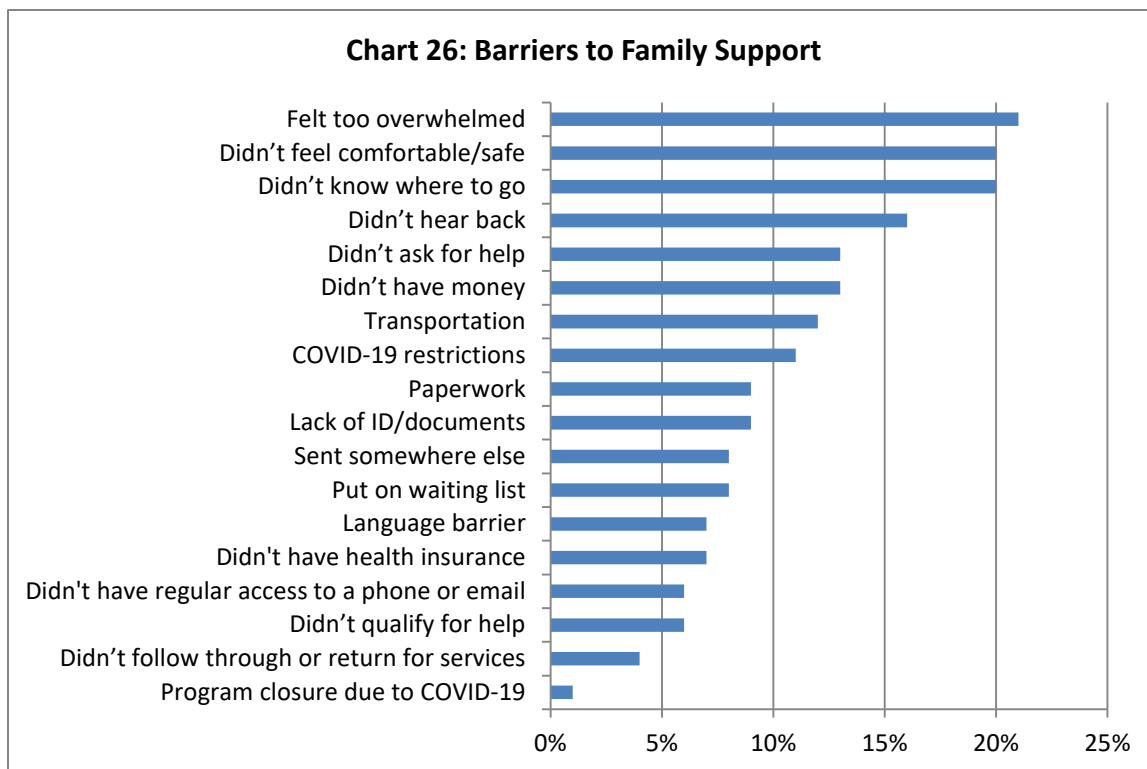
The following subpopulations were more likely than UHY as a whole to report needing help with family support: pregnant and/or parenting (45%) and those with foster care system involvement (41%).



Most groups got none of the help they needed. Those that left home as minors were most likely to get none of the help they needed (37%). BIPOC respondents and those not in school and without a diploma (35%) were also more likely than UHY respondents as a whole to get no help.

Barriers

The most significant barriers respondents faced accessing family support were feeling too overwhelmed, not knowing where to go, not feeling comfortable or safe, not hearing back, not having money, and not asking for help. Chart 26 shows the frequency each barrier was experienced.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COUNSELING

Overall, 25% of respondents reported needing help with domestic violence. Chart 27 shows how much help with domestic violence respondents tended to receive. Only 28% of respondents received all of the help they needed with domestic violence; 29% got none of the help they needed.

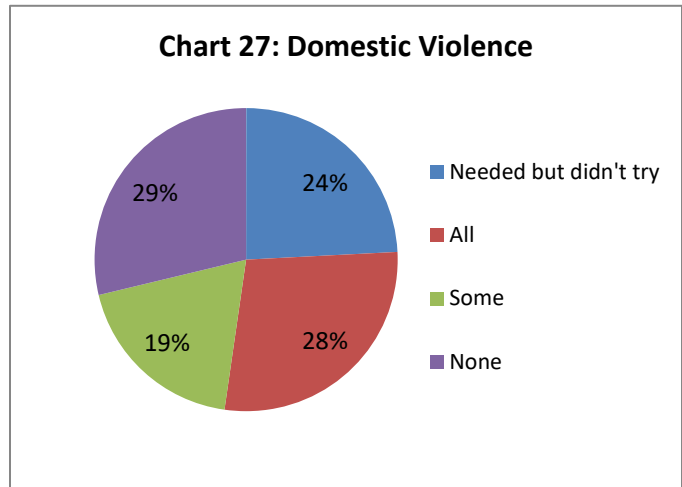
Subpopulations

The following subpopulations were more likely than UHY as a whole to report needing help with domestic violence:

- pregnant/parenting (34%)
- LGBTQ+ (29%)
- foster care system-involved (29%)
- justice system-involved (29%)

These are also the subpopulations that were also those most likely to get all the help they needed.

Respondents without a diploma and not school (39%) and those who left home as minors (33%) were most likely to get none of the help they needed. Justice system involved youth were most likely to report needing this type of help, but not trying to get it (33%).



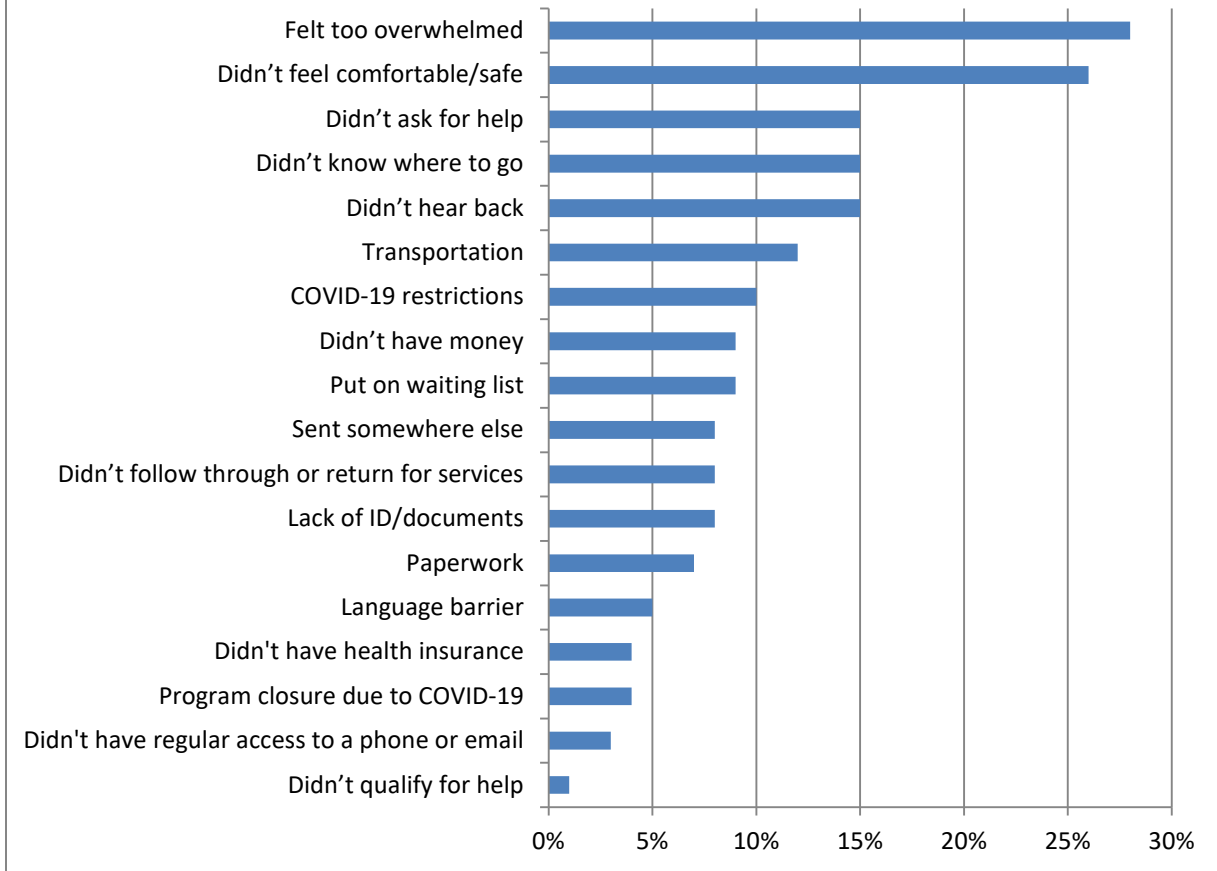
"I really need help with domestic violence shelter and counseling, I'm escaping a very unsafe and scary situation for the first time in 3 years."

--Survey Respondent

Barriers

The most significant barriers respondents faced accessing domestic violence counseling were feeling too overwhelmed to seek help, not feeling comfortable or safe, not hearing back, not knowing where to go, and not asking for help. Chart 28 shows the frequency each barrier was experienced.

Chart 28: Barriers to Domestic Violence Services



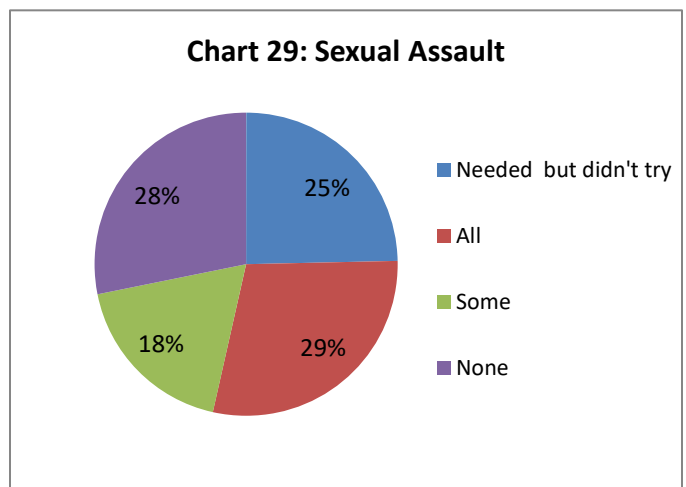
SEXUAL ASSAULT COUNSELING

Overall, 23% of respondents reported needing help with sexual assault counseling. Chart 29 shows how much help with sexual assault respondents tended to receive. Only 29% of respondents received all of the help they needed with sexual assault; 28% got none of the help they needed. One quarter of respondents who needed help with sexual assault did not try to get it.

Subpopulations

The following subpopulations were more likely than UHY as a whole to report needing help with sexual assault:

Chart 29: Sexual Assault



- LGBTQ+ (33%)
- pregnant/parenting (31%)
- those with no diploma and not in school (30%)
- foster care system-involved (29%)
- justice system-involved (27%)

With the exception of respondents who reported foster care involvement (35%), the five listed subpopulations reporting needing these services at higher levels did not tend to receive all the help they needed. However, BIPOC respondents were more likely to say they got all the help they needed (36%).

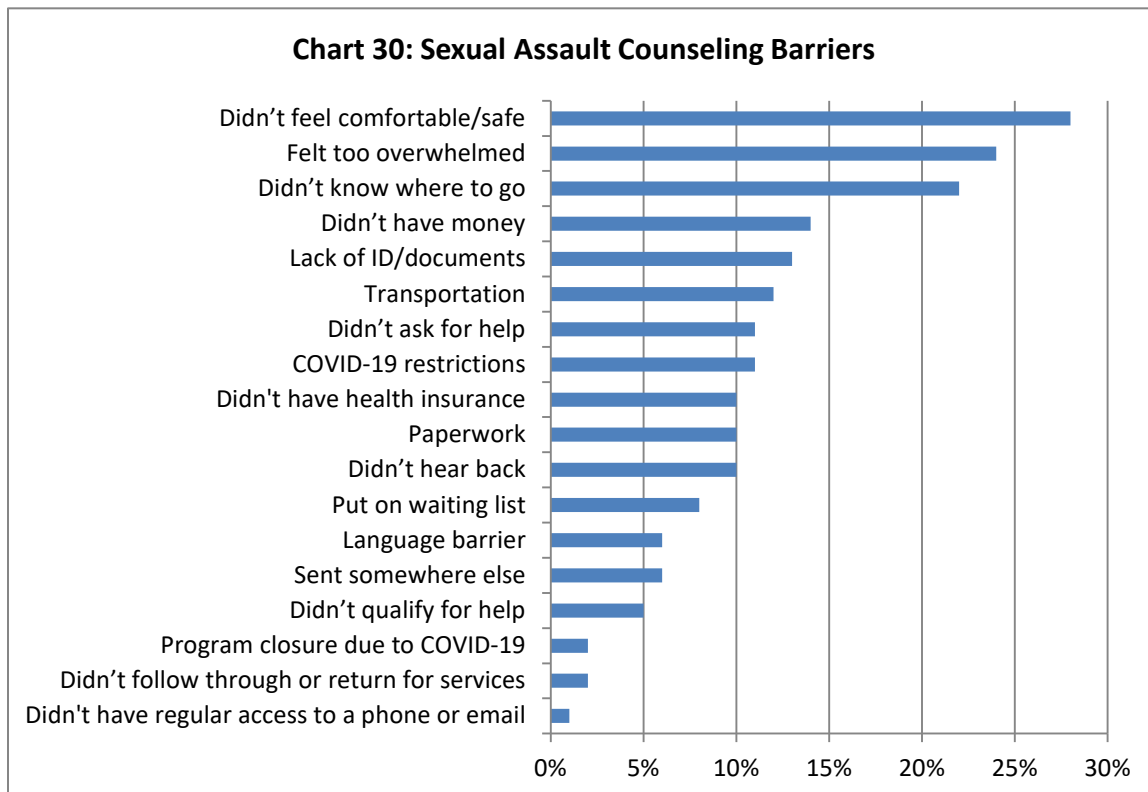
The following groups were most likely to get none of the help they needed:

- those without a diploma and not school (41%),
- pregnant or parenting (35%),
- those who left home as minors (33%).

LGBTQ+ respondents (30%) and those who left home as minors (29%) were most likely to report needing this type of help, but not trying to get it.

Barriers

The most significant barriers respondents faced accessing sexual assault counseling were not feeling comfortable or safe, feeling too overwhelmed to seek help, not knowing where to go, not having money, and not having needed identification. Chart 30 shows the frequency each barrier was experienced.



SUBSTANCE USE OR ALCOHOL TREATMENT

Overall, 22% of respondents reported needing help accessing substance use or alcohol treatment. Chart 31 shows how much help with substance use or alcohol treatment services respondents tended to receive. Roughly one-third (32%) of respondents received all of the help they needed with substance use; 27% got none of the help they needed.

Subpopulations

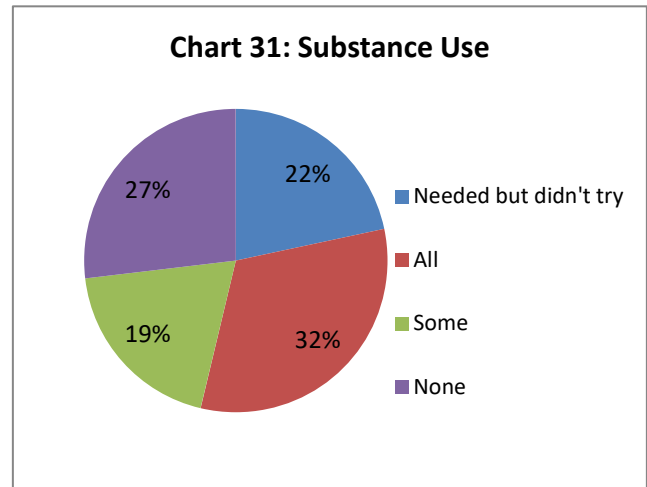
The following subpopulations were more likely than UHY as a whole to report needing help with substance use or alcohol treatment programs:

- justice system-involved (33%)
- those with no school/no diploma (29%)
- LGBTQ+ (28%)
- foster care system-involved (27%)

While justice-involved (38%) and foster care system-involved (49%) respondents tended to report getting all of the help they needed with substance use or alcohol treatment, only 15% of those without a diploma and not in school got all of the help they needed and in fact 43% of them got none of the help they needed. Other groups that tended to not get none of the help they needed were pregnant/parenting respondents (33%), those that left home as minors (33%), and LGBTQ+ respondents (30%). BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and those not in school and with no diploma were most likely to need this type of help but not try to get it.

Barriers

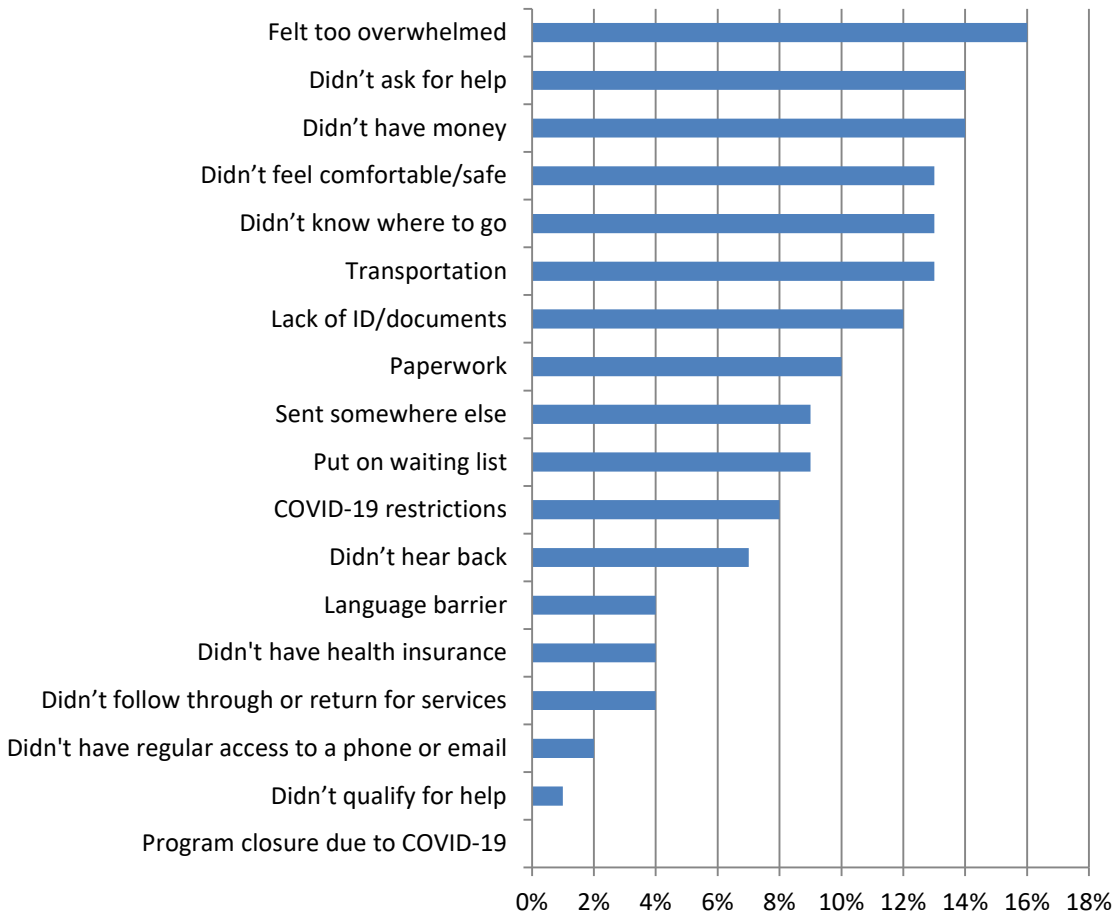
The most significant barriers respondents faced accessing substance use or alcohol treatment were feeling too overwhelmed to seek help, not having money, not asking for help, transportation, and not knowing where to go. Chart 32 shows the frequency each barrier was experienced.



"We need help out here. A lot of us are turning to drugs. Please help."

--Survey Respondent

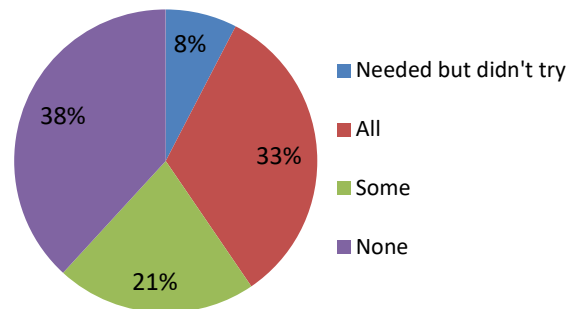
Chart 32: Substance Use or Alcohol Treatment Barriers



CHILDCARE

Overall, 21% of respondents reported needing help with childcare. Chart 33 shows how much help with childcare respondents tended to receive. Roughly one-third (33%) of respondents received all of the help they needed with childcare; 38% got none of the help they needed. Only 8% of those who needed it didn't try to get it, making it a form of help that tends to be sought when needed.

Chart 33: Childcare



Subpopulations

The following subpopulations were more likely than UHY as a whole to report needing help with childcare:

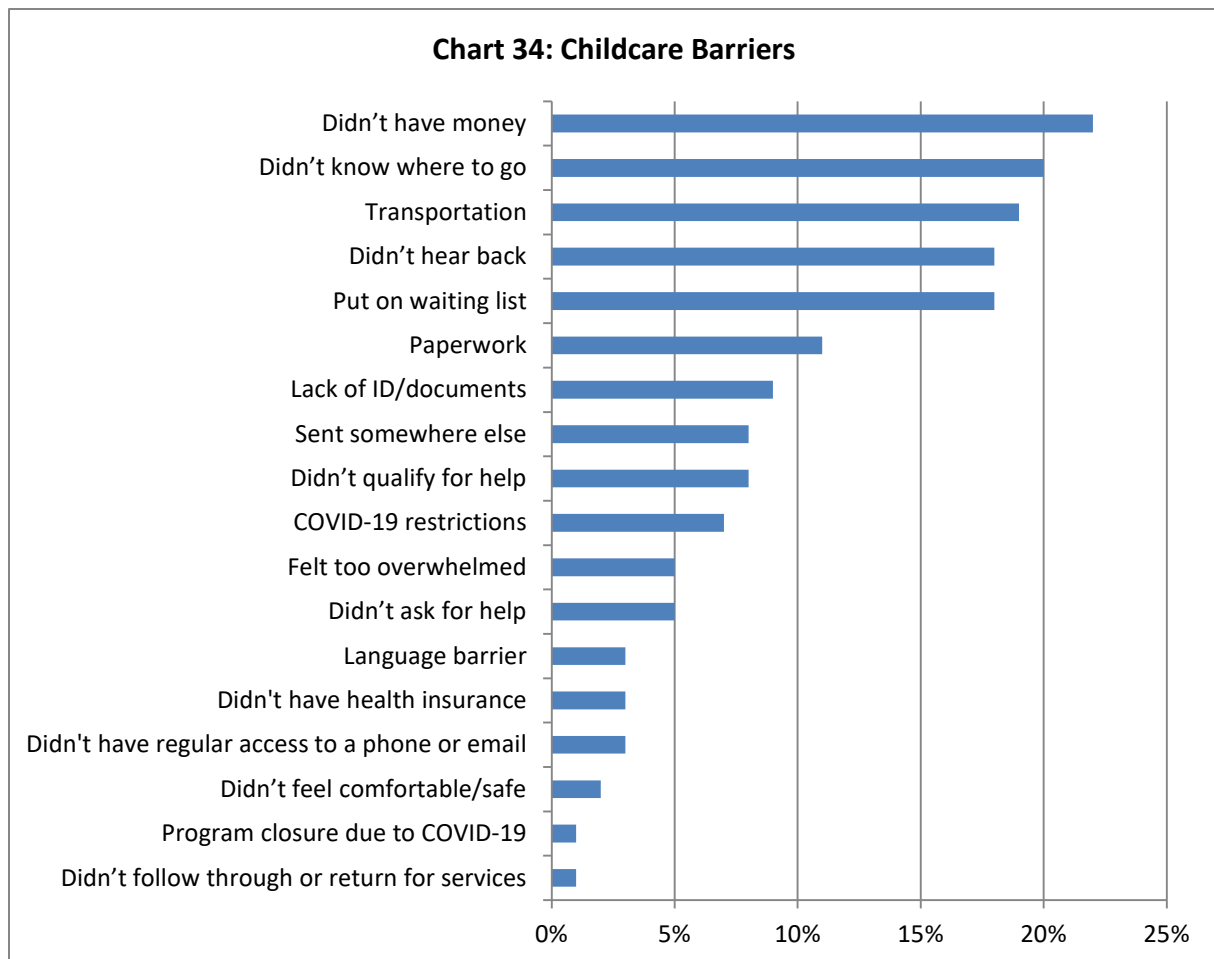
- pregnant/parenting (55%)
- foster care-involved (30%)
- not being in school/no diploma (28%)
- justice-involved (27%)

The subpopulations who got all the help they needed at higher rates than UHY as a whole were: those who left home as minors (40%), LGBTQ+ (36%), and BIPOC respondents (36%).

The groups that tended to get none of the help they sought were those with foster care involvement (42%) and those not in school and no diploma (39%).

Barriers

The most significant barriers respondents faced accessing childcare were not having money, not knowing where to go, transportation, being put on a waiting list, and not hearing back. Chart 34 shows the frequency each barrier was experienced.



SERVICES AND BARRIERS SUMMARY

"And the problem is, is that you can tell that I was serious when it came to resources. You can tell that I was actually committed to what I was doing. And I still didn't receive the help that I needed, which was frustrating"

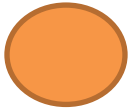
--Focus group participant

Types of Help Needed

The four most sought-out services in 2022 were shelter/transitional housing, long-term housing, nutrition assistance, and employment assistance. Yet, young peoples' experiences getting the help they needed were quite uneven.



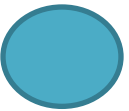
Respondents tended to get all the help they needed accessing **nutrition assistance.**



Respondents tended to get some of the help they needed accessing **shelter and health care.**



Respondents tended to get none of the help they needed accessing **long-term housing, childcare, and cash assistance.**



Respondents who needed the following types of help, tended to not try to get it: **domestic violence counseling, sexual assault counseling, and substance use or alcohol treatment.**

Populations Not Getting Help

Respondents with justice system involvement, pregnant or parenting, and foster care system involvement reported needing more types of help, more frequently than UHY as a whole. LGBTQ+ respondents were most likely to say they received all of the help they sought. Based on trends in YOUTH Count data, it appears that services may have become more responsive to LGBTQ+ youth over the years. Respondents who did not have a high school diploma and who were not currently in school were most likely to report receiving none of the help they needed. This subpopulation, along with BIPOC respondents, were most likely to report needing help but not trying to get it.

As in prior years, we see evidence that the groups of young people who needed certain services the most were least likely to get them. For example, 61% of young people not in school and without a diploma reported needing help with education, yet only 16% of them got all of the help they needed and 32% of them did not receive any help. Young people who left home as minors were least likely to get any of the help they needed with family support. Nutrition and health care were noteworthy in that the populations who reported needing these forms of help the most, were also most likely to report receiving all of what they needed.

Barriers to Getting Help

Not knowing where to go for help was a top barrier for each and every service type. The following responses from the survey provide more insight about the type of information young people were seeking¹⁴:

- “Resources for youth to leave toxic home environments so they can live on their own.”
- “I don't need any help with housing stability, but I feel as if the youth need more knowledge on where to go if they ever need help with housing. I feel as if a lot of young people don't know where help is or how to even go about asking for it.”
- “Improving communication with young adults who are homeless and trying to get them in a safe stable home.”
- “Help with understanding how to buy a car, resources for college students.”
- “If there is more Info about housing help”
- “I would like for the housing coordinator or anyone to actually go step-by-step moving forward.”

Other barriers are clustered by help type. For example, the top barriers reported for not obtaining shelter or long-term housing were transportation, being put on a wait list, not hearing back, not having money, and not knowing where to go. For services like mental health counseling, family support, sexual assault counseling, and domestic violence counseling, the most frequently encountered barriers were not feeling comfortable or safe and feeling too overwhelmed to seek help.

Several barriers stood out because they were associated with particular types of help. For example, transportation was a significant barrier for UHY seeking education support. Not having money was a barrier for health care. Not knowing where to go was a barrier in obtaining mental health support. Not knowing where to go, not having the needed identification and documents, and not qualifying for help were particularly significant barriers to getting cash assistance.

The three services respondents needed but were most likely to forgo were sexual assault counseling, domestic violence counseling, and substance use treatment. Perhaps not surprisingly, the biggest

¹⁴ These responses are from the final question on the survey, “Do you have any other comments or insights you would like to share with the Massachusetts Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth?”

barriers to these three services were the respondent not feeling comfortable or safe accessing the service and/or the respondent felt too overwhelmed to get help.

We explored in the focus groups what it means to feel too overwhelmed or unsafe to seek help. One young person shared, “It could be, like, maybe they didn’t want to leave their house. “ Another shared, “Sometimes like you don't really want help either. Sometimes you can be like so like, wrapped up in it.” Young people explained not feeling safe in terms of being worried that they would be judged and if they could trust the people at the service, “Well, sometimes people are judgmental. So, like maybe, they are feeling like it’s too personal, not wanting to be judged.” Another shared that, “It could mean that they don't want to talk about it. It could be that they don't trust the person they’re talking to.”

The focus groups allowed youth to offer perspectives on how to increase young people’s comfort accessing these services. They discussed the importance of respecting youth’s boundaries. They also talked about the need for consistent, ongoing communication from service organizations and invitations to join their programming and events to foster a sense of belonging. The focus group participants shared how even though they might not attend programming, it is important for them to be invited in. Several focus group participants indicated in different ways that they feel an overall sense of safety when they receive the help they need. For example, one young person expressed:

“Rather than making me like overthink about like... my feelings or any of that stuff, like [the case worker] helped me get my ID and my birth certificate. She told me about this [focus group]. She even helped me get back into school and help with like the HiSET and stuff like that. Just been helping me with a bunch of things. Yeah, she's great.”

We recommend conducting an intersectional analysis to understand more about how race, gender, and life experiences converge. This type of analysis would help us understand findings such as:

- Whether racial identity is a factor that explains why some LGBTQ+ respondents get all the help they needed with long-term housing with while others do not try to get this type of help
- how racialized and gender-based patters in foster care system and justice system involvement correlate with parenting, not being in school/no high school diploma, and leaving home as a minor

6.0 LEAVING HOME AS A MINOR

“I think when we're young, nobody takes us seriously. They think we're a joke. They see us as less important, that we're not valuable to the community. But when we're younger, and these things are happening, the first thing we are is afraid. We don't have the resources or the knowledge to actually figure out, where do we go? How do we start? Where do we start? And me as a minor, there was a lot I had to figure out. It was a lot that I didn't know, which is why help wasn't like available to me that much because I wasn't even sure what I was doing. I didn't know where to start.” —Focus Group Participant

Each year, less than 10% of the UHY YOUth Count respondents are under the age of 18. Yet, we consistently find that roughly one-third of respondents left home permanently as minors. On average, they leave before age 16. They report leaving stressful, unsafe, and unstable home environments. Yet often, rather than encountering help and support, youth experiencing homelessness as an unaccompanied minor are exposed to more traumatizing events. Unaccompanied homelessness as a minor can be a risk factor for long-term economic instability, substance use disorders, and chronic experiences of homelessness. For this reason, we provide more information from the survey and focus groups about differences in the experiences between those who left home as minors and those who left later. Table 9 provides a quantitative overview of these differences.

Table 9: Leaving Home as Minor	Left home as minor (n=212)	Left home at age 18 or later (n=422)
Average age left home permanently	15.6	19.1
Identity Characteristics		
# BIPOC	62%	61%
# LGBTQ+	25%	32%
Born outside of MA but in the US	20%	12%
Average current age	20.2	21.1
Experience Characteristics		
# foster care	38%	33%
# juvenile/criminal justice	33%	23%
# parenting /pregnant	30%	16%
# not in school/no diploma	35%	21%
Unsheltered	18%	16%
Doubled up	36%	32%
Sheltered	46%	51%
Working full-time job	17%	15%
Ever exchanged sex or sexual content for needs	25%	15%

Identity characteristics such as race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), current age, and place of birth suggest that while race/ethnicity is not a differentiating factor, other characteristics are. Those who leave home permanently as minors are less likely to be LGBTQ+, more

likely to have been born outside of Massachusetts, and on average are currently one year younger than those who left at age 18 or later.

Experience characteristics appear to differ greatly between the two groups. Those who leave as minors are more likely to have had foster care and justice system involvement at some point in their lives. They are much more likely to be pregnant or parenting. They are much more likely not to be in school and not have a diploma. While they are more likely to be unsheltered or doubled-up, they are also more likely to be working full time and also to have ever exchanged sex or sexual content.

Respondents who left home as minors were more likely than UHY as a whole to need help with education and they were also more likely to have received all of the education help that they needed. They tended to be much less successful getting help with long-term housing, nutrition, health, family support, domestic violence, sexual assault, and substance use counseling. Nutrition is noteworthy because on the whole, this was the service young people were most likely to say that they got all of what they needed. Also, given that this group is more likely to be working full time, it is important to note that when they sought employment support, they were among the groups most likely to receive all of the help they needed.

Informed by the quantitative data, in the focus groups, we explored questions about the challenges minors face getting help, as well as the types of supports would be beneficial to them. While none of the focus group participants were currently under the age of 18, they all had the experience of unaccompanied homelessness as a minor or knew others who had.

We learned a great deal about the emotional and logistical challenges young people face when being expected to be able to manage all aspects of their lives. One young person shared, “I feel like I have expectations held against me now because of my age. And they never even taught me how to do this. So how am I supposed to have the skills to do this out of nowhere? It’s just a lot of pressure.” Another young person who lived in a town with no shelters, let alone youth shelters, made the self-described “risky” decision to call the police to tell them they were homeless and needed a place to go. This young person felt that this was their only option to get help.

The focus group participants shared powerful imagery of being in survival-mode and what it feels like to navigate the world while experiencing homelessness as a minor:

“Um, it's hard—for people that haven't experienced homelessness or unstable housing—to really understand like what you're going through. And when you're in a situation like this, it's kind of like you're in constant survival mode. And it kind of sucks the fun out of your life and everything around you. I feel like if they knew more of our side of like, how bad it really is sometimes, maybe they would do more or try to do more.”

Another young person reflecting on experiencing homelessness as a minor shared, “When you're living like this you can't like focus. It's kind of hard like, living everyday life. You're like scattered on the inside. It just really sucks. You're spread like really wide.”

A particular form of stress the young people experience is balancing what they know they need to do to improve their own lives while not wanting to harm their family. One young person shared:

“It's more like you don't want to reach out because then that's like affecting your family life. Because to get DTA and stuff like that... when your mother has that, it like takes [benefits] away from her. You guys have a rocky relationship to start and that hurts it even more. And so, you're like, 'I'm just going to have to do everything else the hard way, by myself'”.

Survey respondents who have experienced homelessness as unaccompanied minors were almost 1.5 times more likely to have had criminal justice involvement than those who experience homelessness later. One young person provided insight into the connection between not getting one's needs met and criminal justice involvement. They also suggested that smaller interventions earlier on could really help young people maintain a “normal” life:

“I feel like they decided to turn to gangs, you know, because they think, hey, I could live with somebody here. And then I could get money and then you know, I'll be alright. But they don't know what's really going on. Like everybody keeps saying they get taken advantage of. And that's just like, you don't understand that until you're older and that's when you started noticing you really fell deep into something that you didn't want. And just because people didn't want to help you that you ended up getting into that. And I just think that if they had gotten that little bit of help, they would have just kept going on with their normal life instead of getting a sentence.”

A type of help focus group participants discussed was the need for life skills classes:

“Yeah, like if you can't get it at home or anything else, might as well put it in school. Because how am I going to turn 18 and I know everything that I need to know for school, but I don't know anything else, but I'm still supposed to go into the world. Like, especially for kids whose parents say that you need to move out.”

Focus group participants discussed how case workers can help young people navigate services, but they were clear about the attributes these case workers must possess, such as being trustworthy, knowledgeable, timely with help and communication, and consistent. The focus group participants articulated that young people have different types of abilities, emotional and material needs, and boundaries that must be understood and respected by case workers when they are getting help. Given young people's lack of experience navigating systems, the participants discussed the importance of case workers who not only tell them where to get help but also support the youth in the process of getting connected to help.

7.0 DEMOGRAPHICS

The Commission included several questions to understand demographic characteristics of UHY. In this section, information about respondents' age, race and ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and place of birth are provided.

AGE

The majority of survey respondents meeting the Commission's definition of unaccompanied homeless youth were between the ages of 18 and 24. Roughly 7.0% of responses from those meeting the state's definition for homelessness came from youth under the age of 18; 36.6.0% were between 18 and 20; and 56.8% were between 21 and 24. The average age at which unaccompanied homeless youth left home permanently was 17.8. Roughly one-third of the respondents who met the Commission definition left home permanently as minors.

Table 10: Age	2022 respondents meeting Commission definition (n=634)	
	#	%
Under 18	42	6.6%
18-20	232	36.6%
21-24	360	56.8%
Average age	20.8	
Average age left home first time	16.3	
Average age left home permanently	17.8	

RACE/ETHNICITY

Respondents were able to select multiple options for race and ethnicity on the survey tool. Cumulatively, Black, Latinx, Asian, and Multiracial respondents constituted 61.4% of the respondents who met the Commission definition. White respondents constituted 33% of respondents but 34% of UHY. Black respondents constituted 21% of respondents but 23% of UHY.

Table 11: Race/ethnicity	2022 respondents meeting Commission definition (n=634)	
	#	%
American Indian	3	0.5%
Asian	13	2.1%
Black	145	22.9%
Blank	5	0.8%
Latino	113	17.8%
Middle Eastern/North African	3	0.5%
Multiracial	102	16.1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	3	0.5%
Prefer not to answer	29	4.6%
White	216	34.1%

GENDER

47% of UHY reported they were girls or women. 1.6% of the girls or women reported that they were transgender. 44% of UHY reported that they were boys or men. 1.2% of the boys or men reported that they were transgender.

Table 12: Gender	2022 respondents meeting Commission definition (n=634)		
	#	%	% transgender
Boy/Man	277	43.7%	1.2%
Genderqueer	10	1.6%	1.0%
Girl/Woman	301	47.2%	1.6%
Non-Binary	24	3.8%	1.6%
Prefer not to answer	7	1.1%	.2%
Two-spirit	3	0.5%	.2%
Unsure	2	0.3%	0

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Sixty-five percent of the UHY reported they were straight or heterosexual; 13.6% were bisexual; 4% were gay; 3.5% identified as lesbian; 3% were pansexual; the remaining young people identified as asexual, queer, questioning, or two-spirit. 4% of UHY respondents preferred not to answer this question.

Table 13: Sexual Orientation	2022 respondents meeting Commission definition (n=634)	
	#	%
Asexual	12	1.89%
Bisexual	86	13.56%
Blank	16	2.52%
Gay	23	3.63%
Heterosexual/Straight	412	64.98%
Lesbian	22	3.47%
Pansexual	20	3.15%
Prefer not to answer	24	3.79%
Queer	13	2.05%
Questioning	4	0.63%
Two-spirit	2	0.32%

PLACE OF BIRTH

Of the 634 respondents meeting the Commission’s definition, 76.1% were born in Massachusetts. Breaking this down further, 48.3% of respondents were born in the same city or town in which they took the survey. Roughly 15% were born in the United States but outside of Massachusetts and 8% were born outside of the United States.

Table 14: Place of Birth	2022 respondents meeting Commission definition (n=634)	
	#	%
In this city/town	306	48.3%
Another place in Massachusetts	176	27.8%
Outside of Massachusetts, but in the U.S.	94	14.8%
Outside the U.S	49	7.7%
Don’t know	5	0.8%

REGION

Table 15: Region	2022 respondents meeting Commission definition (n=634)	
	#	%
Bristol	49	7.7%
Cape & Islands	6	0.9%
Essex	77	12.2%
Greater Boston	83	13.1%
Hampden	62	9.8%
Metro West	18	2.8%
North Middlesex	58	9.2%
Plymouth	76	11.9%
Three County	67	10.6%
Worcester	131	20.7%

8.0 REPORT SUMMARY

The 2022 YOUth Count survey highlights **systemic factors**, likely exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, that contribute to youth and young adult homelessness and housing instability in Massachusetts. In this context, the strengths of young people came into clear focus when we examined the **strategies they use to survive and thrive**. Yet, the overall conclusion from an analysis of these strategies is that young people are working hard to meet their most basic needs yet are still falling short. We found that the experiences of **young people who leave home as minors** proved to be a powerful lens to identify potential strategies and approaches for homelessness prevention and earlier intervention.

Systemic Factors

The 2022 YOUth Count found limitations in the capacity of safety nets and that many critical resources are inaccessible to some of the most vulnerable young people in the state. As compared to 2019 pre-pandemic levels, in 2022 the percentage of youth in shelters, transitional housing, or hotels was 13% lower, while the percentage of youth who were on the street and other spaces not meant for human habitation was 38% higher. There is evidence that this is an issue regarding inadequate shelter and housing supply and not demand; 88% of respondents sought help with shelter and transitional housing. **Yet only 23% of respondents reported that they received all of the help they needed.** The problem is more intense with long-term housing: 80% of respondents reported that they sought help with Section 8 or public housing but only 16% got all of the help they needed. Another 17% of respondents needed long-term housing but didn't try to get it. Given the Massachusetts housing market, it is a certainty that young people experiencing housing instability or homelessness will need financial help to be able to afford housing. The National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that a person working a minimum wage job would have to work 87 hours a week to afford a modest 1-bedroom apartment at Fair Market Rent. **Indeed, close to 50% of survey respondents experiencing homelessness were working a full- or part-time job. We see among the UHY respondents that work does not guarantee access to safe and stable housing.**

There are few formal supports for cash assistance for young people who are experiencing housing instability and who do not have children of their own. Only 15% of respondents reported receiving cash assistance; yet 56% tried to access cash assistance. Thirty-six percent of these young people got none of the help they needed. Not being eligible was a major barrier they faced; yet **not being eligible does not take away their self-reported need for cash assistance.** Of the 102 respondents who had no income and sought cash assistance, 41% received no help at all.

The inability to access formal cash assistance must be coupled with findings about other ways young people secure money. At least a quarter of the respondents engaged in informal activities to secure money. These activities include getting money from family or friends, under the table work, exchanging sex to meet their needs, hustling or drug dealing, panhandling, or otherwise self-employed. Many of these activities risk young people's physical and mental health, could keep them in controlling and unhealthy relationships, or lead to possible justice system involvement.

Another systemic factor was an almost 36% increase in UHY who were not in school and did not have a diploma. Young people without a diploma and not in school were much more likely than other UHY to be unsheltered. They were also more likely to have no income. As a group, they were much more likely to get none of the help they sought as compared to all UHY; they were also most likely to not try to get the help they needed.

The final set of systemic factors we highlight are the patterns in barriers young people face accessing help. Barriers that were clearly systemic included: transportation, housing wait lists, eligibility requirements for cash assistance, and not hearing back from providers. These barriers were most pronounced for accessing the social determinants of health, including shelter, long-term housing, employment, and education help.

For services like mental health counseling, family support, sexual assault counseling, and domestic violence counseling, the most frequently encountered barriers were not feeling comfortable or safe and feeling too overwhelmed to seek help. Not knowing where to go for help was a significant barrier for every type of service. On the surface, these types of barriers may not appear to be systemic, but rather more grounded in young people's individual experiences. However, the focus group participants suggested possible systemic responses to these barriers, including universalizing support through trauma-informed and healing-centered practices, advancing youth-centered approaches to case management, as well as ensuring that young people and their families are not inadvertently harmed if the young person reaches out for help.

Strategies to Survive and Get By

First, we want to highlight that 28% of UHY respondents are currently in school—including high school, professional training, or college—indicating that **in spite of housing instability, these young people are engaging in education.** From the experiences of those without a diploma, it is clear how essential education is to housing stability and that more needs to be done to ensure young people have access to educational support. Forty percent of respondents reported needing help with education, but most of them did not get all the help they needed. Only 16% of those without a diploma and not in school got all the help they needed. This group was most likely to not get any help at all or not even try to get help.

Second, young people use multiple strategies to secure the income they need to survive; 53% engaged in more than one strategy to have an income. While roughly half of the respondents were engaged in formal employment, many of the employed respondents also used other strategies to access cash, most often money from benefits, friends or family, or under the table work. Those who relied more on benefits and/or informal sources also utilized multiple strategies. Of all of the informal strategies young people reported using, only exchanging sex or sexual content for needs increased as compared to last year's Count. In total, 22% of respondents had ever exchanged sex or sexual content to meet their needs. In spite of relatively large numbers of young people working, 64% reported needing employment help. Of those who sought this type of help, only a third got all of the help they needed. Those least likely to get needed help were those without a diploma and not in school.

Third, **young people are trying to get help, but for a variety of reasons, they report that services fall short of their expectations.** Young people are looking for knowledgeable, trustworthy, and consistent case workers to partner with them in this process. Respondents were most likely to seek help with nutrition, food, and health care when those forms of help were needed. In the case of nutrition/food, 50% reported getting all of the help they needed, making it the service young people were most likely to get all the help they needed. Respondents who were pregnant/parenting or justice system-involved were most likely to seek more types of help. Yet, we found that it was often the case that young people most in need of services were least likely to get the help they sought.

Leaving Home as a Minor

In 2022, we focused additional survey analysis and focus groups on the experience of UHY who left home as minors. Of the 2022 UHY respondents, 34% had left home permanently before the age of 18, and the average age that these respondents left home permanently as minors was 15.6 years old. We found that the respondents who left home as minors were less likely to be sheltered, less likely to have a high school degree, less likely to receive the help they need, and more likely to have no income sources at all.

The focus group participants added that minors experiencing housing instability and homelessness feel particularly unimportant and unvalued in their communities. They reported being afraid and not knowing where to go. In spite of challenging family situations, they are often still connected to their families and at times do not seek help because they fear doing so could make their relationship with their family worse. They were aware of resources in their communities, but believed that many of these resources may not provide the actual type of help that they need.

Interestingly, young people who left home as minors had success getting help with education and employment, but much less success other forms of help—including getting access to food. This is noteworthy because of all the forms of help respondents overall sought, they had the most success accessing food. Understanding what it is about education and employment services that are more accessible to younger respondents will be important to explore. The experiences of young people who left home permanently as minors forces us to consider everyday practices and systemic changes required to ensure that all youth in the Commonwealth have access to safe and stable housing.

9.0 ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Methodology
- 2) Final 2022 Uniform Survey Tool (English Version)
- 3) Members of the Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth
- 4) Cities and towns where surveys were and were not collected

ATTACHMENT ONE: METHODOLOGY

The 2022 Count builds on progress started with the groundbreaking 2014 Count, the first statewide effort of its kind in the United States, and the subsequent annual Counts. The 2014 Count established a baseline against which progress in addressing unaccompanied youth homelessness could be measured. The importance of having this baseline became even more significant when the Commission released the “Massachusetts State Plan to End Youth Homelessness” in 2018. The Massachusetts Plan responds to youth and young adult housing vulnerability and identifies needed program, policy, and system changes. The Massachusetts Plan also requires regions to undertake community needs assessments to analyze the drivers of youth homelessness. Youth Count data are an important component of the regional assessments. The 2022 YOUTH Count also allows policy makers and service providers an opportunity to learn how young people fared during the pandemic and service gaps that require urgent attention.

STRUCTURE OF THE MASSACHUSETTS YOUTH COUNT

Three organizing entities support the Massachusetts Youth Count: the Massachusetts Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (the Commission), the Identification and Connection Working Group (the Working Group) of the Commission, and the network of ten regional youth homelessness service providers, often with the support of the local Continuums of Care (CoCs).¹⁵

The ***Massachusetts Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth*** provides oversight for the Count and is responsible for reporting on its progress annually to the Governor’s Office, the Legislature, and the Office of the Child Advocate. The Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services chairs the Commission, and at the time of the 2022 Count, the Commission included 29 members, representing youth, state government, service providers, and advocates (see Attachment Two for members of the Commission).

The ***Identification and Connection Working Group*** of the Commission organized and facilitated the Massachusetts Youth Count on behalf of the Commission. For the 2022 Count, its primary responsibilities were to convene interested stakeholders to prepare for the Count, update the Count methodology, make needed modifications to the uniform survey tool, ensure COVID-19 safety protocols were in place, develop print and social media materials for stakeholders to prepare for the Count all accessible in a Google Drive, develop a centralized mechanism to distribute incentives, and implement the Count in partnership with Regional Providers. The Working Group is chaired by Gordie Calkins of the Department of Housing and Community Development and Kelly Turley of the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless.

¹⁵ A Continuum of Care (CoC) is a regional or local planning body of HUD that coordinates housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals.

The Regional Providers, supported by Senior Consultants to the Massachusetts Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Commission, implemented and coordinated the Youth Count at the local and regional level. Each Regional Provider had a unique geographic area to cover, a mix of resources and providers, and high demand for homeless services. The Senior Consultants ensured that the Statewide Youth Ambassadors had decision-making responsibility in the Count, and assisted bringing youth voice to the Count process through focus groups and direct review of all Count materials.

YOUTH COUNT METHODOLOGY

The Commission, through the Senior Consultants and Working Group, provided technical assistance via Zoom and through the creation of implementation materials to the network of regional providers that executed the Youth Count survey in 2022. The Count’s uniform survey tool was administered during a 4-week period from April 4 through May 4, 2022; however, surveying continued at special events until the end of June. The Working Group developed guidelines for regional partners to work with diverse partners to identify young people who may or may not be connected to schools, employment or social services and to engage youth volunteers, also known as “Youth Ambassadors,” to assist with implementation. Youth Ambassadors contribute their knowledge about homelessness and their communities so that the results of the Youth Count reflect the full breadth and depth of youth in diverse communities across the Commonwealth. Young Adult Consultants also assisted with creating and administering two focus groups with a total of 8 young people from across the state with lived experience of homelessness. The aim of the focus groups was to delve deeper into some of the quantitative YOUth Count findings, specifically to understand the experience of leaving home as a minor and explore several of the prominent barriers young people face. See Attachment Three for the focus group protocols.

The Youth Count is aligned with lessons learned through Chapin Hall’s Voices of Youth Count process¹⁶. The Working Group formulated a set of guidelines based on best practices to conduct a youth count, (see Pergamit et al., 2013). Recommended practices included forming a local planning committee, providing stipends to youth volunteers, conducting focused youth outreach and marketing of the count, training all volunteers, engaging diverse partners, providing day-of coordination and quality control, and seeking creative ways to engage youth under 18 years old.

REFINEMENT OF THE UNIFORM SURVEY TOOL

To develop the 2022 uniform survey tool, the Working Group started with the 2021 survey tool and worked to further address limitations, reduce confusion, and encourage completion of each question by survey participants. We modified the question about services and barriers to be able to obtain information specific to each service type and barrier. COVID-19 questions were removed. In 2022, we continued to use a Google Form to capture responses. The survey was also administered through a paper version. The paper survey was available in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Cape Verdean Creole,

¹⁶ Dworsky, A., Horwitz, B., (2018). Missed opportunities: Counting Youth Experiencing Homelessness in America. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

and Brazilian Portuguese. The electronic Google Form was available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. See Attachment Two for the final English version of the 2022 Uniform Survey Tool.

REGIONAL PROVIDER ENGAGEMENT

Once the methodology and updated survey tool were complete, the Senior Consultants and Working Group worked with the Regional Providers to develop the outreach strategies to promote the online tool. Engagement with the Regional Providers during this phase included email and telephone conversations providing basic information about what the Working Group was hoping to accomplish, grant information, and several Zoom webinars and drop-in sessions. Communication was maintained with Regional Providers throughout the Count with progress updates and new social media materials. A Google Data Studio was created to provide Regional Providers with real-time information about surveys completed and select characteristics of the respondents.

LIMITATIONS

Continued reliance on a Google Form opened up the survey and requests for payment to potential scammers. Detailed review of completed surveys and requests for payment was an ongoing activity and allowed for the removal of surveys that were suspected to have been filled out by individuals not experiencing homelessness.

2022 Massachusetts YOUth Count Survey (final)

This survey is being administered by the Massachusetts Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth, in partnership with youth and young adults, the ten regional youth organizations funded by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), and many community groups. This survey has been designed so that the state, regional, and local providers can better understand the housing and service needs of youth and young adults under the age of 25 in Massachusetts. Over the past several years, the results of similar surveys have helped to push the Legislature to invest millions of dollars in housing and services for young people who are experiencing housing instability.

There are 34 questions. It should take 10-15 minutes to complete. **Your answers will remain confidential. Please respond to all of the questions you feel comfortable answering.** We greatly appreciate your participation!

1. Have you already taken this survey in the past five weeks (or since April 4th)? Yes No
2. What are your initials—the first letter of each of your names? ___/___/___(first/middle/last)¹⁷
3. What is your age? _____
4. What is your date of birth? ___/___/___(month/day/year)
5. What is your primary language? _____
6. If your primary language is one other than English, are you taking this survey in your primary language?
 - Yes, someone is reading the questions to me in my primary language
 - Yes, this paper or electronic version has been translated into my primary language
 - No, I am taking this survey in a language that is not my primary language
 - English is my primary language

We are asking the following set of questions to better understand your housing situation.

7. Are you currently experiencing homelessness or housing instability? (This can include couch surfing, sleeping outside, being in and out of a parent or guardian’s house, staying in a shelter, sleeping in your car, etc.)
 - Yes
 - No, but I have experienced homelessness or housing instability in the past
 - No and I never have experienced homelessness or housing instability
 - Unsure

Comments _____

¹⁷ If you prefer not to write your initials, please use three letters you will remember. We will use the letters to be able to compensate young people for completing the survey.

8. Where did you sleep last night? (CIRCLE THE ONE OPTION THAT BEST MATCHES YOUR SITUATION)

- Shelter (emergency/temporary)
- Transitional housing
- Hotel or motel
- Apartment or home where I pay the rent or mortgage and I am up to date on rent
- Apartment or home where I pay the rent or mortgage but I am behind on rent
- Parent or guardian's home
- Other relative's home without paying rent
- Foster family's home
- Home of friend or friend's family without paying rent
- Home of boyfriend/girlfriend/partner without paying rent
- Car or other vehicle
- Abandoned building, vacant unit, or squat
- On a train/bus or in train/bus station
- 24-hour restaurant, laundromat, or other business/retail establishment
- Anywhere outside (street, park, viaduct)
- Hospital or emergency room
- Mental health residential treatment facility
- Substance use residential treatment facility/detox center
- Juvenile detention center or jail
- Other:

9. How long have you stayed/lived in the place you slept last night?

- Fewer than 6 months 6-12 months More than 12 months

10. Do you have a safe place where you can stay on a regular basis for at least the next 14 days?

- Yes No Unsure

We are asking the following set of questions to learn if you are "accompanied", that is living with your parent or guardian, and your history of being out on your own.

11. Are you currently living with a parent, guardian, or foster parent? Yes No

12. How old were you the **first** time you left home to be out on your own? _____ (NA if you never left to be on your own)

13. How old were you when you left home for good? _____ (NA if you have never left home to be on your own)

We are asking the following set of questions to better understand your demographics (place of birth, education, income, etc.) as well as your experiences trying to access needed resources

14. Where were you born?

- In this city /town
- Another place in MA
- Outside MA but in the U.S.
- Outside U.S
- Don't know

15. Which city/town are you in right now, taking this survey? _____

16. Have you been staying overnight in the city/town where you are taking this survey?

- Yes
- No, I'm staying in _____

17. Do you have a high school diploma, HiSET degree, or GED? Yes No

18. Are you currently attending school or another education program? Yes No (If yes, please describe) _____

19. Have you ever served in the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard? Yes No

20. Have you ever been in foster care? Yes No Unsure

21. Have you ever stayed overnight or longer in juvenile detention (a secure facility or residential program for young people as a result of police involvement)? Yes No Unsure

22. Have you ever stayed overnight or longer in an adult jail or prison? Yes No Unsure

23. Are you pregnant and/or parenting?

- Yes, pregnant only
- Yes, parenting only
- Yes, both pregnant and parenting
- No
- Unsure

24. If you are a parent, do you have custody of your child(ren)? In other words, are you responsible for caring for your child(ren) on a day-to-day basis on at least some days of the week?

- Yes
- No
- NA

25. What are the ways that you **currently** make money? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

- Full-time job
- Part-time job and/or temporary job
- Money from “under the table” work
- Cash assistance from DTA/Welfare or DCF
- Social Security/Disability payments
- Unemployment benefits
- Hustling/selling drugs
- Exchanging sex/sexual content including Only Fans or other phone or video platforms
- Panhandling/spanging
- Child support
- Money from family members or friends
- Money from college financial aid
- Self-employed/my own business
- None
- Other: _____

26. Have you ever exchanged sex acts (including sexual intercourse, oral sex, etc) for food, a place to stay, money or other necessities?

- Yes
- No

27. Have you ever exchanged sexual content (including phone calls, photographs, or video uploads) for food, a place to stay, money or other necessities?

- Yes
- No

28. In the last year, have you needed any of the following types of help. If you needed it, please let us know if you got the help you needed. If you were unable to get the help you needed, please let us know what got in the way for you.

a. Needed shelter or short-term housing/transitional housing CIRCLE ONE OPTION	Yes, and I got all the help I needed	Yes, and I got some of the help I needed	Yes, but I got none of the help I needed	I needed this help but I didn't try to get it	No, I didn't need this type of help
b. What <u>barriers</u> did you face accessing <u>shelter or short-term housing</u>?	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Sent somewhere else <input type="checkbox"/> Language barrier <input type="checkbox"/> Put on a waiting list <input type="checkbox"/> Paperwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have ID <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't hear back <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know where to go <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't qualify <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't feel comfortable/safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Felt too overwhelmed to seek help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't follow through or return for services <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't ask for help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have money	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have a phone to follow up <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have health insurance <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 restrictions <input type="checkbox"/> Program closures due to COVID-19 <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
c. Needed long-term housing support such as a housing subsidy Section 8, or public housing CIRCLE ONE OPTION	Yes, and I got all the help I needed	Yes, and I got some of the help I needed	Yes, but I got none of the help I needed	I needed this help but I didn't try to get it	No, I didn't need this type of help
d. What <u>barriers</u> did you face accessing <u>long-term housing supports</u>?	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Sent somewhere else <input type="checkbox"/> Language barrier <input type="checkbox"/> Put on a waiting list <input type="checkbox"/> Paperwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have ID <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't hear back <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know where to go <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't qualify <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't feel comfortable/safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Felt too overwhelmed to seek help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't follow through or return for services <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't ask for help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have money	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have a phone to follow up <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have health insurance <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 restrictions <input type="checkbox"/> Program closures due to COVID-19 <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
e. Needed educational support such as enrolling in school or GED/HiSET CIRCLE ONE OPTION	Yes, and I got all the help I needed	Yes, and I got some of the help I needed	Yes, but I got none of the help I needed	I needed this help but I didn't try to get it	No, I didn't need this type of help

f. What <u>barriers</u> did you face accessing <u>education support</u>?	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Sent somewhere else <input type="checkbox"/> Language barrier <input type="checkbox"/> Put on a waiting list <input type="checkbox"/> Paperwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have ID <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't hear back <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know where to go <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't qualify <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't feel comfortable/safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Felt too overwhelmed to seek help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't follow through or return for services <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't ask for help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have money	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have a phone to follow up <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have health insurance <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 restrictions <input type="checkbox"/> Program closures due to COVID-19 <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
g. Needed job training, job search, life skills training, or career placement <u>CIRCLE ONE OPTION</u>	Yes, and I got all the help I needed	Yes, and I got some of the help I needed	Yes, but I got none of the help I needed	I needed this help but I didn't try to get it	No, I didn't need this type of help
h. What <u>barriers</u> did you face accessing <u>employment support</u>?	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Sent somewhere else <input type="checkbox"/> Language barrier <input type="checkbox"/> Put on a waiting list <input type="checkbox"/> Paperwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have ID <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't hear back <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know where to go <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't qualify <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't feel comfortable/safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Felt too overwhelmed to seek help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't follow through or return for services <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't ask for help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have money	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have a phone to follow up <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have health insurance <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 restrictions <input type="checkbox"/> Program closures due to COVID-19 <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
i. Needed health care services <u>CIRCLE ONE OPTION</u>	Yes, and I got all the help I needed	Yes, and I got some of the help I needed	Yes, but I got none of the help I needed	I needed this help but I didn't try to get it	No, I didn't need this type of help
j. What <u>barriers</u> did you face accessing <u>health care</u>?	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Sent somewhere else <input type="checkbox"/> Language barrier <input type="checkbox"/> Put on a waiting list <input type="checkbox"/> Paperwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have ID <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't hear back <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know where to go <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't qualify <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't feel comfortable/safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Felt too overwhelmed to seek help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't follow through or return for services <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't ask for help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have money	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have a phone to follow up <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have health insurance <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 restrictions <input type="checkbox"/> Program closures due to COVID-19 <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
k. Needed family support such as conflict mediation or parenting support <u>CIRCLE ONE OPTION</u>	Yes, and I got all the help I needed	Yes, and I got some of the help I needed	Yes, but I got none of the help I needed	I needed this help but I didn't try to get it	No, I didn't need this type of help

I. What <u>barriers</u> did you face accessing <u>family support</u>?	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Sent somewhere else <input type="checkbox"/> Language barrier <input type="checkbox"/> Put on a waiting list <input type="checkbox"/> Paperwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have ID <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't hear back <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know where to go <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't qualify <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't feel comfortable/safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Felt too overwhelmed to seek help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't follow through or return for services <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't ask for help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have money	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have a phone to follow up <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have health insurance <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 restrictions <input type="checkbox"/> Program closures due to COVID-19 <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
m. Needed child care <u>CIRCLE ONE</u> OPTION	Yes, and I got all the help I needed	Yes, and I got some of the help I needed	Yes, but I got none of the help I needed	I needed this help but I didn't try to get it	No, I didn't need this type of help
n. What <u>barriers</u> did you face accessing <u>childcare</u>?	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Sent somewhere else <input type="checkbox"/> Language barrier <input type="checkbox"/> Put on a waiting list <input type="checkbox"/> Paperwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have ID <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't hear back <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know where to go <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't qualify <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't feel comfortable/safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Felt too overwhelmed to seek help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't follow through or return for services <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't ask for help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have money	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have a phone to follow up <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have health insurance <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 restrictions <input type="checkbox"/> Program closures due to COVID-19 <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
o. Needed food stamps/SNAP, food from soup kitchen or food pantry <u>CIRCLE ONE</u> OPTION	Yes, and I got all the help I needed	Yes, and I got some of the help I needed	Yes, but I got none of the help I needed	I needed this help but I didn't try to get it	No, I didn't need this type of help
p. What <u>barriers</u> did you face accessing <u>food</u>?	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Sent somewhere else <input type="checkbox"/> Language barrier <input type="checkbox"/> Put on a waiting list <input type="checkbox"/> Paperwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have ID <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't hear back <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know where to go <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't qualify <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't feel comfortable/safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Felt too overwhelmed to seek help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't follow through or return for services <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't ask for help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have money	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have a phone to follow up <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have health insurance <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 restrictions <input type="checkbox"/> Program closures due to COVID-19 <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
q. Needed cash assistance such as DTA/welfare benefits, or Social Security Disability benefits <u>CIRCLE ONE</u> OPTION	Yes, and I got all the help I needed	Yes, and I got some of the help I needed	Yes, but I got none of the help I needed	I needed this help but I didn't try to get it	No, I didn't need this type of help

r. What <u>barriers</u> did you face accessing <u>cash assistance</u>?	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Sent somewhere else <input type="checkbox"/> Language barrier <input type="checkbox"/> Put on a waiting list <input type="checkbox"/> Paperwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have ID <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't hear back <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know where to go <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't qualify <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't feel comfortable/safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Felt too overwhelmed to seek help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't follow through or return for services <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't ask for help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have money	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have a phone to follow up <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have health insurance <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 restrictions <input type="checkbox"/> Program closures due to COVID-19 <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
s. Needed domestic violence counseling <u>CIRCLE ONE</u> <u>OPTION</u>	Yes, and I got all the help I needed	Yes, and I got some of the help I needed	Yes, but I got none of the help I needed	I needed this help but I didn't try to get it	No, I didn't need this type of help
t. What <u>barriers</u> did you face accessing <u>domestic violence counseling</u>?	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Sent somewhere else <input type="checkbox"/> Language barrier <input type="checkbox"/> Put on a waiting list <input type="checkbox"/> Paperwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have ID <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't hear back <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know where to go <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't qualify <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't feel comfortable/safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Felt too overwhelmed to seek help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't follow through or return for services <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't ask for help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have money	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have a phone to follow up <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have health insurance <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 restrictions <input type="checkbox"/> Program closures due to COVID-19 <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
u. Needed counseling for sexual assault <u>CIRCLE ONE</u> <u>OPTION</u>	Yes, and I got all the help I needed	Yes, and I got some of the help I needed	Yes, but I got none of the help I needed	I needed this help but I didn't try to get it	No, I didn't need this type of help
v. What <u>barriers</u> did you face accessing <u>sexual assault counseling</u>?	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Sent somewhere else <input type="checkbox"/> Language barrier <input type="checkbox"/> Put on a waiting list <input type="checkbox"/> Paperwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have ID <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't hear back <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know where to go <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't qualify <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't feel comfortable/safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Felt too overwhelmed to seek help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't follow through or return for services <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't ask for help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have money	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have a phone to follow up <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have health insurance <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 restrictions <input type="checkbox"/> Program closures due to COVID-19 <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
w. Needed mental health counseling <u>CIRCLE ONE</u> <u>OPTION</u>	Yes, and I got all the help I needed	Yes, and I got some of the help I needed	Yes, but I got none of the help I needed	I needed this help but I didn't try to get it	No, I didn't need this type of help

x. What <u>barriers</u> did you face accessing <u>mental health counseling</u>?	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Sent somewhere else <input type="checkbox"/> Language barrier <input type="checkbox"/> Put on a waiting list <input type="checkbox"/> Paperwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have ID <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't hear back <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know where to go <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't qualify <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't feel comfortable/safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Felt too overwhelmed to seek help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't follow through or return for services <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't ask for help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have money	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have a phone to follow up <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have health insurance <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 restrictions <input type="checkbox"/> Program closures due to COVID-19 <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
y. Needed substance use/alcohol treatment program <u>CIRCLE ONE</u> OPTION	Yes, and I got all the help I needed	Yes, and I got some of the help I needed	Yes, but I got none of the help I needed	I needed this help but I didn't try to get it	No, I didn't need this type of help
z. What <u>barriers</u> did you face accessing <u>substance use or alcohol treatment</u>?	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Sent somewhere else <input type="checkbox"/> Language barrier <input type="checkbox"/> Put on a waiting list <input type="checkbox"/> Paperwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have ID <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't hear back <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know where to go <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't qualify <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't feel comfortable/safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Felt too overwhelmed to seek help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't follow through or return for services <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't ask for help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have money	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have a phone to follow up <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have health insurance <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 restrictions <input type="checkbox"/> Program closures due to COVID-19 <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Needed something else: <u>CIRCLE ONE</u> OPTION	Yes, and I got all the help I needed	Yes, and I got some of the help I needed	Yes, but I got none of the help I needed	I needed this help but I didn't try to get it	No, I didn't need this type of help
What <u>barriers</u> did you face accessing this help?	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Sent somewhere else <input type="checkbox"/> Language barrier <input type="checkbox"/> Put on a waiting list <input type="checkbox"/> Paperwork	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have ID <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't hear back <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know where to go <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't qualify <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't feel comfortable/safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Felt too overwhelmed to seek help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't follow through or return for services <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't ask for help <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have money	<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have a phone to follow up <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't have health insurance <input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 restrictions <input type="checkbox"/> Program closures due to COVID-19 <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> Other	

29. What is your race/ethnicity? Select all that apply:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latinx

- Middle eastern/North African
 - Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
 - White
 - Prefer not to answer
 - Write your own response
-

30. What is your gender?

- Girl/Woman
- Boy/Man
- Non-Binary
- Genderqueer

- Two-spirit
 - Unsure
 - Prefer not to answer
 - Write your own response
-

31. Are you transgender?

- No, I am not transgender.
- No, I identify as non-binary, genderqueer, or another term

- Yes, I am a transgender girl/woman
- Yes, I am a transgender boy/man

- Yes, I identify as non-binary, genderqueer, or another term
- Not sure whether I am transgender
- Not sure what this question means
- Prefer not to answer
- Write your own response_____

32. What is your sexual orientation? (sexual orientation means who you are romantically and physically attracted to)

- Heterosexual/straight
- Lesbian
- Gay
- Bisexual
- Queer

- Questioning
- Pansexual
- Asexual
- Two-spirit
- Prefer not to answer
- Write your own response_____

33. Do you have any other comments or insights you would like to share with the Massachusetts Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth?

34. Which would best describe how you were recruited to take this survey?

- At a shelter
- At a social service agency
- Through a Youth Ambassador
- Through a street outreach worker/street count
- At an event
- At a school/educational program
- Social media/website
- An email from a friend or acquaintance

Thank you!

As noted above, **all of your answers will remain confidential.** Your participation is deeply appreciated and a key contribution in helping Massachusetts better understand housing instability among youth and young adults.

For more information about this survey and the work to expand housing and resources for youth and young adults experiencing housing instability, please contact the Massachusetts Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: massachusettsyouthcount@gmail.com

For official use only: Survey date _____

Survey site _____

Administering organization/Youth Count Ambassador

ATTACHMENT THREE: MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION ON UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH

Role¹⁸	Name
House Minority Leader Representative	Kate Campanale
Senate Minority Leader	Maureen Flatley
Member of the House	Representative James O'Day
Member of the Senate	Senator Harriette Chandler
Member of the Senate	Senator Katherine Clark
Boston Alliance of GLBT Youth	Grace Sterling-Stowell
Department of Children and Families	Commissioner Linda Spears
Department of Children and Families	Linda Spears
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education	Commissioner Mitchell Chester
Department of Housing and Community Development	Undersecretary Chrystal Kornegay
Department of Mental Health	Joan Mikula
Department of Public Health	Dr. Monica Bharel
Department of Transitional Assistance	Commissioner Amy Kershaw
Department of Youth Services	
Direct Service Provider, Appointed by the Governor	Lisa Goldblatt-Grace, My Life My Choice
Direct Service Provider, Appointed by the Governor	Lisa Goldsmith, DIAL/SELF
Direct Service Provider, Appointed by the Governor	
House Chair, Committee on Children, Families Persons with Disabilities	Representative Kay Khan
ICHH (staff)	Linn Torto
MA Appleseed Center for Law and Justice	Deb Silva
MA Coalition for the Homeless	Kelly Turley
MA Housing and Shelter Alliance	Caitlin Golden
MA Task Force on Youth Aging Out of DCF	Erin Bradley
MA Transgender Political Coalition	
MassEquality.Org	Deborah Shields
Office of Medicaid	Assistant Secretary Daniel Tsai
Secretary of Health and Human Services	Secretary Marylou Sudders (Chair)
Youth who has experienced homelessness- Appointed by the Child Advocate (3)	Chris Bates and two vacancies

¹⁸ Last updated March 2022

ATTACHMENT FOUR: WHERE SURVEYS WERE AND WERE NOT COLLECTED

In 2022, surveys were collected in 145 out of the 351 cities and towns of Massachusetts (41%). Respondents who met the Commission definition were surveyed in 111 of these cities and towns. This represents significant increases in both the overall statewide coverage of the Count and also an almost 120% increase in the number of cities and towns where young people experiencing homelessness were staying. The following table is organized by regions and provides a list of all cities and towns where surveys were collected, the number of surveys collected in each, and the number that met the Commission definition. Total numbers of surveys collected and meeting the Commission definition do not add up to totals used elsewhere in the report due to missing information about where some of the young people were staying.

Region/Cities & Towns	Total Respondents	Total Respondents Meeting the Commission Definition
Region 1 -Three-County	107	67
Adams	13	10
Alford	6	4
Amherst	8	7
Ashfield		
Becket	1	
Belchertown	1	
Bernardston		
Buckland	1	
Charlemont		
Cheshire		
Chesterfield	1	1
Clarksburg		
Colrain	2	2
Conway		
Cummington		
Dalton	1	
Deerfield		
Easthampton	3	1
Egremont		
Erving		
Florida	1	1
Gill		
Goshen		
Granby		

Great Barrington	1	1
Greenfield	14	6
Hadley	1	
Hancock		
Hatfield		
Hawley		
Heath		
Hinsdale		
Huntington		
Lanesborough		
Lee	1	
Lenox	2	1
Leverett		
Leyden		
Middlefield	1	1
Monroe		
Montague	5	4
Monterey		
Mount Washington		
New Ashford		
New Marlborough		
New Salem		
North Adams	10	9
Northampton	10	6
Northfield		
Orange	9	3
Otis		
Pelham		
Peru		
Pittsfield	7	5
Plainfield		
Richmond		
Rowe		
Sandisfield		
Savoy		
Sheffield	1	
Shelburne		
Shutesbury		

South Hadley	1	
Southampton		
Stockbridge		
Sunderland		
Tyringham		
Ware	2	1
Warwick		
Washington	1	1
Wendell		
West Stockbridge		
Westhampton	1	1
Whately		
Williamsburg		
Williamstown	1	
Windsor		
Worthington	1	1

Region/Cities & Towns	Total Respondents	Total Respondents Meeting the Commission Definition
Region 2 - Hampden County	101	62
Agawam	6	1
Blandford	1	
Brimfield		
Chester		
Chicopee	13	7
East Longmeadow		
Granville		
Hampden		
Holland		
Holyoke	10	9
Longmeadow		
Ludlow		
Monson		
Montgomery		
Palmer		
Russell		

Southwick		
Springfield	65	41
Tolland		
Wales		
West Springfield	5	3
Westfield	1	1
Wilbraham		

Region/Cities & Towns	Total Respondents	Total Respondents Meeting the Commission Definition
Region 3 - Worcester County	218	131
Ashburnham	4	1
Athol	11	7
Auburn	3	2
Barre	1	
Berlin	1	1
Blackstone	2	2
Bolton		
Boylston	2	1
Brookfield		
Charlton		
Clinton	1	1
Douglas		
Dudley	2	2
East Brookfield		
Fitchburg	36	17
Gardner		
Grafton		
Hardwick	1	1
Harvard		
Holden		
Hopedale	1	
Hubbardston		
Lancaster		
Leicester	1	

Leominster	9	5
Lunenburg	1	
Mendon		
Milford		
Millbury	1	1
Millville		
New Braintree	1	1
North Brookfield		
Northborough		
Northbridge		
Oakham		
Oxford		
Paxton		
Petersham		
Phillipston		
Princeton		
Royalston		
Rutland	3	2
Shrewsbury	2	1
Southborough		
Southbridge	3	1
Spencer		
Sterling		
Sturbridge		
Sutton		
Templeton	2	
Upton		
Uxbridge		
Warren		
Webster	1	
West Boylston		
West Brookfield		
Westborough	1	1
Westminster	1	1
Winchendon		
Worcester	127	83

Region/Cities & Towns	Total Respondents	Total Respondents Meeting the Commission Definition
Region 4 - Bristol County	67	49
Acushnet	3	3
Attleboro	2	2
Berkley	4	4
Dartmouth	3	1
Dighton		
Easton		
Fairhaven		
Fall River	13	7
Freetown		
Mansfield		
New Bedford	41	32
North Attleborough		
Norton		
Raynham		
Rehoboth		
Seekonk		
Somerset		
Swansea		
Taunton	1	
Westport		

Region/Cities & Towns	Total Respondents	Total Respondents Meeting the Commission Definition
Region 5 - Cape Cod & Islands (Barnstable, Dukes & Nantucket counties)	12	6
Aquinnah		
Barnstable	10	5
Bourne		
Brewster		
Chatham		
Chilmark		
Dennis		
Eastham		
Edgartown		
Falmouth	1	1
Gosnold		
Harwich		
Mashpee		
Nantucket		
Oak Bluffs		
Orleans		
Provincetown		
Sandwich		
Tisbury		
Truro		
Wellfleet		
West Tisbury		
Yarmouth	1	

Region/Cities & Towns	Total Respondents	Total Respondents Meeting the Commission Definition
Region 6 - Plymouth & East Norfolk counties	135	76
Abington	7	3
Braintree	1	1
Bridgewater	2	2
Brockton	57	31
Carver	1	
Cohasset		
Duxbury		
East Bridgewater		
Halifax		
Hanover		
Hanson	1	
Hingham		
Holbrook		
Hull		
Kingston		
Lakeville		
Marion		
Marshfield		
Mattapoisett		
Middleborough	3	2
Norwell		
Pembroke		
Plymouth	48	24
Plympton		
Quincy	12	11
Rochester		
Rockland		
Scituate		
Wareham	1	1
West Bridgewater		
Weymouth	2	1
Whitman		

Region/Cities & Towns	Total Respondents	Total Respondents Meeting the Commission Definition
Region 7 - Essex County	146	77
Amesbury	6	4
Andover	8	5
Beverly	3	1
Boxford	1	1
Danvers	2	2
Essex	3	3
Georgetown		
Gloucester	2	
Groveland		
Hamilton	1	
Haverhill	11	5
Ipswich		
Lawrence	28	14
Lynn	43	20
Lynnfield	1	1
Manchester	1	
Marblehead		
Merrimac		
Methuen	11	4
Middleton		
Nahant		
Newbury		
Newburyport		
North Andover		
Peabody	5	3
Rockport		
Rowley		
Salem	16	10
Salisbury	2	2
Saugus	2	2
Swampscott		
Topsfield		
Wenham		
West Newbury		

Region/Cities & Towns	Total Respondents	Total Respondents Meeting the Commission Definition
Region 8 - North Middlesex County	124	58
Acton	5	1
Ashby	1	1
Ayer	1	
Bedford	9	8
Billerica	1	
Boxborough	1	1
Burlington	3	2
Carlisle		
Chelmsford	6	5
Concord	1	1
Dracut		
Dunstable		
Groton		
Hudson	1	1
Lexington		
Lincoln		
Littleton		
Lowell	85	34
Marlborough	3	
Maynard	1	1
North Reading		
Pepperell		
Reading		
Shirley		
Stoneham		
Stow		
Sudbury	1	1
Tewksbury		
Townsend		
Tyngsborough		
Wakefield		
Wayland		
Westford	1	
Weston		
Wilmington		
Winchester	2	1
Woburn		

Region/Cities & Towns	Total Respondents	Total Respondents Meeting the Commission Definition
Region 9 - Metro West (South Middlesex & West Norfolk counties)	39	18
Ashland	1	1
Avon	1	1
Bellingham	2	1
Canton	1	1
Dedham		
Dover		
Foxborough		
Framingham	12	5
Franklin	2	2
Holliston		
Hopkinton		
Medfield		
Medway		
Millis	1	
Natick		
Needham		
Norfolk		
Norwood		
Plainville		
Randolph	15	5
Sharon		
Sherborn	1	
Stoughton	3	2
Walpole		
Wellesley		
Westwood		
Wrentham		

Region/Cities & Towns	Total Respondents	Total Respondents Meeting the Commission Definition
Region 10 - Metro Boston	123	83
Arlington	11	8
Belmont	1	1
Boston	80	57
Brookline	1	
Cambridge	10	4
Chelsea	3	2
Everett	2	
Malden	3	3
Medford		
Melrose	1	1
Milton	1	1
Newton	1	1
Revere	2	
Somerville	4	4
Waltham	2	
Watertown	1	1
Winthrop		