

A Count of Unaccompanied Homeless Youths in New York City
Prepared by Lance Freeman and Darrick Hamilton
for the
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Executive Summary

On the night of January 28, 2013 a count of homeless youths in New York City was conducted as part of the annual street homeless count.¹ The youth count was part of a voluntary nine-community pilot, spearheaded by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) and U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) Because homeless youths are extremely vulnerable methods for counting the general homeless population are not always effective when counting homeless youths. New York City decided to participate in the count and the effort was a collaboration between the New York City Coalition on the Continuum of Care on the (NYC CCoC) NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), and the NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and the Empire State Coalition of Youth & Family Services (Coalition of Homeless Youth) to count both sheltered and unsheltered youth. This study focuses on a subset of the unsheltered youth who came to youth drop in centers and several supportive housing residences located throughout the five boroughs. For more information on the count visit, please consult the Urban Institute's *Youth Count! Process Study*.²

In addition to a count, the effort included gathering in-depth information about the homeless youth population. In NYC surveys were administered to all 182 youth who visited drop in centers and supportive housing residences.

This survey serves as the basis for this report. Because the survey was administered only to those who visited a drop in center and or supportive housing residence the survey is not a probability sample and the results cannot be generalized to a larger population. Nevertheless, a great deal can be learned about homeless youths by examining the responses to the survey. Moreover, we can contrast the findings presented here to other research on homeless youth to discern how plausible our results are.

73% of the youth (132 out of 182 respondents) that came to drop-in centers and supportive housing residences on January 28th met the HUD definition of homelessness. The survey results show that homeless youths come from the more marginalized populations in New York City:

- 42% of the survey respondents were Black
- 48% of the survey respondents were Latino
- 34% were Lesbian, Gay or bisexual
- 6% were transgendered

The respondents to the survey had typically been homeless for long periods of time:

- The average duration is 927 days (close to 2.5 years)

¹ 2013 NYC Homeless Outreach Population Estimate (HOPE) Count. Available: <https://a071-hope.nyc.gov/hope/statistics.aspx>

² Pergamit, Michael, Cunningham, Mary, Burt, Martha, Lee, Pamela, Howell, Brent, Bertumen, Kassie. 2013. Urban Institute *Youth Count! Process Study*. Available from: <http://www.urban.org/publications/412872.html>

- The median duration is 730 days (two years).

Homeless youths in our survey had low levels of educational attainment and employment and many were disconnected (not in school or employed):

- 47% had less than a high school diploma
- 21% were currently enrolled in school
- 22% were employed
- 63% were disconnected (not in school and not employed)

Nearly the same proportion of youths in our sample that graduated from high school had experience with the criminal justice system (about 53% each).

Some type of conflict with families was frequently cited as a reason the youth became homeless. Among the reasons for becoming homeless that were cited by at least 20 percent of respondents were:

- Fighting frequently with your parents—34%
- Kicked out of your home—31%
- Physical, mental or sexual abuse—34%
- Neglect or parent not meeting basic needs—26%
- Not willing to live by parents rules—20%
- Parents use of drugs or alcohol—20%

Reflective of the homeless youth family connections were their experiences running away and being placed in foster care:

- 66% had runaway or lived apart from parents before age 18
- 42% had been placed in foster care or a group home

A sizable number of the respondents from our young sample were themselves parents or pregnant:

- 25% were pregnant or parenting
- 8% had a child living with them

While the survey results presented here cannot be compared with the Empire State Coalition's 2007 count of homeless youths, *A Count of Homeless Youth in New York City*, which was the last count of homeless youth in New York City, to identify trends, the overall patterns are consistent with the findings of that study. Many of the results are also consistent with other research on homeless youths such as the 2007 count, which was the most recent prior count of homeless youth in New York City. In particular, the more marginalized members of society (e.g. LGBT youths) are at risk of becoming homeless. Moreover, their homelessness tends to be associated with other problems such as dropping out of school, incarceration and unemployment.

Introduction

On January 28, 2013 a count of unaccompanied homeless youth (hereafter referred to as homeless youth) in New York City took place. The count was conducted through collaboration between the (NYC CCoC), DYCD DHS and homeless youth providers. Please see the Acknowledgements section for a list of the organizations that helped make the youth count happen.

The CoC and DYCD organized and executed a system of 14 late-night drop-in centers and five supportive housing residences, which were open in all five boroughs of New York City. There was at least one drop-in center per borough, and six in Manhattan. The Continuum created a 27-question survey that all youth who participated in the count completed. Since the youth count received no federal funding, the CoC made extensive private fundraising efforts and was able to raise the majority of the funds needed. The drop-in centers that remained open for the count were all funded through DYCD, the Palette Fund, and the Ali Forney Center, which provided funding for the incentives and the Metrocards. CoC steering committee members expected to see the highest number of homeless youth gathering in the drop-in centers in Manhattan and the Bronx.

The night of the count, homeless youth were welcomed into drop-in centers. Most youth heard about the count through runaway and homeless youth providers at the centers they frequent during the day as well as through youth-specific outreach teams. Each drop-in center served food and had various activities to occupy youth while both providers and CoC volunteers helped youth fill out the 27-question survey created by the CoC. Despite the fact that the count was city-wide and there were locations in each borough, not every site had counted youth that night. Four sites did not have any youth surveyed due to a number of factors specific to each site such as location. For example, the site in Queens was normally not used as a youth drop-in center. However, as organizers anticipated, there was heavier turnout in the more central locations of the city in Manhattan.

This was part of a larger national effort in nine diverse communities around the country that was jointly led by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH); the U.S. Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education (ED).

The service providers that participated in the count and where the surveys were conducted are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Services Provider Location and Addresses of Surveys	
Service Providers	Address
Ali Forney Center	321 West 125 St.
The Christopher	202 West 41 St
Covenant House	460 West 41 St.
The Door	555 Broome St.
Jasper Hall	863 Melrose Ave.
Louis Nine House*	1323 Louis Nine Blvd

Project Hospitality*	126 Bennett Street
Ravenswood Community Center*	35-40 21 st Street
SCO Family of Services*	89 South 10 th Street
Schafer Hall	117 East 118 St.
Streetwork Project	209 West 125 St.
Streetwork Project	33 Essex St.
Sunrise Center	333 East 149 St.
Vicinitas	507 East 176 St.

* - *These sites participated in the count but did not have any youth attend that night.*

This count was part of a two pronged strategy USICH to reach the goal of ending youth homelessness by 2020. These prongs include building capacity for service delivery and improving data quality and collection on youth experiencing homelessness. Accurate data is a prerequisite for understanding the nature and scope of the homeless youth problem. Without such data developing programs tailored to the needs of homeless youth is almost impossible (Homelessness 2013).

Through HUD’s annual Point in Time counts significant progress has been made in recent years in estimating the size of the general homeless population. The methodologies employed utilized during HUD’s annual Point in Time counts, however, have been less successful for counting homeless youth. Homeless youth are especially vulnerable and often hard to reach (Ringwalt et al. 1998). Consequently, developing effective methods for counting homeless youths is imperative.

Youth Count! is an initiative of the USICH, HUD, DDS and ED to develop effective methods to count homeless youths. *Youth Count!* entailed counts of homeless youths in nine communities across the nation including New York City. These nine separate counts will provide useful information on “...promising strategies for conducting the following: 1) collaborative Point in Time counts of unaccompanied homeless youth that engage Continuums of Care (CoC), Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) providers, Local Education Agency (LEA) homeless liaisons, and other local stakeholders; and 2) credible Point in time counts that gather reliable data on unaccompanied homeless youth.”¹ In addition to counting homeless youth who engage CoC and RHY providers, the New York City Coalition on the Continuum of Care wanted to gather additional information about these same youths. This information would be helpful in furthering our understanding of how youths became homeless and developing targeted programs to service their needs. To gather this additional information a survey was administered to all of the youths who visited one of the 14 drop - in centers or supportive housing residences listed on the first page of this report on January 28th, 2013, the night New York City executed its *Youth Count!* initiative.

The remainder of this report describes the methodology for conducting the survey, tabulates and describes the survey results and concludes with a discussion and comparison to the findings of the New York City homeless youth survey conducted in 2007.

Methodology

In December 2012 the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development began marketing the *Youth Count!* taking place on January 28th 2013. Flyers were distributed, social media engaged and community stakeholders were informed as part of the effort to encourage homeless youths to make themselves available to be counted on the night of January 28th. In addition, Metrocards and food were provided to encourage participation.

Because of the marketing efforts associated with the *Youth Count* initiative, it was anticipated that January 28th would present an excellent opportunity to learn more about youths who frequent drop in centers and homeless youth residences in New York City. Homeless youths would be visiting drop in centers and supportive housing residences in larger numbers than typically the case and could be canvassed at that time. The survey administered to youths who visited drop in centers and or supportive housing residences on January 28th serves as the basis for this report.

The sampling approach employed here thus encapsulates one of the five approaches commonly used to sample homeless youths. These include 1) sampling the general population to ask if they have ever experienced a spell of homelessness; 2) sampling youth at general social service centers; 3) sampling youths in shelters; 4) sampling youth in public spaces where homeless youths are known to congregate, and; 5) sampling youths in drop in facilities or residences targeted at homeless youths (Haber and Toro 2004).³

Because homeless youths are a heterogeneous and a difficult to reach population these different approaches tap into segments of the homeless youth population. Those youths sampled at drop in centers or residences will likely differ from the population of homeless youths in several ways. First, because this is a point in time estimate this will miss those individuals who may not be in the midst of a homeless spell at the time of the count but who experienced homelessness before or after the count. Second, compared to youths in shelters, who are often experiencing their first spell of homelessness, youths at drop in facilities or residences typically have had more experience with homelessness and are somewhat older (Haber and Toro 2004; McCaskill, Toro, and Wolfe 1998). Third, youths who use drop in facilities or residences may differ in important and unknown ways from youths who do not.

The sample of individuals who visited one of drop in facilities or residences on January 28th might also differ from individuals who typically visit these places in light of the marketing and incentives associated with the *Youth Count!* The sample of individuals who decided to participate in the *Youth Count!* might differ in unknown ways from those who typically visit drop in facilities or residences. These potential differences should be kept in mind when we present our findings.

³ Haber and Toro classify the sampling of homeless youths in drop in centers or in public spaces as one category. We treat these as two distinct categories as we feel these are distinct, albeit overlapping, populations.

Survey Design

Several meetings and phone conferences were held that included the authors of this report and representatives from the NYC CCoC. The instrument that was used in the 2007 survey was also consulted when developing the survey instrument. The final survey instrument, a copy of which is in the appendix, was designed to capture the following; whether the respondent met the HUD definition of a homeless youth; the demographic characteristics of respondents; the respondent's means of support; the respondent's sexuality; and the respondent's contact with the school system, labor market and criminal justice systems.

Definition

The respondent was classified as a homeless youth if they were unaccompanied by their parents, were under the age of 25 and either spent the previous night in a place not considered habitable for humans or had moved at least two times in the past 60 days.

Survey Results

On the night of January 28th between the hours of 10:00 pm and 4:00 am 182 persons completed the survey questionnaire. Of those 182, 132 observations met the definition of a homeless youth described above. Below are the results from the survey described above for those 132 observations.

The survey was administered, in part, to ascertain demographic information such as respondent race/ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, age, educational attainment, etc., as well as information like respondent experience with the criminal justice system, foster care system, and place(s) that they stay at nights. Although not a random survey, this information provides some details on a largely hidden population for which information is hard to gather.

Table 2 displays some basic demographic characteristics of the sample. Beginning with the first panel of the table, which describes the race and ethnicity of the sample, the overwhelming majority indicated that they are either black or Hispanic/Latino; about 42 percent identified as black (not inclusive of those who identified as Hispanic or Latino) and 48 percent identified as Hispanic or Latino.⁴ The next largest category is the multiracial group (8.33 percent), followed by whites (6.82 percent), and, then, "others, which made up 3.03 percent of the sample. None of the respondents identified as Asian,

⁴ On the actual survey respondents were asked to identify their race and Hispanic origin in two separate questions. The results presented in Table 2 combined the two separate questions in a mutually exclusive manner such that none of the racial groups include respondents who identified Hispanic or Latino origin. For example, of the total 63 observations who identified as having Hispanic or Latino descent from the original Hispanic origin question in the survey, 15 observations also identified as racially as black, and ultimately are included in the Hispanic/Latino group, and not the black group, in Table 2. Also, 17 and nine of the individuals that respectively identified as multiracial and white and Hispanic/Latino on the two separate race and Hispanic origin survey questions are combined into the Hispanic/Latino group in Table 2.

one of the respondent identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native and two of the observations refused to answer, did not know or had missing information with regards to their race/ethnicity.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics		
	Freq	Percent
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>		
Black	42	41.82
Hispanic/Latino	63	47.73
Multiracial	11	8.33
White	9	6.82
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1	0.76
Other	4	3.03
Refused/Don't Know/Missing	2	1.52
<i>Sex Assigned at Birth</i>		
Male	81	61.36
Female	41	31.06
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	10	7.58
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>		
Straight	73	55.30
Lesbian/Gay	18	13.64
Bisexual	28	21.21
Questioning/DK/NoID/Other/Refused	13	9.85
<i>Transgender Status</i>		
Not Transgendered	106	80.3
Transgendered	8	6.06
Refused/Don't Know/Missing	18	13.64
<i>Teenager</i>		
Teen: 16 – 19	38	28.79
Young Adult: 20 – 24	94	71.21

The next three panels of the table describe the sex assigned at birth, sexual orientation, and transgender status of the sample. Sixty-one percent of the respondents indicated that their sex assigned at birth was male, while a little less than a third indicated female sex assignment. A slight majority of the respondents, 55 percent, indicated identified their sexual origin as “straight,” while nearly 35 percent identified as Lesbian/Gay or bisexual. The remaining ten percent indicated that they are questioning, did not know, offered no identification, refused or had missing information about their sexual orientation.

About six percent of the respondents identified as transgendered, while another 14 percent did not give a definitive ‘no’ response to the transgender question. The responses for the 14 percent included refused, don’t know, unclear or missing. Given the sensitivity and stigma associated with transgender status, perhaps there are additional transgender observations in the refused, don’t know, unclear or missing responses.

Despite the fact that most of the respondents reported being ‘straight’ and ‘not transgendered’, a sizable portion of the homeless youth respondents indicated that they are not strictly heterosexual and non-transgender. Hence, the survey does suggest that sexual orientation and gender identity are important risk factors associated with homelessness amongst youth.

The last panel of the table divides the sample by age; teenagers – those between the ages of 16 and 19, and, young adults – those between the ages of 20 and 24. About 29 percent of the sampled homeless youths are very young teenagers, while 71 percent are classified as young adults.

Table 3, displays the average age for the sample overall, as well as the average ages for four key demographic characteristics. The characteristics are race/ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity or transgender status. Throughout the results section of this report, we examine how these four key factors, along with age, relate to other homeless youth attributes in order to gain insights about variations across these demographic characteristics. In the case of age, both the median and mean age of the survey respondents is about 21, and there is not a great deal of variation from 21 when the other four demographic factors – race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and transgender status – are considered. However, with a median and mean age of about 22, the lesbian/gay group tends to be on average slightly older, by about one year, than the rest of the sample.

Table 3: Relationships between Average Age and Demographic Characteristics				
Group	Freq	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.
<i>All</i>	132	21	20.83	2.03
<i>Race Ethnicity</i>				
Black	42	21	20.79	1.99
Hispanic/Latino	63	20	20.70	2.04
Multiracial	11	22	21.36	2.25
White	9	21	21.11	2.32
Other/Don't Know/Refused/Missing	7	20	21.14	1.68
<i>Sex Assigned at Birth</i>				
Male	81	21	20.88	1.99
Female	41	21	20.70	2.18
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>				
Straight	73	21	20.67	1.97
Lesbian/Gay	18	22	22.39	1.50
Bisexual	28	21	20.75	2.20
Questioning/DK/NoID/Other/Refused	13	20	19.77	1.54
<i>Transgender Status</i>				
Not Transgendered	106	21	20.84	2.08
Transgendered	8	20	20.5	2.00
Refused/Don't Know/Missing	18	20.5	20.89	1.81

The next table presents information with regards to duration of homelessness. For the 123 respondents responded to the question with an actual length time without a permanent place to stay, the average duration is 927 days (close to 2.5 years), and the median duration is 730 days (two years). It is noteworthy that this duration if length of time without a permanent place to stay varied amongst the demographic groups. The median black homeless youth reported being without a permanent place to stay for one year, which is about half as long as the median in the sample overall. The black average (mean) duration, 988 days is closer to the sample overall average, which suggest that the black distribution is skewed in a manner with some outlier black respondents with very long durations without a permanent place to stay. The multiracial group reported the lowest median overall, 180 days, while the white group reported the longest median duration, 913 days. However, the median for both groups is based on a small number of respondents, only 11 and eight, respectively.

Table 4: Average Length of Time (in days) without Permanent Place to Stay				
Group	Obs.	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.
<i>All</i>	123	730	927	1202
<i>Race Ethnicity</i>				
Black	40	365	988	1706
Hispanic/Latino	58	730	939	941
Multiracial	11	180	719	920
White	8	913	829	453
Other/Don't Know/Refused/Missing	6	913	916	593
<i>Sex Assigned at Birth</i>				
Male	75	730	885	1066
Female	38	548	768	780
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>				
Straight	67	730	1089	1460
Lesbian/Gay	17	180	527	681
Bisexual	27	730	864	918
Questioning/DK/NoID/Other/Refused	12	730	727	343
<i>Transgender Status</i>				
Not Transgender	99	730	1015	1294
Transgendered	7	365	708	780
Refused/Don't Know/Missing	17	240	501	513

Respondents, who identified as female or lesbian/gay, reported lower durations without a permanent place to stay. The typical (median) female reported 1.5 years without a permanent place to stay, and the typical lesbian or gay homeless youth reported being about a half of a year without a permanent place to stay. Finally, the last panel of Table 4 indicates the median survey respondent who identifies as not transgendered reported at least twice as long a spell without a permanent place to live than the respondents who identified as transgendered or whose transgendered status is not clearly defined.

Table 5 describes the relationships between the demographic characteristics listed in Table 2.⁵ As revealed by their larger shares, the black sample tended to more likely to be female, and similar in terms of both sexual orientation and transgender status as their Hispanic/Latino ethnic group comparisons.

Table 5: The Relationships between Basic Demographic Characteristics				
	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
	Black		Hispanic/Latino	
<i>Sex assigned at birth</i>				
Male	23	58.97	43	71.87
Female	16	41.03	17	28.33
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>				
Straight	25	59.52	38	60.32
Lesbian/Gay	7	16.67	7	11.11
Bisexual	6	14.29	11	17.46
Questioning/DK/NoID/Other/Refused	4	9.52	7	11.11
<i>Transgender Status</i>				
Not Transgender	36	85.71	49	77.78
Transgendered	2	4.76	4	6.35
Refused/Don't Know/Missing	4	9.52	10	15.87
	Male		Female	
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>				
Straight	56	69.14	12	29.27
Lesbian/Gay	11	13.58	6	14.63
Bisexual	12	14.81	13	31.71
Questioning/DK/NoID/Other/Refused	2	2.47	10	24.39
<i>Transgender Status</i>				
Not Transgender	70	86.42	31	75.61
Transgendered	3	3.70	1	2.44
Refused/Don't Know/Missing	8	9.88	9	21.95
Refused/Don't Know/Missing	4	10.53	14	14.89
	Straight		Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual	
<i>Transgender Status</i>				
Not Transgender	63	86.30	43	72.88
Transgendered	3	4.11	5	8.47
Refused/Don't Know/Missing	7	9.59	11	18.64

The next panel in Table 5 examines sex assigned at birth in relation to other non-ethnic/racial group demographic characteristics. Sixty-nine percent of the males in the sample indicated that they are “straight,” which is about 40 percentage points higher than

⁵ Since the other ethnic/racial categories are so small, the relationship between race and ethnicity and the other demographic characteristics are only considered for black and Hispanic/Latino groups. Likewise, for sample size reasons, the lesbian/gay category is combined with the bisexual category when examining sexual orientation in relation to transgender status. These categorizations of race/ethnicity and sexual orientation are maintained for the remaining tables in the report as well.

the 29 percent share of females who indicated a straight sexual orientation. This difference is largely the result of the more than double share of females who reported themselves as bisexual, and the fact that the female sample is about 12 times as likely to identify themselves as questioning, other, or not identifying their sexual orientation. In addition, the males in the sample are about ten percentage points more likely to identify as ‘not transgendered’ in comparison to females in the sample.

The final panel of the table examines the relationship between transgender identity and sexual orientation. The results reveal that about 86 percent of ‘straight’ individuals identified as not transgendered in comparison to about 73 percent of lesbian, gay or bisexual individuals. Very few of both groups affirmatively identified as transgendered, only three and five observations, respectively, whereas a greater share of both groups reported that they did not know or did not identify their transgender status, 7 and 11 observations, respectively. Yet, for both of the latter categories, a greater share of lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals identified as transgendered or in the ambiguous category of not affirmatively identifying either transgendered or not transgendered identity.

Socioeconomic Status

The next set of results provides information concerning socioeconomic characteristics of the survey responders. Beginning with Table 6, basic descriptions of the samples educational attainment, school enrollment status, employment status, and whether the youth is not formally engaged in self-investment via employment or school, which we label “disconnected” (i.e. the respondents identify as neither employed in the last week that the survey was administered or enrolled in school). Tables 7-11 examine the relationships between the basic demographic characteristics discussed earlier including whether the respondent is a teenager between the ages of 16 and 19, or a young adult between the ages of 20 and 24 and the socioeconomic characteristics defined in this paragraph.

Table 6: Socioeconomic Characteristics		
	Obs.	Percent
<i>Educational Attainment</i>		
Attained less than HS Diploma/GED	62	46.97
Attained HS Diploma/ED	44	33.33
Attained more than HS Diploma/GED	26	19.70
<i>School Enrollment</i>		
Currently Enrolled in school	28	21.21
<i>Employment Status</i>		
Worked at a job /Business Last Week	29	21.97
<i>Disconnected</i>		
Not in School or Employed	83	62.88

Just about 47 percent of the sample has not attained at least a high school diploma or a General Educational Development degree (GED), whereas one-third of the sample

attained a high school diploma or GED, and the remaining 20 percent attained at least some post-high school training. Twenty-one and 22 percents, respectively, are not currently enrolled in school and were not work last week. Sixty-three percent of the respondents are categorized as “disconnected” from both the formal workforce and school.⁶ Perhaps such high level of disconnectedness is not surprising given the vulnerabilities associated with youth homelessness.

Table 7 reveals that blacks reported higher levels of educational attainment, school enrollment and employment than Latino respondents. Fifty-six percent of Latinos indicated that they had not attained a high school diploma in comparison to 43 percent of the black group, while on the flip-side, 29 percent of the black group in comparison to 11 percent of Latinos indicated that they attained at least some post-high school educational training. Moreover, over two-thirds of the Latino group was not engaged in school or employment in comparison to just over half of the black sample, 55 percent.

Table 7: The Relationship between Socioeconomic Status and Race/Ethnicity				
	Black		Hispanic/Latino	
	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
<i>Educational Attainment</i>				
Attained less than HS Diploma/GED	18	42.86	35	55.56
Attained HS Diploma/GED	12	28.57	21	33.33
Attained more than HS Diploma/GED	12	28.57	7	11.11
<i>School Enrollment</i>				
Currently Enrolled in School	11	26.19	14	22.22
<i>Employment Status</i>				
Worked at a job /Business Last Week	9	21.43	11	17.46
<i>Disconnected</i>				
Not in School or Employed	21	54.76	43	68.25

The male and female comparisons in Table 8 are more similar than the race/ethnicity comparisons in Table 7. A slightly larger share of males attained less than a high school diploma or GED than females, while a slightly smaller share of males attained schooling beyond high school. The 65 percent share of homeless youth males that are “disconnected” in the survey is only slightly higher than 61 percent share for females. These results are somewhat surprising given that male youths in the population at large tend to have substantially much higher rates of “disconnectedness” than female youths.

Table 8: The Relationship between Socioeconomic Status and Sex Assigned at Birth		
	Male	Female

⁶ Social science literature increasingly uses the term “disconnected youth” to refer to adolescents and young adults who are neither engaged in formal work or school. We recognize that this is a precarious term to distinction amongst population of homeless youth, since arguments could be made that this is a disconnected population by definition. Nonetheless, for consistency sake we will refer to homeless youth who did not indicate employment or school enrollment as ‘disconnected.’

	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
<i>Educational Attainment</i>				
Attained less than HS Diploma/GED	39	48.15	18	43.90
Attained HS Diploma/GED	26	32.10	15	36.59
Attained more than HS Diploma/GED	16	19.75	8	19.51
<i>School Enrollment</i>				
Currently Enrolled in School	15	18.52	11	26.83
<i>Employment Status</i>				
Worked at a job /Business Last Week	18	22.22	8	19.51
<i>Disconnected</i>				
Not in School or Employed	52	64.20	23	60.98

Table 9 reveals that, despite having higher levels of educational attainment, lesbian, gay or bisexual respondents are close to 11 percentage points (58 v. 69 percent) more likely to be disconnected from formal education and employment than respondents who identify their sexual orientation as straight. A great deal of the educational attainment disparity is driven by result that a much larger share of lesbian, gay or bisexual respondents acquired some post-high school education, 34 v. 8 percent. For the disconnectedness outcome, much of the disparity in sexual orientation can be attributed to the lower share of lesbian, gay or bisexual respondents who were employed the previous week of the survey. This is noteworthy, given that employment should presumably be positively linked to educational attainment.

Table 9: The Relationship between Socioeconomic Status and Sexual Orientation				
	Straight		Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual	
	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
<i>Educational Attainment</i>				
Attained less than HS Diploma/GED	38	52.05	24	40.68
Attained HS Diploma/ED	29	39.73	15	24.42
Attained more than HS Diploma/GED	6	8.22	20	33.90
<i>School Enrollment</i>				
Currently Enrolled in School	17	23.29	11	18.64
<i>Employment Status</i>				
Worked at a job /Business Last Week	19	26.03	10	16.95
<i>Disconnected</i>				
Not in School or Employed	42	57.53	41	69.49

The survey results presented in Table 10 do not reveal similarities in school enrollment and employment status based on transgender identity. In contrast, the subsample that identified as not transgendered reported substantially lower levels of educational attainment than their transgendered and somewhat ambiguously identified transgendered peers. Half of the not-transgendered group had not finished the 12th grade, whereas a

little over one-third of the transgendered and somewhat ambiguously identified transgendered respondents had not finished the 12th grade.⁷

Table 10: The Relationship between Socioeconomic Status and Transgender Identity				
	Not Transgendered		Transgen/DK/Ref/Mis	
	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
<i>Educational Attainment</i>				
Attained less than HS Diploma/GED	53	50.00	9	34.62
Attained HS Diploma/ED	34	32.08	10	38.46
Attained more than HS Diploma/GED	19	17.93	7	26.92
<i>School Enrollment</i>				
Currently Enrolled in School	23	21.70	5	19.23
<i>Employment Status</i>				
Worked at a job /Business Last Week	23	21.70	6	23.08
<i>Disconnected</i>				
Not in School or Employed	66	62.26	17	65.38

Perhaps not surprisingly, Table 11 illustrates that the younger subsample of teenagers have attained lower levels of education, but higher of school enrollment, than the older cohort of young adults. Nonetheless, the two groups have similar levels of employment, which suggests that the higher share of the older cohort that is disconnected (66 versus 55 percent) mostly attributed to their lower share of school enrollment.

Table 11: The Relationship between Socioeconomic Status and Age Cohort				
	Teen: 16 – 19		Young Adult: 20 – 24	
	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
<i>Educational Attainment</i>				
Attained less than HS Diploma/GED	23	60.53	39	41.49
Attained HS Diploma/ED	12	31.58	32	34.04
Attained more than HS Diploma/GED	3	7.89	23	24.47
<i>School Enrollment</i>				
Currently Enrolled in School	12	31.58	16	17.02
<i>Employment Status</i>				
Worked at a job /Business Last Week	8	21.05	21	22.34
<i>Disconnected</i>				
Not in School or Employed	21	55.26	62	65.96

Location(s) where Respondent Stayed and Frequency of Moves

This section of the report summarizes survey results for location(s) where the respondent stayed and the frequency of respondent moves over specified periods of time. Tables 12

⁷ Since there are only eight observations that identify as transgendered (see Table 2), Table 10 and all remaining tables merge the categories ‘Transgendered’ and ‘Refused/Don’t Know/Missing’ into one category entitled ‘Transgen/DK/Ref/Mis.’

through 18 indicate the location that the respondent stayed the night before the survey and whether the respondent less than or longer than five days at that location. Table 12, sorted by the most frequented responses first, reveals that 25 percent of the sample stayed with a friend the night before the survey. The frequency of homeless youth reporting staying with a friend is nearly twice as large as the next two frequented responses, staying in the subway or staying in a relative's home, which respectively received, about 13 and 12 percent of the responses.

Table 12: Where Respondent Stayed the Last Night		
	Obs.	Percent
With a friend	33	25
Subway	17	12.88
Relative's home	16	12.12
Outdoor/street/park	13	9.85
Youth shelter	13	9.85
Shelter (emergency, temporary)	8	6.06
With boyfriend/girlfriend	7	5.3
Abandoned/foreclosed building	6	4.55
Bus/train station	4	3.03
Family home	4	3.03
Place of business not intended for overnight sleep (e.g.all-night movie)	4	3.03
Church bed/church	2	1.52
With sex work or prostitution client	2	1.52
Jail/juvenile detention center	1	0.76
Other shelter	1	0.76
Permanent supportive housing	1	0.76
<i>If Respondent stayed less than five days at previous location</i>		
Less than 5 days at previous location	62	47.33

The following is a list along with their respective proportions of places outdoors or not intended for overnight accommodation where homeless youth reported spending the night the day before the survey: as mentioned above 13 percent reported spending the night in the subway, ten percent outside on the streets or in a park, five percent in an abandoned or foreclosed building, three percents each in a bus station or place of business not intended for overnight sleep, and two percent in place of worship. Disturbingly, about two percent of the sample reported spending the night with a sex work client, and one respondent spent the night in a jail or juvenile detention center. Lastly, 47 percent of the sample reported spending the night at the location indicated in Table 12 for less than five days, suggesting that about half of the sample is very transient.⁸

⁸ There is a slight error in the survey question designed to ascertain the length of time the respondent stayed at the location reported in Table 12. The question allows the respondent to identify if they stayed less than five days or more than five days, but there is not categorization for individuals to report staying exactly five days.

Tables 13 through 18 reports on the relationships between demographic characteristics and responses to the location stayed last nights and duration of stay at that location. Staying with a friend last night is the most common location for both black and Hispanic/Latino homeless youth. However, large difference occurred between the two groups with regards to frequency of staying in the Subway and staying in a youth shelter last night. About 19 percent of the Hispanic/Latino group reported staying overnight in the subway in contrast to two percent of blacks, while 19 percent of blacks reported staying in a youth shelter in contrast to five percent of Hispanic/Latinos. Also, the Hispanic/Latino population is a little more likely to have stayed less than five days at their reported location. It appears as though the Hispanic/Latino group stayed in relatively more vulnerable locations for an already vulnerable population.

Table 13: The Relationship between Location Stayed Last Night and Race/Ethnicity				
	Black		Hispanic/Latino	
	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
With a friend	10	23.81	16	25.40
Subway	1	2.38	12	19.05
Relative's home	6	14.29	7	11.11
Outdoor/street/park	4	9.52	7	11.11
Youth shelter	8	19.05	3	4.76
Shelter (emergency, temporary)	3	7.14	2	3.17
With boyfriend/girlfriend	3	7.14	4	6.35
Abandoned/foreclosed building	0	0.00	4	6.35
Bus/train station	1	2.38	3	4.76
Family home	2	4.76	2	3.17
Place of business not intended for overnight sleep (e.g. all-night movie)	1	2.38	1	1.59
Church bed/church	1	2.38	0	0.00
With sex work or prostitution client	1	2.38	1	1.59
Jail/juvenile detention center	0	0.00	0	0.00
Other shelter	1	2.38	0	0.00
Permanent supportive housing	0	0.00	1	1.59
<i>If Respondent stayed less than five days at location last night</i>				
Less than 5 days at previous location	19	45.24	32	51.61

The gender comparisons in Table 14 illustrate that females were about ten percentage points more likely to have stayed with a friend (32 v. 22 percent), or to have stayed with a boyfriend/girlfriend (12 v. 2 percent) than their male counterparts. In addition the female subsample were about five percentage points less likely to have spent less than five days at the place they stayed last night. Differences in terms of sexual orientation listed in Table 15 indicate that individuals identified as straight were more likely to have stayed with a friend or a relative's home, whereas those identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual were more likely to have stayed in a subway, outdoors, or a temporary or emergency shelter. Table 16 indicates that individuals who identified as transgendered or did whose transgendered status was not clearly identified were less likely to have stayed outdoors or an abandoned or foreclosed building, and more likely to have stayed with a

boyfriend/girlfriend or a family home than those whose transgender status is defined as 'not transgendered.. However, the reader is cautioned that there are only 26 total observations in the transgendered and ambitiously defined transgendered category.

Table 14: Relationship between Location Stayed Last Night and Sex at Birth				
	Male		Female	
	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
With a friend	18	22.22	13	31.71
Subway	10	12.35	3	7.32
Relative's home	9	11.11	5	12.20
Outdoor/street/park	9	11.11	4	9.76
Youth shelter	9	11.11	3	7.32
Shelter (emergency, temporary)	5	6.17	3	7.32
With boyfriend/girlfriend	2	2.47	5	12.20
Abandoned/foreclosed building	5	6.17	1	2.44
Bus/train station	3	3.70	1	2.44
Family home	3	3.70	1	2.44
Place of business not intended for overnight sleep (e.g. all-night movie)	2	2.47	2	4.88
Church bed/church	2	2.47	0	0.00
With sex work or prostitution client	1	1.23	0	0.00
Jail/juvenile detention center	1	1.23	0	0.00
Other shelter	1	1.23	0	0.00
Permanent supportive housing	1	1.23	0	0.00
<i>If Respondent stayed less than five days at location last night</i>				
Less than 5 days at previous location	39	48.75	18	43.90

Table 15: Relationship between Location Stayed Last Night & Sexual Orientation				
	Straight		Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual	
	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
With a friend	21	28.77	12	20.34
Subway	7	9.59	10	16.95
Relative's home	11	15.07	5	8.47
Outdoor/street/park	5	6.85	8	13.56
Youth shelter	7	9.59	6	10.17
Shelter (emergency, temporary)	3	4.11	5	8.47
With boyfriend/girlfriend	3	4.11	4	6.78
Abandoned/foreclosed building	4	5.48	2	3.39
Bus/train station	3	4.11	1	1.69
Family home	4	5.48	0	0.00
Place of business not intended for overnight sleep (e.g. all-night movie)	2	2.74	2	3.39
Church bed/church	0	0.00	2	3.39
With sex work or prostitution client	1	1.37	1	1.69

Jail/juvenile detention center	1	1.37	0	0.00
Other shelter	0	0.00	1	1.69
Permanent supportive housing	1	1.37	0	0.00
<i>If Respondent stayed less than five days at location last night</i>				
Less than 5 days at previous location	36	49.32	26	44.83

Table 16: Relationship between Location Stayed Last Night & Transgender Status				
	Not Transgendered		Transgen/DK/Ref/Mis	
	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
With a friend	27	25.47	6	23.08
Subway	13	12.26	4	15.38
Relative's home	13	12.26	3	11.54
Outdoor/street/park	12	11.32	1	3.85
Youth shelter	11	10.38	2	7.69
Shelter (emergency, temporary)	6	5.66	2	7.69
With boyfriend/girlfriend	4	3.77	3	11.54
Abandoned/foreclosed building	6	5.66	0	0.00
Bus/train station	4	3.77	0	0.00
Family home	2	1.89	2	7.69
Place of business not intended for overnight sleep (e.g. all-night movie)	3	2.83	1	3.85
Church bed/church	2	1.89	0	0.00
With sex work or prostitution client	1	0.94	1	3.85
Jail/juvenile detention center	1	0.94	0	0.00
Other shelter	1	0.94	0	0.00
Permanent supportive housing	0	0.00	1	3.85
<i>If Respondent stayed less than five days at location last night</i>				
Less than five 5 at previous location	51	48.57	11	42.31

Tables 17 and 18 compare respondent locations of stay based on age and youth disconnectedness from schooling and employment. Teenage homeless youths are the only group who were more likely to have spent the night before the survey in the subway as opposed to with a friend – 16 percent reported spending the night in the subway while 13 percent reported spending the night with a friend. Another 13 percent of teenage respondents stayed outdoors. In contrast, the most frequented response for the young adult homeless youth population, and every other demographic group in the sample, is spending the night with a friend, and the 30 percent response is more than twice as high as their teenage group comparison. Table 18 indicates that homeless youth ‘disconnected’ from employment and school were more likely to have stayed in a subway (10 percentage points) or outdoors (6 percentage points) than their peers who were enrolled in school or who were employed in the previous week of the survey. In contrast, those employed or in school were more likely to have stayed with a friend (6 percentage points) or with a relative (13 percentage points) than their disconnected youth counterparts.

Hence, the results that suggests that teenage and disconnected youths may have stayed in relatively more vulnerable places their also vulnerable older and more formally ‘connected’ homeless youth peers.

Table 17: Relationship between Location Stayed Last Night and Age Cohort				
	Teen: 16 – 19		Young Adult: 20 – 24	
	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
With a friend	5	13.16	28	29.79
Subway	6	15.79	11	11.70
Relative's home	5	13.16	11	11.70
Outdoor/street/park	5	13.16	8	8.51
Youth shelter	5	13.16	8	8.51
Shelter (emergency, temporary)	3	7.89	5	5.32
With boyfriend/girlfriend	2	5.26	5	5.32
Abandoned/foreclosed building	3	7.89	3	3.19
Bus/train station	1	2.63	3	3.19
Family home	1	2.63	3	3.19
Place of business not intended for overnight sleep (e.g. all-night movie)	1	2.63	3	3.19
Church bed/church	0	0.00	2	2.13
With sex work or prostitution client	0	0.00	2	2.13
Jail/juvenile detention center	0	0.00	1	1.06
Other shelter	0	0.00	1	1.06
Permanent supportive housing	1	2.63	0	0.00
<i>If Respondent stayed less than five days at location last night</i>				
Less than 5 days at previous location	28	52.63	42	45.16

Table 18: Relationship between Location Stayed Last Night and Disconnectedness				
	Disconnected		Employed/School	
	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
With a friend	19	22.89	14	28.57
Subway	14	16.87	3	6.12
Relative's home	6	7.23	10	20.41
Outdoor/street/park	10	12.05	3	6.12
Youth shelter	8	9.64	5	10.20
Shelter (emergency, temporary)	5	6.02	3	6.12
With boyfriend/girlfriend	4	4.82	3	6.12
Abandoned/foreclosed building	5	6.02	1	2.04
Bus/train station	3	3.61	1	2.04
Family home	3	3.61	1	2.04
Place of business not intended for overnight sleep (e.g. all-night movie)	1	1.20	3	6.12
Church bed/church	2	2.41	0	0.00
With sex work or prostitution client	2	2.41	0	0.00
Jail/juvenile detention center	1	1.20	0	0.00

Other shelter	0	0.00	1	2.04
Permanent supportive housing	0	0.00	1	2.04
<i>If Respondent stayed less than five days at location last night</i>				
Less than 5 days at previous location	39	47.56	23	46.94

The next couple of tables report on other places for the subsample individuals who report staying less than five days in their location identified in Table 12. There are a total of 62 observations in the sample who indicated staying fewer than five days in the location they spent the night before the survey, and out of those 62, 59 choose to offer at least one additional place that they stayed in the previous five days before the survey. Table 19 displays that with a friend is, again, the most frequented response – 46 percent of the 59 respondents indicated that with a friend was an additional place that they stayed. Seventeen percent indicated that they stayed with in a relative’s home, while 22, 20 14 and ten percent, reported staying outdoors, in a subway, at a bus on train station or in a youth shelter, respectively. Moreover an additional three and two percent of this subsample reported staying in jail or a juvenile justice detention center, or with a sex work client as an additional place they stayed in the prior five nights.⁹

	Obs.	Percent
With a friend	27	45.76
Outdoor/street/park	13	22.03
Subway	12	20.34
Relative's home	10	16.96
Bus/train station	8	13.56
Youth shelter	6	10.17
Hospital	4	6.78
Abandoned/foreclosed building	3	5.08
Place in a home not normally used for sleeping	3	5.08
Jail/juvenile detention center	2	3.39
Motel/hotel	2	3.39
Place of business not intended for overnight sleep (e.g. all-night movie)	2	3.39
With boyfriend/girlfriend	2	3.39
With sex work or prostitution client	2	1.52
Others places with only response	11	15.25

The relationship between other places stayed and demographic and socioeconomic characteristics are summarized in Table 20.¹⁰ The added information for comparisons across demographic and socioeconomic groups based on reports of additional places

⁹ Note that the percentages in Table 19 do not sum to 100, since multiple responses were allowed for the question.

¹⁰ Note that the tables does not include comparisons based on transgendered status since only nine of the 59 observations that listed an additional place of stay in the last five days were classified as something other than ‘not transgendered.’

stayed in the last five days is largely consistent with the trends revealed in Tables 13 through 18. Blacks, females, individuals with a straight sexual orientation, and older homeless youths were more likely to stay with a friend or in a relative's home than their Hispanic/Latino, male, lesbian, gay or bisexual, or teenage youth comparisons. Furthermore, Hispanics/Latinos were 29 and 13 percentage point more likely to stay outdoors, and at a bus or train station, respectively, than blacks. Likewise lesbian, gay or bisexual youths were twice as likely to stay in a subway than their straight identified counterparts. Finally 36 percent of disconnected homeless youth reported staying outdoors in comparison to no homeless youth that were employed or in school, in contrast, 30 percent of homeless youth that attended school or were employed reported staying with a relative, whereas the comparable figure for disconnected homeless youth was eight percent.

Table 20: Relationships between Other Places Stayed and Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics (N=59)				
	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
	Black		Hispanic/Latino	
With a friend	10	58.82	10	32.26
Outdoor/street/park	0	0.00	9	29.03
Subway	3	17.65	7	22.58
Relative's home	6	35.29	2	6.45
Bus/train station	1	5.88	6	19.35
Youth shelter	0	0.00	6	19.35
	Male		Female	
With a friend	15	39.47	9	56.25
Outdoor/street/park	10	16.32	2	12.50
Subway	8	21.05	3	18.75
Relative's home	5	13.16	5	31.25
Bus/train station	5	13.16	2	12.50
Youth shelter	5	13.16	0	0.00
	Straight		Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual	
With a friend	16	45.71	11	45.83
Outdoor/street/park	7	20.00	6	25.00
Subway	5	14.29	7	29.17
Relative's home	7	20.00	3	12.50
Bus/train station	4	11.43	4	16.67
Youth shelter	3	8.57	3	12.50
	Teen: 16 – 19		Young Adult: 20 – 24	
With a friend	5	27.78	22	53.66
Outdoor/street/park	4	22.22	9	21.95
Subway	4	22.22	8	19.51
Relative's home	3	16.67	7	17.07
Bus/train station	3	16.67	5	12.00
Youth shelter	4	22.22	2	4.88
	Disconnected		Employed/School	
With a friend	16	44.44	11	47.83

Outdoor/street/park	13	36.11	0	0.000
Subway	7	19.44	5	21.745
Relative's home	3	8.33	7	30.43
Bus/train station	5	13.89	3	13.04
Youth shelter	5	13.89	1	4.35

The last two tables of this section illustrate the frequency in which the sample moved in the last two months (60 days). Over half of the 131 observations, who answered this question, moved at least five times in the last two months indicating that this is a highly transient group in general. Table 22 examines this high frequency of moves based on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. Frequency of high mobility was near 50 percent for all the demographic and socioeconomic groups with the lone exception being the group of transgendered and other observations that did not identify as ‘not transgendered’ – 40 percent of this group reported at least five moves in the last 60 days.

	Obs.	Percent
None	6	4.59
One time	15	11.45
Two times	14	10.69
Three times	18	13.74
Four times	10	7.63
At least five times	67	51.15
Don't know	1	0.76

	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
	Black		Hispanic	
Moved 5+ times in the past 60 days	20	47.62	32	50.79
	Male		Female	
Moved 5+ times in the past 60 days	41	50.62	20	48.78
	Straight		Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual	
Moved 5+ times in the past 60 days	38	52.05	29	50.00
	Not Transgendered		Transgen/DK/Ref/Mis	
Moved 5+ times in the past 60 days	57	53.77	10	40.00
	Teen: 16 – 19		Young Adult: 20 – 24	
Moved 5+ times in the past 60 days	18	48.65	49	52.13
	Disconnected		Employed/School	
Moved 5+ times in the past 60 days	41	49.40	26	54.17

In sum, this section revealed that the homeless youth in this sample tended to be highly transient, frequently residing with a friend on in the home of a relative. However, a stay in the subway, outside or in an abandoned or foreclosed building was not a rare occurrence for this population. In terms of demographic and socioeconomic group differences, Hispanics/Latinos, males, lesbian, gay or bisexuals, teenagers, and youths disconnected from school or employment tended to report more vulnerable living conditions amongst this vulnerable population in general.

Reasons for Being Homeless

MULTIPLE RESPONSES ALLOWES

	Obs.	Percent
Fighting frequently with your parents	34	33.66
Physical, mental or sexual abuse	34	33.66
Kicked out of your home	31	30.69
Neglect or parent not meeting basic needs	26	25.74
Not willing to live by parents rules	20	19.80
Parents use of drugs or alcohol	20	19.80
Didn't feel safe b/c of violence in home	18	17.82
Delinquent activities by you	10	9.90
Lack of tolerance of sexual orientation/gender	9	8.91
Own use of drugs or alcohol	9	8.91
Left foster care or group home	7	6.93
Became pregnant	6	5.94
Home was too small for everyone	5	4.95
Could not contribute towards rent	4	3.96
Criminal activities by someone in HH	2	1.98
Family lost housing or were evicted (write in)	2	1.98
Evicted from own home or apt	1	0.99
Other (write in with only one occurrence)	21	20.79

	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
	Black		Hispanic	
Fighting frequently with your parents	8	26.67	19	36.54
Physical, mental or sexual abuse	9	30.00	16	30.77
Kicked out of your home	11	36.67	14	26.92
Neglect or parent not meeting basic needs	8	26.67	12	23.08
Not willing to live by parents rules	6	20.00	9	17.31

Parents use of drugs or alcohol	7	23.33	8	15.38
Didn't feel safe b/c of violence in home	5	16.67	7	13.46
Delinquent activities by you	2	6.67	5	9.62
Lack of tolerance of sexual orientation/gender	4	13.33	3	5.77
Own use of drugs or alcohol	3	10.00	3	5.77
Left foster care or group home	1	3.33	5	9.62
Became pregnant	1	3.33	2	3.85
Home was too small for everyone	1	3.33	1	1.92
	Male		Female	
Fighting frequently with your parents	18	30.00	13	40.62
Physical, mental or sexual abuse	21	35.00	9	28.12
Kicked out of your home	16	26.67	10	31.25
Neglect or parent not meeting basic needs	17	28.33	7	21.88
Not willing to live by parents rules	11	18.33	5	15.62
Parents use of drugs or alcohol	8	13.33	9	28.12
Didn't feel safe b/c of violence in home	11	18.33	3	9.38
Delinquent activities by you	6	10.00	2	6.25
Lack of tolerance of sexual orientation/gender	5	8.33	1	3.12
Own use of drugs or alcohol	4	6.67	3	9.38
Left foster care or group home	4	6.67	1	3.12
Became pregnant	1	1.67	2	6.25
Home was too small for everyone	0	0.00	1	3.12
	Straight		Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual	
Fighting frequently with your parents	19	32.20	15	35.71
Physical, mental or sexual abuse	21	35.59	13	30.95
Kicked out of your home	17	28.81	14	33.33
Neglect or parent not meeting basic needs	17	28.81	9	21.43
Not willing to live by parents rules	12	20.34	8	19.05
Parents use of drugs or alcohol	9	15.25	11	26.19
Didn't feel safe b/c of violence in home	11	18.64	7	16.67
Delinquent activities by you	7	11.86	3	7.14
Lack of tolerance of sexual orientation/gender	3	5.08	6	14.29
Own use of drugs or alcohol	3	3.33	6	14.29
Left foster care or group home	7	11.86	0	0.00
Became pregnant	4	6.78	2	4.76
Home was too small for everyone	3	5.08	2	4.76
	Not Transgendered		Transgen/DK/Ref/Mis	

Fighting frequently with your parents	28	34.15	6	31.58
Physical, mental or sexual abuse	31	37.80	3	15.79
Kicked out of your home	25	30.49	6	31.58
Neglect or parent not meeting basic needs	20	24.39	6	31.58
Not willing to live by parents rules	17	20.73	3	15.79
Parents use of drugs or alcohol	18	21.95	2	10.53
Didn't feel safe b/c of violence in home	15	18.29	3	15.79
Delinquent activities by you	9	10.98	1	5.26
Lack of tolerance of sexual orientation/gender	7	8.54	2	10.53
Own use of drugs or alcohol	7	8.54	2	10.53
Left foster care or group home	5	6.10	2	10.53
Became pregnant	5	6.10	1	5.26
Home was too small for everyone	5	6.10	0	0.00
	Teen: 16 – 19		Young Adult: 20 – 24	
Fighting frequently with your parents	10	29.41	24	35.82
Physical, mental or sexual abuse	10	29.41	24	35.82
Kicked out of your home	8	23.53	23	34.33
Neglect or parent not meeting basic needs	9	26.67	17	25.37
Not willing to live by parents rules	4	11.76	16	23.88
Parents use of drugs or alcohol	6	17.65	14	79.10
Didn't feel safe b/c of violence in home	2	5.88	16	23.88
Delinquent activities by you	3	8.82	7	10.45
Lack of tolerance of sexual orientation/gender	1	11.94	8	11.94
Own use of drugs or alcohol	3	8.82	6	8.96
Left foster care or group home	4	11.76	3	4.48
Became pregnant	1	2.94	4	5.97
Home was too small for everyone				
	“Disconnected”		Employed/School	
Fighting frequently with your parents	17	26.15	17	47.22
Physical, mental or sexual abuse	24	36.92	10	27.7813
Kicked out of your home	20	30.77	11	30.56
Neglect or parent not meeting basic needs	15	23.08	11	30.56
Not willing to live by parents rules	10	15.38	10	27.78
Parents use of drugs or alcohol	13	20.00	7	19.44
Didn't feel safe b/c of violence in home	13	20.00	5	13.89
Delinquent activities by you	8	12.31	2	5.56

Lack of tolerance of sexual orientation/gender	5	13.89	4	6.15
Own use of drugs or alcohol	4	6.15	5	13.89
Left foster care or group home	5	7.69	2	5.563
Became pregnant	4	6.15	2	5.56
Home was too small for everyone	3	4.62	2	5.56

Family Companionship

Table 25: Pregnancy/Parenting Status and Presence of Family Members Residing with Them		
	Obs.	Percent
Has a family member with them	27	20.77
Currently pregnant or parenting	33	25.58
Child currently resides with you	10	7.58

Experience with Running Away, Foster Care, Adult Shelters, Jail, and Juvenile Justice Detention Centers

Table 26: Experience with Running Away, Foster Care, Adult Shelters, Jail, and Juvenile Justice Detention Centers		
	Obs.	Percent
Ever run away or been away from parents/guardian before 18	86	65.65
Ever been placed in foster care or group home	55	41.98
Had a place to go after being placed in foster care or group home	26	19.70
Ever stayed in an adult shelter	53	40.77
Ever stayed overnight in a jail or juvenile justice detention facility	70	53.44
Had place to go after being in a jail or juvenile justice detention facility	23	17.42

Table 27: Relationship between Experience with Running Away, Foster Care, Adult Shelters, Jail, and Juvenile Justice Detention Centers and Demographic and SES Characteristics				
	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
	Black		Hispanic	
Ever run away or been away from parents/guardian before 18	24	57.14	44	70.97
Ever been placed in foster care or group home	13	30.95	32	51.61

Had a place to go after being placed in foster care or group home	7	16.67	12	19.05
Ever stayed in an adult shelter	16	39.02	25	39.68
Ever stayed overnight in a jail or juvenile justice detention facility	15	35.71	40	63.49
Had place to go after being in a jail or juvenile justice detention facility	4	9.52	15	23.81
	Male		Female	
Ever run away or been away from parents/guardian before 18	51	63.75	28	68.29
Ever been placed in foster care or group home	34	42.50	15	36.59
Had a place to go after being placed in foster care or group home	19	23.46	6	24.00
Ever stayed in an adult shelter	33	40.74	14	35.00
Ever stayed overnight in a jail or juvenile justice detention facility	48	60.00	17	41.46
Had place to go after being in a jail or juvenile justice detention facility	15	18.52	6	14.63
	Straight		Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual	
Ever run away or been away from parents/guardian before 18	51	70.83	35	59.32
Ever been placed in foster care or group home	33	45.21	22	37.93
Had a place to go after being placed in foster care or group home	17	23.29	9	15.25
Ever stayed in an adult shelter	31	42.47	22	38.60
Ever stayed overnight in a jail or juvenile justice detention facility	42	58.33	28	47.46
Had place to go after being in a jail or juvenile justice detention facility	16	21.92	7	11.86
	Not Transgendered		Transgen/DK/Ref/Mis	
Ever run away or been away from parents/guardian before 18	72	68.57	14	53.85
Ever been placed in foster care or group home	45	42.45	10	19.18
Had a place to go after being placed in foster care or group home	23	21.70	3	11.54
Ever stayed in an adult shelter	46	43.40	7	29.17
Ever stayed overnight in a jail or juvenile justice detention facility	54	51.43	16	61.54
Had place to go after being in a jail or juvenile justice detention facility	16	15.09	7	26.92
	Teen: 16 – 19		Young Adult: 20 – 24	

Ever run away or been away from parents/guardian before 18	29	78.38	57	60.54
Ever been placed in foster care or group home	21	55.26	34	36.56
Had a place to go after being placed in foster care or group home	9	23.68	17	18.09
Ever stayed in an adult shelter	6	16.22	47	50.54
Ever stayed overnight in a jail or juvenile justice detention facility	19	50.00	51	54.84
Had place to go after being in a jail or juvenile justice detention facility	10	26.32	13	13.83
	Disconnected		Employed/School	
Ever run away or been away from parents/guardian before 18	53	64.63	33	67.35
Ever been placed in foster care or group home	36	43.90	19	38.78
Had a place to go after being placed in foster care or group home	17	20.48	9	18.37
Ever stayed in an adult shelter	37	45.12	16	33.33
Ever stayed overnight in a jail or juvenile justice detention facility	51	61.45	19	39.58
Had place to go after being in a jail or juvenile justice detention facility	15	18.07	8	16.33

The Results in Context

In this section we compare the findings of the survey to the findings of the 2007 count in and to other research on homeless youths. This survey was neither a census of homeless youths nor a probability sample designed to be representative of homeless youths. Consequently, we have no way of knowing whether the results of this survey can be generalized to a larger population. This should be kept in mind when the results of this survey are contrasted with other research on homeless youths. The reader should focus on the overall patterns of findings rather than the precise differences in the percentages reported.

Because the survey was neither a census of homeless youths nor a probability sample, when comparing the results we focus on the single traits of the survey respondents rather than the multiple traits revealed by the cross-tabulations. The cross tabulations produce smaller and hence less reliable estimates of the respondents' characteristics. For these same reasons we refrain from attempting to identify trends between the 2007 homeless youth count and the results presenting here. Because the two surveys employed different methodologies, we would have no way of knowing if any observed differences were due to the different methodologies employed or to underlying differences in the homeless youth populations between these two points in time.

This study found respondents were in the midst of relatively long spells of homelessness with the mean duration of being homeless being close to 2.5 years and the median duration is 730 days (two years). In the 2007 count of homeless youths the median duration of being away from their parents or guardians was one year and the mean duration of being away from their parents or guardians slightly more than two years. Because this count was a point in time estimate, youths in the midst of long spells will be over represented relative to all youths who ever experience homelessness. The larger number of youths who experience short durations of homelessness will tend to make up a smaller proportion of those surveyed during a point in time estimate (Freeman and Hamilton 2008).

As was the case in the 2007 count non-Hispanic whites were dramatically under-represented in this sample of homeless youths. In the 2007 study non-Hispanic whites were only 1% of the sample (Freeman and Hamilton 2008) an even smaller proportion than the 7% found here. This is in contrast to at least two national estimates of homeless youths that showed nonwhites were not disproportionately represented among homeless youths (Ringwalt et al. 1998; Haber and Toro 2004). Other studies, however, have found black and Hispanic youths to be overrepresented suggesting the racial and ethnic composition of an estimate will be sensitive to the racial and ethnic composition of the surrounding area (Toro, Dworsky, and Fowler 2007).

Males were much more heavily represented in this sample than the 2007 count. In 2007 males were 44% of the sample, much lower than the 61% figure reported here (Freeman and Hamilton 2008). The patterns in other studies of homeless youth have been mixed. The Baltimore Parallel count, a point in time count of homeless youths designed to supplement the Census Bureau's annual count, for example reported 40% of the respondents being male (Astone and Pologe 2011). The gender compositions found in other studies have typically varied depending on the setting with shelters tending to have an even or more female distribution whereas street-based samples are more heavily male (Toro, Dworsky, and Fowler 2007). The higher proportion of males in this survey might thus reflect the higher proportion of males typically found in street populations. The figures for sexual orientation show that relative to the general population LGBT youths are over-represented in the Youth Count! The over-representation of LGBT youth was also found in the 2007 count where this category comprised 32% of the sample (Freeman and Hamilton 2008). Previous studies of homeless youths have produced estimates of the LGBT population that range from 11%-35% (Cochran et al. 2002). The over-representation of LGBT youths is thus consistent with other studies of homeless youths.

As with previous studies, the findings presented here suggest barriers exist for the educational aspirations of homeless youths. The 2007 count found that only 28% of the sampled youths had a high school diploma or GED despite the average age being 20. Other studies of homeless youths have similarly found "homeless youth often have a history of academic and school behavior problems and their dropout rates are high (Toro, Dworsky, and Fowler 2007, p. 6-5)." The relatively low rates of educational attainment and enrollment found during the Youth Count! are therefore not surprising.

A little over half of the youths in this study have had contact with the criminal justice system. This experience is not atypical according to other studies of homeless youths. The 2007 count found 15% of respondents had experience with Juvenile Detention and 27% had experience in jail or prison (Freeman and Hamilton 2008). Moreover, one of the respondents in Hickler and Auerswald's (2009, p. 28) study of San Francisco homeless youths said "It's like running-in with the law is like getting a new jacket as far as people around here are concerned. It's gonna happen. It's just like drinking water or something." Likewise in their summary of the literature Toro et al. found youthful offenders to be homeless. This is consistent with our finding that homeless youths had high levels of contact with the criminal justice system.

The youths surveyed during the Youth Count! were generally older, a finding that also parallels other surveys of homeless youths. For example, Astone and Pologe found only 18% of homeless youths in Baltimore were under age 18.

When we turn to reasons for becoming homeless we find that the patterns presented here largely mirror those of other studies of homeless youths. For example, Hyde (2005) found that antagonistic family relationships were frequently cited as reasons for leaving home in his study of Los Angeles homeless youths. Other studies of homeless youths have also found chronic familial discord to be a precipitating factor to youths leaving or being forced to leave home (Toro, Dworsky, and Fowler 2007). To cite another example, some 27% of the youths in the 2007 count described themselves as being thrown out of their parents' home. A large proportion of the youths in our sample were previously in foster care and upon leaving, more than half had no place to go. In the 2007 count some 29% of the sample had experience with the foster care system. Aging out of foster care with no place to go has been found to be a contributing factor to other studies of youth homelessness as well (Hyde 2005; C.R. Zlotnick and Robertson 1999). For example, based on a review of published studies Haber and Toro (Haber and Toro 2004) place the proportion of homeless youths with experience in foster care at between 21%-53%. According to several studies rates of pregnancy and parenting are higher among homeless youths than similarly aged young adults and adolescents. For example, whereas 10% of youths in homes had ever been pregnant or had impregnated someone the proportions for shelter and street youths were 33% and 48%, respectively, according to one study (Greene and Ringwalt 1998). That a quarter of our sample is pregnant or parenting is thus congruent with other research on homeless youths.

Conclusion

Although not designed to be representative of the homeless youth population, the results of this survey are generally consistent with other research on homeless youths. Homeless youths tend to be among the more marginalized segments of society and often have a host of other disadvantages that compound their vulnerability.

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Lead researchers: Dr. Lance Freeman and Dr. Darrick Hamilton,

About the Research Team:

Dr. Darrick Hamilton is an Associate Professor of Economics and Urban Policy at the Milano School of International Affairs, Management and Urban Policy at The New School, a faculty research fellow at the *Schwartz Center for Economic Policy Analysis*, an affiliate scholar at the *Center for American Progress*, a research affiliate at the *Research Network on Racial and Ethnic Inequality* at Duke University, He earned a Ph.D. from the Department of Economics at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill in 1999, and upon graduation received the *National Economic Association's Rhonda M. Williams Dissertation Award*. Professor Hamilton was a *Ford Foundation Fellow on Poverty, the Underclass and Public Policy* at the *Poverty Research and Training Center*, and the *Program for Research on Black Americans* both at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor from 1999-2001, and a *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Scholar in Health Policy Research* at Yale University from 2001-2003. He is a stratification economist,

whose work focuses on the causes, consequences and remedies of racial and ethnic inequality in economic and health outcomes, which includes an examination of the intersection of identity, racism, colorism, and socioeconomic outcomes. He has published numerous articles on disparities in; wealth, homeownership, health and labor market outcomes, and his work has been supported by grants from his research agenda has been supported by grants from the *Ford Foundation*, *National Institute of Health*, *National Science Foundation* and *the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*.

Dr. Lance Freeman, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor in the Urban Planning program at Columbia University in New York City. His research focuses on affordable housing, gentrification, ethnic and racial stratification in housing markets, and the relationship between the built environment and well being. Professor Freeman teaches courses on community development, housing policy and research methods. He has also taught in the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Delaware. Prior to this, Dr. Freeman worked as a researcher at Mathematica Policy Research, a leading social policy research firm in Washington D.C. Dr. Freeman holds a Masters degree and a Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Freeman has published several articles in refereed journals on issues related to neighborhood change, urban poverty, housing policy, urban sprawl and residential segregation. Dr. Freeman is also the author of the book *There Goes the Hood: Views of Gentrification from the Ground Up* by Temple University Press. Dr. Freeman also obtained extensive experience working with community development groups while working as a Community Development coordinator for the North Carolina Institute of Minority Economic Development and as a Research Associate at the Center for Urban and Regional Studies in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Dr. Freeman also has professional experience working as a City Planner for the New York City Housing Authority, and as a budget analyst for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

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ⁱ (Homelessness 2013)