

Unaccompanied Children and Young Adults Served by California's Homelessness Programs



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Acknowledgements

This research brief is part of a series using the Homeless Data Integration System to understand how homelessness programs are reaching different populations in California. Other briefs in the series focus on older adults, people in families, and veterans.

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Abstract

This brief provides a snapshot of the 7,500 unaccompanied children (younger than 18 years-old) and 31,500 young adults (aged 18–24 years-old) who were served by homelessness programs that reported data into to the Homelessness Data Integration System (HDIS) between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2021. More than 75% of these unaccompanied children and young adults were people of color, and transgender or gender questioning/non-conforming children and young adults were overrepresented among this population. Unaccompanied children and young adults often experience homelessness for reasons that are distinct from the adult population; their episodes of homelessness may follow significant family instability or exits from institutional settings such as the juvenile justice or foster care systems.

Several state and federal programs serve young people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness while unaccompanied by adults, who present unique service needs compared to adult individuals or families. Unaccompanied children most commonly stayed in emergency shelters briefly before going to live with family or friends. Compared to unaccompanied children, unaccompanied young adults participated in a broader range of services and had a wider range of housing-related outcomes at the end of the assessment period. Additionally, young adults were more likely than children to continue needing assistance to move into permanent housing.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....i

Abstract.....ii

Introduction 1

Characteristics of Unaccompanied Children and Young Adults Served by Homelessness Programs 4

Types of Homelessness Programs Serving Unaccompanied Children and Young Adults..... 7

Outcomes for Unaccompanied Children and Young Adults Served by Homelessness Programs 9

Conclusion..... 12

Additional Figures..... 14

Introduction

Young people experience homelessness differently from adults. Recognizing the distinct needs and circumstances of this population, the *Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in California* from the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) outlines several activities that focus on youth homelessness.¹ Among these efforts, Cal ICH is forming a working group on youth and young adults. Made up of state agency staff and other stakeholders, this working group will be tasked with tailoring strategies for preventing and ending youth homelessness, including efforts to improve how well homelessness programs reach youth in need; to strengthen connections between homelessness services and child welfare, education, and other systems serving youth; and to maximize the effectiveness of state-directed resources. As all levels of government work together with private and community-based organizations, youth homelessness can be prevented and ended in California, as can its long-lasting consequences throughout youths' lives.

Many people might think of homelessness as an issue primarily affecting adults, but homelessness is also common among children (younger than age 18) and young adults (ages 18–24).² Homelessness service providers reporting data through Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) across California recorded serving almost 93,000 children and young adults experiencing homelessness, living either in temporary shelters or in unsheltered situations such as vehicles, tents, or other public spaces at some point throughout 2022.³ This number is an undercount because it includes only people experiencing homelessness who received services reported in those systems. Many more children and young adults experienced housing insecurity, measured by counting how many students reported doubling up in the homes of other family or friends and living in motels: More than 183,000 public school students in California experienced housing insecurity during the 2020–21 academic year.⁴ Homelessness and housing insecurity are also common among college students, including nearly one-fifth of California community college students surveyed in 2016 and 2018.⁵

Many young adults and children experience homelessness while unaccompanied by parents or other adults. These episodes of homelessness often follow substantial family instability, such as the death of a parent or guardian, or institutional involvement, such as release from the juvenile justice system or aging out of the foster care system. A high

¹ California Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2023). "Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Homelessness in California." Retrieved from: https://www.bcsd.ca.gov/calich/documents/action_plan.pdf.

² Young adults between ages 18 and 24 are also frequently called "transition-aged youth" or TAY.

³ California Interagency Council on Homelessness. (n.d.). "Homeless Data Integration System." Retrieved from: <https://bcsd.ca.gov/calich/hdis.html>.

⁴ California Department of Education. (n.d.). "Homeless Youth in California Schools." Retrieved from: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sg/homelessyouth.asp>.

⁵ Goldrick-Rab, S., et al. (2019). "California Community Colleges #RealCollege Survey." The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice. Retrieved from: <https://www.evc.edu/sites/default/files/2022-04/RealCollege-CCCCO-Report.pdf>.

proportion of LGBTQ+ youth experience homelessness due to stigma, discrimination, and parental rejection.⁶

The consequences of homelessness for children and young adults are long lasting. Childhood experiences of homelessness undermine educational attainment, economic resources, and health throughout adulthood.⁷ These challenges heighten the risk of further housing instability and homelessness. For example, one study found that people who experienced homelessness as a child were more than five times more likely to also experience homelessness as an adult.⁸

Efforts to address homelessness among children and young adults are often distinct from interventions serving adults. For example, shelters rarely serve both adults and children, and many organizations focus specifically on youth homelessness. Research has shown that youth are more successful when placed in programs with their peers and in programs that employ staff who understand the unique challenges and social issues confronting teenagers and young adults.⁹

To meet these needs, an array of state and federal programs specifically serve youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness, either in families or unaccompanied by adults. The Bringing Families Home program, by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), serves children and families involved in the child welfare system who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The California Department of Housing and Community Development's (HCD) Homekey program dedicates funds for projects serving youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Other important programs serving children and young adults include the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act's Education for Homeless Children and Youth program, the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program, and the California Community Colleges Homeless and Housing Insecurity Pilot Program.

⁶ Shinn, M., & Khadduri, J. (2020). *In the Midst of Plenty: Homelessness and What To Do About It*. John Wiley & Sons; Samuels, G.M., Curry, S.R., & Cerven, C. (2021). "Theorizing a Social Ecology of Displacement: Structural-, Relational-, and Individual-Level Conditions of Homelessness among Young People." *Social Service Review*, 95, no. 4: 561–615, <https://doi.org/10.1086/717434>; Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). "Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America. National Estimates." Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from: <https://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/national-estimates-of-youth-homelessness>; Robinson, B. (2020). *Coming Out to the Streets: LGBTQ Youth Experiencing Homelessness*. Berkeley, CA; University of California Press.

⁷ Cobb-Clark, D.A., & Zhu, and A. (2017). "Childhood Homelessness and Adult Employment: The Role of Education, Incarceration, and Welfare Receipt." *Journal of Population Economics*, 30, no. 3: 893–924, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00148-017-0634-3>; Stablein, T., & Appleton, A.A. (2013). "A Longitudinal Examination of Adolescent and Young Adult Homeless Experience, Life Course Transitions, and Health." *Emerging Adulthood*, 1, no. 4: 305–313, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696813495682>.

⁸ Cohen-Cline, H., Jones, K., and Vartanian, K. (2021). "Direct and Indirect Pathways between Childhood Instability and Adult Homelessness in a Low-Income Population." *Children and Youth Services Review*, 120, 105707. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105707>.

⁹ Henwood, B.F., Redline, B., & Rice, E. (2018). "What Do Homeless Transition-Age Youth Want from Housing Interventions?" *Children and Youth Services Review*, 89: 1–5, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.04.014>; Samuels, G.M., et al. (2018). "'Nothing Is for Free...': Youth Attitudes about Engaging Resources While Unstably Housed." *Cityscape*, 20, no. 3: 35–68, <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/cityscape/vol20num3/article2.html>.

There are also programs that serve children and young adults who are unaccompanied by adults ages 25 or older. Cal ICH has devoted significant funding to address youth homelessness through the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) and the Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention (HHAP) program, flexible grant programs that set aside more than \$200 million between 2018 and 2022 specifically for serving youth unaccompanied by adults. The Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) program from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services funds emergency shelters and supportive services for children experiencing homelessness. As described in the Statewide Homelessness Assessment, these programs fit within a broader suite of recently expanded state and federal efforts to address homelessness.¹⁰

This brief provides a snapshot of how unaccompanied children and young adults were served by homelessness programs in California using information reported to the Homeless Data Integration System (HDIS) during the three-year period between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2021. The brief describes the number of children and young adults served by programs in this three-year study period, participants' characteristics, the kinds of assistance they received, and their housing outcomes by the end of this period. This brief focuses unaccompanied children and young adults served by homelessness programs, given their distinct circumstances and needs. A separate brief in this series focuses on people in families with children.

¹⁰ California Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2023). "Statewide Homelessness Assessment (July 1, 2018-June 30, 2021): Report to the Legislature." Retrieved from: https://bcsh.ca.gov/calich/documents/homelessness_assessment.pdf.

About the Data

HDIS provides the most comprehensive data available about who is served by homelessness programs across California, including stays in temporary housing programs, residence in permanent housing programs, interactions with street outreach teams, homelessness prevention assistance, and other kinds of services for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Developed by Cal ICH in 2021, HDIS aggregates and processes data that local homelessness service, shelter, and housing providers report to HMIS (Homeless Management Information Systems) to understand how many people are served by these programs, their characteristics, and their outcomes. HDIS does not include information on all services provided across the state, as not all service providers enter data into HMIS, but the reach of the data continues to expand with time.

The information in this brief is based on people's ages and family statuses when they were first observed in HDIS during the assessment period (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021). **Children** are defined as people younger than age 18 when they first enrolled in a program during the period, and **young adults** are those who were between ages 18 and 24.

Unaccompanied children and young adults were first enrolled in programs while not with adults aged 25 or older, and while not with their parents or own children.

This brief describes how children and young adults were served by homelessness programs reporting to HDIS during the study period, including prevention and permanent housing programs for people who are not currently experiencing homelessness. The data show who engages with different programs reporting into HDIS, but don't speak to how many people might need those services. These data were partly collected during the COVID-19 pandemic which may have impacted reporting, service utilization, and outcomes.

Characteristics of Unaccompanied Children and Young Adults Served by Homelessness Programs

Between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2021, HDIS data recorded **almost 130,000 children and more than 45,000 young adults served by local homelessness services, shelter, and housing programs in California**, shown in Figure 1. This number reflects 32 percent of all people served by HDIS reporting programs over the three-year assessment period, highlighting the importance of programs that target the needs of children and young adults. About 69 percent of young adults were unaccompanied by an adult age 25 or older or their own child; only 4 percent of children were unaccompanied. Among the unaccompanied children, 53 percent were between ages 15 and 17, and 79 percent were between ages 12 and 17.

The data presented in the remaining figures describe the 7,485 unaccompanied children and 31,516 unaccompanied young adults served during the assessment period (denoted by the yellow bars in Figure 1). Some of the following figures also show data for the 304,819 adults ages 25 and older and living without children, also referred to as "adult individuals," to highlight ways that youth homelessness is distinct.

CHARACTERISTICS OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS SERVED BY HOMELESSNESS PROGRAMS

Figure 1. Number of children and young adults served by programs recorded in HDIS between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2021

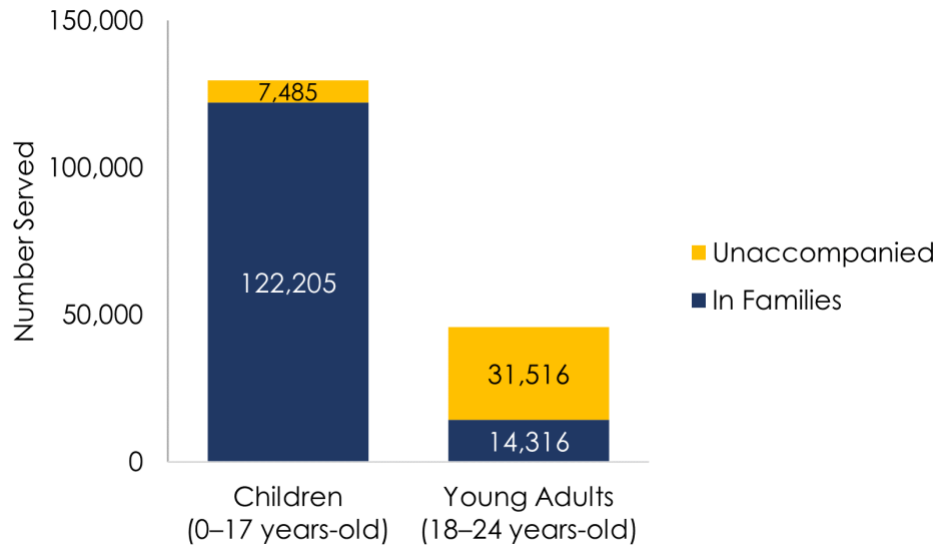


Figure 2 shows the racial/ethnic and gender demographics of the three age groups. **More than 75 percent of unaccompanied children and young adults were People of Color** (not White non-Hispanic/non-Latinx), compared to 61 percent of adult individuals (age 25 and older). These differences between age groups could partly reflect the larger share of People of Color in California's younger population overall.

Figure 2. Race/ethnicity and gender of the unaccompanied children, young adults, and adult individuals served by programs recorded in HDIS between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2021

	Children (0-17)	Young Adults (18-24)	Adult Individuals (25+)
Race and Ethnicity			
Black, African American, or African	25%	37%	29%
White, Hispanic/Latinx	36%	28%	23%
White, Non-Hispanic/Non-Latinx	24%	23%	39%
Multiple Races	7%	5%	3%
American Indian, Alaskan Native, or Indigenous	4%	3%	3%
Asian or Asian American	3%	2%	2%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2%	1%	1%
Gender			
Male	46%	55%	65%
Female	52%	42%	35%
Transgender or Questioning/Non-Singular	2%	3%	<1%

CHARACTERISTICS OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS SERVED BY HOMELESSNESS PROGRAMS

The data show that a greater share of children and young adults identified as female or transgender than did adult individuals. About 52 percent of unaccompanied children and 42 percent of unaccompanied young adults identified as female, compared to 35 percent of adult individuals. This contrast partly reflects how family gender composition changes with age. Women experiencing or at risk of homelessness increasingly are responsible for children as they age, so they would not be included among the adult individuals in Figure 2.¹¹

The impact of family rejection on transgender youth homelessness is also clearly visible.¹² **The percentage of unaccompanied children and young adults who identify as transgender or questioning/non-singular was 3.5 to 4.5 times greater than among adult individuals.**

Youth Parents

Many young adults receiving homelessness services in families do so as parents. “Youth parent families” refer to households headed by young adults ages 18–24 that include their children and do not include any adults ages 25 or older. Youth parent families often need high levels of assistance to find housing, support the children, and maintain the parents’ own ongoing development.¹³

During the three-year assessment period, 6,441 youth parents were served by homelessness programs in HDIS. Including children and any other household members, more than 18,000 people in HDIS were part of youth parent families. **Almost four-fifths (79 percent) of youth parents served by homelessness programs were young cisgender women of color.**

Youth parents were most commonly served by rapid re-housing programs, which provide short-term rental subsidies with time-limited services to help people quickly move back into permanent housing they can afford. Just about half (51 percent) of youth parents in HDIS were enrolled in a rapid re-housing program during the assessment period. About 42 percent of youth parents stayed in an emergency shelter. Parents who were ages 25 or older were similarly served most often by these types of programs.

Youth parents were served less often by homelessness prevention programs than were adult parents ages 25 or older. Homelessness prevention assistance can include many things, including one-time monetary assistance for people at risk of eviction or diversion programs, which try to find alternatives to emergency shelter or unsheltered homelessness. Only 8 percent of youth parents in HDIS were served by a homelessness prevention program, compared to 24 percent of parents aged 25 or older. This difference could be due to the challenges of identifying and reaching youth parents compared to other families, and youth parents could be less likely to be living in their own housing when they seek services.

¹¹ Many women experiencing homelessness while fleeing domestic violence would also not be among the people in Figure 2 because victim service providers cannot report clients’ information to HDIS, to protect their confidentiality.

¹² Morton, Dworsky, and Samuels. (2017); Robinson. (2020).

¹³ Dworsky, A., Morton, M.H., & Samuels, G.M. (2018). “Missed Opportunities: Pregnant and Parenting Youth Experiencing Homelessness in America.” Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from: <https://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/pregnant-and-parenting-youth-experiencing-homelessness>.

Types of Homelessness Programs Serving Unaccompanied Children and Young Adults

During the three-year study period, HDIS data recorded more than 75,000 program enrollments for the approximately 39,000 unaccompanied children and young adults served by homelessness programs. “Enrollments” refer to shelter stays, periods of contact with outreach teams, rental assistance provided by housing programs, and other services for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. To understand the types of programs serving children and young adults, Figure 3 presents the percentages of people in HDIS who ever enrolled programs of different types between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2021.

Unaccompanied children were served by different kinds of programs than were unaccompanied young adults or adult individuals. **About 71 percent of unaccompanied children in HDIS had stayed in an emergency shelter**, which is higher than the percentage of young adults or adult individuals who stayed in shelters. Most of these shelter stays lasted one week or less and were often in youth-specific shelters, such as those funded by the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth program. Prevention services can also look different for unaccompanied children than for adults, including efforts to reunite them with family.¹⁴

Figure 3. Percentages of unaccompanied children, young adults, and adult individuals in HDIS who ever enrolled in each type of program between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2021

	Children (under 18)	Young Adults (18–24)	Adult Individuals (25+)
Services			
Street Outreach	8%	29%	34%
Homelessness Prevention	15%	8%	7%
Shelter			
Emergency Shelter	71%	49%	48%
Transitional Housing	5%	16%	7%
Housing			
Rapid Re-Housing	10%	19%	16%
Permanent Supportive Housing ^a	3%	8%	17%
Other ^b	1%	7%	8%

Note: Numbers add to more than 100% because people can enroll in multiple program types.

^a The “permanent supportive housing” category includes a small percentage of enrollments in “housing with services.”

^b The “other” category includes enrollments in day shelters, housing without services, Safe Haven shelters for adults with serious mental illness, “services only”, “other” program types, and enrollments in Coordinated Entry.

¹⁴ Family and Youth Services Bureau. (n.d.). “Runaway and Homeless Youth.” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/runaway-homeless-youth>.

TYPES OF HOMELESSNESS PROGRAMS SERVING UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS

Unaccompanied young adults more closely resembled adult individuals in the types of programs they enrolled with. Almost half of unaccompanied young adults in HDIS stayed in an emergency shelter (49%), and 29 percent were in contact with street outreach teams.

About 16 percent of unaccompanied young adults were enrolled in transitional housing programs, which typically provide longer lengths of stay and more supportive services than emergency shelters do. Though transitional housing enrollments were still less common than stays in emergency shelters, **the share of young adults who were served by transitional housing programs was more than twice the share of adult individuals who were served by these programs.** Many transitional housing programs for youth offer housing and related services for up to two years, which could be pivotal for navigating the transition to adulthood alongside the challenges causing and resulting from homelessness.¹⁵ Transitional housing programs for young adults are also supported by more state and federal funding sources than are transitional housing programs for adults aged 25 or older.

Conversely, **only 8 percent of young adults were served by permanent supportive housing programs, less than half the share of adult individuals served by these programs.** Permanent supportive housing programs typically prioritize people experiencing chronic patterns of homelessness (defined by homelessness for one cumulative year in the previous three years, plus a disabling condition) or who otherwise need a high level of support for living with disabling conditions. Young adults have disabling conditions at much lower rates than older adults, and they are often too young to meet the criteria for chronic homelessness.

Although chronic patterns of homelessness were less common for young adults than for adult individuals, **11 percent of unaccompanied young adults met the criteria for chronic homelessness when they first enrolled in an HDIS reporting program; as they aged, 18 percent met the criteria later in the assessment period.** For comparison, 34 percent of adult individuals met the criteria for chronic homelessness during the assessment period.

The types of programs reaching unaccompanied children and young adults were similar between racial and ethnic groups, with some exceptions. The percentage of unaccompanied children in HDIS who stayed in emergency shelters ranged from 67 percent of Black, African American, or African children to 76 percent of Asian or Asian American children. The percentage of unaccompanied young adults who stayed in emergency shelter ranged from 46 percent of Asian young adults to 53 percent of American Indian, Alaskan Native, or Indigenous young adults. However, a higher share of Asian or Asian American young adults was served by homelessness prevention

¹⁵ Heerde, J.A., Hemphill, S.A., & Scholes-Balog, K.E. (2016). "The Impact of Transitional Programmes on Post-Transition Outcomes for Youth Leaving Out-of-Home Care: A Meta-Analysis." *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 26, no. 1: e15–e30, <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12348>; Mahathey, A., et al. (2021). "Findings from the Transitional Living Program Youth Outcomes Study. Abt Associates." Retrieved from: https://www.abtassociates.com/files/insights/reports/2021/findings-from-tlp-yos_september-2021_508_qc.pdf.

OUTCOMES FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS SERVED BY HOMELESSNESS PROGRAMS

programs (22%) than any other group. Also, rapid re-housing programs served relatively high shares of Black, African American, and African (25%) and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander young adults (23%) and relatively low shares of Asian or Asian American (13%) and White, Non-Hispanic/Non-Latinx young adults (15%). See Additional Figure A1 for the percentages of unaccompanied young adults in each racial/ethnic group who were ever served by each type of program.¹⁶

The types of programs serving unaccompanied young adults also varied by gender, as shown in Additional Figure A2. Higher shares of young adults identifying as transgender or questioning/non-conforming were served by street outreach teams (38%) and transitional housing programs (29%) compared to young adults identifying as female or male.

Outcomes for Unaccompanied Children and Young Adults Served by Homelessness Programs

Outcomes at the end of the assessment period, June 30, 2021, are measured with the type of program unaccompanied children and young adults were being served by or, if they were no longer being served by any programs in HDIS, with their last known housing situation reported by program staff. These data represent a snapshot of the available information on that date, and ultimate housing situations could differ. Program staff record participants' housing situations when they end their participation in the program, and changes to housing situations between someone's last program exit and the end of the assessment period would not be reflected in the data.¹⁷

As shown in Figure 4, **62 percent of unaccompanied children and 36 percent of unaccompanied young adults were recorded as being housed by the end of the study period**, which includes those living in subsidized housing, receiving homelessness prevention services, or moving into their own housing or with family or friends. For comparison, 35 percent of adult individuals were recorded as housed at the end of the study period. Additional Figure A3 presents the outcomes for each group in more detail.

About half of all unaccompanied children served had exited all programs and were recorded as moving in with family or friends. More specifically, about 39 percent of all unaccompanied children stayed in an emergency shelter for an average of 12 days then moved in with family or friends. Family reunification is often the goal of programs such as the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth program and the Bringing Families Home program by the California Department of Social Services, which helps provide emergency shelter and other services for children and families involved with the child welfare system. As shown in Additional Figure A3, about 13 percent of unaccompanied

¹⁶ Additional Figures A1 and A2 do not show enrollments by race/ethnicity and gender among unaccompanied children because there were relatively few enrollments in each program type other than emergency shelter.

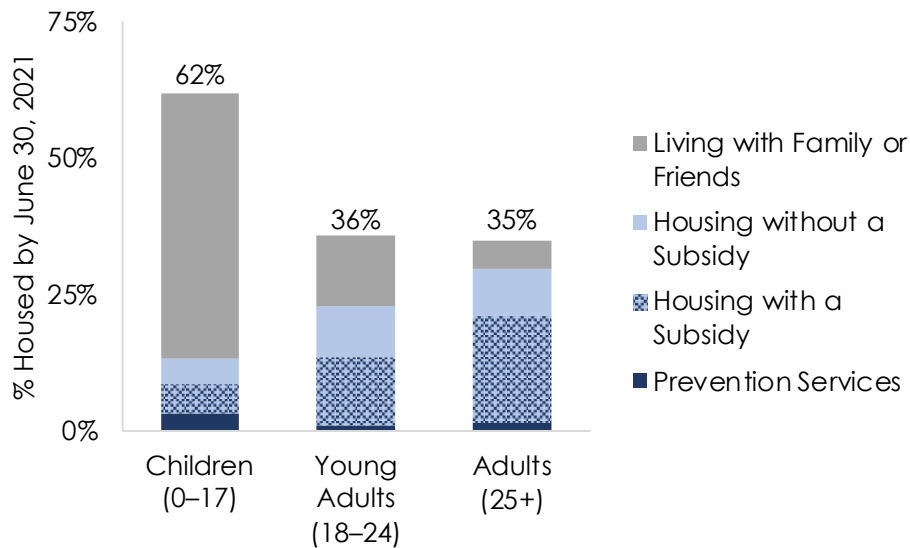
¹⁷ This snapshot of outcomes also does not measure the effectiveness of different types of programs. Many of the people still enrolled in programs at the end of the assessment period had only recently started receiving services and might have secured housing through those programs after the end of the assessment period.

OUTCOMES FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS SERVED BY HOMELESSNESS PROGRAMS

children had exited programs to “other” destinations, including 10 percent who moved into institutional settings such as group homes.

Outcomes were more varied for unaccompanied young adults than for unaccompanied children. In Additional Figure A3, the 23 percent of young adults still enrolled in programs at the end of the assessment period included the 9 percent of young adults staying in emergency shelters or transitional housing programs, as well as the 9 percent of young adults who were enrolled in housing programs but had not yet moved into a housing unit.¹⁸ **About 13 percent of young adults had exited all programs and moved in with family and friends; a similar percentage (12%) had exited all programs and were recorded as continuing to experience homelessness.**

Figure 4. Percentages of unaccompanied children, unaccompanied young adults, and adult individuals in HDIS who were recorded as being housed by the end of the assessment period, June 30, 2021



Note: “Housing with a subsidy” includes people still enrolled and living in housing programs in HDIS and people who exited programs in HDIS and were recorded as moving into housing with a subsidy. More detailed outcome data are presented in Additional Figure A3.

Program staff were not able to record outcomes for one-third (33%) of unaccompanied young adults who exited programs, similar to the percentage of unknown outcomes for adult individuals (31%). These outcomes can be unknown for many reasons—program participants might have found housing and no longer needed assistance from program staff, or they might have left a shelter or stopped having contact with an outreach team while continuing to experience homelessness. Many young adults experiencing homelessness have been alienated by social relationships and service programs that

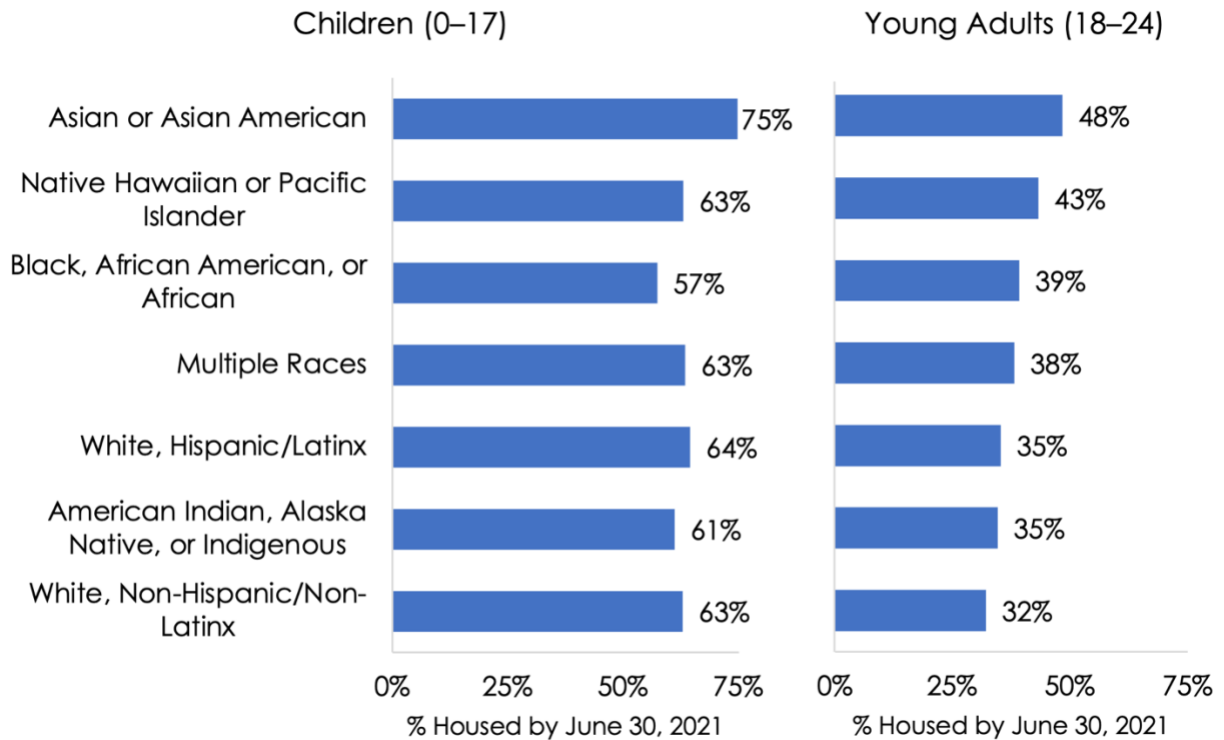
¹⁸ Small percentages of unaccompanied children were recorded as living in housing other than with family/friends, including in ongoing enrollments in rapid re-housing and PSH (Figure A5). The data do not specify whether that housing is with adults, however. For example, it is possible that a service provider would record a destination of “housing without a subsidy” for an unaccompanied child that reunifies with family, and that family moves back into housing together.

OUTCOMES FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS SERVED BY HOMELESSNESS PROGRAMS

have failed to meet their needs, increasing the effort and resources necessary to support and engage them.¹⁹

These outcomes differed by race/ethnicity. Figure 5 below shows the percentage of unaccompanied children and young adults who were housed by the end of the assessment period by race/ethnicity; Additional Figure A4 shows the outcomes in more detail. **Unaccompanied Asian or Asian American children and young adults were housed most often by the end of the period.** About 75 percent of unaccompanied Asian or Asian American children were housed, including 66 percent with family or friends. About 48 percent of unaccompanied Asian or Asian American young adults were housed, including 17 percent who were housed with a subsidy. Most of the Asian or Asian American young adults housed with a subsidy were previously enrolled in a homelessness prevention program, suggesting that they might not have had to experience homelessness.

Figure 5. Percentages of unaccompanied children and young adults who were housed by the end of the assessment period, June 30, 2021, by race/ethnicity



Notes: “Housed” includes people still enrolled in homelessness prevention programs, people still enrolled and moved into a housing program, and people who exited all programs and were recorded as moving into their own housing or in with family or friends. More detailed outcome data are presented in Additional Figure A4.

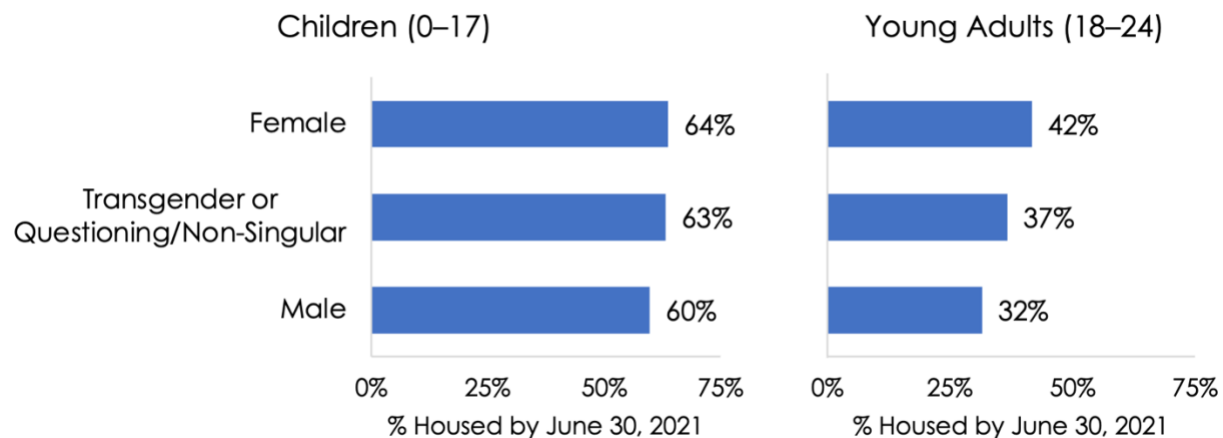
¹⁹ Samuels, G.M., et al. (2019). “Missed Opportunities in Youth Pathways through Homelessness in America.” Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from: <https://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/missed-opportunities-youth-pathways-through-homelessness-in-america>.

Compared to all other unaccompanied children, unaccompanied Black, African American, or African children were housed least often (57%) by the end of the assessment period.

Unaccompanied White non-Hispanic/non-Latinx (32%), American Indian, Alaskan Native, or Indigenous (35%), and White Hispanic/Latinx (35%) young adults were housed least often by the end of the assessment period.

Housing outcomes for unaccompanied young adults also differed somewhat by gender, as shown in Figure 6 below and Additional Figure A5. Fewer than one-third (32%) of unaccompanied male young adults, 37 percent of transgender or questioning/non-conforming young adults, and 42 percent of female young adults were recorded as being housed at the end of the assessment period.

Figure 6. Percentages of unaccompanied children and young adults who were housed by the end of the assessment period, June 30, 2021, by gender



Notes: “Housed” includes people still enrolled in homelessness prevention programs, people still enrolled and moved into a housing program, and people who exited all programs and were recorded as moving into their own housing or in with family or friends. More detailed outcome data are presented in Additional Figure A5.

Conclusion

Substantial numbers of children and young adults experience homelessness in California. More than 175,000 people younger than age 25 were served by homelessness programs during the three-year assessment period, about 39,000 of whom were not accompanied by family or other adults. The data show that demographic disparities in homelessness were particularly pronounced among these unaccompanied children and young adults—more than three-quarters were People of Color, and the share who identified as transgender or questioning/non-conforming was higher than among any other age group.

The data also show that many unaccompanied children and young adults continued to need assistance finding housing at the end of the assessment period. By then, about half of unaccompanied children were living with family or friends, often following short stays in emergency shelters. Outcomes were much more varied for unaccompanied young adults, however. About 30 percent continued experiencing sheltered or

unsheltered homelessness, including those who were awaiting a placement through a housing program. Outcomes were unknown for another one-third of these young adults, many of whom likely continued to experience homelessness. The HDIS data also show that many young adults experienced lengthy episodes of homelessness. As the young adults aged within the three-year assessment period, the percentage who experienced chronic patterns of homelessness increased from 11 percent to 18 percent.

Efforts to address these needs have been expanding across California in recent years. Cal ICH, other public agencies, and nonprofit organizations are increasingly coordinating these efforts to meet children's and young adults' unique needs and support their long-term growth and well-being. HDIS provides a powerful resource for continuing to measure how these efforts reach the youth they're designed to serve and how effectively they help prevent and end youth homelessness.

Additional Figures

Figure A1. Percentages of unaccompanied young adults (ages 18–24) in HDIS who ever enrolled in each type of program between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2021, by race/ethnicity

	Black, African American, or African	White, Hispanic/ Latinx	White, Non- Hispanic/ Non-Latinx	Multiple Races	American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	Asian or Asian American	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
Services							
Street Outreach	28%	28%	32%	28%	33%	17%	26%
Homelessness Prevention	6%	9%	7%	8%	7%	22%	6%
Shelter							
Emergency Shelter	48%	49%	51%	49%	53%	46%	52%
Transitional Housing	18%	16%	13%	19%	16%	14%	18%
Housing							
Rapid Re-Housing	25%	17%	15%	21%	17%	13%	23%
Permanent Supportive Housing ^a	10%	6%	9%	12%	9%	9%	9%
Other ^b	8%	6%	7%	9%	7%	7%	9%

Note: Numbers add to more than 100% because people can enroll in multiple program types.

^a The “permanent supportive housing” category includes a small percentage of enrollments in “housing with services.”

^b The “other” category includes enrollments in day shelters, housing without services, Safe Haven shelters for adults with serious mental illness, “services only”, “other” program types, and enrollments in Coordinated Entry.

Figure A2. Percentages of unaccompanied young adults (ages 18–24) in HDIS who ever enrolled in each type of program between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2021, by gender

	Male	Female	Transgender or Questioning/ Non-Conforming
Services			
Street Outreach	30%	27%	38%
Homelessness Prevention	7%	10%	4%
Shelter			
Emergency Shelter	52%	44%	51%
Transitional Housing	16%	15%	29%
Housing			
Rapid Re-Housing	16%	23%	16%
Permanent Supportive Housing ^a	8%	8%	11%
Other ^b	6%	8%	10%

Note: Numbers add to more than 100% because people can enroll in multiple program types.

^a The “permanent supportive housing” category includes a small percentage of enrollments in “housing with services.”

^b The “other” category includes enrollments in day shelters, housing without services, Safe Haven shelters for adults with serious mental illness, “services only”, “other” program types, and enrollments in Coordinated Entry.

Figure A3. Outcomes recorded in HDIS as of June 30, 2021, for unaccompanied children, unaccompanied young adults, and adult individuals served during the assessment period, July 1, 2018–June 30, 2021

	Children (0–17)	Young Adults (18–24)	Adults (25+)
Enrolled in Program Reporting Data to HDIS as of June 30, 2021	17%	23%	30%
Interim Housing (e.g., Emergency Shelter)	5%	9%	9%
Enrolled in a Housing Program (but not recorded as having moved into unit)	2%	9%	14%
Enrolled and Living in a Housing Program (with a subsidy) *	6%	3%	4%
Enrolled in Homelessness Prevention *	3%	1%	2%
Enrolled in Other Services	< 1%	2%	2%
Exited Programs Reporting to HDIS	83%	77%	70%
Living with Family or Friends *	49%	13%	5%
Homelessness (sheltered or unsheltered)	5%	12%	14%
Housing without a Subsidy *	4%	9%	8%
Housing with a Subsidy *	2%	4%	5%
Other Destinations	13%	5%	6%
Unknown	10%	33%	31%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Note: “Other Services” includes street outreach, Coordinated Entry, day shelters, “services only,” and “other” or unknown program types.

* Outcome indicates being housed at the end of the assessment period.

Figure A4. Outcomes recorded in HDIS as of June 30, 2021, for unaccompanied children and young adults served during the assessment period, by race/ethnicity

	Black, African American, or African	White, Hispanic/ Latinx	White, Non-Hispanic/ Non-Latinx	Multiple Races	American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	Asian or Asian American	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
Unaccompanied Children (0–17)							
Enrolled in Program Reporting Data to HDIS as of June 30, 2021	22%	15%	13%	19%	19%	12%	24%
Interim Housing (e.g., Emergency Shelter)	5%	5%	5%	4%	6%	3%	5%
Enrolled in a Housing Program (but not recorded as having moved into unit)	7%	4%	2%	5%	6%	5%	6%
Enrolled and Living in a Housing Program (with a subsidy) *	6%	3%	2%	4%	5%	1%	7%
Enrolled in Homelessness Prevention *	3%	3%	3%	4%	1%	4%	6%
Enrolled in Other Services	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%	0%	0%
Exited Programs Reporting to HDIS	78%	85%	87%	81%	81%	88%	76%
Living with Family or Friends *	42%	53%	51%	48%	52%	66%	43%
Homelessness (sheltered or unsheltered)	6%	4%	5%	4%	5%	2%	3%
Housing without a Subsidy *	6%	3%	5%	5%	1%	4%	6%
Housing with a Subsidy *	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Other Destinations	11%	14%	16%	13%	13%	12%	16%
Unknown	12%	9%	8%	9%	8%	4%	8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: "Other Services" includes street outreach, Coordinated Entry, day shelters, "services only," and "other" or unknown program types.

* Outcome indicates being housed at the end of the assessment period.

Figure A4 continued.

	Black, African American, or African	White, Hispanic/ Latinx	White, Non-Hispanic/ Non-Latinx	Multiple Races	American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	Asian or Asian American	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
Unaccompanied Young Adults (18–24)							
Enrolled in Program Reporting Data to HDIS as of June 30, 2021	27%	21%	20%	25%	23%	27%	24%
Interim Housing (e.g., Emergency Shelter)	10%	8%	8%	9%	10%	9%	6%
Enrolled in a Housing Program (but not recorded as having moved into unit)	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	1%	2%
Enrolled and Living in a Housing Program (with a subsidy) *	12%	7%	7%	10%	8%	13%	13%
Enrolled in Homelessness Prevention *	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%
Enrolled in Other Services	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Exited Programs Reporting to HDIS	73%	79%	80%	75%	77%	73%	76%
Living with Family or Friends *	12%	14%	13%	14%	14%	12%	16%
Homelessness (sheltered or unsheltered)	10%	14%	16%	11%	15%	10%	12%
Housing without a Subsidy *	9%	10%	8%	10%	8%	17%	11%
Housing with a Subsidy *	5%	3%	3%	4%	3%	4%	2%
Other Destinations	5%	6%	5%	6%	5%	7%	5%
Unknown	32%	32%	34%	31%	31%	24%	29%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: "Other Services" includes street outreach, Coordinated Entry, day shelters, "services only," and "other" or unknown program types.

* Outcome indicates being housed at the end of the assessment period.

Figure A5. Outcomes recorded in HDIS as of June 30, 2021, for unaccompanied children and young adults served during the assessment period, by gender

	Female	Male	Transgender or Questioning/ Non-Conforming
Unaccompanied Children (0–17)			
Enrolled in Program Reporting Data to HDIS as of June 30, 2021	16%	18%	9%
Interim Housing (e.g., Emergency Shelter)	5%	5%	6%
Enrolled in a Housing Program (but not recorded as having moved into unit)	4%	5%	1%
Enrolled and Living in a Housing Program (with a subsidy) *	4%	4%	1%
Enrolled in Homelessness Prevention *	3%	3%	1%
Enrolled in Other Services	<1%	1%	0%
Exited Programs Reporting to HDIS	84%	82%	91%
Living with Family or Friends *	51%	46%	61%
Homelessness (sheltered or unsheltered)	5%	5%	6%
Housing without a Subsidy *	4%	5%	1%
Housing with a Subsidy *	2%	2%	<1%
Other Destinations	14%	13%	18%
Unknown	9%	11%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%
Unaccompanied Young Adults (18–24)			
Enrolled in Program Reporting Data to HDIS as of June 30, 2021	26%	21%	31%
Interim Housing (e.g., Emergency Shelter)	9%	9%	15%
Enrolled in a Housing Program (but not recorded as having moved into unit)	4%	2%	2%
Enrolled and Living in a Housing Program (with a subsidy) *	10%	8%	11%
Enrolled in Homelessness Prevention *	1%	1%	<1%
Enrolled in Other Services	2%	2%	2%
Exited Programs Reporting to HDIS	74%	79%	69%
Living with Family or Friends *	14%	12%	12%
Homelessness (sheltered or unsheltered)	10%	14%	11%
Housing without a Subsidy *	11%	8%	9%
Housing with a Subsidy *	4%	3%	4%
Other Destinations	5%	6%	6%
Unknown	29%	36%	28%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Note: "Other Services" includes street outreach, Coordinated Entry, day shelters, "services only," and "other" or unknown program types.

* Outcome indicates being housed at the end of the assessment period.