



Impact of Homelessness on Youth Recently Released from Juvenile Rehabilitation Facilities

Housing Status, Criminal Justice Involvement, Health, Mortality, Receipt of Public Assistance, and Employment Outcomes

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THE DSHS JUVENILE JUSTICE AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION (JJRA) serves youth who have been adjudicated in Juvenile Court and sentenced to a medium or maximum-security institution, in addition to providing services in community facilities and parole supervision and services. Recognizing that discharge from residential facilities can be a particularly vulnerable time,¹ the Department of Commerce's Ten-Year Homeless Plan aims to reduce the proportion of individuals experiencing homelessness following release from institutions.² This report aims to develop a better understanding of the prevalence and impact of homelessness on youth released from Juvenile Rehabilitation institutions and community residential facilities. It employs a broader definition of homelessness than that used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or by Commerce in accordance with state statute (RCW 43.185C.010). Specifically, unlike narrower definitions, we include individuals who are homeless but staying temporarily with family or friends.

Key Findings

This report aims to 1) identify the number of individuals released from a Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) institution or community residential facility who experienced homelessness in a 12-month follow-up period and 2) investigate how the experience of homeless released youth was different from those who did not have an identified housing need. We identify the following key findings:

- 1. Young adults may be at greater risk for homelessness upon release.** Those who were 18 years-old or older were three times as likely to experience homelessness in the follow-up period compared to those who were younger. In addition, while the vast majority of the JR released youth identified as homeless through the public assistance system were household heads, those who received housing assistance recorded in HMIS were more likely to be children.
- 2. Recidivism rates are higher for homeless released youth.** Compared to JR released youth who were not identified as homeless in the follow-up period, homeless released youth were more likely to be arrested, convicted of a felony or misdemeanor, re-admitted to a JR institution, and receiving JR parole supervision and services.
- 3. Homeless released youth experience greater behavioral health, medical, and mortality risk.** The odds that they will be diagnosed with a serious mental illness or die in the follow-up period are about twice as high compared to JR released youth who did not experience homelessness. They are also over 40 percent more likely to have a substance abuse problem or health status that is comparable to or worse than that of the average disabled adult Medicaid client.

¹ See, for example: Metraux, Stephan, Thomas Byrne, and Dennis Culhane (2010). "Institutional Discharges and Subsequent Shelter Use Among Unaccompanied Adults in New York City," *Journal of Community Psychology*, Vol. 38(1): 28-38.

² Ten-Year Homeless Plan: 2008 Annual Report, <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/site/823/default.aspx> (see p. 23).



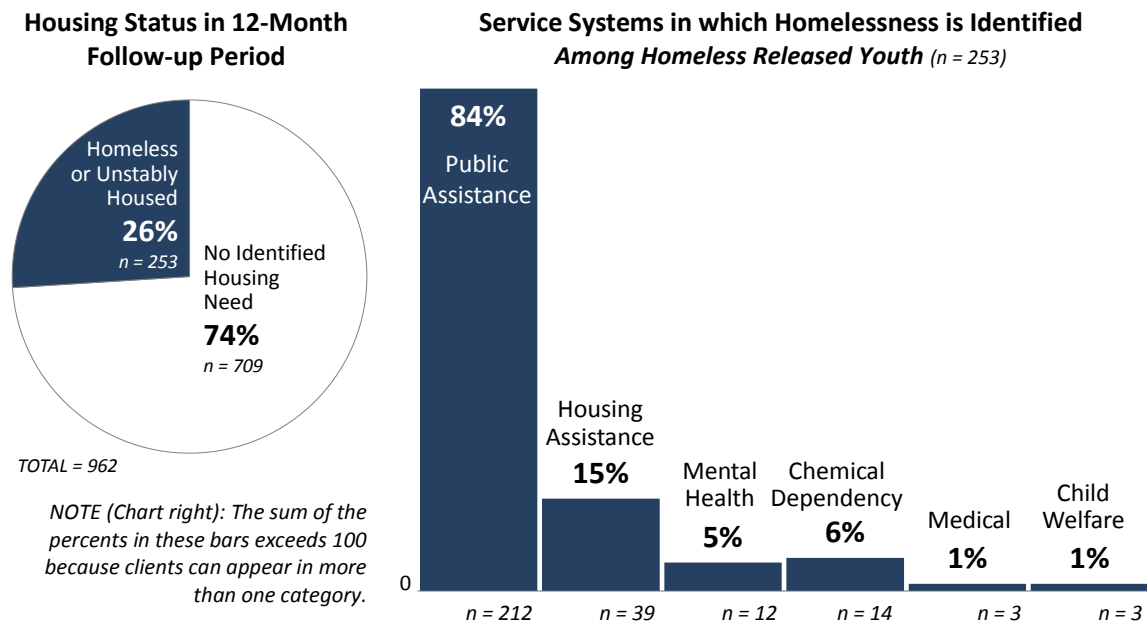
STUDY DESIGN

The study population included 962 youth offenders released from a Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) institution or community residential facility in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2010 or 2011. We selected the last month of release for individuals who were released more than once in that two-year period. We looked at the following set of outcomes over a 12-month follow-up period following release: housing status, criminal justice involvement, behavioral health risk, chronic illness, mortality, use of food and medical assistance, employment, and earnings.

HOUSING STATUS

Homelessness was identified using an indicator that combines data from six different information systems, including the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).³ In addition to capturing homelessness as defined narrowly, this measure also identifies individuals in unstable living arrangements (such as “couch surfers”). Among the 962 individuals in the study population, roughly one-quarter (n = 253) were found to have an indication of homelessness at some point in the 12-month follow-up period. Among the 253 clients who experienced homelessness, 84 percent were identified through the Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES), the information system used by DSHS caseworkers to determine eligibility for public assistance. We excluded six individuals from the initial study population (n = 968) because they had homelessness identified in ACES both prior to and following release from a JR facility but did not receive public assistance in the follow-up period, which would have triggered a DSHS caseworker to update their housing status in ACES.

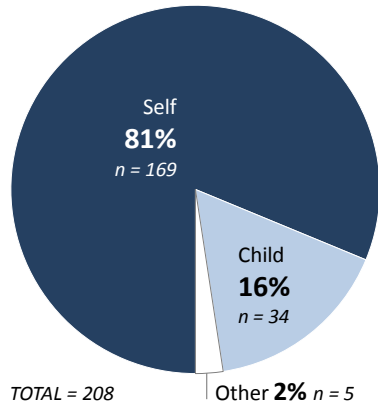
As shown in the table in the Technical Notes on page 8, homeless released youth were three times as likely to be 18 years-old or older compared to those without an identified housing need. While 53 percent of homeless released youth were between 18 and 20 years-old in the month of release, 27 percent of those without an identified housing need were in that age group (Odds Ratio = 3.15; p <.0001). In addition, while young women made up a small proportion of JR released youth, they were disproportionately represented among those who experienced homelessness (14 percent were female compared to 8 percent of those without an identified housing need; Odds Ratio = 1.86; p = .001). See last page for Odds Ratio definition.



³ Homelessness is defined using the criteria developed in Shah, et al. (2012). Identifying Homeless and Unstably Housed DSHS Clients in Multiple Service Systems, Olympia, WA: Research and Data Analysis Division, <http://publications.rda.dshs.wa.gov/1457/>. In addition to the five information systems identified in that prior report, youth were also identified as homeless in this report if an investigation of alleged child abuse or neglect found the child to be homeless or to have inadequate housing.

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION AND HMIS-RECORDED HOUSING ASSISTANCE

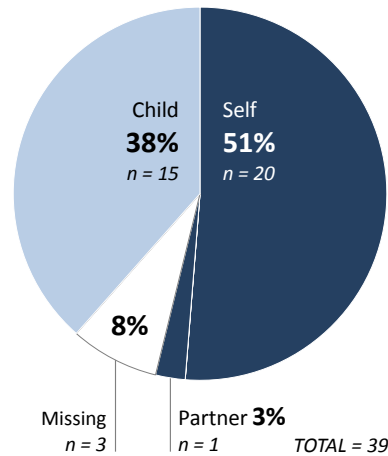
Relationship to Head of Household in ACES



Most JR released youth who were homeless in ACES were household heads on their public assistance unit

We were able to identify the household composition of the public assistance unit for 208 of the 212 JR released youth who were identified as homeless in ACES. Among these 208 homeless individuals, the vast majority (81 percent; n = 169) were the heads of household on their public assistance case from the perspective of ACES. Of those 169 household heads, roughly two-thirds (n = 110 of 169) were 18 years-old or older in the month of release from a JR facility. Approximately 16 percent (n = 34) were children on the case. The remaining five fell into the “other” category: two were grandchildren, one was another unrelated adult, one was a co-parent, and one was a child under legal guardianship.

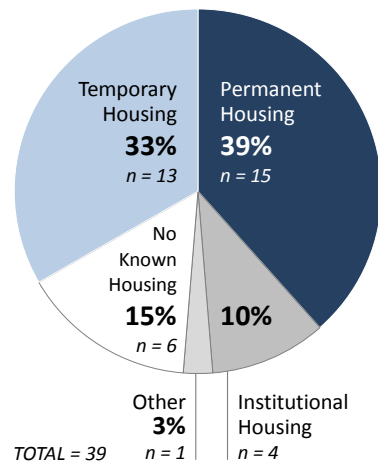
Relationship to Head of Household in HMIS



About half of the JR released youth who received HMIS-recorded assistance were the heads of household in HMIS

We identified 39 JR released youth who received housing assistance recorded in HMIS at some point in the 12-month follow-up period. This included receipt of Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing (HPRR), or Permanent Supportive Housing services.⁴ Although homeless released youth were more likely to be 18 years-old or older, only about half of those who received housing assistance in HMIS (n = 20 of 39) were identified as the head of household in that system. In contrast to the household composition of those who were homeless in ACES, a greater proportion of the JR released youth who received HMIS-recorded housing assistance were children.

Initial Destination at Exit from Housing Assistance

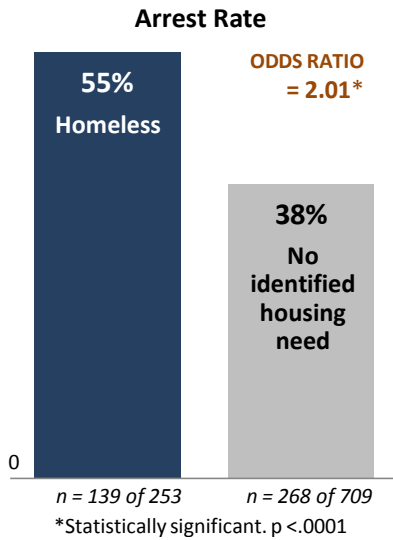


40 percent exited housing assistance to permanent housing

Among the 39 JR released youth who received HMIS-recorded housing assistance, we examined the first destination they had upon exiting assistance. We found that 39 percent (n = 15) exited to permanent housing, 33 percent (n = 13) exited to temporary housing, and 10 percent (n = 4) exited to institutional housing. Finally, 7 people (18 percent) exited to unknown or “other” destinations. Note that 7 individuals were still receiving housing assistance at the end of the follow-up period and placed into the destination at exit category deemed most appropriate. Specifically, 5 HPRR recipients were placed into “permanent housing,” while one emergency shelter and one transitional housing recipient each were each placed into the “temporary housing” category.

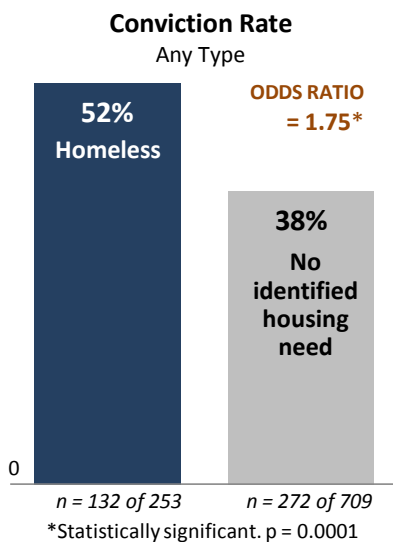
⁴ Individuals may have received housing assistance not captured here if 1) they were in HMIS but did not give consent to share their records with DSHS, 2) they had housing provided through local Public Housing Authorities, or 3) they received housing that was not required to be recorded in HMIS.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT



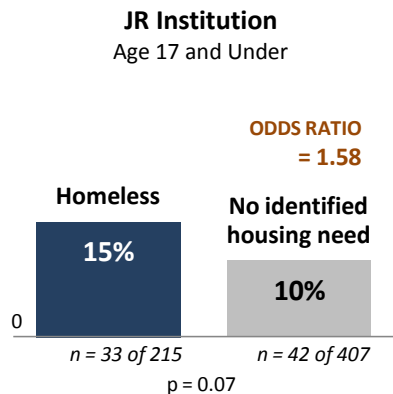
Homeless released youth were more likely to be arrested

Research conducted as part of a national study has shown a recent spell of homelessness to be 7 to 11 times more likely among the jailed population compared to the general U.S. population.⁵ Consistent with this, the rate of arrest as recorded in Washington State Patrol data was higher for homeless released youth than for those without identified housing need.⁶ In particular, 55 percent of homeless released youth were arrested at some point in the 12-month follow-up period, compared to 38 percent of JR released youth without identified housing need. In particular, the odds of being arrested in the follow-up period were twice as high for those experiencing homelessness (Odds Ratio = 2.01) and this difference between groups was statistically significant ($p < .0001$).



Homeless released youth were more likely to be convicted

Due to the relatively short follow-up period for observing incarcerations and returns to JR institutions, we looked at the rate of charges and convictions for felonies and misdemeanors. The chart at left shows differences in the conviction rates between groups. We found that 52 percent of homeless released youth were convicted over the 12-month follow-up period, compared to 38 percent of those without identified housing need (Odds Ratio = 1.75; $p = 0.0001$). Convictions were identified through the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) criminal history file. Individuals were included if they had been 1) convicted, 2) deferred (meaning they admitted guilt and were sentenced to one year of supervision), 3) convicted and sentenced to detention, 4) diverted, or 5) convicted and sentenced to JR institution.



JR involvement is higher for homeless released youth

Among those 17 years-old or younger at the time of JR release, the rate of return to a JR institution in the 12-month follow-up period was 15 percent for those who were homeless compared to 10 percent for other JR released youth (Odds Ratio = 1.58; $p = 0.07$). Similarly, 38 percent ($n = 81$ of 215) of homeless released youth compared to 32 percent ($n = 129$ of 407) of those without identified housing need received parole supervision and services in the follow-up period (Odds Ratio = 1.22; $p = .13$). By contrast, among those 18 years-old or older upon release, rates of admission into Department of Corrections facilities were somewhat lower for homeless released youth (7 percent; 9 of 135) compared to other released youth (10 percent; 18 of 189).

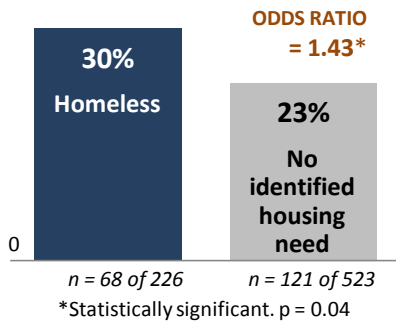
⁵ Greenberg, G. and R. Rosenheck (2008). "Jail Incarceration, Homelessness, and Mental Health: A National Study," *Psychiatric Services*, 59: 170-77.

⁶ Local law enforcement agencies are generally required to report only felony and gross misdemeanor offenses into the WSP arrest database. This report somewhat understates the full volume of arrest events in the study population because our data does not include some arrests for misdemeanor offenses that are not required to be reported in this database.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, CHRONIC ILLNESS, AND MORTALITY

Substance Abuse

Youth with at least one month of medical coverage in the year

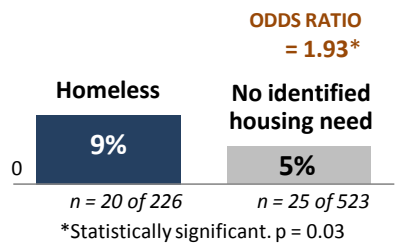


Homeless released youth have a higher rate of substance abuse

We considered an individual to have a probable alcohol or other drug (AOD) problem if health service or criminal justice records identified diagnoses, treatment, or arrests associated with substance-related problems in the 12-month period following release from a JR institution. Only clients who had at least one month of medical coverage in the follow-up period were included in the analysis. Alcohol and drug problems were found to be more prevalent among homeless released youth (30 percent) relative to those who did not experience identified housing need (23 percent) (Odds Ratio = 1.43; p = .04).

Serious Mental Illness

Youth with at least one month of medical coverage in the year

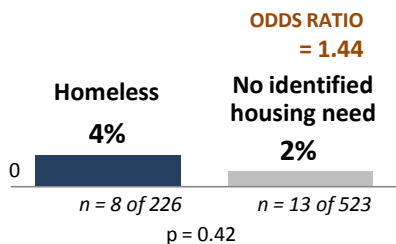


Homeless released youth have higher rates of serious mental illness

We identified an individual as having a serious mental illness if they received a diagnosis for psychosis or bipolar disorder in the 12-month follow-up period. Only clients who had at least one month of medical coverage in the follow-up period were included in the analysis. The odds of having such a diagnosis were almost twice as high for homeless released youth compared to those without identified housing need (Odds Ratio = 1.93; p = 0.03).

Chronic Illness

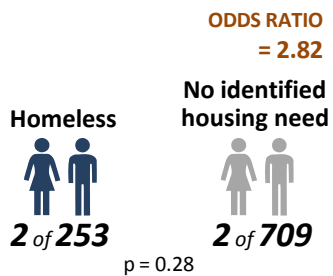
Youth with at least one month of medical coverage in the year



Homeless released youth have higher rates of chronic illness

To assess differences in health status, we used a chronic illness risk score based on health service diagnoses and pharmacy claim information.⁷ The score is calibrated to equal one for the average person in Washington State enrolled in the Social Security Insurance (SSI) disability program. We found that 4 percent of homeless released youth had a chronic illness risk score of one or higher, compared to 2 percent of JR released youth without an identified housing need (Odds Ratio = 1.44; p = 0.42).

Mortality



Mortality rate is higher for homeless released youth

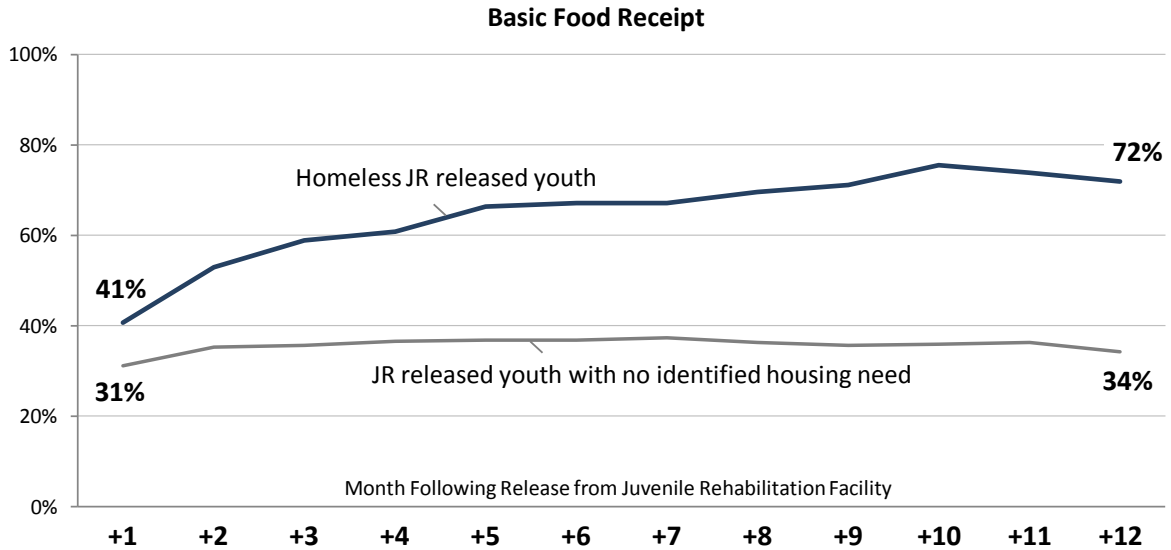
Individuals released from JR facilities who experience homelessness in the 12-month period following release have odds of dying in that period that are almost three times greater than those who do not have an identified housing need (Odds Ratio = 2.82). However, the number of deaths in both groups was low (2 of 253 for homeless released youth compared to 2 of 709 for other released youth). Given this, the difference between groups did not reach statistical significance (p = .28).

⁷ See Gilmer, T., Kronick, R., Fishman, P., & Ganiats, T. G. (2001). The Medicaid R-x model - Pharmacy-based risk adjustment for public programs, *Medical Care*, 39(11), 1188-1202 and Kronick, R., Gilmer, T., Dreyfus, T., & Lee, L. (2000). Improving health-based payment for Medicaid beneficiaries: CDPS, *Health Care Financing Review*, 21(3), 29-64.

RECEIPT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

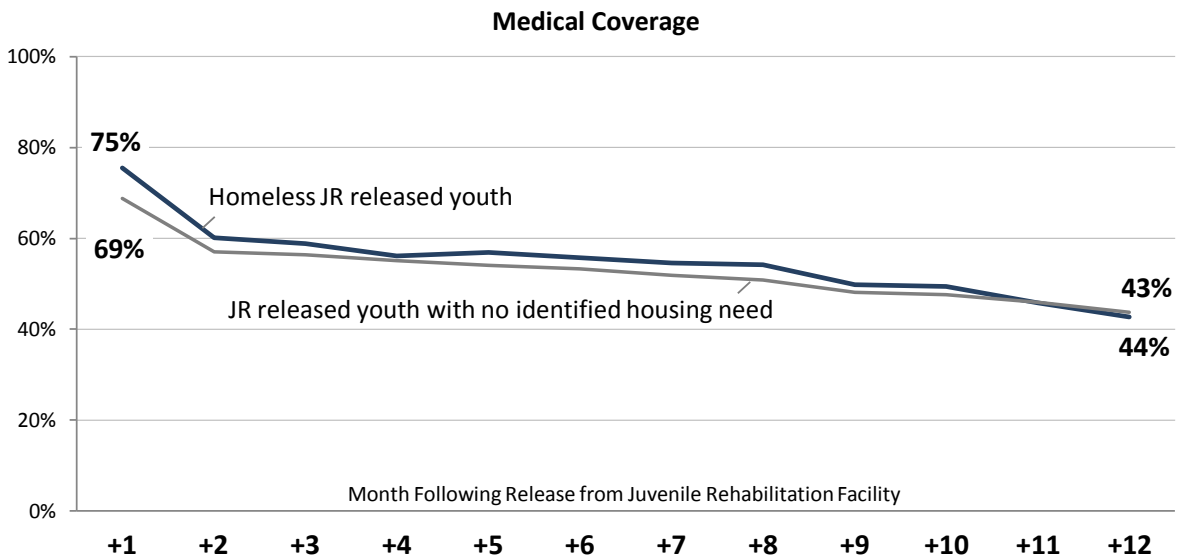
Homeless released youth get more connected to food assistance over time

The federally funded Basic Food program is intended to ensure that low-income individuals do not go hungry. Individuals qualify for Basic Food if they have incomes at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. Over the 12-month follow-up period, the rate of Basic Food receipt increased from 41 percent to 72 percent for homeless released youth but stayed relatively constant for those without identified housing need (increasing from 31 to 34 percent).

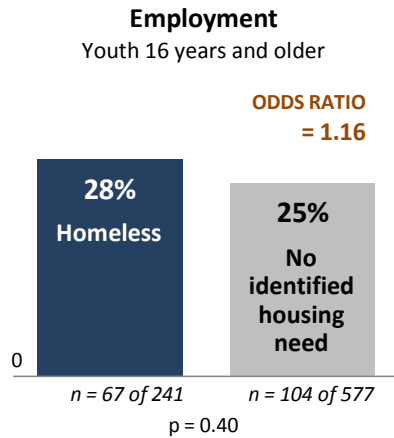


The proportion of JR released youth with medical coverage declined over time

We examined whether individuals had Medicaid or similar publicly-funded medical coverage in the 12-month follow-up period. Both homeless released youth and those without identified housing need experienced a decline in the proportion with medical coverage, though homeless released youth experienced a slightly greater decline (-33 compared to -25 percentage points). That said, roughly one-third of each group turned 18 during the 12-month follow-up period, suggesting that some youth may have “aged off” Medicaid coverage.

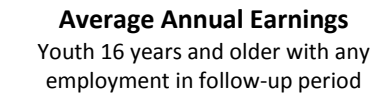


EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS



Homeless released youth are as likely to be employed as other released youth

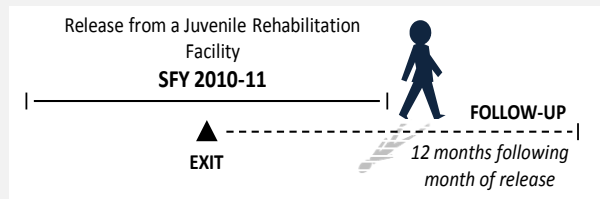
We identified an individual as being employed in the follow-up period if they had any wages reported to the Employment Security Department's Unemployment Insurance system. Among JR released youth who were 16 years-old or older in the month of release, those who experienced homelessness actually had slightly higher rates of employment (28 percent compared to 25 percent), though the between-group difference was not statistically significant. This is likely due, at least in part, to the fact that homeless released youth were three times as likely to be 18 years-old or older. Notably, the rate of employment was relatively low for both groups.



Homeless released youth have lower earnings

Despite having comparable rates of employment in the follow-up period, average annual earnings among those with any employment were much lower for homeless released youth compared to released youth who did not experience housing need in the follow-up period (\$658 compared to \$1,044). This difference was statistically significant at p = 0.01. While both groups experienced very low average annual earnings, homeless released youth were more likely to be young adults, so it is even more striking that their earnings were lower than those of other released youth.

This report examines the experience of individuals released from Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) institutions and community residential facilities over the 12 months following the last month of release in a two-year period (State Fiscal Year 2010-11).



We define the month of release as the last month in SFY 2010 in 2011 in which an individual was released from a Juvenile Rehabilitation institution or community residential facility.

DEMOGRAPHICS	Juvenile Rehabilitation Released Youth Homeless TOTAL = 253		Juvenile Rehabilitation Released Youth Not Homeless TOTAL = 709	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
Age at JR Facility Release				
12-13	1	0.4%	14	2%
14-15	11	4%	118	17%
16-17	106	42%	388	55%
18-20	135	53%	189	27%
Gender				
Female	36	14%	58	8%
Male	217	86%	651	92%
Race Ethnicity⁸				
Missing Race	0	0%	3	0%
White Only, Non-Hispanic	98	39%	263	37%
Any Minority	155	61%	443	62%
Hispanic	41	16%	184	26%
African American	74	29%	181	26%
Asian/Pacific Islander	18	7%	61	9%
Native American	51	20%	83	12%
County of Residence				
King	54	21%	121	17%
Pierce	37	15%	111	16%
Spokane	20	8%	31	4%
All Other Counties	142	56%	446	63%

WHAT IS AN ODDS RATIO?

EXAMPLE: Calculating the Odds Ratio for Between-Group Differences in the Probability of Arrest

- 55% of homeless released youth and 38% of JR released youth without identified housing need were arrested in the follow-up period.
- Odds Ratio = $(.55/(1-.55)) / (.38/(1-.38)) = 2.01$.
- Interpretation: the odds of being arrested in the 12 months following release are twice as high for homeless released youth compared to JR released youth without identified housing need.

CONTACTS	<p>Department of Commerce Mary Schwartz • 360.725.2982</p>	<p>Copies of this paper may be obtained at www.dshs.wa.gov/rda/ or by calling DSHS' Research and Data Analysis Division at 360.902.0701. Please request REPORT NUMBER 11.191</p>
	<p>Department of Social and Health Services Melissa Ford Shah, MPP • 360.902.0760</p>	

⁸ Individuals with known race were categorized into one of two mutually exclusive groups: White Only, Non-Hispanic and Any Minority. Individuals in the Any Minority group were further categorized as Hispanic, African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, and/or Native American and may appear in more than one of these four categories.