



RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH



Annual Report 2016

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Executive Summary

Runaway and Homeless Youth

Youth and young adults who are living on the streets or who do not have consistent, stable housing are highly vulnerable. Homelessness is not just a problem in large urban centers such as New York City or Buffalo. Young people in suburban and rural communities also face homelessness. Runaway and homeless youth are often fleeing neglect, abuse, or conflict in their homes. These youths are generally still physically and emotionally developing and, when they experience homelessness, often do not complete their education, lack general life skills, and have little or no work experience.¹ Homelessness and running away from home also make youth vulnerable to violence, crime, and sexual exploitation at the hands of other youth and adults.²

As defined in Section 532-a of the Executive Law:

- **Runaway youth** means a person under the age of 18 years who is absent from his or her legal residence without the consent of his or her parent, legal guardian, or custodian
- **Homeless youth** means a person under the age of 21 who is in need of services and is without a place of shelter where supervision and care are available

In accordance with Section 532-e of the Executive Law, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) must:

- visit, inspect and make periodic reports on the operation and adequacy of approved runaway and transitional independent living support programs (TILPs);
- certify residential facilities serving runaway and homeless youth;
- maintain a register of approved runaway and TILP programs and runaway and homeless youth service coordinators;
- develop and promulgate regulations concerning the coordination and integration of services for runaway and homeless youth; and
- submit an annual report to the governor and legislature detailing the numbers, characteristics, and service needs of runaway and homeless youth statewide

In accordance with the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA), New York State oversees a system of programs and services to meet the needs of runaway and homeless youth. This includes services offered through crisis shelter programs³ and TILPs⁴ as well as non-residential services offered through such programs that address the needs of runaway and homeless youth through hotlines, street outreach programs and case management.

¹ *What Works to End Youth Homelessness?* The National Network for Youth, Web. <https://www.nn4youth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015-What-Works-to-End-Youth-Homelessness.pdf>

² Pergamit, Michael R. "On the Prevalence of Running Away from Home." (2010): Web. <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/412087-On-the-Prevalence-of-Running-Away-from-Home.PDF>

³ Approved Runaway Programs, as defined by New York State Executive Law, Section 532-a (4), consist of runaway and homeless youth shelters and interim family programs.

⁴ Transitional independent living support programs are in the form of either a group residence or a supported residence.

In accordance with the RHYA, OCFS developed and promulgated regulations that may be found in Title 9 of the New York Codes of Rules and Regulations (NYCRR) Sub-parts 182-1 and 182-2. The RHYA regulations concern the coordination and integration of services for runaway and homeless youth that are intended to:

- protect runaway and homeless youth;
- establish and coordinate services to help runaway and homeless youth cope with and resolve problems;
- reunite youth with parents, guardians or legal custodians, whenever possible; and
- help homeless youth progress from crisis shelter programs and TILPs to independent living

Each municipality that is seeking state aid to provide runaway and homeless youth services must develop a runaway and homeless youth plan in accordance with section 420 of the Executive Law, that addresses the needs of runaway and homeless youth. To the extent that funding is available, municipalities may be eligible to receive reimbursement from New York State for up to 60 percent of the costs associated with the establishment and operation of runaway and homeless youth programs and services. Reimbursement is subject to the availability of funding as well as the approval of the municipality's runaway and homeless youth service plan by OCFS.

Overview of Statewide Findings

Below are highlights from the 2016 survey of certified runaway and homeless youth (RHY) residential programs conducted by OCFS:

- At year's-end 2016, there were **113** RHY residential programs certified by OCFS, with a total bed capacity of **1,125** beds.⁵ There was a slight increase in bed capacity since 2015 in both the rest of state (ROS) and New York City (NYC).
- In 2016, there were **7,064** admissions to RHY residential programs, representing **5,292** individual youth. Of the 5,292 youth:
 - **1,690** were classified as runaway youth; and
 - **3,602** were classified as homeless youth
 - Approximately 128 youth with dependent children were admitted into RHY residential programs.
 - Statewide, the majority of youth admitted to crisis shelters and TILPs were female
 - Youth accessing crisis shelters were significantly older in the five boroughs of NYC than in the ROS (primarily in the age range of 18 to 20 years old')
- The top three self-reported service needs for youth coming into programs continue to be parental conflict health (including behavioral health), and education. Employment challenges were another contributing factor for youth seeking services at runaway and homeless programs.
- For the first time in 2016, all RHYA programs reported on the sexual orientation, gender identity and expression of the youth served in residential and nonresidential programs.

⁵ This figure represents certified bed capacity. However, due to staffing requirements and other factors, the actual number of available beds may be lower.

NYS Runaway and Homeless Youth Service Array

New York State has both residential and non-residential services for runaway and homeless youth.⁶

Residential Programs

In accordance with 9 NYCRR sections 182-1.9 (d) (1) and 182-2.9 (d)(1), participation by youth in RHYA programs is voluntary and may be terminated by the youth at any time. Youth and young adults, therefore, cannot be forced or mandated to stay in RHYA programs. However, program recipients may be required to leave programs for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to when they age out, have behavioral issues, or reach the statutory limits for lengths of stay. (see 9 NYCRR 182-1.9 (b) and 9 NYCRR 182-2.9 (b)).

N Y S regulates the following types of RHY residential programs:

- **Crisis Shelter Programs**
 - **Runaway and Homeless Youth Shelter** – is a type of residential facility for a maximum of 20 youth, all of whom are either under the age of 18 years old or who are between the ages of 16 and 21 years old.
 - **Interim Family Home** – is a private dwelling providing temporary shelter to a maximum of two runaway and homeless youth, under the age of 21 years, as part of an interim family program, which is sponsored, inspected and supervised by an authorized agency
- **Transitional Independent Living Support Programs (TILPs)**
 - **Group Residence** – is a residential facility for a maximum of 20 homeless youth ages 16 to 21 years old, providing an environment that encourages the development and practice of independent living skills.
 - **Supported Residence** – a residential facility for a maximum of five homeless youth of the same gender, ages 16 to 21 years old, providing an environment that approximates actual independent living

Non-Residential Programs

Non-residential programs serve runaway and homeless youth, and youth who are at risk of homelessness. The programs also serve the families of these youth, where appropriate. Services provided by these programs include, but are not limited to the following:

- Basic needs (provisions for food, clothing, hygiene, emergency housing financial assistance)
- Behavioral/Medical health
- Case management
- Drop-In centers
- Educational/Vocational support
- Hotlines
- Lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, queer/questioning (LGBTQ) services
- Street outreach

⁶ Non-residential services are included in the definitions of approved runaway programs and transitional independent living support programs in section 532-a of the Executive Law.

Findings

Data Sources and Methodology

OCFS requires RHYA residential programs to report data annually. The data is then compiled in an annual report. This 2016 annual report includes information from 113 programs in 23 counties and New York City. Of these 113 programs, 38 are crisis shelter programs and 75 are TILPs.

There is no method to identify specific youth within the overall RHYA system. Some transient youth are served by multiple programs, so the “individual youth” counts will have some duplication of youth numbers across programs. However, any duplicate count has been eliminated within a single program.

Data in the charts and tables within this report have been divided into NYC specific data, which references the five boroughs of NYC only, and the ROS, which references all other counties in the state. The charts and tables that report on New York State (NYS) reflect both NYC and ROS data inclusively.

Characteristics of Youth Admitted to OCFS Certified RHY Residential Programs

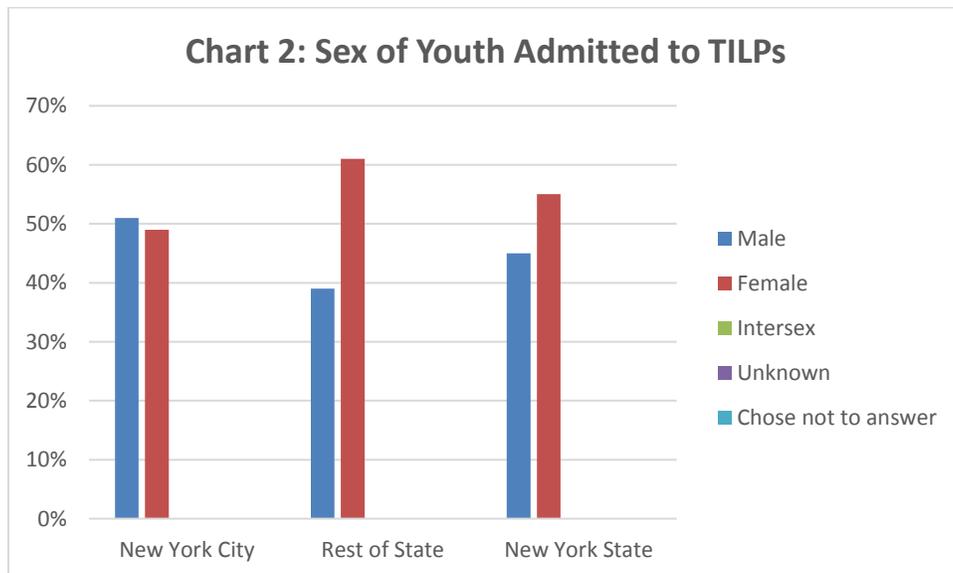
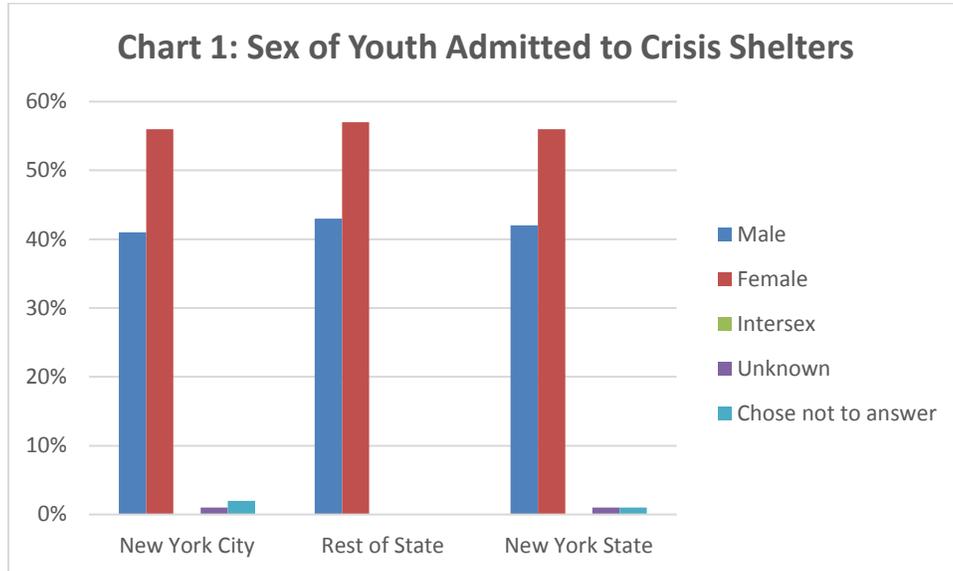
- **5,292** individual youth were reported to have been admitted to residential programs statewide:
 - **4,353** were served in crisis shelter programs
 - **2308** were from NYC
 - **2045** were from ROS
 - **939** were served in TILPs
 - **493** were from NYC
 - **446** were from ROS
 - **128** of the youth were parents who were accompanied, in sum, by **341** dependent children across the state.⁷

	NYC		ROS		NYS	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
Duplicated Admissions	4,781	4,225	3,172	2,839	7,953	7,064
Crisis Shelter Programs	4,425	3,690	2,742	2,374	7,167	6,064
TILPs	356	535	430	465	786	1,000
Unduplicated Admissions	2,404	2,801	2,729	2,491	5,133	5,292
Crisis Shelter Programs	2,121	2,308	2,320	2,045	4,441	4,353
TILPs	283	493	409	446	692	939

⁷ Note: the dependent children of runaway and homeless youth are not included in the data throughout this report.

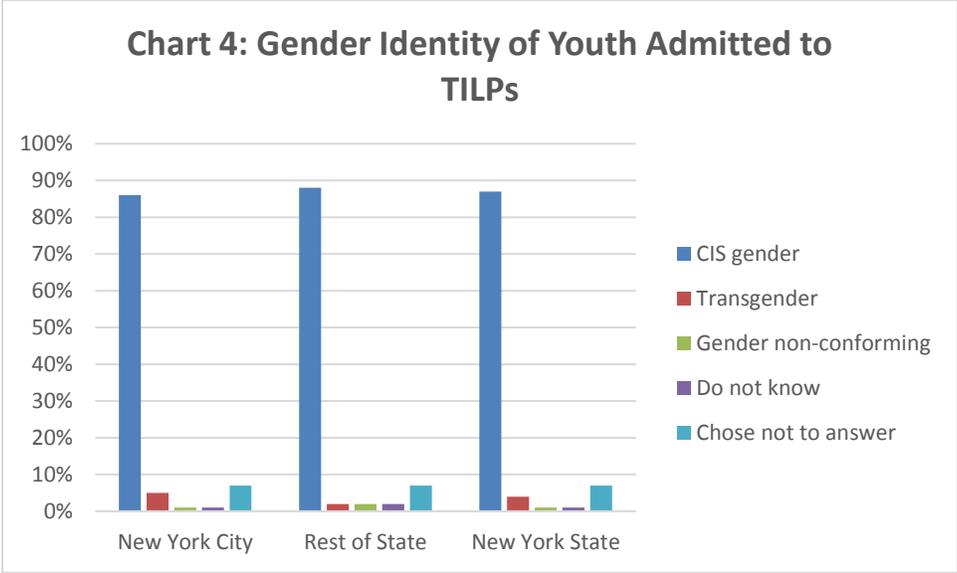
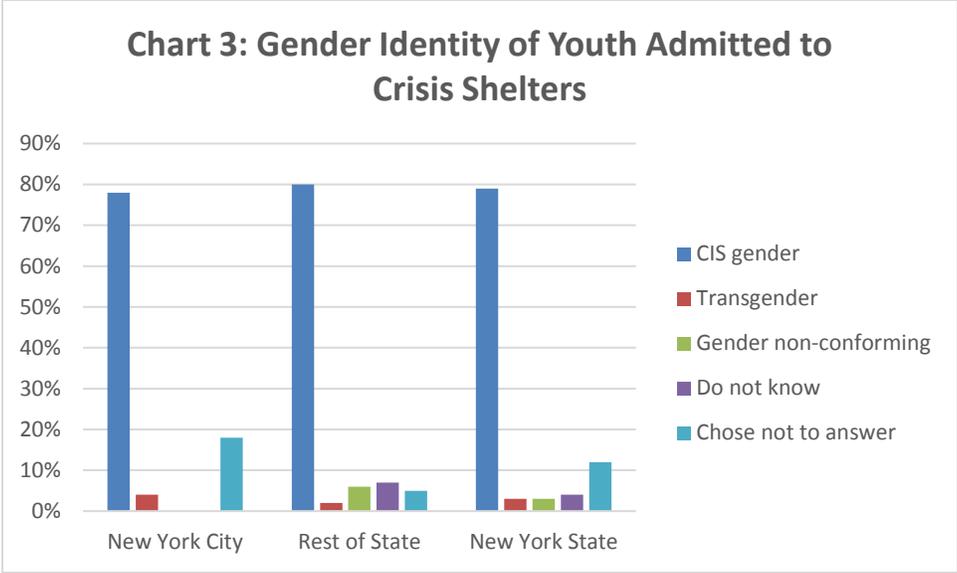
Sex

The majority of youth in both crisis shelter programs and TILPs statewide were female at birth. NYC had a larger percentage of male youth in TILPs compared to ROS.



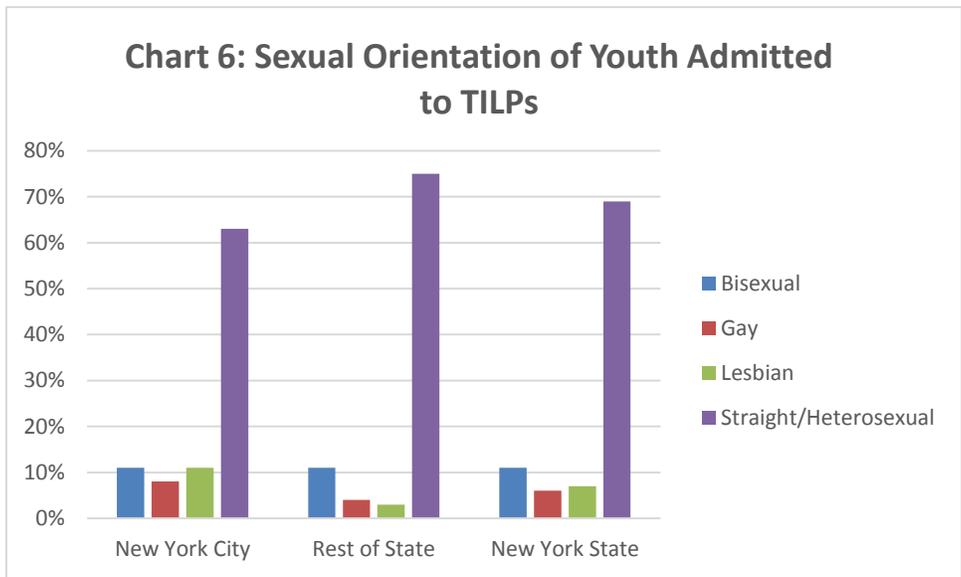
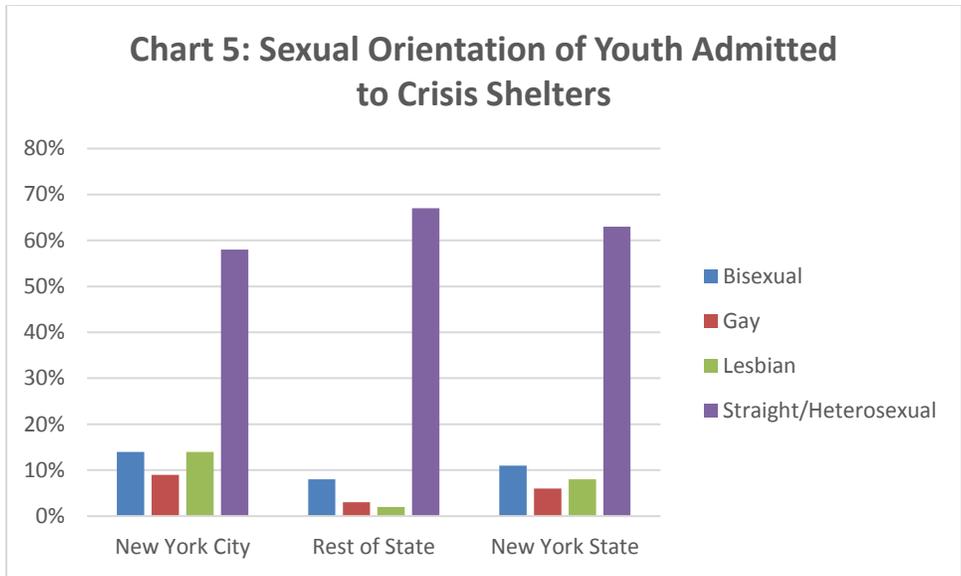
Gender Identity

The majority of youth in both crisis shelter programs and TILPs statewide identified with the sex assigned to them at birth. New York City had a greater percentage of transgender youth in both crisis shelter programs and TILPs than the rest of the state.



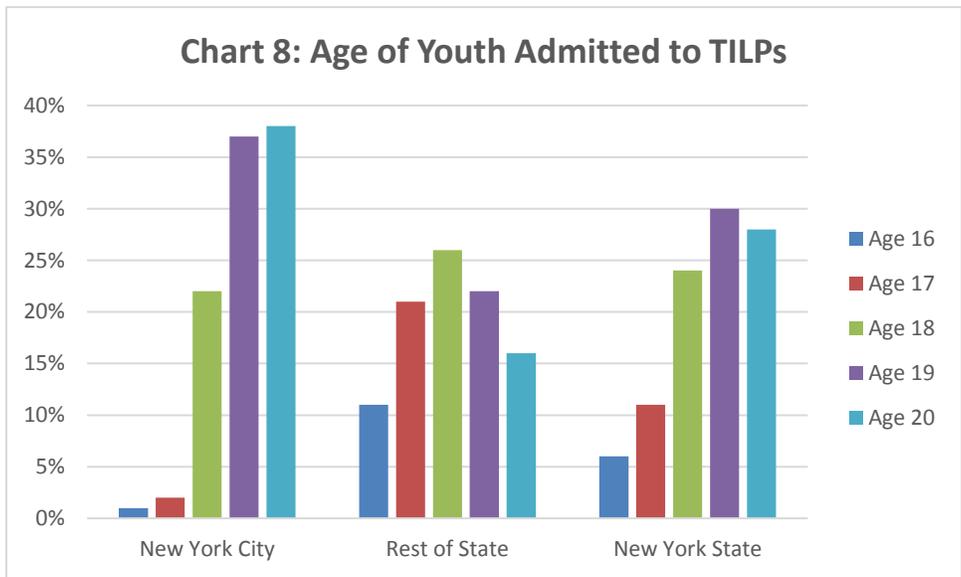
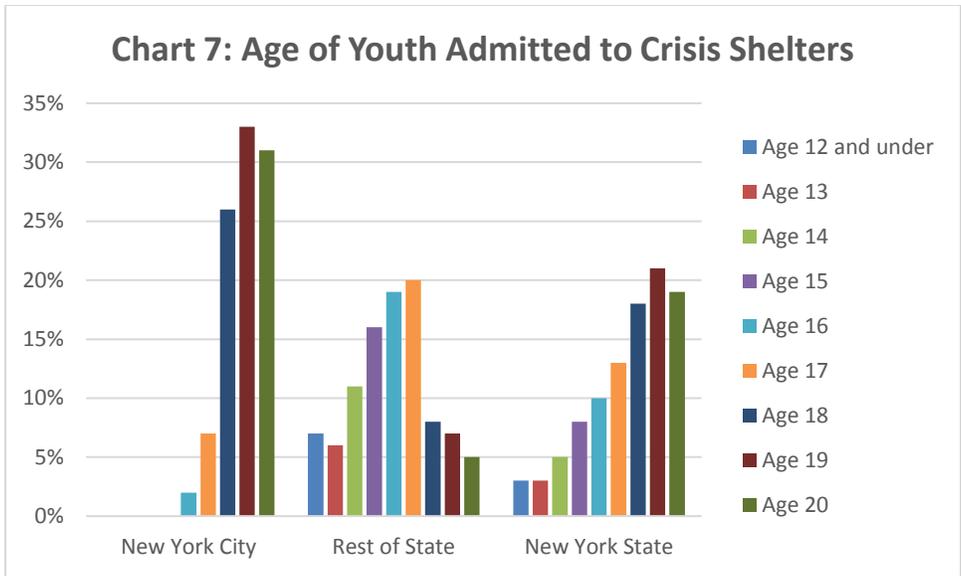
Sexual Orientation

The majority of youth in both crisis shelter programs and TILPs statewide identified as straight/heterosexual. In NYC, 14 percent of youth identified as bisexual or lesbian in crisis shelters, while 11 percent of youth identified as bisexual or lesbian in TILPs.



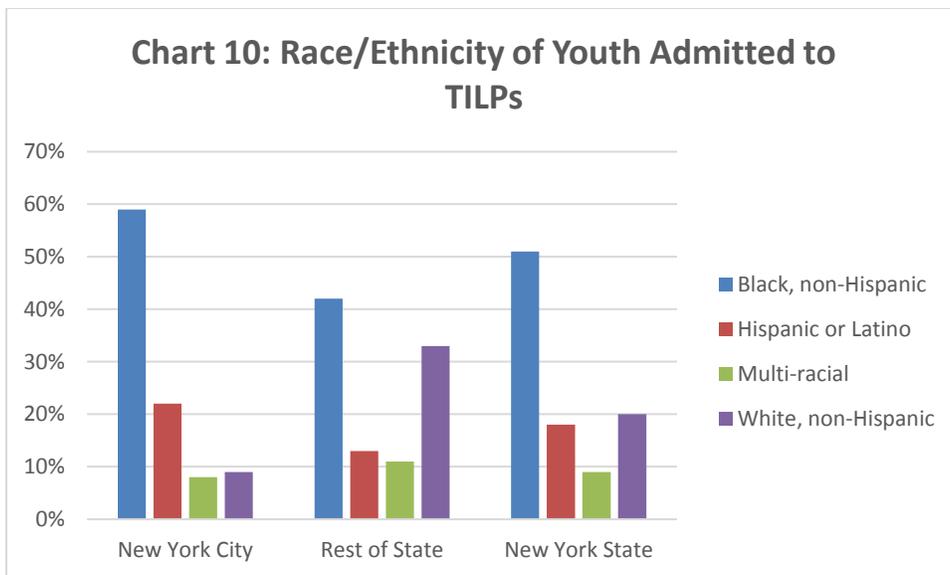
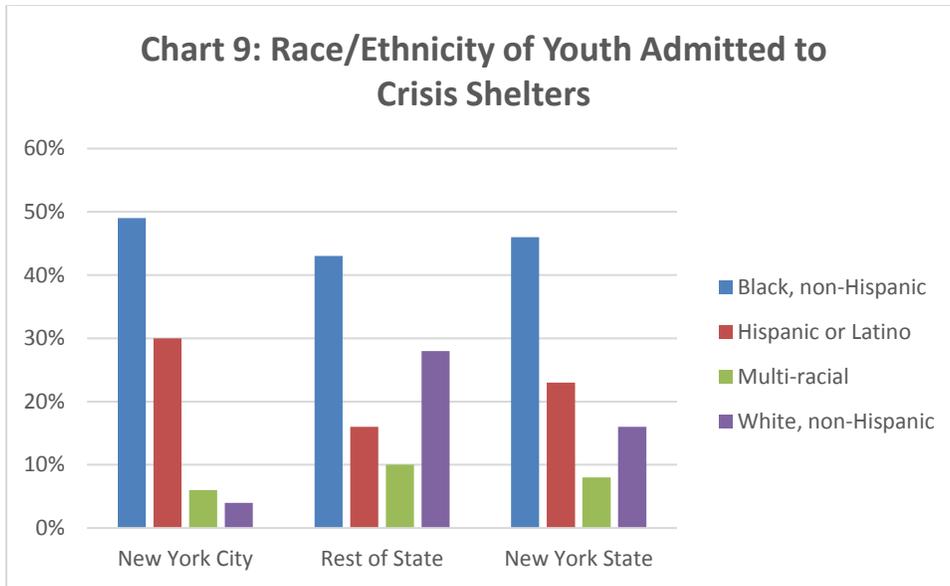
Age

Youth served in crisis shelter programs in NYC are significantly older than RHYA service recipients in the ROS. Approximately 2 percent of youth under the age of 16 years, reported using crisis shelters in NYC.



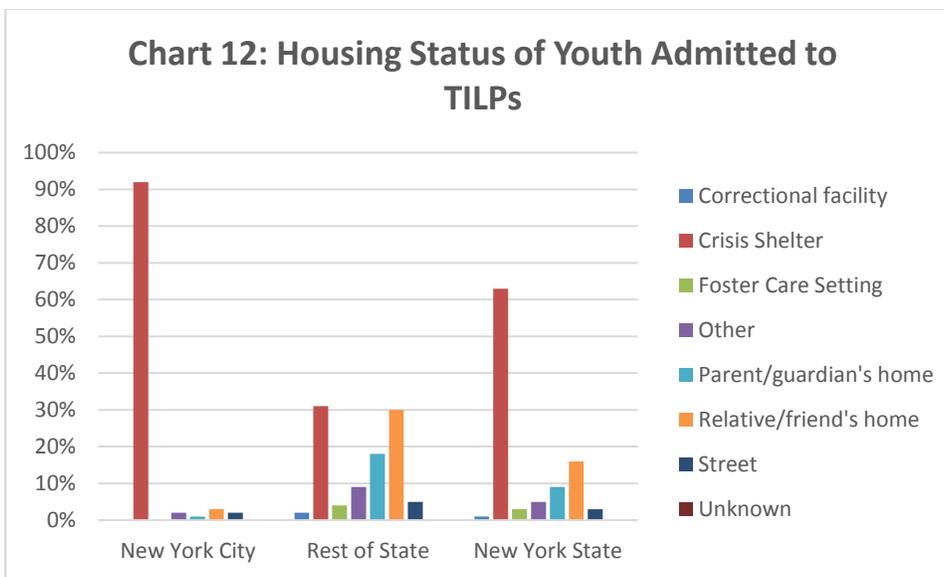
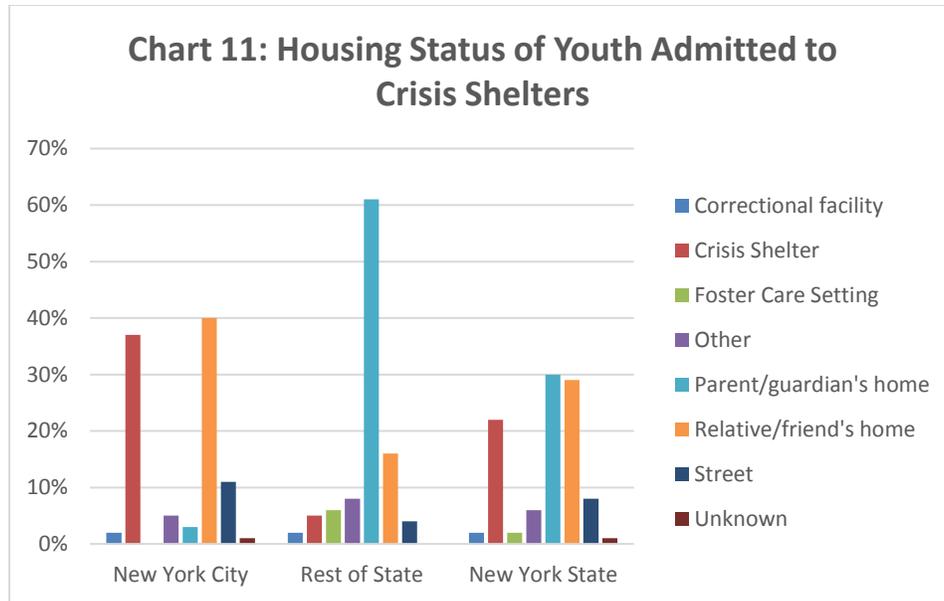
Race/Ethnicity

The most predominant group of youth statewide who used crisis shelter programs and TILPs was Black, non-Hispanic. This accounts for approximately 2,490 youth statewide.



Housing Status at Intake

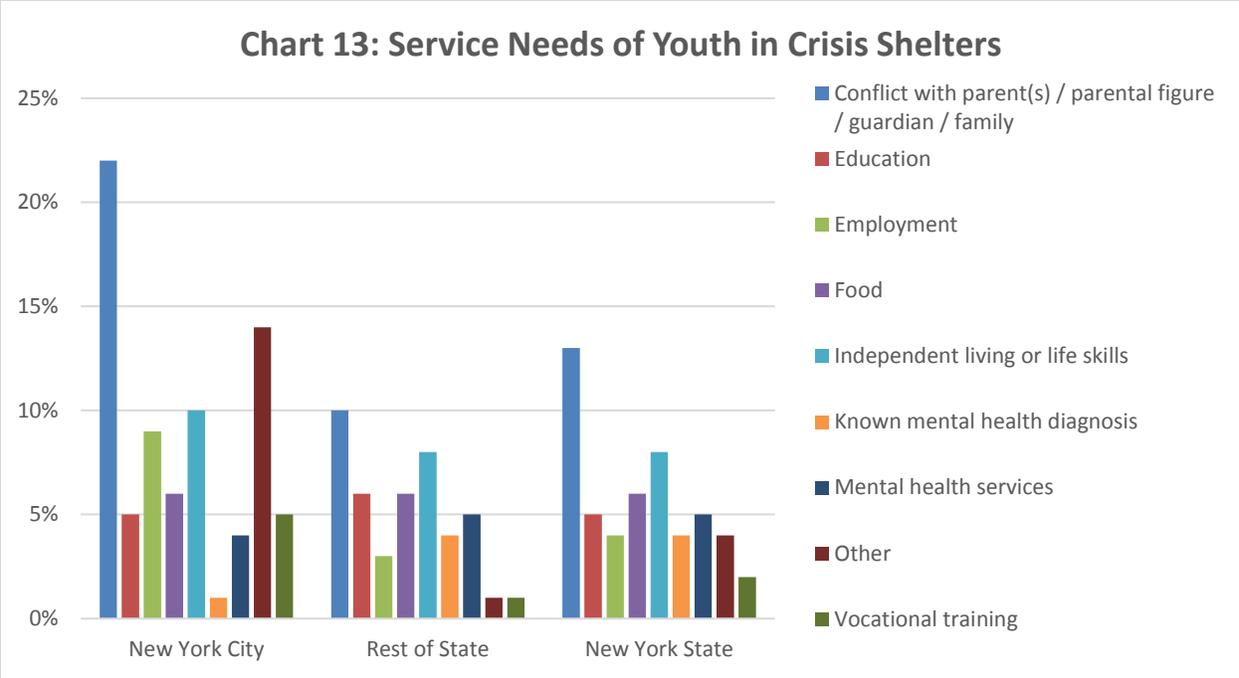
The majority of youth in NYC served at crisis shelters reported living at crisis shelters or relative/friend’s house prior to going to the crisis shelter; whereas most youth served at crisis shelters in ROS came from parent/guardian’s home. In NYC, 92 percent of youth were living in a crisis shelter prior to admission to a TILPs.



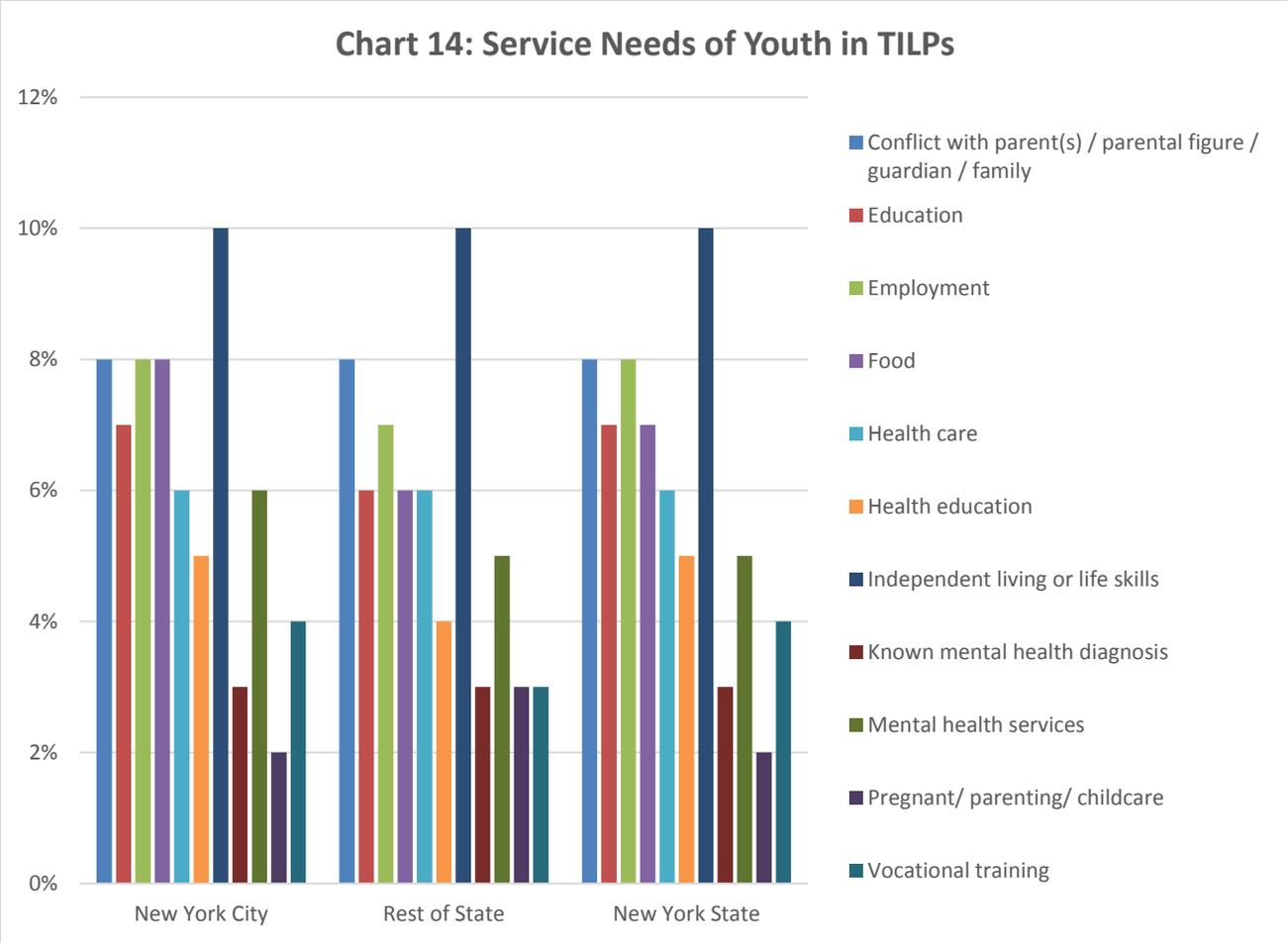
Problems and Service Needs

The charts below show the largest categories of problems and service needs that were self-reported by youth at the time of their intake into RHYA residential programs.

Youth in crisis shelter programs in NYC and in the ROS identified conflict with parent as the top service need. As Chart 13 indicates, youth in NYC report employment as a primary service need in higher percentages than youth in ROS, and ROS youth report education and mental health services in slightly higher proportions.



In TILPs, the most predominant service statewide was independent living/life skills. Parental conflict and education were the other top service needs for youth in the rest of New York State.



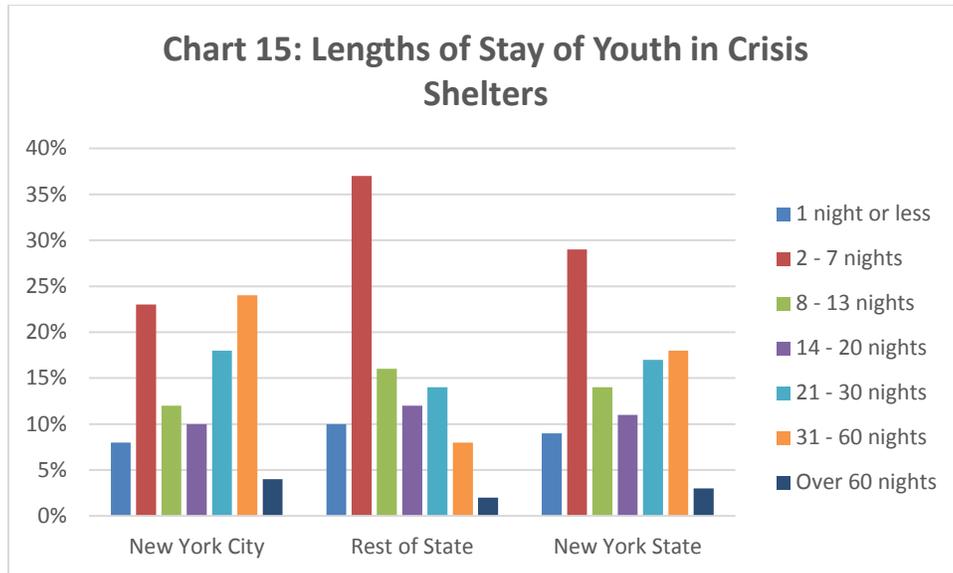
In response to the needs identified by and with the youth, programs provided a wide array of services. The most common services provided to runaway and homeless youth in residential programs were:

- basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, hygiene)
- case management
- counseling/mental health supports
- education services
- employment skills
- health care
- independent living/life skills

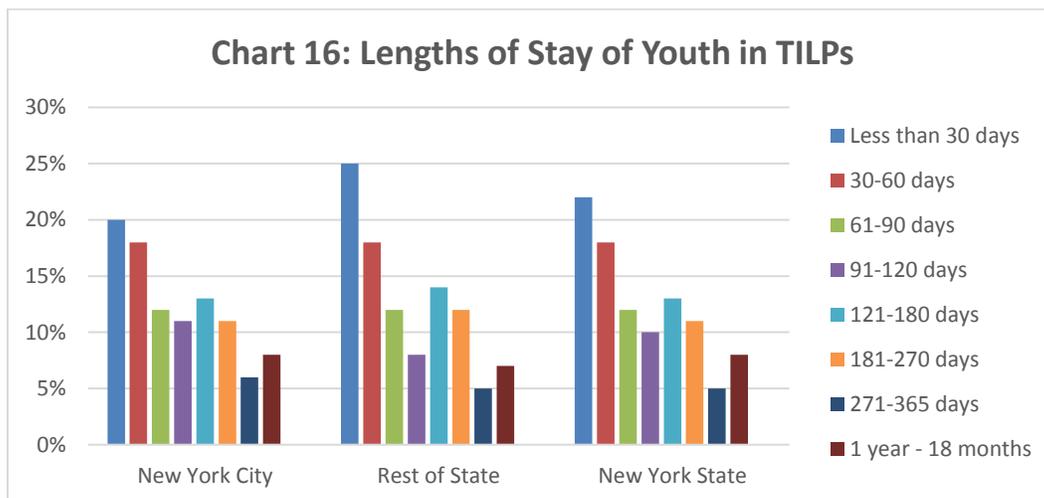
These services were provided either directly by the residential program or through a network of referrals to community services available to that program and the youth in the program.

Length of Stay in Residential Programs and Living Situation at Exit

The most common range of length of consecutive stay was 31 to 60 nights for youth staying in crisis shelter programs in NYC. In ROS, the most common range of length of consecutive stay was 2 to 7 nights. The numbers below reflect the consecutive nights that youth spent in the programs.



In TILPs statewide, the most common length of consecutive stay was less than 30 days. At exit, most youth were either living independently or with a parent/guardian.

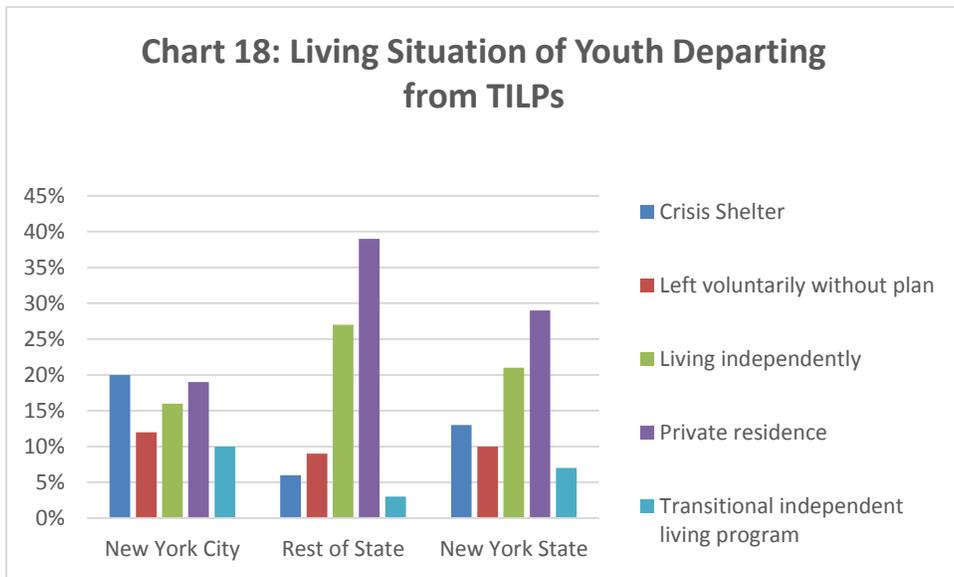
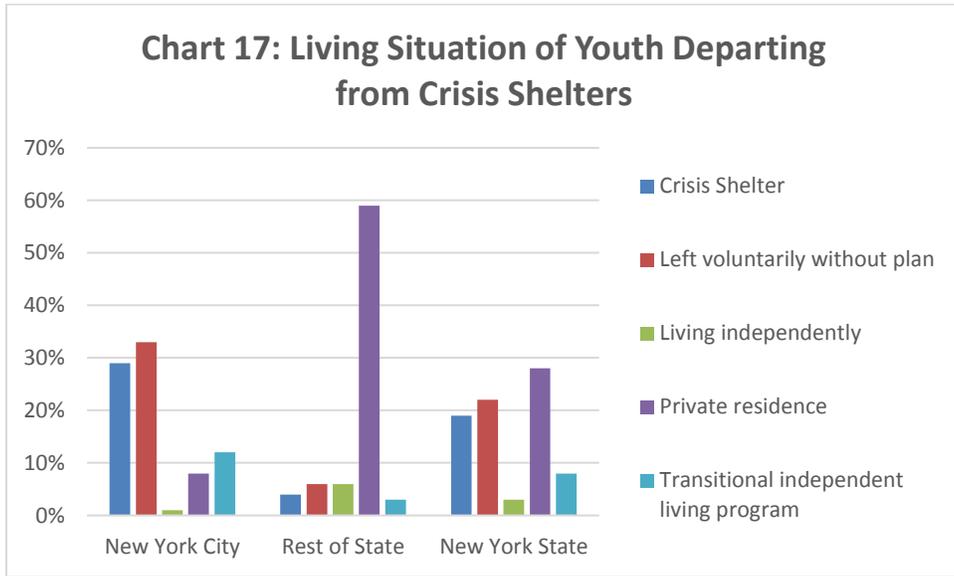


In 2016, there were **5,818** departures from crisis shelter programs and **716** departures from TILPs. These are duplicated counts, since youth may cycle in and out of programs and each departure is counted separately.

As seen in Chart 11, *Housing Status of Youth Admitted to Crisis Shelters* (page 11), the proportion of youth who exited from crisis shelter programs and returned to their families in ROS was

significantly higher than in NYC. Most youth who exited from TILPs in NYC entered a different crisis shelter.

The charts below indicate the top five known living situations of youth who left RHY residential programs.



Runaway and Homeless Youth Identified but Not Served

In 2016, there were **952** instances⁸ when a youth was turned away from a crisis shelter or TILP because no space was available; **782** of those instances were reported by crisis shelter programs and **170** were reported by TILPs.

Capacity data was collected at the program level. Without unique identifiers assigned to individual youth through a centralized data system, and without permissions for sharing confidential information across programs, there is no way to discern whether youth who were turned away from one program received services from another program.

Crisis Shelter Capacity

In NYC, four agencies operated 10 crisis shelter programs within the five boroughs. There were **626** instances where a youth was turned away from a crisis shelter in NYC because the program was at full capacity. There are no interim family programs in NYC.

In ROS, 22 agencies operated 27 crisis shelter programs. There were **156** instances where a youth was turned away from a crisis shelter in ROS because the program was at full capacity. There were no nights when interim family programs reported being at full capacity.

TILP Capacity

In NYC, 10 agencies operated 17 TILP programs within the five boroughs. There were **34** instances where a youth was turned away from a TILP in NYC because the program of capacity issues.

In ROS, 21 agencies operated 46 TILP programs. There were **136** instances in which a youth was turned away from a TILP in ROS because the program was at full capacity.

Non-Residential Program Services

Non-residential services for runaway and homeless youth include street outreach, drop-in services, case management, provisions to help meet basic needs (housing, food, clothing, hygiene products), medical and mental health supports including HIV and STD risk-education to high-risk or homeless youth, vocational support, educational support, employment services, hotlines, services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning/queer youth, emergency housing financial assistance, and general support. It should be noted that the data collected from non-residential RHY programs include multiple appearances of individual youths, pre-dominantly the data pertains to street outreach programs but also as the data relates to services received.

In 2016, the six primary reasons that brought youth to non-residential programs were:

- basic needs (housing, food, clothing, hygiene products)

⁸ Due to the inability to identify each youth who attempts to access each program, it is not possible to say how many individual youth were turned away. This number represents individual program's reports of turning youth away.

- family conflict
- employment services
- safe space/support needs
- educational needs
- case management services

Other reasons that brought youth to non-residential programs:

- advocacy
- computer access
- independent living skills
- mailing address
- participation in workshops/groups
- referral services (mental health & substance abuse counseling, transitional housing)
- social services assistance
- socialization with peers
- transportation needs

For the 2016 year, the OCFS asked non-residential (RHY) programs to collect data on the gender identity and sexual orientation of the youth they served. This also includes street outreach services.

Gender Identity

In 2016, the majority of youth in NYC and ROS receiving services from non-residential programs identified as cis gender (the gender they were assigned at birth). Most youth surveyed in NYC reported on their gender identity, while 22 percent of youth surveyed in ROS chose not to disclose their gender identity. One percent of the youth surveyed in NYC identified as non-conforming. None of the youth in ROS reported as non-conforming.

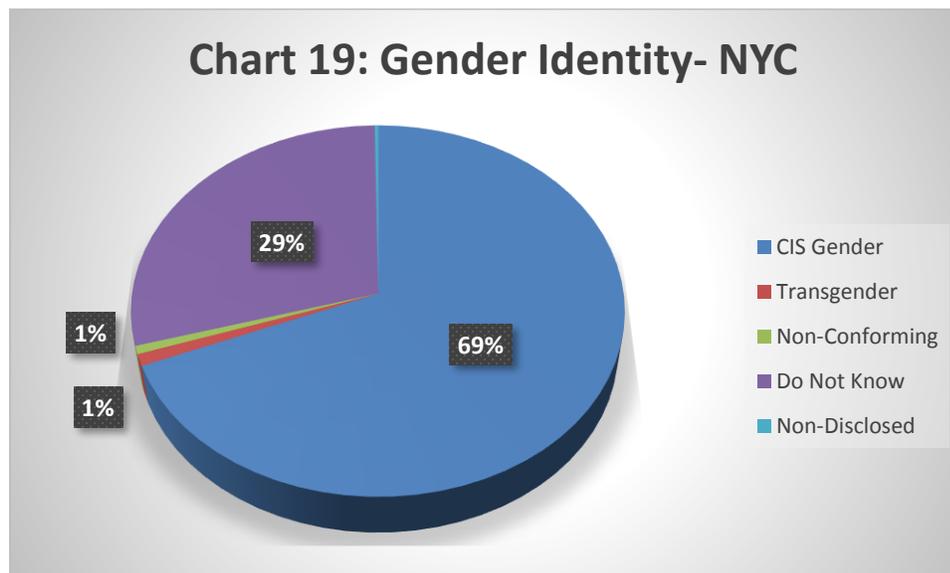
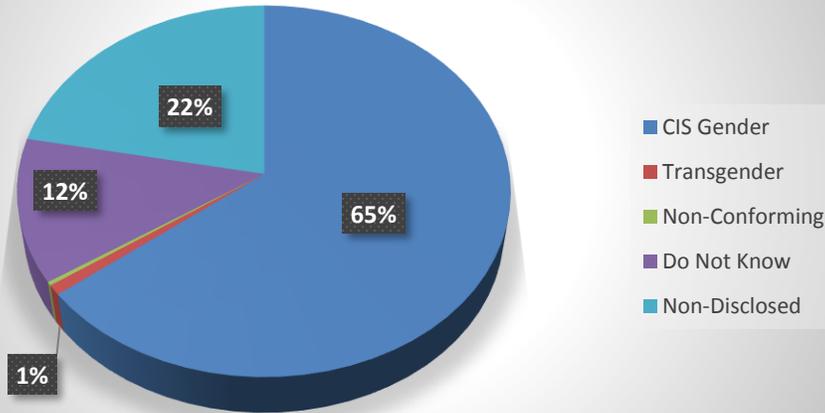


Chart 20: Gender Identity- ROS



Sexual Orientation

In 2016, the majority of youth in NYC receiving services from non-residential RHY programs identified as heterosexual/straight. There was a significant difference in the percentage of youth who reported that they did not know their sexual orientation in ROS versus NYC. A higher percentage of youth identified as bisexual and gay in NYC versus ROS. The same percentage of youth identified as lesbian in both NYC and ROS. None of the youth in NYC or ROS identified as asexual. Most youth surveyed in both NYC and ROS chose to disclose information regarding their sexual orientation.

Chart 21: Sexual Orientation- NYC

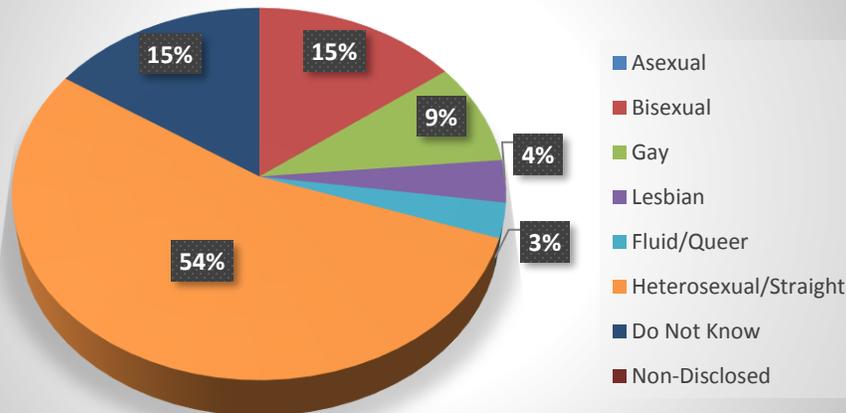
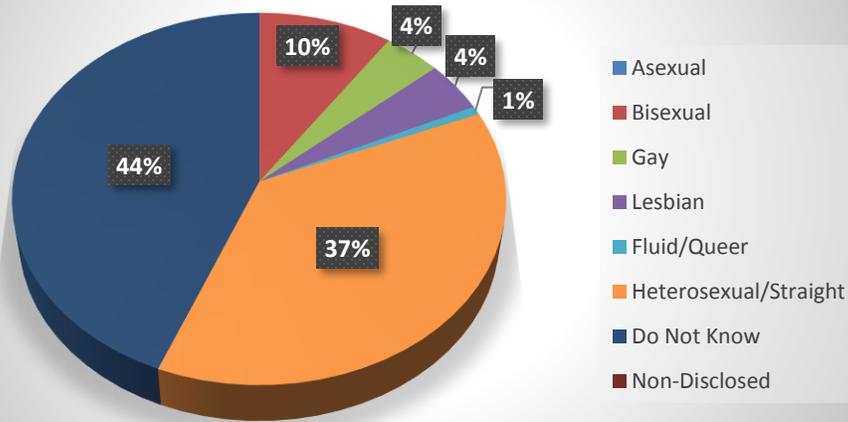


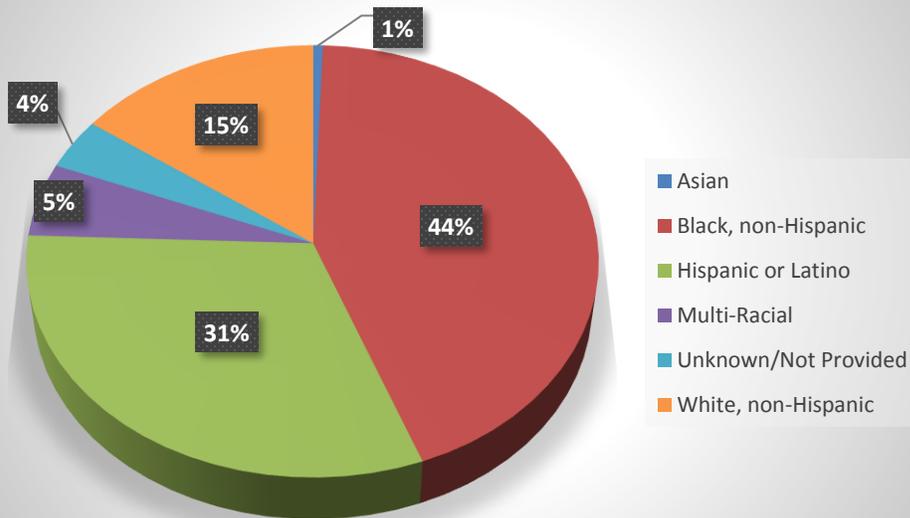
Chart 22: Sexual Orientation- ROS



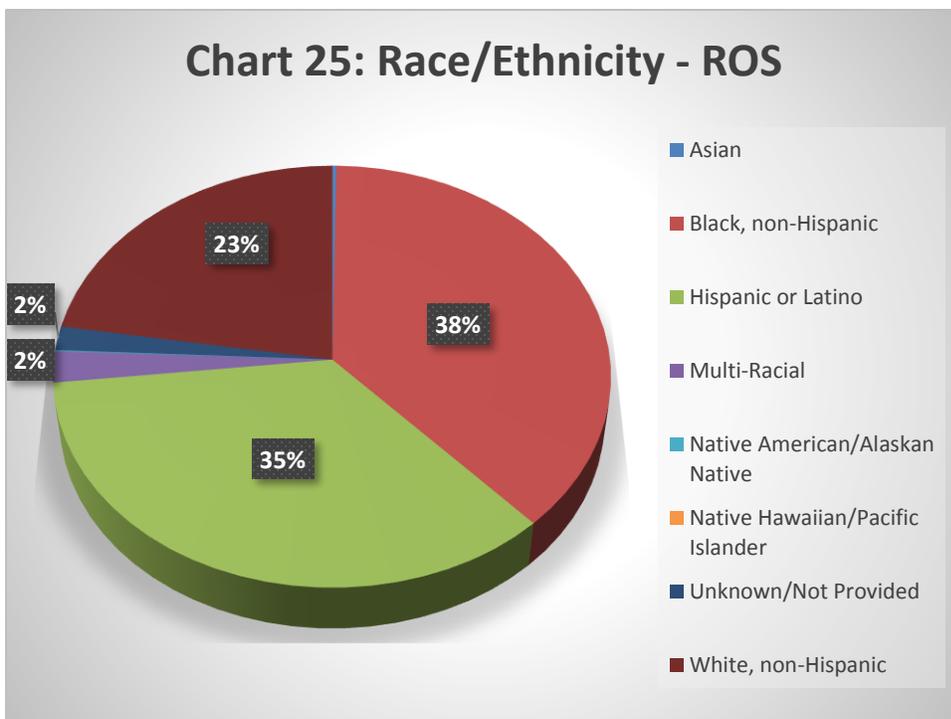
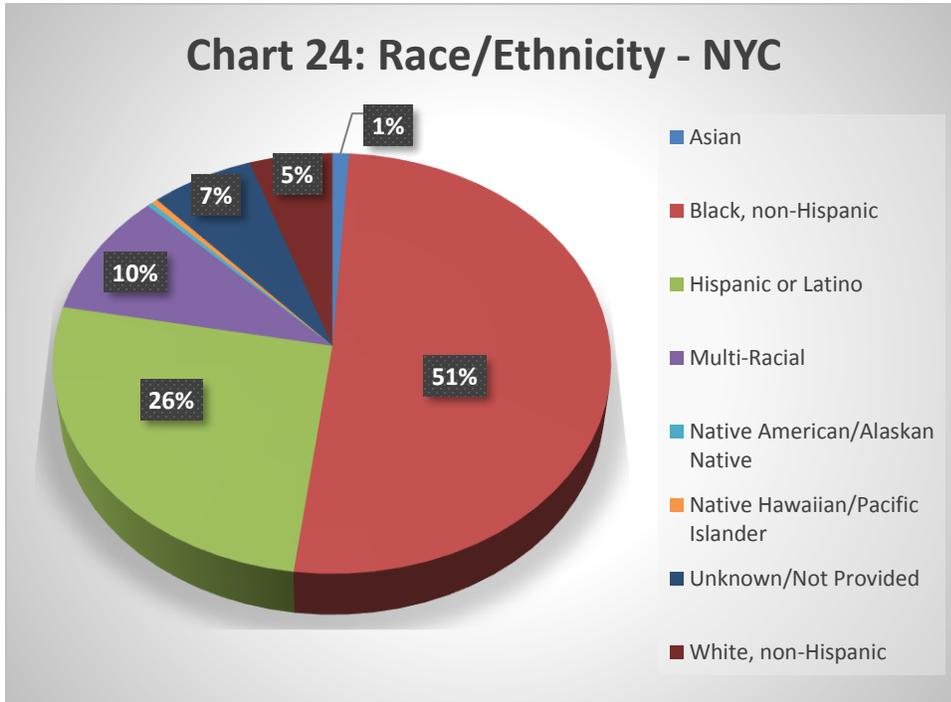
Race/Ethnicity

In 2016, 44 percent of Black, non-Hispanic youth, 31 percent of Hispanic or Latino youth and 15 percent of White, non-Hispanic youth received non-residential services throughout NYS. None of the youth surveyed in NYS identified as Native American/Alaskan Native or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and 1 percent of youth surveyed in ROS identified as Asian.

Chart 23: Race/Ethnicity- NYS



This disproportionality is consistent when separating percentages out into NYC versus. ROS as seen in the graphs below:



Summary

In 2016, NYS saw an increase in certified bed capacity for runaway and homeless youth, as well as an increase in the number of youth served, which is directly related to the increase in the number of admissions to residential programs, particularly TILPs. Black, non-Hispanic youth were disproportionately reported at 47 percent of the population statewide and represented 51 percent of youth in NYC admitted to the runaway and homeless programs. The number of youth who were classified as runaways by these programs slightly increased statewide, while admissions of youth identified as homeless decreased. Youth identified the need for independent living or life skills as the most common reason they needed services in both NYC and ROS for TILPs. Parental conflict was the most common reason RHY services were needed in both NYC and ROS for crisis shelters.

Appendix 1: New York State Legal Framework

In 1978, New York State adopted the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA), following the passage of the federal Runaway Youth Act, Title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974. The RHYA, which is codified under Article 19-H of the Executive Law, (§§ 532 – 532-e of the Executive Law) provides the legal framework for the state, in conjunction with municipalities, to develop strategies to serve runaway and homeless youth in need of shelter and services.

Appendix 2: Programs by Region at Year End 2016

Counties by Region	Program Type	# of programs	# of beds
Albany Region Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Delaware, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery, Otsego, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Warren, Washington	Crisis Shelter Programs	4	43
	Transitional Independent Living Support Programs	8	48
	Interim Family Programs	0	0
Albany Region Subtotals		12	91
Buffalo Region Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, Wyoming	Crisis Shelter Programs	3	37
	Transitional Independent Living Support Programs	7	48
	Interim Family Programs	0	0
Buffalo Region Subtotals		10	85
New York City Region Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, Richmond	Crisis Shelter Programs	11	434
	Transitional Independent Living Support Programs	29	239
	Interim Family Programs	0	0
New York City Subtotals		40	673
Rochester Region Chemung, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Yates	Crisis Shelter Programs	2	27
	Transitional Independent Living Support Programs	13	13
	Interim Family Programs	3	6
Rochester Region Subtotals		18	46
Spring Valley Region Dutchess, Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Suffolk, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester	Crisis Shelter Programs	8	87
	Transitional Independent Living Support Programs	5	36
	Interim Family Programs	1	4

Spring Valley Subtotals		14	127
Syracuse Region Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, St. Lawrence, Tioga, Tompkins	Crisis Shelter Programs	2	24
	Transitional Independent Living Support Programs	13	71
	Interim Family Programs	4	8
Syracuse Region Subtotals		19	103
Statewide Total		113	1125

Appendix 3: Agencies with Certified Programs in 2016

Albany Region

- CAPTAIN Youth & Family Services
- Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany
- Equinox, Inc.
- SAFE Inc., of Schenectady
- Warren/Washington Counties Homeless Youth Coalition, Inc.

Buffalo Region

- Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.
- Compass House
- Family and Children's Service of Niagara, Inc.
- The Franciscan Center
- United Church Home
- Teaching & Restoring Youth, Inc.

New York City Region

- Ali Forney Center
- CORE Services Group, Inc.
- Covenant House New York Under 21, Inc.
- Diaspora Community Services, Inc.
- Girls Educational & Mentoring Services
- Good Shepherd Services, Inc.
- Imeinu, Inc.
- Inwood House
- Project Hospitality, Inc.
- Safe Horizon, Inc.
- Safe Space NYC, Inc.
- SCO Family of Services

Rochester Region

- Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester
- Salvation Army
- Seneca County Youth Bureau
- The Center for Youth Services, Inc.

Spring Valley Region

- Children's Village, Inc.
- Family and Children's Association
- Family of Woodstock, Inc.
- Green Chimneys Children's Services
- HONORehg, Inc.
- Hope for Youth
- Hudson River Housing, Inc.
- Mercy Center Ministries
- SCO Family of Services
- Town of Huntington Youth Bureau

Syracuse Region

- Catholic Charities of Broome County
- Catholic Charities of Herkimer County
- Catholic Charities of Oneida/Madison Counties
- Family and Children's Service of Ithaca
- Family Nurturing Center of Central New York, Inc.
- John Bosco House, Inc.
- Oswego County Opportunities, Inc.
- The Salvation Army, Syracuse Area Services
- YWCA of the Mohawk Valley

Appendix 4: New York State Regional Map

