



Office of Children
and Family Services

RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH



Annual Report 2020

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Executive Summary

Under Article 19-H of the Executive Law, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) has specific powers and duties regarding the administration of the runaway and homeless youth (RHY) program in New York State¹ to include funding, training, and technical assistance to municipalities and programs that serve runaway and homeless youth. Each year OCFS collects self-reported, aggregate data from certified RHY programs. This report includes information from 133 OCFS-certified residential programs that were in operation for one or more days in 2020, as well as 29 approved non-residential RHY programs. These programs are located in 25 counties and New York City (NYC).

The year 2020 presented unprecedented challenges for youth who were homeless or left home, and for the programs that serve them. RHY programs were first responders to the COVID-19 crisis, never closing their doors and remaining available to young people in need, including youth who may have been exposed to COVID-19. They took great pains to comply with additional requirements to keep the youth and staff safe, while simultaneously working to offer the same quality of supportive services that are offered in typical years. Programs helped young people navigate remote learning, work, the socio-emotional challenges of the PAUSE, and the losses of friends and loved ones. They are to be commended for their incredible efforts.

In 2020, these programs admitted:

- 5,478 runaway and homeless youth to residential RHY programs throughout New York State (NYS).
 - 4,162 (unduplicated) runaway and homeless youth, excluding dependents, throughout NYS.
 - 1,316 duplicated runaway and homeless youth, excluding dependents, throughout NYS.
- 3,062 (unduplicated) runaway or homeless youth in crisis services programs, plus 93 dependents.
 - 1,281 youth and six dependents were admitted to Rest of State (ROS) programs
 - 1,781 youth with 87 dependents were admitted to NYC programs.
- 1,100 (unduplicated) homeless youth, plus 91 dependents were admitted to Transitional Independent Living Programs (TILP).
 - 267 youth and 37 dependents were admitted to ROS programs and
 - 833 youth with 54 dependents were admitted to NYC programs.

In reporting unduplicated admissions to OCFS, each RHY program counts youth once for the year. If youth are served by more than one RHY program, they may unknowingly be accounted for more than once. Currently, there is no systematic way to collect disaggregated, youth-level data regarding services across RHY programs. Youth who present to the *same* RHY program more than once in a year are counted additional times in the duplicated number of admissions. Nearly a quarter (24%), or 1,316 runaway or homeless youth, presented to the same residential RHY program more than once in 2020.

¹ Section 532-e of the Executive Law sets forth the power and duties of OCFS as they relate to RHY programs.

RHY shelters served 16% more youth in NYC (1,781) than in ROS (1,281), whereas TILPs served more than three times the number of youths in NYC (833) than in ROS (267). This gap is a result of bed availability; there are approximately double the number of certified beds in NYC than in ROS in both crisis services programs and TILPs. For more details please see Appendix 1.

The most pressing service needs identified by runaway and homeless youth providers included conflict resolution between youth and their parental figure, food, and a need for independent living/life skills.

Youth in RHY crisis services programs most frequently stayed between one and 30 nights, with 29% of youth staying between two and seven nights and between eight and 30 nights. Youth in TILPs tended to stay between one and six months. This is consistent with service utilization in 2019. During their stay, youth were provided a diverse array of services and referrals.

The most commonly provided *services* across all residential RHY programs were

- food,
- independent living support/skill development, and
- positive youth development opportunities.

The most commonly provided *referrals* across all residential RHY programs were

- mental health services and counseling,
- health care and education, and
- education services.

Following discharge from crisis services programs, 32% of youth returned home to family or were staying with a relative, and 22% of youth left voluntarily without a plan. Twenty-six (26) percent of youth discharged from a TILP returned home to family or were staying with a relative, 17% were living independently, and 15% were discharged to an RHY crisis services program.

Youth were admitted to an RHY crisis services programs 83% of the time they sought admission (a 14% increase from 2019), and to TILPs 84% of the time they sought admission. In 2020, there were 1,092 instances² of youth seeking services from a residential RHY program who were not admitted—that is 276 (25%) in NYC and 816 (75%) in ROS. In 21% of cases where youth were not admitted, the program from which they sought services was operating at maximum capacity – a decrease from 29% in 2019. Other reasons youth were not admitted included youth declining to enter the program after services were explained, not meeting the age criteria, or having a higher level of need than the program could accommodate safely.

In 2020, 29 non-residential programs reported data on youth served to OCFS. These programs served approximately 4,700 youth through drop-in centers or case management services, received approximately 5,800 contacts via hotlines, and made approximately 1,900 youth contacts through street outreach.

² Due to the inability to identify individual youth and determine whether youth attempted to access more than one program, it is not possible to say how many individual youths were turned away. This number represents the number of instances in which youth were turned away by programs.

Background

This annual report is submitted in accordance with section 532-e(d) of the Executive Law and provides information detailing the numbers and characteristics of runaway and otherwise homeless youth throughout the state and their problems and service needs.

Youth and young adults who are living on the streets or who do not have consistent, stable housing are highly vulnerable. Each year, thousands of New York's youth and young adults leave home without permission,³ are asked or forced to leave their home, or become homeless.⁴ Homelessness is not just a problem in large urban centers such as NYC or Buffalo. Young people in suburban and rural communities also face homelessness. Youth are often fleeing neglect, abuse, or conflict in the home.⁵ These youth are still developing physically and emotionally, and when experiencing homelessness, they often do not complete their education, and miss the opportunity to gain independent living skills, including work experience.⁶ Homelessness and running away from home also make youth increasingly vulnerable to violence, crime, and sexual exploitation at the hands of other youth and adults.⁷

In recognition that young adults are continuing to develop through age 24, and that homeless young adults often struggle with the same risks and vulnerabilities as runaway and homeless youth, in 2017, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo signed into law amendments to section 420 and Article 19-H of the Executive Law. Beginning on January 1, 2018, municipalities gained the option to provide RHY services to homeless young adults⁸ provided this is part of a municipality's approved comprehensive plan.⁹ When authorized under the municipality's approved comprehensive plan, municipalities may additionally opt to extend the length of stay for runaway youth 14 years of age or older in certified RHY crisis services programs for up to 60 days, or for up to 120 days upon the written agreement of the youth and guardian,¹⁰ and for up to 24 months for youth in TILPs.

The RHY Service Array

In New York State, there are certified RHY residential programs as well as non-residential services and supports available to meet the needs of runaway or homeless youth. Participation in RHY programs and services is voluntary and may be terminated by the youth at any time.¹¹ Youth and young adults, therefore, cannot be forced or mandated to stay in RHY programs.

³ A runaway youth is a person under the age of 18 who is absent from his or her legal residence without the consent of his or her parent, legal guardian, or custodian. (Executive Law § 532-a(1).)

⁴ A homeless youth is a person under the age of 18 who is in need of services and is without a place of shelter where supervision and care are available; or a person who is under the age of 21, but is at least 18, and who is in need of services and is without a place of shelter; or a homeless young adult when a municipality's approved comprehensive plan authorizes RHY services be provided to such individuals. (Executive Law § 532-a(2).)

⁵ *Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America National Estimates.*

<http://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/national-estimates-of-youth-homelessness/>.

⁶ *What Works to End Youth Homelessness?* The National Network for Youth. <https://www.nn4youth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015-What-Works-to-End-Youth-Homlessness.pdf>.

⁷ Pergamit, Michael R, *On the Prevalence of Running Away from Home.* (2010).

<http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/412087-On-the-Prevalence-of-Running-Away-from-Home.PDF>.

⁸ A homeless young adult is a person who is age 24 or younger, but is at least age 21, and who is in need of services and is without a place of shelter. (Executive Law § 532-a(9).)

⁹ No residential RHY programs were certified to serve homeless young adults in 2018.

¹⁰ With proper approvals as defined in 19-OCFS-ADM-06.

¹¹ 9 NYCRR sections 182-1.9 (d) (1) and 182-2.9 (d)(1).

However, program recipients may be required to leave programs for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, aging out, posing a threat to themselves or others in the program, or reaching the statutory limits for lengths of stay.¹²

Each municipality that is seeking state aid to provide services for runaway and homeless youth must develop a comprehensive RHY services plan, in accordance with section 420 of the Executive Law, that provides for a range of services for runaway and homeless youth and their families and 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% of the costs associated with the establishment and operation of RHY programs and services. Reimbursement is subject to the availability of funding as well as the approval of the municipality's RHY service plan by OCFS.

Residential Programs

OCFS certifies and regulates the following types of RHY residential programs:¹³

- RHY crisis services programs
 - RHY Crisis Shelter – a residential program 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, or up to 24 when approved in the county plan
 - Interim Family Home – a private dwelling providing temporary shelter to a maximum of two runaway or 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)¹⁴
 - Group Residence – a small congregate residential program that encourages the development and practice of independent living skills
 - Supported Residence – a residential program for a maximum of five youth where youth reside independently with supports.

Non-Residential Programs

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

- Basic needs (provision of food, clothing, hygiene, emergency housing, financial assistance)
- Behavioral/medical health
- Harm reduction
- Case management, including family reunification
- Drop-in centers
- Educational/vocational support

¹² See 9 NYCRR sections 182-1.9 (b) and 9 NYCRR 182-2.9 (b) for further information.

¹³ 9 NYCRR sections 182-1.2 and 182-2.2.

¹⁴ TILP is defined as any residential program established and operated to provide supportive services to enable homeless youth who are at least 16 years old to progress from crisis care and transitional care to independent living. In certain cases, TILPs may provide shelter to a homeless youth under the age of 16.

- Hotlines
- Services that are affirming of the needs of the LGBTQ+¹⁵ community at risk of homelessness
- Street outreach

Services for runaway and homeless youth are found throughout New York State. Details about service availability by region can be found in appendices 1, 2, and 3.

2020 Residential RHY Program Data

Methodology

OCFS collects self-reported aggregate data from certified residential RHY programs and non-residential RHY programs each year. This report includes information from 133 OCFS-certified residential programs that were in operation for one or more days in 2020. Of these 133 programs, 36 were RHY crisis services programs (31 RHY shelters and five interim family programs) and 97 were TILPs (43 group residences and 54 supported residences). Data provided in this report are presented at the state level and broken out by NYC and ROS, which references all non-NYC counties.

Currently, there is no systematic way to collect client-level, disaggregated data on young people served in RHY programs. Some youth are served by multiple programs in a single year, so the “individual youth” counts include some duplication across programs. However, any duplicate counts within a single program have been eliminated by the RHY programs in their reporting.

Data are presented in percentages. These percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number, as such, some figures may not add up to 100%.

Program Capacity

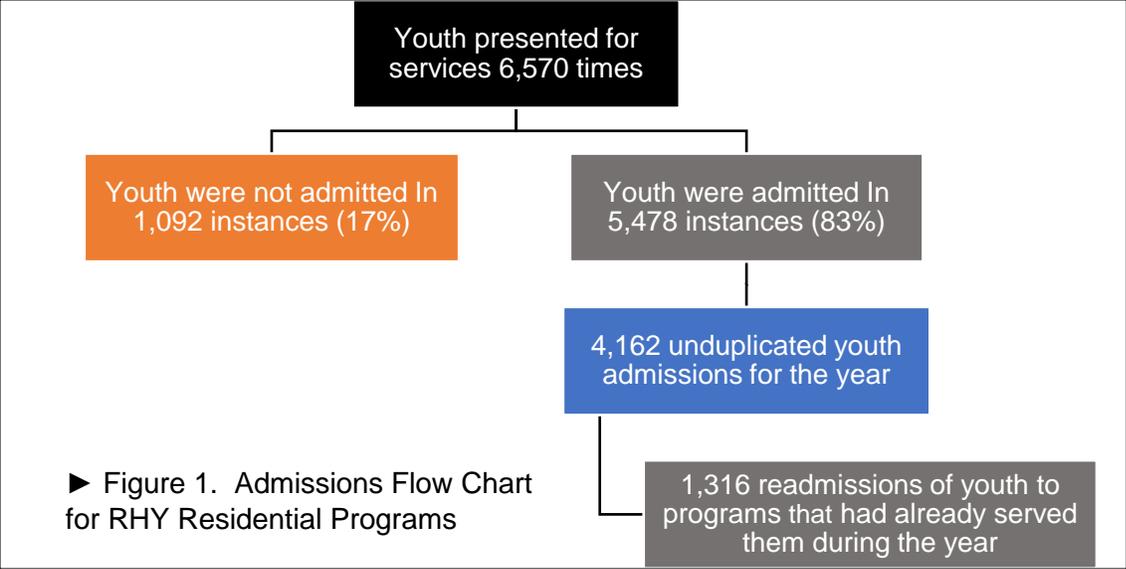
In most instances where youth sought shelter from a residential RHY program, they were admitted. Of the 6,570 instances where a youth presented to an RHY program in need of residential services in 2020, there were 1,092 instances¹⁶ in which youth were turned away. It should be noted that it is possible for youth to be turned away from one program but served by another program that same day. Because there is no single data source, it is not possible to track those occurrences, but programs report referring youth they cannot accept to other programs.

There were 5,478 instances where youth were admitted to certified residential RHY programs. These admission numbers account for 4,162 unduplicated youth (1,019 runaway, 3,109 homeless, 34 both runaway and homeless on different occasions) served at least once during the year, and 1,316 instances where youth were readmitted to programs for additional services the same year. Among admitted youth, 174 were parenting a total of 184 dependents that were sheltered alongside their young parent(s).¹⁷ See Figure 1 for an admissions flow chart.

¹⁵ LGBTQ+ is inclusive of persons identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary queer, or questioning.

¹⁶ Due to the inability to identify individual youth and determine whether youth attempted to access more than one program, it is not possible to say how many individuals were turned away. This number represents the number of instances where youth were turned away by programs.

¹⁷ Information about these dependent children is not included in this report.

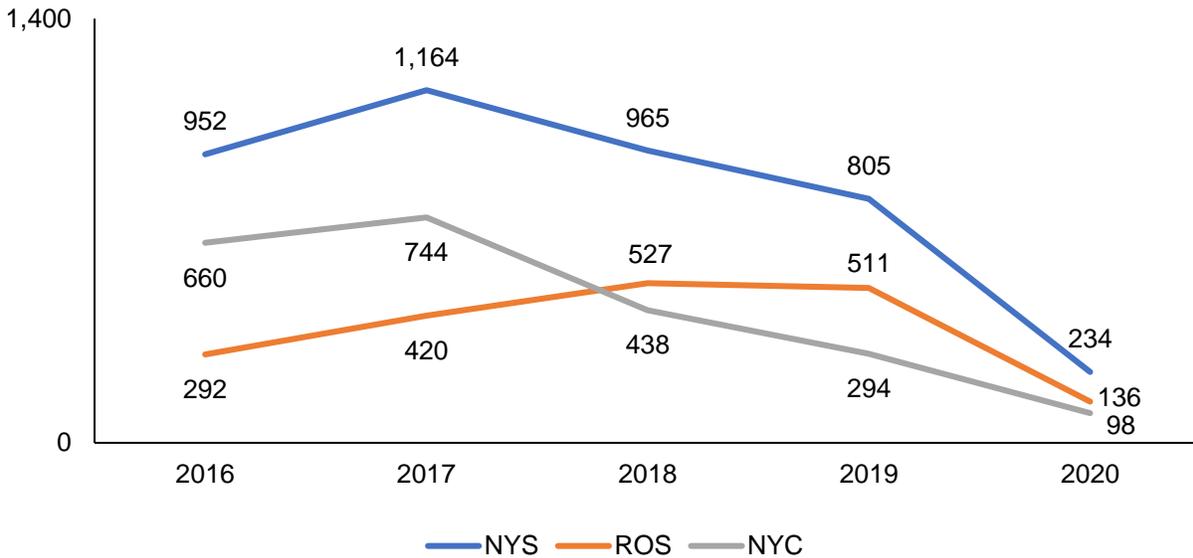


Youth Identified and Not Served

The most common reasons youth were turned away from a program included disinterest from youth in entering the program after it was explained (290 instances), full programs (234 instances), and behavioral needs that interfered with program safety (117 instances).

Figure 2 shows five-year trends of the number of times youth were turned away from RHY programs because they were at capacity. Between 2019 and 2020 there was a 71% decrease in the number of times youth were turned away statewide (571 fewer instances) because programs were full. In 2020 programs reported having higher-than-typical vacancy rates due to COVID-19. As a result of the pandemic many partner agencies that typically refer youth to RHY programs were closed or offered more limited services, resulting in fewer referrals to RHY programs. In some instances, youth and community partners erroneously assumed that intake at RHY programs had closed; RHY programs engaged in outreach and awareness efforts to make sure their communities knew their services remained available. Among the reasons youth were turned away in 2020, full programs accounted for 21% of cases (234 out of 1,092 instances)—down from 29% of cases in 2019 (805 out of 2,792 instances).

► Figure 2. Youth Not Served Because RHY Programs Were at Capacity, 2016-2020

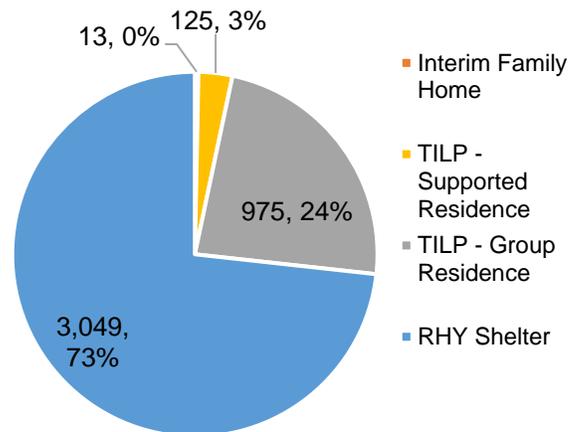


RHY Residential Program Admissions

As seen in Figure 3 during 2020:

- Thirty-one (31) RHY shelters served 3,049 youth, plus 95 dependents.
- Five (5) Interim Family Programs served 13 youth.
- Forty-three (43) TILP group residences served 975 youth, plus 85 dependents.
- Fifty-four (54) TILP supported residences served 125 youth, plus six (6) dependents.

► Figure 3. Youth Admitted to Residential Programs by Program Model, NYS 2020



Statewide, programs reported operating at full capacity an average of 38% of nights in 2020. ROS programs reported operating at full capacity an average of 35% of nights, and NYC programs reported operating at full capacity an average of 42% of nights – a decrease from 49% in 2019. In both NYC and ROS, TILPs operated at full capacity more often than RHY crisis services programs. This is not surprising given that most TILPs are apartments, only available to one or two youth at a time, and residents can stay for up to two years.

The number of youth admitted to residential programs has remained relatively stable in recent years; however, there was a decrease in admissions (672 fewer) from 2019 to 2020 (see Table 1). This can likely be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Year	Total Youth Admitted	Admitted as Runaway	Admitted as Homeless	Admitted as Both Runaway & Homeless	Dependent Children of Admitted Youth
2016	5,292	1,690	3,602		128
2017	5,156	1,243	3,913		308
2018	5,119	1,182	3,937		226
2019	4,834	1,125	3,474	235	185
2020	4,162	1,019	3,109	34	184

Note. In some instances, individual youth sought shelter from more than one residential RHY program or from the same residential RHY program more than once in a year.

Characteristics of Youth Admitted to Certified Residential RHY Programs

Gender Identity

In 2020, the majority of youth admitted to residential RHY programs identified as cisgender, or a person whose gender identity aligns with the sex assigned to them at birth.¹⁸ Of all youth admitted, 215 (5%) identified as either transgender¹⁹ or gender non-conforming (GNC).²⁰

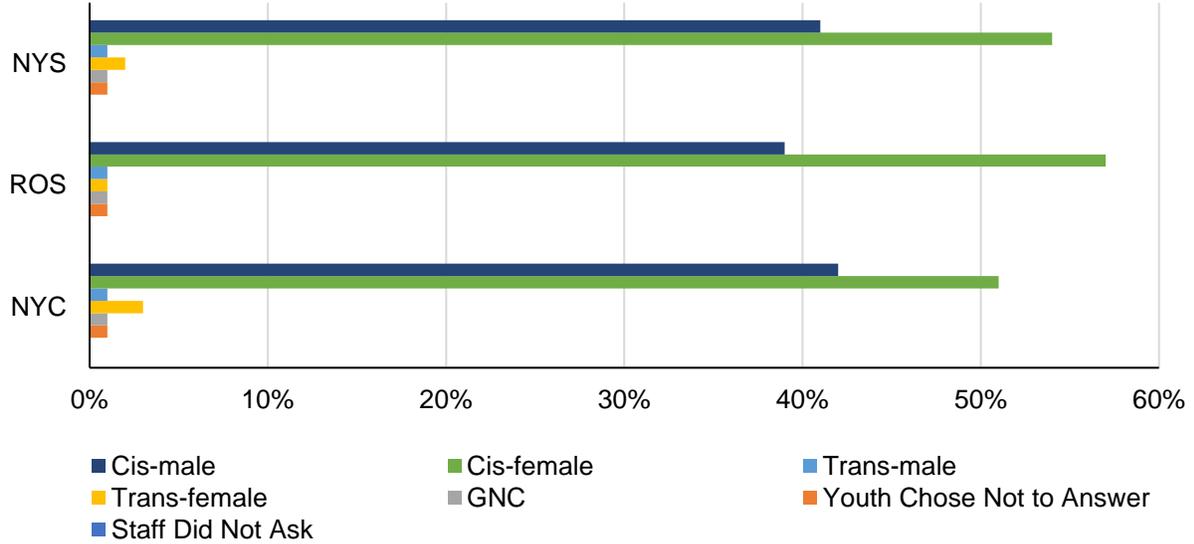
Consistent with 2019 data, cis-male and cis-female youth were admitted to crisis service programs in 2020 at nearly equal rates statewide. In ROS, 57% of youth admitted to crisis services programs were cis-female, while 39% were cis-male. In NYC, 51% of youth admitted to crisis services programs were cis-female and 42% were cis-male. Trans-identified and GNC youth were admitted by RHY crisis services programs at a higher rate in NYC (5%) compared to ROS (3%). See Figure 4.

¹⁸ 16-OCFS-INF-10, *Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression, Attachment A*.

¹⁹ Transgender is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. (16-OCFS-INF-10, *Attachment A*)

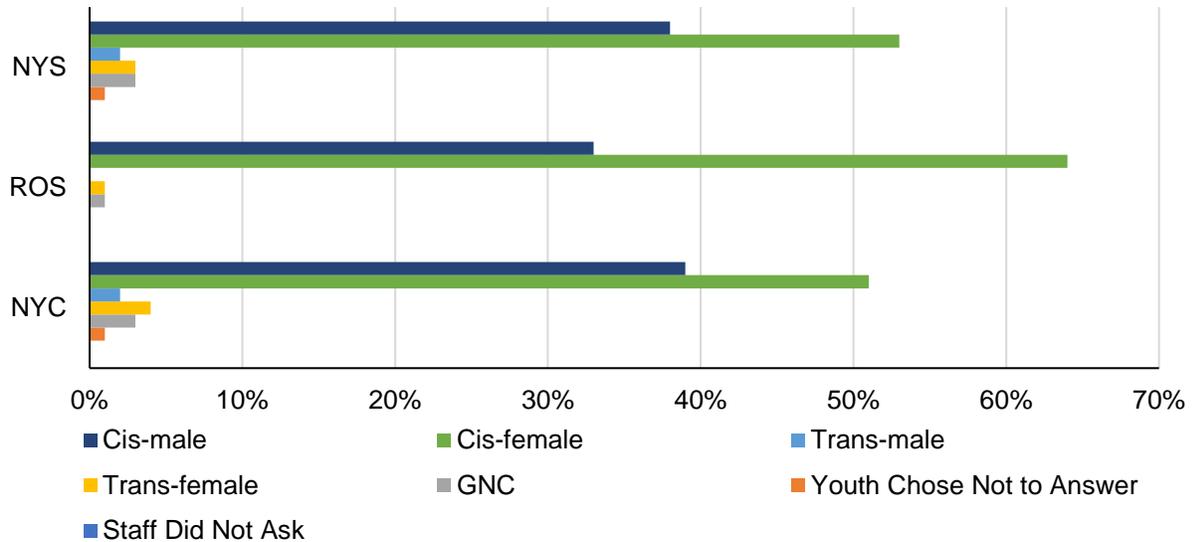
²⁰ Gender non-conforming is a broad term referring to people who do not conform to the traditional expectations of their gender identity, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category. (16-OCFS-INF-10, *Attachment A*)

► Figure 4. Gender Identity of Youth Admitted to RHY Crisis Services Programs, 2020



TILP admission rates of cis-gendered youth were like those described above for crisis services programs: cis-females had the highest rates of admission (64% ROS, 51% NYC), followed by cis-males (33% ROS, 39% NYC). This is likely a result of bed availability; there are many more TILP beds designated for females (34 beds) than males (15 beds) in ROS, and in NYC there are 86 beds designated for female-identified youth and 60 beds for male-identified youth. It should be noted that 64% of TILP beds statewide are available to all runaway and homeless youth, regardless of their sex or gender identity. Among trans-identified or GNC youth, a higher rate were admitted to TILPs in NYC (9%) than ROS (3%). See Figure 5.

► Figure 5. Gender Identity of Youth Admitted to TILPs, 2020



Sexual Orientation

According to RHY programs, most youth admitted in 2020 identified as straight/heterosexual (69%). Youth who identified as queer, asexual, pansexual, something other than the options listed, or who chose not to answer, accounted for less than 5% of admitted youth. Within RHY crisis services programs, 13% of youth admitted statewide identified as bisexual and 9% identified as either gay or lesbian. Similarly, within TILPs, 11% of youth admitted statewide identified as bisexual and 10% identified as gay or lesbian. These rates were also similar between NYC and ROS, with a slightly higher number of youth identifying as a sexual orientation other than straight in NYC.

While consistent with data from 2019, these numbers are low when compared with national projections. OCFS is working with RHY providers to improve training on LGBTQ+ affirming practice; this work is supported by legislation passed in 2019.²¹

Race and Ethnicity

According to providers, just over half of all youth admitted to residential RHY programs identified as Black (51%), followed by white (24%), and something other than the options listed (13%). As shown in Table 2, 20% of youth admitted to RHY programs in 2020 identified as Hispanic.

2020	Ethnicity		Total
	Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	
Race Provided (below)	80%	20%	100%
Asian	97%	3%	2%
Black	88%	12%	51%
Multiracial	44%	56%	9%
Native American/Alaskan Native	70%	30%	1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	64%	36%	<1%
White	65%	35%	24%
Other			13%
Youth identifies as something other than options listed here			94%
Youth chose not to answer			5%
Staff did not ask			< 1%

In 2020, the racial and ethnic identities of youth admitted to RHY programs were consistent when comparing crisis services programs and TILPs; however, differences emerge when comparing NYC and ROS. Forty-three percent of youth admitted to a crisis services program in ROS were

²¹ Chapter 361 of the Laws of 2019.

white, compared to only 11% in NYC. Black youth comprised 55% of admissions to crisis services programs in NYC, and 41% of admissions to those programs in ROS. Hispanic/Latinx-identified youth were admitted to crisis services programs at comparable rates in ROS (19%) and NYC (17%).

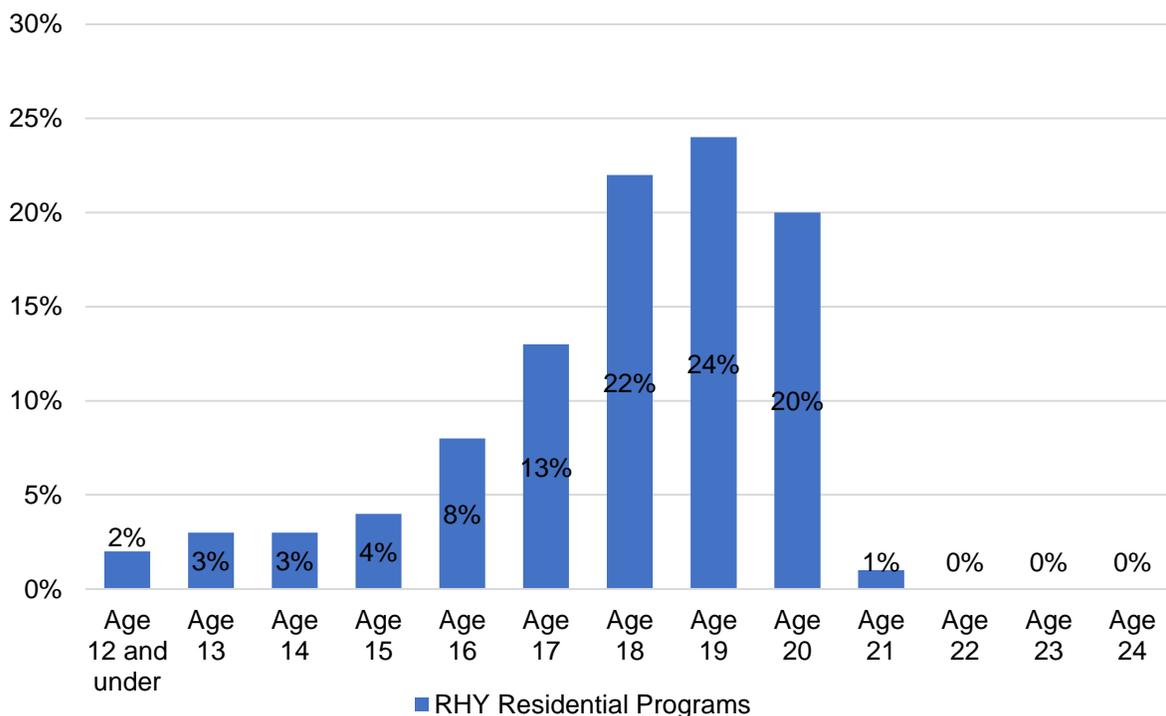
Patterns are similar when comparing admissions to TILPs in NYC and ROS. Forty-five percent of youth admitted to ROS TILPs were white, whereas only 12% of youth admitted to NYC TILPs were white. Black youth comprised 66% of admissions to NYC TILPs, and 36% of admissions to ROS TILPs. Twenty-four (24) percent of youth admitted to NYC TILPs were Hispanic/Latinx, and 29% of youth admitted to ROS TILPs were Hispanic/Latinx.

Given the racial and ethnic composition of New York State’s youth, the overrepresentation of youth of color in RHY programs reflects that the burden of homelessness and housing instability falls disproportionately on Black, brown, and multiracial youth. OCFS is working with RHY providers to explore issues of equity and inclusion in programming.

Age at Admission

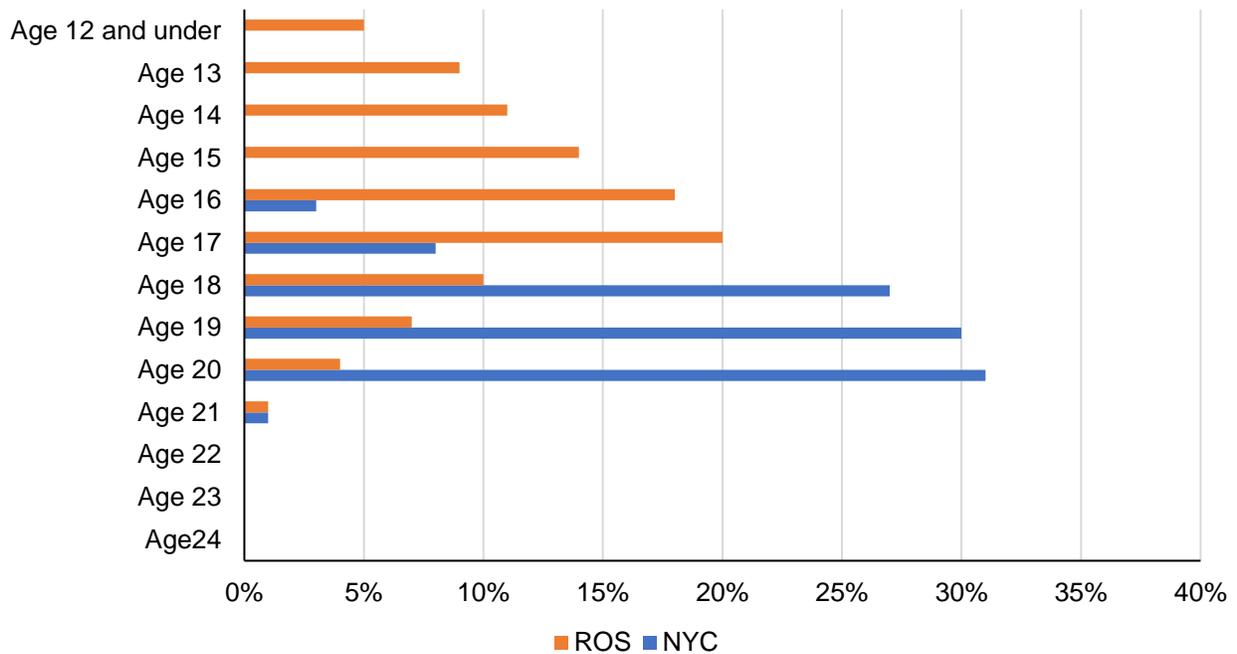
In 2019, OCFS began certifying programs to admit young adults aged 21-24. In 2020, one program in the Rochester Region became certified to serve up to seven youth until their 25th birthday, 17 programs became certified to serve youth up to their 22nd birthday, and two programs became certified to serve youth up to their 23rd birthday. Fifty-eight (58) youth between the ages of 21 and 24 were housed in an RHY program in 2020, representing less than 2% of all admissions. Figure 6 shows the distribution of admitted youth to all RHY programs by age. Among all youth admitted to residential RHY programs in 2020, 3,659 (88%) were age 16 and older.

► Figure 6. Age of Youth Admitted to RHY Residential Programs, 2020

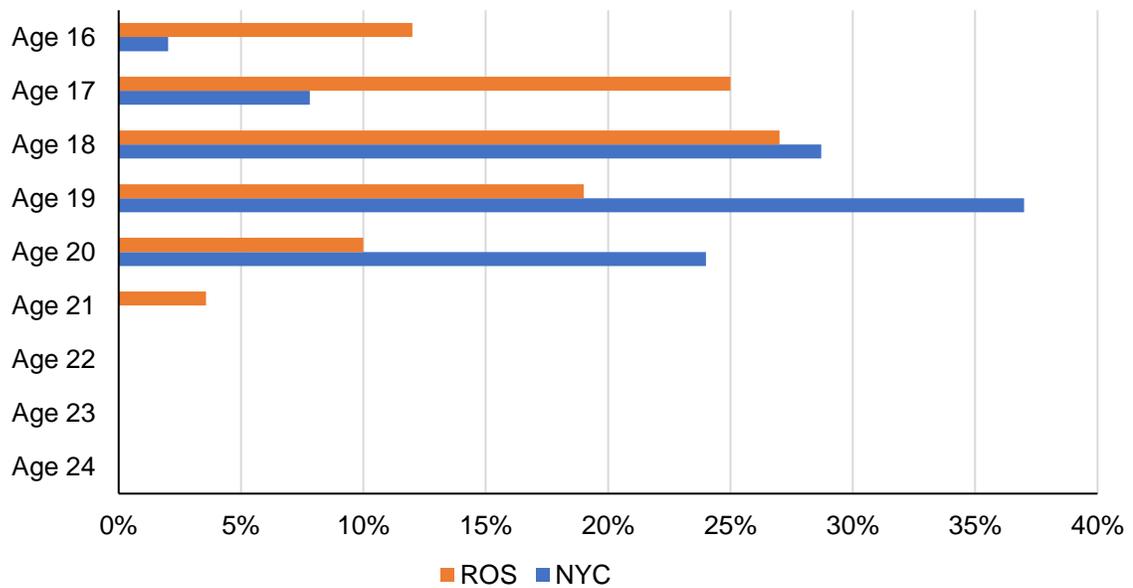


There are no RHY programs in NYC certified to serve youth under the age of 16. It is unclear where youth who have run away or are experiencing homelessness below the age of 16 are being served in NYC. In 2020, nearly all youth admitted to NYC’s RHY programs (90%) were aged 18 or older.

► Figure 7. Age of Youth Admitted to RHY Crisis Services Programs, 2020



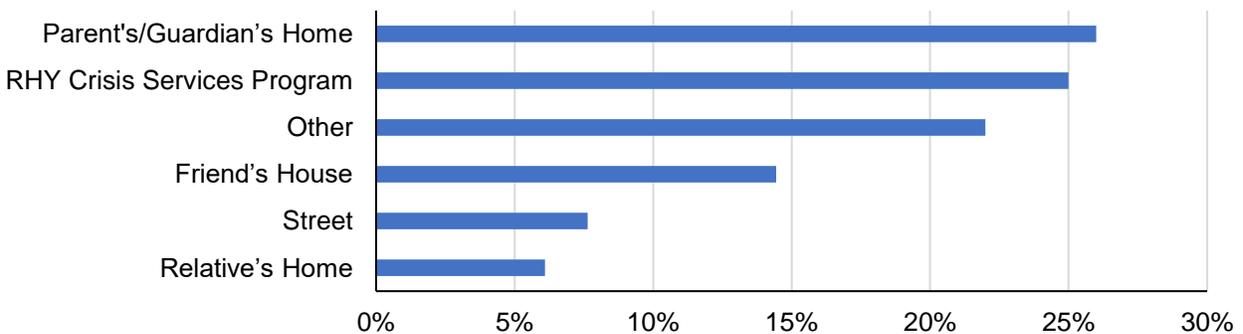
► Figure 8. Age of Youth Admitted to TILPs, 2020



Housing Prior to Admission

Young people come to RHY programs seeking housing from a variety of places and situations. In 2020, the most common housing situation prior to admission in a residential RHY program was a parent's/guardian's home (26%), followed by an RHY crisis shelter (25%), and a friend's home (14%). See Figure 9. Compared with 2019, there are slight declines in many of the categories; this is likely a result of additional response options being added in 2020.

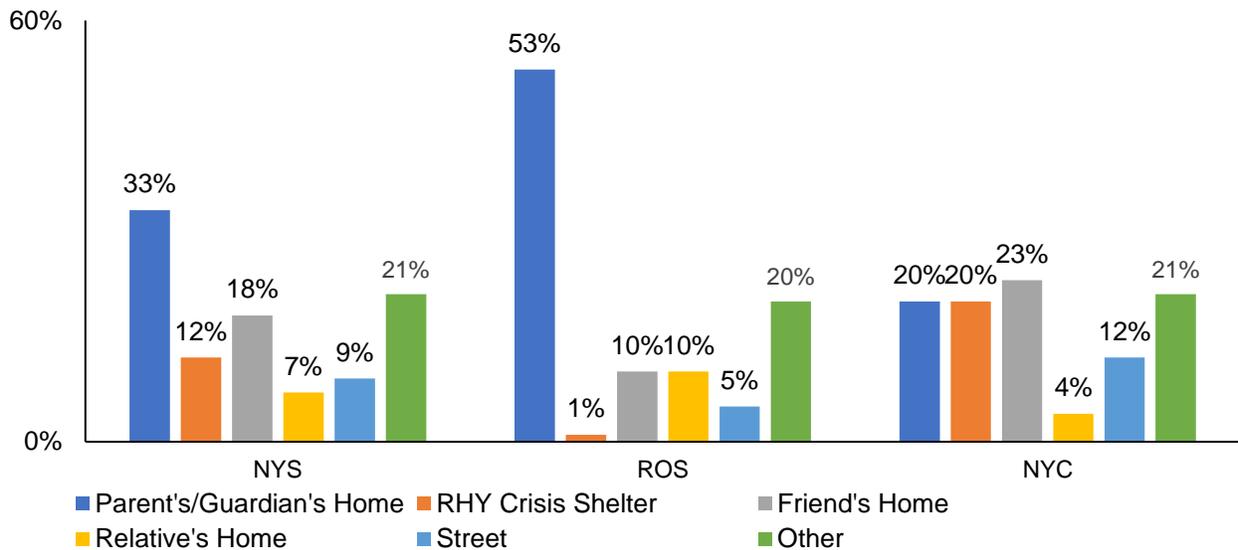
► Figure 9. Youth's Housing Prior to Admission in a Residential RHY Program, 2020



"Other" includes drop-in centers, supportive housing, residential educational setting, including college dorms, staff did not ask, jail/detention, youth chose not to answer, living independently, foster care or group home, hospital, hotel, Safe Haven, mental/behavioral health facility, homeless family or adult shelter, RHY TILP. Options frequently reported under "other" included substance abuse treatment and a young adult shelter (not certified by OCFS).

Youths' pathways into RHY crisis services programs and TILPs varied, as did the experiences of youth in NYC compared to ROS. Statewide, the three most common places of residence prior to admission to an RHY crisis service program were a parent's/guardian's home (33%), a friend's home (18%), and an RHY crisis shelter (12%). In Figure 10, Other (21%) is highlighted as the second most common place of residence prior to entering a crisis services program statewide, although this is a combination of multiple places of residence, which is outlined in the footnote. Just over 50% of youth in ROS admitted to a crisis services program came from the home of a parent or guardian vs. only 20% in NYC. Interestingly, 20% of the youth in NYC reported coming from another crisis services program. See Figure 10.

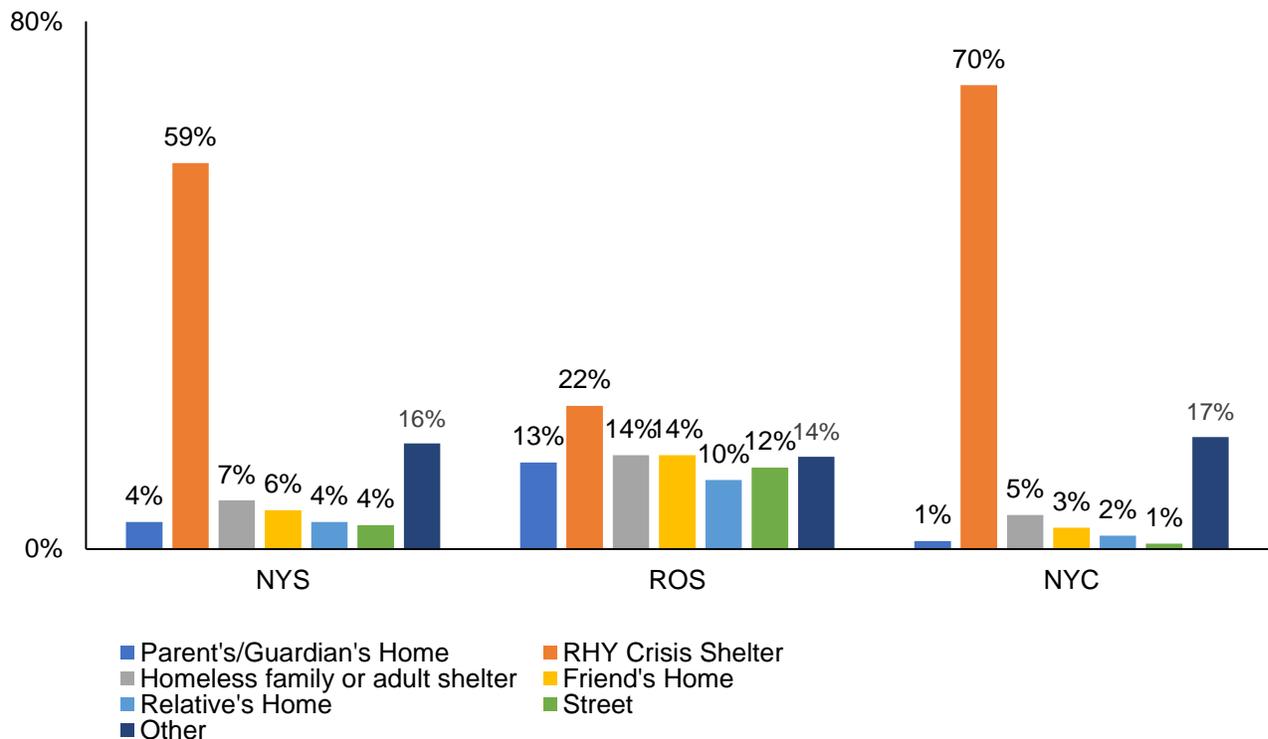
► Figure 10. Youth's Housing Situation Prior to Entering a Crisis Services Program, 2020



"Other" includes mental or behavioral health facilities, foster care or group homes, homeless family or adult shelter, jail/detention, living independently, residential educational setting (including college dorm), supportive housing, RHY TILP, hospital, hotel, safe haven, drop-in center, youth chose not to answer, staff did not ask, other. Options frequently reported under "other" included substance abuse treatment.

Statewide, the three most common places of residence prior to admission to a TILP were RHY crisis shelters (59%), a homeless family or adult shelter (7%), and a friend's home (6%). In Figure 11, Other (16%) is highlighted as the second most common place of residence prior to entering a TILP statewide, although this is a combination of multiple places of residence, which is outlined in the footnote. Other includes substance abuse treatment and a young adult shelter (not certified by OCFS). In NYC, 70% of youth entered a TILP from an RHY crisis services program compared to 22% in ROS. In ROS, many youth reported entering a TILP after staying with a friend or in a homeless family or adult shelter (14% each) or from their parent/guardian's house (13%). See Figure 11 The discrepancies between NYC and ROS may result from the fact that in some localities in ROS, TILPs are the only RHY service available to meet the needs of all runaway and homeless youth. Another factor could be that family and friends of youth in ROS are more likely to have extra space in their homes to provide youth a place to stay compared to kin in NYC.

► Figure 11. Youth's Housing Situation Prior to Entering a TILP, 2020



Responses that represented less than 5% of youth statewide included mental or behavioral health facilities, foster care or group homes, jail/detention, living independently, residential educational setting (including college dorm), supportive housing, RHY TILP, hospital, hotel, safe haven, drop-in center, youth chose not to answer, staff did not ask. Options frequently reported under "other" included substance abuse treatment and a young adult shelter (not certified by OCFS).

Service Needs

Programs reported on the needs of youth served one or more nights during the reporting period, in addition to the need for safe and stable housing. These needs are identified by providers during intake, through assessments, and as they work with youth to meet their goals outlined in their Individualized Service Plans (ISP). More than one service need could be reported for each youth, thus the total number of needs reported exceeds the number of youth served. In total, 26,217 unique needs were reported, averaging six (6) service needs per youth.

Across all RHY programs, independent life skills were identified as a need for 69% of the youth served. Other top needs included conflict resolution with parent(s)/parental figure/guardian/family (68%), food (59%), employment (50%), mental health services (48%), and education (43%).

Services Provided

In addition to shelter and housing, residential RHY programs provide and coordinate a wide variety of services to help meet the needs of youth. In 2020, programs reported on services provided directly by the programs themselves and those for which referrals were made. Statewide, 30,098 unique services were provided to youth directly by RHY programs, and 9,739 referrals for services were made. In total, 39,837 service interventions were made available to youth in residential RHY programs.

The most commonly provided services across all residential RHY programs were food, independent living support/skill development, and positive youth development supports. The most commonly provided referrals across all residential RHY programs were mental health counseling, health care and education, and education services.

More needs were identified and met with services and referrals in TILPs when compared to RHY crisis services programs, which is likely related to the longer lengths of stay available to youth in TILPs. This longer length of stay allows youth to not only stabilize, but also develop trusting relationships with program staff, and time to meet their goals and address their needs more comprehensively than can be accomplished in a crisis-oriented program.

Consistent with 2019, family engagement continues to be an area for improvement. Coordination with child welfare was identified as a gap by both crisis services and TILP programs in 2020. OCFS will be working with RHY programs and child welfare partners to help create a more coordinated approach that supports vulnerable young people. Further training and supports around family engagement will continue to be provided through technical assistance and training.

Lengths of Stay for Discharged Youth

Runaway Youth in RHY Crisis Services Programs

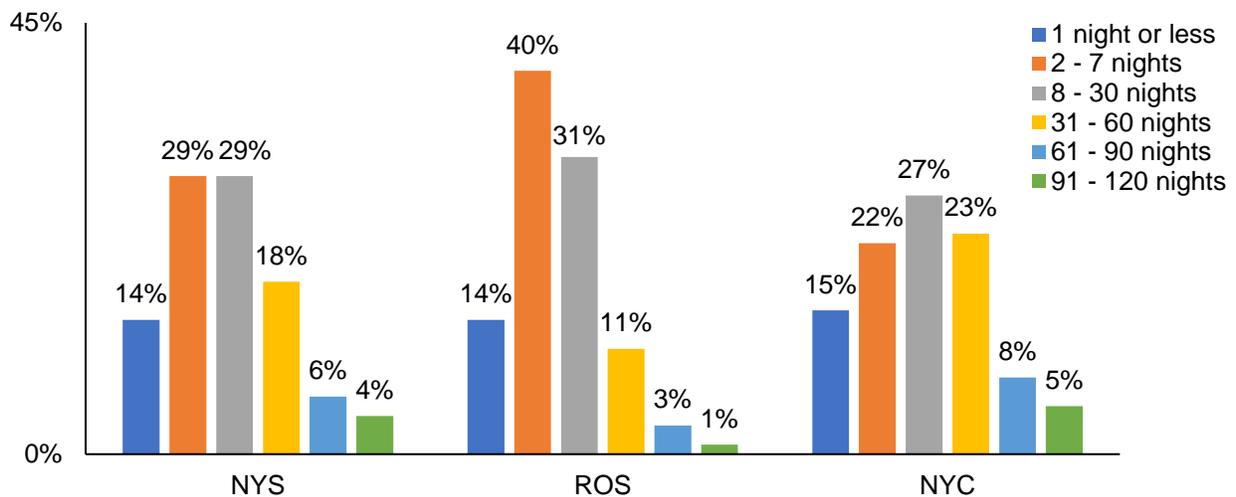
Table 3 summarizes the allowable maximum length of stay (LOS) for runaway youth in RHY programs. The statute differentiates the responses and needs of youth who are considered runaways, for whom there is a safe home to return to, and those available for homeless youth of any age. These differences include maximum LOS for runaway youth, whose options included a maximum LOS of up to 30 days or up to 60 days with written agreement of the youth and their parent, guardian, or custodian, and the approval of the RHY service coordinator. For runaway youth 14 years of age and older, and if authorized in a municipality’s approved comprehensive plan, a maximum LOS of up to 60 days or up to 120 days with written consent from the youth and their parent, guardian, or custodian, and approval of the RHY service coordinator. A program’s maximum allowable LOS must align with the municipality’s comprehensive services plan for the program to remain eligible for municipal RHY funding. The LOS’s selected by counties in 2020 are included in Appendix 5. In 2020, each RHY crisis services program, in partnership with the municipality in which it operated, selected the maximum LOS available to youth who are identified as runaways.

Maximum LOS for Runaway Youth	Maximum LOS With Written Agreement From Youth and Parent, Guardian, or Custodian and Approval of RHY Service Coordinator	Extended stay
30 days	60 days	Runaway youth may remain in an RHY crisis services program beyond

60 days (youth age 14 or older if authorized in the municipality's approved comprehensive plan)	120 days (youth age 14 or older when authorized in a municipality's approved comprehensive plan)	the maximum LOS described under certain circumstances, provided the municipality provides proper notice to OCFS. ²²
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In 2020, the most frequent LOS for youth discharged from RHY crisis services programs were between two and seven nights and eight and 30 nights (29% each). In comparison to ROS, NYC youth tended to stay longer. Thirty-six percent of NYC youth stayed in RHY crisis services programs for 31 nights or longer, compared to only 14% of youth in ROS. See Figure 12. These data are consistent with 2019.

► Figure 12. LOS for Youth Discharged from RHY Crisis Services Programs, 2020



Homeless Youth and Transitional Independent Living Support Programs (TILPs)

In TILPs, maximum LOS options include either 18 months or 24 months when authorized in a municipality's approved comprehensive plan. A program's maximum allowable LOS must align with the municipality's approved comprehensive plan for the program to remain eligible for municipal RHY funding. The LOS selected by counties in 2020 are included in Appendix 5. In 2020, TILPs, in partnership with the municipality in which they operated, selected the maximum LOS available to youth.

Maximum LOS	Additional LOS Available ²³
18 months	Youth may stay in a TILP beyond the maximum LOS in certain circumstances including but not limited to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homeless youth who are not yet 18 years old but have reached the maximum allowable LOS may remain in a

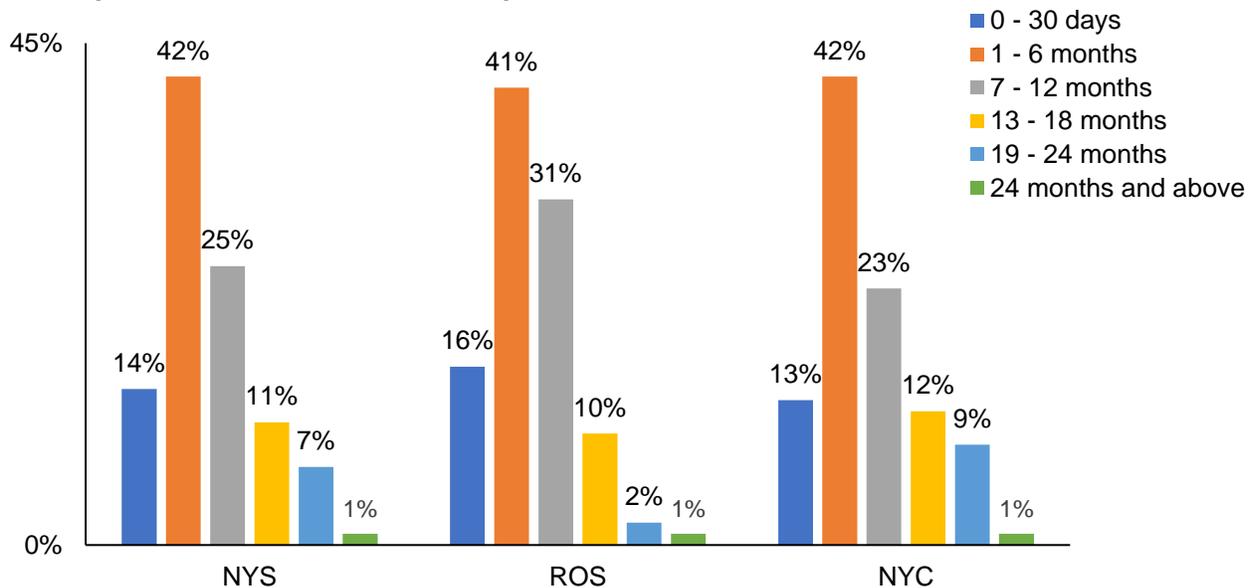
²² 9 NYCRR §§ 165-1.3 and 182-1.9(d) and 19-OCFS-ADM-06.

²³ For additional information please refer to 19-OCFS-ADM-05.

	TILP until the youth turns 18, or for an additional six months if the youth is still under 18 years old.
24 months when authorized in a municipality's approved comprehensive plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth who entered a TILP under the age of 21 may stay in the TILP beyond the maximum LOS when the municipality believes the circumstances warrant the additional services be provided to best meet the needs of the youth.

Statewide, it was most common for youth to remain in a TILP for one to six months (42%). There was almost no variation in LOS when comparing NYC to ROS, with one notable exception: in NYC, 9% of youth stayed in a TILP for longer than 18 months while only 2% of youth in ROS stayed that long. See Figure 13.

► Figure 13. LOS for Youth Discharged from TILPs, 2020

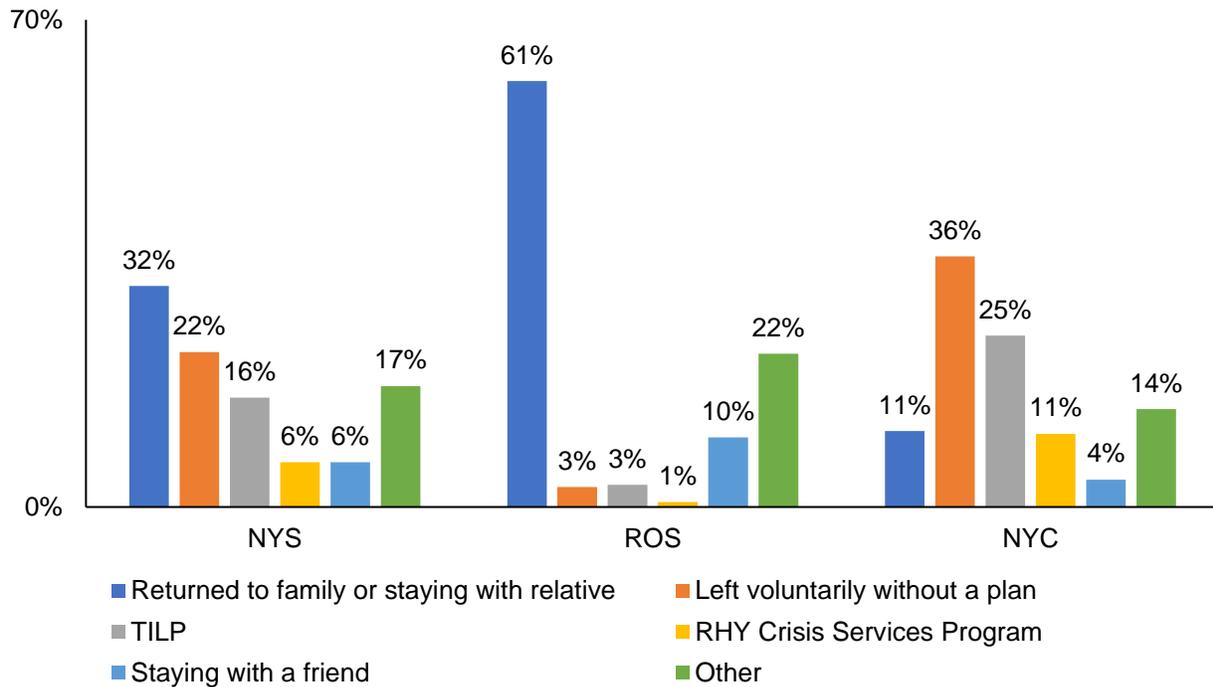


Living Situation at Discharge

Upon discharge, youth resided in a variety of settings. Combined, the two most common living situations at discharge accounted for more than half of youth discharged from RHY crisis services programs in 2020: 32% returned home to family or were staying with a relative, and 22% left voluntarily without a plan. See Figure 14.

There are some noteworthy distinctions regarding youths' living situation at discharge when looking at NYC compared to ROS. In NYC, 36% of the youth who left an RHY crisis services program were reported to have voluntarily left without a plan, while in ROS only three percent of youth left a program for this reason. In ROS 61% of youth returned home to their family or were staying with a relative following discharge. NYC additionally saw a higher percentage of youth transitioning to a TILP or another crisis services program than youth in ROS. This may reflect the age of youth served by programs in ROS vs. NYC or the greater availability of TILPs in NYC compared to ROS. This is similar to what programs reported in 2019.

► Figure 14. Living Situation Following Discharge From Crisis Services Programs, 2020



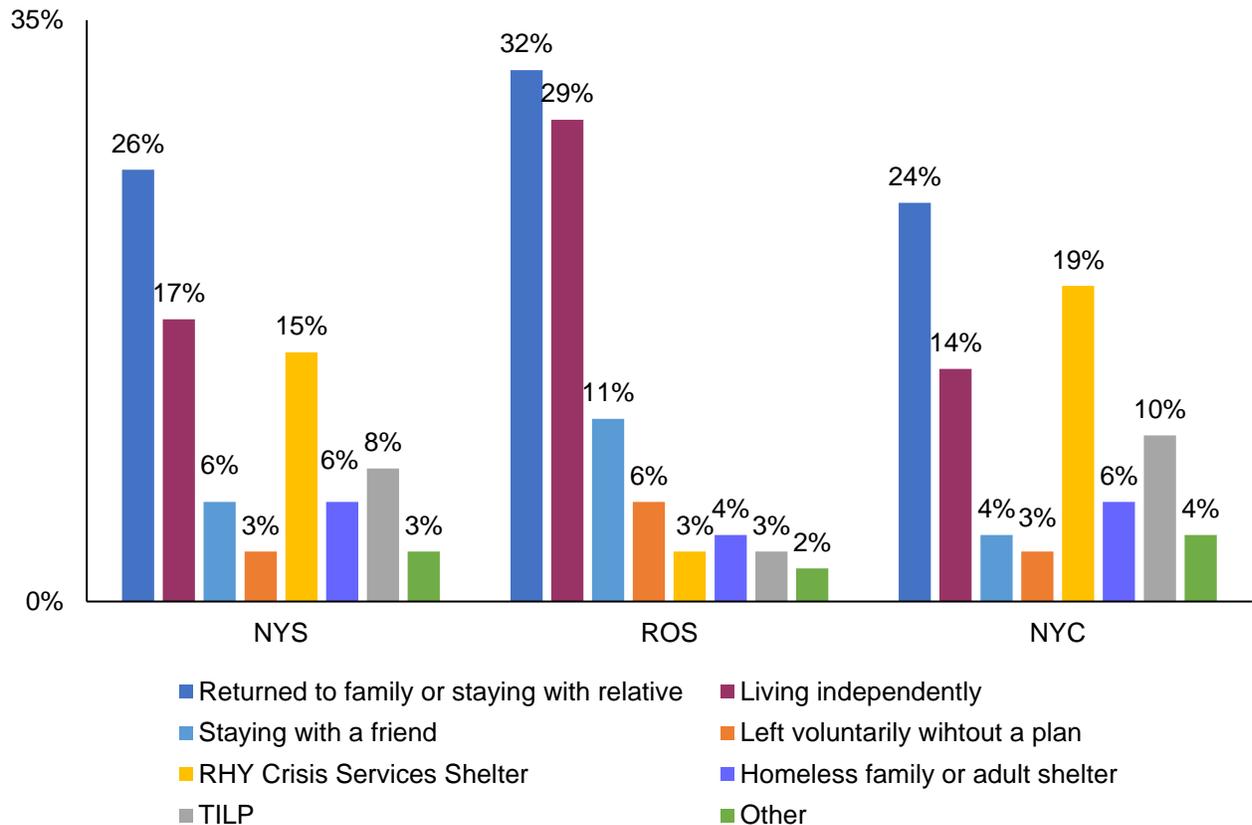
Other responses that represented less than 5% of youth statewide included: foster care or group home, family or adult homeless shelter, jail or detention, known to be on the street, living independently, mental or behavioral health facility, residential education program including college dorm, hospital, military, relocate to another state, Safe Haven, substance abuse facility, and other.

The most common living situation at discharge differed when comparing TILPs to crisis services programs. Following discharge from a TILP:

- 26% of youth returned to family or were staying with a relative;
- 17% of youth were living independently; and
- 15% of youth discharged to a RHY Crisis Services Shelter.

Again, there are noteworthy regional distinctions regarding youths’ living situation at discharge. In NYC, 24% of youth returned to family or were staying with a relative and another 19% left a TILP to go to an RHY crisis shelter. In ROS, 32% returned to family or were staying with a relative, while 29% left to live independently. See Figure 15.

► Figure 15. Living Situation Following Discharge From TILPs, 2020



Responses captured in “Other” included answers such as, drop-in centers, relocations out of state, and unknown.

2020 Non-Residential RHY Program Data

Non-residential services for runaway and homeless youth take many forms, including, but not limited to, street outreach, drop-in services, case management, provisions to help meet basic needs (housing, food, clothing, hygiene products), medical and mental health supports, vocational, educational, and employment support, and hotlines. Some programs also reported providing services targeted to the LGBTQ+ youth population. It should be noted that the data collected from non-residential RHY programs represent duplicate contacts made with youth, rather than the number of individual youth served. OCFS does not certify non-residential programs.

In 2020, 29 non-residential programs reported data on youth served to OCFS. These programs served approximately 4,700 youth through drop-in centers or case management services, received approximately 5,800 contacts via hotlines, and made approximately 1,900 youth contacts through street outreach.

In 2020, the primary reasons youth sought services were the following:

- Basic needs (housing, food, clothing, hygiene products)
- Transportation
- Family conflict

- Service coordination support (LDSS, social security, etc.)
- Employment services
- Independent living skills
- Educational needs,
- Referral services (mental health and substance abuse counseling, transitional housing, health care)

Conclusion

Youth and young adults in New York State continue to need the supports and services provided through RHY programs. The data presented here reflects the critical work done by these programs to safeguard some of our state's most vulnerable young people. These programs provide much more than shelter—they meet thousands of youth's basic needs, provide supports, opportunities for positive youth development, and stabilization in a wholly voluntary environment.

The data show opportunities for improvement of practice, and areas of future inquiry, particularly regarding the gap between the reported sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression of the youth served in New York State and what is reflected in the literature. The gap may indicate a lack of comfort on the part of youth to come out, unaffirming environments, or some other barrier for LGBTQ+ youth engaging in services. The data also reflect that the burden of homelessness and housing instability falls disproportionately on Black, brown, and multiracial youth, and that RHY programs are critical resources in supporting this disenfranchised population of young people.

Similarly, there are opportunities to enhance the practice around family engagement, mediation and connection, and to improve coordination for youth who are or were previously in foster care. OCFS is committed to continuing efforts to improve practice and outcomes for homeless youth and young adults.

Appendix 1: Programs by Region at Year End 2020

Counties by Region	Program Type	# of programs	# of beds	# of dependent beds	maximum # of youth
Albany Region Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Delaware, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery, Otsego, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Warren, Washington	RHY Crisis Shelters	4	37	4	36
	Interim Family Programs	0	0	0	0
	TILP- Group Residence	2	18	5	13
	TILP- Supported Residence	5	8	1	8
	Non-residential services: drop-in center, case management, support for runaway and homeless youth's basic living needs				
Albany Region Subtotals		11	63	10	57
Buffalo Region Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, Wyoming	RHY Crisis Shelters	3	37	0	37
	Interim Family Programs	0	0	0	0
	TILP- Group Residence	3	26	0	26
	TILP- Supported Residence	2	4	0	4
	Non-residential services: drop-in center, case management, support for runaway and homeless youth's behavioral health, educational, vocational, and basic living needs				
Buffalo Region Subtotals		8	67	0	67
New York City Region Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, Richmond	RHY Crisis Shelters	12	453	15	438
	Interim Family Programs	0	0	0	0
	TILP- Group Residence	30	451	30	421
	TILP- Supported Residence	11	21	2	19
	Non-residential services: case management, drop-in centers, support for runaway and homeless youth's behavioral health, educational, vocational needs, health care services				
New York City Subtotals		53	925	47	878
Rochester Region Chemung, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario,	RHY Crisis Shelters	2	27	0	27
	Interim Family Programs	1	2	0	2
		1	16	8	8

Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Yates	TILP- Group Residence	12	15	0	15
	TILP- Supported Residence				
	Non-residential services: case management, support for runaway and homeless youth's educational, vocational, and basic living needs				
Rochester Region Subtotals		16	60	8	52
Counties by Region	Program Type	# of programs	# of beds	# of dependent beds	maximum # of youth
Syracuse Region Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, St. Lawrence, Tioga, Tompkins	RHY Crisis Shelters	4	41	1	40
	Interim Family Programs	3	9	0	9
	TILP- Group Residence	1	19	12	7
	TILP- Supported Residence	24	71	23	55
	Non-residential services: case management, educational support, street outreach				
Syracuse Region Subtotals		31	133	36	111
Westchester Region Dutchess, Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Suffolk, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester	RHY Crisis Shelters	7	79	2	78
	Interim Family Programs	1	4	0	4
	TILP- Group Residence	6	54	14	40
	TILP- Supported Residence	0	0	0	0
	Non-residential services: drop-in center, hotline, case management, behavioral health support				
Westchester Subtotals		14	137	16	122
Statewide	RHY Crisis Shelters	31	674	22	656
	Interim Family Programs	5	15	0	15
	TILP- Group Residence	43	584	69	525
	TILP- Supported Residence	54	119	26	101
Statewide Total		133	1,392²⁴	117	1,287

²⁴ These figures represent certified bed capacity as opposed to operating capacity. In parent and child programs, the program is certified to serve a certain number of youth, dependents, and a combination of youth and dependents. For

Appendix 2: Agencies With Certified Residential RHY Programs in 2020

Albany Region

- CAPTAIN Youth and Family Services
- Equinox, Inc.
- Saint Anne Institute
- SAFE Inc., of Schenectady
- Warren/Washington Counties Homeless Youth Coalition, Inc.

Buffalo Region

- Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.
- Compass House
- Pinnacle Community Services, Inc.
- Plymouth Crossroads
- Teaching and Restoring Youth, Inc.

New York City Region

- Ali Forney Center
- CORE Services Group, Inc.
- Covenant House
- Diaspora Community Services, Inc.
- Edwin Gould Services for Children and Families
- Girls Educational and Mentoring Services
- Good Shepherd Services, Inc.
- IMEINU, Inc.
- Project Hospitality, Inc.
- Rising Ground, Inc.
- Safe Horizon, Inc.
- SCO Family of Services
- Sheltering Arms Children and Family Services, Inc.
- The Children's Village

Rochester Region

- Salvation Army
- The Center for Youth Services, Inc.

example, such a program could serve one youth with nine dependents on one night and seven youth with three dependents on another night.

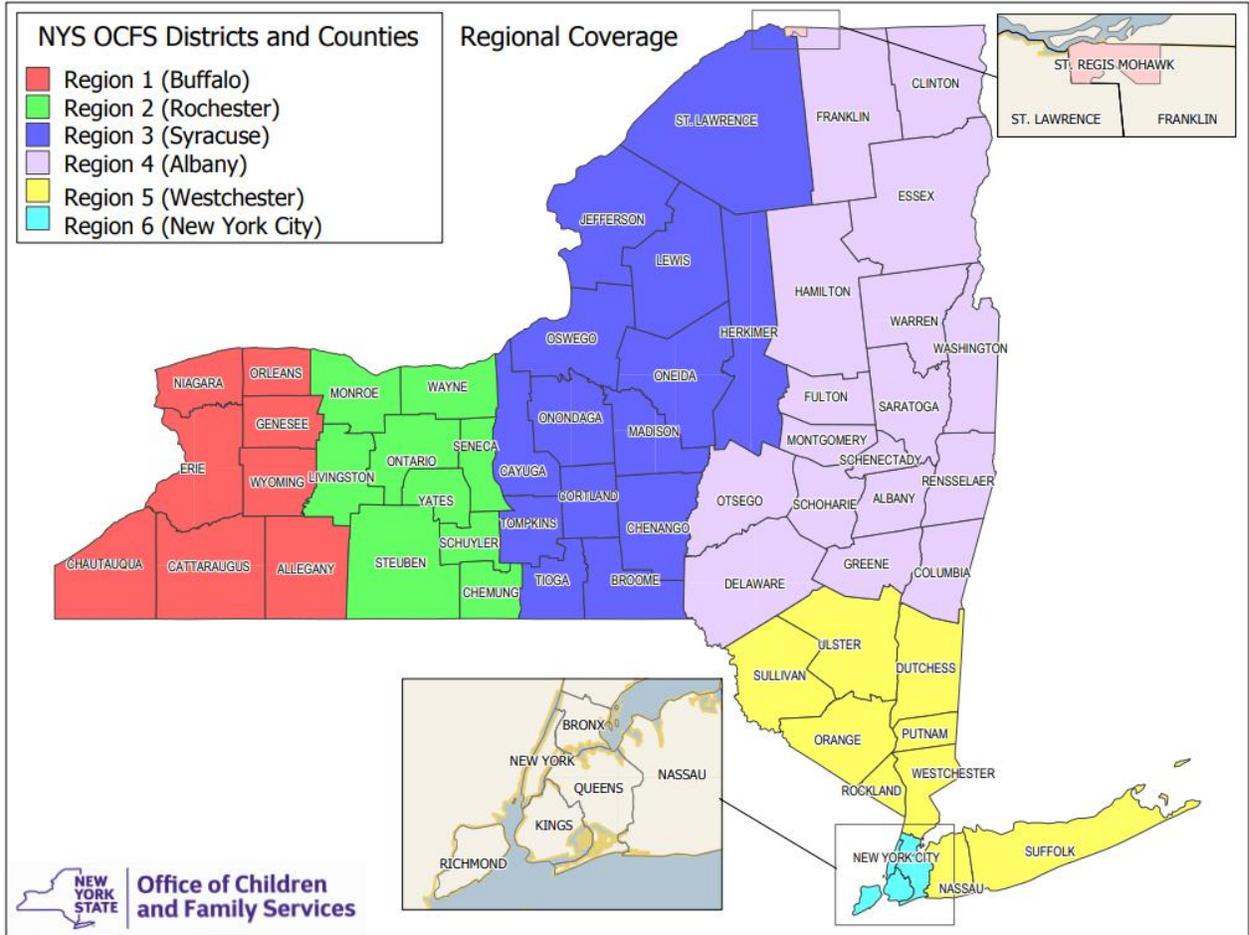
Syracuse Region

- Catholic Charities of Broome County
- Catholic Charities of Herkimer County
- Catholic Charities of Oneida/Madison Counties
- Family and Children's Service of Ithaca
- Integrated Community Alternatives Network, Inc.
- Oswego County Opportunities, Inc.
- The Learning Web, Inc.
- The Salvation Army, Syracuse Area Services

Westchester Region

- Family and Children's Association
- Family of Woodstock, Inc.
- Green Chimneys Children's Services
- HONOR EHG, Inc.
- Hope for Youth
- Hudson River Housing, Inc.
- Huntington Youth Bureau Youth Development Research Institute, Inc.
- Mercy Center Ministries
- The Children's Village

Appendix 3: New York State Regional Map



Appendix 5: Length of Stay (LOS) for Residential RHY Programs as Allowed by Municipalities in 2020

County	Did the county decide to allow crisis service programs the option to extend the maximum LOS?	Did the county decide to allow TILPs the option to extend the maximum LOS?	Did the county decide to allow RHY programs to serve homeless young adults? *
Albany	Yes	Yes	Yes
Broome	Not Applicable	No	Yes
Chautauqua	Yes	No	Yes
Dutchess	No	Not Applicable	No
Erie	No	Yes	Yes
Herkimer	Yes	Not Applicable	No
Madison	Yes	Not Applicable	Yes
Monroe	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nassau	No	No	Yes
Niagara	No	Not Applicable	Yes
Oneida	Yes	Yes	Yes
Onondaga	Yes	No	Yes
Orange	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oswego	Yes	No	Yes
Putnam	Yes	No	No
Saratoga	Yes	Not Applicable	No
Schenectady	Yes	Yes	Yes
Schuyler	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Yes
Suffolk	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tompkins	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ulster	No	Yes	Yes
Warren/Washington	No	Yes	Yes
Westchester	Yes	Not Applicable	No
NYC	Yes	Yes	No

* Non-residential programs are able to serve homeless young adults based on this decision; residential RHY programs are additionally required to be certified to serve young adults before serving this population.