



**Empire State Coalition of Youth
and Family Services**

**A Count
of
Homeless Youth
in
New York City**

Prepared by Lance Freeman and Darrick Hamilton

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Dr. Freeman has published several articles in refereed journals on issues related to neighborhood change, urban poverty, housing policy, urban sprawl and residential segregation. Dr. Freeman is also the author of the book *There Goes the Hood: Views of Gentrification from the Ground Up* by Temple University Press. Dr. Freeman also obtained extensive experience working with community development groups while working as a Community Development coordinator for the North Carolina Institute of Minority Economic Development and as a Research Associate at the Center for Urban and Regional Studies in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Dr. Freeman also has professional experience working as a City Planner for the New York City Housing Authority, and as a budget analyst for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Last night while you were home in your bed

Over 3,800 young people were homeless in New York City;

1,600 of those young people spent the night outside, in an abandoned building, at a transportation site or in a car, bus, train or some other vehicle;

150 of our children spent the night with a sex work client.

For the first time New York City has a comprehensive look at its young homeless population and the results are startling.

In July of 2007 Empire State Coalition surveyed over 1,000 youth who were either homeless or at-risk for homelessness. The surveys were done at youth programs, at runaway shelters and transitional living programs, at adult homeless programs, on the street, and at other miscellaneous sites. The survey consisted of 55 questions including questions about age, reasons for homelessness, sexual orientation, history of foster care, educational attainment, current living situation and age when they first began living away from their parent/guardian. Surveys were done by trained volunteers who had received certification to do research on human subjects by the Institutional Review Board of Columbia University, the same Board that approved the study. The project research team, Dr. Darrick Hamilton, Milano Graduate Center of the New School for Social Research, Dr. Lance Freeman, Columbia University, Margo Hirsch and Jim Bolas, both of Empire State Coalition collected and analyzed the data.

Over 1,000 surveys were completed. There were 7 duplicates and a number of unusable surveys which left a net of 945 surveys to be analyzed.

Results indicate that there are some populations of youth that are grossly overrepresented in the homeless youth populations. These groups include: gay, lesbian and bisexual youth; youth who are transgender; minority youth; youth with some history of foster care; and youth who have been through either the juvenile justice or criminal justice systems.

The vast majority of the youth we interviewed were undereducated and unprepared for self sufficiency. A full 50% did not have a High School diploma or an equivalency. And while an additional 23% stated they were in school or a GED program, it is unknown how many of those will be able to complete even that minimal education. Youth who are connected to a program specifically designed for homeless youth are much better able to access needed supports

and services, sadly, less than one-quarter of the youth surveyed utilized these services.

The average age of the youth we interviewed was 20. The average age of when these youth first left home was 16. Almost all of the youth we met struggled in and out of homelessness for that entire four years.

There were a great deal of challenges in trying to undertake a survey of this magnitude. While volunteers reached out to as many locations and service providers as possible, many agencies were reluctant or unable to assist in locating young people who might have qualified for an interview. Large sections of the city were not visited and the vast majority of street interviews took place in Manhattan. The project was largely unsuccessful in finding and interviewing younger runaways. Anecdotally we have been told by school guidance counselors and others of the numbers of youth who are “couch surfing” and “making do”. Due to the timing of the survey (July) it was impossible to begin to outreach to this younger group as they were not in school and not in touch with traditional runaway services.

Continued work needs to be done to find and engage this younger population before they become street-involved, such as adding a homelessness-relative question to the Board of Education’s Youth Risk Behavior Survey, and not just looking at youth homelessness in the context of family homelessness.

The lessons learned from this project must not be ignored. We need to do a much better job locating and working with youth when they first become homeless. We need to examine why certain populations are overrepresented in the population and develop responses. Churches, schools and communities must work together to insure that youth who are gay, lesbian or bi-sexual are not forced to flee from abuse and harassment and that these youth have safe and supportive places to socialize. The same is true for youth who are transgender. We need to support families in their communities so that a crisis does not lead to a young person becoming homeless. We need to educate and support employers so they will be able to hire homeless youth and work with them through their period of transition to stability. Finally, we need permanent housing that is appropriate for adolescents and that includes supportive services that include education, employment and social skills to help youth succeed in the future.

One of the very important issues we did not tackle in the survey were the mental health needs of homeless youth. We know anecdotally that untreated mental illness is a factor in causing youth to become homeless. Conversely, we also know that homelessness exacerbates or even causes mental health problems. The mental health concerns of our young homeless population need to be addressed and we will not be able to make a meaningful dent into the problem without tackling this issue.

Empire State Coalition is grateful to each of the youth who took the time to speak to one of our interviewers. The youth were amazingly honest and generous with us and were interested in helping the next generation of homeless youth find safe and supportive services and avoid the troubles and struggles they have suffered and continue to suffer.

Introduction

This study results from a pilot effort to estimate the size of the unaccompanied homeless youth (hereafter referred to as homeless youths) living in New York City.

The aim of the study was to produce a reliable estimate of the magnitude of the size of homeless youth population. Due to resource constraints described in more detail below, this estimate does not purport to represent a complete census of the population of homeless youths. Instead by canvassing the common gathering places of homeless youths we produce a reasonable estimate of the size of the most visible proportion of the homeless youth population—those that sleep in public spaces and make use of social services targeting this population. In addition, we make use of information gathered from a survey of service providers who collaborated on this project with the Empire State Coalition to extrapolate beyond our actual count of homeless youth.

We actually counted 945 homeless youths during our study. Using information gathered from our agency survey we estimate that there are at least an additional 2,881 homeless youths that were not counted in our efforts. In the next section we describe our motivation for attempting to estimate the size of the homeless youth population. The third section describes our methodology for counting homeless youth. Section four discusses the results of this effort as well describing some salient characteristics of the homeless youth population. The fifth section describes our agency survey including both the methodological approach and the results. In section six we utilize the results of the agency survey to produce an estimate of the number of homeless youths based on the number who make use of services provided by the many agencies that collaborated with Empire State Coalition on this project. Finally, in the conclusion we discuss the implications of our findings.

Background

Providing services to homeless youths is hampered significantly by the lack of knowledge about the size of this population. Most prior efforts to count the homeless are not adequate for counting homeless youth because of the differing behavioral patterns of adult homeless and homeless youth. For example, homeless youth more typically couch surf, meaning they stay in someone else's home, until they have exhausted their welcome, thereafter moving on to another household who will provide them with a place to sleep. Moreover, homeless youths are typically homeless for differing reasons and need different services than homeless adults. In addition, homeless youth tend to blend into the general youth population in terms of dress and grooming and are therefore less likely to be identified as homeless.

There appears to be a growing trend of lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender youths and youth with mental health issues finding themselves without a home. Policy makers and social service providers who work with homeless youth are always confronted with the valid question of, “*Just how many homeless youth are there in NYC?*” The answer to this question is crucial for planning and program development. Without an adequate sense of the size of the homeless youth population it is impossible to gauge whether current levels of service provision are adequate. The service provider community is forced to guess *just how many homeless youths* are in need of services.

While individual homeless youth service providers recognize the importance of counting the number of homeless youths, these organizations do not have the staff time to invest in a community survey or an independent “count” of homeless youth and end up falling back upon the statistic of “20,000” from Shaffer and Caton’s 1984 report to the Ittleson Foundation on Runaway and Homeless Youth in New York City. In a similar vein, the Department of Youth and Community Development’s Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) statistics only come from the agencies they oversee and, therefore, the number of youth served in those programs. Countless others, who do not receive services, remain unknown.

In the *2003 State of the City’s Homeless Youth Report* from The New York City Association of Homeless and Street-Involved Youth Organizations (<http://www.empirestatecoalition.org/report.html>), Shaffer, and Caton’s number is referenced several times. However, an estimated number of over 30,000 is suggested a couple of times, specifically in the chapter on “Street Outreach”. This number was extrapolated from a formula produced by The National Development Research Institute that was based upon street outreach contacts from a study they conducted in 1994, and using snapshot data from 2000 from the three largest street outreach programs in the city.

Homeless youth service providers have always believed there was a need to go beyond the numbers gleaned from street outreach programs and look at all unaccompanied homeless youth, whether they are in an emergency shelter or are living on a friend’s sofa and haven’t accepted the fact that they are homeless. This statistic would be welcomed by the City Council along with numerous grantors and policy makers both locally and nationally.

We have tried relying upon generalized homeless counts to address the youth aged 13-24 that are homeless in NYC. Unfortunately, these generalized counts do not consider youth who are *not* connected to a parent or are *not* a parent themselves. For example, last year’s street count undertaken by the New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS) estimated 700 homeless youth. The failure to identify and count homeless youth is a direct result of a lack of understanding of the difference between youth and homeless adult populations. Based on years of experience working with the homeless youth

population, The Empire State Coalition of Youth and Family Services and The NYC Association of Homeless and Street-Involved Youth Organizations have found the estimates of DHS to be drastically inaccurate.

With a more accurate count of homeless youth funders, policy makers and service providers will be better able to target resources to homeless youths.

Methodology

Our study relied upon a methodology developed by the Garden State Coalition for Youth and Family Concerns and the Department of Housing and Urban Development to count homeless youths. This methodology was developed with input from numerous social service providers and researchers at The New School. In addition, we consulted with professionals and outreach workers familiar with our target population as well as social scientists experienced in counting similar populations.

Definition of Homeless Youth

The experience of homeless youth advocates and service providers led us to define our target population as 13-24 year old youth who are homeless. Although the age of emancipation in New York State is 18, many service providers find that young adults also are in need of services similar to those provided to youths under age 18.¹ Therefore, the count of homeless youth is designed to target all homeless under the age of 24 who are not living with, or under the jurisdiction of a parent or guardian. Thus, a homeless youth was defined as an individual, living separated from their parent/guardian who has not yet reached their 24th birthday who: resides in a program for homeless persons or lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence which may include living in a motel, hotel, or abandoned building, or public or private place not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation.

Our approach to counting this population was based on a two pronged effort:

1. Enumerating Homeless Youths in Public Spaces

As this population often lacks a stable place of residence we needed to target them where they are. Our first step was to identify specific places where homeless youth congregate. We achieved this through the use of focus groups with homeless youths. Focus groups were held on the premises of several organizations of the New York City Association of Homeless and Street Involved Youth Organizations (NYAHSIYO). Volunteers for the focus groups were recruited from among the homeless youths who are clients of these organizations. Program staff asked their clients if they would agree to participate

¹ For information on the rationale for addressing the needs of older homeless youth, see "Homeless Young Adults Ages 18-24: Examining Service Delivery Adaptations", *National Health Care for the Homeless Council*, September 2004.

in a focus group on homeless youth. The focus groups were conducted by the staff of the organizations of the NYAHSIYO. The focus group asked participants to identify places where homeless youths congregate. The questions used to guide the focus groups are available in Appendix A. In all, five focus groups were conducted. This data was used to identify target locations to conduct street canvassing. Various locations in the five boroughs were identified.²

Over the period commencing June 28, 2007 and ending August 10, 2007, teams of enumerators targeted areas identified in the focus groups to count homeless youth. Each enumeration team consisted of at least one youth service professional. Youths that were identified as potentially being homeless (based on their being in an area where homeless youth are known to congregate) were interviewed. They were asked a series of questions (see survey in Appendix B) to ascertain their homeless status. All contacted youth were provided with information about services available to homeless youth, including, in most cases, a listing of resources (see attached brochure).

2. An enumeration of homeless youths utilizing services provided by Collaborating Agencies

In addition to street canvassing, homeless youth were also be recruited through service providers. Appendix C lists the service providers who participated in our effort. The staff at these institutions asked their clients if they were willing to volunteer to be interviewed. Volunteers were enumerated by a team as described above. Most agencies choose to provide volunteer respondents a five dollar stipend, but a small minority of agencies chose not to do so.

Duplication

As our count of homeless youths lacked a sampling frame or population list some effort was necessary to avoid duplicated counts. Especially since a nominal stipend was provided there may have been some incentive for youths to participate more than once in the survey. However, because we wanted to assure anonymity and encourage participation, identifying information such as names or last addresses were not collected. Thus, we produced a unique identifier that would nevertheless be unlikely to compromise the anonymity of the respondents. To prevent duplication we used four ID markers: date of birth, county of birth, mother's initials and respondent body markers such as scars, tattoos and body piercings.

Methodological Caveats

Ideally, we would have attempted to count all youths who met our definition of homeless. This could best be achieved through some combination of street canvassing and intercept interviews at institutions frequented by homeless youths and by using a snowball sampling, a process where each homeless youth would be asked to identify other homeless youth. The reason a

² Due to the vulnerability of homeless youth, we have chosen not to provide those locations in this report.

household survey would also be needed is that undoubtedly some homeless youths neither congregate in public spaces nor visit service providers. Instead, they might survive by “couch surfing.” That is, they stay with someone for a few nights here, someone else for a few nights, and so on. A household survey, if successful in gaining cooperation from respondents (admittedly a very big if) could identify this population by asking respondents if anyone meeting our definition of a homeless youth had spent the last night in their house.

Resource constraints precluded our conducting a household survey. Consequently, homeless youths who neither congregate in the public spaces we canvassed, don't utilize services provided by the participating agencies, nor associate with homeless youths that we contacted had no way of being included in our count. Just how large of portion of all homeless youths fall into this category we do not know. But in the early 1990's, National Development Research Institute (NDRI), Inc. conducted the Youth at Risk (YAR) study, a study of street youth in New York City. NDRI found that only about 40 percent of street youth in the study had ever been contacted by an outreach worker (usually once to four times a month). Based on this, we might conclude that the number of homeless youths who were not included in our study is substantial.

Survey Results

In addition to counting homeless youth, a survey was administered to ascertain demographic information such as their race, sex, sexual orientation, age, educational attainment, etc., as well as information like their experience with the criminal justice system, foster care system, and where they spend their nights. Although not a random survey, this information provides some details on a population that remains largely hidden.

Table 1 displays some basic demographic characteristics of the sample. Beginning with race/ethnicity, the overwhelming majority of the sample indicated that they are black or Hispanic; 45 percent identified black and 24 percent identified Hispanic. Less than one percent of the sample listed white, and about six percent listed Native American. The homeless youth problem in New York City seems largely to be concentrated amongst blacks and Latinos, particularly amongst blacks. However, it should be noted that 24 percent of the survey responders offered unclear race/ethnicity responses and thus could be any race/ethnicity.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics		
	Obs.	Percent
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>		
Black	421	44.55
Hispanic	225	23.81
White	7	0.74
Native American	58	6.14
Other	10	1.06
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	224	23.70
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	412	43.60
Female	472	49.95
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	61	6.46
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>		
Heterosexual	556	58.84
Homosexual	168	17.78
Bisexual	100	10.58
Unsure/Other	16	1.69
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	105	11.11
<i>Transgender Status</i>		
Not Transgender	727	76.93
Yes/Sometimes/Probably	50	5.29
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	168	17.78
<i>Educational Attainment</i>		
Attend Sch/GED program last month	219	23.17
Attained less than HS Diploma/GED	476	50.37
Attained HS Diploma/ED	238	25.19
Attained more than HS Diploma/GED	30	3.17

The next three panels of the table describe the gender, sexual orientation, and transgender status of the sample. Slightly more respondents indicated that they are female, 50 percent, while 44 percent indicated that they are male with roughly six percent having no interpretable or refused responses. The majority of the respondents indicated that they are heterosexual, however, nearly 30 percent reported homosexual or bisexual orientation. About five percent of the respondents reported that they are probably transgender at least sometimes,

while another 18 percent did not give a definitive 'no' response to the transgender question; their response was refused, don't know, unclear or missing. Given the sensitivity and stigma associated with transgender status, perhaps there are additional transgender observations in the refused, don't know, unclear or missing responses. Despite the fact that most of the respondents reported being heterosexual or not transgender, a sizable portion of the homeless youth respondents indicated that they are not strictly heterosexual and non-transgender. Hence, the survey does suggest that sexual orientation and gender identity are important risk factors for becoming a homeless youth.

The last panel of the table describes the educational attainment of the respondents. About half of the respondents have not attained a high school diploma/GED nor enrolled in school (i.e. are high school dropouts), 23 percent are still enrolled in school and a little over three percent had additional schooling beyond high school. Not surprisingly, low education is prevalent among homelessness youth.

Next, Table 2, displays the average age for the sample overall, as well as the average ages for four key demographic characteristics. The characteristics are race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity or transgender status. Throughout the results section of this report, we examine how these four key factors relate to other homeless youth attributes in order to gain insights about variations across these demographic groups. In the case of age, both the median and mean age of the survey respondents is 20, and there is not a great deal of variation from 20 when the other four demographic factors – race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and transgender status – are considered.

Table 2: Average Age				
Group	Obs.	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.
All	883	20	19.88	1.95
Race Ethnicity				
Black	416	20	19.74	1.85
Hispanic	220	20	19.93	1.97
White	7	21	20.43	2.70
Native American	58	20	20.05	2.06
Other	9	20	20.00	0.87
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	173	20	20.05	2.14
Gender				
Male	406	20	20.00	2.02
Female	467	20	19.73	1.87
Sexual Orientation				
Heterosexual	551	20	19.78	1.86
Homo/Bisexual	267	20	20.01	2.10
Unsure/Other	15	20	20.40	1.64
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	54	19.5	20.02	2.18
Transgender Status				
Not Transgender	721	20	19.80	1.89
Yes/Sometimes/Probability	50	21	20.72	2.38
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	112	20	19.98	2.08

The next two tables present information with regards to the average age in which the survey respondent first moved away from their parent or guardian, and the length of time the survey respondent has been away from their parent or guardian. In response to the question concerning the age in which the respondent first moved away, Table 3 indicates that the mean age of the 856 respondents to the question is close to 15, while the median age is 16. The rest of the table reveals a similar median of about 16 for the various race/ethnic, gender and sexual orientation groups. A notable exception is the category indicating that the respondent is yes/probably/sometimes a transgender youth. The median age that those respondents moved away from their parents or guardian was only 14, a full two years earlier than the overall sample median.

Table 3: The Average Age Youth First Moved Away from Parents/Guardians				
Group	Obs.	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.
All	856	16	14.61	4.44
Race Ethnicity				
Black	405	16	14.27	4.75
Hispanic	216	16	15.44	3.51
White	7	15	13.24	5.46
Native American	56	16	13.14	5.46
Other	10	16.5	16.1	3.41
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	162	16	14.44	4.69
Gender				
Male	395	16	14.27	4.59
Female	452	16	14.89	4.27
Sexual Orientation				
Heterosexual	537	16	14.68	4.56
Homo/Bisexual	257	16	14.40	4.26
Unsure/Other	16	17	15.25	3.87
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	46	15	14.61	4.32
Transgender Status				
Not Transgender	695	16	14.63	4.45
Yes/Sometimes/Probability	48	14	13.54	5.17
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	113	16	14.91	4.06

The first panel of Table 4 displays the average number of months that the respondent is living away from their parents or guardian. There is a great deal of variance in how youths answered this question, which is apparent by the large standard deviation of 36 months, and the large distance between the median score of 12 months and more than double mean score of 26 months. The fact that the mean is so much larger than the median indicates that the distribution of most recent months away from parents or guardians is positively skewed. Thus, there are some youths that have been living away from home for well over 24 months. The next sets of panels in the table detail information by race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity. In terms of race and ethnicity, black youths had the lowest mean number of months away, about 23, while with the exception of whites (there were only seven white responders), the other racial and ethnic groups had a mean in excess of 28 months. In terms of gender, the male mean exceeded the female mean by about five months. Homosexual or bisexual youths had longer mean months away than heterosexual youth, about six months more.

Table 4: Average Months Away from Parents/Guardian: Most Recent Time Away				
Group	Obs.	Median	Mean	Std. Dev.
All	708	12	26.06	35.94
Race Ethnicity				
Black	330	11.5	22.60	30.65
Hispanic	176	12	28.44	42.04
White	7	30	26.14	24.29
Native American	51	12	29.71	42.20
Other	7	8	30.57	49.49
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	137	15	29.72	36.40
Gender				
Male	339	12	28.58	38.22
Female	364	12	24.03	33.74
Sexual Orientation				
Heterosexual	446	12	23.26	32.42
Homo/Bisexual	216	12	29.13	39.58
Unsure/Other	10	24	33.20	36.36
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	36	24	40.28	48.92
Transgender Status				
Not Transgender	585	12	24.93	34.13
Yes/Sometimes/Probability	37	30	52.19	58.28
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	86	11	22.48	31.40

Lastly, homeless youth that reported that they are transgender also reported the longest median and mean most months away from their parent or guardian, 30 and 52 months respectively. Their mean and median score is more than double the scores for the overall sample. According to Tables 3 and 4, transgender youths tended to move away earlier and currently live away longer than other youths in the sample.

The next set of results describes the relationships between race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and transgender identity. Table 5 indicates that the distributions of gender, sexual orientation and transgender identity for the two largest racial/ethnic groups, blacks and Latinos, are similar with slightly more blacks reporting themselves to be female, heterosexual and not transgender. In contrast, there is a greater difference in sexual orientation and transgender status by sex. Males were a little over 10 percentage points less likely to report being heterosexual and a little less than 10 percentage points less likely to indicate that they are not transgender relative to females. Hence, these results

are suggestive that sexual orientation and transgender identity may be more prevalent for male in comparison to female homeless youths.

Table 5: The Relationship between Race/Ethnicity and Gender, and Sexual Orientation and Transgender Status				
	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
	Black		Hispanic	
Sexual Orientation				
Heterosexual	274	65.08	139	61.78
Homo/Bisexual	117	27.79	71	31.56
Unsure/Other	5	1.19	3	1.33
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	25	5.94	0	0.00
Transgender Status				
Not Transgender	345	81.95	180	80.00
Yes/Sometimes/Probably	31	7.36	10	4.44
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	45	10.69	35	15.56
	Male		Female	
Sexual Orientation				
Heterosexual	236	57.28	319	67.58
Homo/Bisexual	149	36.17	116	24.58
Unsure/Other	9	2.18	5	1.05
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	18	4.37	32	6.78
Transgender Status				
Not Transgender	319	77.43	407	86.23
Yes/Sometimes/Probably	38	9.22	9	1.91
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	55	13.35	56	11.86

Tables 6-8 provide information concerning geographical characteristics of the survey responders. This information may be particularly useful for designing policies and determining where interventions may be most useful. Beginning with the first panel of Table 6, 76 percent of the sample was born in the mainland United States and about three percent were born in Puerto Rico. The vast majority of homeless youth were born in the United States. The second panel details the places of birth for homeless youth born outside of the United States and Puerto Rico. North, Central and South America, along with Mexico accounted for over 13 percent of birth places for the foreign born respondents. The Caribbean is the largest category with about 28 percent of the foreign born respondents, and Africa accounted for an additional five percent. Finally, a non-trivial amount, about five percent, report Europe as their place of birth.

Table 6: Place of Birth		
	Obs.	Percent
<i>USA/Puerto Rico Place of Birth</i>		
USA/Mainland	732	76.40
Puerto Rico	32	3.39
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	79	8.36
<i>Place of Birth if Born Outside of USA/Puerto Rico</i>		
North America	6	3.14
Central America	6	3.14
Mexico	4	2.09
Caribbean	51	27.70
South America	11	5.76
Europe	10	5.24
Eastern Europe/Russia	1	0.52
Middle East	1	0.52
Asia/Australia	5	2.62
Africa	10	5.24
Other	7	3.66

The second geographical variable, borough of residence is presented in Tables 7 and 8. Perhaps not surprisingly, almost half of the homeless youth population resides in Manhattan. The Bronx and Brooklyn have similar proportions with about 18 percent of homeless youth residing in the respective borough. Less than five percent of the sample reported residence in Queens and fewer than one percent reported Staten Island as their residence.

Table 7: Borough of Residence		
	Obs.	Percent
Bronx	170	17.99
Queens	40	4.23
Brooklyn	172	18.20
Staten Island	9	0.95
Manhattan	459	48.57
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	95	10.05

Table 8 allows us to determine if borough of residence is associated with certain demographic characteristics. The first panel of the table indicates that black homeless youth were about 8-9 percentage points more likely to reside in Brooklyn and about four percentage points less likely to reside in the Bronx than their Latino counterparts. In terms of gender, female homeless youth reported residence in the Bronx at about a nine percentage point greater frequency than their male counterparts. The Bronx also had between 5-6 percentage points more heterosexual and non-transgender homeless youths in comparison to

homosexual or bisexual and transgender youths, whereas Queens, Brooklyn and Manhattan had more homosexual or bisexual and transgender homeless youths. In particular, 64 percent of transgender homeless youth report residence in Manhattan.

Table 8: Relationship between Basic Demographic Characteristics and Borough of Residence				
<i>Borough of Residence</i>	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	Black		Hispanic	
Bronx	78	18.53	51	22.67
Queens	24	5.70	7	3.11
Brooklyn	97	23.04	33	14.67
Staten Island	1	0.24	4	1.78
Manhattan	205	48.69	113	50.22
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	16	3.80	17	7.56
<i>Gender</i>	Male		Female	
Bronx	58	14.08	111	23.52
Queens	23	5.58	17	3.60
Brooklyn	86	20.87	85	18.01
Staten Island	5	1.21	4	0.85
Manhattan	220	53.40	232	49.15
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	20	4.85	23	4.87
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>	Heterosexual		Homo/Bisexual	
Bronx	117	21.04	41	15.30
Queens	21	3.78	17	6.34
Brooklyn	105	18.88	56	20.90
Staten Island	7	1.26	2	0.75
Manhattan	283	50.90	140	52.24
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	23	4.14	12	4.48
<i>Transgender Status</i>	Not Transgender		Yes/Sometimes/Probably	
Bronx	139	19.12	7	14.00
Queens	35	4.81	3	6.00
Brooklyn	147	22.22	6	12.00
Staten Island	9	1.24	0	0.00
Manhattan	366	50.34	32	64.00
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	31	4.26	2	4.00

The final set of results inform us about the background of homeless youth, including their experience with the foster care and criminal justice system, and why they are living away from their parents, and where homeless youth spend their nights. Table 9 indicates that about 29 percent of homeless youth have experience with the foster care system, and 15 and 27 percent, respectively, have been to a juvenile detention center, and jail or prison. This is very consistent with foster care and criminal justice exposure being risk factors for youths becoming homeless.

Table 9: Experience with Foster Care or Criminal Justice System		
	Obs.	Percent
Foster Care	270	28.57
Juvenile Detention	144	15.24
Jail or Prison	251	26.56

Table 10 allows us to examine how race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and transgender status, the four key demographic characteristics, relate to foster care and criminal justice exposure. We find that a greater proportion of black in comparison to Latino youths had exposure to foster care, 31 vs. 26 percent, while a greater proportion of Latino youths had exposure to juvenile detention and jail or prison, 16 vs. 14 percent, and, 28 vs. 25 percent, respectively. Perhaps not surprisingly, male youths had greater exposure to foster care, juvenile detention, and jail or prison than their female counterparts. More than one-third of all male homeless youths reported going to jail or prison. Nonetheless, there is also a substantial share of female homeless youth reporting exposure to juvenile detention (10 percent), and jail or prison (18 percent).

In terms of sexual orientation and transgender status, about a six percentage point greater share of homosexual and bisexual youths reported exposure to foster care than their heterosexual youth counterparts, whereas about a five percentage point greater share of non-transgender youths reported greater exposure to the foster care system than heterosexual youths. Both homosexual or bisexual, and transgender youths indicated that a greater share of them went to prison or jail than their heterosexual and non-transgender counterparts. Thus, homosexual, bisexual and transgender homeless youth seem to have a greater risk of exposure to the foster care and the criminal justice systems than their heterosexual and non-transgender counterparts.

Table 10: Relationship between Basic Demographic Characteristics and Experience with Foster Care and Criminal Justice System				
	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	Black		Hispanic	
Foster Care	131	31.11	60	26.67
Juvenile Detention	57	13.54	35	15.56
Jail or Prison	105	24.94	64	28.44
<i>Gender</i>	Male		Female	
Foster Care	129	31.31	127	26.91
Juvenile Detention	89	21.60	47	9.95
Jail or Prison	49	36.16	87	18.42
<i>Sexual Orientation</i>	Heterosexual		Homo/Bisexual	
Foster Care	148	26.61	87	32.46
Juvenile Detention	87	15.64	41	15.29
Jail or Prison	134	24.10	88	32.83
<i>Transgender Status</i>	Not Transgender		Yes/Sometimes/Prob	
Foster Care	213	29.30	12	24.00
Juvenile Detention	113	15.54	7	14.00
Jail or Prison	179	24.62	16	32.00

The following set of results provides responses as to why homeless youths are living away from their parents or guardians. The most frequented response is that the respondent was thrown out of the home (29 percent). The next two largest categories are 'Other' (28 percent) and 'Runaway' (15 percent). In Table 12, we focus on the 'Thrown Out' and 'Runaway' categories and examine how they relate to certain demographic characteristics. Beginning with the race/ethnicity category, we find that black homeless youth were nearly seven percentage points more likely than Latinos to be thrown out of their home, while Latinos were about six percentage points more likely to runaway from their home. In terms of gender, slightly more female youths reported being thrown out while slightly more males reported running away from their home. Homosexual and bisexual homeless youths reported a slightly higher percentage of being thrown out in comparison to heterosexuals, as well as about a four percentage point greater likelihood of running away. Lastly, 26 percent of individuals reporting to be transgender indicated that they ran away from home in comparison to about 14 percent of non-transgender individuals.

Table 11: Reasons Living Away from Parents: Most Recent Time		
	Obs.	Percent
Thrown Out	274	28.99
Placed in Foster Care	50	5.29
Parent Moved	26	2.75
Parent Homeless	12	1.27
Parent Incarcerated	3	0.32
Released from Juvenile Det/Prison	15	1.59
Discharged from Hospital/Treatment	5	0.53
Runaway	144	15.24
Left Foster Care	10	1.06
Other	260	27.51
Refused/Don't Know/Missing/Unclear	146	15.45

Table 12: Relationship between Demographic Characteristics and Reasons Living Away from Parents: Most Recent Time				
	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
	Black		Hispanic	
Thrown Out	139	33.02	59	26.22
Runaway	57	13.54	46	20.44
	Male		Female	
Thrown Out	113	27.43	141	29.87
Runaway	72	17.48	66	13.98
	Heterosexual		Homo/Bi-Sexual	
Thrown Out	160	28.78	83	30.97
Runaway	80	14.39	47	17.54
	Not Transgender		Yes/Sometimes/Prob	
Thrown Out	215	29.57	13	26.00
Runaway	104	14.31	13	26.00

Tables 13 and 14 displays where homeless youth spent nights in the month prior to being surveyed. The following is a list along with their respective proportions of places outdoors or not intended for overnight accommodation where homeless youth reported spending nights last month: 14 percent reported spending the night outside, three percent in a place of business, nine percent at a transportation site, 11 percent in a vehicle, six percent in an abandoned building, and about three percent in a place of worship. Disturbingly, over three percent of the respondents reported spending at least one night with a sex work client.

Table 13: Where Respondent Spent Nights Last Month		
	Obs.	Percent
With Foster Care Family	31	3.28
At Own Place (Includes Dorm)	83	8.78
With Sex Work Client	31	3.28
At Hotel/Motel (Paid Place w Room)	72	7.62
At Room Paid w Public or Serv Funds	26	2.75
In a Place of Business	28	2.96
At Transportation Site	86	9.10
Outside	136	14.39
In Car/Bus/Train/Other Vehicle	102	10.79
In Detention Center	57	6.03
In Abandoned Building	53	5.61
In Hospital, Detox, Drop-in, or Community Based Center	76	8.04
In an Adult Emergency Shelter	55	5.82
In a Transition housing program	233	24.66
In a Permanent Housing Program	36	3.81
In a Place of Worship	25	2.65
In a Host Home	25	2.65
In a Youth Emergency Shelter	264	27.94

Table 14 indicates that there are not a large degree of disparity by race and ethnicity. However, Latino youths did report a five percentage point greater frequency of spending nights outside and in a vehicle than in comparison to black youths. The differences by sex are larger. Male in comparison to female youths were more likely to spend nights outside (8 percentage points), in a vehicle (8 percentage points), in a detention center (8 percentage points), in a hospital, detoxification, drop-in or community based center (7 percentage points), and at a youth emergency shelter (9 percentage points). Also, there are substantial differences based on sexual orientation and transgender status. Homosexual or bisexual in comparison to heterosexual youths reported greater frequency of spending the night with a sex work client (6 percentage points) and in a youth emergency shelter (10 percentage points); and a lower frequency of spending the night in a transition housing program (9 percentage points). In comparison to non-transgender youth, transgender youth reported a greater frequency of residing at their own place (9 percentage points), with a sex work client (14 percentage points), at a hotel or motel (9 percentage points), in a hospital, detoxification, drop-in or community based center (13 percentage points), and in a youth emergency shelter (17 percentage points); and a lower frequency of residing in a transition housing program (19 percentage points).

Table 14: Relationship between Demographic Characteristics and Where Respondent Spent Nights Last Month

	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
	Black		Hispanic	
With Foster Care Family	14	3.33	11	4.89
At Own Place (Includes Dorm)	46	10.93	15	6.67
With Sex Work Client	10	2.38	8	3.56
At Hotel/Motel (Paid Place w Room)	30	7.13	16	7.11
At Room Paid w Public or Serv Funds	12	2.85	4	1.78
In a Place of Business	8	1.90	3	1.33
At Transportation Site	36	8.55	18	8.00
Outside	40	9.50	33	14.67
In Car/Bus/Train/Other Vehicle	30	7.13	29	12.89
In Detention Center	17	4.04	13	5.78
In Abandoned Building	11	2.61	15	6.67
In Hospital, Detox, Drop-in, or Community Based Center	31	7.36	20	8.89
In an Adult Emergency Shelter	21	4.99	19	8.44
In a Transition housing program	110	26.13	60	26.67
In a Permanent Housing Program	17	4.04	8	3.56
In a Place of Worship	11	2.61	3	1.33
In a Host Home	10	2.38	4	1.78
In a Youth Emergency Shelter	129	30.64	64	28.44
	Male		Female	
With Foster Care Family	17	4.13	12	2.54
At Own Place (Includes Dorm)	37	8.98	42	8.90
With Sex Work Client	22	5.34	7	1.48
At Hotel/Motel (Paid Place w Room)	35	8.50	31	6.57
At Room Paid w Public or Serv Funds	15	3.64	8	1.69
In a Place of Business	22	5.34	4	0.85
At Transportation Site	55	13.35	28	5.93
Outside	93	22.57	39	8.26
In Car/Bus/Train/Other Vehicle	63	15.29	35	7.42
In Detention Center	41	9.95	9	1.91
In Abandoned Building	31	7.52	21	4.45
In Hospital, Detox, Drop-in, or Community Based Center	49	11.89	22	4.66
In an Adult Emergency Shelter	30	7.28	23	4.87
In a Transition housing program	51	12.38	165	34.96
In a Permanent Housing Program	20	4.85	15	3.18

In a Place of Worship	12	2.91	11	2.33
In a Host Home	11	2.67	10	2.12
In a Youth Emergency Shelter	137	33.25	113	23.94
	Heterosexual		Homo/Bi-Sexual	
With Foster Care Family	12	2.16	15	5.60
At Own Place (Includes Dorm)	45	8.09	26	9.70
With Sex Work Client	6	1.08	19	7.09
At Hotel/Motel (Paid Place w Room)	35	6.29	29	10.82
At Room Paid w Public or Serv Funds	8	1.44	14	5.22
In a Place of Business	8	1.44	19	7.09
At Transportation Site	48	8.63	32	11.94
Outside	79	14.21	43	16.04
In Car/Bus/Train/Other Vehicle	53	9.53	39	14.55
In Detention Center	26	4.68	22	8.21
In Abandoned Building	30	5.40	18	6.72
In Hospital, Detox, Drop-in, or Community Based Center	35	6.29	33	12.31
In an Adult Emergency Shelter	31	5.58	18	6.72
In a Transition housing program	155	27.88	51	19.03
In a Permanent Housing Program	18	3.24	16	5.97
In a Place of Worship	8	1.44	15	5.60
In a Host Home	7	1.26	12	4.48
In a Youth Emergency Shelter	147	26.44	96	35.82
	Not Transgender		Yes/Sometimes/Prob	
With Foster Care Family	24	3.30	1	2.00
At Own Place (Includes Dorm)	62	8.53	9	18.00
With Sex Work Client	17	2.34	8	16.00
At Hotel/Motel (Paid Place w Room)	51	7.02	8	16.00
At Room Paid w Public or Serv Funds	18	2.48	2	4.00
In a Place of Business	18	2.48	4	8.00
At Transportation Site	64	8.80	5	10.00
Outside	101	13.89	9	18.00
In Car/Bus/Train/Other Vehicle	74	10.18	4	8.00
In Detention Center	38	5.23	3	6.00
In Abandoned Building	36	4.95	3	6.00
In Hospital, Detox, Drop-in, or Community Based Center	53	7.29	10	20.00
In an Adult Emergency Shelter	38	5.23	4	8.00
In a Transition housing program	198	27.24	4	8.00
In a Permanent Housing Program	24	3.30	3	6.00

In a Place of Worship	15	2.06	3	6.00
In a Host Home	17	2.34	3	6.00
In a Youth Emergency Shelter	197	27.10	22	44.00

The final two tables provide information concerning homeless youth access to services. Two types are listed, homeless or runaway services, and drop-in services. Nearly half of the respondents reported using homeless or runaway services while about a third reported using drop-in services. Given our sampling frame described earlier, it is likely that these numbers overstate the actual prevalence for homeless youth at large.

Table 15: Service Use in the Past Month		
	Obs.	Percent
Homeless or Runaway Service	451	47.72
Drop-in Services	329	34.81

The last table, Table 16, displays the distributions of where the survey respondents reported accessing service conditional on various demographic characteristics. Latinos reported greater use of homeless or runaway services while blacks reported greater use of drop-in services. In terms of gender, males reported greater use of both homeless or runaway services, and drop-in services. Finally, homosexual or bisexual youths, and transgender youths reported greater use of both service types than their heterosexual and non-transgender peers. Close to half of the homosexual and bisexual reported use of drop-in services, while 62 percent of the transgender population reported drop-in use, both groups had a much higher use than the one-third norm across all respondents.

Table 16: Relationship between Demographic Characteristics and Service Use in the Past Month				
	Obs.	Percent	Obs.	Percent
	Black		Hispanic	
Homeless or Runaway Service	187	44.42	108	48.00
Drop-in Services	141	33.49	63	28.00
	Male		Female	
Homeless or Runaway Service	214	51.94	208	44.07
Drop-in Services	181	43.93	130	27.54
	Heterosexual		Homo/Bi-Sexual	
Homeless or Runaway Service	252	45.32	142	52.99
Drop-in Services	163	29.32	132	49.25
	Not Transgender		Yes/Sometimes/Prob	
Homeless or Runaway Service	333	45.80	31	62.00
Drop-in Services	230	31.64	31	62.00

The overall results from the survey indicate that the overwhelming majority of the respondents belong to a racial/ethnic minority group and have low

education attainment. In addition, a substantial portion of the responders are homosexual, bisexual and/or transgender. The median age that homeless youth first report leaving home is 16, while the median duration of their most recent bout of homelessness that they report is 12 months. The average reported duration is much higher, 26 months. Over three-quarters of the respondents were born in the United States, and of the foreign nationals, the Caribbean is the largest place of origin. Manhattan is the largest borough of residence reported, while Staten Island and Queens had the fewest responders. Nearly 30 percent of the responders have been in foster care, and over a quarter have been to jail or prison. Also, getting thrown out of the household is the most frequent explanation offered why the respondent became homeless. Respondents reported spending nights in a range of places including outdoors, in abandoned buildings, at transportation sites, in cars, buses, trains, and with sex work clients.

The two largest racial/ethnic groups, blacks and Latinos, had similar responses for most of the survey responses. However, a greater proportion of blacks resided in Brooklyn, whereas a slightly greater portion of Latinos reported the Bronx as their place of residence. Also, a greater proportion of blacks indicated that they were thrown out of their household, while a greater proportion of Latinos reported sleeping outside or in a vehicle.

There is greater variance in responses according to gender. A greater proportion of males indicated that they are homosexual/bisexual and/or transgender. Furthermore, a greater proportion of males indicated that they have been to juvenile detention, and jail or prison. Nonetheless, a non-trivial amount proportion of females reported going to juvenile detention (10 percent), and jail or prison (18 percent). Males reported spending nights outside; in a vehicle; detention center, hospital, detoxification center, drop-in or community based center; and at a youth emergency shelter more often than females. And, lastly, a greater portion of males reported a use of social services, particularly drop-in services.

The survey also revealed some notable differences between responses based on sexual orientation and transgender status. Youth who identified themselves as homosexual or bisexual more frequently indicated that that they have spent time in jail or prison, and spent the night with a sex work client. A greater proportion of transgender youth also reported spending time in a jail or prison and spending the night with a sex work client. Moreover, transgender youth reported a much larger frequency of residing in Manhattan (14 percentage points), and running away from home (12 percentage points) in comparison to their non-transgender peers. Furthermore, homosexual, bisexual and transgender youths all reported greater proportional use of homeless, runaway and drop-in services than their heterosexual and non-transgender counterparts. Lastly, transgender youth tended to move away at younger ages and currently be living away longer from their parents or guardian than other youths in the sample.

Beyond the Count: Extrapolating beyond our count of homeless youths

Our efforts to enumerate homeless youths yielded a count of 945 individuals. This number, however, represents only a portion of all homeless youths. As mentioned earlier the homeless youth population is composed of the highly visible street population, those making use of youth service facilities and the almost invisible homeless who “couch surf”, avoid service facilities and whose status as part of the homeless is almost impossible to observe without a household survey. Resource constraints precluded us from attempting a household survey and thus our efforts completely miss those homeless who are not part of the street population or do not visit service providers who target homeless youths. We do, however, attempt to estimate of the size of the street homeless population and those using youth service facilities. In this section we describe our attempt to estimate how many homeless youths there were in New York City in July of 2007. We employ a multiplier approach based on counts of homeless youths utilizing services for homeless and runaway youth. We also applied a multiplier based on annualized rates of homelessness for the adult population found by Culhane (2001).³

Agency Based Multiplier

The use of a multiplier is premised on two populations that overlap in some way. The multiplier makes use of information in one of the non-overlapping populations and applies it to the other population. In our case we have our count of homeless youths and a tally of homeless youths served by agencies collaborating with the Empire State Coalition. This tally is separate from the count and is based on administrative records. The tally was recorded by asking agencies how many homeless youths they served in July 2007. The populations overlap because many of the youths included in our count make use of services provided by collaborating agencies. Because there is some overlap between our count and the agency count we can combine information from the two to get some sense of the true number of homeless youths who use services provided by collaborating agencies. We produced our estimate using the following steps and assumptions.

1. Agencies reported 1,982 person visits by homeless youths in July 2007. A person visit is any contact a homeless youth individual has with a specific agency during the study period. Note that one homeless youth can have several person visits if they utilize services from several agencies. Also note that not all collaborating agencies responded to the survey.
2. Of the 945 homeless youths identified in our count, 225 utilized services provided by agencies who responded to the agency survey in July 2007. These 225 individuals had 489 person visits. The ratio of

³ Culhane, Dennis.. 2001. Assessing Homeless Population Size Through the Use of Emergency and Transitional Shelter Services in 1998: Results from the Analysis of Administrative Data from Nine US Jurisdictions. *Public Health Reports*. 116:344-52

individuals to person visits among homeless youths we counted is therefore 2.17. We use only those who visited agencies that responded to our survey because we lack information on the non-respondent agencies.

3. We assume that the ratio of individuals to person visits for those counted by the agencies is similar to what we found among the homeless youths we counted. That means the 1,982 person visits reported by the Coalition collaborators were produced by 912 (1,982/2.17) homeless youths. In other words we are assuming each homeless youth counted by responding agencies visited 2.17 agencies, on average, in July 2007.
4. Only 23.8 percent (225) of the homeless youths that we counted indicated that they used services provided by the collaborating agencies who took part in the agency survey. The remaining 74.2 percent (720) either used an agency that did not respond to our survey or did not visit any agency. If the number of homeless youths counted by the collaborating agencies represents a similar proportion of all homeless youths that means the 912 homeless youths (from step 3) are only 23.8 percent of the homeless youth population. This means there are at least 3,826 (912/.238) homeless youths! This number refers only to those who make use of services provided by collaborating agencies.

Symbolically, the formula we used is:

Homeless Youths = (Agency Count /Average number of agencies visited according to street survey)/Proportion of street survey youths who visited an agency who responded to the agency survey.

It should be noted that the figure 3,826 is likely to represent a minimum number of homeless youths in July 2007. For example, a number of the agencies that participated in the count did not provide tallies of the number of youths they served in July 2007. It seems likely that at least some of these youths were neither included in our count nor in the tallies of agencies that did respond to the agency survey. Unfortunately, we have no reliable way of estimating how large this group is.

Point Prevalence Counts vs. Annualized Rates

Our count of 945 homeless youths is a point prevalence count. That is, it represents a count of homeless youths at a single point in time (although our count actually lasted several weeks). Over the course of a longer period of time, however, this number will undoubtedly underestimate the number of youths who ever experienced homelessness during the longer period of time. This is because it is unlikely that the all of the youths that experienced homelessness during 2007 experienced it during the month of July. For example, someone may have been homeless from January 2007 through June 2007. Reconciled with their parents and returned home during July 2007, and become homeless again

in August 2007 for the remainder of the year. This person would not have been included in our homeless count.

For purposes of planning and policy, however, we certainly would want to have some sense of how many youths are likely to experience homelessness over a given period of time. Knowing how many youths experience homelessness gives a better picture of how prevalent homelessness is. Point in time estimates while useful, tend to understate the prevalence of those ever experiencing homelessness in a population.

Prior research utilizing longitudinal administrative data illustrates just how much point prevalence counts differ from annualized rates of homelessness. The annualized turnover rate is the multiple by which the average daily census is multiplied to obtain how many individuals ever experience homelessness in a given year. In a study of nine cities Culhane et al. (2001) found annual turnover rates in 1998 for homeless adults ranging from a low of 2.8 in Spokane, Washington to a high of 13 for the Montgomery County, Maryland. New York City had an annualized turnover rate of 3.5. This means that in New York City, which had an average daily census of 6,801.6 homeless single adults in 1998, a total of 23,806 ($3.5 \times 6,801.6$) single adults experienced homelessness over the course of the entire year.

These results suggest the annualized rate of homelessness for youths is significantly higher than our estimates described above. For example, if the turnover of youths entering homelessness was similar to what Culhane found in 1998 for New York City single adults, then our estimate of 3,826 would translate into 13,391 ($3.5 \times 3,826$) youths that will have experienced homelessness at some point in 2007. Keep in mind this number would only refer to youths who make use of services provided by the agencies that collaborated in this study.

To accurately determine turnover rates the dates of entry into and exit from homelessness for each homeless youth is needed. Unfortunately, such data is not available. Consequently, we cannot produce annualized estimates with any degree of certitude. Moreover, published annualized turnover rates are all based on either single adults or families, precluding an easy assumption that these rates are applicable to homeless youths as well. We can assume the annualized rate is some multiple higher than the point time estimate produced above. But we do know that for other populations in large cities the annualized count ranged from approximately three to 13 times higher than the point in time count.

Given this range, it would not be imprudent to assume that the annualized count is at least twice as high as the count that was estimated above. This means at least 7,652 ($2 \times 3,826$) youths will experience homelessness during 2007. Moreover, if we were to consider the highest estimated turnover rate of 13

(Maryland adult population) we are likely to have an upper bound estimate of 49,738($13 \times 3,826$).

Conclusion

This pilot study attempted to provide an estimate of the magnitude of the size of the most visible portion of the homeless youth population. Because of resource constraints, neither a complete census nor a household survey was undertaken. Consequently, our effort should not be viewed as a definitive count of the number of homeless youths, but rather is likely to be an undercount. Nevertheless, by canvassing the most popular public spaces where homeless youth congregate and recruiting homeless youths through collaborating agencies we were able to estimate the magnitude of the size of this population.

We enumerated 945 youths who met our definition of homelessness. Based on information collected from collaborating agencies we estimate that there were at least another 2,841 that we did not enumerate but who utilized services provided by collaborating agencies. Finally, we also estimate a range for an annualized rate of homelessness based on annual turnover rates published elsewhere. Other studies produced ranges from approximately three to 13 times higher than the point in time count. If we apply a conservative annualized turnover rate of two, this means at least 7,652($2 \times 3,826$) youths will have experienced homelessness during 2007. Alternatively, if we assume that the adult annualized turnover rate for New York City is applicable to youths, the annual count would be 13,391.

These results suggest the magnitude of the homeless youth problem is substantial. At any one point in time there are likely several thousand homeless youths in New York. This group represents perhaps the most vulnerable members of this population as they are the most visible—congregating in public spaces and making use of services provided by agencies serving this group.

Our analyses suggest several groups are overrepresented among the homeless youth population and consequently should be kept in mind when devising policies and programs targeting homeless youths. We found African Americans and to a lesser extent Latinos to be the racial/ethnic categories most heavily represented among homeless youths. While heterosexuals were the majority of those we enumerated, those with other sexual orientations and transgender status were more prevalent in our sample than their numbers in the larger population would suggest. Finally, low levels of educational attainment were the norm among the respondents in our sample. A large proportion of the sample are high school dropouts.

When thinking about programs and policies targeting homeless youths, there are at least two other findings in this report that we think deserve special attention. One is length of time these youths had been away from their parents or

guardians at the time of the survey. The median was one year and the mean was in excess of two years. This suggests that this is not a group made up of youths who may have run away for a night or two because of an argument with their parents. Rather, a substantial portion of this population are long-term homeless. Programs serving this group should be tailored with this in mind. We also find that the proportion of our population that had contact with the criminal justice or foster care systems to be especially noteworthy. Although the majority of respondents had contact with neither, a sizable proportion had prior experience with the foster care system, juvenile detention or jail. The proportion in our sample indicating prior contact with these institutions is much greater than what would be found in the larger population of 13-24 year olds. From this we can infer that the foster care and criminal justice systems need to pay special attention to those exiting these institutions. Those exiting these systems would appear to be especially vulnerable to becoming homeless.

Finally, as this was a pilot study conducted with limited resources the findings also highlight the need for better funded research that could come closer to estimating the true size of the homeless youth population. The tremendous efforts of those who undertook the count for this study reached only those who congregate in well known public spaces or made use of services provided by collaborating agencies. Undoubtedly, a substantial and sizeable number of homeless youths remain unaccounted. A better funded study would allow for a more precise estimate of the homeless youth population. Nevertheless, this study represents an important first step toward gauging the size of this important and vulnerable population.

APPENDIX A: Collaborating Agencies

Agency	Name	Phone number
Ali Forney Center	Steve Gordon	212-206-0574
Better Brooklyn	Reid Spector	718.624.1992
Bronx Pride	Sean Coleman	718.292.4368
Citizens Advice Bureau (Homebase)	Megan Fogarty	718-293-0727
Citizens Advice Bureau (Nelson)	Ralph Payton	718-299-5550x311
Citizens Advice Bureau (Outreach)	Amie Pospisil	
Citizens Advice Bureau (Various)	Wanda Cruz	718-993-8900x231
Citizens Advice Bureau (Willow)	Lisa Primus	718-665-9123
Columbia Presbyterian	Doris Roman	646-284-9733
Concourse House	Manuela Schaudt	718-584-4400
Covenant House	Elizabeth Garcia*/Nancy Downing ndowning@covenanthouse.org	(212) 727-4189 / 212-478-5097 ext. 146
Door	Door	
Fox House	Sr. Pat Brennan	212-534-6634
Gay and Lesbian CC - YES Program		
GEMS	Julie Laurence	212.926.8089 x25
Good Shepherd (Foyer)	Leonardo Arias	646-485-3950
Green Chimneys	Theresa Nolan*	212.491.5911 x13
GVYC	Alexandra Schuppert	212.475.7972 x869
Hospitality House	Faith Maswoswe	718-720-2236
Independence Inn	Rose Dickson	718.326.5931
Kingsbridge Heights Community Center	Sadie Mahoney	718-884-0700x185
Montifiore Adol. Risk	Elizabeth Enriquez	718-882-0023

Nazaeth Housing	Amy Winarsky	212-777-1010
Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter	Dimitra	212-537-5410
People Are the Solution (POTS)/ Brainpower	Ben Stock / Sister Mary Alice Hannon, OP	(718) 220-4892
Providence House	Michele Grimes	718-455-0197
Rachel's Place	Jennifer Jaffe*	(718) 253-5364
Safe Horizon's Streetwork	David Nish*	212.695.2220
Safe Space	Theresa Wright	718.785.9062 x31
Sanctuary for Families	Sandra Fluke	212-349-6009
Seamen's Society	Jennifer Setton	
Siena House		
Street Outreach	Meredith Dank	
Sylvia's Place	Lucky Michaels	917-463-6439
The Fortune Society	Danielle Strauss	212-691-7554x840
Thorpe Family Residence	Sr. Lesley Block	718-933-7312
Trinity Place shelter	Kevin Lotz	212.921.9108
West End Intergenerational	Pedro Dela Cruz	212-873-6300x334

APPENDIX B:

Homeless Youth Count Focus Group Questions

Begin by describing the Homeless Youth Count Project. In your description, include the purpose, the challenges the potential outcomes, service resource benefits, etc. Let the group know how important it is to gather the information and also let them know that it cannot be done without their help and expertise.

1. Explore the situation of the interviewees

- Is your housing situation ever unstable?
- Do you ever find yourself out on the street with nowhere to go?
- Do you ever have to worry about where you will sleep at night?

2. Explore where the interviewees go

- Where do you go, or what do you do when you face this situation?
- Where are some of the places where you have been in the past when you had nowhere to rest your head?
- What has been your experience there?
- Are there places you know of but haven't gone to?
- What made you choose not to go?
- Where do you go for:
 1. Food?
 2. Showers?
 3. Clothing?

3. Explore what they know about others

- Do you know of places where homeless youth congregate?
- What places can you think of, off the top of your head, where homeless youth hang out?

- What time would be the best time for outreach workers to hit these spots?
- What are the most popular spots? What do you think makes these spots so popular?
- What are some of the less popular spots? What do you think makes them less popular?
- When would be a good time for outreach workers to meet youth at these spots?

4. Explore how we can be sensitive

- What advise can you give staff working on this project?
- What else should we know about regarding sensitivity, as we reach out to youth, especially those youth who may not be aware of our services.

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT

All interviewees will receive the following information prior to giving oral consent to participate:

A. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to try to determine how many young people are homeless in our City so that we can help plan for more and better services. For our study we define a homeless youth as someone who is under the age of 24 and does not have a permanent or stable place to live. For example, we may include young people who are staying with friends or relatives but not parents or guardians.

B. PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate, we will ask you a series of questions that should take no more than 10 minutes to answer. You may refuse to answer any of the questions and may stop the interview at any time. Your continued participation is voluntary and you will not be penalized in any way if you decide to stop.

C. RISKS

Some of the questions we ask may cause you some embarrassment or may cause you to feel uncomfortable. We apologize for this and will insure that any response you give is confidential. You may decline to answer any question and may stop the interview at any time.

D. BENEFITS

At the end of the interview, either after it is completed or at the time you choose to stop it, you will be given information about the many programs and services in this City that can provide you assistance. We have information about shelters, medical services, drop-in centers and more. We also have information about 24 hour transportation assistance should you wish to go to one of our referral agencies.

The project will also benefit others who like you may be in need of assistance as we will use the results to work with the City to increase the number of programs available and design the programs to meet your needs and the needs of young people like you.

E. COMPENSATION

To thank you for your time, we will pay you \$5 at the end of this interview.

F. PERSONS TO CONTACT

This study is being run by Empire State Coalition of Youth and Family Services. You may call Margo Hirsch at 212 966-6477 ext. 307 if you have any

questions or concerns about your participation. You may also contact **(WHO)** if you feel you have been harmed by this study in any way.

G. PRIVACY STATEMENT

Your participation in this study is completely confidential. We will not ask your name

and no identifying information will be made public. All responses will be kept locked up and only the study team will have access to it.

H. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL STATEMENT

This study is VOLUNTARY. You are not giving up any legal claims or rights because of your participation in this study. If you do join, you are free to quit at any time.

I. AGREEMENT

Are you willing to be in this study (focus group)?

Consent Form

By initialing this form, I affirm that I have talked with all interviewees and provided all the above information to them. As a youth service professional, I have also assessed their psychological state of mind, their physical condition, the degree to which they appear to fully understand the aims of the study, the extent to which they have given their assent to participate, and the relative degree of freedom that they appear to exercise in making decisions. After examining all the factors and information available to us, I believe that this young person is fully capable of and willing to participating in the Pilot Study of Homeless Youth and Young Adults in New York City.

Interviewer: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D: Resource Brochure

Association Mission:

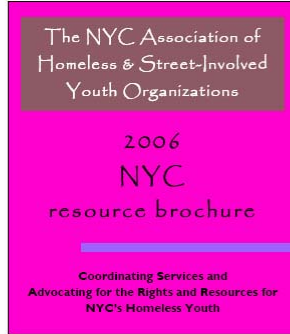
The NYC Association of Homeless and Street-Involved Youth Serving Organizations is a coalition of service providers, organizations and youth. We believe that by coordinating our services, planning strategies and speaking in a unified voice, we can both advocate for and more effectively respond to the needs of homeless and street-oriented youth in the New York metropolitan area. Our members are dedicated to mobilizing our respective expertise and resources to assist homeless and street-oriented youth to lead safe, healthy and self-empowered lives.

Organizational Participants:

Advocates for Children; Anti-Violence Project; The Ali Forney Center; Berkshire Farms; Better Brooklyn Community Center; Callen-Lorde Community Health Center/Health Outreach to Teens; Connect 2 Protect; Covenant House; The Door; Empire State Coalition of Youth and Family Services; FIERCE; Good Shepherd Services/Chelsea Foyer; Green Chimneys; Greenleaf Village Youth Council / The Neutral Zone; The Interfaith Task Force; Lawyers for Children; Mt. Sinai Adolescent Health Center; The National Development Research Institute; NYC Administration of Children's Services; Project Renewal; Project S.T.A.Y.; Promesa; Rachel's Place; Safe Space; South Bronx Health Center/Montefiore Hospital; SCO Family of Services; Safe Horizon's Streetwork Project; Stand Up for Kids; NYC; StreetLIFE; Sylvia's Place; Peter Cicchino Youth Project of the Urban Justice Center; Women in Community Services.



c/o Empire State Coalition of Youth and Family Services
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Produced by
Empire State Coalition of Youth and Family Services

Tel: 212.966.6477 x332

EMERGENCY and TRANSITIONAL RESIDENTIAL SERVICES (Call to determine availability)			
Agency	Beds Available	Agas	Telephone
Alli Forney Center (LGBT) 527 W. 22nd St. 1st Fl. NY, NY 10011	(Intake required at All Forney) -18 Emergency beds, Co-ed, GLBTQ -9 Transitional Beds	16 to 24	212.206.0574
Berkshire Farms 732 Dean St., Brooklyn, NY	-6 beds males	17 to 21	p)718.398.0174 f)718.398.0175
Covenant House -460 W. 41st St. Rites of Passage - Transitional:	Shelter: -190 beds -162 beds	under 21	212.613-0300 800.999.9999
Chelsea Foyer (LGBTQ) 212 W. 24th St. NY, NY 10011 (maximum stay - 2 years)	-23 beds for males -17 beds for females	18 to 22 (Intake)	646.485.3900 646.485.3954 www.goodshepherds.org
GEHS - transitional housing for sexually exploited young women	-6 beds for females	17 to 21	212.926.8089
Green Chimneys (LGBTQ)	10 transitional living beds (TLP) 11 transitional independent living (TIL) bed	17 to 21	212.491-5911 x21
SCO Independence Inn 1: Family of Services www.sco.org	-20 males, no children -6 mothers, 6 babies(0-6) & 13 singles -8 mothers & 8 babies(0-6) -2 mothers & 2 babies(0-6) & 2 singles	16 to 20 16 to 20 16 to 20 16 to 20	718.782.0198 718.827.8465 718.326.5931 Phone number TBA
Interfaith Task Force's Trinity Place	-8beds (6 months) LGBT-specific youth must be referred by a program and high-functioning	18 to 23	646.359.3725
Rachel's Place	-5 transitional living beds (TLP) - For females	16 to 21	718.253.5364
Safe Horizon's Streetwork Project *Midtown-545 8th Ave., 20th Fl. *Lower East Side - 33 Essex St. *Overnight - NY, NY	-Mixed Gender 27 beds (90 days) / 3 beds (7 days)	16 to 23	212.695-2220 646.602.6404 917.507.1562
Seaman's Society for Children and Families Staten Island, NY	-Host homes	under 21	718.447.7666
MCCNY/Homeless Youth Services Sylvia's Place & The Johnson Center -446 W. 36th St., NY, NY	26 beds for GLBTQ Youth	16 to 23	718.300.0133

This list is current as of January 2007.

- Programs will sometimes lose funding for their shelter and transitional beds or increase the number of beds.
- Programs with different beds for different populations will sometimes change the number of beds to cover the changing needs of particular populations.
- Some programs only take referrals through a drop-in or outreach center.

It is best that you call to find out about available beds in their shelter.



IMPORTANT HOMELESS YOUTH SERVICES | MEDICAL SERVICES | OTHER SUPPORTIVE SERVICES | NOTES

- The Door (call for intake appt.): 212.941.9090
555 Broome St. (Under 24 yrs - drop in: counseling, medical needs, jobs, GED, clothing, meals, food pantry and legal services)
- Empire State Coalition Legal Issues Project
Answers to legal questions regarding homeless youth's rights confidentiality, emancipation, parent's rights, school, shelter and public benefits - send questions through website:
www.empirestatecoalition.org
- Better Brooklyn Community Center
718.624.1992
- Bronx Community Pride Center
718.292.4368
- Neutral Zone: 12 E 33rd St., 10 Fl.
646.935.1943
LGBTQ drop-in (15-22yr W-Sa: 6p-10p, food, case management, basic needs & referrals)
- Safe Space Youth Center: 212.481.6062
24 West 30th St., 2nd Floor, NY, NY 10001, - (Under 13-20 yrs - drop in: M-F 1p-7p (Case Mgmt, basic needs);
- The Seaman Society: 718.447.7666 x4792
Housing and services for youth on Staten Island
- Stand Up for Kids: NYC
(local chapter of Nat'l Outreach Organization)
Food, health bags, street counseling & referrals
- The Streetwork Project: 212.695.2220
545 8th Ave., 22nd Fl. (Under 24 yrs - drop in: counseling, food, showers, case management, holistic care, benefits help and needle exchange)
- Where Is Safe: 646.209.1264
Street Outreach in Manhattan and Bronx; transports to housing, emergency, street-based services and counseling

- Callen-Lorde's H.O.T.T. Program -
212.271.7212
356 West 18th Street, 2nd Fl. - walk-ins welcome, appt. preferred for medical services for GLBTQ youth, low & no-cost: mobile medical services, HIV counseling and testing, mental health counseling, case management for youth: ages 13 - 21 (aging out to 24).
- Mt. Sinai Adol. Health Center - 212.423.5000
312 E. 94th St. - Free Medical and Mental Health Services, HIV Counseling and Testing and HIV Care: ages 12 - 20.
- Project Renewal - 212.620.0340 x312
Mobile Medical Outreach Services - See below
- Project STAY - 646.284.9732/3
21 Audubon Avenue @ 166th St. - Free Medical and Mental Health Services, HIV Counseling and Testing and HIV Care: ages 13 - 24
- NY Children's Health Project - 718.991.0605
Free medical services and HIV testing and counseling: ages 13-24

- LGBT Anti-Violence Project - 212.714.1141
24 hr. Spanish/English crisis hotline for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender victims of violence.
- Peter Cicchino Youth Project - 646.602.5633 or at the Urban Justice Center 877-LGBT-LAW
666 Broadway, 10th Fl. NY, NY 10012
Free legal services for GLBT youth and young adults.
- Sylvia Rivera Law Project - 212.337.8550
322 8th Ave. @ 26th St, 3rd Fl.
Free legal services for Transgender youth and young adults
- Center for Community Alternatives - 718.858.9658
25 Chapel St., Brooklyn, NY
Alternative to Incarceration (ages 12-16)
- FIERCE! (www.fiercenyc.org) - 646.336.6789
437 W. 16th St. lower level, NYC, NY
Transgender and queer youth of color organizing project

MOBILE MEDICAL SCHEDULES				
	HOTT 212.271.7212	NY Children's Health Project, Community Pediatric Programs @ Montefiore	Ryan, Ctr. Shout Van (212.314.7912 - Last Appt. 1 hour before closing time)	Project Renewal For more info, call: 212.620.0340 x312 mobile@prnyc.org
Mon		Streetwork Shelter - 9a - 12p; Streetwork Midtown - 1p - 6p	129th St/7th Ave - 3p-8p	CREATE-133 W.128th Streetwork-33 Essex St. 4p-7p Sylvia's Place-446 W.36th 8p-10p Safe Space-230 W. 30th 3p-5:30p Safe Space- 89-31 161 St. Queens 7p-9p
Tues			144th St/7th Ave. - 3p-8p	
Weds	24stor Place 2:30p - 4:30p Christopher St./Pier 2 @ Christopher & Washington St. 6:30p-8:30p		94th & Amsterdam - 2p-6p 47th & 10th Ave - 11:30a-1:30p & 3p-6p	CREATE 133 W.128 St 11a-1p Green Chimneys 460 W.145 3p-5p Neutral Zone 12 E.33rd 6p-8p Christopher St./Piers 8:30p-10p
Thurs	Streetwork Project Lower East Side @ 33 Essex @ Grand St. 3p-7p		Christopher Street @ Wash- ington St. 3p-8p	Catholic Guardian 4p-6:30p Sylvia's Place 446 W.36th 8p-10p
Fri	Streetwork Project 545 8th Ave @ 37th/8th 2:30p-5p		114th St/7th Ave - (limited services) 2p-5p	



The NYC Association of
Homeless & Street-Involved
Youth Organizations

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