

HEY Statistics: Health, Homelessness and Services

Statistics About Current and Former Foster Youth

Emancipated Foster Youth Experience High Rates of Homelessness

- More than 80% of children in foster care have developmental, emotional, or behavioral problems.¹
- Each year in California, nearly 2,300 youth "age out" of foster care,² 65% do so without a place to live.³
- In California one in four emancipated youth are homeless.⁴ Of emancipated youth in the Bay Area, it is estimated up to 44% have experienced homelessness.⁵

As Former Foster Youth Age, They Continue to Experience Homelessness

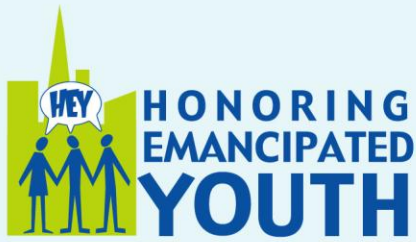
- Nationally, 38% of the homeless population is former foster children.⁶
- 40% of people living in California's homeless shelters are former foster children.⁷
- The longer the period of youth homelessness is the higher the risk that the youth will end up as a chronically homeless adult. Many homeless street youth today would meet HUD criteria for chronic homelessness if they were adults.⁸

Health Problems are Chief Causes of Homelessness

While youth are in care, their foster homes are paid monthly to house and care for them. However, once youth age out of care, they experience high rates of homelessness. Homelessness can be attributed to many factors, and chief among them is health: physical health, trauma, developmental delays, disabilities, addictions and mental health. Because current and former foster youth are more likely to experience mental health problems and have higher rates of other health needs, these youth are less likely to be able to retain stable housing. Services that provide therapeutic care, or employment and educational opportunities can help youth retain housing.

Mental Health and Employment Services Improve Youth's Chances to Find and Retain Housing

- All foster youth are eligible for Medi-Cal health insurance while they are in-care or if they emancipate, up to age 21.
- In San Francisco there are currently over 26 'trauma-focused prevention and early intervention' services for youth.⁹
- A Home Within was founded in San Francisco and has 18 chapters around the Bay Area and nationally and provides long-term pro bono psychotherapy to current and former foster youth.¹⁰
- Jewish Vocation Services (JVS) assists youth with disabilities to obtain employment and has a full time case manager dedicated to serving current and former foster youth. JVS currently is serving 50 youth, with about 30 youth are actively engaged. In 2008, JVS had over 70 intakes of foster youth with disabilities, and placed over 30 current and former foster youth into employment opportunities.¹¹
- In 2009, Jewish Vocational Services will train 30 additional foster youth with disabilities to work in the healthcare field by providing them employment training and internships.¹²
- The San Francisco Foster Care Mental Health program received 741 referrals for foster youth from San Francisco during the 2006-2007 fiscal year.¹³
- San Francisco currently has 2 Full Service Partnerships for Transitional Age Youth that provides individual/family/couple therapy, intensive case management, medication support, social outings and a drop-in center where the youth can "hang out" or attend workshops.¹⁴



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What is this Guide?

- HEY Guides offer relevant information for any person interested in foster care, emancipation and transitional age youth in the Bay Area.
- HEY Statistics shows the most current statistics regarding foster youth in the Bay Area in many subject areas. This issue focuses on services in San Francisco to improve opportunities to find and keep housing.

What is HEY?

Honoring Emancipated Youth (HEY), a community project of United Way of the Bay Area, is dedicated to strengthening and connecting San Francisco's systems of support so that Bay Area youth emancipating, or "aging out" of the foster care system can enjoy a healthy transition to adulthood.

HEY identifies and raises awareness around challenges affecting local emancipating or emancipated foster youth by bringing together a diversity of voices and experiences, including those of former foster youth, service providers, and other supporters, in finding solutions.

HEY's core work includes:

1. **Focused research on local practices** that affect transition aged current and former foster youth
2. **Skill building and information sharing opportunities** for youth and direct service providers through trainings and convenings
3. **An information hub** of issues and challenges affecting local transition aged current and former foster care youth

As a result, supporters of foster youth are linked and informed about the challenges faced by former foster youth and gain access to hard data and expert review of policies and practices so that they can help improve the lives of former foster youth.

Works Cited

- ¹ HHS. (1999). *Helping Families Achieve Self-Sufficiency: A Guide to Funding Services for Children and Families Through the TANF Program*. Washington, D.C.: Author. Online at www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ofa/funds2.htm.
- ² Child Welfare Services Stakeholders Group. (2003). *CWS Redesign: The Future of California's Child Welfare Services*. Sacramento: California Department of Social Services.
- ³ Issue Brief, Ensuring Access to Healthy Young Adults Program for Transitioning Youth, citing a California Department of Social Services 2002 Study: Report of the Housing Needs of Emancipated Foster/Probation Youth; California Department of Social Services. (2002) Report on the Survey of the Housing Needs of Emancipated Foster/Probation Youth. Independent Living Program Policy Unit, Child and Youth Permanency Branch.
- ⁴ Administrative Office of the Courts. (2007). *Beyond the Bench XVIII: Access and Fairness*. Sacramento: Administrative Office of the Courts, Center for Families, Children & the Courts, Judicial Council of California.
- ⁵ Heart Gallery of Bay Area
- ⁶ University of California. (2008). *Ensuring Transfer Success*. California: UC Support Services for Veterans and Former Foster Youth, University of California.
- ⁷ Children's Advocacy Institute. (2007). *Expanding Transitional Services for Emancipated Foster Youth: An Investment in California's Tomorrow*. San Diego: Children's Advocacy Institute, University of San Diego School of Law.
- ⁸ Burt, Martha R., Laudan Aron, and Edgar Lee. 2001. *Helping America's Homeless: Emergency Shelter or Affordable Housing?* Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.
- ⁹ Department of Public Health Community Behavioral Health Services: Research, Evaluation & Quality Management, Overview (April 2008) Overview of Services for Trauma Exposed Children.
- ¹⁰ Toni Heineman, A Home Within. Contacted 11.17.08
- ¹¹ Autumn Kelley, Jewish Vocational Services, Contacted 11.17.08
- ¹¹ Autumn Kelley, Jewish Vocational Services, Contacted 11.17.08
- ¹² Department of Public Health Community Behavioral Health Services: Research, Evaluation & Quality Management, Overview (April 2008) Overview of Services for Trauma Exposed Children.
- ¹³ San Francisco County: County Behavioral Mental Health Memo, CBHS-TAY [http://cmhda.org/go/Portals/o/CMHDA%20Files/Committees/TAY%20Subcommittee/Meeting%20Reports/San_Francisco_TAY_FSPs_\(9-4-08\).pdf](http://cmhda.org/go/Portals/o/CMHDA%20Files/Committees/TAY%20Subcommittee/Meeting%20Reports/San_Francisco_TAY_FSPs_(9-4-08).pdf)