

## Homeless and Unstably Housed K-12 Students in Washington State

*Who are they and how are they faring?*

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THE FEDERAL MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT requires public schools to provide homeless children with free transportation to and from school (including between school districts) and to waive documentation generally required for enrollment, if needed. Recent research suggests the merit of this policy given that homelessness—especially in combination with school change—puts students at increased risk for poor academic achievement.<sup>1</sup> In Washington State, the number of students identified by the public school system as homeless has increased in recent years. Given that roughly 27,000 homeless students were identified in Academic Year (AY) 2011/12, Governor Inslee made it a top priority of his administration to address the needs of these children.<sup>2</sup>

This report leverages integrated administrative data to describe the characteristics and needs of homeless students. The ability to link and analyze data across systems is critical, because federal law defines “homelessness” differently for schools than it does for local homeless service providers, with little known about the extent of overlap.<sup>3</sup> At the national level, this disconnect recently led to proposed legislation in Congress to broaden the definition used by the homeless system to align with that used by the schools, the latter of which includes living “doubled-up” with other households.<sup>4</sup>

### Key Findings

Focusing on children and youth who have ever received services from the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), we provide a comprehensive view of K-12 students’ housing status and associated measures of risk and well-being. In particular, we find that:

1. In AY 2011/12, there were 19,207 students ages 5 to 20 who experienced homelessness, defined narrowly to exclude those doubled-up or staying temporarily with friends or family.
2. Compared to their peers, homeless students—and often those identified by DSHS caseworkers as “homeless with housing”—were at greater risk on a number of measures.
3. Opportunities exist to better connect homeless students and those at risk of homelessness to services that could help them succeed in school and beyond.

<sup>1</sup> Fantuzzo, John, et al. (2012). “The Unique and Combined Effects of Homelessness and School Mobility on the Educational Outcomes of Young Children,” *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 41 ( 9): 393–402; Cutilli, J.J., et al. (2013). “Academic Achievement Trajectories of Homeless and Highly Mobile Students: Resilience in the Context of Chronic and Acute Risk,” *Child Development*, Vol. 84 (3): 841-857.

<sup>2</sup> See: [http://www.governor.wa.gov/news/speeches/20130328\\_budget\\_remarks.pdf](http://www.governor.wa.gov/news/speeches/20130328_budget_remarks.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Cunninham, Mary, et al. (2010). “Residential Instability and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Children and Education Program: What We Know, Plus Gaps in Research,” Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, <http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/412115-mckinney-vento-program.pdf>.

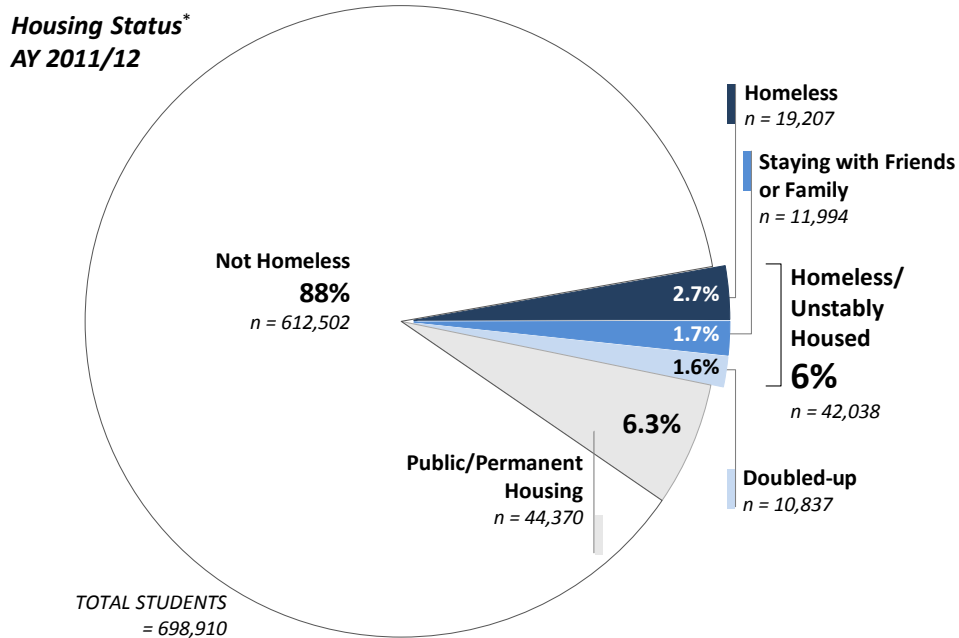
<sup>4</sup> See: <http://helphomelesskidsnow.org/files/factsheet.pdf>.



## STUDY DESIGN | Grouping students according to housing status

The INVEST 2012 database contains de-identified education data from OFM’s Education Research and Data Center P-20 data warehouse linked with data from the DSHS Integrated Client Database (ICDB)<sup>5</sup> for students who received a DSHS service at any point between State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2000 and 2012. Using this database, 698,910 students were identified who had valid housing data in school records and were between the ages of 5 and 20 in Academic Year (AY) 2011/12. Students were assigned to one of five mutually exclusive categories using the following hierarchy to place them into the most precarious housing status they experienced in the year: 1) homeless, 2) staying with friends or family, 3) doubled-up, 4) public/permanent housing, and 5) not homeless.<sup>6</sup> Although “staying with friends or family” and “doubled-up” are conceptually very similar, preliminary analyses suggested the two groups—identified by the social service and school system, respectively—are different demographically and on key education measures.

These five categories represent a consolidation of 13 different housing statuses recorded in four data systems: the DSHS Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES), the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS), the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), and Public Housing Authority (PHA) data. The use of a hierarchy to place each student into a single group means that while 14,107 students with a DSHS service history were doubled-up in school data, only 10,837 were assigned to that category here because 3,270 of these students experienced a more precarious housing status in the year. Similarly, while 15,272 students were identified by DSHS caseworkers as staying with friends or family, only 11,994 are included in that group here because 3,278 were also identified as homeless at some point in the year.



\*Students were grouped according to the most precarious housing status they experienced in AY 2011/12.

	Homeless		Staying with Friends or Family		Doubled-up		Public/Permanent Housing		Not Homeless	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
<b>ALL AGES</b>	<b>19,207</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>11,994</b>	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>10,837</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>44,370</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>612,502</b>	<b>88%</b>
Ages 5-11	9,864	51%	5,943	50%	5,498	51%	24,796	56%	315,441	52%
Ages 12-20	9,343	49%	6,051	50%	5,339	49%	19,574	44%	297,061	48%

<sup>5</sup> Mancuso, David (2014). DSHS Integrated Client Database, Olympia, WA: DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division.

<sup>6</sup> “Not homeless” is one of four possible values used by schools to code students’ housing status under McKinney-Vento.

## THE DATA | Identifying housing status in multiple data systems

### *Systems Identifying Student Homelessness and Housing Instability*

- ACES**     **DSHS Economic Services Administration.** The Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES) is used by DSHS/ESA caseworkers to record clients' self-reported housing status during eligibility determination.
- CEDARS**   **K-12 Public Schools.** The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)'s Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) contains K-12 public education data, including housing status collected under the McKinney-Vento Act.
- HMIS**     **Homeless System.** The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is used by local housing providers to record housing assistance services provided to eligible individuals and households.

<i>Number of Students, AY 2011/12<sup>7</sup></i>	Source System	Student Count
NOTE: Students can be counted in multiple categories.		
<b>HOMELESS</b>		
<b>Shelters.</b> Examples: living in shelters or transitional housing, awaiting foster care placement, or in temporary, group, or residential foster care placement.	CEDARS	5,065
<b>Unsheltered.</b> Examples include living in abandoned buildings, campgrounds, vehicles, trailer parks, FEMA shelters, bus/train stations, abandoned in the hospital, living in substandard or inadequate housing, or on the streets.	CEDARS	898
<b>Hotels/Motels.</b> Residing in hotels/motels due to lack of alternative housing.	CEDARS	991
<b>Homeless without Housing</b> (code HO). Generally means unsheltered.	ACES	4,476
<b>Emergency Housing/Shelter</b> (code EH). Staying in an emergency housing shelter.	ACES	242
<b>Battered Spouse</b> (code BT). Staying in a domestic violence shelter.	ACES	40
<b>Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing.</b> Homeless Prevention offers short-term rent assistance or other services necessary to prevent homelessness. Rapid Re-housing provides housing and stabilization services and rental assistance as necessary to help a homeless individual or family move quickly into permanent housing.	HMIS	6,419
<b>Emergency Shelter.</b> Temporary housing for homeless individuals and households that does not require occupants to sign a lease. Typically limited to 90-day stays.	HMIS	2,634
<b>Transitional Housing.</b> Temporary housing program to facilitate the movement of homeless households to permanent housing within 24 months.	HMIS	2,559
<b>STAYING WITH FRIENDS OR FAMILY</b>		
<b>Homeless with Housing</b> (code HH). Temporarily staying with friends or family.	ACES	15,272
<b>DOUBLED-UP</b>		
<b>Doubled-up.</b> Examples include children and youth—including runaway and unaccompanied youth—who live with relatives or friends due to loss of housing, economic hardship, family turmoil, domestic violence, incarceration, hospitalization, drug/alcohol treatment, and similar reasons.	CEDARS	14,107
<b>PUBLIC/PERMANENT HOUSING</b>		
<b>Public/permanent housing.</b> Combined measure that includes assistance provided through a Public Housing Authority or receipt of permanent supportive housing recorded in HMIS.	HMIS/PHA	50,164

<sup>7</sup> Homeless code definitions used by the schools were obtained here: Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) Data Manual for the 2011-2012 School Year, <http://www.k12.wa.us/cedars/pubdocs/2011-12/2011-12CEDARSManual.pdf>.

## Q1. How do demographic characteristics differ by housing status?

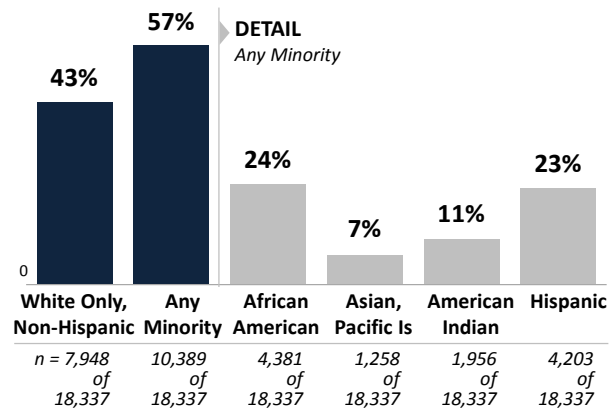
### RACE/ETHNICITY | AY 2011/12

Each student's race and Hispanic origin status was identified through DSHS records, and students could be counted in more than one minority group.<sup>8</sup> Students identified as minorities were more likely than white, non-Hispanic students to be homeless, doubled-up, or residing in public/permanent housing assistance.

The proportion of homeless and public housing residents who were African American was much higher than the proportion among those identified as not homeless (24 percent and 36 percent, respectively, compared to 6 percent).

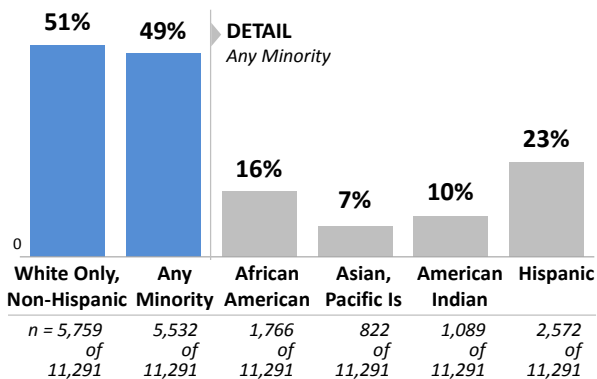
#### Among Homeless Students

All Ages • Academic Year 2012



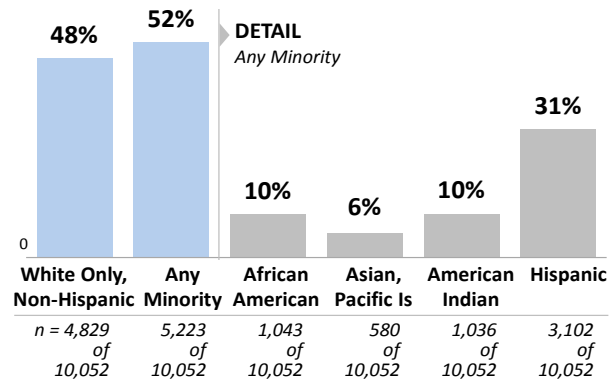
#### Among Those Staying with Family or Friends

All Ages • Academic Year 2012



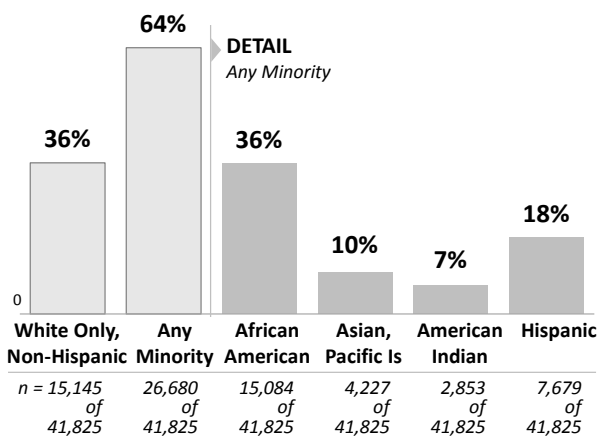
#### Among Doubled-up Students

All Ages • Academic Year 2012



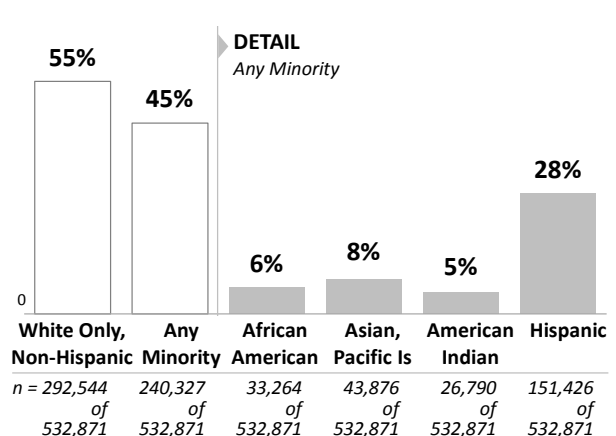
#### Among Students in Public/Permanent Housing

All Ages • Academic Year 2012



#### Among Students Not Identified as Homeless

All Ages • Academic Year 2012



<sup>8</sup> Students who were missing race/ethnicity information in DSHS records were excluded from this analysis.

## GEOGRAPHY | Urban and rural counties of residence

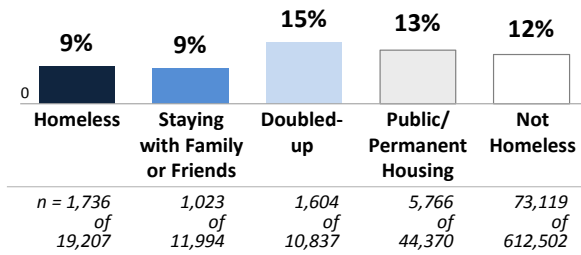
Using 2000 U.S. Census data, a measure was constructed based on the percent of each county's population residing in an urbanized area. Students were assigned to one of the following geographic categories based on their county of residence in AY 2011/12: 1) urban–high density, 2) urban–medium density, 3) urban–low density, or 4) rural. Students experiencing homelessness and those receiving public housing were more likely than students in the other groups to live in high density urban areas, while students in doubled-up housing situations were more likely to be living in rural areas.



## ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS | AY 2011/12

### English Language Learners (ELL)

All Ages • Academic Year 2012



We identified English Language Learners (ELL) in AY 2011/12 using school records. Students who were homeless or staying with family or friends had lower rates of participation in ELL instruction relative to peers in more stable housing situations. Students who were doubled-up had the highest rates of ELL participation at 15 percent. This is consistent with a study based on survey data that found a higher proportion of doubled-up students had immigrant mothers compared to homeless students.<sup>9</sup>

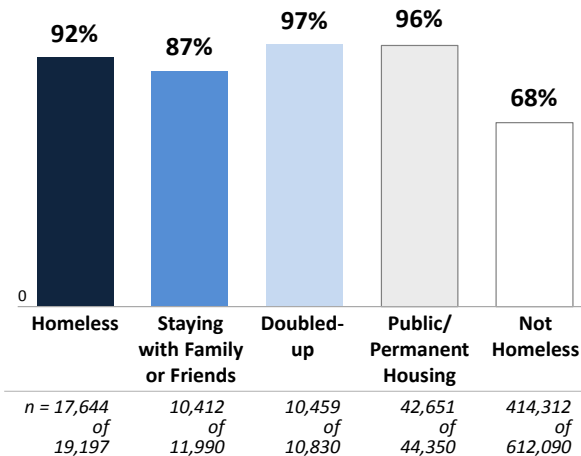
A separate national study found that individuals who are foreign-born, African American, Hispanic, or living in urban areas are more likely to be doubled-up.<sup>10</sup> In Washington State, we find that the demographic composition of the doubled-up student population relates to geographic location. In particular, doubled-up students in urban areas are much more likely to be African American, while those in rural areas are more likely to be Hispanic and to be English Language Learners.<sup>11</sup>

## LOW-INCOME | Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program Eligibility

Students were identified as low-income if they met the eligibility criteria for participation in the Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) program offered through the school system. Statewide, 46 percent of the 1,043,536 K-12 students qualified for FRPL in AY 2011/12.<sup>12</sup>

### Eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch

All Ages • Academic Year 2012



The rate is higher for each of the five groups in the present analysis because 1) students had to have received a DSHS service at some point between SFY 2000 and 2012 to be included in the study population and 2) students who are homeless in the K-12 system are categorically eligible for the program. We find that FRPL eligibility rates for homeless students and those staying with family or friends mirror rates of Basic Food participation for these two groups (92 and 87 percent compared to 88 and 87 percent; see page 11). It is also worth noting that the FRPL eligibility rate is higher—at 96 percent—when we look only at students identified as homeless by the schools (including doubled-up) under McKinney-Vento.

<sup>9</sup> Park, Jung Min, et al. (2011). "Physical and Mental Health, Cognitive Development, and Health Care Use by Housing Status of Low-Income Young Children in 20 American Cities: A Prospective Cohort Study," *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 101 (S1), pp. S255-S261.

<sup>10</sup> Eggers, Frederick and Fouad Moumen (2013). "Analysis of Trends in Household Composition Using American Housing Survey Data," Bethesda, MD: Econometrica, Inc.

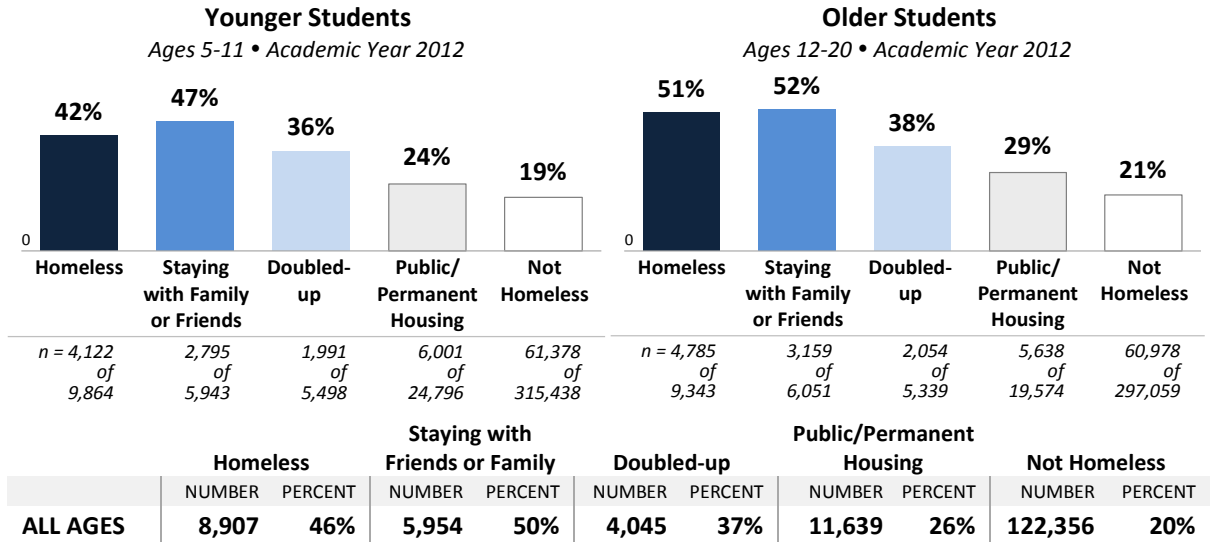
<sup>11</sup> Here we define rural counties as those that fell into either the rural or urban-low density group.

<sup>12</sup> Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State Report Card, AY 2011/12.

## Q2. How does housing status relate to educational experience?

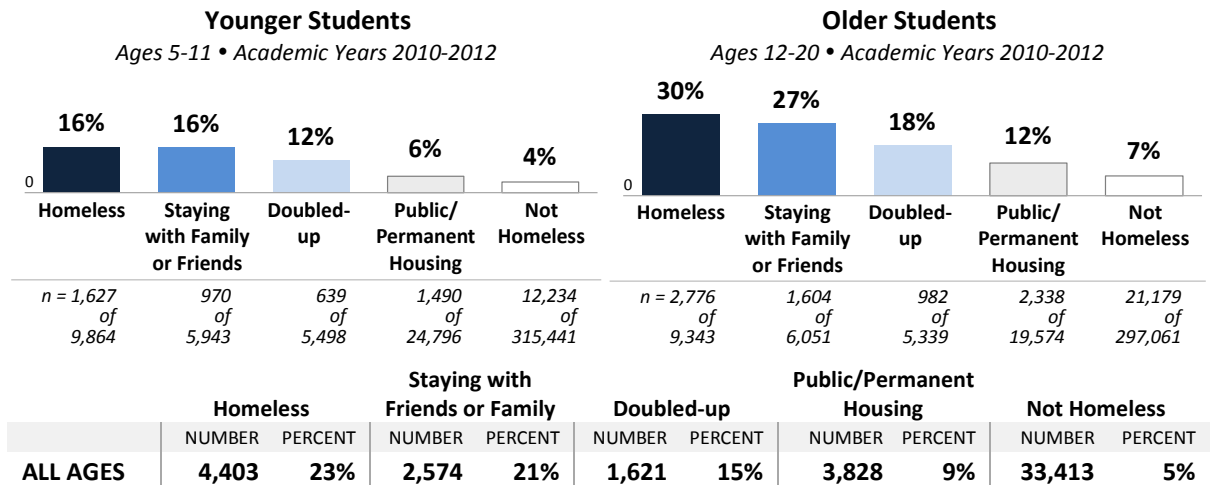
### AT LEAST ONE SCHOOL MOVE | AY 2011/12

Both younger and older students who were homeless at some point in the year were twice as likely to experience a school change compared to non-homeless students. Somewhat surprisingly, students identified by DSHS caseworkers as staying with friends or family (“homeless with housing”) were slightly more likely than homeless students to experience a school change.



### 3+ SCHOOL MOVES | Over a 3-year window from AY 2009/10 to 2011/12

A recent RDA report found that students with three or more school moves over a 3-year period were at much greater risk on a variety of measures relative to students with fewer moves.<sup>13</sup> Most notably, while 21 percent of 7<sup>th</sup> graders with no school moves dropped out of school over a 7-year follow-up period, 74 percent of their peers with three or more school changes had dropped out. The present analysis finds that homeless students and those staying with family or friends were more likely to experience three or more school changes, though students doubled-up and those residing in public/permanent housing were also at higher risk.

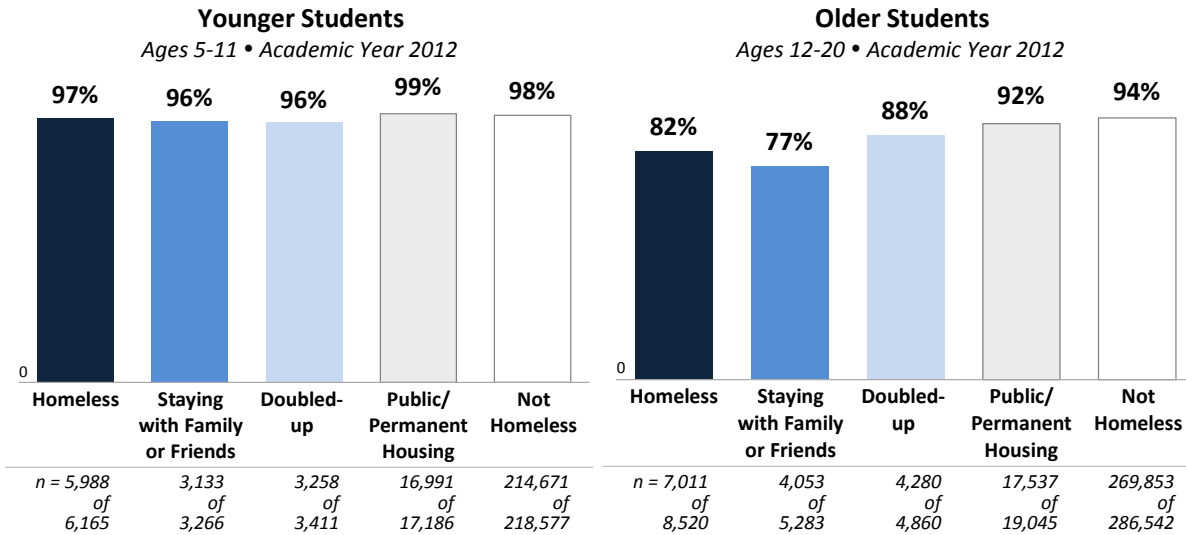


<sup>13</sup> Estee, Sharon, et al. (2014). “School Moves: School changes related to social service use, risk factors, and academic performance,” Olympia, WA: DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division, <http://publications.rda.dshs.wa.gov/1513/>.



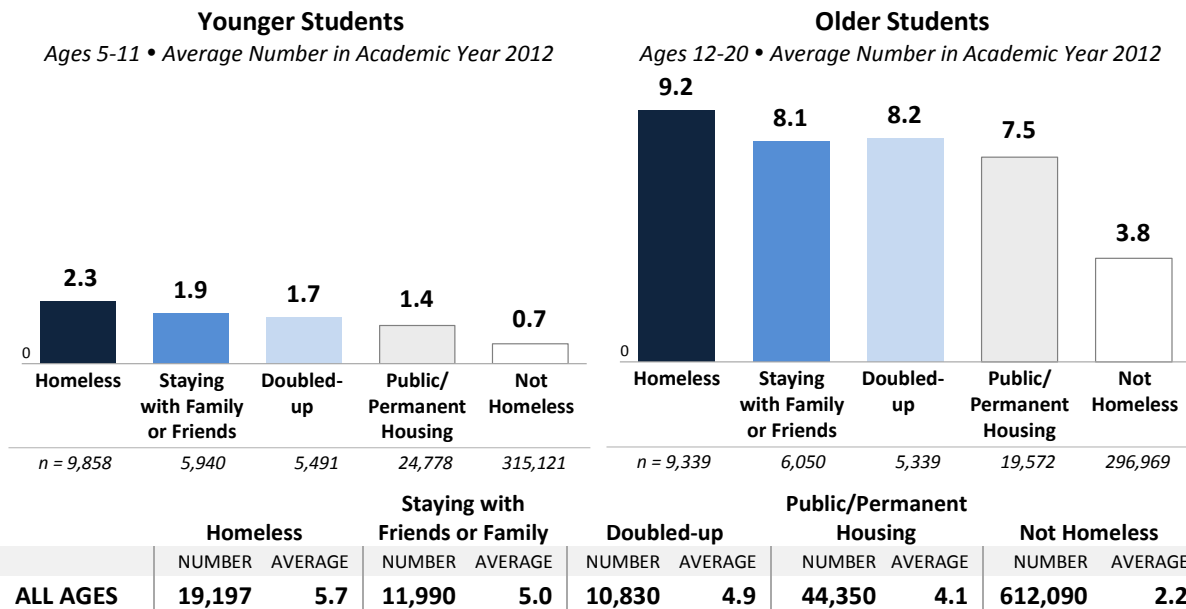
## GRADE PROGRESSION | Progressed to the next grade as expected in AY 2011/12

Another measure of how students are faring is whether they advanced as expected from one grade to the next between AY 2010/11 and AY 2011/12, excluding students for whom grade information was missing (such as those not enrolled in both academic years). Among younger students, there was little association between housing status and grade progression. Among older students, however, 18 percent of homeless youth and 23 percent of youth staying with family or friends in AY 2011/12 had *not* progressed, while only 6 percent of non-homeless students had failed to progress to the next grade as expected.



## UNEXCUSED ABSENCES | Average number of unexcused absences in AY 2011/12

Unexcused absences from school are another important measure of academic well-being among K-12 students. Among both younger and older students, we observe an association between housing status and unexcused absences, with homeless students experiencing two to three times as many of these absences as peers who did not experience homelessness in the year (2.3 compared to 0.7 for younger students and 9.2 compared to 3.8 for older students).



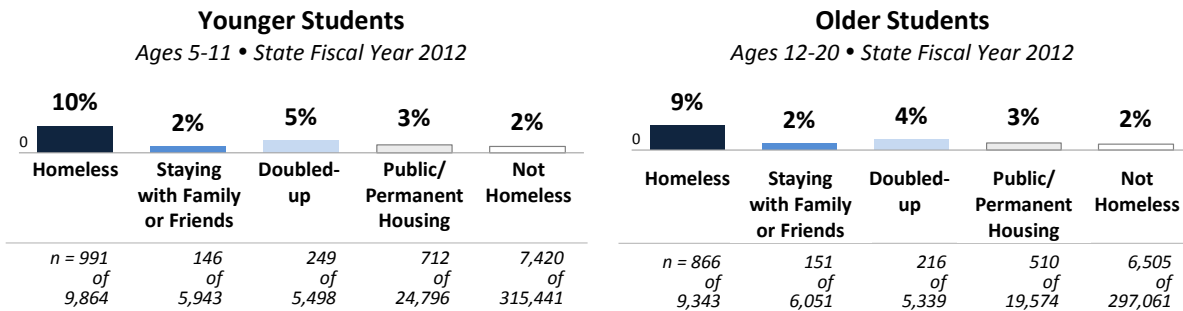


### Q3. How does housing status relate to key risk factors?

This section explores the relationship between housing status in AY 2011/12 and the following risk factors in SFY 2012: child welfare involvement, substance abuse, mental illness, and juvenile justice involvement. A two-year window (SFY 2011-12) is used to observe the presence of substance abuse and mental illness.

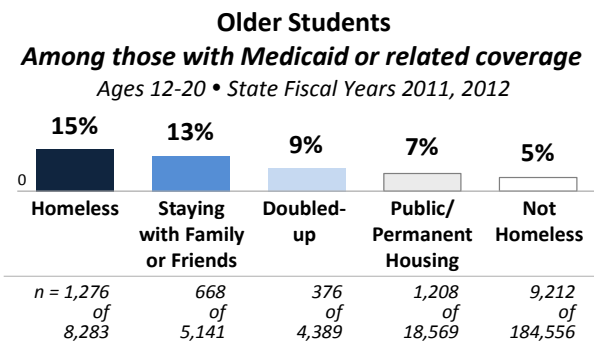
#### CHILD WELFARE INVOLVEMENT | SFY 2012

A growing body of literature finds an association between homelessness and child welfare involvement, particularly for families experiencing domestic violence and those newly entering or spending an extended length of time in shelters.<sup>14</sup> Consistent with these earlier findings, we find that homeless students are much more likely to be involved with the DSHS Children’s Administration (CA) than their peers in more stably housed situations. Among homeless students, 10 percent of those aged 5 to 11 and 9 percent of older students were involved with the child welfare system in SFY 2012. By contrast, only 2 percent of non-homeless students in both age groups were involved with DSHS/CA.



#### SUBSTANCE ABUSE | SFY 2011-12

We considered an individual to have a probable alcohol or other drug (AOD) problem if health service or criminal justice records identified diagnoses, treatment, or arrests associated with substance-related problems in SFY 2011 or 2012.

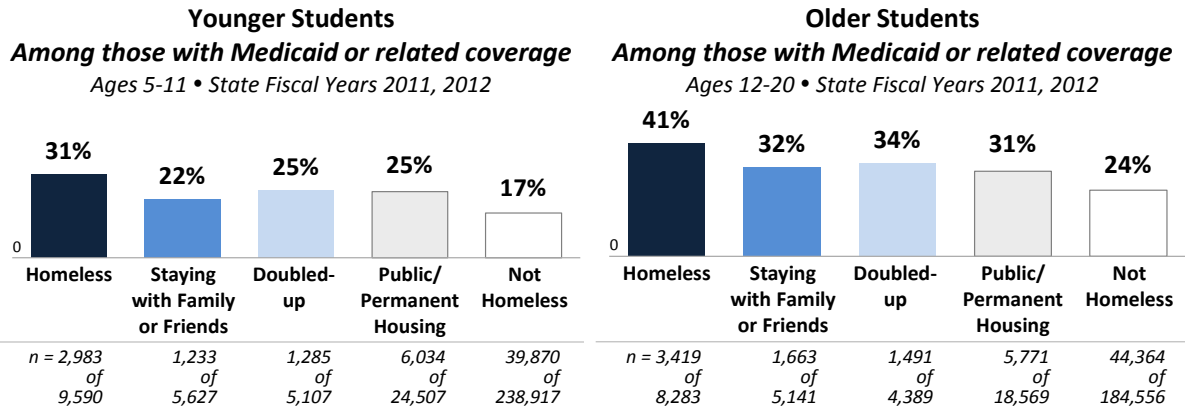


Only students between the ages of 12 and 20 who had at least one month of medical coverage were included in this measure. Alcohol and drug problems were found to be more prevalent among homeless students and those staying with family or friends (15 and 13 percent, respectively) relative to those who were not homeless in AY 2011/12 (5 percent).

<sup>14</sup> Park, Jung Min, et al. (2004). “Child Welfare Involvement Among Children in Homeless Families,” *Child Welfare*, Vol. 83, No. 5: pp. 423-436.

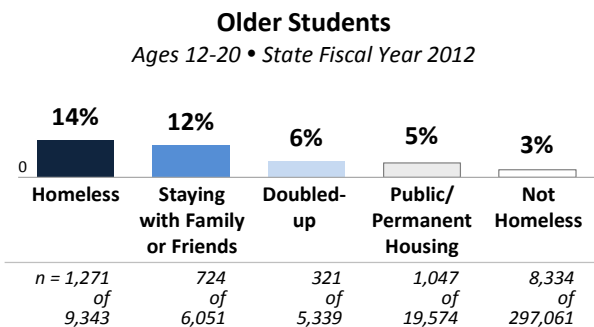
## MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT NEED | SFY 2011-12

Mental health treatment need was identified through medical and treatment records in SFY 2011 and 2012 for students who had at least one month of Medicaid or related medical coverage in that period. The measure includes receipt of mental health services as well as prescriptions for psychotropic medications and mental health-related medical diagnoses in defined categories. For both age groups, homeless students had higher rates of identified mental illness relative to the other groups. Among students in the other housing categories, however, the association between housing status and risk was less pronounced than what we observe on other risk measures.



## JUVENILE JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT | SFY 2012

Students were identified as having juvenile justice system involvement if they had arrests recorded in Washington State Patrol (WSP) data, convictions/adjudications captured by the Administrative Office of the Courts, services from the DSHS Juvenile Justice and Rehabilitation Administration, or involvement with the state Department of Corrections at any point in SFY 2012.



Students who were homeless and those who were staying with family or friends had higher rates of criminal justice involvement compared to the other three groups. The rate of involvement was more than four times as high for homeless students compared to those who were not homeless (14 percent compared to 3 percent). This is consistent with prior research that has found youth offenders to be at increased risk for homelessness.<sup>15</sup>

It is also worth noting that a study of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) participants in Seattle-King County found that court-involved youth were more likely than other youth participants to be homeless or highly mobile. Contributing to this problem, some youth ex-offenders were unable to reunite with their families in public housing upon release from correctional facilities due to housing authority policies regarding convictions for certain offenses.<sup>16</sup>

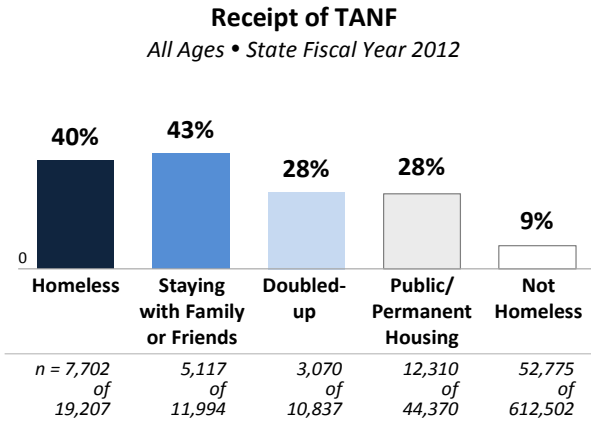
<sup>15</sup> Toro, P., Dworsky, A., and Fowler, P. (2007). "Homeless youth in the United States: Recent research findings and intervention approaches," Paper presented at the 2007 National Symposium on Homelessness Research.

<sup>16</sup> Feldman, D. and D. Patterson (2003). "Characteristics and Program Experiences of Youthful Offenders within Seattle-King County Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Programs," Seattle, WA: Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County Research & Development Committee, [http://www.seakingwdc.org/pdf/youth/YouthOffenderStudy\\_33.pdf](http://www.seakingwdc.org/pdf/youth/YouthOffenderStudy_33.pdf).

## Q4. How does housing status relate to receipt of economic services?

### TANF RECEIPT | SFY 2012

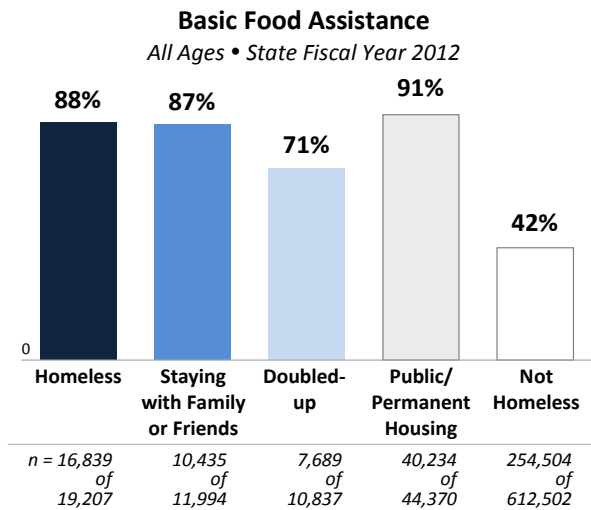
The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program provides cash assistance to low-income families. Homeless students and those staying with family or friends had higher rates of TANF receipt (40 and 43 percent, respectively) than the other three groups.



Just over one quarter (28 percent) of doubled-up families and those in public/permanent housing were receiving TANF. TANF time limits may have precluded some families from qualifying for the program. For example, previous analyses found that about 40 percent of children on TANF cases that were terminated due to February 2011 time limit policy changes were receiving subsidized housing (such as through Public Housing Authorities) according to ACES.<sup>17</sup>

### BASIC FOOD | SFY 2012

The federally-funded Basic Food program is intended to ensure that low-income individuals do not go hungry. Contingent on meeting other eligibility criteria, households in Washington State qualify for Basic Food if they have incomes at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.



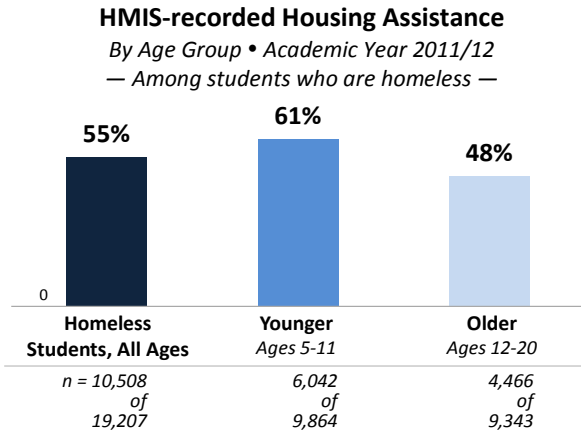
Homeless students, those staying with family or friends, and those in public housing had the highest rates of Basic Food receipt. Interestingly, only 71 percent of doubled-up students received Basic Food even though that group had the highest rate of participation in the Free and Reduced Price Lunch program (at 97 percent) of any of the five groups examined. It is possible that some doubled-up households are sharing food as well as housing. In addition, some may not meet the eligibility criteria for Basic Food assistance despite being categorically eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch due to their housing status.

<sup>17</sup> See: Shoji, Dori, et al. (Jan. 2012). "A Look at Adults and Children Terminated from TANF Due to Time Limits in February 2011," <http://publications.rda.dshs.wa.gov/1465/> and Mancuso, David, et al. (Oct. 2012). "The Circumstances of Families after Time Limits: Adults and Children Terminated from TANF in February 2011," <http://publications.rda.dshs.wa.gov/1508/>.

## Q5. Are homeless students receiving HMIS-recorded housing assistance?

### HOUSING ASSISTANCE | SFY 2012

Under the federal HEARTH Act, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines homelessness more narrowly than the definition provided under the McKinney-Vento Act.<sup>18</sup> Whereas the definition in the HEARTH Act determines who is eligible for homeless housing assistance, the definition used under McKinney-Vento determines which students are eligible for transportation and other school-based services. We therefore examined HMIS-recorded housing assistance in SFY 2012 only for students who were homeless, using our closest approximation to the HEARTH Act definition.



Restricting to homeless students, we found that 61 percent of younger students and 48 percent of older students received HMIS-recorded housing assistance at some point in SFY 2012. This includes the following types of housing: emergency shelter, transitional housing, rent assistance, and permanent/permanent supportive housing. It does not include other types of housing assistance, such as that provided through Public Housing Authorities or the Housing Trust Fund.

## Discussion

**Schools currently identify a large number of students who qualify for services under the McKinney-Vento Act but who might not be eligible for homeless housing assistance under the HEARTH Act.**

- There were 10,837 students identified as doubled-up by the school system who were not identified as homeless or unstably housed by the social service or housing assistance system. These students might not be eligible for housing assistance from the vantage point of the homeless service system.
- At the same time, over half (56 percent) of homeless students in this report (n = 10,726 of 19,207) were identified by DSHS caseworkers or local housing providers but *not* by the school system. In other words, there were 10,726 students identified by ACES and/or HMIS who would likely be considered homeless under the narrow definition used by the homeless service system but who were identified as “not homeless” in CEDARS.

**Further efforts to minimize school changes, especially among homeless students, could buffer students from poor educational outcomes.**

- We identified 8,907 students ages 5 to 20 with a DSHS service history who experienced homelessness and also changed schools at least once in AY 2011/12, meaning that almost half (46 percent) of the 19,207 homeless students in our analysis experienced a school change in the year.

<sup>18</sup> For the definition of homelessness under the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act, see: [https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HEARTH\\_HomelessDefinition\\_FinalRule.pdf](https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HEARTH_HomelessDefinition_FinalRule.pdf).

- Students identified by DSHS caseworkers as “homeless with housing” also appear to be at greater risk, with 50 percent of the 11,994 students in this category experiencing a school change in AY 2011/12.
- Although the present analysis does not tell us what impact school mobility will have on these students’ academic performance, we do find that older homeless youth and those staying with friends or family were more likely to be held back a grade in AY 2011/12. In particular, 18 percent of older homeless youth and 23 percent of youth staying with friends or family had not progressed to the next grade as expected, compared to a grade retention rate of just 6 percent for non-homeless students.

***Older youth who experienced homelessness or had been staying with friends or family had a higher prevalence of substance abuse and criminal justice involvement compared to peers.***

- The rate of juvenile justice involvement among homeless and “homeless with housing” students was approximately four times that of students who did not experience homelessness in AY 2011/12 (14 and 12 percent, respectively, compared to 3 percent).
- Similarly, while 15 percent of homeless students and 13 percent of “homeless with housing” students had a probable alcohol/drug treatment need, only 5 percent of their non-homeless peers were experiencing this risk factor.

***Students living in doubled-up housing situations may be at risk for future homelessness.***

- In this analysis, we have looked separately at the 10,837 students with DSHS service histories who the school system identified as doubled-up but who were not identified as homeless in the year. Prior research suggests individuals in shared housing situations are at increased risk of becoming homeless. For example, one statistical analysis predicting homelessness among families in New York City found that approximately 60 percent of families who entered emergency shelter had spent most of their time in the prior year in doubled-up housing arrangements.<sup>19</sup>
- Similarly, an earlier RDA study based on interviews conducted with DSHS families living in shelters found that more than half of those who were experiencing repetitive homelessness had spent their most recent spell of housing instability in a “place shared with others.”<sup>20</sup> Further work to identify specific pockets of particularly at-risk groups within the doubled-up population and to connect them to needed resources could potentially help prevent those at greatest risk from becoming homeless.

<sup>19</sup> Shinn, Marybeth, et al. (1998). “Predictors of Homelessness Among Families in New York City: From Shelter Request to Housing Stability,” *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 88, No. 11: 1651-1657.

<sup>20</sup> Lowin, A., S. Demirel, S. Estee, and B. Schreiner (2001). “Homeless Families in Washington State. A study of Families Helped by Shelters and Their Use of Welfare and Social Services,” Olympia, WA: DSHS Research and Data Analysis, <http://publications.rda.dshs.wa.gov/842/>.

**OVERVIEW**

This report examines the housing status of K-12 public education students and explores key measures of risk and well-being associated with housing stability.

**STUDY POPULATION**

The study population included 698,910 K-12 public education students in Washington State who had valid housing status data in school records and were between the ages of 5 and 20 in Academic Year (AY) 2011/12. The Office of Superintendent for Public Instruction (OSPI) identified 27,390 students as homeless (including doubled up) according to school data in AY 2011/12.<sup>21</sup> Our study population includes only 21,061 students who were homeless or unstably housed in school data for two reasons: 1) INVEST 2012 only contains de-identified school data for students who received a DSHS service between SFY 2000 and 2012 and who had identifying information (such as name, date of birth, and social security number) that linked with education data available in OFM’s Education Research and Data Center P-20 Data Warehouse and 2) we did not include pre-kindergarten students in our analysis.

**DATA AND MEASURES**

- The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) provided information on receipt of emergency shelter, transitional housing, rent assistance, and permanent/permanent supportive housing. All of these programs were included in a measure of HMIS-recorded housing assistance. However, for the purposes of grouping students by housing status, those in permanent/permanent supportive housing were grouped with students receiving assistance from Public Housing Authorities according to HUD data.
- The Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES) provided information on homelessness and housing instability identified by DSHS caseworkers.
- Data from the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) was used to identify students’ housing status as recorded by the school system. CEDARS was also used to measure school moves, grade progression, unexcused absences, receipt of Free and Reduced Price Lunch, and participation in English Language Learners instruction.
- The DSHS Client Services Database (CSDB) provided information on county of residence, age, race/ethnicity, TANF receipt, Basic Food assistance, Children’s Administration involvement, and Juvenile Rehabilitation services.
- Office of Financial Management (OFM) eligibility data provided information on whether or not individuals had Medicaid or related medical coverage, since behavioral health risk factors were only measured for the subset of individuals who had medical coverage in the period being observed.
- ProviderOne provided diagnosis, prescription, and service encounter data from medical records, which was used to create measures of mental illness and substance abuse issues.
- The Treatment and Assessment Report Generation Tool (TARGET) and Consumer Information System (CIS) both provided data on behavioral health care needs and services.
- Along with data on DSHS Juvenile Rehabilitation involvement, arrest data from the Washington State Patrol (WSP), conviction data from the Administrative Office of the Courts, and incarceration and community supervision data from the Department of Corrections were used to create an indicator of juvenile justice involvement.

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<sup>21</sup> State of Washington, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Homeless Education Data Collection and Reports, <http://www.k12.wa.us/HomelessEd/Data.aspx>.