

Unaccompanied Children and Young Adults Served by Homelessness Programs in California



This fact sheet is part of a series using the [Homeless Data Integration System \(HDIS\)](#) to understand how homelessness programs are reaching different populations in California. It provides a snapshot of how unaccompanied children and young adults were served by homelessness programs in California using information reported in HDIS during the three-year period between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2021. HDIS includes information about programs that report to a local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), but does not contain information about every homelessness response program across the state.

Characteristics of Unaccompanied Children and Young Adults Served by Homelessness Programs

- More than **175,000 people younger than 25 years-old** were served by homelessness programs during the three-year assessment period, about 39,000 of whom were not accompanied by parents or other adults at least 25 years-old, and were not living with their own children.



Of all people served were children and young adults

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This number reflects 32% of all people served over the three-year assessment period, highlighting the importance of programs that target the needs of children and young adults.

- 7,485** were unaccompanied children younger than 18 years old
- 31,516** were unaccompanied young adults aged 18-24 years old

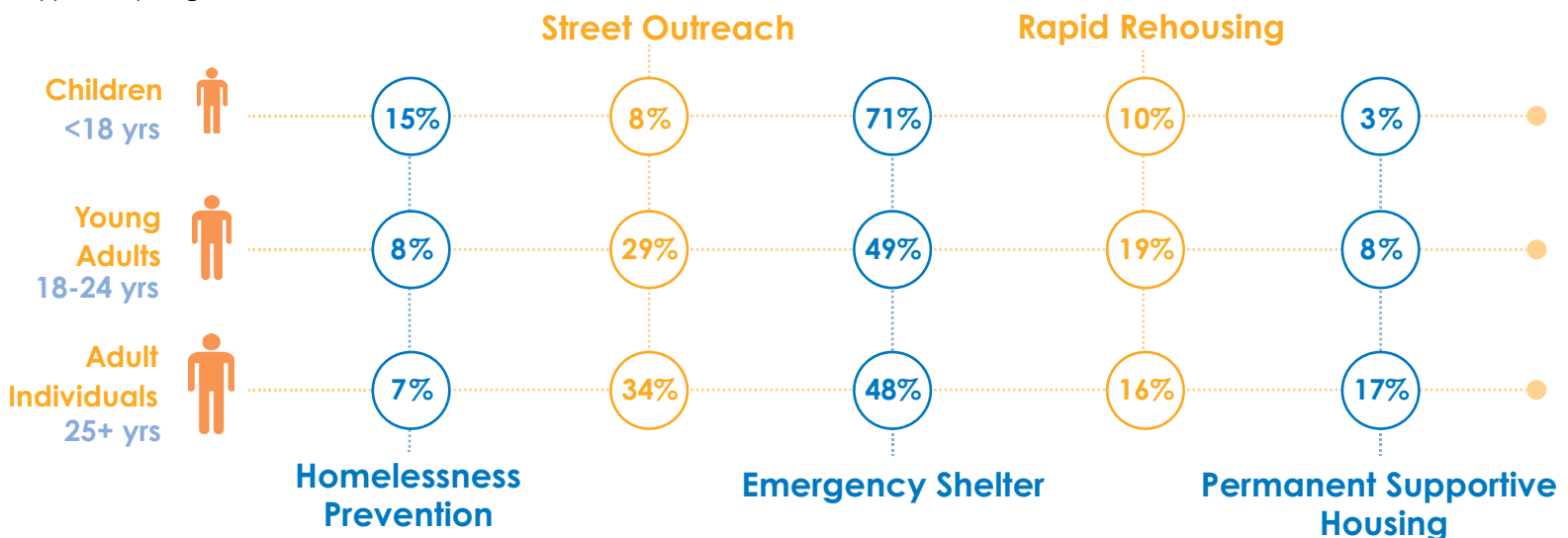


Of unaccompanied children and young adults were people of color

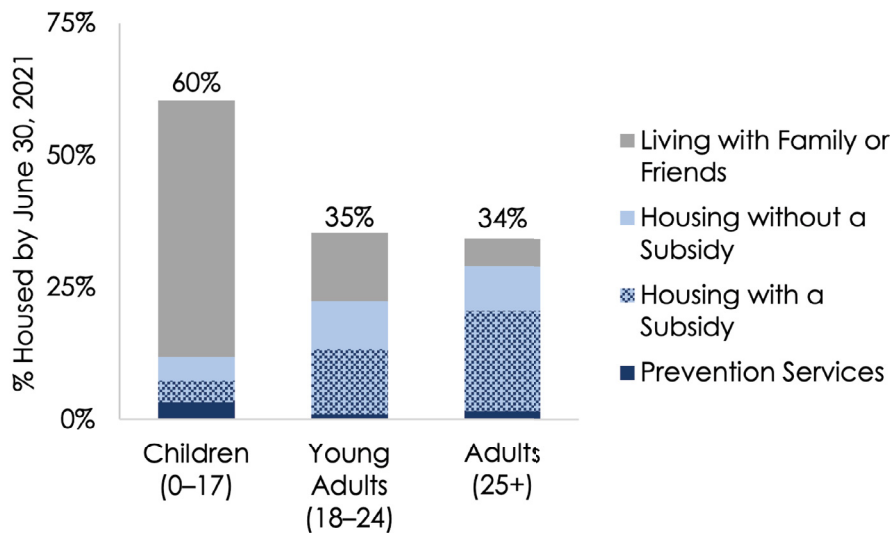
Programs served an additional **6,441 young adults who were also parents**

Types of Homelessness Programs Serving Unaccompanied Children and Young Adults

The percentages of unaccompanied children, young adults, and adult individuals served by each type of program.



Outcomes for Unaccompanied Children and Young Adults Served by Homelessness Programs



- **60%** of unaccompanied children and **35%** of unaccompanied young adults **were recorded as being housed** by the end of the study period.
- Many of those who were not recorded as housed were still receiving homelessness services or had moved into institutional settings like group homes.



Of unaccompanied young adults met the criteria for chronic homelessness (at least one year plus a disabling condition) by the end of the study period.



The most common outcome for unaccompanied children was to move in with family or friends following a stay in an emergency shelter.

Unaccompanied young adults were 4.5 times more likely to identify as transgender or questioning/non-singular than adults ages 25 or older.

Conclusion

- The consequences of homelessness for children and young adults are long lasting. Childhood experiences of homelessness undermine educational attainment, economic resources, and health throughout adulthood.
- Efforts to address homelessness among children and young adults are often distinct from interventions serving adults. Youth are more successful when placed in programs with their peers, and in programs that employ staff who understand the unique challenges and social issues confronting teenagers and young adults.
- Cal ICH is forming a working group on youth and young adults to tailor strategies for preventing and ending youth homelessness, including efforts to improve how well homelessness programs reach youth in need; to strengthen connections between homelessness services and child welfare, education and other systems serving youth; and to maximize the effectiveness of state-directed resources.

This series is a collaboration between the California Interagency Council on Homelessness; the Terner Center for Housing Innovation at the University of California, Berkeley; the Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative at the University of California, San Francisco; and Abt Associates.

