

2016 Homeless Needs Assessment

City of Seattle
Human Services Department

Needs Assessment Study

More than 1,050 unique surveys with individuals experiencing homelessness in the city of Seattle in November 2016.

6 targeted focus groups, held with roughly 80 individuals representing different subpopulations:

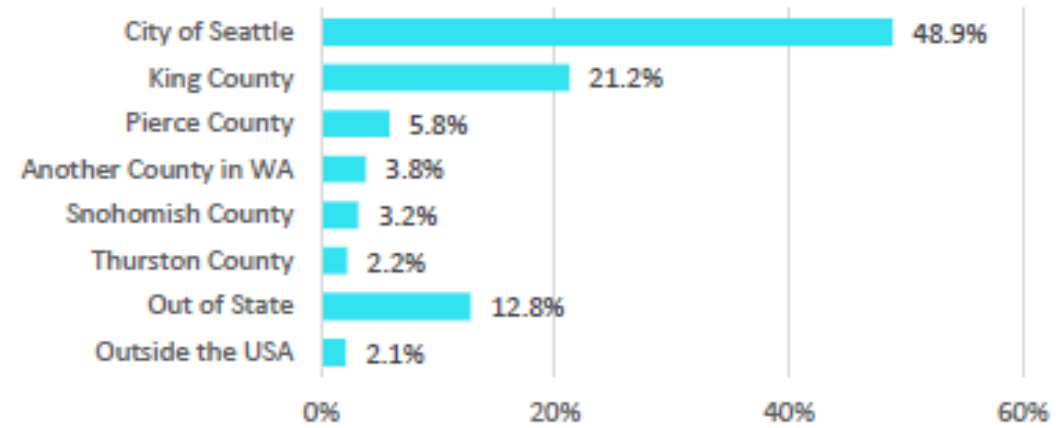
- Youth
- Families with children
- People in authorized encampments
- People in unsanctioned encampments
- People in emergency shelters
- People who sleep in vehicles

Who is Homeless?

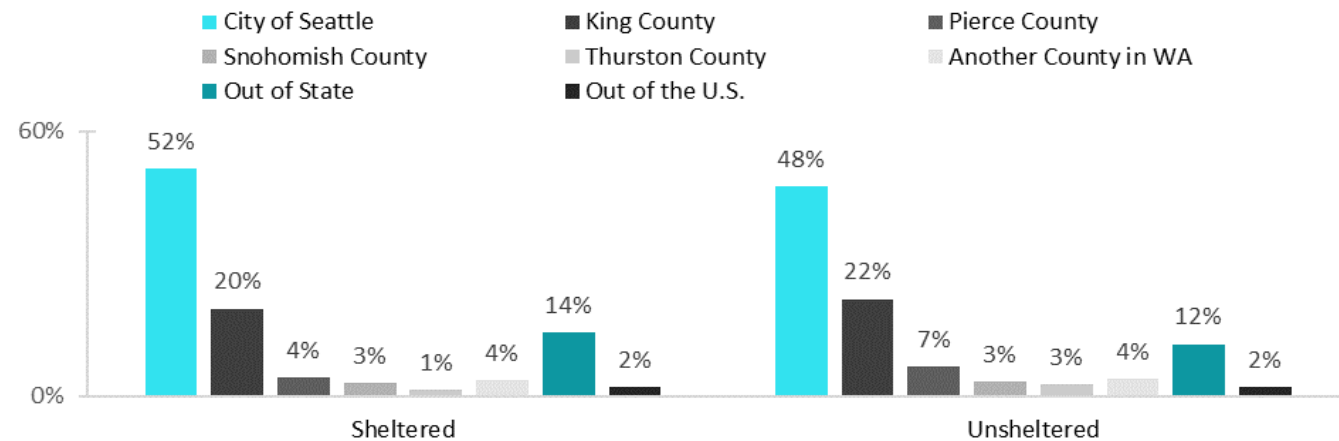
Where are people from?

Around 70% lived in Seattle or King County when they were last stably housed

WHERE RESPONDENTS WERE LIVING AT THE TIME THEY MOST RECENTLY BECAME HOMELESS



COMPARING SHELTERED AND UNSHELTERED



Why Seattle?

Why did people come to Seattle?

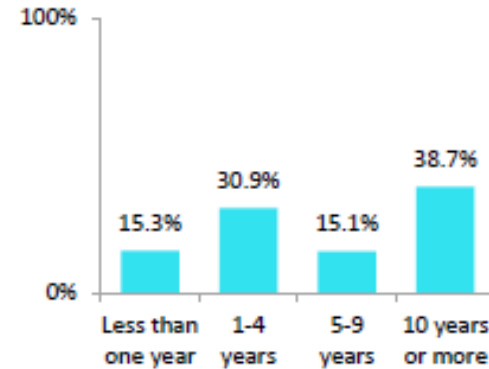
Over 50% of homeless have been in Seattle more than 5 years

Looking for opportunity or because friends/family live here

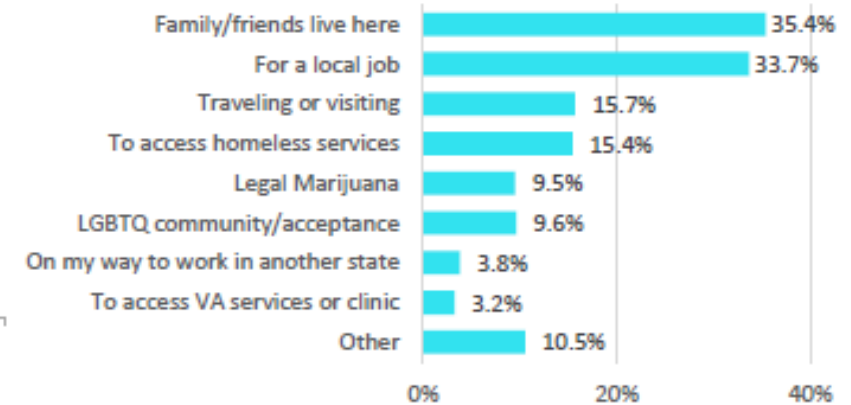
Slightly more **unsheltered** came for family and friends

Slightly more **sheltered** came to access homeless services and/or VA services

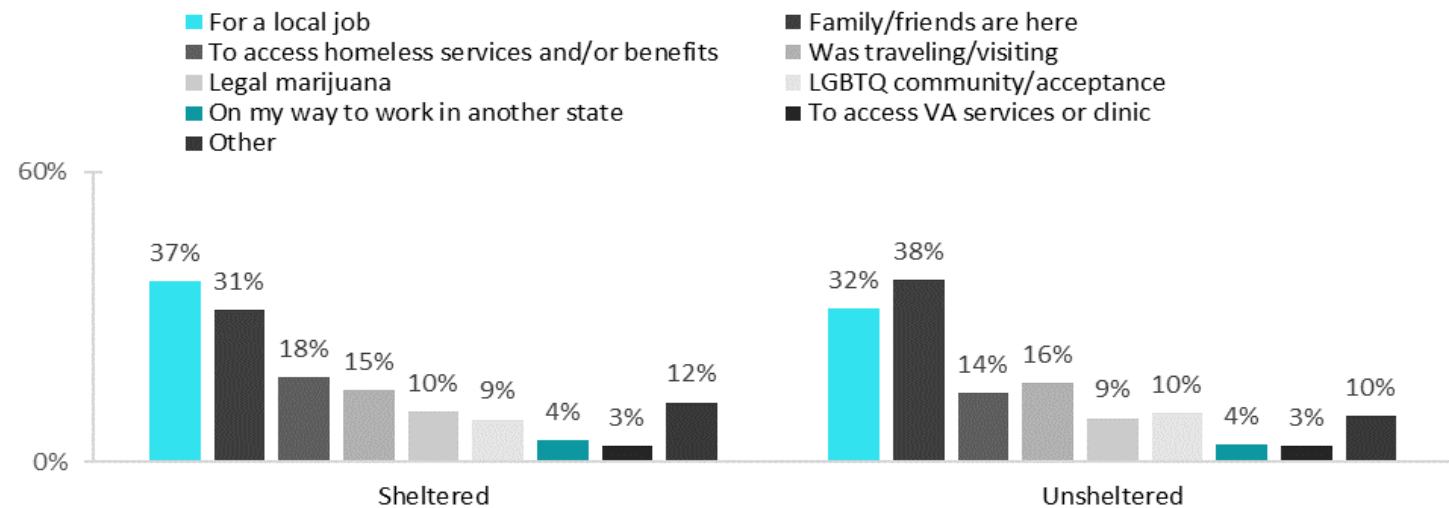
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN SEATTLE?



WHY DID YOU COME TO SEATTLE?



COMPARING SHELTERED AND UNSHELTERED



Who is Homeless?

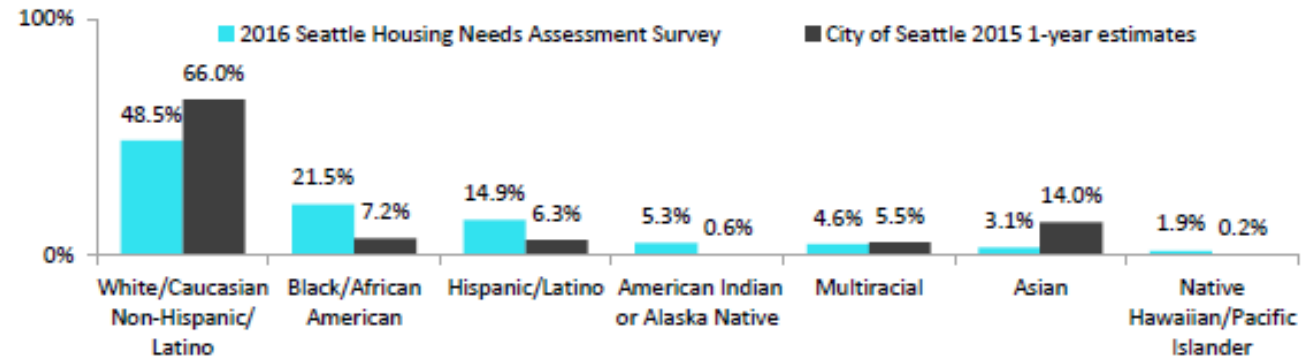
Homelessness Affects Minorities Disproportionately

- Latinos/Hispanics
- Black/African Americans
- Native Americans

Slightly more Whites and Black/African Americans in shelter

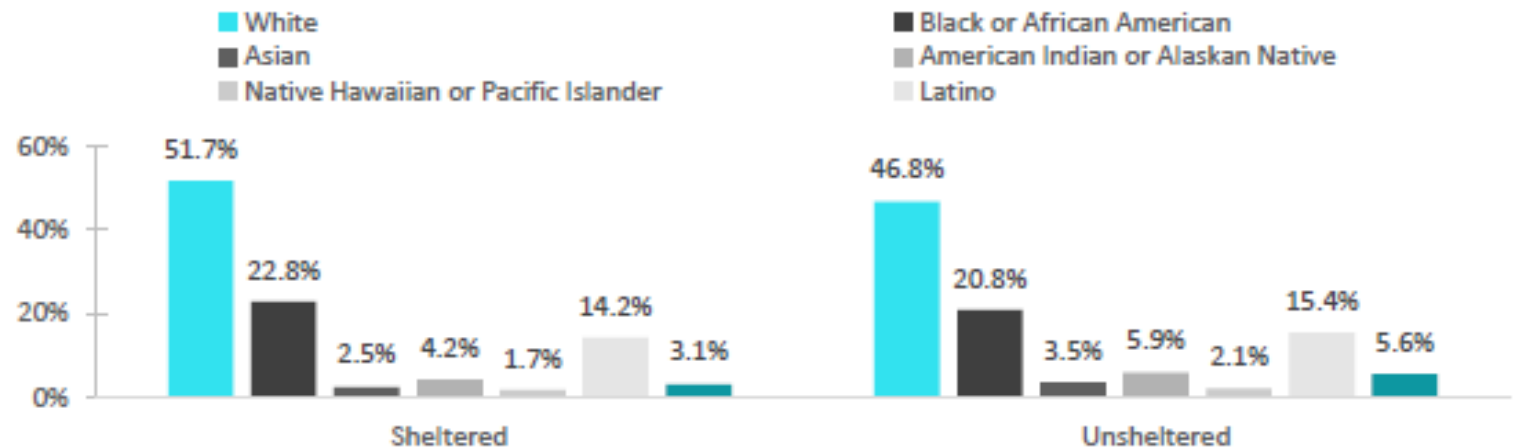
Slightly more Native Americans, Asians and Latinos living unsheltered

Figure 5. RACE/ETHNICITY



N = 990; Source: United States Census Bureau. (2016). 2015 American Community Survey 1-year estimates.

WHICH RACIAL GROUP DO YOU IDENTIFY WITH MOST?



Who is Homeless?

28% of people living outdoors are 30 years or younger

28% of survey respondents identify as LGBTQ

3.4% identify as transgender

AGE

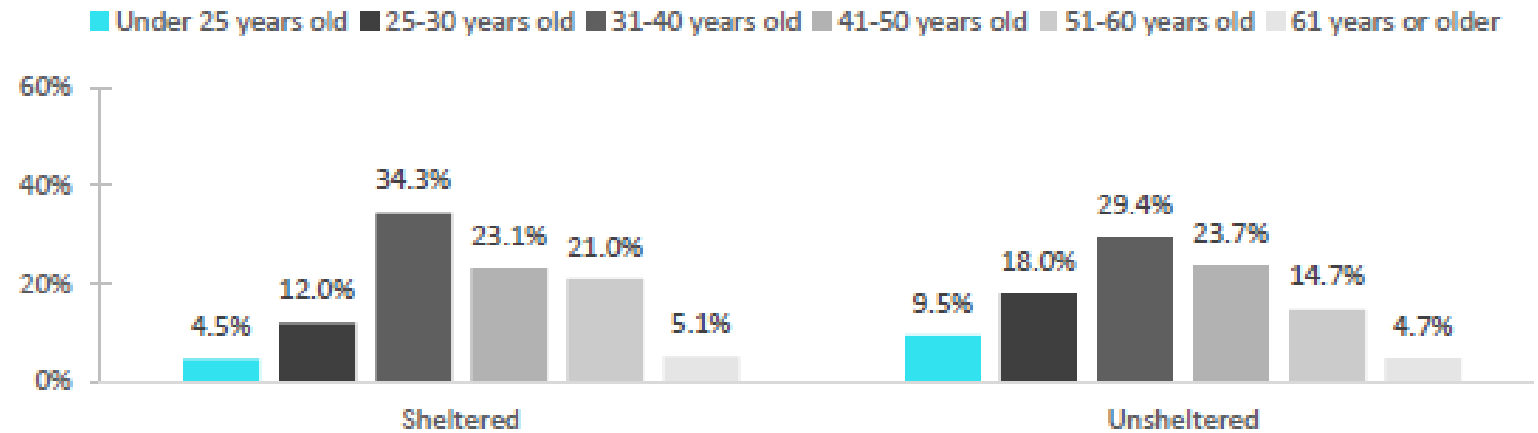


Figure 4. SEXUAL ORIENTATION

	Percentage	Respondents
Straight	73.8%	765
Bisexual	12.2%	126
Gay	5.4%	56
Other	3.8%	39
Lesbian	3.5%	36
Queer	3.0%	31

N=1,037 respondents offering 1,053 responses.

Education and Employment

41% of respondents work in some capacity
(full-time, part-time, temporarily, or seasonally)

35% of respondents had some college or a college degree

Figure 6. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

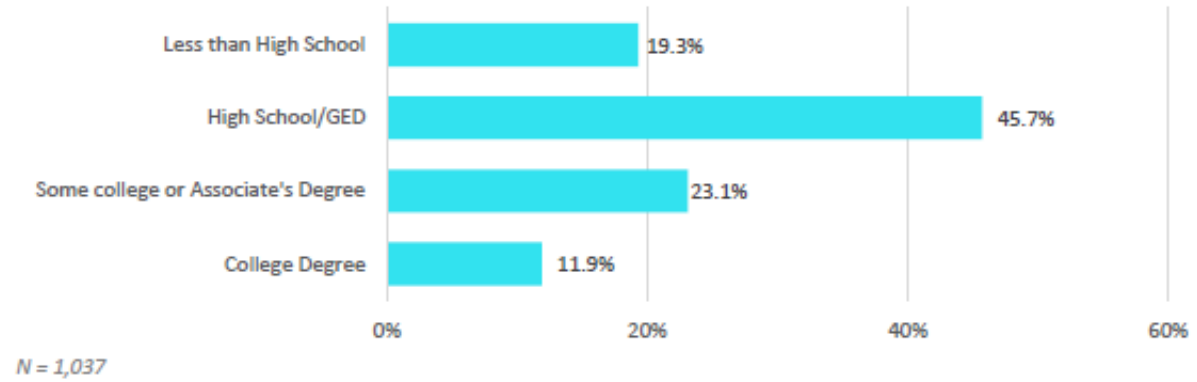
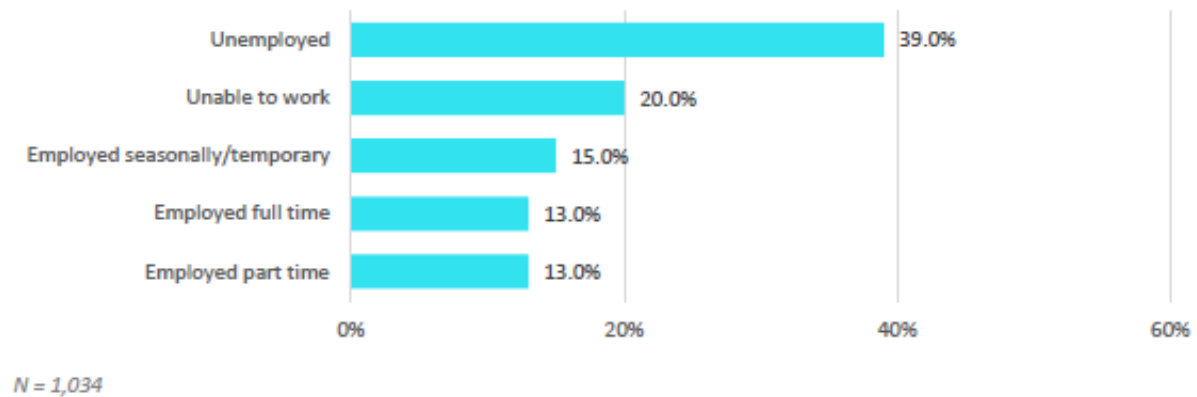


Figure 7. EMPLOYMENT STATUS

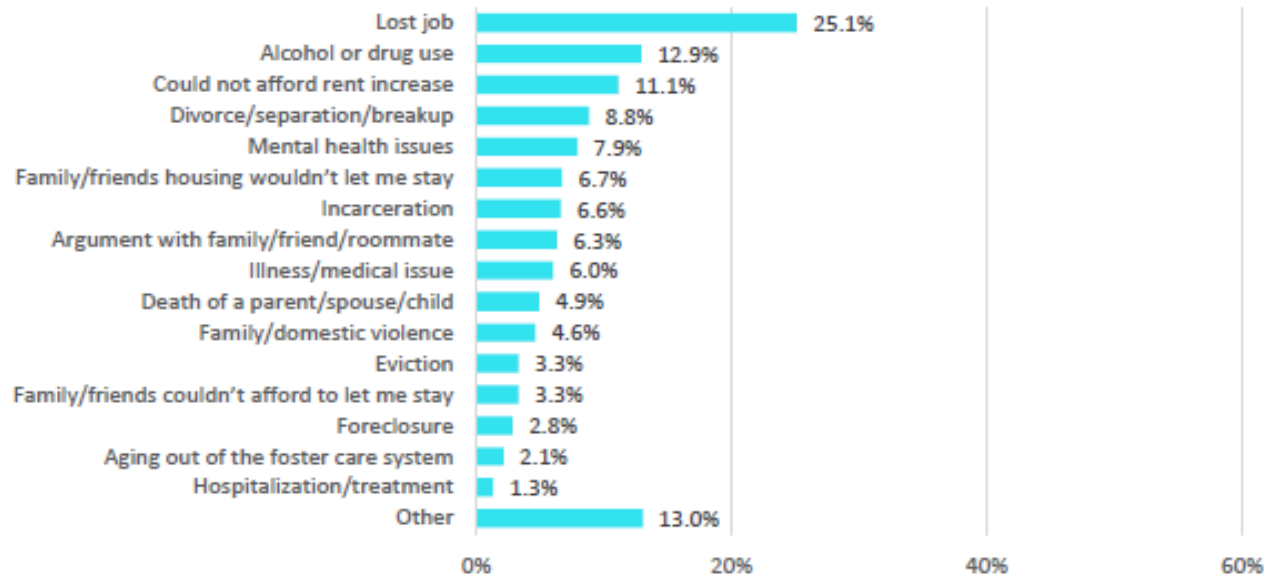


Primary Event Leading to Homelessness

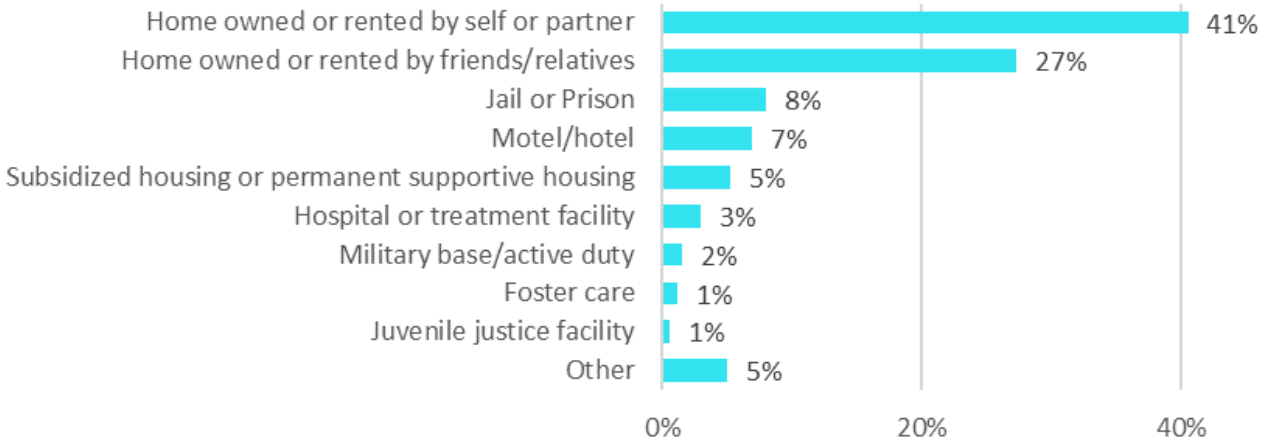
20% listed Housing issues as the primary event leading to their homelessness

12% were connected to an institution or system immediately prior to experiencing homelessness

Figure 21. PRIMARY EVENT OR CONDITION THAT LED TO RESPONDENTS' CURRENT EPISODE OF HOMELESSNESS



LIVING ARRANGEMENTS IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS THIS TIME.

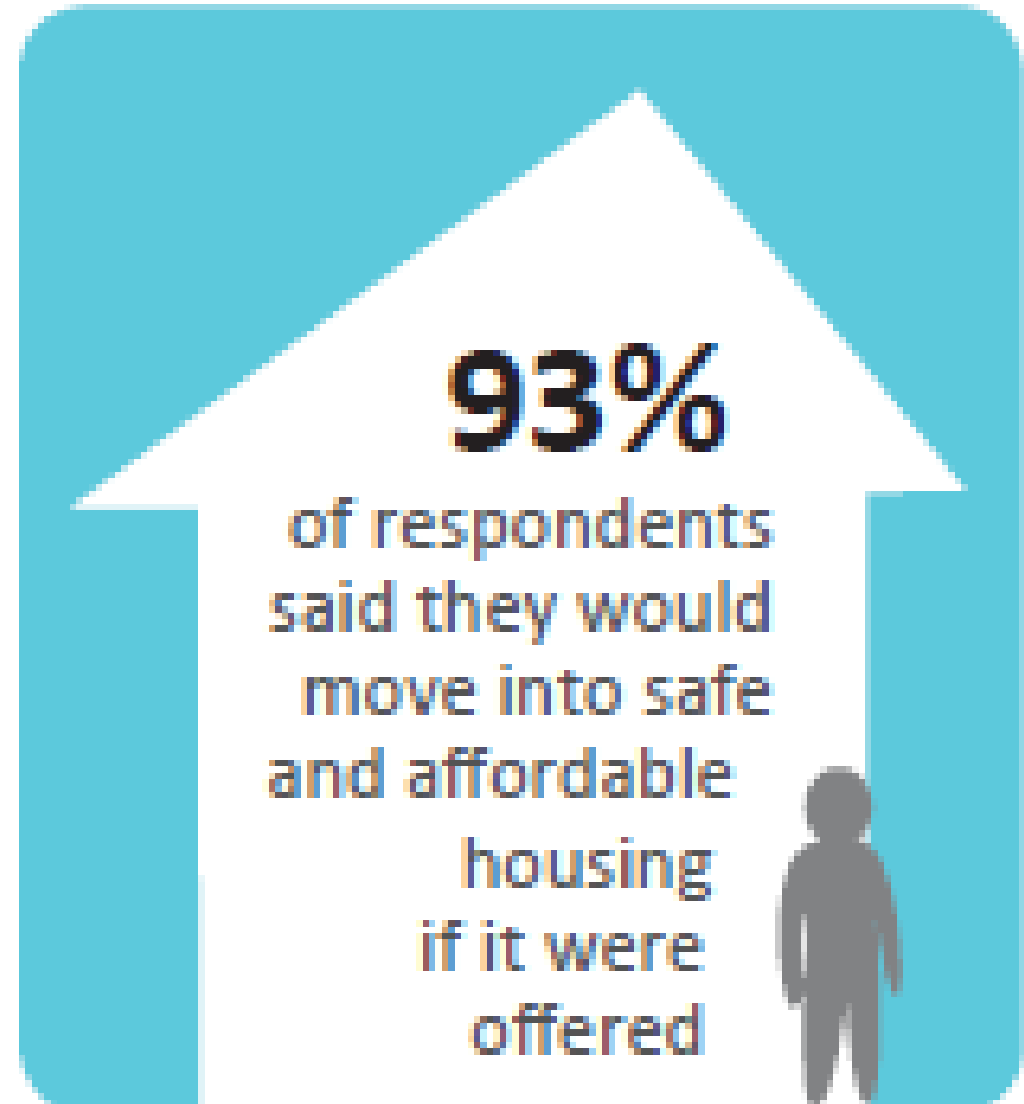


Housing Affordability Contributes to Homelessness

What would help them obtain permanent housing?

68% reported rental assistance

65% reported that an increase in affordable housing



Foster Care System Contributes to Homelessness

1 in 4

foster youth experience
homelessness

within 4 years

of exiting the foster care
system.

23% of all survey respondents
reported a history of foster care.

40% of respondents under the age
of 25 reported a history of foster
care.

“Focus group participants, especially those in the youth and family groups, identified the lack of support for youth transitioning out of foster care, combined with previous experiences of instability and abuse in foster care homes, as causes of homelessness for this vulnerable population”

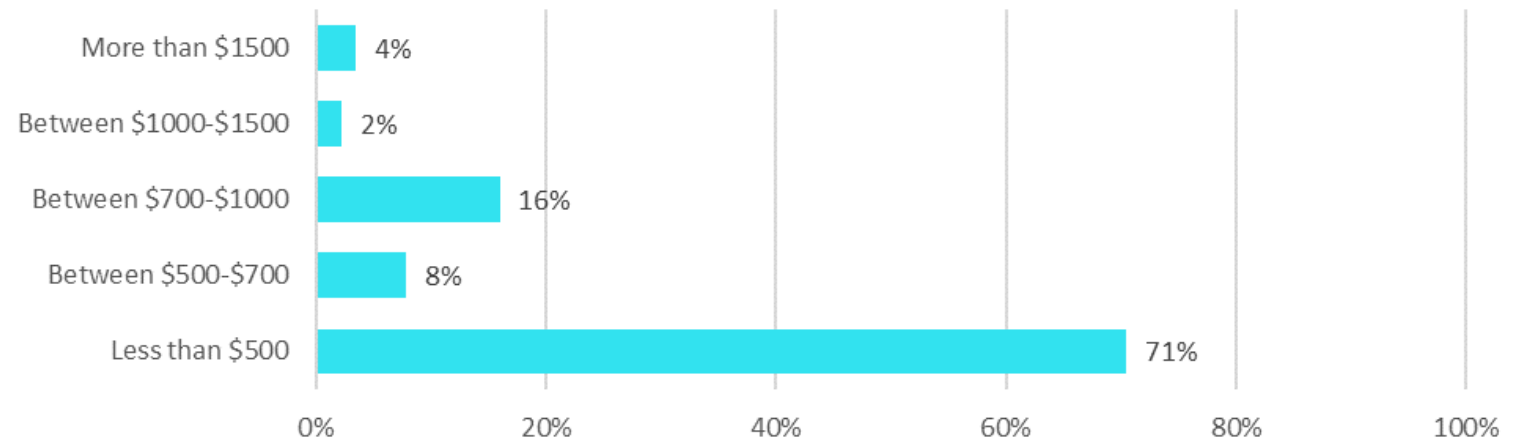
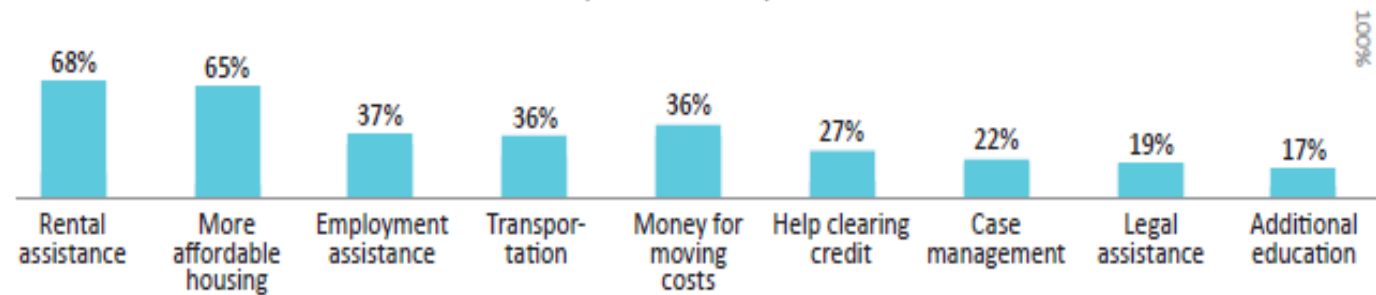
— Focus Strategies Needs Assessment 2017

Housing Affordability Contributes to Homelessness

Rental assistance and more affordable housing were the top two responses regarding what was needed to obtain permanent housing.

Over 70% of respondents could afford a monthly rent of less than \$500.

WHAT WOULD HELP YOU OBTAIN PERMANENT HOUSING? (TOP 9 RESPONSES)



Current Length of Homelessness

Roughly 50% of respondents had been homeless for a year or more.

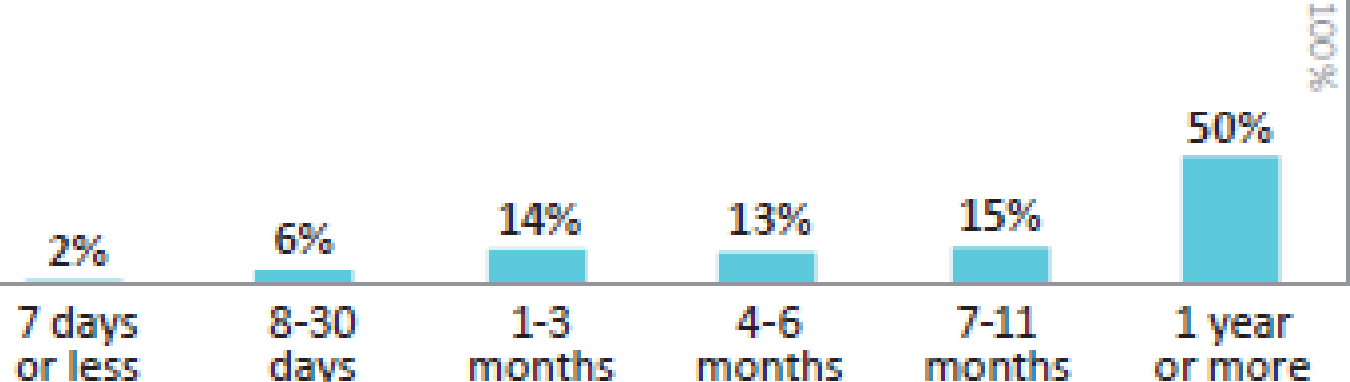
30% were chronically homeless.

44% respondents reported they were experiencing homelessness for first time.

These findings are similar to other West Coast communities

Chronically homeless is defined as homeless 365 days living outside and with a disabling mental or physical condition

CURRENT LENGTH OF HOMELESSNESS



30% of survey respondents were chronically homeless*

*See full report for definition of chronically homeless.

15% meet the same definition nationally

Drug Use Contributes to Homelessness

There is a higher prevalence of drug use among people living unsheltered vs those sheltered

45% reported they do not engage in drug use

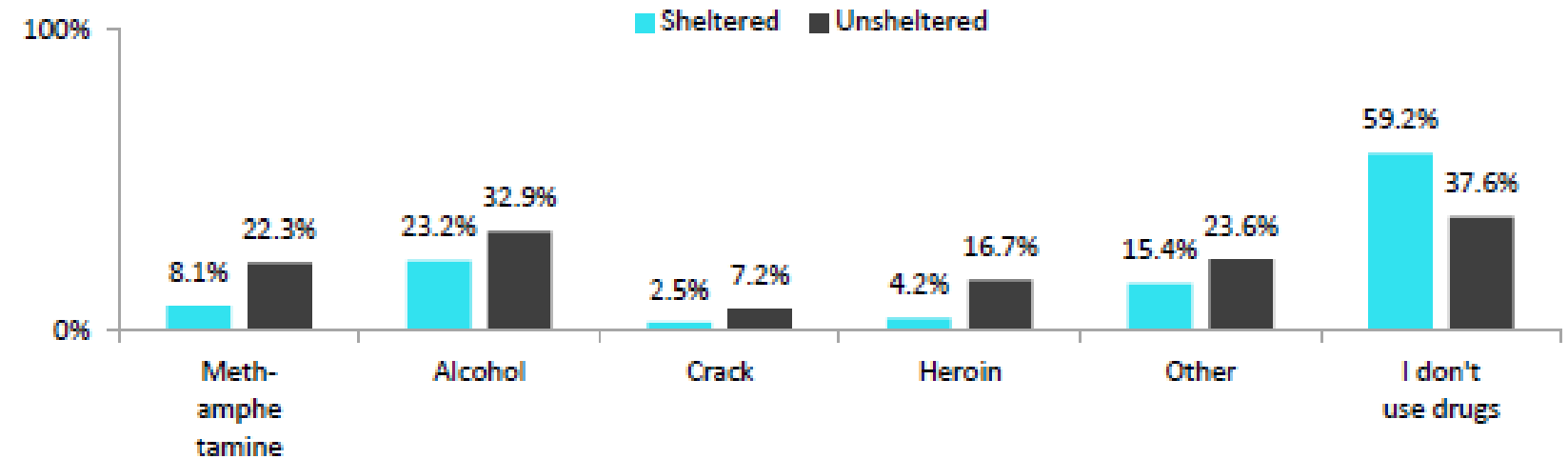
29% reported using alcohol

35% reported use of hard drugs (meth, heroin, crack)

13% reported alcohol or drug use as primary cause of homelessness

13% reported they were accessing drug or alcohol counseling services

Figure 31. DRUG USE



Sheltered, N=358 respondents offering 403 responses; Unsheltered, N=641 respondents offering 899 responses

"Before I was homeless I was two or three years clean, but within my first week of being homeless, I was using again. I was using meth and all that. I never would have thought I would have been back doing that, but then the only reason why I was doing that, so I could stay warm and literally forget the fact that I was homeless."

Mental Healthcare Needs Addressing

Mental Health tops List of Conditions

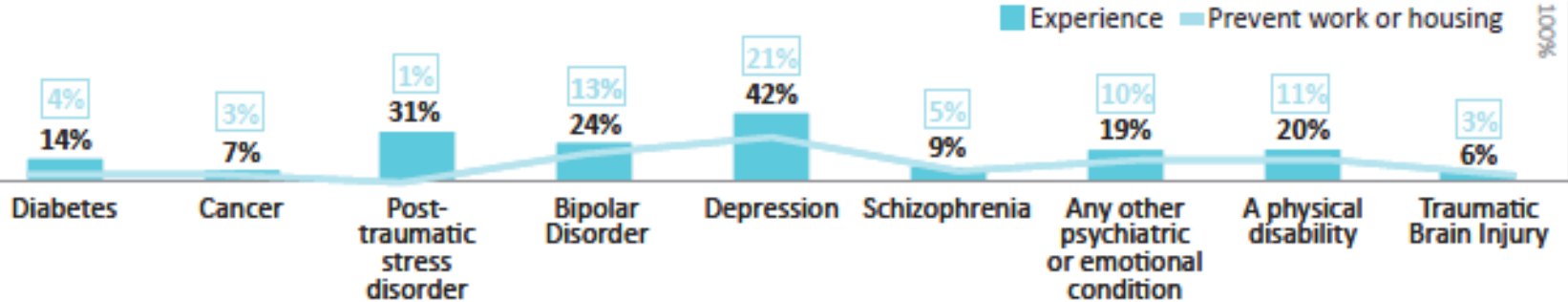
51% reported going to ER in past year

Figure 29. HEALTH CONDITIONS

	Experience	Prevent Work or Housing
Depression	42.2%	21.9%
Post-traumatic Stress Disorder	30.9%	18.4%
Bipolar Disorder	23.6%	13.6%
A physical disability	19.9%	12.0%
Any other psychiatric or emotional condition	18.5%	10.6%
Diabetes	14.1%	4.4%
Schizophrenia	8.5%	5.2%
Cancer	6.5%	2.8%
Traumatic Brain injury	6.1%	3.3%

N = 997-1,013

HEALTH CONDITIONS AND EFFECT ON WORK OR HOUSING



Large Veteran Population Remains Homeless

14% of the population were identified as veterans

55% of veterans were unsheltered

Of the unsheltered, 19% were living in encampments

Figure 9. VETERANS STATUS

	Yes	No
Have you ever served in the US Armed Forces?	13.6%	86.4%
Have you ever received health care or benefits from the VA? (Veterans)	68.5%	31.5%

N = 1,011 (US Armed Forces); n = 143(Health Care or Benefits from VA)

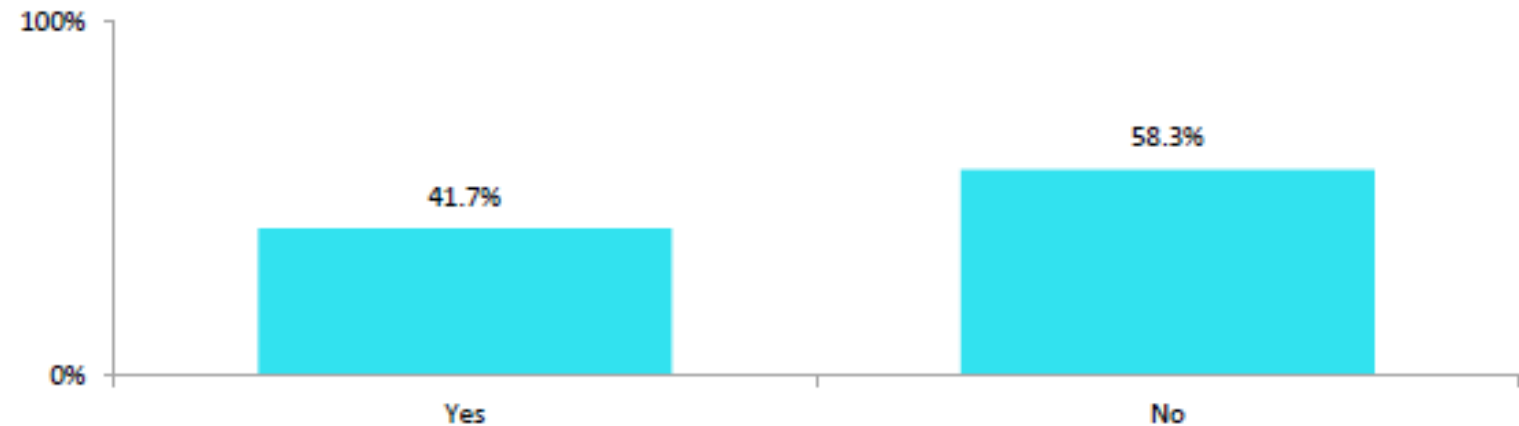
Domestic Violence Adds to Homelessness Among Certain Populations

42% of survey respondents reported they had an experience of Domestic Violence (DV).

5% reported it was the **primary cause** of their homelessness.

More than half (51%) of youth under 25 reported experiences of DV or abuse.

Figure 32. EXPERIENCED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OR ABUSE



N = 881

58% of female respondents reported experience with DV.

30% of males reported experience with DV.

63% Transgender respondents who reported DV

78% People who identified as a gender other than male, female, or transgender who reported DV.

Summary of key findings

- Seattle's homeless are generally 'local' to the area and come to the city for opportunity
- Significant number of encampments all over the city
- 30% of respondents are chronically homeless
- High percentage of foster youth
- Large number of homeless veterans
- Significant demand for mental and behavioral health and rehab services
- Large number of employed homeless
- High rates of domestic violence and trauma
- Need for more qualified and peer-sourced outreach workers
- Strong client perception that coordinated entry, case management and referral system is not working
- Large numbers of vehicularly housed