

Identifying and Understanding the Needs of Homeless Youth in Tompkins County

2011 Independent Living Survey Project 3

Preliminary Results
October 2011

Community-University Partnership

- The Learning Web
 - Dale Schumacher
 - Sally SchwartzbachYouth Outreach Program Staff
 - Larry Farbman
 - Rick Alvord
 - Mona Smiley
 - Ryan Wilcox
- 17 Youth Outreach Researchers
- Tompkins County Youth Services Department
 - Nancy Zook
- Cornell University
 - Family Life Development Center
 - Jane Powers
 - Amanda Purington
 - Undergraduate Research Assistants
 - Christine Heib
 - Michael Smith
 - Jackie Garza

The Youth Research Assistants

Mike Bentley

Natividad Carrion

Christa Earl

Le'eltdevorah Lenoretafari

Jenee Lyons

Megan McCheyne

Ramish McBride

William McIntosh

Shawnae Milton

Latisha Perkins

Zach Proctor

Xavier Raza

Brandi Rogers

Allan Simeon

Adam Skinner

Sean Smuda

Sam Townsend

Approach and Methods

- Form team
- Revise 2007 survey
- Engage youth researchers
 - Human Subjects
 - Identifying sample and obtaining consent
 - Using the tool and data collection procedures
- Code and analyze data
- Discuss and interpret findings
- Present results to key stakeholders and decision makers

Population Surveyed

- Youth “who have no parental, substitute, foster or institutional home to which they can safely go.” (McKinney Act, 1987)
- Age 25 or younger
- Not a Cornell or IC student

Number of Participants

2003 Study

- Original Goal: 100
- Total Completed: 165

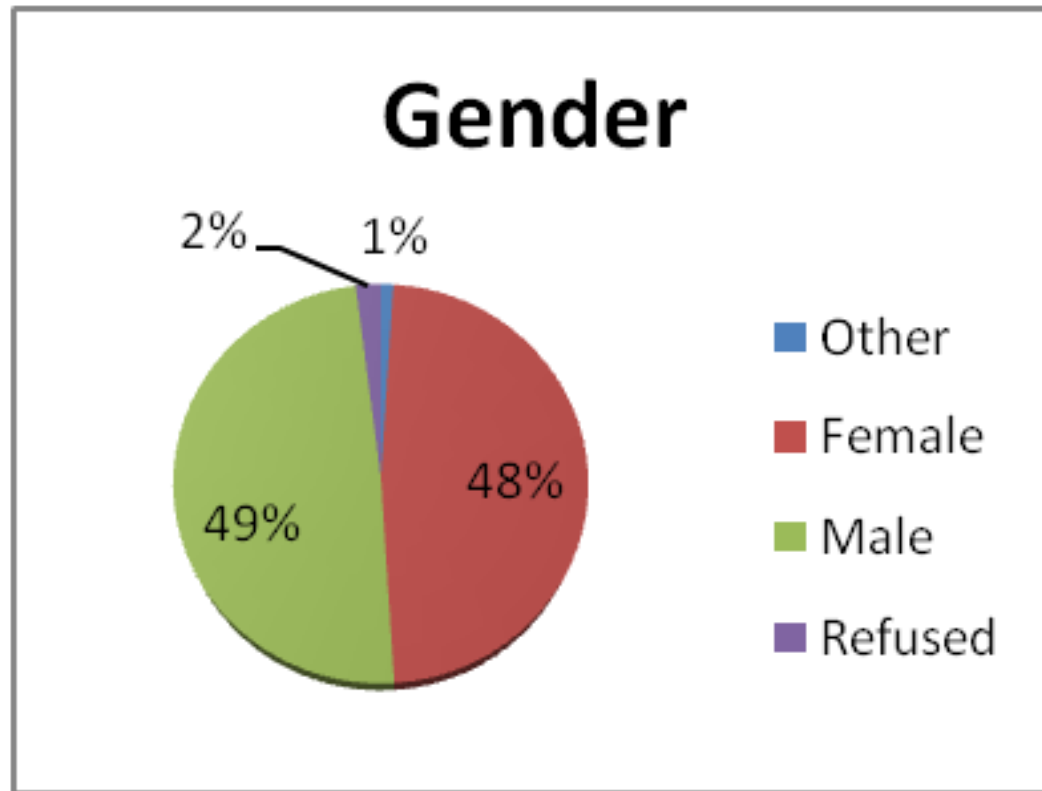
2007 Study

- Original Goal: 200
- Total Completed: 204

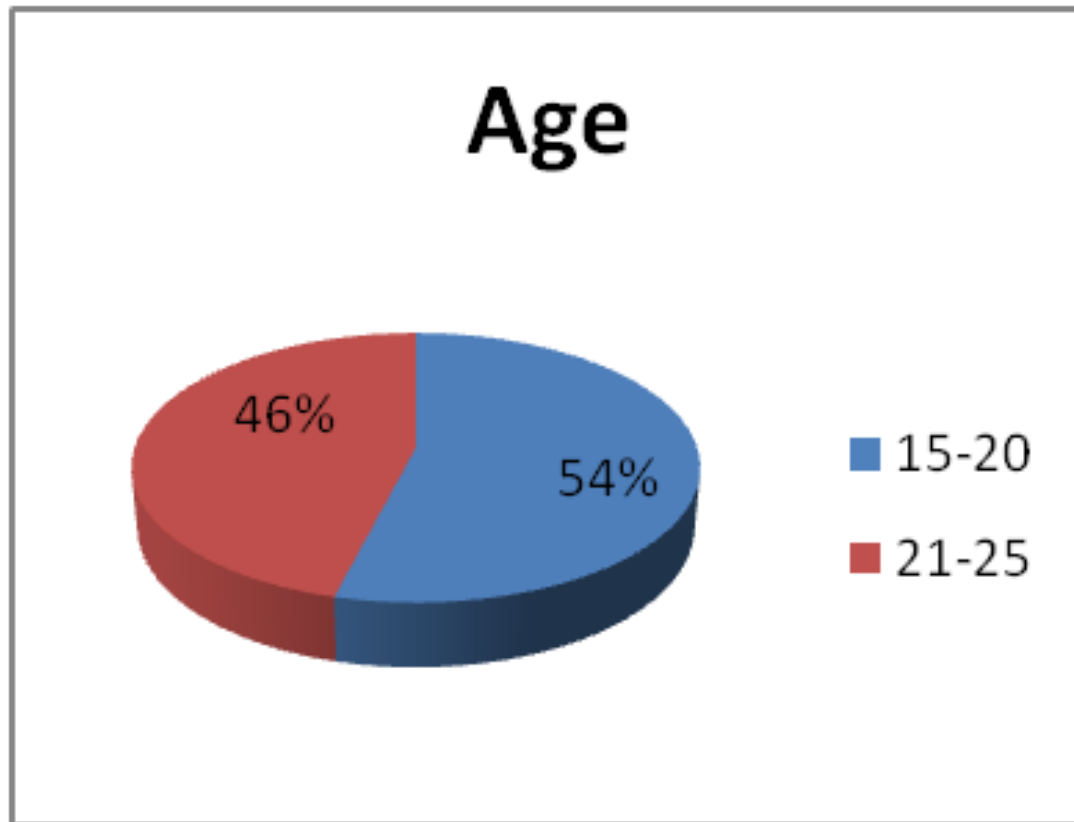
2011 Study

- Original Goal: 204
- Total Completed: 225

Demographic Profile

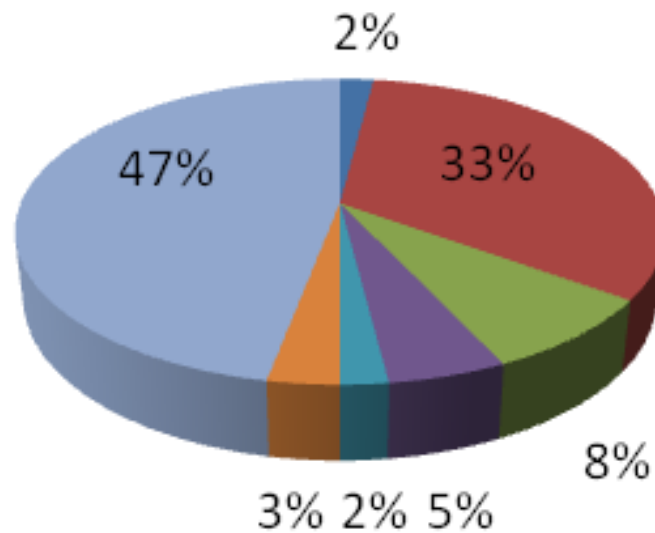


Demographic Profile



Ethnicity

- Asian/Pacific islander
- Black, non-Hispanic
- Both Black & White
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native American/Alaskan native
- Other
- White, non-Hispanic



*Participants that identified as other described themselves as Human (n=2), Hispanic/French (n=1), Jamaican (n=1), Indian (n=1), Middle Eastern (n=1), or part Asian part White (n=1).

Housing: Past, Present, and Future

HOUSING- Present

Current Number of Living Situations

- One Place: 72%
- Multiple Places: 28%
 - 2 to 4 places

HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL IN YOUR CURRENT LIVING SITUATION?

59% I feel safe all of the time

36% I feel safe some of the time

5% I feel safe none of the time

Comments on current housing:

“I stay with my friend in his parent’s house and I sleep on his floor in his bathroom.”

“I don’t like having [to] go different places to stay. I don’t mind couch-surfing. It’s hard at times but I’m okay where I’m at now. I feel like I may be getting on my roommates nerves and he wants me to get my own place soon.”

Comments on current housing:

“I have all of my belongings in my car but once in awhile I crash at a friend’s place.”

“I just feel strange sleeping on some boys couch and using their shower because I think they want something more.”

Housing over the past year

Number of Living Situations Over the Past Year:

- One Place: 17 %
- Multiple Places: 83 %
 - 2 to 5 places: 73%
 - 6 to 9 places: 10%

Comments on housing for the past year:

“No heat or hot water.”

“Just want to stay at the same place, don’t like jumping around.”

“Not stable, couch surfing, no address of my own.”

“Hard finding a place, cold at night trying to find a place.”

Reasons for Leaving Home

respondents could check more than one	Age 15-20	Age 21-25
Conflict with parents	55%	33%
Thrown out	25%	26%
Left home after the age of 18	20%	38%
Ran away	12%	5%
Abuse by parent/guardian	12%	6%
Substance abuse of parent/guardian	7%	7%
Parents deceased	6%	2%
Never lived with parents	4%	1%
Parents in jail	3%	5%
Parents moved	2%	7%
Parents homeless	1%	4%
*Other	14%	15%

Comments on leaving home:

“My parents and me fought every day for two years straight, when I was 17 and 6 months or so I left.”

“When I was 17, I got pregnant and was kicked out of my father’s house.”

“Mother did not want to take care of me anymore. I had to help take care of my brothers and sisters cause my mom didn’t work.”

“They smoke crack.”

Comments on what would have helped them stay home:

“If the fighting stopped.”

“Mom not doing drugs, mom not having an abusive boyfriend.”

My parents not always on my back.”

“Me not doing drugs.”

INVOLVEMENT IN SYSTEMS

**ALMOST 60% OF ALL RESPONDENTS HAD BEEN
MORE PUBLIC SYSTEMS**

INVOLVED IN ONE OR

System	Age15-20	Age21-25
NONE	43%	43%
Foster care	20%	16%
Group Home	10%	5%
Juvenile detention	12%	16%
Rehab (drug and alcohol)	12%	13%
Prison/Jail	16%	31%
*Other institution	1%	0%

The Struggle to Make Ends Meet

Covering the Basics while Trying to Get Ahead

EDUCATION

59% had graduated from high school or got my GED

17% were still in high school

24% were high school drop outs

51% were interested in getting more education or training

12% were not sure if they wanted more training or education

38% were not interested in more training or education

EMPLOYMENT

60% UNEMPLOYED

40% CURRENTLY WORKING

EMPLOYMENT

OF THOSE EMPLOYED, HOURS WORKED PER WEEK:

8% WORK LESS THAN 10

16% 10-20

34% 20-30

41% MORE THAN 30

IS THIS NUMBER OF HOURS ADEQUATE?

57% NOT ENOUGH

42% ENOUGH

1% TOO MUCH

EMPLOYMENT

OF THOSE WHO WERE UNEMPLOYED:

79% WERE LOOKING FOR A JOB

21% WERE NOT LOOKING FOR A JOB

24% HAD BEEN LOOKING FOR 1 MONTH

41% HAD BEEN LOOKING FOR 6 MONTHS

19% HAD BEEN LOOKING FOR 12 MONTHS
OR MORE

Comments on jobs:

“Overeducated people are taking our jobs!”

“They don’t hire Blacks and my age is a problem I guess.”

“We need help getting a job and transportation. TCAT needs to be free public transportation.”

“We are all not drug users or pushers. Some of us work hard and still have nothing.”

SUPPORTING YOURSELF

PUBLIC SUPPORT (RESPONDENTS CHECKED ALL THAT APPLY)

- 53%** Food Stamps
- 48%** Medicaid
- 9%** Cash Assistance
- 8%** WIC
- 6%** Sec 8 Rental assist. or public housing
- 4%** Child support, SSI
- 1%** HEAP (heating and electric), SSD, Day Care subsidies
- 0%** Lifeline, Child Health Plus

If you do not have a job, how do you get the money you need?

- Borrow
- Odd jobs
- Illegal sales/Hustling
- Steal

Hunger & Food Security

40% of youth reported skipping a meal because they couldn't afford food. Almost half of these youth skipped a meal on a weekly basis.

27% reported not eating for a whole day due to lack of money for food. Of this group, 43% skipped eating for a whole day on a weekly basis.

Hunger & Food Security

Despite the fact that over half of respondents received food stamps, hunger is still prevalent.

- **32% of youth receiving food stamps reported skipping a meal because they couldn't afford food.**
- **19% of youth receiving food stamps reported not eating for a whole day due to lack of money for food.**

HEALTH BEHAVIOR

WHERE DO YOU GO WHEN YOU ARE SICK?

(RESPONDENTS CHECKED ALL THAT APPLY)

- 62%** Emergency Room
- 33%** Convenient Care
- 24%** Nowhere
- 17%** The Free Clinic
- 16%** Private physician/Doctor
- 12%** Planned Parenthood
- 5%** *Other

HEALTH BEHAVIOR- emotional health

WHO DO YOU TURN TO WHEN YOU NEED EMOTIONAL SUPPORT OR NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO?

(RESPONDENTS CHECKED ALL THAT APPLY)

	Age 15-20	Age21-25
Friends	69%	71%
Girl friend or boyfriend	37%	40%
No one	21%	39%
Family member	19%	15%
Adult counselor, therapist, teacher, or coach	7%	6%
Other (included pastor, sister, older adult, poetry/art, mother)	4%	6%

COMMUNITY SAFETY

32% of all respondents indicated that they have carried a weapon.

	Age 15-20	Age 21-25
	Yes	Yes
Do you carry a weapon?	37%	29%
If no, do you feel like you need to?	30%	19%
During the past year, how many times has someone threatened or injured you with a weapon?		
0 times	42%	44%
1 time	12%	10%
2 or 3 times	25%	23%
4 or 5 times	12%	18%
6 to 12 or more times	9%	7%

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT NEEDS?

THE TOP TEN NEEDS IDENTIFIED

(RESPONDENTS CHECKED ALL THAT APPLY)

Current Need	Age 15-20	Age21-25
Help finding Housing	67%	67%
Transportation	61%	67%
Help finding a job	61%	45%
Help with my education	52%	55%
Help affording personal living supplies	30%	29%
Someone to talk to	29%	21%
Help affording food	29%	21%
Better access to healthcare	24%	23%
Maintaining health relationships	21%	18%
Help with legal issues	16%	20%

Biggest Issue Facing Youth Today

- Drugs
- Unemployment
- No Support/Help/Respect
- Sex/STDs
- Money/Economy
- Pregnancy
- Homelessness
- Crime
- Parents
- Education
- Violence
- Boredom

Biggest Issue Facing Youth Today

Barriers to getting a job:

- Transportation
- No job opportunities/Not hiring
- Resume/Experience
- Education
- Race/Appearance
- Availability
- Childcare
- Distractions
- Criminal Record
- Age

Biggest Issue Facing Youth Today

“Drugs, crime, no jobs, no one cares what the young people do with themselves and they are so young so how are they supposed to know what to do with themselves.”

Biggest Issue Facing Youth Today

“Drugs amongst young people and no places to do recreational things.”

Biggest Issue Facing Youth Today

“I think for some, it's the jobs. For some it's simply the fact that they're trying to live an adult life without adult knowledge. It's discouraging to have to choose between food and ciggs and other things we need. ALSO and lastly for the purpose of this survey and so as to not dictate an essay, we don't know how to take good physical care of ourselves. Ever seen my peers? We look like a bunch of ragamuffins who could really use some iron and vitamins C+E.”

GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

- School
- GED
- Job
- Car
- Home
- Family

“To finish school and open up a body shop.”

“To eventually obtain a bachelor's degree in communications.”

“Be the best that I can be, better than my father.”

“Get a place, have a room for my baby and be a good dad.”

GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

“TC3 for culinary arts.”

“To get off drugs and live a happy and stable life.”

“Eventually attend college, get promoted at work, save enough money to get a car, also talk to my mom to make things better.”

What do you want the people in power to know?

“No one believes in the young youth today and if their own parents don't, how are they gonna believe in themselves?”

“No jobs, no money, no love from loved ones. We are just out here alone basically.

What do you want the people in power to know?

“Not enough resources available to teens under 21.”

“No place to go afterschool, no one to care what they do all day. Drugs, crime, and violence.”

“The economy affects education and employment, if you can't afford education it's hard to find an adequate job.”

What do you want the people
in power to know?

“No one listens to their needs, they just
assume they know what they need.
Sometimes it’s better to listen than to assume
you know the answer to everything.