



Office of Children  
and Family Services

# RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH



## Annual Report 2019

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## Executive Summary

Under Article 19-H of the Executive Law, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) has specific powers and duties regarding the administration of the runaway and homeless youth (RHY) program in New York State<sup>1</sup> to include administering funding, training, and technical assistance to municipalities and programs that serve runaway and homeless youth. Each year OCFS collects self-reported aggregate data from certified RHY programs. This report includes information from 133 OCFS-certified residential programs that were in operation for one or more days in 2019, as well as 29 approved non-residential RHY programs. These programs are located in 23 counties and New York City (NYC).

The 133 programs included in this report operated:

- Thirty-nine (39) RHY crisis services programs that admitted 3,672 youth, plus 99 dependents. A total of 1,699 youth and four dependents were served in Rest of State (ROS) programs and 1,973 youth with 95 dependents were served in NYC. Youth and dependents were served in the following program types:
  - Thirty-one (31) RHY shelters that served 3,654 youth, plus 99 dependents
    - Twelve (12) of these programs served 1,973 youth, plus 95 dependents in NYC
    - Nineteen (19) of these programs served 1,681 youth, plus four (4) dependents in ROS
  - Eight (8) Interim family programs that served 18 youth (ROS only)
- Ninety-four (94) Transitional Independent Living Support Programs (TILP) that served 1,162 youth, plus 86 dependents. Of that total, 368 youth and 55 dependents were served in ROS programs and 794 youth with 31 dependents were served in NYC. Youth and dependents were served in the following program types:
  - Forty-four (44) TILP group residences that served 1,021 youth, plus 82 dependents
    - Thirty (30) of these programs served 776 youth, plus 31 dependents in NYC.
    - Fourteen (14) of these programs served 245 youth, plus 51 dependents in ROS.
  - Fifty (50) TILP supported residences that served 141 youth, plus four (4) dependents
    - Eleven (11) of these programs served 18 youth.
    - Thirty-nine (39) of these programs served 123 youth, plus four (4) dependents in ROS.

Combined, these programs served 4,834 individual (unduplicated) runaway or homeless youth. There were 6,319 duplicated admissions to an RHY program. Currently, there is no systematic way to collect client-level, disaggregated data on young people served in RHY programs. Some transient runaways or homeless youth are served by multiple programs, so the unduplicated figure includes some duplication across programs. However, any duplicate counts within a single

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<sup>1</sup> Section 532-e of the Executive Law sets forth the power and duties of OCFS as they relate to RHY programs.

program have been eliminated from the unduplicated figure by the RHY programs in their reporting. The duplicated figure represents the number of times a young person presented for services, even if the youth had already presented and been counted previously within 2019 for that same program. Nearly a quarter, 24 percent (1,485) of runaway or homeless youth presented to the same residential RHY program more than once in 2019.

RHY shelters served 14 percent more youth in NYC (2,767) than in ROS (2,067), whereas TILPs served more than double the number of youths in NYC (794) than in ROS (368). This gap is a result of bed availability; there are approximately twice the number of TILP beds in NYC than in ROS. For more details, please see Appendix 1.

The most pressing service needs identified by runaway and homeless youth included resolution of conflict with their parental figure, food, and a need for independent living and life skills.

Youth in RHY crisis services programs most frequently stayed between eight and 30 nights, while youth in TILPs tended to stay between one and six months. This is consistent with service utilization in 2018. During their stay youth were provided a diverse array of services and referrals.

The most commonly provided *services* across all residential RHY programs were

- food,
- independent living support/skill development, and
- positive youth development opportunities.

The most commonly provided *referrals* across all residential RHY programs were

- mental health services and counseling,
- health care and education, and
- education services.

Following discharge from crisis services programs, 34 percent of youth returned home to family or were staying with a relative, and 20 percent of youth left voluntarily without a plan. Twenty-three (23) percent of youth discharged from a TILP returned home to family or were staying with a relative, 17 percent were living independently, and 13 percent were discharged to an RHY crisis services program.

Youth who sought admission to a residential program were admitted 69 percent of the time; youth were admitted to an RHY crisis services programs 72 percent of the time they sought admission. 62 percent of youth admitted when sought to TILPs. In 2019, there were 2,797 instances<sup>2</sup> of youth seeking services from a residential RHY program who were not admitted. Six hundred thirteen (613 or 22 percent) of these instances occurred in NYC and 2,184 (78 percent) in ROS. In 29 percent of the cases where youth were turned away, the program from which they sought services was operating at maximum capacity – a decrease from 35 percent in 2018. This suggests that youth are turned away for other reasons, such as declining to enter the program after intake was approved, not meeting age criteria, or having a higher level of need than the program can accommodate safely.

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<sup>2</sup> Due to the inability to identify individual youth and determine whether youth attempted to access more than one program, it is not possible to say how many individual youths were turned away. This number represents the number of instances in which youth were turned away by programs.

In 2019, 29 non-residential programs reported data on youth served to OCFS. These programs served approximately 5,700 youth through drop-in centers or case management services, received approximately 6,000 contacts via hotlines, and made approximately 4,300 youth contacts through street outreach.

## Background

This annual report is submitted in accordance with section 532-e(d) of the Executive Law and provides information detailing the numbers and characteristics of runaway and otherwise homeless youth throughout the state and their problems and service needs.

Youth and young adults who are living on the streets or who do not have consistent, stable housing are highly vulnerable. Each year, thousands of New York's youth and young adults leave home without permission,<sup>3</sup> are asked or forced to leave their home, or become homeless.<sup>4</sup> Homelessness is not just a problem in large urban centers such as NYC or Buffalo. Young people in suburban and rural communities also face homelessness. Youth are often fleeing neglect, abuse, or conflict in the home.<sup>5</sup> These youth are still developing physically and emotionally, and when experiencing homelessness, they often do not complete their education, and miss the opportunity to gain independent living skills, including work experience.<sup>6</sup> Homelessness and running away from home also make youth increasingly vulnerable to violence, crime, and sexual exploitation at the hands of other youth and adults.<sup>7</sup>

In recognition that young adults are continuing to develop through age 24, and that homeless young adults often struggle with the same risks and vulnerabilities as runaway and homeless youth, in 2017, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo signed into law amendments to section 420 and Article 19-H of the Executive Law. Beginning on January 1, 2018, municipalities gained the option to provide RHY services to homeless young adults<sup>8</sup> provided that this is part of a municipality's approved comprehensive plan.<sup>9</sup> When authorized under the municipality's approved comprehensive plan, municipalities may additionally opt to extend the length of stay for runaway youth 14 years of age or older in certified RHY crisis services programs for up to 60 days, or for up to 120 days upon the written agreement of the youth and guardian,<sup>10</sup> and for up to 24 months for youth in TILPs.

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<sup>3</sup> A runaway youth is a person under the age of 18 who is absent from his or her legal residence without the consent of his or her parent, legal guardian, or custodian. (Executive Law § 532-a(1).)

<sup>4</sup> A homeless youth is a person under the age of 18 who is in need of services and is without a place of shelter where supervision and care are available; or a person who is under the age of 21, but is at least 18, and who is in need of services and is without a place of shelter; or a homeless young adult when a municipality's approved comprehensive plan authorizes RHY services be provided to such individuals. (Executive Law § 532-a(2).)

<sup>5</sup> *Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America National Estimates*.  
<http://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/national-estimates-of-youth-homelessness/>.

<sup>6</sup> *What Works to End Youth Homelessness?* The National Network for Youth.  
<https://www.nn4youth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015-What-Works-to-End-Youth-Homlessness.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Pergamit, Michael R, *On the Prevalence of Running Away from Home*. (2010).  
<http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/412087-On-the-Prevalence-of-Running-Away-from-Home.PDF>.

<sup>8</sup> A homeless young adult is a person who is age 24 or younger, but is at least age 21, and who is in need of services and is without a place of shelter. (Executive Law § 532-a(9).)

<sup>9</sup> No residential RHY programs were certified to serve homeless young adults in 2018.

<sup>10</sup> With proper approvals as defined in 19-OCFS-ADM-06.

## The RHY Service Array

In New York State, there are certified RHY residential programs as well as non-residential services and supports available to meet the needs of runaway or homeless youth. Participation in RHY programs and services is voluntary and may be terminated by the youth at any time.<sup>11</sup> Youth and young adults, therefore, cannot be forced or mandated to stay in RHY programs. However, program recipients may be required to leave programs for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, aging out, posing a threat to themselves or others in the program, or reaching the statutory limits for lengths of stay.<sup>12</sup>

Each municipality that is seeking state aid to provide services for runaway and homeless youth must develop a comprehensive RHY services plan. In accordance with section 420, the Executive Law, provides for a range of services for runaway and homeless youth and their families and addresses the needs of runaway and homeless youth. To the extent that funding is available, municipalities may be eligible to receive reimbursement from New York State for up to 60 percent of the costs associated with the establishment and operation of RHY programs and services. Reimbursement is subject to the availability of funding as well as the approval of the municipality's RHY service plan by OCFS.

### Residential Programs

OCFS certifies and regulates the following types of RHY residential programs:<sup>13</sup>

- RHY crisis services programs
  - RHY Crisis Shelter – a residential program for a maximum of 20 youth, all of whom are either under the age of 18 years old or who are between the ages of 16 and 21 years, or up to 24 when approved in the county plan
  - Interim Family Home – a private dwelling providing temporary shelter to a maximum of two runaway or homeless youth under the age of 21 years as part of an interim family program, which is sponsored, inspected, and supervised by an authorized agency
- Transitional Independent Living Support Programs (TILPs)<sup>14</sup>
  - Group Residence – a small congregate residential program that encourages the development and practice of independent living skills
  - Supported Residence – a residential program for a maximum of five youth where youth reside independently with supports.

### Non-Residential Programs

Non-residential programs serve runaway and homeless youth as well as youth who are at risk of homelessness. These programs also serve the families of youth at risk of homelessness, where appropriate. Services provided by these programs include, but are not limited to the following:

- Basic needs (provision of food, clothing, hygiene, emergency housing, financial assistance)

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<sup>11</sup> 9 NYCRR sections 182-1.9 (d) (1) and 182-2.9 (d)(1).

<sup>12</sup> See 9 NYCRR sections 182-1.9 (b) and 9 NYCRR 182-2.9 (b) for further information.

<sup>13</sup> 9 NYCRR sections 182-1.2 and 182-2.2.

<sup>14</sup> TILP is defined as any residential program established and operated to provide supportive services to enable homeless youth who are at least 16 years old to progress from crisis care and transitional care to independent living. In certain cases, TILPs may provide shelter to a homeless youth under the age of 16.

- Behavioral/medical health
- Harm reduction
- Case management, including family reunification
- Drop-in centers
- Educational/vocational support
- Hotlines
- Services that are affirming of the needs of the LGBTQ+<sup>15</sup> community at risk of homelessness
- Street outreach

Services for RHY are found throughout New York State. Details about service availability by region can be found in appendices 1, 2, and 3.

## 2019 Residential RHY Program Data

### Methodology

OCFS collects self-reported aggregate data from certified residential RHY programs and non-residential RHY programs each year. This report includes information from 133 OCFS-certified residential programs that were in operation for one or more days in 2019. Of these 133 programs, 39 were RHY crisis services programs (31 RHY shelters and eight interim family programs) and 94 were TILPs (44 group residences and 50 supported residences). Data provided in this report is presented at the state level and broken out by NYC and ROS, which references all non-NYC counties.

Currently, there is no systematic way to collect client-level, disaggregated data on young people served in RHY programs. Some youth are served by multiple programs in a single year, so the “individual youth” counts include some duplication across programs. However, any duplicate counts within a single program have been eliminated by the RHY programs in their reporting.

OCFS made significant changes to its data collection process for 2019. Questions and response options were more specific than in previous years; therefore, year-over-year comparisons will not be analogous in all areas. These changes were made to improve the quality of the data collected.

Data is presented in percentages. These percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number, as such, some figures may not add up to 100 percent.

### Program Capacity and Admissions

In total, 7,631 individual youth (unduplicated) presented at a certified residential RHY program seeking services. One thousand one hundred twenty-five (1,125) runaway youth and 3,474 homeless youth were admitted to residential programs. Additionally, there were 235 youth that presented in need of services on multiple occasions, both as a runaway youth and as a homeless youth. Of the 4,834 youth admitted, 180 were parenting a total of 185 dependents that were

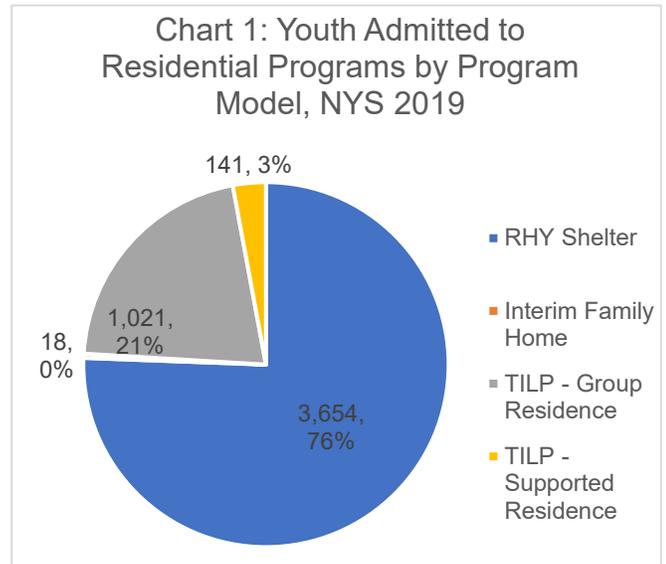
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<sup>15</sup> LGBTQ+ is inclusive of persons identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary queer, or questioning.

sheltered alongside their young parent(s).<sup>16</sup> There were 2,797 instances where young people sought shelter from RHY programs and were not provided residential services.

In 2019:

- Thirty-one (31) RHY shelters served 3,654 youth, plus 99 dependents.
- Eight (8) Interim Family Programs served 18 youth.
- Forty-four (44) TILP group residences served 1,021 youth, plus 82 dependents.
- Fifty (50) TILP supported residences served 141 youth, plus four (4) dependents.



Statewide, programs reported operating at full capacity an average of 44 percent of nights in 2019. ROS programs reported operating at full capacity an average of 41 percent of nights. NYC programs reported operating at full capacity an average of 49 percent of nights – an increase from 36 percent in 2018. In both NYC and ROS, TILPs operated at full capacity more often than RHY crisis services programs. This is not surprising given that most TILPs are apartments, only available to one or two youth at a time, and residents can stay for up to two years.

As shown below, the number of youth served in residential programs has remained relatively stable over the past five years; however, there was a slight decrease in admissions (285 fewer) from 2018 to 2019.

Year	Runaway or Homeless Youth Admitted	Runaway Youth Admitted	Homeless Youth Admitted	Youth Admitted as Both Runaway and Homeless	Dependent Children of Runaway or Homeless Youth Admitted
2015	5,133	1,387	3,746		368
2016	5,292	1,690	3,602		128
2017	5,156	1,243	3,913		308
2018	5,119	1,182	3,937		226
2019	4,834	1,125	3,474	235	185

In some instances, individual youth sought shelter from more than one residential RHY program or from the same residential RHY program more than once in a year. The chart below reflects duplicated and unduplicated admissions to residential RHY programs in 2019.

<sup>16</sup> Information about these dependent children is not included in this report.

# Characteristics of Youth Admitted to Certified Residential RHY Programs

## Gender Identity

In 2019, the majority of youth admitted to residential RHY programs identified as cisgender, or a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.<sup>17</sup> Two hundred and fifty-seven (257) youth, comprising five percent of all youth admitted, identified as either transgender<sup>18</sup> or gender non-conforming<sup>19</sup> (GNC). Trans-identified and GNC youth were admitted by RHY crisis services programs at a higher rate in NYC (seven percent) compared to ROS (three percent). Similarly, 7 percent of youth admitted by TILPs in NYC were trans-identified or GNC compared with two percent in ROS. This remains consistent with data from 2018.

Consistent with 2018 data, cis-male and cis-female youth were admitted to crisis service programs at nearly equal rates statewide; however, there was variation when comparing ROS and NYC. In ROS, 52 percent of youth admitted to crisis services programs were cis-female, and only 39 percent were cis-male. In NYC, 52 percent of youth admitted to crisis services programs were cis-male and 40 percent were cis-female.

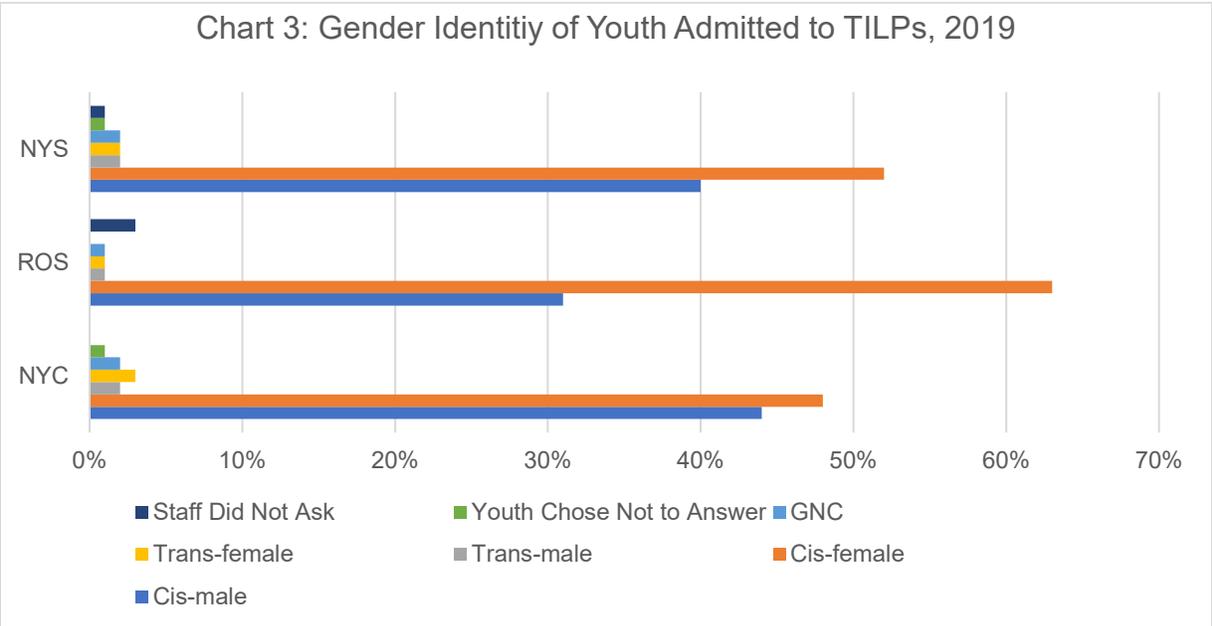
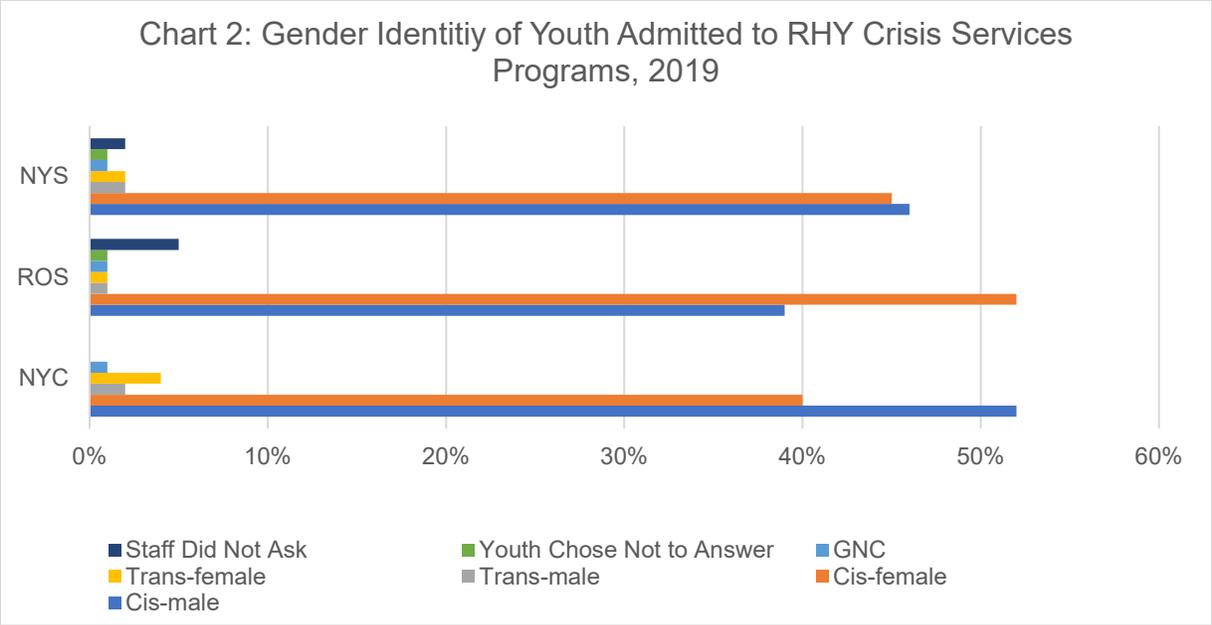
ROS TILPs admitted more cis-female youth (63 percent) than cis-male youth (31 percent). In NYC cis-male youth represented 48 percent of admissions and cis-female youth comprised 44 percent. This is likely a result of bed availability; there are many more TILP beds designated for females (44 beds) than males (19 beds) in ROS, and a nearly equal number of beds available to male-identified and female-identified youth in NYC. It should be noted that all crisis beds and 76 percent of TILP beds statewide are available to all runaway and homeless youth, regardless of their sex or gender identity.

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<sup>17</sup> 16-OCFS-INF-10 Attachment A

<sup>18</sup> Transgender is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. (16-OCFS-INF-10 Attachment A)

<sup>19</sup> Gender non-conforming is a broad term referring to people who do not conform to the traditional expectations of their gender identity, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category. (16-OCFS-INF-10 Attachment A)



**Sexual Orientation**

According to providers, in 2019, most youth admitted to RHY programs identified as straight/heterosexual. Statewide, providers reported that 11 percent of youth admitted to RHY crisis services programs identified as bisexual and an additional nine percent identified as either gay or lesbian. This pattern was similar for TILPs; statewide, providers reported that 13 percent of admitted youth identified as bisexual, and an additional 11 percent identified as gay or lesbian. These rates were similar for both NYC and ROS, with a slightly higher number of youth identifying as a sexual orientation other than straight in NYC. These numbers, while consistent with data from 2018, are surprisingly low given national projections. OCFS is working with RHY providers

to improve training on LGBTQ+ affirming practice; this work is supported by legislation passed in 2019.<sup>20</sup>

Responses that represented less than 5 percent of youth statewide included queer, asexual, pansexual, youth identifies as something other than options listed, and youth chose not to answer.

### Race and Ethnicity

According to providers, just over half of all youth admitted to residential RHY programs identified as black (51 percent), followed by white (25 percent), and something other than the options listed (12 percent). In 2019, OCFS adjusted the way this question was asked in an effort to separate race from Hispanic ethnicity. As shown below, 18 percent of youth admitted in 2019 identified as Hispanic.

2019	Ethnicity		Total
	Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	
<b>Race Provided (below)</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>88%</b>
<b>Asian</b>	85%	15%	1%
<b>Black</b>	87%	13%	59%
<b>Multiracial</b>	56%	44%	11%
<b>Native American/Alaskan Native</b>	95%	5%	>1%
<b>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</b>	75%	25%	>1%
<b>White</b>	70%	30%	28%
<b>Other</b>			<b>12%</b>
<b>Youth identifies as something other than options listed here</b>			95%
<b>Youth chose not to answer</b>			4%
<b>Staff did not ask</b>			>1%

In 2019, the racial and ethnic identities of youth admitted to RHY programs were consistent when comparing crisis services programs and TILPs; however, differences emerge when comparing NYC and ROS. Forty-five percent of youth admitted to a crisis services program in ROS were white, compared to only 10 percent in NYC. Black youth comprised 58 percent of admissions to crisis services programs in NYC, and 43 percent of admissions to those programs in ROS. Hispanic/Latinx-identified youth were admitted to crisis services programs at comparable rates in ROS (20 percent) and NYC (17 percent).

Patterns are similar when comparing admissions to TILPs in NYC and ROS. Forty-five percent of youth admitted to ROS TILPs were white, whereas only 10 percent of youth admitted to NYC TILPs were white. Black youth comprised 64 percent of admissions to NYC TILP, and 36 percent

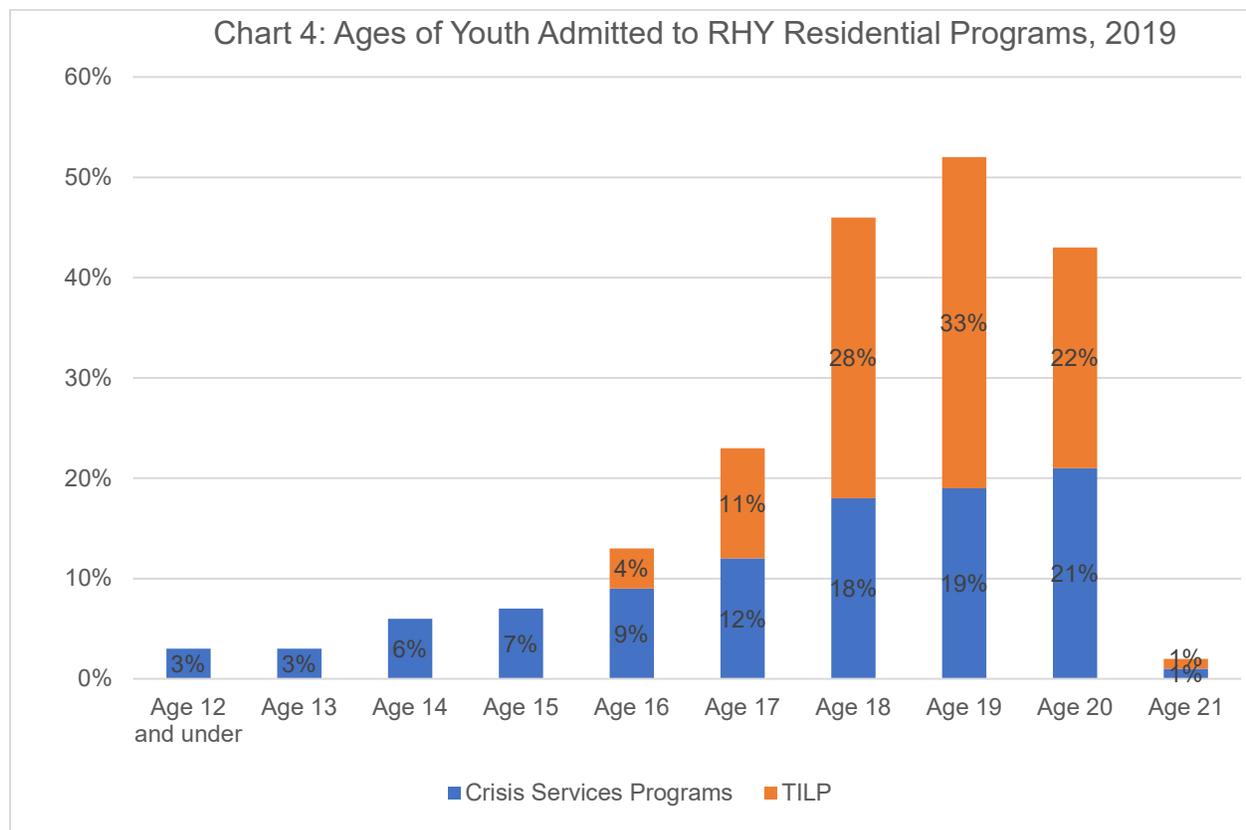
<sup>20</sup> Chapter 361 of the Laws of 2019.

of admissions to ROS TILPs. More variation was noted in the admission of Hispanic/Latinx-identified youth: 23 percent of youth admitted to NYC TILPs were Hispanic/Latinx, whereas only 10 percent of youth admitted to ROS TILPs were Hispanic/Latinx.

Given the racial and ethnic composition of New York State’s youth, the overrepresentation of youth of color in RHY programs reflects that the burden of homelessness and housing instability falls disproportionately on black, brown, and multiracial youth.

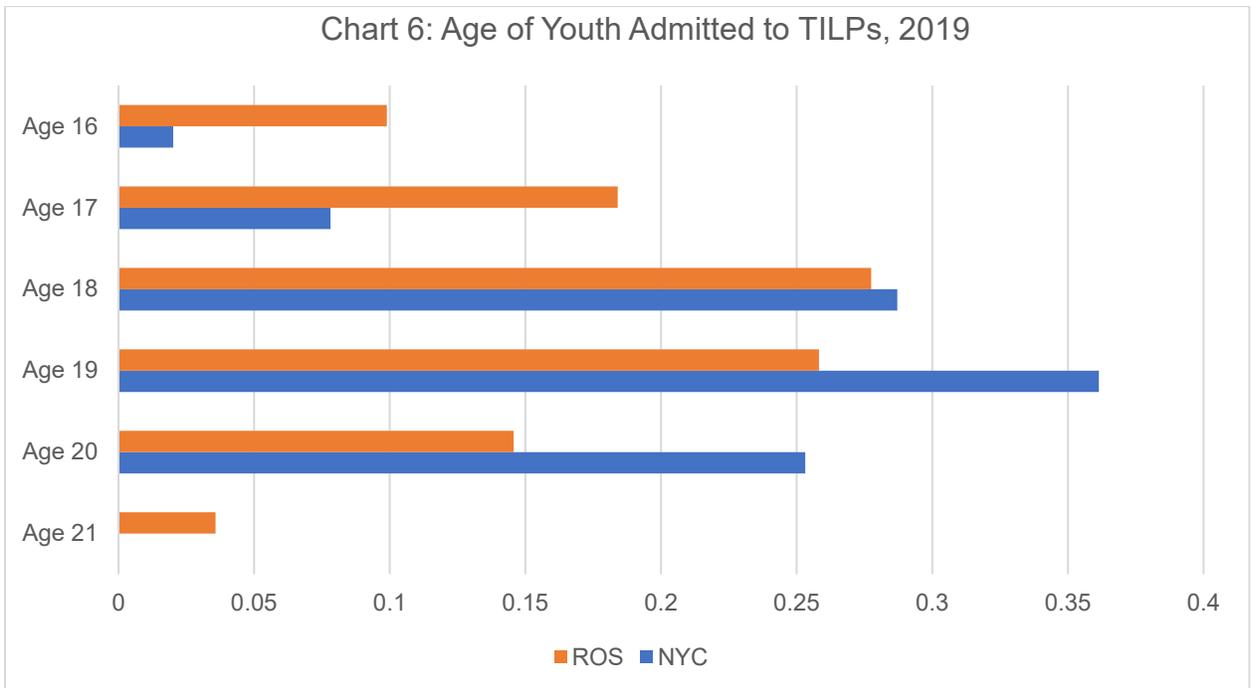
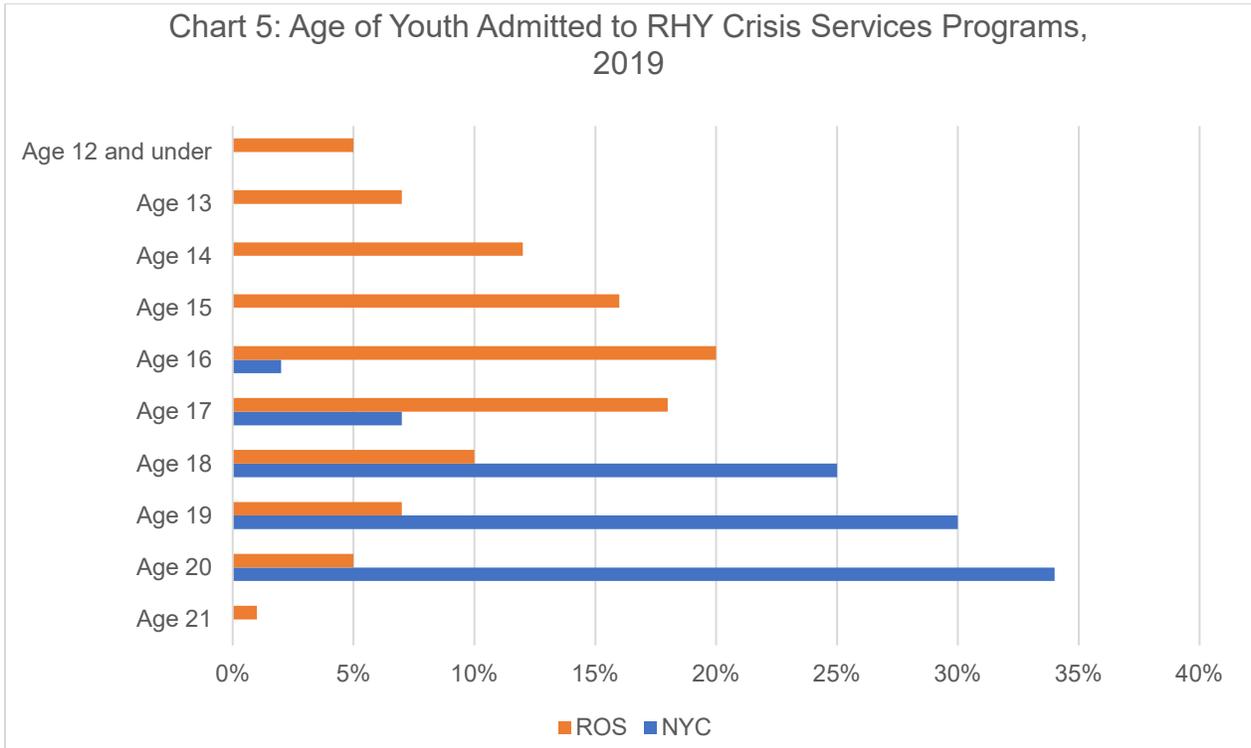
### Age at Admission

Four thousand one hundred thirty-six (4,136) youth – 86 percent of all youth admitted to residential RHY programs in 2019 – were age 16 and older. In 2019, OCFS began certifying programs to admit young adults aged 21-24. Two programs in the Albany Region became certified to serve a total of 13 youth up until their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday; other programs began the process in 2019 but were not approved by the end of the year. Regardless of certification, in some instances youth were able to stay in a residential RHY program past their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday per 9 NYCRR 182-2.9(d). Seventy (70) youth over age 20 were housed in an RHY program in 2019. The charts below do not include youth over the age of 21 or youth whose age was not known as the value of each was less than 1 percent.



In 2019, nearly all youth admitted to NYC’s RHY programs (91 percent) were aged 18 or older. There are no RHY programs in NYC certified to serve youth under the age of 16. In NYC’s RHY crisis services programs, only 180 youth (9 percent) under the age of 18 were admitted. Similarly, only 78 youth (10 percent) under the age of 18 were admitted to NYC’s TILPs. It is unclear where

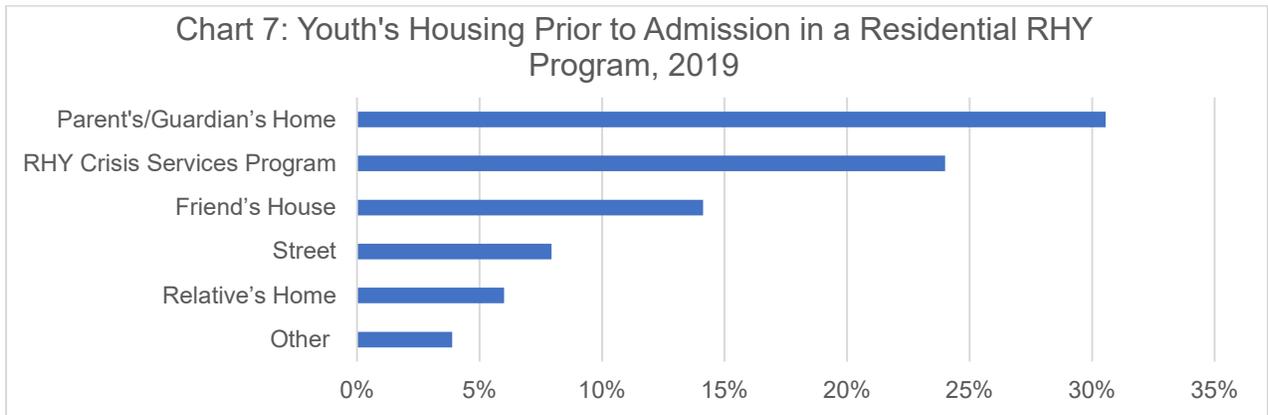
youth who have run away or are experiencing homelessness below the age of 18 are being served in NYC.



### Housing Prior to Admission

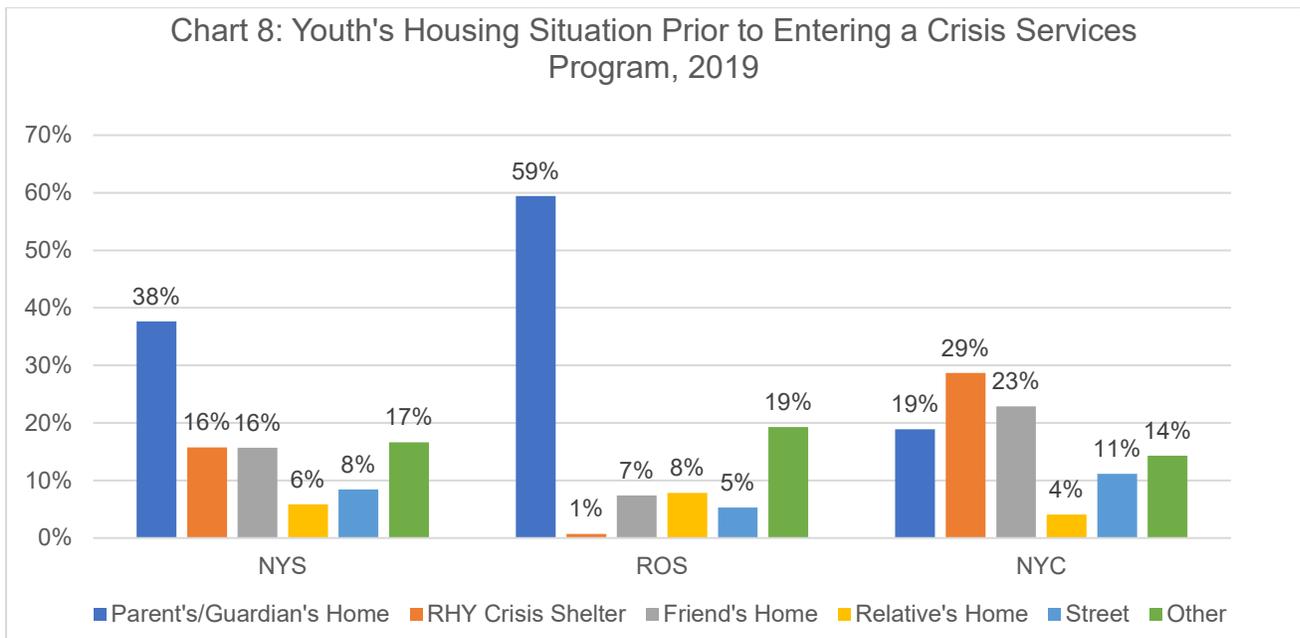
Young people come to RHY programs seeking housing from a variety of places and situations. In 2019, the most common housing situation prior to admission in a residential RHY program was

parent's/guardian's home (31 percent), followed by RHY crisis shelter (24 percent), and friend's home (14 percent). When compared with 2018 there are slight declines in many of the categories; this is likely a result of additional response options being added in 2019.



Responses that represented less than 5 percent of youth statewide included supportive housing, residential educational setting, including college dorms, staff did not ask, jail/detention, youth chose not to answer, living independently, foster care, hospital, mental/behavioral health facility, homeless family or adult shelter, RHY TILP. Options frequently reported under "other" included safe havens and drop-in centers.

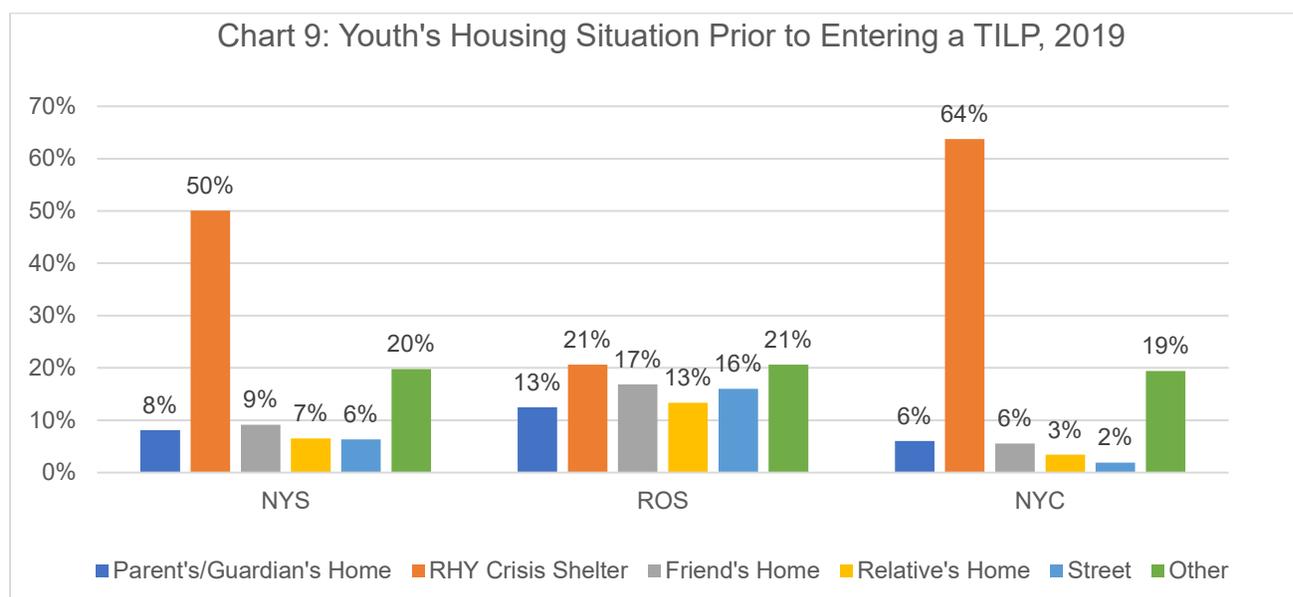
Youth's pathways into RHY crisis services programs and TILPs varied, as did the experiences of youth in NYC compared to ROS. Statewide, the three most common places of residence prior to admission to an RHY crisis service program were parent's/guardian's home (38 percent), RHY crisis shelter (16 percent), and friend's home (16 percent). Nearly 60 percent of youth in ROS admitted to a crisis services program came from the home of a parent or guardian vs. only 19 percent in NYC. Interestingly, nearly 30 percent of the youth in NYC reported coming from another crisis services program.



The most common responses for "other" included unknown/unclear or a hotel.

Statewide, the three most common places of residence prior to admission to a TILP were RHY crisis shelters (50 percent), a friend's home (9 percent) and other (20 percent). Other includes living independently, a different TILP, group home, foster home, residential treatment center/campus, correctional facility, college dorm, and unknown/unclear.

In NYC, 64 percent of youth entered a TILP from an RHY crisis services program compared to 19 percent in ROS. In ROS, many youth reported entering a TILP after staying with a friend (17 percent) or from the street (16 percent). This data is consistent with what was reported in 2018. This likely reflects a larger array of crisis programs in NYC than in ROS, and that TILPS are certified to provide crisis services as well as longer-term residential supports. In many localities in ROS, there is only one TILP available to meet all RHY needs.



### Service Needs

Programs reported on the needs of youth served one or more nights during the reporting period, in addition to safe and stable housing. These needs are identified by providers during intake, through assessments, and as they work with youth to meet their goals outlined in their Individualized Services Plans (ISP). More than one service need could be reported for each youth, thus the total number of needs reported exceeds the number of youth served. In total, 32,719 unique needs were reported, averaging six (6) service needs per youth.

Among all youth served, the top needs included conflict resolution with parent(s)/parental figure/guardian/family (65 percent), food (61 percent), independent living or life skills (55 percent), mental health services (45 percent), and clothing (45 percent). These were the needs reported most often by programs, regardless of their program type.

### Services Provided

In addition to shelter and housing, residential RHY programs provide and coordinate a wide variety of services to help meet the needs of youth. In 2019, programs reported on services provided directly by the programs themselves and those for which referrals were made. Statewide, 34,481 unique services were provided to youth directly by RHY programs, and 11,171 referrals for services were made. In total, 45,652 service interventions were made available to youth in residential RHY programs.

The most commonly provided services across all residential RHY programs were food, independent living support/skill development, and positive youth development supports (replacing clothing from 2018). The most commonly provided referrals across all residential RHY programs were mental health counseling, health care and education (replacing employment services from 2018), and education services. The most commonly service identified under the category of “other” was legal services.

The charts below align the reported service needs of youth with the most frequently reported services provided or referred to demonstrate the rate at which youth’s needs were met with resource(s). In nearly all instances the services and referrals provided exceed the needs identified. This may reflect preventive efforts and/or instances where more than one service was provided or referred for an identified need.

More needs were identified and met with services and referrals in TILPs when compared to RHY crisis services programs, which is likely related to the longer lengths of stay available to youth residing in TILPs. This longer length of stay allows youth to not only stabilize, but also develop trusting relationships with program staff, and time to meet their goals and address their needs more comprehensively than can be accomplished in a crisis-oriented program.

Consistent with 2018, family engagement continues to be an area for improvement. In 2019, OCFS offered a webinar for RHY providers on Family Engagement and Reunification to help address this gap. Coordination with child welfare was identified as a gap by both crisis services and TILP programs in 2019. OCFS will be working with RHY programs and child welfare partners to help create a more coordinated approach that supports vulnerable young people. Further training and supports around family engagement will continue to be provided through technical assistance and training.

Chart 10: Reported Services Needed and Provided or Referred  
RHY Crisis Services Programs 2019

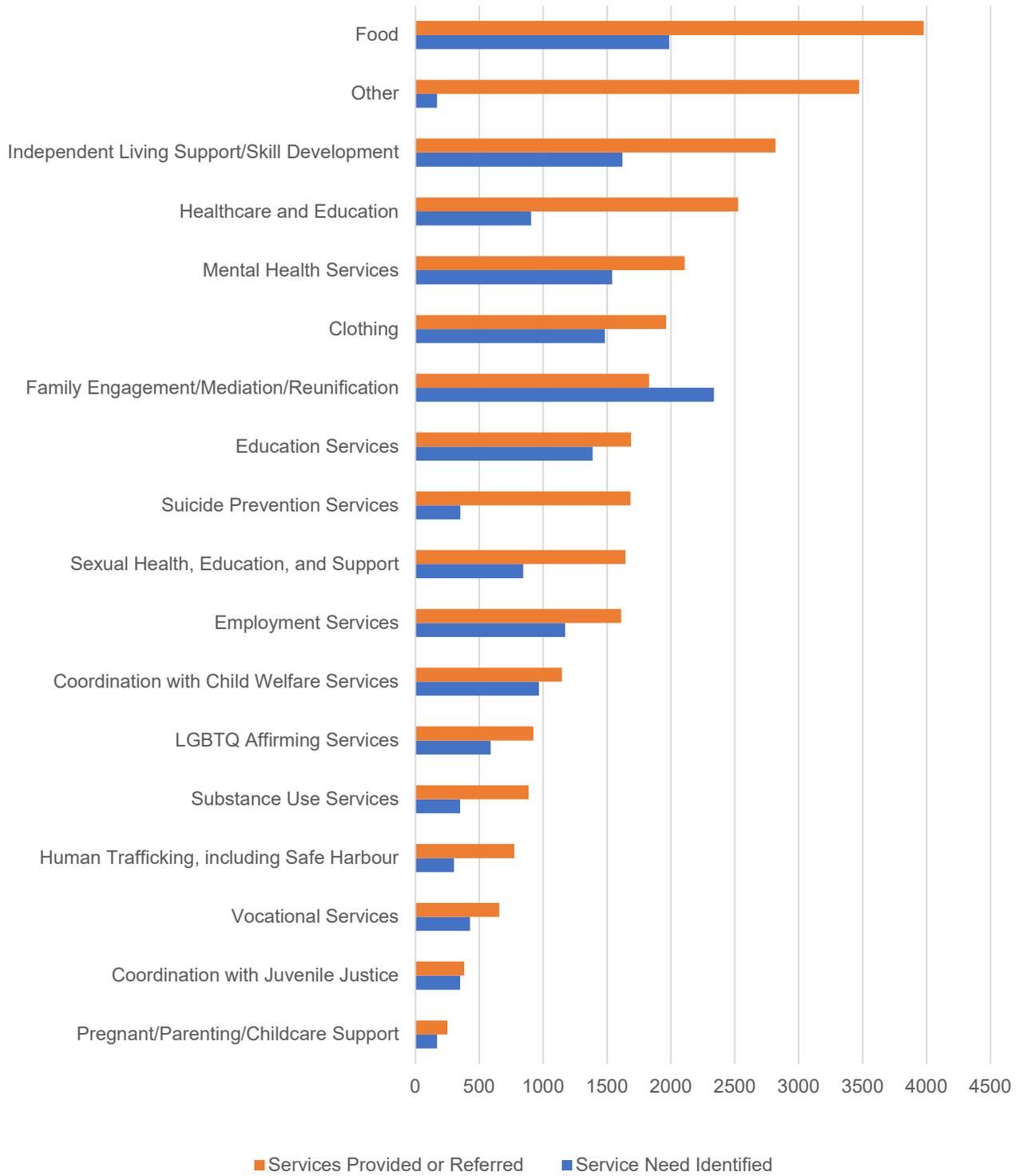
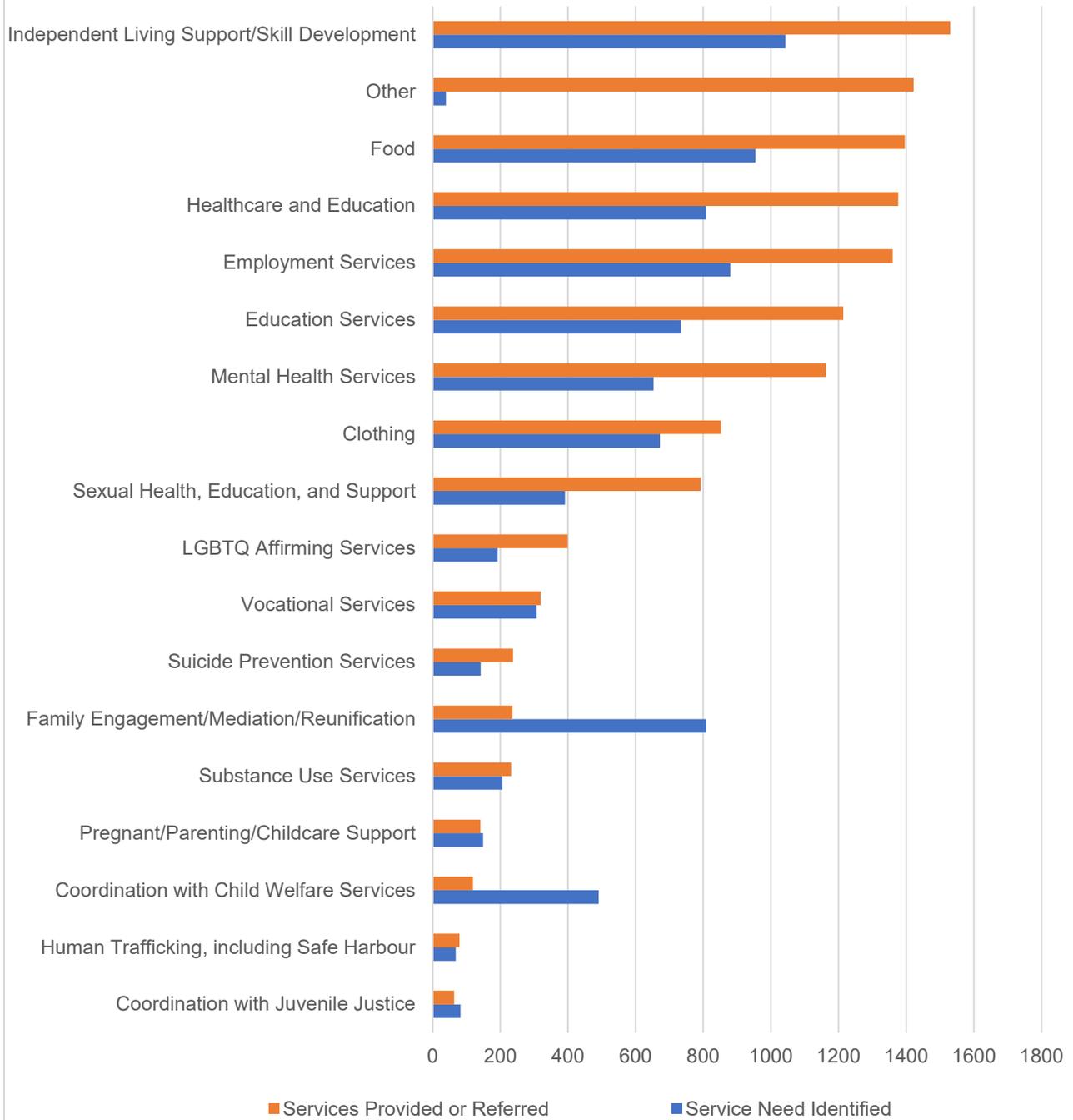


Chart 11: Services Needed and Provided or Referred, TILPs 2019



### Lengths of Stay (LOS)

#### Runaway Youth in RHY Crisis Services Programs

In 2019, RHY crisis services programs, in partnership with the municipality in which they operate, selected the maximum LOS available to youth who are identified as runaways. The statute

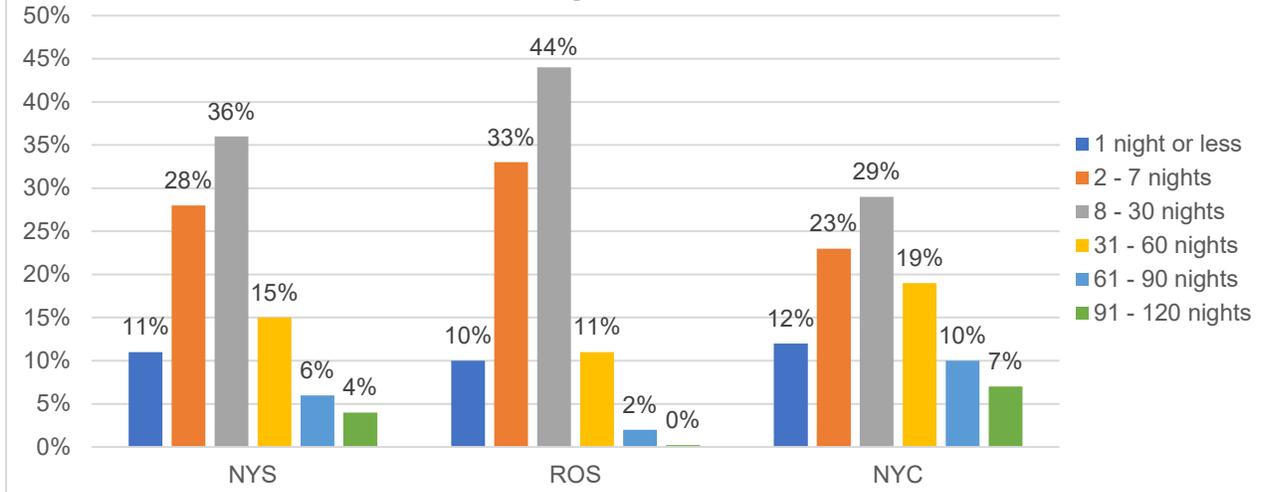
differentiates the responses and needs of youth who are considered runaways, for whom there is a safe home to return to, and those available for homeless youth of any age. These differences include maximum lengths of stay for runaway youth, whose options included a maximum length of stay of up to 30 days or up to 60 days with written agreement of the youth and their parent, guardian, or custodian and the approval of the RHY service coordinator. For runaway youth 14 years of age and older, and if authorized in a municipality’s approved comprehensive plan, a maximum length of stay of up to 60 days or up to 120 days with written consent from the youth and their parent, guardian, or custodian, and approval of the RHY service coordinator. A program’s maximum allowable LOS must align with the municipality’s comprehensive services plan for the program to remain eligible for municipal RHY funding. The LOS’s selected by counties in 2019 are included in Appendix 5.

<b>Maximum LOS for Runaway Youth</b>	<b>Maximum LOS With Written Agreement From Youth and Parent, Guardian, or Custodian and Approval of RHY Service Coordinator</b>	<b>Extended stay</b>
30 days	60 days	Runaway youth may remain in an RHY crisis services program beyond the maximum LOS described under certain circumstances, provided the municipality provides proper notice to OCFS <sup>21</sup>
60 days (youth age 14 or older if authorized in the municipality’s approved comprehensive plan)	120 days (youth age 14 or older when authorized in a municipality’s approved comprehensive plan)	

In 2019, the most frequent lengths of stay for youth discharged from RHY crisis services programs were between eight and 30 nights (36 percent). In comparison to ROS, NYC youth tended to stay longer. Thirty-six percent of NYC youth stayed in RHY crisis services programs for 31 nights or longer, compared to only 13 percent of youth in ROS. This data is consistent with 2018.

<sup>21</sup> 9 NYCRR §§ 165-1.3 and 182-1.9(d) and 19-OCFS-ADM-06.

Chart 12: LOS for Youth Discharged from RHY Crisis Services Programs, 2019



### Homeless Youth and Transitional Independent Living Support Programs (TILPs)

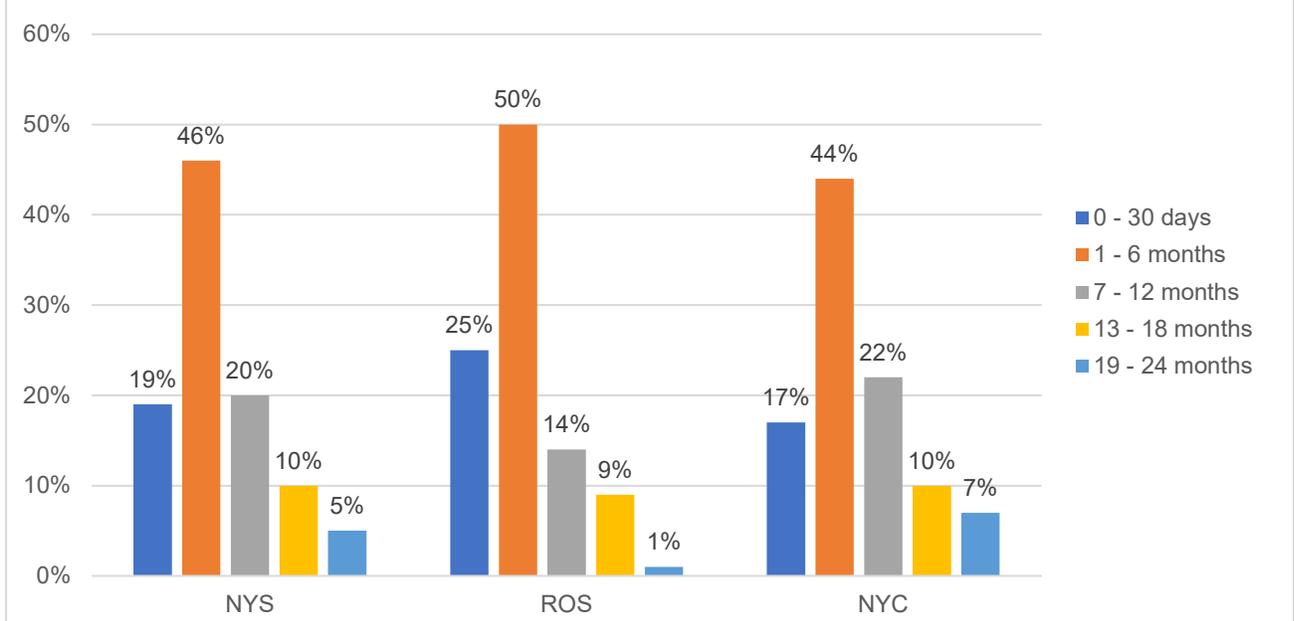
In 2019, TILPs, in partnership with the municipality in which they operate, selected the maximum LOS available to youth. Options included a maximum LOS of either 18 months or 24 months when authorized in a municipality’s approved comprehensive plan. A program’s maximum allowable LOS must align with the municipality’s approved comprehensive plan for the program to remain eligible for municipal RHY funding. The LOS selected by counties in 2019 are included in Appendix 5.

Maximum LOS	Additional LOS Available <sup>22</sup>
18 months	Youth may stay in a TILP beyond the maximum LOS in certain circumstances including but not limited to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Homeless youth who are not yet 18 years old but have reached the maximum allowable LOS may remain in a TILP until the youth turns 18, or for an additional six months if the youth is still under 18 years old.</li> <li>Youth who entered a TILP under the age of 21 may stay in the TILP beyond the maximum LOS when the municipality believes the circumstances warrant the additional services be provided to best meet the needs of the youth.</li> </ul>
24 months when authorized in a municipality’s approved comprehensive plan	

Statewide, nearly half (46 percent) of all youth discharged from a TILP remained in the program between one and six months. There was almost no variation in lengths of stay when comparing NYC to ROS, except for the most extended stays—7 percent of youth in NYC TILPS stayed beyond 18 months.

<sup>22</sup> For additional information please refer to 19-OCFS-ADM-05.

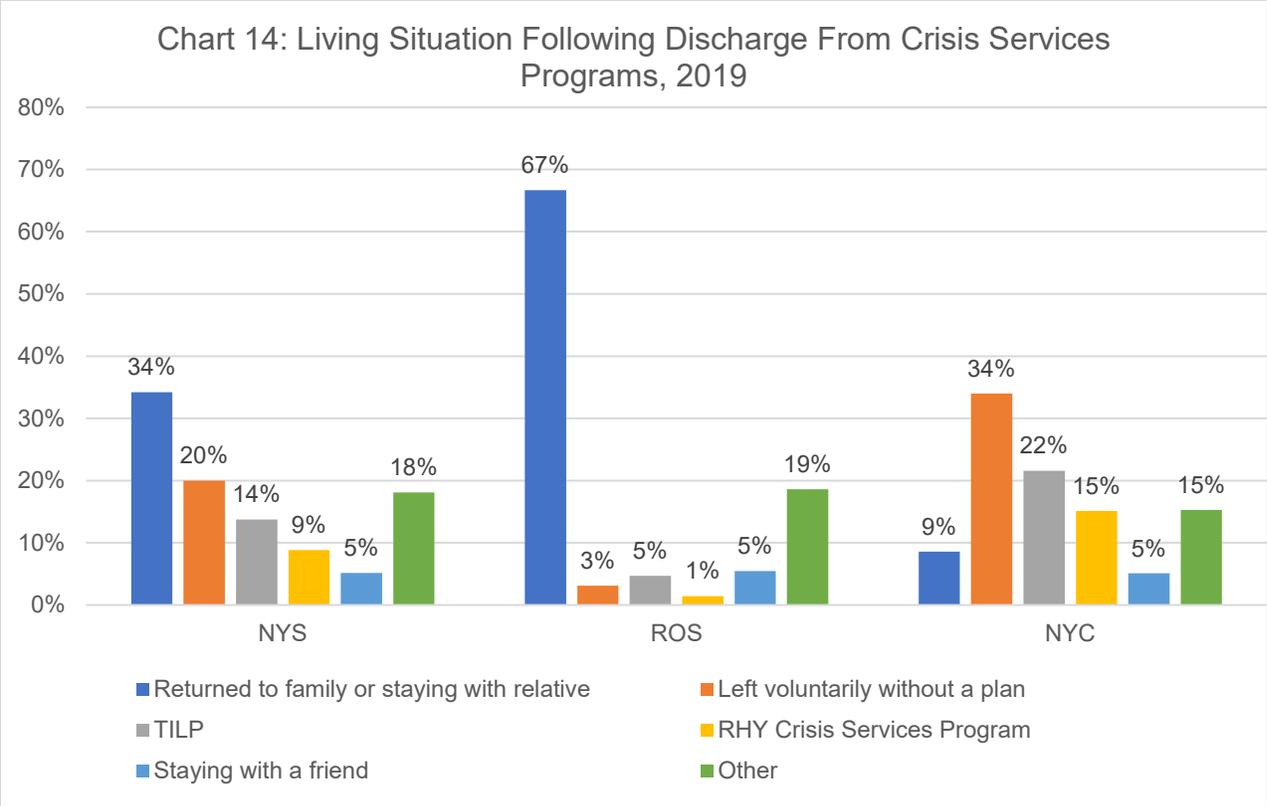
Chart 13: LOS of Youth in TILPs, 2019



### Living Situation at Discharge

Upon discharge, youth resided in a variety of settings. Combined, the two most common living situations at discharge accounted for more than half of youth discharged from RHY crisis services programs in 2019: 34 percent returned home to family or were staying with a relative, and 20 percent left voluntarily without a plan.

There were significant distinctions between NYC and ROS in living situation at discharge. In NYC, 34 percent of youth left the RHY crisis services program voluntarily without a plan, while in ROS, 67 percent returned home to their family or were staying with a relative. NYC additionally saw a significantly higher percentage of youth transitioning to a TILP or another crisis services program than youth in ROS. This may be a reflection of the age of youth in ROS vs. NYC or the greater availability of TILPS. This is similar to what programs reported in 2018.

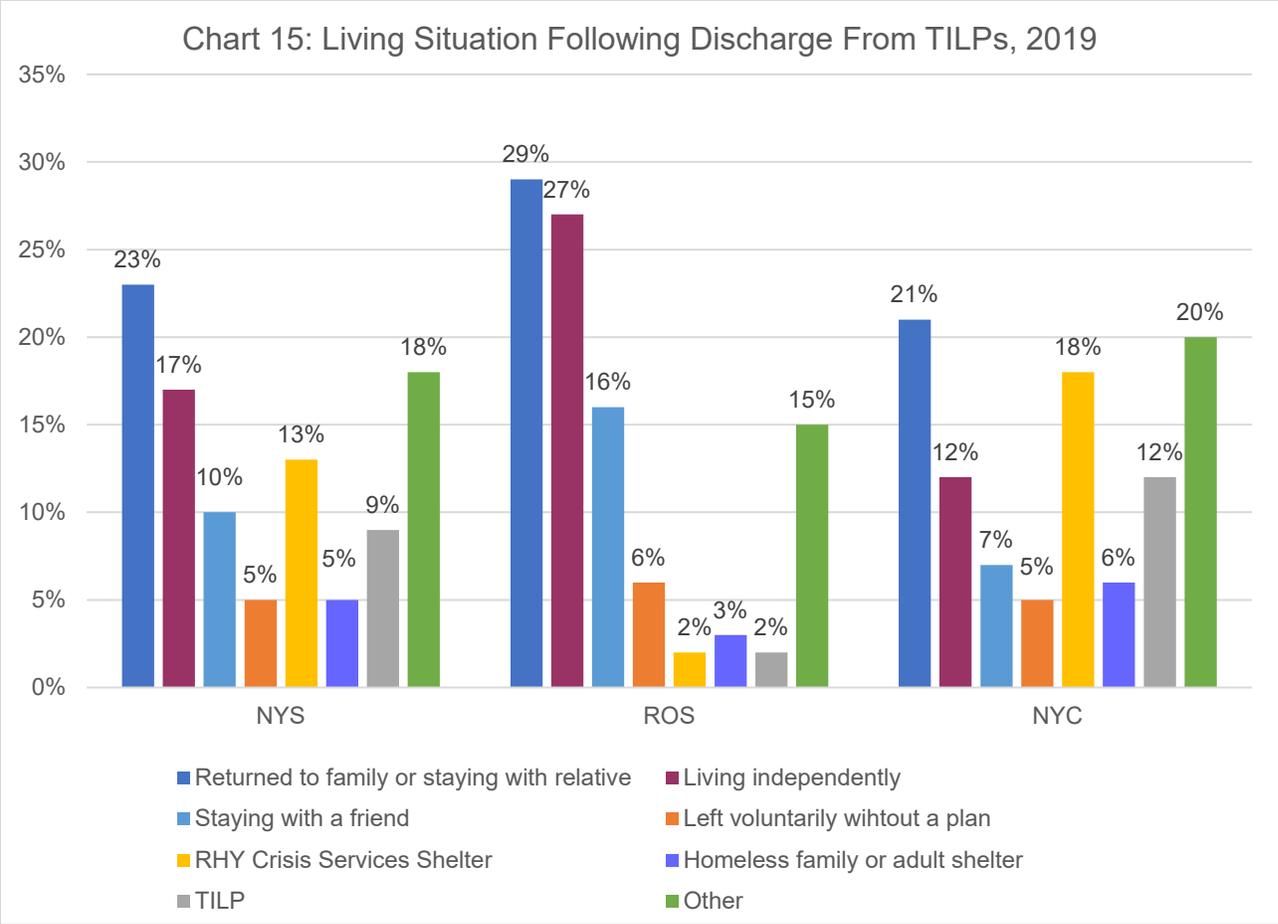


Other responses that represented less than 5 percent of youth statewide included: foster care or group home, family or adult homeless shelter, jail or detention, known to be on the street, living independently, mental or behavioral health facility, residential education program including college dorm, and other.

The most common living situation at discharge differed when comparing TILPs to crisis services programs. Following discharge from a TILP:

- 23 percent of youth returned to family or were staying with a relative;
- 17 percent of youth were living independently; and
- 10 percent of youth were staying with a friend.

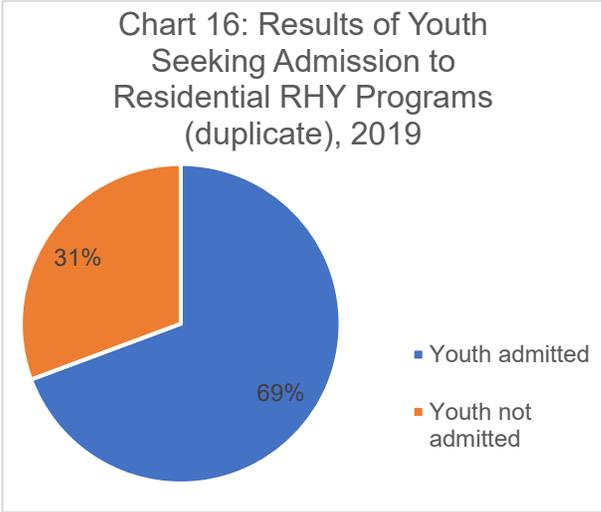
Again, there were significant distinctions between NYC and ROS for living situation at discharge. In NYC, 21 percent of youth returned to family or were staying with a relative and another 18 percent went to an RHY crisis shelter. In ROS, 29 percent returned to their family or were staying with a relative, while 27 percent were living independently.



Responses captured in “Other” included answers such as safe havens, drop-in centers, relocations out of state, and unknown.

**Youth Identified and Not Served**

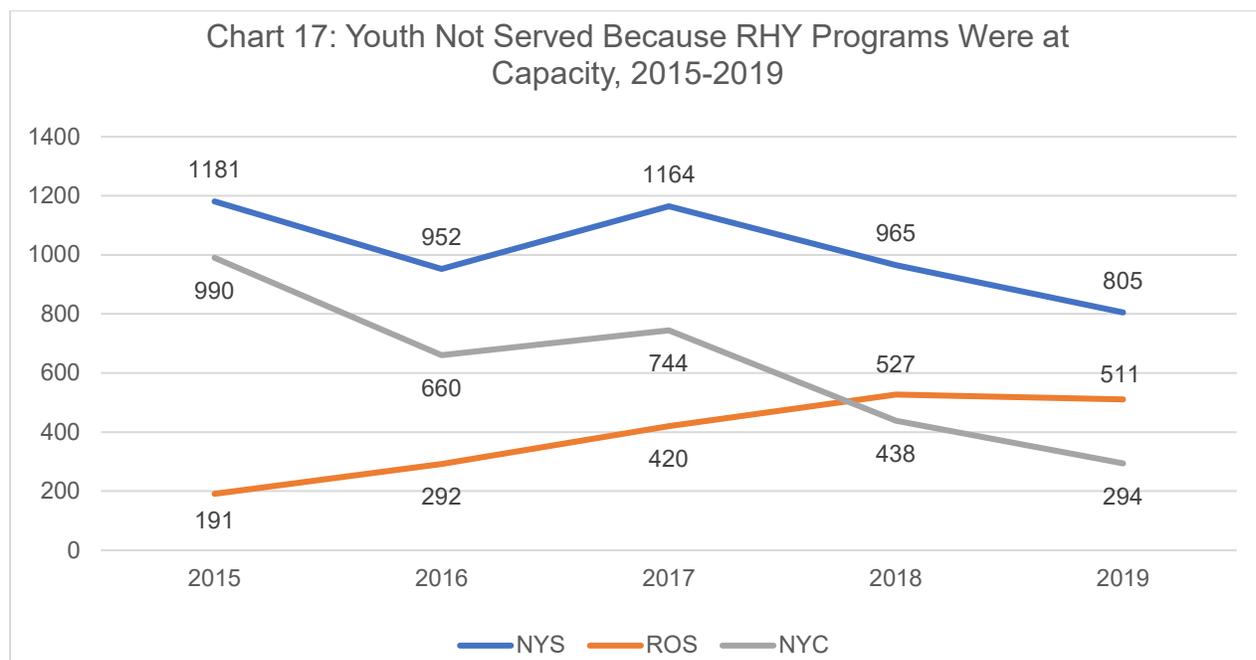
In most instances where youth sought shelter from a residential RHY program, they were admitted. Of the 9,116 instances where a youth presented to an RHY program in need of residential services in 2019, there were 2,797 instances<sup>23</sup> in which youth were turned away. It should be noted that it is possible for youth to be turned away from one program but served by another program that same day. Because there is no single data source, it is not possible to track those occurrences, but programs report referring youth they cannot accept to other programs.



<sup>23</sup> Due to the inability to identify individual youth and determine whether youth attempted to access more than one program, it is not possible to say how many individuals were turned away. This number represents the number of instances where youth were turned away by programs.

Information on instances of youth being turned away is reflected in the chart below by location and program model. In 78 percent of these instances, the youth had sought services from a crisis services program outside of NYC.

The most common reasons youth were turned away from a program included other<sup>24</sup> (954 instances), the program being full (805 instances), and the youth was not interested in entering the program after it was explained (407 instances). The chart below reflects the number of youth turned away from an RHY program because it was at capacity over the last five years. These figures represent some of the lowest rates of youth being turned away due to programs being at capacity in the past five years, driven by the decrease in NYC. There was a slight decline in such instances in ROS from a multiyear high in 2018, however the rate remains elevated when compared with prior years.



## 2019 Non-Residential RHY Program Data

Non-residential services for runaway and homeless youth take many forms, including, but not limited to: street outreach, drop-in services, case management, provisions to help meet basic needs (housing, food, clothing, hygiene products), medical and mental health supports, vocational, educational, and employment support, and hotlines. Some programs also reported providing services targeted to the LGBTQ+ youth population. It should be noted that the data collected from non-residential RHY programs represent duplicate contacts made with youth, rather than the number of individual youths served. OCFS does not certify non-residential programs.

In 2019, 29 non-residential programs reported data on youth served to OCFS. These programs served approximately 5,700 youth through drop-in centers or case management services,

<sup>24</sup> The top three most common options under “other” included youth unwilling to come to the program, youth utilized other resources, and program did not meet the safety needs of youth.

received approximately 6,000 contacts via hotlines, and made approximately 4,300 youth contacts through street outreach.

In 2019, the primary reasons youth sought services were the following:

- Basic needs (housing, food, clothing, hygiene products)
- Transportation
- Family conflict
- Service coordination support (DSS, social security, etc.)
- Employment services
- Independent living skills
- Educational needs.
- Referral services (mental health and substance abuse counseling, transitional housing),
- Advocacy
- Human trafficking
- Socialization with peers

## Conclusion

Youth and young adults in New York State continue to need the supports and services provided through RHY programs. The data presented here reflects the critical work done by these programs to safeguard some of our state's most vulnerable young people. These programs provide much more than shelter—they meet thousands of youth's basic needs, provide supports, opportunities for positive youth development, and stabilization in a wholly voluntary environment.

The data additionally shows that there are opportunities for improvement of practice, and areas of future inquiry, particularly regarding the gap between the reported sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression of the youth served in New York State and what is reflected in the literature. The gap may indicate a lack of comfort on the part of youth to come out, unaffirming environments, or some other barrier for LGBTQ+ youth engaging in services. The data also reflects that the burden of homelessness and housing instability falls disproportionately on black, brown, and multiracial youth, and that RHY programs are critical resources in supporting this disenfranchised population of young people.

Similarly, there are opportunities to enhance the practice around family engagement, mediation and connection, and to improve coordination for youth who are or were previously in foster care. OCFS is committed to continuing efforts to improve practice and outcomes for homeless youth and young adults.

## Appendix 1: Programs by Region at Year End 2019

Counties by Region	Program Type	# of programs	# of beds	# of dependent beds	# of maximum youth
<b>Albany Region</b> Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Delaware, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery, Otsego, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Warren, Washington	RHY Crisis Shelters	4	37	4	36
	Interim Family Programs	0	0	0	0
	TILP- Group Residence	2	18	5	13
	TILP- Supported Residence	5	8	1	8
	Non-residential services: drop-in center, case management, support for runaway and homeless youth's basic living needs				
<b>Albany Region Subtotals</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Buffalo Region</b> Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans, Wyoming	RHY Crisis Shelters	3	37	0	37
	Interim Family Programs	0	0	0	0
	TILP- Group Residence	4	36	9	36
	TILP- Supported Residence	2	4	0	4
	Non-residential services: drop-in center, case management, support for runaway and homeless youth's behavioral health, educational, vocational, and basic living needs				
<b>Buffalo Region Subtotals</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>New York City Region</b> Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens, Richmond	RHY Crisis Shelters	12	453	15	438
	Interim Family Programs	0	0	0	0
	TILP- Group Residence	30	415	23	395
	TILP- Supported Residence	11	21	2	19
	Non-residential services: case management, drop-in centers, support for runaway and homeless youth's behavioral health, educational, vocational needs, health care services				
<b>New York City Subtotals</b>		<b>53</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>852</b>
<b>Rochester Region</b> Chemung, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario,	RHY Crisis Shelters	2	27	0	27
	Interim Family Programs	3	4	0	4

Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Yates	TILP- Group Residence	1	16	8	8
	TILP- Supported Residence	12	15	0	15
	Non-residential services: case management, support for runaway and homeless youth's educational, vocational, and basic living needs				
<b>Rochester Region Subtotals</b>		<b>18</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Syracuse Region</b> Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Oswego, St. Lawrence, Tioga, Tompkins	RHY Crisis Shelters	3	34	1	33
	Interim Family Programs	4	11	0	11
	TILP- Group Residence	1	19	12	7
	TILP- Supported Residence	20	58	21	42
	Non-residential services: case management, educational support, street outreach				
<b>Syracuse Region Subtotals</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Westchester Region</b> Dutchess, Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Suffolk, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester	RHY Crisis Shelters	7	81	2	80
	Interim Family Programs	1	4	0	4
	TILP- Group Residence	6	54	14	40
	TILP- Supported Residence	0	0	0	0
	Non-residential services: drop-in center, hotline, case management, behavioral health support				
<b>Westchester Subtotals</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>Statewide</b>	RHY Crisis Shelters	31	651	22	669
	Interim Family Programs	8	19	0	19
	TILP- Group Residence	44	499	71	558
	TILP- Supported Residence	50	88	24	106
<b>Statewide Total</b>		<b>133</b>	<b>1257<sup>25</sup></b>	<b>117</b>	<b>1352</b>

<sup>25</sup> These figures represent certified bed capacity as opposed to operating capacity. In parent and child programs, the program is certified to serve a certain number of youth, dependents, and a combination of youth and dependents. For example, such a program could serve one youth with nine dependents on one night and seven youth with three dependents on another night.

## Appendix 2: Agencies with Certified Residential RHY Programs in 2019

### **Albany Region**

- CAPTAIN Youth and Family Services
- Equinox, Inc.
- Saint Anne Institute
- SAFE Inc., of Schenectady
- Warren/Washington Counties Homeless Youth Coalition, Inc.

### **Buffalo Region**

- Chautauqua Opportunities, Inc.
- Compass House
- Pinnacle Community Services, Inc.
- Plymouth Crossroads
- Teaching and Restoring Youth, Inc.

### **New York City Region**

- Ali Forney Center
- Children's Village, Inc.
- CORE Services Group, Inc.
- Covenant House New York Under 21, Inc.
- Diaspora Community Services, Inc.
- Edwin Gould Services for Children and Families
- Girls Educational and Mentoring Services
- Good Shepherd Services, Inc.
- IMEINU, Inc.
- Project Hospitality, Inc.
- Rising Ground, Inc.
- Safe Horizon, Inc.
- Sheltering Arms Children and Family Services, Inc.
- SCO Family of Services

### **Rochester Region**

- Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Rochester
- Salvation Army
- The Center for Youth Services, Inc.

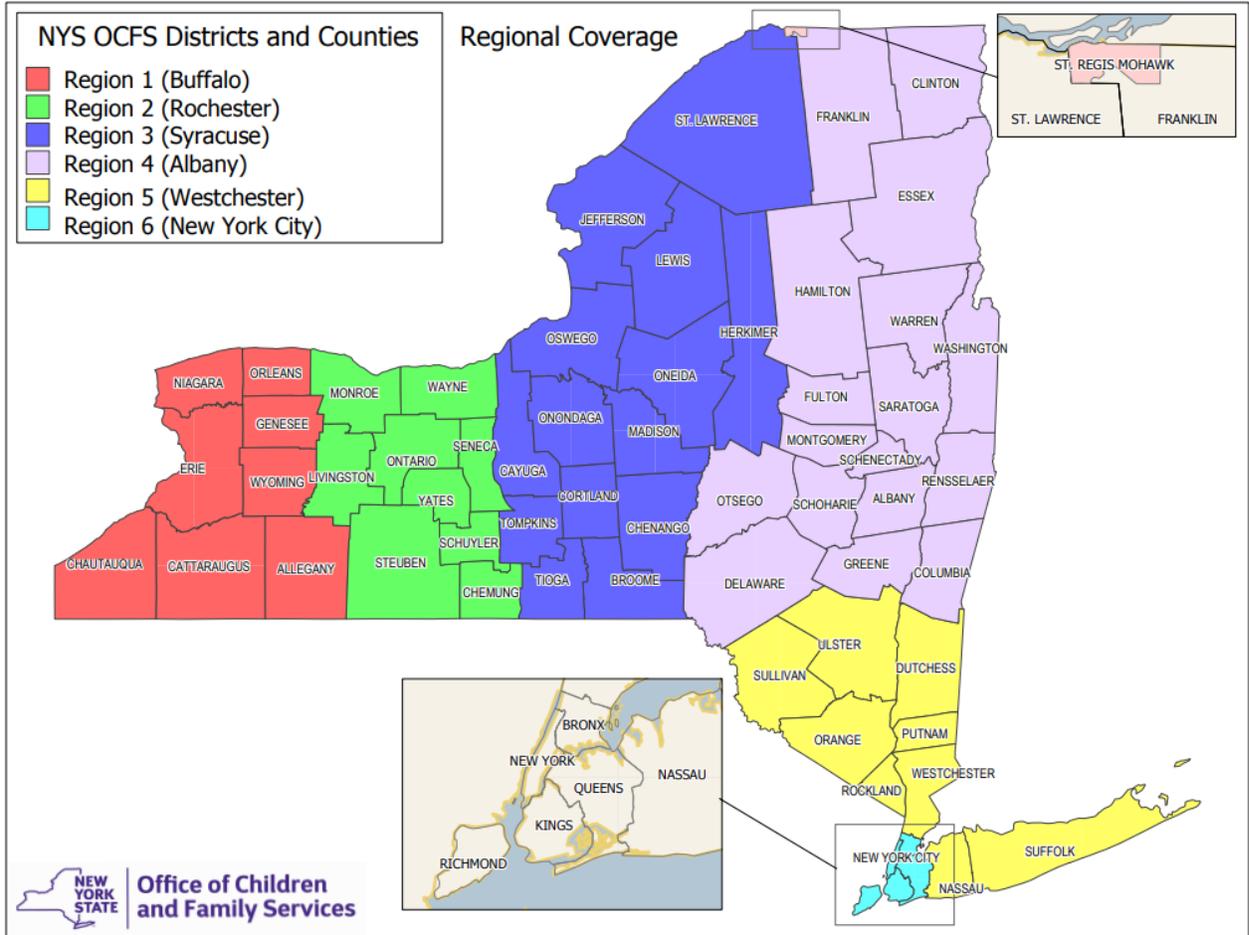
## **Syracuse Region**

- Catholic Charities of Broome County
- Catholic Charities of Herkimer County
- Catholic Charities of Oneida/Madison Counties
- Family and Children's Service of Ithaca
- Integrated Community Alternatives Network, Inc.
- Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency, Inc.
- Oswego County Opportunities, Inc.
- The Learning Web, Inc.
- The Salvation Army, Syracuse Area Services

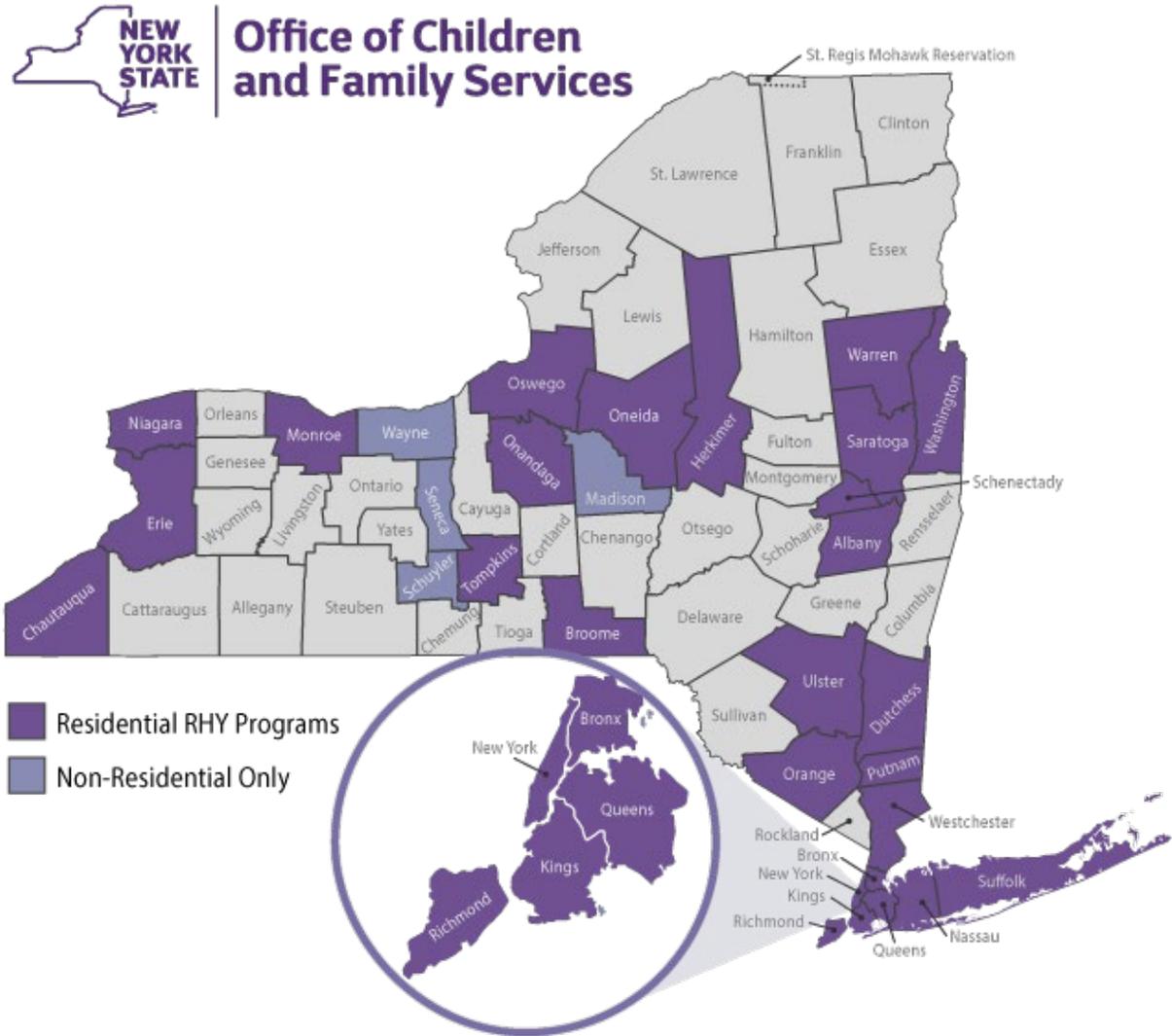
## **Westchester Region**

- Children's Village, Inc.
- Family and Children's Association
- Family of Woodstock, Inc.
- Green Chimneys Children's Services
- HONOR EHG, Inc.
- Hope for Youth
- Hudson River Housing, Inc.
- Mercy Center Ministries
- Town of Huntington Youth Bureau

# Appendix 3: New York State Regional Map



# Appendix 4: Counties with Residential and/or Non-Residential RHY Services, 2019



## Appendix 5: Length of Stay (LOS) for Residential RHY Programs as Allowed by Municipalities in 2019

<b>County</b>	<b>Did the county decide to allow crisis service programs the option to extend the maximum LOS?</b>	<b>Did the county decide to allow TILPs the option to extend the maximum LOS?</b>	<b>Did the county decide to allow RHY programs to serve homeless young adults? *</b>
Albany	Yes	Yes	Yes
Broome	Not Applicable	No	Yes
Chautauqua	Yes	No	Yes
Dutchess	No	Not Applicable	No
Erie	No	Yes	Yes
Herkimer	Yes	Not Applicable	No
Madison	Yes	Not Applicable	Yes
Monroe	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nassau	No	No	Yes
Niagara	No	Not Applicable	Yes
Oneida	Yes	Yes	Yes
Onondaga	Yes	No	Yes
Orange	Yes	Yes	Yes
Oswego	Yes	No	Yes
Putnam	Yes	No	No
Saratoga	Yes	Not Applicable	No
Schenectady	Yes	Yes	Yes
Schuyler	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Yes
Suffolk	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tompkins	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ulster	No	Yes	Yes
Warren/Washington	No	Yes	Yes
Westchester	Yes	Not Applicable	No
NYC	Yes	Yes	No

\* Non-residential programs are able to serve homeless young adults based on this decision; residential RHY programs are additionally required to be certified to serve young adults before serving this population.