

# **A Comparative Portrait of Individuals and Families Utilizing Massachusetts Emergency Shelter Programs 1999 and 2000**

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# Introduction to the Massachusetts Homeless Tracking System

## *History and Methodology*

The Center for Social Policy (CSP) at the McCormack Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston oversees the Connection, Service, Partnership through Technology (CSPTech) project.<sup>1</sup> CSPTech operates a homeless services data system being implemented throughout the Commonwealth. Founded in 1995, this project is a networked computerized record-keeping system that allows homeless service providers across Massachusetts to collect uniform client information over time. This information is aggregated in a database used by service providers, advocates, government officials, researchers, and people experiencing homelessness. Analysis of this information is critical to efforts to understand the extent of this problem in Massachusetts in an attempt to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty.

Through multi-year contracts with the City of Boston and the State of Massachusetts, more than 140 homeless programs are currently involved in the CSPTech project, representing over 60% of the homeless individuals and families served in emergency shelters in the state. Involved sites include the full range of programs serving homeless persons across the Continuum of Care: emergency shelter, transitional housing, supportive services, permanent-, and permanent-supportive housing. Many of these programs serve persons who have highly sensitive needs, such as HIV/AIDS, mental health, chemical addictions, and domestic violence. Statewide expansion of the network is underway, with a long-term goal of including 90% or more of the publicly funded shelters in the state, over 225 programs at full implementation.

Prior to the CSPTech project, Boston and the Commonwealth had no consistent means by which to identify service needs, barriers to accessing services, and program-, region-, and system-wide results. Advocates and planners were forced to rely upon point-in-time census counts to estimate the size of the local homeless population. While this approach is useful for gathering a one-time unduplicated count of homeless individuals and families, it is limited by vulnerability to seasonal fluctuations. Snapshot counts also tend to over-represent those with the most chronic problems while under-representing those facing time-limited situational crises.<sup>2</sup>

The ongoing gathering of data on homeless persons who utilize service programs offers cumulative, longitudinal information, thus enabling the tracking of service and demand trends. These data are critical to accurately calculate the size and needs of the homeless population, as well as the outcomes of specific interventions and programs. Policy makers, agency directors, homeless program consumers, and advocates require this information for service and systems planning and advocacy.

The CSPTech system is designed to balance the interests and needs of three levels of stakeholders: homeless men, women, and children; service providers; and policy makers and

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<sup>1</sup> This project was previously referred to as the ANCHoR Project.

<sup>2</sup> For more detail on this topic, see Culhane, D., Metraux, S., Raphael, S. (2000). [The Prevalence of Homelessness in 1998: Results from the Analysis of Administrative Data in Nine US Jurisdictions](#). Center for Mental Health Policy and Services Research, University of Pennsylvania.

advocates. Through a linkage with MicroMax benefit eligibility software, homeless program consumers who agree to have their information entered into the system can receive a printout listing their eligibility for various state and federal benefit programs. Homeless service programs are assisted in managing operational information through access to a wide array of agency, program, and client level reports. Policy makers benefit through access to system-wide data for identifying service gaps, targeting resources, and making informed planning decisions at city, regional, and state levels.

***Representativeness***

Based upon policies developed by the project’s Steering Committee, aggregate data must meet a minimum threshold criterion before they can be released: data must represent at least 60% of those persons served in a region. Based on a calculation of client records contained in the database versus shelter system capacity for a particular period, the data are deemed eligible for release.

This report represents information on individuals and families who utilized the state emergency shelter system in 1999 and 2000. The data presented in this report represent 61% of individuals and 63% of families served at Massachusetts homeless shelters between January 1, 2000 and December 31, 2000, and 68% of individuals and 62% of families served between January 1, 1999 and December 31, 1999.

These coverage rates are determined by calculating the total number of beds in the shelter system, and multiplying that figure by the average annual turnover in those beds, thus estimating the proportion of total persons served by the shelter system represented in the data. For example, if the individual shelter system has 4,000 beds across all of the emergency shelter programs, using a turnover rate of 5, the shelter system would serve 20,000 persons over the course of the year. If there were 12,500 individual records for the year, coverage would be 12,500/20,000, or 63 percent. For family programs, the turnover rate used is two, as the latest DTA data shows that statewide, the average length of stay in emergency shelters is six months. For individuals, the Steering Committee agreed (as specified in the Three Year Workplan) on a turnover rate of 5, the average of the actual turnover reported by Dennis Culhane in Philadelphia and New York City in 1994. However, for 2000 the Massachusetts rate was increased to 6.5, based upon actual data from the programs showing that individual stays are shorter in Massachusetts than in the other two cities.

$$\begin{array}{l}
 \text{Total Beds} \times \text{Turnover Rate} = \text{Total Persons Served} \\
 \text{Total Records} \div \text{Total Persons Served} = \text{Coverage Rate}
 \end{array}$$

These calculations are based upon assumptions that will be clarified as more data are gathered. As more programs utilize the CSPTech system, the turnover rate will become more accurate. Additionally, as the number of shelter beds, particularly for individuals, is not constant or easily attainable, it too will become more accurate as the CSPTech system is refined and broadened. In upgrading to ServicePoint web-based software, information on

the number of beds and utilization of the shelter system will be continually updated. In addition, the Access to Data Committee recommends moving to a more streamlined method for calculating coverage of beds, rather than persons. That method would involve dividing the number of beds in the overall shelter system, by the number of beds for which ServicePoint was being utilized. These data will be available as programs convert to the new CSPTech system and complete the Program Information sheet as part of the start-up materials. For example, if the individual shelter system has 4,000 beds across all programs, and ServicePoint is being used for 2,600 of those beds, then coverage would be 2,600/4,000 or 65 percent.

$$\frac{\text{Total Beds in System}}{\text{Total Beds}} = \text{Coverage Rate}$$

Presently the two largest homeless shelters in Massachusetts are the Pine Street Inn Men's Inn (the rest of Pine Street agency has been gathering and submitting data regularly) and the Long Island Shelter. These large shelters have been hindered by the need for a comprehensive nightly bed list, and have just developed a method for this function in ServicePoint. Utilization of the ServicePoint bed list will allow these two large shelters to continuously account for the people they serve and the services those participants request and need. Their daily participation, now more possible with ServicePoint, will greatly enhance the coverage rate for the statewide aggregate data.

### ***Limitations***

These data were collected in large part by interviewing people experiencing homelessness, sometimes on the street, and most often in shelters or other homeless service agencies. These data do not capture information on people who are in doubled-up living situations, and others who are homeless but do not come into contact with the service system.

It should be noted that the homeless individuals and families who are interviewed as part of this project respond to specific questions with varying levels of depth. As can be seen in the tables<sup>3</sup> in the report, information on demographic characteristics is based upon a much higher level of accuracy than is that for prior residence, income sources, etc. These data are limited in their informative value and cannot be extrapolated to the whole data set.

In the trend analyses in the report, the numbers of respondents in the various categories are often quite different; for example, in 1999, 94% of family heads provided information on marital status, while in 2000, 72% shared these data. While these comparisons provide noteworthy information, the variations in response proportions should be taken into account when making generalizations about the data that follow. The results can, however, still provide some indication of the differences between the various homeless populations across the two years.

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<sup>3</sup> See the N under each column/row heading for the exact number of respondents to that particular set of questions. Data for the remainder of the client records are missing (e.g. the Individuals section reports on 10,219 records for 2000; in Table 2, N=2,384 for prior residence data, thus 7,835 records did not contain this information).

## ***Report Structure***

The report begins by focusing on individuals served at emergency shelter programs. It describes the demographic characteristics, residential history, health insurance coverage, and income sources of individual shelter users for each of the two years. The report then compares members of the individual emergency shelter population by gender and age group. Then, individuals served in 2000 are analyzed by region, contrasting those from greater Boston with others from the rest of the state.

The report next focuses on homeless families. In addition to presenting demographic and other characteristics, the report also provides some information about children and the family unit. Families served in 2000 are then analyzed by region, contrasting those from greater Boston with others from the rest of the state. Finally, an appendix lists the shelters that contributed client records to the data set.



# INDIVIDUALS

## SERVED AT MASSACHUSETTS EMERGENCY HOMELESS SHELTERS

The following describes the information collected by individual emergency shelter providers on clients served during 2000 and 1999. An unduplicated count of 10,219 individuals was obtained in 2000, and an unduplicated count of 8,411 was gathered for 1999. This section of the report contains data on the 10,219 persons served in 2000, and the 8,411 individuals served in 1999.

	2000	1999
Total Records	11,946	9,953
Records with Valid Client Codes	10,771	9,015
Unduplicated Count	10,219	8,411

The following shows the shelter utilization patterns of these consumers. As described below, just under 5% of 2000 shelter users and 6% of 1999 individuals were seen in two shelter programs. In both years, less than 1% accessed three or more shelters.

	2000	1999
Users of One Shelter Program	9,705	7,858
Users of Two Shelter Programs	479	505
Users of Three or More Programs	35	48

## *Demographic Characteristics*

Table 1 presents information comparing the 10,219 individuals served in 2000 to the 8,411 persons served in 1999. Highlights are discussed below.

In both years more than three-quarters of individuals served in Massachusetts emergency homeless shelters were male; the proportion of women decreased slightly in 2000, from just over one in five, to just under one in five shelter residents. (See the next section of this report for a detailed comparison of shelter users by gender.)

In 2000, three in five individuals served described themselves as white, and one in four as African American, as compared to proportionally fewer whites and more African Americans in 1999. In 2000, shelter residents were also slightly less likely to identify as Latino.

In both years, about four out of five shelter users were between 25 and 54 years of age. Homeless individuals served in 2000 were, however, slightly older than their 1999 counterparts. The proportion of individuals over age 45 increased, and the overall average age rose by two years. (See the age comparison section of this report for more detail.)

Individual shelter users in 2000 reported higher levels of educational attainment. In 2000, 36% of individuals served had less than a high-school degree, as compared to 44% in 1999. Most notably, the proportion of individuals with only a grade-school education decreased by almost half, from 15% in 1999 to 8% in 2000. In addition, 26% of those served in 2000 reported at least some college education, as compared to 20% in 1999.

The population did not differ much in terms of marital status over the period. In both years, most individual shelter users had never married, though this proportion did decrease slightly in 2000. Another one in five were divorced.

The proportion of individuals who reported having served in the military increased from 15% in 1999 to 21% in 2000. This difference can be explained by the presence of a larger proportion of records from veterans' shelters in the 2000 data set.

**Table 1:  
Demographic Characteristics of Homeless Individuals<sup>4</sup>**

	Homeless Individuals, 2000	Homeless Individuals, 1999
<b>Gender</b>	(N=10,203)	(N=8,381)
Male	81%	78%
Female	19%	22%
<b>Race</b>	(N=9,144)	(N=6,175) <sup>a</sup>
White	60%	55%
African American	25%	28%
Latino	10%	12%
Other	3%	3%
Multiracial	1%	1%
Native American	1%	1%
Asian	1%	<1%
Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%
Alaskan Native	<1%	0%
<b>Age</b>	(N=10,207)	(N=8,390)
Under 18	<1%	<1%
18-24	10%	11%
25-34	21%	24%
35-44	36%	36%
45-54	24%	20%
55-64	7%	6%
65 and older	2%	2%
<b>Average Age</b>	41**	39**
<b>Education</b>	(N=2,751)	(N=2,287)
Grade school	8%	15%
Some high-school	28%	29%
HS grad./GED	38%	36%
Some college/AA	20%	14%
BS/BA	5%	4%
Grad. Degree	1%	2%
<b>Marital Status</b>	(N=8,297)	(N=6,055)
Single/Never Married	60%	63%
Divorced	22%	20%
Separated	9%	9%
Married	7%	7%
Widowed	2%	2%
<b>Veterans</b>	(N=10,219)	(N=8,411)
Yes	21%	15%

<sup>a</sup> Racial category responses are slightly different from those published in the 1999 report due to utilization of a different calculation method.

\*\* Statistically significant difference p<.001

<sup>4</sup> Please note that in this and other tables, percents do not always total 100 due to rounding.

## ***Residence Prior to Shelter Entry***

In terms of prior living situation, there were several differences between individuals served in the two years. In 2000, shelter residents were noticeably more likely to report having doubled up with family or friends or rented their own place prior to entering the shelter. Concurrently, they were markedly less likely to have moved to their current shelter from another program, or from a substance abuse treatment center.<sup>5</sup> The difference was greatest in the area of moving from one shelter to another, decreasing from 36% in 1999, to 26% in 2000. Other notable differences include an increase in the proportion who reported owning a home before becoming homeless, from 2% in 1999 to 5% in 2000; and those coming from jail, from 2% in 1999 to 4% in 2000. Concurrently, there was an overall decrease in those coming from institutional settings (detox., jail, supervised living, hospital, or transitional housing), from 23% in 1999 to 19% in 2000.

**Table 2:  
Residence of Homeless Individuals Prior to Entering Shelter**

Prior Residence	Homeless Individuals 2000 (N=2,384)	Homeless Individuals 1999 (N=2,550)
Other Shelter	26%	36%
Homes of Relative/Friends	21%	14%
Rented Home	20%	16%
Detox./Substance Abuse Treatment Center	9%	14%
Street/Park/Car/Abandoned Building	5%	4%
Owned Home	5%	2%
Jail/Prison/Detention Center	4%	2%
Supervised Living <sup>a</sup>	3%	3%
Mental Health/Other Hospital	2%	3%
Other	2%	2%
Boarding House	2%	2%
Hotel/Motel	1%	1%
Transitional Housing	1%	1%

<sup>a</sup> Foster home, halfway house, three-quarter house, or nursing home.

## ***Health Insurance Coverage***

In both years, just under one-third of those reporting health insurance status did not have health insurance coverage. Over half were covered by Medicaid/Mass Health.

**Table 3:  
Health Insurance Coverage of Homeless Individuals**

Health Insurance	Homeless Individuals 2000 (N=2,337)	Homeless Individuals 1999 (N=1,532)
No Health Insurance	32%	30%
Medicaid/Mass Health	55%	56%
Private Plan	6%	6%
Medicare	4%	4%
VA	2%	2%
HMO	2%	2%

<sup>5</sup> Some of the change in those coming from substance abuse treatment may be due to the exclusion of United Homes' Post Detox. transitional program from the 2000 data set.

## *Income at Shelter Entry*

Of those individual shelter residents providing income information, more than one-quarter were employed in both years, either exclusively or in conjunction with public assistance. This proportion increased somewhat in 2000, to 31 percent. The proportion of individuals subsisting on public assistance alone also increased, while proportionally fewer individuals reported having no source of formal income in 2000.

**Table 4:**  
**Income by Category of Homeless Individuals at Shelter Entry<sup>6</sup>**

<b>Income Category</b>	<b>Homeless Individuals 2000</b> (N=2,335)	<b>Homeless Individuals 1999</b> (N=2,692)
Employment <sup>a</sup>	28%	25%
Public Assistance <sup>b</sup>	39%	36%
Employment and Public Assistance	3%	2%
No Formal Income <sup>c</sup>	30%	36%
Other <sup>d</sup>	1%	1%

<sup>a</sup>Wages, Earned Income Tax Credit, savings, and investments.

<sup>b</sup>TAFDC, WIC, Food Stamps, SSI/SSDI, workers' compensation, unemployment, refugee assistance, veterans administration disability, general relief, and rent supplements.

<sup>c</sup>Includes those receiving income from informal sources as defined above.

<sup>d</sup>Child support/alimony, retirement, veterans pension, other pension, and private disability insurance.

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<sup>6</sup> For the analysis in Table 4, each individual providing income information was grouped into one of five income categories. As such, those with multiple sources were counted only once, as compared to Table 5, where more than one income source was reported.

Of those providing income information, proportionally fewer individuals received earnings in 2000, but the average monthly amount increased somewhat. The proportion of individuals reporting Food Stamp income also decreased somewhat. Average monthly income amounts increased for all sources.

**Table 5:  
Income Sources and Amounts of Homeless Individuals with Reported Income at Shelter Entry**

<b>Income</b>	<b>Homeless Individuals 2000 (N=1,642)</b>	<b>Homeless Individuals 1999 (N=1,818)</b>
<b><u>Income Source<sup>a</sup></u></b>		
SS/SSI/SSDI	45%	46%
Employment Income	43%	48%
Other Public Benefits <sup>b</sup>	10%	12%
Food Stamps	7%	10%
TAFDC	2%	2%
Other Private Income <sup>c</sup>	2%	3%
<b><u>Average Monthly Amount</u></b>		
SS/SSI/SSDI	\$576	\$563
Employment Income	\$1,012	\$962
Other Public Benefits <sup>b</sup>	\$388	\$332
Food Stamps	\$113	\$99
TAFDC	\$366	\$343
Other Private Income <sup>c</sup>	\$514	\$498

<sup>a</sup>More than one response possible.

<sup>b</sup>Earned Income Tax Credit, refugee assistance, veterans administration disability, veterans pension, workers' compensation, unemployment, general assistance, rent supplements, WIC, and alimony/child support.

<sup>c</sup>Retirement, investments, savings, private disability insurance, and other pension.

## Comparison by Gender<sup>7</sup>

### *Demographic Characteristics*

In both years, homeless men were more likely to be white and less likely to be African American than homeless women. As in the total populations, the gender variation among whites increased somewhat in the later year. In 2000, the proportion of both men and women who identified as Latino decreased from 15% of homeless men served in 1999 to 11% in 2000, and from 11% to 8% of women in 1999 and 2000 respectively.

In terms of age, women were a bit younger than men in both years. While the average age of those served in 2000 varied by just two years, women were much more likely to be under age 25, and less likely to be between the ages of 45 and 54.

Despite this age difference, in both years, women reported attaining a higher degree of education than their male counterparts, with almost one-third of women served in 2000 attending at least some college, as compared to less than one-fourth of homeless men. As in the overall data set, education levels were higher for those served in 2000.

There were few differences in marital status by gender or across the two years, and, not surprisingly, men were much more likely to have served in the military in both years. Again, the increase in male military service can be explained by the presence of a larger number of records from veterans' shelters in the 2000 data set.

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<sup>7</sup> The total numbers of individuals compared in this section (10,203 for 2000, and 8,378 for 1999) is slightly lower than the total numbers of individuals in the data sets due to missing gender information for 16 records in the 2000 set and 33 1999 records.

**Table 6:  
Demographic Characteristics of Individual Homeless Men and Women**

	Homeless Men 2000	Homeless Women 2000	Homeless Men 1999	Homeless Women 1999
<b>Race</b>	(N=7,234)	(N=1,898)	(N=5,270) <sup>a</sup>	(N=1,649) <sup>a</sup>
White	61%	56%	56%	54%
African American	24%	29%	25%	30%
Latino	11%	8%	15%	11%
Other	3%	4%	3%	3%
Native American	1%	1%	1%	1%
Multiracial	<1%	1%	<1%	1%
Asian	<1%	1%	<1%	1%
Pacific Islander	<1%	0%	<1%	<1%
Alaskan Native	<1%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Age</b>	(N=8,222)	(N=1,969)	(N=6,496)	(N=1,866)
Under 18	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
18-24	9%	15%	10%	17%
25-34	21%	22%	24%	24%
35-44	36%	33%	37%	33%
45-54	25%	20%	21%	18%
55-64	7%	7%	7%	5%
65 and older	2%	3%	2%	3%
<b>Average Age</b>	41**	39**	40	39
<b>Education</b>	(N=1,758)	(N=984)	(N=1,516)	(N=769)
Grade school	8%	8%	14%	12%
Some high-school	28%	27%	30%	30%
HS grad./GED	40%	35%	39%	34%
Some college/AA	19%	23%	13%	18%
BS/BA	4%	6%	4%	4%
Grad. Degree	1%	1%	1%	2%
<b>Marital Status</b>	(N=6,561)	(N=1,721)	(N=4,593)	(N=1,424)
Single/Never Married	59%	62%	63%	62%
Divorced	23%	19%	21%	16%
Separated	9%	7%	9%	9%
Married	7%	9%	6%	9%
Widowed	2%	3%	2%	4%
<b>Veterans</b>	(N=8,233)	(N=1,970)	(N=6,505)	(N=1,873)
Yes	25%	2%	19%	2%

<sup>a</sup>Racial category responses are slightly different from those published in the 1999 report due to utilization of a different calculation method.

\*\* Statistically significant difference p<.001



## ***Residence Prior to Shelter Entry***

Gender differences were notable with regard to residence prior to entering shelter in both years. In 2000, men were more likely than women to have entered their current shelter from a rented apartment, substance abuse treatment, an owned home, or jail; while women were twice as likely to have doubled up with friends or relatives or to have stayed on the street. Notable differences from the prior year include decreases in the proportion of males entering shelter from another program and females coming from substance abuse treatment<sup>8</sup>, and increases in men renting apartments, owning homes, or being incarcerated prior to entering shelter. Additionally, there was a substantial decrease in women coming from institutional settings (detox., jail, supervised living, hospital, or transitional housing), from 21% in 1999 to 12% in 2000, while the proportion of men identifying these settings as their prior residence remained constant at just under one-quarter.

**Table 7:**  
**Residence of Homeless Men and Women Prior to Entering Shelter**

<b>Prior Residence</b>	<b>Homeless Men 2000 (N=1,490)</b>	<b>Homeless Women 2000 (N=890)</b>	<b>Homeless Men 1999 (N=1,860)</b>	<b>Homeless Women 1999 (N=863)</b>
Other Shelter	25%	27%	41%	27%
Rented Home	22%	17%	16%	15%
Homes of Friends or Relatives	15%	30%	10%	22%
Detox./Substance Abuse Treatment Center	11%	4%	16%	13%
Owned Home	6%	2%	2%	1%
Jail/Prison/Detention Center	6%	2%	3%	1%
Street/Park/Car/Abandoned Building	3%	7%	3%	7%
Supervised Living <sup>a</sup>	3%	3%	2%	3%
Boarding House	3%	2%	2%	1%
Mental Health/Other Hospital	2%	2%	2%	3%
Other	2%	2%	2%	2%
Hotel/Motel	1%	3%	<1%	2%
Transitional Housing	1%	<1%	1%	<1%

<sup>a</sup>Foster home, halfway house, three-quarter house, or nursing home.

<sup>8</sup> Some of the change in those coming from substance abuse treatment may be due to the exclusion of United Homes' Post Detox. transitional program from the 2000 data set.

## *Health Insurance Coverage*

In both years, a higher proportion of homeless men did not have health insurance coverage. This variation increased in 2000, while insurance providers for those with coverage remained relatively constant.

**Table 8:**  
**Health Insurance Coverage of Homeless Men and Women**

<b>Health Insurance</b>	<b>Homeless Men</b>	<b>Homeless Women</b>	<b>Homeless Men</b>	<b>Homeless Women</b>
	<b>2000</b> (N=1,500)	<b>2000</b> (N=837)	<b>1999</b> (N=918)	<b>1999</b> (N=613)
No Health Insurance	37%	22%	31%	22%
Medicaid/Mass Health	49%	65%	52%	62%
Private Plan	6%	6%	6%	6%
Medicare	3%	5%	6%	7%
VA	4%	<1%	4%	<1%
HMO	2%	3%	2%	2%

## *Income at Shelter Entry*

In both years, men were more likely than women to be employed, either exclusively or in conjunction with public assistance. There was an increase in the proportion of women receiving public assistance in 2000. Also in both years, men were more likely to have no income, and the proportion of both genders lacking income markedly decreased in 2000.

**Table 9:**  
**Income by Category of Homeless Men and Women at Shelter Entry<sup>9</sup>**

<b>Income Category</b>	<b>Homeless Men 2000</b> (N=1,508)	<b>Homeless Women 2000</b> (N=824)	<b>Homeless Men 1999</b> (N=1,903)	<b>Homeless Women 1999</b> (N=787)
Employment <sup>a</sup>	33%	19%	29%	16%
Public Assistance <sup>b</sup>	30%	55%	30%	50%
Employment and Public Assistance	3%	2%	2%	3%
No Formal Income	33%	23%	39%	31%
Other <sup>d</sup>	1%	1%	1%	1%

<sup>a</sup>Wages, Earned Income Tax Credit, savings, and investments.

<sup>b</sup>TAFDC, WIC, Food Stamps, SSI/SSDI, workers' compensation, unemployment, refugee assistance, veterans administration disability, general relief, and rent supplements.

<sup>d</sup>Child support/alimony, retirement, veterans pension, other pension, and private disability insurance.

<sup>9</sup> For the analysis in Table 9, each individual providing income information was grouped into one of five income categories. As such, those with multiple sources were counted only once, as compared to Table 10, where more than one income source was reported.

For those reporting income, differences among income sources remained relatively constant. Men were almost twice as likely to report employment income than women, while women were more likely to receive Social Security and Food Stamps. Not surprisingly, gender differences in wage amounts were significant, with working men earning significantly more than women. Also in 2000, men reported receiving higher amounts than women of every source but TAFDC.

**Table 10:  
Income Sources and Amounts of Homeless Men and Women with Reported Income at Shelter Entry**

<b>Income</b>	<b>Homeless Men 2000 (N=1,008)</b>	<b>Homeless Women 2000 (N=633)</b>	<b>Homeless Men 1999 (N=1,257)</b>	<b>Homeless Women 1999 (N=560)</b>
<b><u>Income Source<sup>a</sup></u></b>				
SS/SSI/SSDI	38%	57%	40%	59%
Employment Income	53%	27%	56%	31%
Other Public Benefits <sup>b</sup>	10%	10%	12%	12%
Food Stamps	5%	11%	7%	15%
Other Private Income <sup>c</sup>	2%	1%	<1%	6%
TAFDC	<1%	5%	3%	3%
<b><u>Average Monthly Amount</u></b>				
SS/SSI/SSDI	\$585	\$565	\$578	\$536
Employment Income	\$1,085**	\$762**	\$1,018	\$709
Other Public Benefits <sup>b</sup>	\$411	\$335	\$43	\$295
Food Stamps	\$116	\$109	\$92	\$108
Other Private Income <sup>c</sup>	\$535	\$445	\$305	\$346
TAFDC	\$133	\$385	\$434	\$652

<sup>a</sup>More than one response possible.

<sup>b</sup>Earned Income Tax Credit, refugee assistance, veterans administration disability, veterans pension, workers' compensation, unemployment, general assistance, rent supplements, WIC, and child support/alimony.

<sup>c</sup>Retirement, investments, savings, private disability insurance, other pension

\*\* Statistically significant difference p<.001

## Comparison by Age Group<sup>10</sup>

For this set of comparisons, the data were divided by age category:

- Youth – ages 18-24,
- Adults – ages 25-54, and
- Elderly – 55 and over.

### *Demographic Characteristics*

In both years, youth were more likely to be female than were those over age 25; although this difference decreased somewhat in 2000. In terms of race, in both years more minorities were represented among homeless youth and adults; the elders were more likely to be white. However, in 2000 the proportion of African Americans increased slightly among the elders, while decreasing for adults and youth. There was also a decrease in Latinos across all age groups, with youth being the most likely to identify as Latino in both years.

The findings for education, marital status, and military service reflect expected age differences. Predictably, youth were less educated than their older counterparts in both years. The educational attainment of elders was also lower than that of the adults in both years, although the older cadre was more likely to have attained a college degree or higher. The overall trend of increased educational levels spread across all age groups.

Not surprisingly, in both years, almost all of the youth had never been married, as compared to about three in five adults and one-third of elders. In 2000, elders were less likely to have never married and more likely to be divorced. As expected, in 2000, more than one-third of the elderly reported a history of military service, as compared to one in five adults, and very few youth. Again, the increase in male military service can be explained by the presence of a larger proportion of records from veterans' shelters in the 2000 data set.

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<sup>10</sup> The total numbers of individuals compared in this section (10,205 for 2000, and 8,375 for 1999) are slightly lower than the total numbers of individuals in the data sets due to missing or erroneous age information for 14 records in the 2000 set and 36 1999 records.

**Table 11:**  
**Demographic Characteristics of Homeless Youth, Adults, and Elders**

	Homeless Youth Age 18-24 2000	Homeless Adults Age 25-54 2000	Homeless Elderly Age 55+ 2000	Homeless Youth Age 18-24 1999	Homeless Adults Age 25-54 1999	Homeless Elderly Age 55+ 1999
<b>Gender</b>	(N=1,017)	(N=8,217)	(N=955)	(N=939)	(N=6,703)	(N=703)
Male	71%	82%	80%	66%	79%	80%
Female	29%	18%	20%	34%	21%	20%
<b>Race</b>	(N=865)	(N=7,402)	(N=866)	(N=850) <sup>a</sup>	(N=6,133) <sup>a</sup>	(N=689) <sup>a</sup>
White	54%	59%	69%	52%	55%	68%
African American	22%	26%	20%	23%	27%	18%
Latino	15%	10%	7%	18%	13%	11%
Other	6%	3%	2%	5%	3%	2%
Multiracial	1%	1%	<1%	2%	1%	1%
Native American	1%	1%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%
Asian	1%	1%	1%	1%	<1%	<1%
Alaskan Native	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	0%	0%
Pacific Islander	0%	<1%	0%	0%	<1%	<1%
<b>Education</b>	(N=315)	(N=2,217)	(N=217)	(N=273)	(N=1,817)	(N=192)
Grade school	4%	8%	17%	11%	13%	22%
Some high-school	48%	26%	22%	48%	27%	25%
HS grad./GED	34%	39%	34%	34%	39%	31%
Some college/AA	11%	22%	18%	7%	16%	15%
BS/BA	3%	5%	6%	<1%	4%	6%
Grad. Degree	0%	1%	4%	<1%	2%	2%
<b>Marital Status</b>	(N=791)	(N=6,705)	(N=793)	(N=659)	(N=4,846)	(N=502)
Single/Never Married	94%	59%	33%	95%	61%	39%
Married	3%	8%	7%	3%	7%	7%
Separated	2%	10%	10%	2%	10%	9%
Divorced	1%	23%	41%	<1%	21%	35%
Widowed	0%	2%	8%	0%	2%	9%
<b>Veterans</b>	(N=1,020)	(N=8,229)	(N=956)	(N=943)	(N=6,728)	(N=704)
Yes	3%	21%	36%	2%	15%	31%

<sup>a</sup>Racial category responses are slightly different from those published in the 1999 report due to utilization of a different calculation method.

## Residence Prior to Shelter Entry

Across all age groups, a greater proportion of 2000 individuals were doubled up in 2000, with youth being the most likely to stay with family or friends. The decline in those coming from another shelter was greatest among the elders, while the decrease in those who were in substance abuse treatment prior to entering shelter was greatest among adults and youth.<sup>11</sup> In both years, elders were the most likely to have lost their rented home before accessing shelter. Interestingly, in 2000, elders and adults were more likely to have stayed on the street just prior to entering shelter, while youth were two-thirds as likely to have done so as in 1999. Youth were also twice as likely to come to shelter from supervised living in 2000, and adults were more than twice as likely to have been incarcerated prior to entering shelter. Additionally, there was a substantial decrease in women coming from institutional settings (detox., jail, supervised living, hospital, or transitional housing), from 21% in 1999 to 12% in 2000, while the proportion of men identifying these settings as their prior residence remained constant at just under one-quarter. In both years, adults were the most likely to enter shelter from an institutional setting (detox., jail, supervised living, hospital, or transitional housing), 24% in 1999 and 21% in 2000, and elders were the least likely, 11% in 1999 and 7% in 2000.

**Table 12:**  
**Residence of Homeless Youth, Adults, and Elders Prior to Entering Shelter**

Prior Residence	Homeless Youth	Homeless Adults	Homeless Elderly	Homeless Youth	Homeless Adults	Homeless Elderly
	Age 18-24 2000 (N=262)	Age 25-54 2000 (N=1,906)	Age 55+ 2000 (N=215)	Age 18-24 1999 (N=287)	Age 25-54 1999 (N=2,045)	Age 55+ 1999 (N=209)
Homes of Relative/Friends	43%	18%	16%	29%	13%	11%
Other Shelter	20%	26%	30%	27%	37%	46%
Rented Home	12%	21%	28%	12%	17%	21%
Supervised Living <sup>a</sup>	6%	3%	1%	3%	2%	3%
Detox./Substance Abuse Treatment	4%	10%	3%	10%	17%	3%
Owned Home	3%	5%	6%	2%	2%	1%
Jail/Prison/Detention Center	3%	5%	1%	3%	2%	<1%
Street/Park/Car/Abandoned Building	2%	5%	5%	6%	4%	3%
Mental Health/Other Hospital	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	3%
Other	2%	2%	2%	4%	1%	4%
Boarding House	2%	2%	5%	1%	1%	3%
Hotel/Motel	2%	1%	3%	1%	1%	2%
Transitional Housing	0%	1%	1%	<1%	1%	<1%

<sup>a</sup>Foster home, halfway house, three-quarter house, or nursing home.

<sup>11</sup> Some of the change in those coming from substance abuse treatment may be due to the exclusion of United Homes' Post Detox. transitional program from the 2000 data set.

## Health Insurance Coverage

In both years, health coverage was highest for the elderly, with youth the most likely to be uninsured. While the proportion of youth without insurance fell slightly, there were increases in the proportions of uninsured adults and elders.

**Table 13:**  
**Health Insurance Coverage of Homeless Youth, Adults, and Elders**

<b>Health Insurance</b>	<b>Homeless Youth Age 18-24 2000 (N=269)</b>	<b>Homeless Adults Age 25-54 2000 (N=1,892)</b>	<b>Homeless Elderly Age 55+ 2000 (N=176)</b>	<b>Homeless Youth Age 18-24 1999 (N=181)</b>	<b>Homeless Adults Age 25-54 1999 (N=1,188)</b>	<b>Homeless Elderly Age 55+ 1999 (N=159)</b>
No Health Insurance	38%	32%	21%	40%	27%	19%
Medicaid/Mass Health	50%	55%	53%	50%	57%	53%
Private Plan	8%	5%	7%	7%	6%	6%
Medicare	1%	3%	13%	2%	6%	16%
VA	0%	3%	5%	0%	2%	6%
HMO	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%



## *Income at Shelter Entry*

Of those youth, adults, and elders providing income information, in both years, young people were the most likely to be working, either exclusively or in conjunction with public assistance. The proportion subsisting on public assistance alone increased for adults and youth, while decreasing for elders in 2000, with the greatest change among youth. Youth were the most likely to have no income, although the proportion of youth and adults without income dropped in 2000.

In both years, of the three age groups, elders were the most likely to have income. However, while the proportion of elders lacking income increased slightly from 1999 to 2000, there were substantial decreases in the proportions of youth and adults without an income source.

**Table 14:**  
**Income by Category of Homeless Youth, Adults, and Elders at Shelter Entry<sup>12</sup>**

<b>Income Category</b>	<b>Homeless Youth Age 18-24 2000 (N=209)</b>	<b>Homeless Adults Age 25-54 2000 (N=1,868)</b>	<b>Homeless Elderly Age 55+ 2000 (N=257)</b>	<b>Homeless Youth Age 18-24 1999 (N=270)</b>	<b>Homeless Adults Age 25-54 1999 (N=2,160)</b>	<b>Homeless Elderly Age 55+ 1999 (N=257)</b>
Employment <sup>a</sup>	31%	29%	18%	30%	26%	14%
Public Assistance <sup>b</sup>	29%	37%	60%	22%	34%	63%
Emp. and Public Asst.	3%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%
No Formal Income <sup>c</sup>	37%	31%	18%	47%	37%	16%
Other <sup>d</sup>	0%	1%	3%	0%	1%	5%

<sup>a</sup>Wages, Earned Income Tax Credit, savings, and investments.

<sup>b</sup>TAFDC, WIC, Food Stamps, SSI/SSDI, workers' compensation, unemployment, refugee assistance, veterans administration disability, general relief, and rent supplements.

<sup>c</sup>Includes those receiving income from informal sources as defined above.

<sup>d</sup>Child support/alimony, retirement, veterans pension, other pension, and private disability insurance.

<sup>12</sup> For the analysis in Table 14, each individual providing income information was grouped into one of five income categories. As such, those with multiple sources were counted only once, as compared to Table 15, where more than one income source was reported.

Of those reporting income, as could be expected elders were most likely to report Social Security benefits; however, while the rate of receiving this income decreased across the two years, slightly for adults and, notably, for elders, it increased somewhat for youth. Youth and adults were more likely to work; but there were substantial decreases in the employment rates of both, while that of elders went up slightly. In both years, youth were at least twice as likely to receive Food Stamps as their elders. Although receipt of other public benefits declined for adults and elders, it more than doubled for youth. Income amounts differed most in the area of employment, with adults earning significantly more job-related income than youth and elders in 2000.

**Table 15:  
Income Sources and Amounts of Homeless Youth, Adults, and Elders with Reported Income at Shelter Entry**

<b>Income</b>	<b>Homeless Youth Age 18-24 2000 (N=132)</b>	<b>Homeless Adults Age 25-54 2000 (N=1,297)</b>	<b>Homeless Elderly Age 55+ 2000 (N=212)</b>	<b>Homeless Youth Age 18-24 1999 (N=151)</b>	<b>Homeless Adults Age 25-54 1999 (N=1,443)</b>	<b>Homeless Elderly Age 55+ 1999 (N=219)</b>
<b><u>Income Source<sup>a</sup></u></b>						
Employment Income	55%	45%	24%	62%	52%	22%
SS/SSI/SSDI	30%	43%	65%	26%	44%	72%
Food Stamps	17%	7%	4%	18%	9%	5%
Other Public Benefits <sup>b</sup>	13%	9%	11%	6%	12%	16%
TAFDC	7%	2%	>1%	7%	2%	0%
Other Private Income <sup>c</sup>	0%	1%	7%	7%	3%	3%
<b><u>Ave. Monthly Amount</u></b>						
Employment Income	\$797	\$1,051*	\$844	\$760	\$992	\$876
SS/SSI/SSDI	\$539	\$576	\$584	\$491	\$563	\$586
Food Stamps	\$134	\$110	\$92	\$110	\$97	\$101
Other Public Benefits <sup>b</sup>	\$328	\$388	\$419	\$264	\$330	\$359
TAFDC	\$284	\$411	\$96	\$400	\$328	NA
Other Private Income <sup>c</sup>	NA	\$452	\$570	NA	\$435	\$579

<sup>a</sup>More than one response possible.

<sup>b</sup>Earned Income Tax Credit, refugee assistance, veterans administration disability, veterans pension, workers' compensation, unemployment, general assistance, rent supplements, WIC, and child support/alimony.

<sup>c</sup>Retirement, investments, savings, private disability insurance, and other pension.

\* Statistically significant difference  $p < .01$

## Comparison by Region

For this set of comparisons, the 2000 data were divided by region, comparing those served in greater Boston shelter programs with those served in other parts of the state. Future reports will break these regions down further.

### *Demographic Characteristics*

Gender differences were similar for both groups. In terms of race, individuals served in greater Boston were much more likely to identify as African American and less likely to be Latino than their counterparts across the state. Greater Boston shelter residents were somewhat older than those in other regions, with an average age difference of two years.

Greater Boston individuals were also more highly educated than those in other parts of the state, with 28% having at least some college experience, as compared to less than 21% from outside greater Boston. Interestingly, individuals served at greater Boston shelters were much less likely to be married than their counterparts across the state. The proportion of veterans was similar in both regions.

**Table 16:  
Demographic Characteristics of Homeless Individuals by Region, 2000**

	Homeless Individuals Greater Boston	Homeless Individuals Other Parts of the State
<b>Gender</b>	(N=7,577)	(N=2,626)
Male	81%	79%
Female	19%	21%
<b>Race</b>	(N=6,552)	(N=2,592)
White	59%	61%
African American	28%	16%
Latino	9%	15%
Other	2%	6%
Multiracial	1%	<1%
Native American	1%	1%
Asian	1%	<1%
Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%
<b>Age</b>	(N=7,581)	(N=2,626)
Under 18	<1%	0%
18-24	9%	12%
25-34	21%	22%
35-44	35%	37%
45-54	25%	22%
54-64	7%	6%
65+	2%	2%
<b>Average Age</b>	41**	39**
<b>Education</b>	(N=2,102)	(N=649)
Grade school	8%	8%
Some high-school	28%	28%
HS grad./GED	36%	43%
Some college/AA	21%	17%
BS/BA	5%	3%
Grad. Degree	2%	<1%
<b>Marital Status</b>	(N=5,804)	(N=2,493)
Single/Never Married	62%	54%
Married	20%	27%
Separated	9%	9%
Widowed	7%	8%
Divorced	2%	2%
<b>Veterans</b>	(N=7,591)	(N=2,628)
Yes	21%	20%

\*\* Statistically significant difference p<.001

## *Residence Prior to Shelter Entry*

There were several notable differences in prior residence. Proportionally, individuals in greater Boston were six times as likely to have come from another shelter, while those in other parts of the state were much more likely to have doubled up with family or friends, or to have been in substance abuse treatment before they came to shelter. Individuals from other parts of the state were also twice as likely than their greater Boston counterparts to have owned their own home before entering shelter, while those in greater Boston were more than twice as likely to have come to shelter from the street. Interestingly, individuals from Boston were substantially less likely to come to shelter from an institutional setting (detox., jail, supervised living, hospital, or transitional housing), 18% as compared to 26% of their counterparts across the state.

**Table 17:**  
**Residence of Homeless Individuals Prior to Entering Shelter by Region, 2000**

<b>Prior Residence</b>	<b>Homeless Individuals Greater Boston (N=1,958)</b>	<b>Homeless Individuals Other Parts of the State (N=426)</b>
Other Shelter	30%	5%
Rented Home	20%	22%
Homes of Relative/Friends	19%	31%
Detox/Substance Abuse Center	8%	12%
Street/Park/Car/Abandoned Building	5%	2%
Owned Home	4%	8%
Jail/Prison/Detention Center	4%	6%
Supervised Living <sup>a</sup>	3%	6%
Hotel/Motel	2%	1%
Other	2%	4%
Hospital	2%	1%
Boarding House	2%	3%
Transitional Housing	1%	1%

<sup>a</sup>Foster home, halfway house, three-quarter house, or nursing home.

## *Health Insurance Coverage*

Health coverage was somewhat lower outside of greater Boston.

**Table 18:**  
**Health Insurance Coverage of Homeless Individuals by Region, 2000**

<b>Health Insurance</b>	<b>Homeless Individuals Greater Boston (N=1,675)</b>	<b>Homeless Individuals Other Parts of the State (N=662)</b>
No Health Insurance	30%	34%
Medicaid/Mass Health	55%	54%
Private Plan	7%	2%
Medicare	4%	4%
VA	2%	5%
HMO	2%	1%

## *Income at Shelter Entry*

Of those individuals providing income information, those in greater Boston were somewhat more likely to be working, either exclusively or in conjunction with public assistance. Individuals outside greater Boston were much more likely to subsist just on public assistance. Greater Boston individuals were also substantially more likely to have no income than those from the rest of the state.

**Table 19:**  
**Income by Category of Homeless Individuals at Shelter Entry by Region, 2000<sup>13</sup>**

<b>Income Category</b>	<b>Homeless Individuals Greater Boston (N=1,739)</b>	<b>Homeless Individuals Other Parts of the State (N=596)</b>
Employment <sup>a</sup>	29%	26%
Public Assistance <sup>b</sup>	35%	50%
Employment and Public Assistance	2%	3%
No Formal Income <sup>c</sup>	33%	20%
Other <sup>d</sup>	1%	1%

<sup>a</sup>Wages, Earned Income Tax Credit, savings, and investments.

<sup>b</sup>TAFDC, WIC, Food Stamps, SSI/SSDI, workers' compensation, unemployment, refugee assistance, veterans administration disability, general relief, and rent supplements.

<sup>c</sup>Includes those receiving income from informal sources as defined above.

<sup>d</sup>Child support/alimony, retirement, veterans pension, other pension, and private disability insurance.

<sup>13</sup> For the analysis in Table 19, each individual providing income information was grouped into one of five income categories. As such, those with multiple sources were counted only once, as compared to Table 20, where more than one income source was reported.

In terms of income sources, those in greater Boston were more likely to report employment income, while individuals from outside the area were more likely to receive Social Security and other public benefits. Income amounts differed most for TAFDC and other private income recipients.

**Table 20:  
Income Sources and Amounts of Homeless Individuals with Reported Income at Shelter Entry by Region, 2000**

<b>Income</b>	<b>Homeless Individuals Greater Boston (N=1,164)</b>	<b>Homeless Individuals Other Parts of the State (N=478)</b>
<b><u>Income Source<sup>a</sup></u></b>		
Employment Income	46%	37%
SS/SSI/SSDI	43%	50%
Food Stamps	8%	7%
Other Public Benefits <sup>b</sup>	9%	13%
TAFDC	2%	1%
Other Private Income <sup>c</sup>	2%	1%
<b><u>Average Monthly Amount</u></b>		
Employment Income	\$1,028	\$959
SS/SSI/SSDI	\$566	\$597
Food Stamps	\$110	\$119
Other Public Benefits <sup>b</sup>	\$383	\$394
TAFDC	\$308**	\$624**
Other Private Income <sup>c</sup>	\$536**	\$380**

<sup>a</sup>More than one response possible.

<sup>b</sup>Earned Income Tax Credit, refugee assistance, veterans administration disability, veterans pension, workers' compensation, unemployment, general assistance, and rent supplements.

<sup>c</sup>Retirement, investments, savings, private disability insurance, and other pension.

\*Statistically significant difference p<.05

\*\*Statistically significant difference p<.001





# FAMILIES

## SERVED AT MASSACHUSETTS EMERGENCY HOMELESS SHELTERS

The following describes the information collected by family emergency shelter providers on clients served during 2000 and 1999. An unduplicated count of 1,064 families was obtained for 2000, and an unduplicated count of 1,022 families was gathered for 1999. This section of the report contains data on the 1,064 families served in 2000, and the 1,022 families served in 1999.

	2000	1999
Total Records	1,072	1,038
Unduplicated Count	1,064	1,022

The following shows the shelter utilization patterns of these families. As described below, less than 1% of 2000 shelter users and just over 1% of 1999 families accessed two or more shelter programs.

	2000	1999
Users of One Shelter Program	1,056	1,006
Users of Two Shelter Programs	8	15
Users of Three Shelter Programs	0	1

### ***Demographic Characteristics of Heads of Household***

Not surprisingly, in both years, most Massachusetts homeless families were headed by women.

The population's racial composition varied slightly over the two years. In 2000, homeless families were less likely to identify as African American and white, and more likely to be Latino and other. In both years, homeless family heads were most likely to be African American or Latino.

On average, heads of household were 32 years old in both years. Most were between ages 25 and 44, with a higher proportion under age 24 in 2000.

Educational attainment was similar across the two years. More than half of family heads had not completed high school in both years, while just over 13% had some college education.

In both years, most family heads had never married, however families served in 2000 were less likely to be single and more likely to be separated, widowed, or married. A very small proportion of families in either year had military experience.

**Table 21:**  
**Demographic Characteristics of Heads of Household of Homeless Families**

	Homeless Families 2000	Homeless Families 1999
<b>Gender</b>	(N=1,016)	(N=1,019)
Female	90%	90%
Male	10%	10%
<b>Race</b>	(N=782)	(N=939) <sup>a</sup>
Latino	32%	28%
African American	30%	35%
White	24%	26%
Other	11%	6%
Multiracial	2%	2%
Asian	1%	1%
Native American	<1%	1%
Pacific Islander	<1%	1%
<b>Age</b>	(N=938)	(N=1,014)
Under 18	0%	0%
18-24	24%	20%
25-34	40%	44%
35-44	28%	28%
45-54	6%	7%
55+	1%	1%
<b>Average Age</b>	32	32
<b>Education</b>	(N=616)	(N=470)
Grade School	10%	10%
Some High School	47%	46%
HS grad./GED	31%	30%
Some College/AA	11%	12%
BS/BA	2%	1%
Grad. Degree	<1%	<1%
<b>Marital Status</b>	(N=765)	(N=958)
Single/Never Married	62%	69%
Married	16%	14%
Separated	11%	7%
Widowed	9%	6%
Divorced	3%	4%
<b>Veterans</b>	(N=1,064)	(N=1,022)
Yes	1%	1%

<sup>a</sup>Racial category responses are slightly different from those published in the 1999 report due to utilization of a different calculation method.

## ***Family Members***

Homeless families did not vary according to size across the two years. In both years, about one-third of the families consisted of two members, and just under another third had three members. Just over a third of families consisted of four or more persons. Most family members in both years were children, with a slight decrease in this proportion, and an increase in heads of household in 2000.

**Table 22:  
Homeless Family Sizes**

<b>Family Size</b>	<b>Homeless Families 2000 (N=855)</b>	<b>Homeless Families 1999 (N=897)</b>
Two Family Members	33%	34%
Three Family Members	31%	31%
Four Family Members	20%	19%
Five or More Family Members	16%	16%

**Table 23:  
Family Member Relationships in Homeless Families**

	<b>Homeless Families 2000 (N=855)</b>	<b>Homeless Families 1999 (N=897)</b>
Children	58%	61%
Heads of Household	37%	33%
Spouses	3%	3%
Partner/Boyfriend	1%	1%
Grandchildren	1%	<1%
Niece/Nephew	<1%	1%
Mother/Father-in-law	<1%	<1%
Other Friend	<1%	<1%
Other Relative	<1%	<1%
Siblings	0%	<1%

## Children

In both years, children in homeless families were slightly more likely to be boys than girls. In 2000, children were significantly older, just over 7 years of age on average, as compared to just over 6 in 1999. In 2000, proportionally more children were between ages 9 and 17, and fewer were under 2.

**Table 24:**  
**Characteristics of Children in Homeless Families**

	Children in Homeless Families 2000 (N=1,679)	Children in Homeless Families 1999 (N=1,845)
<b>Gender</b>		
Boys	54%	52%
Girls	46%	48%
<b>Age</b>		
0-2 years	24%	27%
3-5 years	22%	23%
6-8 years	18%	19%
9-11 years	15%	14%
12-14 years	13%	11%
15-17 years	7%	6%
<b>Average Age</b>	7.3**	6.3**

\*\* Statistically significant difference  $p < .001$

## ***Residence Prior to Shelter Entry***

In 2000, families were more likely to have lost their rented home or have doubled up with family or friends prior to entering shelter. From 1999 to 2000, the proportion of families entering one shelter from another decreased by almost half. Homelessness of families who had previously owned their residence also increased.

**Table 25:**  
**Residence of Homeless Families Prior to Entering Shelter**

<b>Prior Residence</b>	<b>Homeless Families</b>	<b>Homeless Families</b>
	<b>2000</b> (N=551)	<b>1999</b> (N=581)
Rented Home	38%	33%
Homes of Relative/Friends	36%	33%
Other Shelter	12%	23%
Owned Home	4%	2%
Hotel/Motel	3%	2%
Other	3%	3%
Transitional Housing	2%	1%
Street/Park/Car/Abandoned Building	1%	1%
Boarding House	1%	<1%
Supervised Living <sup>a</sup>	<1%	1%
Detox/Substance Abuse Center	<1%	<1%
Hospital	<1%	0%
Jail/Prison/Detention Center	0%	<1%

<sup>a</sup>Foster home, halfway house, three-quarter house, or nursing home.

## ***Health Insurance Coverage***

In both years, almost all of the families reported having health insurance. Most were covered by Medicaid/Mass Health in both years.

**Table 26:**  
**Health Insurance Coverage of Homeless Families**

<b>Health Insurance</b>	<b>Homeless Families</b>	<b>Homeless Families</b>
	<b>2000</b> (N=230)	<b>1999</b> (N=211)
No Health Insurance	5%	4%
Medicaid/Mass Health	91%	89%
HMO	3%	4%
Private Plan	1%	3%
Medicare	<1%	<1%
VA	0%	<1%

## *Income at Shelter Entry*<sup>14</sup>

Of those 2000 families providing income information, just over one in five were employed at shelter entry, either exclusively or in conjunction with public assistance. Just under another two-thirds subsisted on public assistance alone, and just over one in ten reported having no formal source of income at shelter entry.

**Table 27:**  
**Income by Category of Homeless Families at Shelter Entry, 2000**<sup>15</sup>

<b>Income Category</b>	<b>Homeless Families</b>
	<b>2000</b> <b>(N=759)</b>
Employment <sup>a</sup>	13%
Public Assistance <sup>b</sup>	65%
Employment and Public Assistance	8%
No Formal Income <sup>c</sup>	12%
Other <sup>d</sup>	2%

<sup>a</sup>Wages, Earned Income Tax Credit, savings, and investments.

<sup>b</sup>TAFDC, WIC, Food Stamps, SSI/SSDI, workers' compensation, unemployment, refugee assistance, veterans administration disability, general relief, and rent supplements.

<sup>c</sup>Includes those receiving income from informal sources as defined above.

<sup>d</sup>Child support/alimony, retirement, veterans pension, other pension, and private disability insurance.

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<sup>14</sup> Data for 1999 are not presented here due to an overrepresentation of the proportion without income. Upon further analysis, it was determined that some of those counted as lacking income actually did not provide income information.

<sup>15</sup> Please note that for the analysis in Table 27, each family providing income information was grouped into one of the five income categories. As such, those with multiple sources were counted only once, as compared to Table 28 where more than one income source was reported.

Of the 2000 families reporting income, about three in five received TAFDC and/or Food Stamps at shelter entry. Just under one-quarter of these families were working when they entered shelter in 2000. Average monthly earnings were just under \$1,000.

**Table 28:**

**Income Sources and Amounts of Homeless Families with Reported Income at Shelter Entry, 2000**

<b>Income</b>	<b>Homeless Families 2000 (N=652)</b>
<b><u>Income Source<sup>a</sup></u></b>	
TAFDC	60%
Food Stamps	59%
Employment Income	24%
SS/SSI/SSDI	22%
WIC	10%
Child Support/Alimony	9%
Other Public Benefits <sup>b</sup>	7%
Other Private Income <sup>c</sup>	1%
<b><u>Average Monthly Amount</u></b>	
TAFDC	\$412
Food Stamps	\$225
Employment Income	\$985
SS/SSI/SSDI	\$605
WIC	\$115
Child Support/Alimony	\$301
Other Public Benefits <sup>b</sup>	\$496
Other Private Income <sup>c</sup>	\$823

<sup>a</sup>More than one response possible.

<sup>b</sup>Earned Income Tax Credit, refugee assistance, veterans administration disability, veterans pension, workers' compensation, unemployment, general assistance, and rent supplements.

<sup>c</sup>Retirement, investments, savings, private disability insurance, and other pension.



## Family Comparison by Region

For this set of comparisons, the 2000 data were divided by region, comparing those served in greater Boston shelter programs with those served in other parts of the state. Future reports will break these regions down further.

### *Demographic Characteristics*

Gender differences were similar for both groups, with a slightly greater proportion of male heads of household outside greater Boston. As with the individual population, families served in greater Boston were much more likely to identify as African American, and less likely to be Latino or white than their counterparts across the state. Ages were similar across the two regions.

Greater Boston families were less educated than those in other parts of the state, with 59% having less than a high-school degree, as compared to 51% from outside greater Boston. As in the individual group, families served at greater Boston shelters were more likely to be single than their counterparts across the state. The proportion of veterans was similar in both regions.

**Table 29:**  
**Demographic Characteristics of Heads of Household of Homeless Families by Region, 2000**

	Homeless Families Greater Boston	Homeless Families Other Parts of the State
<b>Gender</b>	(N=614)	(N=402)
Female	90%	88%
Male	10%	12%
<b>Race</b>	(N=537)	(N=245)
African American	39%	11%
Latino	27%	42%
White	18%	36%
Other	12%	7%
Multiracial	2%	1%
Asian	1%	<1%
Native American	<1%	1%
Pacific Islander	0%	<1%
<b>Age</b>	(N=552)	(N=386)
18-24	25%	23%
25-34	40%	41%
35-44	28%	28%
45-54	6%	7%
55+	1%	1%
<b>Average Age</b>	32	32
<b>Education</b>	(N=298)	(N=150)
Grade school	10%	9%
Some high-school	49%	42%
HS grad./GED	28%	37%
Some college/AA	11%	11%
BS/BA	2%	1%
Grad. Degree	1%	0%
<b>Marital Status</b>	(N=515)	(N=250)
Single/Never Married	64%	56%
Married	15%	18%
Separated	10%	12%
Widowed	7%	12%
Divorced	3%	2%
<b>Veterans</b>	(N=644)	(N=420)
Yes	2%	1%

## *Family Members*

Homeless families from outside greater Boston were somewhat larger than those in the city; 39% of those from other parts of the state had four or more members, as compared to 35% of those in greater Boston.

**Table 30:**  
**Homeless Family Sizes by Region, 2000**

<b>Family Size</b>	<b>Homeless Families Greater Boston (N=571)</b>	<b>Homeless Families Other Parts of the State (N=284)</b>
Two Family Members	34%	31%
Three Family Members	31%	30%
Four Family Members	18%	24%
Five or More Family Members	17%	15%

**Table 31:**  
**Family Member Relationships in Homeless Families by Region, 2000**

	<b>Homeless Families Greater Boston (N=571)</b>	<b>Homeless Families Other Parts of the State (N=284)</b>
Children	60%	54%
Heads of Household	35%	40%
Spouses	3%	3%
Partner/Boyfriend	1%	2%
Grandchildren	1%	<1%
Niece/Nephew	<1%	<1%
Mother/Father-in-law	<1%	0%
Other Friend	<1%	<1%
Other Relative	<1%	0%
Siblings	0%	0%

## Children

Children's genders and ages were similar in both groups, with a larger proportion of boys in greater Boston.

**Table 32:**  
**Characteristics of Children in Homeless Families by Region, 2000**

	Children in Homeless Families Greater Boston (N=1,115)	Children in Homeless Families Other Parts of the State (N=564)
<b>Gender</b>		
Boys	55%	52%
Girls	45%	48%
<b>Age</b>		
0-2 years	23%	25%
3-5 years	23%	22%
6-8 years	19%	17%
9-11 years	15%	16%
12-14 years	13%	12%
15-17 years	7%	8%
<b>Average Age</b>	7.3	7.2

## *Residence Prior to Shelter Entry*

As with the individuals, there were notable differences in prior residence. Greater Boston families were much more likely to have doubled up with family or friends, while those in other parts of the state were much more likely to have rented their own home before they came to shelter. Families from Boston were also more likely to come to shelter from an institutional setting (detox., jail, supervised living, hospital, or transitional housing), 5% as compared to 1% of their counterparts across the state.

**Table 33:**  
**Residence of Homeless Families Prior to Entering Shelter by Region, 2000**

<b>Prior Residence</b>	<b>Homeless Families</b>	
	<b>Greater Boston</b> (N=357)	<b>Other Parts of the State</b> (N=194)
Homes of Relatives/Friends	39%	30%
Rented Home	34%	46%
Other Shelter	12%	12%
Owned Home	4%	3%
Other	4%	2%
Hotel/Motel	3%	5%
Transitional Housing	3%	0%
Street/Park/Car/Abandoned Building	1%	1%
Boarding House	1%	1%
Supervised Living <sup>a</sup>	<1%	0%
Hospital	<1%	0%
Detox/Substance Abuse Center	0%	<1%
Jail/Prison/Detention Center	0%	0%

<sup>a</sup>Foster home, halfway house, three-quarter house, or nursing home.

## *Health Insurance Coverage*

Health coverage was similar across the two regions.

**Table 34:**  
**Health Insurance Coverage of Homeless Families by Region, 2000**

<b>Health Insurance</b>	<b>Homeless Families</b>	
	<b>Greater Boston</b> (N=181)	<b>Other Parts of the State</b> (N=49)
No Health Insurance	5%	4%
Medicaid/Mass Health	91%	90%
HMO	3%	0%
Private Plan	0%	4%
Medicare	0%	2%

## *Income at Shelter Entry*

Of those families providing income information, those in greater Boston were more likely to be working, either exclusively or in conjunction with public assistance. Families outside greater Boston were more likely to subsist on public assistance. Greater Boston families were also less likely to have no income.

**Table 35:**  
**Income by Category of Homeless Families at Shelter Entry by Region, 2000<sup>16</sup>**

<b>Income Category</b>	<b>Homeless Families Greater Boston (N=502)</b>	<b>Homeless Families Other Parts of the State (N=238)</b>
Employment <sup>a</sup>	16%	6%
Public Assistance <sup>b</sup>	64%	69%
Employment and Public Assistance	7%	10%
No Formal Income <sup>c</sup>	11%	15%
Other <sup>d</sup>	2%	1%

<sup>a</sup>Wages, Earned Income Tax Credit, savings, and investments.

<sup>b</sup>TAFDC, WIC, Food Stamps, SSI/SSDI, workers' compensation, unemployment, refugee assistance, veterans administration disability, general relief, and rent supplements.

<sup>c</sup>Includes those receiving income from informal sources as defined above.

<sup>d</sup>Child support/alimony, retirement, veterans pension, other pension, and private disability insurance.

<sup>16</sup> Please note that for the analysis in Table 35, each family providing income information was grouped into one of the five income categories. As such, those with multiple sources were counted only once, as compared to Table 36 where more than one income source was reported.

In terms of income sources, those in greater Boston were much more likely to report employment income, while families from outside the area were much more likely to receive benefits, including TAFDC, Food Stamps, and WIC. In fact, families from other parts of the state were, proportionally, six times as likely as those in greater Boston to receive WIC. Income amounts differed most for earnings and TAFDC. On average, greater Boston workers earned over \$400 more per month than their counterparts across the state.

**Table 36:**  
**Income Sources and Amounts of Homeless Families with Reported Income at Shelter Entry by Region, 2000**

<b>Income</b>	<b>Homeless Families Greater Boston (N=449)</b>	<b>Homeless Families Other Parts of the State (N=203)</b>
<b><u>Income Source<sup>a</sup></u></b>		
TAFDC	57%	67%
Food Stamps	53%	72%
Employment Income	27%	18%
SS/SSI/SSDI	22%	23%
Child Support/Alimony	8%	10%
Other Public Benefits <sup>b</sup>	7%	6%
WIC	4%	24%
Other Private Income <sup>c</sup>	1%	<1%
<b><u>Average Monthly Amount</u></b>		
TAFDC	\$427	\$387
Food Stamps	\$223	\$228
Employment Income	\$1087**	\$664**
SS/SSI/SSDI	\$634	\$551
Child Support/Alimony	\$303	\$299
Other Public Benefits <sup>b</sup>	\$462	\$569
WIC	\$100	\$123
Other Private Income <sup>c</sup>	\$868	\$600

\*\* Statistically significant difference p<.001

<sup>a</sup>More than one response possible.

<sup>b</sup>Earned Income Tax Credit, refugee assistance, veterans administration disability, veterans pension, workers' compensation, unemployment, general assistance, and rent supplements.

<sup>c</sup>Retirement, investments, savings, private disability insurance, and other pension.

## Appendix: Shelters Contributing Records

<b>Shelters Contributing Records for INDIVIDUALS</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>1999</b>
American Red Cross: Barton's Crossing	0%	2%
Boston Rescue Mission	4%	7%
Bristol Lodge	<1%	1%
Cambridge Salvation Army	8%	12%
Central MA Shelter for Homeless Vets	1%	2%
Father Bill's	16%	5%
Franklin County Emergency Shelter	<1%	2%
Jeremiah's Inn	1%	1%
Leeds Veterans Shelter	1%	1%
Long Island Annex	9%	3%
Long Island Shelter	0%	1%
Long Island Woods Mullen	1%	1%
Main Spring House	7%	6%
New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans	12%	5%
NOAH Shelter	4%	5%
Open Pantry Community Services	<1%	<1%
Pine Street Inn Holy Family	1%	1%
Pine Street Inn Men's Inn	4%	2%
Pine Street Inn Women's Inn	8%	8%
Shattuck Shelter	11%	12%
Shelter Inc. Cambridge Shelter	1%	1%
Silver Street Inn	<1%	<1%
United Homes: Post Detox	0	3%
United Homes: Main Shelter	<1%	2%
Worcester PIP	9%	16%
<u>Lynn Emergency Shelter</u>	1%	0%
<b>Total Unduplicated Count</b>	<b>10,219</b>	<b>8,411</b>



<b>Shelters Contributing Records for FAMILIES</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>1999</b>
Bridge House	1%	0%
Casa Nueva Vida	2%	1%
Conway House	5%	4%
Crossroads	1%	1%
Florence House	0%	1%
Friendly House	0%	1%
Hyannis Assistance Corp.	6%	7%
The Inn Between	1%	1%
Jessie's House	3%	1%
Louison House	1%	2%
Mary's House	2%	2%
Metro Boston Housing Partnership	8%	17%
North Shore CAP	3%	3%
Open Pantry Community Services	7%	3%
Our Friends' House	3%	6%
Project Hope	2%	2%
Quincy Commission on the Family	4%	<1%
St. Ambrose House	1%	2%
Sandra's Lodge	17%	12%
Service Net	2%	5%
Shelter Inc.	2%	2%
Sojourner House	3%	2%
SPIN	4%	0%
Stepping Stone	2%	0%
Travelers Aid	15%	19%
Tri City Housing Task Force	5%	6%
<b>Total Unduplicated Count</b>	<b>1064</b>	<b>1022</b>