

**Oxford Street Shelter &
Community Overflow Shelters
Year End Report
FY 2019**



**City of Portland, Maine
Health and Human Services Department
Social Services Division**

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Community Overflow Shelter
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Who We Are and What We Do

The City of Portland's Health and Human Services Department, Social Services Division operates the Oxford Street Shelter, which is the largest emergency shelter in the State of Maine. This low-barrier shelter provides safe, temporary housing for homeless adults. The Shelter offers a variety of support services to assist homeless individuals secure housing, and work towards a self-sufficiency plan.

The shelter has a capacity of one hundred and fifty-four (154) mats. The Oxford Street Shelter also operates an off-site Community Overflow Shelter at the Preble Street Resource Center which has a capacity of seventy-five (75), as needs arise, we have the ability to open a third overflow site or Warming Center.

Hours of operation are 24 hours daily, 7 days a week. Day services operate from 7:00AM -7:00PM and overnight shelter operations begin at 7:00PM and end at 7:00AM. The Community Overflow Shelter is operates from 8:00 PM – 7:00 AM. Day Services are open for those accessing overnight shelter.

Shelter Overflow

The Oxford Street Shelter reaches full capacity on a nightly basis, requiring staff to operate up to two overflow facilities. The Preble Street Resource Center is currently used as an emergency overflow for men when Oxford Street reaches full capacity. Staff from Oxford Street opens the overflow at 8:00 PM and up to seventy-five (75) men sleep on mats until 7:00 AM. When Preble Street is full, the Social Services Division General Assistance (GA) lobby opens and can be utilized for up to sixteen (16) individuals to sleep on mats or as a warming center, seating up to seventy-five (75) individuals.

Oxford Street Shelter services provided on site includes:

- **Outdoor Bathroom Facilities**

In addition to bathroom facilities within the emergency shelter and overflow locations locked outdoor bathrooms were built by the city this year to supplement the existing bathroom facilities. Staff are stationed in the courtyard during hours of bathroom operation to monitor for safety.

(Hours of operation 8am-8pm)

In door bathroom and shower facilities are provided at all sites. Shelter staff provide basic hygiene supplies.

- **Lockers/Storage**

Outside storage was built by the city this year for guests in the immediate physical area outside of the shelter. This provides guests with room to store their belongings. Guests may see staff to sign up for a locker. Staff in the courtyard assist guests with access to the locker area.

(Locker access hours: 5am-6am, 9am-10am, 1pm-2pm,8pm-9pm)

- **Computer Stations**

Two laptops are provided for client use for housing search, employment search and personal resource management.

- **Oxford Street Shelter Park**

Outside the Shelter, paved walkways, benches, picnic tables, and a gazebo have been transformed into a park for homeless adults. Staff is stationed in the park to conduct outreach services to residents. Park curfew is 8:30pm

- **Interpretation Service for Non-English Speaking Clients**

Immediate access to interpreting services over the phone for non-English speaking consumers is available; in-person interpreters can be arranged for as well.

- **Mobile Medical Outreach Program**

The Mobile Medical Outreach Project, which began in May 2017 during the height of Maine's opioid epidemic, allows experienced paramedics to provide low-barrier, on-site medical care to individuals experiencing homelessness. Since its inception, paramedics have provided medical care nearly 600 times to individuals receiving services at the Oxford Street Shelter. In the current year alone, the Project is on track to provide services over 400 times. As a result of this multi-departmental collaboration between Social Services, Public Health, and the Fire Department, emergency calls for service to OSS have decreased.

- **Intake Services**

Human Services Specialists conduct Intake Assessments, develop goals, provide connections with other social service agencies and make referrals to the shelter's housing team.

- **Housing Orientation, Triage and Case Management Referrals**

Housing orientation occurs for all guests each day at 1:00PM seven (7) days a week. Supervisors work with guests to develop a housing plan, begin initial housing work, provide them with resources in the area and complete appropriate referrals to service. Basic questions regarding shelter services are also answered at this time.

- **Housing Placement & Referrals**

Human Service Counselors provide assistance with housing placement, including transitional/supportive housing and subsidized housing. Staff is available six (6) days a week, 7:00am-8:30pm to assist with locating permanent housing.

Housing Services

The Shelter's Support Services component provides a variety of services to assist clients with the transition to permanent housing. Our emphasis has been to quickly connect with individuals entering the Shelter and assess overall needs, making connections to resources quickly, finding suitable and affordable housing and locating gainful employment. Housing Counselors work one-on-one with consumers to co-develop plans for developing housing plans.

Housing counselors work with guests to obtain necessary documentation to apply for housing (birth certificates, state identification, social security cards), assist them in obtaining subsidies, and work with them to locate housing.

Housing counselors call landlords daily to locate vacant rooms, efficiencies or apartments. A weekly housing list of available rentals is put together for guests.

Additionally, our housing team work with guests on how to present to a landlord and how to maintain an apartment once it is secured.

Long Term Stayers (LTS) Initiative

The Oxford Street Shelter Long Term Stayers Initiative (LTSI) is a collaborative of multiple governmental, non-profit, housing and service providers that target chronically homeless (continually homeless for a year or more; or at least 4 periods of homelessness in a 4 year period) or long term homeless (over 180 bed nights in a year) persons, to attempt to end long term homelessness.

- **Long Term Stayer's Community Integration and Landlord Outreach Program**

The Community Integration and Landlord Outreach Program works to support formally Long Term Homeless individuals in maintaining their new housing and prevent returns to the shelter.

The Long Term Stayers Community Integration and Landlord Outreach Program connects with individuals as they are transitioning from homelessness into permanent housing. The Long Term Stayers Community Integration and Landlord Outreach Program teaches housing life skills and connects individuals to new supports so their chances of remaining stably housed increase. The program also connects individuals with lower cost, mainstream resources for health (medical, mental health, and substance use), food, and other benefits to address needs formerly met by costly emergency services such as shelters, soup kitchens, and emergency rooms. The program increases community, landlord, and property management outreach to expand the number of providers who will serve a potential high needs population.

- **Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program**

The goal of the City of Portland Oxford Street Shelter ESG program is to help people who become homeless by quickly moving them into permanent housing (Rapid Re-housing) and to also prevent individuals and families living in the City of Portland from becoming homeless (prevention) in the first place.

In FY 2019, 81 individuals received a wide range of comprehensive housing related services, including: full assessments to identify barriers to housing and housing stability, connection to appropriate mainstream resources in the community, employment and training opportunities, as well as at least three months of follow-up services after housing placement.

Of the 81 enrolled in the program this year: 76 were rapidly re-housed, 5 were prevented from becoming homeless and falling into the shelter system and all received needed case management and referrals.

FY 2018 Program Highlights

During the 2019 fiscal year, the Oxford Street Shelter and its staff strived to meet the needs of our community. This included multiple additions and a major expansion of services in response to existing needs and those created when other providers began to curtail services. These included:

- Addition of a second follow-up Human Services Counselor via CDBG.

Oxford Street Shelter Statistics

In FY 2019, the Shelter staff located **permanent housing for 192 individuals** experiencing homelessness, 165 men and 27 women, (including 10 Veterans and 48 chronically homeless individuals). This intensive outreach approach is very successful in terms of the long-term outcomes, with a 9.3% recidivism rate (returned to Oxford Street Shelter within the same year). Staff works with area landlords, subsidized housing programs, and other area resources on behalf of homeless clients. They assisted clients in making applications for benefits programs, rental applications, employment applications and other important linkages to help move them towards self-sufficiency.

The Oxford Street Shelter served 1,304 men and 446 women for a total of 1,750 individuals (unduplicated numbers) in FY 19. This represents a decrease of 6.9% compared to the 1,872 individuals served last year. The shelter provided 78,438 bed nights in FY 19, which represents an increase of 1.6% in bed usage compared to the 77,207 bed nights provided in FY 18 (attachment #1).

A significant number of individuals were new to the Shelter system this year. Statistics indicate that 79% of consumers (1,375) were considered new individuals or new intakes who had never utilized Oxford Street Shelter prior to this year.

The Chronic homeless population is another statistic tracked at the Oxford Street Shelter. (Chronic homelessness as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) and the McKinney-Vento Act: “an individual or family who has been homeless and living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter continuously for at least 1 year or on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years.”). A total of 492, or 28% of the individuals that stayed at the Oxford Street Shelter were identified as chronically homeless. In FY 2018 a total of 599 individuals or 32% of all individuals that stayed at the Shelter were identified as chronically homeless.

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Chronically Homeless	43.81%	39.62%	35.3%	32%	28%

The average length of stay for men and women at the Oxford Street Shelter are as follows:

FY 2019				
<u>Length of Stay</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
1 – 3 Days	325	123	444	25%
4 – 12 Days	235	91	326	19%
13 – 60 Days	415	132	547	31%
61 - 179 Days	251	80	331	19%
180 – 273 Days	60	6	66	4%
273 - 365 Days	18	6	22	1%
Total	1,312	438	1,750	

FY 2018				
<u>Length of Stay</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
1 – 3 Days	389	147	536	31%
4 – 12 Days	281	94	375	20%
13 – 60 Days	395	123	518	27%
61 - 179 Days	268	91	359	17%
180 – 273 Days	54	6	60	4%
273 - 365 Days	14	2	16	1%
Total	1,402	463	1,865	

The majority of guests have an average length of stay at the Shelter under 60 days. The shelter continues to be a long-term, or permanent, residence for a core group of clients with mental health/substance abuse issues.

Who We Serve

The Oxford Street Shelter serves adult men and women with a variety of underlying issues, which contribute to their homelessness, and each case is unique and complex. The average age of our male and female clients is between 41 and 55 years old.

The average age breakdown at the Oxford Street Shelter indicated the following:

<u>Age Range</u>	<u>FY 18</u>	<u>FY 19</u>
18-24 years old	121 or 6%	110 or 6.29%
25-30 years old	255 or 14%	234 or 13.37%
31-40 years old	545 or 29%	472 or 26.97%
41-55 years old	656 or 35%	615 or 35.14%
55 + years old	295 or 16%	319 or 18.23%

<u>Age Range</u>	<u>FY 19</u>	
	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
18-24 years old	80 or 4.57%	30 or 1.71%
25-30 years old	178 or 10.17%	56 or 3.2%
31-40 years old	342 or 19.54%	130 or 7.43%
41-55 years old	470 or 26.86%	145 or 8.29%
55 + years old	242 or 13.83%	77 or 4.4%

For many individuals who experience persistent mental health and/or substance abuse problems, employment and stable housing are long-term goals that can be worked on with support staff from the Shelter.

Based on self-reporting, 17.09% of shelter clients experience mental illness, 88.23% struggle with substance abuse issues, and 11.54% experience a physical disability or illness. Many of our clients with significant mental health issues deny having any problems and refuse any form of medication or support.

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Clients Indicating Substance Abuse	83.3%	85.2%	86.2%	87.7%	88.23%

The Oxford Street Shelter serves a significant population of homeless veterans. In FY 2019, we served 83 veterans, comprising 4.7% of the total individuals served, totaling 3,590 bed nights. Last year, we served 115 veterans, comprising 6.1% of the total individuals served, totaling 4,826 bed nights.

Veterans	FY 2018	FY 2019
Total # of Individuals	115	83
Total # of Bed Nights	4,826	3,590
Chronically Homeless	40 or 35% of all veterans	35 or 42% of all veterans

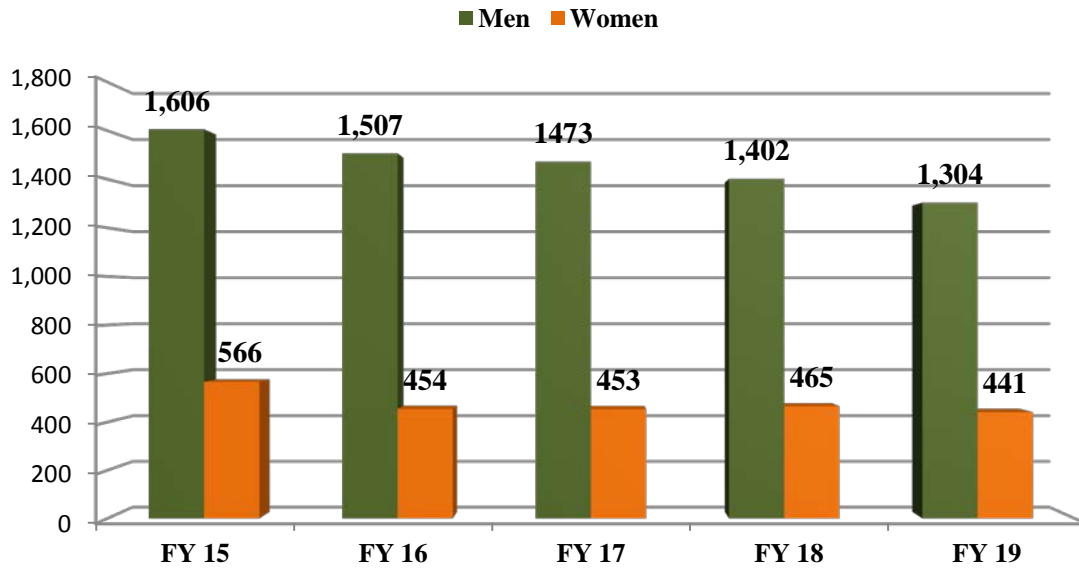
The “Residency Summary” graph, which indicates the last known address of our new clients, shows that 901 individuals, or 67% of the population came from Maine, and 347 individuals, or 25% of the population served came from other states (attachment #3). 340, or 25% are Portland residents, and 561, or 41% come from other Maine cities.

Based on self-reporting, 343 intakes or 25% of all intakes, reported being homeless for the first time in FY 2019 (attachment #5). An Intake is defined as an individual who has not stayed at the Shelter for a period of three (3) months/90-days or longer.



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Number of Individuals Served

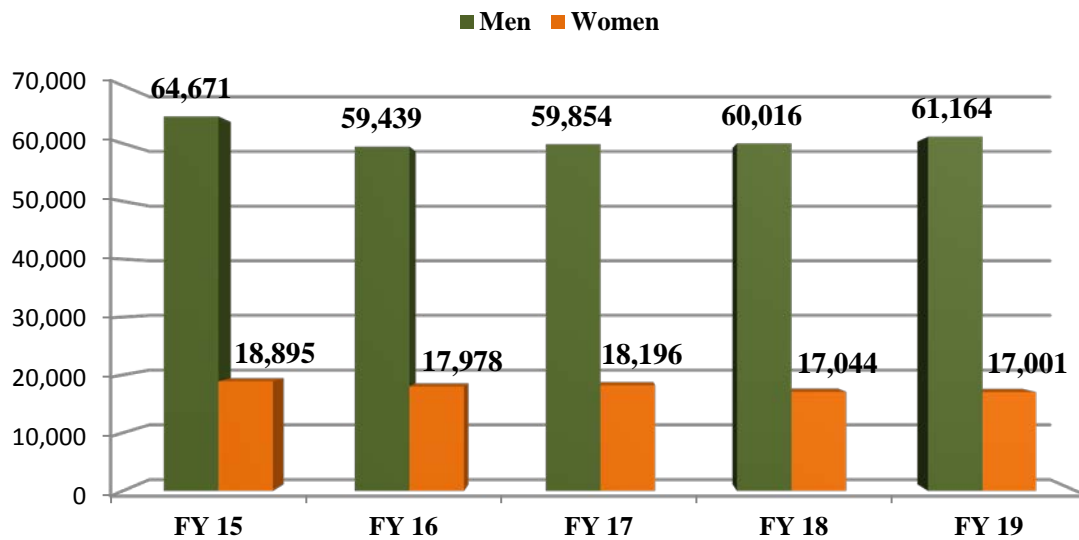


Total Individuals **2,173** **1,961** **1,929** **1,872** **1,750**

The above chart displays the unduplicated number of individuals served.

Total Bed Nights

Total bed nights include overflow beds used at Preble Street and Lancaster Street

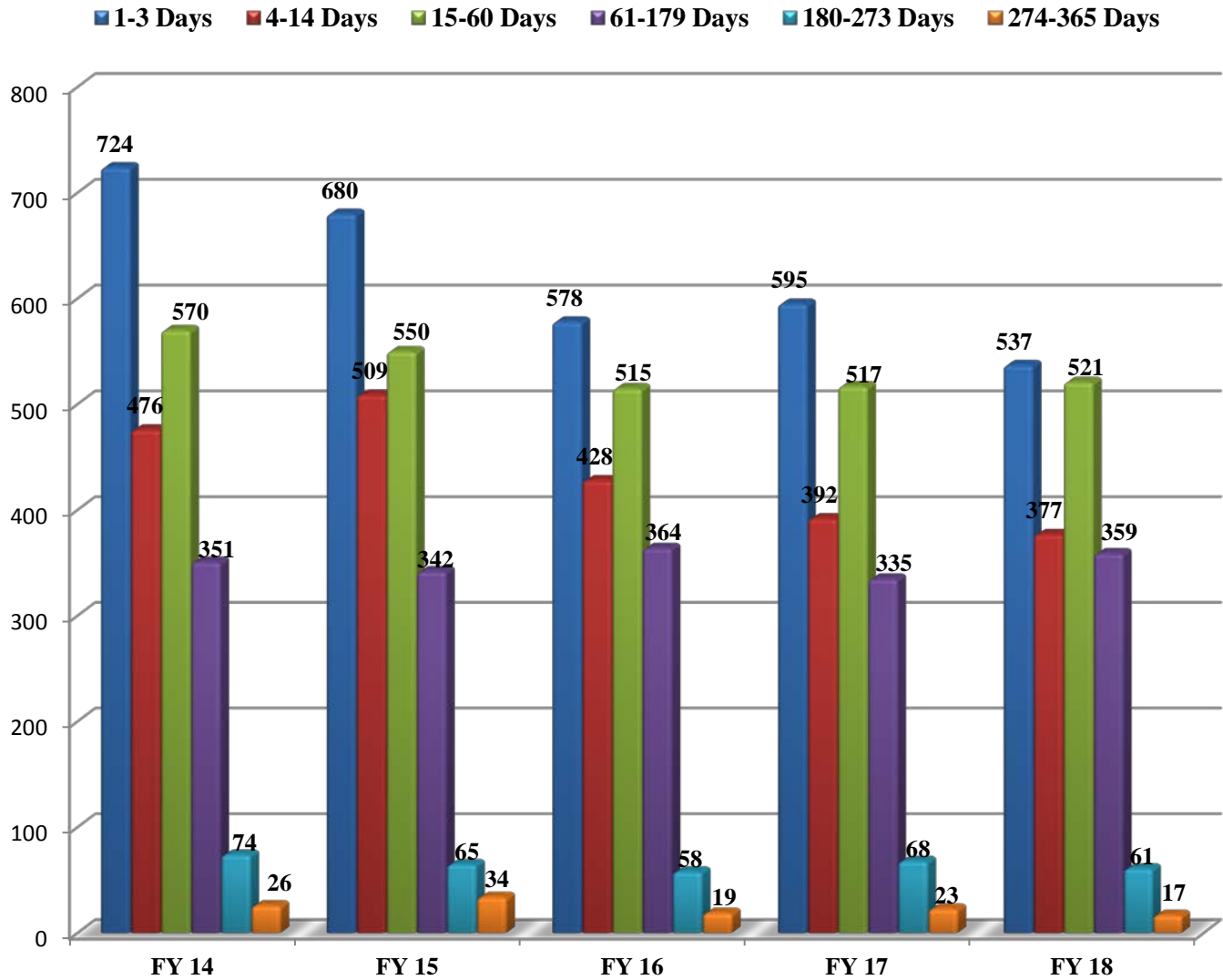


Total Bed Nights **83,681** **77,417** **78,168** **77,207** **78,438**

The above chart displays the total number of bed nights used per fiscal year.

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FIVE YEAR HISTORY

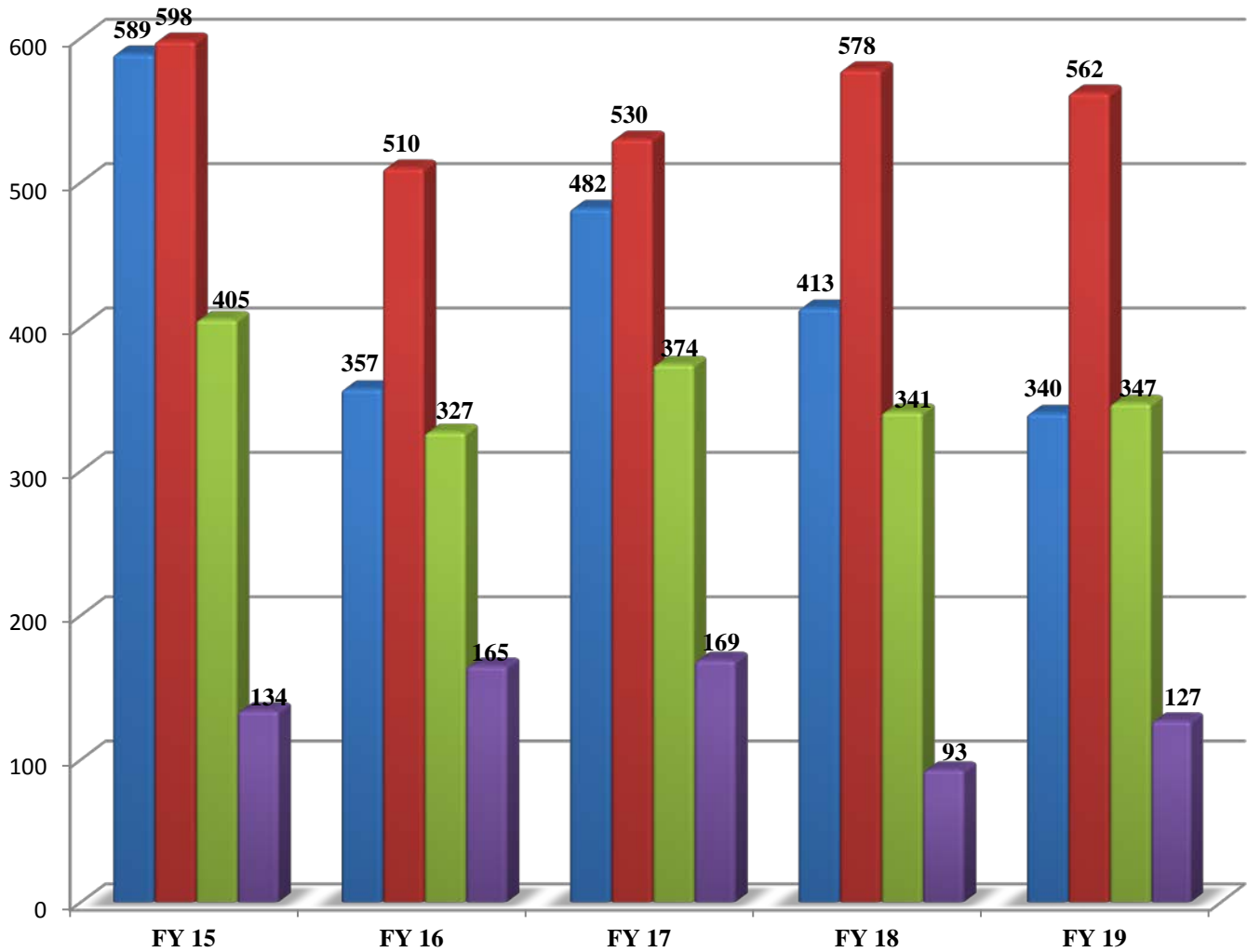


	<u>FY 15</u>	<u>FY 16</u>	<u>FY 17</u>	<u>FY 18</u>	<u>FY 19</u>	<u>+ / - %</u>
Stayed between 1-3 Days	680	578	595	537	444	-17%
Stayed between 4-14 Days	509	428	392	377	326	-14%
Stayed between 15-60 Days	550	515	517	521	547	+5%
Stayed between 61-179 Days	342	364	335	359	331	-8%
Stayed between 180-273 Days	65	58	68	61	66	+8%
Stayed between 274-365 Days	34	19	23	17	22	+29%

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FIVE YEAR HISTORY
INTAKE RESIDENCY STATISTICS

■ Portland ■ Out of Town ■ Out of State ■ Out of Country

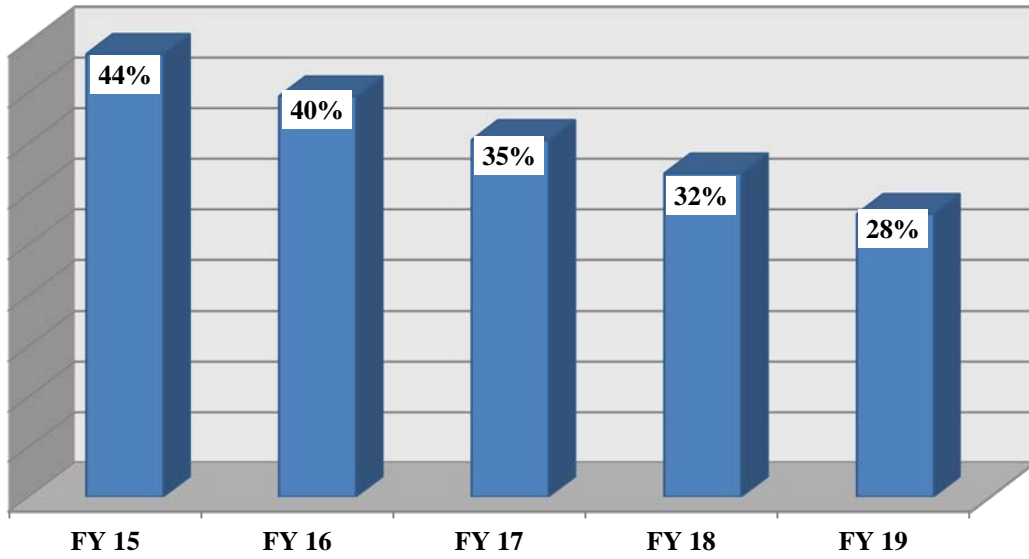


	<u>FY 15</u>	<u>FY 16</u>	<u>FY 17</u>	<u>FY 18</u>	<u>FY 19</u>
Portland	589	357	482	413	340
Out of Town	598	510	530	578	562
Out of State	405	327	374	341	347
Out of Country	134	165	169	93	127

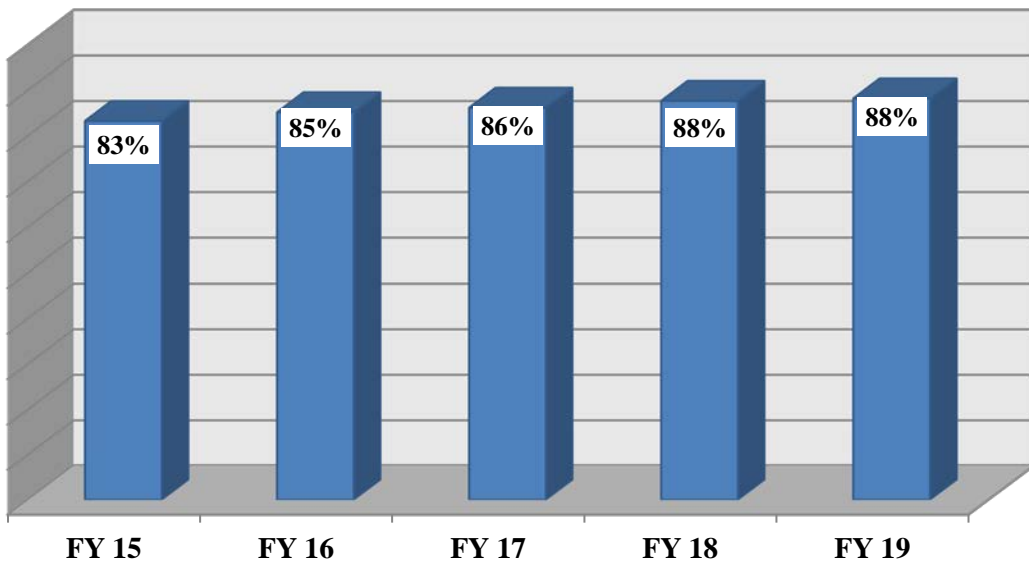
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CHRONICALLY HOMELESS CLIENTS



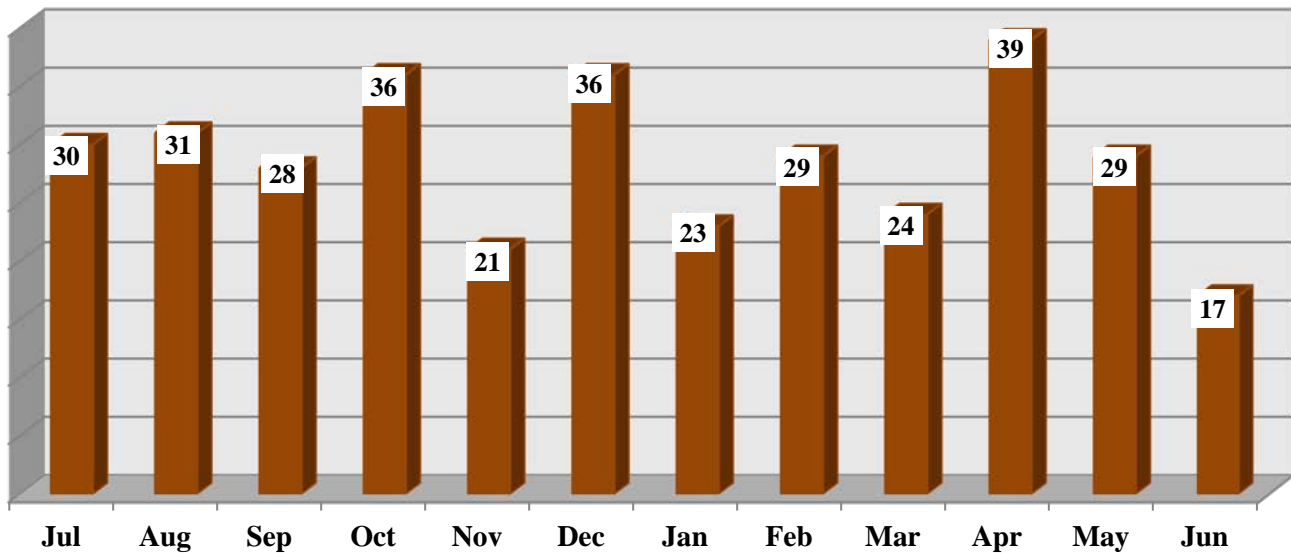
SUBSTANCE USE



Substance use data is based on client self-reporting.

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FIRST TIME HOMELESSNESS
 (Based on Self-Reporting)

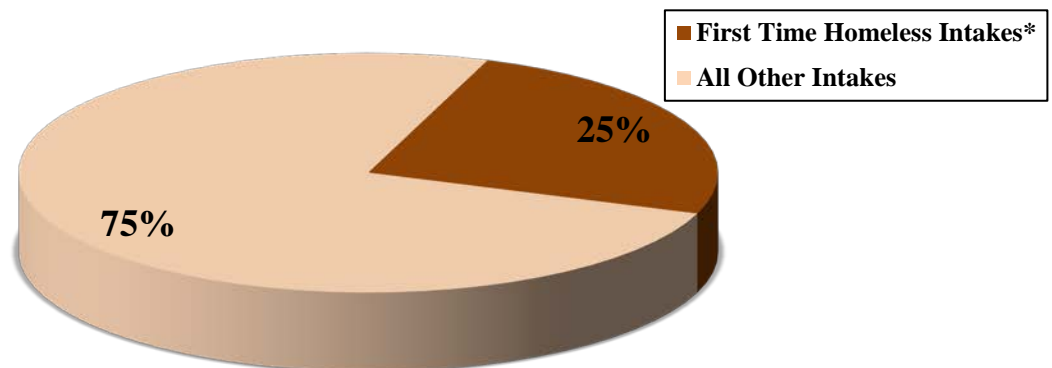


An Intake is defined as an individual that has not stayed at the Shelter for a period of three (3) months/90 days, or longer.

Total First Time Homeless Intakes in FY 19: **343**

Out of a total of **1,375** Intakes

25% of all intakes self-reported being homeless for the first time at the time of intake

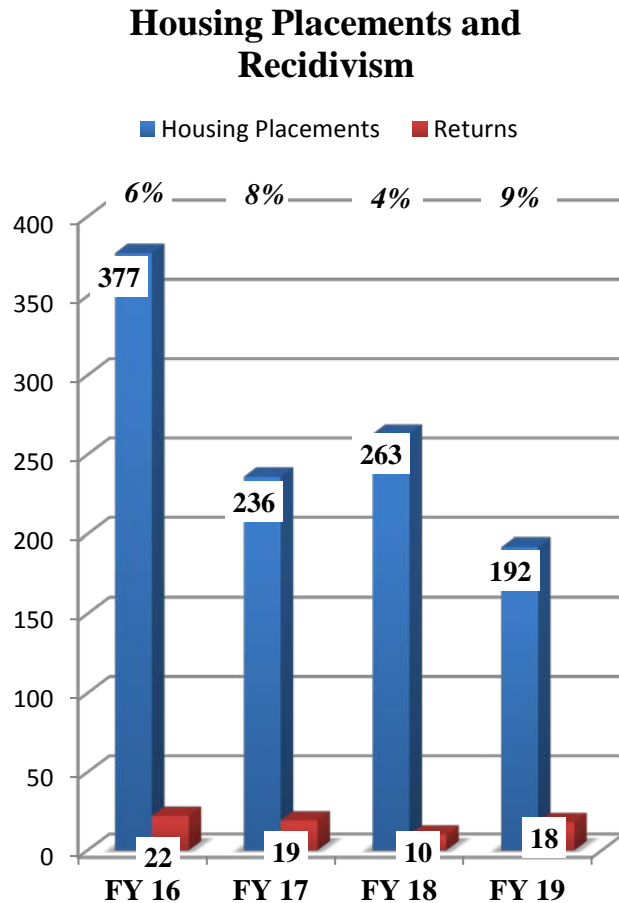


***Based on self-reporting**

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HOUSING PLACEMENTS

	FY 2019	
Permanent, No Housing Subsidy (123)		
Portland	62	32%
Biddeford	5	3%
Cumberland	1	1%
Lewiston	3	2%
South Portland	2	1%
Westbrook	1	1%
Wiscasset	1	1%
Out of State- Bus Ticket	44	23%
Out of State- No Bus Ticket	4	2%
In-State- Bus Ticket	6	3%
Permanent, Housing Subsidy (69)		
BRAP	12	6%
HCV	1	1%
Section 8 (Project-based)	13	7%
Section 8 (Regular)	5	3%
Section 8 (PHA)	1	1%
Shelter Plus Care	28	15%
STEP	3	2%



**Cumulative Bednights Representing
Housing Placements**

