



Fraser, Ltd. Transitional Youth Services

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Stepping Stones Resource Center
Survey Data Report No. 6.10

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Introduction

Fraser, Ltd. by charter is the longest serving non-profit organization in North Dakota. Established as the Florence Crittenton Home in 1893, Fraser, Ltd. continues to meet the needs of children, adolescents and adults. Services and resources offered at Fraser, Ltd. have grown significantly since its inception to include Independent Living Supports, Residential Services, and Day Support Services for people with disabilities; Childcare Services for children who are typically developing and children with special needs; and skills training and basic needs resources for transition age youth (ages 14-26).

Established in September 2009, Stepping Stones Resource Center (SSRC) functions as a safe environment where young people can receive food, hygiene products, and clothing; find healthy and safe ways to spend time off the streets through recreational, social, leisure, and artistic outlets; and utilize desktop computers to search jobs, prepare resumes, take skill training courses, work on homework, etc. SSRC offers therapeutic case management services providing participants with the opportunity to discuss issues that hamper the health and positive outlook he/she experiences while providing a chance to set goals and work towards desired outcomes with a licensed practitioner. In addition to licensed practitioner intervention, SSRC provides supportive peer mentors who assist with locating a GED testing center, college entrance, positive peer interaction, resume development, and other basic independent living skills.

During March 2010 through June 2010, SSRC collected data regarding demographics, housing situations, employment status and educational status of center participants. Using a convenience sampling process, center participants were approached by center staff and asked to complete a survey. Surveys were constructed using an informed consent introduction section that included required content as promoted by University Institutional Review Boards including a researcher contact name and information, the purpose of collecting the data, voluntary participation, the absence of obligation on behalf of the participant, time required to complete the survey, parameters of confidentiality, and what will happen to surveys after being entered into the database. Based on reports from center staff, none of the participants approached to participate declined to do so. The sample included a total $n=63$, 33 of those met Housing and Urban Development's definition of homelessness.

The project was guided by the following research questions:

1. What percentage of the centers population meets Housing and Urban Development's definition of homelessness?
2. What is the employment status of center participants?
3. What are the demographic differences between housed participants and homeless participants?

Demographic

Mean age:	19.1	
White:	28	(46%)
Native American:	19	(31%)
African American:	5	(8%)
Multi-race:	5	(8%)
Hispanic:	4	(7%)

Housing

Biological Parents Home:	13	(21%)
Living Independently:	13	(21%)
Friends Home:	10	(16%)
Homeless Shelter:	9	(14%)
Literally Homeless:	5	(8%)
Hotel / Motel:	4	(6%)
Relatives Home:	4	(6%)
Friends Parents Home:	2	(3%)
Transitional Living Program:	2	(3%)
Foster Home:	1	(2%)

Are you at risk of losing your current living situation?

No:	47	(75%)
Yes:	16	(25%)

Reasons identified that produce and promote risk of losing current living situation (in order of prevalence):

1. Kicked out / pushed out
2. Respondents financial situation
3. Homeowners / renters financial situation
4. End of given time limit
5. Pending eviction
6. Homeowner / renter relocation

Have you ever in your life stayed one or more nights in a homeless shelter?

No:	33	(53%)
Yes:	29	(47%)

Average number of times respondents have moved in the last year: 3.6

Education and Employment

Highest completed education level:

8 th grade:	3
9 th grade:	8
10 th grade:	7
11 th grade:	19
H.S. Diploma:	15
GED:	9

Are you currently employed?

No:	49	(80%)
Part-time:	9	(15%)
Full-time:	3	(5%)

Comparison of Housed and Homeless Respondents		
	Housed Individuals	Homeless Individuals
Total <i>n</i>	30	33
Mean Age	18.8	19.3
Gender	Male: 12 (40%) Female: 18 (60%)	Male: 21 (64%) Female: 12 (36%)
Race	White: 14 (48%) Native American: 10 (35%) African American: 1 (3%) Multi-race: 1 (3%) Hispanic: 3 (10%)	White: 14 (44%) Native American: 9 (28%) African American: 4 (13%) Multi-race: 4 (13%) Hispanic: 1 (3%)
At risk of losing current living situation	Yes: 8 (31%) No: 22 (69%)	Yes: 8 (24%) No: 25 (76%)
One or more nights in a homeless shelter	Yes: 5 (17%) No: 25 (83%)	Yes: 24 (75%) No: 8 (25%)
Average number of moves in the last year	2.9	4.2
Completed education level	8 th grade: 1 (3%) 9 th grade: 4 (13%) 10 th grade: 3 (10%) 11 th grade: 9 (30%) H.S. Diploma: 7 (23%) GED: 6 (20%)	8 th grade: 2 (6%) 9 th grade: 4 (13%) 10 th grade: 5 (16%) 11 th grade: 10 (31%) H.S. Diploma: 8 (25%) GED: 3 (9%)
Average completed grade level	11	10.8
Current Employment	No: 19 (66%) Part-time: 8 (27%) Full-time: 2 (7%)	No: 30 (94%) Part-time: 1 (3%) Full-time: 1 (3%)

Results

This information was collected in Fargo, ND and is not generalizable to other populations other than those who use the services of Stepping Stones Resource Center. In addition, a random survey process was not used limiting the use of inferential statistical analysis. The guiding research questions required basic descriptive statistics to shed light on who was using the center.

Using descriptive statistics, the collected data indicated that the center experiences a 55% rate of homelessness amongst those surveyed. This information was collected by listing multiple housing scenarios and asked participants to choose the one that fit their current living situation. An “other” category was included to catch a situation that was not offered. Of the housing options, “friend’s home”, “friend’s parent’s home”, “Transitional Living Program”, and “Living on the streets (Includes abandon buildings, campgrounds, car, bridges...)” were categories that indicate that the respondent meets Federal guidelines of being homeless. Housing options that indicated that an individual was housed included “biological parent’s home”, “sibling, aunt, uncle, or grandparents home”, “foster home”, “group home”, and “living independently (house, apartment, college dorm...)”.

The question of “Are you currently employed?” was asked on the survey. The “yes” checkbox was followed by “part-time” and “fulltime” options. The total sample population indicated that the center experiences an 80% unemployment rate. When the housed population were separated from the homeless population, the unemployment rate of the housed was 66%, while the unemployment rate of the homeless was 94%. Of those that were employed at the time of the survey, 3 (5%) were employed full-time. The collected data indicated some other differences between housed and homeless individuals. Those differences were in the areas of gender, average times moved within the year, experiences with overnight stays in homeless shelters, and employment rates. The categories relating to age, race, risk of losing current living situation, and completed grade level produced results that were similar between housed and homeless.

Discussion

The survey results produced a better understanding of the background and make-up of the center population. The center staff discussed the need to approach center participants within the context of homeless prevention and homeless intervention. What the center staff had looked at as two different populations became one population with similar needs and barriers. With that, the overwhelming difference between the two groups was employment. The technically housed group’s employment status of 34% would definitely give them an edge on the technically homeless group’s employment status of 6%, highlighting the obvious connection between employment and one’s ability to afford housing.

A majority (64%) of those identified in the homeless category were young men. When this issue was discussed by center staff, areas of mental and emotional development differences between males and females were identified. Other societal factors were in regards to homeless intervention programming structure. Programs serving women tend to emphasize employment

skill development, educational advancement, and an understanding of the influence of trauma. This emphasis is healthy and should be available to all people who desire action. Another area that brought discussion was the center population and the role of parenting. Young women who have children take on the caregiver role and may evaluate the living situation through the scope of consistency and dependability. Young men in today's society may view this life changing event as a choice, and choose the path that requires the least responsibility.

Stepping Stones Resource Center is committed to understanding the target population through surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews. Areas of educational status and barriers, parenting, survival techniques, and the challenges of transitioning from foster care to independent living situations are all areas that the center will be investigating. Understanding who the population is, and what experiences they've had, will produce better homeless prevention and intervention strategies for practitioners engaged in program development.