(Reach out, Engage, Assist, & Count to end Homelessness)

Maryland's First Unaccompanied Homeless Youth & Young Adult Count: Findings from Youth REACH MD Phase 2
May 2016

Prepared by
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for the Maryland Department of Housing & Community Development and
the Youth REACH MD Steering Committee

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Quotes from 2015 Youth REACH MD Survey Respondents are included throughout this report. All statements are quoted verbatim from the surveys and have not been modified.

Note to Readers

Every night in Maryland, thousands of youth and young adults living on their own turn to a friend's couch, a stranger's house, a vacant building, the street, or some other tenuous or unsuitable location for a place to sleep. These are unaccompanied homeless youth - youth or young adults under 25 years old who are not in the care of their parents or guardians and lack access to safe, adequate, and reliable housing.   We know these youth are individuals with their own stories and experiences and that they are not defined by their housing status. This report—and all of the work of Youth REACH MD—is designed to identify the common challenges and barriers that result in youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in order to end youth homelessness. No finding, statement, or analysis in this report should be taken to diminish the importance of the voices of youth and young adults or to minimize the individual experiences, preferences, and vision for the future that each youth and young adult has for themselves.   This report reflects the aggregate findings regarding a diverse population of youth and young adults who were willing share of themselves by participating in this survey, and we are grateful to them for sharing their stories and experiences with us and for helping us to gain new and deeper understanding of what it means to experience homelessness.

Introduction & Purpose

Until recently, unaccompanied homeless youth in Maryland have been largely unknown to policymakers and society at large - an invisible population. This is in part because youth experiencing homelessness generally are indistinguishable in appearance from their housed peers. Many have jobs or are going to school and are eager to improve their situations. These youth generally do not fit the traditional homeless person archetype. Instead, they tend to resemble your typical teenager or young adult. While some may be living in cars, vacant buildings or on the street, many others may opt to couch-surf with friends or relatives. These characteristics make it difficult to count unaccompanied homeless youth and young adults and, consequently, it is difficult to design, fund and implement necessary services and supports. In general, current methods for counting homeless persons are geared more towards counting homeless adults and are ineffective for accurately capturing unaccompanied homeless youth. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) only recently began collecting data on unaccompanied homeless youth, starting with their 2013 Point-in-Time (PIT) count.

In 2013, the Maryland General Assembly demonstrated a strong commitment to better understanding and addressing the needs of unaccompanied homeless youth and young adults in the state through the passage of Senate Bill 764/House Bill 823, which established the Task Force to Study Housing and Supportive Services for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth. The primary objective of the Task Force was to compile information on and identify the unique needs of unaccompanied homeless youth, identify gaps in the programs and resources currently available to meet those needs, and collect and compile data on the unaccompanied homeless youth population in Maryland (Maryland Task Force, 2013). The Task Force issued a series of recommendations in its November 2013 report, one of which was to "obtain accurate, detailed information on the number, characteristics, and needs of unaccompanied homeless youth in Maryland" (Maryland Task Force, 2013, p. 2).

Following the Task Force's report, the General Assembly established the Maryland Unaccompanied Homeless Youth and Young Adult Count Demonstration Project as part of the 2014 legislative session under Chapter 425, Acts of 2014 (House Bill 794). This Demonstration Project became known as Youth REACH MD, the state's first-ever multi-jurisdiction, comprehensive survey and census of youth and young adults who are experiencing homelessness. The enumeration unfolded across eight Maryland jurisdictions over a three week period from September 28, 2015-October 16, 2015, and was preceded by intensive planning activities undertaken by the Youth REACH MD Steering Committee.

This report details the second phase of Youth REACH MD, incorporating the methods used to survey and count unaccompanied homeless youth and the subsequent findings and recommendations. For more details on the history of the project, characteristics of unaccompanied homeless youth based on national research, and the process used to develop the methodology for Youth REACH MD, please see the Phase I Report.[1] Detailed information regarding local implementation, successes and challenges, social marketing and more will be included in the final report and toolkit issued by Youth REACH MD in 2017.

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Methods

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The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) contracted with The Institute for Innovation & Implementation, University of Maryland School of Social Work (The Institute) to serve as the Coordinating Entity for Youth REACH MD, managing the primary activities of the Demonstration Project. Under the guidance of the Steering Committee (see *acknowledgements* for list of Phase 2 members), The Institute coordinated with the six Continuums of Care (CoCs)[2] named in the establishing legislation to serve as the implementing bodies for Youth REACH MD: Anne Arundel/Annapolis, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Prince George's County, the Lower Shore (Somerset, Worcester, and Wicomico Counties), and Washington County (see Figure One for a map of participating jurisdictions). These jurisdictions were selected because they are representative of Maryland's geography (comprising urban, suburban, and rural areas) and because they recorded relatively high rates of unaccompanied homeless students compared to other jurisdictions at the time of the legislation. Each CoC was responsible for directing Youth REACH MD activities in their jurisdictions with technical assistance from the Steering Committee.

> *"Young people like me need more resources to utilize because there aren't enough resources out there, especially if you're homeless. I can't count the times I have been turned away because I didn't qualify or shelters had no room."*

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[1] Available from http://www.youthreachmd.com/resources/ or by e-mailing theinstitute@ssw.umaryland.edu.

[2] A CoC is a planning body comprised of local nonprofit organizations and government entities that coordinates funding & services related to homelessness. They are federally mandated to track and monitor homelessness in their area (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2010).
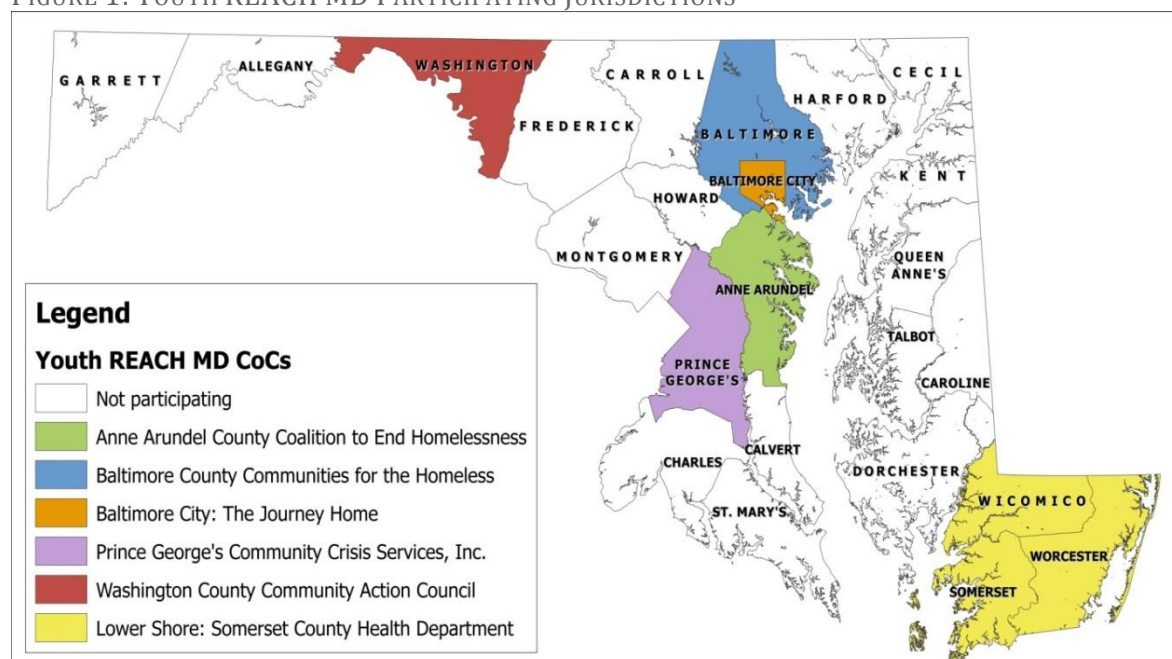
Youth REACH MD was designed to **exceed the scope of a typical youth count.** It was intended to enumerate the size and scope of homelessness among Maryland's youth and young adults and the current support systems available to serve this population, and develop an efficient and consistent mechanism by which the scope of youth and young adult homelessness can be tracked over time. Youth REACH MD was undertaken with an ultimate goal of supporting Maryland to end and prevent homelessness for youth and young adults by 2020, consistent with the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness's goal (see https://www.usich.gov/goals/youth for more information).

Employing the lessons learned and methodology developed in Phase 1, the six CoCs locally planned and implemented Youth REACH MD in their jurisdictions with guidance, technical assistance, and financial support from the Steering Committee, The Institute, and DHCD. These activities took place from February 2015-March 2016. See Table 1 for the full timeline of Phase 2 activities.

TABLE 1: PHASE 2 TIMELINE

Phase 2: Pilot Implementation	Timeline
State Preparation & CoC Engagement	February – May, 2015
Planning & Development	July – August, 2015
Volunteer Recruitment & Provider Preparation	September, 2015
Enumeration	September 28, 2015 – October 16, 2015
Debrief	October – November, 2015
Analysis	November 2015-March 2016

"I'm 23 years old. I really can't get a place because of evictions and it's hard to figure out how to pay that full amount it's way too much for me now that I'm experiencing homelessness."

State Preparation & CoC Engagement

The Steering Committee launched Phase 2 by naming the project, holding a logo competition, and refining the definition of unaccompanied homeless youth. In February 2015, the Steering Committee expanded to include all participating CoCs, and an orientation to the project was facilitated by The Institute and Delegate Mary Washington in April, 2015.   A Kick-Off Summit was held in June 2015 with Steering Committee members, CoC representatives, community partners, and youth and young adults and included an overview of Phase 1 activities and upcoming activities in Phase 2 as well as youth and young adult testimonies, CoC presentations on their preliminary methodology for locally conducting the enumeration, and an introduction to the survey. In addition, toolkits were provided to participants that included a Youth REACH MD timeline, an unaccompanied homeless youth fact sheet, a CoC work plan, key resources, important dates and deliverables, and promising practices from the 9-community federal Youth Count! Initiative.   The survey tool itself was refined during this time period and went through multiple iterations, incorporating feedback from youth, young adults, and Steering Committee members.

Refining the Definition

Establishing a uniform definition of unaccompanied homeless youth was a priority task in the initial months of Phase 2. Youth REACH MD's final definition was derived from the Maryland Task Force to Study Housing & Supportive Services for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth report (2013), which defined these youth and young adults as individuals "between the ages of 14 and 25 years who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence" and who "are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian." Youth REACH MD expanded the age range to include *any* unaccompanied youth or young adult under the age of 25 to align with the definitions used by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development and the U. S. Department of Education.

> **Youth REACH MD Definition of Unaccompanied, Homeless Youth or Young Adult:**
> - Under 25 years old (24 years of age or younger);
> - Not in the physical custody or care of a parent or legal guardian; and,
> - Lacks a fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime residence.

The Youth REACH MD definition of unaccompanied homeless youth is comprised of three specific aspects of current status: 1) Age; 2) Whether unaccompanied; and 3) Housing. Only respondents who satisfied each of these three conditions were counted in the surveys. The definition was purposefully broad to encompass the multitude of scenarios that may indicate a youth is unstably housed or homeless, and to capture those youth that are at-risk of becoming homeless.   To test the reliability of the definition, a series of vignettes was created representing various scenarios that may or may not indicate unaccompanied youth homelessness. The Steering Committee and CoCs were asked to participate in an online survey in which they indicated "yes" or "no" as to whether each vignette met the definition. On average, there was 91% agreement on survey responses, indicating adequate reliability for the definition. Definitional guidance was developed (see Appendix). [3]

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[3] Concern was raised over whether students who were identified by the school system as being in informal kinship care would satisfy the Youth REACH MD definition: "Informal kinship care refers to a living arrangement in which a relative of a child, who is not in the care, custody, or guardianship of the local department of social services, provides for the care and custody of the child due to a serious family hardship. The relative must provide care for the child 24 hours a day, seven days a week" (Maryland State Department of Education, 2013). A subcommittee was formed to study this issue, and decided that youth in this category would *not* be included unequivocally in the enumeration. It is likely that a proportion of youth in informal kinship care do meet the Youth REACH MD criteria, and CoCs were advised to survey these students during the Demonstration to better determine whether they were unaccompanied and homeless.

Social Marketing & Incentives

Youth REACH MD launched a comprehensive social marketing campaign to raise awareness about the project and the issue of unaccompanied youth homelessness; engage volunteers, service providers, policymakers, and other stakeholders; and, connect with unaccompanied homeless youth themselves to increase survey participation. To streamline social marketing efforts, Youth REACH MD contracted with a social marketing firm, SPARKS!, to develop a marketing strategy. In addition, SPARKS! was responsible for launching a social media campaign and for designing marketing materials that were utilized by participating CoCs to promote activities in their areas.

SPARKS! facilitated brand management by designing a look and feel for the project, including creating a set of print and web-formatted materials and developing social media graphics and press releases. The designs for print and web-formatted materials were presented to the Steering Committee for input and were refined over the course of three workgroup meetings. The materials also were shown to youth and young adults participating on local planning workgroups and their feedback was incorporated into the overall design. While some youth were pleased with the design, others indicated that the images were overly negative and not reflective of how the population wishes to be seen by the public. In response, SPARKS! created additional designs with more positive images.

Contracting delays compressed the timeline for the social marketing activities, impacting the ability to tailor the materials to meet local input as well as the ability to generate as much interest across large geographic areas. However, SPARKS! developed a marketing and communications plan and materials to guide the overall marketing efforts of Youth REACH MD, which were able to be adapted by the participating jurisdictions. As part of the social media plan, SPARKS! launched accounts on Facebook and Twitter on which they shared brand content (both program- and issue-specific) and facilitated user-generated content, and revised and managed the Youth REACH MD website. Youth REACH MD was featured by eight print or broadcast media outlets, including the Dan Rodricks Show on WYPR, Sunday Q&A on WBALTV, WMDT 47 TV, the Marc Steiner Show, the Washington Blade, the Dundalk Eagle, 93.1 WPOC, and Z 104.3.

The week prior to the enumeration, CoCs began posting marketing materials at local agencies, service providers, and areas where youth congregate. Posters with Spanish translations were made available at the request of CoCs. Further, CoCs were provided with wallet cards containing Youth REACH MD's website and details of how to participate in the survey.   The Institute purchased pens, t-shirts, and water bottles with the Youth REACH MD name and/or logo to give away to youth and volunteers, and each CoC was provided with 128 backpacks to give to unaccompanied homeless youth participating in the survey.

Local Implementation

Each CoC was responsible for planning survey administration processes in their jurisdictions to include unsheltered and sheltered counts. Some CoCs used a geography-based strategy, some a service-based strategy, and some a combination of the two. Those employing a geography-based strategy targeted specific hotspots or regions for canvassing and relied on the technique of snowballing to spread the word about the counts through word of mouth communication and repeat site visits. Those using a service-based strategy targeted programs, agencies, and businesses known to serve or accommodate homeless youth, including drop-in centers, schools, recreation and teen centers, local departments of social services, transitional housing programs, convenience stores, colleges and universities, and libraries. Rural areas, such as the Lower Shore and Washington

County, relied more heavily on service provider approaches, while urban and suburban regions used geography-based strategies coupled with service-based approaches.

CoCs were provided with grants of $13,500 each to support local implementation. In order to receive these funds, CoCs or their designees were required to contract with the University of Maryland and agree to serve as the local implementing entity for Youth REACH MD. Each CoC decided to utilize the grants differently, depending on the availability of supplemental resources, the CoC's experience in conducting youth counts, and the geographic expanse of the jurisdiction. Table 2 identifies the cost categories that were included in the budget proposals. As noted below, each CoC approached the topic of survey incentives differently, which contributed to the richness of the pilot count. Incentives range from backpacks only to $20. Many of the CoCs experienced contracting delays, which had a particular impact on those CoCs utilizing the funds for staff.

TABLE 2: COC BUDGET ALLOCATIONS

		Annapolis/ Anne Arundel County	Baltimore City[4]	Baltimore County	Prince George's County	Lower Shore[5]	Hagerstown/ Washington County
Staff	Salaried	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
	Non-salaried	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Supplies	Tablets, laptops cellphones	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓
	Training materials	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
	Office supplies	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
	Marketing materials/ Magnet event materials	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Other Expenses	Youth ambassador stipends	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Consultants	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗
	Survey incentives	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
	Other	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓
	Travel	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓

✗=Did not use Youth REACH MD Grant Funds for this purpose
✓=Did use Youth REACH MD Grant Funds for this purpose

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[4] Baltimore City received a $9,600 matching grant from a local nonprofit and $5,000 in-kind funding to support Youth REACH MD implementation in their jurisdiction.
[5] Due to limited capacity, the Lower Shore appropriated the majority of its funds to staffing.

In order to foster knowledge sharing and networking among the CoCs, the Steering Committee facilitated bi-weekly, peer-to-peer virtual meetings. These meetings focused on the status of each CoCs implementation process and any issues they were encountering.

Each CoC was tasked with identifying and recruiting volunteers to participate in their counts. This included identifying recruitment networks, establishing a plan for quality control and monitoring of volunteers, developing volunteer trainings, determining the number of youth or volunteers needed to cover survey routes, and deciding whether to compensate youth for their participation. Most CoCs relied on existing agency staff to help support magnet events, assist with the administration of the survey, and recruit volunteers. Point-in-Time count volunteers and members of partner organizations also were recruited to assist. Some jurisdictions used a youth ambassador approach, in which they recruited youth who were already involved with partner agencies who could then leverage their social networks to reach unaccompanied homeless youth. Each planning group decided their own selection criteria for youth ambassadors and volunteers, and, in general, considered such attributes as familiarity with youth homelessness, the ability to discern homeless youth from non-homeless youth, trustworthiness, and reliability. In some jurisdictions, including Baltimore City, only youth with current or recent experience of homelessness were engaged as ambassadors.

Youth engagement in all phases of Youth REACH MD was imperative its success. Each CoC was expected to engage youth and young adults and participate in the identification of places where youth are likely to congregate, develop marketing materials and strategies, assist in magnet event planning, give advice on the survey design, and act as ambassadors for the project. Youth were also involved in promoting the count in their communities.

The degree to which CoCs engaged youth in the planning and enumeration phases varied by region depending on whether there were pre-existing partnerships or extensive networks of currently and formerly homeless youth and young adults. Baltimore City, for example, had the benefit of leveraging well-established partnerships with the YES Drop-In Center and Baltimore Homeless Youth Initiative to recruit youth who not only had experiences with homelessness but who were committed to helping others in similar circumstances. These youth led efforts to map routes for survey administration and developed scripts to use when approaching homeless youth to discuss the count or administer the survey. Some regions had a more difficult time engaging youth and young adults to participate on local planning teams.

Planning groups also were responsible for developing training processes for volunteers. Local trainings for volunteers and youth ambassadors included (1) the purpose of the count, (2) safety, (3) survey protocol, (4) strategies for asking sensitive questions, (5) location assignments, and (6) how and when survey respondents would receive incentives for participation. Most CoCs planned trainings for 1 - 2 weeks prior to the enumeration and either adapted trainings given previously as part of their PIT counts and/or used a training provided by The Institute. The expedited timeframe for this first pilot count impacted the ability of some CoCs to engage with local university and community college partners as potential volunteers to support the count.

> *"I'm living a really dangerous life in order to survive. I hope that something changes before I get killed. I just want a regular job and I want to go to college one day."*

School Engagement

Local School Systems were engaged early in Phase 2 as part of the local implementation teams. However, in order to administer the survey in schools, approval was needed from the State Superintendent of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). In July 2015, project staff met with MSDE staff and formally requested approval for administration of the survey in the schools. This approval process entailed a review by the Attorney General and a formal memorandum from MSDE to each local school system in the participating jurisdictions.

The vetting of the survey took approximately three months, in part due to concerns regarding parental consent. Ultimately, the decision was made to permit passive consent, meaning all parents within the school district would be notified that the survey was taking place and be provided with a mechanism to opt their child out of participating if they chose to do so. Legal counsel also required that participating youth complete a consent form prior to taking the survey. The Institute drafted a communication plan for schools to use when sharing information about the survey with parents.

Due to the complexity of this process and the fact that this occurred during the lead-up to the new school year, the official memo from the Office of the State Superintendent requesting the participation of local school systems was not disseminated to local superintendents until September 21, 2015. Some local school systems required additional local approval, which contributed to a further delay in implementation. In order to allow additional time for schools to disseminate opt-out notices to parents and prepare their staff, the survey period was extended from one week to three weeks.

Enumeration

The Youth REACH MD enumeration officially kicked off on September 28 and ran through October 16, 2015. The count followed the methodology proposed in Phase 1, which included surveying youth and young adults via:

- **Shelter counts** – youth/young adults who spend the night in a shelter or a transitional housing program during the night(s) of the survey period;
- **Service-Based Counts** – youth/young adults who utilize the services offered by participating providers during the survey period; and,
- **Kick-off/Magnet event(s) and Street Counts** - youth/young adults participating in the kick-off event or magnet events or on the streets during the survey period are surveyed to assess if they meet the definition of "unaccompanied homeless youth."

The survey was available in both paper and online formats. The online version was developed using Qualtrics, a web-based survey tool. The survey also was translated into Spanish; the Spanish-language version was available in paper and online formats. The link to the survey was not broadly advertised and, for the most part, was only available to survey administrators at the CoCs, schools, and service providers. This was done to control for the responses that were received and to ensure that survey respondents received incentives.

The survey took 15- 25 minutes to administer in-person. Youth taking the survey alone online completed the survey in less time, but youth ambassador or volunteer survey administration was preferred in many parts of the state to ensure accuracy. Future revisions to the survey will include a refinement of the stop questions (questions that determined if a young person qualified as an unaccompanied homeless youth), as well as efforts to shorten the survey and simplify survey administration.

Table 3 provides a snapshot of the key elements of each CoC's count. Descriptions of how Youth REACH MD unfolded in each jurisdiction are provided in the appendix.

TABLE 3: COC ENUMERATION COMPONENTS

		Annapolis/ Anne Arundel County	Baltimore City	Baltimore County	Prince George's County	Lower Shore	Hagerstown/ Washington County
Count Method	Geography-based	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
	Service-based	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Volunteers	# of Youth Ambassadors	11	10	2	7	0	25
	# of Volunteers (not incl. YAs)	24	10	33	22	15	20
Survey Implementation	# of Magnet Events	2	1	4	0	1	1
	Survey incentives	$10	$20	$20	$15	Backpacks/ water bottles	$10
	Paper surveys	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Electronic Tablets	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
	Computer-Based	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Data Strategy

In the week that followed the enumeration period, CoCs submitted paper surveys to The Institute for analysis. Paper surveys were entered electronically into Qualtrics and merged with online survey responses. In addition to survey data, state agencies that interact with unaccompanied homeless youth were asked to supply administrative data on any youth who were identified as homeless or unaccompanied in their data systems. These administrative data are not as rich a source of information as the surveys because they have only basic information. Administrative data were requested from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Data also were requested from the Department of Juvenile Services but it was learned that reliable housing data are not collected for this particular population. Administrative data are still being collected and analyzed and will be reported separately in fall 2016.

Prior to the analysis of survey and administrative data, a focus group was conducted by The Institute with unaccompanied homeless youth and young adults and providers. The purpose of this focus group was to determine the constellation of survey responses that would accurately indicate whether a respondent met the definition of unaccompanied homelessness. This input has been incorporated in the reporting of the findings below as has the input of Steering Committee members, CoCs, and the local implementation teams.

Please see the survey in the appendix for the specific wording of the questions.

Results from the Survey

Survey respondents were considered to be an unaccompanied homeless youth if they were under 25 years old, not in the physical custody of their parent or guardian, and did not have a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. There were 1,223 surveys completed during the survey period. Of these surveys, 834 (73%) met the definition for being both unaccompanied *and* under age 25. Only 834 (68%) of the surveys completed met all three aspects of the definition (see Appendix for detailed definition guidance). **The surveys identified a total of 834 unaccompanied homeless youth in Maryland in the 6 CoCs (8 jurisdictions) during a 3 week period** (see Table 4).

TABLE 4: COUNTS OF UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH

Continuum of Care	# of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth identified during Youth REACH MD Survey
Annapolis/Anne Arundel	46
Baltimore City	540
Baltimore County	54
Lower Shore	30
Prince George's County	122
Washington County/Hagerstown	42
Total	**834**

Using only unaccompanied youth with no stable housing (n=834), we looked at sample demographics, reasons for being unaccompanied, housing instability, and various experiences such as parenting, interaction with institutions, income sources and service use. The data presented below are for these 834 youth and young adults (with actual counts varying depending on the number of respondents for each question).[6] Demographics for the sample of unaccompanied unstably housed youth are presented in Table 5. The majority of the sample is over 18 years old but 16% were minors. Forty-four percent (44%) have not completed high school but 10% are either in college or have a college degree. Out of the whole sample, 30% reported being in school and 45% of those without a high school degree reported being enrolled in school.

Survey respondents were predominantly black (74%), followed by white (14%), showing a vast **disparity in racial representation** amongst youth experiencing homelessness. The sample was split evenly between males and females (2% of survey respondents identified as transgender). Of the individuals that responded, 10% identified as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, or Other. This is a significantly smaller proportion of LGBTQ identifying homeless youth than has been found in other similar surveys.[7] **This number almost certainly reflects an under count of the young, unaccompanied,**

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[6] Data are presented for the entire Youth REACH MD population and not broken down by CoC to protect the confidentiality of youth in jurisdictions with lower numbers of respondents. CoC-level data are provided to the CoCs for their use at the local level.

[7] E.g., see Choi, Wilson, Shelton & Gates (2015)

unstably housed LGBTQ population in Maryland, most likely due to limited experience counting the population of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness.

TABLE 5: DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics	Frequency	Percent
Age Categories		
17 and Under	132	16%
18 to 24 Years Old	702	84%
Highest Completed Grade (n=821)		
No Education	9	1%
8th Grade or Less	40	5%
9-11th Grade	314	38%
High School	310	38%
GED	66	8%
Some College	67	8%
College Degree	9	1%
Currently in School (n=819)		
Yes	576	70%
Race (n=806)		
Black/African American	594	74%
White/Caucasian	109	14%
Multiracial	77	10%
Other	13	2%
Native American/American Indian	6	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	7	1%
Hispanic (n=717)	**660**	**92%**
Gender Identity (n=799)		
Male	390	49%
Female	385	48%
Male to Female (Transgender)	15	2%
Prefer Not to Answer	4	1%
Female to Male (Transgender)	3	0%
Other	2	0%
Sexual Orientation (n=802)		
Straight	628	78%
Bisexual	83	10%
Gay	37	5%
Lesbian	29	4%
Prefer Not to Answer	17	2%
Other	8	1%

Table 6 shows the reasons that youth reported they were no longer living with their parent or guardian. The majority of the sample (62%) who responded to this question identified being kicked

out of their parent or guardian's residence.   Another 46% also reported choosing to leave. This indicates that some respondents reported both that they were kicked out and that they chose to leave. This reflects the *complexity of the lived experiences of unaccompanied homeless youth*, particularly as these experiences relate to family relationships. For such youth, understanding their family separation as a choice rather than as rejection by caregivers may be a self-protective perspective that preserves their own sense of agency and self-worth. It is also important to note that a youth who "chooses" to leave home to avoid abuse or some other untenable situation arguably has not made a free and unencumbered choice.

TABLE 6: REASONS FOR NOT LIVING WITH PARENT OR GUARDIAN

Reason	Count (n=778)	Percent*
Kicked out	569	73%
Chose to Leave	384	49%
Released from Jail	46	6%
Guardian was Homeless	48	6%
Guardian Died	38	5%
Other	32	4%

* Does not sum to 100% because multiple categories can be chosen.

Of those that reported being kicked out, the most common reason was conflict with parent or guardians (41%), followed by being unable to return (23%) or being told to leave before the youth turned 18 years old (21%) (see Table 7).

TABLE 7: REASON FOR BEING KICKED OUT

Reason	Count (n=569)	Percent*
Fighting	234	41%
Could not return	132	23%
Told to leave before 18	117	21%
Drugs or Alcohol	82	14%
House too small	60	11%
Other	61	11%
Pregnancy	38	7%
Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity	39	7%
Told to leave after 18	26	5%

* Does not sum to 100% because multiple categories can be chosen.

Of those who reported choosing to leave their guardians' residence, fighting was the most common reason (35%) followed by drug and alcohol use (14%) (See Table 8).   The survey questions do not indicate whether the youth, parent or guardian, or both were abusing alcohol or drugs.

TABLE 8: REASON FOR LEAVING

Reason for Leaving	Count (n=384)	Percent*
Fighting	136	35%
Other	60	16%
Drugs or Alcohol	53	14%
House too small	41	11%
Felt Unsafe	44	11%
Abuse	36	9%
Parent Drug use	35	9%
Pregnancy	27	7%
Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity	19	5%

* Does not sum to 100% because multiple categories can be chosen.

Only 7% of those that were kicked out or chose to leave reported pregnancy as the cause of leaving their guardians' residence. However, many more respondents (34%) reported being a parent. Table 9 shows the number of youth who met the definition for unaccompanied and homeless and who were pregnant and/or parenting. Of the 267 individuals who responded that they were parents, *123 (46%) have custody of their children.* These parents have an average of 1.78 children.

TABLE 9: UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH IDENTIFYING AS PREGNANT AND/OR PARENTING

	Count	Percent*
Have Custody of Children	123	46%
Parent	267	34%
Pregnant	39	5%
	Mean	Standard Deviation
Number of Children	1.78	1.08

*Represents the percent of those who answered the question

> "My mom and dad died years ago. Me and my children have been on our own ever since. My house had lead and my children do too. Don't know where we are going to go due to this lead issue. Please help us with anything possible. Please I don't want me and my children to be homeless. I have a new born child and a nine year old little girl."

Table 10 shows the type of residences where survey respondents slept during the last two months and the night prior to taking the survey. The most common living arrangement was to "double up" with a friend or extended family member (54% during prior 2 months and 37% last night). The second most common place to sleep was outside or in an abandoned building (41% during prior 2 months and 19% last night). Thirty-four percent (34%) of respondents felt unsafe in the place that they stayed on the night before taking the survey (See Table 11). Not surprisingly, frequent moves are the norm in this population with over 50% of respondents reporting 2 or more moves in the last two months (See Table 12).

TABLE 10: REPORTED SLEEPING LOCATION IN PAST 2 MONTHS & LAST NIGHT

Reported Sleeping Location	Stayed Anytime in Past 2 Months (n=834)		Stayed Last Night (n=702)	
	Count	Percent*	Count	Percent*
At the house or apartment of another family member or friend	449	54%	262	37%
Outside in the park, on the street, in a tent, transit station, car, etc. or inside in an abandoned building, squat, porch, basement, hallway, etc.	338	41%	123	18%
In a house or apartment with my immediate family (parent or guardian) that we rent or own.	252	30%	103	15%
At a shelter/motel paid for by a government-funded or non-profit organization	236	28%	113	16%
At the house or apartment of a stranger	218	26%	86	12%
In a transitional housing program or a group home	184	22%	71	10%
At my own apartment or a room I rent	120	14%	39	6%
In a jail or juvenile detention facility	96	12%	14	2%
At the house/apartment of my foster parent	81	10%	14	2%
In campus housing with nowhere to stay during breaks	56	7%	12	2%

* Does not sum to 100% because multiple categories can be chosen.

TABLE 11: SAFETY IN CURRENT LIVING SITUATION

Is it safe where you have been living?	Count	Percent
Yes	531	66%
No	271	34%

"Can you please help me with housing I'm scared of living on the streets with strangers."

TABLE 12: NUMBER OF TIMES MOVED IN PAST 2 MONTHS

Number of Times	Count	Percent
None	124	19%
1 time	152	23%
2-5 times	340	51%
More than 5 times	47	7%

Recognizing that Youth REACH MD is about designing and implementing services to end and prevent homelessness, it was important to identify which systems and institutions had contact with these youth and young adults (See Table 13). Unsurprisingly, many youth reported being in contact with multiple agencies and institutions. More than one-third (39%) reported ever being in jail and 33% (265) reported being involved with juvenile services. Twenty-two percent (22%) of the youth (175) reported being in foster care.   However, the nature, extent, and circumstances of their involvement in foster care were not determined through this survey, including whether all of the youth were in foster care in Maryland or in a different jurisdiction. [See discussion in Appendix regarding foster care services.] Only 15 young adults (2%) reported being in the military.

Similarly, it was important to know whether the youth have a place to get mail services and if they have health insurance, as this will impact the types of assistance and support that can be made available to them and will inform the nature of outreach efforts.   The majority of the youth had mail services (73%) and health insurance (64%).

TABLE 13: SERVICES & AGENCIES

	Count	Percent*
Jail	310	39%
Juvenile Services	265	33%
Foster Care	175	22%
Military	15	2%
Have Mail Services	590	73%
Have Health Insurance	516	64%

* Does not sum to 100% because multiple categories can be chosen.

Table 14 shows the income sources for the survey respondents. The majority (61%) report no income source. Family and friends (25%) and part time employment (22%) are common sources of income. Hustling (21%), exchanging sex for money, rent or necessities (13%), and panhandling (14%) are also common survival strategies. Other means of securing support include asking for help from various sources.

> *"I am really tired of being homeless and without my family and I would do anything to get my life back or start a new good life."*

TABLE 14: SOURCE OF INCOME

Income	Count	Percentage*
No income (n=765)	469	61%
Sources of Income (n=373)		
Money from family members or friends	95	25%
Part-time job and/or temporary job	82	22%
Hustling/selling drugs	79	21%
Money from 'under the table' work	71	19%
Cash assistance from a government-funded program	63	17%
Panhandling/begging on the street	54	14%
Full-time job	47	13%
Exchanging sex for money/rent/etc	50	13%
Social Security/disability payments	33	9%
Unemployment benefits	14	4%
Child support	13	3%

* Does not sum to 100% because multiple categories can be chosen.

Table 15 shows where survey respondents reported seeking help. Overall, 31% report not seeking any services at all. A sizable number of individuals reported seeking housing support, either in the form of shelter (33%) or long term housing (29%). Food stamps were another common source of support for these youth with 25% reporting seeking SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits.

TABLE 15: HELP SOUGHT

Type of Help Sought	Count (n=834)	Percent*
Short-term housing (such as shelter or transitional living program)	278	33%
Did not seek help	260	31%
Long-term housing (such as Section 8 or public housing)	242	29%
Nutritional assistance (such as Food Stamps/SNAP or free meals)	207	25%
Job training, life skills training, and/or career placement	166	20%
Cash assistance (such as Welfare benefits or Social Security Disability benefits)	154	18%
Educational support (such as enrolling in school or GED)	140	17%
Counseling or other mental health care services	126	15%
Health care services, including emergency room services and care to help with	129	15%
Food banks	107	13%
Family support (such as conflict mediation or parenting support)	104	12%
Child care	92	11%
Substance abuse/alcohol treatment program	82	10%
Local police officers	52	6%
Other	29	3%

* Does not sum to 100% because multiple categories can be chosen.

Survey respondents reported a number of barriers to receiving needed support. Table 16 shows that transportation was a major barrier (47%), followed by having to wait too long for benefits (37%), not

qualifying for benefits (25%), not going to the correct place for benefits (24%), and not hearing back about applications (23%).

TABLE 16: BARRIERS TO SEEKING HELP

	Count	Percent*
No transportation	301	46%
Put on waiting list	233	36%
I didn't qualify	156	24%
Sent me somewhere else	150	23%
I didn't hear back	146	22%
I didn't follow through	120	18%
I didn't have necessary documentation	108	17%
I didn't know where to go	102	16%
I didn't feel comfortable/safe	69	11%
I did not want to fill out paperwork	38	6%
Other	41	6%
Language barrier	27	4%

* Does not sum to 100% because multiple categories can be chosen.

A Closer Look: Survey & HMIS Data in Baltimore City

There was wide variation in the number of unaccompanied, unstably housed or homeless youth identified by jurisdictions through the survey process. Notably, Baltimore City and Prince George's County had the largest number of identified individuals and, incidentally, are the two jurisdictions that have previously conducted homeless youth counts. These findings suggest that future iterations of this Youth REACH MD are likely to find larger numbers of qualifying youth with more count experience. Furthermore, this survey appears to identify youth who are less likely to be identified by other administrative data sources.

For this pilot study we used Baltimore City's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data as a point of comparison to the survey data collected in Baltimore City (only Baltimore City had the capacity to respond to this request based on the design of the HMIS and the staffing available). CoCs are required by HUD to input data into HMIS pertaining to individuals accessing CoC programs, including but not limited to HUD-funded emergency shelter and transitional housing programs. HMIS data can be combined with Youth REACH survey data and de-duplicated to identify persons who did not complete the survey but participated in a CoC program and met the definition of "unaccompanied homeless youth" during the survey period.

In response to The Institute's request for HMIS data, Baltimore City was able to provide the full count of individuals under 25 not reporting living with their family (i.e. Self as the Head of Household) that have received services within the city homeless services system. The Baltimore City HMIS system uniquely identified 881 individuals meeting criteria. The Youth REACH MD survey identified 486 unique individuals meeting the criteria. Only 54 individuals were identified by both the City HMIS system and the survey. *The lack of overlap in populations suggests that the population seeking homeless services and the population identified in this survey sample are distinct.* **For Baltimore City 1,421 unique individuals have been identified meeting the criteria of unstably housed or homeless unaccompanied youth.**

Youth REACH MD identified **834 unaccompanied homeless youth in eight jurisdictions in Maryland (increasing to 1,715 when incorporating data from Baltimore City's HMIS).** HUD estimated that there are 481 unaccompanied homeless youth in the entire state based on the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count (Henry, Shivii, deSousa, & Cohen, 2015). Differences between the Youth REACH MD count and the PIT count include the length of the count (more than one week for Youth REACH MD compared to one day for HUD) and scope of definitions of homeless or being unstably housed. Importantly, one key difference is the focus and location of the counts. The focus of Youth REACH MD was exclusively on youth and young adults, whereas the PIT count covers all ages. Our findings suggest that the **existing PIT count data vastly undercount the population** of unaccompanied individuals under 25 years old with unstable housing or who are homeless in Maryland.

There also was a lack of overlap between the population reached through the survey and those who accessed services in Baltimore City. One explanation for this lack of overlap is that many of the youth that meet Youth REACH MD's criteria for "unaccompanied homeless youth" do not identify as homeless and thus may not seek to access the mainstream homeless services system. Other youth may mistrust that system or feel unsafe in it, or may simply be unaware of resources available through the CoC. Youth who are homeless and couch surfing or doubled-up may not be eligible for many HUD-funded programs so are not represented in the data from these services. While 834 (68%) of the 1,223 youth and young adults surveyed met the Youth REACH MD definition of unaccompanied homeless youth, **only 228 (19%) met HUD's more narrow living situation definition[8]** of unaccompanied homeless youth (see Table 17).

TABLE 17: DEFINITION COMPARISON

Continuum of Care	# of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth according to Youth REACH MD definition	# of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth according to HUD definition (living situation)
Annapolis/Anne Arundel	46	4
Baltimore City	540	166
Baltimore County	54	17
Lower Shore	30	7
Prince George's County	122	28
Washington County/Hagerstown	42	6
Total	**834**	**228**

These findings point to the importance of regular and multimodal counts of this population as well as to improvements for future Youth REACH MD counts. Combining administrative data and survey data unquestionably provide a more accurate picture of youth homelessness in Maryland than survey data alone.

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[8] HUD's definition of unaccompanied homeless youth (Category 1) requires that the youth is under 25 years old, not staying with a parent or guardian, and stayed in a shelter, street or other place not meant for human habitation, or is exiting an institution where the youth was a resident for 90 days or less and the youth resided in a shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately prior to entering the institution (HUD, n.d.).

The final report and toolkit from the Youth REACH MD Demonstration Project will identify lessons learned, successes and challenges, and opportunities. Initial lessons learned are being identified by the CoCs and Steering Committee and will be incorporated into planning for a 2016 or 2017 count, including a particular focus on the timing of the count and the ability to stagger different aspects of the count (i.e. shelter count, school-based survey, etc). Additionally, Youth REACH MD will be looking to expand to additional CoCs in the future and, in so doing, will be looking to employ a mentor-community approach in future counts. In particular, jurisdictions with strong youth involvement in the design and implementation of the count will be called upon to support additional jurisdictions to enhance their capacity for youth involvement.

In the next phase of Youth REACH MD, the Steering Committee will continue to convene to refine the methodology of the enumeration and coordinate the implementation of the proposed recommendations. These efforts will include revision of the survey tool and the development of a plan for Youth REACH MD survey replication and expansion. The plan, which will be rooted in implementation science, will incorporate a "phase-in" approach for new jurisdictions and specify onboarding procedures for new jurisdictions. The Steering Committee will also develop toolkits that incorporate best practices based on the experiences of the pilot CoCs and will continue to facilitate peer-to-peer learning among the CoCs as well as the provision of technical support to new sites.

Youth REACH MD's pilot demonstration has afforded Maryland a fundamental understanding of the challenging circumstances of unaccompanied homeless youth in eight of its jurisdictions and will continue to improve in order to end youth homelessness in Maryland.

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Appendices

Defining "Unaccompanied Homeless Youth"

The purpose of this guidance is to orient you to the definition of unaccompanied youth[1] homelessness and to assist Youth REACH MD staff and volunteers in identifying unaccompanied homeless youth and determining their eligibility for the Demonstration Count. This guidance is not inclusive of all scenarios that you may encounter during the Demonstration Count, meaning it is meant to capture the more common examples of unaccompanied youth homelessness. This guidance is meant to be used by planning workgroups to inform their outreach activities. **During the count, the Youth REACH MD survey (not this guidance) will be used to determine whether youth meet the definition for unaccompanied youth homelessness.** Please note that this guidance is solely intended to provide clarification on the definition for the purposes of counting unaccompanied homeless youth, and not to place shame, value-judgements, or any other unwanted attention on youth or their parents or guardians.

Youth REACH MD defines an **"unaccompanied homeless youth"** as a person who is:

1. 24 years of age or younger,
2. not in the physical custody or care of a parent or legal guardian, <u>and</u>
3. lacks a fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime residence.

The definition for unaccompanied homeless youth is comprised of three specific parts: **Part 1)** <u>Age</u>; **Part 2)** <u>Unaccompanied</u>; and **Part 3)** <u>Housing status</u>. Each of these three conditions must be met in order to satisfy the definition. The specific parts are discussed in greater detail below.

PART ONE: A person 24 years of age or younger

There is no lower age limit for this definition. Young adults who are ages 25 years or older should not be counted.

PART TWO: A person who is not in the physical custody or care of a parent or legal guardian

This part is used to define the "unaccompanied" component of the definition. Any youth who is not living in the physical custody of their parents or legal guardians should be considered unaccompanied. The definition for unaccompanied youth homelessness may include youth who are unaccompanied by a parent or legal guardian and who are **"doubled up,"** meaning they are living in a residence with extended family, friends, or with other non-relatives. In order to satisfy the definition, **these youth must still meet Part 3 of the definition: Lacking a fixed, regular, or adequate residence.**

For the school-age population, youth who are doubled-up are often in some form of informal kinship care with a relative because their parent/legal guardian is facing a specific hardship (e.g., loss of housing, economic hardship, incarceration, drug addiction, etc.). **Youth in informal care arrangements should be**

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[1] For the purposes of this guidance, "youth" will be used as a universal term that means any of the following: Child, minor, juvenile, transition-age youth, teens, and young adult.

considered unaccompanied homeless youth unless there is sufficient evidence that they meet Part Three of the definition.

Youth who are pregnant or parenting are considered "unaccompanied" if they are not in the physical custody of their parent/legal guardian. However, a parenting unaccompanied youth's children are not, given that they are in the custody of their parent/legal guardian.

Youth who have been kicked-out by their parent/guardians and are only permitted to return based on some ultimatum or condition (e.g., Must take medications, must stop using drugs, etc.) meet the definition for unaccompanied. The term unaccompanied also applies to youth who are no longer in the care of their parent or guardian by choice.

PART THREE: A person who lacks a fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime residence

This part is used to define the "housing status" component of the definition.

- **"Fixed"** is defined as a residence that is **stationary and not subject to change**.
- **"Regular"** means a dwelling at which a person resides on **a predictable, routine, or consistent basis (i.e., nightly)**.
- **"Adequate"** means that the dwelling provides **safe shelter and meets the physical and psychological needs of the youth**.

Can the youth go to the SAME PLACE (fixed), EVERY NIGHT (regular) to sleep in a SAFE AND SUFFICIENT SPACE (adequate)? If not, then they meet the criteria for part three of the definition.

Youth who are living in emergency shelters, transitional housing, motels, hotels, camping grounds or places not meant for human habitation (the streets, cars, vacant or abandoned properties, parks, etc.) are included in the definition.

Youth who are "**couch-surfing**" are included as well. Couch Surfing is defined as having no other place to stay other than on someone's couch and is designed to indicate someone who is precariously housed and whose only other option is a homeless shelter or sleeping on the street.

Runaway youth (i.e., youth who absent themselves from their home or place of legal residence without the permission of a parent or legal guardian) are included as well, along with youth who spend a significant length of time on the street or in other areas that increase their risk for sexual abuse or exploitation, prostitution, or drug abuse.

The definition includes unaccompanied youth who are at **imminent risk** of losing their primary nighttime residence within 14 days and have no other resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing, as well as youth who have moved multiple times (i.e., at least twice) in the past 60 days and are likely to remain unstable because of special needs or barriers.

Youth who are doubled-up in unsafe living environments and have no other safe alternative living arrangement should be considered unaccompanied homeless youth.

YOUTH REACH MD SURVEY

This survey is being administered by the Youth Count Steering Committee on Homeless and Unaccompanied Youth & this local Continuum of Care so that the state and local providers can better understand the housing and service needs of youth and young adults under the age of 25. Your answer will remain confidential. We greatly appreciate your participation!

Part One: Basic Information & Demographics

1. Have you taken this survey already this week?   O Yes   O No

   If you answered "yes" to Question 1, you do not need to fill out the rest of the survey

2. What is your date of birth? (mm/dd/yyyy)   ____/___/_____

3. What is the first letter of your first name?   ____

4. What is the first letter of your last name?   ____

5. Please select your age category: O 17 or younger   O 18-24   O 25 or older

   If you answered "25 or older," to Question 5, you do not need to fill out the rest of the survey

6. Are you still living with your parent/guardian/foster parent?   O Yes   O No

   If you answered "yes" to Question 6, you do not need to fill out the rest of the survey

7. Where were you born?
   - O In this city/town
   - O Another place in Maryland
   - O Outside of Maryland, but within the United States
   - O Outside of the United States

8. Are you currently in school?   O Yes   O No

9. If yes, are you in:
   - O Middle school   O High school
   - O Trade school   O College
   - O Other, *please describe* _____

10. What is the highest grade or certificate year of school that you have completed? *Please check one.*
    - O No education
    - O 8th grade or less
    - O 9-11th grade
    - O High school diploma
    - O GED
    - O Some college credits
    - O College degree
    - O Post-secondary training

Please continue to Page Two ⟹

Part One: Basic Information & Demographics (Cont'd)

11. What is your race/ethnicity? *Please check all that apply.*	○ Black/African American ○ Native American ○ White ○ Asian/Pacific Islander ○ Multiracial ○ Other *(please specify)*: _____
12. Are you Hispanic or Latino/a?	○ Yes ○ No ○ Don't Know
13. What is your gender identity?	○ Female ○ Male ○ Transgender, FTM ○ Transgender, MTF ○ Other _____ ○ Prefer not to answer
14. What is your sexual orientation? *Check the answer that best describes you.*	○ Straight ○ Gay ○ Lesbian ○ Bisexual ○ Other _____ ○ Prefer not to answer
15. Are you pregnant?	○ Yes ○ No ○ Not applicable
16. Do you have children?	○ Yes ○ No
17. If yes, *how many children?* _____ Do they live with you? ○ Yes ○ No	
18. Have you ever served in the military? ○ Yes ○ No	
19. Have you ever been in foster care? ○ Yes ○ No	
20. If yes, did you receive independent living services? ○ Yes ○ No	
21. Have you ever lived in a group home? ○ Yes ○ No ○ Don't know	
22. Have you ever lived in a residential (e.g., psychiatric or mental health) program? ○ Yes ○ No ○ Don't know	
23. Have you ever stayed overnight or longer in juvenile detention a secure facility or residential program for young people as a result of criminal behavior or police involvement? ○ Yes ○ No	
24. Have you ever stayed overnight or longer in an adult jail or prison? ○ Yes ○ No	
25. Do you have a place to get your mail? ○ Yes ○ No	
26. Do you have health insurance? ○ Yes ○ No	

Part Two: Housing Status

27. How many times have you moved in the past two months? _____	

28. How long have you been staying at the place you stayed last night?
- ○ 1-6 days
- ○ At least 1 week, but less than 2 weeks
- ○ At least 2 weeks, but less than 1 month
- ○ 1-6 months
- ○ More than 6 months
- ○ I am no longer there. Where are you now: _____

29. How long do you think you could sleep there without being asked to leave?
- ○ For the next week
- ○ For the next month
- ○ Indefinitely
- ○ For the next two weeks
- ○ I am no longer there

30. Is it safe where you have been living?   ○ Yes   ○ No

31. Are you currently staying in the city/town where you are taking this survey?   ○ Yes   ○ No

32. If so, for how long have you stayed/lived here?
- ○ Fewer than 6 months
- ○ 6-12 months
- ○ More than 12 months

33. If not, where are you staying now (city/town)? _____

34. Please check where you stayed last night and the 60 days prior to that.

	Check only one	Check all that apply	
	Last night	In the last two weeks	In the last two months
In a house or apartment with my immediate family (parent or guardian) that we rent or own.	○	○	○
At the house or apartment of another family member or friend	○	○	○
At the house or apartment of a stranger	○	○	○
At the house/apartment of my foster parent	○	○	○
At my own apartment or a room I rent	○	○	○
At a shelter/motel paid for by a government-funded or non-profit organization	○	○	○
In a transitional housing program	○	○	○
In a group home	○	○	○
Outside in the park, on the street, in a tent, transit station, car, etc.	○	○	○
Inside in an abandoned building, squat, porch, basement, hallway, etc.	○	○	○
In a treatment or medical facility (such as a hospital, detox)	○	○	○
In a jail or juvenile detention facility	○	○	○
In campus housing with nowhere to stay during breaks	○	○	○
Other (please specify)_____	○	○	○

Part Two: Housing Status (Cont'd)

35. How old were you when you first left home and were on your own? _____ years old

36. Have your parents/guardians ever experienced homelessness? ○ Yes ○ No ○ I don't know

37. Do you have friends who currently are experiencing homelessness? ○ Yes ○ No ○ I don't know

38. What are the reasons you are not living with a parent/guardian/foster parent? *Please check all that apply.*

○ I was kicked out by my parent/guardian/foster parent. Why were you kicked out? (Please *check all that apply.*)	○ I was fighting with my parent/guardian/foster parent ○ I left home and could not return ○ My parent/guardian/foster parent told me to leave before I turned 18 ○ My parent/guardian/foster parent told me to leave after I turned 18 ○ I was/am pregnant or got someone pregnant ○ My sexual orientation and/or gender identity ○ My use of drugs or alcohol ○ My house was too small for everyone to live there ○ Other:_____
○ I chose to no longer live with my parent/guardian/foster parent. Why did you choose to leave? (*Please check all that apply*).	○ I was fighting with my parent/guardian/foster parent ○ I was/am pregnant or got someone pregnant ○ My sexual orientation and/or gender identity ○ My use of drugs or alcohol ○ My house was too small for everyone to live there ○ My parent/guardian/foster parent or another household member was abusive (sexually, physically, or emotionally) or neglected me ○ My parent/guardian/foster parent abused drugs or alcohol ○ I did not feel safe because of violence or unsafe activities in my house ○ Other:_____

○ I was released from jail or a detention facility and did not have a home to return

○ My parent/guardian/foster parent was experiencing homelessness and/or my family lost its housing

○ My parent/guardian/foster parent died/passed away

○ Other:_____

Part Three: Access to Services

39. In the last year, have you tried to get help from any of the following services/programs? *Please check all that apply.*
    - ○ I haven't tried to access help

Service Program	I tried to get help	Was help received, and if so how helpful was				
		1 = Not helpful at all 2 = Slightly helpful 3 = Somewhat helpful 4 = Very Helpful 5 = Extremely Helpful				
Short-term housing (such as shelter or transitional living program)	○	1	2	3	4	5
Long-term housing (such as Section 8 or public housing)	○	1	2	3	4	5
Educational support (such as enrolling in school or GED)	○	1	2	3	4	5
Job training, life skills training, and/or career placement	○	1	2	3	4	5
Health care services, including emergency room services and care to help with health conditions/disabilities	○	1	2	3	4	5
Family support (such as conflict mediation or parenting support)	○	1	2	3	4	5
Child care	○	1	2	3	4	5
Nutritional assistance (such as Food Stamps/SNAP or free meals)	○	1	2	3	4	5
Cash assistance (such as Welfare benefits or Social Security Disability benefits)	○	1	2	3	4	5
Counseling or other mental health care services	○	1	2	3	4	5
Substance abuse/alcohol treatment program	○	1	2	3	4	5
Food banks	○	1	2	3	4	5
Local police officers	○	1	2	3	4	5
Other _____	○	1	2	3	4	5

40. Remembering instances where you did not get the help you needed, what were the main reasons? *Please check all that apply.*

   - ○ No transportation
   - ○ Sent me somewhere else
   - ○ Language barrier
   - ○ Put on waiting list
   - ○ I did not want to fill out paperwork
   - ○ I didn't have necessary documentation
   - ○ I didn't hear back
   - ○ I didn't know where to go
   - ○ I didn't qualify
   - ○ I didn't feel comfortable/safe
   - ○ I didn't follow through

Part Four: Income

41. Do you have a personal source of income?	○ Yes	○ No

42. If yes, what are your sources of income? *Please check all that apply and tell us which is your primary source of income.*

Sources of Income	I get income from this source	This is my primary source
Full-time job	○	○
Part-time job and/or temporary job	○	○
Money from 'under the table' work	○	○
Cash assistance from a government-funded program (federal/state/local)	○	○
Social Security/disability payments	○	○
Unemployment benefits	○	○
Hustling/selling drugs	○	○
Exchanging sex for money/rent/etc.	○	○
Panhandling/begging on the street	○	○
Child support	○	○
Money from family members or friends	○	○
Other, please specify _____	○	○

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey! Is there anything you would like to share to help us better serve you and other young people like you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

STOP *Please hand in your survey* **STOP**

What date was the survey taken? (mm/dd/yyyy)____/___/_____	
In what zip code was this survey taken? _____	
What modality was the survey taken?	○ Youth took the survey in paper and pencil ○ The survey was read to the youth and the youth took the survey on a laptop or tablet

Appendix 3: Local Implementation Strategies

Anne Arundel County

Anne Arundel County employed both a geography-based strategy (e.g., street outreach to hot spots) and a service based strategy (e.g., shelters, provider agencies, schools) when conducting their enumeration. Hot spots were identified using school system data, which determined the location of school-aged unaccompanied homeless youth. Older homeless youth were identified through targeted providers and word of mouth on the street. Two magnet events were held, one at a library and one at a local restaurant. Youth also were surveyed in high schools by Pupil Personnel Workers. [9] Electronic devices were used to administer the survey and the online version of the survey was advertised broadly. In addition, $10 in survey incentives was provided to each youth that participated in the survey.

Two staff persons took on the primary responsibilities for recruitment of youth, survey administration, marketing and technical expertise. One staff member, an intake manager at a local shelter and leader for the county's Point in Time Count, organized the week of the survey administration, conducted street outreach to those living in the woods, tents, vacant buildings, etc., and communicated with the participating Pupil Personnel Workers. A total of seven youth participated in Anne Arundel's planning phase and 11 youth participated in the implementation phase. Volunteers were recruited by presenting at meetings and inviting people from targeted providers or organizations to volunteer. They recruited a total of 24 volunteers to assist in the implementation of the count.

Baltimore City

Baltimore City used a comprehensive geography-based approach coupled with magnet events and school and service provider outreach. They employed four lead youth ambassadors who were heavily involved in throughout the planning and implementation process. Youth ambassadors attended bi-monthly committee planning meetings, which turned into weekly meetings as the count approached and during its implementation. The youth ambassadors were critical voices in creating the Baltimore City marketing materials and helped identify hot spots and the ideal times to conduct street outreach. They also helped recruit and train other youth to administer surveys during the street count and promoted the count in the preceding weeks by talking to peers on the streets and handing out Youth REACH MD wallet cards, which listed pertinent details about the count. Youth ambassadors were compensated a living wage for their participation in the count.

The city was divided into specific regions for canvassing and ten youth surveyors broke into teams of at least two to survey the hot spots identified during the planning phase. Surveys were administered in the morning, early afternoon, and evening. They tried to visit each hot spot multiple times more than once and at different times of day to capture the most youth possible. Youth ambassadors took a hands-on approach to administering the surveys by casually striking up conversations with youth they identified as fitting the target population. The youth ambassadors were highly effective, much more so than their adult counterparts, at recruiting participants for the survey.

The extended three-week timeframe for the count enabled the Baltimore City group to refine their original list of hot spots and make course corrections as needed. Each youth ambassador worked about 80 hours over the course of the project. In addition to street outreach, homeless youth were

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[9] Pupil personnel workers are specialists trained to assess student needs, serve as student advocates, and act as a motivating force in removing barriers to student achievement. They also serve as a referral source to outside agencies.

surveyed at multiple provider locations, such as the Geraldine Youth Family Life Center Youth Center and the YES Drop-In Center. Full-time professional staff provided in-kind support and supervised youth ambassadors. Baltimore City's planning team regularly consisted of 14 members, including youth ambassadors, volunteers, and community partners, with some additional volunteers recruited to help with magnet events.

Baltimore City kicked off their enumeration by surveying at Project Homeless Connect, Baltimore City's annual homeless resource day, where they collected 70 surveys in a single day. They planned to hold two additional magnet events, which were planned by the Baltimore City Youth Commission; however, one was canceled due to inclement weather and the other was moved from an outdoor park to inside. The event at City Hall included food, drinks, giveaways, and entertainment. Due to the weather, location of the event at City Hall, and insufficient marketing, the event was sparsely attended by the target population of unaccompanied homeless youth. In addition to magnet events, street outreach, and service providers, surveys were administered in three schools in the region by Baltimore City school staff.

As a survey incentive, the Baltimore City group provided $20 gift cards to youth who took the survey during the street counts and at select service provider locations. Tablets were used to administer the online version of the survey at the magnet events and at provider locations; however, they were not permitted to be used during street outreach. Some provider sites offered computer access for youth to take the online version of the survey, which was helpful when lack of staff capacity limited in-person survey administration. While the online version offered convenience, youth ambassadors favored the paper format and found it to be the more practical option for collecting surveys and accurate information.

Baltimore County
Baltimore County relied heavily on a school-based and magnet event approach, with some street and homeless service provider outreach. The local planning workgroup identified four hot spots in which the count would take place: 1) Essex, 2) Landsdown, 3) Woodlawn, and 4) Dundalk. These areas were chosen based on high numbers of homeless youth in area schools. A magnet event was scheduled in each of those areas and included food, giveaways, and entertainment. In order to publicize the magnet events, Baltimore County planned to task local Pupil Personnel Workers with identifying unaccompanied homeless students and asking them to start word of mouth campaigns. However, the delay in the approval process for schools' participation prevented school staff from publicizing the count ahead of the magnet events. Consequently, there was no turnout at any of the magnet events. Baltimore County ultimately surveyed their largest proportion of youth in schools after approval was granted. A street-outreach team also conducted surveys in the identified hot spots, however this proved difficult due to the geographical nature of the county. Finally, unaccompanied homeless youth were identified in each of the county's shelters and surveys were completed.

In total, approximately 35 volunteers were recruited for Baltimore County's enumeration, including youth/young adults. An entire class of youth from a local college participated in the count, as well as members of the Baltimore County Homeless Roundtable, Baltimore County Communities for the Homeless, and local government staff. Baltimore County distributed $20 survey incentives to participants surveyed outside of county schools. Tablets were not used to administer the survey; however some schools used computers for ease of use.

Prince George's County

Prince George's County was the only jurisdiction that did not hold magnet events, instead focusing resources on a geography and service-based strategy. They retained outreach team leaders to provide leadership on five outreach teams. The team leaders worked with the county's homeless youth coordinator on planning, implementation, and follow-up of the count. They also helped recruit, orient, and supervise outreach teams, and assist with data collection, transmission and integrity. In addition, seven youth/young adult ambassadors were recruited to participate with the local planning workgroup and assist with implementation of the count. In sum, 11 volunteers/staff participated in planning activities and 29 participated in the implementation.

Participation incentives in the form of fast food or retail gift cards in the amount of $15 were provided to youth who completed the survey. Prince George's County employed an innovative and effective method to identify hot spots for street outreach, in which they created a map of known locations in the community that serve youth 24 hours a day, such as fast food restaurants and convenience stores. In addition, staff were able to foster a relationship with the Director of Commuter Services at Bowie State University, who allowed survey administrators to set up a table at the college throughout the enumeration. Prince George's county also surveyed youth at local high schools, and developed relationships with the county's parks and recreation department and library system to identify additional youth to participate in the survey.

Lower Shore

Given the rural nature of the Lower Shore, their count relied more heavily on schools and service providers than street outreach. Shelters do not serve unaccompanied youth under the age of 18, but have recently noticed an increase in the number of unaccompanied youth ages 18 to 24. The local planning workgroup identified schools as the primary touch point for the population. They invited representatives from local Boards of Education, LDSS, health departments, Local Management Boards, and a formerly homeless individual to participate in planning activities and partnered with all the shelters within the CoC, holding monthly meetings starting in May. There are no programs or providers that specifically serve unaccompanied youth in the tri-county region, and consequently the CoC was not able to locate any youth to assist with the planning or implementation phase of the count. As many youth obtain seasonal employment in the resort area of Ocean City, many still had housing in the early fall.

In total, 15 staff and volunteers participated in the Lower Shore's enumeration. Prior to the enumeration, the CoC participated in a community fair at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, a tri-county event, in order to advertise the count and try to engage youth to participate. In addition, volunteers set up tables with information and incentives in public places. The Lower Shore advertised locations of where the survey was being administered via local newspapers.

Both Wicomico and Somerset's school boards administered the survey to students; however Worcester County declined to participate in the enumeration. The delay in receiving state-level approval for the survey to be administered in the schools led to a low number of students completing them. The Lower Shore did not offer monetary or gift card incentives as they were prohibited by state regulations, instead choosing to give out the Youth REACH MD backpacks and water bottles, which were very well received by participants. For the most part, counts were conducted during normal business hours of agencies serving this population. The majority of the

surveys were obtained in written form, but some agencies offered computers so that the surveys could be completed in private through the online version.

Washington County

Washington County comprises a large, mostly rural area and used a geography-based and service-based strategy when conducting the enumeration. However, there was difficulty in securing sufficient staff and volunteers to conduct widespread street outreach. Instead, survey activities were largely focused in Hagerstown. One large magnet event was held at a community center (where the majority of surveys were collected) and additional mini-magnet events were held at shelters, libraries, and high schools. Free giveaways and services were provided to attendees, and they were generally well-received by youth and young adults.

Youth were also surveyed at school; however, counselors and intervention staff only completed surveys with students that were already identified as homeless and were not able to locate additional unaccompanied homeless students. Surveys were administered from 7am - 8pm. Staff administered surveys in both the paper format and using tablets. Youth who participated in the survey were given $10 gift cards.

In total, Washington County recruited 20 staff and volunteers and an additional 25 youth and young adults to take part in enumeration activities. Eight staff and volunteers regularly participated in local planning team meetings. Community members volunteered to administer surveys after learning about the initiative from partners and youth were recruited by the Homeless Coordinator with Washington County Public Schools. Youth helped identify hot spots and provided valuable insight into locating youth. In addition, they were instrumental in advertising the magnet event by handing out flyers at places where youth gather.

Appendix 4: Foster Care in Maryland

Recognizing that a proportion of youth identified as having been in foster care, the following information is provided to describe how Maryland supports foster youth to prevent homelessness after they have exited from the child welfare system.

Maryland's Department of Human Resources (child welfare agency) has a policy that all transitional aged youth (14-21) are aware of aftercare services available to them upon exiting from foster care at or between ages 18 to 21 through their local Department of Social Services. Aftercare services are available on a voluntary basis to youth 18 to 21 years old who were in out-of-home placement on their 18th birthday and exited care after their 18th birthday. Youth are not eligible if they left foster care prior to their 18th birthday, unless they left foster care after age 16 under the permanency plan of Custody and Guardianship or Adoption; they also are not eligible after they reach age 21.

Aftercare services are designed to support former foster care youth ages 18 to 21 years old in their effort to achieve self-sufficiency. There are two types of aftercare services: Independent Living Aftercare services and Enhanced aftercare voluntary placement services.   The goals of Independent living aftercare services are to provide financial assistance to purchase goods and services; temporarily assist with room, board, and utilities; counseling; employment assistance; educational assistance; medical assistance; and other appropriate services to assist with self-sufficiency. Each local Department of Social Services (LDSS) allows Maryland's former foster youth to re-enter out-of-home placement/foster care through the signing of a voluntary placement agreement. Enhanced Aftercare Voluntary Placement Agreement Services provide services to former foster youth that exited Maryland DHR foster care after age 18. Youth in enhanced aftercare are eligible for all services provided to youth in out-of-home placement including placement with a licensed child care provider.

Maryland youth in foster care are informed of aftercare services through their annual (for ages 14-16) and semi-annual (for ages 17-21) transitional family involvement meeting, annual notifications of benefits, and media outlet such as the MDConnectMYLIFE.org website and social media web pages. The Annual Notice of Benefits brochure is provided to all youth who are at least 13 years old in an Out-of-Home/foster care Placement regardless of permanency plan goal(s) or living arrangement type. This includes youth under a Voluntary Placement Agreement. This brochure is distributed to the youth at their Permanency Planning or Review Hearing so that all youth ages 13-21 in out-of-home placement have information about benefits they may be eligible to receive upon leaving out-of-home placement, including tuition assistance, health care, housing, job training and internship opportunities, and rights and procedures for re-entering foster care.

The MDConnectMYLIFE website (http://mdconnectmylife.org/) was developed for Maryland's youth in foster care as a way to ensure that youth can access to information about statewide services, initiatives, resources, and events. The youth-friendly website connects its users to the individuals that youth will need to speak with if they have any questions about the information they have read or wanted to access the services offered. The website also has resources for alumni of foster care and connects to many public state agency's website for additional resources and information.

For more information about Maryland's Ready by 21 Initiative or other efforts to support youth to transition successfully to adulthood, please visit: http://dhr.maryland.gov/blog/

For information about Thrive@25, Maryland's federal grant to end and prevent homelessness among youth with child welfare histories, please visit www.thrive25md.org.

www.youthreachmd.com