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July 26, 2016

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
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From: Sachi A. Hamai
Chief Executive Officer

RESPONSE TO THE MAY 24, 2016 BOARD MOTION DIRECTING THE CEO TO PREPARE A REPORT ON COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH HOMELESS CHILDREN (AGENDA ITEM 27-A).

On May 24, 2016, the Board passed a motion directing the Chief Executive Office (CEO) to work with the departments of Public Social Services (DPSS) and Children and Family Services (DCFS), as well as, the Health Agency, Probation, Sheriff, and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), to examine the economic costs of homeless children in the County and develop a plan, within 60 days, for providing ongoing resources to house homeless children. This memo is a formal response to the motion, and requests additional time to complete the analyses and planning needed to be fully responsive to the Board's directions.

The attached document is a research plan and timetable prepared jointly by the CEO's Research and Evaluation Services unit (RES) and DPSS. The plan estimates that a report capturing the full breadth of services, programs and their associated costs will require twelve months to complete. Recommendations for the most effective use of County resources in the effort to house homeless children would be included with the report and informed by its findings.

A Plan Informed by Exploratory Analysis

The attached research plan includes results of analyses, conducted at the direction of DPSS, which examine parents who began receiving benefits through the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program in 2012. These recipients are

analyzed in their use of services across DPSS and five additional County agencies over a five-year period, 2010-2014, which includes time before and after they initiated receipt of CalWORKs assistance in 2012. Limited information on the children attached to these parents is also provided.

A Distinct Subpopulation Within the More General Homeless Population

The CalWORKs analyses include comparisons between homeless and non-homeless parents, as well as, between homeless parents and homeless single adults. These comparative analyses produce a number of findings that inform the research plan for the forthcoming report on costs related to homeless children and families. In both their demographic compositions and their patterns of service use, homeless single adults and homeless parents are comparatively distinct subpopulations within the County's larger homeless population:

- The distribution of men and women in the homeless CalWORKs study population, (roughly 72 percent female and 28 percent male), is virtually the reverse of a study population of homeless single adults RES built for a previous cost report (approximately 31 percent female, 69 percent male). The homeless CalWORKs study group is also younger, more Latino, less African-American, and less White than the homeless single adult population;

- Also by comparison with the single adult study population, although the analyses are not based on a standardized year, a significantly smaller proportion of the homeless CalWORKs study population used County services in 2012, the most comparable year in which they were observed. Whereas more than half the single adult population used services across six County agencies in fiscal year (FY) 2014-15, less than 14 percent of the homeless CalWORKs population used County services across six agencies in 2012;

- However, while homeless parents are generally less frequent users of County services than homeless single adults, RES's analysis shows that, by comparison with parents in the larger CalWORKs study population who were not homeless, a considerably larger proportion of homeless parents used health-related services, both in the year (2012) they were identified by DPSS as being homeless and over the five-year period of observation; and

- RES additionally conducted a series of longitudinal examinations that control for different DCFS case start dates. These analyses show that DCFS cases involving homeless parents took an average of four months longer to resolve cases involving parents in the CalWORKs study population who were not homeless (21 months versus 17 months).

Implications for the Forthcoming Report

The CalWORKs analyses included with the research plan are especially valuable in suggesting the range of potential effects the demographic differences between homeless family members and homeless single adults are likely to have on the observed patterns of family service use, as well as, on the service delivery systems through which this utilization takes place. To a certain degree, differences in these areas will differentiate the data sources required to capture the service episodes and the expenditures attached to them.

The Time Needed to Produce a Rigorous Cost Report

Taken together with RES's previous report on homeless single adults, the forthcoming report on children and families will offer policymakers and program administrators a broad understanding of the fiscal significance of the homeless crisis. The analyses required to produce this companion report must be approached with rigorous methods that necessitate more time than the six months RES spent in completing its report on single adults. Several factors inform RES's estimate of the time needed:

- While the May 24, 2016, Board motion specifically directs the CEO to prepare a report on homeless *children,* examination of services provided to children must be linked to a broader examination of *families,* which when examined as users of services and units of cost are considerably more complicated than single adults.

- Parents and children often do not engage with the same service delivery systems, and access to utilization data on minors is frequently subject to more restrictive protocols and statutory guidelines that must be carefully navigated.

- Although the data immediately available to RES in the Enterprise Linkages Project (ELP) data warehouse includes some records of services provided to minors, these records are neither exhaustive nor systematic. The attached research plan highlights the extensive supplemental data collection efforts the report on children and families will require.

A report that does justice to the seriousness of homelessness among children and families demands a reliable set of estimates that fully capture the patterns of utilization and their related costs. Producing such a report additionally necessitates a collaborative approach that taps into the expertise of stakeholders inside and outside County government.

The work performed for the forthcoming report will produce cost estimates for FY 2015-16. Preparation of the report for the Board will require twelve months from the start of work on the project to ensure both the needed data supplements are collected properly, and that the resulting analyses produce reliable cost estimates.

The unit will initiate work on the report in two weeks, provided there is no objection raised to the contents of this memo and its supporting documents.

Should you have any questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Fesia Davenport, Assistant Chief Executive Officer, at (213) 974-1186, or via email at fdavenport@ceo.lacounty.gov.

SAH:FD:HK
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Attachments

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Children and Family Services
Health Services
Mental Health
Probation
Public Health
Public Social Services
Sheriff
Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles
Los Angeles County Office of Education
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority

Los Angeles County Expenditures on Homeless Children and Families

A Research Plan Informed by Exploratory Analysis

(Interim Report)

Chief Executive Office
Strategic Integration Branch
Research and Evaluation Services unit

July 2016

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Background and Context

On May 24, 2016, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors passed a motion directing the Chief Executive Office (CEO) to prepare a report on County expenditures associated with services provided to homeless children. Citing a gap in systematic information on this population's patterns of service utilization, the motion tasked the CEO with producing a report in 60 days. Earlier in the year, on February 9, the Board unanimously approved a series of 47 coordinated countywide strategies to combat homelessness, which was developed by the CEO's *ad hoc* Homeless Initiative in collaboration with stakeholders inside and outside County government. Within these strategies, homelessness among families is given high priority in terms of the immediate action to be taken. In approving the Homeless Initiative's recommended approach, the Board committed roughly $100 million in one-time funding for initial implementation. Funding sources for ongoing implementation and execution continue to be explored as of this writing.

LAHSA's 2016 Homeless Count

In the time since the Board took decisive action in approving the Homeless Initiative's countywide strategies, public release of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority's (LAHSA's) 2016 homeless count has highlighted a number of important developments. LAHSA's overall count suggests that the total number of people who are homeless on a typical night in the Greater Los Angeles Continuum of Care (GLA CoC) grew by 2,515, from 44,359 to 46,874, an increase of 6%.[1] However, homelessness among veterans and families declined sharply, suggesting that the availability of housing vouchers for veterans, funded through a coordinated combination of Federal, County and municipal dollars, as well as programs such as the Homeless Family Solution System, are producing some encouraging results. At the same time, however, LAHSA's 2016 count shows a 12% increase in the GLA CoC's *unsheltered* homeless population.

Costs Associated with County Services Provided to Homeless Single Adults

A report prepared by the CEO's Research and Evaluation Services unit (RES) unit examining County spending on services used by homeless single adults in FY 2014-15, which was included among the supporting materials submitted to the Board with the Homeless Initiative's strategies, is an additional factor motivating the request for a companion report on children and families. The single adult report estimates that six County agencies spent a combined total of close to $1 billon on this population over 12 months. Although health-related expenditures, most of which are Federal and State revenues, account for about three-fifths of the total costs shown in the report, roughly one-third of the spending is estimated to be Net County Cost (NCC), a calculation that does not include Department of Health Services (DHS) expenditures on the single adult study population.[2]

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[1] The GLA CoC is a Housing and Urban Development jurisdiction that includes most of Los Angeles County but excludes the cities of Long Beach, Pasadena and Glendale.

[2] CEO/SIB/RES. January 2016. *The Services Homeless Single Adults Use and their Associated Costs: An Examination of Utilization Patterns and Expenditures over One Fiscal Year.* (Included with the Board Letter from the Homeless Initiative; February 9, 2016).

The Time Needed to Prepare a Comprehensive Report on Homeless Children and Families

RES's report on single adults required six months to complete. Although analysis of homeless children involves smaller numbers of individual people, the analysis of children and the services they require must be linked to a broader examination of *families,* which when examined as users of services and units of cost are considerably more complicated than single adults. Parents and children often do not engage with the same service delivery systems. Moreover, access to utilization data on minors is frequently subject to a more restrictive protocols and statutory guidelines. Additionally, while the data immediately available to RES in the Enterprise Linkages Project (ELP) data warehouse includes some records of services provided to children, these records are neither exhaustive nor systematic.

Table A1 shows the number and proportion of clients with records of services received across four County agencies while they were under the age of 18 in each of the four-years between 2010 and 2013. Approximately 13% of the DHS records and roughly 19% of Department of Mental Health (DMH) data in the warehouse captures services provided to minors over these four years, and only between approximately 2% and 4% of the Sheriff's data in the system over the same period captures arrests and jail days involving minors. Moreover, while efforts are underway to fill key gaps in the data warehouse, the system does not presently include key Department of Public Social Services data, such as records of cash aid and child care services paid through CalWORKs, Food Stamps benefits, and Medi-Cal eligibility services, nor does the system include juvenile Probation data or a sufficiently exhaustive array of services provided through the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). These data can be obtained through the agencies in question and with the support of key research collaborators, but preparation and collection are labor-intensive tasks that require sufficient time to be done properly.

Table A1. Clients with Service Records in ELP, by Agency, 2010- 2014+

	DHS			DMH			DPH/SAPC			Sheriff		
	Unique Clients^	Under 18*		Unique Clients^	Under 18*		Unique Clients^	Under 18*		Unique Clients^	Under 18**	
		#	%		#	%	#	#	%		#	%
2010	755,781	91,705	12.1%	119,644	21,441	17.9%	25,454	n/a		187,764	3,064	1.6%
2011	760,492	94,467	12.4%	144,601	25,443	17.6%	22,972			178,329	3,808	2.1%
2012	665,872	78,168	11.7%	133,568	24,360	18.4%	22,788			113,598	2,621	2.3%
2013	719,436	90,045	12.5%	130,039	25,085	19.3%	20,416			102,967	4,090	4.0%

+DPSS is not included in this table because the only program the Department includes in the data shared through ELP is General Relief, which is in definitional terms is a program for single adults.

^Client counts are unique by year and by agency.

**The year of birth is the only non-encrypted data element retained from the birthdate in these records. The counts of clients under the age of 18 are based on the assumption of a January 1 birthdate in the row year. These counts are therefore *estimates* and not precise tallies.

A report that does justice to the seriousness of homelessness among children and families as a social and humanitarian problem demands a reliable set of estimates that fully capture the patterns of utilization and their associated costs. RES will produce these estimates for FY 2015-16, but doing so will necessitate 12 months to collect the needed data and conduct the analyses correctly and produce reliable cost estimates.

A Project that Necessitates a Collaborative Approach

The first chapter of this interim report is a research plan that describes the methods and approach to be taken in preparing the cost report. The plan described is not a fixed approach and will be modified based on feedback received from the Public Social Services Commission, all five Board Offices, and other stakeholders. Given the complexities involved in the effort to identify and estimate the relevant expenditures over one Fiscal Year in providing services to homeless children and families, RES intends to collaborate with specialists and scholars inside and outside the County governance, both to obtain data not immediately available to the unit and to conduct analysis. As of this writing, the unit is deliberating over the most appropriate mechanism through which to assemble a research team for the report.

A Research Plan Informed by Empirical Analysis

The research plan included in this document is informed, in part, by an examination RES conducted on services used over a period of five years, across five County agencies by homeless parents who initiated receipt of cash benefits through the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program in 2012. Key parts of the analysis are included with this document in chapters 2 through 5. In an effort to avoid circulating misleading findings based on partial information, the analysis includes only limited information on children and does not attach costs to the utilization patterns discussed. Nevertheless, these patterns provide a sound empirical point of departure, one that is useful in framing the research approach described in Chapter 1.

1. County Expenditures on Homeless Children and Families in FY 2015-16: A Research Plan

On May 24, 2016, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors passed a motion tasking the CEO with producing information on the costs the County incurs in providing services to homeless children. Specifically, the motion directs the CEO to '*work with the Department of Public Social Services, the Department of Children and Family Services, the Health Agency, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, and the Sheriff's and Probation Departments to examine the economic costs of homeless children in the County and develop a plan within 60 days that focuses on providing resources on an ongoing basis to house homeless children in the County.*'

In this first chapter, we describe our plan for completing a report that estimates the County's expenditures in providing homeless children and families with services in FY 2015-16, which will be the most recent fiscal year for which there are complete data. The plan is informed, in part, by the analyses of utilization patterns among homeless CalWORKs parents summarized in Chapters 2 through 5. Completion of the analysis and submission of the report to the Board is expected to necessitate 12 months to complete. A timetable is provided in Section 1.6.

1.1. Specifying the Focus of the Assignment

1.1.1. Families as the Unit of Analysis

A letter from the County's Public Social Services (PSS) Commission submitted as a supporting document with the May 24 Board motion correctly points to the lack of systematic information on homeless children in Los Angeles County.[3] The research plan described here, however, is based on an assumption that its end product will be a more broadly-defined report on costs associated with homeless children and *families*. There are three reasons for this expanded focus:

- ***Homeless parents have distinct service needs that should not be left unaddressed:*** Homeless parents were not examined in RES's previous cost report. The attached analyses given in chapters 2 through 5 suggest that service use patterns among homeless parents diverge significantly from what is observed among homeless single adults. In all likelihood the differences are not merely a result of parents being younger and healthier, but also because their service needs differ from those of single adults (this will be discussed in more detail in the sections that follow). Excluding parents from the follow-up report would leave an important segment of the County's homeless population unaddressed.

- ***Analysis of families aligns with the focus of the County's coordinated strategies to combat homelessness****:* The strategies developed by the CEO's *ad hoc* Homeless Initiative, which the Board approved in February 2016, include components intended to intervene in homelessness among children, but these are framed more broadly as strategies to

[3]The May 12, 2016 letter from PSS Commissioner, Booker Pearson, to the Board of Supervisors, urges the Board to pursue '*a study outlining the economic costs of homeless children in Los Angeles County,*' and notes the following: '*The economic cost of homeless adults has been well documented in Los Angeles by multiple studies (most recently as a part of the County's Homeless Initiative); however, no meaningful research has been conducted outlining the cost the County incurs as a result of the unconscionable number of homeless children living on our streets.*'

combat family homelessness.[4] To the extent that our objective is to produce information that will inform the County's approach to homelessness as it evolves, the report should align with the way the strategies are framed, which is at the level of families and not limited to children, though children are critical elements in families experiencing homelessness.

- ***The Services children utilize are often family services:*** A number of key services and benefits provided to children are grouped more generally under services provided to families. Benefits administered by DPSS, for instance, such as CalWORKs cash aid and Food Stamps paid through Calfresh, are distributed in family/household grants.[5] Services DPSS provides jointly with LAHSA through the Homeless Families Solution System (HFSS) are another example. Additionally, the Community Development Commission makes housing- and homeless-related funds available to families (e.g. funds available through Emergency Solutions Grants and the Affordable Housing Trust Fund), which would not be captured if the focus were limited to children.

1.1.2. The General Approach

At a general level, the homeless family cost report will replicate the form given to the previous study on single adults. A study population of families who experienced homelessness in FY 2015-16 will be built (details on this are provided below) and the following steps will be taken:

- The study population – consisting of the individuals in families – will be matched against FY 2015-16 County agency and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) service records. To the extent that they are available, legally accessible and relevant, the study population could also be matched to State-level administrative data on other services provided over the same period.

- The individuals in the match results will then be merged into family units of direct service utilization and analysis.

- The utilization patterns will be combined with FY 15-16 cost information provided by the agencies to produce direct service cost estimates by agency, by clusters of agencies, and overall.

- Administrative cost estimates will be calculated and added to the direct service expenditures.

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[4]The relevant homelessness prevention strategies, for example, are geared towards families. Under Homeless Initiative Strategy A1, DPSS and LAHSA are directed 'to convene a workgroup consisting of other relevant County departments and key community stakeholders to develop an integrated, comprehensive homeless prevention program for *families* which draws on the Homeless Family Solutions System (HFSS) model and builds upon current available County homeless prevention funding sources to address rental/housing subsidies, case management and employment services, and legal services' (emphasis ours). RES has been assigned to collect and analyze baseline outcome and service profile data in connection with strategy A1. The unit's efforts in this area are expected to intersect with work on the homeless family cost report at a number of significant levels.

[5]CalWORKs can be parsed into child and adult portions using administrative categories DPSS utilizes for purposes of noncompliance with the program's rules and regulations, but using these categories for the purpose of a cost analysis would create unwieldy complications and significantly increase the likelihood of error in the estimates produced for the report.

- Information on programmatic costs will also be added to the overall estimates.

- Analysis will be conducted to show the extent to which high-volume, high-acuity service users account for overall expenditures.[6]

- The proportional relationship between agency expenditures on homeless families and overall expenditures on families will also be examined.[7]

- RES's previous analysis of homeless single adults will be reintroduced in the conclusion to the report in order to produce an approximation of overall annual homeless cost, (i.e. combined total expenditures on single adults and children and families).

1.1.3. The Limits of Replicating the Approach Taken for Single Adults

At a more specific substantive level, however, simply replicating what was done for the report on homeless single adults will not be sufficient to produce equally informative and actionable information. In terms of capturing services used by homeless parents, the analyses provided in Chapters 2 through 5 suggest that these adults are a demographically distinct population (younger, more Latino and predominantly female) with patterns of service use that diverge significantly from what is observed in examining homeless single adults:

- Whereas close to one-third of the study population in RES's report on homeless single adults used DHS services over 12-months, roughly 8% of the homeless CalWORKs parents in the attached analyses used DHS services in 2012, which is the most comparable 12-month period within a five-year observation window.

- More generally, more than half the single adult study population versus slightly less than 14% of the homeless parent study population used services through at least one of the County's three health agencies over a 12-month period.[8]

- Roughly 10% of the single adult population was arrested over one year versus 3% of the study group of CalWORKs parents. The single adult study population has an arrest rate approximately four times higher than the CalWORKs study group.

A portion of these divergences, particularly those in the area of health services use, are in all likelihood reflections of demographic differences. However, these differences may also mean that

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[6] However, spending is expected to be considerably less concentrated on families than what is shown in RES's report on homeless single adults, where 5% of the study population accounted for 40% of the total cost estimate across six agencies in FY 2015-16 (CEO/SIB/RES. January 2016. *The Services Homeless Single Adults Use and their Associated Costs: An Examination of Utilization Patterns and Expenditures over One Fiscal Year.* (Included with the Board Letter from the Homeless Initiative; February 9, 2016).

[7] This will be similar to what was done in RES's previous report, where costs associated with the provision of services to homeless single adults are estimated to comprise roughly 11% of the total FY 14-15 expenditure across the six agencies included in the analysis (ibid).

[8] However, the difference between the two populations at this level is likely inflated to a certain degree due to the more comprehensive DMH data used for the analysis of homeless single adults. However, we expect that the gap between the two populations would still be considerable even with more inclusive DMH data for the CalWORKs study group.

parents use *different* services than those analyzed for the report on homeless single adults, in which case different or enhanced datasets will be required to capture what the County spends in providing them. Similarly, analysis of services and treatment provided to children will necessitate working with the appropriate agencies and research partners to obtain the data required to produce cost estimates:

- Juvenile Probation services are expected to be a much more prominent component of the children and families estimates than adult Probation services are for the single adult estimates.[9] RES must work with the department to obtain these data and guidance on how to interpret them and use them to calculate costs.

- Similarly, DCFS is not included in RES's previous report but will be one of the core agencies in the analysis of homeless families and children. RES receives data from DCFS on an *ad hoc* basis and must work closely with the agency to obtain the data elements needed to produce cost estimates for the department.

1.1.4. The FY 2015-16 Study Period

This research plan is developed with the assumption that the period of time to be analyzed should mirror the period that structured the analysis of homeless single adults – i.e. one fiscal year - and that the fiscal year to be analyzed should be the most recent for which there are complete data (FY 2015-16). However, since the estimates in the report on single adults are for FY 2014-15, there may be some interest in building a separate study population consisting of families who experienced spells of homelessness in FY 2014-15 and producing estimates for this group as well, which would enable a single standardized estimate for a uniform Fiscal Year of costs incurred in providing services to the County's homeless population, single adult, children and families. The value of this added analysis will be explored with the Homeless Initiative and the research partners collaborating with RES on the homeless children and families cost report.

1.2. Building the Study Population: Three Options

The process of building a study population of homeless children and families must be handled with great care. Three feasible options, including their strengths and weaknesses, are discussed in this section.

1.2.1. Option 1

- ***Follow a modified version of the process through which the homeless single adult study population was assembled for RES's previous cost report:*** Four County source agencies - i.e. departments providing files of clients they identified as being homeless at the point of an FY 2015-16 service episode - would contribute to the population and this group of clients would be enhanced with data from HMIS:[10]

[9] Adult Probation services – both those provided to Probation's adult felon AB 109 clients account for about 1% of the total expenditures shown in RES's report on Homeless single adults (CEO/SIB/RES. January 2016. *The Services Homeless Single Adults Use and their Associated Costs: An Examination of Utilization Patterns and Expenditures over One Fiscal Year.* (Included with the Board Letter from the Homeless Initiative; February 9, 2016).

[10] Elements in HMIS enable users to distinguish between persons who are single adults and persons who are family members. Additionally, while the date of birth is encrypted by the data integration software RES uses to de-identify the Enterprise Linkages Project clients in HMIS, LAHSA provides RES a separate file with clients by year of birth, which is also

- DPSS: All FY 2015-16 CalWORKs households – parents, guardians, children – for which the residential address given in the record of receipt in at least one month during the year is a DPSS office or shelter address.

- DCFS: All children and TAY in the County's Foster Care system identified as homeless during at least one month during FY 2015-16, as we;; as their biological/legal parents.

- Probation: All juvenile probationers identified in Probation records as being homeless in FY 2015-16, as well as their biological/legal parents

- DHS: Assuming the records can be legally provided to RES in encrypted form, all patients under the age of 18 who DHS identified as being homeless (or identified their parents as being homeless) in FY 2015-16

- HMIS: All families (children and adults) who received services recorded in HMIS during FY 2015-16. Elements in HMIS enable users to distinguish between persons who are single adults and persons who are family members.[11]

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1.2.1.1. Assessment of Option 1

A similar process produced fairly robust estimates and analysis for homeless single adults. However, several potential flaws (and possible solutions to them) should be specified. Firstly, the study population will be matched against records of County agencies and also linked to services in HMIS. Additionally, services recorded in other non-County databases could potentially be included in the analysis. However, clients using services through departments that are not source agencies (DMH, DPH and the Sheriff) will only be captured in the results if they also used services provided through one of the source agencies. While a similar problem – one which can lead to an understatement of service use and costs – was identified as an unavoidable limitation in RES's report on single adults, the proximity of the single adult study population count to a LAHSA estimate of single adults who experienced homelessness in 2015 provided some measure of confidence in the representativeness of the resulting analyses.

Information provided in Chapter 2, however, points to a potential discrepancy between the population size that Option 1 is expected to produce and LAHSA's 2015 estimate of the number of families who experienced homelessness over the course of 12 months. The homeless subpopulation constructed for the analyses summarized in chapters 2 through 5 was assembled using only records of CalWORKs receipt in DPSS's Los Angeles Eligibility Automated Determination, Evaluation and Reporting (LEADER) system and therefore only consists of homeless CalWORKs parents. Moreover, the study population is limited to homeless parents who received CalWORKs benefits for the first time in 2012. As shown in Chapter 2, families associated with these parents comprise only 5.6% of the CalWORKs universe of families receiving aid in 2012.

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the procedure followed by most County agencies participating in the Enterprise Linkages Project (ELP) and enables minors to be pulled out of match results, with an only slightly lowered degree of accuracy.

[11] RES will work with LAHSA to clarify how to interpret HMIS data at the family level.

Although the comparison is not standardized by a uniform year, it would nevertheless be reasonable to expect the 2012 count of families produced with LEADER to be considerably smaller than an estimate intended to capture all families who experienced homelessness in the course of a period of similar duration (12 months) three years later. Yet, the LEADER count of homeless families is twice the size of the LAHSA estimate. Specifically, the number of homeless CalWORKs parents in the 2012 entry cohort is roughly 136% larger, and the number of children attached to these parents is 90% larger than the LAHSA 2015 estimates. This gap would presumably widen if clients from the other source agencies were added to the CalWORKs/LEADER count.

The discrepancy highlights a much broader definition of homelessness for DPSS by comparison with LAHSA. DPSS assumes any client or family is homeless in in any month during which they receive benefits and use either a DPSS address or a shelter address as their residential address in their administrative records of receipt. By comparison, LAHSA uses the considerably more restrictive Housing and Urban Development definition in which an individual or family is homeless if they are 1) An living in places not meant for human habitation such as cars, parks, sidewalks, and abandoned buildings; 2) living in an emergency shelter; 3) living in transitional housing for homeless persons or families and who originally came from the streets or an emergency shelter.

If Option 1 is pursued, RES and its research partners must work closely with DPSS and LAHSA, as well as other stakeholders, to construct a replicable homeless family study population based on a consensus definition intended to produce meaningful, policy-driven results.

1.2.2. Option 2

- ***Further Enhance Option 1 with Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) data on homeless children.*** LACOE produces monthly counts of homeless children in the County's school systems. Obtaining a de-identified and unduplicated source file from LACOE of all students in the County's school systems who experienced homelessness in FY 2015-16 would add significant value to the homeless families cost report. To this end, RES and its partners for this project could approach LACOE with the following proposal to develop a Data Use Agreement (DUA) that specifies a process similar to the steps RES takes in obtaining quarterly HMIS files under the terms of its DUA with LAHSA:

    - Upon execution of the DUA, LACOE would produce a file of all children who the agency counted as being homeless during any month in FY 2015-16.

    - Upon notification of completion of the file, technical personnel within RES would travel to an office location specified by LACOE, bringing a laptop loaded with RES encryption and file cleaning software.

    - Under the supervision of personnel delegated by LACOE, RES's technician would load the FY 2015-16 file onto the laptop.

    - RES would de-identify/encrypt the file on site at the LACOE office.

    - RES would then destroy the identifiable file on site with either software already loaded onto the RES laptop or software LACOE utilizes for similar purposes.

- RES would then leave the LACOE office with nothing more than a deidentified file of children who experience homelessness in FY 2015-16.

- The terms of use in the DUA would specify (a) that the file provided by LACOE is to be used for the homeless families project only, and (b) that RES will produce verification evidence showing that the file, though de-identified, has nevertheless been destroyed six months after public release of the homeless families report.

1.2.2.1. Assessment of Option 2

Option 2 is preferable to Option 1 but the dispersed ownership of the data in question and the time needed to enter into what could be a comparatively complex DUA or set of DUAs may pose barriers to its feasibility. Additionally there may be legal impediments to entering into such an agreement.

The data on homeless children is not directly collected by LACOE but rather assimilated from information collected from the 81 primary and secondary School districts in Los Angeles County. The districts retain ownership of their own data. Pursuing a single consolidated DUA with LACOE is workable, but pursuing individual DUAs with school districts or clusters of school districts is likely to be overly taxing for the homeless families cost report timetable which is expected to produce timely information to inform the ongoing implementation and execution of the County's homeless strategies.

One encouraging development is that LACOE has recently shown an increasing interest in utilizing data, advanced analytics, and information technology for the purpose of improving educational policy and practice at the County level. Evidence of this is seen in the agency's development and implementation of the Los Angeles Educational Passport System. To the extent that the Homeless Initiative's strategies with respect to families and children are generally consistent with LACOE's mission, the mutual benefits to be yielded from a DUA with RES for the purposes of the homeless children and families cost report could be emphasized in talks with LACOE.

1.2.3. Option 3

- ***Simplify the building process and base the estimates and analysis on CalWORKs families only:*** One of the broadly-recognized norms of social science research methodology is the premium placed on parsimonious methods. If fewer steps will produce the same results as more steps, then taking fewer steps reduces the margin of error, assuming everything else to be equal.[12] Options 1 and 2 entail collecting data from a number of disparate sources and then undertaking the work of reconciling children's service records with those of the attached parents and creating family units of analysis. A more parsimonious path to a study population would be to base the entire analysis of CalWORKs families who experienced homelessness in FY 2015-16. The following actors should be considered in assessing this option:

    - According to a recent DPSS estimate, roughly 80% of the County's homeless families receive services and benefits through CalWORKs.[13] If upon closer scrutiny this is a

[12] Bunge, Mario. *Causality and Modern Science.* Dover Publications. Third Revised Edition, 2011.

[13] This is loosely equivalent to the 76% of single adults in RES previous study population who received GR in at least one month during FY 2015-16.

valid estimate, then the missing fifth from the population can be specified in the analysis and, potentially, adjustments could be made to the cost calculations based on the assumption of a missing children and families.[14]

- CalWORKs data is already aggregated into family units, thereby eliminating the need to reconcile individual family members using different service systems into family units, which, as noted above, is a step that increases the possibility of error.

- *Option 3a:* One variant of Option 3 would be to use the three departments that have data aggregated by family units – DPSS, DCFS and Probation, LAHSA all three of which have homelessness identifiers in their administrative records – and use the homeless families in these three systems as the basis for analysis. This would differ from option 1 by excluding DHS from the source population since DHS data is not organized into family units of analysis.

- Insofar as this option is simplified and shortens the source data collection process, the report would likely be completed more quickly as is shown in section 1.6.

1.2.3.1. Assessment of Option 3

In terms of methodological parsimony and the amount of time needed to assemble a study population, Option 3 is the most preferable of the three options. The question that must be addressed in consultation with partners and stakeholders is whether this option is likely to produce the same information as the other 2 options. If this question can be answered in the affirmative, the report is likely to be completed more quickly.

1.3. Services, Costs and Data

Similarly to RES's report on homeless single adults, the estimates produced for the report on homeless families will be based on three types of cost: (1) Expenditures on services provided directly to individual clients (i.e. Direct Services Costs); (2) Non-Client specific costs related to programs that serve homeless children and families (i.e. programmatic costs). (3) Administrative expenditures associated with services and programs provided to homeless families and children.

1.3.1. Linkages to Direct Services

Table 1a shows the data matches that will be conducted for the homeless family cost report. Since some of the data is not immediately available to RES, the analyses in those service areas are contingent on obtaining supplemental service files from the agencies in question. This is discussed in more detail in section 1.3.2. Table 1a provides a sense of why completion of the homeless families cost report will take longer than completion of the homeless single adult report. For the homeless single adult report, seven data matches were conducted to capture the needed direct services utilization costs and 1 set of supplemental services files were required from DMH. Twice as many matches will be required for the

[14] As of this writing, it is not clear whether this 80% estimate refers to a point in time calculation or is a calculation for a given 12-month period. One way to clarify this would be to identify the number of CalWORKs DPSS categorizes at a point in time and compare the count to the LAHSA point-in-time count.

homeless families report. Of the 14 matches to be conducted, RES has immediate access to only four or five of the agency-level service data required.

Table 1a. Data Matches to be Conducted for Homeless Families Cost Report

Agency	Section	Population		Services/ Benefits	Supplemental Datasets Needed?		
		Parents	Children		Yes	No	TBD/Notes
DPSS	General	✓	✓	CalWORKs	✓		CalWORKs LRS files, FY `5-16
DPSS	"	✓	✓	Calfresh	✓		Calfresh LRS files '15-16
DPSS	"	✓		*GAIN	✓		GAIN LRS Files, '15-16
DPSS	"	✓	✓	Medi-Cal	✓		Medi-Cal LRS files, '15-16
DCFS	General		✓	TBD	✓		TBD in consultation w/dept
Probation	Juvenile		✓	TBD	✓		TBD in consultation w/dept
Probation	Adult	✓		Adult		✓	
DMH	Adult	✓		Adult		✓	
DMH	Children		✓	Minors	✓		
DHS	General	✓	✓	All			✓ Services to minors TBD
DPH	+SAPC	✓		+SUD		✓	
DPH	**CMS	✓	✓	All	✓		Access to these data TBD
Sheriff	General	✓		Arrests, Jail		✓	
HMIS	Families	✓	✓	Homeless			

*Including CalWORKs Stage 1 Child Care.

+*SAPC is* the acronym for DPH's Substance Abuse Prevention and Control Program. *SUD* is an acronym for Substance Use Disorder.

***CMS* is an acronym for DPH Children's Medical Services Program

1.3.2. Notes on Needed Data Supplements

- Due to the migration of DPSS administrative records to the LEADER Replacement System (LRS), RES has not received exhaustive DPSS data for almost one year as of this writing. However, DPSS is essential to this project, both as a source agency and as one of the core agencies providing services to children and families in the County. Obtaining data on homeless families receiving CalWORks, CalFRESH and Medi-Cal eligibility services is, at a minimum, critical to the contemplated analysis.

- DCFS and juvenile probation services are also expected to be critical components of the costs associated with homelessness among children and families. RES must work with both departments to obtain both source and service data.

- RES currently obtains comprehensive DMH data on services provided to adults but little to no data on services provided to children and minors. These services are expected to be comparatively expensive and another key component in the costs the County incurs in providing services to homeless children.

- RES intends to inquire into the content and availability of any administrative data collected by DPH's Children's Medical Services program. The Program's budget in FY 2015-16 was roughly $110.1 Million. What kinds of services are available through the program? Are records of these services collected at the individual patient level? Is an estimate of the degree to which the program provides services to homeless children available? In an effort to obtain these data, RES could potentially follow similar steps to those proposed for obtaining LACOE data outlined in section 1.2.2.

- The exhaustiveness of the DHS data available through the ELP data warehouse with respect to children must be determined in consultation with the department. As shown in the Background and Context section to this document, between 2010 and 2013 roughly 12% of the records in the warehouse were records of services provided to patients under the age of 18. Are there DHS services provided to children and families that are not shared through the ELP data sharing arrangements and, if so, could they be obtained?

1.3.3. Services Provided through Non-County Agencies and Organizations

The analyses summarized in chapters 2 through 5 emphasize the differences between homeless parents and homeless single adults with respect to their patterns of service utilization. The introduction of children into the analysis, in turn, is likely to further differentiate families and single adults. The differences raise the issue of whether the range of service delivery systems to be included in the examination of homeless families should be expanded beyond County service delivery systems. The answer to this question will largely depend not only on whether data from non-County entities can be made available but also whether they can be made available in a timely fashion. This will be discussed in further detail in section 1.4 below. Data from HMIS is already available to RES through an existing DUA with LAHSA.[15] Since LAHSA plays a critical role, along with DPSS, in administering the Homeless Family Solution System (HFSS), the services will be included in the cost estimates produced for the report on children and families. The degree to which other services recorded in HMIS are to be factors in the analysis will be determined in consultation with the Homeless Initiative and LAHSA.

1.3.4. Programmatic and Administrative Costs

RES will work with the seven agencies included in the analyses to collect information on FY 2015-16 program costs and any newly-implemented programs. The costs will be added to the individual- and family-level costs produced through the data matches either entirely when they are specifically homeless programs or on a *pro rata* when they are programs that homeless children and families use but are not specifically homeless-related. In the latter cases – and similarly to the method applied in RES's report on single adults - the share of the FY 2015-16 costs added to the estimates will be based on information provided by the agencies and the proportion of programmatic resources used by their homeless clients. The addition of administrative costs to the estimates will be similarly calculated on an agency-by-agency and proportional basis.

1.4. An Approach Based on Partnership and Collaboration

RES benefitted immeasurably from partnerships with County and non-County stakeholders in preparing the previous report on homeless single adults. Working collaboratively with experts in the areas of child and family well-being will be even more critical to the process of preparing a report on the costs associated with homeless children and families.

[15] The CEO-LAHSA DUA through which RES obtains access to quarterly HMIS files is valid through 2019.

1.4.1. County Partners

Table 1b lists one lead contact from each agency or office critical to the analyses for this project. In a number of cases, these partners will be the points of contact in RES's efforts to obtain supplemental data needed for the analyses. As such, engaging them will be one of the key initial tasks in the project timeline.

Table 1b. County Collaborators for the Homeless Family Cost Project

Primary Point of Contact	Department	Area of Expertise
Jose Perez	DPSS	Program, Operations, Policy
Cecilia Custodio	DCFS	Data, Programs, Policy
Rae Hahn	DCFS	Data, Programs, Policy
Richard Giron	Probation	Program, Operations, Policy, Data
Libby Boyce	DHS	Homeless Programs, Operations, Policy
Dr. Paul Arns	DMH	Program, Data, Operations, Policy
Stephane Caldwell	DPH	Program, Operations, Policy
Scott Goodwin	Sheriff	Operations, Data
Josh Decell	LAHSA	Program, Data, Operations, Policy
Sid Kikiawa	CEO (Budget)	Budget and Finance, Operations, Policy
Phil Ansell	CEO (Homeless Initiative)	Homeless Programs, Budget, Operations, Policy

1.4.2. Assembling a Research Team

The recruitment of a research team for the homeless family cost report is also a critical initial step in the project timeline. As of this writing, RES is exploring the most appropriate mechanism through which to assemble a group of researchers to assist with data collection and analysis.

1.5. Legal Questions

At the time of this writing, RES is gathering information potential legal impediments with respect to gaining access to medical, law enforcement and social services data on minors and making the results public. All data used for the children and families cost report will be de-identified and the results are to be presented at an aggregate level. However, additional statutory guidelines may be in place that could restrict the scope of the analyses conducted for the report. RES will work with County Counsel to ensure the work invested in the report is performed in a manner consistent with exiting legal protocols.

1.6. Project Timetable

Table 1c is the projected timetable for this project, showing each task at hieratically by its starting point. The end result, which is a finalized report submitted to the Board of Supervisors with the appropriate Board correspondence, is require 12 months to complete. The timeline includes the following eight project benchmarks: 1) A decision on the best method for building a homeless family study population in month two; a research team assembled by month three; 3) Data collection complete by month six; 4) A finalized study population in month seven; 4) assimilation of County and non-County cost estimates complete by Month ten; 5) completion of analysis by month eleven; 6) Completion of draft report by month eleven; and 7) CEO budget review of the report by month twelve; and 8) submission of the report to the Board of Supervisors by month twelve.

Table 1c. Homeless Families and Children Cost Report: Project Timetable*

Months Elapsed in Project Period

Task	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Engage County Partners	✓											
Assemble Research Team	✓		✓									
Determine Study Population Method	✓	✓										
Programmatic Cost Data Collection	✓		✓									
Establish Necessary Agreements		✓			✓							
Build Study Population		✓				✓						
Supplemental Data Collection		✓				✓	Finalized Data Collection					
Analysis and Cost Estimates		✓									✓	
Draft Report		✓									✓	

Task	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Prepare Study Population *N* Memo	✓						
Distribute *N* Memo among stakeholders/Feedback (finalized study population)	✓	✓	Finalized Study Population				
Data Matches Against County Agencies		✓		✓			
Data Matches Against Non-County Agencies			✓	✓			
Assimilate County and Non-County Estimates				✓	✓		
Agency Review						✓	
Final Homeless Initiative Review						✓	
CEO Budget Review							✓
Draft Board Correspondence							✓
Submit Report to the Board							✓

✓ Denotes month in which we estimate work on task will commence

✓ Denotes month in which we estimate task will be complete

✓ Denotes tasks that commence and are completed in the same month

Completed tasks highlighted in yellow denote project bench marks

*The Public Social Services Commission has requested periodic updates on the progress made on this project. RES will attend Commission meetings to provide the commissioners with progress reports upon request.

2. An Exploratory Analysis of Homeless CalWORKs Parents

The next four chapters are adapted from a report RES prepared at the direction of DPSS, which examines patterns of service use across five County agencies among roughly 76,000 parents who began receipt of cash assistance through CalWORKs in 2012. The analysis focuses, in particular, on approximately 20,000 parents in this CalWORKs entry cohort who were identified as being homeless in at least one month during 2012. As shown in Table 1a, these adults were responsible for more than 28,000 children, roughly 21,000 of which were aided through CalWORKs. In keeping with the County's growing interest in Transition Age Youth (TAY), parents in the study population who fell into this category when they began their time in receipt of CalWORKs benefits - roughly 9,000 homeless parents between the ages of 19 and 26 - are examined both as part of the larger study population and as a discrete subgroup. For comparative purposes, we also examine parents in the 2012 CalWORKs entry cohort who were not homeless.

Table 2a. Adults who Initiated CalWORKs Aid in 2012

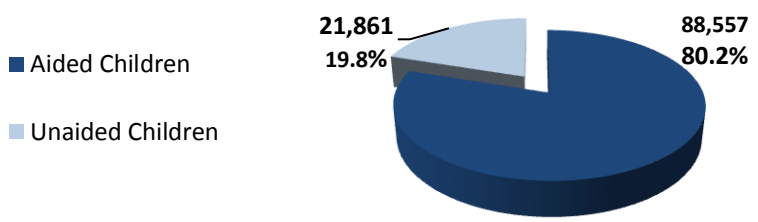
		Children*	
Parents	**Count**	**Aided+**	**Total**
All Homeless	**18,853**	**21,064**	**28,339**
Homeless TAY	9,025	9,120	12,604
Homeless >26 yrs old	8.470	11,944	15,735
All Non-Homeless	**56,763**	**67,493**	**82,079**
Non-Homeless TAY	21,012	22,956	29,335
Non-Homeless >26 Yrs old	35,109	44,537	52,744
All TAY	**30,037**	**32,076**	**41,939**
All > 26 Years Old	**43,579**	**56,481**	**68,479**
Entry Cohort Unique Total	**75,616**	**88,557**	**110,418**

*These counts are based on the initial entry into CalWORKs in 2012.

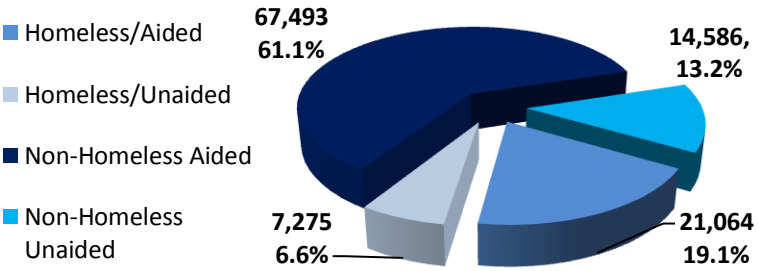
Figure 2a.i. Distribution of Aided and Unaided Children in the 2012 CalWORKs Entry Cohort

Total Aided and Unaided Children *n*=110,418*

2a.1 Aided and Unaided Children in the 2012 Entry Cohort



2a.ii Distribution of Aided and Unaided Children by Homeless and Non-Homeless Parents in the 2012 Entry Cohort



*This number, which represents the total number of children attached to parents in the 2012 entry cohort, is the denominator for the percentages shown in the two charts.

Figure 2a.i. shows the distribution of aided and unaided children both for the full 2012 entry cohort overall (2ai) and by whether or not their custodial parents were homeless at the time they began receiving aid through CalWORKs. (2aii). Aided children associated with homeless parents comprise about one fifth of the total aided and unaided children in the entry cohort. Slightly more than one quarter of the total aided *and* unaided children were attached to homeless parents.

2.1 Comparative Demographics

Table 2b. shows the demographic composition of the study groups within the CalWORKs entry cohort. The homeless and non-homeless distributions shown in the table can be examined comparatively.

Table 2b. CalWORKs Parents, 2012 Entry Cohort Demographics*																		
	Homeless						Non-Homeless						Full 2012 CalWORKs Entry Cohort					
	All		TAY+		> 26 Years Old+		All		TAY+		>26 Years Old+		All		TAY+		> 26 Years Old+	
n=	**18,853**		**9,025**		**8,470**		**56,763**		**21,012**		**35,109**		**75,616**		**30,037**		**45,579**	
Mean Age (Median)	28.5 (25)		21.9 (22)		34.7 (33)		33.0 (33)		23.0 (24)		40.4 (38)		30.8 (32)		22.4 (23)		37.6 (38)	
Age Ranges+	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
26 or Younger	10,383	55.1	9,025	100	-	-	21,654	38.1	21,012	100	-	-	32,037	42.4	30,037	100	-	-
27-36	4,777	25.3	-	-	4,777	56.4	15,645	27.6	-	-	15,645	44.6	20,422	27.0	-	-	20,422	46.9
37-46	2,360	12.5	-	-	2,360	27.9	10,271	18.1	-	-	10,271	29.3	12,361	16.7	-	-	12,631	30.0
47-56	1.099	5.8	-	-	1,099	12.9	6,192	10.9	-	-	6,192	17.6	7,291	9.6	-	-	7,291	16.7
Over 56	234	1.3	-	-	234	2.8	3,001	5.3	-	-	3,001	8.5	3,235	4.3	-	-	3,235	7.4
Gender	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Male	5,249	27.8	2,188	24.2	2,202	26.0	16,632	29.3	4,857	23.2	12,306	35.1	21,881	28.9	7,045	23.5	14,508	33.3
Female	13,604	72.2	6,837	75.8	6,286	74.0	40,131	70.7	16,155	76.8	22,803	64.9	53.735	71.1	22,292	76.5	29,071	66.7
	All		TAY+		< 26 Years Old+		All		TAY+		< 26 Years Old+		All		TAY+		< 26 Years Old+	
Race/Ethnicity	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
African-American	6,787	36.0	3,374	37.4	2,877	34.0	7,209	12.7	2,780	13.2	4,366	12.4	13,996	18.5	6,154	20.5	7,243	16.6
White	1,589	8.4	480	5.3	983	11.6	9,536	16.8	1,870	8.9	7,567	21.6	11,125	14.7	2,350	7.8	8,550	19.6
Hispanic	7,277	38.6	3,634	40.3	3,152	37.2	30.993	54.6	13,111	62.4	17,108	48.7	38,270	50.6	16.745	55.7	20,260	46.5
Asian	299	1.6	87	<1.0	199	2.3	2,327	4.1	537	2.6	2,283	6.5	2,626	3.5	624	2.1	2,482	5.7
Other/Unknown	2,901	15.4	1,450	16.1	1,259	14.9	6,608	11.8	2,714	12.9	3,785	10.8	9,559	12.7	4,164	13.9	5,044	11.6
Language	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
English	17,868	94.8	8,819	97.7	7,894	93.2	43,479	76.6	19,624	93.4	22,847	65.1	61,347	81.1	28,089	93.5	30,741	70.5
Spanish	873	4.6	198	2.2	388	4.6	8,702	15.3	1,357	6.5	7,791	22.2	9,575	12.7	1,636	5.4	8,179	18.8
Other/Unknown	112	<1.0	8	<1.0	188	2.2	4,582	8.1	31	<1.0	24,471	12.7	4,694	6.2	314	1.1	4,659	10.5
Marital Status	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Married	1,329	7.1	326	3.6	949	22.9	13,003	22.9	1,676	8.0	10.199	29.0	14,332	19.0	2,002	6.7	11,148	25.6
Single	9,869	52.3	5,459	60.5	3,974	38.8	22,024	38.8	11,751	55.9	10,305	29.4	31,893	42.2	17,210	57.3	14,279	32.8
Unknown	7,655	50.6	3,240	36.0	3,547	38.3	21.736	38.3	7,585	36.1	14,605	41.6	29.391	38.8	10,825	36.0	18,152	41.6

*Please note that the counts in ***All*** columns are slightly larger than the sum of the ***TAY*** and ***>26 yrs Old*** columns because the TAY category captures parents between 19 and 26 years of age, whereas the ***All*** category captures parents who are 18 years of age and not included in the TAY category. For the same reason, note that the row totals shown for recipients26 years of age or younger are larger than the TAY counts.

+As of 1/1/12

2.2. Homeless and Non-Homeless Parents

The most striking difference observed in Table 3 is the relative youth of the homeless segment of the 2012 entry cohort. Roughly half of these homeless parents are TAY (9,025 of 18,853), versus 37.4% of the non-homeless comparison group (21,012 of 56,031). By extension, the median age among the full non-homeless comparison group (33) is approximately 8 years older than the median age of the homeless group.

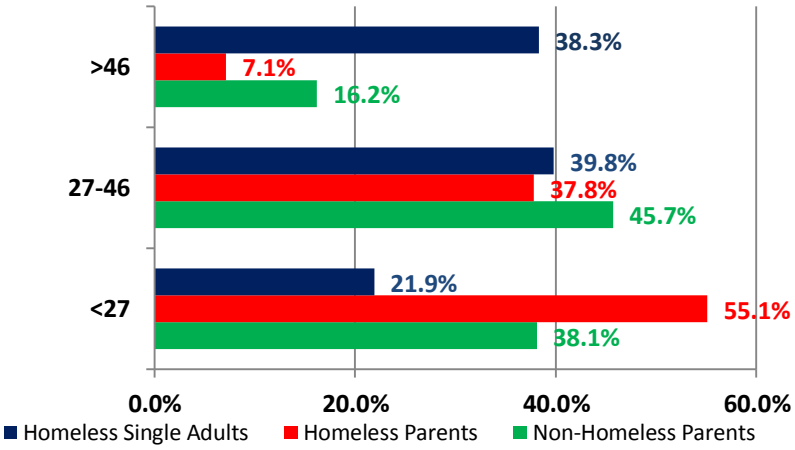
Key differences are also observed in the respective racial and ethnic compositions of the two groups of parents. Among those who are homeless, close to three quarters are either Hispanic or African American, slightly more than 5% are white, and all but about 5% speak English as their primary language. By comparison, close to 55% of the non-homeless group is Hispanic, but only 12.7% is African-American, as compared to 36% of the homeless group, and close to 17% is white. Additionally, while the homeless group of parents is almost entirely English-speaking, more than 15% of the non-homeless group speaks Spanish as their primary language.

Some striking distinctions are also observed in looking at the comparative distribution of parents who are married versus parents who are either single or for whom marital status is unknown. Whereas only 7% of the homeless parents in the entry cohort were confirmed as being married when they began receiving aid, roughly 23% of the parents in the non-homeless subpopulation were confirmed as being married.

2.3. Homeless Parents by Comparison with Homeless Single Adults

2.3.1 Homeless Parents are Younger

Figure 2b.i Homeless Parents and Homeless Single Adults: Comparative Distribution by Age



When the distributions shown in Table 2b.i are gauged against the demographics shown in RES' homeless single adult study population, the picture that emerges is one of two demographically distinct segments within the County's homeless population. Homeless single adults are significantly older than homeless parents. Slightly more than one-fifth of the adults in RES's single adult report (32,555 of 148,815, 21.9%) were TAY at the start of the FY 2014-15 observation period. The average age of the single adults in the study population is 41 and close to two-fifths of these adults are at least 46 years of age.[16] By comparison, 55% of the homeless parents in the CalWORKs entry cohort are under the age of 27. (Figure 2b.i).[17]

[16]CEO/SIB/RES. *The Services Homeless Single Adults Use and their Associated Costs: An Examination of Utilization Patterns and Expenditures in Los Angeles County over One Fiscal Year.* January, 2016, p.3.

2.3.2. Opposed Distributions of Men and Women

As shown in Figure 2b.ii, another important difference between the homeless CalWORKs adults analyzed in this report and the study population in RES's report on homeless single adults is that the gender distribution within the two populations are effectively opposite. Close to 70% of those included in the estimates RES produced for homeless single adults are male. By contrast, Table 2a. shows that approximately 72% of the homeless CalWORKs study population is female.[18] Within this distribution of CalWORKs parents, more than three-quarters of the homeless CalWORKs TAY population is female. By comparison, the majority of the non-homeless CalWORKs parents in the 2012 entry cohort are also women, but women and men are distributed somewhat more evenly as roughly 65% of the group is female.

Figure 2b.ii. Comparative Distribution of Men and

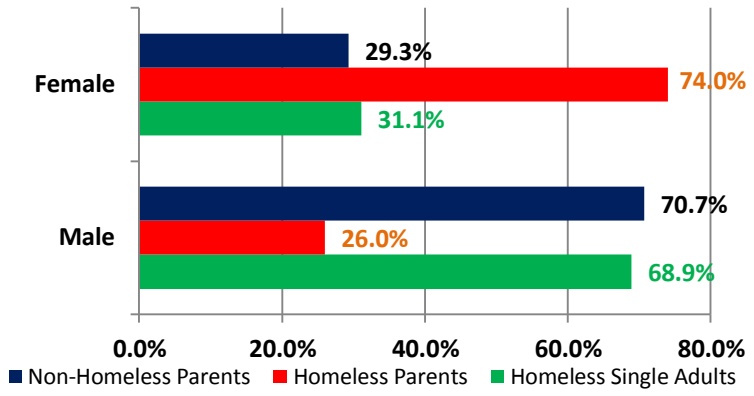
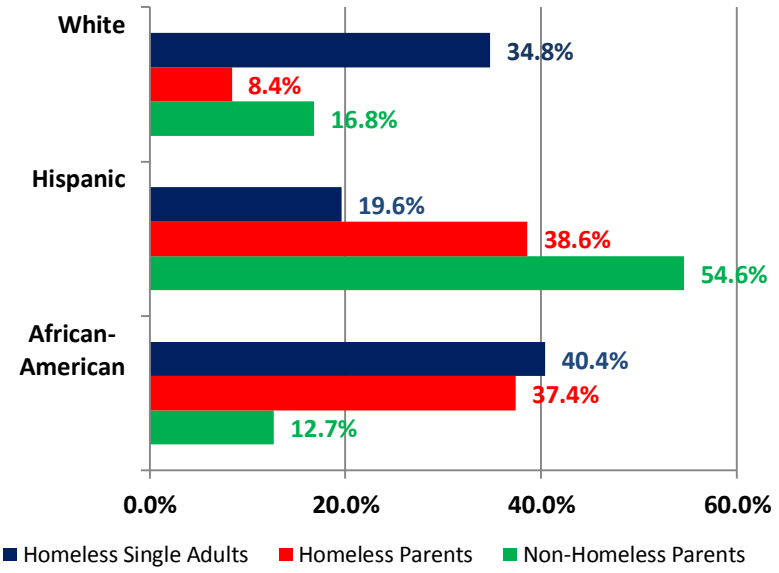


Figure 2b.iii. Comparative Racial/Ethnic Composition



2.3.3. Differing Racial and Ethnic Compositions

An additional comparison with the study population in RES's report on homeless single adults reveals that the ethnic and racial composition of the homeless parents in the 2012 CalWORKs entry cohort is substantially different as well. Whereas roughly one-fifth of the homeless single adult study population is Latino, and approximately three-quarters is either African-American (40.4%) or White (34.8%), In proportional terms there are twice as many homeless Latino CalWORKs parents as compared to the study group of homeless single adults, whole the proportion of white parents is roughly one-quarter the proportion among homeless single adults.[19]

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[17] The age difference in the two populations is striking but also expected. A population of parents who receive CalWORKs benefits for the first time will be heavily weighted towards new parents and, as such, will skew towards the younger end of the age spectrum.

[18] Ibid, p.3

[19] Ibid. p.3.

2.4 The Significance of Demographic Differences between Homeless Single Adults and Family Members

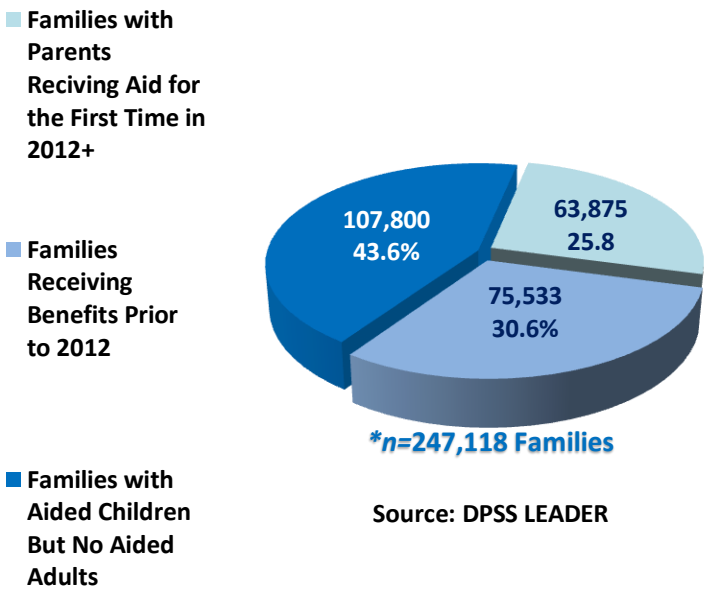
The research plan for the comprehensive report on the County's costs in providing services to homeless families must anticipate the range of potential effects the demographic differences between homeless family members and homeless single adults are likely to have on the observed patterns of family service use, as well as on the service delivery systems through which this utilization takes place. To a certain degree, differences in these areas will differentiate the data sources required to capture the service episodes and the expenditures attached to them.

RES's single adult study population (n=148,815) is roughly eight times larger than the population of homeless parents shown in Table 3. While this is due in large part to the bigger number of homeless single adults in the County as compared to homeless adult parents, it is also important to note that the objective in building the single adult study population was, to the extent possible, to assemble a group that would approach exhaustiveness with respect to the full universe of single adults who experience homelessness in the course of a 12-month period. Conversely, as will be shown in the next section, the study population of homeless parents discussed above is a segment of the larger CalWORKs population, one that presumably includes a significant number of homeless family members not captured in the 2012 entry cohort. It is therefore important to approach the differences described in the comparisons with single adults as provisional distinctions that may prove more or less pronounced given a more inclusive study population. More specifically, the study population for the report on homeless families is to be more exhaustive and built with a broader spectrum of data sources than what is used for the analyses summarized here.

2.5. Families in the 2012 Entry Cohort in Relation to the Full Universe of CalWORKs Families

Figure 2c shows the full universe of families receiving CalWORKs in 2012 as distributed into three mutually-exclusive categories of receipt. The figure adds emphasis to the characterization of the homeless parents in a CalWORKs entry cohort as, in all probability, not sufficiently exhaustive of the full universe of families who experienced homelessness over the course of a year. While families in the 2012 entry cohort constitute roughly one quarter of those receiving aid in the same year, the *homeless* families in this group (*n*=13,884 families, not pictured) constitute slightly more than one-fifth of this segment of the population and therefore about 5.6% of the full population. Families receiving benefits both in 2012 and prior to 2012 constitute approximately 31% of the

Figure 2c Families Receiving CalWORKs Benefits in 2012*



Source: DPSS LEADER

2012 universe and, most significantly, families with aided children but no aided adults – referred to as *child-only* cases - account for almost 44% of families receiving benefits in 2012. [20]

2.6. Does the Evidence Suggest the Need for a Modified Approach to the Analysis Families?

According to a recent DPSS estimate, approximately 80% of the families in Los Angeles County that experience at least one spell of homelessness in the course of 12 months receive benefits through CalWORKs.[21] Just as General Relief (GR) is, in terms of programmatic reach, the broadest and most inclusive County program from the point of view of building a study population of homeless single adults, CalWORKs appears to be the most critical component in the process of building a homeless family study population.

However, one question that must be addressed in making preparations for the analysis of families is the extent to which the process of building the study population should replicate the method utilized for the analysis of single adults, which involved assembling the study group from three County source agencies - DHS, DPSS and Probation, the three that track client homelessness systematically in their administrative records - and to augment the homeless clients contributed by these agencies with single adults who had records of using homeless-related services in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The resulting master file consisted of approximately 150,000 single adults who were identified as homeless in at least one of the four data systems at the time of a FY 2014-15 service episode.

2.7. LAHSA Estimates for Homeless Single Adults and Families

An estimate produced by LAHSA of the number of single adults with spells of homelessness during the 2015 calendar year eased concerns about the degree to which RES's single adult study population would exhaust the full universe of adults who experience a spell of homelessness in the course of a 12-month period. The LAHSA estimate, which is distinct from the point-in-time homeless counts the agency produces, and which captures a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) jurisdiction inclusive of most but not all of Los Angeles County, was 6.5% smaller than the count of unique single adults in RES's file. When extrapolated estimates were added from the County's cities not included in LAHSA's jurisdiction, the difference separating LAHSA's estimate and the RES study population count was approximately 1%. Assuming, however, that (a) the family portion of the same 2015 estimate is reasonably accurate, and (b) family homelessness in Los Angeles County between 2012 and 2015 did not experience a sharp *decrease,* a comparison of the relevant numbers indicates the degree to which DPSS's proxy method for capturing homelessness within its client population produces a broader cross-section of homeless families than LAHSA's HUD-based definition.

The comparisons shown in Table 2c are imperfect and shown for suggestive purposes only. Specifically, the LAHSA estimates of homeless adults, children and their associated families are approximations for calendar year 2015, while the numbers produced using CalWORKs data from DPSS's Los Angeles Eligibility Determination Evaluation and Reporting (LEADER) system are based on records of adults who received CalWORKs benefits for the first time in 2012:

[20] Families in the child-only aided group are not counted in either of the other two groups. This is another factor that skews comparisons at the demographic level since child-only cases are disproportionately Latino.

[21] As noted in Chapter 1, an inquiry must be made to determine if the 80% is a point-in-time proportion or an annual proportion.

Table 2c. Comparing Homeless Family Counts Produced Using DPSS and LAHSA Methods				
	Adults	**Children***	**Persons**	**Families**
LAHSA 2015 Homeless Family Estimate	8,000	15,000	23,000	7,000
Homeless CalWORKs Clients Receiving Benefits For the 1st Time in 2012	18,853	28,339	47,192	13,884
DPSS Count in Relation to LAHSA Estimate (#)	+10,853	+13,339	+24,192	+6,884
DPSS Count in Relation to LAHSA Estimate (%)	+135.7	+88.9	+105.2	+98.3
The DPSS Count of Children in this table includes those who are aided (*n*=21,064) and unaided (*n=7,275*). The inclusion of unaided children therefore increases the count by (34.5%).				

LEADER produces a number of homeless families that is virtually double the size of the number LAHSA produced. Within this overall difference, LEADER produces a number of homeless adult family members 135.7% larger, a number of homeless children almost 90% larger, and a number of total family members 105% larger. Moreover if DPSS's estimate with respect to CalWORKs receipt among homeless families in Los Angeles County is accurate - i.e. that 80% of the County's homeless families in the course of a typical year receive benefits through the program - then other County data sources that would be used to construct a study population for the cost report on homeless families would likely add even more family members from among the 20% not included in CalWORKs data, thereby creating additional distance between the counts produced with County records and the LAHSA family estimate.[22]

2.8. Building Consensus on a Representative Study Population of Homeless Families

Collaboration with County and non-County stakeholders and a commitment to leveraging a diverse range of expertise were key principles guiding the work that produced RES's report on homeless single adults. This approach will be replicated in preparing the report on homeless families. It will be necessary, in particular, to work closely with LAHSA and County agencies (especially DPSS, DCFS, Probation, the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), and the Children's Medical Services program within the Department of Public Health), as well as with stakeholder organizations outside the County, to construct a reliably representative study population. Building consensus on a set of criteria for inclusion in the study population will be critical to producing accurate cost estimates and analytic information that can be utilized with confidence in the ongoing work involved in implementing and executing the countywide strategies to combat homelessness.

[22] The May 12 letter from the PSS Commission to the Board of Supervisors cites a number of homeless CalWORKs families (*n*= (16,000, presumably in calendar year 2015, source unknown).

3. Use of County Services in General and Health Services in Particular

This section examines the homeless parents in the 2012 CalWORKs entry cohort in terms of both their overall use of County services and their more specific use of services provided through the County's three health agencies. Table 3a enables an overall five-year comparison of these parents with the non-homeless and TAY subgroups in the CalWORKs entry cohort. Almost half the homeless parents shown in the total, a unique count of 8,949 adults, used services provided through DHS an/ord DPH's Substance Abuse Prevention and Control Program SAPC), as well as the departments of Mental Health (DMH), Children and Family Services (DCFS), and the Sheriff (LASD). While homeless parents comprise roughly one quarter of the 2012 CalWORKs entry cohort (*n-75,616* adults), they account for about one-third of the cohort's service users over five years (*n*=28,052 service users).[23]

The numbers suggest that the intensity of service use is closely related to age, particularly among homeless parents. Close to three fifths of the homeless parents over the age of 26 in the entry cohort utilized an average of roughly 10 services per person over the five-year observation period. A significantly smaller proportion of non-homeless parents over the age of 26 used County services over the same period (36.6%) but did so with slightly higher intensity than those who were homeless (11.2 services per client).

Table 3a. Combined Total DHS, DMH, DPH, DCFS & LASD, Use 2010-2014

CalWORKs Parents	Clients Using Any Services	Total Services Used	Five-Year Group Match %	Services Used Per Person
All Homeless	**8,949**	**76,068**	**47.5**	**8.5**
Homeless TAY	3,988	24,866	44.2	6.2
Homeless >26 yo	4,961	51,202	58.6	10.3
All Non-Homeless	**23,091**	**181,122**	**40.7**	**7.8**
Non-Homeless TAY	8,856	37,144	42.1.	4.2
Non-Homeless > 26 yo	12,844	143,978	36.6	11.2
Overall TAY	10,247	62,010	34.1	6.1
Entry Cohort Total	**28,052**	**257,190**	**37.4**	**9.2**

The denominators for these match rates are the number of unique individuals in the row category, which are shown in Table 2.

3.1. Health-Related Services

Table 3b looks more specifically at total combined use of *health-related* services provided through DHS, DMH and DPH/SAPC from 2010 through 2014. Tables 5 and 6 taken together reveal that almost three-quarters of the homeless parents in the entry cohort who used County services over the five-year period of

Table 3b. Combined Total DHS, DMH & DPH Utilization, 2010-2014

CalWORKs Parents	Clients Using Any Services	Total Services Used	Five-Year Group Match %	Services Used Per Person
All Homeless	**6,659**	**67,397**	**35.3**	**8.5**
Homeless TAY	2,784	20,898	30.8	7.5
Homeless >26 yo	3,875	46.499	45.7	12.0
All Non-Homeless	**15,171**	**169,312**	**26.7**	**11.0**
Non-Homeless TAY	4,415	32,385	21.0	7.3
Non-Homeless > 26 yo	10,756	136,928	30.6	12.7
Overall TAY	7,199	53,283	24.0	7.4
Entry Cohort Total	**21,830**	**236,709**	**28.9**	**10.8**

The denominators for these match rates are the number of unique individuals in the row category, which are shown in Table 2.

[23]The combined total use of services in this context measures parents in the 2012 entry cohort who used at least one service through one of the five agencies over the five-year observation period. Use of services through any of the three health agencies is straightforward in capturing service treatment episodes recorded in administrative records. For the Sheriff's Department, an arrest is counted as a service. In the case of DCFS, the agency's clients are primarily children. However, if a parent had a child in a child-protective case during the observation period, the case is counted in Table 5 as a service.

observation (6,659 out of 8,949 adults) were patients of least one of the three health agencies. Moreover, close to 90% of the roughly 76,000 County services these homeless parents used over five years (67,397 out of 76,038) were provided through one of the three health agencies (Figure 3). The homeless parents shown in Table 3b comprise about 30% of the patients in the full 2012 entry cohort (6,659 out of 21,830 patients over five years).

Figure 3a. Homeless Parents, Health and Non-Health Services Used, 2010-2014

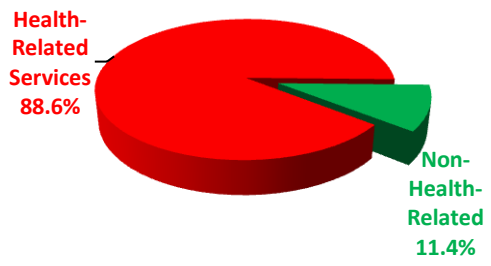
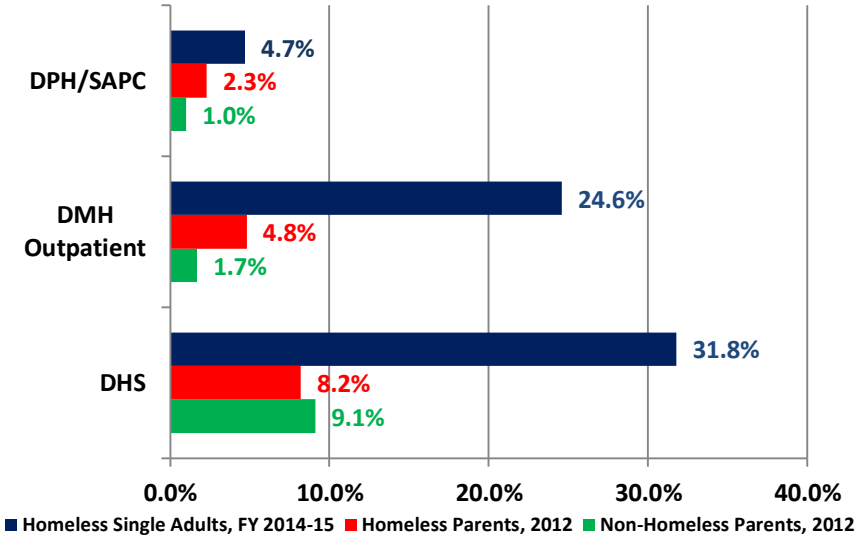
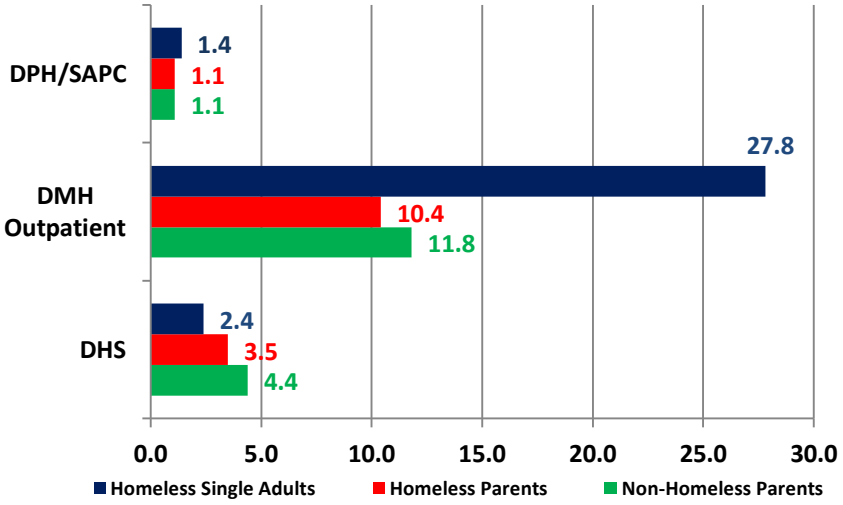


Figure 3b. Annual Use of DHS, DMH and DPH Services*

3b.i Proportion of Three Homeless Populations Using County Health- Related Services over a Period of 12 Months



3b.ii Annual Average Number of Services Used per Patient



3.2. Comparison with Single Adults

Figure 3b offers some useful comparative perspective in showing the proportion of the homeless and non-homeless parent study groups using health-related services in 2012 (3bi) and the number of services used per patient *(3bii);* The same measures fare shown or RES's study population in FY 2014-15 (3bi and 3bii). The decision to use 2012 as the basis for comparison against the single adult study population is made because 2012 is the year in which their DPSS records indicated that they were homeless and the comparison with single adults is more standardized.

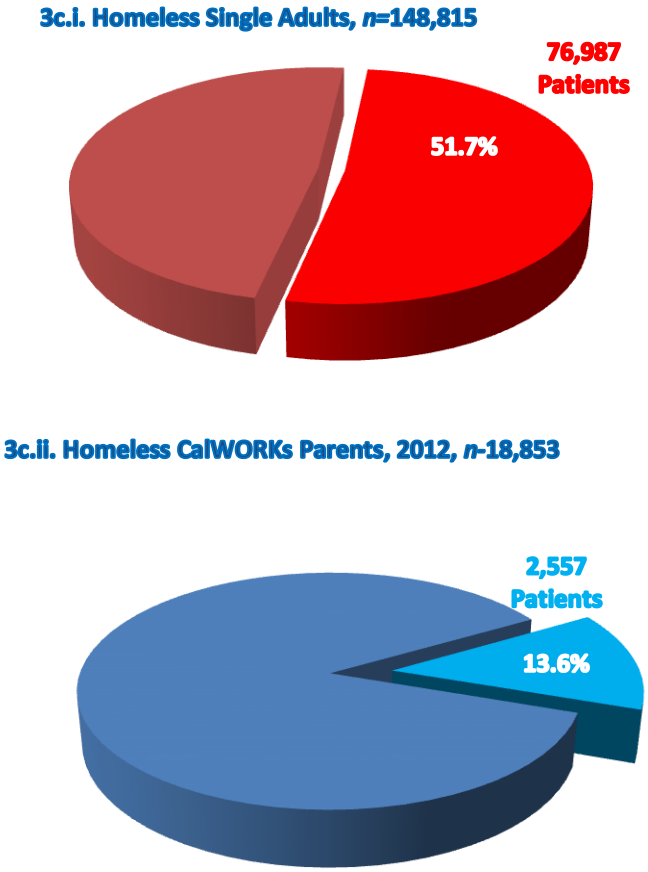
3.2.1. The Data and the Observed Differences

It must be specified in advance that although the two graphs shown in Figure 3b highlight some important differences with respect to the observed service use patterns, some degree of the contrast is likely an artifact of the focus on single adults that guided decisions regarding the data elements to include from each partnering agency in the ELP data warehouse. The CEO is currently taking steps to

diversify the types of service records available in the system. A portion of this work is expected to be complete in time for the forthcoming homeless family cost report. In service areas where the addition of data elements is unfinished, RES intends to work with partners at the agencies to obtain supplemental service files. Additionally, since the DMH services recorded for parents are largely limited to outpatient services, the measure for single adults is also restricted to outpatient services.

3.2.2. Two Distinct Subpopulations

Figure 3c. Homeless Parents and Single Adults who Used County Health Services over a Period of 12 Months*



Much larger cross-sections of the single adult population use health-related services in the course of a typical 12-month period. There may be some temptation to attribute the differences to the January 1, 2014 expansion of Medi-Cal, which significantly expanded the availability of medical services to homeless men and women. However, an examination of service use among the CalWORKs entry cohort shows that there is a negligible change in utilization of services before and after 2012, the year they started receiving CalWORKs and therefore the year they automatically became eligible for Medi-Cal.[24] Moreover, the immediate impact of the expanded access to health-related services on utilization rates among homeless single adults are not clear as of this writing.

While the comparisons are imperfect for reasons discussed above, the observed differences, in general, again reflect two distinct subpopulations within the larger universe of the County's homeless population. The single adult segment of the homeless population is older, more likely to have been homeless for extended periods of time, and consequently more afflicted with medical and mental health conditions when examined in the aggregate. The pie charts in Figure 3c are consistent with this inference. However, although use of health services is more broadly distributed in the single adult

[24]At the same time, it should be noted that, eligibility for Medi-Cal does not necessarily mean that a patient will receive services through a County managed care provider. This raises several important questions that must be addressed in the preparations for the homeless family cost report: To what extent is data on Non-County services available both in general and in a format that could potentially be manipulated for analysis? Are such services relevant to a report on County expenditures? If they are relevant, does the nature of family service use patterns suggest that the analysis would benefit from an expansion in its scope beyond County expenditures?

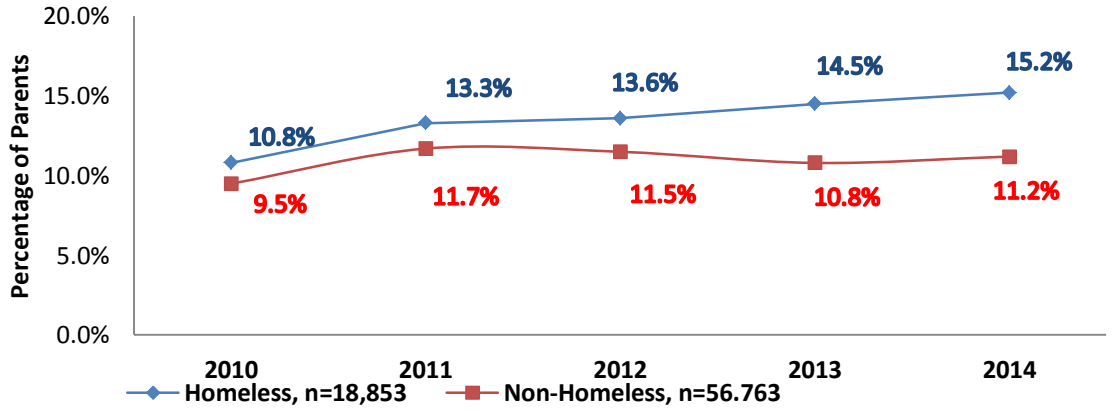
subpopulation, Figure 3b indicates that the intensity with which DPH/SAPC and DHS services are used is fairly similar for both groups of homeless adults.[25]

3.3. Parental Use of Health-Related Services Before and After the Initiation of CalWORKs

As noted previously, the initiation of cash assistance through CalWORKs does not appear to have had an appreciable effect on the use of County health services among the homeless parents in the 2012 entry cohort. Figures 3d.i shows the proportion of patients in the homeless parent study population using DHS, DMH and/or DPH/SAPC services over two years before they began receiving aid in 2012, and then tracks the annual percentage from 2012 through 2014. Figure 7 shows the average number of services these patients used per year over the same five-year period. Although a slight increase in the number of homeless parents is observed between 2012 and 2013, a larger increase is observed between 2010 and 2013. Similarly, a small increase in the number of services used per patient is observed between 2012 and 2013, while a larger increase is seen between 2010 and 2011.

Figure 3d. Use of County Health Services among Homeless and Non-Homeless Parents in the CalWORKs Entry Cohort, 2010-2014*

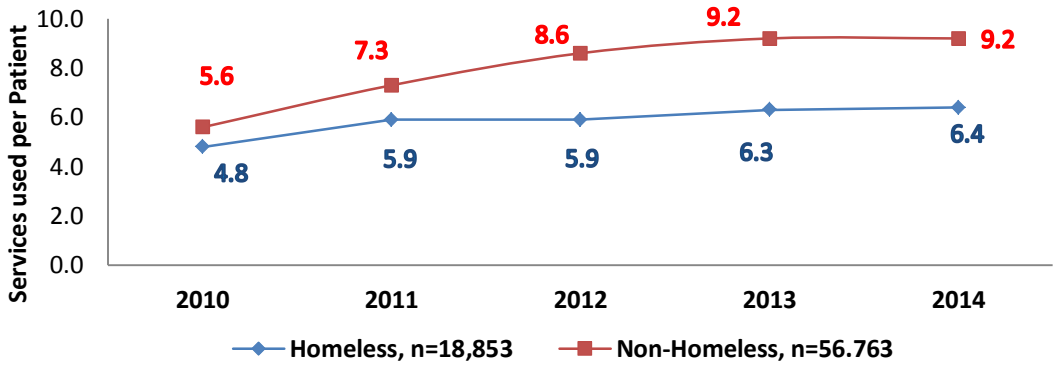
3di. Percentage of Each Subpopulation using Services through DHS, DMH and/or DPH SAPC.



***Cash assistance Initiated 2012**

[25]Although heavier health services utilization among homeless single adults by comparison with parents is consistent with expectations, the differences implied in this figure may be overstated to an indeterminate degree due to the more comprehensive DMH data used for the RES's report on single adults. Obtaining the appropriate mental health services data for the family report will be a critical component of the data collection process.

3dii. Average Health-Related Services per Patient*



*Cash assistance Initiated 2012

4. Involvement in Child-Protective Cases

DPSS and DCFS are each charged with distinct but intersecting responsibilities with respect to child well-being in Los Angeles County. Since a number of DCFS program components for children are based on benefits paid through CalWORKs, an examination of involvement in child protective cases among the homeless parents in the 2012 CalWORKs entry cohort provided an opportunity to produce limited aggregated information on children in families experiencing homelessness without collecting supplemental data (i.e. data not immediately available to RES).

4.1. The Centrality of DCFS to the Analysis of Homeless Family Costs

DCFS is to be one of the core County agencies involved in RES's forthcoming homeless family cost report, along with Probation (Juvenile divisions), DPSS, DMH, DPH (Children's Medical Program), DHS and LAHSA.[26] Working with the department to determine the needed data elements for the analysis will be a critical initial task in making preparations for the report.

4.2. Parents with Children in the County's Foster Care System

Table 4a shows the parents in the 2012 entry cohort who were involved in DCFS cases between 2012 and 2014. The table additionally provides annual counts of children in these cases, by subgroup. One factor that stands out immediately is the significantly larger-than-average proportion of homeless clients who had children involved in open DCFS cases.

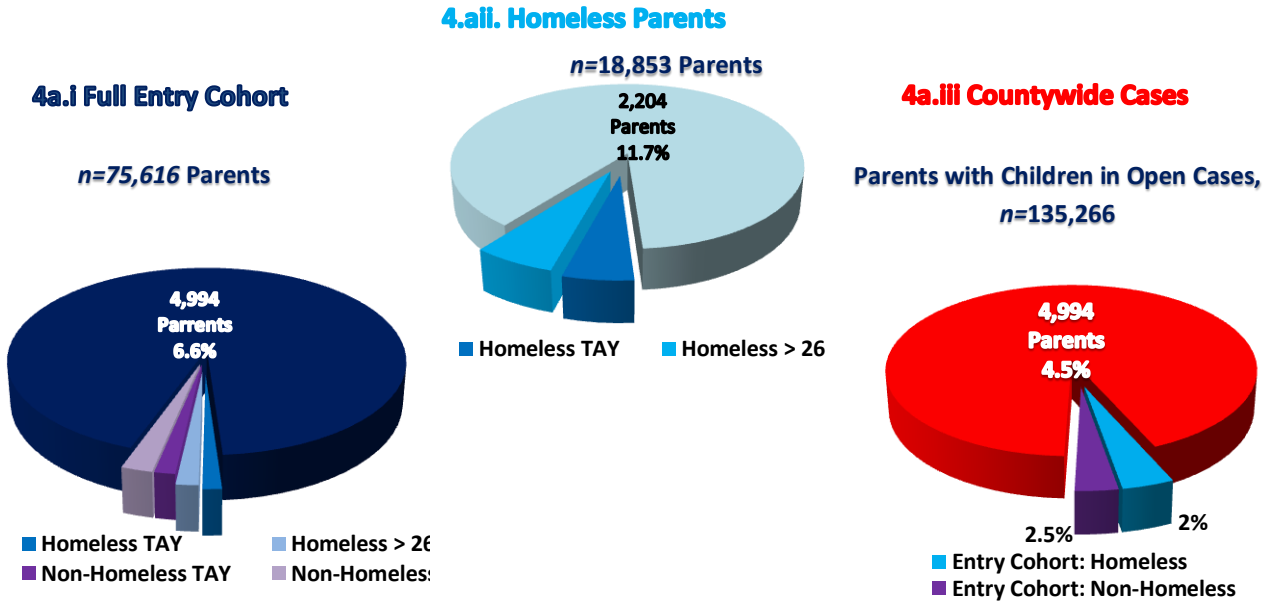
Table 4a. CalWORKs Study Group and DCFS Cases Opened From 2010 through 2014

	# Parents Involved in DCFS Cases	% Group Involved in Open DCFS Cases	DCFS Cases		# Children involved in Open DCFS Cases	Average # Children per Parent*
			Newly Opened 2010-2014	Total *Open* 2010-2014		
All Homeless Parents	**2,204**	**11.7**	**4,294**	**4,867**	**4,412**	**2.0**
Homeless TAY	1,015	11.2	1,863	2,058	1,906	1.9
Homeless >26 years old	1,189	14.0	2,431	2,809	2,506	2.1
All Non-Homeless Parents	**2,790**	**4.9**	**5,494**	**6,091**	**5,590**	**2.0**
Non-Homeless TAY	1,112	5.3	1,925	2,011	1,938	1.7
Non-Homeless >26	1,678	4.8	1,558	4,080	3,652	2.2
All TAY	2,127	7.1	3,788	4,149	3,844	1.8
Total Entry Cohort	**4,994**	**6.6**	**9,788**	**10,958**	**10,002**	**2.0**

Figure 4a.i shows that 6.6% of the 2012 CalWORKs entry cohort had children in open DCFS cases over five years. Figure 4a.ii shows that roughly 1 in 9 parents in the entry cohort's homeless subpopulation had children in child protective cases over the same period. Figure 4aiii looks at the entry cohort, including its homeless segment, in relation to parents involved in cases countywide over five years, showing that slightly less than 5% of these parents were in the 2012 entry cohort and 2% were in the homeless segment of the entry cohort.

[26] LACOE may also be an important partner in the homeless family cost project, pending conversations the research team intends to have with representatives from the agency.

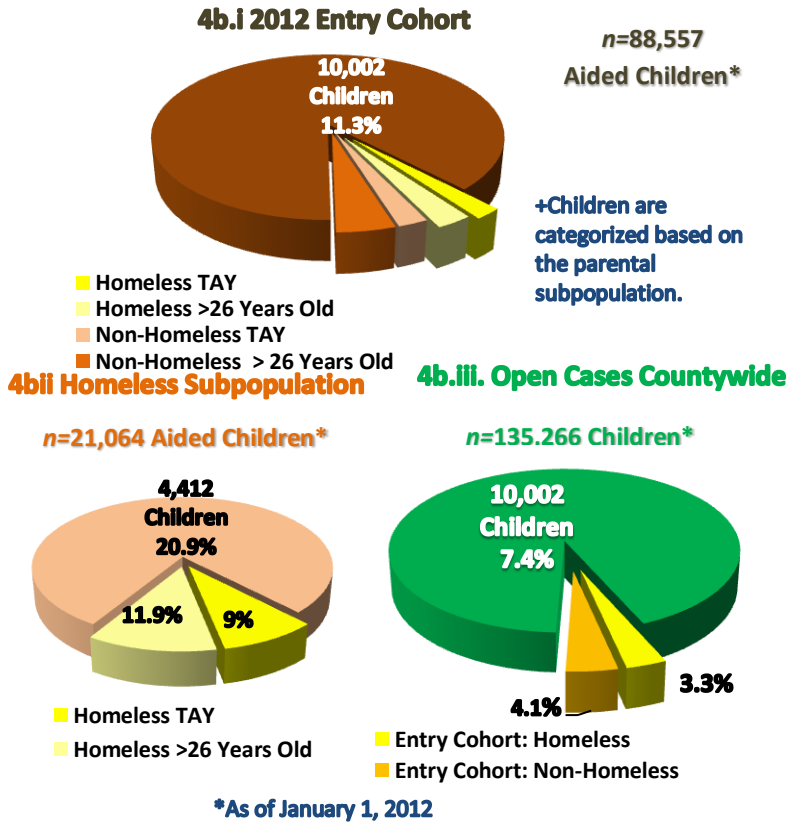
Figure 4a. CalWORKs Entry Cohort Parents with Children in Child Protective Cases, 2010-2014



4.3. Entry Cohort Children in DCFS Cases

Figure 4b provides similar information for children attached to the parents shown in Figure 4a. Figure 4bi shows that roughly 1 in 9 entry cohort children became involved in a child protective case over the five years of observation. Additionally, whereas less than 12% of the homeless parents in the entry cohort were involved in DCFS cases, Figure 4bii shows that their children comprise more than one-fifth of the entry cohort children attached to the homeless subpopulation. In total, approximately 10,000 entry cohort children received services through DCFS over five years. These children, 44% of whom were attached to parents identified as being homeless when they initiated receipt of CalWORKs, constitute 7.4% of those who were served by DCFS between 2010 and 2014 (4b.iii).

Figure 4b. CalWORKs Entry Cohort Children Involved in Child Protective Cases 2,010-2014s+



Almost 12% of the homeless parents in the entry cohort had children in open DCFS cases over the five-year observation period. These children comprise slightly more than one-fifth of the aided children attached to the homeless subgroup (4,412 of 21,064 aided children). By comparison, less than 5% of the non-homeless segment had children in DCFS cases and they account for 8.3% of the children attached to the full non-homeless subpopulation (5,590 of 67,493). More refined analysis is needed to draw strong conclusions, but the initial impression (i.e. the basis for a hypothesis) is that parental spell of homelessness makes encounters with the County's Foster Care system more likely. At the same time, however, TAY parents are the most likely to be involved with DCFS regardless of whether or not they experience a period of homeless.

4.4. DCFS Cases Opened Annually

Between 2010 and 2013, the number of newly-opened DCFS cases per year involving parents in the homeless subgroup increased by 72% (from 621 to 1,068, Figure 4c). Clients in the *homeless* TAY subset accounted for 72% of this increase. Moreover, roughly two fifths of the newly-opened cases linked to homeless parents in the entry cohort over the five years of observation involved TAY parents (1,863 of 4,294 cases). The proportion is lower but significant nevertheless among the non-homeless subpopulation (1,925 of 5,494 cases, 55.3%).

Figure 4c. DCFS Cases Opened Annually, 2010 -2014, by CalWORKs Entry Cohort Subgroup

Total Cases: Homeless Parents, *n*=4,294 Non-Homeless Parents, *n*=5,494, Overall, *n*=9,788

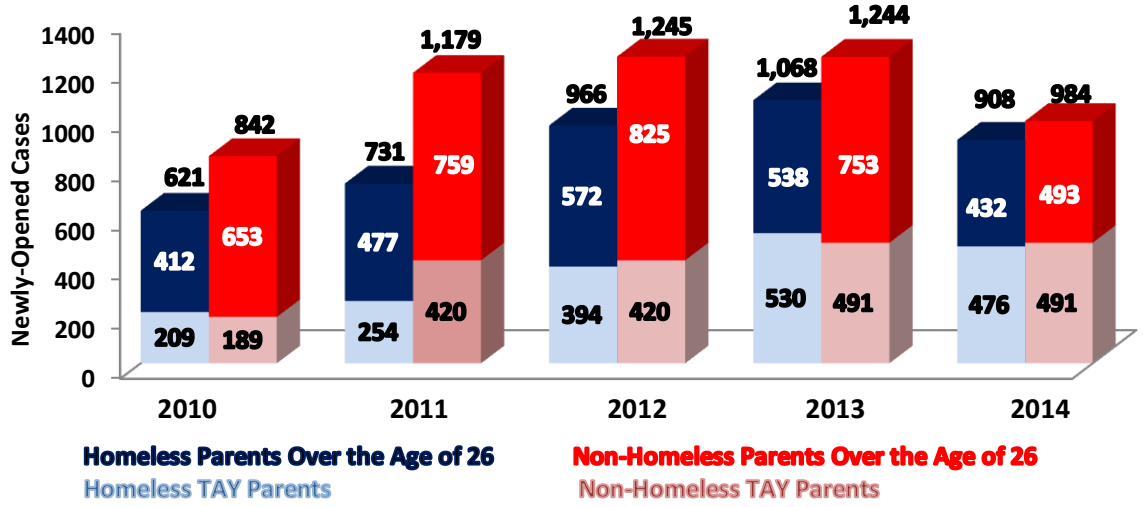
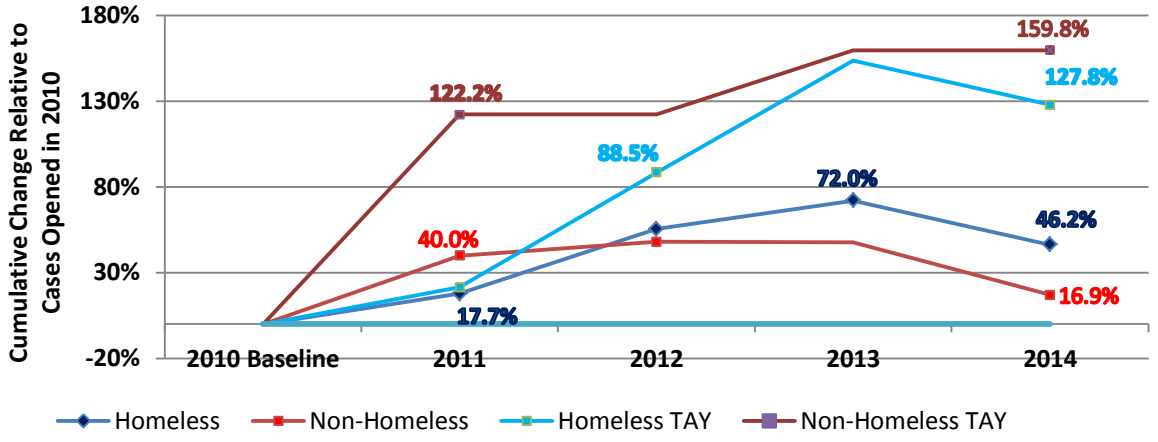


Figure 4d amplifies the extent to which the likelihood of involvement with DCFS increases when at least one of the parents is TAY. The percentages shown are cumulative relative to the number of newly-opened cases for the entry cohort and its subpopulations in 2010 (*n*=1,463 cases overall). For the homeless and non-homeless parents in the cohort, the peaks achieved in 2013 decline to roughly 46% and 17% respectively by the end of the observation period. While these are significant increases, the figure shows that the TAY subsets within these populations are the primary source of encounters with DCFS. The count of cases involving homeless TAY parents in 2014 (476) represents

an increase of approximately 128% in relation to the 2010 baseline (209). Those involving non-homeless TAY parents in 2014 (491) represent an increase of roughly 160% relative to 2010 (189).

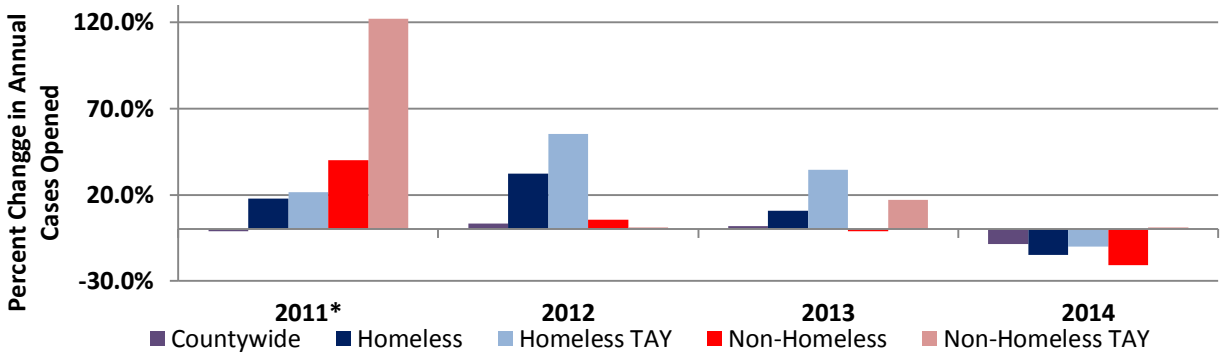
Figure 4d. Percentage Change in Newly Opened DCFS Cases 2011-2014, Relative to 2010 Baseline*



***The percentages are based on the parents involved in the cases.**

Figure 4e indicates that, by comparison with the full Countywide universe of DCFS cases opened , the homeless and TAY segments of the 2012 CalWORks entry cohort were considerably more volatile in terms of annual fluctuations in the number of cases opened. Significant increases in cases are observed for the cohort's homeless parents, particularly those in the TAY subset, in each year from 2010 to 2013, followed by a fairly sharp decline between 2013 and 2014. Cases involving the non-homeless parents in the cohort increased by about one-third between 2010 and 2011, which includes the 122% increase among the TAY parents in this subgroup discussed above, followed by less dramatic fluctuations in subsequent years. From a Countywide perspective, annually-opened cases remained effectively flat over the observation period.

Figure 4e. Annual Change in the Number of DCFS Cases Opened, Entry Cohort and Countywide



DCFS Cases Opened Annually

% change relative to 2010	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	5-yr total*
CalWORKs Homeless	**621**	**731**	**966**	**1,068**	**908**	**4,294**
CalWORKs Homeless TAY	209	254	394	530	476	1,863
CalWORKs Non-Homeless	**842**	**1,179**	**1,245**	**1,244**	**984**	**5,494**
CalWORKs Non-Homeless TAY	189	420	420	491	491	2,011
Full Entry Cohort	**1,463**	**1,910**	**2,211**	**2,312**	**1,892**	**9,788**
Countywide	**22,378**	**22,270**	**23,026**	**23,490**	**21,523**	**112,687**

4.5. The Duration of DCFS Cases

An examination of the duration of DCFS cases involving parents in the 2012 CalWORKs entry cohort raises key questions about how to structure the homeless family cost study. The CalWORKs-DCFS data match results produced for the present report show that roughly four-fifths of entry cohort cases opened in 2010 were closed five years later (1,178 of 1,463). The average duration of these closed cases was 21.35 months, or one year, 9 months and almost 11 days. Inversely, close to 85% of the cohort cases with a much shorter observation window – e.g. 1,597 of the 1,892 cases opened in 2014 – remained open at the end of the year. More than half the study group cases opened in 2013 (1,272 of 2,312, 53.3%) were closed at the end of the observation period. However, these findings do not control for the varied points in time at which cases are started A survival analysis was therefore conducted to produce more robust information on the duration of DCFS cases involving study group parents.

The survival curve produced for the all DCFS cases involving the 2012 entry cohort parents indicates that 25% of these cases close after 10 months. At 17 months, half the cases close. After 31 months, 75% of the cases close. Cases involving the cohort's homeless parents took between three and four months longer to close. However, the reasons for this are not immediately clear insofar DCFS is legally prevented from assuming custody of children of homeless parents. Additionally, cases involving TAY parents took about one month longer to close. The survival analysis plots are shown in the technical appendix (Tables A2 and A3.)The appendix additionally discusses the significance of the duration of DCFS cases for the homeless family cost report.

5. Sheriff's Department Arrests

In this section, we examine arrests among parents in the homeless segment of the 2012 entry cohort. The patterns are examined in relation to non-homeless parents in the entry cohort and to single-adult arrestees in RES's previously-released homeless cost report. Jail stays are not examined here but, as a primary driver of Sheriff's Department costs, analysis of jail stay durations will be a key component of the law enforcement analysis in the forthcoming homeless families cost report.

5.1. Arrests and Recidivism over Five Years

Table 5a shows arrests and re-arrests among the different subpopulations within the 2012 entry cohort over a period of five years. Roughly 1 in 6 parents in the homeless segment of the cohort were arrested within the 2010 through 2014 observation window (16.9%). Half the homeless parents arrested were TAY when they initiated their receipt of CalWORKs benefits in 2012. The difference separating homeless from non-homeless parents with respect to the proportion of persons arrested in each group over five years is noteworthy but not unexpected. Similarly, the arrest rate of 0.20 for the homeless group – which means that approximately one arrest was made for every five of these parents in the subpopulation (n=18,853) - is double the rate observed for parents in the non-homeless subpopulation (*n*=56,763). The recidivism rates across all the subpopulations within the entry cohort are similar and indicate that between roughly 1 in 5 or 1 in 6 persons arrested in each group was arrested more than once over five years.

Table 5a. Entry Cohort Arrests, Re-Arrests, and Jail Stays, 2010 -2014

CalWORKs Parents	Arrestees	% of Group^	Arrests	Arrest Rate+	Persons Re-Arrested*	Re-Arrests^^	Recidivism Rate++
All Homeless	**3,189**	**16.9**	**3,804**	**0.20**	**546**	**615**	**0.17**
Homeless TAY	1,594	17.7	1,910	0.21	285	316	0.18
Homeless >26 yo	1,595	18.8	1,894	0.22	261	299	0.19
All Non-Homeless	**4,700**	**8.3**	**5,638**	**0.10**	**825**	**938**	**0.16**
Non-Homeless TAY	2,205	10,5	1,889	0.09	405	463	0.18
Non-Homeless > 26 yo	2,495	7.1	2,668	0.08	420	475	0.17
Overall TAY	3.799	12.6	4,578	0.15	690	779	0.18
Entry Cohort Total	**7.899**	**10.4**	**9.442**	**0.13**	**1,371**	**1,553**	**0.20**

^The denominators for these match rates are the number of unique individuals in the row category, which are shown in Table 2.

+ The arrest rate is calculated by dividing the number of arrests by population ount of persons in the row population as shown in Table 2.

*A person who is arrested more than once within the five year observation period is counted in this table as a *person re-arrested.*

^^Re-arrests are all arrests after an initial arrest within the five year observation window

++Recidivism rate can refer to a number of different measures. In this table the rate is calculated by dividing the number of persons rearrested by the number of persons arrested and is a measure of the degree to which persons in the given row populations are arrested more than once in the five year observation period.

5.2. Comparison with Single Adults

Figure 5a shows arrestees among the homeless parents in the 2012 CalWORKs entry cohort (5a.i) and among RES's FY 2014-15 study population of homeless single adults (5aii).[27] Notwithstanding differences in the processes and applied criteria involved in building each study population, as well as the sizes of each group, the different degrees to which each group has encounters with LASD underscores the importance of approaching homeless families as a population that will likely have distinct patterns of service use. The 2012 arrest rate of 0.033 (619 arrests within a population of 18,853, not shown) is four times smaller than the 0.13 FY 2014-15 arrest rate for the single adult population.[28] However, 2012 does not appear to be a typical year insofar as a sharp decline in arrests is observed both within the CalWORKs entry cohort and Countywide.

Figure 5a Adults in Two Homeless Study Populations Arrested Over a Period of 12 Months in

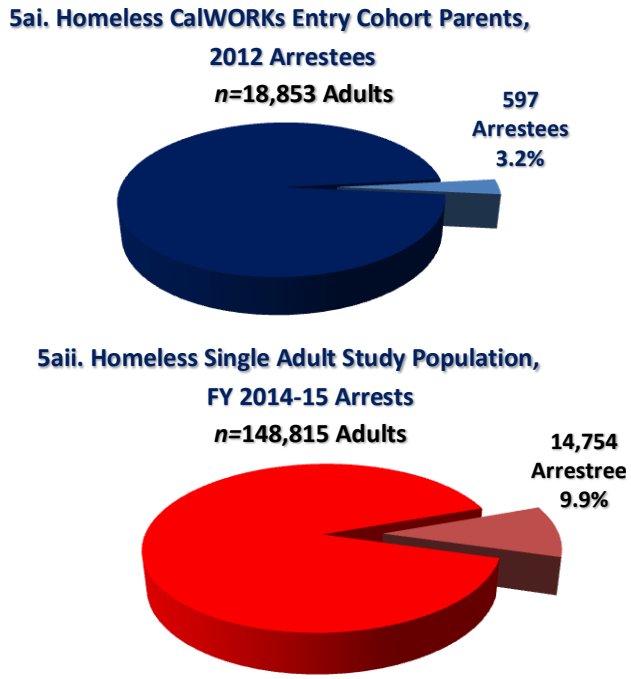


Figure 5b.Percentage Change in Arrests over Previous Year, CalWORKs Entry Cohort and Countywide 2010-2014

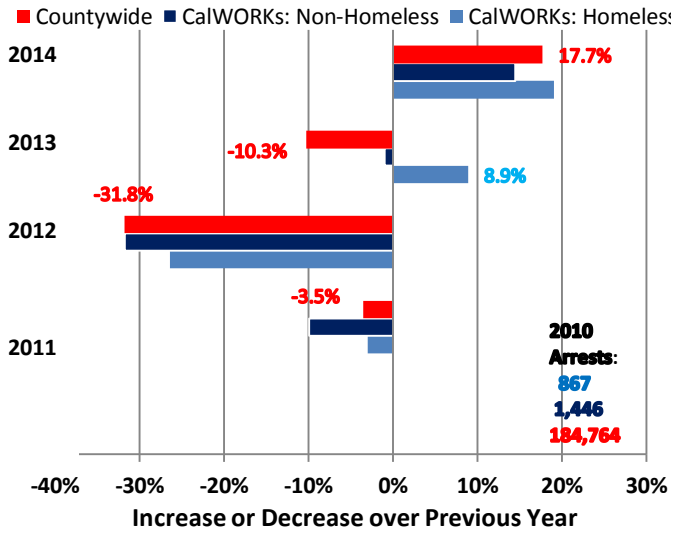


Figure 5b shows the percentage change in the number of LASD arrests in each successive year between 2010 and 2014 Countywide and for the homeless and non-homeless subpopulation within the 2012 CalWORKs adult entry cohort. Sharp decreases are observed for all three populations in 2012, which is likely a reflection of the passage and implementation of AB 109. In 2013, arrests among homeless parents in the entry cohort increased by about 9% over the previous year, while the more general trend countywide was a continuation of the decreases observed from 2010 through 2012.

An alternative comparison with single adults - one that accounts for the changing policy conditions in 2012 - is to use the average proportion of the CalWORKs populations arrested per year over the five year observation period and the average annual arrest rate. Making the comparison on this basis, however, does little to alter the overall distinction observed between the two populations. Moreover, the

[27] Similarly to the analytical approach taken in comparing use of health services earlier in this report, 2012 is chosen as the year of observation for the CalWORKs population because this was the year DPSS that placed these parents in the homeless subpopulation based on indicators in the CalWORKs data.

[28] LASD made 19,433 arrests of adults in RES's single adult study population (*n*=148,815*)* in FY 2014-15.

comparison is based on 2012 since this is the only year for which we have readily-available data indicating that the homeless-parent subpopulation experienced at least one spell of homelessness.[29]

5.3. Comparisons within the CalWORKs Entry Cohort

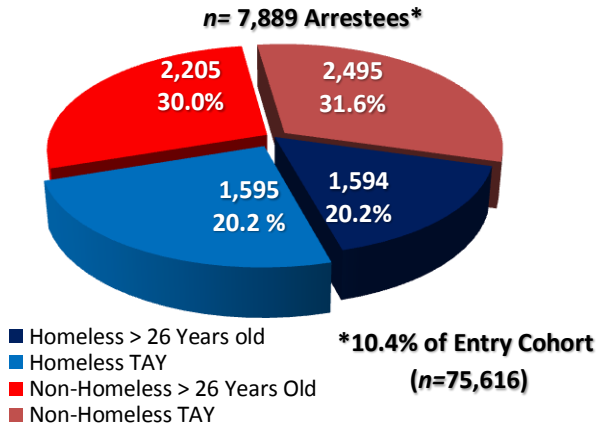
Figure 5c shows the distribution of entry cohort parents who were LASD arrestees over the five-year period of observation. Roughly 1 in 10 parents in the full cohort were arrested between 2010 and 2014. As is reflected in their comparatively high arrest rates shown in Table 5a, parents who DPSS identified as being homeless in 2012 comprise about one quarter of the entry cohort but account for roughly 40% of the cohort's arrestees (5ci) Additionally, as shown in Figure 5c.ii and 5ciii, while roughly 1 in 12 of the non-homeless parents were arrested in five years, the proportion is double among the entry cohort's homeless parents..

5.4. Implications for the Forthcoming Cost Report

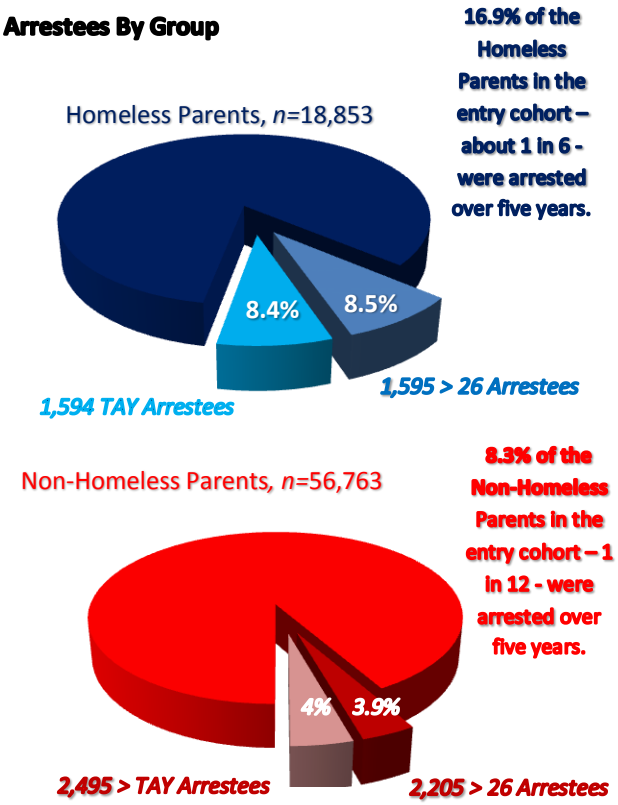
Homeless parents are arrested by LASD on a less frequent basis than homeless single adults, but in the proportional terms expressed in arrest rates these parents are arrested with greater frequency than non-homeless parents. Within the universe of families touching the County's law enforcement agencies, it is therefore reasonable to infer that homeless parents are the population's heaviest users of the County's jail system.[30] Along with the comparative DCFS-related results summarized in the previous section, the findings presented here suggest that law enforcement will be a key component in the analysis of the costs associated with family homelessness. It is important to re-emphasize in this regard that Probation was not included in the analysis for this report but will be critical to the forthcoming report and the resulting cost estimates.

Figure 5c. Arrestees in the CalWORKs Entry Cohort, 2010 - 2014

5c.i. Arrestees Overall



5c.ii. Arrestees By Group



[29]The average annual proportion arrested within the homeless parent subpopulation from 2010 through 2014 is 3.9%, which is higher than the 2012 proportion by only seven-tenths of one percentage point. While the average annual arrest rate for the same population and period is higher than the 2012 rate alone by 24% (.041 for five years versus .033 for the one year) but is still three times smaller than the arrest rate for the single adult study population used for RES's homeless cost study.

[30] A total of 3,474 of the arrests involving the homeless parents in the CalWORKs entry cohort (91.3%) led to stays in jail.

Appendix

Controlling for Time Sensitivity: Survival Curves for the Entry Cohort's DCFS Cases

Analysis of the duration of DCFS cases over a fixed period of is necessarily time sensitive. A case started in January of a given year has a higher probability of closing by the end of the year than a case that opens in November, and the duration of cases with a maximum observation window of five years – i.e. those opened in 2010 and observed until they close or for five years, whichever comes first – will skew towards longer durations when compared to cases with a maximum observation window of three years, all else being equal. Survival methods apply statistical controls to neutralize the confounding effects of differentiated entry times – in this case the start dates of the observed DCFS cases – thereby providing a more reliable set of estimates for how long the DCFS cases were typically open during the study period, as well as information on the effects of age, homelessness, and the receipt of cash aid on the length of a case. An added advantage of these methods is that they feature procedures that enable the assimilation of cases with blank end dates in the data, which typically appear in data either because the cases are ongoing at the time the data are collected or if there are data quality issues that create either missing values or nonsensical start and end dates (e.g. cases recorded with dates in the future or with end dates that come before the start date).

Figure A1. Survival Curve: All Entry Cohort Cases Opened between 2010 and 2014, *n*=9,788 Cases

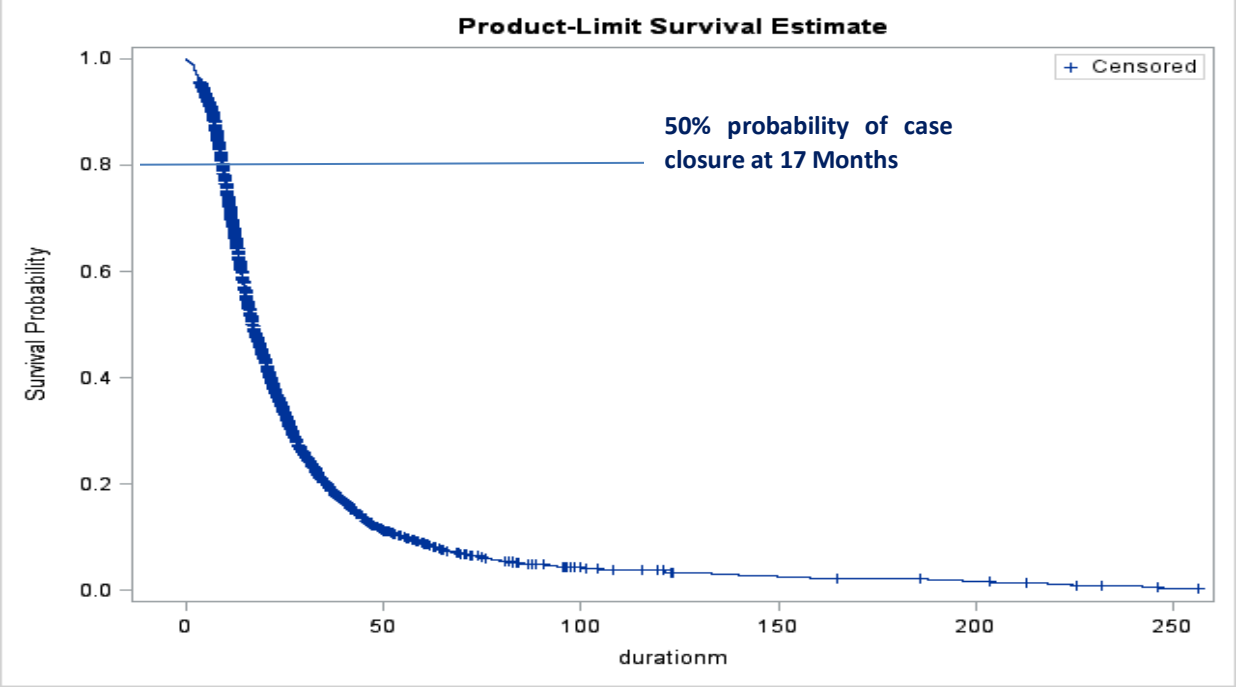


Figure A2 shows the survival curves for cases started before and after the initiation of cash assistance in 2012. The test coefficient is 12.56 (P<0.01), indicating that cases started after the start of cash receipt were closed more quickly.[31] Figure A3 shows the difference between cases involving homeless and non-

[31] In conducting the analysis of case duration relative to the initiation of cash receipt, we assumed that start dates for receiving aid would be randomly distributed across the 78,191. However, more analytical precision would be gained if duration of the DCFS case at this level were linked to the actual mm/dd/yy cash aid start date in LEADER.

homeless clients in the study group. Cases are longer when they involve homeless parents (test coefficient=161.45, P<0.01).

Figure A2. Survival Curves:
Entry Cohort DCFS Cases Parsed by whether they were opened before or after the Initiation of CalWORKs Benefits

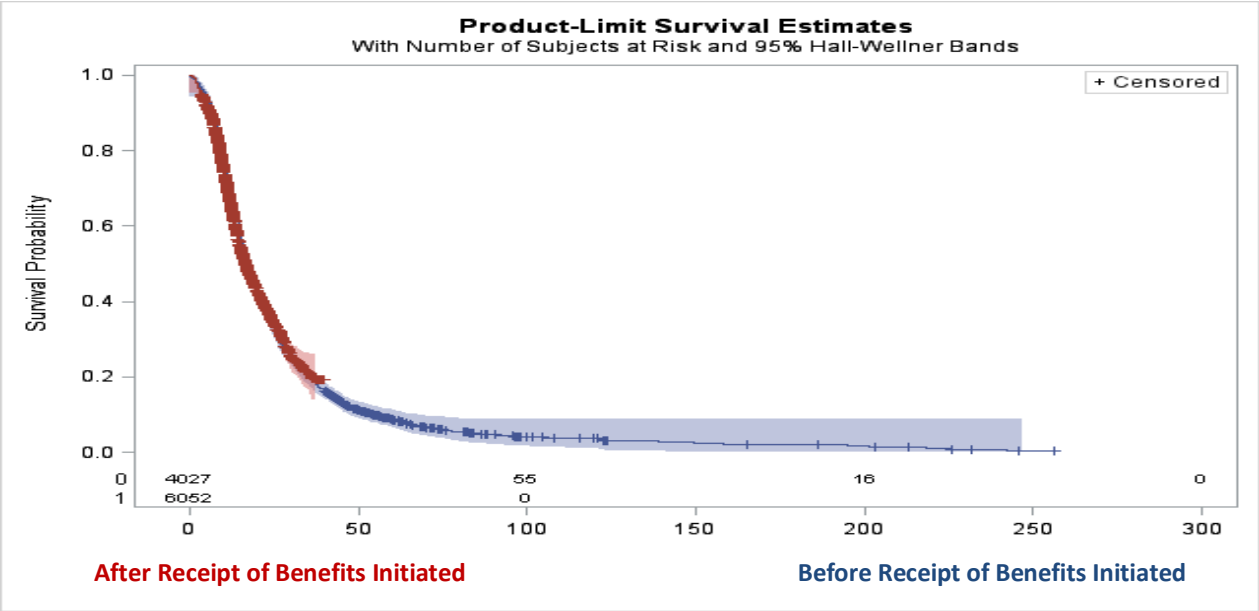
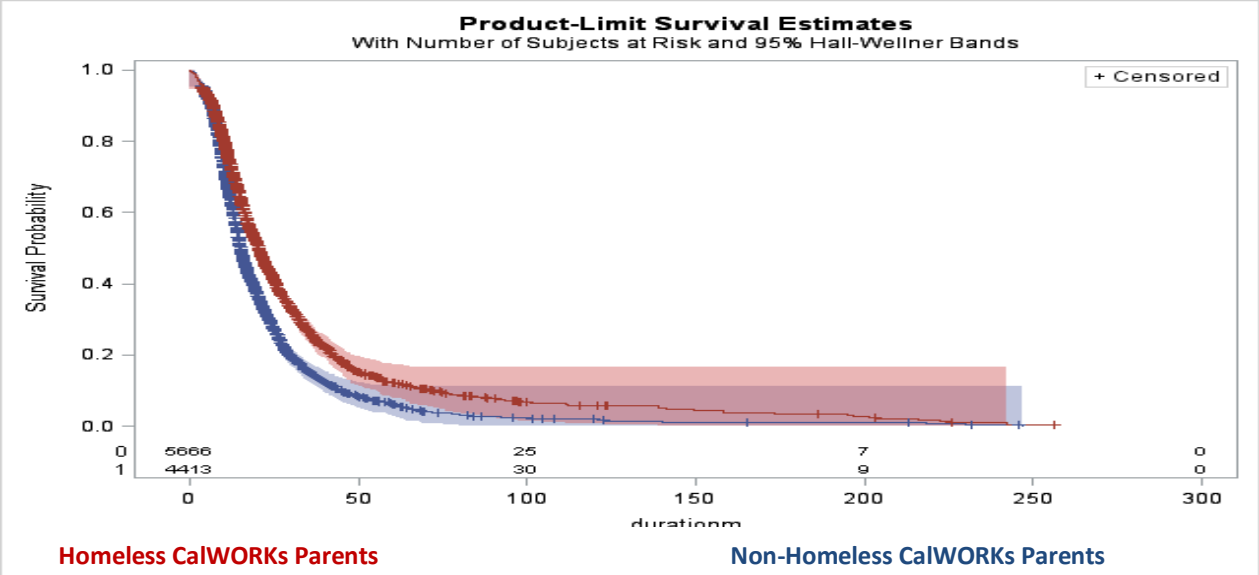



Figure A3. Survival Curves:
DCFS Cases Parsed by the Homeless and Non-Homeless Parents in the Entry Cohort