

City of Portland
Health and Human Services Department
Social Services Division

Family Shelter Program
Year End Report
FY 2011

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FY 2011 Year End Report**

Who We Are

The City of Portland’s Health & Human Services Department, Social Services Division operates the Family Shelter, which is the largest shelter for families in the State of Maine. The Family Shelter offers both preventative services for families at risk of experiencing homelessness and support services to assist families locate housing and achieve stability.

Preventative Family Services

Through crisis intervention, case management and advocacy, the preventative segment of our program was instrumental in preventing homelessness for 78 families this year consisting of 242 individuals. Through phone consultation we were able to assist additional families with preventative services such as advocating with their town of residency, landlord/ tenant negotiations and family reunification. An additional 91 families received assistance through phone referrals.

| <i>FY 07</i> | <i>FY 08</i> | <i>FY 09</i> | <i>FY 10</i> | <i>FY 11*</i> |
|---|---|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| <i>89 families/ 249 individuals</i> | <i>86 families/ 264 individuals</i> | <i>55 families/ 147 individuals</i> | <i>78 families/ 242 individuals</i> | <i>16 families/47 Individuals</i> |

**In FY 2011 preventative services to homeless families were provided through the *Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP). This project is funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.*

Shelter Services

The Family Shelter provides temporary housing to families with children under the age of eighteen (18). The shelter is located at 54 - 56 Chestnut Street. Administrative and support services staff are located on the first floor of 54 Chestnut Street. Shelter apartments are located at 54 - 56 Chestnut Street, including one handicap accessible unit. Combined, we have a total capacity of seventy-seven (77) beds in an apartment style living environment. Apartments are shared by families and are furnished with beds, bureaus, kitchen tables and chairs. Residents have access to telephones, cleaning supplies, transportation and other basic needs accessed through the City’s General Assistance Program. Upon entrance into the shelter, each family member is assigned a Case Manager who works with families to develop self-sufficiency work plans, which will lead to permanent housing.

Support Services provided on-site include:

- **Housing Location**
Case Managers provide assistance with housing placement, including transitional, subsidized housing, and market rents.

- **Cultural Skills**
Cultural Skills Training is provided both on an individual and group level. Specialized training includes Welcome Orientations, Adjusting to American Culture, Winter Issues, and other basic life skills.
- **Household Items**
Cleaning supplies and household items, such as sheets, pillows and blankets are provided. Shelter staff provides training on basic hygiene and household cleanliness. Each unit is supplied with pots, pans, baking and cooking utensils, dishes, glasses/cups, silverware, other needed kitchen utensils and towels, as necessary.
- **House Meetings**
Staff and families meet weekly to discuss issues that may arise from multiple families sharing living space at the Shelter. These meetings also provide a forum for reviewing rules, procedures and gather consumer input.
- **Case Management Services**
Crisis intervention and case management services are provided which include counseling, referrals to available resources and advocacy.
- **Laundry Services**
The Family Shelter has two separate laundry areas for client use. There are two washers & dryers located at 54 Chestnut and a washer & dryer at 55 Chestnut.
- **Transportation**
Bus tickets are available for families to attend appointments pertaining to their self-sufficiency plan.
- **Follow-Up Services**
Consumers who are placed in housing are offered follow-up services for 90 days. Family Shelter Case Managers meet with families 1-2 times per month and work on issues such as landlord/tenant negotiations, accessing community resources, accessing General Assistance, preventing evictions, and working toward securing more affordable housing.

Follow-Up Case Management

The Family Shelter Staff have focused a great deal of attention on follow-up case management services this past year. Family Shelter Case Managers follow-up with families once per month or more, if needed. Follow-up case management services consist of assisting consumer's with their budget; landlord/tenant negotiations; connecting to area resources; assist with accessing General Assistance; preventing evictions; and applying for affordable/subsidized housing. This past year 251 families were sheltered and only 15 families returned for a second stay for a 6% recidivism rate, which is an decrease of 2% when compared to last year . Of the 251 families that were sheltered, 209 or 83% received follow-up case management services for at least one month after they secured housing.

Follow-Up Case Histories

The Family Shelter staff conducted follow-up case management services to the majority of shelter residents who were placed in permanent housing during the past year. Below are two successful follow-up scenarios:

A Portland mother of 2 young children entered the shelter in the winter time because of an eviction. Mom was battling against cancer just prior to entering the shelter and was in remission. The shelter staff was able to secure a Housing Choice Voucher (Formerly Section 8) for the family and successfully housed her and continues to be housed.

A refugee mother of 2 young children, one of whom was very ill entered the shelter during the fall. Family Shelter staff connected the family quickly with the Portland Community Health Center for health needs. Once the young child received the proper care, Family Shelter was able to secure the family a 2-bedroom apartment and connect them with other needed services.

Secondary Migrant Refugees

The Family Shelter also serves as an unofficial Welcome House for New Mainers or secondary migrant refugees. New Mainers often arrived in Maine without resources or housing, speaking limited or no English. They initially presented themselves in Portland as homeless. Secondary migrants tend to have very large families.

Each family is referred to the Division's Refugee Services Program and assigned to a multi-lingual Case Manager. A full range of case management services are provided for a period of three months. All services are offered to persons with limited English speaking abilities. Employment Case Managers provide assistance, information, and referrals for employment, education and training opportunities. Cultural skills training are offered on an individual and group level. Workshops address cultural orientation, understanding systems, adjusting to Maine winters, building a household, health and safety, money management and budgeting.

This year, the Family Shelter provided housing for 46 refugee families consisting of 189 individuals. This number represents 23% of the total number of individuals residing in the Shelter in FY 2011. This fiscal year, we have experienced a decrease of 46% in the number of refugees residing at the Shelter compared to last fiscal year.

This year the Family Shelter served 14 families/42 individuals who entered the Country via B1/B2 visa (visiting visa). All of the families arriving to the shelter indicated that they were seeking asylum from their home country.

Shelter Statistics

This year, the Family Shelter provided housing for 251 families consisting of 806 individuals for a total of 19,774 bed nights. Of the 251 families served, 15 families were homeless two or more occasions during this fiscal year for a 6% homeless recidivism rate.

The Shelter experienced a decrease of 9% in the number of individuals served (heads of household and children) and an increase of 4% in the number of bed nights used. The average length of stay increased from 21.3 days to 24.5 days. Shelter staff continues to excel at locating both subsidized and permanent housing (attachment 1).

Of the 251 families served, 84 families had relocated from other states, 8 families were from other countries, 65 families were from Maine (but not Portland), and 94 families were from Portland. Of the 84 families coming from outside Maine, 65 families were secondary migrant refugee families from several different countries who had originally resettled outside the State of Maine.

Client Characteristics

| <u>Age Range</u> | <u>FY 10</u> | | <u>FY 11</u> | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| | <i>Males</i> | <i>Females</i> | <i>Males</i> | <i>Females</i> |
| <i>1 year old & under</i> | 25 | 21 | 17 | 19 |
| <i>1 – 5 years old</i> | 114 | 102 | 130 | 92 |
| <i>6 – 12 years old</i> | 81 | 90 | 56 | 78 |
| <i>13 – 17 years old</i> | 36 | 32 | 22 | 21 |
| <i>18 – 30 years old</i> | 45 | 176 | 56 | 162 |
| <i>31 – 50 years old</i> | 55 | 99 | 57 | 85 |
| <i>51 – 61 years old</i> | 5 | 3 | 5 | 6 |
| <i>62 + years old</i> | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 362 | 524 | 343 | 463 |

| | <u>FY 10</u> | <u>FY 11</u> |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| <i>Adults</i> | 385 | 371 |
| <i>Children</i> | 501 | 435 |
| Total | 886 | 806 |

| | <u>FY 10</u> | <u>FY 11</u> |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| <i>Veteran</i> | 7 | 0 |
| <i>Non-Veteran Adults</i> | 378 | 371 |
| Total Adults | 385 | 371 |

Reasons for Homelessness

The major reasons for being homeless, as reported by families were as follows:

- *Relocation – The majority of refugees indicated they moved to Portland because they wanted a safe place to raise their children.*
- *Domestic Violence/Family Conflict – Some clients experienced domestic violence and/or family conflict and had to leave their current living situations.*
- *Lack of Affordable Housing – Other clients report having difficulty locating and securing affordable housing.*
- *Failure to pay rent which results in eviction.*

Bell Street Transitional Housing Project

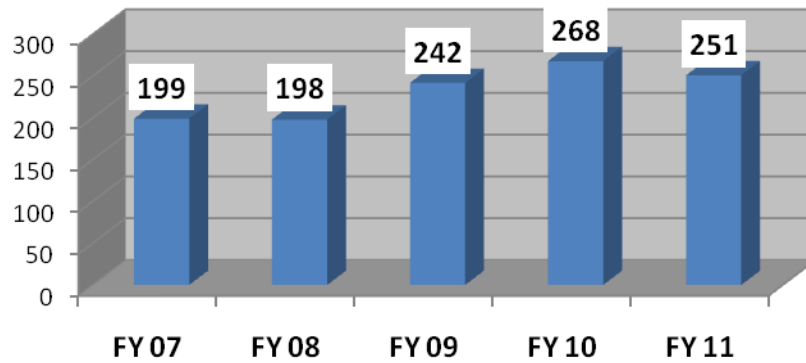
In collaboration with Learning Works, the Social Services Division provides intensive, long-term case management services for four families who reside in apartments on Bell Street in Portland. Eligibility for the Bell Street Transitional Housing Project is contingent upon a family residing in a homeless shelter at the time of their application. This program is funded entirely through a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant.

During the two-year residency, clients work with a Case Manager to develop individual service plans identifying short and long term goals designed to eliminate barriers to self-sufficiency. The plan is reviewed, updated and renewed every 90 days. Residents are expected to pursue education, employment training or employment. An array of support services is made available to these families, which include transportation, subsidized rent, childcare, counseling, social interaction opportunities, school self-esteem boosting activities, medical and dental care as needed.

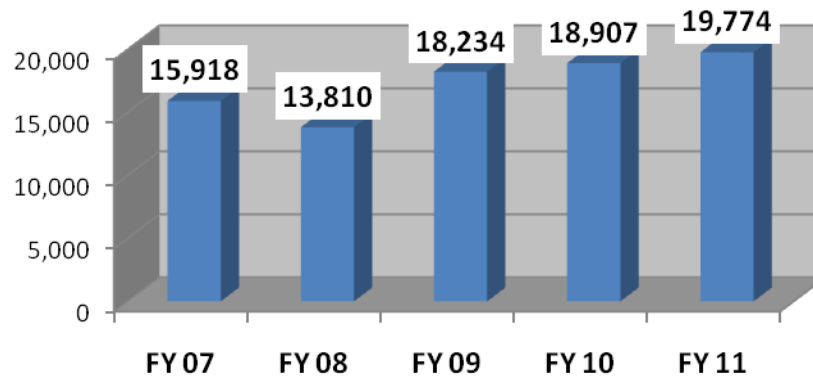
This program has served a total of three (3) families, which consisted of 11 individuals in FY 11. Two (2) families successfully completed the program and began their path towards self-sufficiency by transitioning to permanent housing.

FAMILY SHELTER

Number of Families Served

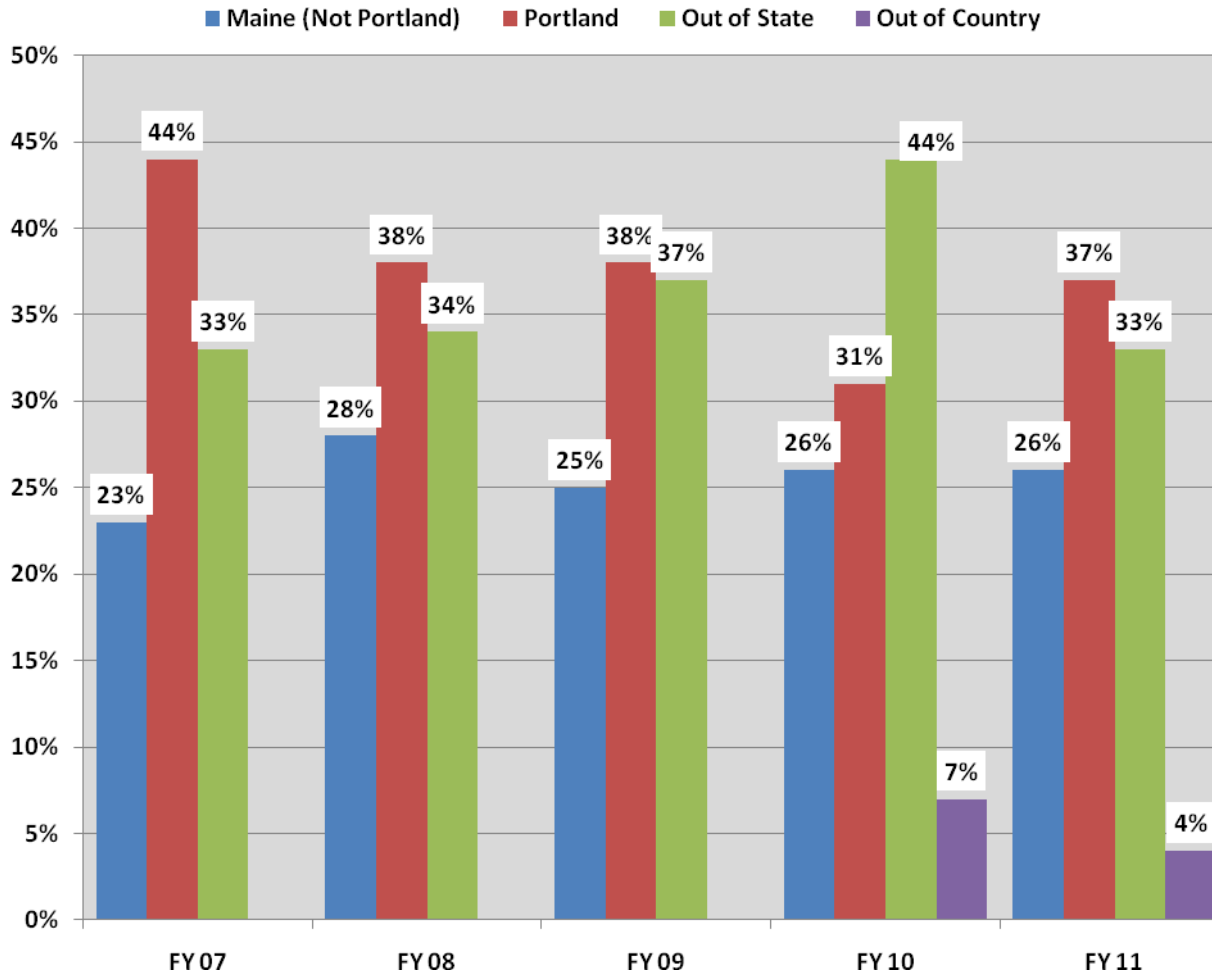


Number of Bed Nights



| Family Shelter Program | FY 07 | FY 08 | FY 09 | FY 10 | FY 11 |
|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Number of Families | 199 | 198 | 242 | 268 | 251 |
| Number of Individuals | 682 | 628 | 822 | 886 | 806 |
| Number of Bed Nights | 15,918 | 13,810 | 18,234 | 18,907 | 19,774 |
| Average Family Size | 3.4 | 3.2 | 3.4 | 3.1 | 3.2 |
| Average Stay (Days) | 23.3 | 21.9 | 22.2 | 21.3 | 24.5 |

FAMILY SHELTER



Residency of New Intakes*
Number of Families

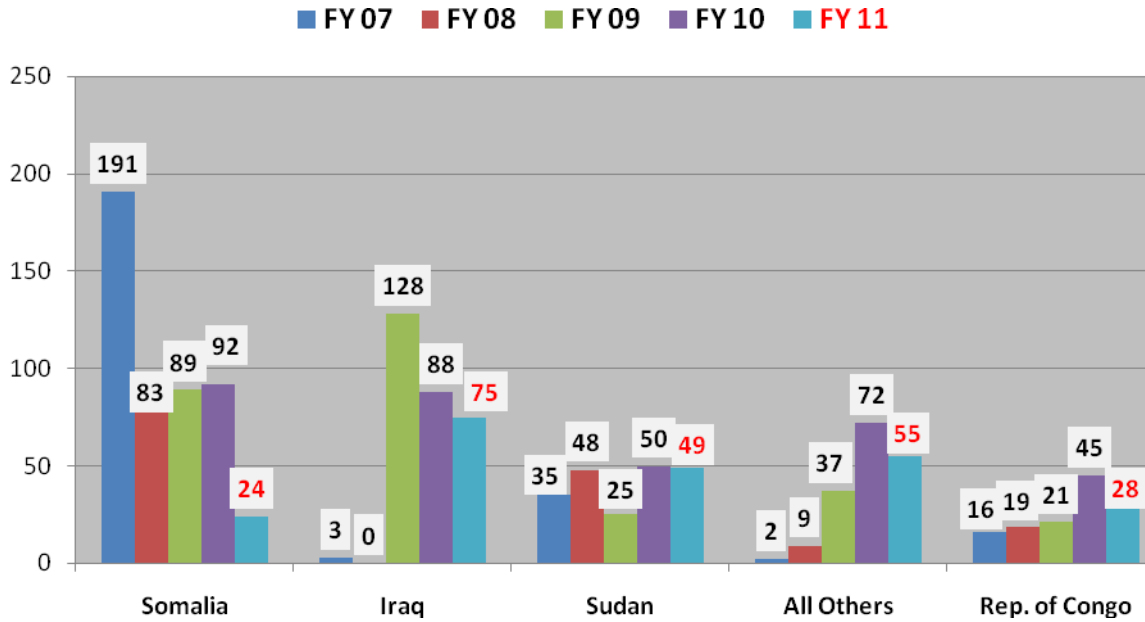
| | FY 07 | FY 08 | FY 09 | FY 10 | FY 11 |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Maine (Not Portland) | 45 | 56 | 60 | 69 | 65 |
| Portland | 88 | 75 | 93 | 82 | 94 |
| Out of State | 66 | 67 | 89 | 97 | 84 |
| *Out of Country | N/A | N/A | N/A | 20 | 8 |

- Based on self-reporting by consumers.
- * FY 10 is the first year tracking out of country families.

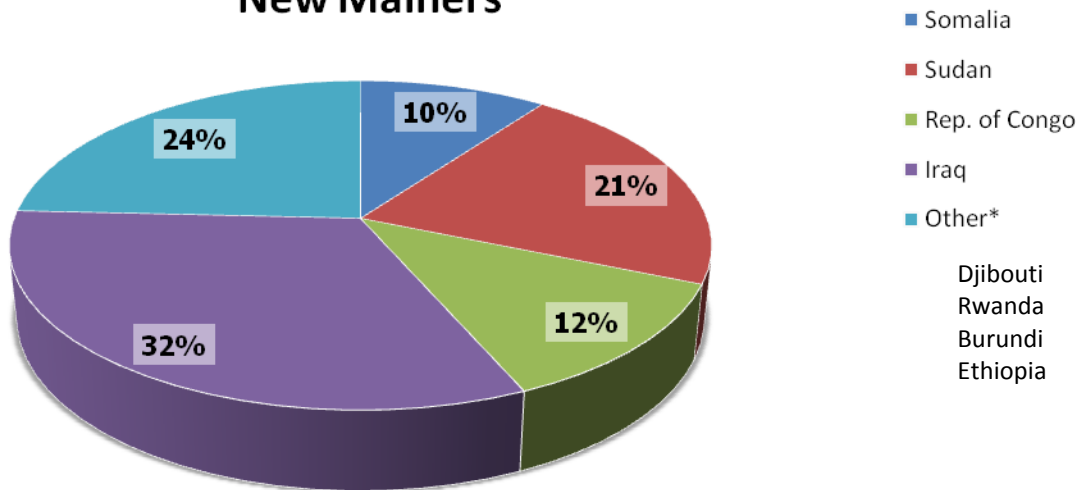
SECONDARY MIGRANT REFUGEES/B1 B2 Visa

A total of 231 individuals, or 29% of all individuals residing in the Shelter

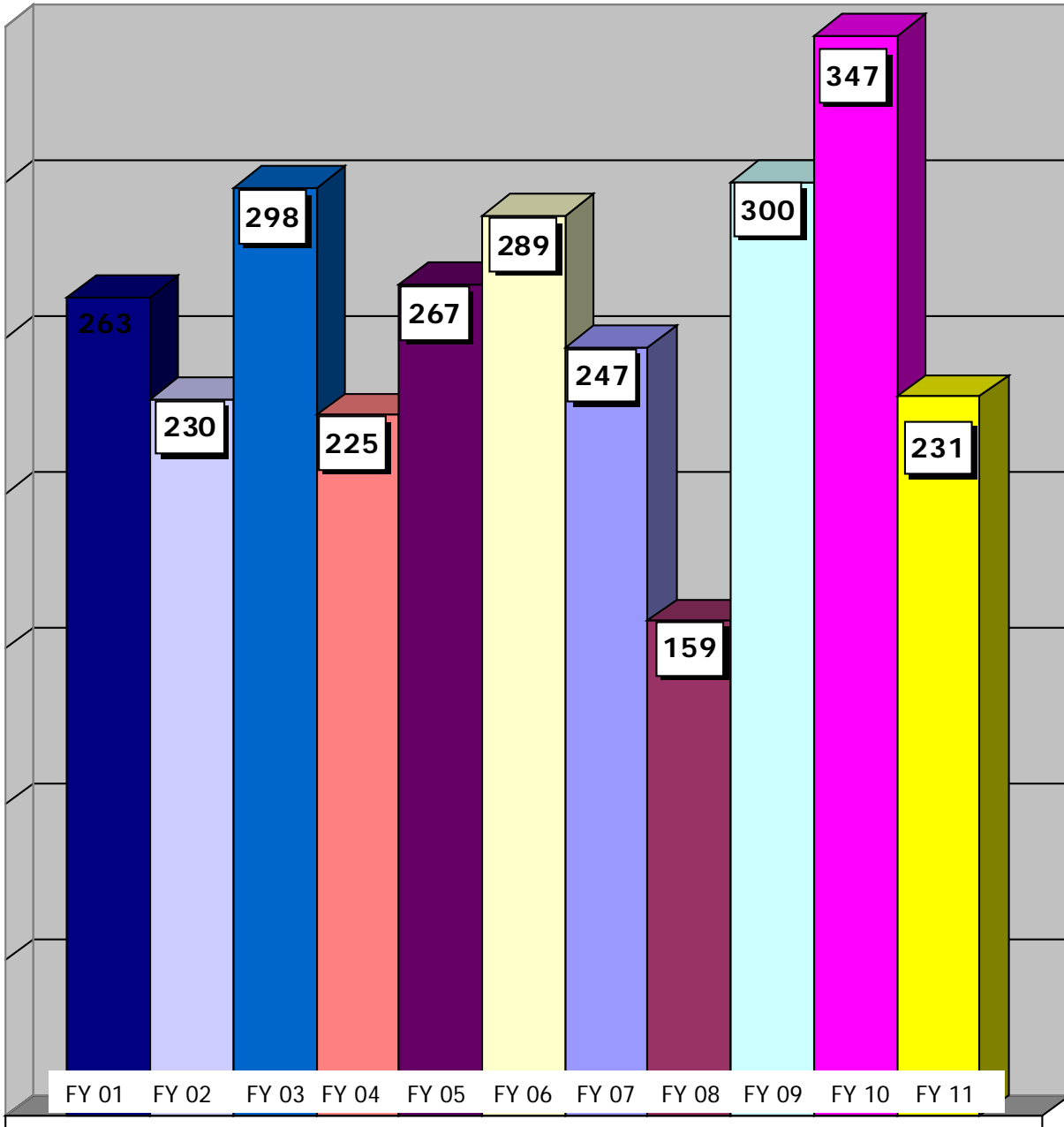
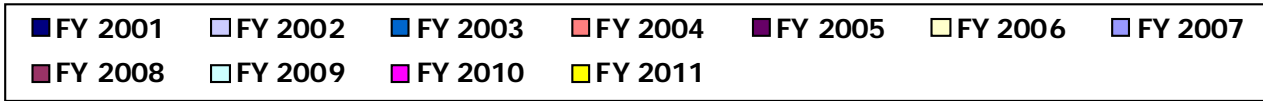
Total Number of New Mainers



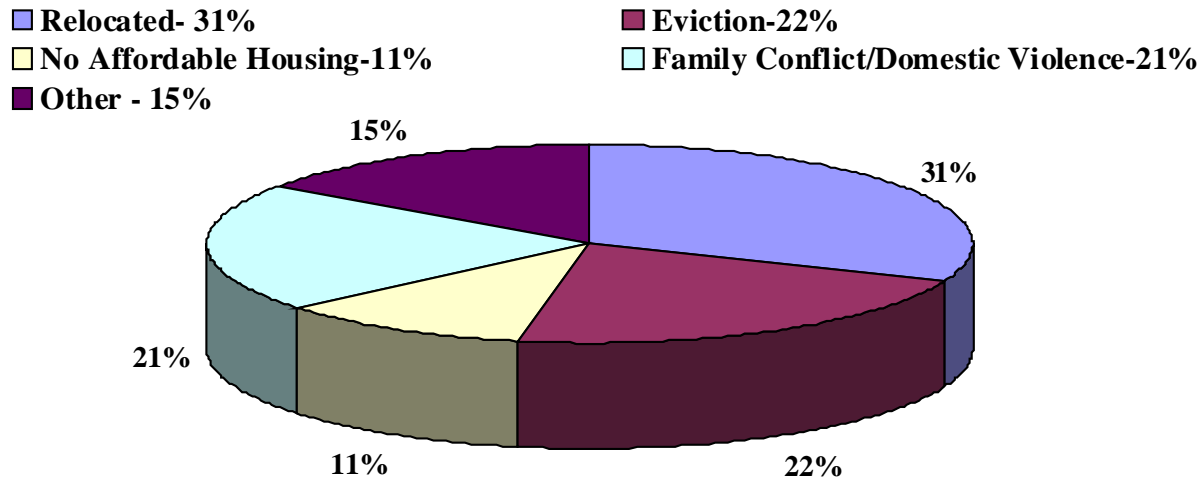
FY 2011 Secondary Migrant Refugees "New Mainers"



**Family Shelter
Secondary Migrant Refugees/B1 B2 Visa
(Individuals)**



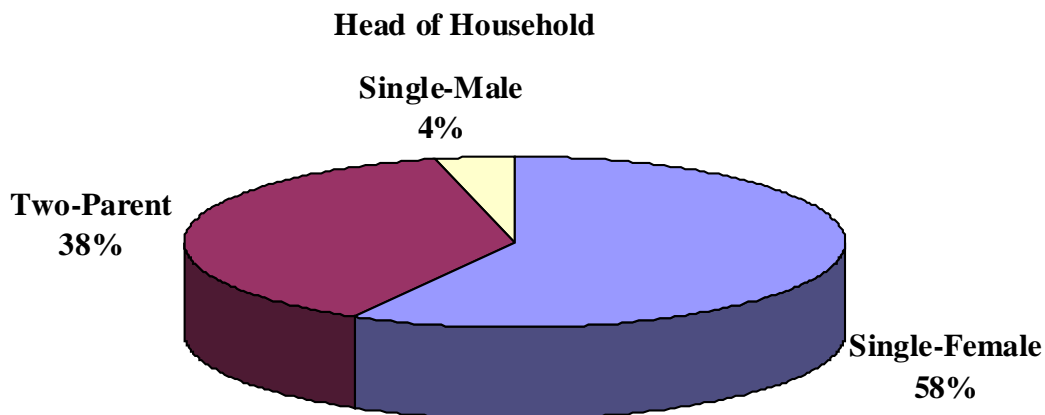
FAMILY SHELTER CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS FY 2011



The above graph represents the primary reasons homeless families utilized the City of Portland Family Shelter in FY 2011.

Estimates of sub-population characteristics experienced by our homeless families are as follows (these estimates reflect individuals who have multiple characteristics):

- Domestic Violence/Family Conflict 40%
- Open Child Protective Cases 45%
- Mental Health/Substance Abuse 55%



The graph above indicated the Head of Household for the 251 families served by the Family Shelter in FY 2011.