

City of Portland
Health and Human Services Department
Social Services Division

Oxford Street Shelter &
Community Overflow Shelters
Year End Report
FY 2013

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Who We Are and What We Do

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

The shelter has a capacity of one hundred and fifty-four (154) if mats are used for sleeping. This year the shelter has experienced a greater number of clients requesting special accommodations due to medical issues which require the use of specialized beds. This has reduced the shelter capacity to an average of one hundred and thirty (130) beds. Hours of operation are Monday-Friday 6:00 PM – 8:00 AM daily, and weekend/holidays from 1:00 PM – 8:00 AM.

The Oxford Street Shelter also operates off-site Community Overflow Shelters at the Preble Street Resource Center which has a capacity of seventy-five (75), General Assistance lobby with a capacity of seventeen (17), and Refugee Services that can seat up to seventy-five (75) while waiting for a bed to open. The Community Overflow Shelter is open daily from 8:00 PM – 7:30 AM.

Oxford Street Shelter services provided on site includes:

- **Shower and Laundry Facilities**
Shower and laundry facilities are provided on site. Shelter staff provide training on basic hygiene skills and laundering procedures.
- **Housing Placement & Referrals**
Human Service Counselors provide assistance with housing placement, including transitional/supportive housing and subsidized housing. Staff are available seven (7) days a week, 1:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. to assist with locating permanent housing.
- **Veteran's Services**
The VA's Portland Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) runs an interdisciplinary health clinic every Tuesday from 4:30 PM—6:30 PM. Veterans Benefits also performs outreach at the shelter on a monthly basis. In June 2013, the city designated a full-time Housing Counselor to serve veterans with the goal of ending veteran homelessness in Portland by 2015. Since 2005, the percentage of veterans at the shelter has been reduced from 25% to under 10%.

- **Veteran Housing Services**

The City of Portland Oxford Street Shelter is a sub-grantee as part of a grant awarded to Preble Street by the Veteran's Administration to help house veterans and their families. In FY 2013, the City component of this grant served to help with processing of client financial assistance, managing VA required Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) data, benefits counseling and housing search and placement activities.

The City benefits Counselor helped dozens of veterans apply for new benefits or increase existing benefits – including direct cash benefits, healthcare, educational and other resources. The City housing liaison helped place 86 homeless veteran households into housing and has developed a strong working relationship with area landlords and property management companies interested in working with veterans.

- **Mental Health**

The new Preble Street Clinical Intervention Program (CLIP) provides clinical and outreach services for individuals with mental health concerns. The city has also assigned a full-time licensed clinical social worker to the shelter for the first time in 2013.

- **Case Work**

Human Services Counselors conduct Intake Assessments, develop goals, provide connections with other social service agencies and make referrals to appropriate resources.

- **Non-English Speaking Clients**

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

- **Oxford Street Shelter Park**

Outside the Shelter, paved walkways, benches, picnic tables, and a gazebo have been transformed into a park for homeless adults. Staff is stationed in the park to conduct outreach services to residents. Park hours are 1:00pm – 9:00pm daily.

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

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

In FY 2013, 135 individuals and families received a wide range of comprehensive housing related services, including: full assessments to identify barriers to housing and housing stability, connection to appropriate mainstream resources in the community, employment and training opportunities, temporary financial assistance such as security deposits, utility arrears, etc., as well as at least three months of follow up services after housing placement.

Of the 135 enrolled in the program this year: 75 were rapidly re-housed, 26 were prevented from becoming homeless and falling into the shelter system and 34 received needed case management and referrals.

A total of \$34,615 was used on rapid re-housing placements out of the shelter system and \$6,384 was spent on prevention of homelessness. This funding expired at the end of this fiscal year and has not been extended, however, the housing case management position will continue in FY 2014.

Case Management Services

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

Counselors call landlords daily to locate vacant rooms, efficiencies or apartments and are also instrumental in finding jobs. Another feature at the Oxford Street Shelter is the weekly House Meeting, which is designed to help individuals locate housing and employment. At these meetings, topics are presented on living on your own, what strengths participants have in terms of living skills, how to present to a landlord and how to maintain an apartment once it is secured.

In collaboration with Preble Street, the shelter began implementation of the new client support and services policy, which requires consumers utilize the Oxford Street Shelter to work with shelter staff or another community provider on a housing plan.

Shelter Overflow

The Oxford Street Shelter reaches full capacity on a nightly basis and staff operation two overflow facilities. The Preble Street Resource Center is currently used as an emergency overflow for men when Oxford Street reaches full capacity. Staff from Oxford Street opens the overflow at 8:00 PM and up to 75 men sleep on mats until 7:30 AM. When Preble Street is full, the General Assistance (GA) lobby opens and is used as another seventeen (17) bed overflow shelter. When General Assistance is full, staff open a warming center in the City's Refugee Services reception area and conference room, where seventy-five (75) individuals can sit and wait for the next bed to open.

Client Support and Services Policy

Effective January 1, 2013, the City Shelter System created the Client Support and Services Policy. In collaboration with Preble Street and the Homeless Voices for Justice, all non-specialized adult shelters in Portland adopted the Client Support and Services Policy which required all consumers to work on a permanent housing plan that achieves safe, stable and affordable housing.

During orientation, shelter staff review shelter policies and procedures, identify community resources, and introduce the clients to the team of Housing Counselors and Support Staff. Shelter staff clearly state that within the first week of their stay, via open access hours and appointments, each client will be provided with support services via their Housing Counselor and can begin work on a Housing/Self-Sufficiency Plan. If this meeting is unsuccessful, the client and the Housing Counselor will attempt to meet the following week. If repeated attempts to connect are unsuccessful, the client will be referred for an assessment. Upon assessment, the clinical staff will make a recommendation to the client and his/her Housing Counselor regarding service referrals and housing options. The clinical staff will follow up on and make appropriate service referrals and the Housing Counselor will continue to meet with the client regarding housing plans.

If the Housing/Self-Sufficiency Plan does not lead to helping the client locate housing, or if the client continually declines services and supports, or if appropriate housing opportunities are declined, a follow up meeting with a member of the Preble Street/Oxford Street Management team will be requested. The

Preble Street/Oxford Street Management team will assist that person in addressing the barriers to housing and with the assessment input of the clinical staff, work with the client to identify appropriate housing options.

If the Preble Street/Oxford Street Management team and the clinical staff determine that the client has no prohibitive mental health or addiction issues that prevent him/her from maintaining and securing housing and the client has the financial ability and/or resources available to successfully maintain the rent, then the client will be informed that if they do not utilize support services to locate housing, the shelter may not continue to be a resource for them and that an alternative arrangement for shelter may need to be made by the client. The client will also be expected to use any available resource (regular income, general assistance, voucher, etc.) for temporary shelter if they chose not to follow through with a housing plan. This conversation will be summarized with a list of available housing options for the person via a Completion of Services letter.

Oxford Street Shelter Statistics

*In FY 2013, the Shelter staff located **permanent housing for 554 homeless**, 417 men and 137 women, (including 62 Veterans and 123 chronically homeless individuals). This intensive outreach approach is very successful in terms of the long-term outcomes, with an 8.6% recidivism rate (returned to Oxford Street Shelter within the same year). Staff works with area landlords, subsidized housing programs, and other area resources on behalf of homeless clients. They assisted clients in making applications for benefits programs, rental applications, employment applications and other important linkages to help move them towards self-sufficiency.*

The Oxford Street Shelter served 1,696 men and 470 women for a total of 2,166 individuals (unduplicated numbers) in FY 13. This represents an increase of 4.2% compared to the 2,079 individuals served last year. The shelter provided 85,494 bed nights in FY 13, which represents an increase of 22.8% in bed usage compared to the 69,619 bed nights provided in FY 12 (attachment #1).

A significant number of individuals were new to the Shelter system this year. Statistics indicate that 26% of consumers (563) were considered new individuals who had never utilized Oxford Street Shelter prior to this year.

The Chronic homeless population is another statistic tracked at the Oxford Street Shelter. (Chronic homelessness as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) and the McKinney-Vento Act: “an individual or family who has been homeless and living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter continuously for at least 1 year or on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years.”). A total of 707, or 32.6% of the individuals that stayed at the Oxford Street Shelter were identified as chronically homeless. In FY 2012 a total of 615 individuals or 30% of all individuals that stayed at the Shelter were identified as chronically homeless.

<i>Year Served</i>	<i>FY 2009</i>	<i>FY 2010</i>	<i>FY 2011</i>	<i>FY 2012</i>	<i>FY 2013</i>
<i>Chronically Homeless</i>	<i>31%</i>	<i>34%</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>33%</i>

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

<u>FY 2012</u>				
<u>Length of Stay</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
<i>1 – 3 Days</i>	499	197	696	33%
<i>4 – 14 Days</i>	372	122	494	24%
<i>15 – 60 Days</i>	444	111	555	27%
<i>61 – 179 Days</i>	214	40	254	12%
<i>180 – 273 Days</i>	39	3	42	2%
<i>274 – 365 Days</i>	34	3	37	2%
<i>Total</i>	1,568	476	2,078	

<u>FY 2013</u>				
<u>Length of Stay</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>
<i>1 – 3 Days</i>	516	163	679	32%
<i>4 – 14 Days</i>	398	108	506	23%
<i>15 – 60 Days</i>	422	115	537	25%
<i>61 – 179 Days</i>	26	68	328	15%
<i>180 – 273 Days</i>	57	13	70	3%
<i>274 – 365 Days</i>	43	3	46	2%
<i>Total</i>	1,653	470	2,166	

The average length of stay at the Shelter is still under 60 days. A total of 1,185, or 55%, of all individuals served stayed for 1-14 days. An additional 25% of all clients stayed 15-60 days, totaling 80% of those served staying less than two months. The shelter continues to be a long-term, or permanent, residence for a core group of clients with mental health/substance abuse issues. A total of 116, or 5%, of clients served were considered “Long-Term” by staying at the Shelter 180 days or more.

Who We Serve

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

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

<u>Age Range</u>	<u>FY 12</u>	<u>FY 13</u>
<i>18-24 years old</i>	286 or 14%	255 or 12%
<i>25-30 years old</i>	287 or 14%	357 or 17%
<i>31-40 years old</i>	511 or 24%	566 or 26%
<i>41-55 years old</i>	767 or 37%	743 or 34%
<i>55 + years old</i>	229 or 11%	245 or 11%

<u>Age Range</u>	<u>FY 13</u>	
	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
<i>18-24 years old</i>	189 or 11%	66 or 14%
<i>25-30 years old</i>	261 or 16%	96 or 20%
<i>31-40 years old</i>	449 or 27%	117 or 25%
<i>41-55 years old</i>	602 or 35%	141 or 30%
<i>55 + years old</i>	195 or 11%	50 or 11%

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

Based on self-reporting, 47% of shelter clients experience mental illness, 60% struggle with substance abuse issues, and 31% experience a physical disability or illness. Many of our clients with significant mental health issues deny having any problems and refuse any form of medication or support.

<i>Year Served</i>	<i>FY 2010</i>	<i>FY 2011</i>	<i>FY 2012</i>	<i>FY 2013</i>
<i>Clients Indicating Substance Abuse</i>	<i>43%</i>	<i>39%</i>	<i>38%</i>	<i>60%</i>

The Oxford Street Shelter serves a significant population of homeless veterans. In FY 2013, we served 199 veterans, comprising 9.2% of the total individuals served, totaling 8,535 bed nights. Last year, we served 219 veterans, comprising 11% of the total individuals served, totaling 9,981 bed nights.

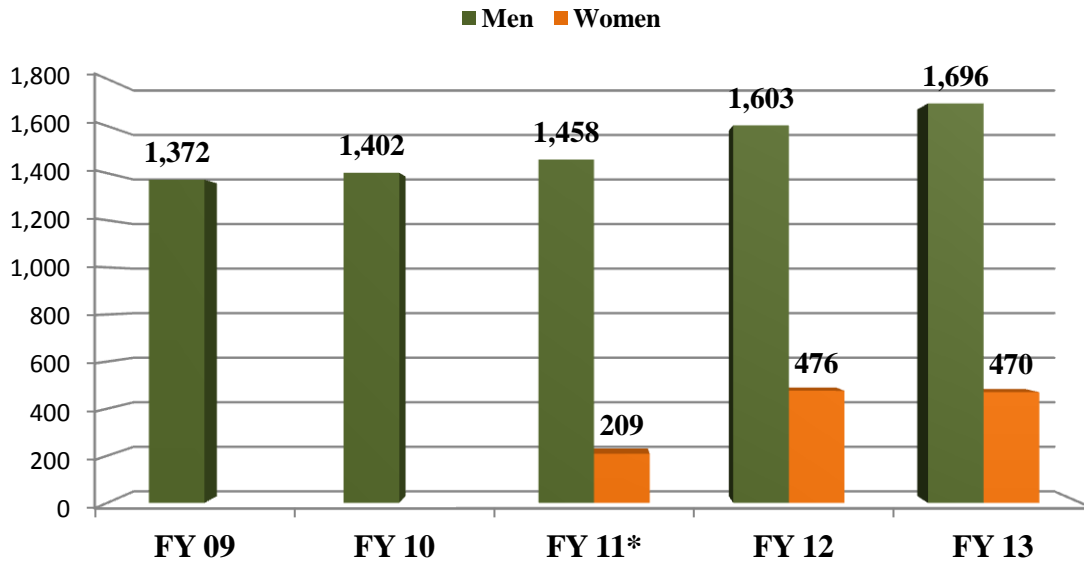
<i>Year Served</i>	<i>FY 2012</i>	<i>FY 2013</i>
<i>Total # of Individuals</i>	<i>219</i>	<i>199</i>
<i>Total # of Bed Nights</i>	<i>9,981</i>	<i>8,535</i>
<i>Chronically Homeless</i>	<i>89 or 41% of all veterans</i>	<i>82 or 41% of all veterans</i>

The “Residency Summary” graph, which indicates the last known address of our new clients, shows that 1,201 individuals, or 65% of the population came from Maine, and 643 individuals, or 35% of the population served came from other states (attachments #3). Of the 1,201 Maine clients, 597, or 50% are Portland residents, and 604, or 50% come from other Maine cities.

Based on self-reporting, 481 intakes or 26% of all intakes, reported being homeless for the first time in FY 2013 (attachment #5). An Intake is defined as an individual who has not stayed at the Shelter for a period of three (3) months/90-days or longer.

**OXFORD STREET SHELTER
FY 2013**

Number of Individuals Served

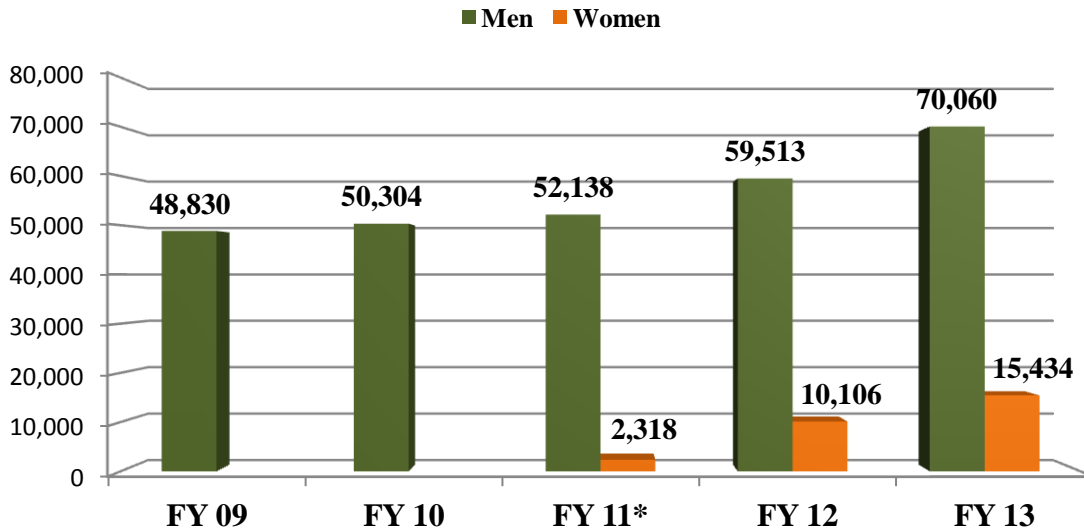


Total Individuals **1,372** **1,402** **1,667** **2,079** **2,166**

The above chart displays the unduplicated number of individuals served.

Total Bed Nights

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

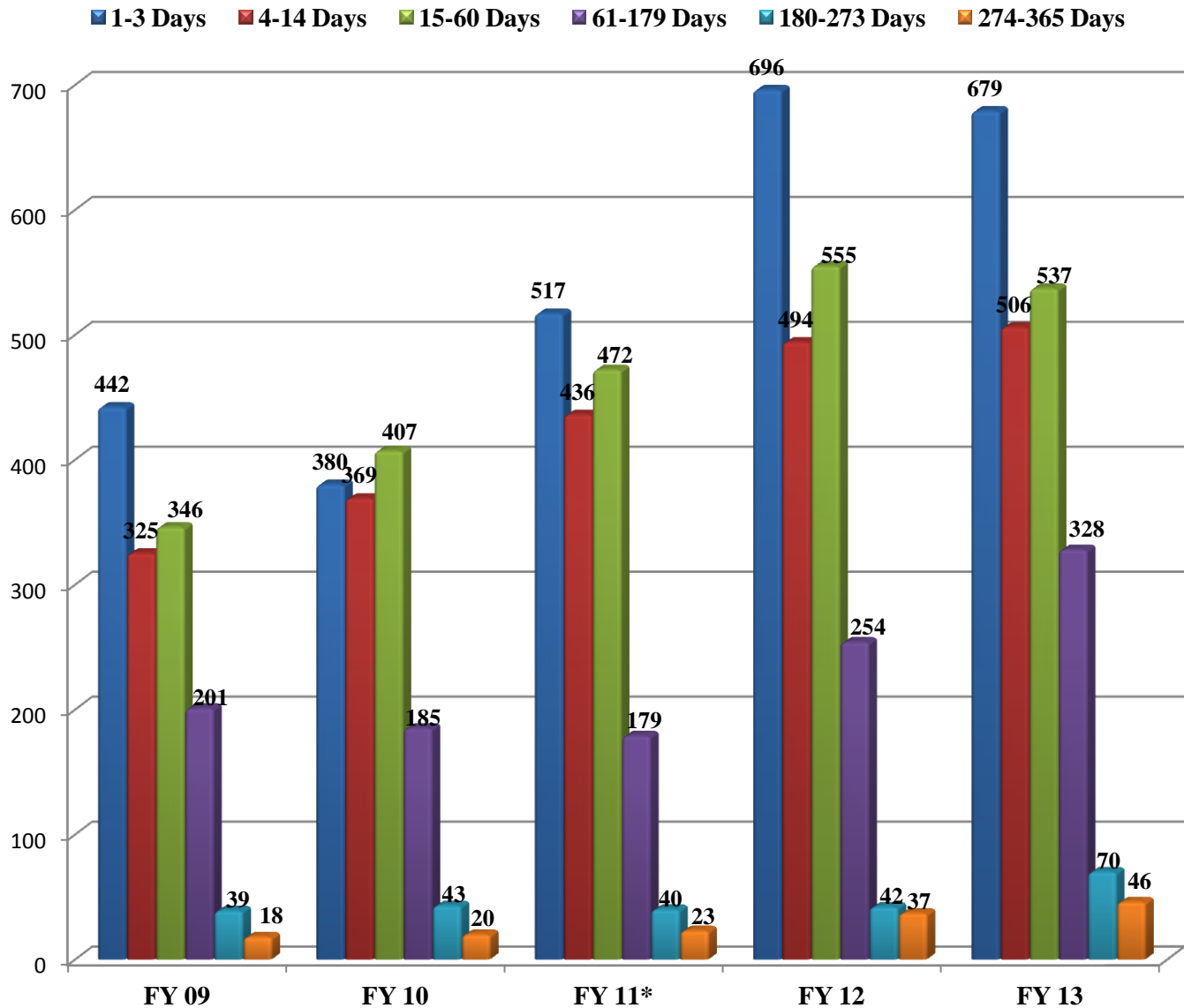


Total Individuals **48,830** **50,304** **54,456** **69,619** **85,494**

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

**As of January 20, 2011 Oxford Street began sheltering women as a means of overflow for Preble Street Women's Shelter. Thus, the above information includes statistics for men and women.*

**OXFORD STREET SHELTER
FY 2013
FIVE YEAR HISTORY**



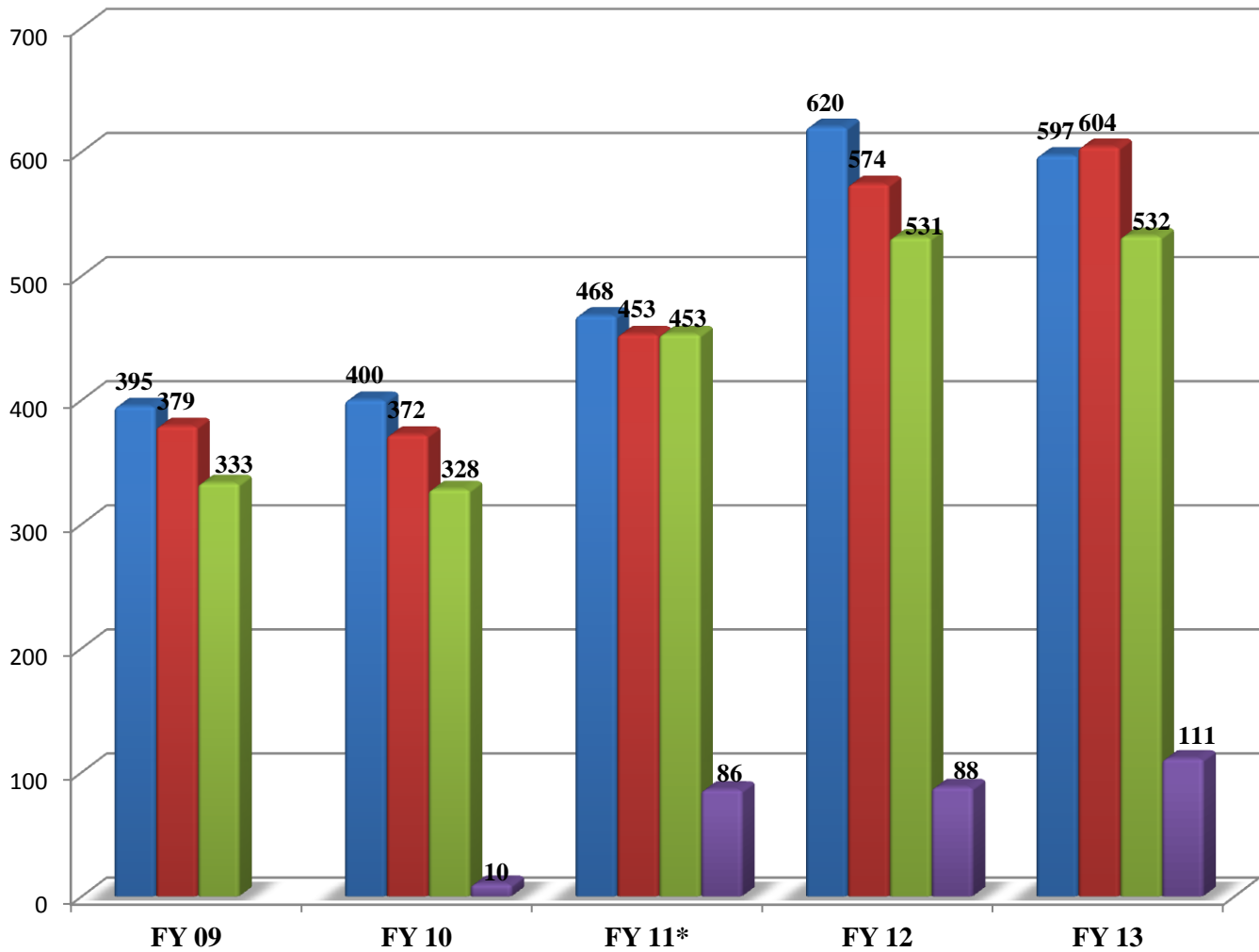
	<u>FY 09</u>	<u>FY 10</u>	<u>FY 11*</u>	<u>FY 12</u>	<u>FY 13</u>	<u>+ / - %</u>
Stayed between 1-3 Days	442	380	517	696	679	- 2.4%
Stayed between 4-14 Days	325	369	436	494	506	+ 2.4%
Stayed between 15-60 Days	346	407	472	555	537	- 3.2%
Stayed between 61-179 Days	201	185	179	254	328	+ 29.1%
Stayed between 180-273 Days	39	43	40	42	70	+ 66.7%
Stayed between 274-365 Days	18	20	23	37	46	+ 24.3%

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**OXFORD STREET SHELTER
FY 2013
FIVE YEAR HISTORY**

INTAKE RESIDENCY STATISTICS

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



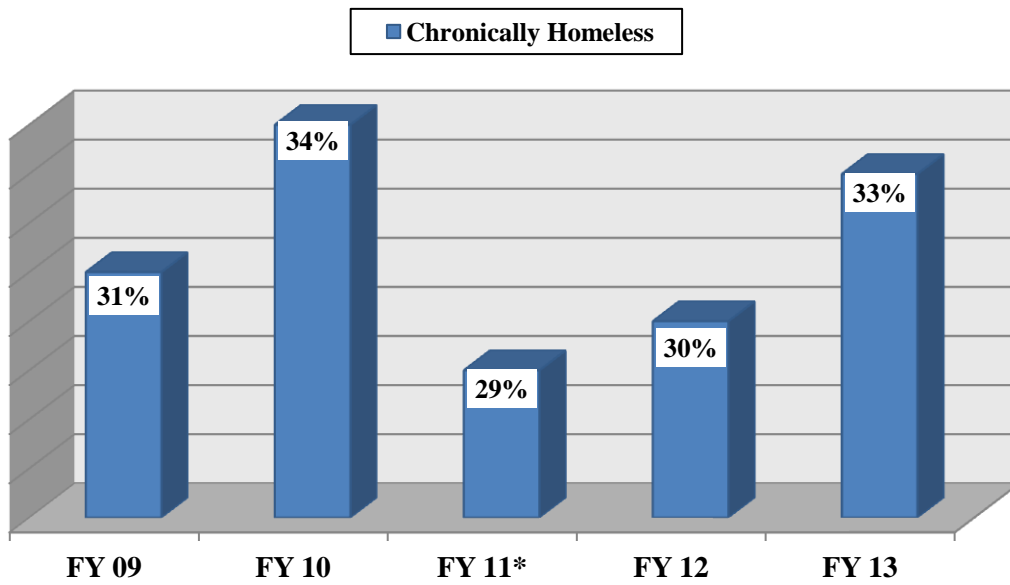
	<u>FY 09</u>	<u>FY 10</u>	<u>FY 11*</u>	<u>FY 12</u>	<u>FY 13</u>
Portland	395	400	468	620	597
Out of Town	379	372	453	574	604
Out of State	333	328	453	531	532
Out of Country	N/A	10	86	88	111

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

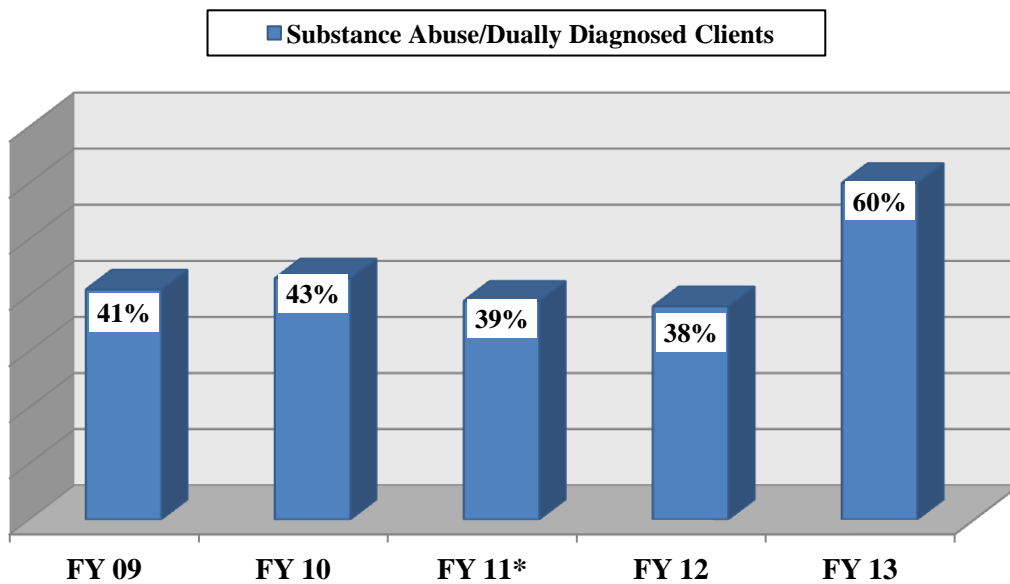
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OXFORD STREET SHELTER FY 2013

CHRONICALLY HOMELESS CLIENTS



SUBSTANCE ABUSE / DUALY DIAGNOSED CLIENTS

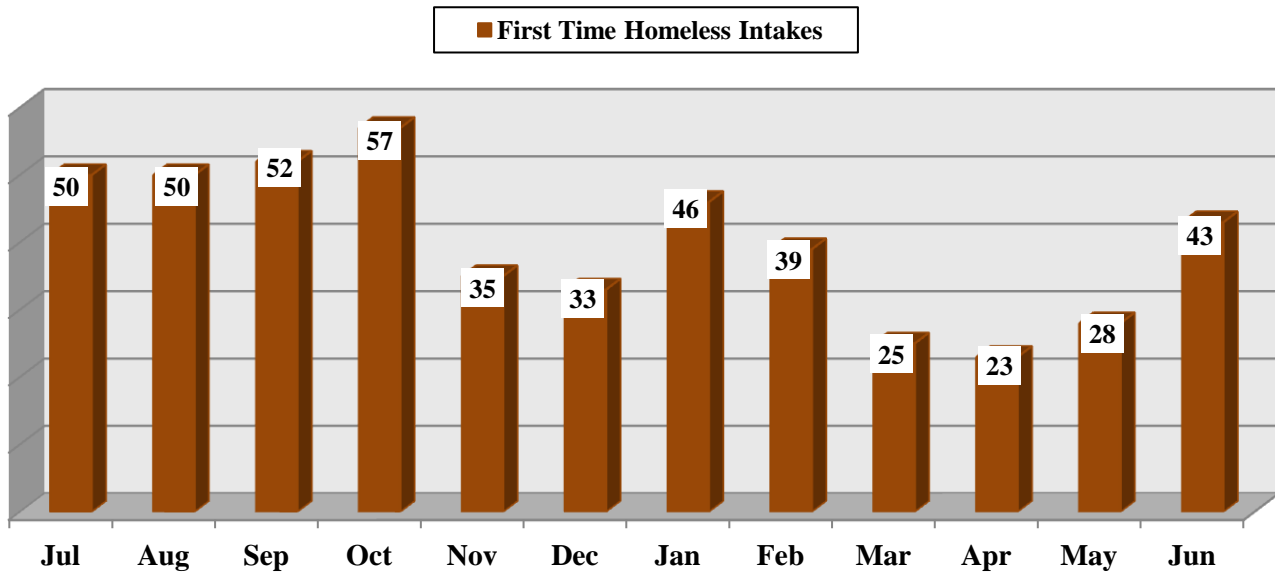


Substance Abuse/Dually Diagnosed data is based on self-reporting.

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**OXFORD STREET SHELTER
FY 2013**

**FIRST TIME HOMELESSNESS
(Based on Self-Reporting)**

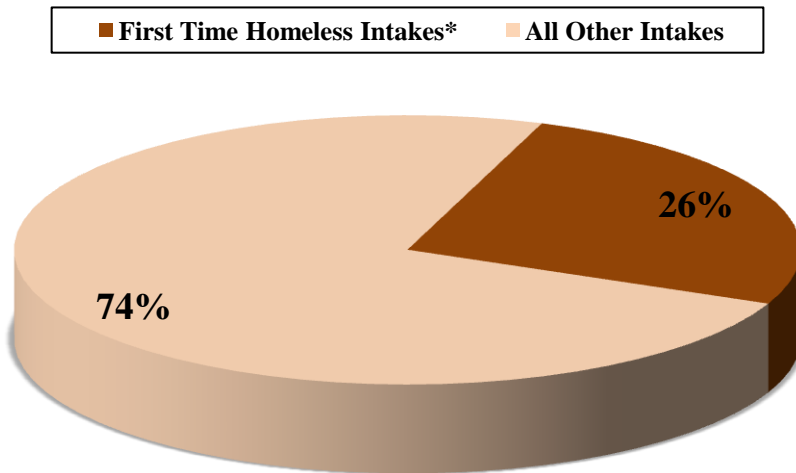


An Intake is defined as an individual that has not stayed at the Shelter for a period of three (3) months/90 days, or longer.

Total First Time Homeless Intakes in FY 13: **481**

Out of a total of **1,844** Intakes

26% of all intakes self-reported being homeless for the first time at the time of intake



***Based on self-reporting**

**As of January 20, 2011 Oxford Street began sheltering women as a means of overflow for Preble Street Women's Shelter. Thus, the above information includes statistics for men and women.*

**OXFORD STREET SHELTER
FY 2013
HOUSING PLACEMENTS**

	FY 2013*	
	554	
Permanent, No Housing Subsidy (472)		
Portland	292	52.7%
Westbrook	22	3.9%
South Portland	15	2.7%
Lewiston	9	1.6%
Biddeford	8	1.4%
Old Orchard Beach	8	1.4%
Augusta	4	0.7%
Bangor	3	0.5%
Saco	3	0.5%
Sanford	3	0.5%
Scarborough	3	0.5%
Belfast	2	0.4%
Brunswick	2	0.4%
Windham	2	0.4%
Yarmouth	2	0.4%
Alfred	1	0.2%
Auburn	1	0.2%
Bath	1	0.2%
Brewer	1	0.2%
Dedham	1	0.2%
Dixfield	1	0.2%
Gorham	1	0.2%
Kittery	1	0.2%
Limestone	1	0.2%
Peaks Island	1	0.2%
Rumford	1	0.2%
Standish	1	0.2%
Topsham	1	0.2%
Wells	1	0.2%
Out of State family reunification	80	14.4%
Permanent, Housing Subsidy (58)		
Section 8	16	2.9%
Project Section 8	15	2.7%
BRAP	27	4.8%
Transitional/Temporary Placements (24)		
Shalom House	6	1.0%
The Bridge	4	0.7%
Serenity House	4	0.7%
York County Shelter	2	0.4%
Sweetser	2	0.4%
Friendship House	1	0.2%
Hope House	1	0.2%
Nye Street	1	0.2%
Pharos House	1	0.2%
Salvation Army Rehab	1	0.2%
VA Career House	1	0.2%

Housing Placements and Recidivism

