

# **Family Shelter Year End Report FY 2014**



**City of Portland, Maine  
Health and Human Services Department  
Social Services Division**

**Maine (2013):**

Total Shelter Clients: 7,765

Total Bed Nights: 358,281

Family Shelter Accounts for:

**12%** of all Bed Nights in the State**13%** of all Shelter Clients in the State**Portland-City Wide (2013):**

Total Shelter Clients: 4,203

Total Bed Nights: 164,563

Family Shelter Accounts for:

**25%** of all Bed Nights in the City**24%** of all Shelter Clients in the State

**City of Portland, Maine  
Health & Human Services Department  
Social Services Division  
Family Shelter  
FY 2014 Year End Report**

## Who We Are

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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.

### 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 ninety-four (94) beds in an apartment style living environment. Apartments are shared by families and are furnished with beds, 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.
- **Life Skills**  
Group workshops and training sessions are conducted on bed bug prevention and daily life skills, such as: food and kitchen safety, fire prevention, cleaning and hygiene, basic parenting skills, community resources, public transportation and family relationship 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. Case management services are provided while families are in the shelter and continue once housing is located. Case Managers provide follow-up services with families to work on issues such as landlord/tenant negotiations, accessing community resources, accessing General Assistance, preventing evictions, and working toward securing more affordable housing.

- **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.

### Preventative Family Services

Through crisis intervention, case management and advocacy, the preventative segment of our program was instrumental in preventing homelessness for 20 families this year consisting of 56 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.

| FY 10                           | FY 11                          | FY 12                          | FY 13                           | FY 14                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 78 families/<br>242 individuals | 16 families/<br>47 Individuals | 22 Families/<br>66 Individuals | 36 Families/<br>124 Individuals | 20 Families/<br>56 Individuals |

### Housing Placement

Shelter Staff provides housing assistance to all residents of the Family Shelter by seeking out affordable rental units, applying for eligible subsidies and accessing transitional housing opportunities. Shelter staff has access to housing means through vouchers and established relationships with landlords. This year, shelter staff placed 128 families into permanent housing without a subsidy, 8 families were re-unified with other family and 13 families were placed into permanent housing with a Housing Choice Voucher. Shelter Staff also work on transitional housing opportunities with families and this year Shelter Staff placed 20 families temporarily with family members, 3 families went to Stepping Stones Transitional Housing Program, 7 families received STEP Vouchers (Maine State Housing Authority Home to Stay Program), and 42 families left for reasons not known (Attachment #2.1).

### Follow-Up Case Management

The Family Shelter Staff provide follow-up case management services. Case Managers meet with families once a month, or more if needed. Follow-up 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 269 families were sheltered and only 24 families returned for a second stay for a 9% recidivism rate, which is consistent when compared to last year. Of the 269 families that were sheltered, 213 or 79% received follow-up case management services for at least one month after they secured housing.

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:

**Scenario 1:**

A family of three, consisting of a mother, father and small child entered the shelter in the summer of 2013. This family had a history of chronic homelessness and lacked the needed services. The family was quickly connected to a Case Worker, who assessed the family's needs. The Case Worker submitted an application for a Shelter Plus Care rental subsidy and was awarded a rental voucher. This family has been stably housed for the past six months and they continue to work closely with their Case Worker.

**Scenario 2:**

A refugee family of eight entered the Family Shelter in the summer of 2013. This family had numerous medical needs and had an older child with special needs. The family was connected with a Case Worker, who quickly assessed the family's needs. The family was connected to the Portland Community Health Center for their medical needs. The school aged children were connected to the Multi-Lingual Center for school testing. The Case Worker was able to secure a Project Based Housing Choice Voucher through Portland Housing Authority. The family was connected to the City's Refugee Services program for follow-up care. The family is doing very well today and has been stably housed for over six months.

**Refugees/Immigrants**

The Family Shelter also serves as a Welcome House for New Mainers or refugees/immigrants (which include secondary migrant refugees, asylees, people pending asylum, and undocumented non-citizens). New Mainers often arrived in Maine without resources or housing, speaking limited or no English. Refugees/immigrants tend to have very large families,

New Mainers initially present themselves to the Family Shelter as homeless. In FY 2014, a total of 391 of the 916 individuals served by the Family Shelter are of Refugee/Immigrant status (Attachment #4). This is a decrease from FY 2013 by 23%. Refugees/Immigrants present from a variety of nations, including: Afghanistan, Angola, Belgium, Burundi, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Somalia and Sudan. 352 New Mainers, 64% of individuals, self-reported as being homeless for the first time (Attachment #5).

## Family Shelter Statistics

This year, the Family Shelter provided shelter for 269 families consisting of 916 individuals for a total of 43,218 bed nights. Of the 269 families served, 24 families were homeless on two or more occasions during this fiscal year for a 9% homeless recidivism rate, compared to 9% in FY13. Of the 269 families sheltered, 151 were placed in permanent housing and 38 were placed in transitional housing.

The Shelter experienced a decrease of 9% in the number of individuals served (heads of household and children) and an increase of 26% in the number of bed nights used. The average length of stay increased from 34 days to 47 days (Attachment #1). The increase in the number of bed nights used and length of stay can be attributed to the tight rental market in Portland and the extreme difficulty in locating 3- to 4-bedroom units

Of the 269 families served, 58 families had relocated from other states, 63 families were from other countries, 69 families were residents from Maine but lived in town outside of Portland, and 79 families Portland residents. Of the 121 families coming from outside Maine, 54 families were secondary migrant refugee families or had a visiting visa.

### Client Characteristics

| <b>Age by Gender</b> |              |                |              |                |
|----------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| <b>Age Range</b>     | <b>FY 13</b> |                | <b>FY 14</b> |                |
|                      | <b>Males</b> | <b>Females</b> | <b>Males</b> | <b>Females</b> |
| 1 year old & under   | 19           | 19             | 20           | 28             |
| 1 – 5 years old      | 144          | 143            | 130          | 95             |
| 6 – 12 years old     | 89           | 99             | 85           | 81             |
| 13 – 17 years old    | 38           | 39             | 49           | 41             |
| 18 – 30 years old    | 47           | 143            | 43           | 112            |
| 31 – 50 years old    | 89           | 136            | 83           | 138            |
| 51 – 61 years old    | 2            | 4              | 3            | 5              |
| 62 + years old       | 0            | 0              | 2            | 1              |
| <b>TOTAL</b>         | <b>428</b>   | <b>583</b>     | <b>415</b>   | <b>501</b>     |

| <b>Adult Status</b> |              |              |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|
|                     | <b>FY 13</b> | <b>FY 14</b> |
| Adults              | 421          | 387          |
| Children            | 590          | 529          |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>1,011</b> | <b>916</b>   |

| <b>Veteran Status</b> |              |              |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|
|                       | <b>FY 13</b> | <b>FY 14</b> |
| Veteran               | 2            | 6            |
| Non-Veteran Adults    | 419          | 381          |
| <b>Total Adults</b>   | <b>421</b>   | <b>387</b>   |

| <b>Length of Stay</b> |                            |                            |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Length of Stay</b> | <b>FY 13</b>               | <b>FY 14</b>               |
| 1-30 nights           | 165 Families or <b>59%</b> | 139 Families or <b>52%</b> |
| 31-60 nights          | 81 Families or <b>29%</b>  | 85 Families or <b>32%</b>  |
| 61-90 nights          | 36 Families or <b>13%</b>  | 17 Families or <b>6%</b>   |
| 91 + nights           | 0 Families                 | 28 Families or <b>10%</b>  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>          | <b>282 Families</b>        | <b>269 Families</b>        |

| <b>Family Composition</b>   |                            |                            |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Family Composition</b>   | <b>FY 13</b>               | <b>FY 14</b>               |
| Female Single Parent Family | 147 Families or <b>52%</b> | 150 Families or <b>56%</b> |
| Male Single Parent Family   | 10 Families or <b>4%</b>   | 19 Families or <b>7%</b>   |
| Two Parent Family           | 125 Families or <b>44%</b> | 100 Families or <b>37%</b> |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>282 Families</b>        | <b>269 Families</b>        |

### Reasons for Homelessness

The major reasons for being homeless, as self-reported by families were relocation, domestic violence/family conflict, lack of affordable housing, and failure to pay rent resulting in eviction. Many families, 41% of all families in FY 14, indicated “relocation” as their reason for homelessness; the majority of refugees/immigrants indicated they moved to Portland because they wanted a safe place to raise their children. Some clients, 43% of all families in FY 14, experienced domestic violence and/or family conflict and had to leave their current living situations. Other clients, 17% of all families in FY 14, reported having difficulty locating and securing affordable housing. Failure to pay rent resulting in eviction was indicated by 16% of all families in FY 14. Other reasons for homelessness as self-reported by families include loss of job, substandard housing, loss of public assistance, and health and safety reasons. The aforementioned reasons combined accounted for 11% of all families in FY 14.

### Overflow

When the Family Shelter reaches maximum capacity it operates an overflow shelter. The shelter utilizes area motels to ensure families who present as homeless will have a safe place to stay. This year, the Family Shelter reached maximum capacity and utilized area motels for overflow for a total of 331 nights, or 91% of all nights, in FY 2014; this is a dramatic increase from FY 2013, where the Family Shelter utilized motels for a total of 198 nights (see Attachment #1). The Family Shelter overflow had a total of 1,200 family motel placements for a total of 6,468 bed nights during that period (Attachment #2). Families remain in motels until room is available at the shelter or until permanent housing is located, whichever occurs first.

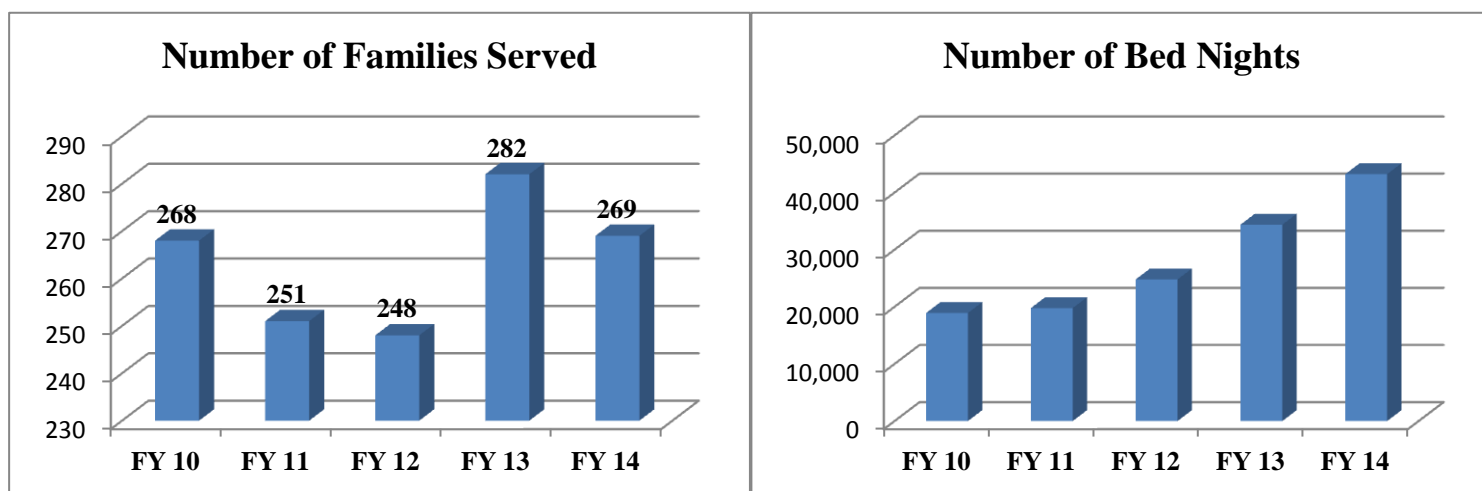
### Bell Street Transitional Housing Project

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. 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, medical and dental care as needed.

This program has served a total of 4 families, which consisted of 14 individuals, in FY 14, compared to 6 families for a total of 20 individuals in FY 13, a decrease of 33% from FY 13 to FY 14. Three (3) families successfully completed the program and began their path towards self-sufficiency by transitioning to permanent housing in FY 14, compared to one (1) family in FY 13, an increase of 300% from FY 13 to FY 14.

**City of Portland, Maine**  
**Health & Human Services Department**  
**Social Services Division**  
**Family Shelter**  
**FY 2014 Year End Report**



**FAMILY SHELTER – OVERFLOW (Motel)**  
**FY 2014**

**Overflow was used 331 nights, or 91% of all nights in FY 14**

|                                | FY 12 | FY 13 | FY 14 | +/- % Change |
|--------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Total Overflow Bednights Used  | 597   | 2,550 | 6,468 | + 154 %      |
| Total Nights Overflow Was Used | 68    | 198   | 331   | + 67%        |

\*Area Motels are used as overflow for the Family Shelter

|                       | FY 10  | FY 11  | FY 12* | FY 13* | FY 14* | % Change    |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------------|
| Number of Families    | 268    | 251    | 248    | 282    | 269    | <b>-5%</b>  |
| Number of Individuals | 886    | 806    | 848    | 1,011  | 916    | <b>-10%</b> |
| Number of Bed Nights* | 18,907 | 19,774 | 24,784 | 34,371 | 43,218 | <b>+26%</b> |
| Average Family Size   | 3.1    | 3.2    | 3.4    | 3.6    | 3.4    | <b>-6%</b>  |
| Average Stay (Days)   | 21.3   | 24.5   | 29.2   | 34     | 47.1   | <b>39%</b>  |

\*Bed Nights Include: 597 hotel bed nights in FY 2012  
2,550 hotel bed nights in FY 2013  
6,468 hotel bed nights in FY 2014



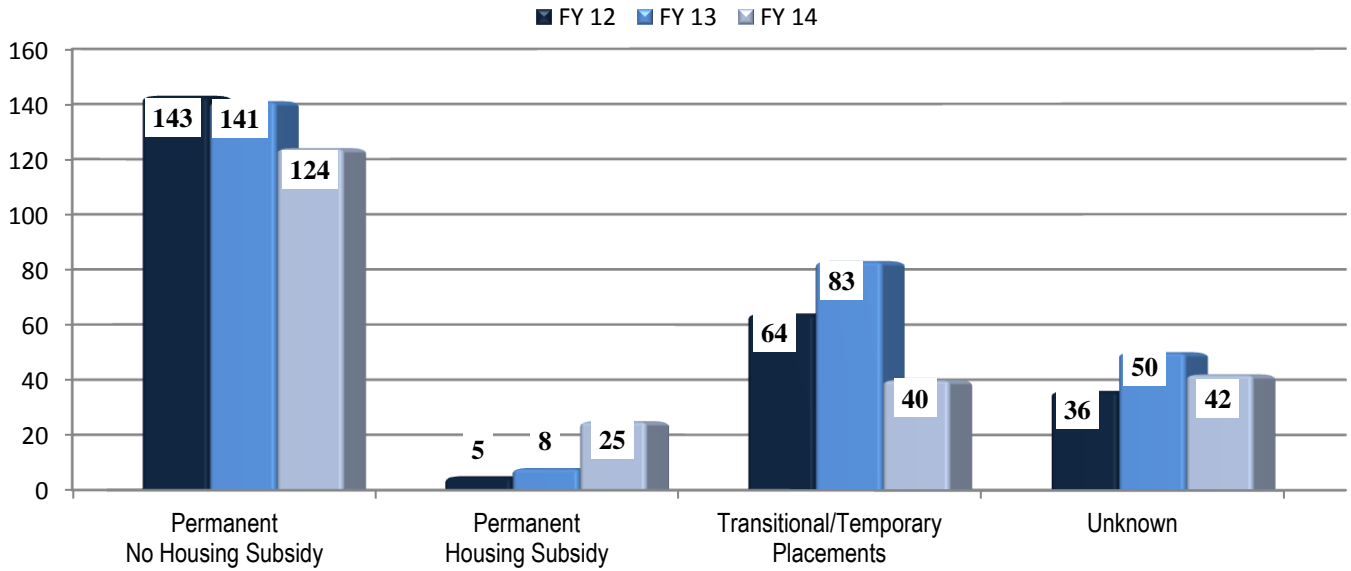
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### Housing Placements

|  | FY 2012*   |      | FY 2013*   |      | FY 2014*   |      |
|--|------------|------|------------|------|------------|------|
|  | 248        |      | 269        |      | 189        |      |
| <b>Permanent, No Housing Subsidy</b>     |            |      |            |      |            |      |
| Portland                                 | 104        | 42%  | 96         | 36%  | 86         | 37%  |
| Lewiston                                 | 1          | 0.4% | 9          | 3%   | 5          | 2%   |
| Westbrook                                | 9          | 4%   | 16         | 6%   | 16         | 7%   |
| Biddeford                                | 2          | 0.8% | 5          | 2%   | 2          | 1%   |
| South Portland                           | 4          | 2%   | 5          | 2%   | 3          | 1%   |
| Windham                                  | 0          | 0%   | 1          | 0.4% | 1          | 0.4% |
| Palmyra                                  | 0          | 0%   | 1          | 0.4% | 0          | 0%   |
| Scarborough                              | 1          | 0.4% | 1          | 0.4% | 0          | 0%   |
| Newfield                                 | 0          | 0%   | 0          | 0%   | 1          | 0.4% |
| Sanford                                  | 0          | 0%   | 0          | 0%   | 1          | 0.4% |
| Old Orchard Beach                        | 1          | 0.4% | 0          | 0%   | 0          | 0%   |
| Out of State                             | 1          | 0.4% | 0          | 0%   | 1          | 0.4% |
| Reunification with Family                | 20         | 8%   | 7          | 3%   | 8          | 3%   |
| <b>Permanent, Housing Subsidy</b>        |            |      |            |      |            |      |
| Portland                                 | 3          | 1%   | 7          | 3%   | 12         | 5%   |
| South Portland                           | 1          | 0.4% | 1          | 0.4% | 2          | 1%   |
| Westbrook                                | 1          | 0.4% | 0          | 0%   | 3          | 1%   |
| Auburn                                   | 0          | 0%   | 0          | 0%   | 1          | 0.4% |
| Old Orchard Beach                        | 0          | 0%   | 0          | 0%   | 1          | 0.4% |
| Saco                                     | 0          | 0%   | 0          | 0%   | 3          | 1%   |
| Standish                                 | 0          | 0%   | 0          | 0%   | 1          | 0.4% |
| Windham                                  | 0          | 0%   | 0          | 0%   | 1          | 0.4% |
| Biddeford                                | 0          | 0%   | 0          | 0%   | 1          | 0.4% |
| <b>Transitional/Temporary Placements</b> |            |      |            |      |            |      |
| Reunification with Family                | 48         | 20%  | 71         | 26%  | 20         | 9%   |
| Stepping Stones                          | 1          | 0.4% | 5          | 2%   | 5          | 2%   |
| STEP Voucher                             | 0          | 0%   | 3          | 1%   | 7          | 3%   |
| Bell Street                              | 4          | 2%   | 2          | 0.7% | 0          | 0%   |
| Catholic Charities Welcome House         | 0          | 0%   | 1          | 0.4% | 0          | 0%   |
| Family Crisis                            | 0          | 0%   | 1          | 0.4% | 1          | 0.4% |
| Emergency Shelter                        | 7          | 3%   | 0          | 0%   | 0          | 0%   |
| Jail                                     | 2          | 0.8% | 0          | 0%   | 0          | 0%   |
| BRAP                                     | 0          | 0%   | 0          | 0%   | 7          | 3%   |
| 22 Park Ave.                             | 2          | 0.8% | 0          | 0%   | 0          | 0%   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                             | <b>248</b> |      | <b>269</b> |      | <b>189</b> |      |

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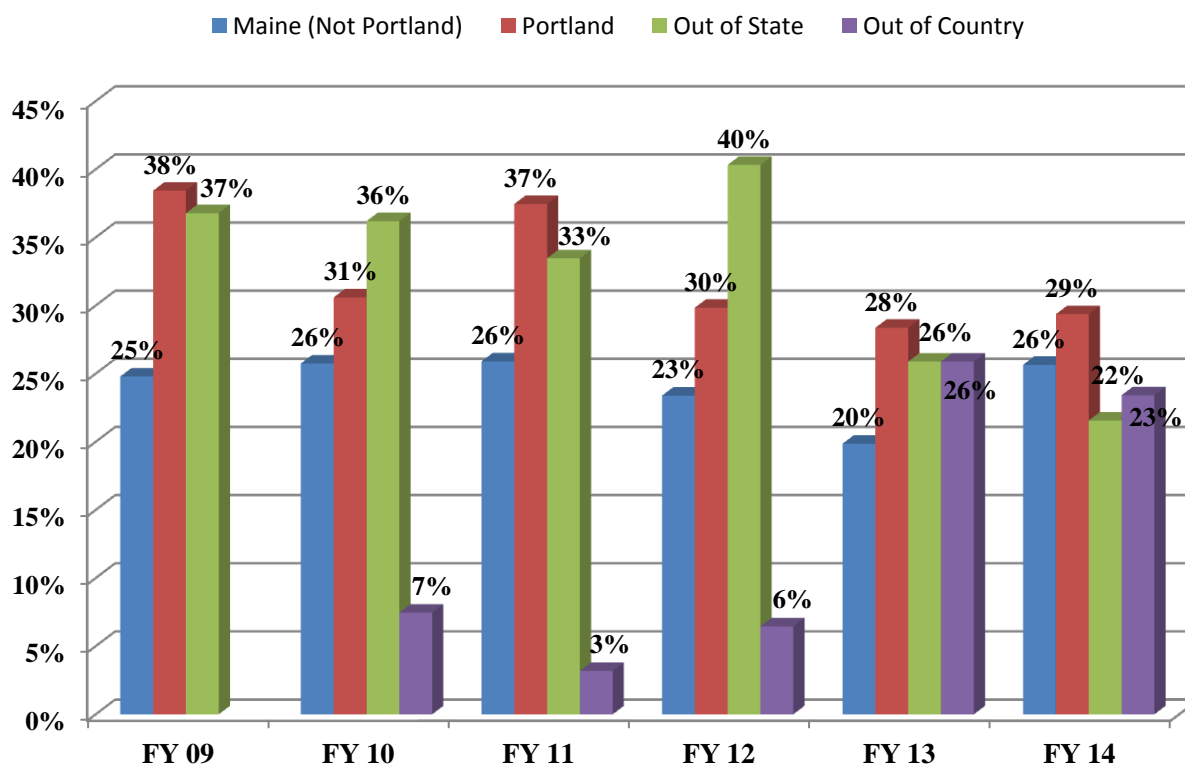
**Housing Placements**



Total Placements\*  
*(does not include "Unknown" numbers)*  
**FY 12: 248**  
**FY 13: 282**  
**FY 14: 189**

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### LAST PERMANENT RESIDENCE BASED ON SELF-REPORTING



### Residency of New Intakes

(Based on self-reporting by consumers)

Number of Families

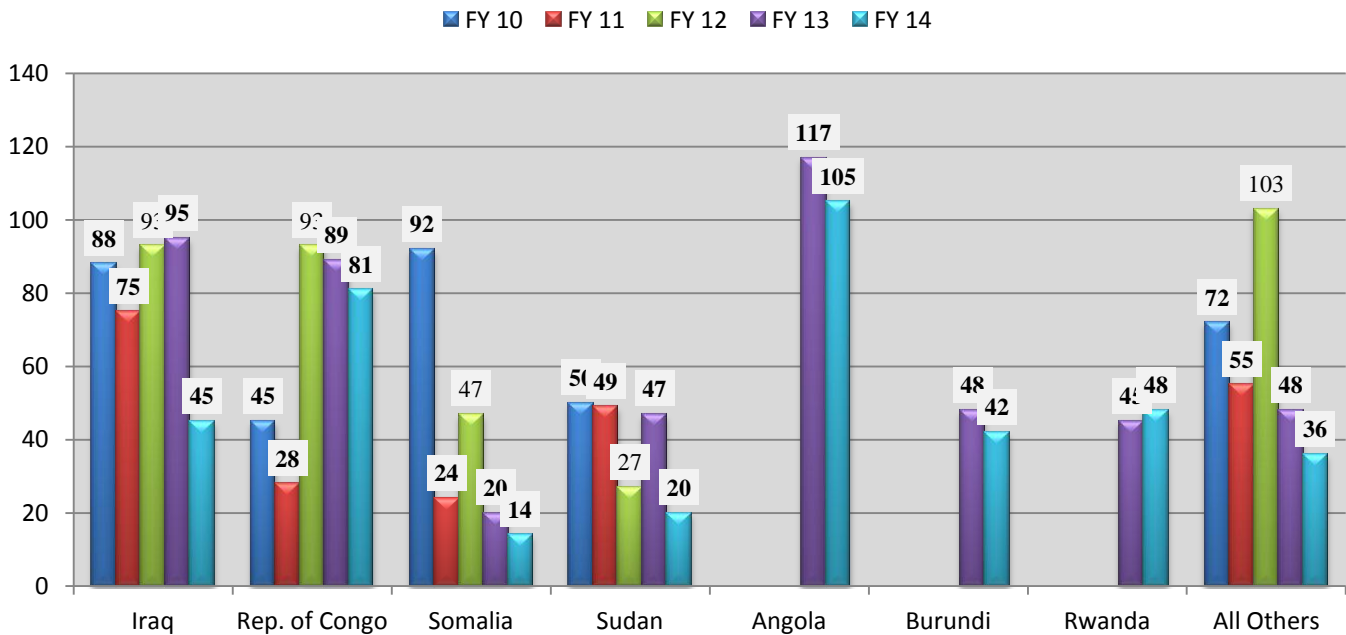
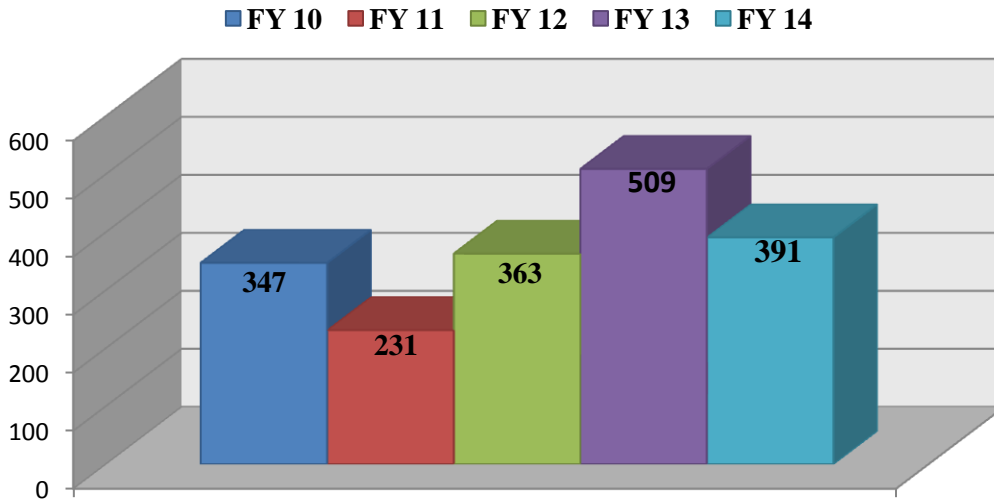
|                      | FY 10 | FY 11 | FY 12 | FY 13 | FY 14 | FY 13-14<br>+/- % |
|----------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------------------|
| Maine (Not Portland) | 69    | 65    | 58    | 56    | 69    | + 23.2%           |
| Portland             | 82    | 94    | 74    | 80    | 79    | + 1.3%            |
| Out of State         | 97    | 84    | 100   | 73    | 58    | - 20.5%           |
| Out of Country       | 20    | 8     | 16    | 73    | 63    | - 13.7%           |

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**REFUGEES/IMMIGRANTS/VISA HOLDERS/ASYLUM PENDING**

**A total of 391 individuals, or 43% of all individuals residing in the Shelter**

**Total Number of New Mainers**



Iraq – 12%  
All Others – 9%

Rep. of Congo – 21%  
Angola\* – 27%

Somalia – 4%  
Burundi\* – 10%

Sudan – 5%  
Rwanda\* – 12%

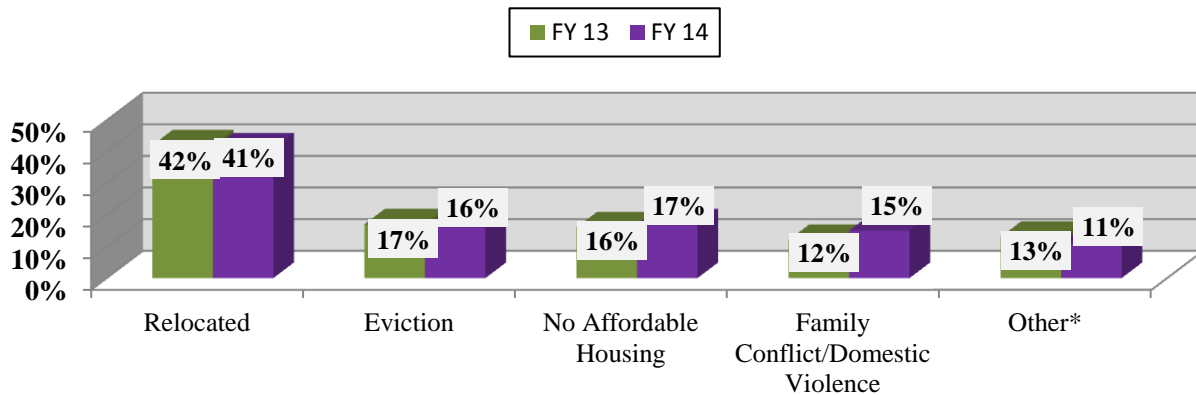
\*“All Others” include: Afghanistan, Belgium, Eritrea, Iran

\*FY 13 is the first year tracking Angola, Burundi, and Rwanda, due to low numbers in previous years.  
This group consists of visa holder families entering the US with visitor visas

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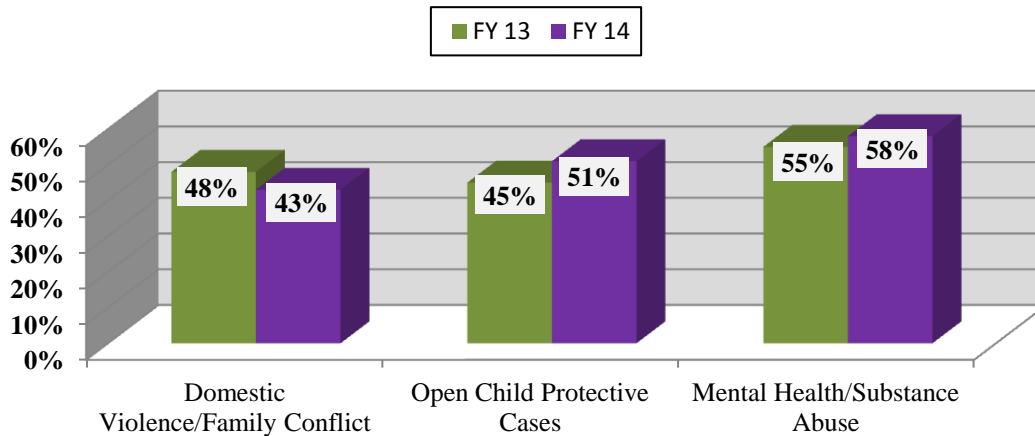
**CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS**

The graph below represents the primary reasons homeless families utilized the City of Portland Family Shelter in FY 14

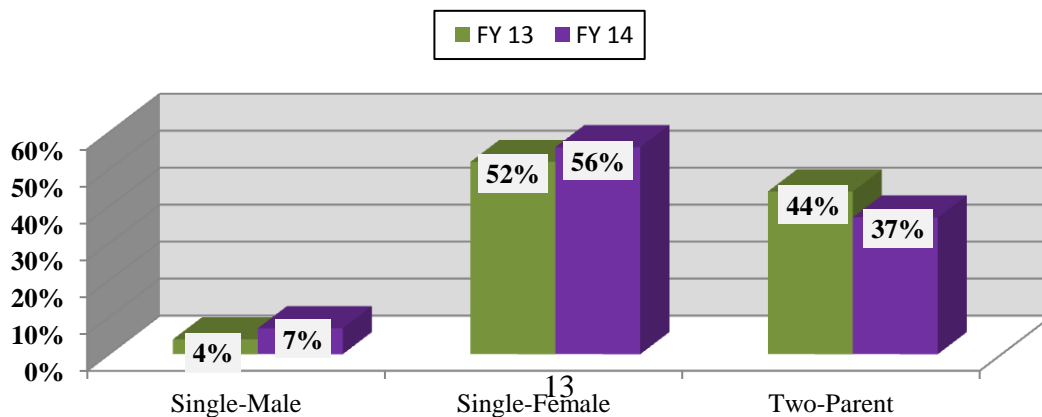


\*Other includes: Loss of job, substandard housing, loss of public assistance, and health & safety reasons.

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

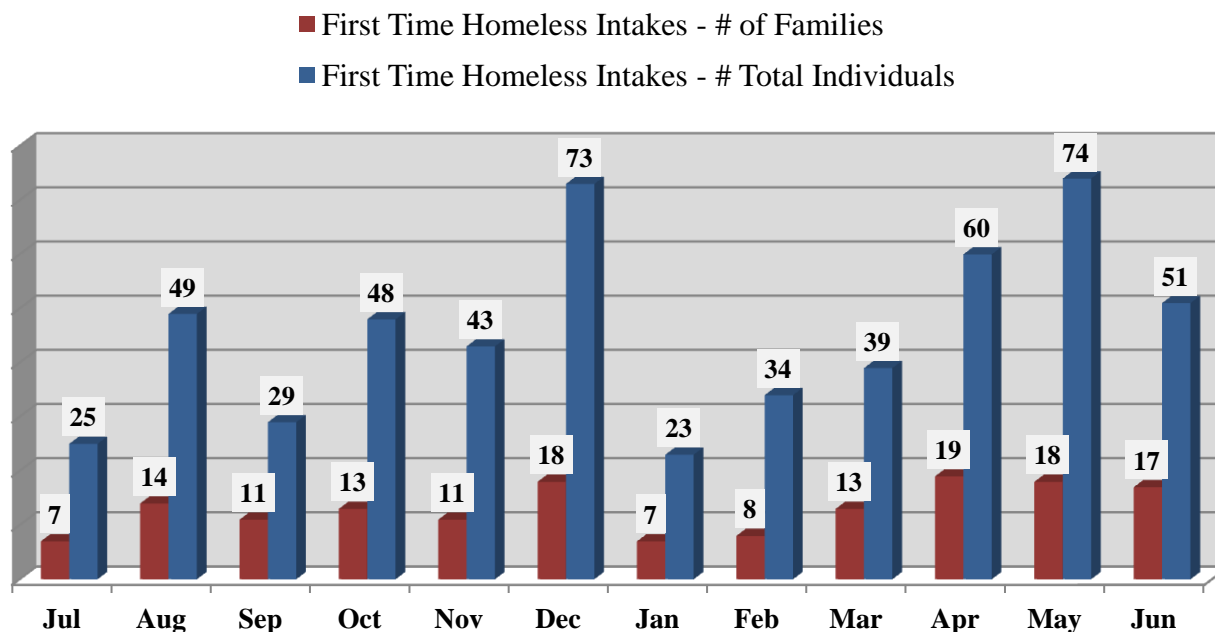


The graph below indicates the Head of Household for the 269 families served by the Family Shelter in FY 14



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**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 for FY 14: **156 Families for a total of 548 Individuals**

Total Refugee First Time Homeless Intakes in FY 13: 93 Families for a total of 352 Individuals

**Total FY 14 Intakes = 269 Families for a total of 916 Individuals**

**58%** of all new families self-report this as their first time in a homeless shelter.

This consists of:

First Time Homeless – Refugees/Immigrants/Visa Holders/Asylum Pending: 35%

First Time Homeless- Non-refugee Families: 23%