

# Family Shelter Year End Report FY 2015



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

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**Health & Human Services Department**  
**Social Services Division**  
**Family Shelter**  
**FY 2015 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 one hundred-four (124) 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 25 families this year consisting of 92 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 11	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
16 families/ 47 Individuals	22 Families/ 66 Individuals	36 Families/ 124 Individuals	20 Families/ 56 Individuals	25Families/ 92 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 135 families into permanent housing without a subsidy and 20 families were placed into permanent housing with the help of a housing voucher. Shelter Staff also work on transitional housing opportunities with families. As a result, this year Shelter Staff placed 6 families temporarily with family members, 12 families received STEP Vouchers (Maine State Housing Authority Home to Stay Program), 9 families received BRAP Vouchers, and 9 families entered other programs throughout the community (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 246 families were sheltered and only 21 families returned for a second stay for a 9% recidivism rate, which is consistent when compared to last year. Of the 246 families that were sheltered, 203 or 83% 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 four, consisting of a mother, father and two children entered the shelter in the summer of 2014. 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 BRAP 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 Diversity Visa family of two entered the Family Shelter in the fall of 2014. This family had numerous medical 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 child was connected to the Multi-Lingual Center for school testing. The Case Worker was able to secure a Tenant 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 2015, a total of 310 of the 826 individuals served by the Family Shelter are of Refugee/Immigrant status (Attachment #4). This is a decrease from FY 2014 by 21%. Refugees/Immigrants present from a variety of nations, including: Afghanistan, Angola, Belgium, Burundi, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Somalia and Sudan.

## Family Shelter Statistics

This year, the Family Shelter provided shelter for 246 families consisting of 826 individuals for a total of 46,343 bed nights. Of the 246 families served, 21 families were homeless on two or more occasions during this fiscal year for a 9% homeless recidivism rate, compared to 9% in FY14. Of the 246 families sheltered, 135 were placed in permanent housing and 36 were placed in transitional housing.

The Shelter experienced a decrease of 10% in the number of individuals served (heads of household and children) and an increase of 7% in the number of bed nights used. The average length of stay increased from 47 days to 56 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 246 families served, 49 families had relocated from other states, 83 families were from other countries, 53 families were residents from Maine but lived in town outside of Portland, and 61 families Portland residents. Of the 132 families coming from outside Maine, 110 families were secondary migrant refugee families or had a visiting visa.

### Client Characteristics

<b>Age by Gender</b>				
<b>Age Range</b>	<b>FY 14</b>		<b>FY 15</b>	
	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
1 year old & under	20	28	18	20
1 – 5 years old	130	95	96	95
6 – 12 years old	85	81	93	90
13 – 17 years old	49	41	35	30
18 – 30 years old	43	112	41	97
31 – 50 years old	83	138	63	135
51 – 61 years old	3	5	8	5
62 + years old	2	1	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>472</b>

<b>Adult Status</b>		
	<b>FY 14</b>	<b>FY 15</b>
Adults	387	349
Children	529	477
<b>Total</b>	<b>916</b>	<b>826</b>

<b>Veteran Status</b>		
	<b>FY 14</b>	<b>FY 15</b>
Veteran	6	18
Non-Veteran Adults	381	459
<b>Total Adults</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>477</b>

<b>Length of Stay</b>		
<b>Length of Stay</b>	<b>FY 14</b>	<b>FY 15</b>
1-30 nights	139 Families or 52%	97 Families or 40%
31-60 nights	85 Families or 32%	87 Families or 35%
61-90 nights	17 Families or 6%	62 Families or 25%
91 + nights	28 Families or 10%	N/A
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>269 Families</b>	<b>246 Families</b>

<b>Family Composition</b>		
<b>Family Composition</b>	<b>FY 14</b>	<b>FY 15</b>
Female Single Parent Family	150 Families or 56%	151 Families or 61%
Male Single Parent Family	19 Families or 7%	10 Families or 4%
Two Parent Family	100 Families or 37%	85 Families or 35%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>269 Families</b>	<b>246 Families</b>

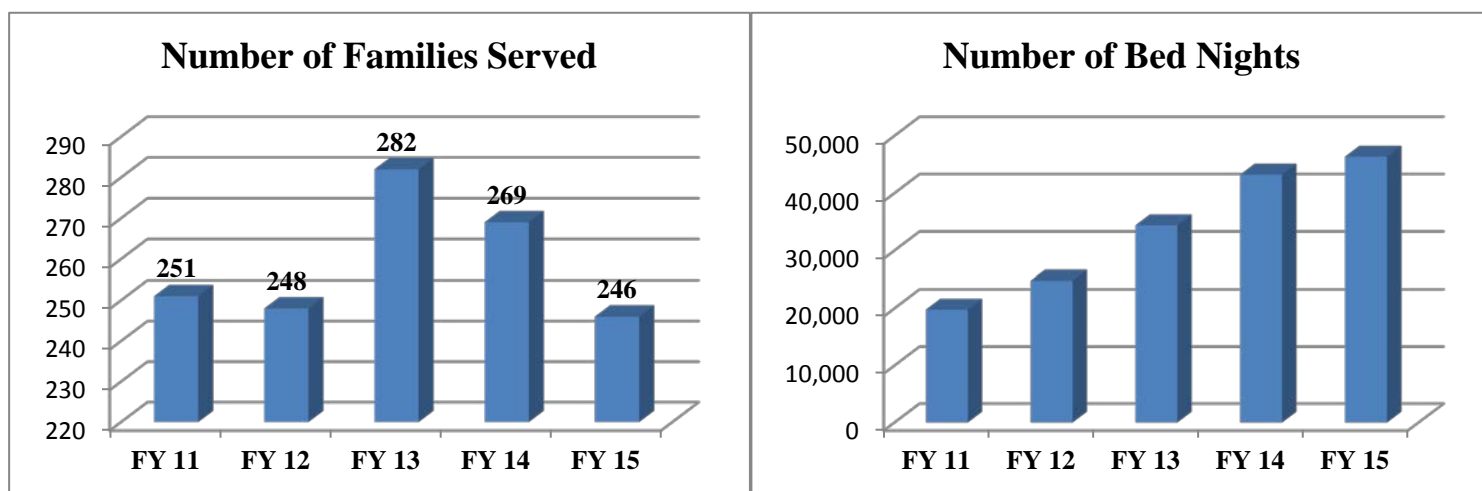
### Reasons for Homelessness

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 15, 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, 16% of all families in FY 15, experienced domestic violence and/or family conflict and had to leave their current living situations. Other clients, 21% of all families in FY 15, reported having difficulty locating and securing affordable housing. Failure to pay rent resulting in eviction was indicated by 17% of all families in FY 15. 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 5% of all families in FY 15.

### 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 303 nights, or 83% of all nights, in FY 2015; this is a slight decrease from FY 2014, where the Family Shelter utilized motels for a total of 313 nights (Attachment #1). The Family Shelter overflow had a total of 1,200 family motel placements for a total of 46,343 bed nights during that period (Attachment #1). Families remain in motels until room is available at the shelter or until permanent housing is located, whichever occurs first.

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**FAMILY SHELTER – OVERFLOW (Motel)**  
**FY 2015**

**Overflow was used 303 nights, or 83% of all nights in FY 15**

	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15	+/- % Change
Total Overflow Bednights Used	2,550	6,468	6,316	-2%
Total Nights Overflow Was Used	198	331	303	-8%

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

	FY 11	FY 12*	FY 13*	FY 14*	FY 15*	% Change
Number of Families	251	248	282	269	246	<b>-9%</b>
Number of Individuals	806	848	1,011	916	826	<b>-10%</b>
Number of Bed Nights*	19,774	24,784	34,371	43,218	46,343	<b>+26%</b>
Average Family Size	3.2	3.4	3.6	3.4	3.4	<b>0%</b>
Average Stay (Days)	24.5	29.2	34	47.1	56.2	<b>+16%</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  
6,316 hotel bed nights in FY 2015

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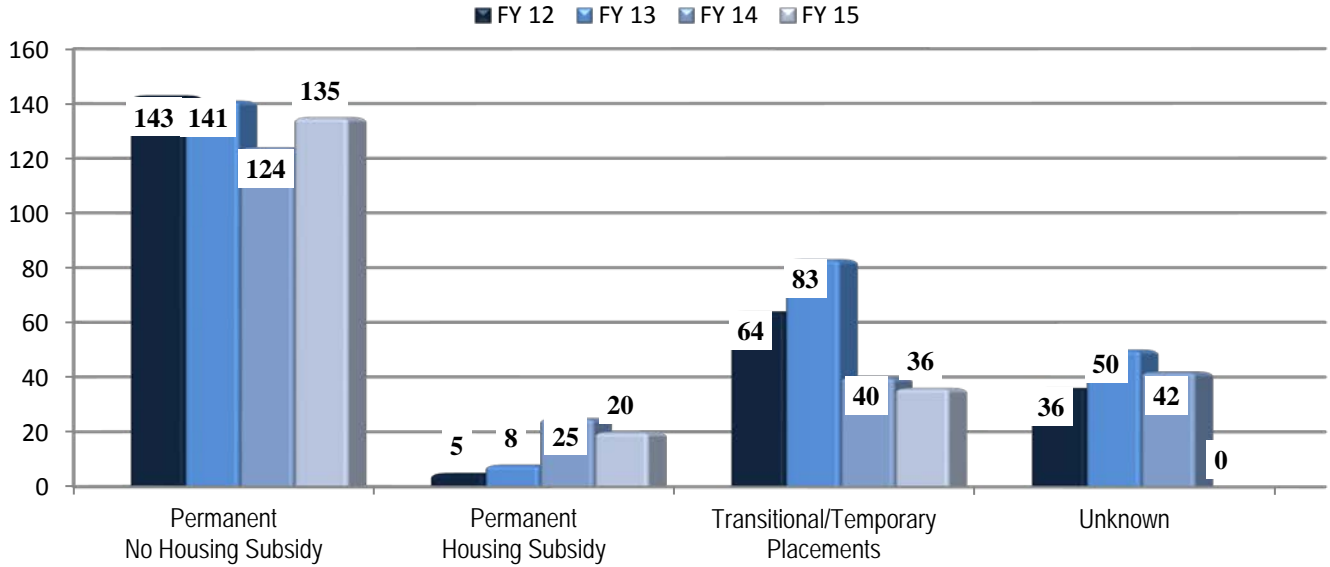
**Housing Placements**

	FY 2012*		FY 2013*		FY 2014*		FY 2015*	
	248		269		189		191	
<b>Permanent, No Housing Subsidy</b>								
Portland	104	42%	96	36%	86	37%	77	40%
Biddeford	2	0.8%	5	2%	2	1%	0	0%
Bridgton	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.5%
Falmouth	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.5%
Lewiston	1	0.4%	9	3%	5	2%	7	4%
Newfield	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.4%	0	0%
Old Orchard Beach	1	0.4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Palmyra	0	0%	1	0.4%	0	0%	0	0%
Saco	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.5%
Sanford	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.4%	0	0%
Scarborough	1	0.4%	1	0.4%	0	0%	0	0%
South Portland	4	2%	5	2%	3	1%	2	1%
Westbrook	9	4%	16	6%	16	7%	8	4%
Windham	0	0%	1	0.4%	1	0.4%	0	0%
Out of State	1	0.4%	0	0%	1	0.4%	2	1%
Reunification with Family	20	8%	7	3%	8	3%	36	19%
<b>Permanent, Housing Subsidy</b>								
Portland	3	1%	7	3%	12	5%	13	7%
Auburn	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.4%	0	0%
Biddeford	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.4%	0	0%
Kennebunk	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.5%
Old Orchard Beach	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.4%	0	0%
Saco	0	0%	0	0%	3	1%	1	0.5%
Scarborough	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.5%
South Portland	1	0.4%	1	0.4%	2	1%	0	0%
Standish	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.4%	0	0%
Waterboro	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.5%
Waterville	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.5%
Westbrook	1	0.4%	0	0%	3	1%	1	0.5%
Windham	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.4%	0	0%
Yarmouth	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	0.5%
<b>Transitional/Temporary Placements</b>								
Reunification with Family	48	20%	71	26%	20	9%	6	3%
22 Park Ave.	2	0.8%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Bell Street	4	2%	2	0.7%	0	0%	3	2%
BRAP Voucher	0	0%	0	0%	7	3%	9	5%
Catholic Charities Welcome House	0	0%	1	0.4%	0	0%	0	0%
Emergency Shelter	7	3%	0	0%	0	0%	2	1%
Family Crisis	0	0%	1	0.4%	1	0.4%	0	0%
Jail	2	0.8%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
STEP Voucher	0	0%	3	1%	7	3%	12	6%
Stepping Stones	1	0.4%	5	2%	5	2%	4	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>248</b>		<b>269</b>		<b>189</b>		<b>191</b>	



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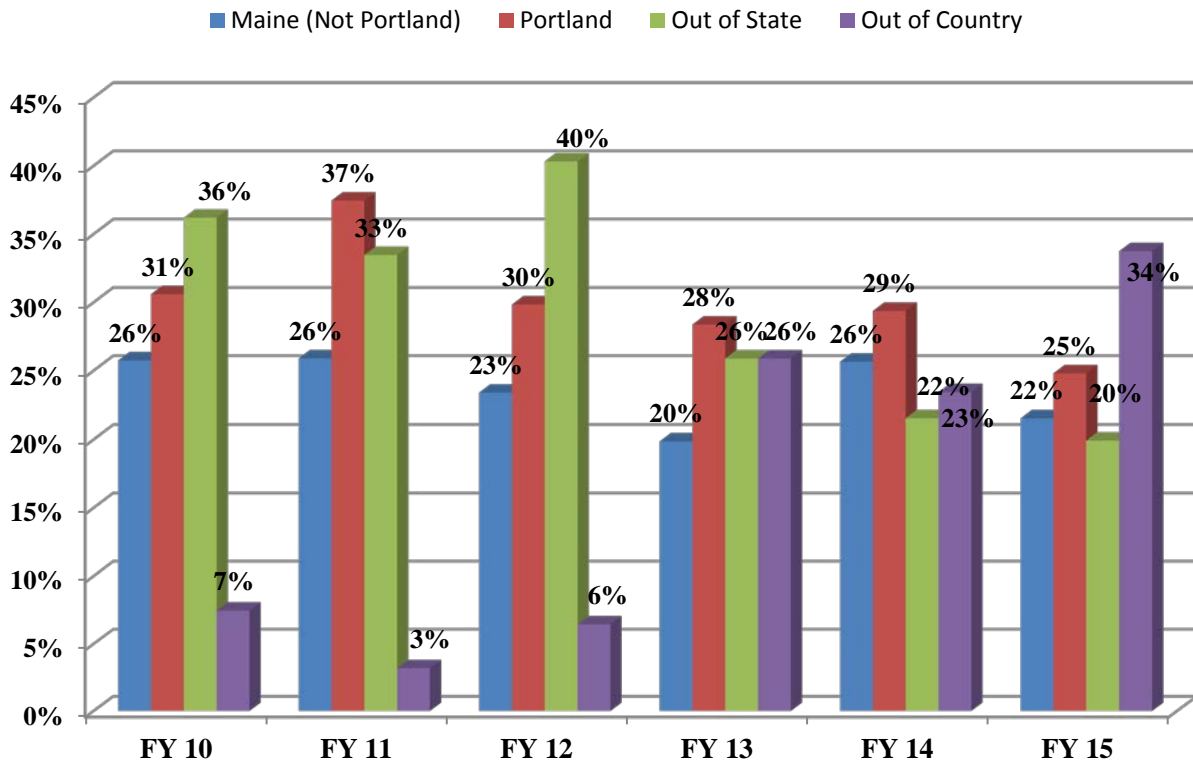
**Housing Placements**



Total Placements\*  
(does not include "Unknown" numbers)  
**FY 12: 248**  
**FY 13: 282**  
**FY 14: 189**  
**FY 15: 191**

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### LAST PERMANENT RESIDENCE BASED ON SELF-REPORTING



### Residency of New Intakes

(Based on self-reporting by consumers)

Number of Families

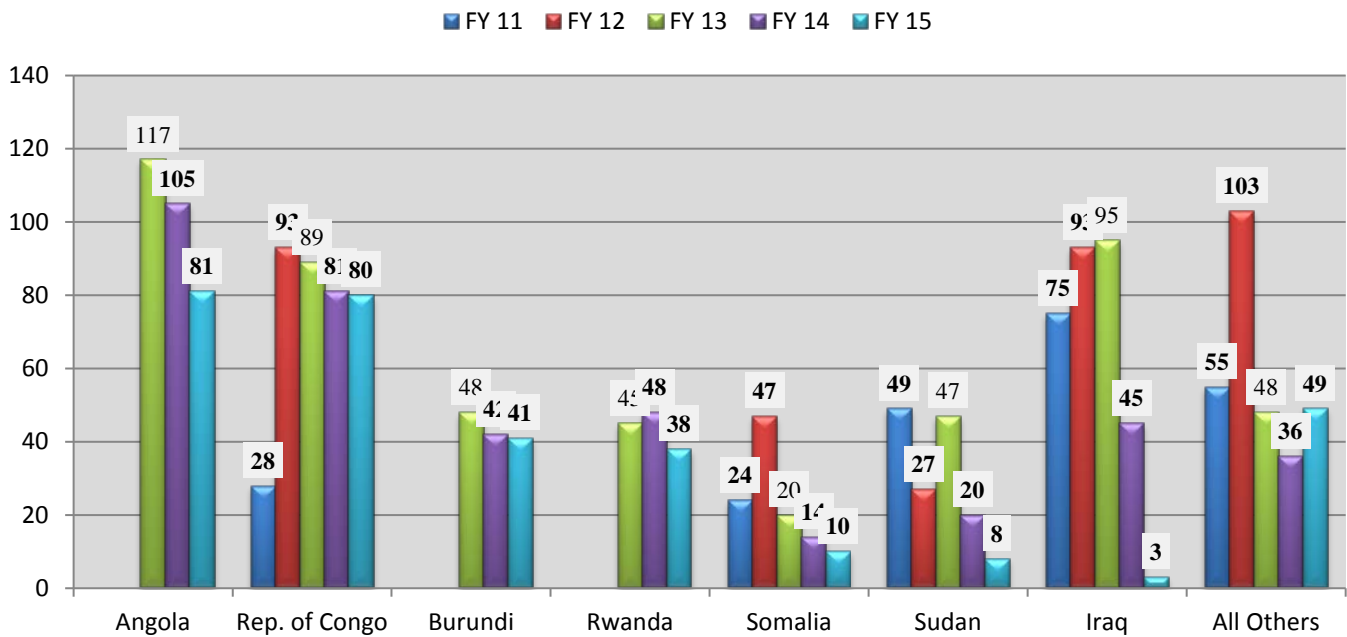
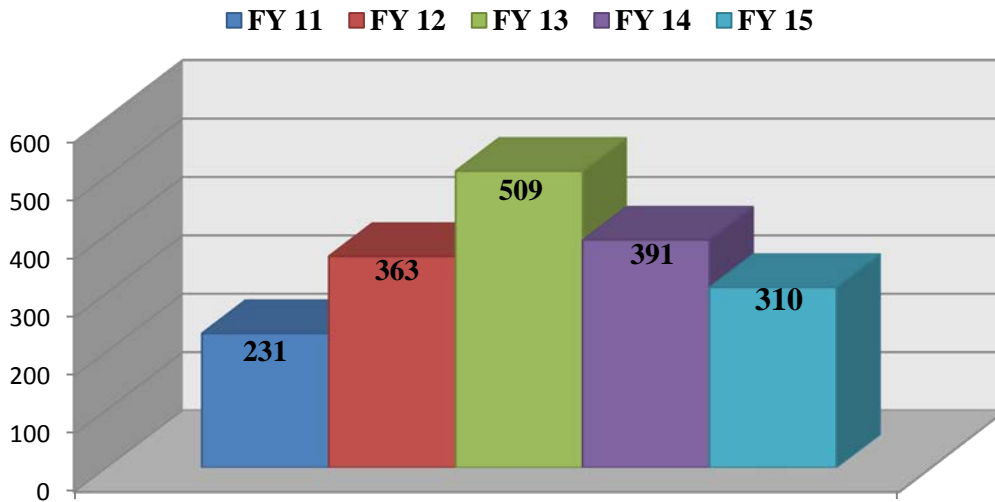
	FY 11	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15	FY 14-15 +/- %
Maine (Not Portland)	65	58	56	69	53	-23%
Portland	94	74	80	79	61	-23%
Out of State	84	100	73	58	49	-16%
Out of Country	8	16	73	63	83	+32%

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

**A total of 310 individuals, or 38% of all individuals residing in the Shelter**

**Total Number of New Mainers**



Angola\* – 26%  
Somalia – 3%

Rep. of Congo – 26%  
Sudan – 3%

Burundi\* – 13%  
Iraq – 1%

Rwanda\* – 12%  
All Others – 16%

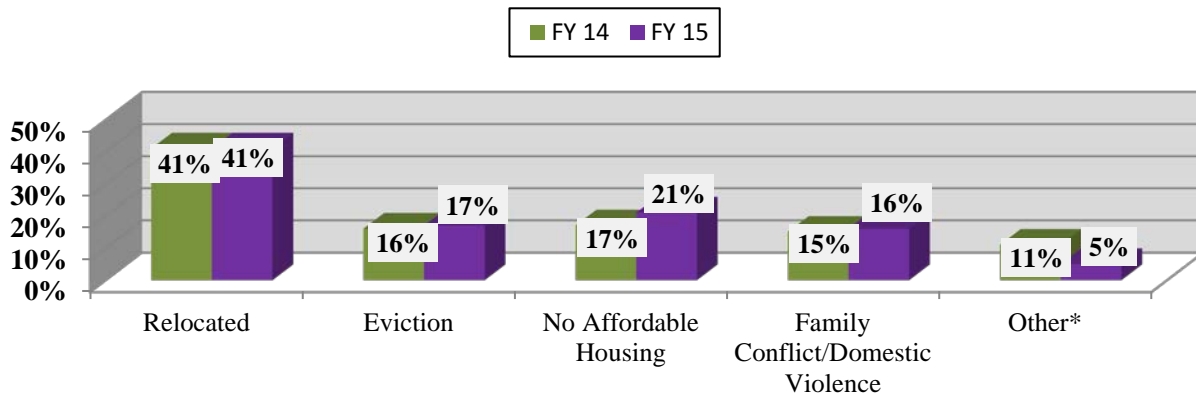
“All Others” include: Afghanistan, Djibouti, South Africa

\*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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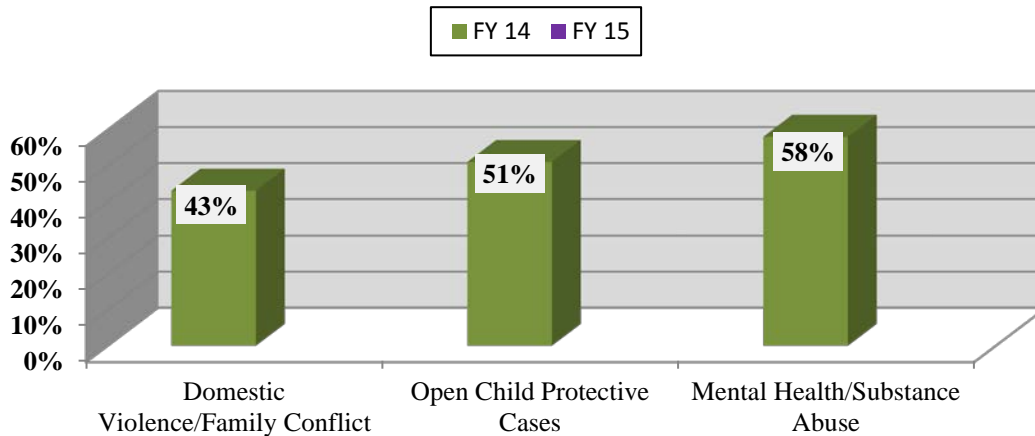
**CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS**

The graph below represents the primary reasons homeless families utilized the City of Portland Family Shelter in FY 15

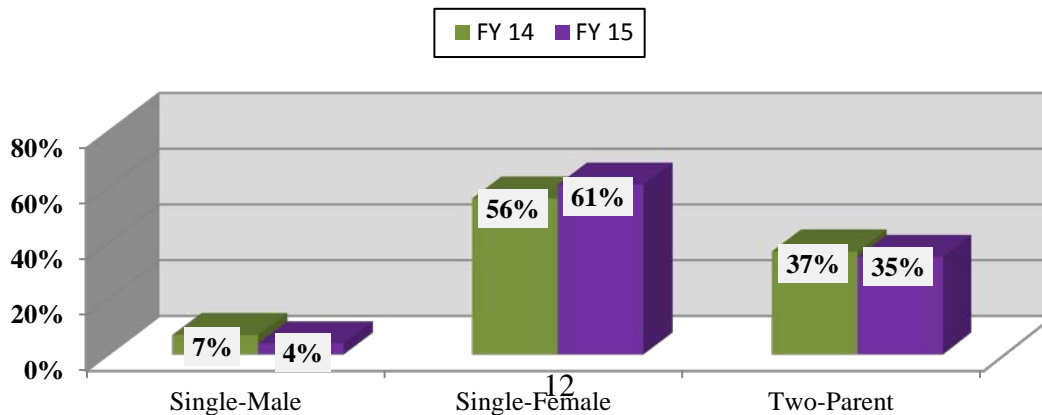


\*Other includes: Loss of job, substandard housing, loss of public assistance, and health & safety reasons.

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

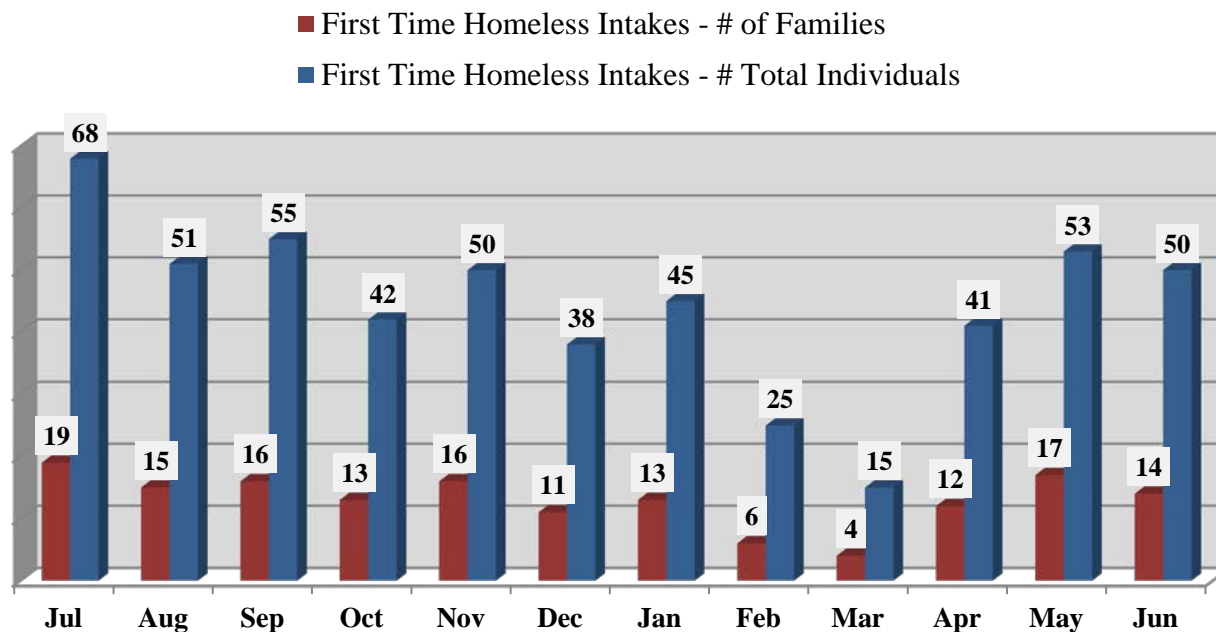


The graph below indicates the Head of Household for the 246 families served by the Family Shelter in FY 15



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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 15: 156 Families for a total of 533 Individuals**

**Total FY 15 Intakes = 246 Families for a total of 826 Individuals**

**63%** of all new families self-report this as their first time in a homeless shelter.