

Young Adults in Transition

From the Oklahoma Healthy Transitions Initiative

Special points of interest:

67% of people who received emergency shelter services in 2006 reported they were working full-time before they became homeless.

Income inequality continued to grow with the richest 20% of working individuals taking home 47% of all income and earning 10 times that of low income individuals.

Special points of interest:

Based on 2004 annual income data, 18% of young adults age 18-24 had household incomes below the poverty line compared with a poverty rate of 12% for those ages 25-34.

According to the Oklahoma Interagency Council on Homelessness, 22% of Oklahoma's homeless population are under the age of 18.

POVERTY, HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS IMPACTS YOUNG ADULTS IN TRANSITION

Today, young adults take far longer to transition to adulthood than others did five or six decades ago. For young adults with mental illness, substance abuse addiction, or behavioral challenges, the process of transitioning can be even more overwhelming. The services these vulnerable populations receive as children and adolescents often come to an end during the transition to adulthood phase, even if their need for mental health and substance abuse services continue. More often than not, many young adults in transition end up living in poverty, homeless, couch surfing, or in socio-economically deprived communities. The true number of homeless youth and young adults in transition throughout Oklahoma is a number that continues to elude advocates for the homeless. Many young people find themselves homeless after years of sexual and physical abuse, strained relationships, addiction of a family member, and/or parental neglect. Homeless young people find themselves exchanging sex for food, clothing, and shelter; and feel this is their only chance of survival on the streets. According to the Oklahoma City Continuum of Care, there were one hundred and forty-eight 18-24 year olds accessing shelter services between Jan 1, 2010 to July 1, 2010. The number of homeless 18-24 year olds accessing shelter services in the Tulsa Continuum of Care was three hundred and twenty-three during the same time frame. That's a total of four hundred and seventy-eight young people that have accessed shelter services in Oklahoma's largest metropolitan communities in six months. A growing number of Americans and local leaders recognize that reducing homelessness and poverty is no longer something our country can afford to put off for another day. With unemployment rates predicted to stay consistent around 9%, homelessness and poverty have become an immediate concern not only for individuals and families, but for young people in Oklahoma. To date, Oklahoma has consistently led the nation with the highest poverty rate. On average, in the state of Oklahoma, 12.2% of families and 16.4% of individuals live at or below the national poverty level. Local communities that experience high levels of poverty have higher levels of unemployment and lower high school graduation rates when compared to the national average. Some of Oklahoma's poorest and least educated counties for young adults in transition include Oklahoma, Ottawa, Haskell, Tulsa, and Muskogee counties. The employment rate for those counties falls between 52% and 73%, and the High school graduation rate is Between 57% and 78%.



**Homeless
in
Oklahoma**

Lack of Education, Limited Employment, and Poverty

It's not surprising that state funding to support young people in transition is highly concentrated in some of Oklahoma's poorest counties.



18.4% of Oklahomans between the ages of 18-24 have less than a high school diploma.



The Number of DHS Foster Youth Aging Out of Services in Fiscal Year:

FY 2008—500 youth
FY 2009—278 youth
FY 2010—300 youth

The Number of Youth and Young Adults Being Served thru the Public Mental Health Systems

State Total: 12,909 youth and young adults

18-25 year olds—10,930

16-17 year olds—1,979

Oklahoma's Average Household Income for Single Adults

19.6%: \$15,000—\$24,000

18.1%: \$10,000 or less