

Regional Homelessness Assessment Report



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This report uses information from the Homeless Missourians Information System (HMIS) to provide a snapshot of the extent and nature of homelessness. Data was compiled from agencies in region 2 for the time period of January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012. This report also outlines performance measures used to evaluate the effectiveness of homeless service delivery systems.

Regional Overview

Region 2 of the Balance of State Continuum of Care covers six counties: Lewis, Marion, Monroe, Pike, Ralls, and Shelby. According to the 2012 Winter Point-in-Time Sheltered and Unsheltered Homeless Count, 14 people were reported as being homeless with 11 of them not having shelter.

In 2012 there were four housing programs, not including domestic violence providers, as well as agencies providing prevention-only services. All four of these programs are enrolled in HMIS and contributed data to this report. These programs include:

- One emergency shelter (Hope House).
- Two permanent housing programs (Preferred Family Healthcare and NECAC’s Housing First program).
- One Shelter Plus Care program (through the Department of Mental Health with the NECAC processing center).

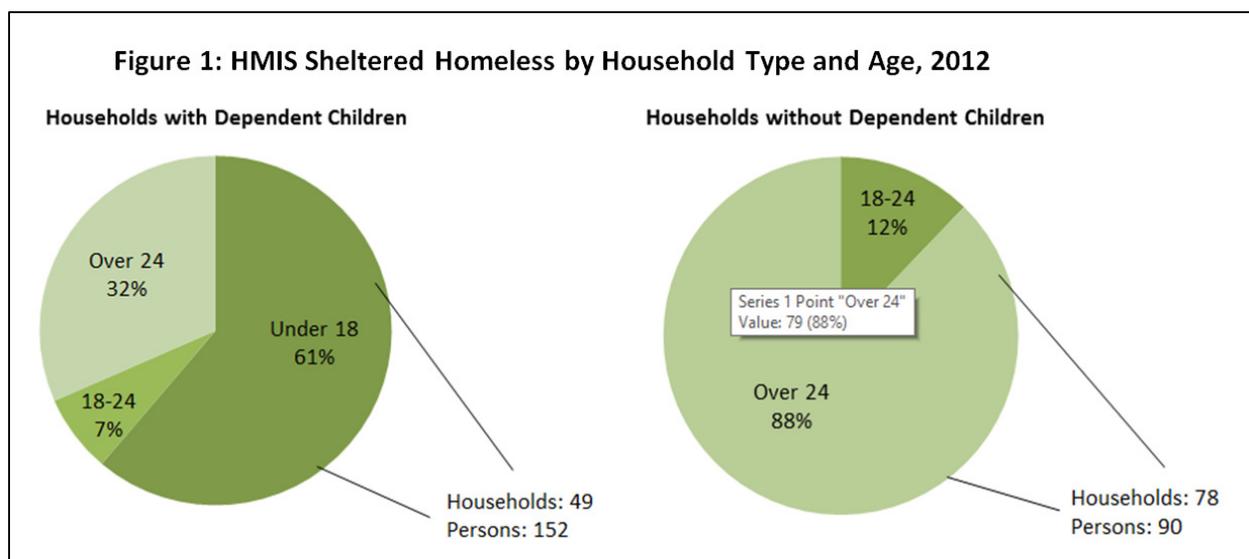
With 100 percent of the available beds tracked in HMIS, funders and the community should

have thorough data to understand the extent of homelessness in the region and evaluate the system of care. However, it is important to note there are some data quality issues for this region, which impacts the information provided in this report.

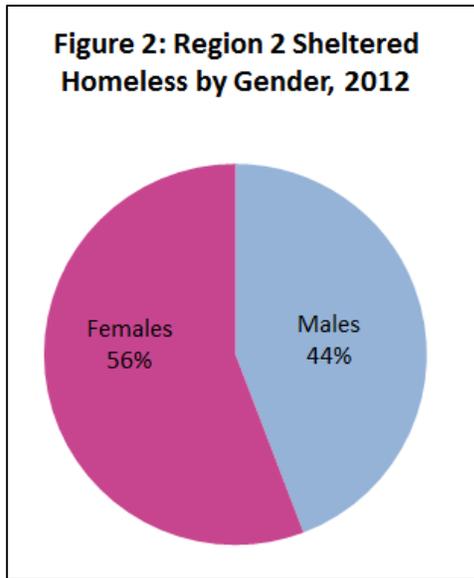
Demographics

A total of 127 households were housed in region 2 in 2012, accounting for 242 people. This represents roughly 3 percent of all persons served by housing programs and shelters enrolled in HMIS in the continuum. In future reports, demographic information will include data from agencies tracking prevention services in HMIS to show a more complete picture of what homelessness and at-risk homelessness looks like in the region and continuum.

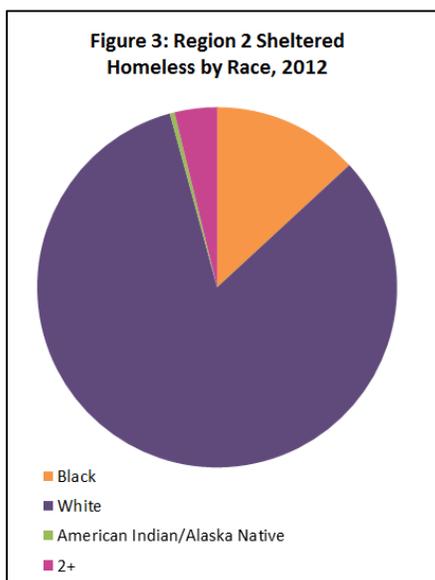
Of the 127 households, 49 were households with dependent children and 78 were households without dependent children (see Figure 1). For the households with children, more than half (61%) are under the age of 18.



Of the 242 people housed, 56 percent of them were female and 44 percent were male (see Figure 2). The majority of females came from one of the two NECAC permanent housing programs.

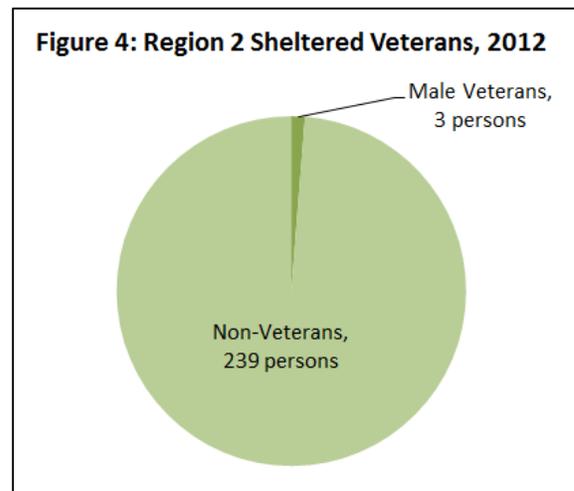


A majority (81%) of all persons served in 2012 reported their race as white (see Figure 3). Black or African American was the second highest with 13 percent of all clients reporting that as their race. Roughly 3 percent of the clients were two or more races, and 1 individual



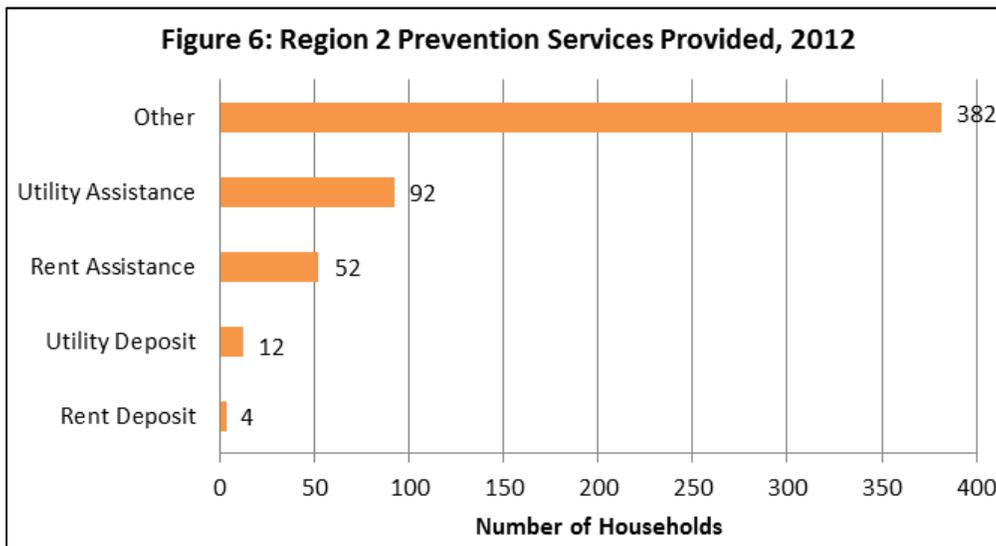
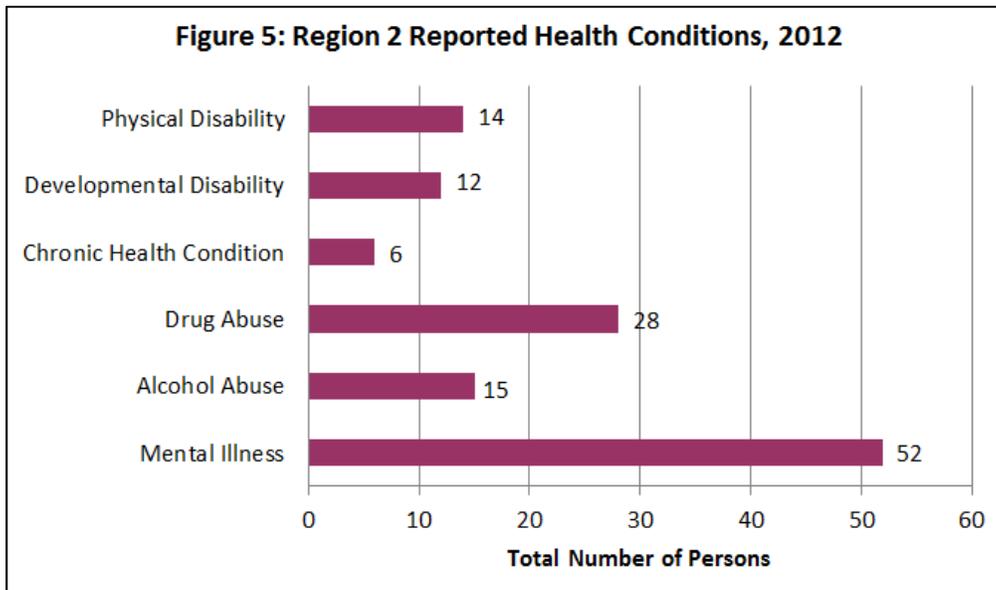
reported their race as being American Indian/Alaskan Native.

Only a small percentage (1.2%) reported being a veteran, all of whom were male (see Figure 4). The distinction in gender among veterans is a particular area of interest for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) due to the nature of their collaboration with the Department of Veteran Affairs.



Additional subpopulation data for clients served by housing programs and shelters focuses on health conditions. The most common health condition reported in HMIS was mental illness, which impacts at least 22 percent of those served by housing programs during the year (see Figure 5). This percentage is slightly higher than the continuum's which is roughly 20 percent of all persons served by housing programs and shelters.

The second most commonly reported health condition was drug abuse, which accounts for about 12 percent of clients served in 2012. The next most commonly reported health condition is pretty evenly divided between alcohol abuse and physical disability. Each of these categories account for about 6 percent of clients served in 2012.



Prevention Services

Currently there are two agencies in region 2 that track their prevention services in HMIS: Douglass Community Services and Salvation Army - Hannibal. Prevention services include rent assistance and deposits, utility assistance and deposits and other services. Other services take into account food pantry items, transportation costs and hotel/motel vouchers.

A total of 542 households, which may include households who have received services multiple times or in different categories, were assisted in

the region for a total of \$118,069.50. This accounts for 15.6 percent of the total amount expended for prevention in the continuum, which is significant considering only two agencies are offering prevention services in the region.

The majority of prevention services provided are for other services, followed by utility assistance (see Figure 6). Other services are comprised mainly of food pantry assistance through Salvation Army – Hannibal. The remaining services encompass utility and rent assistance, with most of that assistance

provided through Douglass Community Services' rental assistance funding.

Moving forward, the HMIS Project will be identifying other agencies in the region that also provide prevention services to get a more complete picture of those efforts.

Reasons for Emergency

Currently there are 31 options in HMIS to indicate a household's primary reason for emergency. There are also a handful of subsequent reasons that a household can select as secondary and tertiary reasons for experiencing emergency. The "Reasons for Emergency" report pulls on all three of those reasons. As a result, this particular data is not unduplicated. Data is also unduplicated in that a household may have sought services multiple times.

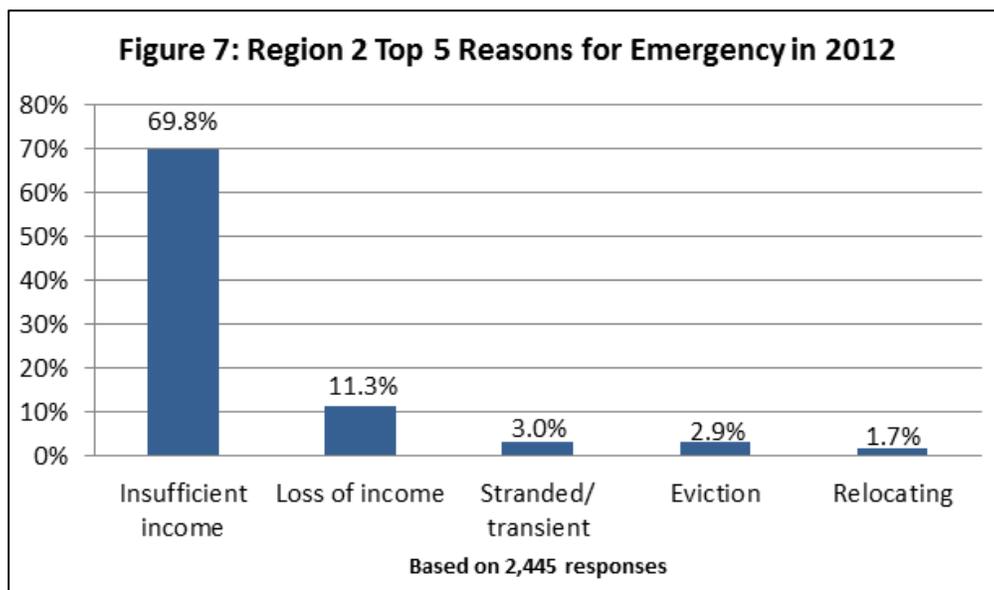
Examining why people seek services – both housing and prevention – allow agencies, communities and the continuum to look at the needs of the clients. It is also helpful in understanding the causes for emergency – whether it is due to financial reasons, health issues or other factors. This may provide some insight to unmet needs as well, pointing to potential gaps in services.

In 2012, the most common reason for emergency in the continuum was insufficient income, accounting for roughly 53 percent of the households. That is also the case for region 2, although a bit higher. Nearly 70 percent of the households fell under the category insufficient income (see Figure 7). The next most common reason for experiencing emergency is loss of income, which is also consistent with data at the continuum level. It is also comparable to data from previous years, which are available through reports on the HMIS Project website.

Program Utilization

Utilization rates represent the number of units or beds occupied on a given night. In addition to providing useful information to the region and continuum about bed availability or unavailability, utilization rates are the single strongest indicator of HMIS data quality. It allows agencies and the HMIS Project to spot if an agency is potentially missing program entries or exits in the system, particularly if the rates remain stagnant over time.

Program utilization rates are calculated on the last Wednesday of each month from July 2012 to December 2012 for the programs enrolled in HMIS. Data from January through June 2012

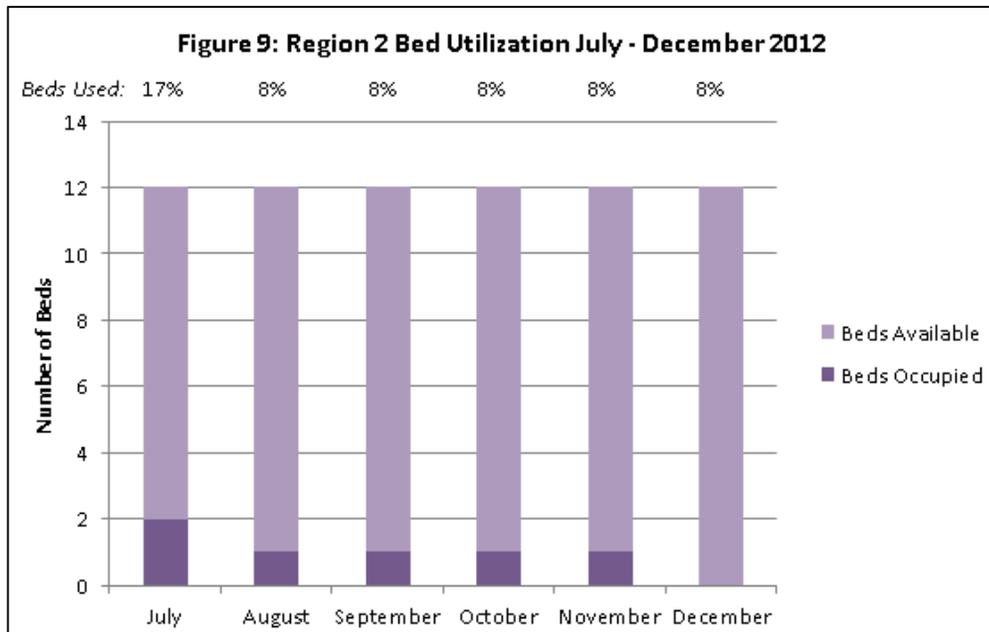
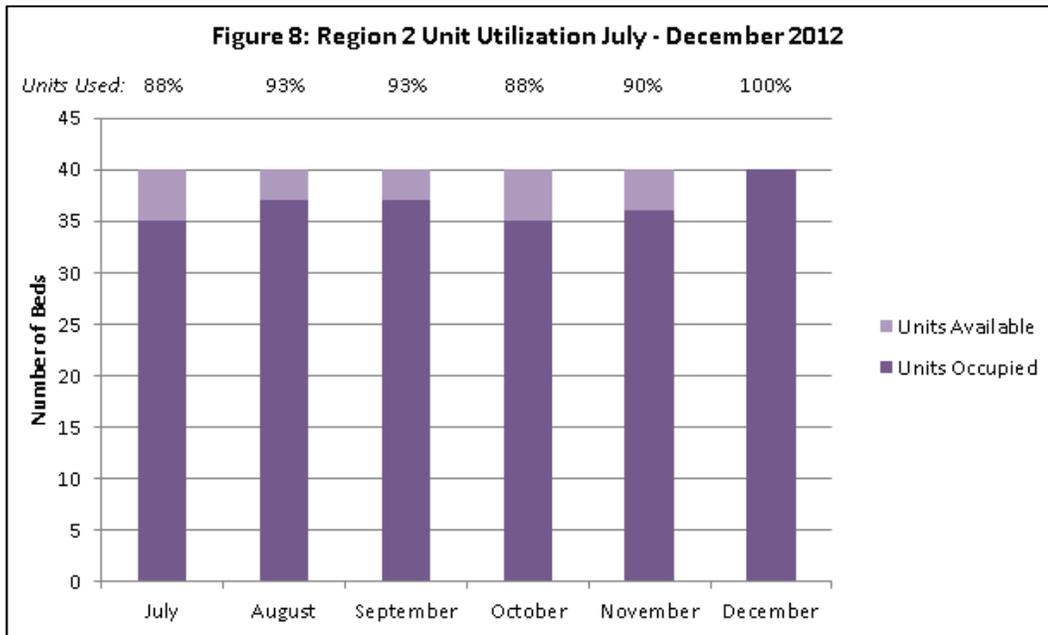


was presented during September Regional Housing Team Meetings and the report is available on the HMIS website. Utilization rates for 2011 are also available on the website.

The utilization rates for region 2 are divided in two ways – unit utilization rates and bed utilization rates. The unit utilization looks at the number of units in use at the three permanent housing programs. While the number of units available may fluctuate month to month, the

capacity for each month remains the number of units indicated by their grant and the Housing Inventory Chart. Using that number allows the program to show how they are able to utilize their funds to best serve the region.

For region 2, the permanent housing programs have a combined capacity of 40 units. During the six-month period, the utilization rates were between 88 and 100 percent (see Figure 8). This indicates that the programs are consistently full



but may also suggest there may be some unit availability.

Similarly, bed utilization rates look at the number of beds that were utilized. In region 2 the bed utilization rates are calculated based on the one emergency shelter for a total of 12 beds.

The bed utilization rates from July to December are very low and stagnate at 8 percent from August to December (see Figure 9). On average for the six months, only one bed is generally being utilized. That indicates that there are consistently available beds in the region. As it is unusual for utilization rates at emergency shelters to stay the same over a period of time, this is usually indicative of data quality errors due to entry and exits not being recorded in HMIS on all clients served. HMIS Project staff will continue to work with this agency to determine what data entry barriers they face, if any.

Average Length of Stay for Individuals & Families at Emergency Shelters

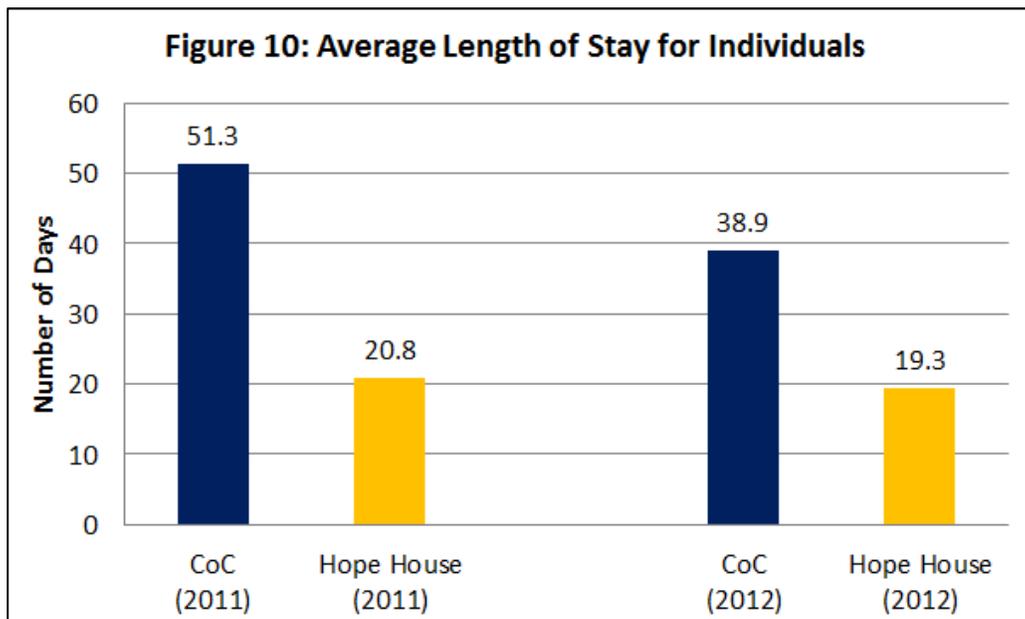
While the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act will provide guidance on how to measure for overall length of homelessness, currently the Balance

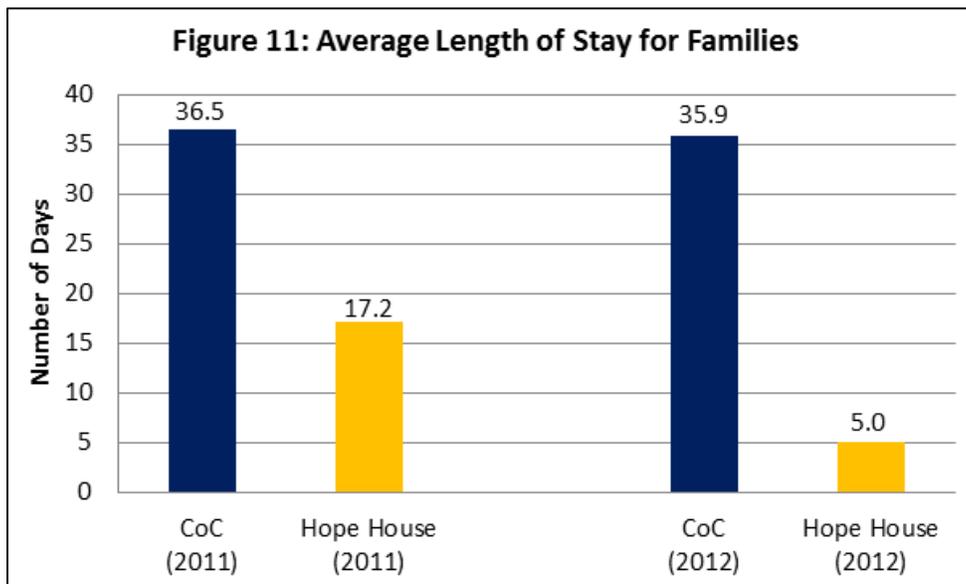
of State CoC looks at the average length of stay at emergency shelters to obtain a baseline measure of how the continuum is performing. Currently HUD identifies high performing communities as ones where the average length of stay at an emergency shelter is 20 days. Communities are also considered high performing if they do not have that 20 day average but instead decrease the average length of stay by 10 percent each year.

Baseline measures from 2011 and 2012 indicate that in the Balance of State Continuum individuals generally have a higher average length of stay at shelters, though they are seeing the largest decreases (see Table 1). With individuals and families having an average length of stay higher than 20 days, the continuum has a goal of decreasing the average by 10 percent each year.

	2011	2012 Goal	2012 Actual
Individuals	51.3	46.2 days	38.9 days
Families	36.5	32.9 days	35.9 days

At the continuum level, the goal for individuals' length of stay in 2012 was met. However, for families, the average length of stay only decreased by half a day. This could be because





there are fewer emergency shelters serving families in the continuum that track data in HMIS to help lower the average length of stay.

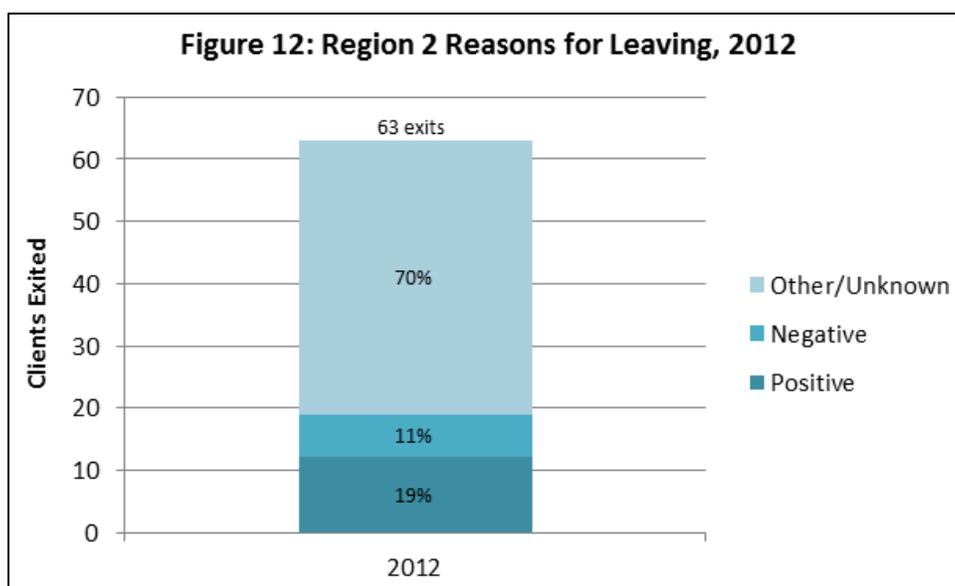
The emergency shelter in region 2 did help lower the individual and family average length of stay for the continuum, primarily with their decrease in family length of stay from 17 days to 5 days. However, this number might be a misrepresentation as there is some data quality issues with entries and exits recorded in HMIS.

Moving forward with the goal of reducing the average length of stay by 10 percent each year,

the goal for 2013 is 37 days for individuals and 34.1 days for families, although this region is already meeting that goal.

Reasons for Leaving

Currently there are 11 options in HMIS listed as reasons for leaving a housing program or shelter. Those reasons are divided into positive, negative and other/unknown reasons for leaving. Positive reasons for leaving include left for housing opportunity or completed program. Negative reasons for leaving include such things as non-compliance with project, needs could



not be met and disagreement with the rules. Both positive and negative reasons are classified based on what other continuums have previously done, which aided in categorizing the reasons for leaving. Unknown/other reasons for leaving are tracked primarily for data quality purposes.

In region 2, nearly three quarters of the households who left did so for other/unknown reasons (see Figure 12). The majority of these unknown reasons for leaving are attributed to Hope House, with all clients coming through their program leaving for unknown reasons. While unknown reasons for leaving are more common in emergency shelters, the extent this option is being recorded in HMIS by the agency could point to potential data quality issues.

In contrast, the permanent housing and Shelter Plus Care program have one in four households leaving for positive reasons, which is evenly divided between completing program and left for another housing opportunity. Additionally, 11 percent of the households for the permanent housing programs leave for negative reasons with all of those reasons falling into the category non-compliance with the program.

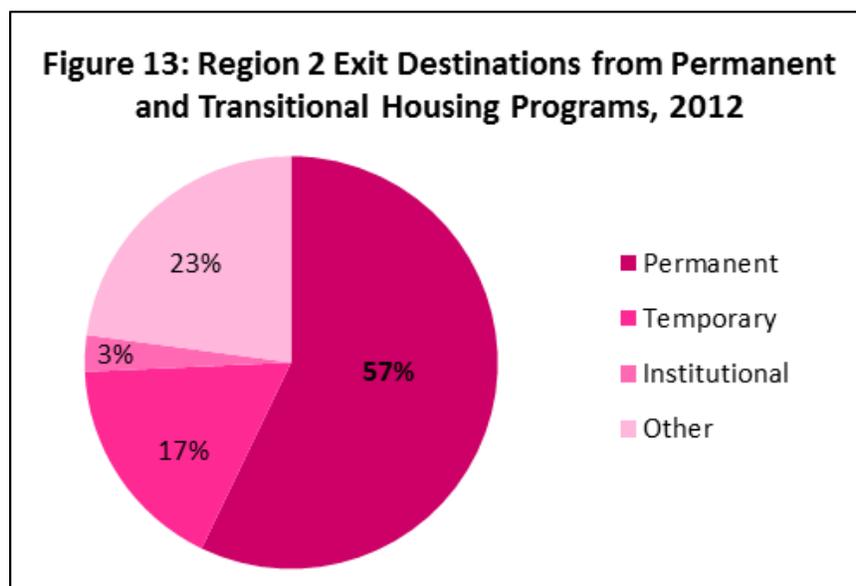
Exit Destinations

Currently in HMIS there are 18 exit destination options for clients leaving a housing program or emergency shelter. Those exit destinations are categorized as being permanent, temporary, institutional or other and are categorized as such based on the new Annual Performance Report (APR).

Exit destinations are examined for two reasons. The first is that it provides an opportunity to look at how many clients leave for stable housing situations which is a performance measure for transitional and permanent housing programs. The second is for data quality purposes, particularly for unknown exit destinations.

In region 2, over half of those who exited went to a permanent housing destination. Most of those were to a rental house or apartment - either with or without a subsidy (see Figure 13).

Another one fourth of the clients exiting went to an “other” destination, which are evenly divided between “don’t know” and “refused to answer” for the permanent housing programs.



With only 35 total exits taken into account for these three programs, this likely does not have substantial data quality implications.

Exit destinations can be harder to capture for emergency shelters. The shelter in region 2 had 100 percent of their clients going to an unknown destination, which is indicative of data quality issues. While it is not a performance measure for emergency shelters as it is for transitional and permanent housing programs, the HMIS Project will continue to monitor the unknown exit destinations of shelters for data quality purposes.

Moving Forward

Although this report provides a snapshot of the extent and nature of homelessness in region 2, there are some limitations of the report.

First and foremost, the data in this report may have data quality issues. This primarily pertains to bed utilization rates, unknown exit destinations and exiting clients in a timely manner. The HMIS Project will continue to work with agencies on an individual basis to address any data quality concerns. While the data in this report shows aggregate level information for the region, agencies can request their specific data at any point for further review and analysis.

Additionally, there are system limitations in what data can be pulled from HMIS. The HMIS Project will continue working with MISI to enhance the system to allow more detailed data reporting. In the future, the following changes will be addressed:

- Demographic information will include data from programs providing prevention services.
- Reasons for emergency currently pull for primary, secondary and tertiary reasons, which will be reduced to just the primary reasons.

- Reasons for leaving will be pulled at program-level to account for agencies who serve multiple regions.

As regulations are released with guidance on how to measure performance at the agency and continuum level, such as recidivism, first time homelessness, and average length of homelessness, this report will be changed to address those measurements.