Spokane Youth Homeless Services Gap Analysis

Volunteers of America®
EASTERN WASHINGTON & NORTHERN IDAHO

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The purpose of this project, conducted by Volunteers of America and AmeriCorps VISTA, was to learn about the services and supports provided to youth and young adults in Spokane, to track what assets our community offers to people ages 13-24, and what gaps in services need to be filled.

This executive summary will show organizational-level information about basic and ongoing services (see Key Terms below) provided to two age groups: youth ages 13-17, and young adults ages 18-24, and will compare data across the 5 sectors represented. We will also see information regarding the 75 individual respondent's ability to refer to all services, which is reflective of knowledge of services provided in our community. We did not look at utilization rates, but rather how many organizations provide each of the 22 services common of a homeless system. By focusing on organizational-level information we are able to look broadly at the Spokane County system to learn which services call for better collaboration, resource development, and knowledge generation.

Key Terms

Youth = 13-17 years old   **Young Adults** = 18-24 years old

Basic Services =
Food
Overnight Shelter
Drop-in/ recreation center
Clothing
Laundry
Showers/ hygiene
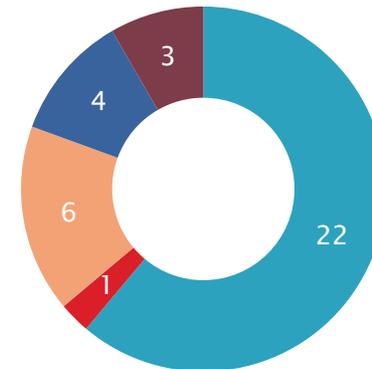*Transportation assistance*
Healthcare
Crisis intervention

Ongoing Services =
Transitional housing
*Permanent housing ***
Case management
Life skills
Counseling
Family reunification
Recreation
Employment assistance
Education assistance
Peer support
Street outreach
Legal advice
Substance abuse services
* *asked only for young adults*

Participation

We surveyed *75 individuals* from *36 organizations and departments* across Spokane County from *5 sectors*: Services and Nonprofits, Law Enforcement, Government, Education, Health

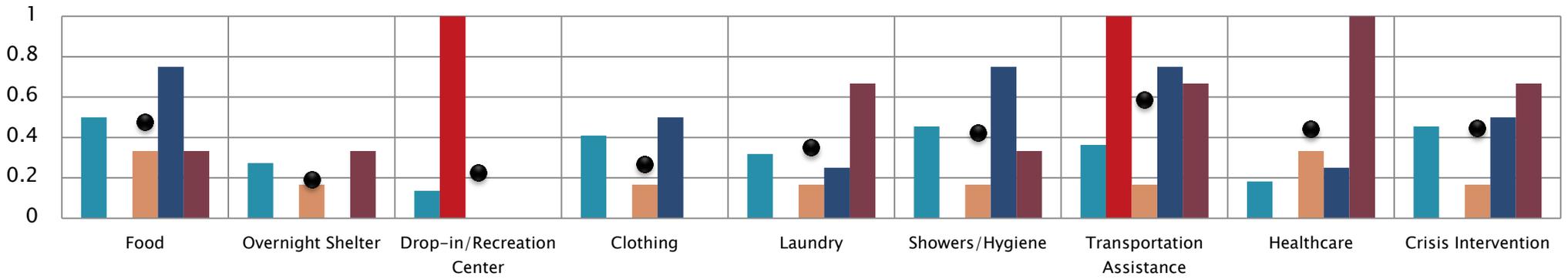## Participating Organizations and Departments:

*multiple individual submissions

YWCA, Lutheran Community Services NW, Volunteers of America, SNAP, Cup of Cool Water, Life Services/MyChoice, Frontier Behavioral Health, Goodwill, Tenants Union of WA, Catholic Charities, Mockingbird Society, Communities in Schools, Greater Spokane Substance Abuse Council, CoMiA Foundation, Union Gospel Mission, Career Path Services, Daybreak Youth Services, Pioneer Human Services, World Relief, The Hutton Settlement Children's Home, Girl Scouts, Spokane County Juvenile Court and Detention, City of Spokane, Community Court, Department of Social Health Services, Department of Developmental Disability Services, Department of Children Youth and Families, Office of Public Defense, Spokane Falls Community College, Spokane Public Schools, Central Valley School District, Nine Mile Falls School District, Kaiser Permanente, Amerigroup, Providence

Services and Nonprofits (22), Law Enforcement (1), Government (6), Education (4), Health (3)   Average ●

% – Basic Services for Youth

The Average ● here is the mean = the sum of all rates of each service provision across sectors divided by five (the number of all sectors). This gives us the central value by which to compare sectors, and determine whether they are above or below the average rate of service provision.

Basic Services for Youth:

12 orgs provide NONE
2 orgs provide ALL

Basic Services for Young Adults:

9 orgs provide NONE
1 org provides ALL

Below is the **average** number of organizations that provide basic services (regardless of the service) out of the total number of organizations surveyed:
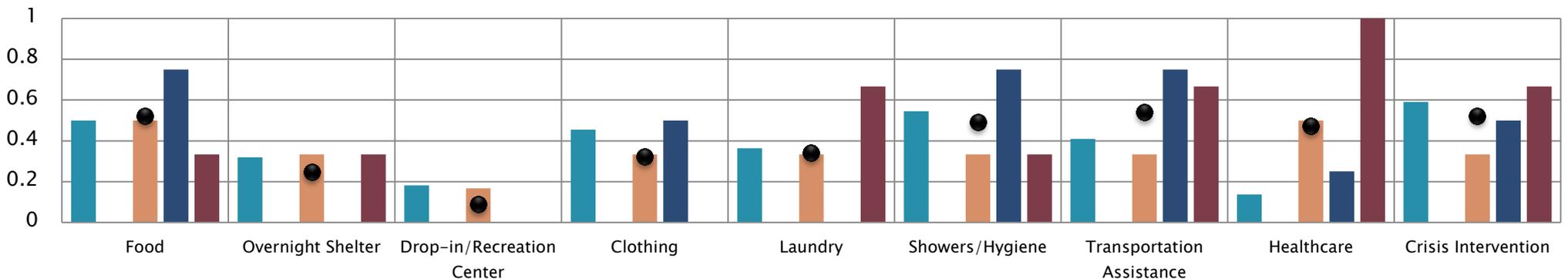
$$\frac{13}{36}$$

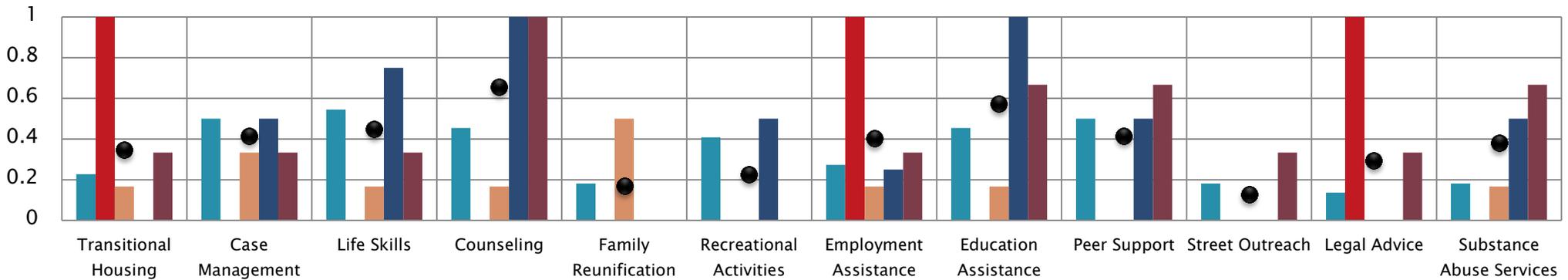Provide to Youth

$$\frac{14}{36}$$

Provide to Young Adults

% – Basic Services for Young Adults

% – Ongoing Services for Youth

Bar chart with categories: Transitional Housing, Case Management, Life Skills, Counseling, Family Reunification, Recreational Activities, Employment Assistance, Education Assistance, Peer Support, Street Outreach, Legal Advice, Substance Abuse Services. Y-axis: 0 to 1.

Below is the **average** number of organizations that provide ongoing services (regardless of the service) out of the total number of organizations surveyed:

$$\frac{12}{36}$$
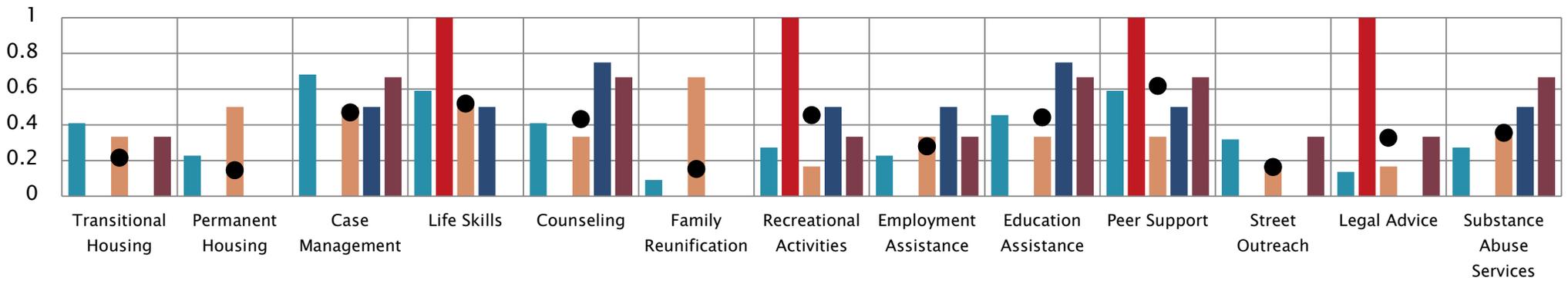
Provide to Youth

$$\frac{15}{36}$$

Provide to Young Adults

Ongoing Services for Youth:

7 orgs provide NONE
2 orgs provide ALL

Ongoing Services for Young Adults:

3 orgs provide NONE
1 org provides ALL

Which of the 22 services would you know to refer someone to?

We asked this question to learn which of the 22 services respondents have adequate knowledge of to refer a young person. We learned that **there are consistent knowledge gaps across sectors regarding family reunification, street outreach, and recreational activities**. The data also shows **individuals in the government sector trend highest in their ability to refer, and law enforcement individuals trend the lowest**, which represents an area in need of improvement, especially considering that sector presents the most gaps in services.

% – Ongoing Services for Young Adults

Bar chart with categories: Transitional Housing, Permanent Housing, Case Management, Life Skills, Counseling, Family Reunification, Recreational Activities, Employment Assistance, Education Assistance, Peer Support, Street Outreach, Legal Advice, Substance Abuse Services. Y-axis: 0 to 1.

TAKEAWAY ·······The services and nonprofits sector provides the widest breadth of services out of all the sectors surveyed, but have more available for people over the age of 18. The government sector's focus is not on providing services as much as on funding services. Therefore, government organizations present many gaps in service provision but one of the highest rates of individuals' ability to refer young people to other organizations' programs. The law enforcement sector focuses primarily on minors, and presents the most gaps in services of any sector – the majority of those gaps present in services for young adults. The health sector focuses on providing specific services, mostly regardless of age, with an obvious focus on healthcare and health-related basic and ongoing services. The education sector provides services primarily for minors, with most of their gaps in services presenting for those over the age of 18.

Services are generally provided by less than 18 of the 36 organizations and departments surveyed. Our service landscape has the potential to be a strong one with the appropriate cross sector collaboration, without that there is great potential to create an inaccessible system with multiple possible points of failure for those needing to access it. Especially considering the lack of service hubs (one physical location where young people can go to access all services), we currently have a system through which youth and young adults must navigate on their own, which greatly impacts accessibility. Formalizing resource sharing will be an important component of systems improvement, and will continue to improve our current knowledge gaps. Moving forward, we should focus on integrating our approaches at the systems-level and design processes with the young people who need to access them in mind, ideally with their input, and learn more about the informal partnerships in place that work and interrogate how to make them formal to replicate them across organizations and ideally across sectors.

* Study limitations: because we didn't ask questions about the nature of the services provided (i.e. utilization rates), we do not know the restrictions or targeted demographic of any of the services reported here, nor do we know the number of youth served or capacity of any given program. Therefore we cannot assume that all services are available for all youth or young adults experiencing instability or homelessness.

A huge **thank you** goes out to all who filled out this survey and took time out of your day to give input on this project. Thank you also to the Spokane Homeless Coalition, Eastern Washington University Masters in Social Work Program, the School Community Partnership, Local McKinney Vento Liaisons, and the Continuum of Care Youth Subcommittee for the use of your platforms to further spread this survey. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, or want to see the full report, please direct your comments to Meg Pannkuk – mpannkuk@voaspokane.org

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