



## Homeless in High School: School District of Philadelphia Students Self-Report on Housing Insecurity in Response to Risk Assessment Survey

This BrainGain summarizes the responses to the housing question on the local result of the most recent Youth Risk Behavioral Survey (YRBS). PEC offers this information for the professional development of staff of emergency housing programs and other agencies who serve youth who experience homelessness.

YRBS is a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) questionnaire given to high school students (9-12th grade) throughout the nation to assess their health and behavioral risks and trends. YRBS is administered locally by the School District of Philadelphia. The most recent survey was administered to 1,217 students at 25 randomly chosen schools within the district in Spring 2019.

### Highlights

The survey asks 100 questions regarding behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence; tobacco use; alcohol and other drug use; sexual behaviors that contribute to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease; unhealthy dietary behaviors; safety and physical activity. The data is used to find correlation of the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems of youth.

There is one housing insecurity / homelessness-related question:

“During the past 30 days, where did you usually sleep?”

- A. In my parent's or guardian's home
- B. In the home of a friend, family member, or other person because I had to leave my home or my parent or guardian cannot afford housing
- C. In shelter or emergency housing
- D. In a motel or hotel
- E. In a car, park, campground, or other public place
- F. I do not have a usual place to sleep
- G. Somewhere else”

Responses to this question might provide some insight into the prevalence of homelessness or housing insecurity among teenagers enrolled in the School District of Philadelphia.

The YRBS administered in Philadelphia in 2019 showed that:

- 4.9% of students identifying as heterosexual who responded to the survey reported that they did not usually sleep at their parents' or guardian's home in the 30 days prior to the survey.
- 10.4% of students identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual (LGB) reported that they did not usually sleep at their parents' or guardian's home in the 30 days prior to the survey.

The School District's full report can be found here: <https://bit.ly/39lpnYd>. PEC encourages readers to familiarize themselves with the full report as it contains a wealth of valuable responses from teenagers about their health.

## Who Should Read This?

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### About People's Emergency Center (PEC)

[People's Emergency Center \(PEC\)](#) uplifts our community by providing housing, social services, and quality of life supports that empower people and encourage more prosperous and safer neighborhoods.

For families and youth experiencing homelessness, we offer housing, social services, access to early childhood education, and educational programs in career training, parenting, financial literacy, life skills, and technology.

The PEC Community Development Corporation programs respond to community needs and build on neighborhood assets to help bridge the digital divide, expand mixed-income housing opportunities, stimulate economic growth, create wealth, and improve the quality of life for all West Philadelphia residents.

PEC advocates for urgently needed public policy changes on behalf of families and youth experiencing homelessness and the neighborhoods we serve. We have worked successfully

with local, state, and federal government agencies to advance legislation and budgets that prioritize these communities.

For additional publications from our policy department, visit [pec-cares.org/policy-publications](https://pec-cares.org/policy-publications).