



BrainGain@PEC provides brief summaries of research or publications on family homelessness and related issues. Previous issues of BrainGain@PEC can be found at <http://bit.ly/2iaczvQ>.

## Summary of *Missed Opportunities: Pregnant and Parenting Youth Experiencing Homelessness in America*

Voices of Youth Counts published **Missed Opportunities: Pregnancy and Parenting Youth Experiencing Homelessness in America**, offering information on young people experiencing homelessness who are pregnant or parenting and identifying future implications as well as recommendations for policymakers, leaders of public systems, and practitioners.

The report's objective was to inform our nation about new evidence on homelessness among youth and young adults, ages 13 to 25. Some data was collected from youth in Philadelphia. Various methods were used, including point in time counts, in-depth interviews, and surveys.

Missed Opportunities is a product of Chapin Hall's *Voices of Youth Count*. More information on Missed Opportunities can be found at [www.voicesofyouthcount.org](http://www.voicesofyouthcount.org).

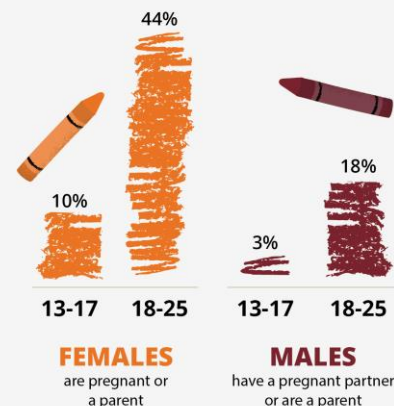
Readers are encouraged to read the full report (at <http://bit.ly/2ld4hPw>) to understand the data and various methodologies. (citation: Dworsky, A., Morton, M. H., Samuels, G. M. (2018). *Missed opportunities: Pregnant and parenting youth experiencing homelessness in America*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.)

PEC summarized the report for the Philadelphia emergency housing system.

### **Key findings:**

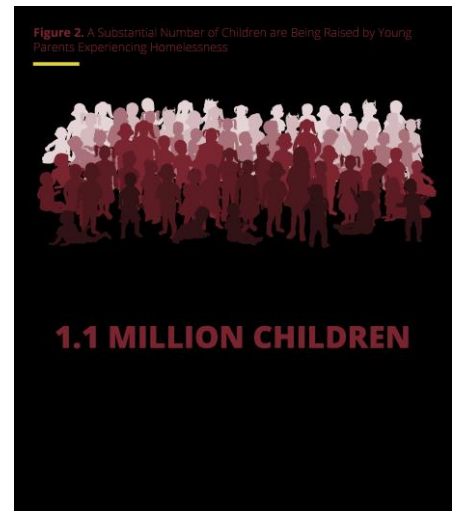
- **Pregnancy and parenthood are common among youth experiencing homelessness**

**Figure 1.** Pregnancy and Parenthood are Common Among Youth Experiencing Homelessness



(Source: VoYC Brief Youth Survey)

- 44% of the young women, age 18-25, reported being pregnant or a parent
  - 18% of the young men, age 18-25, reported having a pregnant partner or being a parent
  - 10% of the young women, age 13-17, reported being pregnant or a parent
  - 3% of the young men, age 13-17, reported having a pregnant partner or being a parent
  - Overall, 43% of young women who had experienced homelessness within the past year, age 18-25, reported having at least one child
  - Overall, 29% of young men who had experienced homelessness within the past year, age 18-25, reported having at least one child
- **A substantial number of children are being raised by young parent experiencing homelessness**
    - Approximately 1.1 million children have an 18 to 25 years old parent who experienced homelessness during the past year.
  - **Youth experiencing homelessness often seek support during pregnancy and after they become a parent**
    - 36% of the parents experiencing homelessness who were living with at least one child reported ever receiving TANF
    - 64% of the parents experiencing homelessness who were living with at least one child reported ever receiving WIC
    - 23% were currently receiving TANF
    - 55% were currently receiving WIC
  - **Few homeless service providers serve pregnant and parenting youth under the age 18**
    - 21% of the homeless *youth* providers serve young parents who are 13 to 17 years of age
    - 35% of the homeless *youth* providers serve young parents who are 18 to 25 years old
    - 16% of the homeless *family* providers serve young parents who are 13 to 17 years old
    - 80% of the homeless *family* providers serve young parent who are 18-25 years old
  - **Difficulty for young parents experiencing homelessness to maintain relationship while receiving services**
    - Some parents struggled to obtain shelter or transitional housing because the homeless service providers in their community only served single mothers or married couple with children
    - Providers often failed to support relationships that are important to youth experiencing homelessness



- **Pregnancy and parenthood may increase the risk for youth homelessness**
  - Several young women in the in-depth interviews reported becoming homeless after becoming pregnant
  - The national survey data indicate that the relative risk of experiencing homelessness during the past few years was significantly higher for 18-25 years old, both male and female, who had children, compared to their nonparent peers.

## **Recommendations**

The report identifies recommendations for policymakers, leaders of public system, and practitioners based on each of the six major findings. These recommendations are the following:

- **Address** the sexual and reproductive health needs of youth experiencing homelessness by adapting evidence-based pregnancy prevention programs and providing contraception plus prenatal and postpartum care in nontraditional settings.
- **Increase** collaboration between homeless service providers and providers in other systems, including early childhood, early intervention, education, and welfare.
- **Explore** opportunities for family reunification, relationship building, and service engagement with youth experiencing homelessness who are pregnant or parenting.
- **Develop** the capacity of both homeless youth service providers and homeless family service providers to serve all young parents who are homeless regardless of their gender, age, or marital status.
- **Design** programs that recognize the importance of the relationships pregnant and parenting youth have with partners and co- parents.
- **Assess** the risk for homelessness among pregnant and parenting youth and refer high-risk youth for appropriate services when they are identified.

### **About PEC:**

People's Emergency Center's mission is to nurture families, strengthen neighborhoods and drive change. PEC offers more than 235 affordable housing units, job training, parenting and early childhood education, financial education and planning, life skills and technology coursework for families, children and youth who experience homelessness.

This BrainGain@PEC was developed by Ornella Pitah and Joe Willard. For more information, email at [policy@pec-cares.org](mailto:policy@pec-cares.org).