

City Manager's Office

November 7, 2025

To:  Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager
Re: Homeless Response Team Performance Data Report

Introduction

This Homeless Response Team (HRT) data report follows a May 12, 2025, off-agenda memo to the City Council, titled “New Homeless Response Team Mission and Performance Data Report.” That memorandum was published partially in anticipation of the City Auditor’s audit¹ of the Homeless Response Team (published July 16, 2025), which recommended that the HRT expand reported outcomes and report on the same outcomes over time with a consistent timeframe to support comparisons. Moving forward, the HRT will continue to provide these reports twice yearly in accordance with this recommendation.

Key Take-Aways

1. New data reflect demographic shifts since the last report, but overall there is not enough information to establish meaningful trends.

This report reflects several noteworthy shifts in the demographic composition of people served by the Homeless Response Team. This includes increases in the proportion of people self-identifying as female (48% in this report, up from 32% in May 2025 and bringing the male:female ratio closer to 1:1), and increases in the proportion of people self-identifying as White (50% in this report, up from 39% in May 2025). The report also shows a drop since the May 2025 data report in HRT participants self-reporting physical and mental health disabilities (down to 56% from 81% and down to 37% from 56%, respectively), but a sharp increase in participants reporting substance use disorder, up to 87% from 62%). While these differences are striking, this memo provides only the second data report using this revamped and expanded set of outcomes, so it is too soon to determine trends. HRT staff will continue to monitor these data moving forward,

¹ See: https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Homeless_Response_Team_-_Opportunities_Exist_to_Strengthen_Procedures_and_Better_Track_Outcomes.pdf

as this will continue to inform how Berkeley's encampment population can best be served.

2. The outcomes reflect a lack of available shelter to which HRT participants can be referred.

Since May 2025, the HRT continues to serve an encampment population in Berkeley that is more disabled (physically and mentally) than the general Alameda County homeless population. Since May 2025, the HRT has dramatically increased the number of participants who have been assessed for Coordinated Entry (increasing the proportion who have an active assessment from 60% to 94%), and the results show that HRT participants remain overwhelmingly eligible for permanent supportive housing, reserved by federal regulation for high-needs and chronically homeless individuals. What has changed, however, is the number of HRT participants who are able to access interim housing:

- In May 2025, fewer than half (43%) of all participants served by the HRT did not eventually enroll in some form of interim housing. As of this report, the number never enrolling has increased to 58% (see slide #6). Similarly, of those sheltered, the number able to eventually access permanent housing declined from 17% in May to 8% as of this report (see slide #9).
- As a result, the overall rate of successful placement by the HRT into any form of shelter or housing has dropped sharply. In May 2025, 63% of all people served by the HRT eventually exited to some form of housing or shelter. By the time this report was published, that number had dropped to 34%.

Again, since this is only the second report on these new outcomes, too little information is available to establish meaningful trend analyses over time. However, if these trends continue, the HRT believes that they reflect a shortage of available noncongregate beds (which continue to be overwhelmingly preferred to congregate beds among people in encampments—see slide #7).

Conclusion

Using State Encampment Resolution Fund dollars (leveraged by Measure P related general fund), the HRT opened four noncongregate motel programs between 2022 and 2025—an average of one new program per year. This rapid increase in interim housing stock helped some of Berkeley's hardest-to-serve unsheltered population move indoors. As reported by city staff in a September 16, 2025, worksession presentation to the City Council², the city faces a significant general fund deficit; the current State budget includes no money for homeless programs for the first time in years, and Berkeley's

² See: <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-09-16%20Special%20Item%2001a%20Comprehensive%20Summary%20of%20Berkeley%E2%80%99s.pdf>

existing noncongregate motels face a multi-million dollar fiscal cliff over the coming years. Moreover, the County recently decided not to fund the City of Berkeley-sponsored application for County Measure W resources to open another motel program³, despite stating a goal to establish one such program in this region. Altogether, this will make it challenging to open new shelter programs in the foreseeable future. Without new shelter beds, it is likely that the trend of fewer positive outcomes for HRT participants will continue--and may worsen over time.

All of this speaks to the continued need to partner with and advocate to Alameda County so that Berkeley receives an appropriate share of Measure W sales tax funding to support the continuation of existing programs and opening of new ones. City staff are deeply engaged with County counterparts in the Measure W administrative planning process and thank the City Council for recently approving a letter to the Board of Supervisors⁴, advocating for Berkeley's needs in the homeless system of care.

Overview of Homeless Response Team

The Homeless Response Team is coordinated by the Neighborhood Services Division in the City Manager's Office, which coordinates a multi-departmental effort to address all the needs and impacts of the people who live in, work or visit the area of a particular encampment. The effort also includes staff from Public Works, Health, Housing & Community Services, City Attorney's Office, Police, Fire and Parks, Recreation and Waterfront, and other departments/divisions as needed.

Concerns about encampments are reported by community members (often through 311), Councilmembers, merchants or City Staff – including Homeless Response Team (HRT). HRT staff then assess the site for its impacts. The City looks at a number of factors to decide how and when to address encampment concerns, including but not limited to:

- Impact on sidewalks
- Neighborhood impact
- Health and safety concerns for those at the site or nearby, especially imminent dangers
- Municipal or State code violations
- Legal issues
- Outreach capacity
- Willingness to accept shelter

³ See: <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-10-28%20Item%2004%20Letter%20to%20Alameda%20County%20Board%20of%20Supervisors%20re%20Opportunities.pdf>

⁴ See: <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-10-28%20Item%2004%20Letter%20to%20Alameda%20County%20Board%20of%20Supervisors%20re%20Opportunities.pdf>

Attachment 1: Homeless Response Team Data Report

cc: David White, Deputy City Manager
Peter Radu, Assistant to the City Manager
Josh Jacobs, Homeless Services Coordinator
Farimah Brown, City Attorney
Scott Ferris, Director, Parks, Recreation and Waterfront
Scott Gilman, Director, Health Housing and Community Services
David Sprague, Fire Chief, Berkeley Fire Department
Jennifer Louis, Chief of Police, Berkeley Police Department
Terrance Davis, Director, Public Works
Jenny Wong, City Auditor
Mark Numainville, City Clerk
Matthai Chakko, Assistant to the City Manager

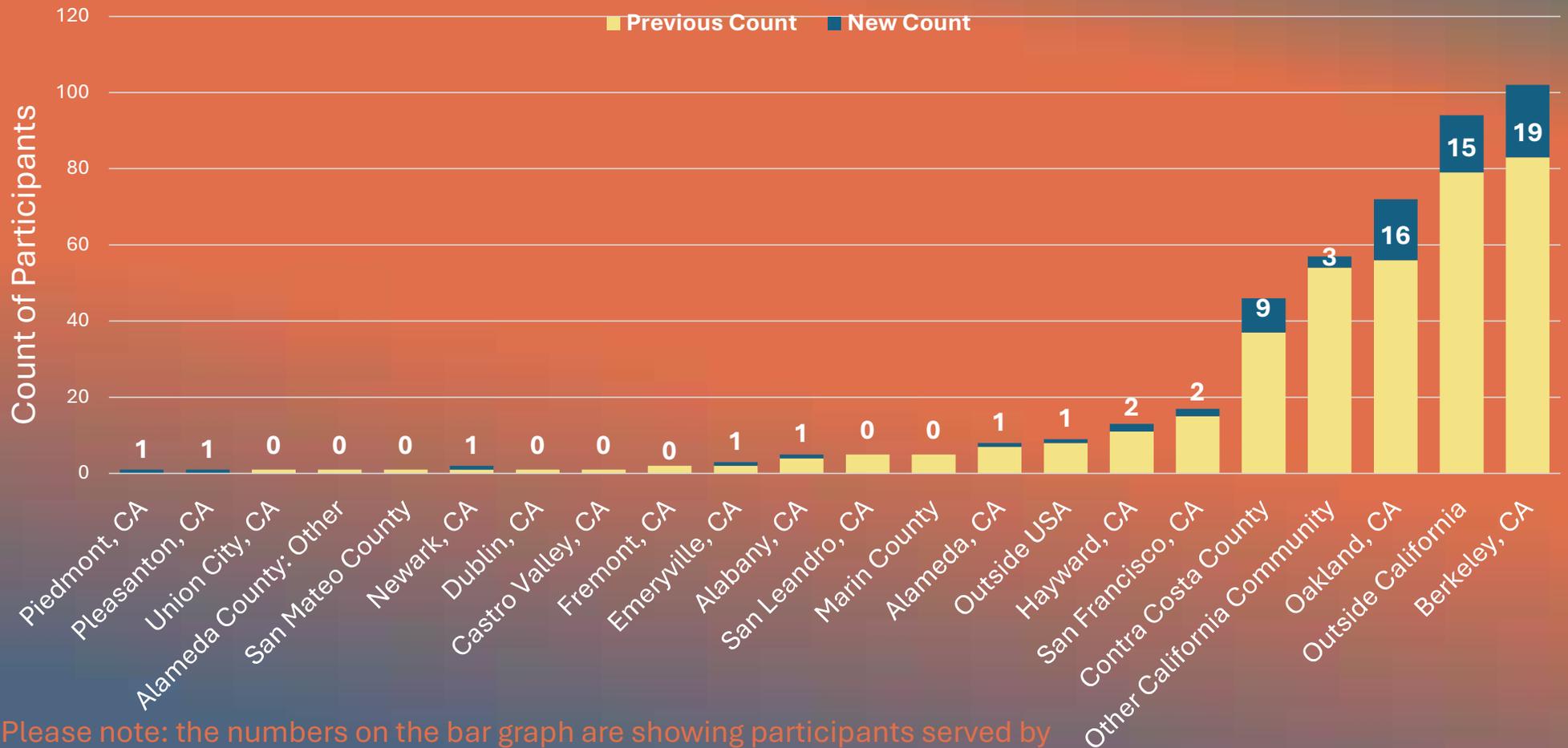
Homeless Response Team

Performance Data Report

November 2025

Where Are HRT Participants Coming From?

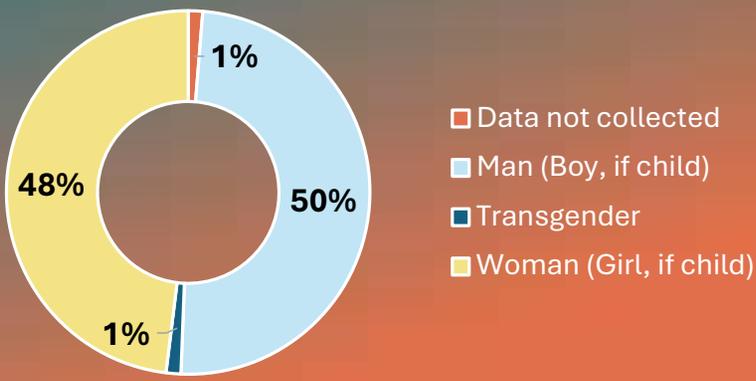
Self-reported city of residence when becoming homeless



Please note: the numbers on the bar graph are showing participants served by the HRT since the last Data and Performance Report (dated 5/12/25)

Gender, Race, and Age Distribution of HRT Participants

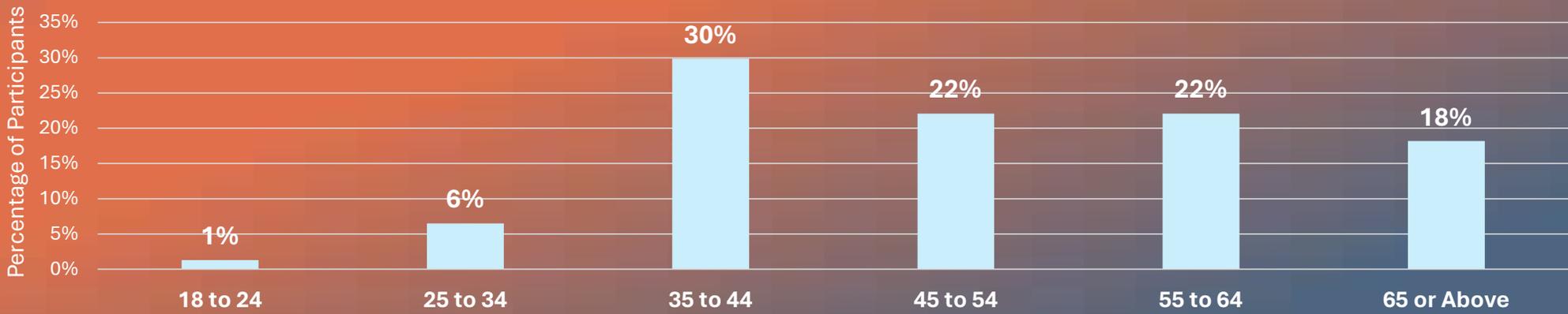
Gender Identity



Racial Background

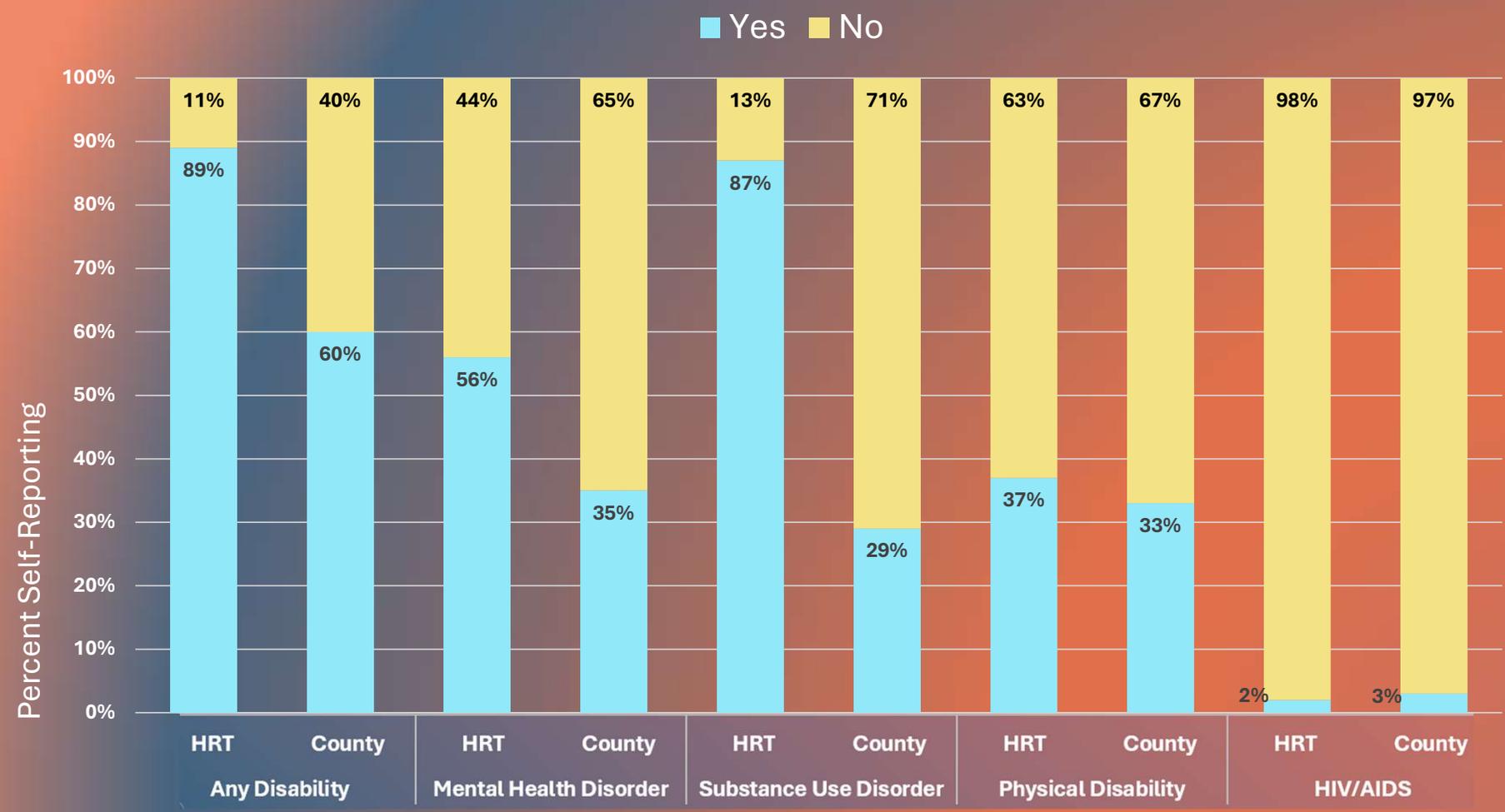


Age Distribution



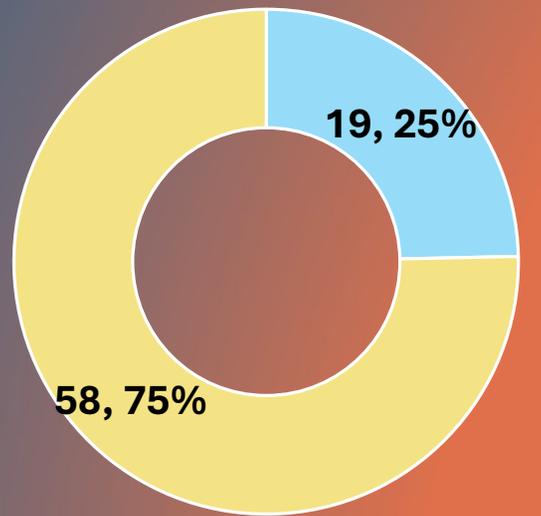
HRT Serves a Highly Vulnerable Population

HRT participants are far more vulnerable than Alameda County's homeless population overall



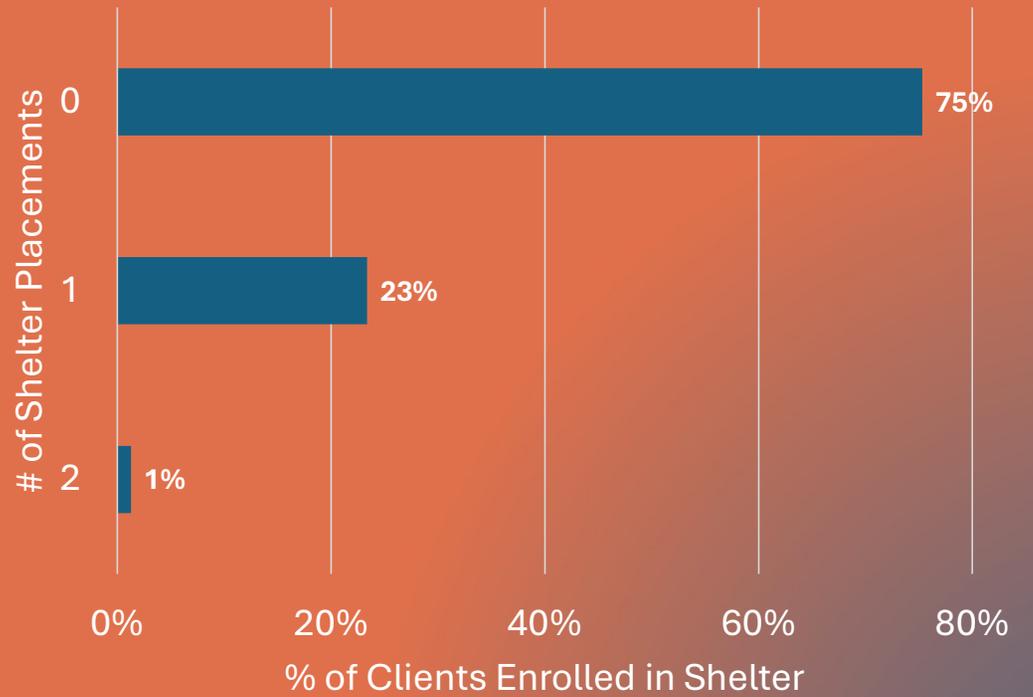
HRT Shelter Placements

% of HRT Clients Placed into Shelter



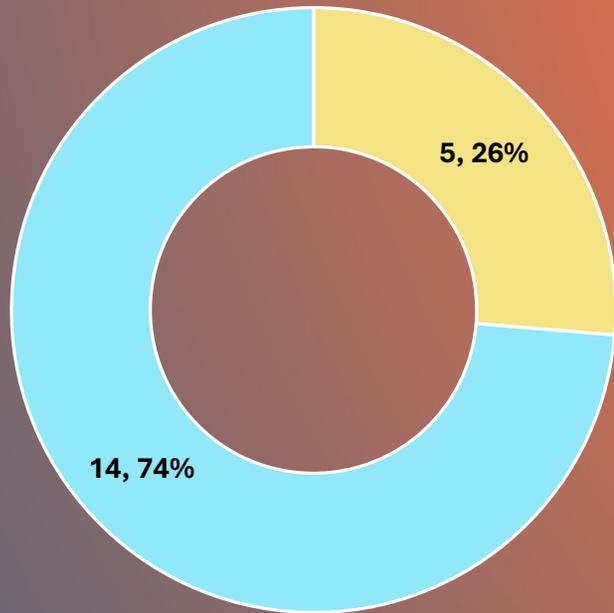
■ Sheltered ■ Unsheltered

% of HRT Clients Placed into Shelter



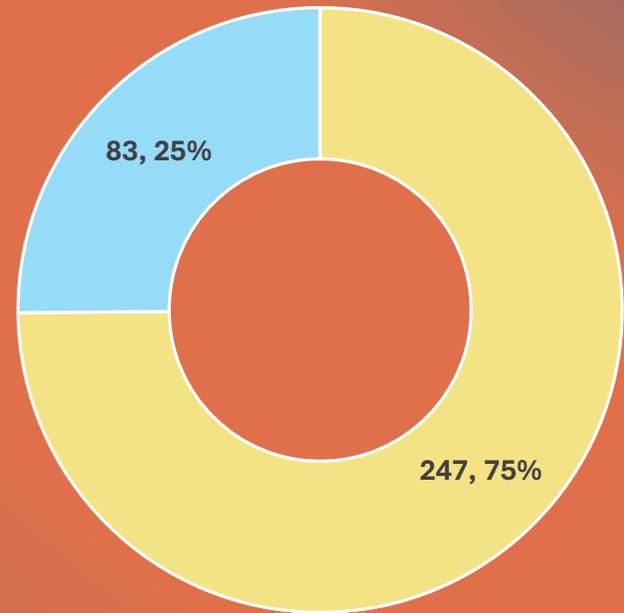
High Non-Congregate Shelter Placements Despite Limited Capacity

Shelter Enrollments by Bed Type for HRT Participants



■ Congregate beds ■ Non-congregate beds

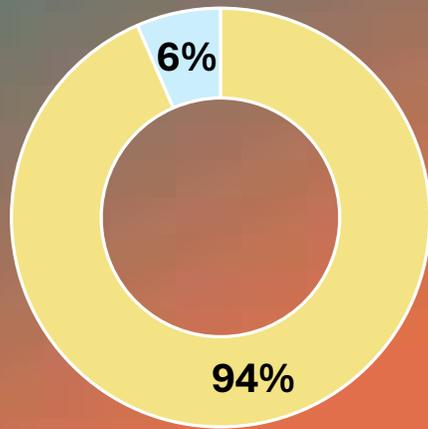
Shelter Bed Inventory by Type in Berkeley



■ Congregate beds ■ Non-congregate beds

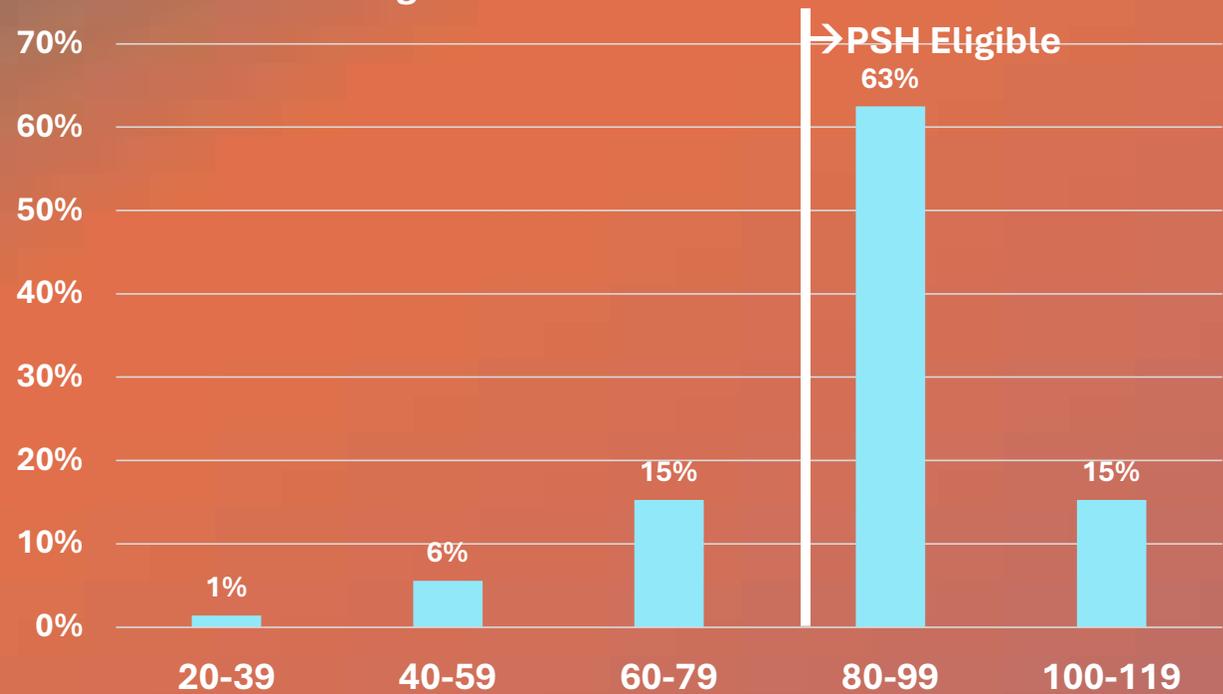
Most Participants Qualify for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

% of HRT Participants Assessed for Coordinated Entry



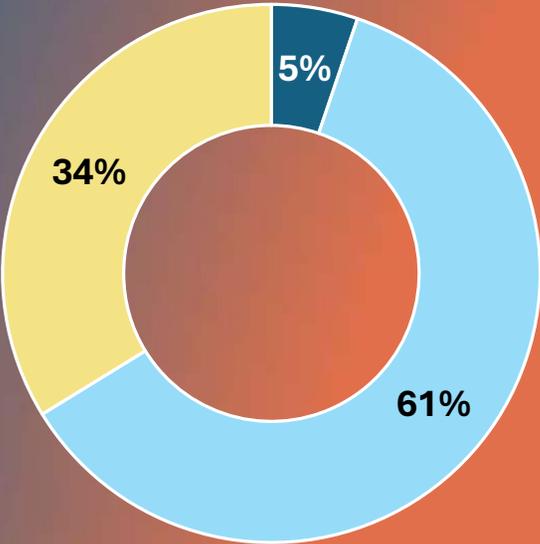
- Housing Needs Assessment
- No Assessment

Housing Assessment Score Distribution



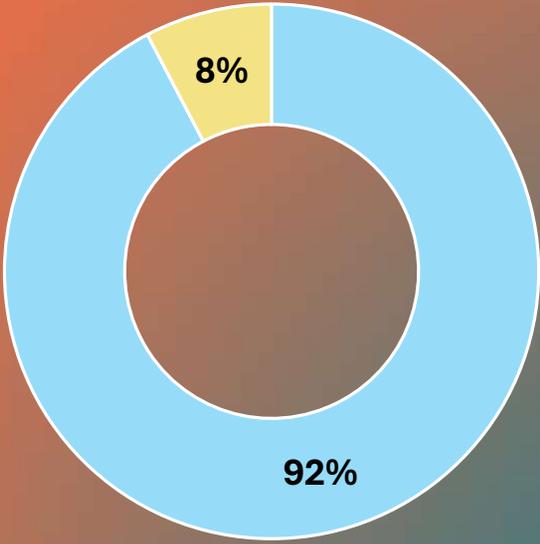
More HRT Participants Remain Unsheltered

HRT Participant Exit Outcomes



Other Unsheltered Sheltered/Housed

Breakdown of Exit Outcomes for Sheltered/Housed Participants Upon Exit



Sheltered Rental by Client