

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT

Youth Survey Data Snapshot

The Youth Homelessness Systems Improvement Project (October 2025–March 2027) is focused on strengthening the youth homeless response system in San Diego County by:

- Improving how young people are connected to housing support (both within and outside of the Coordinated Entry System).
- Strengthening how data about youth homelessness is collected and used.
- Supporting collaboration among youth-serving providers across the region.

From May to July 2025, 275 young people in San Diego County completed a survey about their experiences accessing housing and related services.

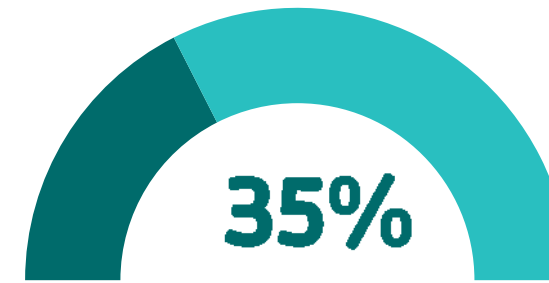
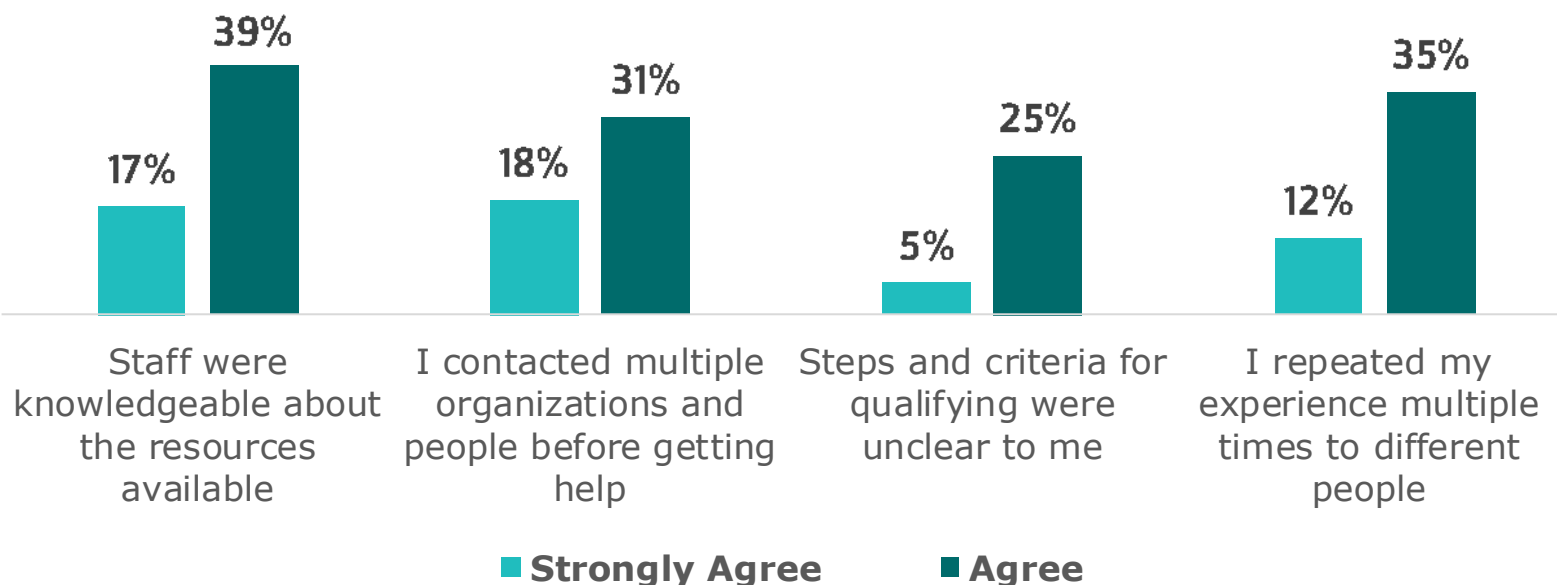
Survey respondents were primarily between the ages of 18–25, currently residing in San Diego County, and have or currently experience homelessness or housing instability in San Diego County. A majority of participants identified their current living situation as: not currently housed, temporarily staying with family/friend/partner, or transitional housing.

STAGE 1: ACCESSING RESOURCES

OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE SURVEYED:

- 60% knew how to access housing resources when they needed them (n=157)
- 42% tried to access housing resources in San Diego County and were successful (n=115)
- 28% tried to access housing resources in San Diego County and were NOT successful (n=78)
- 26% did not try to access housing resources in San Diego County (n=71)

EXPERIENCE ACCESSING HOUSING RESOURCES



identified there were housing resources they needed but could not access in the last 12 months. (n=90)

RESPONDENTS EXPRESSED THAT THE FOLLOWING PREVENTED THEM FROM CONNECTING TO RESOURCES:



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STAGE 2: AFTER RECEIVING SERVICES

AMONG YOUTH WHO ACCESSED HOUSING SERVICES:

- 43% said the support met their needs (n=80)
- 71% agreed or somewhat agreed that housing resources they may need are easily accessible (n=182)

TOP HOUSING RESOURCES YOUTH NEEDED BUT COULD NOT ACCESS:

1. Rental assistance and eviction prevention (n=14)
2. Housing support (n=12)
3. Section 8 and low-income housing vouchers (n=9)
4. Transitional, Supportive, TAY housing (n=5)
5. Shelter, emergency housing, and motel vouchers (n=4)

YOUTH SHARED THAT ACCESSING SERVICES WOULD HAVE BEEN A BETTER EXPERIENCE WITH:

- Increased availability of housing and other resources
- Improved communication and transparency
- Ensure staff are knowledgeable about resources and can provide clear support
- Streamline processes and limit unnecessary barriers to accessing services
- Support staff in developing empathetic relationships and creating safe environments

EXAMPLES OF WHAT YOUTH SAID INCLUDE:

"More staff being available to talk about the situation instead of being referred to emails."

"Better explanation of what the services offered, how to access those platforms that are in place to help people in needs, due diligence and understanding of the needs requested and knowledge of what can be achieved and how it can be done."

FINDINGS & NEXT STEPS

While the majority (60%) of respondents knew how to access resources, a significant amount (40%) did not.

Nearly half or more of respondents reported:

- Staff were not knowledgeable about available resources (44%)
- Needing to contact multiple organizations before receiving help (49%)
- Having to repeat their story to different people (47%)
- Not knowing what was available or who to contact (43%)
- Support not meeting their needs (57%)

Across the survey, clear system gaps emerged around access, staff knowledge, and effectiveness of support. These experiences point to a system that is often confusing, repetitive, and difficult to navigate.

Insights from this survey will be used to guide targeted interventions to strengthen the Youth Homelessness System in San Diego County.

The Youth Homelessness Systems improvement (YHSI) project is working to improve the experiences of youth in San Diego County's homeless response system.

If you're interested in learning more or getting involved in this effort, please contact Jasmyne Sheridan at yhsi@ymcasd.org or (619) 972-4709.