

Ending Long Stays in Shelter

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COMMUNITY HOUSING OF MAINE





Community Housing of Maine

Community Housing of Maine (CHOM) develops, owns, and maintains high-quality affordable housing for working families and older Mainers. CHOM believes that housing, together with support services, provides stability, fosters dignity and respect, and transforms lives. CHOM is the largest housing provider for homeless populations in Maine.

Targeting people who are homeless for the longest periods of time

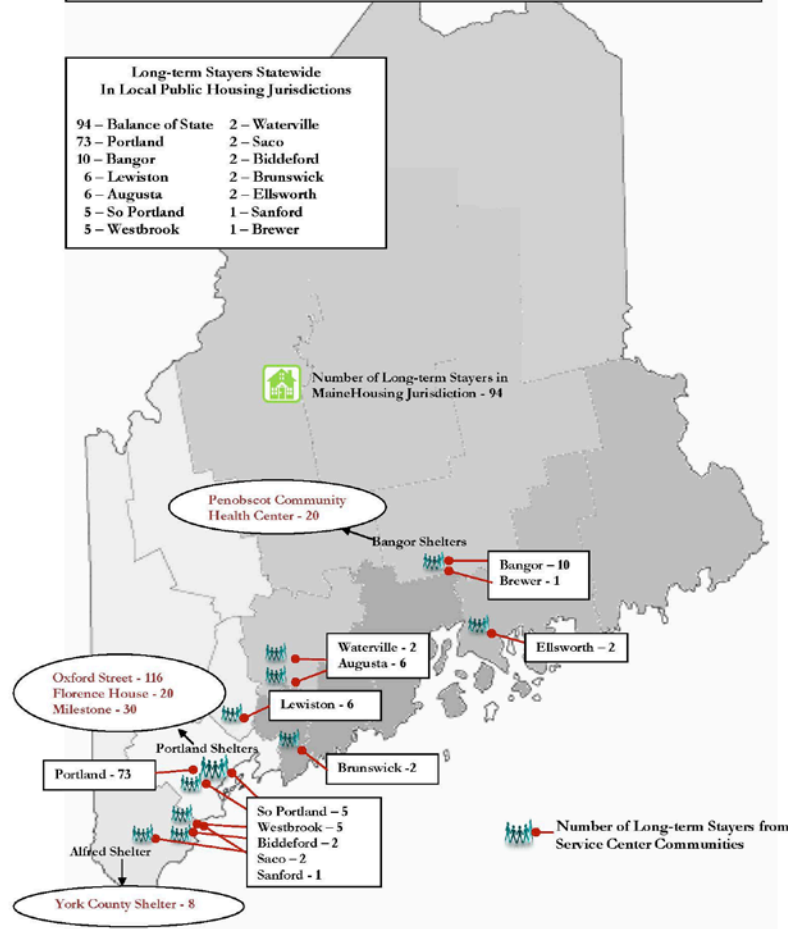
- It was difficult to identify people who met the HUD Definition of Chronic Homelessness in rural Maine, and by not identifying them, we effectively ignored them.
- Bouncing through small shelters several months at a time, people remained homeless for years while not appearing “chronic” to any one shelter.
- The result: Our shelter system was effectively clogged with people homeless for very long periods of time, using beds night after night.
- Since shelter staff could name the people staying the longest, we invented a simple definition to easily identify and target them.
- Maine’s Statewide Homeless Council resolved that “Long Term Stayers” (LTS) were defined as people staying over 180 cumulative days in shelters or outdoors within any 365 day period.
- This group was very easy to find. *In fact, we knew each of them locally by name.*
- It immediately took the guesswork out of how many people were chronically homeless in Maine, and we began focusing rental subsidies and services on LTS as a top priority population in 2013.

Targeting LTS — We figured out where they were

Long-term Stayers Report ~ Shelter Clients > 180 days within 365 Days

Long-term Stayers Statewide
In Local Public Housing Jurisdictions

94 - Balance of State	2 - Waterville
73 - Portland	2 - Saco
10 - Bangor	2 - Biddeford
6 - Lewiston	2 - Brunswick
6 - Augusta	2 - Ellsworth
5 - So Portland	1 - Sanford
5 - Westbrook	1 - Brewer



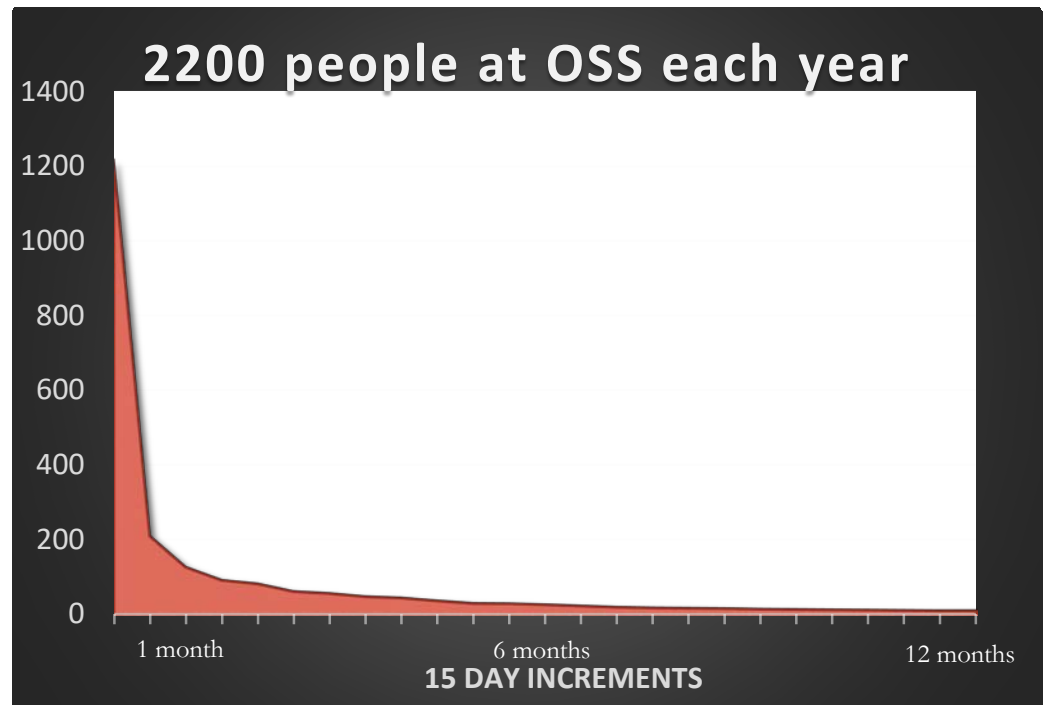
➤ A specialized, targeted regional effort zeroed in on one shelter and a *by-name list* was created in April 2015.

Lengths of
stay for
adult singles:

Most self-solve
their
homelessness
very quickly.

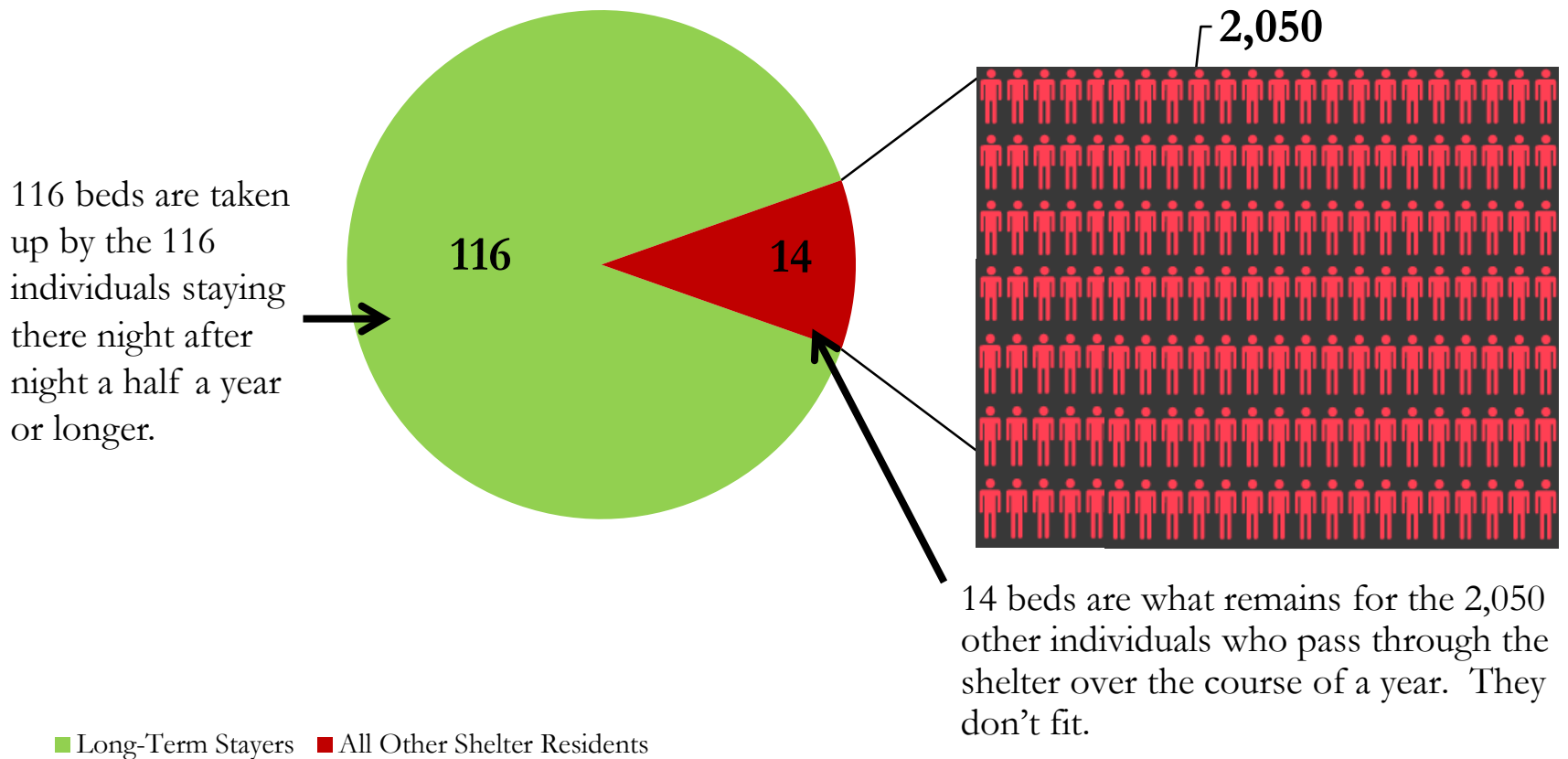
Oxford Street Shelter, Portland, Maine

- 33% pass through in 1-3 days, 54% pass through in 2 weeks or less, and 80% pass through in 2 months or less.
- But 5% or less were staying night after night, using the shelter beds and causing the need for overflow. Housing that 5% would open up capacity at OSS, end the overflowing, and begin to reduce numbers.



How Long Term Stayers affected one shelter: 2013

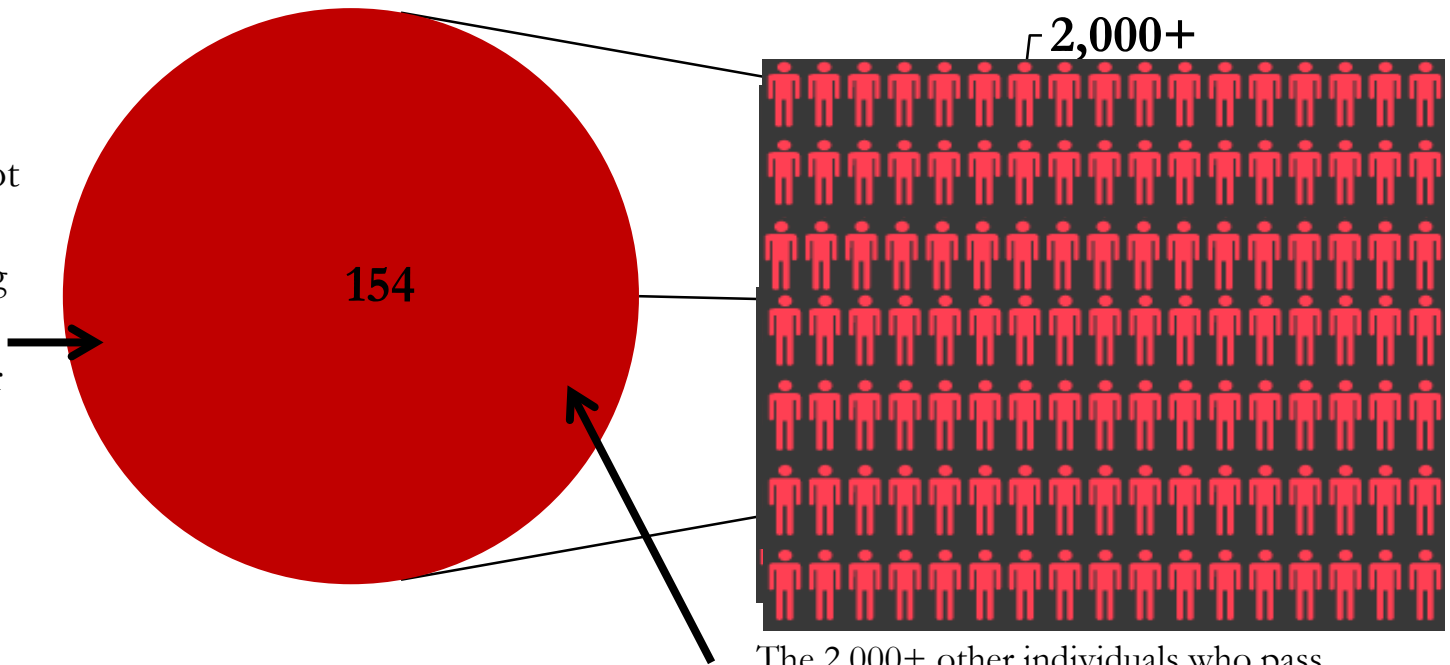
130 Oxford Street Shelter Beds



One shelter's end goal: House all of the Long Term Stayers & increase shelter capacity/efficiency

154 Oxford Street Shelter Beds

When beds are not taken up by individuals staying there night after night a half a year or longer, the shelter has much greater capacity.



■ Long-Term Stayers ■ All Other Shelter Residents

The 2,000+ other individuals who pass through the shelter over the course of a year now fit – and the shelter can shift resources to house them, longest to shortest, while keeping the original long term stayers stably housed.

By-Name List: 2015

- In May 2015, 9 agencies and 9.5 FTEs joined the effort, aiming to house the LTS at the Oxford Street Shelter.
- Weekly meetings began working with one By-Name list of people beginning with 70. We are now on our fourth list.
- 209 people in total have been targeted as part of this initiative
- 79 LTS were housed through this effort in the first year. Average nightly shelter numbers reached their lowest since 2/2012.
- The group committed to continue their effort working from longest to shortest stayers until functional zero is achieved.

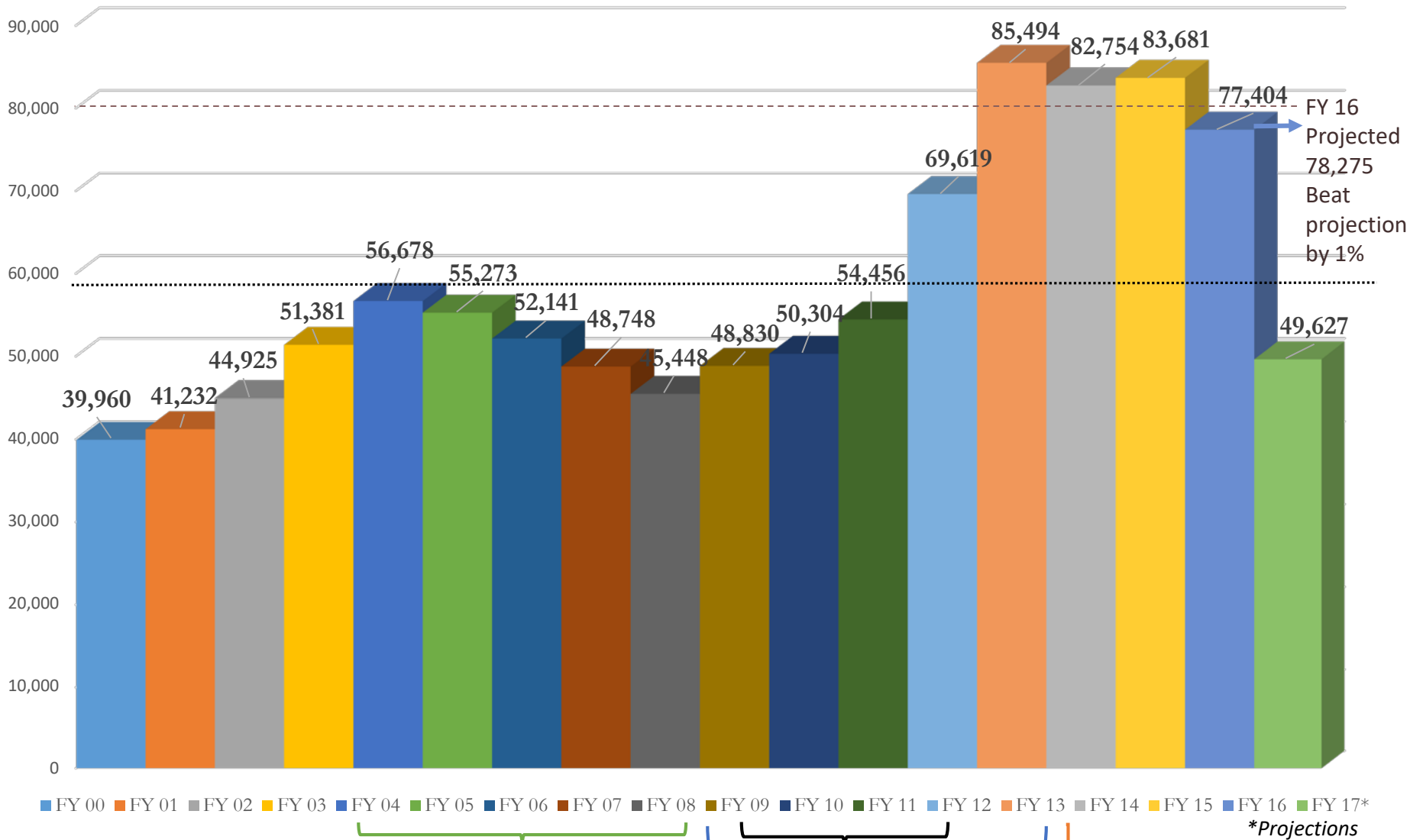
Results

One shelter's progress

Progress at the Oxford Street Shelter:

- Shelter staff have made 146 Housing First placements since the initiative's inception in April of 2015.
- The 146 Long Term Stayers housed through this initiative cumulatively had more than 200 years of homelessness, per HMIS data.
- The vast majority of the 146 people housed were determined to meet the HUD definition of Chronic Homelessness. Decreasing LOS are now affecting that, but HUD has indicated LTS will be an acceptable alternative on a local level.
- There has been a 94% success rate in the scattered site apartments due to the combination of rental subsidies and adequate support services.

Total Bed Nights Used at the Oxford Street Shelter



From FY 04 – FY 08 the federal government shifted its focus and resources to housing individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.

HPRP ran from midway through FY 09 to midway through FY 12. The program focused on rapid re-housing; the shelter worked to house individuals with shorter stays.

Great Recession/
Economic Downturn
lasted from FY 9 to FY 13

LTS Initiative

FY 16
Projected
78,275
Beat
projection
by 1%

The By- Name List catches on

Members of other communities in Maine were invited and encouraged to attend the weekly Long Term Stayer By-Name List meetings in Portland. Soon the VA and Bangor followed suit with By-Name lists.

Other communities are beginning to do the same.

DHHS has concluded that there are 22 chronically homeless people in shelters in Maine as of June 30, 2017 using the 365 day definition. They have committed to a rental subsidy for each of these people, and services.

Results

Statewide progress

Statewide Progress:

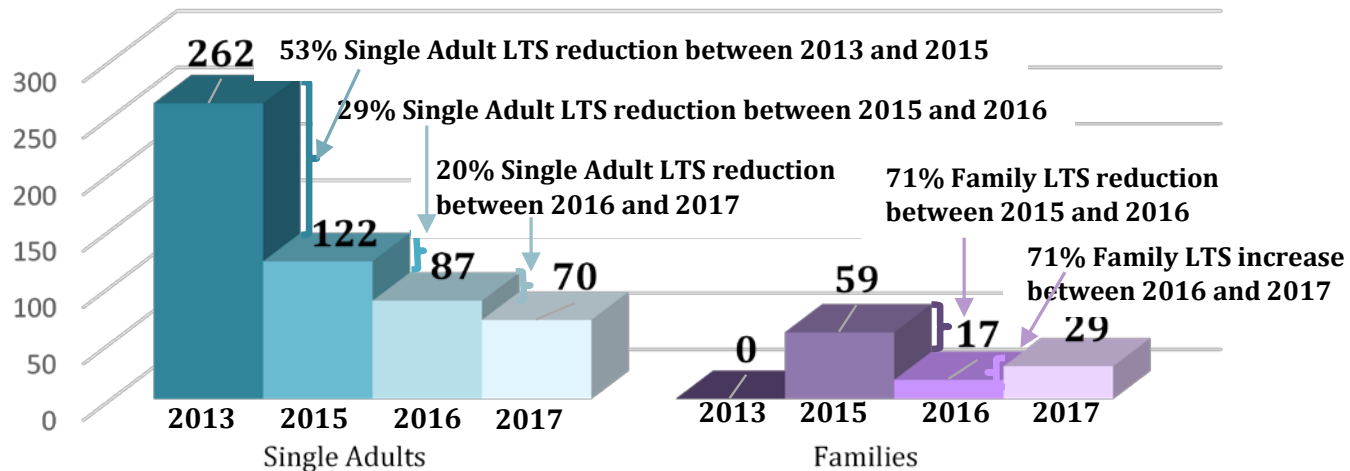
On July 1, 2013, there were 262 LTS in Maine.

On July 1, 2017:

- There were 70 LTS single individuals – a 73% decrease from 2013.
- LOS has decreased 21% from 2016-2017. This follows a 63% decrease from 2015-2016 (averages go down as we remove the skew).
- Overall, LTS now represent 1.6% of the overall population, down from 5% of the population in 2013.

Results – Statewide progress

Statewide LTS Data



*Family LTS increased between 2013 and 2015, and 2016 and 2017, likely due to interruptions in the supply of Section 8 caused by sequestration.

Hiccups

- **Interruptions in the supply of everything needed**
 - Rental subsidies, housing (decreasing vacancy rate), dedicated staff reassigned, service funding restrictions, PATH funding agency change
- **Homeostasis**
 - Resistance, naysaying, organizations feeling threatened by the funding prioritization, worries success would create confusion that homelessness was solved
- **Last 5 people on the list are the hardest to house**
- **Diverging interests**
 - Rapid Rehousing
 - Funding strategies of our State Administration



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