



# DATA BRIEF

## Satisfaction Kiosk Findings: Clients' Experiences with Homelessness and Housing Services

### BACKGROUND

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) regularly surveys clients to determine how well services are meeting their needs.

Traditional paper surveys, while useful for collecting a large amount of feedback at once, offer less flexibility, require staff resources to tabulate the data, and can result in clients reporting their more memorable (positive or negative) experiences only. Satisfaction kiosks are being tested to determine their usefulness in gathering immediate feedback about clients' current services and additional needs. The kiosk presents a single question, and clients respond using buttons with smiley faces that represent Very Positive, Positive, Negative, and Very Negative satisfaction levels.

### PURPOSE

Clients experiencing housing instability and homelessness provided on-site, instant feedback about services they were receiving at the time and services they would like to receive to stay safe over the winter. This report describes the results of four unique survey questions posed to clients. This data can inform service providers about whether services are meeting the clients' self-identified needs and what other services they may require to achieve independence.

<sup>1</sup> HappyOrNot kiosks are contracted with [Xavier Solutions](#).

<sup>2</sup> The Allegheny Link assists County residents by providing information and referrals to people who are seniors, have a disability, are at risk of homelessness, or are parents interested in a home-visiting program. The Allegheny Link accepts walk-ins, emails and phone calls, though only walk-in clients were surveyed.

<sup>3</sup> Severe Weather Emergency Shelters offer a sleeping area during cold winter months. One location is open every night between November 15 and March 15, while the other location is open on nights when severe weather or temperatures of 25 degrees or below are forecast.

<sup>4</sup> A Host Home is a proposed service that would link young people experiencing homelessness with a family willing to provide shelter and some basic supports in their home.

### METHODOLOGY

The HappyOrNot<sup>1</sup> kiosk is a free-standing unit that collects data at the point of service and sends automated reports the following day. (An image of the kiosk appears at the top of this brief.) A kiosk is fitted with a single question, which was developed by provider and DHS staff to address the providers' need for feedback.

- At [Allegheny Link](#),<sup>2</sup> where clients are connected with a variety of resources to help them stabilize their housing situation and meet related needs, clients were asked to rate this statement: **“As a result of the services I received, I feel better prepared to manage my problems.”**
- At the [Severe Weather Emergency Shelters](#)<sup>3</sup> (men’s and women’s locations), clients were asked, **“Did you learn about resources to help you stay safe this winter?”**
- At [412 Youth Zone](#), a downtown drop-in center where youth transitioning out of foster care or experiencing homelessness can receive a range of services including basic needs, life skills counseling and physical/mental health services, clients were asked, **“Would you be interested in using a Host Home<sup>4</sup> program?”**
- At Allegheny Link, clients used a modified HappyOrNot kiosk to answer **“What services are you most in need of this winter?”** In this modification, the kiosk’s Happiness Scale buttons were altered to present four multiple-choice options: warm clothing, hot meals, utility bill help, and safe shelter.

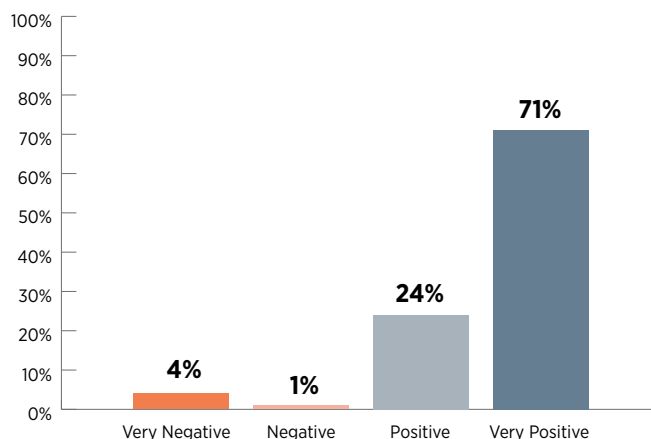
### FINDINGS

#### Service Quality

A majority of Allegheny Link clients (**95%**) answered “positive” or “very positive” when asked if the services they received **made them better prepared to manage their problems.**

FIGURE 1: Service Quality Findings from Allegheny Link Site

*“As a result of the services I received, I feel better prepared to manage my problems.”*  
n=55



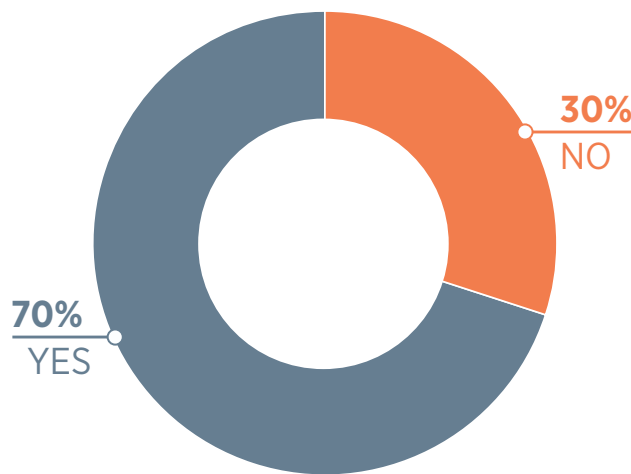
The Severe Weather Emergency Shelters operates locations for men and women. A majority of winter shelter clients (**70%**) felt that they **learned about resources to help them stay safe through the winter**. At the women's shelter site, 74 percent (n=176) felt they learned about resources to help stay safe through the winter, while this rate was 63 percent (n=470) for men.

FIGURE 2: Service Quality Findings from Severe Weather Emergency Shelters (Men's and Women's)

***"Did you learn about resources to help you stay safe this winter?"***

1/22/2018-3/12/2018

n=646



**Additional Needs: Host Home Program**

Youth were given a description of a proposed Host Home program as an opportunity to gauge interest in the idea.

**Description of proposed Host Home program, as presented along with the kiosk at 412 Youth Zone**

Allegheny County is considering developing a Host Home program. A Host Home is a private family home that hosts youth in need of temporary housing.

Hosts provide shelter, food, some transportation (if needed), and family-style support, and can help arrange for additional services the youth might need.

Youth select the home in which they feel comfortable, and the program recruits homeowners to participate in the program.

A majority of youth **(72%) are interested in the possibility of a Host Home program.**

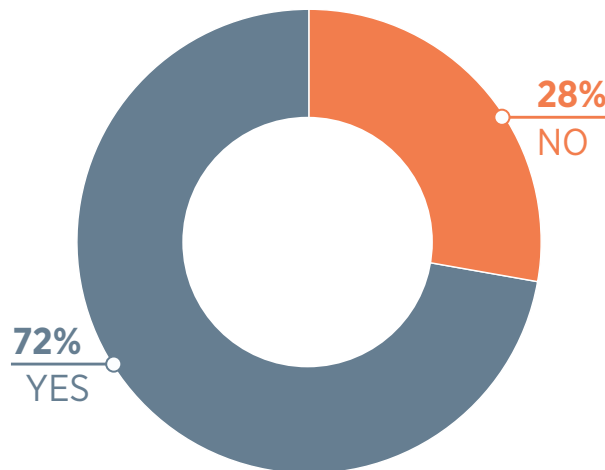
FIGURE 3: Interest in a Host Home Program as Identified by Youth at the 412 Youth Zone

<sup>5</sup> "Yes" combines youth answering "Positive" or "Very Positive." "No" combines youth answering "Negative" or "Very Negative."

**"Would you be interested in using a Host Home program?"<sup>5</sup>**

3/7/2018–3/16/2018

n=62

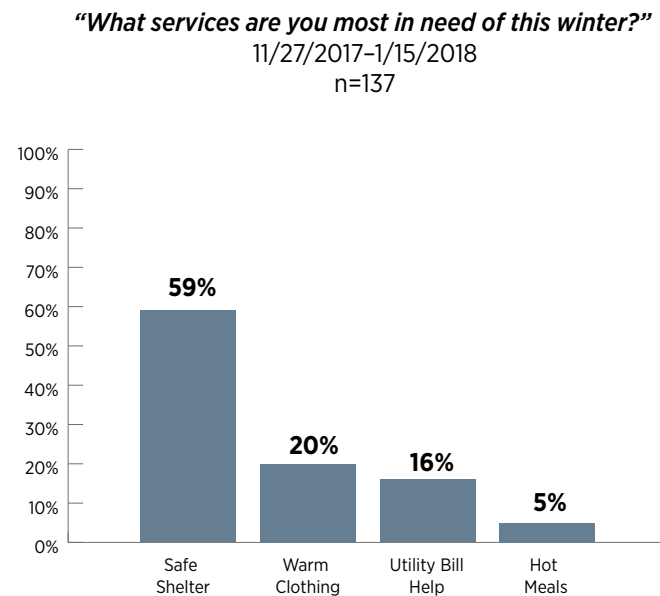


<sup>6</sup> Survey item was designed by Allegheny Link staff identifying top challenges and concerns their clients face during the winter.

### Additional Needs: Winter Services

Clients visiting Allegheny Link shared that the service<sup>6</sup> they are most in need of this winter (2017–2018) is **safe shelter (59%)**. After safe shelter, the next most frequently identified need was **warm clothing (20%)**.

FIGURE 4: Most Needed Winter Services as Identified by Clients Visiting the Allegheny Link



### NEXT STEPS

- Allegheny Link and the Winter Shelters share the goal of connecting clients with housing instability to resources. Coordination efforts, such as sharing findings from client feedback surveys, can help them work toward this shared goal.
- Allegheny Link clients note that shelter is their primary concern over the winter. This can inform how resources are prioritized in client–staff interaction. A deeper dive into what aspects of shelter are most concerning — such as physical security of the structure, ability to pay for and maintain consistent housing, etc. — can also be explored, to further prioritize resources.
- Youth experiencing housing instability show strong interest in pursuing the Host Home program to assist in their transition to independence. DHS is further exploring feasibility and interest in this program.

AUTHORS

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