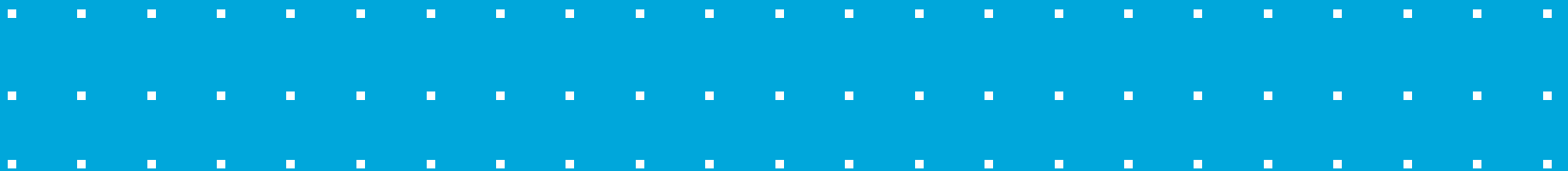




# What We Know About Human Trafficking in the U.S.: National Perspectives

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Justice Policy Center  
Urban Institute



# Federal Definition: Human Trafficking

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) defines “severe forms of human trafficking” as: The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for:

- sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion\*, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or
- labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

\*Coercion includes threats of physical or psychological harm to children and/or their families. Any child (under the age of 18) engaged in commercial sex is a victim of trafficking.

# Attempts to Measure Prevalence

- 14,500 - 17,500 – Number of foreign nationals trafficked into the United States every year.
- Most commonly used estimate of CSEC is Estes and Weiner (2001). Concluded that about 326,000 children were “*at risk* for commercial sexual exploitation.”
- Edwards, Iritani, and Hallfors (2005), which found that 3.5% (n=465) of an AddHealth sample endorsed an item asking if they had “ever exchanged sex for drugs or money.” The nationally representative sample was comprised of 13,294 youth in grades 8-12 during the year 1996 who completed an in-school questionnaire.
- Zhang (2012) estimated that about 31% of unauthorized Spanish-speaking workers have experienced an incident that meets the legal definition of human trafficking,

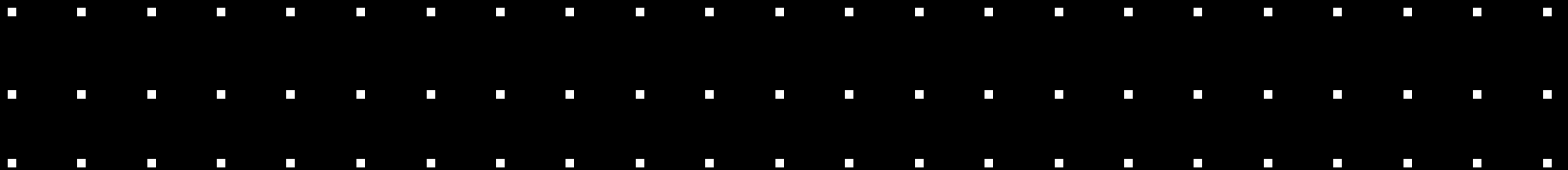
# IOM Findings (2013)

- Youth vulnerable to CSEC: neglected and abused; in foster care or juvenile detention; homeless, runaways and throwaway youth.
- Over-criminalization of commercially sexually exploited youth.
- More trainings are necessary for LE, CPS workers, medical professionals and other first responders.
- Strengthen existing laws.
- Support multi-sector collaboration.
- Improve data collection and program evaluations.



# Urban Institute Study Findings

Underground Commercial Sex Economy (UCSE) Study  
Labor Trafficking Study  
LGBTQ Youth Study

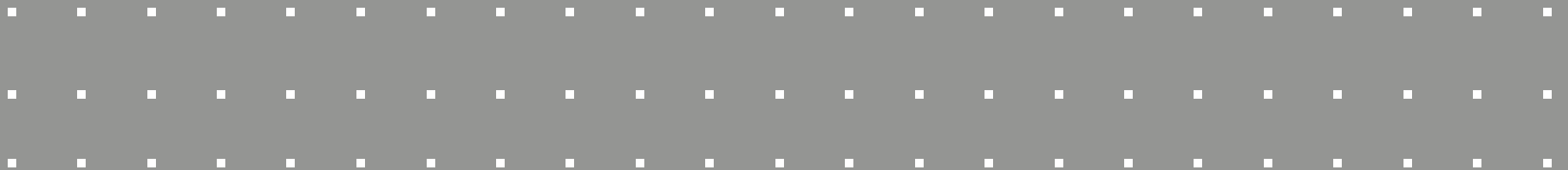




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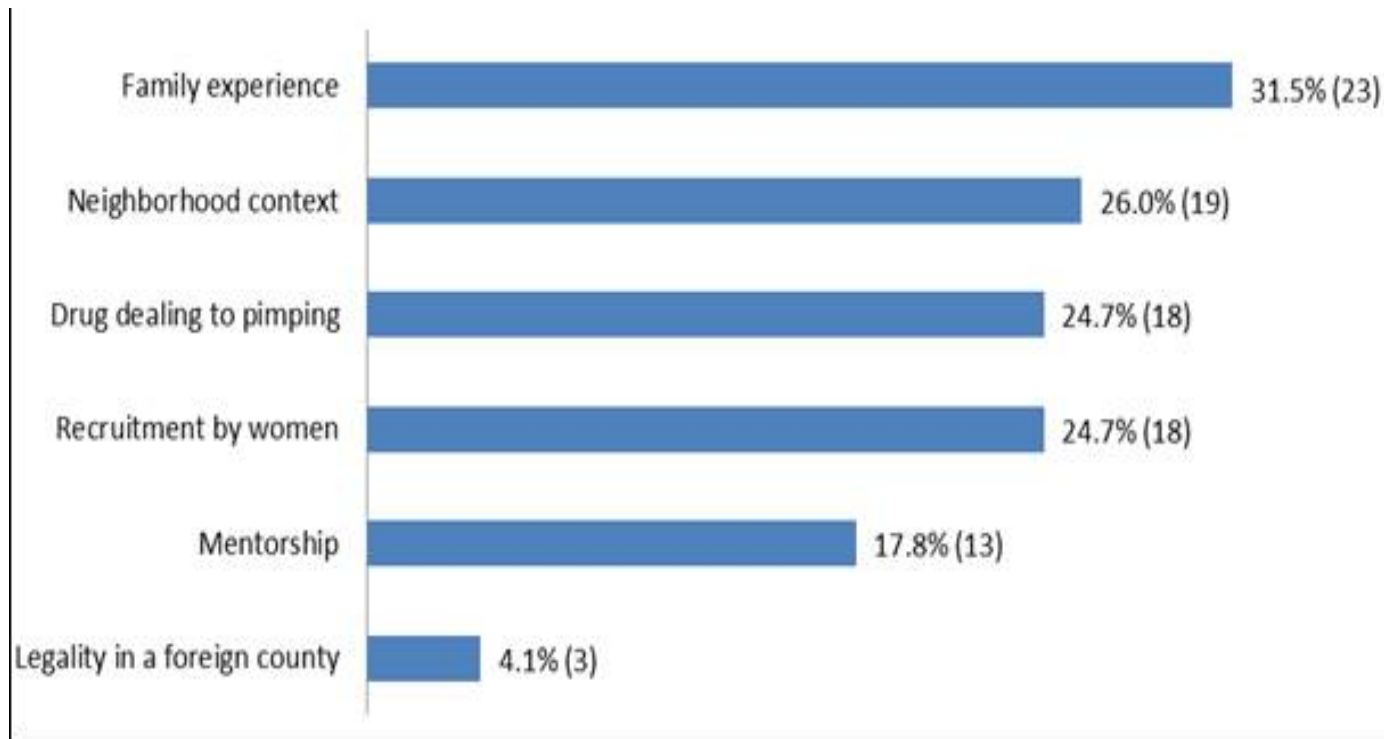
# Estimating the Size and Structure of the Underground Commercial Sex Economy in 8 U.S. Cities



## UCSE Finding

**Pimps and sex workers cited many of the same factors influencing their decision to become involved in the UCSE. Pimps described neighborhood influence, family exposure to sex work, lack of job options, and encouragement from a significant other or acquaintance as critical factors in their decision to engage in the UCSE.**

# Entry Points into the Market



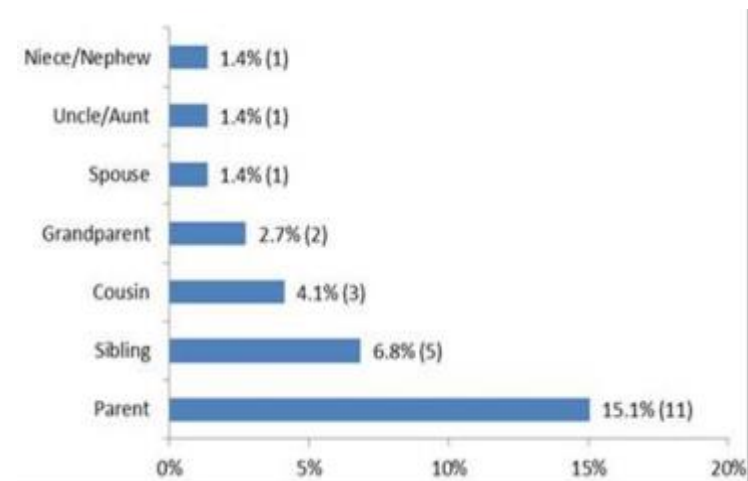


# Quote

## Family Context

“At age five and six and seven, I seen it because my auntie was a ho. I’ve seen men come and go all the time, didn’t know. One night, I saw and asked. She said, ‘The clothes on your back, the apartment, this is how I pay the rent.’ I had nothing but love for my auntie, that’s what made me fall in love with a working woman. Then my sister and my momma did it. It’s been I the family. My uncle and father were pimps.”

## Family Member Involvement



# Quote

## Neighborhood context

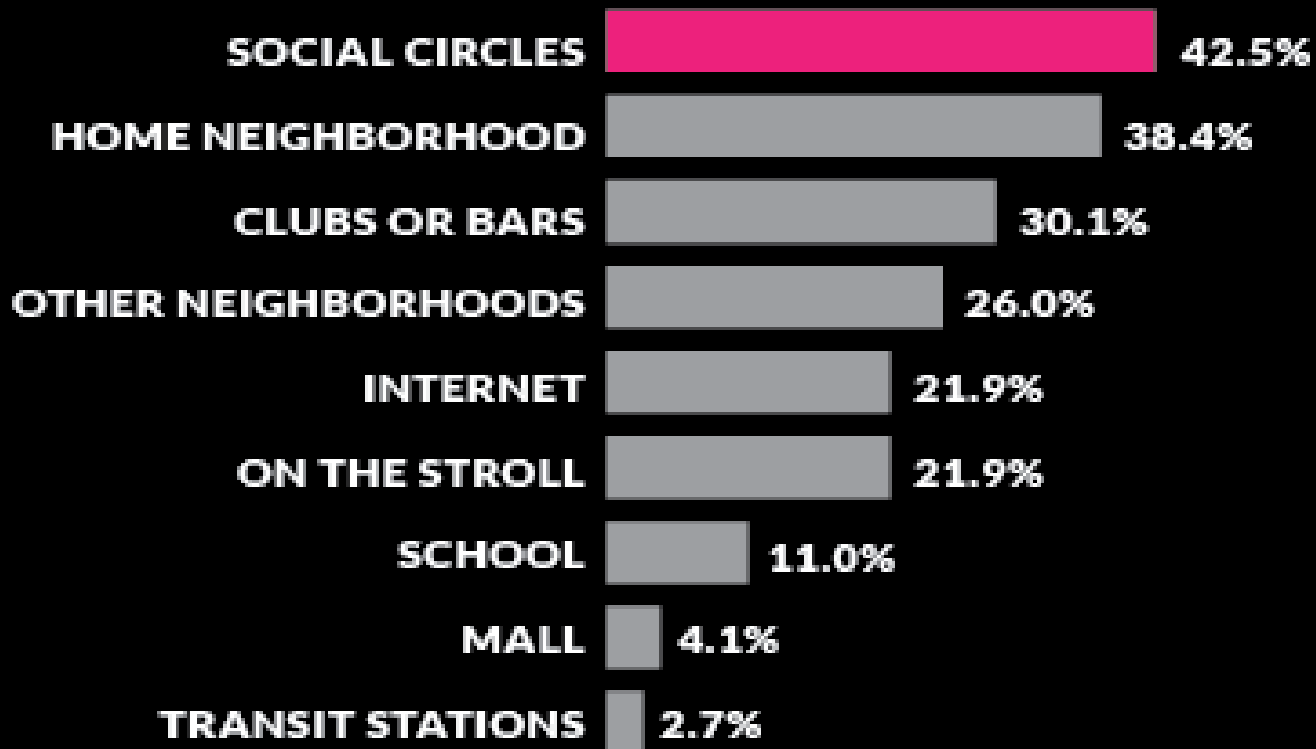
“I figure when you look at underground businesses, you should pinpoint the cause and effect that gets into underground business. Not just the business itself, but the trials and tribulations so that the hand is forced into it. To grow up in underprivileged neighborhoods, especially in Black communities, you already have stereotypes around you. You don't have too much of an option. If you don't succeed in school, you have the streets or jail”

## UCSE Finding

**Different forms of coercion and fraud are used by pimps to recruit, manage and retain control over employees. These forms include feigning romantic interest; emphasizing mutual dependency between pimp and employee; discouraging women from “having sex for free;” and promising material comforts.**

# Scouting Venues

Pimps commonly recruit workers from public locations, most often from social circles.



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# Quotes

“I believe one of the strong points of this business is manipulation. Say an individual is left wanting. She has aspirations for a bigger future ... A lot has to do with promising”

“[I would at first] beat the girls, and then I was trying to get better ways of control ... A lot of the time I would hit one in front of the others, and that’s all it took ‘cause they would be scared enough to stay in line ... The girls didn’t like when I didn’t hit them, they’d think something was wrong.”

“I have smacked a woman before ... But once you get physical with a ho then that means you ran out of game. She beat you mentally and emotionally and so all you have is physical. You ran out of mental games to teach her a lesson. I rarely lay a hand on a woman.”

# UCSE Finding

**The widespread availability and rapid expansion of the Internet has redefined the spatial and social limitations of the sex market by introducing new markets for both recruitment and advertisement.**

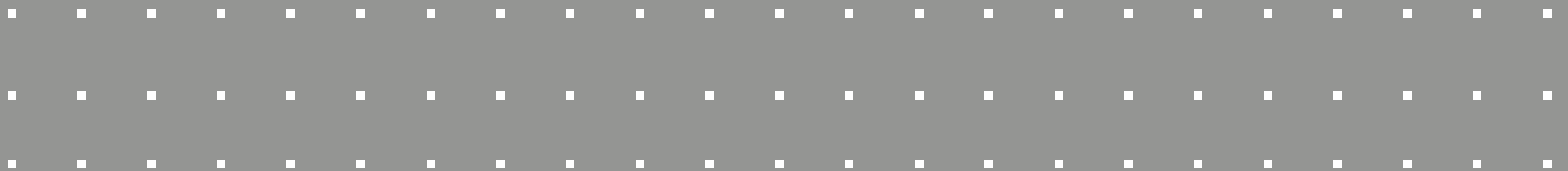
- Online advertisements/classifieds: 49%
- Personal/business websites: 10%
- Social media/discussion boards: 11%
- Stroll: 40%
- Word of mouth and referrals: 40%
- Local newspapers, phonebooks: 23%
- Business cards: 23%
- Establishments: 23%

## Quote

“Over the years, the Internet became an easier way to get money without having to take so many chances as far as injury or assholes on the outside. You never know what happens at night—a lot of creeps come out. The Internet was a safe haven for everybody. A guy calls and comes to a location where the girl and you are comfortable. Or you go to a location where he gives you an address and you know where to go. It’s modern day.”



# Understanding the Organization, Operation and Victimization Process of Labor Trafficking in the United States





# LABOR TRAFFICKING SURVIVOR CHARACTERISTICS

Top 6 Countries	n=122
Mexico	34%
Philippines	16%
Thailand	7%
India	9%
Indonesia	4%
Guatemala	4%
Other	27%

- 100% of sample were non-US citizens
- 29 different countries of origin

# LABOR TRAFFICKING SURVIVOR CHARACTERISTICS

<b>Education (n=60)</b>	
None	10%
Some Elementary	10%
Finished Elementary	15%
Some High School	17%
H.S. Diploma	13%
Some College	8%
College Degree	13%
Graduate School	2%
Technical School	10%
GED	2%

- Men (48%); women (53%)
- Minors (10%); adults (90%)
- Single (46%) ; Married (45%)
- 64% had children
- Avg 33 years old at time of services
- 33% some college or higher

# LABOR TRAFFICKING VENUES/INDUSTRIES

	N=122
Private Residence/Domestic Servitude	37%
Agriculture	19%
Restaurants	14%
Hospitality	10%
Construction	10%
Carnivals/fairs	7%
Factories	4%
Assisted living	3%
Strip clubs	2%
Massage parlors	1%

Note: 4% of the sample was labor trafficked in more than one industry.

- Regulated and unregulated industries
- Low-wage industries
- Hidden and public
- Gender differences by venue

# LABOR TRAFFICKING SURVIVOR IMMIGRATION STATUS

	Upon Entry to United States	At time of services
	N=111	N=113
Nonimmigrant visa	<b>71%</b>	28%
Unauthorized		<b>69%</b>
Permanent resident		1%
Resident alien		1%
Asylee		1%
Note: Percentages shown above are based on non-missing cases		

# SUSPECT CRIMINAL JUSTICE OUTCOMES

- Criminal Network
  - Variation in criminal network sophistication across industries
    - More sophisticated networks associated with H2A/H2B (larger # of victims and suspects per case)
  - 36% attempted and actual sexual abuse (more common in domestic servitude)
  - 23% had weapons (10% attempted murder)
  - Document fraud (17%) and smuggling (14%)
- Criminal Justice Outcomes
  - Arrest information for under half of suspects (49%)
    - DOL fines in only 1 case
  - In 6% of cases suspects not arrested or cases dismissed due to suspect status as a diplomat

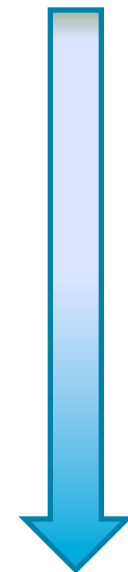
## CHARACTERISTICS OF RECRUITMENT

- High levels of fraud (93%) and coercion (54%)
- 48% paid recruitment fees (up to \$25,000)
  - 36% paid \$10,000 and above
  - Average \$6,150
- 57% of recruiters involved in other stages
- 54% recruited as a group; 46% individual
- 28% promised less than federal minimum wage

# Labor Exploitation and Labor Trafficking

	Yes
Less Pay Than Promised	83%
Withheld Pay	81%
Under Minimum Wage	80%
Denial of Pay	80%
Illegal Deductions	62%
No written earnings statement	62%
Safe water, toilet	30%
Hazardous Work Environment	16%
No meal breaks	42%
Movement to work controlled	80%
Victim lived where worked	56%
Depriving/Disorienting	84%
Threats or use of Violence	82%
Demoralizing	82%
Diminishing Resistance	70%
Intimidation and Control	80%
Deception of Consequences	71%
Use/Threatened Use of law	71%

**Labor  
Exploitation**



**Labor  
Trafficking**

# SURVIVOR ESCAPE EXPERIENCES

- Many came into contact with others while being trafficked – law enforcement, coworkers, neighbors
- Physical barriers, psychological abuse and law enforcement lack of education/training create challenges in escaping
- Victims' fear of deportation made victims reluctant to contact law enforcement
- Most victims (59%) escaped by running away. However, the support of community members (38%), service providers (21%), friends, family, colleagues (20%) and law enforcement (19%) were also important.
- Low victim self-report to police (7%)
- 14% of victims arrested by police (most commonly for immigration violations)
- Traffickers continued to contact victims after escape and expanded threats and harassment to victims' families in their home countries



# SURVIVOR EXPERIENCES AND SERVICE PROVISION

- Several months or years before properly identified and connected (despite help seeking)
- Majority unauthorized (69%) by time contact specialized service provider
- Some placed into deportation, threatened by immigration officials or placed in detention
- Continued Presence was rarely granted across all sites
- T visa applications successful (but with lack of CP some survivors do not go forward and choose to remain unauthorized)

# SURVIVOR NEEDS AND OUTCOMES

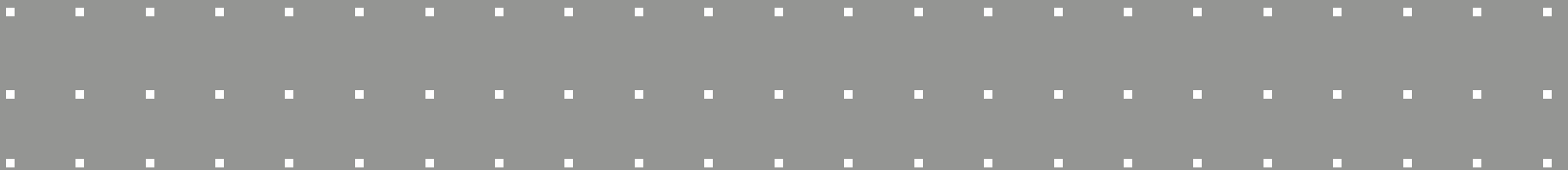
- Shelter was the greatest need and challenge
- Acute need to begin working again
- Lack of job training/career readiness -- mired in low-wage work regardless of previous education (sometimes in same industries trafficked)
- Difficulty accessing benefits due to lack of provider knowledge or state laws – often tied to location of service provision/criminal case
- Civil damages and criminal restitution rarely awarded
- Longer-term access to mental health
- Adjustment of status to permanent resident may not be covered/ concern about long-term ability to remain in the US
- Family reunification and/or ability to travel/see family



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# Surviving the Streets of New York: Experiences of LGBTQ Youth, YMSM, YWSW Engaged in Survival Sex



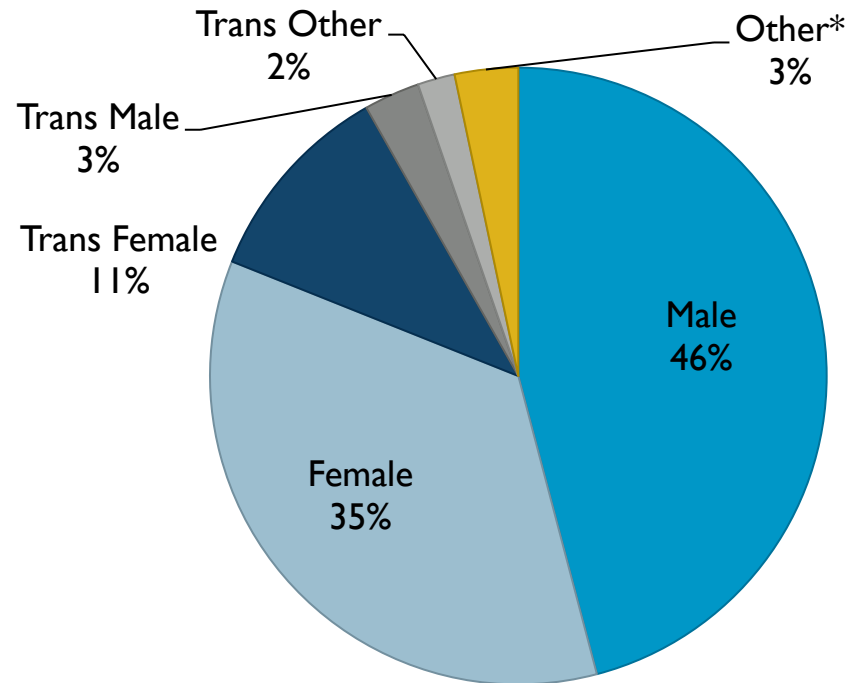
## Sample Characteristics: Birthplace

- 2 in 3 youth were born (63%) and/or raised (65%) in New York City.



- Approximately 3 in 4 respondents were born and/or raised in the tri-state area of New York City, New Jersey and Connecticut.

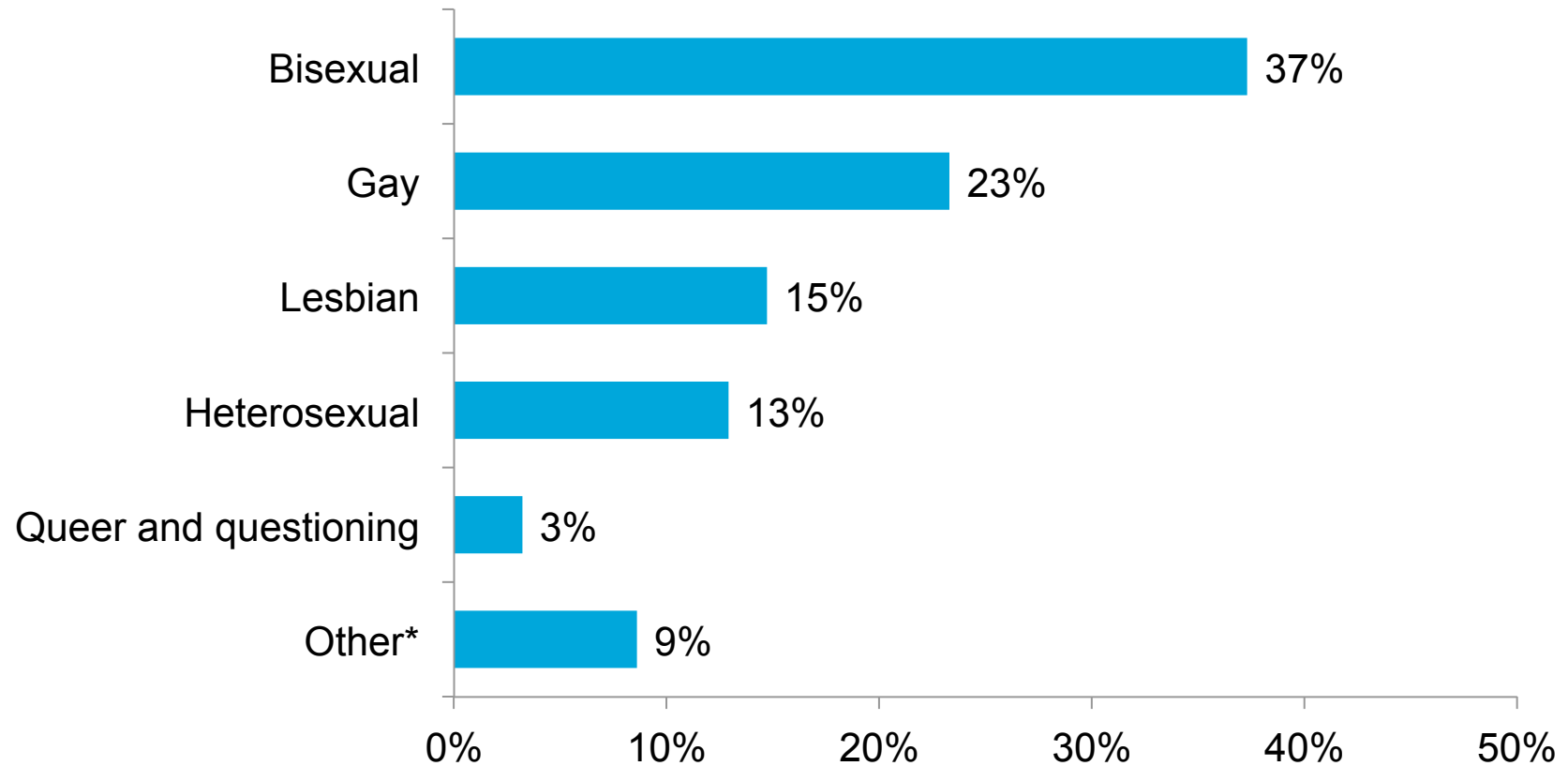
# Gender



\*Includes queer/questioning, androgynous, femme, gender non-conforming, and genderless

- Half identified as male, one-third as female
- 11% identified as transgender female, 3% identified as transgender male

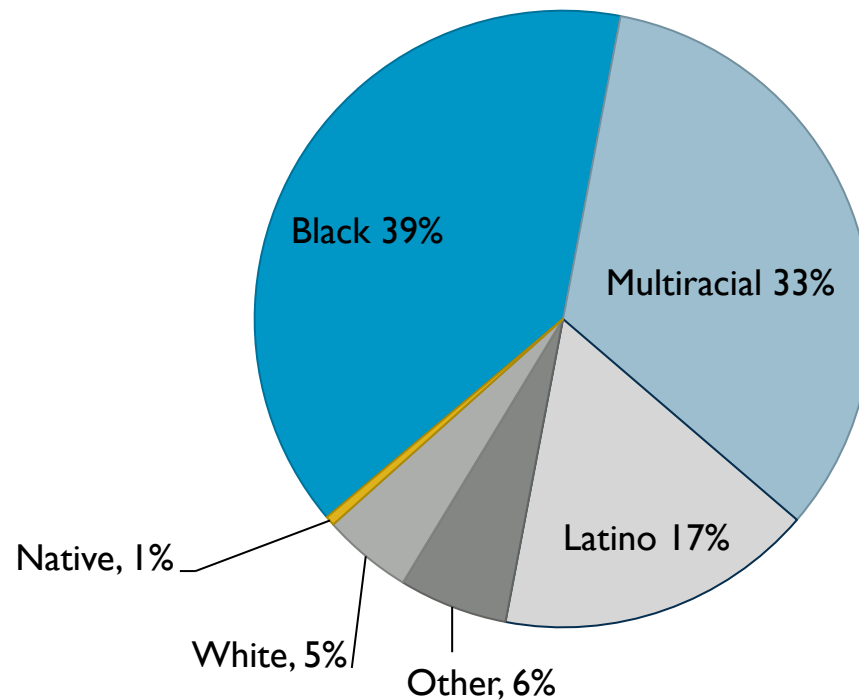
# Sexual Orientation



- 38% identified as gay or lesbian
- 13% identified as straight
- 37% identified as bisexual

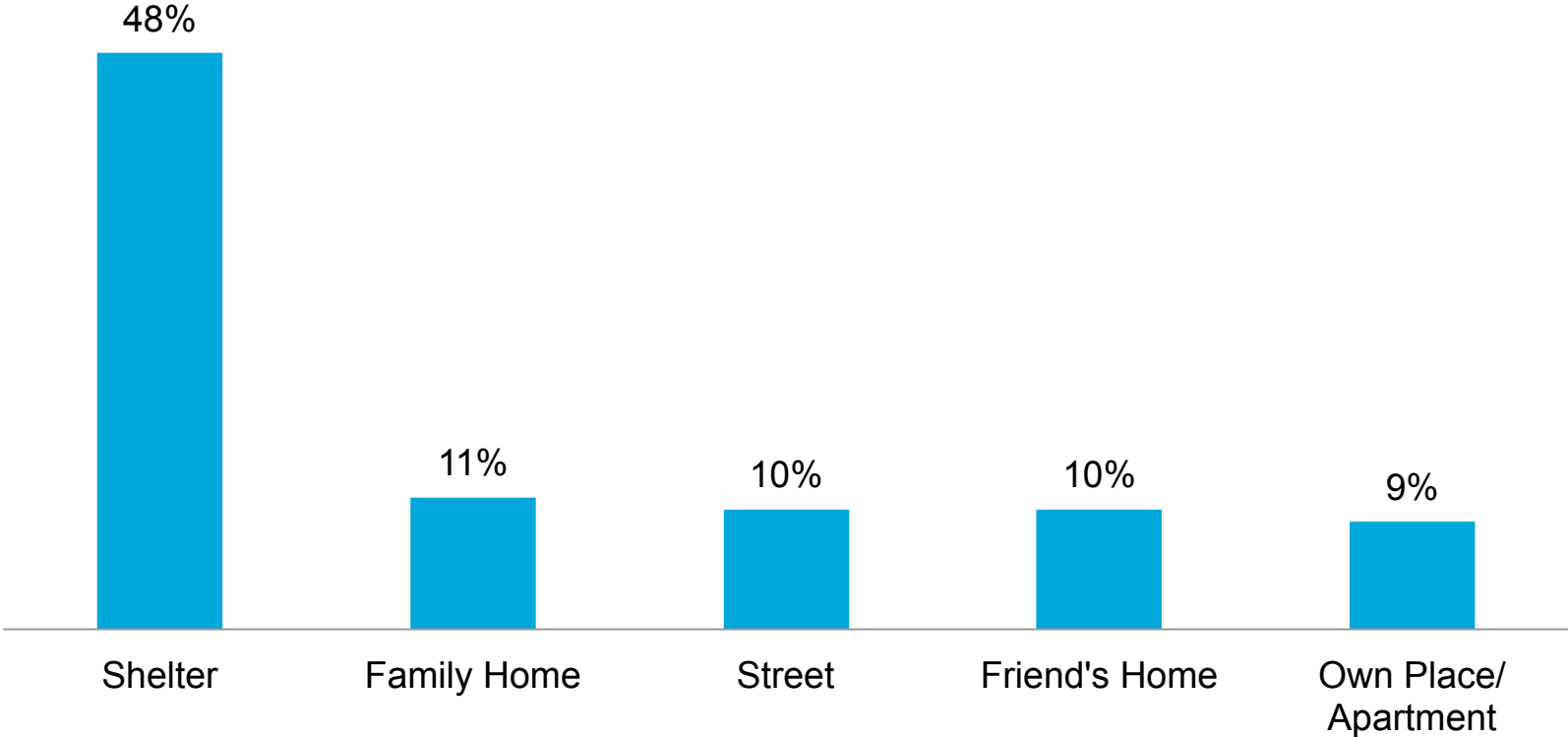
\*Includes open, pansexual, no preference, and no label

# Race



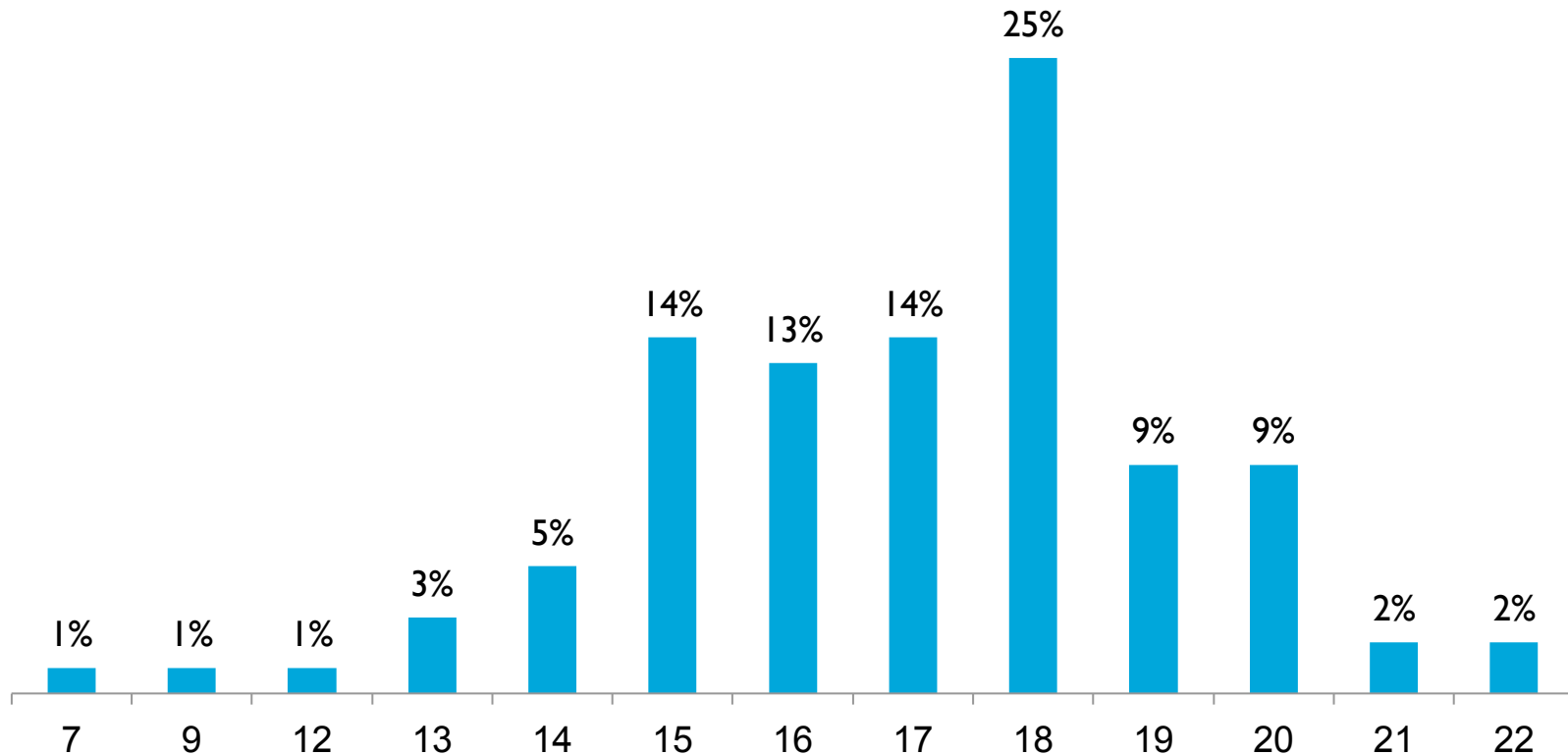
- Majority of youth were people of color
- 39 % identified as Black/African-American
- 17% as Hispanic/Latino
- 33% with more than one race and/or ethnicity (most commonly Black and Latino)

# Living Situation



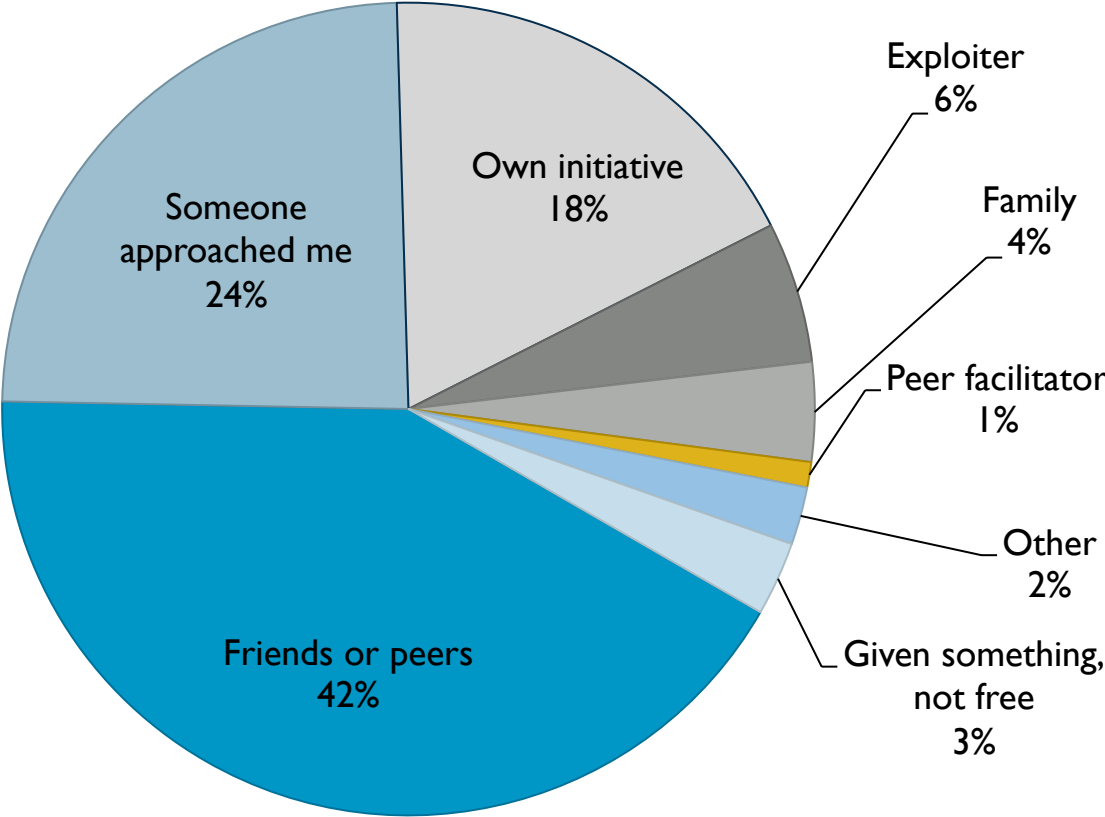


## Age First Engaged in Survival Sex

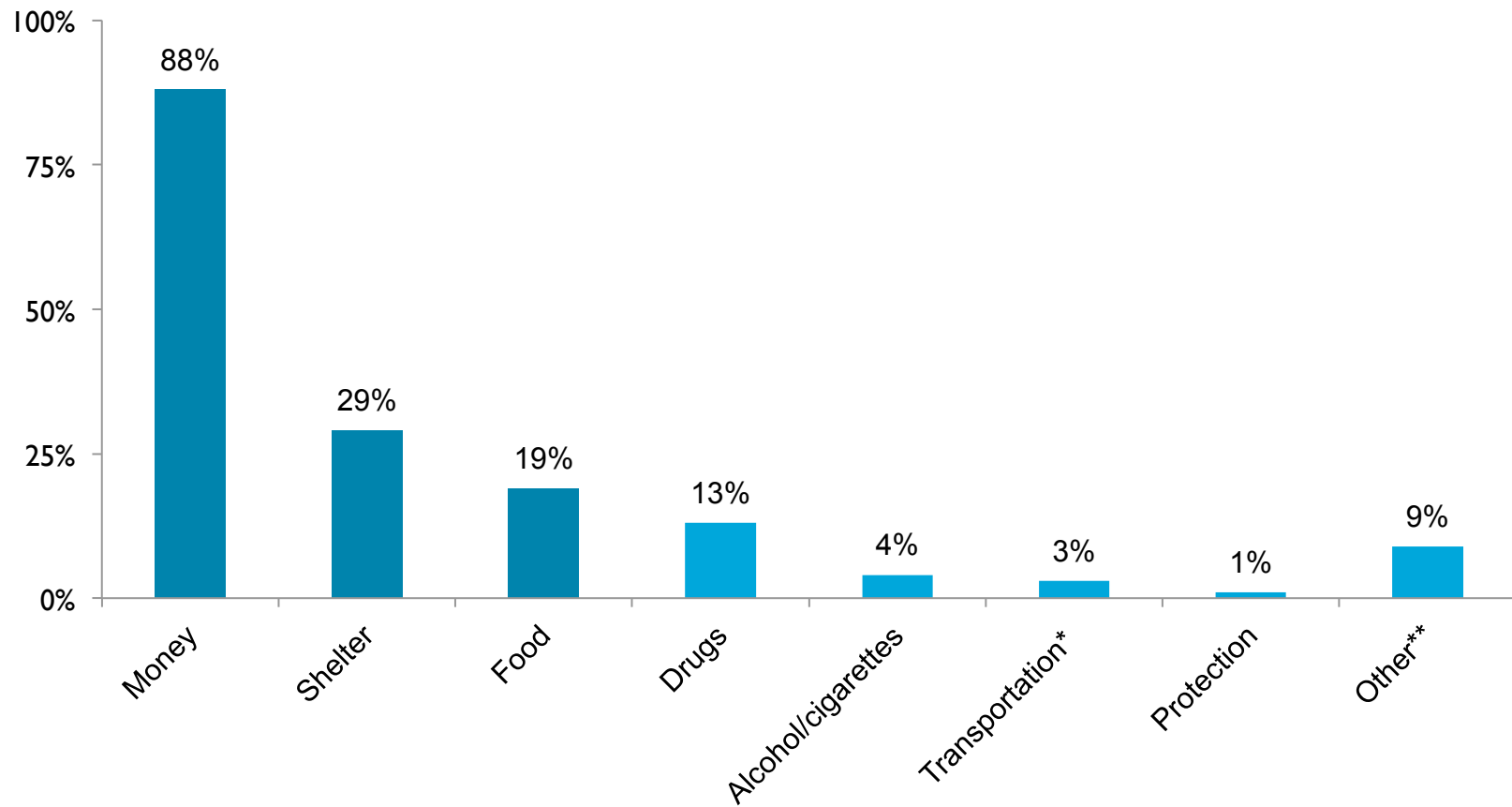


- Average age was 17 years old
- Most youth were 15 to 18; full range was 7 to 22

# How First Engaged in Survival Sex



# What Do You Receive In Exchange for a Sexual Act



\* e.g., Metrocard, bus fare

\*\* e.g., jewelry, gifts

# Situations Involving an Exploiter

**14.5% of youth had been in an  
exploitative situation involving a  
trafficker**

(evidence of force, fraud and coercion)

## Desire to Stop Engaging in Survival Sex

- 67% of youth reported wanting to stop at some point or immediately (5%)
- 21% said they had already stopped
- 7 % said they had no desire to stop

# Complexities

There are many positive things about trading sex. You can trade sex for the life of your kids, you can trade sex to keep your apartment, you can trade sex to feed yourself...Some people think that the sex trade is the worst thing you to do cause your selling yourself...but when it boils down to it, if you have no food in your stomach, if you have no transportation, but you have a man in your face willing to give you money for a half hour, you put your pride to the side, you throw everything out the window and you forget who you are and you forget what you're doing and you learn to be someone else.

*19 years old, Latino, gay, male*

## Finding

Youth are extremely resilient in the face of external challenges (violence, lack of housing and employment, etc.) and internal challenges (emotional and physical trauma, gender and sexual identity issues).

They find ways to survive, often relying on their informal networks, street savvy, and quick learning abilities to share resources and skills and to adapt to difficult and often dangerous situations.

# Contact

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Full report:

<http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/2000119-Surviving-the-Streets-of-New-York.pdf>