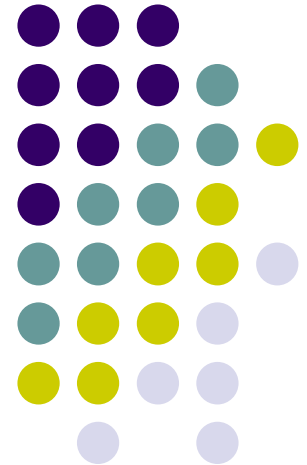


Story-Telling through Data Visualization

NAEH Conference 7/27/16

Presented by: Cullen Ryan
Executive Director
Community Housing of Maine



Using data to highlight a specific need: In this case to highlight the longest stayers



- After realizing they had been ignored for decades, Maine decided to address the homeless population that was staying the longest.
- 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 a 365 day period.
- This group was very easy to find.
- It immediately took the guesswork out of how many people were chronically homeless in Maine (it was the same group), and we began focusing rental subsidies and services on LTS as a top priority population in 2013.

Using data to highlight a specific need: In this case to highlight the longest stayers

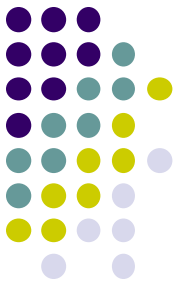


- For years, we estimated that there were 900 chronically homeless people in Maine. We used HMIS data to calculate how many LTS there were. In the 12 month period ending 7/1/13, data showed 262 LTS across the state. All 262 were single adults.
- Once we realized that there were just 262 people, housing them somehow sounded very feasible.
 - We could house that many people if we all did our part across the state; indeed, many communities only had one or two LTS. Surely they could house one or two people. And with each community doing its part, we could end long term homelessness.

Using data to highlight a specific need: Zeroing in on one shelter



- We discovered through HMIS data that 44% of the state's LTS were located at the Oxford Street Shelter (OSS) in Portland, the largest shelter in Maine. So we zeroed in on that one shelter.
- HMIS length of stay data for that shelter revealed that 33% of people passed through the shelter in 1-3 days, 54% passed through in 2 weeks or less, and 80% passed through in 2 months or less. 5% or less were staying night after night, using the shelter beds and causing the need for overflow. (Spoiler alert: We now have that down to 1.5%).



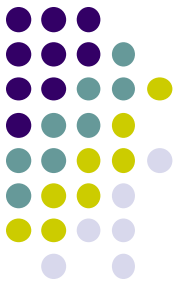
Zeroing in on one shelter: Examples of data visualization for OSS

Oxford Street Shelter Statistics:

<u>FY 2014</u>			
<u>Length of Stay</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Cumulative %</u>
1 – 3 Days	724	33%	33%
4 – 14 Days	476	21%	54%
15 – 60 Days	570	26%	80%
61 – 179 Days	351	16%	96%
180 – 273 Days	74	3%	99%
274 – 365 Days	26	1%	100%
Total	2,221		

<u>FY 2013</u>			
<u>Length of Stay</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Cumulative %</u>
1 – 3 Days	679	32%	32%
4 – 14 Days	506	23%	55%
15 – 60 Days	537	25%	80%
61 – 179 Days	328	15%	95%
180 – 273 Days	70	3%	98%
274 – 365 Days	46	2%	100%
Total	2,166		

54% of the guests: Leave these people alone. Doing anything will probably slow them down. Note this is more than half of the people in the shelter.



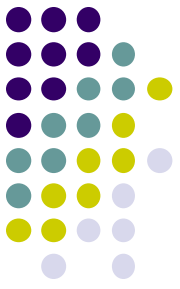
Zeroing in on one shelter: Examples of data visualization for OSS

Oxford Street Shelter Statistics:

<u>FY 2014</u>			
<u>Length of Stay</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Cumulative %</u>
1 – 3 Days	724	33%	33%
4 – 14 Days	476	21%	54%
15 – 60 Days	570	26%	80%
61 – 179 Days	351	16%	96%
180 – 273 Days	74	3%	99%
274 – 365 Days	26	1%	100%
Total	2,221		

<u>FY 2013</u>			
<u>Length of Stay</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Cumulative %</u>
1 – 3 Days	679	32%	32%
4 – 14 Days	506	23%	55%
15 – 60 Days	537	25%	80%
61 – 179 Days	328	15%	95%
180 – 273 Days	70	3%	98%
274 – 365 Days	46	2%	100%
Total	2,166		

42%: Shelters are particularly well suited to help this group. But it can be easy to blow the resources on the shortest stayers - those passing through who probably don't need help, yet look like good targets to house quickly. Instead, leave these people alone until the longest term stayers are housed.



Zeroing in on one shelter: Examples of data visualization for OSS

Oxford Street Shelter Statistics:

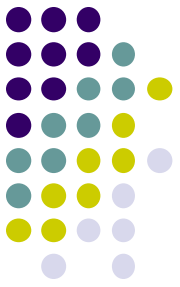
<u>FY 2014</u>			
<u>Length of Stay</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Cumulative %</u>
1 – 3 Days	724	33%	33%
4 – 14 Days	476	21%	54%
15 – 60 Days	570	26%	80%
61 – 179 Days	351	16%	96%
180 – 273 Days	74	3%	99%
274 – 365 Days	26	1%	100%
Total	2,221		

<u>FY 2013</u>			
<u>Length of Stay</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Cumulative %</u>
1 – 3 Days	679	32%	32%
4 – 14 Days	506	23%	55%
15 – 60 Days	537	25%	80%
61 – 179 Days	328	15%	95%
180 – 273 Days	70	3%	98%
274 – 365 Days	46	2%	100%
Total	2,166		

4-5%: Get these people housed. People working in shelters around the country have often chosen to work with people who are easier to engage and house rather than people within this group, leaving them languishing for long periods of time. This is what we hope to change, and when we do, the rest will be easier.

Zeroing in on one shelter:

Using data to highlight patterns in one shelter

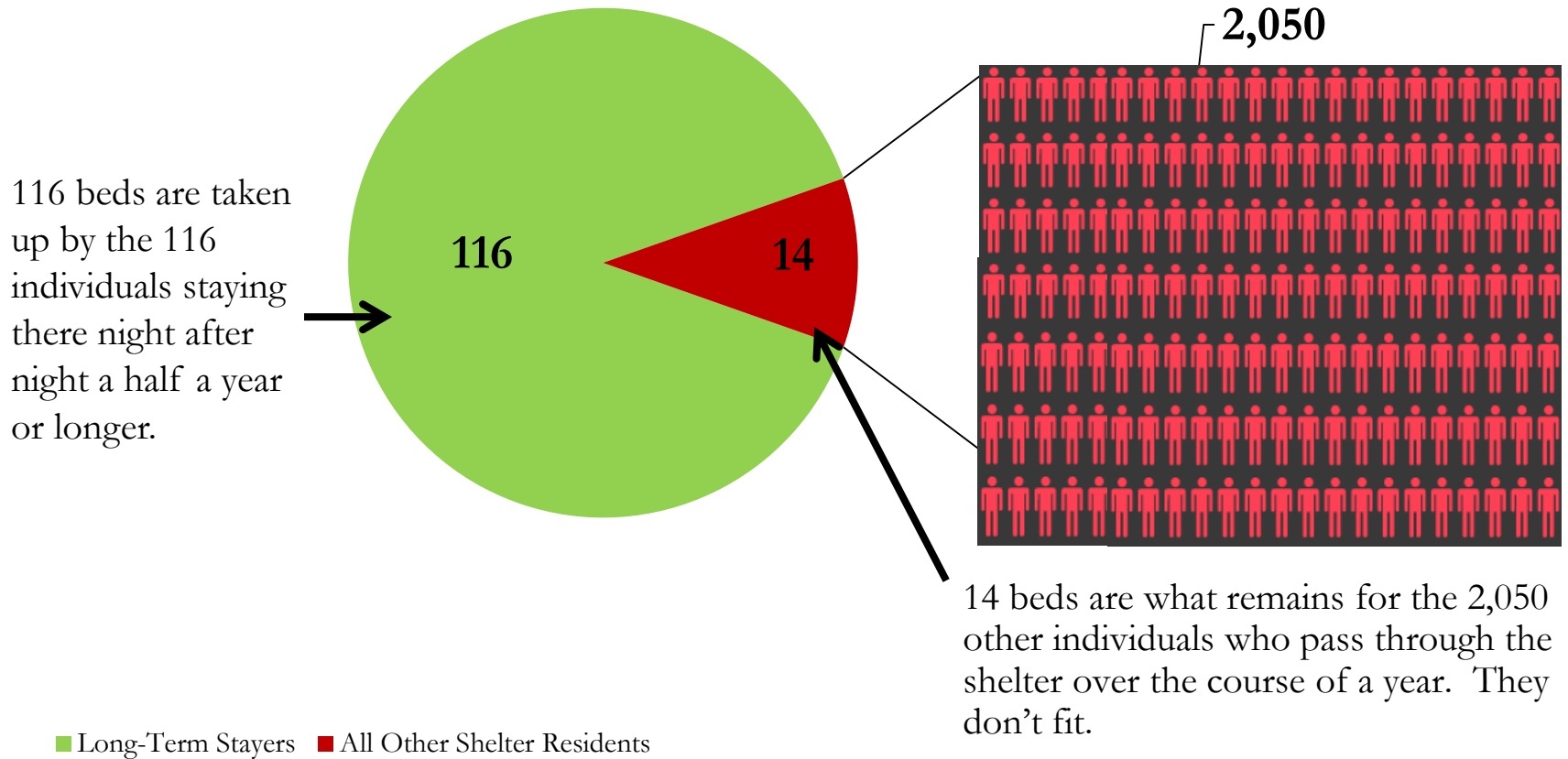


- We used data to illustrate that housing the 5%, would open up capacity at OSS, end the overflowing, and begin to reduce numbers.
- HMIS data revealed that there were 116 Long Term Stayers (the 5% staying night after night) at OSS. We illustrated that the 116 take up beds night after night, reducing the shelter's capacity.
- After analyzing housing data, we discovered that in 2013 the shelter housed a record 700 people, but targeted people with short stays.
- We looked at data trends and discovered this fast-paced effort made no difference in the numbers (numbers actually increased). Three overflow shelters remained.
- Based on this, we started a focused LTS initiative at OSS.

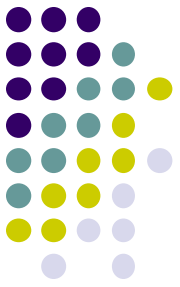
Zeroing in on one shelter: Examples of data visualization for OSS (2013)



130 Oxford Street Shelter Beds

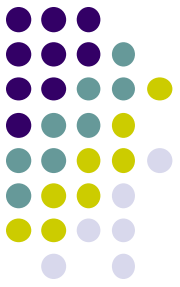


Zeroing in on one shelter: Using data to highlight progress on a goal



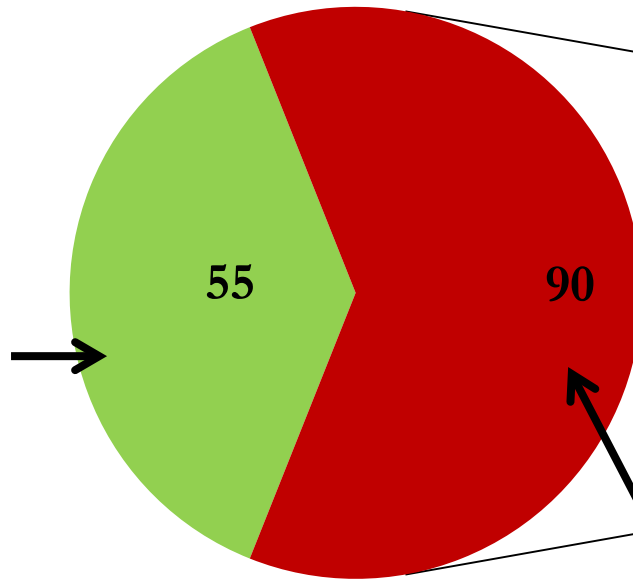
- We looked at shelter and housing data monthly to track the OSS LTS initiative's progress. **With the shelter almost exclusively targeting LTS in 2014, by June they had housed 22 and closed one of the three (75 bed) overflows. *It has never reopened.* By November, they had housed 66 LTS and intermittently closed the second overflow shelter. Numbers declined every month for 11 months in a row.**
- Those remaining now represented less than 2.5% of the population at OSS.
- Confounds: By November, Portland's vacancy rate had edged closer to 1%, and pressure emerged within the City (due to GA reimbursement withholdings from the State Administration) to examine new approaches. A new shelter was proposed, and some key City Staff left.
- Result: Temporary slowdown in progress on LTS.

Zeroing in on one shelter: Examples of data visualization for OSS (2014)



145 Oxford Street Shelter Beds

55 beds are taken up by the 55 individuals staying there night after night, for half a year or longer.



■ Long-Term Stayers ■ All Other Shelter Residents

2,000+



90 beds are what remains for the 2,000 other individuals who pass through the shelter over the course of a year. They don't fit yet causing continued need for overflow.

Zeroing in on one shelter: Using data to maintain focus despite obstacles



- Pressure continued on the City due to the Governor withholding GA reimbursement.
- City Administrators announced an abrupt June 30th closure of the remaining 75 bed shelter overflow.
- Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee (ESAC) called an emergency meeting 4/30/15 on the topic of overflow closure.
- Shelter staff rejuvenated their efforts at housing LTS. After a 6 month break in progress, the week of 4/20, OSS Shelter staff housed 5 of their longest remaining LTS.

Zeroing in on one shelter: Using data to regain focus



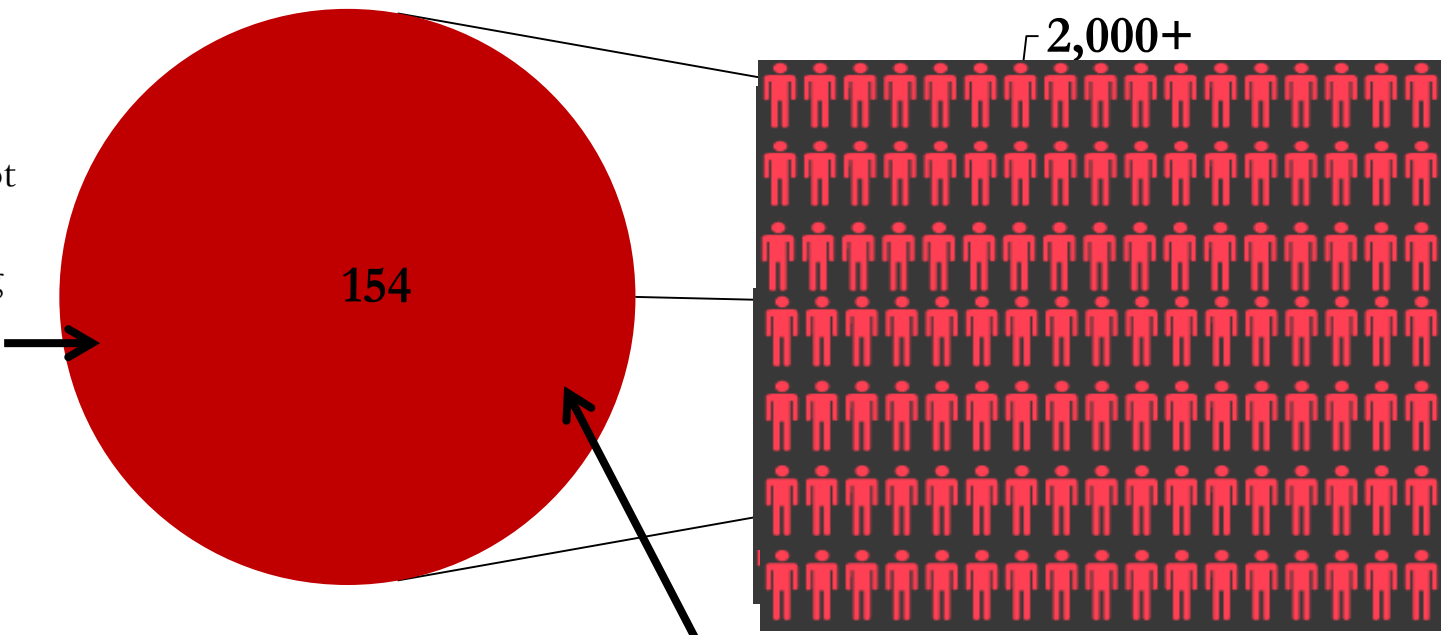
- At the 4/30/15 emergency ESAC meeting, we presented the monthly HMIS data to illustrate the LTS initiative's success, why we should continue to prioritize LTS, and how by doing so we would be able to close the last remaining 75 bed overflow shelter – when the LTS are housed OSS will have the capacity to fit everyone else.
- Based on the presentation, ESAC voted unanimously in their 4/30/15 emergency meeting to focus a community wide effort to house the remaining Long Term Stayers. Within three weeks, nine organizations committed staffing resources. This effort was unprecedented.
- City Administration put the closure of the remaining 75 bed shelter overflow on hold indefinitely.



Zeroing in on one shelter: Example of goal visualization for OSS (end goal)

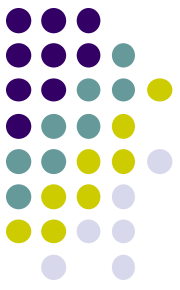
154 Oxford Street Shelter Beds

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.

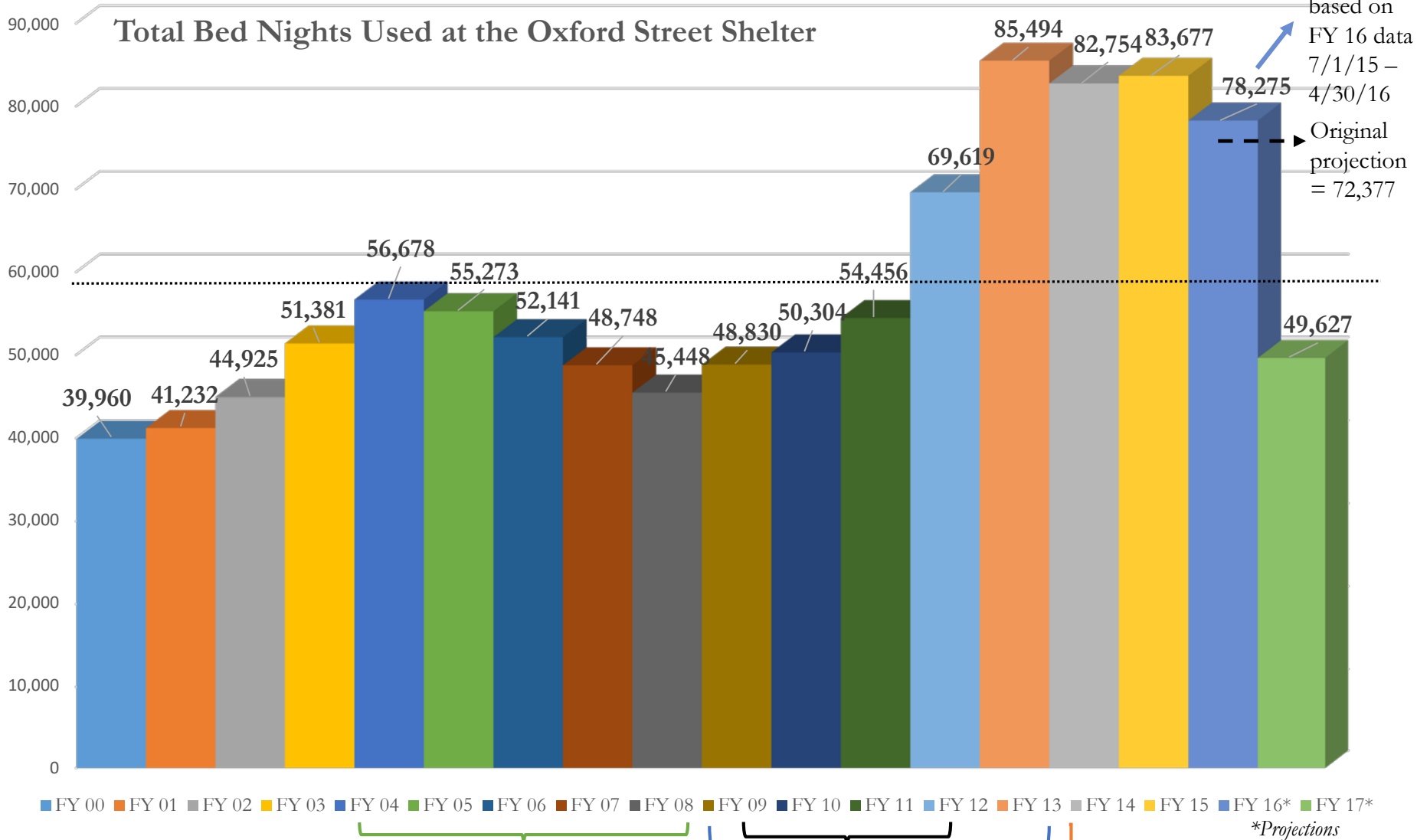


Zeroing in on one shelter:

Using data to highlight progress on a goal

- Throughout the initiative, we have used a **by-name list** to track the remaining LTS at the Oxford Street Shelter.
- Community organizations have met weekly as a group since the beginning of the initiative to review housing data and the initiative's progress.
- OSS LTS data has been reviewed monthly since the effort's inception at planning meetings across the state, including both the Maine and Portland Continuums of Care, ESAC, the Statewide Homeless Council, and all three Regional Homeless Councils.
- We have regularly provided City Administration progress reports, clearly outlining the shelter and housing data, trends, and projections based on progress made and historical trends.

Using data for visualizing projections:

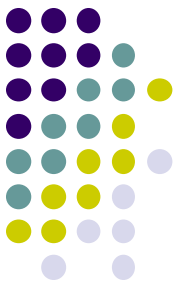


From FY 04 – FY 08 the federal government shifted its focus and resources to housing individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.

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



Zeroing in on one shelter: Using data to highlight progress on a goal

- 9 agencies and 9.5 FTEs joined the effort.
- Weekly meetings began working with one list of people beginning with 70. Due to the success of the initiative, a second list of 72 people was initiated on 1/7/2016, and a third list of 34 people on 6/2/2016.
- **79 LTS were housed through this effort in the last year.** The community is engaged, the pace is picking up, and commitment to keep at this is growing.
- Shelter numbers are currently at their lowest since 2/2012.
- The group is poised to continue this effort working from longest to shortest stayers until functional zero is achieved.

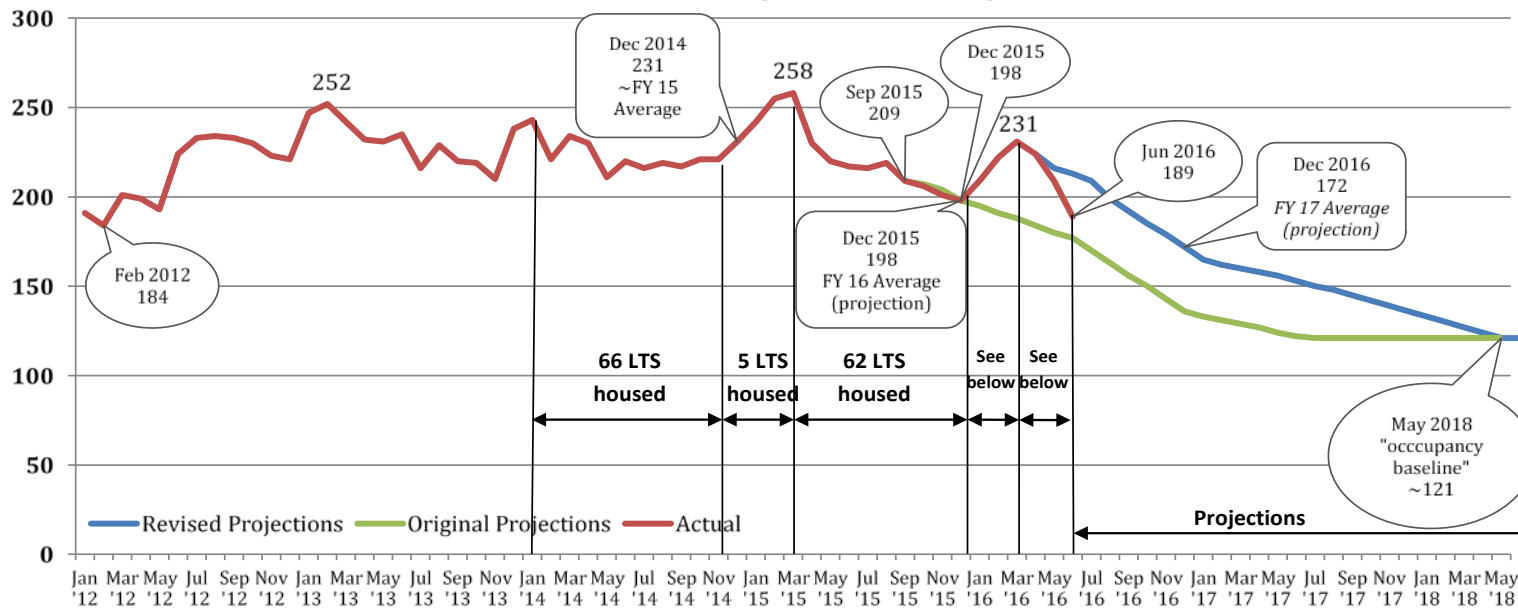
Using data for tracking progress and visualizing projections:

CITY OF PORTLAND
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT
SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION

OXFORD STREET SHELTER & COMMUNITY OVERFLOW

Average Number of Individuals Served On Any Given Night – Per Month

January 2012 - May 2018



Warming Center	Last Used: May 29
PSRC Overflow (75 Beds)	Warming Center/ Chairs used since May 30, 2014:
Oxford Street Shelter	June- 2 July- 3 Aug- 10 Sept- 9 Oct- 12 Nov- 11 Dec- 11 Jan- 23 Feb- 23 Mar- 31 Apr- 6 May- 1 June- 1 July- 2 Aug- 0 Sep-

- The average for February and March 2016 increased compared to January 2016 and did not meet projections. This increase coincided with the continued concerted effort to bring individuals sleeping outside into the shelter (29 individuals in March), new shelter funding requirements, clients presenting at the shelter for verification of homeless status due to HUD's new Chronic Homeless definition (18 individuals in March), and clients returning to shelter due to no-cause evictions from Grant Street and Cumberland Avenue (2 individuals in March).
- The averages have steadily decreased since March 2016, and remained on track with the revised projections. The average for June 2016 was lower than the revised projections.

Using data to demonstrate progress: Statewide progress on LTS

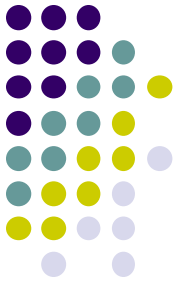


On July 1, 2013, there were 262 LTS in Maine.

On July 1, 2016, there were:

- 87 single adult LTS (down from 122 in 7/15 and 262 in 7/13 – a 67% decrease)
- 17 family member LTS (down from 59 in 7/15 – a 71% decrease)
- Overall, LTS represent 1.5% of the overall population, down from 5% of the population in 2013.

Using data to demonstrate progress: Statewide progress on LTS



FY 2016 Maine Homeless Statistics - HMIS Emergency Shelter Data (7/1/2015 – 6/30/2016)

In Maine, approximately 98% of people who experience homelessness show up in emergency shelters. Two percent or less stay outside or in places unfit for human habitation. Both are counted by HMIS Emergency Shelter Data summarized here.

Statewide total

7,020 Unique clients (vs. 7,679 unique clients in FY 15)

- 66% Individuals
- 33% Families
- 7% Youth 18-24
- <1% Unaccompanied Youth under 18

Changes from previous year

Compared to FY 2015, in FY 2016 there were significant

reductions:

- 12% reduction in people experiencing homelessness (659 less people)
- 63% reduction in the average length of time clients remain in homelessness
- 29% decrease in single adult LTS (35 less) and 71% decrease in family LTS (42 less)

Highlights:

- > **7020 people were homeless in 2016 vs. 7679 people in 2015, a 12% reduction.**
- > **There was a 63% decrease in the average length of stay in homelessness in 2016 vs. 2015.**
- > **There was a 54% decrease in Veteran homelessness: 201 people in 2016 vs. 438 in 2014.**
- > **There was a 67% decrease in single adult Long Term Stayers: 87 people in 2016 vs 262 in 2013.**

Homeless Veterans

There were 201 Homeless Veterans statewide in 2016, compared to 438 in 2014, a 54% decrease.

Age Breakdown

18-30: 10 (5%)
31-45: 53 (26%)
46-64: 129 (64%)
65+: 10 (5%)

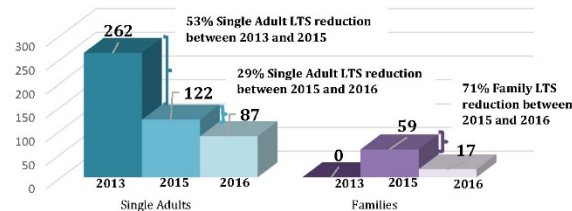
Gender Breakdown

Male: 184 (92%)
Female: 16 (8%)
Transgender: 1 (<1%)

Long Term Stayers (LTS) *see below for history/explanation

There were 104 LTS (single and family LTS) statewide in 2016 compared to 262 in 2013, a 60% decrease. Overall, LTS represent 1.5% of the overall population, down from 5% of the population in 2013.

- 87 single individuals, down from 122 in July of 2015, and 262 in July of 2013 – a 67% decrease.
- 17 people within homeless families, down from 59 in July of 2015 – a 71% decrease.



*Family LTS increased between 2013 and 2015 likely due to sequestration reducing the supply of Section 8.

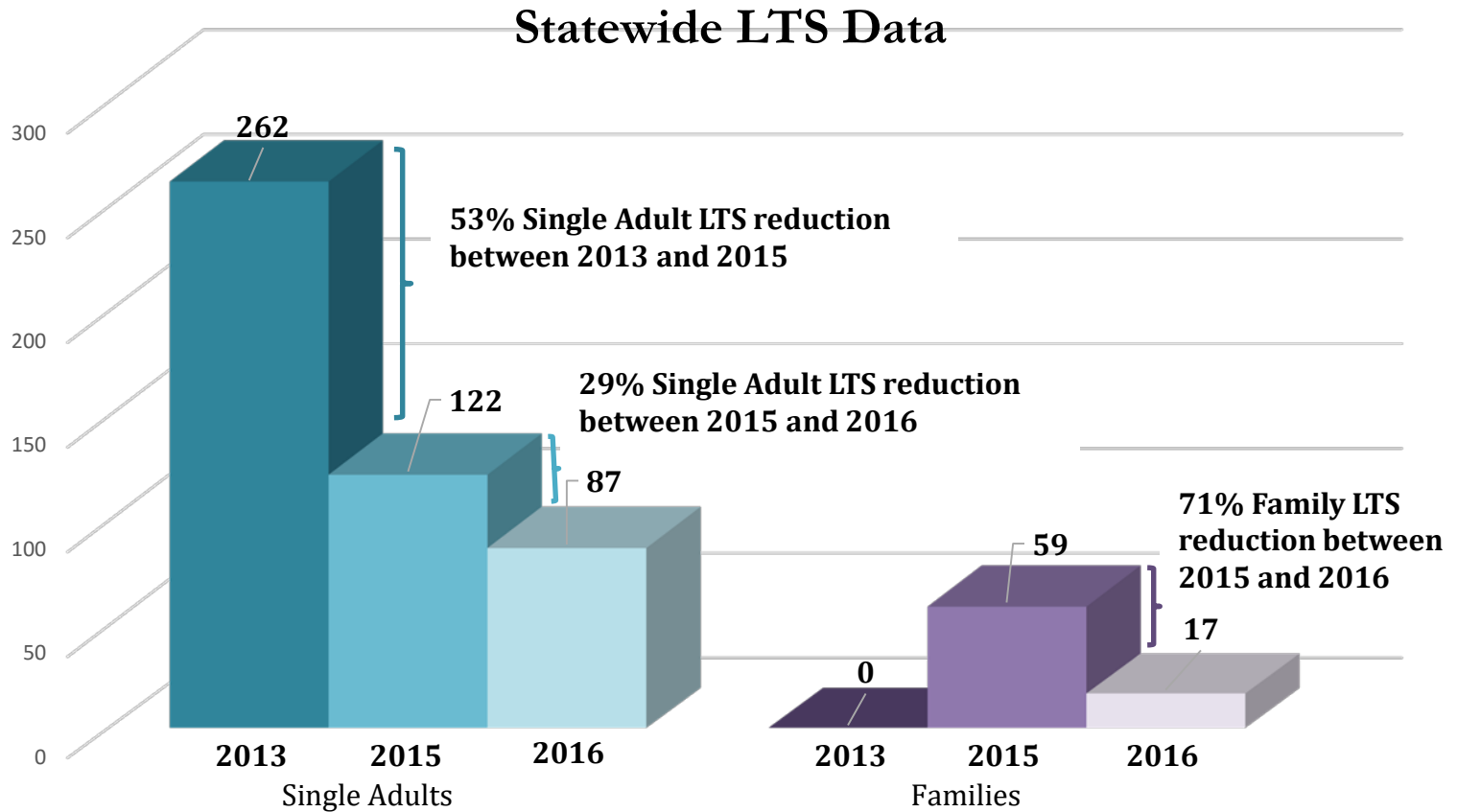
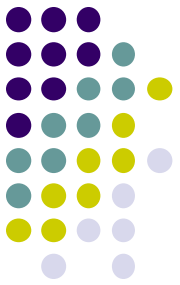
Using data to demonstrate progress: Statewide progress on LTS



Highlights:

- **7020 people were homeless in 2016** vs. 7679 people in 2015, a 12% reduction.
- There was a **63% decrease in the average length of stay** in homelessness in 2016 vs. 2015.
- There was a **54% decrease in Veteran homelessness: 201 people** in 2016 vs. 438 in 2014.
- There was a **67% decrease in single adult Long Term Stayers: 87 people** in 2016 vs 262 in 2013.

Examples of data visualization: Statewide progress on LTS:



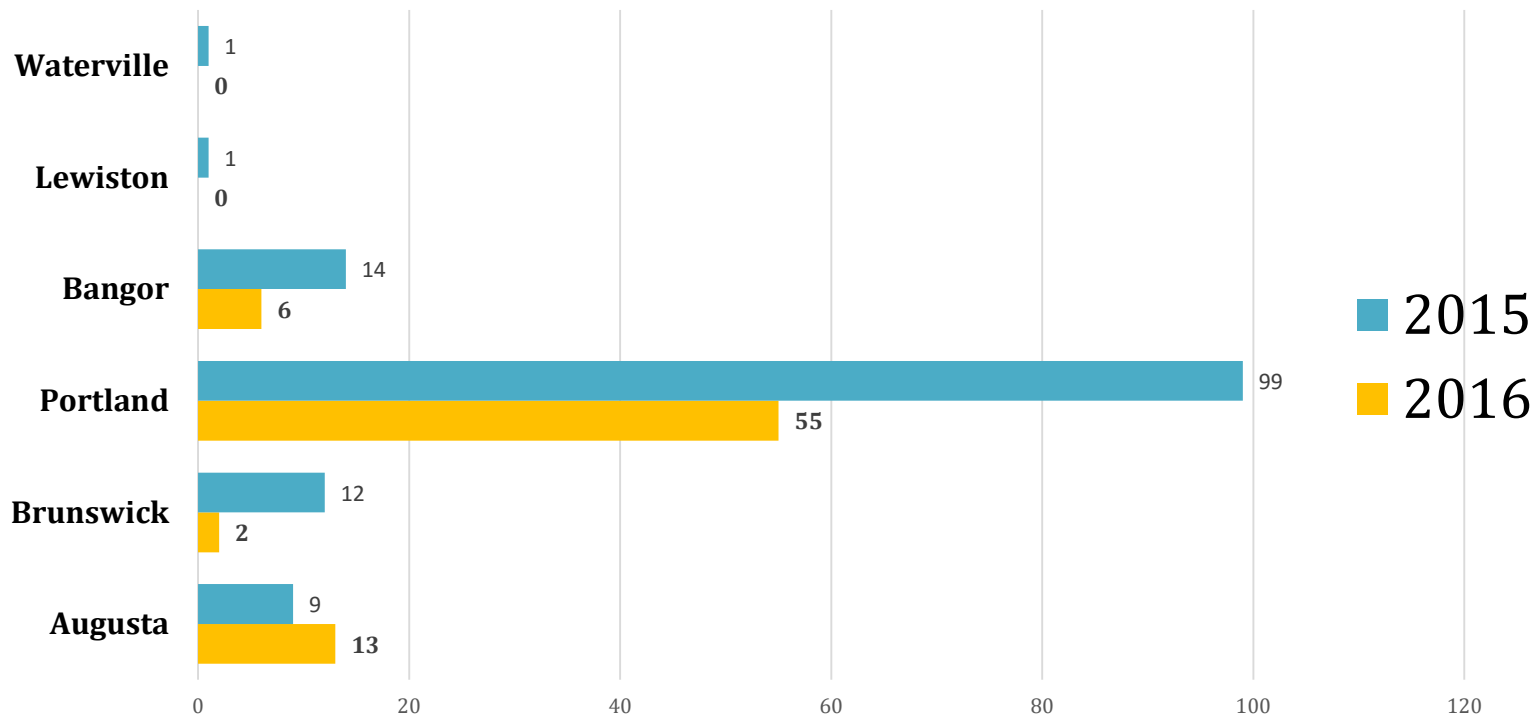
*Family LTS increased between 2013 and 2015 likely due to sequestration reducing the supply of Section 8.

Examples of data visualization: Urban progress on LTS



Data shows that as of June 30th, 2016, there were 76 LTS in urban locations (73% of the total LTS), and for 5 of 6 communities, their numbers are decreasing significantly:

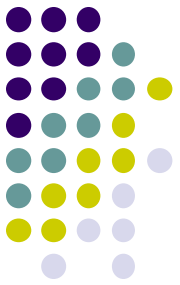
Urban LTS Statistics



Story-Telling through Data Visualization: Conclusions



- Telling stories through data can significantly influence policy on a local, state, and federal level.
- You can use different graphics, different approaches to telling the story, and target different audiences. Use everything you have to grab people's attention, create focus, and maintain focus.
- Show the problem, and the solution.
- Show the baseline data, and annual data thereafter for comparison.
- Cheerlead progress through regular updates – each time more people get on board.



Cullen Ryan
Executive Director

cullen@chomhousing.org

One City Center, 4th Floor
Portland, ME 04101

www.chomhousing.org

(office) 207-879-0347

(fax) 207-879-0348