

An analysis of HELP USA client age profiles from 2017 to 2024

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HELP USA’s transitional housing clients became “younger” between July 2017 and March 2024, based on a least squares regression trend analysis of *monthly* average client ages during this period in Department of Homeless Services (DHS) New York City single adult, family and sanctuary sites (singles and family) as well as New York area family, emergency and domestic violence facilities, managed by the Human Resources Administration (HRA), *and* veterans sites in Las Vegas (**figures 1 & 2**).

The “younger” profile of HELP clients over this period has not been the result of a linear decline in mean ages. The mean ages of clients in DHS significantly increased during the Covid-19 pandemic, initially spiking in March 2020 just before New York City was declared a Covid epicenter, and remaining higher than the trend average until May 2022, when the city began to relax many remote working, masking and shelter-in-place protocols (**figure 1**). Mean ages were significantly higher during the early Covid-19 months of March to ‘Aug’20 among AWARDS clients (**figure 2**). However, the increase in the mean age of these clients occurred before the pandemic, in August 2019.

In this context, this brief quantifies the mean ages of unique clients that HELP served each month from July 2017 to March 2024 to identify related trends in both the CARES system - analogous to DHS clients - and the AWARDS data system, which is analogous to clients who fall under the jurisdiction of HRA and Las Vegas. It further identifies the contributions of client subpopulations to the macro, downward – “younger” – age profile of HELP USA clients in these two systems over the analysis period.

In CARES, these groups include men and women in respective DHS single adult shelters ; men, women and children, respectively, in DHS family shelters; and men, women and children, respectively, in DHS sanctuary sites. In AWARDS these groups include men, women, and children, respectively, in New York area HRA family shelters; adults in New York City HRA emergency shelters; adults in HRA domestic violence shelters; and veterans in Las Vegas sites.

Figure 1: Mean age of CARES clients (July 2017 – March 2024) (source: HELP USA client age dashboard)

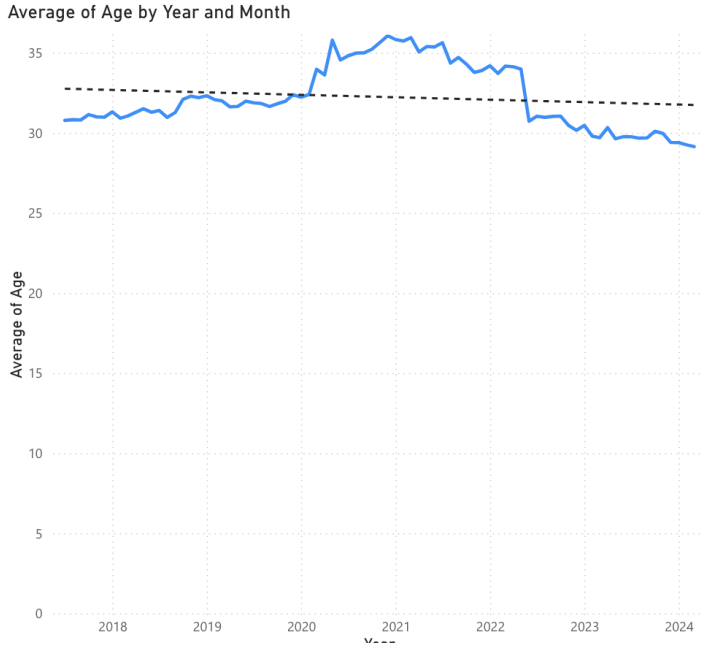
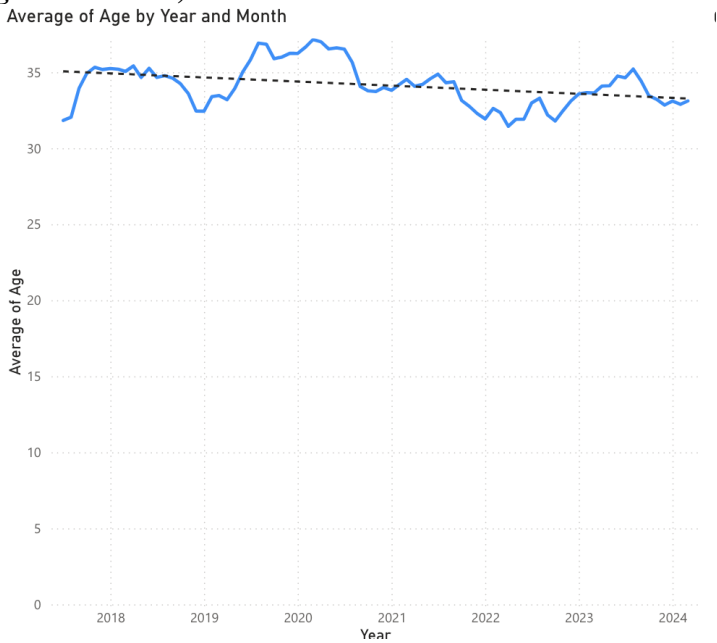


Figure 2: Mean age of AWARDS clients (July 2017 – March 2024) (source: HELP USA client age dashboard)



Quantifying mean ages and trends of clients in CARES and AWARDS systems

Clients in DHS (CARES) sites trended “younger” from July 2017, when the mean age was **30.78**, to March 24, when the average client was **29.14** years old (**table 1**). Younger mean ages for consecutive months after May 2022, the ostensible end of the pandemic, to March ’24 contributed to the “younger” age profile of CARES clients from July ’17 to March ’24 (CARES) (**table 1**).

Table 1: CARES – All Clients

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	trending
mean age	30.78	31.4	31.88	34.81	35.63	31.04	29.75	29.14	younger
total	4569	4567	4645	3899	3638	3468	3646	3807	

In AWARDS sites, clients were, on average, at least 35 years old for consecutive months from Nov ’17 to June ’18 and June ’19 to Aug ’20, and below 33 years old between Oct’21 and June ’22. Considering these variances, AWARDS clients were also seen to have become younger between July ’17, when the mean age was **31.83**, and March’24, when the mean age was **33.11** (**table 2**).

Table 2: AWARDS – All clients

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	trending
mean age(n)	31.83	34.66	35.82	36.52	34.87	32.98	34.63	33.11	younger
total	641	688	635	506	507	587	557	550	

Contributions of subpopulations to the “younger” client profile from July 2017 to March 2024

The DHS population became younger over the analysis period because, as one may imagine, most of its sub-populations - 52% to 67% of its clients (**table 1a; Appendix 1**) - became “younger” over this period.

These included women at assessment sites, who were an average 36.97 years old in March ’24 and 41.66 in July ’17; women in family sites - a mean 30.53 years old in March ’17 and 31.4 years old in July ’17 – and their children, who comprised about one-fourth of CARES clients and were 6.07 years of age in July ’17, 6.28 in July’19 (before the pandemic), and 5.5 years of age in March ’24. (**tables 1e, 1f, and 1i**).

Unlike adults, children served by HELP started becoming “younger” *during* the Covid-19 pandemic, and particularly from March ’20 to July ’21.

Table 1e: Women in families (CARES)

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	trending
mean age	31.4	31.1	31.45	30.86	30.2	30.26	29.86	30.53	younger
sub total	832	814	802	556	536	579	565	551	
% total	18%	18%	17%	14%	15%	17%	15%	14%	

Table 1f: Women in assessment facilities (CARES)

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	trending
mean age	41.66	41.91	41.22	39.67	39.47	36.48	38.39	36.97	younger
sub total	975	1037	875	694	564	446	552	525	
% total	21%	23%	19%	18%	16%	13%	15%	14%	

Table 1i: Children in families

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	trending
mean age	6.07(1232)	6.04(1206)	6.28(624)	5.82(1241)	5.23(776)	5.18(839)	5.37(800)	5.5(773)	younger
sub total	1232	1206	1241	863	776	839	800	773	
% total	27%	26%	27%	22%	21%	24%	22%	20%	

Scholars, such as Marybeth Shinn and Jill Khadduri, have found that young children, particularly infants, have long exhibited the highest risk to entering shelters nationally. The trend of younger children entering HELPs system indicate that the public health and macroeconomic crisis of the pandemic potentially further eroded the ability of poor families with childcare responsibilities to evade homelessness. We must also note that children in HELP’s sanctuary sites became “younger” from March ’23 to March ’24. Multiple scholars, such as Karen Jacobsen, have also noted that distress migration exhibits yet another form of high vulnerability that undermines the housing security of young children.

Conversely, single men and women, respectively at DHS sites became older from July ’17 to March ’24 (**tables 1b and 1c**). The mean ages of single women, particularly, spiked during the Covid-19 period of March ’20 to July ’21 - being at least 41 for consecutive months between July ’20 to Aug ’21 – and contributing to the increased total mean age of the DHS population.

Table 1b: Single adult men (CARES)

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	trending
mean age	45.69	46.16	46.77	45.81	46.7	47.34	47.52	47.45	older
sub total	1048	1054	1317	1384	1351	1203	923	917	
% total	23%	23%	28%	35%	37%	35%	25%	24%	

Table 1c: Single adult women (CARES)

	Single adult								

	females - Table 1c								
	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	trending
mean age	37.06	38.27	38.58	41.52	43.22	41.01	41.76	41.17	older
sub total	211	219	219	271	272	201	276	280	
% total	5%	5%	5%	7%	7%	6%	8%	7%	

The total AWARDS population became younger over the analysis period because the overwhelming majority of its subpopulations did so (**tables 2 c-g in text; table 2 a in Appendix 2**), including women at family sites, who comprised about one-fourth of AWARDS clients and were 33.75 years of age in June '23 and 34.57 years of age in July '17 (data for March '24 was unavailable); their children, who also comprised about one-fourth of these clients and were 5.91 years old in March '24 and 9.85 in July '17; veterans (54.57 years old in March '24 and 58.63 in July '17); adults in emergency shelters (40.15 in March '24 and 47.19 in July '17); and adults in domestic violence shelters (34.61 years old in March '24 and 35.9 in July '17).

Table 2c: Women in families (AWARDS)

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jun	23-Jun	24-Mar	trending
mean age	34.57	34.69	34.37	35.81	33.49	32.17	33.75	na	younger
sub total	176	173	155	123	122	160	126	na	
% total	27%	25%	24%	24%	24%	27%	24%		

Table 2d: Children in families (AWARDS)

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	
mean age	9.85	9.55	9.32	7.64	6.46	5.94	6.63	5.91	younger
sub total	197	178	153	113	116	145	125	131	
% total	31%	26%	24%	22%	23%	25%	22%	24%	

Table 2e: Veterans (AWARDS)

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	
mean age	58.63	57.93	58.1	59.33	58.73	55.69	56.38	54.57	younger
sub total	89	151	163	123	128	147	148	143	
% total	14%	22%	26%	24%	25%	25%	27%	26%	

Table 2f: Adults at emergency sites (AWARDS)

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	
mean age	47.19	46.41	44.04	43.3	41.5	41.96	41.23	40.15	younger
sub total	83	83	78	67	68	78	75	68	
% total	13%	12%	12%	13%	13%	13%	13%	12%	

Table 2g: Adults at domestic violence sites (AWARDS)

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	younger
mean age	35.9	35.07	34.86	38.54	34.84	32.11	31.61	34.61	
sub total	49	50	43	39	38	47	41	33	
% total	8%	7%	7%	8%	7%	8%	7%	6%	

Appendix 1: CARES Tables (source: HELP USA client age dashboard)

Tale 1: CARES – All clients

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	trending
mean age	30.78	31.4	31.88	34.81	35.63	31.04	29.75	29.14	younger
total	4569	4567	4645	3899	3638	3468	3646	3807	

Table 1a: Share of CARES populations trending younger, older or exhibiting no significant change (“no change”) (read with tables 1b-1j)

period	younger	older	no change
17-Jul	67%	28%	6%
18-Jul	67%	28%	6%
19-Jul	63%	33%	4%
20-Jul	54%	42%	3%
21-Jul	52%	45%	4%
22-Jul	54%	40%	5%
23-Jul	57%	36%	7%
24-Mar	56%	36%	7%

Table 1b: Single adult men (CARES)

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	trending
mean age	45.69	46.16	46.77	45.81	46.7	47.34	47.52	47.45	older
sub total	1048	1054	1317	1384	1351	1203	923	917	
% total	23%	23%	28%	35%	37%	35%	25%	24%	

Table 1c: Single adult women (CARES)

	Single adult females - Table 1c								
	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	trending
mean age	37.06	38.27	38.58	41.52	43.22	41.01	41.76	41.17	older
sub total	211	219	219	271	272	201	276	280	
% total	5%	5%	5%	7%	7%	6%	8%	7%	

Table 1d: Men in families (CARES)

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	trending
mean age	33.33	32.73	32.3	32.72	31.81	31.44	32.36	32.70	no change
sub total	278	253	201	129	134	187	169	157	
% total	6%	6%	4%	3%	4%	5%	5%	4%	

Table 1e: Women in families (CARES)

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	trending
mean age	31.4	31.1	31.45	30.86	30.2	30.26	29.86	30.53	younger
sub total	832	814	802	556	536	579	565	551	
% total	18%	18%	17%	14%	15%	17%	15%	14%	

Table 1f: Women in assessment facilities (CARES)

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	trending
mean age	41.66	41.91	41.22	39.67	39.47	36.48	38.39	36.97	younger
sub total	975	1037	875	694	564	446	552	525	
% total	21%	23%	19%	18%	16%	13%	15%	14%	

Table 1g: Men in sanctuary facilities

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-May	trending
mean age	na	na	na	na	na	na	31.99	31.76	no change
sub total	na	na	na	na	na	na	83	125	
% total	na	na	na	na	na	na	2%	3%	

Table 1h: Women in sanctuary facilities

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-May	trending
mean age	na	na	na	na	na	na	31.34	32.49	older
sub total	na	na	na	na	na	na	99	177	
% total	na	na	na	na	na	na	3%	5%	

Table 1i: Children in families

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	trending
mean age	6.07(1232)	6.04(1206)	6.28(624)	5.82(1241)	5.23(776)	5.18(839)	5.37(800)	5.5(773)	younger
sub total	1232	1206	1241	863	776	839	800	773	
% total	27%	26%	27%	22%	21%	24%	22%	20%	

Table 1j: Children in sanctuary facilities

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-May	trending
mean age	na	na	na	na	na	na	7.87	7.59	younger
sub total	na	na	na	na	na	na	158	281	
% total	na	na	na	na	na	na	4%	7%	

Appendix 2: AWARDS tables

Table 2: AWARDS – All clients

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	trending
mean age(n)	31.83	34.66	35.82	36.52	34.87	32.98	34.63	33.11	younger

total	641	688	635	506	507	587	557	550	
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Table 2a: Share of AWARDS populations trending younger, older

period	younger	older
17-Jul	93%	7%
18-Jul	92%	9%
19-Jul	93%	8%
20-Jul	92%	8%
21-Jul	93%	7%
22-Jun	96%	4%
23-Jun	94%	6%

Table 2b: Men in families (AWARDS)

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jun	23-Jun	24-Mar	trending
mean age	32.15	34.41	36.91	38.03	34.12	35.82	37	na	older
sub total	46	61	43	38	33	22	30	na	
%total	7%	9%	7%	8%	7%	4%	6%	na	

Table 2c: Women in families (AWARDS)

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jun	23-Jun	24-Mar	trending
mean age	34.57	34.69	34.37	35.81	33.49	32.17	33.75	na	younger
sub total	176	173	155	123	122	160	126	na	
% total	27%	25%	24%	24%	24%	27%	24%		

Table 2d: Children in families (AWARDS)

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	
mean age	9.85	9.55	9.32	7.64	6.46	5.94	6.63	5.91	younger
sub total	197	178	153	113	116	145	125	131	
% total	31%	26%	24%	22%	23%	25%	22%	24%	

Table 2e: Veterans (AWARDS)

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	
mean age	58.63	57.93	58.1	59.33	58.73	55.69	56.38	54.57	younger
sub total	89	151	163	123	128	147	148	143	
% total	14%	22%	26%	24%	25%	25%	27%	26%	

Table 2f: Adults at emergency sites (AWARDS)

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	
mean age	47.19	46.41	44.04	43.3	41.5	41.96	41.23	40.15	younger
sub total	83	83	78	67	68	78	75	68	
% total	13%	12%	12%	13%	13%	13%	13%	12%	

Table 2g: Adults at domestic violence sites (AWARDS)

	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	20-Jul	21-Jul	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Mar	younger
mean age	35.9	35.07	34.86	38.54	34.84	32.11	31.61	34.61	
sub total	49	50	43	39	38	47	41	33	
% total	8%	7%	7%	8%	7%	8%	7%	6%	