



# THE IMPACT

## OF THE HOMESTRETCH MODEL

Sponsored by Homestretch. Independent analysis  
and report created by The MITRE Corporation and Ecosystems  
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# Overview of Homestretch

The mission of Homestretch is to empower families experiencing homelessness to secure permanent housing and attain the skills, knowledge and hope to achieve self-sufficiency.

Homestretch provides housing and creates individualized plans for each family based on their skills, needs, and aspirations, with the aim of equipping each family to increase their skills and income sufficiently to escape homelessness and poverty for good. Graduation occurs when a family can afford to move into permanent housing on the income they earn.

## Factors that lead to a family becoming homeless



Lack of skills and education sufficient to support a family



Chronic physical or mental illness



Social isolation



High debt and bad credit



Fleeing partner violence or violence in other countries



Legal or immigration barriers



Death of loved ones



Histories of institutionalization or substance abuse

Families coming into Homestretch tend to have a combination of problems, further hindering their ability to cope. These families need a safe environment where they can begin to resolve each of these issues at a pace that fits their circumstances.

# Homestretch is a rigorous program with high expectations for what each family can achieve if offered the right resources and opportunities

## Homestretch Services include:

- Intensive case management
- Employment center to help identify career paths
- Secure scholarships for education and training
- Tenant education
- Housing
- Financial literacy program (debt reduction, credit repair, savings plans and budgeting)
- Therapy & access to mental health
- Medical services
- Wide array of services for children including a nursery and licensed preschool.

Many homeless programs focus on a single goal: housing, whether temporary or permanent. The aim of Homestretch is broader—to help each family acquire the skills, knowledge and hope to achieve lasting self-sufficiency. If a family can ascend out of poverty, their risk of returning to homelessness is greatly diminished. This tailored approach means families tend to stay longer in Homestretch than other programs (average two-plus years), but they also tend to make far greater progress. This approach has earned Homestretch a reputation for exceptional results.

# Why an Impact Study?


Homestretch aims to ensure that every family that comes to Homestretch has the opportunity to change the trajectory of their lives and is never again at risk of homelessness. This means Homestretch needs to measure our impact on every family through data on income, housing stability, debt, credit, health, and other critical matters, and that data must include how well families fare years after leaving Homestretch.

The reason Homestretch focuses so heavily on education, employment, debt reduction, savings plans, and improved health, is our determination to remove people not just from homelessness but from poverty. The only way to have an impact on a family's likelihood of future stability is to acquire more education and skills and increase their income, help them learn to manage their finances, retain their health, and to build strong social networks. The only way to know if we have been effective in these efforts is to track the families over a sufficient period of time after they have left our care.



# How Do Most Programs for the Homeless Measure Success?

Very few nonprofit or government-operated programs for the homeless track long-term outcomes. A search of websites and annual reports of nonprofit and governmental organizations serving individuals and families experiencing homelessness usually report only short-term outcomes, such as numbers of people served, or numbers of beds, meals, or individual services provided, focusing on volume or scale instead of lasting impact. For example, organizations receiving government funds usually report on numbers of people placed into housing using government-issued, temporary vouchers, but they do not report on whether those families housed using temporary vouchers manage to sustain their homes once the subsidies end. If most subsidies are temporary, and there is no evidence that the families are able to obtain employment, increase their income, acquire skills or education, or build savings and credit, is it safe to ask, “how will the families sustain their housing after the temporary subsidies end?”

A photograph of a woman and a young girl in a living room. The woman is sitting on a light-colored armchair, looking at a laptop. The girl is sitting on a sofa, reaching for a stuffed animal. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting an evening or indoor lighting.

**“How will the families sustain their housing after the temporary subsidies end?”**

# How Do Most Programs for the Homeless Measure Success?



This approach tends to give an impression of success when, in fact, many families placed into temporary housing lose that housing when the temporary subsidies end. For example, a 2018 report by the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless called “Set Up to Fail,” tracking homeless families that were rapidly rehoused in Washington DC, showed that 50% of families receiving such vouchers lost their housing when the subsidies expired.

The only other reliable source for comparison is the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Family Options Study, issued in 2015 and updated in 2018, which tracked families placed into housing for up to 78 months. This study by Homestretch also tracked graduates for up to 78 months. Also, by way of comparison, the response rate among families in the HUD Study was 48.7%, whereas the response rate for Homestretch graduates was 67%.

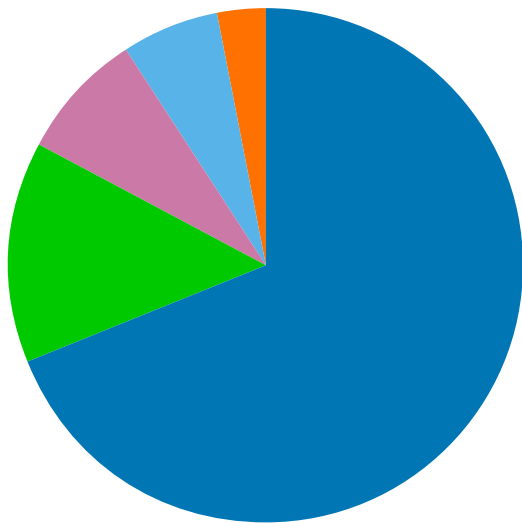
Notations will be provided comparing Homestretch’s outcomes to the 2018 HUD Family Options Study and the 2017 Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless study, “Set Up to Fail.”



**50%**  
**of families**  
**under Rapid**  
**Rehousing lost**  
**their housing**

when the subsidies expired

# Q1 - What is your housing status?

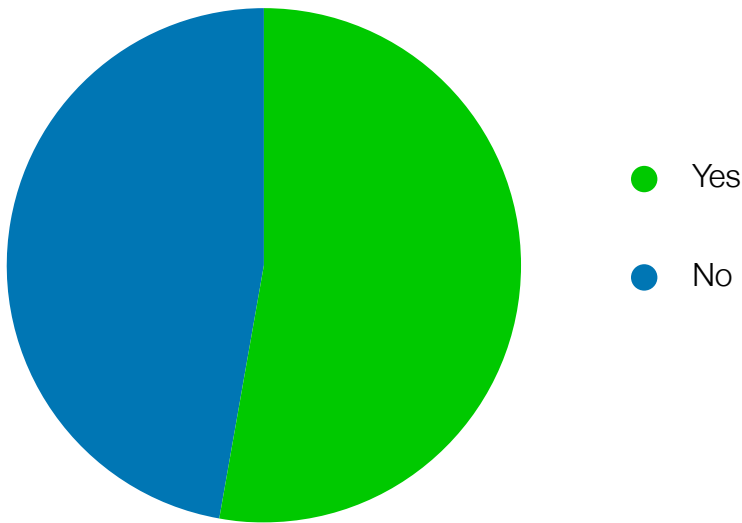


- I rent my own home
- Other (please specify)
- I own my own home
- I live in a home rented or owned by a friend, relative, or someone who offered me housing
- I live in a shelter or other temporary housing

Answer Choices	Responses	
I rent my own home	69%	25
Other (please specify)	14%	5
I own my own home	8%	3
I live in a home rented or owned by a friend, relative, or someone who offered me housing	6%	2
I live in a shelter or other temporary housing	3%	1
I live in a home rented or owned by my partner/significant other	0%	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>36</b>



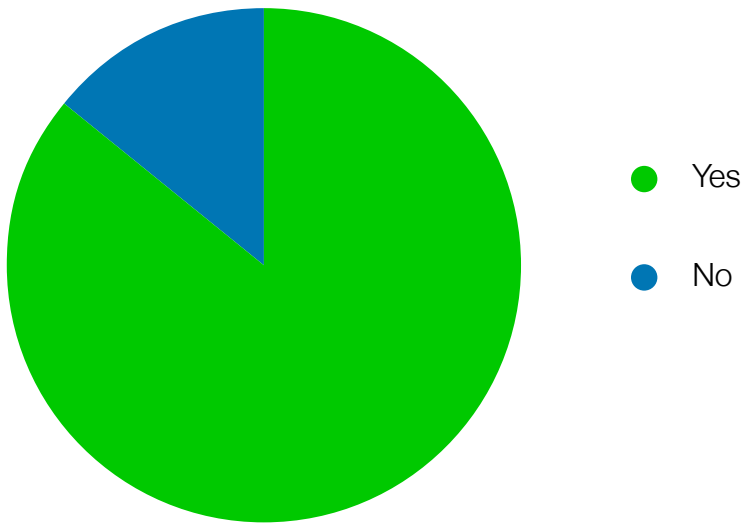
## Q2 - Do you receive a government subsidy?



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	53%	19
No	47%	17
<b>Total</b>		<b>36</b>

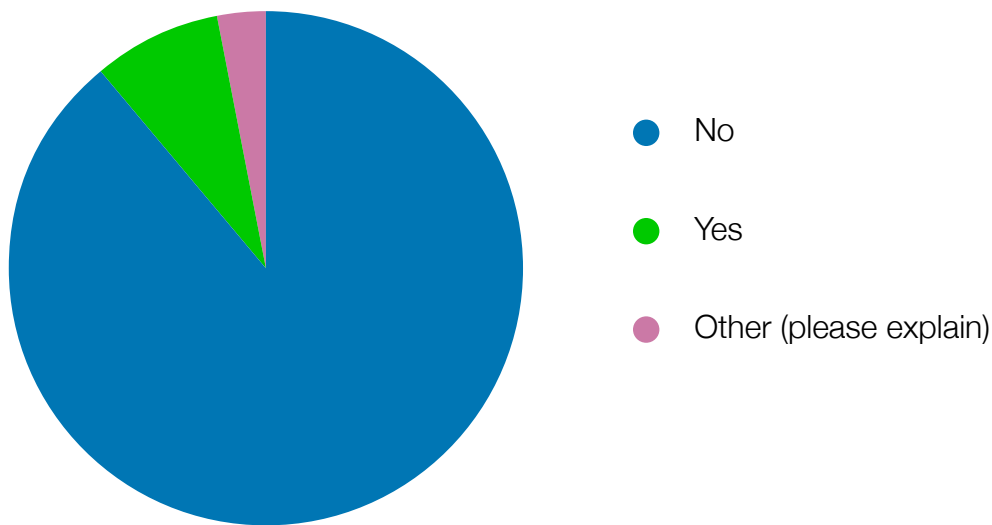
**Note:** For comparison, the HUD Family Options Study reports that 50% of families rely on government subsidies to remain safely housed, whereas above the 88% of Homestretch graduates have made enough financial progress that they have moved into market rate housing.

# Q3 - Do you feel safe in your own home?



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	86%	31
No	14%	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>36</b>

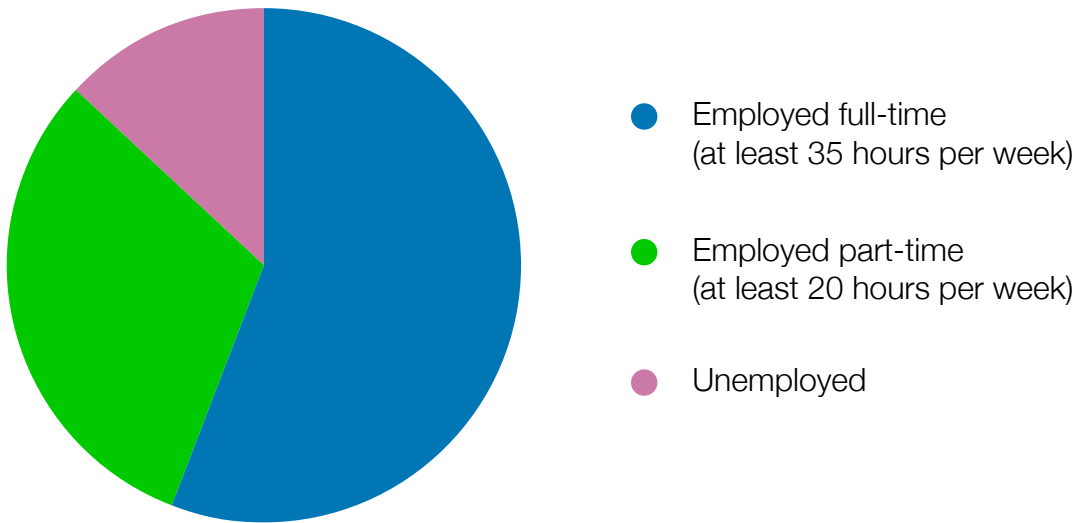
# Q4 - Since leaving Homestretch, have you experienced homelessness?



Answer Choices	Responses	
No	88%	32
Yes	8%	3
Other (please explain)	3%	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>36</b>

**Note:** For comparison, the Washington Legal Clinic’s 2017 study, “Set Up to Fail”, that tracked families who had been rapidly rehoused, showed that 50% of families housed by the DC government lost their housing once their subsidies ended. This study is notable because the average cost of housing in Washington DC and Northern Virginia are comparable. Housing affordability is a major factor in a low-income family’s ability to sustain housing. As a comparison, Homestretch’s own success rate was 88%.

# Q5 - Are you currently unemployed?

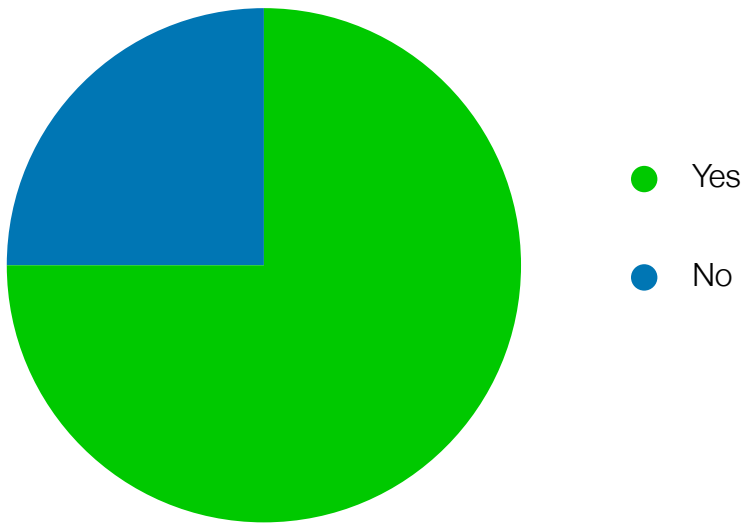


Answer Choices	Responses	
Employed full-time (at least 35 hours per week)	56%	20
Employed part-time (at least 20 hours per week)	31%	11
Unemployed	13%	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>36</b>

**Note:** For comparison, the 2018 HUD Family Options Study showed that the vast majority of families receiving vouchers for housing actually experienced *reductions in income* once they secured housing subsidies. After 78 months, a mere 51.5% of families tracked by HUD were employed either full or part time, while 87% of Homestretch graduates were employed either full or part time.

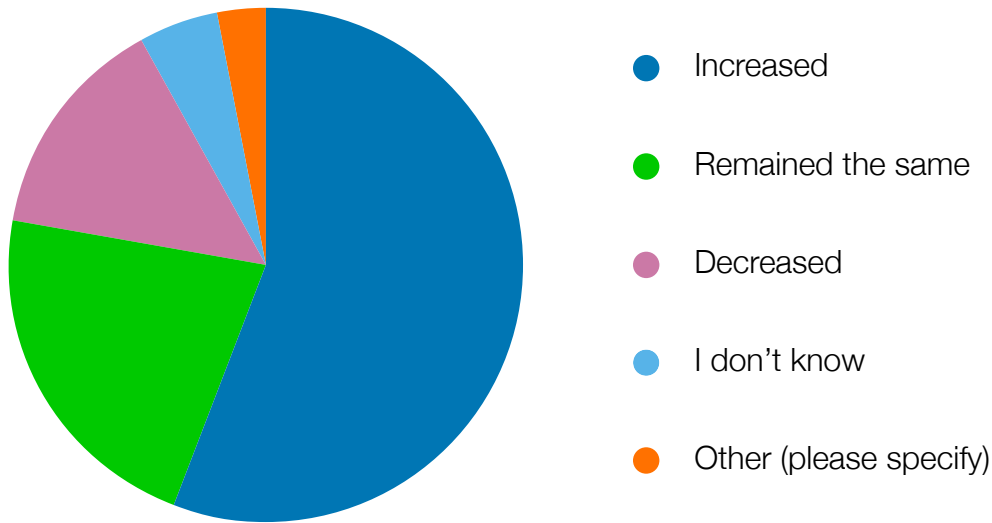
It is also important to note that a figure of 13% unemployment among Homestretch graduates can be interpreted in various ways. Over 50% of all Homestretch families have a family member with a documented disability. Some of these disabilities are so severe that they limit or inhibit a parent's ability to work either full or part time. In some cases, a family may rely on a combination of government benefits and a housing voucher to sustain stable housing, despite being unemployed.

# Q6 - Is your income enough to pay your rent?



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	75%	27
No	25%	9
<b>Total</b>		<b>36</b>

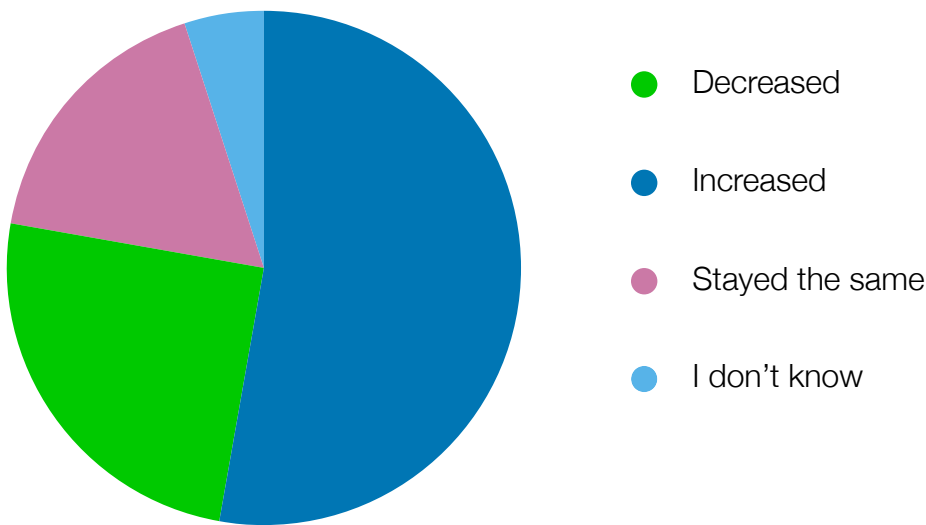
# Q7 - Has your income changed?



Answer Choices	Responses	
Increased	56%	20
Remained the same	22%	8
Decreased	14%	5
I don't know	5%	2
Other (please specify)	3%	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>36</b>

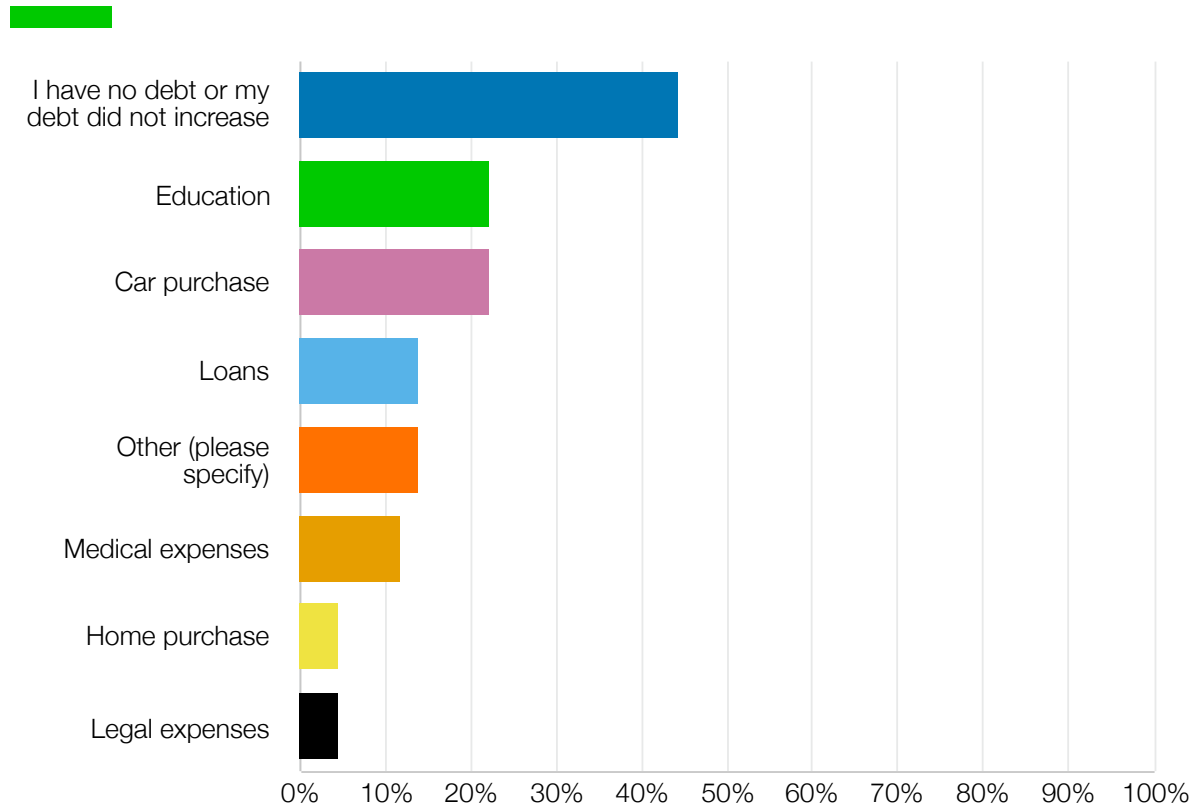
**Note:** Once again, for comparison, the HUD Family Options Study showed that a mere 5% of families receiving housing vouchers increased their income, and over half experienced a reduction in income.

# Q8 - Compared to when you were in Homestretch, has your debt changed?



Answer Choices	Responses	
Decreased	53%	19
Increased	25%	9
Stayed the same	17%	6
I don't know	5%	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>36</b>

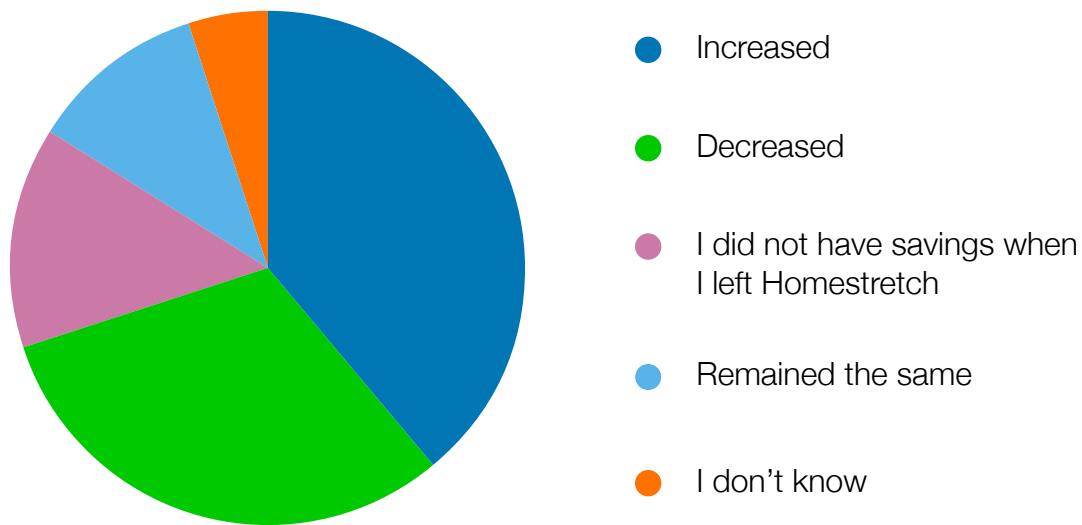
# Q9 - If your debt has increased, check all that apply



Answer Choices	Responses	
I have no debt or my debt did not increase	44.44%	16
Education	22.22%	8
Car purchase	22.22%	8
Loans	13.89%	5
Other (please specify)	13.89%	5
Medical expenses	11.11%	4
Home purchase	2.78%	1
Legal expenses	2.78%	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>36</b>

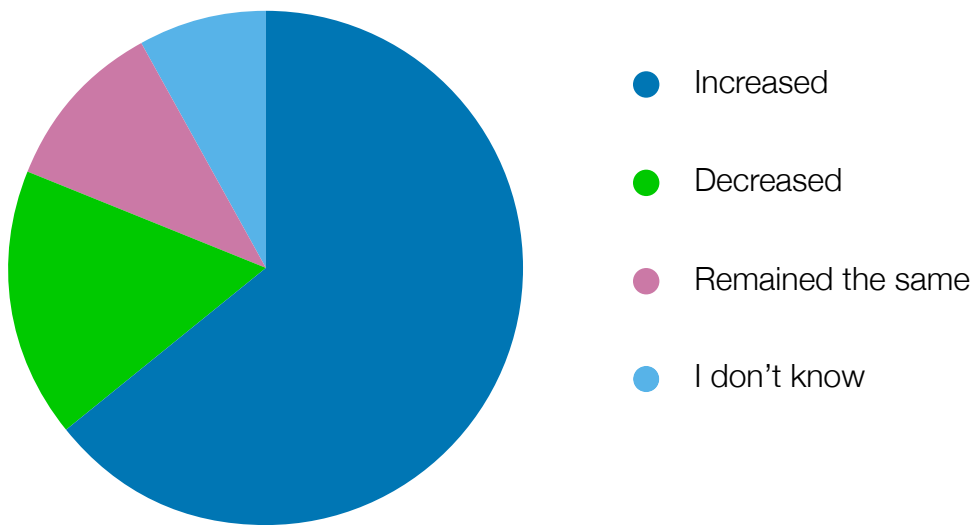


# Q10 - Compared to when you were in Homestretch, has your savings changed?



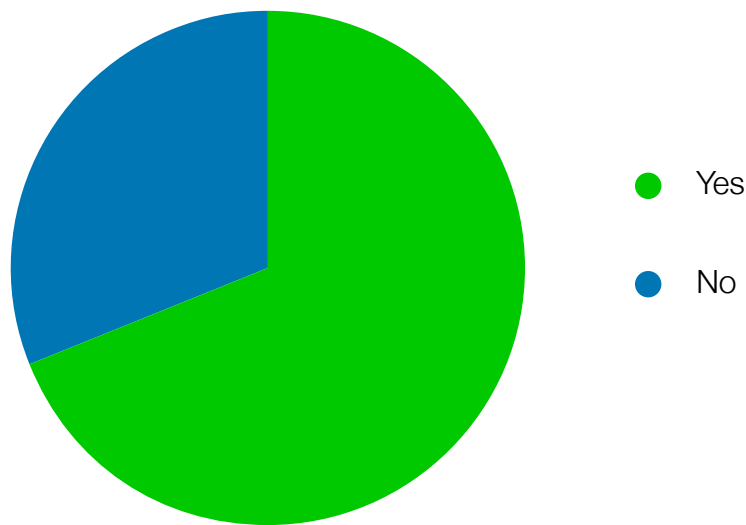
Answer Choices	Responses	
Increased	39%	14
Decreased	31%	11
I did not have savings when I left Homestretch	14%	5
Remained the same	11%	4
I don't know	5%	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>36</b>

# Q11 - Compared to when you were in Homestretch, has your credit score changed?



Answer Choices	Responses	
Increased	64%	23
Decreased	17%	6
Remained the same	11%	4
I don't know	8%	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>36</b>

# Q12 - Have you attended school/classes/training program since leaving Homestretch?



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	69%	25
No	31%	11
Other (please explain)	0%	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>36</b>



# The Impact Stories

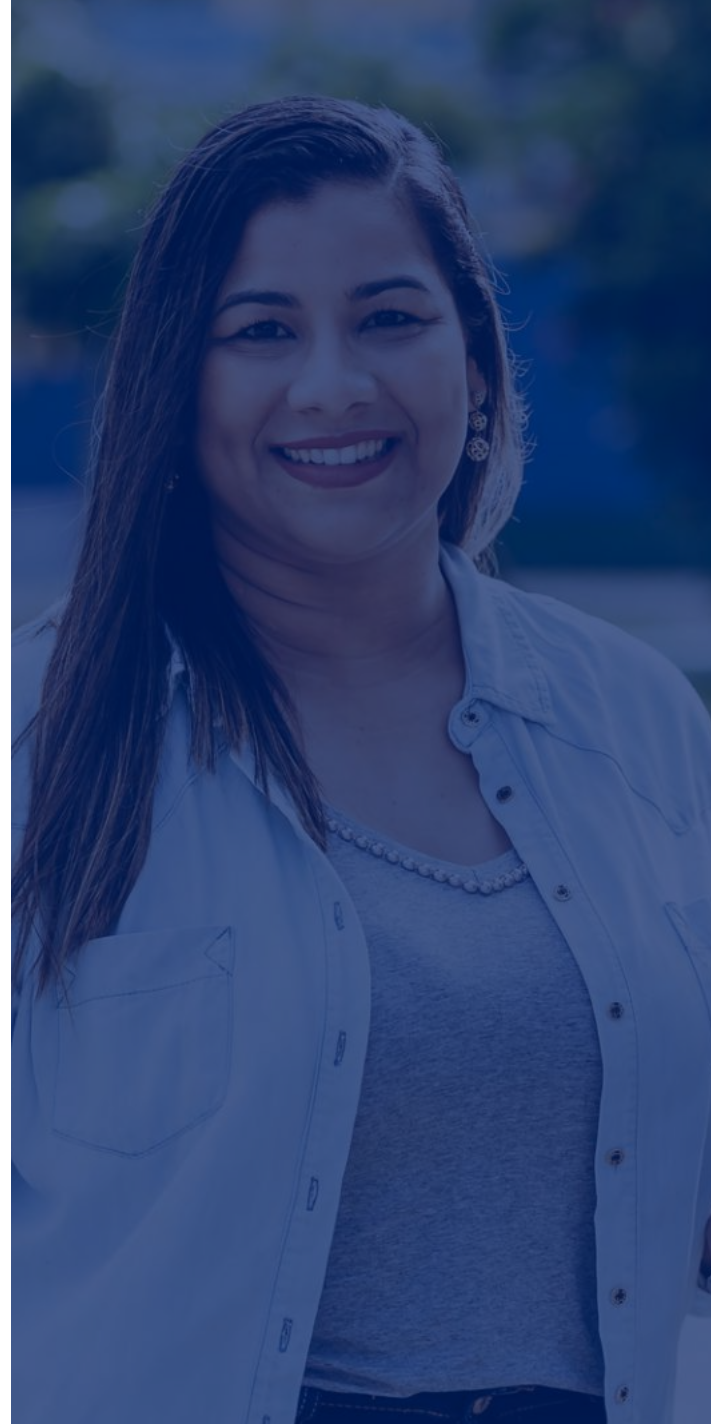
# Amanda



Amanda came to Homestretch with her children as a victim of domestic violence after fleeing from her abuser. During her first interview, she could not begin to describe the depth of the violence, or the horror that affected her and her children. The situation became worse and worse over time, and she was once beaten so badly that she was left in a coma.

Amanda recalled, “To escape him, I ended up becoming homeless. This is not uncommon; most mothers with children who become homeless are fleeing from domestic violence. I had to go into hiding to escape not only him but his family, who threatened revenge on me if I pressed charges, which I did. Out of fear for my life, I recanted my testimony in court, which led to the prosecutor charging me with giving false testimony. So, now I was not only homeless, and recovering from terrible physical assaults, but I had a criminal charge as well.

In Homestretch, I found the strength to put the pieces of my life back together. They hid me during the trial, which I won, and he was sent away for over fifty-five years, the longest sentence for domestic violence in the state’s history. At Homestretch I not only found a safe place to live for me and my children, I also received therapy and regained a sense of hope. Homestretch helped me pay off a huge portion of the debts I accumulated while with my abuser. I was able to sustain a good job and identify a new career. Homestretch helped me with scholarships to pursue a career in social work. I earned my master’s degree in social work from the University of Southern California.



**“I have turned the major crisis of my life into a cause, to help others who were trapped in abusive relationships like mine”**

  
Amanda

Since graduating from Homestretch, I have served as a domestic abuse advocate for the military in charge of training base commanders and incoming soldiers, as a Domestic Violence Court Specialist in a Family Justice Center, I have served on task forces, chaired and co-chaired subcommittees including the NOVA Human Trafficking Regional Task Force Victim Services Committee and the Domestic Violence Network Community Outreach Committee. I have turned the major crisis of my life into a cause, to help others who were trapped in abusive relationships like mine, and to advocate for change in the criminal justice system so abuse survivors are not victimized a second time by the system ostensibly designed to protect them.”

Through this whole process, Homestretch has been a mainstay for Amanda, helping her in countless ways, even after graduation from its program. People come to Homestretch in crisis, they may feel broken and devoid of hope, but Homestretch sees you as someone of infinite potential. The whole purpose of the Homestretch program is to make an investment in people in need that is life changing.

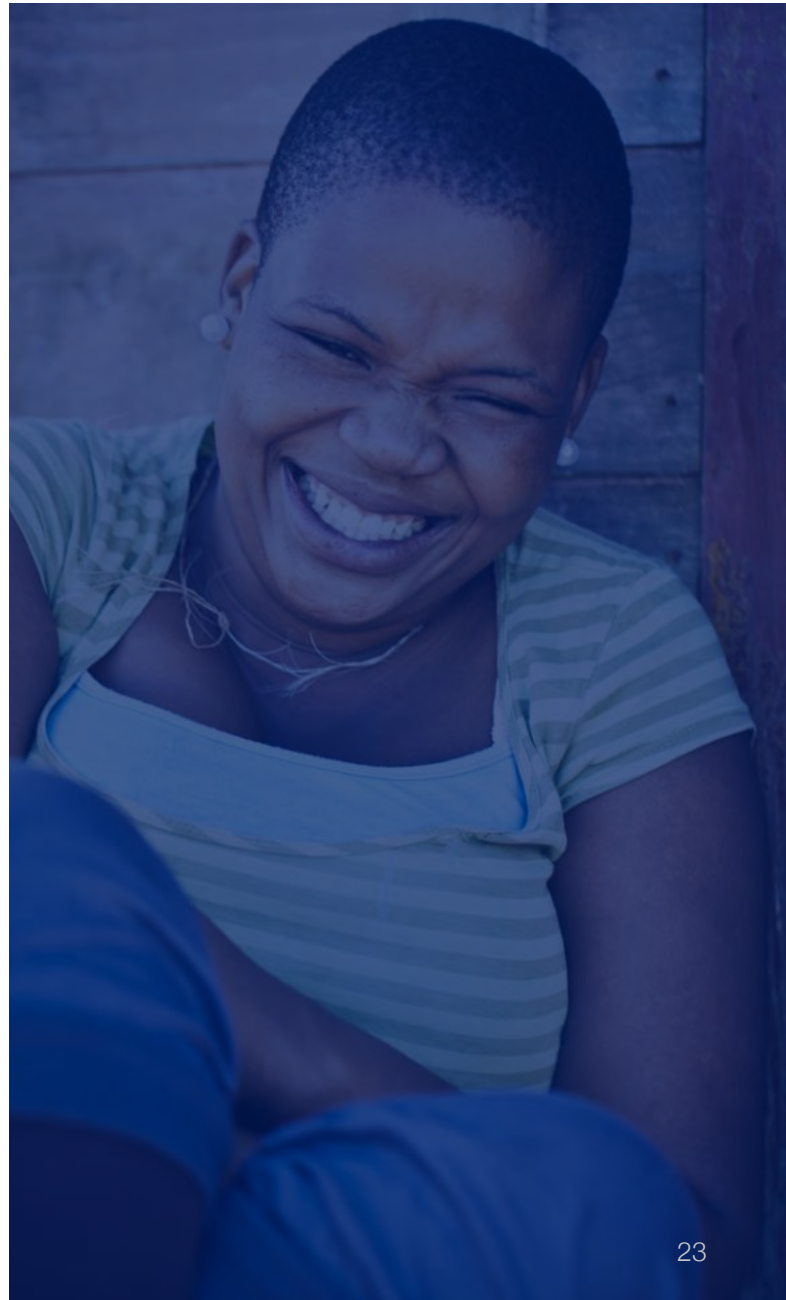
# Claudia


Claudia came to America as a fifteen-year-old bride. The only person she knew in America was her husband. Everything was good for the first few weeks, but then he became terribly abusive. Once Claudia's daughter was born, she grew even more scared, for her daughter's safety as well as her own. She had to hide in a nearby cemetery on cold nights when her husband would have his friends over because once they started drinking, anything could happen, and it was always bad.

Finally, she took her daughter and fled. She stayed in a basement apartment until the landlord got too friendly. For a while, she and her daughter lived in her car, until it became too cold. They ended up in a shelter, and from there they were referred to Homestretch.

Claudia says, "The first thing Homestretch did for us was give us a HOME. Not a room, not a basement, a motel, or somebody else's house, but a safe place that we could call home. I still had to pay rent, but only a small portion based on my income. As a single mom I can't explain the relief you feel when you can give your daughter a safe home,

somewhere she can be herself. I was able to meet positive people, learn new things, and become more confident in my work. My divorce caused some serious credit problems, and Homestretch helped me fix my credit, pay off my debts, build up savings, and complete my taxes.





**The first thing  
Homestretch did for us  
was give us a HOME.  
Not a room, not a  
basement, a motel, or  
somebody else's house,  
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could call home.**

  
Claudia

Homestretch helped me enroll in an accounting program on a full scholarship! This advanced my career and got me a better job. They helped my daughter take gymnastics, soccer, and swimming, whatever sport she wanted. I made so many positive changes to my life that, within two years of leaving Homestretch, I became a first-time home buyer. I used Homestretch as a springboard to a beautiful new life. And now, in my present job as a realtor, I help other people move into their dream homes. I am also now a proud member of the Homestretch Board of Directors.”

Colin Powell, a former United States Secretary of State, once said, “There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.” That is exactly what Homestretch teaches families they serve – how to prepare for any adversity, how to develop a work ethic, and how to learn from failure. Essentially, they teach you how to turn your crisis into opportunity.



# Ecosystems' Collaborative Value Management Platform



Ecosystems' mission is to make value clear. We empower emerging and world-class companies to differentiate and sell more by clearly conveying the value of their products and services. Below is an example of the Ecosystems' collaborative value management platform. The platform is dynamic and interactive, designed to define and track the quantified value realized by donors when giving to and partnering with Homestretch.

Contact a  
Homestretch  
representative for  
a demonstration  
of Collaborative  
Success Plan

Learn more at [Ecosystems.io](https://Ecosystems.io)

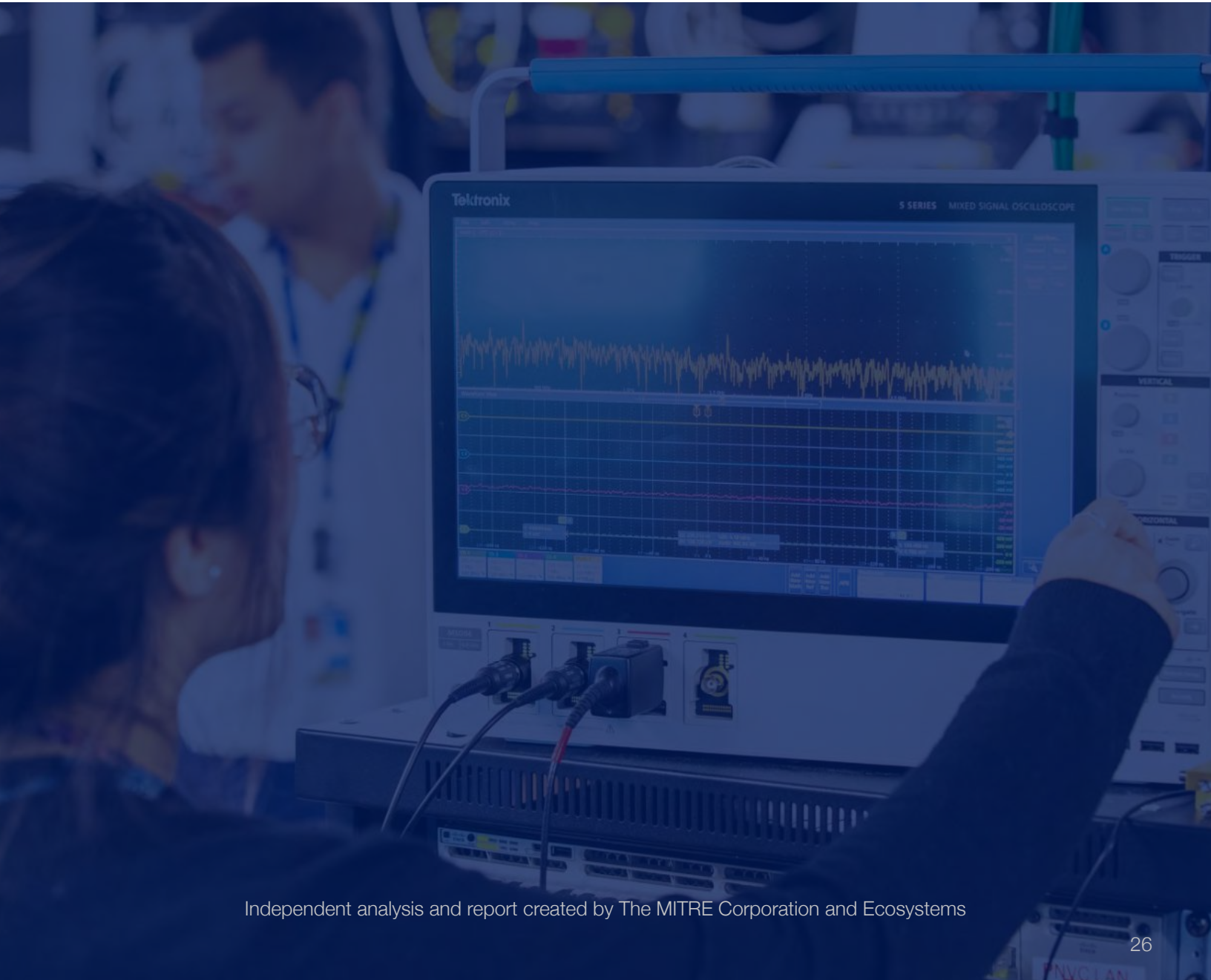


# About MITRE



MITRE's mission-driven teams are dedicated to solving problems for a safer world. Through our public-private partnerships and federally funded R&D centers, we work across government and in partnership with industry to tackle challenges to the safety, stability, and well-being of our nation.

Learn more at [mitre.org](https://mitre.org).



# Summary

Homestretch's focus on long term effectiveness and transparent, measurable results leads to substantially better long-term outcomes than are reported nationwide by both nonprofit and governmental organizations serving the homeless. A Homestretch graduate is far more likely to make lasting changes, such as acquiring skills and education, increasing income, reducing debt, building savings, and repairing credit, than families served by other programs serving homeless families.

Homestretch graduates have become nurses, teachers, accountants, chefs, social workers, realtors, pastors, auto mechanics, pharmacy techs, veterinary assistants, dental assistants, day care owners, business analysts, commercial drivers, restaurant managers, and business owners. While all graduates of Homestretch are not able to enter lucrative careers, our individualized approach assists each family to establish the resources they need to escape homelessness over the long term. This study shows that after 78 months, 88% of Homestretch graduates remain safely housed, an extraordinary achievement.

Less than 3% of Homestretch's revenue comes from government funding. Homestretch relies on support from individual donors, foundations, civic organizations, local businesses, and faith communities.

This Impact Report is a testament of hope that should inspire us all. It shows that, given the right support and resources, families with children experiencing homelessness can build bright new futures.