

Monarch Housing Associates

29 Alden Street, Suite 1B

Cranford, NJ 07016

908.272.5363

[www.monarchhousing.org](http://www.monarchhousing.org)



**NJ**  
**2015**  
**Counts!**

# Cumberland County's 2015 Point-In-Time Count of the Homeless

February 3, 2015

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This report was prepared for  
The New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency  
by  
Monarch Housing Associates

## I. Introduction

### NJ Counts 2015

*NJ Counts 2015*, New Jersey's annual Point-In-Time (PIT) Count of the Homeless, provides a statewide snapshot of homeless households in our communities; where they find shelter, what their needs are, and what factors contribute to making them homeless. The 2015 Count reveals important demographic and other information about families and individuals who were homeless on the night of Tuesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015 or Tuesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 (depending on the community, see limitations below), and was carried out with the help of government agencies, community-based organizations, and local volunteers.

In New Jersey, each County's count is planned, coordinated, and carried out locally, and the information gathered enables each community to better allocate housing resources and services in order to prevent and end homelessness. The PIT Count is the only opportunity throughout the year for most communities to take a comprehensive look at the total homeless population, and is especially crucial in assessing the needs of the unsheltered homeless.

### Acknowledgements

Monarch would like to thank all Point-In-Time Coordinators, homeless service providers, agencies, and volunteers who participated in NJ Counts 2015. Monarch would also like to specifically thank Bergen County for providing a Spanish translation of the 2015 paper survey tool.

Finally, a special acknowledgement is given to all the respondents who were willing to share personal information about themselves and their households' experiences in order to help our communities better understand and assist the homeless.

Funding for coordinating New Jersey's 2015 Point-In-Time and producing this report was provided by New Jersey's Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA).

### This Report

The findings in this report are presented in the following sections:

1. Total homeless population;
2. Those experiencing chronic homelessness (families and individuals that have been homeless for a year or longer, or who have experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years, and have a disabled head of household); and
3. Unsheltered families and individuals;



The structure of this report is intended to provide not only an overall snapshot of the homeless population counted in the Point-In-Time, but also to focus attention on the homeless subpopulations that are the most in need, and those that represent federal funding priorities set forth by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

In addition to the main findings presented in the body of this report, Appendix A includes charts illustrating the responses to all survey questions that were part of the 2015 Point-In-Time Count.

## II. Data Collection and Methodology

### Requirements for the Count

As part of its Continuum of Care (CoC) application for homelessness funding, HUD requires that jurisdictions across the nation conduct a statistically reliable and unduplicated count of the homeless for one overnight period during the last 10 days of January. New Jersey's Continuums of Care (regional networks of organizations, agencies, and community stakeholders that plan local efforts to help the homeless) conduct an annual count of sheltered homeless persons (i.e. persons in emergency shelter, transitional housing for the homeless, and Safe Haven programs) and at least a biennial count of unsheltered homeless persons. 2015 was a HUD-required full count year.

In their Point-In-Time Count, CoCs must count and report all individuals and families who meet the criteria in paragraph (1)(i) of the homeless definition in 24 CFR 91.5 of HUD's Homeless Definition Rule on the night designated for the count. This includes individuals and families who are:

- **Sheltered**, or "living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangement (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals)," or
- **Unsheltered**, "with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground."

Because this report focuses on those respondents who meet HUD's definition of homeless, it does not include information about those who may be at risk of homelessness, precariously housed, or considered homeless under other federal statutes. Persons who, on the night of the count, were living doubled up with another household, living in illegal or overcrowded units, being discharged from a jail or health facility with no subsequent residence, scheduled to be evicted, or paying for its own motel unit were not considered

homeless. All survey information collected for respondents who were at risk of homelessness or precariously housed was preserved and shared with each community for local planning purposes, but is not included in this report unless otherwise noted.

## Data Collection Methods

Monarch Housing Associates provided each of New Jersey's 21 counties with in-person training, online video and print training guides, a practice online survey tool, and technical assistance to aid in the data collection process for New Jersey's 2015 Point-In-Time Count. Point-In-Time Coordinators in each county disseminated PIT training materials and helped facilitate local planning around implementation of the PIT count in their communities.

For the second year, the count of homeless persons who were sheltered on the night of the point in time was primarily taken from New Jersey's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), while the count for the unsheltered and those sheltered by non-HMIS programs was conducted using a Paper Survey tool, personal interviews, and agency client records. This strategy was designed in accordance with HUD guidance regarding conducting both sheltered and unsheltered Point-In-Time Counts.

The 2015 PIT Survey tool closely mirrors information collected in HMIS so that the data was comparable for important factors such as household characteristics, income, services needed, and factors contributing to homelessness. Agencies updated all HMIS data to accurately reflect the night of the count, and those with programs that were non-HMIS-participating submitted information from interviews utilizing the Paper Survey tool through SurveyMonkey.

## Limitations

1. HUD requires a count of sheltered homeless persons and families annually, but only a biennial count of those who are unsheltered. Even though New Jersey conducts both a sheltered and unsheltered count each year, the comprehensiveness of the unsheltered count may be influenced during the non-HUD required full count years. This report includes comparison data from 2011 to 2015. 2012 and 2014 were not HUD required full reporting years while 2011, 2013 and 2015 were.
2. The winter of 2014 to 2015 was particularly cold, with parts of New Jersey seeing significant snow accumulation. NJ Counts 2015 was originally scheduled to take place Tuesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Unfortunately, there was a blizzard predicted for the night of the PIT, which led to about half of the Counties in the State postponing the PIT activities to the following week, Tuesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015. This weather led to half the communities counting the households that were homeless on the night of January 27<sup>th</sup> and the other half counting those that were homeless on the night of February 3<sup>rd</sup>. Besides leaving the date of the count inconsistent, this winter weather forced many communities to set up emergency warming stations or shelters for the unsheltered.

While this means that many more people are able to sleep in a warm place, it may skew Point-In-Time data to show fewer unsheltered households than are actually present in communities on a regular basis.

3. The information presented in this report is based on survey interviews and agency HMIS records. In some cases, survey respondents did not answer every question completely, and homeless provider agencies did not report all client information on the night of the count. For this reason, all charts presented in this report will be based on the responses received, while all percentages will be based on the total households or individuals served and may not equal 100% in each category due to possible missing data.
4. Because the Point-In-Time Count represents only one night during the last ten days of January, it is widely accepted that the PIT will undercount the overall homeless population. Undercounting may occur due to difficulty finding those living on the street, incomplete information for people who do not agree to complete the survey, a shortage of volunteers to cover a geographic area, or homeless persons choosing not to seek housing services on the night of the count. This data should not be viewed as a comprehensive measurement of all families and individuals who experience homelessness throughout the year, but rather as a minimum number of persons who experience homelessness in New Jersey on a given night.

## De-duplication

Monarch Housing Associates collected and merged all HMIS and SurveyMonkey Point-In-Time data from each community into its combined database. Monarch generated two unique identifiers, one more general and one more in-depth, based on the identifying information for each individual record. Using a formula, these unique identifiers were compared to all identifiers for other records in the database to identify potential duplicates.

All duplicates detected through comparison of unique identifiers were then de-duplicated by the following process:

1. Multiple HMIS records where all fields match – a single record was preserved, and all duplicates were removed;
2. Multiple SurveyMonkey records where all fields match – a single record was preserved, and all duplicates were removed;
3. Comparing HMIS to SurveyMonkey records where unique identifiers, disabilities, income sources, household size, and location on the night of the count all match – the HMIS record was preserved and the SurveyMonkey duplicates were removed.

Following this de-duplication of the data, communities were given preliminary data to review all identified duplicates and records with missing data. Communities were then able to update records with missing information and/or request any additional de-duplication they determined prudent. Monarch then updated and removed additional records based on community feedback prior to completing its final analysis and report.

### III. Findings for Total Homeless Population

#### Key Findings

- On the night of February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 a total of 166 households, including 201 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Cumberland County, according to the 2015 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 44 households, with 53 persons, were identified as chronically homeless.
- 32 unsheltered homeless persons were counted.

#### Total Homeless Population

As a note, due to the refinement of HUD’s definition of homeless, updates were made to some of the emergency shelter data that was released in the 2014 report. The 2015 report compares 2015 data to the updated data that was submitted to HUD for 2014. For this reason, while the comparisons in this report are accurate, the numbers listed for 2014 may not match the report that was released last year.

On the night of February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015, a total of 201 persons, in 166 households, were experiencing homelessness in Cumberland County, according to the 2015 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 44 households (15.3%) and 18 persons (9.8%) from 2014. Cumberland County had 2% of New Jersey’s statewide homeless population in 2015.

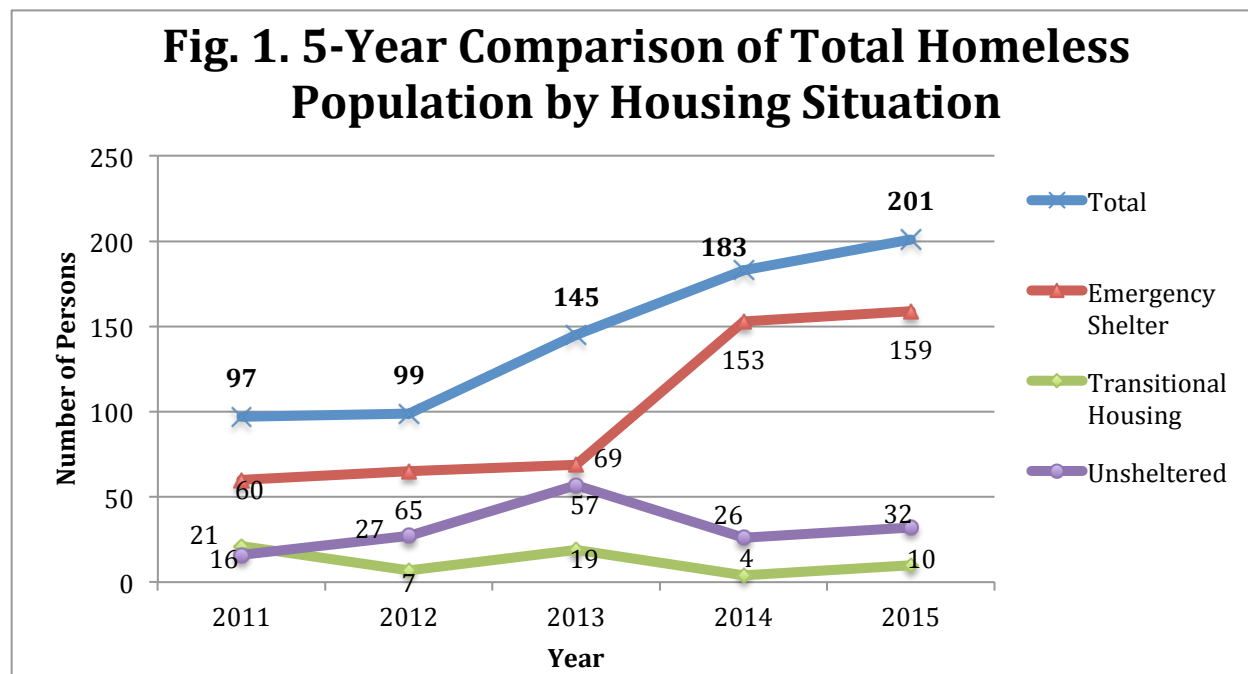


Figure 1 shows that, in 2015, 159 homeless persons stayed in emergency shelters, 10 stayed in transitional housing, and 32 were living unsheltered on the night of the count.

The total number of persons in each housing category saw an increase from 2014, emergency shelter (3.9%), transitional housing (6 persons) and unsheltered (23.1%).

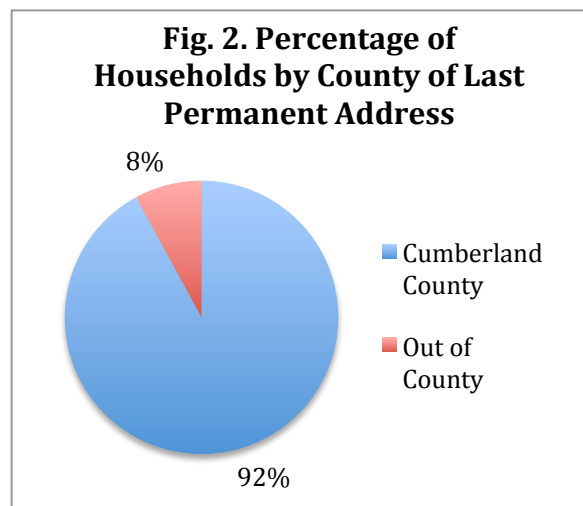


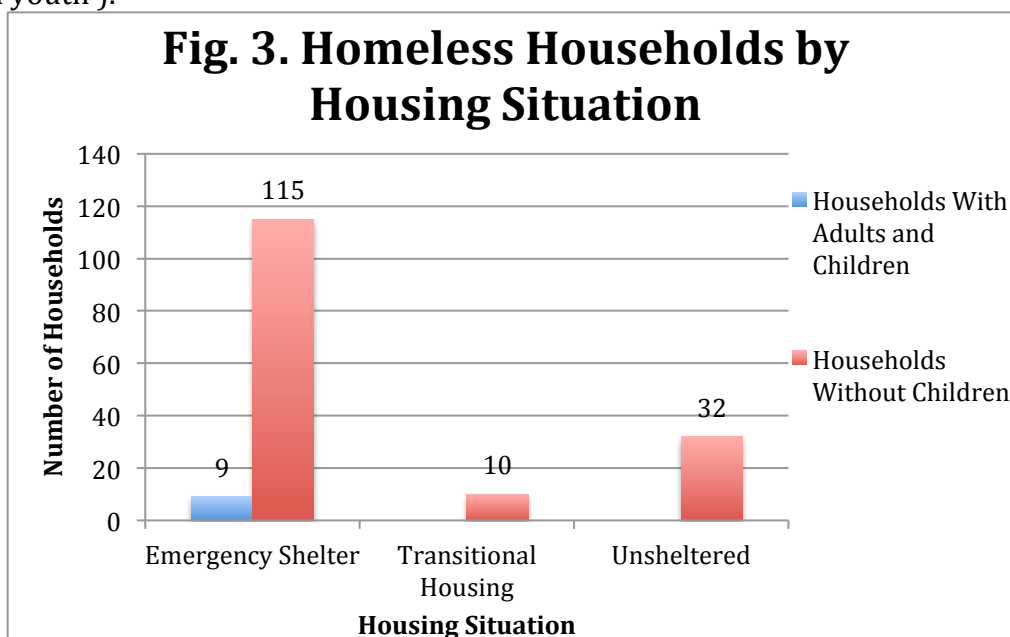
Figure 1 also shows that the total number of homeless in Cumberland County has consistently increased from 2011. Between 2011 and 2015 Cumberland has seen an increase of 104 persons (107%). The housing category that has led to this increase is emergency shelter which has seen a 165% increase from 2011.

As Figure 2 shows, in 2015, 8% of homeless households in Cumberland County reported that their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless was outside of the county.

### Homeless Families and Individuals

When reading the data regarding different types of homeless households, it is important for the reader to remember that, in this report, 'household' means "any group of persons who, if they were able to attain permanent housing, would choose to live together; and, shared the same sleeping arrangements on the night of the count." Three different types of households are discussed below: households with adults and children under 18 ('families'), households without children ('individuals'), and households with only children under 18 ('unaccompanied youth').

Of the 166 homeless households counted in Cumberland County in 2015, 9 (5.4%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult, a decrease of 6 families from 2014. These families



included 38 persons, including 28 children under age 18. The average family size was 3.9 persons. Figure 3 shows that all 9 of the families were staying in emergency shelter.

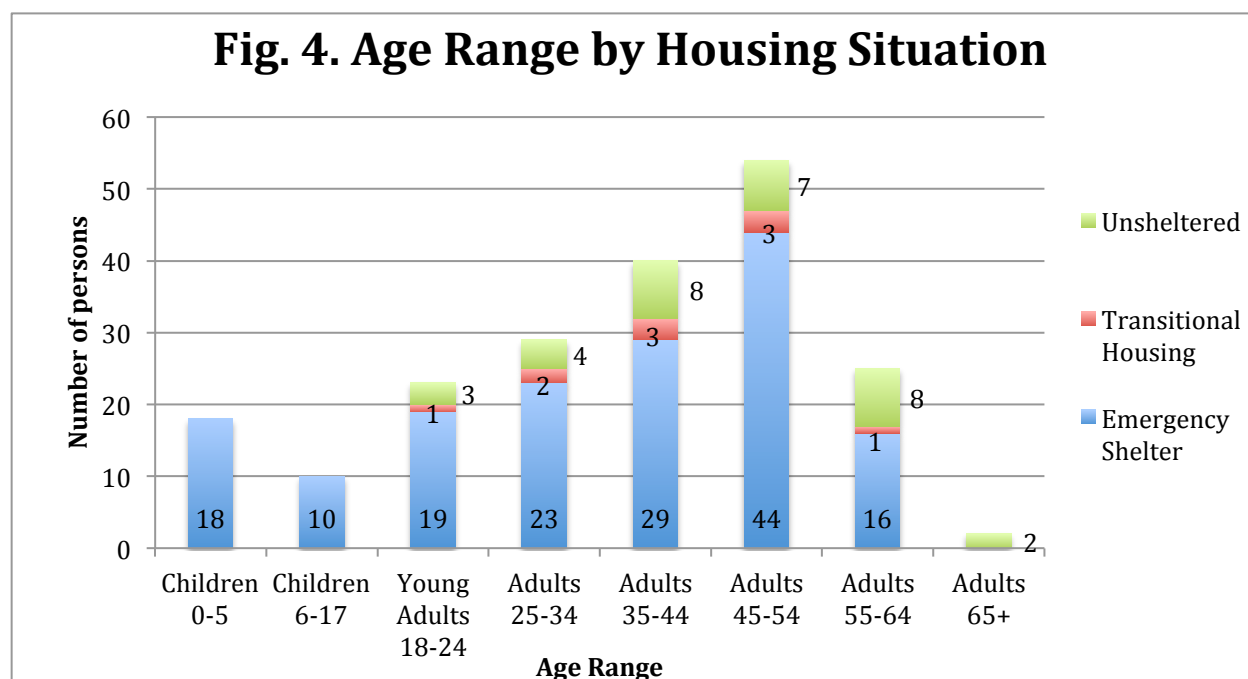


94.6% (157) of the homeless households in Cumberland County were households without children under 18, and they were composed of 163 persons. 115 of these households, including all 6 of the multiple adult households were staying in emergency shelters (73.2%). 32 individual adult households were unsheltered on the night of the count.

As Figure 3 indicates, there were no households with only children under 18 years old reported in 2015.

### Demographics

There were a total of 23 (11.4%) homeless adults between 18 and 24 years old, 150 (74.6%) adults over age 24, and 28 (13.9%) children under 18 years old experiencing homelessness on the night of the count. Figure 4 shows that the majority of homeless children who were under the age of 18 were between 0 and 5 years of age (18, 64.3%). Similar to 2014, the age range most represented among the homeless in Cumberland County was adults between 45 and 54 years old (26.9%).

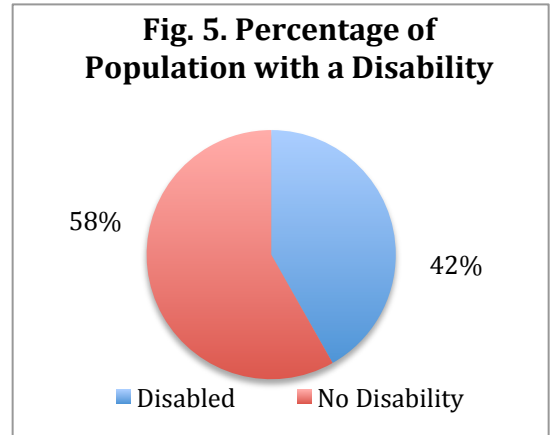


68.7% of homeless persons in Cumberland County were male, and 31.3% were female.

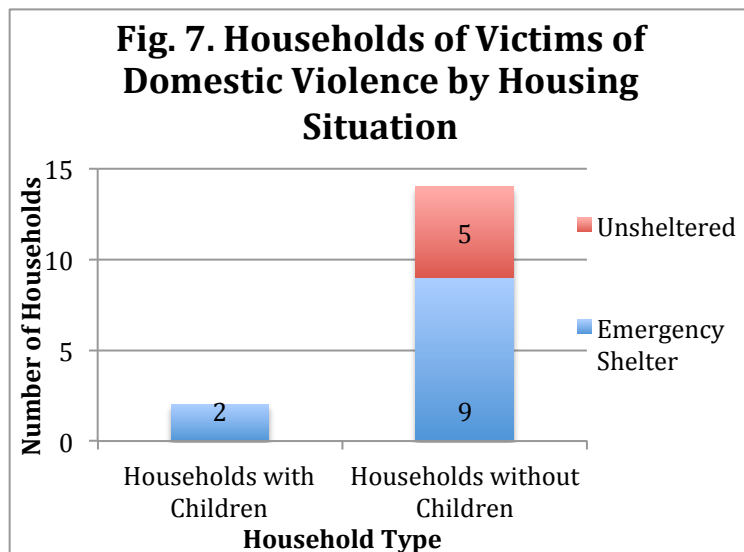
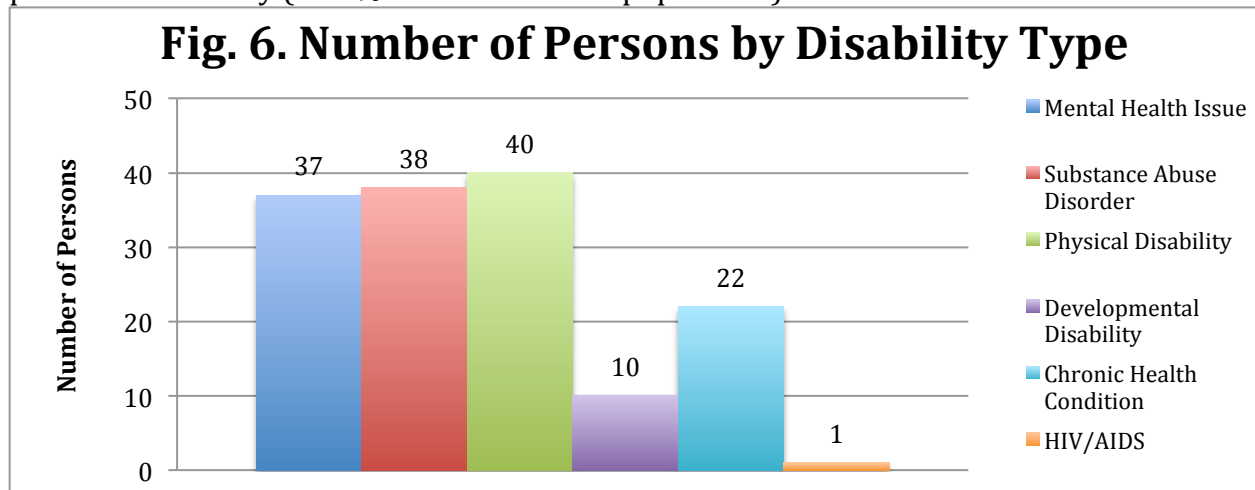
49.8% of respondents identified their race as Black or African-American, making that the largest racial subgroup of homeless persons counted. The next largest group self-identified as White (46.8%); followed by those identifying as Multi-Racial (1%). With regard to ethnicity, 26.9% of persons identified themselves as Hispanic, or Latino.

## Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 42% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 46.8% of adults reported some type of disability compared to 10.7% of children. Figure 6 shows the number of the homeless persons that identified as having various disabilities. The most common disabilities identified include physical disabilities and substance abuse disorders.



Among disabled adults, 48.1% reported physical disabilities, making this the most prevalent disability (22.5% of the total adult population).



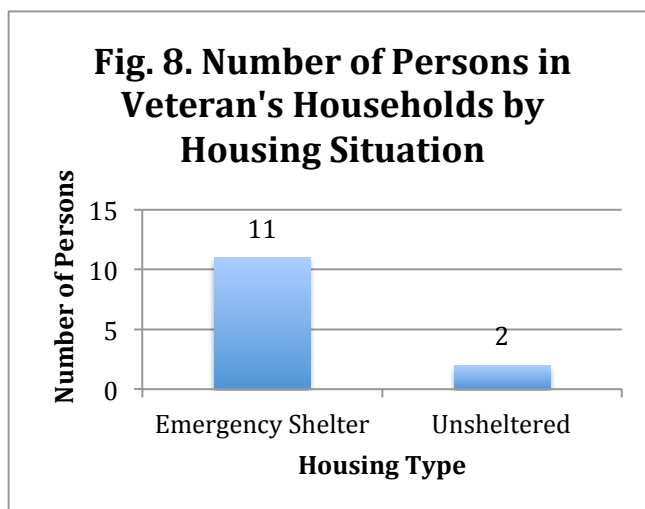
## Victims of Domestic Violence

On the night of the count, in Cumberland County, 16 homeless households identified as victims of domestic violence, an increase of 7 households from 2014. The majority of these households (81.3%) were individual adult households, but 2 (12.5%) were families with at least one adult and one child under the age of 18, composed of 7 persons, and the remaining household was a

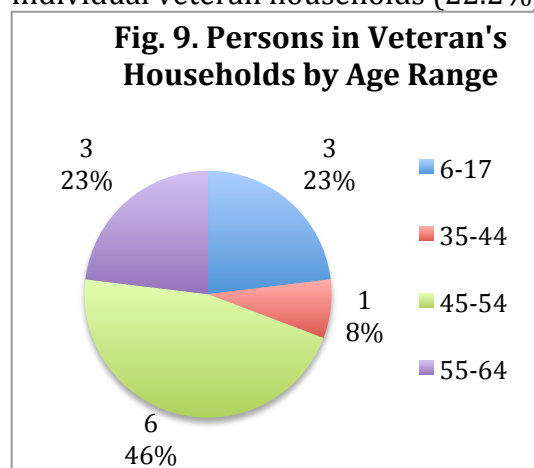
household of 2 adults. All but 5 of the adult individual households were in emergency shelters on the night of the count.

## Veterans

In its plan, *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has prioritized ending homelessness among veterans by 2015. Many communities in New Jersey have also been working hard to end homelessness among our country's servicemen and women.



9 homeless veteran households were counted on the night of the count, showing no change from 2014. 8 of the 9 were individual veterans, the last household was a veteran family composed of 5 persons. All veteran households were in emergency shelters, except for 2 individual veteran households (22.2%).



76.9% of the persons in veteran households were male. 9 of the 13 (69.2%) identified their racial background as Black or African-American. The other 4 persons self-identified as White (33.3%). Figure 9 shows the percentage of persons in veteran households by age range.

2 individual veterans reported being victims of domestic violence. 10 persons, 76.9%, reported having a disability. The top reported disabilities were mental health issues, substance abuse disorders and physical disabilities, which were each reported by 4 persons. None of the 9 veteran households reported being connected to Veteran related sources of income or non-cash benefits. The top service requested by veteran households was housing (66.7%).

## Income and Benefits

Among all homeless households on the night of the count, 36.7% reported no source of income, and 6.6% reported receiving some kind of earned cash income. The two most common sources of income among households were General Assistance (GA) and SSI with 28.9% and 28.3% of households receiving each, respectively.

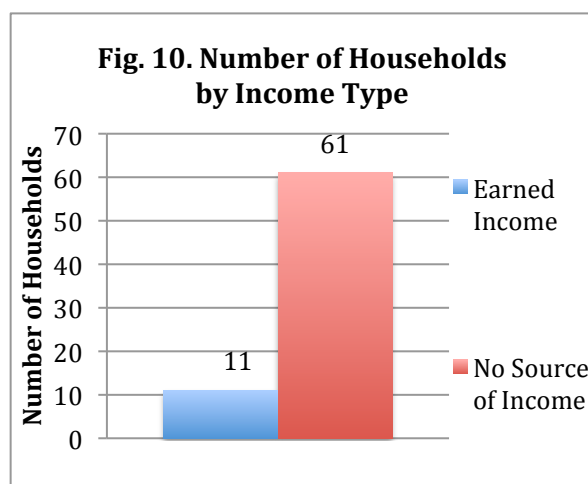


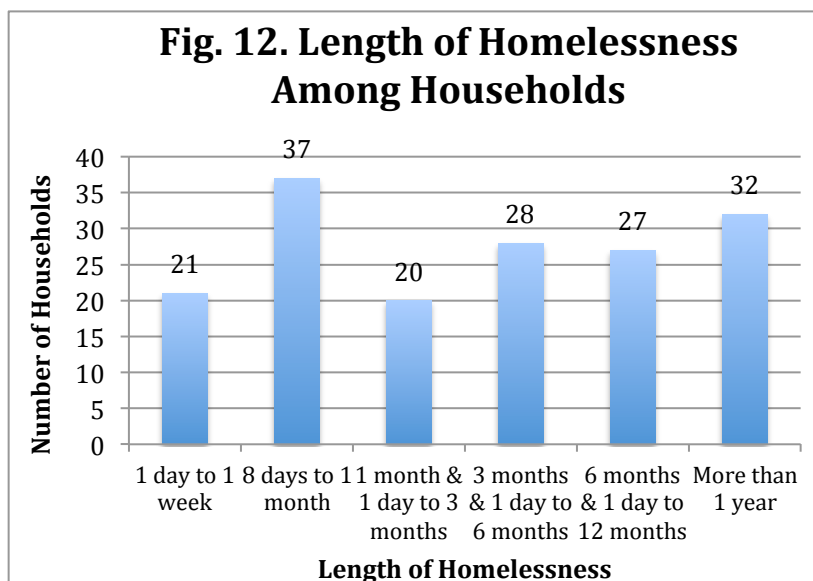
Figure 11 shows the average monthly income for all homeless households.

<b>Figure 11. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation</b>			
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered
Average for All Households	\$331.45	\$166.80	\$314.06

41% of homeless households reported receiving no kind of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Food Stamps, or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), was the top reported non-cash benefit, and was received by 44% of households. 35.5% were also connected to Medicaid benefits.

### Length of Homelessness

As Figure 12 shows, 37 homeless households (22.3%) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted from 8 days to 1 month, making this the most common response. more than 1 year, making this the most common response. 19.3% of households reported their length of homelessness as more than 1 year. This is a shift from 2014, where the most common response was more than 1 year, which represented 27.8% of households.

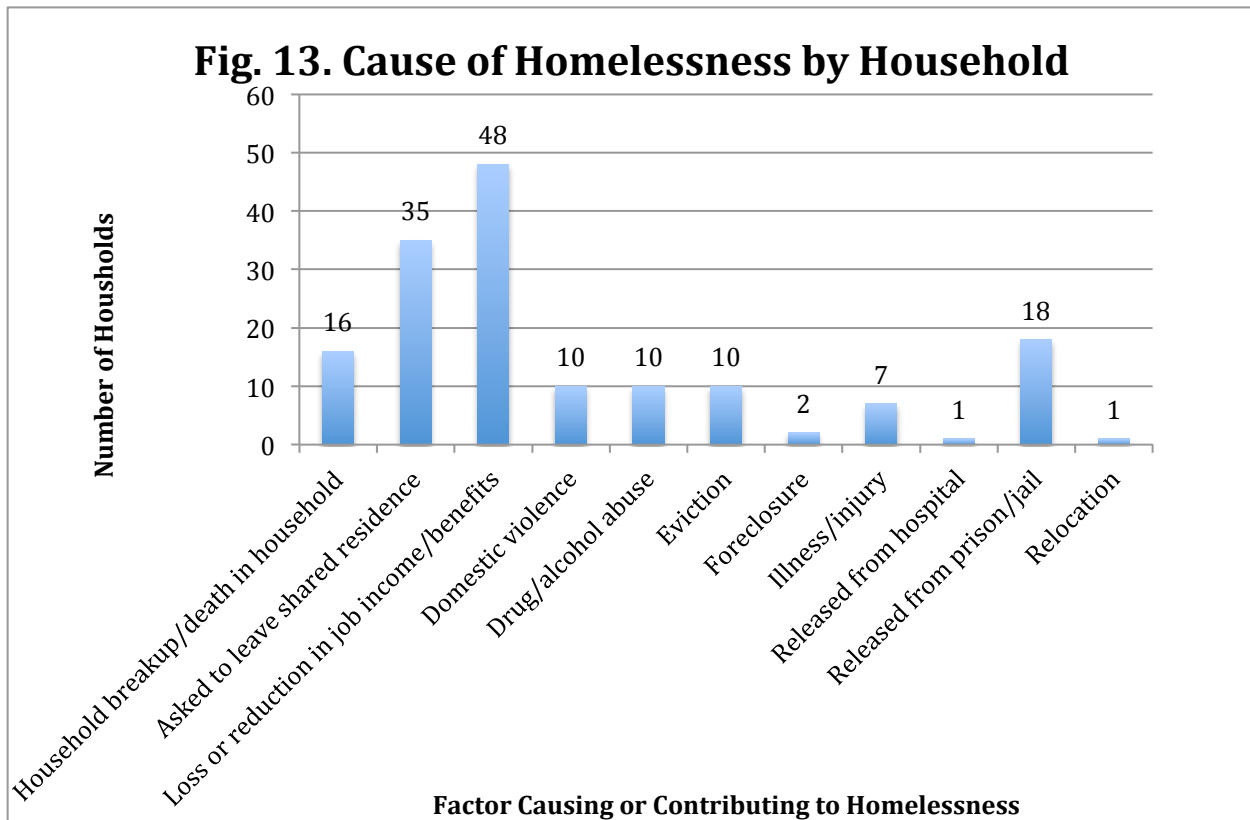


### Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to a loss or reduction of job income or benefits (48 households, 28.9%) than any other cause. As Figure 13 shows, the next most common factor reported was being asked to leave a shared residence (21.1%), followed by being released from prison or jail (10.8%).

When households were asked ‘what was your residence prior to your current living situation?’ more said they were staying or living with friends or family (37.3%) than any other type of residence. 31.3% reported they were residing in permanent housing prior to their current situation.





#### IV. Findings for the Chronically Homeless

Someone with a long-term disabling condition, who has been continually homeless for a year or more, or at least four times in the past three years, meets HUD’s definition of chronically homeless. Any family with one adult that meets this definition is considered a chronically homeless family.

HUD has established a goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2017. This goal reflects the urgency of helping to house those persons who have not been able to remain stably housed over the course of an extended period of time. Chronically Homeless persons are among the most vulnerable homeless groups, and providing effective supportive services and case management may be required in order to help some stay in the housing they need. Prioritization of new Continuum of Care funding opportunities has recently been giving some communities in New Jersey new resources for housing this subgroup.

## Total Chronically Homeless Population

44 households, made up of 53 total persons, were chronically homeless in Cumberland County, according to the 2015 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 8 persons (17.8%) from 2014. The rate of chronic homelessness as a percentage of the overall homeless population was 26.4% in 2015.

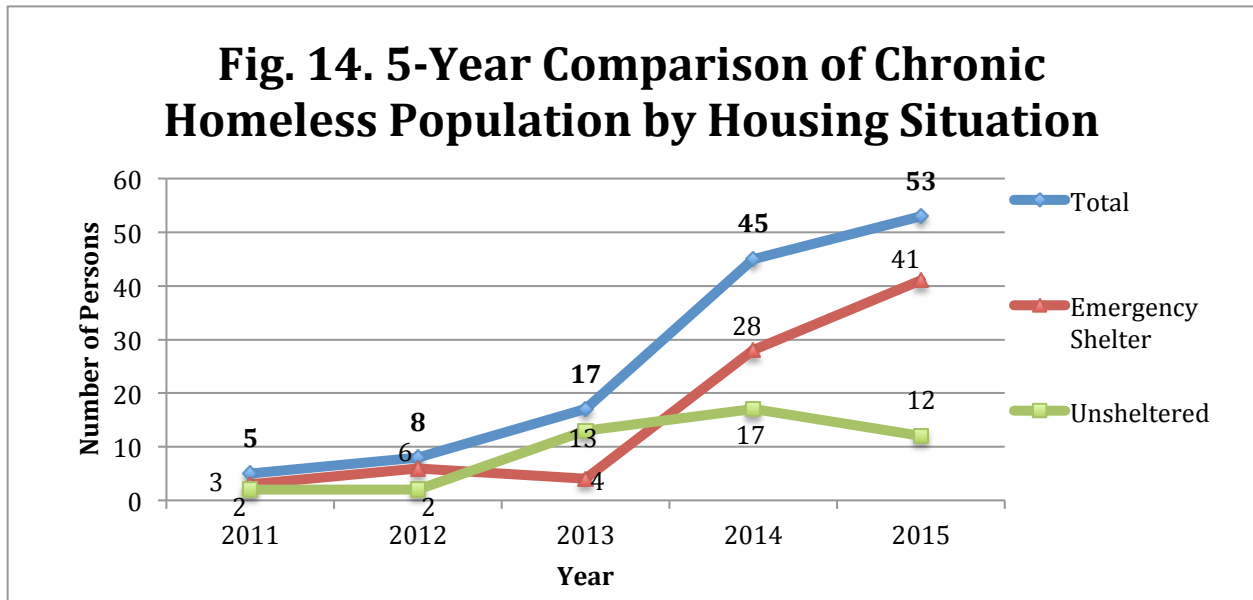
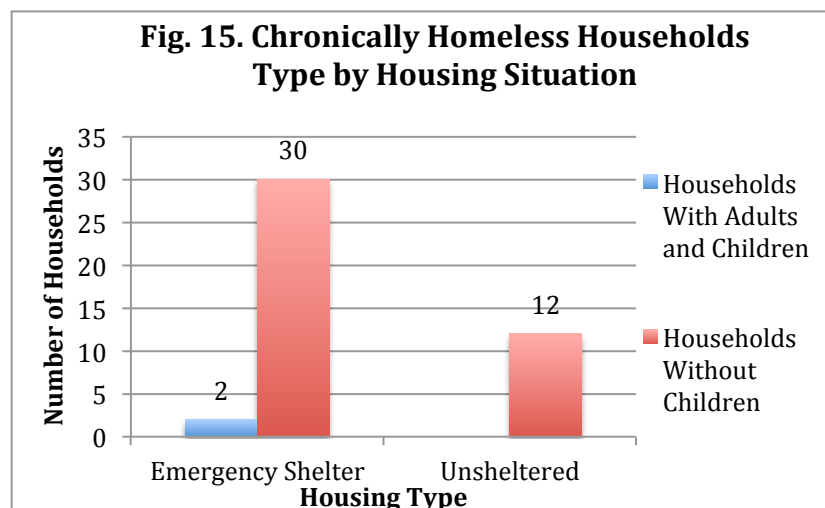


Figure 14 shows the number of chronically homeless persons who were in emergency shelters or living unsheltered in Cumberland County from 2011 to 2015. While the number of unsheltered chronically homeless decreased from 2014 (29.4), the overall number of chronically homeless in Cumberland County has consistently increased over the past 5 years. From 2011 to 2015, Cumberland has seen an increase of 48 chronically homeless persons.

## Families and Individuals

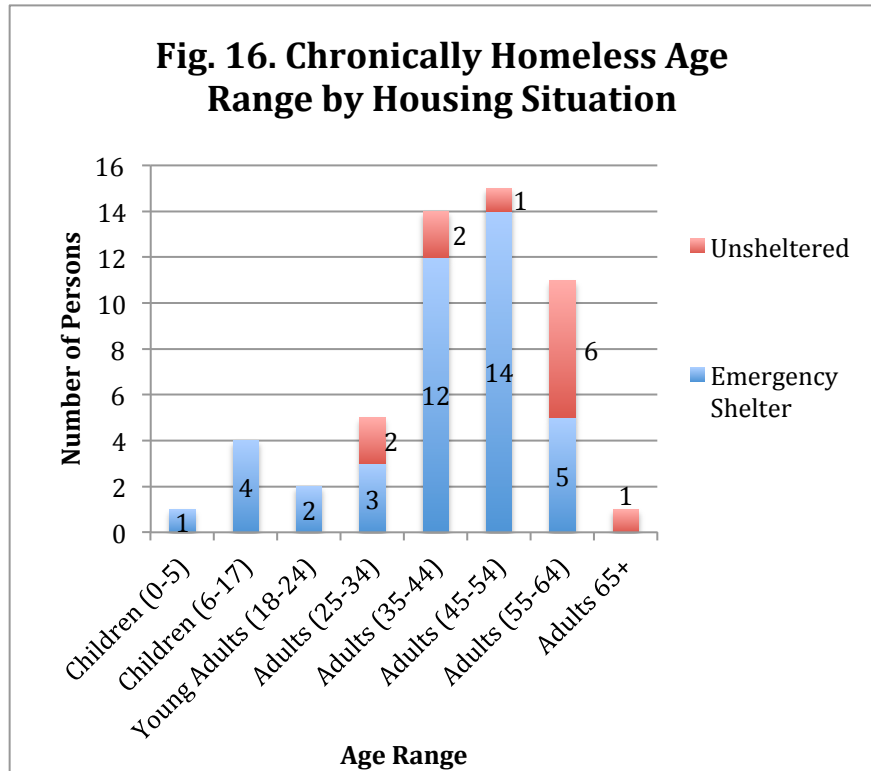
Of the 44 chronically homeless households counted in Cumberland County in 2015, 2 (4.5%) were families with children under 18 (8 persons), an increase from the 0 families counted in 2014. Both of these households were served in emergency shelters. The remaining 42 were adult only households, composed of 45 persons. 12 of these adult only households were individual adults who were unsheltered on the night of the count.



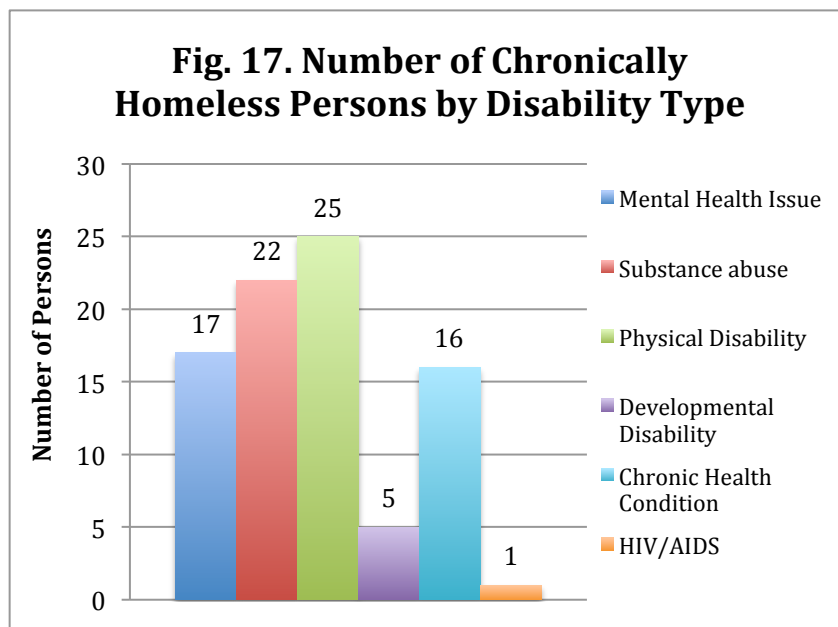
## Demographics

Of the 53 total chronically homeless persons counted, 5 were children under the age of 18 (9.4%), 2 were young adults between 18 and 24, and the remaining 46 (86.8%) were adults over the age of 24. The largest number of chronically homeless adults (15, 28.3%) fell between the ages of 45 and 54, years of age.

77.4% of those counted as chronically homeless were male, and 22.6% were female.



The largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported their race as White (49.1%). The next largest group self-identified as Black or African-American (47.2%). With regard to ethnicity, 28.3% of persons identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino.



## Disabilities

In order to meet the definition of chronically homeless, at least one adult in each household must have some kind of disability. The disabilities most commonly identified were physical disabilities (53.2%) and substance abuse disorders (46.8%). The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the chronically homeless can be seen in Figure 17.

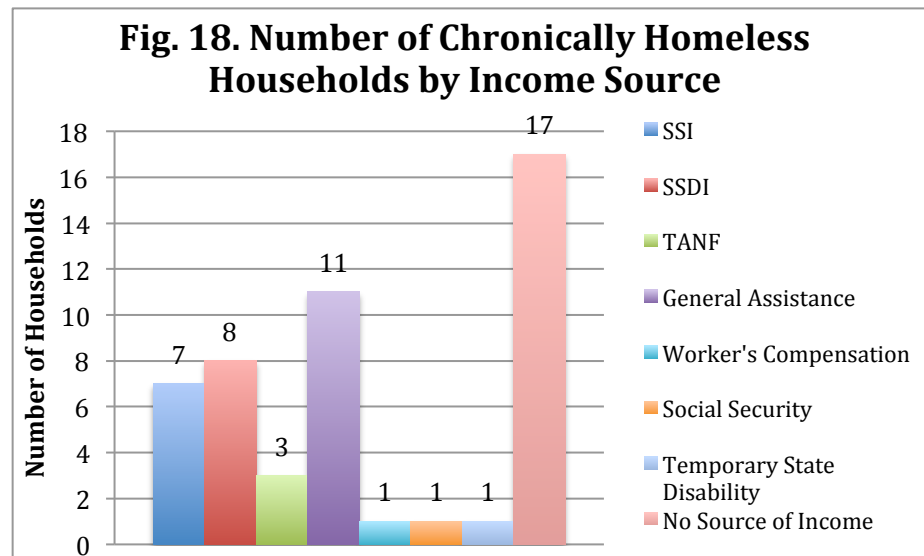
## Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 6 chronically homeless households in Cumberland County identified as victims of domestic violence (13.6%). 5 were adult only households (2 were unsheltered). The last household was a family household composed of 3 persons that was staying in an emergency shelter.

There were 5 veteran households, composed of 9 persons, identified as chronically homeless on the night of the count. 1 individual veteran was unsheltered.

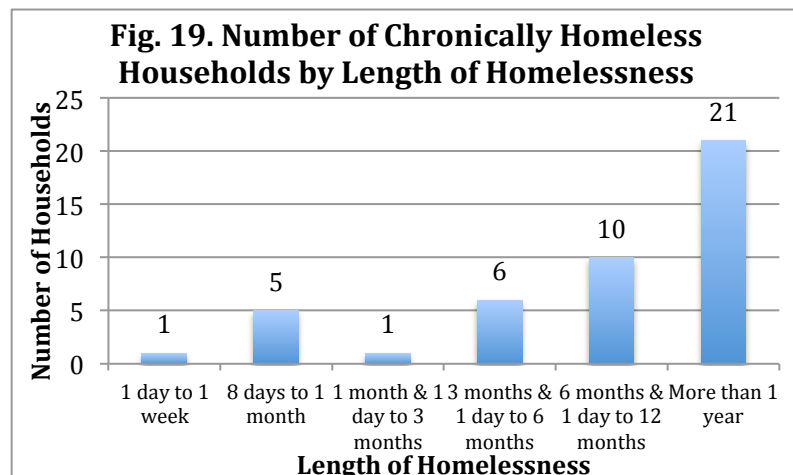
## Income and Benefits

Among all of the chronically homeless households on the night of the count, 17 (38.6%) reported receiving no form of cash income. The most common source of income received among chronically homeless households was General



Assistance (25% of households). Figure 18 shows all of the sources of income received by chronically homeless households.

45.5% of the chronically homeless households reported they were not receiving any type of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Food Stamps (SNAP) was the top reported non-cash benefit among this population, with 47.7% receiving this benefit. 29.5% of households also reported being connected to Medicaid benefits.



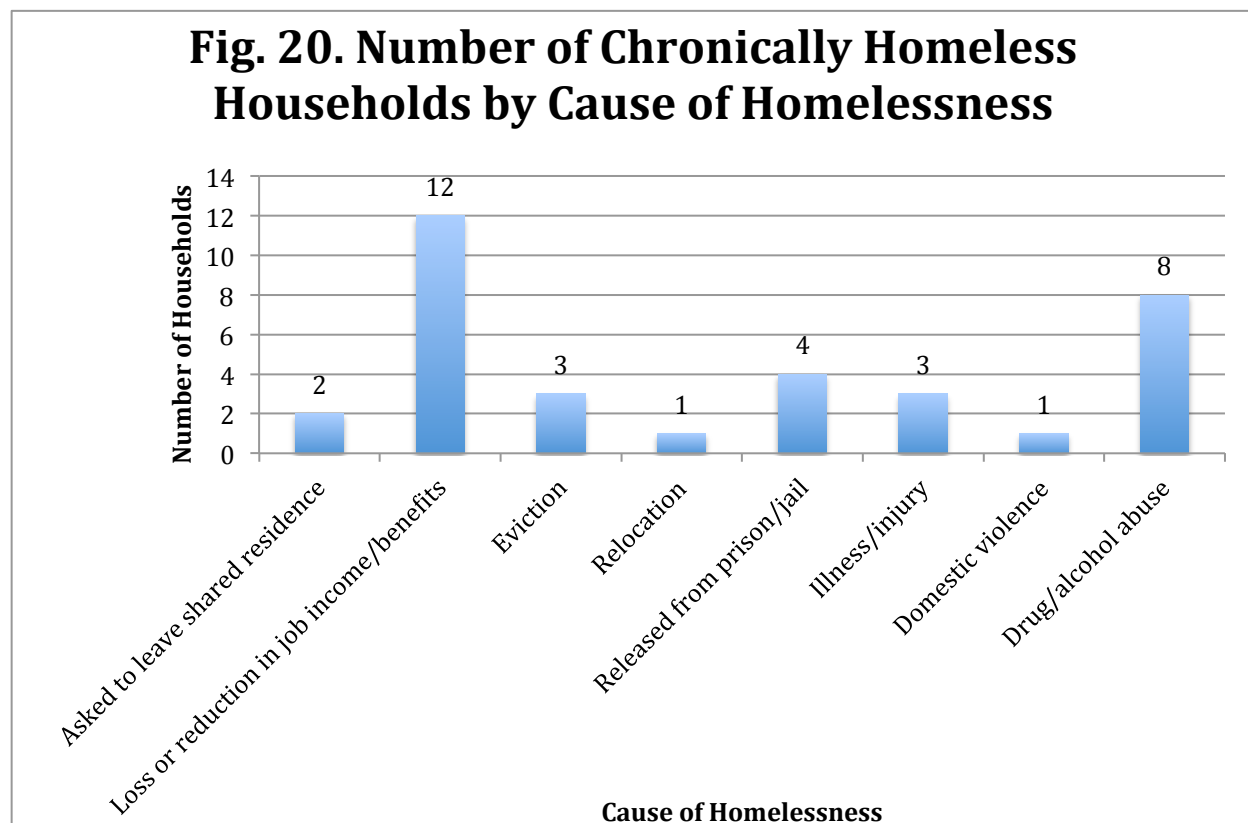
## Length of Homelessness

Figure 19 shows that, similar to 2014, 21 chronically homeless households (47.7%) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted for more than 1 year, making this the most commonly reported answer.



## Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more chronically homeless households cited a loss or reduction of job income or benefits (27.3%) than any other. As Figure 20 shows, the next most common factor was drug or alcohol abuse (18.2%).



## V. Findings for the Unsheltered Homeless

HUD’s definition of “unsheltered homeless” applies to any individual or family “with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.”

Unsheltered homeless individuals and families are among those with the most critical housing needs in a community. The unsheltered are especially vulnerable in the cold weather and the elements, which are in evidence at the end of January when the Count takes place. The Point-In-Time survey can play an important role in helping communities understand why some of the homeless remain unsheltered, and who is included in this group.

### Total Unsheltered Homeless Population

32 persons were living unsheltered in Cumberland County, according to the 2015 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 6 persons (23.1%) from 2014.

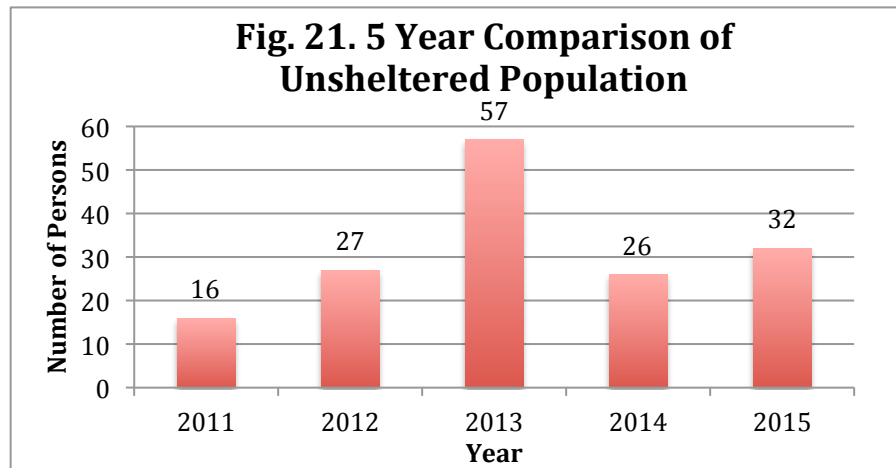


Figure 21 shows the number of unsheltered respondents from 2011 to 2015. While the number of unsheltered persons in Cumberland County has fluctuated since 2011, the County has seen a decrease of 25 persons from 2013.

### Families and Individuals

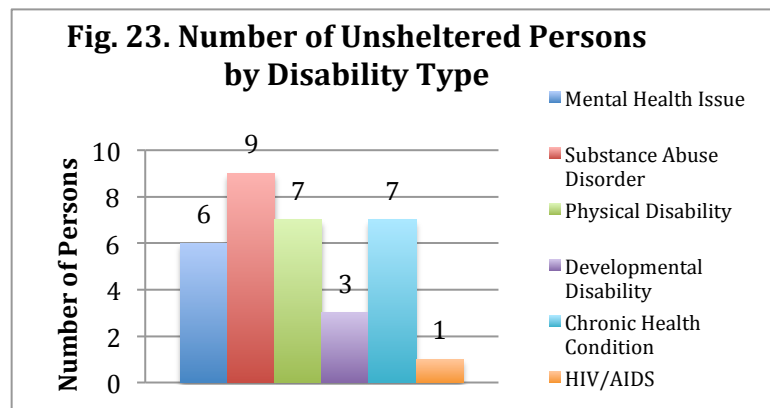
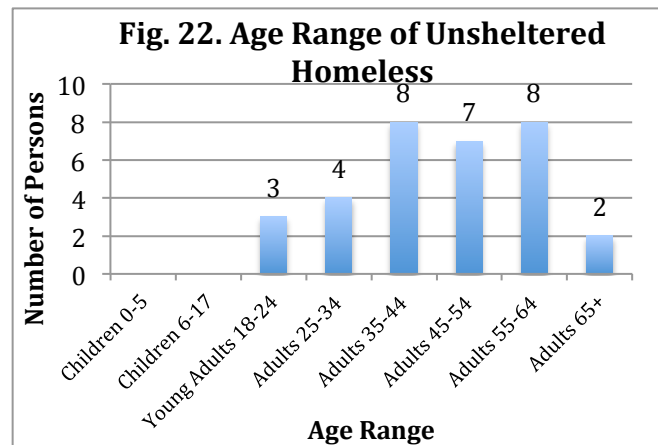
There were 0 families with adults and children, and 0 youth only households identified as unsheltered on the night of the count.

All 32 households counted in 2015, were individual adult persons.

### Demographics

Of the 32 unsheltered persons counted in 2015, 25% were between the ages of 35 and 44. Another 25% were between 55 and 64, as seen in Figure 22.

90.6% of unsheltered respondents were male and 50% identified their race as Black or African-American. 21.9% of respondents identified as Hispanic.



### Disabilities

13 of the 32 unsheltered persons (40.6%) reported having some type of disability. The disability most identified was physical disabilities. The full scope of disabilities reported can be seen in Figure 23.

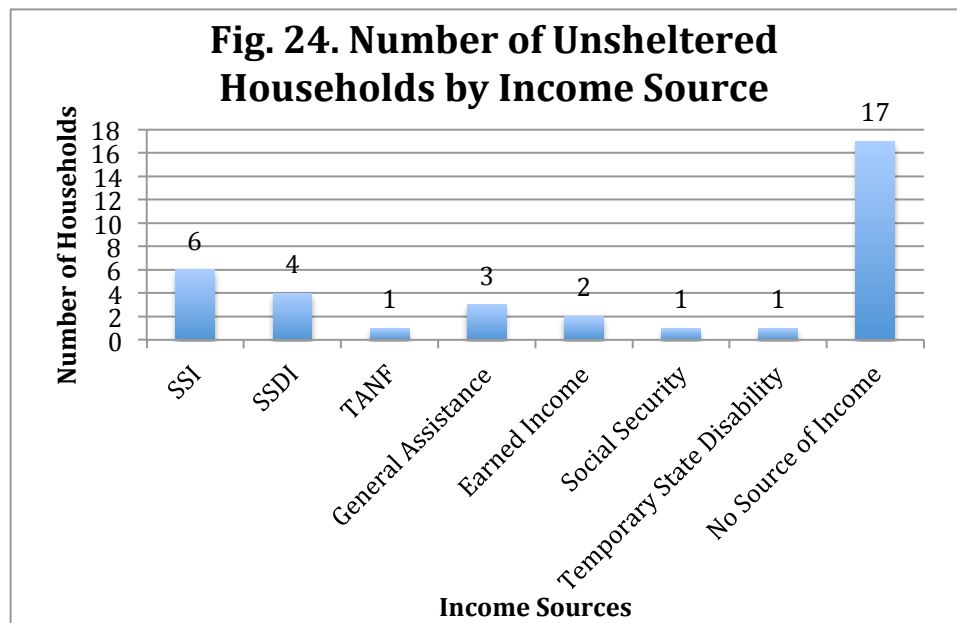
## Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 5 of the unsheltered homeless persons in Cumberland County (15.6%) reported being victims of domestic violence, 2 more than 2014.

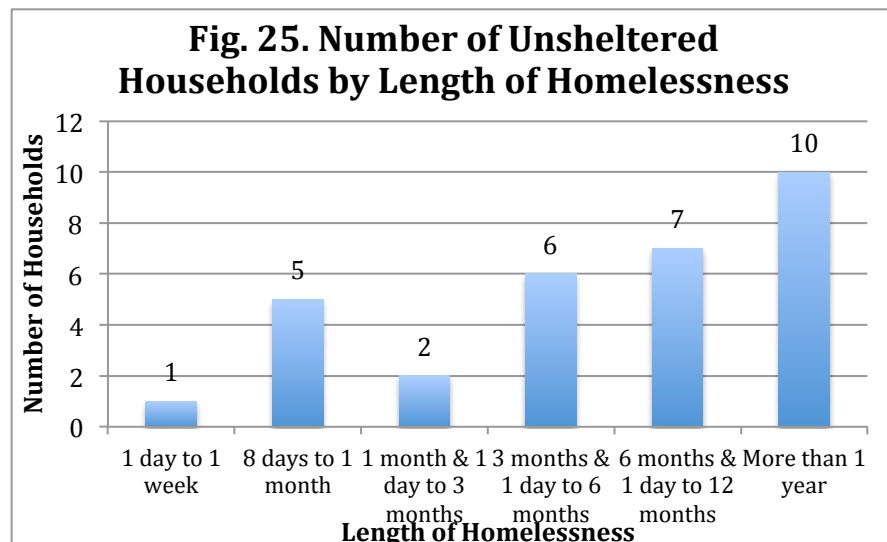
There were 2 unsheltered veterans identified on the night of the count, matching the number counted in 2014.

## Income and Benefits

Among all the unsheltered households on the night of the count, 17 (53.1%) reported having no source of cash income. The average monthly income among unsheltered households was approximately \$314. Figure 24 shows the income sources reported by unsheltered persons in 2015.



62.5% of the unsheltered households reported that they were not receiving any type of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Food Stamps (SNAP) was the top reported non-cash benefit among this population, with 31.3% receiving Food Stamps.

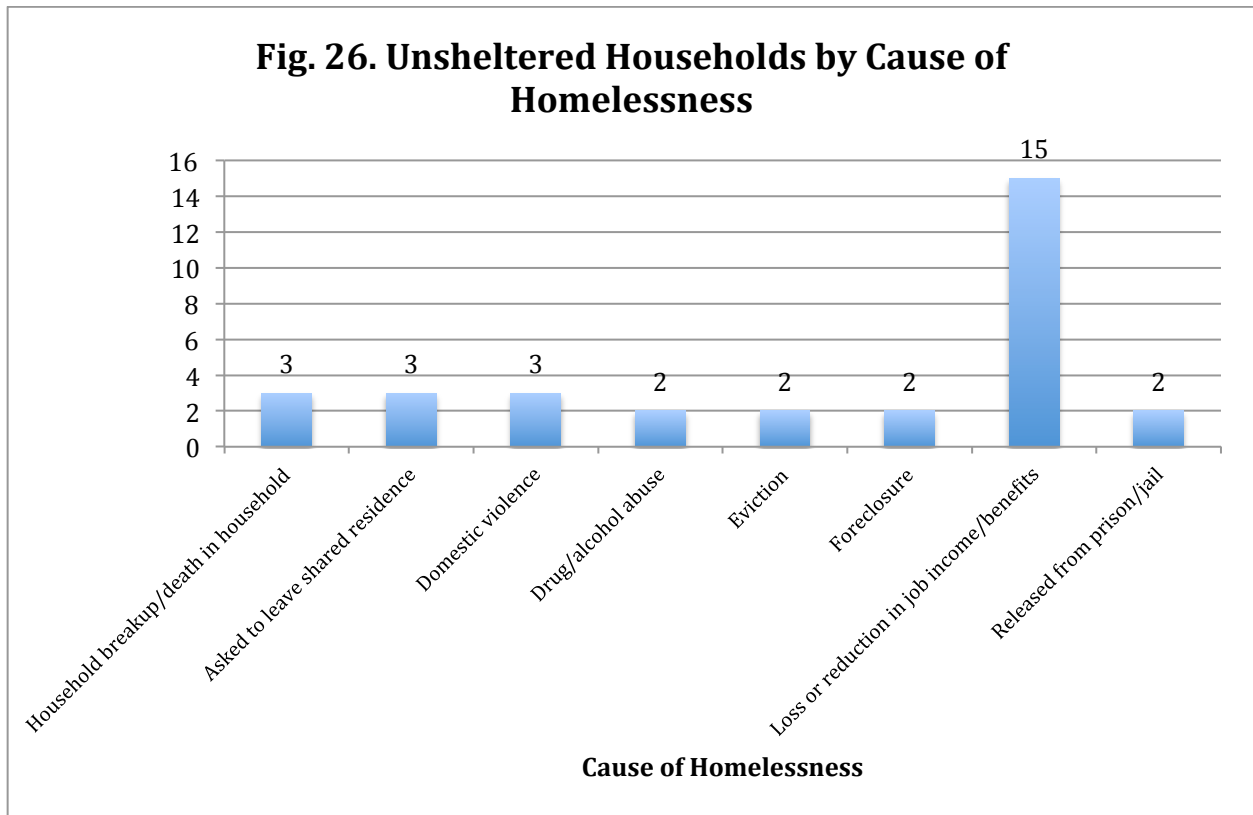


## Length of Homelessness

As shown in Figure 25, 10 unsheltered homeless households (31.3%) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted more than 1 year.

## Cause of Homelessness

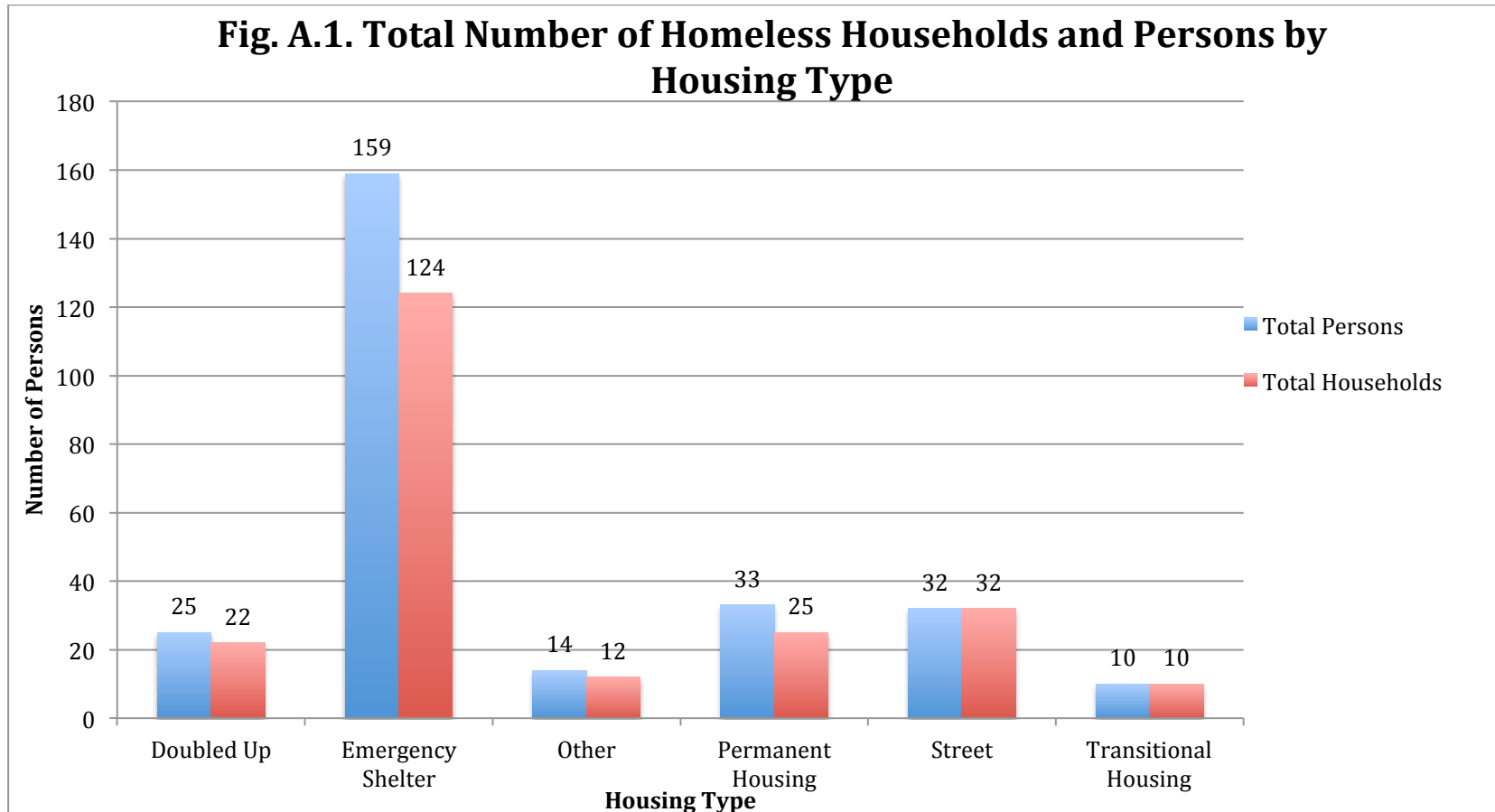
When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, 46.9% of unsheltered households said a loss or reduction of job income or benefits. Figure 26 has the full list of causes listed by unsheltered households.





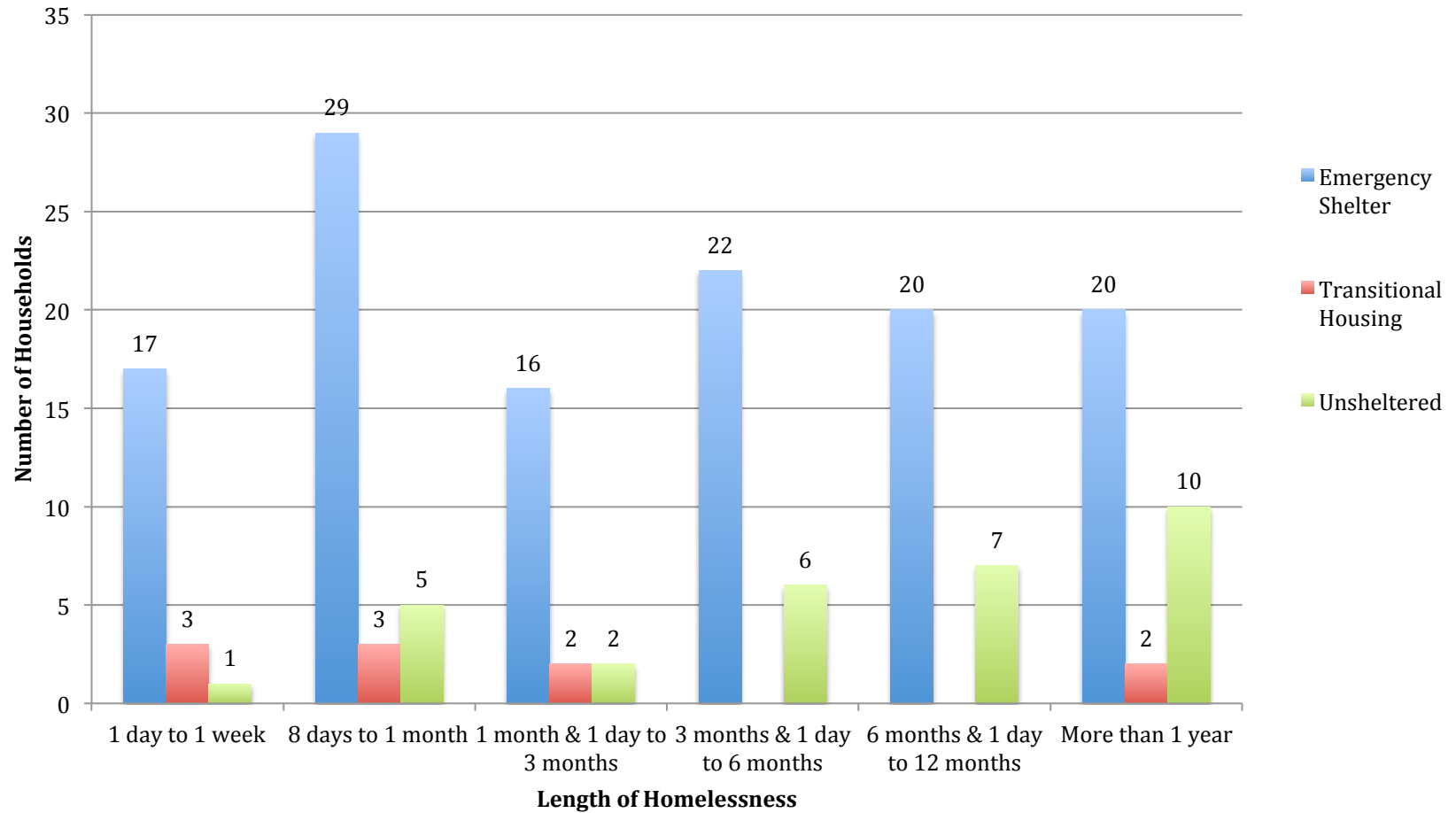
## VI. Appendix

Where did you spend the night of Tuesday, February 3, 2015?

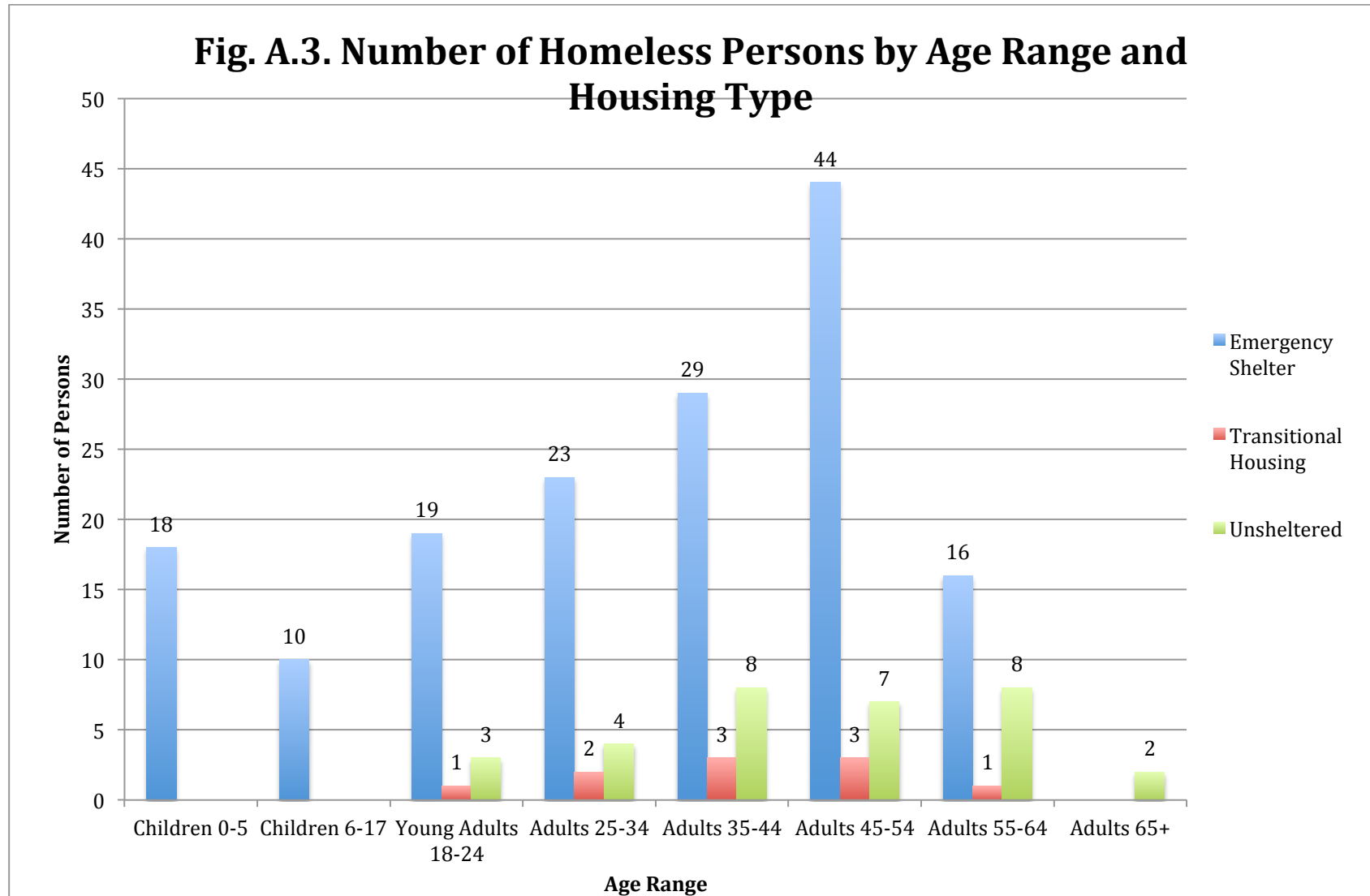


How long have you been in your current living situation?

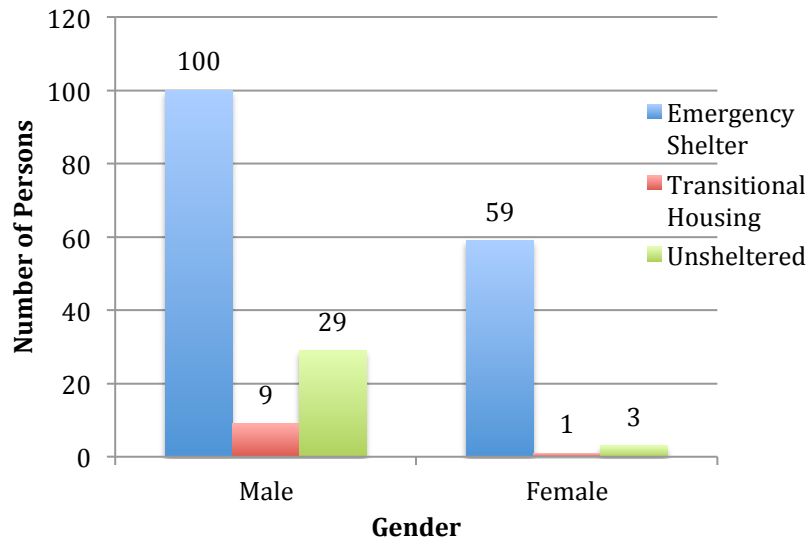
**Fig. A.2. Homeless Households by Length of Homelessness and Housing Type**



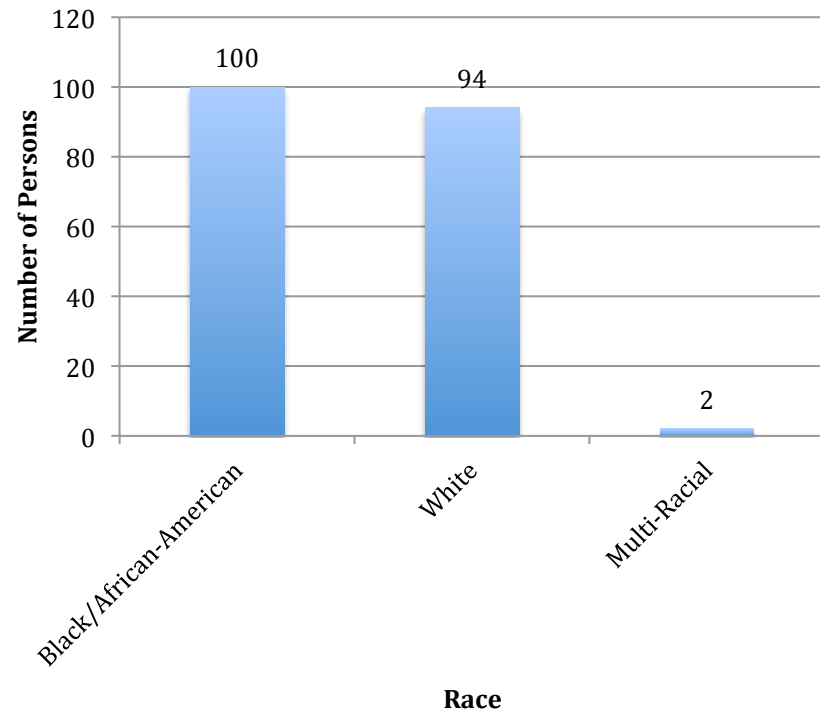
Who was homeless with you on the night of February 3<sup>rd</sup>?



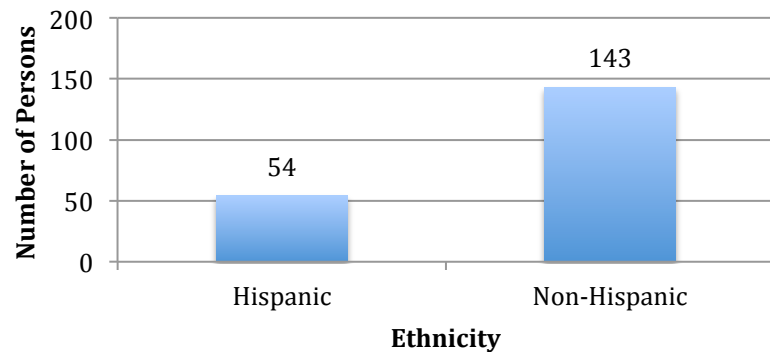
**Fig. A.4. Number of Homeless Persons by Gender and Housing Situation**



**Fig. A.5. Number of Homeless Persons by Race**



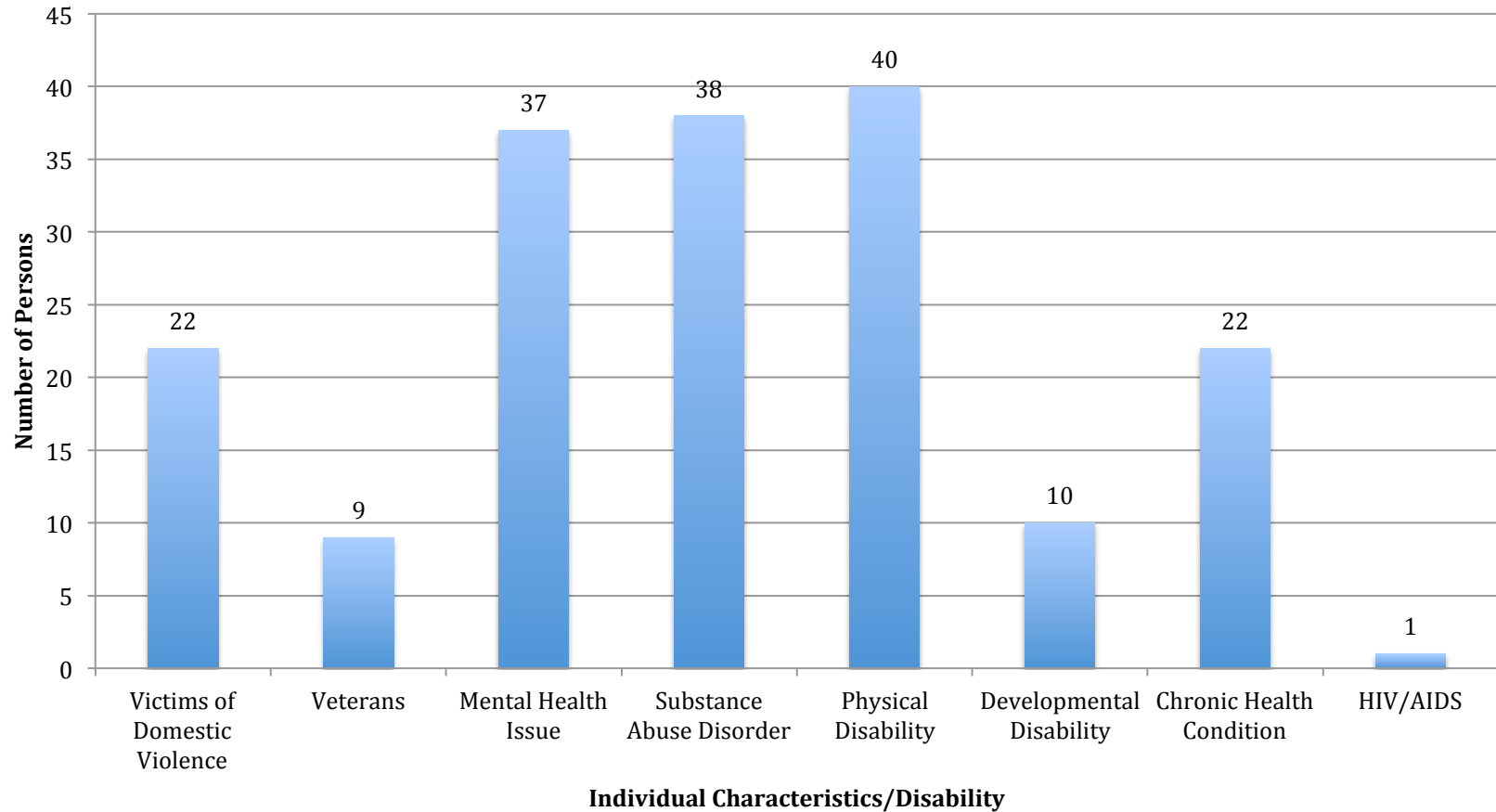
**Fig. A.6. Number of Homeless Persons by Ethnicity**





Household Characteristics – check all that apply to each person

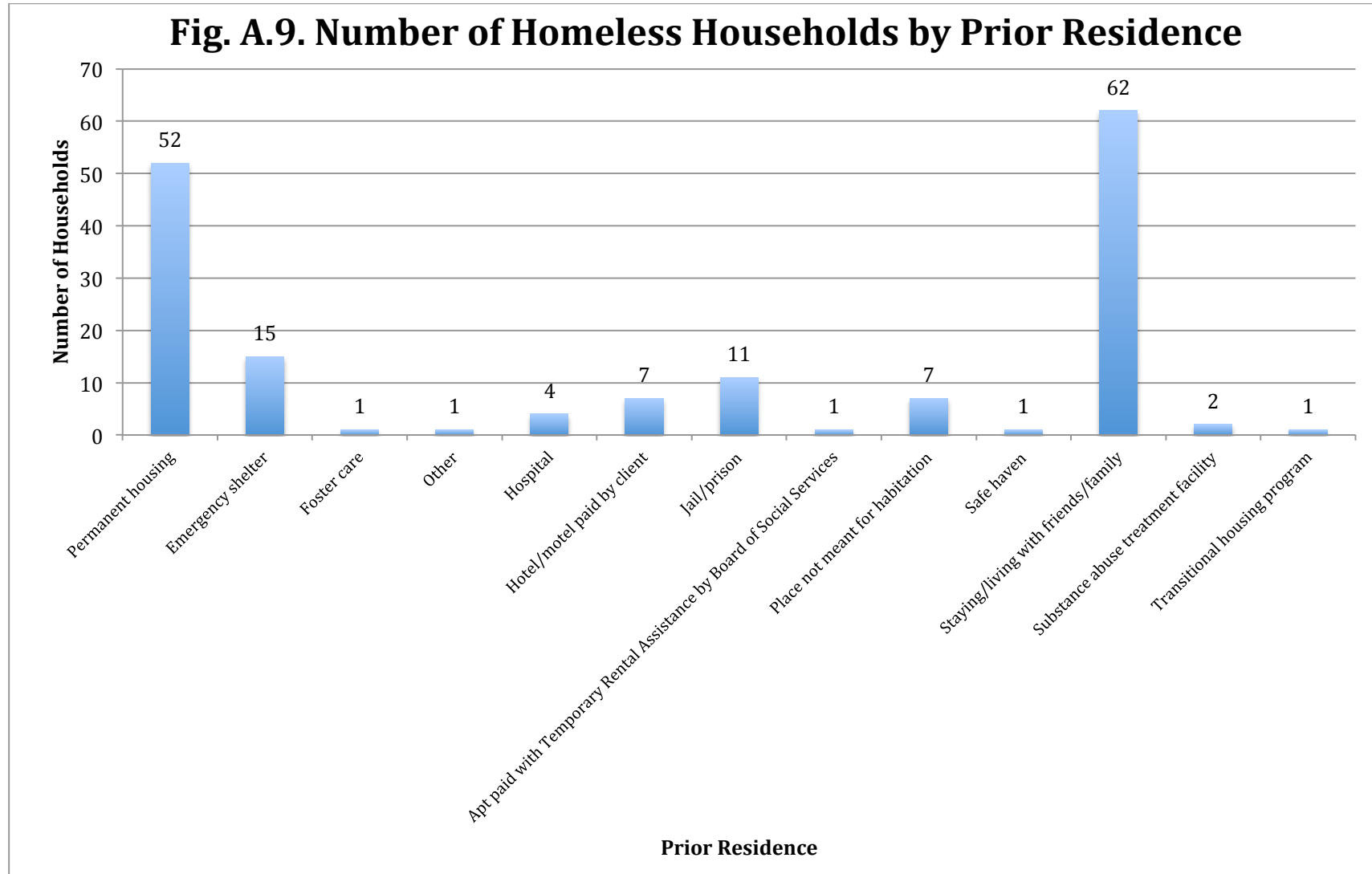
**Fig. A.7. Number of Homeless Persons by Victims of Domestic Violence, Veteran Status, and Disability**



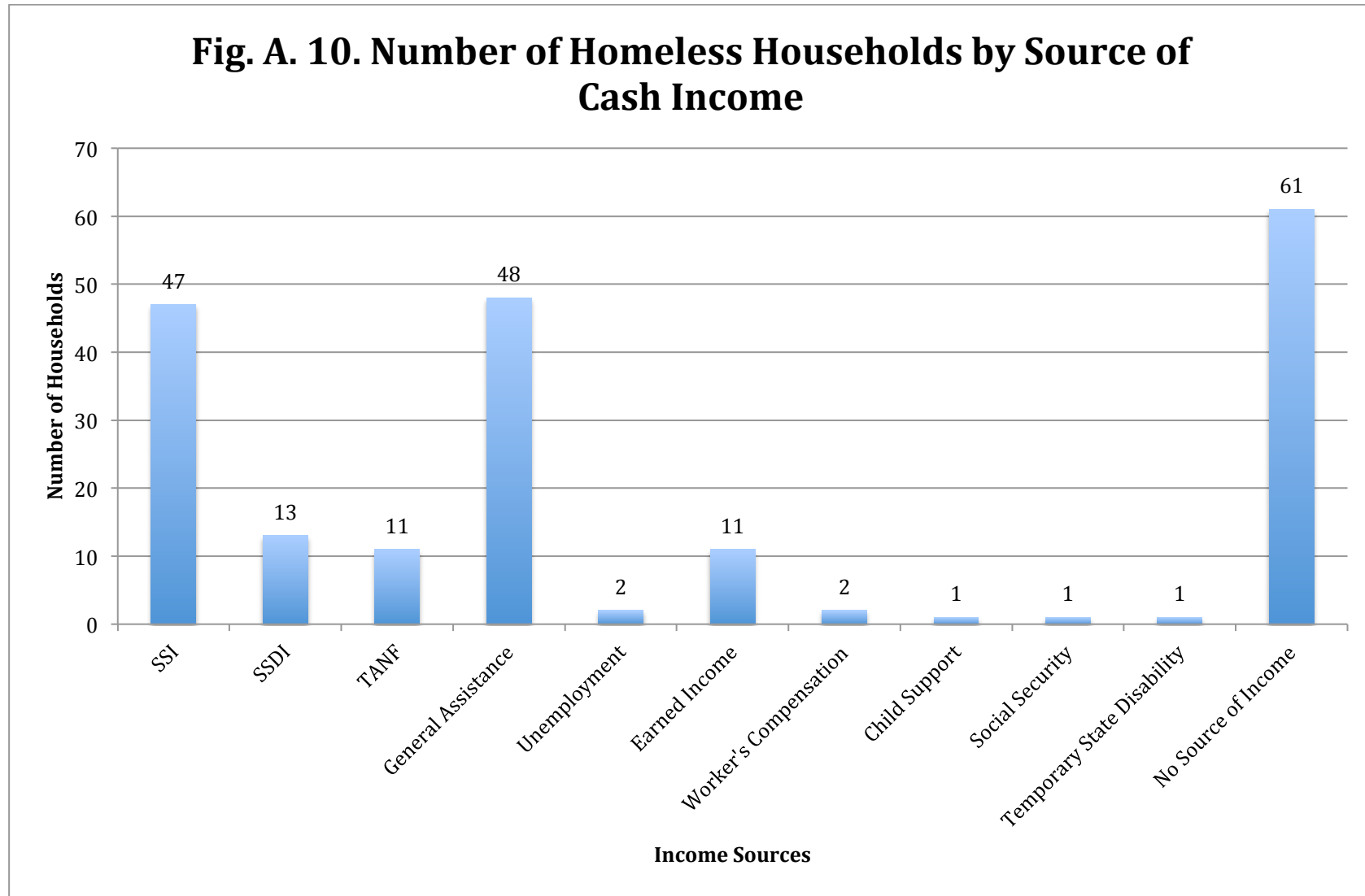
**Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?**

<b>Fig. A.8. Number of Homeless Households by County, State or Country of Last Permanent Address</b>	
<b>Last Permanent Address - County/ State</b>	<b>Number of Households</b>
Atlantic County	1
Camden County	1
Cape May County	1
<b>Cumberland County</b>	<b>151</b>
Delaware	1
Gloucester County	4
Ocean County	1
Tennessee	1
Warren County	1

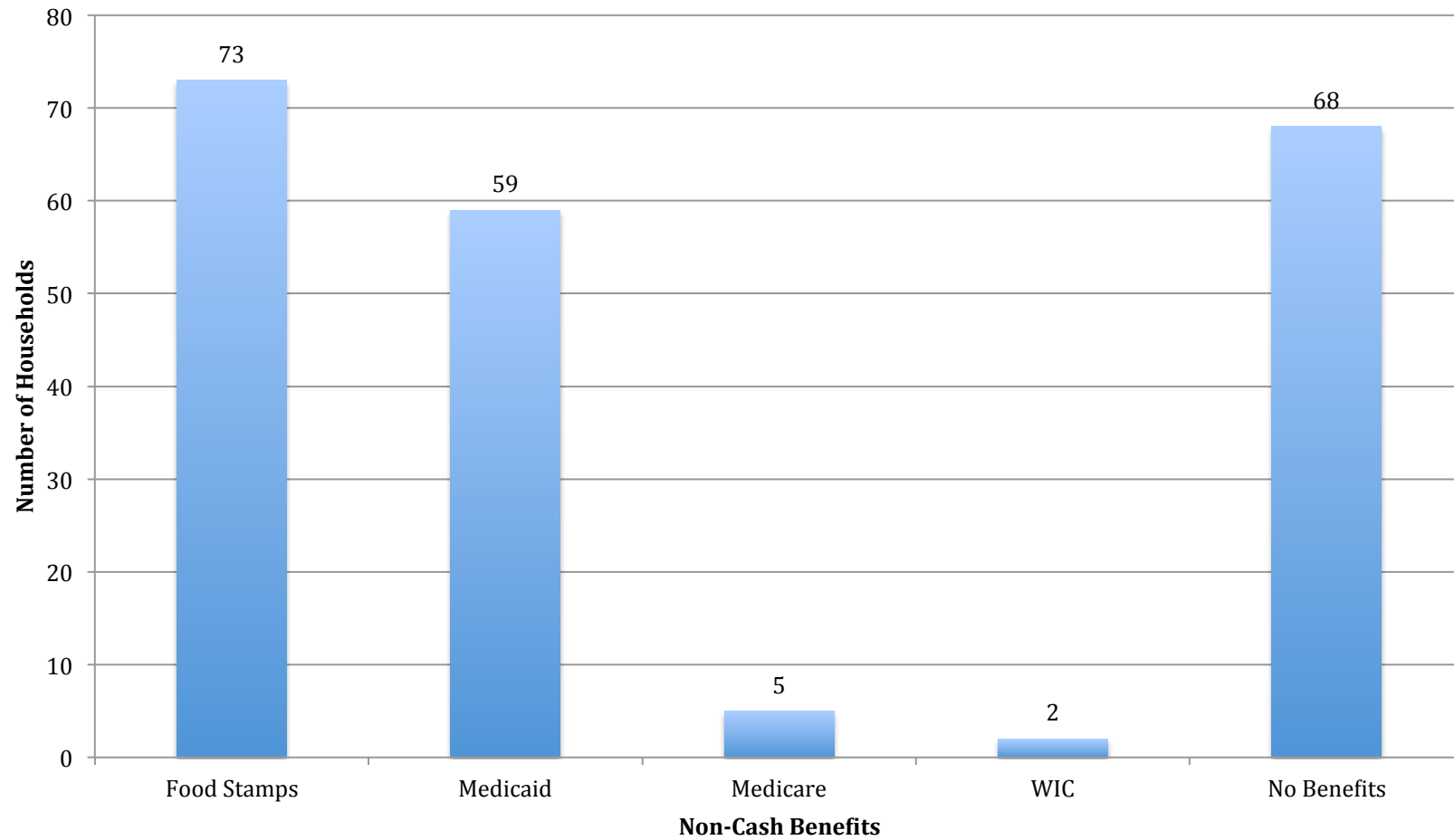
What was your residence prior to your current living situation?



Which of the following sources of income or non-cash benefits do you, or anyone in your household, receive?

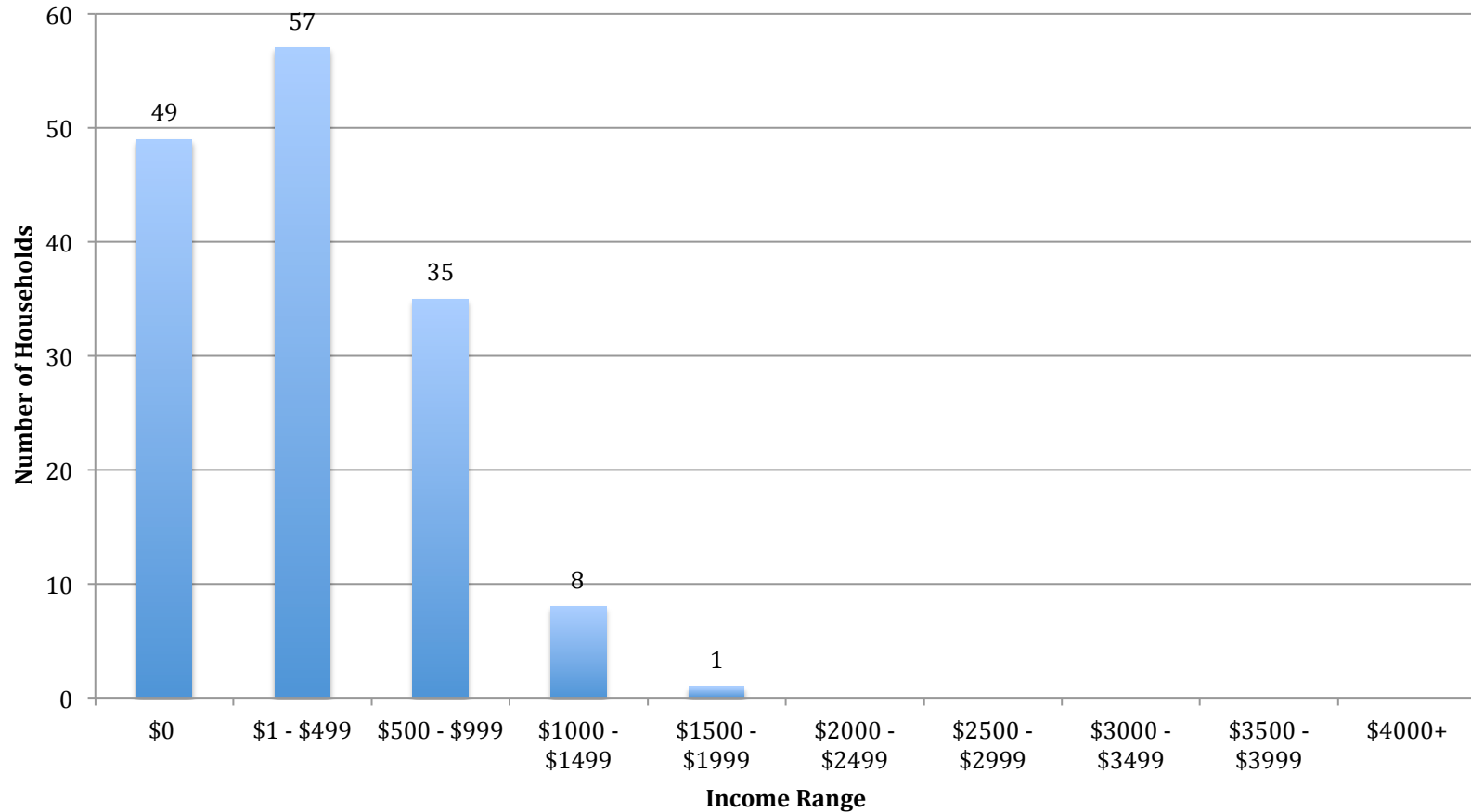


**Fig. A. 11. Number of Homeless Households by Sources of Non-Cash Benefits**



What is your monthly household income?

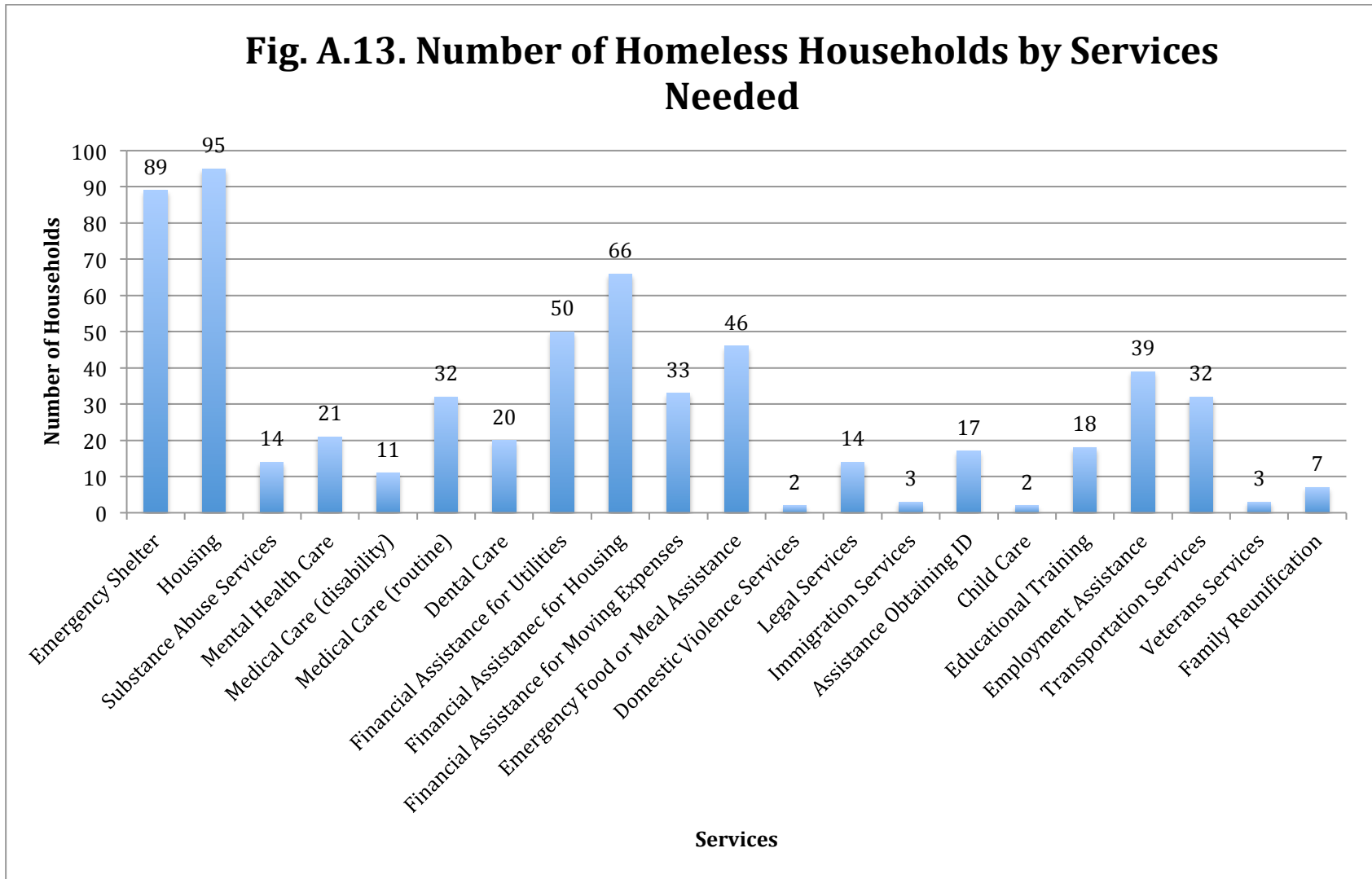
**Fig. A.12. Number of Homeless Households by Monthly Income Range**





Would you, or anyone in your household, like to receive any of the following services?

**Fig. A.13. Number of Homeless Households by Services Needed**



What was the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, your current living situation?

