

Monarch Housing Associates

29 Alden Street, Suite 1B

Cranford, NJ 07016

908.272.5363

www.monarchhousing.org



NJ
2015
Counts!

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

January 27, 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 27th, 2015 or Tuesday, February 3rd, 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 27th, 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 3rd, 2015. This weather led to half the communities counting the households that were homeless on the night of January 27th and the other half counting those that were homeless on the night of February 3rd. 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 January 27th, 2015 a total of 120 households, including 140 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Hunterdon County, according to the 2015 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 7 households, with 9 persons, were identified as chronically homeless.
- There were 0 unsheltered homeless persons 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. While the comparisons in this report are accurate, the numbers listed for 2014 may not match the report that was released last year for this reason.

On the night of January 27th, 2015, a total of 140 persons, in 120 households, were experiencing homelessness in Hunterdon County, according to the 2015 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 35 persons (33.3%) and 22 households (22.4%) from 2014. Hunterdon County had 1.4% New Jersey’s statewide homeless population in 2015.

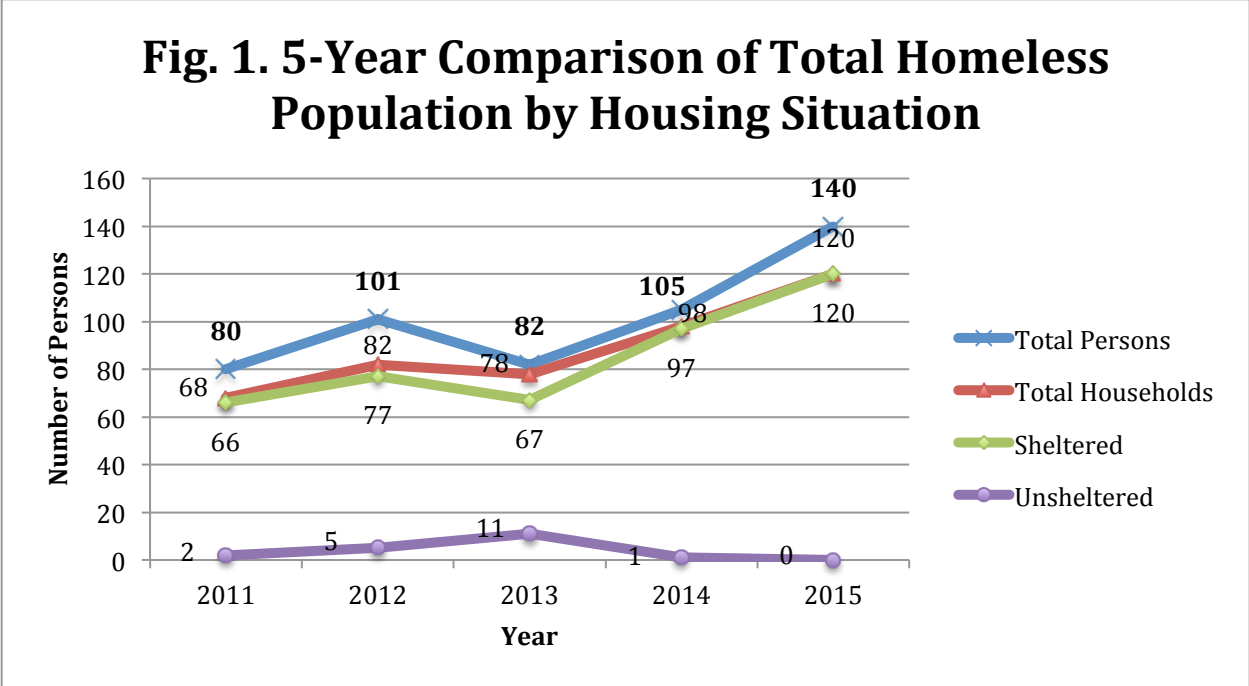


Figure 1 shows that, in 2015, 120 homeless households were sheltered and 0 were unsheltered on the night of the count. The total number of those counted as sheltered represents an increase of 23 households from 2014, however, the unsheltered population decreased from 1 to 0 persons.

Fig. 2. Percentage of Households by County of Last Permanent Address

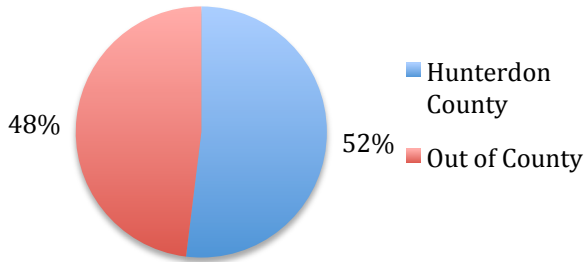


Figure 1 also shows that, over the past five years, the total number of homeless persons has been fluctuating slightly in Hunterdon County, with the highest count in 2015 (140), representing overall a 75% increase from 2011 to 2015.

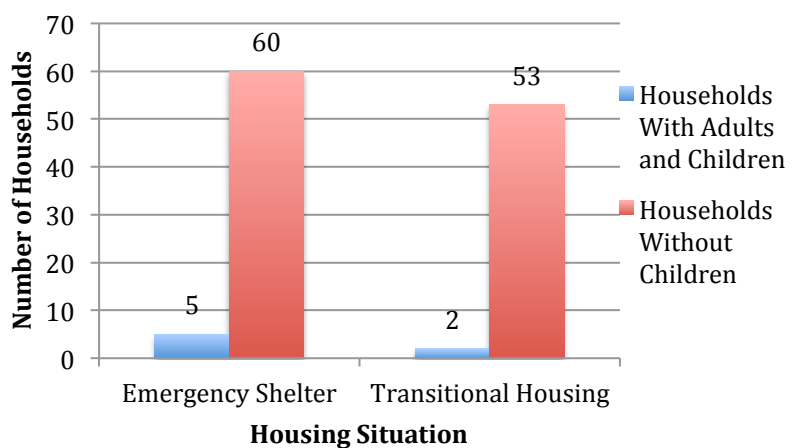
As Figure 2 shows, 48% of homeless households counted in Hunterdon County reported that their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless was outside of the county.

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 120 homeless households counted in Hunterdon County in 2015, 7 (5.8%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult. These families included 24 persons, including 16 children under age 18. The average family size was 3.6 persons. Figure 3 shows that 2 families (28.6%) were staying in transitional housing on the night of the count. The remaining 5 (71.4%) families were in emergency shelters.

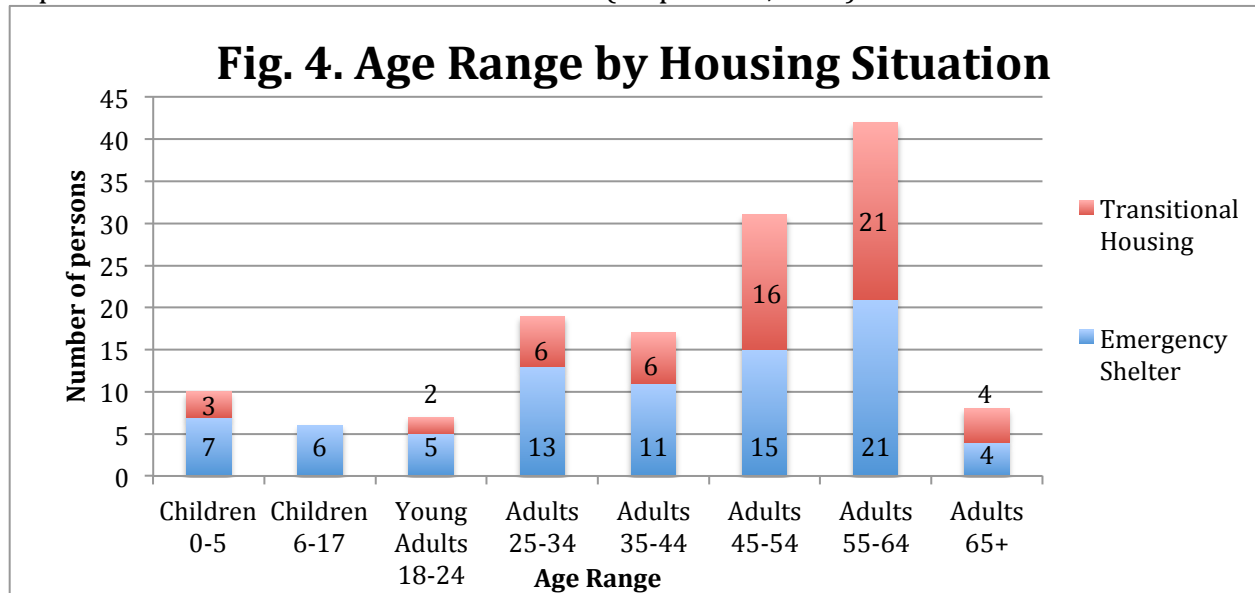
Fig. 3. Homeless Households by Housing Situation



94.2% (113) of the homeless households counted in Hunterdon County were households without children under 18. 110 of the 113 were adult individuals, the remaining 3 households were adult only households that were composed of 6 total adults. 53.1% of all adult-only households were staying in emergency shelters.

Demographics

The majority (117 persons, 83.6%) of those experiencing homelessness in Hunterdon County on the night of the count were adults over age 24. There were a total of 7 (5%) homeless young adults between 18 and 24 years old, and 16 (11.4%) children under 18 years old as well. Figure 4 shows that the majority of homeless children who were under the age of 18 were between 0 and 5 years of age (10, 62.5%). The age range most represented was adults between 55 and 64 (42 persons, 30%).

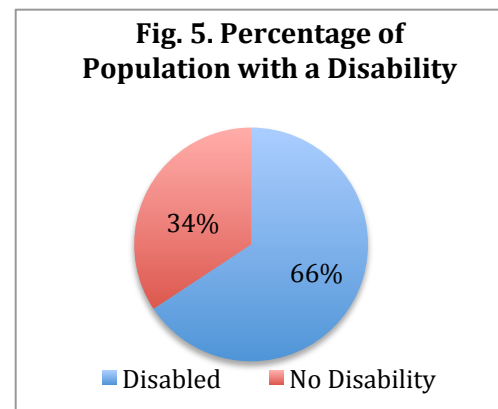


33.6% of homeless respondents were female, and 66.4% were male.

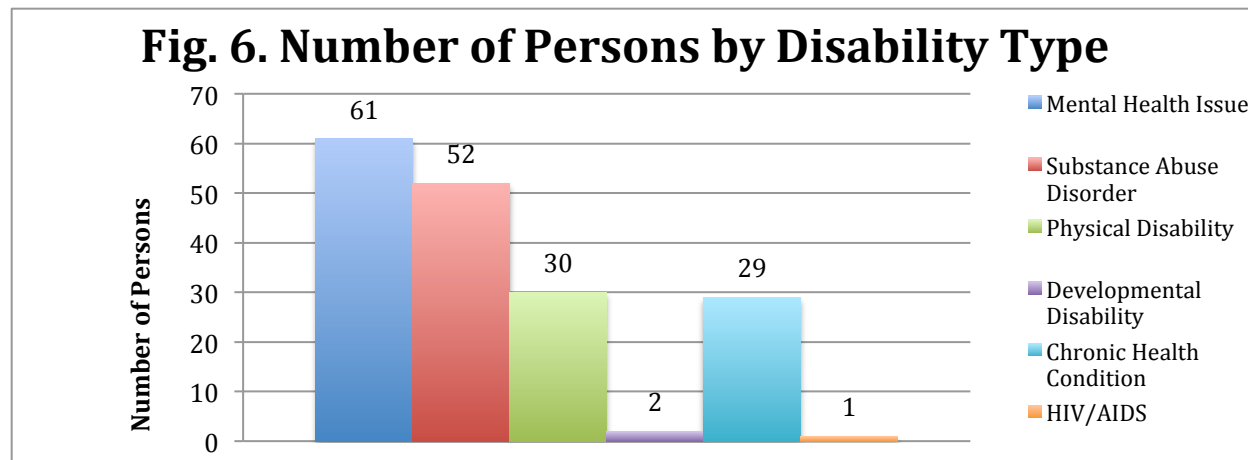
67.9% of respondents identified their race as White, making that the largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported. The next largest group self-identified as Black or African American (28.6%), followed by those identifying as Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian (1.4%). With regard to ethnicity, 12.9% of respondents identified themselves as Hispanic.

Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 66% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 74.2% of adults 18 or older reported some type of disability; no children reported a disability. Figure 6 shows the number of the homeless persons that identified as having various disabilities. The most prevalent disabilities were mental health issues, substance abuse disorders, and physical disabilities.

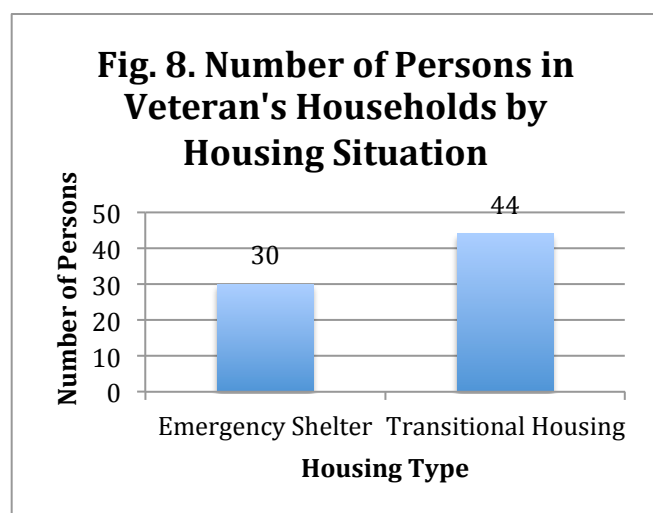
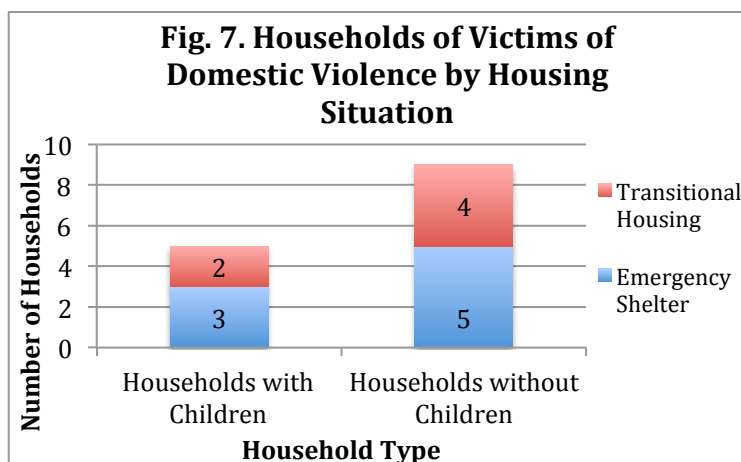


Among disabled adults, 66.3% reported mental health issues making this the most prevalent disability; representing 49.2% of the total adult homeless population.



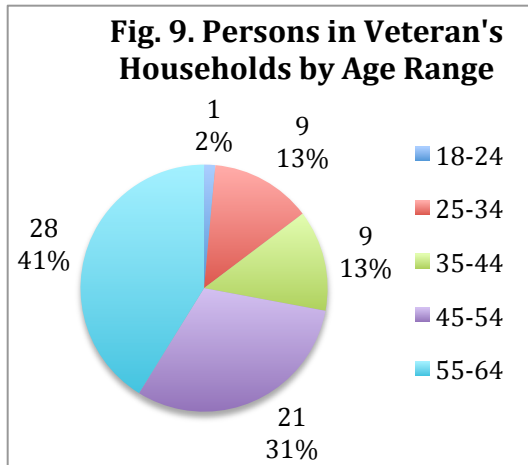
Victims of Domestic Violence

On the night of the count, in Hunterdon County, 14 homeless households reported having a victim of domestic violence. Figure 7 shows that 9 (64.3%) of these households were households made up of adult individuals, while 5 (35.7%) households were families with at least 1 adult and 1 child under 18.



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.



74 homeless veterans were counted on the night of the count, this is an increase of 14 veterans, from the 60 that were counted in 2014. All veterans were members of adult-only households. 30 (40.5%) were staying in emergency shelter, while 44 (59.5%) were in transitional housing.

67 (90.5%) of the veterans experiencing homelessness in Hunterdon County were male, and 7 (9.5%) were female. 55.4% identified their race as White and 40.5% as Black or African-American.

67 of the 74, 90.5%, reported having some kind of disability. The most common disabilities cited among these were mental health issues; with 43 veterans (58.1%), and substance abuse issues, reported by 38 veterans (51.4%). The three types of service that homeless veterans sought most were emergency shelter (86.5%), mental health care (63.5%) and financial assistance for housing (55.4%).

Income and Benefits

Among all the households experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, 38.3% had no source of income, and 13.3% reported receiving some form of earned cash income. The most common sources of cash income among homeless households, other than earned income were General Assistance (17.5%) and Veterans' Disability Benefits (10.8%). Figure 11 shows the average monthly income for all homeless households.

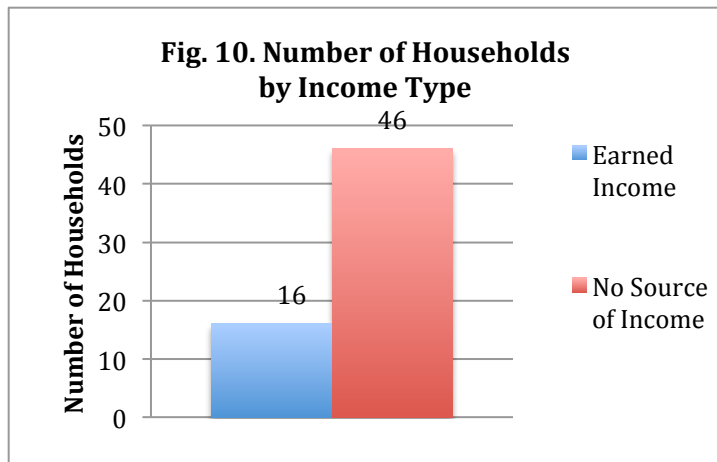


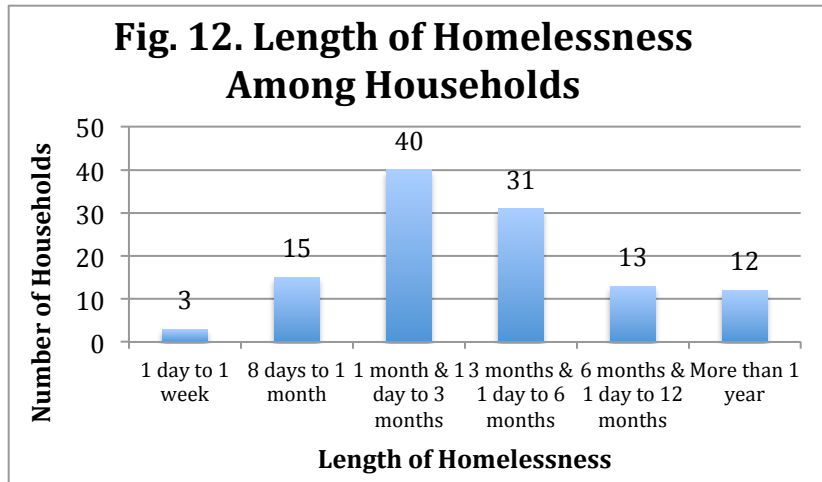
Figure 11. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation

	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing
Average for All Households	\$575.52	\$945.17

6.7% of households reported that their household was receiving no kind of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. VA Benefits was the top reported non-cash benefit, and was received by 56.7% of households. 30% were receiving Medicaid and 17.5% reported that they were receiving Food Stamps (SNAP).

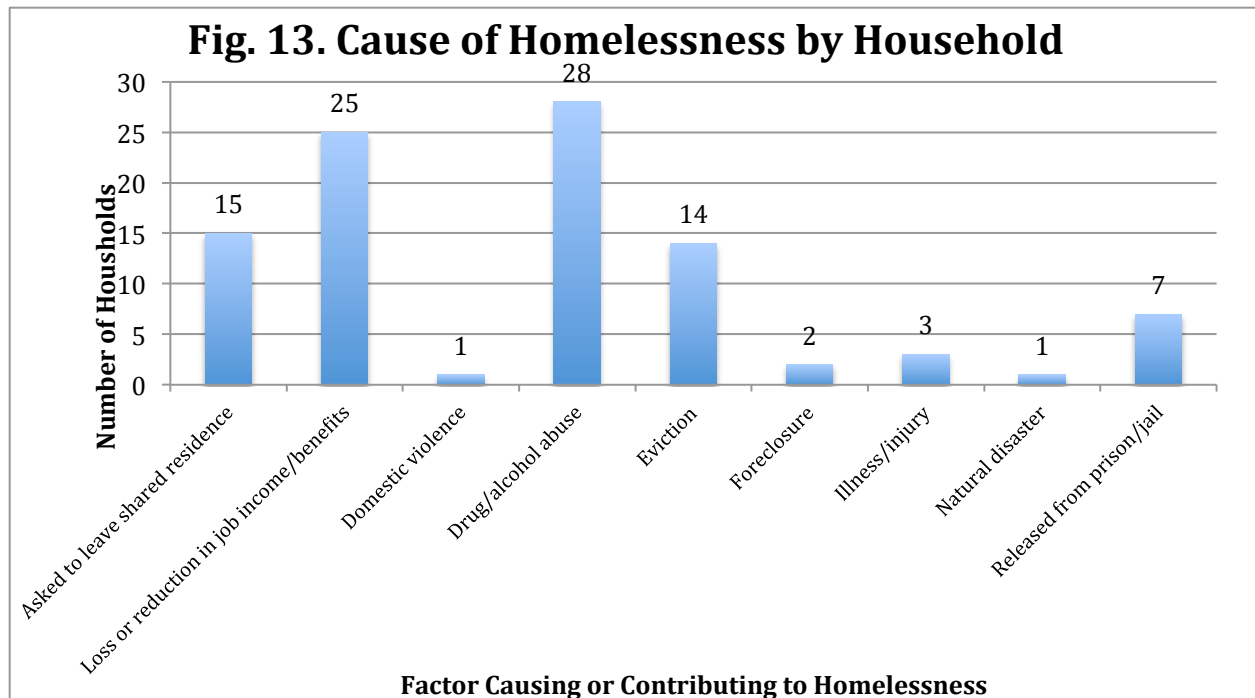
Length of Homelessness

Figure 12 shows the lengths of homeless episodes experienced on the night of the count by households in Hunterdon County. More households (40, 33.3%) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted 1 month & 1 day to 3 months.



Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more respondents attributed their homelessness to drug or alcohol abuse (28 households, 23.3%) than any other cause. As Figure 13 shows, the next most common factors reported were a loss or reduction of job income or benefits (20.8%) and being asked to leave a shared residence (12.5%).



When homeless respondents were asked ‘what was your residence prior to your current living situation?’ more said they were living with friends or family (25.8%) than any other type of residence. The next most common response was emergency shelter (20%).

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 currently has 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

7 households, made up of 9 total persons, were chronically homeless in Hunterdon County, according to the 2015 Point-In-Time Count. Chronic homelessness as a percentage of overall homelessness went from 12.4% in 2014 to 6.4% in 2015.

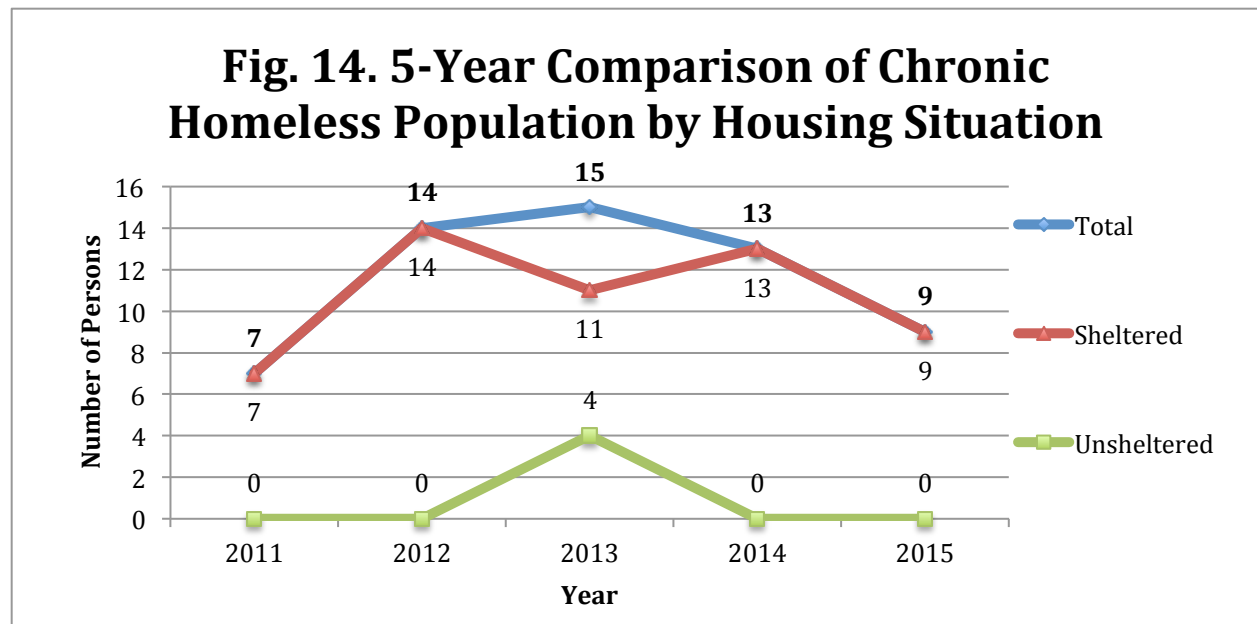
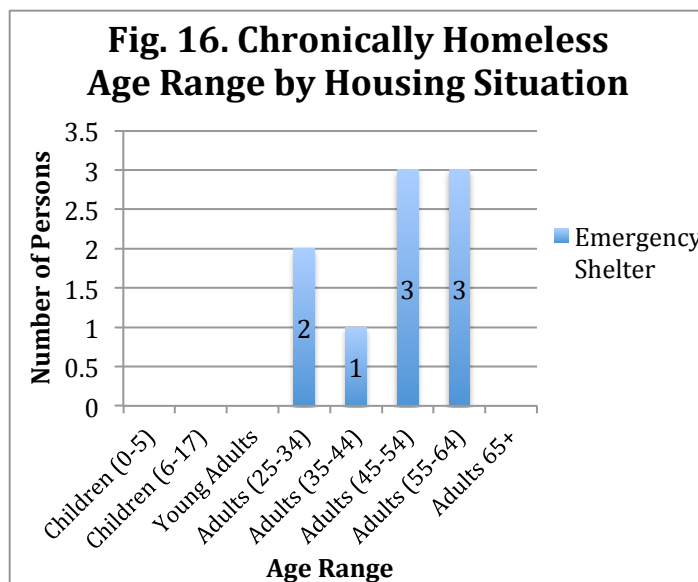
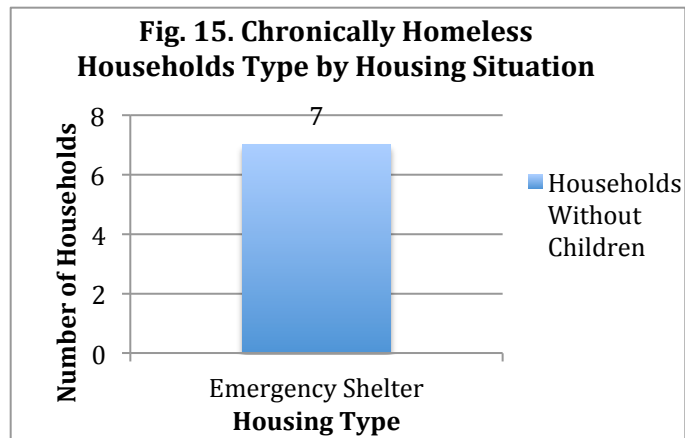


Figure 14 shows the number of chronically homeless respondents who were sheltered or living unsheltered in Hunterdon County from 2011 to 2015. While the 2015 count shows an increase in the chronically homeless since 2011, the 9 counted in 2015 is a decrease of 4 or 30.8% from 2014.

Families and Individuals

Of the 7 chronically homeless households counted in 2015, all were households with no children 17 or younger. There were 2 adult only households composed of 2 adults each, making the chronic homeless count 9 persons. All of these adult-only households were staying in emergency shelters on the night of the count.



Demographics

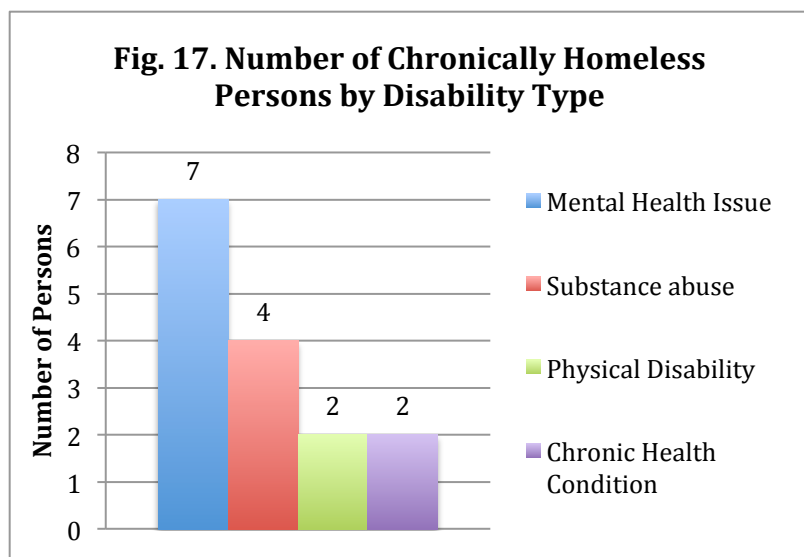
Of the 9 total chronically homeless persons, none were younger than 25 years old.

5 of the 9 (55.6%) of those counted as chronically homeless were male, and 4 (44.4%) were female.

The largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported their race as White (66.7%), and the rest self-identified as Black or African-American (33.3%)

Disabilities

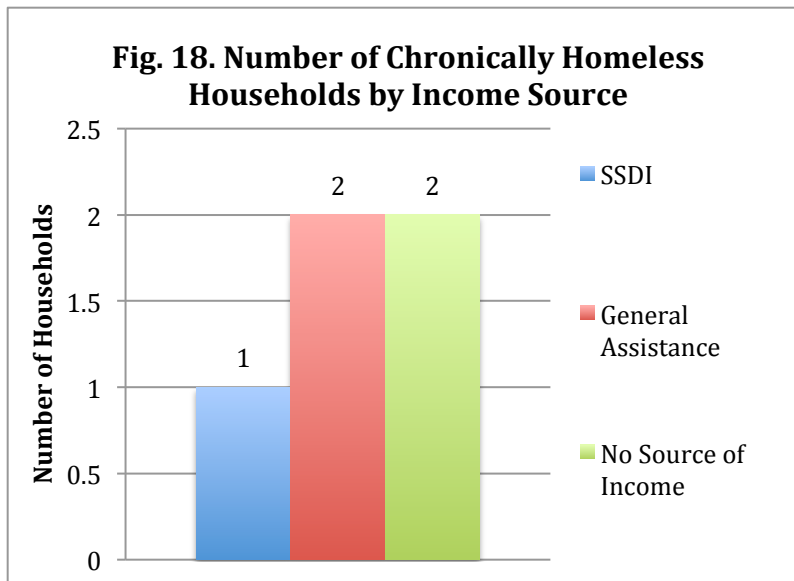
In order to meet the definition of chronically homeless, at least one adult in each household must have some kind of disability. The disabilities most commonly identified were mental health issues (77.8%) and substance abuse disorders (44.4%). The complete numbers of disabilities can be seen in Figure 17.



Subpopulations

There were no chronically homeless persons in Hunterdon County on the night of the count that identified being a victim of domestic violence.

There were 3 chronically homeless veterans identified on the night of the count (33.3%). All 3 were staying in emergency shelters.



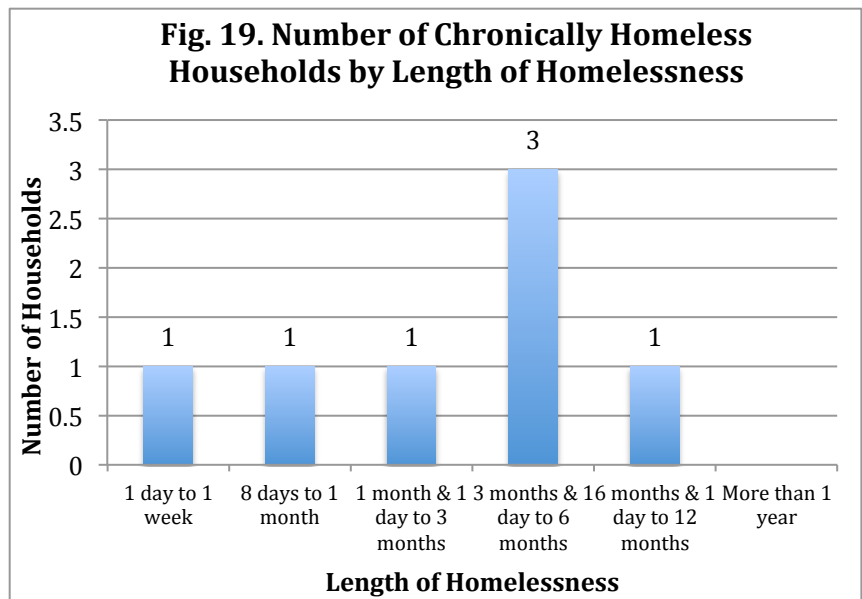
Income and Benefits

Among all the chronically homeless households on the night of the count, 28.6% reported receiving no type of cash income. Figure 18 shows the sources of income received. The most common source of cash income among chronically homeless households was General Assistance (28.6%). No households reported any earned income.

There were no chronically homeless households on the night of the count that reported they were not receiving any type of non-cash benefit. Food Stamps (SNAP) and Medicaid were the most reported non-cash benefits among the chronically homeless households, with 57.1% reporting each benefit.

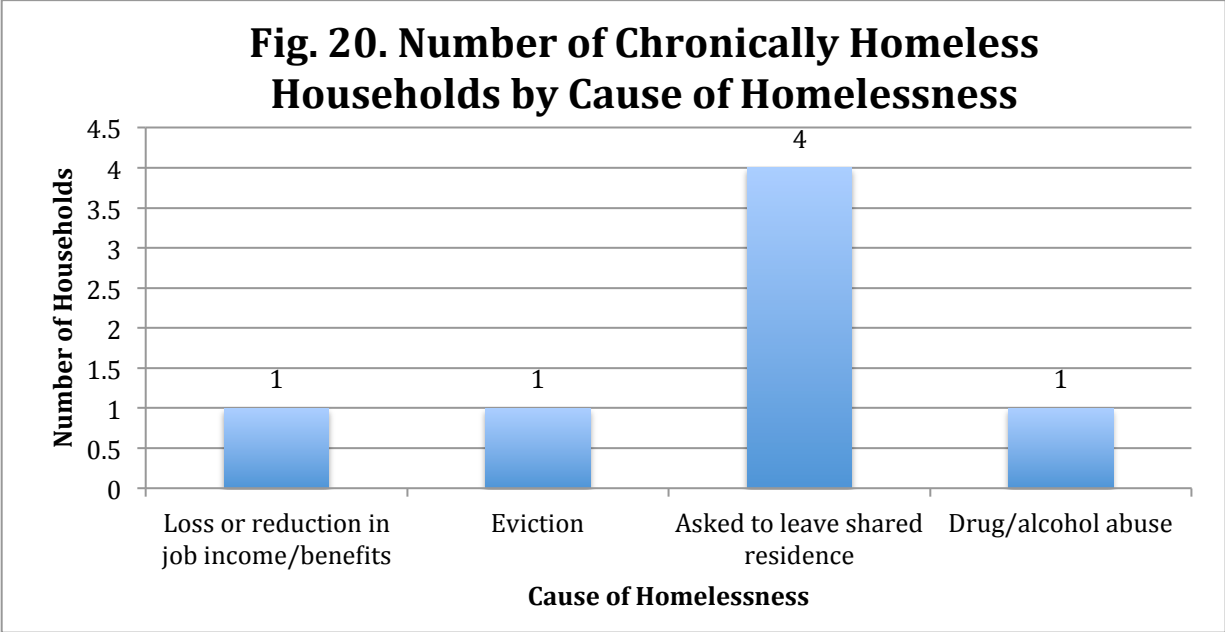
Length of Homelessness

Figure 19 shows 42.9% of chronically homeless households reported their most recent, continuous episode of homeless had lasted for 3 months and 1 day to 6 months. There were no chronically homeless households that had been homeless more than 1 year, a decrease from the 1 household in 2014.



Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, 57.1% of chronically homeless households cited being asked to leave a shared residence as a primary cause of their homelessness.



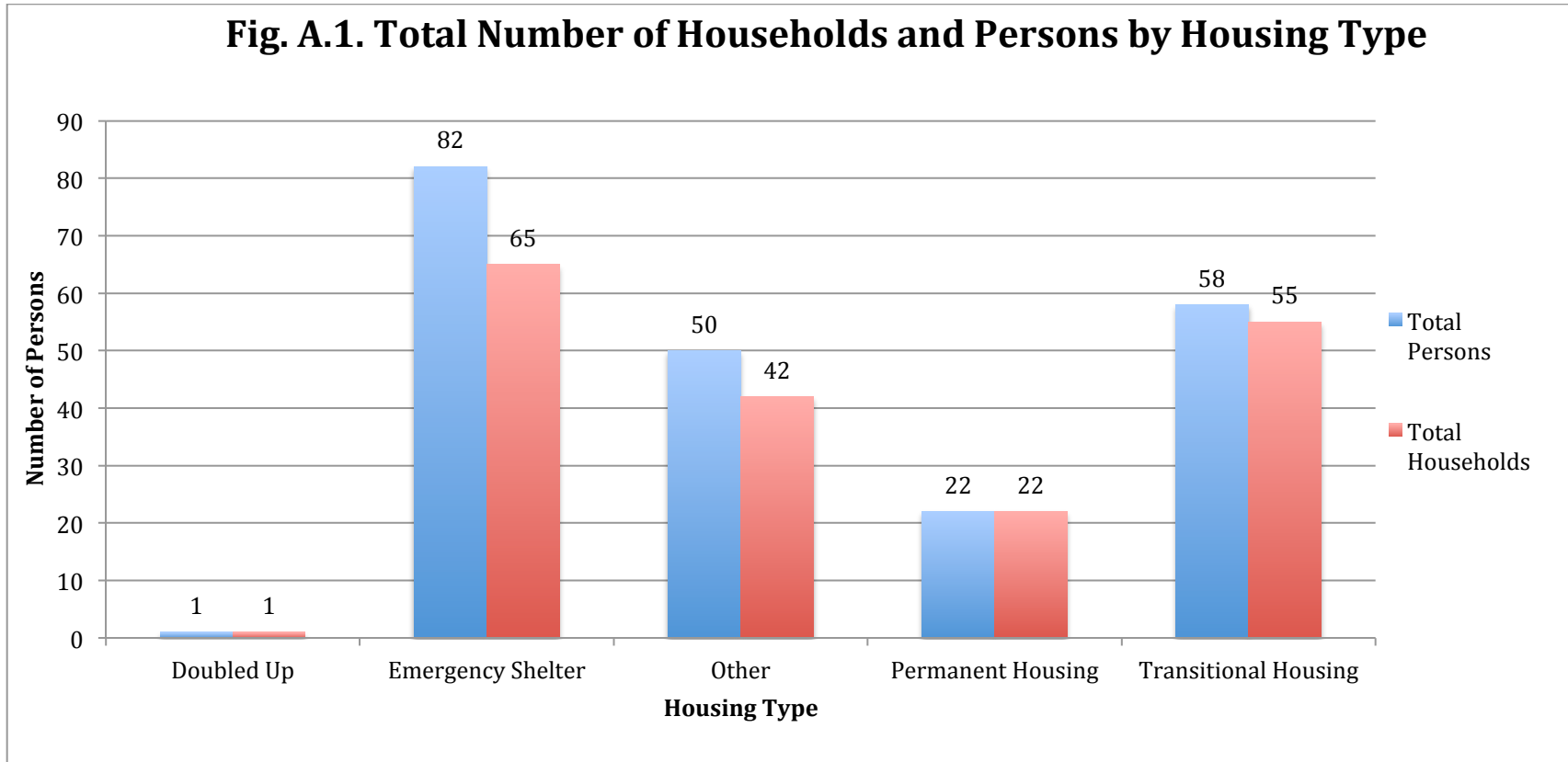
V. Findings for the Unsheltered Homeless

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.”

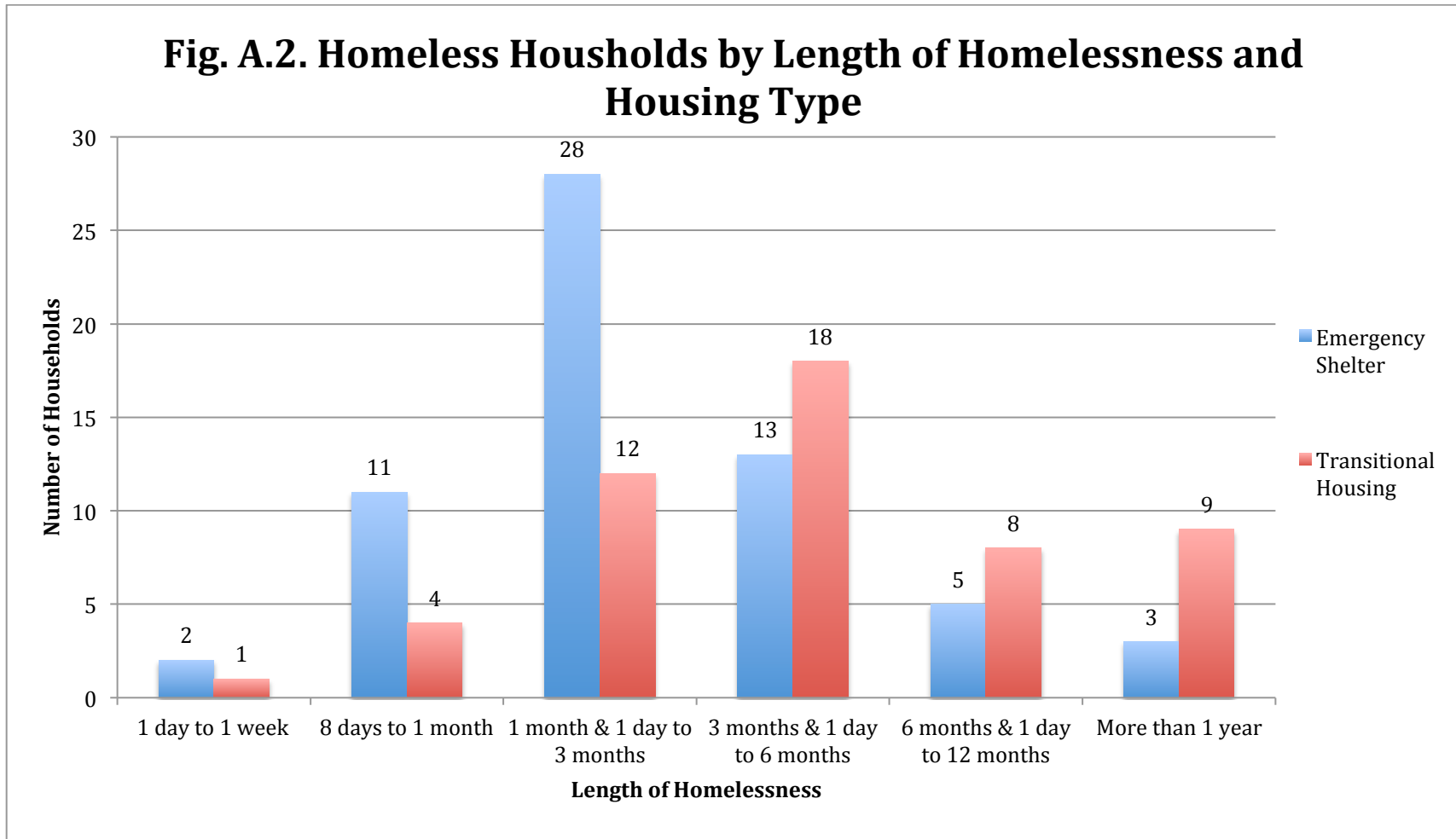
There were 0 unsheltered persons counted in Hunterdon County on the night of the count in 2015. This is a decrease from the 1 person counted in 2014.

VI. Appendix

Where did you spend the night of Tuesday, January 27, 2015?



How long have you been in your current living situation?



Who was homeless with you on the night of January 27th?

Fig. A.3. Number of Homeless Persons by Age Range and Housing Type

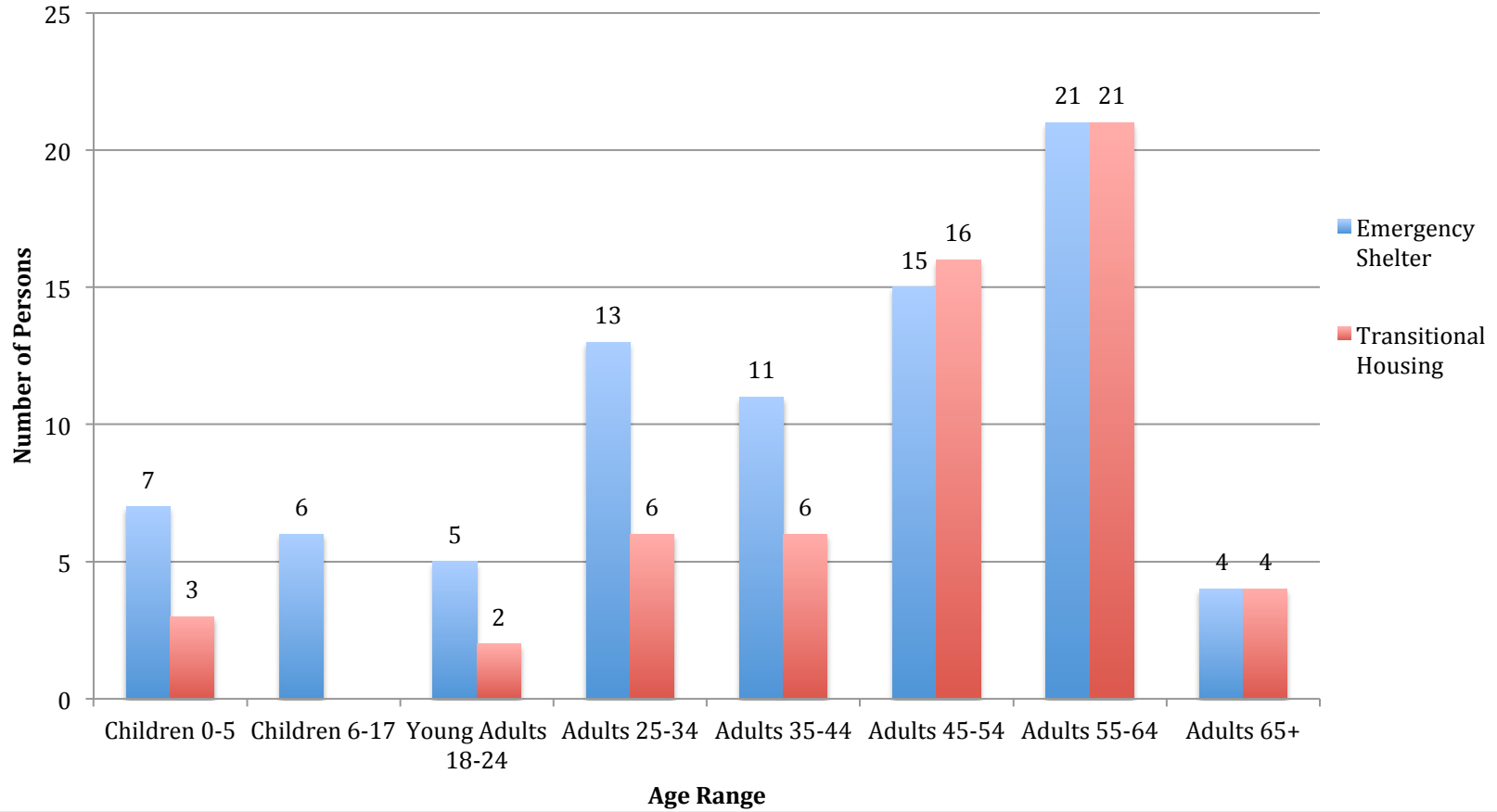


Fig. A.4. Number of Homeless Persons by Gender and Housing Situation

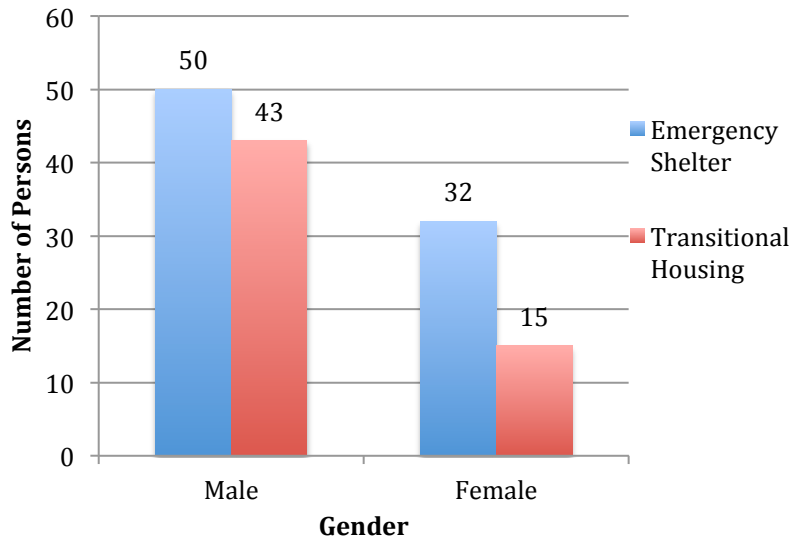


Fig. A.5. Number of Homeless Persons by Race

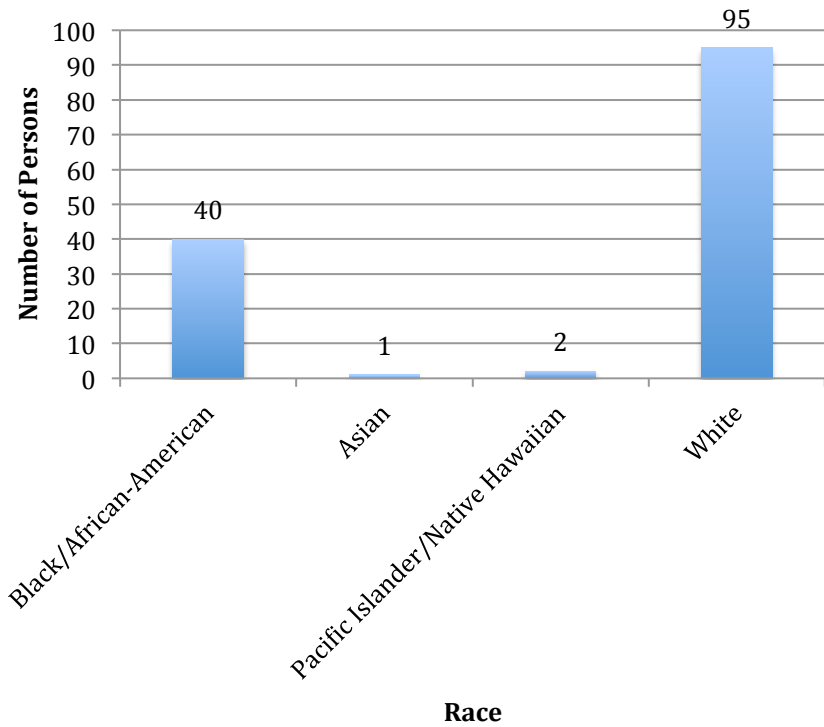
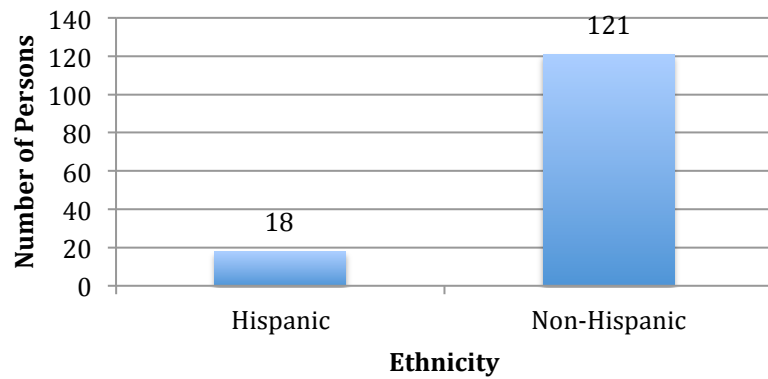
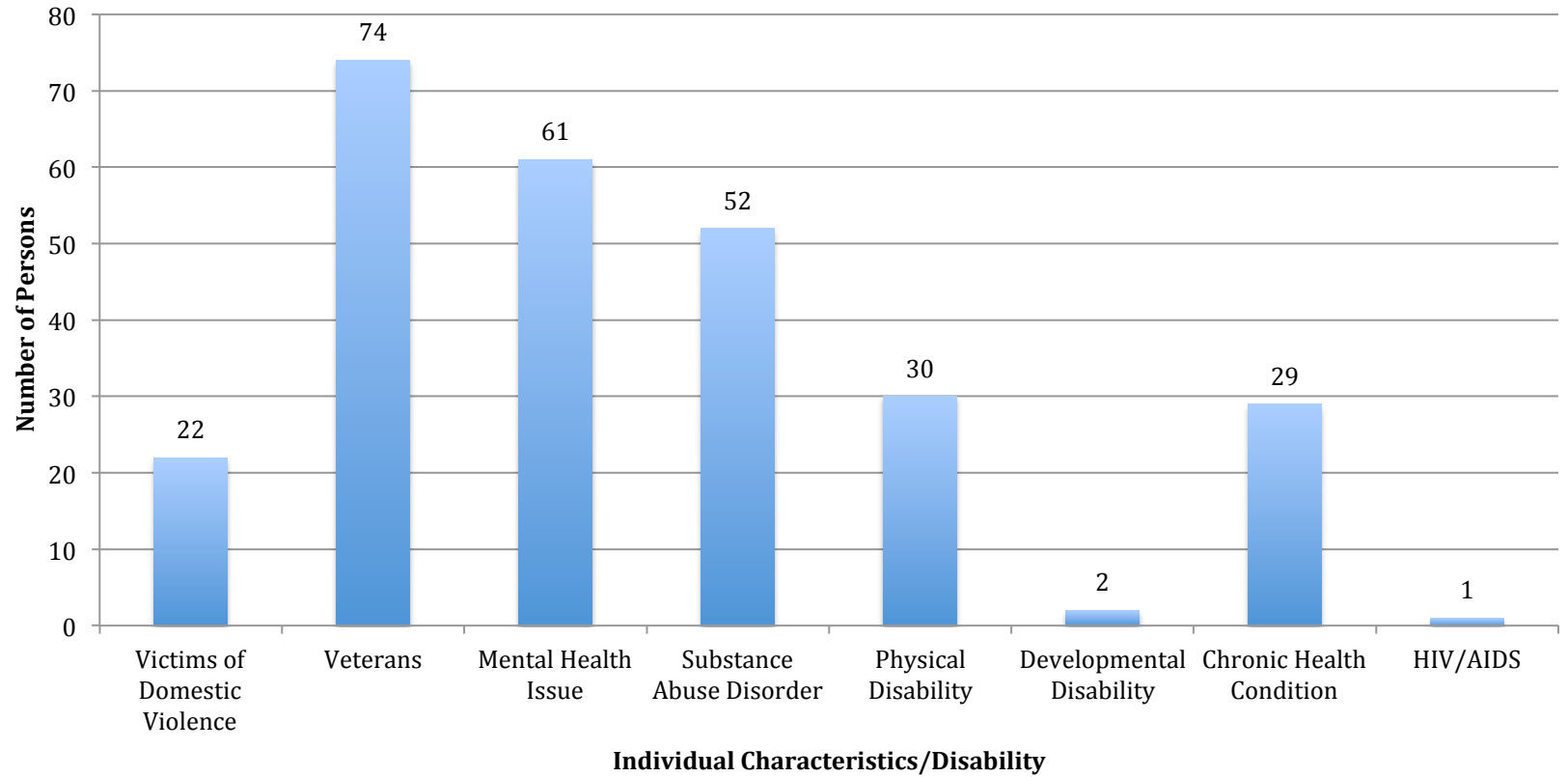


Fig. A.6. Number of Homeless Persons by Ethnicity



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

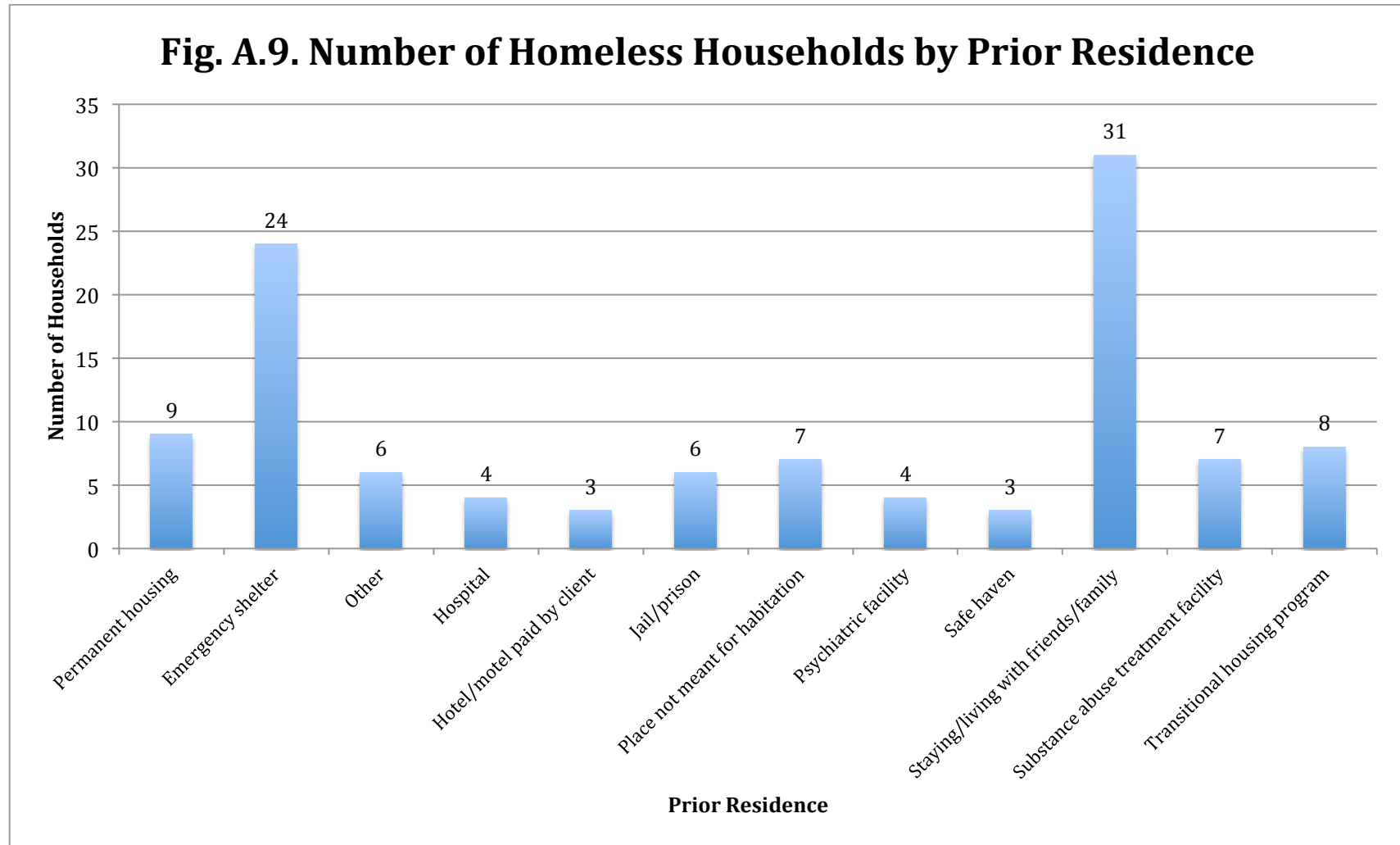


Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?

Fig. A.8. Number of Homeless Households by County, State or Country of Last Permanent Address

Last Permanent Address - County/State	Number of Households
Essex County	7
Hudson County	3
Hunterdon County	40
Maryland	1
Mercer County	1
Middlesex County	3
Monmouth County	2
Morris County	2
New York	1
Ocean County	3
Passaic County	2
Pennsylvania	1
Somerset County	6
Sussex County	1
Union County	2
Virginia	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?

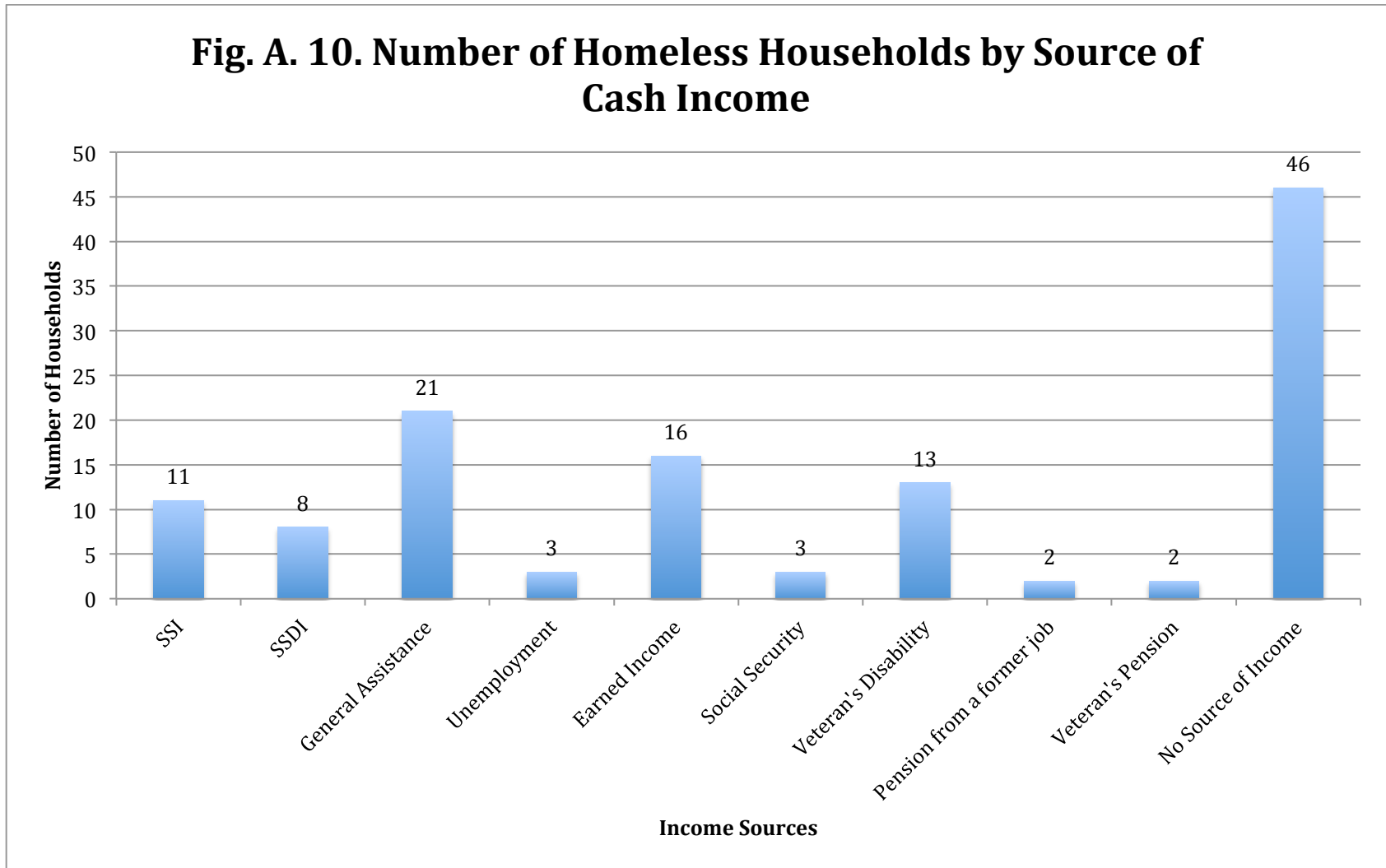
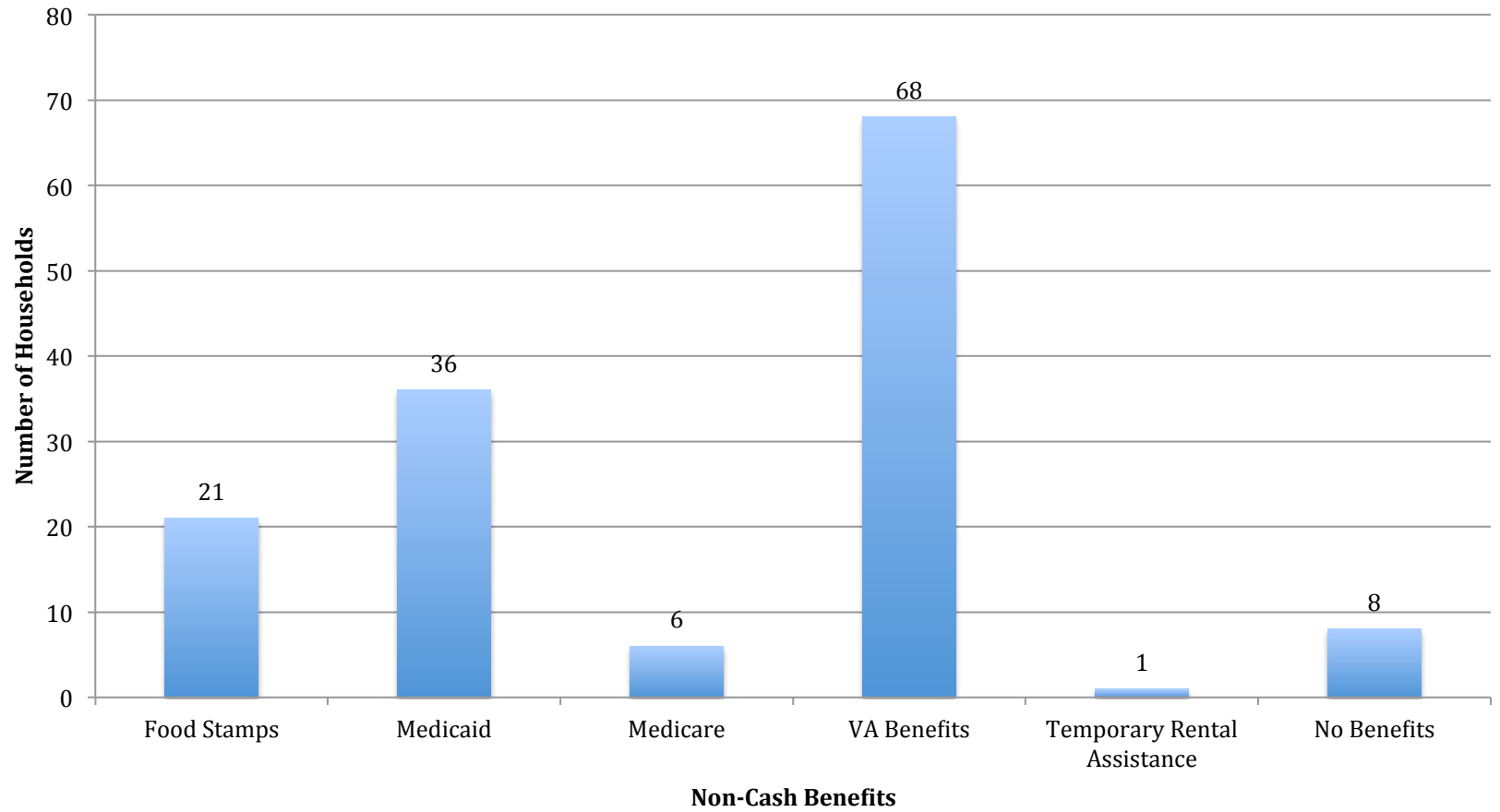
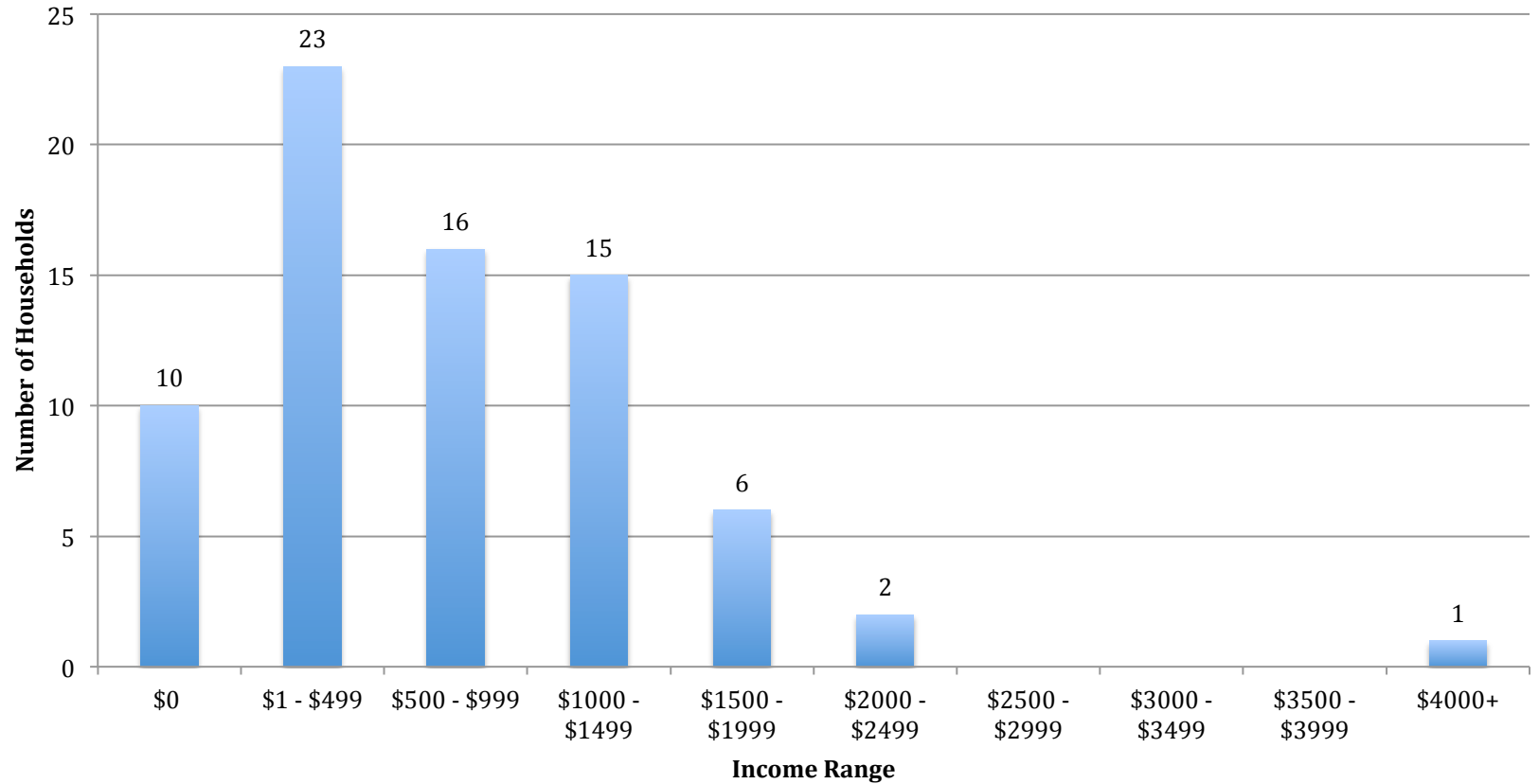


Fig. A. 11. Number of Homeless Households by Sources of Non-Cash Benefits



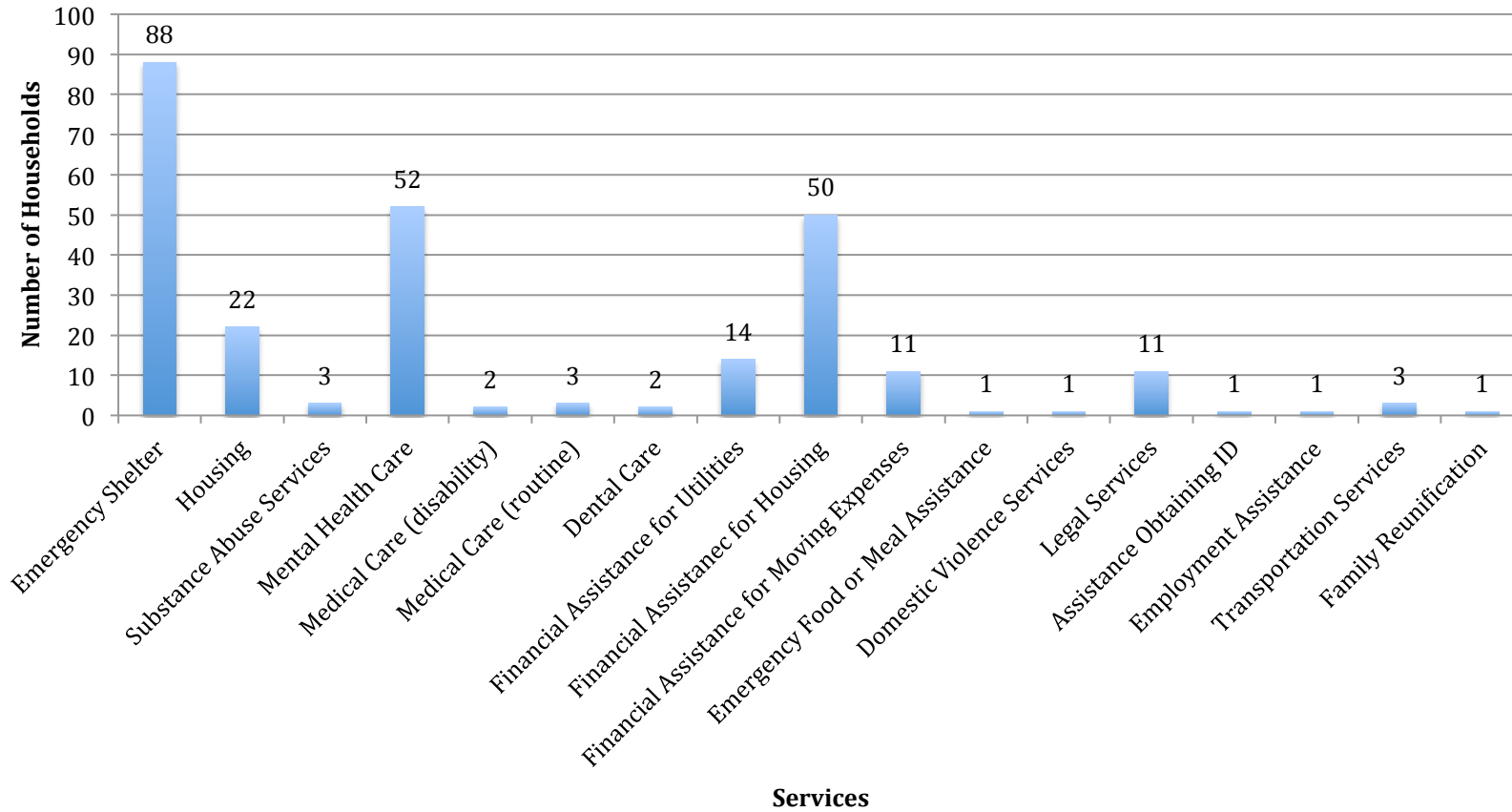
What is your monthly household income?

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?

