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

# Passaic 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 320 households, including 459 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Passaic County, according to the 2015 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 38 households, with 43 persons, were identified as chronically homeless.
- 30 unsheltered homeless persons were counted.

#### Total Homeless Population

On the night of February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015, a total of 459 persons, in 320 households, were experiencing homelessness in Passaic County, according to the 2015 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 83 persons (22.1%) and 71 households (28.5%) from 2014. Passaic County had 4.5% of New Jersey’s statewide homeless population in 2015.

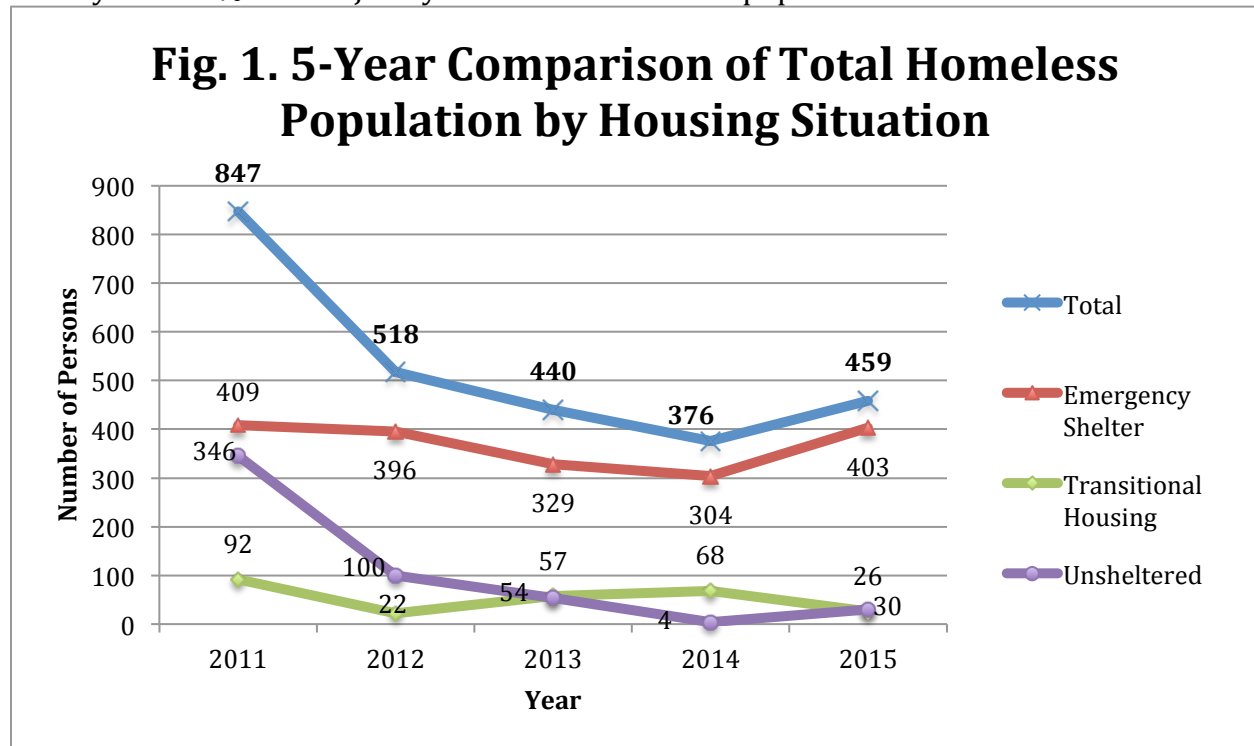
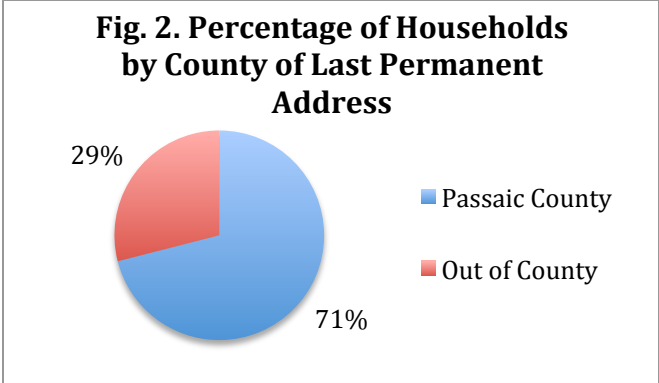


Figure 1 shows that, in 2015, 403 homeless persons stayed in emergency shelters, 26 stayed in transitional housing, and 30 were unsheltered on the night of the count. The emergency shelter and unsheltered totals show increases from 2014, increasing by 99 and 26 persons, respectively.

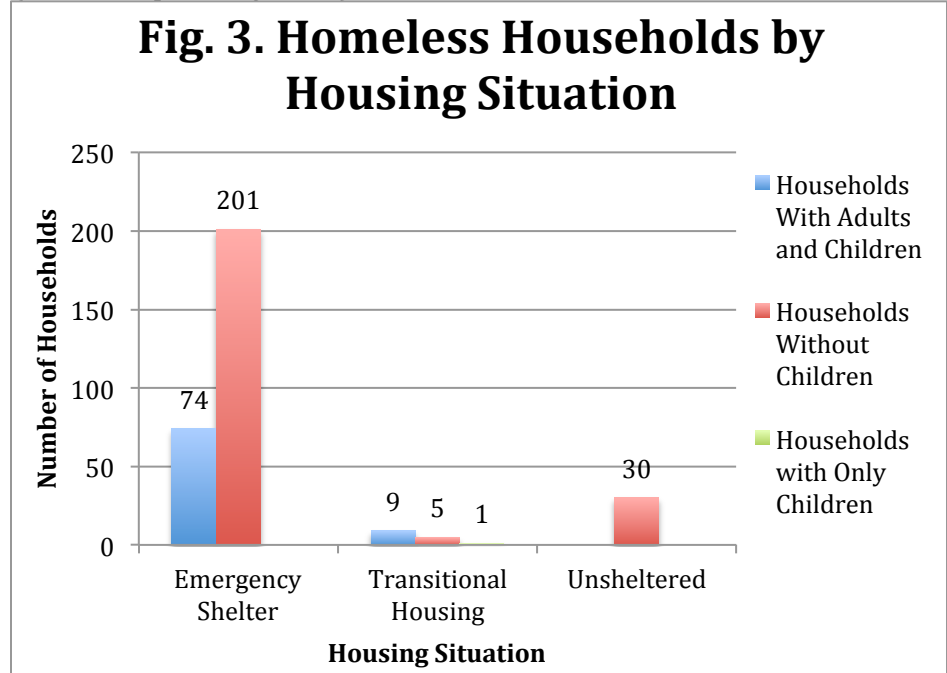
Figure 1 also shows that, over the past five years, the total number of homeless persons has been falling in Passaic County. From 2011 to 2015, the total number of homeless persons has dropped by 388 persons (45.8%).

As Figure 2 shows, 29% of homeless households in Passaic 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 320 households counted in Passaic County in 2015, 83 (25.9%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult, an 18 household increase from families counted in 2014. These families included 218 persons, including 135 children under age 18. The average family size was 2.6

persons. Figure 3 shows that 74 families were staying in emergency shelter (89.2%) and there were no unsheltered families with adults and children in 2015.

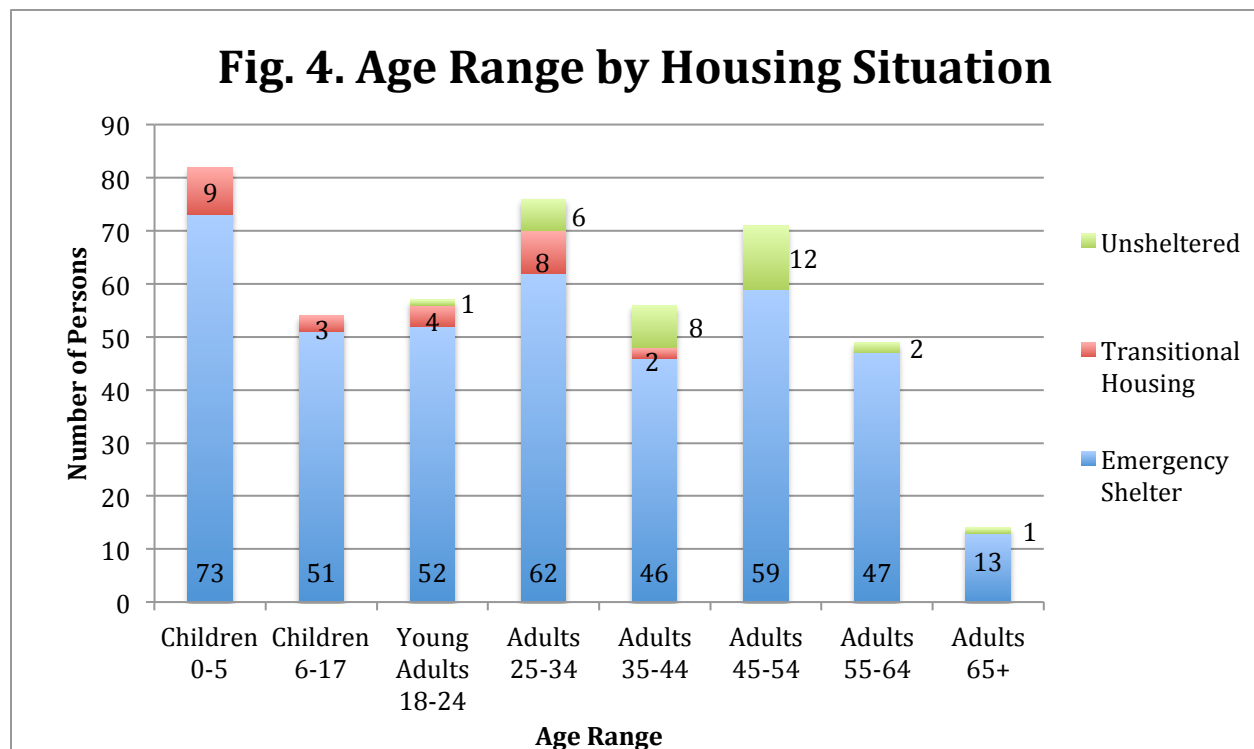
73.8% (236) of the homeless households in Passaic County were households without children under 18, and they were composed of 240 adult individuals. This is an increase of 53 (29%) adult only households from 2014. 201 (85.2%) of these adult-only households were staying in emergency shelters, 5 (2.1%) were in transitional housing, and 30 (12.7%) were unsheltered.



As Figure 3 indicates, 1 (0.3%) household with only children under 18 years old was reported in 2015. This matches the 1 household that was counted in 2014. This household had only one child who was staying in a transitional housing project on the night of the count.

## Demographics

57 (12.4%) homeless persons experiencing homelessness on the night of the count were adults between 18 and 24 years old, 266 (58%) were adults over age 24, and 136 (29.6%) were children under 18 years old. Figure 4 shows that the majority of homeless children who were under the age of 18 were between 0 and 5 years of age (82, 60.3%). Children 0 to 5 years old was also the age range most represented. Among homeless adults, more were between 25 and 34 than any other age range (76 persons, 23.5%).



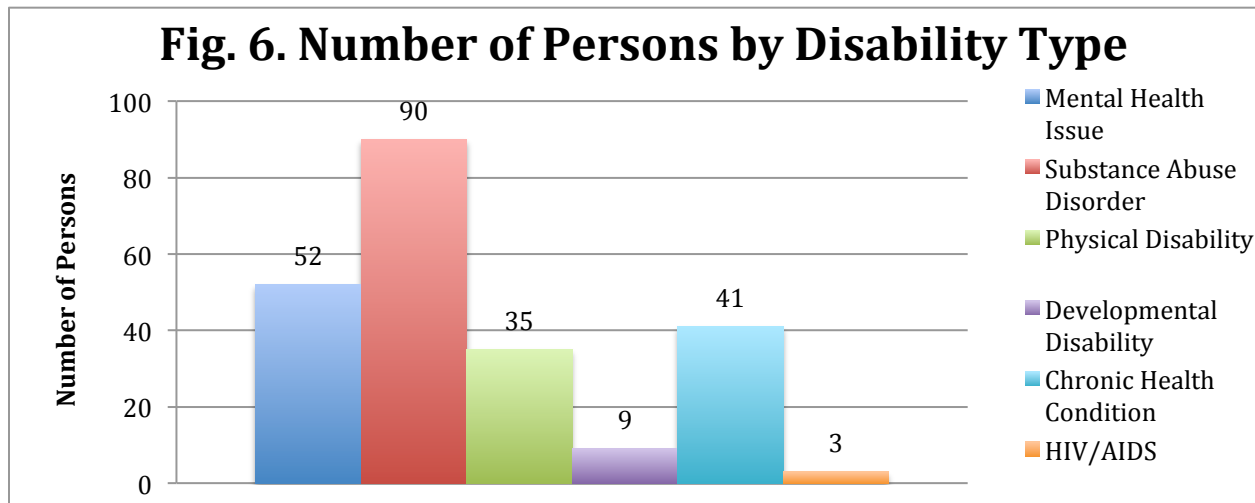
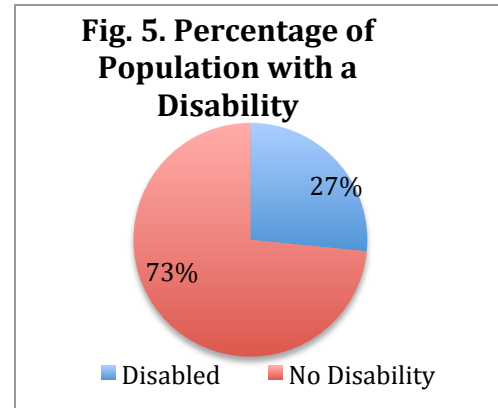
48.1% of homeless persons were female, and 50.6% were male.

41.2% of homeless persons identified their race as Black or African-American, making that the largest racial subgroup reported by homeless persons. The next largest group self-identified as White (29.8%) With regard to ethnicity, 22.7% of persons identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino.

## Disabilities

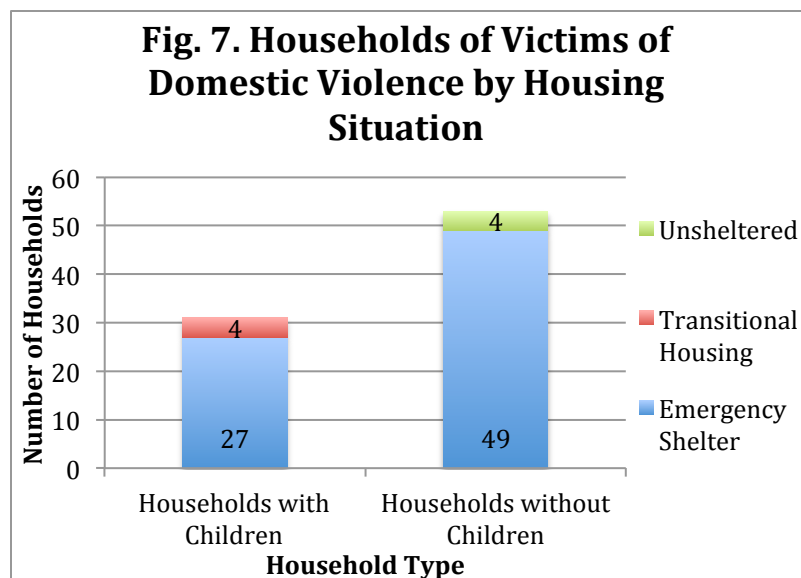
Figure 5 illustrates that 27% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. All 122 persons reporting a disability were adults. Figure 6 shows the number of the homeless persons that identified as having various disabilities. The most common disabilities identified include substance abuse disorders and mental health issues.

Among disabled adults, 73.8% reported substance abuse disorders making this the most prevalent disability, representing 27.9% of the total adult population.



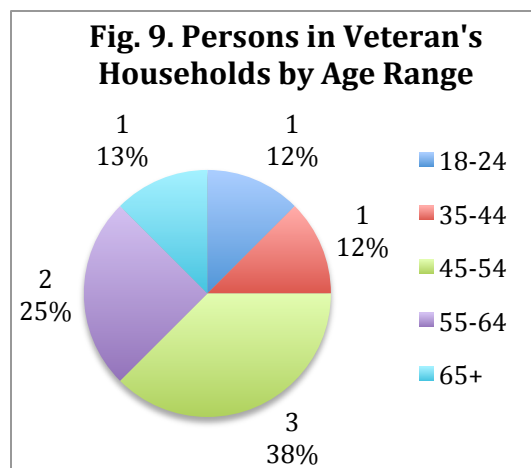
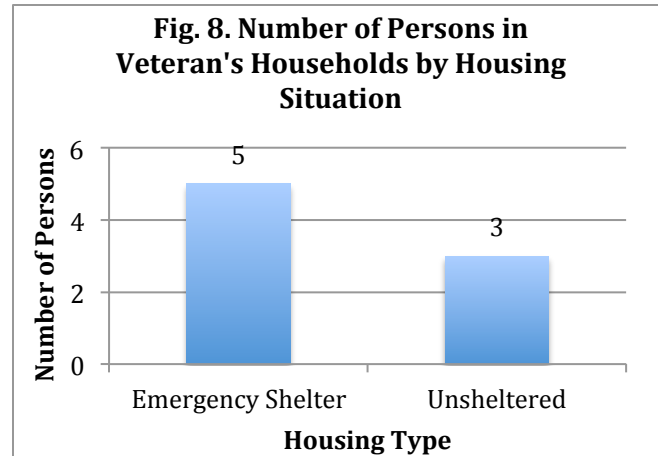
## Victims of Domestic Violence

On the night of the count, in Passaic County, 84 homeless households reported having a victim of domestic violence. These households were composed of 53 individuals and 31 families, for a total of 144 persons in domestic violence households. The majority of these households (90.5%) 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.



8 homeless persons identified as veterans on the night of the count, 2 more (33.3%) than in 2014. All were single, adult individuals. The largest contingent of homeless veterans was found to be staying in emergency shelters (62.5%). In addition, 3 veterans were unsheltered (37.5%).

All of the veterans experiencing homelessness in Passaic County were male, and the most common racial background identified was Black or African-American and White (3 veterans each). Figure 9 illustrates the percentage of homeless veterans by age range.

6 of the 8 veterans, 75%, reported having some kind of disability. In regards to the most common disability, 5 veterans reported a mental health issue, substance abuse disorder, physical disability and chronic health condition. The type of service that homeless veterans sought the most was housing (62.5%). Only 1 veteran was connected to VA healthcare benefits.

## Income and Benefits

Among households experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, 40% had no source of income, and 2.8% reported receiving earned cash income. The two most common sources of income among households were SSI and General Assistance with 18.1% and 15.6% of households receiving each, respectively.

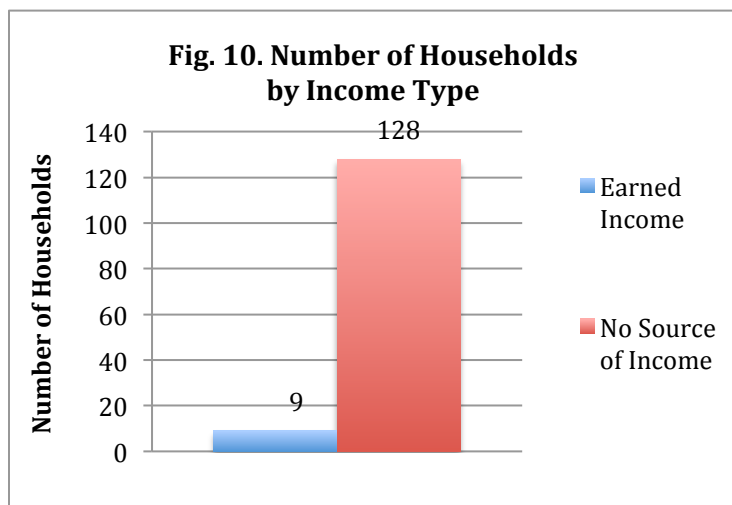


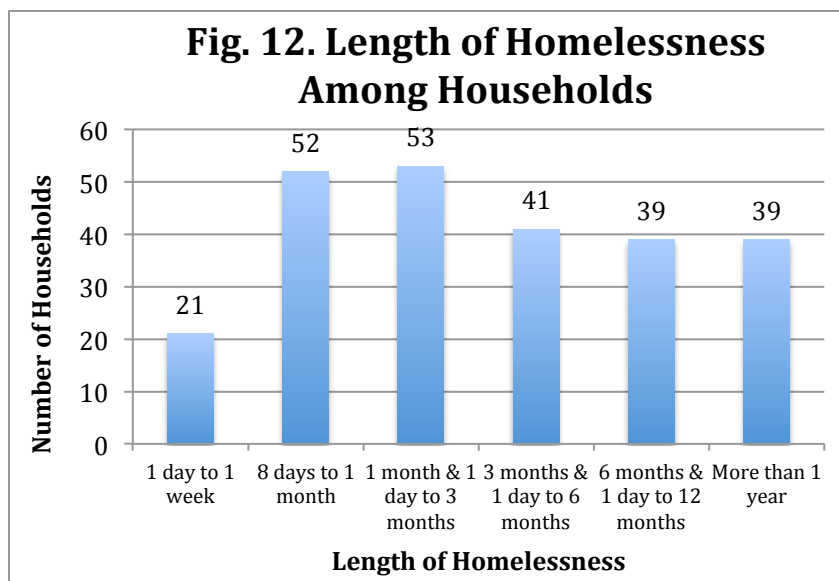
Figure 11 shows the average monthly income for all homeless households.

<b>Figure 11. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation</b>			
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered
Average for All Households	\$250.79	\$505.40	\$179.32

30.6% of homeless households reported receiving no kind of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Food Stamps (SNAP) was the top reported non-cash benefit, and was received by 33.4% of households. 31.9% of homeless households were also connected to Medicaid, on the night of the count.

### Length of Homelessness

As Figure 12 shows, 53 homeless households (16.6%) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted between 1 month and 1 day to 3 months, while 52 (16.3%) reported that they had been homeless for 8 days to 1 month. 12.2% of homeless households in Passaic County had been experiencing homelessness for more than 1 year on the night of the count.

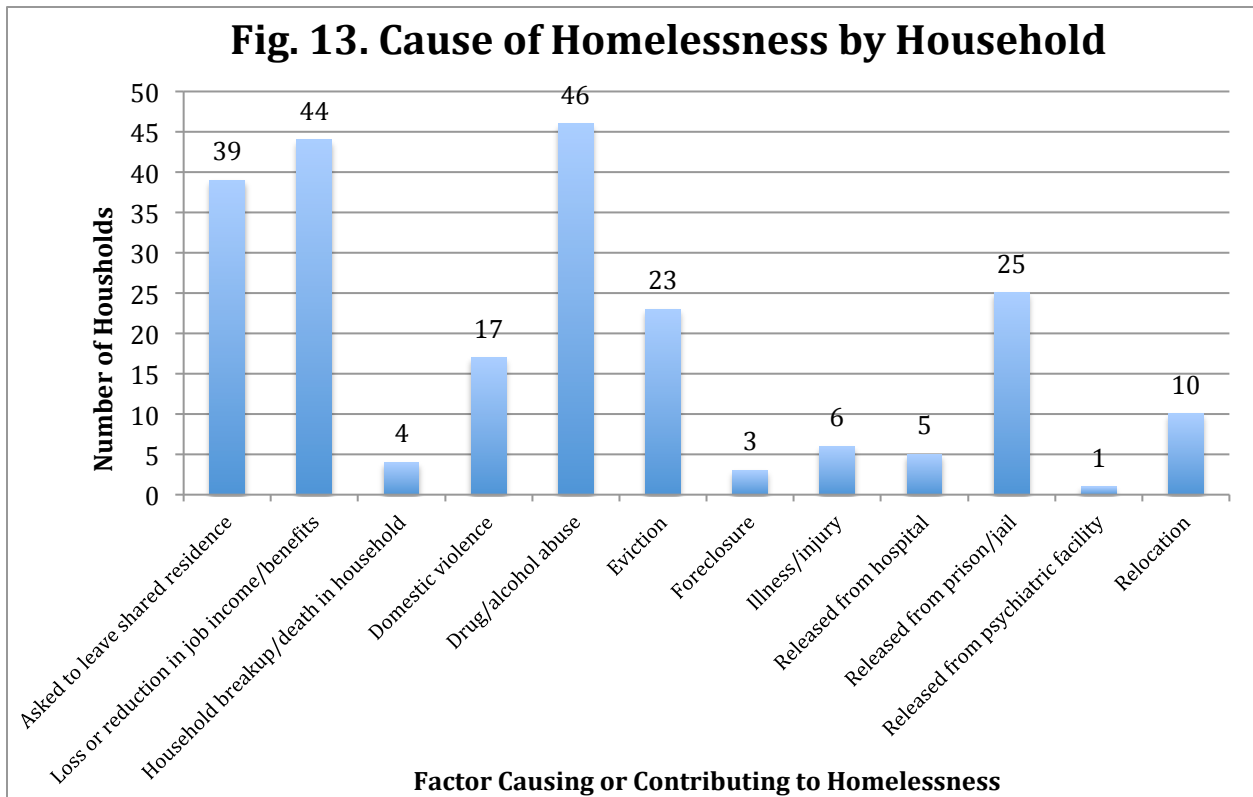


### Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their household's homelessness to drug or alcohol abuse (46 households, 14.4%) than any other cause. As Figure 13 shows, the next most common factors reported were a loss or reduction in job in or benefits (13.8%) and being asked to leave a shared residence (12.2%).

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 (25.9%) than any other type of residence. 16.9% reported residing in permanent housing prior to their current living situation, while 7.8% reported residing in an emergency shelter.





#### 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

38 households, made up of 43 total persons, were counted as chronically homeless in Passaic County, according to the 2015 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 23 households and 28 persons from 2014. The rate of chronic homelessness increased as a percentage of the overall homeless population from 4.9% to 9.4%.

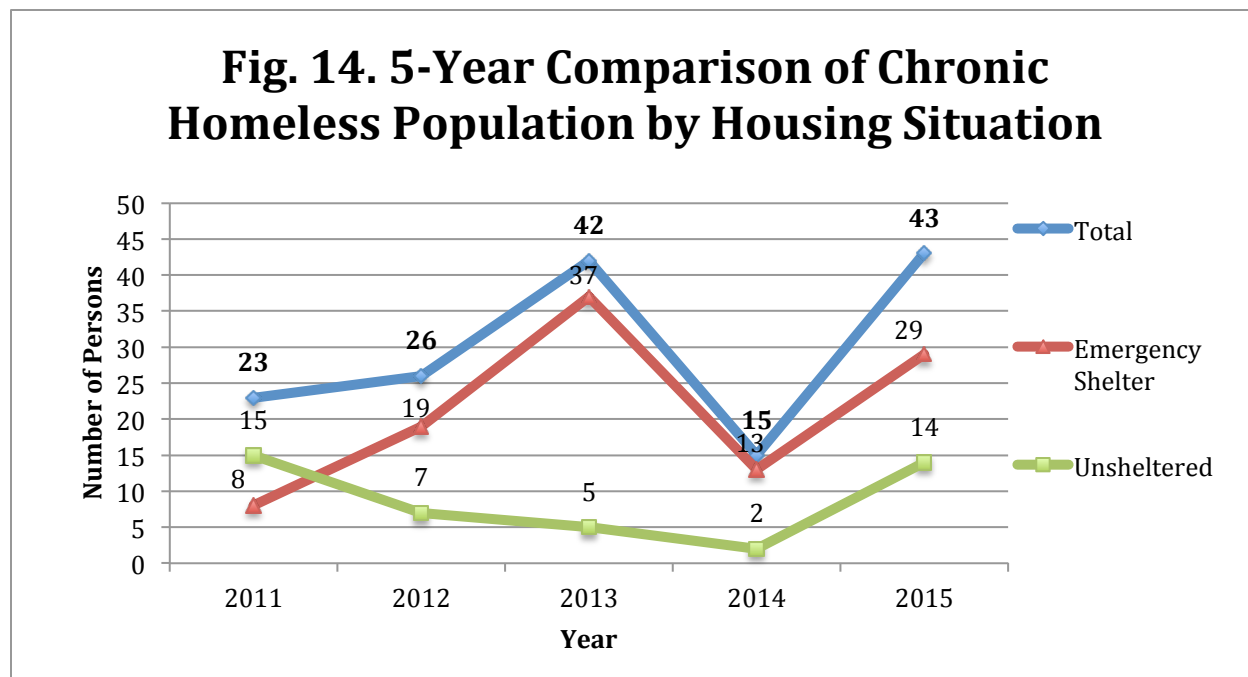
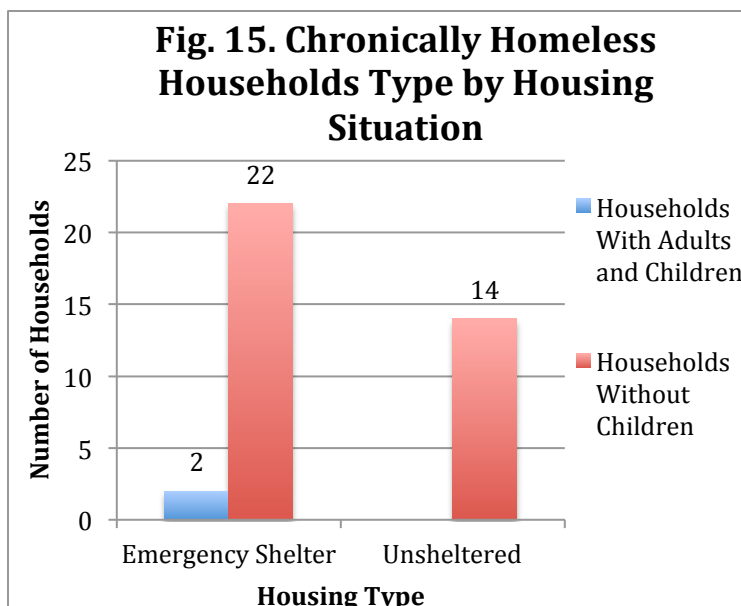


Figure 14 shows the number of chronically homeless households who were in emergency shelters or living unsheltered in Passaic County from 2011 to 2015. Over the past five years, while the numbers have fluctuated, the total number of chronically homeless persons has trended upward with the highest count in 2015 of 43 total chronically homeless persons.

## Families and Individuals

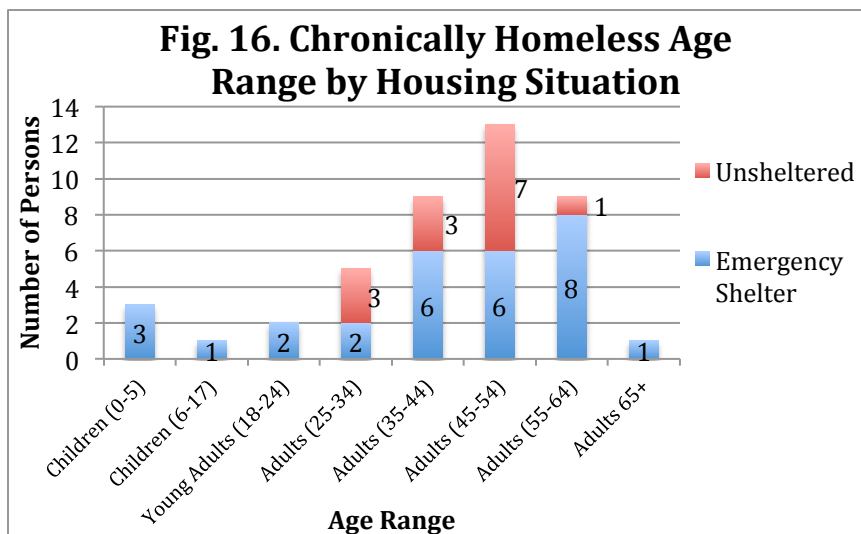
Of the 38 chronically homeless households counted in Passaic County in 2015, only 2 were households with at least 1 adult and 1 child under the age of 18. These 2 family households were made up of a total of 6 persons. The remaining 36 households were adult only households, 35 of which were individual adults, and 1 which was an adult only household composed of 2 persons.



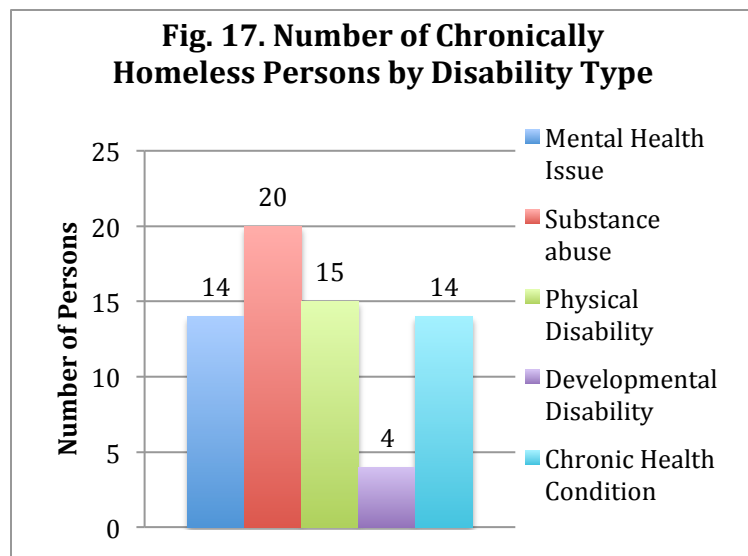
## Demographics

Of the 43 total chronically homeless persons counted, 4 (9.3%) were under 18 years old. The largest number of chronically homeless persons (13, 30.2%) in a single category fell between the ages of 45 and 54 years of age.

65.1% of those counted as chronically homeless were male, and 32.6% were female.



The largest racial subgroup of chronically homeless persons reported their race as Black or African-American (46.5%). The next largest group self-identified as White (34.9%). With regard to ethnicity, 16.3% of chronically homeless 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 among the chronically homeless were substance abuse disorders (46.5%) and physical disabilities (34.9%). The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the chronically homeless can be seen in Figure 17.

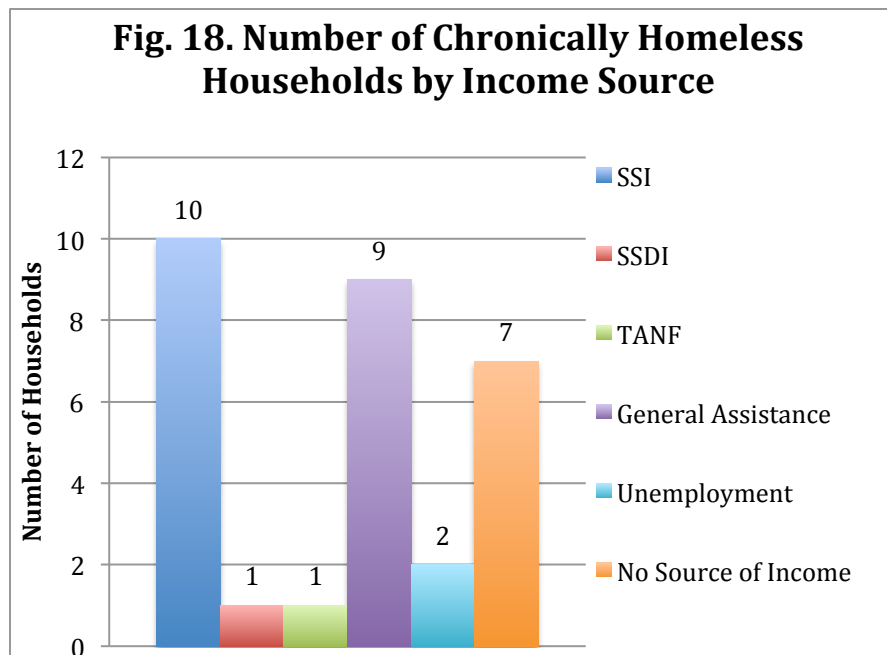
## Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 5 chronically homeless households in Passaic County reported being victims of domestic violence (13.2%). 4 were individual adults (1 was unsheltered), while the last household was a family household composed of 3 persons.

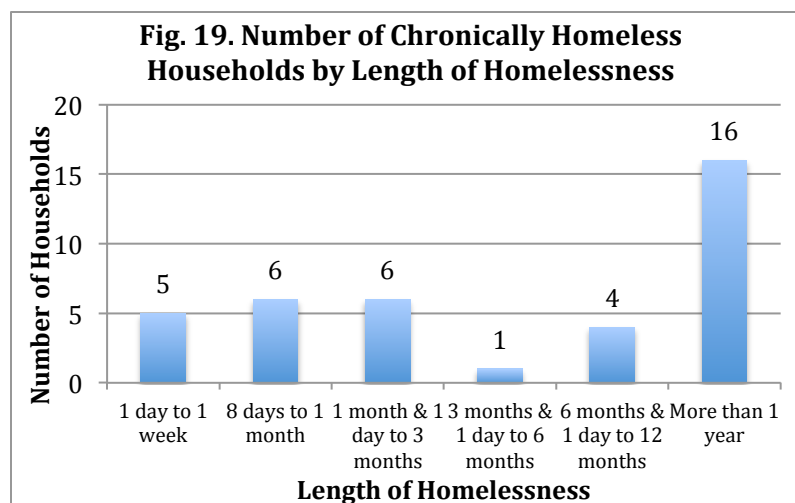
There was 1 chronically homeless veteran that reported being unsheltered on the night of the count.

### Income and Benefits

Among all chronically homeless households on the night of the count, 18.4% reported receiving no form of cash income, and none reported any earned income. Figure 18 shows the sources of income received. The most common sources of cash income among households were SSI and General Assistance, which were received by 26.3% and 23.7% households, respectively.



13.2% of 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 reported, with 47.4% receiving this benefit. A significant percentage, 31.6%, also reported receiving Medicaid.



### Length of Homelessness

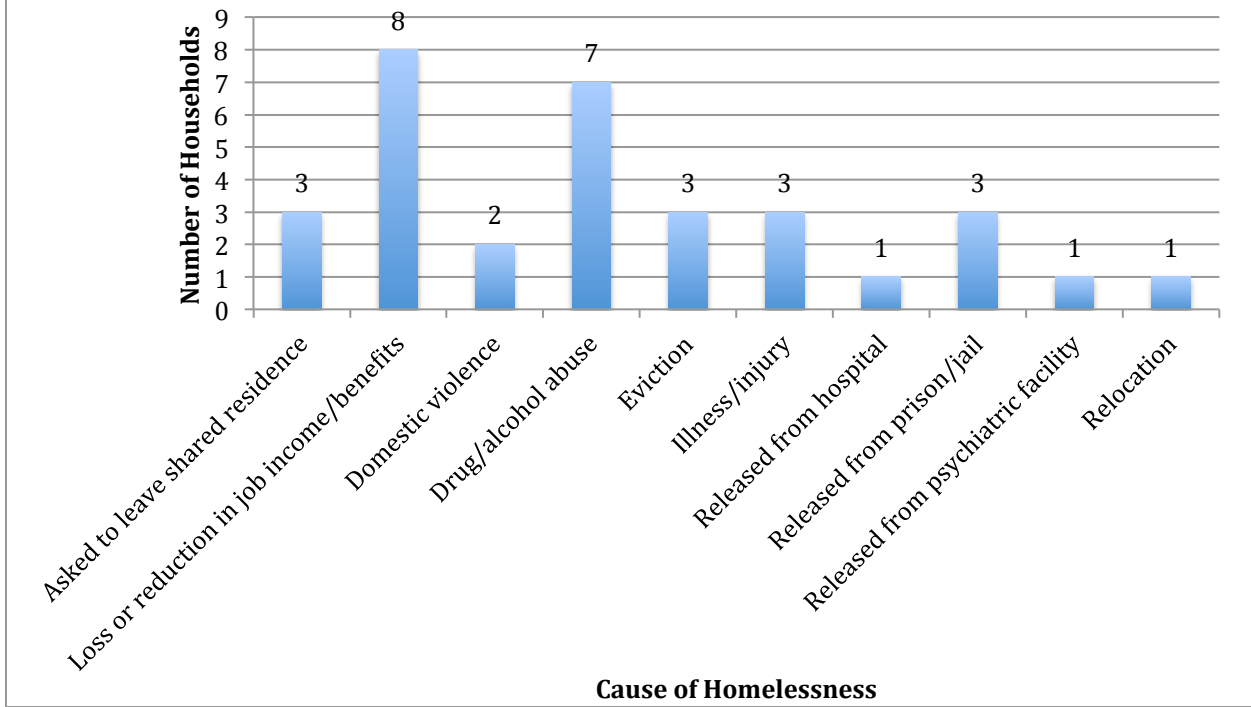
Figure 19 shows that 16 chronically homeless households (42.1%) reported that their household's most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted more than 1 year, making this the most common response.

### 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 in job income or benefits (21.1%) than any other. As Figure 20 shows, the next most common factor reported was drug or alcohol abuse (18.4%).



**Fig. 20. Number of Chronically Homeless Households by Cause of 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.”

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

30 households, made up of 30 adult persons, were living unsheltered in Passaic County, according to the 2015 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 26 households and persons compared to the 2014 count.

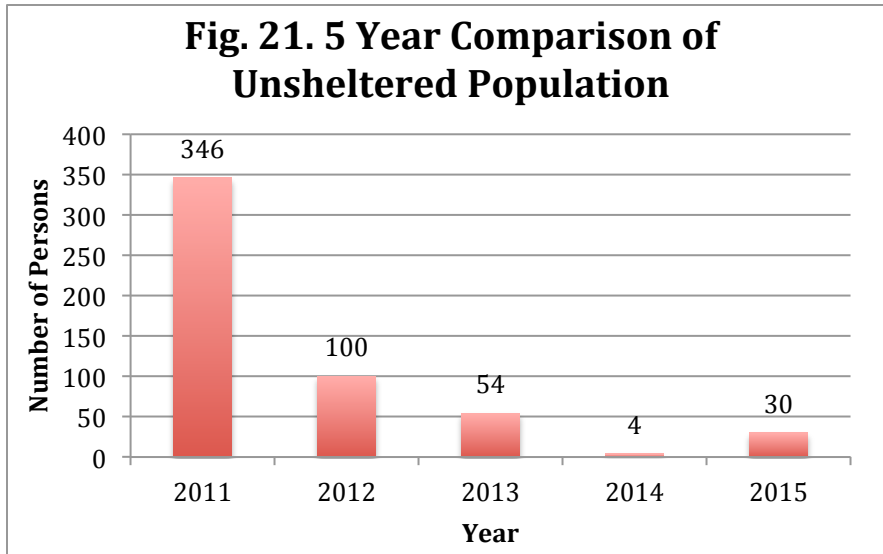


Figure 21 shows the number of unsheltered respondents from 2011 to 2015. While the unsheltered count in 2015 was an increase from the unsheltered persons counted in 2014, it is still a decrease in the unsheltered count from years past.

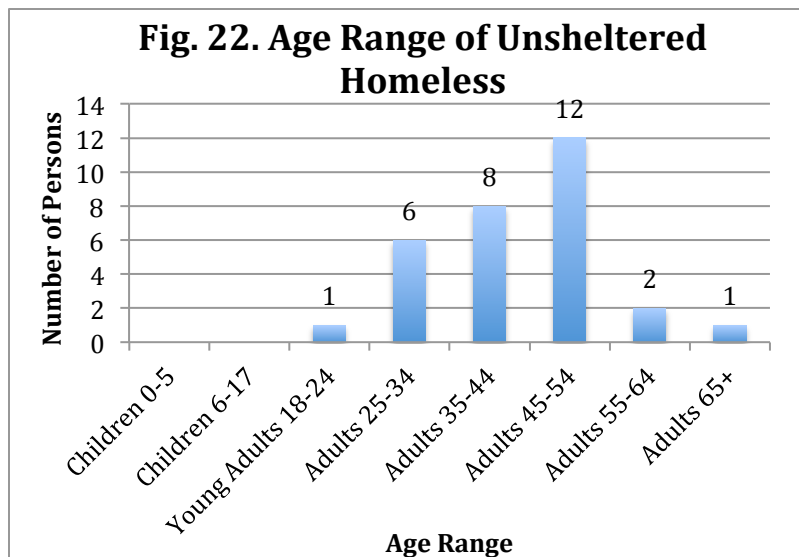
## Families and Individuals

All of the 30 unsheltered households counted in 2015 were adult-only households, meaning that there were no unsheltered families with children. Each of the unsheltered households was made up of only one individual adult.

## Demographics

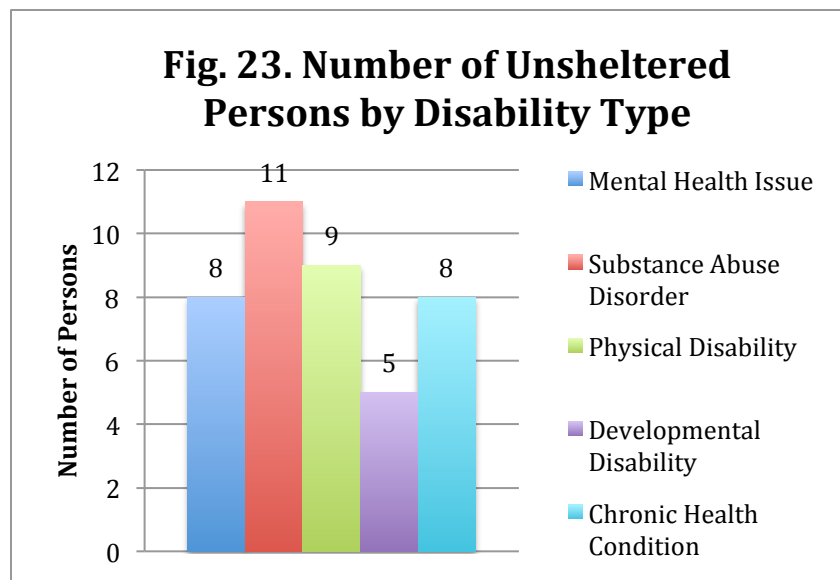
Of the 30 unsheltered persons counted, the largest age group represented was adults between 45 and 54 years old (40%).

76.7% of the unsheltered persons were male and 9 (30%) identified their race as Black or African-American. 23.3% self-identified as White. 10 of the 30 unsheltered persons counted identified their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino.



## Disabilities

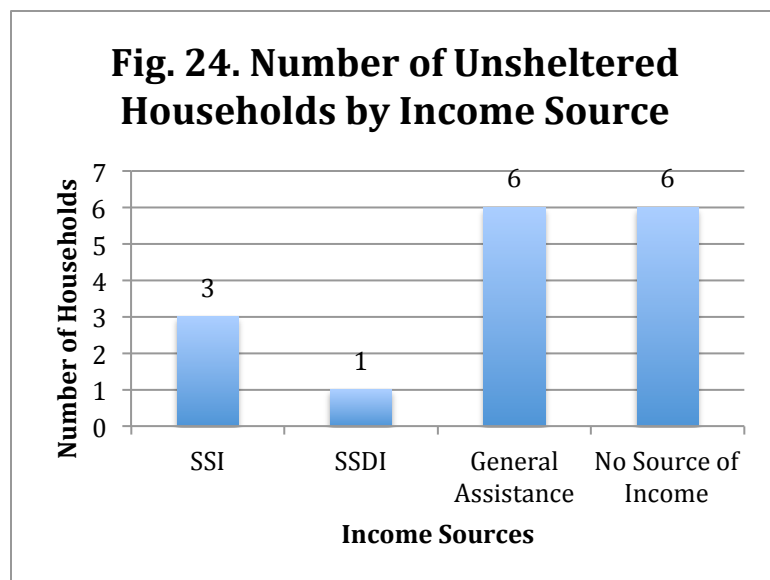
56.7% of unsheltered persons reported having some disability. The most prevalent disabilities identified were substance abuse disorders (64.7%) and physical disabilities (52.9%) as can be seen in Figure 23. The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the unsheltered can be seen in Figure 23.



## Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 4 unsheltered individual adults in Passaic County reported being victims of domestic violence.

There were 8 unsheltered veterans identified on the night of the count, 7 more than were counted in 2014.



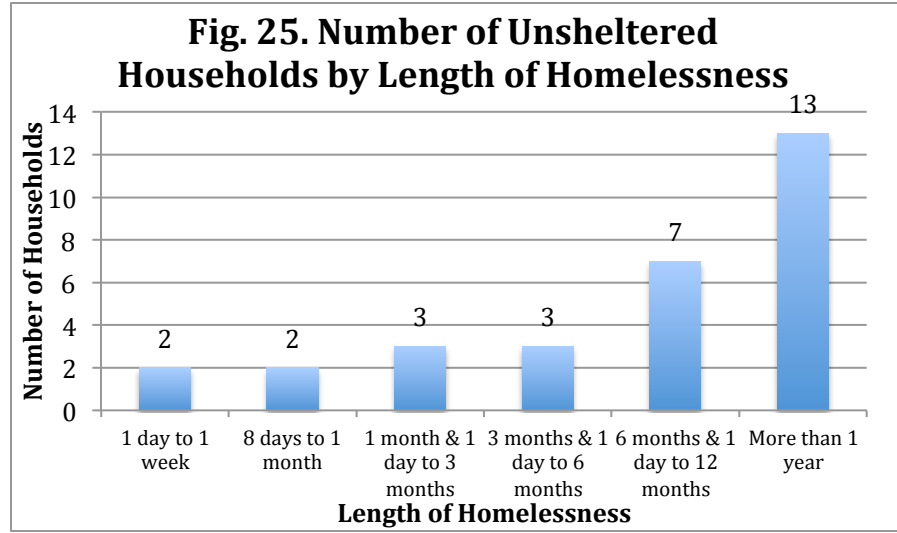
## Income and Benefits

Among all unsheltered households on the night of the count, 6 (20%) reported having no source of cash income. The average monthly income among unsheltered households was approximately \$179, with the most reported source of income being General Assistance, which was reported by 20% of unsheltered households, as seen in Figure 24.

13.3% of the unsheltered households reported that they were not receiving any non-cash benefits on the night of the count. Food Stamps (SNAP) was the top reported non-cash benefit among this population, which was reported by 33.3% of unsheltered households.

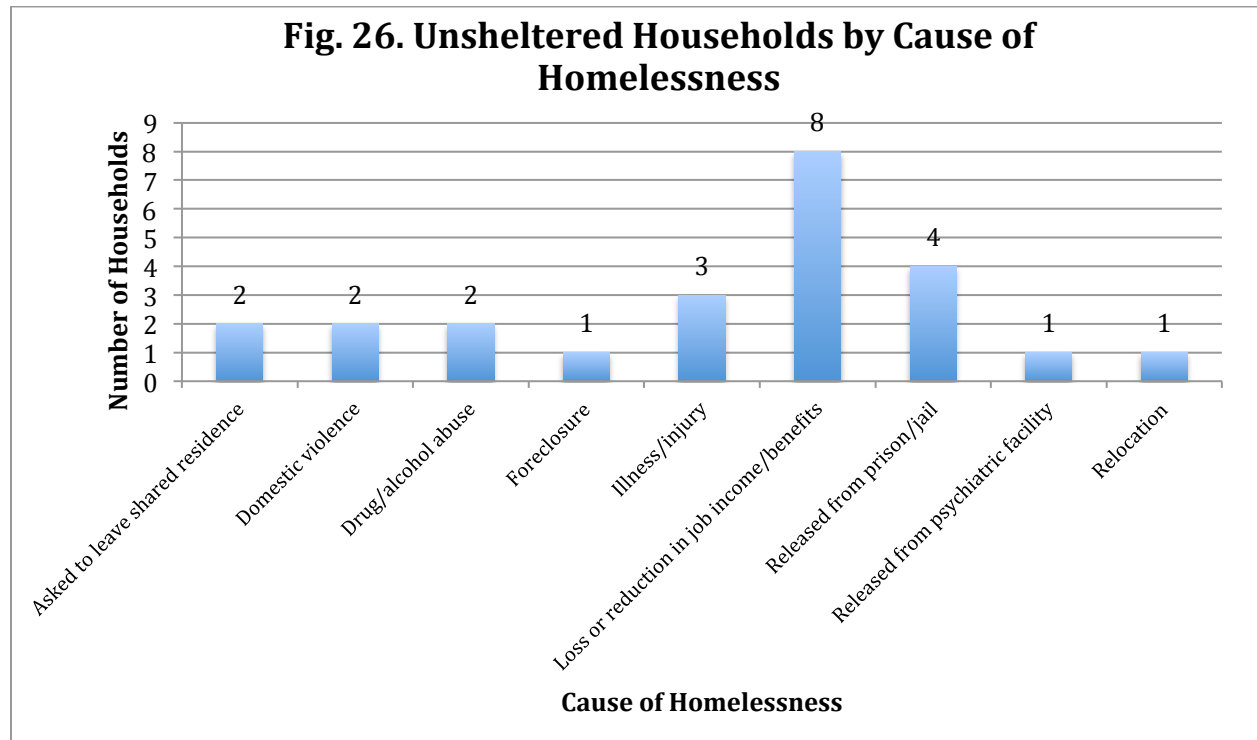
## Length of Homelessness

43.3% of unsheltered households reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted more than 1 year, making this the most common response. Another 23.3% reported their most recent episode was between 6 months & 1 day to 12 months, showing that 66.7% of all unsheltered homeless have been homeless for at least 6 months.



## Cause of Homelessness

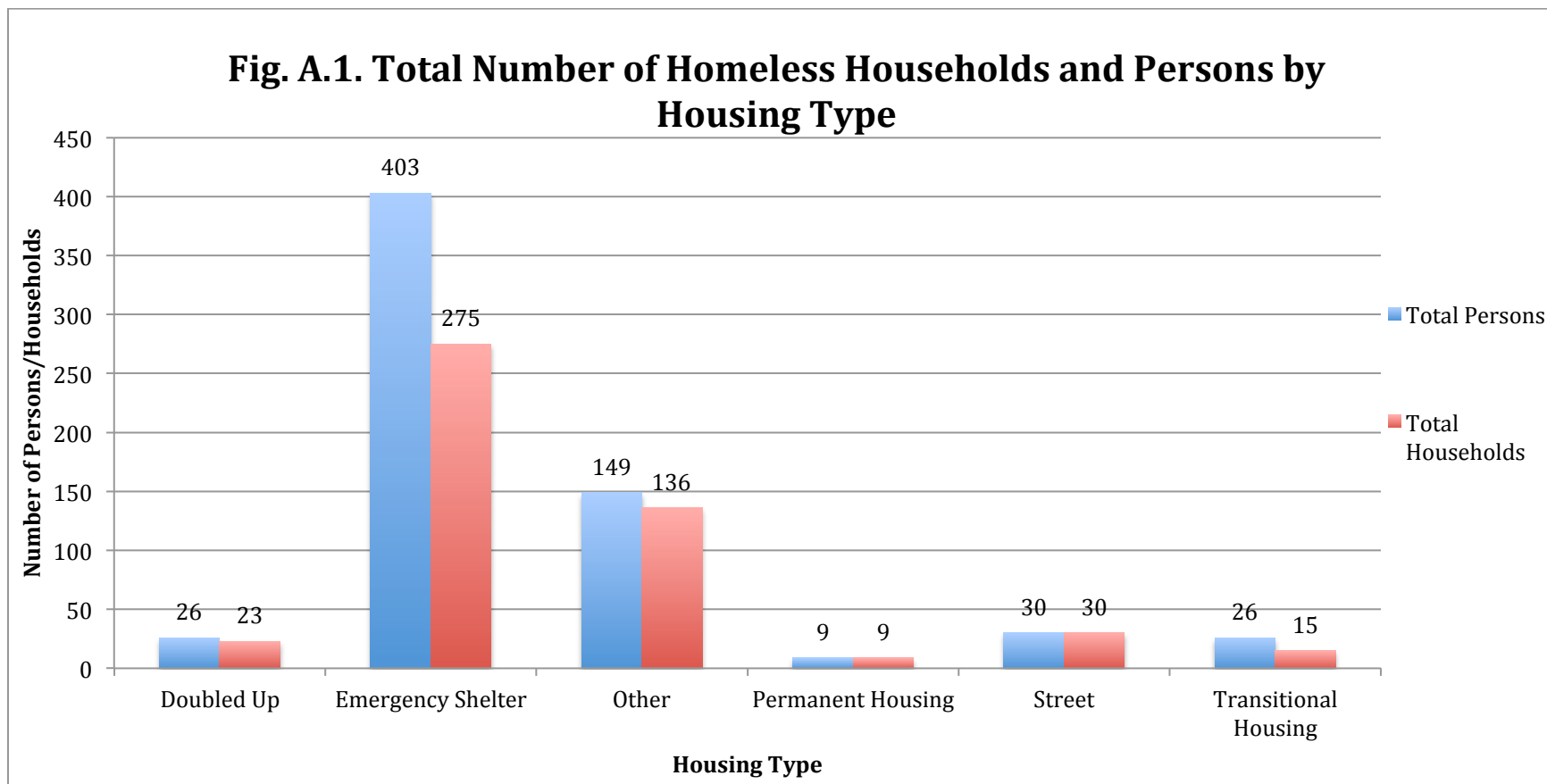
When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more unsheltered households (26.7%) cited a loss or reduction in job income or benefits, than any other cause. As Figure 26 shows, the next most common response was being released from prison or jail (13.3%).





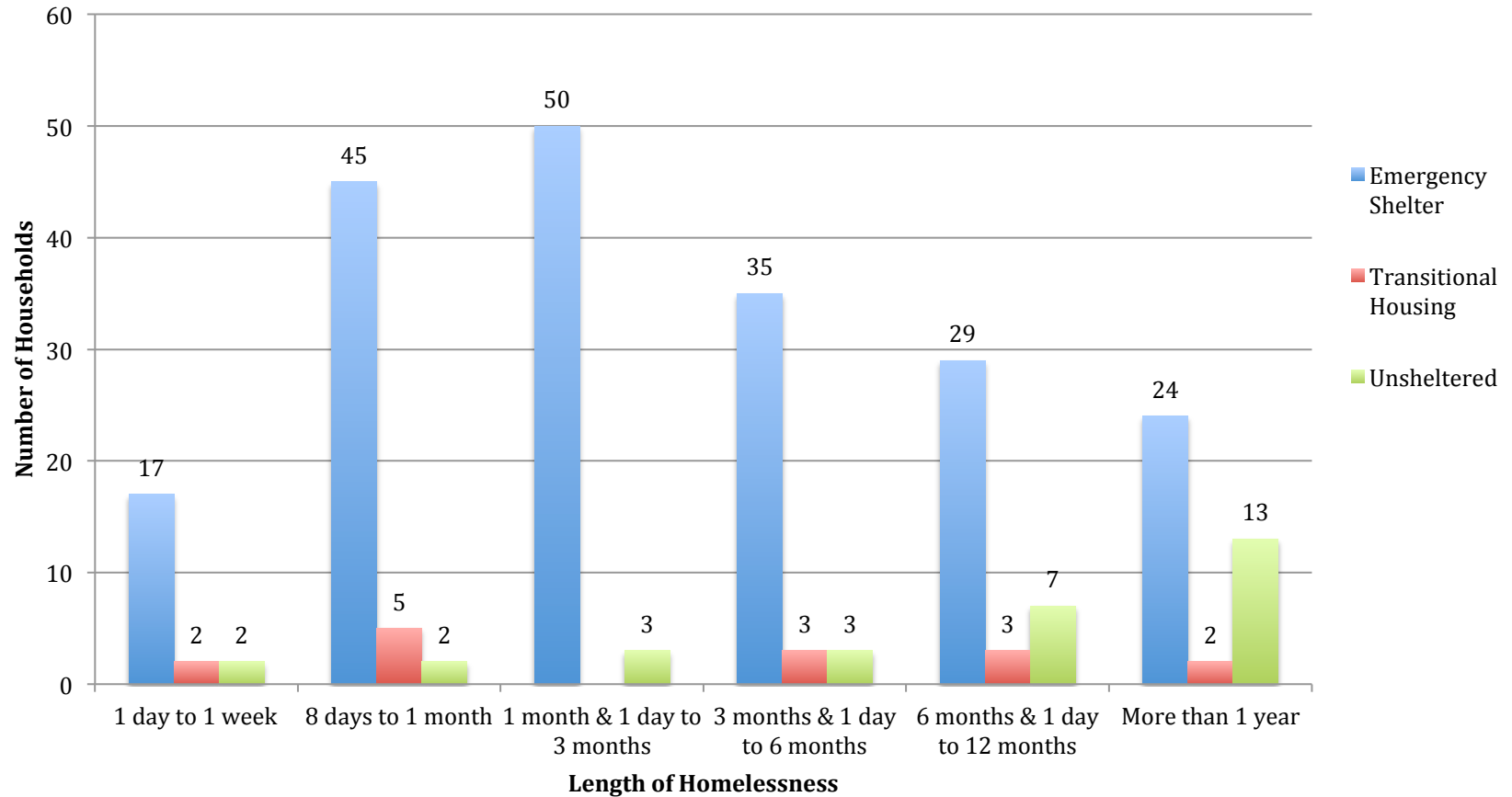
## VI. Appendix

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



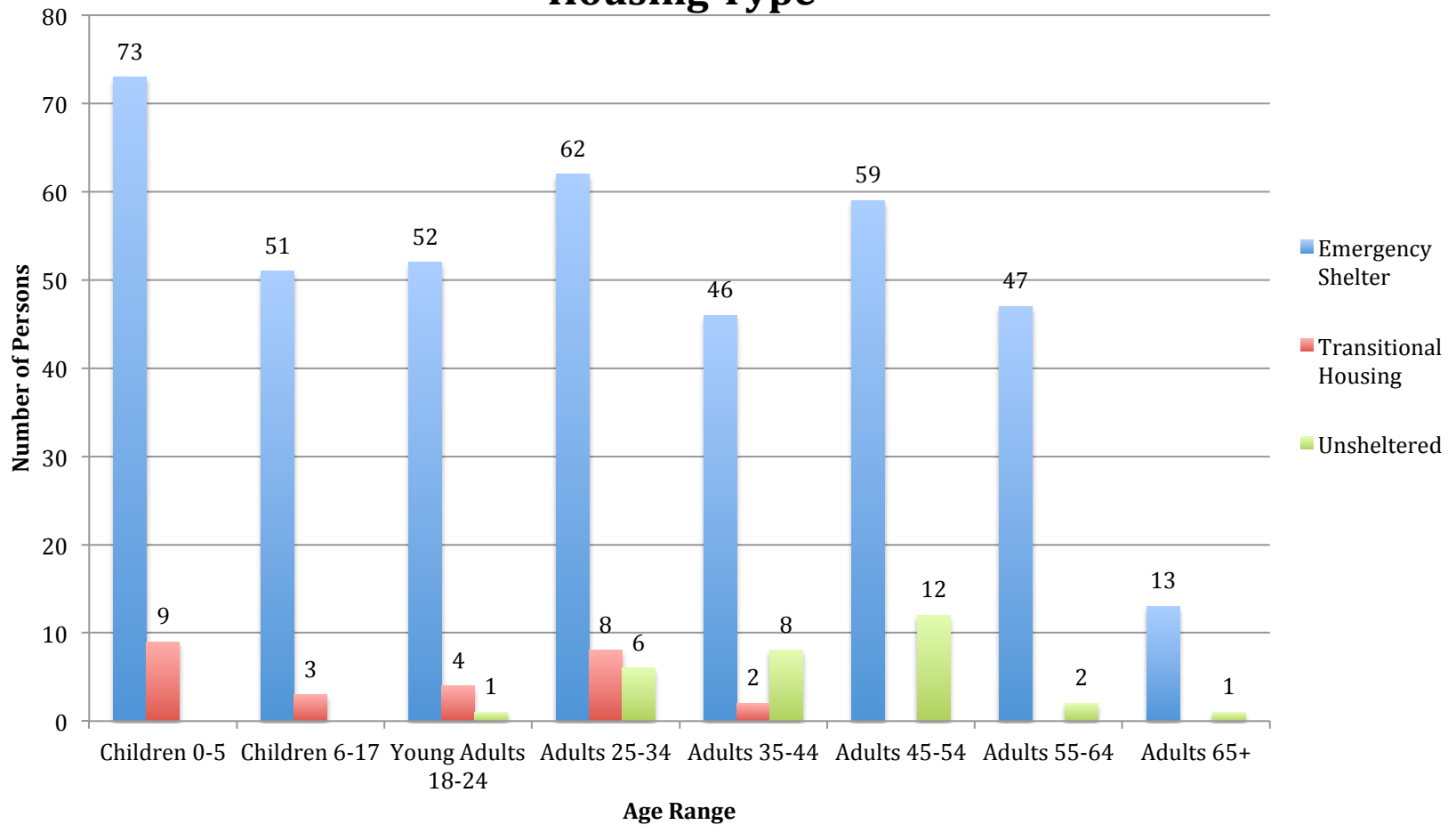
How long have you been in your current living situation?

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

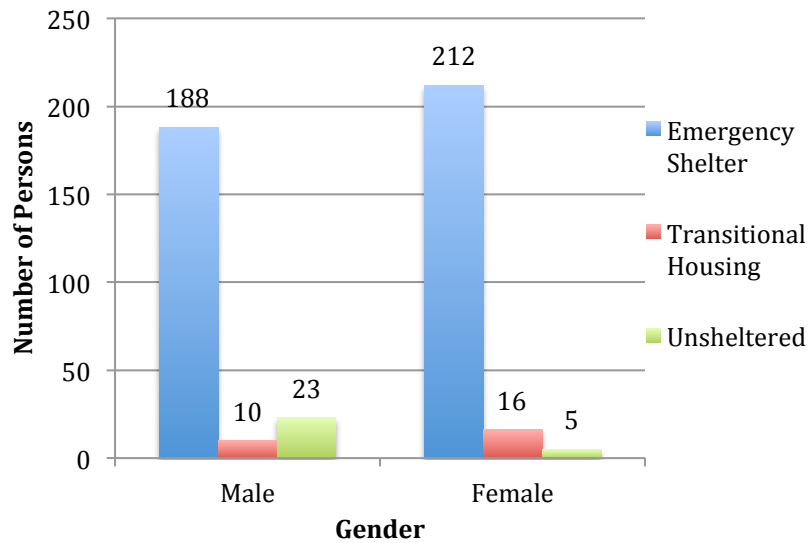


Who was homeless with you on the night of February 3<sup>rd</sup>?

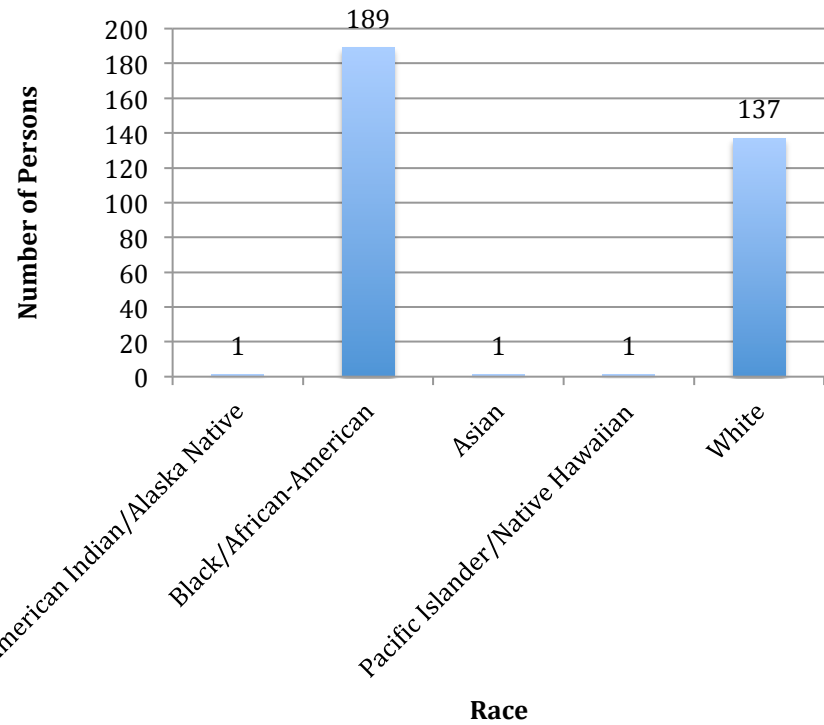
**Fig. A.3. Number of Homeless Persons by Age Range and Housing Type**



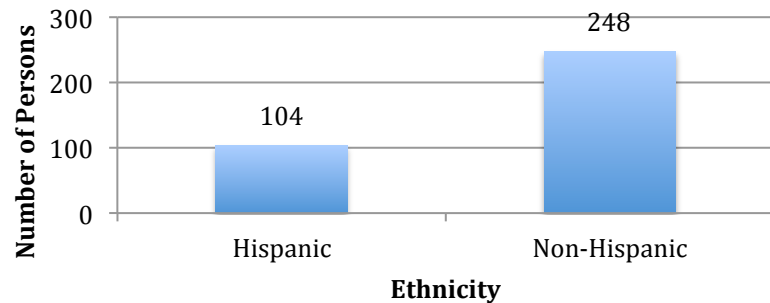
**Fig. A.4. Number of Homeless Persons by Gender and Housing Situation**



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

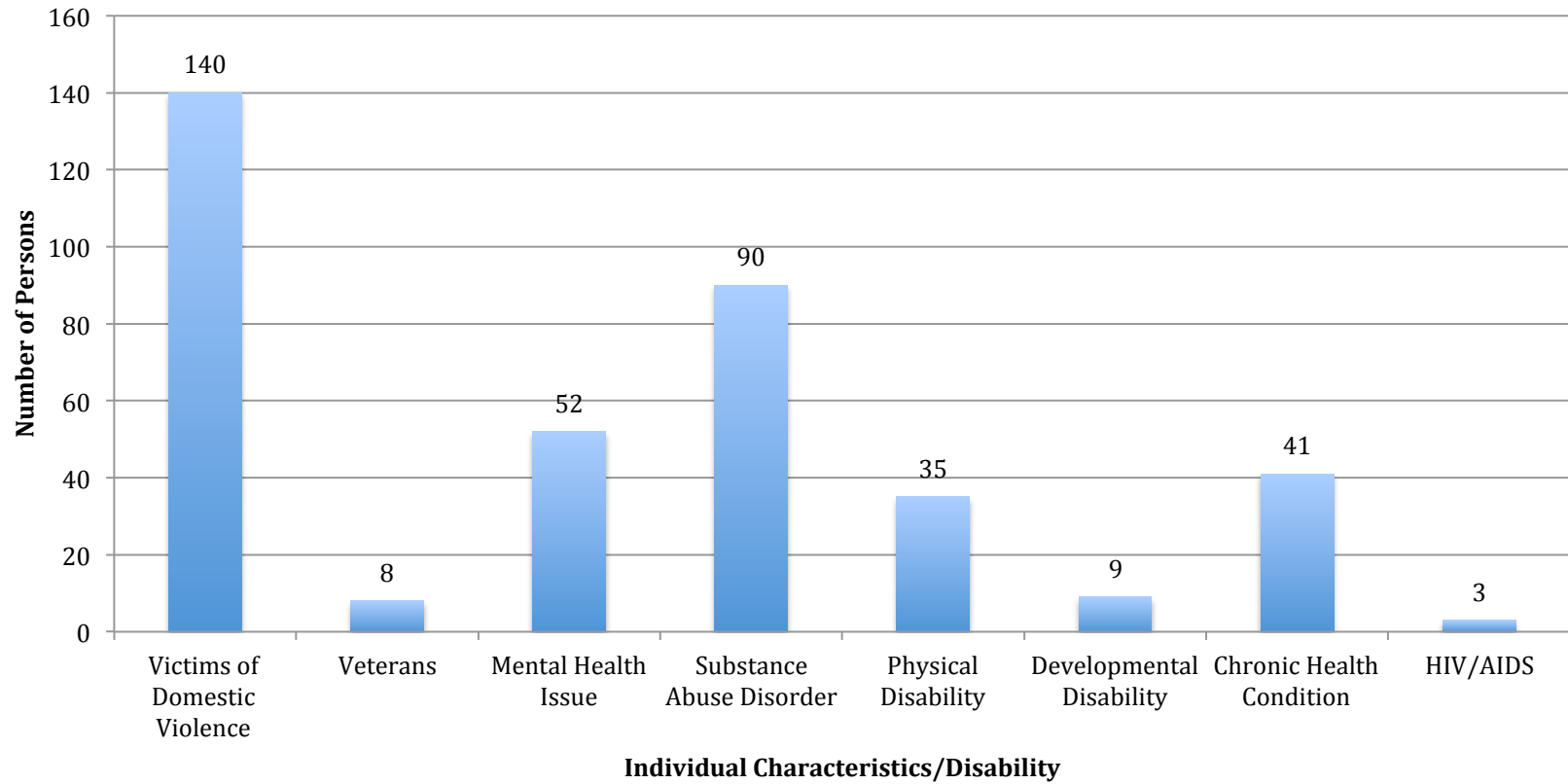


**Fig. A.6. Number of Homeless Persons by Ethnicity**



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**

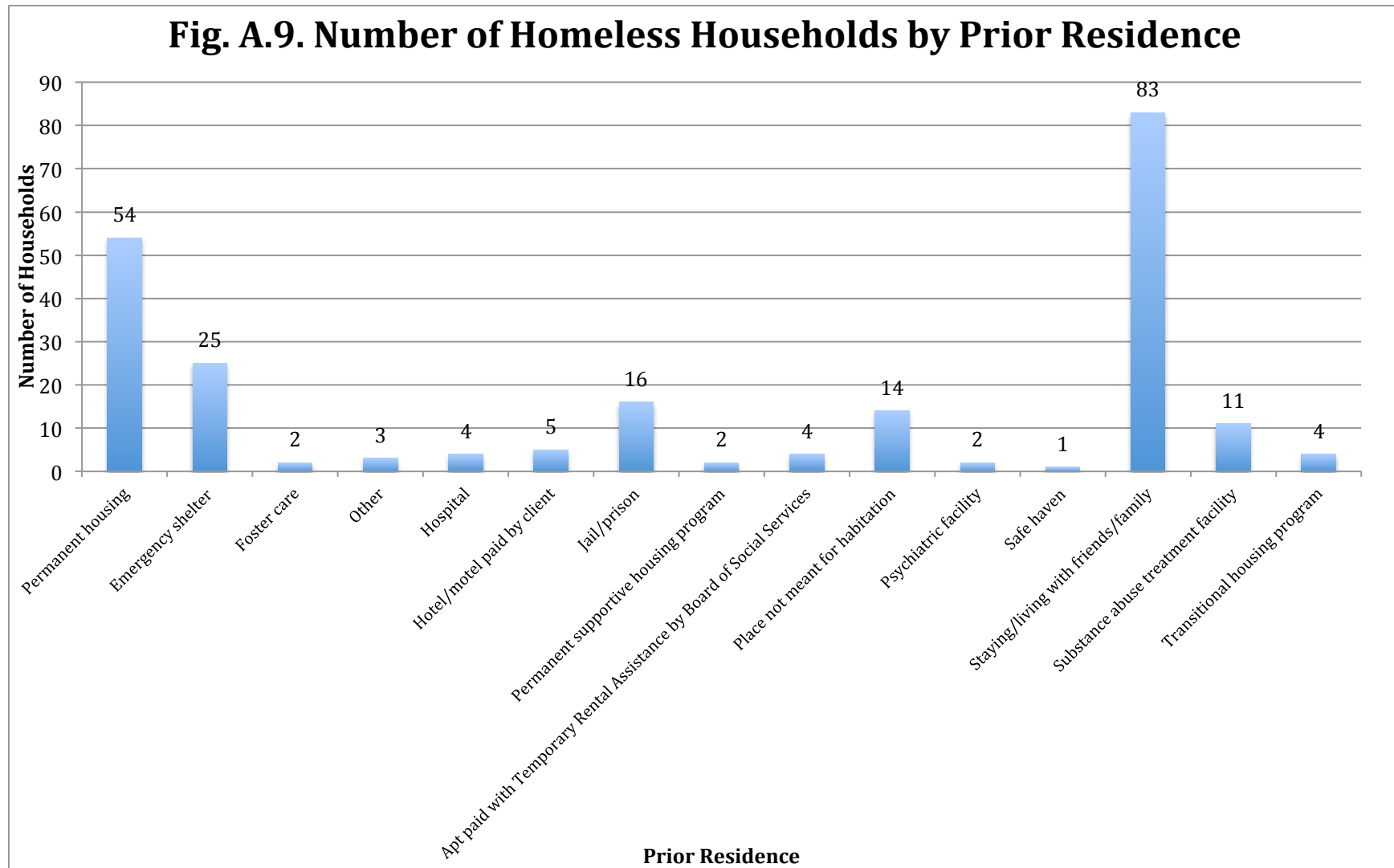


## Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?

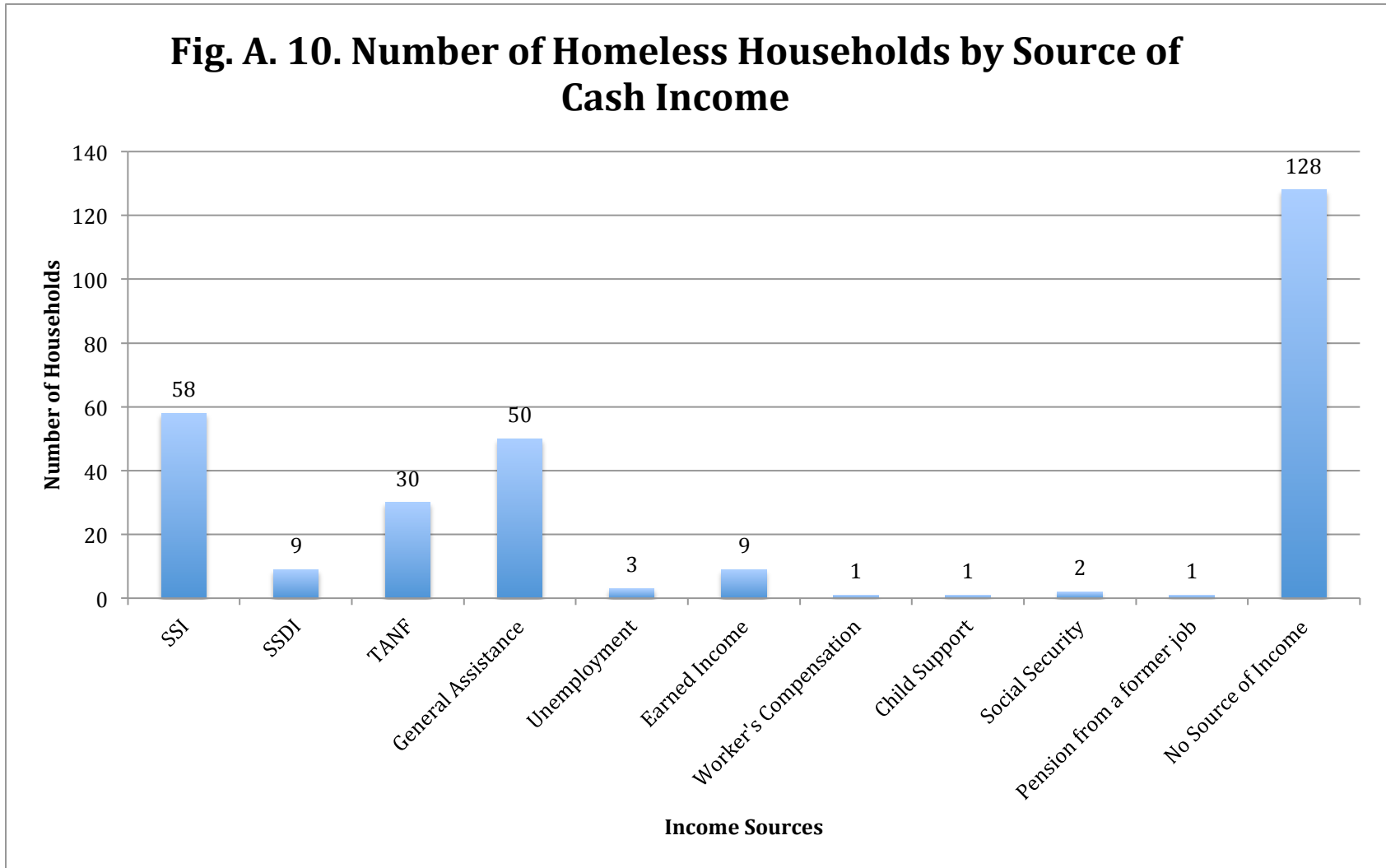
<b>Fig. A.8. Number of Homeless Households by County, State or Country of Last Permanent Address</b>	
<b>Last Permanent Address - County/State</b>	<b>Number of Households</b>
Alabama	1
Arizona	1
Atlantic County	1
Bergen County	13
Burlington County	1
California	1
Cumberland County	1
Essex County	14
Florida	2
Hudson County	6
Hunterdon County	2
Illinois	1
Indiana	1
Middlesex County	2
Monmouth County	2
Morris County	4
Nebraska	1
New York	3
Ocean County	4
<b>Passaic County</b>	<b>169</b>
Pennsylvania	1
South Carolina	1
Sussex County	1
Texas	1
Union County	2
Virginia	1
Washington DC	1



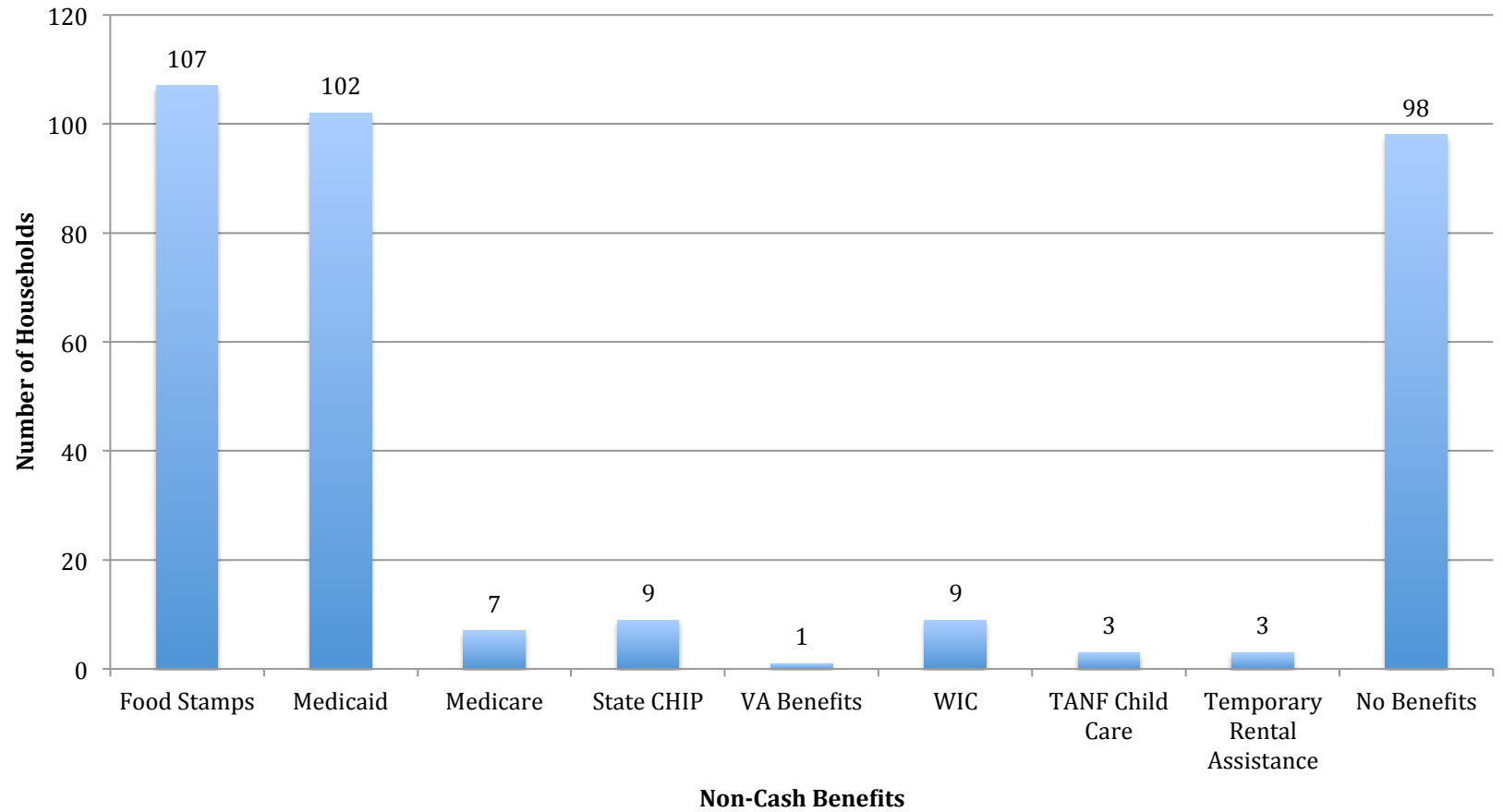
What was your residence prior to your current living situation?



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

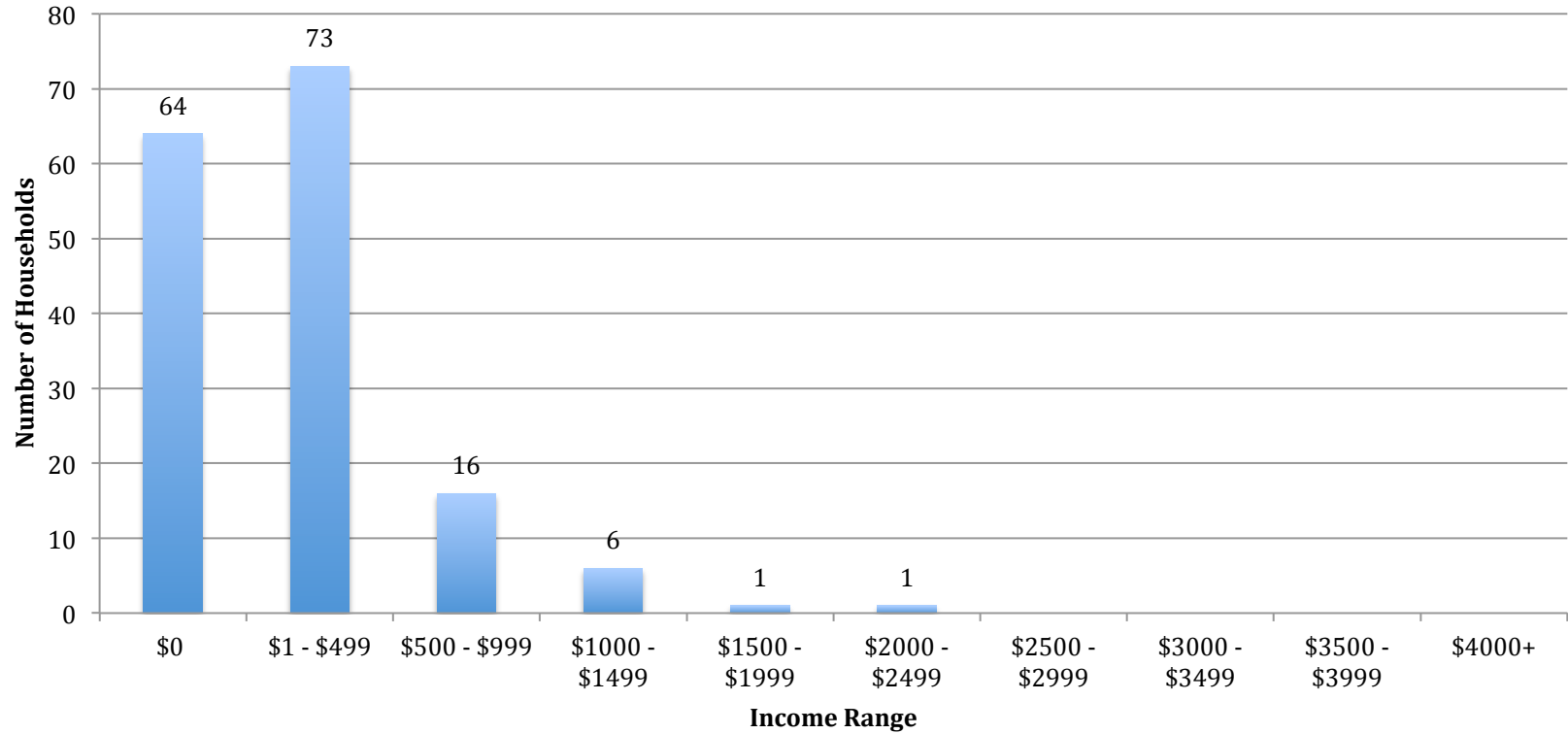


**Fig. A. 11. Number of Homeless Households by Sources of Non-Cash Benefits**



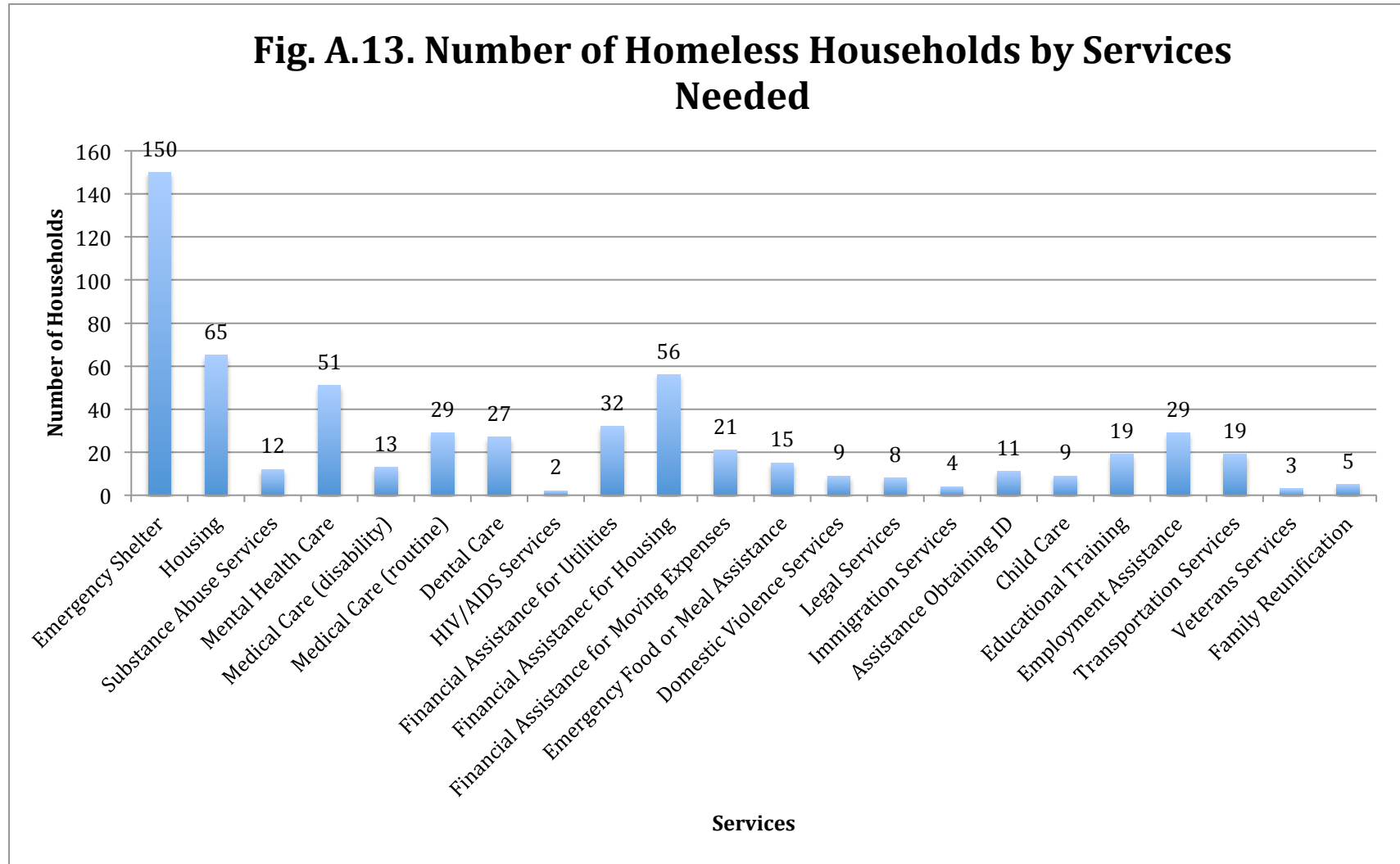
What is your monthly household income?

**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?

**Fig. A.14. Number of Homeless Households by Cause of Homelessness**

