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# Hudson County's 2016 Point-In-Time Count of the Homeless

January 26, 2016

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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 2016

NJ Counts 2016, 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 2016 Count reveals important demographic and other information about families and individuals who were homeless on the night of Tuesday, January 26th, 2016 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 2016. Monarch would also like to specifically thank Bergen County for providing a Spanish translation of the 2016 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 2016 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 in which the episodes equal at least 12 months, 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 2016 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.

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 2016 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 third 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 This strategy was designed in accordance with HUD guidance regarding conducting both sheltered and unsheltered Point-In-Time Counts.

The 2016 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 HMISparticipating 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 2012 to 2016. 2012, 2014 and 2016 were not HUD required full reporting years while 2013 and 2015 were.
- 2. 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.
- 3. 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 deduplication 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 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016 a total of 660 households, including 829 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Hudson County, according to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 137 households, with 139 persons, were identified as chronically homeless.
- 226 unsheltered homeless persons were counted.

#### **Total Homeless Population**

On the night of January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016, a total of 829 persons, in 660 households, were experiencing homelessness in Hudson County, according to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 88 persons (9.6%) and 68 households (9.3%) from 2015. Hudson County had 9.3% of New Jersey's statewide homeless population in the 2016 PIT.

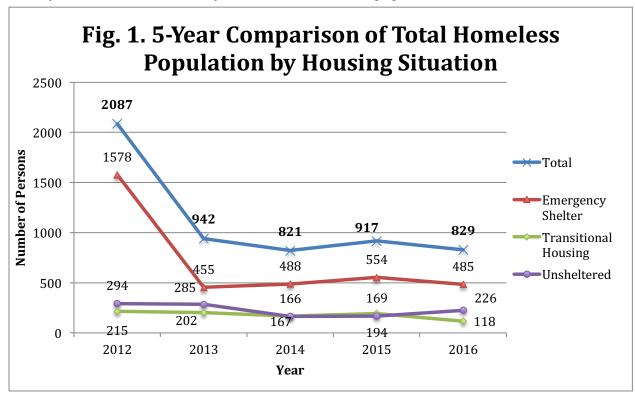
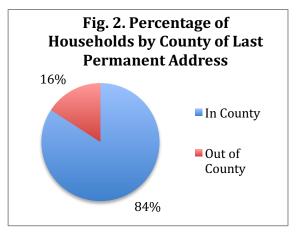


Figure 1 shows that in 2016, 485 homeless persons stayed in emergency shelters, 118 stayed in transitional housing, and 226 were living unsheltered on the night of the count. While there was a decrease in the number of persons counted in both emergency shelters (69 persons, 12.5%) and transitional housing (76 persons, 39.2%), there was an increase of 57 persons (33.7%) seen in the total number of persons unsheltered on the night of the count.

Figure 1 also shows that over the past five years, the total number of homeless persons in Hudson County has been trending downward, with slight fluctuations. During the five-year period from 2012 to 2016, the overall number of homeless persons in Hudson County has been reduced by 60.3% (a decrease of 1,258 persons), with the biggest decrease in persons residing in emergency shelters (1,093 persons, 69.3%).



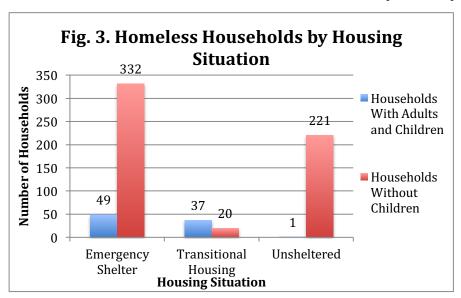
16% As Figure 2 shows, of homeless households in Hudson County reported that their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless was outside of the county.

#### 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 660 homeless households counted in Hudson County 2016, 87 (13.2%) were families with at least one adult and one child under the age of 18. This is a decrease of 19 family households



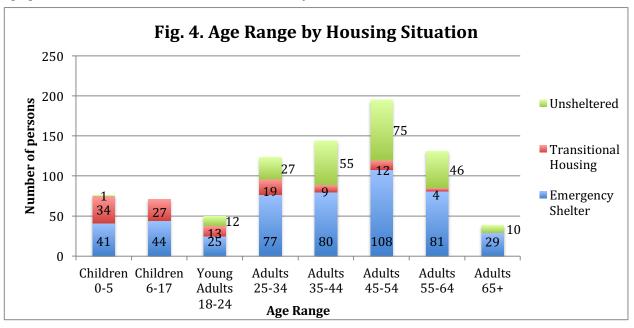
(17.9%) from 2015. These families included 245 persons, 147 children under age 18, and 98 adults. The average family size was 3 persons. Figure 3 shows that 49 families (56.3%) were staying in emergency shelters on the night of the count, 37 were in transitional housing and 1 family, consisting of 1 adult and 1 child was unsheltered on the night of the count. While there was an increase of 4 homeless families in transitional housing from 2015, there was a decrease of 1 unsheltered family and a decrease of 22 families in emergency shelter when compared to 2015.

573 (86.8%) of the homeless households counted in Hudson County were households without children under 18, and were predominately composed of individual adults (565). The remaining 8 households were adult only households composed of 19 adults. 332 (57.9%) of these adult-only households were staying in emergency shelters, 20 (3.5%) were in transitional housing, and 221 (38.6%) were unsheltered. The number of adult-only households decreased by 7.9% (49 households) from the number counted in 2015.

Just as in 2015, there were no households with only children under 18 years old reported on the night of the count in Hudson County in 2016.

#### **Demographics**

The majority (632 persons, 76.2%) of those experiencing homelessness in Hudson County on the night of the count were adults over age 24. There was a total of 50 (6%) homeless young adults between 18 and 24 years old and 147 (17.7%) children under 18 years old experiencing homelessness on the night of the count as well. Similar to 2015, Figure 4 shows the age range most represented, with 195 persons and 23.5% of the total homeless population, was adults between 45 and 54 years old.

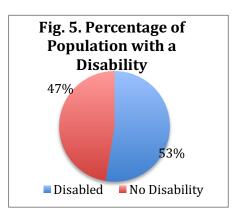


65% (539) of homeless persons were male, and 34.5% (286) were female. 1 person identified as transgender.

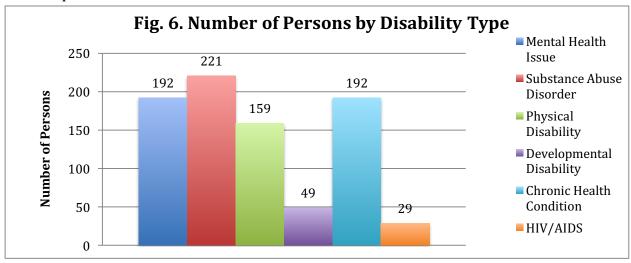
46.9% of homeless persons identified their race as Black or African American, making that the largest racial subgroup. The next largest group identified themselves as White (46.4%), followed by those identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native (2.1%). With regard to ethnicity, 39.2% of persons identified themselves as Hispanic.

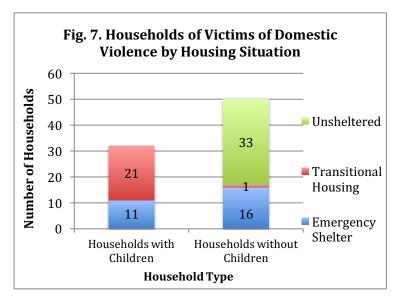
#### Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 52.6% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 59.8% of adults 18 or older reported some type of disability compared to 19% of children. Figure 6 shows the number of homeless persons that identified as having various disabilities. The most prevalent disabilities were substance abuse disorders, mental health issues and chronic health conditions.



Among disabled adults, 54.2% reported a substance abuse disorder, making this the most prevalent disability; representing 32.4% of the total adult homeless population. 46.1% of disabled adults also reported a mental health issue. Among disabled homeless children, 71.4% reported a chronic health condition.



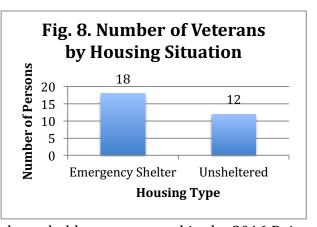


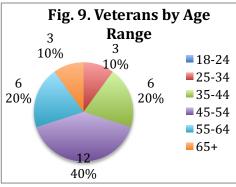
#### Victims of Domestic Violence

On the night of the count, in Hudson County, 82 homeless households reported having a victim of domestic violence, an increase of 7 households from 2015. Figure 7 shows that 61% of these households were adult only households. The remaining 39% of households were families with at least 1 adult and 1 child under 18. 40.2% of all victim households were unsheltered 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.





30 veteran households were counted in the 2016 Point in Time, 13 (30.2%) less than in 2015. While most were individuals (96.7%), 1 was part of a couple household, making it a total of 31 persons served in veteran households on the night of the PIT. 60% of veteran households were staying in emergency shelters, while another 40% were unsheltered, an increase of 1 unsheltered veteran from 2015.

Homeless veterans in Hudson County were predominantly male (93.3%), and the most common racial background reported was White (50%), followed by Black or African American (46.7%). 43.3% of homeless veterans identified their ethnicity as Hispanic. Figure 9 illustrates the percentage of homeless veterans by age range.

1 homeless veteran reported being a victim of domestic violence, and 17 veterans (56.7%) reported having a disability. The most common disabilities cited were substance abuse (58.8%) and physical disabilities (47.1%). 2 veteran households reported receiving Veteran's Pension and 1 reported Veteran's Disability as forms of income. 4 of the 30 veterans reported being connected to VA Medical Benefits. The top two services that veteran households sought most were housing (93.3%) and emergency shelter (70%).

#### **Income and Benefits**

Among all households experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, 33.6% had no source of income, while 13.6% reported receiving earned cash income. The most common sources of cash income among homeless households outside of earned income were SSI (22.7%) and General Assistance (12.9%).

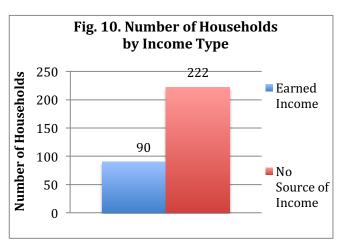


Figure 11 shows the average monthly income for all homeless households.

Figure 11. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation			
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered
Average for All Households	\$718.09	\$543.18	\$229.98

25.5% of homeless households reported that their household was receiving no kind of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Medicaid was the top reported non-cash benefit, and was received by 50% of households. 48.9% of homeless households were connected to Food Stamps (SNAP) benefits.

#### Length of Homelessness

Figure 12 shows the range lengths of homeless episodes experienced on the night of the count by households in Hudson County. The largest grouping of households reported their most recent. continuous episode of homelessness had lasted more than 1

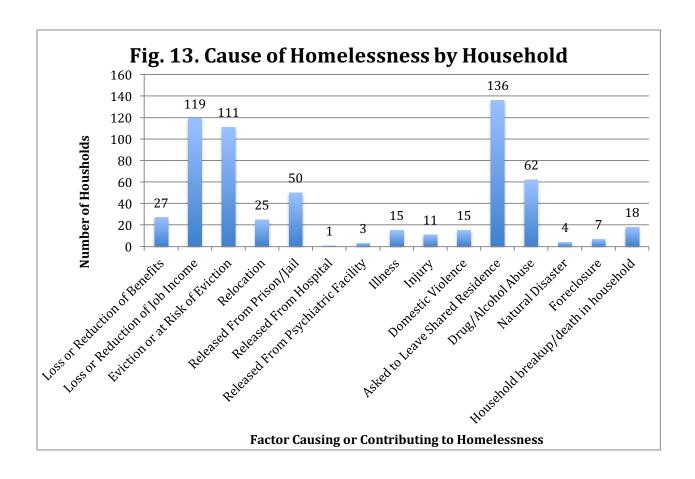


year (24.4%), a decrease of 5 households from those that reported being homeless for more than 1 year in 2015.

#### Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to being asked to leave a shared residence (136 households, 20.6%) than any other cause. As Figure 13 shows, the next most common factor reported was a loss or reduction of job income (18%) followed by eviction (16.8%).

When homeless households were asked 'what was your residence prior to your current living situation?' more said they were residing in an emergency shelter (34.2%) than any other type of residence. 21.8% reported staying or living with family or friends prior to their current living 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. This definition has been updated since the 2015 point in time, in such that in order for a household to meet the episodic definition of chronically homeless, the 4 episodes must equal at least 12 months, which may lead to a decrease in the number of households that qualify as chronically homeless.

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**

137 households, made up of 139 persons, were chronically homeless in Hudson County, according to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 34 households (19.9%) and 38 persons (21.5%) from 2015. The rate of chronic homelessness as a percentage of overall homelessness is 16.8%; which is a decrease from the 19.3% found in 2015.

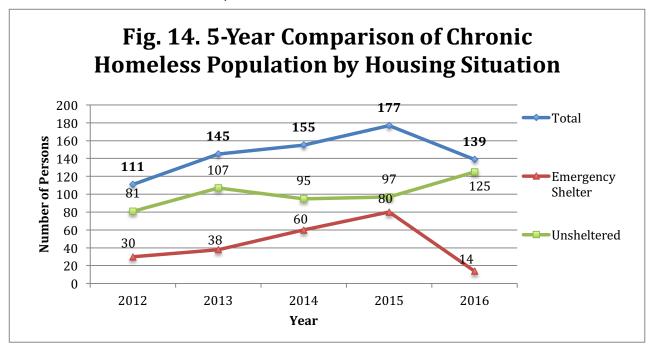
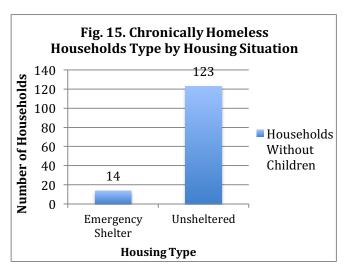


Figure 14 shows the number of chronically homeless persons who were in emergency shelter or living unsheltered in Hudson County from 2012 to 2016. Over the period from 2012 to 2015 the overall number of chronically homeless persons trended upward, before decreasing in 2016. While this is true, the total chronically homeless population has increased by 25.2% between 2012 and 2016. In 2016, the number of chronically homeless persons in emergency shelter decreased by 66 people (82.5%) but increased for the unsheltered chronically homeless population by 28 people (28.9%).

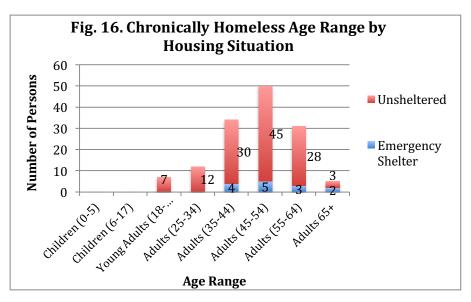
#### Families and Individuals

the 137 chronically homeless households counted in 2016. 135 (98.5%) were individual adult households. The other 2 households, were adult only households, each composed of 2 persons. There were no homeless families with children identified as chronically homeless in 2016, a decrease from the 3 households counted in 2015.



#### **Demographics**

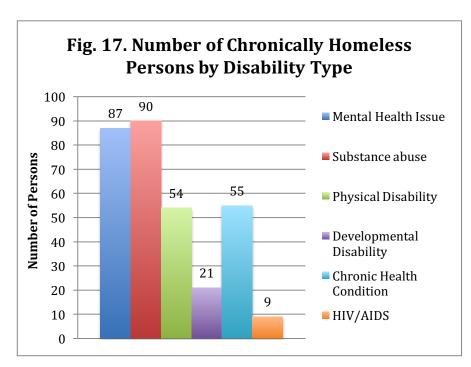
Of the 139 total chronically homeless persons, the age range with the highest concentration of chronically homeless persons was adults between the ages of 45 and 54 (50 persons, 36%). This is similar to what was found in 2015.



73.4% of chronically

homeless persons were male, and 25.9% were female. 1 chronically homeless person identified as transgender.

The largest racial subgroup of chronically homeless persons reported their race as Black or African-American (49.6%). The next largest group self-identified as White (36.7%). With regard to ethnicity, 20.1% of chronically homeless persons identified themselves as Hispanic.



#### 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 substance abuse disorders (64.7%) and mental health issues (62.6%). The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the chronically homeless can be seen in Figure 17.

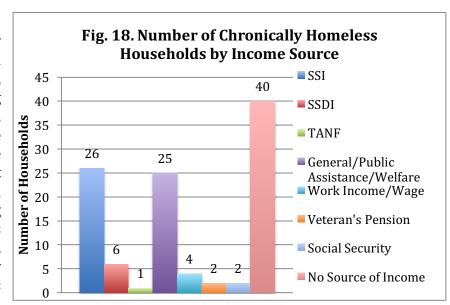
#### Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 21 chronically homeless households in Hudson County reported having a victim of domestic violence (15.3%). 1 of these victim households was staying in emergency shelter, while the remaining 20 (95.2%) were unsheltered.

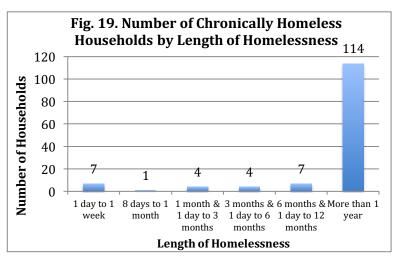
There were 8 veteran individuals identified as chronically homeless on the night of the count (5.8%). 2 of these veterans were in emergency shelter, while the other 6 (75%) were unsheltered.

#### Income and Benefits

Among all the chronically homeless households on the night of the count, 29.2% reported receiving no type of cash income. Figure 18 shows the of income sources received. The most common source of cash income among chronically homeless households SSI. was which was received by 19%. 2.9% of households reported earned income.



21.2% of chronically homeless households reported they were not receiving any type of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Food Stamps (SNAP) and Medicaid were the top reported benefits among the chronically homeless, with 41.6% and 39.4% receiving each, respectively.

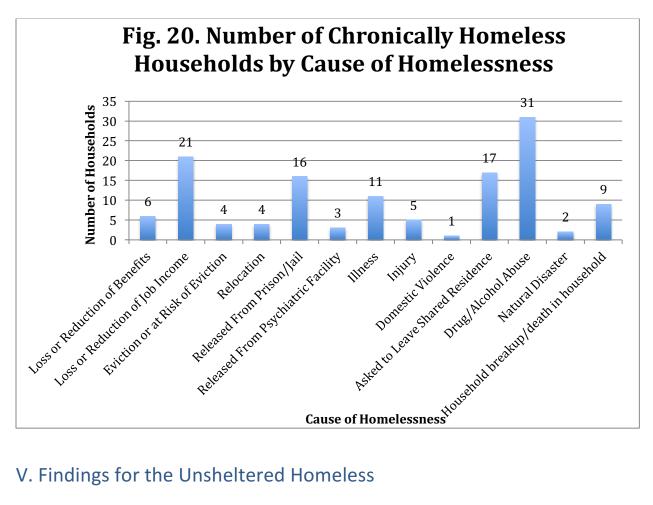


#### Length of Homelessness

Figure 19 shows that more chronically homeless households (83.2%) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted for more than 1 year than any other length of time. This is an increase of 10 households that reported this response from 2015.

#### Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more chronically homeless households cited drug or alcohol abuse (22.6%) than any other cause. As Figure 20 shows, other common factors reported included a loss or reduction of job income (15.3%) and being asked to leave a shared residence (12.4%).



# 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**

222 households, made up of 226 persons, were living unsheltered in Hudson County, according to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 59 households (36.2%), and 57 persons (33.7%) from 2015.

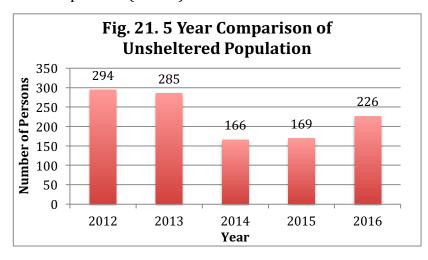


Figure 21 shows the number of unsheltered persons from 2012 to 2016. While the unsheltered population increased from 2015, the overall unsheltered population has decreased by 23.1% (68 persons) since 2012.

#### Families and Individuals

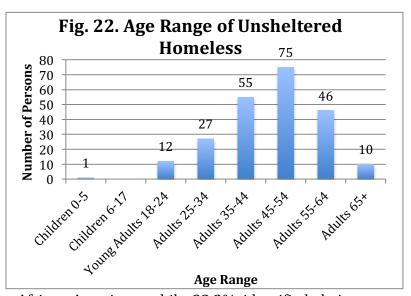
Of the 222 unsheltered households counted in 2016, only 1 was a household with at least 1 adult and 1 child on the night of the count. There were 2 persons in this household. This is a decrease of 1 unsheltered family from the 2 that were found in 2015.

221 of unsheltered households (99.5%) were adult only households, which included 224 persons. This is a 37.3% increase from 2015.

# Demographics

Similar to 2015, as shown in Figure 22, the largest portion of the 226 unsheltered persons counted in 2016, 33.2%, was between 45 and 54 years old.

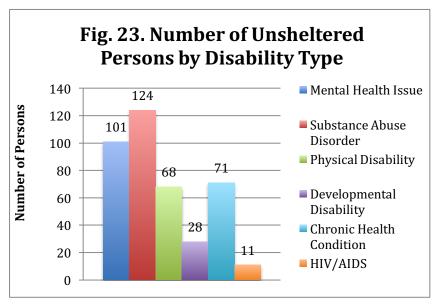
74.3% of unsheltered persons were male and 23.9% were female. 1 unsheltered persons identified as transgender. 49.1% of unsheltered persons



identified their race as Black or African-American, while 33.2% identified their race as White. 23.9% of unsheltered persons identified their ethnicity as Hispanic.

#### Disabilities

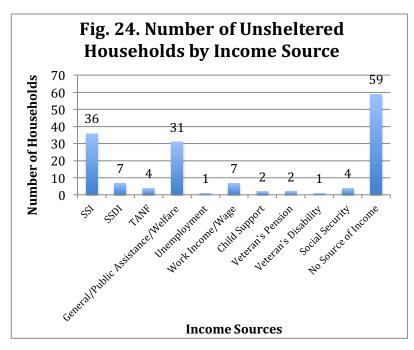
178 of the 226 unsheltered persons (78.8%) reported having some kind disability. The disabilities most commonly identified substance were abuse disorders (69.7%)and issues mental health (56.7%).The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the unsheltered can be seen in Figure 23.



#### Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 33 unsheltered homeless households (14.9%) in Hudson County reported being victims of domestic violence, 17 more than were counted in 2015.

There were 12 unsheltered veterans on the night of the count, 1 more than in 2015.



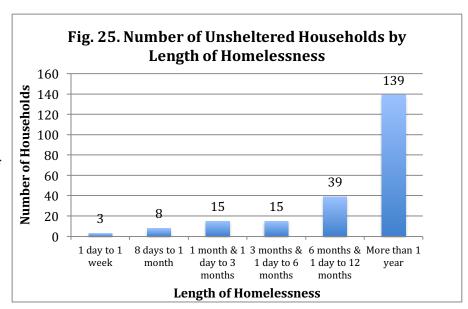
#### **Income and Benefits**

the unsheltered Among all households on the night of the count, 59 (26.6%) reported having no source of cash income, while 3.2% reported having earned income. The average monthly income reported among unsheltered households was approximately \$230. 16.2% unsheltered households received SSI, making it the most common source of cash income. Figure 24 shows the sources of income received by unsheltered population.

51 unsheltered households (23%) reported they were not receiving any type of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Food Stamps (SNAP) and Medicaid were the top reported non-cash benefits among this group, with 37.4% and 30.6% receiving each of these benefits, respectively.

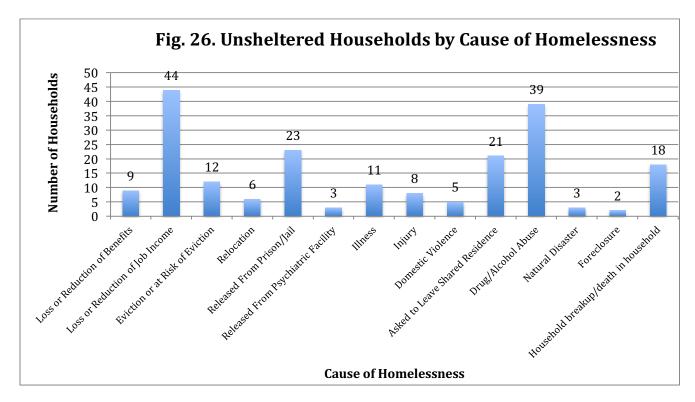
# Length of Homelessness

As shown in Figure 25, more unsheltered homeless households reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted for over a year than any other length of time (62.6%). This is similar to what was found in 2015.

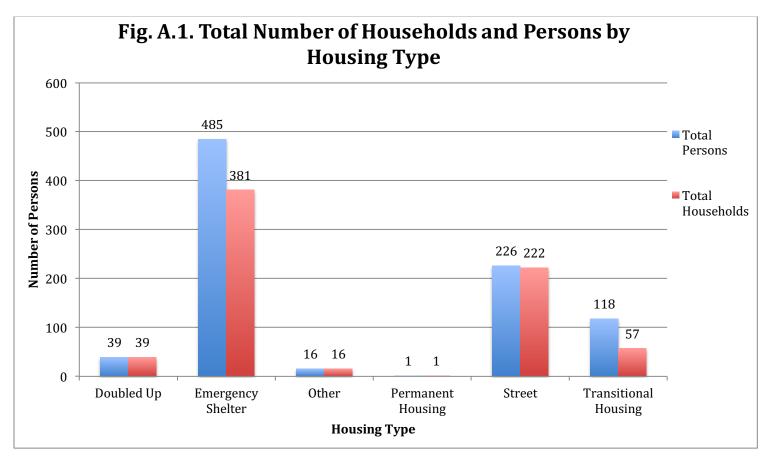


#### Cause of Homelessness

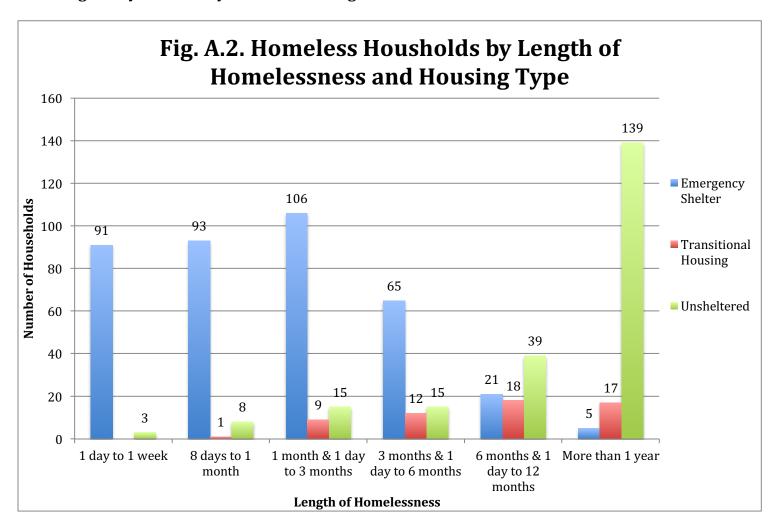
When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more unsheltered households said a loss or reduction of job income (19.8%) than any other factor. As Figure 26 shows, other common factors reported included drug or alcohol abuse (17.6%) and release from prison or jail (10.4%).



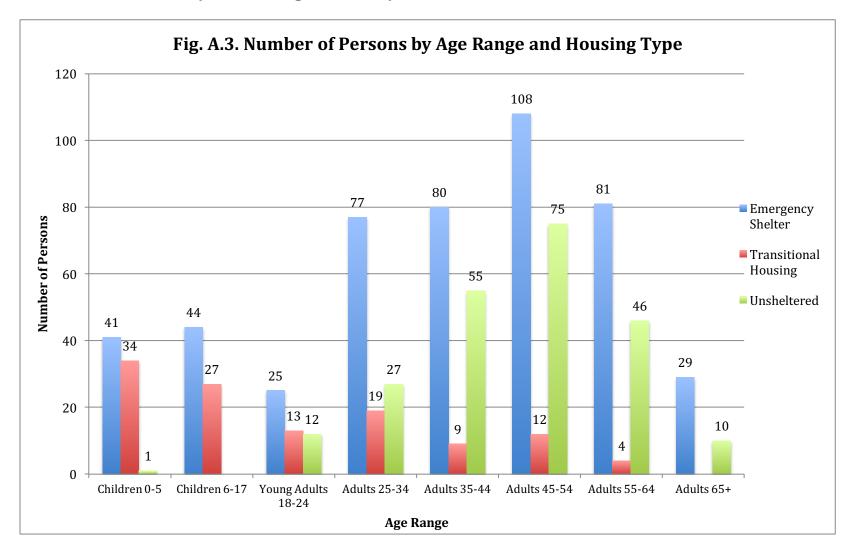
# VI. Appendix Where did you spend the night of Tuesday, January 26, 2016?

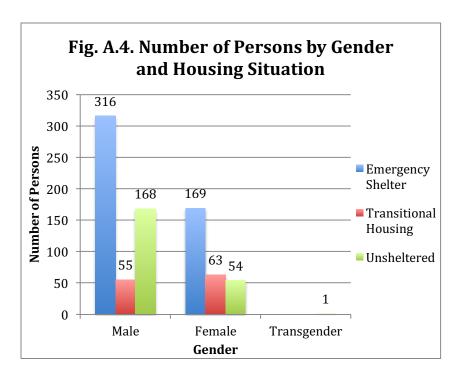


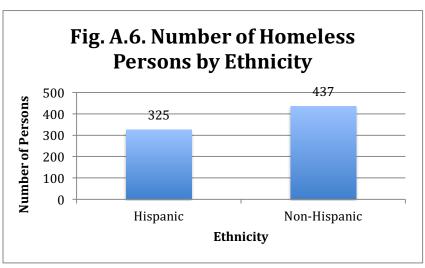
How long have you been in your current living situation?

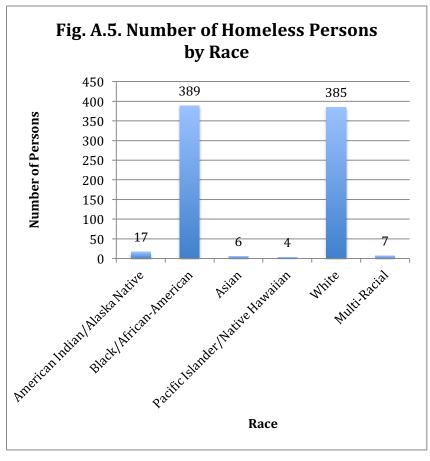


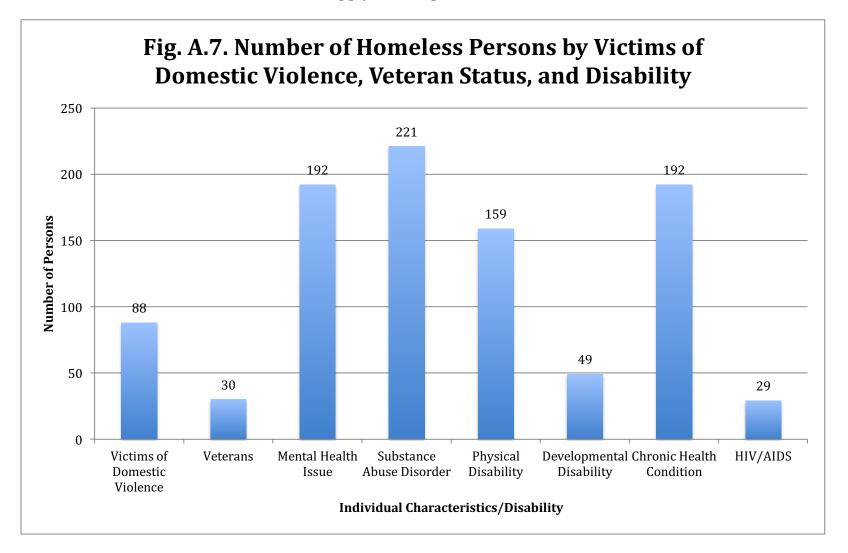
# Who was homeless with you on the night of January 26th?







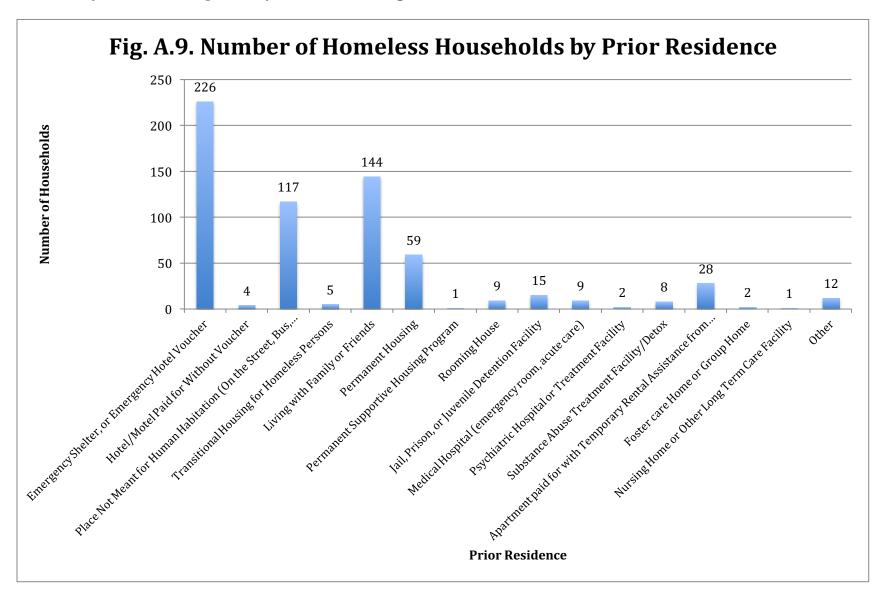




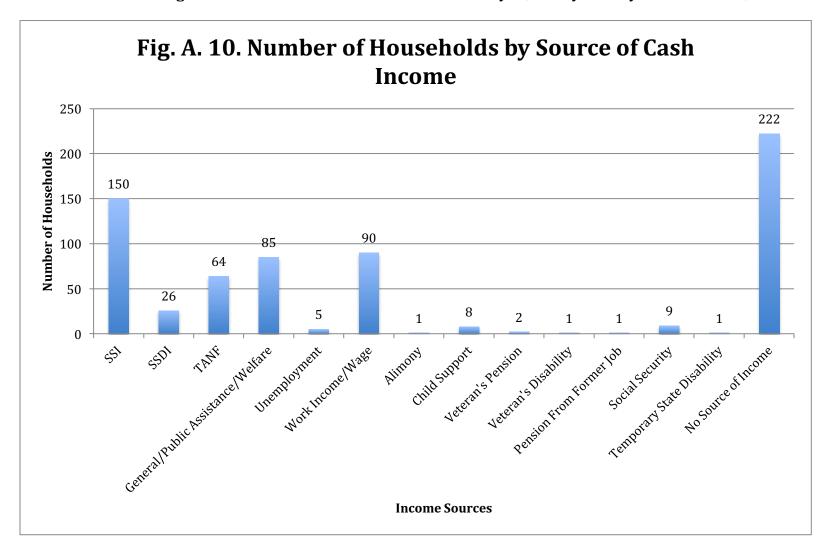
# Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?

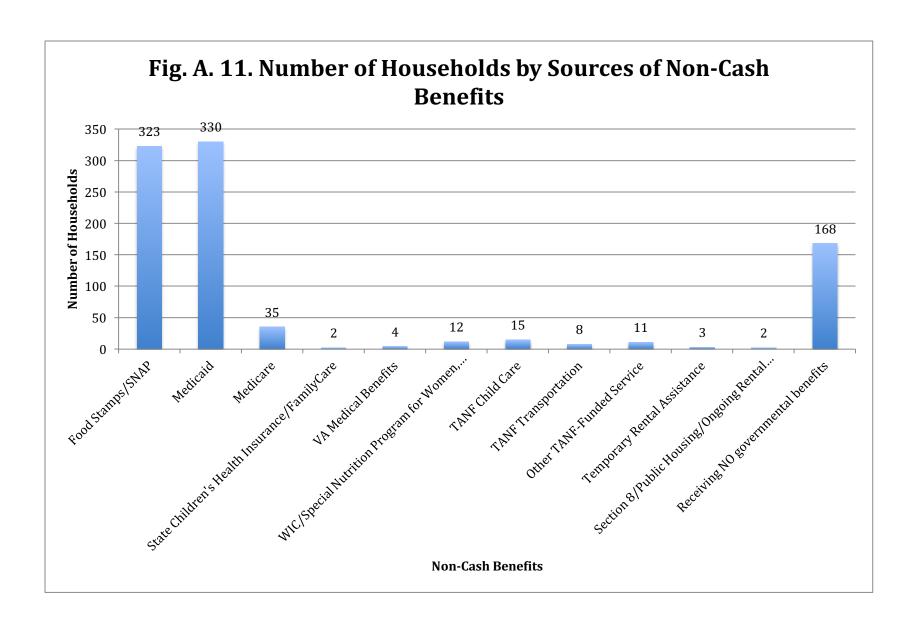
Fig. A.8. Number of Homeless Households by County, State or Country of Last Permanent Address		
Last Permanent Address - County/State/Country	Number of Households	
Arizona	1	
Bergen County	10	
Burlington County	1	
California	1	
Camden County	1	
Cumberland County	1	
Essex County	29	
Florida	4	
Georgia	2	
Hudson County	493	
Illinois	1	
Indiana	1	
Massachusetts	1	
Middlesex County	6	
Michigan	1	
Monmouth County	1	
Morris County	3	
New York	12	
North Carolina	2	
Ocean County	2	
Passaic County	2	
Pennsylvania	1	
Puerto Rico	2	
South Carolina	1	
Union County	4	
Utah	1	
Virginia	1	
Washington	1	

What was your residence prior to your current living situation?

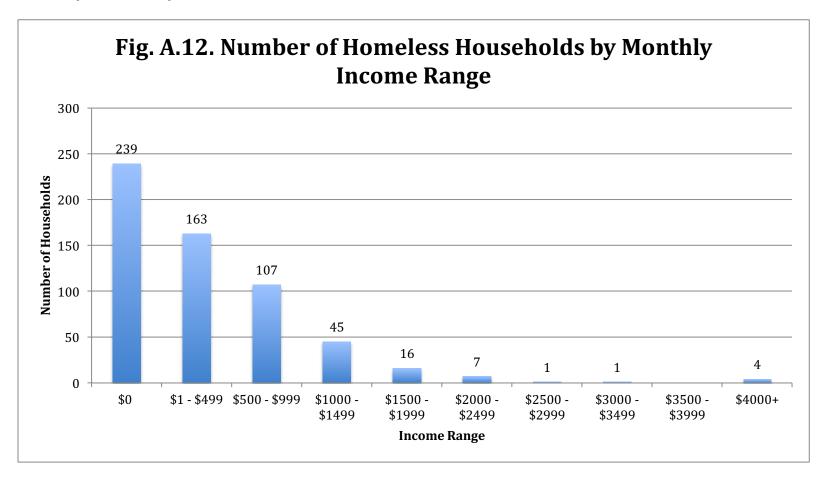


Which of the following sources of income or non-cash benefits do you, or anyone in your household, receive?

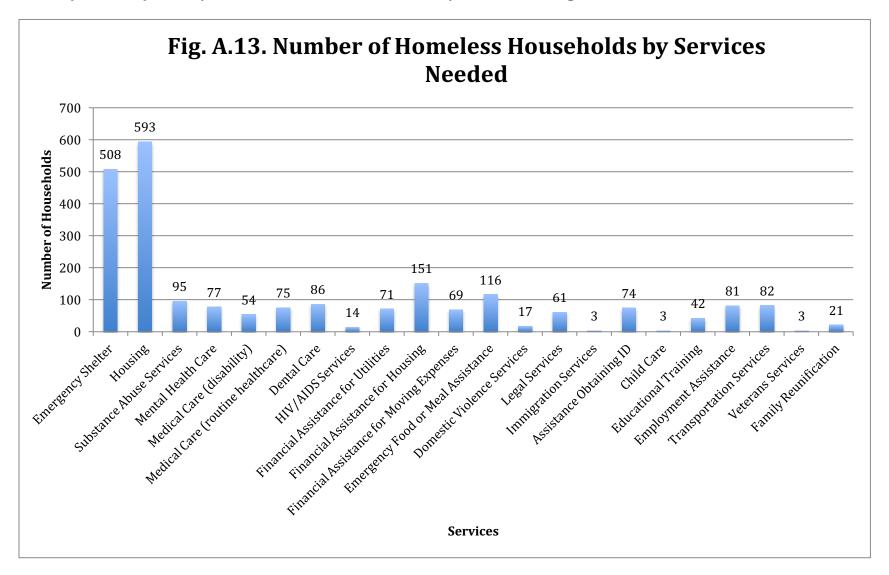




## What is your monthly household income?



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



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

