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NJ
2016
Counts!

Sussex 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 records. 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 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 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 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 26th, 2016 a total of 53 households, including 80 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Sussex County, according to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 6 households, with 8 persons, were identified as chronically homeless.
- 9 unsheltered homeless households, with 10 persons, were counted.

Total Homeless Population

On the night of January 26th, 2016, a total of 80 persons, in 53 households, were experiencing homelessness in Sussex County, according to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 20 households (60.6%) and 23 persons (40.4%) from 2015. Sussex County had 0.9% of New Jersey's statewide homeless population in 2016.

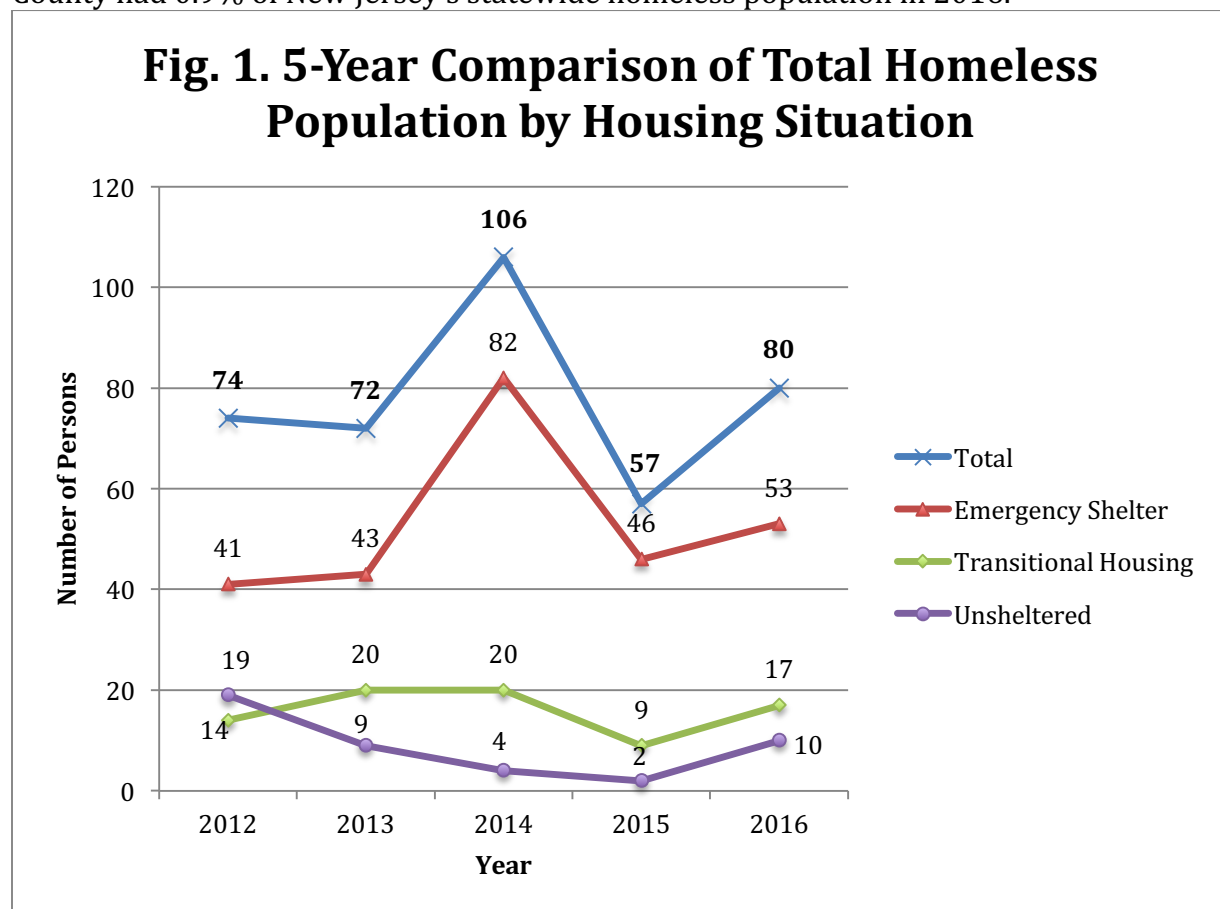
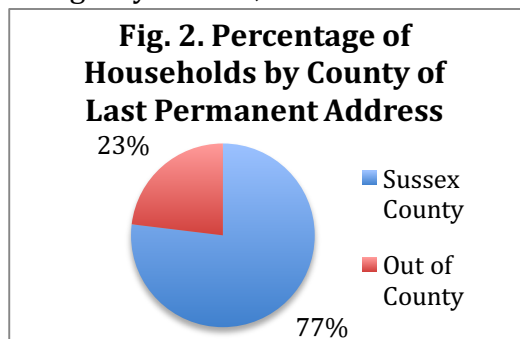


Figure 1 shows that, in 2016, 53 homeless persons were staying in shelters, 17 in transitional housing, and 10 were living unsheltered on the night of the count. There was a 15.2% increase in emergency shelter, 88.9% increase in transitional housing, and a 400% increase in the unsheltered populations as compared to 2015.

Figure 1 also shows that, over the past five years, the total number of homeless persons and households has been fluctuating in Sussex County, with an overall trend of a slight increase in total homelessness. From 2012 to 2016 Sussex County has seen an increase of 6 persons (8.1%). Over this 5-year period, there was a 29.3% increase in persons in emergency shelter, and 21.4% increase in persons in transitional housing. However, the unsheltered count has seen an overall decrease of 47.4% (9 persons).



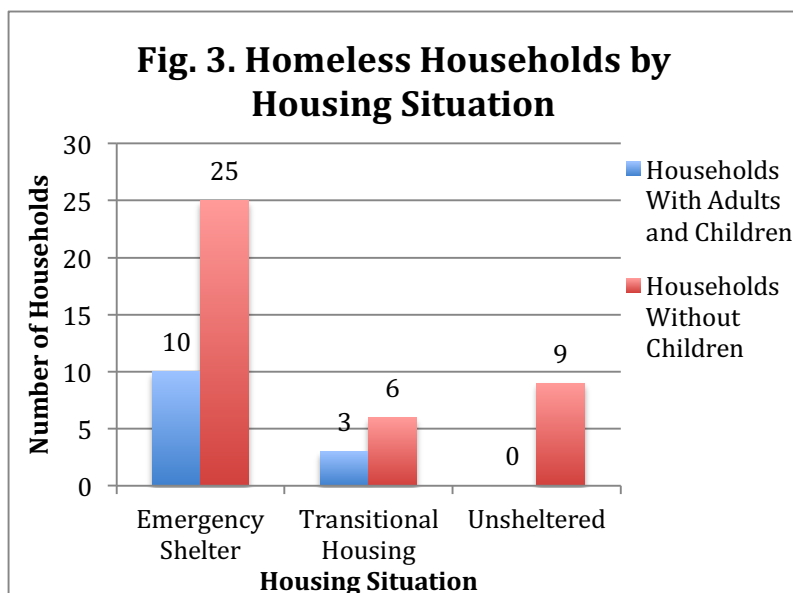
As Figure 2 shows, 23% of homeless households counted in Sussex County reported that their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless was outside of the county.

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’).

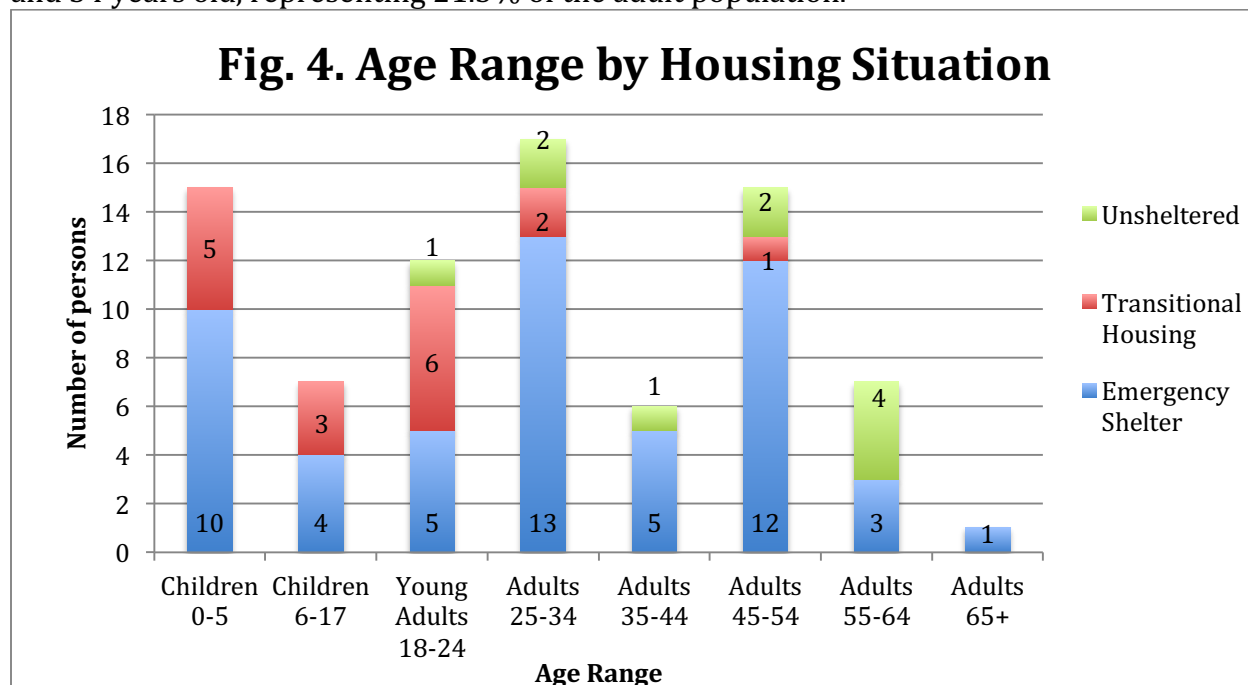
Of the 53 homeless households counted in Sussex County in 2016, 13 (24.5%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult, a decrease of 2 families (13.3%) from 2015. These families included 37 persons, 22 children under age 18, and 15 adults. The average family size was 3.1 persons. Figure 3 shows that 3 families (23.1%) were staying in transitional housing, while the remaining 10 (76.9%) were in emergency shelters.

75.5% of the homeless households (40) counted in Sussex County were households without children under 18, and they were composed of 43 persons. The majority of these adult-only households (36) were composed of individuals, while 3 were couple households that contained a total of 6 persons. The majority of adult only households (62.5%), were in an emergency shelter.



Demographics

There was a total of 22 (27.5%) homeless children under 18 years old, 12 (15%) young adults between 18 and 24 years old, and 46 (57.5%) adults over the age of 24 in Sussex County on the night of the count. Figure 4 shows that the majority of homeless children who were under the age of 18 were between 0 and 5 years of age (68.2%). The age range most represented among homeless persons in Sussex County was that of adults between 25 and 34 years old, representing 21.3% of the adult population.

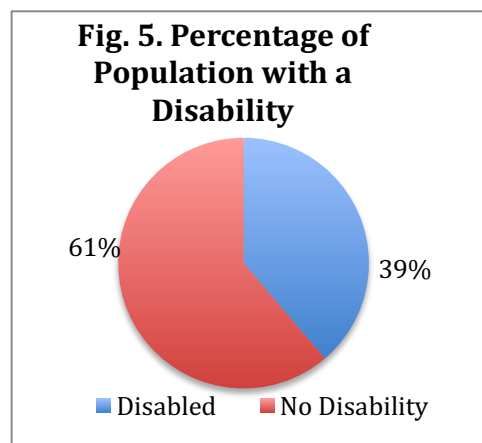


62.5% of homeless persons were female, and 37.5% were male.

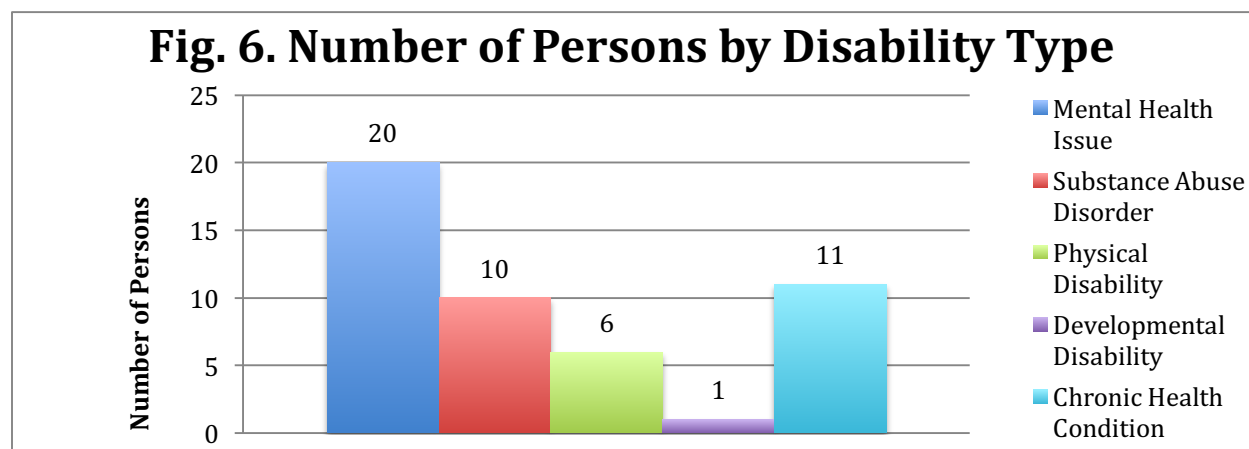
62.5% of persons identified their race as White, making that the largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported. The next largest group self-identified as Black or African American (28.8%). With regard to ethnicity, 12.5% of homeless persons identified themselves as Hispanic.

Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 39% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 51.7% of adults 18 or older reported some type of disability compared to 4.5% of children. Figure 6 shows the number of the homeless persons that identified as having various disabilities. The most prevalent disabilities were mental health issues, chronic health conditions, and substance abuse disorders.

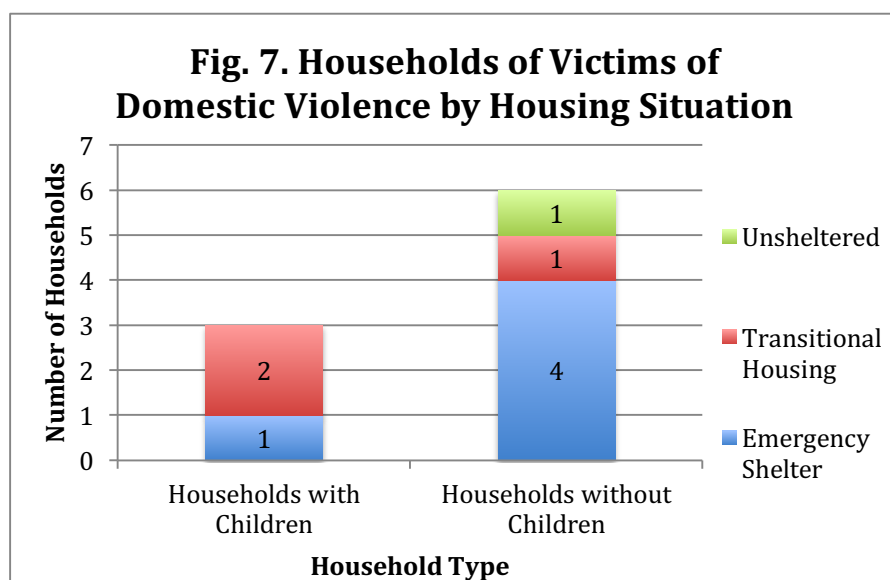


Among disabled adults, 63.3% reported mental health issues making this the most prevalent disability; representing 32.8% of the total adult homeless population. 36.7% of disabled adults reported a chronic health condition, while another 33.3% reported a substance abuse disorder. 1 homeless child reported a disabling mental health issue.



Victims of Domestic Violence

On the night of the count, in Sussex County, 9 homeless households reported having a victim of domestic violence, 3 fewer than 2015. Figure 7 shows that 6 (66.7%) of these households were individual adult households, while 3 were families with at least 1 adult and 1 child under 18. 5 of the 9 households (55.6%) were in emergency shelters, 3 (33.3%) were in transitional housing, and 1 (11.1%) household was 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.

There was 1 homeless individual veteran staying in an emergency shelter in Sussex County on the night of the Point in Time count.

The individual veteran that was counted was male and identified his race as White. He was between 45 and 54 and reported a mental health issue and chronic health condition. This veteran was not connected to veteran specific benefits, but reported SSI income and connection to Food Stamps (SNAP) and Medicaid. This veteran was seeking housing, mental health care, financial assistance for housing, and veteran services.

Income and Benefits

Among all the households experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, 20.8% had no source of income, and 20.8% reported having earned income. The top reported sources of income, other than earned income, were General Assistance and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and, which were received by 32.1% and 15.1% of households, respectively.

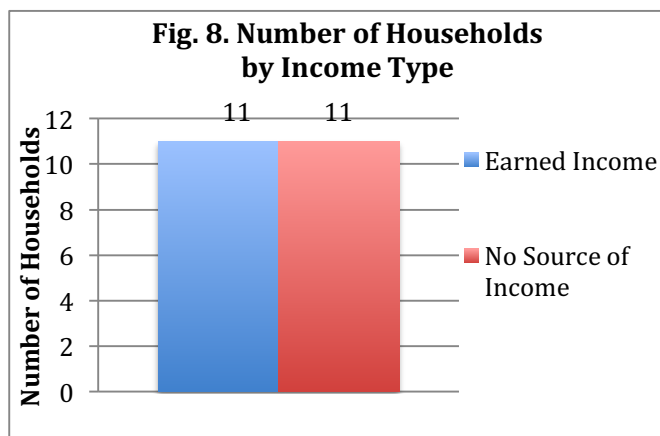


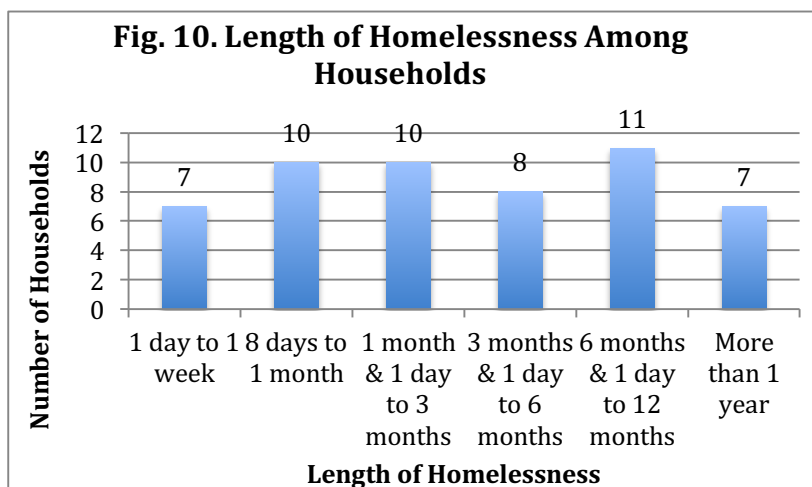
Figure 9 shows the average monthly income for all homeless households.

Figure 9. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation			
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered
Average for All Households	\$464.06	\$417.50	\$586.55

17% of homeless households reported that they were not receiving any kind of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Medicaid and Food Stamps (SNAP) were the top reported non-cash benefits, and were received by 58.5% and 54.7% of households, respectively.

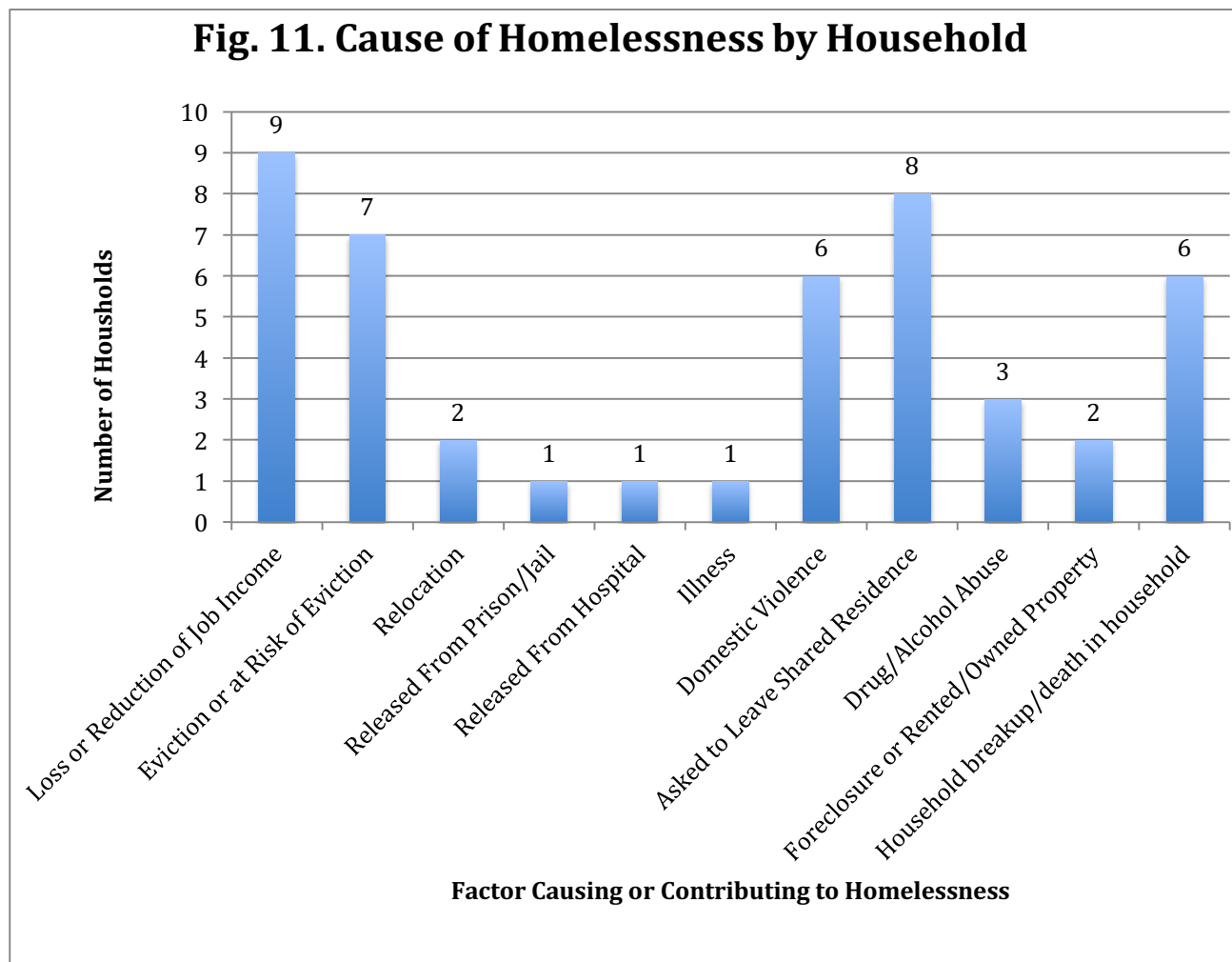
Length of Homelessness

Figure 10 shows that when households were asked how long their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted, more (20.8%) reported it had been 6 months to 12 months than any other length. 7 households (13.2%) reported their homelessness had lasted more than 1 year.



Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more homeless households attributed their homelessness to a loss or reduction of job income (9 households, 17%) than any other cause. As Figure 11 shows, the next most common factor reported was being asked to leave a shared residence (15.1%).



When homeless households were asked ‘what was your residence prior to your current living situation?’ more said they were staying or living with friends or family (41.5%) than any other type of residence. 20.8% reported residing in permanent housing 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

6 households, made up of 8 total persons, were chronically homeless in Sussex County, according to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count, a decrease of 2 households (25%) and 6 persons (42.9%) from 2015. The rate of chronic homelessness as a percentage of overall homelessness was 10% in 2016, compared to 24.6% in 2015.

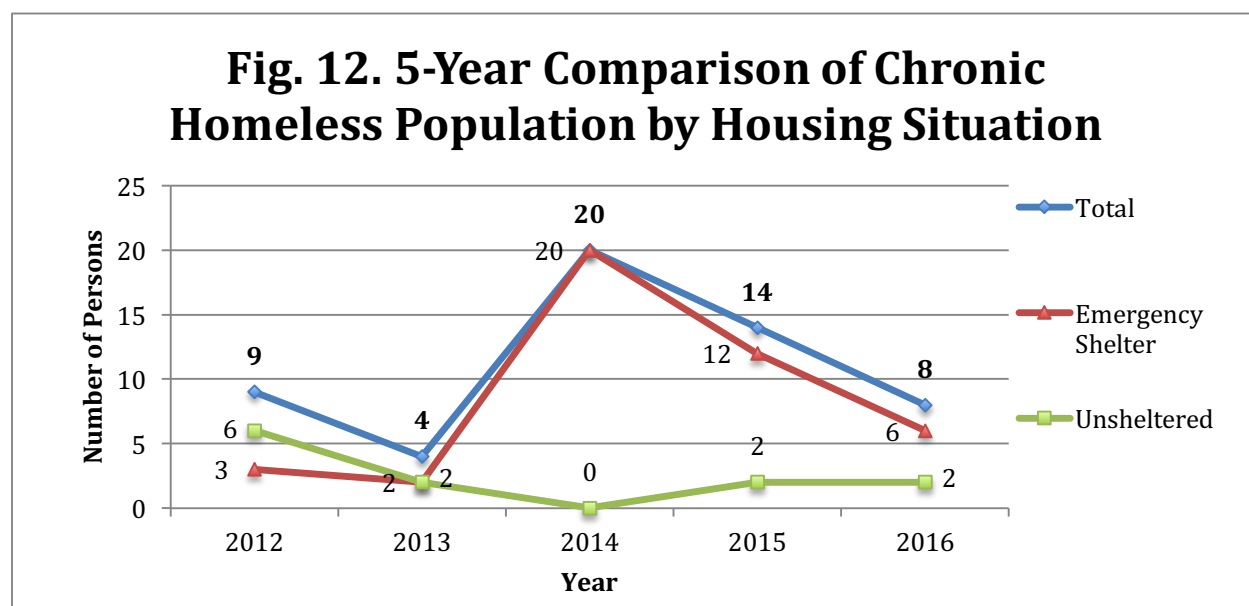
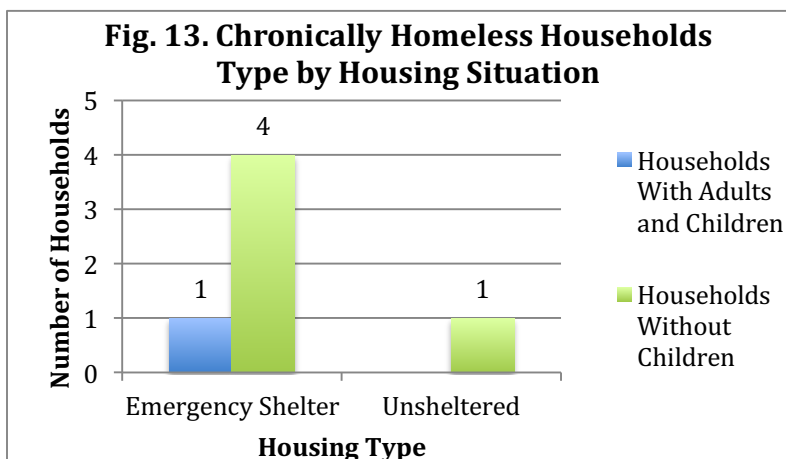


Figure 12 shows the number of chronically homeless persons who were sheltered or living unsheltered in Sussex County from 2012 to 2016. Over the past five years, the number of chronically homeless persons has fluctuated, but has decreased overall from 2012 to 2016 by 1 person (11.1%).

Families and Individuals

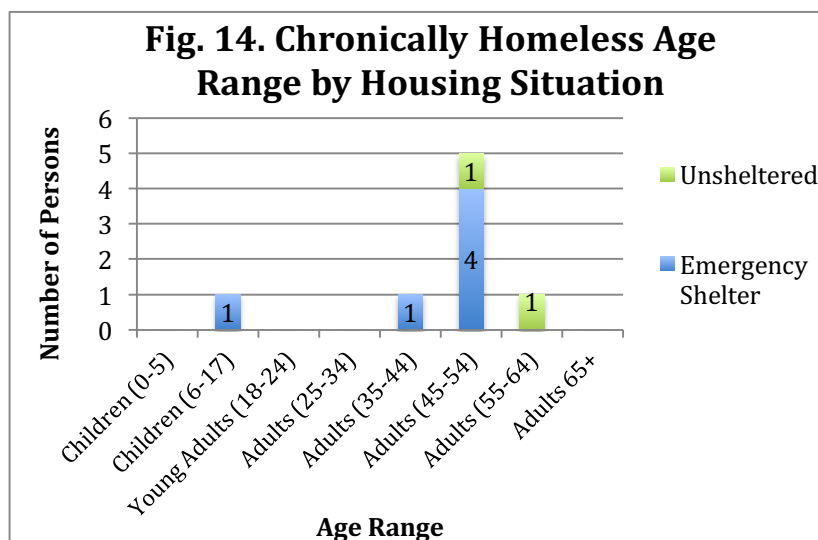
Of the 6 chronically homeless households counted in 2016, 1 (16.7%) was a family with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult, a decrease of 2 families (66.7%) from 2015. This family included 2 persons, and was in emergency shelter on the night of the count.



There were 4 chronically homeless adult individuals counted in Sussex County and 1 couple household. The couple household was unsheltered on the night of the count.

Demographics

Of the 8 total chronically homeless persons, 1 was a child under the age of 18. The remaining 7 persons (87.5%) were adults over the age of 35. Adults between the ages of 45 and 54, with 62.5%, was the most common age range among all chronically homeless persons, as seen in Figure 14.

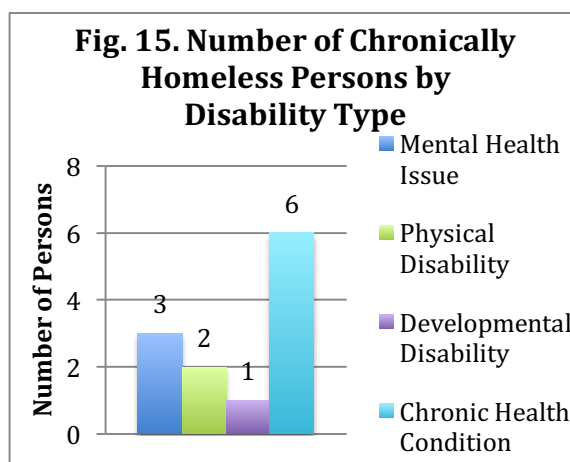


50% of those counted as chronically homeless were female, and 50% were male.

75% of chronically homeless persons reported their race as White, and 25% identified as Black or African-American. 1 person identified their ethnicity 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 among the chronically homeless were chronic health



conditions (75%) and mental health issues (37.5%). The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the chronically homeless can be seen in Figure 15.

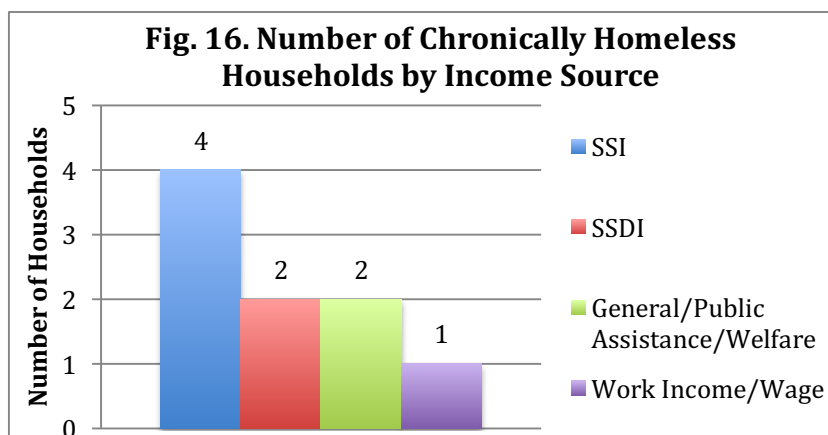
Subpopulations

No chronically homeless households in Sussex County reported having victims of domestic violence.

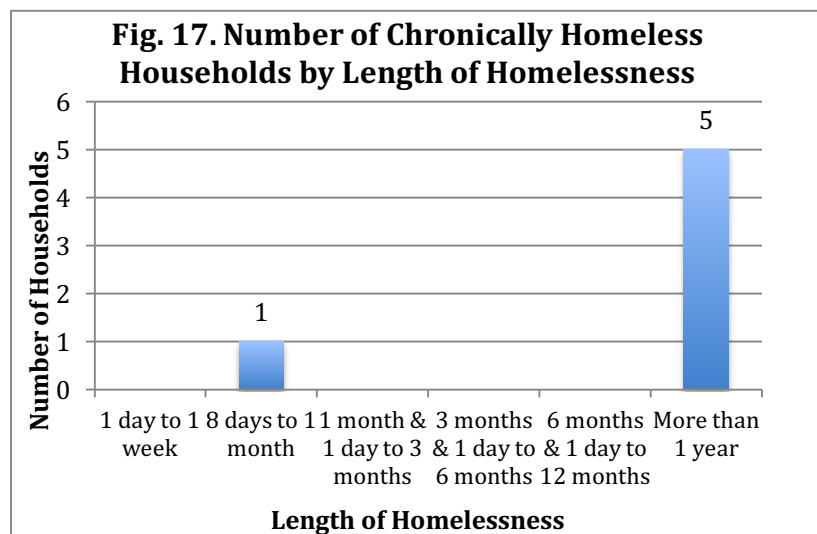
There was 1 chronically homeless veteran staying in emergency shelter identified on the night of the count.

Income and Benefits

Among all the chronically homeless households on the night of the count, all reported receiving some type of cash income. Figure 16 shows the sources of income received. The most common source of cash income among chronically homeless households was SSI, which was received by 66.7% of households. 1 household (16.7%) reported earned income.



1 chronically homeless household (16.7%) reported 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 with 83.3% and 66.7% of households receiving these benefits, respectively.

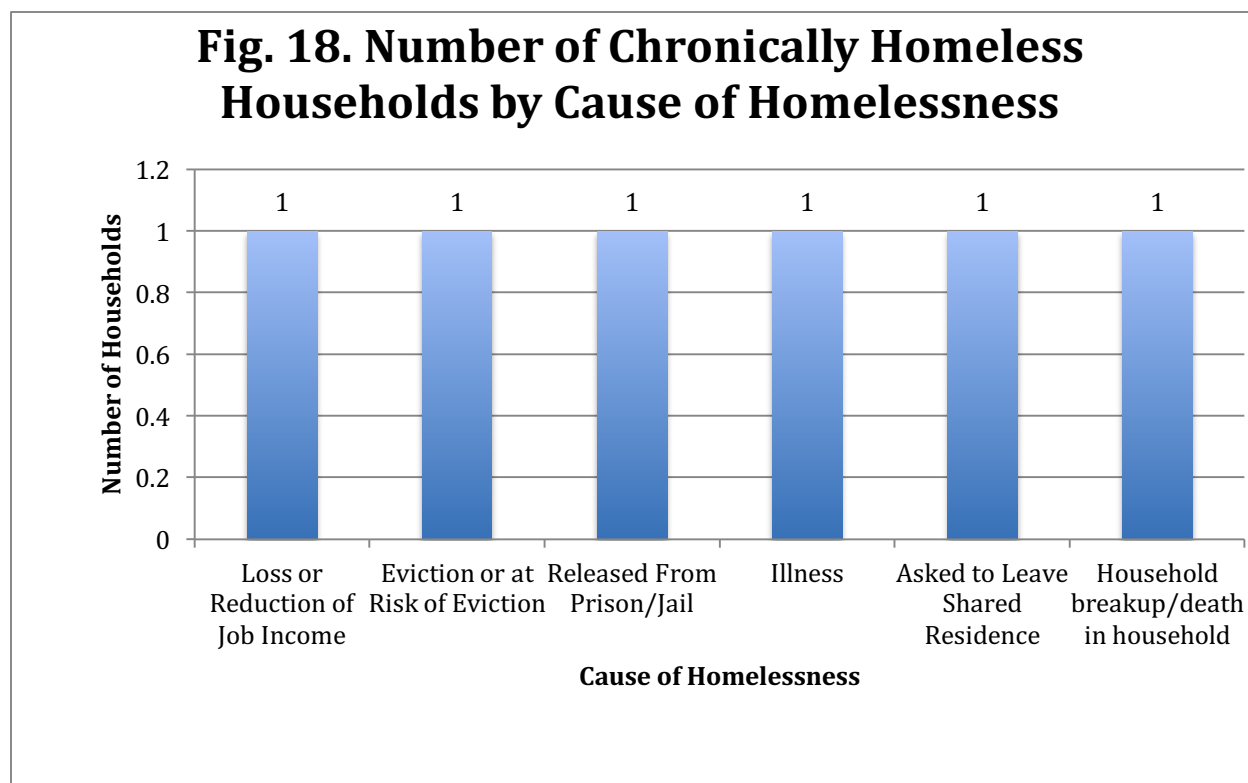


Length of Homelessness

Figure 17 shows that 83.3% of chronically homeless households reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted for more than 1 year. This is a shift from 2015 when only 37.5% of chronically homeless households reported their homelessness lasted more than 1 year.

Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, each of the following causes was cited by 1 (16.7%) chronically homeless household: loss or reduction of job income, eviction or risk of eviction, release from prison/jail, illness, being asked to leave a shared residence, or household breakup/death. Figure 18 has the full list of the causes reported by chronically homeless households.



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

9 households, made up of 10 persons, were living unsheltered in Sussex County, according to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 7 households (350%) and 8 persons (400%) from 2015.

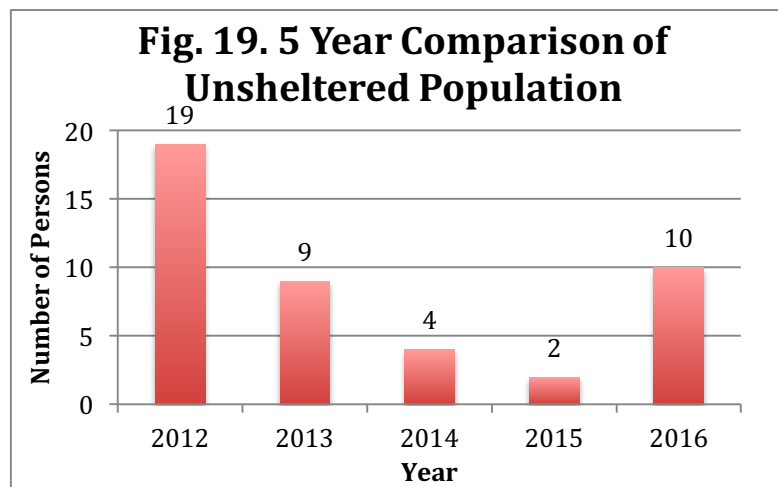
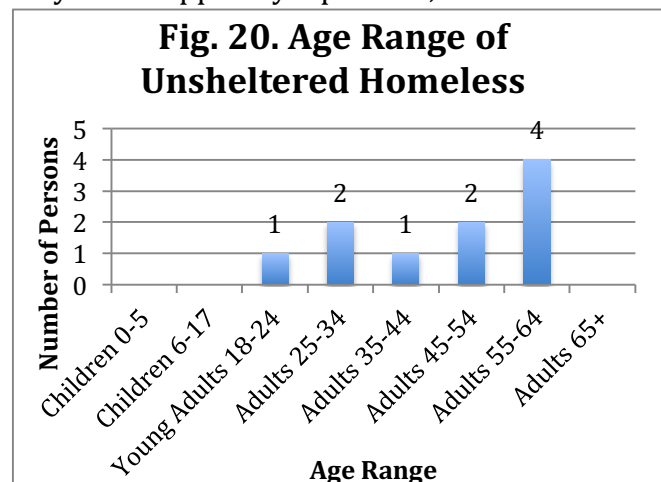


Figure 19 shows the number of unsheltered persons from 2012 to 2016. Since 2012, the number of unsheltered persons in Sussex County has dropped by 9 persons, or 47.4%.

Families and Individuals

There were 0 unsheltered families with adults and children counted in 2016.

1 unsheltered household counted was an adult couple, while the remaining 8 households were adult individuals.



1 unsheltered person counted in 2016 was a young adult between the ages of 18 and 24 years old, while the remaining unsheltered persons were adults between the ages of 25 and 64. The largest portion (40%) of unsheltered persons was between 55 and 64 years old.

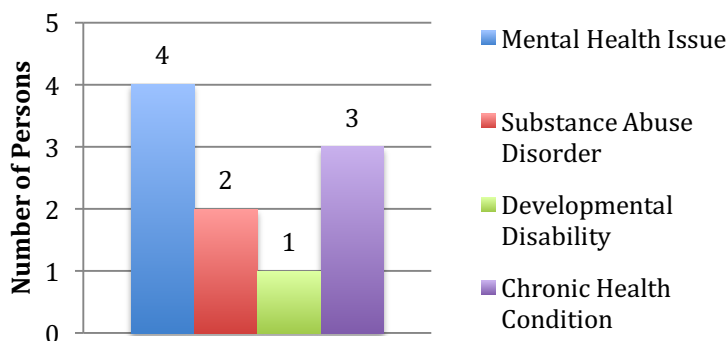
Demographics

60% of the unsheltered population was female, and 40% were male. All 10 identified their race as White, and none identified their ethnicity as Hispanic.

Disabilities

60% of unsheltered persons reported being disabled. The most common disability reported was mental health issues (66.7%). The reported disabilities can be seen in Figure 21.

Fig. 21. Number of Unsheltered Persons by Disability Type



Subpopulations

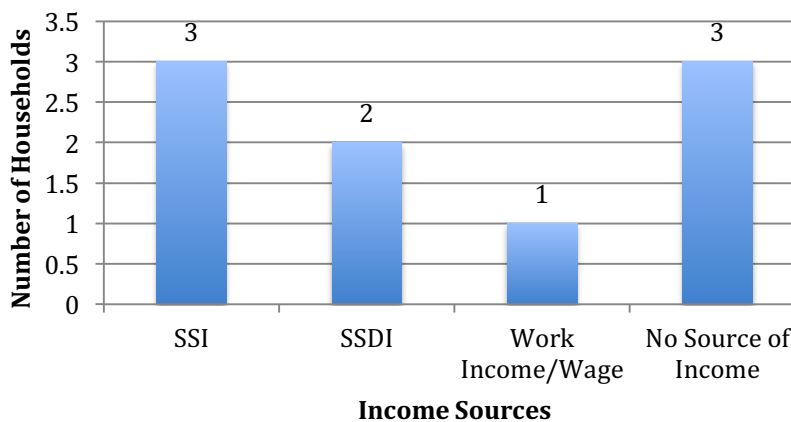
On the night of the count, 1 unsheltered homeless individual (10%) in Sussex County reported being a victim of domestic violence.

There were 0 unsheltered veterans counted on the night of the count.

Income and Benefits

Among the 9 unsheltered households counted in Sussex County on the night of the PIT, 3 (33.3%) reported having no source of income. Another 33.3% reported receiving SSI and another 22.2% reported receiving SSDI. The average monthly income of unsheltered households was \$586.55.

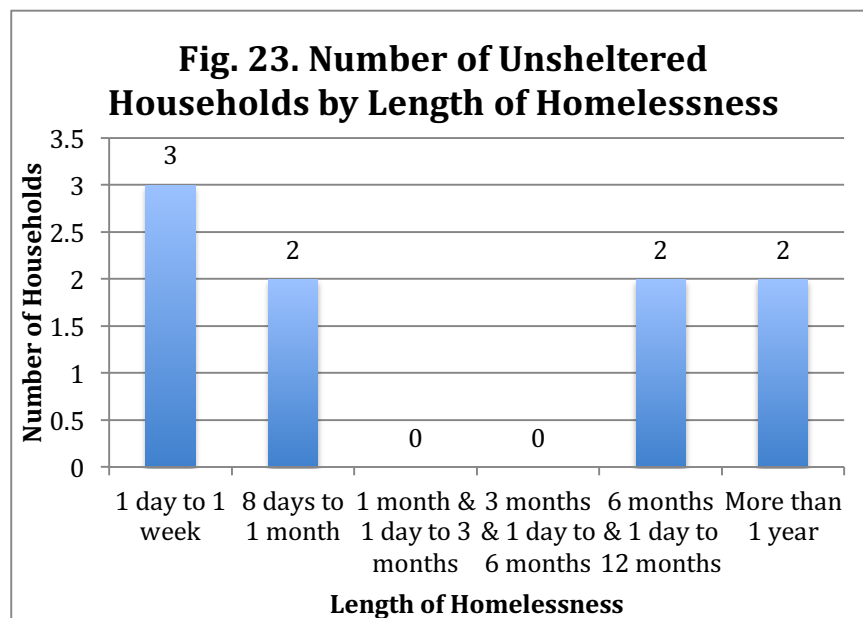
Fig. 22. Number of Unsheltered Households by Income Source



33.3% of unsheltered households reported not being connected to any mainstream benefits. 1 household (11.1%) reported being connected to Food Stamps/SNAP and 1 (11.1%) reported being connected to Medicare benefits.

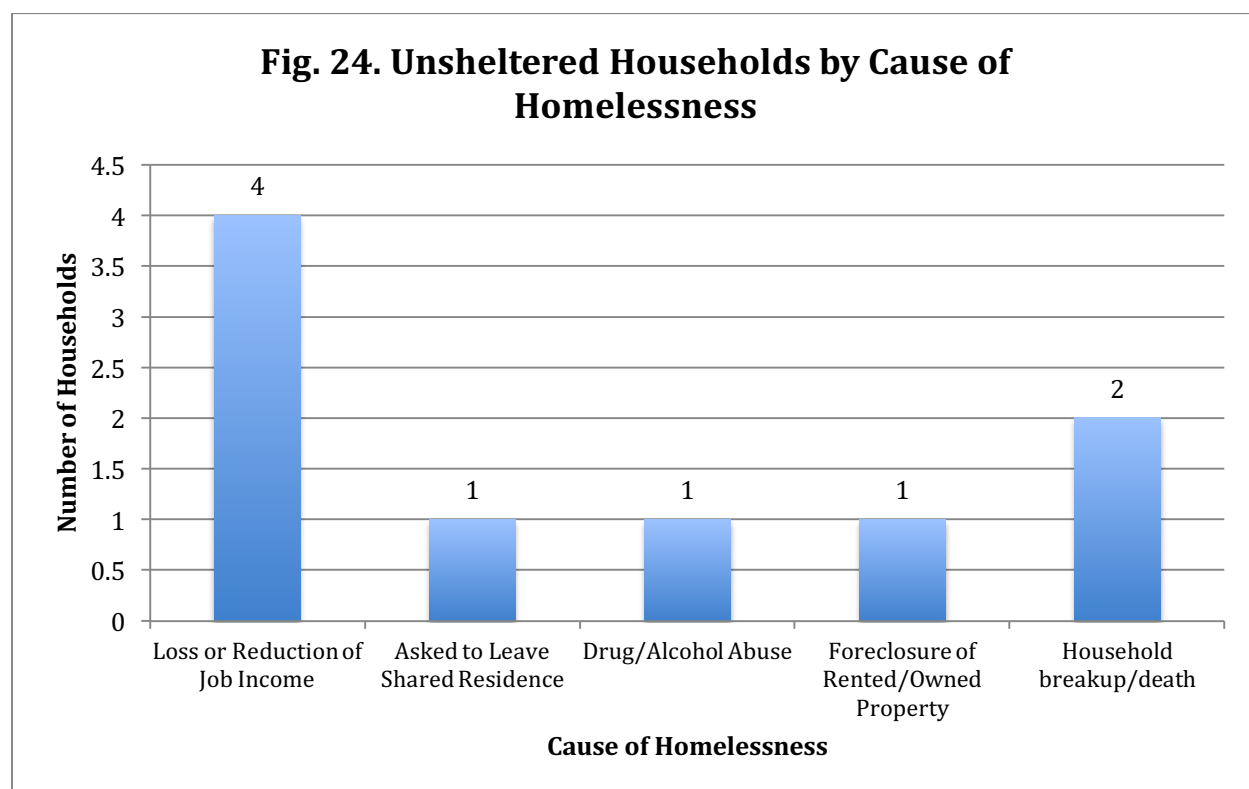
Length of Homelessness

The largest contingent of unsheltered households (33.3%) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homeless had lasted from 1 day to 1 week. 22.2% of unsheltered households reported being homeless for more than 1 year.



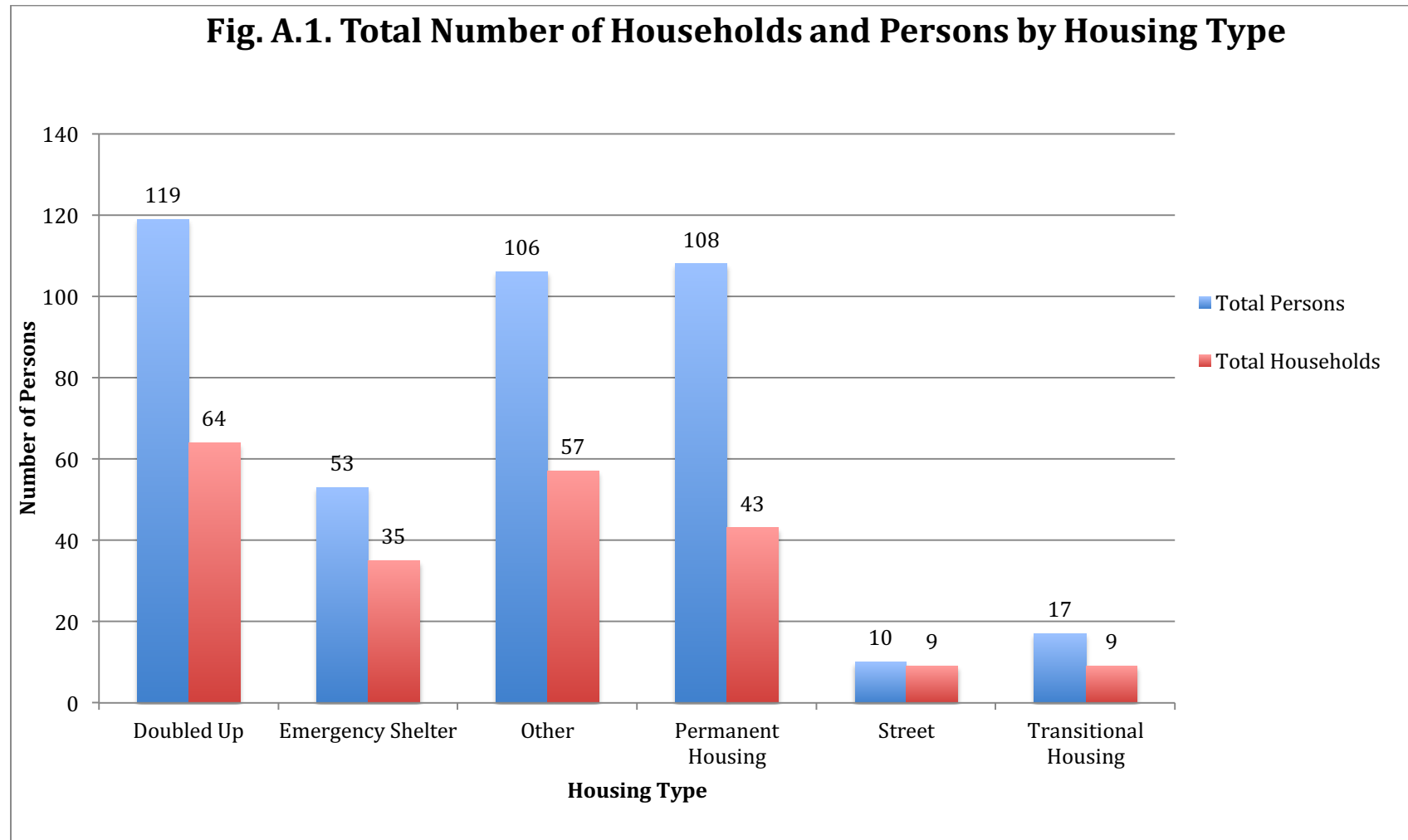
Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more unsheltered households (44.4%) reported a loss or reduction of job income than any other cause. Figure 24 has the full list of the causes reported by unsheltered households.



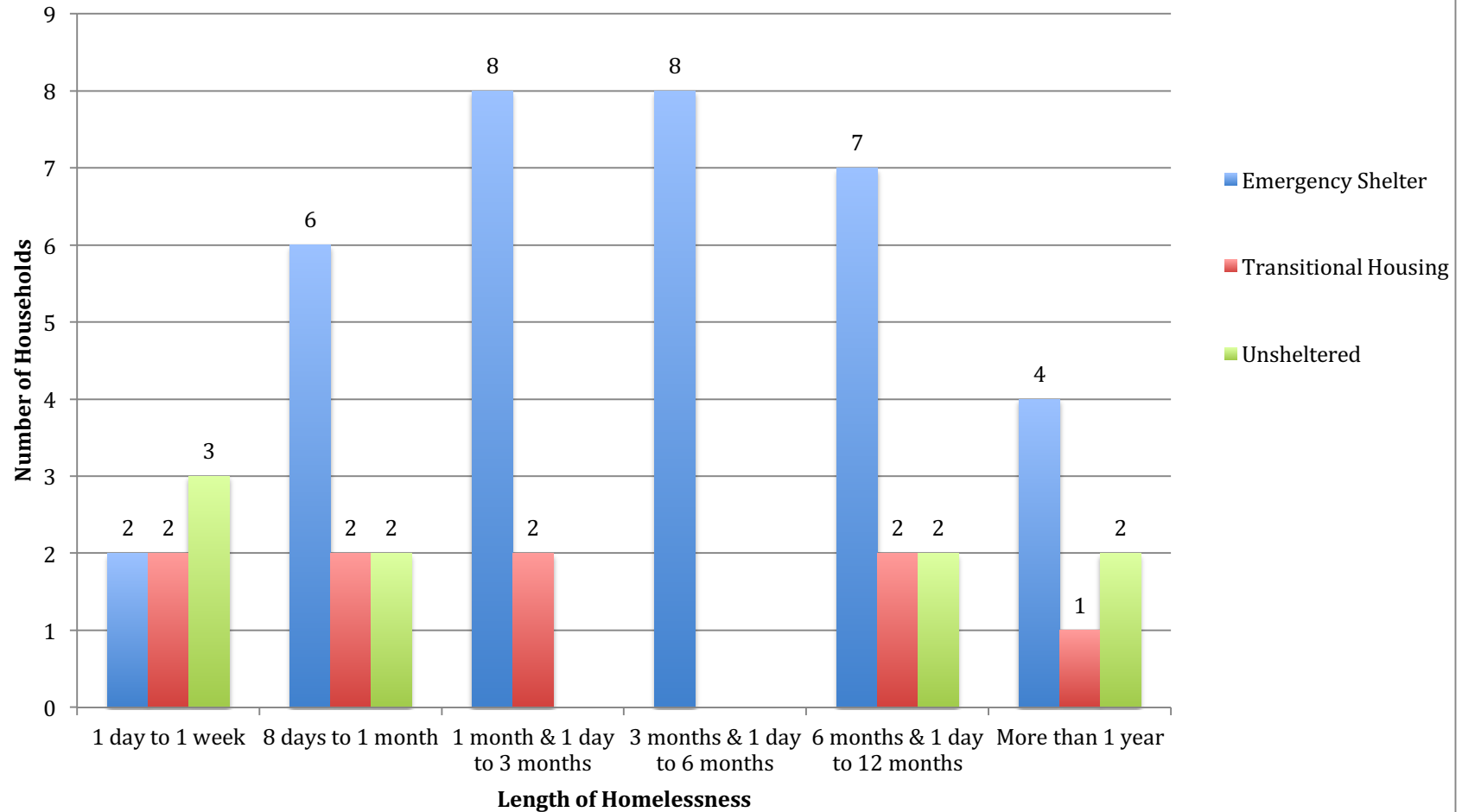
VI. Appendix

Where did you spend the night of Tuesday, January 26, 2016?



How long have you been in your current living situation?

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



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

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

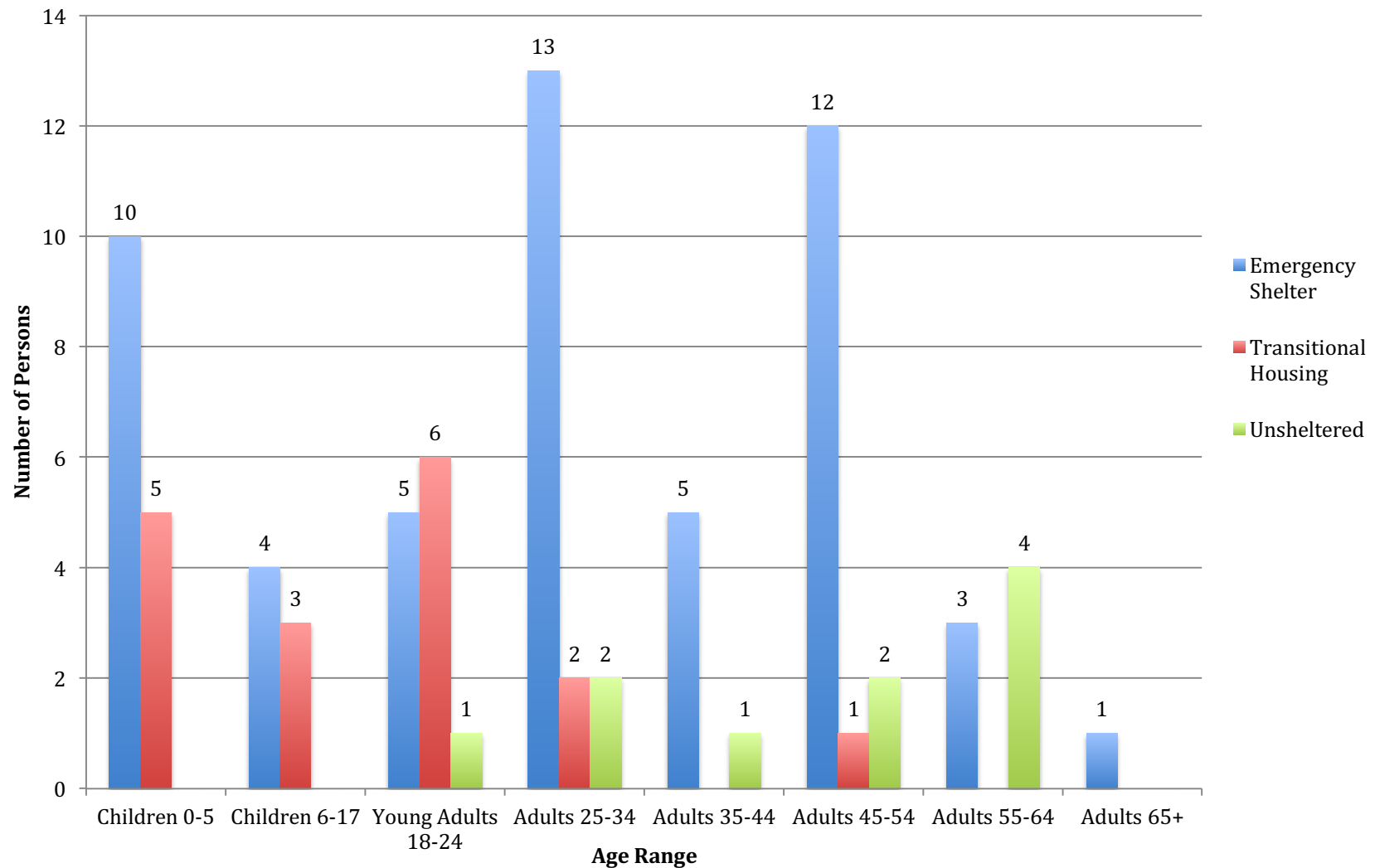


Fig. A.4. Number of Persons by Gender and Housing Situation

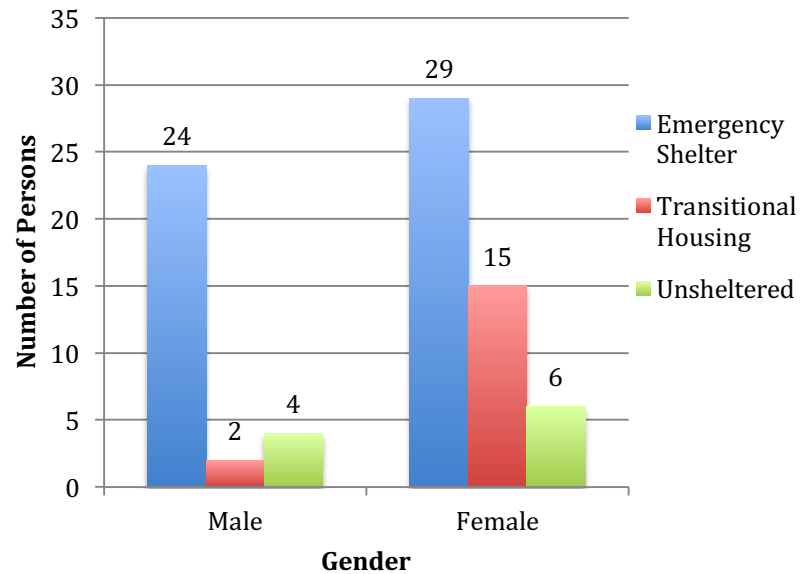


Fig. A.5. Number of Homeless Persons by Race

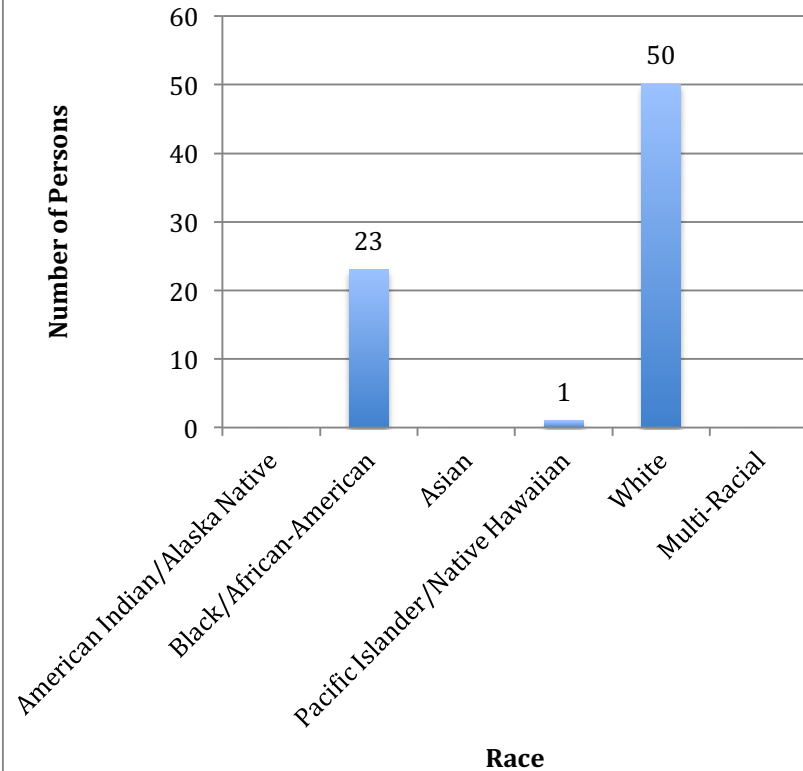
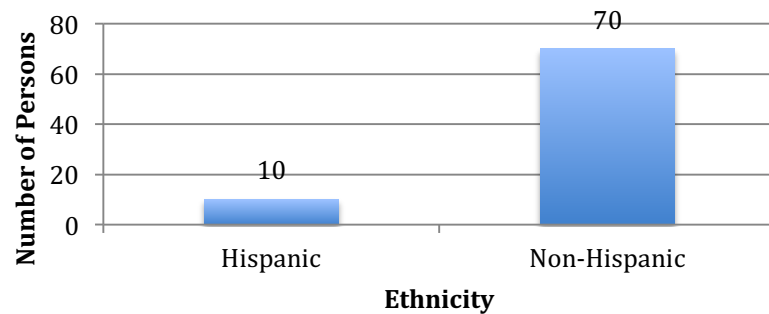
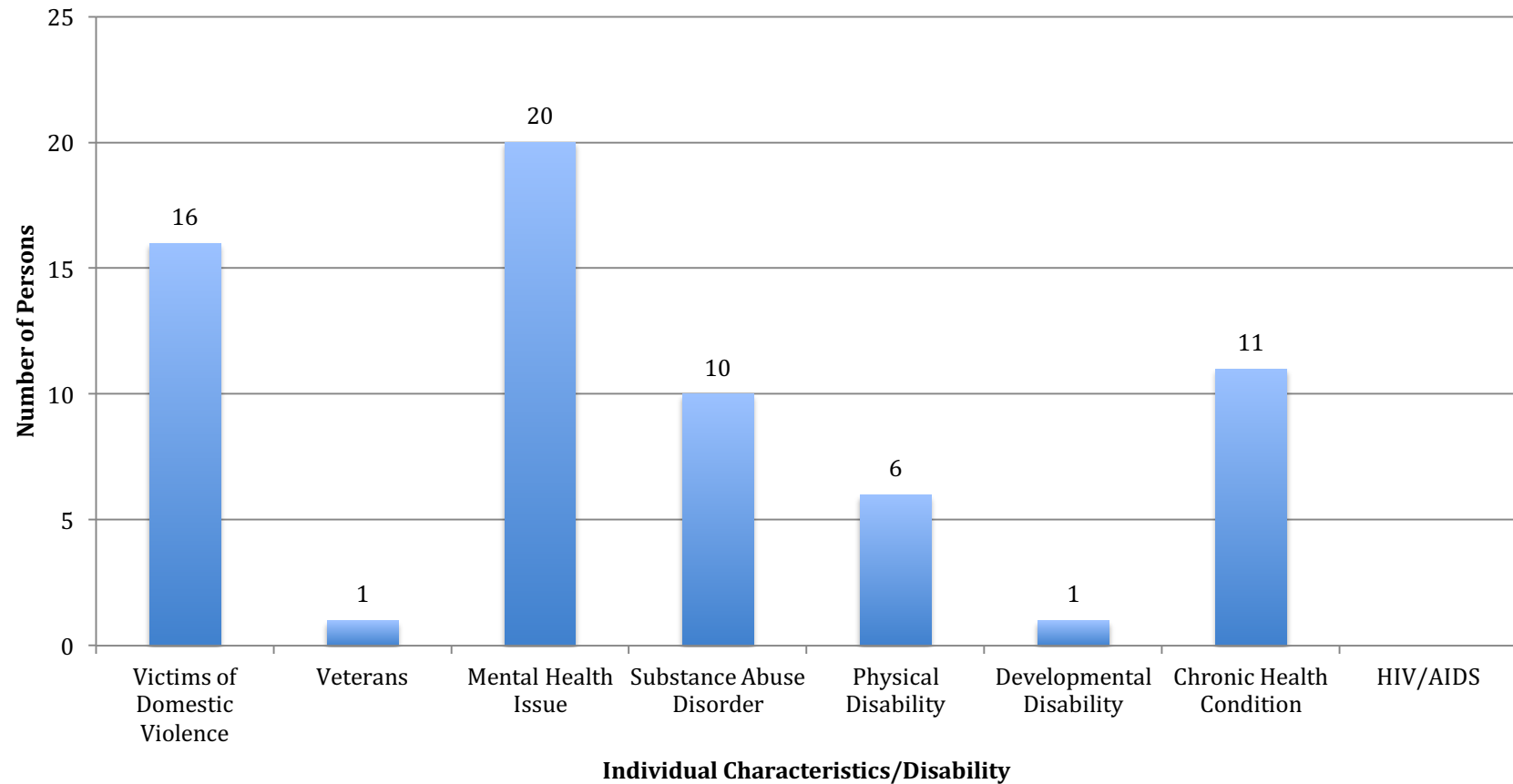


Fig. A.6. Number of Homeless Persons by Ethnicity



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

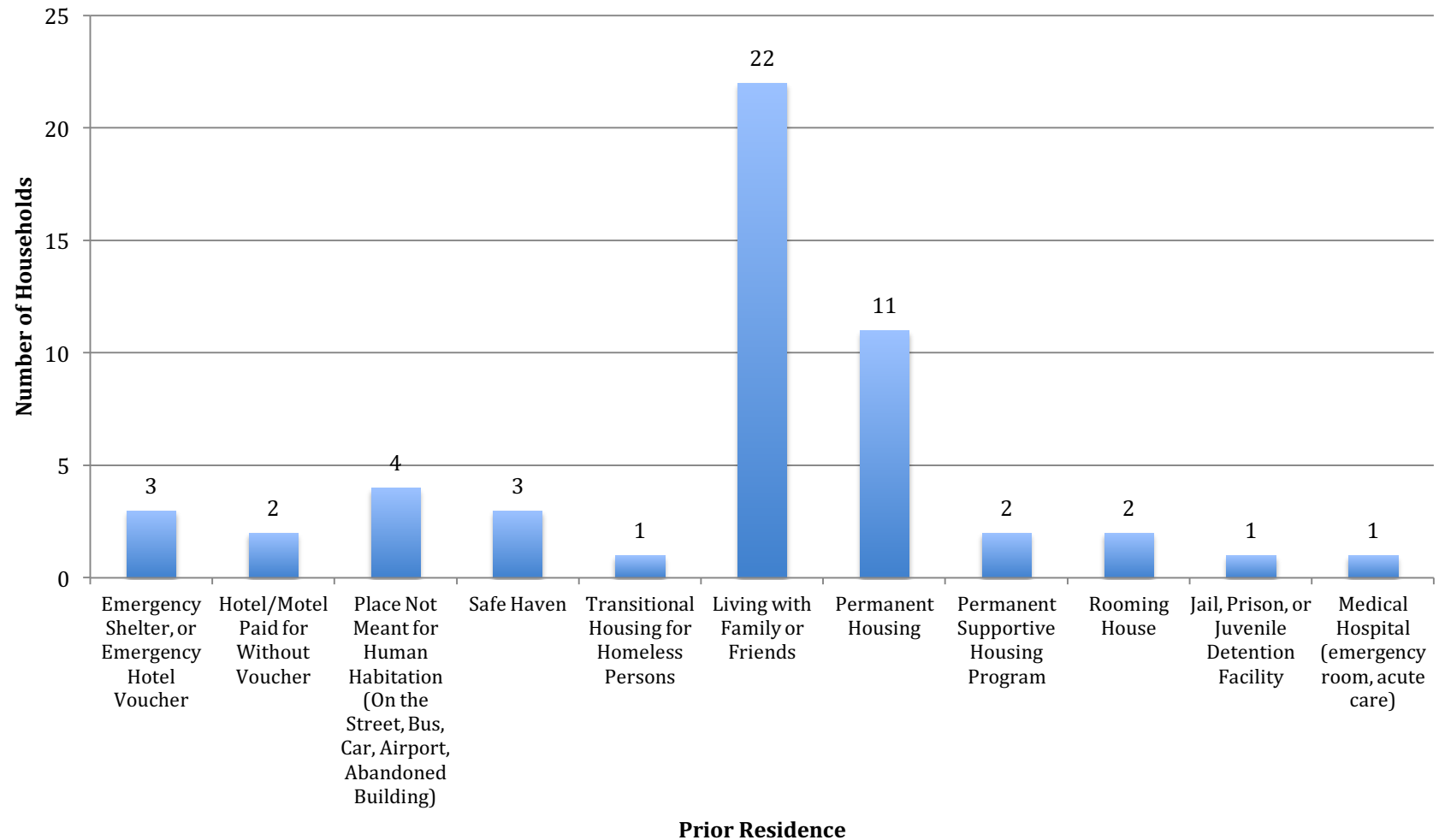


Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?

Fig. A.8. Number of Homeless Households by County, State or Country of Last Permanent Address	
Last Permanent Address - County/State	Number of Households
Delaware	1
Florida	1
Middlesex County	1
Morris County	2
New York	2
Passaic County	1
Pennsylvania	1
South Carolina	1
Sussex County	40
Union County	2

What was your residence prior to your current living situation?

Fig. A.9. Number of Homeless Households by Prior Residence



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

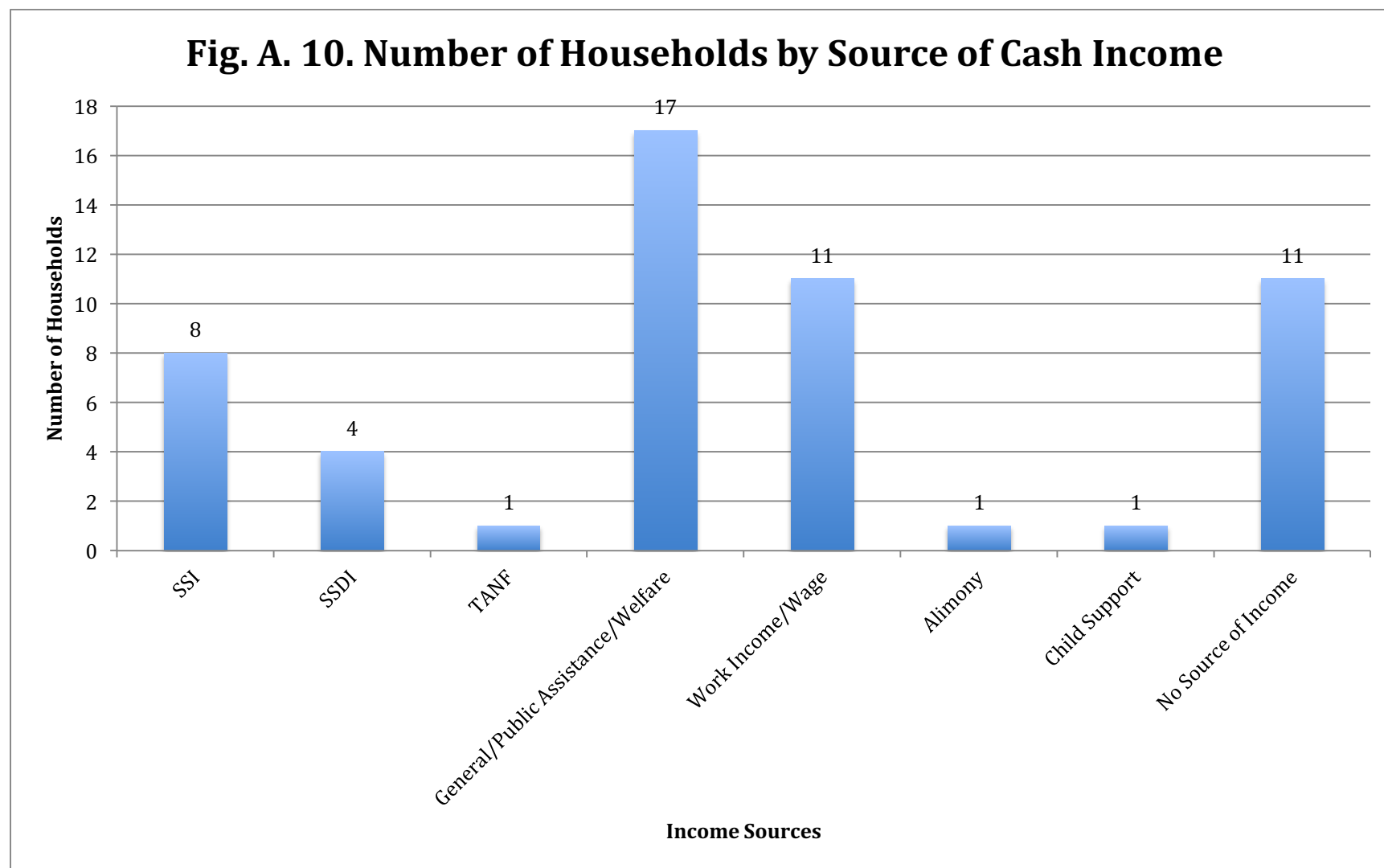
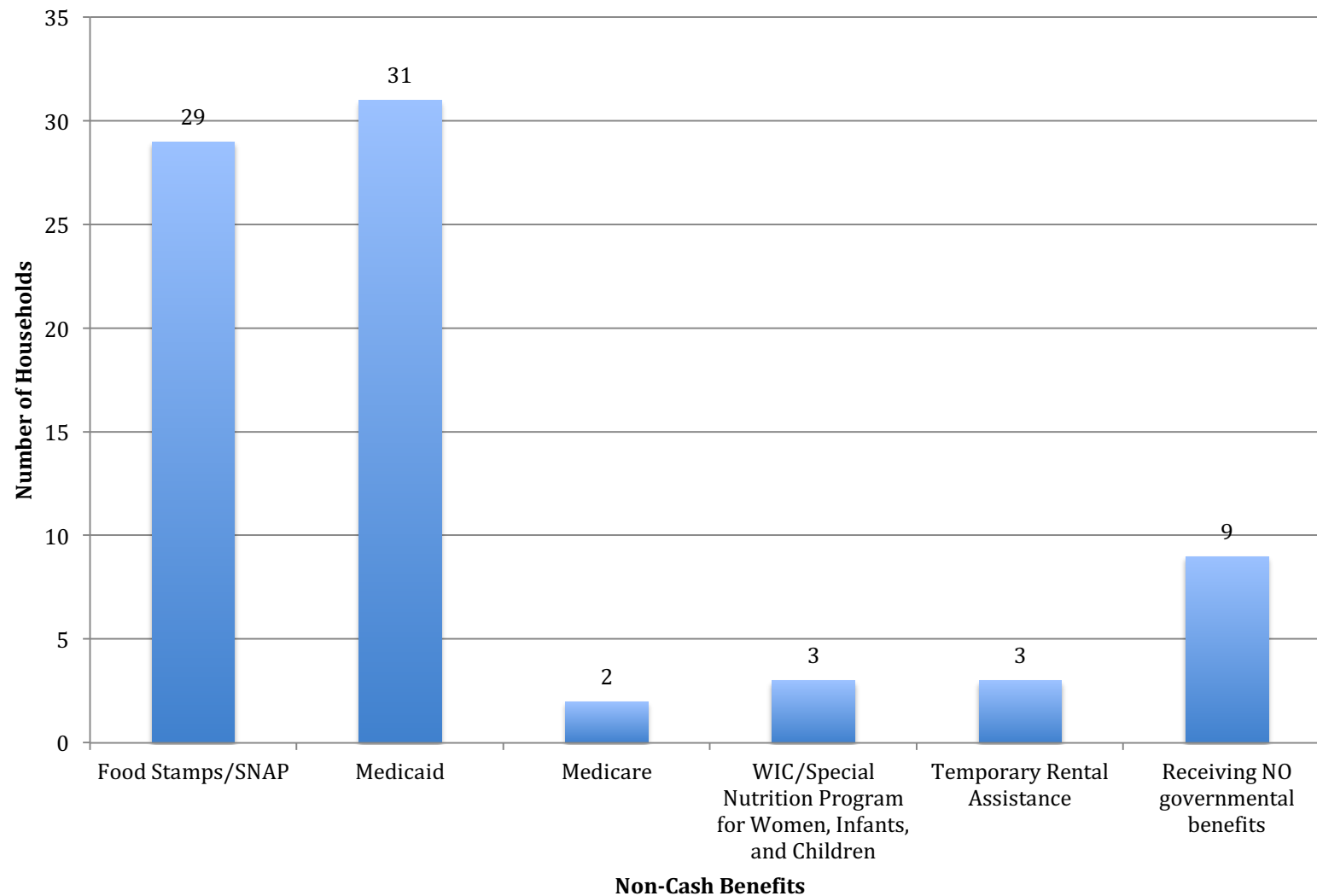
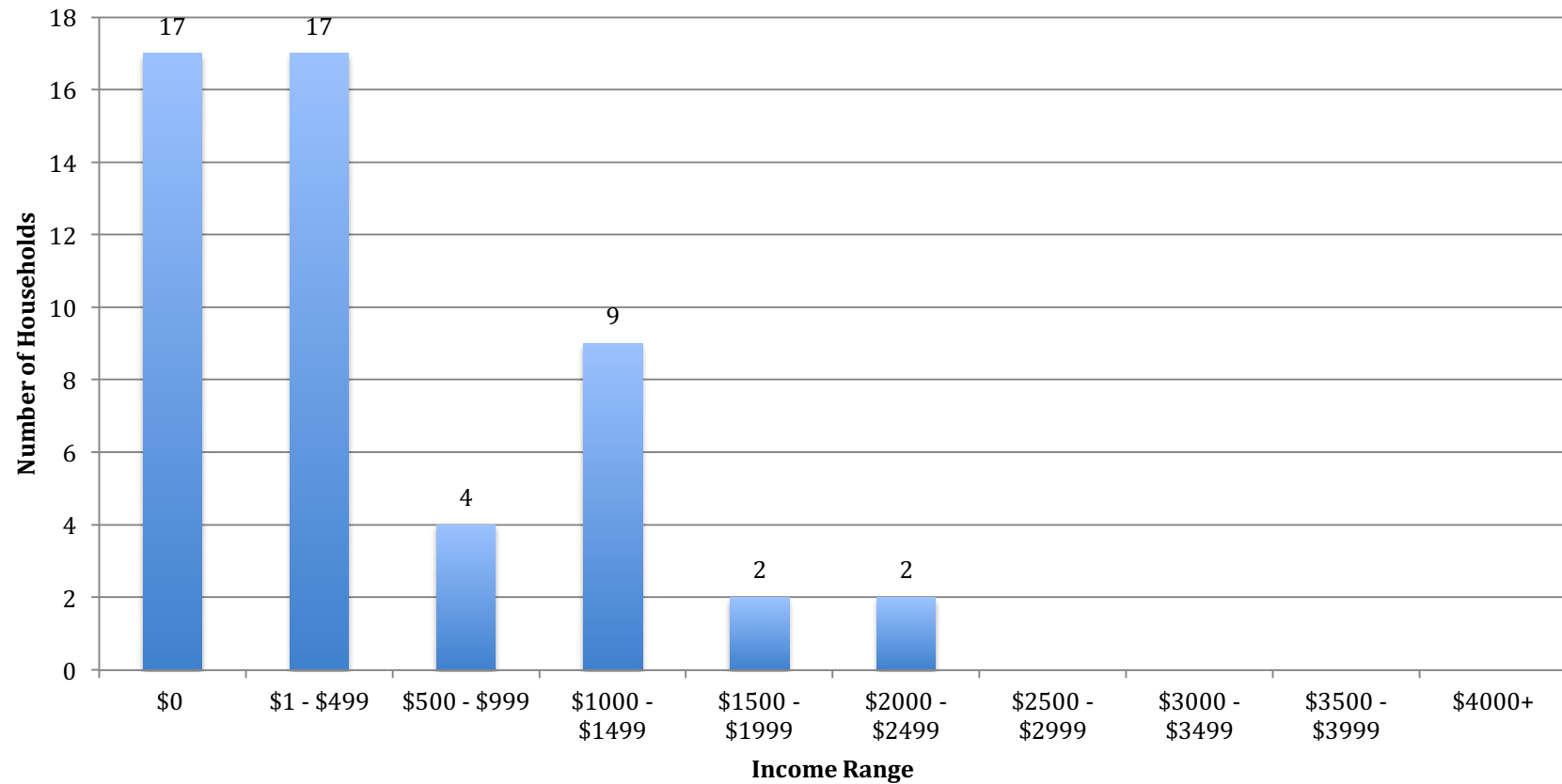


Fig. A. 11. Number of Households by Sources of Non-Cash Benefits



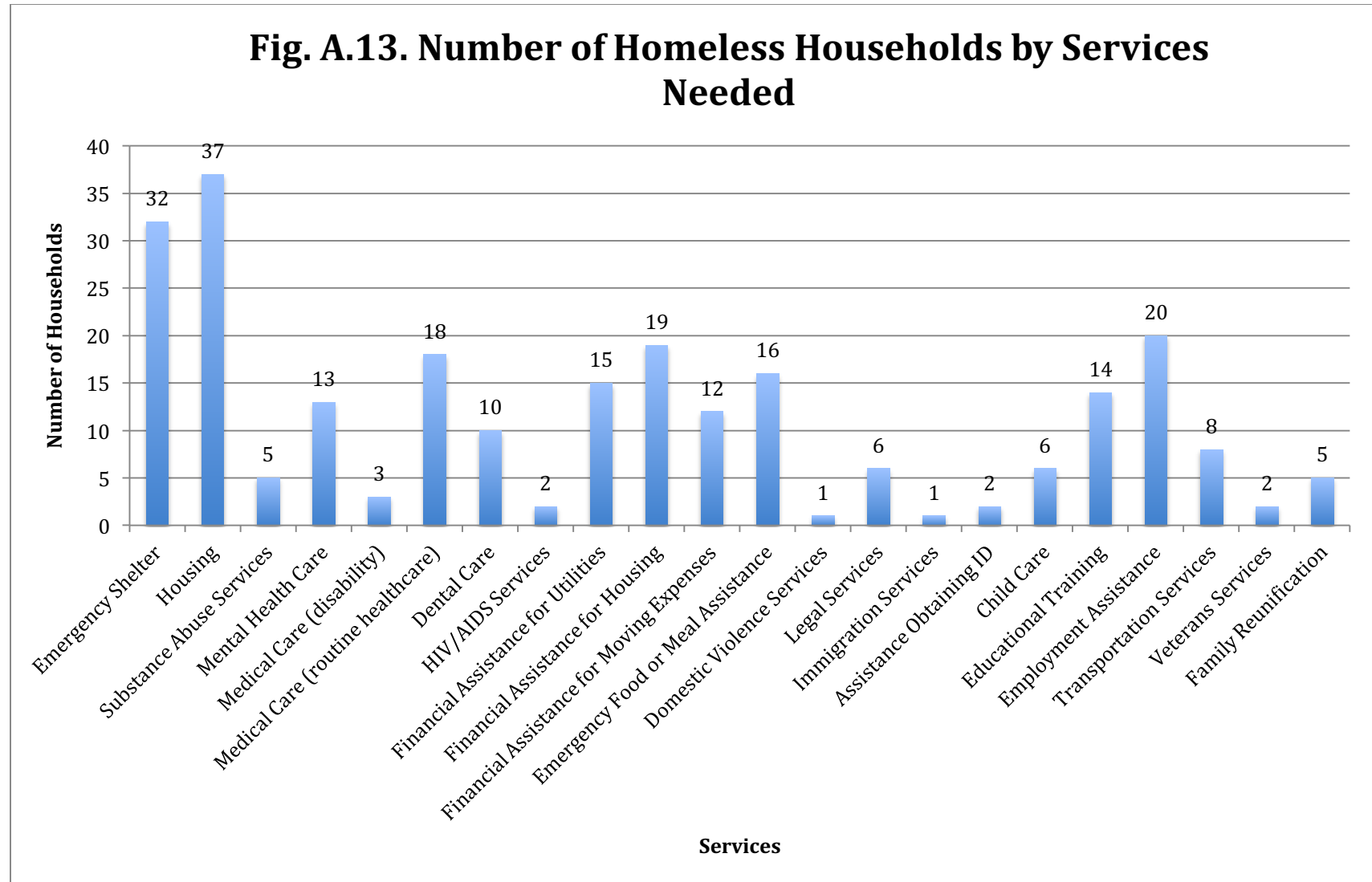
What is your monthly household income?

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 Households by Cause of Homelessness

