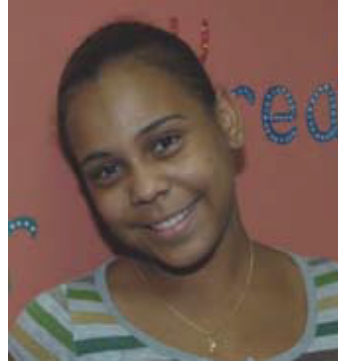


Central New Jersey Regional Homeless Assessment Report



2012

I. Introduction

With the release of the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Interim rules in July of 2012, it is essential for communities to continue moving forward with its implementation. One area HEARTH focuses on is the use of data for analyzing current program capabilities and assessing the needs of the population in order to have a more effective planning process and program development that is necessary to achieve the ultimate goal of ending homelessness.

This report uses information from the New Jersey Homeless Information System (HMIS) to provide a snapshot of the characteristics of homeless households in the Central New Jersey region. This report can serve as the foundation of a more in depth review of the population and its needs in the individual communities included. Communities in New Jersey are well positioned to move towards data driven planning with the wealth of information available through HMIS.

II. Data Source

This Regional Homeless Assessment Report for Central New Jersey analyzed data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) administered by New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA), the HMIS Lead Agency. In New Jersey, NJHMFA utilized software developed by Foothold Technology as the primary HMIS system for the state. Data analyzed included that from all Central New Jersey homeless programs for Burlington, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, and Somerset Counties. Middlesex County data was not included in this year's regional report due to a change in their HMIS provider and the inability to compare and analyze the data in the short time frame.

Data from the Department of Housing and Urban Development's 2011 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress was also analyzed as a comparison to the regional data. The AHAR provides estimates of the number of characteristics along with service patterns of all people who participated in residential programs for the homeless during the 2011 federal Fiscal Year (October 2010-September 2011).

The Regional Homeless Assessment Report is based on information about unduplicated homeless and formerly homeless families and individuals who used emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing programs during the year long reporting period January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012, as reported in HMIS.

Data was collected in the following categories:

1. Total number served
2. Total number of adults vs. children
3. Cause of homelessness
4. Residence prior to program entry
5. Length of homeless episode prior to program entry
6. Number of homeless episodes prior to entry
7. Chronic homelessness

8. Disabling condition
9. Veteran status
10. Gender
11. Age range
12. Race
13. Ethnicity
14. Highest level of education
15. Access to cash-income and non-cash benefits
16. Average length of program stay
17. Reason for discharge from program
18. Destination at discharge

The data in this report was analyzed based on two populations, total population served and total youth served.

In the first section of the results the total homeless population served was organized and at times separated based on program type and individual/family type. It focused on:

- Families served in Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, and Permanent Housing
- Individuals served in Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, and Permanent Housing

Families include households with at least one child age 17 or younger and at least one adult age 18 or older. Adult couples were also considered families for this report. All others were considered homeless individuals.

The second section of the results focused on the youth population served in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing during the reporting period. A person was considered youth in this section if they were between the ages of 18 – 24 and were identified as the head of household.

All percentages are based on total number of actual responses, an answer of “don’t know” or missing data were not represented or calculated in this report.

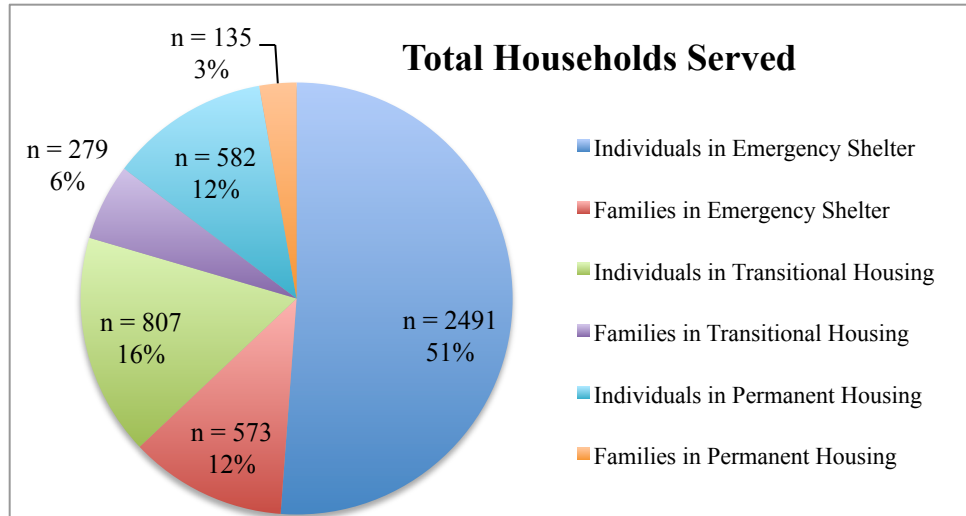
III. Findings for Total Population Served

Key Findings:

- A total of 4,867 households were served in HMIS participating emergency shelters, transitional housing, and permanent housing programs during the January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012 report period
- A total of 684 individuals were identified as chronically homeless
- 33% of the total population including children and adults either served as individuals or families identified having a disability
- 23% of the total population served was between the ages of 50 and 65
- 14% of individuals and 59% of families moved on to permanent destinations after discharge

Total Homeless Population. A total of 4,867 households involving 6,623 persons were housed in Central New Jersey HMIS participating emergency shelters, transitional housing, or permanent housing programs during the January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012 reporting period.

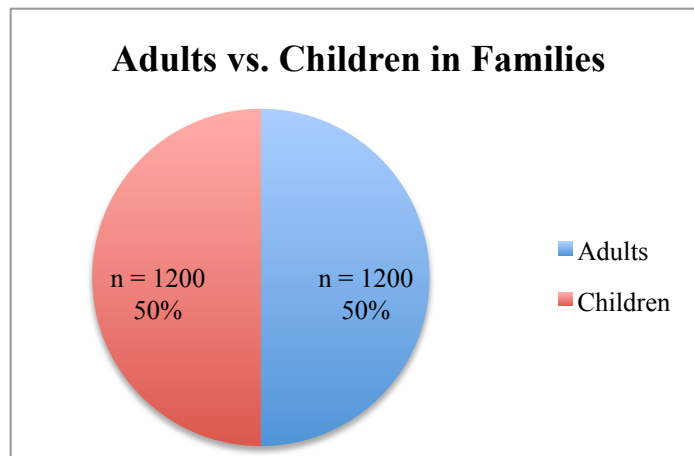
This represents 25% of all 19,861 households as well as 26% of all 25,870 persons who were homeless throughout New Jersey during the report period. Out of those identified as homeless in the Central Region, 135 (3%) were families served in permanent housing. 279 (6%) were families served



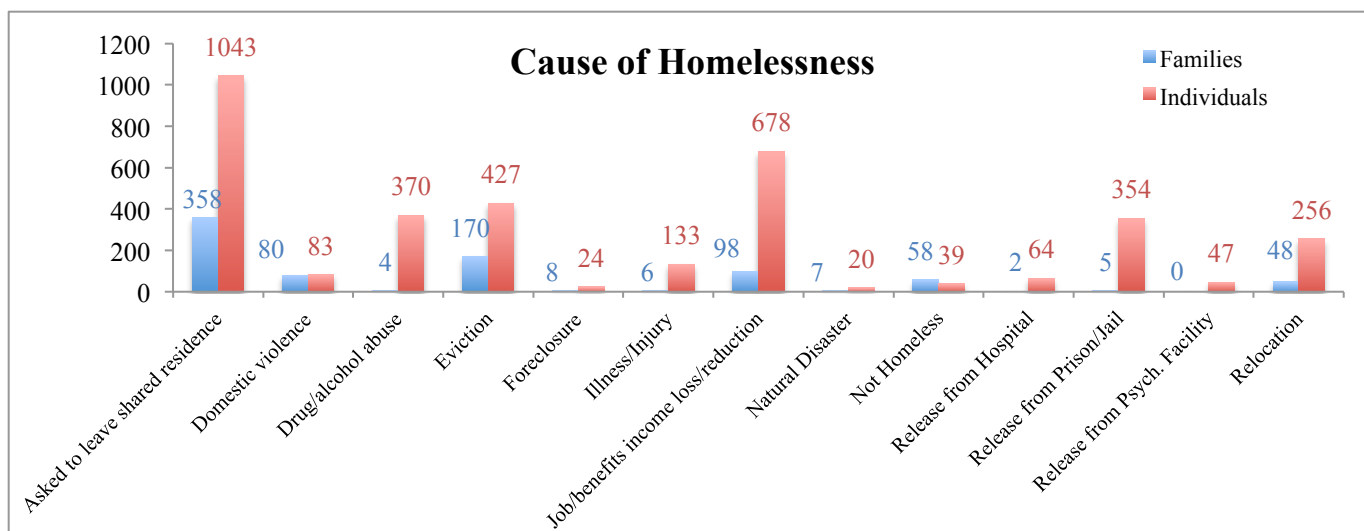
in transitional housing and 573 (12%) were families served in emergency shelters. For individuals, there were 582 (12%) that were served in permanent housing, 807 (16%) were in transitional housing, and 2,491 (51%) of the total central population were individuals served in emergency shelters.

	Central New Jersey	New Jersey	National
Total Persons Served	6,623	25,870	1,598,592
Emergency Shelter	4,099	17,776	1,236,814
Individuals	2,491	12,163	828,400
Families	1,608	5,613	408,414
Transitional Housing	1,587	4,837	361,778
Individuals	807	2,072	208,446
Families	780	2,765	153,332
Permanent Housing	937	3,257	298,488
Individuals	582	2,217	193,214
Families	355	1,040	105,274

Adults vs. Children in Families. The average size of a homeless family in Central New Jersey was 3 persons regardless if they were in an emergency shelter, transitional housing, or permanent housing program. Children represented 50% of persons sheltered as part of a family in any of the 3 program types. The average age of children sheltered in either emergency shelter or transitional housing was 6 years old where as the average age for a child in permanent housing was 9.



Cause of Homelessness. The most reported cause of homelessness for both individuals and families for emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing combined was being “asked to leave shared residence” which accounted for 32% of all responses.

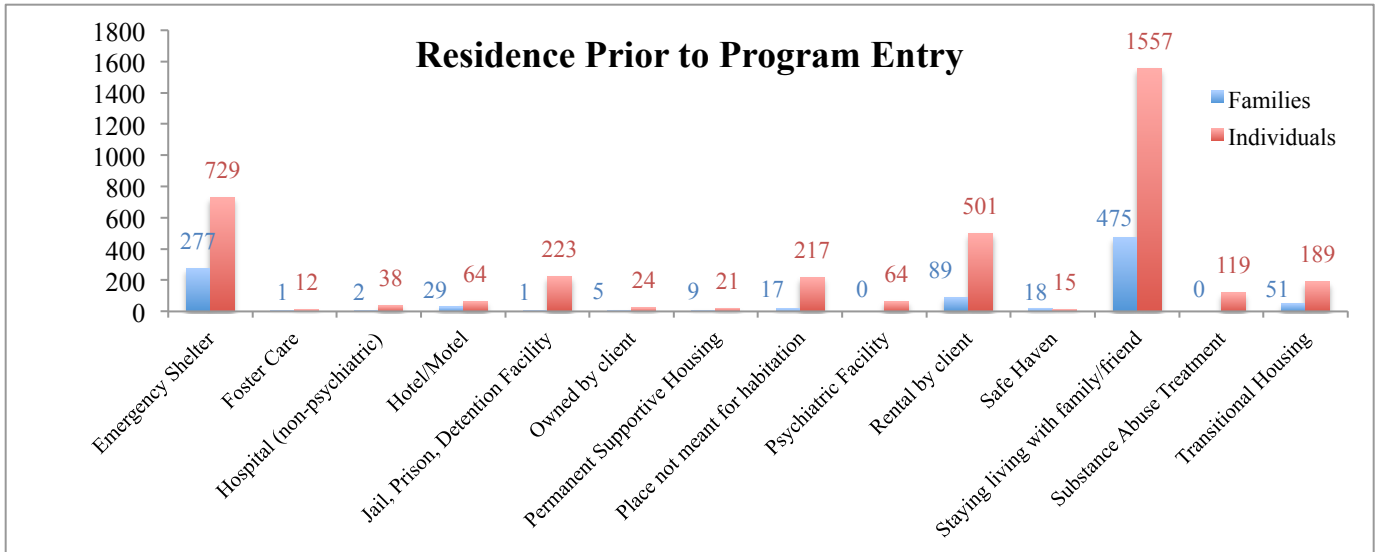


For emergency shelters the most reported cause of homelessness was being “asked to leave shared residence” for both individuals (32%) and families (47%) followed by “job income loss/reduction” (19%) for individuals and “eviction” (22%) for families.

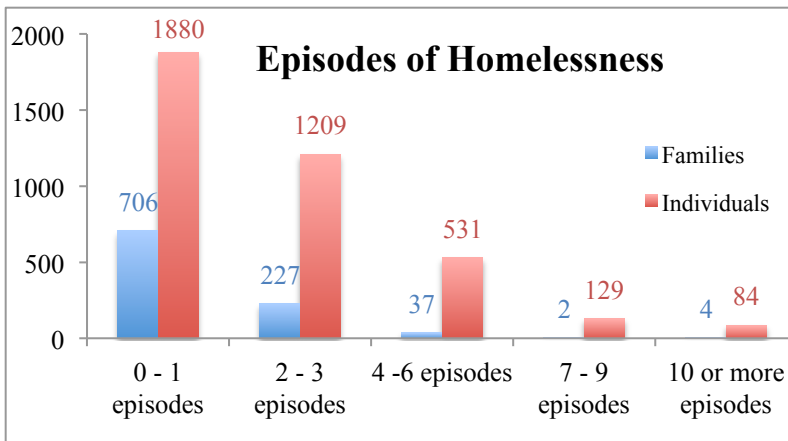
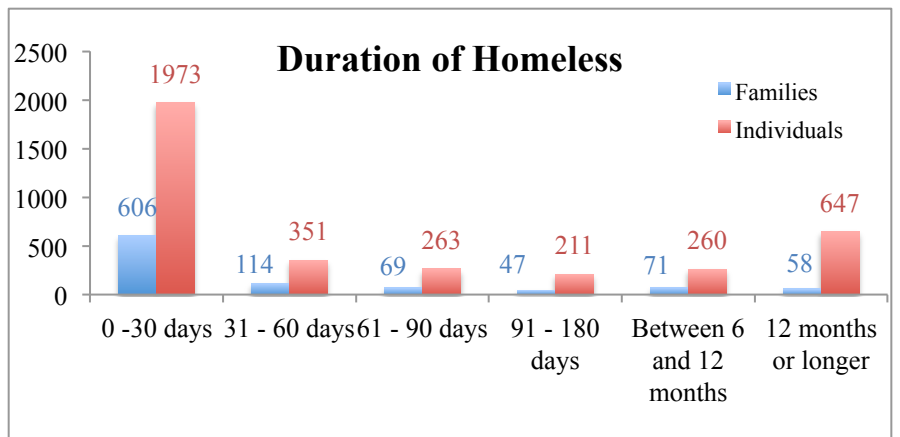
For transitional housing programs, a similar trend was found in which “asked to leave shared residence” was most reported for families (46%) and individuals (29%). The second most common response for individuals was “drug/alcohol abuse” at 20% and “eviction” for families (15%).

For individuals served in permanent housing “drug/alcohol abuse” was the most reported cause (20%) followed by “asked to leave shared residence” (17%). For families served in permanent housing “not homeless” was the most reported cause of homelessness at 35% followed by “eviction” (18%).

Residence Prior to Program Entry. “Staying or living with a family member/friend” was the most common response for both families and individuals in emergency shelters (families – 61%, individuals – 52%), individuals in transitional housing (32%), and families in permanent housing (24%). The most reported residence prior to program entry for families in transitional housing and individuals in permanent housing was “emergency shelter” (families – 47% and individuals – 51%).

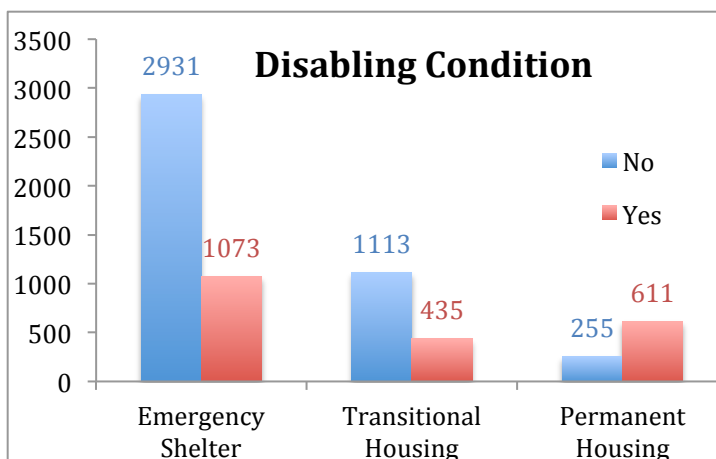


Length of homeless episode prior to program entry. For both families (63%) and individuals (53%), most had become homeless very recently, within a month or less, of entering their most recent program. 6% of families and 17% of individuals reported experiencing homelessness for over a year.



Episodes of Homelessness and Chronic Homelessness. The majority of both families (72%) and individuals (49%) served in emergency shelters, transitional housing, or permanent housing programs had experienced 0 or 1 episodes of homelessness prior to program entry. Out of all individuals served, a total of 684 or 18% were identified as chronically homeless.

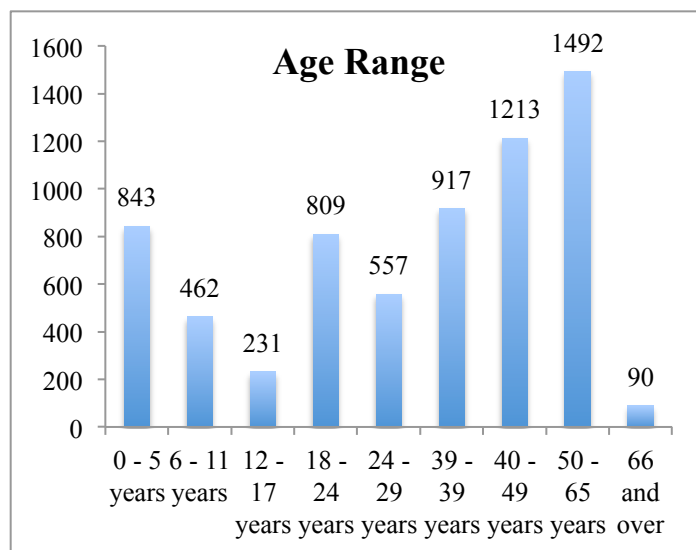
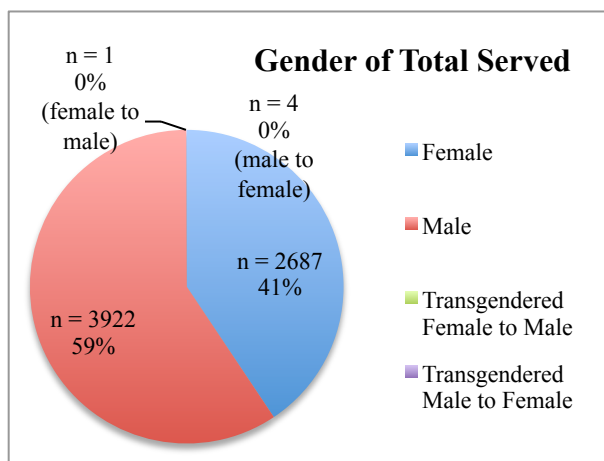
Disabling Condition. 2,119 persons (33% of total), including children, who were homeless in Central New Jersey, indicated having a disability. 46% of individuals identified themselves as having a disabling condition compared to 14% of families. The most prevalent disabling condition reported by families was chronic physical illness or disability, while the most prevalent condition for individuals was serious mental illness.



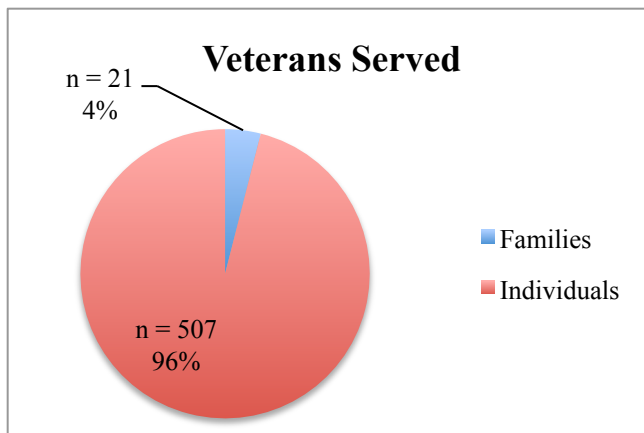
For those whom indicated a disabling condition, the breakdown is as follows:

Disabling Condition	Individuals	%	Families	%
Yes	282	16%	207	58%
Yes – Chronic physical illness or disability	377	21%	50	14%
Yes – Developmental disability	21	1%	22	6%
Yes – Diagnosable substance use disorder	360	20%	14	4%
Yes – Dually diagnosed	160	9%	19	5%
Yes – Serious mental illness	560	32%	47	13%
Total	1760	100%	359	100%

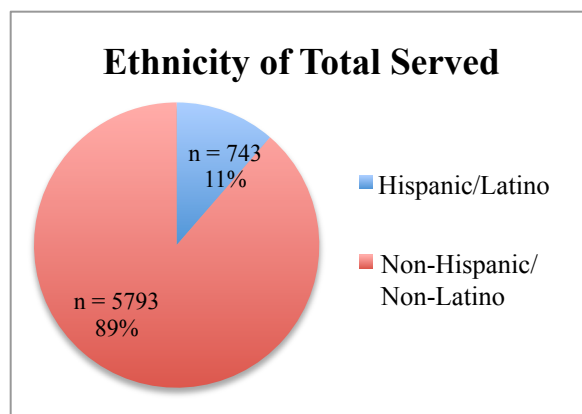
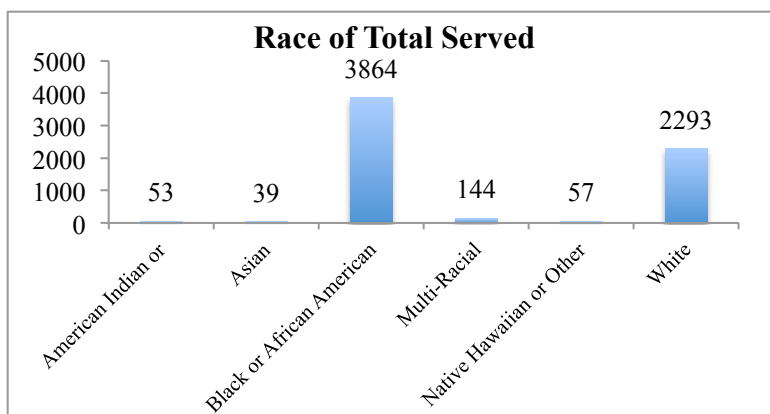
Gender and Age Range. More than half (59%) of homeless persons served in Central New Jersey were male, with women representing 41% of the population. This is slightly lower than the national trend, which shows men representing around 63% of the population and women representing 37%. Of the 6,623 persons served in the HMIS participating emergency shelters, transitional housing, and permanent housing programs, the age range that contained the most amount of persons was between 50 and 65 years of age (23%). The second largest age range found was 18 – 29 years of age, which consisted of 21% of the total population. Of the children served in all three program categories, the majority (55%) were between the ages of 0 and 5 years old.



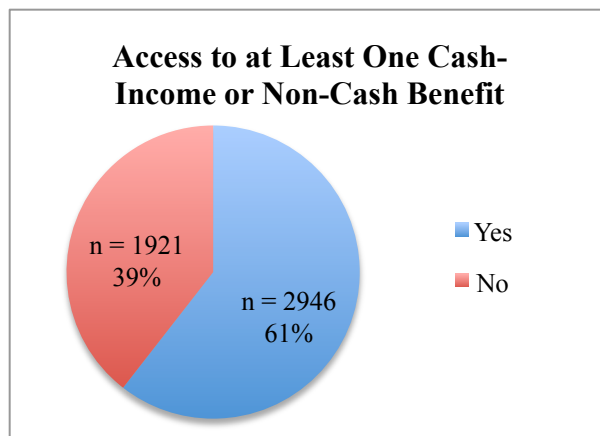
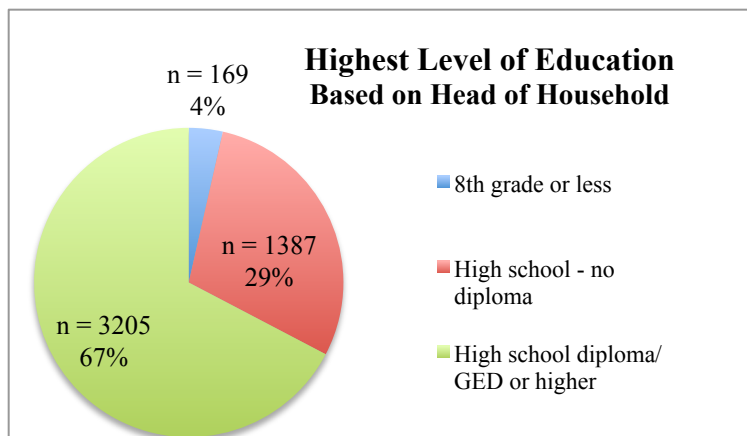
Veteran Status. A total of 528 veterans were served in emergency shelters, transitional housing, and permanent housing programs. This accounted for 10% of all adults served throughout the 2012 report period. Of the veterans served, 21 (4%) were served as part of a family, while 507 (96%) were served as individuals. 234 or 44% of the veterans served were served in an emergency shelter setting, 51% (268) as part of a transitional housing program, and 5% (26) were provided housing through a permanent housing program.



Race and Ethnicity. Most homeless persons served in the Central New Jersey region (3,864) reported their race as “Black or African-American” (60%). The next most reported race was “White” at 36% (2,293), followed by “Multi-Racial” at 144 (2%). 89% of the homeless population identified themselves as “Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino.”



Level of Education and Access to Cash-Income/Non-Cash Benefits. When looking at highest level of education in the head of household, 3,205 (67%) served as either a family or individual in Central New Jersey programs received their high school diploma/GED or higher. 4% or 169 head of households received no more than an 8th grade education. Of the individuals and families served, 2,946 or 61% have at least one source of cash-income or non-cash benefit.



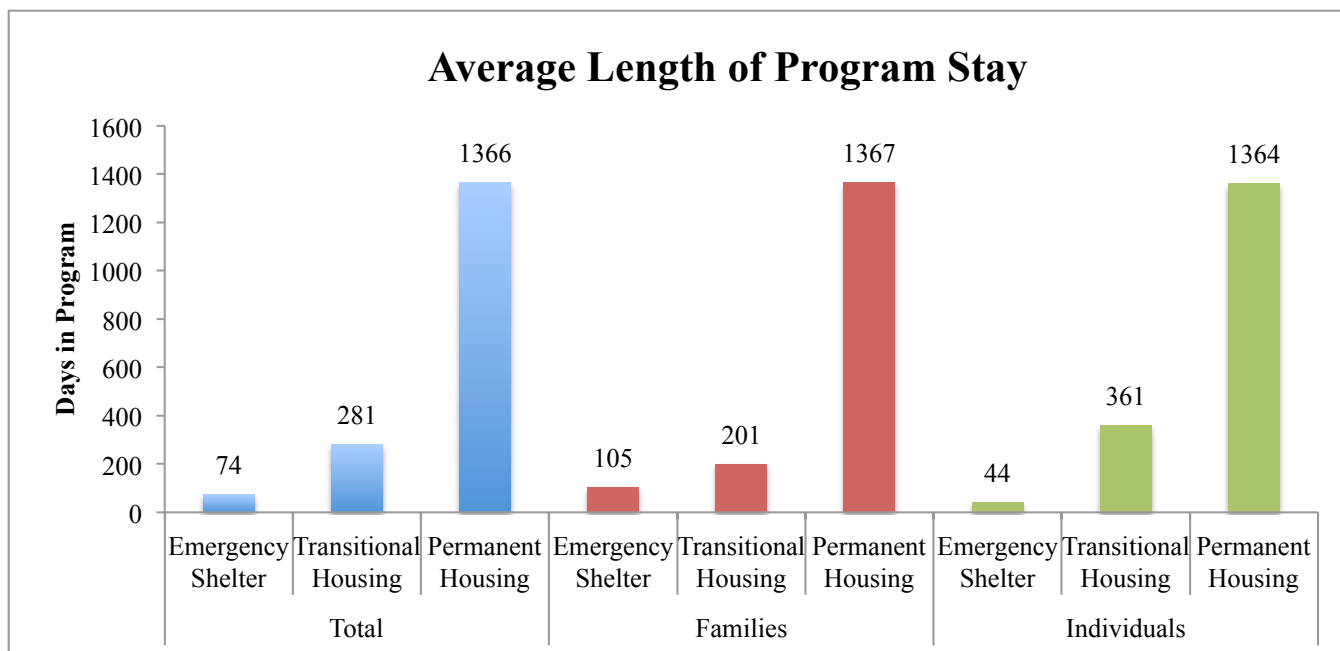
For families served in emergency shelter and transitional housing, the most common cash-income reported was TANF (70% for emergency shelter and 64% for transitional). The most reported cash-income for families in permanent housing was earned income with 48%.

General assistance was the most reported cash-income for individuals in both emergency shelter (11%) and transitional housing (40%). The most reported cash-income for individuals in permanent housing was SSI at 38%.

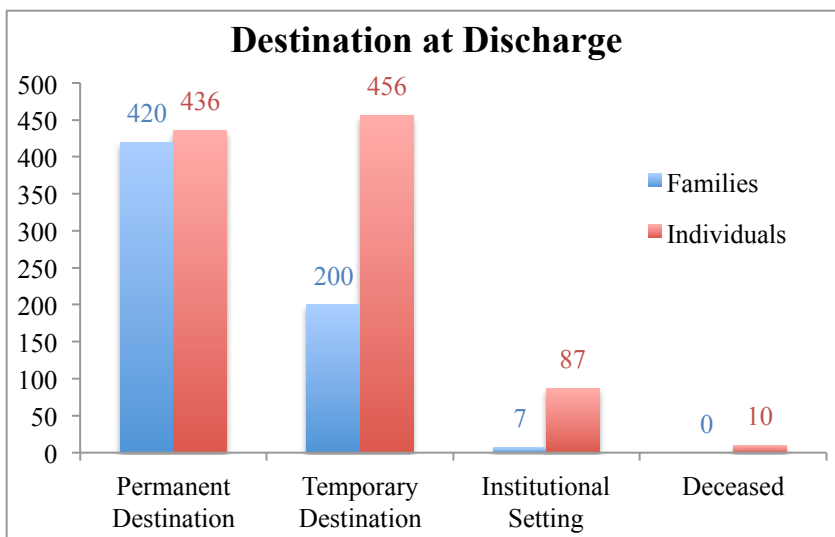
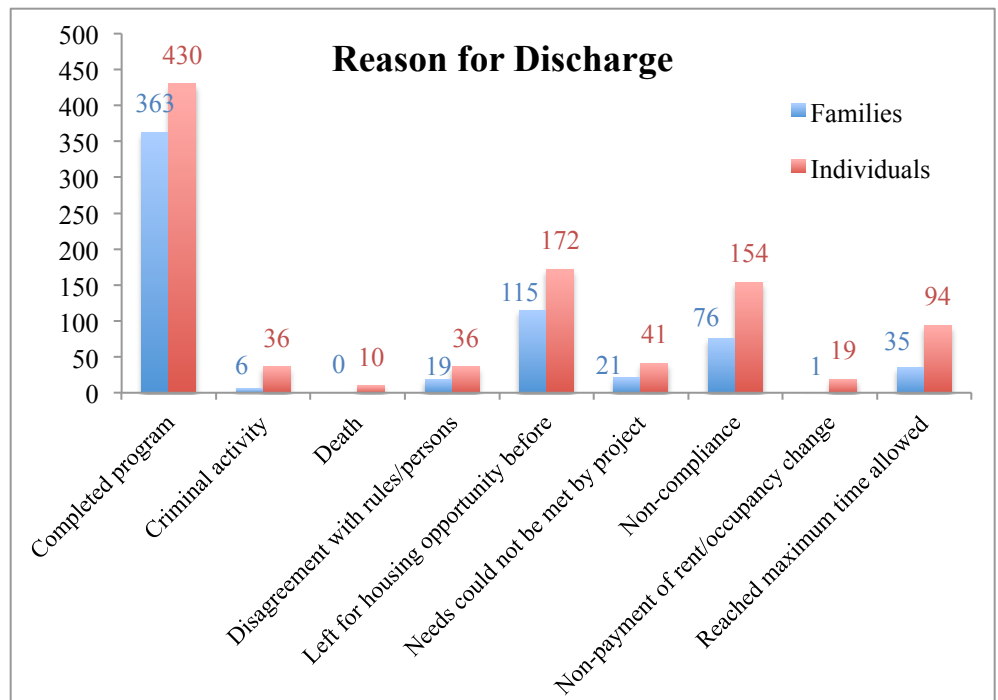
22% of all families and 6% of all individuals reported having an earned income.

Food Stamps was the top reported non-cash benefit for individuals served in all three program categories with 33% of all individuals receiving Food Stamps. Food Stamps was also the top reported non-cash benefits for families in emergency shelter (79%) and transitional housing (84%). The most reported non-cash benefit for families in permanent housing was MEDICAID at 47%.

Average Length of Program Stay. When looking at total length of program stay for families and individuals, families seemed to have longer stays in emergency shelter. During their program stay it was found that families stayed on average 61 days or about 2 months longer than individuals in emergency shelter. Yet the opposite was found when looking at transitional housing. Throughout their program stay it was found that individuals stayed an average of 160 days or 5 months longer than families.



Reason and Destination at Discharge. A total of 3,778 households were discharged from emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing programs during the 2012 reporting period. 21% of these households were discharged from programs after completing the program while 8% left for a housing opportunity before completing the program. 14% of individuals and 59% of families moved on to permanent housing after being discharged. A permanent housing destination includes a unit owned or rented by a client, permanent supportive housing for a formerly homeless person, or living with a family member or friend permanently. The most common permanent housing response was rental by client with 18% of total households moving into a rental. This rental could be with or without a subsidy. 28% of families and 15% of individuals moved on to a temporary destination at discharge. A temporary discharge destination includes an emergency shelter, hotel or motel, place not meant for habitation, staying with a family member or friend temporarily, or transitional housing for homeless persons. The most common form of temporary housing as a destination was staying with a family member or friend temporarily, which involved 8% of the total population. An institutional destination includes hospital (psychiatric or non-psychiatric), jail or prison, or a substance abuse treatment facility. The most common institutional destination reported was jail or prison with 1% of the total discharges.



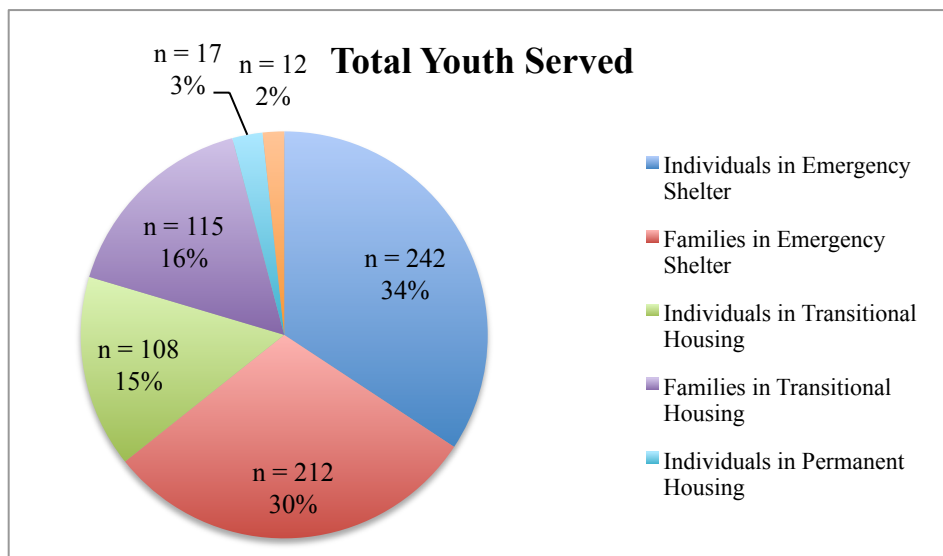
The most common permanent housing response was rental by client with 18% of total households moving into a rental. This rental could be with or without a subsidy. 28% of families and 15% of individuals moved on to a temporary destination at discharge. A temporary discharge destination includes an emergency shelter, hotel or motel, place not meant for habitation, staying with a family member or friend temporarily, or transitional housing for homeless persons. The most common form of temporary housing as a destination was staying with a family member or friend temporarily, which involved 8% of the total population. An institutional destination includes hospital (psychiatric or non-psychiatric), jail or prison, or a substance abuse treatment facility. The most common institutional destination reported was jail or prison with 1% of the total discharges.

IV. Findings for Youth Population

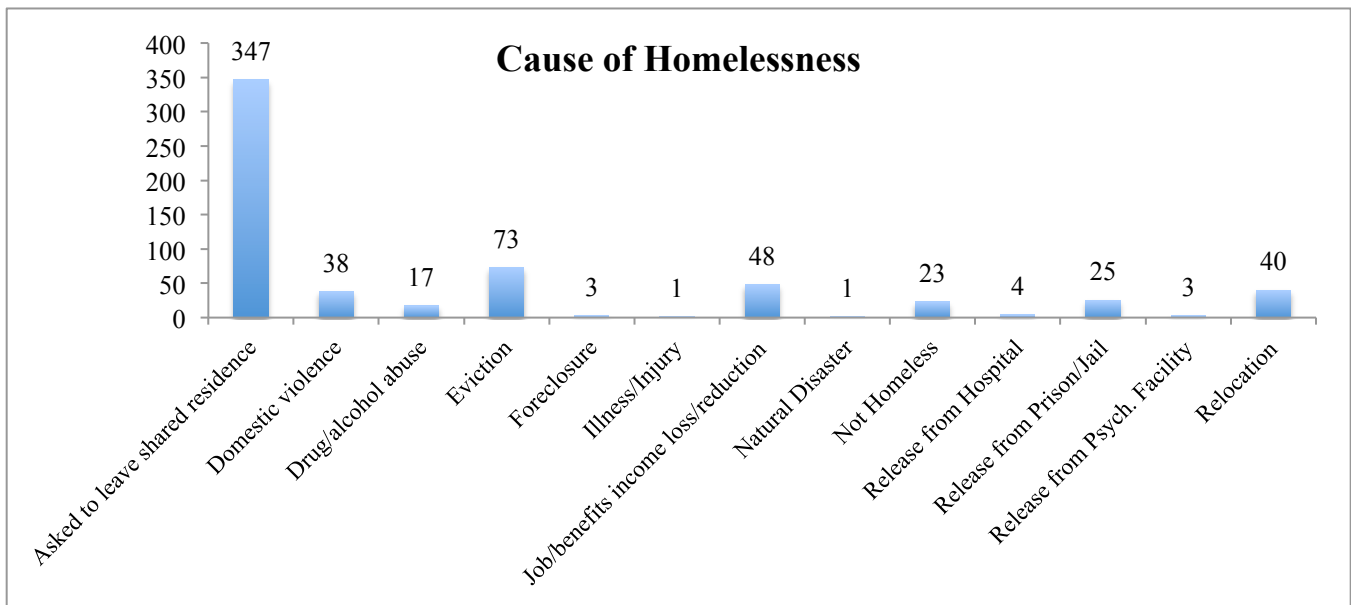
Key Findings

- A total of 706 homeless youth were served in HMIS participating emergency shelters, transitional housing, or permanent housing programs during the January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012 report period
- Youth households represented 21% of those served in transitional housing, 18% of those served in emergency shelters, and 4% of those served in permanent housing
- 31% of disabled youth identified having a serious mental illness
- 67% of youth served were female which differed from the total population in which 59% were male
- 15% of youth identified having earned income compared to the 9% of the total population
- Youth had shorter program stays in all three program categories when compared to the total population
- 37% of youth moved on to a permanent destination upon program discharge

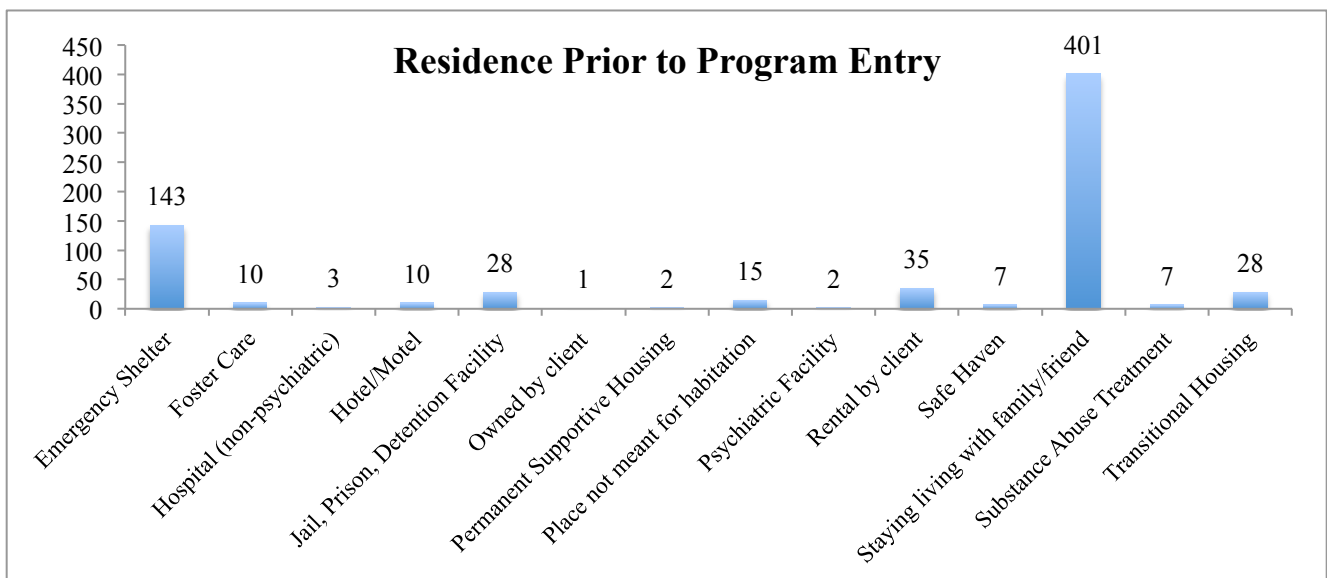
Total Served. A total of 706 youth were served as a head of household in the Central New Jersey region during the January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012 reporting period. Youth households represent 18% of households served in emergency shelters, 21% served in transitional housing, 4% of households served in permanent housing and 15% of the total households served throughout the region. Of the youth households identified as homeless in the central region, 12 (2%) were families served in permanent housing. 115 (16%) were families served in transitional housing and 212 (30%) were families served in emergency shelters. For individuals, there were 17 (3%) that were served in permanent housing, 108 (15%) were part of a transitional housing program, and 242 (34%) were served as individuals in emergency shelters. The average age of youth served as either a family or individual was 22 in emergency shelter and permanent housing, and 21 in transitional housing programs.



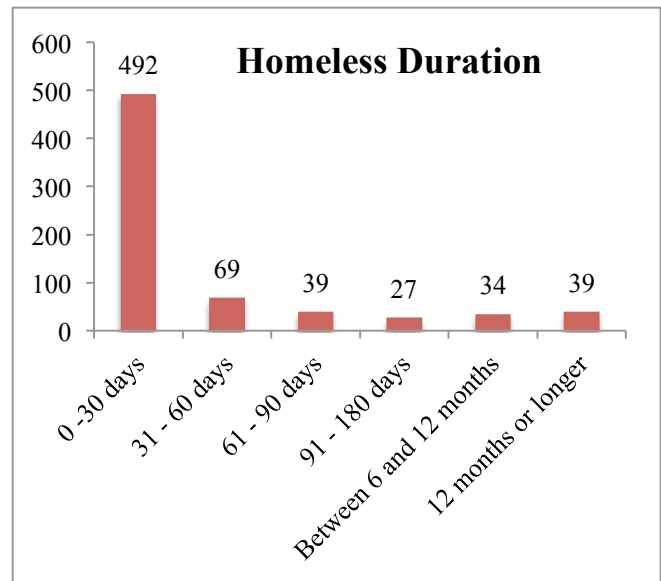
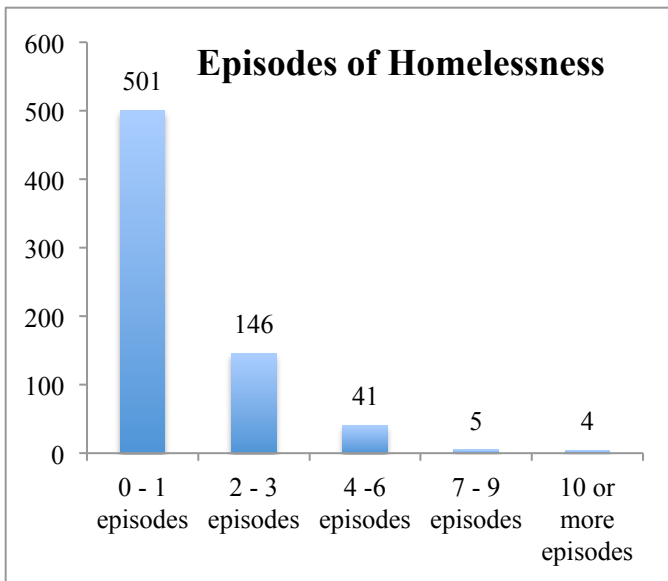
Cause of Homelessness. Similar to the total population, the most reported cause of homelessness for youth in all three program categories was being “asked to leave shared residence” which accounted for 56% of all responses. The second most common response for emergency shelters, transitional housing, and permanent housing was “eviction” which was the response for 12% of the youth served. These responses are similar to what was seen by the total population.



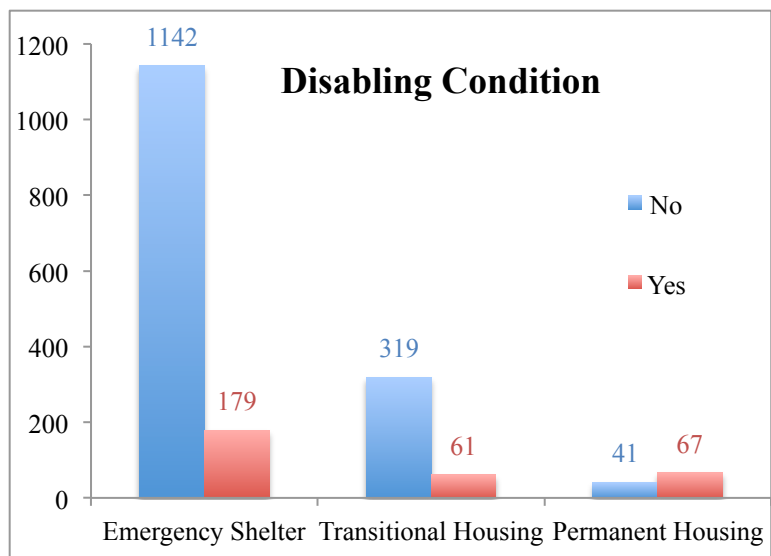
Residence Prior to Program Entry. The most common response for residence prior to program entry was “staying or living with a family member or friend” for both emergency shelter (65%) and transitional housing (48%). The most reported residence prior to program entry for permanent housing programs was “emergency shelter” with 39%. All of these results are similar to the trends found for the total population.



Episodes and Duration of Homelessness and Chronic Homelessness. Similar to the total population, most homeless youth reported experiencing 0 -1 episode of homelessness prior to entering the program (72%). The majority of the youth also became homeless shortly before entering their most recent homeless program (70%). A total of 23 homeless youth were identified as chronically homeless during this reporting period. This number represents only 3% of the total number of individuals identified as chronically homeless.

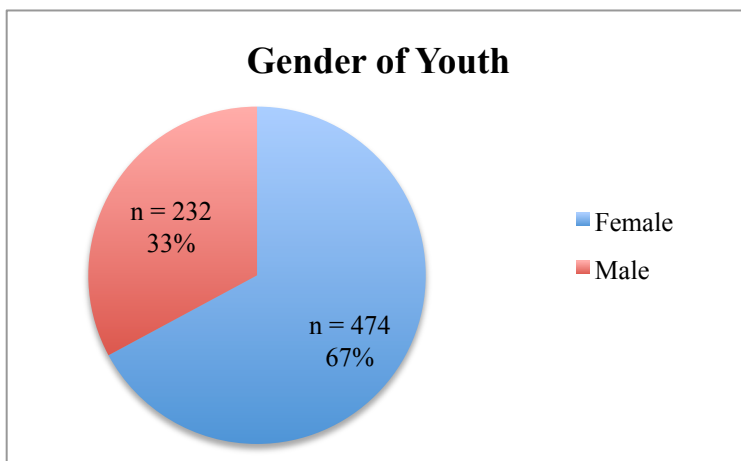


Disabling Condition. 118 homeless youth (17%) in Central New Jersey indicated having a disability. The most prevalent disabling condition reported for all three program categories was serious mental illness, which accounted for 31% of responses. This is similar to what was found for individuals served in the total population.



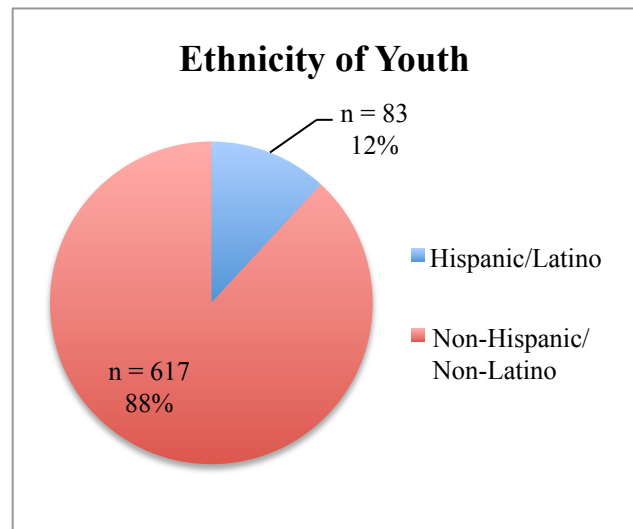
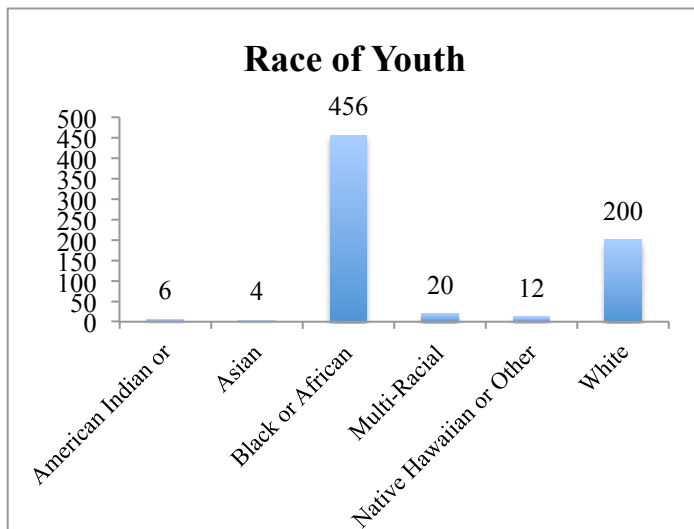
For those indicating a disabling condition, the breakdown is as follows:

Disabling Condition	Youth	%
Yes	39	33%
Yes – Chronic physical illness or disability	18	15%
Yes – Developmental disability	3	3%
Yes – Diagnosable substance use disorder	19	16%
Yes – Dually diagnosed	3	3%
Yes – Serious mental illness	36	31%
Total	118	100%

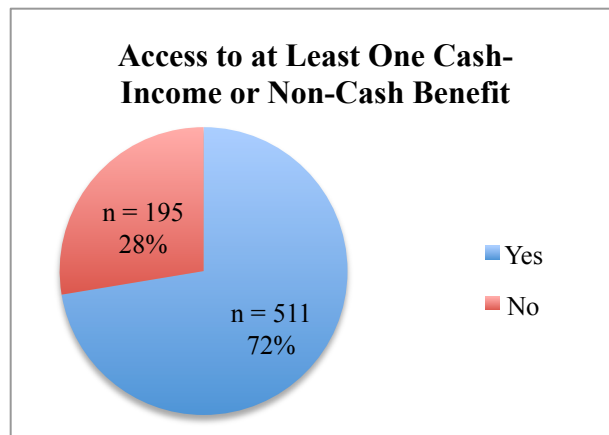
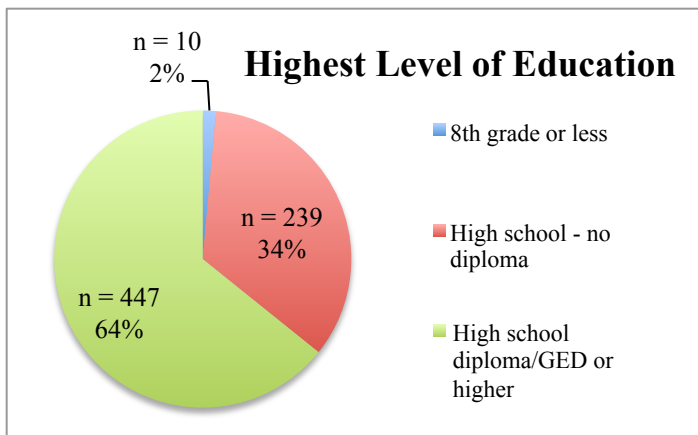


Gender and Veterans Served. More than half (67%) of the homeless youth served in Central New Jersey were female, with male representing only 33%. This is the opposite of the gender information found for the overall population in which men represented 59% and women with 41%. A total of 5 youth veterans were served between all three program categories during the reporting period, which accounts for 1% of the total veterans served.

Race and Ethnicity. Most homeless youth served in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing (456) reported their race as “Black or African-American” (65%). The next most reported race was “White” at 29% (200), followed by “Multi-Racial” at 20 (3%). 88% of the homeless youth served identified themselves as “Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino.” These percentages coincide with the total population percentages found.



Level of Education and Cash-Income Sources/Non-Cash Benefits. When looking at the highest level of education for youth, 447 (64%) served in Central New Jersey programs received their high school diploma/GED or higher. 2% or 10 youth received no more than an 8th grade education. Of the youth served, 511 or 72% have at least one source of cash-income or non-cash benefit.

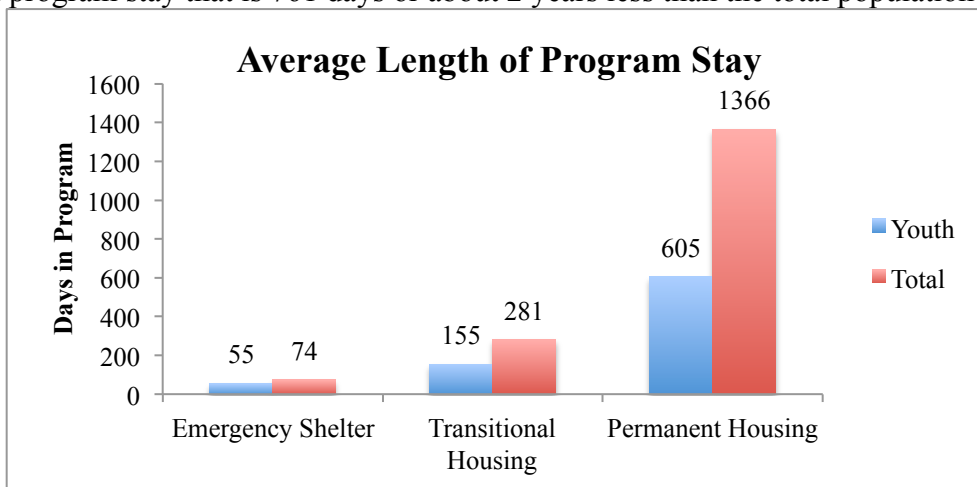


For youth served in emergency shelter and transitional housing TANF was the most common cash-income source reported (30% for emergency shelter and 39% for transitional housing).

Earned income was the most reported cash-income source for youth served in permanent housing with 41%. 7% of youth served in emergency shelter reported having earned income and 27% in transitional programs for a total of 15% having earned income. This is slightly higher than the total population percentage of 9% having earned income.

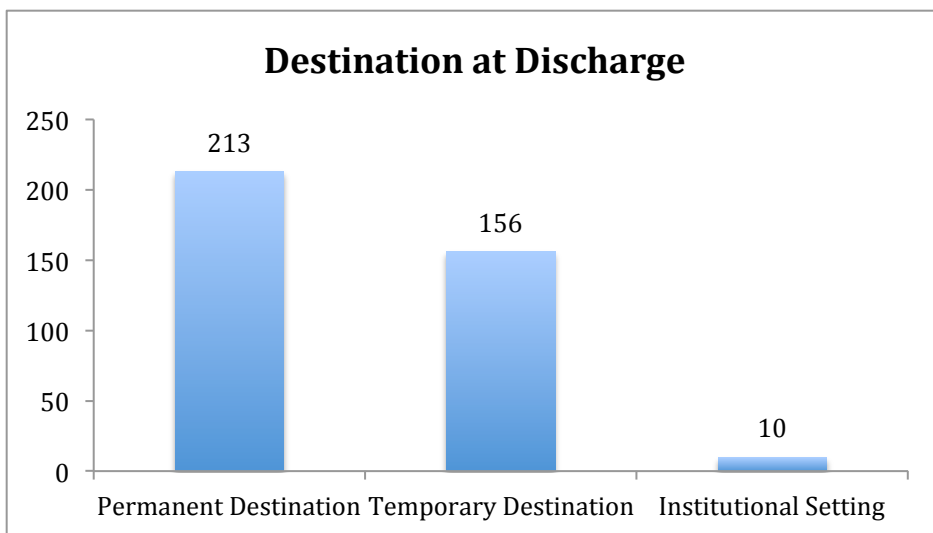
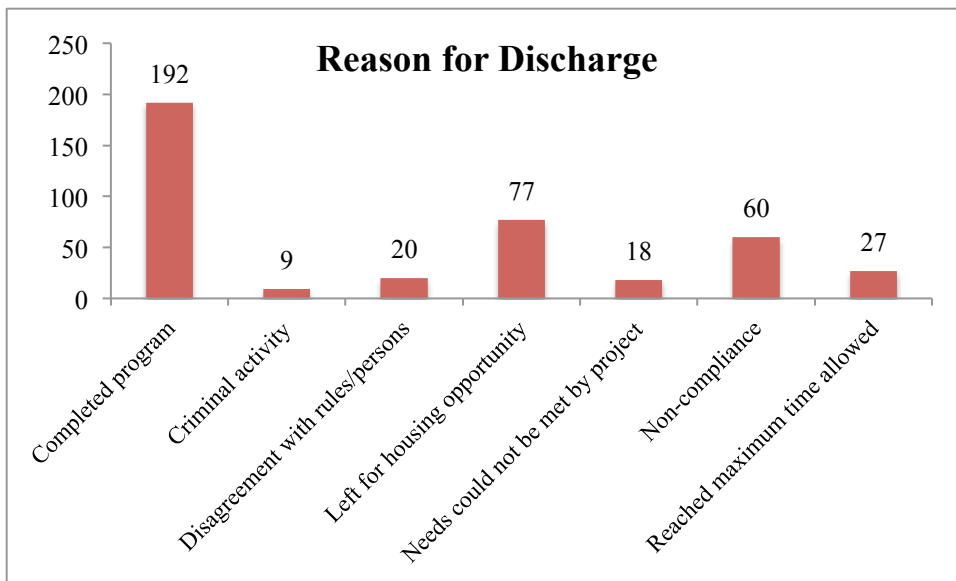
Similar to the total population, Food Stamps was the top reported non-cash benefit for homeless youth in emergency shelter (49%) and permanent housing (39%). The most reported non-cash benefit for transitional housing was MEDICAID with 77% of homeless youth reporting this.

Average Length of Program Stay. When comparing the average length of program stay for youth and the total population, youth, on average, tend to have shorter stays in all three program categories. The most apparent difference is in permanent housing where youth have an average length of program stay that is 761 days or about 2 years less than the total population average.



Reason and Destination at Discharge.

A total of 583 youth were discharged from emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing programs during the 2012 reporting period. 33% of these youth were discharged from programs after completing the program, while 13% were discharged due to finding a housing opportunity before program completion. 37% of youth moved on to a permanent destination upon discharge while 27% moved on to temporary and 2% moved on to an institutional setting. These percentages are slightly higher than what was found for permanent and temporary destinations for the total population. A permanent housing destination includes a unit owned or rented by a client, permanent supportive housing for formerly homeless, or living with a family member or friend permanently. Similar to the total population, the most common permanent destination at discharge was a rental by client which accounted for 28% of the total responses. A temporary discharge destination includes an emergency shelter, hotel or motel, place not meant for habitation, staying with a family member or friend temporarily, or transitional housing for the homeless. The most common temporary destination was temporarily staying with a family member or friend at 15%. An institutional destination includes hospital (psychiatric or non-psychiatric), jail or prison, or a substance abuse treatment facility. The most common institutional destination, in line with the total population, was jail or prison with 1% of the total discharges.



permanent supportive housing for formerly homeless, or living with a family member or friend permanently. Similar to the total population, the most common permanent destination at discharge was a rental by client which accounted for 28% of the total responses. A temporary discharge destination includes an emergency shelter, hotel or motel, place not meant

for habitation, staying with a family member or friend temporarily, or transitional housing for the homeless. The most common temporary destination was temporarily staying with a family member or friend at 15%. An institutional destination includes hospital (psychiatric or non-psychiatric), jail or prison, or a substance abuse treatment facility. The most common institutional destination, in line with the total population, was jail or prison with 1% of the total discharges.