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HOUSING ASSOCIATES

NJ
2019
Counts!

Mercer County 2019 Point-In-Time Count of the Homeless

January 22, 2019

Acknowledgements

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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 2019, New Jersey's annual Point-In-Time (PIT) Count of the Homeless, provides a statewide snapshot of households experiencing homelessness in our communities; where they find shelter, what their needs are, and what factors contribute to making them homeless. The 2019 Count reveals important demographic and other information about families and individuals experiencing homelessness on the night of Tuesday, January 22nd, 2019. These findings help to understand how to better allocate housing resources and services in order to prevent and end homelessness.

This Report

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).

The findings in this report are presented in the following sections:

1. Racial Disparities among the Total Homeless Population;
2. Total homeless population;
3. Subpopulations
   a. Unsheltered
   b. Chronically Homeless
   c. Veterans
   d. Victims of Domestic Violence
   e. Youth

In addition to the main findings presented in the body of this report, Appendix B includes charts illustrating the responses to all survey questions that were part of the 2019 Point-In-Time Count. Appendix A contains information on data collection and methodology.

Definition of Terms

Household - 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').

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.

Emergency Shelter - any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide a temporary shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless and which does not require occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreements.

Transitional Housing - a project that is designed to provide housing and appropriate supportive services to homeless persons to facilitate movement to independent living within 24 months.

Safe Haven - a form of supportive housing that serves hard-to-reach homeless persons with severe mental illness who come primarily from the streets and have been unable or unwilling to participate in housing or supportive services. Safe Haven programs offer low barriers to program entry and low-demand services and referrals in a 24-hour residential setting to no more than 25 persons

Changes affecting the 2019 Point-in-Time Count

For 2019, a number of factors contributed to significant changes in the counted population experiencing homelessness. The factors impacting the count vary from community to community and are best described locally.

When reviewing data included in this report, it is important to keep in mind that the Point-in-Time data includes a census of all persons in sheltering programs (emergency shelter, transitional housing, and safe haven programs) as well as the unsheltered population identified on the night of the count. While there is uniformity and complete coverage in data collection for those utilizing the sheltering system within communities, each county develops a local methodology to identify and engage unsheltered persons within the community. As such, the strength of the unsheltered count varies from community to community. In addition, it is generally accepted that while communities work to identify and engage all persons living unsheltered within their geographic region, the count of persons unsheltered in the community may not reflect the full population experiencing homelessness.

II. Racial Disparities in Total Homeless Population

NJ Counts 2019 provides a snapshot of the population experiencing homelessness in the Mercer County on a single night. The results of this report are intended to assist communities in understanding the characteristics and needs of those experiencing homelessness to improve service delivery and resource targeting to effectively end homelessness. As communities work to expand their understanding of the root causes of homelessness it is important recognize the structural forces impacting trajectories into and out of homelessness. Disparities in who experiences homelessness highlight the impact of a pervasive structural force: Systemic Racism. Acknowledging and understanding the impact of systemic racism on those experiencing homelessness is key to developing an effective system responsive to the community and strengthened in cultural understanding and awareness.

On January 22, 2019 there were 448 persons experiencing homelessness on a single night in the Mercer County. Figure R.1 illustrates the racial breakdown of the total population in Mercer County, those living below the poverty line, and those experiencing homelessness. Persons identified as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander in the population count in Figure R.1 include those who identified as both Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and Hispanic/Latino.

Fig. R.1: Percent of Population by Race and Ethnicity
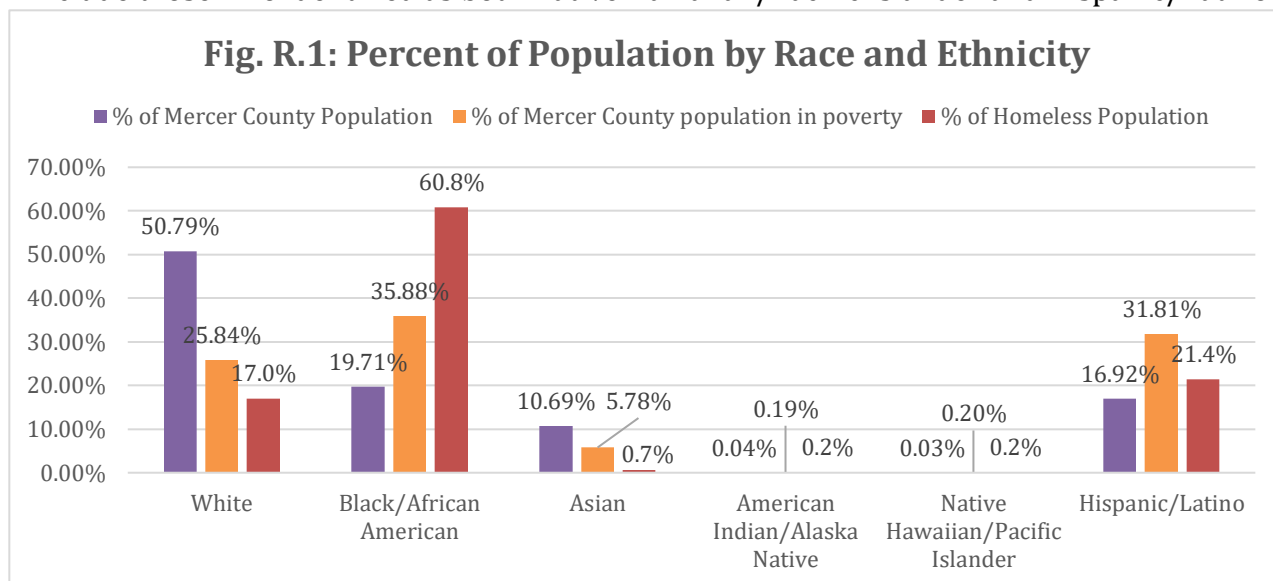
In looking at the racial breakdown of those experiencing homelessness in relation to the racial breakdown in the general population and those living in poverty, disparate impacts along racial lines become evident. According to the American Community Survey 2017 annual estimates prepared by the Census Bureau, about 373,362 people live in Mercer County, and 10.8% (40,450 persons) of Mercer County residents are living below the poverty line. There is a strong correlation between poverty and homelessness, however, the racial disparities evident in the population indicate that poverty alone does not determine who will experience homelessness. Given the disparities present in the data, it is evident that systemic racism plays a significant role in factors contributing to homelessness. The data from Figure R.1 indicates the following:

- Persons identifying as Black or African American are overrepresented in the population experiencing homelessness. While 20.07% of the general population, persons identifying as Black or African American are 35.98% of the population in poverty and 60.8% of the identified population experiencing homelessness.
- Persons identifying as Hispanic/Latino are also overrepresented among the population living in poverty and homelessness. 17.23% of the general population, persons identifying as Hispanic/Latino are 31.91% of the population in poverty and 21.4% of the identified population experiencing homelessness.
- Persons identifying as Black or African American represent 64.3% of the sheltered population (staying in emergency shelter, transitional housing or safe havens) and 45.1% of the unsheltered population. Persons identifying as White and not Hispanic or Latino represent 16.4% of the sheltered population and 19.5% of the unsheltered population. Persons identifying as Hispanic/Latino represent 18.4% of the sheltered population and 32.9% of the unsheltered population.

Fig. R.2: Percent of Household Type by Race
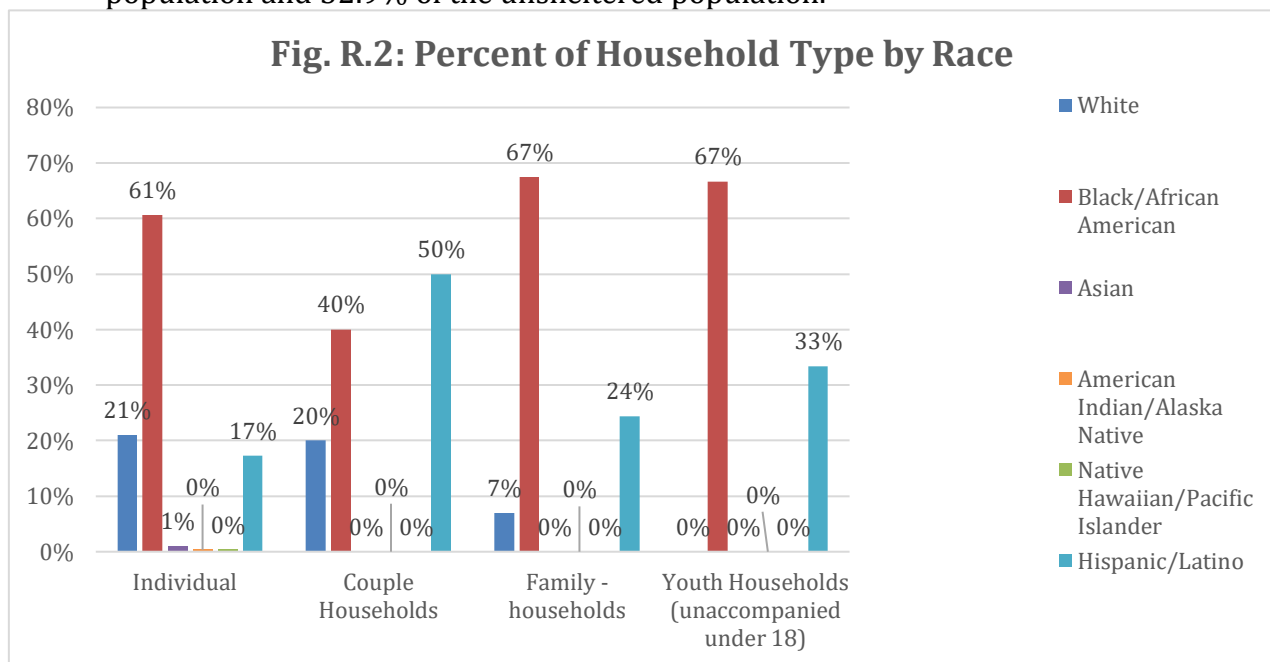
Figure R.2 illustrates the racial breakdown within each household type for those experiencing homelessness.
- Persons identifying as Black or African American make up the majority (61%) of individuals and the majority of youth and family households (67% and 67%, respectively). More of the couple households identified as Hispanic/Latino (50%) than any other group.
- 11% of persons identifying as Black or African American and 11% of persons identifying as Hispanic/Latino were in family households as compared to 4% of persons identifying as White.

Disparities along racial and ethnic lines in the population experiencing homelessness are seen in a number of other areas including the following:
- Among children ages 0 – 5 counted as homeless, 69% of the population identified as Black or African American.

- 49% of persons identifying as White reported receiving Medicaid as compared to 44% of persons identifying as Black or African American and 29% of persons identifying as Hispanic/Latino.
- The most common cause of homelessness among persons identifying as White was Released from Prison/Jail (21%), whereas the most common cause of homelessness among persons identifying as Black or African American was Asked to Leave Shared Residence (23%).
- 68% of persons identifying as White indicated a disability as compared to 54% of person identifying as Black or African American, and 55% of Hispanic/Latino persons.

Figure R.3 illustrates the racial breakdown within each disabling condition reported.
- The most prevalent disability overall, mental health issues, was reported by 40% of persons identifying as White, 29% of persons identifying as Black or African American and 26% of persons identifying as Hispanic/Latino.
- The second most prevalent disability reported, substance use disorders, was identified by 27% of persons identifying as White, 20% of persons identifying as Black or African American and 25% of persons identifying as Hispanic/Latino.

Fig. R.3: Disabling Condition by Race
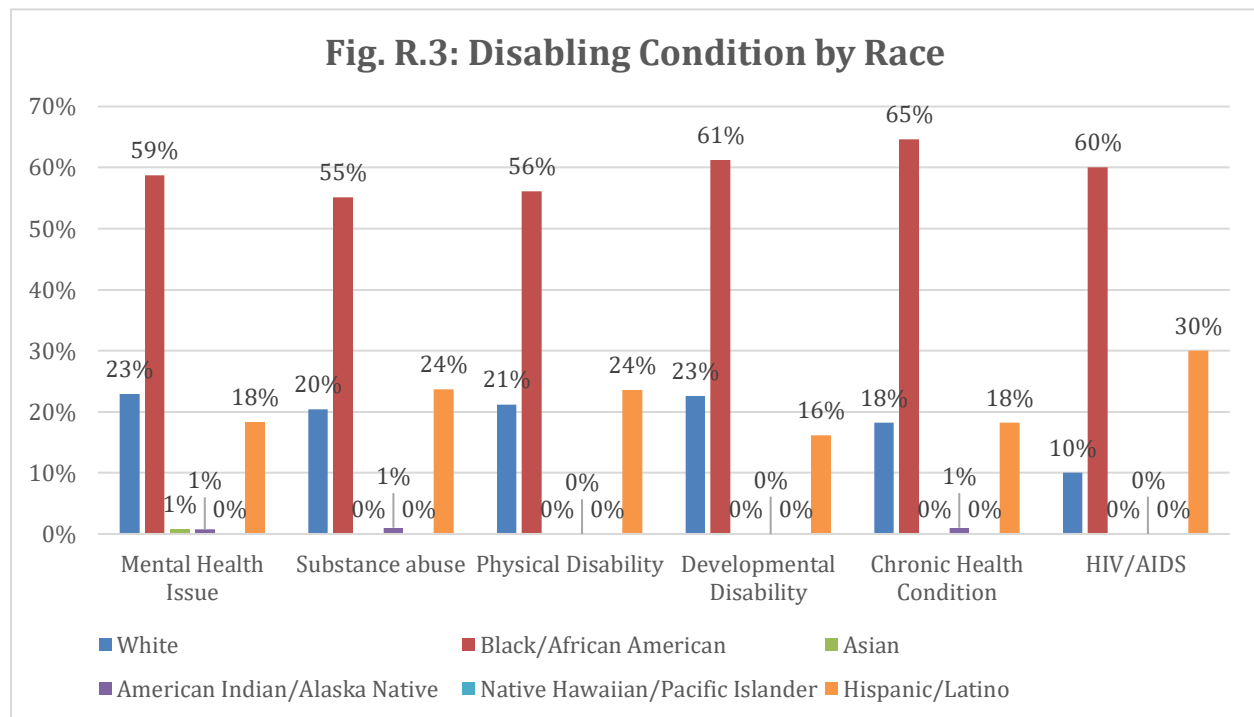
Disparities were seen in a number of other questions included in the PIT survey in addition to the ones reported here. Given this information, it is clear that more research is needed to fully understand the causes, correlations and impacts as it relates to racial disparities. In addition, this information highlights the need for homeless service systems to make deliberate efforts to understand and address racial disparities in order to better serve those experiencing homelessness and effectively end their homelessness.

III. Findings for Total Homeless Population

Key Findings

- On the night of January 22nd, 2019, a total of 353 households, including 448 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Mercer County, according to the 2019 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 70 persons, were identified as chronically homeless.
- 84 persons were unsheltered on the night of the count.

Municipalities	Total Homeless Population	% of Total population	Total sheltered population	% of sheltered population	Total unsheltered population	% of unsheltered population
Trenton	324	78%	247	73%	77	100%
Ewing	77	19%	77	23%	0	0%
Hamilton	15	4%	15	4%	0	0%
Total	**416***		**339**		**77***	

Figure i. Number of Homeless Persons by County and Percentage of County Total

*Does not reflect total homeless persons counted as some survey responses may not have included municipality

Total Homeless Population

On the night of January 22nd, 2019, a total of 448 persons, in 353 households, were experiencing homelessness in Mercer County, according to the 2019 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 31 persons (6%) and 29 households (8%) from 2018.

Fig. 1: 5-Year Comparison of Total Homeless Population by Housing Situation
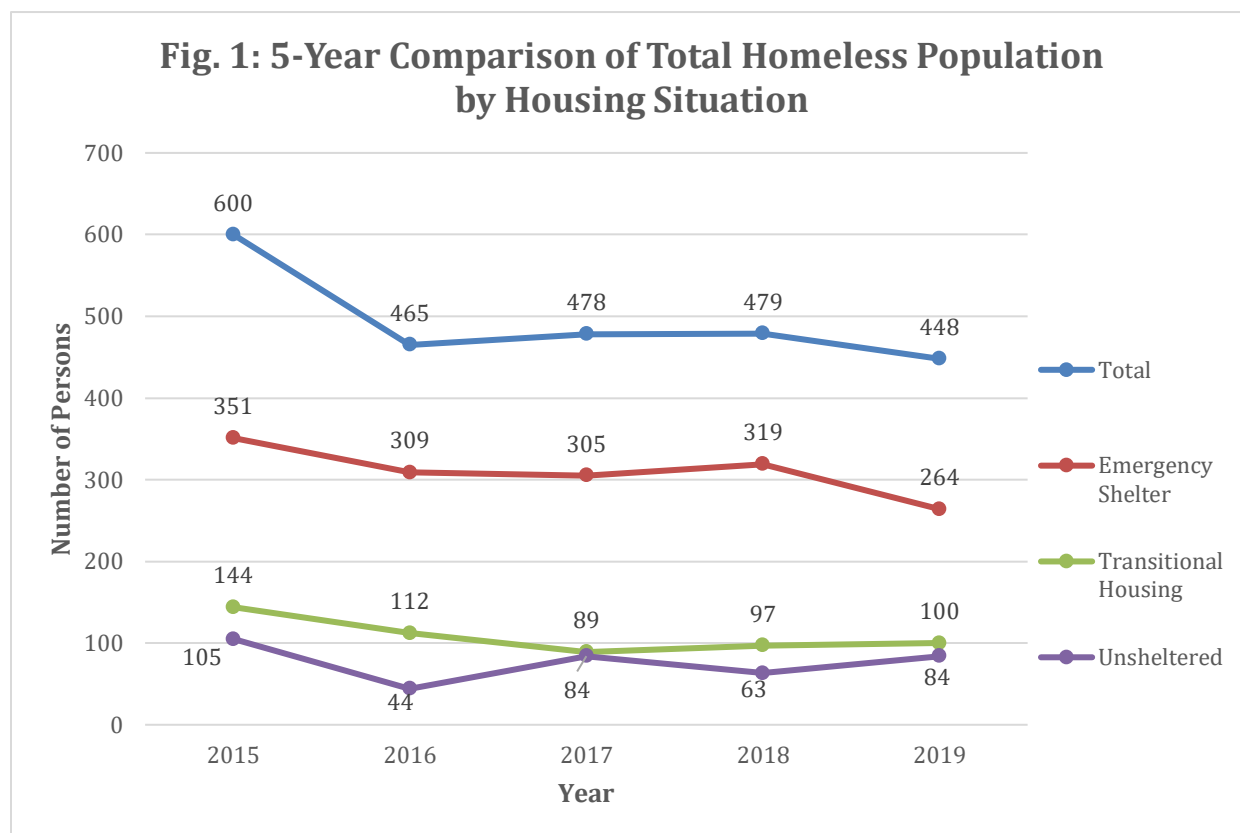

Figure 1 shows that, in 2019, 264 homeless persons stayed in emergency shelters, 100 stayed in transitional housing, and 84 were living unsheltered on the night of the count. When comparing to 2018, increases are seen in the number of homeless persons staying in transitional housing (3 persons, 3%) and unsheltered locations (21 persons, 33%).

Figure 1 also shows that, over the past five years, Mercer has seen an overall decrease of 152 persons, or 25% from 2015 to 2019. Over this 5-year period, there was a 25% decrease in persons staying in emergency shelter, a 20% decrease in unsheltered persons, and a 31% decrease in persons staying in transitional housing between 2015 and 2019.

As Figure 2 shows, 22% of the homeless household respondents in Mercer in 2019 reported that their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless was outside of the county.

Fig. 2: Percentage of Households by County of Last Permanent Address
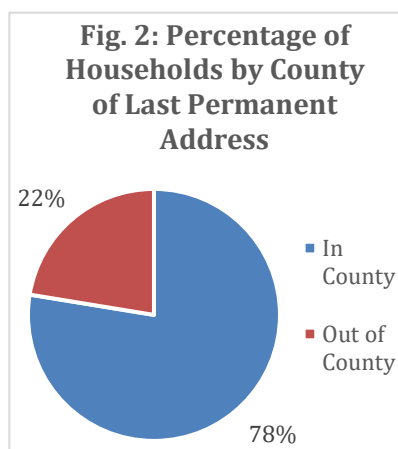
Homeless Families and Individuals

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."

Fig. 3: Homeless Households by Housing Situation
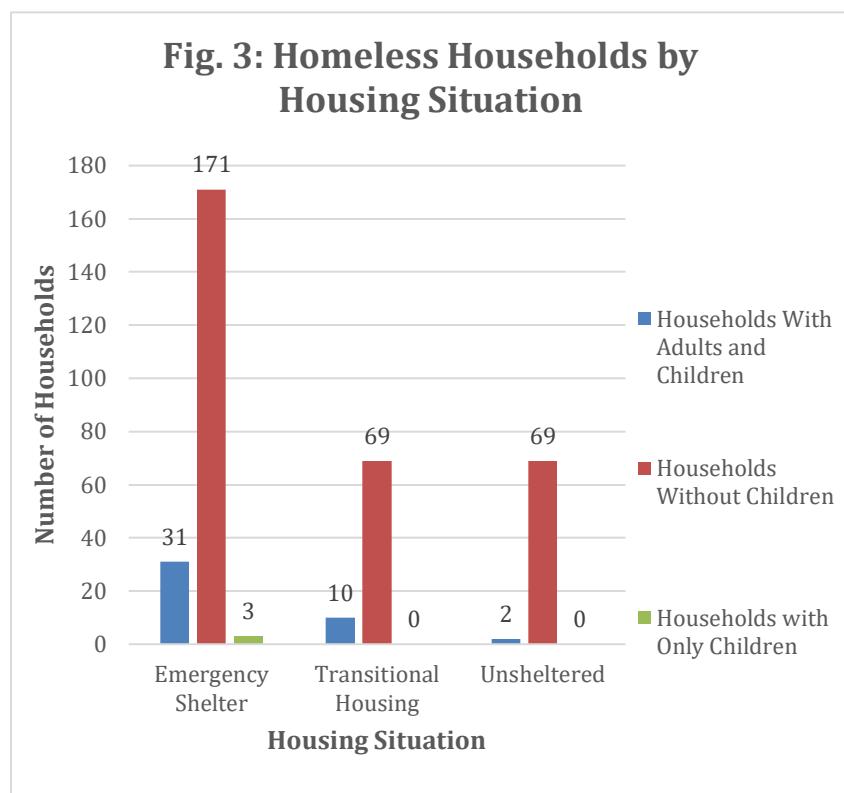
Of the 353 homeless households counted in Mercer in 2019, 43 (12%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult. This is a decrease of 9 % from 2018. These families included 124 persons, including 75 children under age 18 and 49 adults. The average family size was 2.88 persons. Figure 3 shows that 31 families (72%) were staying in emergency shelters. There were 2 (5%) identified unsheltered families with children under the age of 18. There were 10 families (23%) in transitional housing.

309 (87%) of the homeless households in Mercer County were households without children under 18, and they were composed of 321 adults. This is a decrease of 7% from the number of adult only households in 2018. The majority of adult only households (55%) were staying in emergency shelter on the night of the count. 22% of adult only households were unsheltered and 22% were staying in transitional housing in 2019.

As Figure 3 indicates, 3 households with only children under 18 years old were reported in 2019, an increase of 2 households from 2018. 100% of these unaccompanied youth households were staying in emergency shelter.

Demographics

There was a total of 30 (7%) homeless adults between 18 and 24 years old, 337 (76%) adults over age 24, and 78 (18%) children under 18 years old experiencing homelessness on the night of the count. Figure 4 shows that the age range most represented are Adults between 45 and 54 (97 persons, 22%).

Fig. 4: Age Range by Housing Situation
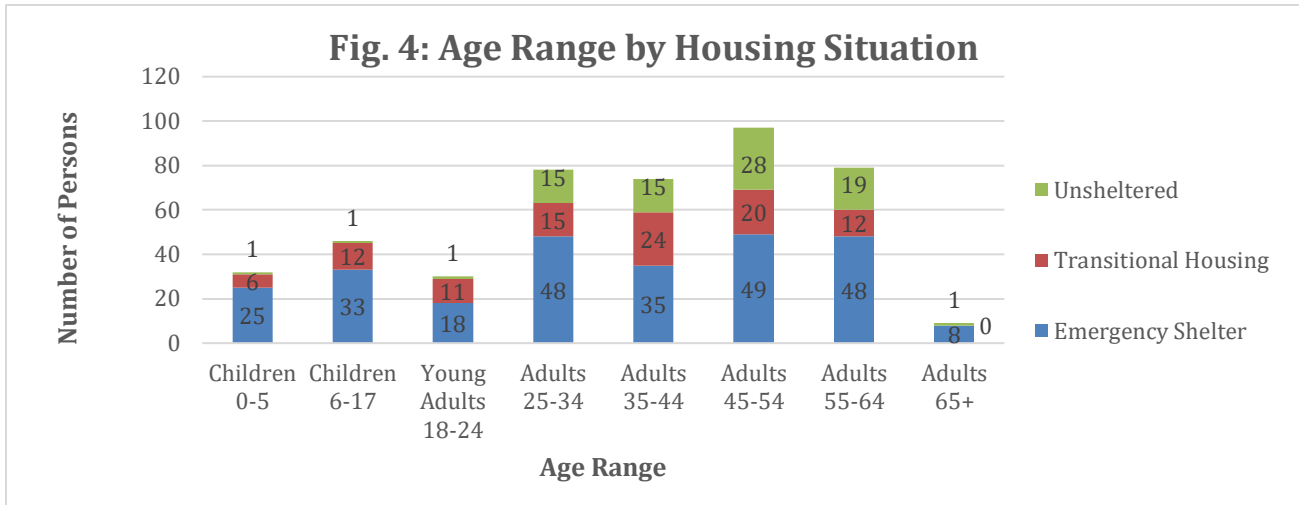
68.7% (307) of homeless persons were male and 31.3% (140) were female.

77.3 % (262) of persons identified their race as Black or African American, making this the largest racial subgroup of homeless persons counted. The next largest group self-identified as White (20.1%, 68 persons). With regard to ethnicity, 21.4% (93) of persons identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.

Subpopulations

On the night of January 22, 2019 out of the 448 persons identified as homeless, there were a total of 70 Chronically Homeless persons, representing 15.6% of the homeless population. There were 17 homeless veterans representing 4.6% of the adult homeless population. 50 Victims of Domestic Violence were identified representing 11.2% of the total homeless population. Homeless Youth (individuals and families with heads of households 24 years old or younger) represented 8.5% of the homeless population with 38 persons identified. Figure 5 illustrates the break-down of each subpopulation identified by housing type.

As illustrated in Figure 5 the majority of Chronically Homeless persons and Veterans were unsheltered on the night of the count whereas the majority of Victims of Domestic Violence and Youth were in emergency shelter programs.

Fig. 5: Subpopulations by Housing Situation
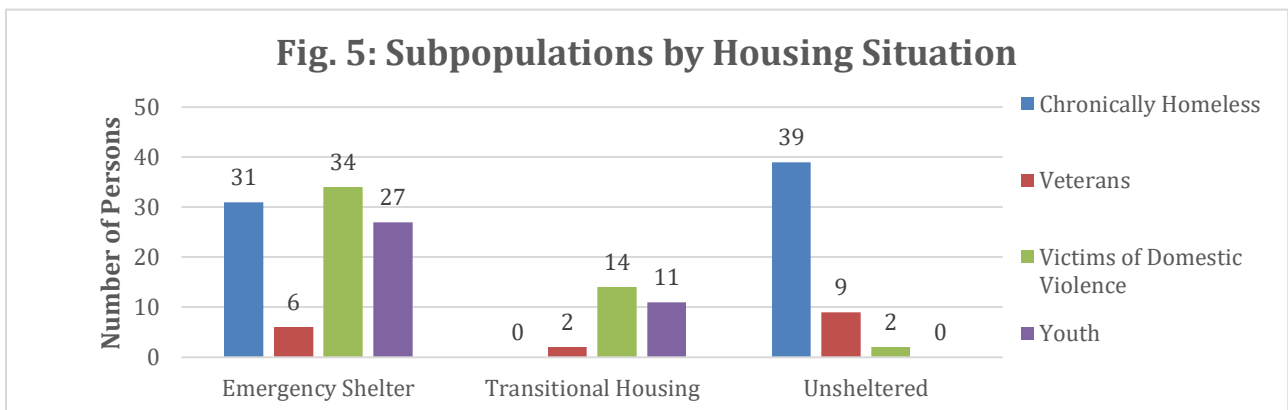
Disabilities

Figure 6 illustrates that 56% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 93.3% of adults 18 or older reported some type of disability compared to 5.9% of children. Figure 7 shows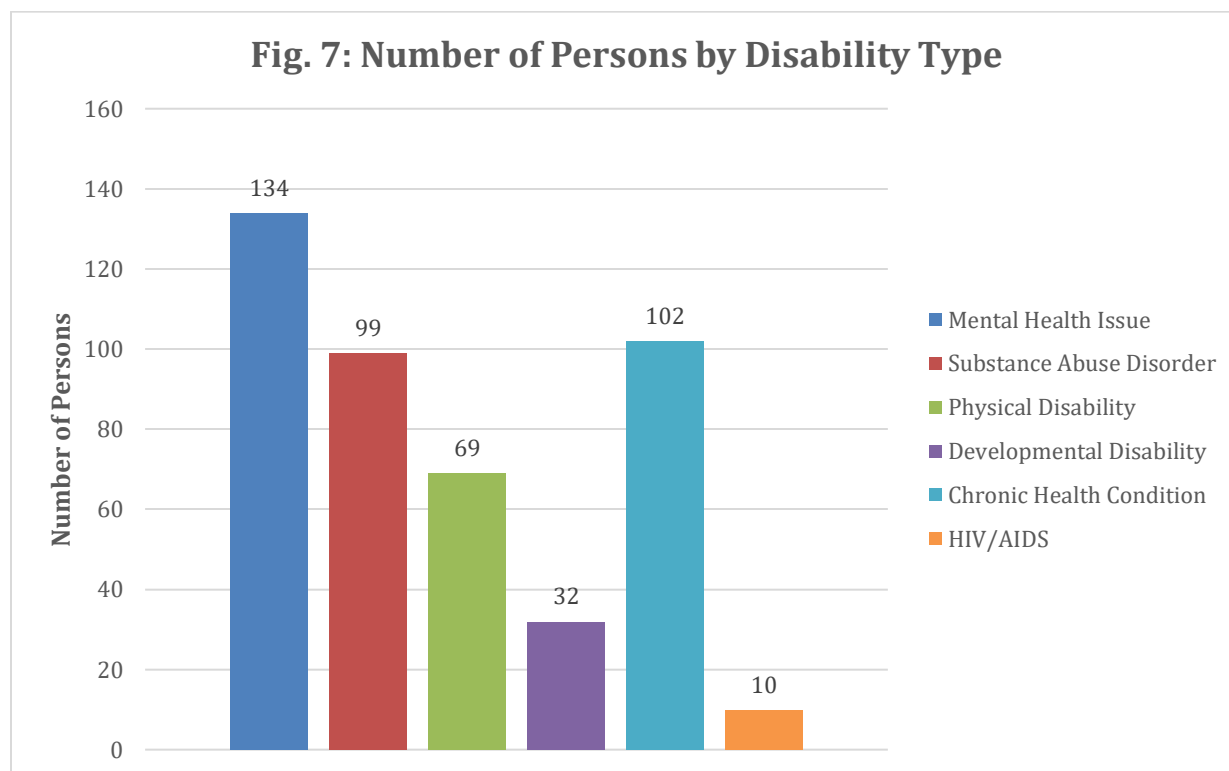 the number of the homeless persons that identified as having various disabilities. The most common disabilities included mental health issues and substance abuse disorders.

Fig. 6: Percent of Population with a Disability

- Disabled
- No Disability

44% 56%
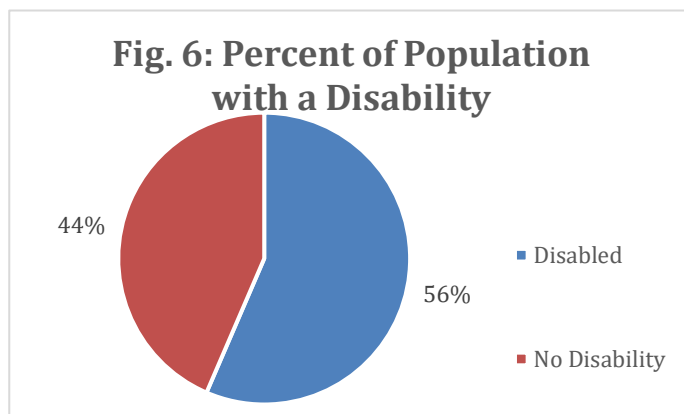
Among disabled persons, 53% reported mental health issues making this the most prevalent disability; representing 55.1% of the disabled adult homeless population and 29.9% of the total population experiencing homelessness. 40.7% of disabled adults reported a substance use disorder and 39.8% reported a chronic health condition. Among disabled homeless children, 53.3% reported a chronic health condition, and 40% reported a development disability.

Fig. 7: Number of Persons by Disability Type

Number of Persons

Disability	Number
Mental Health Issue	134
Substance Abuse Disorder	99
Physical Disability	69
Developmental Disability	32
Chronic Health Condition	102
HIV/AIDS	10

Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

Among all households experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, 51.4% had no source of income, and 9.5% reported having earned income. The most common sources of income among homeless households were SSI (14.2%) and General Assistance (8.3%) followed by TANF (7.4%). Figure 8 shows the income sources reported by respondents in relation to their housing situation on the night of the count.

Fig. 8: Income by Housing Situation

Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options
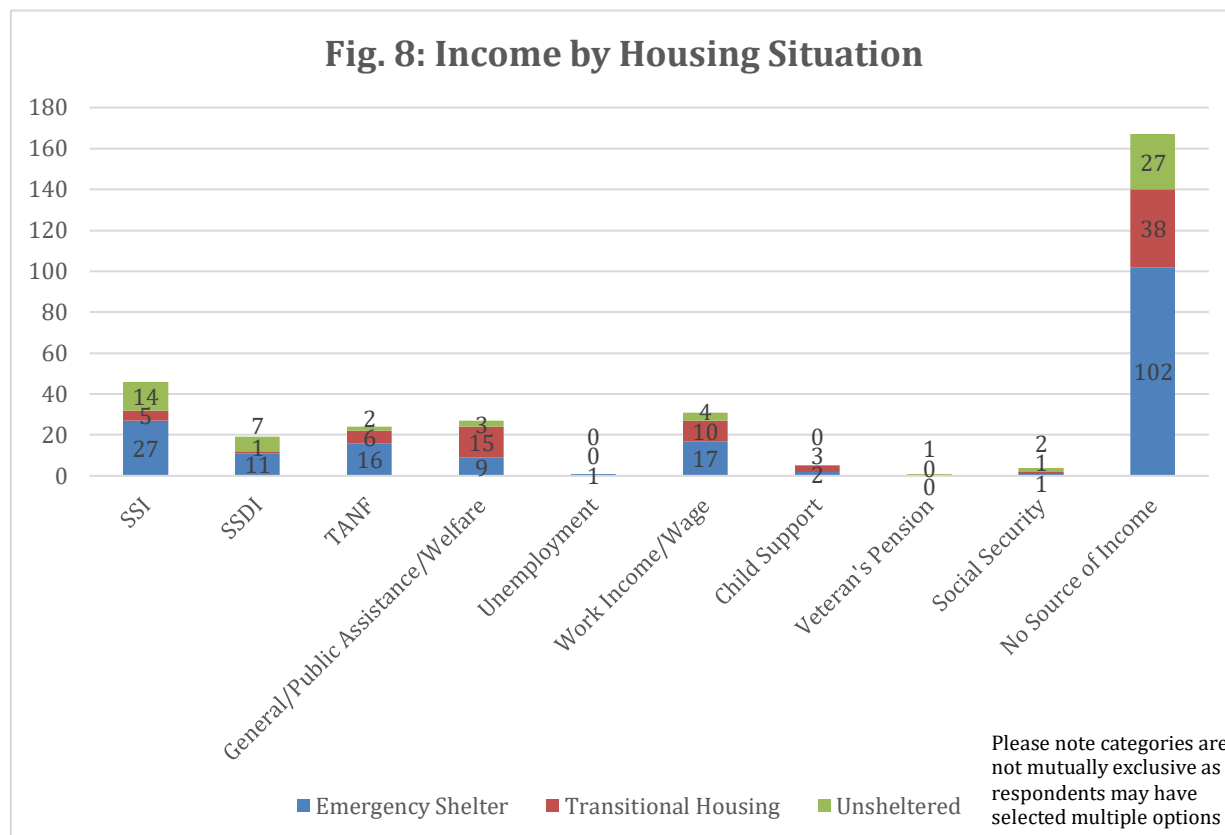
Figure 9 show the average monthly income among households in each housing situation.

Figure 9. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation			
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered
Average for All Households	$685.75	$468.55	$393.48

3.1% of homeless households reported receiving no kind of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Medicaid was the top reported non-cash benefit, received by 51.8% of homeless households. Food Stamps (SNAP), was the second most reported non-cash benefit received by 32% of homeless households.

Length of Homelessness

Figure 10 illustrates the total amount of time households have reported being homeless. This includes continuous episodes of homelessness as well as the total time from various episodes of homelessness over the past 3 years. As seen in Figure 10, 46.2% of homeless households reported their total length of homelessness was between 0 and 6 months. Within this group, 27.8% were homeless from 0 – 2 months and 18.4% were homeless between 3 and 6 months. For those with longer periods of homelessness, 21% of homeless households reported that their total length of homelessness was more than 1 year. In looking at those households that had lengths of homelessness exceeding one year, 41 households (11.6%) were homeless between 1 and 3 years while 33 households (9.3%) reported their total length of homelessness exceeded 3 years.

**Fig. 10: Length of Homelessness Among Households**
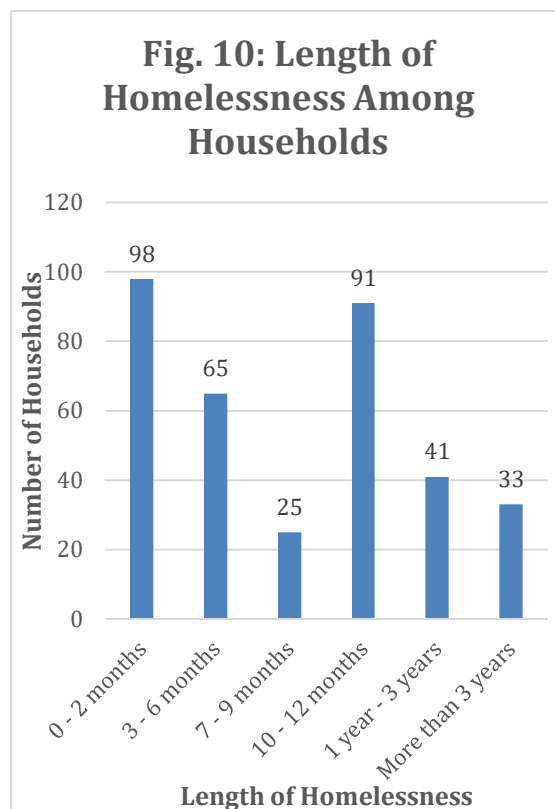
Episodes of Homelessness

There was a total of 218 households (62.8%) that reported experiencing one episode of homelessness, making this the most prevalent response. Figure 11 illustrates the total number of episodes of homelessness reported by households experiencing homelessness.

Fig. 11: Episodes of Homelessness Among Households
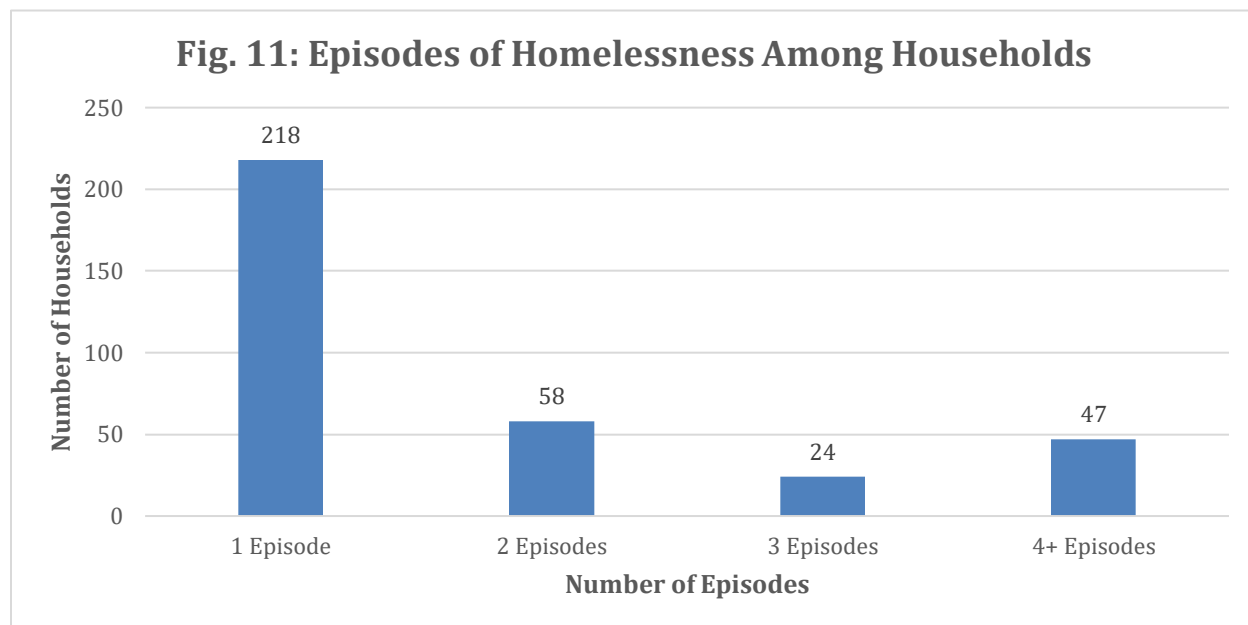
Cause of Homelessness

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 (80 households, 24.9%) than any other cause. As Figure 12 shows, the next most common factor reported was release from prison or jail (17.8%) followed by loss or reduction of job income (15%).

Fig. 12: Cause of Homelessness by Household
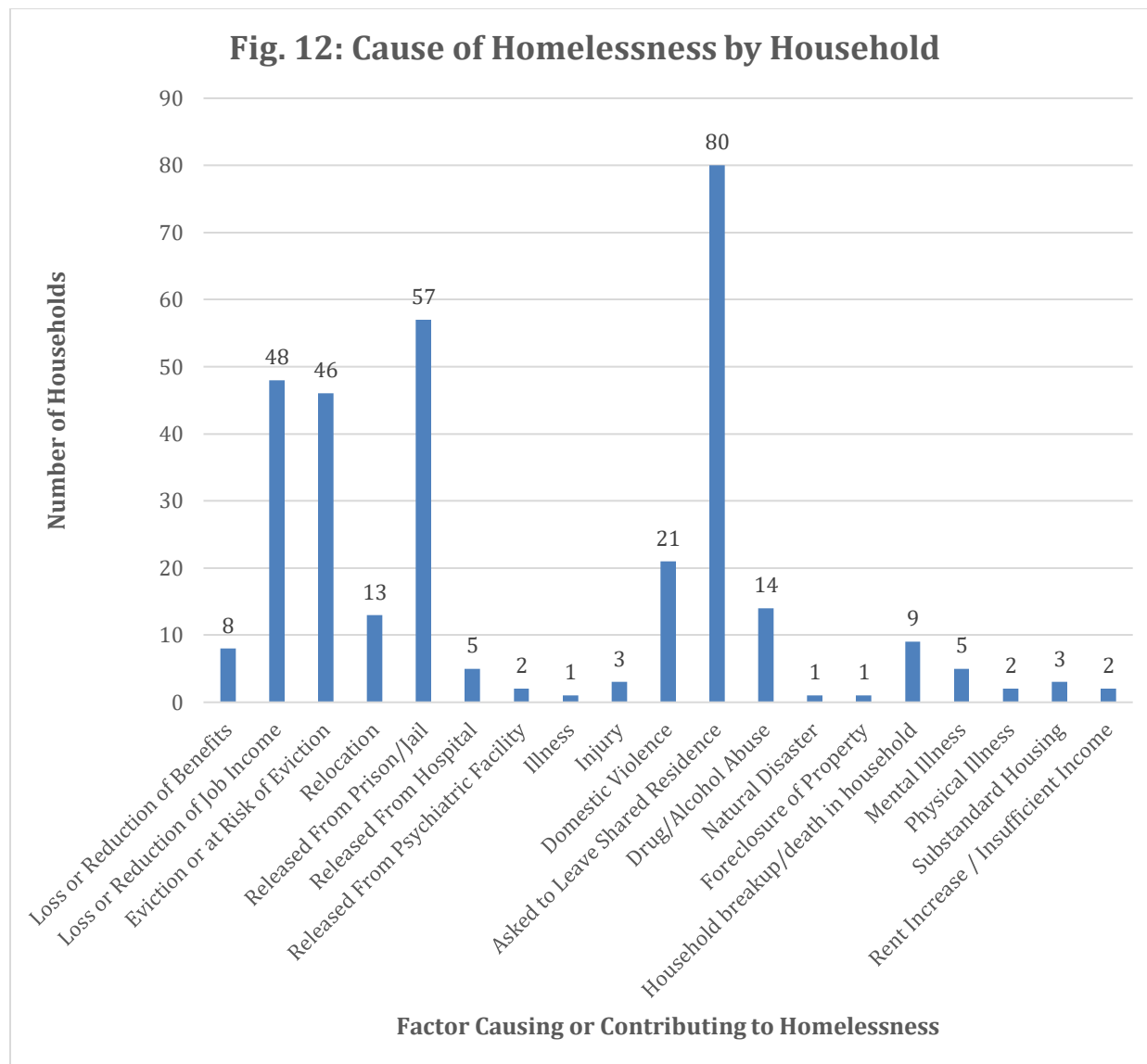
When households were asked 'what was your residence prior to your current living situation?' more said they were living with family or friends (26.2%) than any other type of residence. 19.3% reported residing in permanent housing and 17.2% reported staying in Emergency Shelter prior to their current living situation.

IV. Findings for the Chronically Homeless

Chronically Homeless households, as defined by HUD, are persons with a long-term disabling condition, who have been continually homeless for a year or more, or at least four times in the past three years where the length of time in those episodes add up to a year or more. Any family with a head of household that meets this definition is considered a chronically homeless family.

Chronically Homeless households are one of the priority populations identified by HUD. This status as a priority population 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.

Fig. 13: 5-Year Comparison of Chronic Homeless Population by Housing Situation

65 Households with 70 Total Persons

52.2% increase in total persons since 2018

6.7% decrease in total population since 2015

181.8% increase in Emergency Shelter population since 2018

39.1% decrease in unsheltered persons since 2018

Fig. 14: Chronically Homeless Households by Housing Situation

98.5% Adult Individuals; 1.5% Family Households

- Households With Adults and Children
- Households Without Children
- Households with Only Children

Fig. 15: Number of Chronically Homeless Persons by Disability Type

- Mental Health Issue
- Substance Abuse Disorder
- Physical Disability
- Developmental Disability
- Chronic Health Condition
- HIV/AIDS

Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options
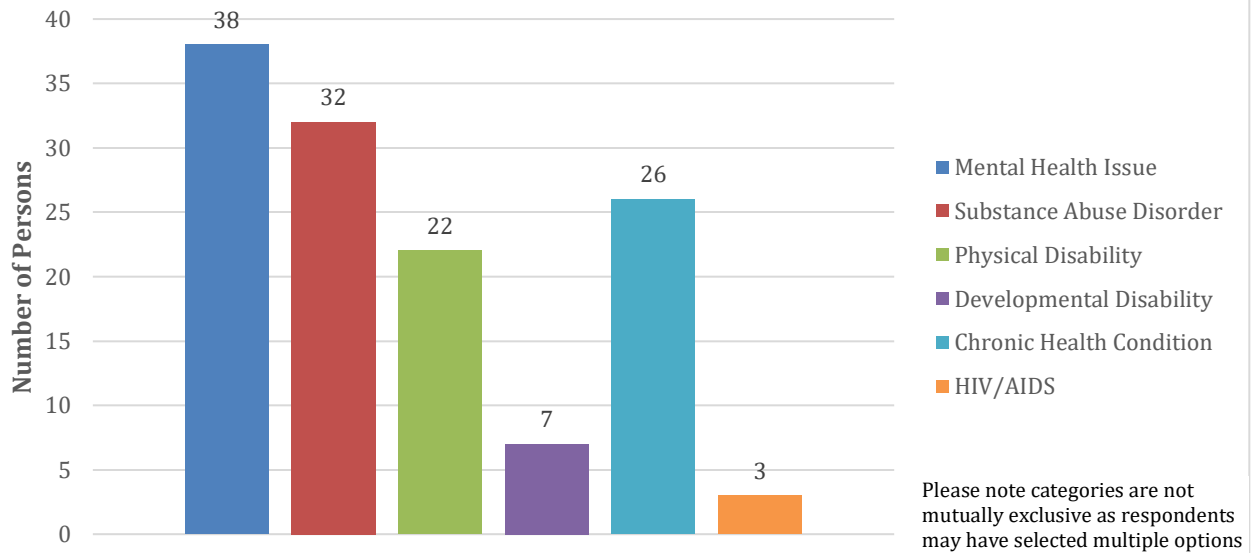
Fig. 16: Episodes of Homelessness Among Chronically Homeless Households

Number of Households (y-axis)
Number of Episodes (x-axis)

- 1 Episode: 33
- 2 Episodes: 10
- 3 Episodes: 7
- 4+ Episodes: 11
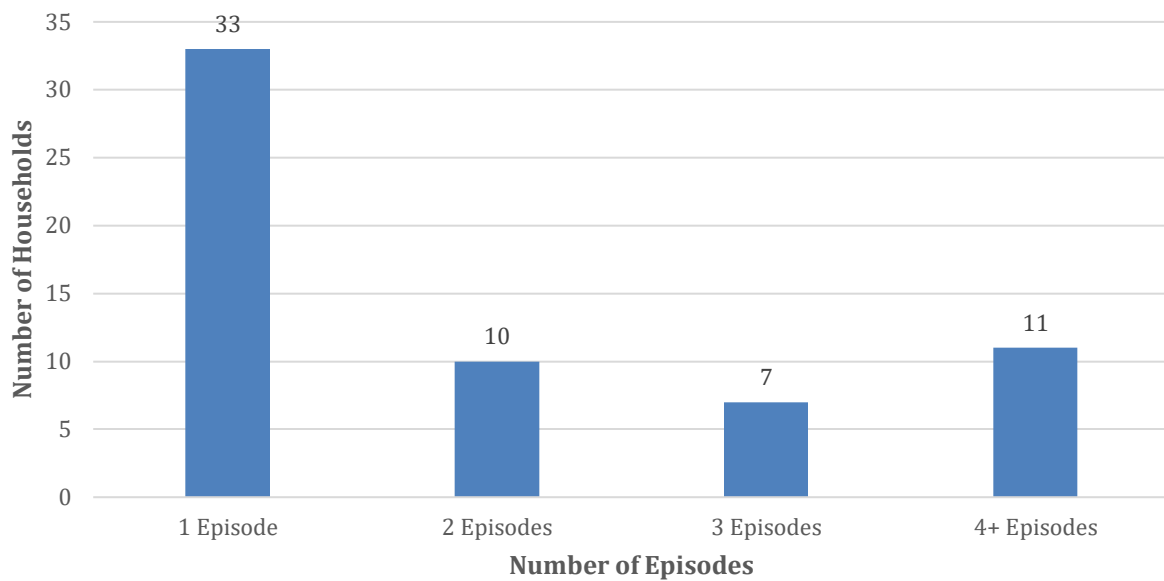
Fig. 17: Number of Chronically Homeless Households by Income Source
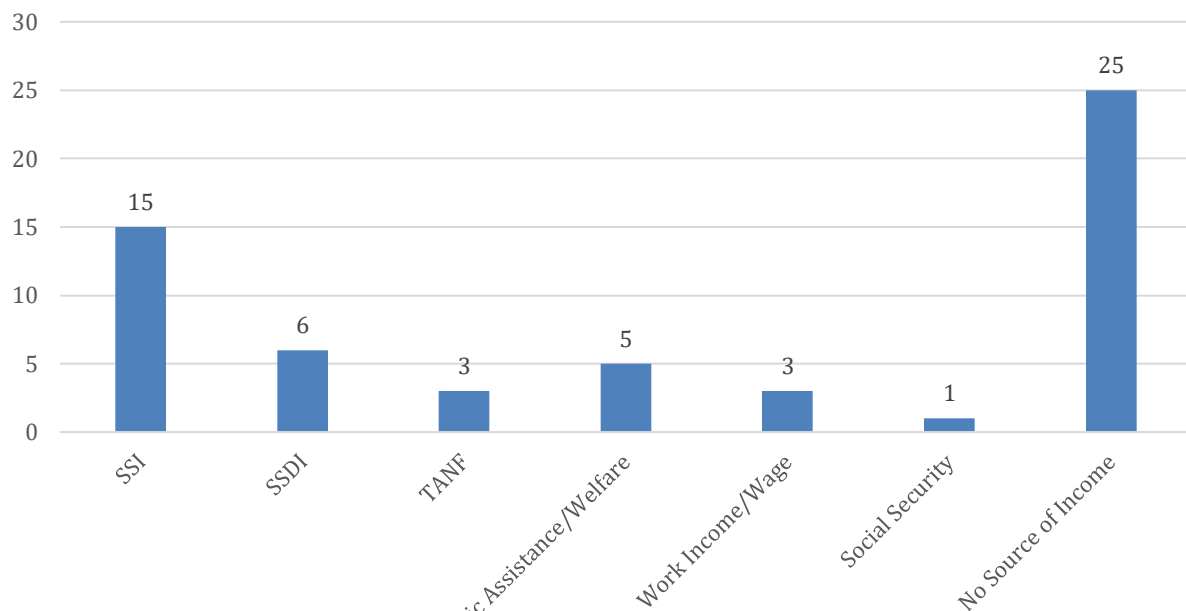
- SSI: 15
- SSDI: 6
- TANF: 3
- General/Public Assistance/Welfare: 5
- Work Income/Wage: 3
- Social Security: 1
- No Source of Income: 25

Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

Average monthly income for chronically homeless households is $488.16

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.

Fig. 18: 5-Year Comparison of Unsheltered Homeless Population
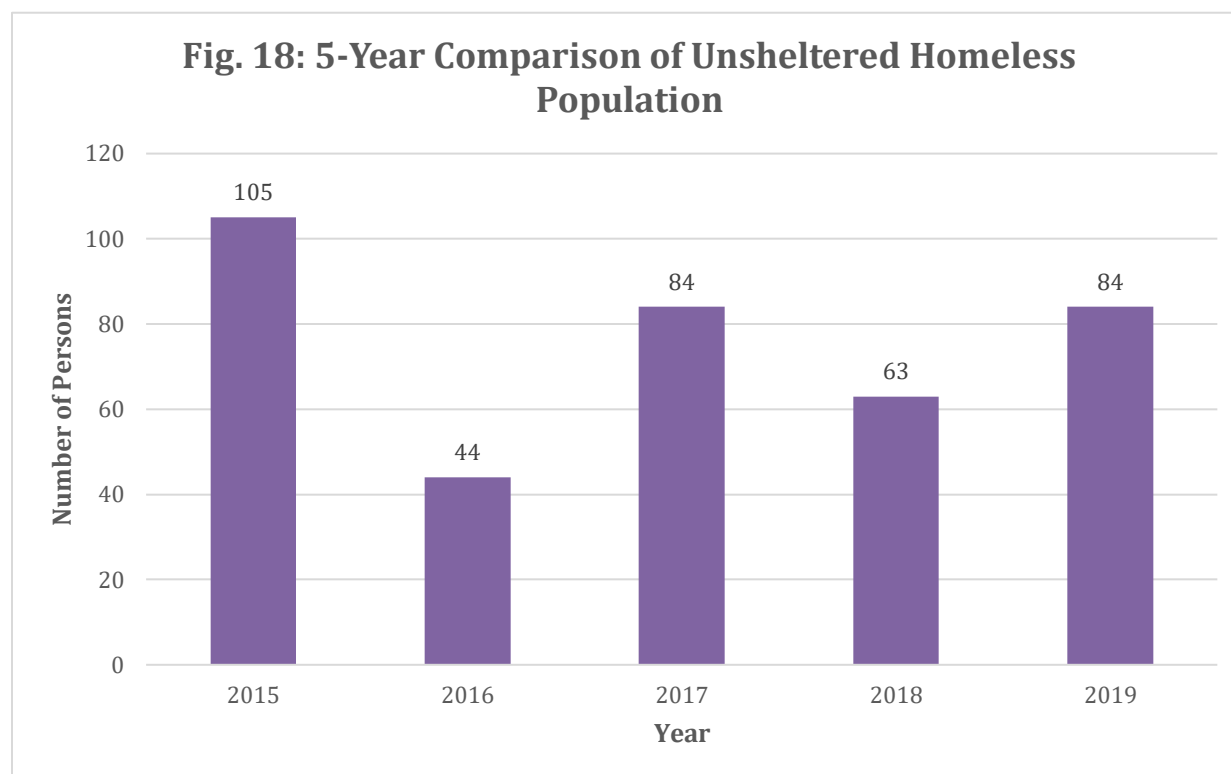
33% increase in persons since 2018

20% decrease in persons since 2015

Fig. 19: Unsheltered Homeless Households by Housing Situation

Number of Households (y-axis): 0 to 80

- Unsheltered:
  - Households With Adults and Children: 2
  - Households Without Children: 69
  - Households with Only Children: 0

Housing Situation (x-axis)

Legend:
- Households With Adults and Children
- Households Without Children
- Households with Only Children
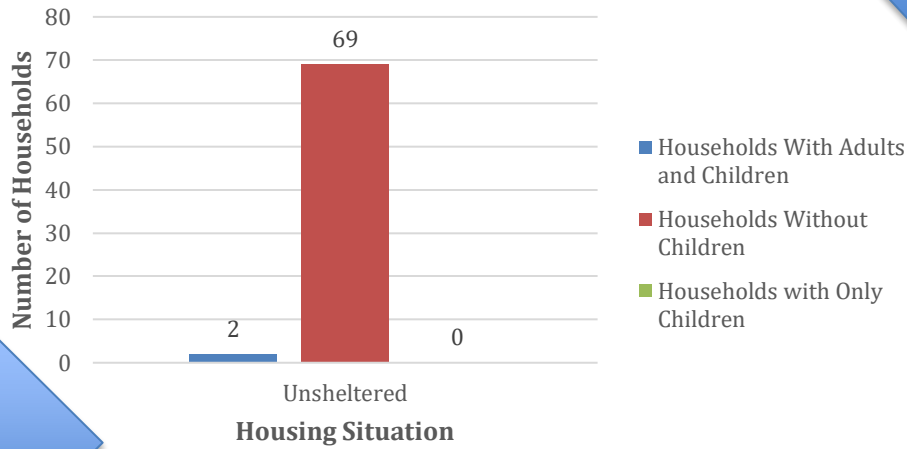
97.2% individuals 2.8% families

79.5% male, 20.5% female

35% 45-54 years old
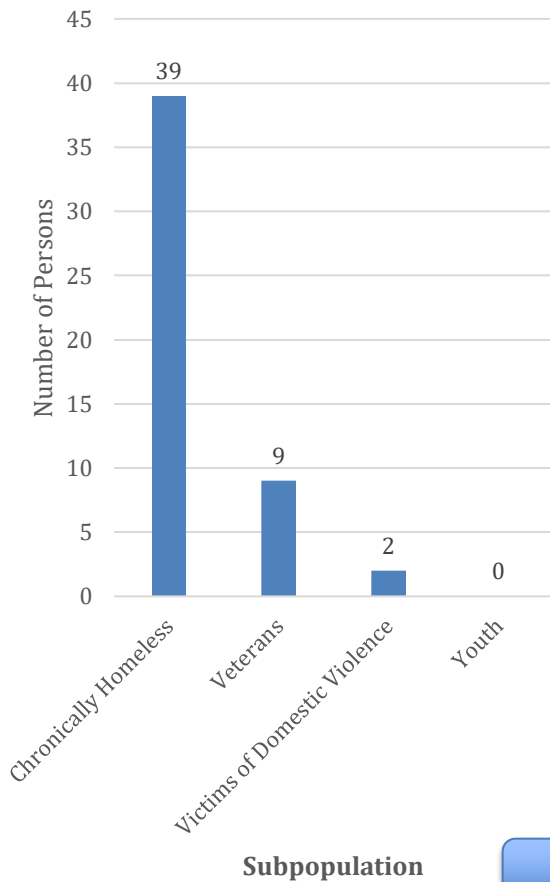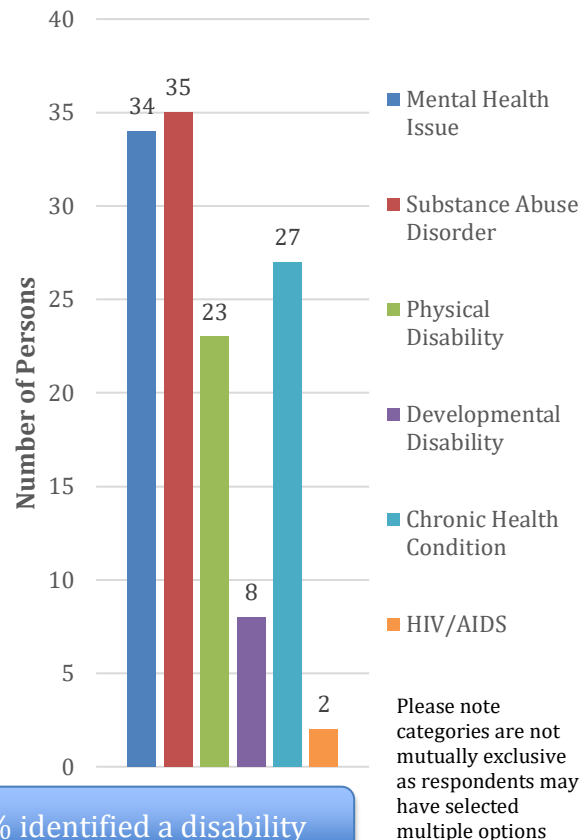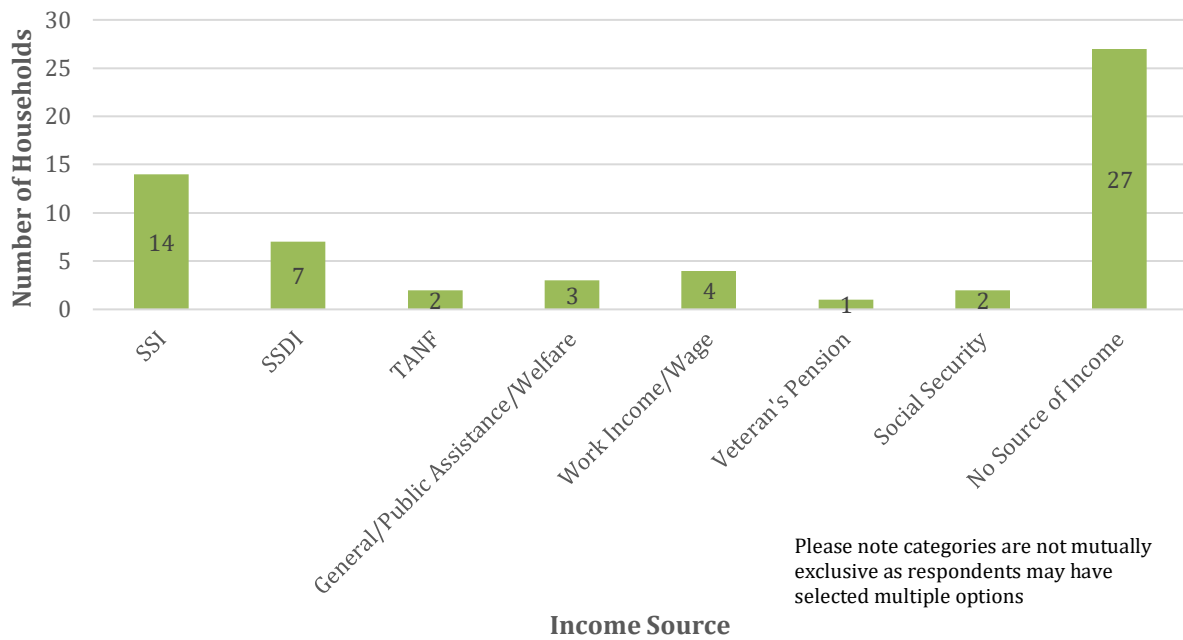
Fig. 20: Unsheltered Persons by Subpopulation

Number of Persons (y-axis): 0 to 45

- Chronically Homeless: 39
- Veterans: 9
- Victims of Domestic Violence: 2
- Youth: 0

Subpopulation (x-axis)

Fig. 21: Number of Unsheltered Persons by Disability Type

Number of Persons (y-axis): 0 to 40

- Mental Health Issue: 34
- Substance Abuse Disorder: 35
- Physical Disability: 23
- Developmental Disability: 8
- Chronic Health Condition: 27
- HIV/AIDS: 2

Legend:
- Mental Health Issue
- Substance Abuse Disorder
- Physical Disability
- Developmental Disability
- Chronic Health Condition
- HIV/AIDS

Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

76.5% identified a disability

Fig. 22: Income Source of Unsheltered Households by Housing Situation

Number of Households (y-axis)

Income Source	Number of Households
SSI	14
SSDI	7
TANF	2
General/Public Assistance/Welfare	3
Work Income/Wage	4
Veteran's Pension	1
Social Security	2
No Source of Income	27

Income Source

Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

Average Monthly Income is $393.48

Fig. 23: Length of Homelessness Among Unsheltered Households

Number of Households (y-axis)

Length of Homelessness	Number of Households
0 - 2 months	6
3 - 6 months	10
7 - 9 months	8
10 - 12 months	11
1 year - 3 years	21
More than 3 years	13

Length of Homelessness
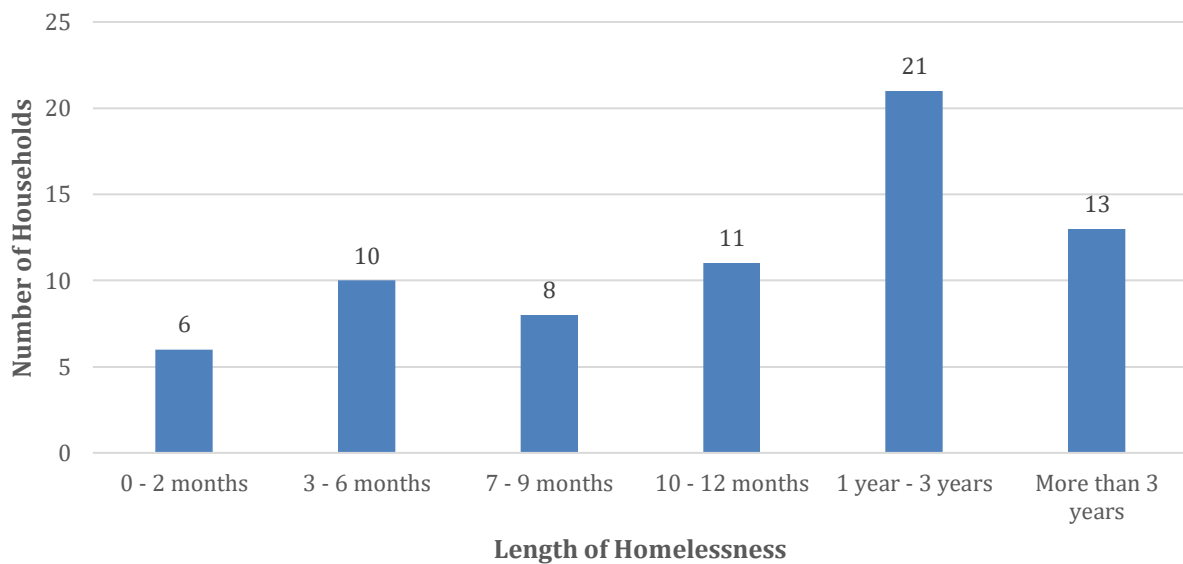
VI. Findings for Homeless Veterans

Veterans are defined as any person of the age of 18 who has served in any branch of the Armed Forces. For the purposes of the Point-in-Time Count, the veteran definition covers any person who has served including those who may not be eligible for veteran services through the U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs. 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. Many communities in New Jersey have also been working hard to end homelessness among our country's servicemen and women.

Fig. 24: 5-Year Comparison of Total Homeless Veteran Population by Housing Situation

6% decrease since 2018

45.2% decrease since 2015

Fig. 25: Number of Veteran Persons by Disability Type

Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

70.6% of homeless veterans identified a disability
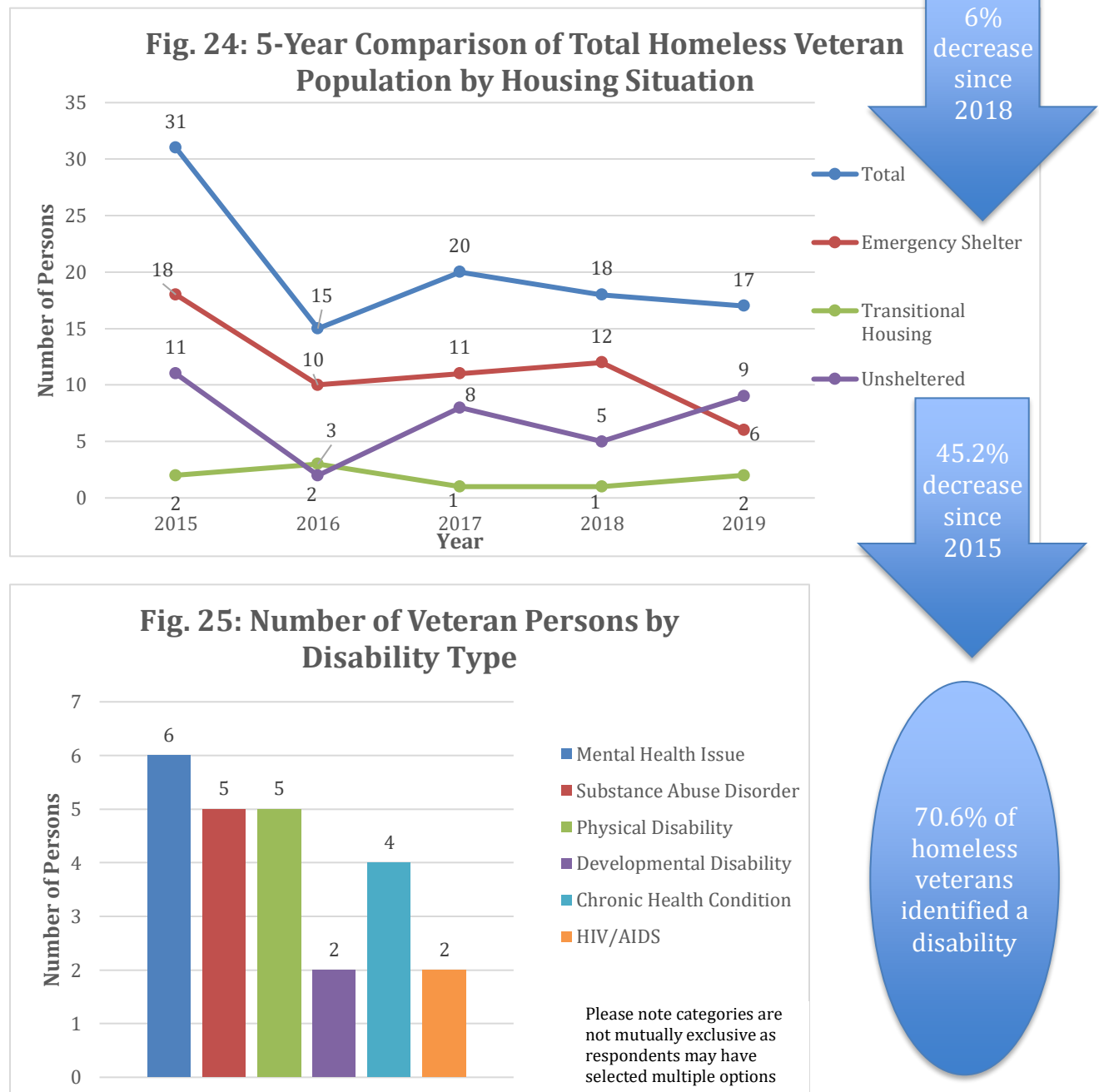
Average monthly income is $838.10

Fig. 26: Income by Housing Situation for Veteran Households

Number of Households (y-axis: 0–7)

- SSI: 3
- SSDI: 4
- Veteran's Pension: 1
- No Source of Income: 6

Income Source

Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

Fig. 27: Length of Homelessness Among Veteran Households

Number of Households (y-axis: 0–6)

- 0 - 2 months: 1
- 3 - 6 months: 4
- 7 - 9 months: 1
- 10 - 12 months: 4
- 1 year - 3 years: 2
- More than 3 years: 5
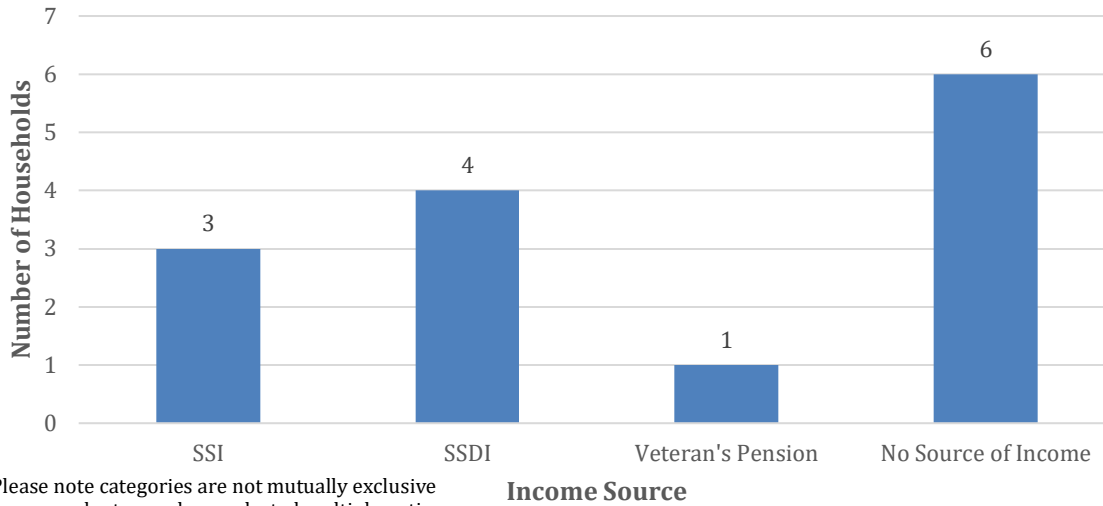
Length of Homelessness

Fig. 28: Episodes of Homelessness Among Veteran Households

Number of Households (y-axis: 0–14)

- 1 Episode: 12
- 2 Episodes: 1
- 3 Episodes: 2
- 4+ Episodes: 1
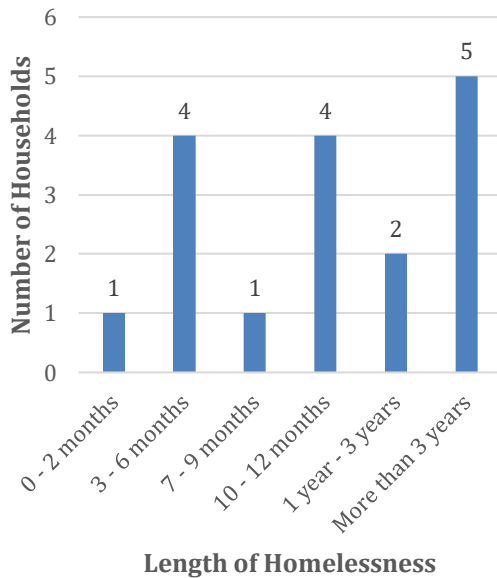
Number of Episodes
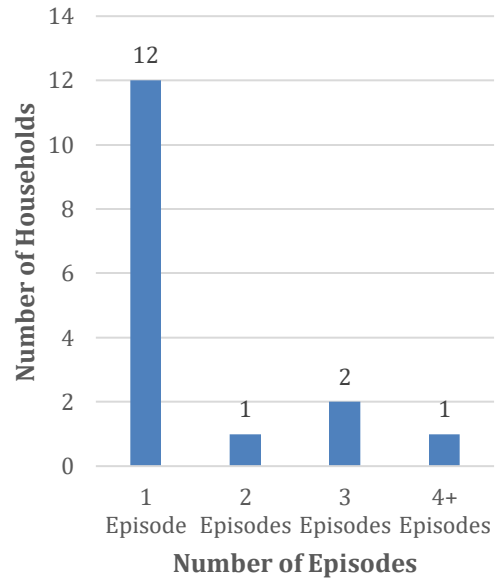
VII. Finding for Homeless Youth

Youth are defined as persons under the age of 25 who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian. This can include individual unaccompanied youth, youth only households of 2 or more youth presenting together as a household, and pregnant or parenting youth who are the legal guardians of one or more children. The United States Interagency Council has identified homeless youth as one of the priority population of focus in *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*. Many communities across Mercer are working to better understand the scope and needs of the Youth population experiencing homelessness and are working with community partners to end youth homelessness.
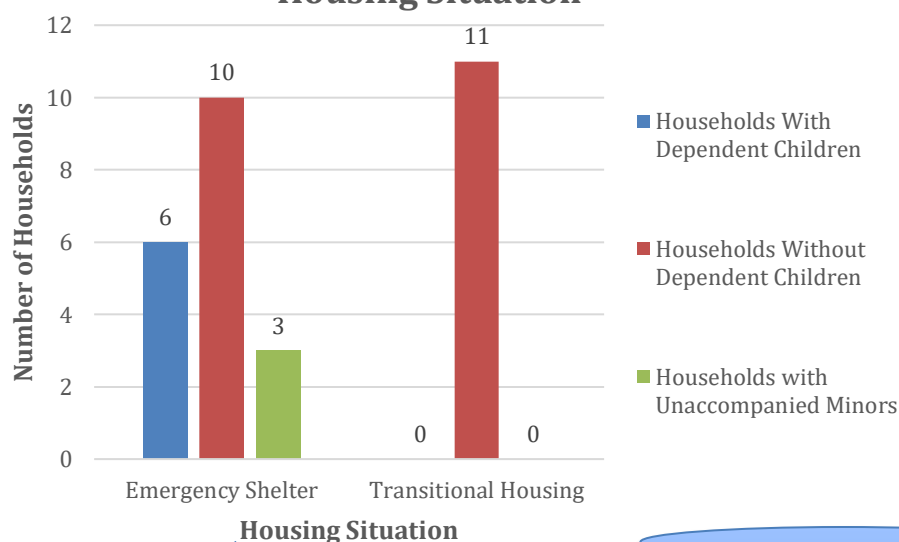
52.6% are male

Fig. 29: Number of Homeless Youth by Housing Situation
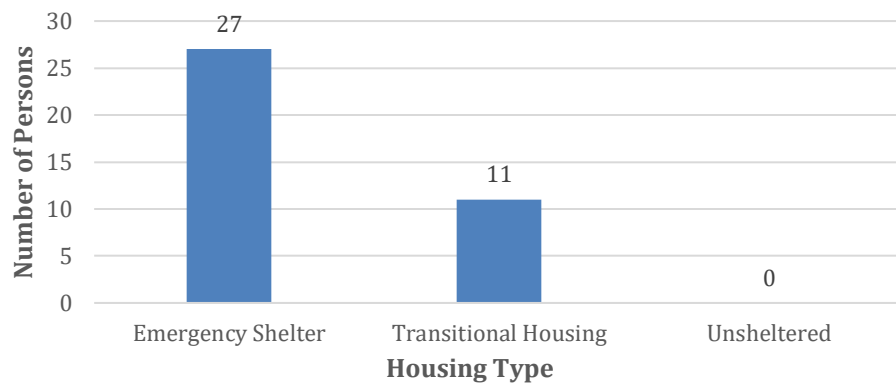
92.6% are Black/African American

74% of persons are over 18 yrs. old

Fig. 30: Homeless Youth Households by Housing Situation

Average Monthly Income is $658.28

50% of youth respondents identified a disability

Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options
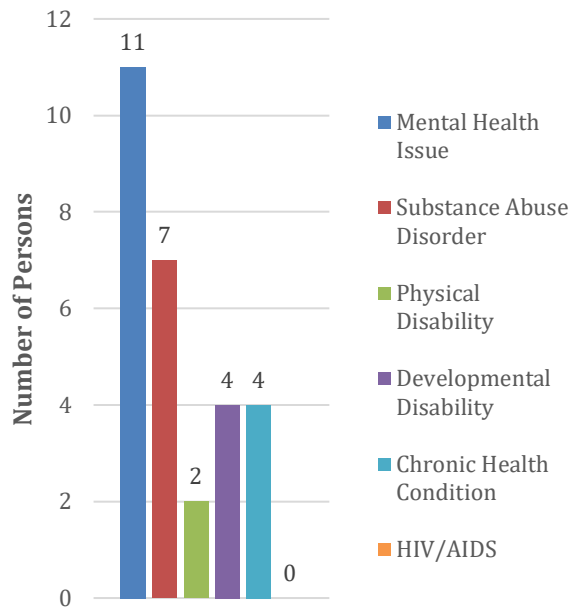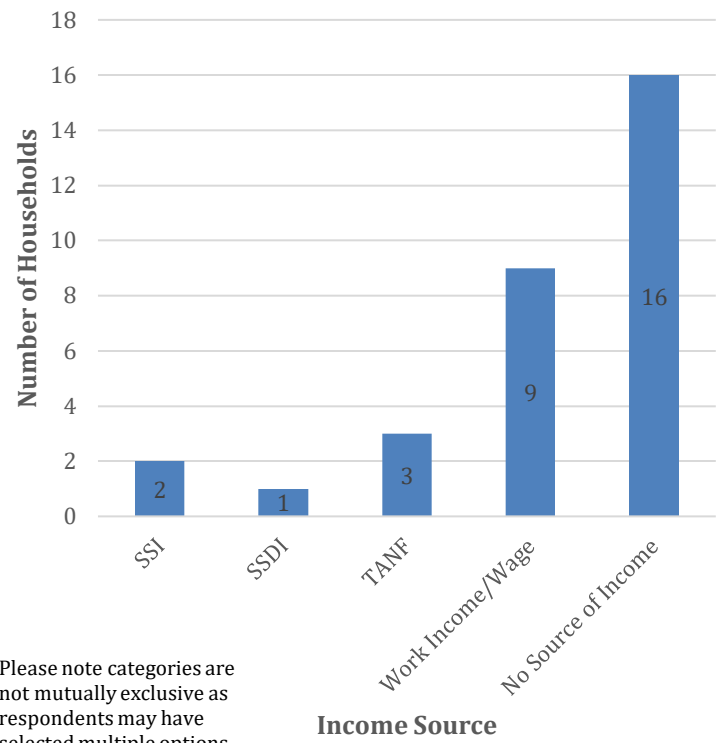
Fig. 31: Number of Youth by Disability Type

Fig. 32: Income Sources for Youth Households

Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

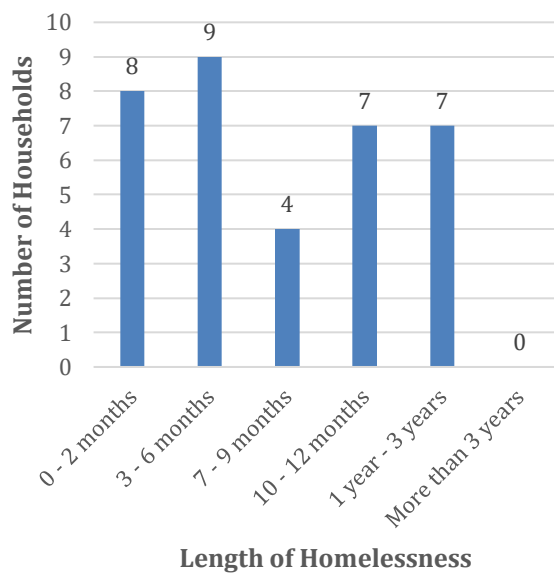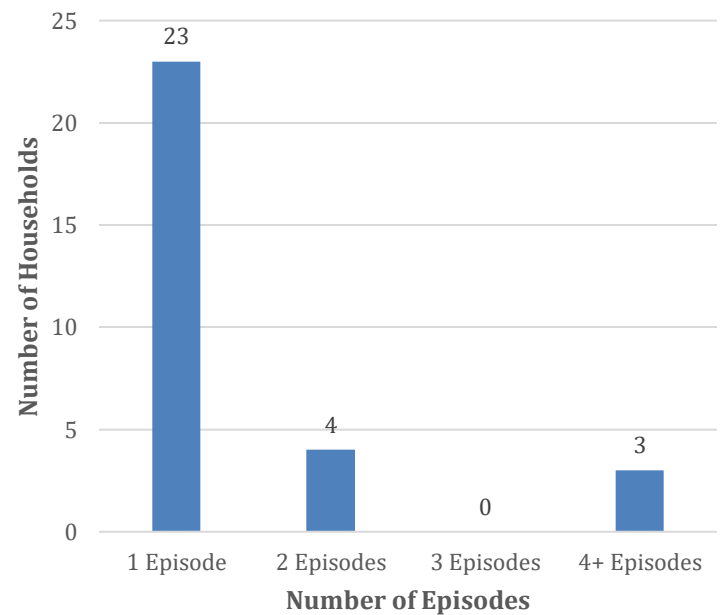## Fig. 33: Length of Homelessness Among Youth Households

Fig. 34: Episodes of Homelessness Among Youth Households

VIII. Findings for Victims of Domestic Violence

The 2019 Point in Time Count captured information for individuals and families "Fleeing" Domestic Violence. For the purposes of the Point-In-Time Count, Domestic Violence is defined as any household that is fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member, including a child, that has taken place in their home, or has created a situation in which the individual or family is afraid to return to their home.

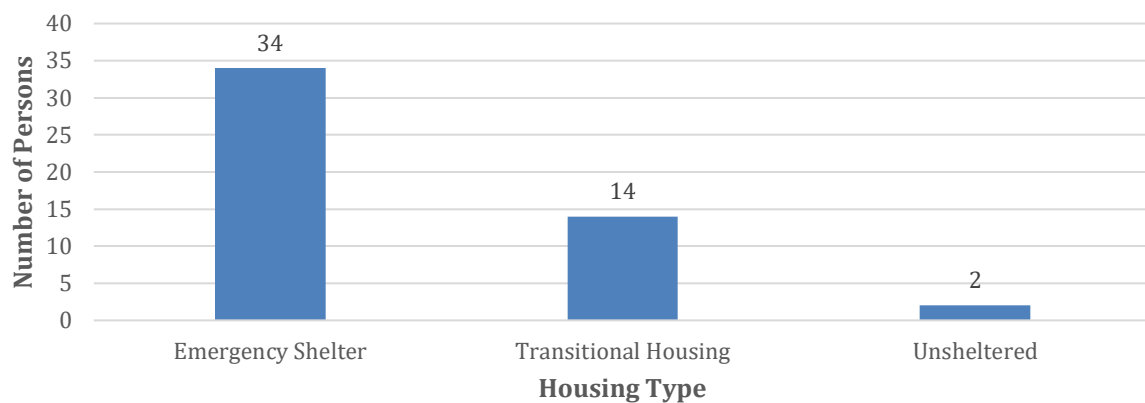Fig. 35: Number of Homeless DV Victims by Housing Situation

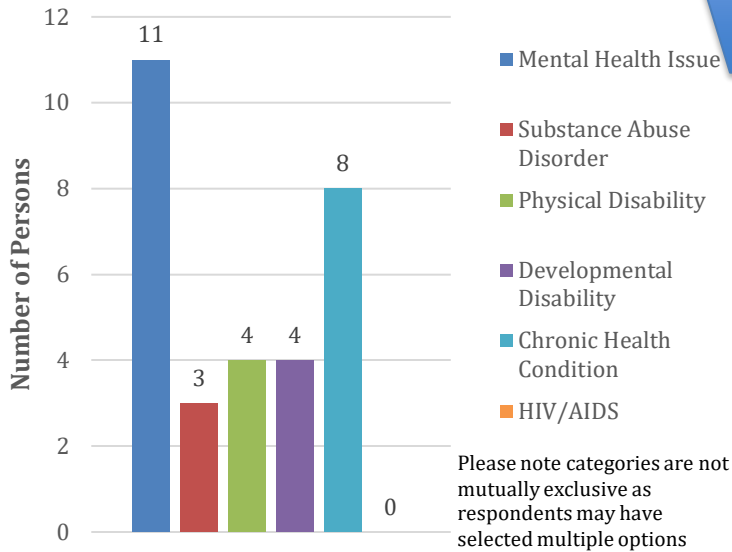Fig. 36: Homeless DV Households by Housing Situation

56% are households with children

74% are females

87.1% are Black or African American

Fig. 37: Number of DV Victims by Disability Type

Number of Persons

- Mental Health Issue: 11
- Substance Abuse Disorder: 3
- Physical Disability: 4
- Developmental Disability: 4
- Chronic Health Condition: 8
- HIV/AIDS: 0

32% were disabled

Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options
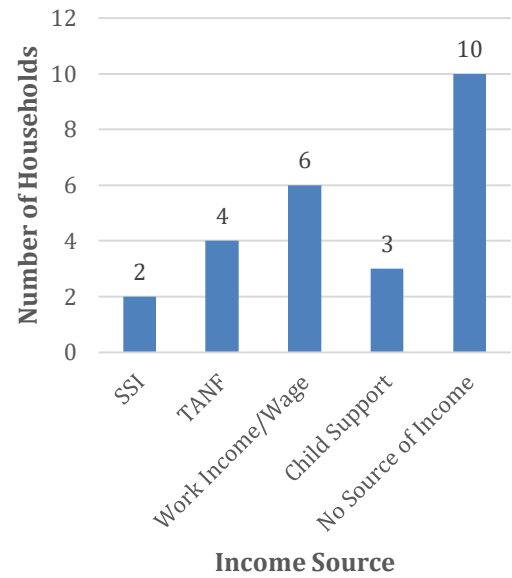
Fig. 38: Income Source for DV Victim Households

Number of Households

- SSI: 2
- TANF: 4
- Work Income/Wage: 6
- Child Support: 3
- No Source of Income: 10

Income Source

Fig. 39: Length of Homelessness Among DV Victim Households

Number of Households

- 0 - 2 months: 7
- 3 - 6 months: 8
- 7 - 9 months: 4
- 10 - 12 months: 3
- 1 year - 3 years: 3
- More than 3 years: 1

Length of Homelessness

Fig. 40: Episodes of Homelessness Among DV Victim Households

Number of Households

- 1 Episode: 12
- 2 Episodes: 4
- 3 Episodes: 2
- 4+ Episodes: 6
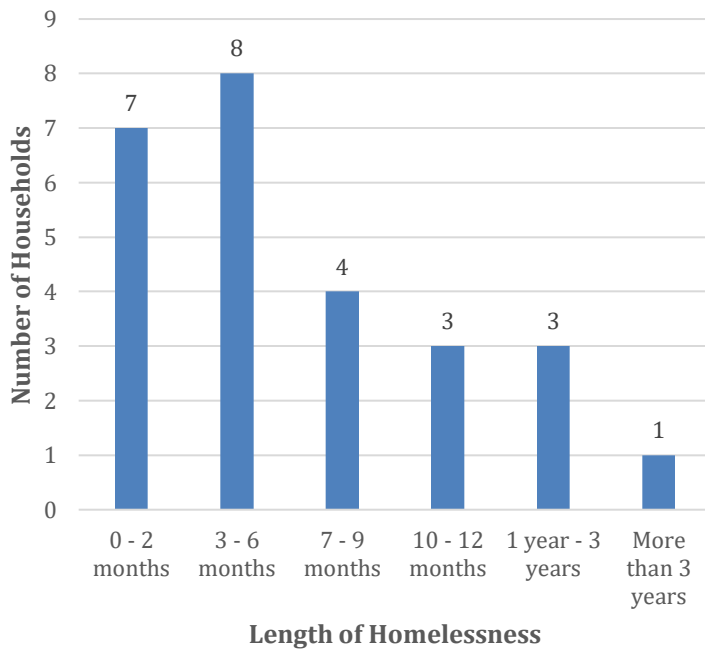
Number of Episodes
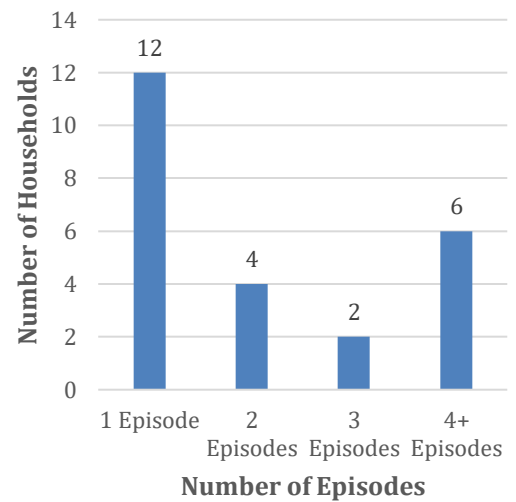
IX. Appendix A: Data Collection and Methodology

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. Mercer'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 their 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 2019 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.

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 2019 PIT Survey tool closely mirrors information collected in HMIS so that the data was comparable for important factors such as duration and episodes of homelessness, household characteristics, income, services needed, and factors contributing to homelessness. Agencies updated all HMIS data to accurately reflect household information 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 2015 to 2019. 2016 and 2018 were not HUD required full reporting years while 2015, 2017, and 2019 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 are based on the responses received, while all percentages are 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.

4. The Point in Time Count represents an attempt by communities across the state of New Jersey to capture a complete census of all persons experiencing homelessness both in shelters and on the street during a single night. While the count is coordinated as a single statewide event, each county across the state develops locally appropriate methodologies for conducting the count of unsheltered persons in the community. As such, there is variation of the scope and depth of the unsheltered count from community to community. However, the sheltered count is conducted in a uniform manner across the state and each community maintains a consistent process for completing the sheltered and unsheltered count from year to year.

5. Given the nature of the Point in Time Count as a one day count of the population experiencing homelessness, data collected on the racial and ethnic breakdown from the PIT is not fully comparable to U.S. Census Bureau data on the racial and ethnic population for the state of New Jersey. While there are limitations on comparing the PIT data, for purposes of examining racial and ethnic disparities, as a result of the single day count, a review of the sheltered population in the State of New Jersey over the course of a full year demonstrates similar trends as seen in the PIT data in which persons identifying as African American or Black, Native American and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander are over represented in the population experiencing homelessness.

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.

X. Appendix B: Survey Responses

**Where did you spend the night of January 22nd, 2019?**

Fig. A.1:Total Number of Households and Persons by Housing Type
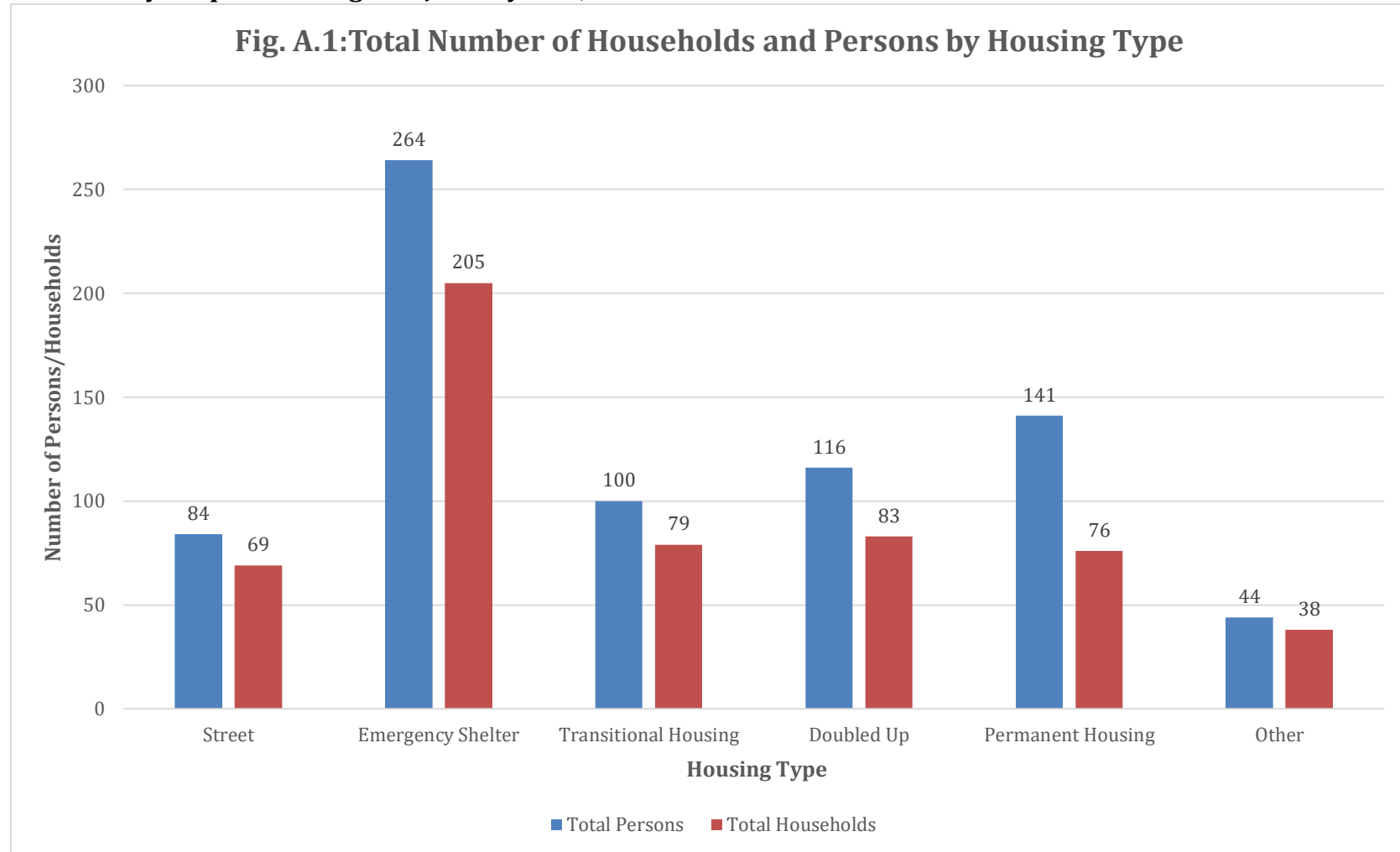
What was your location the night of the count?

| Fig. A.2: Number of Homeless Persons by Municipality on the Night of the Count	
Location Night of Count – Municipality	**Number of Persons**
Trenton	324
Ewing	77
Hamilton	15

*Does not reflect total homeless persons counted as some survey responses may not have included municipality
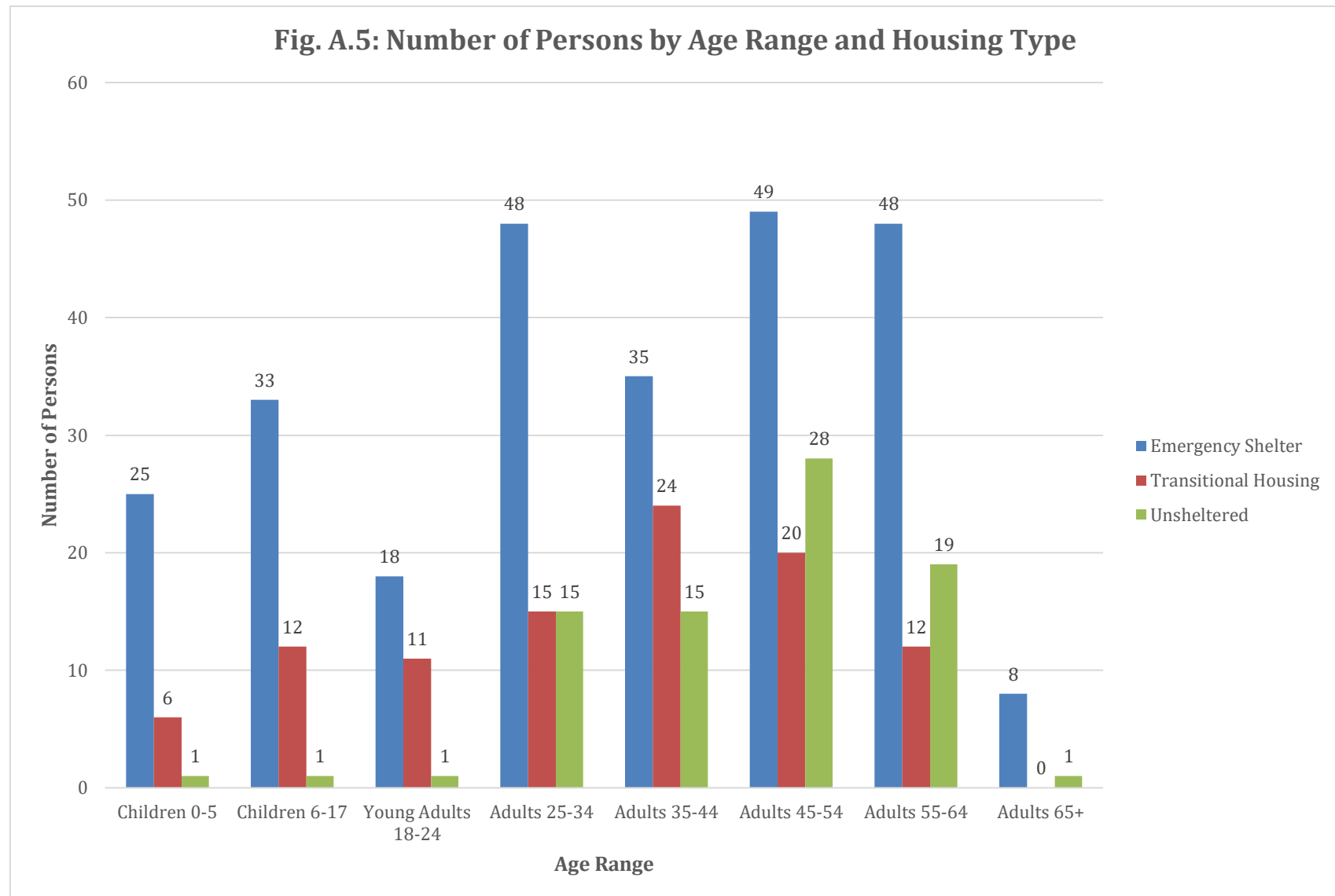
What is your total length of homelessness?

Fig. A.3: Homeless Households by Length of Homelessness and Housing Type
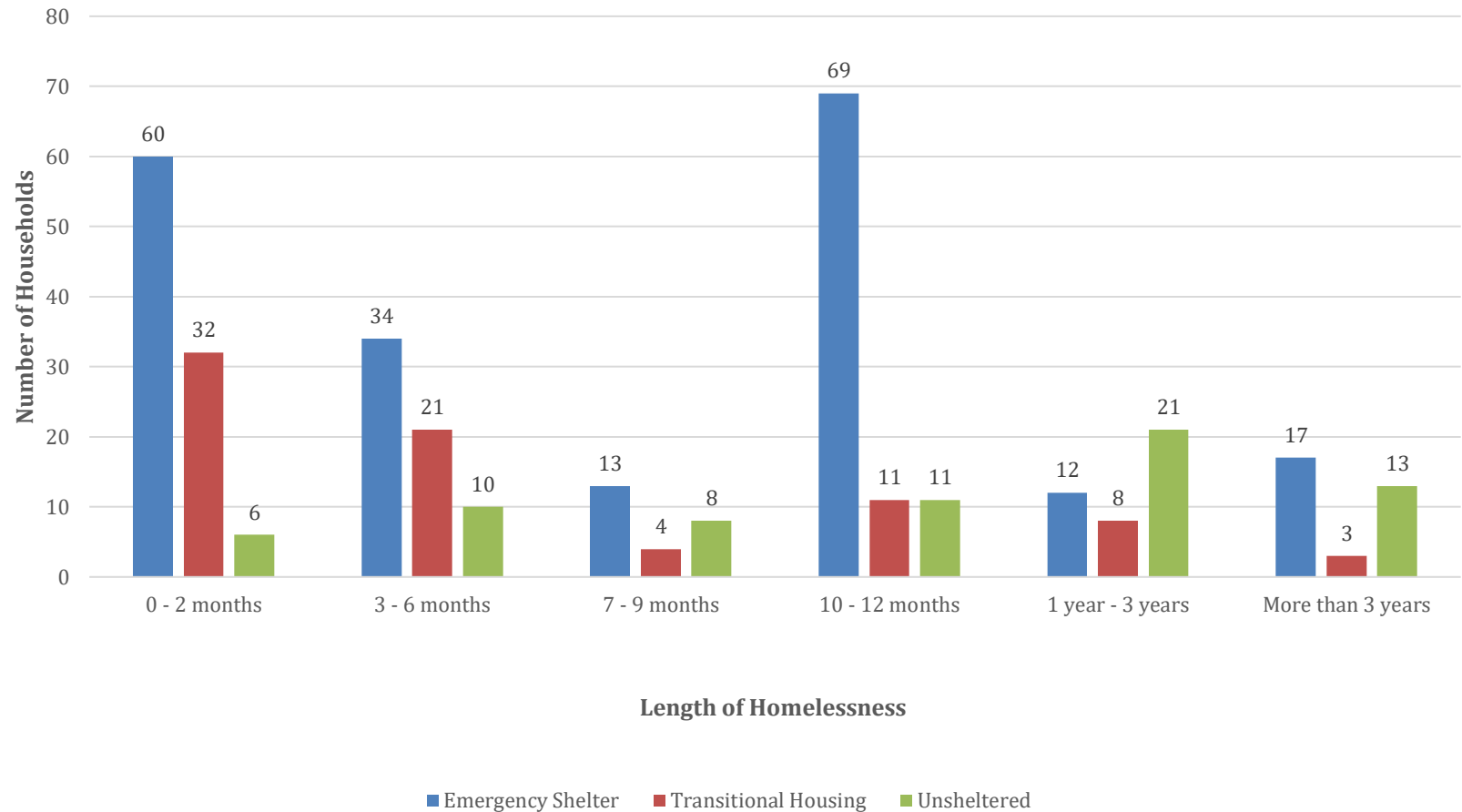
How many times have you been homeless in the past 3 years?

Fig. A.4: Homeless Househlds by Episodes of Homelessness by Housing Type
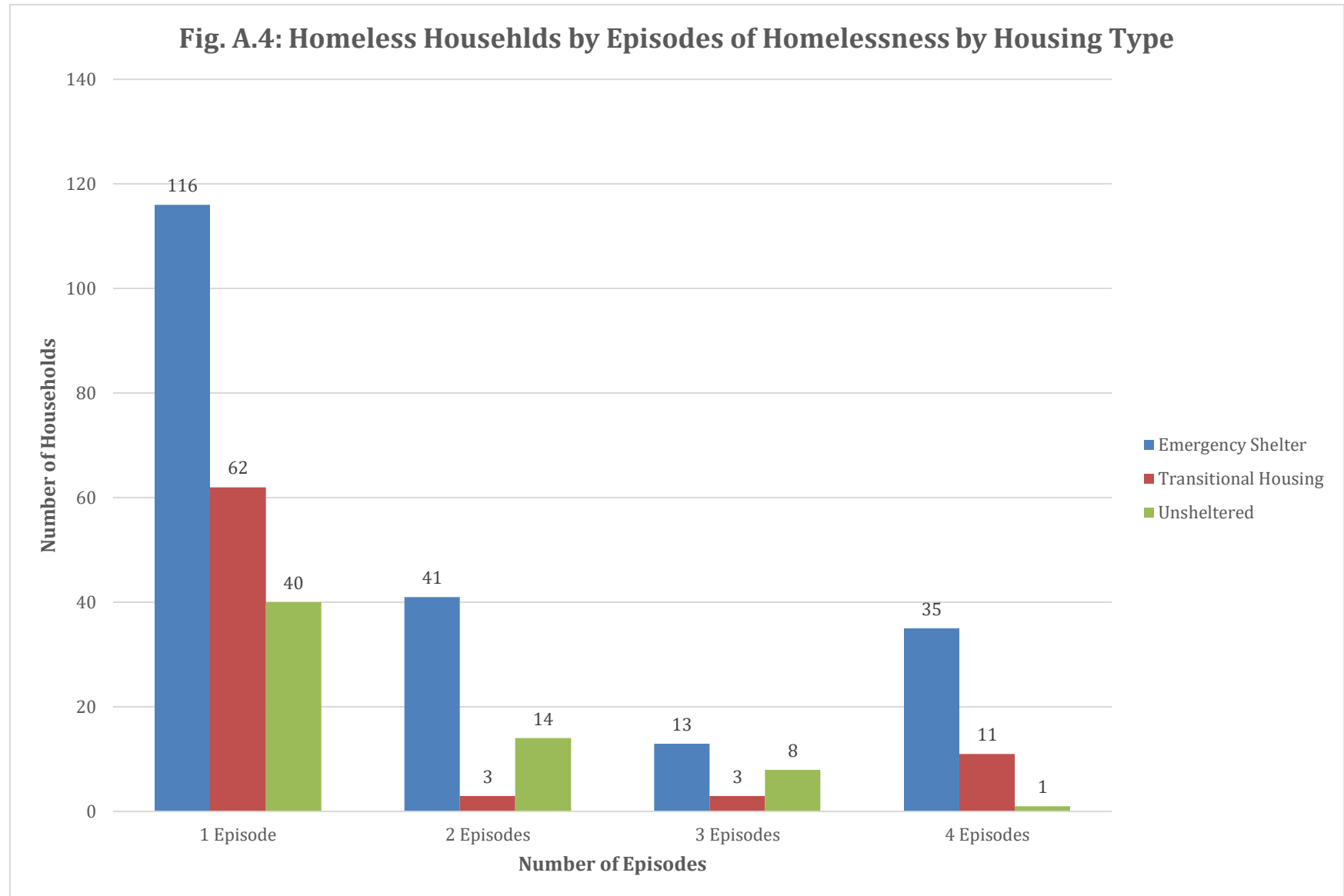
Who was homeless with you on the night of the Point in Time count?

Fig. A.5: Number of Persons by Age Range and Housing Type

Household Characteristics: Demographic Data – check all that apply to each person

Fig. A.6: Number of Persons by Gender and Housing Type

- Emergency Shelter
- Transitional Housing
- Unsheltered

Male: 174, 67, 66
Female: 90, 33, 17

X-axis: Gender (Male, Female, Transgender, Gender Non-Conforming)
Y-axis: Number of Persons
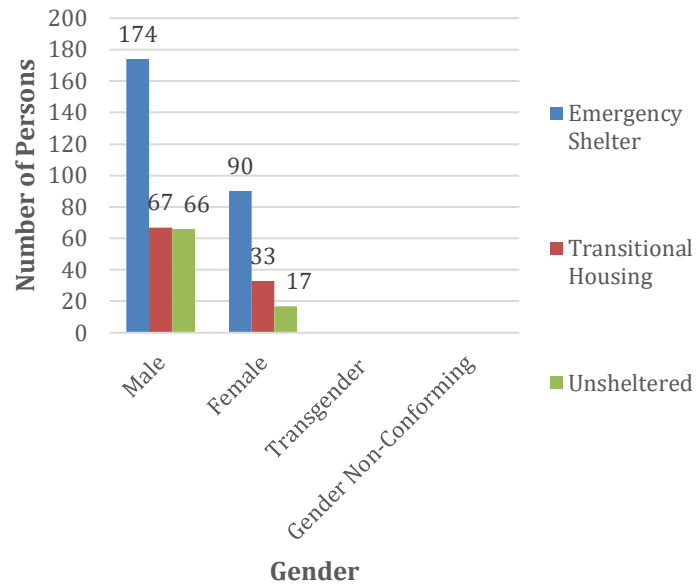
Fig. A.7: Number of Persons by Race and Housing Type

American Indian/Alaska Native: 1
Black/African-American: 262
Asian: 3
Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian: 1
White: 68
Multi-Racial: 4

X-axis: Race
Y-axis: Number of Persons
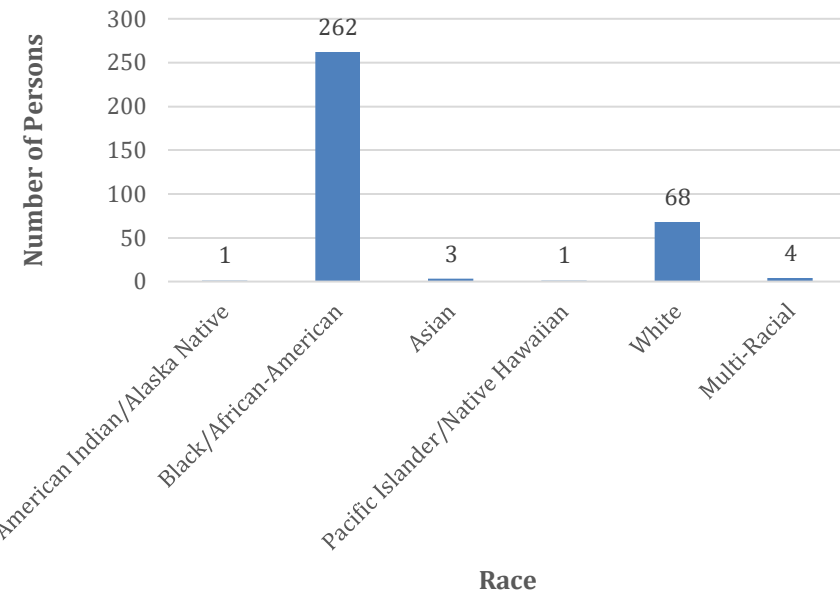
Fig. A.8: Number of Persons by Ethnicity and Housing Type

Hispanic: 93
Non-Hispanic: 341

X-axis: Ethnicity
Y-axis: Number of Homeless Persons
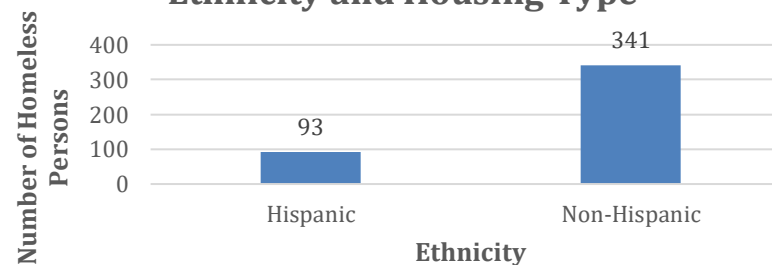
Household Characteristics: Subpopulations – check all that apply to each person
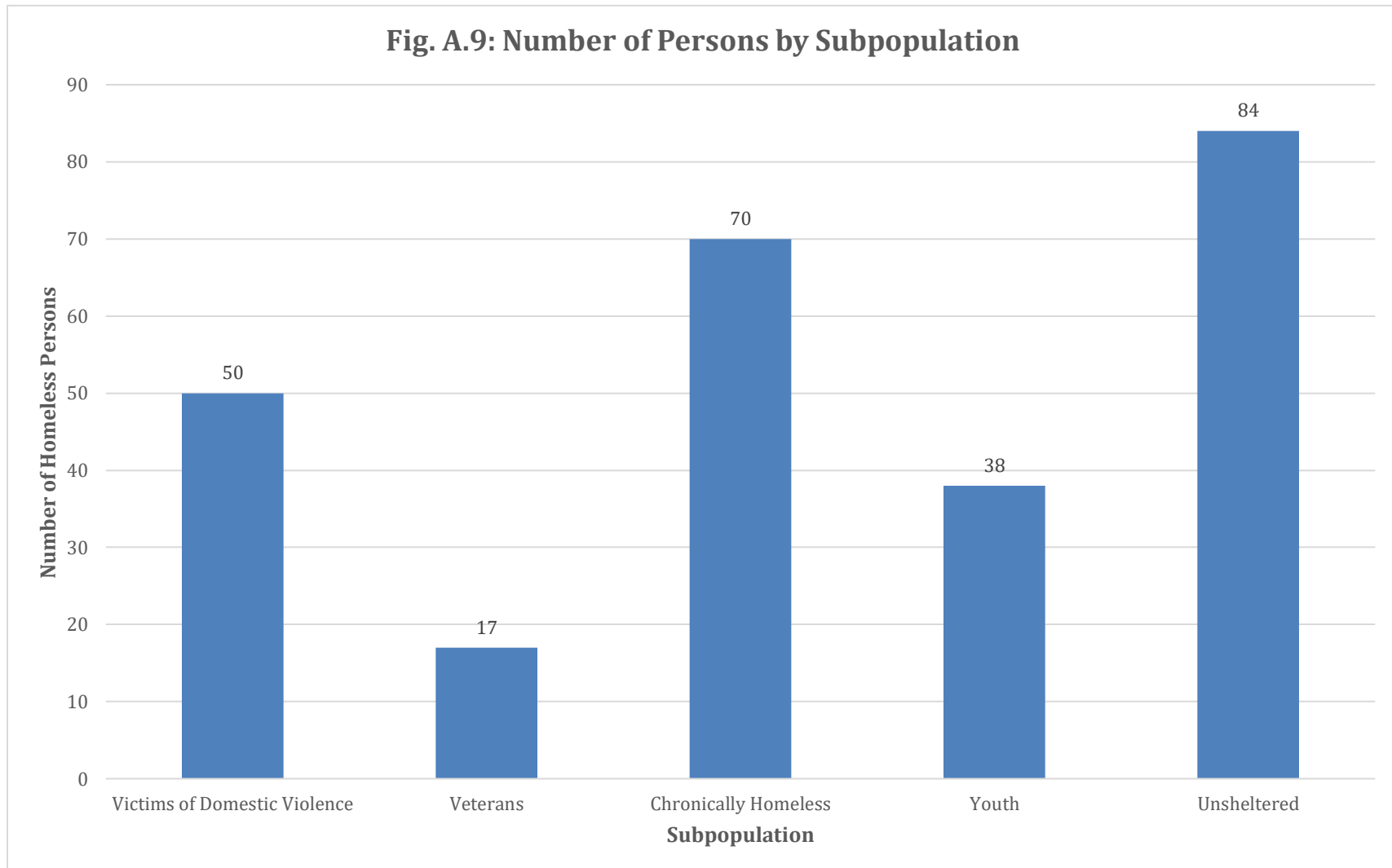
Fig. A.9: Number of Persons by Subpopulation

Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

Household Characteristics: Disabling Conditions – check all that apply to each person
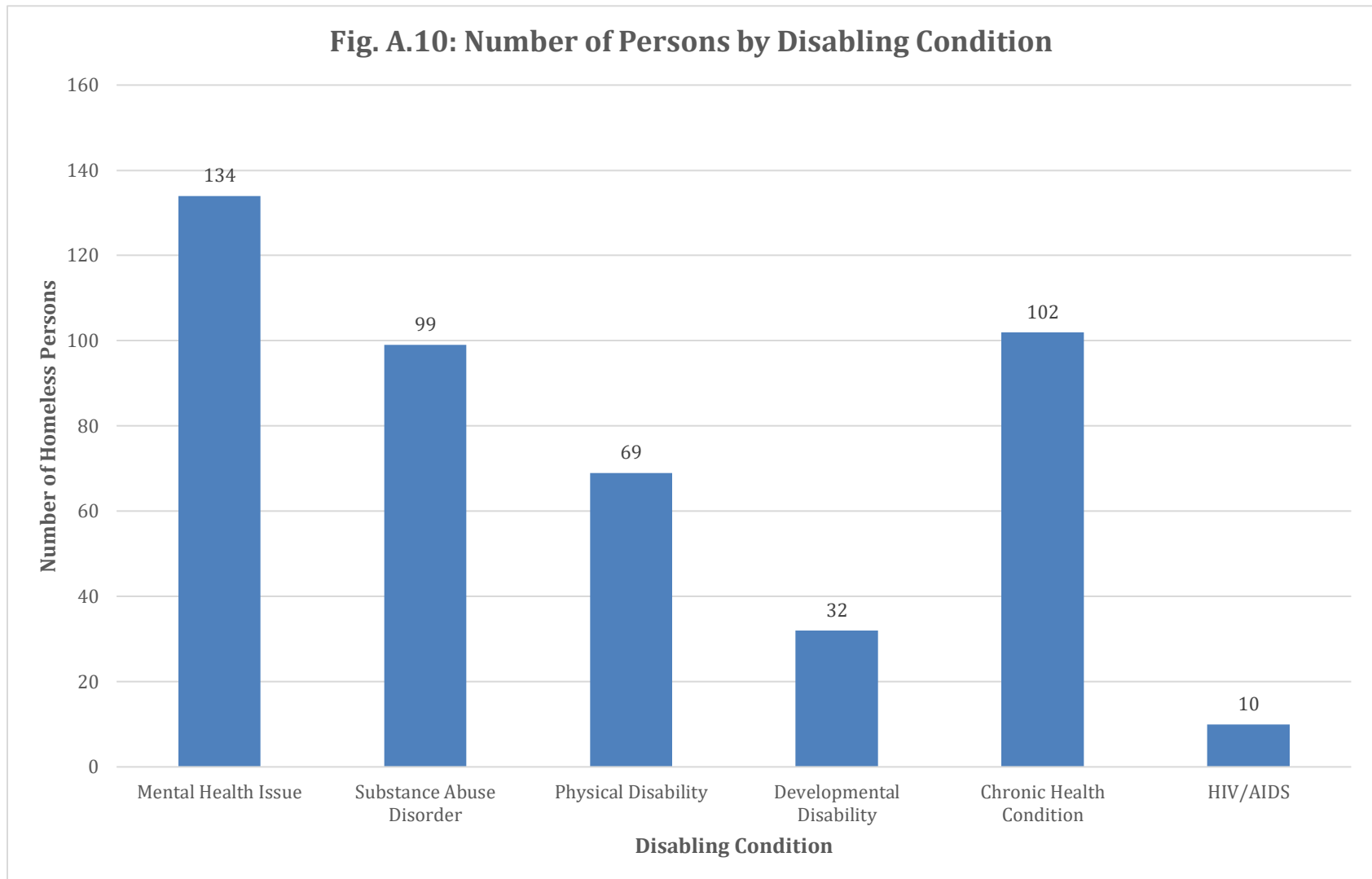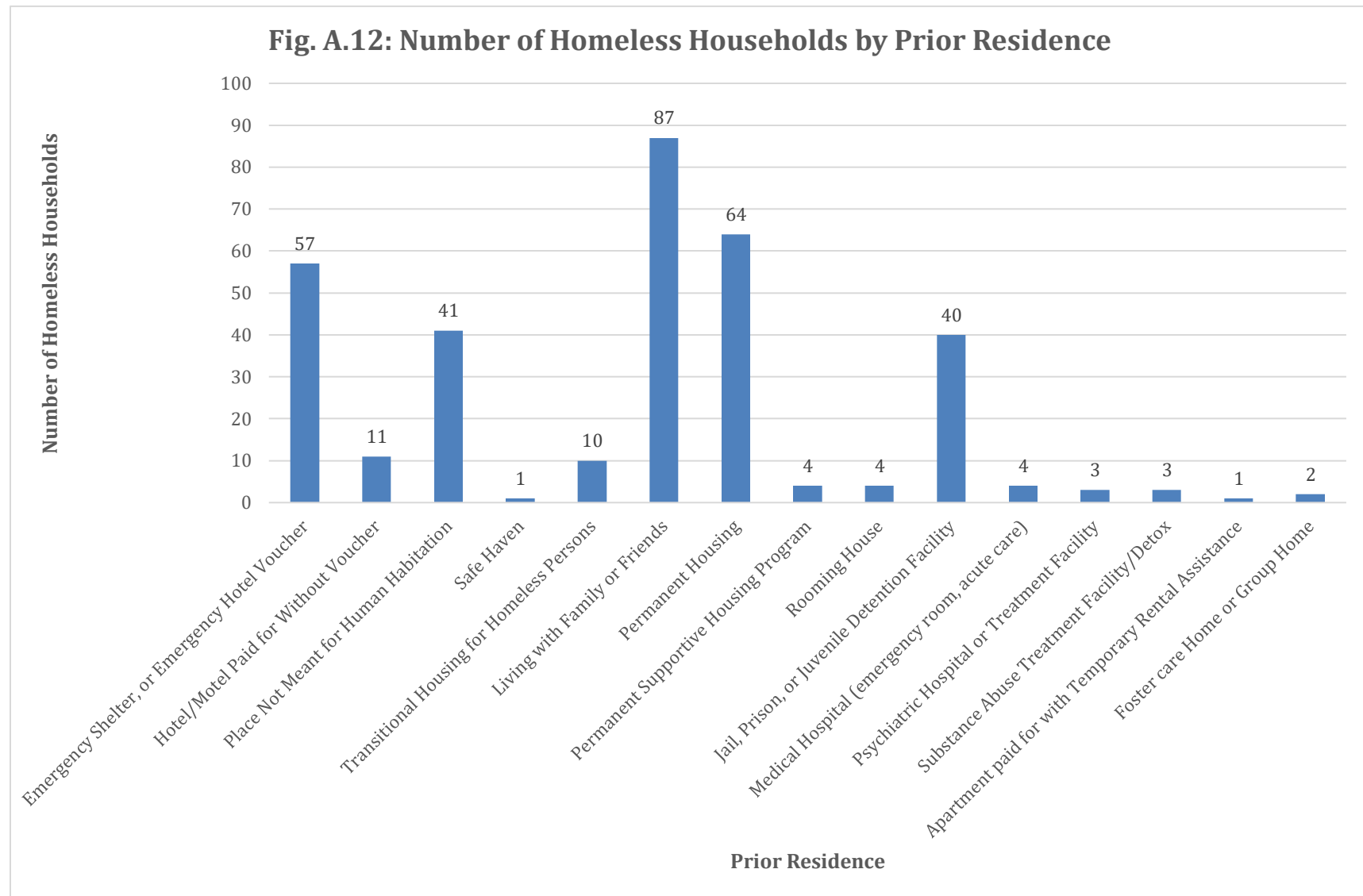

Fig. A.10: Number of Persons by Disabling Condition

Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

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

Fig. A.11. Number of Homeless Households by County or State of Last Permanent Address	
Last Permanent Address – County/State	**Number of Households**
Atlantic County	2
Burlington County	13
Camden County	11
Cumberland County	2
Essex County	5
Hudson County	3
Mercer County	**218**
Middlesex County	6
Monmouth County	4
Ocean County	3
Somerset County	1
California	2
Florida	1
Kentucky	1
Maine	1
New York	5
Pennsylvania	3

What was your residence prior to your current living situation?

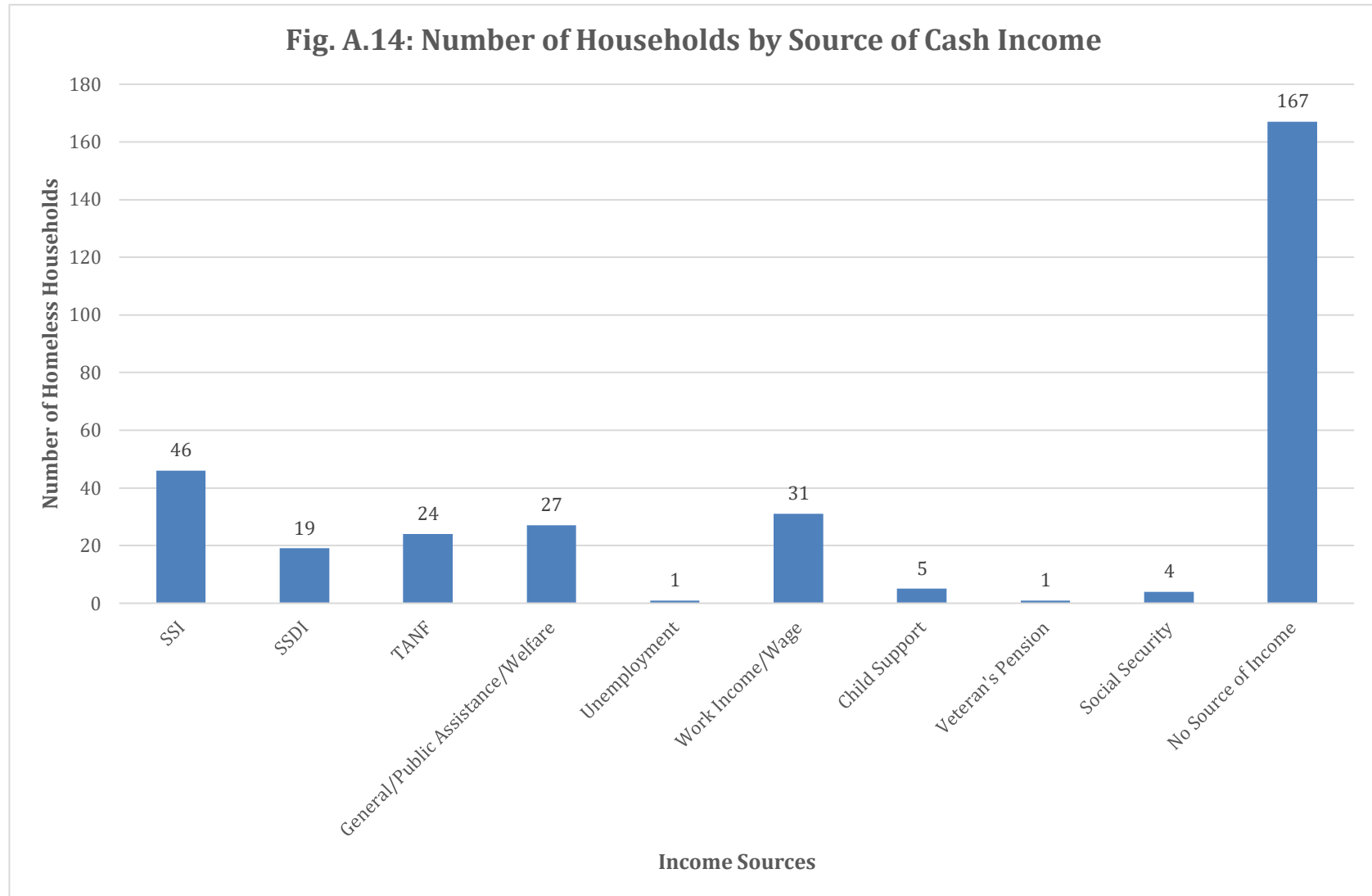Fig. A.12: Number of Homeless Households by Prior Residence

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


Fig. A.13: Number of Households by Cause of Homelessness
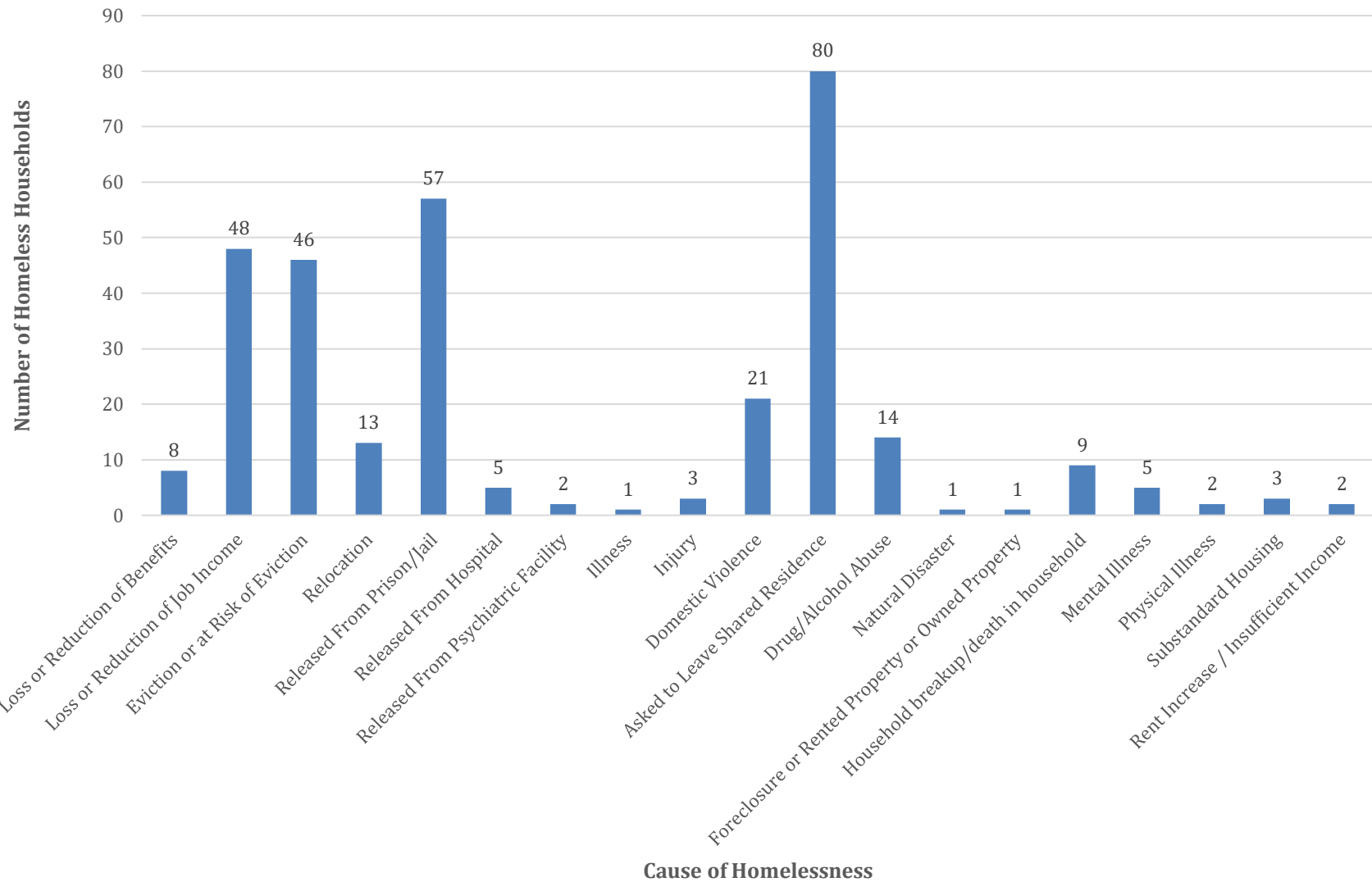
Which of the following sources of income do you, or anyone in your household, receive?

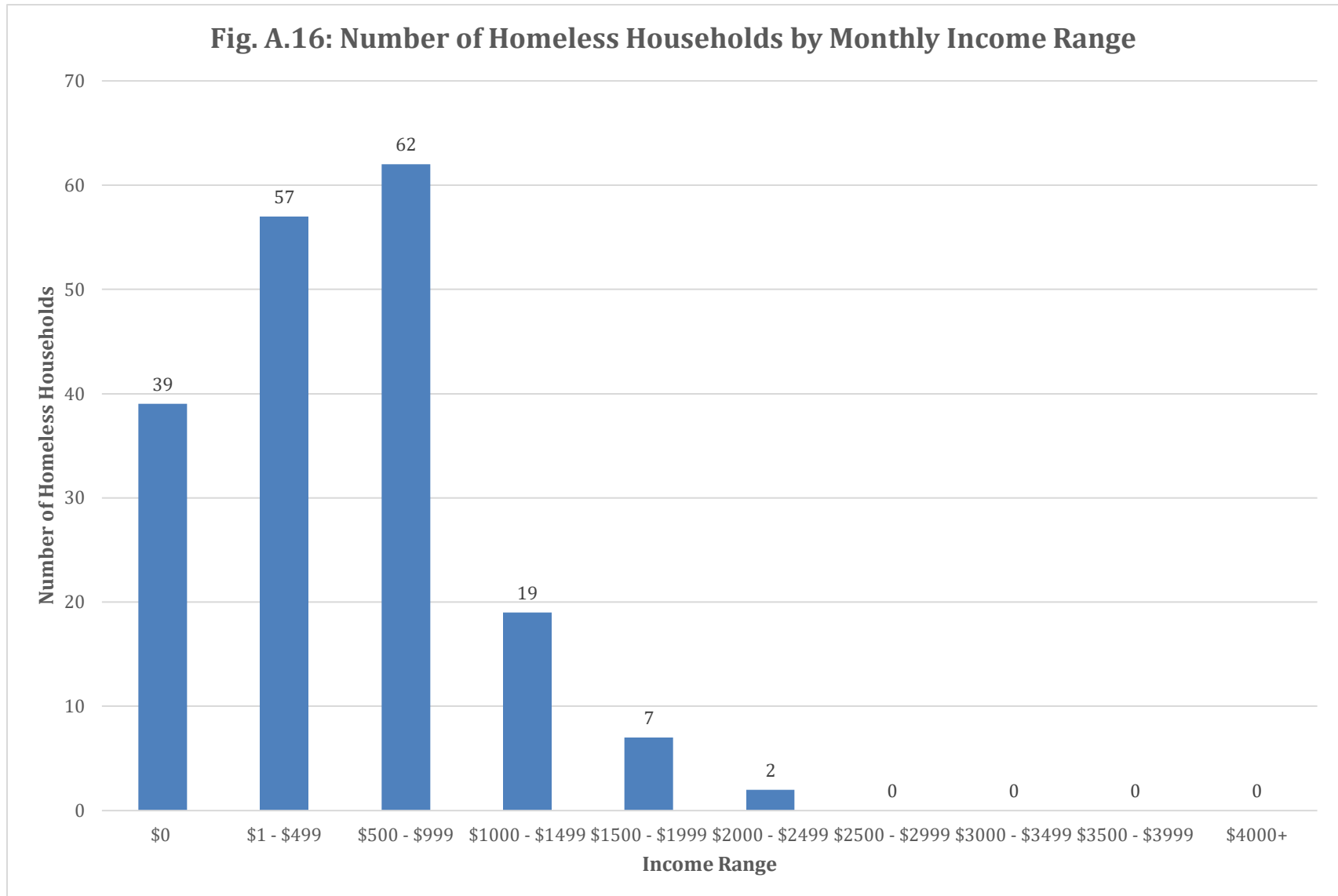Fig. A.14: Number of Households by Source of Cash Income

Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

Which of the following sources of non-cash benefits do you, or anyone in your household, receive?
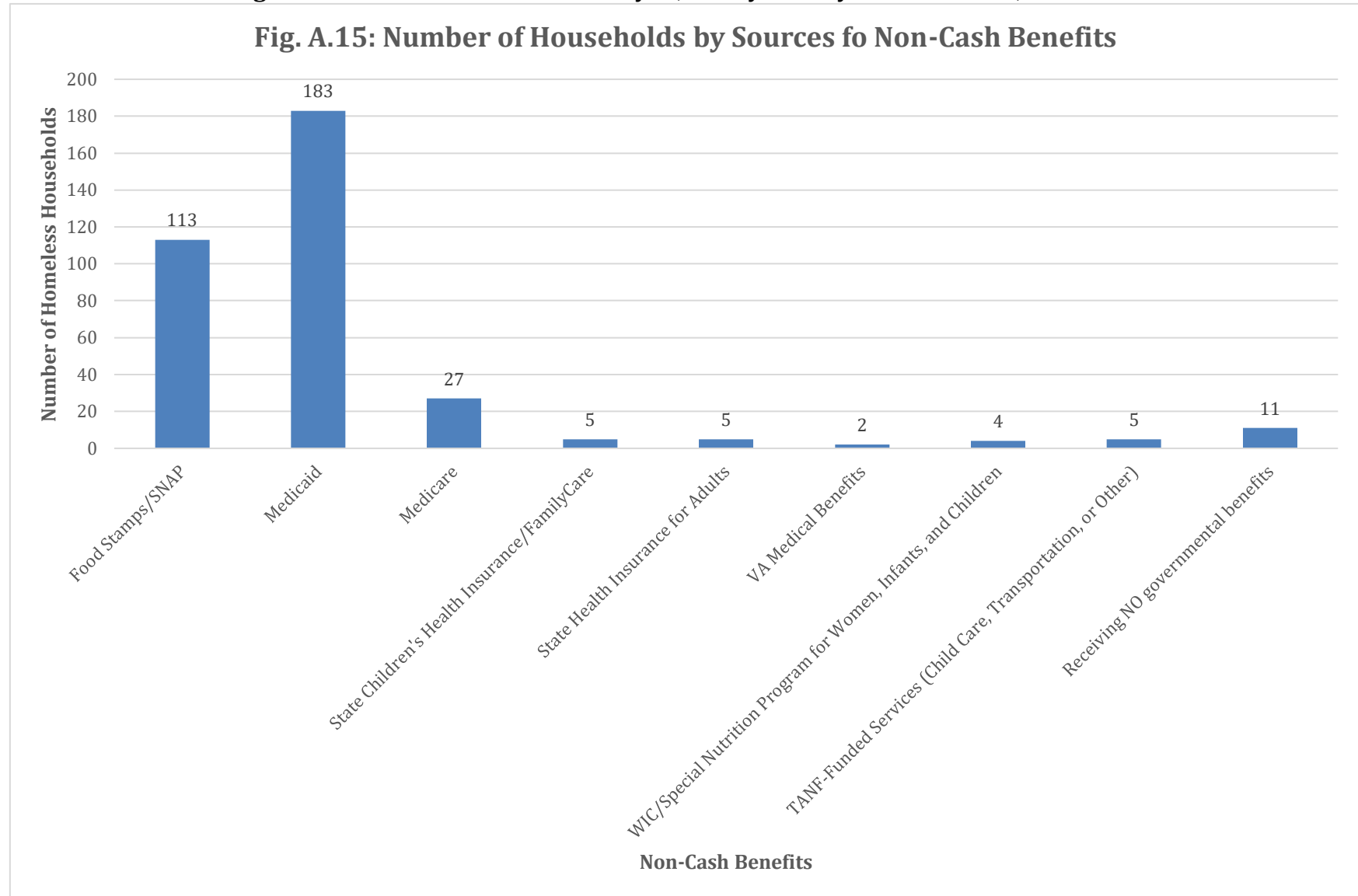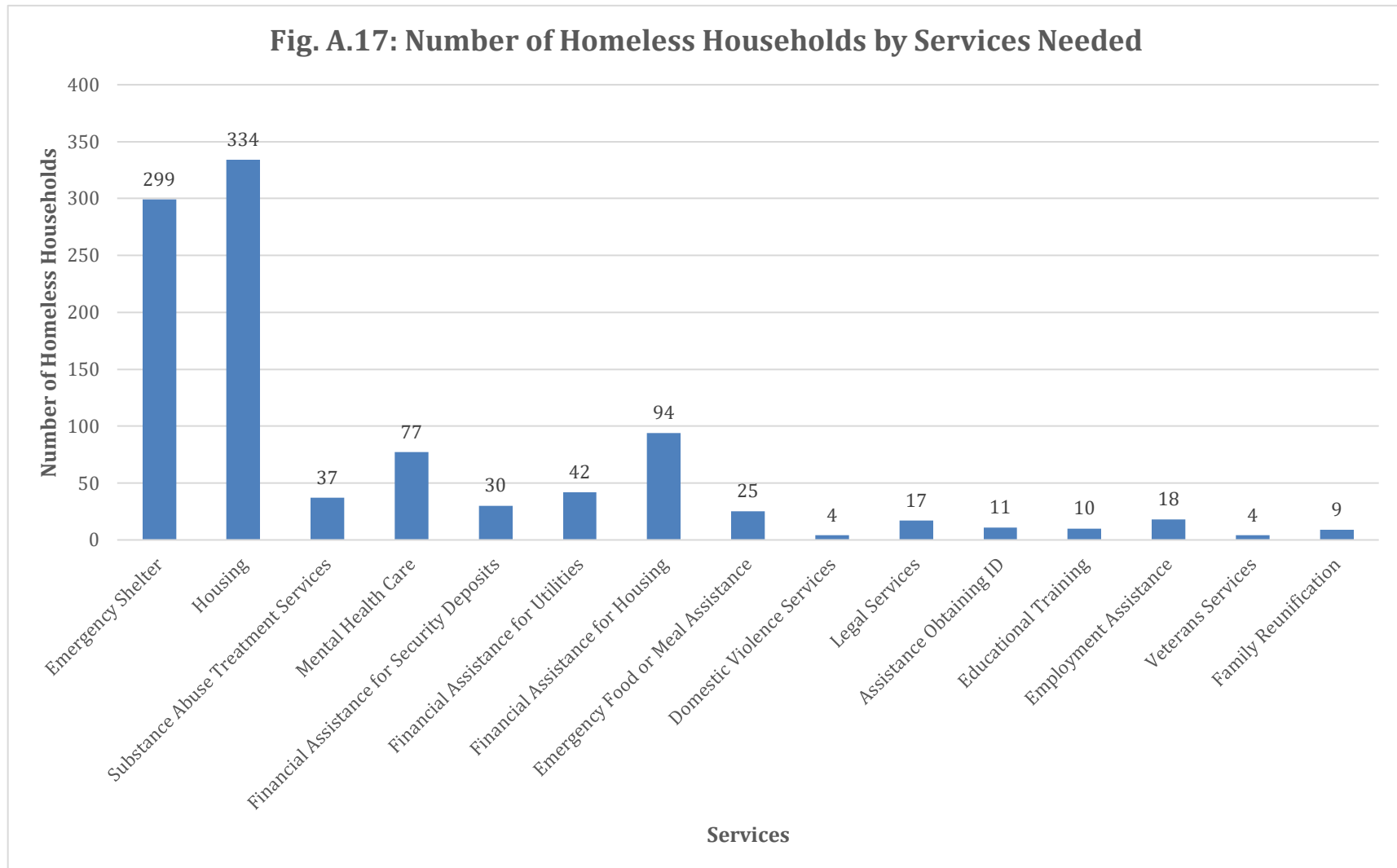
Fig. A.15: Number of Households by Sources fo Non-Cash Benefits

Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

What is your monthly household income?

Fig. A.16: 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.17: Number of Homeless Households by Services Needed

Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options