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NJ
2015
Counts!

Cape May County's 2015 Point-In-Time Count of the Homeless

February 3, 2015

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This report was prepared for
The New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency
by
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I. Introduction

NJ Counts 2015

NJ Counts 2015, New Jersey's annual Point-In-Time (PIT) Count of the Homeless, provides a statewide snapshot of homeless households in our communities; where they find shelter, what their needs are, and what factors contribute to making them homeless. The 2015 Count reveals important demographic and other information about families and individuals who were homeless on the night of Tuesday, January 27th, 2015 or Tuesday, February 3rd, 2015 (depending on the community, see limitations below), and was carried out with the help of government agencies, community-based organizations, and local volunteers.

In New Jersey, each County's count is planned, coordinated, and carried out locally, and the information gathered enables each community to better allocate housing resources and services in order to prevent and end homelessness. The PIT Count is the only opportunity throughout the year for most communities to take a comprehensive look at the total homeless population, and is especially crucial in assessing the needs of the unsheltered homeless.

Acknowledgements

Monarch would like to thank all Point-In-Time Coordinators, homeless service providers, agencies, and volunteers who participated in NJ Counts 2015. Monarch would also like to specifically thank Bergen County for providing a Spanish translation of the 2015 paper survey tool.

Finally, a special acknowledgement is given to all the respondents who were willing to share personal information about themselves and their households' experiences in order to help our communities better understand and assist the homeless.

Funding for coordinating New Jersey's 2015 Point-In-Time and producing this report was provided by New Jersey's Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA).

This Report

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

1. Total homeless population;
2. Those experiencing chronic homelessness (families and individuals that have been homeless for a year or longer, or who have experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years, and have a disabled head of household); and

3. Unsheltered families and individuals;

The structure of this report is intended to provide not only an overall snapshot of the homeless population counted in the Point-In-Time, but also to focus attention on the homeless subpopulations that are the most in need, and those that represent federal funding priorities set forth by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

In addition to the main findings presented in the body of this report, Appendix A includes charts illustrating the responses to all survey questions that were part of the 2015 Point-In-Time Count.

II. Data Collection and Methodology

Requirements for the Count

As part of its Continuum of Care (CoC) application for homelessness funding, HUD requires that jurisdictions across the nation conduct a statistically reliable and unduplicated count of the homeless for one overnight period during the last 10 days of January. New Jersey's Continuums of Care (regional networks of organizations, agencies, and community stakeholders that plan local efforts to help the homeless) conduct an annual count of sheltered homeless persons (i.e. persons in emergency shelter, transitional housing for the homeless, and Safe Haven programs) and at least a biennial count of unsheltered homeless persons. 2015 was a HUD-required full count year.

In their Point-In-Time Count, CoCs must count and report all individuals and families who meet the criteria in paragraph (1)(i) of the homeless definition in 24 CFR 91.5 of HUD's Homeless Definition Rule on the night designated for the count. This includes individuals and families who are:

- **Sheltered**, or "living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangement (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals)," or
- **Unsheltered**, "with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground."

Because this report focuses on those respondents who meet HUD's definition of homeless, it does not include information about those who may be at risk of homelessness, precariously housed, or considered homeless under other federal statutes. Persons who, on the night of the count, were living doubled up with another household, living in illegal or overcrowded units, being discharged from a jail or health facility with no subsequent

residence, scheduled to be evicted, or paying for its own motel unit were not considered homeless. All survey information collected for respondents who were at risk of homelessness or precariously housed was preserved and shared with each community for local planning purposes, but is not included in this report unless otherwise noted.

Data Collection Methods

Monarch Housing Associates provided each of New Jersey's 21 counties with in-person training, online video and print training guides, a practice online survey tool, and technical assistance to aid in the data collection process for New Jersey's 2015 Point-In-Time Count. Point-In-Time Coordinators in each county disseminated PIT training materials and helped facilitate local planning around implementation of the PIT count in their communities.

For the second year, the count of homeless persons who were sheltered on the night of the point in time was primarily taken from New Jersey's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), while the count for the unsheltered and those sheltered by non-HMIS programs was conducted using a Paper Survey tool, personal interviews, and agency client records. This strategy was designed in accordance with HUD guidance regarding conducting both sheltered and unsheltered Point-In-Time Counts.

The 2015 PIT Survey tool closely mirrors information collected in HMIS so that the data was comparable for important factors such as household characteristics, income, services needed, and factors contributing to homelessness. Agencies updated all HMIS data to accurately reflect the night of the count, and those with programs that were non HMIS-participating submitted information from interviews utilizing the Paper Survey tool through SurveyMonkey.

Limitations

1. HUD requires a count of sheltered homeless persons and families annually, but only a biennial count of those who are unsheltered. Even though New Jersey conducts both a sheltered and unsheltered count each year, the comprehensiveness of the unsheltered count may be influenced during the non-HUD required full count years. This report includes comparison data from 2011 to 2015. 2012 and 2014 were not HUD required full reporting years while 2011, 2013 and 2015 were.
2. The winter of 2014 to 2015 was particularly cold, with parts of New Jersey seeing significant snow accumulation. NJ Counts 2015 was originally scheduled to take place Tuesday, January 27th, 2015. Unfortunately, there was a blizzard predicted for the night of the PIT, which led to about half of the Counties in the State postponing the PIT activities to the following week, Tuesday, February 3rd, 2015. This weather led to half the communities counting the households that were homeless on the night of January 27th and the other half counting those that were homeless on the night of February 3rd. Besides leaving the date of the count inconsistent, this winter weather forced many

communities to set up emergency warming stations or shelters for the unsheltered. While this means that many more people are able to sleep in a warm place, it may skew Point-In-Time data to show fewer unsheltered households than are actually present in communities on a regular basis.

3. The information presented in this report is based on survey interviews and agency HMIS records. In some cases, survey respondents did not answer every question completely, and homeless provider agencies did not report all client information on the night of the count. For this reason, all charts presented in this report will be based on the responses received, while all percentages will be based on the total households or individuals served and may not equal 100% in each category due to possible missing data.
4. Because the Point-In-Time Count represents only one night during the last ten days of January, it is widely accepted that the PIT will undercount the overall homeless population. Undercounting may occur due to difficulty finding those living on the street, incomplete information for people who do not agree to complete the survey, a shortage of volunteers to cover a geographic area, or homeless persons choosing not to seek housing services on the night of the count. This data should not be viewed as a comprehensive measurement of all families and individuals who experience homelessness throughout the year, but rather as a minimum number of persons who experience homelessness in New Jersey on a given night.

De-duplication

Monarch Housing Associates collected and merged all HMIS and SurveyMonkey Point-In-Time data from each community into its combined database. Monarch generated two unique identifiers, one more general and one more in-depth, based on the identifying information for each individual record. Using a formula, these unique identifiers were compared to all identifiers for other records in the database to identify potential duplicates.

All duplicates detected through comparison of unique identifiers were then de-duplicated by the following process:

1. Multiple HMIS records where all fields match – a single record was preserved, and all duplicates were removed;
2. Multiple SurveyMonkey records where all fields match – a single record was preserved, and all duplicates were removed;
3. Comparing HMIS to SurveyMonkey records where unique identifiers, disabilities, income sources, household size, and location on the night of the count all match – the HMIS record was preserved and the SurveyMonkey duplicates were removed.

Following this de-duplication of the data, communities were given preliminary data to review all identified duplicates and records with missing data. Communities were then able to update records with missing information and/or request any additional de-duplication they determined prudent. Monarch then updated and removed additional records based on community feedback prior to completing its final analysis and report.

III. Findings for Total Homeless Population

Key Findings

- On the night of February 3rd, 2015 a total of 111 households, including 157 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Cape May County, according to the 2015 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 2 households, with 2 persons, were identified as chronically homeless.
- 3 unsheltered individuals were counted.

Total Homeless Population

On the night of February 3rd, 2015, a total of 157 persons, in 111 households, were experiencing homelessness in Cape May County, according to the 2015 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 146 persons (47.7%) and 121 households (52.1%) from 2014. Cape May County had 1.5% of New Jersey's statewide homeless population in 2015.

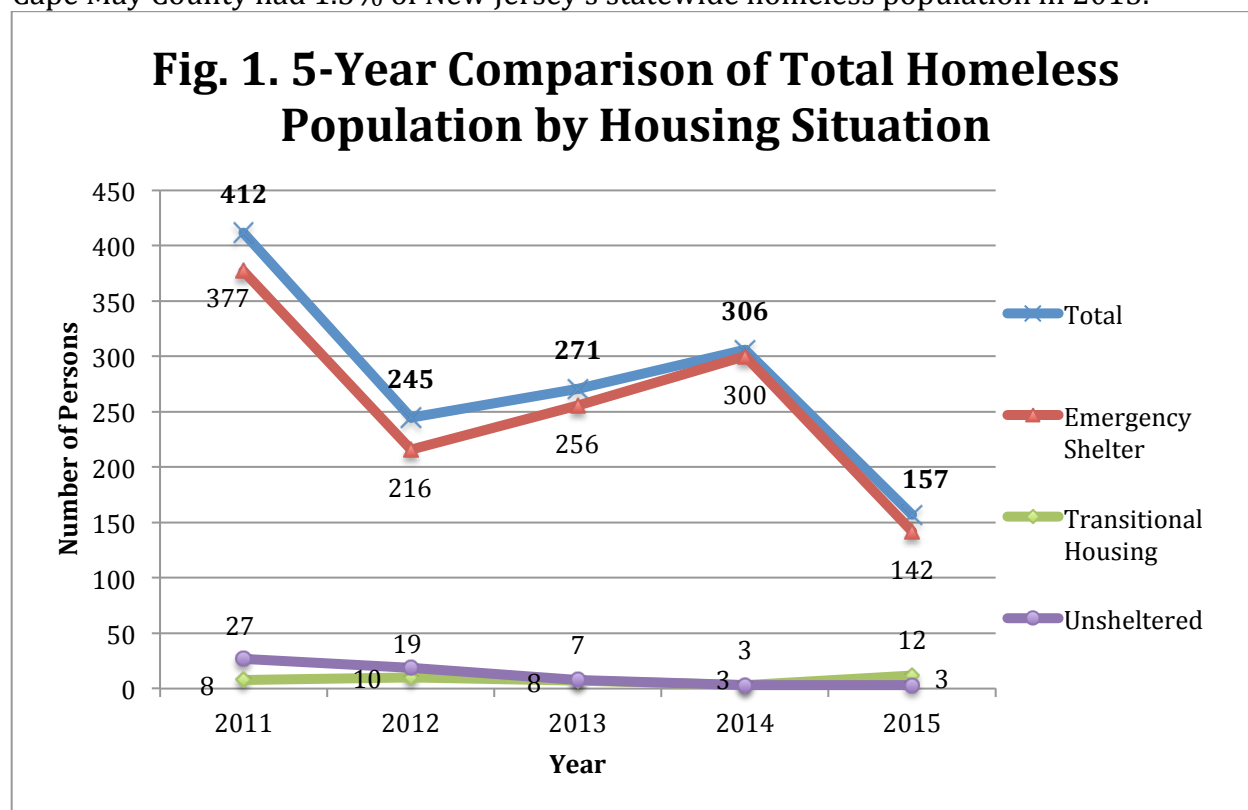
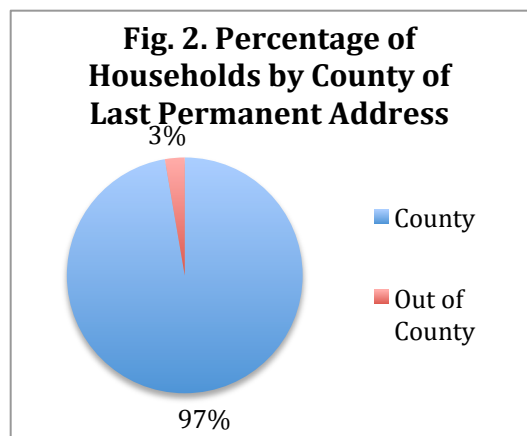


Figure 1 shows that, in 2015, 142 homeless persons stayed in emergency shelters, 12 people were in transitional housing, and 3 were living unsheltered on the night of the count. The total number of those counted in emergency shelters was a decrease of 158 persons (52.6%) from 2014. However, there were 9 (300%) more persons in transitional housing, and 3 living unsheltered—the same total counted last year.

Figure 1 shows that, over the past five years, the total number of homeless persons counted has been fluctuating in Cape May County, with the highest count in 2011 (412). Over this period, the number of homeless persons went down by 61.9%; this in spite of a 25% rise between 2012 and 2014. The number of persons who were in emergency shelter and unsheltered went down overall as well, by 62.3% and 88.9%, respectively. However, the number of homeless persons in transitional housing has risen overall by 50% since 2011.

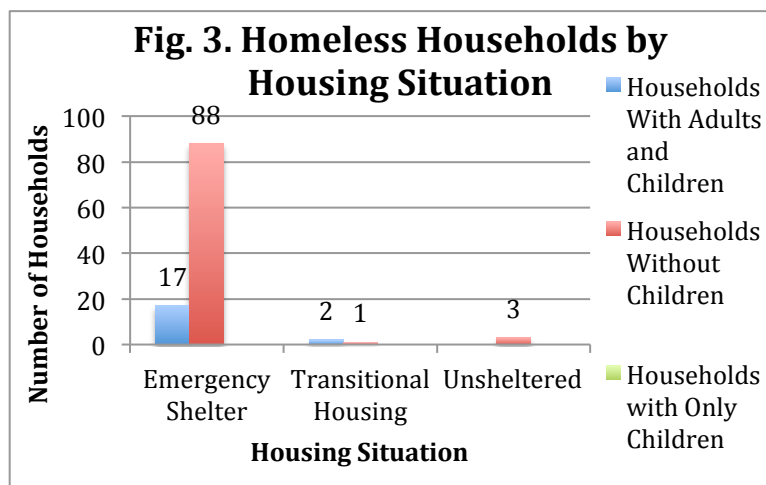


As Figure 2 shows, 3% of these homeless respondents in Cape May County reported that their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless was outside of the county.

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 111 homeless households counted in Cape May County in 2015, 19 (17.1%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult. This represents 16 (45.7%) fewer homeless families than in 2014. These families included 59 persons, 40 children under age 18, and 19 adults over 18. The average family size was 3.1 persons. Figure 3 shows that all 17 families (89.5%) were staying in emergency shelter on the night of the count.

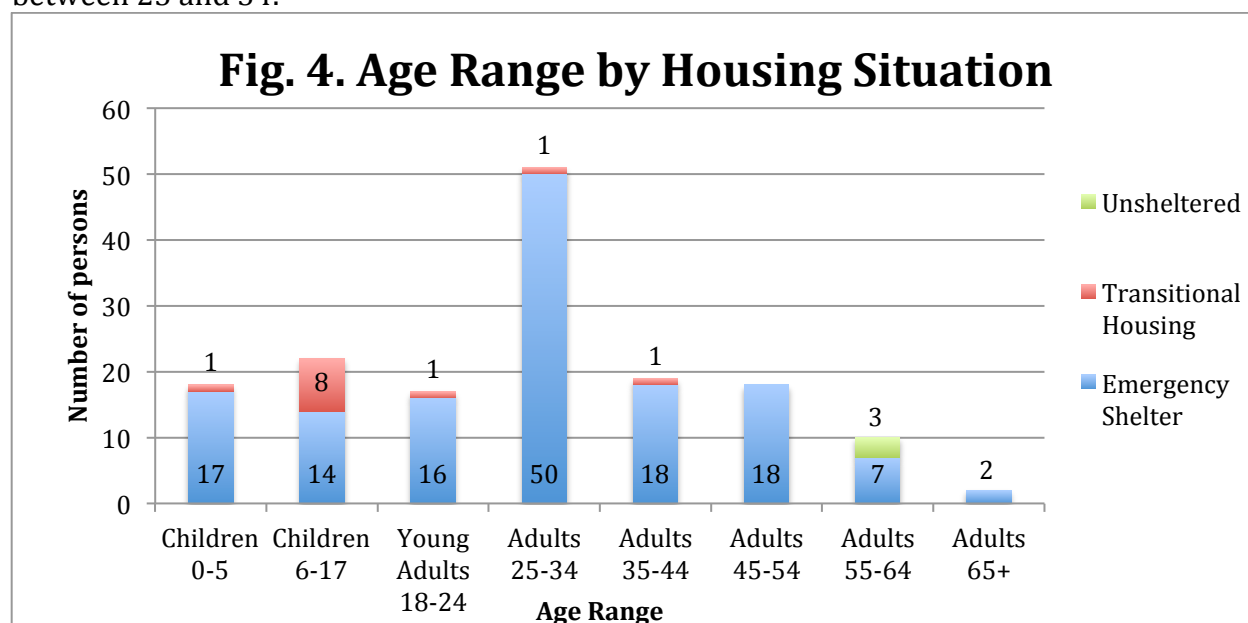


82.9% (92) of the homeless households counted in Cape May County were households without children under 18, and they were composed of 98 adult individuals. 88 (89.8%) of these adult-only households were staying in emergency shelters, while 3 (3.1%) were

unsheltered. Cape May County has seen the number of adult-only households decrease by 99 (50.3%) since 2014.

Demographics

The majority (100 persons, 63.7%) of those experiencing homelessness in Cape May County on the night of the count were adults over age 24. There were a total of 17 (10.8%) homeless young adults between 18 and 24 years old, and 40 (24.5%) children under 18 years old as well. Figure 4 shows that the majority of homeless children who were under the age of 18 were between 6 and 17 years of age (22, 55%). The age range most represented, with 51 persons and 32.5% of the total homeless population, was Adults between 25 and 34.

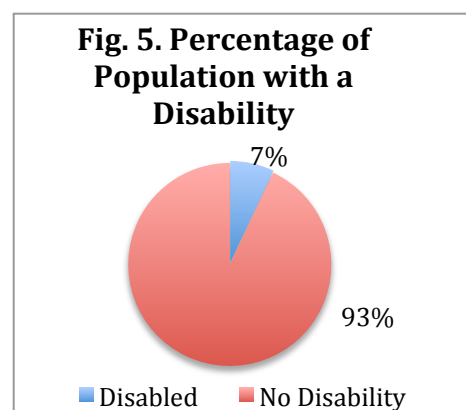


51% (80) of homeless respondents were male, and 49% (77) were female.

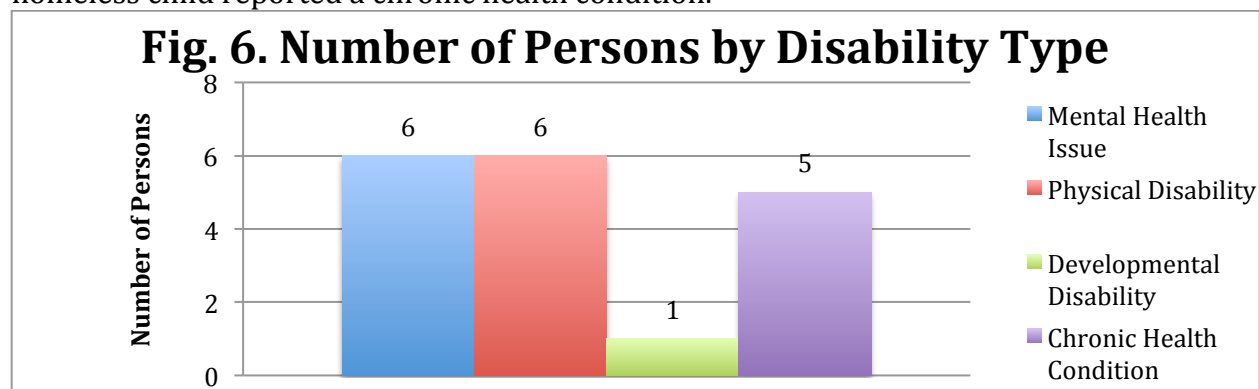
69.4% of respondents identified their race as White, making that the largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported. The next largest group self-identified as Black or African American (23.4%); followed by those identifying as Pacific Islander or Hawaiian Native (2.5%). With regard to ethnicity, 8.9% of respondents identified as Hispanic.

Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 7% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 8.5% of adults 18 or older reported some type of disability compared to 2.5% 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 and substance abuse disorders.

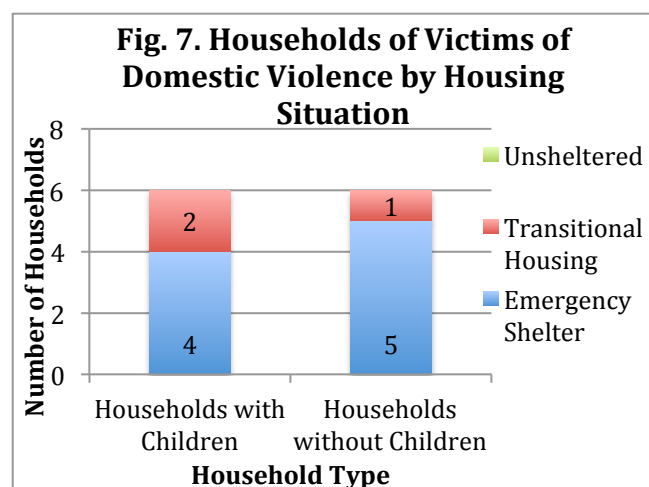


Among disabled adults, 60% (5.1% of the total adult homeless population) reported mental health issues and the same percentage reported physical disabilities, making these the most prevalent disabilities. 50% of disabled adults reported a chronic health condition. 1 homeless child reported a chronic health condition.



Victims of Domestic Violence

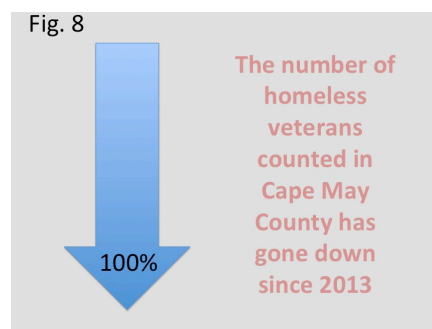
On the night of the count, in Cape May County, 12 homeless households reported having a victim of domestic violence. Figure 7 shows that half (50%) of these households were adult-only, individual households. 6 families (33.3%) including 26 persons, were also counted. This puts the total number of homeless persons impacted by domestic violence on the night of the count at 32.



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 were no homeless veterans counted in Cape May County on the night of the count, 1 fewer (100%) than 2014.



Income and Benefits

Among all households experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, 70.3% had no source of income, and 1.8% reported receiving some form of earned cash income. The three most common sources of cash income among homeless respondents were SSI (16.2%), General Assistance (GA)(9%), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)(6.3%).

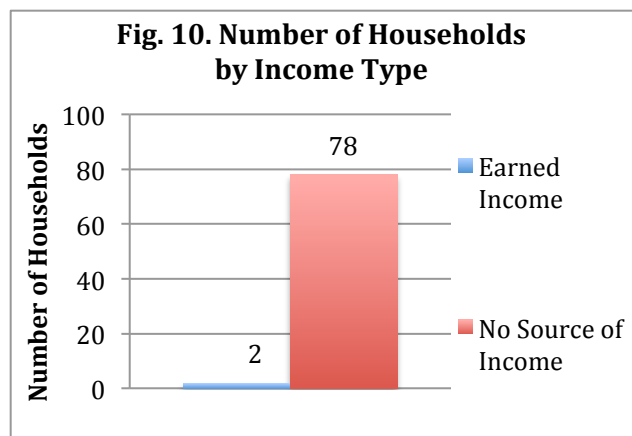


Figure 11 shows the average monthly income for all homeless households by housing type.

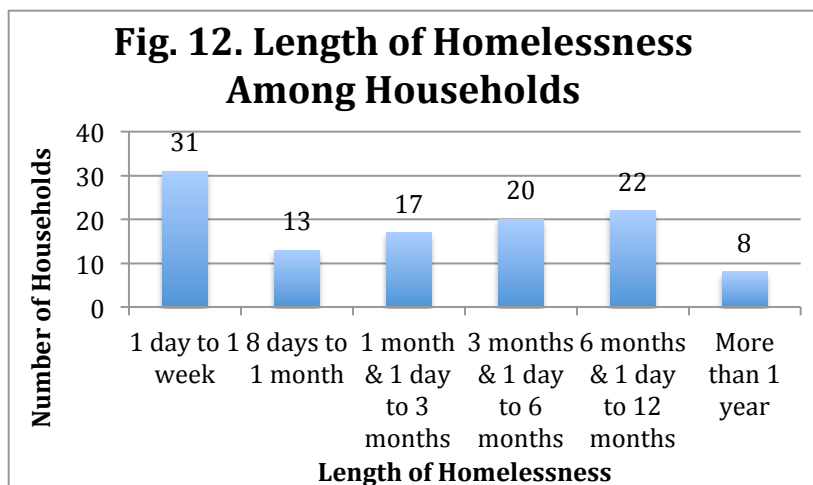
Figure 11. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation			
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered
Average for All Households	\$398.56	\$1,766.67	\$46.67

37.8% of respondents reported that their household was receiving no kind of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Food Stamps, or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) was the top reported non-cash benefit, and was received by 49.5% of households. 39.6% were receiving Medicaid.

Length of Homelessness

Figure 12 shows the range lengths of homeless episodes experienced on the night of the count by respondents in Cape May County. 31 households (27.9%) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted between 1 day and 1 week.

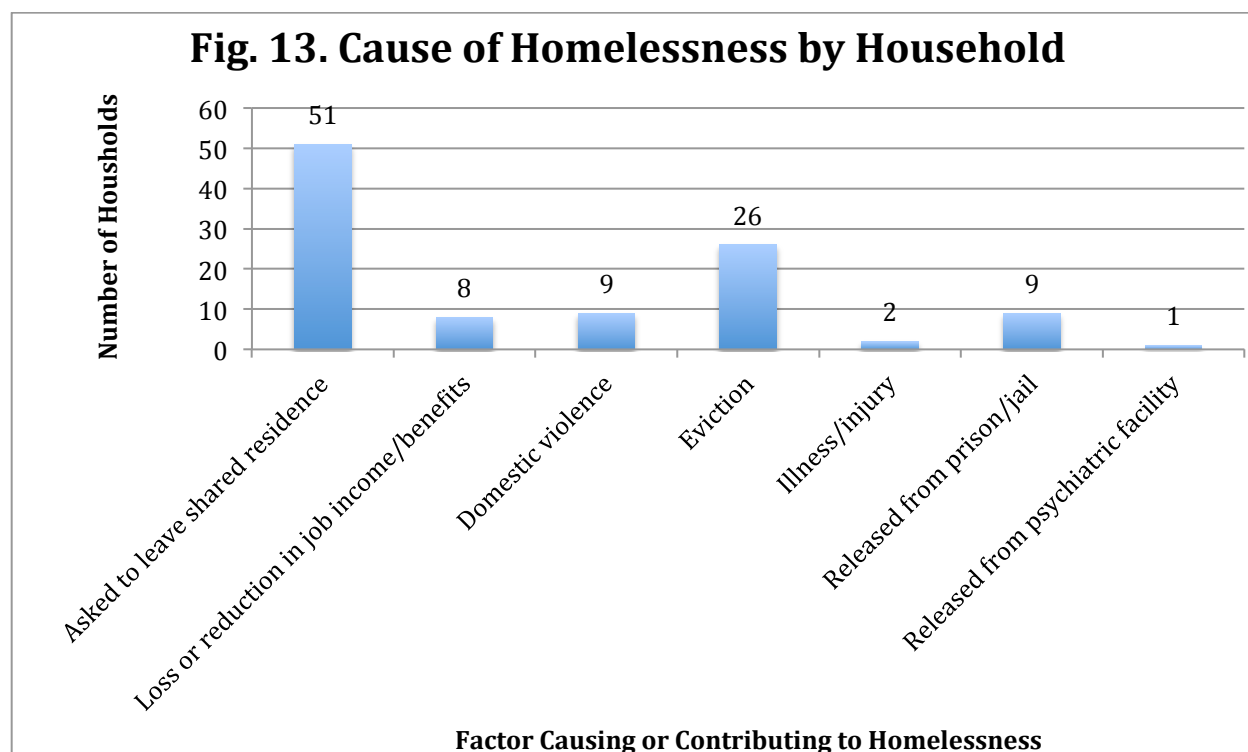
22 households (19.8%) reported being homeless between 6 months and 1 day and 1 year. 7.2% (8) of all homeless households in Cape May County said that they had been homeless for more than 12 months.



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 (51 households, 45.9 %) than any other cause. As Figure 13 shows, the next most common factor reported was being eviction (23.4%).

When respondents were asked ‘what was your residence prior to your current living situation?’ more said they were staying or living with friends or family (54.1%) than any other type of residence. 17.2% reported their prior residence was an emergency shelter, and 9.9% 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.

In 2010, USICH established the goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2015. 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

2 households, made up of 2 adult individuals, were chronically homeless in Cape May County, according to the 2015 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 4 persons (66.7%) from 2014. The rate of chronic homelessness as a percentage of overall homelessness dropped from 2% to 1.8% in the same time.

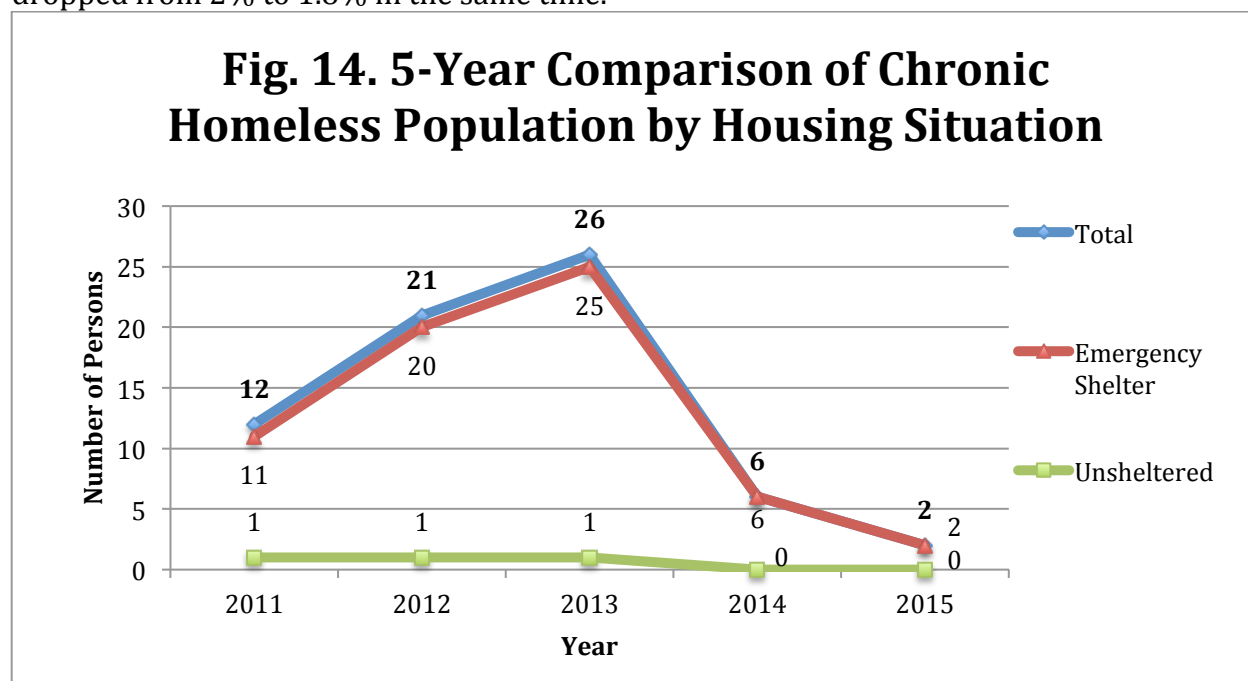
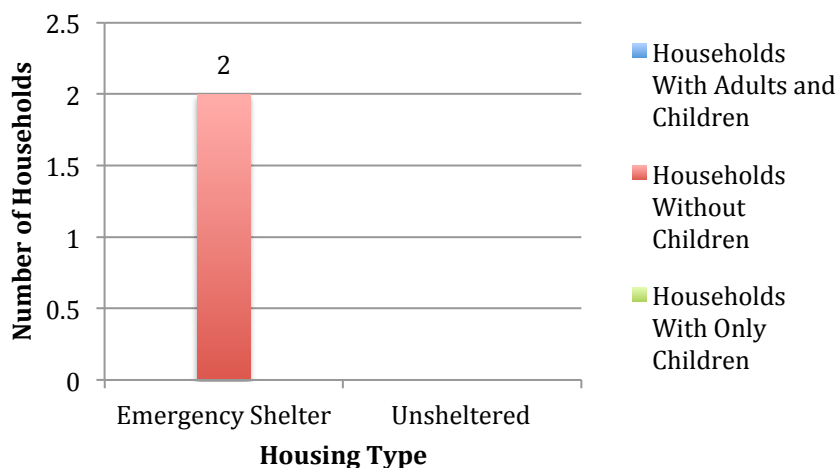


Figure 14 shows the number of chronically homeless respondents who were in emergency shelter or living unsheltered in Cape May County from 2011 to 2015. After fluctuations over the past five years, the overall number of chronically homeless persons has fallen by 10 persons, or 83.3% since 2011. The number of unsheltered chronically homeless persons has also gone down by 1 (100%).

Families and Individuals

Both of the 2 chronically homeless households counted in 2014 were households with no children 17 or younger. They were both staying in emergency shelters on the night of the count. This represents a decrease from 6 chronically homeless households in shelters in 2014 (66.7% decrease).

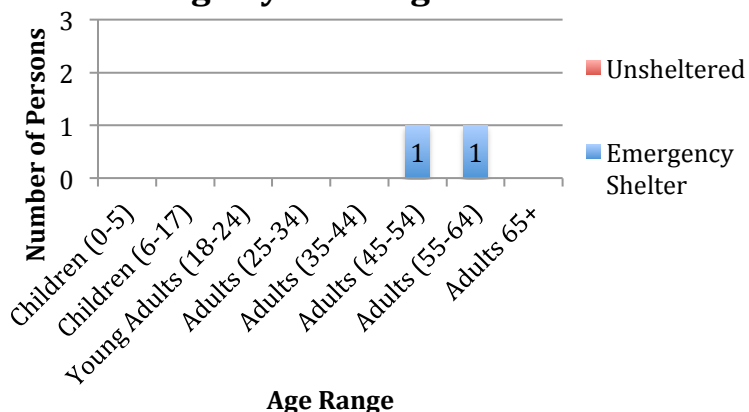
Fig. 15. Chronically Homeless Households Type by Housing Situation



Demographics

Of the 2 chronically homeless persons, none were between the ages of 18 and 24, and none were children 17 or younger. The age range for 1 of these chronically homeless persons was between 45 and 54 years old, and the other was between 55 and 64 years old. Figure 16 shows that no chronically homeless individuals were over 65 years of age.

Fig. 16. Chronically Homeless Age Range by Housing Situation



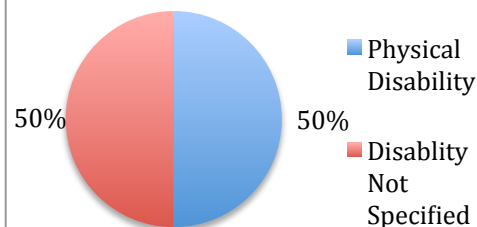
100% of those counted as chronically homeless were male, and neither one was female.

Both chronically homeless persons reported their race as White (100%).

Disabilities

In order to meet the definition of chronically homeless, at least one adult in each household must have some kind of disability. While 2 chronically homeless adults were identified as being disabled, only 1 specified having a physical disability (50%).

Fig. 17. Number of Chronically Homeless Persons by Disability Type



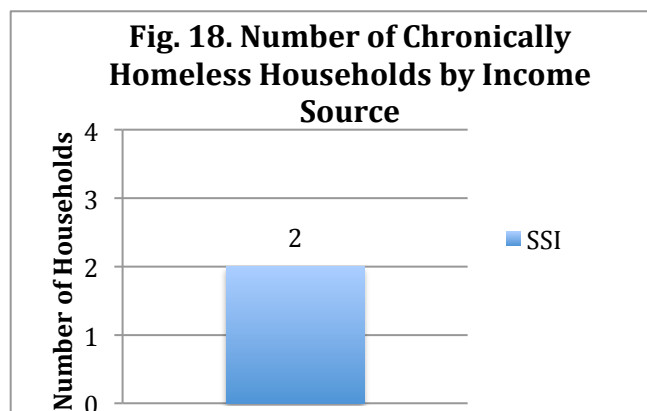
Subpopulations

On the night of the count, neither chronically homeless person in Cape May County reported being a victim of domestic violence.

There were no chronically homeless veterans identified on the night of the count.

Income and Benefits

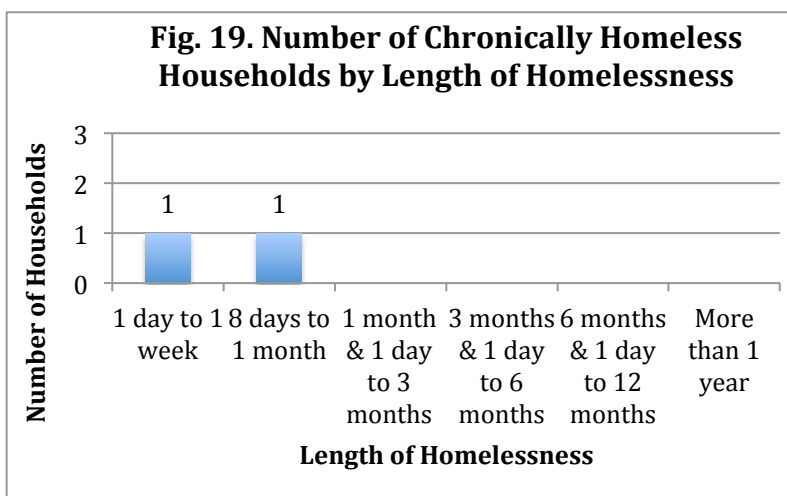
Neither of the chronically homeless households reported receiving no type of cash income. Figure 18 shows the sources of income that were received. The only source of cash income among chronically homeless respondents was SSI, which was received by 100%.



Neither of the chronically homeless households reported they were not receiving any type of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Food Stamps (SNAP) benefits was the only reported non-cash benefit among the chronically homeless, with 100% receiving this benefit.

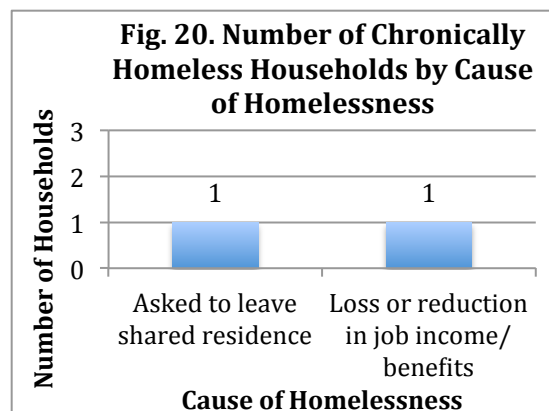
Length of Homelessness

Figure 19 shows that 1 chronically homeless person reported that his most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted less than 1 week, and the other reported his had lasted for less than 1 month.



Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, 1 chronically homeless household cited being asked to leave a shared residence, and 1 cited a loss or reduction of job income or benefits.



V. Findings for the Unsheltered Homeless

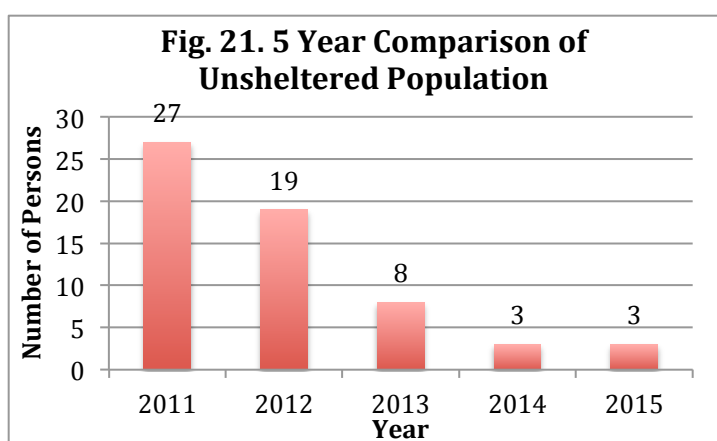
HUD's definition of "unsheltered homeless" applies to any individual or family "with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, 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

3 households, made up of 3 persons, were living unsheltered in Cape May County, according to the 2015 Point-In-Time Count. This is the same number as counted in 2014.

Figure 21 shows the number of unsheltered respondents from 2011 to 2015. Over the past five years the number of unsheltered persons has gone down overall. Since 2011, the number of unsheltered homeless persons has dropped 88.9% in Cape May County.



Families and Individuals

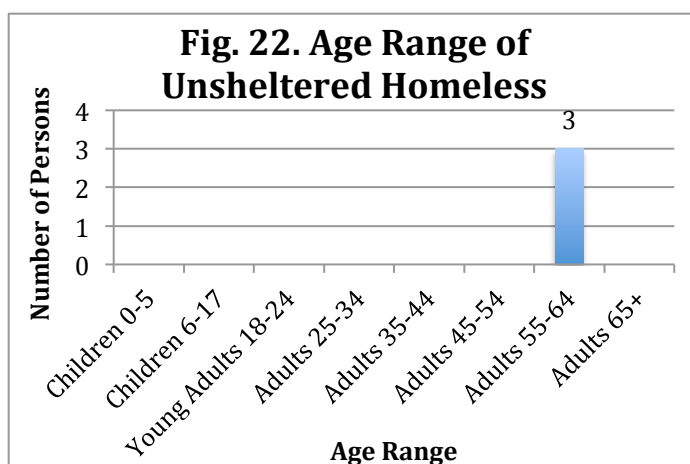
There were 0 unsheltered families counted in Cape May County on the night of the count.

All 3 unsheltered households counted were households with just 1 adult individual.

Demographics

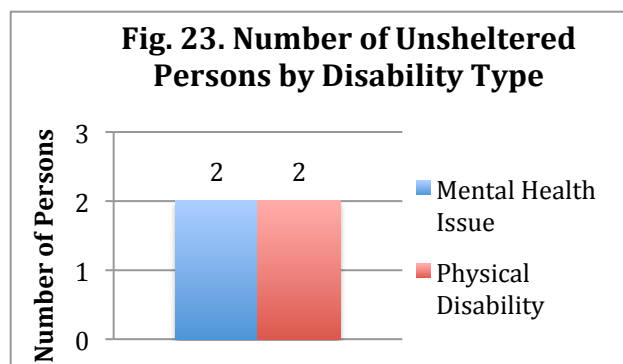
3 out of 3 unsheltered persons counted in 2015 were between 55 and 64 years old.

All 3 unsheltered persons were male and identified their race as White. None identified as Hispanic.



Disabilities

2 of the 3 unsheltered persons (66.7%) reported having some type of disability. Figure 23 shows that the two types of disabilities reported were mental health issues and physical disabilities.



Subpopulations

On the night of the count, no unsheltered adult individuals in Cape May County reported being victims of domestic violence.

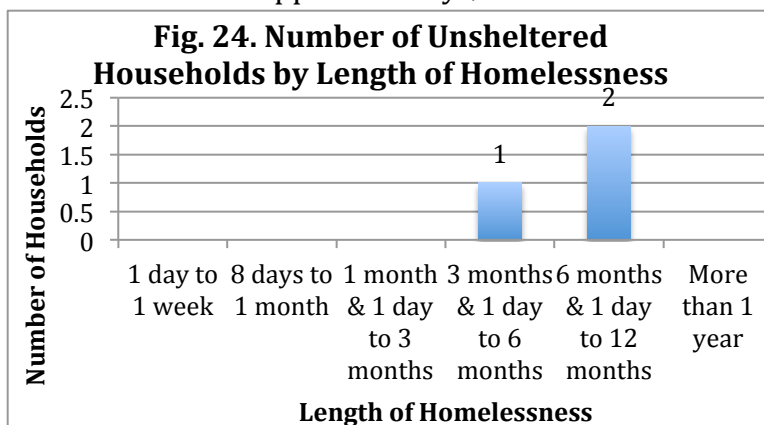
There were 0 unsheltered veterans on the night of the count.

Income and Benefits

Among the 3 unsheltered respondent households on the night of the count, 1 reported having a source of cash income, and was receiving General Assistance. 1 reported receiving Food Stamps (SNAP), and 2 reported receiving Medicaid benefits. The average monthly income reported among unsheltered households was approximately \$47.

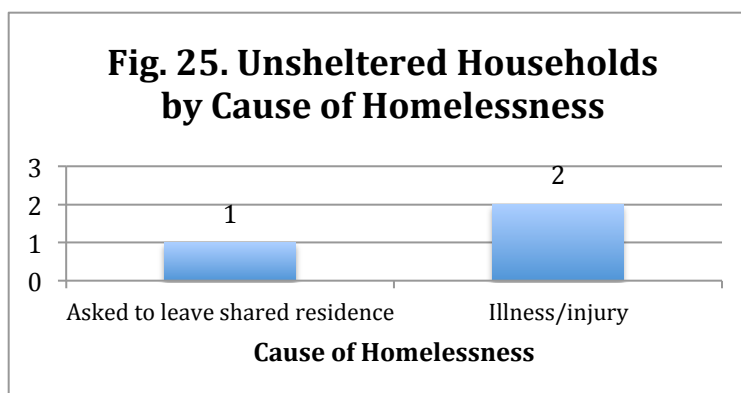
Length of Homelessness

As shown in Figure 25, 2 of the 3 unsheltered households reported their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted between 6 months and 1 year. 1 reported the most recent episode had lasted 3 to 6 months.



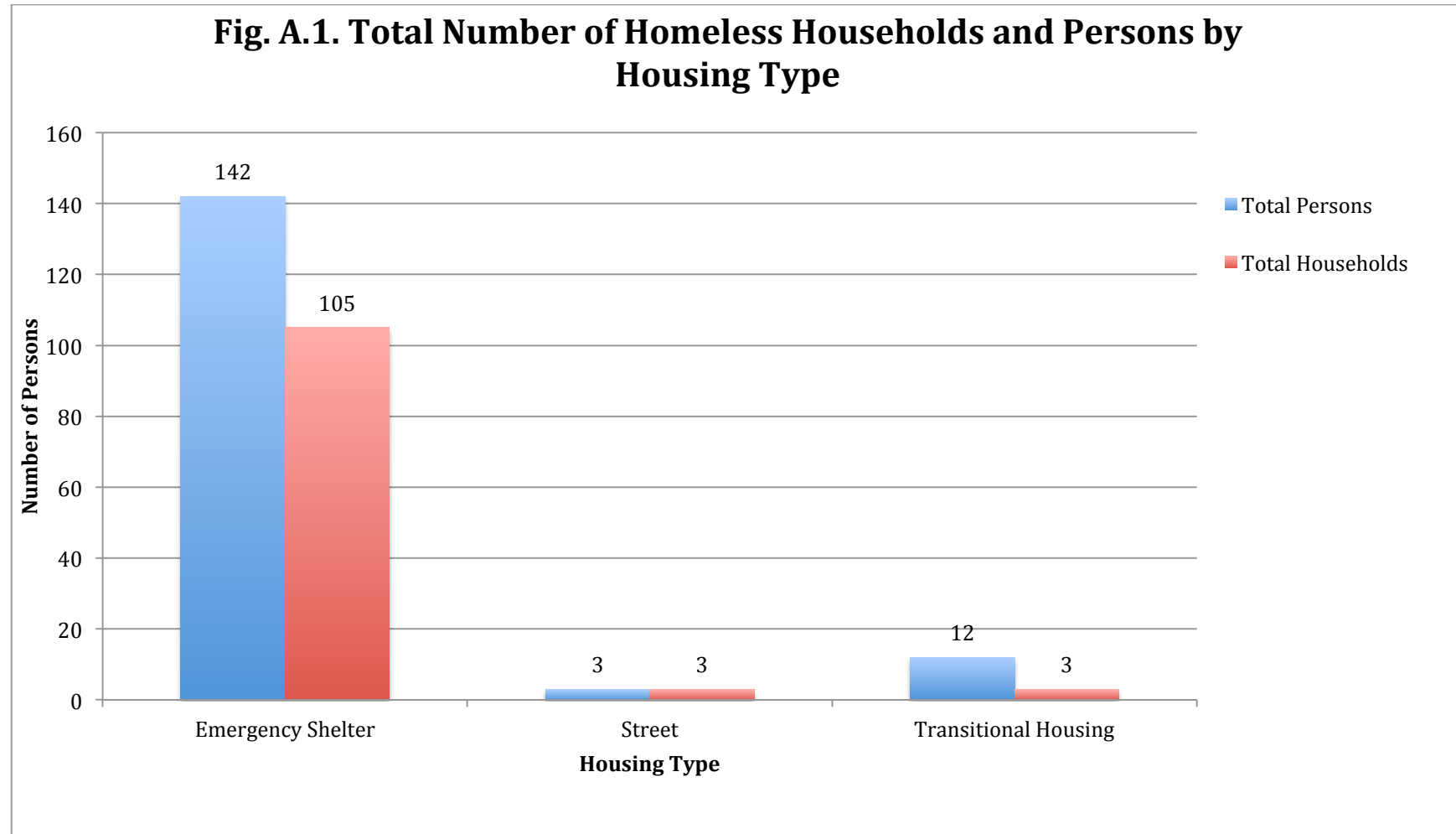
Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more unsheltered households said illness or injury (66.7%) than any other factor. 1 (33.3%) cited being asked to leave a shared residence as the cause to their homelessness.



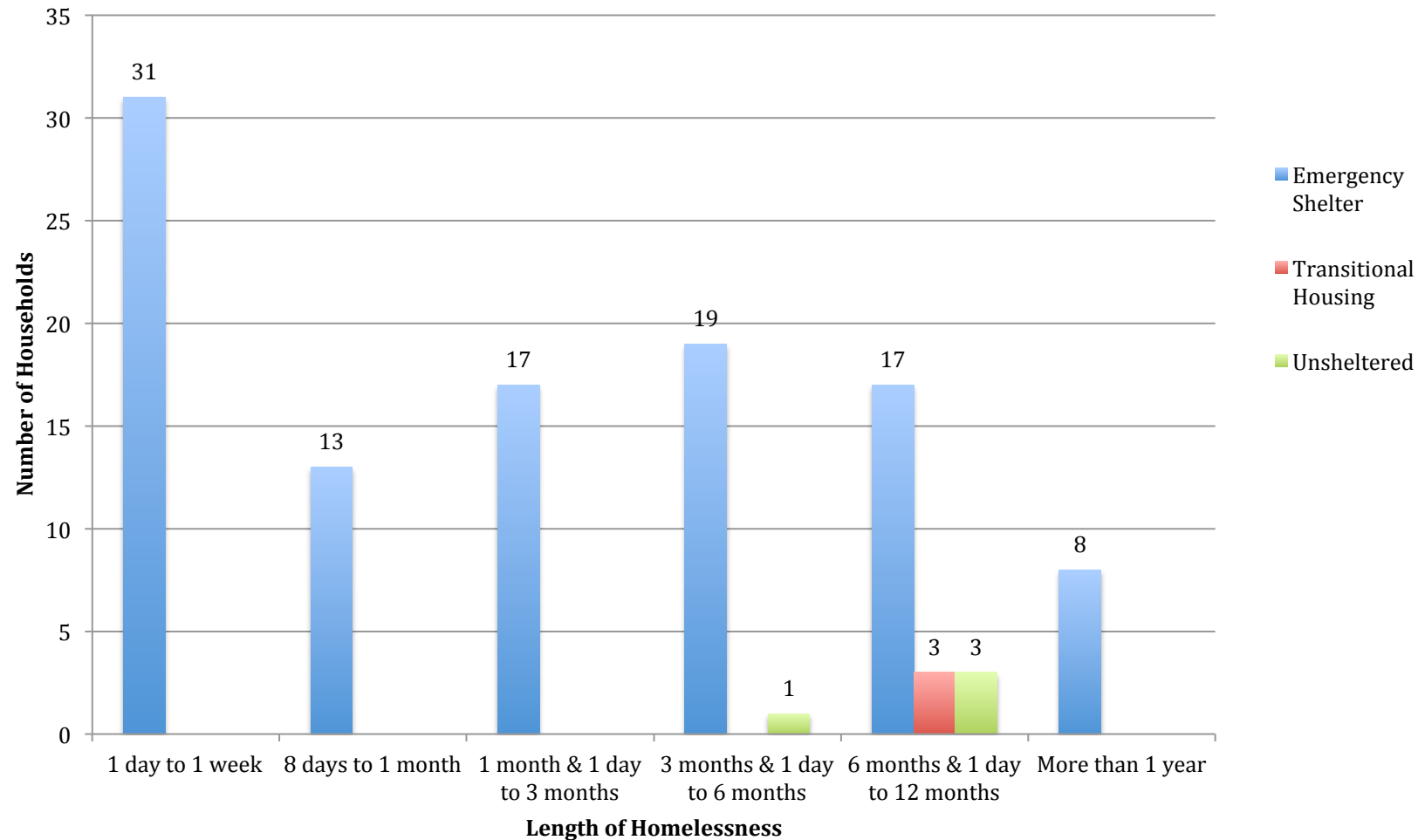
VI. Appendix

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



How long have you been in your current living situation?

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



Who was homeless with you on the night of February 3rd?

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

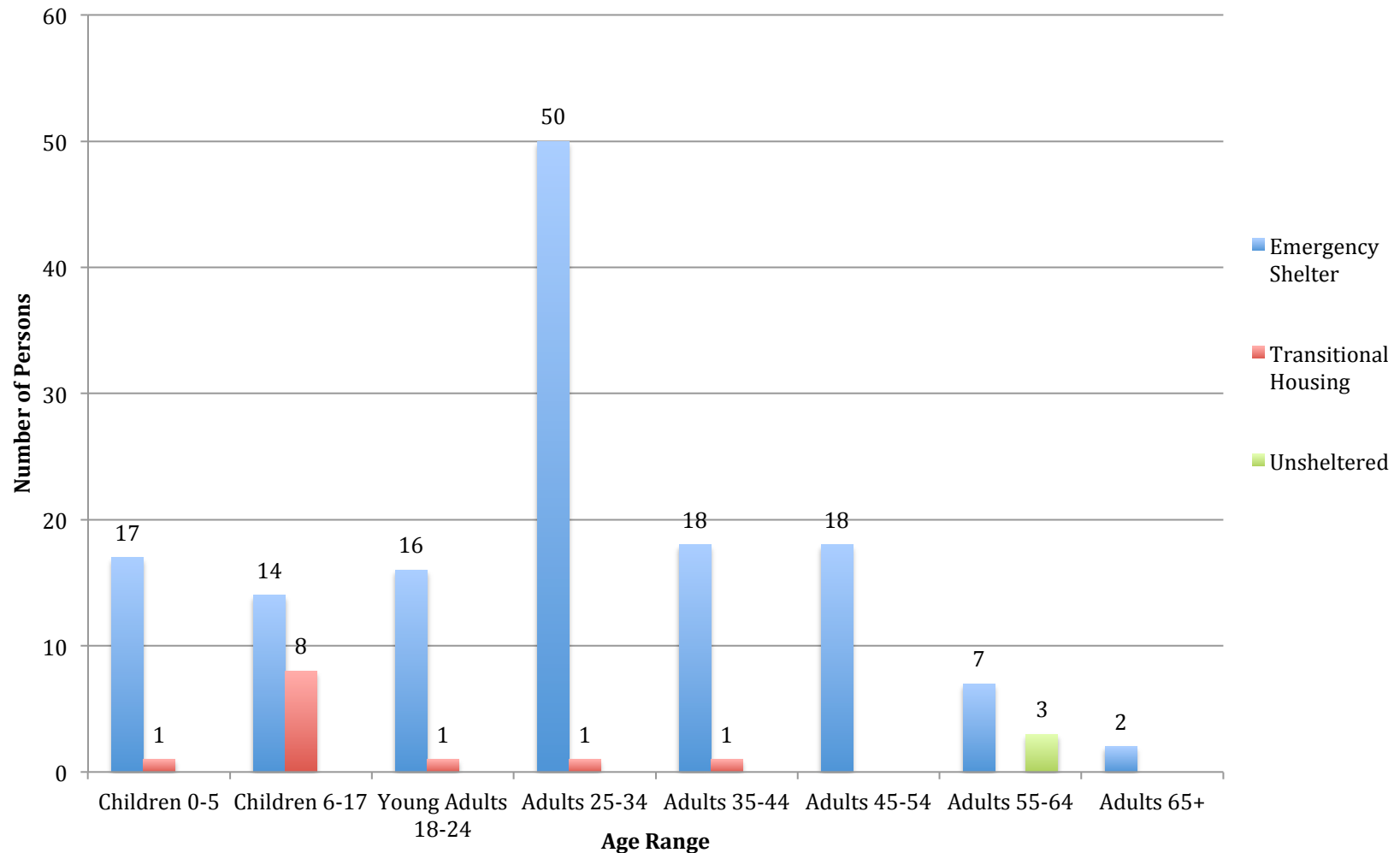


Fig. A.4. Number of Homeless Persons by Gender and Housing Situation

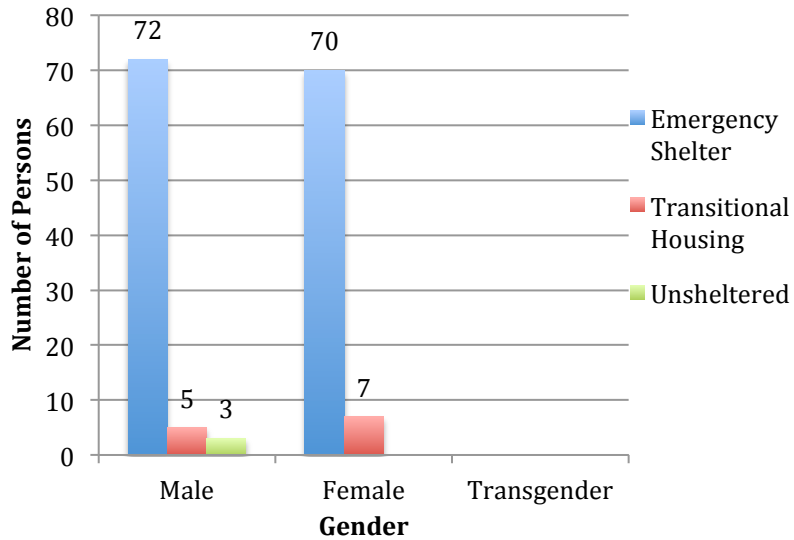


Fig. A.5. Number of Homeless Persons by Race

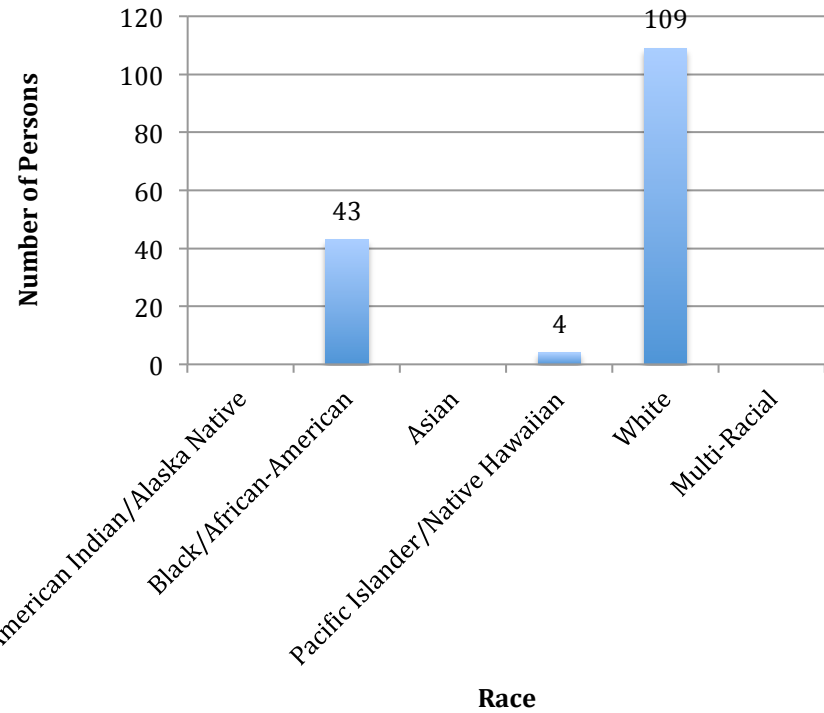
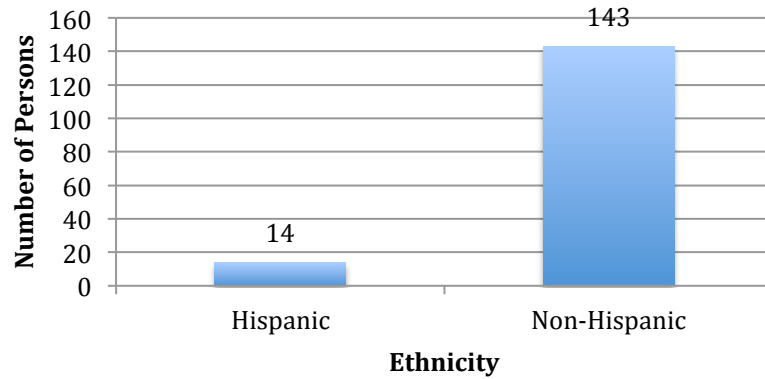
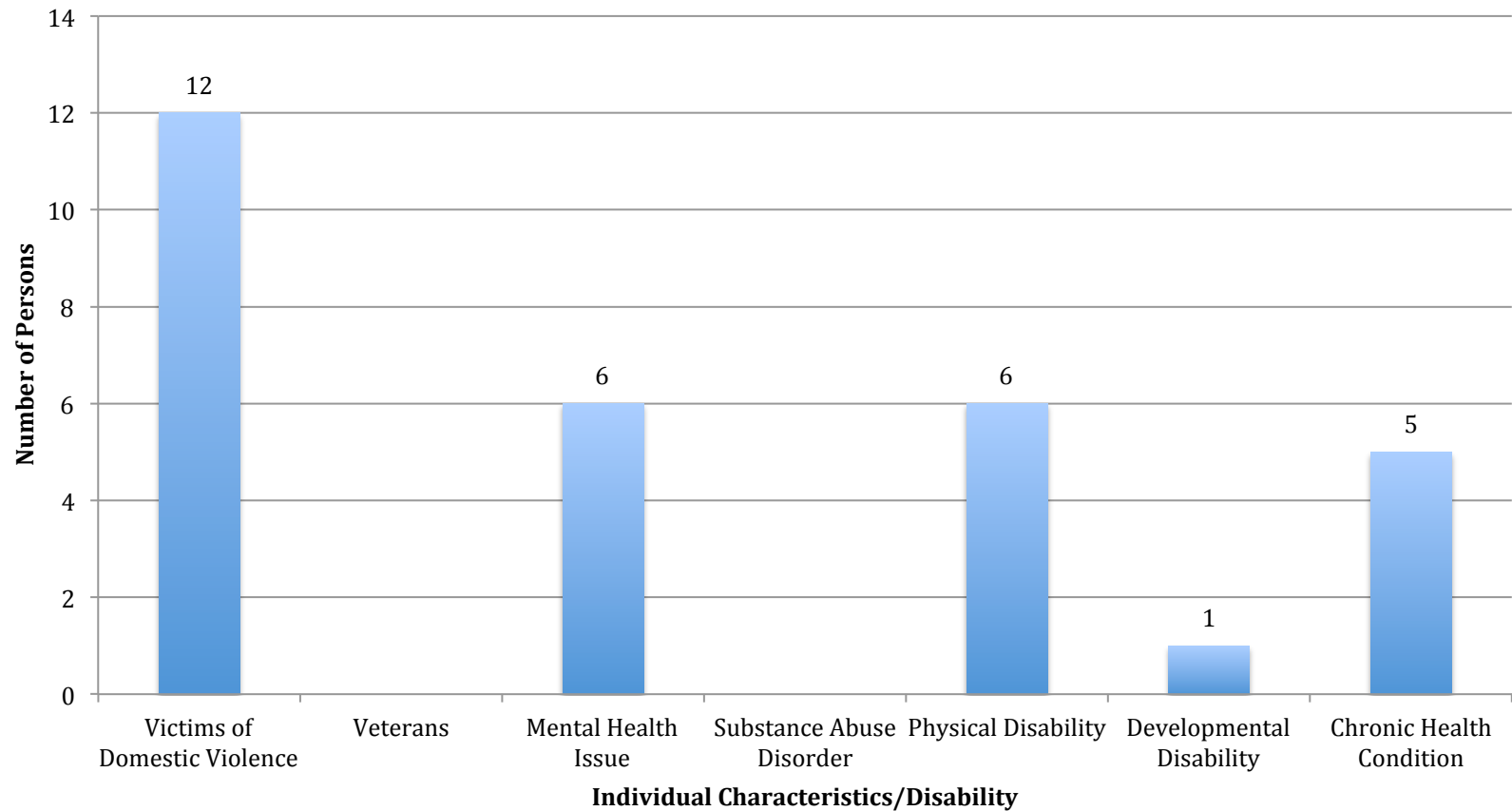


Fig. A.6. Number of Homeless Persons by Ethnicity



Household Characteristics – check all that apply to each person

Fig. A.7. Number of Homeless Persons by Victims of Domestic Violence, Veteran Status, and Disability

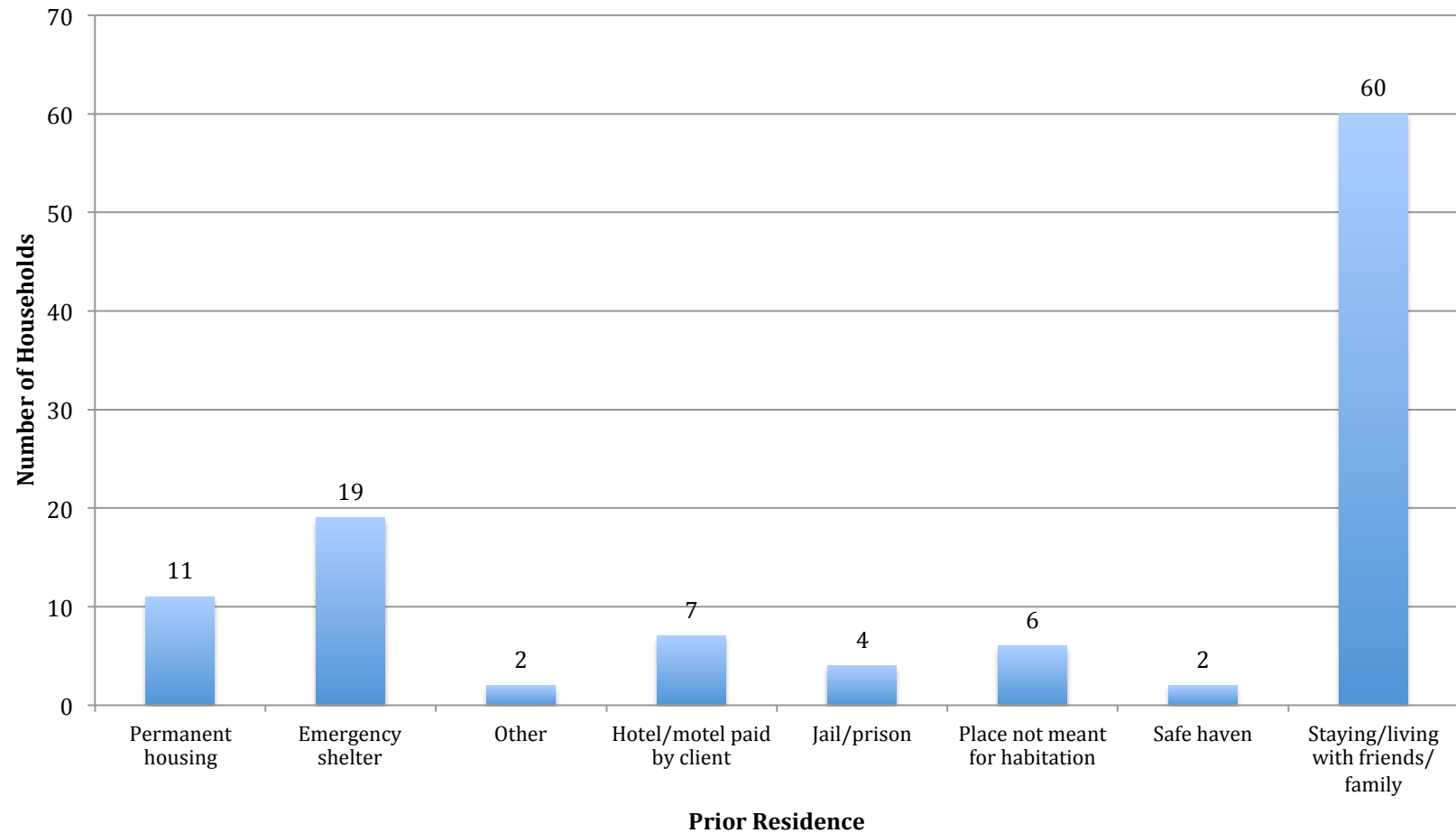


Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?

Fig. A.8. Number of Homeless Households by County or State of Last Permanent Address	
Last Permanent Address – County/State	Number of Households
Atlantic County	1
Cape May County	108
Cumberland County	1

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. 10. Number of Homeless Households by Source of Cash Income

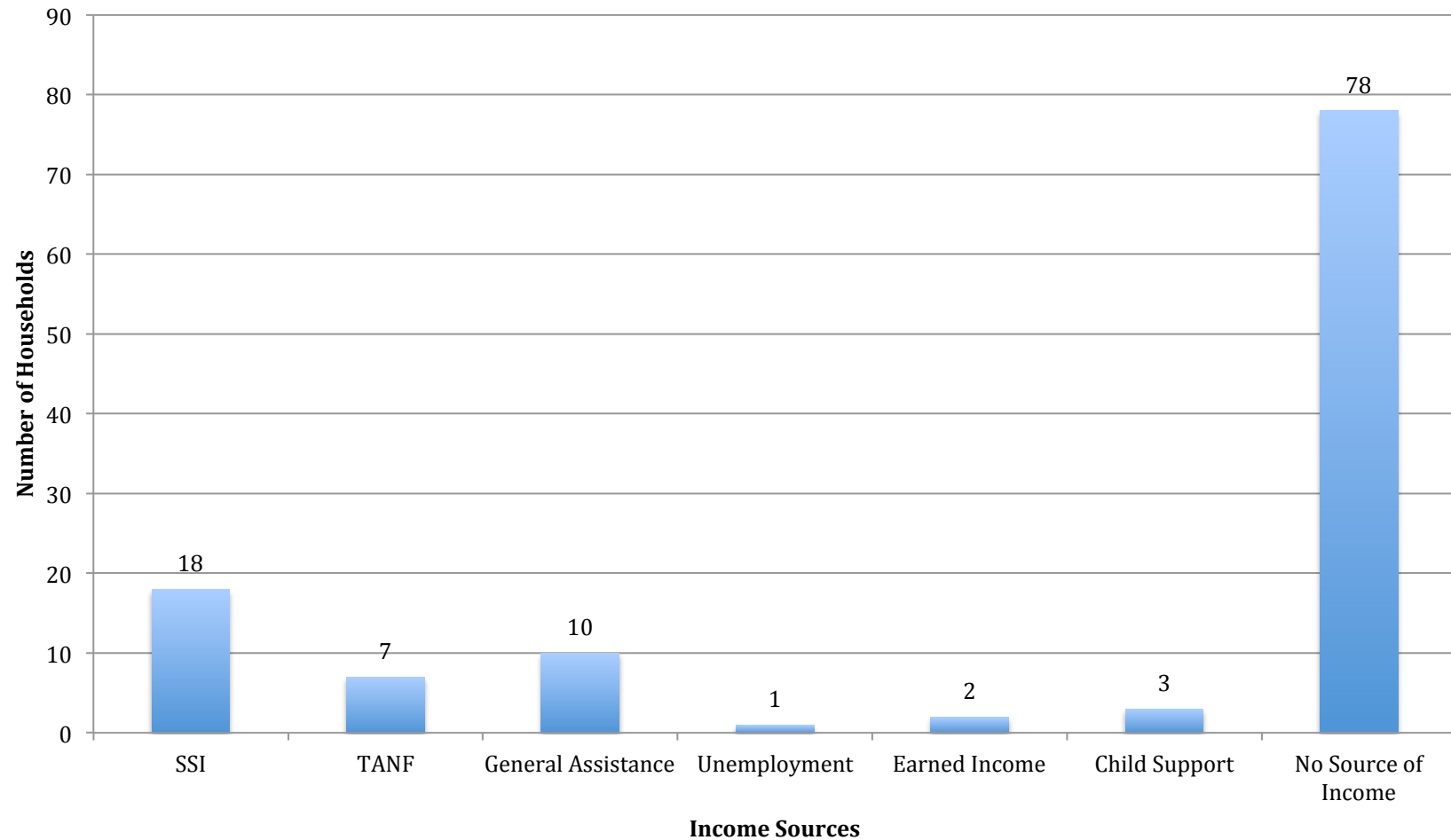
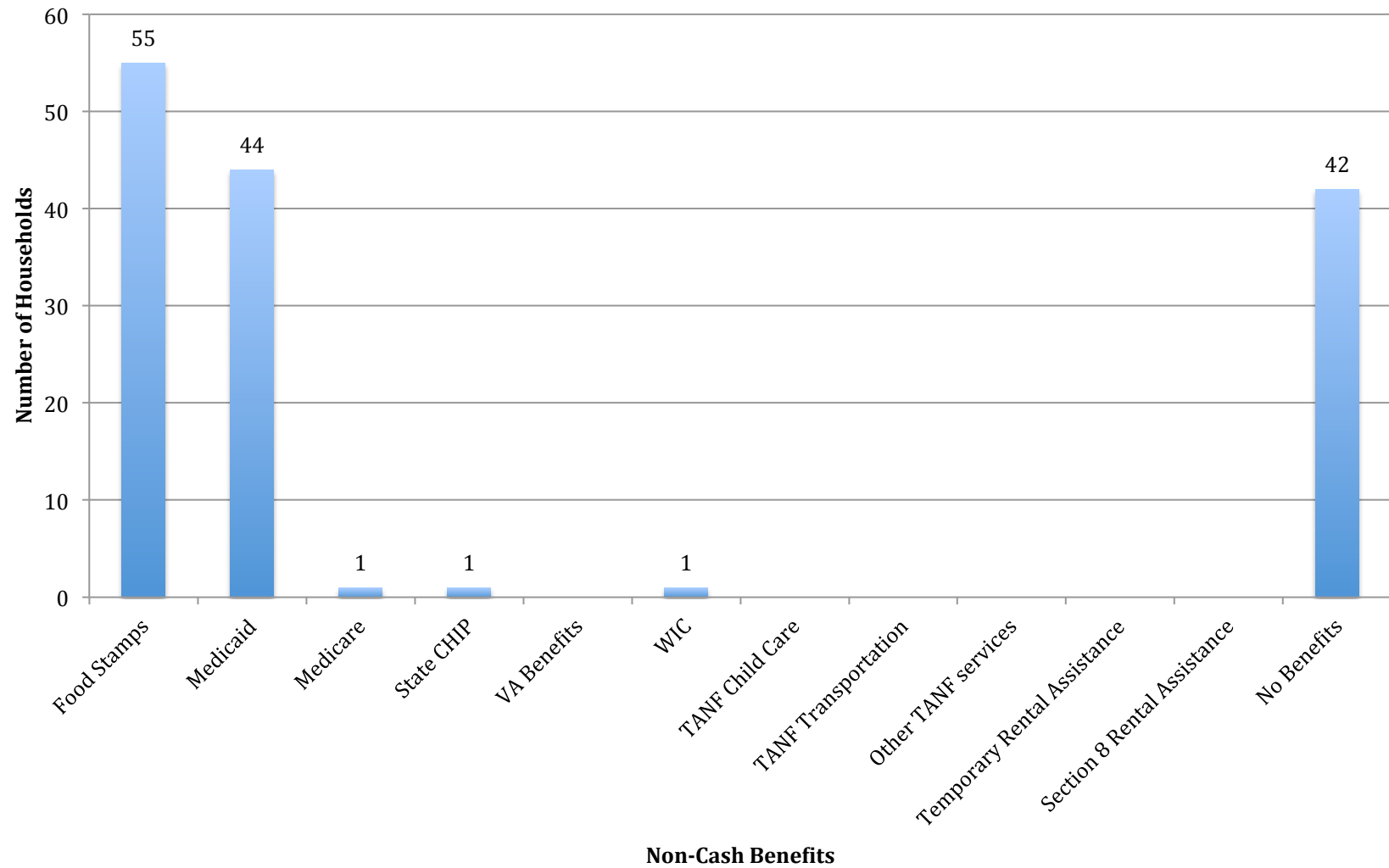
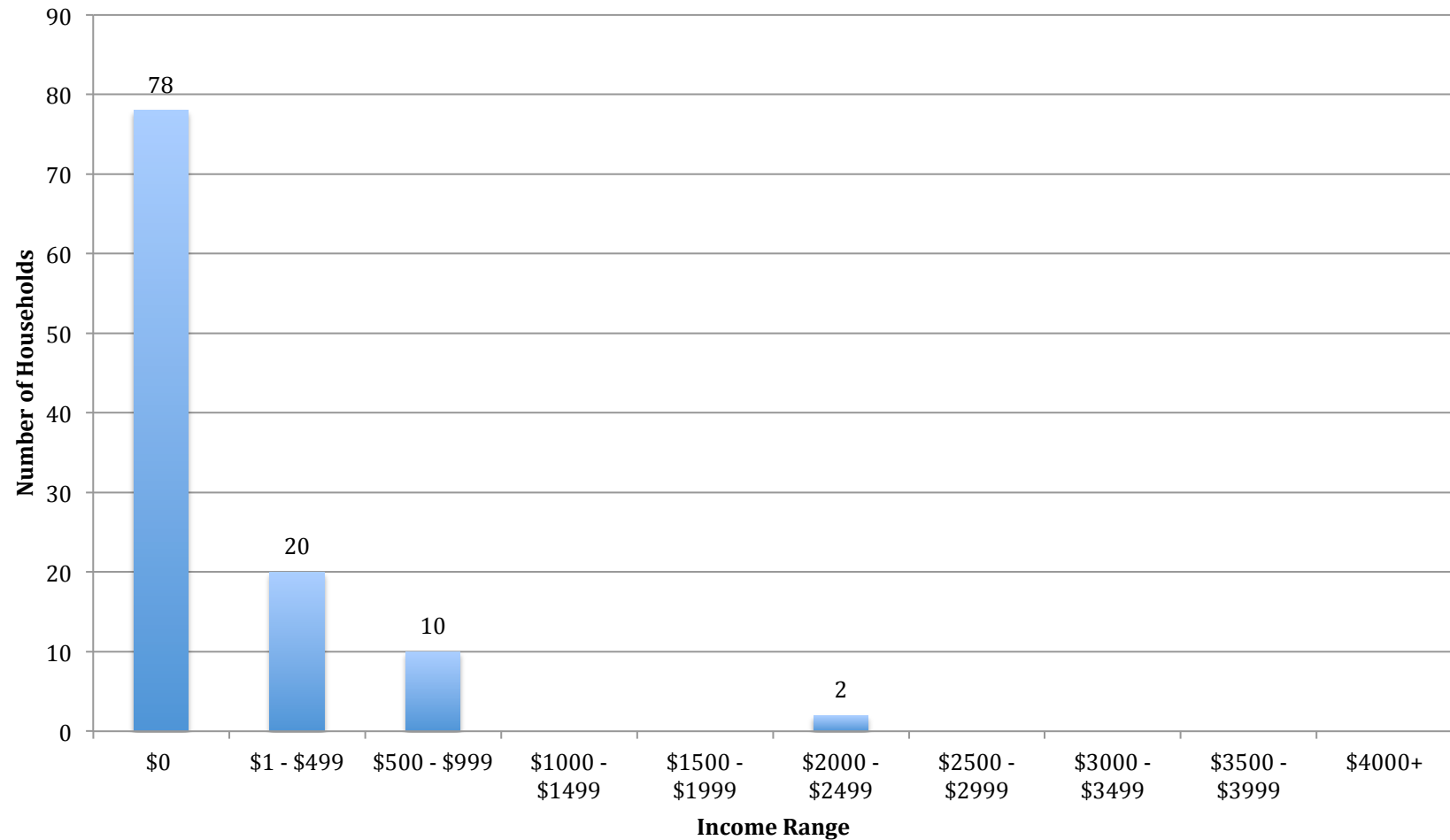


Fig. A. 11. Number of Homeless Households by Sources of Non-Cash Benefits



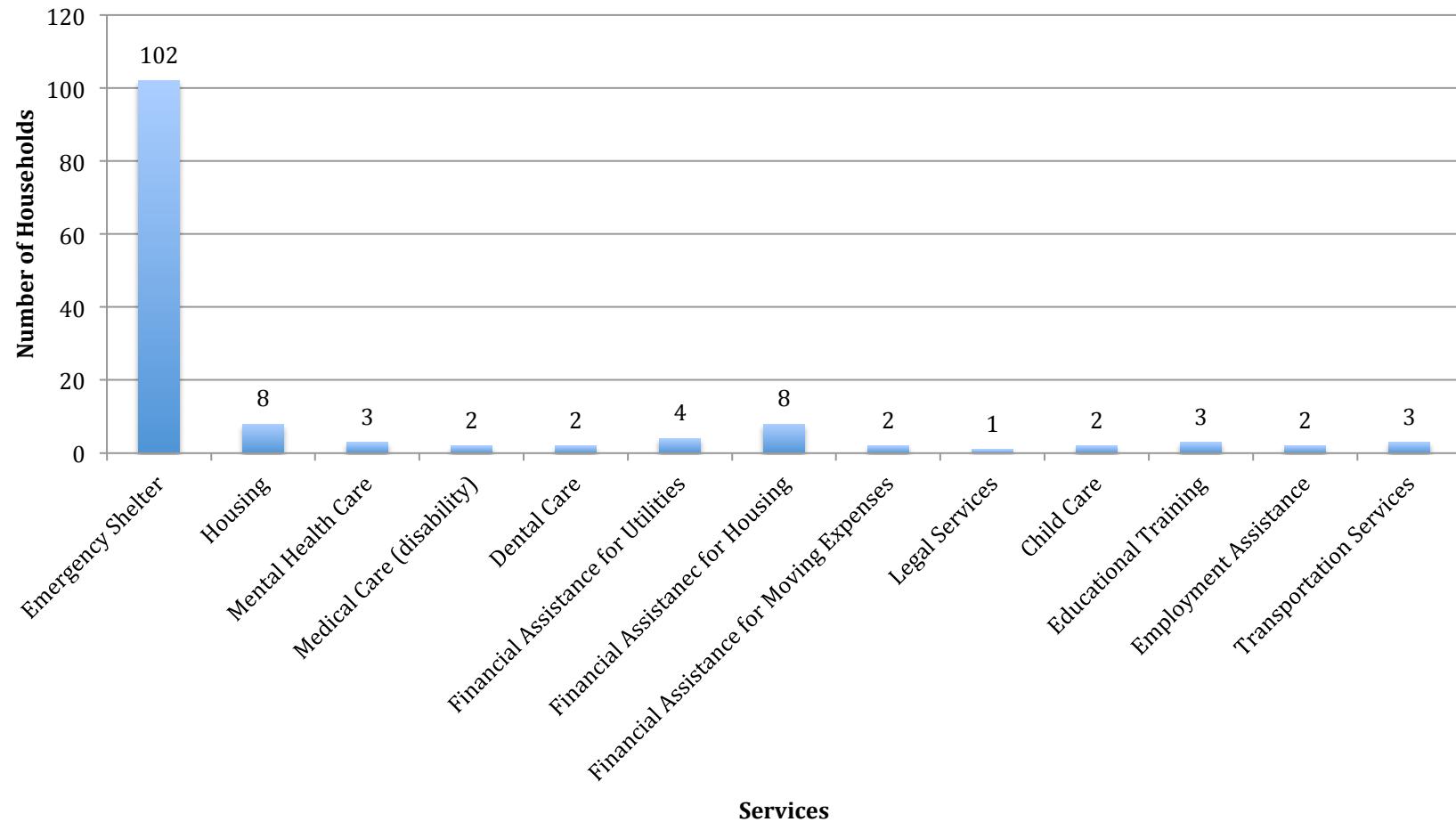
What is your monthly household income?

Fig. A.12. Number of Homeless Households by Monthly Income Range



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

Fig. A.13. Number of Homeless Households by Services Needed



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

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

