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NJ
2015
Counts!

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

January 27, 2015

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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 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 January 27th, 2015 a total of 24 households, including 38 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Salem County, according to the 2015 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 2 households, with 2 adult individuals were identified as chronically homeless.
- 1 unsheltered homeless person was counted.

Total Homeless Population

On the night of January 27th, 2015, a total of 38 persons, in 24 households, were experiencing homelessness in Salem County, according to the 2015 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 6 households (33.3%) but represents no change in the number of persons from 2014. Salem County had 0.3% of New Jersey's statewide homeless population in 2015.

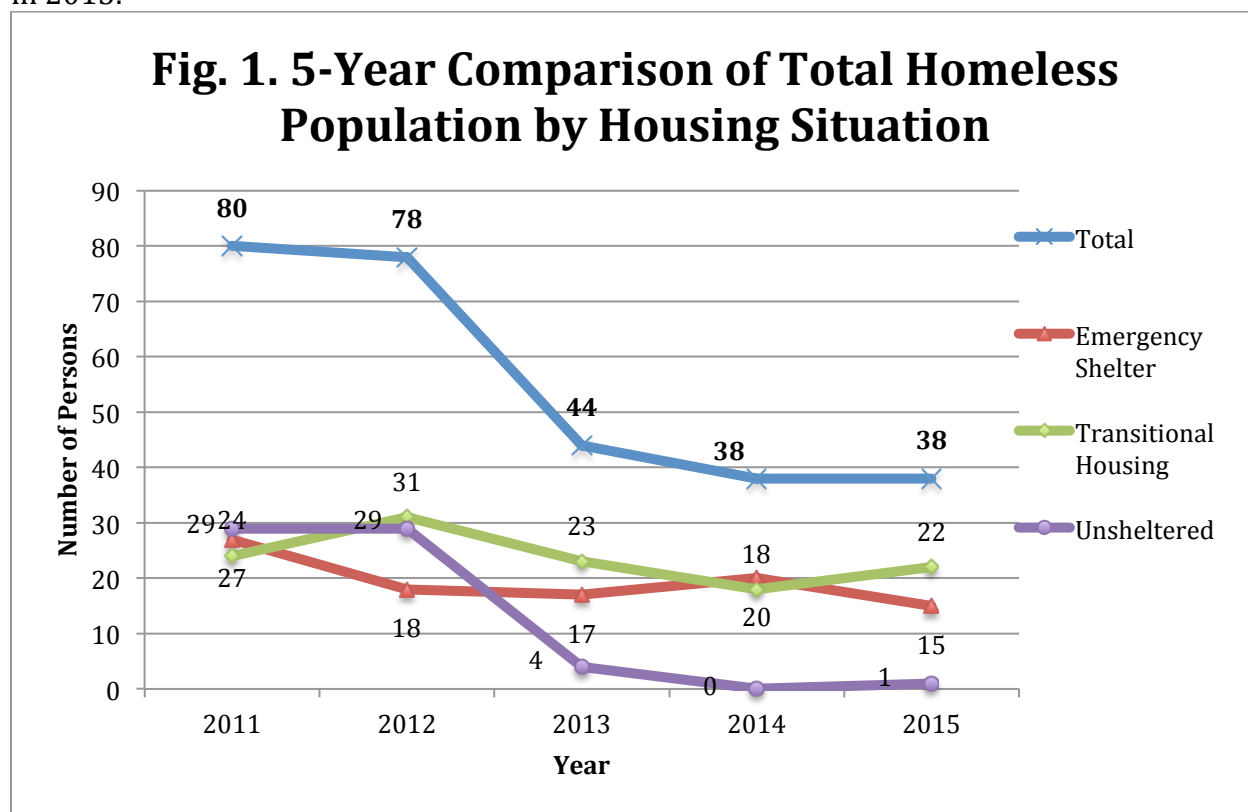


Figure 1 shows that, in 2015, 15 homeless persons were staying in emergency shelter, 22 in transitional housing and 1 was living unsheltered on the night of the count. While the number of those staying in emergency shelter decreased from 2014 (5 persons, 25%), the number of persons staying in transitional housing and living unsheltered had increased, 4 persons, (22.2%) and 1 persons (100%), respectively.

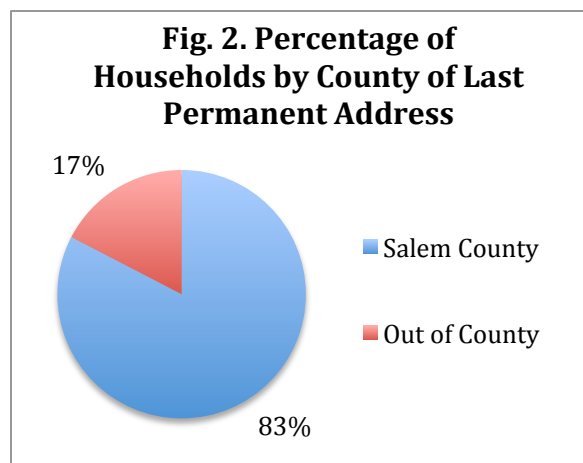


Figure 1 also shows that, over the past five years, while the number of homeless persons in different housing types has been fluctuating in Salem County, the overall trend is a decrease in total homelessness. From 2011 to 2015 Salem County has seen a decrease of 42 persons (52.5%).

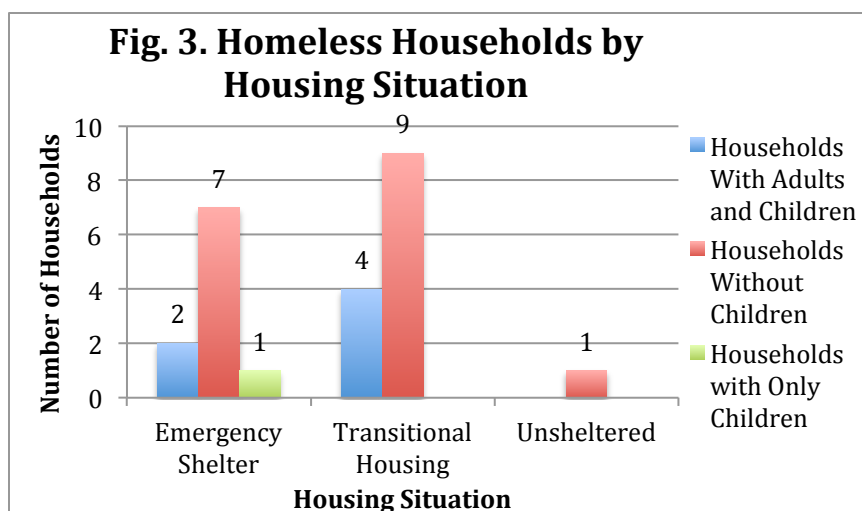
As Figure 2 shows, 17% of homeless households counted in Salem County reported that their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless was outside of the county.

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 24 homeless households counted in Salem County in 2015, 6 (25%) were families with

at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult, an increase of 1 family from 2014. These families included 20 persons, 12 children under age 18, and 8 adults. The average family size was 3.3 persons. Figure 3 shows that 2 families (33.3%) were staying in emergency shelter, while the remaining 4 (66.7%) were in transitional housing.

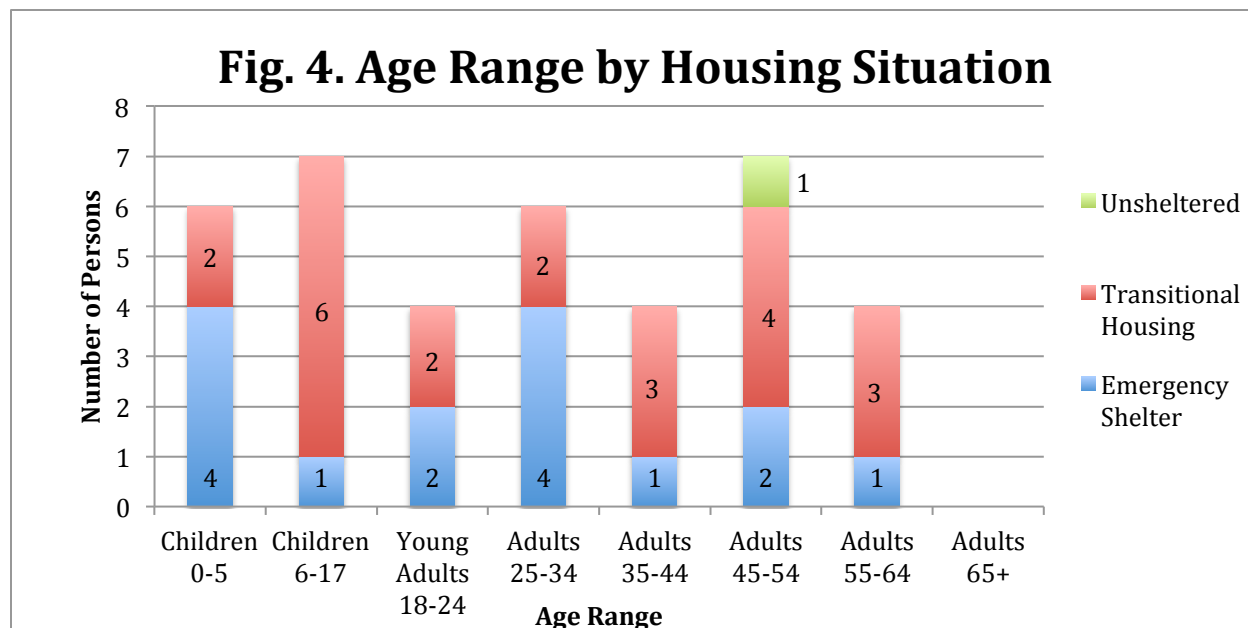


70.8% of the homeless households (17) counted in Salem County were households without children under 18, and they were composed of 17 individual adults. The majority of adult only households (52.9%) were in emergency shelter, while 1 was unsheltered, an increase of 1 (100%) from 2014.

In addition, there was 1 unaccompanied youth under the age of 18 staying in an emergency shelter in 2015. This is a decrease of 4 youth only households (80%) from 2014.

Demographics

55.3% of persons (21) experiencing homelessness in Salem County on the night of the count were adults over age 24. There were a total of 4 (10.5%) homeless young adults between 18 and 24 years old, and 13 (34.2%) 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 (53.8%). This age range, as well as 45 to 54 years old, were the most represented categories among homeless persons in Salem County.

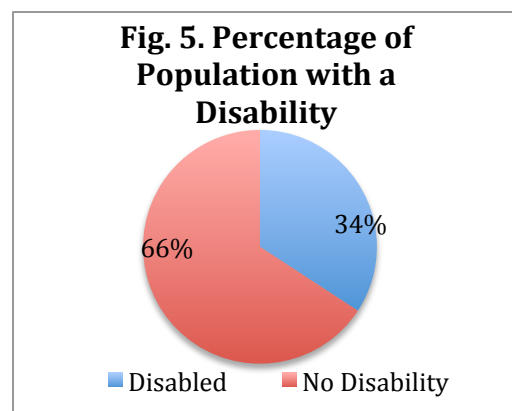


52.6% of homeless persons (20) were male, and 47.4% (18) were female.

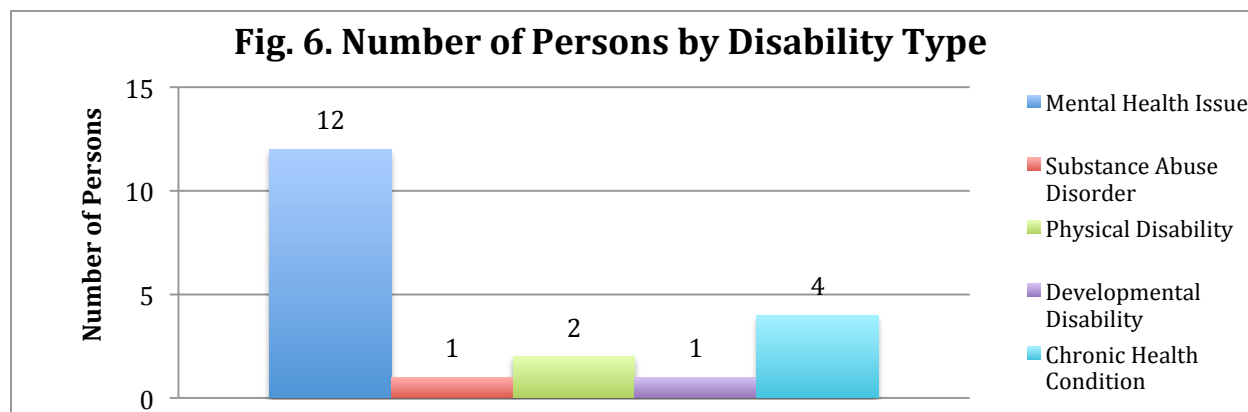
60.5% of persons identified their race as Black or African American, making that the largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported. The next largest group self-identified as White (36.8%). With regard to ethnicity, 0% of persons identified themselves as Hispanic.

Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 34% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 48% of adults 18 or older reported some type of disability compared to 7.7% 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 chronic health conditions.

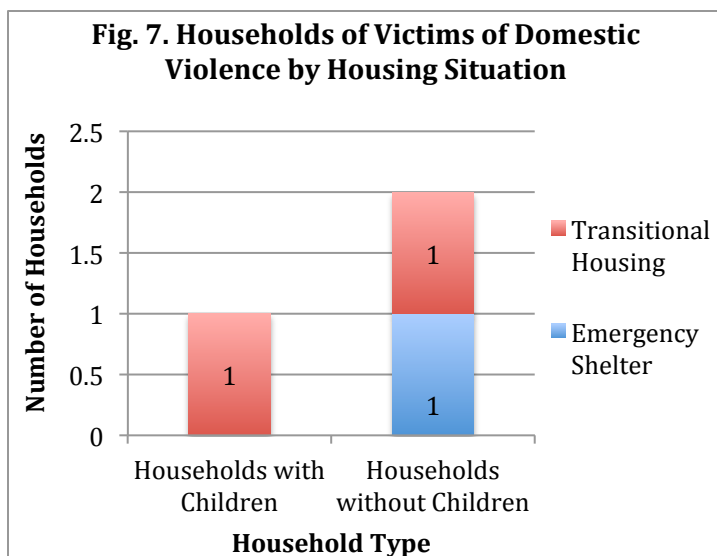


Among disabled adults, 91.7% reported mental health issues making this the most prevalent disability; representing 44% of the total adult homeless population. 33.3% of disabled adults also reported a chronic health condition. The 1 disabled child reported a mental health condition.



Victims of Domestic Violence

On the night of the count, in Salem County, 3 homeless households reported having a victim of domestic violence, the same as were counted in 2014. Figure 7 shows that 2 (66.7%) of these households were individual adult households, while 1 was a family with at least 1 adult and 1 child under 18, composed of 3 persons. 2 of the 3 households were in a transitional housing project.



Veterans

In its plan, *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has prioritized ending homelessness among veterans by 2015. Many communities in New Jersey have also been working hard to end homelessness among our country's servicemen and women.

There was 1 homeless individual veteran staying in a transitional housing project in Salem County on the night of the point in time count, matching the 1 veteran counted in 2014.

The individual veteran that was counted was male and identified his race as Black or African American. He was between 55 and 64 and did not report having a disability. This veteran was not connected to veteran specific benefits and was seeking emergency shelter and financial assistance for housing.

Income and Benefits

Among all households experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, 4.2% had no source of income, and 20.8% reported having earned income. The top two reported sources of income were General Assistance and SSI, which were received by 54.2% and 41.7% of households, respectively.

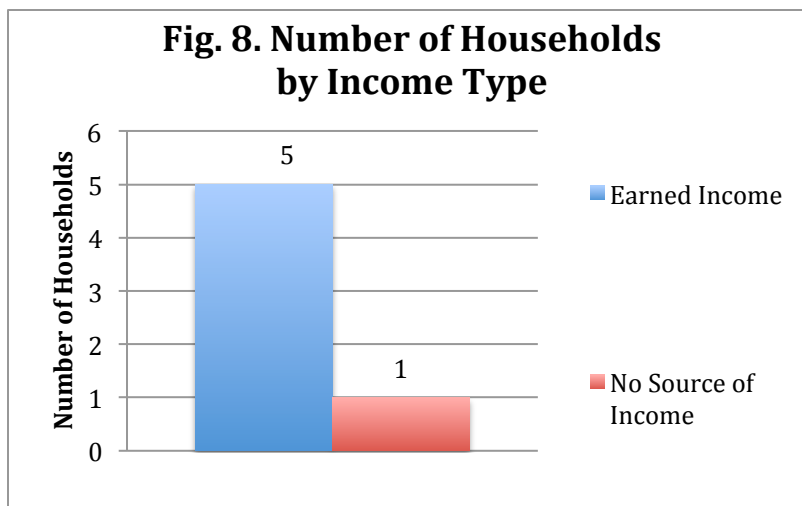


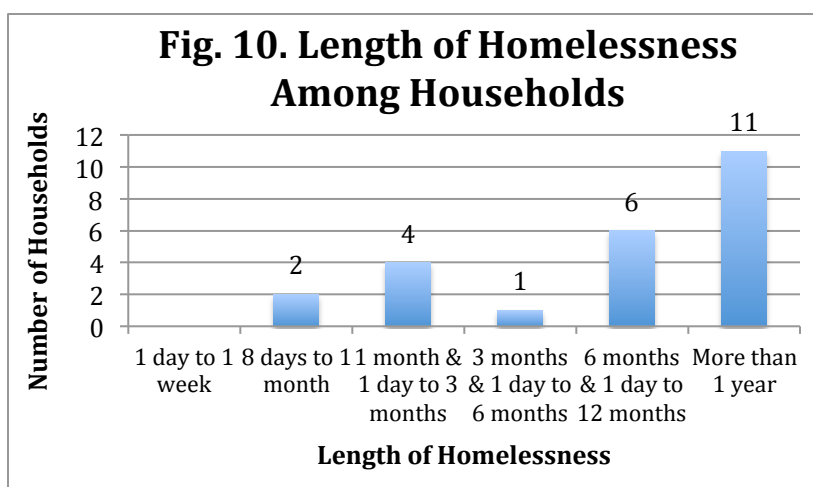
Figure 9 shows the average monthly income for all homeless households.

Figure 9. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation			
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered
Average for All Households	\$82.44	\$445.25	\$764.00

8.3% of households 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 79.2% of households. 58.3% were also connected to Medicaid benefits.

Length of Homelessness

Figure 10 shows that similar to 2014, most households, 11 (45.8%), reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted more than 1 year. 70.8% of households reported their most recent episode lasted more than 6 months.

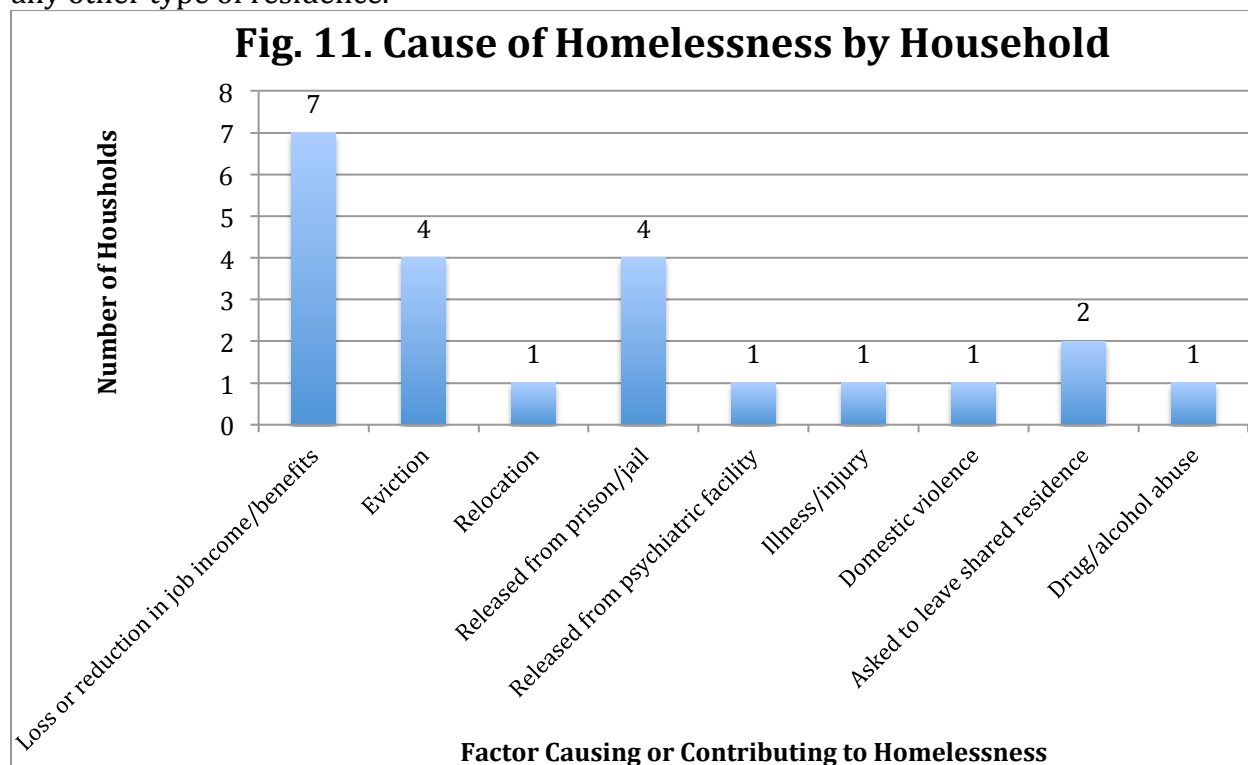


Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to a loss or reduction in job income or

benefits (29.2%) than any other cause. Figure 11 shows the full list of responses provided by homeless households counted in Salem County.

When homeless households were asked ‘what was your residence prior to your current living situation?’ more said they were staying or living with friends or family (50%) than any other type of residence.



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.

HUD currently has a goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2017. This goal reflects the urgency of helping to house those persons who have not been able to remain stably housed over the course of an extended period of time. Chronically Homeless persons are among the most vulnerable homeless groups, and providing effective supportive services and case management may be required in order to help some stay in the housing they need. Prioritization of new Continuum of Care funding opportunities has recently been giving some communities in New Jersey new resources for housing this subgroup.

Total Chronically Homeless Population

2 households, made up of 2 total persons, were chronically homeless in Salem County, according to the 2015 Point-In-Time Count, an increase of 1 household and person from 2014. The rate of chronic homelessness as a percentage of overall homelessness was 5.3% for 2015.

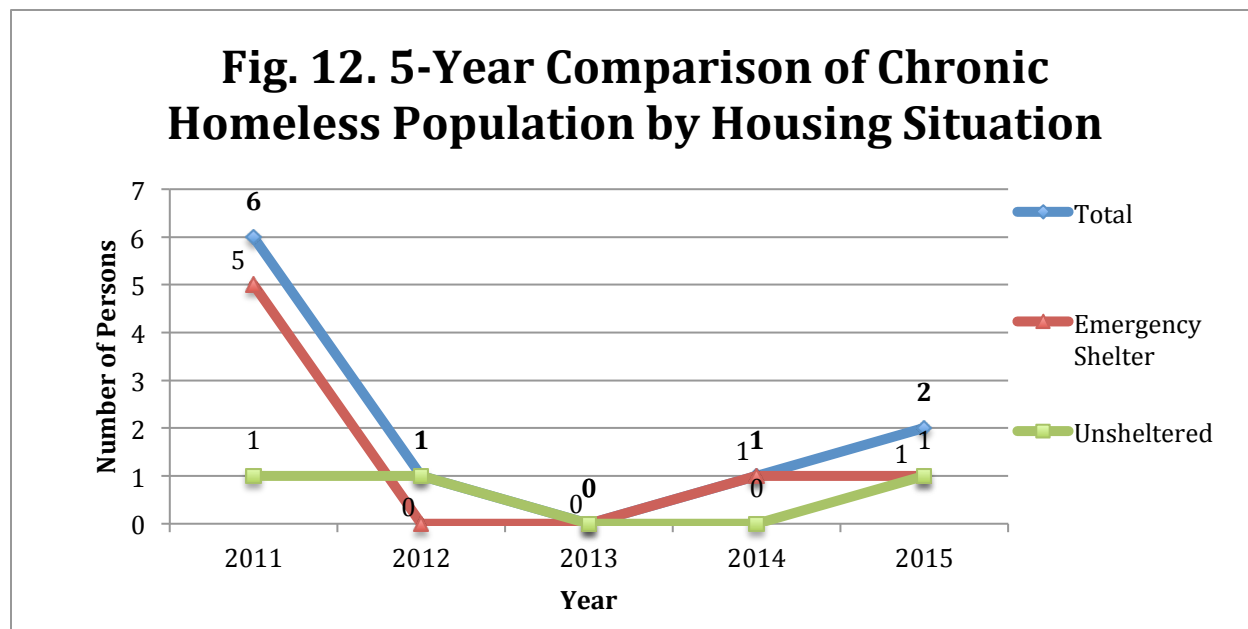
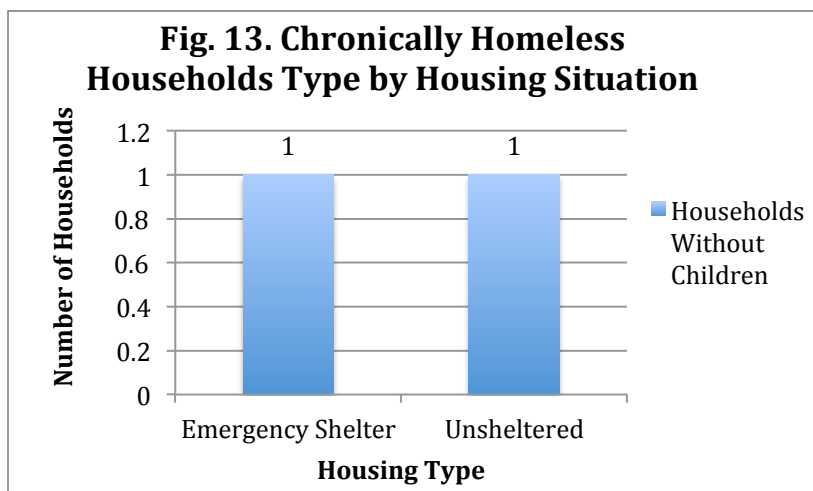


Figure 12 shows the number of chronically homeless persons who were staying in emergency shelter or living unsheltered in Salem County from 2011 to 2015. Over the past five years, the overall number of chronically homeless persons has decreased from 2011 to 2015 by 4 persons (66.7%).

Families and Individuals

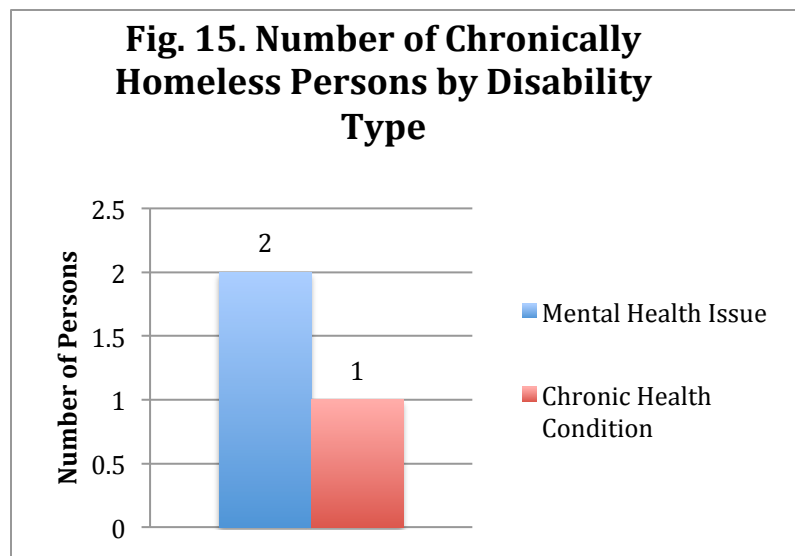
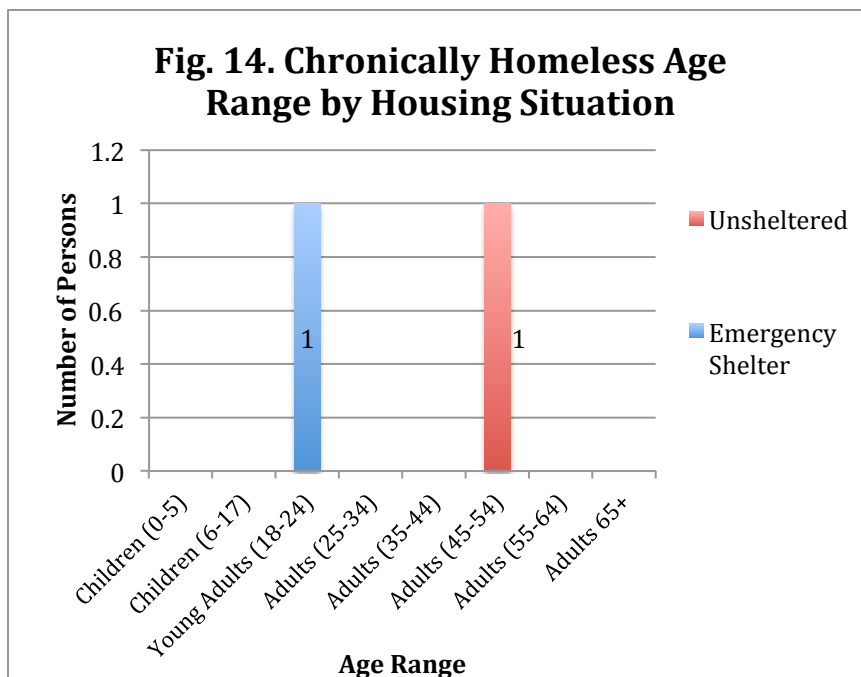
Both chronically homeless households counted in Salem County in 2015 were individual adult households. There were no chronically homeless family households of at least 1 adult and 1 child, or youth only households counted in 2015.



Demographics

Of the 2 chronically homeless persons counted in Salem County in 2015, 1 was a young adult between 18 and 24, while the other was an adult between 45 and 54.

Both chronically homeless individuals counted were female and identified their race as Black or African American. Neither chronically homeless individual reported their ethnicity as Hispanic.



Disabilities

In order to meet the definition of chronically homeless, at least one adult in each household must have some kind of disability. The list of disabilities reported by the two chronically homeless individuals can be seen in Figure 15.

Subpopulations

There were 0 chronically homeless individuals counted in the Point in Time in Salem County that reported being a victim of domestic violence or a veteran.

Income and Benefits

Among the 2 chronically homeless households counted in Salem County, both had some form of cash income. Figure 16 shows the sources of income reported by the chronically homeless households.

Both chronically homeless households also reported receiving non-cash benefits on the night of the count. The 2 households reported receiving Food Stamps (SNAP) benefits and 1 individual reported being connected to Medicaid benefits.

Fig. 16. Number of Chronically Homeless Households by Income Source

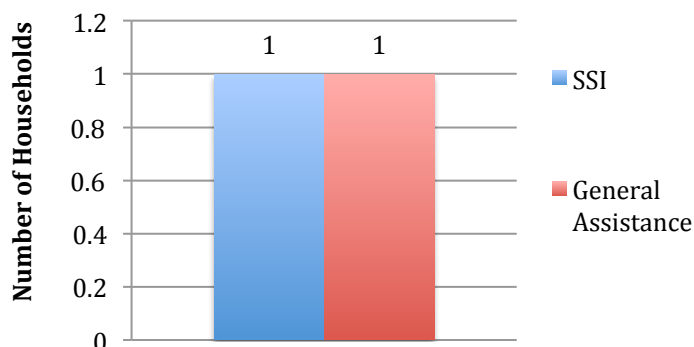
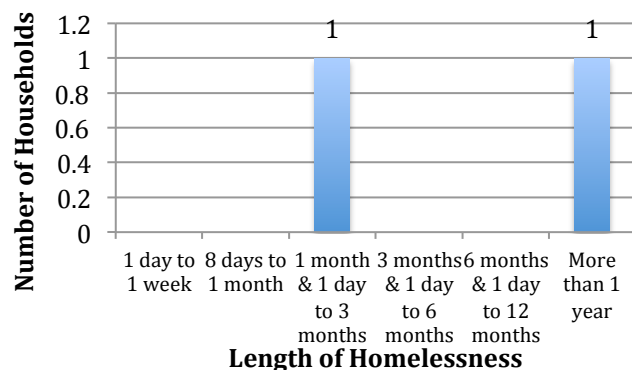


Fig. 17. Number of Chronically Homeless Households by Length of Homelessness



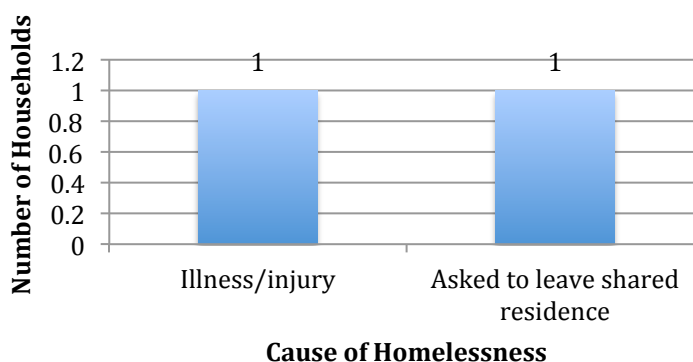
Length of Homelessness

Figure 17 shows the length of each chronically homeless household's most recent, continuous episode of homelessness.

Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, 1 chronically homeless household reported illness or injury while the other reported being asked to leave a shared residence.

Fig. 18. Number of Chronically Homeless Households by Cause of Homelessness



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

1 household, made up of 1 person, was living unsheltered in Salem County, according to the 2015 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 1 household and person from 2014.

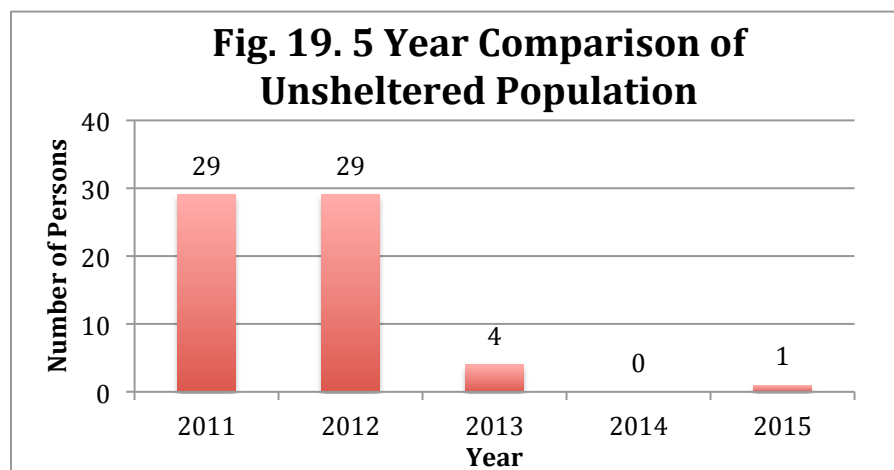


Figure 19 shows the number of unsheltered persons from 2011 to 2015. Since 2011, the number of unsheltered persons in Salem County has dropped by 28 persons, or 96.6%.

Families and Individuals

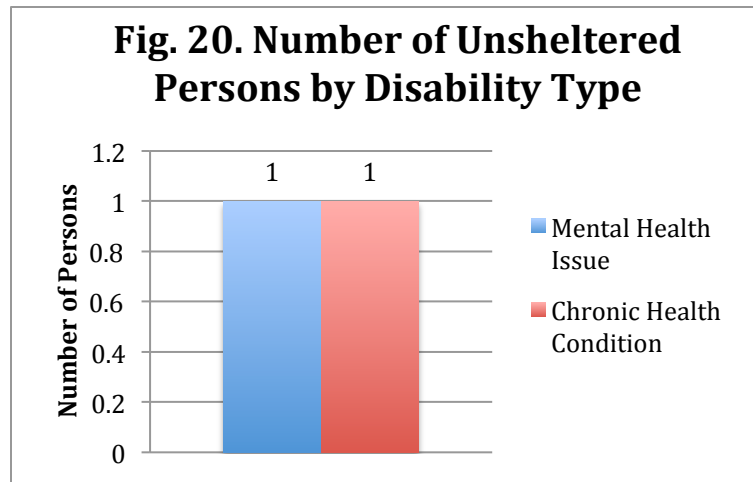
The 1 unsheltered household counted in Salem County in 2015 was an individual adult person. There were 0 unsheltered families or youth only households in 2015.

Demographics

The 1 unsheltered household counted in Salem County, was an individual female who reported her race as Black or African American. She reported her ethnicity as non-Hispanic and her age as between 45 and 54 years old.

Disabilities

The 1 unsheltered individual counted in Salem County, reported having a disabling condition. Figure 20 shows the disabilities reported.



Subpopulations

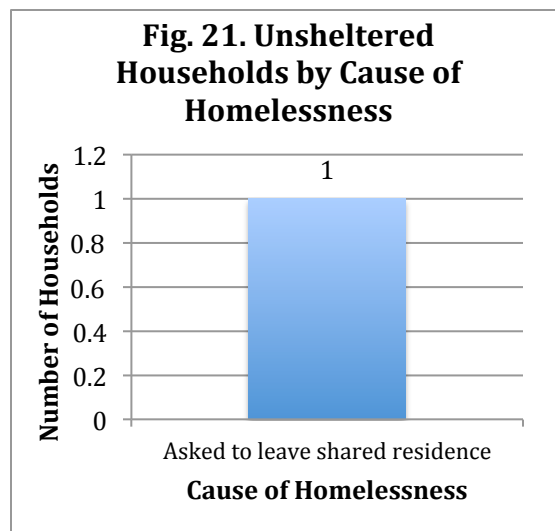
The 1 unsheltered individual counted in Salem County did not report being a victim of domestic violence or a veteran.

Income and Benefits

The 1 unsheltered household reported receiving SSI as their form of income and reported an average monthly income of \$764. They also reported receiving Food Stamps (SNAP) and being connected to Medicaid benefits.

Length of Homelessness

The 1 unsheltered household reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness lasted between 1 and 3 months.

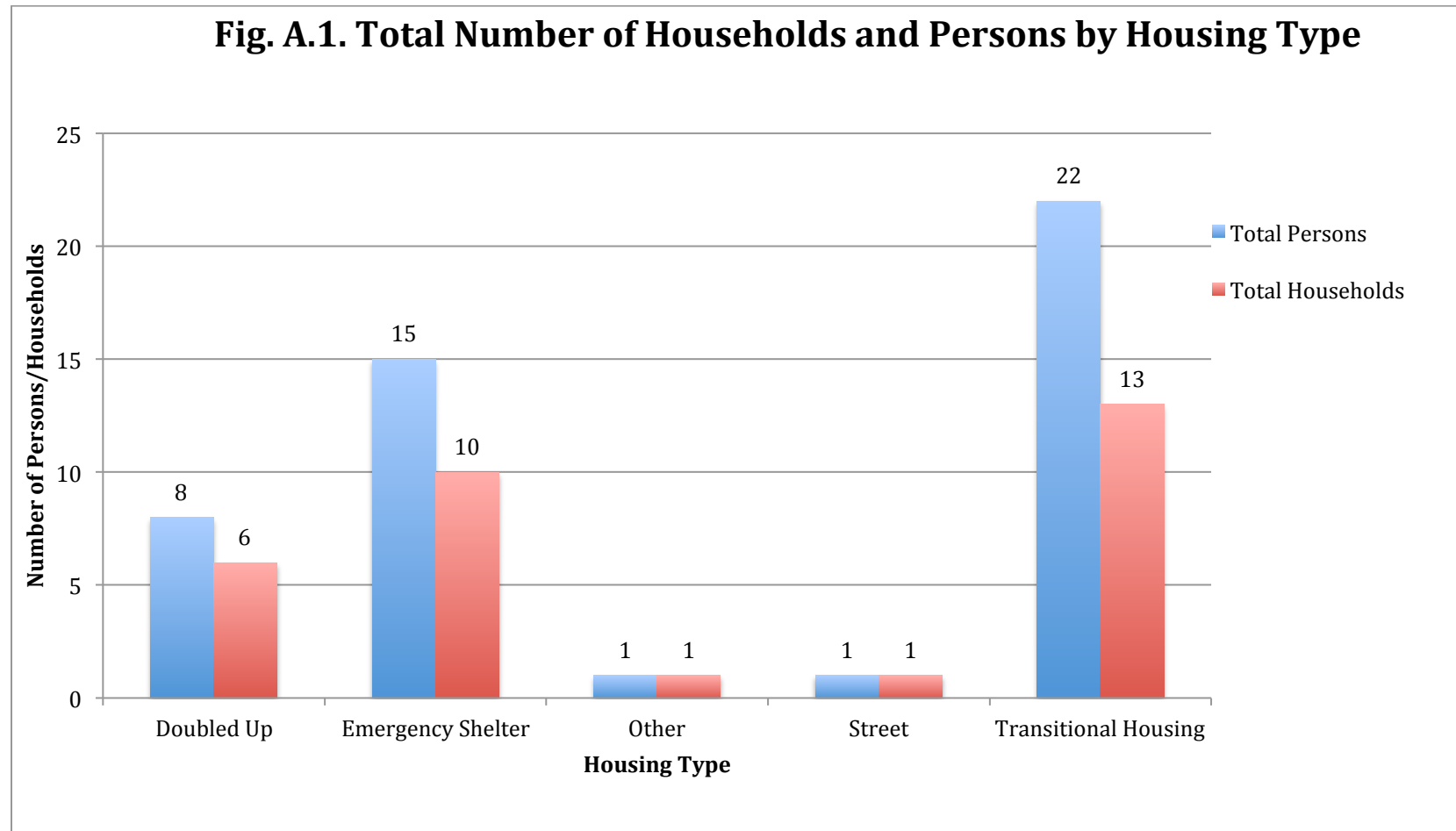


Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, the 1 unsheltered household reported being asked to leave a shared residence.

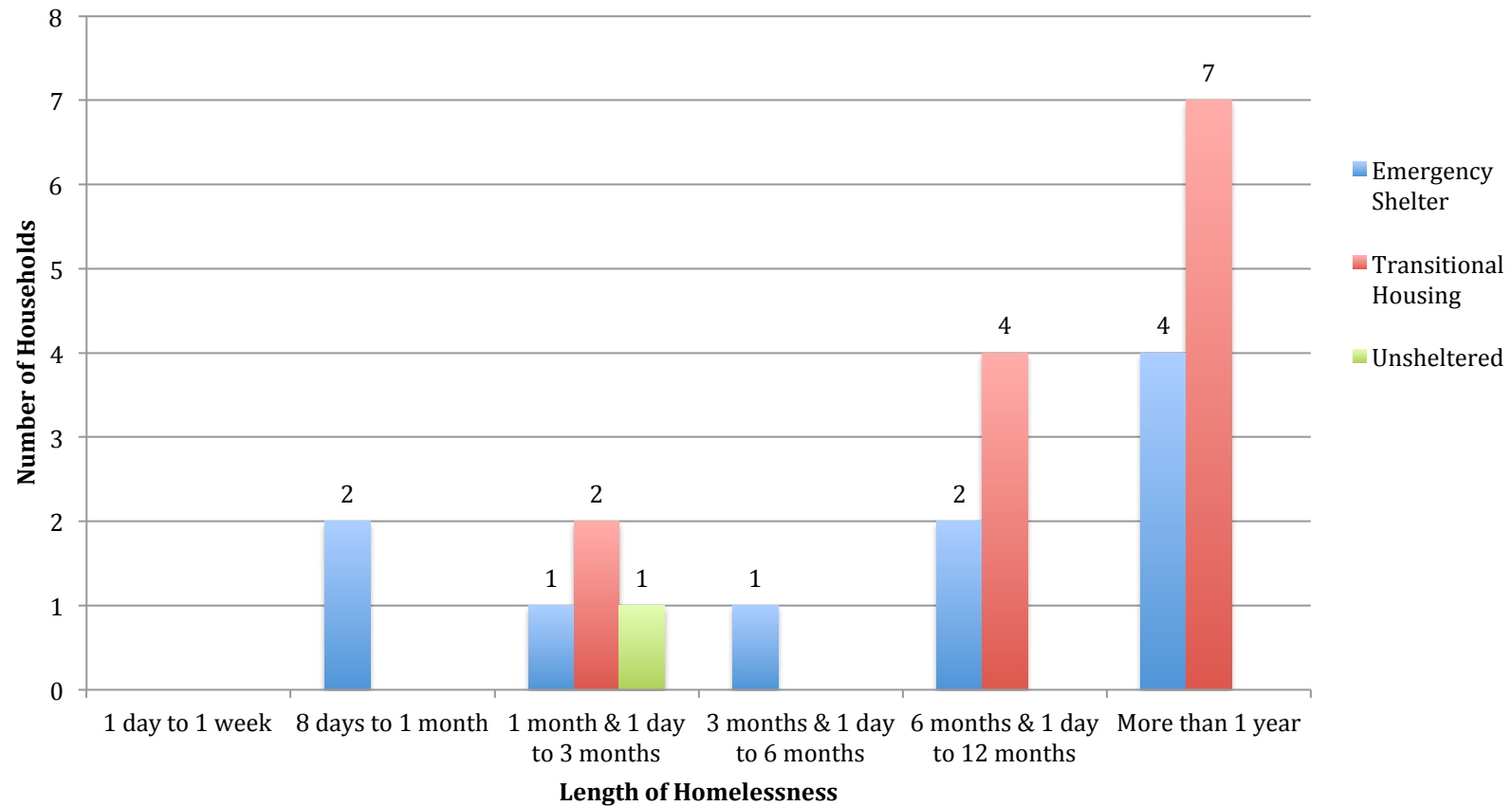
VI. Appendix

Where did you spend the night of Tuesday, January 27, 2015?



How long have you been in your current living situation?

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



Who was homeless with you on the night of January 27th?

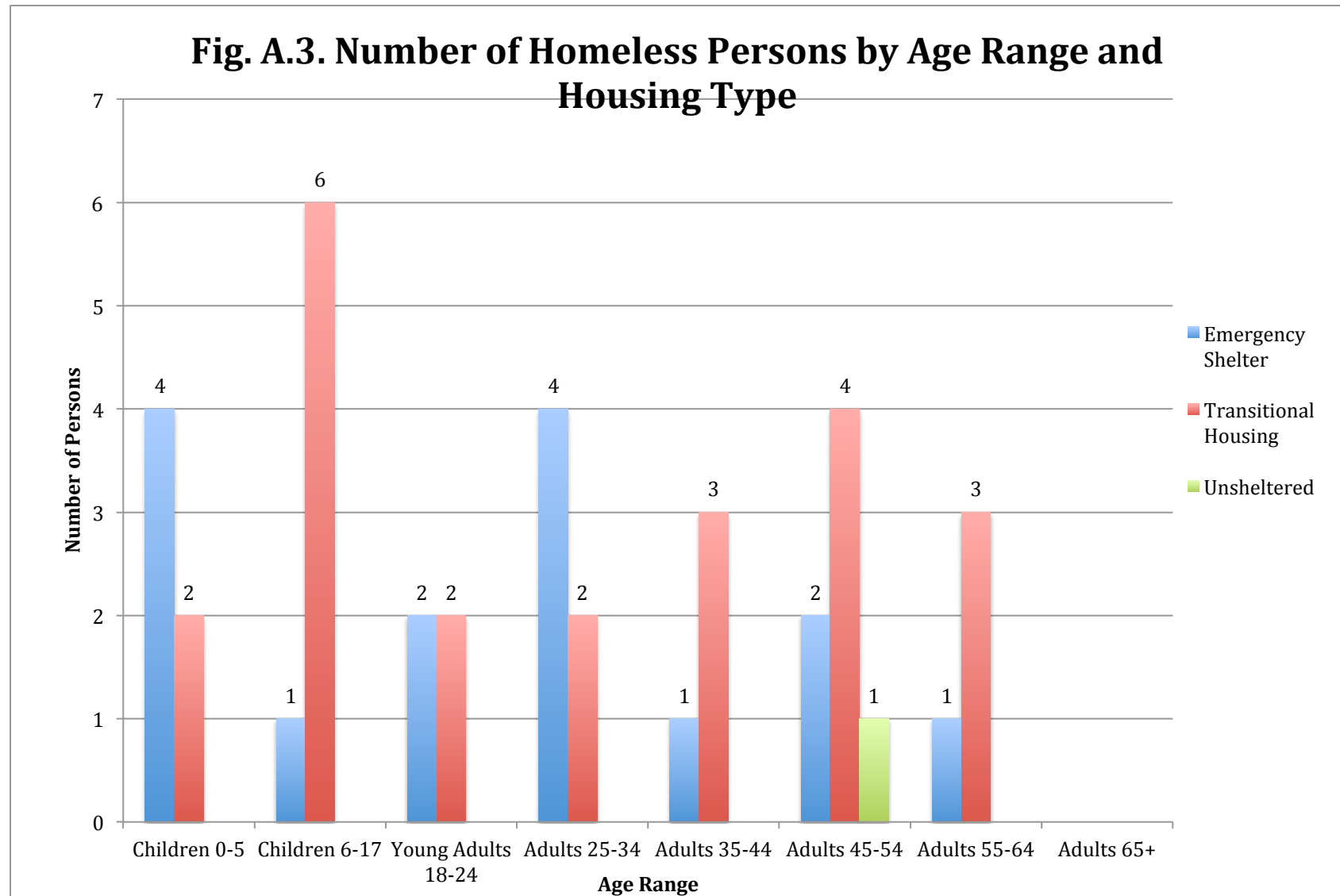


Fig. A.4. Number of Homeless Persons by Gender and Housing Situation

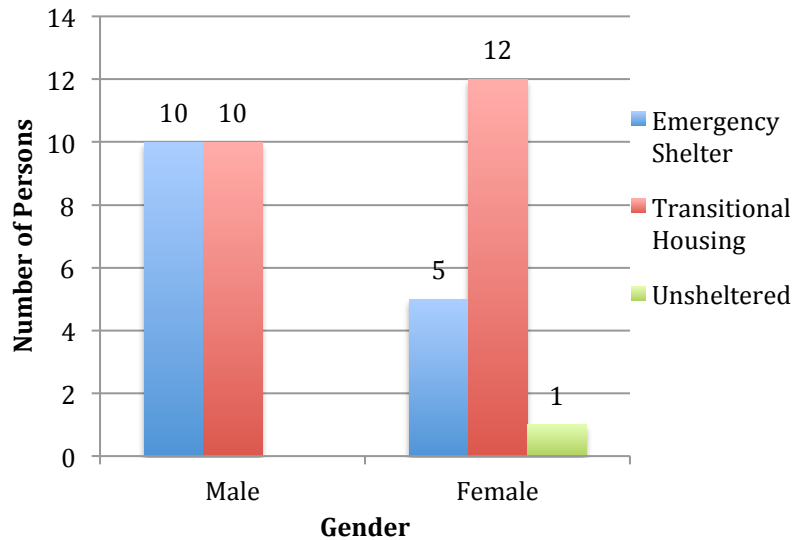


Fig. A.5. Number of Homeless Persons by Race

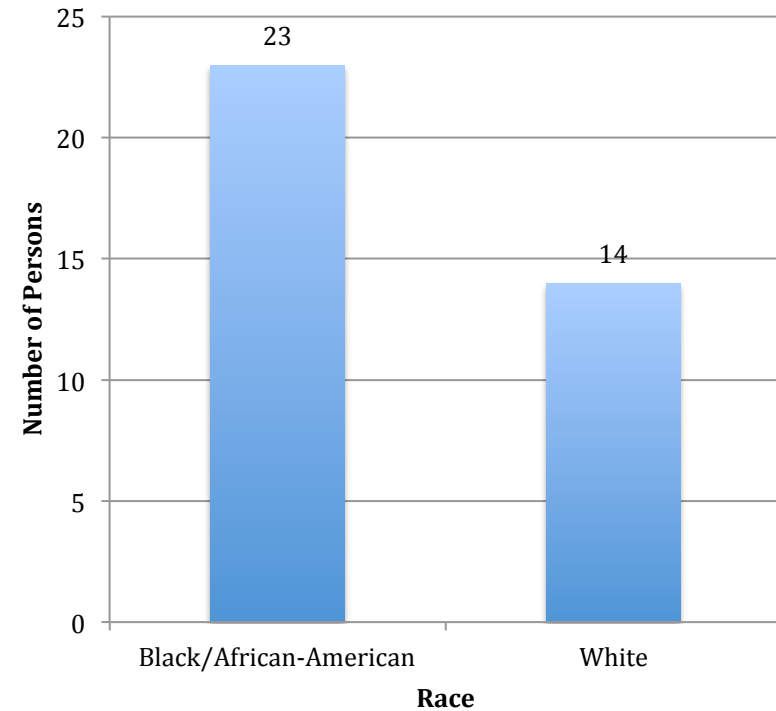
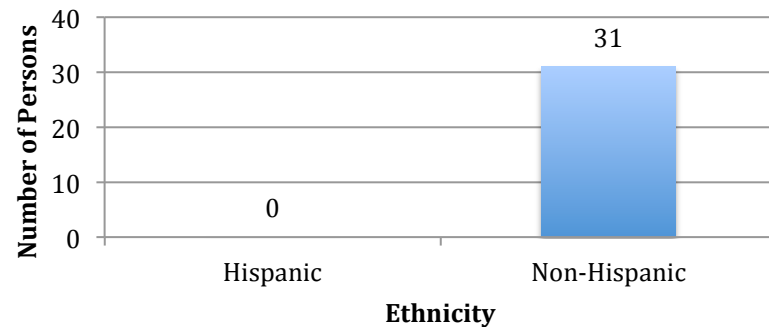
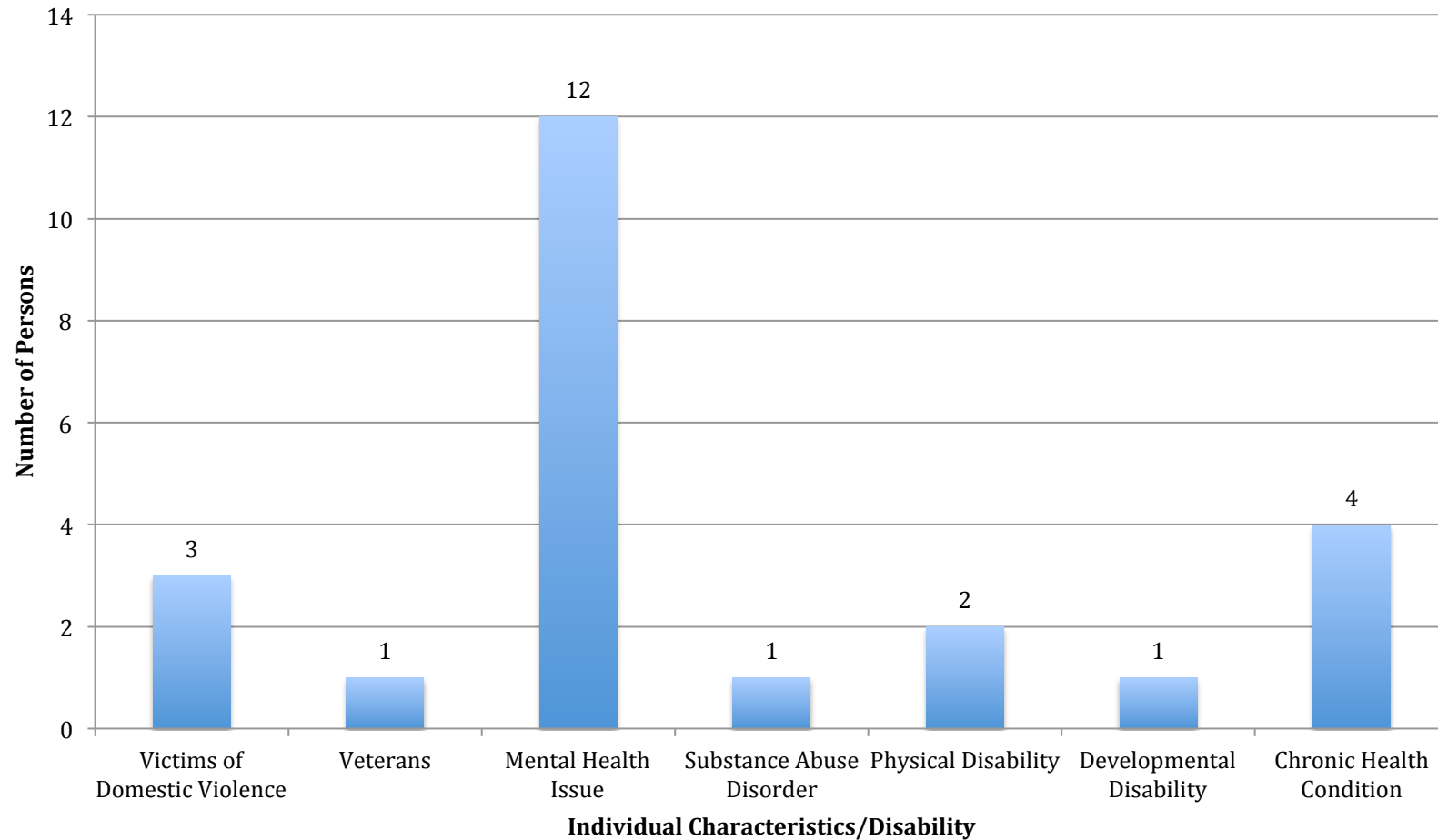


Fig. A.6. Number of Homeless Persons by Ethnicity



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

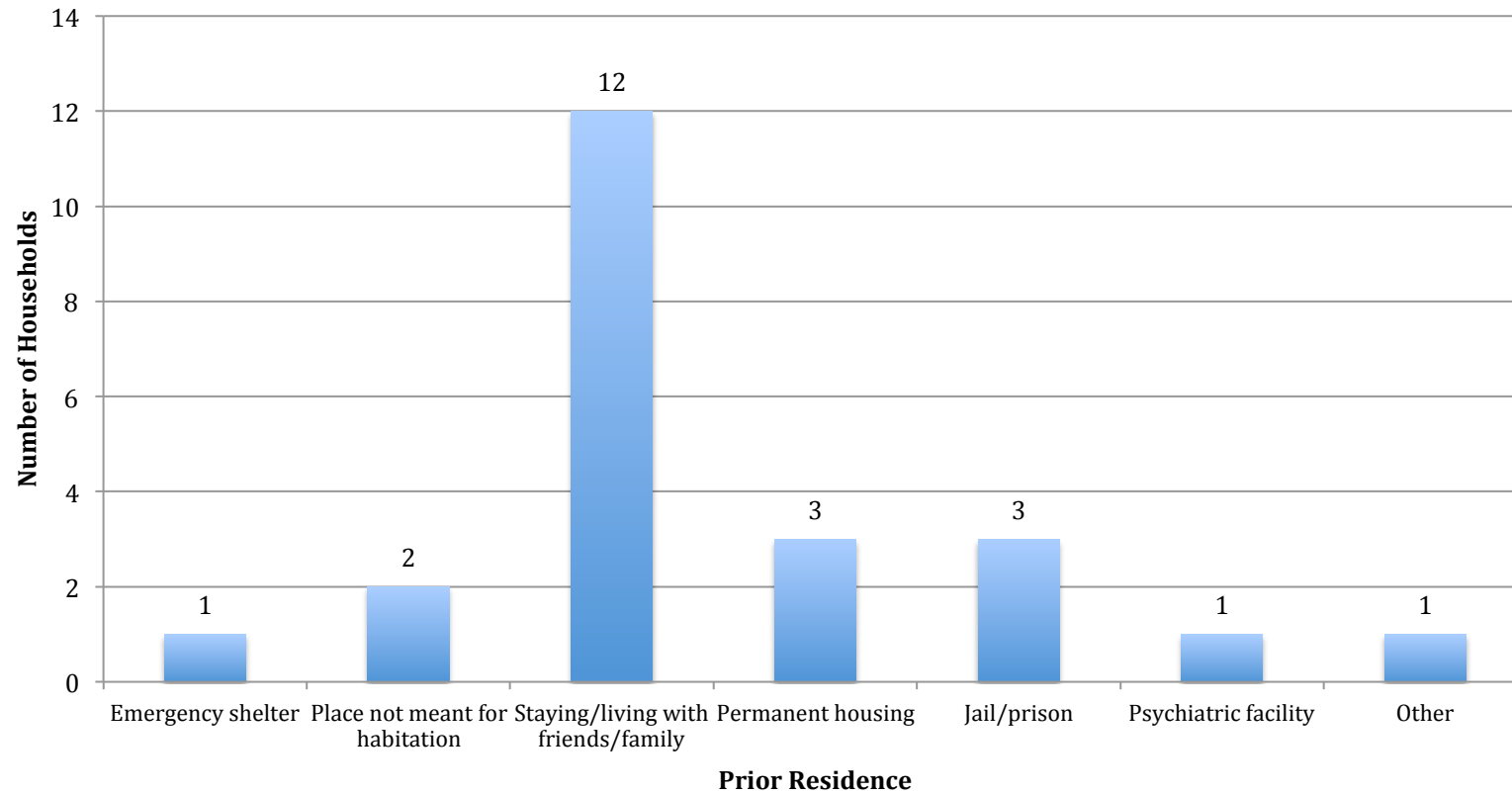


Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?

Fig. A.8. Number of Homeless Households by County, State or Country of Last Permanent Address	
Last Permanent Address - County/State	Number of Households
Cumberland County	1
Gloucester County	2
Salem County	19
Virginia	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

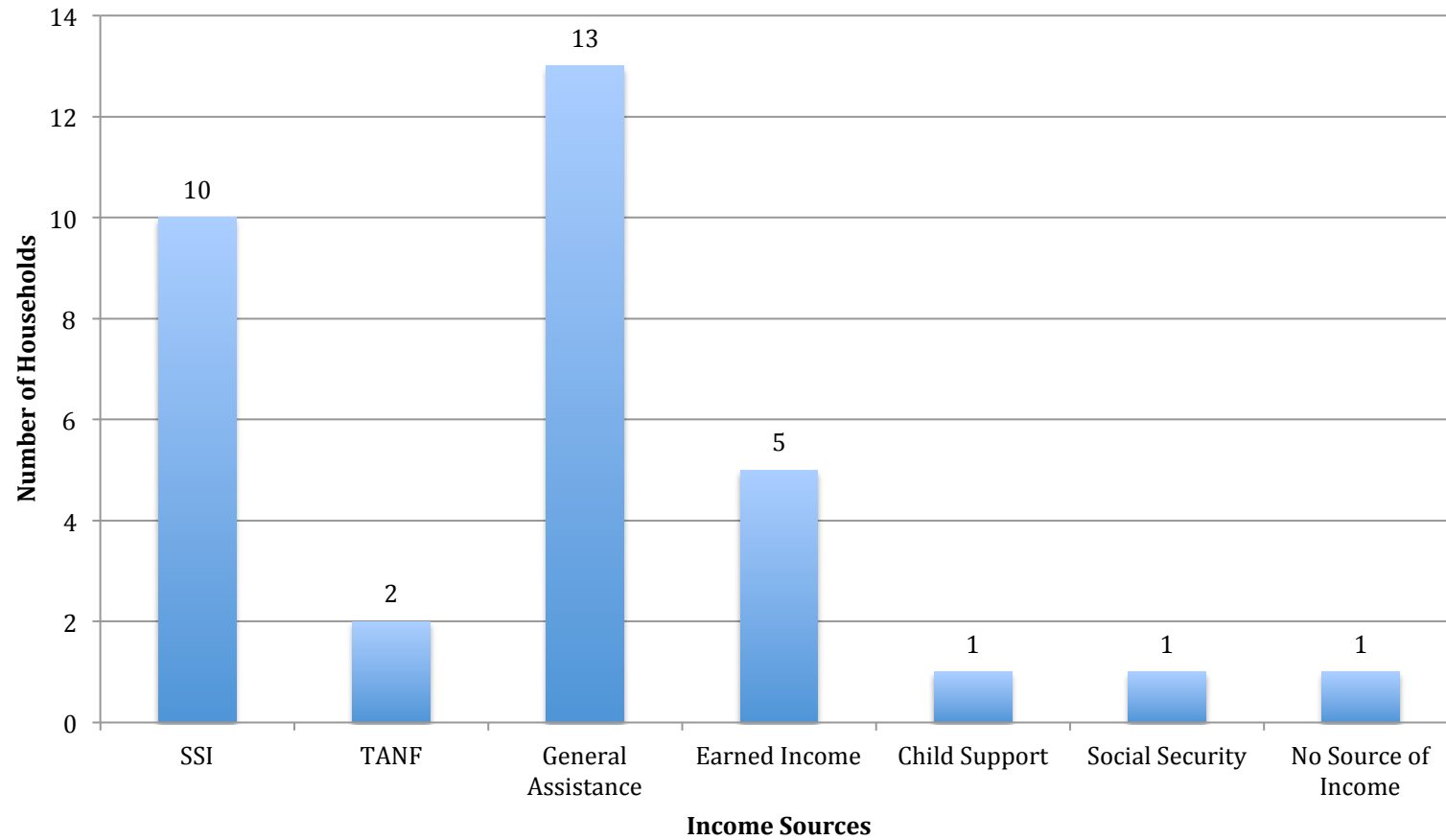
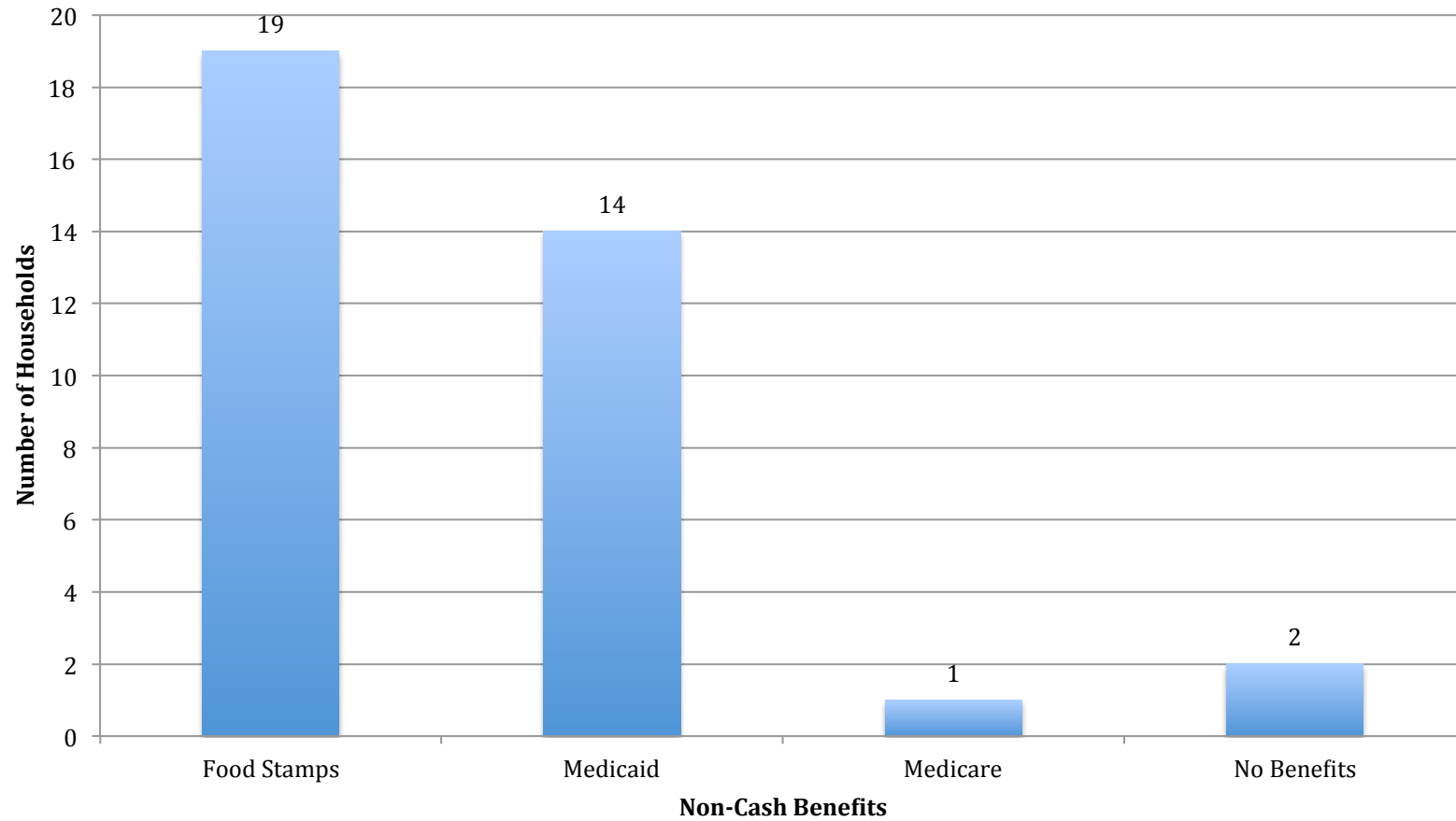
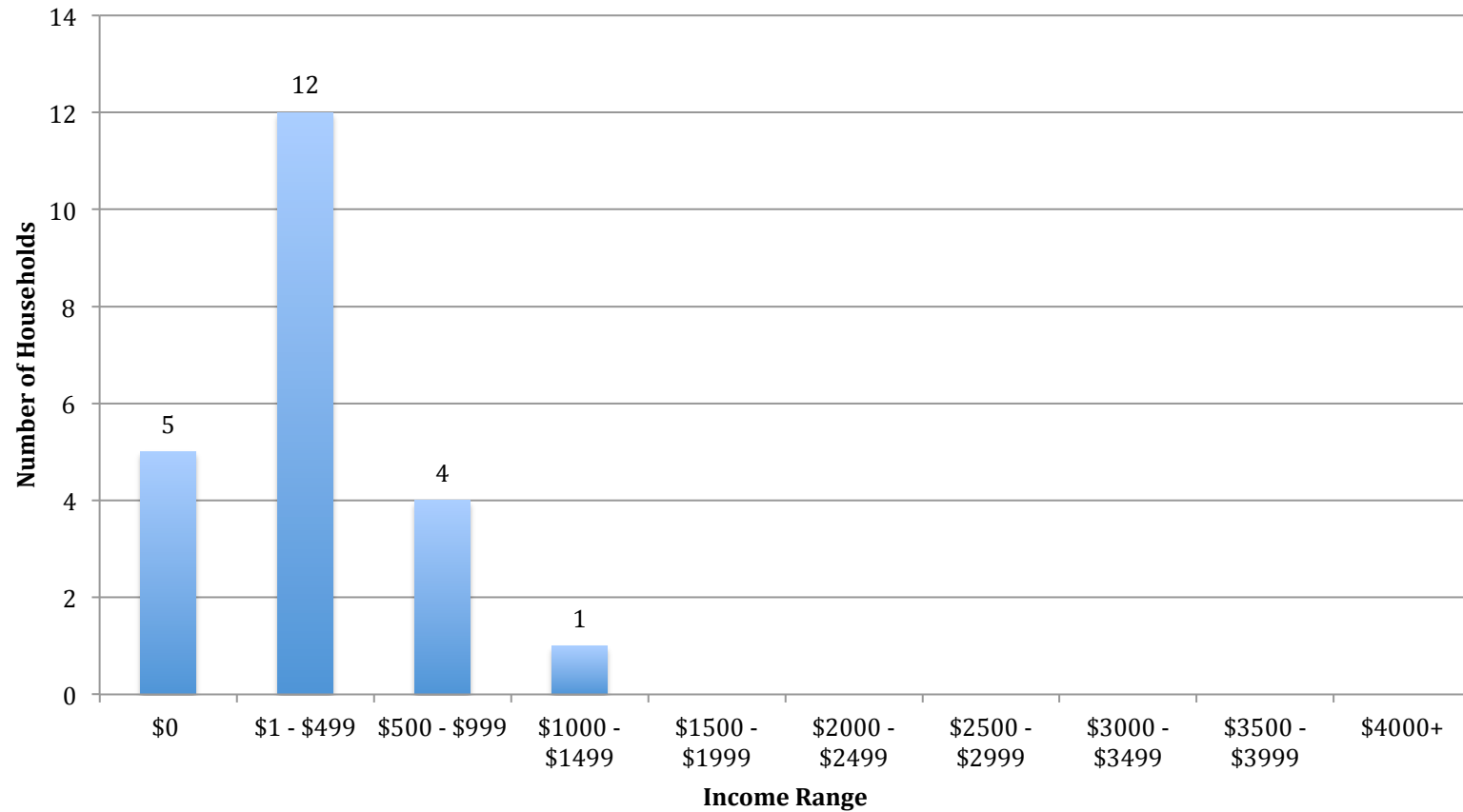


Fig. A. 11. Number of Homeless Households by Sources of Non-Cash Benefits



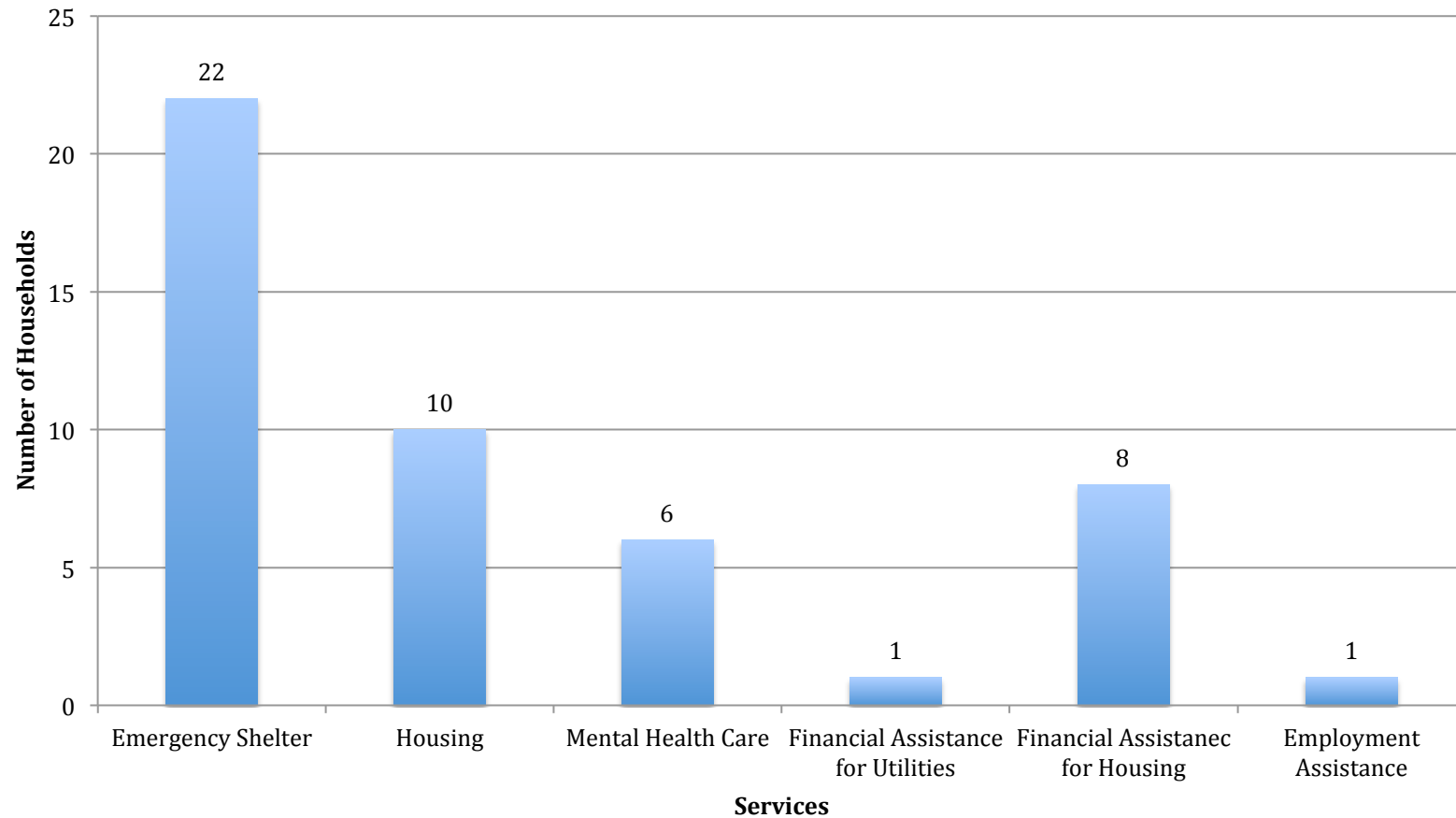
What is your monthly household income?

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 Homeless Households by Cause of Homelessness

