Monarch Housing Associates 29 Alden Street, Suite 1B Cranford, NJ 07016 908.272.5363

www.monarchhousing.org





# Cape May County's 2016 Point-In-Time Count of the Homeless

January 26, 2016

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This report was prepared for The New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency by Monarch Housing Associates

#### I. Introduction

#### NJ Counts 2016

NJ Counts 2016, New Jersey's annual Point-In-Time (PIT) Count of the Homeless, provides a statewide snapshot of homeless households in our communities; where they find shelter, what their needs are, and what factors contribute to making them homeless. The 2016 Count reveals important demographic and other information about families and individuals who were homeless on the night of Tuesday, January 26th, 2016 and was carried out with the help of government agencies, community-based organizations, and local volunteers.

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

#### Acknowledgements

Monarch would like to thank all Point-In-Time Coordinators, homeless service providers, agencies, and volunteers who participated in NJ Counts 2016. Monarch would also like to specifically thank Bergen County for providing a Spanish translation of the 2016 paper survey tool.

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

Funding for coordinating New Jersey's 2016 Point-In-Time and producing this report was provided by New Jersey's Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA).

#### This Report

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

- 1. Total homeless population;
- 2. Those experiencing chronic homelessness (families and individuals that have been homeless for a year or longer, or who have experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years in which the episodes equal at least 12 months, and have a disabled head of household); and
- 3. Unsheltered families and individuals:

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

In addition to the main findings presented in the body of this report, Appendix A includes charts illustrating the responses to all survey questions that were part of the 2016 Point-In-Time Count.

# II. Data Collection and Methodology

#### Requirements for the Count

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

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

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

Because this report focuses on those respondents who meet HUD's definition of homeless, it does not include information about those who may be at risk of homelessness, precariously housed, or considered homeless under other federal statutes. Persons who, on the night of the count, were living doubled up with another household, living in illegal or overcrowded units, being discharged from a jail or health facility with no subsequent residence, scheduled to be evicted, or paying for its own motel unit were not considered homeless. All survey information collected for respondents who were at risk of homelessness or precariously housed was preserved and shared with each community for local planning purposes, but is not included in this report unless otherwise noted.

#### Data Collection Methods

Monarch Housing Associates provided each of New Jersey's 21 counties with in-person training, online video and print training guides, a practice online survey tool, and technical assistance to aid in the data collection process for New Jersey's 2016 Point-In-Time Count. Point-In-Time Coordinators in each county disseminated PIT training materials and helped facilitate local planning around implementation of the PIT count in their communities.

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

The 2016 PIT Survey tool closely mirrors information collected in HMIS so that the data was comparable for important factors such as household characteristics, income, services needed, and factors contributing to homelessness. Agencies updated all HMIS data to accurately reflect the night of the count, and those with programs that were non HMISparticipating submitted information from interviews utilizing the Paper Survey tool through SurveyMonkey.

#### Limitations

- 1. HUD requires a count of sheltered homeless persons and families annually, but only a biennial count of those who are unsheltered. Even though New Jersey conducts both a sheltered and unsheltered count each year, the comprehensiveness of the unsheltered count may be influenced during the non-HUD required full count years. This report includes comparison data from 2012 to 2016. 2012, 2014 and 2016 were not HUD required full reporting years while 2013 and 2015 were.
- 2. The information presented in this report is based on survey interviews and agency HMIS records. In some cases, survey respondents did not answer every question completely, and homeless provider agencies did not report all client information on the night of the count. For this reason, all charts presented in this report will be based on the responses received, while all percentages will be based on the total households or individuals served and may not equal 100% in each category due to possible missing data.
- 3. Because the Point-In-Time Count represents only one night during the last ten days of January, it is widely accepted that the PIT will undercount the overall homeless

population. Undercounting may occur due to difficulty finding those living on the street, incomplete information for people who do not agree to complete the survey, a shortage of volunteers to cover a geographic area, or homeless persons choosing not to seek housing services on the night of the count. This data should not be viewed as a comprehensive measurement of all families and individuals who experience homelessness throughout the year, but rather as a minimum number of persons who experience homelessness in New Jersey on a given night.

#### **De-duplication**

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

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

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

Following this de-duplication of the data, communities were given preliminary data to review all identified duplicates and records with missing data. Communities were then able to update records with missing information and/or request any additional deduplication 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 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016 a total of 81 households, including 133 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Cape May County, according to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 8 persons in 7 households were identified as chronically homeless.
- 9 households, including 9 persons were unsheltered on the night of the count.

#### **Total Homeless Population**

On the night of January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016, a total of 133 persons, in 81 households, were experiencing homelessness in Cape May County, according to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 24 persons (15.3%) and 30 households (27%) from 2015. Cape May County had 1.5% of New Jersey's statewide homeless population in 2016.

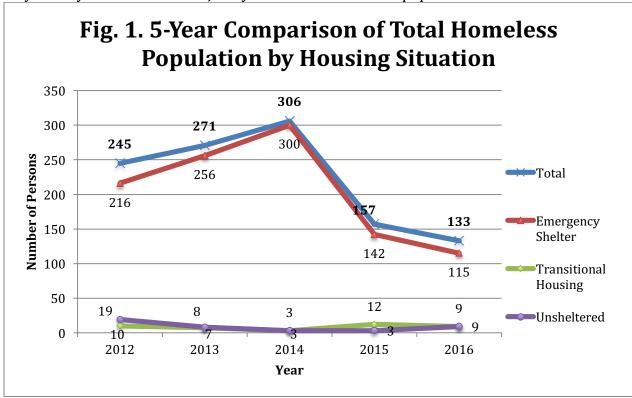
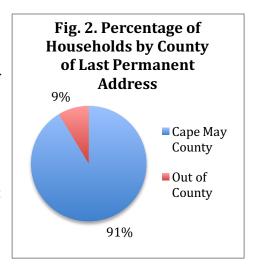


Figure 1 shows that, in 2016, 115 homeless persons stayed in emergency shelters, 9 stayed in transitional housing, and 9 were living unsheltered on the night of the count. The number of persons in transitional housing decreased by 3 persons (25%) and the number of those in emergency shelter decreased 27 persons (19%) from 2015. The number of those counted who were in unsheltered locations, however, increased by 6 (200%) compared with 2015.

Figure 1 also shows that, over the past five years in Cape May County the total number of homeless persons had been shifting up until 2014, when it began trending steeply downward. In 2016, the number of homeless persons in Cape May County reflects a decrease of 112 since 2012, a change of 45.7% over this five-year reporting period.

As Figure 2 shows, 9% of the homeless households in Cape May County in 2016 reported that their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless was outside of the county.

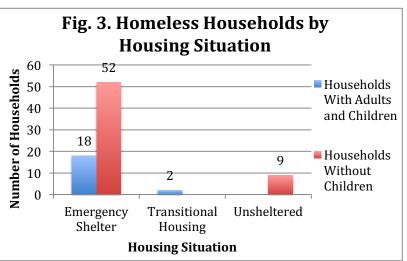


#### Homeless Families and Individuals

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 homeless 81 households counted in Cape May County in 2016, 20 (24.7%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult. These families were composed of 69 persons, including 44 children under age 18. The average family size was 3.5 persons. Figure 3 shows that families were staving emergency shelter (90%), and

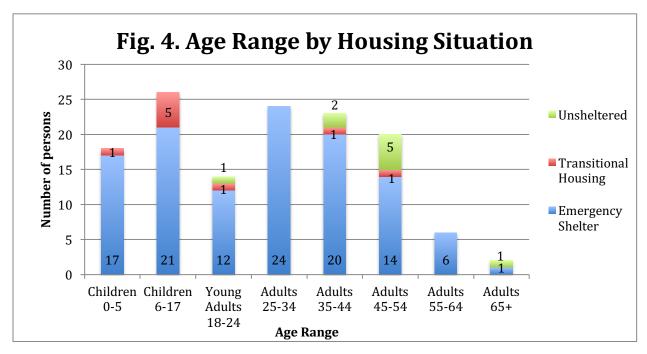


2 were in transitional housing programs (10%). There were no unsheltered families. In 2016, Cape May County counted 1 more homeless family than in 2015, an increase of 5.3%.

75.3% (61) of the homeless households in Cape May County were households without children under 18, and they were composed of 64 adults. 52 (85.2%) of these adult-only households were staying in emergency shelters, and 9 (14.8%) were unsheltered. Cape May County has seen the number of adult-only homeless households decrease by 31 (33.7%) since 2015.

#### **Demographics**

There were a total of 14 (10.5%) homeless adults between 18 and 24 years old, 75 (56.4%) adults over age 24, and 44 (33.1%) children under 18 years old experiencing homelessness on the night of the count. Figure 4 shows that the majority of homeless children who were under the age of 18 were between 6 and 17 years of age (26, 59.1%) This was also the age range most represented, with 19.5% of the overall homeless population. The next most represented age range was adults between 25 and 34 (24 persons, 18%).

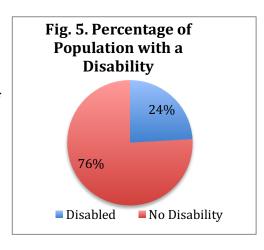


53.4% of homeless persons were male, and 46.6% were female.

75.9% of persons identified their race as White, making that the largest racial subgroup among persons experiencing homelessness on the night of the count. The next largest group self-identified as Black or African-American (23.3%). With regard to ethnicity, 21.1% of homeless persons identified themselves as Hispanic.

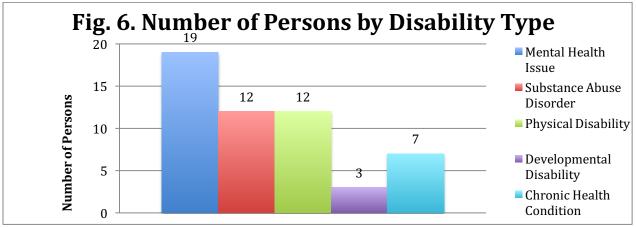
#### Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 24% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 34.8% of adults (31 persons) 18 or older reported some type of disability compared to 2.3% of children (1 person). Figure 6 shows the number of the homeless persons that identified as having various disabilities. The most common disabilities included mental health



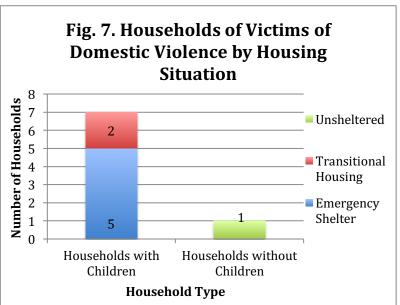
issues, substance abuse disorders, and physical disabilities.

Among disabled adults, 61.3% reported a mental health issue, making this the most prevalent disability. Adults with mental health issues were 21.3% of the total homeless adult population. Among homeless children, 1 reported developmental disabilities, making this the most prevalent condition.

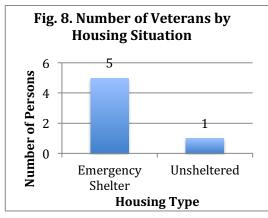


#### Victims of Domestic Violence

On the night of the count, in Cape May County, 8 homeless households (9.9% οf all households) identified having a victim of domestic violence. A total of 29 homeless persons who were members of those households were impacted. The majority (87.5%)of these households had at least one adult and one child, 71.4% of which were in emergency shelter on the night of the count. adult-only victim



household (12.5%) was unsheltered on the night of the count.



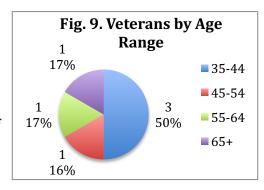
#### **Veterans**

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

been working hard to end homelessness among our country's servicemen and women.

6 homeless veterans were identified on the night of the count. This represents an increase from 0 veterans counted in 2015. All of the homeless veterans counted were in households with only adults, 2 of which were adult couples. The majority (83.3%) of homeless veterans were in emergency shelter, but 1 unsheltered veteran was identified as well.

5 of the veterans experiencing homelessness in Cape May County on the night of the count were male and 1 was female. The most common racial background identified among them (4 veterans, 66.7%) was White, with 2 (33.3%) identified as Balck or African-American. Figure 9 Illustrates the percentage of homeless veterans by age range. No homeless veterans were under 35 years old.



2 of the 6 veterans, 33.3%, reported having some kind of disability. Both veterans reported chronic health conditions, 1 reported mental health issues, and 1 reported a physical disability. The types of services that homeless veterans sought the most were housing and emergency shelter. 2 homeless veterans were connected with VA medical benefits (33.3%). 66.7% of homeless veterans reported having no source of income, and 16.7% reported that they were not connected with any kind of non-cash mainstream benefit.

#### **Income and Benefits**

Among all homeless households on the night of the count, 63% had no source of income and only 1.2% reported having earned cash income (see Figure 10). The three most common sources of non-earned cash income among households were SSI (19.8%), TANF (12.3%) and General Assistance (9.9%).

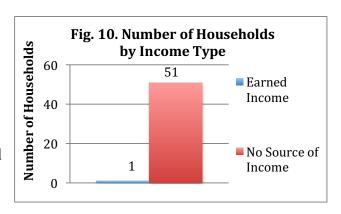


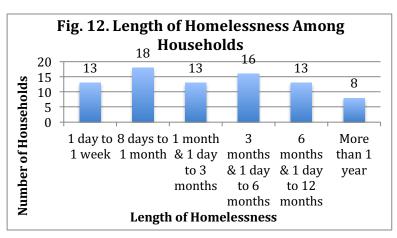
Figure 11 shows the average monthly income for all homeless households by housing situation.

Figure 11. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation				
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered	
Average for All Households	\$152.01	\$1050.00	\$162.88	

8.6% of homeless households reported receiving no kind of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. The top reported non-cash benefits were Food Stamps (SNAP) (81.5%) and Medicaid (55.5%).

#### Length of Homelessness

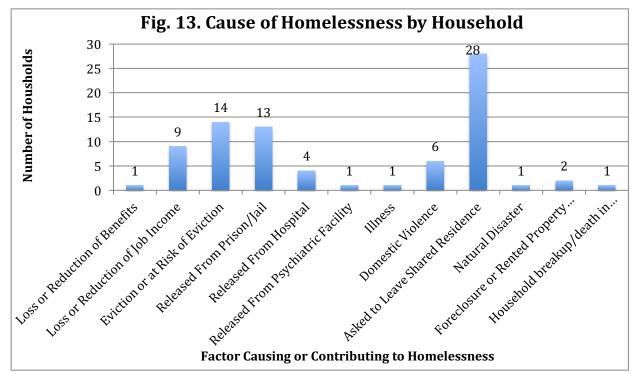
As Figure 12 shows, the lengths of time households had been homeless was fairly evenly distributed. The largest number of households (18 households, 22.2%) reported their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted between 8 days and 1 month. 16, or 19.6%



of households, reported being homeless between 3 and 6 months. 8 households (9.9%) had been homeless more than 12 months. 16% of households reported their most recent episode of homelessness as lasting for less than 1 week.

#### Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households, 28 (34.6%), attributed their homelessness to being asked to leave a shared residence than any other cause. As Figure 13 shows, the next most common factors reported were eviction (17.3%), followed by release from prison or jail (16%).



When homeless households were asked 'what was your residence prior to your current living situation?' more said they were living with friends or family (55.6%) than any other type of residence. 16% reported being in prison or jailprior to their current living situation, and another 9.9% reported staying in permanent housing.

# IV. Findings for the Chronically Homeless

Someone with a long-term disabling condition, who has been continually homeless for a year or more, or at least four times in the past three years, meets HUD's definition of chronically homeless. Any family with one adult that meets this definition is considered a chronically homeless family. This definition has been updated since the 2015 point in time, in such that in order for a household to meet the episodic definition of chronically homeless, the 4 episodes must equal at least 12 months, which may lead to a decrease in the number of households that qualify as chronically homeless.

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

#### **Total Chronically Homeless Population**

7 households, made up of 8 persons, were chronically homeless in Cape May County, according to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 6 persons (300%) from 2015. The rate of chronic homelessness as a percentage of overall homelessness increased from 1.8% in 2015 to 6.1% in 2016.

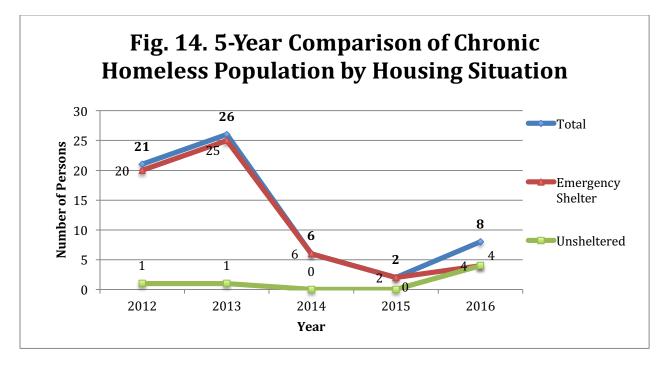
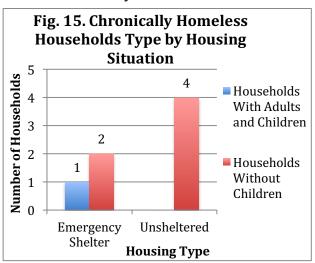


Figure 14 shows the number of chronically homeless persons who were in emergency shelters or living unsheltered in Cape May County from 2012 to 2016. Over the past five

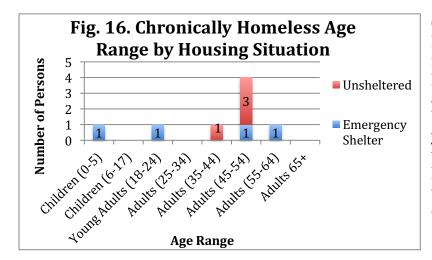
years the total number of chronically homeless persons has seen an overall decrease, with a slight increase in 2016. Overall, over the past 5 years the total number of chronically homeless persons has decreased by 13 persons (61.9%.). The numbers of chronically homeless persons in emergency shelter decreased 80%, while the unsheltered chronically homeless population increased by 3, which is 300% in the last 5 years.

#### Families and Individuals

6 of the chronically homeless household counted in 2016 were adult-only households, and 1 of the households was a family household. This marks an increase from the 0 chronically homeless families counted in 2015. 4 (66.7%) of the adult-only households were living unsheltered, an increase from 0 counted in 2015.



#### **Demographics**

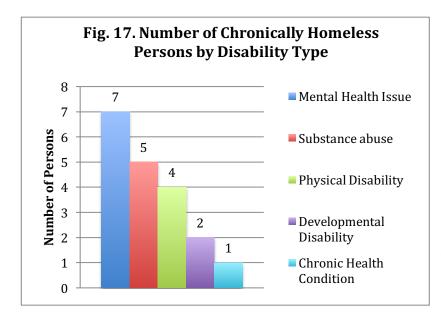


Of the 8 total chronically homeless persons, the largest number of chronically homeless persons (4, 50%) in a single age category fell between the ages of 45 and 54 years of age. Figure 16 shows that 1 of the chronically homeless persons was under the age of 5 and none were over the age of 65.

75% of chronically homeless persons were male, and 25% were female.

The largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported their race as White (62.5%). The next group self-identified as Black or African-American (37.5%). With regard to ethnicity, none of chronically homeless persons identified themselves as Hispanic.

#### Disabilities



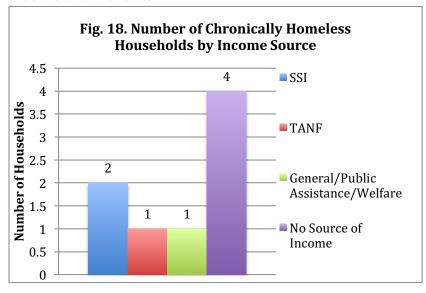
In order to meet the definition of chronically homeless, at least one adult in each household must have some kind of disability. The disabilities most commonly identified were mental health issues (87.5%), and substance abuse disorders (62.5%).

The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the chronically homeless can be seen in Figure 17.

#### **Subpopulations**

On the night of the count, none of the chronically homeless person in Cape May County reported being a victim of domestic violence or a veteran.

#### **Income and Benefits**

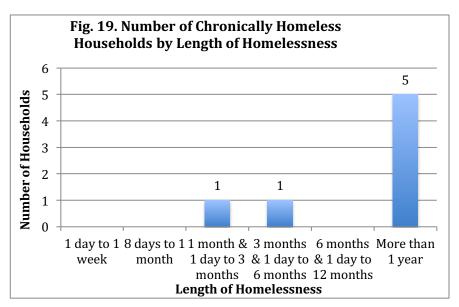


chronically Among all homeless households on the night of the count, 57.1% reported receiving no type of cash income. Figure 18 shows the sources of income received. The most common source of cash income all chronically among homeless households was SSI, which was received by 28.6%. None of the households reported any earned income.

All of the chronically homeless households reported they were receiving some type of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Food Stamps (SNAP) and Medicaid were the top benefits among this population with 100% of households receiving each of these.

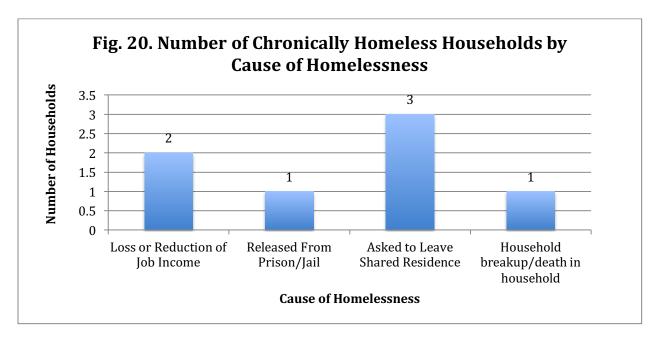
#### Length of Homelessness

Figure 19 shows that 5 of the 7 chronically homeless households (71.4%) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted for more than 1 year.



#### Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, the top two reported causes among the chronically homeless households were being asked to leave a shared residence (42.9%) and a loss or reduction in job income (28.6%).

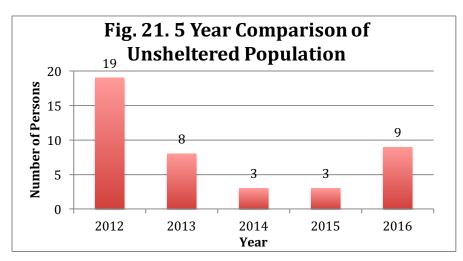


# V. Findings for the Unsheltered Homeless

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

Unsheltered homeless individuals and families are among those with the most critical housing needs in a community. The unsheltered are especially vulnerable in the cold weather and the elements, which are in evidence at the end of January when the Count takes place. The Point-In-Time survey can play an important role in helping communities understand why some of the homeless remain unsheltered, and who is included in this group.

#### **Total Unsheltered Homeless Population**



9 households, made up of 9 persons, were living unsheltered in Cape May County on January 26th, 2016, according to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 6 households and persons (200%) from 2015.

Figure 21 shows the number of unsheltered

persons from 2012 to 2016. Since 2012, although the unsheltered population has been trending downward according the the Point-In-Time Count, the 2016 count is the first increase in the number of unsheltered persons in two years.

#### Families and Individuals

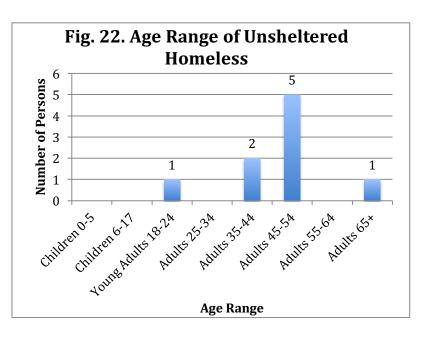
Of the 9 unsheltered households counted in 2016, all (100%) were households with only adults.

No households with both adults and children were counted.

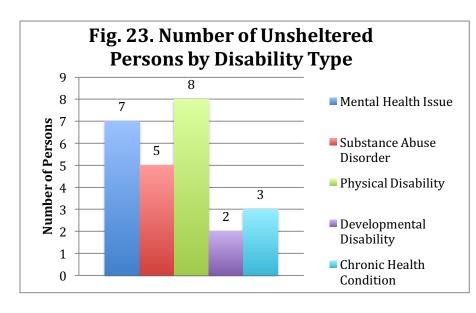
### **Demographics**

The largest portion of the 9 unsheltered persons counted in 2016, 5 or 55.6%, were adults between 45 and 54 years old, followed by those between 35 and 44 (22.2%).

77.8% of unsheltered persons were male and 22.2% identified as female. 77.8% identified their race as White and 22.2% identified as Black or African-American. 11.1% of unsheltered persons identified their ethnicity as Hispanic.



#### Disabilities



Of the 9 unsheltered persons, 8 (88.9%)reported having some kind of disability. The disabilities most commonly identified were physical disabilities (100%), and mental health issues (87.5%). The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the unsheltered can be seen in Figure 23.

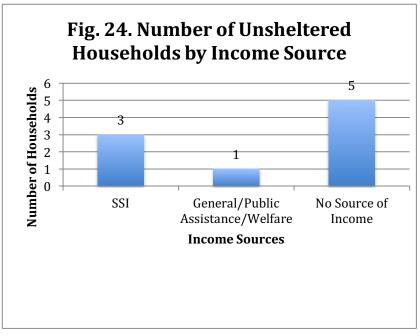
#### Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 1 unsheltered homeless individual in Cape May County reported being a victim of domestic violence. This is an increase from 0 counted in 2015.

There was 1 unsheltered veterans identified on the night of the count. This is aslo an increase from 0 counted in 2015.

#### **Income and Benefits**

**Among** all unsheltered households on the night of count, the (55.6%)reported having no source of income. The average monthly income among unsheltered households was approximately \$163. 33.3% of unsheltered households received SSI and 11.1% reported receiving General Assistance. Figure 24 shows all sources of income received.

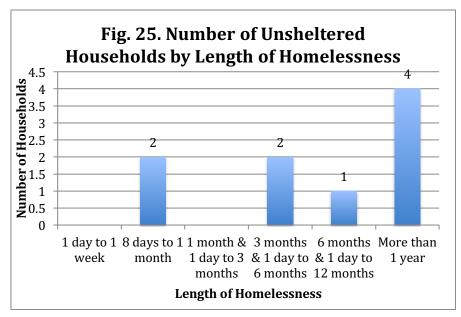


1 unsheltered household

(11.1%) reported not receiving any type of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Food Stamps (SNAP) and Medicaid were the top reported non-cash benefit among this group, with 77.8% and 66.7% receiving each of these benefits, respectively.

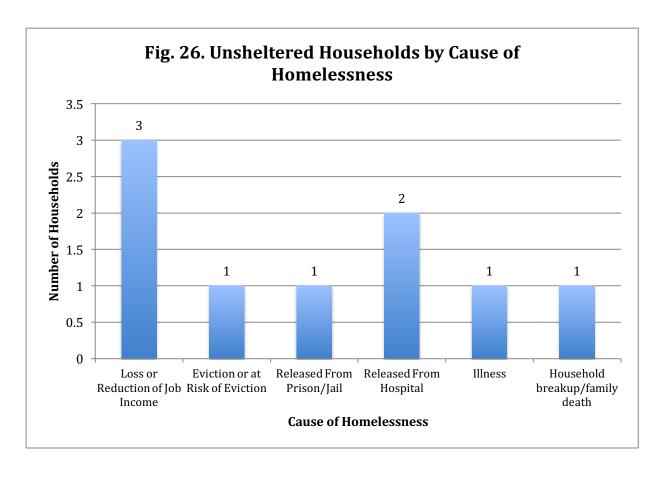
## **Length of Homelessness**

As shown in Figure 25, more unsheltered homeless households reported that their households' most recent, continuous episode of homelessness was for more than 1 year (44.4%) than any other. 11.1% Another unsheltered homeless reported being unsheltered between 6 and 12 months.



#### Cause of Homelessness

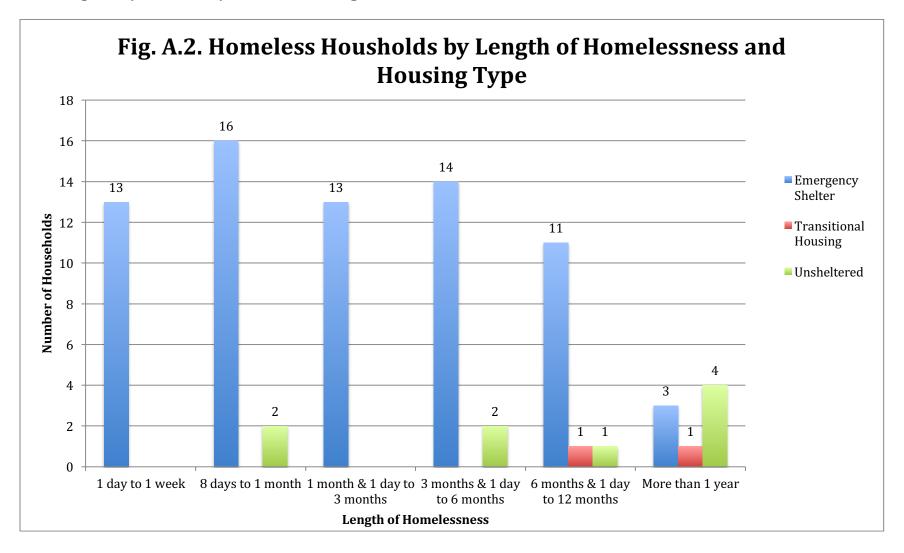
When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, the two most common responses were loss or reduction of job income (33.3%) and release from the hospital (22.2%).



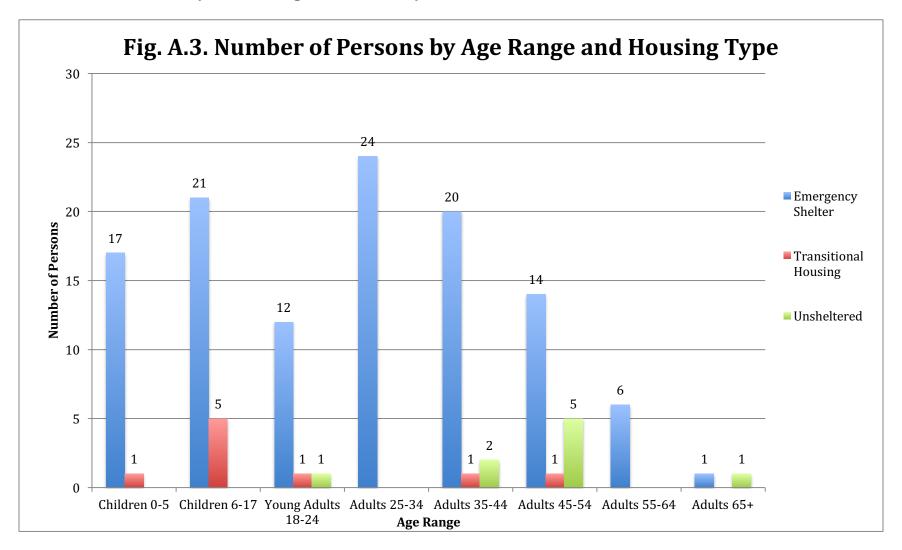
# VI. Appendix

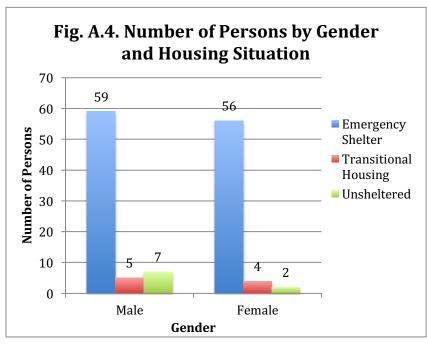
Where did you spend the night of Tuesday, January 26, 2016? Fig. A.1. Total Number of Households and Persons by Housing Type 140 115 120 100 Number of Persons ■ Total Persons 80 70 ■ Total Households 60 40 20 9 6 2 1 1 Doubled Up **Emergency Shelter** Other **Transitional Housing** Street **Housing Type** 

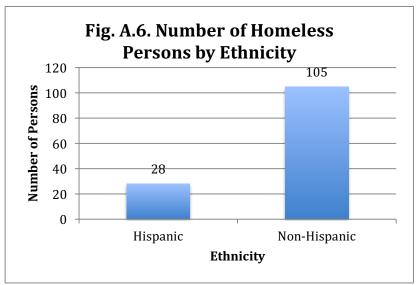
How long have you been in your current living situation?

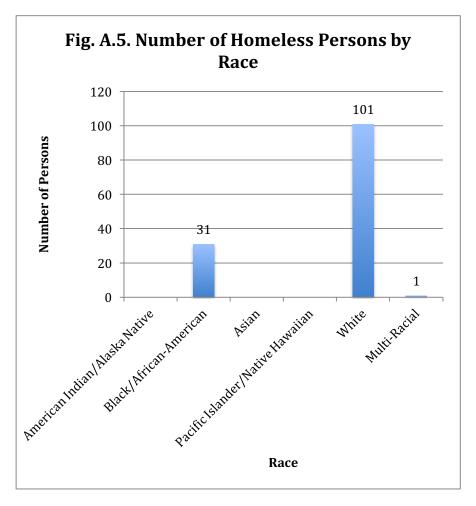


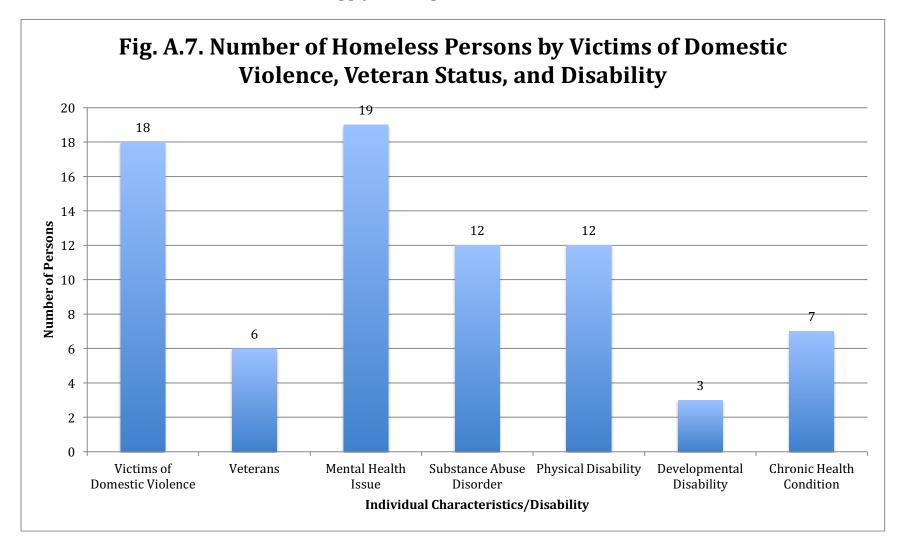
Who was homeless with you on the night of the January 26th?







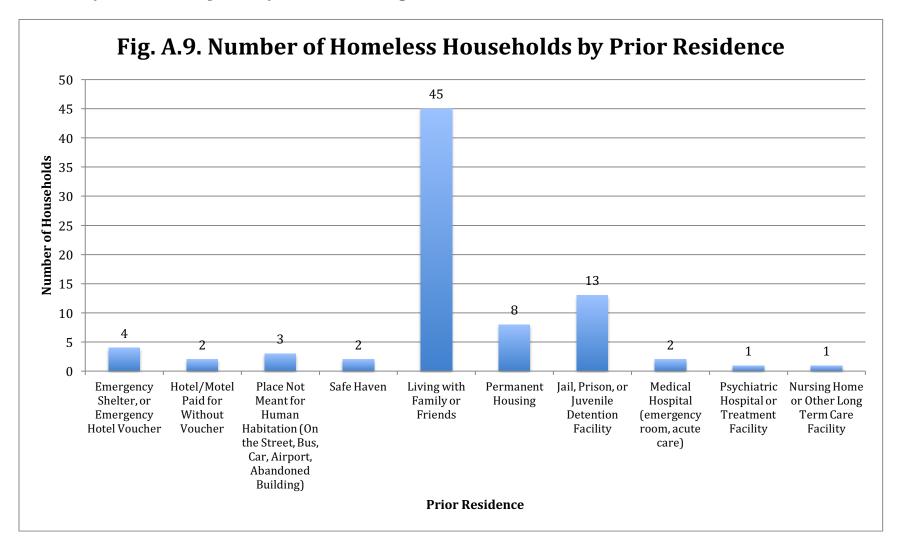




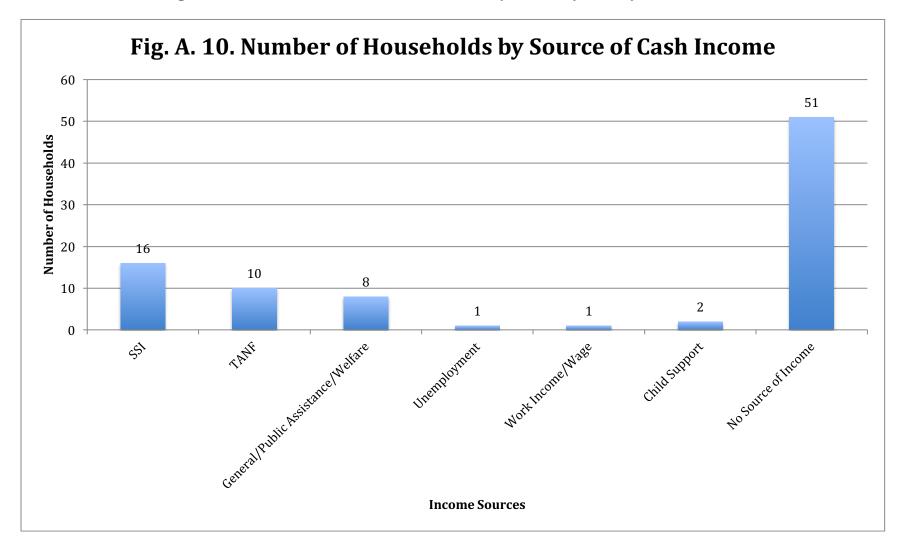
# $Where \ was \ your \ last \ permanent \ address \ before \ becoming \ homeless?$

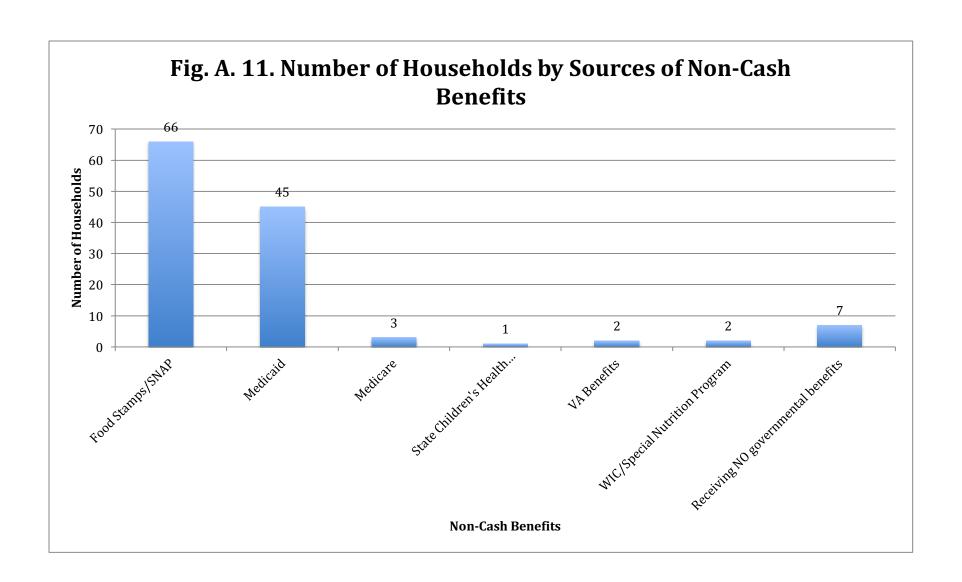
Fig. A.8. Number of Homeless Households by County or State of Last Permanent Address		
Last Permanent Address –	Number of Households	
County/State		
Atlantic County	1	
Burlington County	1	
Cape May County	74	
Cumberland County	1	
Somerset County	1	
Sussex County	1	
Michigan	1	
Texas	1	

What was your residence prior to your current living situation?

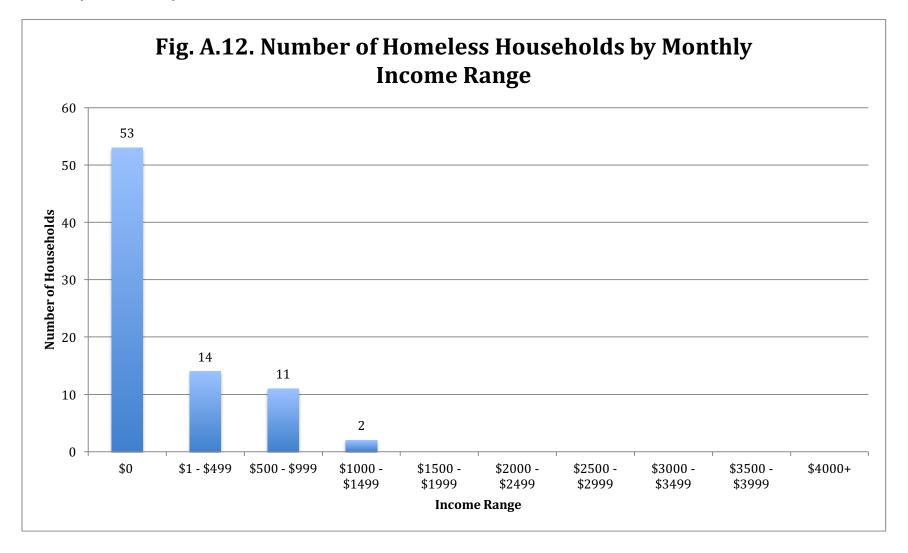


Which of the following sources of income or non-cash benefits do you, or anyone in your household, receive?

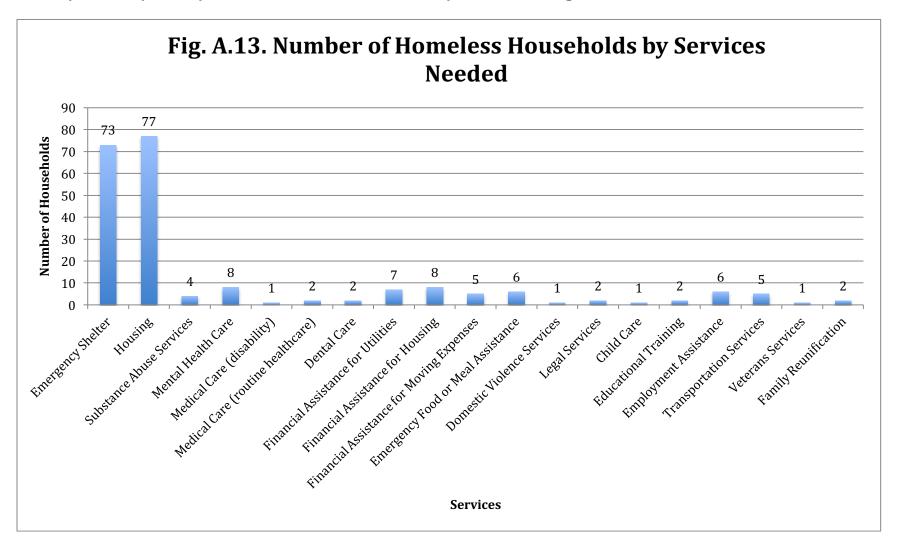




# What is your monthly household income?



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



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

