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**NJ**  
**2016**  
**Counts!**

# Hunterdon 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 26<sup>th</sup>, 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 records. 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 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 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 de-duplication they determined prudent. Monarch then updated and removed additional records based on community feedback prior to completing its final analysis and report.

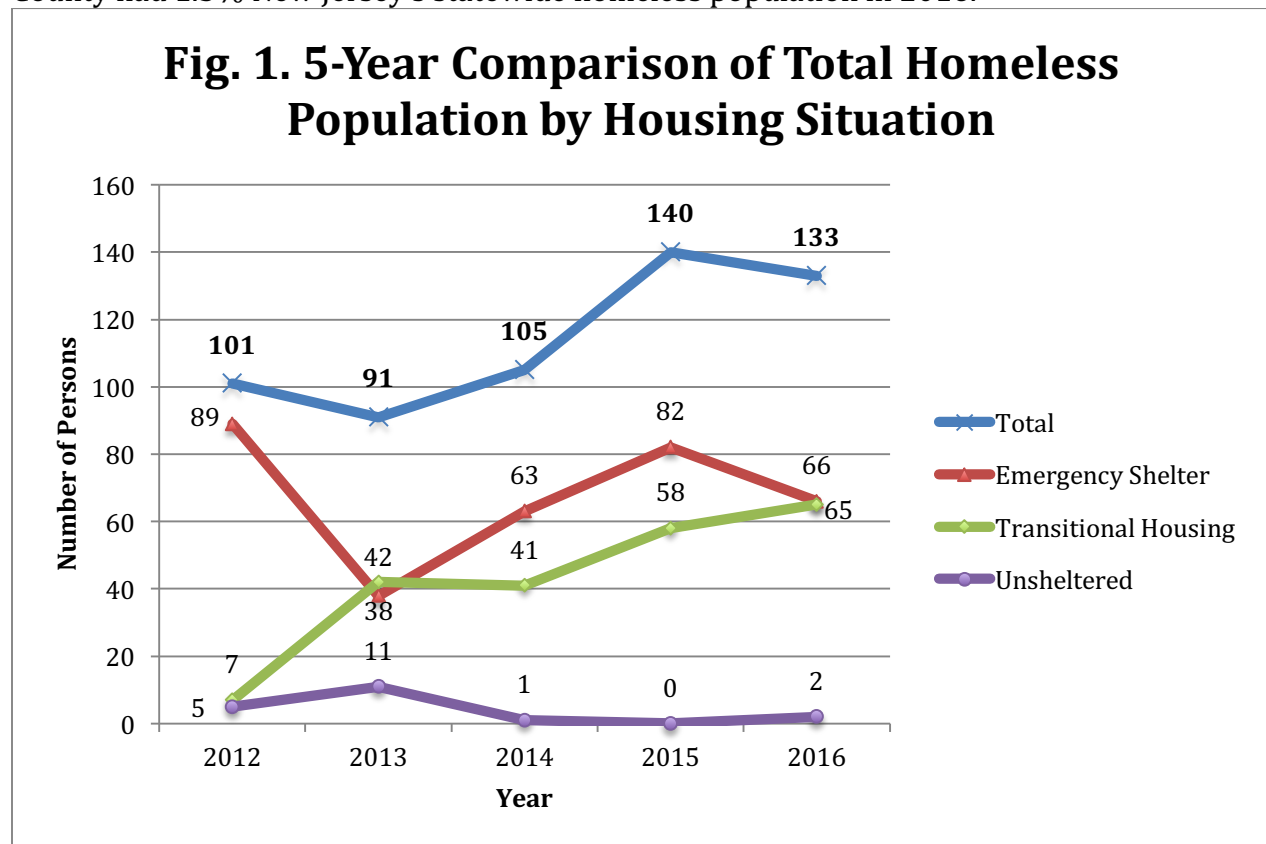
### III. Findings for Total Homeless Population

#### Key Findings

- On the night of January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016 a total of 119 households, including 133 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Hunterdon County, according to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 12 households, with 12 persons, were identified as chronically homeless.
- There were 2 unsheltered homeless persons counted.

#### Total Homeless Population

On the night of January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016, a total of 133 persons, in 119 households, were experiencing homelessness in Hunterdon County, according to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 7 persons (5%) and 1 household (.8%) from 2015. Hunterdon County had 1.5% New Jersey's statewide homeless population in 2016.



In 2016, 66 homeless persons (49.6%) were staying in emergency shelter, 65 in transitional housing (48.9%) and 2 (1.5%) were unsheltered on the night of the count. Figure 1 shows that the total number of persons staying in emergency shelters decreased by 16 (19.5%) compared to 2015, however, the number of those in transitional housing increased by 7 (12.1%) and the unsheltered population increased from 0 to 2 persons during the same period.

**Fig. 2. Percentage of Households by County of Last Permanent Address**

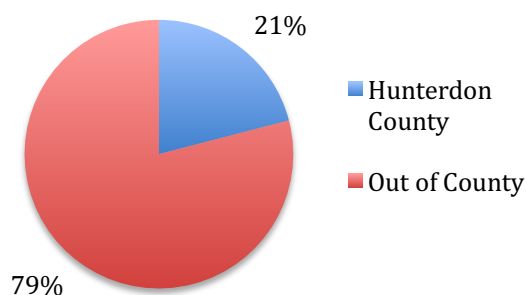


Figure 1 also shows that, over the past five years, the total number of homeless persons has been fluctuating slightly in Hunterdon County, with the highest count in 2015 (140). There has been an overall 31.7% increase from 2012 to 2016.

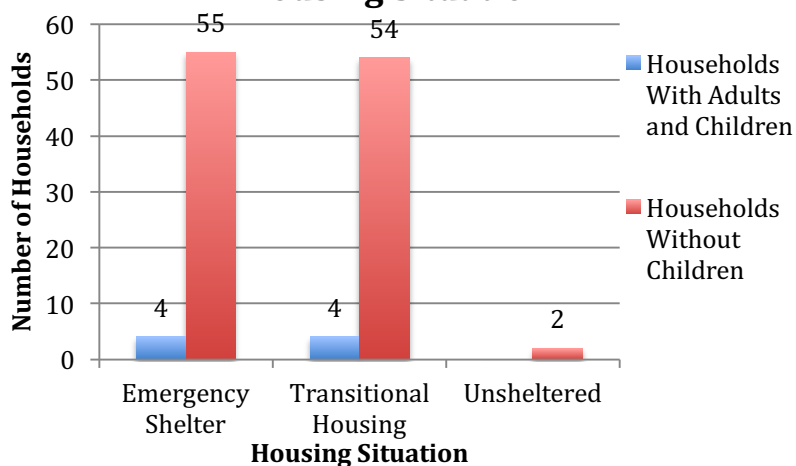
As Figure 2 shows, 79% of homeless households counted in Hunterdon County reported that their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless was outside of the county.

## 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 119 homeless households counted in Hunterdon County in 2016, 8 (6.7%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult. These families included 22 persons, including 13 children under age 18. The average family size was 3.14 persons. Figure 3 shows that 4 families (50%) were staying in transitional housing on the night of the count, while the remaining 4 families were in emergency shelters.

**Fig. 3. Homeless Households by Housing Situation**

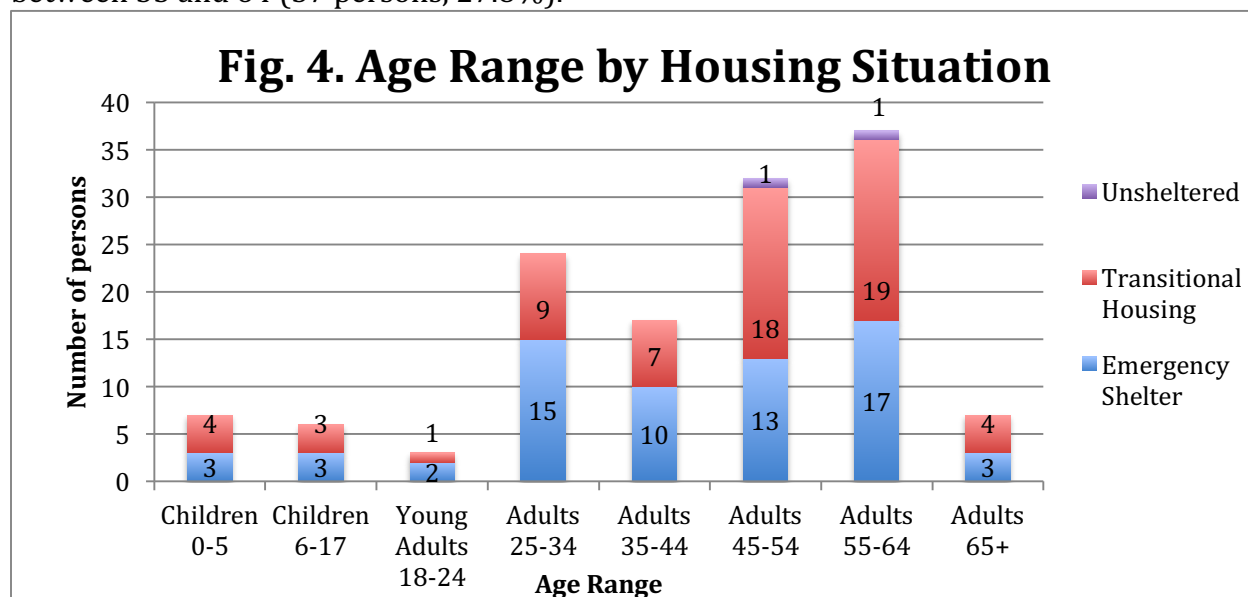


93.3% (111) of the homeless households counted in Hunterdon County were households without children under 18. All 111 households were composed of adult individuals. 49.5% of all adult-only households were staying in emergency shelters, while 48.6% were in transitional housing. 2 adult only households (1.8%) were unsheltered on the night of the count.



## Demographics

The majority (117 persons, 88%) of those experiencing homelessness in Hunterdon County on the night of the count were adults over age 24. There were a total of 3 (2.3%) homeless young adults between 18 and 24 years old, and 13 (9.8%) 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 0 and 5 years of age (7, 53.8%). The age range most represented was adults between 55 and 64 (37 persons, 27.8%).

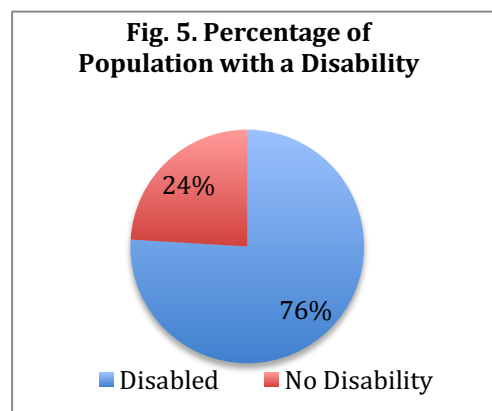


72.9% of homeless persons were male, and 26.3% were female.

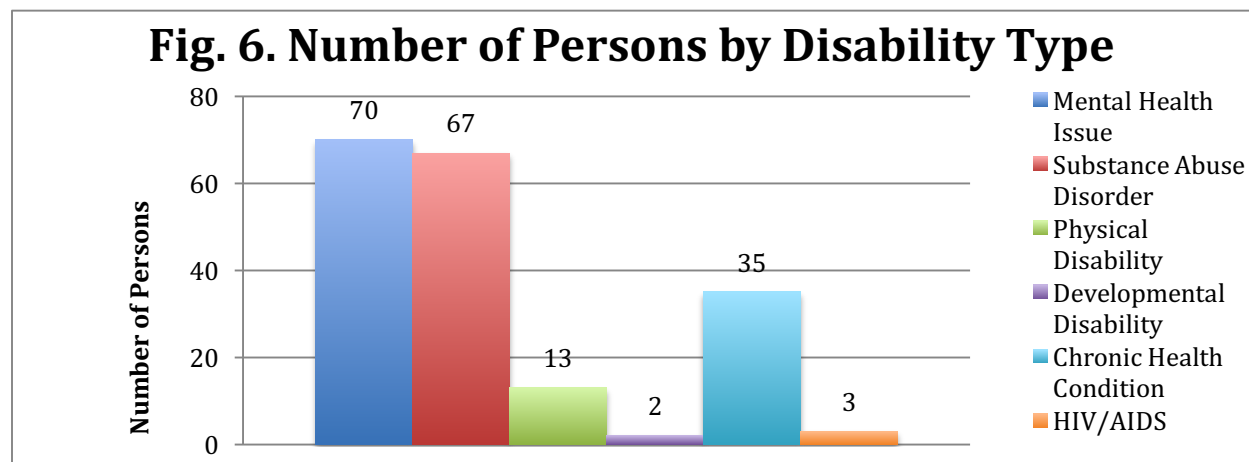
54.9% of homeless persons identified their race as White, making that the largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported. The next largest group self-identified as Black or African American (33.1%), followed by those identifying as Asian (2.3%). With regard to ethnicity, 7.5% of homeless persons identified themselves as Hispanic.

## Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 76% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 84.2% of adults 18 or older reported some type of disability; no children reported a disability. Figure 6 shows the number of the homeless persons that identified as having various disabilities. The most prevalent disabilities were mental health issues, substance abuse disorders, and chronic health conditions.

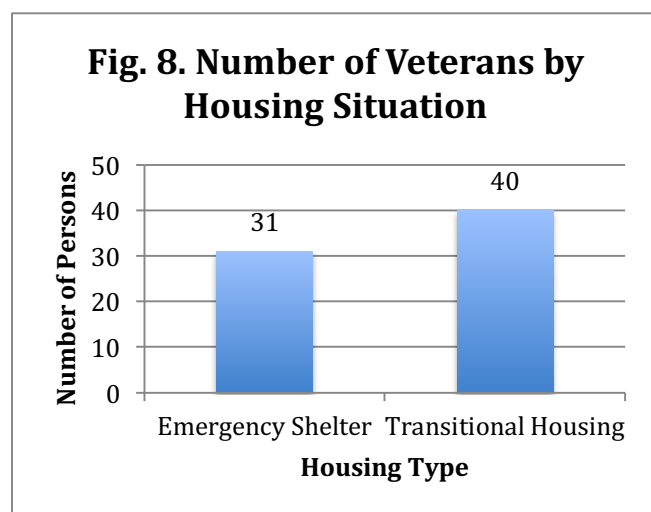
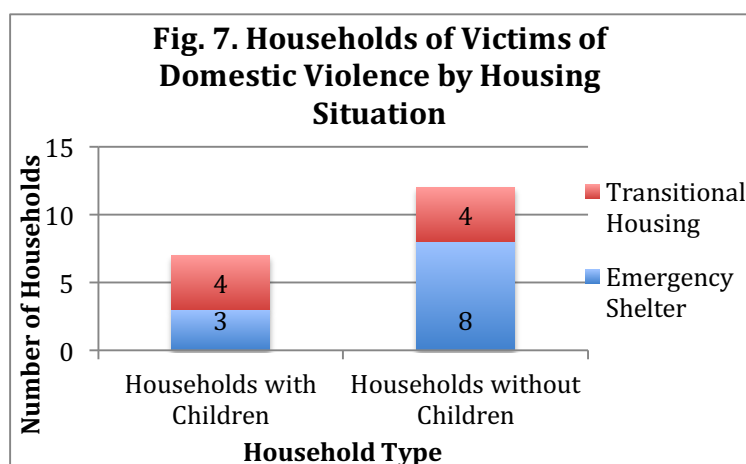


Among disabled adults, 69.3% reported mental health issues making this the most prevalent disability; representing 58.3% of the total adult homeless population.



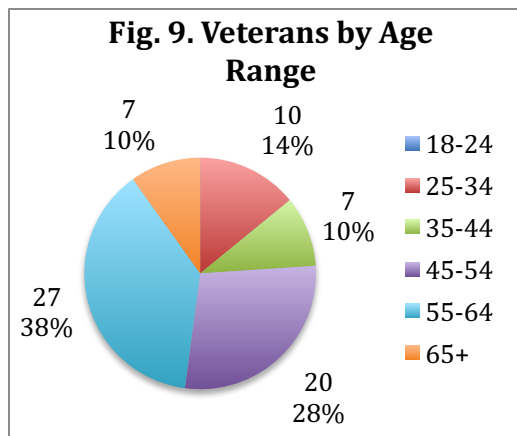
### Victims of Domestic Violence

On the night of the count, in Hunterdon County, 19 homeless households (16%) reported having a victim of domestic violence. This is an increase of 5 households (35.7%) compared to 2015. Figure 7 shows that 12 (63.2%) of these households were households made up of adult individuals, while 7 (36.8%) households were families with at least 1 adult and 1 child under 18.



### 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.



71 homeless veterans were counted on the night of the count, this is a decrease of 3 veterans (4.1%), from the 74 that were counted in 2015. All veterans were members of adult-only households. 31 (43.7%) were staying in emergency shelter, while 40 (56.3%) were staying in transitional housing.

65 (91.5%) of the veterans experiencing homelessness in Hunterdon County were male, and 5 (7%) were female. 49.3% identified their race as White and 45.1% identified as Black or African-American.

69 of the 71, 97.2%, reported having some kind of disability. The most common disabilities cited among these were mental health issues; with 57 veterans (82.6%), and substance abuse issues, reported by 45 veterans (65.2%). The three types of services that homeless veterans sought most were housing (95.8%), veteran services (74.6%) and financial assistance for housing (57.8%). 16.9% of veterans identified that they had no source of income. 12.7% reported work income while 11.3% and 26.8% reported income from VA pensions and VA disability benefits respectively. 2.8% of homeless veterans identified they were not connected to any form of non-cash benefits while 35.2% were connected to VA medical benefits.

### Income and Benefits

Among all the households experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, 10.9% had no source of income, and 16% reported receiving some form of earned cash income. The most common sources of cash income among homeless households, other than earned income were General Assistance (18.5%) and Veterans' Disability Benefits (16%).

Figure 11 shows the average monthly income for all homeless households by housing situation on the night of the count.

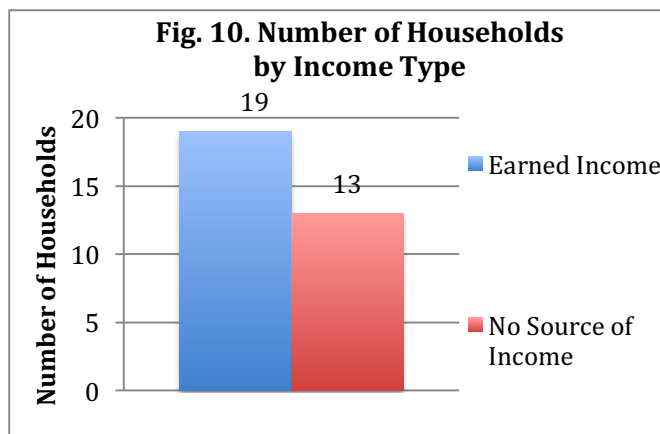
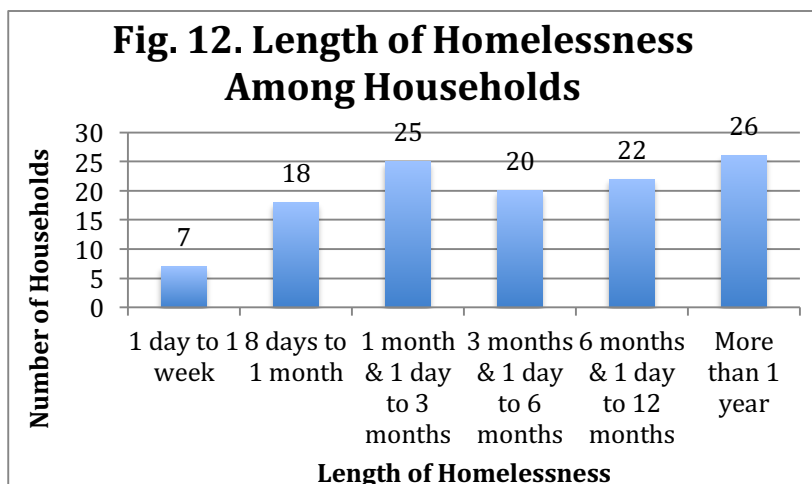


Figure 11. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation			
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered
Average for All Households	\$774.66	\$1222.29	\$783.00

5% of households reported that their household was receiving no kind of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. VA Medical Benefits, Medicaid, and Food Stamps (SNAP) were the top reported non-cash benefits, each received by 21% of households.

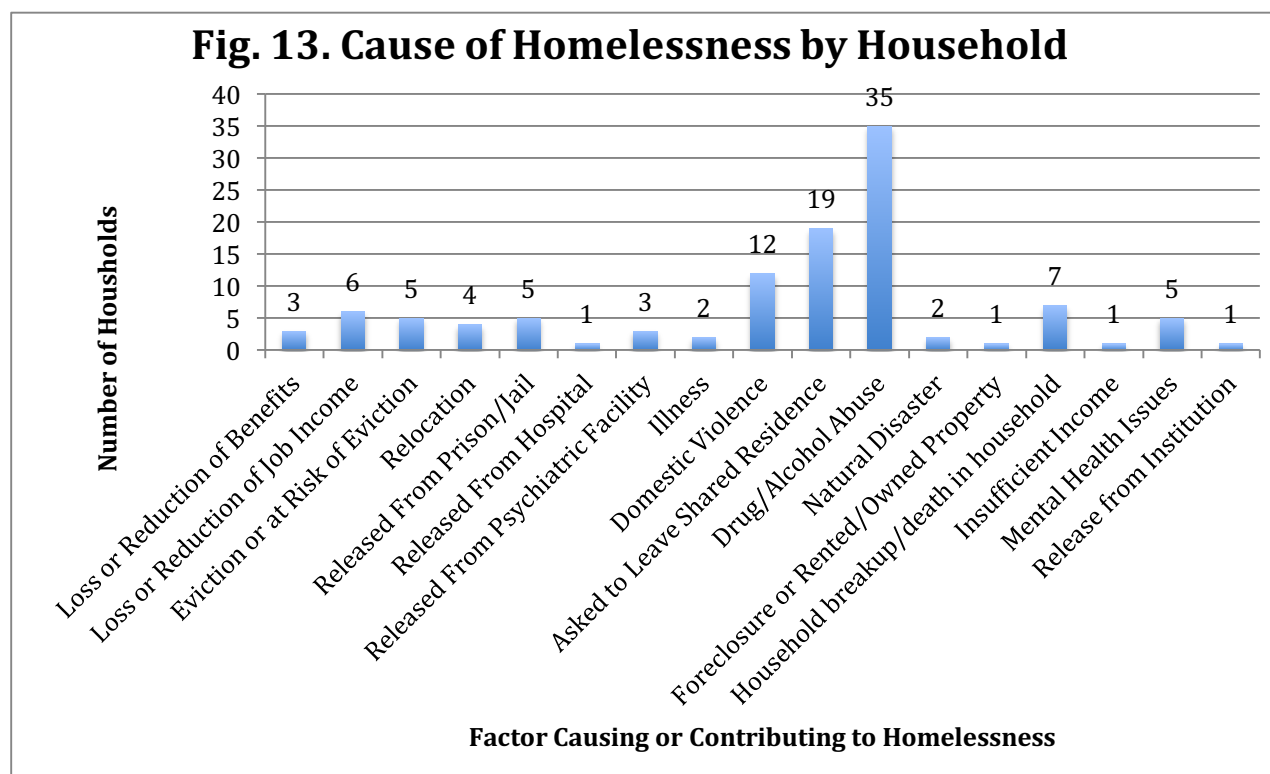
## Length of Homelessness

Figure 12 shows the lengths of homeless episodes experienced on the night of the count by households in Hunterdon County. More households (26, 21.8%) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted for more than 1 year, an increase of 14 households (116.7%) from 2015.



## Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to drug or alcohol abuse (35 households, 29.4%) than any other cause. As Figure 13 shows, the next most common factors reported were being asked to leave a shared residence (16%) and domestic violence (10.1%).



When homeless households were asked 'what was your residence prior to your current living situation?' more said they were living with friends or family (25.2%) than any other type of residence. The next most common response was permanent housing (20.2%).



## 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

12 households, made up of 12 total persons, were chronically homeless in Hunterdon County, according to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count. Chronic homelessness as a percentage of overall homelessness went from 6.4% in 2015 to 9% in 2016.

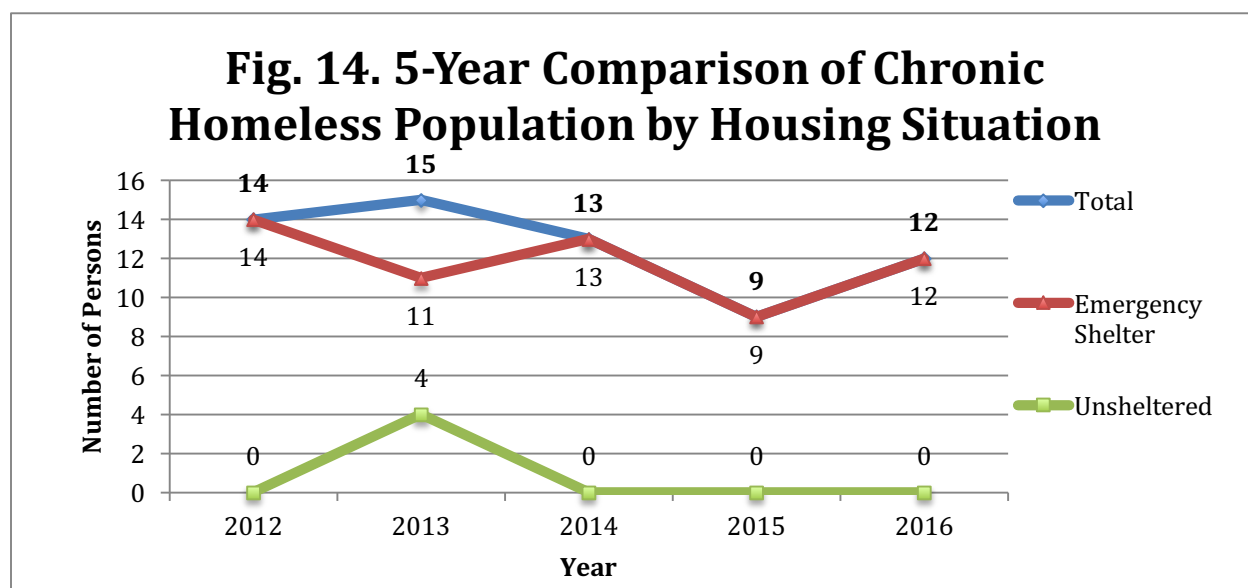
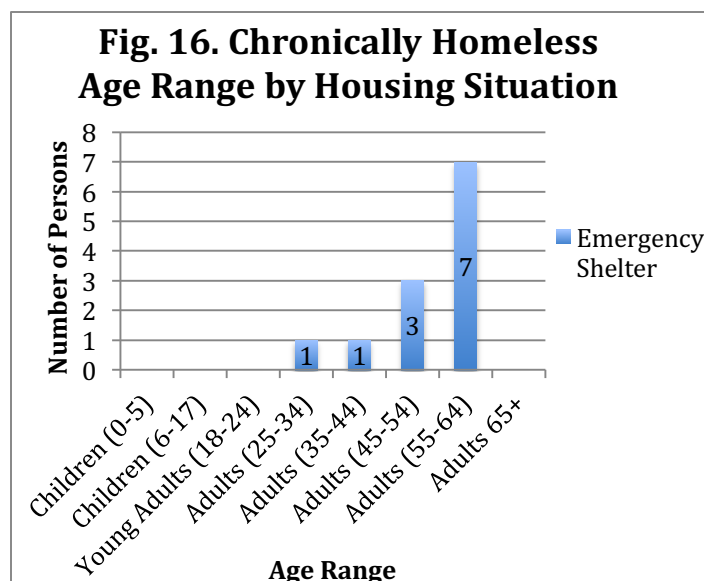
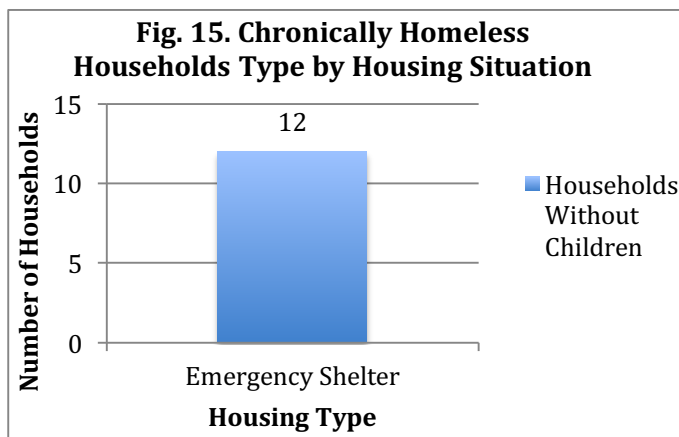


Figure 14 shows the number of chronically homeless households who were sheltered or living unsheltered in Hunterdon County from 2012 to 2016. While the 2016 count shows an increase of 33.3% in the chronically homeless population since 2015, overall there has been a slight 14.3% decrease in the chronically homeless since 2012.

## Families and Individuals

Of the 12 chronically homeless households counted in 2016, all were households with no children 17 or younger. All of these adult-only households were composed of individuals. All of these adult-only households were staying in emergency shelters on the night of the count.



## Demographics

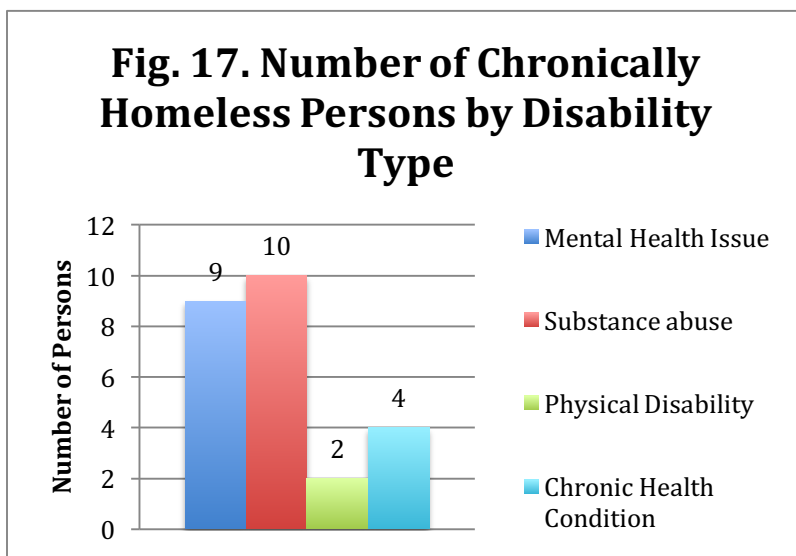
Of the 12 total chronically homeless persons, none were younger than 25 years old.

All of those counted as chronically homeless were male.

The largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported their race as White (66.7%), and the rest self-identified as Black or African-American (33.3%).

## Disabilities

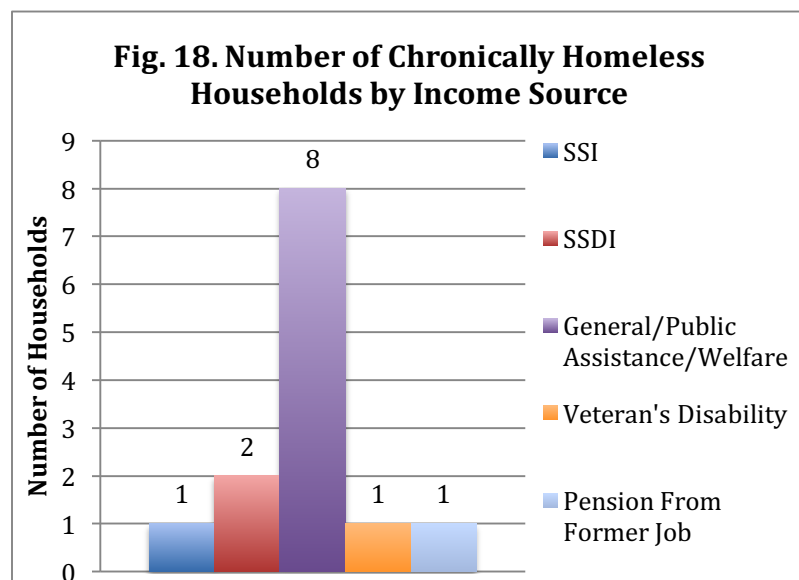
In order to meet the definition of chronically homeless, at least one adult in each household must have some kind of disability. The disabilities most commonly identified were substance abuse disorders (83.3%) and mental health issues (75%). The complete numbers of disabilities can be seen in Figure 17.



## Subpopulations

There were no chronically homeless persons in Hunterdon County on the night of the count that identified being a victim of domestic violence.

There were 6 chronically homeless veterans identified on the night of the count (50% of all chronically homeless persons). All 6 were staying in emergency shelter.



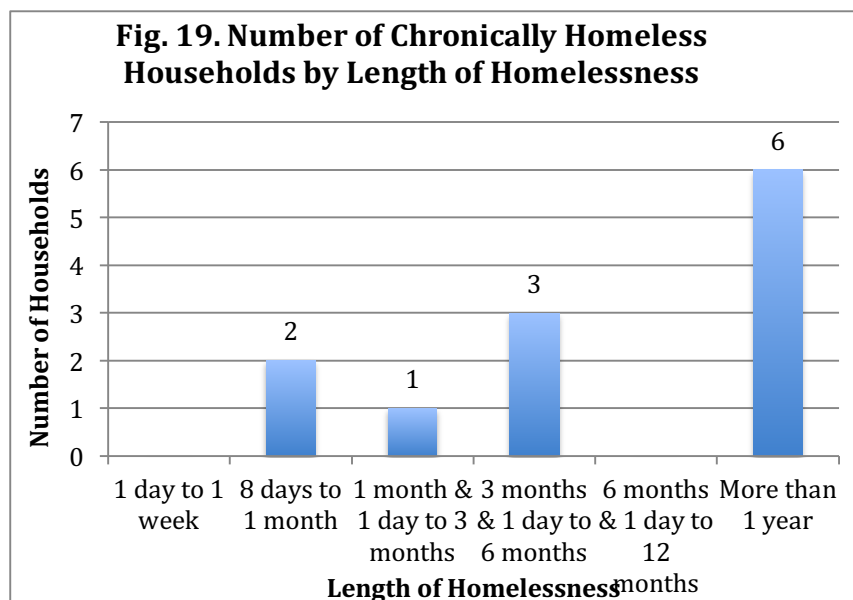
## Income and Benefits

Among all the chronically homeless households on the night of the count, all reported receiving some type of cash income. Figure 18 shows the sources of income received. The most common source of cash income among chronically homeless households was General Assistance (66.7%). No households reported any earned income.

There were no chronically homeless households on the night of the count that reported they were not receiving any type of non-cash benefit. VA Medical Benefits, received by 50%, were the most reported non-cash benefits among the chronically homeless households, followed by Food Stamps (SNAP) and Medicaid, with 41.7% reporting each benefit.

## Length of Homelessness

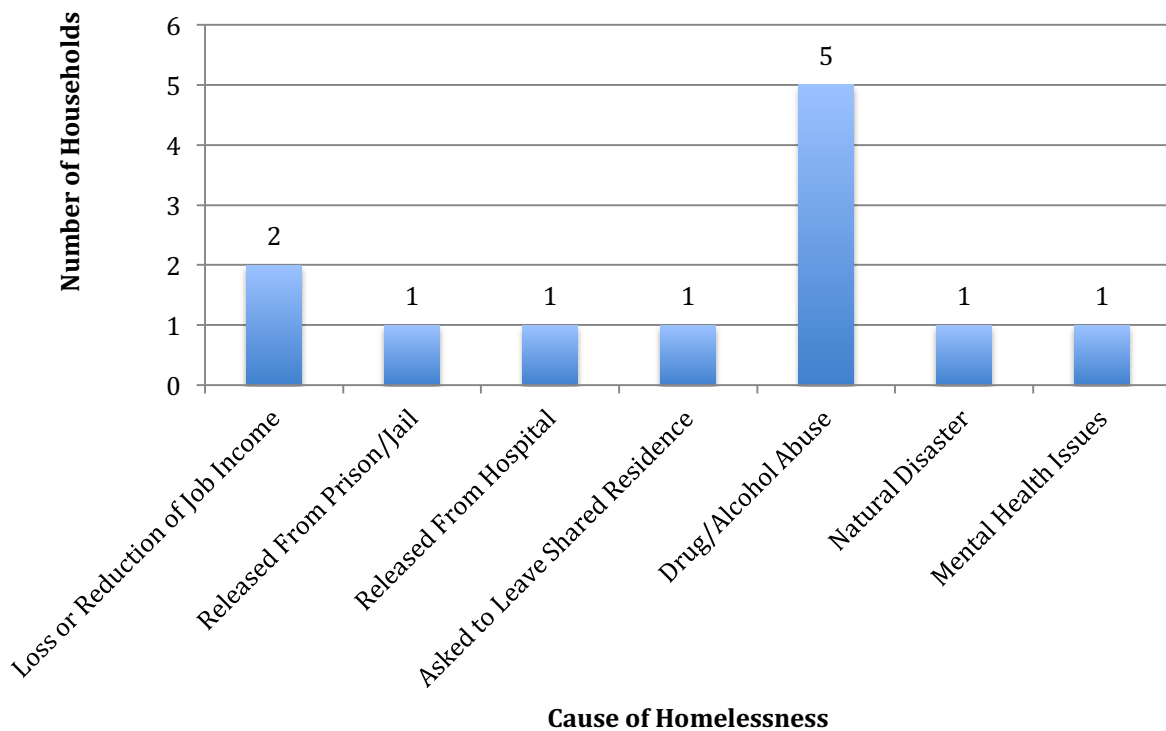
Figure 19 shows that 50% of chronically homeless households reported their most recent, continuous episode of homeless had lasted for more than 1 year, an increase from the 0 counted in 2015.



## Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, 41.7% of chronically homeless households cited drug or alcohol abuse as a primary cause of their homelessness.

**Fig. 20. Number of Chronically Homeless Households by Cause of Homelessness**





## V. Findings for the Unsheltered Homeless

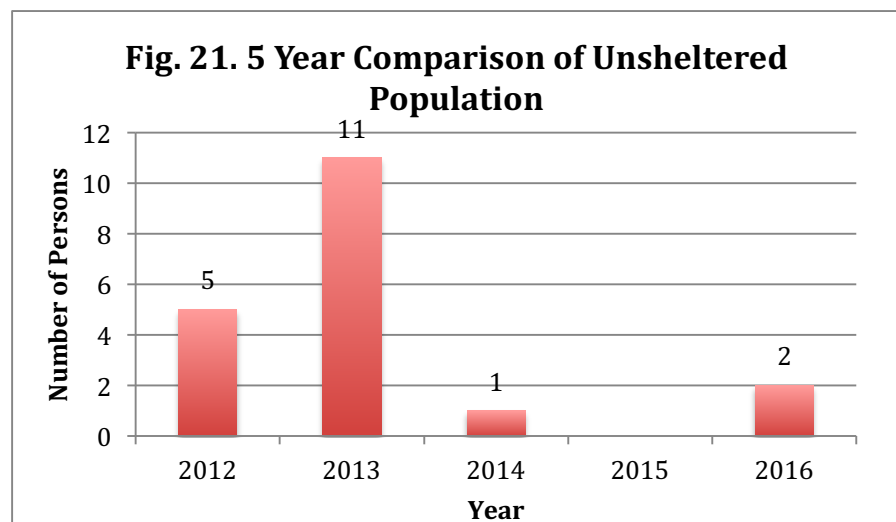
HUD's definition of "unsheltered homeless" applies to any individual or family "with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station,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

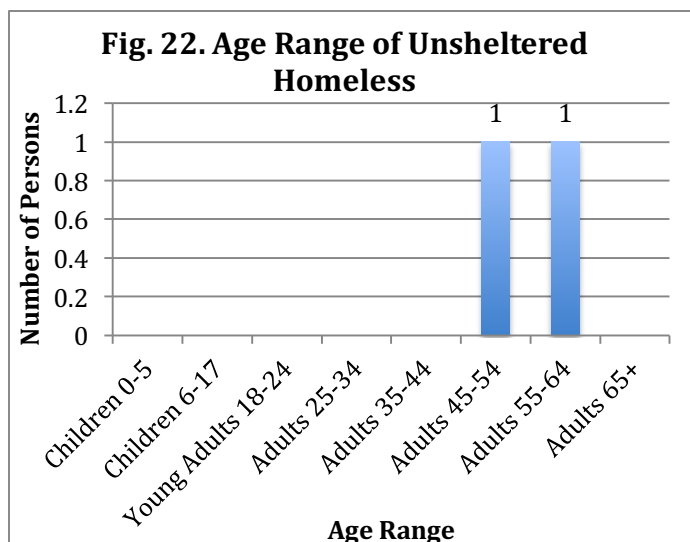
2 households, made up of 2 persons, were living unsheltered in Hunterdon County, according to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase from the 0 persons counted in 2015.

Figure 21 shows the number of unsheltered persons from 2012 to 2016. While the numbers have fluctuated over the years, overall the unsheltered population is down 60% compared to 2014.



### Families and Individuals

There were 0 unsheltered households with children in 2016. Both of the unsheltered households counted were individual adult households.



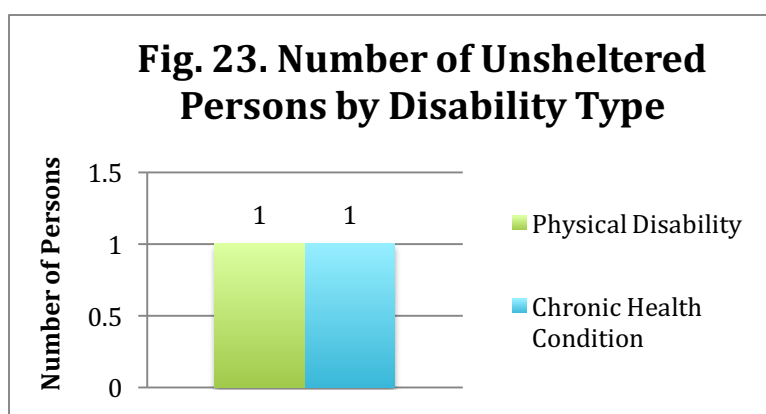
## Demographics

One of the unsheltered persons counted in 2016 was between 45 and 54 years old, and the other between 55 and 64.

Both of the unsheltered persons were male. 1 identified their race as White, while 1 did not respond to the question about race. Neither person identified as Hispanic.

## Disabilities

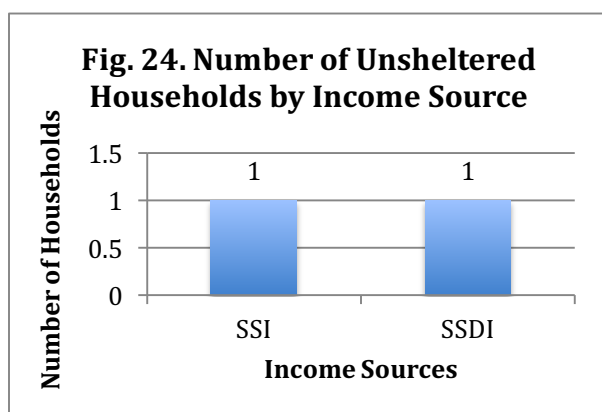
One unsheltered persons reported disabling conditions. There were two disabilities reported. Figure 23 shows a reported physical disability and chronic health condition.



## Subpopulations

On the night of the count, neither unsheltered homeless person in Hunterdon County reported being a victim of domestic violence.

There were no unsheltered veterans on the night of the count.



## Income and Benefits

Among the 2 unsheltered households on the night of the count, neither reported having earned income. 1 reported receiving SSI, and 1 reported receiving SSDI. The average monthly income reported among unsheltered households was \$783.

Neither household reported receiving any

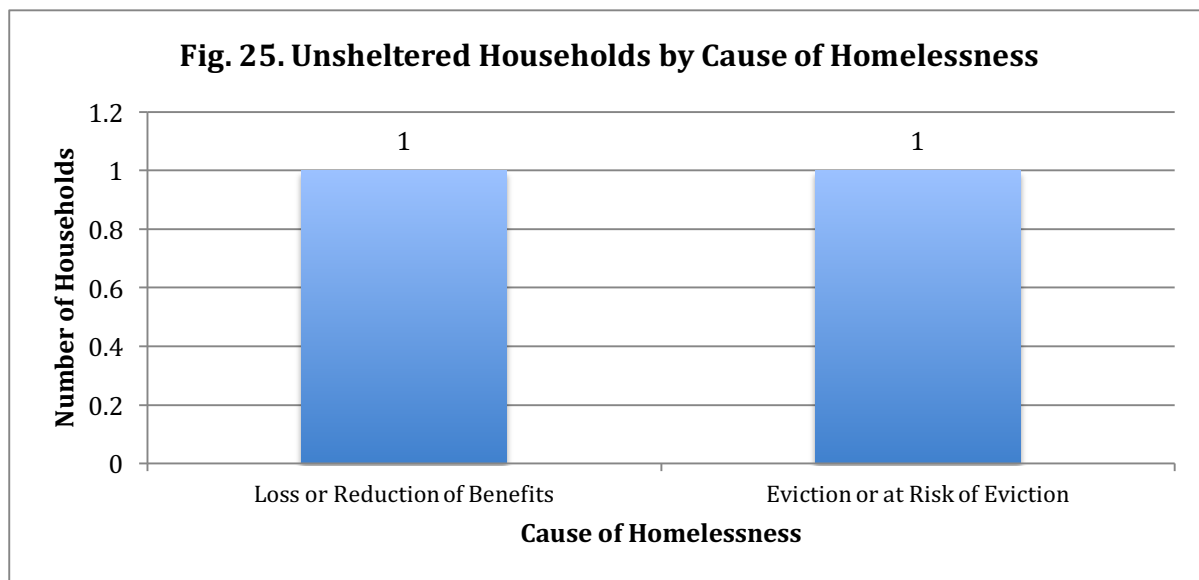
mainstream benefits in the 2016 Point in Time Count.

### Length of Homelessness

Both unsheltered households reported their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness lasted from 1 month and 1 day to 3 months.

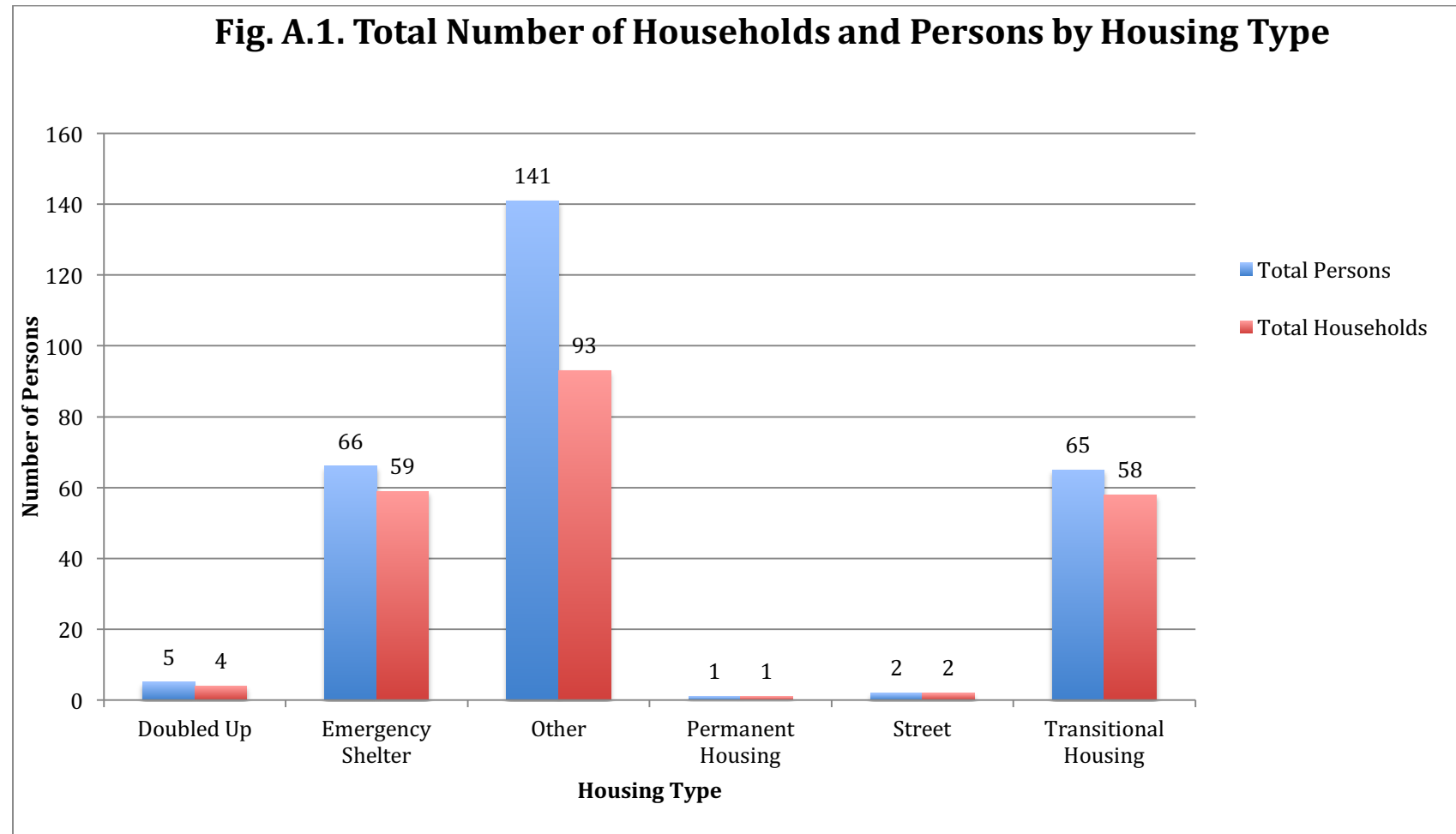
### Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, 1 unsheltered household reported loss or reduction of benefits, while the other household reported eviction, as seen in Figure 25.



## VI. Appendix

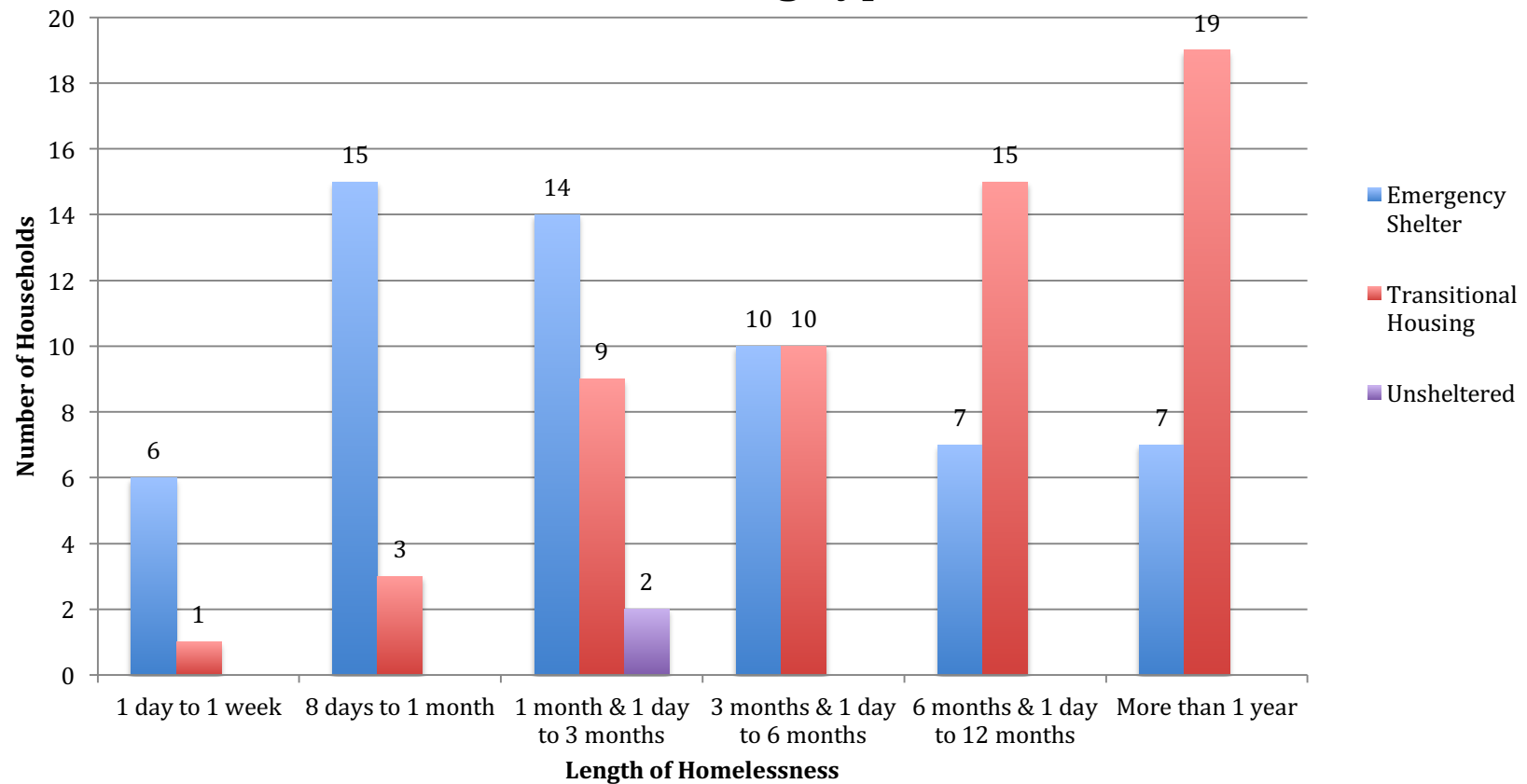
Where did you spend the night of Tuesday, January 26, 2016?



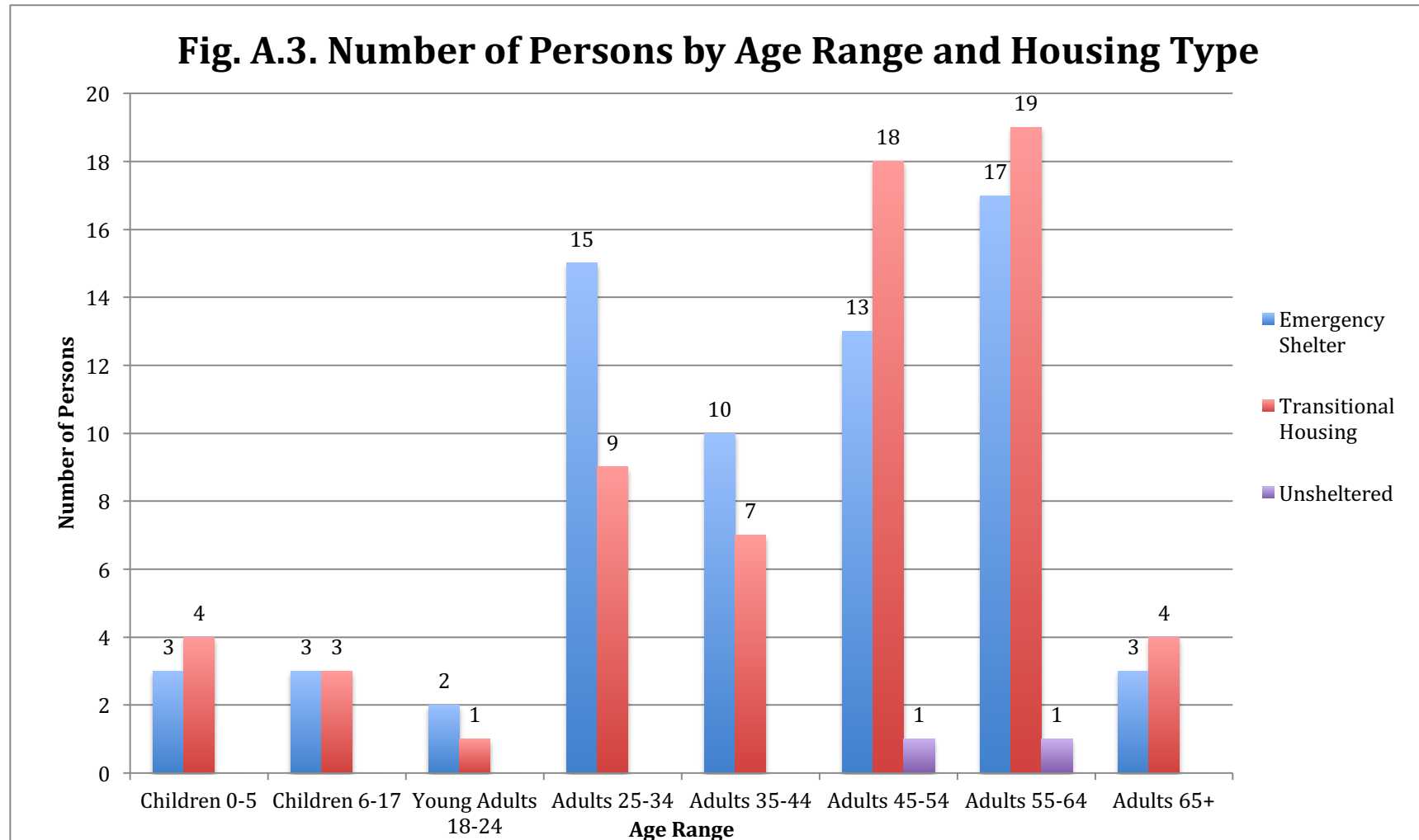


How long have you been in your current living situation?

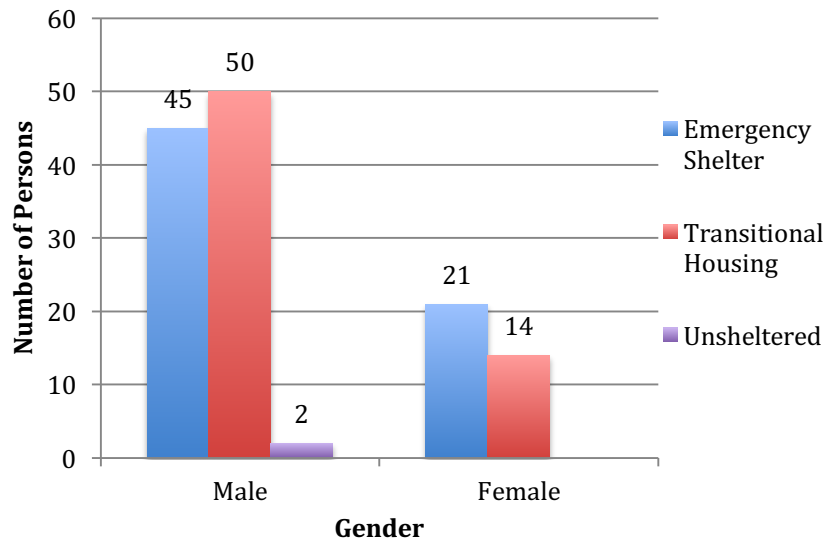
**Fig. A.2. Homeless Housholds by Length of Homelessness and Housing Type**



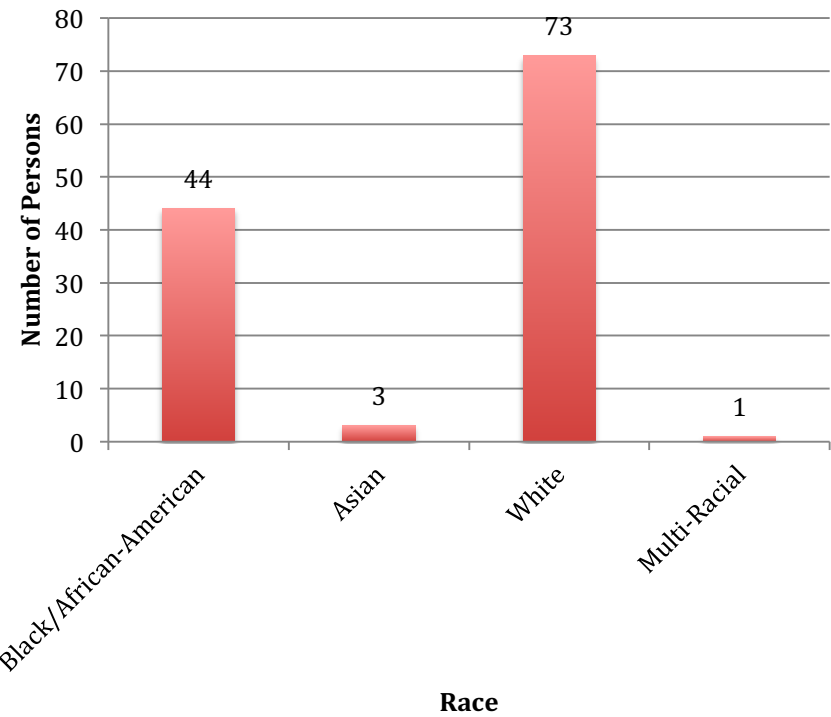
Who was homeless with you on the night of January 26<sup>th</sup>?



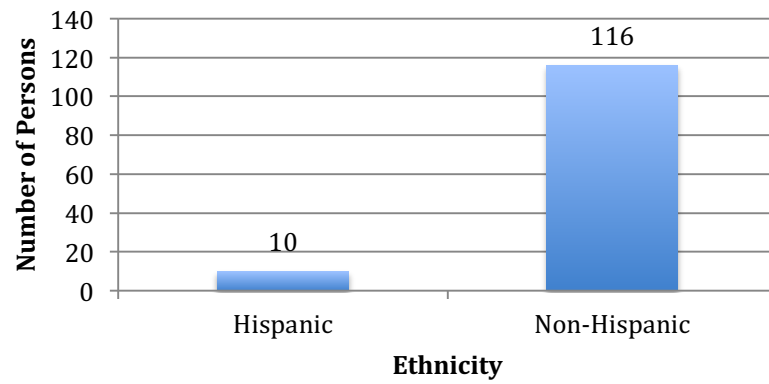
**Fig. A.4. Number of Persons by Gender and Housing Situation**



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

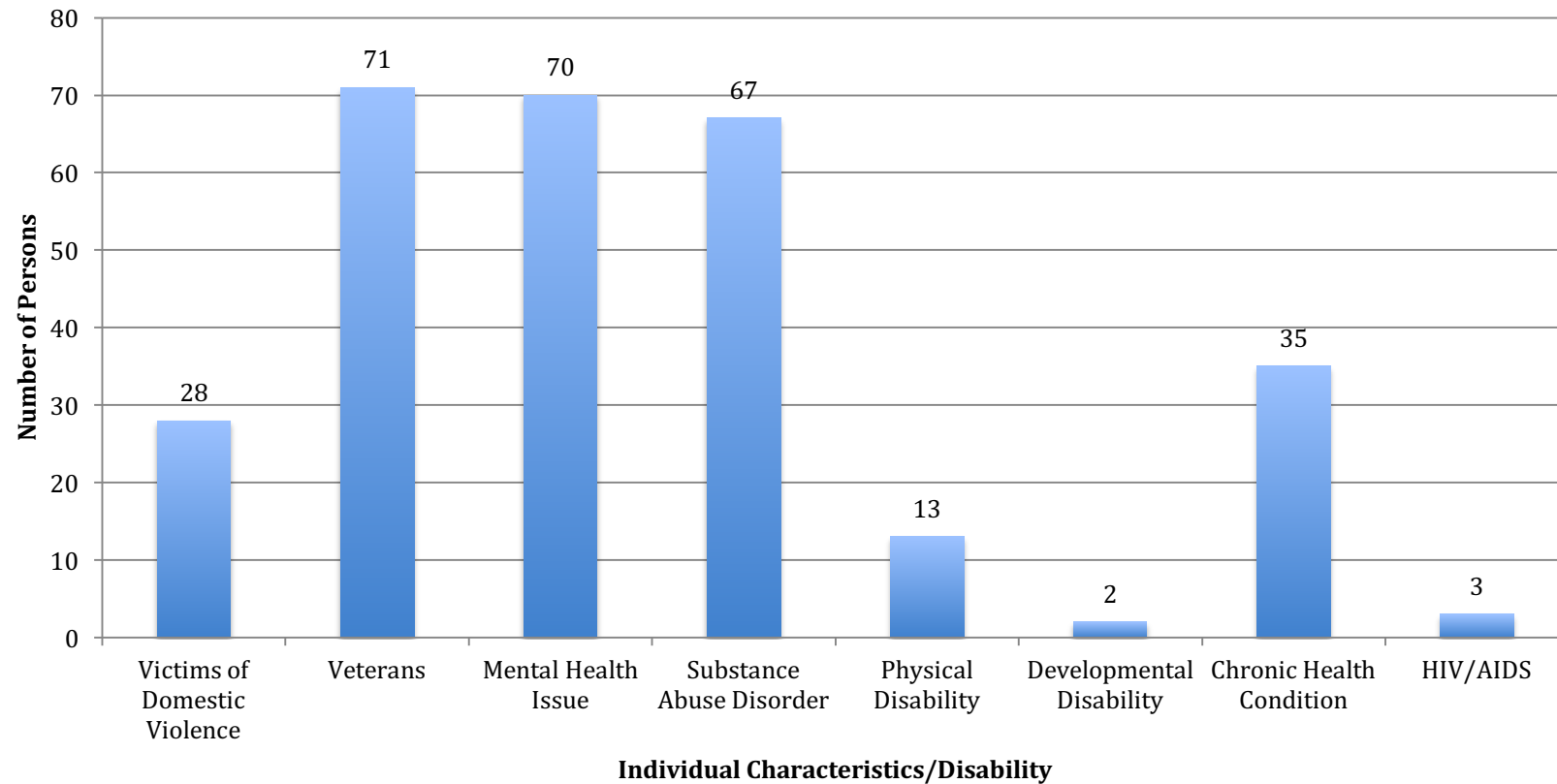


**Fig. A.6. Number of Homeless Persons by Ethnicity**



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**

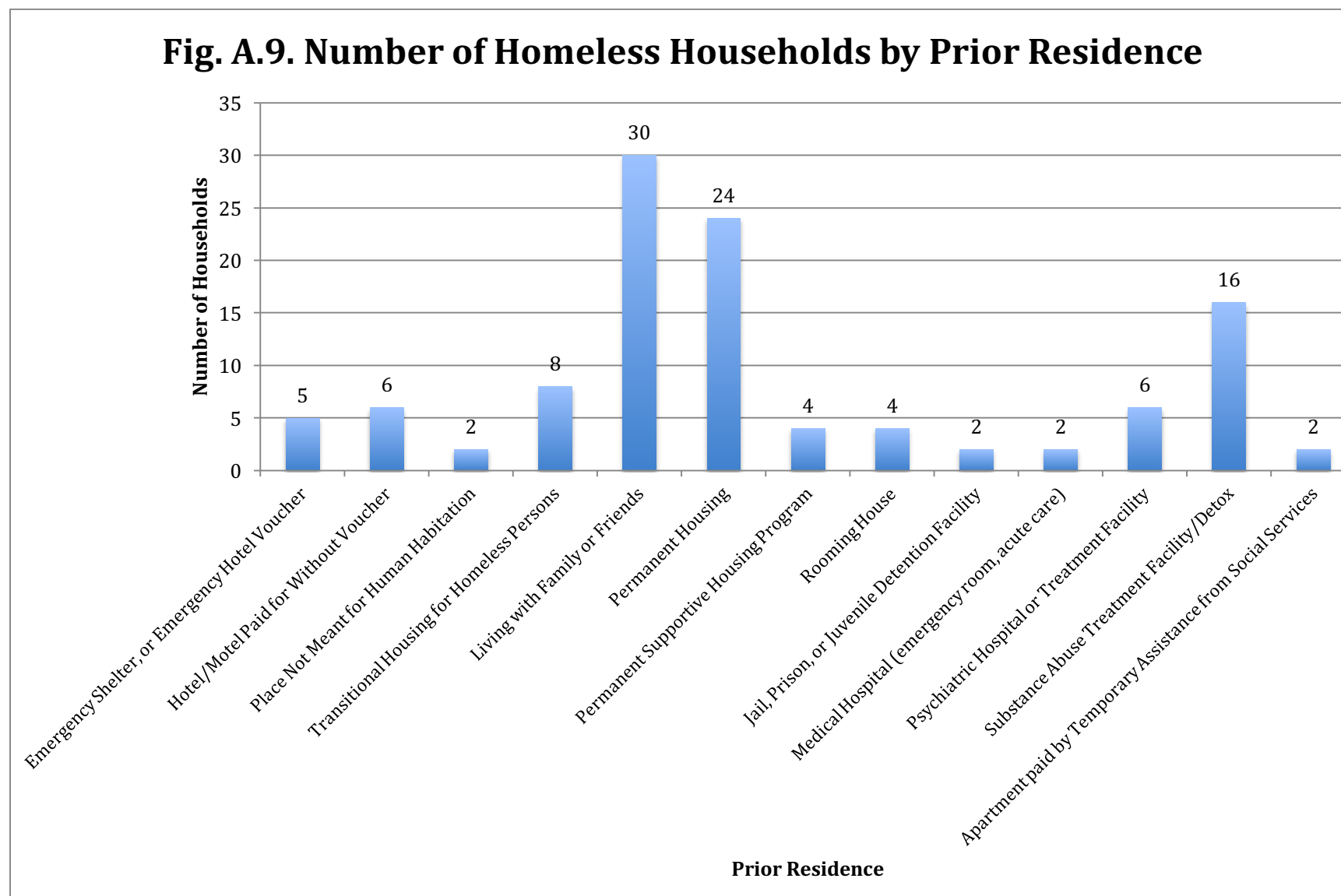


**Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?**

<b>Fig. A.8. Number of Homeless Households by County, State or Country of Last Permanent Address</b>	
<b>Last Permanent Address – County/State</b>	<b>Number of Households</b>
Atlantic County	2
Bergen County	2
Burlington County	1
Essex County	15
Gloucester County	1
Hudson County	4
<b>Hunterdon County</b>	<b>22</b>
Mercer County	3
Middlesex County	9
Monmouth County	5
Morris County	3
Ocean County	3
Passaic County	3
Somerset County	12
Sussex County	2
Union county	5
Warren County	2
Colorado	2
Maryland	2
New York	2
Pennsylvania	3
South Carolina	1
West Virginia	1

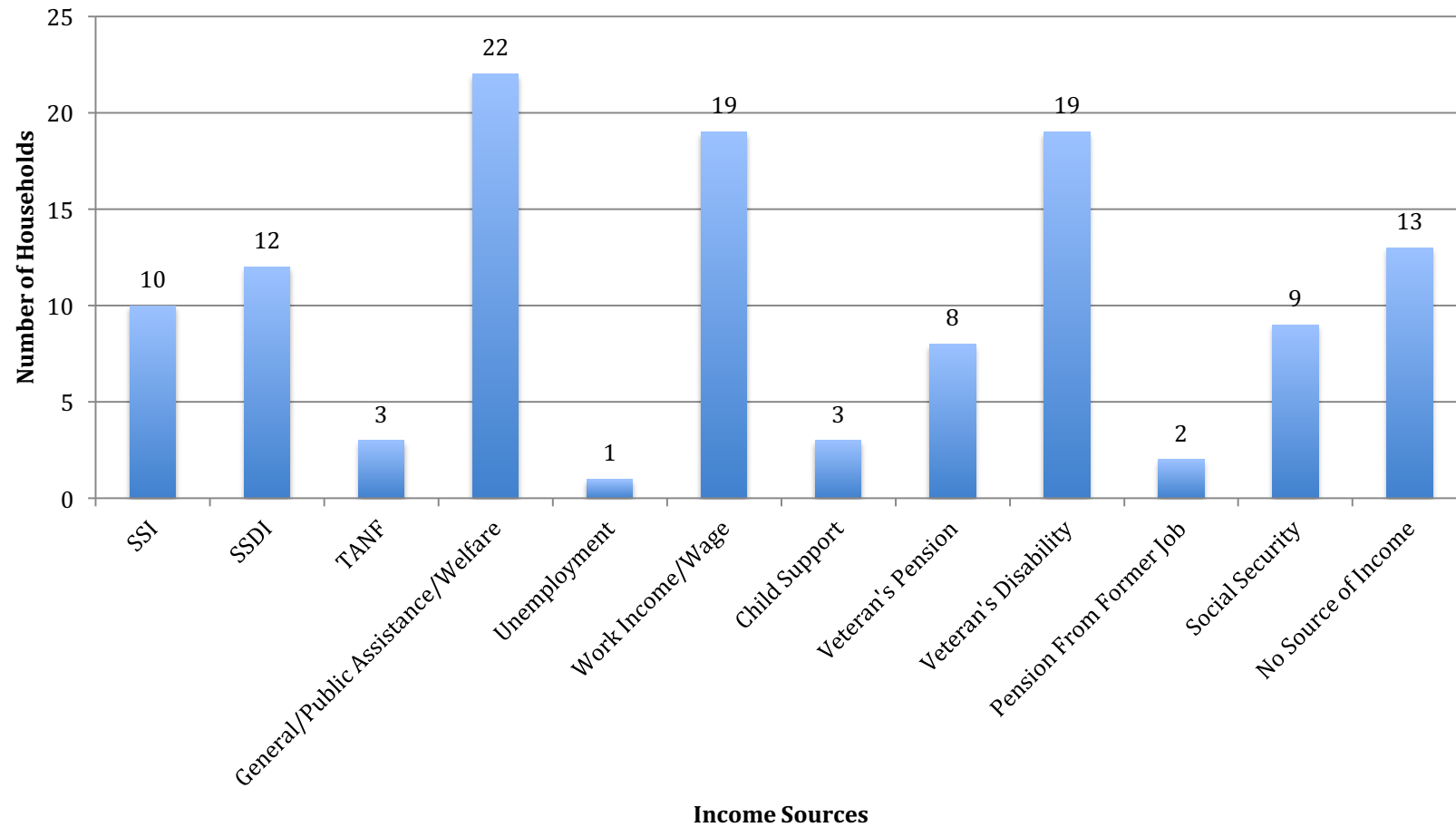
What was your residence prior to your current living situation?

**Fig. A.9. Number of Homeless Households by Prior Residence**



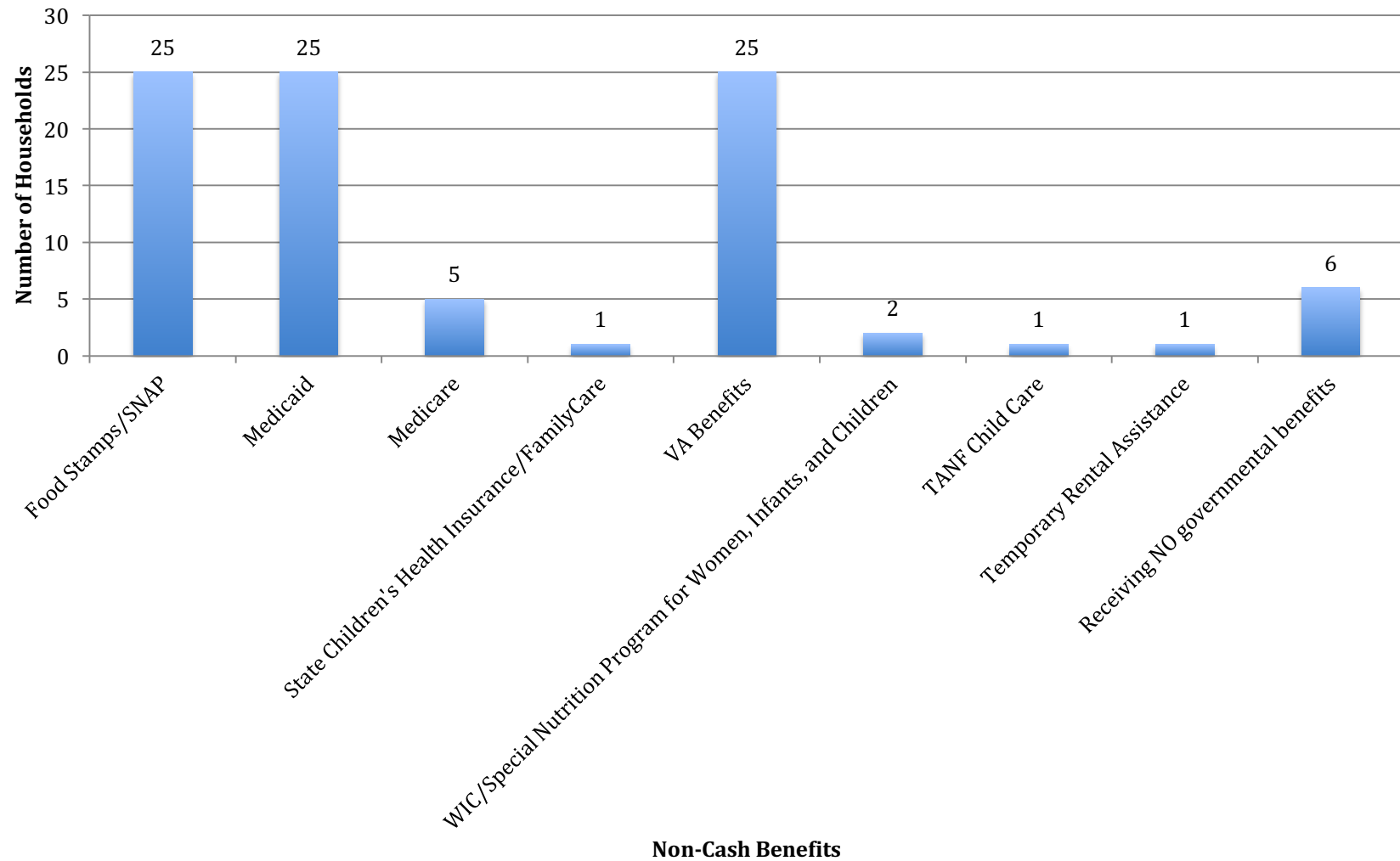
Which of the following sources of income or non-cash benefits do you, or anyone in your household, receive?

**Fig. A. 10. Number of Households by Source of Cash Income**

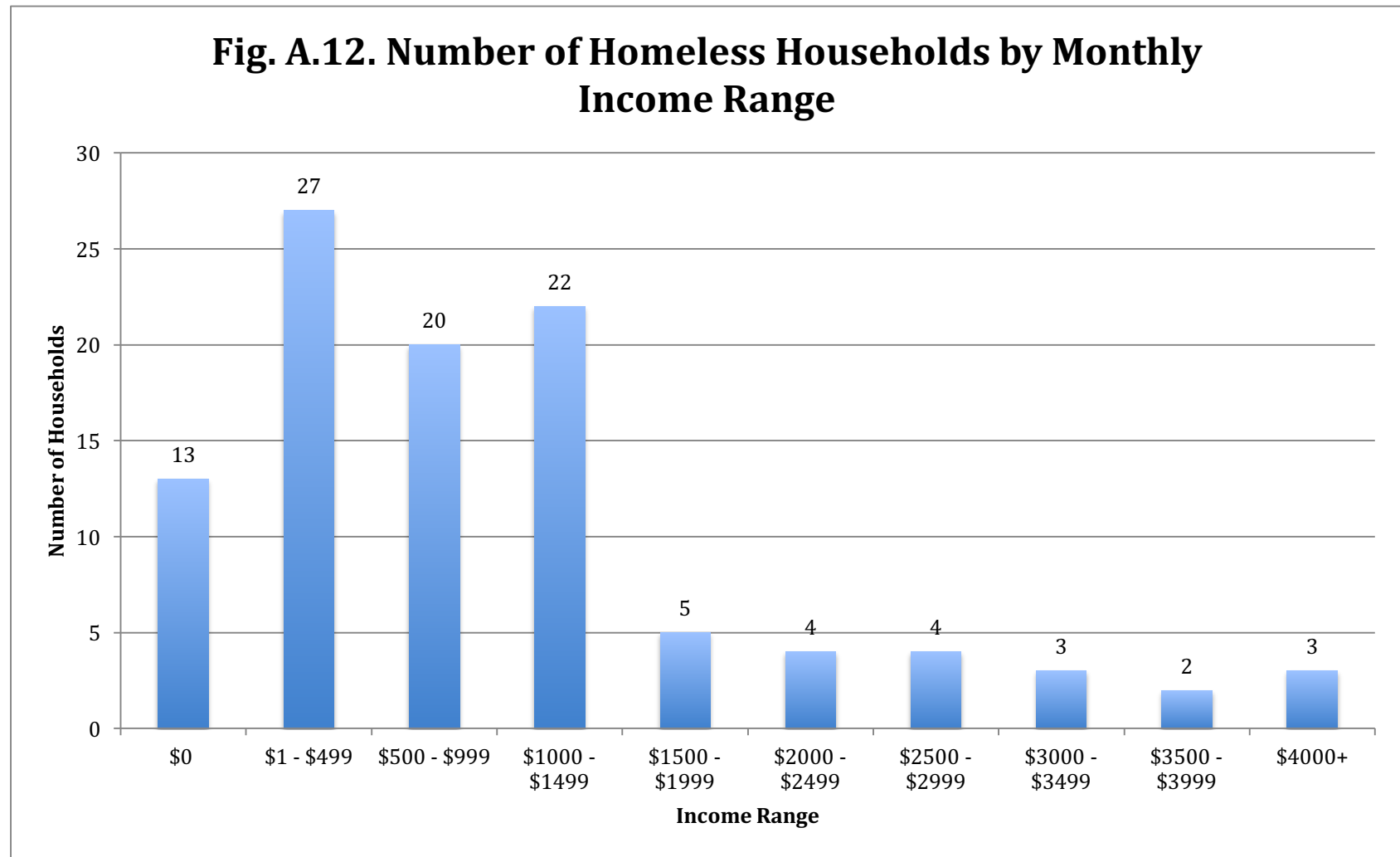




**Fig. A. 11. Number of Households by Sources of Non-Cash Benefits**

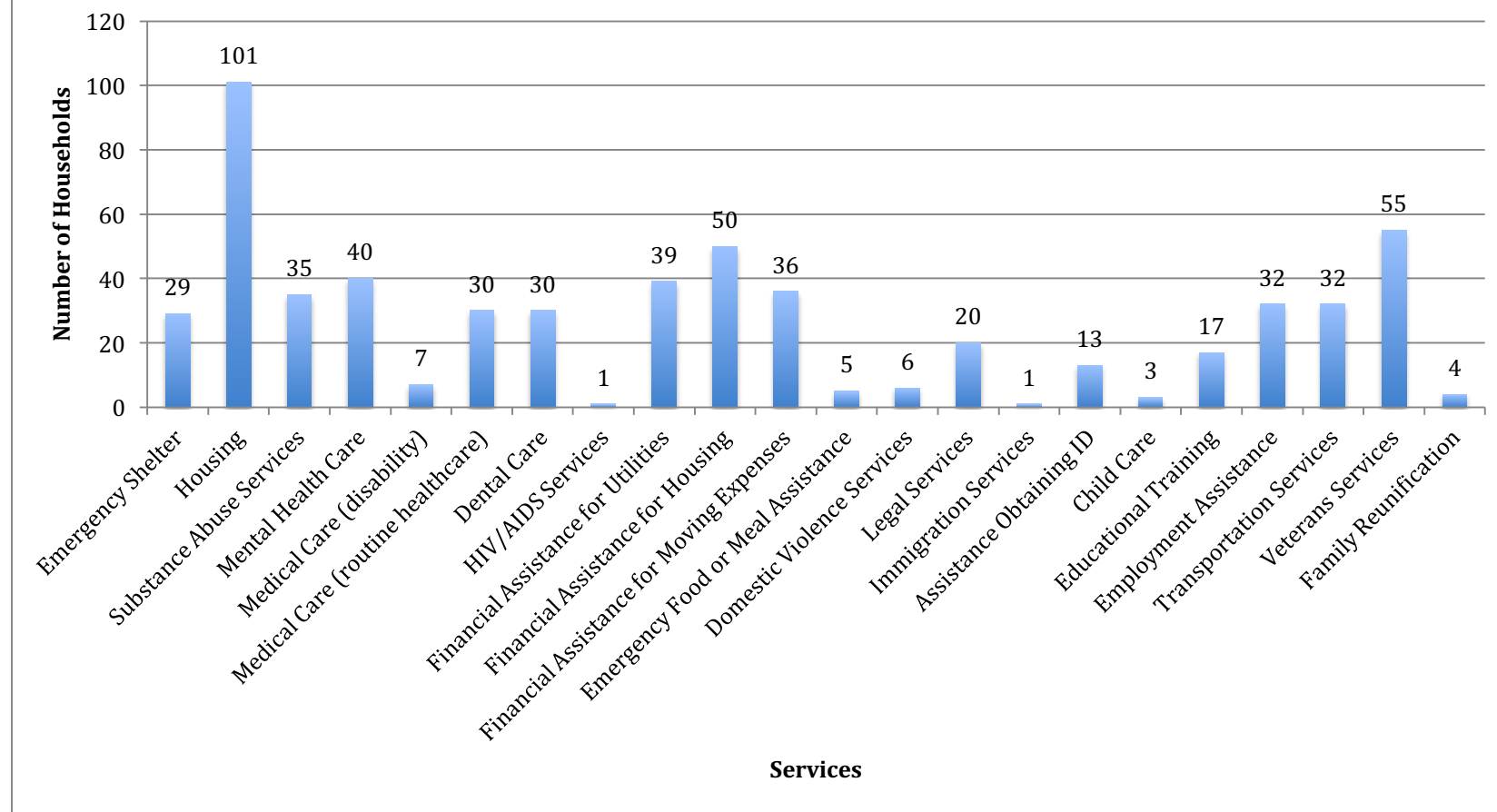


What is your monthly household income?



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**

