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2016 Counts!

Southern NJ CoC'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 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 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 26th, 2016 a total of 815 households, including 1,068 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Southern NJ CoC, according to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 75 persons in 70 households were identified as chronically homeless.
- 207 households, including 239 persons were unsheltered on the night of the count.

Total Homeless Population

On the night of January 26th, 2016, a total of 1,068 persons, in 815 households, were experiencing homelessness in Southern NJ CoC, according to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count. The Southern New Jersey CoC includes Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, and Gloucester Counties. This is a decrease of 21 persons (1.9%) and 31 households (3.7%) from 2015. Southern NJ CoC had 11.9% of New Jersey's statewide homeless population in 2016.

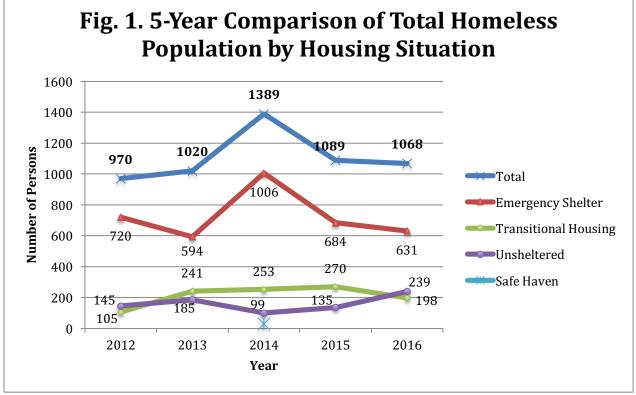
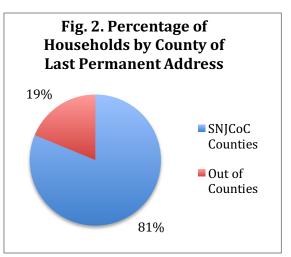


Figure 1 shows that, in 2016, 631 homeless persons stayed in emergency shelters, 198 stayed in transitional housing, and 239 were living unsheltered on the night of the count. When comparing to 2015, the number of persons in both emergency shelter and transitional housing decreased by 53 persons (7.7%) and 72 persons (26.7%), respectively. While this is true, the number of unsheltered persons increased by 104 (77%) from 2015.

Figure 1 also shows that, overall, the total number of homeless persons had shifted upward from 2012 to 2014, but has been trending downward over the past two years. From 2014 to 2016, Southern NJ CoC saw a decrease of 321 persons (23.1%). While this is the case, Southern NJ CoC has seen an overall increase of 10.1% (98 persons) in the total homeless population from 2012 to 2016.

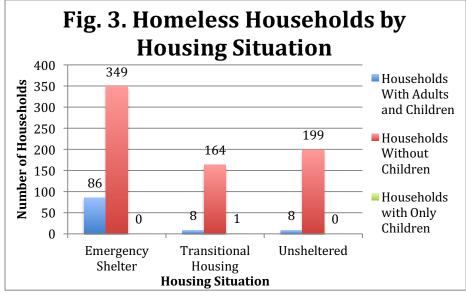
As Figure 2 shows, 19% of the homeless households in Southern NJ CoC in 2016 reported that their last permanent address prior to



becoming homeless was outside Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, and Gloucester Counties.

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 815 homeless households counted in Southern NJ CoC in 2016, 102 (12.5%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult. These families were composed of 335 persons, including 212 children under age 18 and 123 adults. The average family size was 3 persons. Figure

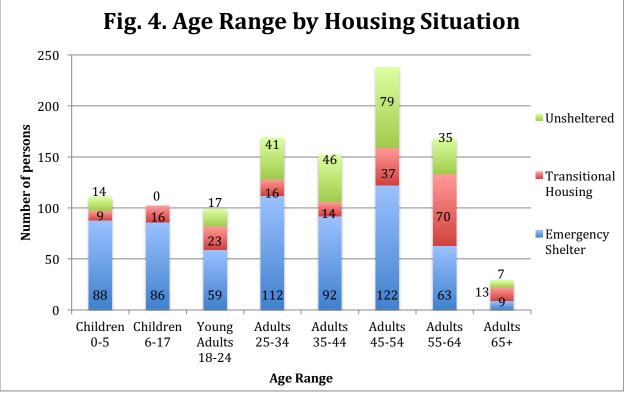
3 shows that 86 families were staying in emergency shelter (84.3%), and 8 were in transitional housing programs (7.8%). There were 8 unsheltered families (7.8%), consisting of 8 adults and 27 children. In 2016, Southern NJ CoC counted exactly the same number of homeless families as in 2015 (102).

87.4% (712) of the homeless households in Southern NJ CoC were households without children under 18, and they were composed of 732 adults. 349 (49%) of these adult-only households were staying in emergency shelters, 164 (23%) were in transitional housing, and 199 (27.9%) were unsheltered. Southern NJ CoC has seen the number of adult-only homeless households decrease by 28 (3.8%) since 2015.

In 2016, there was 1 unaccompanied youth household under the age of 18 served in a transitional housing program on the night of the count. This represents a decrease of 3 youth-only households from 2015.

Demographics

There were a total of 99 (9.3%) homeless adults between 18 and 24 years old, 756 (70.8%) adults over age 24, and 213 (19.9%) children under 18 years old experiencing homelessness on the night of the count. Figure 4 shows that the majority of homeless children under the age of 18 were between 0 and 5 years of age (111, 52.1%). The age range most represented overall are adults between 45 and 54 (238 persons, 22.3%).



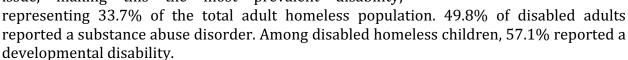
64.5% (689) of homeless persons were male, and 35.3% (377) were female.

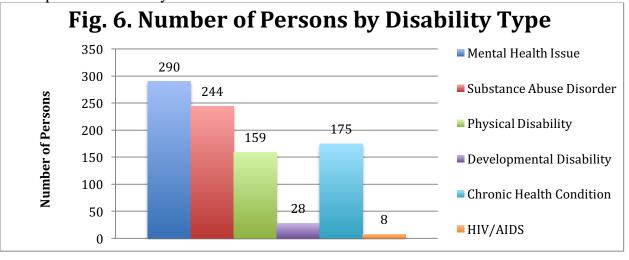
50.5% (539) of persons identified their race as Black or African-American, making that the largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported. The next largest group self-identified as White (47.5%, 507 persons), followed by those identifying as Multi-Racial (2.3%, 25 persons). With regard to ethnicity, 14.5% of persons identified themselves as Hispanic.

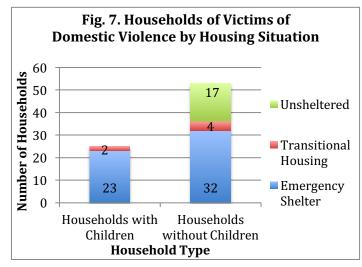
Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 46% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 57.1% of adults 18 or older reported some type of disability compared to 3.3% of children. Figure 6 shows the number of the homeless persons that identified as having various disabilities. The most common disabilities included mental health issues and substance abuse disorders.

Among disabled adults, 59% reported a mental health issue, making this the most prevalent disability;



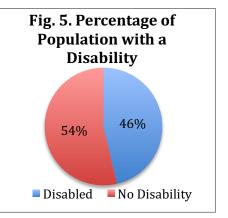




Victims of Domestic Violence

On the night of the count, in Southern NJ CoC, 78 homeless households (9.6% of all households) identified having a victim of domestic violence, an increase of 1 households from 2015. The majority (67.9%) of these households were adult households without children, 60.4% of which were in emergency shelter on the night of the count. The remaining 25 households were families with

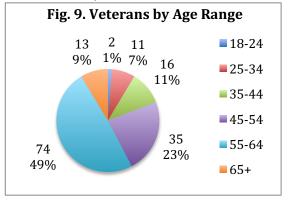
children which were composed of 86 persons. 17 of the 78 households (21.8%) were unsheltered on the night of the count.

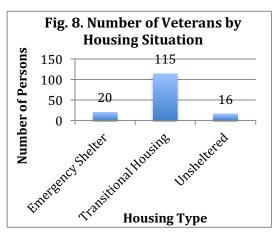


Veterans

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.

151 homeless veterans were identified on the night of the count, 7 more than in 2015. 96% of veterans





counted were individuals, 3 were in adults only households composed of 7 persons and 3 were in families with children composed of 7 persons. As in 2015, the majority (76.2%) of homeless veterans were in transitional housing, but the number of unsheltered veterans doubled from 8 in 2015 to 16 in 2016.

94.7% of veterans experiencing homelessness in Southern NJ CoC on the night of the count were male and 8 were female. The most common racial

background identified among them (92 veterans, 60.9%) was Black or African American, with 56 (37.1%) identified as White. Figure 9 Illustrates the percentage of homeless veterans by age range.

4 veterans identified being a victim of domestic violence and 107 of the 151 veterans, 70.9%, reported having some kind of disability. The most common disabilities cited were mental health issues (58.9%) and substance abuse disorders (47.7%). 6% of veteran households reported receiving Veteran's Pension and 13.9% reported Veteran's Disability as forms of income, while 44.4% reported no source of income. 58.9% of veterans reported being connect to VA Medical Benefits, while 13.2% reported no connect to non-cash benefits. 6.6% of homeless veterans requested assistance around connection to veteran services.

Income and Benefits

households experiencing Among all homelessness on the night of the count, 43.1% had no source of income and 6.9% reported having earned income. The most sources common of income among households were SSI (19.5%). General Assistance (16.7%), and TANF (7.1%).

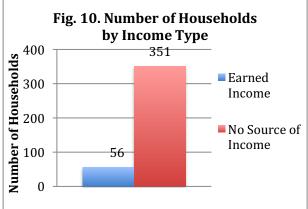


Figure 11. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation				
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered	
Average for All Households	\$262.37	\$545.12	\$310.10	

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

19.8% of households reported that their household was receiving no kind of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. The top reported non-cash benefits were Medicaid (44.9%) and Food Stamps (SNAP) (44.4%).

Length of Homelessness

As Figure 12 shows, the length time households of had reported being homeless was pretty evenly distributed. The largest number of households (156 households, 19.1%) reported their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted more than 12 months. 136, or 16.7% households. of homeless reported being

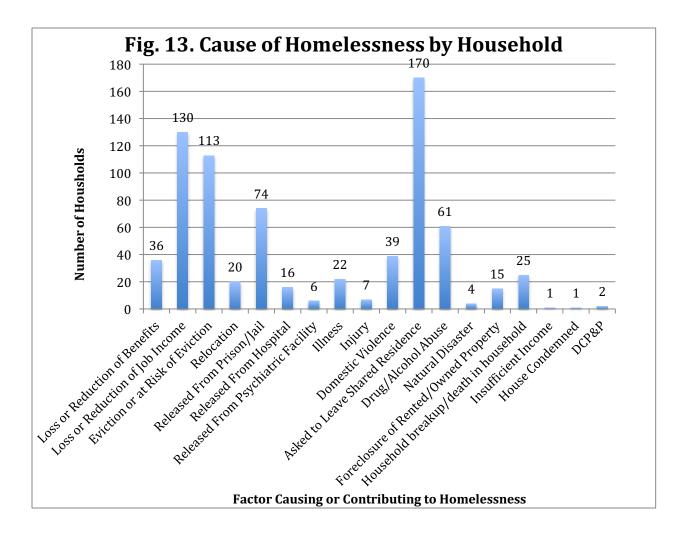


between 6 and 12 months. Taken together, this means 35.8% of households had been homeless more than 6 months.

Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households, 170 (20.8%), 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 loss or reduction of job income (16%), followed by eviction or risk of eviction (13.7%).

When homeless households were asked 'what was your residence prior to your current living situation?' more said they were living with friends or family (40.9%) than any other type of residence. 14.8% reported staying in permanent housing prior to their current living situation, and another 14.6% reported staying in emergency shelter.



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

70 households, made up of 75 persons, were chronically homeless in Southern NJ CoC, according to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 35 houeholds (33.3%) and 40 persons (34.8%) from 2015. The rate of chronic homelessness as a percentage of overall homelessness also decreased from 10.6% in 2015 to 7% in 2016.

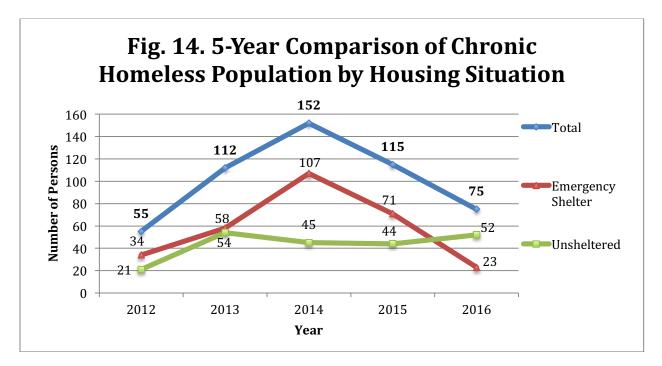
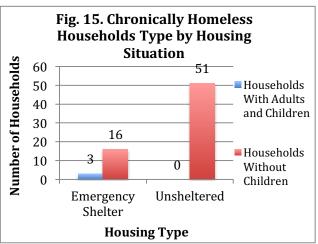


Figure 14 shows the number of chronically homeless persons who were in emergency shelters or living unsheltered in Southern NJ CoC from 2012 to 2016. Over the past five years the total number of chronically homeless persons has seen a significant spike in 2014 and subsequent decline since. Overall, over the past 5 years the total number of chronic homeless persons has increased by 20 persons (36.4%.). The numbers of chronically homeless persons in emergency shelter decreased 32.4%, while the unsheltered chronically homeless population is up 147.6% since 2012.

Families and Individuals

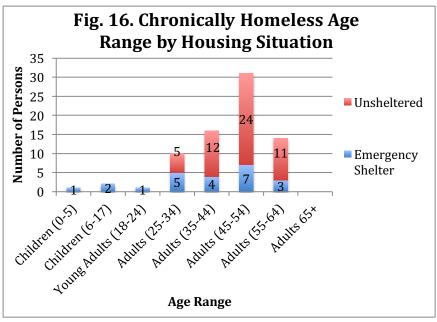
67 of the 70 (95.7%) chronically homeless households counted in 2016 were adultonly households, while the remaining 3 (4.3%) of the households were family households. This is an increase of 1 chronically homeless family from 2015. 51 (72.9%) chronically homeless households were unsheltered, 8 more (18.6%) than 2015.



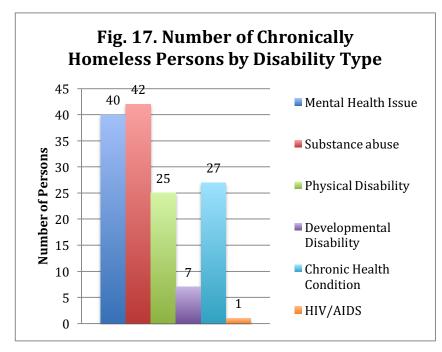
Demographics

Of the 75 total chronically homeless persons, the age range with the highest concentration of chronically homeless persons was adults between 45 and 54 years old (31 persons, 41.3%). This age distribution is similar to the pattern of chronically homeless that was seen in 2015.

78.7% of chronically homeless persons were male, and 20% were female.



The largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported their race as White (54.7%). The next group self-identified as Black or African-American (46.7%). With regard to ethnicity, 9.3% 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 substance abuse disorders (56%) and mental health issues (53.3%). The complete numbers reported of disabilities among the chronically homeless can be seen in Figure 17.

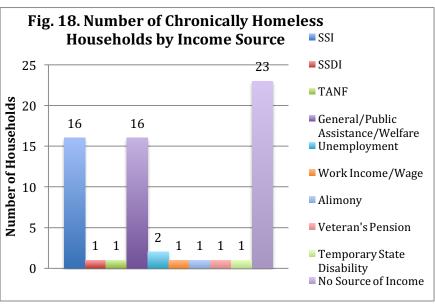
Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 6 chronically homeless individuals in Southern NJ CoC reported being a victim of domestic violence, a decrease of 8 from 2015. 3 of these individuals were counted in emergency shelter while the other 3 were living unsheltered.

There were 3 veteran individuals identified as chronically homeless in Southern NJ CoC on the night of the count, a decrease of 5 from 2015. All of these chronically homeless veterans were unshelted on the night of the count.

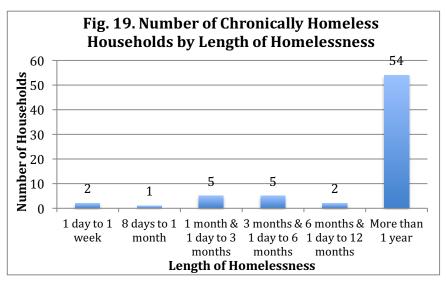
Income and Benefits

Among all chronically homeless households on the night of the count, 32.9% reported receiving no type of cash income. Figure 18 shows the of income sources received. The most common sources of cash income among chronically homeless households were General Assistance and SSI, both of which were



received by 22.9%. 1 chronically homeless household reported earned income.

24.3% of the chronically homeless households reported they were not receiving any type of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Food Stamps (SNAP) and Medicaid were the top benefits among this population with 48.6% and 40% receiving each, respectively.

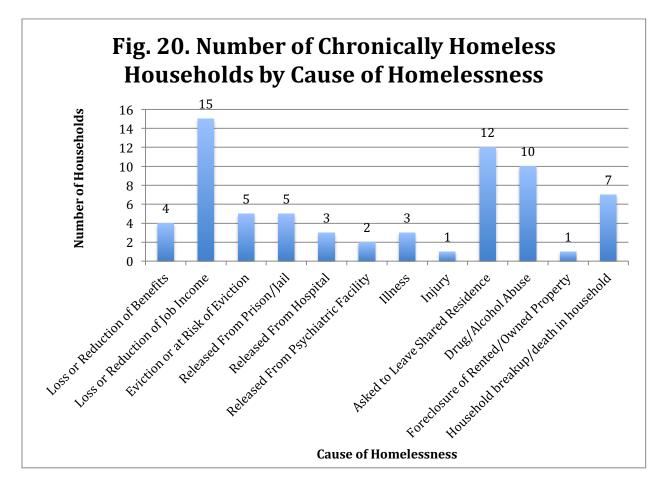


Length of Homelessness

Figure 19 shows that 54 chronically homeless households (77.1%) 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, 21.4% reported a loss or reduction of job income. Another 17.1% reported being asked to leave a shared residence.



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

207 households, made up of 239 persons, were living unsheltered in Southern NJ CoC on January 26th, 2016, according to the 2016 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 81 households (64.3%), and 104 persons (77%) from 2015.

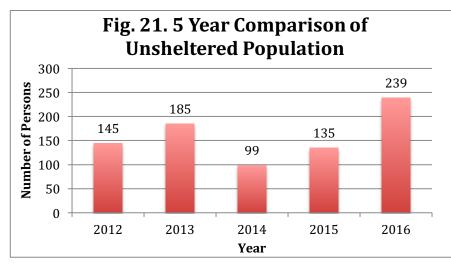


Figure 21 shows the number of unsheltered persons from 2012 to Since 2014, the 2016. unsheltered population has been steadily increasing and overall the Southern NJ CoC has seen an increase of 64.8% (94 persons) from 2012 to 2016.

Families and Individuals

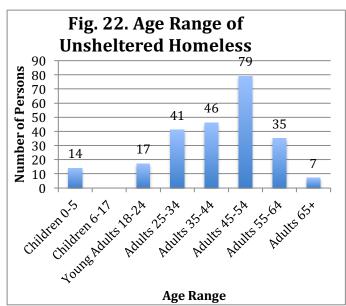
Of the 207 unsheltered households counted in 2016, 8 (3.9%) were households with at least 1 adult and 1 child. These unsheltered families were comprised of 27 persons, 14 children under the age of 18, and 13 adults. These 8 unsheltered families shows an increase of 6 unsheltered families from 2015.

The remaining 199 unsheltered households (96.1%) were adult-only households, and they included 212 persons. This is an increase of 75 (60.4%) adult households from 2015.

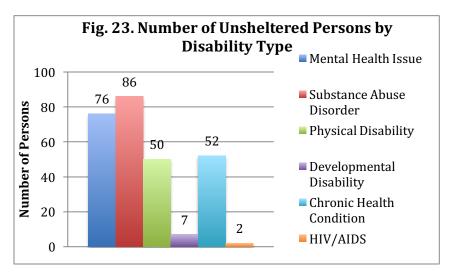
Demographics

As Figure 22 shows, the largest portion of the 239 unsheltered persons counted in 2016, 33.1%, were adults between 45 and 54 years old.

73.6% of unsheltered persons were male and 25.9% identified as female. 51.9% identified their race as Black or African-American and 48.1% identified as White. 12.1% of unsheltered persons identified their ethnicity as Hispanic.



Disabilities



Of the 239 unsheltered persons, 147 (61.5%)reported having some kind of disability. The disabilities most commonly identified were substance abuse disorders (58.5%), and mental health issues (51.7%).The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the unsheltered can be seen in Figure 23.

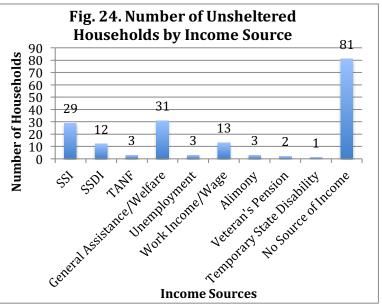
Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 17 unsheltered homeless households in Southern NJ CoC reported having a victim of domestic violence, 16 were adult individuals and 1 was an adult couple. This is an increase of 1 household since 2015.

There were 16 unsheltered veterans identified on the night of the count, a 100% increase from the 8 reported in 2015. 15 were single individuals, and 1 was a member of an adult-only household of 3 persons.

Income and Benefits

all unsheltered Among households on the night of the 81 (39.1%) reported count. having no source of income. The average monthly income among unsheltered households was approximately \$310. 15% of unsheltered households received General Assistance, making it the most common source of cash income. Figure 24 shows all sources of income received.

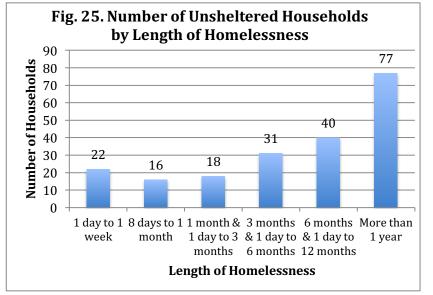


72 unsheltered households (34.8%) reported they were not receiving any type of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Food Stamps (SNAP) and Medicaid were the top reported non-cash benefits among this group, with 31.9% and 27.1% receiving each of these benefits, respectively.

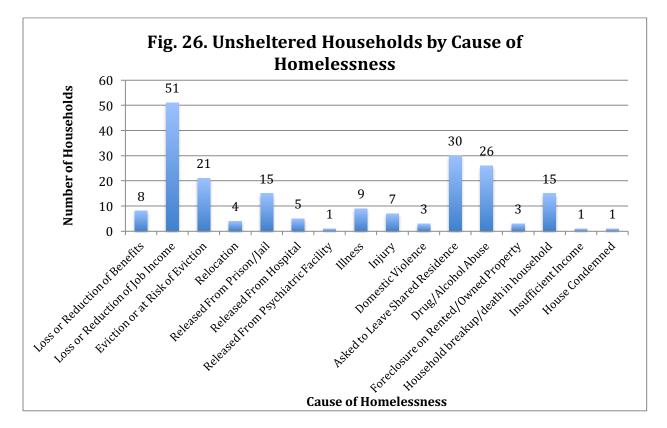
Length of Homelessness

As shown in Figure 25, more unsheltered homeless households reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted more than 1 year (37.2%) than any other. This is similar to what was found in 2015.

Cause of Homelessness

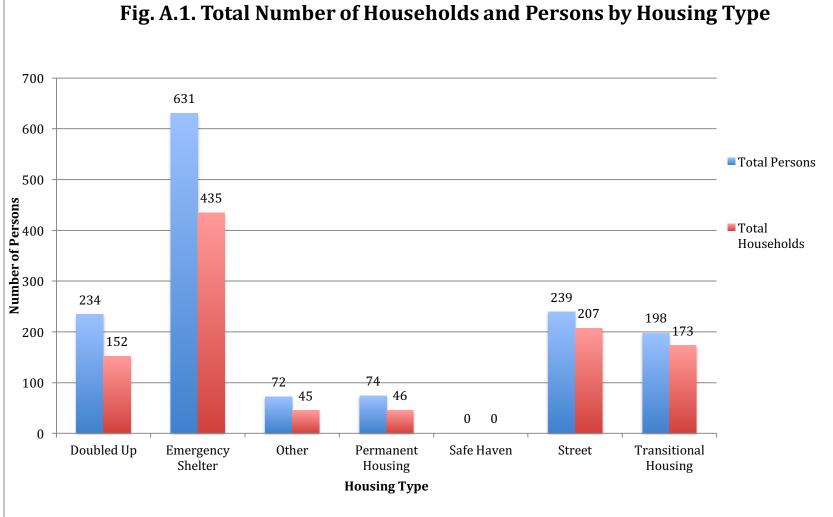


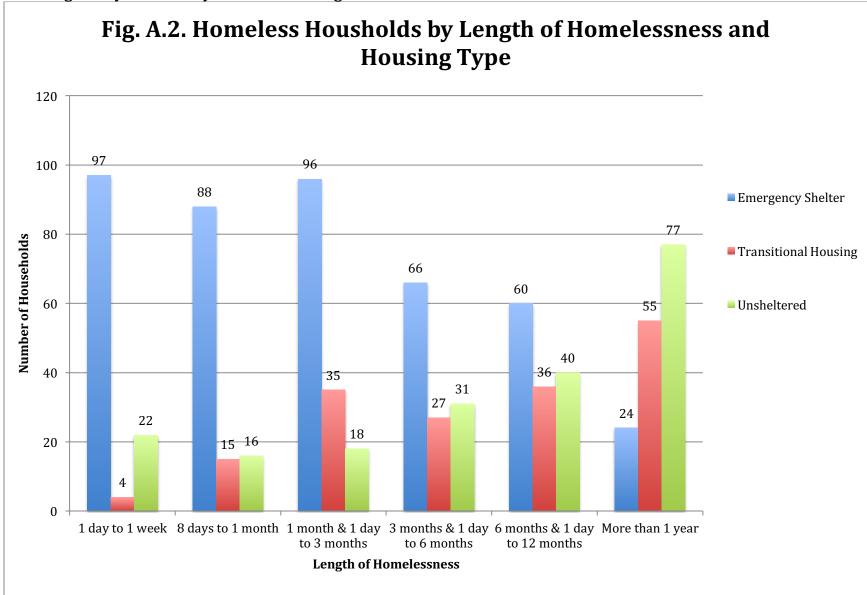
When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more unsheltered households reported a loss or reduction of job income (24.6%) than any other factor. Figure 26 shows the full breakdown for unsheltered households.



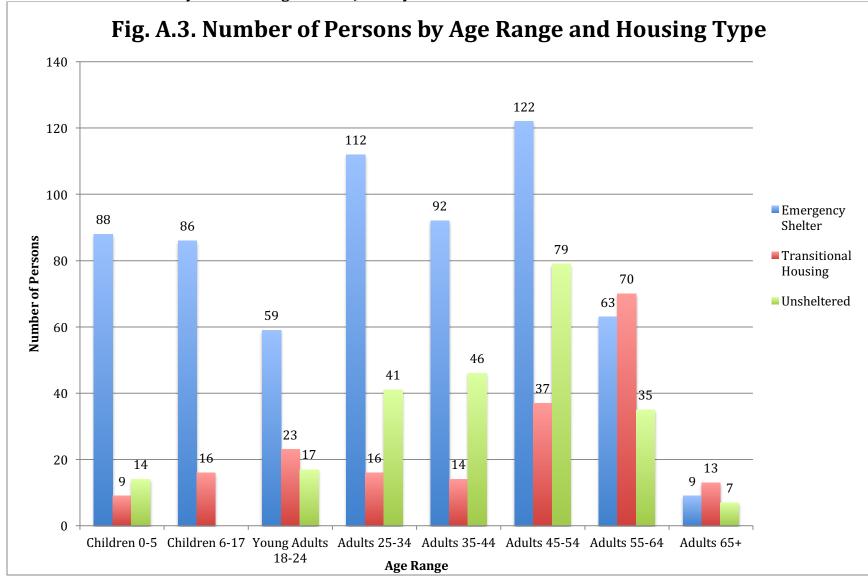
VI. Appendix



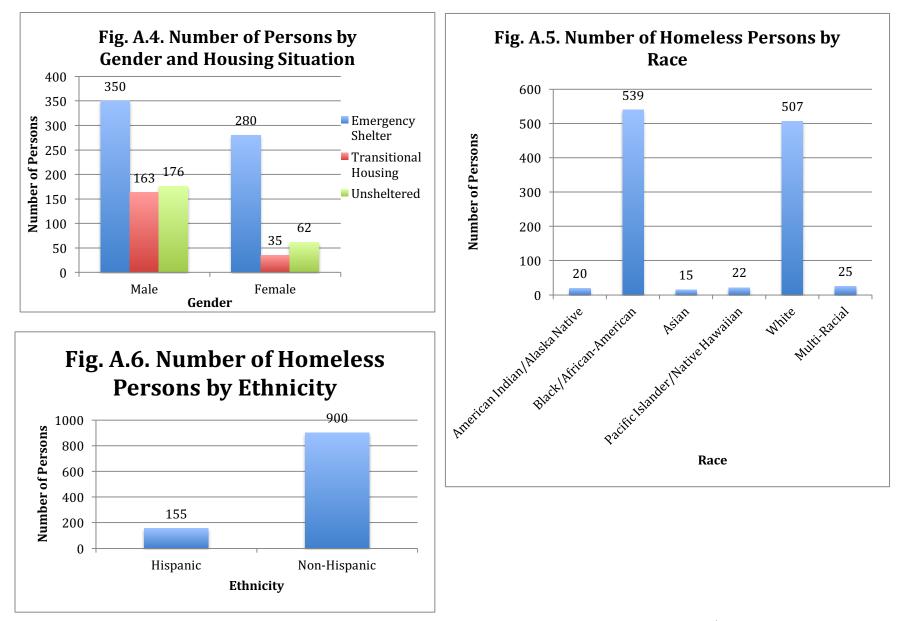




How long have you been in your current living situation?



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



Household Characteristics – check all that apply to each person

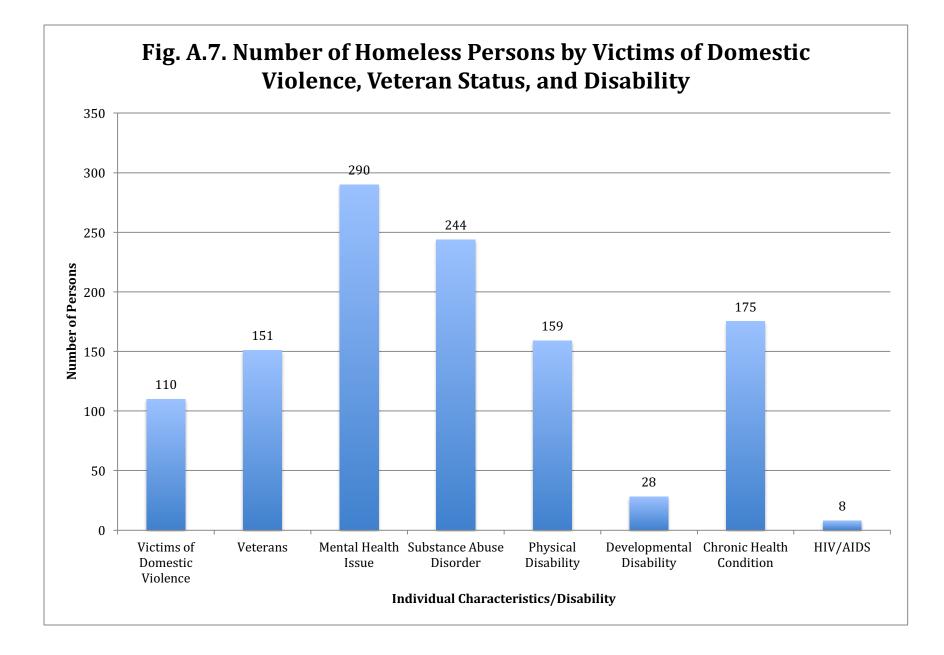
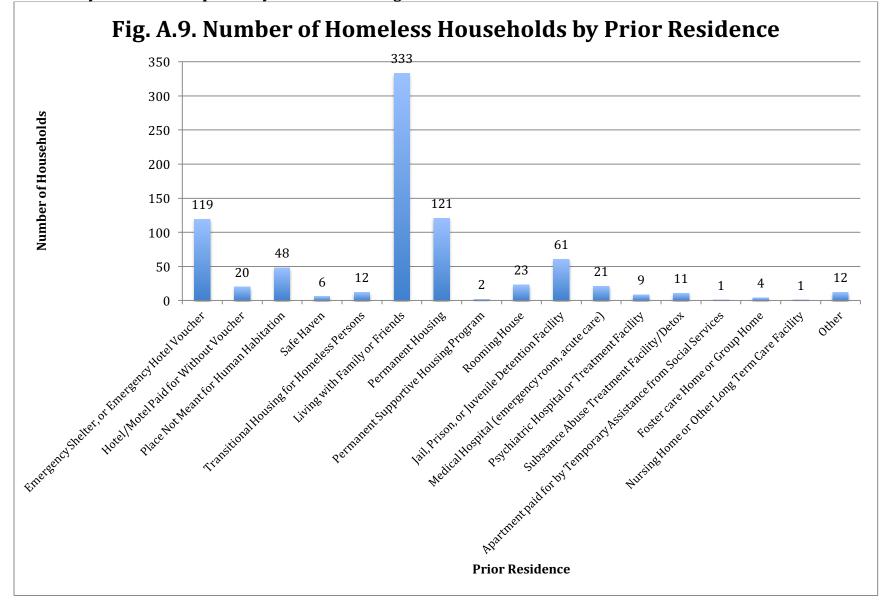
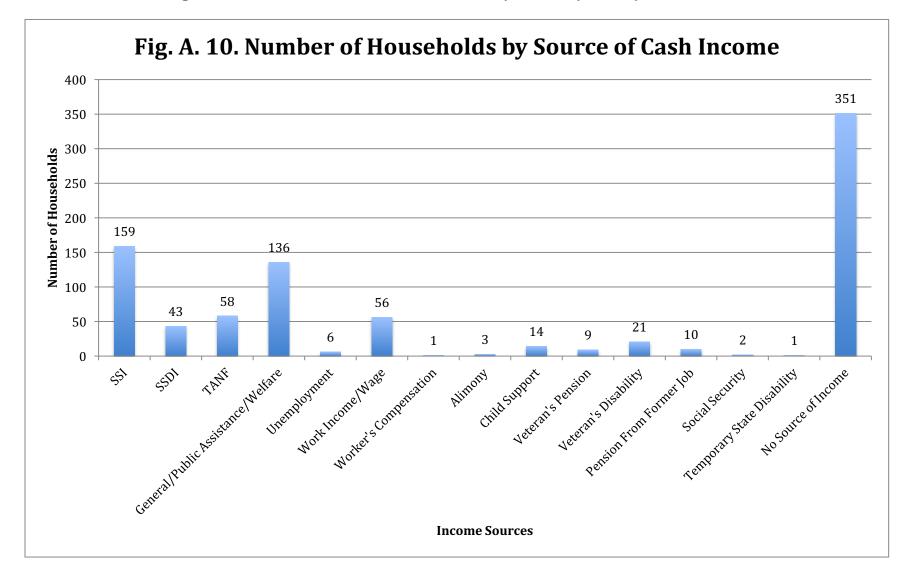


Fig. A.8. Number of Homeless Households by County or State of Last Permanent Address			
Last Permanent Address – County/State	Number of Households		
Atlantic County	8		
Burlington County	67		
Camden County	307		
Cape May County	74		
Connecticut	1		
Cumberland County	119		
Essex County	1		
Florida	2		
Gloucester County	62		
Hunterdon County	1		
Mercer County	3		
Michigan	2		
New Hampshire	1		
New York	3		
North Carolina	1		
Ocean County	5		
Pennsylvania	23		
Puerto Rico	1		
Salem County	5		
Somerset County	1		
South Carolina	1		
Sussex County	1		
Texas	1		
Union County	2		

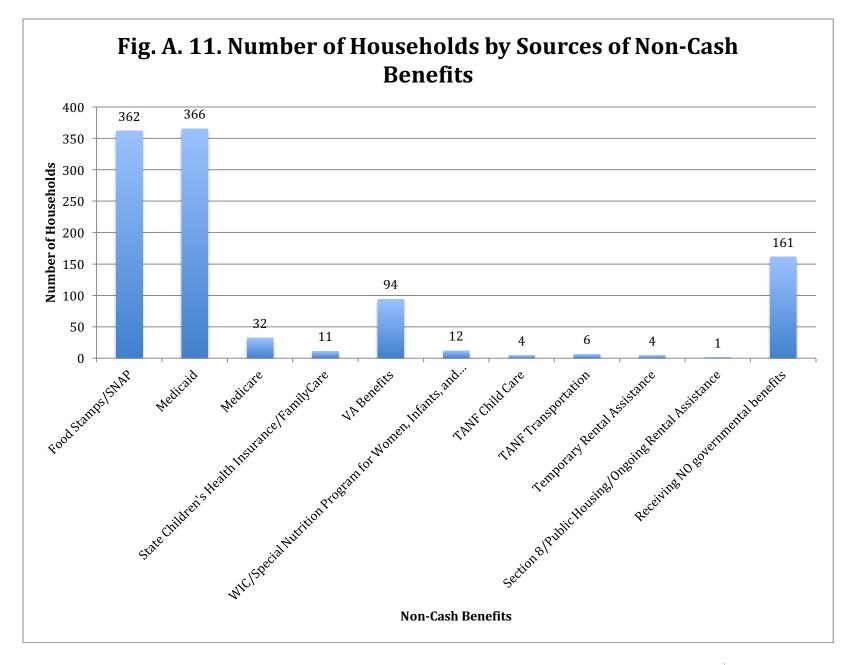
Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?



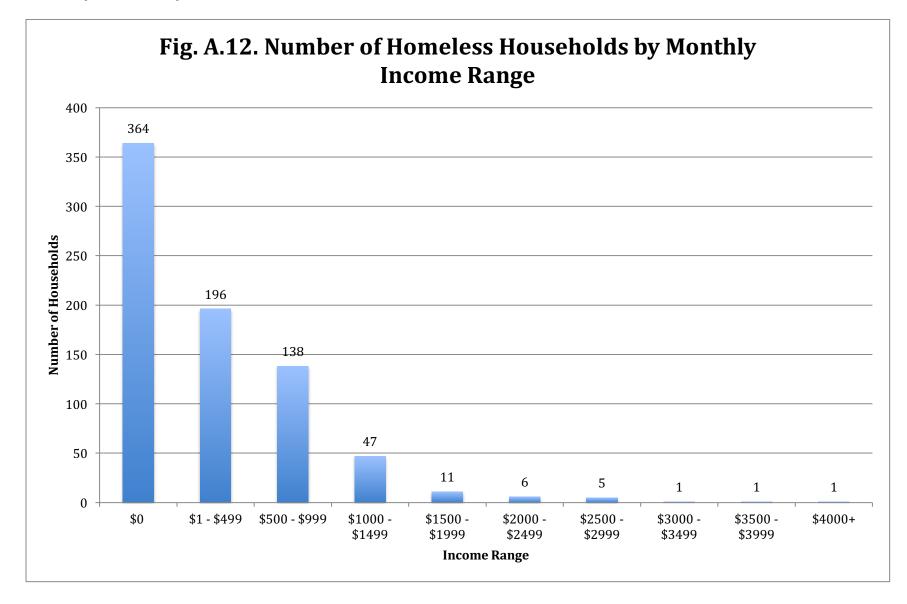
What was your residence prior to your current living situation?

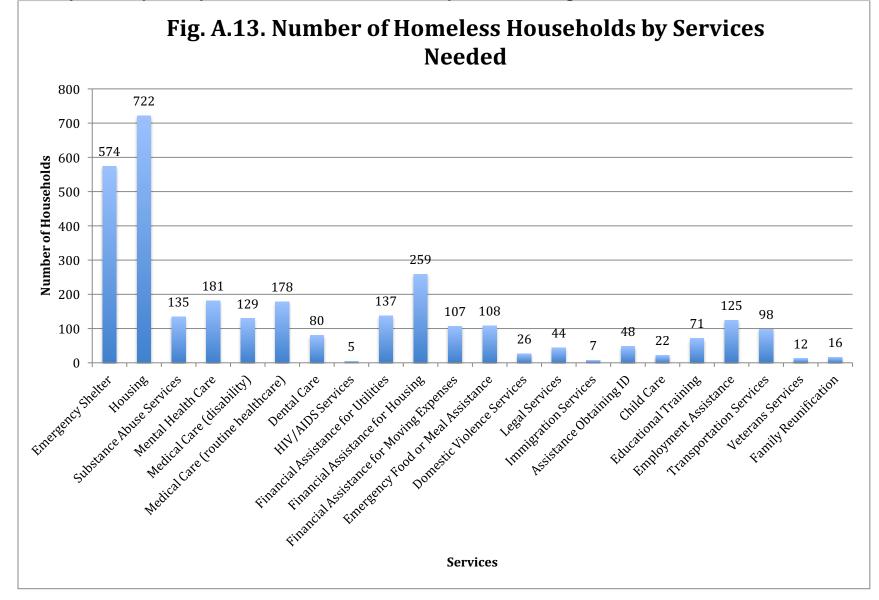


Which of the following sources of income or non-cash benefits do you, or anyone in your household, receive?

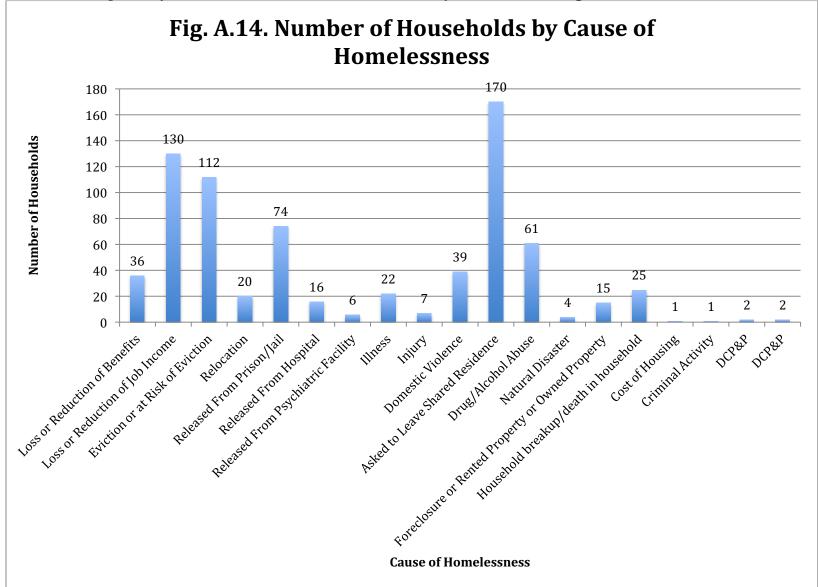


What is your monthly household income?





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?