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A large, light blue map of the state of New Jersey serves as the background for the entire page. Overlaid on the upper right portion of the map is the text 'NJ 2017 Counts!' in a large, bold, brown serif font. The 'NJ' is particularly large, with '2017' and 'Counts!' positioned below it.

**NJ**  
**2017**  
**Counts!**

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## Cape May County's 2017 Point-In-Time Count of the Homeless

January 24, 2017

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## Table of Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>I. Introduction.....</b>                             | <b>3</b>  |
| NJ Counts 2017.....                                     | 3         |
| Acknowledgements.....                                   | 3         |
| This Report .....                                       | 3         |
| <b>II. Data Collection and Methodology .....</b>        | <b>4</b>  |
| Requirements for the Count.....                         | 4         |
| Data Collection Methods.....                            | 5         |
| Limitations .....                                       | 5         |
| De-duplication .....                                    | 6         |
| <b>III. Findings for Total Homeless Population.....</b> | <b>7</b>  |
| Key Findings .....                                      | 7         |
| Total Homeless Population .....                         | 7         |
| Homeless Families and Individuals .....                 | 8         |
| Demographics .....                                      | 9         |
| Disabilities .....                                      | 10        |
| Victims of Domestic Violence.....                       | 10        |
| Veterans.....   | 11        |
| Income and Benefits .....                               | 11        |
| Length of Homelessness .....                            | 12        |
| Cause of Homelessness .....                             | 12        |
| <b>IV. Findings for the Chronically Homeless .....</b>  | <b>13</b> |
| Total Chronically Homeless Population.....              | 14        |
| Families and Individuals .....                          | 14        |
| Demographics .....                                      | 15        |
| Disabilities .....                                      | 15        |
| Subpopulations.....                                     | 15        |
| Income and Benefits .....                               | 16        |
| Length of Homelessness .....                            | 16        |
| Cause of Homelessness .....                             | 16        |
| <b>V. Findings for the Unsheltered Homeless.....</b>    | <b>17</b> |
| Total Unsheltered Homeless Population.....              | 18        |
| Families and Individuals .....                          | 18        |
| Demographics .....                                      | 18        |
| Disabilities .....                                      | 19        |
| Subpopulations.....                                     | 19        |
| Income and Benefits .....                               | 19        |
| Length of Homelessness .....                            | 20        |
| Cause of Homelessness .....                             | 20        |
| <b>VI. Appendix .....</b>                               | <b>21</b> |

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

## I. Introduction

### NJ Counts 2017

*NJ Counts 2017*, 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 2017 Count reveals important demographic and other information about families and individuals who were homeless on the night of Tuesday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017 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 primary 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 2017. Monarch would also like to specifically thank Bergen County for providing a Spanish translation of the 2017 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 2017 Point-In-Time Count 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 totaling 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 2017 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 2017 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 fourth 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 2017 PIT Survey tool closely mirrors information collected in HMIS so that the data was comparable for important factors such as duration and episodes of homelessness, 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 2013 to 2017. 2014 and 2016 were not HUD required full reporting years while 2013, 2015, and 2017 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 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017 a total of 71 households, including 119 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Cape May County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 13 persons in 10 households were identified as chronically homeless.
- 6 households, including 6 persons were unsheltered on the night of the count.

#### Total Homeless Population

On the night of January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017, a total of 119 persons, in 71 households, were experiencing homelessness in Cape May County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 14 persons (10.5%) and 10 households (12.3%) from 2016. Cape May County had 1.4% of New Jersey's statewide homeless population in 2017.

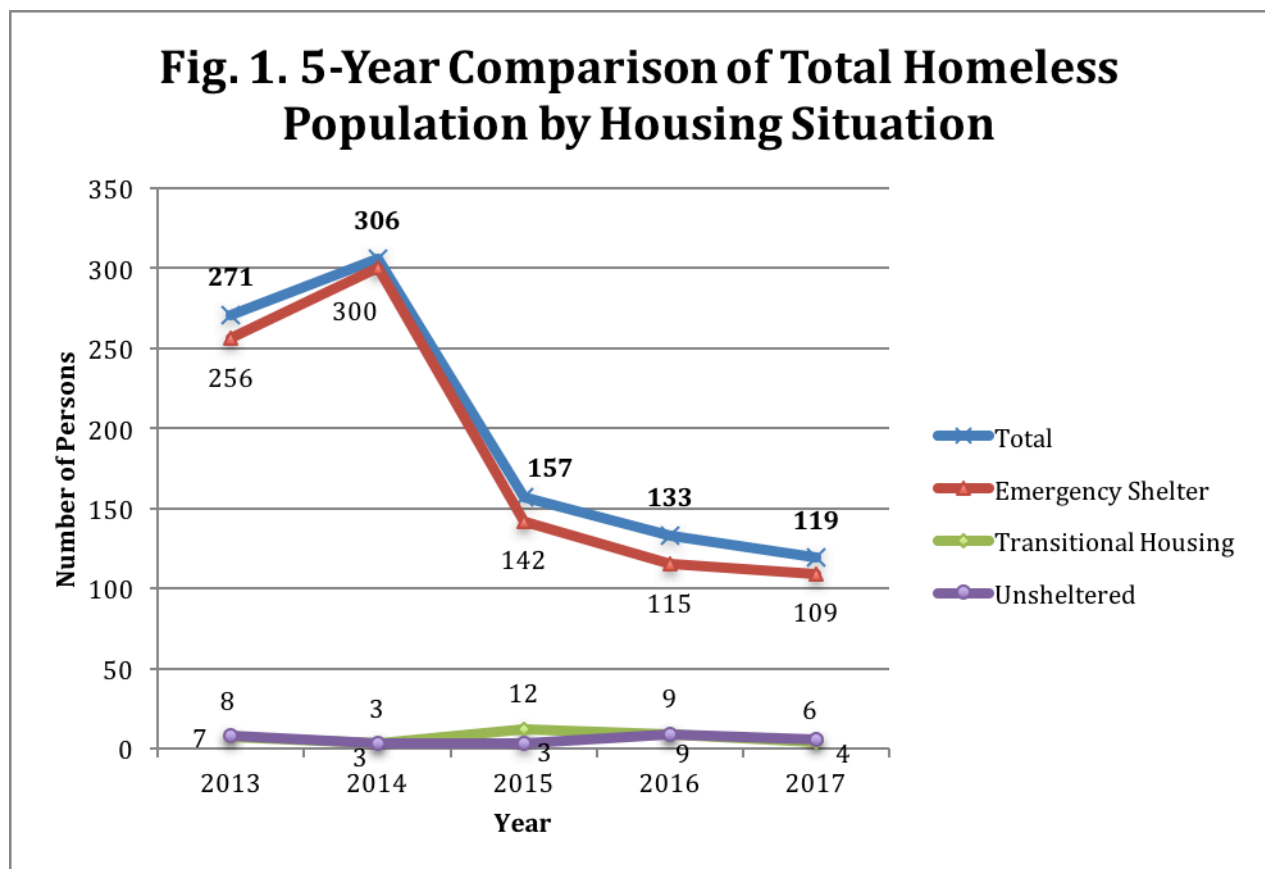


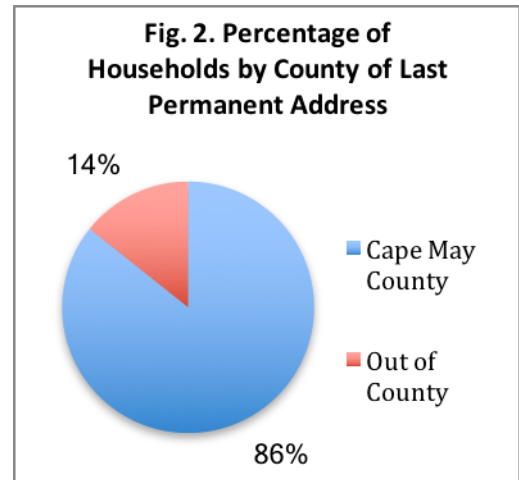
Figure 1 shows that, in 2017, 109 homeless persons stayed in emergency shelters, 4 stayed in transitional housing, and 6 were living unsheltered on the night of the count. The number of persons in transitional housing decreased by 5 persons (55.6%), those in



emergency shelter decreased by 6 persons (5.2%) , those living in unsheltered locations also decreased by 3 (33.3%) compared with 2016.

Figure 1 also shows that, over the past five years in Cape May County the total number of homeless persons shifted up in 2014, but has been trending steeply downward since. In 2017, the number of homeless persons in Cape May County reflects a decrease of 152 persons since 2013, a change of 56.1% over this five-year reporting period.

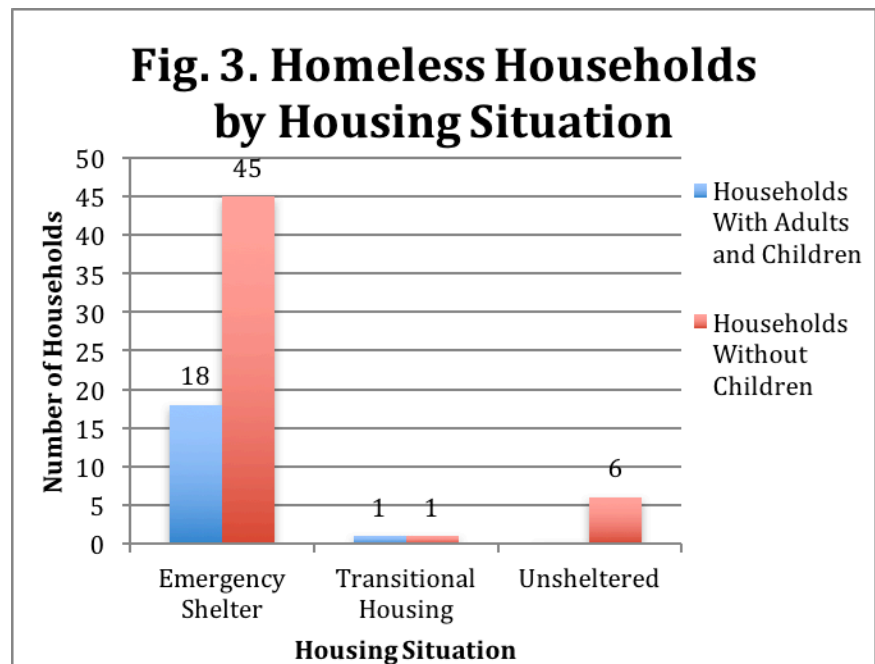
As Figure 2 shows, 14% of the homeless households in Cape May County in 2017 reported that their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless was outside of the county.



### 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 71 homeless households counted in Cape May County in 2017, 19 (26.8%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult. These families were composed of 62 persons, including 40 children under age 18, and 22 adults. The average family size was 3 persons. Figure 3 shows that 18 families were staying in emergency shelter (94.7%), and 1 was in a transitional housing

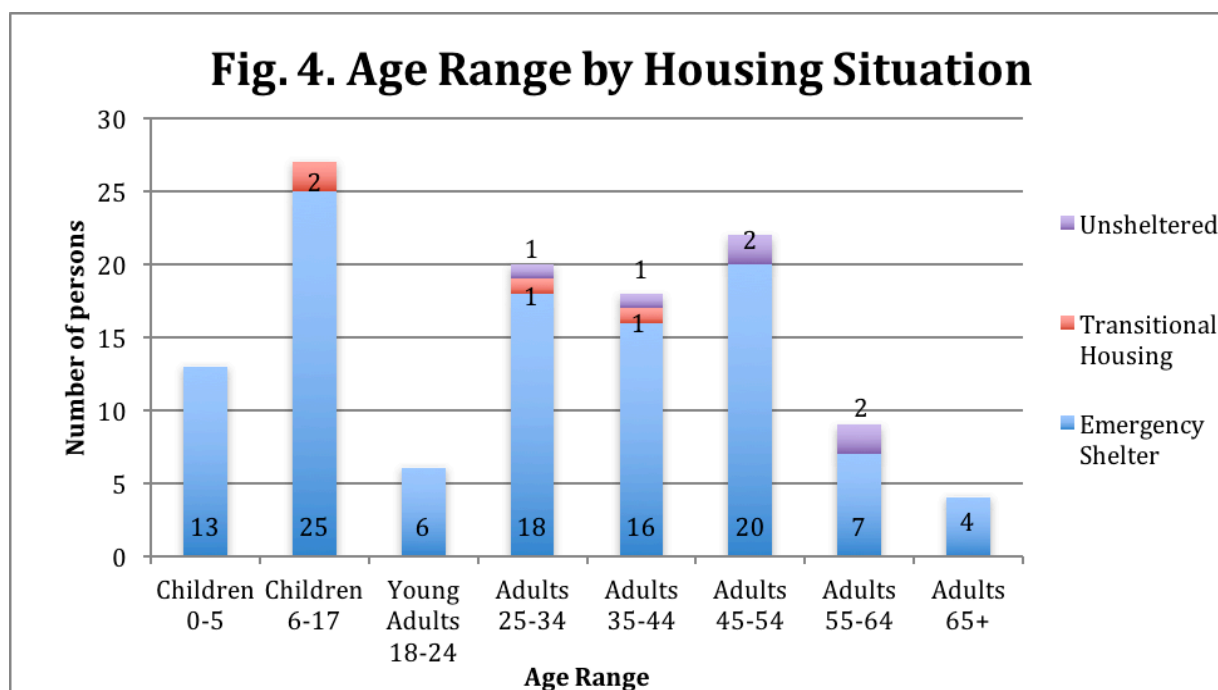


program (5.3%). There were no unsheltered families counted in 2017. Cape May County counted 1 fewer homeless family than in 2016, a decrease of 5%.

73.2% (52) of the homeless households in Cape May County were households without children under 18, and they were composed of 57 adults. 45 (86.5%) of these adult-only households were staying in emergency shelters, and 6 (11.5%) were unsheltered. Cape May County has seen the number of adult-only homeless households decrease by 9 (14.8%) since 2016.

## Demographics

There were a total of 6 (5%) homeless adults between 18 and 24 years old, 73 (61.3%) adults over age 24, and 40 (33.6%) 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 (27, 67.5%) This was also the age range most represented, with 22.7% of the overall homeless population. The next most represented age range was adults between 45 and 54 (22 persons, 18.5%).

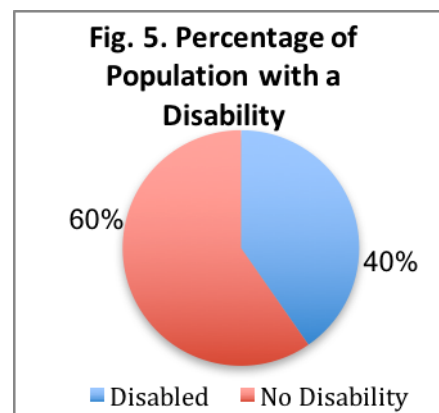


50.4% of homeless persons were male, and 49.6% were female.

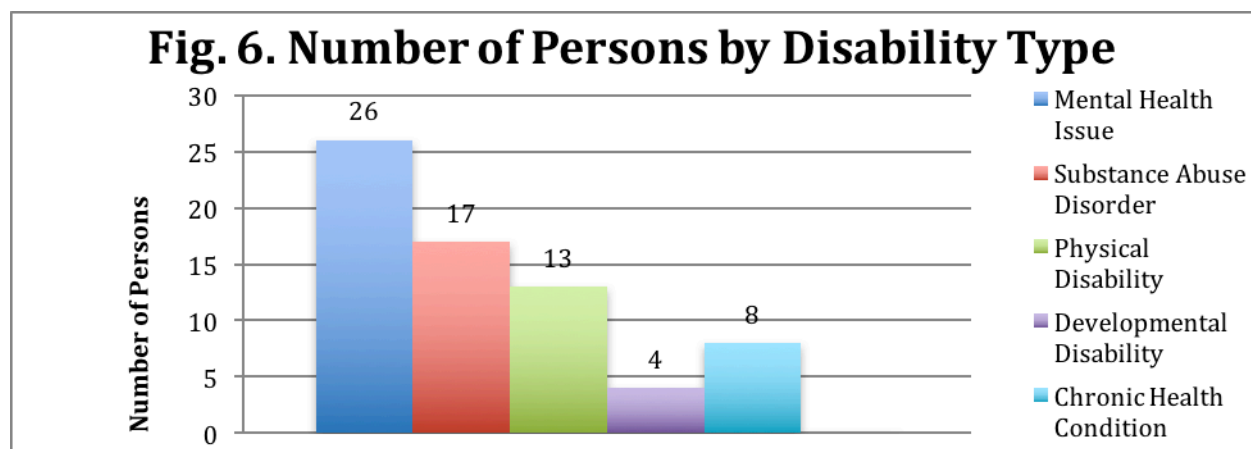
76.5% of persons identified their race as White, making that the largest racial subgroup among persons experiencing homelessness on the night of the count. The next largest self-identified as Black or African-American (21.8%). With regard to ethnicity, 10.9% of homeless persons identified themselves as Hispanic.

## Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 40.3% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 57% of adults (45 persons) 18 or older reported some type of disability compared to 7.5% of children (3 persons). 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.

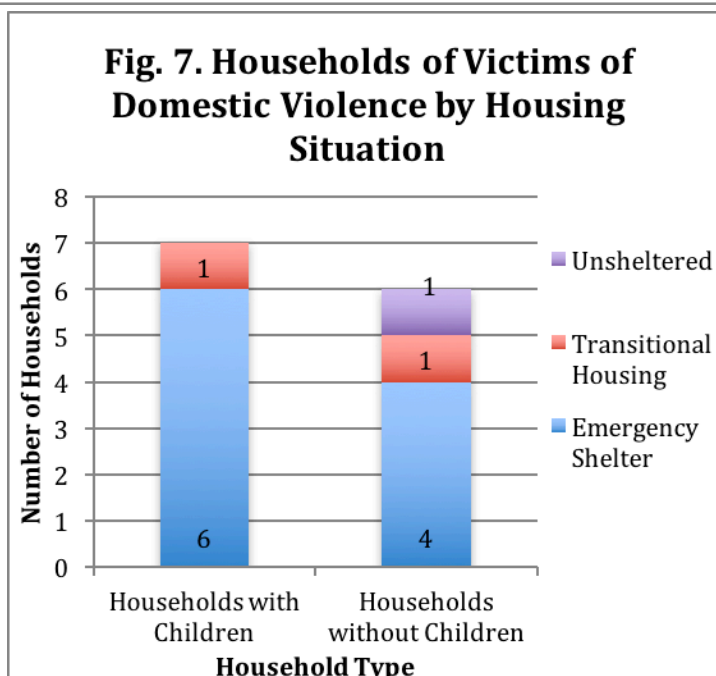


Among disabled adults, 53.3% reported a mental health issue, making this the most prevalent disability; representing 30.4% of the total homeless adult population. Among homeless children, 2 reported mental health issues, making this the most prevalent condition.



## Victims of Domestic Violence

On the night of the count, in Cape May County, 13 homeless households (18.3% of all households) identified having a victim of domestic violence. A total of 31 homeless persons who were members of those households were impacted. The majority (7, 53.8%) of these households had at least one adult and one child. 76.9% of homeless domestic violence victims were staying in emergency shelters on the night of the count. 7.7% were unsheltered.

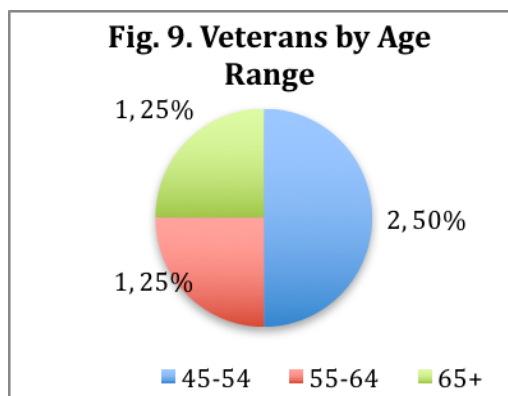
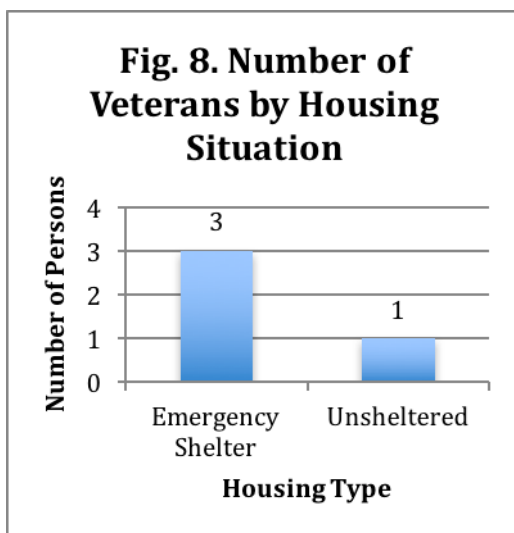




## Veterans

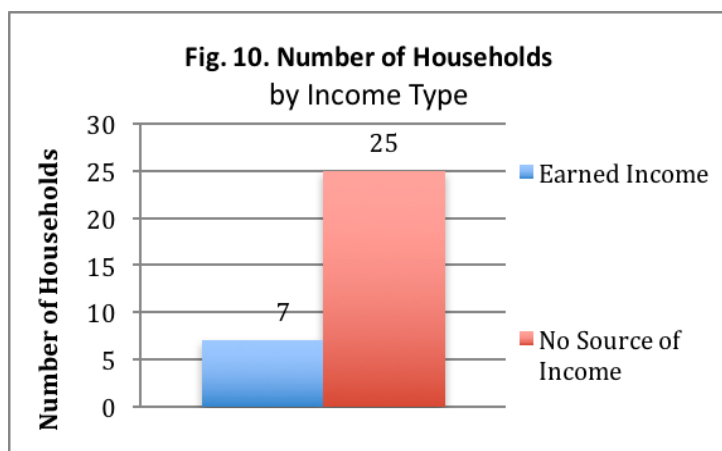
In its plan, *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has prioritized ending homelessness among veterans by 2015. Many communities in New Jersey have also been working hard to end homelessness among our country's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

4 homeless veterans were identified on the night of the count, 2 less than were counted in 2016. 2 of the homeless veterans counted were individual adults, 1 was part of an adult couple and 1 was a family household with a child under 18. The majority (75%) of homeless veterans were in emergency shelter, but 1 unsheltered veteran was identified.



All 4 of the veterans experiencing homelessness in Cape May County on the night of the count were male. The most common racial background identified among them (3 veterans, 75%) was White, with 1 (25%) identified as Black or African-American. Figure 9 illustrates the percentage of homeless veterans by age range.

3 of the 4 veterans, 75%, reported having some kind of disability. Each veteran reported a different disability, with mental health issues, physical disability, and chronic health condition all being reported by 1 veteran. As far as connection to veteran services, none of the veterans counted were receiving a Veteran's Pension or Veteran's Disability, but 1 of the 4 (25%) did report being connected to VA Medical Benefits.



## Income and Benefits

Among all homeless households on the night of the count, 25 (35.2%) reported no source of cash income, while 7 (9.9%) reported having earned income. The most common sources of cash income among households were SSI (38%), and General Assistance (GA) (29.6%).

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  | \$275.97          | \$0                  | \$159.83    |

4 households (5.6%) reported receiving no kind of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. The top reported non-cash benefits were Food Stamps (SNAP) (80.3%) and Medicaid (66.2%).

### Length of Homelessness

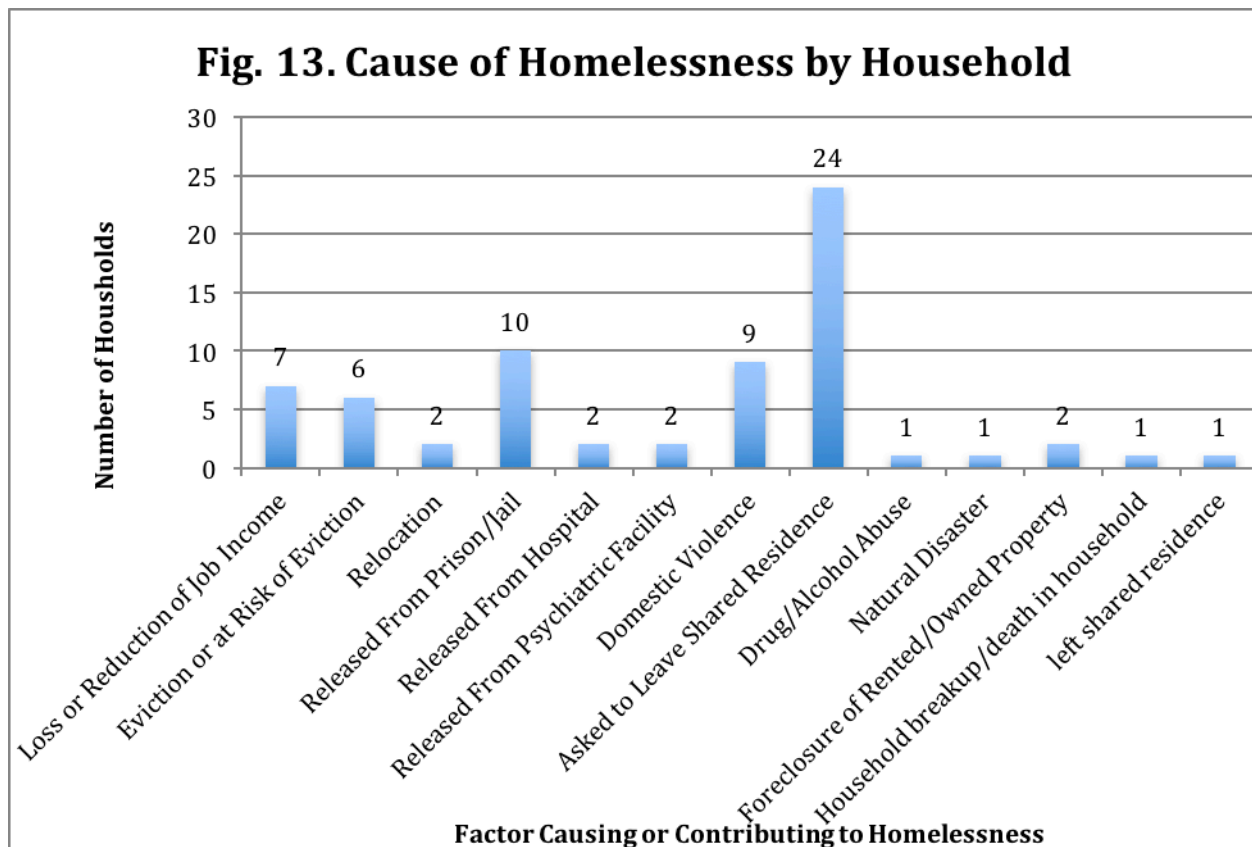


As Figure 12 shows, the largest number of households (16 households, 22.5%) reported their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted between 3 months and 6 months. Only 8 households (11.3%) had been homeless more than 12 months.

### Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households, 24 (33.8%), 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 release from prison or jail (14.1%), followed by domestic violence (12.7%).

When respondents were asked ‘what was your residence prior to your current living situation?’ more said they were living with friends or family (26.8%) than any other type of residence. 15.5% reported staying in permanent housing prior to their current living situation, and another 14.1% reported staying in emergency shelter.



#### IV. Findings for the Chronically Homeless

HUD issued its final rule on the definition of chronic homelessness in 2015. Under this definition, 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 where the length of time in those episodes add up to a year or more, meets HUD’s definition of chronically homeless. Any family with a head of household that meets this definition is considered a chronically homeless family.

HUD has established 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

10 households, made up of 13 persons, were chronically homeless in Cape May County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 5 persons (62.5%) and 3 households (42.9%) from 2016. The rate of chronic homelessness as a percentage of overall homelessness increased from 6.1% in 2016 to 10.9%.

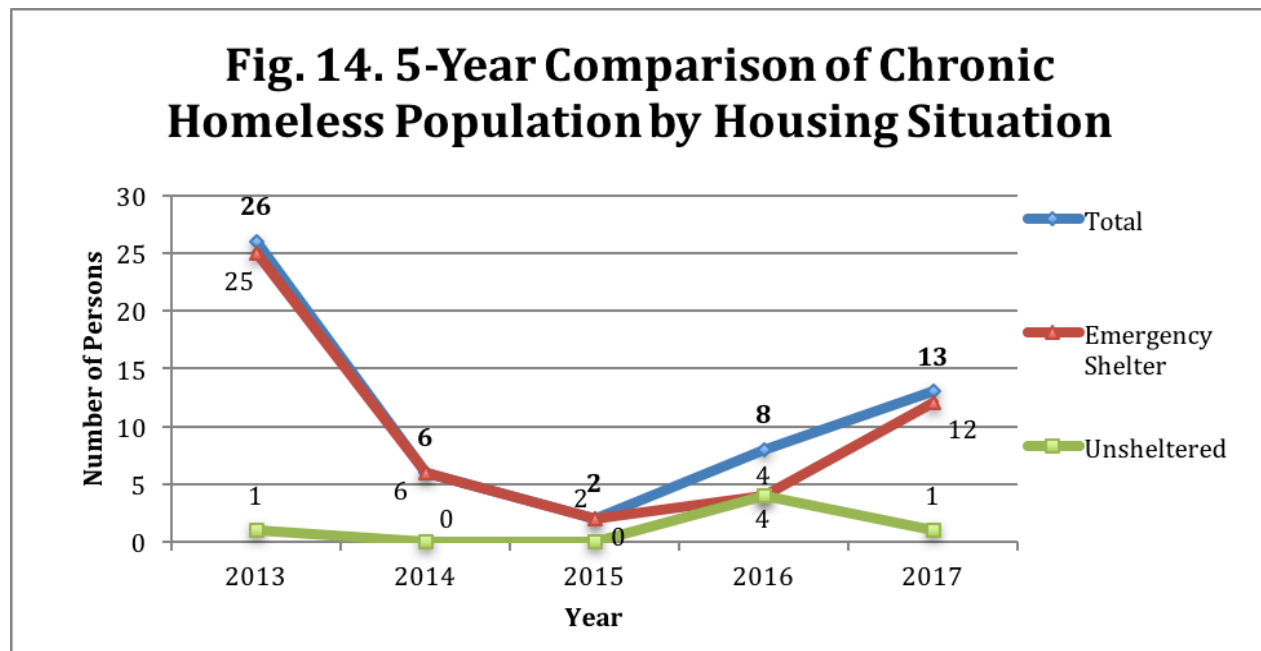
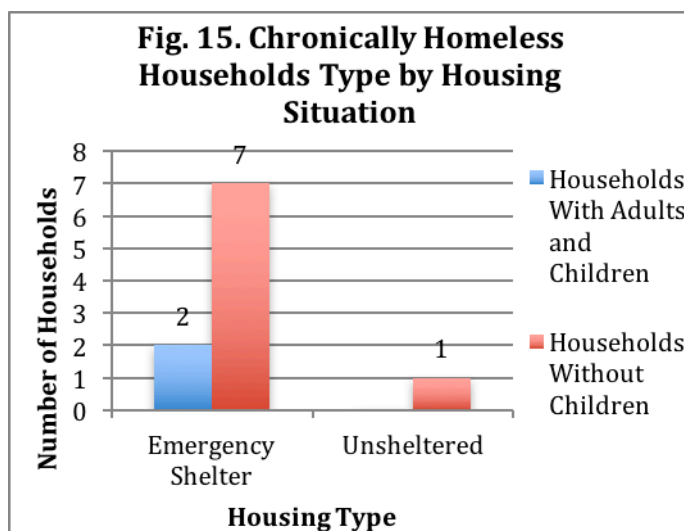


Figure 14 shows the number of chronically homeless persons who were in emergency shelters or living unsheltered in Cape May County from 2013 to 2017. Over the past five years the total number of chronically homeless persons has seen an overall decrease, with an increase since 2015. Overall, over the past 5 years the total number of chronic homeless has decreased by 13 persons (50%), with the main decrease seen in the number of chronically homeless persons counted in emergency shelters, a decrease of 13 persons (52%).

## Families and Individuals

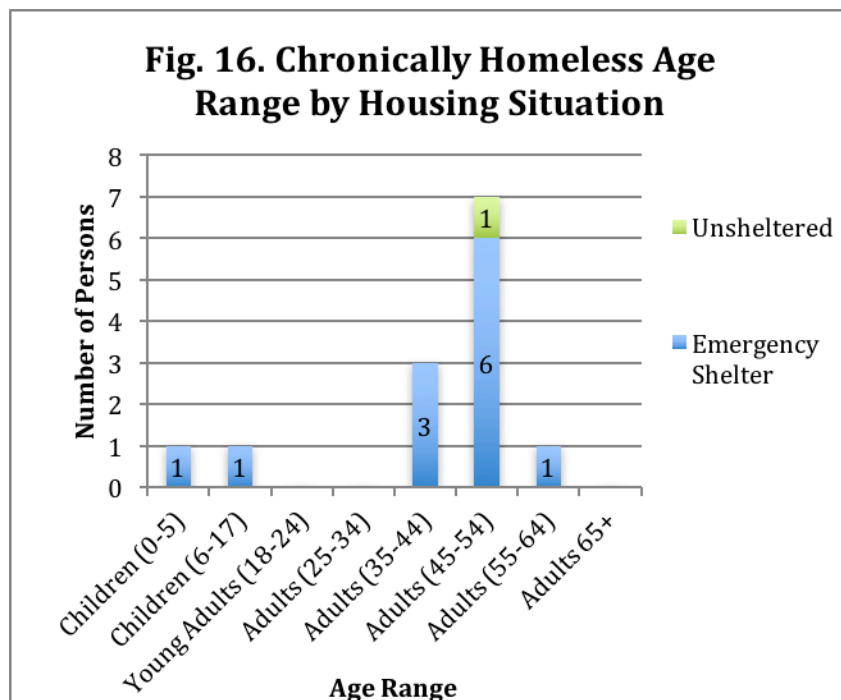
8 (80%) of the chronically homeless households counted in 2017 were adult-only households, and 2 (20%) of the households were families. This marks an increase from the 1 chronically homeless families counted in 2016, and an increase of 4 adult only households from 2016.



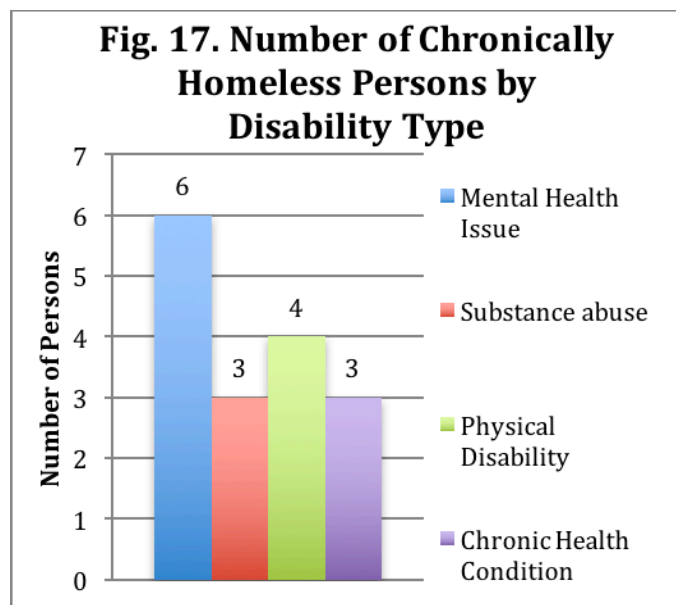
## Demographics

Of the 13 total chronically homeless persons, the largest number of chronically homeless persons (7, 53.8%) in a single age category fell between the ages of 45 and 54 years of age. Figure 16 shows the full list of ages reported by chronically homeless persons.

69.2% of chronically homeless persons were male, and 30.8% were female.



The largest racial subgroup of chronically homeless persons reported their race as White (84.6%). The next self-identified as Black or African-American (15.4%). With regard to ethnicity, none of the chronically homeless persons identified themselves as Hispanic.



## Disabilities

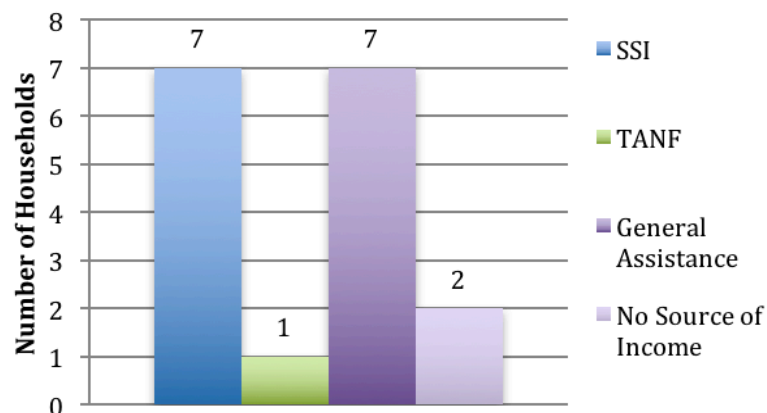
In order to meet the definition of chronically homeless, at least one adult in each household must have some kind of disability. The disabilities most commonly identified were mental health issues (46.2%), and physical disabilities (30.8%). The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the chronically 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

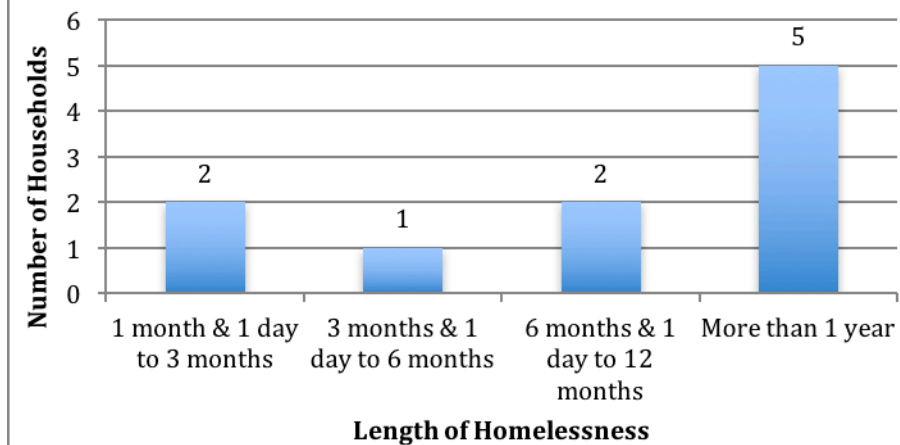
**Fig. 18. Number of Chronically Homeless Households by Income Source**



Among all chronically homeless households on the night of the count, 20% reported receiving no type of cash income. Figure 18 shows the sources of income received. The most common sources of cash income among all chronically homeless households were SSI and General Assistance, which were both received by 70% of households. 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. Medicaid and Food Stamps (SNAP) were the top benefits among this population with 100% and 90% of households receiving each of these respectively.

**Fig. 19. Number of Chronically Homeless Households by Length of Homelessness**



## Length of Homelessness

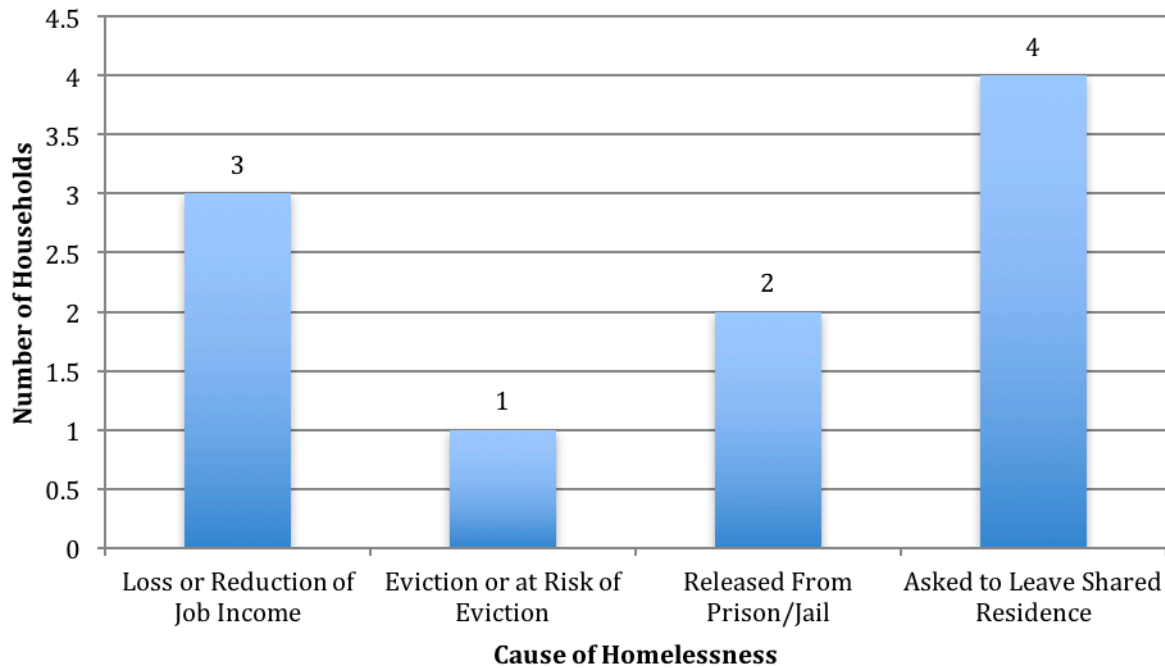
Figure 19 shows that 5 of the 10 chronically homeless households (50%) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted for more than 1 year.

## 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 (40%) and a loss or reduction of job income (30%).



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

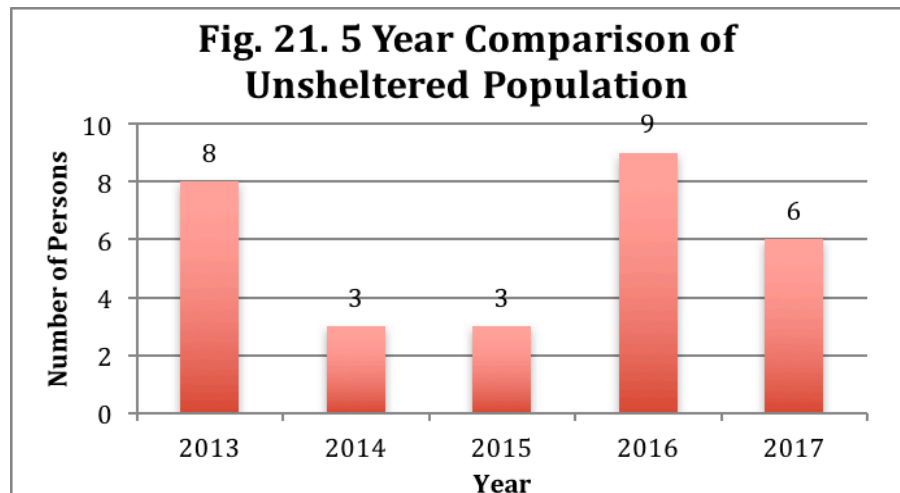


## V. Findings for the Unsheltered Homeless

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



6 households, made up of 6 persons, were living unsheltered in Cape May County on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 3 households and 3 persons (33.3%) from 2016.

Figure 21 shows the number of unsheltered

persons from 2013 to 2017. While the number of unsheltered persons has fluctuated, overall the number of persons counted has fallen by 25% since 2013.

## Families and Individuals

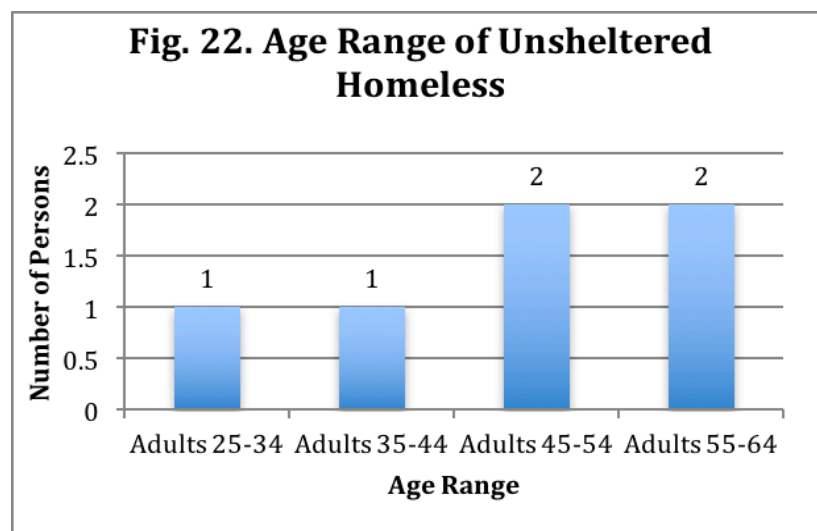
Of the 6 unsheltered households counted in 2017, all were individual adult households.

No family households with both adults and children were counted, matching what was found in 2016.

## Demographics

All of the 6 unsheltered persons counted in 2017 were adults over the age 24 and there were none 65 years and older.

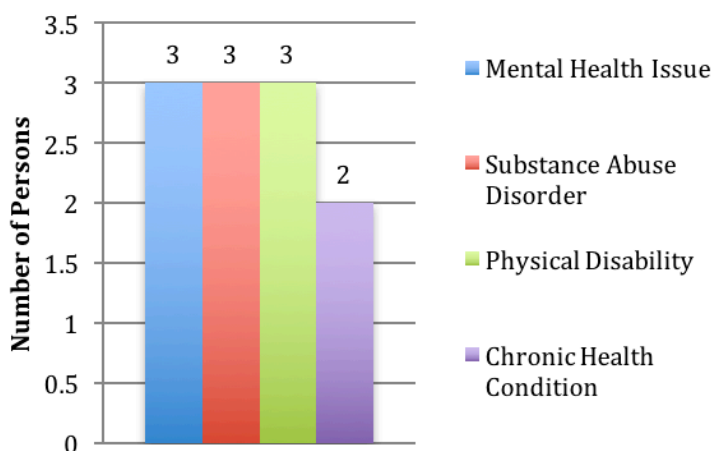
83.3% of unsheltered persons were male and 16.7% identified as female. 50% identified their race as White and 33.3% identified as Black or African-American. 0 unsheltered persons identified their ethnicity as Hispanic.



## Disabilities

All 6 unsheltered persons reported having some kind of disability. The disabilities most commonly identified were physical disabilities, mental health issues and substance abuse issues, each reported by 50% of unsheltered persons. The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the unsheltered can be seen in Figure 23.

**Fig. 23. Number of Unsheltered Persons by Disability Type**



## Subpopulations

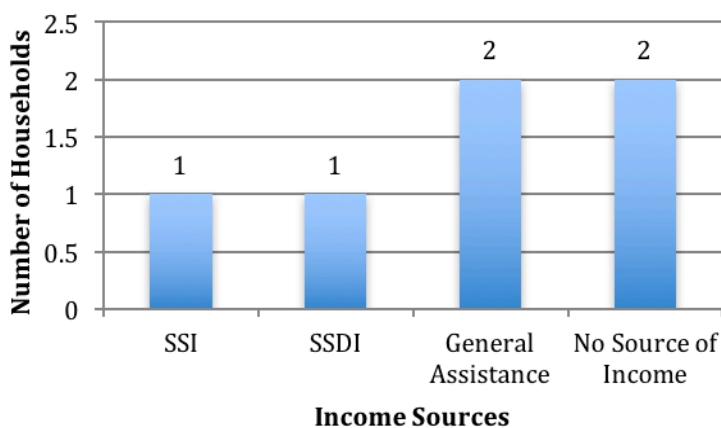
On the night of the count, 1 unsheltered homeless individual in Cape May County reported being a victim of domestic violence, the same number as identified in 2016.

There was also 1 unsheltered veteran identified on the night of the count. This was also the same number in 2016.

## Income and Benefits

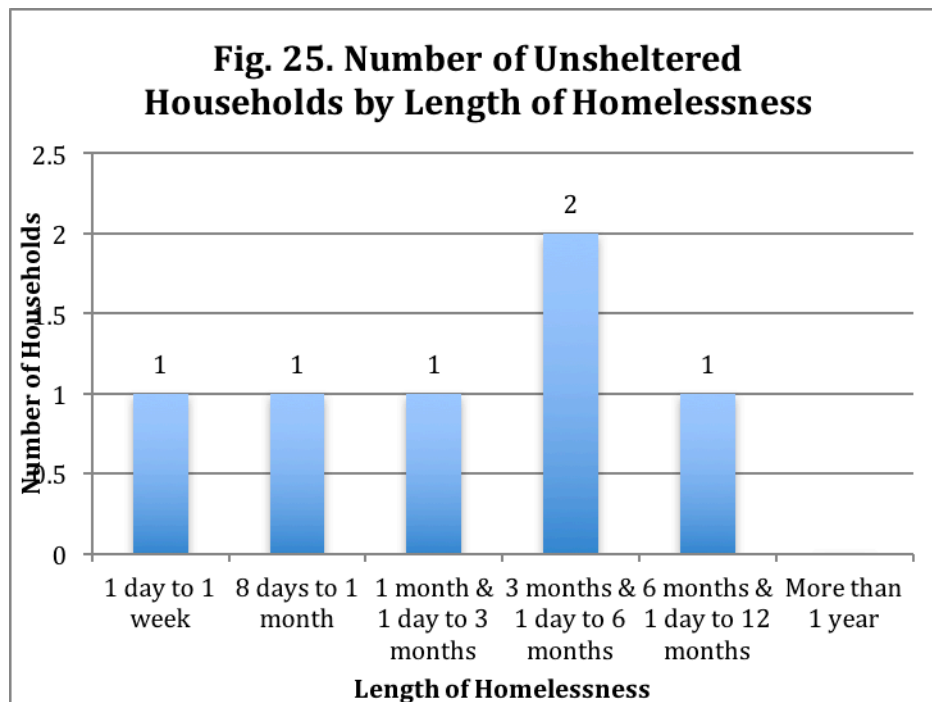
Among all unsheltered households on the night of the count, 2 (33.3%) reported having no source of income. The average monthly income among unsheltered households was \$159.83. 33.3% of unsheltered households reported receiving General Assistance Figure 24 shows all sources of income received.

**Fig. 24. Number of Unsheltered Households by Income Source**



2 unsheltered households (33.3%) 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 benefits among this group, with 33.3% of households receiving each.

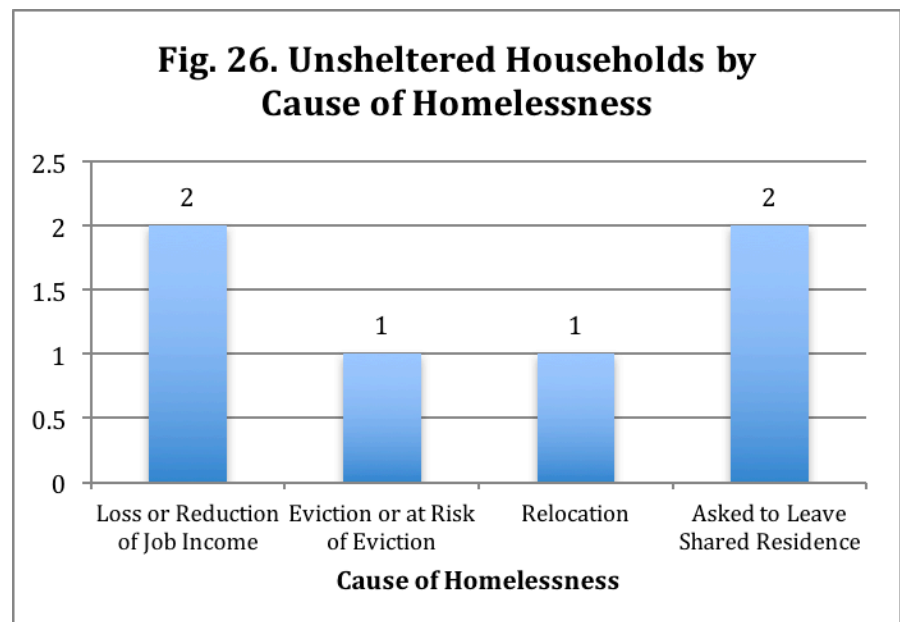
## Length of Homelessness



As shown in Figure 25, more unsheltered households reported that their most recent and continuous episode of homelessness had lasted between 3 and 6 months (33.3%) than any other length of homelessness. None of the unsheltered homeless reported being unsheltered more than a year.

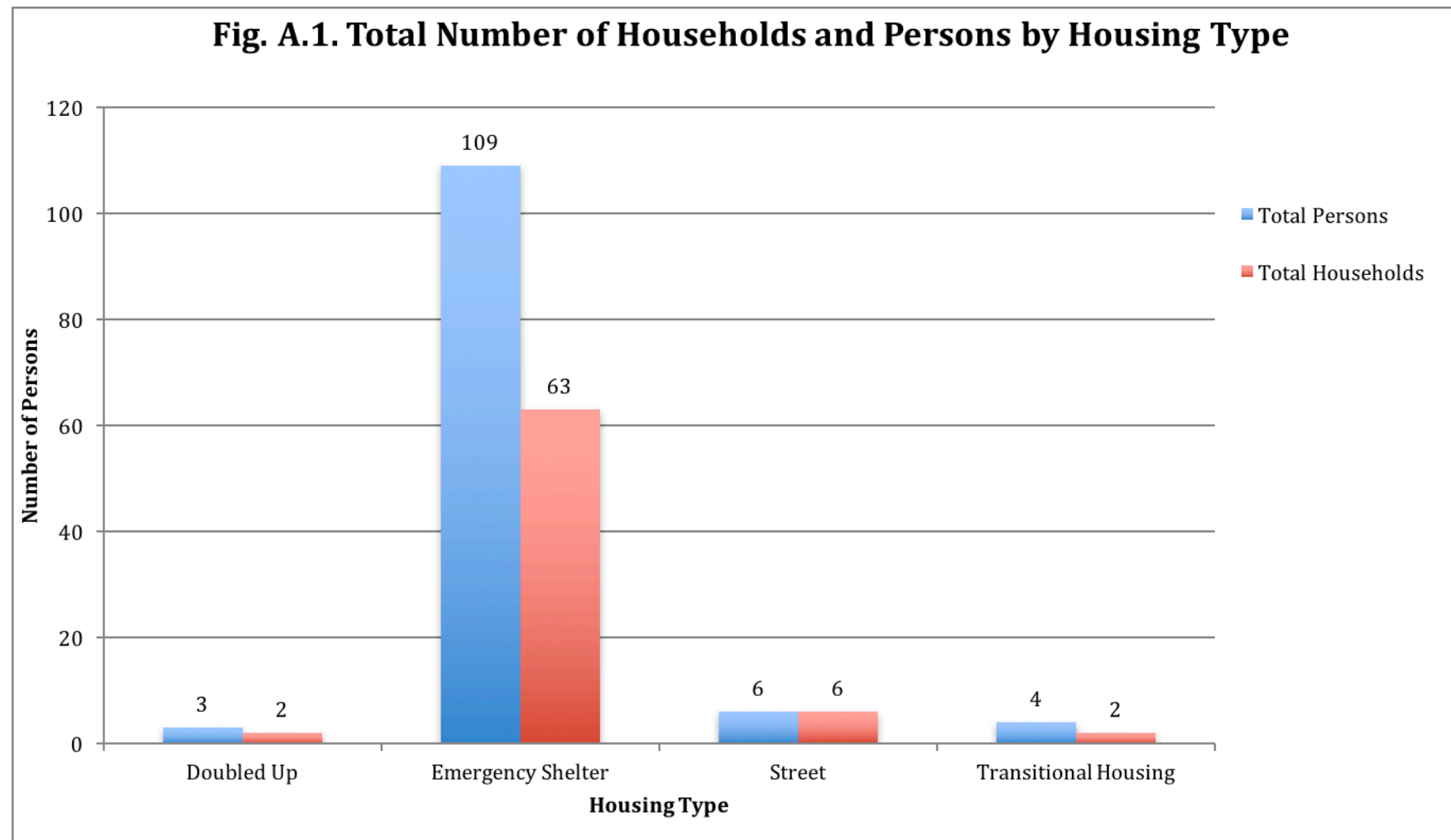
## Cause of Homelessness

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 being asked to leave shared residence (33.3%).



## VI. Appendix

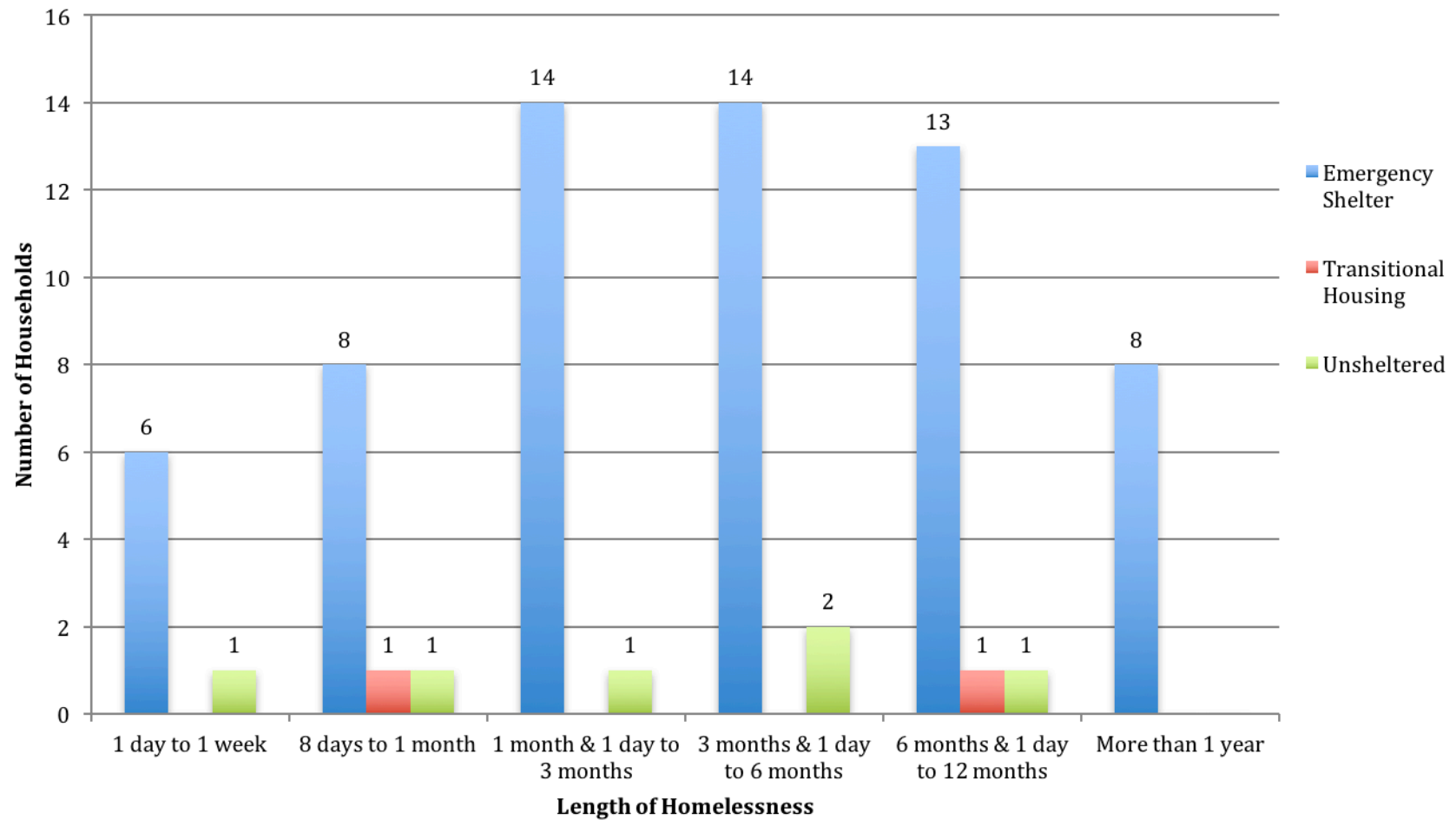
Where did you spend the night of Tuesday, January 24, 2017?



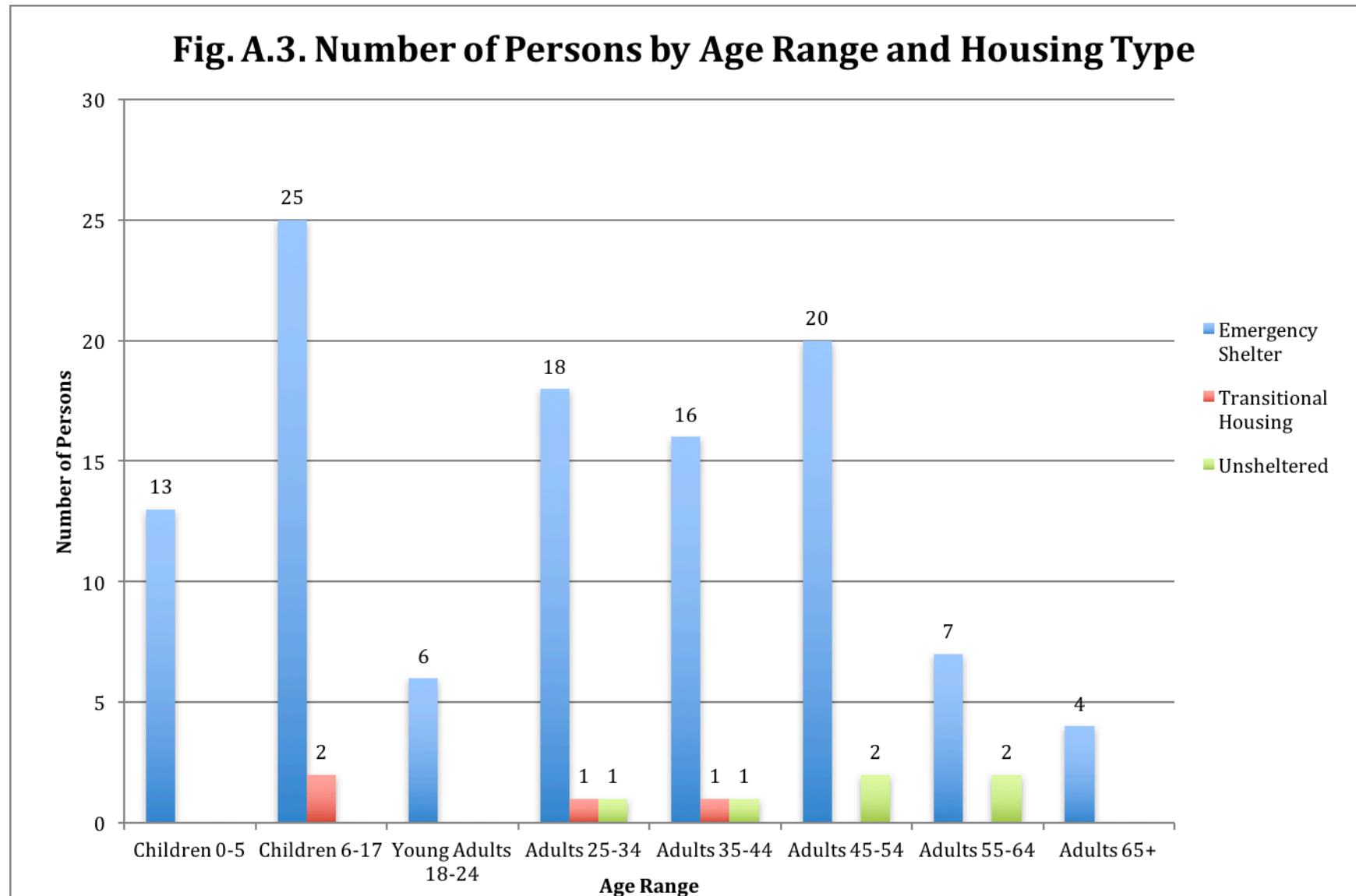


How long have you been in your current living situation?

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



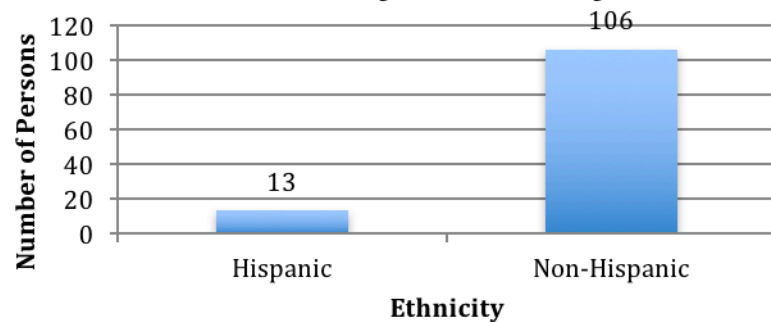
Who was homeless with you on the night of the January 24<sup>th</sup>?



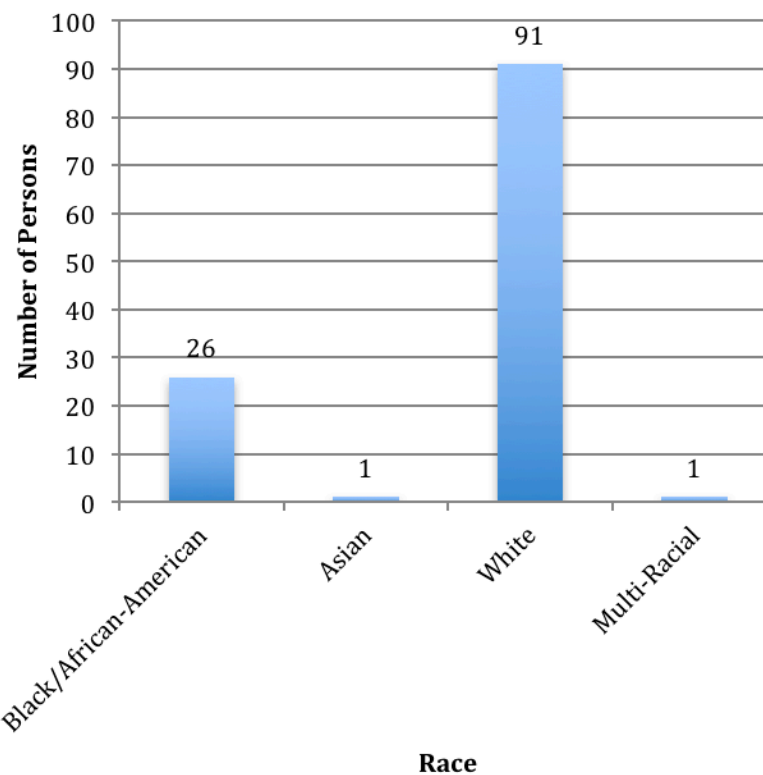
**Fig. A.4. Number of Persons by Gender and Housing Situation**



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

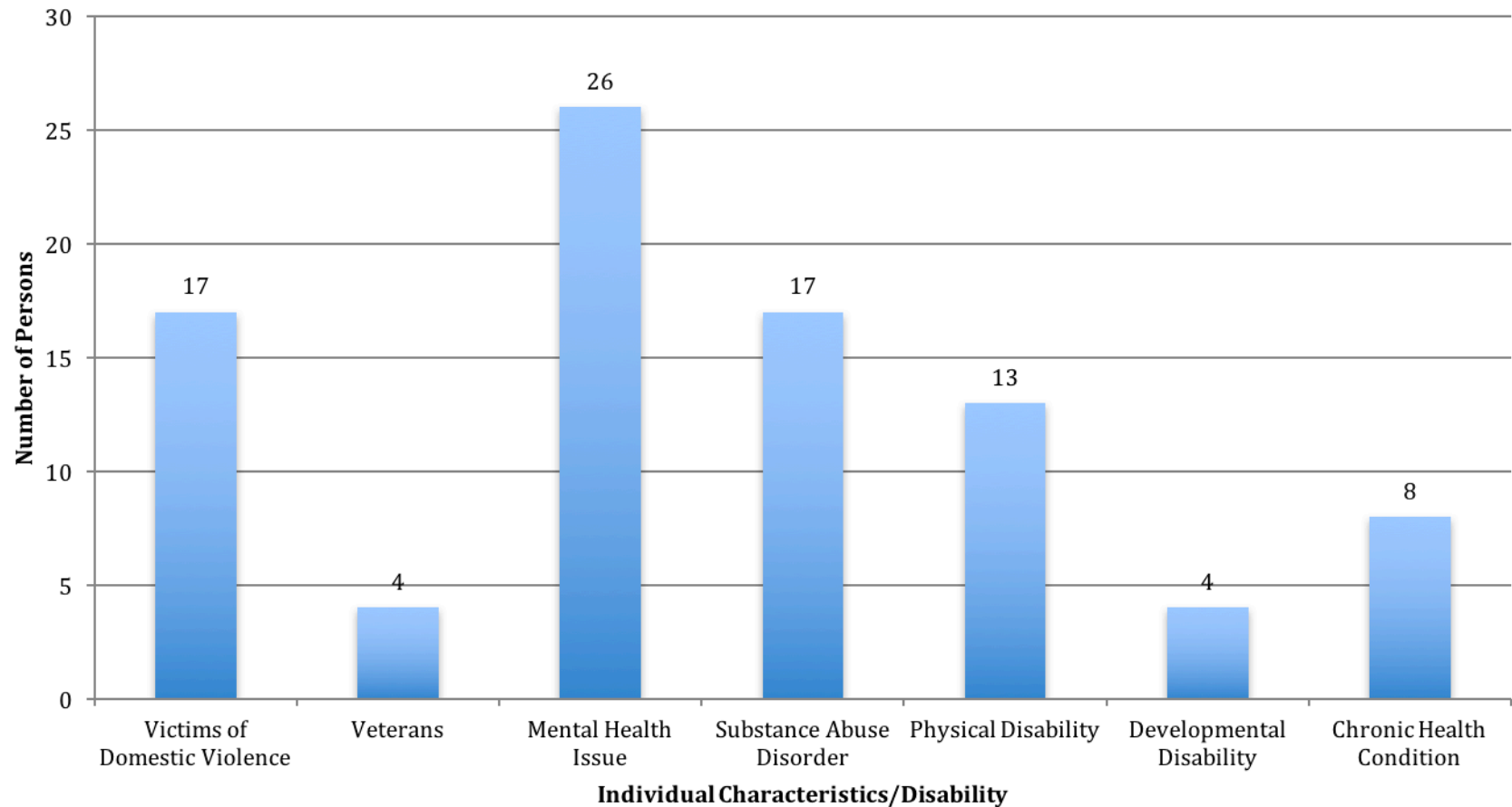


**Fig. A.5. Number of Homeless Persons by Race**



Household Characteristics – check all that apply to each person

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

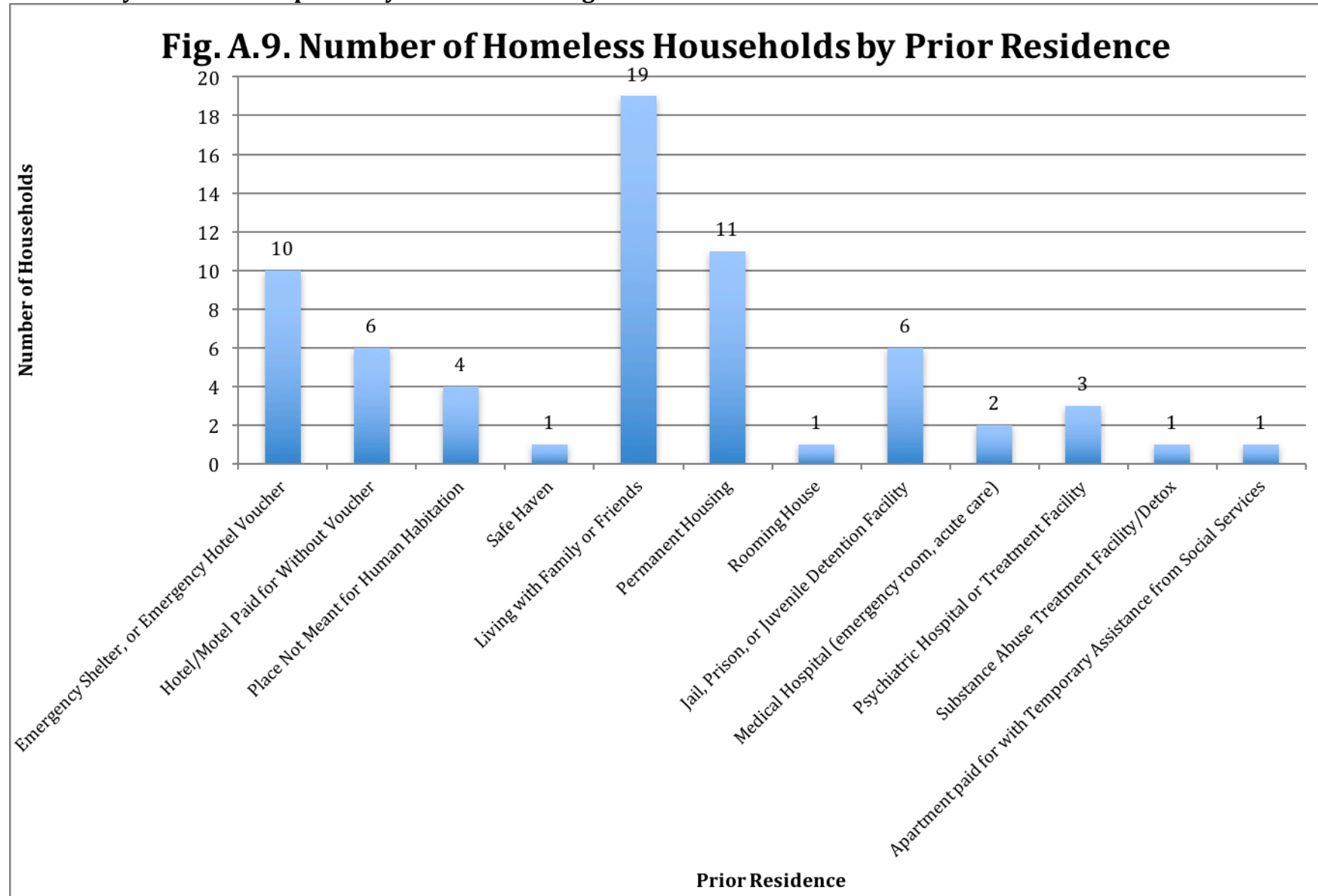


**Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?**

| Fig. A.8. Number of Homeless Households by County, State or Country of Last Permanent Address |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| Last Permanent Address – State  | Number of Households |
| Burlington County   | 1                    |
| Camden County   | 1                    |
| <b>Cape May County</b>  | <b>60</b>            |
| Cumberland County   | 3                    |
| New York  | 2                    |
| Pennsylvania  | 3                    |

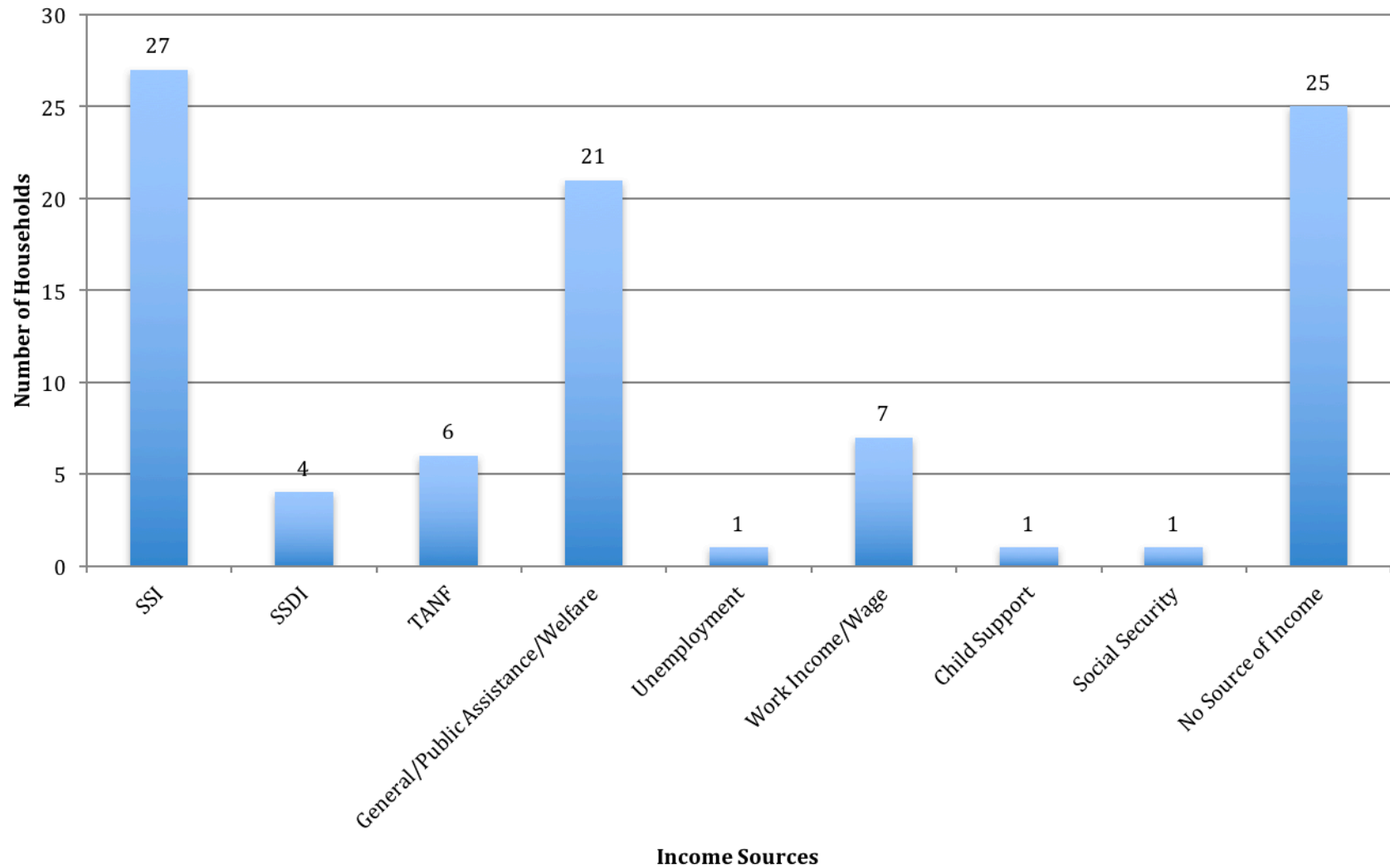


What was your residence prior to your current living situation?

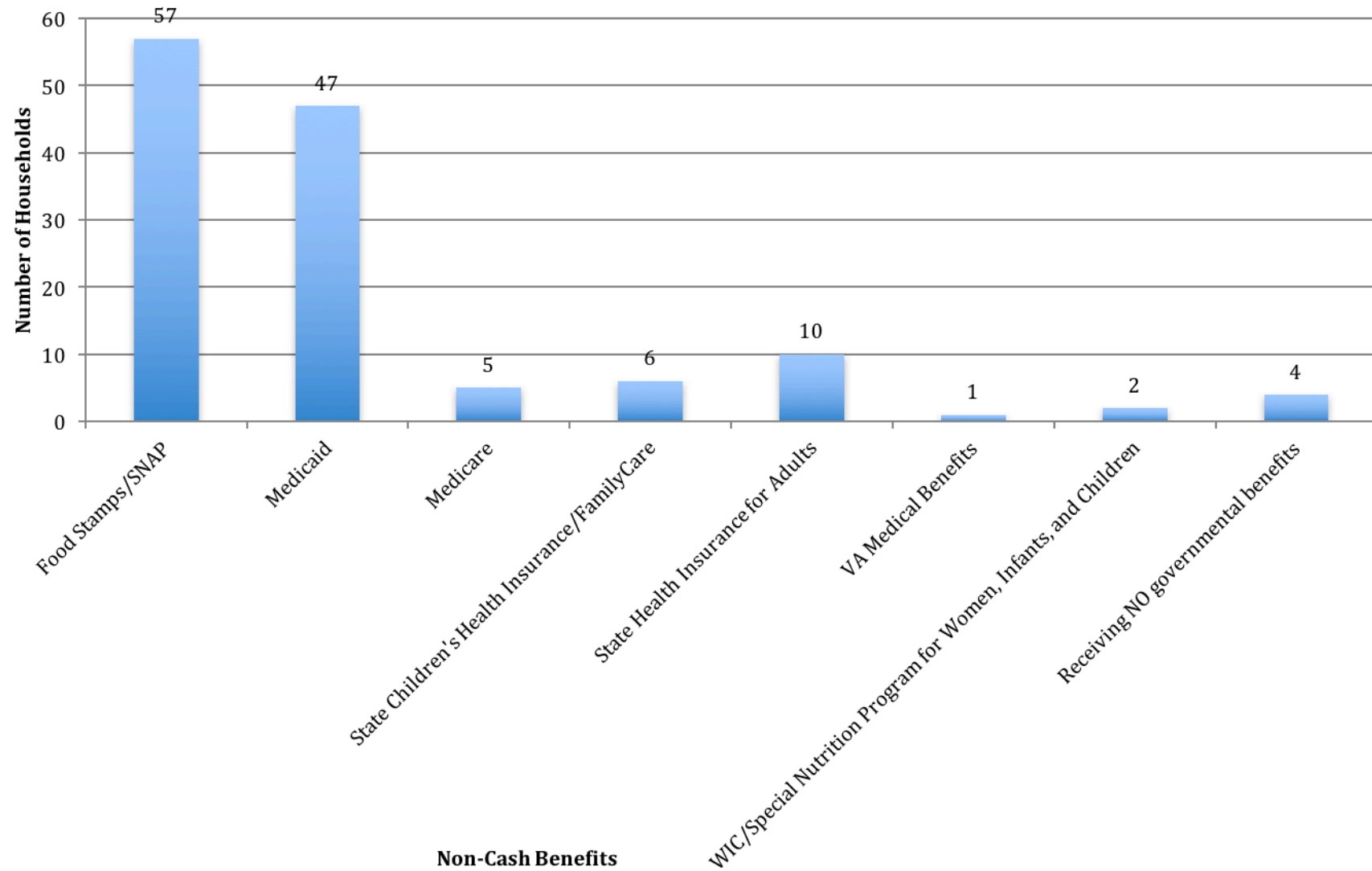


Which of the following sources of income or non-cash benefits do you, or anyone in your household, receive?

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

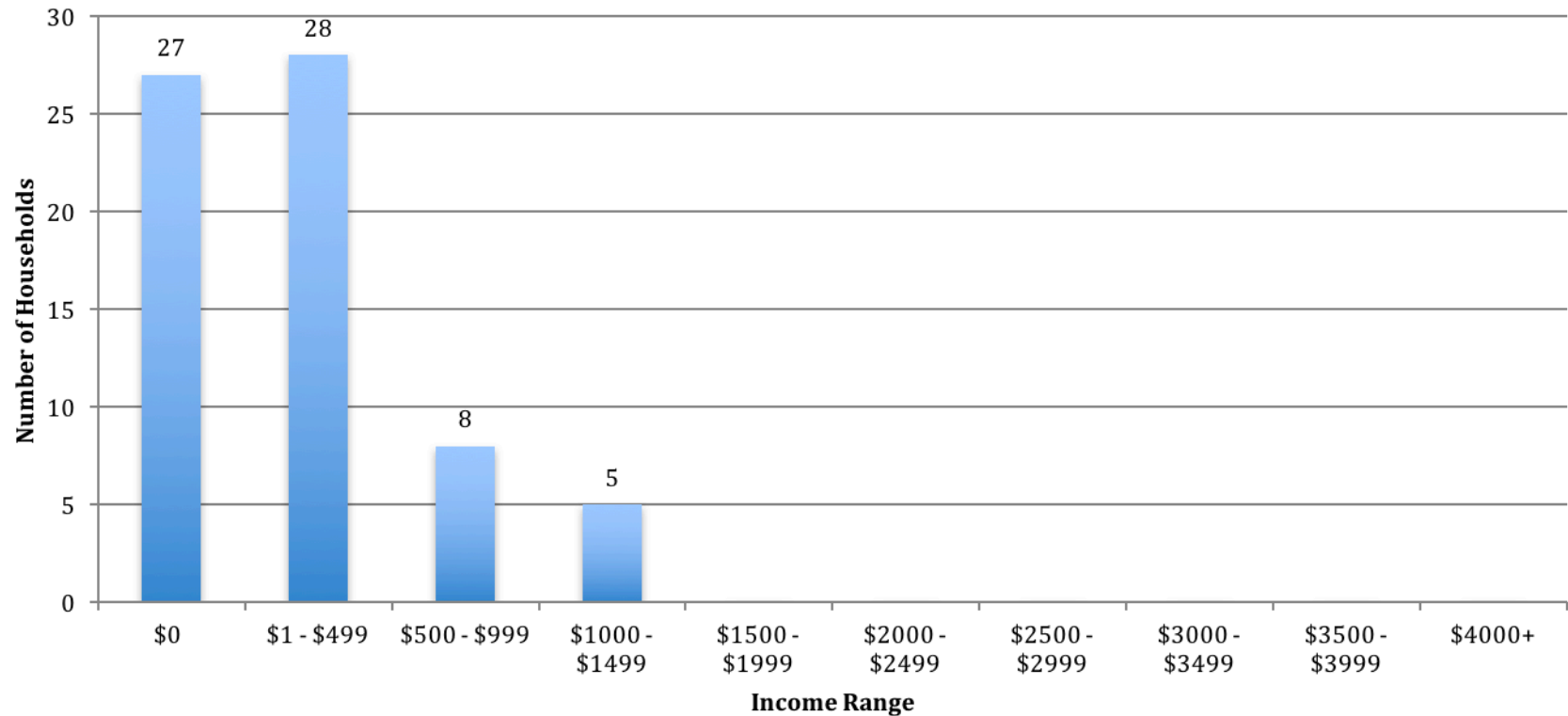


**Fig. A. 11. Number of Households by Sources of Non-Cash Benefits**



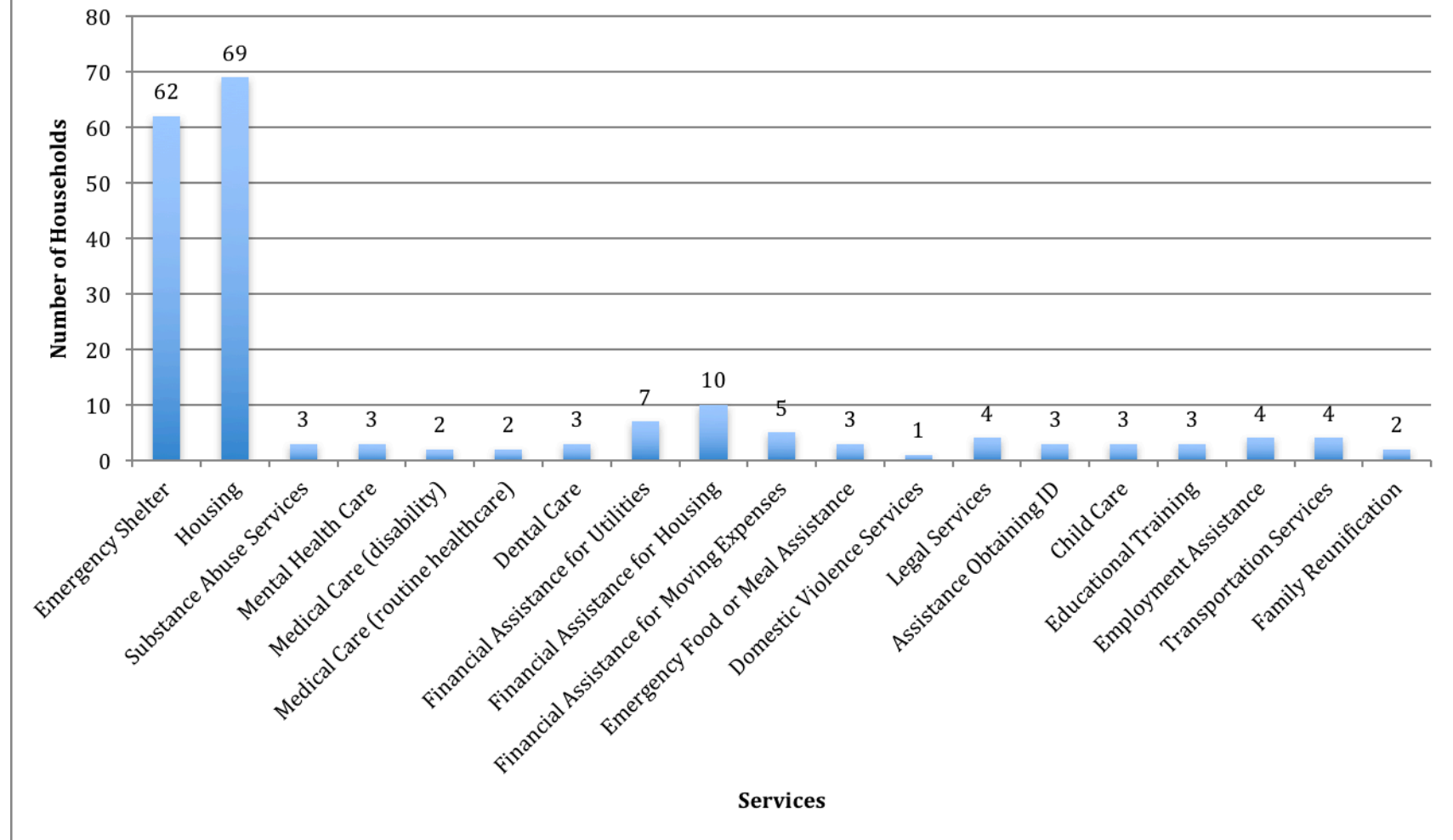
What is your monthly household income?

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



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

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





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

