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2017 Counts!

Cumberland County's 2017 Point-In-Time Count of the Homeless

January 24, 2017

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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 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 24th, 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 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 24th, 2017 a total of 134 households, including 151 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Cumberland County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 15 persons in 15 households were identified as chronically homeless.
- 39 households, including 39 persons were unsheltered on the night of the count.

Total Homeless Population

On the night of January 24th, 2017, a total of 151 persons, in 134 households, were experiencing homelessness in Cumberland County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 11 persons (7.9%) and 19 households (16.5%) from 2016. Cumberland County had 1.8% of New Jersey's statewide homeless population in 2017.

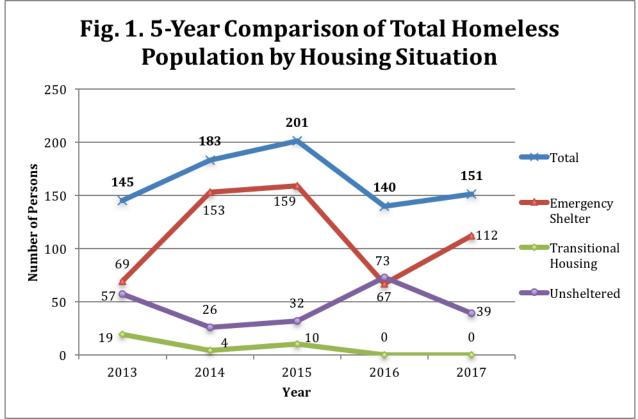


Figure 1 shows that, in 2017, 112 homeless persons stayed in emergency shelters and 39 were living unsheltered on the night of the count. The number of persons in emergency shelter increased by 45 persons (67.2%), while the number of those in unsheltered locations decreased by 34 (46.6%). As in 2016, there were no persons staying in transitional housing on the night of the count.

Figure 1 also shows that, while the numbers having been fluctuating, the 151 persons

identified in 2017 represents an increase of 6 persons, 4.1% from 2013, with the largest change seen in persons staying in emergency shelter, which increased by 43 persons (62.3%) since 2013.

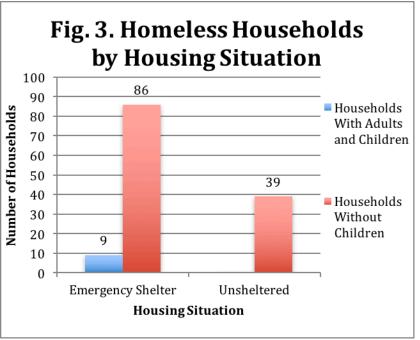
As Figure 2 shows, 7% of the homeless households in Cumberland County in 2017 reported that their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless was outside of the county.

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

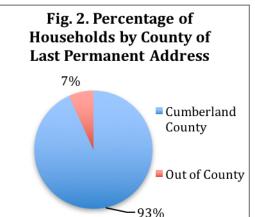
('unaccompanied youth').

Of the 134 homeless households counted in Cumberland County in 2017, 9 (6.7%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 one adult. These and families were composed of 26 persons, including 16 children under age 18 and 10 adults. The average family size was 3 persons. Figure 3 shows that all 9 families were staying in emergency shelter on the night of the count. There were 0 unsheltered



families. In 2017, Cumberland County counted 1 fewer homeless familiy than in 2016, an decrease of 10%.

93.3% (125) of the homeless households in Cumberland County were households without children under 18, and they were composed of 125 adults. 86 (68.8%) of these adult-only households were staying in emergency shelters and 39 (31.2%) were unsheltered.

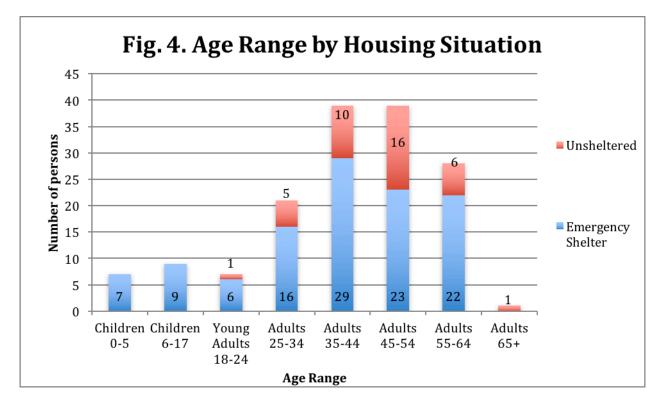


Cumberland County has seen the number of adult-only homeless households increased by 20 (19%) since 2016.

As in 2016, there were 0 households with only children under 18 identified in Cumberland County in 2017.

Demographics

There were a total of 7 (4.6%) homeless adults between 18 and 24 years old, 128 (84.8%) adults over age 24, and 16 (10.6%) children under 18 years old experiencing homelessness on the night of the count. Figure 4 shows that the age ranges most represented overall were adults between 35 and 44 and those 45 and 54, which both had 39 persons, (25.8% each). This was followed by adults between 55 and 64 (28 persons, 18.5%).

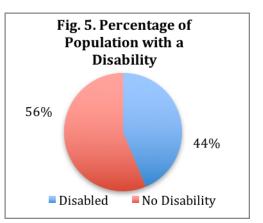


72.2% of homeless persons were male, and 27.2% were female.

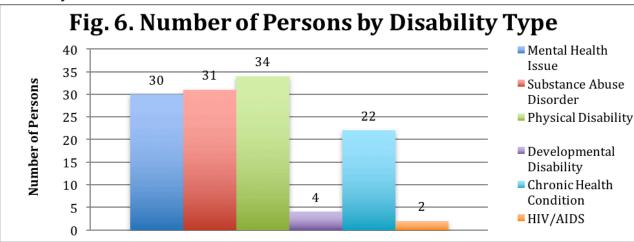
56.3% of homeless persons identified their race as White, making that the largest racial subgroup among persons experiencing homelessness on the night of the count. The next largest self-identified as Black/African American (40.4%), followed by those identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native (2%). With regard to ethnicity, 34.4% of persons identified themselves as Hispanic.

Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 43.7% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 48.1% of adults (65 persons) 18 or older reported some type of disability compared to 6.3% of children (1 person). Figure 6 shows the number of the homeless persons that identified as having various disabilities. The most common disabilities included physical disabilities and substance abuse disorders.

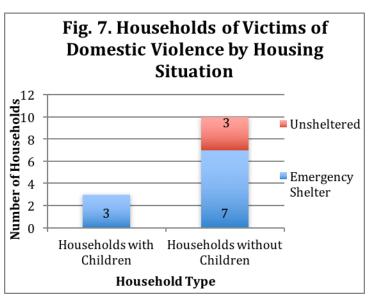


Among disabled adults, 50.8% reported physical disabilities, making this the most prevalent disability; representing 24.4% of the total homeless adult population. Among homeless children, the 1 disabled child has a physical disability and a developmental disability.



Victims of Domestic Violence

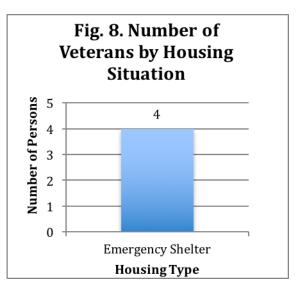
On the night of the count, in Cumberland County, 13 homeless households (9.7% of all households) identified having a victim of domestic violence, an increase of 5 households from 2016. The majority (76.9%) of these households were adult households without children. 76.9% of domestic violence households were in emergency shelters on the night of the count, while 21.1% were living unsheltered.



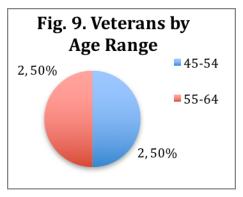
Veterans

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, 1 fewer (20%) than was counted in 2016. All of the homeless veterans



counted were individual adults, and all were staying in emergency shelter programs, this representes a decrease of 5 unsheltered veterans from 2016.



All 4 veterans experiencing homelessness in Cumberland County on the night of the count were male. The racial background identified among them were split equally between Black or African American and White (50% each). Figure 9 illustrates the percentage of homeless veterans by age range.

None of the veterans identified as a victim of domestic violence, but 2 of the 4 veterans, 50%, reported having some kind of disability. Both veterans reported physical

disabilities, chronic health conditions and mental health isues, while 1 of the 2 also reported a substance abuse disorder. In regard to veteran services, 1 of the veterans reported receiving Veteran's Disability, and 1 also reported a connection to VA Medical Benefits.

Income and Benefits

Among all homeless households on the night of the count, 53.7% had no source of income and 11.9% reported having earned income. The most common sources of non-earned cash income among homeless households were SSI (19.4%) and General Assistance (11.9%).

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

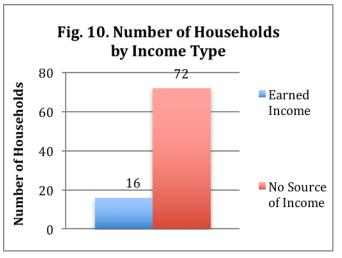


Figure 11. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation				
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered	
Average for All Households	\$310.41	N/A	\$83.47	

26.1% of homeless households reported receiving no kind of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. The top reported non-cash benefits were Medicaid (36.6%) and Food Stamps (SNAP) (28.4%).

Length of Homelessness

As Figure 12 shows, the largest number of households (40 29.9%) households, reported their most recent, continuous episode homelessness had of lasted between 8 days and month. Only 1 14 households. (10.4%)reported that they had

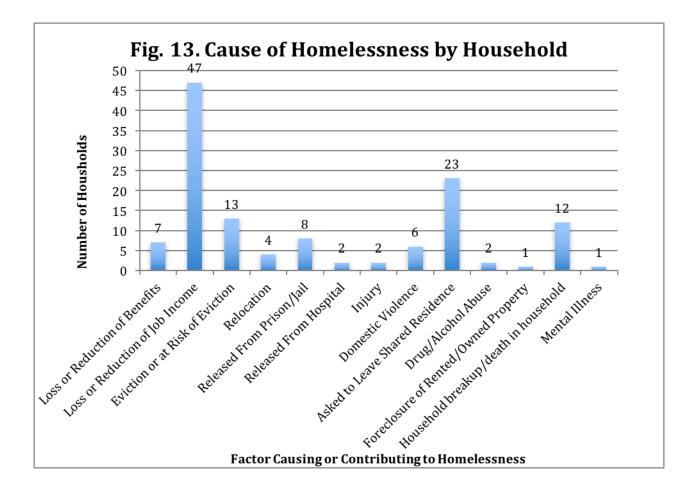


been homeless for more than 1 year. Of those 14 households, 3 (21.4%) reported their homelessness had lasted longer than 5 years.

Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, 47 households (35.1%) attributed their homelessness to loss or reduction of job income. As Figure 13 shows, the next most common causes identified were being asked to leave a shared residence (17.2%), followed by eviction (9.7%).

When respondents were asked 'what was your residence prior to your current living situation?' more said they were in permanent housing (20.1%) than any other type of residence. Another 15.7% reported living with family and friends, while 10.4% reported staying in a place not meant for human habitation.



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

15 households, made up of 15 persons, were chronically homeless in Cumberland County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 4 persons and households (21.1%) from 2016. The overall rate of chronic homelessness as a portion of total homelessness was 9.9% in 2017.

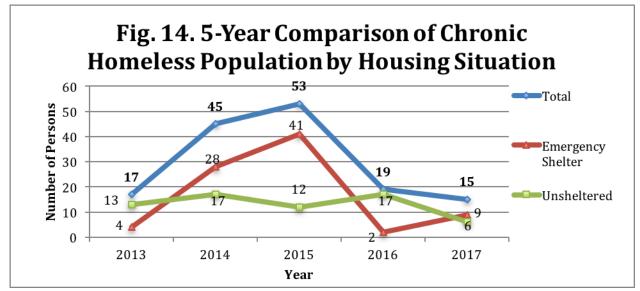
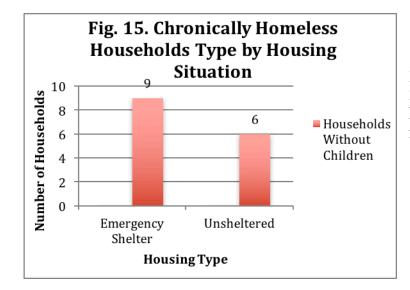


Figure 14 shows the number of chronically homeless persons who were in emergency shelters or living unsheltered in Cumberland County from 2013 to 2017. Over the past five years the total number of chronically homeless persons first trended upward, with a significant spike in 2015 and subsequent decline after. Overall, over the past 5 years the total number of chronic homeless has decreased by 2 persons (11.8%.). Since 2016, the number of chronically homeless persons in emergency shelter has increased 350%, while the unsheltered chronically homeless population decreased 64.7%.



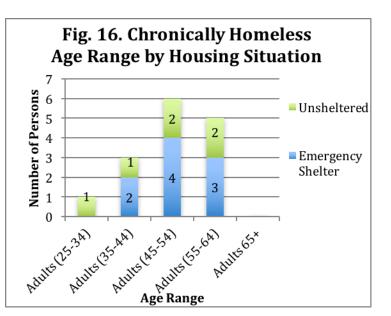
Families and Individuals

Matching what was found in 2016, all 15 chronically homeless households counted in 2017 were individual adult households.

Demographics

Of the 15 total chronically homeless persons, the largest number of chronically homeless persons (6, 40%) in a single age category fell between the ages of 45 and 54 years of age. Figure 16 shows that none of the chronically homeless individuals were under the age of 25 or over age 64.

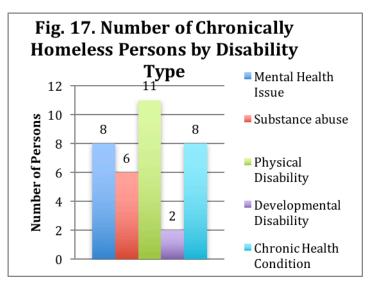
86.7% of chronically homeless persons were male, and 13.3% were female.



The largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported their race White (53.3%), while 40% identified as Black or African-American. With regard to ethnicity, 20% 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 physical disabilities (73.3%), chronic health conditions (53.3%), and mental health issues (53.3%). The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the chronically homeless can be seen in Figure 17.



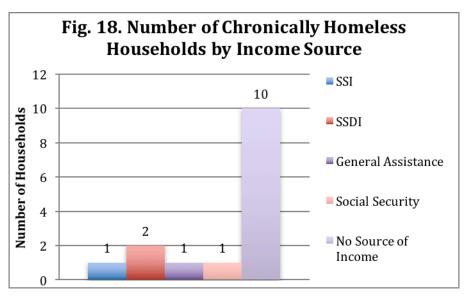
Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 1 chronically homeless person in Cumberland County reported being a victim of domestic violence. This individual was staying in an emergency shelter.

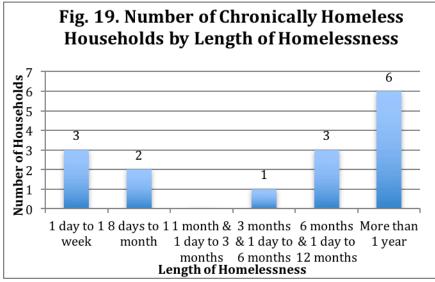
There was also 1 veteran individual identified as chronically homeless in Cumberland County on the night of the count. This individual was staying in an emergency shelter.

Income and Benefits

Among all chronically homeless households on the night of the count, 66.7% reported receiving no type of cash income. Figure 18 shows the sources of income received. The most common source of cash income among all chronically homeless households was SSDI, which was received by 13.3%.



2 (13.3%) 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 only two non-cash benefits reported among this population with 26.7% and 20% of households receiving each, respectively.



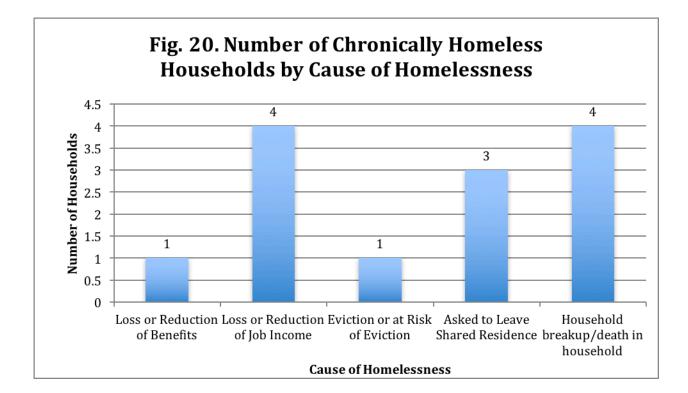
Length of Homelessness

Figure 19 shows that 6 chronically homeless households (40%)reported that their most recent. continuous episode of homelessness had lasted for more than 1 Of these 6, 1 year. (16.7%)reported their homelessness

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 a loss or reduction of job income and a household breakup or death in the household which were reported by 26.7% of households each.

had lasted longer than 5 years.



V. Findings for the Unsheltered Homeless

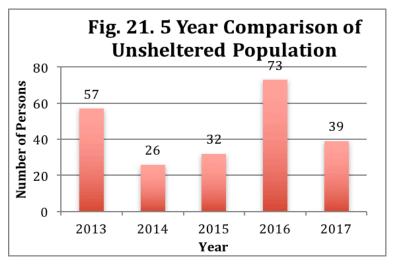
HUD's definition of "unsheltered homeless" applies to any individual or family "with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station,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

39 households, made up of 39 persons, were living unsheltered in Cumberland County on January 24th, 2017, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 30 households (43.5%), and a decrease of 34 persons (46.6%) from 2016.

Figure 21 shows the number of unsheltered persons from 2013 to 2017. Since 2013, the unsheltered population has been fluctuating according the the

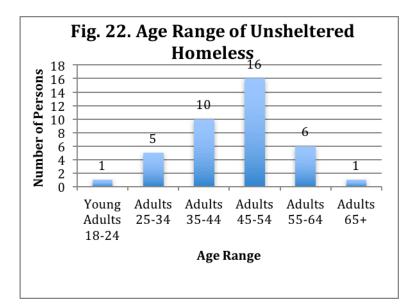


Point-In-Time Count. While this is true, Cumberland County has seen a decrease in the unsheltered population of 18 persons (31.6%) from 2013.

Families and Individuals

All 39 unsheltered households were individual adult households. Matching 2016, there were no unsheltered households with children in 2017.

Demographics

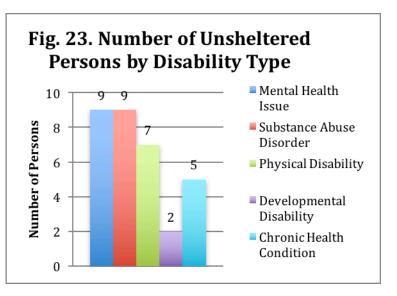


The largest portion of the 39 unsheltered persons counted in 2017, 16 or 41%, were adults between 45 and 54 years old, followed by those between 35 and 44 (25.6%).

76.9% of unsheltered persons were male and 20.5% identified as female. 69.2 % identified their race as White and 30.8% identified as Black or African-American. 46.2% of unsheltered persons identified their ethnicity as Hispanic.

Disabilities

Of the 39 unsheltered persons, 16 (41%) reported having some kind of disability. The disabilities most commonly identified were substance abuse disorders (56.3%). and mental health conditions (56.3%). The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the unsheltered can be seen in Figure 23.



Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 3 unsheltered homeless households in Cumberland County reported having a victim of domestic violence. All were adult individuals. This is a decrease of 1 households from 2016.

There were 0 unsheltered veterans identified on the night of the count, a decrease from the 5 reported in 2016.

Income and Benefits

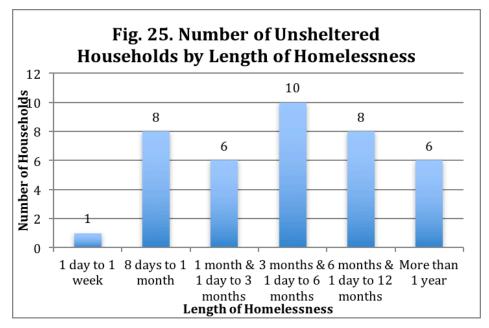
unsheltered Among all households on the night of the (76.9%) reported count. 30 having no source of income. The average monthly income among unsheltered households was \$83.47. 7.7% of unsheltered households received SSI, while another 7.7% reported receiving Social Security. Figure 24 shows all sources of income received.

Fig. 24. Number of Unsheltered Households by Income Source Number of Households 35 30 30 25 20 15 10 3 3 5 0 SSI SSDI General Social No Source Assistance Security of Income **Income Sources**

4 unsheltered households

(10.3%) 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 10.3% and 7.7% receiving each of these benefits, respectively.

Length of Homelessness

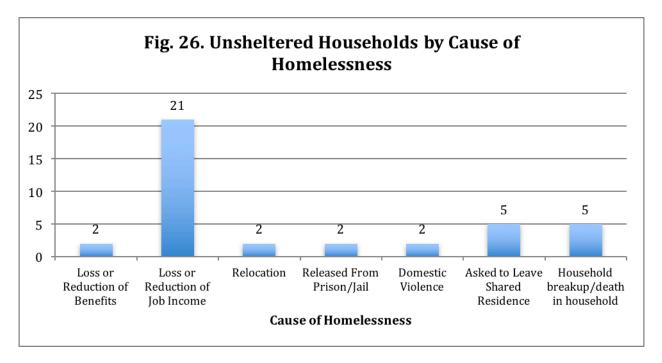


As shown in Figure 25, more unsheltered homeless households reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness lasted 3 months to 6 (25.6%)than anv other. 15.4% of unsheltered households reported being homeless for more than 1 year. Of those 6, 3 (50%), reported their length of homelessness as

lasting longer than 5 years.

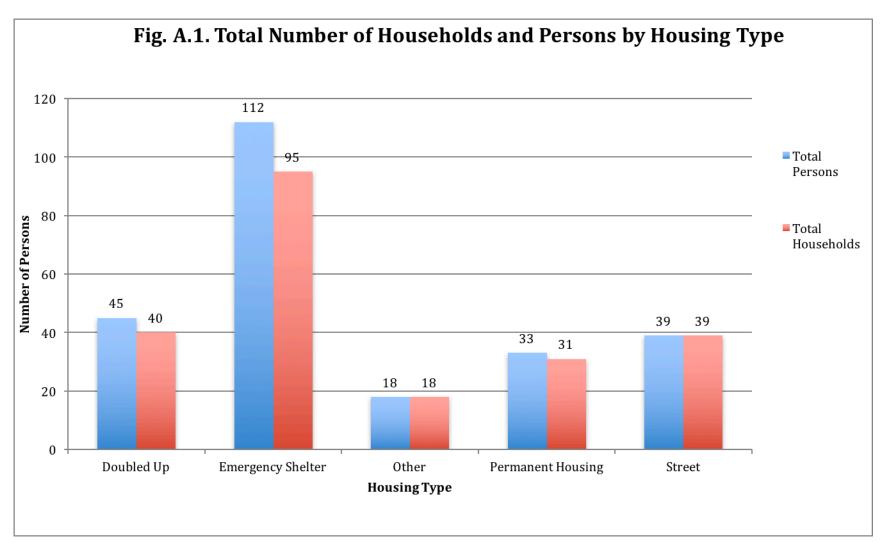
Cause of Homelessness

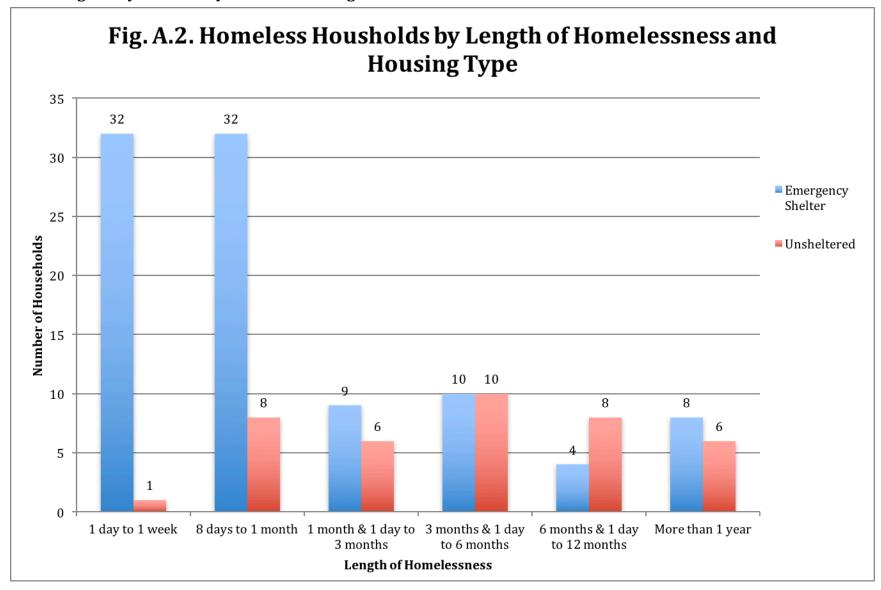
When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more unsheltered households (21 households, 53.8%), identified a loss or reduction of job income. Figure 26 identifies all reponses provided by unsheltered households.



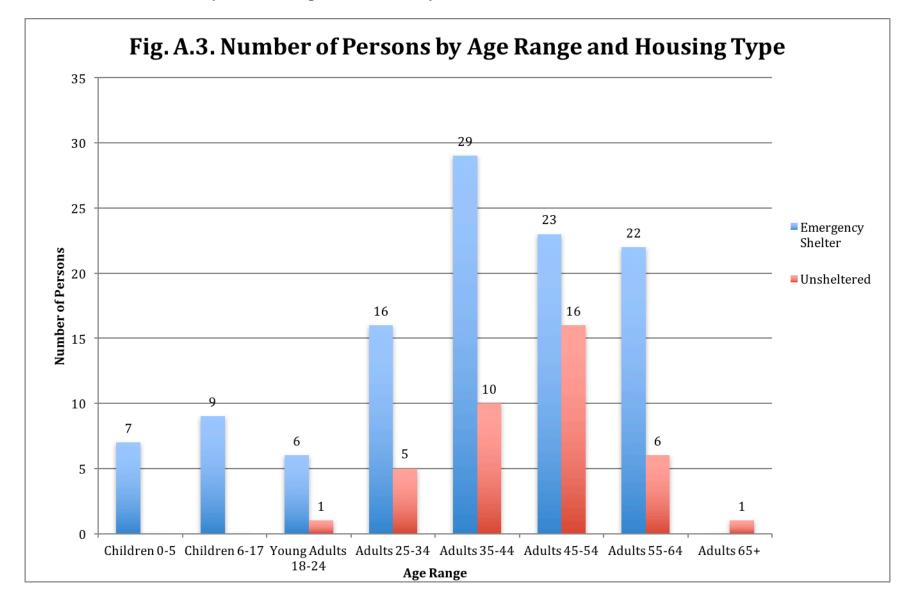
VI. Appendix

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

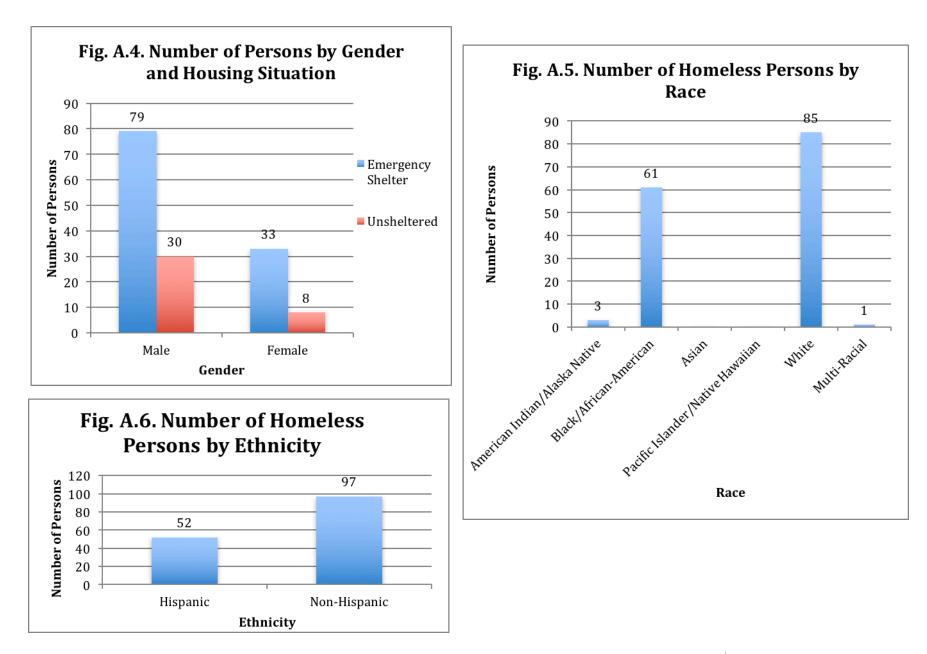




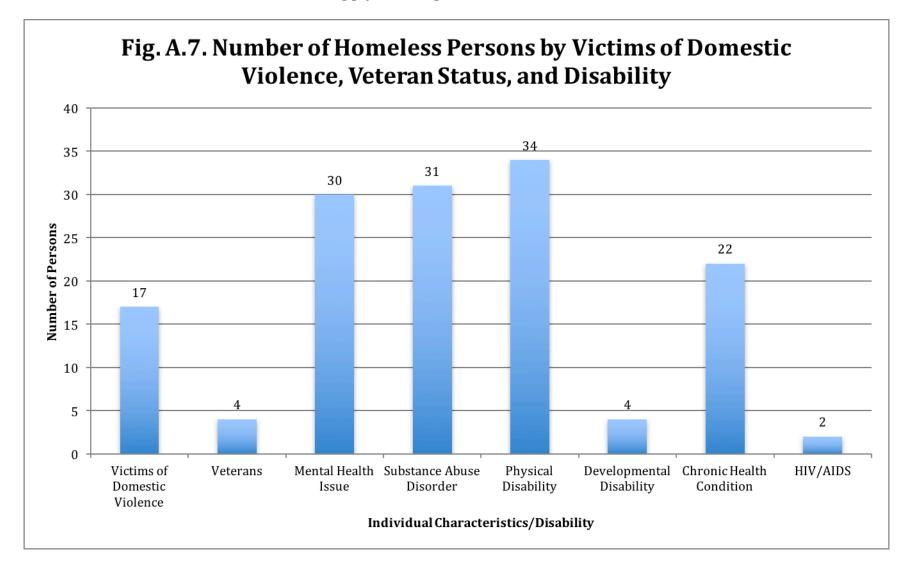
How long have you been in your current living situation?



Who was homeless with you on the night of the January 24th?

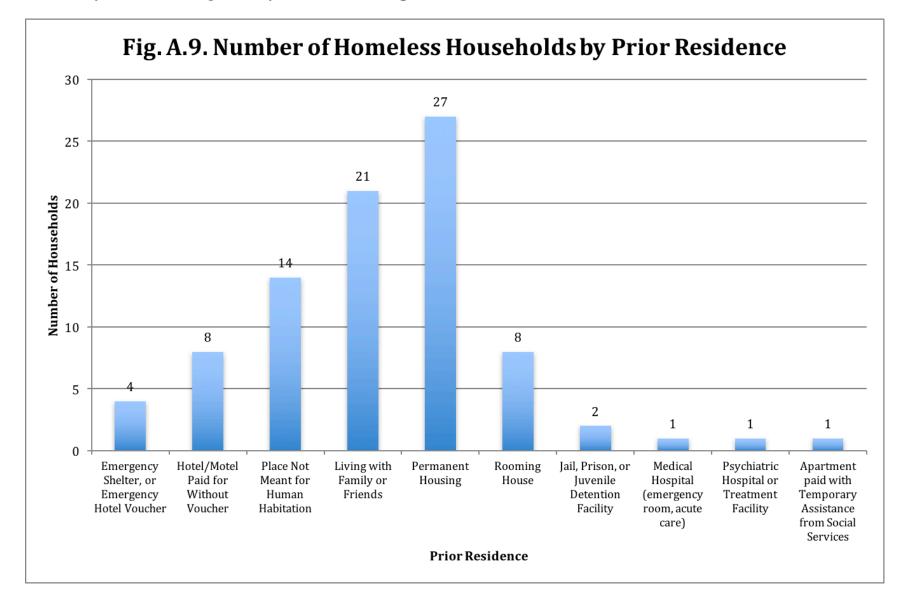


Household Characteristics - check all that apply to each person

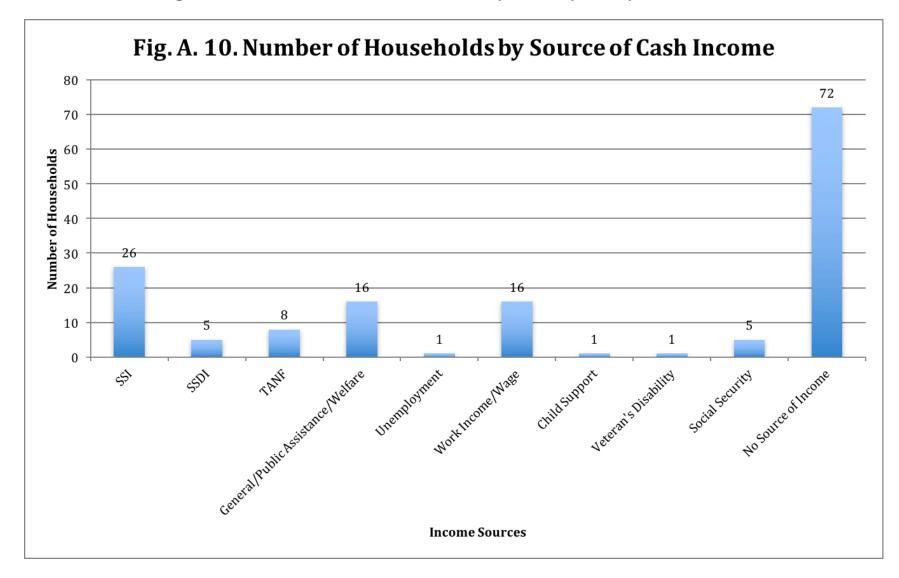


Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?

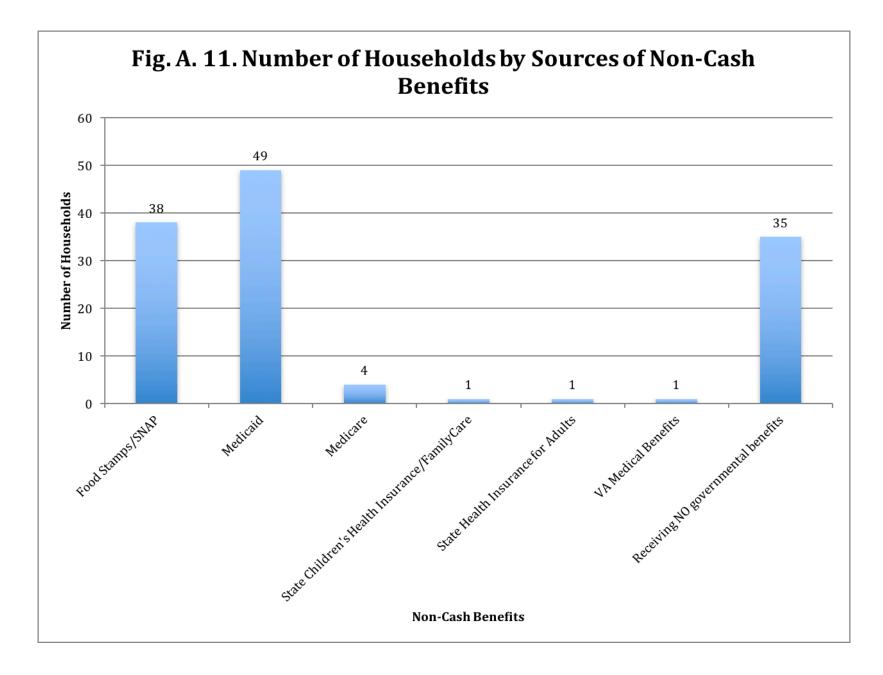
Fig. A.8. Number of Homeless Households by County, State or Country of Last Permanent Address			
Last Permanent Address – State	Number of Households		
Atlantic County	1		
Camden County	1		
Cumberland County	124		
Essex County	1		
Gloucester County	1		
Salem County	1		
California	1		
Florida	1		
New York	1		
Virginia	1		



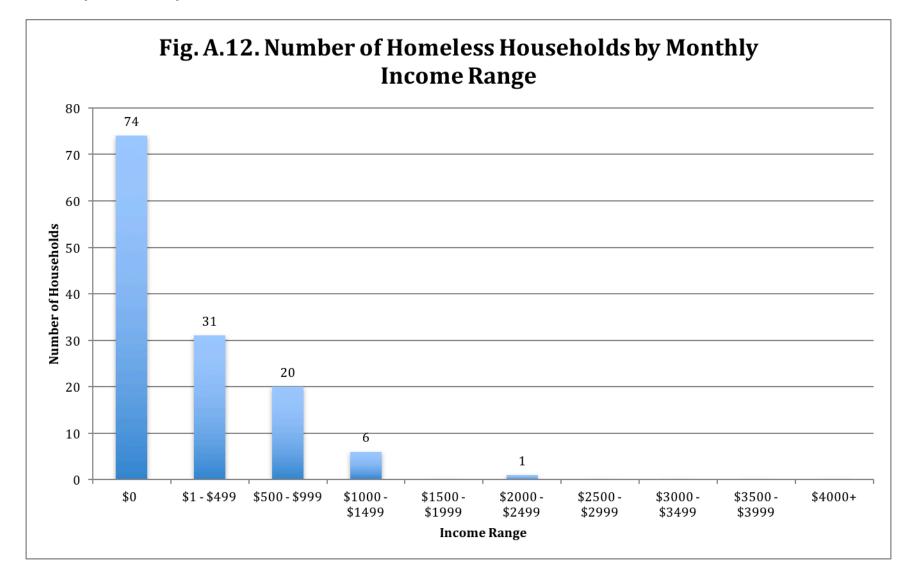
What was your residence prior to your current living situation?

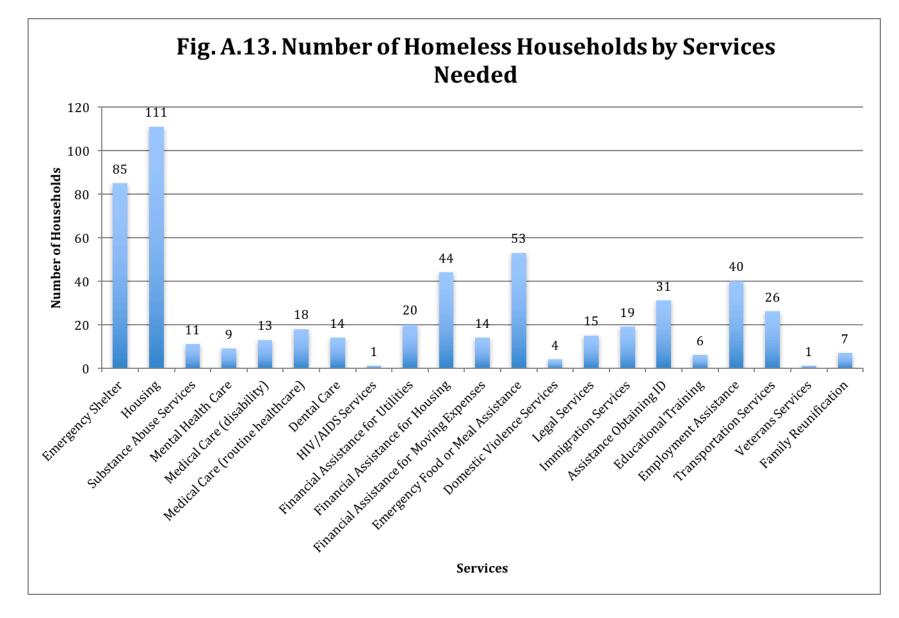


Which of the following sources of income or non-cash benefits do you, or anyone in your household, receive?

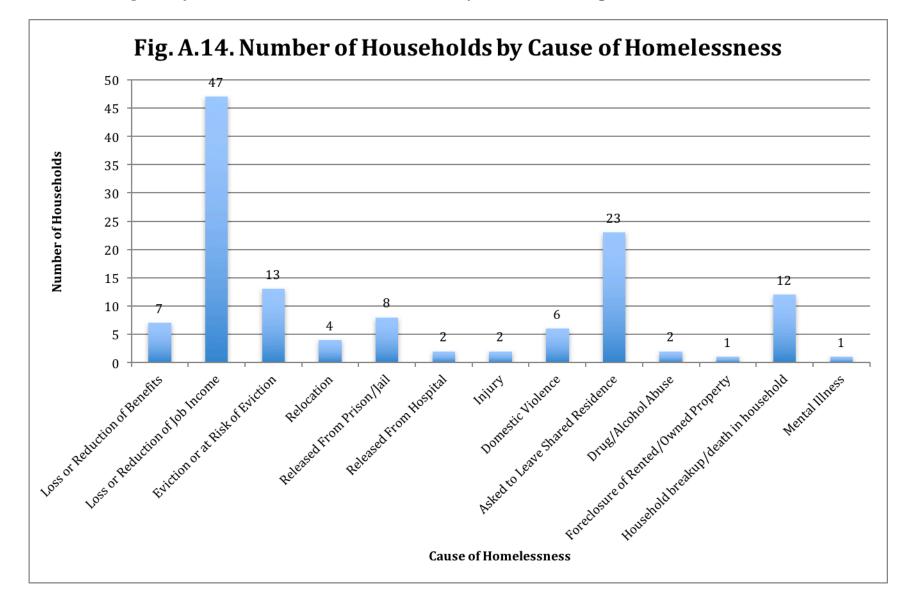


What is your monthly household income?





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



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