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2017 Counts!

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

January 24, 2017

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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 184 households, including 299 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Monmouth County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 40 households, with 49 persons, were identified as chronically homeless.
- 44 unsheltered homeless persons were counted.

Total Homeless Population

On the night of January 24^{th} , 2017, a total of 299 persons, in 184 households, were experiencing homelessness in Monmouth County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 45 persons (13.1%) and 46 households (20%) from 2016. Monmouth County had 3.5% of New Jersey's statewide homeless population in the 2017 PIT.



Figure 1 shows that in 2017, 124 homeless persons stayed in emergency shelters, 131 stayed in transitional housing, and 44 were living unsheltered on the night of the count. The biggest change was seen in the total number of persons counted in emergency shelters, which decreased by 27.1% (46 persons) from 2016. There was also a 2.2% decrease seen

in the unsheltered population (1 person). There was a 1.6% increase (2 persons) in the transitional housing.

Figure 1 also shows that there has been a steady decrease in the homeless population since 2013. Over the five-year period between 2013 and 2017, there was a 67.4% decline in the



homeless population. The largest decrease occurred in emergency shelter use which saw an 82% decrease during this period. There was a 32.5% decrease in the transitional housing population as well. During the same five-year period, there was a 22.2% increase in the unsheltered population.

As Figure 2 shows, 18% of homeless households in Monmouth County reported that their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless was outside of the county.

Homeless Families and Individuals

When reading the data regarding different types of homeless households, it is important for the reader to remember that, in this report, 'household' means "any group of persons who, if they were able to attain permanent housing, would choose to live together; and, shared the same sleeping arrangements on the night of the count." Three different types of households are discussed below: households with adults and children under 18 ('families'), households without children ('individuals'), and households with only children under 18 ('unaccompanied youth').



Of the 184 homeless households counted in Monmouth County in 2017, 49 (26.6%) were families with at least one adult and one child under the age of 18. These included families 155 persons, 99 children under age 18, and 56 adults. The average family size was 3 persons. Figure 3 shows

that 15 families (30.6%) were staying in emergency shelters on the night of the count. 34 families (69.4%) were in transitional housing on the night of the count. Monmouth County experienced an overall decrease of 14% (8 family households) in homeless families between 2016 and 2017. There was a 100% decrease in unsheltered families with no unsheltered families identified in 2017 as compared to the 4 unsheltered families identified in 2016.

73.4% (135 households) of the homeless households counted in Monmouth County were households without children under 18, and were predominately composed of individual adults (126 persons). The remaining 9 households were adult only households composed of 18 adults. 73 (54.1%) of these adult-only households were staying in emergency shelters, 23 (17%) were in transitional housing, and 39 (28.9%) were unsheltered. The number of adult-only households decreased by 22% (38 households) from the number counted in 2016.

There were no households with only children under 18 years old reported on the night of the count in Monmouth County in 2017.

Demographics

There was a total of 22 (7.4%) homeless adults between 18 and 24 years old, 178 (59.5%) adults over age 24, and 99 (33.1%) children under 18 years old experiencing homelessness on the night of the count. The age range by housing situation as shown in Figure 4 shows a similar distribution as identified in 2016. While there were decreases in the number of homeless adults over the age of 18, there was increase in the number of homeless children under the age of 18.



54.5% (163) of homeless persons were male, 44.5% (133) were female, and one person (.3%) identified as transgender.

43.8% of homeless persons identified their race as White, making that the largest racial subgroup. The next largest group identified themselves as Black or African American (40.1%), followed by those identifying as Multi-Racial (6.7%) and Asian (1.3%). With regards to ethnicity, 17.1% of persons identified themselves as Hispanic.

Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 47% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 66.5% (133 persons) of adults 18 or older reported some type of disability compared to 7.1% (7 persons) of children. Figure 6 shows the number of the homeless persons that identified as having various disabilities. The most prevalent disabilities were mental health issues and substance abuse disorders.





homeless population. 51.1% of disabled adults also reported a substance abuse disorder. Among disabled homeless children, 100% reported a mental health issue.

Victims of Domestic Violence

On the night of the count, in Monmouth homeless County, 41 households reported having a victim of domestic violence. Households with an experience of domestic violence represented 22.3% of all homeless households identified. Figure 7 shows that 75.6% of these households were families with children under the age of 18. The remaining 10 households were adult only households. 39% of all victim households were counted in emergency while shelters 53.6% were in transitional housing and 7.3% 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.

16 veteran households were counted in the 2017 Point in Time.



While most were individuals (68.7%), 2 were in adult only households and 2 were part of families with children under the age of 18. 43.7% of persons in veteran households were unsheltered, while 37.5% were staying in emergency shelters and another 18.7% were in transitional housing.



Homeless veterans in Monmouth County were 81.3% male (13 persons) and 18.8% female (3 persons). The most common racial background was White (68.8%) followed by Black or African American (25%). Figure 9 illustrates the age range of the veterans identified.

Among those identifying as veterans, 3 homeless veterans reported being a victim of domestic violence. 13 veterans (81.3%) reported having a disability. The most common disabilities cited were physical disabilities, representing 69.2% of the

homeless veteran population, followed by mental health issues and chronic health conditions, with each being reported by 61.5% of homeless veterans. With regards to income, no veterans reported being connected to VA pension and 2 veterans reported being connected to VA disability benefits. 1 veteran reported being connected to VA Medical Benefits. 20% of veteran households were not connected to any source of income and 20% were not connected to any mainstream benefits.

Income and Benefits

Among all households experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, 30.4% had no source of income, while 12.5% reported receiving earned cash income. The most common sources of non-earned cash income among homeless households were SSI (17.9%) and TANF (13%).

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



Figure 11. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation				
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered	
Average for All Households	\$559.16	\$570.20	\$405.16	

14.7% of homeless households reported that their household was receiving no kind of noncash benefits on the night of the count. Medicaid was the top reported non-cash benefit, and was received by 62% of households. 46.7% of households were receiving Food Stamps.





Figure 12 shows that 21.7% of homeless households (40 households) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted from days to 1 8 month, making this the most

common response. Another 20.1% of households reported being homeless for more than 1 year. Out of those homeless for more than 1 year, 10 households indicated they were homeless from 2 – 5 years and 6 households indicated they were homeless for more than 5 years.

Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to being asked to leave a shared residence (30 households, 16.3%) than any other cause. As Figure 13 shows, the next most common factor reported was domestic violence (13.6%).



When households were asked 'what was your residence prior to your current living situation?' more said they resided in permanent housing (20.7%) than any other type of residence. 14.7% reported living with family or friends prior to their current living situation.

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.

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

40 households, made up of 49 persons, were chronically homeless in Monmouth County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 25 persons (33.8%) from 2016. The rate of chronic homelessness as a percentage of overall homelessness is 16.4%; which is a decrease from the 21.5% in 2016.



Figure 14 shows the number of chronically homeless persons who were in emergency shelter or living unsheltered in Monmouth County from 2013 to 2017. From 2013 to 2015, the overall number of chronically homeless persons trended upward, before falling between 2015 and 2017. Overall, there has been a decrease of 19 persons (27.9%) from 2013 to 2017.

Families and Individuals

Of the 40 chronically homeless households counted in 2017, 2 (5%) were households with

at least 1 adult and 1 child. These 2 households were composed of 6 persons, 100% of which were served in emergency shelters. The other 38 households (95%) were adult only households, composed of 43 persons.

37.5% of chronically homeless households were living unsheltered, a decrease of 4 household from 2016. The other 25 households (62.5%)



were staying in emergency shelters on the night of the count, a decrease of 13.7% from 2016.



Demographics

Of the 49 total chronically homeless persons, 7 (14.3%) were between 18 and 24 years old, and another 3 (6.1%) were children 17 or younger. The largest number of chronically homeless persons (17, 34.7%) in a single category fell between the ages of 55 and 64 years of age. Since 2016 the chronically homeless population has shifted to a much older population.

73.5% of chronically homeless persons were male, and 26.5% were female.

The largest racial subgroup of chronically homeless persons reported their race as White (51%). The next largest group self-identified as Black or African American (44.9%). With regards to ethnicity, 20.4% of chronically homeless persons identified themselves as Hispanic.

Disabilities



In order to meet the definition of chronically homeless, at least one adult in each household must have some kind of disability. The disabilities most commonly identified were mental health issues (51%) and substance abuse disorders (38.8%). The chronically homeless population with a mental health issue represented 33.3% of the total homeless population with a mental health issues. The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the chronically homeless can be seen in Figure 17.

Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 4 chronically homeless households in Monmouth County reported being victims of domestic violence (8.2%). 2 (50%) of these households were staying in emergency shelters and 2 (50%) were unsheltered.

There were 7 veteran individuals identified as chronically homeless on the night of the count (14.3%). 57.1% of the chronically homeless veterans were unsheltered while 42.9% of were in emergency shelter the night of the count.

Income and Benefits

Among all the chronically homeless households on the night of the count, 22.5% reported receiving no type of cash income. Figure 18 shows the sources of income received. The most common source of cash income among chronically homeless households was SSI, which was received by 27.5%.

7.5% of chronically homeless households reported they were not receiving any type of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Medicaid and



Food Stamps (SNAP) were the top reported benefits among the chronically homeless, with 52.5% and 32.5% receiving each, respectively.

Length of

Homelessness

Figure 19 shows that 19 chronically homeless households (47.5%) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted for more than 1 vear. This was the most common answer. Of those homeless for more than 1 year, 31.6% (6 households) homeless were between 2 – 5 years,



and 21.1% (4 households) were homeless for longer than 5 years.

Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more chronically homeless respondents indicated a loss or reduction of job income (12.5%) than any other cause. Figure 20 shows the full list of reported causes 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.

Fig. 21.5 Year Comparison of **Unsheltered Population** 50 45 44 Number of Persons 30 10 36 36 12 0 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 Year

Total Unsheltered Homeless Population

39 households, made up of 44 were persons. living unsheltered in Monmouth County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 1 person (2.2%), increase of 8 but an households (25.8%)from 2016.

Figure 21 shows the number of unsheltered respondents from 2013 to 2017. Though there was a significant increase in the unsheltered

population between 2014 and 2015, there was a slight decrease between 2016 and 2017. Overall the unsheltered homeless population has fluctuated through the years with a 22.2% increase between 2013 and 2017.

Families and Individuals

Of the 39 unsheltered households counted in 2017, there were no unsheltered families with children under the age of 18.

34 (87.2%) of the unsheltered households were individuals and 5 households with 10 persons (12.8%) were adult only couple households.

Demographics

The largest portion of the 44 unsheltered persons counted in 2017 were between the ages of 45 and 54 years old (29.5%). Figure 22 shows the age range of the unsheltered persons counted in 2017.

70.5%ofunshelteredpersonsweremaleand29.5%werefemale.63.6%



of unsheltered persons identified their race as White. Another 34.1% identified their race as Black or African American. 22.7% of unsheltered persons identified their ethnicity as Hispanic.



Disabilities

34 of the 49 unsheltered persons (77.3%) reported having some disability. The disabilities most commonly identified were mental health issues (58.8%) and substance abuse disorders (55.9%). 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 (6.8%) in Monmouth County reported being victims of domestic violence.

There were 7 unsheltered veterans on the night of the count representing 15.9% of the unsheltered population. This is an increase of 3 unsheltered veterans, a 75% increase, as compared to the 2016 count.

38.5% of unsheltered households (45.4% of unsheltered persons) were identified as chronically homeless. 60% of the unsheltered chronically homeless population was continuously homeless for more than 1 year.



Income and Benefits

Among all the unsheltered households on the night of the count. 15 (38.5%) reported having no source of cash income. The average monthly income reported among unsheltered households was \$405.16. 20.5% of unsheltered households received SSI. Figure 24 shows the sources of income received by the unsheltered population.

10 unsheltered households (25.6%) reported they were not receiving any type of non-cash

benefit on the night of the count. Medicaid and Food Stamps (SNAP) were the top reported non-cash benefits among this group, with 30.8% and 23.1% receiving each of these benefits, respectively.



Length of Homelessness

As shown in Figure 25, more unsheltered homeless households reported that their households' most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted more than 1 year than any other length of time (30.8%). Among those homeless for longer than 1 year, 4 (33.3%) were

homeless from 2 – 5 years, and 3 (25%) were homeless more than 5 years.

Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more unsheltered households said loss or reduction of job income (23.1%) than any other factor. As Figure 26 shows, other common factors reported included household breakup or death in the household (12.8%), as well as substance abuse (10.3%).



VI. Appendix







How long have you been in your current living situation?



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



Household Characteristics - check all that apply to each person



Fig. A.8. Number of Homeless Households by County, State or Country of Last Permanent Address			
Last Permanent Address – County/State	Number of Households		
Atlantic County	1		
Cumberland County	2		
Essex County	2		
Hudson County	1		
Mercer County	1		
Middlesex County	3		
Monmouth County	140		
Morris County	1		
Ocean County	9		
Somerset County	1		
Sussex County	1		
Union county	2		
Warren County	1		
Florida	2		
New York	2		
Virginia	1		

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?