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NJ
2017
Counts!

Sussex 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 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 24th, 2017 a total of 52 households, including 99 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Sussex County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 8 households, with 10 persons, were identified as chronically homeless.
- 10 unsheltered homeless households, with 12 persons, were counted.

Total Homeless Population

On the night of January 24th, 2017, a total of 99 persons, in 52 households, were experiencing homelessness in Sussex County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 19 persons (23.8%) and a decrease of 1 household from 2016. Sussex County had 1.2% of New Jersey's statewide homeless population in 2017.

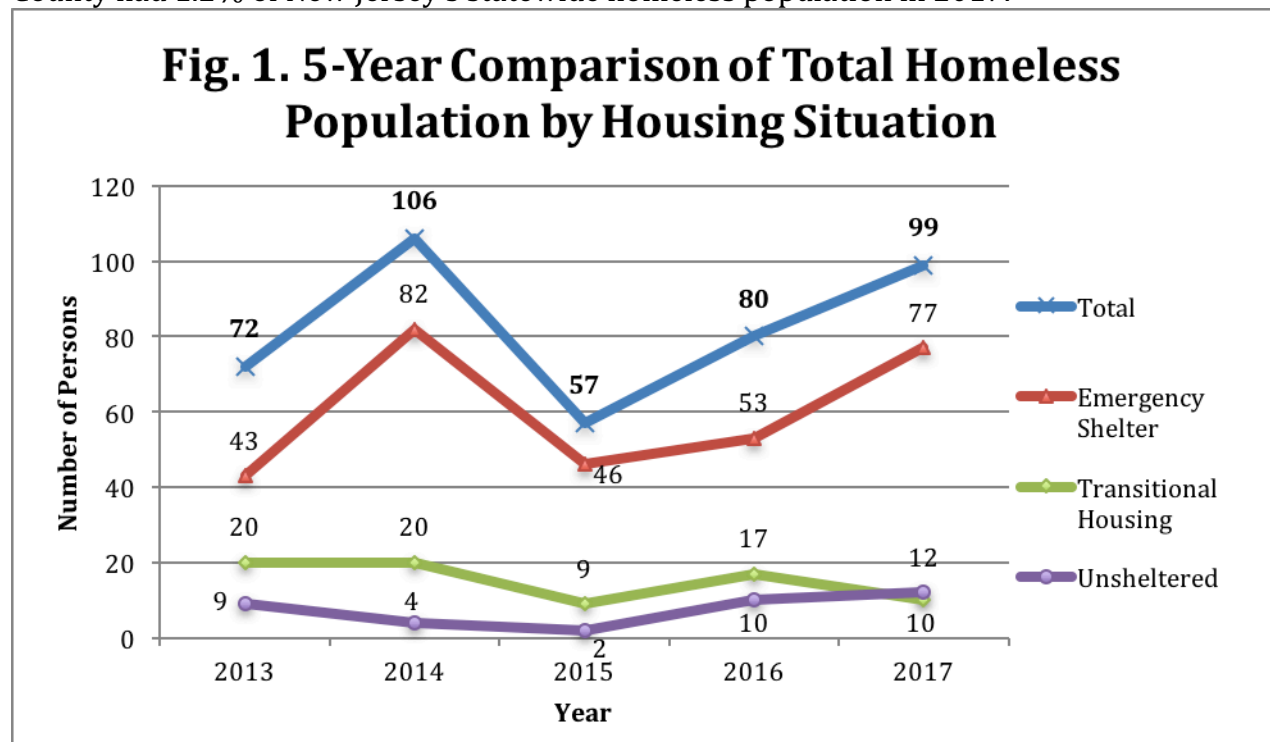


Figure 1 shows that, in 2017, 77 homeless persons (77.8%) were in emergency shelter, 10 (10.1%) were in transitional housing, and 12 (12.1%) were living unsheltered on the night of the count. The total number of those in emergency shelter represents an increase of 24 persons (45.3%) from 2016. There were 2 (20%) more unsheltered households when compared to 2016.

Figure 1 also shows that, over the past five years, the total number of homeless persons and households has been fluctuating in Sussex County, with an overall trend of a slight increase in total homelessness. From 2013 to 2017 Sussex County has seen an increase of

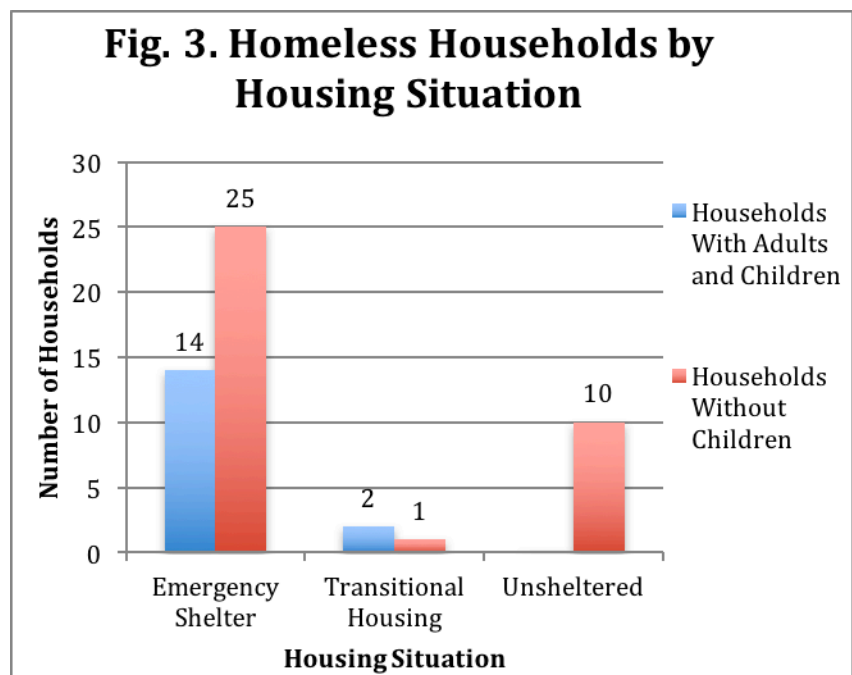
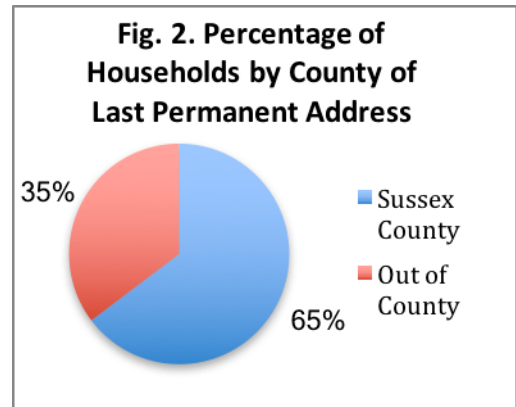
27 persons (37.5%). The unsheltered count has also seen an overall increase of 33.3% (3 persons).

As Figure 2 shows, 35% of homeless households counted in Sussex 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').

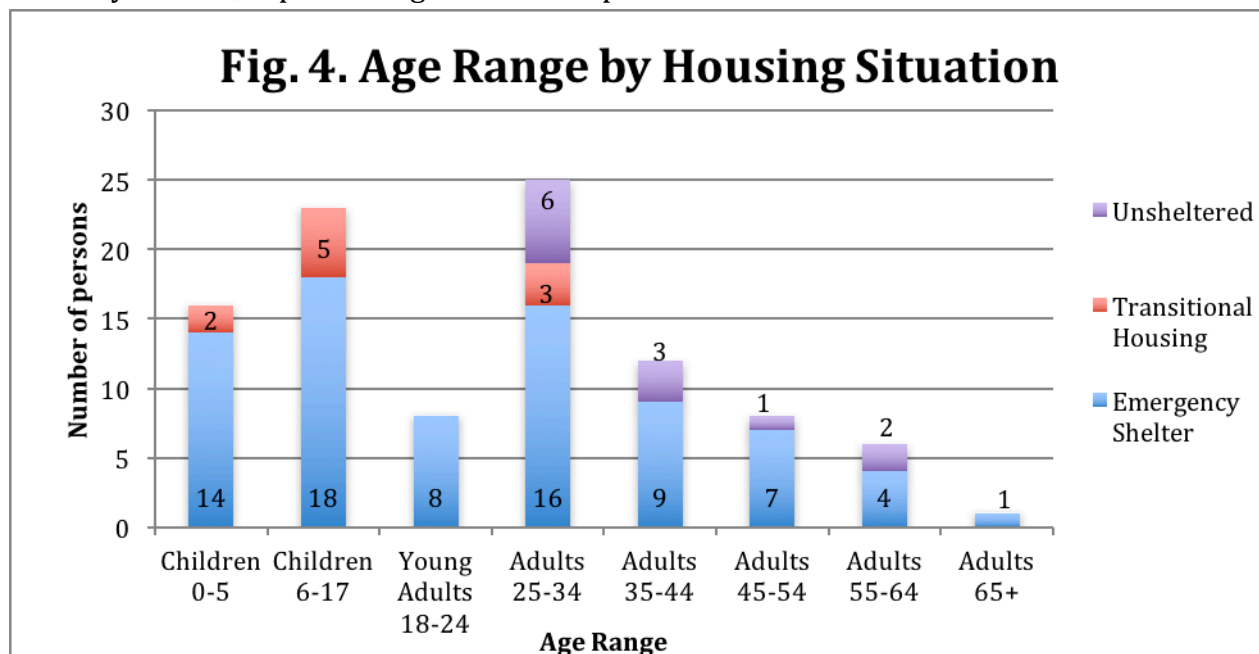
Of the 52 homeless households counted in Sussex County in 2017, 16 (30.8%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult, an increase of 3 families (23.1%) from 2016. These families included 59 persons, 39 children under age 18, and 20 adults. The average family size was 3.1 persons. Figure 3 shows that 2 of the families (12.5%) were staying in transitional housing, while the remaining 14 (87.5%) were in emergency shelters.



69.2% of the homeless households (36) counted in Sussex County were households without children under 18, and they were composed of 40 persons. The majority of these adult-only households (33, 91.7%) were composed of individuals, while 3 (8.3%) were couple households that contained a total of 7 persons. The majority of adult only households (69.4%), were in an emergency shelter.

Demographics

There were a total of 39 (39.4%) homeless children under 18 years old, 8 (8.1%) young adults between 18 and 24 years old, and 52 (52.5%) adults over the age of 24 in Sussex County 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 (59%). The age range most represented among homeless persons in Sussex County was that of adults between 25 and 34 years old, representing 25.3% of all persons counted.



63.6% of homeless respondents were female, and 36.4% were male.

81.8% of persons identified their race as White, making that the largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported. The next largest group self-identified as Black or African American (13.1%). With regard to ethnicity, 14.1% of respondents identified themselves as Hispanic.

Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 40% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 65% of adults 18 or older reported some type of disability compared to 2.6% 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, substance abuse disorders and chronic health conditions.

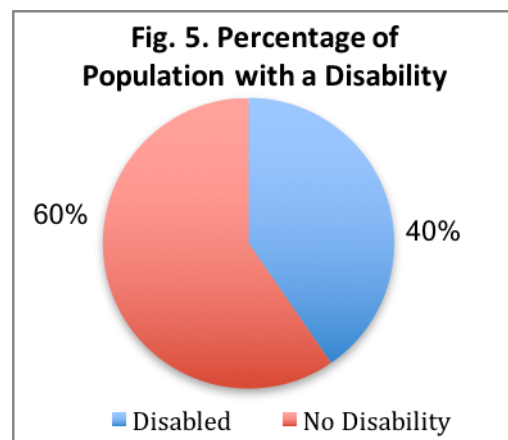
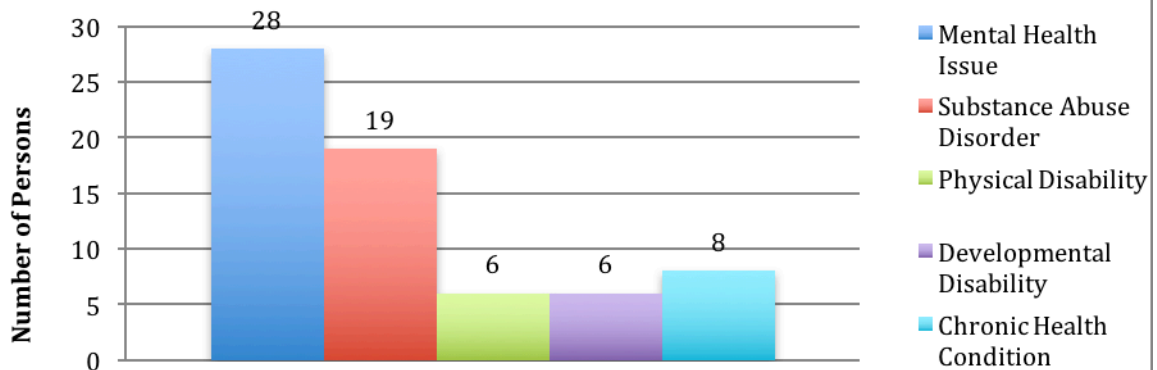


Fig. 6. Number of Persons by Disability Type

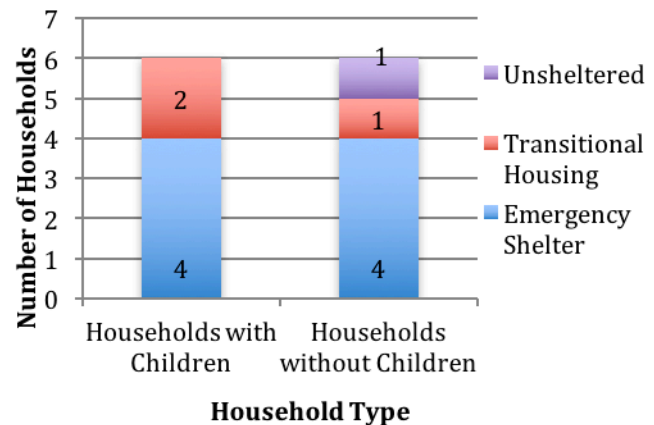


Among disabled adults, 69.2% reported mental health issues making this the most prevalent disability; representing 45% of the total adult homeless population. 48.7% of disabled adults also reported a substance abuse issues, while another 20.5% reported a chronic health condition. The 1 disabled child reported a mental health issue and a development disability.

Victims of Domestic Violence

On the night of the count, in Sussex County, 12 (23.1%) homeless households reported having a victim of domestic violence, 33.3% more than 2016. Figure 7 shows that 6 (50%) of these households were individual adult households, while 6 (50%) were families with at least 1 adult and 1 child under 18 counted. 8 of the 12 households were in emergency shelters, 3 were in transitional housing, and 1 was unsheltered.

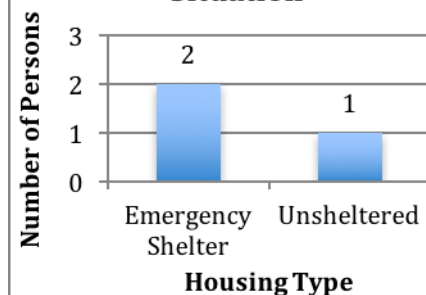
Fig. 7. Households of Victims of Domestic Violence by Housing Situation



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.

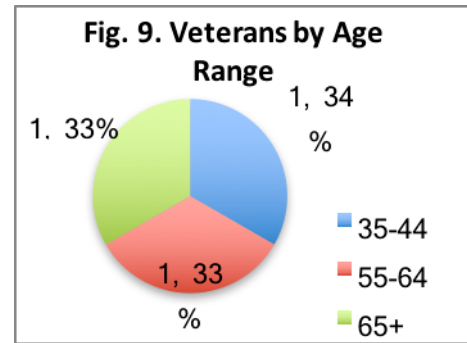
Fig. 8. Number of Veterans by Housing Situation



There were 3 single, adult homeless veterans counted in Sussex County on the night of the Point in Time Count. 2 (66.7%) were in emergency shelter and 1 (33.3%) was unsheltered.

Two of the veterans that were counted were male (66.7%) and all 3 veterans were White. 2 of the veterans were between 35 and 64 and 1 was over 65 years of age.

2 (66.7%) reported a mental health issue. 0 veterans were connected to veteran specific benefits. All were seeking housing assistance.



Income and Benefits

Among all the households experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, 17.3% had no source of income, and 13.5% reported having earned income. The top reported sources of income, other than earned income, were General Assistance, TANF, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which were received by 25%, 9.6%, and 9.6% of households, respectively.

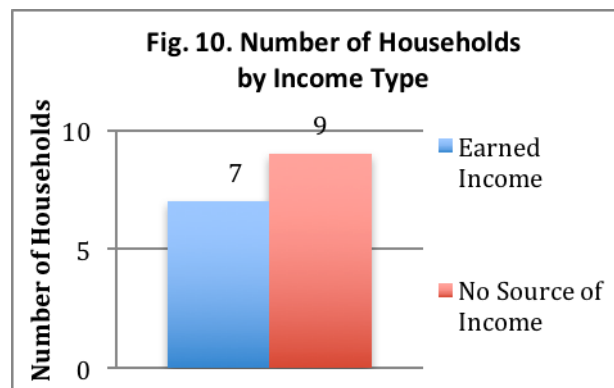


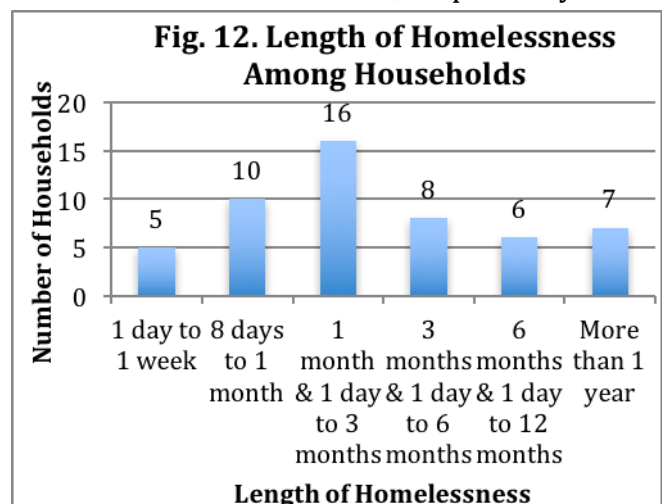
Figure 11 shows the average monthly income for all homeless households.

Figure 11. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation			
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered
Average for All Households	\$591.05	\$900	\$527.88

15.4% of respondents reported that their household was receiving no kind of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Medicaid and Food Stamps (SNAP) were the top reported non-cash benefits, and were received by 65.4% and 53.8% of households, respectively.

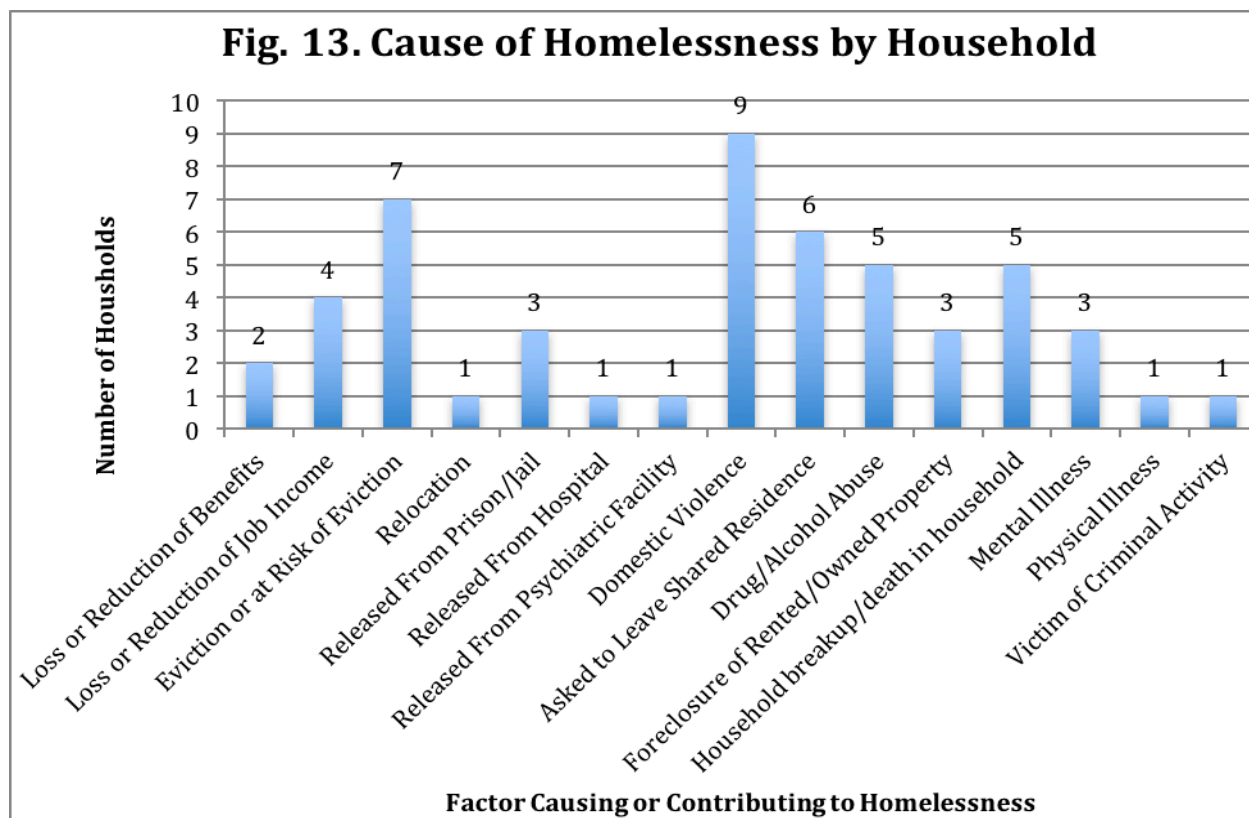
Length of Homelessness

Figure 12 shows that when households were asked how long their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted, more reported it had lasted between 1 month and 3 months (30.8%) than any other length. 13.5% of households reported having experienced homelessness for more than 1 year, and 9.6% reported less than 1 week.



Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more respondents attributed their homelessness to domestic violence (9 households, 17.3%) than any other cause. The next most common factor reported was eviction (13.5%).



When homeless respondents were asked ‘what was your residence prior to your current living situation?’ more said they were residing in permanent housing (23.1%) than any other type of residence. 13.5% reported staying in emergency shelter prior to their current living situation.

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

8 households, made up of 10 total persons, were chronically homeless in Sussex County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count, an increase of 2 households (25%) and 2 persons (33.3%) from 2016. The rate of chronic homelessness as a percentage of overall homelessness was 10.1% in 2017, compared to 17.7% in 2016.

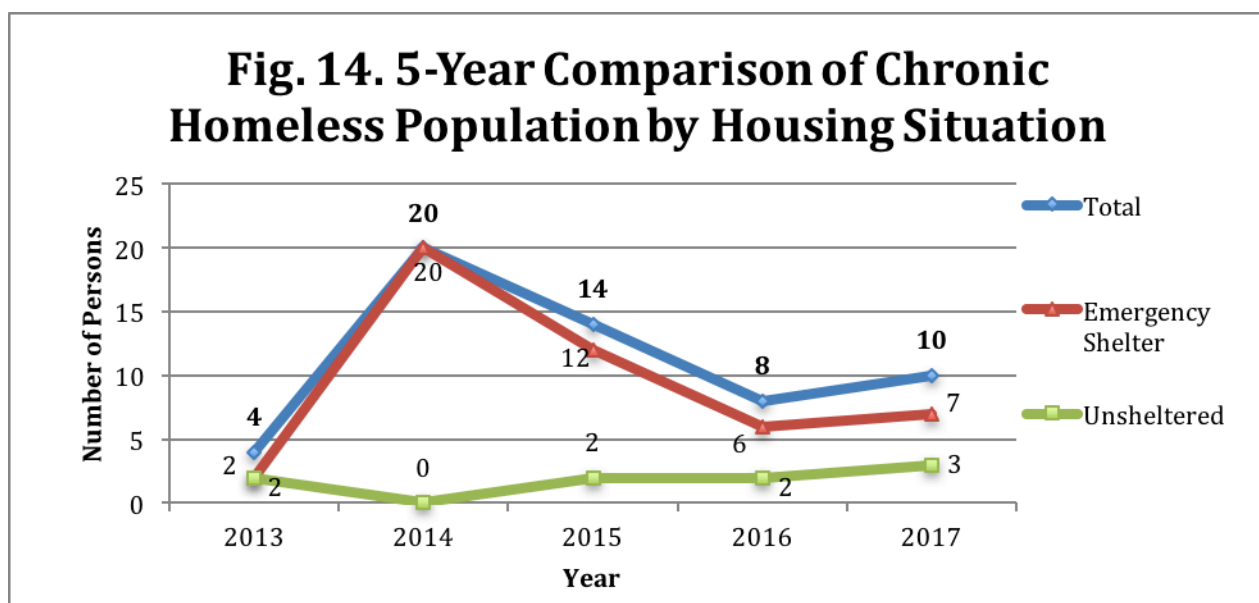
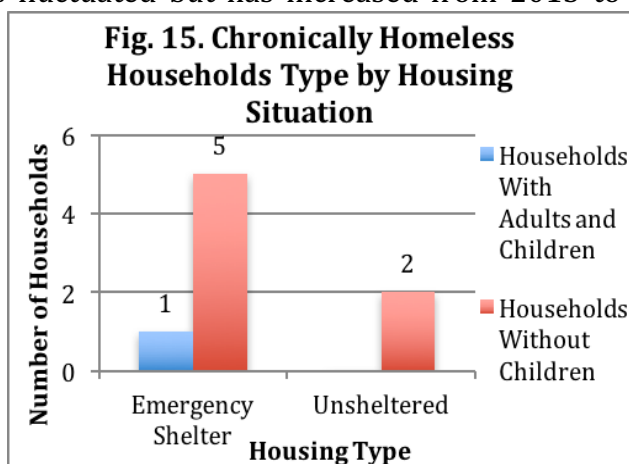


Figure 14 shows the number of chronically homeless persons who were sheltered or living unsheltered in Sussex County from 2013 to 2017. Over the past five years, the overall number of chronically homeless persons has fluctuated but has increased from 2013 to 2017 by 6 persons (150%).

Families and Individuals

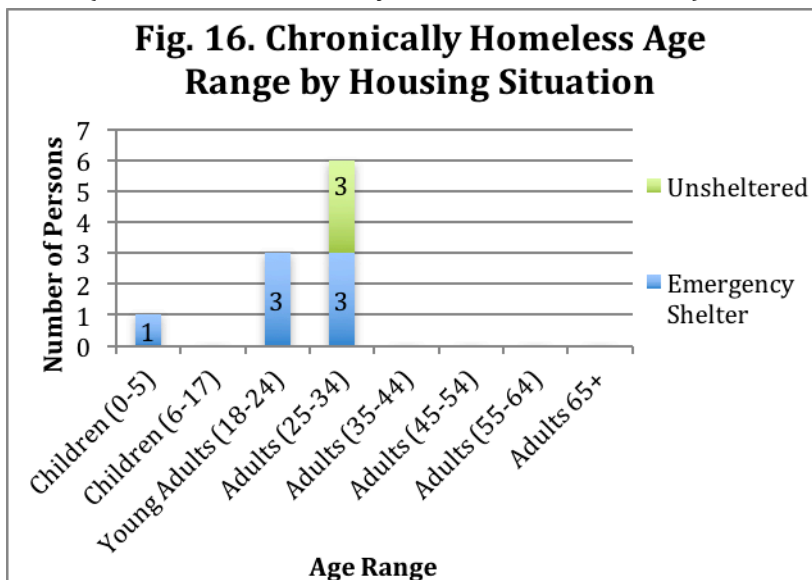
Of the 8 chronically homeless households counted in 2017, 1 (12.5%) was a family with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult, the same as 2016. This family included 1 adult and 1 child, and was in emergency shelter on the night of the count.



There were 6 chronically homeless households with adult individuals counted in Sussex County and 1 couple household. The couple household and 1 adult-only household were unsheltered on the night of the count. (25% of all chronically homeless households).

Demographics

Of the 10 total chronically homeless persons, 1 (10%) was a child under the age of 5. The remaining 9 persons (90%) were adults over the age of 18. Adults between the ages of 25 and 34, with 60%, was the most common age range among all chronically homeless persons, as seen in Figure 16.

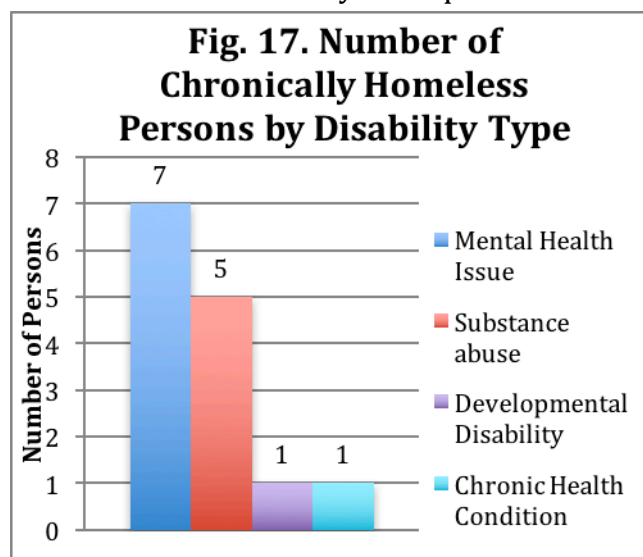


90% of those counted as chronically homeless were female, and 10% were male.

80% of chronically homeless persons reported their race as White, and 10% identified their race as Black or African-American. 30% identified their ethnicity 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 among these disabled persons were mental health issues (70%) and substance abuse issues (50%). The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the chronically homeless can be seen in Figure 17.



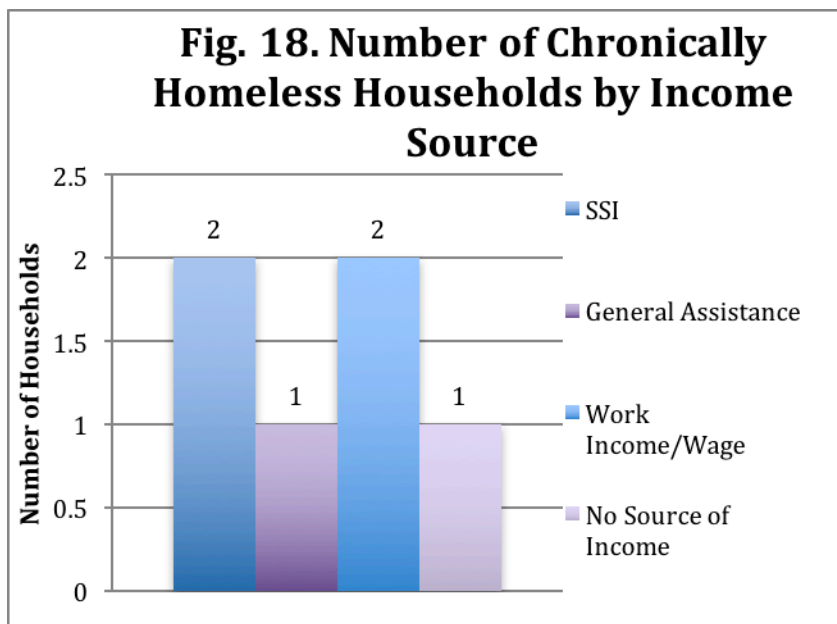
Subpopulations

3 chronically homeless households (30%) in Sussex County reported having victims of domestic violence. 1 of these chronically homeless victim households was unsheltered.

There were 0 chronically homeless veterans identified on the night of the count. This represents a 100% decrease from 1 such veteran in 2016.

Income and Benefits

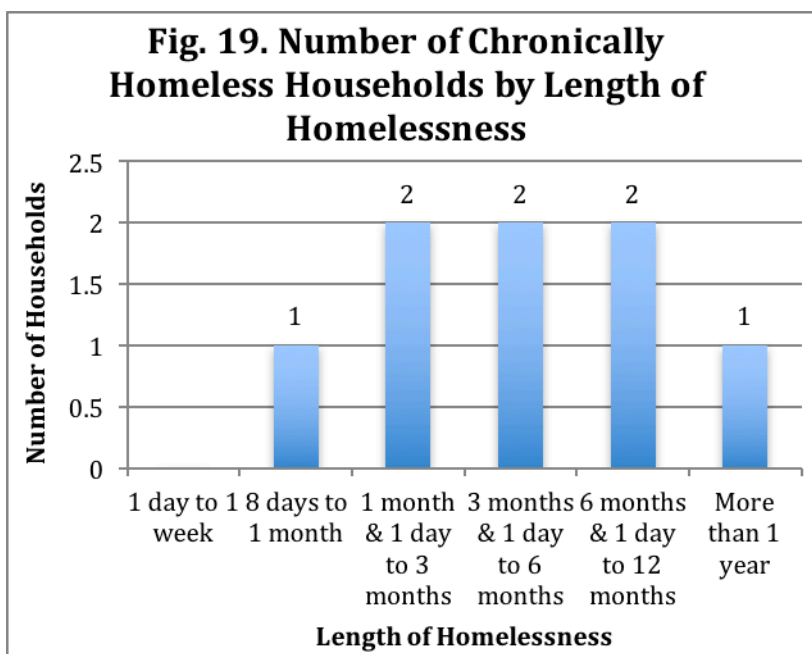
Among all the chronically homeless households 1 (12.5%) reported no source of cash income. Figure 18 shows the sources of income received. The most common source of cash income among chronically homeless households were SSI and work income/wage, which were both reported by 25%. 1 household reported general assistance.



No chronically homeless households reported not receiving at least 1 type of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Medicaid and Food Stamps (SNAP) were the top reported non-cash benefits with 100% and 75% of households receiving these benefits, respectively.

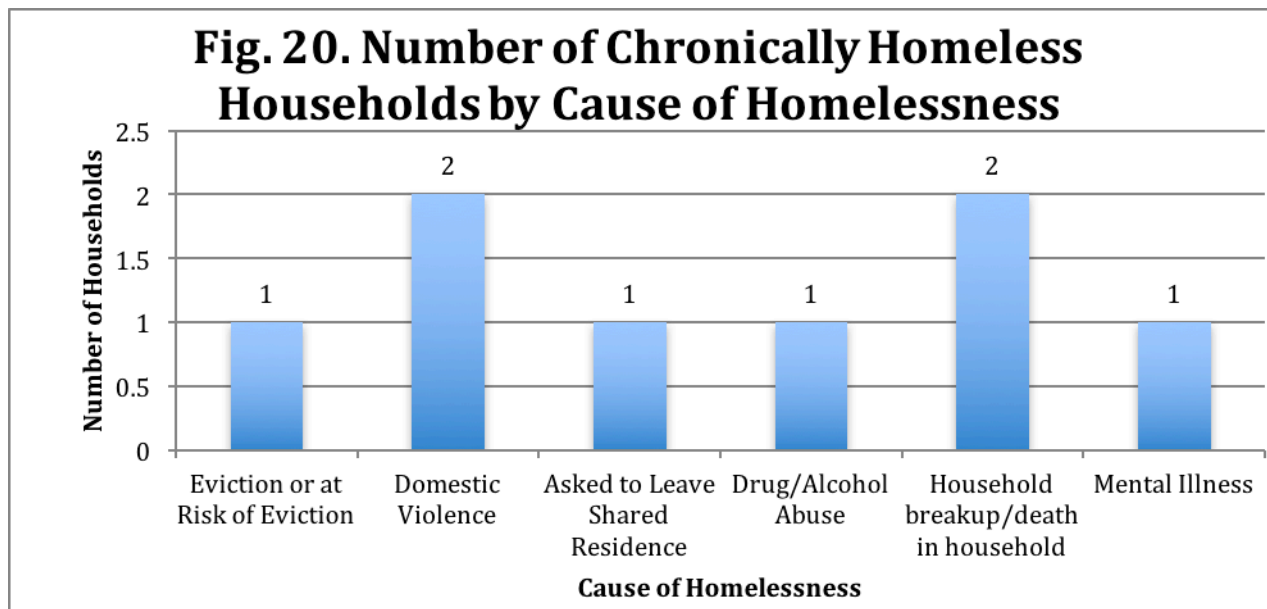
Length of Homelessness

25% of chronically homeless households reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness to be between 1 to 3 months, 3 months to 6 months and 6 months to a year, each. This is a shift from 2016 in which 83.3% of chronically homeless households reported their homelessness lasted more than 1 year.



Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, domestic violence and household breakup or death contributed the most to the cause of homelessness, representing 25% each. Figure 20 has the full list of the causes reported by chronically homeless households.



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

10 households, made up of 12 persons, were living unsheltered in Sussex County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 1 household (11.1%) and 2 persons (20%) from 2016.

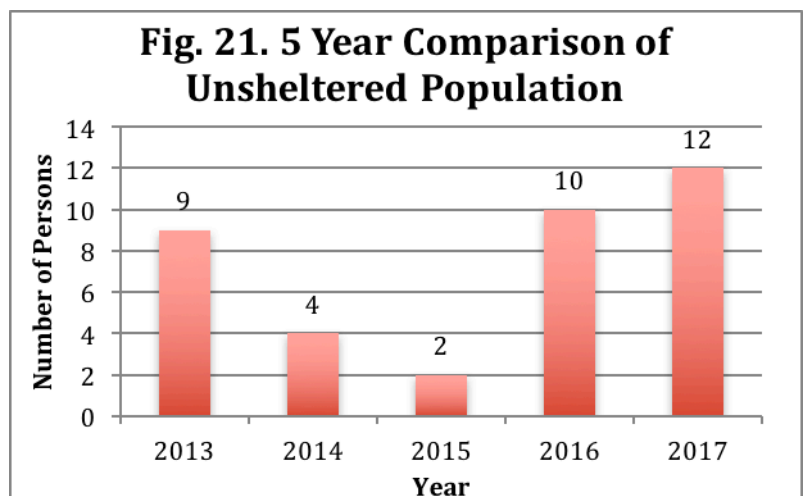


Figure 21 shows the number of unsheltered respondents from 2013 to 2017. Since 2013, the number of unsheltered persons in Sussex County has increased overall by 33.3%.

Families and Individuals

There were 0 unsheltered families with adults and children counted in 2017.

1 unsheltered household (10%) counted was a couple, while the remaining 9 households were adult individuals.

Demographics

No unsheltered person counted in 2017 was a young child under the age of 18 years, while the remaining unsheltered persons were adults between the ages of 25 and 64. 50% of the unsheltered population were between the ages of 25 and 34.

58.3% of the unsheltered population was female, and 41.7% were male. 91.7% identified their race as White, and 8.3% identified their ethnicity as Hispanic.

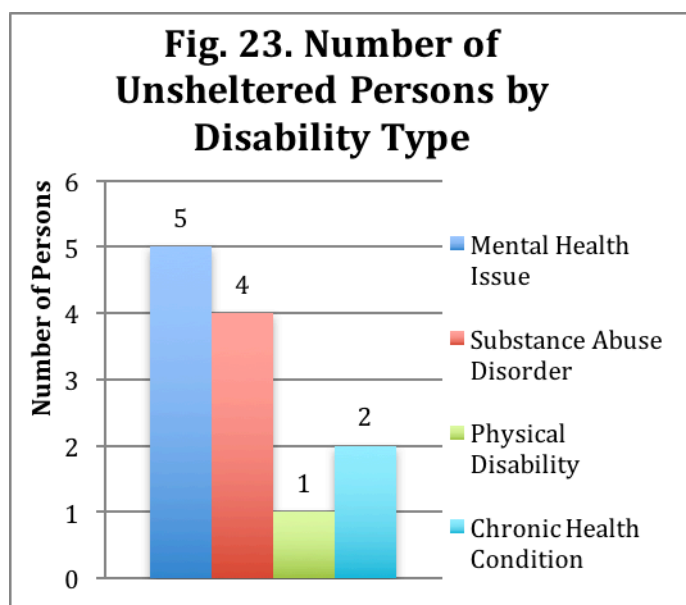
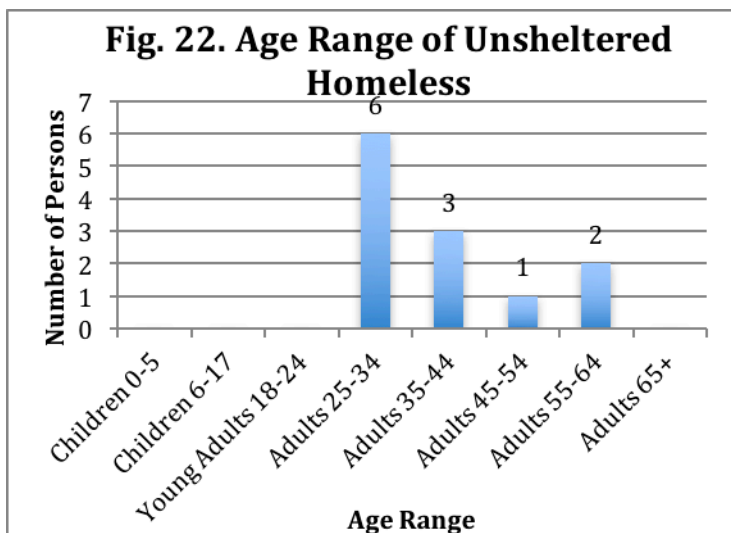
Disabilities

58.3% of unsheltered persons reported being disabled. The most common disabilities reported were mental health issues (71.4%). All reported disabilities can be seen in Figure 23.

Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 2 unsheltered homeless individuals in Sussex County reported being a victim of domestic violence.

There was 1 unsheltered veteran counted on the night of the count.

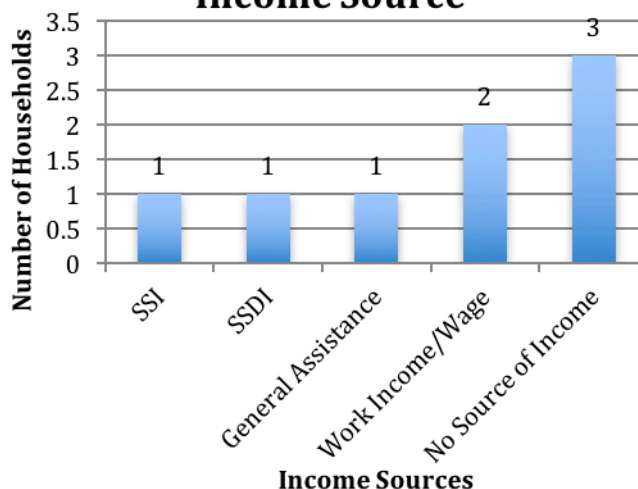


Income and Benefits

Among the 10 unsheltered households counted in Sussex County on the night of the PIT, 3 (30%) reported having no source of income. Another 20% reported receiving work income. The average monthly income of unsheltered households was about \$528.

10% of unsheltered households reported not being connected to any mainstream benefits. 4 (40%) reported being connected to Medicaid benefits and 1 household reported being connected to Food Stamps/SNAP (10%).

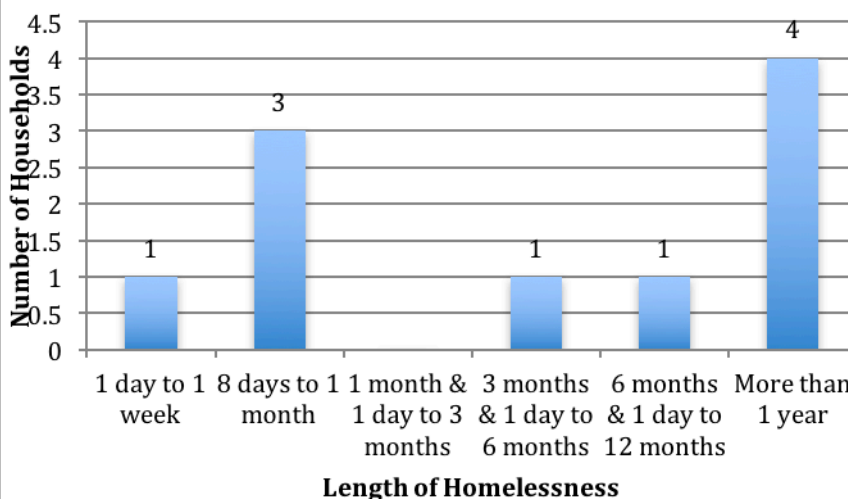
Fig. 24. Number of Unsheltered Households by Income Source



Length of Homelessness

The largest contingent of unsheltered households (40%) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homeless had lasted more than 1 year. 30% of unsheltered households reported being homeless between 8 days and 1 month.

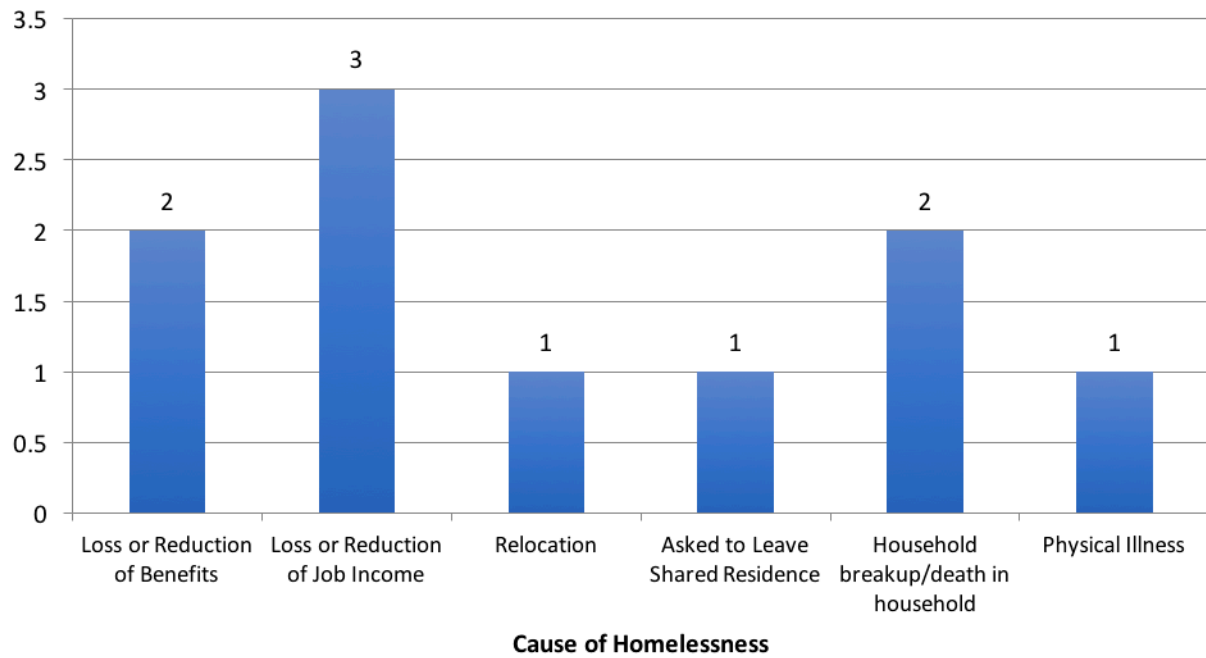
Fig. 25. Number of Unsheltered Households by Length of Homelessness



Cause of Homelessness

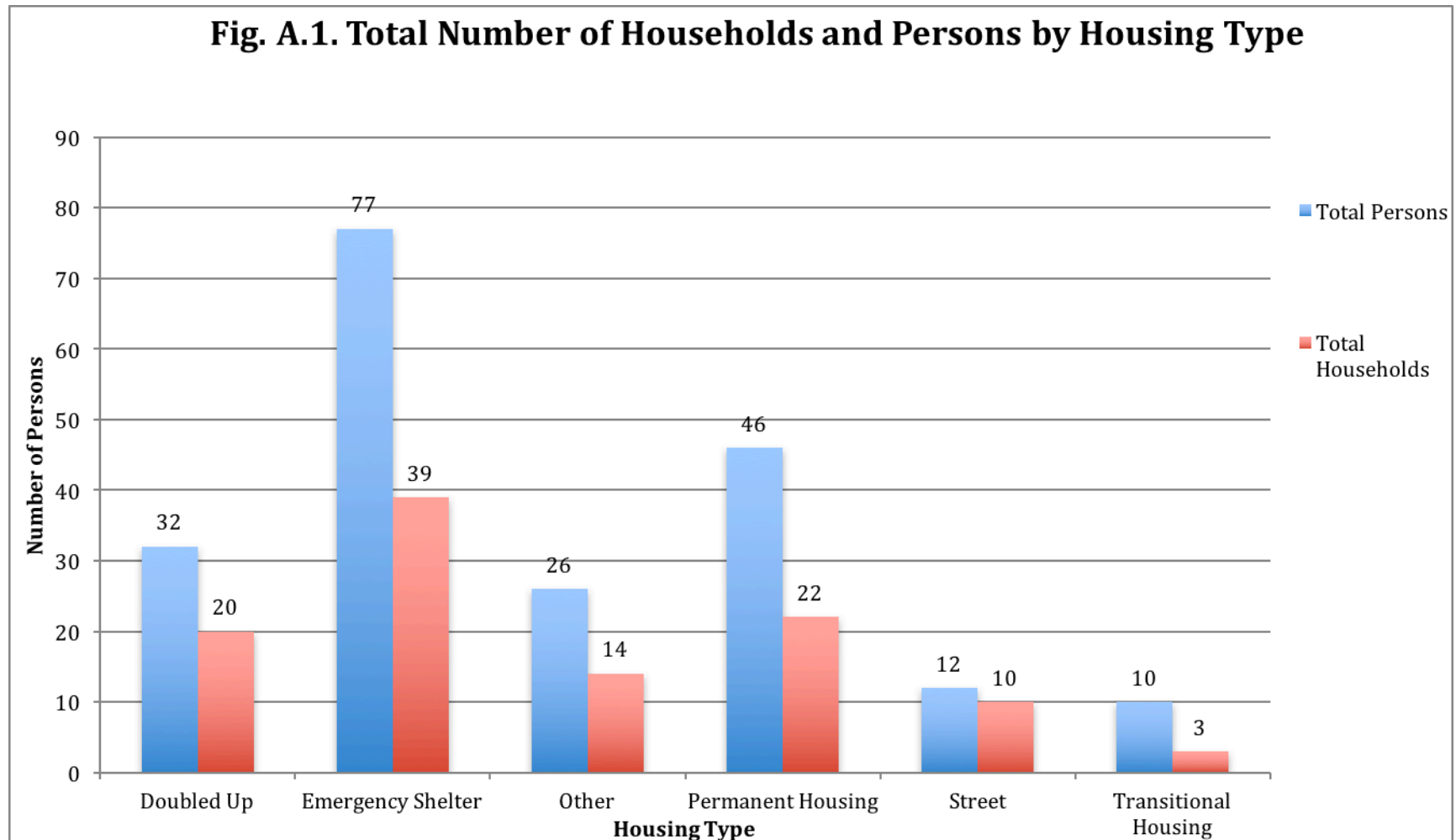
When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more unsheltered households (30%) reported a loss or reduction of job income than any other cause. Figure 26 has the full list of the causes reported by unsheltered households.

Fig. 26. Unsheltered Households by Cause of Homelessness



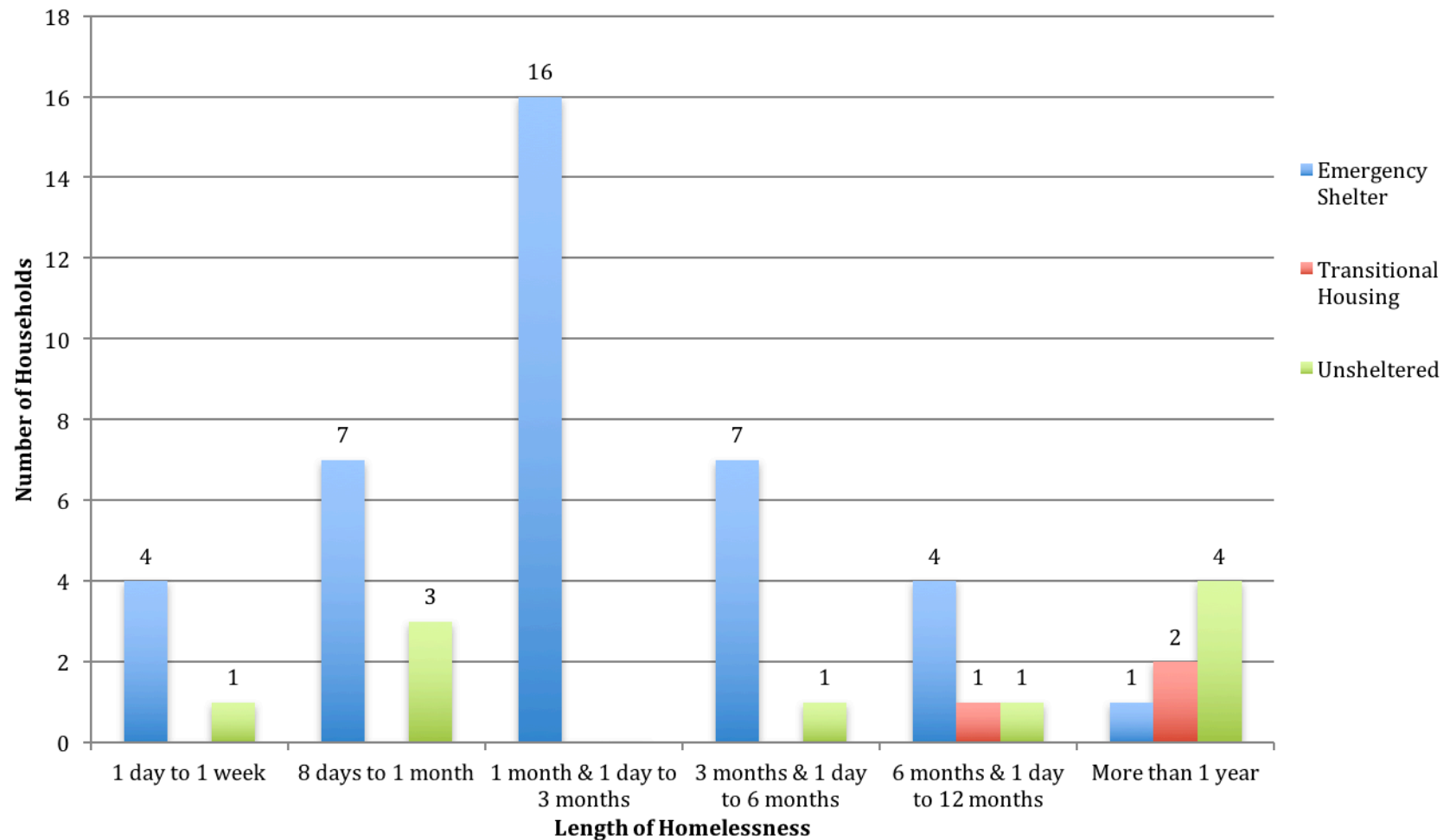
VI. Appendix

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

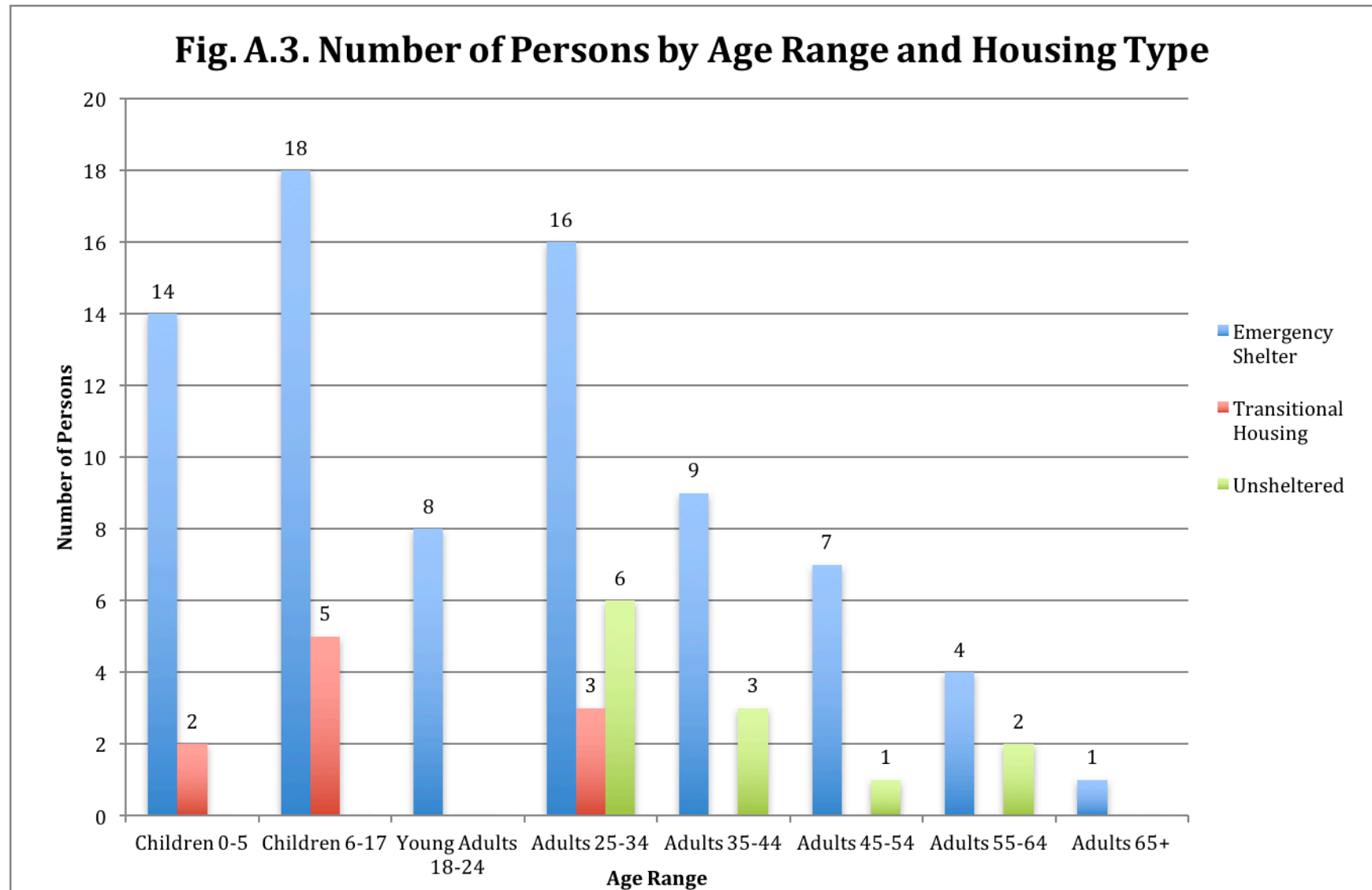


How long have you been in your current living situation?

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



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



Household Characteristics – check all that apply to each person

Household Characteristics – check all that apply to each person

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

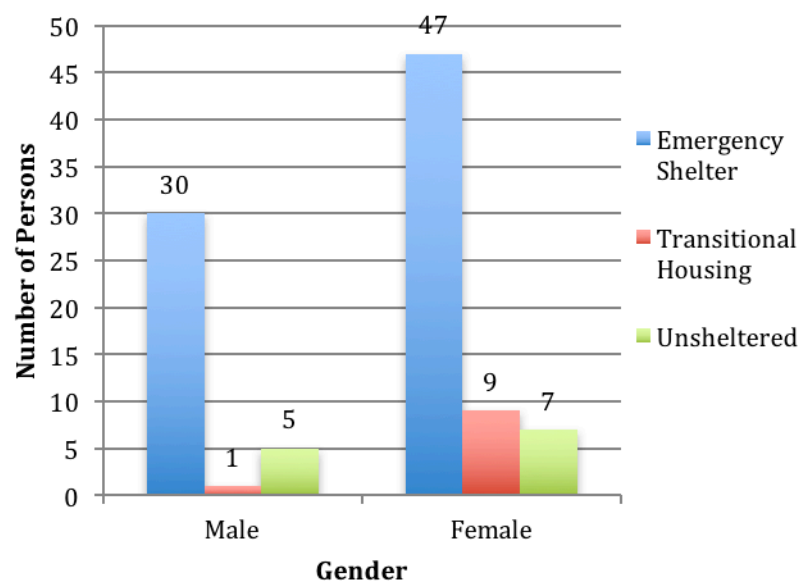


Fig. A.6. Number of Homeless Persons by Ethnicity

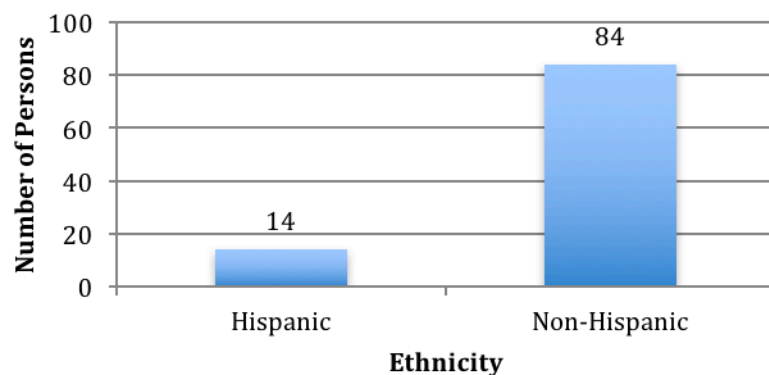


Fig. A.5. Number of Homeless Persons by Race

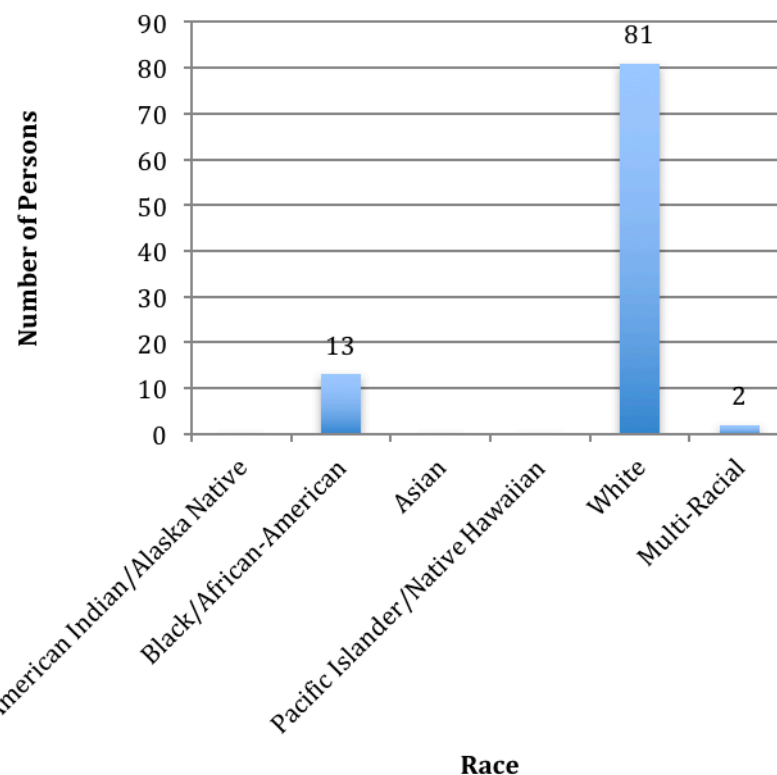
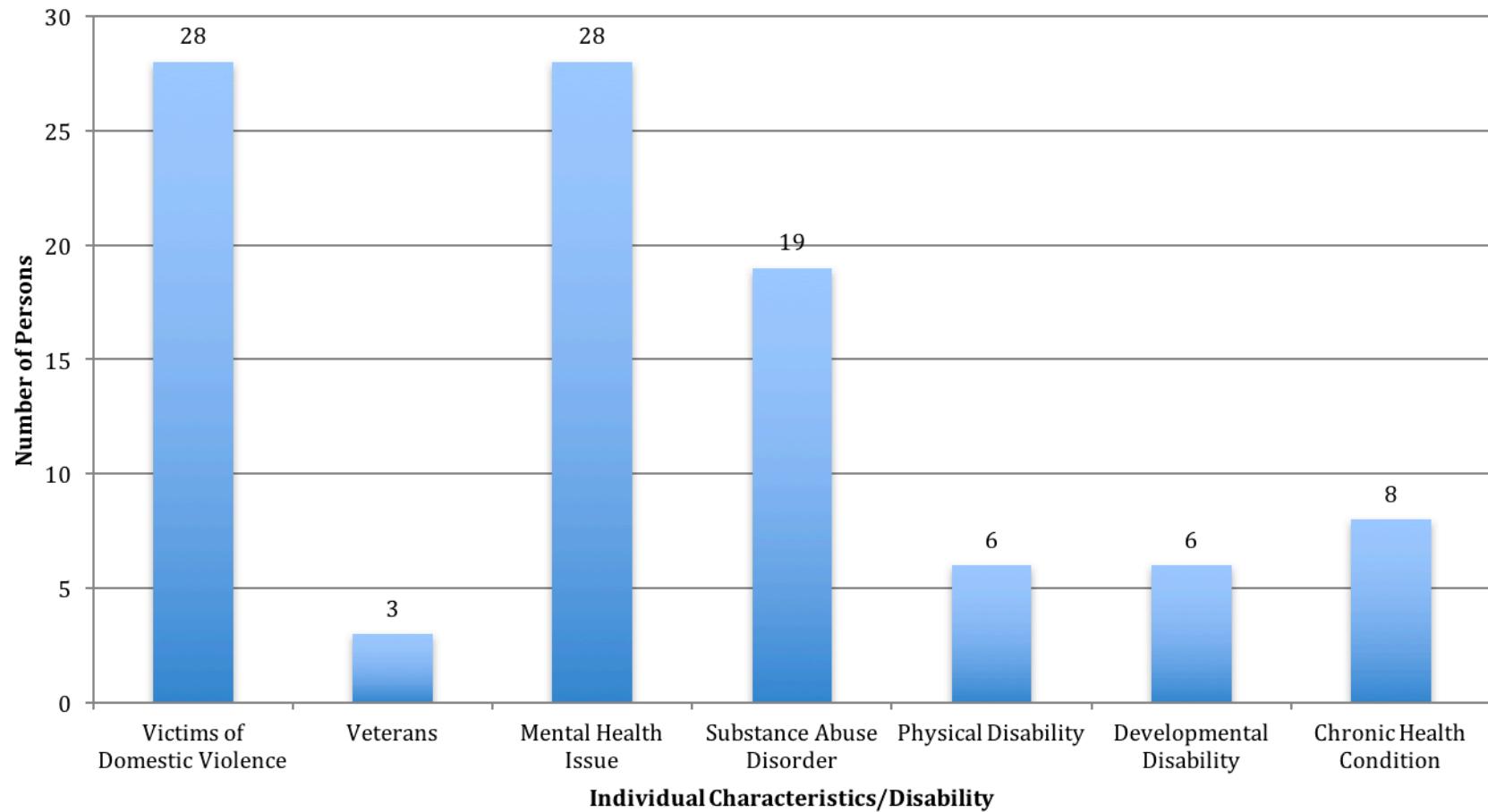


Fig. A.7. Number of Homeless Persons by Victims of Domestic Violence, Veteran Status, and Disability

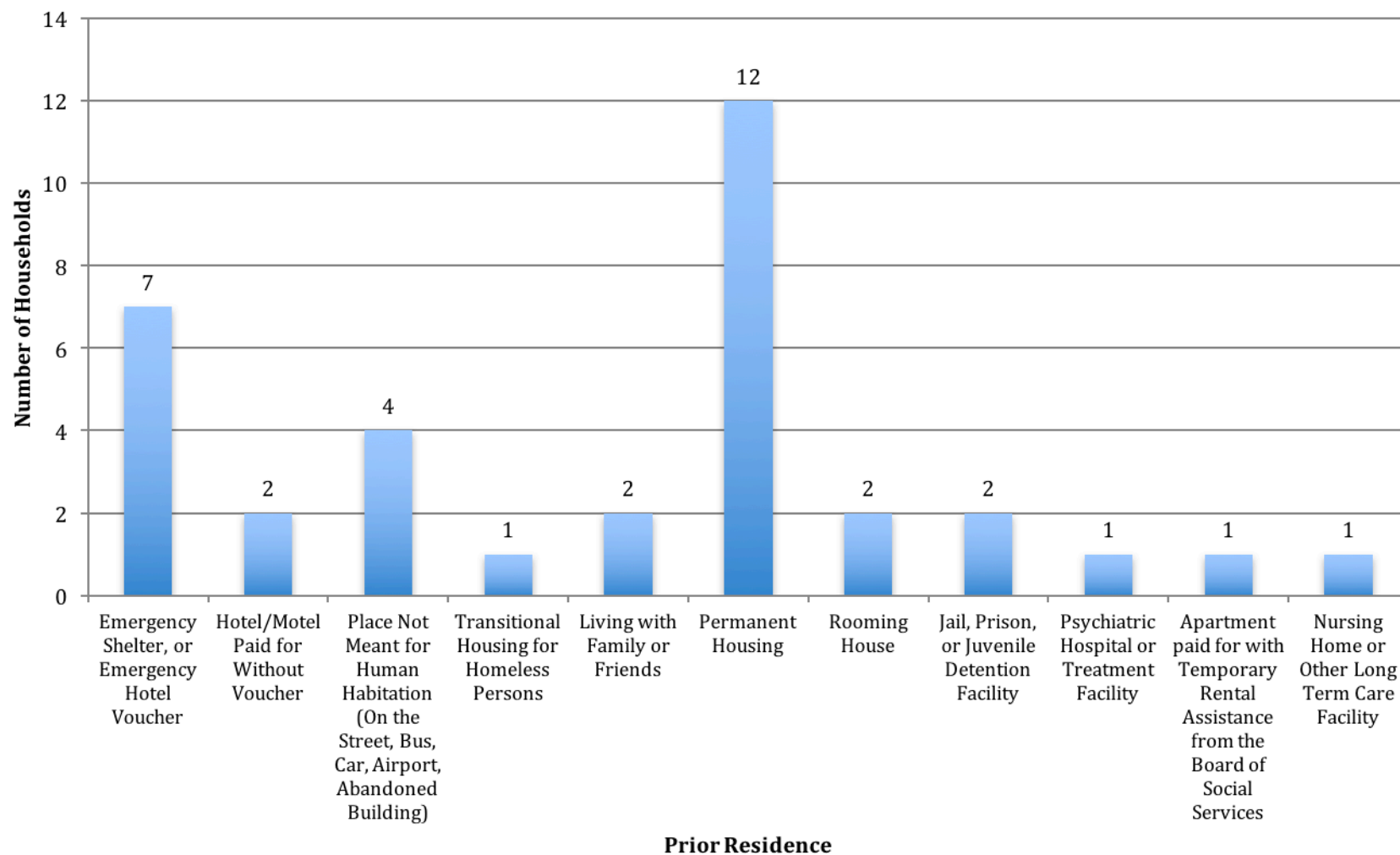


Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?

Fig. A.8. Number of Homeless Households by County, State or Country of Last Permanent Address	
Last Permanent Address	Number of Households
Bergen County	1
Essex County	2
Hudson County	1
Monmouth County	1
Morris County	5
Ocean County	1
Passaic County	3
Sussex County	33
Warren County	2
New York	1

What was your residence prior to your current living situation?

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



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

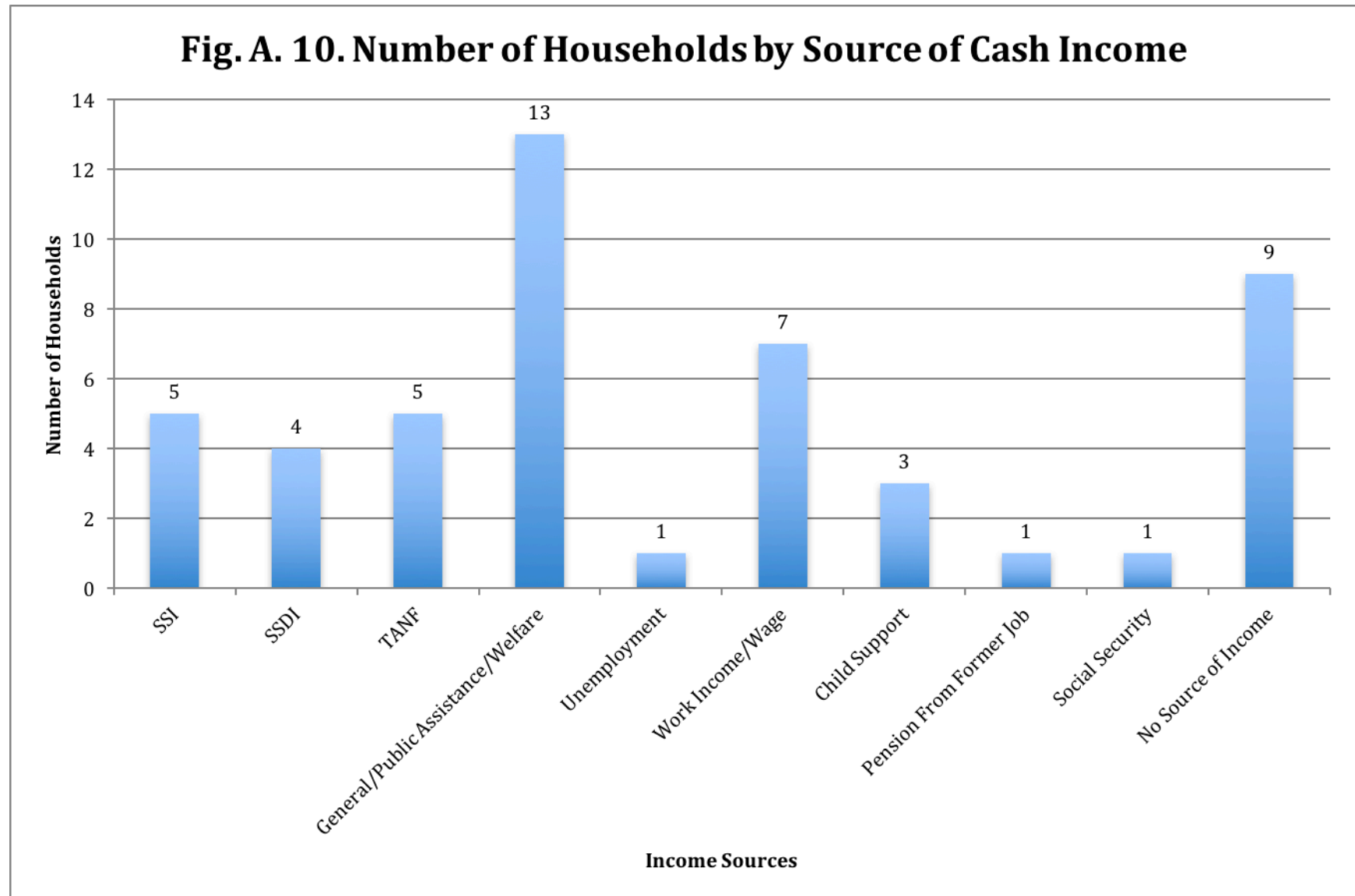
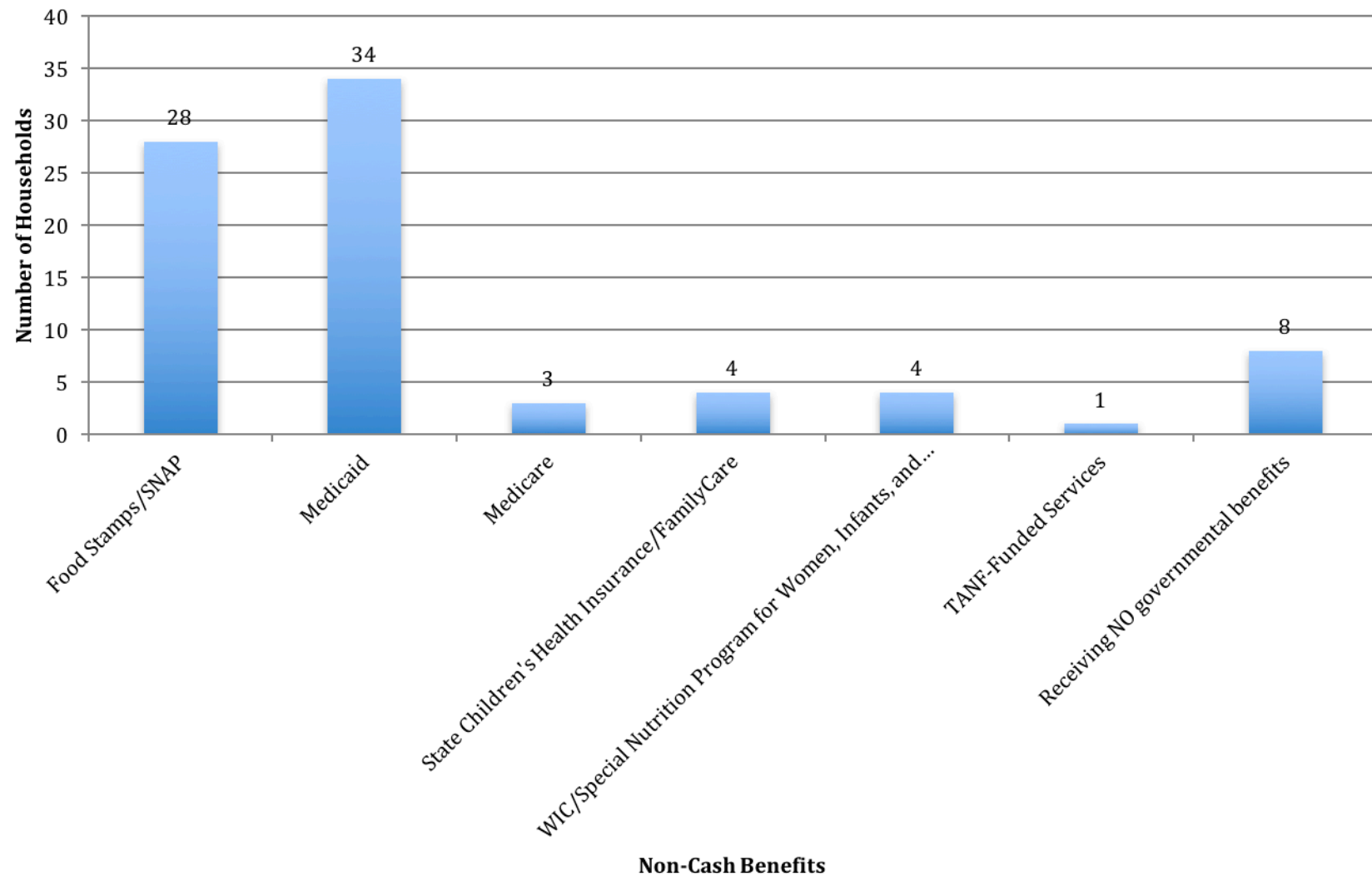
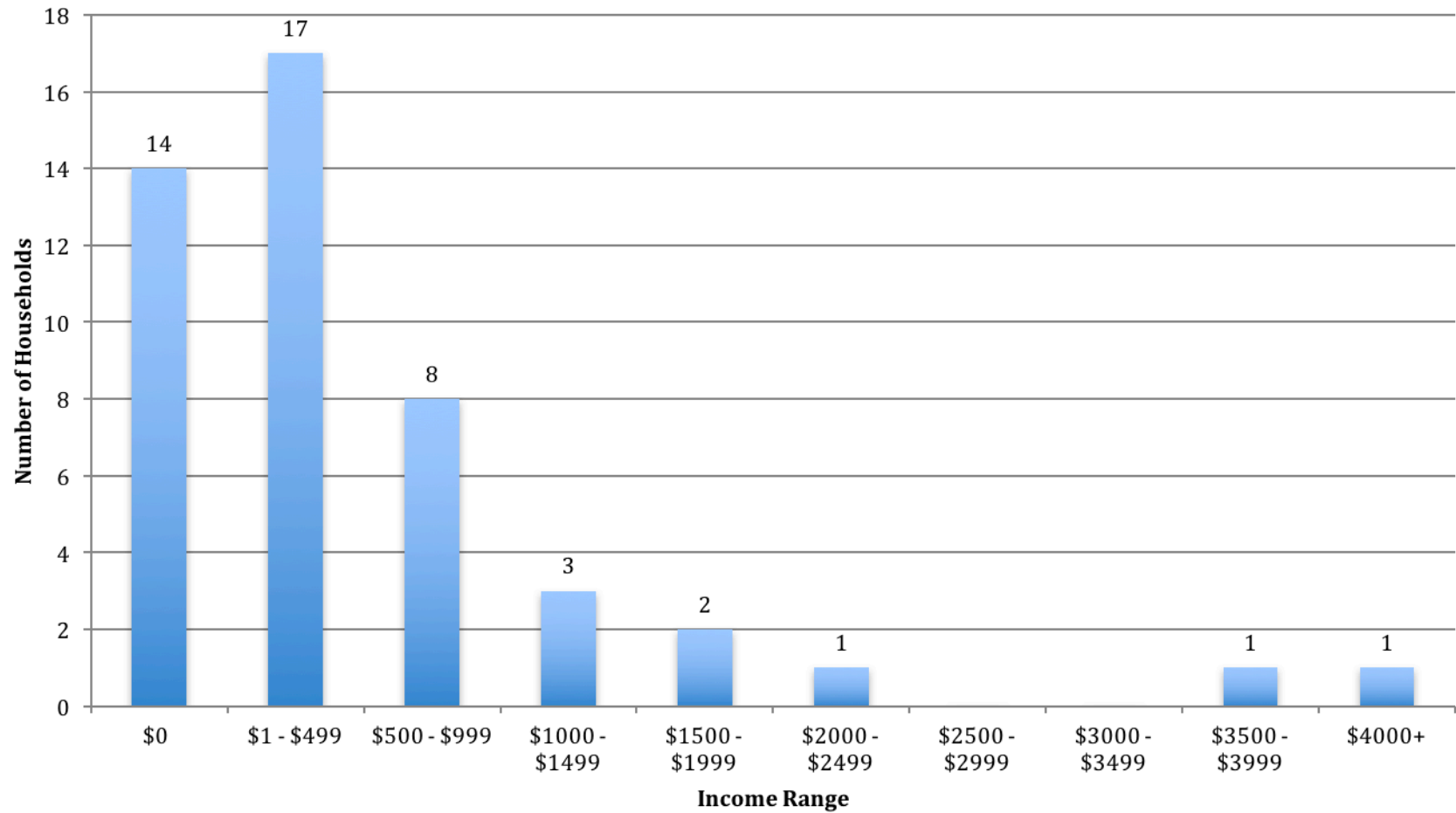


Fig. A. 11. Number of Households by Sources of Non-Cash Benefits



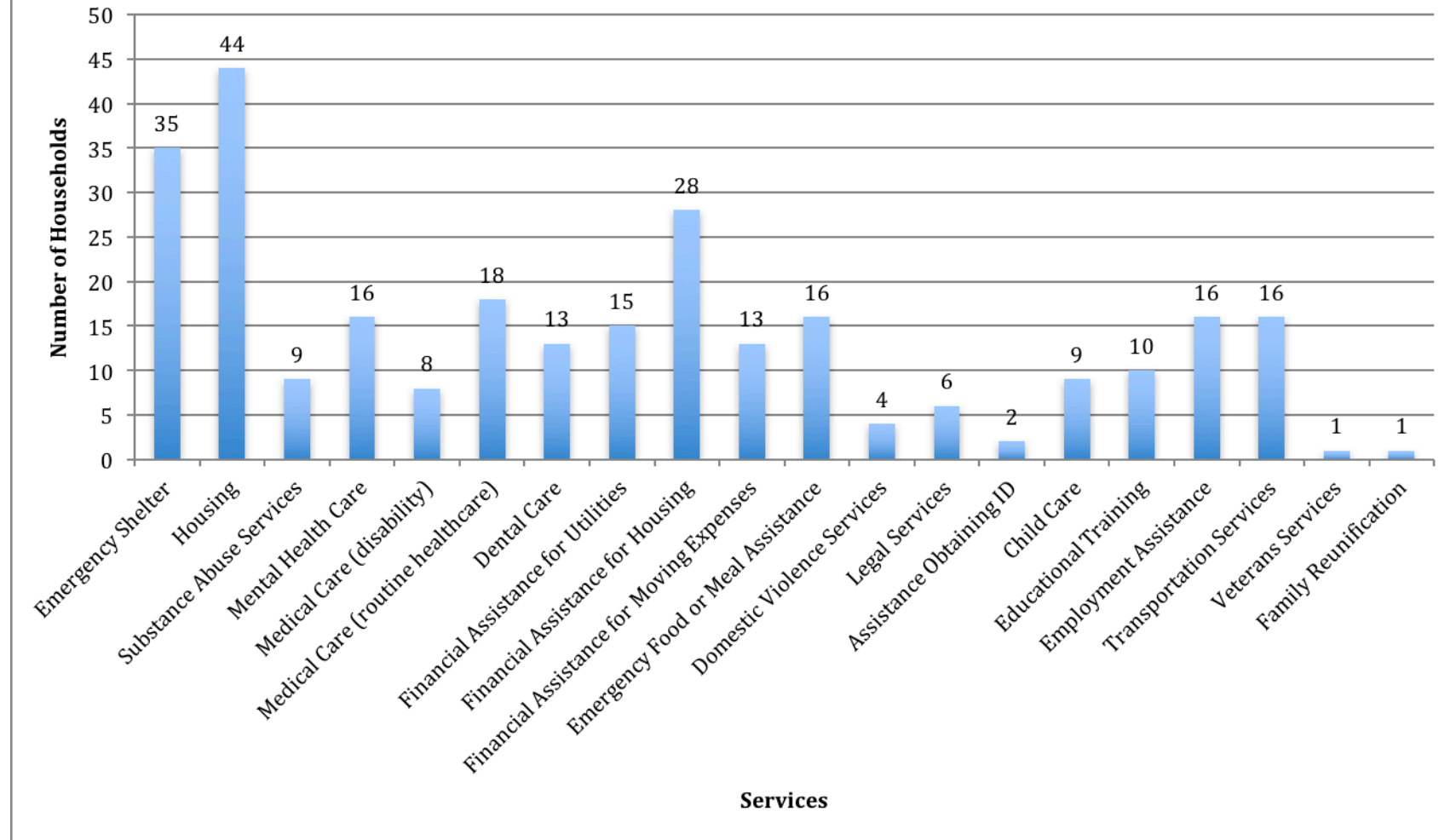
What is your monthly household income?

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?

Fig. A.14. Number of Households by Cause of Homelessness

