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Camden County's 2014 Point-In-Time Count of the Homeless

January 28, 2014

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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 2014

NI Counts 2014, 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 2014 Count reveals important demographic and other information about families and individuals who were homeless on the night of Tuesday, January 28th, 2014, and was carried out with the help of government agencies, community-based organizations, and local volunteers.

In New Jersey, each County's count is planned, coordinated, and carried out locally, and the information gathered enables each community to better allocate housing resources and services in order to prevent and end homelessness. The PIT Count is the only opportunity throughout the year for most communities to take a comprehensive look at the total homeless population, and is especially crucial in assessing the needs of the unsheltered homeless.

Acknowledgements

Monarch would like to thank all Point-In-Time Coordinators, homeless service providers, agencies, and volunteers who participated in NJ Counts 2014. Monarch would also like to specifically thank Bergen County for providing both Spanish and Korean translations of the 2014 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 2014 Point-In-Time and producing this report was provided by New Jersey's Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA).

This Report

The findings in this report are presented in the following sections:

- 1. Total homeless population;
- 2. Those experiencing chronic homelessness (families and individuals that have been homeless for a year or longer, or who have experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years, 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 2014 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. 2014 was not a HUD-required full count year.

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 2014 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.

This year marked the beginning of a new process for collecting survey data for New Jersey's PIT Count. The count of homeless persons who were sheltered on the night of January 28th, 2014 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 revised 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 2014 PIT Survey tool was updated to more closely mirror information collected in HMIS so that the data was comparable for important factors such as household characteristics, income, services needed, and factors contributing to homelessness. Agencies updated all HMIS data to accurately reflect the night of the count, and those with programs that were non HMIS-participating submitted information from interviews utilizing the Paper Survey tool through SurveyMonkey.

Limitations

- 1. HUD requires a count of sheltered homeless persons and families annually, but only a biennial count of those who are unsheltered. Even though New Jersey conducts both a sheltered and unsheltered count each year, the comprehensiveness of the unsheltered count may be influenced by the fact that it is not a HUD-required full count year. This report includes comparison data from 2010 to 2014. 2010, 2012, and 2014 were not HUD required full reporting years while 2011 and 2013 were.
- 2. The winter of 2013 to 2014 was particularly cold, setting record low temperatures in parts of New Jersey. The night of the count, January 28, 2014, was cold enough to warrant a 'Code Blue' in many communities, which mandates that emergency warming stations or shelters be set-up for the unsheltered. While this means that many more people are able to sleep in a warm place, it may skew Point-In-Time data to show fewer unsheltered households than are actually present in communities on a regular basis.

- 3. 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, the numbers and percentages reported may not equal the total number of homeless respondents due to missing data. All numbers, percentages, and figures contained in this report are calculated based on the total number of actual responses, and do not represent null or missing values unless otherwise noted.
- 4. 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 28th, 2014 a total of 526 households, including 654 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Camden County, according to the 2014 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 84 households, with 87 persons, were identified as chronically homeless.
- 68 unsheltered homeless persons, in 64 households, were counted.

Total Homeless Population

On the night of January 28th, 2014, a total of 654 persons, in 526 households, were experiencing homelessness in Camden County, according to the 2014 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 13 persons (2%) from 2013. Camden County had 5% of New Jersey's statewide homeless population in 2014.

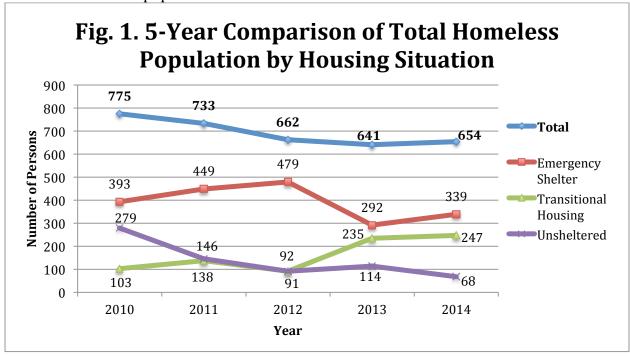
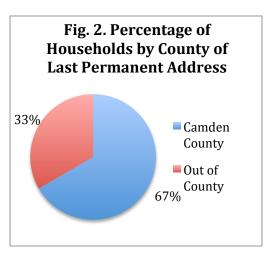


Figure 1 shows that, in 2014, 339 homeless persons stayed in emergency shelters, 247 stayed in transitional housing, and 68 were living unsheltered on the night of the count. The number of unsheltered persons represents a reduction of 46 persons (40%) from 2013, while the number of those in emergency shelters rose by 47 persons (16.1%), and the number of those in transitional housing rose by 12 persons (5.1%).

Figure 1 also shows that, over the past five years, the total number of homeless persons counted has been trending downward in Camden County. While Camden County saw a slight increase in the overall number of homeless persons in 2014 compared to 2013, over the past five years homelessness has gone down by 121 persons (15.6%). During the same

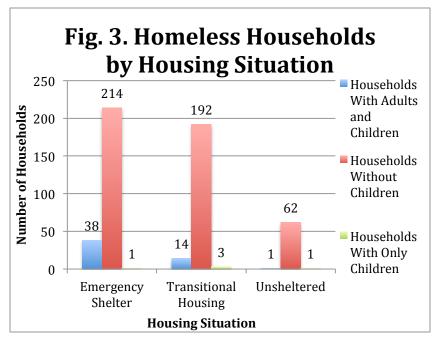
five-year period, the number of persons in emergency shelter and living unsheltered on the night of the count saw decreases of 13.7% and 75.6%, respectively, while the number of persons in transitional housing has risen by 144 (140%).

As Figure 2 shows, 33% of homeless respondents in Camden 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 526 the homeless households counted Camden County in 2014, 53 (10.1%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult. These families included 172 persons, 115 children under age 18, and 57 adults. The average family size was 3.1 persons. Figure 3 shows that 38 families were staying in emergency shelter (71.7%), and 14 were transitional in housing programs for the homeless (26.4%). There

was 1 unsheltered family with 1 adult and 3 children. In 2014, Camden County had 29 fewer homeless families than in 2013, a reduction of 35.4%.

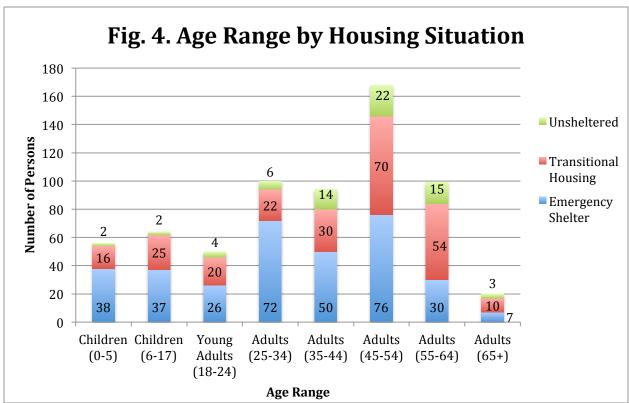
89% (468) of the homeless households in Camden County were households without children under 18, and they were composed of 477 adult individuals. 214 (45.7%) of these households were staying in emergency shelters, 192 (41%) were in transitional housing,

and 62 (13.2%) were unsheltered. Camden County has seen the number of adult-only households increase by 133 (39.7%) since 2013.

As Figure 3 indicates, 5 (0.9%) households with only children under 18 years old were reported in 2014. This represents an increase of 2 (66.7%) households from 2013. All of these households were single-child households totaling 5 youth. 1 of these unaccompanied youth was staying in emergency shelter, 3 in transitional housing, and 1 unsheltered, on the night of the count.

Demographics

There were a total of 50 (7.6%) homeless adults between 18 and 24 years old, 481 (73.5%) adults over age 24, and 120 (18.3%) children under 18 years old experiencing homelessness on the night of the count. Figure 4 shows that the majority of homeless children who were under the age of 18 were between 6 and 17 years of age (64, 53%). The age range most represented was adults between 45 and 54 years old (168 persons, 25.7%).

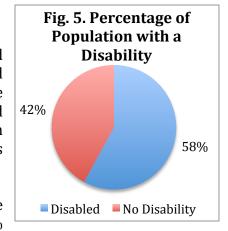


34.1% of homeless respondents were female, and 65.9% were male.

63.1% of respondents identified their race as Black or African-American, making that the largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported. The next largest group self-identified as White (30.8%), followed by those identifying as Multi-Racial (1.7%), American Indian/Alaska Native (0.9%), and Asian (0.5%). With regard to ethnicity, 16% of respondents identified themselves as Hispanic, or Latino.

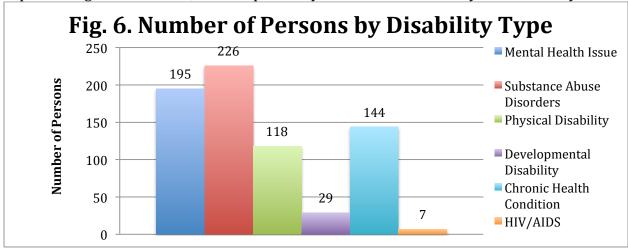
Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 58% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 69.1% of adults reported some type of disability compared to 10% of children. Figure 6 shows the number of the homeless persons that identified as having various disabilities. The most common disabilities identified include substance abuse disorders and mental health issues.



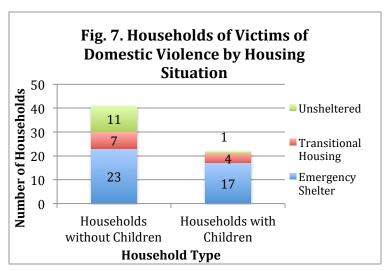
Among disabled adults, 61% reported substance abuse disorders making this the most prevalent disability (42.2%

of all homeless adults). More disabled homeless children had chronic health conditions (50%) than any other disability. Notably, 202 households, or 38.4% of all households experiencing homelessness, were impacted by some kind of disability in their family.



Victims of Domestic Violence

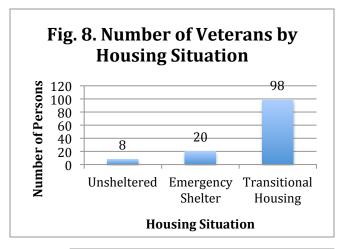
On the night of the count, in Camden County, 63 homeless households reported having a victim of domestic violence. This means that a total of 107 homeless persons who were members of those households were impacted. The majority (65%) of victim households were adult-only households. However, 22 families (35%) had both adults and



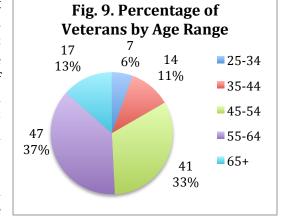
children. Figure 7 shows where victim households were staying on the night of the count.

Veterans

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



126 homeless veterans were counted on the night of the count, 95 more than were counted in 2013. (99.2%) 125 were part of adult-only households and 1 (0.8%) was part of a family with at least one adult and one child. The largest contingent of homeless veterans was found to be staying in transitional housing (77.8%). In addition, 8 veterans were unsheltered (6.3%), and 20 were in emergency shelters (15.9%).



Veterans experiencing homelessness in Camden County were predominantly male (96%), and the most common racial background identified among

most common racial background identified among them was Black or African-American (81 veterans, 64.3%). Figure 9 shows the percentage of homeless veterans by age range.

103 of the 126 veterans, 81.7%, reported having some kind of disability. The most common disability among these was substance abuse disorders, which affected 65 veterans (51.6%). 53 veterans (42.1%) reported mental health issues, 45 (35.7%) reported chronic health problems, and 21 (16.7%) had physical disabilities. The three types of services that homeless veterans sought the most were emergency shelter (86.5%), mental health care (34.9%), and financial assistance for housing (22.2%).

Income and Benefits

Among all those households experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, 45.2% had no source of income, and 3.2% reported having some source of earned cash income. The two most common sources of income among respondents were General Assistance (GA) and SSI, with 16.2% and 13.1% receiving each, respectively. 7.8% reported receiving TANF.

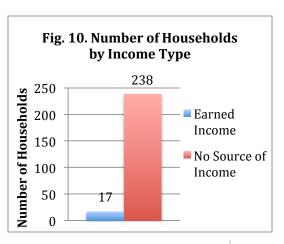
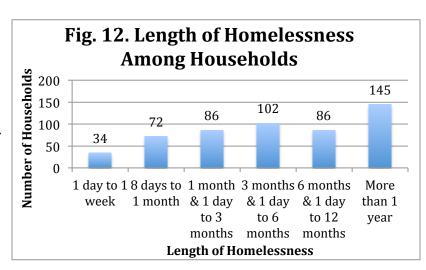


Figure 11. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation				
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered	
Average for All Households	\$326.08	\$287.16	\$335.02	

37.1% of respondents reported receiving no kind of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Food Stamps, or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), was the top reported non-cash benefit, and was received by 37.1% of respondents. 27.8% were receiving Medicaid, 9.3% were receiving VA Benefits, and 5.7% were receiving Medicare.

Length of Homelessness

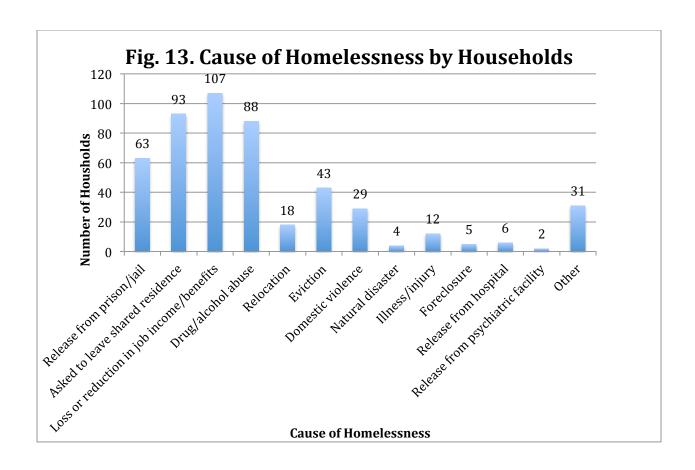
As Figure 12 shows, 145 households (27.6%) reported that their most recent. continuous episode homelessness had lasted for more than 1 year, making this the most common response. Also. 102 (19.4%)households reported being homeless between 3 months and 1 day and 6 months.



Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more respondents attributed their homelessness to a loss or reduction of job income or benefits (107 households, 20.3%) than any other cause. As Figure 13 shows, the next most common factor reported was being asked to leave a shared residence (17.7%).

When respondents were asked 'what was your residence prior to your current living situation?' more said they were staying or living with friends or family (27%) than any other type of residence. 21% reported residing in an emergency shelter 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.

In 2010, USICH established the goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2015. 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

84 households, made up of 87 total persons, were chronically homeless in Camden County, according to the 2014 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 11 households (15.1%), and 9 persons (11.5%) from 2013. This increase caused the rate of chronic homelessness to rise as a percentage of the overall homeless population from 12.1% to 13.3%.

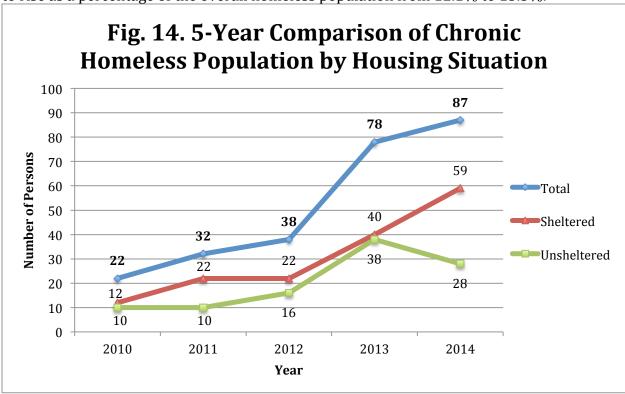
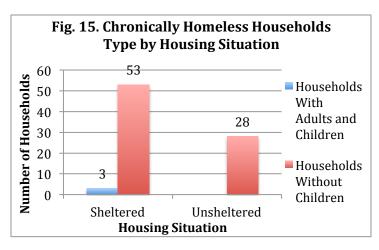


Figure 14 shows the number of chronically homeless respondents who were in emergency shelters or living unsheltered in Camden County from 2010 to 2014. Over the past five years the total of chronically homeless persons has risen by 65 (295%) The number of chronically homeless persons in emergency shelters has also risen (47 persons, 392%) during that time. While it has risen during the past 5 years, since 2013, the number of unsheltered chronically homeless persons has dropped 26.3%, from 38 persons to 28.

Families and Individuals

Of the 84 chronically homeless households counted in 2014, 3 (3.6%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult. These families included 6 persons. All of the chronically homeless families stayed in shelters on the night of the count.



There were 81 chronically homeless persons in 81 households with no children 17 or younger counted in Camden County, making up 93% of the chronically homeless population. There were 53 (65.4%) of these individuals sheltered in emergency shelters, while 28 (34.6%) individuals were unsheltered on the night of the count.

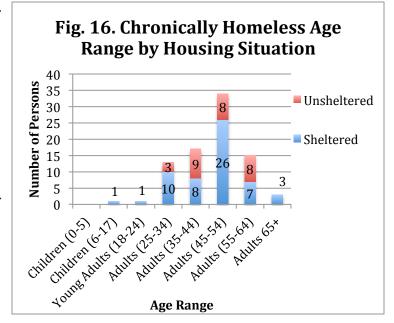
Demographics

Of the 87 total chronically homeless persons, 1 (1.1%) was between 18 and 24 years old,

and 1 (1.1%) was a child 17 or younger. The largest number of chronically homeless persons (34, 39.1%) in a single category fell between the ages of 45 and 54 years of age.

73.8% of those counted as chronically homeless were male, and 26.2% were female.

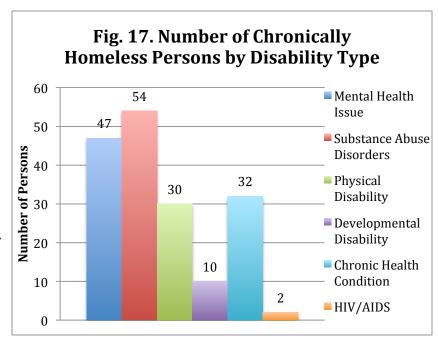
The largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported their race as Black or African-American (56.3%). The next largest group selfidentified as White (36.8%),followed by persons identifying as Asian (1.1%). With regard to



ethnicity, 25% of respondents identified themselves as Hispanic, or Latino.

Disabilities

In order to meet the definition of chronically homeless, at least one adult in each household must have some kind of disability. The disabilities most commonly identified were substance abuse disorders (62.1%) and mental health issues (54%). The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the chronically homeless can be seen in Figure 17.



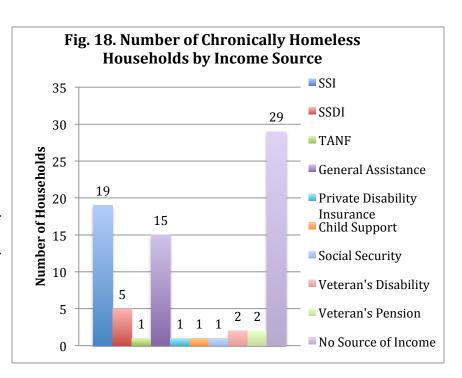
Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 14 chronically homeless persons in Camden County reported being victims of domestic violence (16.1%). 6 of these victims were staying in emergency shelters, including domestic violence shelters, and 8 were unsheltered on the night of the count.

There were 12 veterans identified as chronically homeless on the night of the count (12.6%), 8 who were staying with 4 other household members in an emergency shelter.

Income and Benefits

Among all the chronically homeless households on the night of the count, 34.5% reported having no source of cash income, and none reported any earned income. Figure 18 shows the sources of income received. The most common source of cash income among all respondents was SSI. which was received by 22.6% of households.

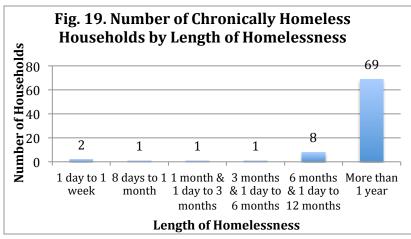


32.1% of chronically

homeless persons reported they were not receiving any type of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Food Stamps (SNAP) was the top reported non-cash benefit among this population, with 33.3% receiving this benefit. A significant percentage, 25%, also reported receiving Medicaid.

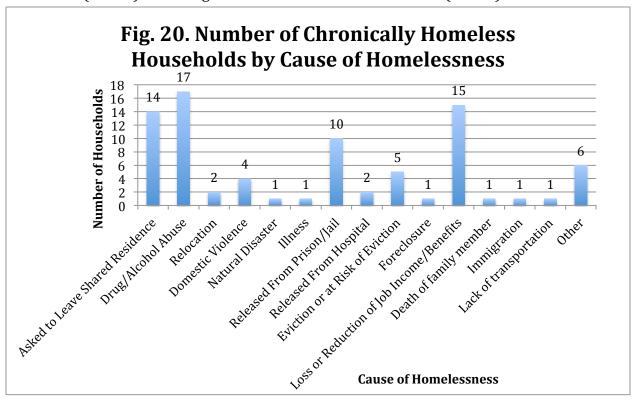
Length of Homelessness

69 chronically homeless households (82.1%) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted for more than 1 year. 9.5% reported being homeless between 6 and 12 months.



Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness more chronically homeless households cited substance abuse (20.2%) than any other. As Figure 20 shows, other common factors reported included a loss or reduction of job income or benefits (17.9%) and being asked to leave a shared residence (16.7%).



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

64 households, made up of 68 adult persons, were living unsheltered in Camden County, according to the 2014 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 39 households (38%), and 46 persons (40.3%) from 2013.

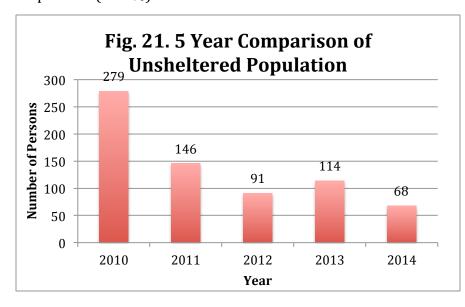


Figure 21 shows the number of unsheltered respondents from 2010 to 2014. Over the past five years, while the numbers have fluctuated, the total number of unsheltered persons has been reduced overall. Since 2010, the number of unsheltered homeless persons has dropped 75.6%.

Families and Individuals

There was 1 unsheltered family (1.6%) with 1 adult and 3 children counted on the night of the count. This is 5 (83.3%) fewer families and 13 (76.5%) fewer persons than in 2013.

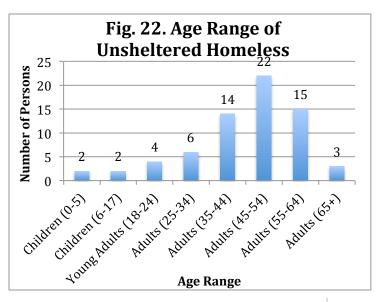
62 of the 64 unsheltered households counted in 2014 were adult-only households, and there were 63 individuals in these households—both numbers down 38% from 2013.

There was 1 unsheltered youth household with 1 youth, an increase of 1 from last year.

Demographics

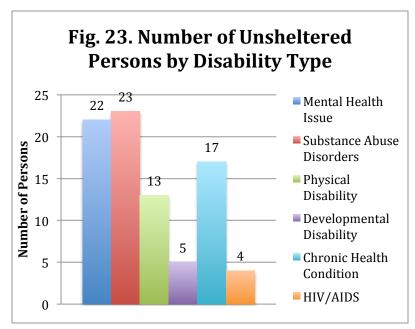
Of the 68 unsheltered persons counted, 22 (32.3%) were between 45 and 54 years old. 4 (5.9%) were children younger than 18.

50 of the 68 unsheltered persons were male (73%). 44% identified their race as White and 42.6% identified as Black or African-American. 26.5% of respondents identified as Hispanic.



Disabilities

75% of unsheltered persons reported having some disability. The disabilities most commonly identified were substance abuse disorders, physical disabilities. and chronic health conditions. The complete numbers of reported disabilities among unsheltered can be seen in Figure 23.



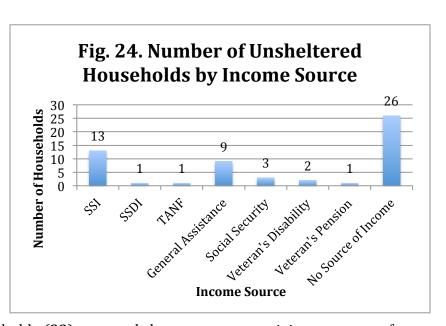
Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 12 of the unsheltered homeless persons in Camden County reported being victims of domestic violence. 11 were single adults and 1 was in a family.

There were 8 unsheltered veterans on the night of the count. All were single adults.

Income and Benefits

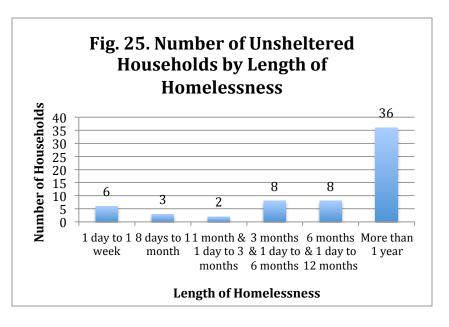
Among all the unsheltered households on the night of the count, 26 (40.6%) reported having no source of cash income. The average monthly income among unsheltered households was approximately \$335. shows Figure 24 sources of income received. and 20% 14% of respondents received SSI and General Assistance. respectively.



34.4% of unsheltered households (22) reported they were not receiving any type of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Food Stamps (SNAP) was the top reported non-cash benefit among this population, with 29.4% receiving this benefit, while 14.7% reported receiving Medicaid.

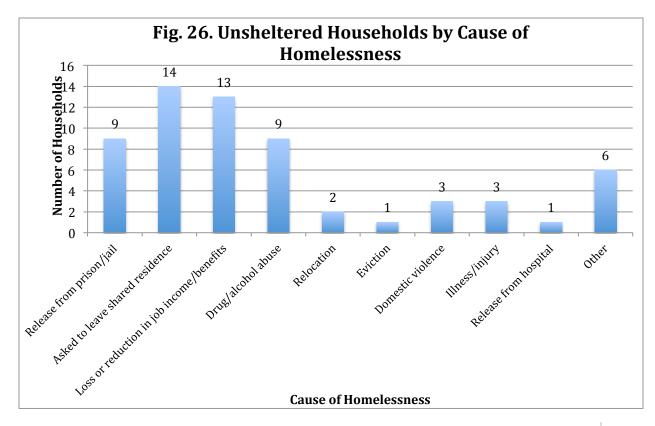
Length of Homelessness

As shown in Figure 25, unsheltered more homeless respondents (52.9%) reported that their households' most recent. continuous episode of homelessness had lasted more than 1 than anv other length of time. In total, 65% of unsheltered respondents reported they had been homeless more than 6 months.



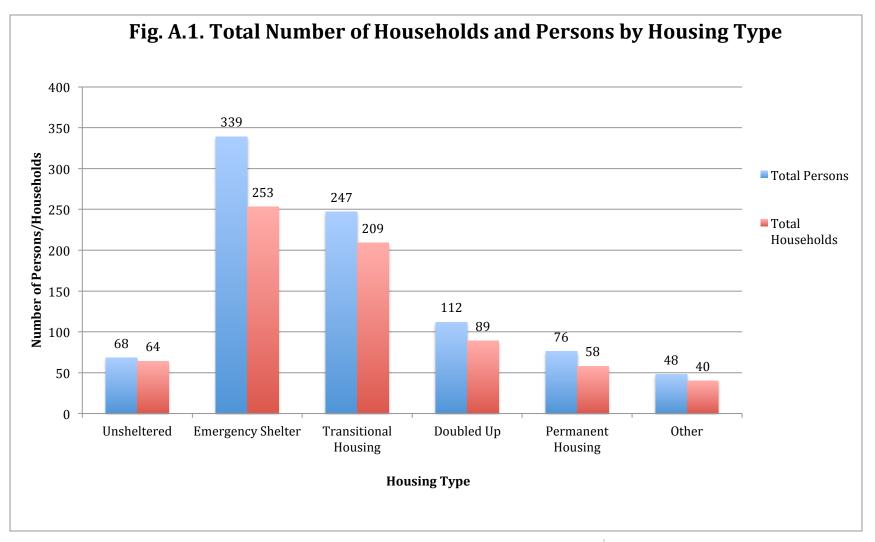
Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more unsheltered respondents said loss or reduction of job income or benefits (25%) than any other factor. As Figure 26 shows, other common factors reported included being released from prison or jail and being asked to leave a shared residence.

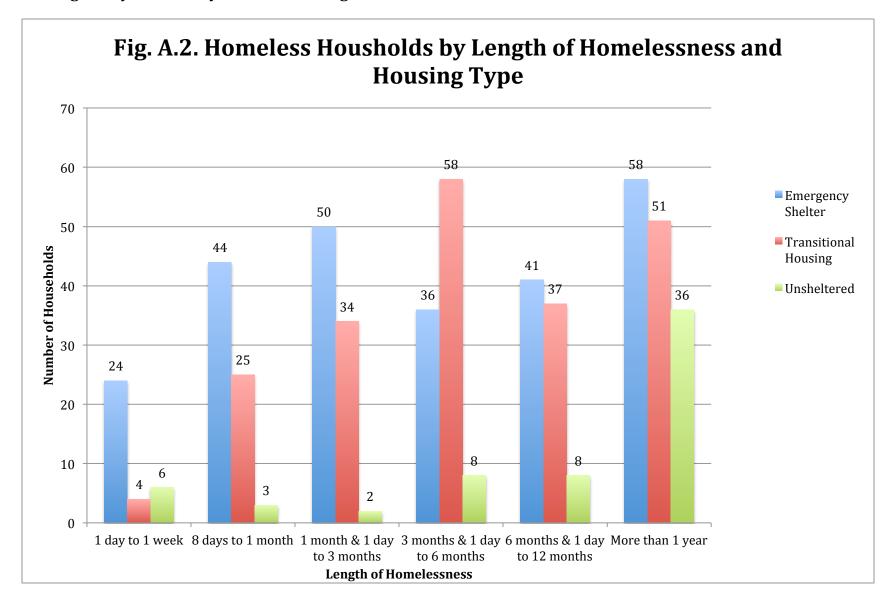


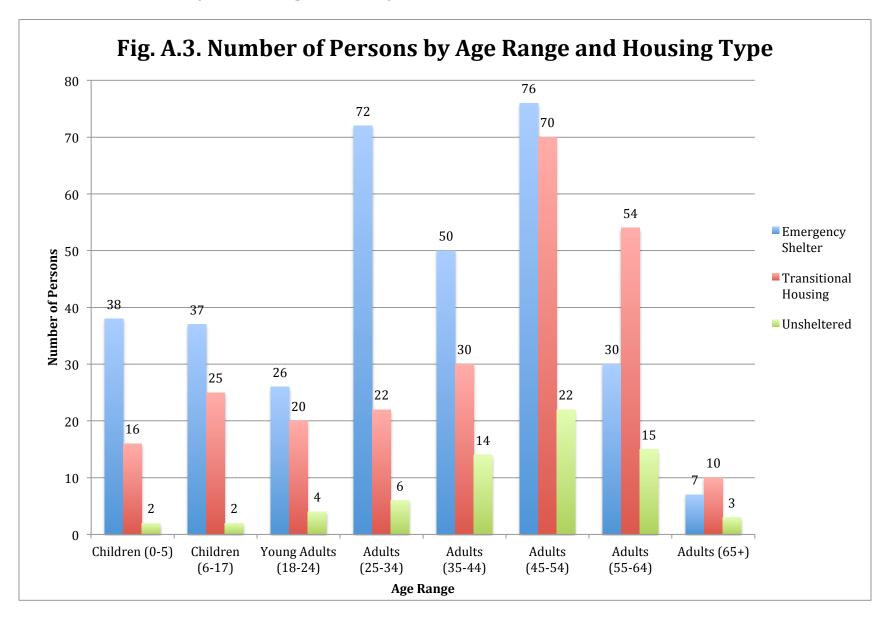
VI. Appendix

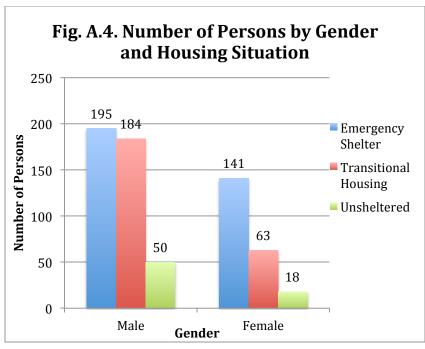
Where did you spend the night of Tuesday, January 28, 2014?

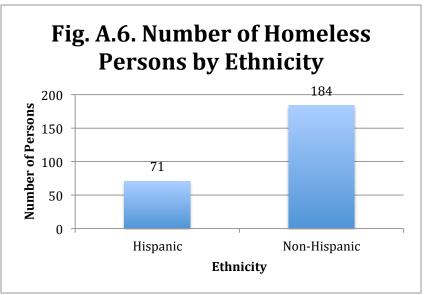


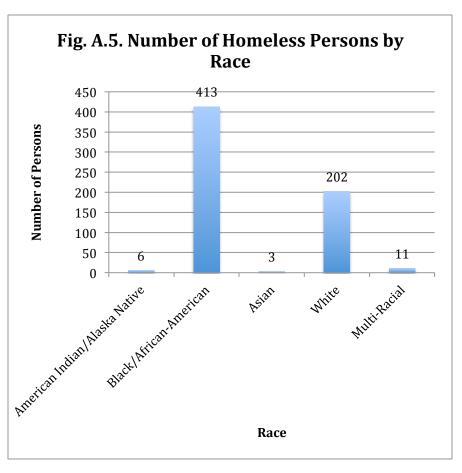
How long have you been in your current living situation?

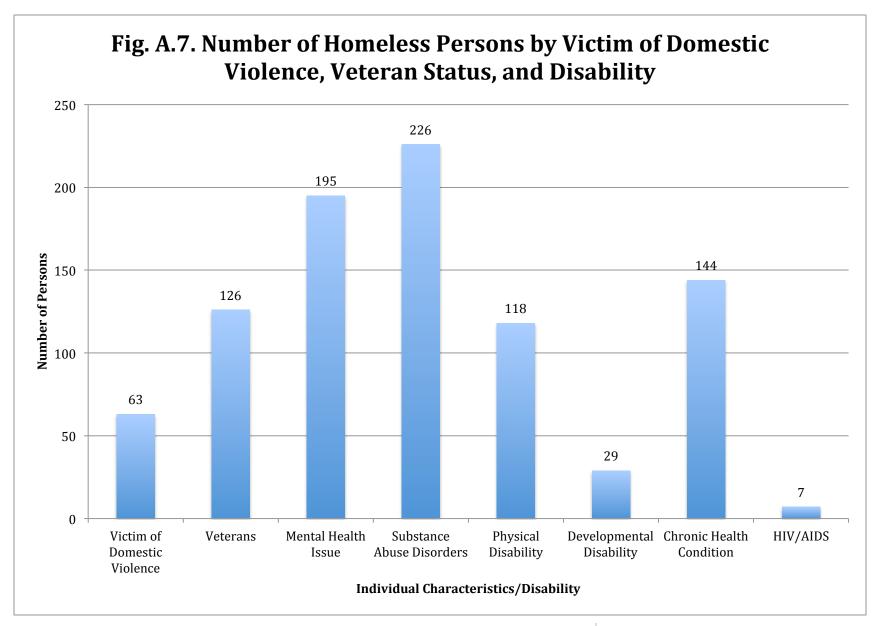








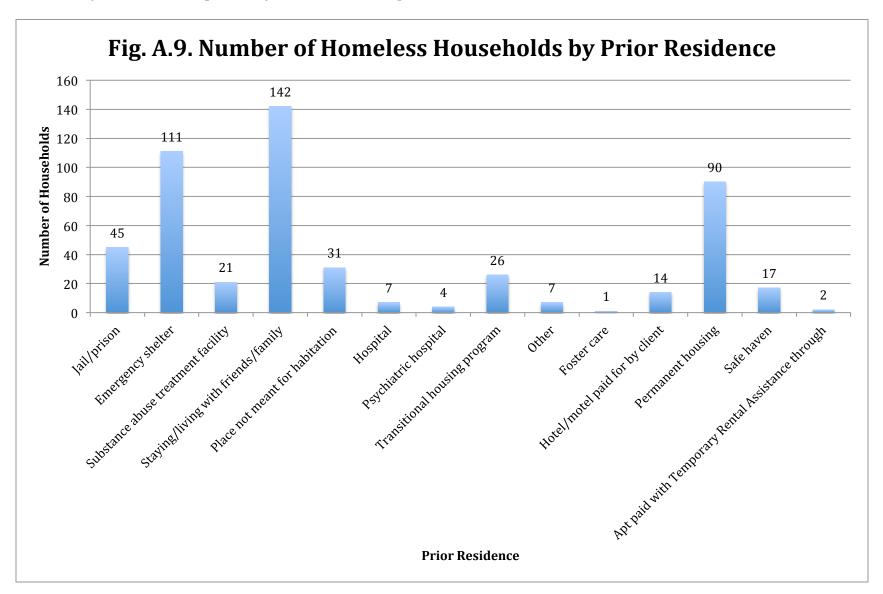




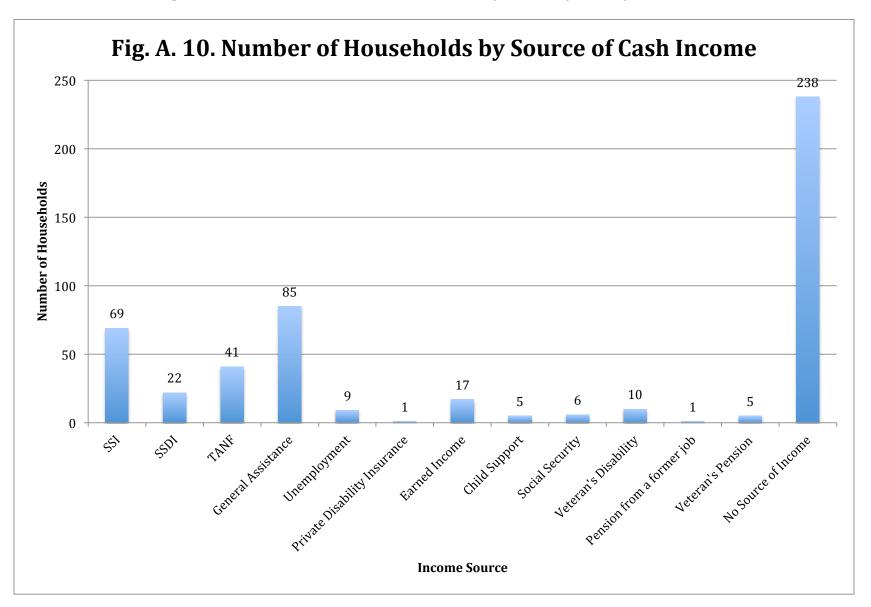
Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?

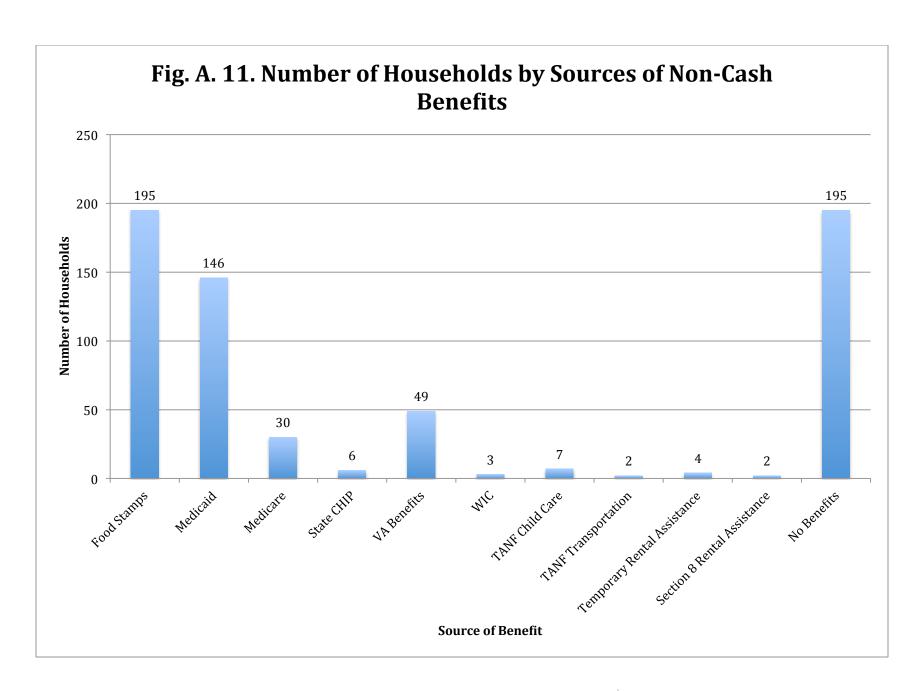
Fig. A.8. Number of Homeless Households by County or State of Last Permanent Address		
Last Permanent Address - County/State	Number of Households	
Atlantic County	4	
Bergen County	1	
Burlington County	19	
California	1	
Camden County	337	
Cape May County	2	
Cumberland County	10	
Delaware	2	
Florida	4	
Gloucester County	32	
Hudson County	1	
Hunterdon County	1	
Mercer County	4	
Michigan	1	
Middlesex County	76	
Monmouth County	1	
New York	1	
Ocean County	1	
Passaic County	1	
Pennsylvania	4	
Salem County	2	
Wisconsin	1	

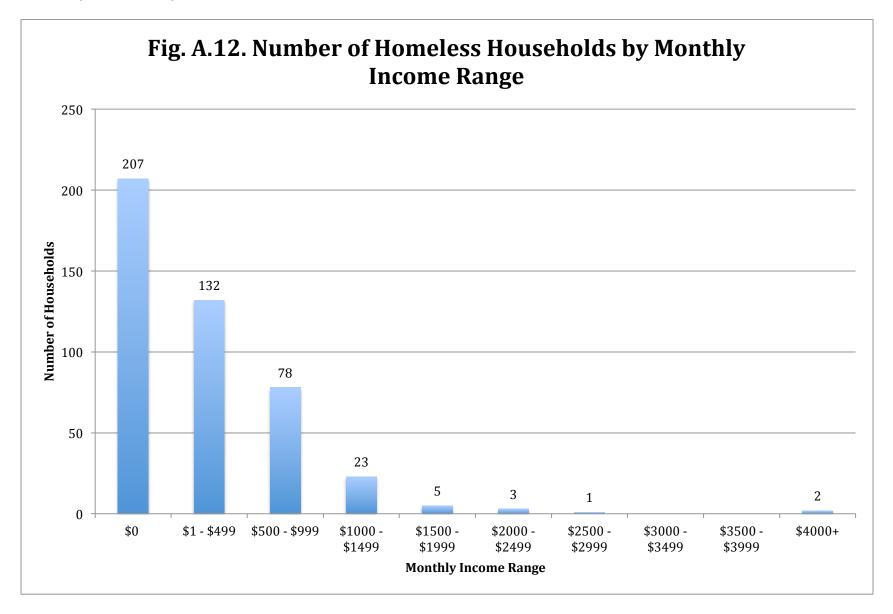
What was your residence prior to your current living situation?



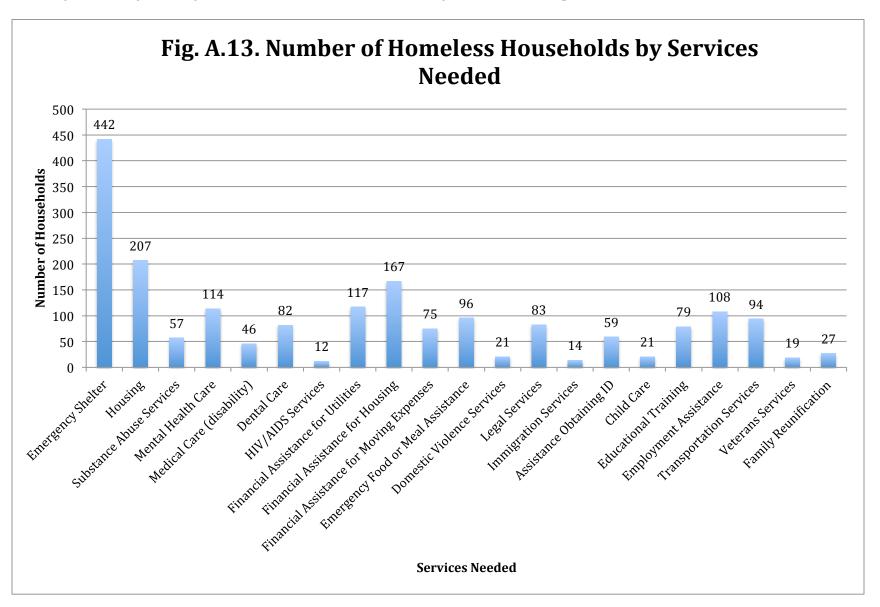
Which of the following sources of income or non-cash benefits do you, or anyone in your household, receive?







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



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

