Monarch Housing Associates 29 Alden Street, Suite 1B Cranford, NJ 07016 908.272.5363

www.monarchhousing.org





# Cape May County's 2014 Point-In-Time Count of the Homeless

January 28, 2014

# **Table of Contents**

|                                   | 3           |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
|                                   | 3           |
| 0                                 | 3           |
| This Report                       | 3           |
| II. Data Collection and Methodolo | ogy4        |
|                                   | 4           |
| •                                 | 5           |
|                                   | 5           |
|                                   |             |
| III Findings for Total Hamalage F | landatian P |
|                                   | opulation   |
| •                                 |             |
| _                                 |             |
|                                   | ls8         |
| 0 1                               |             |
|                                   |             |
|                                   |             |
|                                   |             |
|                                   |             |
| · ·                               |             |
|                                   |             |
|                                   | omeless 13  |
|                                   | lation 13   |
|                                   |             |
| 0 1                               |             |
|                                   |             |
|                                   |             |
|                                   |             |
| 3                                 |             |
|                                   |             |
| V. Findings for the Unsheltered H | omeless16   |
|                                   | ılation16   |
| Families and Individuals          |             |
| Demographics                      |             |
|                                   |             |
| 1 1                               |             |
|                                   |             |
|                                   |             |
| Cause of Homelessness             |             |
| VI Annondiy                       | 10          |

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

#### I. Introduction

#### NJ Counts 2014

NJ 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 Cape May 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 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014 a total of 232 households, including 306 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Cape May County, according to the 2014 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 6 households, with 6 persons, were identified as chronically homeless.
- 3 unsheltered individuals were counted.

### **Total Homeless Population**

On the night of January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014, a total of 306 persons, in 232 households, were experiencing homelessness in Cape May County, according to the 2014 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 35 persons (12.9%) and 46 households (24.7%) from 2013. Cape May County had 2% of New Jersey's statewide homeless population in 2014.

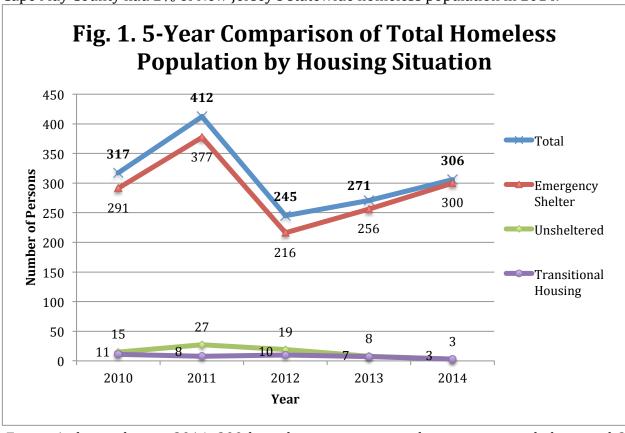
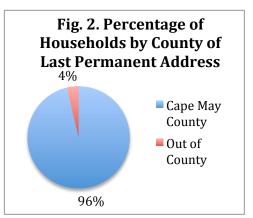


Figure 1 shows that, in 2014, 300 homeless persons stayed in emergency shelters and 3 were living unsheltered on the night of the count. The total number of those counted in emergency shelters was an increase of 44 persons (17.2%) from 2013. However, there were 4 (57.1%) fewer persons in transitional housing, and 5 (62.5%), fewer living unsheltered.

As Figure 2 shows, 4% of these homeless respondents in Cape May County reported that their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless was outside of the county.

Figure 1 shows that, over the past five years, the total number of homeless persons counted has been fluctuating in Cape May County, with the highest count in 2011 (412). Over the same period, the number of homeless persons went down by 4.1%; this in spite of a 25% rise since 2012. The number of persons who



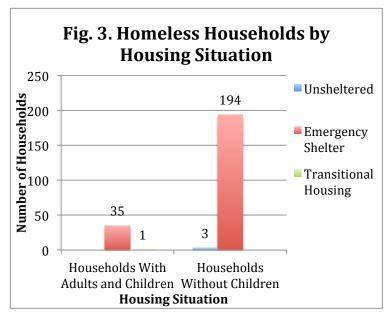
were unsheltered and in transitional housing went down overall as well, by 80% and 72.7%, respectively. However, the number of homeless persons in emergency shelter has risen by 3.1% since 2009, and by 38.8% since 2012.

#### 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').

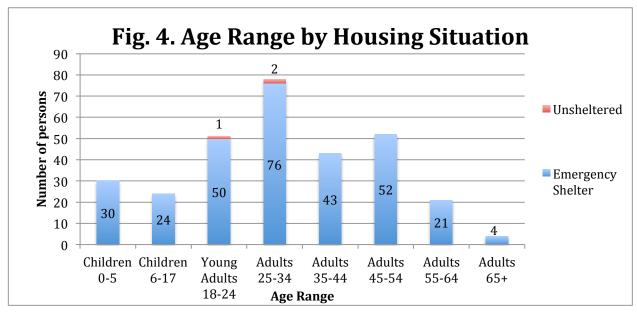
Of the 232 homeless households counted in Cape May County in 2014, 35 (15.1%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult. This represents 14 (28.6%) fewer homeless families than in 2013. families included persons, 56 children under age 18, and 40 adults over 18. The average family size was 2.8 persons. Figure 3 shows that all 35 families were staying in emergency shelter on the night of the count.



85% (197) of the homeless households counted in Cape May County were households without children under 18, and they were composed of 210 adult individuals. 194 (98.5%) of these adult-only households were staying in emergency shelters, while 3 (1.5%) were unsheltered. Cape May County has seen the number of adult-only households increase by 60 (43.8%) since 2013.

## Demographics

The majority (198 persons, 65.3%) of those experiencing homelessness in Cape May County on the night of the count were adults over age 24. There were a total of 51 (16.8%) homeless young adults between 18 and 24 years old, and 54 (17.8%) children under 18 years old as well. Figure 4 shows that the majority of homeless children who were under the age of 18 were between 0 and 5 years of age (30, 55.5%). The age range most represented, with 78 persons and 25.7% of the total homeless population, was Adults between 25 and 34.

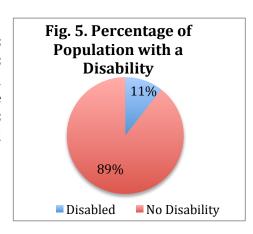


50.5% (153) of homeless respondents were male, and 49.5% (150) were female.

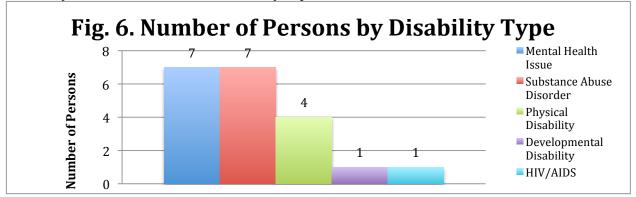
75% of respondents identified their race as White, making that the largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported. The next largest group self-identified as Black or African American (22.4%); followed by those identifying as Multi-Racial (0.3%). With regard to ethnicity, 10.8% of respondents identified themselves as Hispanic.

#### Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 11% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 12.8% of adults 18 or older reported some type of disability compared to 0% 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.

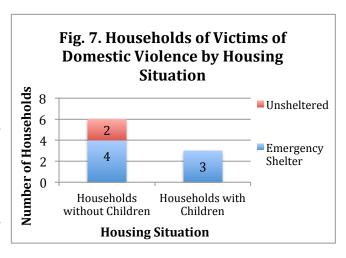


Among disabled adults, 21.9% (2.8% of the total adult homeless population) reported mental health issues and the same percentage reported substance abuse disorders, making these the most prevalent disabilities. 12.5% of disabled adults reported a physical disability. No homeless children had any reported disabilities.



#### Victims of Domestic Violence

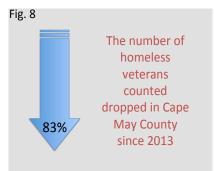
On the night of the count, in Cape May County, 9 homeless households reported having a victim of domestic violence. Figure 7 shows that the majority (67%) of these households were adult-only, individual households. 3 families (33.3%) including 10 persons, were also counted. 1 adult individual and 1 family were in domestic violence shelters on the night of the count.

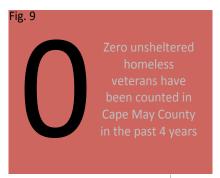


#### **Veterans**

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.

1 homeless veteran was counted on the night of the count, 5 fewer (83.3%) than 2013. This veteran was an adult male between 45 and 54 years of age, and was staying in emergency shelter on the night of the count. The veteran identified his race as White; he reported no disabilities.





#### **Income and Benefits**

Among all households experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, 69.8% had no source of income, and 2.6% reported receiving some form of earned cash income. The three most common sources of cash income among homeless respondents were General Assistance (GA)(9.9%), SSI (7.3%), and Temporary Assistance Needy Families (TANF)(4.7%).

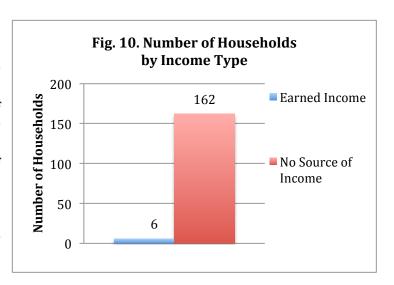


Figure 11 shows the average monthly income for all homeless households by housing type.

| Figure 11. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation |                   |                      |             |  |
|---|-------------------|----------------------|-------------|--|
|   | Emergency Shelter | Transitional Housing | Unsheltered |  |
| Average for All Households  | \$121.49          | Not Provided         | \$0         |  |

69.4% of respondents reported that their household was 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 27.2% of households. 25.9% were receiving Medicaid.

#### Length of Homelessness

Figure 12 shows the range lengths of homeless episodes experienced on the night of the count by respondents in Cape May County. households (23.3%) reported that their most recent. continuous episode homelessness had lasted between 1 day and 1 week. The same number reported

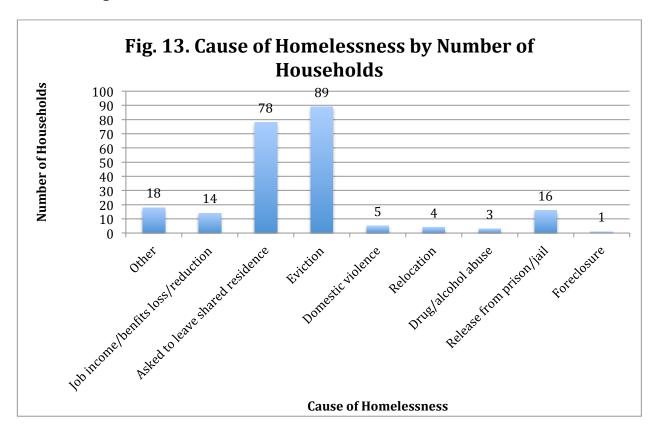


being homeless between 6 months and 1 day and 1 year. 13.4% (31) of all homeless households in Cape May County said that they had been homeless for more than 12 months.

#### Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to being evicted (89 households, 38%) than any other cause. As Figure 13 shows, the next most common factor reported was being asked to leave a shared residence (34%).

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 (69.4%) than any other type of residence. 13.8% reported residing in permanent housing 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**

6 households, made up of 6 adult individuals, were chronically homeless in Cape May County, according to the 2014 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 20 persons (77%) from 2013. The rate of chronic homelessness as a percentage of overall homelessness dropped from 9.6% to 2% in the same time.

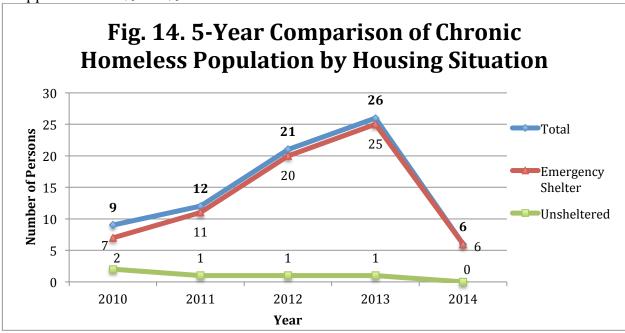


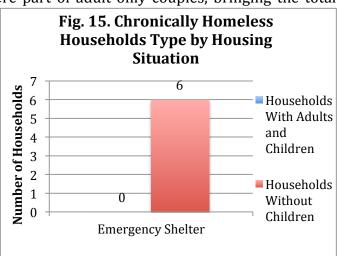
Figure 14 shows the number of chronically homeless respondents who were in emergency shelter or living unsheltered in Cape May County from 2010 to 2014. After fluctuations over the past five years, the overall number of chronically homeless persons has fallen by 3 persons, or 33.3% since 2010. The number of unsheltered chronically homeless persons has also gone down by 2 (100%).

#### Families and Individuals

In the interest of giving an accurate comparison, the total number of chronically homeless households and persons in the previous section reflects all the information required for submission to HUD for this subpopulation, including the total number of chronically homeless adult individuals and the total number of persons in chronically homeless families. However, this number excludes any adults who were part of an adult-only couple with a chronically homeless individual, any youth in youth-only households, or any chronically homeless respondents who did not report an age. Therefore, the analysis below includes 2 additional individuals who were part of adult-only couples, bringing the total

number of chronically homeless persons to 8, but keeping the number of households at 6.

All of the 6 chronically homeless households counted in 2014 were households with no children 17 or younger. They were all staying in emergency shelters on the night of the count. This represents a decrease from 25 chronically homeless households in shelters in 2013 (76% decrease).



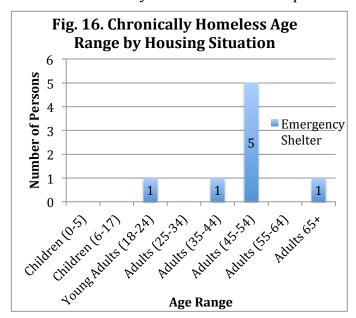
## **Demographics**

Of the 8 chronically homeless persons, 1 (12.5%) was between 18 and 24 years old, and none were children 17 or younger. The age range with the highest concentrations of chronically homeless persons was adults between 45 and 54 years old which had 5 persons

(62.5%). Figure 16 shows that one chronically homeless individual was over 65 years of age.

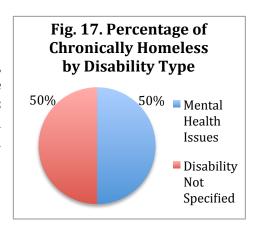
50% of those counted as chronically homeless were male, and 50% were female.

The largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported their race as White (87.5%), and the remaining group selfidentified as Black or African-American (12.5%).



#### Disabilities

In order to meet the definition of chronically homeless, at least one adult in each household must have some kind of disability. While 6 chronically homeless adults were identified as being disabled, only three specified what disability was present. All three of these identified having mental health issues (50%).



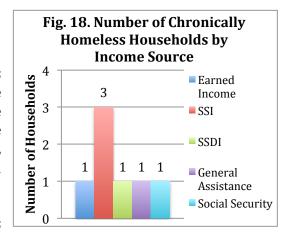
#### Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 1 chronically homeless person in Cape May County reported being victims of domestic violence (12.5%).

There were no chronically homeless veterans identified on the night of the count.

#### **Income and Benefits**

None of the chronically homeless households reported receiving no type of cash income. Figure 18 shows the sources of income that were received. The most common source of cash income among chronically homeless respondents was SSI, which was received by 50%. 1 household reported earned income.

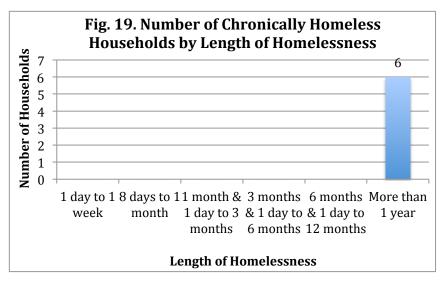


12.5% (1) of the chronically homeless households

reported they were not receiving any type of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Medicaid was the top reported non-cash benefit among the chronically homeless, with 83.3% receiving this benefit. 66.7% reported receiving Medicaid.

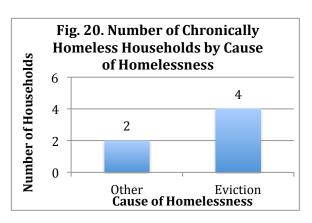
# Length of Homelessness

Figure 19 shows that all of chronically homeless households reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted for more than 1 year.



#### Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more chronically homeless households cited eviction (66.7%) than any other factor. Figure 20 shows all responses received.



# V. Findings for the Unsheltered Homeless

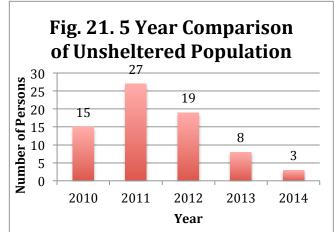
HUD's definition of "unsheltered homeless" applies to any individual or family "with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station,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

3 households, made up of 3 persons, were living unsheltered in Cape May County, according to the 2014 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 3 households (37.5%), and 5 persons (62.5%) from 2013.

shows the number Figure 21 of unsheltered respondents from 2010 to



2014. Over the past five years the number of unsheltered persons has gone down overall. Since 2010, the number of unsheltered homeless persons has dropped 80% in Cape May County.

#### Families and Individuals

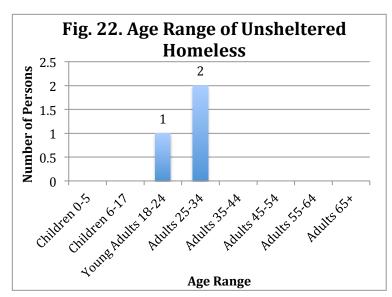
There were 0 unsheltered families counted in Cape May County on the night of the count.

All 3 unsheltered households counted were households with just 1 adult individual.

## **Demographics**

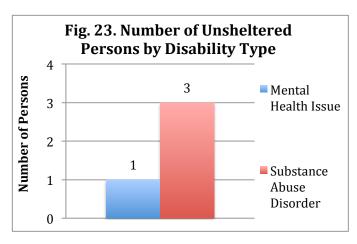
2 out of 3 unsheltered persons counted in 2014, 66.7%, were between 25 and 34 years old. 1 (33.3%) was between 18 and 24.

1 of the 3 unsheltered persons was male (33.3%), and 2 were female (66.7%). 2 (66.7%) identified their race as White and 1 (33.3%) identified as Multi-Racial. None of the unsheltered persons identified as Hispanic.



#### Disabilities

All 3 unsheltered persons reported having some type of disability. Figure 23 shows that all three identified having a substance abuse disorder, and 1 (33.3%) reported mental health issues.



#### Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 2 unsheltered adult individuals (66.7%) in Cape May County reported being victims of domestic violence.

There were 0 unsheltered veterans on the night of the count.

#### **Income and Benefits**

Among all the unsheltered respondent households on the night of the count, 0 reported having a source of cash income. None reported any non-cash benefits either. The average monthly income reported among unsheltered households was approximately \$0.

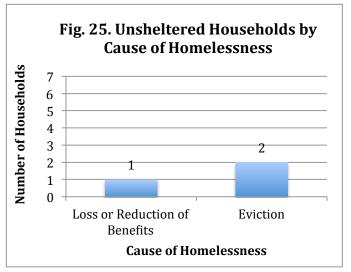
# **Length of Homelessness**

As shown in Figure 25, all 3 unsheltered homeless respondents reported their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted between 8 days and 1 month.



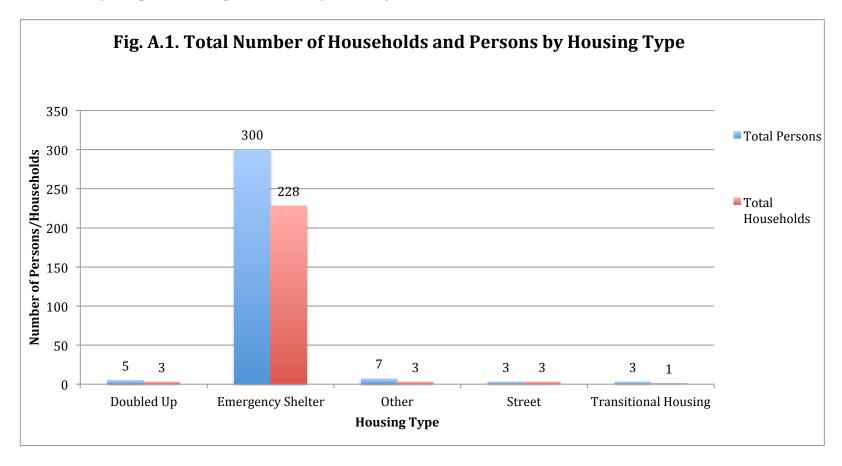
#### Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more unsheltered households said eviction (66.7%) than any other factor. 1 (33.3%) cited loss or reduction of job income or benefits as the cause or factor that most contributed to their homelessness.

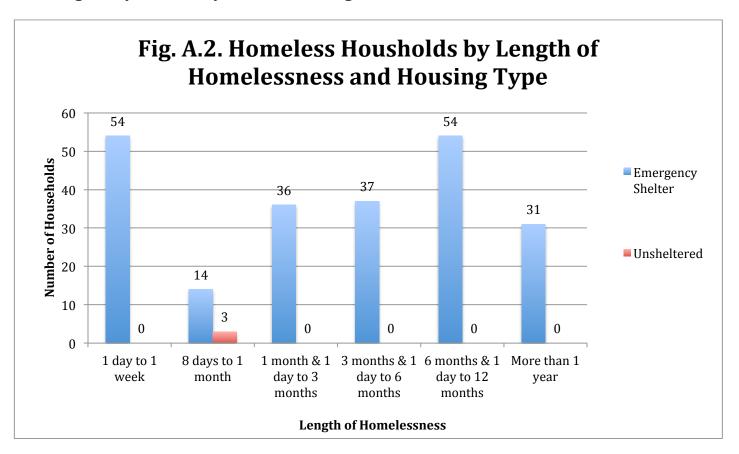


# VI. Appendix

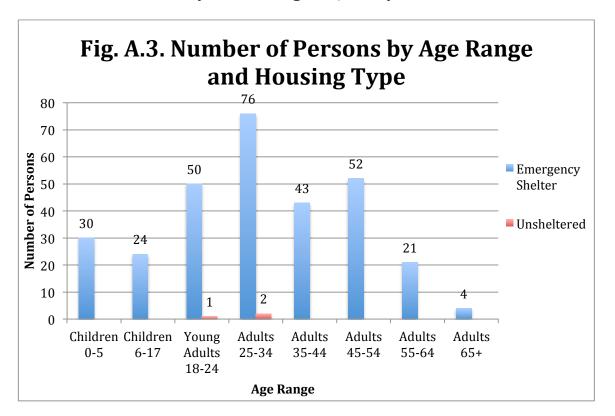
Where did you spend the night of Tuesday, January 28, 2014?

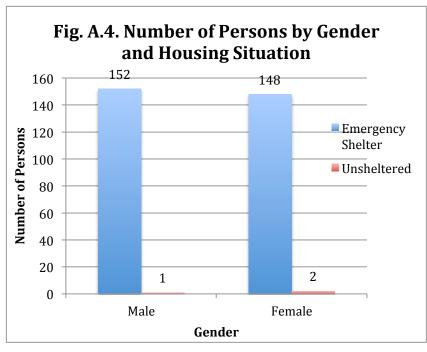


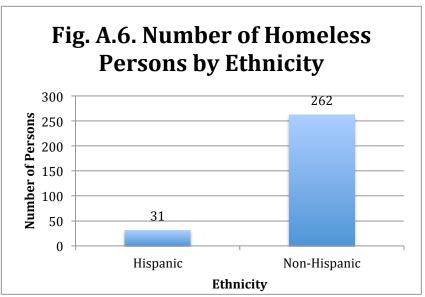
How long have you been in your current living situation?

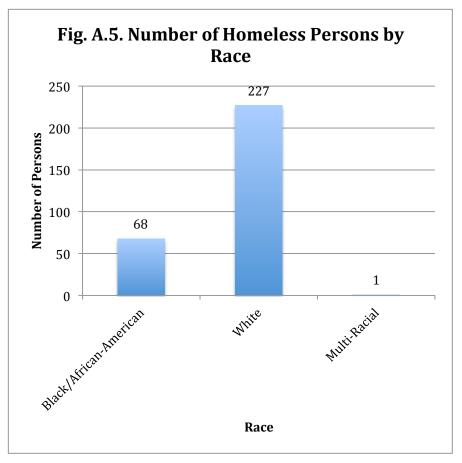


Who was homeless with you on the night of January 28th?

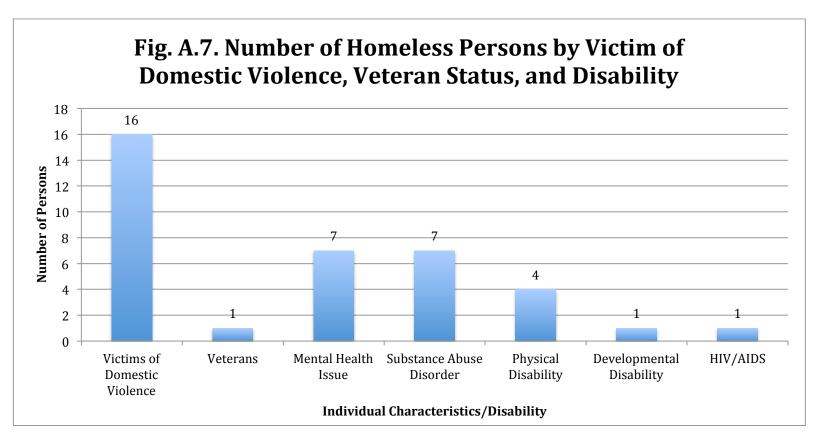








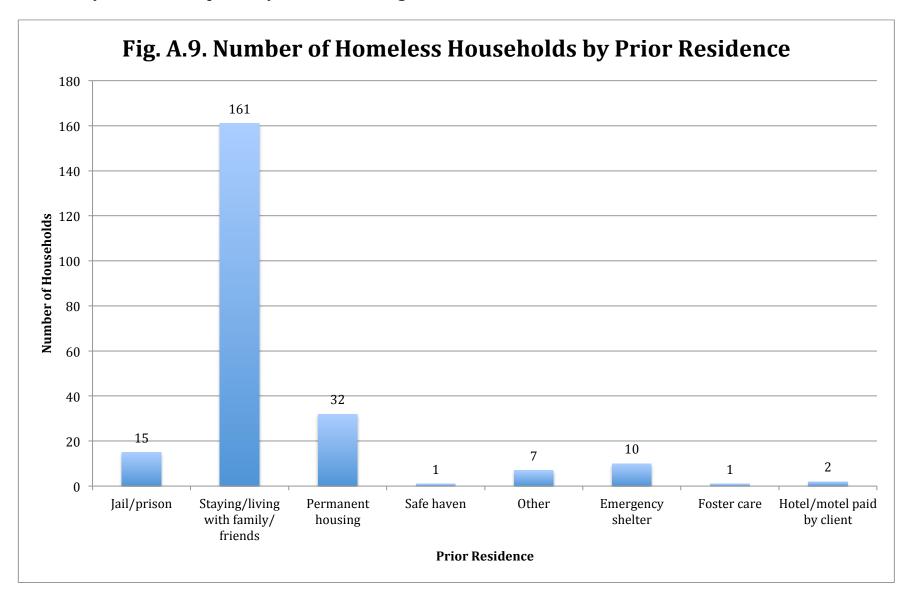
# Household Characteristics - check all that apply to each person



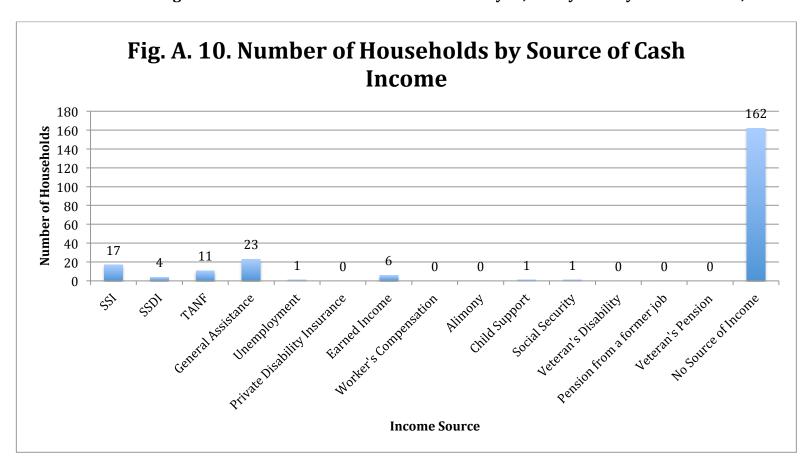
# Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?

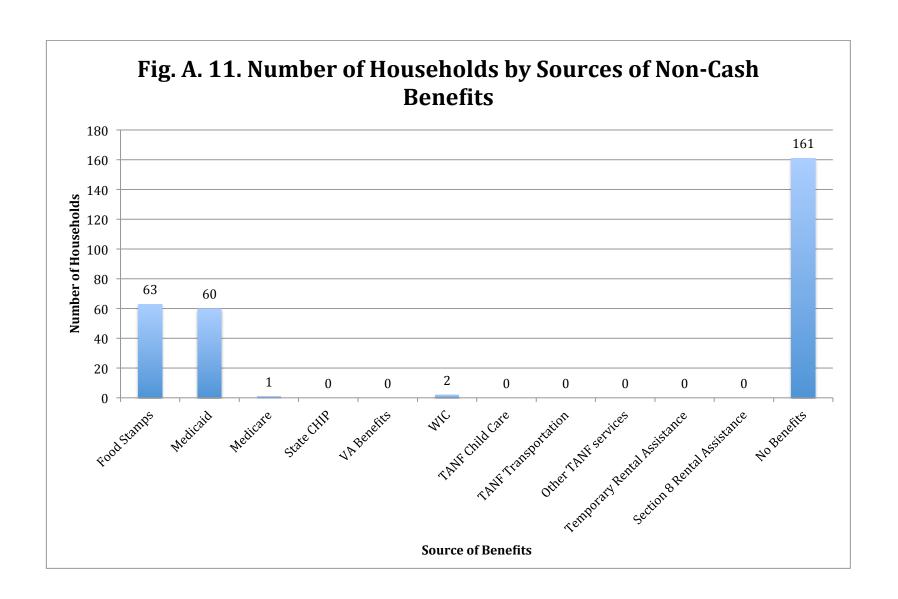
| Fig. A.8. Number of Homeless Households by County or State of Last Permanent Address |                      |  |  |
|--|----------------------|--|--|
| Last Permanent Address - County/State  | Number of Households |  |  |
| Atlantic County  | 4                    |  |  |
| Burlington County  | 1                    |  |  |
| Cape May County  | 221                  |  |  |
| Cumberland County  | 1                    |  |  |
| Middlesex County   | 2                    |  |  |
| North Carolina   | 1                    |  |  |

What was your residence prior to your current living situation?

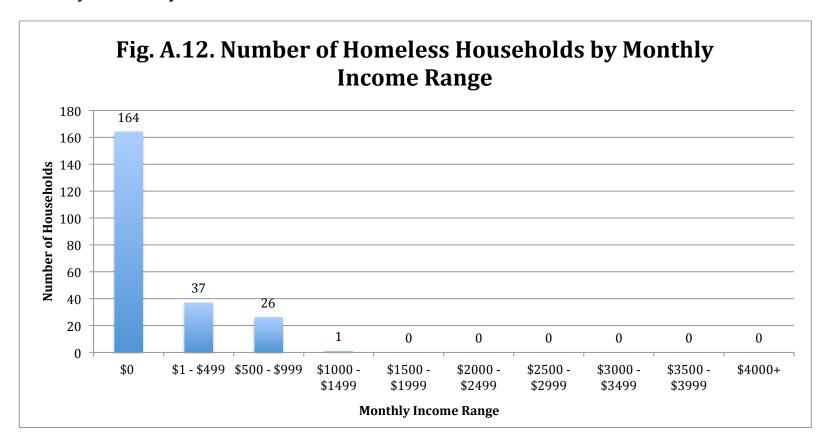


Which of the following sources of income or non-cash benefits do you, or anyone in your household, receive?

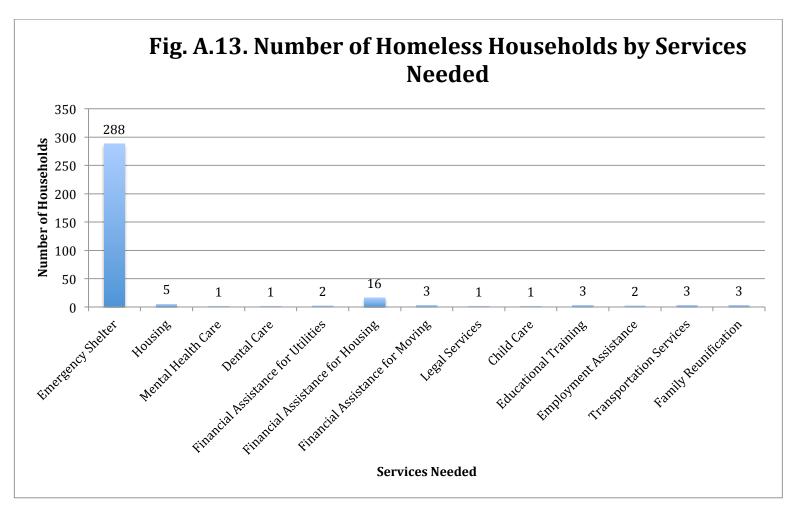




# What is your monthly household income?



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



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

