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# Gloucester 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 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014 a total of 309 households, including 585 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Gloucester County, according to the 2014 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 12 households, with 20 persons, were identified as chronically homeless.
- 4 adult-only households, with 5 unsheltered homeless persons were counted.

## **Total Homeless Population**

On the night of January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014, a total of 585 persons, in 309 households, were experiencing homelessness in Gloucester County, according to the 2014 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 371 persons (173%) and 175 households (130%) from 2013. Gloucester County had 4% of New Jersey's statewide homeless population in 2014.

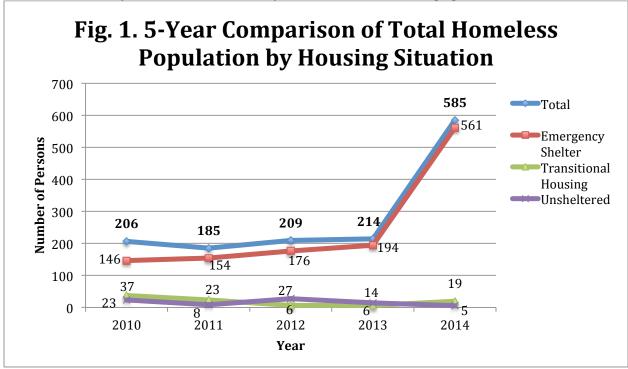
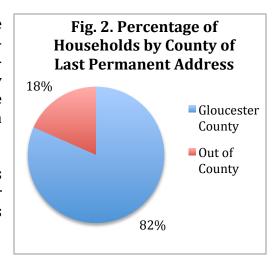


Figure 1 shows that, in 2014, 561 homeless persons stayed in emergency shelters, 19 stayed in transitional housing, and 5 were living unsheltered on the night of the count. The number of those in emergency shelters jumped up by 367 (189%) in the past year. A large portion of the increase in 2014 can be attributed to the fact that clients who were receiving Temporary Rental Assistance (TRA) from the Board of Social Services were counted as homeless persons in emergency shelter unlike past years. This was done in recognition that the County utilizes TRA as part of their homeless service system. The number of those in transitional housing on the night of the count rose by 13 (216%). The totals of those living unsheltered, however, sharply decreased, dropping by 9 (64.3%).

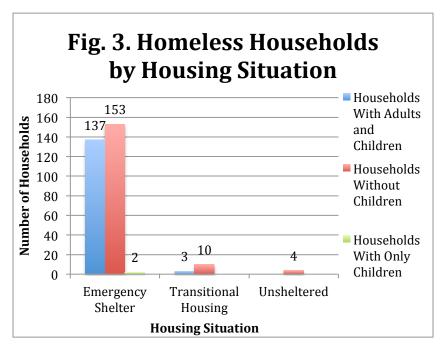
Gloucester County has seen an increase in the overall number of homeless persons in the past five-years (379 persons, 181%). During the same five-year period, the number of persons in emergency shelter on the night of the count increased while the number of unsheltered persons and those in transitional housing both declined.

As Figure 2 shows, in 2014 13% of homeless households in Gloucester 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 309 homeless households counted Gloucester County in 2014, 140 (45.3%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one These families included 400 persons, 240 children under age 18, and 160 adults. The average family size was 2.9 persons. Figure 3 shows that 137 of the families were staying in emergency shelter (97.8%), and 3 were in transitional housing programs for the homeless (2.2%). There were no unsheltered

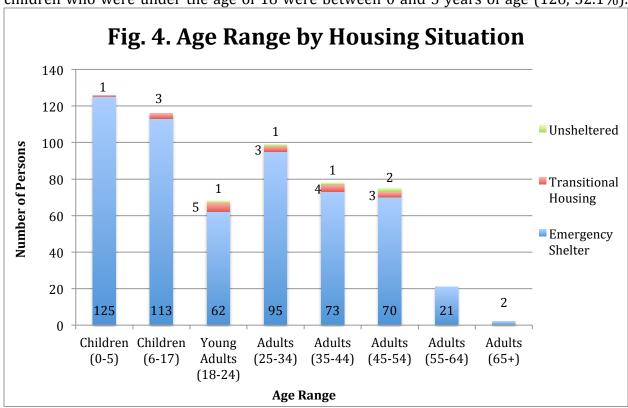
families counted. In 2014, Gloucester County counted 87 more homeless families than in 2013, an increase of 164%.

54% (167) of the homeless households in Gloucester County were households without children under 18, and they were composed of 183 adult individuals. 153 (91.6%) of these adult-only households were staying in emergency shelters, 10 (6%) were in transitional housing, and 4 (2.4%) were unsheltered. Gloucester County has seen the number of adult-only households increase by 86 (6.2%) since 2013.

As Figure 3 indicates, 2 (0.6%) households with only children under 18 years old were reported in 2014. This represents an increase of 2 households from 2013. These households had only 1 child each and both were staying in emergency shelter on the night of the count.

## **Demographics**

There were a total of 68 (11.6%) homeless adults between 18 and 24 years old, 275 (44%) adults over age 24, and 242 (41.4%) 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 0 and 5 years of age (126, 52.1%).



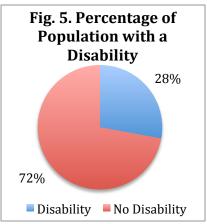
Children 0 to 5 years old, and children 6 to 17 years old, are also the two age ranges most represented among the homeless population. Among adults, more were between 25 and 34 years old than any other age range (28.9% of adults). Only 2 persons (0.3%) were over the age of 65.

57.4% (336) of homeless respondents were female, and 42.6% (249) were male.

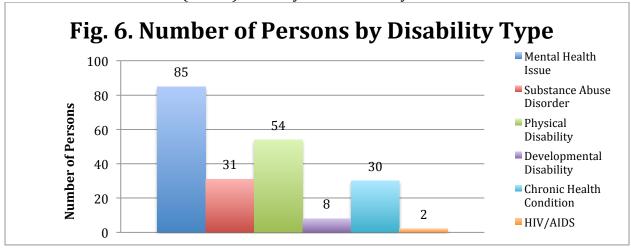
50.4% of respondents identified their race as White, making that the largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported. The next largest group self-identified as Black or African-American (46.7%), followed by those identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native (1.4%), Multi-Racial (1%) and Asian (0.5%). With regard to ethnicity, 10.5% of respondents identified themselves as Hispanic, or Latino.

#### Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 28% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 43.1% of adults reported some type of disability compared to 6.2% of children. Figure 6 shows the number of the homeless persons that identified as having various disabilities. The most common disabilities identified include mental health issues and physical disabilities.

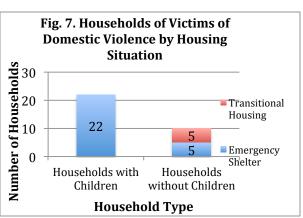


Among disabled adults, 53.4% reported mental health issues making this the most prevalent disability (23% of total adult population). More disabled homeless children had chronic health conditions (46.7%) than any other disability.



#### Victims of Domestic Violence

On the night of the count, in Gloucester County, 32 homeless households reported having a victim of domestic violence (See Figure 7). The majority (68.7%) of these households were families with at least one adult and one child under the age of 18, one of which reported staying in a domestic violence shelter; all other households in emergency shelter were in other shelters. I of the 10 adult apply victim households



shelters. 5 of the 10 adult-only victim households were staying in transitional housing.

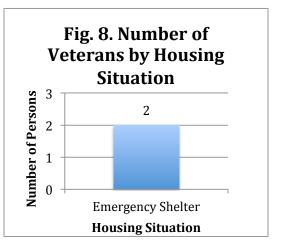
#### **Veterans**

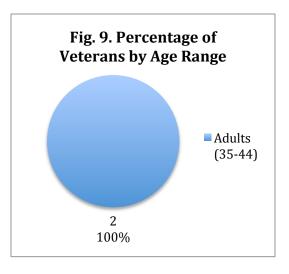
In its plan, *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has prioritized ending homelessness among veterans by 2015. Many communities in New Jersey have also been working hard to end homelessness among our country's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

2 homeless veterans were counted on the night of the count, 1 (33%) fewer than in 2013. Both were single, adult individuals staying in emergency shelter on the night of the count.

The 2 veterans experiencing homelessness in Gloucester County were both male, and 1 identified his racial background as White (50%), while the other identified as Multi-Racial. Figure 9 Illustrates that both homeless veterans were between 35 and 44 years of age.

1 veteran, 50%, reported having a physical disability, while the other reported no disability. The types of services that homeless veterans sought were emergency shelter, and financial assistance for housing and utilities, employment assistance, educational training, transportation, and veterans' services.





#### Income and Benefits

Among all those experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, 4.8% reported no source of income, and 2.2% reported receiving some kind of earned cash income. The two most common sources of income among respondents were Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and General Assistance (GA), with 44% and 34.6% receiving each, respectively. Figure 11, below, shows the average monthly income for all homeless households.

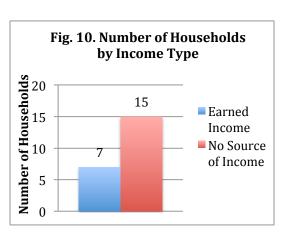


Figure 11. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation				
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered	
Average for All Households	\$351.06	\$608.62	\$400.00	

3.5% of homeless households 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 77.3% of respondents. 10.7% were receiving temporary rental assistance from the Board of Social Services, and 67% were receiving Medicaid.

## **Length of Homelessness**

As Figure 12 shows, 104 (33.7%) of the homeless households reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted from more than 1 year, while 49 (15.9%) reported that they had been homeless between 6 months and 1 day and 1 year. These two

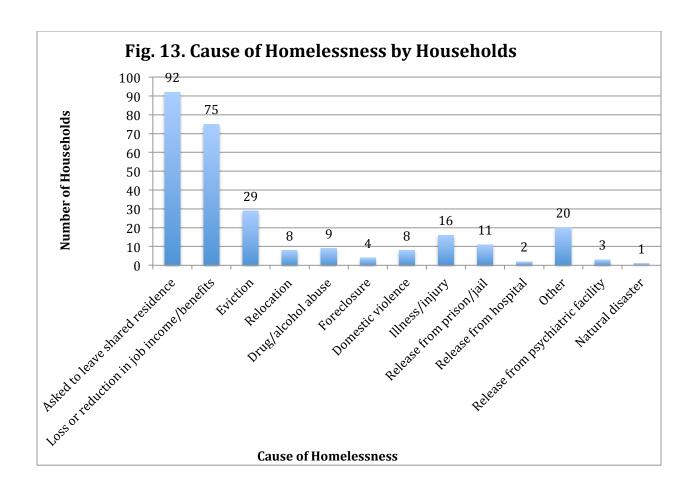


responses account for nearly half of all respondent households. This means that 49.5% of all homeless households in Gloucester County had been experiencing homelessness for more than 6 months on the night of the count.

#### Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to being asked to leave a shared residence (92 households, 29.8%) than any other cause. As Figure 13 shows, the next most common factor reported was a loss or reduction of job income or benefits (24.3%).

When households were asked 'what was your residence prior to your current living situation?' more said they were staying or living with friends or family (32%) than any other type of residence. 28% reported residing in permanent housing and 22% said they were in 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**

12 households, made up of 20 total persons, were chronically homeless in Gloucester County, according to the 2014 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 3 persons (17.6%) from 2013. This small increase, in conjunction with higher homelessness in the County overall, caused the rate of chronic homelessness to shrink as a percentage of the overall homeless population from 7.9% to 3.4%.

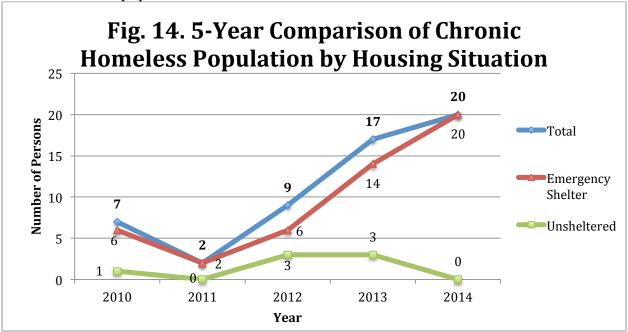


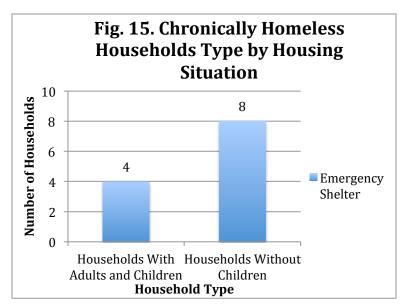
Figure 14 shows the number of chronically homeless respondents who were in emergency shelters or living unsheltered in Gloucester County from 2010 to 2014. Over the past four years the total of chronically homeless persons counted has gone up each year. Since 2010, the numbers of chronically homeless persons in emergency shelters has risen by 233%. The number of unsheltered chronically homeless persons has dropped 100%, however, with 0 counted on the night of the count in 2014.

#### 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 and any youth in youth-only households. Therefore, the analysis below also includes data for 2 adult individual who were part of adult-only couples, keeping the total number of chronically homeless households at 12, but bringing the total number of chronically homeless persons to 22.

Of the 12 chronically homeless households counted in 2014, 4 (33%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult. These families included 12 persons (33% more than 2013), and the average family size was 3 persons. All chronically homeless families stayed in emergency shelters on the night of the count.

There were 10 chronically homeless persons in 8 households with no children 17 or younger counted in Gloucester



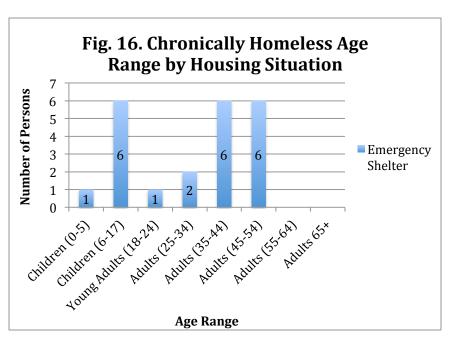
County, making up 67% of the chronically homeless population. All were sheltered in emergency shelters, the same number of households as in 2013. 25 None of these adult households were unsheltered on the night of the count, a decrease from 3 last year.

## Demographics

Of the 22 total chronically homeless persons, 1 (4.5%) was between 18 and 24 years old, and 7 (32%) were children 17 or younger. The largest number of chronically homeless adults (6, 27%) fell between the ages of 35 and 44, and between 45 and 54 years of age.

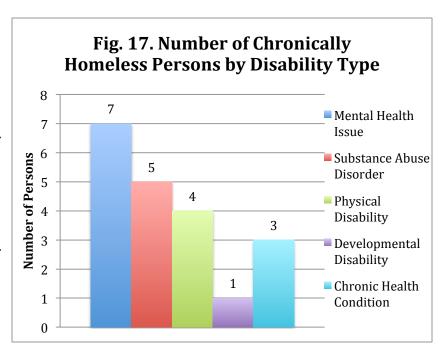
45.4% of those counted as chronically homeless were male, and 54.6% were female.

The largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported their race as White (54.6%). The next largest group self-identified as Black or African-American (27.3%). followed by persons identifying as Multi-Racial (13.6%) and American Indian Alaska Native (4.5%).With regard to ethnicity, 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 disability. The disabilities most commonly identified were mental health issues (31.8%)and substance abuse disorders (22.7%). The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the chronically homeless can be seen in Figure 17.



## Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 1 chronically homeless person in Gloucester County reported being victims of domestic violence (4.5%). This person was in household of 4 with children under the age of 18.

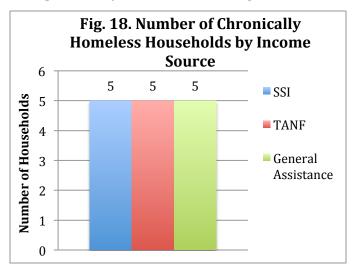
There were 0 veterans identified as chronically homeless on the night of the count.

#### **Income and Benefits**

Among all the chronically homeless households on the night of the count, 0 reported receiving no form of cash income, and 0 also reported any earned income. Figure 18 shows

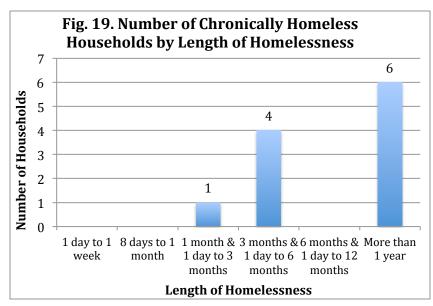
the sources of income received. The most common sources of cash income among all respondents can be seen in Figure 18.

0 of chronically homeless households 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 50% receiving this benefit. A significant percentage also reported receiving Medicaid (40.9%) and temporary rental assistance from the Board of Social Services (4.5%).



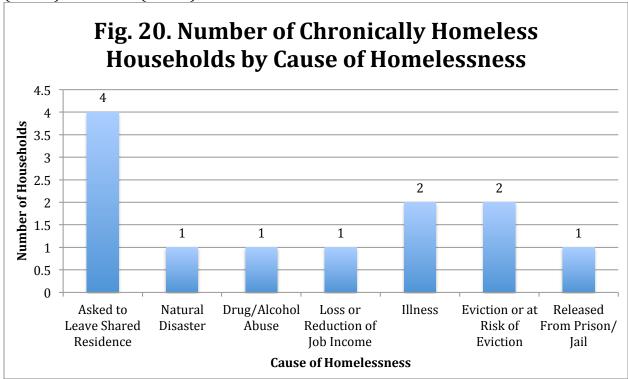
## Length of Homelessness

Figure 19 shows that 6 chronically homeless households (50%) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted for more than 1 year. This was the most common answer followed by 33% reporting being homeless between 3 and 6 months.



#### Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more chronically homeless households cited being asked to leave a shared residence (33%) than any other. As Figure 20 shows, other common factors reported included eviction (16.7%) and illness (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**

4 households, made up of 5 persons, were living unsheltered in Gloucester County, according to the 2014 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 9 (6.9%) households, and 9 persons (6.4%) from 2013.

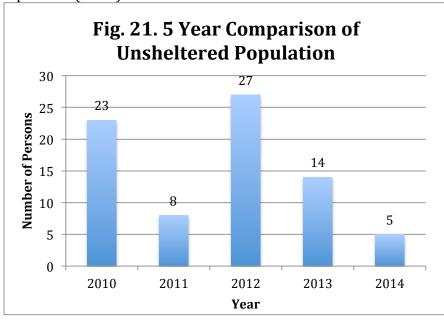


Figure 21 shows the number of unsheltered respondents from 2010 to 2014. Over the past five years, while the numbers have fluctuated. total the number of unsheltered persons has been reduced overall. Since 2012, the number of unsheltered homeless persons has dropped 8.1%, and by 78.3% since 2010.

#### Families and Individuals

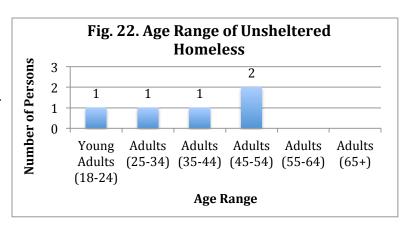
There were 0 families with adults and children identified as unsheltered on the night of the count.

All 4 of the households were adult-only households made up of 5 adult persons.

## **Demographics**

Of the 5 unsheltered persons counted, 1 (20%) was between 18 and 24 years old. (40%) of those living unsheltered were between the ages of 45 and 54.

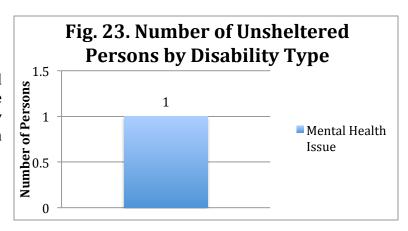
4 of the 5 unsheltered persons were male (80%). 80% identified their race as White and 20%



identified as Asian. None of the respondents identified as Hispanic.

#### Disabilities

Just 1, 20%, of unsheltered persons reported having some disability. The disability identified was a mental health issue.



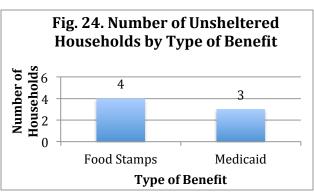
## Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 0 of the unsheltered homeless persons in Gloucester County reported being victims of domestic violence.

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

#### **Income and Benefits**

Among all the unsheltered households on the night of the count, 0 reported what source of cash income they may have, but the average monthly income among unsheltered households was approximately \$400.



0 unsheltered households reported that 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 100% receiving this benefit, while 75% were receiving Medicaid.

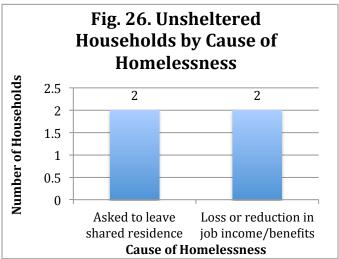
## **Length of Homelessness**

As shown in Figure 25, 1 unsheltered homeless household (25%) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted more than 1 year. 2 (50%) reported they had been homeless fewer than 3 months.



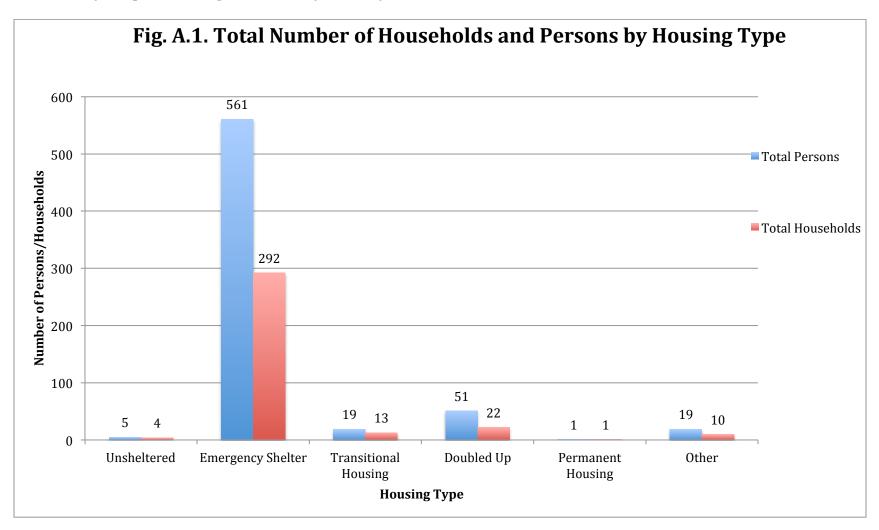
#### Cause of Homelessness

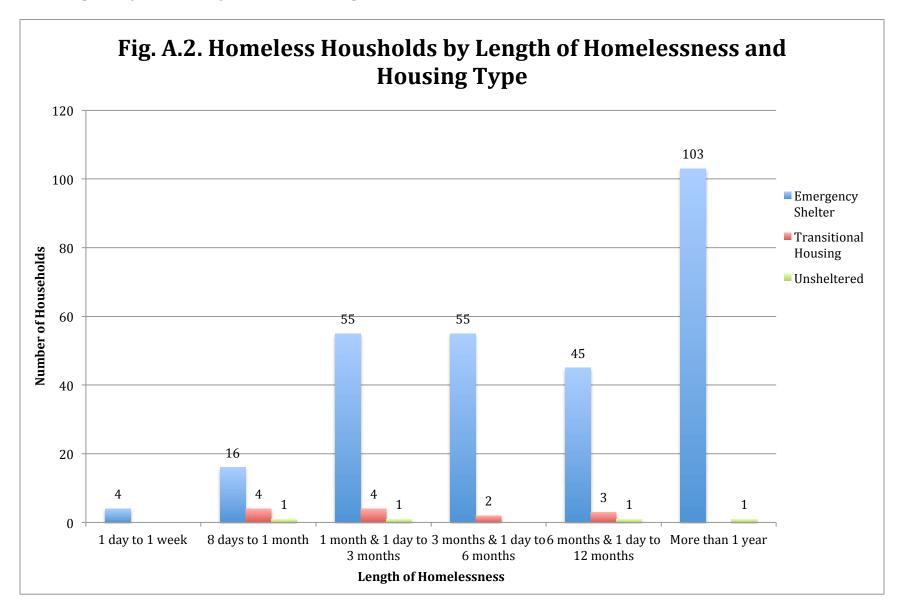
When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, half of unsheltered households said loss or reduction of job income or benefits and half said being asked to leave a shared residence.



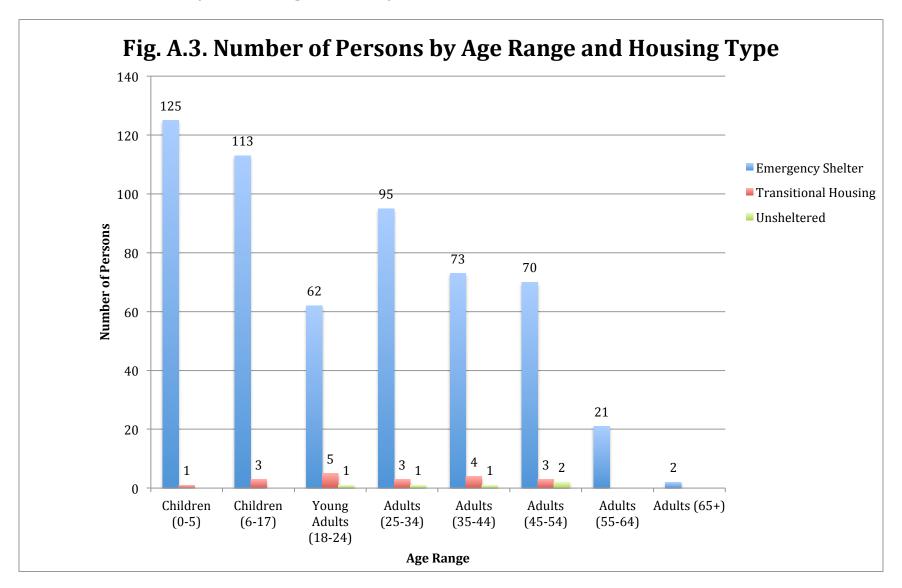
# VI. Appendix

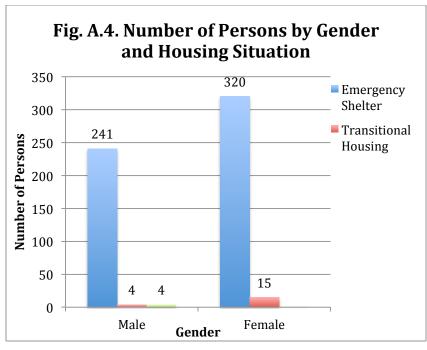
Where did you spend the night of Tuesday, January 28, 2014?

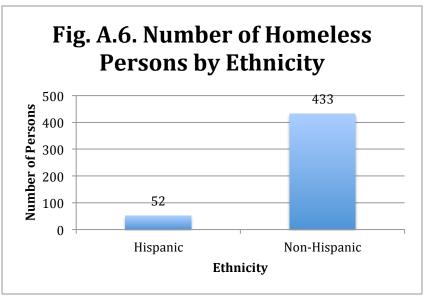


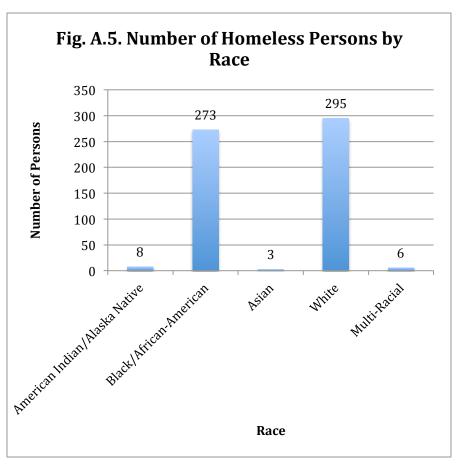


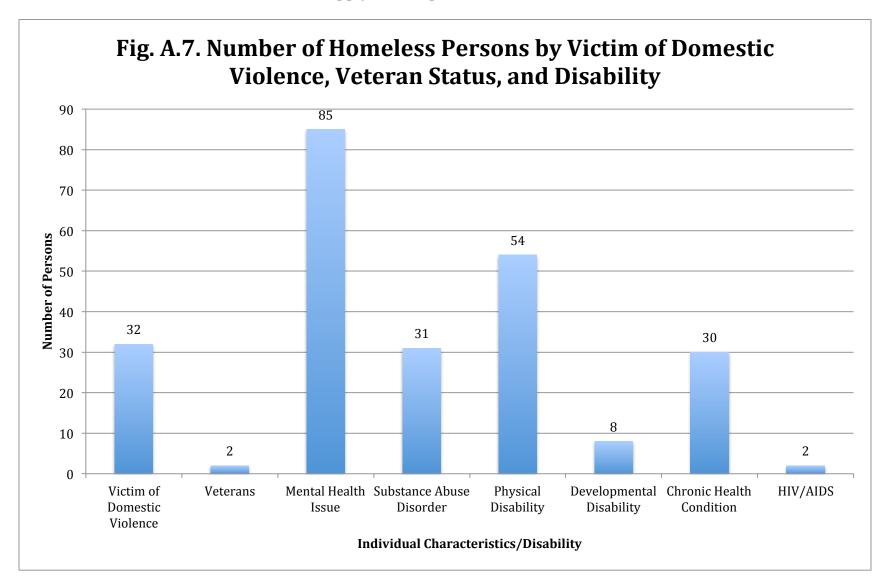
Who was homeless with you on the night of January 28th?







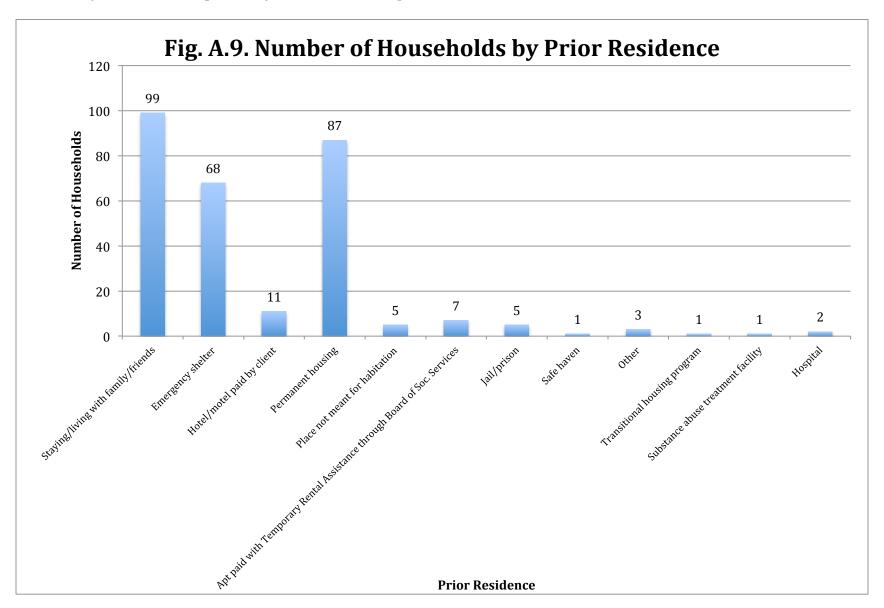




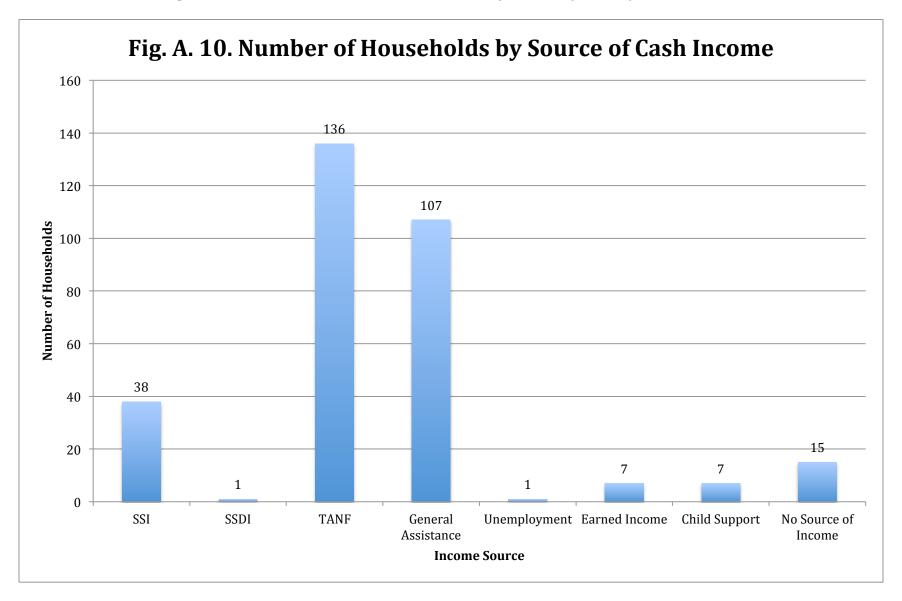
# Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?

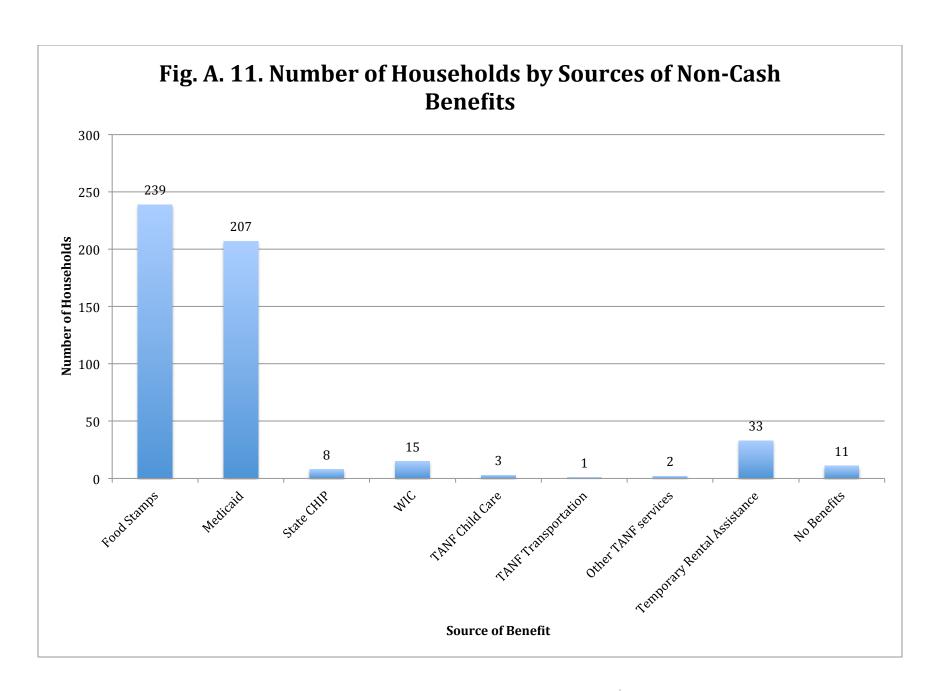
Fig. A.8. Number of Households by County or State of Last Permanent Address		
Last Permanent Address -	Number of Households	
County/State		
Camden County	39	
Cumberland County	2	
Florida	1	
Gloucester County	231	
Iraq	3	
Middlesex County	2	
New York	2	
Salem County	2	
Turkey	1	

What was your residence prior to your current living situation?

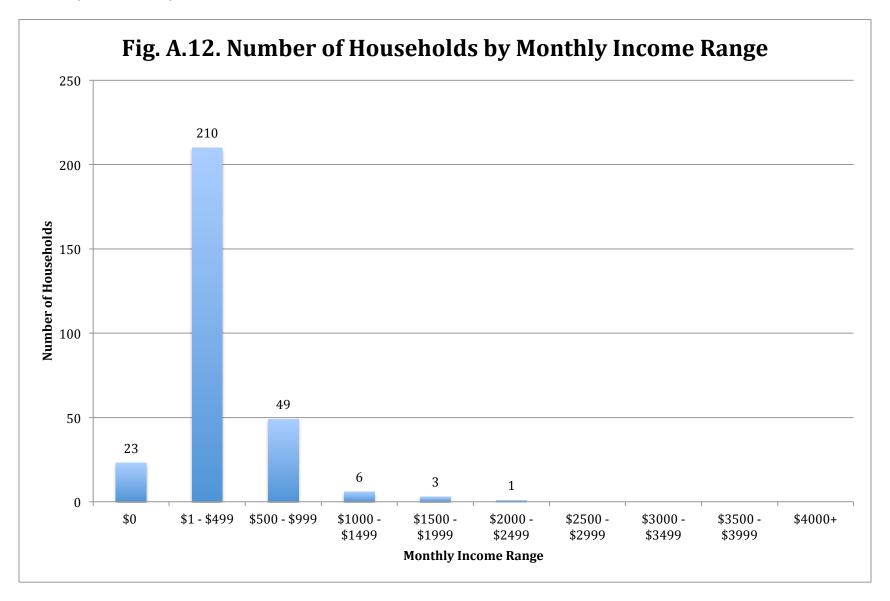


Which of the following sources of income or non-cash benefits do you, or anyone in your household, receive?

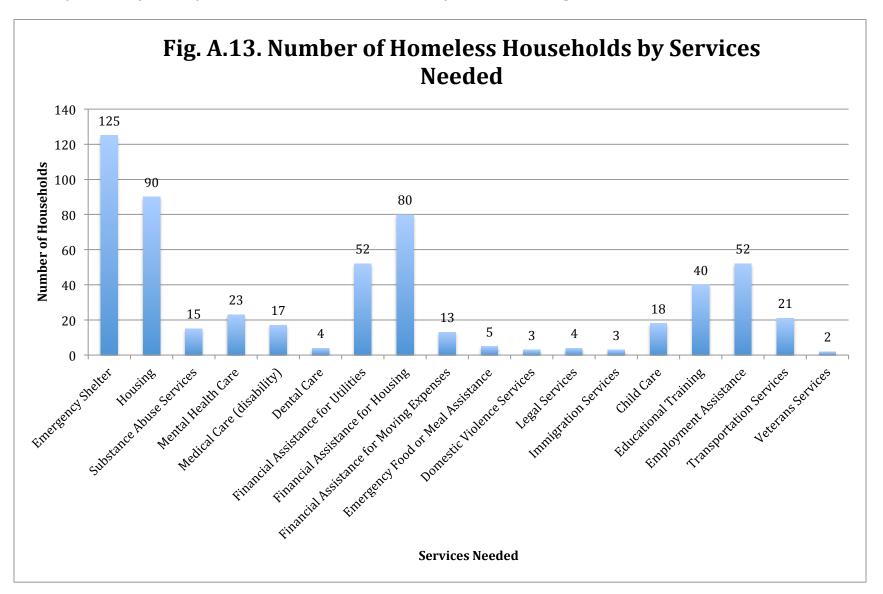




## What is your monthly household income?



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?

