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NJ
2014
Counts!

Sussex 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

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 Sussex 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 de-duplication they determined prudent. Monarch then updated and removed additional records based on community feedback prior to completing its final analysis and report.

III. Findings for Total Homeless Population

Key Findings

- On the night of January 28th, 2014 a total of 230 households, including 374 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Sussex County, according to the 2014 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 17 households, with 20 persons, were identified as chronically homeless.
- 4 unsheltered homeless persons were counted.

Total Homeless Population

On the night of January 28th, 2014, a total of 374 persons, in 230 households, were experiencing homelessness in Sussex County, according to the 2014 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 301 persons (412%) and 182 households (379%) from 2013. Sussex County had 3% of New Jersey's statewide homeless population in 2014.

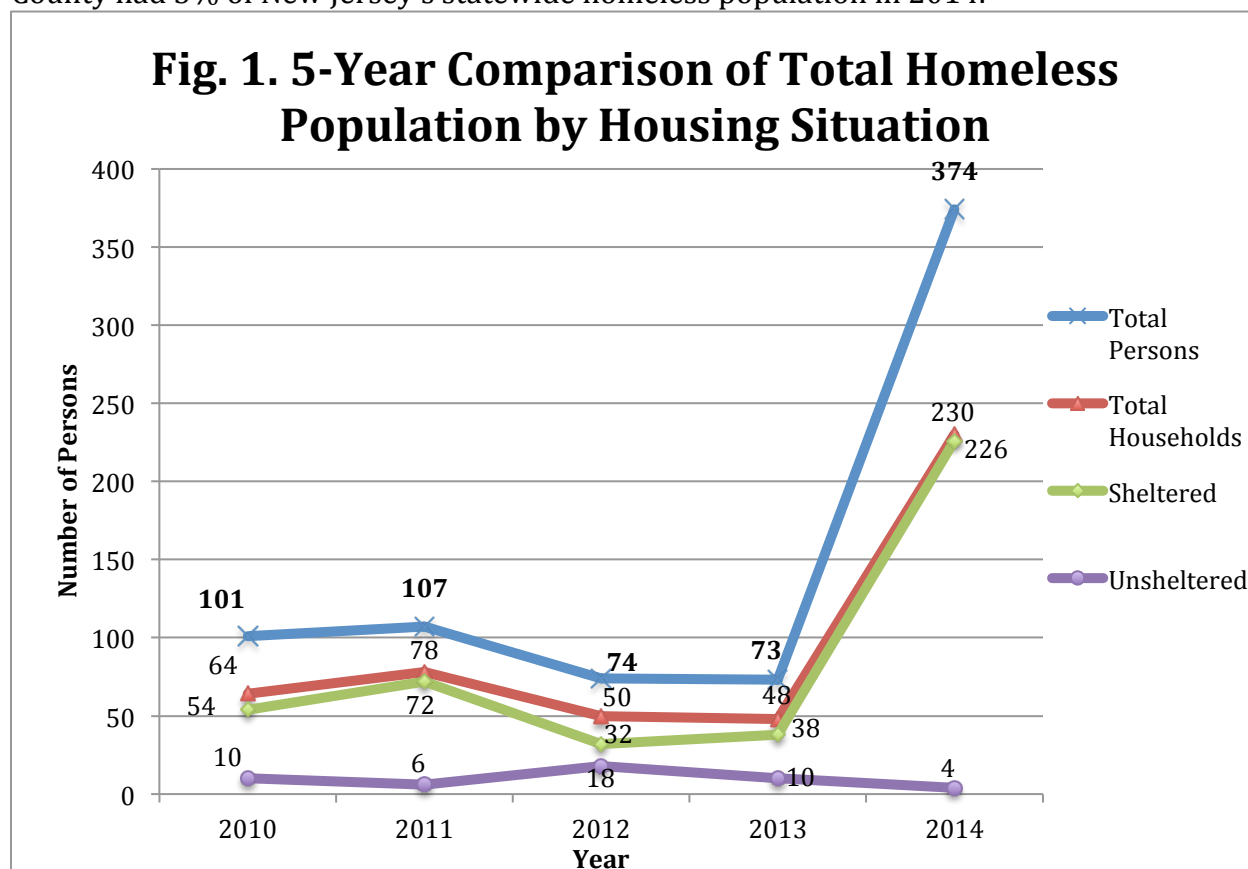


Figure 1 shows that, in 2014, 226 homeless households were sheltered and 4 were living unsheltered on the night of the count. The total number of those counted as sheltered represents an increase of 188 households (495%) from 2013. However, there were 6 (60%) fewer unsheltered households in 2014.

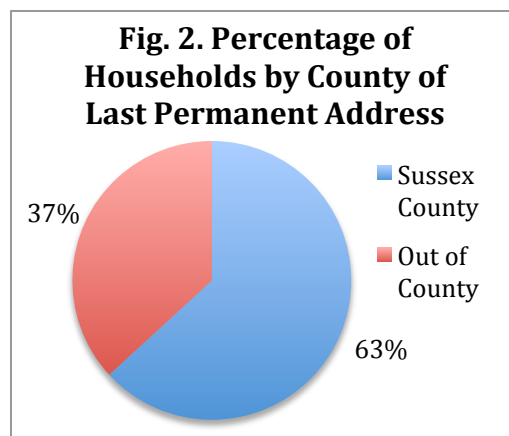


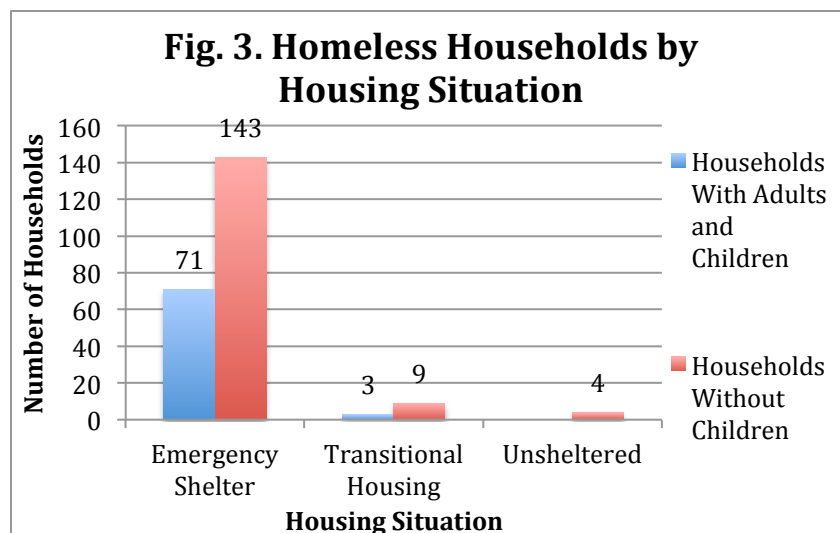
Figure 1 also shows that, over the past five years, the total number of homeless persons has been fluctuating in Sussex County, with the highest count in 2014 (374). 2014's high count is primarily caused by a change in methodology, which counted clients receiving temporary rental assistance from the Board of Social Services as homeless unlike counts in past years. As Figure 2 shows, 37% of homeless households counted in Sussex County reported that their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless was outside of the county.

Over the five-year period from 2010 to 2014, the overall number of homeless households went up 260%. The number of persons who were unsheltered went down overall during the same period by 60%.

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 230 homeless households counted in Sussex County in 2014, 74 (32.2%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult. These families included 204 persons, 119 children under age 18, and 85 adults. The average family size was 2.8 persons. Figure 3 shows that 3 families (4%) were staying in transitional housing on the night of the count. The remaining 71 families were in emergency shelters.

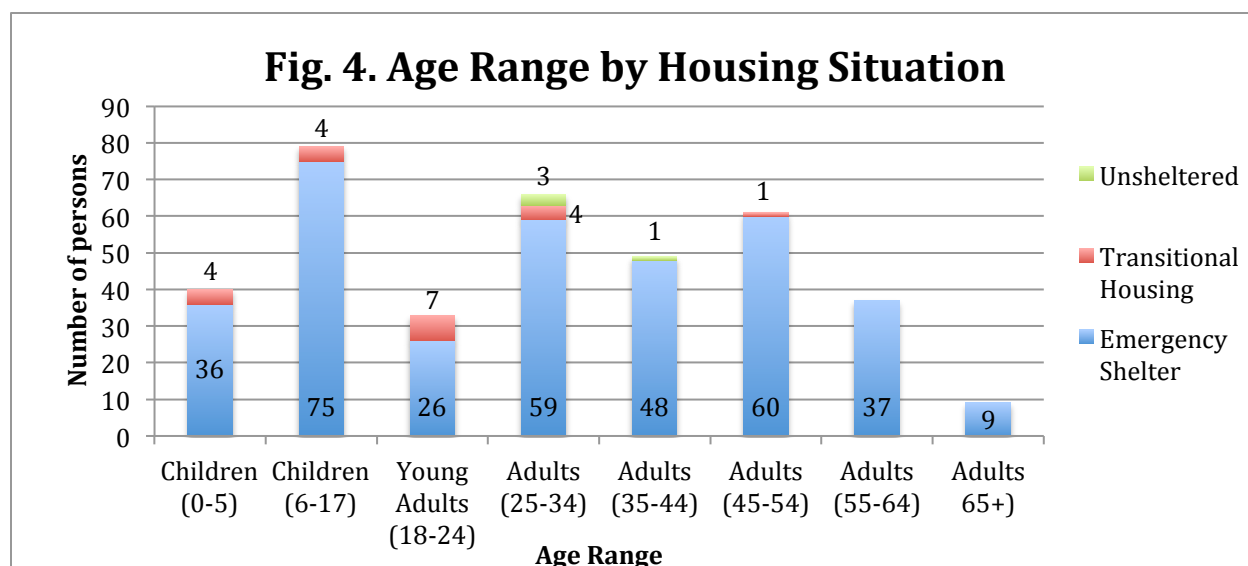


67.8% (156) of the homeless households counted in Sussex County were households without children under 18, and they were composed of 170 adult individuals. 143 (91.6%)

of these adult-only households were staying in emergency shelters, 9 (5.8%) were in transitional housing, and 4 (2.6%) were unsheltered.

Demographics

The majority (222 persons, 59.4%) of those experiencing homelessness in Sussex County on the night of the count were adults over age 24. There were a total of 33 (8.8%) homeless young adults between 18 and 24 years old, and 119 (31.8%) 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 6 and 17 years of age (79, 66.4%). This age range was also the most represented; followed by was adults between 25 and 34 (66 persons, 17.6%).

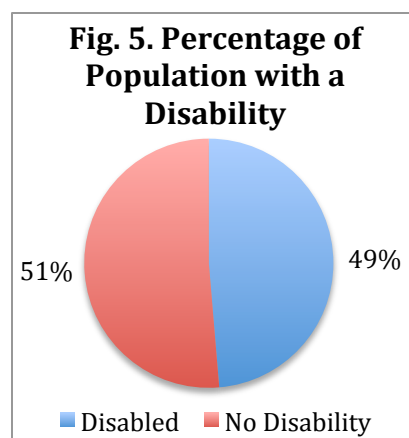


58.6% (219) of homeless respondents were female, and 41.4% (155) were male.

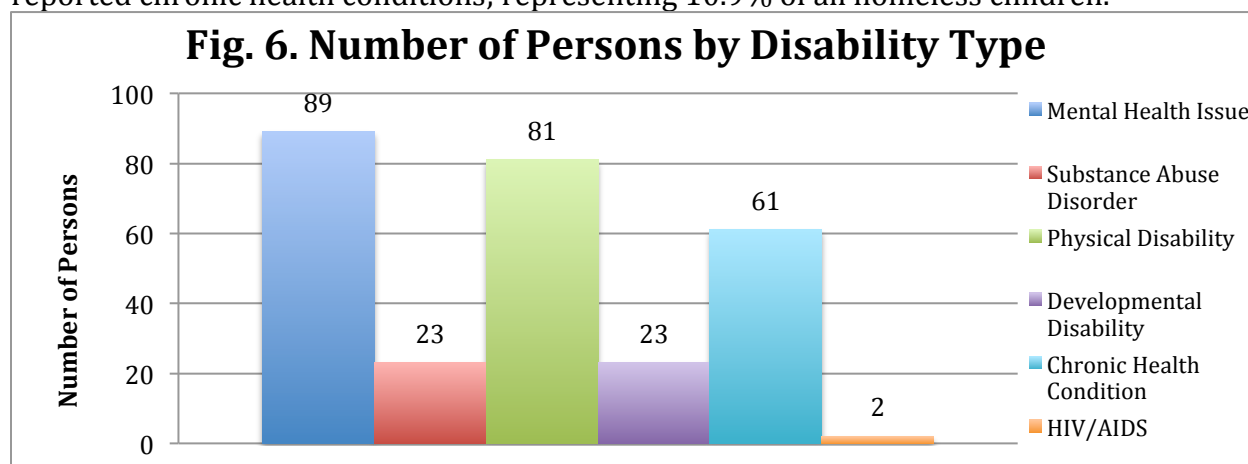
81.3% of respondents identified their race as White, making that the largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported. The next largest group self-identified as Black or African American (14.2%), followed by those identifying as American Indian/Alaska Native (0.1%), Multi-Racial (0.1%), and. With regard to ethnicity, 11.7% of respondents identified themselves as Hispanic.

Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 49% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 63% of adults 18 or older reported some type of disability compared to 17.6% of children. Figure 6 shows the number of the homeless persons that identified as having various disabilities. The most prevalent disabilities were mental health issues, physical disabilities, and chronic health conditions.

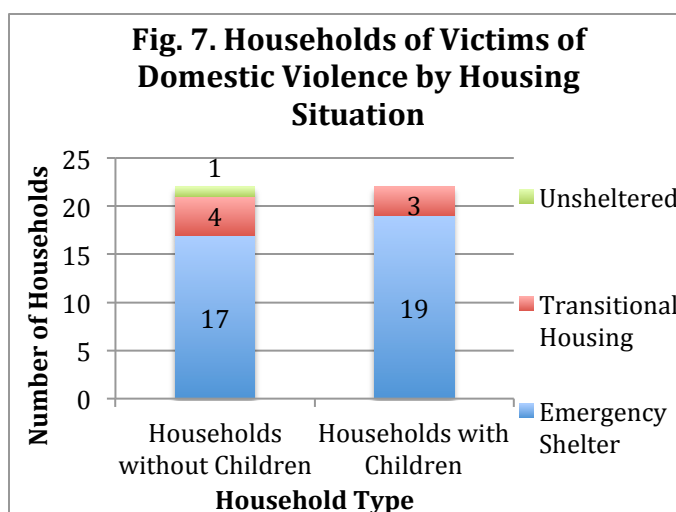


Among disabled adults, 52.8% reported mental health issues making this the most prevalent disability; representing 33.3% of the total adult homeless population. 50.3% of disabled adults reported a physical disability. Among disabled homeless children, 61.9% reported chronic health conditions; representing 10.9% of all homeless children.



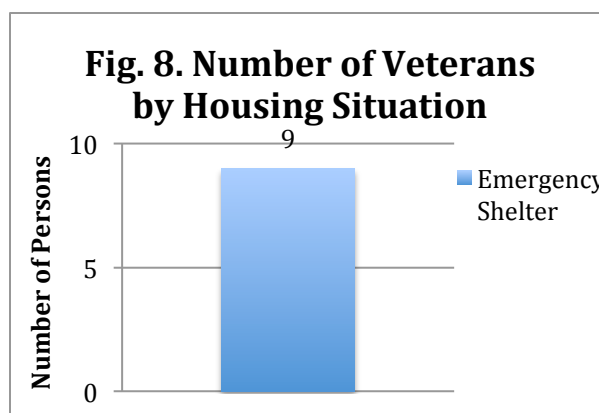
Victims of Domestic Violence

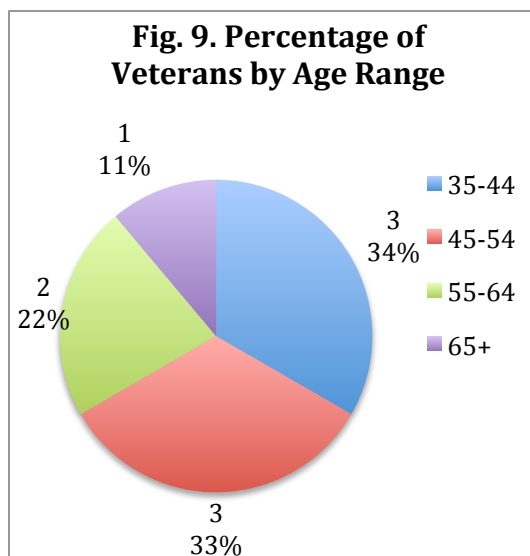
On the night of the count, in Sussex County, 44 homeless households reported having a victim of domestic violence. Figure 7 shows that 22 (50%) of these households were adult-only, individual households, while the same number were families with at least 1 adult and 1 child under 18 were counted. 1 adult individual and 8 families were in domestic violence shelters, while 77% of all victim households were in other emergency shelters.



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.





9 homeless veterans were counted on the night of the count. 8 were members of adult-only households, while 1 was a member of a family of 3 persons, including one child under 18. All of the homeless veterans were staying in emergency shelter.

6 (66.6%) veterans experiencing homelessness in Sussex County were male, and all identified their race as White. Figure 9 Illustrates the percentage of homeless veterans by age range.

6 of the 9, 66.6%, reported having some kind of disability. The most common disabilities cited among these were physical disabilities; with 4

veterans (44.4%) reporting them. 1 veteran (11.1%) reported each of the following: substance abuse disorders, mental health issues, and chronic health conditions. The two types of service that homeless veterans sought most were financial assistance for housing (55.5%) and financial assistance for utilities (44.4%).

Income and Benefits

Among all the households experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, 15.2% had no source of income, and 3.5% reported receiving earned income. The three most common sources of cash income among homeless respondents were General Assistance (GA) (29.1%), SSI (27%), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (22.6%).

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

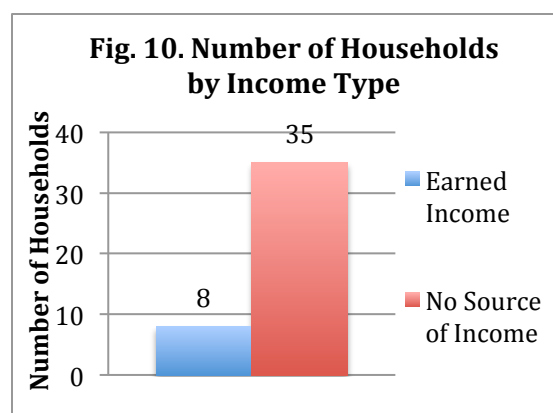
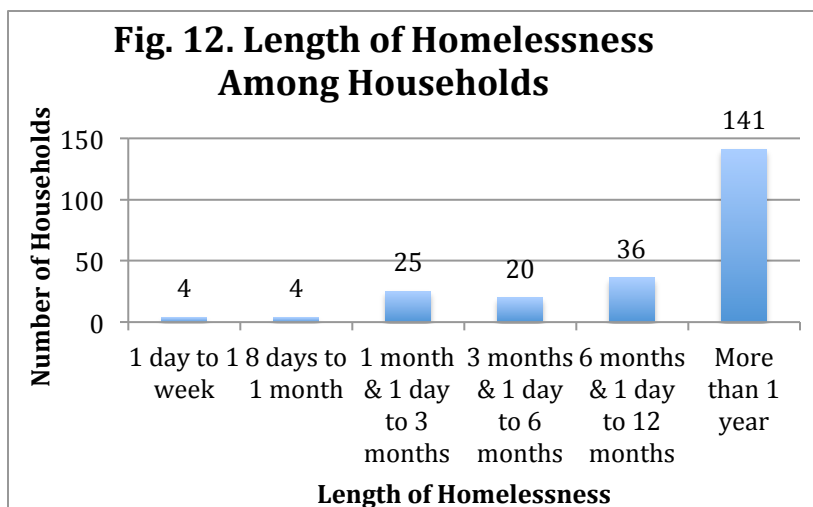


Figure 11. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation			
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered
Average for All Households	\$420.16	\$474.75	\$200.00

13% 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 78.7% of households. 64% were receiving Medicaid, and 7.8% reported that they were receiving Medicare.

Length of Homelessness

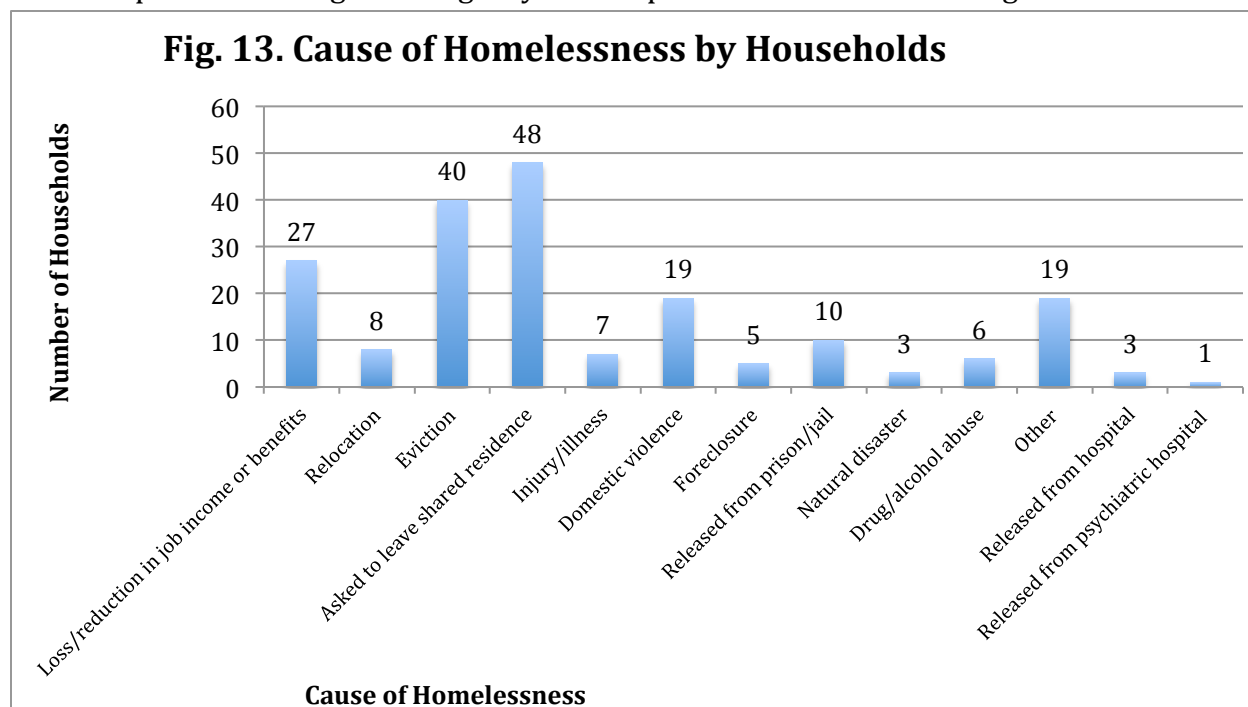
Figure 12 shows the range lengths of homeless episodes experienced on the night of the count by respondents in Sussex County. 141 households (61.3%) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted more than 1 year. More than 3 out of 4 (76.9%) of the homeless households in Sussex County reported that they had been homeless for at least 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 being asked to leave a shared residence (48 households, 20.9%) than any other cause. As Figure 13 shows, the other most common factors reported were eviction (17.4%) and a loss of job income or benefits (11.7%).

When homeless respondents were asked 'what was your residence prior to your current living situation?' more said they were residing in permanent housing (36.1%) than any other type of residence. 30% reported housing staying or living with friends or family, and 10.4% reported residing 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

17 households, made up of 20 total persons, were chronically homeless in Sussex County, according to the 2014 Point-In-Time Count. Chronic homelessness as a percentage of overall homelessness went from 8.3% in 2013 to 5.3% in 2014.

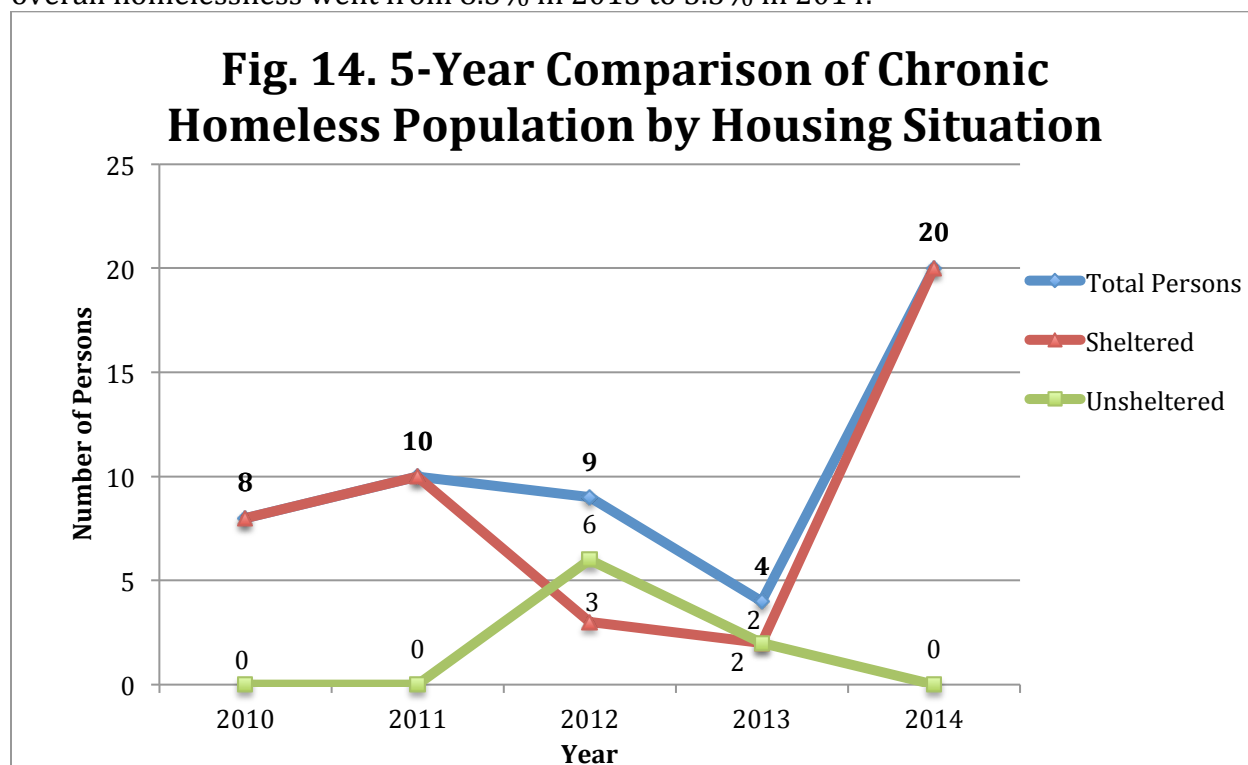
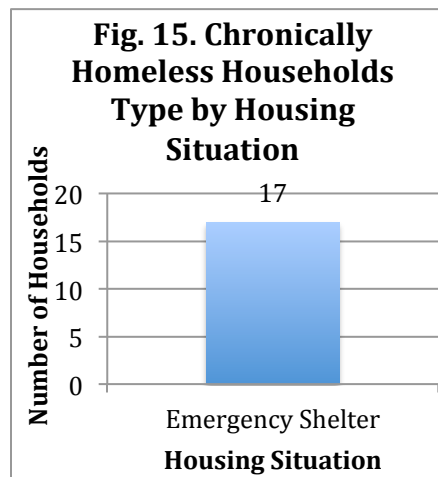


Figure 14 shows the number of chronically homeless respondents who were sheltered or living unsheltered in Sussex County from 2010 to 2014. Over the past five years, the overall number of chronically homeless persons has risen by 12 persons, or 150%. The number of unsheltered chronically homeless persons has fluctuated, but returned to 0 in 2014.

Families and Individuals

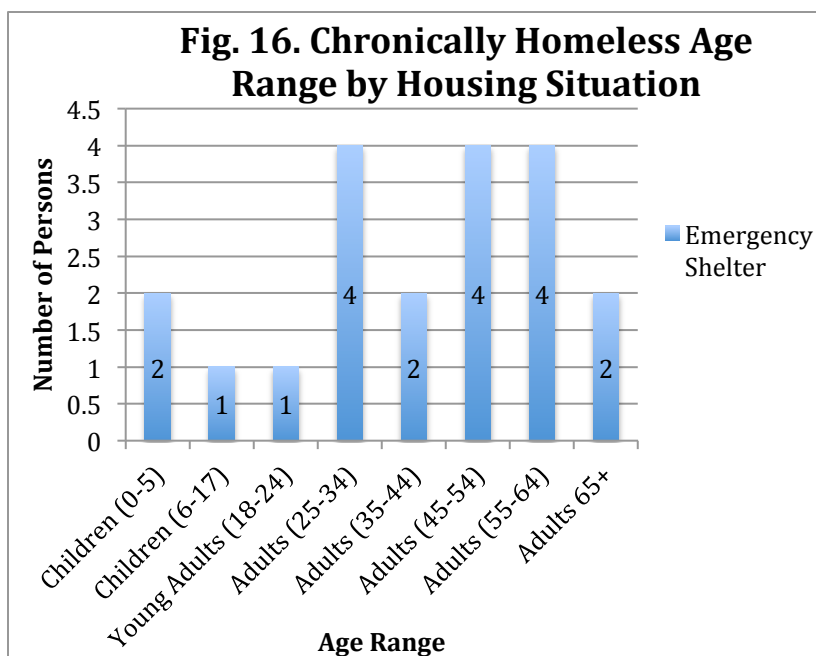


Of the 17 chronically homeless households counted in 2014, 2 (11.8%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult. These families included 5 persons, making the average family size 2.5 persons. All of the chronically homeless families were in emergency shelters on the night of the count.

There were 15 chronically homeless persons in 15 households with no children 17 or younger counted in Sussex County, making up 88.2% of the chronically homeless population. All of these adult-only households were staying in emergency shelters on the night of the count.

Demographics

Of the 20 total chronically homeless persons, 1 (5%) was between 18 and 24 years old, and 3 (15%) were children 17 or younger. There were no children under 5 years old. The age ranges with the highest concentrations of chronically homeless persons were adults between 25 and 34, adults between 45 and 54, and adults between 55 and 64 years of age, which each had 4 persons (20%) in that range.

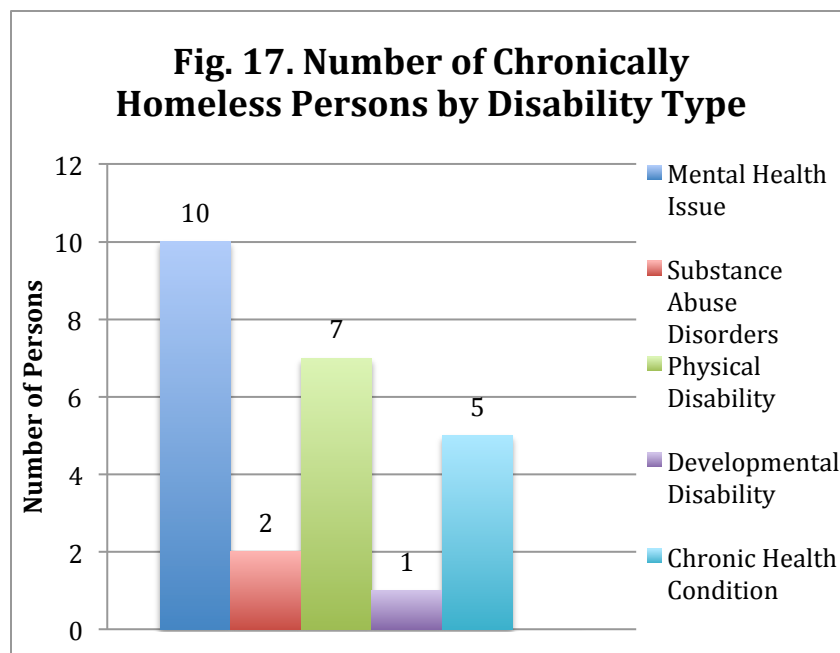


50% of those counted as chronically homeless were male, and 50% were female.

The largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported their race as White (85%), and the next largest group self-identified as Black or African-American (5%).

Disabilities

In order to meet the definition of chronically homeless, at least one adult in each household must have some kind of disability. The disabilities most commonly identified were mental health issues (50%) and physical disabilities (35%). The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the chronically homeless can be seen in Figure 17.



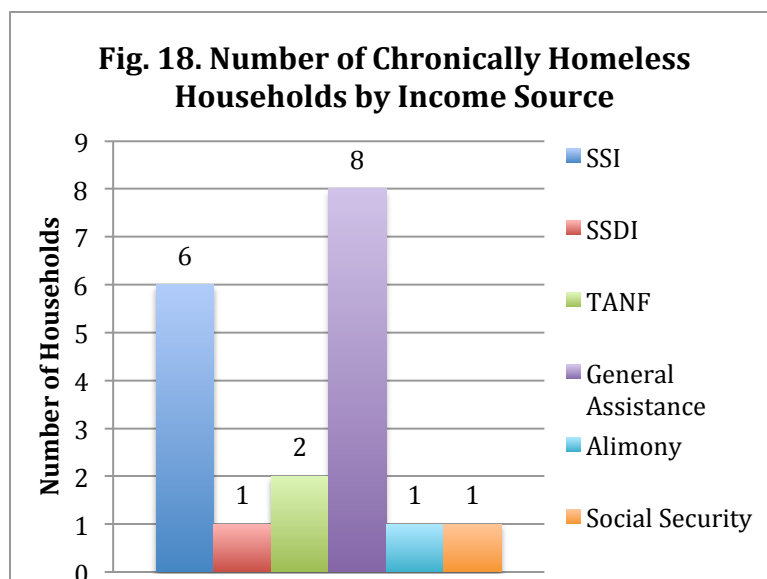
Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 2 chronically homeless persons in Sussex County reported being victims of domestic violence (10%). Both of these victims were adult individuals.

There was 1 chronically homeless veteran identified on the night of the count.

Income and Benefits

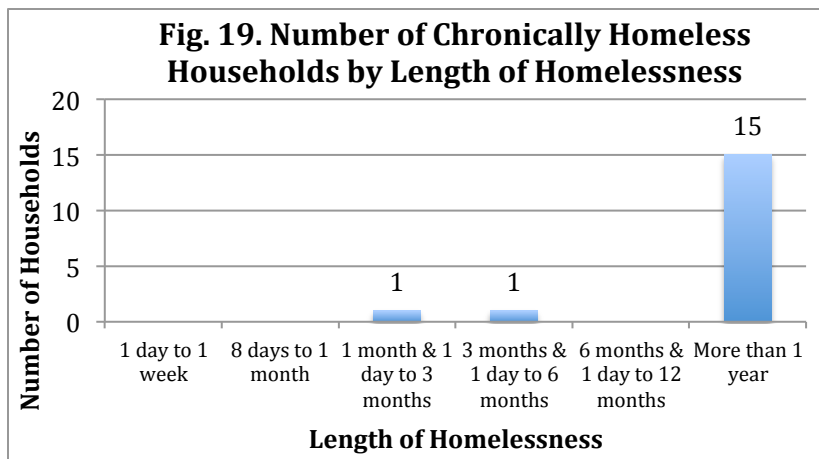
Among all the chronically homeless households on the night of the count, 0% reported receiving no type of cash income. Figure 18 shows the sources of income received. The most common source of cash income among chronically homeless households was General Assistance, which was received by 47.1%. No households reported any earned income.



17.6% 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 the chronically homeless, with 70.6% receiving this benefit. 64.7% reported receiving Medicaid and 23.5% reported receiving Section 8 rental assistance.

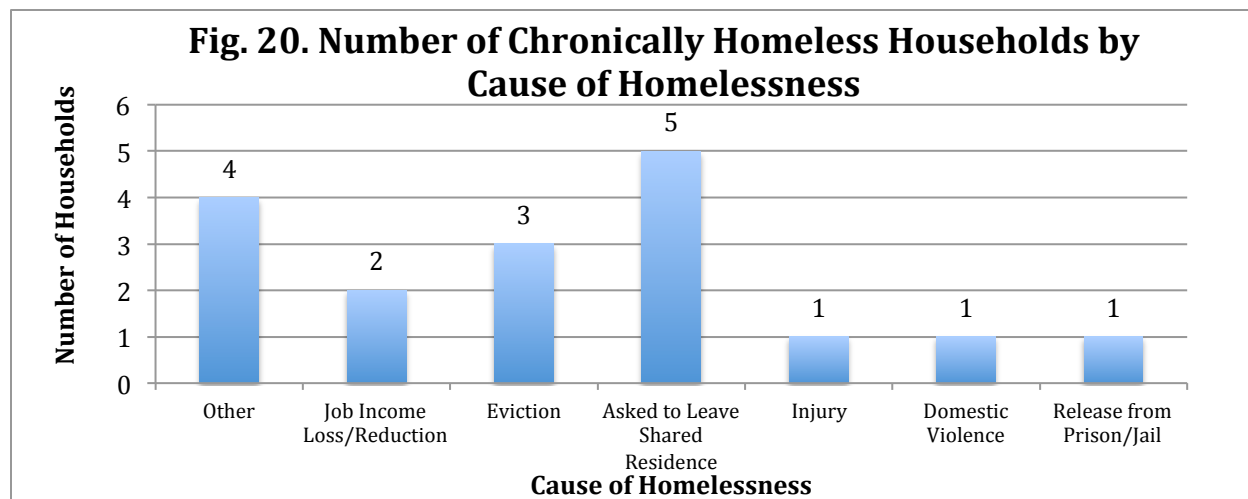
Length of Homelessness

Figure 19 shows that the majority of chronically homeless households (88.2%) reported their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted for more than 1 year. This represents 6.5% of the total number of homeless households.



Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more chronically homeless households (29.4%) cited being asked to leave a shared residence than any other cause.



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 4 persons, were living unsheltered in Sussex County, according to the 2014 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 6 households (60%) from 2013.

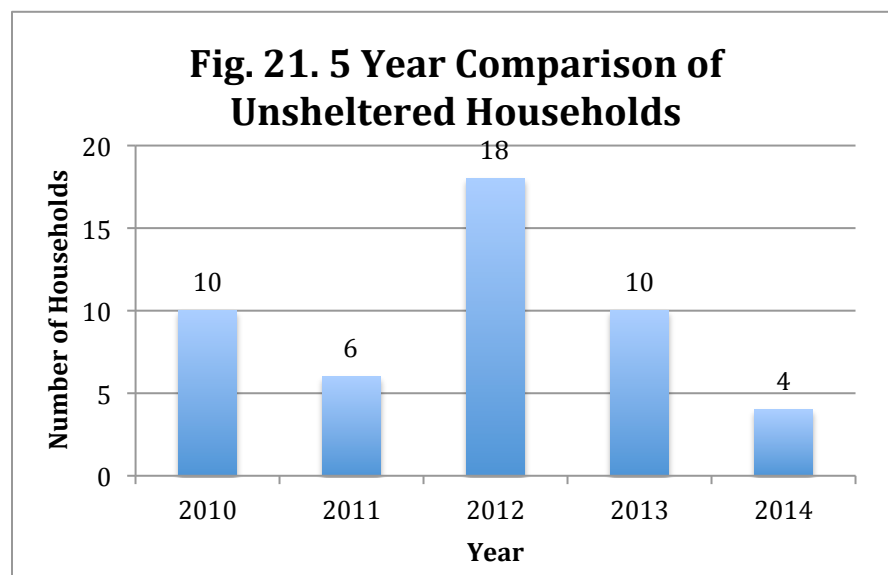


Figure 21 shows the number of unsheltered respondents from 2010 to 2014. Over the past five years the numbers have gone down by 60% overall. Since 2012, the number of unsheltered homeless persons has dropped 77.8% in Sussex County.

Families and
Individuals

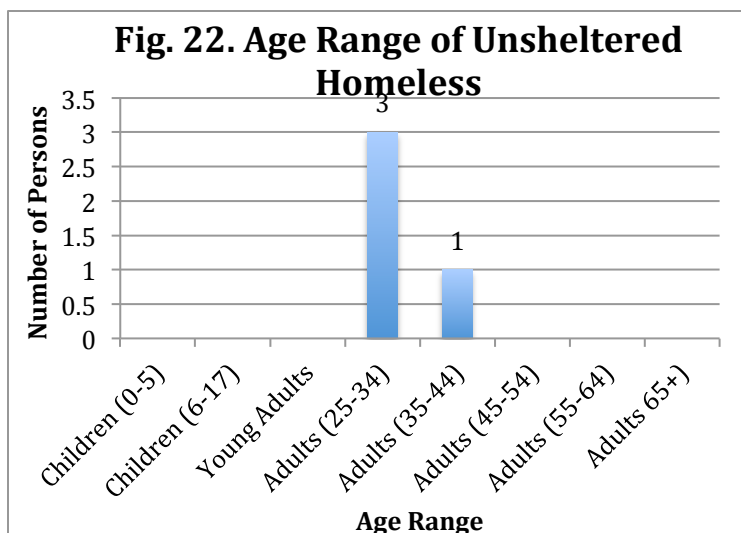
There were 0 unsheltered families with adults and children counted in 2014.

All 4 unsheltered households counted were households with just 1 adult individual.

Demographics

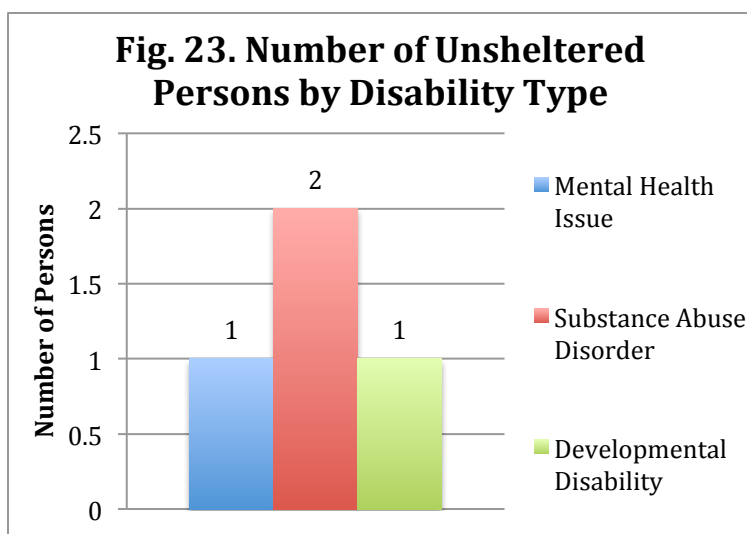
The largest portion of the 4 unsheltered persons counted in 2014, 75%, was between 25 and 34 years old. 25% were between 35 and 44.

All of the unsheltered persons were male, and all identified their race as White. None of the unsheltered respondents identified as Hispanic.



Disabilities

3 of 4 unsheltered persons (75%) reported having some disability. The disability most commonly identified was substance abuse disorders (2 persons, 50%). The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the unsheltered can be seen in Figure 23.



Subpopulations

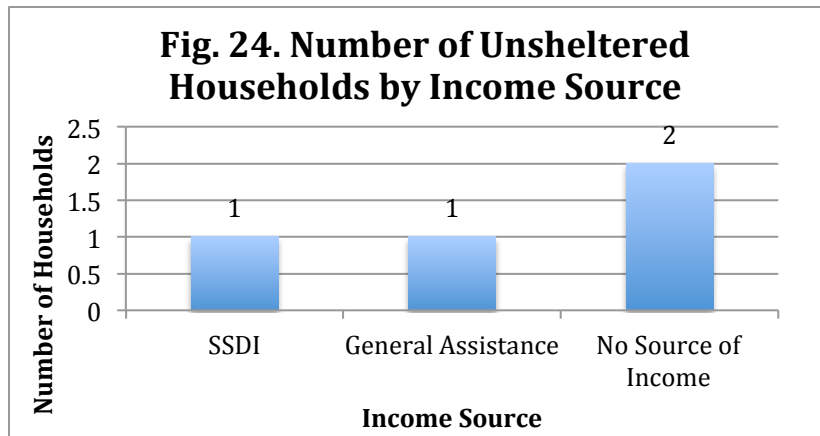
On the night of the count, 1 unsheltered homeless person (25%) in Sussex County reported being a victim of domestic violence.

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

Income and Benefits

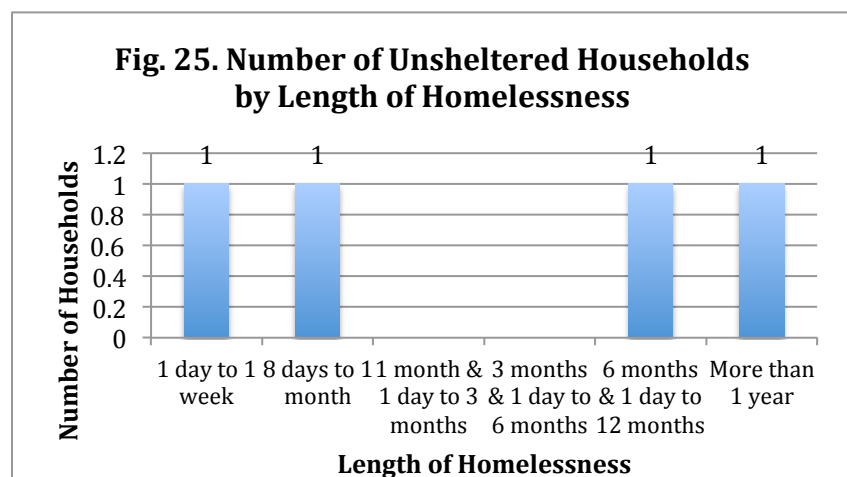
Among all the unsheltered respondent households on the night of the count, 2 (50%) reported having no source of cash income. The average monthly income reported among unsheltered households was approximately \$200. Figure 24 shows the sources of income received.

2 unsheltered households (50%) reported they were not receiving any type of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Food Stamps (SNAP) and was the top reported non-cash benefits among this group, with 25% receiving this benefit.



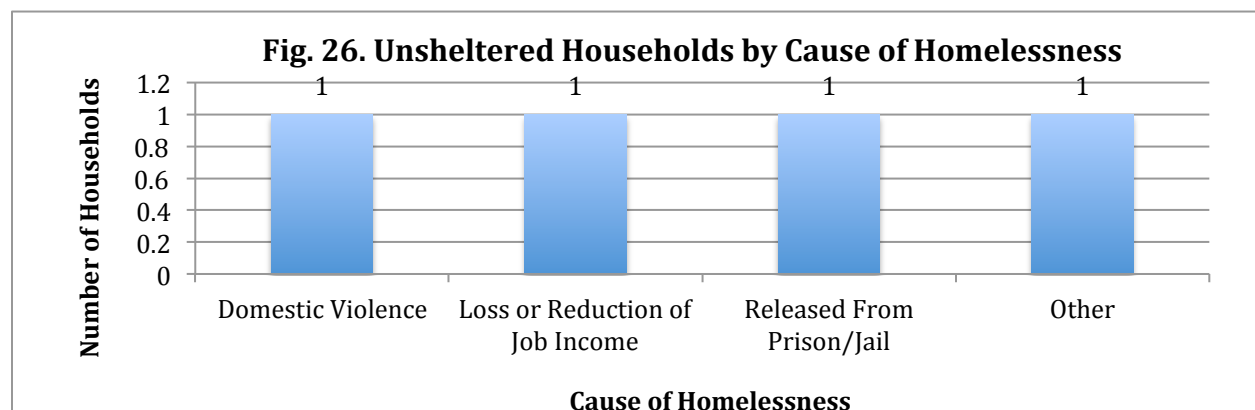
Length of Homelessness

As shown in Figure 25, the 4 unsheltered homeless households reported 4 different lengths of time that their households' most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted. Half had been homeless for less than 1 month, and half had been homeless for more than 6 months.



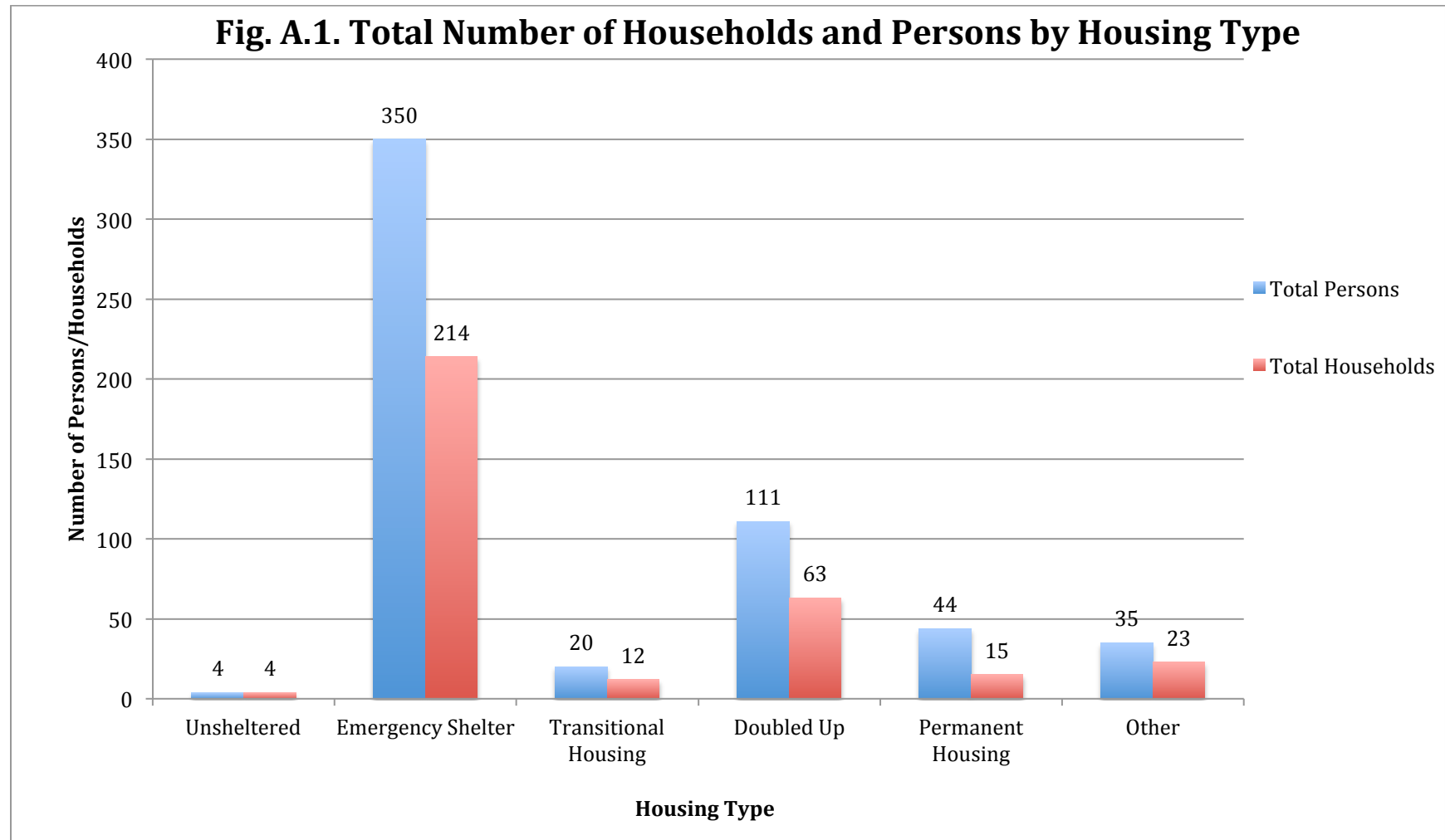
Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, the 4 unsheltered households gave 4 different answers. Below, Figure 26 shows the factors cited by each household.



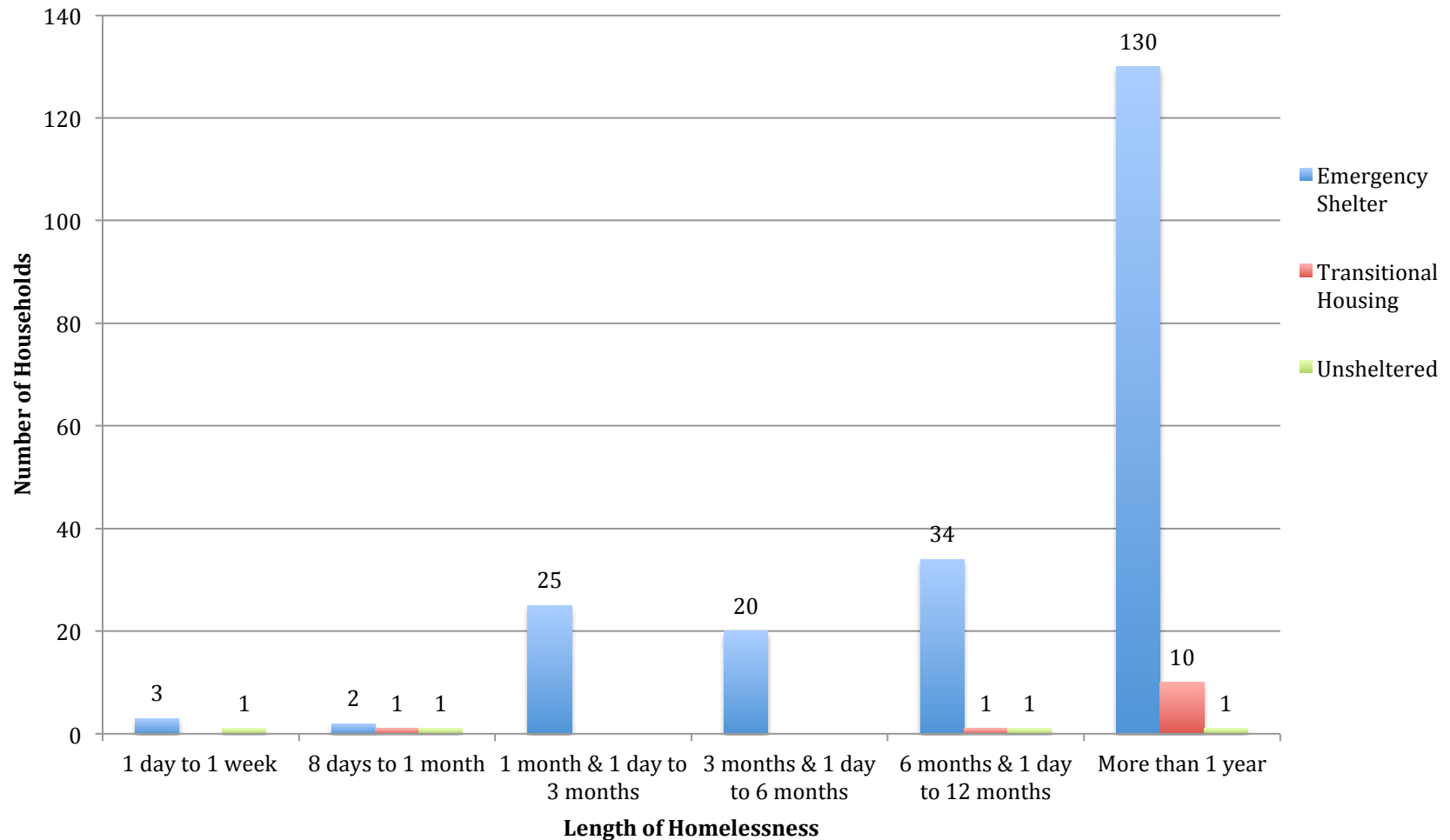
VI. Appendix

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



How long have you been in your current living situation?

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



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

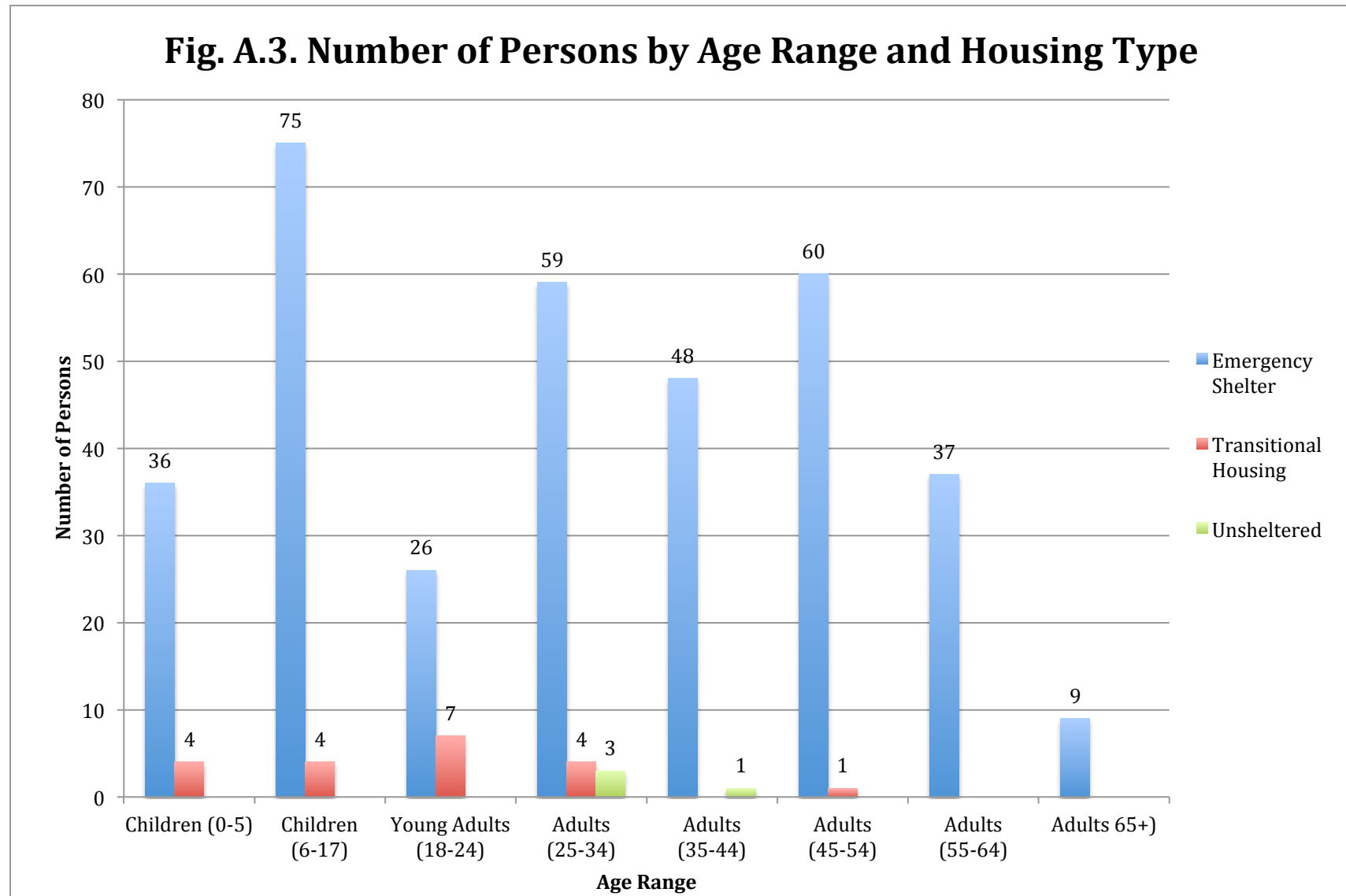


Fig. A.4. Number of Persons by Gender and Housing Situation

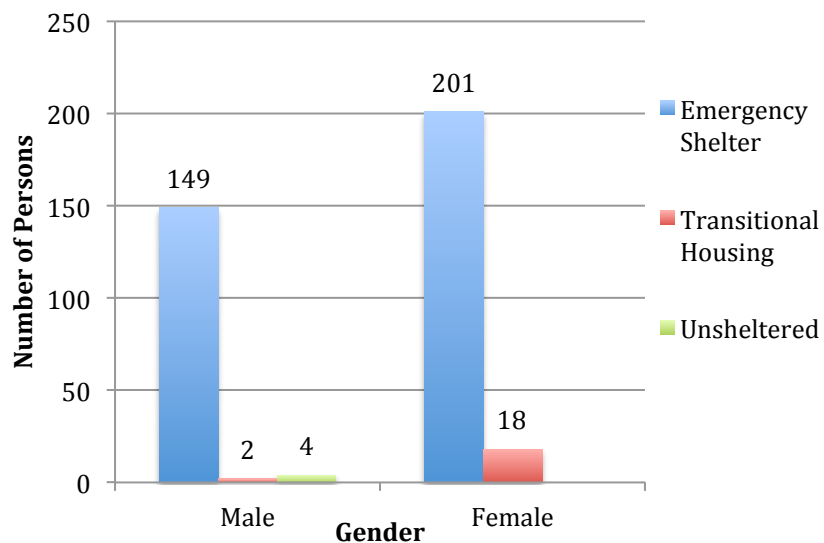


Fig. A.5. Number of Homeless Persons by Race

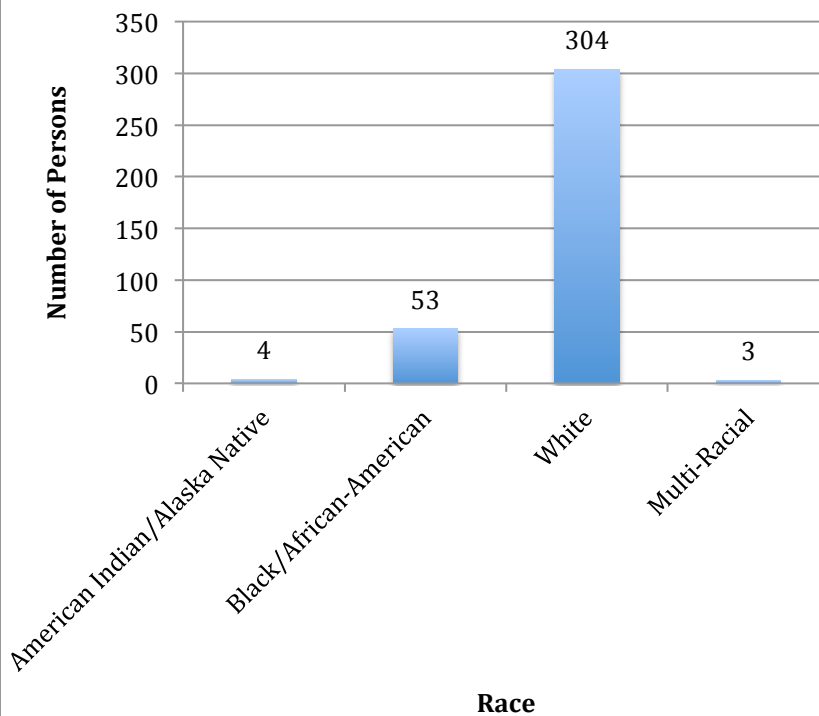
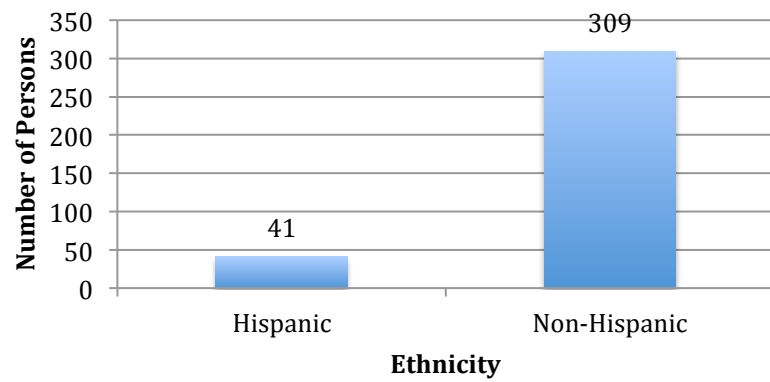
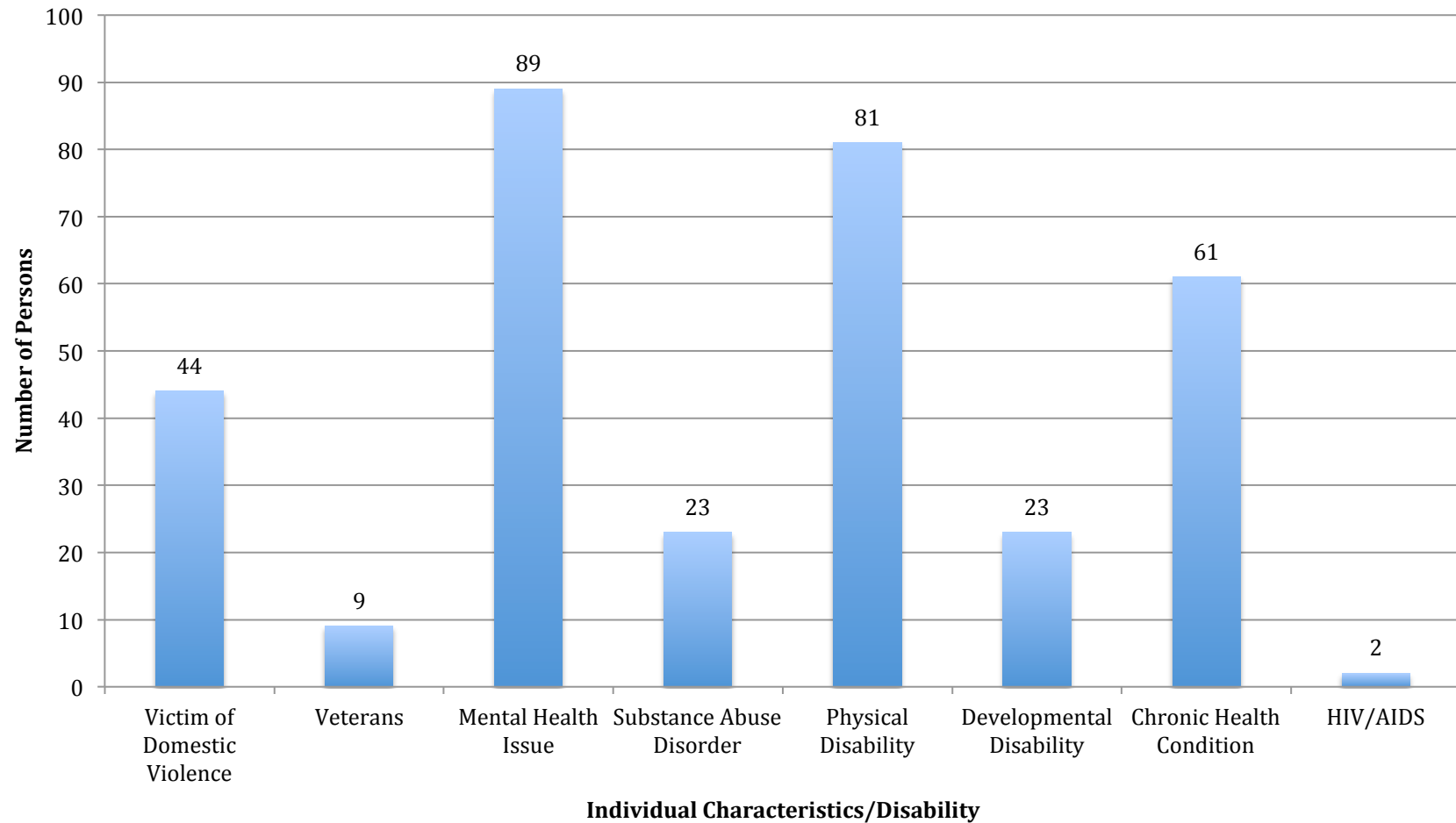


Fig. A.6. Number of Homeless Persons by Ethnicity



Household Characteristics – check all that apply to each person

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

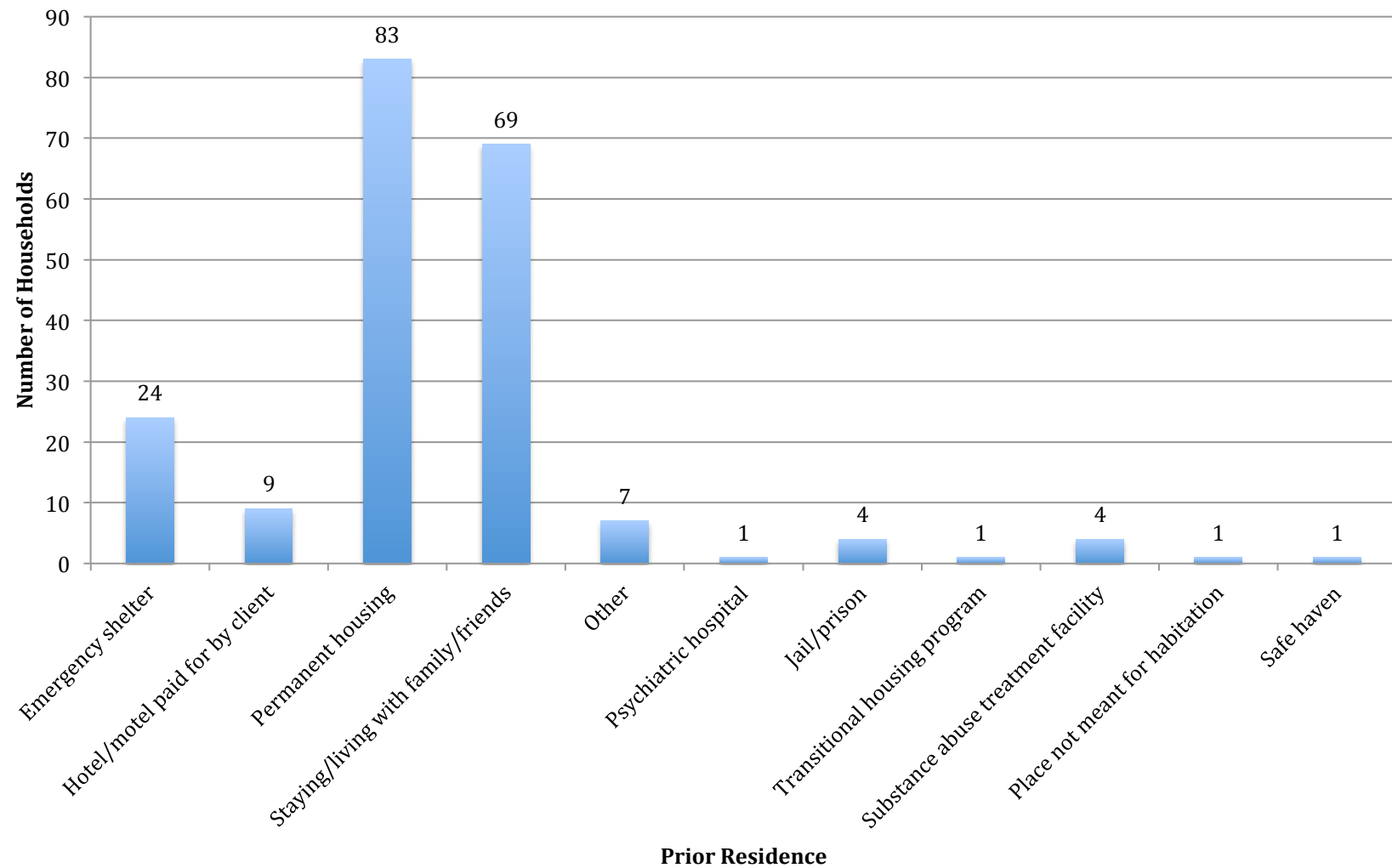


Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?

Fig. A.8. Number of Households by County or State of Last Permanent Address	
Last Permanent Address – County/State	Number of Households
Atlantic County	1
Bergen County	2
Essex County	3
Hudson County	1
Middlesex County	50
Monmouth County	2
Morris County	11
Ocean County	1
Passaic County	10
Somerset County	1
Sussex County	144
Warren County	2

What was your residence prior to your current living situation?

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



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

Fig. A. 10. Number of Households by Source of Cash Income

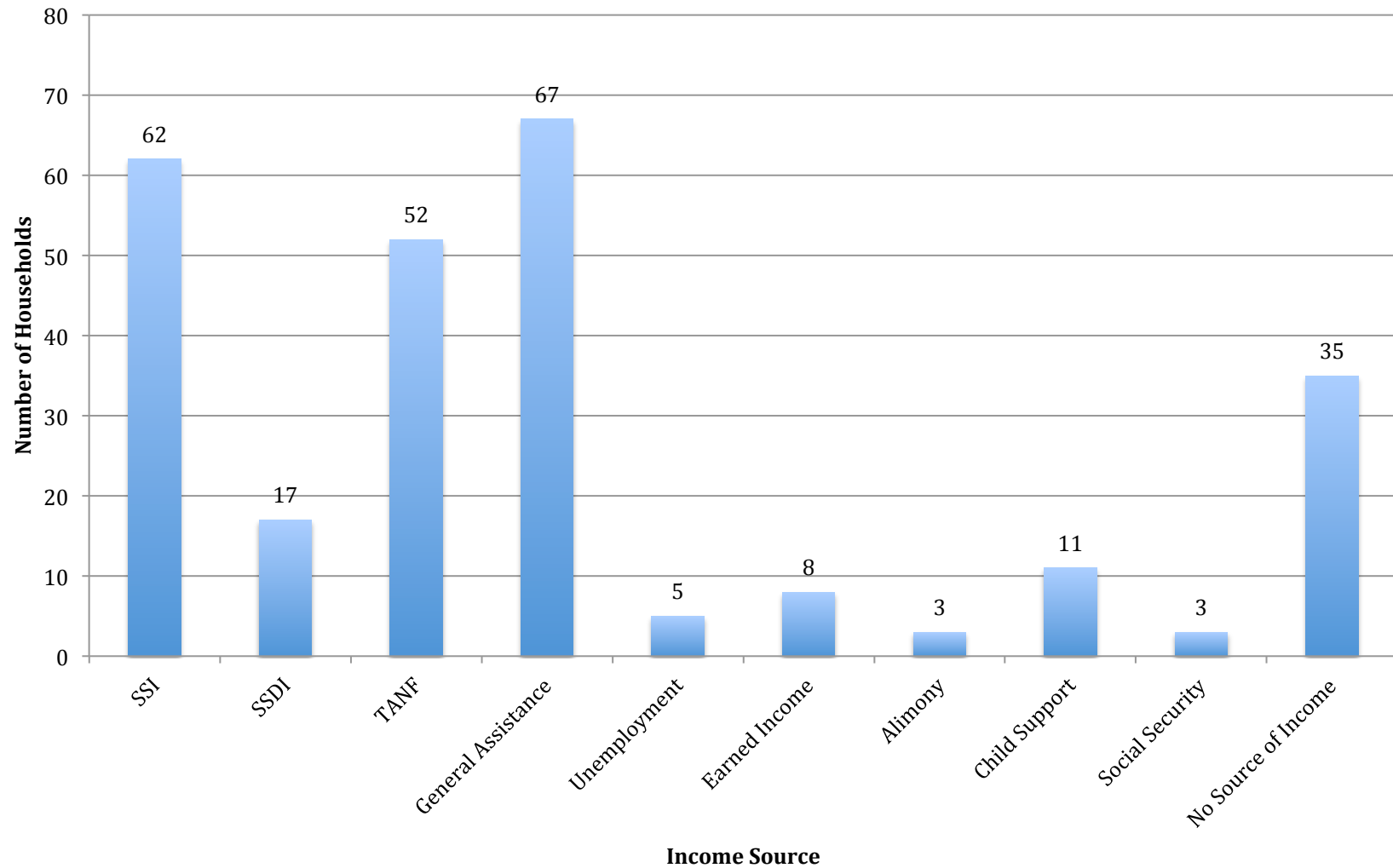
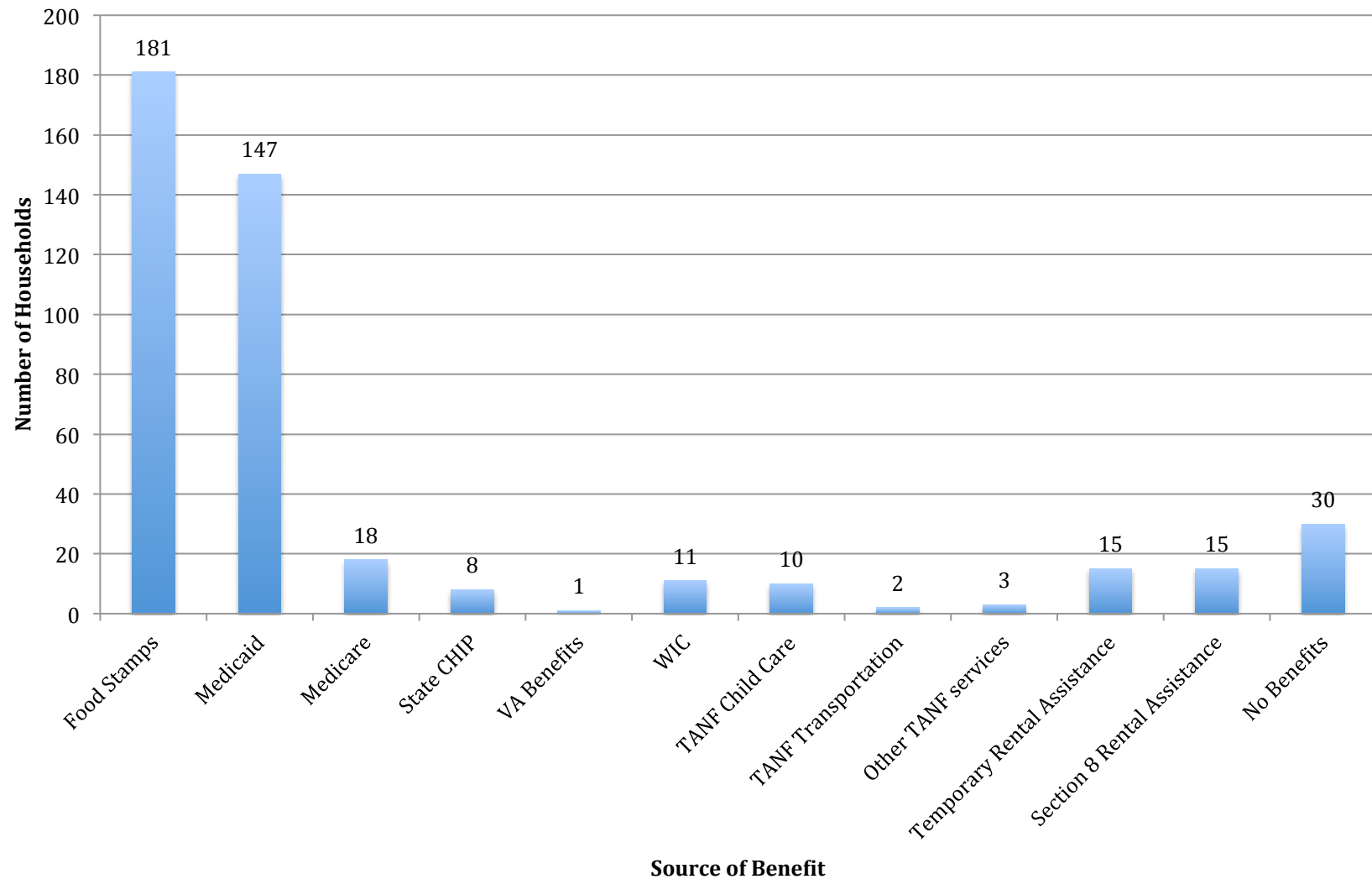
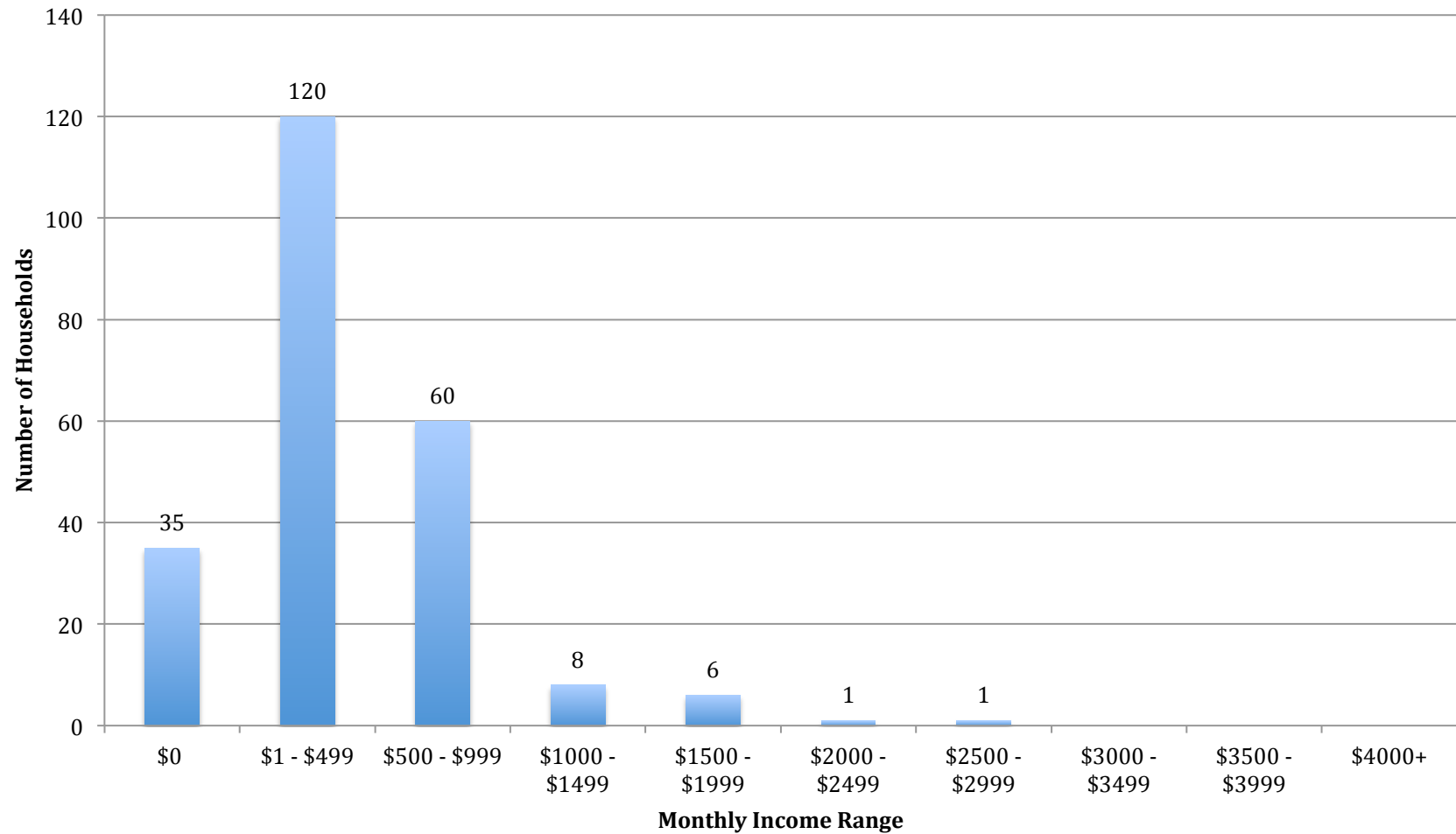


Fig. A. 11. Number of Households by Sources of Non-Cash Benefits



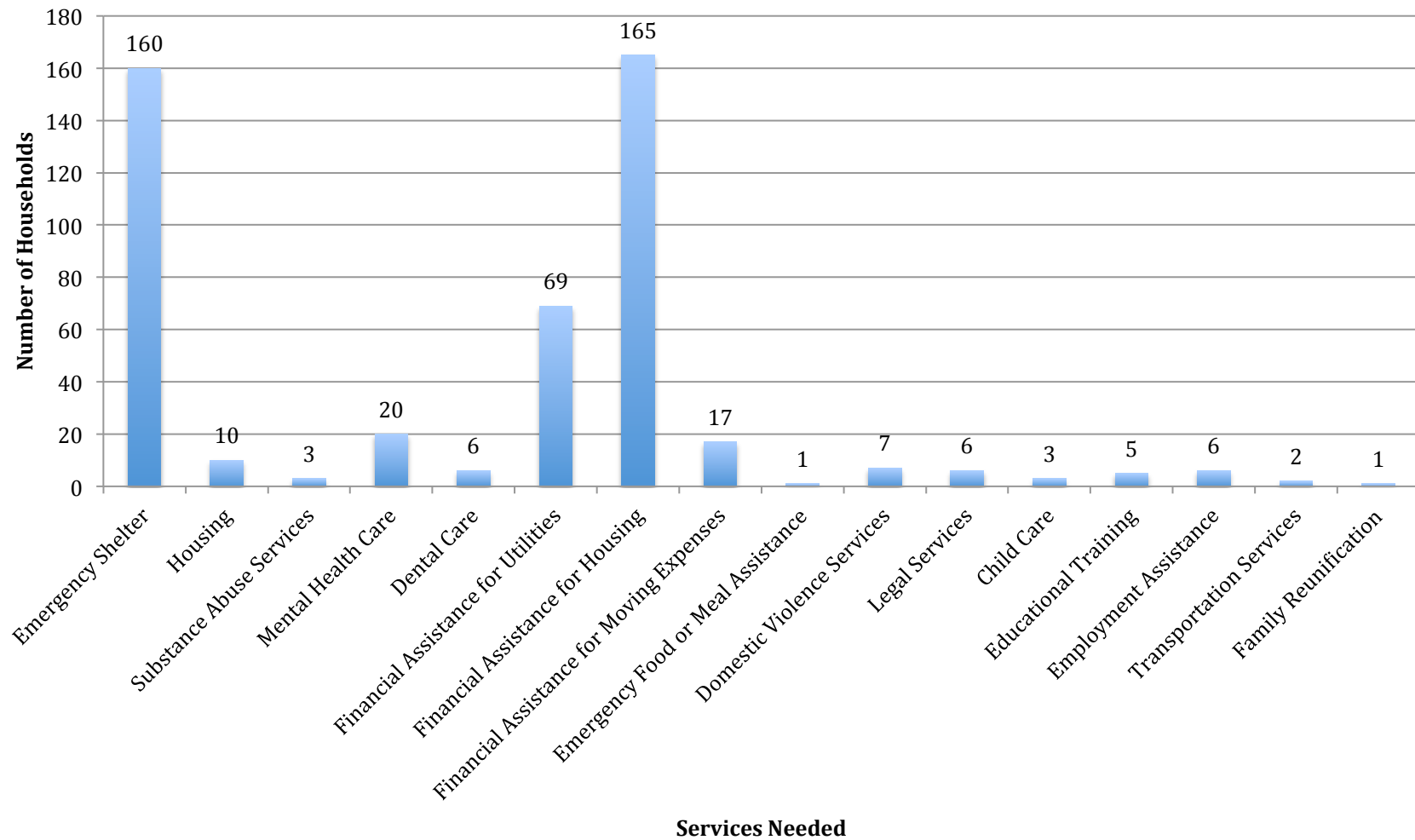
What is your monthly household income?

Fig. A.12. Number of Homeless Households by Monthly Income Range



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

Fig. A.13. Number of Homeless Households by Services Needed



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

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

