Gloucester County Homeless Assessment Report

2013

I. Introduction

In 2012, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development released the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Interim rules. These interim regulations require a high level of planning and coordination among all Continuums of Care (CoCs) throughout the Country. As with any planning process, data analysis of the needs and outcomes of the current system is essential to facilitate meaningful planning.

In order to assist the Continuums of Care throughout New Jersey with this data analysis, this report uses information from the New Jersey Homeless Information System (HMIS) to provide a snapshot of the characteristics of homeless households in Gloucester County. This report can serve as the foundation of a more in depth review of the population and its needs. Communities in New Jersey are well positioned to move towards data driven planning with the wealth of information available through HMIS.

II. Data Source

This Homeless Assessment Report for Gloucester County analyzed data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) administered by New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA), the HMIS Lead Agency. In New Jersey, NJHMFA utilized software developed by Foothold Technology as the primary HMIS system for the state. The projects included in this report were all Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing and Safe Haven projects (if available in the community) that were classified as "Homeless Only".

The Homeless Assessment Report is based on information about unduplicated homeless families and individuals who used available emergency shelter, transitional housing and safe haven projects during the yearlong reporting period January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013, as reported in HMIS.

For purposes of this report, families included any persons that presented together at the HMIS participating project and would choose to be permanently housed together if that was an option. This can include, households with adults and children under the age of 18, households made of all adults, or unaccompanied youth (under age 18) that present together.
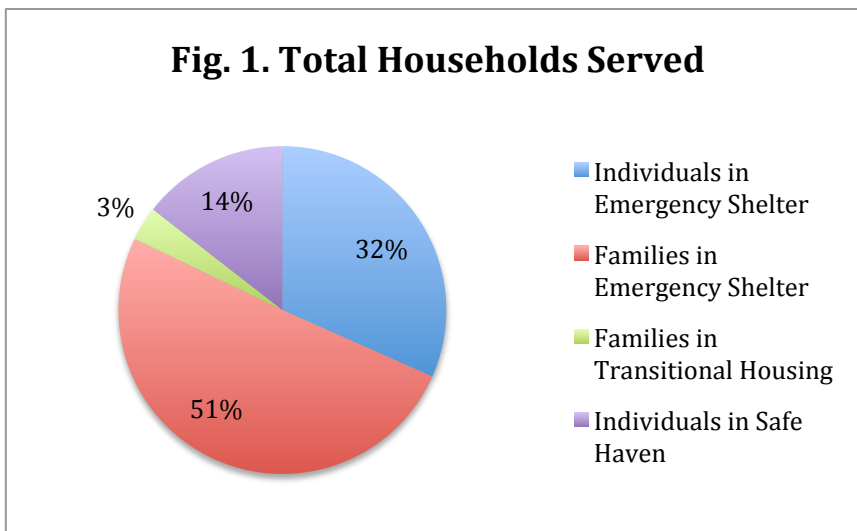
III. Findings for Total Population Served

Key Findings:
- A total of 297 households were served in HMIS participating emergency shelters, transitional housing and safe haven projects during the January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013 period
- There were 11 households identified as chronically homeless during this reporting period
- 46% of all adults served either as individuals or as part of a family identified having a disabling condition
- 76% of the total population served was under age 30
- 47% of households moved on to permanent destinations after discharge, while 49% moved on to temporary destinations
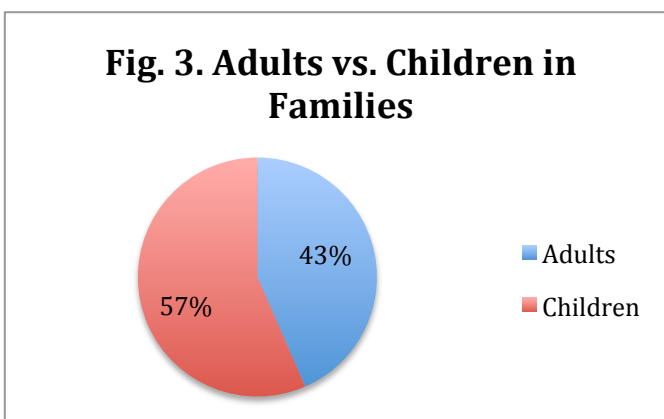
Total Homeless Population. A total of 297 households composed of 531 persons were housed in Gloucester County HMIS participating emergency shelters, transitional housing or safe haven projects during the January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013 reporting period. Out of the households served in 2013, the slight majority, 54% (160 households) were families, while the remaining 46%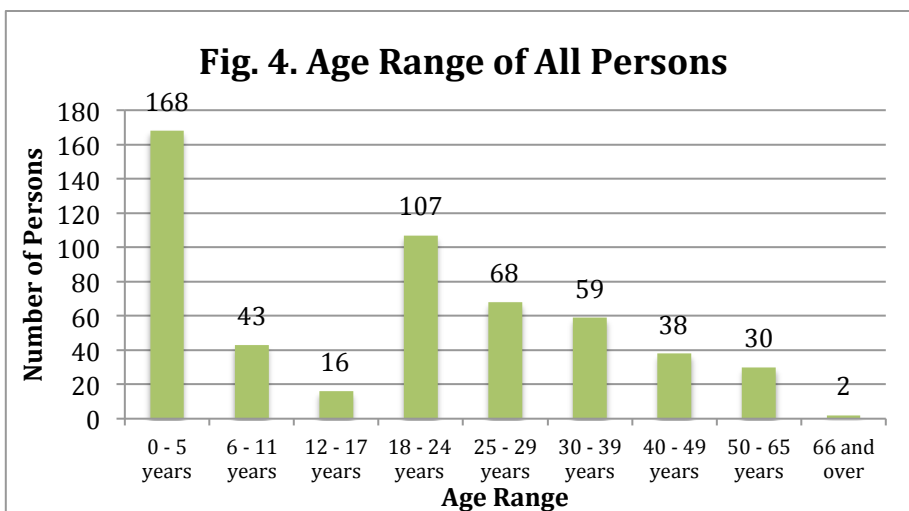 (137) were individuals. As shown in Figure 1, the most served population was families in emergency shelter, which accounted for 51% of the total population each. The 531 persons served throughout Gloucester County HMIS projects made up 2% of New Jersey's total homeless population served in HMIS projects in 2013.

Fig. 1. Total Households Served

- Individuals in Emergency Shelter
- Families in Emergency Shelter
- Families in Transitional Housing
- Individuals in Safe Haven

32%
51%
3%
14%

Figure 2. Total Persons Served		
	Gloucester County	**New Jersey**
Total Persons Served	531	23,949
Emergency Shelter	466	19,208
Individuals	94	12,639
Families	372	6,569
Transitional Housing	22	4,455
Individuals	0	2,176
Families	22	2,279
Safe Haven	43	286
Individuals	43	286
Families	0	0

Family Composition. Of the 160 family households served throughout Gloucester County in 2013, 154 (96%) were households with adults and children under 18, 4 were adult only households while the other 2 were youth only households. As shown in Figure 3, children represented 57% of the persons included in adult and children families. The average size of a homeless family in 2013 was 2 and the average age of a child served between the two project types was 4 years old.

Fig. 3. Adults vs. Children in Families

- Adults
- Children

43%
57%

Demographics. Of the total homeless population that was served in Gloucester County during 2013, the largest percent, 43%, of persons were children under the age of 18, with 227 children falling in that age category. As Figure 4 shows, the next highest age range served was persons between the ages of 18 and 29, which represented 33% of the total population, showing that 76% of the population served were persons under the age of 30.

Fig. 4. Age Range of All Persons

Number of Persons (y-axis): 0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100, 120, 140, 160, 180

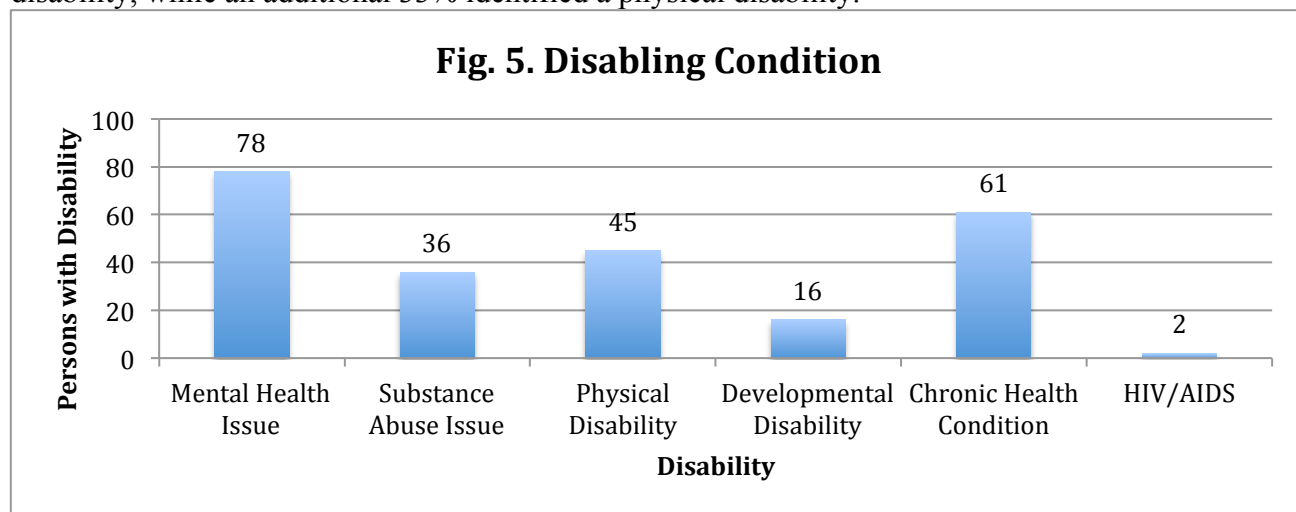| Age Range	Number of Persons
0 - 5 years	168
6 - 11 years	43
12 - 17 years	16
18 - 24 years	107
25 - 29 years	68
30 - 39 years	59
40 - 49 years	38
50 - 65 years	30
66 and over	2

Similar to the 2012 numbers, more than half (75%) of the homeless persons served in Gloucester County projects were female, with men representing only 25% of the population.

In addition, 57% of the homeless persons served during 2013 identified their race as Black or African American, making that the largest racial subgroup. The next largest was White (32%), followed by Multi-Racial with 7%. With regards to ethnicity, only 14% identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.
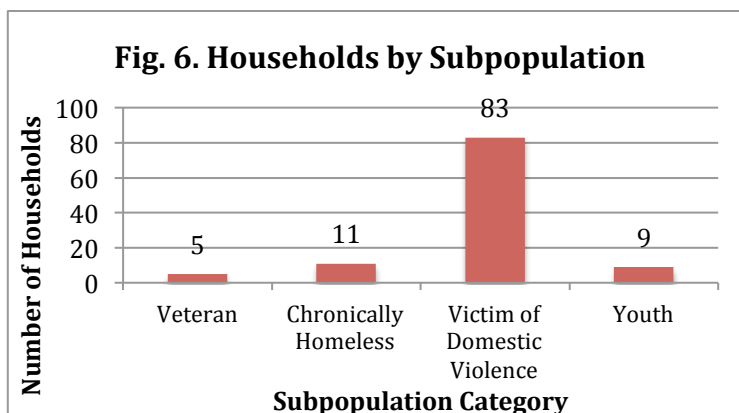
Disabling Conditions. Among all persons served throughout Gloucester County's HMIS emergency shelter, transitional housing and safe haven projects, 27% identified having a disabling condition, this number includes 46% of adults and 1% of children.

Among disabled adults, 56% reported mental health issues making this the most prevalent disability; representing 26% of the total adult homeless population. 44% of disabled adults also reported a chronic health condition. Among disabled children, 67% reported a developmental disability, while an additional 33% identified a physical disability.

Fig. 5. Disabling Condition

Persons with Disability (y-axis): 0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100

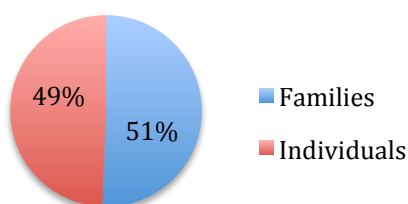| Disability	Persons with Disability
Mental Health Issue	78
Substance Abuse Issue	36
Physical Disability	45
Developmental Disability	16
Chronic Health Condition	61
HIV/AIDS	2

Subpopulation Characteristics. In its plan, *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has prioritized ending youth, veteran and chronic homelessness across the Country. In 2013, Gloucester County served a total of 11 households that were identified as chronically homeless in emergency shelter or safe haven projects. 64% of the chronic households served were individuals in safe haven projects, while the remaining 36% were individuals and families in emergency shelter.

Fig. 6. Households by Subpopulation

Youth only households, households without someone over age 18, represented only 3% of the total households served throughout Gloucester HMIS projects. These households were composed of 7 individual youth and 4 persons in youth only households. All of the youth only households were served in emergency shelter projects.

As far as veterans served, Gloucester County served a total of 5 veterans throughout 2013. 80% of veterans served were individuals and 60% were female. All of the veterans served were served in emergency shelter projects. 40% of veterans reported having some kind of disability, with the most common disabilities reported being mental health issue and physical disabilities.

Fig. 7. Household Type Among Victims of Domestic Violence

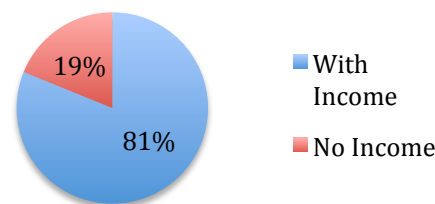49% ■ Families
51% ■ Individuals

In addition to the chronic, youth and veteran populations, there were 83 homeless households that reported having a victim of domestic violence. 51% of these households were families, while the remaining 41 were individuals. 35% reported that the last episode of domestic violence happened within the past 3 months, while 30% reported it occurred over a year ago. The majority of the domestic violence victims (80%) were served in emergency shelters. As a note, while there are victims of domestic violence being served in HMIS participating agencies, due to federal regulations, Domestic Violence specific projects are not able to enter data into HMIS, so the number of victims served in those projects are not included in this report.
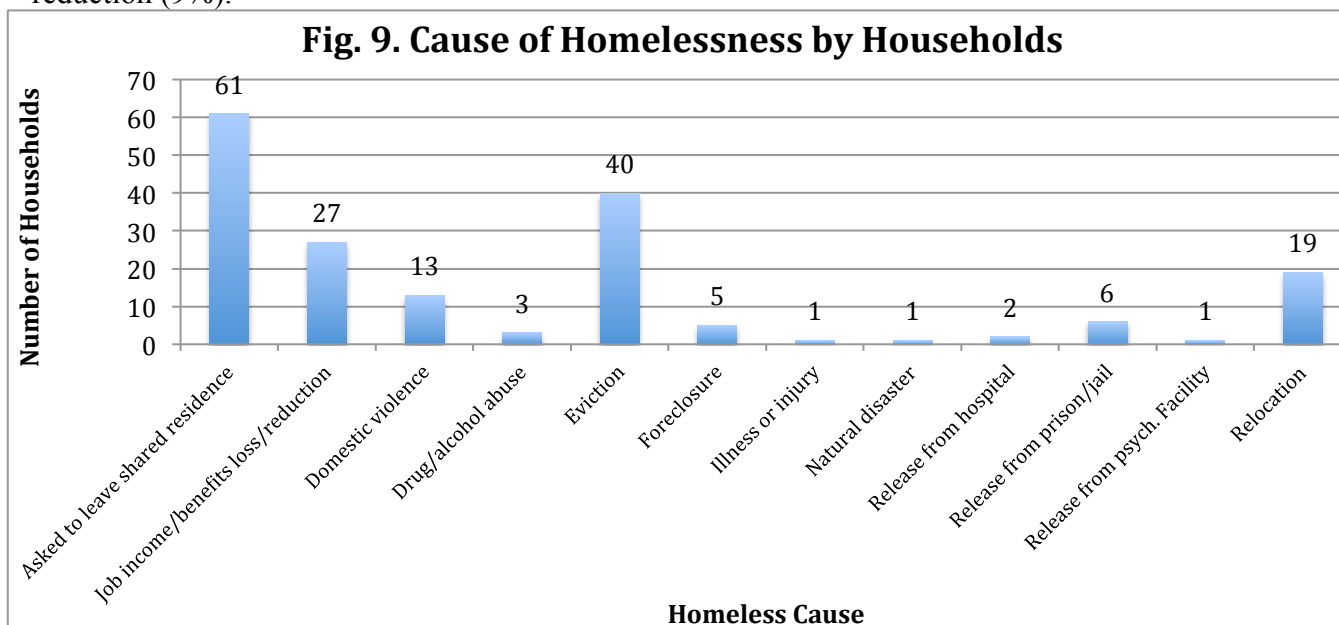
Income and Benefits. Among all homeless households served in emergency shelter, transitional housing or safe haven projects during 2013, 19% had no source of income, while 5% reported receiving some form of earned income. The most common sources of cash income among households were TANF (44%) and SSI (32%). The average monthly income for households was $290 for emergency shelter, $281 for safe haven, and $887 for households served in transitional housing projects.

Fig. 8. Percentage of Households with Income
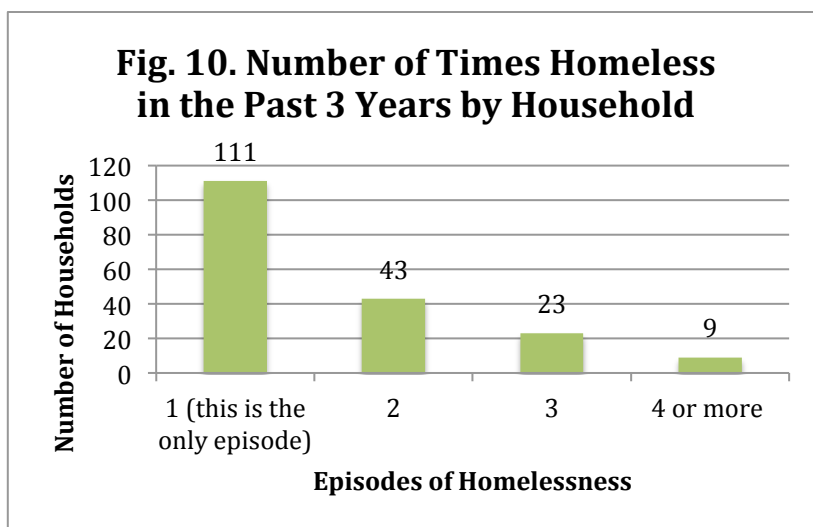
19% ■ With Income
81% ■ No Income

While 19% of households had no source of income, 10% of households were not receiving some kind of non-cash benefit. Food Stamps was the top reported non-cash benefit, which was reported by 87% of the households. Another 71% of households were connected to Medicaid benefits.

Cause of Homelessness and Residence Prior to Project Entry. When asked what the primary factor was that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to being asked to leave a shared residence (21%) than any other cause. As Figure 9 shows, the next most common factors were eviction (13%) and job income or benefits loss or reduction (9%).

Fig. 9. Cause of Homelessness by Households

These causes of homelessness coincide with the common response for residence prior to project entry with 57% of households staying or living with family or friends prior to project entry. The next most common response was emergency shelter (25%) followed by hotel or motel (6%).
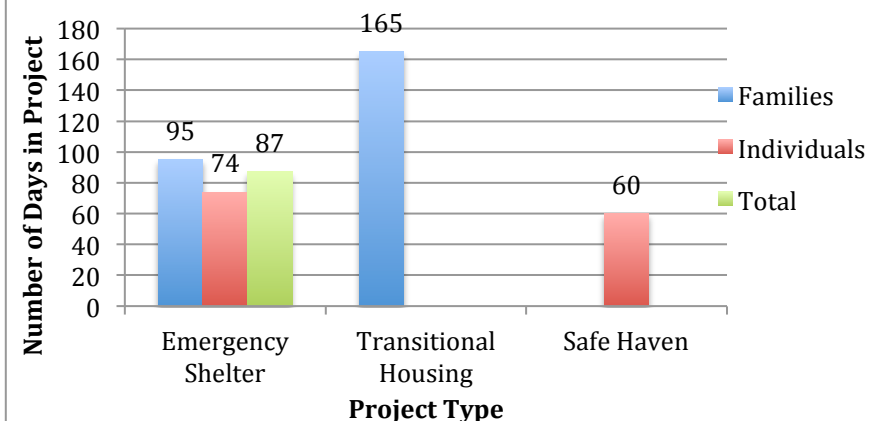
Length of Stay at Prior Residence and Episodes of Homelessness. 20% of households served during 2013 had stated they resided in their last residence for one year or longer before entering the emergency shelter, transitional housing or safe haven project. Another 24% were in their prior residence for more than 3 months but less than one year, while only 14% were there one week or less. When looking at episodes of homelessness, 37% of households were experiencing their first episode of homelessness prior to project entry.

Fig. 10. Number of Times Homeless in the Past 3 Years by Household
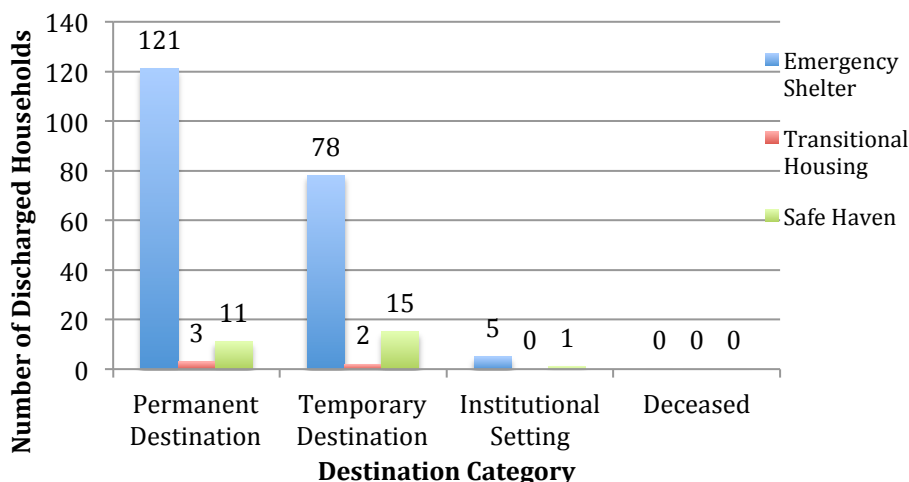
Average Length of Project Stay. When looking at total length of project stay for emergency shelters in Gloucester County, families seemed to have longer stays in than individuals. During their project stay it was found that families stayed on average 21 days longer than individuals in emergency shelter. The average length of stay for families in transitional housing was 165 days, or about 5 months, and 60 days for individuals in safe havens.

Fig. 11. Average Length of Project Stay by Household Type

Number of Days in Project (vertical axis)
Project Type (horizontal axis)

- Emergency Shelter: Families 95, Individuals 74, Total 87
- Transitional Housing: Families 165
- Safe Haven: Individuals 60

Legend: Families, Individuals, Total

Reason and Destination at Discharge. A total of 289 households were discharged from emergency shelter, transitional housing and safe haven projects during the 2013 reporting period. 36% of these households were discharged from projects after completing the program while 28% were discharged from the project due to non-compliance.

Fig. 12. Destination Category by Households

Number of Discharged Households (vertical axis)
Destination Category (horizontal axis)

- Permanent Destination: Emergency Shelter 121, Transitional Housing 3, Safe Haven 11
- Temporary Destination: Emergency Shelter 78, Transitional Housing 2, Safe Haven 15
- Institutional Setting: Emergency Shelter 5, Transitional Housing 0, Safe Haven 1
- Deceased: Emergency Shelter 0, Transitional Housing 0, Safe Haven 0

Legend: Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, Safe Haven

47% of households discharged in 2013 moved on to permanent destinations upon discharge from the project. A permanent destination includes a unit owned or rented by a client, permanent housing project, or living with a family member or friend permanently. The most common permanent destination was rental by client with 34% of total households moving into a rental upon discharge. This rental could be with or without a subsidy. 33% of households moved on to a temporary destination at discharge, which could include an emergency shelter, hotel or motel, place not meant for habitation, staying with a family member or friend temporarily, safe haven, or transitional housing for homeless persons. The most common form of temporary housing as a destination was emergency shelter, which involved 20% of the total households. An institutional destination, which was the destination of 2% of households, includes hospitals (psychiatric or non-psychiatric), a halfway house, jail or prison, foster care, long-term care facility or a substance abuse treatment facility. Medical hospital was the most common institutional destination recorded with 4 households being discharged to hospitals.

Appendix A: HMIS Projects Included in Report

I. Emergency Shelter Projects

Agency	Project Name
Center for Family Services	CFS-MCRS EA Families
Interfaith Hospitality	IHN – Emergency Shelter
VOADV	VOADV-Eleanor Corbett Emergency Shelter

II. Transitional Housing Projects

Agency	Project Name
Center for Family Services	CFS-MCRS Transitional Housing
Tri-County Comm. Action Partnership Parvins Branch	TCCAP-TH

III. Safe Haven Projects

Agency	Project Name
VOADV	VOADV-Eleanor Corbett Safe Haven 2
	VOADV-Eleanor Corbett Safe Have HUD