



# Somerset County CoC 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 the Somerset County CoC. 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 Somerset County CoC 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**

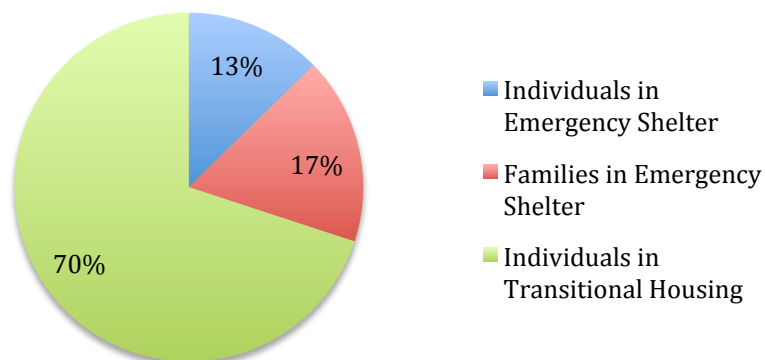
### **Key Findings:**

- A total of 213 households were served in HMIS participating emergency shelters and transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013 period
- There were 2 households identified as chronically homeless during this reporting period
- 85% of all adults served either as individuals or as part of a family identified having a disabling condition
- 37% of the total population served was between the ages of 50 and 65
- 41% of households moved on to permanent destinations after discharge

## Total Homeless

**Population.** A total of 213 households composed of 297 persons were housed in Somerset County CoC HMIS participating emergency shelters or transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013 reporting period. This is a 26% decrease in total households served from 2012. Out of the households served in 2013, the majority, 83% (176) were individuals, while the remaining 17% (37 households) were families. As shown in Figure 1, the most served population was individuals in transitional housing projects, which made up 70% of the total population served. The 297 persons served throughout Somerset County HMIS projects made up 1% of New Jersey's total homeless population served in HMIS projects in 2013.

**Fig. 1. Total Households Served**



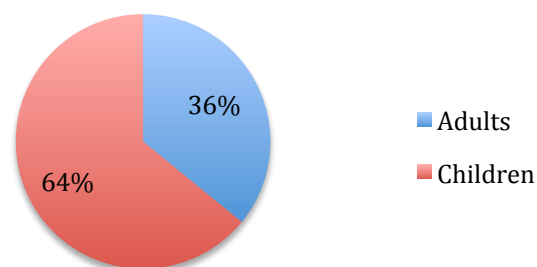
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**Figure 2. Total Persons Served**

	Somerset County	New Jersey
<b>Total Persons Served</b>	297	23,949
<b>Emergency Shelter</b>	148	19,208
Individuals	27	12,639
Families	121	6,569
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	149	4,455
Individuals	149	2,176
Families	0	2,279

**Family Composition.** Of the 37 family households served throughout Somerset County in 2013, 35 (95%) were households with adults and children under 18, while the remaining 2 (5%) were adult only households. As shown in Figure 3, children represented 64% of the persons included in adult and children families. The average size of a homeless family in 2013 was 3 and the average age of a child served was 6 years old.

**Fig. 3. Adults vs. Children in Families**



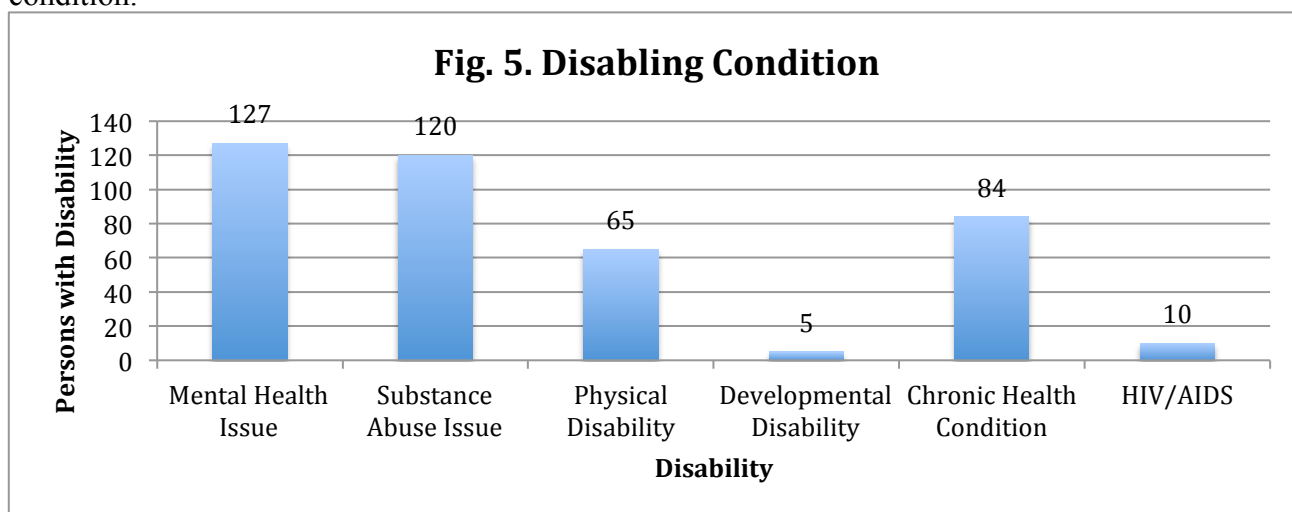
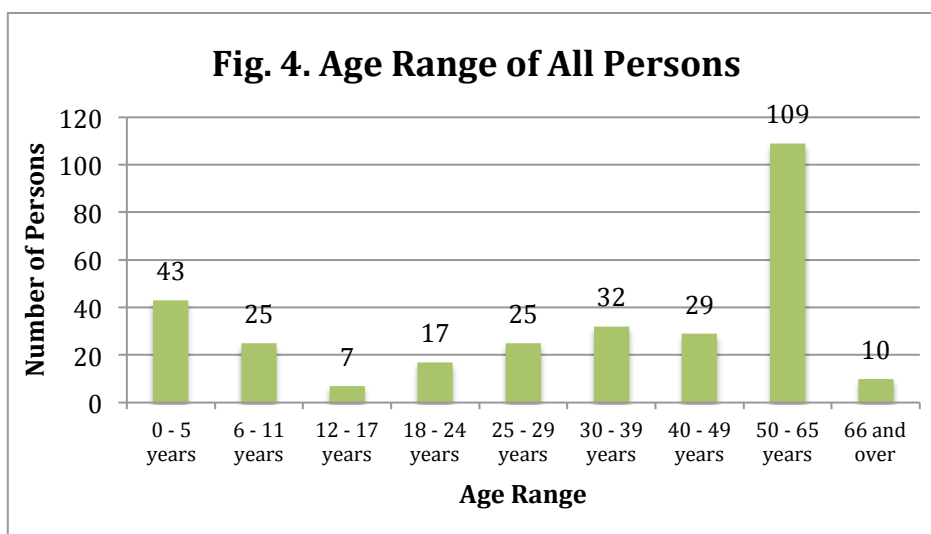
**Demographics.** Of the total homeless population that was served in the Somerset CoC during 2013, the largest percent, 37%, of persons were between the ages of 50 and 65. As Figure 4 shows, the next highest age range served was children under the age of 18 (25%).

Matching the 2012 numbers, more than half (65%) of the homeless persons served in Somerset CoC HMIS participating projects were male, with women representing 35% of the population.

In addition, 62% 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 (31%), followed by Multi-Racial with 4%. With regards to ethnicity, only 11% identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.

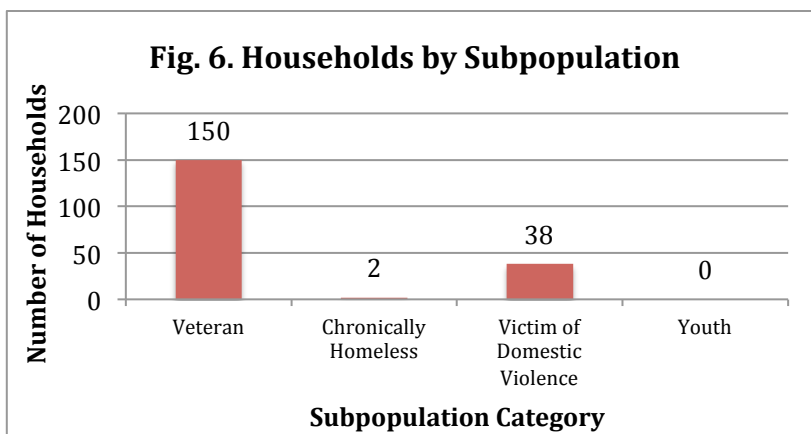
**Disabling Conditions.** Among all persons served throughout Somerset County's HMIS emergency shelter and transitional housing projects, 64% identified having a disabling condition, this number includes 85% of adults and 1% of children.

Among disabled adults, 68% reported mental health issues making this the most prevalent disability; representing 57% of the total adult homeless population. 64% of disabled adults also reported a substance abuse issue. The one disabled child that was served identified a chronic health condition.



### Subpopulation Characteristics.

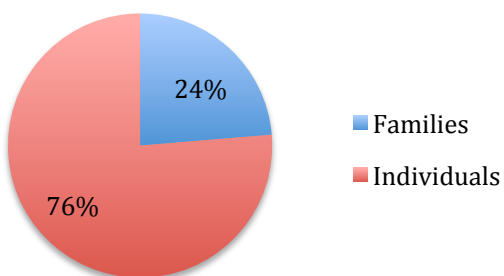
In its plan, *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has prioritized ending youth, veteran and chronic homelessness across the Country. In 2013, Somerset CoC served a total of 2 households that were identified as chronically homeless. Both households were in emergency shelter, one was an individual household was the other was a family.



Somerset HMIS projects did not serve any youth only households, households without someone over age 18, during the 2013 reporting period.

As far as veterans served, Somerset CoC served a total of 150 veterans throughout 2013. 99% of veterans served were individuals and only 6% were female. 99% of the veterans served were served in transitional housing projects. 98% of veterans reported having some kind of disability, with the most common disability reported being substance abuse issue (73%).

**Fig. 7. Household Type Among Victims of Domestic Violence**

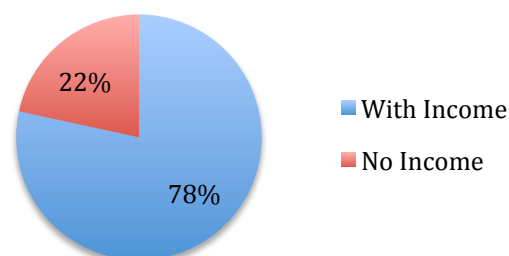


In addition to the chronic, youth and veteran populations, there were 38 homeless households that reported having a victim of domestic violence. 76% of these households were individuals, while the remaining 9 were families. 61% reported that the last episode of domestic violence occurred over a year ago, while 21% reported it happening within the past 3 months. The majority of the domestic violence victims (55%) were served in transitional housing projects. 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.

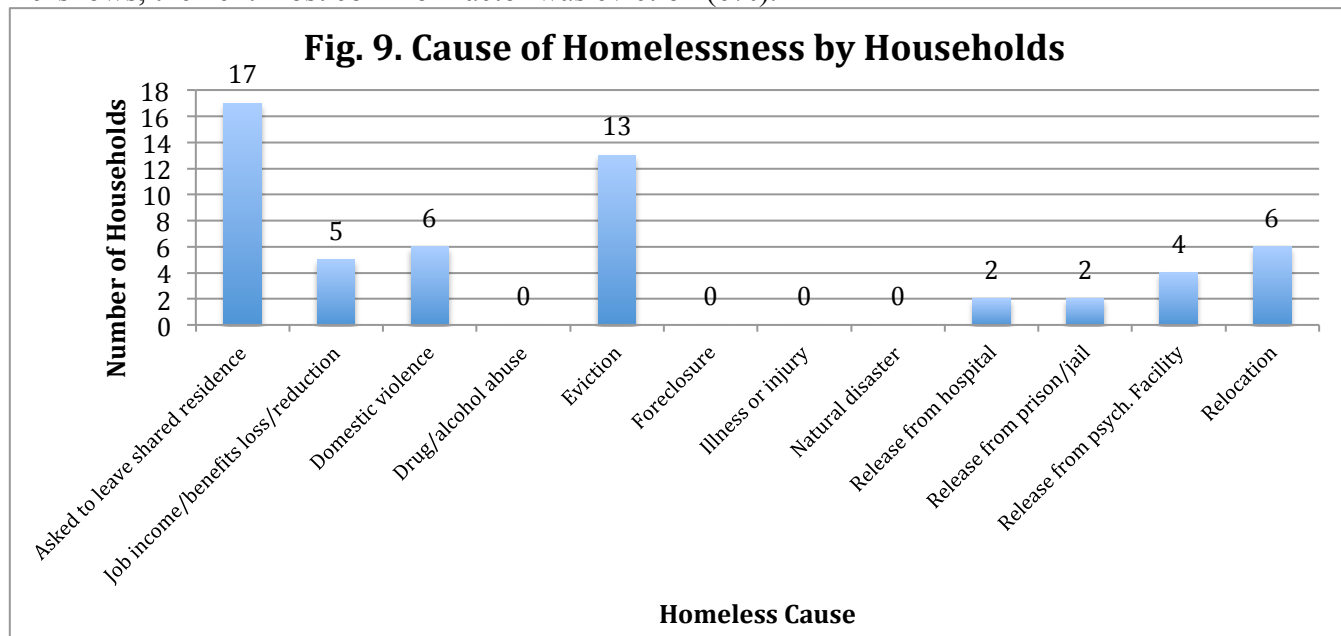
**Income and Benefits.** Among all homeless households served in emergency shelter or transitional housing projects during 2013, 22% had no source of income, while 23% reported receiving some form of earned income. The most common source of cash income among households, after earned income, was VA Service-Connected Disability Compensation (15%). The average monthly income for households was \$486 in emergency shelter and \$986 in transitional housing projects.

**Fig. 8. Percentage of Households with Income**



While 22% of households had no source of income, 20% of households were not receiving some kind of non-cash benefit. VA Medical Services was the top reported non-cash benefit, which was reported by 61% of the households. Another 29% of households were receiving to Food Stamps.

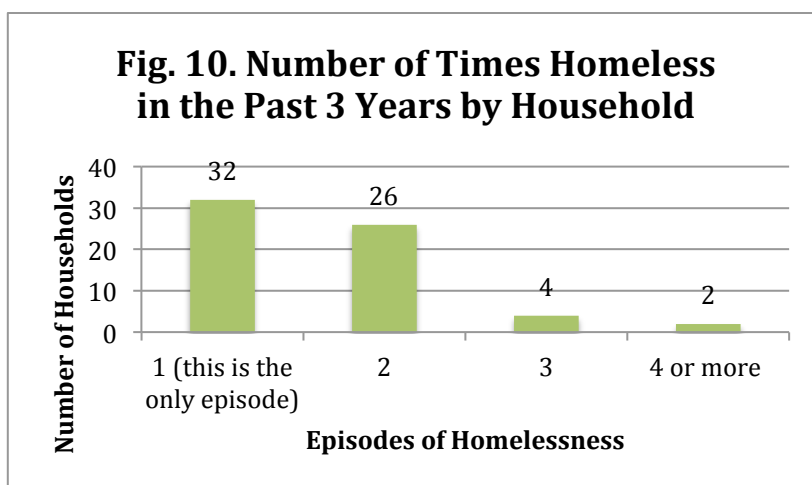
**Cause of Homelessness and Residence Prior to Project Entry.** When asked what the primary factor was that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to being asked to leave a shared residence (8%) than any other cause. As Figure 9 shows, the next most common factor was eviction (6%).



When looking at the responses for residence prior to project entry, 48% of households reported staying in an emergency shelter prior to project entry. The next most common response was staying with friends or family (19%).

### Length of Stay at Prior Residence and Episodes of Homelessness.

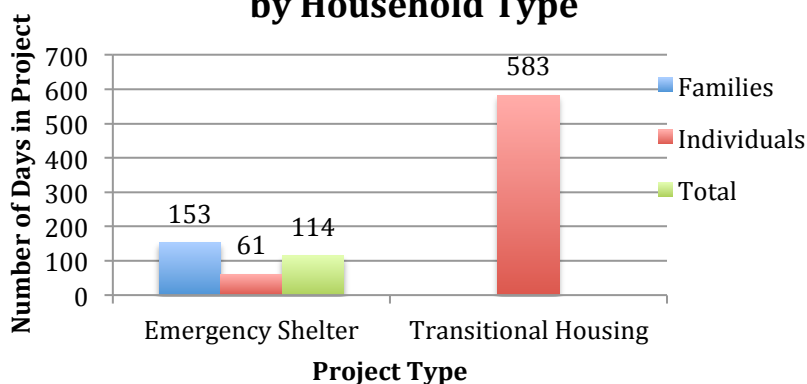
47% of households served during 2013 had resided in their last residence for more than 3 months but less than one year before entering the emergency shelter or transitional housing project. Another 23% were in their prior residence for one to three months, while only 3% were there one week or less. Similarly, only 1% of households experienced 4 or more episodes of homelessness in the last 3 years, while 15% were experiencing their first episode of homelessness, as seen in Figure 10.



### Average Length of Project Stay

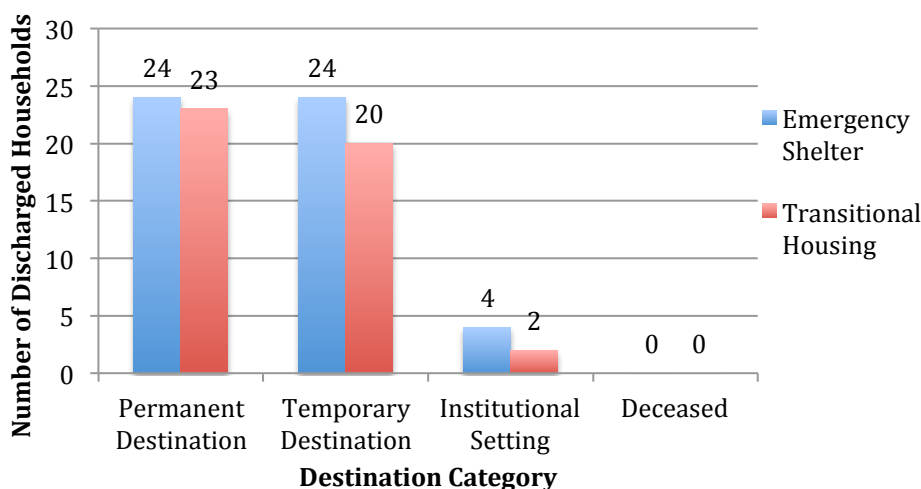
When looking at total length of project stay in emergency shelter, families seemed to have longer stays when compared to individuals. During their project stay it was found that families stayed on average 92 days or about 3 months longer than individuals in emergency shelter. Individuals had stayed an average of 583 or 18 months in their transitional housing projects.

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



**Reason and Destination at Discharge.** A total of 116 households were discharged from emergency shelter and transitional housing projects during the 2013 reporting period. 25% of these households were discharged from projects after completing the program while 23% left for a housing opportunity prior to project completion.

**Fig. 12. Destination Category by Households**



41% 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. 38% 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 staying or living with family or friends temporarily, which involved 22% of the total households. An institutional destination, which was the destination of 5% 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. Jail or prison was the most commonly reported institutional destination, with 3% of households being discharged to jails or prisons after leaving the projects.

**Appendix A: HMIS Projects Included in Report****I. Emergency Shelter Projects**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Project Name</b>
VOADV	VOADV – Agape House

**II. Transitional Housing Projects**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Project Name</b>
Community Hope	Community Hope – Hope for Veterans
	Community Hope – Hope for Veterans B