Southern NJ 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 Southern NJ 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 the Southern NJ 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 1,947 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 138 households identified as chronically homeless during this reporting period
- 49% of all adults served either as individuals or as part of a family identified having a disabling condition
- 48% of the total population served was under age 30
- 38% of households moved on to permanent destinations after discharge, while 42% moved on to temporary destinations

Total Homeless Population. A total of 1,947 households composed of 2,645 persons were housed in the Southern NJ CoC 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 large majority, 80% (1,567) were individuals, while the remaining 20% (380 households) were families. As shown in Figure 1, the most served population was individuals in emergency shelter projects, which accounted for 45% of the total population each. The 2,645 persons served throughout the Southern NJ CoC HMIS projects made up 11% of New Jersey's total homeless population served in HMIS projects in 2013.
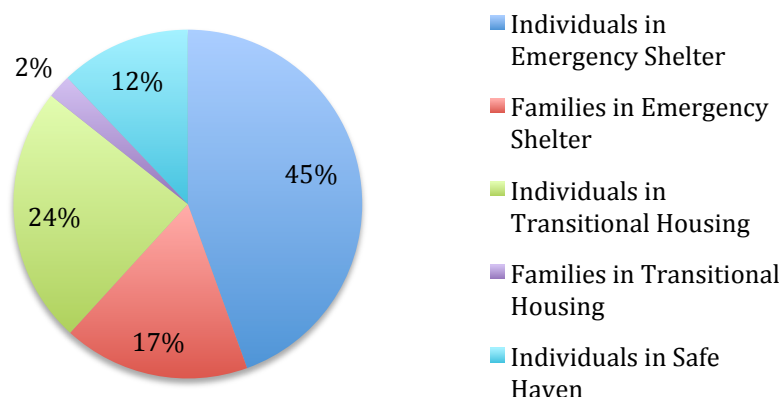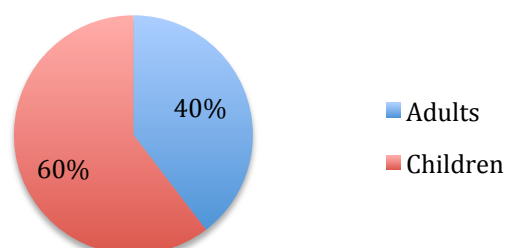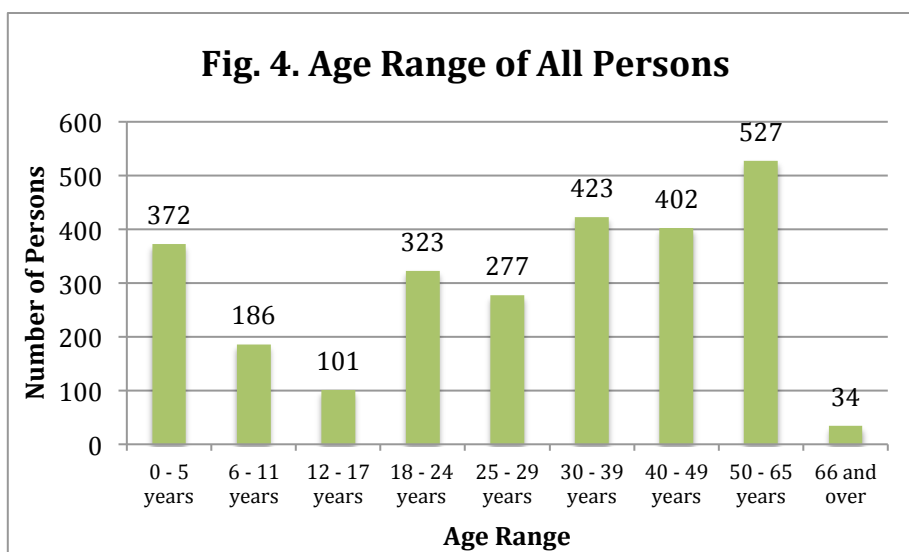
Fig. 1. Total Households Served

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

Figure 2. Total Persons Served		
	Southern NJ CoC	**New Jersey**
Total Persons Served	2,645	23,949
Emergency Shelter	1,794	19,208
Individuals	866	12,639
Families	928	6,569
Transitional Housing	615	4,455
Individuals	465	2,176
Families	150	2,279
Safe Haven	236	286
Individuals	236	286
Families	0	0

Family Composition. Of the 380 family households served throughout the Southern NJ CoC in 2013, 365 (99%) were households with adults and children under 18, 10 were adult only households while the other 5 were youth only households. As shown in Figure 3, children represented 60% 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 between the two project types was 6 years old.

Fig. 3. Adults vs. Children in Families

- Adults
- Children

Demographics. Of the total homeless population that was served in the Southern NJ CoC during 2013, the largest percent, 25%, of persons were children under the age of 18. As Figure 4 shows, the next highest age range served was persons between the ages of 18 and 29, which represented 23% of the total population, making almost 50% of the population served (48%) under the age of 30.

Fig. 4. Age Range of All Persons

(bar chart, Number of Persons vs. Age Range)

- 0 - 5 years: 372
- 6 - 11 years: 186
- 12 - 17 years: 101
- 18 - 24 years: 323
- 25 - 29 years: 277
- 30 - 39 years: 423
- 40 - 49 years: 402
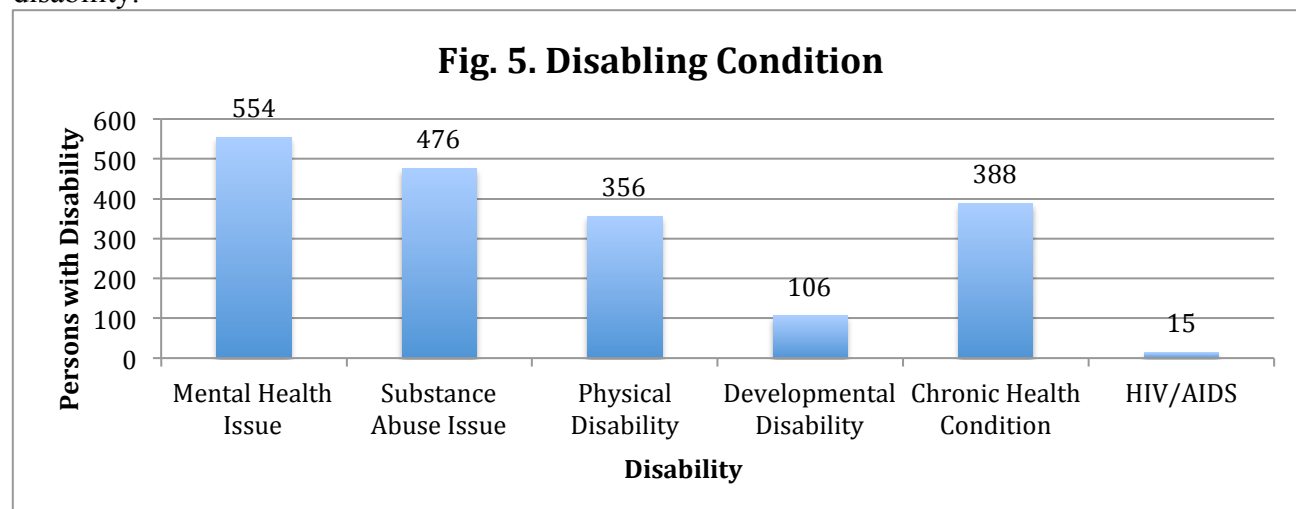- 50 - 65 years: 527
- 66 and over: 34

Similar to the 2012 numbers, more than half (57%) of the homeless persons served in the Southern NJ CoC HMIS participating projects were male, with women representing 43% of the population.

In addition, 53% 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 (38%), followed by Multi-Racial with 3%. With regards to ethnicity, only 15% identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.

Disabling Conditions. Among all persons served throughout Southern NJ CoC's HMIS emergency shelter, transitional housing and safe haven projects, 38% identified having a disabling condition, this number includes 49% of adults and 3% of children.
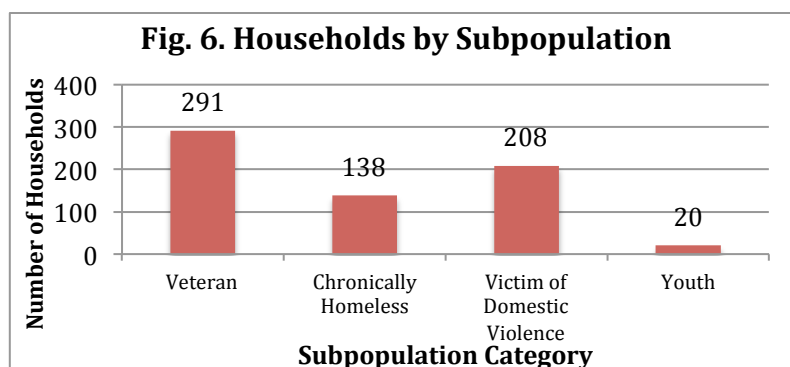
Among disabled adults, 56% reported mental health issues making this the most prevalent disability; representing 28% of the total adult homeless population. 49% of disabled adults also reported a substance abuse issue. Among disabled children, 53% reported having a developmental disability.

Fig. 5. Disabling Condition

(bar chart, Persons with Disability vs. Disability)

- Mental Health Issue: 554
- Substance Abuse Issue: 476
- Physical Disability: 356
- Developmental Disability: 106
- Chronic Health Condition: 388
- HIV/AIDS: 15

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, the Southern NJ CoC served a total of 138 households that were identified as chronically
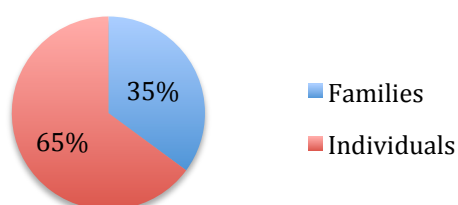
Fig. 6. Households by Subpopulation

homeless in emergency shelter, transitional housing or safe haven projects. 46% of the chronic households served were in emergency shelters (2 were families); 33% were individuals in safe havens and the remaining 21% were individuals in transitional housing.

Youth only households, households without someone over age 18, represented only 1% of the total households served throughout Southern NJ CoC HMIS projects. These households were composed of 15 individual youth and 13 persons in youth only households. The majority of these households (80%) were served in emergency shelter projects.

As far as veterans served, the Southern NJ CoC served a total of 291 veterans throughout 2013. 98% of veterans served were individuals and only 7% were female. 78% of the veterans served were served in transitional housing projects. 68% of veterans reported having some kind of disability, with the most common disability reported being substance abuse issue (76%).

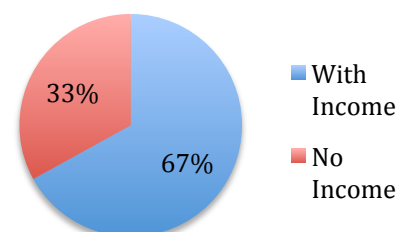**Fig. 7. Household Type Among Victims of Domestic Violence**

In addition to the chronic, youth and veteran populations, there were 208 homeless households that reported having a victim of domestic violence. 65% of these households were individuals, while the remaining 73 were families. 38% reported that the last episode of domestic violence occurred over a year ago, while 31% reported it happening within the past 3 months. The majority of the domestic violence victims (67%) 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.
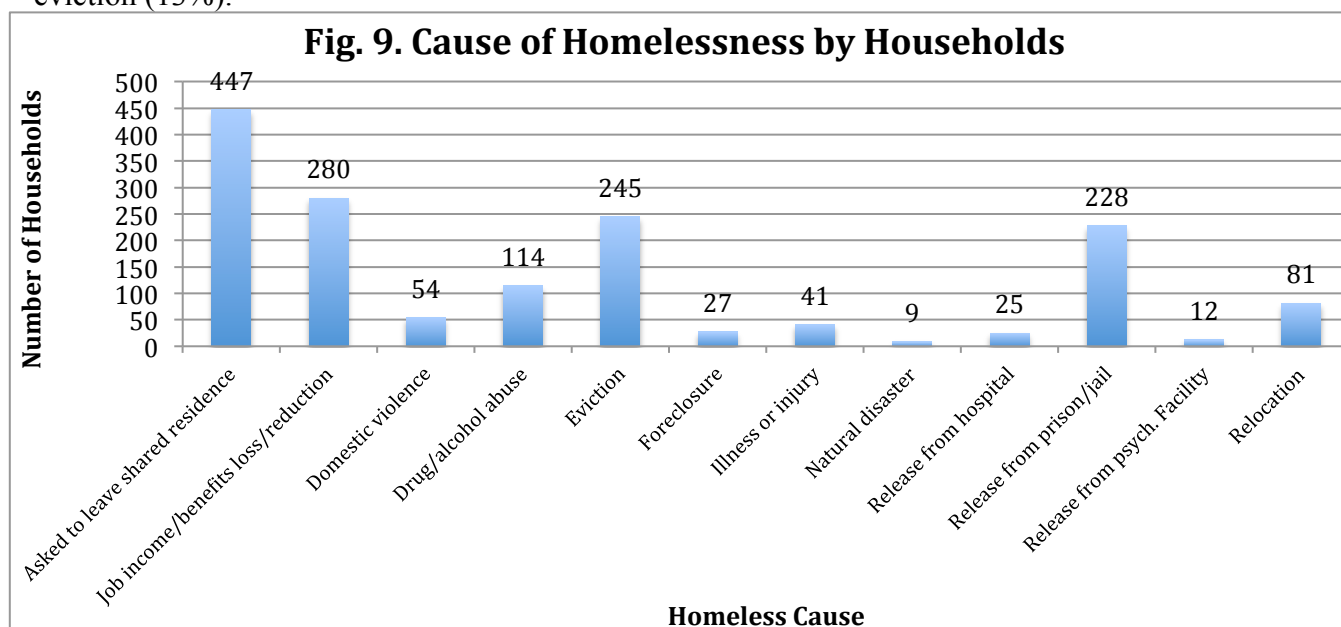
Income and Benefits. Among all homeless households served in emergency shelter, transitional housing or safe haven projects during 2013, 33% had no source of income, while 9% reported receiving some form of earned income. The most common sources of cash income among households were SSI (36%) and General Assistance (28%). The average monthly income for households was $265 for emergency shelter, $264 for safe haven, and $578 for households served in transitional housing projects.

Fig. 8. Percentage of Households with Income

While 33% of households had no source of income, 32% of households were not receiving some kind of non-cash benefit. Food Stamps was the top reported non-cash benefit, which was reported by 58% of the households. Another 43% of households were connected to Medicaid benefits.
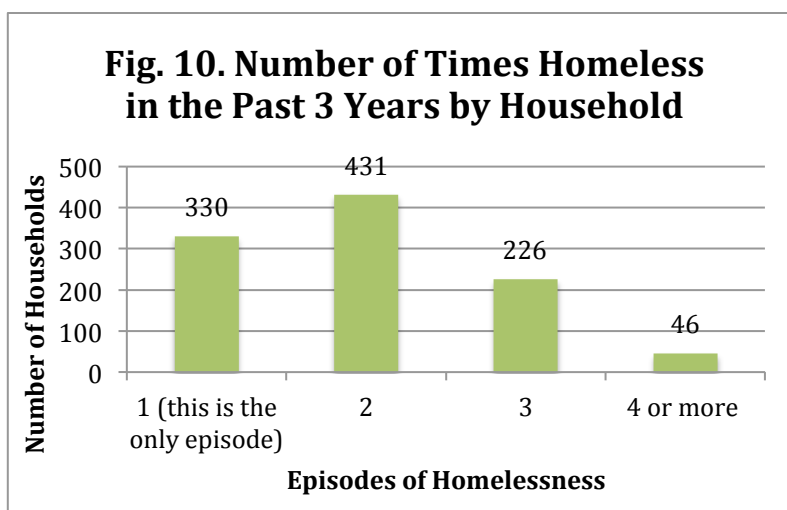
Cause of Homelessness and Residence Prior to Project Entry. When asked what the primary factor was that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to being asked to leave a shared residence (23%) than any other cause. As Figure 9 shows, the next most common factors were job income or benefits loss or reduction (14%) and eviction (13%).

Fig. 9. Cause of Homelessness by Households

These causes of homelessness coincide with the common response for residence prior to project entry with 39% of households staying or living with family or friends prior to project entry. The next most common response was emergency shelter (21%) followed by jail or prison (9%).

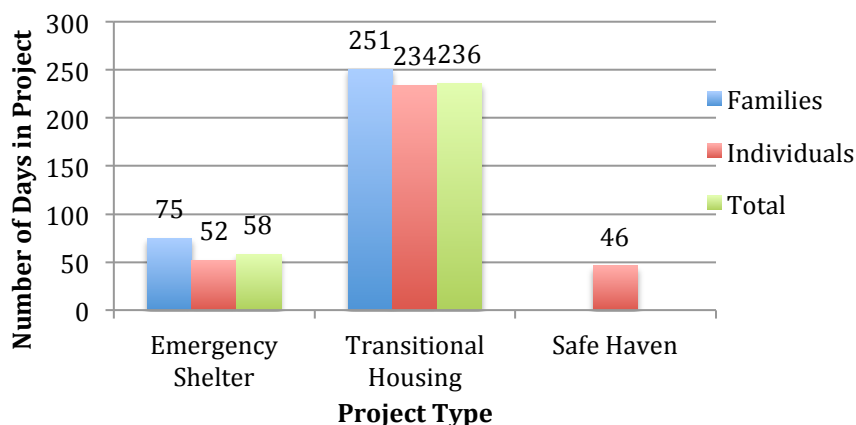**Length of Stay at Prior Residence and Episodes of Homelessness.** 29% of households served during 2013 had stated they resided in their last residence for one year or longer before entering the emergency shelter, transitional housing or safe haven project. Another 22% were in their prior residence for more than 3 months but less than one year, while only 11% were there one week or less. When looking at episodes of homelessness, 22% of households were experiencing their second episode of homelessness, while only 2% experiencing 4 or more episodes prior to project entry.

Fig. 10. Number of Times Homeless in the Past 3 Years by Household
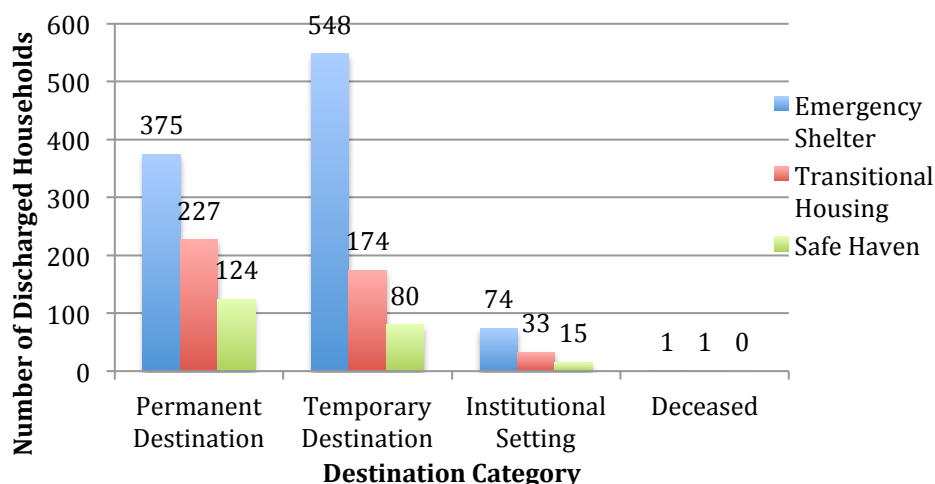
Average Length of Project Stay. When looking at total length of project stay for families and individuals, families seemed to have longer stays in both emergency shelter and transitional housing projects. During their project stay it was found that families stayed on average 23 days longer than individuals in emergency shelter, and 17 days longer in transitional housing projects. The average length of stay for individuals in safe haven projects was 46 days.

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

Reason and Destination at Discharge. A total of 1,896 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 23% were discharged from the project due to non-compliance.

Fig. 12. Destination Category by Households

38% 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 22% of total households moving into a rental upon discharge. This rental could be with or without a subsidy. 42% 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 with family temporarily, which involved 17% of the total households. An institutional destination, which was the destination of 6% 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 common institutional destination recorded, with 41 households leaving projects and entering the prison or jail system.

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
Joseph's House of Camden	JH-Joseph's House Camden Café
Rural Development Corp.	RDC Cumberland Family Shelter
Tri-County Comm. Action Partnership Parvins Branch	TCCAP Hotel/Motel
VOADV	VOADV- Aletha Wright- Emergency Shelter
	VOADV-Anna Sample Family Shelter
	VOADV-Eleanor Corbett Emergency Shelter

II. Transitional Housing Projects

Agency	Project Name
Camden County OEO	CCOEO A. Wright Place Transitional Housing
	CCCOEO Imani House Transitional Housing
	CCCOEO Liberty Place Transitional Housing
Center for Family Services	CFS-Camden Grandslam Transitional Living
	CFS-Camden Homebase Group Home
	CFS-GrandSlam Supportive Apartment
	CFS-MCRS Transitional Housing
Interfaith Homeless Outreach Council	IHOC Network
	IHOC Transitional Housing
NJD Veterans Affairs	NJDMAVA – Veterans Haven
Tri-County Comm. Action Partnership Parvins Branch	TCCAP-TH
VOADV Property Inc.	VOADV Property Promise Program
VOADV	VOADV-Aletha Wright Transitional Living
	VOADV-Anna Sample Transitional Living
VOADV-Veterans Service	VOADV-Home for the Brave

III. Safe Haven Projects

Agency	Project Name
VOADV	VOADV-Aletha Wright Safe Haven HUD
	VOADV-Aletha Wright-Safe Haven 2
	VOADV-Anna Sample Safe Haven 2
	VOADV-Anna Sample Safe Haven HUD
	VOADV-Eleanor Corbett Safe Haven 2
	VOADV-Eleanor Corbett Safe Haven HUD