



New Jersey 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 State of New Jersey. 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 New Jersey analyzed data from the Homeless Management Information Systems for the New Jersey Collaborative, Bergen Continuum of Care and Middlesex Continuum of Care. 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 18,251 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 1,742 households identified as chronically homeless during this reporting period
- 45% of all adults served either as individuals or as part of a family identified having a disabling condition
- 45% of the total population served was under age 30
- 27% of households moved on to permanent destinations after discharge

Total Homeless Population.

A total of 18,251 households composed of 23,949 persons were housed in New Jersey 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, 83% (15,101) were individuals, while the remaining 17% (3,150 households) were families. As shown in Figure 1, the most served population was individuals in emergency shelter projects, which accounted for 69% of the total population served.

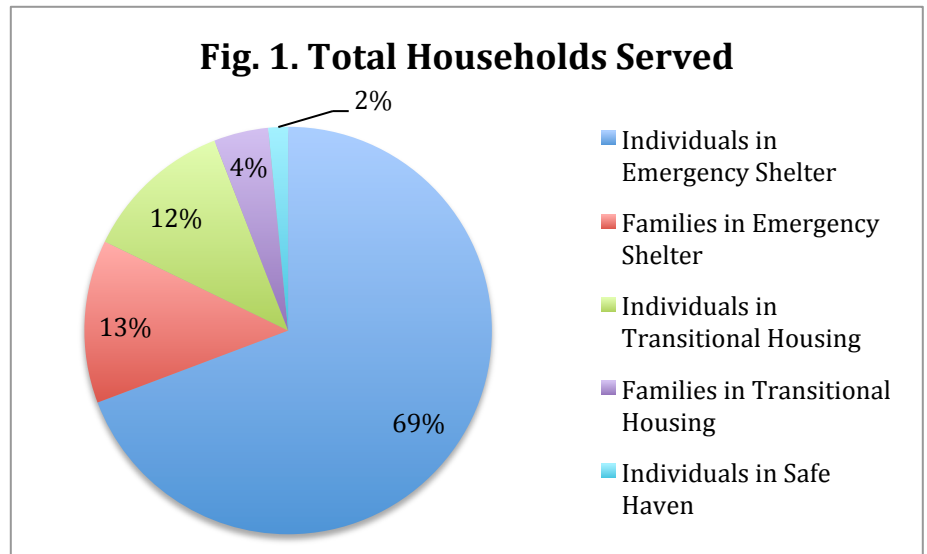
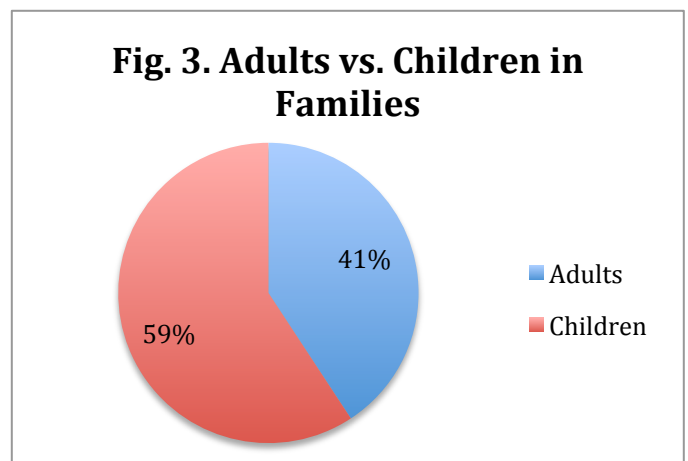
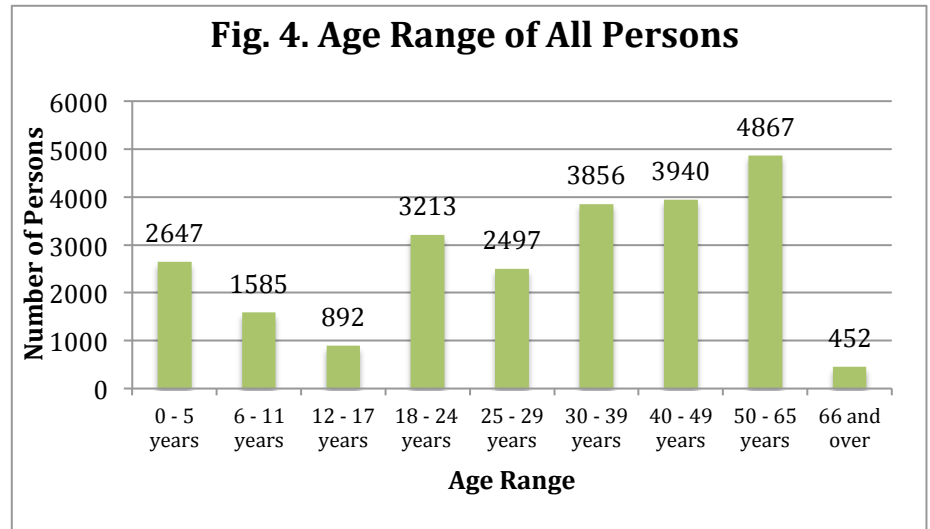


Figure 2. Total Persons Served in New Jersey in 2013	
Total Persons Served	23,949
Emergency Shelter	19,208
Individuals	12,639
Families	6,569
Transitional Housing	4,455
Individuals	2,176
Families	2,279
Safe Haven	286
Individuals	286
Families	0

Family Composition. Of the 3,150 family households served throughout New Jersey in 2013, 2,942 (93%) were households with adults and children under 18, 180 (6%) were adult only households while the remaining 28 were youth only households. As shown in Figure 3, children represented 59% 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.



Demographics. Of the total homeless population that was served in New Jersey during 2013, the largest percent, 24%, of persons were persons between the ages of 18 and 29. As Figure 4 shows, the next highest age range served was children under the age of 18, which represented 21% of the total population, showing that approximately 45% of the population served during 2013 was under the age of 30.

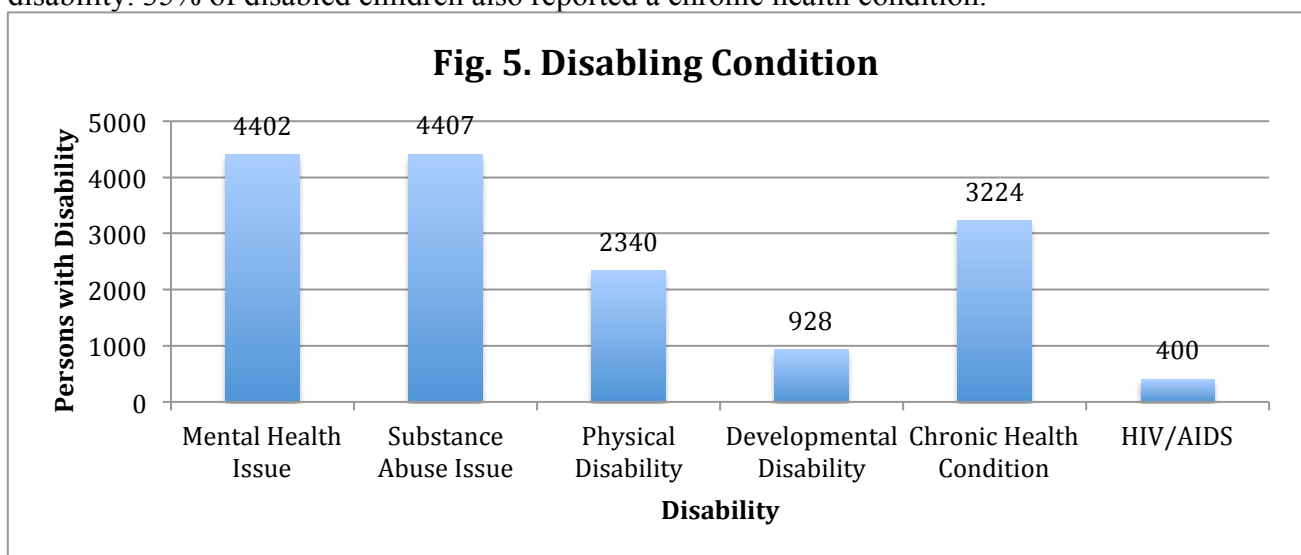


More than half (59%) of the homeless persons served in New Jersey HMIS participating projects were male, with women representing 41% of the population.

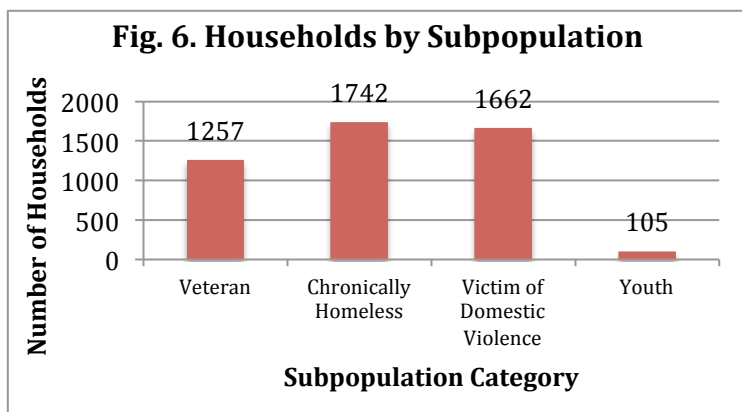
In addition, 53% of the homeless persons served during 2013 identified their race as Black or African American, making that the largest racial subgroup. The next largest was White (41%), followed by Multi-Racial with 2%. With regards to ethnicity, 17% identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.

Disabling Conditions. Among all persons served throughout New Jersey’s HMIS emergency shelter, transitional housing and safe haven projects, 37% identified having a disabling condition, this number includes 45% of adults and 7% of children.

Among disabled adults, 52% reported a substance abuse issue, making this the most prevalent disability; representing 23% of the total adult homeless population. 51% of disabled adults also reported a mental health issue. Among disabled children, 42% reported having a developmental disability. 35% of disabled children also reported a chronic health condition.

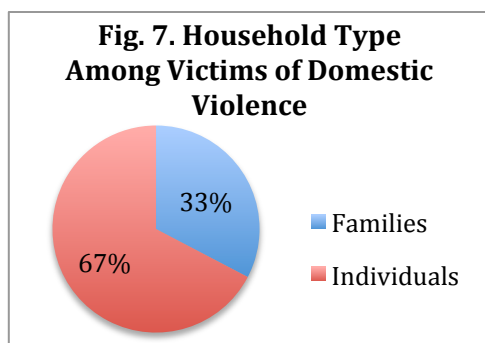


Subpopulation Characteristics. In its plan, *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has prioritized ending youth, veteran and chronic homelessness across the Country. In 2013, the State of New Jersey served a total of 1,742 households that were identified as chronically homeless in emergency shelter, transitional housing or safe haven projects. 80% of the chronic households served were in emergency shelters (50 were families); 16% were served in transitional housing project (38 were families), while 4% were individuals in safe havens.



Youth only households, households without someone over age 18, represented only 1% of the total households served throughout New Jersey HMIS projects. These households were composed of 77 individual youth and 64 persons in youth only households. The majority of these households (72%) were served in emergency shelter projects.

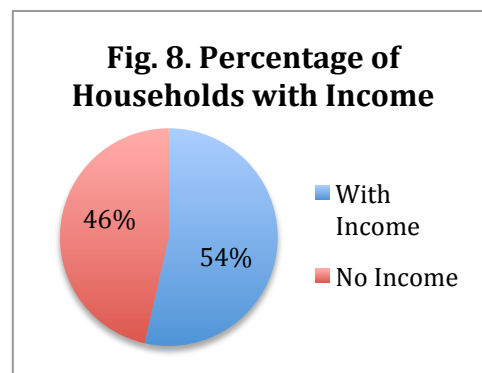
As far as veterans served, New Jersey served a total of 1,257 veterans throughout 2013. 96% of veterans served were individuals and only 7% were female. 54% of the veterans served were served in emergency shelter projects. 68% of veterans reported having some kind of disability, with the most common disability reported being a substance abuse issue (64%).



In addition to the chronic, youth and veteran populations, there were 1,662 homeless households that reported having a victim of domestic violence. 67% of these households were individuals, while the remaining 543 were families. 43% reported that the last episode of domestic violence occurred over a year ago, while 29% reported it happening within the past 3 months. The majority of the domestic violence victims (78%) 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

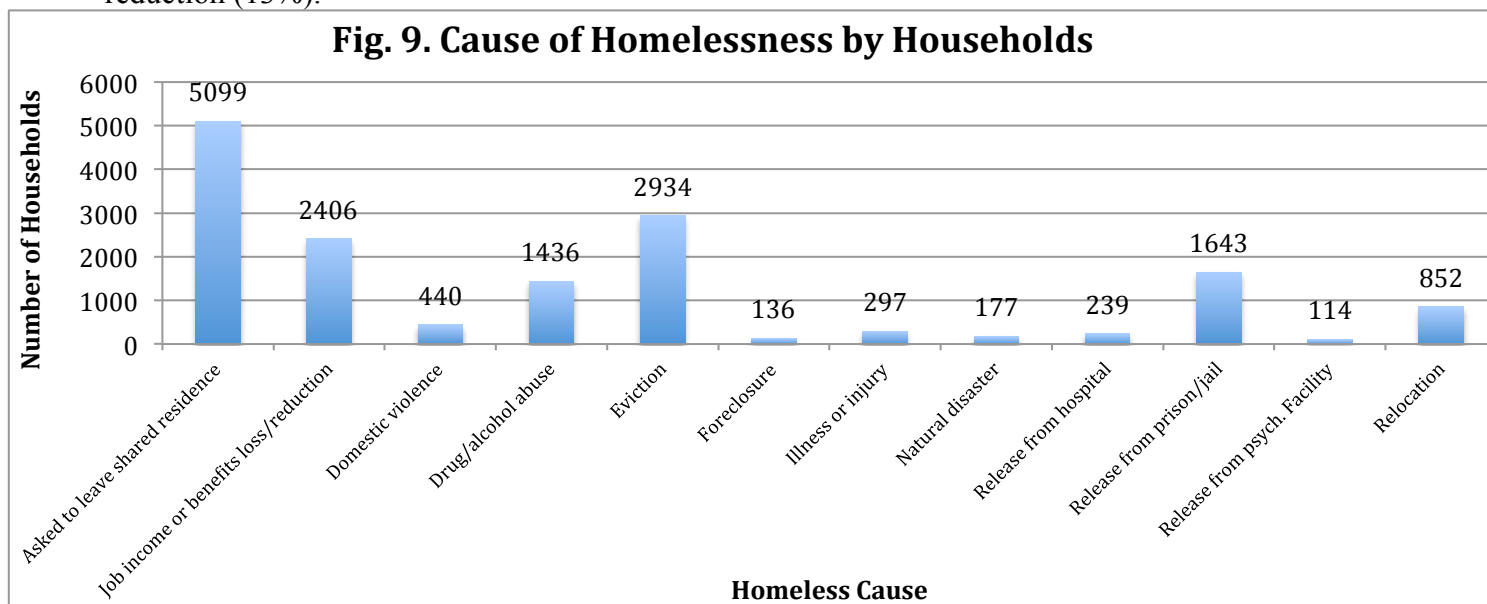
Violence specific projects are not able to enter data into HMIS, so the number of victims served in those projects are not included in this report.

Income and Benefits. Among all homeless households served in emergency shelter, transitional housing or safe haven projects during 2013, 46% had no source of income, while 11% reported receiving some form of earned income. The most common sources of cash income among households were SSI (25%) and General Assistance (15%). The average monthly income for households was \$270 for emergency shelter, \$296 for safe haven, and \$588 for households served in transitional housing projects.



While 46% of households had no source of income, 50% of households were not receiving some kind of non-cash benefit. Food Stamps was the top reported non-cash benefit, which was reported by 42% of the households. Another 28% of households were connected to Medicaid benefits.

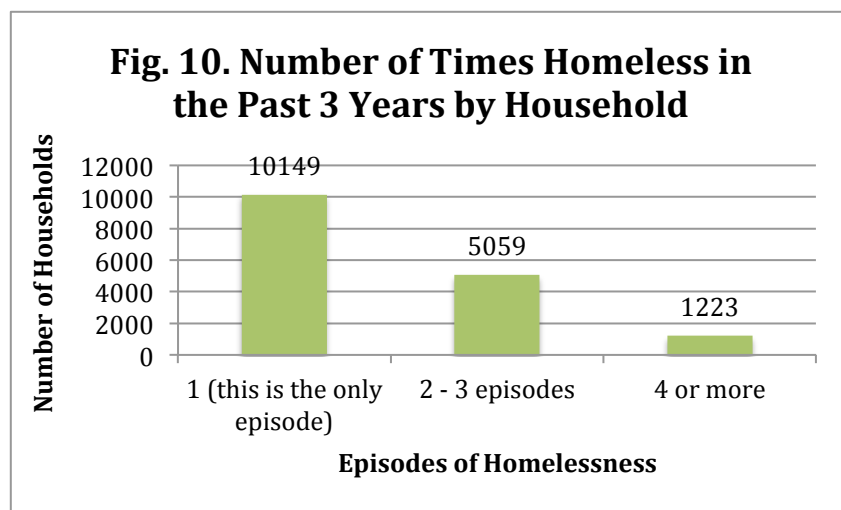
Cause of Homelessness and Residence Prior to Project Entry. When asked what the primary factor was that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to being asked to leave a shared residence (28%) than any other cause. As Figure 9 shows, the next most common factors were eviction (16%) and job income or benefits loss or reduction (13%).



These causes of homelessness coincide with the common responses for residence prior to project entry with 41% of households staying or living with family or friends prior to project entry. The next most common response was emergency shelter (17%) followed by rental (11%).

Length of Stay at Prior Residence and Episodes of Homelessness.

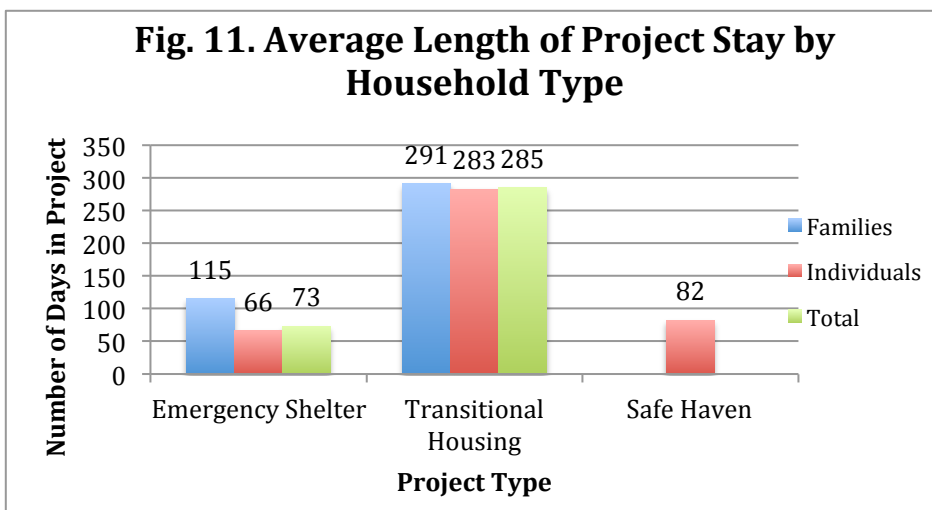
29% of households served during 2013 had stated they resided in their last residence for one year or longer before entering the emergency shelter, transitional housing or safe haven project. Another 22% were in their prior residence for more than 3 months but less than one year, while only 10% were there one week or less. When looking at episodes of homelessness, 56% of households were experiencing their first episode of homelessness, while only 7% experienced 4 or more episodes prior to project entry.



Average Length of Project Stay.

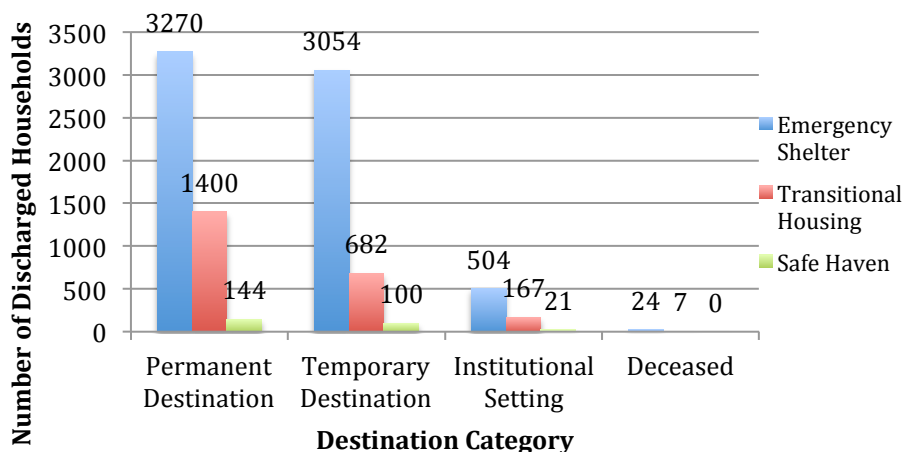
When looking at total length of project stay for families and individuals, families seemed to have longer stays in both emergency shelter and transitional housing projects. During their project stay it was found that families stayed on average 49 days longer than individuals in emergency shelter, and 8 days longer in transitional housing projects. The average length of stay for individuals in safe haven projects was 82 days.

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



Reason and Destination at Discharge. A total of 17,521 households were discharged from emergency shelter, transitional housing and safe haven projects during the 2013 reporting period. 22% of these households were discharged from projects after completing the program while 13% left for a housing opportunity before project completion.

Fig. 12. Destination Category by Households



27% 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 21% of total households moving into a

rental upon discharge. This rental could be with or without a subsidy. 22% 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 10% of the total households. An institutional destination, which was the destination of 4% 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 240 households leaving projects and entering the prison or jail system.