



Union 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 Union 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 Union 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

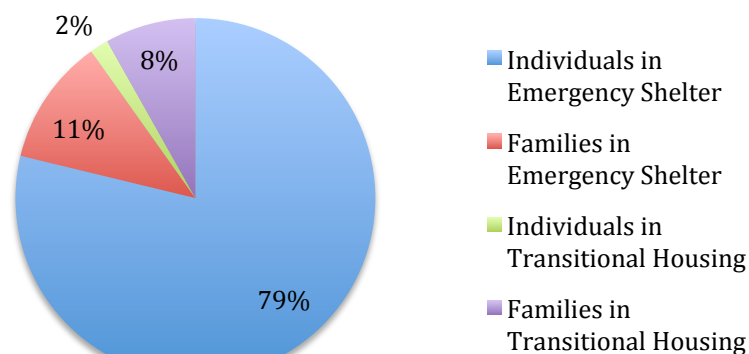
Key Findings:

- A total of 834 households were served in HMIS participating emergency shelters and transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013 period
- There were 29 households identified as chronically homeless during this reporting period
- 43% 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
- 39% of households moved on to permanent destinations after discharge, while 44% moved on to temporary destinations

Total Homeless

Population. A total of 834 households composed of 1,136 persons were housed in Union County CoC HMIS participating emergency shelters or transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013 reporting period. This is a 7% increase in total households served from 2012. Out of the households served in 2013, the majority, 80% (671) were individuals, while the remaining 20% (163 households) were families. As shown in Figure 1, the most served population was individuals in emergency shelter, which made up 79% of the total population served. The 1,136 persons served throughout Union County HMIS projects made up 5% of New Jersey's total homeless population served in HMIS projects in 2013.

Fig. 1. Total Households Served



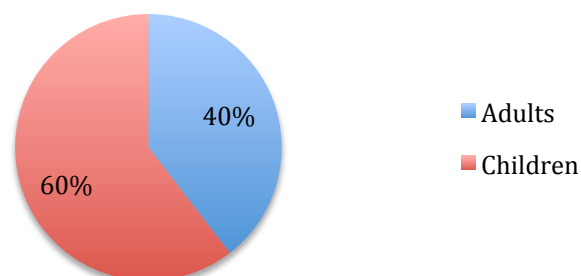
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Figure 2. Total Persons Served

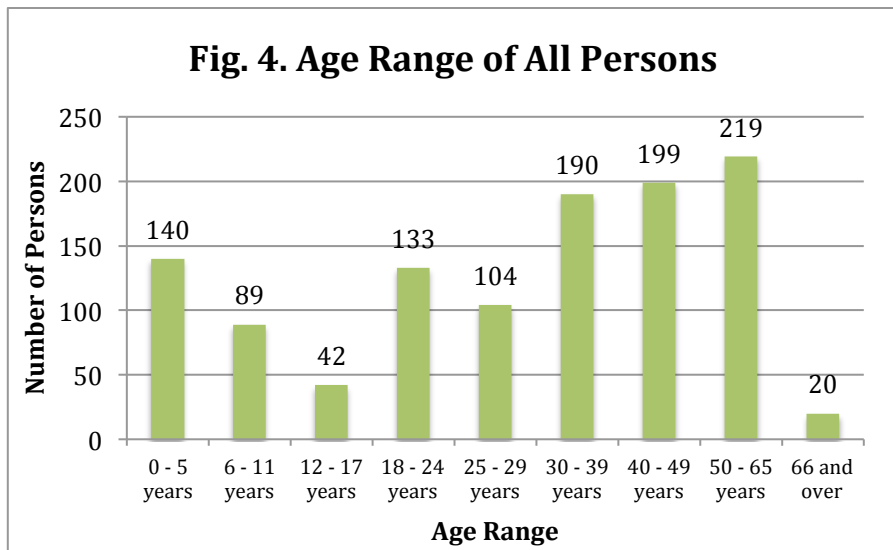
	Union County	New Jersey
Total Persons Served	1,136	23,949
Emergency Shelter	907	19,208
Individuals	657	12,639
Families	250	6,569
Transitional Housing	229	4,455
Individuals	14	2,176
Families	215	2,279

Family Composition. Of the 163 family households served throughout Union County in 2013, 151 (93%) were households with adults and children under 18, 10 (6%) were adult only households while the remaining 2 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



Demographics. Of the total homeless population that was served in the Union CoC during 2013, the largest percent, 24%, of persons were children under age 18, with 271 aged between 0 and 17. As Figure 4 shows, the next highest age range served was persons between 18 and 29 (21%), showing that 45% of the population served was under the age of 30.

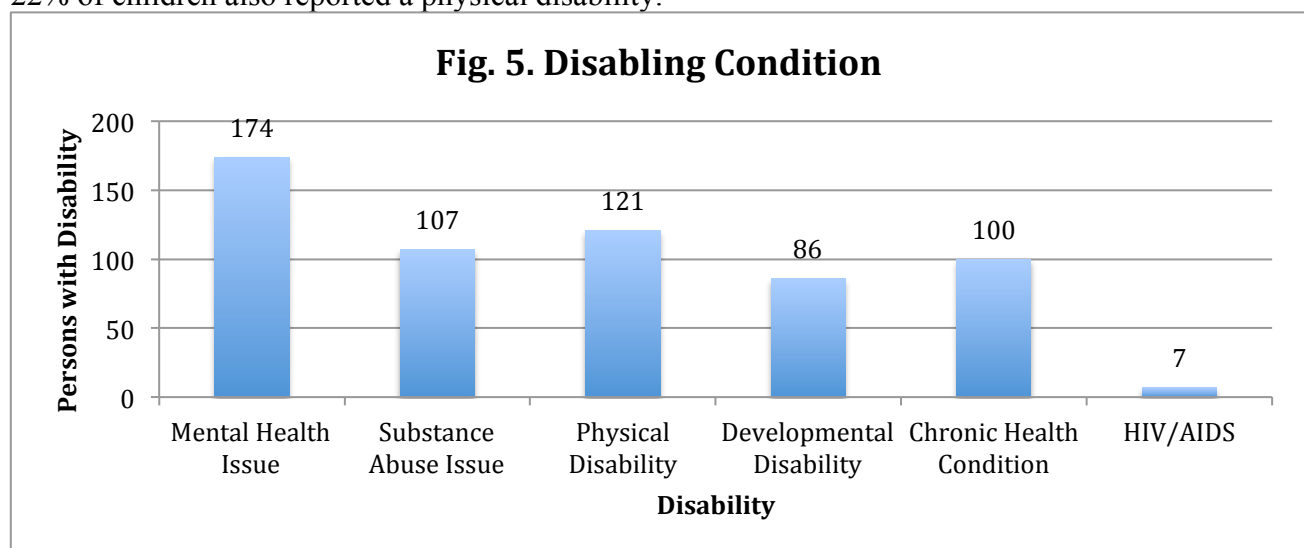


Similar to the 2012 numbers, slightly more than half (57%) of the homeless persons served in Union CoC HMIS participating projects were male, with women representing 43% of the population.

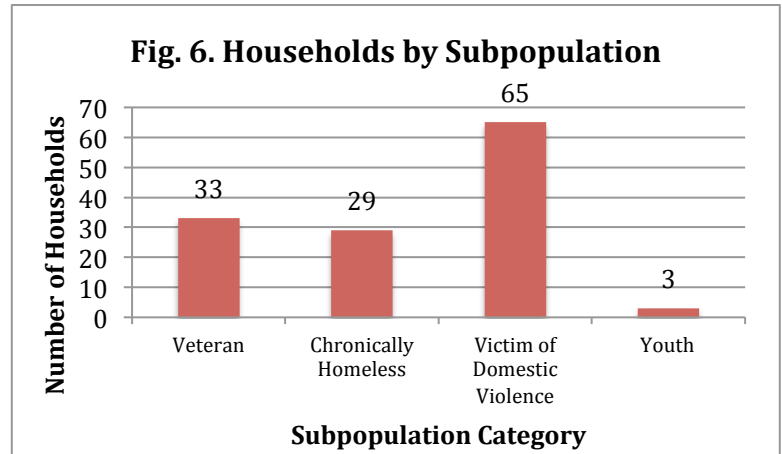
In addition, 66% of the homeless persons served during 2013 identified their race as Black or African American, making that the largest racial subgroup. The next largest was White (28%), followed by Multi-Racial with 1%. With regards to ethnicity, 22% identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.

Disabling Conditions. Among all persons served throughout Union County's HMIS emergency shelter and transitional housing projects, 33% identified having a disabling condition, this number includes 43% of adults and 3% of children.

Among disabled adults, 47% reported mental health issues making this the most prevalent disability; representing 20% of the total adult homeless population. 32% of disabled adults also reported a physical disability. Among disabled children, 67% reported a developmental disability. 22% of children also reported a physical disability.



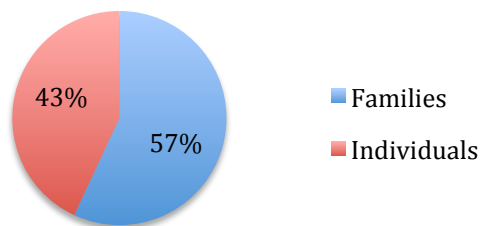
Subpopulation Characteristics. In its plan, *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has prioritized ending youth, veteran and chronic homelessness across the Country. In 2013, Union CoC served a total of 29 households that were identified as chronically homeless. All of the chronically homeless served in the County were individuals being served in emergency shelter projects.



Youth only households, households without someone over age 18, represented less than 1% of the total households served throughout Union HMIS projects. These households were composed of 1 individual youth and 4 persons in youth only households. 2 of the 3 youth households served were served in emergency shelter projects.

As far as veterans served, Union CoC served a total of 33 veterans throughout 2013. 97% of veterans served were individuals and only 6% were female. All of the veterans served were served in emergency shelter projects. 36% of veterans reported having some kind of disability, with the most common disability reported being mental health issue or physical disability (50% each).

Fig. 7. Household Type Among Victims of Domestic Violence

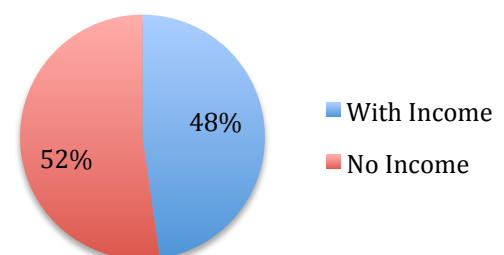


In addition to the chronic, youth and veteran populations, there were 65 homeless households that reported having a victim of domestic violence. 57% of these households were families, while the remaining 28 were individuals. 40% reported that the last episode of domestic violence occurred over a year ago, while 34% 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.

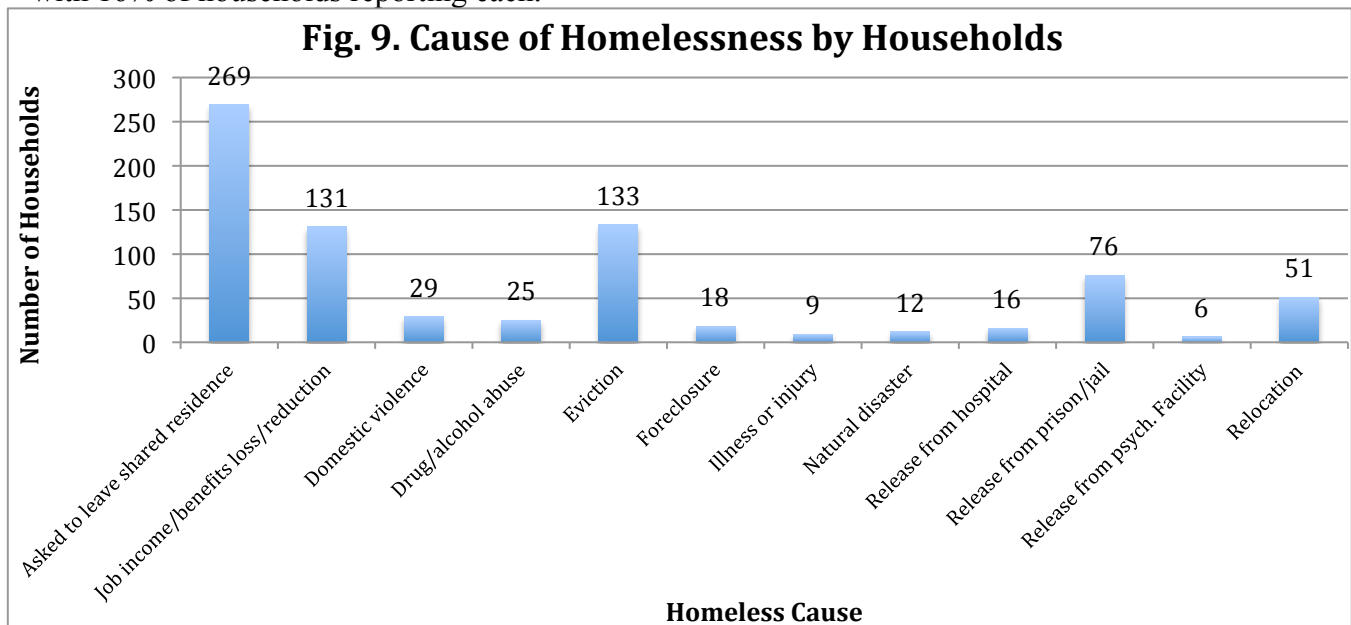
Income and Benefits. Among all homeless households served in emergency shelter or transitional housing projects during 2013, 52% had no source of income, while 6% reported receiving some form of earned income. The most common sources of cash income among households were SSI (26%) and General Assistance (18%). The average monthly income for households was \$195 in emergency shelter and \$416 for transitional housing projects.

Fig. 8. Percentage of Households with Income



While 52% 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 43% of the households. Another 31% of households were connected to Medicaid benefits.

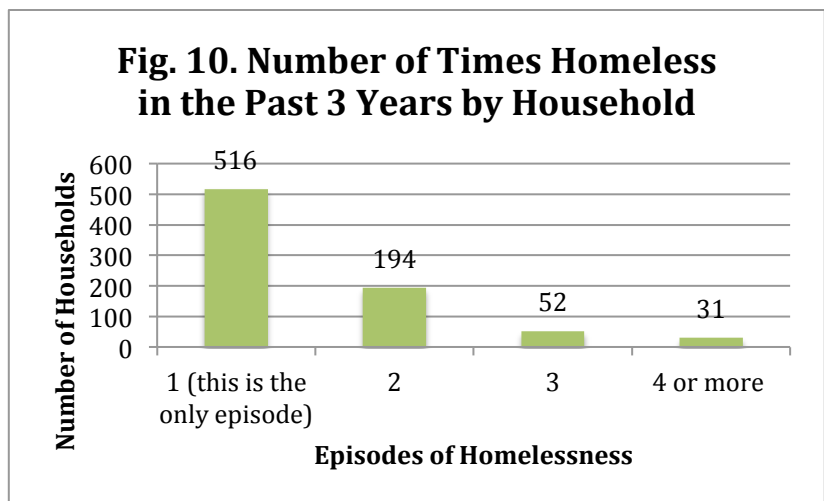
Cause of Homelessness and Residence Prior to Project Entry. When asked what the primary factor was that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to being asked to leave a shared residence (32%) than any other cause. As Figure 9 shows, the next most common factors were eviction and job income or benefits loss/reduction with 16% of households reporting each.



These causes of homelessness coincide with the common response for residence prior to project entry with 48% of households staying or living with family or friends prior to project entry. The next most common response was emergency shelter (18%) followed by rental by client (15%).

Length of Stay at Prior Residence and Episodes of Homelessness.

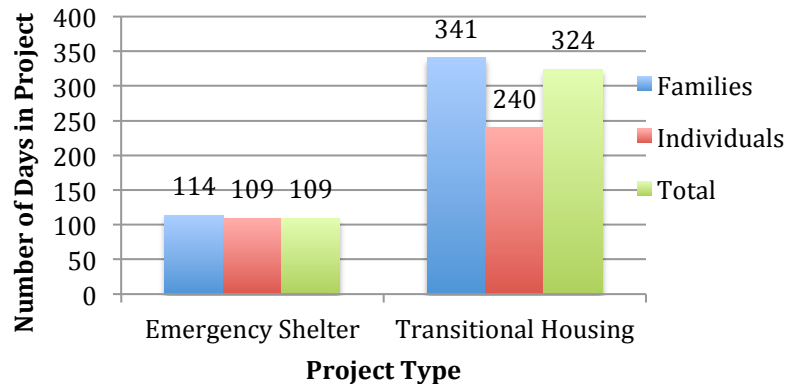
40% of households served during 2013 had resided in their last residence for one year or longer before entering the emergency shelter or transitional housing project. Another 24% were in their prior residence for more than 3 months but less than one year, while only 4% were there one week or less. Similarly, only 4% of households experienced 4 or more episodes of homelessness in the last 3 years, while the majority of households (62%) were experiencing their first episode of homelessness, as seen in Figure 10.



Average Length of Project Stay

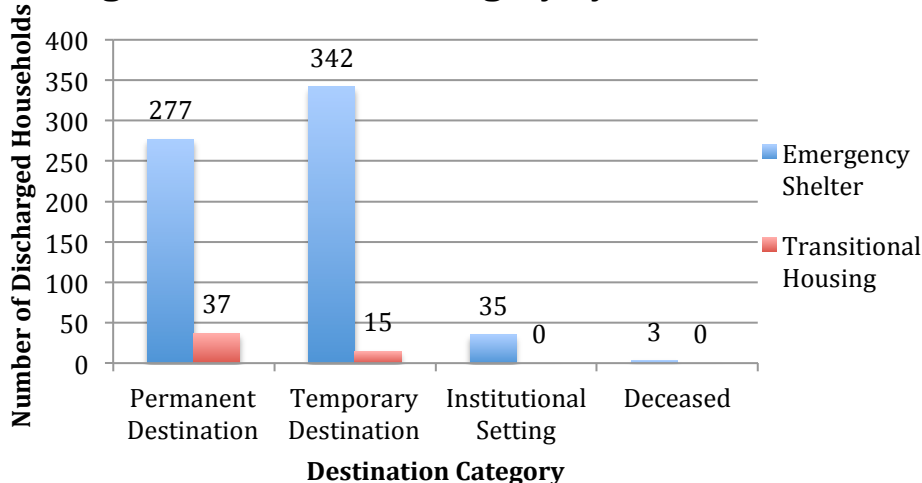
When looking at total length of project stay for families and individuals, families seemed to have longer stays in both emergency shelter and transitional housing when compared to individuals. During their project stay it was found that families stayed on average 5 days longer than individuals in emergency shelter and on average 101 or about 3 months longer when enrolled in transitional housing projects.

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



Reason and Destination at Discharge. A total of 804 households were discharged from emergency shelter and transitional housing projects during the 2013 reporting period. 63% of these households left these projects for another housing opportunity or after project completion, another 14% were discharged from the project due to non-compliance.

Fig. 12. Destination Category by Households



39% 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 32% of total households moving into a

rental upon discharge. This rental could be with or without a subsidy. 44% 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 27% 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. A substance abuse treatment facility was the most common institutional destination reported with 2% of households moving on to this destination after discharge.

Appendix A: HMIS Projects Included in Report

I. Emergency Shelter Projects

Agency	Project Name
Community Access Unlimited	CAU E-CAP
Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless	ECHH – Operation Warm Heart
Family Promise	FPUC-Family Shelter
FISH Hospitality	FISH Hospitality Program
Salvation Army	Salvation Army Shelter
YMCA of Eastern Union County	Eastern Union YMCA – Madison House
	Eastern Union YMCA – Men’s Dormitory
	Eastern Union YMCA – Project Sustain
YMCA of Plainfield	Plainfield Area YMCA – Y.E.S.

II. Transitional Housing Projects

Agency	Project Name
Community Access Unlimited	CAI-TIP Morris
Covenant House	Covenant House – Raphael’s Life House
Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless	ECHH Hospitality House
	ECHH-Joanie’s House
Homefirst Interfaith Housing and Family Services	IFC Transitional Housing Program
YMCA of Eastern Union County	Eastern Union YMCA – Step Up Transitional House