



Atlantic County CoC Homeless Assessment Report

2014

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 Atlantic 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 Atlantic 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, 2014 – December 31, 2014, as reported in HMIS.

For purposes of this report, families included any households 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.

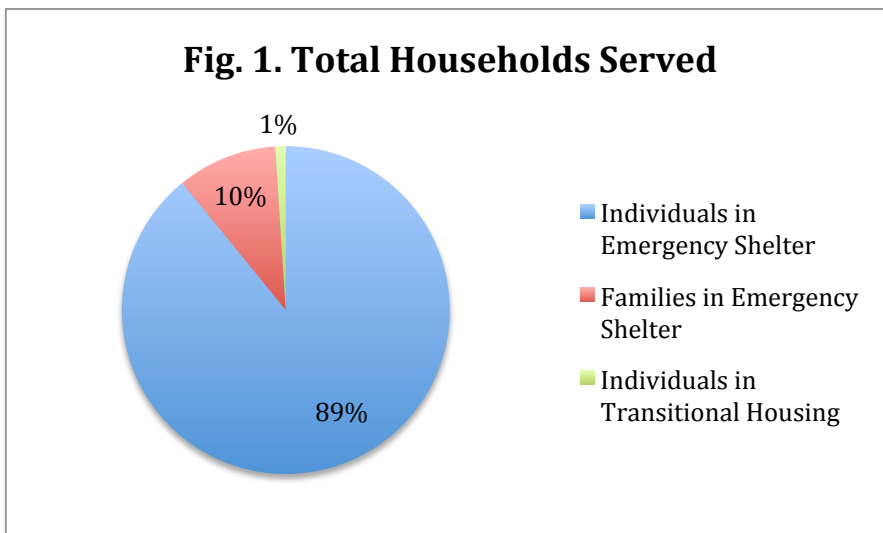
III. Findings for Total Population Served

Key Findings:

- A total of 2,124 households were served in HMIS participating emergency shelters and transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014 period
- There were 373 households identified as chronically homeless during this reporting period
- 62% of all adults served either as individuals or as part of a family identified having a disabling condition
- 38% of the total population served was under age 30
- 23% of households moved on to permanent destinations after discharge

Total Homeless Population.

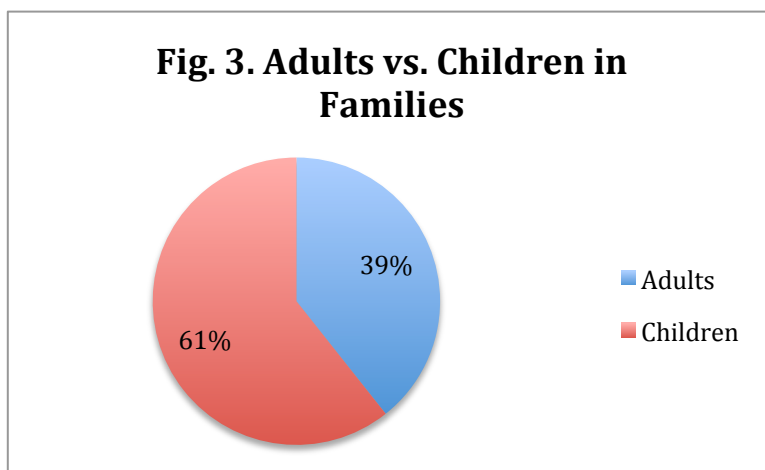
A total of 2,124 households composed of 2,537 persons were housed in Atlantic County CoC HMIS participating emergency shelters or transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014 reporting period. This is a 51% increase in total households and 59% increase in total persons served from 2013. As a note, this increase is most



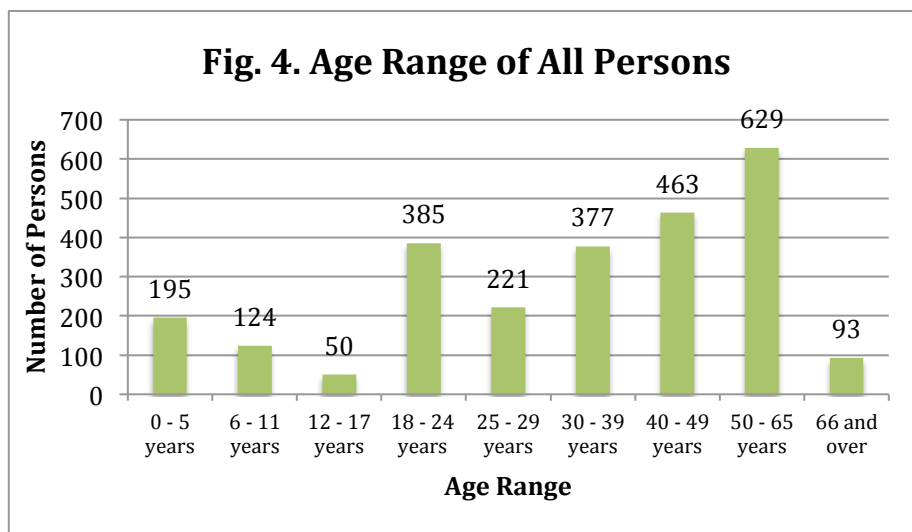
likely due to the increased use of HMIS from the Atlantic CoC’s largest sheltering agency. Out of the households served in 2014, the large majority, 90% (1,915) were individuals, while the remaining 10% (209 households) were families. As shown in Figure 1, the most served population was individuals in emergency shelter, which made up 89% of the total population served. The 2,537 persons served throughout Atlantic County HMIS projects made up 10% of New Jersey’s total homeless population served in HMIS projects in 2014.

	Atlantic County	New Jersey
Total Persons Served	2,537	25,327
Emergency Shelter	2,515	20,800
Individuals	1,893	14,143
Families	622	6,657
Transitional Housing	22	4,343
Individuals	22	2,256
Families	0	2,087

Family Composition. Of the 209 family households served throughout Atlantic County in 2014, 199 (95%) were households with adults and children under 18, 9 (4%) were adult only households, while the last household was a youth only household. As shown in Figure 3, children represented 61% of the persons included in adult and children families. The average size of a homeless family in 2014 was 3 and the average age of a child served was 6 years old.



Demographics. Of the total homeless population that was served in the Atlantic CoC during 2014, the largest percent, 25%, of persons were between 50 and 65 years old. As Figure 4 shows, the next highest age range served was persons between 18 and 29 (24%), with 63% of this category representing young adults between the ages of 18 and 24.

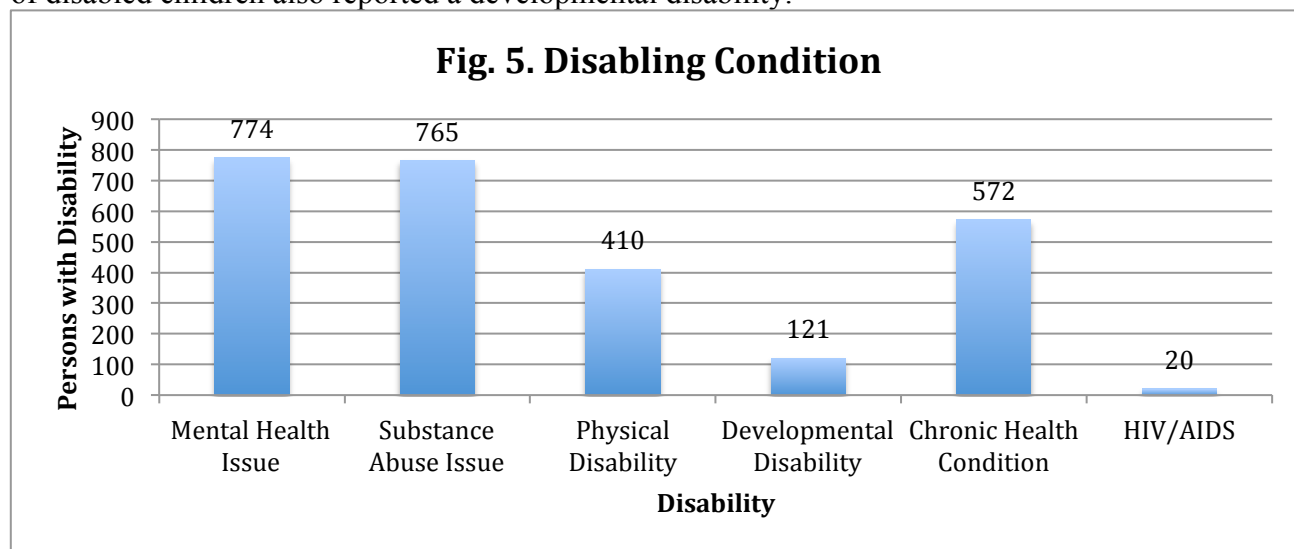


Similar to the 2013 numbers, the large majority (67%) of the homeless persons served in Atlantic CoC HMIS participating projects were male, with women representing only 33% of the population.

In addition, 50% of the homeless persons served during 2014 identified their race as White, making that the largest racial subgroup. The next largest was Black or African-American (46%), followed by Multi-Racial with 2%. With regards to ethnicity, 15% of persons identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.

Disabling Conditions. Among all persons served throughout Atlantic County's HMIS emergency shelter and transitional housing projects, 54% identified having a disabling condition, this number includes 62% of adults and 3% of children.

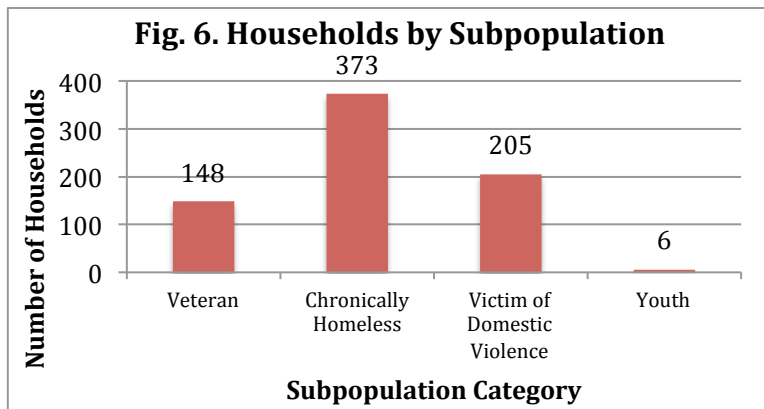
Among disabled adults, 57% reported a mental health issue, making this the most prevalent disability; representing 36% of the total adult homeless population. 56% of disabled adults also reported a substance issue. Among disabled children, 58% reported a chronic health condition. 33% of disabled children also reported a developmental 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 2014, Atlantic CoC served 373 households that were identified as chronically homeless, which is a 17% increase from 2013 numbers. 99% of these households were

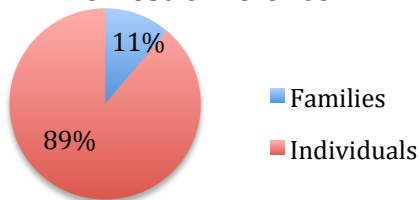
individuals residing in emergency shelter projects. The remaining 2 households were chronically homeless individuals in transitional housing projects.



Youth only households, households without someone over age 18, represented less than 1% of the total households served throughout Atlantic HMIS projects. The 6 youth households served were composed of 5 individual you and 3 persons in a youth only household. All youth only households served were served in emergency shelter projects.

As far as veterans served, Atlantic CoC served a total of 148 veterans throughout 2014. 95% of veterans served were individuals and only 10% were female. 85% of the veterans served were served in emergency shelter projects. 72% of veterans reported having some kind of disability, with the most common disability reported being substance abuse issue (61%).

Fig. 7. Household Type Among Victims of Domestic Violence

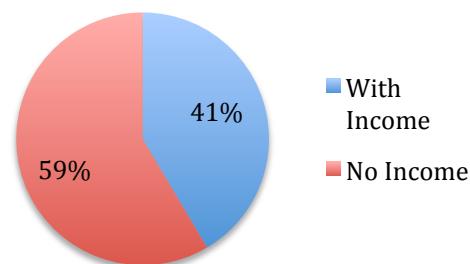


In addition to the chronic, youth and veteran populations, there were 205 homeless households that reported having a victim of domestic violence. 89% of these households were individuals, while the remaining 23 were families. 49% reported that the last episode of domestic violence occurred over a year ago, while 34% reported it happening within the past 3 months. All of the domestic violence victims 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.

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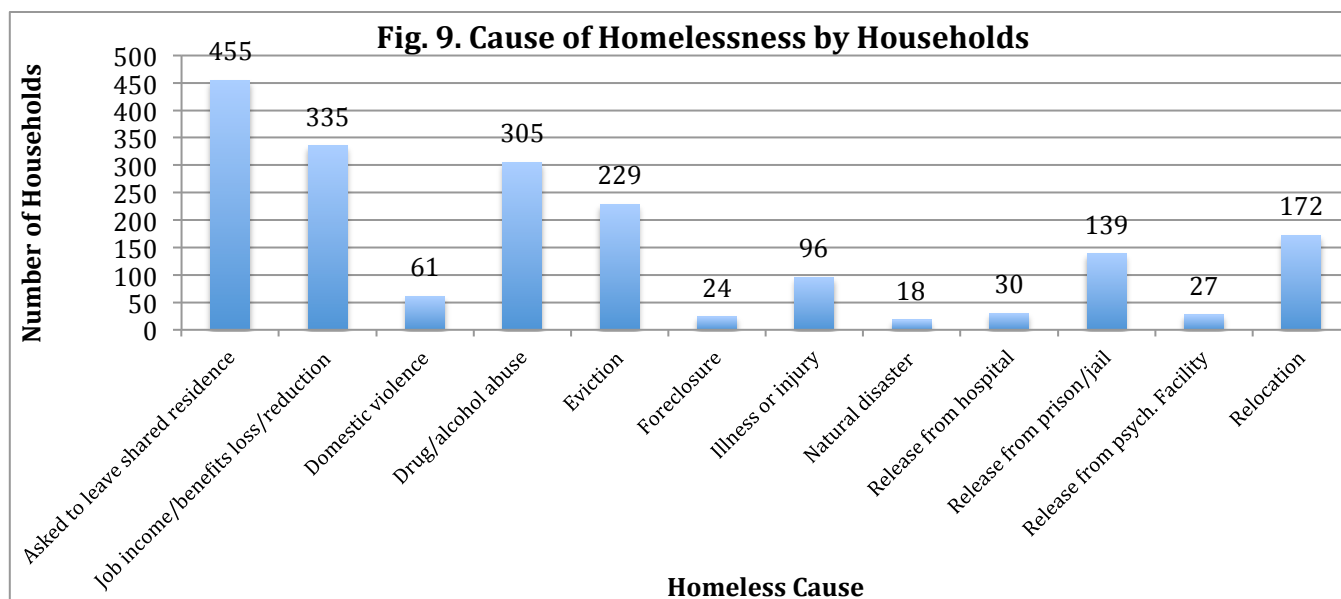
Income and Benefits. Among all homeless households served in emergency shelter or transitional housing projects during 2014, 59% had no source of income, while 9% reported receiving some form of earned income. The most common sources of cash income among households were SSI (19%) and General Assistance (9%). The average monthly income for households in emergency shelter was \$252, while it was \$578 for households served in transitional housing projects.

Fig. 8. Percentage of Households with Income



While 59% of households had no source of income, 57% of households were not receiving some kind of non-cash benefit. Food Stamps was the top reported non-cash benefit, which was reported by 37% of the households. Another 13% of households were connected to Medicaid benefits.

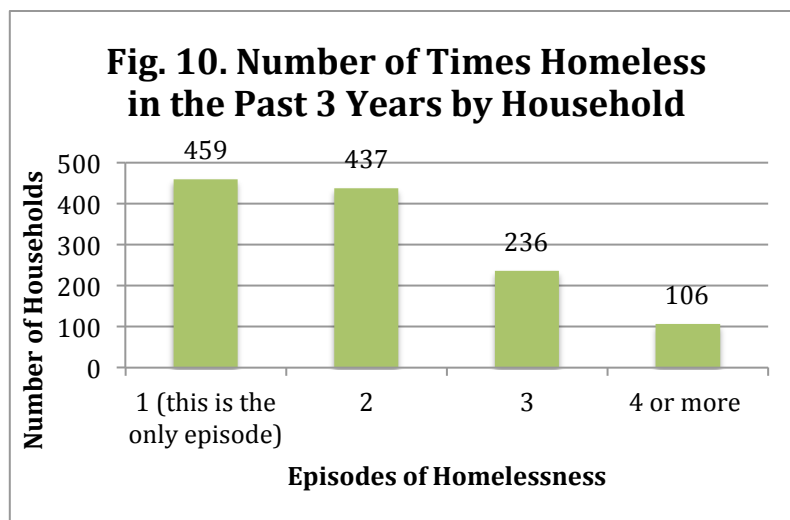
Cause of Homelessness and Residence Prior to Project Entry. When asked what the primary factor was that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to being asked to leave a shared residence (21%) than any other. As Figure 9 shows, the next most common factors were loss or reduction in job income or benefits (16%) and drug or alcohol abuse (14%).



When looking at the most common responses for residence prior to project entry, 36% of households identified they were staying or living with family or friends prior to project entry. The next most common response was emergency shelter (27%) followed by rental by client (9%).

Length of Stay at Prior Residence and Episodes of Homelessness.

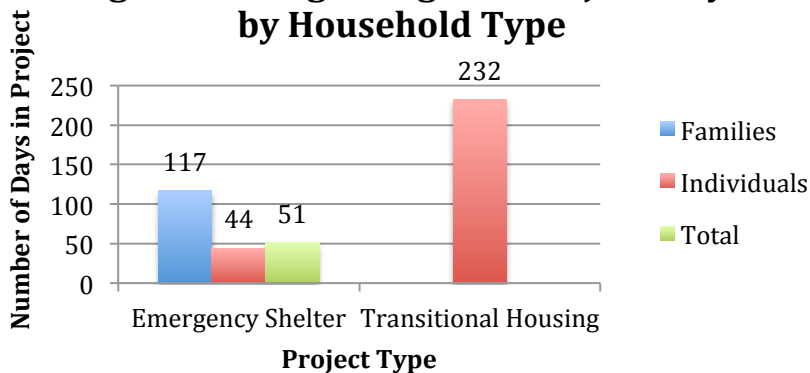
34% of households served during 2014 had resided in their last residence for one year or longer before entering the emergency shelter or transitional housing project. Another 20% were in their prior residence for more than 3 months but less than 1 year, while 18% were in their residence for one week or less before entering the project. As seen in Figure 10, 22% of households were experiencing their first episode of homelessness upon entering the emergency shelter or transitional housing project.



Average Length of Project Stay.

When looking at total length of project stay for families and individuals, families seemed to have longer stays in emergency shelter when compared to individuals. During their project stay it was found that families stayed on average 73 days, or 2½ months, longer than individuals in emergency shelter. Individuals were found to stay on average 232

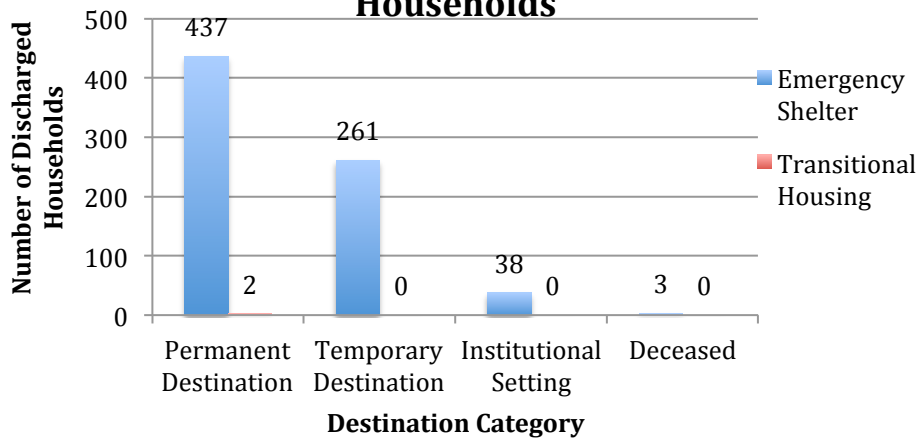
Fig. 11. Average Length of Project Stay by Household Type



days, or about 7½ months when enrolled in a transitional housing project. The total average length of program stay reduced by 15 days, or 2 weeks, in emergency shelter, and 193 days, or about 6 months for transitional housing projects when compared to 2013.

Reason and Destination at Discharge. A total of 1,898 households were discharged from emergency shelter projects and transitional housing projects during the 2014 reporting period. 18% of households were discharged after project completion or left for a housing opportunity before completion.

Fig. 12. Destination Category by Households



23% of households discharged in 2014 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, living with a family member or friend permanently, foster care, a long-term care facility or a hotel or motel the household pays for. The most common permanent destination was rental by client with 20% of total households

moving into a rental upon discharge. This rental could be with or without a subsidy. 14% of households moved on to a temporary destination at discharge, which could include an emergency shelter, hotel or motel paid for by an agency, 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 or friends temporarily, which involved 5% of the total households. An institutional destination, which was the destination of 2% of households, included exits to foster care, medical hospitals, jail or prison, long-term care facilities or substance abuse treatment facility. Please note, there was a high number of households that where discharge information was not provided, which led to low percentage for each discharge category.

Appendix A: HMIS Projects Included in Report

I. Emergency Shelter Projects

Agency	Project Name
Atlantic City Rescue Mission	ACRM-Family Emergency Shelter
	ACRM-Mens Program Emergency Shelter
	ACRM-Nightly Emergency Shelter
	ACRM-Women Program Emergency Shelter
Atlantic County DFCD	ACDFCD-Motel Voucher
Covenant House	Covenant House Crisis Center

II. Transitional Housing Projects

Agency	Project Name
Atlantic City Rescue Mission	Enphront Veteran's Services-MARP