



Bergen 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 Bergen 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 Bergen County CoC analyzed data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) administered by the Bergen County Department of Human Services, the HMIS Lead Agency. Bergen County, utilizes software developed by Foothold Technology as the primary HMIS system for the County, which is also the system used by the majority of the rest of 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 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.

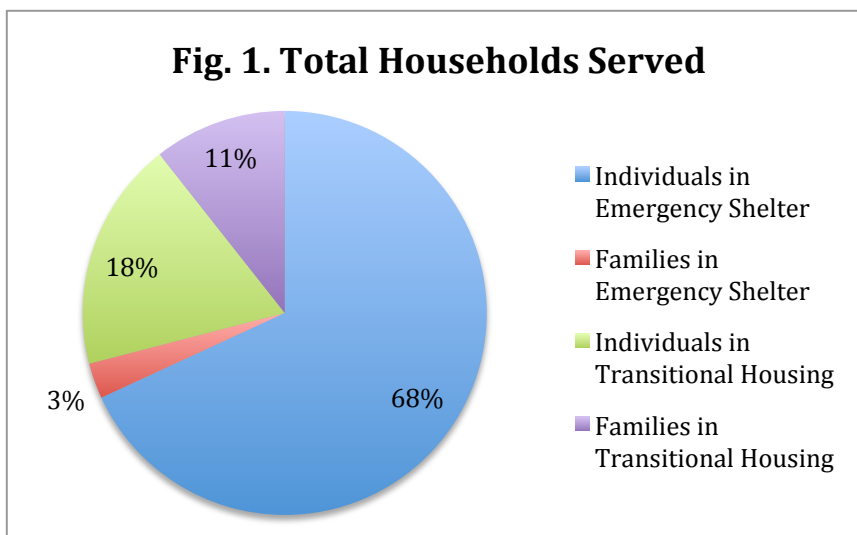
III. Findings for Total Population Served

Key Findings:

- A total of 668 households were served in HMIS participating emergency shelters and transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014 period
- There were 114 households identified as chronically homeless during this reporting period
- 72% of all adults served either as individuals or as part of a family identified having a disabling condition
- 39% of the total population served was under age 30
- 48% of households moved on to permanent destinations after discharge

Total Homeless Population.

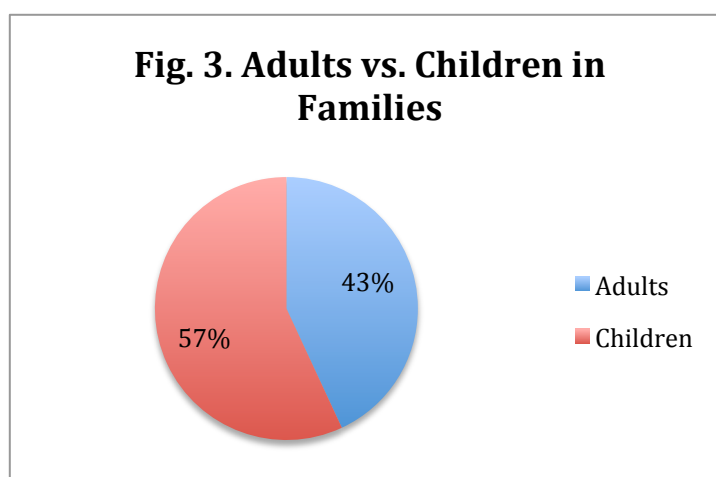
A total of 668 households composed of 845 persons were housed in Bergen County CoC HMIS participating emergency shelters or transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014 reporting period. This is a 13% decrease in total households and a 15% decrease in total persons served from 2013. Out of the households served in 2014, the majority, 87% (578) were individuals, while the remaining 13% (90 households) were families. As shown in Figure 1, the most served population was individuals in emergency shelter, which made up 68% of the total population served. The 845 persons served throughout Bergen County HMIS projects made up 3% of New Jersey’s total homeless population served in HMIS projects in 2014.



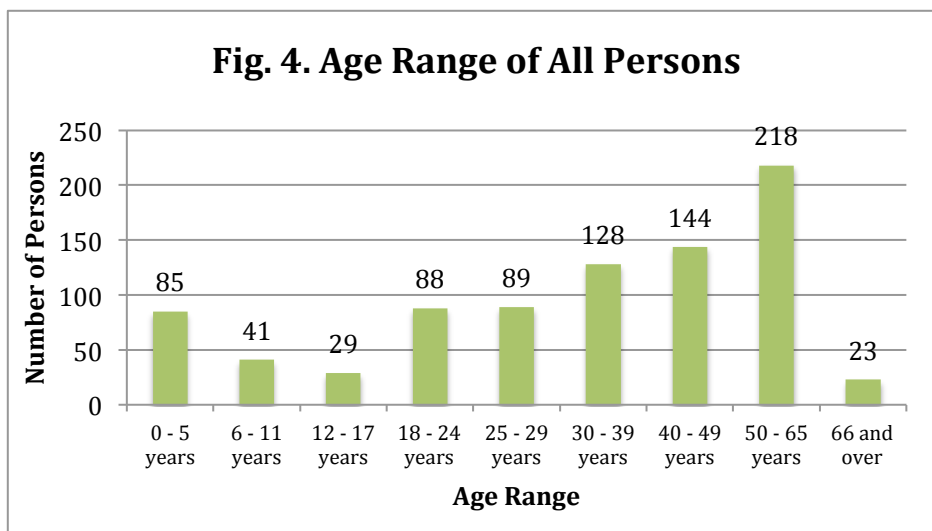
As shown in Figure 1, the most served population was individuals in emergency shelter, which made up 68% of the total population served. The 845 persons served throughout Bergen County HMIS projects made up 3% of New Jersey’s total homeless population served in HMIS projects in 2014.

	Bergen County	New Jersey
Total Persons Served	845	25,327
Emergency Shelter	519	20,800
Individuals	455	14,143
Families	64	6,657
Transitional Housing	326	4,343
Individuals	123	2,256
Families	203	2,087

Family Composition. All 90 family households served throughout Bergen County in 2014 were households with adults and children under 18. As shown in Figure 3, children represented 56% 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 between the two project types was 6 years old.



Demographics. Of the total homeless population that was served in the Bergen CoC during 2014, the largest percent, 26%, of persons were between the ages of 50 and 65. As Figure 4 shows, the next highest age range served was persons between 18 and 29 (21%), with 50% of that number being youth between the ages of 18 and 24.

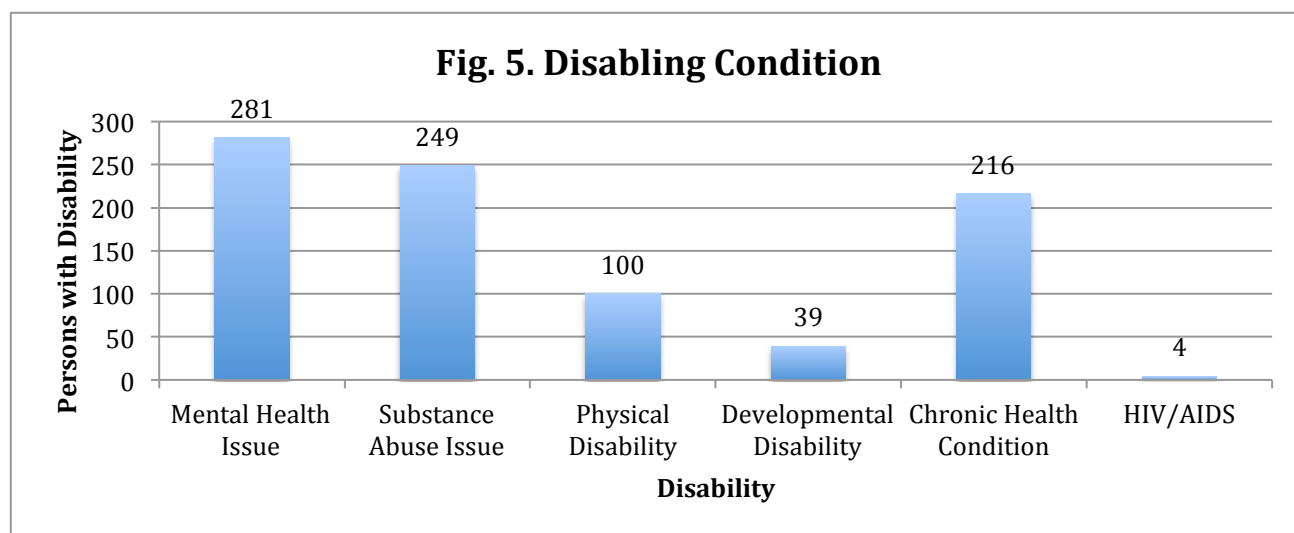


Similar to the 2013 numbers, over half (60%) of the homeless persons served in Bergen CoC HMIS participating projects were male, with women representing 40% of the population.

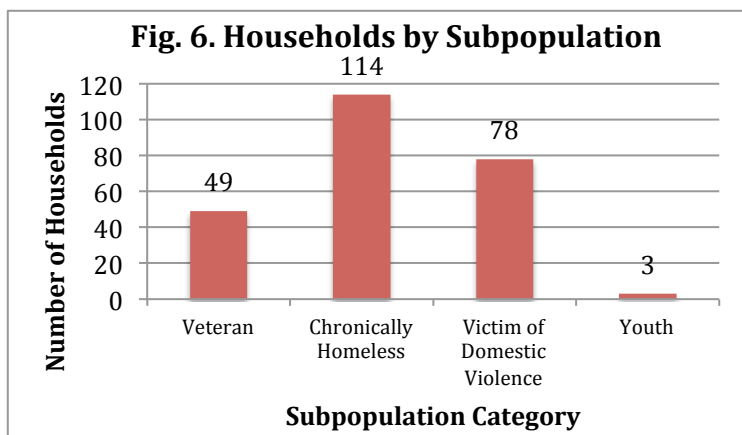
In addition, 60% of the homeless persons served during 2014 identified their race as White, making that the largest racial subgroup. The next largest was Black or African American (35%), followed by Multi-Racial with 3%. With regards to ethnicity, only 18% identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.

Disabling Conditions. Among all persons served throughout Bergen County’s HMIS emergency shelter and transitional housing projects, 61% identified having a disabling condition, this number includes 72% of adults and 15% of children.

Among disabled adults, 56% reported mental health issues, making this the most prevalent disability; representing 40% of the total adult homeless population. 50% of disabled adults also reported a substance abuse issue. Among disabled children, 46% reported a chronic health condition. 42% of disabled children also reported a developmental disability.



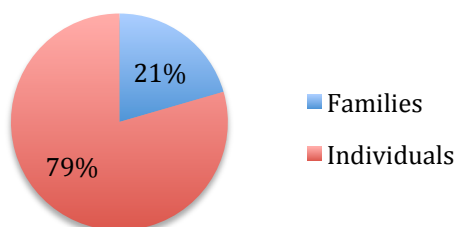
Subpopulation Characteristics. In its plan, *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has prioritized ending youth, veteran and chronic homelessness across the Country. In 2014, Bergen CoC served a total of 114 households that were identified as chronically homeless, which is a 5% decrease from 2013. 88% of the chronic households served were individuals in emergency shelters, the remaining 12% were served in transitional housing projects (1 of which was a family household).



Youth only households, households without someone over age 18, represented less than 1% of the total households served throughout Bergen HMIS projects. 3 individual youth only households were served in 2014, 67% of which were served in transitional housing projects.

As far as veterans served, Bergen CoC served a total of 49 veterans throughout 2014. 94% of veterans served were individuals and only 8% were female. 67% of the veterans served were served in emergency shelter projects. 86% of veterans reported having some kind of disability, with the most common disability reported being a substance abuse issue (55%).

Fig. 7. Household Type Among Victims of Domestic Violence

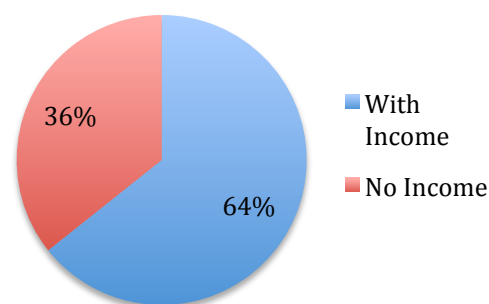


In addition to the chronic, youth and veteran populations, there were 78 homeless households that reported having a victim of domestic violence. 79% of these households were individuals, while the remaining 16 were families. 64% reported that the last episode of domestic violence occurred over a year ago, while 26% reported it happening within the past 3 months. The majority of the domestic violence victims (73%) 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.

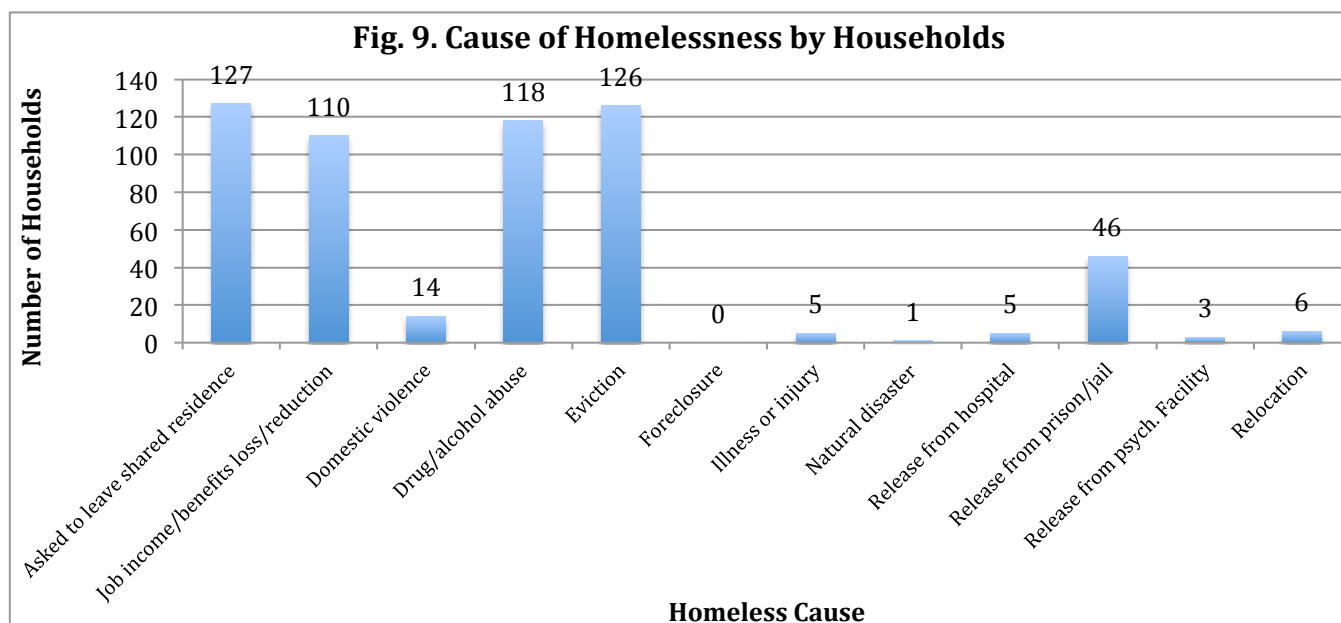
Income and Benefits. Among all homeless households served in emergency shelter or transitional housing projects during 2014, 36% had no source of income, while 20% reported receiving some form of earned income. The most common sources of cash income among households, other than earned income, were SSI (26%) and General Assistance (16%). The average monthly income for households in emergency shelter was \$428, while it was \$627 for households served in transitional housing projects.

Fig. 8. Percentage of Households with Income



While 36% of households had no source of income, 44% of households were not receiving some kind of non-cash benefit. Food Stamps was the top reported non-cash benefit, which was reported by 46% of the households. Another 14% of households were connected to Medicaid benefits.

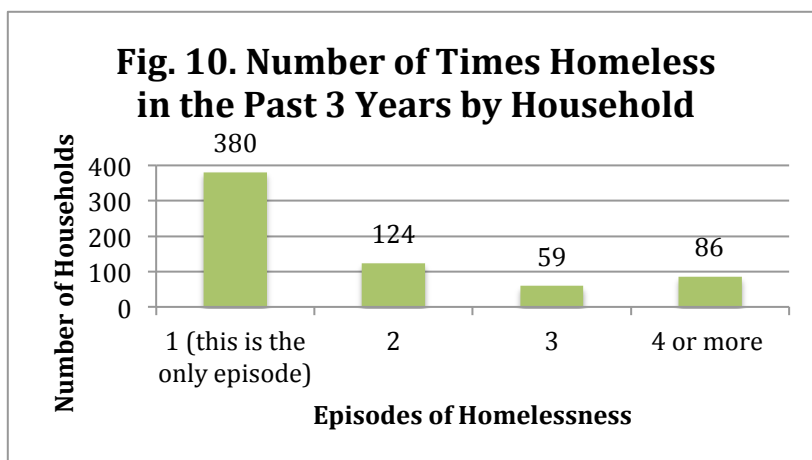
Cause of Homelessness and Residence Prior to Project Entry. When asked what the primary factor was that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to being asked to leave a shared residence (19%) than any other cause. As Figure 9 shows, the next most common factors were eviction (19%) and drug or alcohol abuse (17%).



These causes of homelessness coincide with the common response for residence prior to project entry with 26% of households staying or living with family or friends prior to project entry. The next most common response was emergency shelter (22%) followed by place not meant for habitation (12%).

Length of Stay at Prior Residence and Episodes of Homelessness.

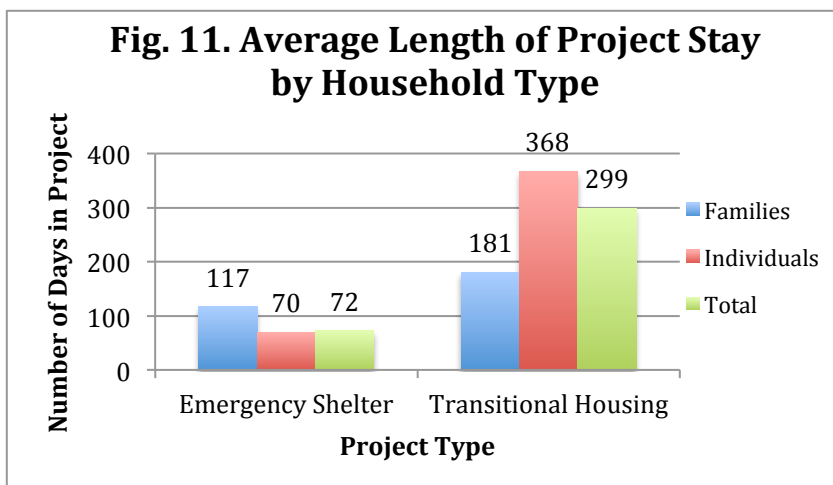
48% of households served during 2014 had resided in their last residence for one year or longer before entering the emergency shelter or transitional housing project. Another 17% were in their prior residence for more than 3 months but less than one year, while only 13% were there one week or less. Similarly, only 13% of households experienced 4



or more episodes of homelessness in the last 3 years, while the majority of households (57%) were experiencing their first episode of homeless, as seen in Figure 10.

Average Length of Project Stay.

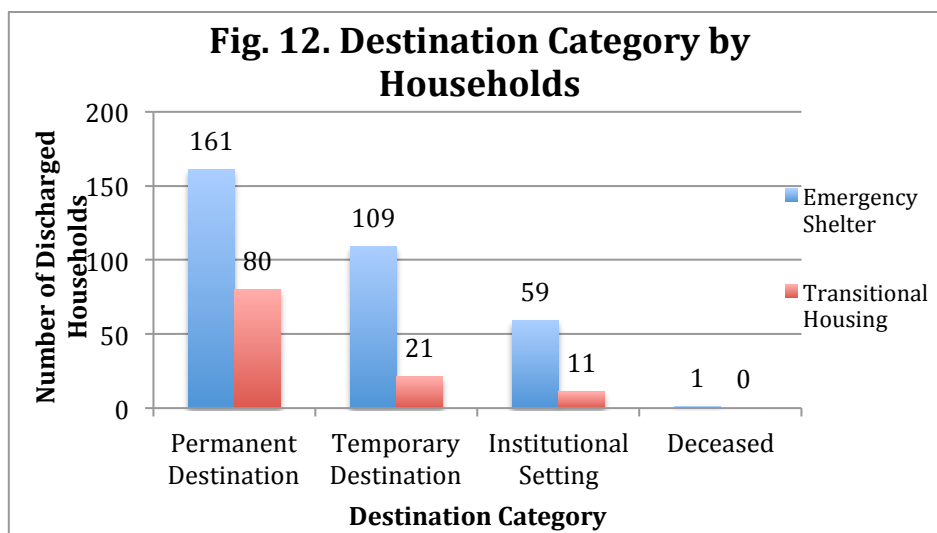
When looking at total length of project stay for families and individuals, families seemed to have longer stays than individuals in emergency shelter, but the opposite was found when looking at transitional housing. During their project stay, families stayed on average 47 days, or 1½ months longer than individuals in emergency shelter, while individuals stayed on average, 187 days, or a little over 6 months longer than families in transitional housing projects.



When comparing the average lengths of stay for 2014 to those found in 2013, emergency shelter’s average decreased by 1 day, while the average transitional housing length of stay decreased by 64 days, or just over 2 months.

Reason and Destination at Discharge.

A total of 505 households were discharged from emergency shelter and transitional housing projects during the 2014 reporting period. 52% of these households were discharged from projects after completing the program while 11% were discharged because there needs could not be met by the project.



48% 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, or living with a family member or friend permanently. The most common permanent destination was rental by client with 37% of total

households moving into a rental upon discharge. This rental could be with or without a subsidy. 26% 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 13% of the total households. An institutional destination, which was the destination of 14% 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. Medical hospital was the most common institutional destination recorded with 10% of total households leaving housing projects for medical hospitals.



Appendix A: HMIS Projects Included in Report

I. Emergency Shelter Projects

Agency	Project Name
Bergen County Board of Social Services	BCBSS Motel Placement
Bergen County Housing Health and Human Services Center	CCCDC Center Single Shelter
Family Promise of Bergen County	FPBC Family Shelter Program

II. Transitional Housing Projects

Agency	Project Name
Bergen County Department of Human Services	Community Hope – AJTHV
	Visions
Comprehensive Behavioral Health Care	CBHC 19 Spruce
	CBHC 292 Newark
Family Promise of Bergen County	FPBC TH Family Apartments
Greater Bergen Community Action	GBCA Family Transitional Housing
	GBCA Ladder
	GBCA Ladder II
	GBCA Phases
Vantage	GBCA Shepherd House
	Vantage – Hille Place