Burlington 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 Burlington 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 Burlington 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 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 414 households were served in HMIS participating emergency shelters and transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014 period
- There were 44 households identified as chronically homeless during this reporting period
- 38% of all adults served either as individuals or as part of a family identified having a disabling condition
- 74% of the total population served was under age 30
- 38% of households moved on to permanent destinations after discharge, while 49% moved on to temporary destinations

Total Homeless Population. A total of 414 households composed of 1,085 persons were housed in Burlington County CoC HMIS participating emergency shelters or transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014 reporting period. This is a 33% decrease in total households and a 14% decrease in total persons served from 2013. Out of the households served in 2014, the majority, 65%

Fig. 1. Total Households Served

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

(270 households) were families, while the remaining 35% (144) were individuals. As shown in Figure 1, the most served population was families in emergency shelter, which made up 62% of the total population served. The 1,085 persons served throughout Burlington County HMIS projects made up 4% of New Jersey's total homeless population served in HMIS projects in 2014.
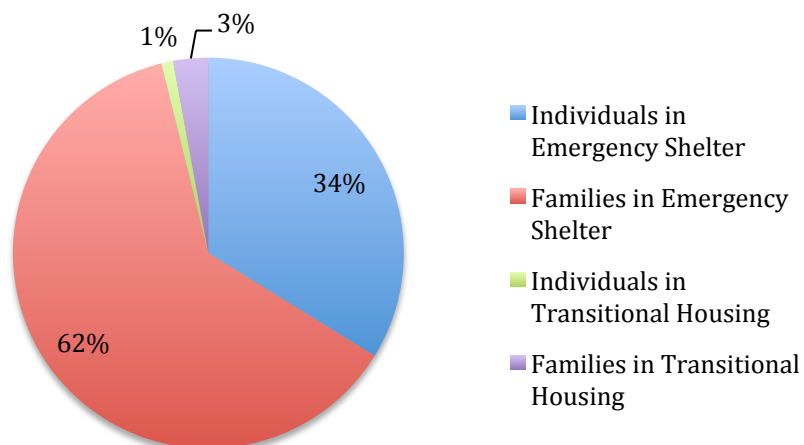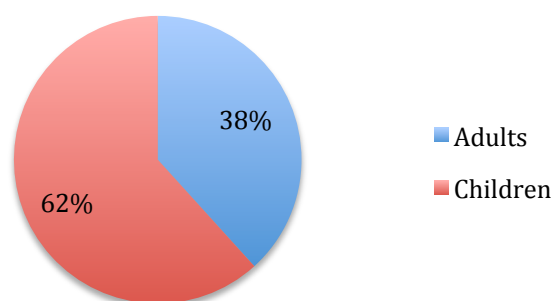
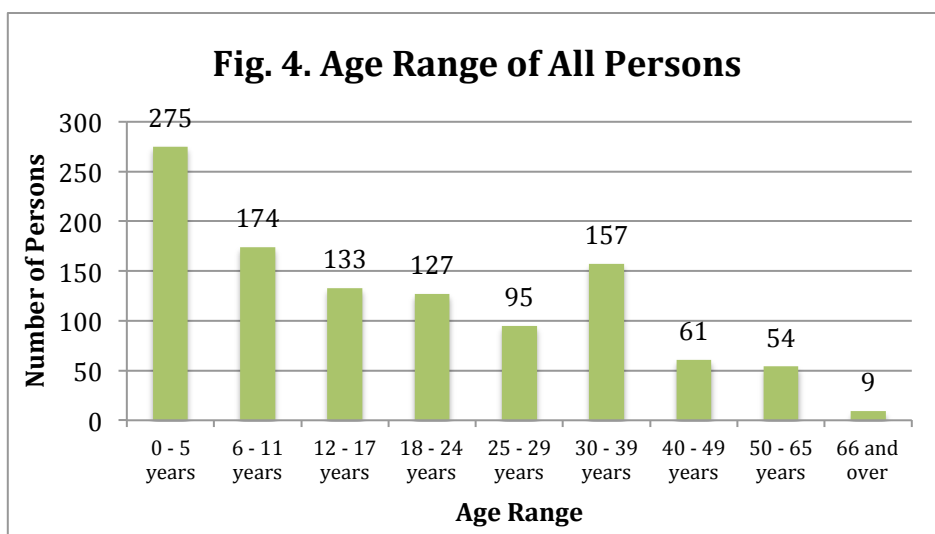| Figure 2. Total Persons Served		
	Burlington County	**New Jersey**
Total Persons Served	1,085	25,327
Emergency Shelter	1,040	20,800
Individuals	140	14,143
Families	900	6,657
Transitional Housing	45	4,343
Individuals	4	2,256
Families	41	2,087

Family Composition. Of the 270 family households served throughout Burlington County in 2014, 259 (96%) were households with adults and children under 18, 8 (3%) were adult only households while the remaining 3 were youth only households. As shown in Figure 3, children represented 62% 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 7 years old.

Fig. 3. Adults vs. Children in Families

- Adults
- Children

Demographics. Of the total homeless population that was served in the Burlington CoC during 2014, **t**he largest percent, 54%, of persons were children under age 18, with 582 aged between 0 and 17. As Figure 4 shows, the next highest age range served was persons between 18 and 29 (20%), showing that nearly 75% of the population served was under the age of 30.
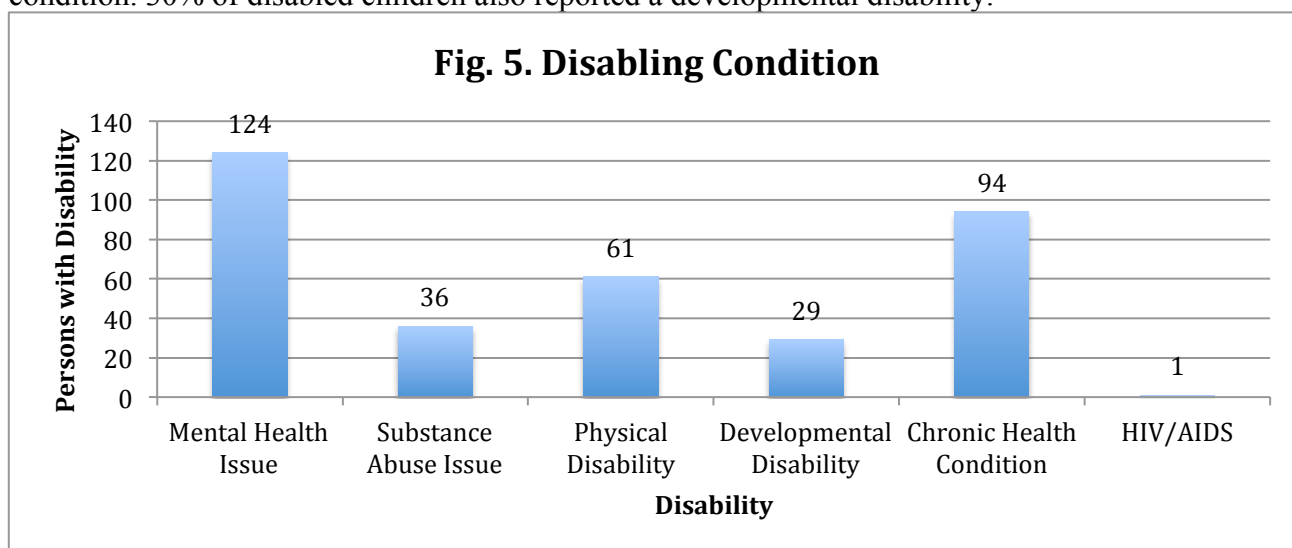
Fig. 4. Age Range of All Persons

Opposite to the 2013 numbers, more than half (56%) of the homeless persons served in Burlington CoC HMIS participating projects were female, with men representing 44% of the population.
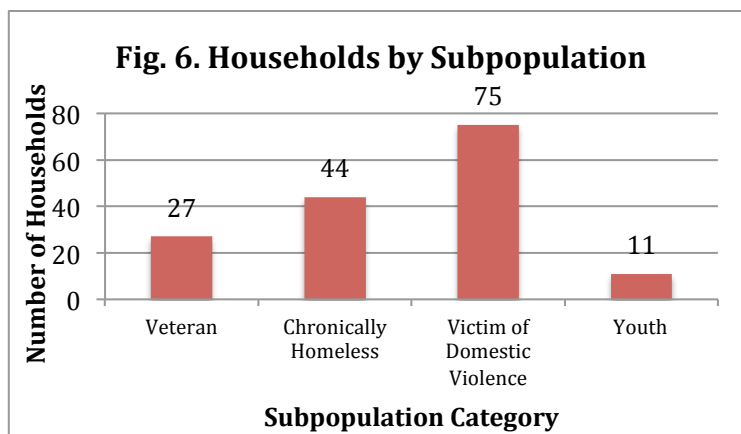
In addition, 64% of the homeless persons served during 2014 identified their race as Black or African American, making that the largest racial subgroup. The next largest was White (27%), followed by Multi-Racial with 4%. With regards to ethnicity, only 11% identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.

Disabling Conditions. Among all persons served throughout Burlington County's HMIS emergency shelter and transitional housing projects, 23% identified having a disabling condition, this number includes 38% of adults and 9% of children.

Among disabled adults, 58% reported mental health issues making this the most prevalent disability; representing 22% of the total adult homeless population. 35% of disabled adults also reported a chronic health condition. Among disabled children, 49% reported a chronic health condition. 30% of disabled children also reported a developmental disability.
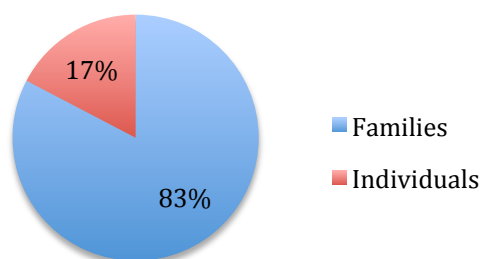
Fig. 5. Disabling Condition

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 2014, Burlington CoC served a total of 44 households that were identified as chronically homeless, this is a 33% decrease from the number served in 2013. 57% of the chronic households served were families in emergency shelter projects, the remaining 43% were individuals in emergency shelters.

Fig. 6. Households by Subpopulation

Number of Households — Subpopulation Category

Veteran: 27
Chronically Homeless: 44
Victim of Domestic Violence: 75
Youth: 11

Youth only households, households without someone over age 18, represented 3% of the total households served throughout Burlington HMIS projects. These households were composed of 8 individual youth and 8 persons in youth only households. All of the youth only households were served in emergency shelter projects.

As far as veterans served, Burlington CoC served a total of 27 veterans throughout 2014. 52% of veterans served were individuals and 26% were female. All except 1 veteran was served in emergency shelter projects. 41% of veterans reported having some kind of disability, with the most common disabilities reported being a mental health issue and a physical disability, with 55% each.

Fig. 7. Household Type Among Victims of Domestic Violence
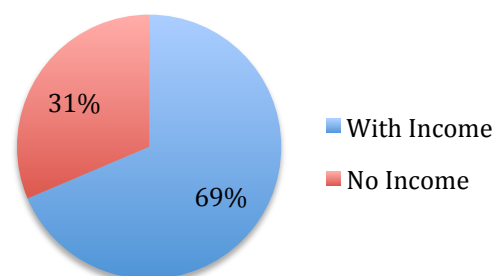
Families: 83%
Individuals: 17%

In addition to the chronic, youth and veteran populations, there were 75 homeless households that reported having a victim of domestic violence. 83% of these households were families, while the remaining 13 were individuals. 43% reported that the last episode of domestic violence occurred over a year ago, while 35% reported it happening within the past 3 months. The majority of the domestic violence victims (95%) 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.
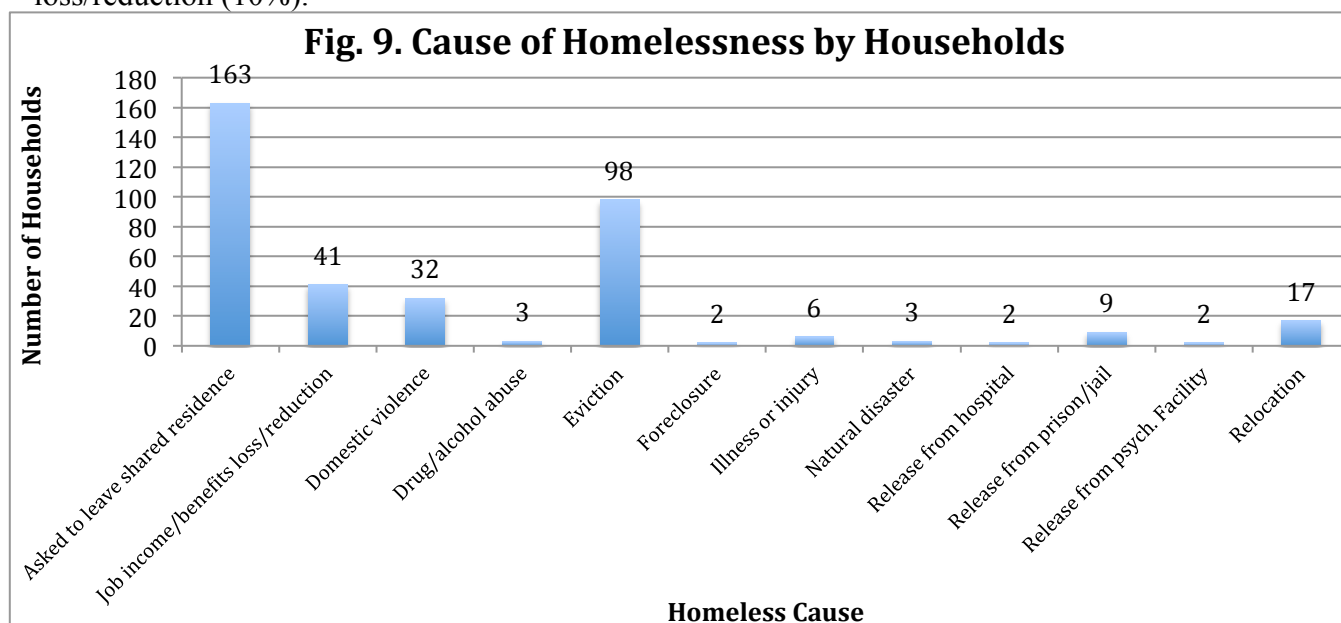
Income and Benefits. Among all homeless households served in emergency shelter or transitional housing projects during 2013, 31% had no source of income, while 7% reported receiving some form of earned income. The most common sources of cash income among households were TANF (43%) and SSI (20%). The average monthly income for households in emergency shelter was $453, while it was $860 for households served in transitional housing projects.

Fig. 8. Percentage of Households with Income

With Income: 69%
No Income: 31%

While 31% of households had no source of income, 23% of households were not receiving some kind of non-cash benefit. Food Stamps was the top reported non-cash benefit, which was reported by 67% of the households. Another 32% of households were connected to Medicaid benefits.
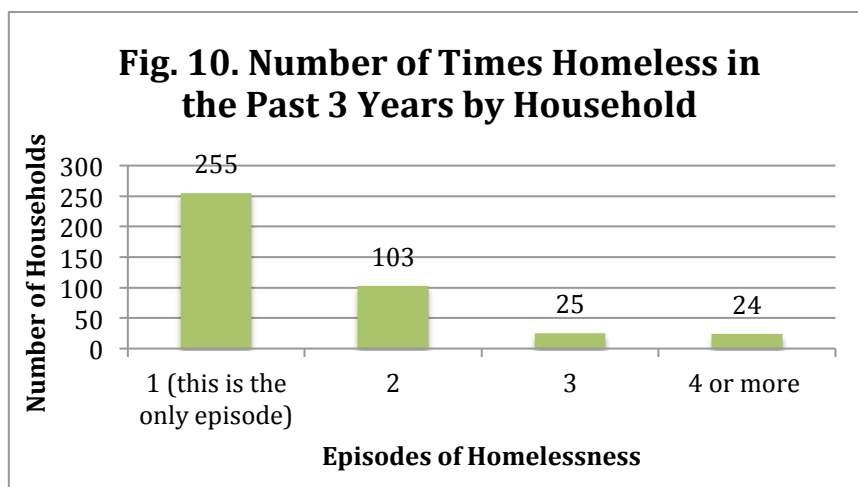
Cause of Homelessness and Residence Prior to Project Entry. When asked what the primary factor was that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to being asked to leave a shared residence (39%) than any other cause. As Figure 9 shows, the next most common factors were eviction (24%) and job income or benefits loss/reduction (10%).

Fig. 9. Cause of Homelessness by Households

These causes of homelessness coincide with the common response for residence prior to project entry with 52% of households staying or living with family or friends prior to project entry. The next most common response was emergency shelter (25%) followed by rental by client (6%).

Length of Stay at Prior Residence and Episodes of Homelessness. 27% 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 23% were in their prior residence for more than 3 months but less than one year, while only 9% were there one week or less. Similarly, only 6% 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 homeless, as seen in Figure 10.
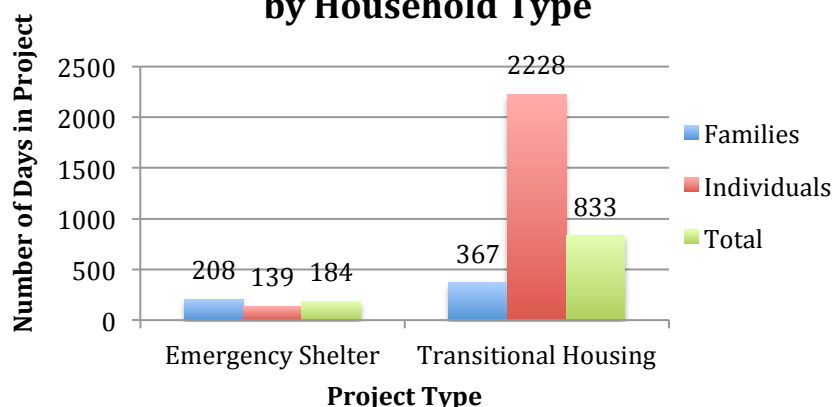
Fig. 10. Number of Times Homeless in the Past 3 Years by Household

Average Length of Project Stay. When looking at total length of project stay for families and individuals, families seemed to have longer stays than individuals in emergency shelter, while the opposite was true when looking at transitional housing. During their project stay it was found that families stayed on average 69 days or just over 2 months longer than individuals in emergency shelter, while individuals stayed 1,861

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

days or 5 years longer than families in transitional housing. When comparing the total average lengths of stay for 2014 to those of 2013, the emergency shelter average length of stay increase by 37 days, while the transitional housing average increased by 59 days from 2013.
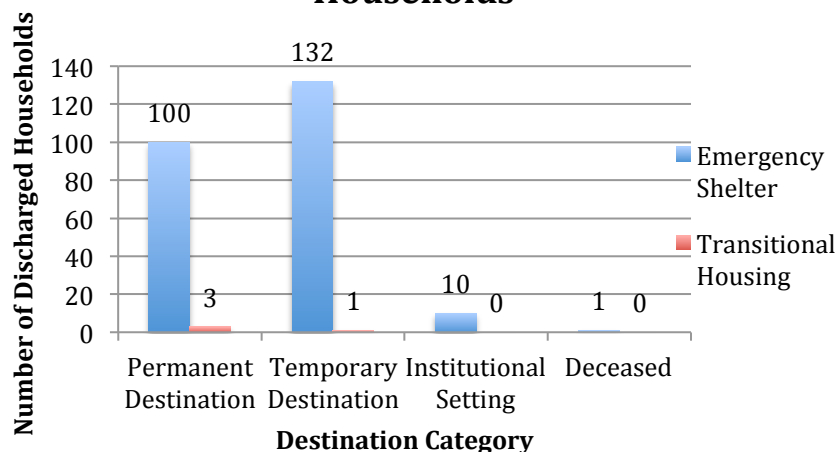
Reason and Destination at Discharge. A total of 274 households were discharged from emergency shelter and transitional housing projects during the 2014 reporting period. 30% of these households were discharged after completing the project while another 20% were discharged after reaching their maximum time for assistance.

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 33% of total households moving into a rental upon discharge. This rental could be with or without a subsidy. 49% 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 25% 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 reported, with 1% of total households reporting this as their destination after discharge.

Appendix A: HMIS Projects Included in Report

I. Emergency Shelter Projects

Agency	Project Name
Belmont Homes Housing Program	Belmont Homes ES
Christian Caring Center	CCC-Jack Stelle Men's Shelter
Extended Hand Ministries	TEHM-Extended Hand Ministries Code Blue
Interfaith Hospitality Network	IHN Emergency Shelter
	IHN-Triple Towns Code Blue Initiative
Transitional Housing Services Inc.	EA THSI Transitional Housing

II. Transitional Housing Projects

Agency	Project Name
Burlington County Community Action Program	BCCAP – Veterans TH Program
	BCCAP – Working Poor Program
Transitional Housing Services Inc.	THSI TH
Twin Oaks Community Services	TOCS-Family Service Haven