



Cape May County 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 Cape May County. 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 Cape May County 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

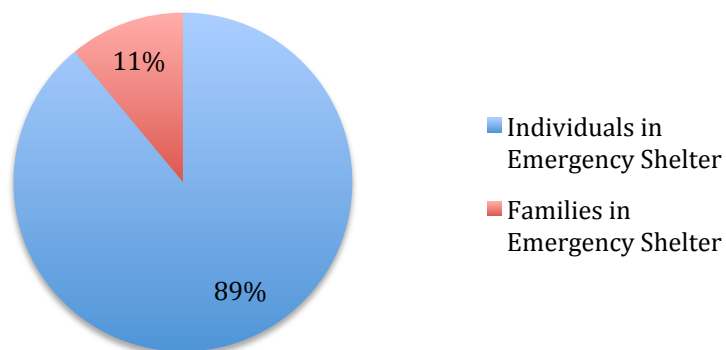
Key Findings:

- A total of 1,424 households were served in HMIS participating emergency shelters during the January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014 period
- There were 7 households identified as chronically homeless during this reporting period
- 3% of all adults served either as individuals or as part of a family identified having a disabling condition
- 49% of the total population served was under age 30

Total Homeless

Population. A total of 1,424 households composed of 1,672 persons were housed in Cape May County HMIS participating emergency shelters during the January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014 reporting period. This is a 13% decrease in total households and a 14% decrease in total persons served from 2013. Out of the households served in 2014, the majority, 89%

Fig. 1. Total Households Served



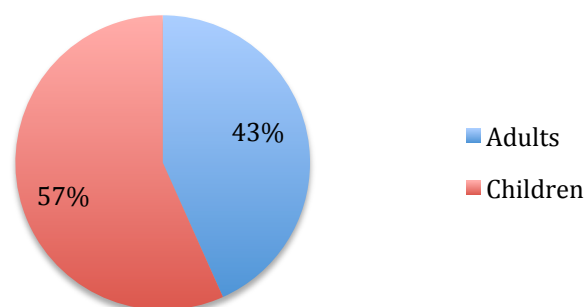
(1,267) were individuals, while the remaining 11% (157 households) were families. The 1,672 persons served throughout Cape May County HMIS projects made up 7% of New Jersey's total homeless population served in HMIS projects in 2014.

Figure 2. Total Persons Served

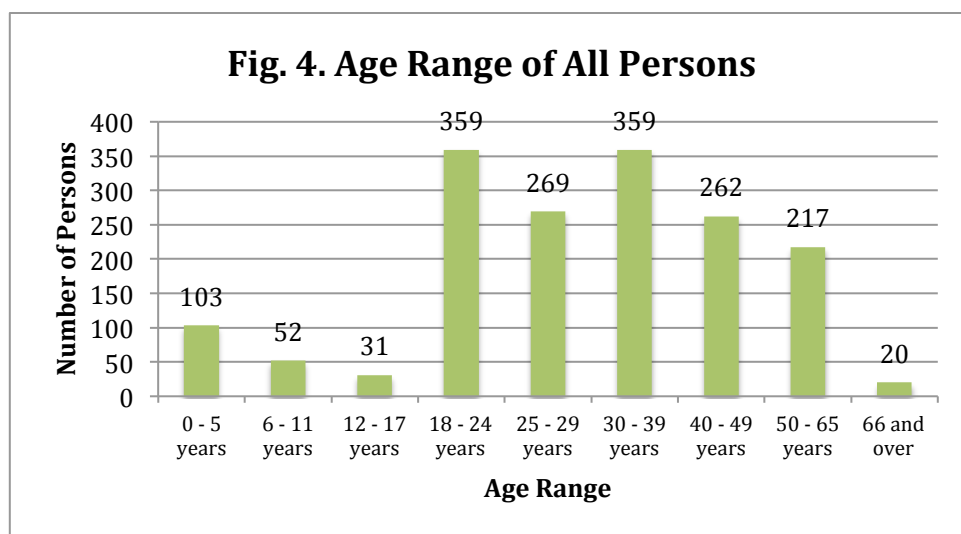
	Cape May County	New Jersey
Total Persons Served	1,672	25,327
Emergency Shelter	1,672	20,800
Individuals	1,267	14,143
Families	405	6,657

Family Composition. Of the 157 family households served throughout Cape May County in 2014, 119 (76%) were households with adults and children under 18, while the remaining 38 (24%) were adult only households. As shown in Figure 3, children represented 57% 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 was 6 years old.

Fig. 3. Adults vs. Children in Families



Demographics. Of the total homeless population that was served in Cape May County during 2014, the largest percent, 38%, of persons were between the ages of 18 and 29, with about 57% of the group between the ages of 18 and 24. As Figure 4 shows, the next highest age range served was persons between 30 and 39 years (21%).

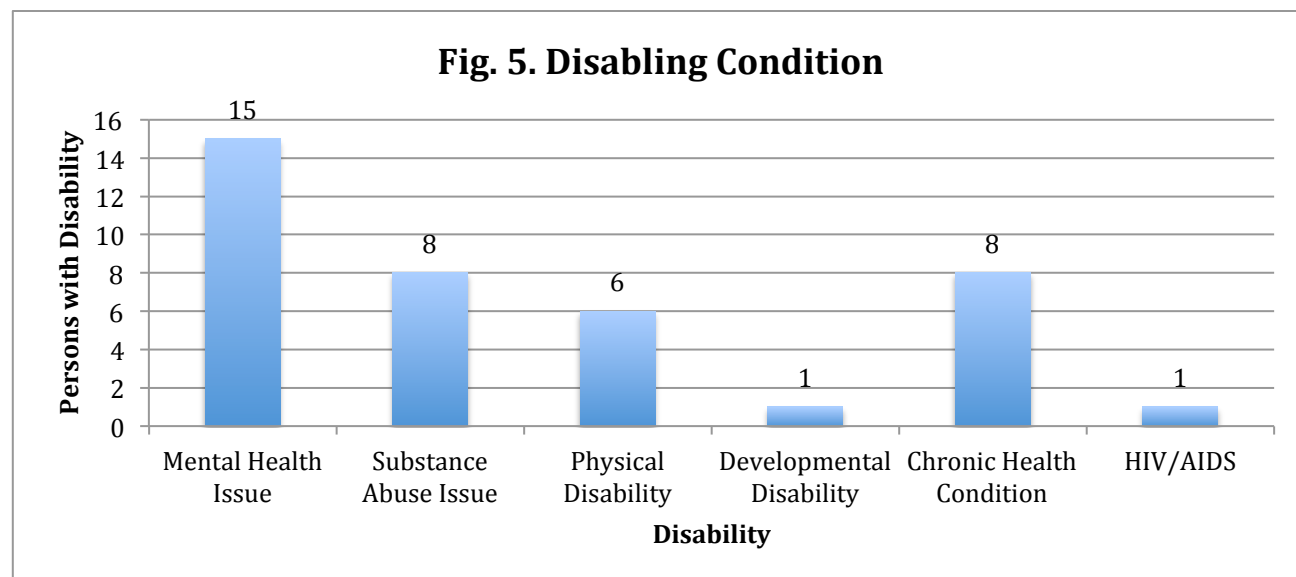


Similar to the 2013 numbers, more than half (55%) of the homeless persons served in Cape May HMIS participating projects were male, with women representing 45% of the population.

In addition, 79% 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 (21%), followed by Asian with less than 1%. With regards to ethnicity, only 12% identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.

Disabling Conditions. Among all persons served throughout Cape May County's HMIS emergency shelters, 3% identified having a disabling condition, this number includes 3% of adults and no children.

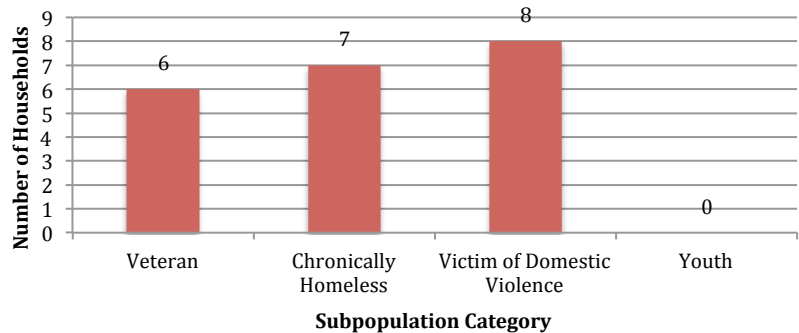
Among disabled adults, 33% reported a mental health issue making this the most prevalent disability. 18% of disabled adults also reported a substance abuse issue or a chronic health condition.



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 2014, Cape May County served a total of 7 households that were identified as chronically homeless, which was a 50% decrease from the 2013 number. All chronic households were individuals being served in the emergency shelter.

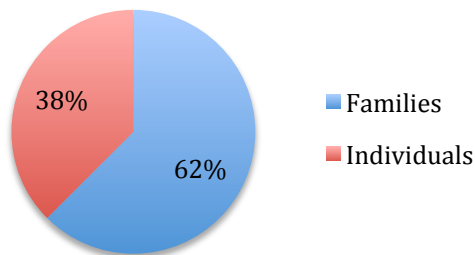
Fig. 6. Households by Subpopulation



There were no youth only households, households without someone over age 18, served in Cape May County in the 2014 reporting period.

As far as veterans served, Cape May County served a total of 6 veterans throughout 2014. 4 of the 6 veterans served were individuals and 2 of the 6 were female. None of the veterans served reported a disabling condition.

Fig. 7. Household Type Among Victims of Domestic Violence

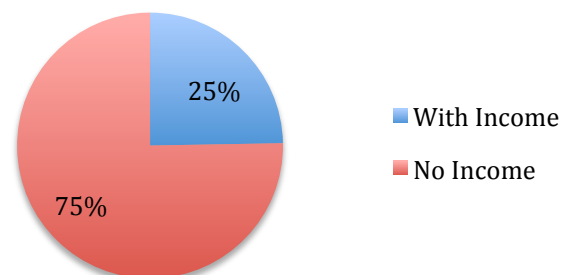


In addition to the chronic, youth and veteran populations, there were 8 homeless households that reported having a victim of domestic violence. 63% of these households were families, while the remaining 3 were individuals. 38% reported that the last episode of domestic violence occurred within the past 3 months, while another 13% reported it happening between 3 and 6 months ago. 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.

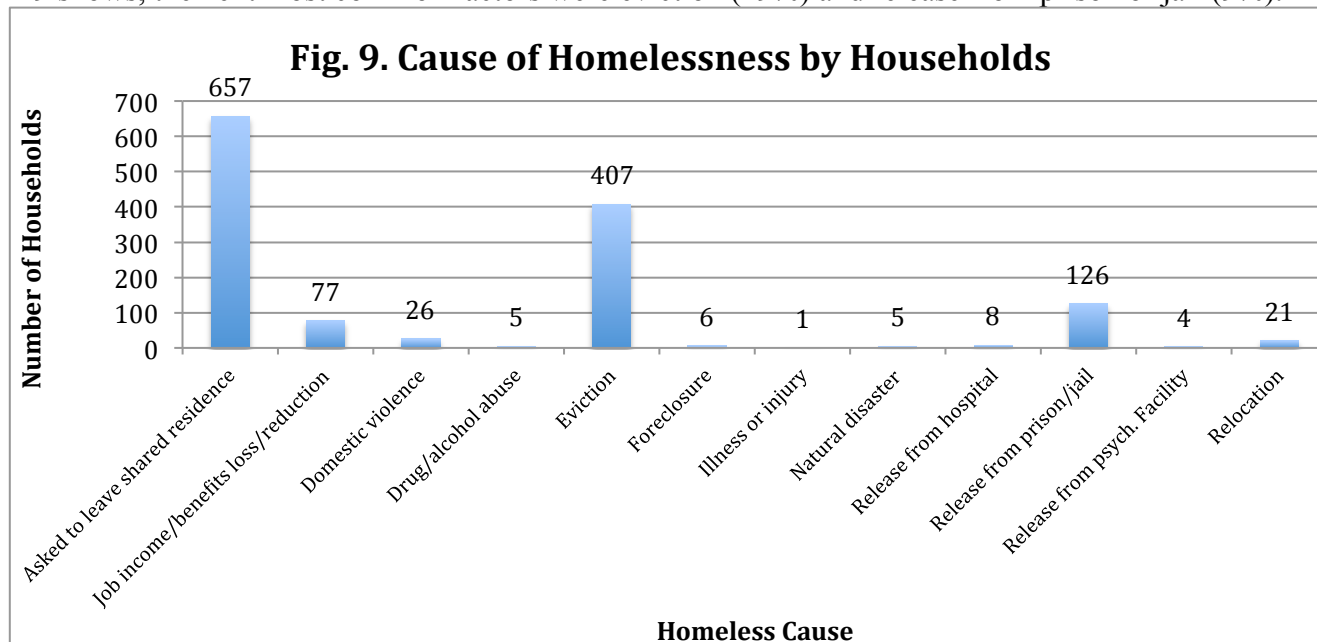
Income and Benefits. Among all homeless households served in emergency shelters during 2014, 75% had no source of income, while 5% reported receiving some form of earned income. The most common sources of cash income among households, other than earned income, were SSI (10%) and General Assistance with 4% of households reporting this form of income. The average monthly income for households in emergency shelter was \$132.

Fig. 8. Percentage of Households with Income



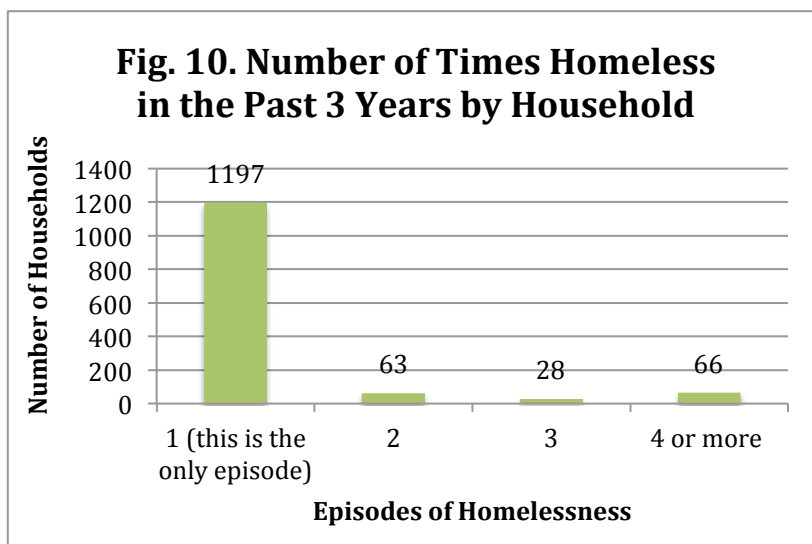
While 75% of households had no source of income, 79% of households were not receiving some kind of non-cash benefit. Food Stamps was the top reported non-cash benefit, which was reported by 21% of the households. Another 9% of households were connected to Medicaid benefits.

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 (46%) than any other cause. As Figure 9 shows, the next most common factors were eviction (29%) and release from prison or jail (9%).



These causes of homelessness coincide with the common response for residence prior to project entry with 56% of households staying or living with family or friends prior to project entry. The next most common response was rental by client (23%) followed by jail or prison (8%).

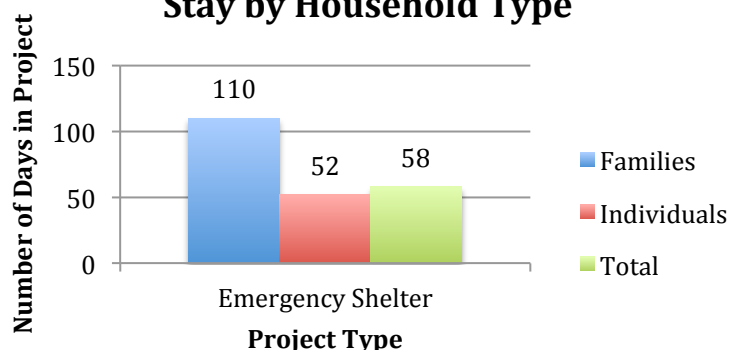
Length of Stay at Prior Residence and Episodes of Homelessness. 28% of the households served during 2014 had resided in their last residence for one to three months before entering the emergency shelter project. Only 13% were in their prior residence for more than one year and only 8% were there one week or less. When looking at the number of times the household had been homeless in the past 3 years, 84% of households were experiencing their first episode of homelessness, as seen in Figure 10.



Average Length of Project Stay.

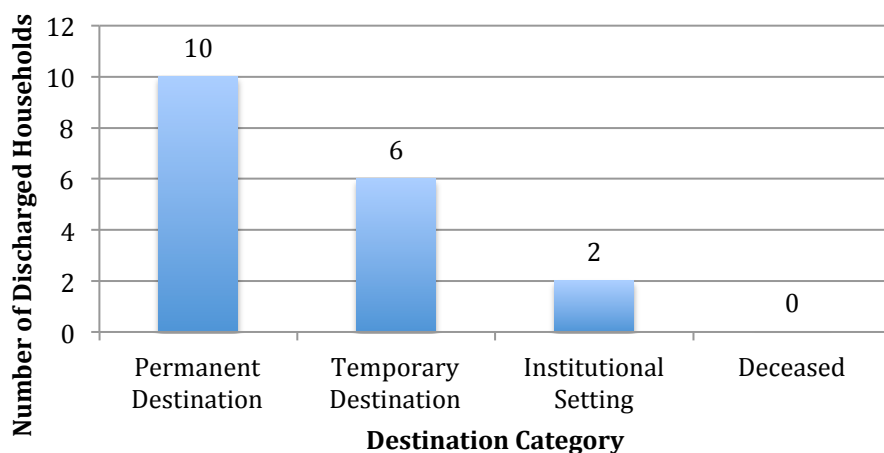
When looking at total length of project stay for families and individuals, families seemed to have longer stays in emergency shelter than individuals. During their project stay it was found that families stayed on average 58 days or about 2 months longer than individuals in emergency shelter. When comparing the average lengths of stay in 2014 to those of 2013, the average length of stay decreased by 38 days for emergency shelter.

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



Reason and Destination at Discharge. A total of 1,257 households were discharged from emergency shelter projects during the 2014 reporting period. 30% of these households were discharged from projects upon project completion, while another 24% were discharged due to disagreement with project rules or staff.

Fig. 12. Destination Category by Households



Unfortunately, due to the nature of Cape May's emergency shelter project, and the reason households were leaving the project, information about where the household was leaving to was not able to be collected by staff for the majority of households.

Based on the data that was collected, 1% 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. This rental could be with or without a subsidy. Less than 1% 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 or friends temporarily. An institutional destination, which was the destination of less than 1% 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 upon discharge.

Appendix A: HMIS Projects Included in Report

I. Emergency Shelter Projects

Agency	Project Name
Cape May County Board of Social Services	CMCBSS – Temporary Shelter