



# Cumberland 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 the Cumberland 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 Cumberland 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:**

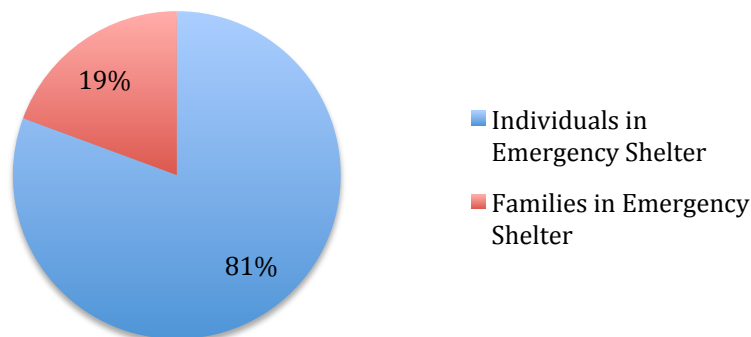
- A total of 346 households were served in HMIS participating emergency shelters during the January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014 period
- Only 4 households were identified as chronically homeless during this reporting period
- 27% of all adults served either as individuals or as part of a family identified having a disabling condition
- 52% of the total population served was under age 30
- 27% of the households were discharged to a permanent destination after leaving the project, while 40% were discharged to a temporary destination

### Total Homeless

**Population.** A total of 346 households composed of 481 persons were housed in Cumberland County HMIS participating emergency shelters during the January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014 reporting period. This is a 9% decrease in total households and a 10% decrease in total persons served from 2013. Out of the households served in

2014, the majority, 81% (279) were individuals, while the remaining 19% (67 households) were families. The 481 persons served throughout Cumberland County HMIS projects made up 2% of New Jersey's total homeless population served in HMIS projects in 2014.

**Fig. 1. Total Households Served**

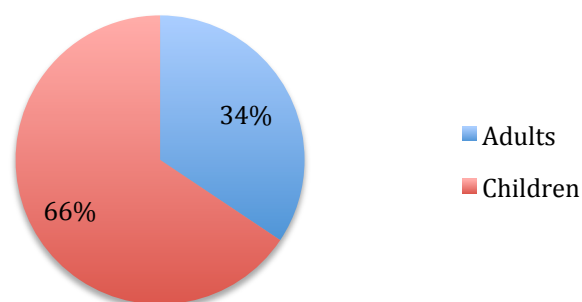


**Figure 2. Total Persons Served**

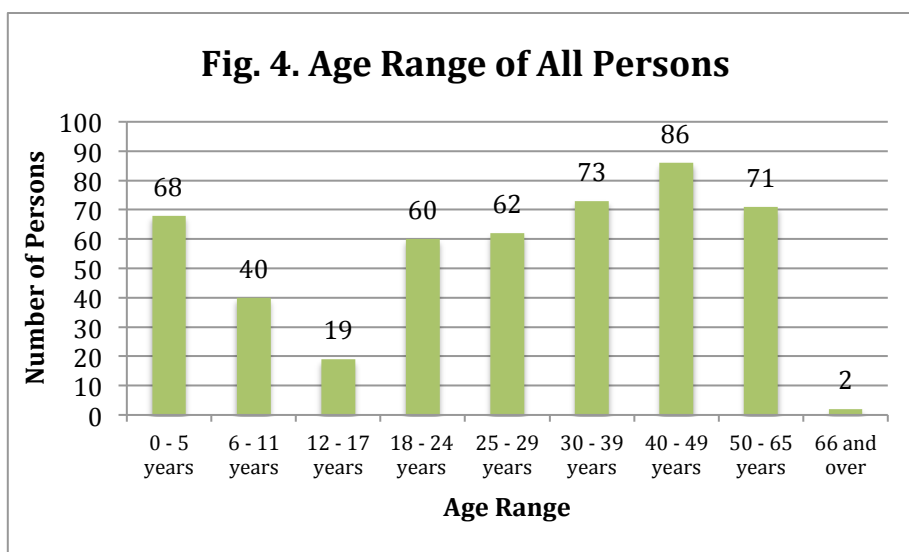
	Cumberland County	New Jersey
<b>Total Persons Served</b>	481	25,327
<b>Emergency Shelter</b>	481	20,800
Individuals	279	14,143
Families	202	6,657

**Family Composition.** Of the 67 family households served throughout Cumberland County in 2014, 62 (93%) were households with adults and children under 18, while the remaining 5 (7%) were adult only households. As shown in Figure 3, children represented 66% 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.

**Fig. 3. Adults vs. Children in Families**



**Demographics.** Of the total homeless population that was served in Cumberland County during 2014, the largest percent, 26%, were children under the age of 18. As Figure 4 shows, the next highest age range served was persons between 18 and 29 years (25%), making 52% of the total population served under the age of 30.

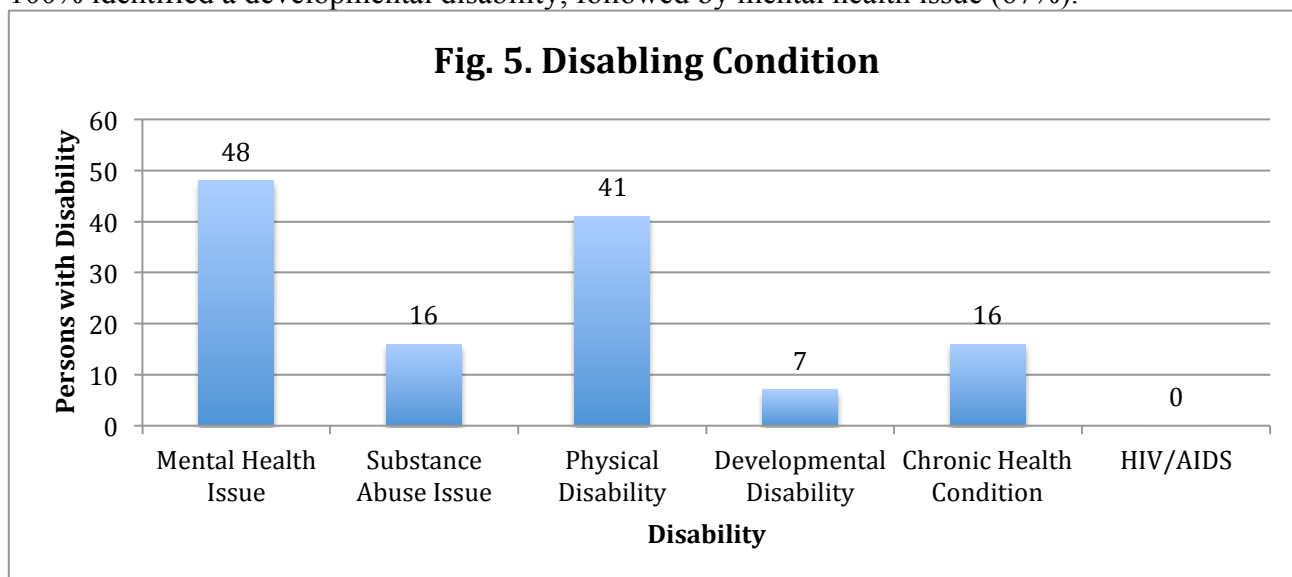


Similar to the 2013 numbers, more than half (54%) of the homeless persons served in Cumberland County HMIS participating projects were male, with women representing 46% of the population.

In addition, 49% of the homeless persons served during 2014 identified their race as Black or African-American, making this the largest racial subgroup. The next largest was White with 47% followed by Multi-Racial with 3%. With regards to ethnicity, 21% identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.

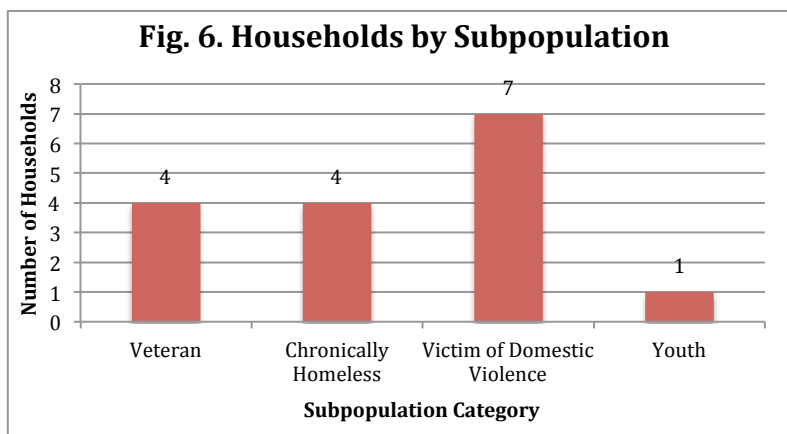
**Disabling Conditions.** Among all persons served throughout Cumberland County's HMIS emergency shelters, 20% identified having a disabling condition, this number includes 27% of adults and 2% of children.

Among disabled adults, 49% reported mental health issues making this the most prevalent disability. 43% of disabled adults also reported a physical disability. Among disabled children, 100% identified a developmental disability, followed by mental health issue (67%).



### Subpopulation Characteristics.

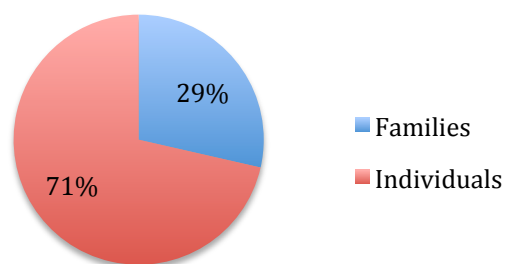
In its plan, *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has prioritized ending youth, veteran and chronic homelessness across the Country. In 2014, Cumberland County served 4 households that were identified as chronically homeless, this is an increase of 3 from the 1 that was served in 2013. All 4 households were individuals served in the emergency shelter.



Youth only households, households without someone over age 18, represented less than 1% of the total households served throughout Cumberland HMIS projects. The 1 youth only household served was an individual youth in an emergency shelter project.

As far as veterans served, Cumberland County served a total of 4 veterans throughout 2014. All of the veterans served were individuals and all were male. 50% of veterans reported having some kind of disability, the most common disability, reported by both disabled veterans was mental health.

**Fig. 7. Household Type Among Victims of Domestic Violence**

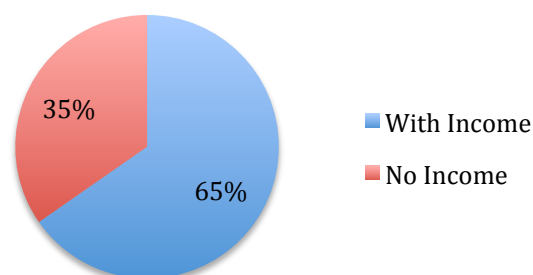


In addition to the chronic, youth and veteran populations, there were 7 homeless households that reported having a victim of domestic violence. 71% of these households were individuals, while the remaining 2 were families. 57% reported that the last episode of domestic violence occurred within the past 3 months, while another 29% reported it happening more than a year 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.

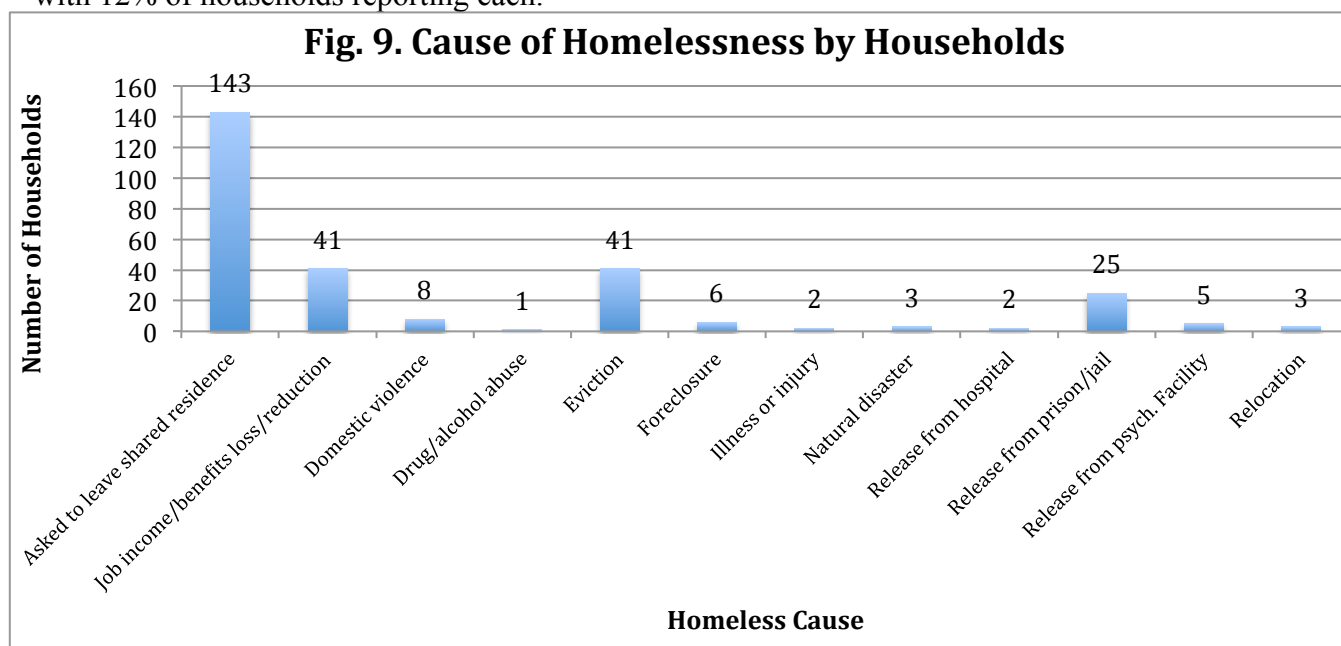
**Income and Benefits.** Among all homeless households served in emergency shelters during 2014, 35% had no source of income, while 6% reported receiving some form of earned income. The most common sources of cash income among households was SSI (39%) and General Public Assistance with 27% of total households reporting this form of income. The average monthly income for households in emergency shelter was \$294.

**Fig. 8. Percentage of Households with Income**



While 35% of households had no source of income, 43% of households were not receiving some kind of non-cash benefit. Food Stamps was the top reported non-cash benefit, which was reported by 54% of the households. Another 30% of households were connected to Medicaid benefits.

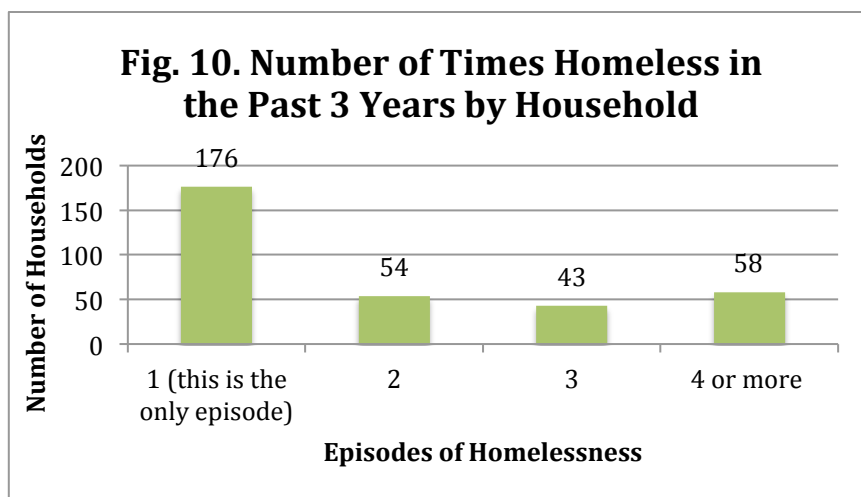
**Cause of Homelessness and Residence Prior to Project Entry.** When asked what the primary factor was that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to being asked to leave a shared residence (41%) than any other cause. As Figure 9 shows, the next most common factors were eviction and job income or benefit loss or reduction with 12% of households reporting each.



These causes of homelessness coincide with the common response for residence prior to project entry with 47% of households staying or living with family or friends prior to project entry. The next most common response was rental by client (13%) followed by hotel or motel (9%).

### Length of Stay at Prior Residence and Episodes of Homelessness.

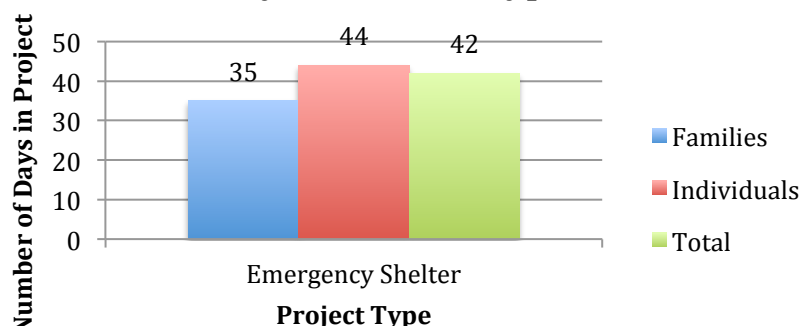
33% of the households served during 2014 had resided in their last residence for one year or longer before entering the emergency shelter project. Another 11% were staying in their residence for a week or less before entering the project. When looking at the number of times the household had been homeless in the past 51% of households were experiencing their first episode of homelessness, as seen in Figure 10.



### Average Length of Project Stay

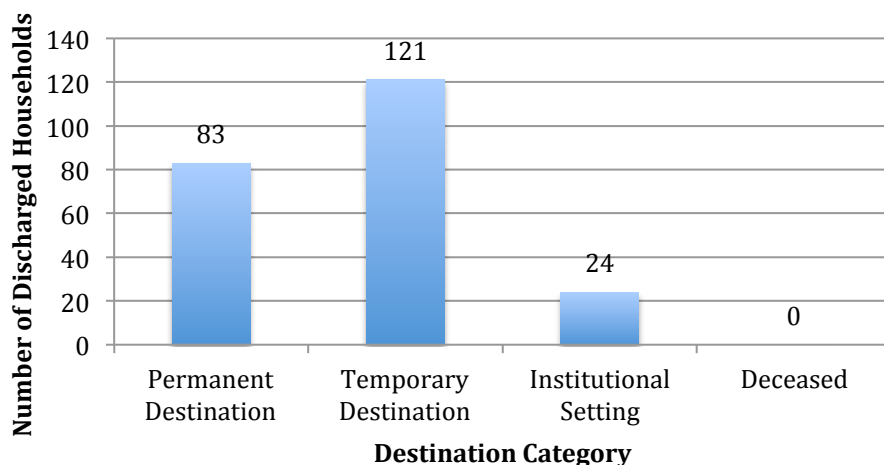
When looking at total length of project stay individuals had slightly longer stays in emergency shelter than families. In 2014, individuals were found to stay around 9 days longer than families enrolled in emergency shelter projects. When comparing the 2014 average length of stay to that found in 2013, the total average length of stay decreased by 3 days in 2014.

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



**Reason and Destination at Discharge.** A total of 303 households were discharged from emergency shelter projects during the 2014 reporting period. 35% of these households left the project for a housing opportunity before project completion while another 16% were discharged from the project due to non-compliance.

**Fig. 12. Destination Category by Households**



27% 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 17% of total

discharges. This rental could be with or without a subsidy. 40% 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, which was the destination of 24% of the households served. An institutional destination, which was the destination of 8% 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. 4% of households were discharged to a medical hospital in 2014, making this the most common institutional destination reported.

**Appendix A: HMIS Projects Included in Report****I. Emergency Shelter Projects**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Project Name</b>
Rural Development Corp.	RDC Cumberland Family Shelter
Tri-County Community Action Partnership Parvins Branch	TCCAP Hotel/Motel