



Essex 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 Essex 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 Essex 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.

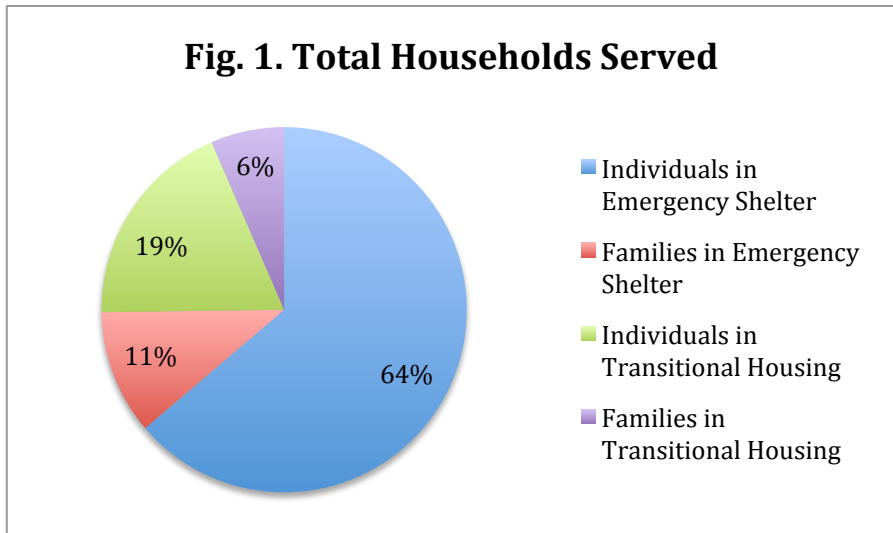
III. Findings for Total Population Served

Key Findings:

- A total of 3,783 households were served in HMIS participating emergency shelters and transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014 period
- There were 249 households identified as chronically homeless during this reporting period
- 40% 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
- 30% of households moved on to permanent destinations after discharge

Total Homeless Population.

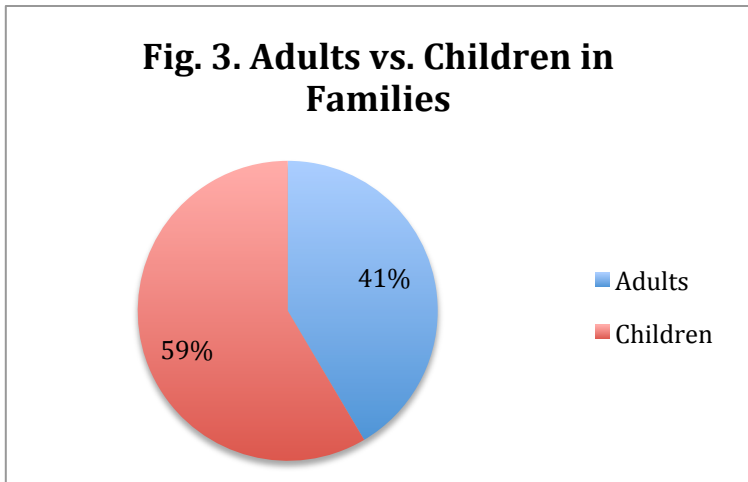
A total of 3,783 households composed of 4,945 persons were housed in Essex County CoC HMIS participating emergency shelters or transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014 reporting period. This is a 14% increase in total households served and a



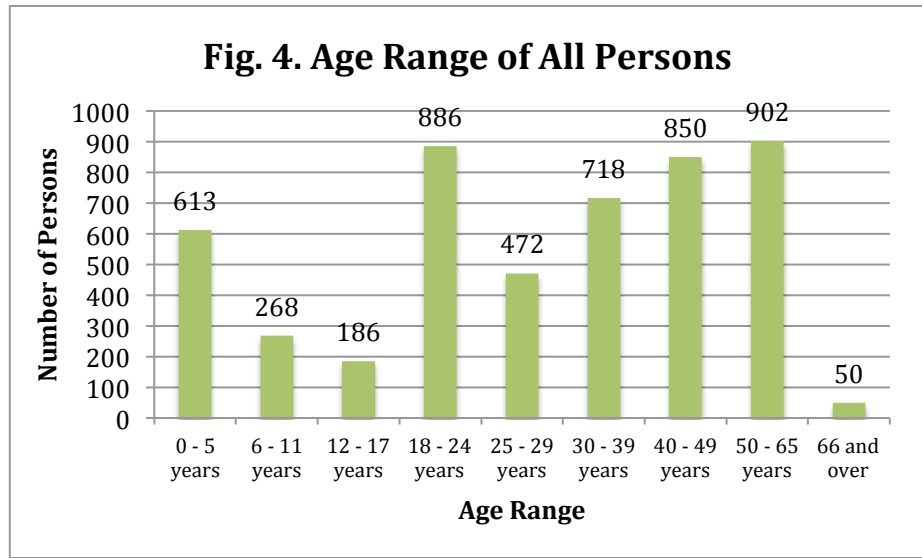
10% increase in total persons from the number served in 2013. Out of the households served in 2014, the large majority, 82% (3,120) were individuals, while the remaining 18% (663 households) were families. As shown in Figure 1, the most served population was individuals in emergency shelter, which made up 64% of the total population served. The 4,945 persons served throughout Essex County HMIS projects made up 20% of New Jersey’s total homeless population served in HMIS projects in 2014.

	Essex County	New Jersey
Total Persons Served	4,945	25,327
Emergency Shelter	3,544	20,800
Individuals	2,412	14,143
Families	1,132	6,657
Transitional Housing	1,401	4,343
Individuals	708	2,256
Families	693	2,087

Family Composition. Of the 663 family households served throughout Essex County in 2014, 628 (95%) were households with adults and children under 18, 34 (5%) were adult only households while the remaining household was a youth only household. As shown in Figure 3, children represented 59% 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 Essex CoC during 2014, the largest percent, 27%, of persons were between the ages of 18 and 29. As Figure 4 shows, the next highest age range served was children under the age of 18 (22%), showing that 49% of the population served was under the age of 30.

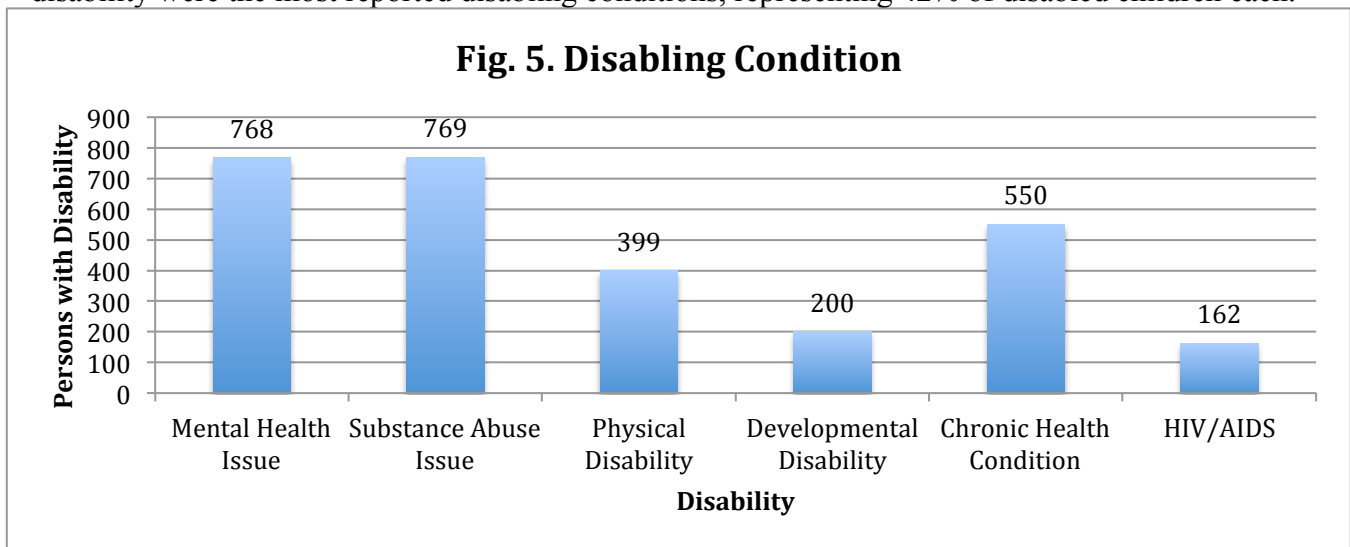


Similar to the 2013 numbers, just over half (53%) of the homeless persons served in Essex CoC HMIS participating projects were male, with women representing 46% of the population.

In addition, 79% 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 with 16%, followed by American Indian or Alaskan Native with 2%. With regards to ethnicity, 13% identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.

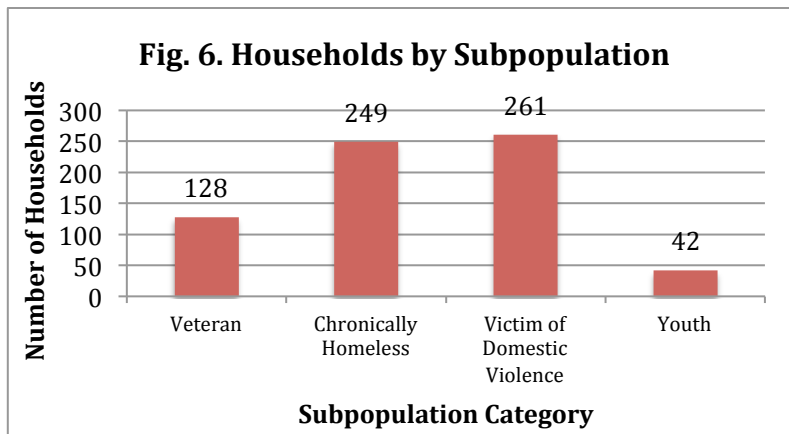
Disabling Conditions. Among all persons served throughout Essex County’s HMIS emergency shelter and transitional housing projects, 33% identified having a disabling condition, this number includes 40% of adults and 6% of children.

Among disabled adults, 49% reported substance abuse issues making this the most prevalent disability; representing 20% of the total adult homeless population. 48% of disabled adults also reported a mental health issue. Among disabled children, mental health issues and a developmental disability were the most reported disabling conditions, representing 42% of disabled children each.



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, Essex CoC served a total of 249 households that were identified as chronically homeless, a 12% in the chronically homeless number found in 2013. 66% of the chronic households were served in emergency shelter projects; only 6 were families. 34% were served in transitional housing projects, only 5 of which were families.

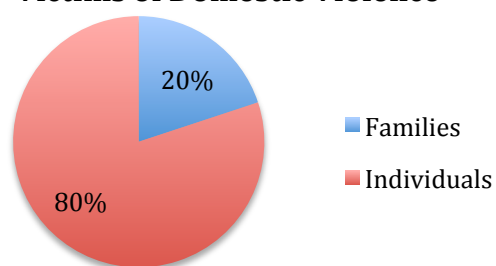


66% of the chronic households were served in emergency shelter projects; only 6 were families. 34% were served in transitional housing projects, only 5 of which were families.

Youth only households, households without someone over age 18, represented only 1% of the total households served throughout Essex HMIS projects. These households were composed of 41 individual youth and 2 persons in a youth only household. The majority of these households (69%) were served in transitional housing projects.

As far as veterans served, Essex CoC served a total of 128 veterans throughout 2014. 88% of veterans served were individuals and 19% were female. 77% of the veterans served were served in emergency shelter projects. 52% of veterans reported having some kind of disability, with the most common disability reported being a mental health issue (50%).

Fig. 7. Household Type Among Victims of Domestic Violence

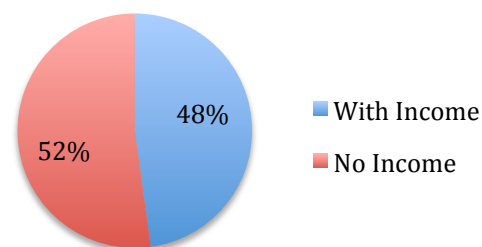


In addition to the chronic, youth and veteran populations, there were 261 homeless households that reported having a victim of domestic violence. 80% of these households were individuals, while the remaining 52 were families. 49% reported that the last episode of domestic violence occurred over a year ago, while 19% reported it happening within the past 3 months. The majority of the domestic violence victims (67%) 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, 52% had no source of income, while 8% reported receiving some form of earned income. The most common sources of cash income among households was SSI (24%) and General Assistance (14%). The average monthly income for households was \$244 in emergency shelter and \$405 in transitional housing projects.

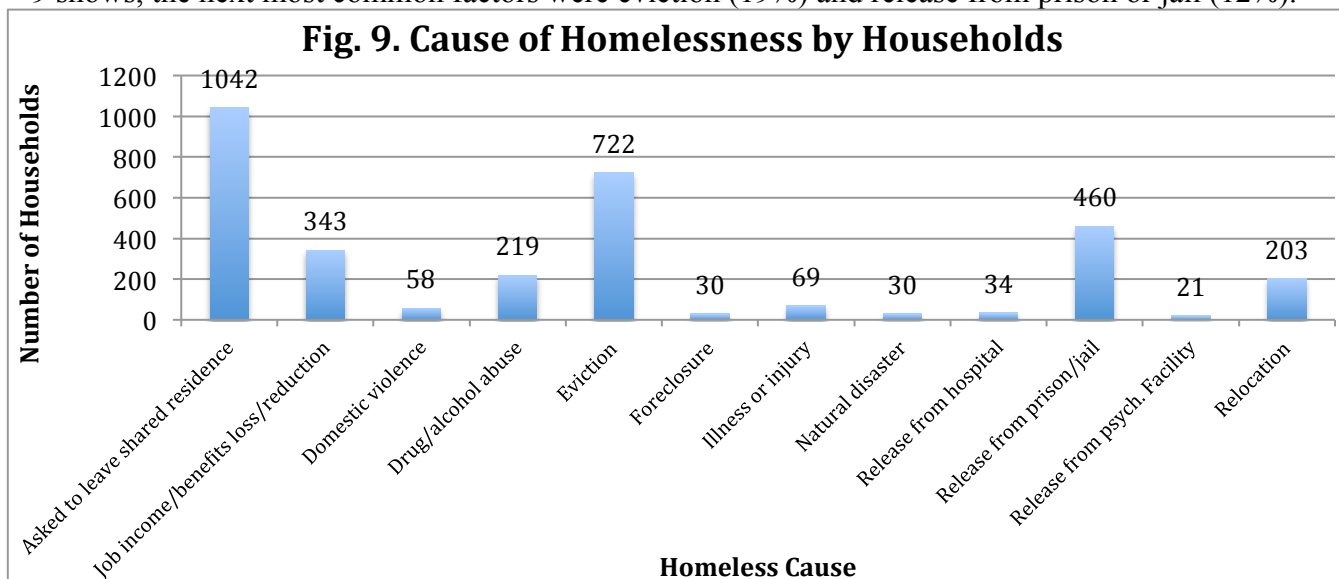
Fig. 8. Percentage of Households with Income





While 52% of households had no source of income, 52% of households were not receiving some kind of non-cash benefit. Food Stamps was the top reported non-cash benefit, which was reported by 44% of the households. Another 16% of households were connected to Medicaid benefits.

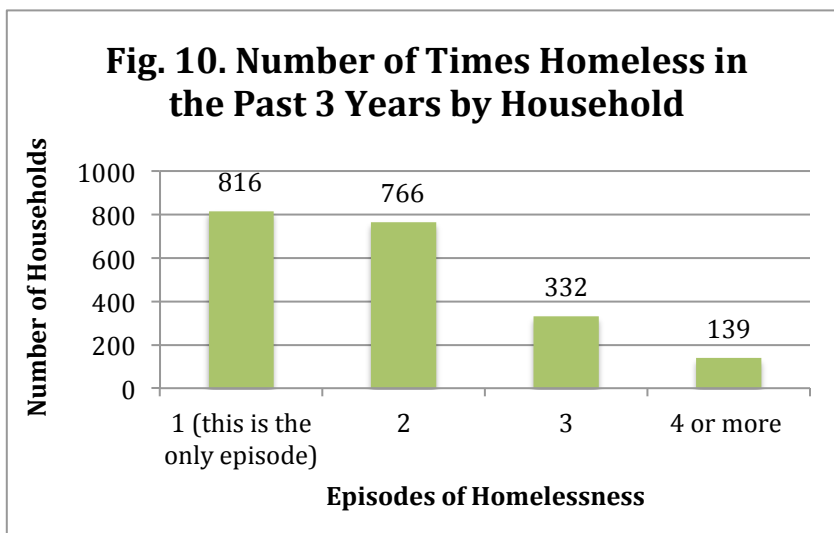
Cause of Homelessness and Residence Prior to Project Entry. When asked what the primary factor was that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to being asked to leave a shared residence (28%) than any other cause. As Figure 9 shows, the next most common factors were eviction (19%) and release from prison or jail (12%).



These causes of homelessness coincide with the common response for residence prior to project entry with 44% of households staying or living with family or friends prior to project entry. The next most common response was emergency shelter (16%) followed by jail or prison with 12%.

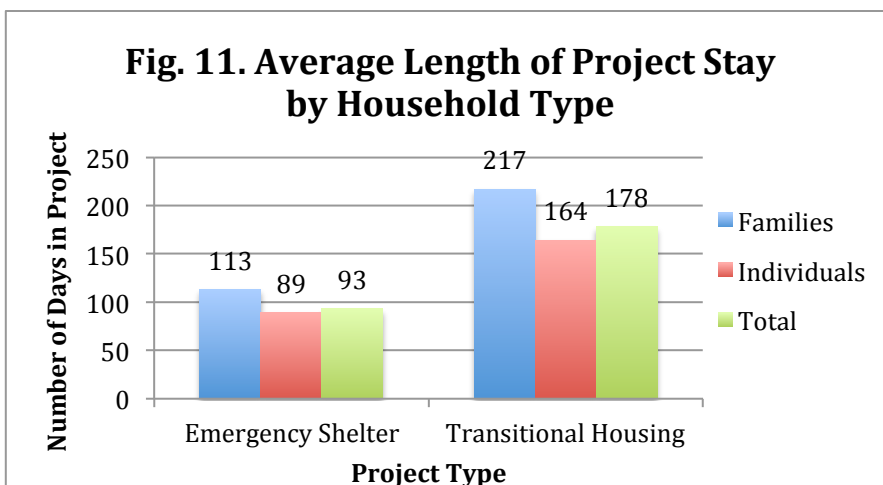
Length of Stay at Prior Residence and Episodes of Homelessness.

33% 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 25% 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 4% of households experienced 4 or more episodes of homelessness in the last 3 years, while many of the households (22%) were experiencing their first episode of homeless, as seen in Figure 10.



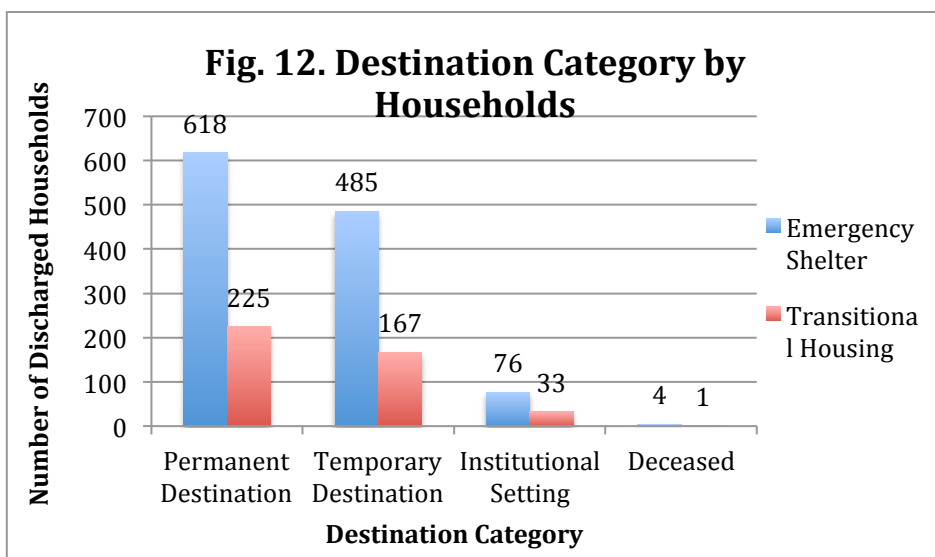
Average Length of Project Stay.

When looking at total length of project stay for families and individuals, families seemed to have slightly longer stays in both emergency shelter and transitional housing projects. During their project stay it was found that families stayed on average 24 days longer than individuals in emergency shelter and 53 days, or almost 2 months, longer than individuals in transitional housing projects. When comparing the average lengths of stay in 2014 to those of 2013, the average length of stay decreased by 18 days for emergency shelter projects, and 74 days for transitional housing projects from 2013.



Reason and Destination at Discharge.

A total of 2,833 households were discharged from emergency shelter and transitional housing projects during the 2014 reporting period. 20% of these households were discharged upon project completion while 18% left for a housing opportunity before project completion.



30% 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 24% of total households moving into a rental upon discharge. This rental could be with or without a subsidy. 23%

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 involved 14% 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 2% of total households.

Appendix A: HMIS Projects Included in Report

I. Emergency Shelter Projects

Agency	Project Name
Catholic Charities	CC Essex St. Bridget's Emergency Shelter
	CC Essex St. Rocco's Family Residence
Circle of Life	COL- Circle of Life Shelter
Covenant House	Covenant House NWK Crisis Center
Fairmont Health Services	FHS Emergency Shelter
Goodwill Rescue Mission	GRM – Goodwill Rescue Mission
Gospel Services Benevolent Society	GSBS – Emergency Shelter
Helping the Homeless III	HTHIII-Homeless Shelter
IHN for the Homeless of Essex County	IHN – Emergency Shelter
Newark Transitional Living	NTL-Newark Transitional Living
Newark YMCA	NYMCA Emergency Residence Program
Newly Destined Inc.	NDI – 1114 Broad Street
Peace House	PHI-Peace House
Positive Health Care Inc.	PHC Homeless Shelter Program
Real House Inc.	Real House-Juniper House
Salvation Army Montclair Corp	SA Cornerstone Shelter Family
	SA Cornerstone Shelter Female
	SA Cornerstone Shelter Single Male
The Apostle's House	The Apostles' House Avon Ave. Family Shelter
	The Apostles' House Avon Ave. Single Female Shelter
	The Apostles' House Emergency Shelter
Turning Point Community Services Inc.	TPCS – Servant's House
United Community Corporation	UCC Shelter
Urban Renewal Corp	URC-12 Myrtle House
	URC-521 Washington
	URC-689 So 16 th

II. Transitional Housing Projects

Agency	Project Name
AIDS Resource Foundation for Children	ARFC-Brighter Beginnings
Amity Transitional LLC	Amity Transitional LLC – Amity
Catholic Charities	CC Essex St Bridget's Residence
East Orange Hospital	EOGH-Next Step Program
IHN for the Homeless of Essex County	IHN-TH Montclair
Inner City Emergency Services	ICES-Joi's Angels
Integrity Inc.	Integrity Men's Recovery House
	Integrity Womens Transitional Housing
	Integrity-Joan Riddick House
Irvington Neighborhood Improvement Corp	INIC-Transitional Housing
Isaiah House	Isaiah House – Teen MAP
	Isaiah House Brothers with Brothers
	Isaiah House-Community Creche



New Community Corp	NCC-Harmony House
Sierra House	Sierra House- THousing Program
The Apostle's House	The Apostles' House Avon Ave. TH
The Restoration Center	The Restoration Center-Men On A Mission
	The Restoration Center-Veteran SRO