



Hunterdon 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 Hunterdon 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 Hunterdon 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.

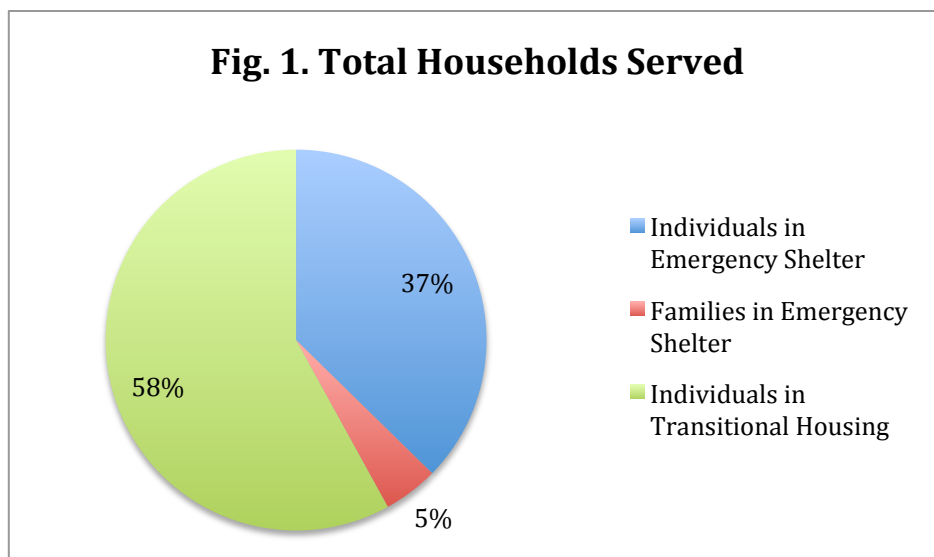
III. Findings for Total Population Served

Key Findings:

- A total of 300 households were served in HMIS participating emergency shelters and transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014 period
- There were 52 households identified as chronically homeless during this reporting period
- 85% of all adults served either as individuals or as part of a family identified having a disabling condition
- 42% of the total population served was over the age of 50
- 37% of households moved on to permanent destinations after discharge

Total Homeless Population.

A total of 300 households composed of 333 persons were housed in Hunterdon County HMIS participating emergency shelters or transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014 reporting period. This is a 32% increase in total households, and a 31% increase in total persons

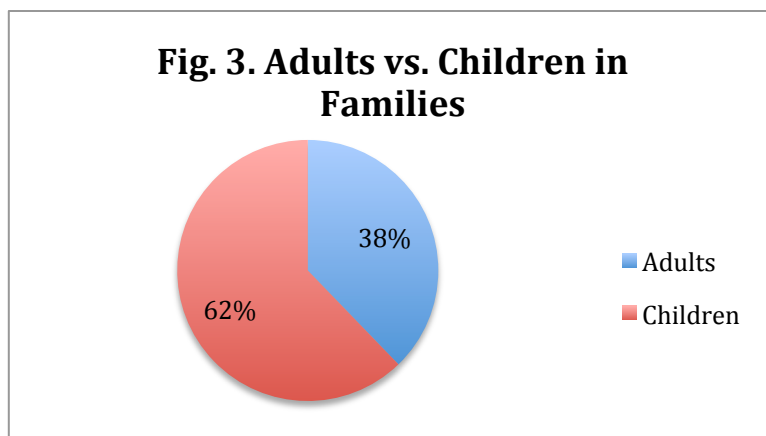


served from 2013. Out of the households served in 2014, the large majority, 95% (286) were individuals, while the remaining 5% (14 households) were families. As shown in Figure 1, the most served population was individuals in transitional housing, which made up 58% of the total population served. The 333 persons served throughout Hunterdon County HMIS projects made up 1% of New Jersey’s total homeless population served in HMIS projects in 2014.

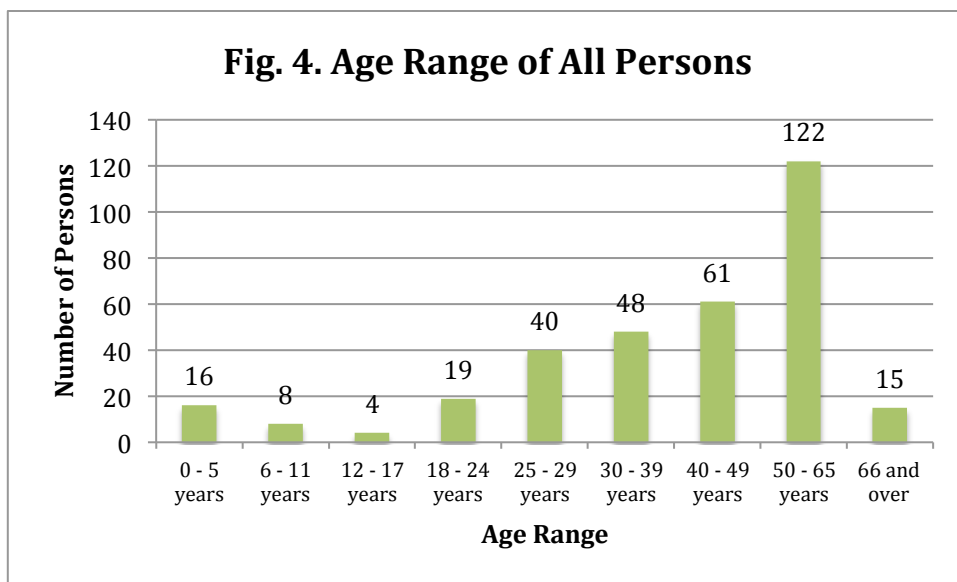
Figure 2. Total Persons Served

	Hunterdon County	New Jersey
Total Persons Served	333	25,327
Emergency Shelter	159	20,800
Individuals	112	14,143
Families	47	6,657
Transitional Housing	174	4,343
Individuals	174	2,256
Families	0	2,087

Family Composition. Of the 14 family households served throughout Hunterdon County in 2014, 14 (93%) were households with adults and children under 18, the remaining household was an adult only household. 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 was 6 years old.



Demographics. Of the total homeless population that was served in Hunterdon County during 2014, the largest percent, 37%, of persons were between the ages of 50 and 65. As Figure 4 shows, the next highest age range served was persons between 40 and 49 (18%), showing that 60% of the population served during 2014 was over the age of 40.

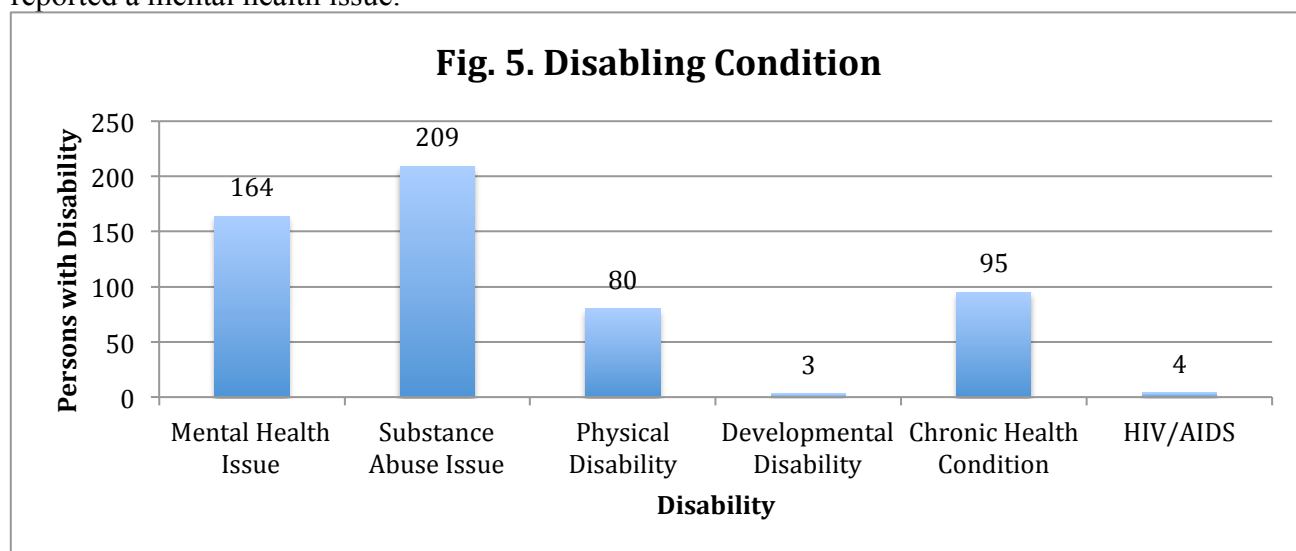


Similar to the 2013 numbers, more than half (67%) of the homeless persons served in Hunterdon County HMIS participating projects were male, with women representing 32% of the population.

In addition, 58% 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 (36%), followed by Multi-Racial with 2%. With regards to ethnicity, only 13% identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.

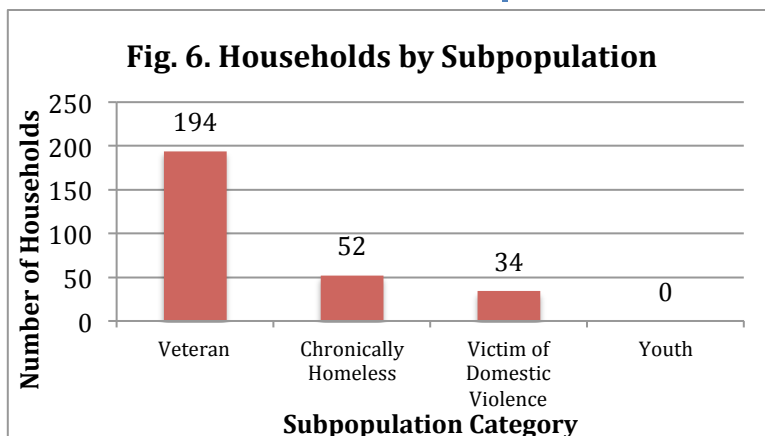
Disabling Conditions. Among all persons served throughout Hunterdon County’s HMIS emergency shelter and transitional housing projects, 78% identified having a disabling condition, this number includes 85% of adults and 0% of children.

Among disabled adults, 81% reported substance abuse issues making this the most prevalent disability; representing 69% of the total adult homeless population. 63% of disabled adults also reported a mental health issue.



Subpopulation Characteristics.

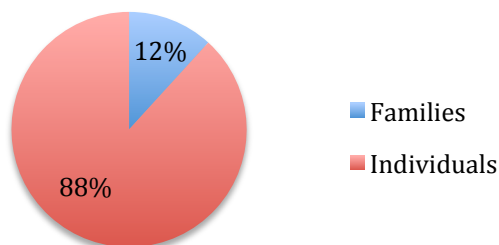
In its plan, *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has prioritized ending youth, veteran and chronic homelessness across the Country. In 2014, Hunterdon County served a total of 52 households, this is a 63% increase from the 32 chronically homeless households served in 2013. 50% of the chronic households served were individuals in emergency shelters, while the remaining 50% were individuals in transitional housing projects.



There were no youth only households (households without someone over the age of 18) served in Hunterdon County HMIS participating projects during 2014.

As far as veterans served, Hunterdon County served a total of 194 veterans throughout 2014. 99% of the veterans served were individuals and only 7% were female. 56% of the veterans served were served in emergency shelters. 92% of veterans reported having some kind of disability, with the most common disability reported being substance abuse issues (70%).

Fig. 7. Household Type Among Victims of Domestic Violence

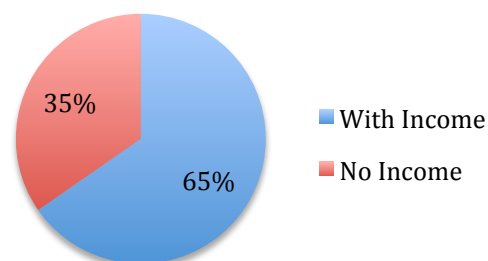


In addition to the chronic, youth and veteran populations, there were 34 homeless households that reported having a victim of domestic violence. 88% of these households were individuals, while the remaining 4 were families. 76% reported that the last episode of domestic violence occurred over a year ago, while 3% reported it happening within the past 3 months. The majority of the domestic violence victims (59%) were served in transitional housing projects. 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.

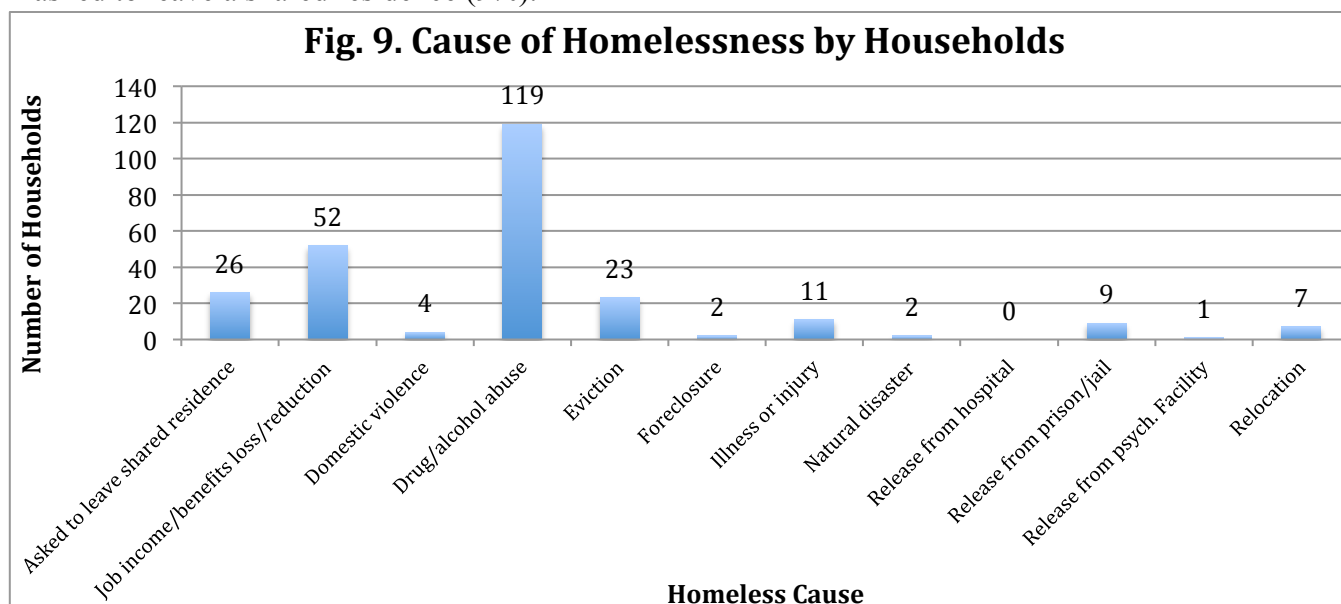
Income and Benefits. Among all homeless households served in emergency shelter or transitional housing projects during 2014, 35% had no source of income, while 26% reported receiving some form of earned income. The most common source of cash income among households, other than earned income, was VA Service-Connected Disability with 17%. The average monthly income for households in emergency shelter was \$775, while it was \$672 for households served in transitional housing projects.

Fig. 8. Percentage of Households with Income



While 35% of households had no source of income, 41% of households were not receiving some kind of non-cash benefit. VA Medical Services was the top reported non-cash benefit, which was reported by 40% of the households. Another 15% of households were connected to Medicaid benefits.

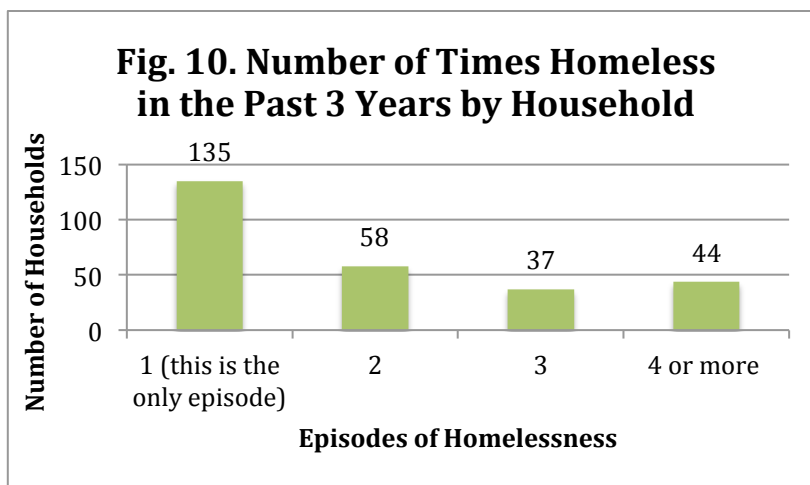
Cause of Homelessness and Residence Prior to Project Entry. When asked what the primary factor was that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to drug or alcohol abuse (40%) than any other cause. As Figure 9 shows, the next most common factors were job income or benefits loss or reduction (17%) followed by being asked to leave a shared residence (9%).



When looking at the most common response for residence prior to project entry, 24% of households reported they were staying with friends or family prior to project entry. The next most common response was substance abuse treatment facility (23%) followed by emergency shelter (17%).

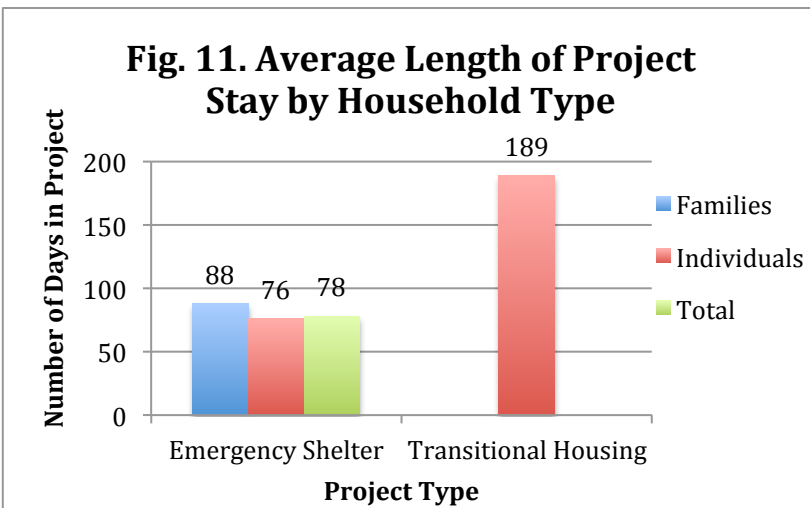
Length of Stay at Prior Residence and Episodes of Homelessness.

29% of households served during 2014 had resided in their last residence for one to three months before entering the emergency shelter or transitional housing project. Another 28% were in their prior residence for more than 3 months but less than one year, while only 4% were there one week or less. Similarly, only 15% of households experienced 4 or more episodes of homelessness in the last 3 years, while most households (45%) were experiencing their first episode of homeless, as seen in Figure 10.



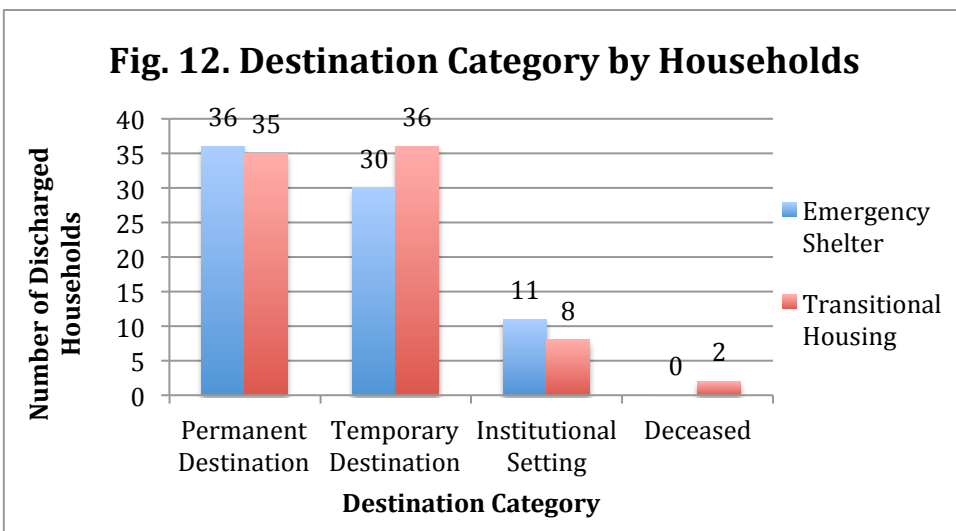
Average Length of Project Stay.

When looking at total length of project stay for emergency shelter projects, families seemed to have longer project stays than individuals. During their project stay it was found that families stayed an average of 11 days longer than individuals. When looking at transitional housing projects, the average length of stay for individuals was 189 days or about 6 months before being discharged. When comparing the average lengths of stay for 2014 to those of 2013, the average length of stay for emergency shelter decreased by 10 days in 2014, while the length of stay for transitional housing decreased by 45 days when compared to 2013.



Reason and Destination at Discharge.

A total of 193 households were discharged from emergency shelter and transitional housing projects during the 2014 reporting period. 44% of these households were discharged from projects after project completion, while 15% were discharged from the project due to non-compliance.



37% 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 25% of total

households moving into a rental upon discharge. This rental could be with or without a subsidy. 34% 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 friends or family, which involved 19% of the total households. An institutional destination, which was the destination of 10% 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. Psychiatric hospital was the most commonly recorded institutional destination, with 4% of total discharges.



Appendix A: HMIS Projects Included in Report

I. Emergency Shelter Projects

Agency	Project Name
Interfaith Hospitality	IHN-Homeless Shelter
NJDMAVA – Veteran’s Haven North	NJDMAVA – Veteran’s Haven North SHIELD – Emergency Shelter and Treatment

II. Transitional Housing Projects

Agency	Project Name
Anderson House	AH Transitional Housing Anderson House
	AH Transitional Housing Blue Hill
	AH Transitional Housing Jerica Hill
Freedom House	Grantham House
NJDMAVA – Veteran’s Haven North	NJDMAVA – Veteran’s Haven North