Tri-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 Tri-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 the Tri-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 759 households were served in HMIS participating emergency shelters and transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014 period
- There were 62 households identified as chronically homeless during this reporting period
- 41% of all adults served either as individuals or as part of a family identified having a disabling condition
- 51% of the total population served was under age 30
- 19% of households moved on to permanent destinations after discharge

Total Homeless Population. A total of 759 households composed of 1,089 persons were housed in Tri-County CoC HMIS participating emergency shelters or transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014 reporting period. This is a 9% increase in total households and an 11% increase in total persons served from 2013. Out of the households served in 2014, the majority, 77% (585) were individuals, while the remaining 23% (174 households) were families. As shown in Figure 1, the most served population was individuals in emergency shelter, which made up 53% of the total population served. The 1,089 persons served throughout Tri-County HMIS projects made up 4% of New Jersey's total homeless population served in HMIS projects in 2014.
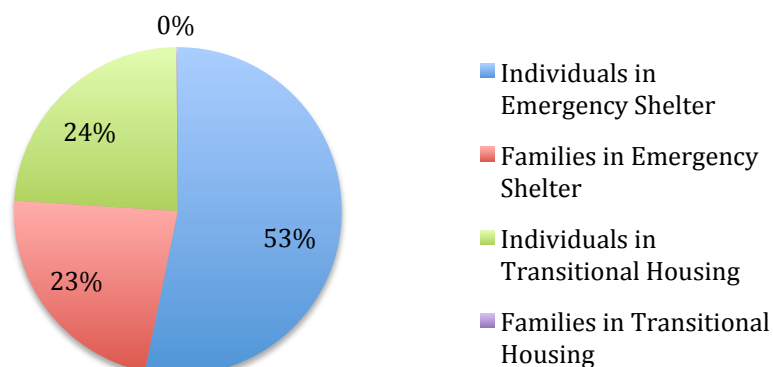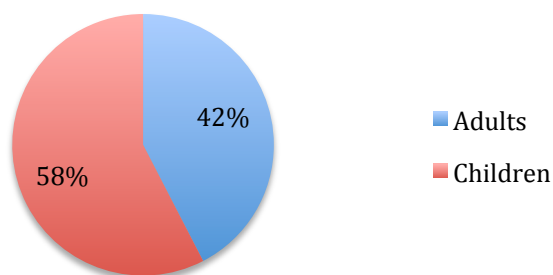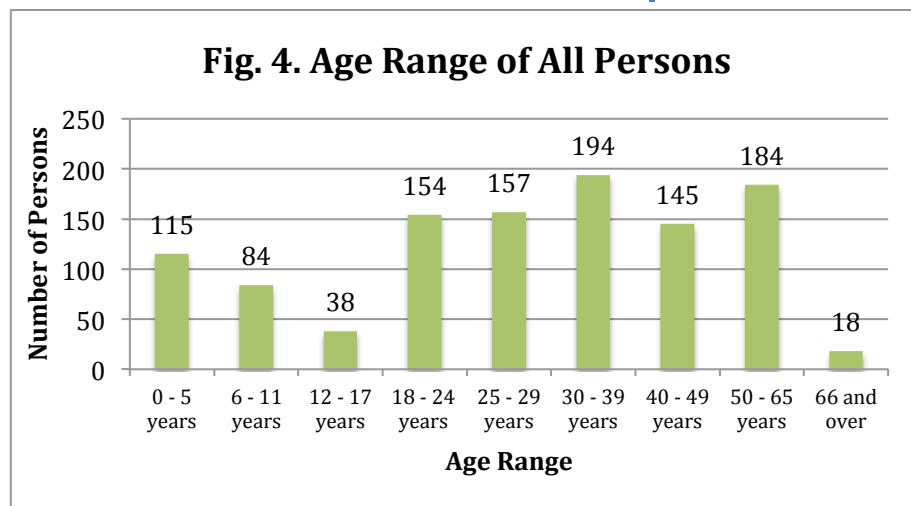
Fig. 1. Total Households Served

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

Figure 2. Total Persons Served		
	Tri-County	**New Jersey**
Total Persons Served	1,089	25,327
Emergency Shelter	906	20,800
Individuals	404	14,143
Families	502	6,657
Transitional Housing	183	4,343
Individuals	181	2,256
Families	2	2,087

Family Composition. Of the 174 family households served throughout the Tri-County in 2014, 129 (74%) were households with adults and children under 18 while the remaining 45 (26%) were adult only households. As shown in Figure 3, children represented 58% 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 7 years old.

Fig. 3. Adults vs. Children in Families

- Adults
- Children

Demographics. Of the total homeless population that was served in the Tri-County CoC during 2014, the largest percent, 29%, of persons were between the ages of 18 and 29 with about 50% being youth between 18 and 24 years old. As Figure 4 shows, the next highest age range served was children under the age of 18, representing 22% of the population, showing that just over 50% of the population served was under the age of 30.

Fig. 4. Age Range of All Persons

Number of Persons / Age Range

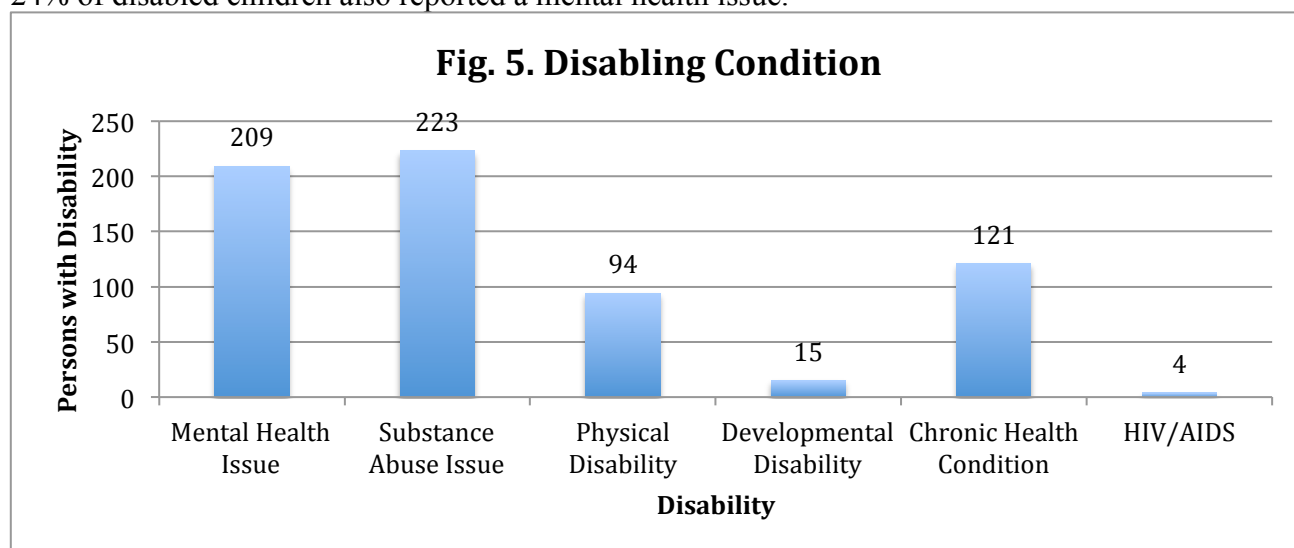| Age Range	Number of Persons
0 - 5 years	115
6 - 11 years	84
12 - 17 years	38
18 - 24 years	154
25 - 29 years	157
30 - 39 years	194
40 - 49 years	145
50 - 65 years	184
66 and over	18

Similar to the 2013 numbers, more than half (56%) of the homeless persons served in Tri-County HMIS participating projects were male, with women representing 44% of the population.

In addition, 68% 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 (22%), followed by Multi-Racial with 1%. With regards to ethnicity, only 10% identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.
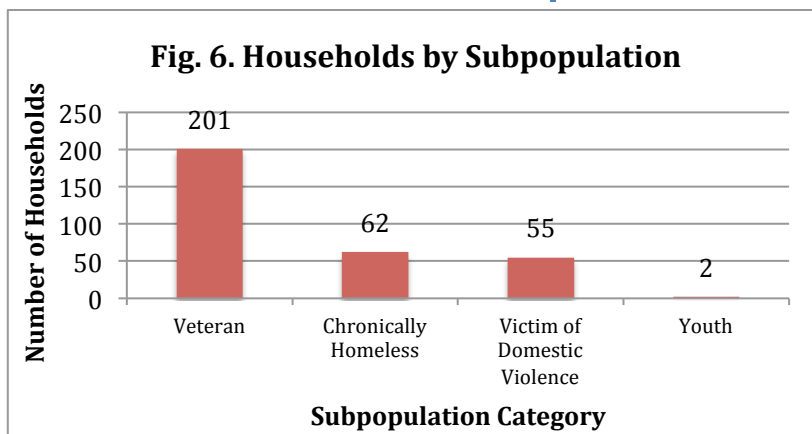
Disabling Conditions. Among all persons served throughout Tri-County's HMIS emergency shelter and transitional housing projects, 34% identified having a disabling condition, this number includes 41% of adults and 7% of children.

Among disabled adults, 64% reported a substance abuse issue, making this the most prevalent disability; representing 26% of the total adult homeless population. 59% of disabled adults also reported a mental health issue. Among disabled children, 35% reported a developmental disability. 24% of disabled children also reported a mental health issue.

Fig. 5. Disabling Condition

Persons with Disability / Disability

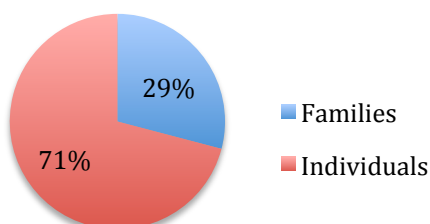| Disability	Persons with Disability
Mental Health Issue	209
Substance Abuse Issue	223
Physical Disability	94
Developmental Disability	15
Chronic Health Condition	121
HIV/AIDS	4

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, Tri-County CoC served a total of 62 households that were identified as chronically homeless, a 44% increase

Fig. 6. Households by Subpopulation

from the chronically homeless served in 2013. All but 2 of the chronic households served were individuals and 58% were served in emergency shelter projects.

Youth only households, households without someone over age 18, represented less than 1% of the total households served throughout Tri-County HMIS projects. These households were composed of 2 individual youth served in emergency shelter projects.

As far as veterans served, Tri-County CoC served a total of 201 veterans throughout 2014. 98% of veterans served were individuals and only 7% were female. 57% of the veterans served were served in transitional housing projects. 90% of veterans reported having some kind of disability, with the most common disability reported being a substance abuse issue (70%).

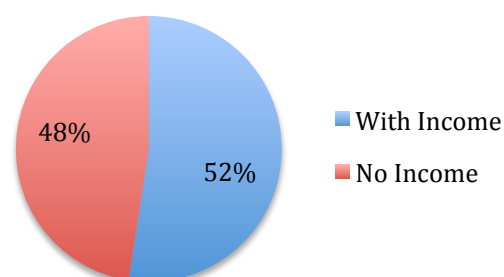**Fig. 7. Household Type Among Victims of Domestic Violence**

In addition to the chronic, youth and veteran populations, there were 55 homeless households that reported having a victim of domestic violence. 71% of these households were individuals, while the remaining 16 were families. 56% reported that the last episode of domestic violence occurred over a year ago, while 16% reported it happening within the past 3 months. The majority of the domestic violence victims (60%) 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.
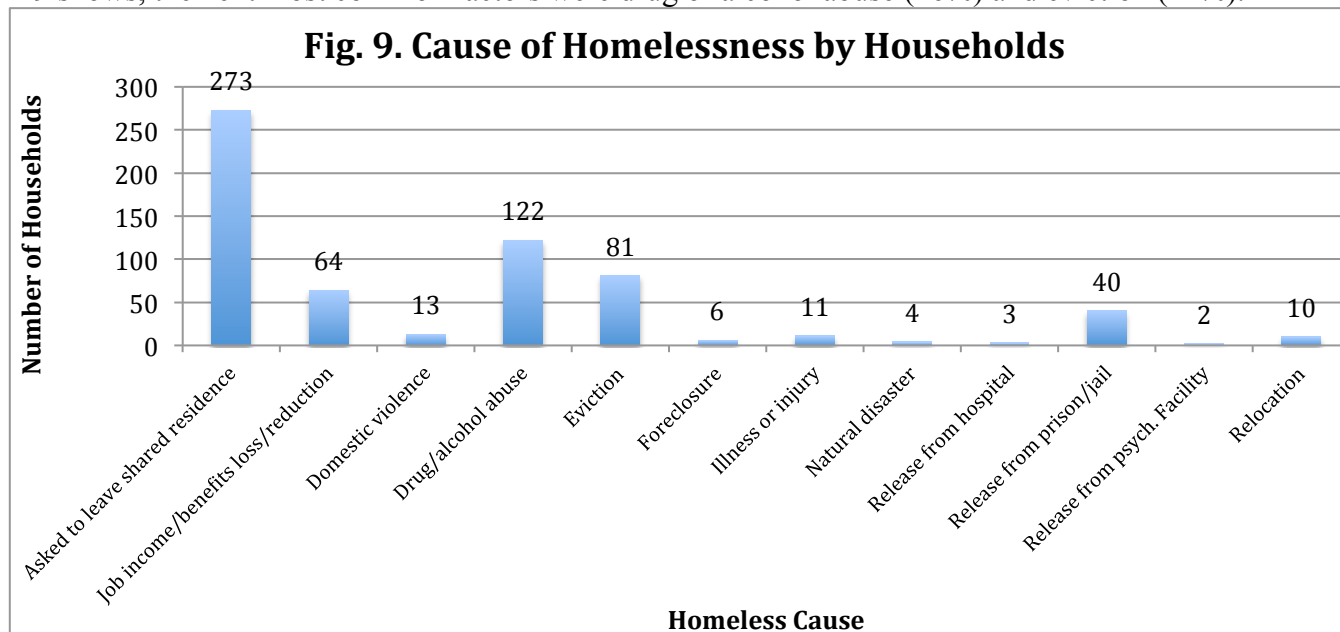
Income and Benefits. Among all homeless households served in emergency shelter or transitional housing projects during 2014, 48% had no source of income, while 20% reported receiving some form of earned income. The most common source of cash income among households, behind earned income, was SSI with 11%. The average monthly income for households was $444 in emergency shelter and $647 for households served in transitional housing projects.

Fig. 8. Percentage of Households with Income

While 48% of households had no source of income, 56% of households were not receiving some kind of non-cash benefit. Food Stamps was the top reported non-cash benefit, which was reported by 25% of the households. Another 16% of households were connected to VA Medical Services.
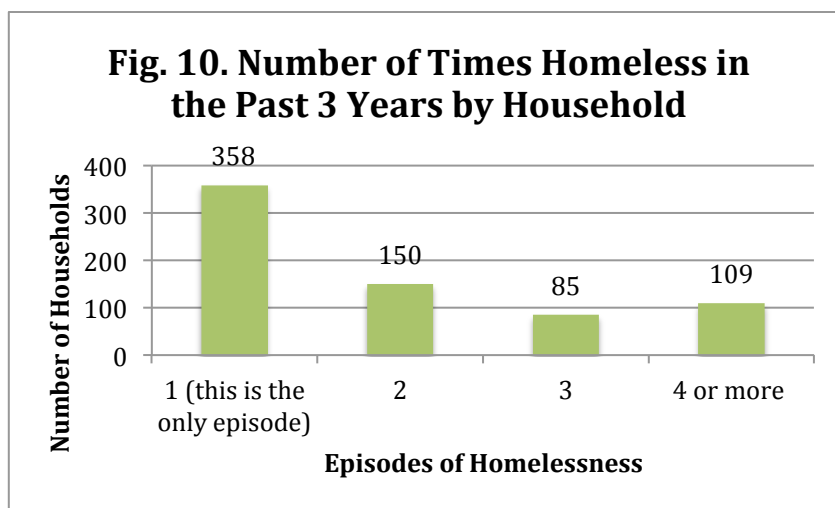
Cause of Homelessness and Residence Prior to Project Entry. When asked what the primary factor was that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to being asked to leave a shared residence (36%) than any other cause. As Figure 9 shows, the next most common factors were drug or alcohol abuse (16%) and eviction (11%).

Fig. 9. Cause of Homelessness by Households

These causes of homelessness coincide with the common response for residence prior to project entry with 48% of households staying or living with family or friends prior to project entry. The next most common response was rental by client (12%) followed by emergency shelter (9%).

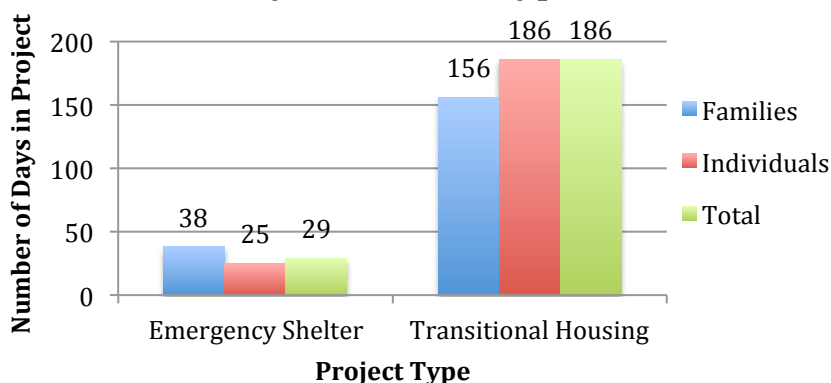**Length of Stay at Prior Residence and Episodes of Homelessness.** 25% of households served during 2014 had resided in their last residence for one to three months before entering the emergency shelter or transitional housing project. Another 24% were in their prior residence for one year or longer, while only 6% were there one week or less. Similarly, only 14% of households experienced 4 or

Fig. 10. Number of Times Homeless in the Past 3 Years by Household

more episodes of homelessness in the last 3 years, while 47% of households were experiencing their first episode of homelessness, as seen in Figure 10.
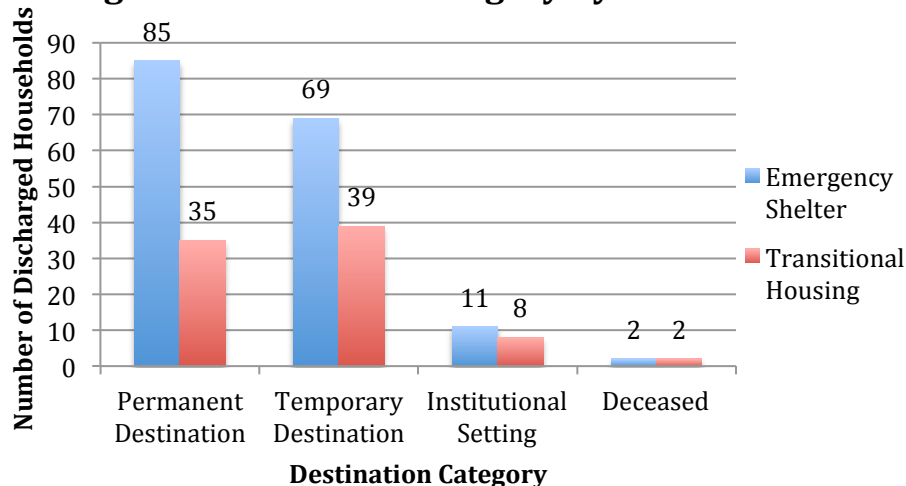
Average Length of Project Stay. When looking at total length of project stay, it was found that on average families stayed 14 days longer than individuals in emergency shelters, while individuals stayed 30 days longer than families in transitional housing. When comparing the average lengths of stay found in 2014 to those of 2013, the average length of stay increased by 3 days for emergency shelters, but decreased by 48 days for transitional housing projects.

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

Reason and Destination at Discharge. A total of 635 households were discharged from emergency shelter and transitional housing projects during the 2014 reporting period. 24% of these households were discharged upon project completion, while 14% were discharged from the project because their needs could not be met.

Fig. 12. Destination Category by Households

19% 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 13% of total households moving into a rental upon discharge. This rental could be with or without a subsidy. 17% 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 temporarily, which involved 9% of the total households. An institutional destination, which was the destination of 3% 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 reported institutional destination with 7 households reporting this destination.

Appendix A: HMIS Projects Included in Report

I. Emergency Shelter Projects

Agency	Project Name
Family Promise of Sussex County Inc.	SCIHN-Interfaith Hospitality Network
Family Promise of Warren County	FPWC-WCIHN Shelter
Interfaith Hospitality	IHN-Homeless Shelter
NJDMAVA – Veteran's Haven North	NJDMAVA – Veteran's Haven North SHIELD
Samaritan Inn	SI-Family Shelter
Warren County Div of Temporary Assistance & Social Services	WC-SSH ES

II. Transitional Housing Projects

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