



Atlantic County Homeless Assessment Report

2015

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 Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) used in New Jersey to provide a snapshot of the characteristics of homeless households that were served throughout the State. This report can serve as the foundation of a more in depth review of the population and its needs.

II. Data Source

This Homeless Assessment Report for Atlantic County analyzed data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) administered by the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA), the HMIS Lead Agency for the CoC. 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, 2015 – December 31, 2015, 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.

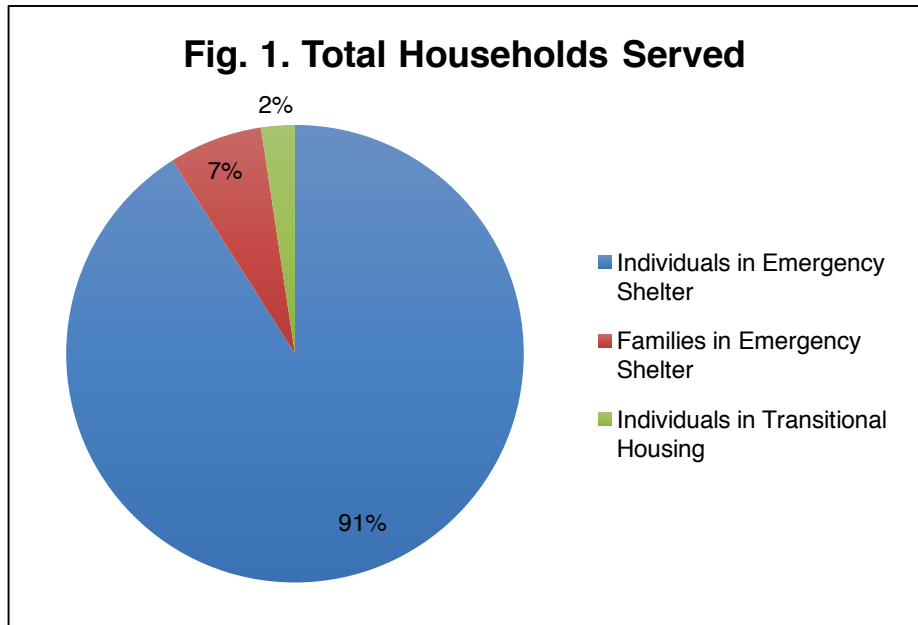
III. Findings for Total Population Served

Key Findings:

- A total of 1,723 households were served in HMIS participating emergency shelter and transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015 period
- There were 289 households identified as chronically homeless during this reporting period
- 69% of all adults served either as individuals or as part of a family identified having a disabling condition
- 35% of households moved on to permanent destinations after discharge

Total Homeless Population.

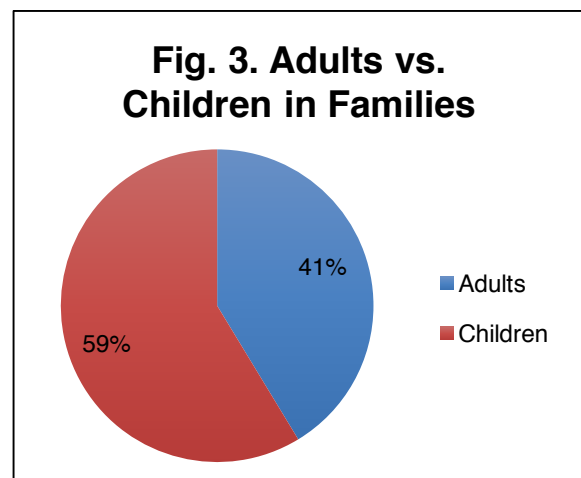
A total of 1,723 households composed of 1,906 persons were housed in Atlantic County CoC HMIS participating emergency shelter or transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015 reporting period. This is a 19% decrease in the total number of households served from 2014 and a 25% decrease from the



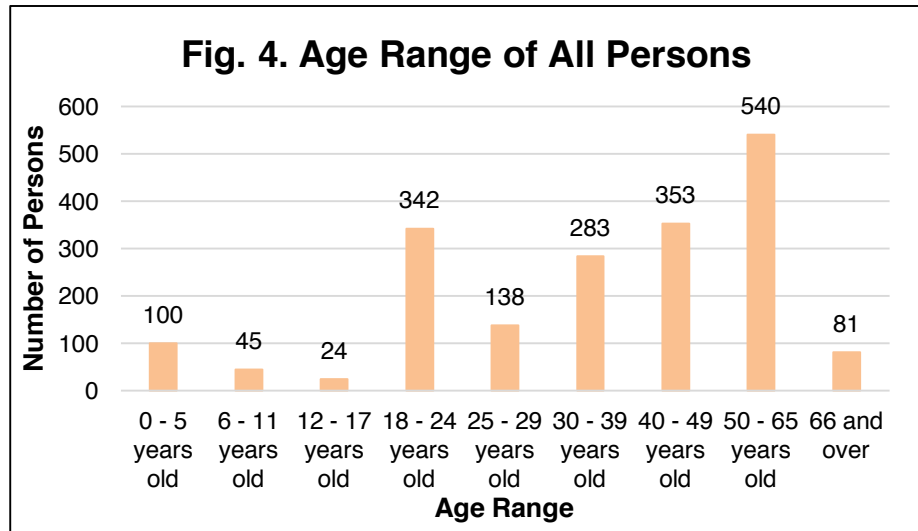
2,537 persons served in 2014. Out of the households served in 2015, the large majority, 93% (1,609) were individuals, while the remaining 7% (114 households) were families. As shown in Figure 1, the most served population was individuals in emergency shelter projects, which accounted for 91% of the total population.

	Atlantic County	New Jersey
Total Persons Served	1,906	24,519
Emergency Shelter	1,865	20,337
Individuals	1,568	13,108
Families	297	7,229
Transitional Housing	41	4,134
Individuals	41	2,116
Families	0	2,018

Family Composition. Of the 114 family households served throughout Atlantic County in 2015, 110 (96%) were households with adults and children under 18, while the remaining 4 (4%) were adult only households. 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 2015 was 3 and the average age of a child served between the two project types was 5 years old.



Demographics. Of the total homeless population that was served in Atlantic County CoC during 2015, the largest percent, 28%, of persons were between the ages of 50 and 65. As Figure 4 shows, the next highest age range served was persons between the ages of 18 and 29, which represented 25% of the total population.

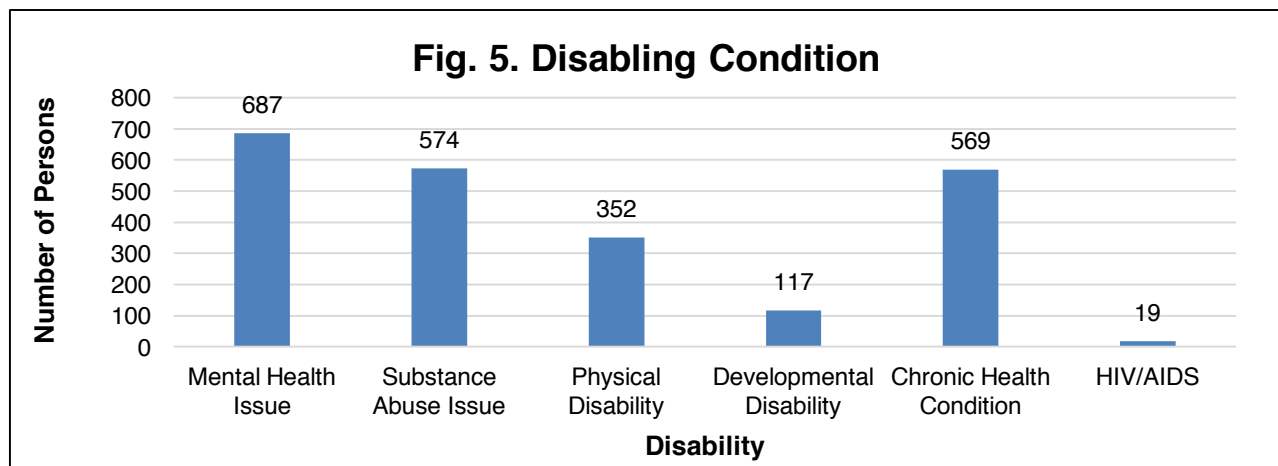


Similar to the 2014 numbers, more than half (68%) of the homeless persons served in Atlantic County HMIS participating projects were male, with women representing 32% of the population.

In addition, 47.3% of the homeless persons served during 2015 identified their race as White, making that the largest racial subgroup. The next largest was Black or African American (47.2%), followed by Multi-Racial with 2%. With regards to ethnicity, 14% identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.

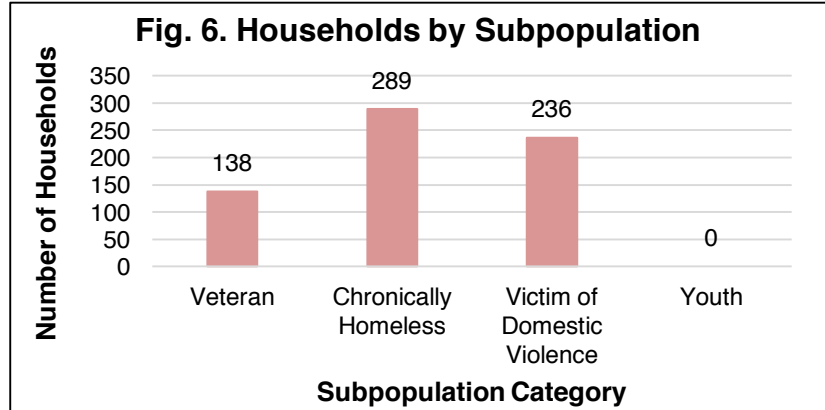
Disabling Conditions. Among all persons served throughout Atlantic County’s HMIS emergency shelter and transitional housing projects, 64% identified having a disabling condition, this number includes 69% of adults and 12% of children.

Among disabled adults, 57% reported a mental health issue, making this the most prevalent disability; representing 39% of the total adult homeless population. 48% of disabled adults also reported a substance abuse issue. Among disabled children, 62% reported a chronic health condition. Another 43% of disabled children reported a developmental disability.



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 2015, Atlantic County CoC projects served a total of 289 households that

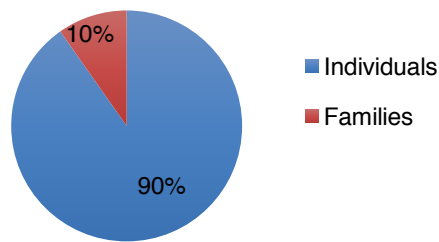


were identified as chronically homeless, a 23% decrease from the 373 served in 2014. 99.7% of the chronic households served in 2015 were served in emergency shelters; 3 were families. The remaining household was an individual served in transitional housing.

There were no youth only households, households without someone over age 18, served throughout Atlantic County CoC HMIS projects in 2015.

As far as veterans served, Atlantic County projects served a total of 138 veterans throughout 2015. 99% of veterans served were individuals and only 6% were female. 71% of the veterans served were served in emergency shelter projects. 73% of veterans reported having some kind of disability, with the most common disability reported being a chronic health condition (55%).

Fig. 7. Household Type Among Victims of Domestic Violence

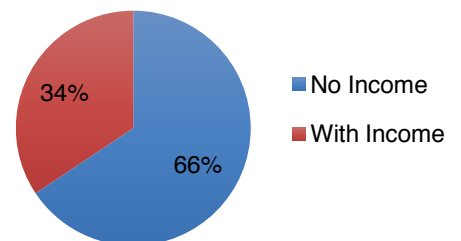


In addition to the chronic, youth and veteran populations, there were 236 homeless households that reported having a victim of domestic violence. 90% of these households were individuals, while the remaining 23 were families. 51% reported that the last episode of domestic violence occurred over a year ago, while 32% reported it happening within the past 3 months. All domestic violence victims 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.

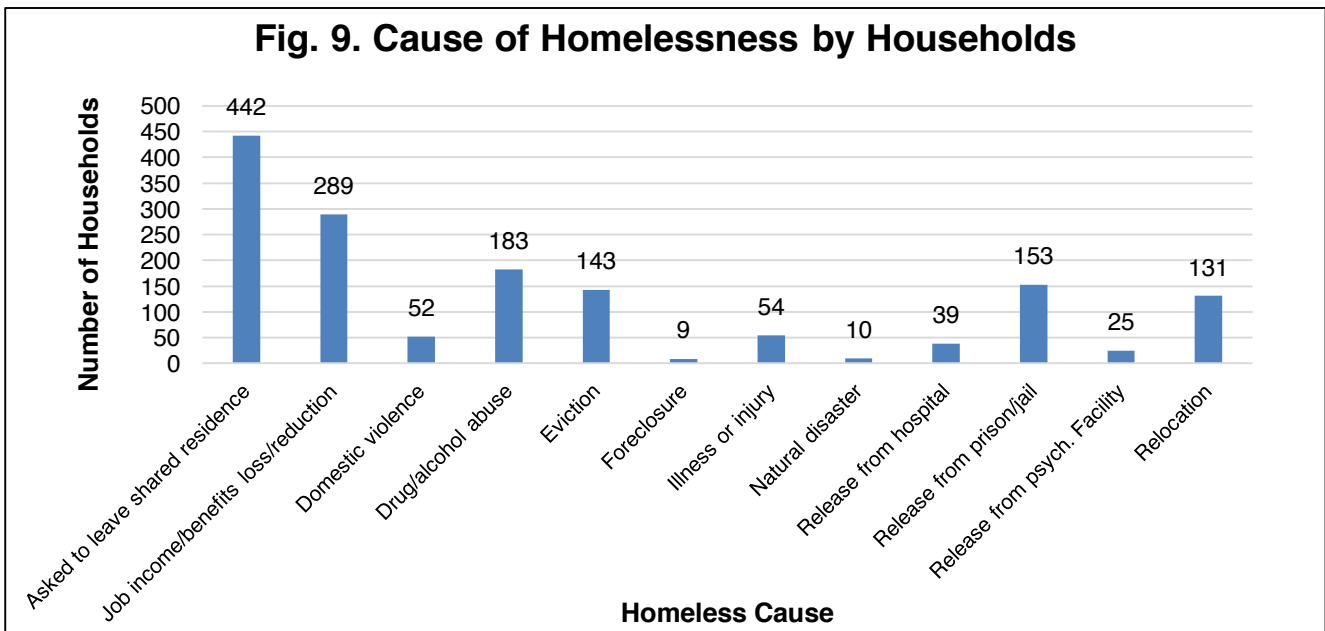
Income and Benefits. Among all homeless households served in emergency shelter or transitional housing projects during 2015, 66% had no source of income, while 9% reported receiving some form of earned income. The most common sources of cash income among households were SSI (15%) and earned income (9%). The average monthly income for households was \$258 for emergency shelter and \$470 for households served in transitional housing projects.

Fig. 8. Percentage of Households with Income



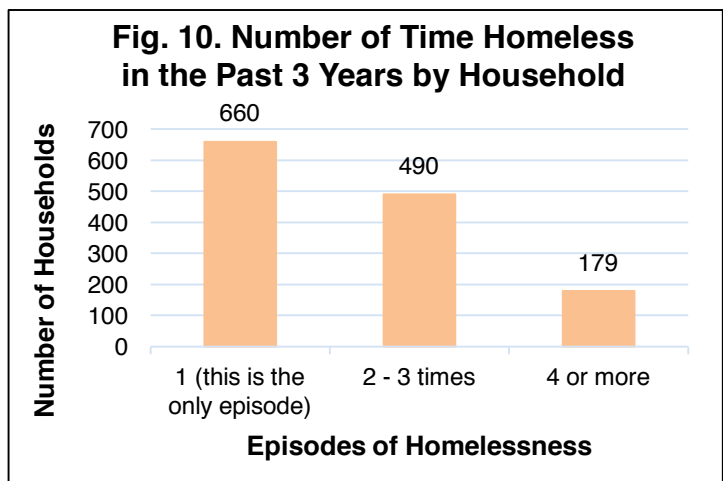
While 34% of households had some source of income, 41% of households were receiving some kind of non-cash benefit. Food Stamps was the top reported non-cash benefit, reported by 31% of households, followed by Medicaid, reported by 23%.

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 (26%) than any other cause. As Figure 9 shows, the next most common factors were job income or benefits loss or reduction (17%) and drug or alcohol abuse (11%).



The most common response for residence prior to project entry was staying or living with friends or family, with 35% of households. The next most common response was emergency shelter (22%) followed by a place not meant for human habitation (12%).

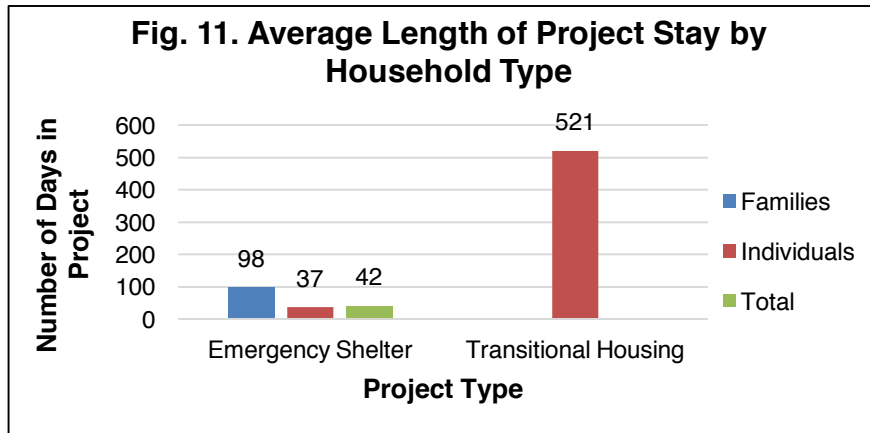
Length of Stay at Prior Residence and Episodes of Homelessness. 32% of households served during 2015 had stated they resided in their last residence for one year or longer before entering the emergency shelter or transitional housing project, while 20% were there one week or less. Additionally, only 10% of households experienced 4 or more episodes of homelessness in the past 3 years, while 38% of households were experiencing their first episode of homelessness prior to project entry, as shown in Figure 10.



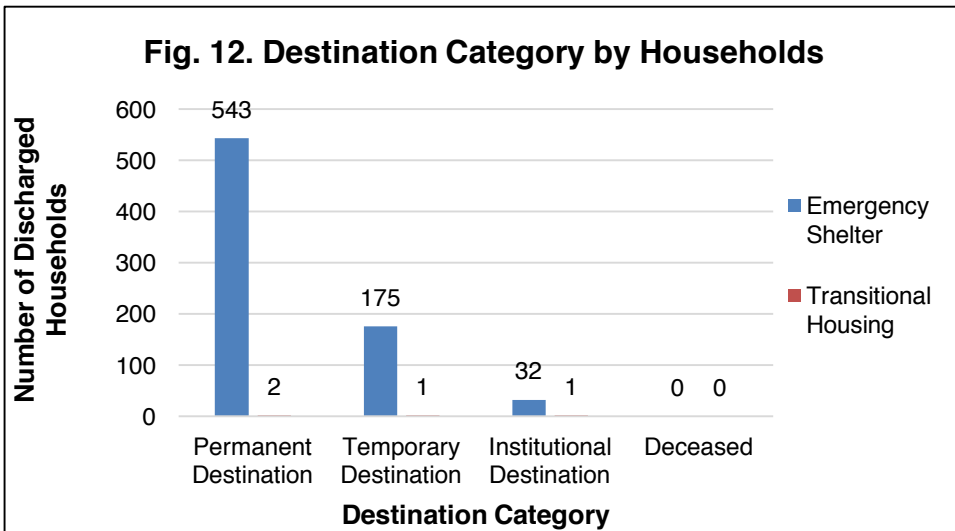


Average Length of Project Stay.

When looking at total length of project stay, families seemed to have longer lengths of program stays in emergency shelter projects. When comparing the average lengths of stay in 2015 to those in 2014, the average length of stay decreased by 9 days for emergency shelters but increased by 289 days, or just over 9 months, for transitional housing projects in 2015.



Reason and Destination at Discharge. A total of 1,561 households were discharged from emergency shelter and transitional housing projects during the 2015 reporting period. 8% of these households were discharged upon project completion, while another 8% left for a housing opportunity prior to project completion.



Due to the nature of some homeless projects, discharge information was not able to be collected for all discharged households.

35% of households discharged in 2015 moved on to permanent destinations upon discharge from the project. A permanent destination includes a unit

owned or rented by a client, a permanent housing project, or living with a family member or friend permanently. The most common permanent destination was rental by client with 32% of total households moving into a rental upon discharge. This rental could be with or without a subsidy. 11% 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 temporary destination was staying with friends or family, which was reported by 6% of households. An institutional destination, which was the destination of 2% 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. The most common institutional destination was a medical hospital with 1% of households being discharged to this location.

Appendix A: HMIS Projects Included in Report

I. Emergency Shelter Projects

Agency	Project Name
Atlantic City Rescue Mission	ACRM-Family Emergency Shelter
	ACRM-Mens Program Emergency Shelter
	ACRM-Nightly Emergency Shelter
	ACRM-Women Program Emergency Shelter
Atlantic County DFCD	ACDFCD-Motel Voucher
Covenant House	Covenant House Crisis Center

II. Transitional Housing Projects

Agency	Project Name
Atlantic City Rescue Mission	Enphront Veteran's Services-MARP