Camden 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 Camden 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.
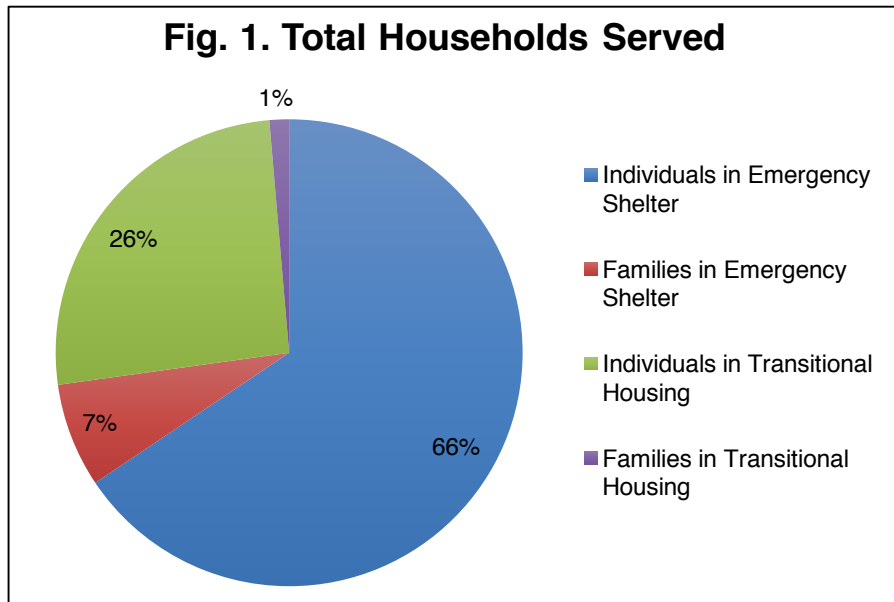
III. Findings for Total Population Served

Key Findings:
- A total of 1,401 households were served in HMIS participating emergency shelter and transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015 period
- There were 96 households identified as chronically homeless during this reporting period
- 64% of all adults served either as individuals or as part of a family identified having a disabling condition
- 59% of households moved on to permanent destinations after discharge
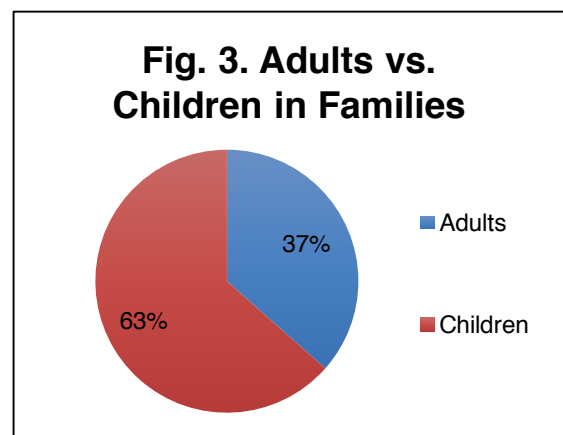
Total Homeless Population. A total of 1,401 households composed of 1,648 persons were housed in Camden County CoC HMIS participating emergency shelter or transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015 reporting period. This is a 29% decrease in the total number of households served from 2014 and a 27% decrease from the 2,271 persons served in 2014. Out of the households served in 2015, the large majority, 91% (1,281) were individuals, while the remaining 9% (120 households) were families. As shown in Figure 1, the most served population was individuals in emergency shelter projects, which accounted for 66% of the total population.
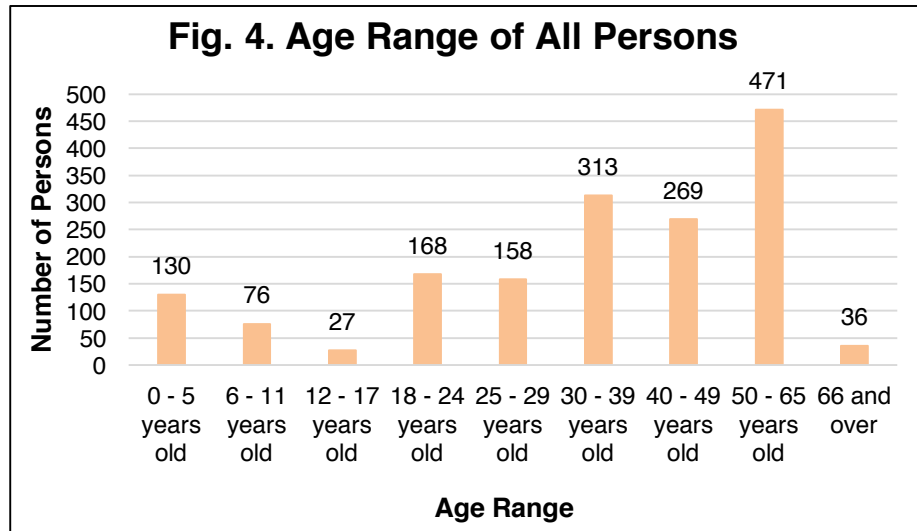
Fig. 1. Total Households Served

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

Fig. 2 Total Persons Served		
	Camden County	**New Jersey**
Total Persons Served	1,648	24,519
Emergency Shelter	1,208	20,337
Individuals	919	13,108
Families	289	7,229
Transitional Housing	440	4,134
Individuals	362	2,116
Families	78	2,018

Family Composition. Of the 120 family households served throughout Camden County in 2015, 119 (99%) were households with adults and children under 18, while the last was an adult only household. As shown in Figure 3, children represented 63% of the persons included in families with both adults and children. The average size of a homeless family in 2015 was 3 persons and the average age of a child served between the two project types was 6 years old.

Fig. 3. Adults vs. Children in Families

- Adults
- Children

Demographics. Of the total homeless population that was served in Camden County during 2015, the largest percent, 29%, of persons were between the ages of 50 and 65. As Figure 4 shows, the next highest age range served was persons between 18 and 29 years old, which represented 20% of the total population.

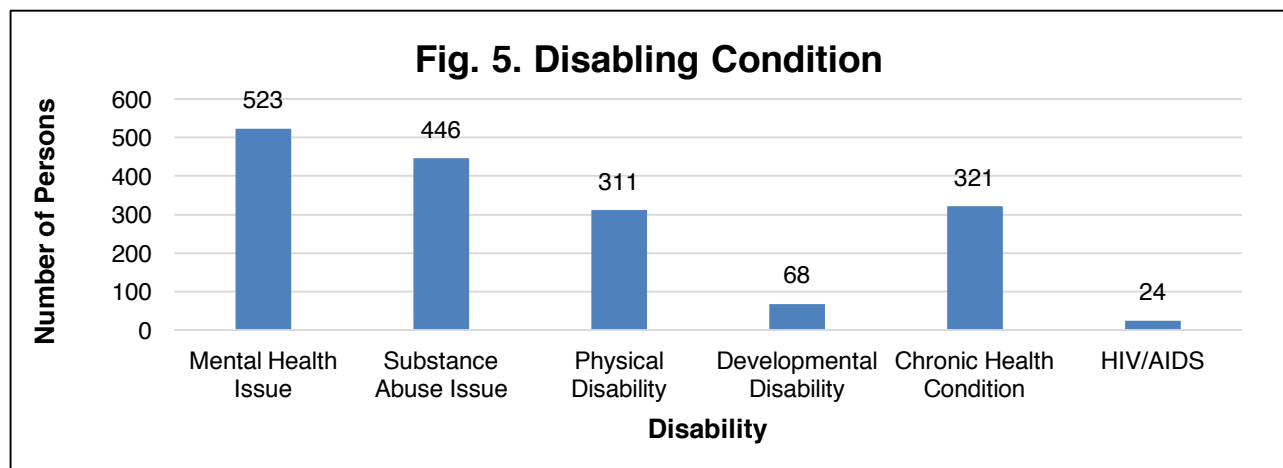**Fig. 4. Age Range of All Persons**

Similar to the 2014 numbers, more than half (67%) of the homeless persons served in Camden County HMIS participating projects were male, with women representing 33% of the population.
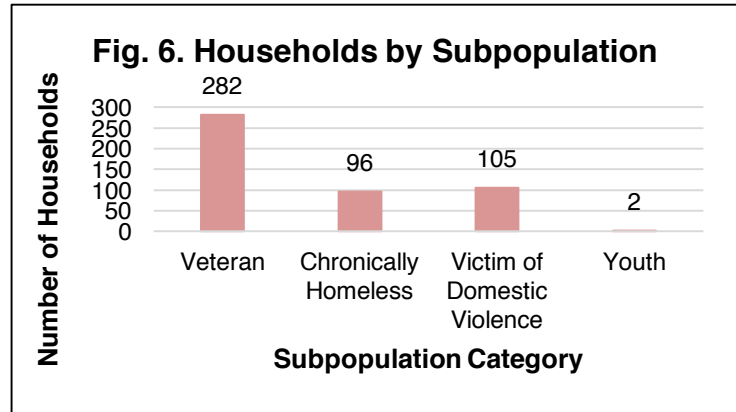
In addition, 52% of the homeless persons served during 2015 identified their race as Black or African American, making that the largest racial subgroup. The next largest was White (39%), followed by Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander with 3%. With regards to ethnicity, 15% identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.

Disabling Conditions. Among all persons served throughout Camden County's HMIS emergency shelter and transitional housing projects, 55% identified having a disabling condition, this number includes 64% of adults and 2% of children.

Among disabled adults, 58% reported a mental health issue, making this the most prevalent disability; representing 37% of the total adult homeless population. 50% of disabled adults also reported a substance abuse issue. Among disabled children, 50% reported a mental health issue. Another 50% of disabled children reported a developmental disability.
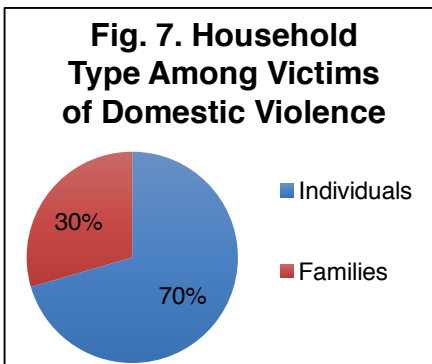
Fig. 5. Disabling Condition

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, Camden County CoC projects served a total of 96 households that were identified as chronically homeless, a 49% decrease

Fig. 6. Households by Subpopulation

from the 187 identified in 2014. 58% of the chronic households served in 2015 were served in emergency shelters (1 was a family). The remaining 42% were served in transitional housing (1 was a family).

There were 2 youth only households, households without someone over age 18, served throughout Camden HMIS projects in 2015. One individual youth was served in an emergency shelter while the other individual youth was served in a transitional housing project.
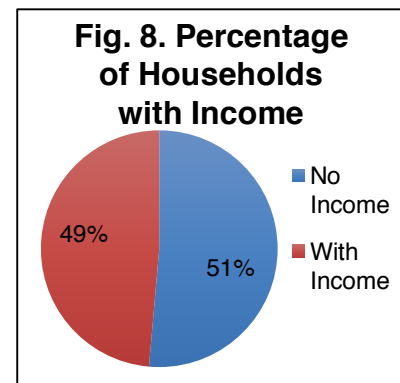
As far as veterans served, Camden County projects served a total of 282 veterans throughout 2015. 99% of veterans served were individuals and only 4% were female. 84% of the veterans served were served in transitional housing projects. 76% of veterans reported having some kind of disability, with the most common disability reported being a mental health issue (58%).

Fig. 7. Household Type Among Victims of Domestic Violence

In addition to the chronic, youth and veteran populations, there were 105 homeless households that reported having a victim of domestic violence. 70% of these households were individuals, while the remaining 31 were families. 18% reported that the last episode of domestic violence occurred over a year ago, while 37% reported it happening within the past 3 months. The majority of the domestic violence victims (90%) were served in emergency shelters. As a note, while there are victims of domestic violence being 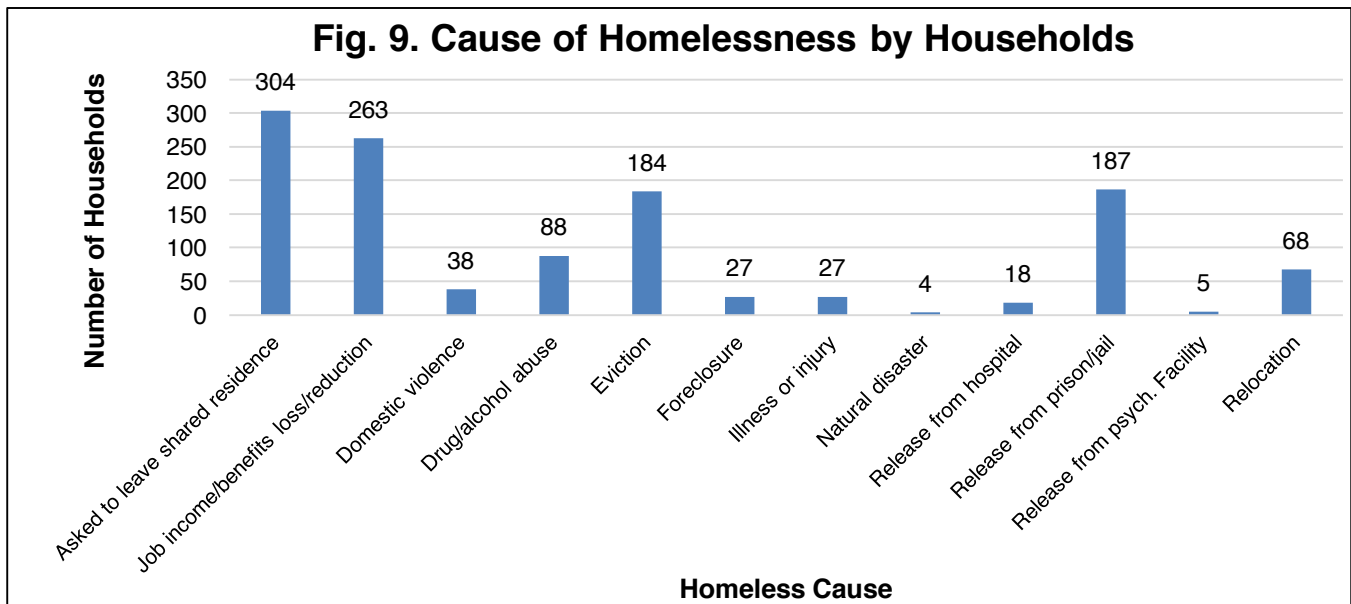served in HMIS participating agencies, due to federal regulations, Domestic Violence specific projects are not able to enter data into HMIS, so the number of victims served in those projects are not included in this report.

Income and Benefits. Among all homeless households served in emergency shelter or transitional housing projects during 2015, 51% 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 (25%) and General Assistance (17%). The average monthly income of households in emergency shelter was $174 and $780 for households served in transitional housing.

Fig. 8. Percentage of Households with Income

While 49% of households had some source of income, 59% of households were receiving some kind of non-cash benefit. Medicaid was the top reported non-cash benefit, reported by 40% of households, followed by Food Stamps, reported by 37%.
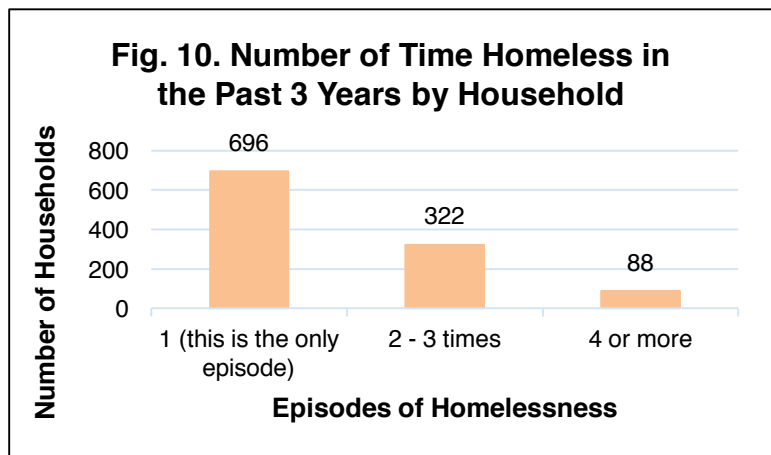
Cause of Homelessness and Residence Prior to Project Entry. When asked what the primary factor was that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to being asked to leave a shared residence (22%) than any other cause. As Figure 9 shows, the next most common factors were loss or reduction of job income or benefits (19%) and release from prison or jail (13%).

Fig. 9. Cause of Homelessness by Households

The most common response for residence prior to project entry was staying or living with friends or family, with 31% of households. The next most common response was emergency shelter (27%) followed by a place not meant for human habitation (11%).

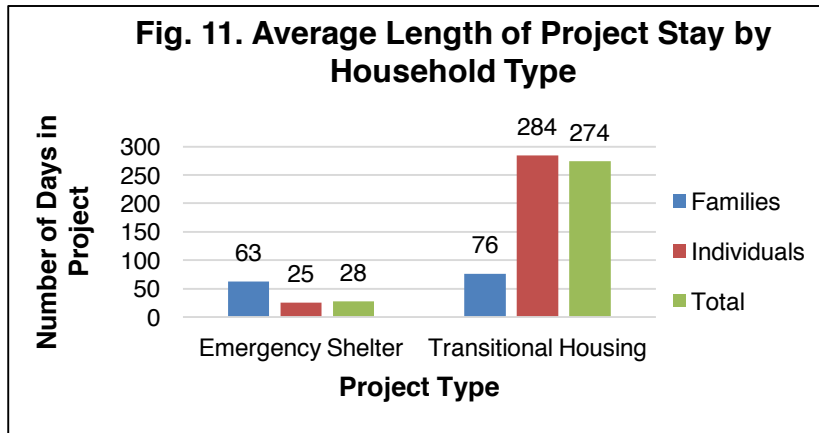**Length of Stay at Prior Residence and Episodes of Homelessness**. 29% of households served during 2015 had stated they resided in their last residence for one year or longer before entering the emergency shelter or transitional housing project, while 14% were there one week or less. Additionally, only 6% of households experienced 4 or more episodes of homelessness in the past 3 years, while 50% of households were experiencing their first episode of homelessness prior to project entry, as shown in Figure 10.
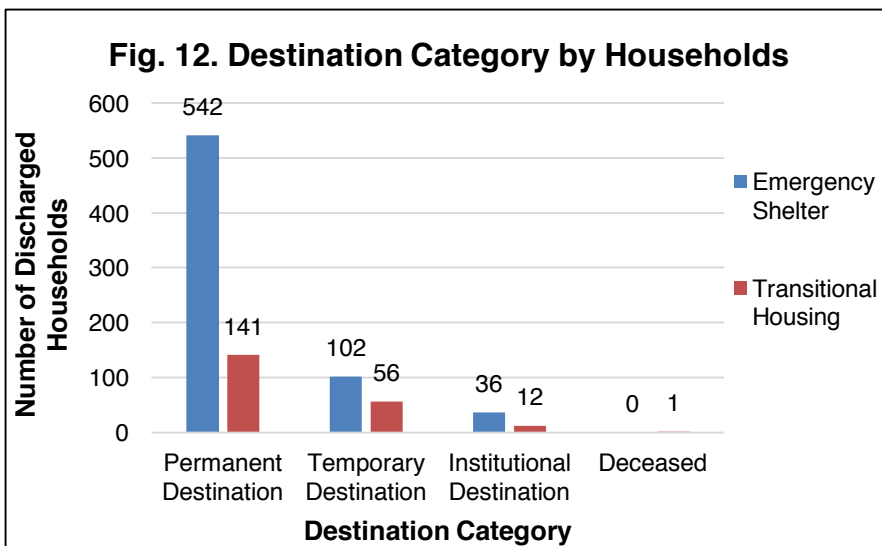

Fig. 10. Number of Time Homeless in the Past 3 Years by Household

Average Length of Project Stay. When looking at total length of project stay, families seemed to have longer lengths of stay in emergency shelter but shorter stays in transitional housing projects. When comparing the average lengths of stay in 2015 to those in 2014, the average length of stay decreased by 128 days, or about 4 months,

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

for emergency shelters, but increased by 27 days for transitional housing projects in 2015.

Reason and Destination at Discharge. A total of 1,165 households were discharged from emergency shelter and transitional housing projects during the 2015 reporting period. 31% of these households were discharged upon project completion, while 9% left for a housing opportunity prior to project completion.

Fig. 12. Destination Category by Households

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

59% 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 38% of total households moving into a rental upon discharge. This rental could be with or without a subsidy. 14% 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 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. The most common institutional destination was a jail or prison with 16 households being discharged to this location.

Appendix A: HMIS Projects Included in Report

I. Emergency Shelter Projects

Agency	Project Name
Joseph's House of Camden	JH – Nightly Shelter
VOADV	VOADV- Aletha Wright- Emergency Shelter
	VOADV-Anna Sample Family Shelter

II. Transitional Housing Projects

Agency	Project Name
Camden County OEO	CCCOEO Imani House Transitional Housing
Center for Family Services	CFS-Camden Grandslam Transitional Living
	CFS-Camden Homebase Group Home
	CFS-GrandSlam Supportive Apartments
Interfaith Homeless Outreach Council	IHOC Network
	IHOC Transitional Housing
NJD Veterans Affairs	NJDMAVA – Veterans Haven
VOADV	VOADV Property Promise Program
	VOADV-Anna Sample Safe Haven 2
	VOADV-Anna Sample Safe Haven HUD
	VOADV-Anna Sample Transitional Living
	VOADV-Home for the Brave
	VOADV-Transitional in Place