



# Essex 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 Essex 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.

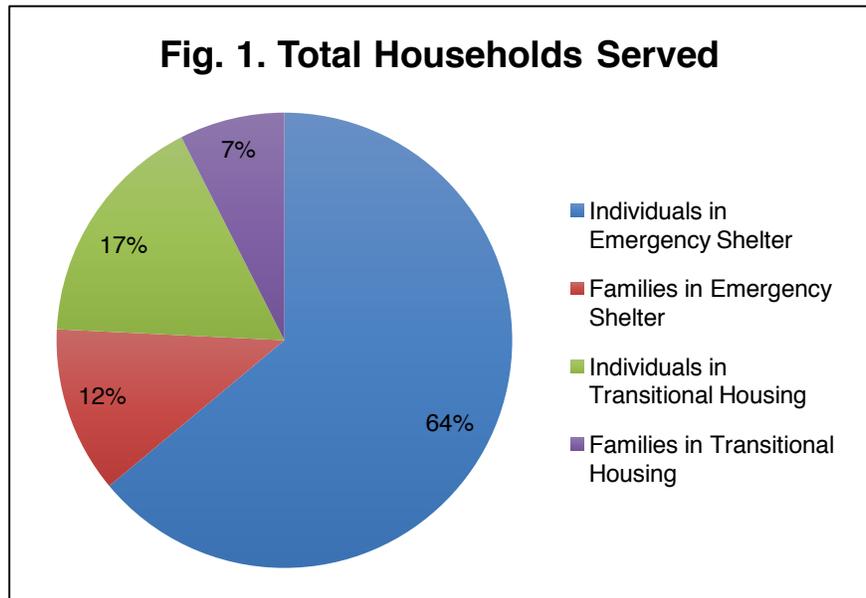
## III. Findings for Total Population Served

### Key Findings:

- A total of 3,859 households were served in HMIS participating emergency shelter and transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015 period
- There were 272 households identified as chronically homeless during this reporting period
- 33% of all adults served either as individuals or as part of a family identified having a disabling condition
- 45% of households moved on to permanent destinations after discharge

**Total Homeless Population.**

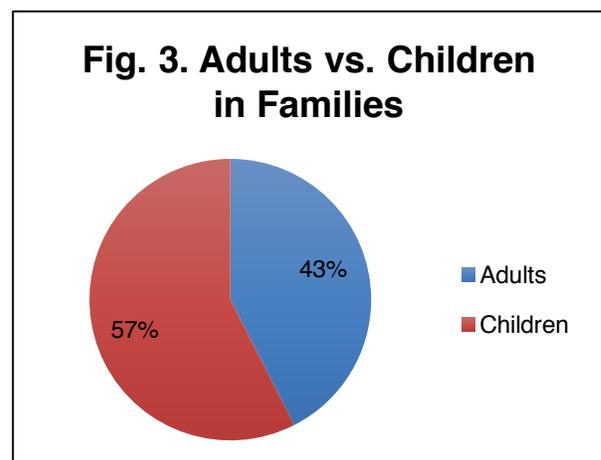
A total of 3,859 households composed of 5,175 persons were housed in Essex County CoC HMIS participating emergency shelter or transitional housing projects during the January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015 reporting period. This is a 2% increase in the total number of households served from 2014 and a 5% increase from the 4,945 persons served in 2014. Out of the households served



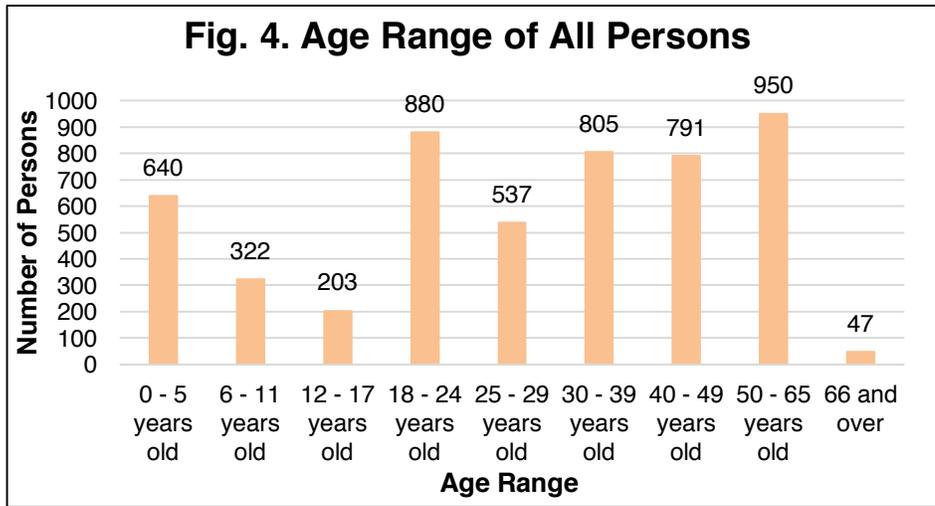
in 2015, the large majority, 81% (3,115) were individuals, while the remaining 19% (744 households) were families. As shown in Figure 1, the most served population was individuals in emergency shelter projects, which accounted for 64% of the total population.

	Essex County	New Jersey
<b>Total Persons Served</b>	5,175	24,519
<b>Emergency Shelter</b>	3,758	20,337
Individuals	2,468	13,108
Families	1,290	7,229
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	1,417	4,134
Individuals	647	2,116
Families	770	2,018

**Family Composition.** Of the 744 family households served throughout Essex County in 2015, 704 (95%) were households with adults and children under 18, 5% were adult only households, while the last was a youth only household. As shown in Figure 3, children represented 57% 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 6 years old.



**Demographics.** Of the total homeless population that was served in Essex County CoC during 2015, 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, which represented 23% of the total population.

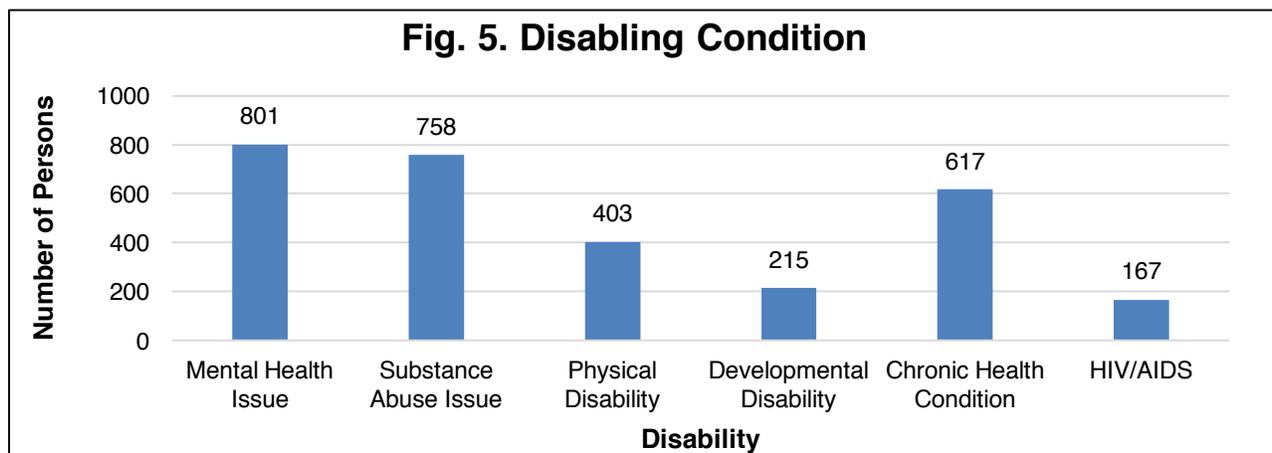


Similar to the 2014 numbers, just over half (53%) of the homeless persons served in Essex County HMIS participating projects were male, with women representing 47% of the population.

In addition, 79% 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 (16%), followed by American Indian or Alaskan Native with 2%. With regards to ethnicity, 14% 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 41% of adults and 6% of children.

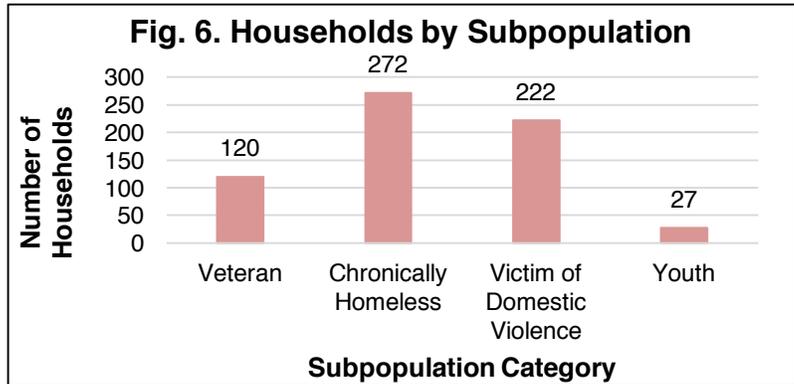
Among disabled adults, 47% reported a mental health issue, making this the most prevalent disability; representing 19% of the total adult homeless population. 46% of disabled adults also reported a substance abuse issue. Among disabled children, 41% reported a mental health issue. Another 38% of disabled 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, Essex County CoC projects served a total of

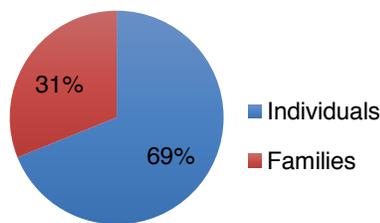
272 households that were identified as chronically homeless, a 9% increase from the 249 served in 2014. 76% of the chronic households served in 2015 were served in emergency shelters (10 were families). The remaining 24% were served in transitional housing (8 were families).



There were 27 youth only households, households without someone over age 18, served throughout Essex HMIS projects in 2015. 11% of youth households were served in emergency shelters (1 was a family). The remaining 89% were individual youth served in transitional housing.

As far as veterans served, Essex County projects served a total of 120 veterans throughout 2015. 89% of veterans served were individuals and 20% were female. 81% of the veterans served were served in emergency shelter projects. 55% of veterans reported having some kind of disability, with the most common disability reported being a physical disability (53%).

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

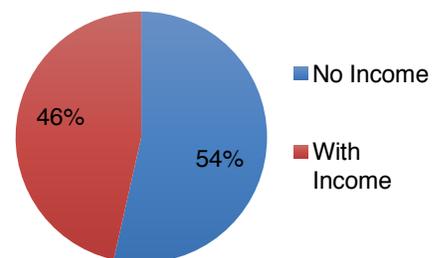


In addition to the chronic, youth and veteran populations, there were 222 homeless households that reported having a victim of domestic violence. 69% of these households were individuals, while the remaining 69 were families. 40% reported that the last episode of domestic violence occurred over a year ago, while 32% reported it happening within the past 3 months. The majority of the domestic violence victims (85%) 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.

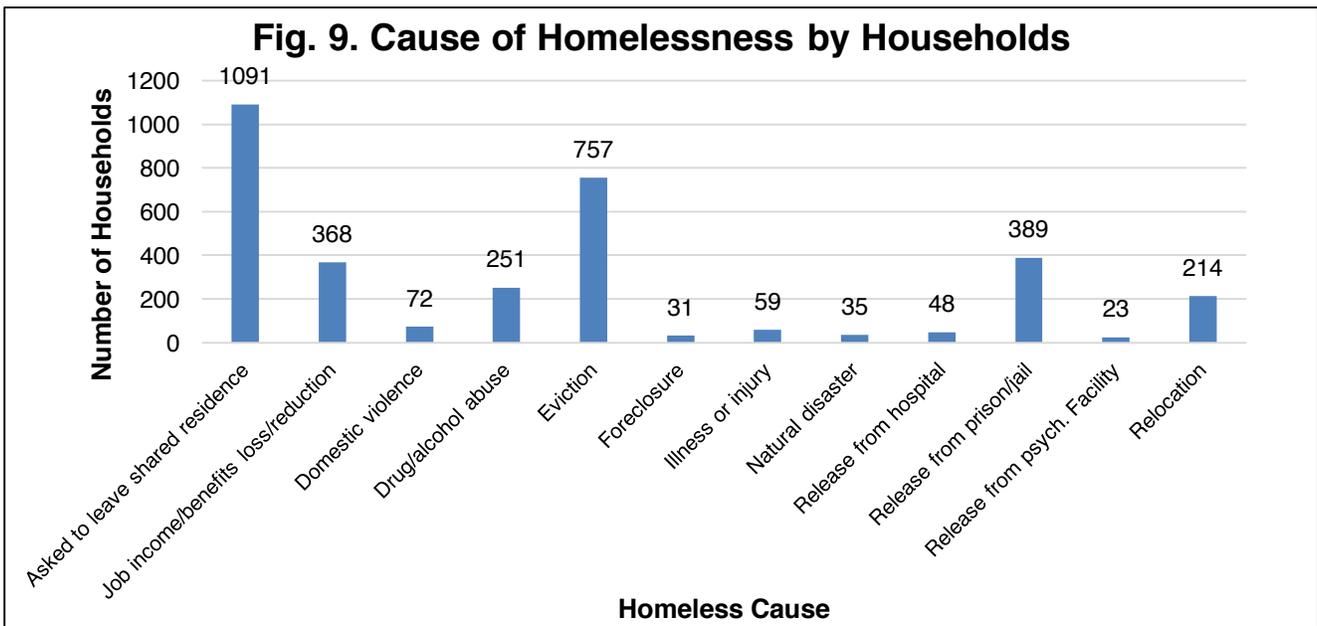
**Income and Benefits.** Among all homeless households served in emergency shelter or transitional housing projects during 2015, 54% had no source of income, while 10% reported receiving some form of earned income. The most common sources of cash income among households were SSI (21%) and TANF (13%). The average monthly income for households was \$212 for emergency shelter and \$391 for households served in transitional housing projects.

**Fig. 8. Percentage of Households with Income**



While 46% of households had some source of income, 63% of households were receiving some kind of non-cash benefit. Medicaid was the top reported non-cash benefit, reported by 51% of households, followed by Food Stamps, reported by 43%.

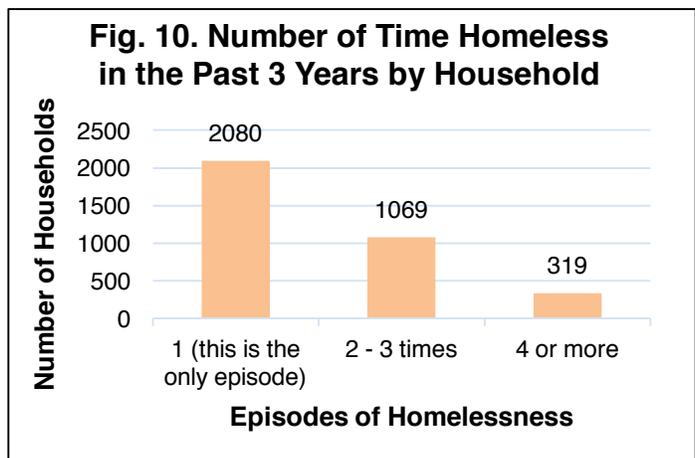
**Cause of Homelessness and Residence Prior to Project Entry.** When asked what the primary factor was that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to being asked to leave a shared residence (28%) than any other cause. As Figure 9 shows, the next most common factors were eviction (20%) and release from prison or jail (10%).



The most common response for residence prior to project entry was staying or living with friends or family, with 42% of households. The next most common response was emergency shelter (19%) followed by jail, prison or juvenile detention center (11%).

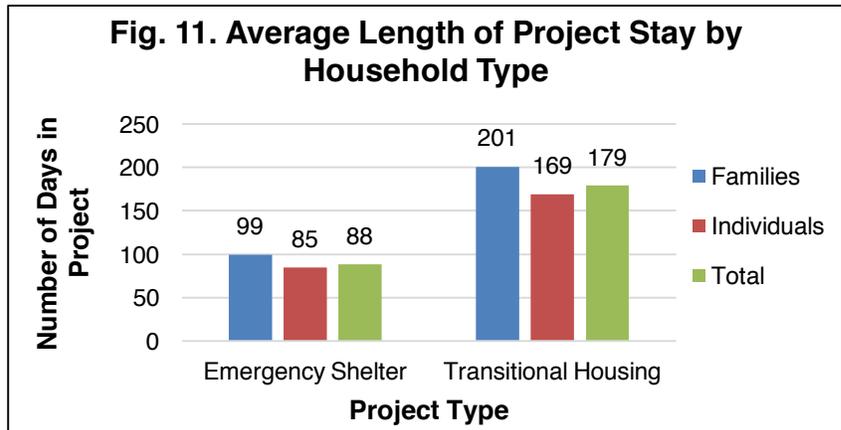
**Length of Stay at Prior Residence and Episodes of Homelessness.**

28% 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 11% were there one week or less. Additionally, only 8% of households experienced 4 or more episodes of homelessness in the past 3 years, while 54% of households were experiencing their first episode of homelessness prior to project entry, as shown in Figure 10.



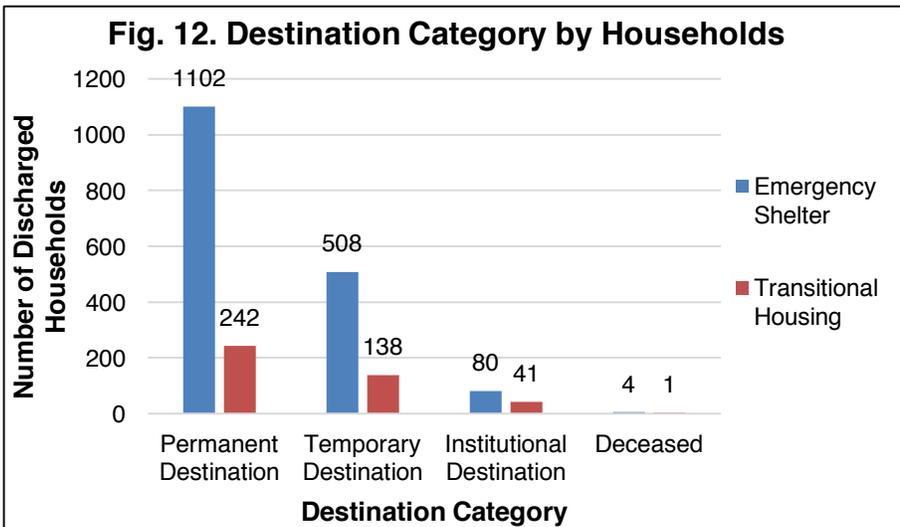
**Average Length of Project Stay.**

When looking at total length of project stay, families seemed to have longer lengths of program stays in both emergency shelter and transitional housing projects. When comparing the average lengths of stay in 2015 to those in 2014, the average length of stay decreased by 5 days for emergency shelters but increased by 1 day for transitional housing projects in 2015.



**Reason and Destination at Discharge.**

A total of 3,013 households were discharged from emergency shelter and transitional housing projects during the 2015 reporting period. 18% of these households were discharged upon project completion, while 17% 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.

45% 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 36% of total households moving into a rental upon discharge. This rental could be with or without a subsidy. 21% 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 10% 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 2% of households being discharged to this location.

## 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
Helping the Homeless III	HTHIII-Homeless Shelter
IHN for the Homeless of Essex County	IHN – Emergency shelter
LGBT R.A.I.N. Foundation	LGBT R.A.I.N. Foundation- 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. 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 16th

### 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
Inner City Emergency Services	ICES-Joi's Angels
Integrity Inc.	Integrity Men's Recovery House
	Integrity-Joan Riddick House



Isaiah House	Isaiah House – Teen MAP
	Isaiah House Brother with Brothers
	Isaiah House-Community Creche
	Isaiah House-Next Step
	Isaiah House-SSH Transitional
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