Warren 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 Warren 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.
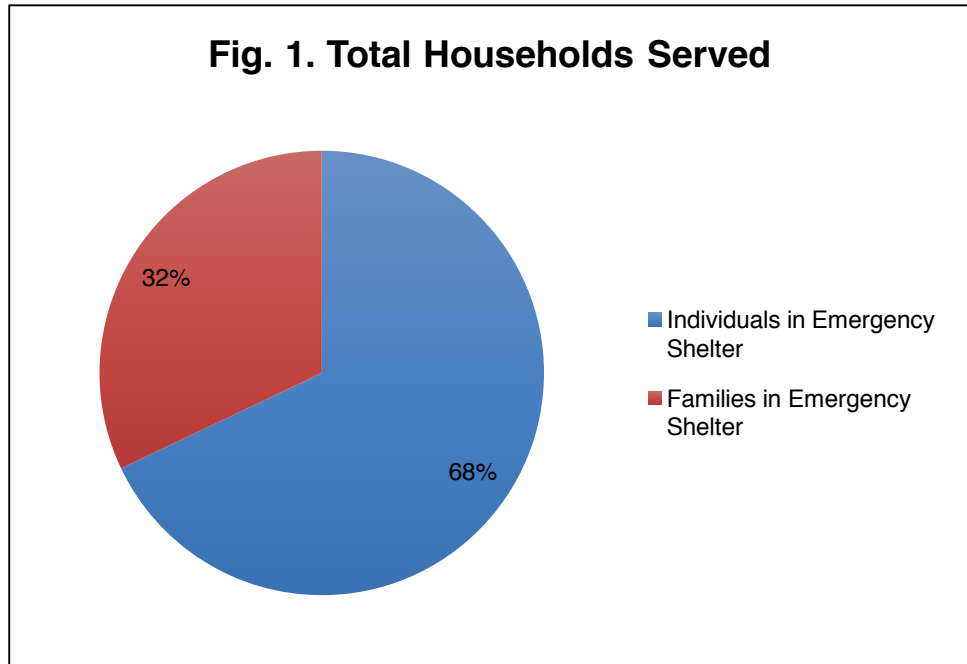
III. Findings for Total Population Served

Key Findings:
- A total of 368 households were served in HMIS participating emergency shelter projects during the January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015 period
- There were 3 households identified as chronically homeless during this reporting period
- 16% of all adults served either as individuals or as part of a family identified having a disabling condition
- 8% of households moved on to permanent destinations after discharge

Total Homeless Population. A total of 368 households composed of 567 persons were housed in Warren County HMIS participating emergency shelter projects during the January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015 reporting period. This is a 9% decrease in the total number of households served from 2014 and a 7% decrease from the

Fig. 1. Total Households Served

- Individuals in Emergency Shelter
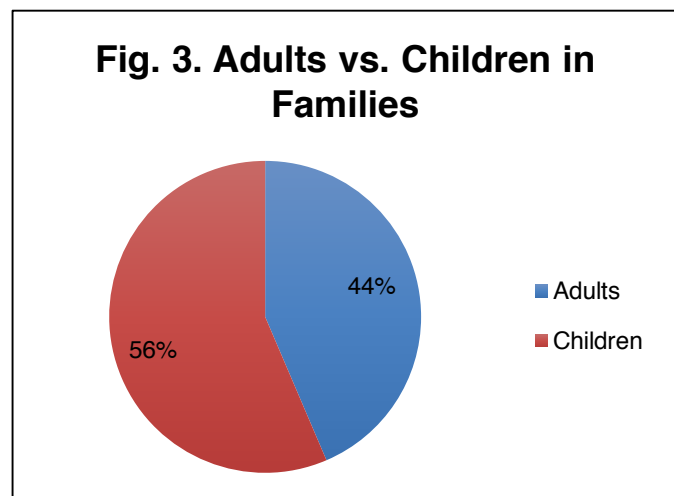- Families in Emergency Shelter

32%

68%

609 persons served in 2014. Out of the households served in 2015, the large majority, 68% (250) were individuals, while the remaining 32% (118 households) were families.
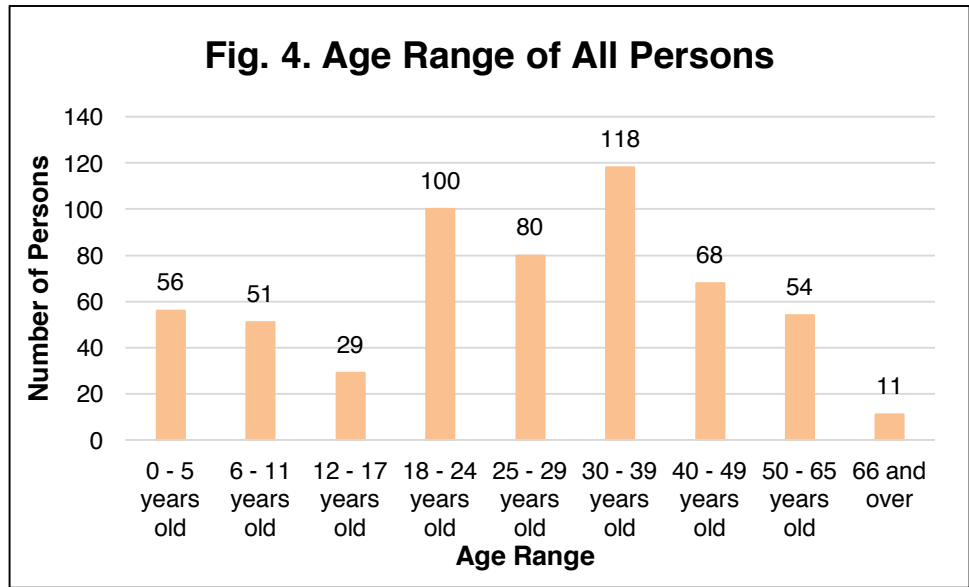
Fig. 2 Total Persons Served		
	Warren County	**New Jersey**
Total Persons Served	567	24,519
Emergency Shelter	567	20,337
Individuals	250	13,108
Families	317	7,229

Family Composition. Of the 118 family households served throughout Warren County in 2015, 81 (69%) were households with adults and children under 18, while the remaining 37 (31%) were adult only households. As shown in Figure 3, children represented 56% 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 was 7 years old.

Fig. 3. Adults vs. Children in Families

- Adults
- Children

44%

56%

Demographics. Of the total homeless population that was served in Warren County during 2015, the largest percent, 32%, 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 24% of the total population.
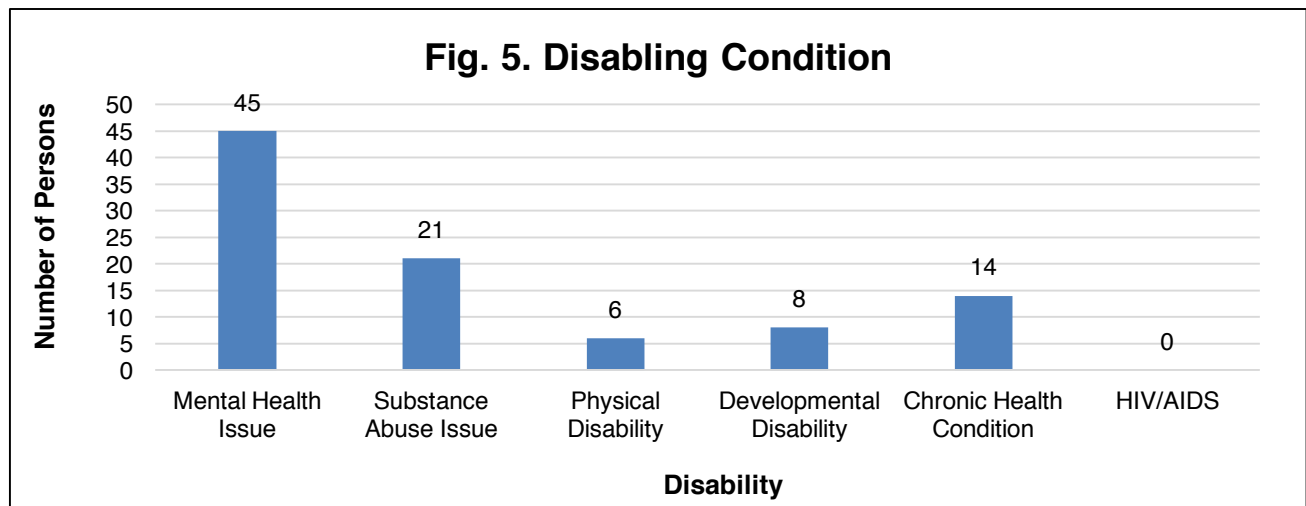
Fig. 4. Age Range of All Persons

Similar to the 2014 numbers, just over half (51%) of the homeless persons served in Warren County HMIS participating projects were male, with women representing 49% of the population.

In addition, 72% 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 (13%), followed by Multi-Racial with 1%. With regards to ethnicity, only 6% identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.
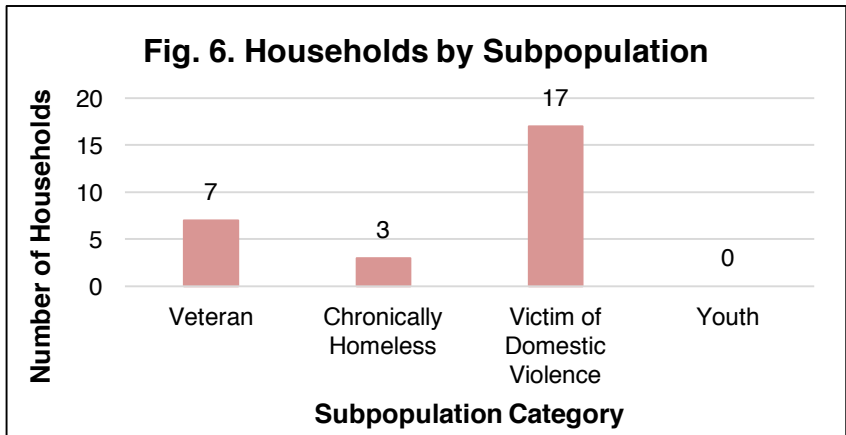
Disabling Conditions. Among all persons served throughout Warren County's HMIS emergency shelter projects, 12% identified having a disabling condition, this number includes 16% of adults and 0% of children.

Among disabled adults, 65% reported a mental health issue, making this the most prevalent disability; representing 10% of the total adult homeless population. 30% of disabled adults also reported a substance abuse issue.
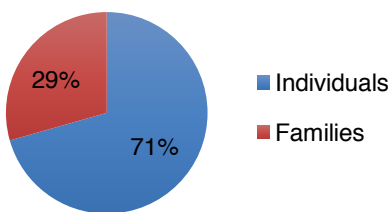
Fig. 5. Disabling Condition

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, Warren County projects served a total of 3

Fig. 6. Households by Subpopulation

households that were identified as chronically homeless, a decrease of 7 households from the 10 chronically homeless households served in 2014. All 3 of the chronically homeless households were individuals.

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

As far as veterans served, Warren County emergency shelter projects served a total of 7 veterans throughout 2015. 86% of veterans served were individuals and 0 were female. No veterans served reported having any kind of disability.
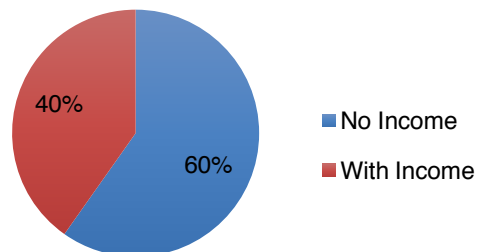

Fig. 7. Household Type Among Victims of Domestic Violence

In addition to the chronic, youth and veteran populations, there were 17 homeless households that reported having a victim of domestic violence. 71% of these households were individuals, while the remaining 5 were families. 12% reported that the last episode of domestic violence occurred over a year ago, while 65% reported it happening within the past 3 months. 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.
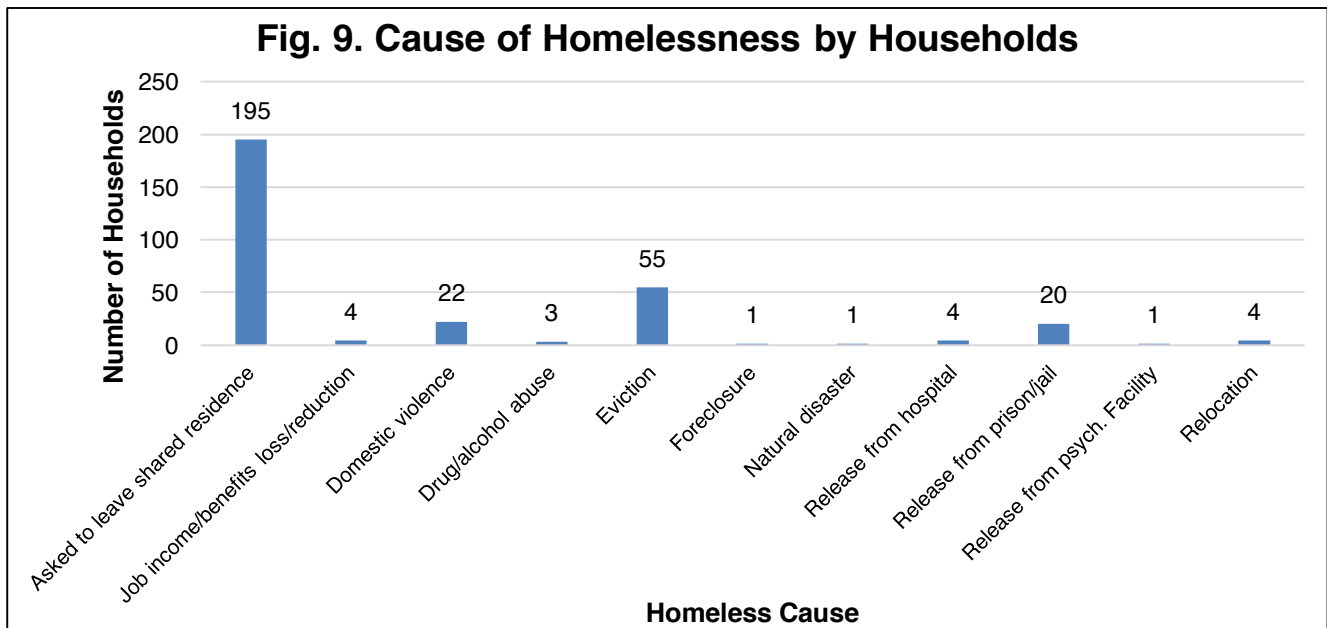
Income and Benefits. Among all homeless households served in emergency shelter projects during 2015, 60% had no source of income, while 12% reported receiving some form of earned income. The most common sources of cash income among households were SSI (14%) and earned income (12%). The average monthly income for households in emergency shelter was $312.

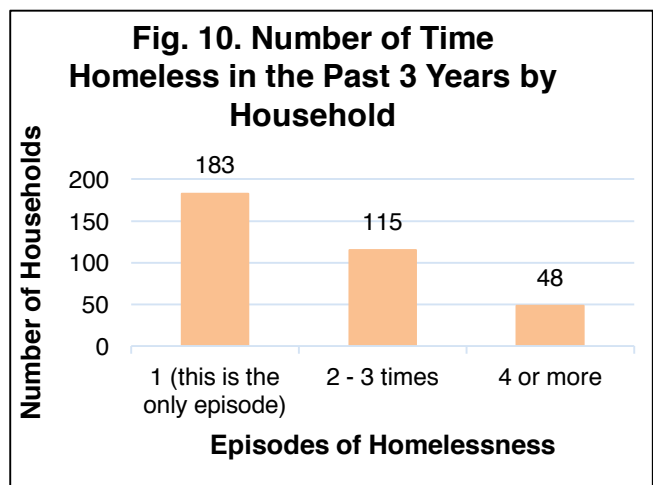**Fig. 8. Percentage of Households with Income**

While 40% of households had some source of income, 51% of households were receiving some kind of non-cash benefit. Medicaid was the top reported non-cash benefit, reported by 38% of households, followed by Food Stamps, reported by 29%.

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 (53%) than any other cause. As Figure 9 shows, the next most common factors were eviction (15%) and domestic violence (6%).

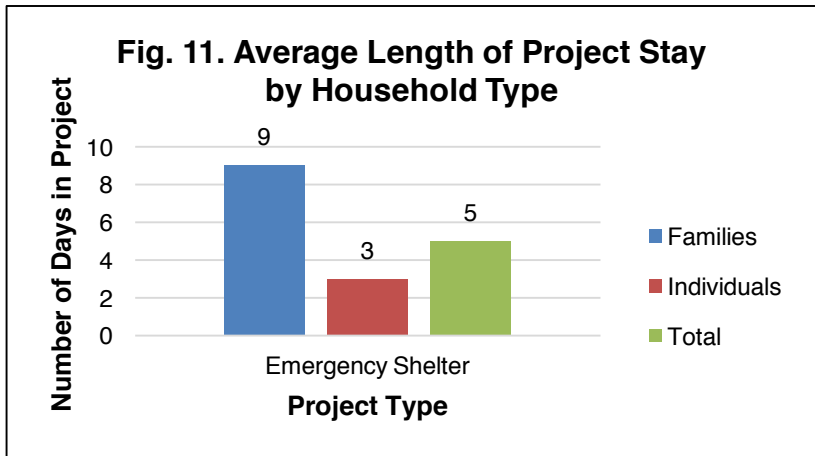Fig. 9. Cause of Homelessness by Households

The most common response for residence prior to project entry was staying or living with family or friends, with 67% of households. The next most common response was rental by client (15%) followed by jail or prison (4%).

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 project, while 9% were there one week or less. Additionally, only 13% 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.

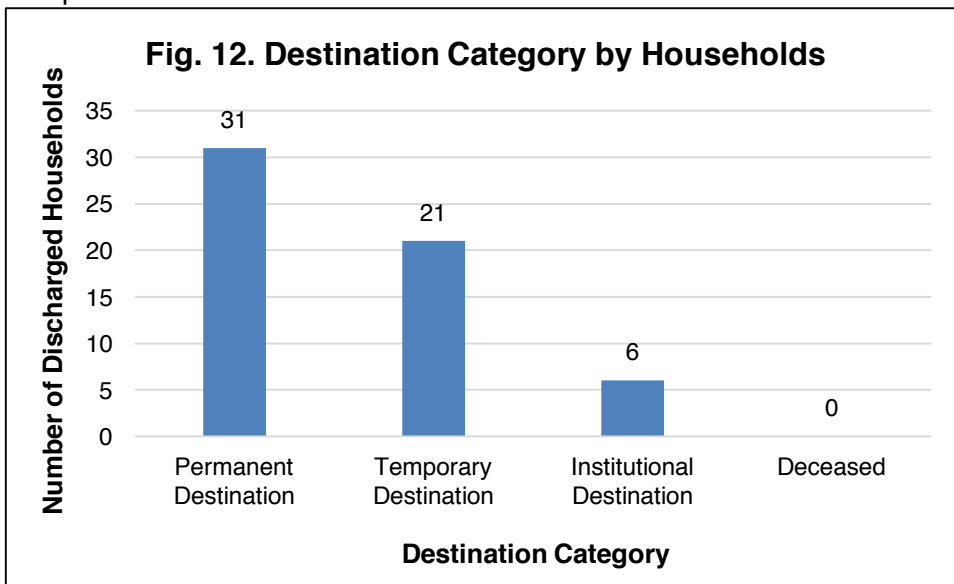Fig. 10. Number of Time Homeless in the Past 3 Years by Household

Average Length of Project Stay. When looking at total length of project stay, families seemed to have a slightly longer length of program stay than individuals. When comparing the average length of stay in 2015 to that in 2014, the average length of stay decreased by 1 day for emergency shelter projects in 2015.

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

Reason and Destination at Discharge. A total of 365 households were discharged from emergency shelter projects during the 2015 reporting period. 23% of these households were discharged due to their needs not being able to be met, while 10% were discharged upon 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.

8% 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 4% of total households moving into a rental upon discharge. This rental could be with or without a subsidy. 6% 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 and family, which was reported by 4% 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 medical hospital, reported by 1% of households.

Appendix A: HMIS Projects Included in Report

I. Emergency Shelter Projects

Agency	Project Name
Family Promise of Warren County	FPWC-WCIHN Shelter
Warren County Div of Temporary Assistance & Social Services	WC- SSH ES