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**NJ**  
**2017**  
**Counts!**

# Atlantic County's 2017 Point-In-Time Count of the Homeless

January 24, 2017

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This report was prepared for  
The New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency  
by  
Monarch Housing Associates

## I. Introduction

### NJ Counts 2017

*NJ Counts 2017*, New Jersey's annual Point-In-Time (PIT) Count of the Homeless, provides a statewide snapshot of homeless households in our communities; where they find shelter, what their needs are, and what factors contribute to making them homeless. The 2017 Count reveals important demographic and other information about families and individuals who were homeless on the night of Tuesday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017 and was carried out with the help of government agencies, community-based organizations, and local volunteers.

In New Jersey, each County's count is planned, coordinated, and carried out locally, and the information gathered enables each community to better allocate housing resources and services in order to prevent and end homelessness. The PIT Count is the primary opportunity throughout the year for most communities to take a comprehensive look at the total homeless population, and is especially crucial in assessing the needs of the unsheltered homeless.

### Acknowledgements

Monarch would like to thank all Point-In-Time Coordinators, homeless service providers, agencies, and volunteers who participated in NJ Counts 2017. Monarch would also like to specifically thank Bergen County for providing a Spanish translation of the 2017 paper survey tool.

Finally, a special acknowledgement is given to all the respondents who were willing to share personal information about themselves and their households' experiences in order to help our communities better understand and assist the homeless.

Funding for coordinating New Jersey's 2017 Point-In-Time Count and producing this report was provided by New Jersey's Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA).

### This Report

The findings in this report are presented in the following sections:

1. Total homeless population;
2. Those experiencing chronic homelessness (families and individuals that have been homeless for a year or longer, or who have experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years totaling at least 12 months, and have a disabled head of household); and
3. Unsheltered families and individuals;



The structure of this report is intended to provide not only an overall snapshot of the homeless population counted in the Point-In-Time, but also to focus attention on the homeless subpopulations that are the most in need, and those that represent federal funding priorities set forth by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

In addition to the main findings presented in the body of this report, Appendix A includes charts illustrating the responses to all survey questions that were part of the 2017 Point-In-Time Count.

## II. Data Collection and Methodology

### Requirements for the Count

As part of its Continuum of Care (CoC) application for homelessness funding, HUD requires that jurisdictions across the nation conduct a statistically reliable and unduplicated count of the homeless for one overnight period during the last 10 days of January. New Jersey's Continuums of Care (regional networks of organizations, agencies, and community stakeholders that plan local efforts to help the homeless) conduct an annual count of sheltered homeless persons (i.e. persons in emergency shelter, transitional housing for the homeless, and Safe Haven programs) and at least a biennial count of unsheltered homeless persons.

In their Point-In-Time Count, CoCs must count and report all individuals and families who meet the criteria in paragraph (1)(i) of the homeless definition in 24 CFR 91.5 of HUD's Homeless Definition Rule on the night designated for the count. This includes individuals and families who are:

- **Sheltered**, or “living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangement (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals),” or
- **Unsheltered**, “with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground.”

Because this report focuses on those respondents who meet HUD's definition of homeless, it does not include information about those who may be at risk of homelessness, precariously housed, or considered homeless under other federal statutes. Persons who, on the night of the count, were living doubled up with another household, living in illegal or overcrowded units, being discharged from a jail or health facility with no subsequent residence, scheduled to be evicted, or paying for its own motel unit were not considered

homeless. All survey information collected for respondents who were at risk of homelessness or precariously housed was preserved and shared with each community for local planning purposes, but is not included in this report unless otherwise noted.

## Data Collection Methods

Monarch Housing Associates provided each of New Jersey's 21 counties with in-person training, online video and print training guides, a practice online survey tool, and technical assistance to aid in the data collection process for New Jersey's 2017 Point-In-Time Count. Point-In-Time Coordinators in each county disseminated PIT training materials and helped facilitate local planning around implementation of the PIT count in their communities.

For the fourth year, the count of homeless persons who were sheltered on the night of the point in time was primarily taken from New Jersey's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), while the count for the unsheltered and those sheltered by non-HMIS programs was conducted using a Paper Survey tool, personal interviews, and agency client records. This strategy was designed in accordance with HUD guidance regarding conducting both sheltered and unsheltered Point-In-Time Counts.

The 2017 PIT Survey tool closely mirrors information collected in HMIS so that the data was comparable for important factors such as duration and episodes of homelessness, household characteristics, income, services needed, and factors contributing to homelessness. Agencies updated all HMIS data to accurately reflect the night of the count, and those with programs that were non HMIS-participating submitted information from interviews utilizing the Paper Survey tool through SurveyMonkey.

## Limitations

1. HUD requires a count of sheltered homeless persons and families annually, but only a biennial count of those who are unsheltered. Even though New Jersey conducts both a sheltered and unsheltered count each year, the comprehensiveness of the unsheltered count may be influenced during the non-HUD required full count years. This report includes comparison data from 2013 to 2017. 2014 and 2016 were not HUD required full reporting years while 2013, 2015, and 2017 were.
2. The information presented in this report is based on survey interviews and agency HMIS records. In some cases, survey respondents did not answer every question completely, and homeless provider agencies did not report all client information on the night of the count. For this reason, all charts presented in this report will be based on the responses received, while all percentages will be based on the total households or individuals served and may not equal 100% in each category due to possible missing data.
3. Because the Point-In-Time Count represents only one night during the last ten days of January, it is widely accepted that the PIT will undercount the overall homeless

population. Undercounting may occur due to difficulty finding those living on the street, incomplete information for people who do not agree to complete the survey, a shortage of volunteers to cover a geographic area, or homeless persons choosing not to seek housing services on the night of the count. This data should not be viewed as a comprehensive measurement of all families and individuals who experience homelessness throughout the year, but rather as a minimum number of persons who experience homelessness in New Jersey on a given night.

## De-duplication

Monarch Housing Associates collected and merged all HMIS and SurveyMonkey Point-In-Time data from each community into its combined database. Monarch generated two unique identifiers, one more general and one more in-depth, based on the identifying information for each individual record. Using a formula, these unique identifiers were compared to all identifiers for other records in the database to identify potential duplicates.

All duplicates detected through comparison of unique identifiers were then de-duplicated by the following process:

1. Multiple HMIS records where all fields match – a single record was preserved, and all duplicates were removed;
2. Multiple SurveyMonkey records where all fields match – a single record was preserved, and all duplicates were removed;
3. Comparing HMIS to SurveyMonkey records where unique identifiers, disabilities, income sources, household size, and location on the night of the count all match – the HMIS record was preserved and the SurveyMonkey duplicates were removed.

Following this de-duplication of the data, communities were given preliminary data to review all identified duplicates and records with missing data. Communities were then able to update records with missing information and/or request any additional de-duplication they determined prudent. Monarch then updated and removed additional records based on community feedback prior to completing its final analysis and report.

### III. Findings for Total Homeless Population

#### Key Findings

- On the night of January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017 a total of 395 households, including 422 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Atlantic County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 104 households, with 105 persons, were identified as chronically homeless.
- 109 unsheltered homeless persons were counted.

#### Total Homeless Population

On the night of January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017, a total of 422 persons, in 395 households, were experiencing homelessness in Atlantic County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 54 persons (11.3%) and a decrease of 59 households (13%) from 2016. Atlantic County had 4.9% of New Jersey's statewide homeless population in 2017.

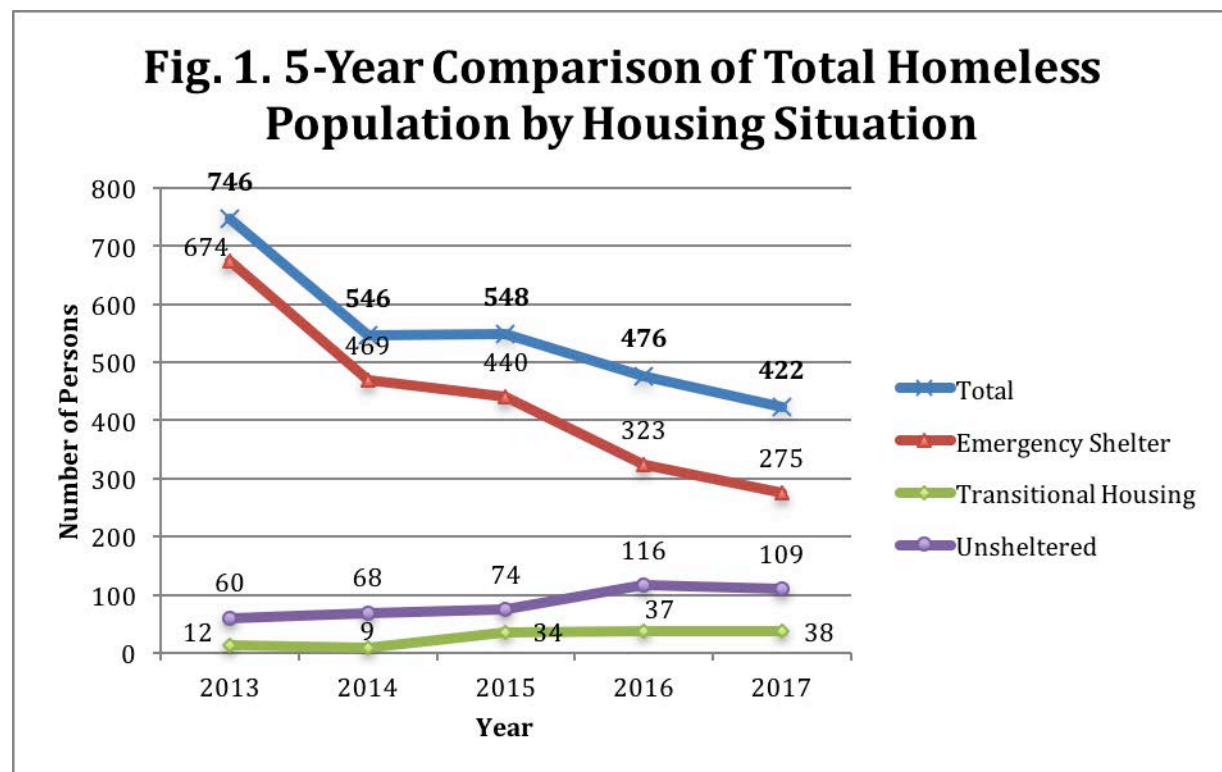
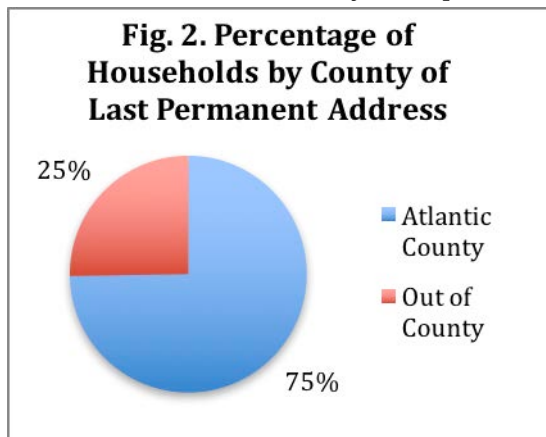


Figure 1 shows that, in 2017, 275 homeless persons stayed in emergency shelters, 38 stayed in transitional housing, and 109 were living unsheltered on the night of the count. In 2017, the total number of persons counted in emergency shelters decreased by 48 persons (14.9%) from 2016. There was a decrease of 6% (7 persons) in the unsheltered population, but a 2.7% increase in the transitional housing population.

Figure 1 also shows that, over the past five years, the total number of homeless persons has decreased in Atlantic County, by 43.4%, or 324 persons. The main decrease has been seen in the number of persons staying in emergency shelter, which decreased by 399 persons (59.2%) from 2013. While this is true, Atlantic County has seen an increase in persons residing in transitional housing since 2013 (26 persons, 216.7%) and an increase in the unsheltered population (49 persons, 81.7%).

As Figure 2 shows, 17% of homeless households in Atlantic County reported that their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless was outside of the county.

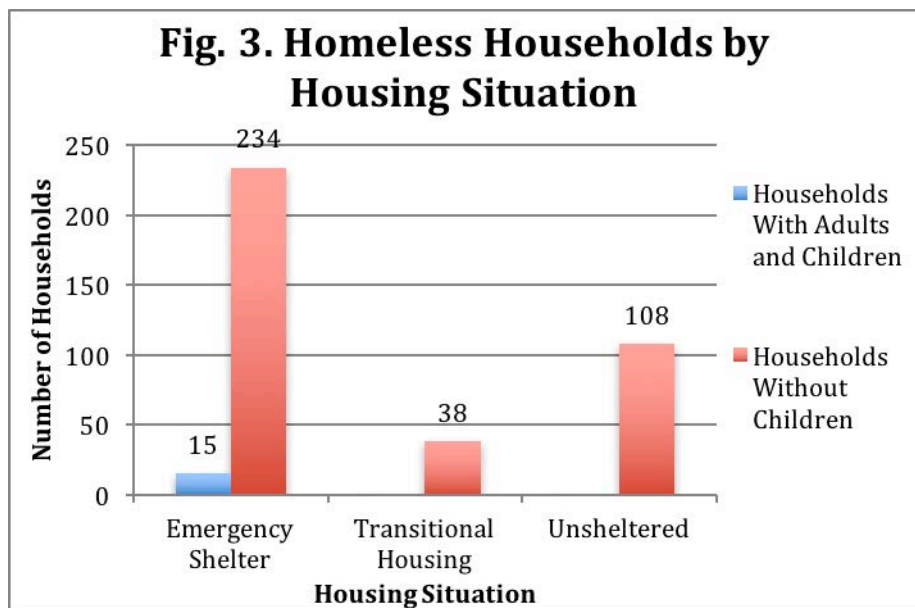


### Homeless Families and Individuals

When reading the data regarding different types of homeless households, it is important for the reader to remember that, in this report, 'household' means "any group of persons who, if they were able to attain permanent housing, would choose to live together; and, shared the same sleeping arrangements on the night of the count." Three different types of households are discussed below: households with adults and children under 18 ('families'), households without children ('individuals'), and households with only children under 18 ('unaccompanied youth').

Of the 395 homeless households counted in Atlantic County in 2017, 15 (3.8%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult. These families included 40 persons, 25 children under age 18, and 15 adults. This represents an increase of 1 (7.1%) homeless family compared to 2016.

The average family size was 3 persons. Figure 3 shows that 100% of homeless families were staying in emergency shelter on the night of the count.



96.2% (380) of the homeless households counted in Atlantic County were adult-only households. These households were primarily individual adults (378), with the remaining 2 households consisting of 2 adults each. The majority of these adult-only households, 234

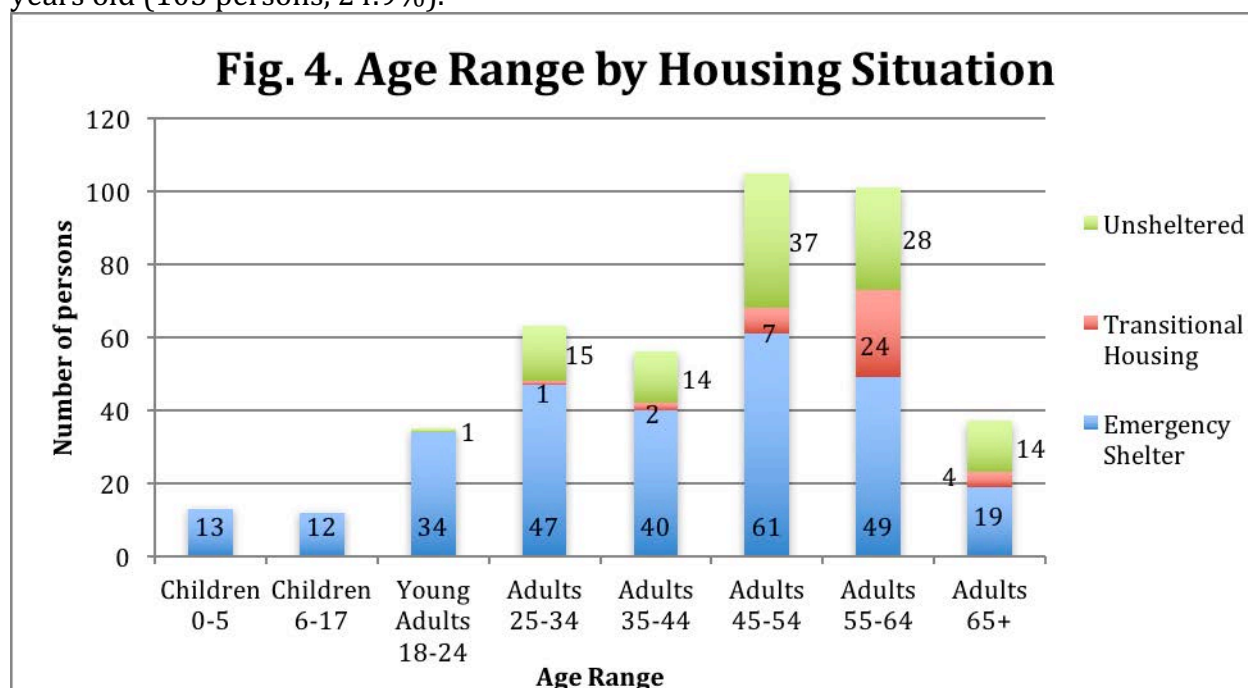


(61.6%) were staying in emergency shelters on the night of the count. Atlantic County has seen the number of adult-only households decrease by 13.6% (60) since 2016.

Similar to 2016, there were no youth-only households counted in 2017.

### Demographics

The vast majority (362 persons, 85.8%) of those experiencing homelessness in Atlantic County on the night of the count were adults over age 24. There were a total of 35 (8.3%) homeless young adults between 18 and 24 years old, and 25 (5.9%) children under 18 years old. Figure 4 shows that age range most represented was persons between 45 and 54 years old (105 persons, 24.9%).



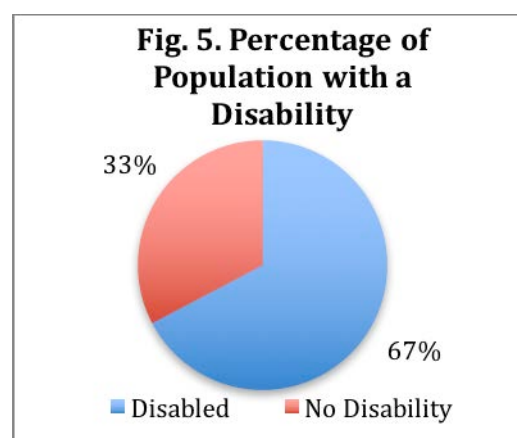
70.6% (298) of homeless respondents were male, and 29.4% (124) were female.

The largest racial group of respondents identified themselves as White (49.1%), followed by those identifying as Black or African American (44.1%). With regard to ethnicity, 14% of respondents identified themselves as Hispanic.

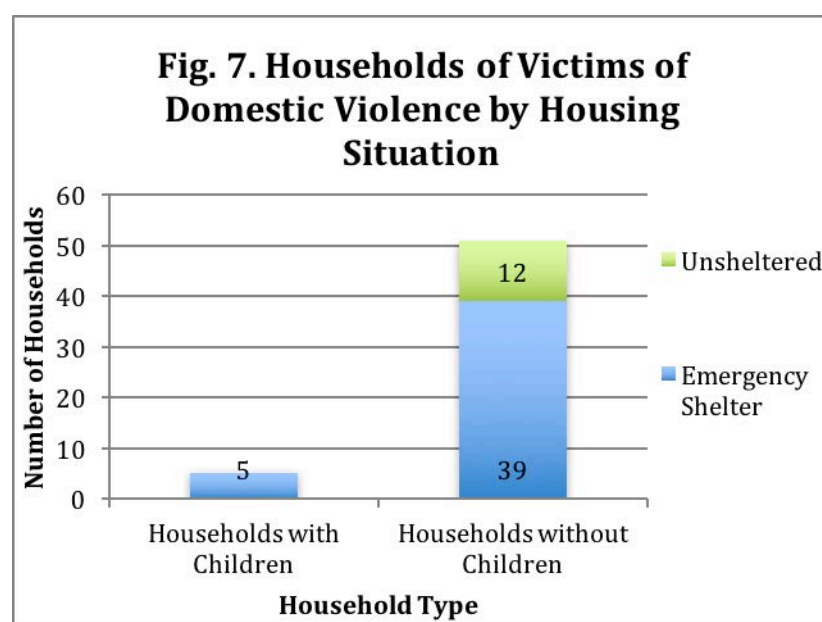
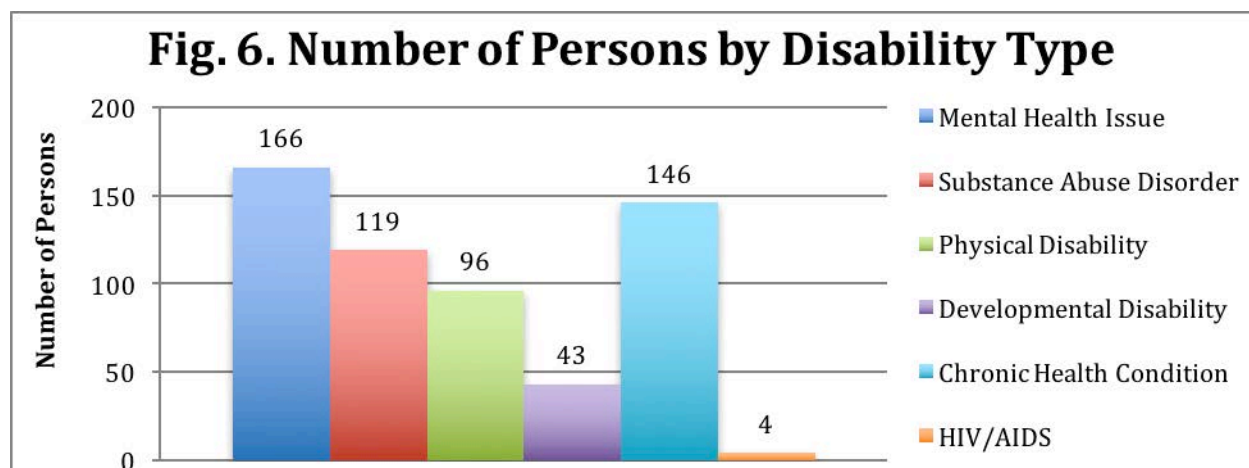
### Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 67.3% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 55.1% of adults 18 or older reported some type of disability compared to 20% of children.

Figure 6 shows the number of the homeless persons that identified as having various disabilities. The most common disabilities included mental health issues and chronic health conditions.



Among disabled adults, 59.1% reported mental health issues making this the most prevalent disability; representing 32.6% of the total adult homeless population. 51.3% of disabled adults reported chronic health conditions. Among disabled homeless children, 60% reported a chronic health condition.



### Victims of Domestic Violence

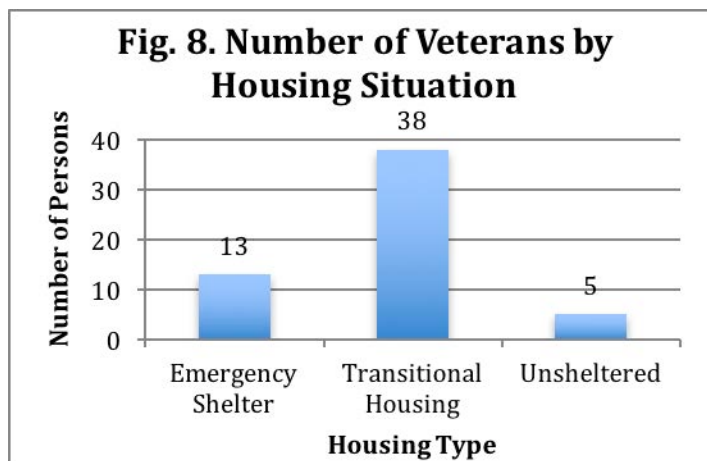
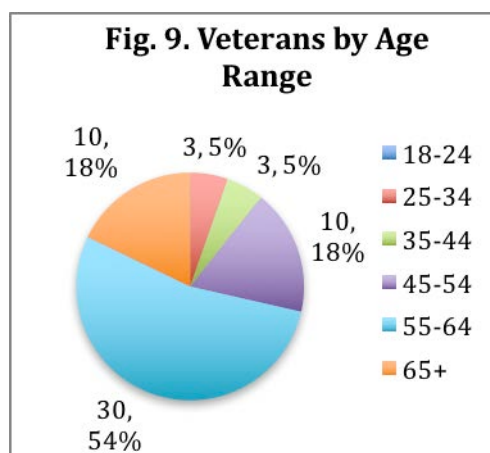
On the night of the count, in Atlantic County, 56 homeless households identified as victims of domestic violence, an increase of 8 from 2016. Figure 7 shows that the majority (91.1%) of these households were adult-only households. 78.6% of victim households were residing in emergency shelters.

### Veterans

In its plan, *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has prioritized ending homelessness among veterans by 2015. Many communities in New Jersey have also been working hard to end homelessness among our country's servicemen and women.

56 homeless veterans were reported on the night of the count, 3 less (5.1%) than in 2016. All veterans identified were individuals and the largest contingent of homeless veterans was in transitional housing (67.9%) followed by 23.2% in emergency shelters and 8.9% that were unsheltered.

Veterans experiencing homelessness in Atlantic County were predominantly male (96.4%), and the most common racial background identified among them (31 veterans, 55.4%) was White, followed by 22 (39.3%) identifying as Black or African-American. Figure 9 Illustrates the percentage of homeless veterans by age range.



2 homeless veterans reported being victims of domestic violence. 40 of the 56 veterans, 71.4%, reported having some kind of disability. The most common disability cited among homeless veterans was chronic health conditions (80%), followed by substance abuse disorders (37.5%). As far as veteran benefits, 1.8% of veterans reported receiving a VA pension while no veterans reported receiving VA disability income. Additionally, 60.7% of homeless veterans reported they were connected to VA healthcare benefits.

## Income and Benefits

Among all households experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, 46.1% had no source of income, and 8.1% reported receiving earned income from a job. The two most common sources of income among households were SSI, received by 18.5% of households, and General Assistance (GA), received by 8.9% of households.

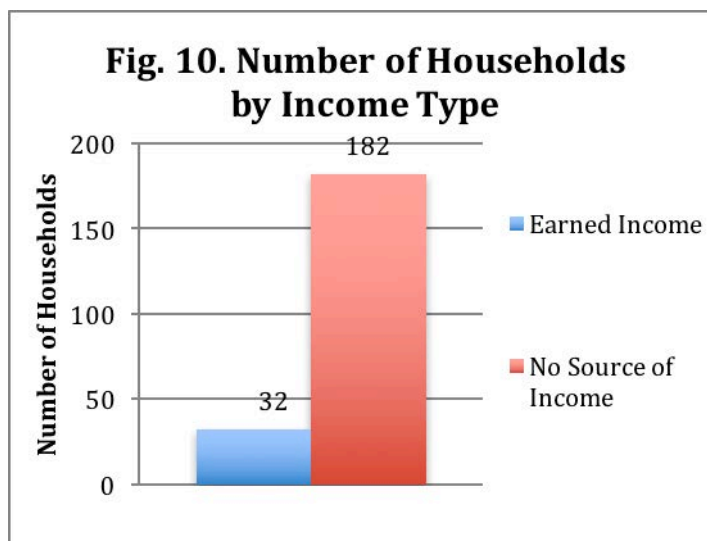


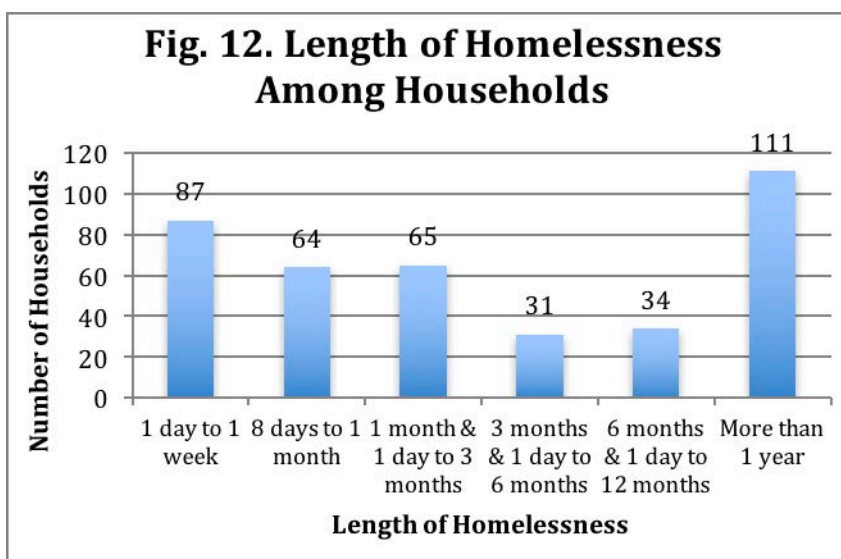
Figure 11 shows the average monthly income for all homeless households.

<b>Figure 11. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation</b>			
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered
Average for All Households	\$276.02	\$521.16	\$293.98

20.8% of respondents reported that their household did not receive any kind of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. The top reported non-cash benefit was Medicaid, which was received by 44.8% of households. 44.6% of households were connected to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or Food Stamps).

### Length of Homelessness

As seen in Figure 12, 28.1% of homeless households reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness was more than 1 year. This was the most common response, followed by those who had been homeless 1 day to 1 week (87 households, 22%).

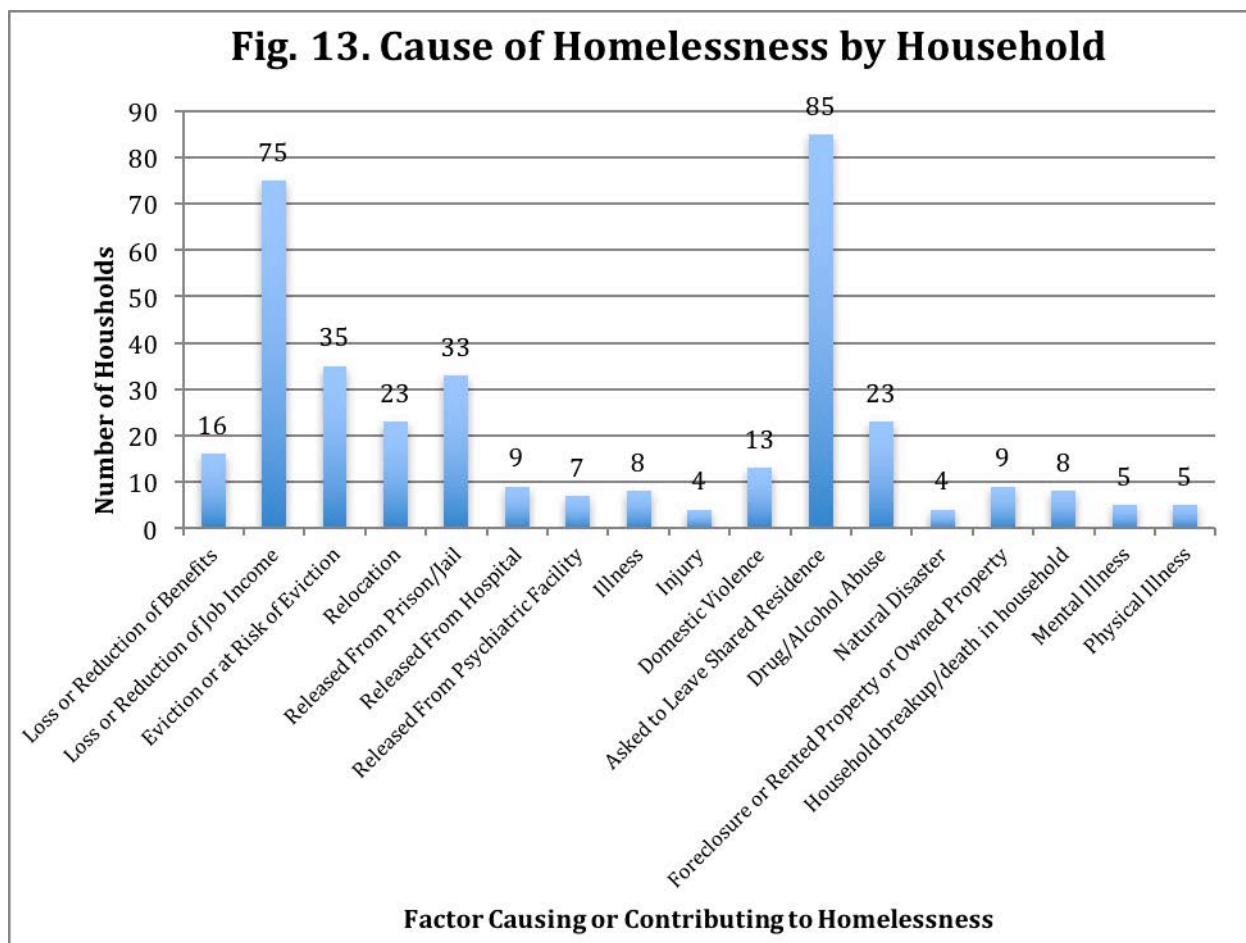


### Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more respondents attributed their homelessness to being asked to leave a shared residence (85 households, 21.5%) than any other cause. As Figure 13 shows, the next most common factor reported was a loss or reduction of job income (19%).

When respondents were asked ‘what was your residence prior to your current living situation?’ more said they had been in a permanent housing situation (19.7%) than any other type of situation. Another 18% of households reported staying in emergency shelters prior to their current living situation.





#### IV. Findings for the Chronically Homeless

Someone with a long-term disabling condition, who has been continually homeless for a year or more, or at least four times in the past three years, meets HUD’s definition of chronically homeless. Any family with one adult that meets this definition is considered a chronically homeless family.

HUD has established a goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2017. This goal reflects the urgency of helping to house those persons who have not been able to remain stably housed over the course of an extended period of time. Chronically Homeless persons are among the most vulnerable homeless groups, and providing effective supportive services and case management may be required in order to help some stay in the housing they need. Prioritization of new Continuum of Care funding opportunities has recently been giving some communities in New Jersey new resources for housing this subgroup.

## Total Chronically Homeless Population

104 households, made up of 105 total persons, were chronically homeless in Atlantic County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 52 persons (98.1%) and 52 households (100%) from 2016. The rate of chronic homelessness as a percentage of overall homelessness increased from 11.1% in 2016 to 24.9% in 2017.

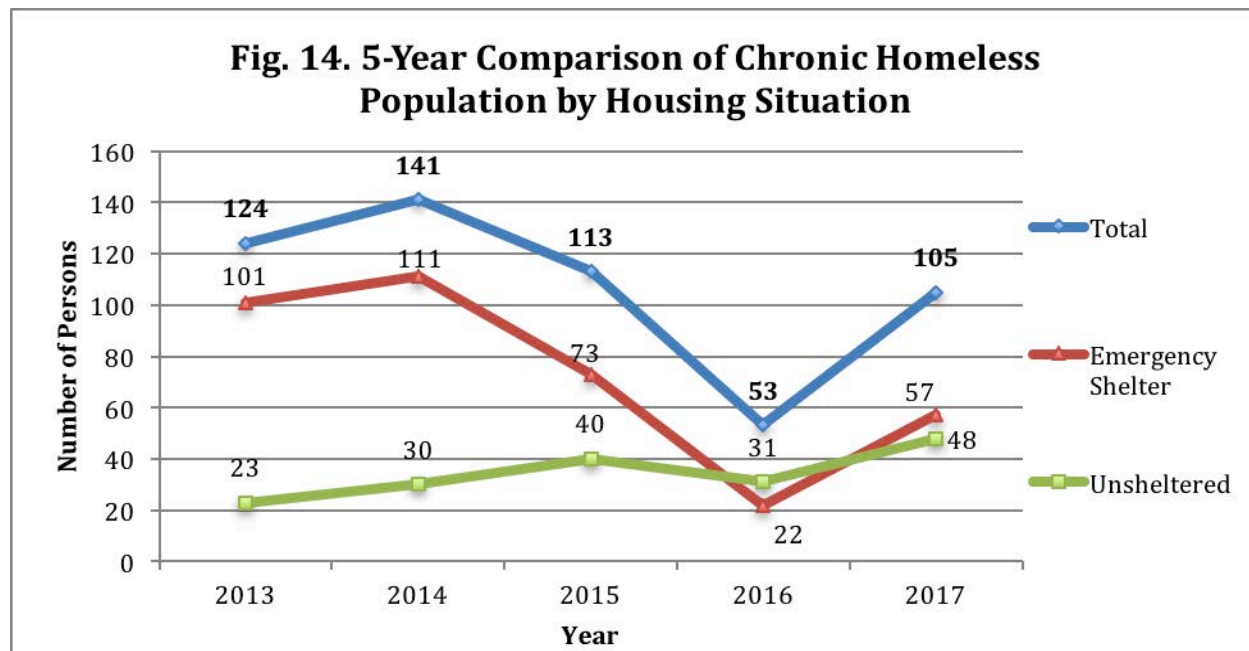
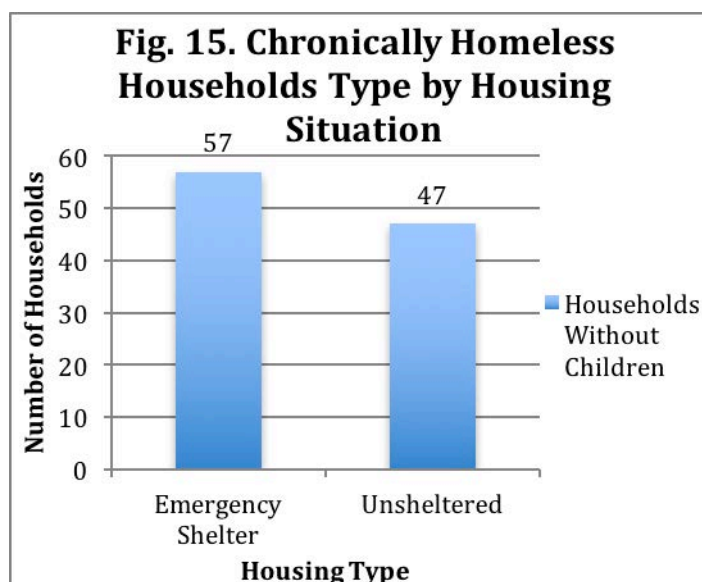


Figure 14 shows the number of chronically homeless respondents who were in Atlantic County from 2013 to 2017. Over the past five years, the overall number of chronically homeless persons has decreased (by 19 persons, 15.3%). While the overall number of chronically homeless has dropped since 2013, the number of unsheltered chronically homeless persons has more than doubled since 2013, an increase of 25 persons (108.7%).

## Families and Individuals

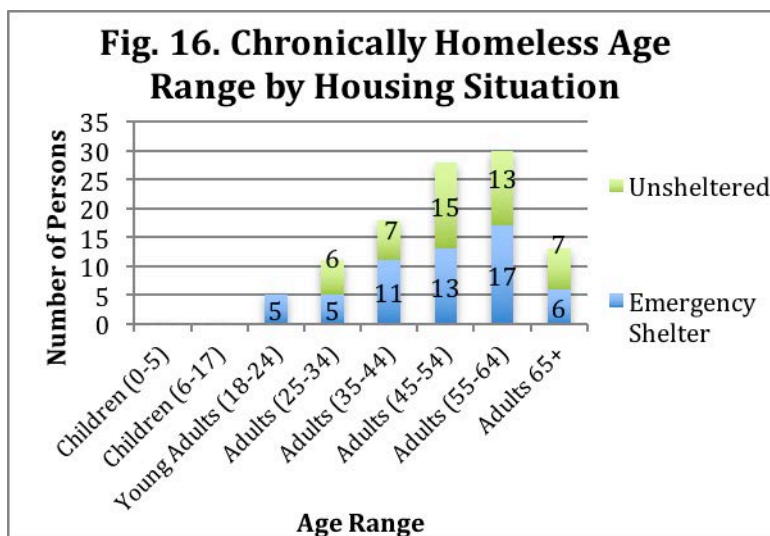
All of the 104 chronically homeless households counted in 2017, all were adult-only households, with the majority, 103 households, being individual adults. This breakdown represents a decrease of 1 chronically homeless family, and an increase of 53 chronically homeless adult-only households (103.9%) since 2016. 54.8% of the chronically homeless households counted in 2017 were being served in emergency shelter programs, as seen in Figure 15.



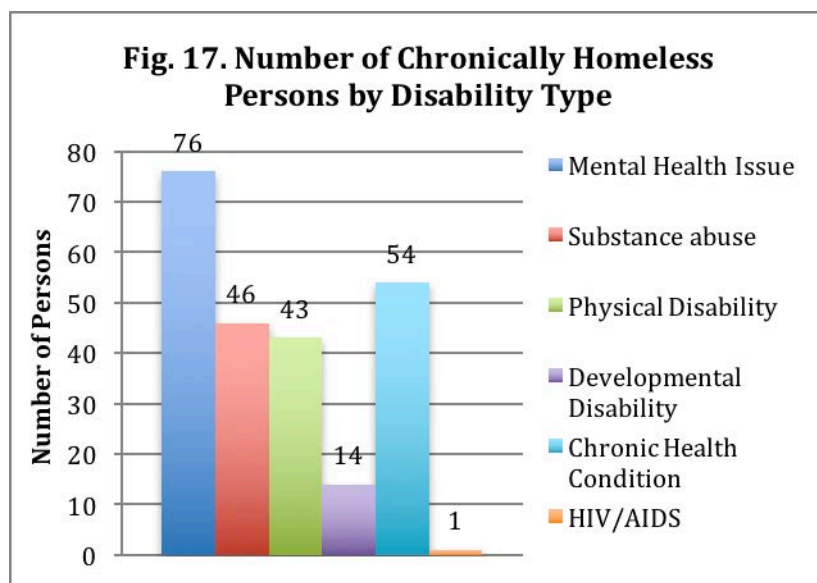
## Demographics

Of the 105 total chronically homeless persons, the age range with the highest concentration of chronically homeless persons was adults between 55 and 64 years old (30 persons, 28.6%). The full age range distribution is shown in Figure 16.

66.7% of those counted as chronically homeless were male, and 33.3% were female.



Among the chronically homeless population, 53.3% reported their race as White, while 43.8% reported their race as Black or African-American. 12 chronically homeless persons (11.4%) identified themselves as Hispanic.



## Disabilities

In order to meet the definition of chronically homeless, at least one adult in each household must have some kind of disability. The disabilities most commonly identified were mental health issues (72.4%) and chronic health conditions (51.4%). The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the chronically homeless can be seen in Figure 17.

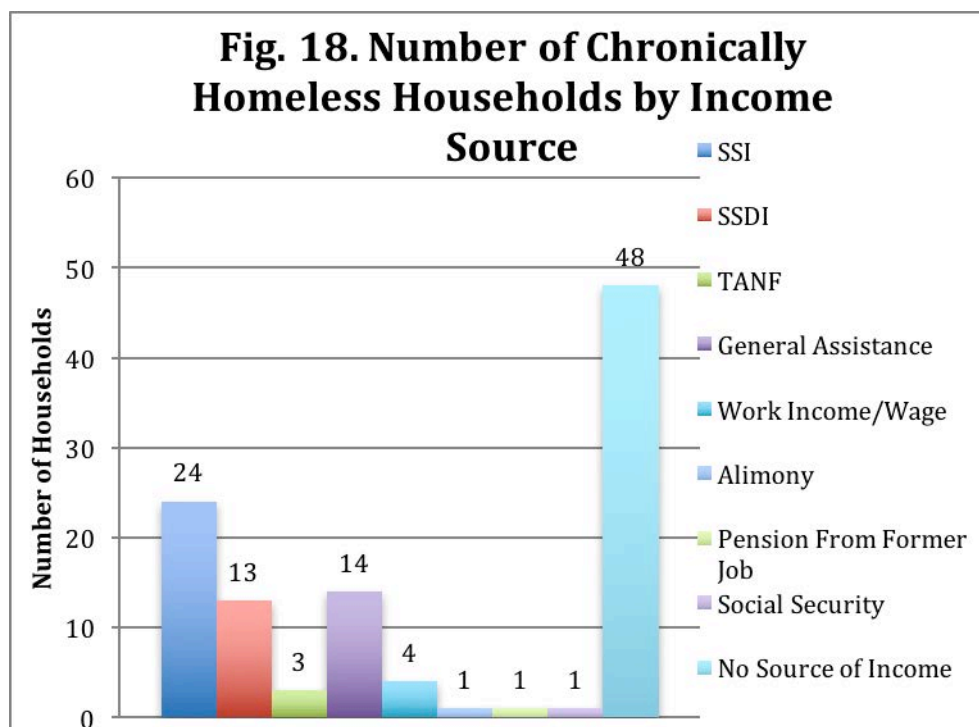
## Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 19 chronically homeless persons in Atlantic County reported being victims of domestic violence (18.1%). All victims were adult individuals, 11 were staying in emergency shelters and 8 were unsheltered.

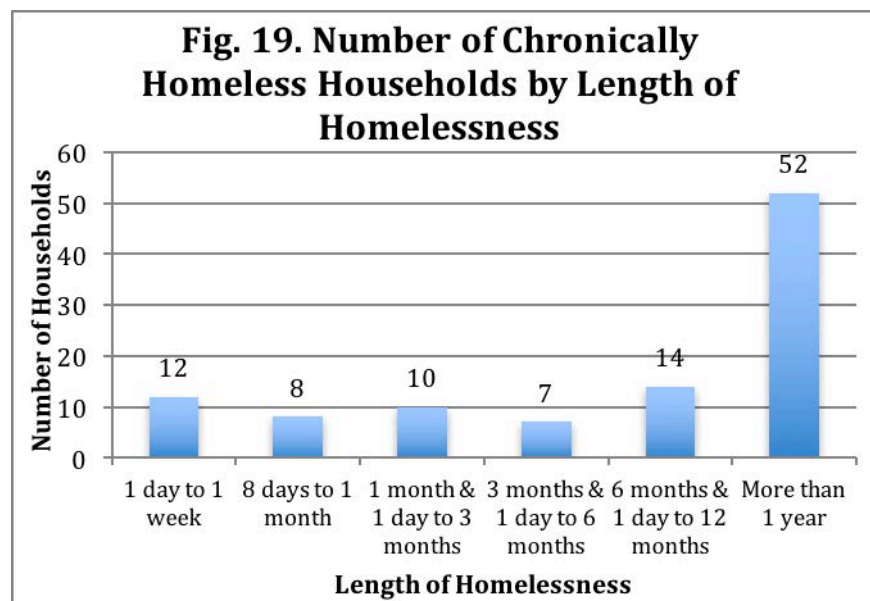
There were 5 chronically homeless veteran individuals identified, an increase of 2 from 2016. 20% of those chronically homeless veteran households were living unsheltered on the night of the count.

## Income and Benefits

Among all the chronically homeless households on the night of the count, 48 (46.2%) reported receiving no source of income. Figure 18 shows the sources of income reported. The most common source of cash income among



chronically homeless households was SSI, which was received by 23.1% of households. 3.8% of chronically homeless households reported earned income from a job. 24% of chronically homeless households reported they were not receiving any type of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Food Stamps (SNAP) and Medicaid were the top reported non-cash benefits among the chronically homeless, with 50% reporting each.



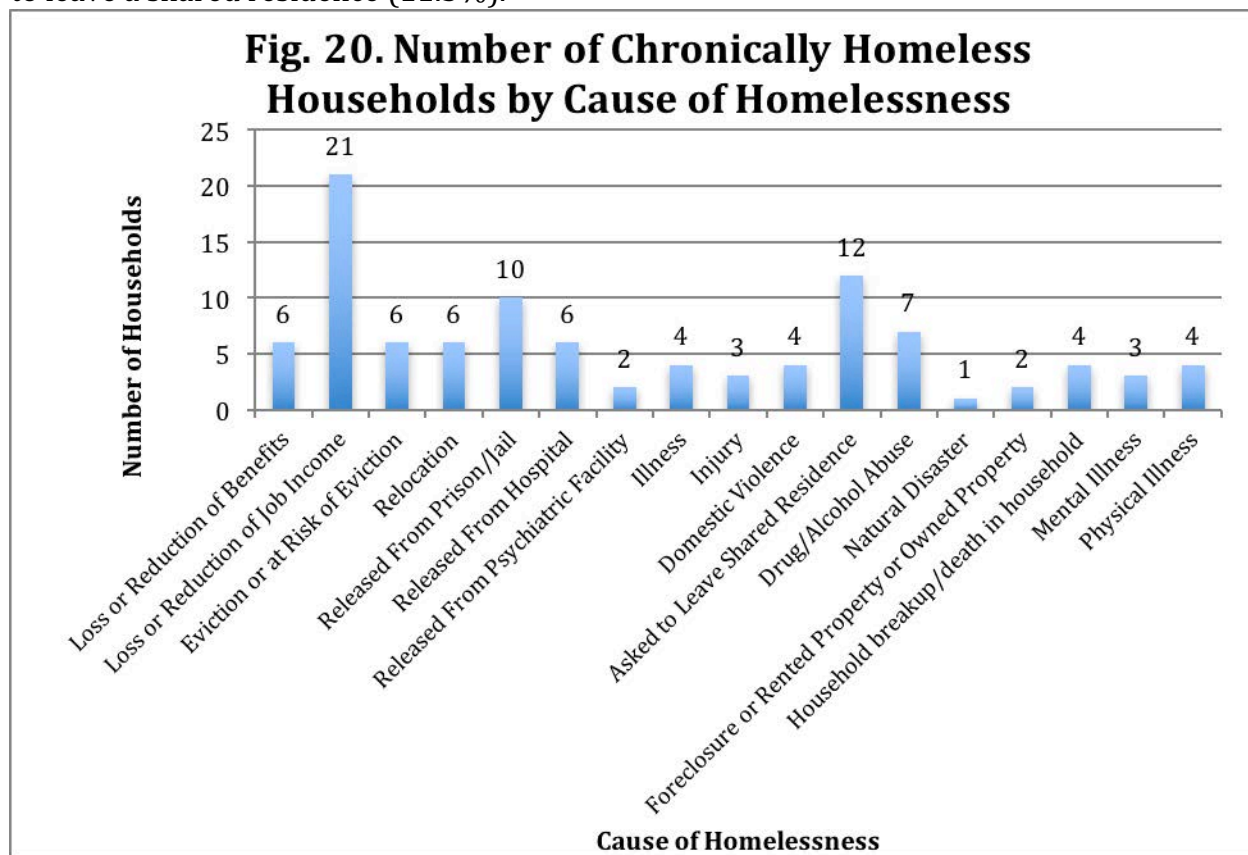
## Length of Homelessness

Figure 19 shows that half of the chronically homeless households (52, 50%) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted for more than 1 year.



## Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more chronically homeless households cited a loss or reduction of job income (20.2%) than any other. As Figure 20 shows, the second most common factor reported was being asked to leave a shared residence (11.5%).



## V. Findings for the Unsheltered Homeless

HUD's definition of "unsheltered homeless" applies to any individual or family "with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground."

Unsheltered homeless individuals and families are among those with the most critical housing needs in the community. The unsheltered are especially vulnerable in the cold weather and the elements, which are in evidence at the end of January when the Count takes place. The Point-In-Time survey can play an important role in helping communities understand why some of the homeless remain unsheltered, and who is included in this group.

## Total Unsheltered Homeless Population

109 households, made up of 108 persons, were living unsheltered in Atlantic County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 8 households (6.9%) and 7 persons (6.0%) from 2016.

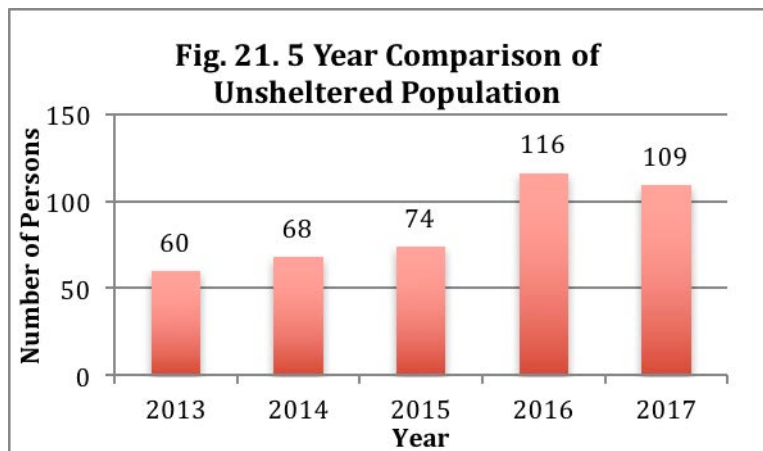
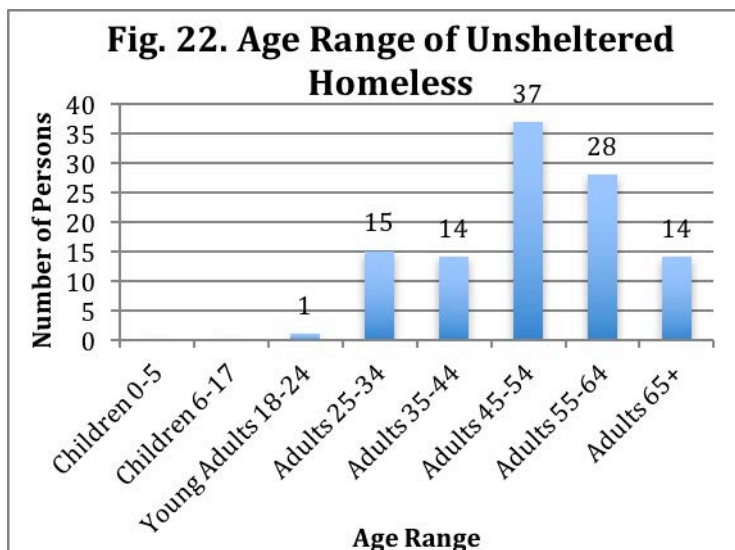


Figure 21 shows the number of unsheltered households from 2013 to 2017. The unsheltered population was relatively steady between 2013 and 2015. However, in 2016 Atlantic City experienced a significant increase in the unsheltered population. Since 2013, the unsheltered population has increased by 49 persons (81.7%).



## Families and Individuals

There were no unsheltered family identified in the 2017 count. 107 of the unsheltered persons counted were individual adults, while the last household was an adult couple.

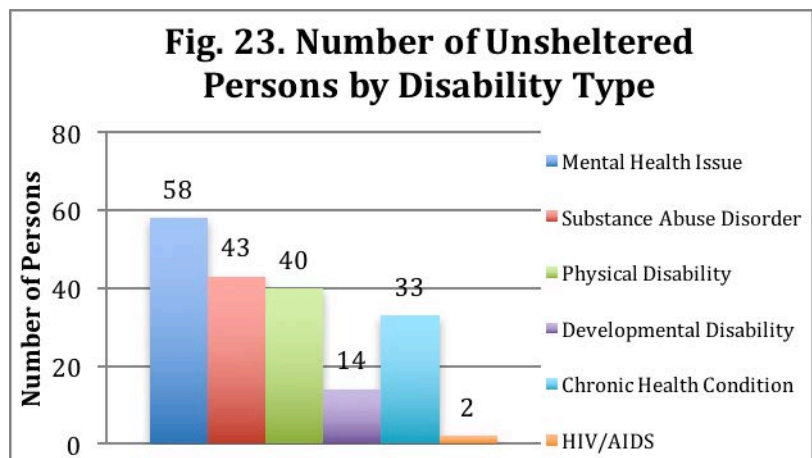
## Demographics

As shown in Figure 22, the largest portion of the 109 unsheltered persons counted in 2017, 33.9%, were between 45 and 54 years old.

84 of the 109 unsheltered persons were male (77.1%). 52 (47.7%) identified their race as White and 49 (45%) identified as Black or African-American. 11 (10.1%) of unsheltered persons identified as Hispanic.

## Disabilities

85 of 109 unsheltered persons (78%) reported having some type of disability. 68.2% of disabled persons identified a mental health issue. The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the unsheltered can be seen in Figure 23.



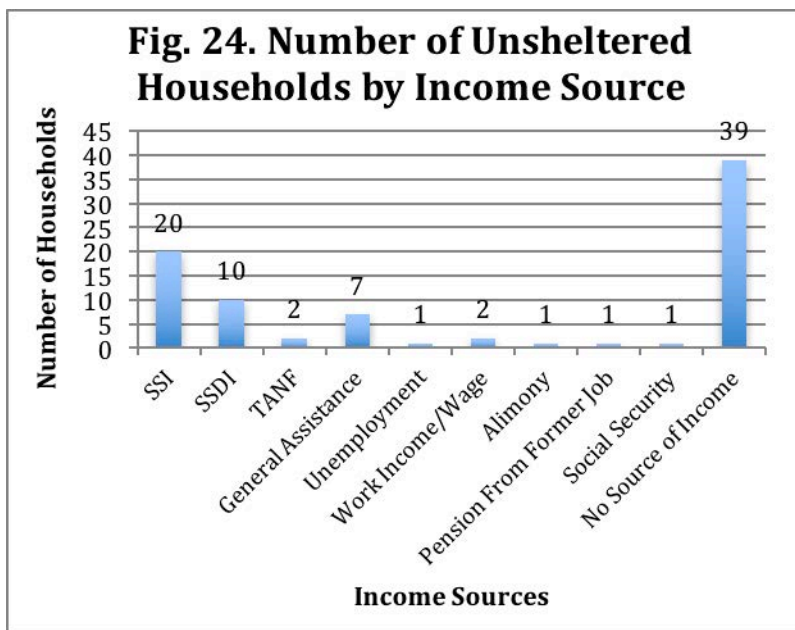
## Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 12 unsheltered households (11%) reported being victims of domestic violence.

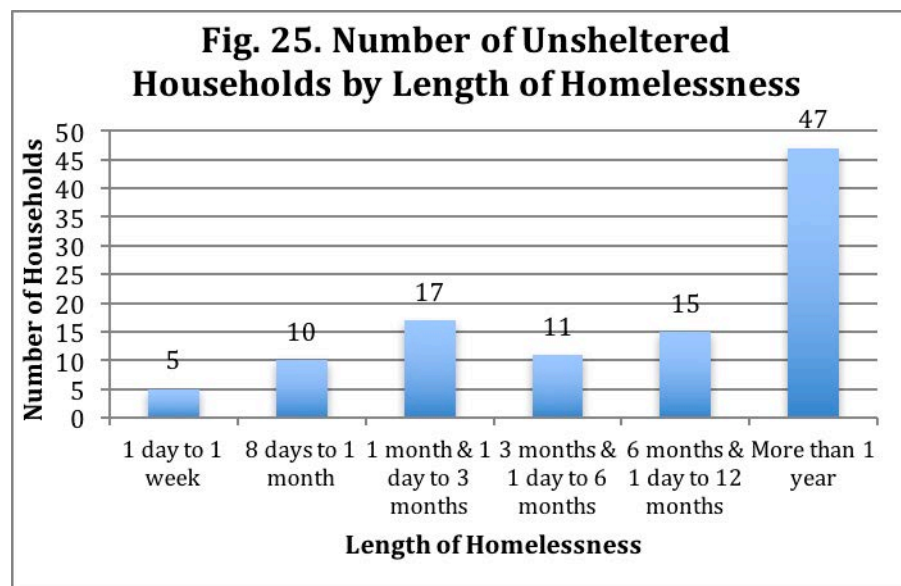
There were 5 unsheltered veterans on the night of the count.

## Income and Benefits

Among all unsheltered households on the night of the count, 39 (36.1%) reported having no source of income. The average monthly income among unsheltered households was \$293.98. 18.5% of unsheltered households received SSI, making it the most common source of income. Figure 24 shows the sources of income received.



17 unsheltered households (15.7%) reported they were not receiving any type of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. The top reported non-cash benefit received by unsheltered households was Food Stamps (SNAP), with 44.4% receiving this benefit. In addition, 34.3% were receiving Medicaid.

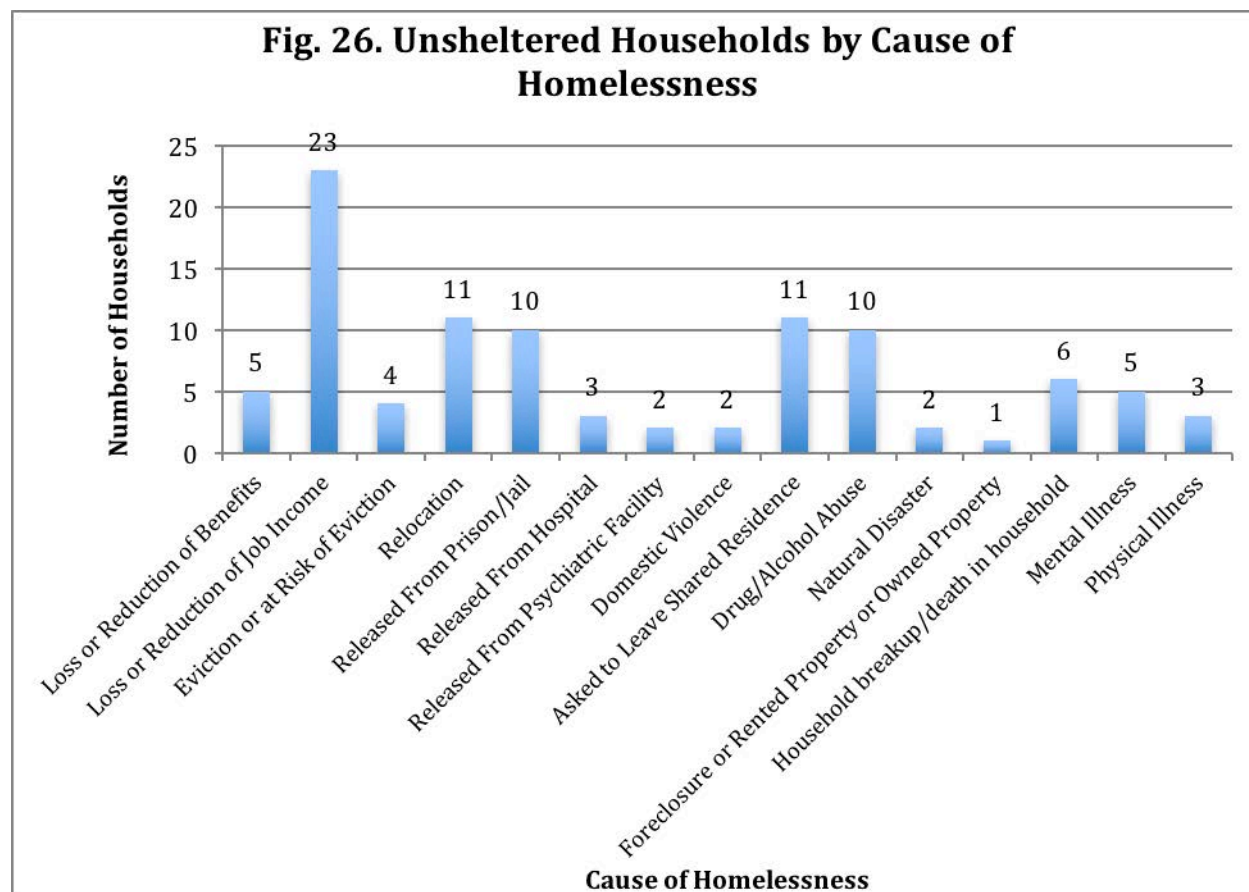


## Length of Homelessness

As shown in Figure 25, the largest portion of unsheltered homeless households (47, 43.5%) reported their households' most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted for more than one year.

## Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more unsheltered persons said loss or reduction of job income (21.3%) than any other factor. As Figure 26 shows, the next most common factors reported were being asked to leave shared residence and relocation (10.2% each).

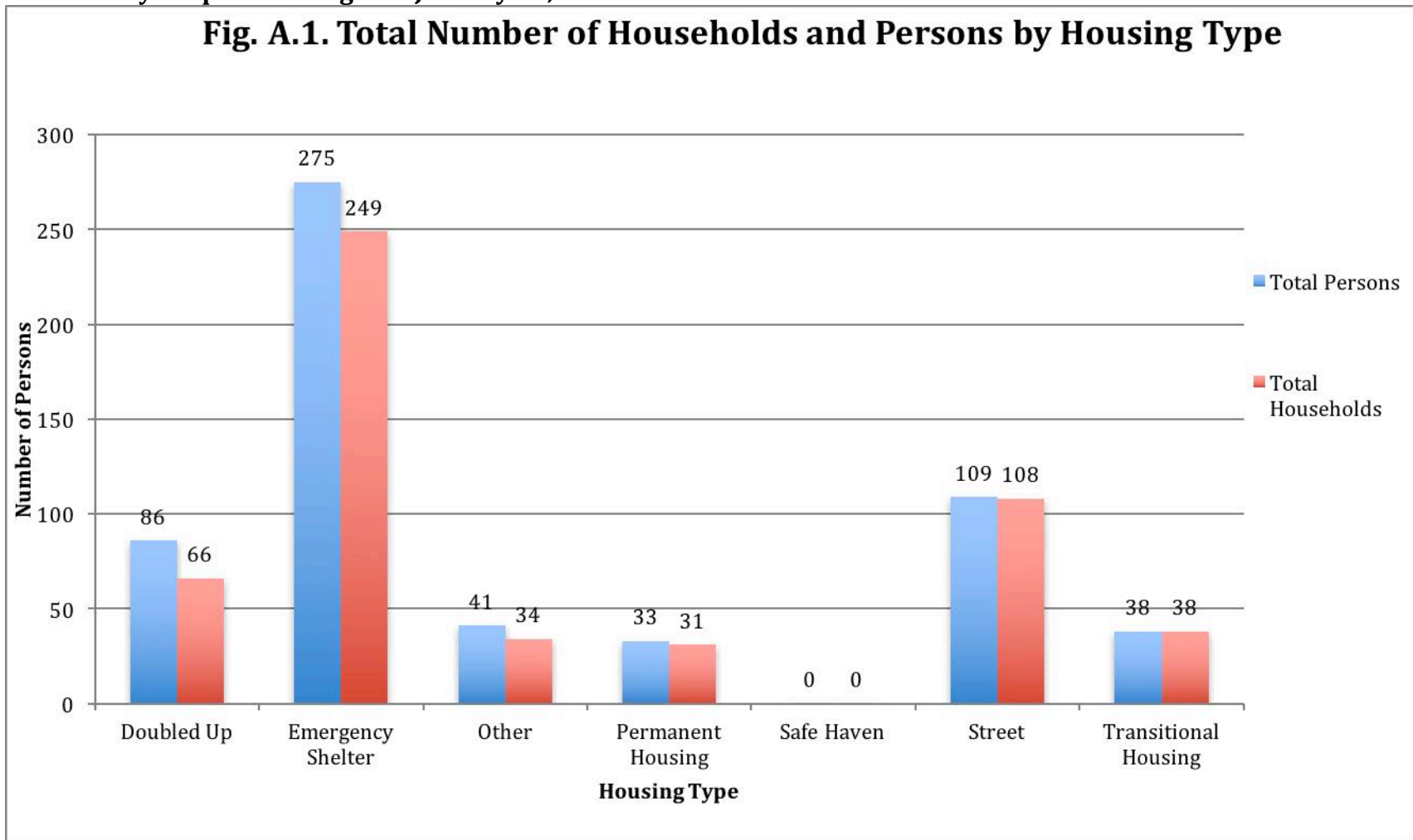




## VI. Appendix

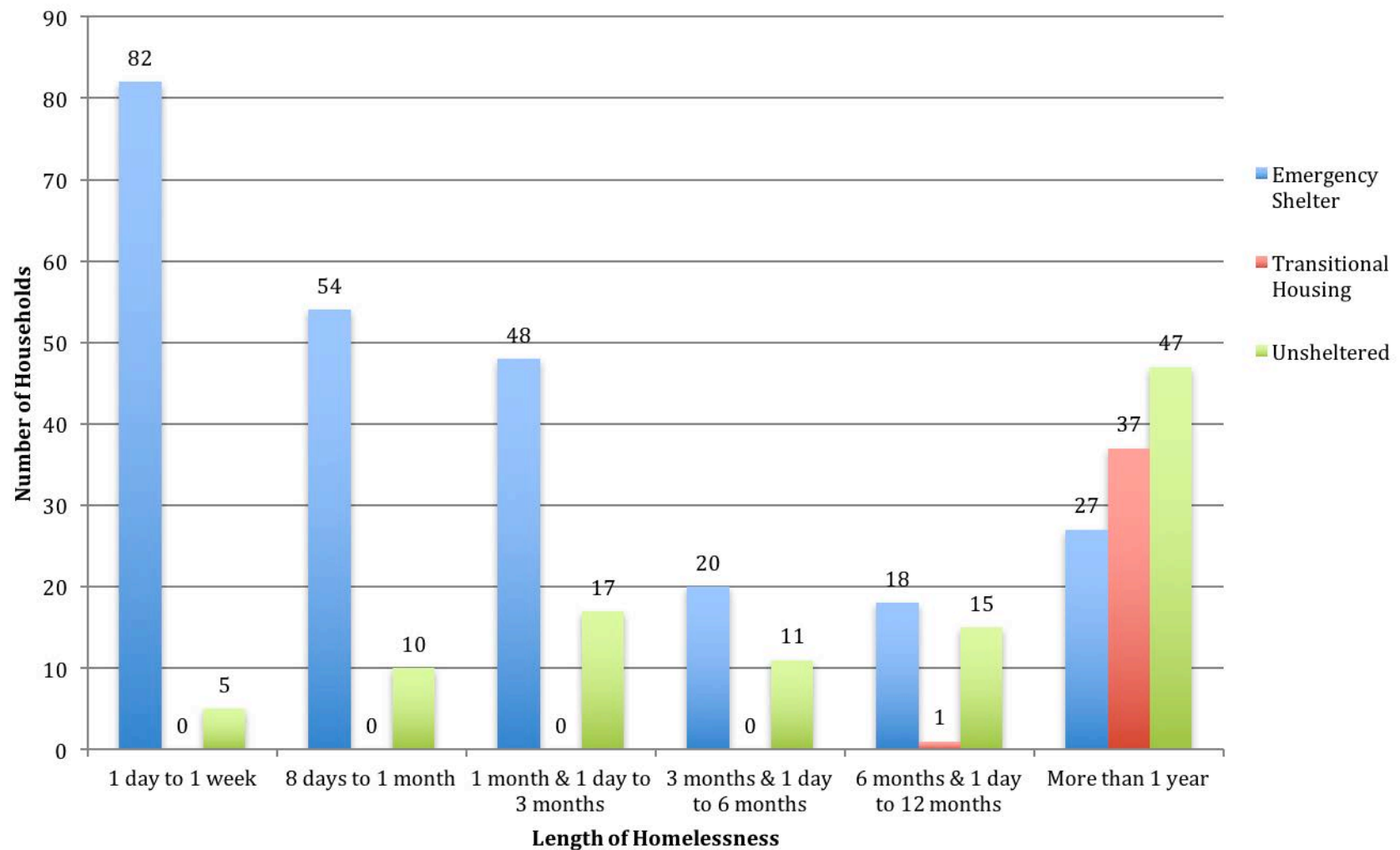
Where did you spend the night of January 24, 2017?

**Fig. A.1. Total Number of Households and Persons by Housing Type**



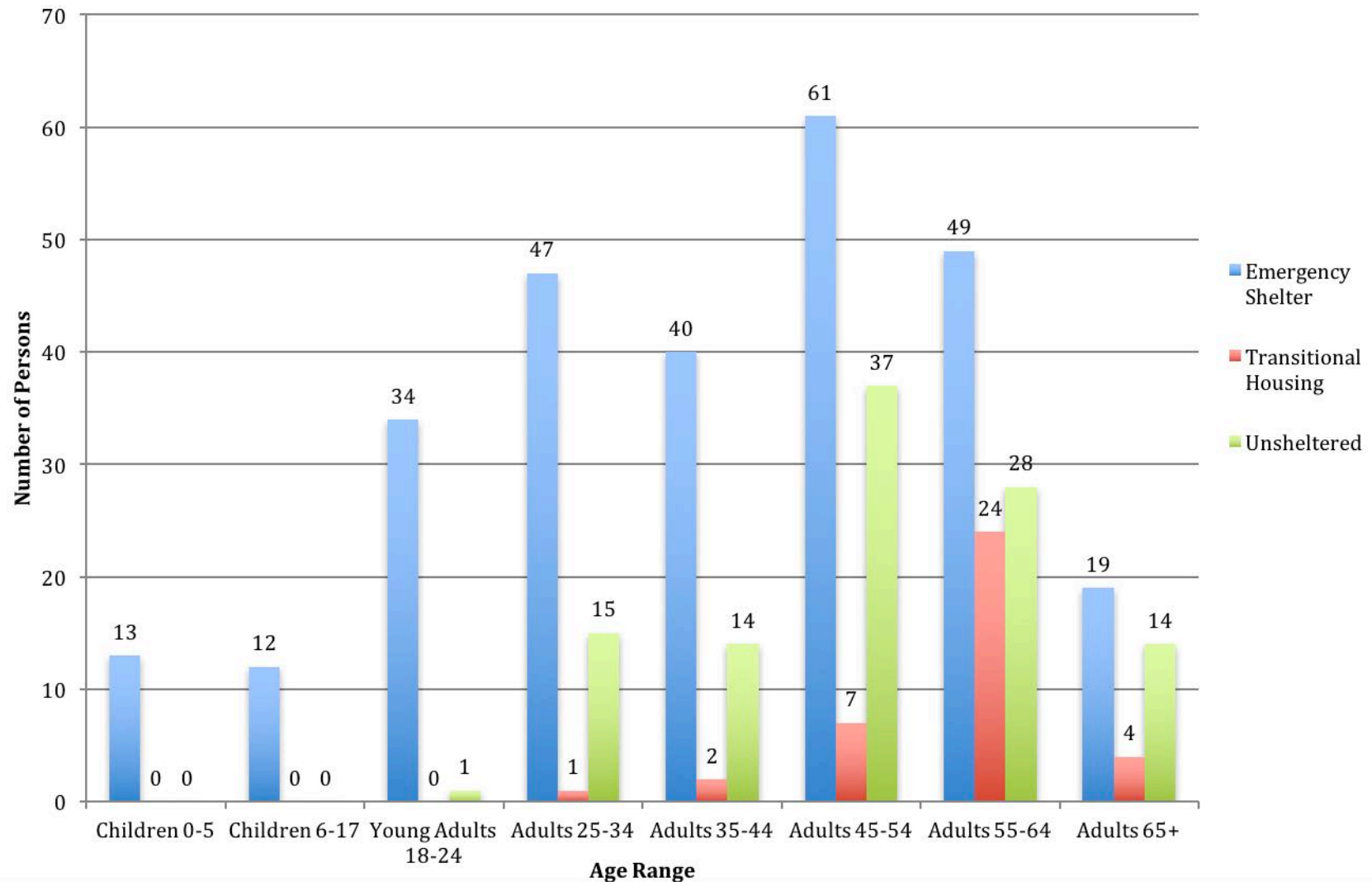
How long have you been in your current living situation?

**Fig. A.2. Homeless Housholds by Length of Homelessness and Housing Type**



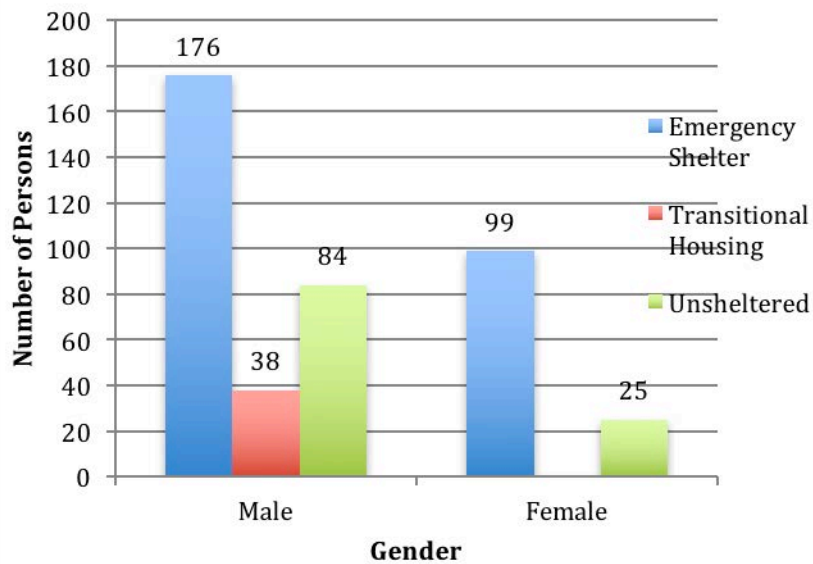
Who was homeless with you on the night of January 24<sup>th</sup>?

**Fig. A.3. Number of Persons by Age Range and Housing Type**

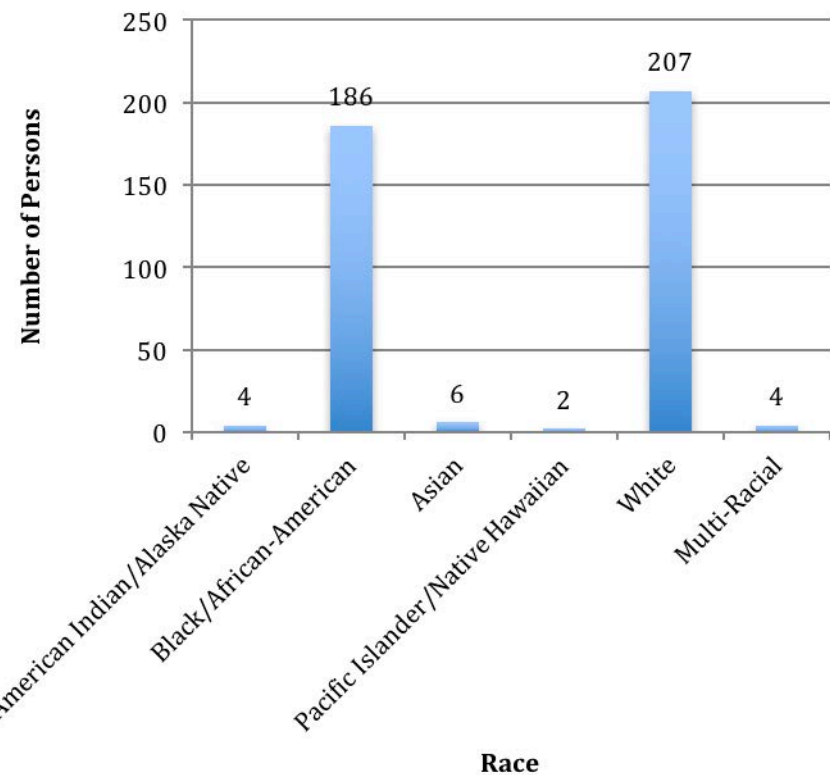


**Household Characteristics – check all that apply to each person**

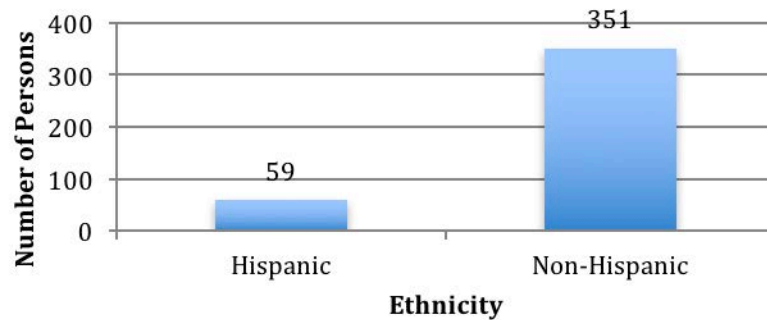
**Fig. A.4. Number of Persons by Gender and Housing Situation**



**Fig. A.5. Number of Homeless Persons by Race**

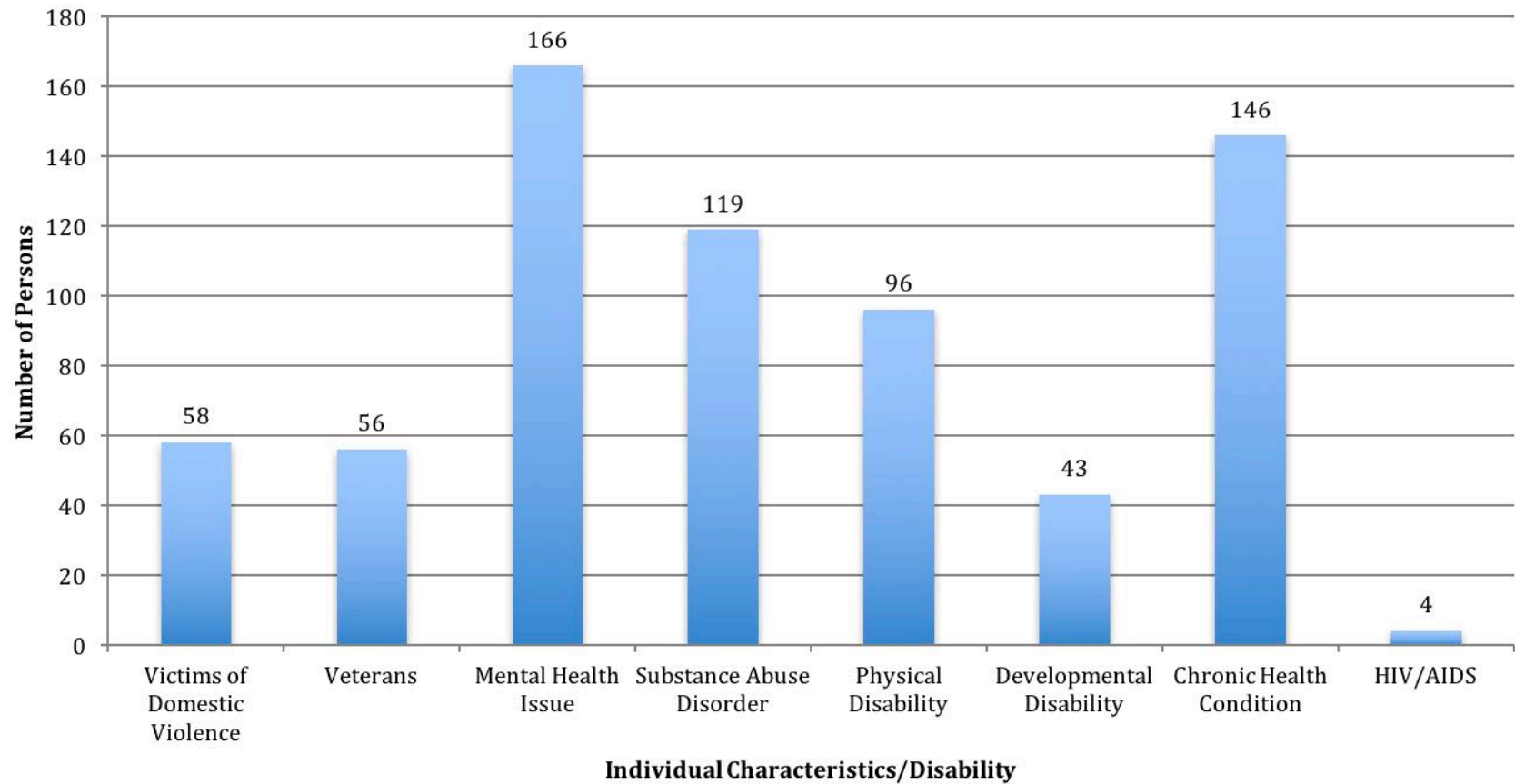


**Fig. A.6. Number of Homeless Persons by Ethnicity**





**Fig. A.7. Number of Homeless Persons by Victims of Domestic Violence, Veteran Status, and Disability**

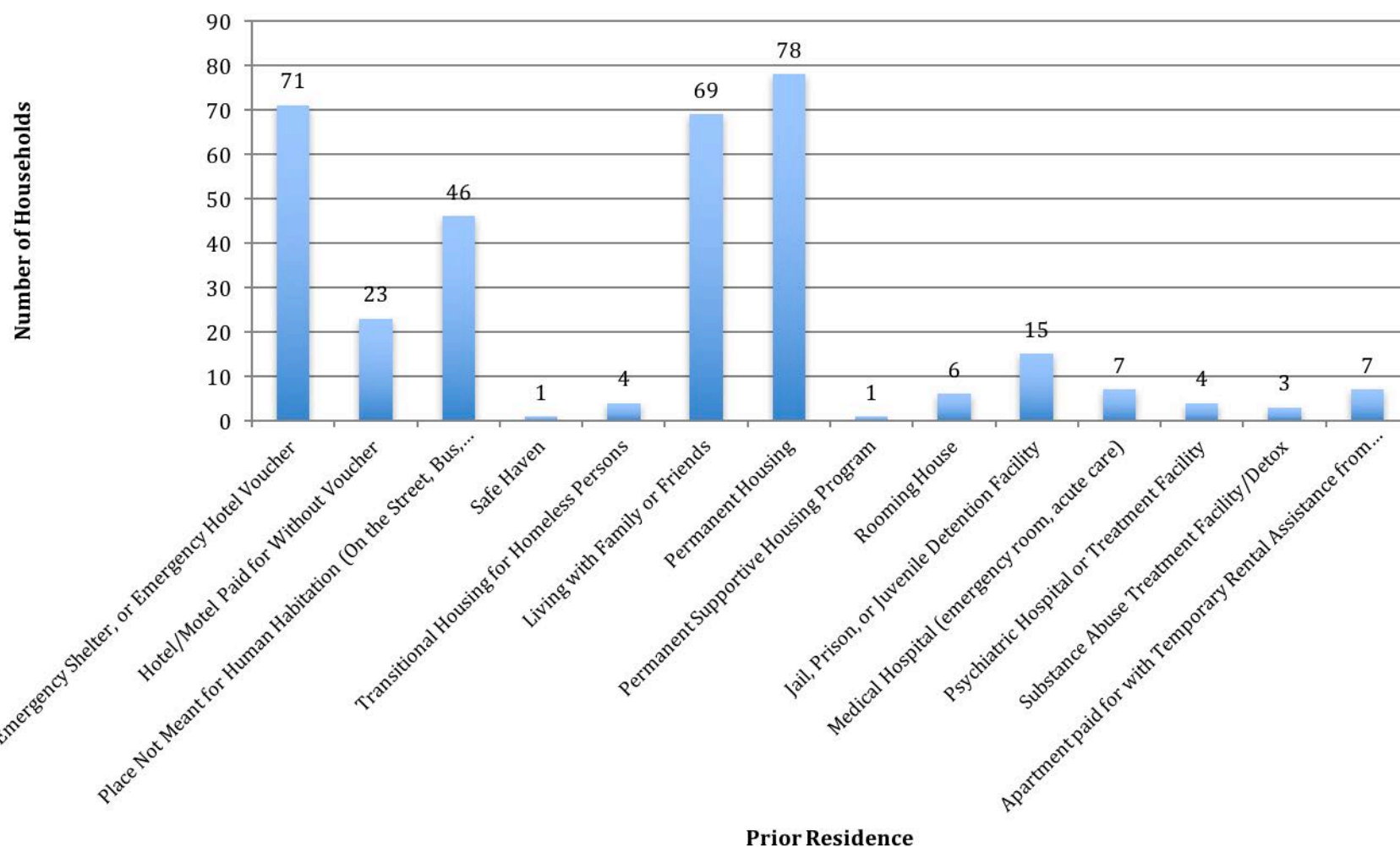


## Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?

Fig. A.8. Number of Homeless Households by County, State or Country of Last Permanent Address	
Last Permanent Address – State	Number of Households
Atlantic County	290
Bergen County	2
Burlington County	7
Camden County	13
Cape May County	7
Cumberland County	11
Essex County	6
Gloucester County	9
Mercer County	1
Monmouth County	1
Ocean County	3
Somerset County	1
Union County	1
California	1
Colorado	2
Connecticut	1
Delaware	2
Florida	3
Maine	1
New Jersey	1
New York	6
North Carolina	1
Ohio	1
Pennsylvania	14
Texas	1
Virginia	2

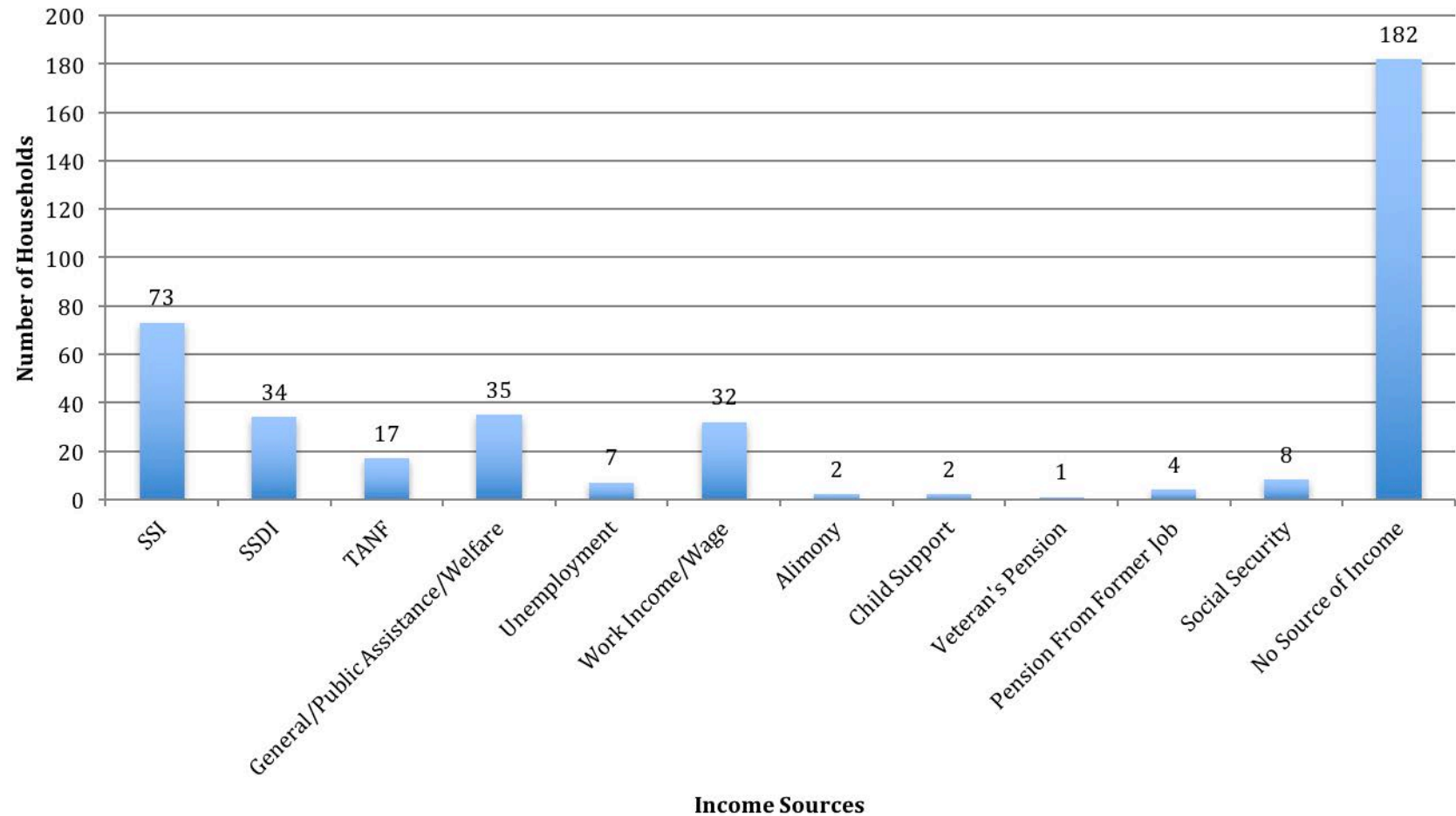
What was your residence prior to your current living situation?

**Fig. A.9. Number of Homeless Households by Prior Residence**

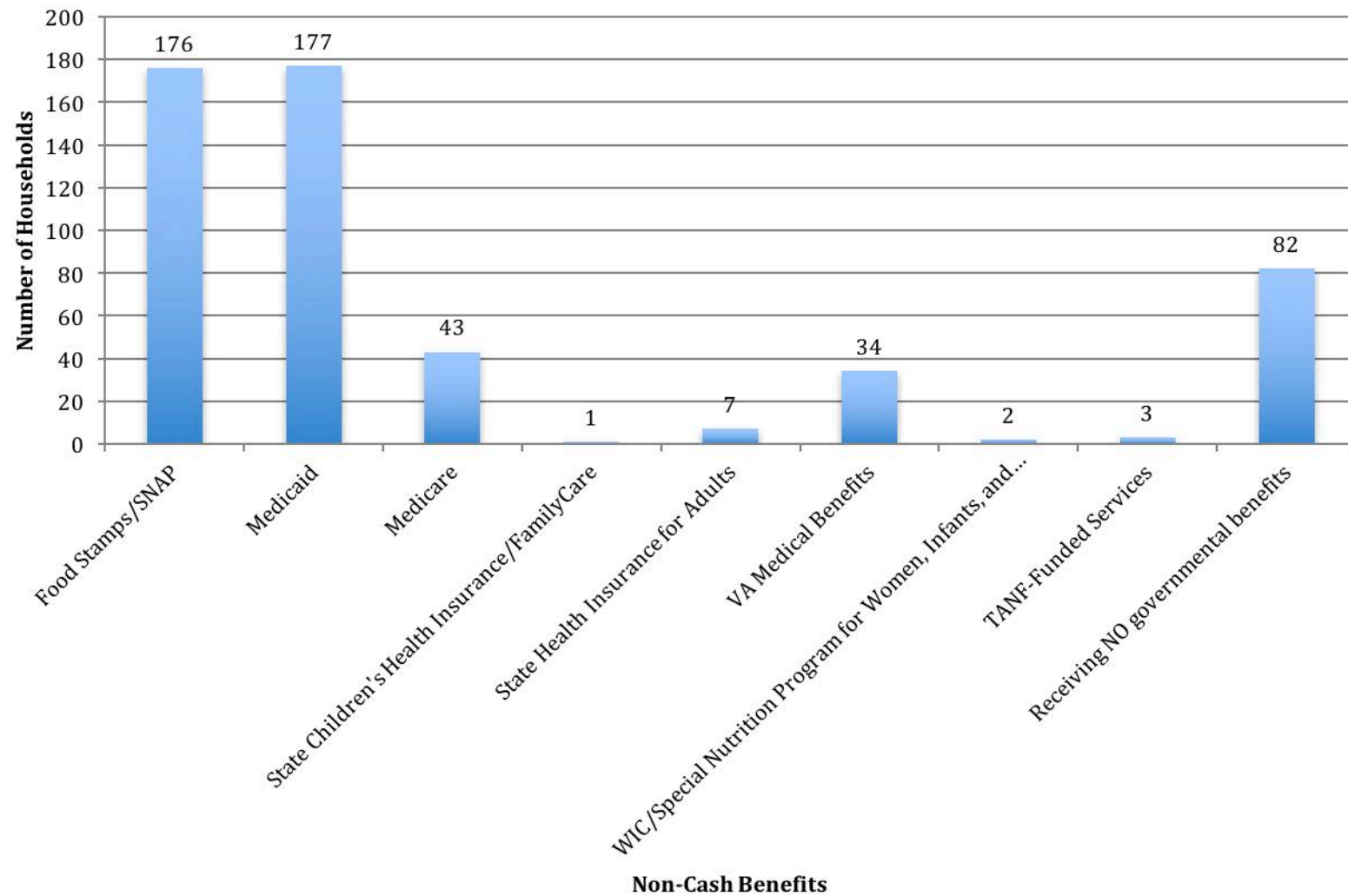


Which of the following sources of income or non-cash benefits do you, or anyone in your household, receive?

**Fig. A. 10. Number of Households by Source of Cash Income**



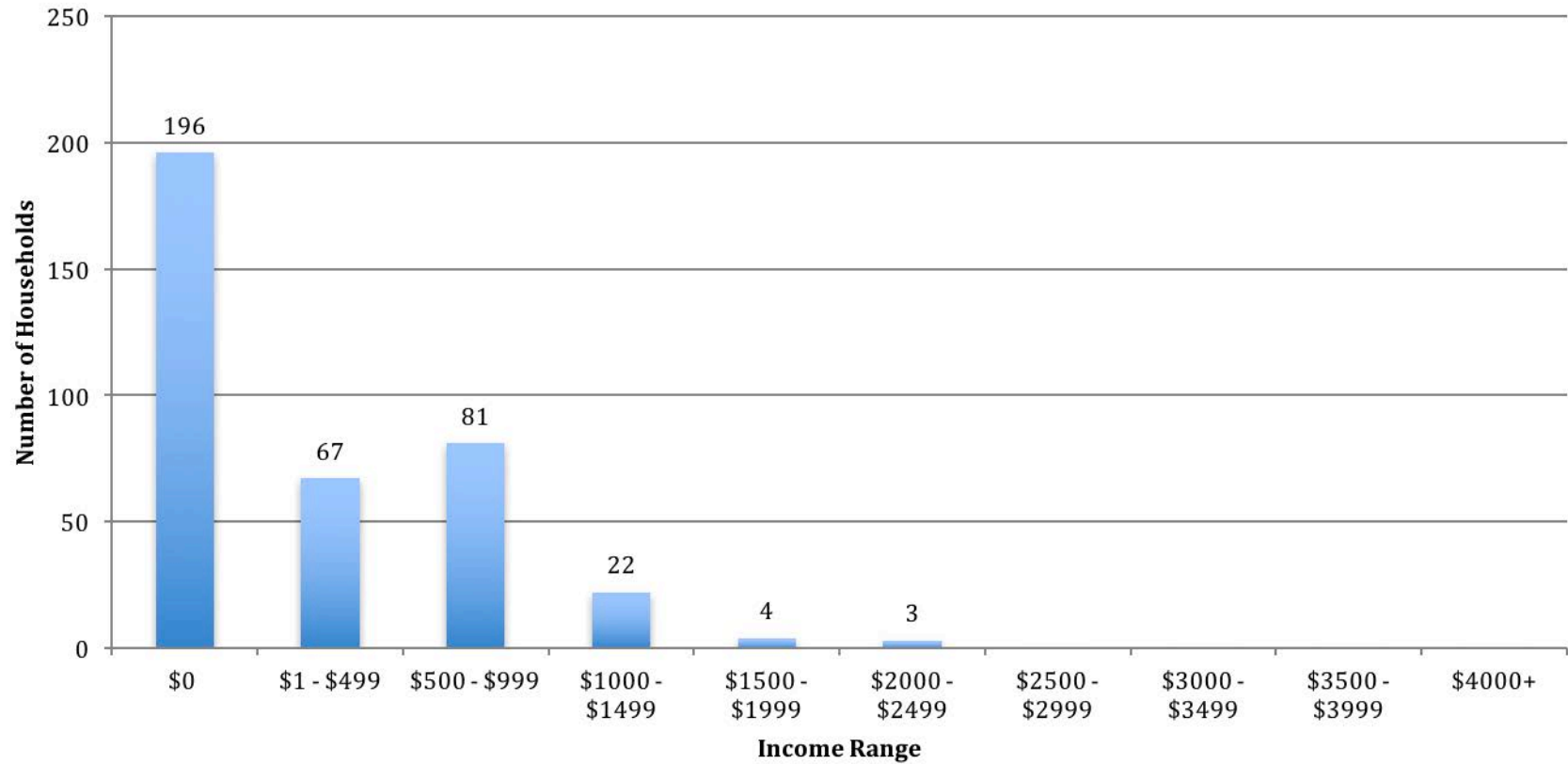
**Fig. A. 11. Number of Households by Sources of Non-Cash Benefits**





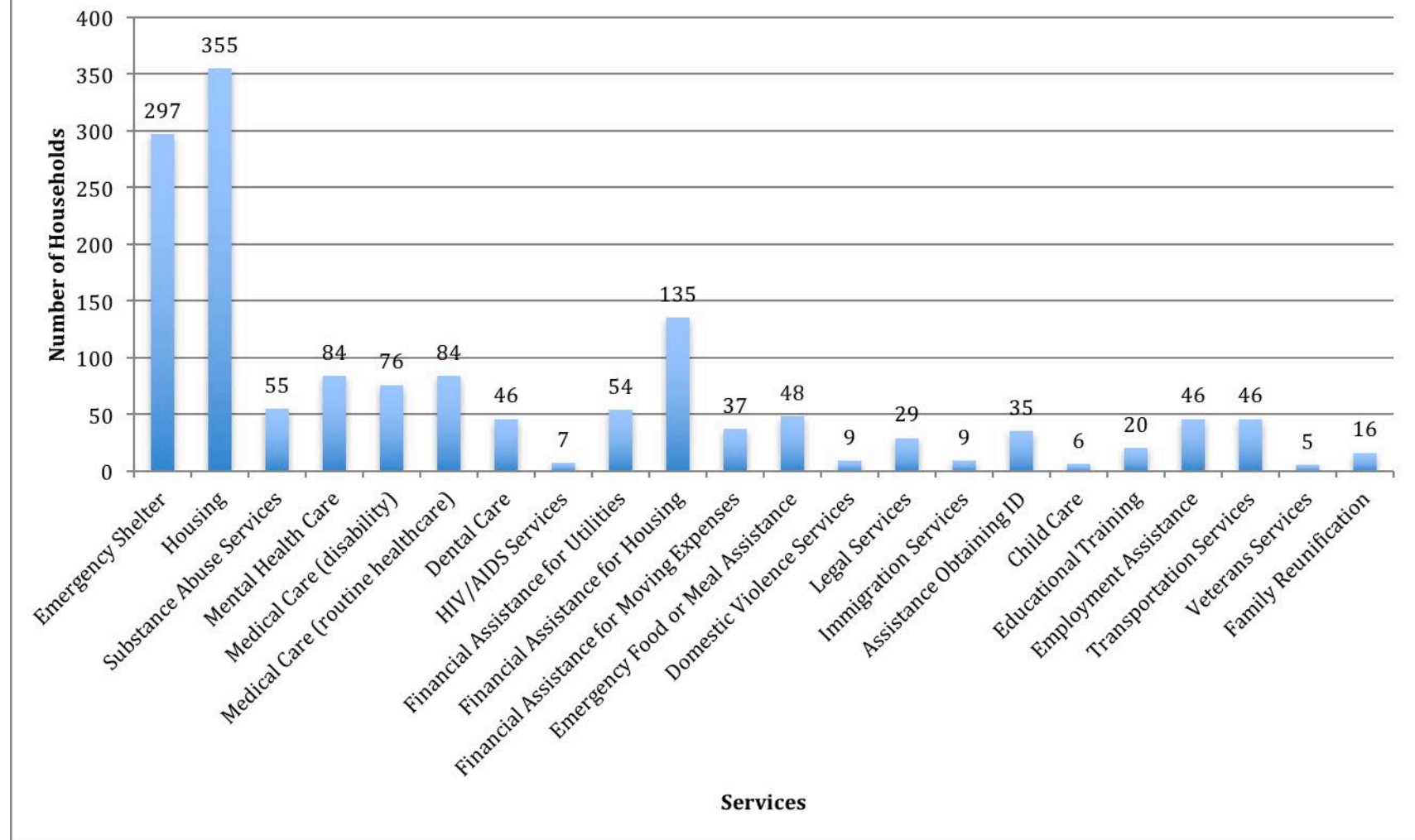
What is your monthly income?

**Fig. A.12. Number of Homeless Households by Monthly Income Range**



Would you, or anyone in your household, like to receive any of the following services?

**Fig. A.13. Number of Homeless Households by Services Needed**



What was the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, your current living situation?

**Fig. A.14. Number of Households by Cause of Homelessness**

