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NJ
2017
Counts!

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

January 24, 2017

Table of Contents

- I. Introduction..... 3**
 - NJ Counts 2017..... 3
 - Acknowledgements..... 3
 - This Report 3
- II. Data Collection and Methodology 4**
 - Requirements for the Count..... 4
 - Data Collection Methods..... 4
 - Limitations 5
 - De-duplication 6
- III. Findings for Total Homeless Population..... 7**
 - Key Findings 7
 - Total Homeless Population 7
 - Homeless Families and Individuals 8
 - Demographics 9
 - Victims of Domestic Violence..... 10
 - 10
 - Veterans 10
 - Income and Benefits 11
 - Length of Homelessness 11
 - Cause of Homelessness 12
- IV. Findings for the Chronically Homeless 12**
 - Total Chronically Homeless Population..... 13
 - Families and Individuals 13
 - Demographics 14
 - Disabilities 14
 - Subpopulations..... 14
 - Income and Benefits 14
 - Length of Homelessness 15
 - Cause of Homelessness 15
- V. Findings for the Unsheltered Homeless 15**
 - Total Unsheltered Homeless Population..... 16
 - Families and Individuals 16
 - Demographics 16
 - Disabilities 16
 - Subpopulations..... 16
 - Income and Benefits 17
 - Length of Homelessness 17
 - Cause of Homelessness 17
- VI. Appendix 18**

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 24th, 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 24th, 2017 a total of 216 households, including 302 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Bergen County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 3 households, with 3 persons, were identified as chronically homeless.
- 5 unsheltered homeless persons were counted.

Total Homeless Population

On the night of January 24th, 2017, a total of 302 persons, in 216 households, were experiencing homelessness in Bergen County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 5 households (2.3%), but an increase of 6 persons (2%) from 2016. Bergen County had 3.5% of New Jersey’s statewide homeless population in 2017.

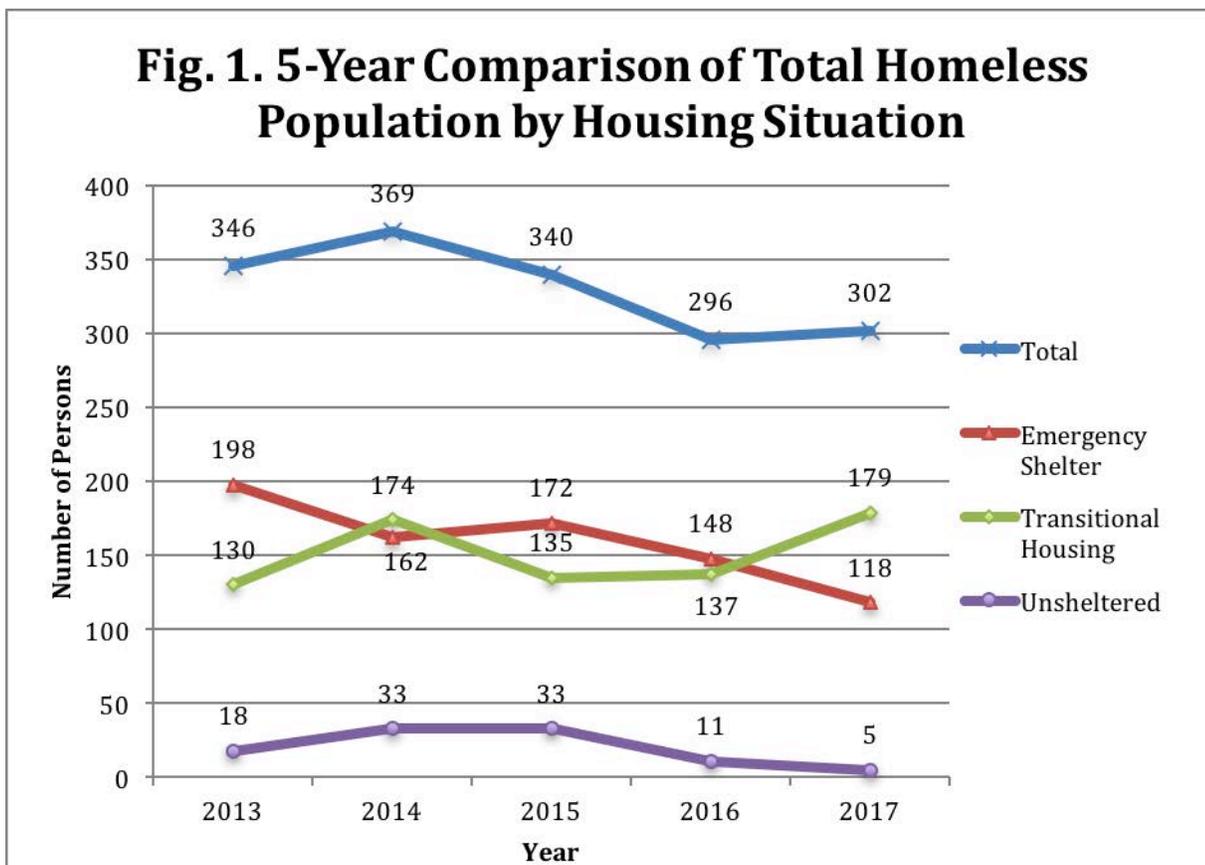


Figure 1 shows that, in 2017, 118 homeless persons stayed in emergency shelters, 179 stayed in transitional housing, and 5 were living unsheltered on the night of the count. There were 42 (30.7%) more persons in transitional housing in 2017, however, the number of those counted in emergency shelters decreased by 30 persons (20.3%), and the number living unsheltered decreased by 6 persons (54.5%) from 2016 to 2017.

Fig. 2. Percentage of Households by County of Last Permanent Address

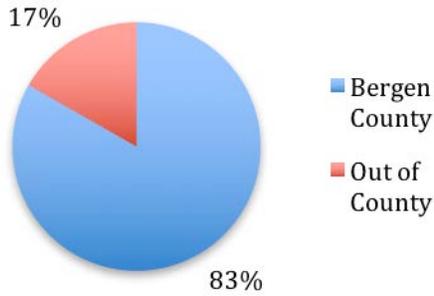


Figure 1 also shows that, while the total homeless population increased slightly in 2017, overall there has been a decline in homelessness, with the lowest count in 2016 (296 persons). Over the 5-year period from 2013 to 2017, Bergen County has seen a decrease of 12.7%.

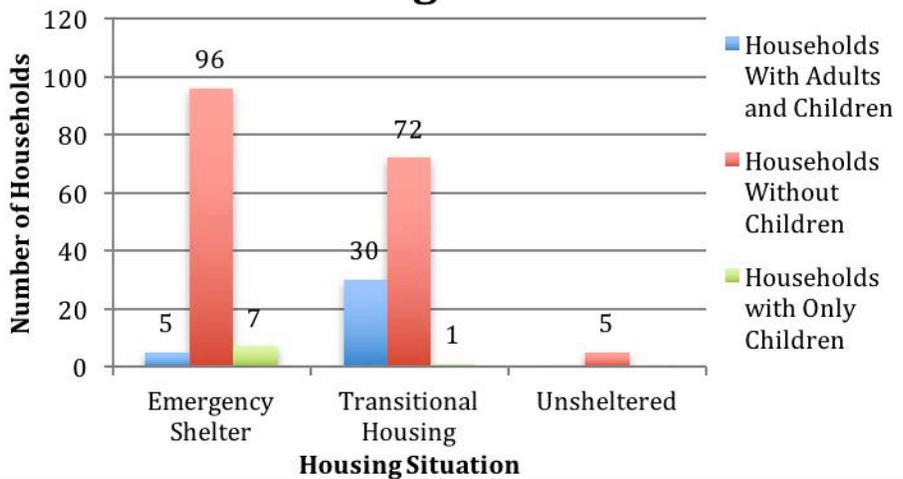
As Figure 2 shows, 17% of homeless households in Bergen County reported that their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless was outside of the county.

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 216 homeless households counted in Bergen County in 2017, 35 (16.2%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult. This is a decrease of 4 families (10.3%) from 2016. These families included 120 persons, 76 children under age 18, and 44 adults. The average family size was 3 persons. Figure 3 shows that 30 families (85.7%) were staying in transitional housing on the night of the count. There were 0 unsheltered families, matching the numbers found in 2016.

Fig. 3. Homeless Households by Housing Situation

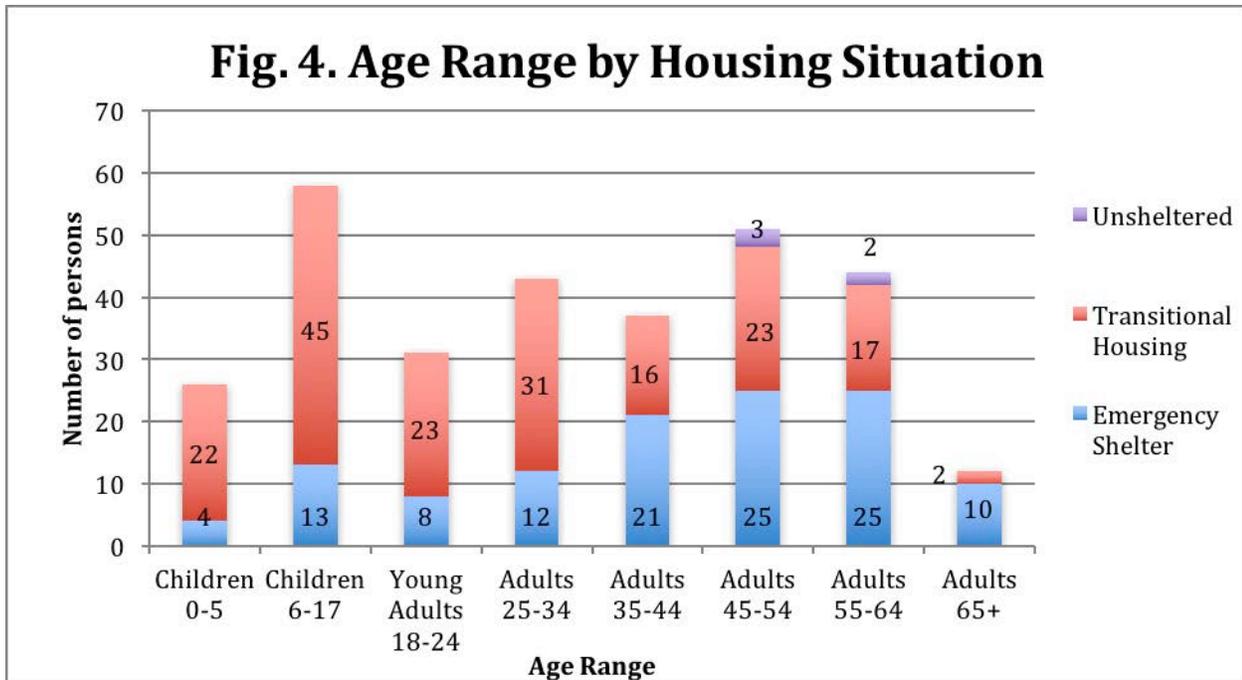


80.1% (173) of the homeless households counted in Bergen County were households without children under 18, and they were composed of 174 persons. 96 (55.5%) of these adult-only households were staying in emergency shelters, 72 (41.6%) were in transitional housing, and 5 (2.9%) were unsheltered. Bergen County has seen the number of adult-only households decrease by 5 (2.8%) since 2016.

As Figure 3 indicates, there were 8 youth only households reported in 2017, an increase of 3 from 2016. All of these households were one-child households. 7 unaccompanied youth were staying in emergency shelters, while 1 was in transitional housing on the night of the count.

Demographics

The majority (187 persons, 61.9%) of those experiencing homelessness in Bergen County on the night of the count were adults over age 24. There were a total of 31 (10.3%) homeless young adults between 18 and 24 years old, and 84 (27.8%) children under 18 years old as well. As Figure 4 shows the age range most represented, with 58 persons and 19.2% of the total homeless population, was children between 6 and 17, which is similar to what was found in 2016.

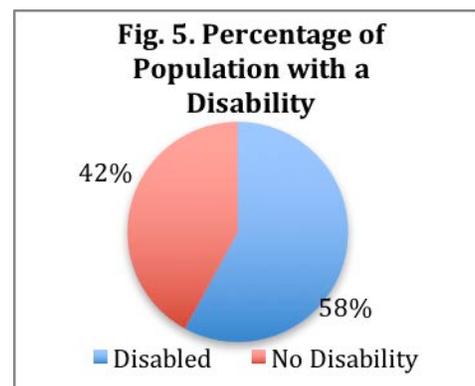


52.6% (159) of homeless persons were female, and 47.4% (143) were male.

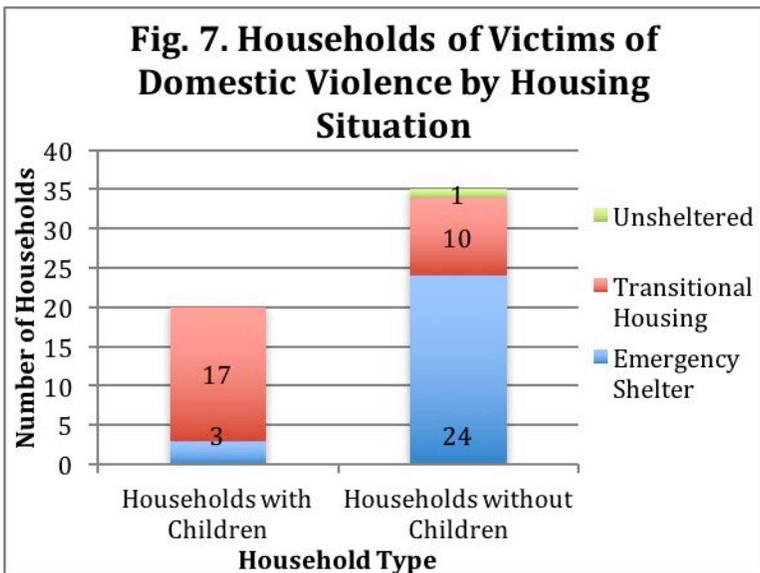
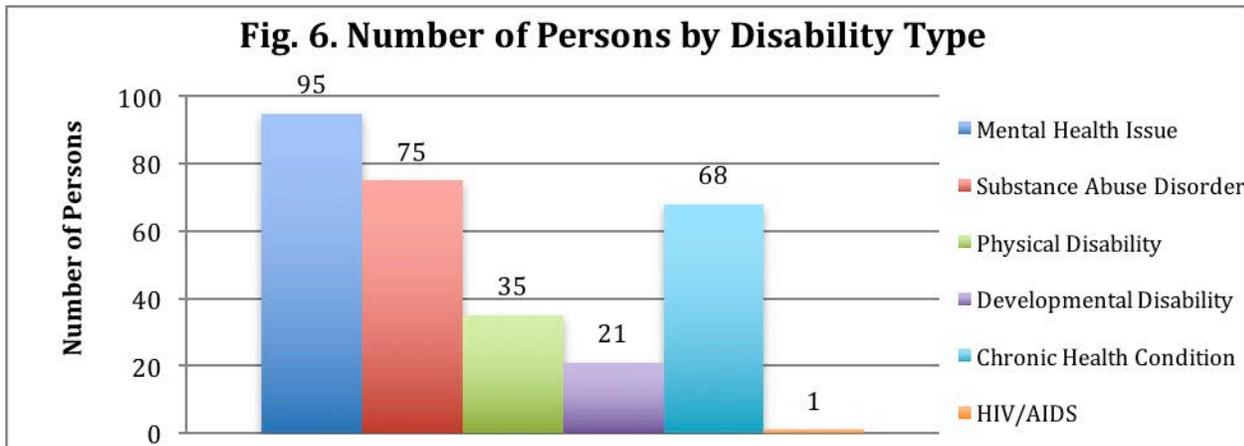
54.3% (164) of homeless persons identified their race as White, making that the largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported. The next largest group self-identified as Black or African-American (36.4%, 110 persons), followed by those identifying as Asian (5.3%, 16 persons). With regard to ethnicity, 24.8% of persons identified themselves as Hispanic.

Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 57.9% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 71.6% of adults 18 or older reported some type of disability compared to 22.6% of children. Figure 6 shows the number of the homeless persons that identified as having various disabilities. The most prevalent disabilities were mental health issues, substance abuse disorders, and chronic health conditions.



Among disabled adults, 58.3% reported mental health issues making this the most prevalent disability; representing 41.7% of the total adult homeless population. 46.2% of disabled adults reported a substance abuse disorder. Among disabled homeless children, 47.4% reported a chronic health condition.

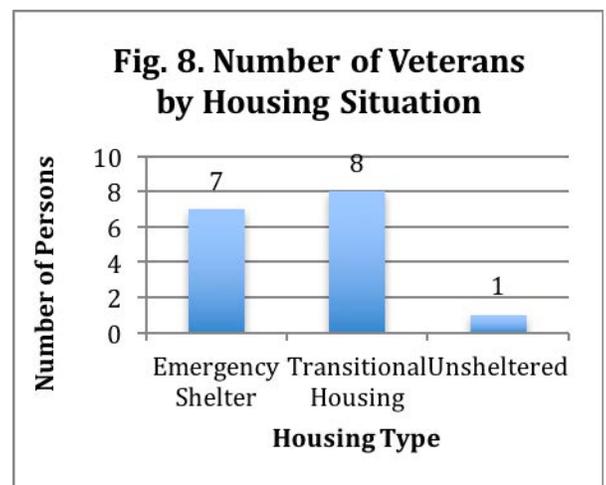


Victims of Domestic Violence

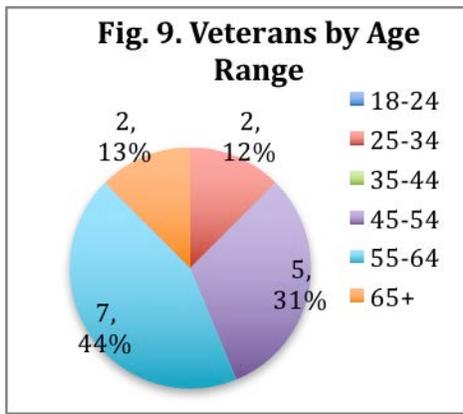
On the night of the count, in Bergen County, 55 homeless households reported having a victim of domestic violence, 9 more households than 2016. Figure 7 shows that 63.6% of domestic violence households were households without children, 1 of these was a household that consisted of 2 adults.

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 2016. Many communities in New Jersey have also been working hard to end homelessness among our country's servicemen and women.



16 homeless veteran households were counted on the night of the count, 6 more than 2016. 100% were individual veterans, making the total number of persons in veteran households 16.



100% of persons in veteran’s households experiencing homelessness in Bergen County were male. In regards to racial background, 62.5% of veterans identified as White and 31.3% identified as Black or African American. Figure 9 illustrates the percentage of homeless veterans by age range.

1 homeless veteran reported being a victim of domestic violence and 13 of the 16, 81.3%, of persons in veteran’s households reported having some kind of disability. The most common disabilities cited were chronic health conditions (61.5%), mental health issues (46.2%) and substance abuse disorders (38.5%). 18.8% of veteran

households were receiving Veteran’s Disability, while 43.8% were receiving VA Medical Benefits. None of the veterans were receiving Veteran’s Pension. The two types of service that homeless veteran households sought most were emergency shelter and housing (43.8% each).

Income and Benefits

Among all households experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, 30.1% had no source of income, and 26.4% reported receiving some form of earned cash income. The most common sources of cash income among homeless households outside of earned income were SSI (20.8%) and TANF (9.7%).

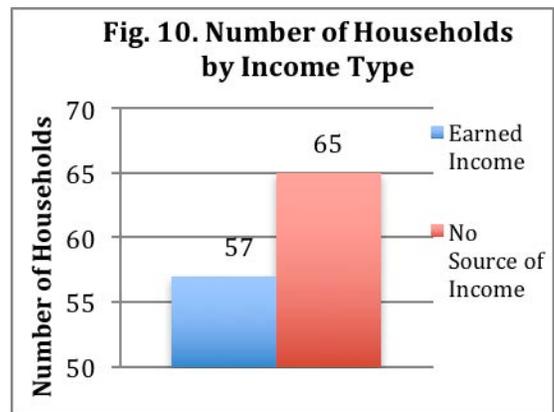


Figure 11 shows the average monthly income for all homeless households.

Figure 11. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation

	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered
Average for All Households	\$373.55	\$876.05	\$300

22.2% of households reported that their household was receiving no kind of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Medicaid was the top reported non-cash benefit, and was received by 59.3% of households. 38% of homeless households were connected to Food Stamps, or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Length of Homelessness

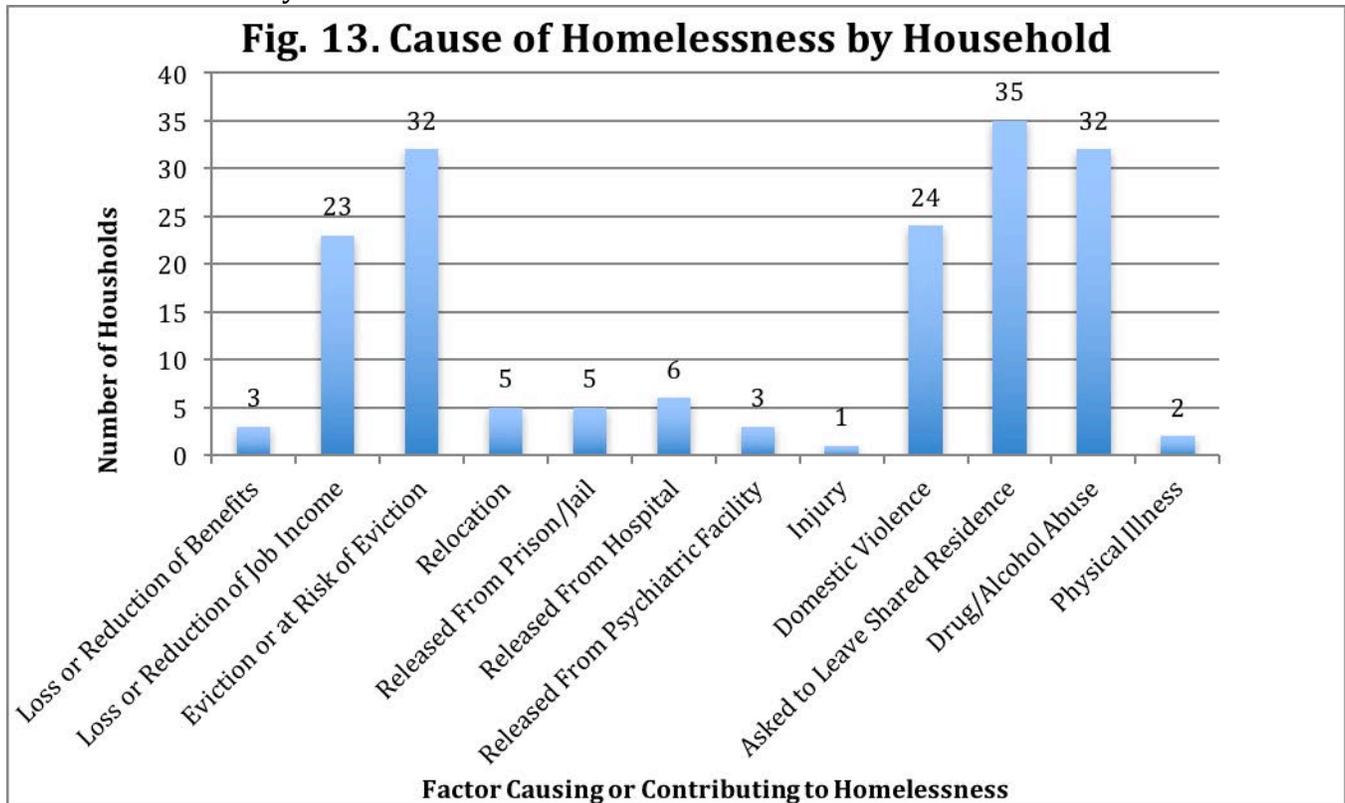
Figure 12 shows the range lengths of homeless episodes experienced on the night of the count by households in Bergen County. The largest grouping of households reported their most recent, continuous episode of homeless had lasted between 1 month and 1 day and 3 months (49, 22.7%). 8 more households reported being homeless for more than 1 year compared to 2016.



Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more households attributed their homelessness to being asked to leave a shared residence (35 households, 16.2%) than any other cause. As Figure 13 shows, the next most common factors reported were eviction or at risk of eviction and drug/alcohol abuse (14.8% each).

When homeless households were asked ‘what was your residence prior to your current living situation?’ more said they were staying in an emergency shelter prior to their current living situation (21.3%) than any other type of residence. Another 20.8% of households reported living with friends or family.



IV. Findings for the Chronically Homeless

HUD issued its final rule on the definition of chronic homelessness in 2015. Under this definition, 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 where the length of time in those episodes add up to a year or more, meets HUD’s definition of chronically homeless. Any family with a head of household 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

3 households, made up of 3 total persons, were chronically homeless in Bergen County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 7 households and 7 persons (70%) from 2016. The rate of chronic homelessness as a percentage of overall homelessness decreased from 4.5% in 2016 to 1%.

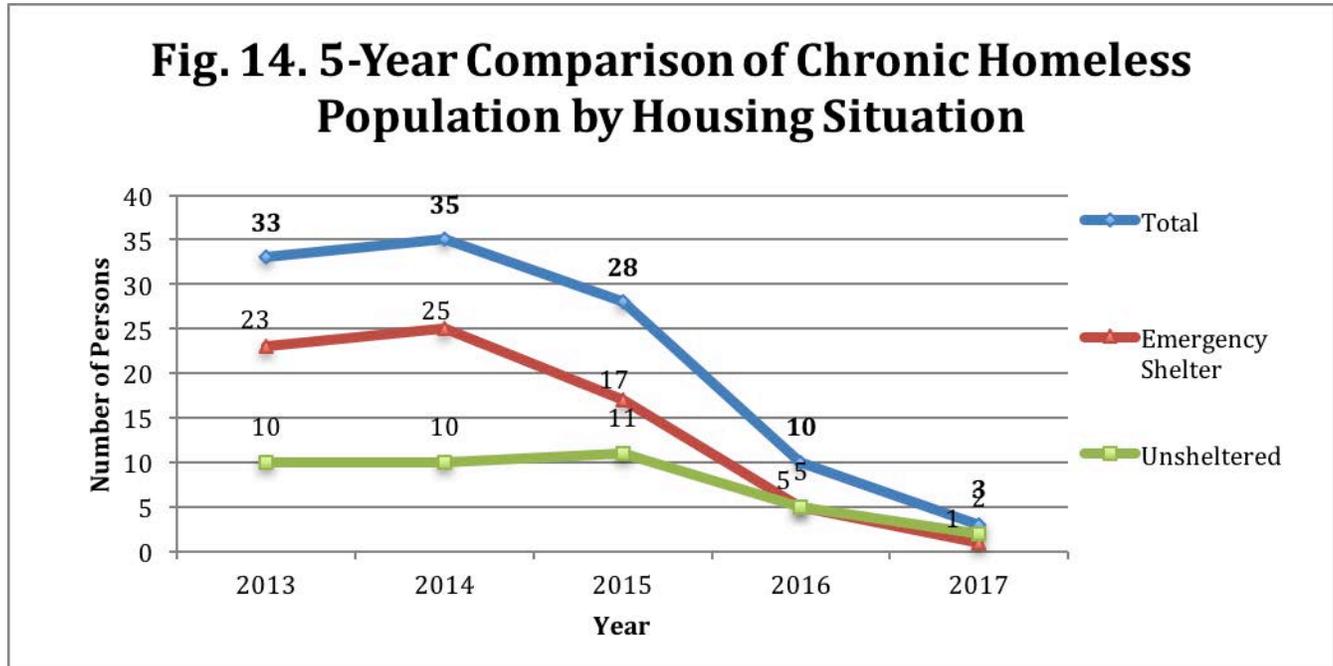
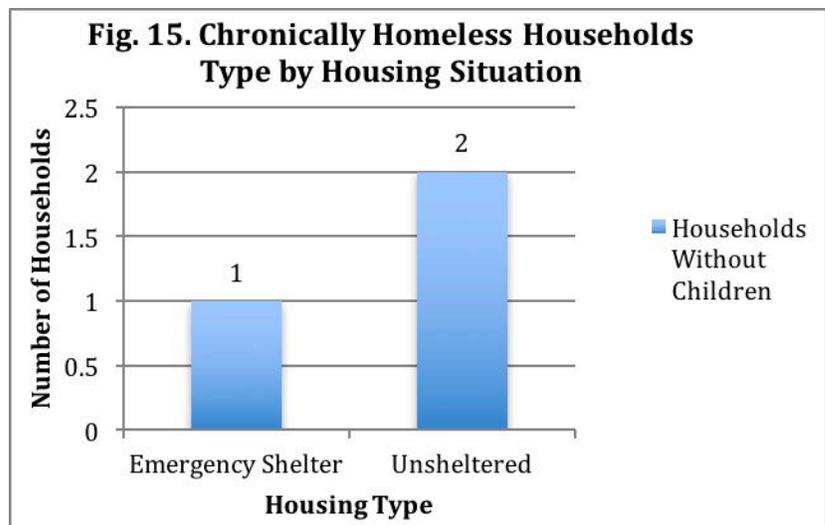


Figure 14 shows the number of chronically homeless persons who were in emergency shelter or living unsheltered in Bergen County from 2013 to 2017. Over the past five years, the overall number of chronically homeless persons has fallen by 30 persons, or 90.9%. The unsheltered population decreased by 8 persons, and the emergency shelter count decreased by 22 persons in 2017 compared to 2013.

Families and Individuals

Similar to 2016, all 3 of the chronically homeless households counted in Bergen County in 2017 were individual adults. 66.7% of the chronically homeless households were unsheltered on the night of the count, while the other 33.3% were in emergency shelter.

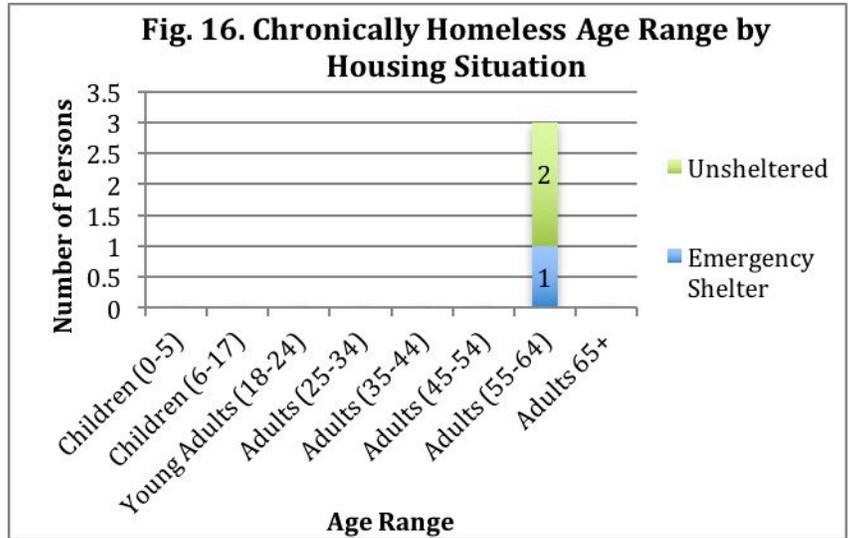


Demographics

All 3 of the chronically homeless persons counted in 2017 were between 55 and 64 years old as shown in Figure 16.

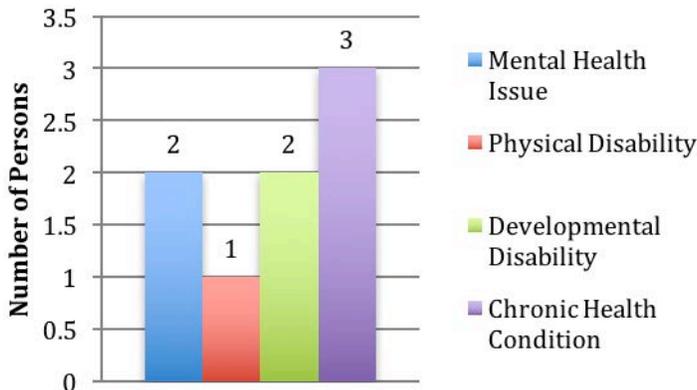
66.7% of those counted as chronically homeless were male, and 33.3% were female.

The largest racial subgroup of chronically homeless persons reported their race as White (66.7%).



Disabilities

Fig. 17. Number of Chronically Homeless Persons by Disability Type



In order to meet the definition of chronically homeless, at least one adult in each household must have some kind of disability. The most commonly identified disability was chronic health conditions (100%). The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the chronically homeless can be seen in Figure 17.

Subpopulations

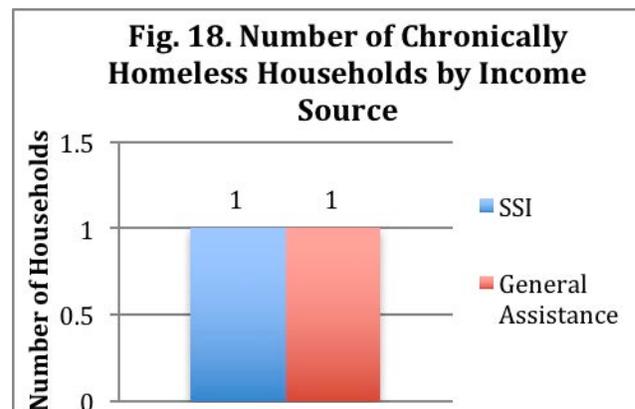
On the night of the count, 1 chronically homeless person in Bergen County reported being a victim of domestic violence. This is 1 more than were counted in 2016.

There were no chronically homeless veterans identified on the night of the count, matching what was found in 2016.

Income and Benefits

Figure 18 shows the sources of income received. 0 chronically homeless households reported having a form of earned income.

100% of chronically homeless households reported that they were receiving some type of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Food Stamps (SNAP) and Medicaid were the top



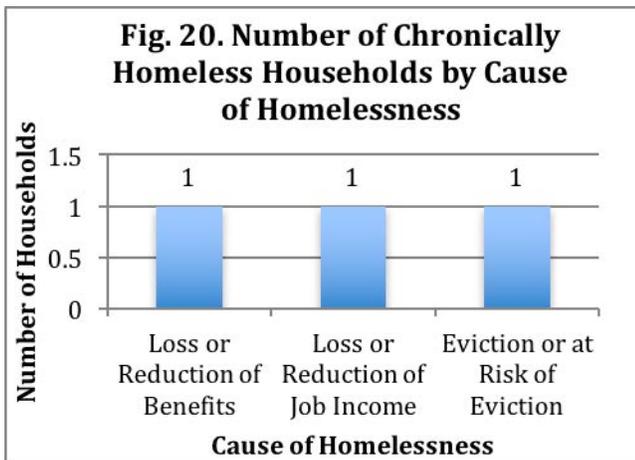
reported non-cash benefits among the chronically homeless, with 100% receiving both of these benefit. 33.3% also reported receiving Medicare.



Length of Homelessness

Figure 19 shows that all chronically homeless households identified that their current episode of homelessness have lasted less than 1 year, showing that all 3 qualified based on the episodes of homelessness they have experienced.

Cause of Homelessness



When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, 33.3% of chronically homeless households cited either a loss or reduction of benefits, loss or reduction of job income and eviction or at risk of eviction.

V. Findings for the Unsheltered Homeless

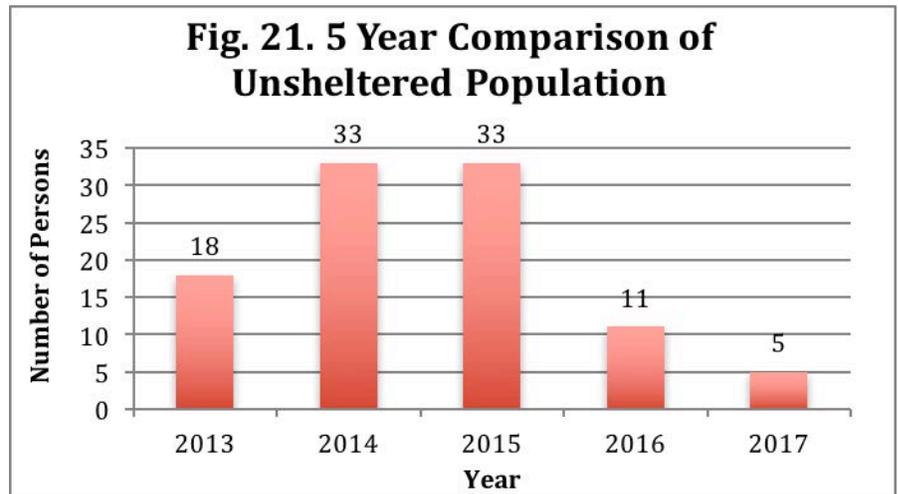
HUD’s definition of “unsheltered homeless” applies to any individual or family “with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station,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

Unsheltered homeless individuals and families are among those with the most critical housing needs in a 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

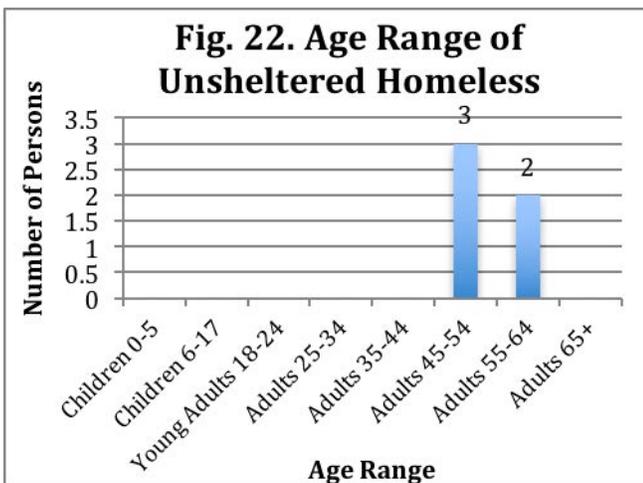
5 households, made up of 5 persons, were living unsheltered in Bergen County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 5 households (50%), and 6 persons (54.5%) from 2016.

Figure 21 shows the number of unsheltered respondents from 2013 to 2017. The number of unsheltered persons has decreased significantly over the timeframe. The total has decreased from 2013 to 2017 by 13 (72.2%) unsheltered persons in total.



Families and Individuals

Similar to 2016, all 5 unsheltered households counted in 2017 were adult only individual households.



Demographics

The largest portion of the 5 unsheltered persons counted in 2017, 60%, were between 45 and 54 years old.

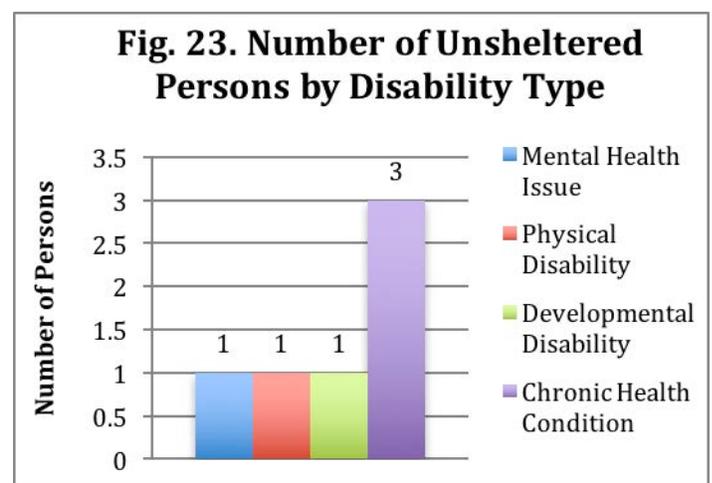
4 of the 5 unsheltered persons were male (80%). 4 (80%) identified their race as White and 2 (40%) identified their ethnicity as Hispanic.

Disabilities

3 of the 5 unsheltered persons (60%) reported having some disability. Among the disabled, the most common disability was chronic health conditions, (3 persons, 100%). The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the unsheltered can be seen in Figure 23.

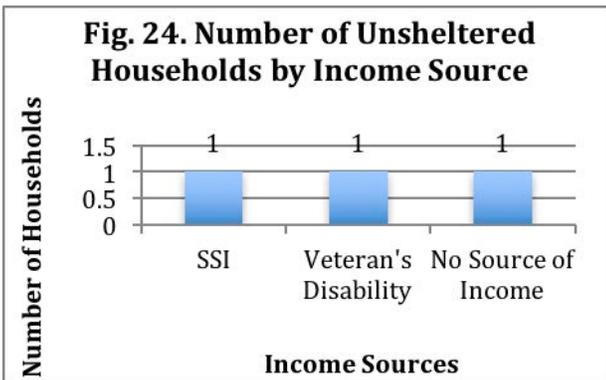
Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 1 unsheltered homeless person in Bergen County reported



being a victim of domestic violence. This was 1 more than were counted in 2016.

There was 1 unsheltered veteran household on the night of the count, a decrease of 5 from 2016.



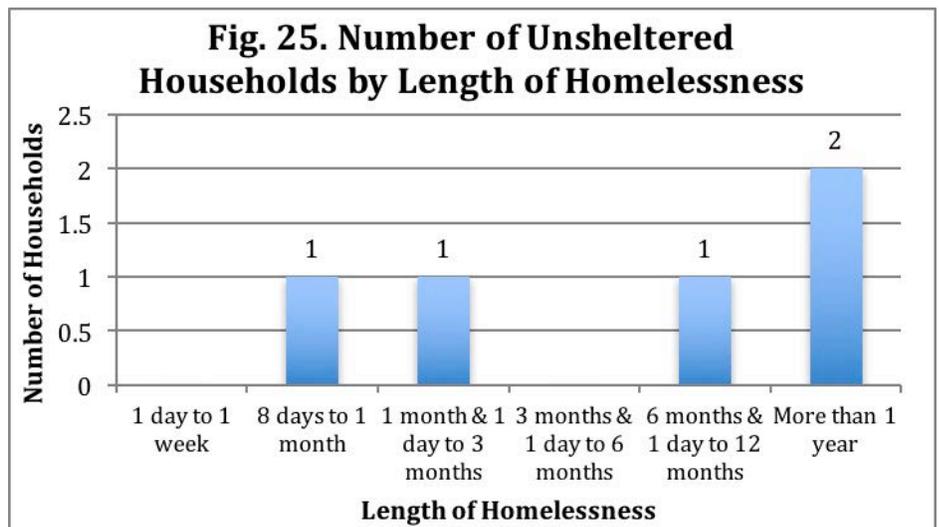
Income and Benefits

Among all the unsheltered households on the night of the count, 1 (20%) reported having no source of cash income. The average monthly income reported among unsheltered households was approximately \$300. Figure 24 shows all sources of income received.

1 unsheltered household (20%) 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 this group, with 40% receiving these benefits.

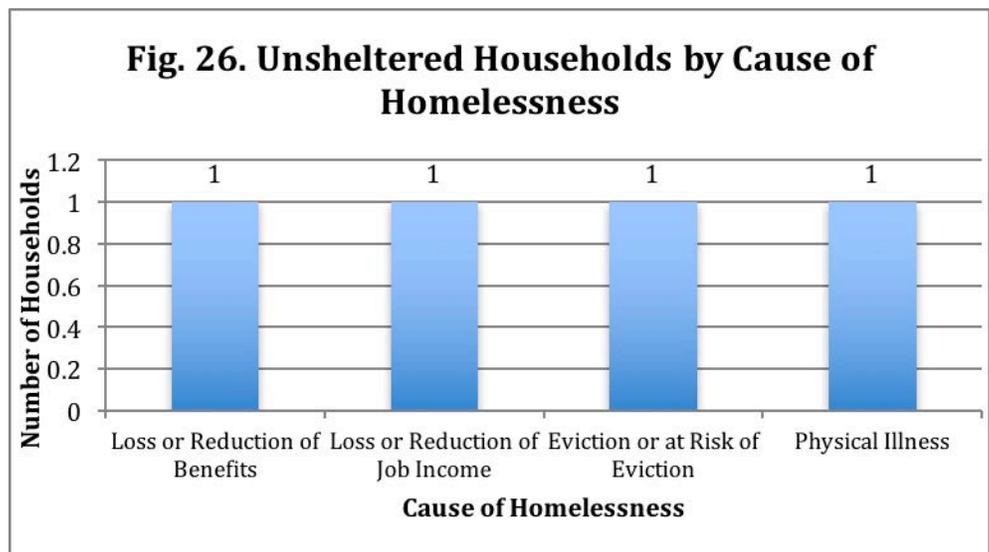
Length of Homelessness

As shown in Figure 25, similar to 2016, more unsheltered homeless households (2, 40%) reported their households' most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted more than 1 year.



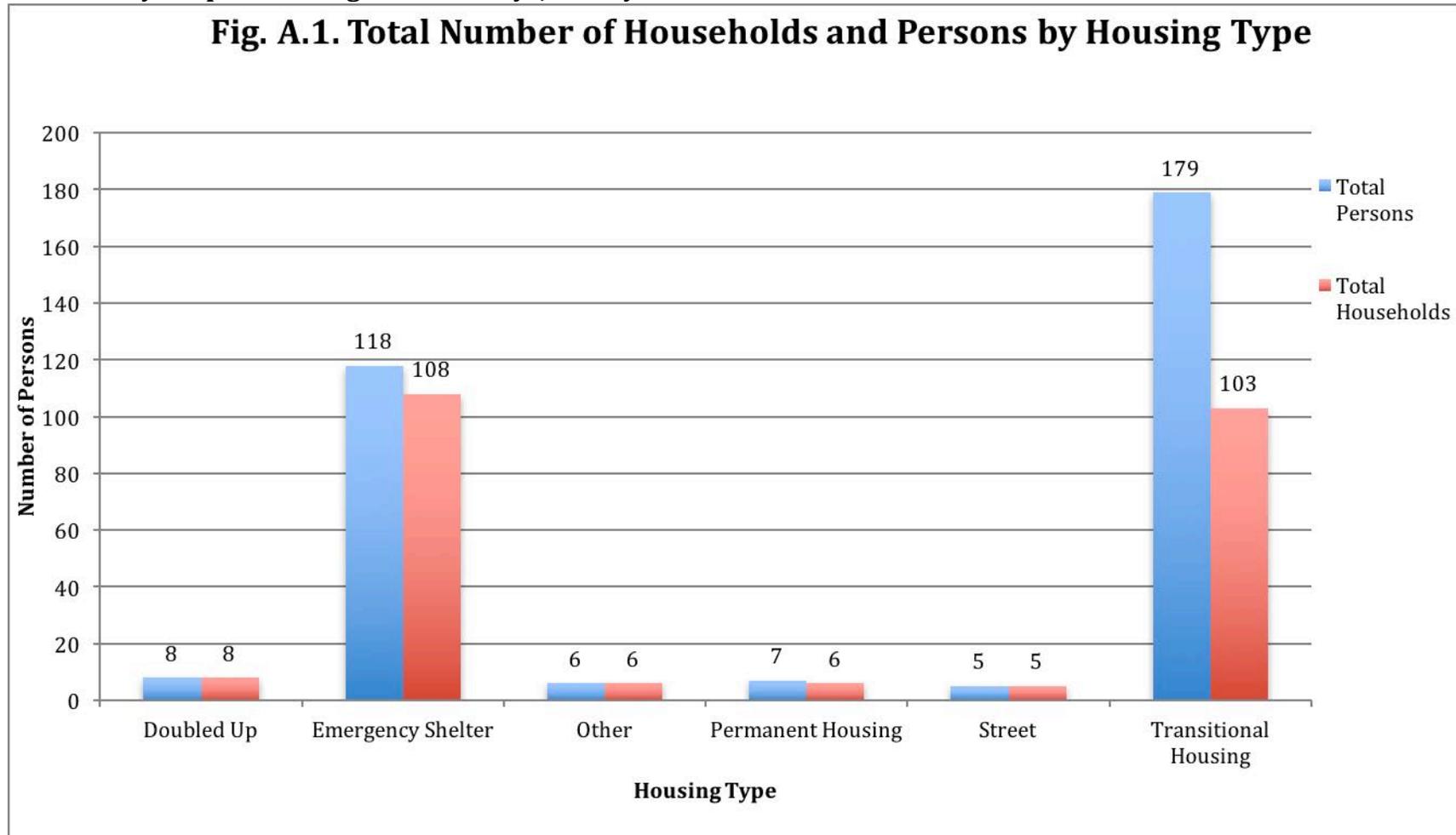
Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, unsheltered households cited loss or reduction of job income, loss or reduction of benefits, eviction or at risk of eviction and physical illness. Figure 26 shows the full breakdown for unsheltered households.



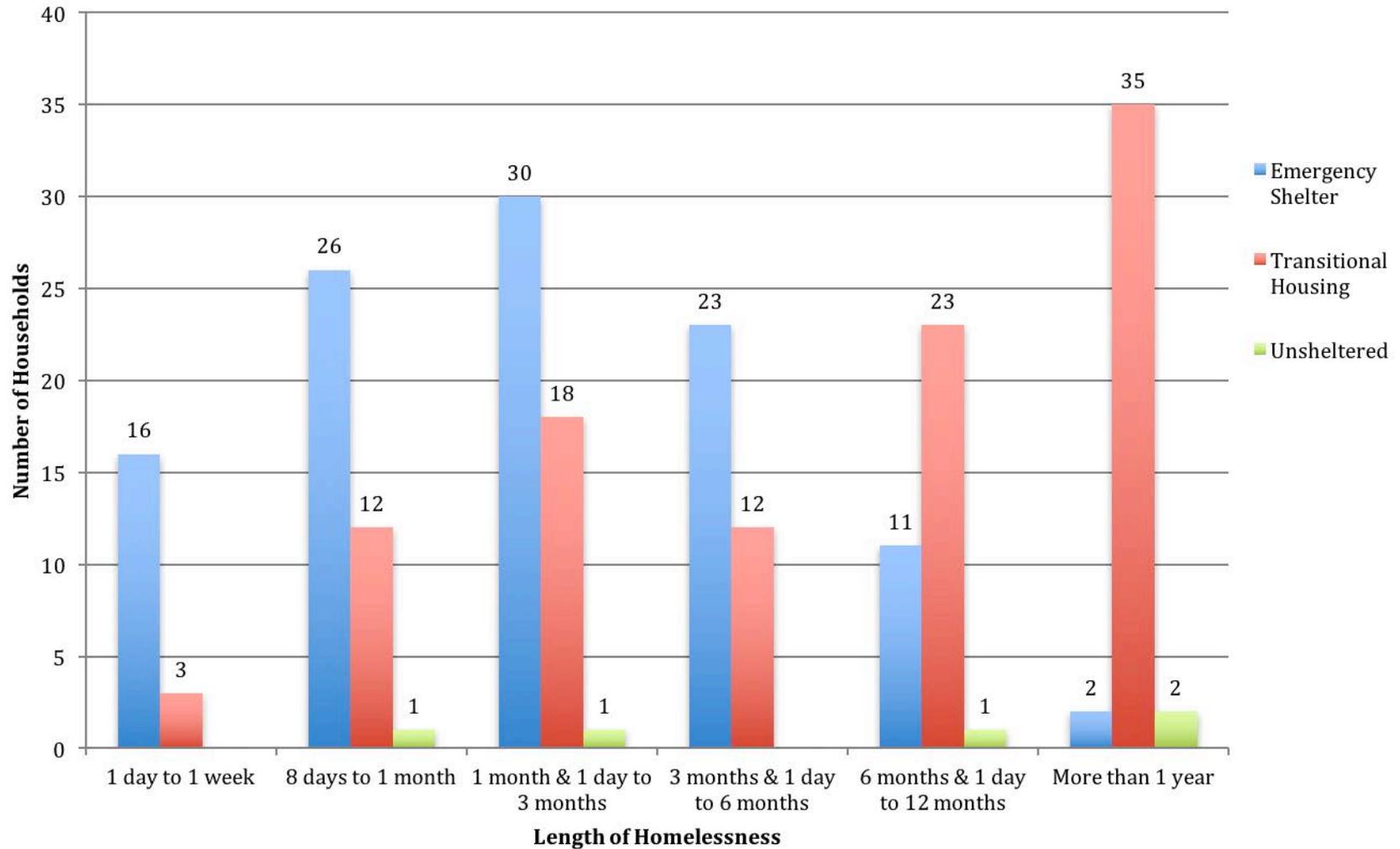
VI. Appendix

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

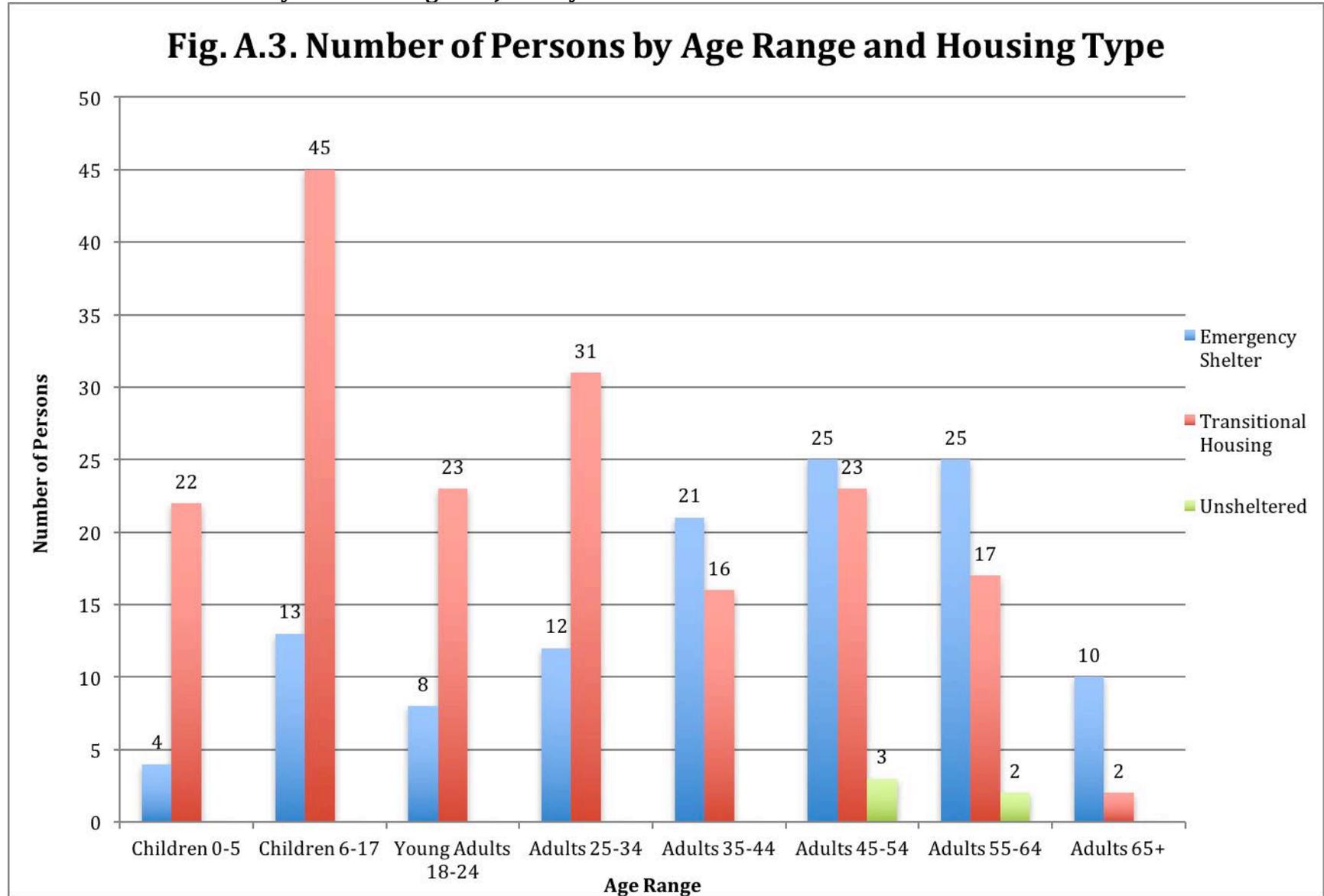


How long have you been in your current living situation?

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



Who was homeless with you on the night of January 24th?



Household Characteristics – check all that apply to each person

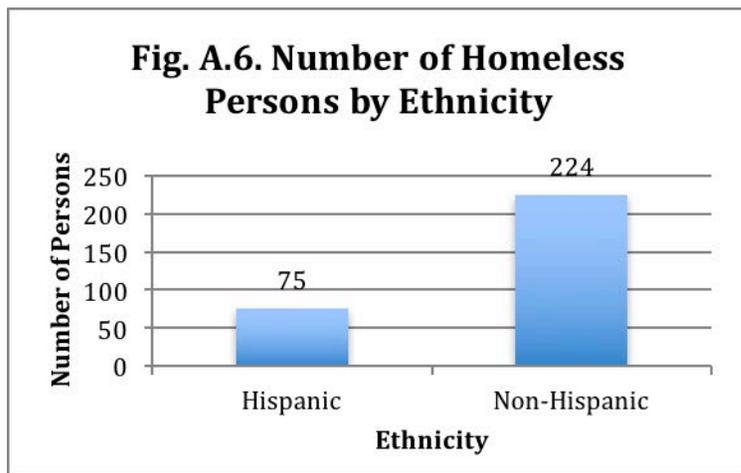
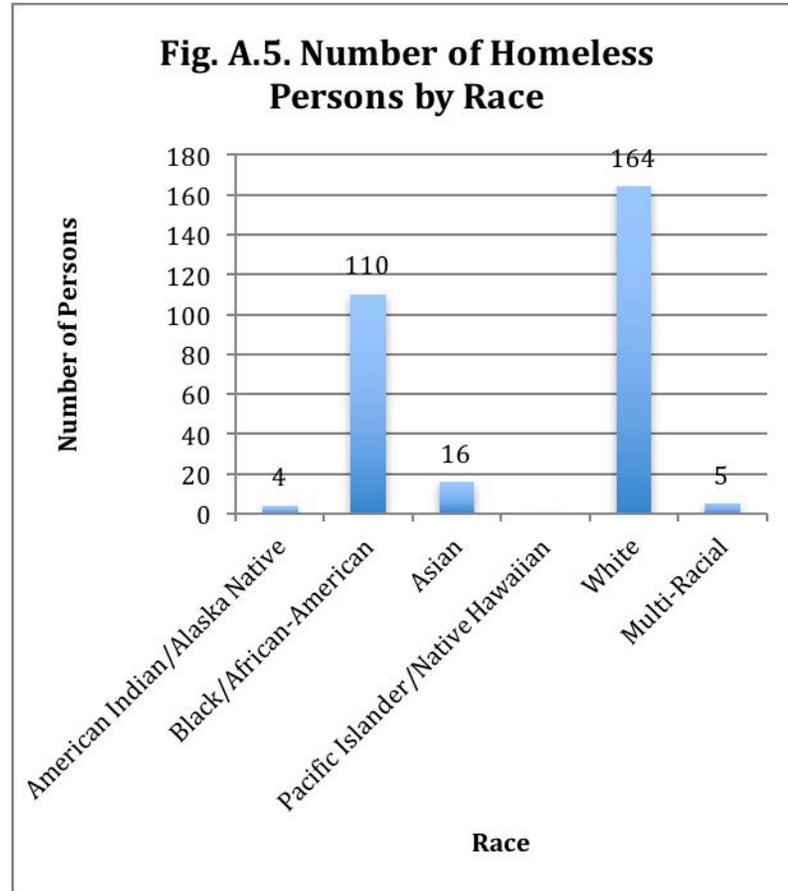
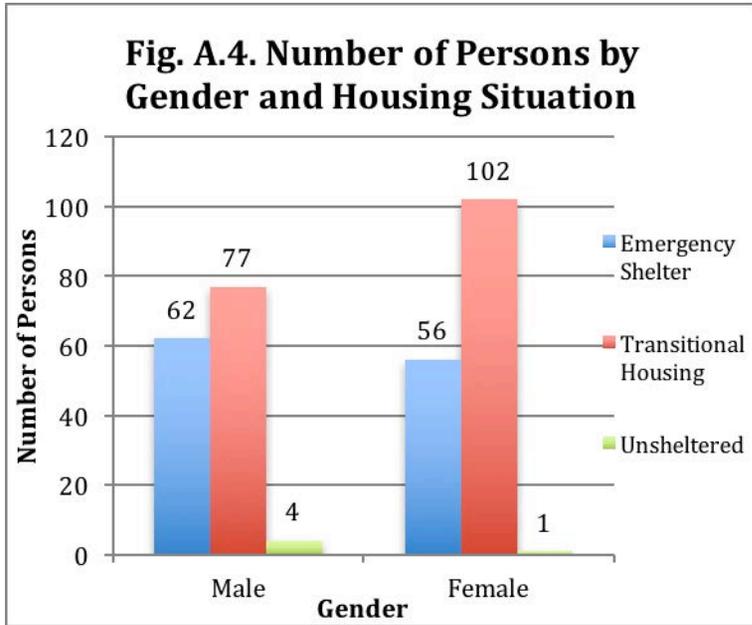
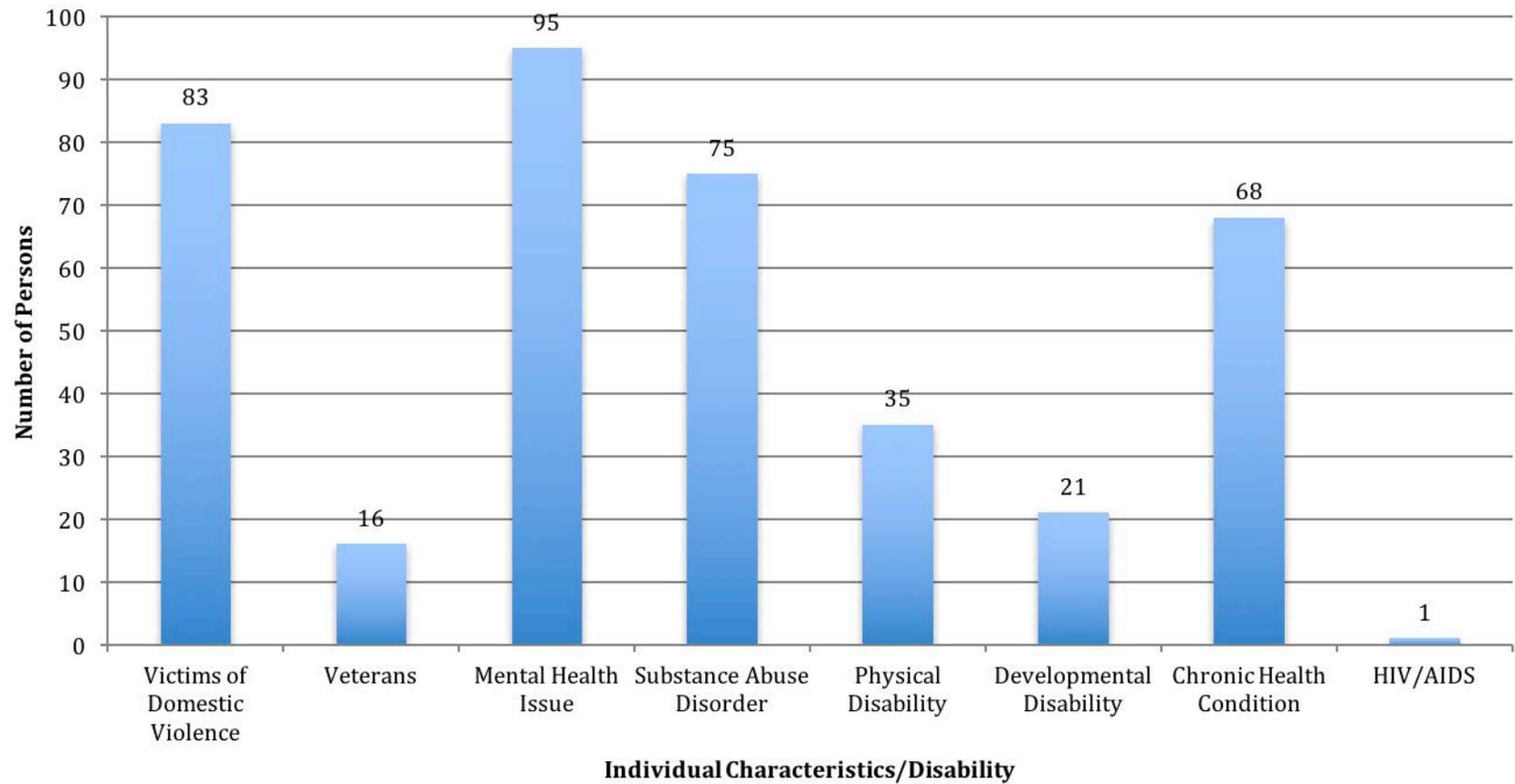


Fig. A.7. Number of Homeless Persons by Victims of Domestic Violence, Veteran Status, and Disability

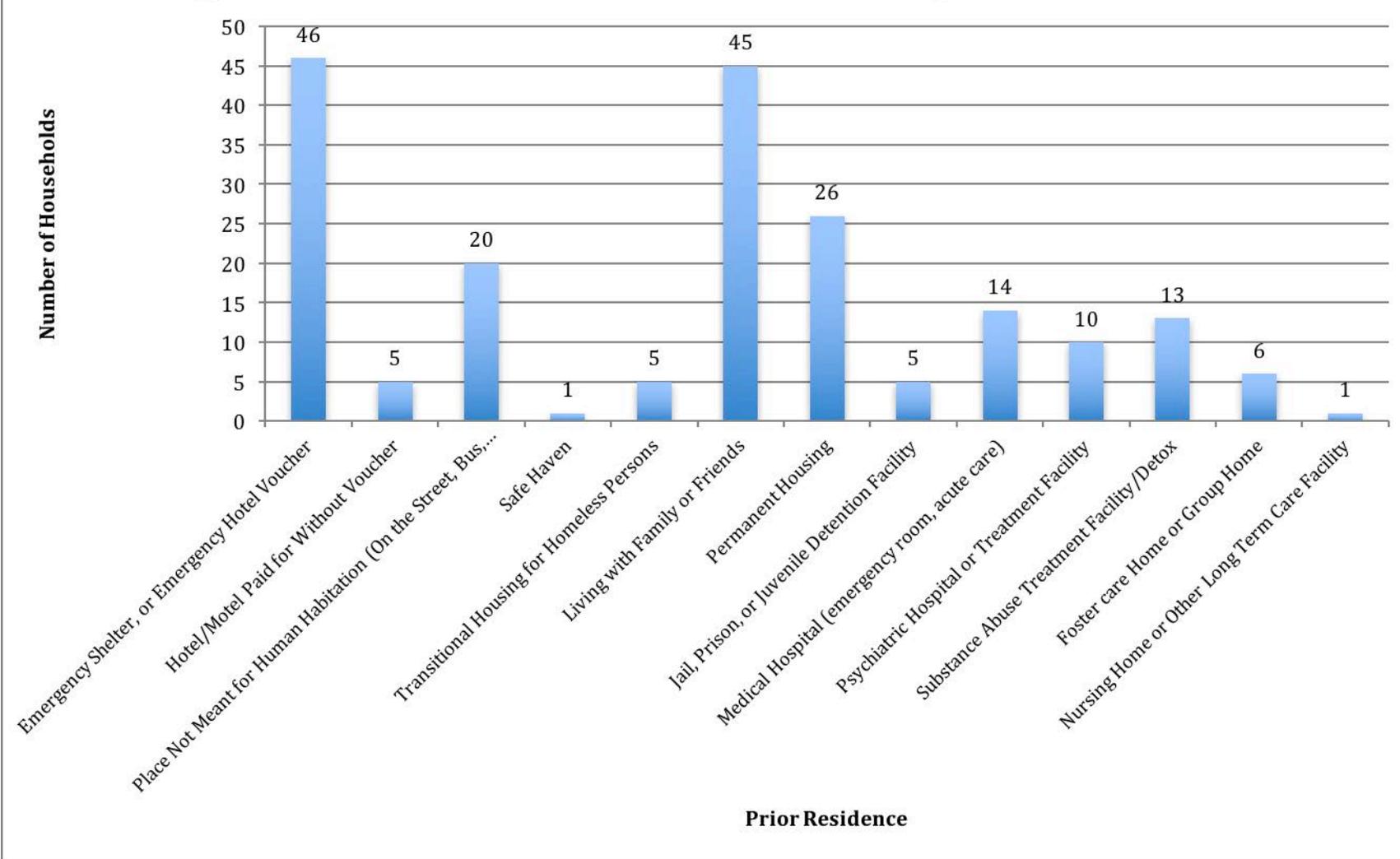


Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?

Fig. A.8. Number of Homeless Households by County, State or Country of Last Permanent Address	
Last Permanent Address	Number of Households
Bergen County	154
Burlington County	1
Cumberland County	1
Essex County	2
Mercer County	2
Monmouth County	3
Morris County	3
Ocean County	3
Passaic County	6
Somerset County	3
Sussex County	1
Union county	2
Florida	2
New York	3
West Germany	1

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?

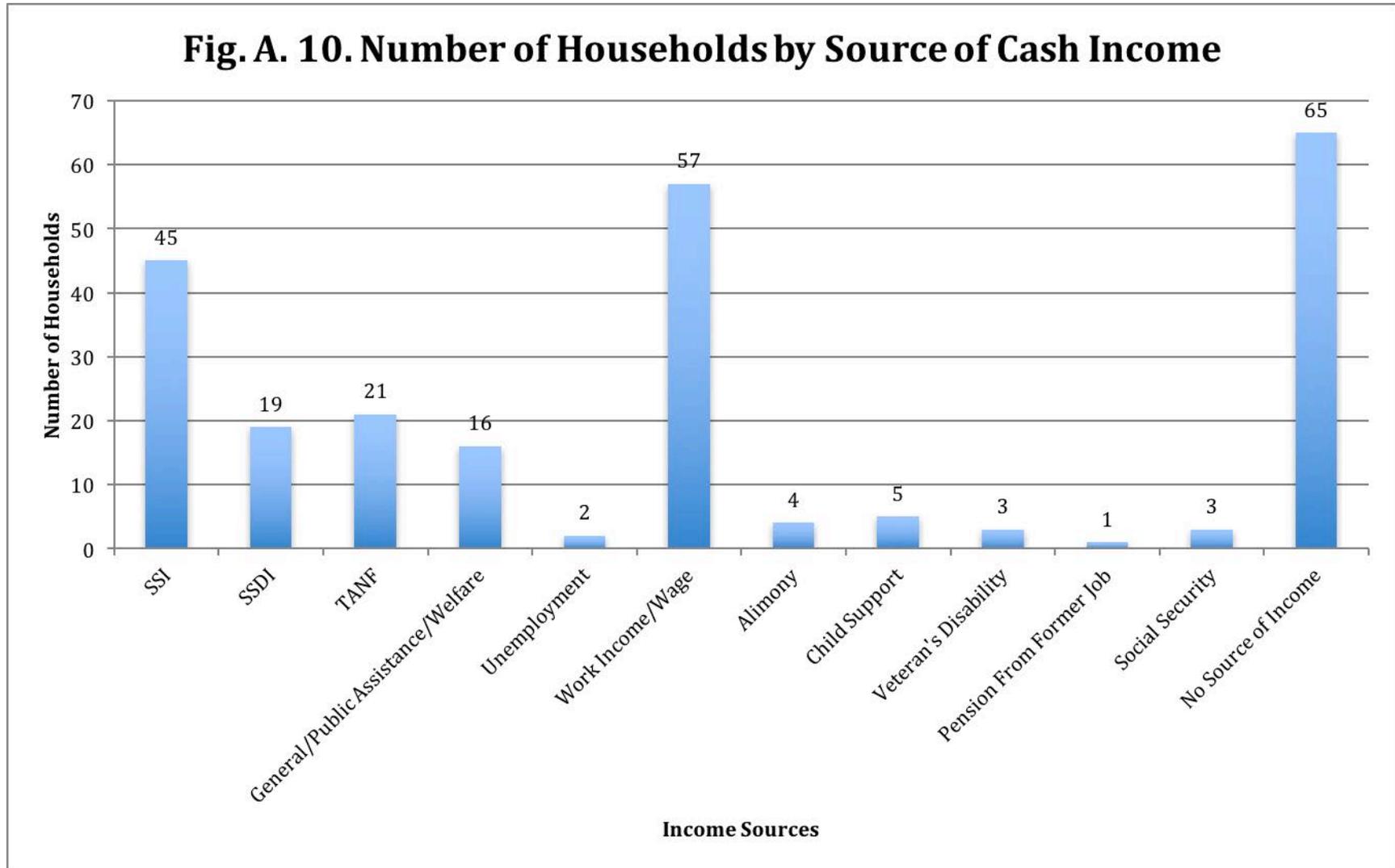
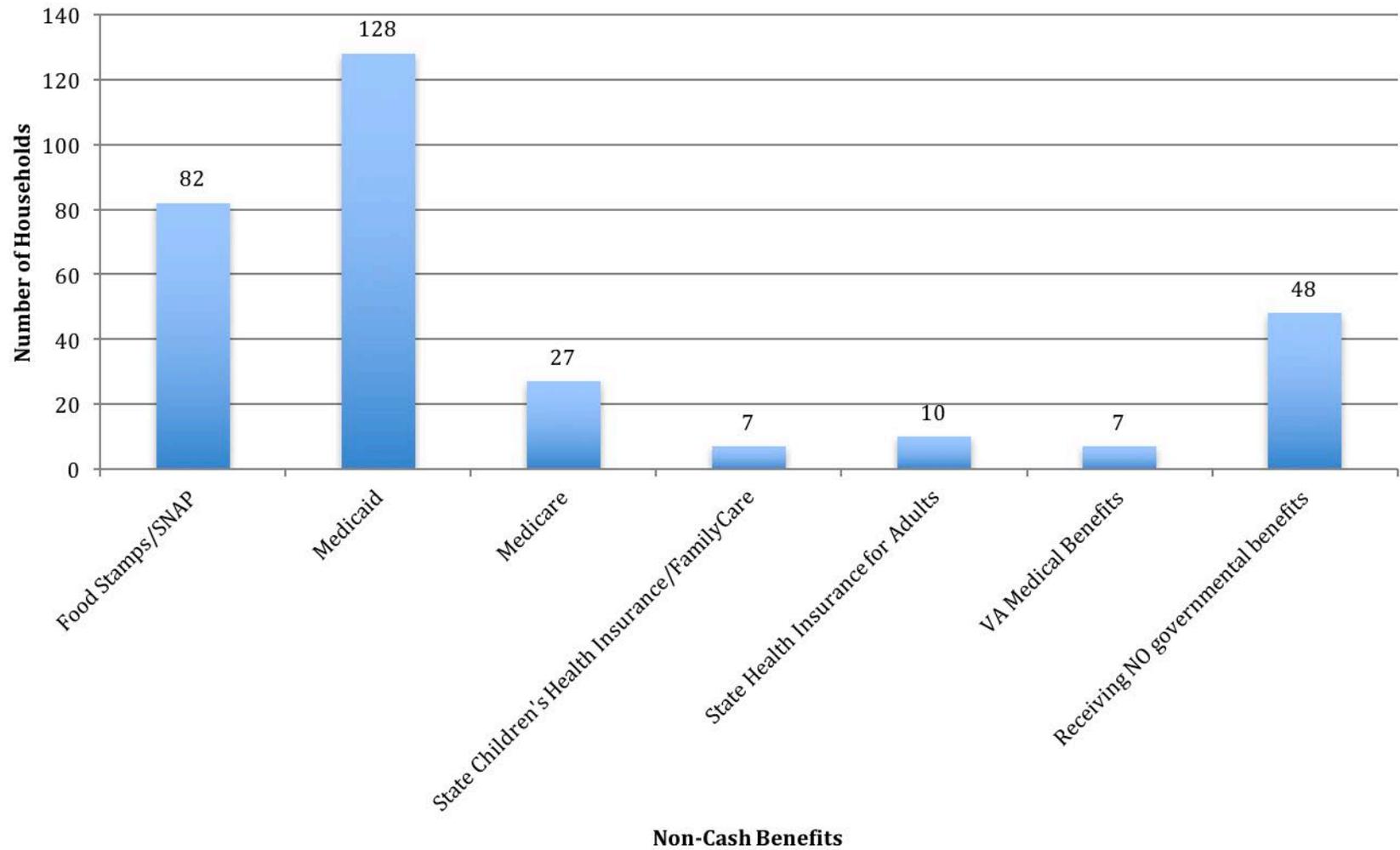
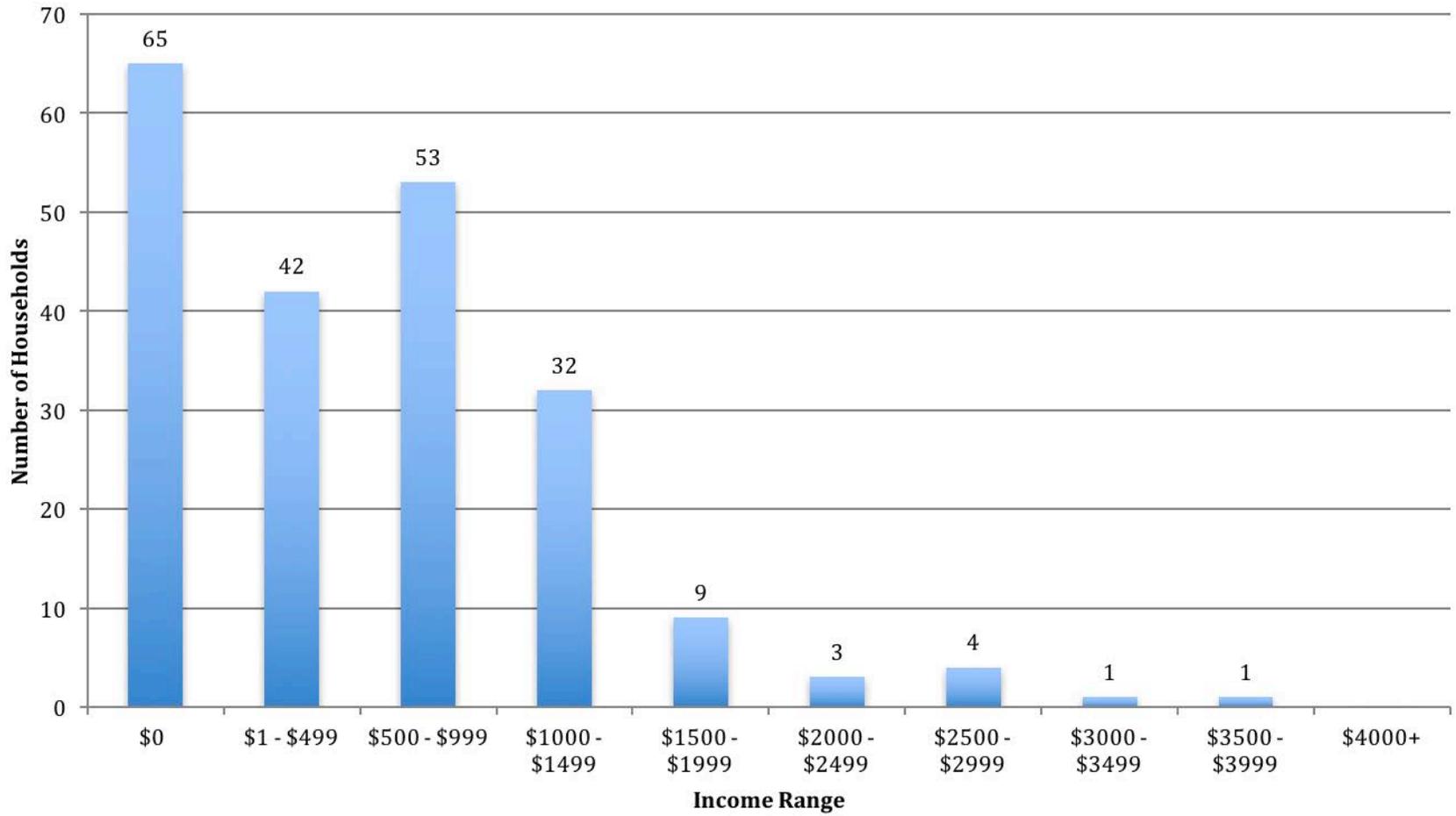


Fig. A. 11. Number of Households by Sources of Non-Cash Benefits



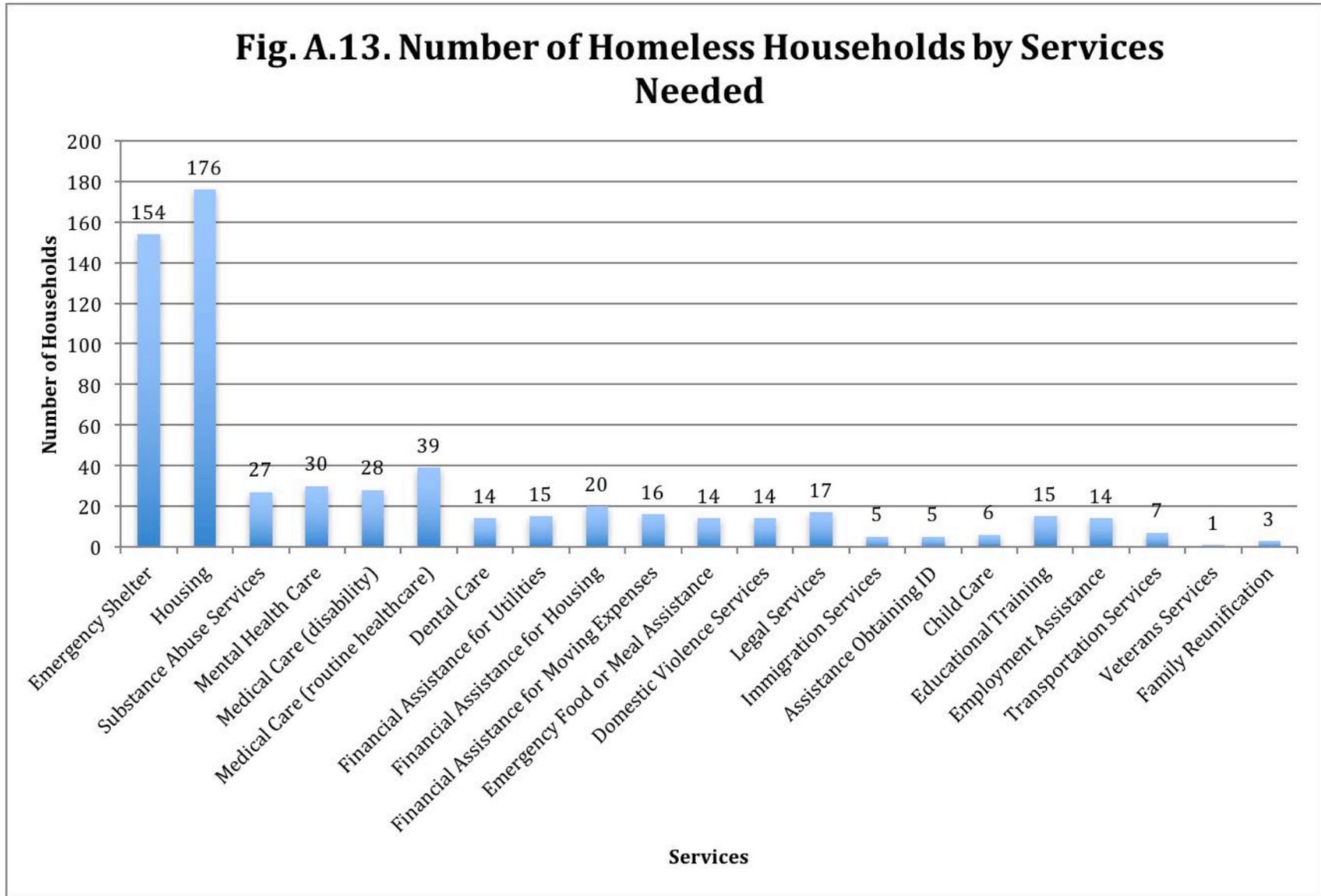
What is your monthly household income?

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

