

Monarch Housing Associates

29 Alden Street, Suite 1B

Cranford, NJ 07016

908.272.5363

www.monarchhousing.org



NJ
2017
Counts!

Hudson 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 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 721 households, including 822 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Hudson County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 170 households, with 176 persons, were identified as chronically homeless.
- 184 unsheltered homeless persons were counted.

Total Homeless Population

On the night of January 24th, 2017, a total of 822 persons, in 721 households, were experiencing homelessness in Hudson County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 7 persons (0.8%), but an increase of 61 households (9.2%) from 2016. Hudson County had 9.6% of New Jersey's statewide homeless population in the 2017 PIT.

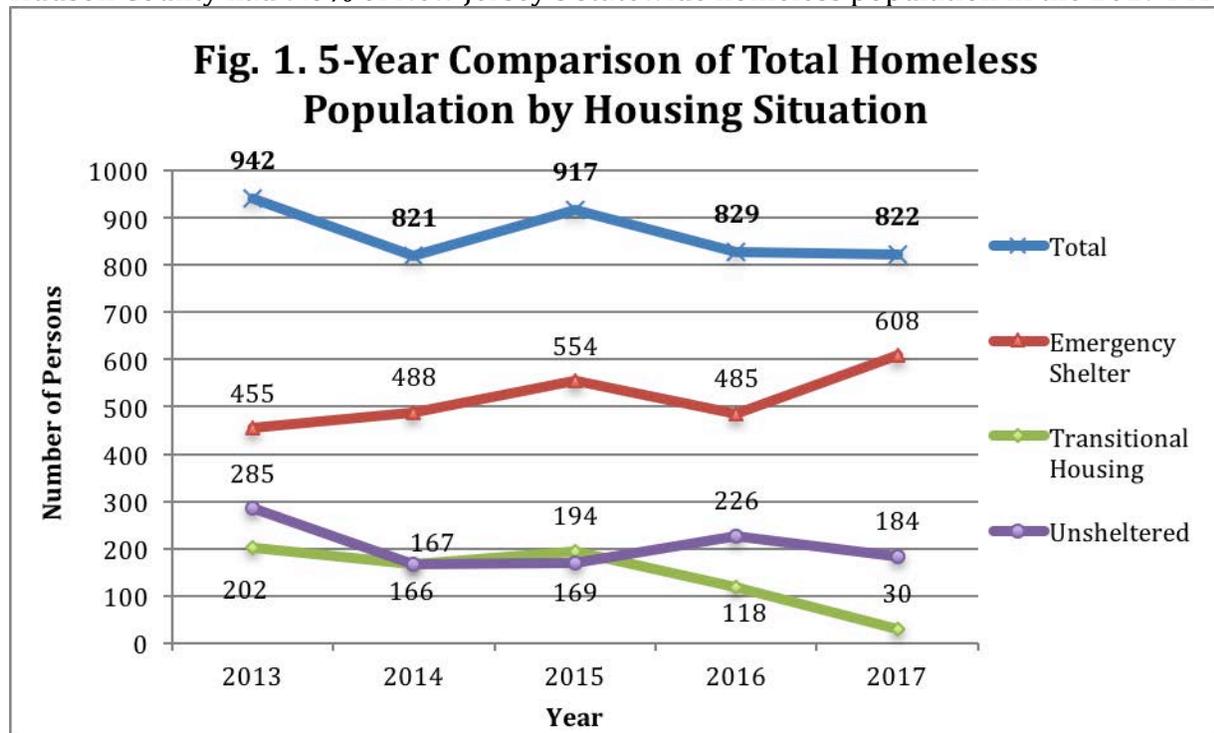
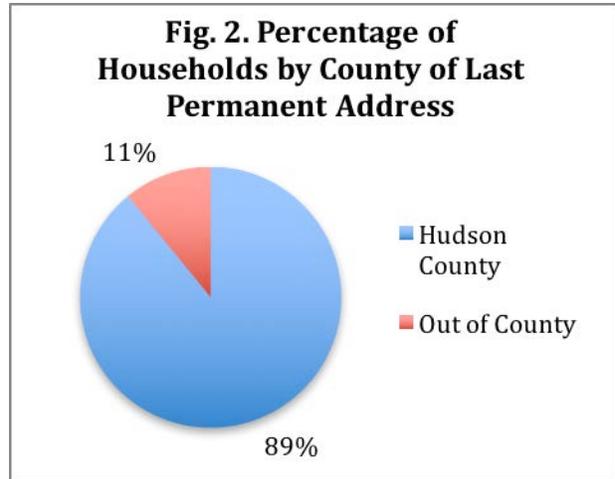


Figure 1 shows that in 2017, 608 homeless persons stayed in emergency shelters, 30 stayed in transitional housing, and 184 were living unsheltered on the night of the count. There was an increase of 123 persons (25.4%) seen in the total number of persons served in emergency shelters on the night of the count. While true, there was a decrease seen in both transitional housing (88 persons, 74.6%) and in unsheltered persons on the night of the count (42 persons, 18.6%) since 2016. Part of the significant changes between emergency shelter and transitional housing programs involves the reclassification of transitional housing programs to be used as emergency shelter placements.

Figure 1 also shows that over the past five years, the total number of homeless persons in Hudson County has been trending downward, with slight fluctuations. During the five-year period from 2013 to 2017, the overall number of homeless persons in Hudson County has been reduced by 12.7% (a decrease of 120 persons), with the biggest decrease seen in persons residing in transitional housing (172 persons).

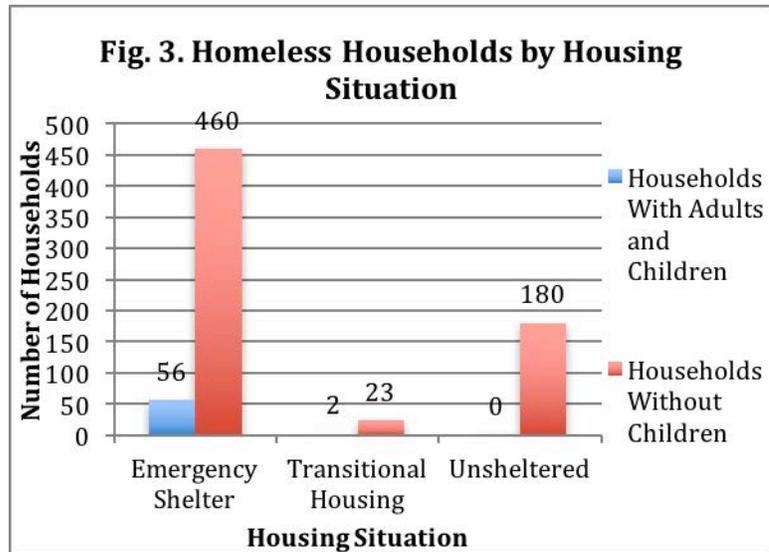
As Figure 2 shows, 11% of homeless households in Hudson County reported that their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless was outside of the county.



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 721 homeless households counted in Hudson County in 2017, 58 (8%) were families with at least one adult and one child under the age of 18. This is a decrease of 29 family households (33.3%) from 2016. These families included 154 persons, 93 children under age 18, and 61 adults. The average family size was 2.6 persons. Figure 3 shows that 56 families (96.6%) were staying in emergency shelters on the night of the count. There were no unsheltered families on the night of the count, a decrease from the 1 unsheltered family counted in 2016.



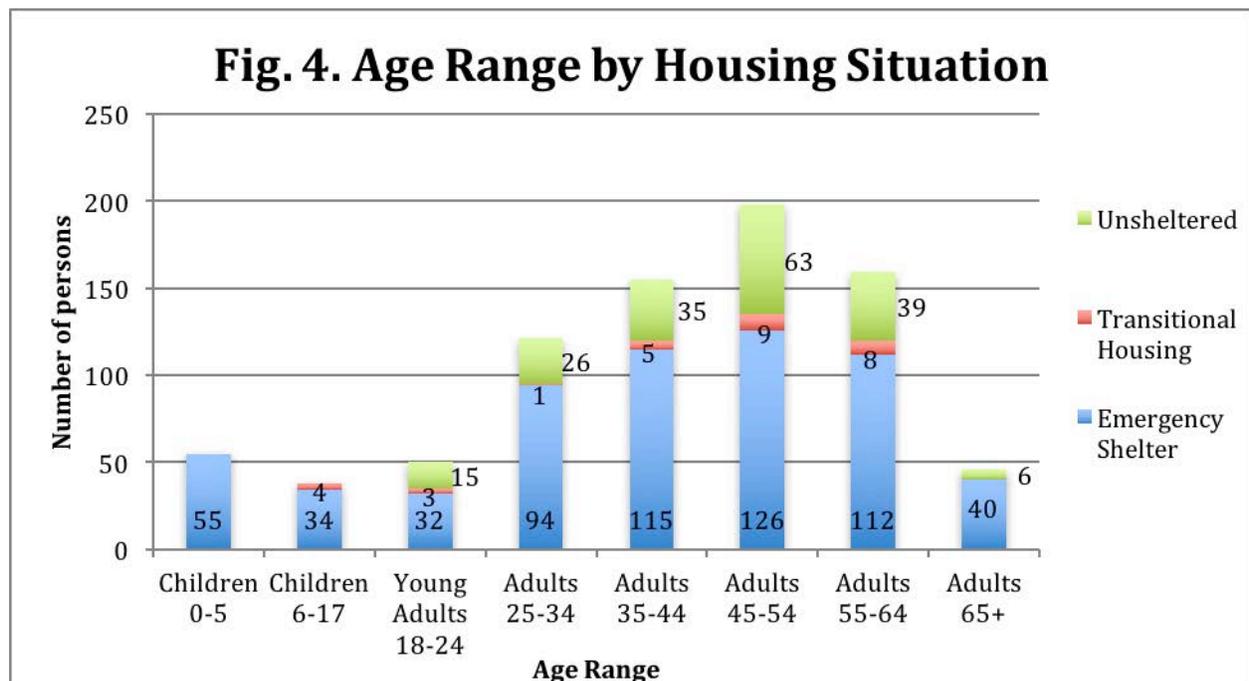
663 (92%) of the homeless households counted in Hudson County were households without children under 18, and were predominately composed of individual adults (658). The remaining 5 households were adult only households composed of 10 adults. 460

(69.4%) of these adult-only households were staying in emergency shelters, 23 (3.5%) were in transitional housing, and 180 (27.1%) were unsheltered. The number of adult-only households increased by 15.7% (90 households) from the number counted in 2016.

Just as in 2016, there were no households with only children under 18 years old reported on the night of the count in Hudson County in 2017.

Demographics

The majority (679 persons, 82.6%) of those experiencing homelessness in Hudson County on the night of the count were adults over age 24. There was a total of 50 (6.1%) homeless young adults between 18 and 24 years old and 93 (11.3%) children under 18 years old experiencing homelessness on the night of the count as well. Similar to 2016, 24.1% of the total homeless population (198 persons) were adults between the ages of 45 and 54. Figure 4 shows the full scope of age ranges represented.

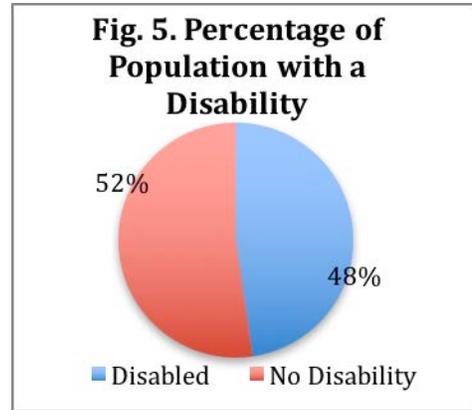


68.6% (564) of homeless persons were male, and 30.8% (253) were female. 1 person identified as transgender.

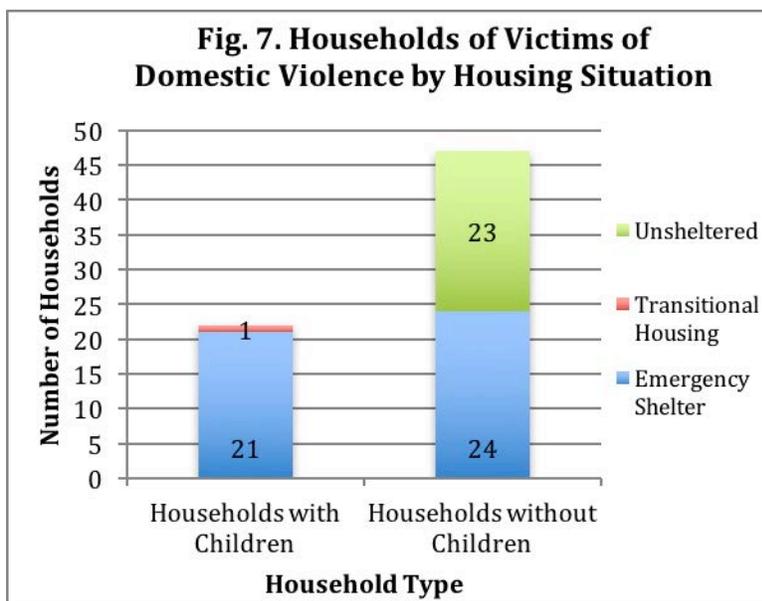
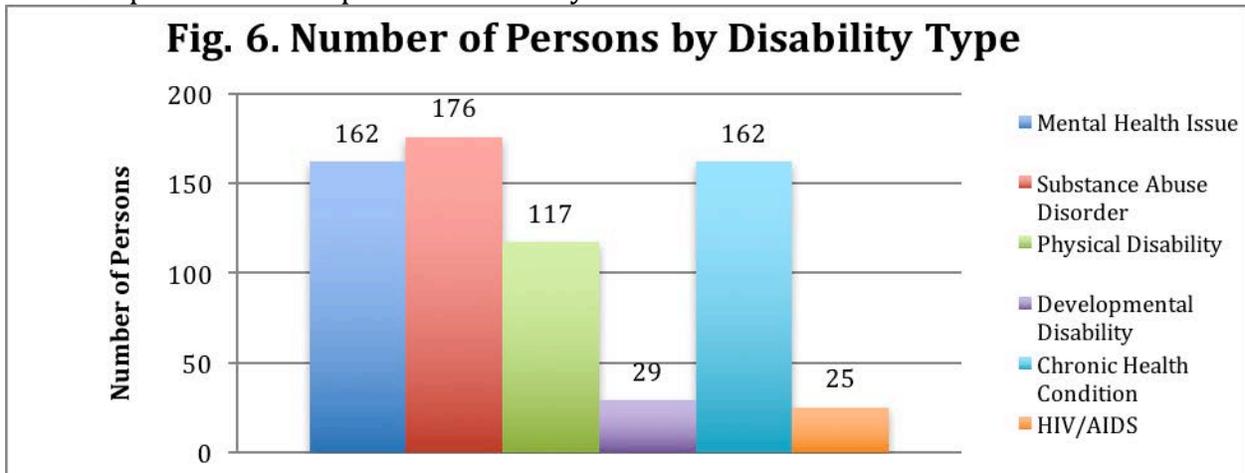
47.2% of homeless persons identified their race as White, making that the largest racial subgroup. The next largest group identified themselves as Black or African-American (46.7%), followed by those identifying as American Indian/Alaskan Native and Asian (1% each). With regard to ethnicity, 35.8% of persons identified themselves as Hispanic.

Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 47.7% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 52.3% of adults 18 or older reported some type of disability compared to 11.8% of children. Figure 6 shows the number of homeless persons that identified as having various disabilities. The most prevalent disabilities were substance abuse disorders, mental health issues and chronic health conditions.



Among disabled adults, 46.2% reported a substance abuse disorder, making this the most prevalent disability; representing 24.1% of the total adult homeless population. 42.5% of disabled adults also reported a mental health issue. Among disabled homeless children, 63.6% reported a developmental disability.

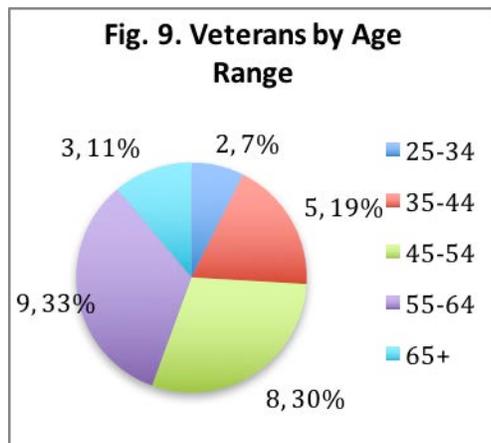
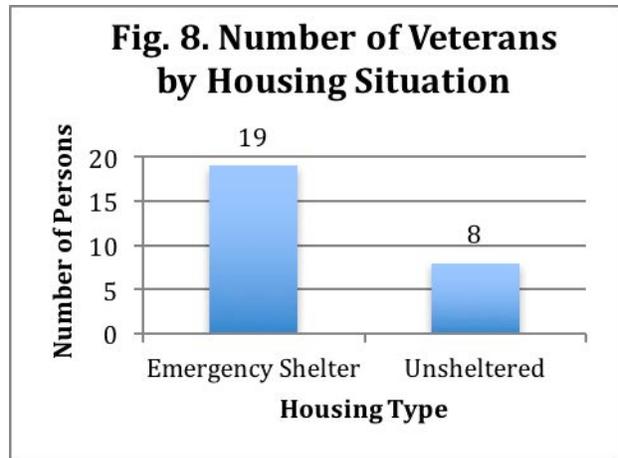


Victims of Domestic Violence

On the night of the count, in Hudson County, 69 homeless households reported having a victim of domestic violence. Figure 7 shows that 68.1% of these households were adult only households. The remaining 31.9% of households were families with at least 1 adult and 1 child under 18. 65.2% of all victim households were in an emergency shelter on the night of the count.

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.



27 veteran households were counted in the 2017 Point in Time, 3 (10%) less than in 2016. All 27 veteran households served were individual veterans served on the night of the PIT. 70.4% of persons in veteran households were staying in emergency shelters, while the remaining 29.6% were unsheltered, a decrease of 4 from 2016.

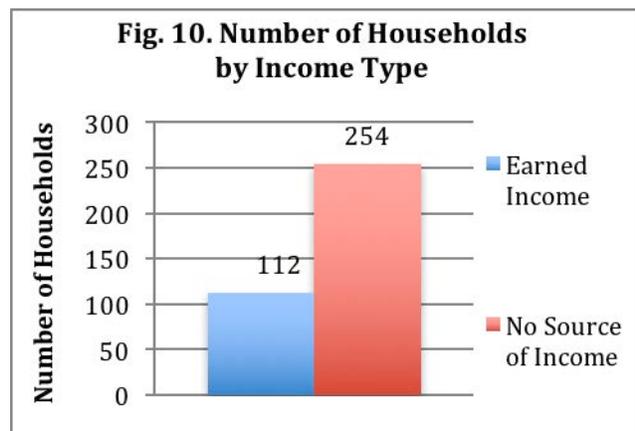
Homeless persons in veteran households in Hudson County were predominantly male (92.6%). Black or African-American and White were the most prominent racial backgrounds reported by veterans,

which 48.1% reporting each. Figure 9 illustrates the percentage of homeless veterans by age range.

No homeless veteran reported being a victim of domestic violence, and 13 veterans reported having a disability (48.1%). The most common disabilities cited were mental health issues (61.5%) and physical disabilities and chronic health conditions with 46.2% each. 3 veterans reported receiving Veteran's Pension and another veteran reported receiving Veteran's Disability as forms of income. 5 veterans reported being connected to VA Medical Benefits. The top two services that veteran households sought most were housing (92.6%) and emergency shelter (63%).

Income and Benefits

Among all households experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, 35.2% had no source of income, while 15.5% reported receiving earned cash income. The most common sources of cash income among homeless households



outside of earned income were SSI (25.7%) and General Assistance (14.1%).

	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered
Average for All Households	\$419.75	\$1,035.76	\$453.90

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

25% of homeless 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 47.6% of households. 40.8% of homeless households were connected to Food Stamps (SNAP) benefits.

Length of Homelessness

Figure 12 shows the range lengths of homeless episodes experienced on the night of the count by households in Hudson County. The largest grouping of households reported their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness



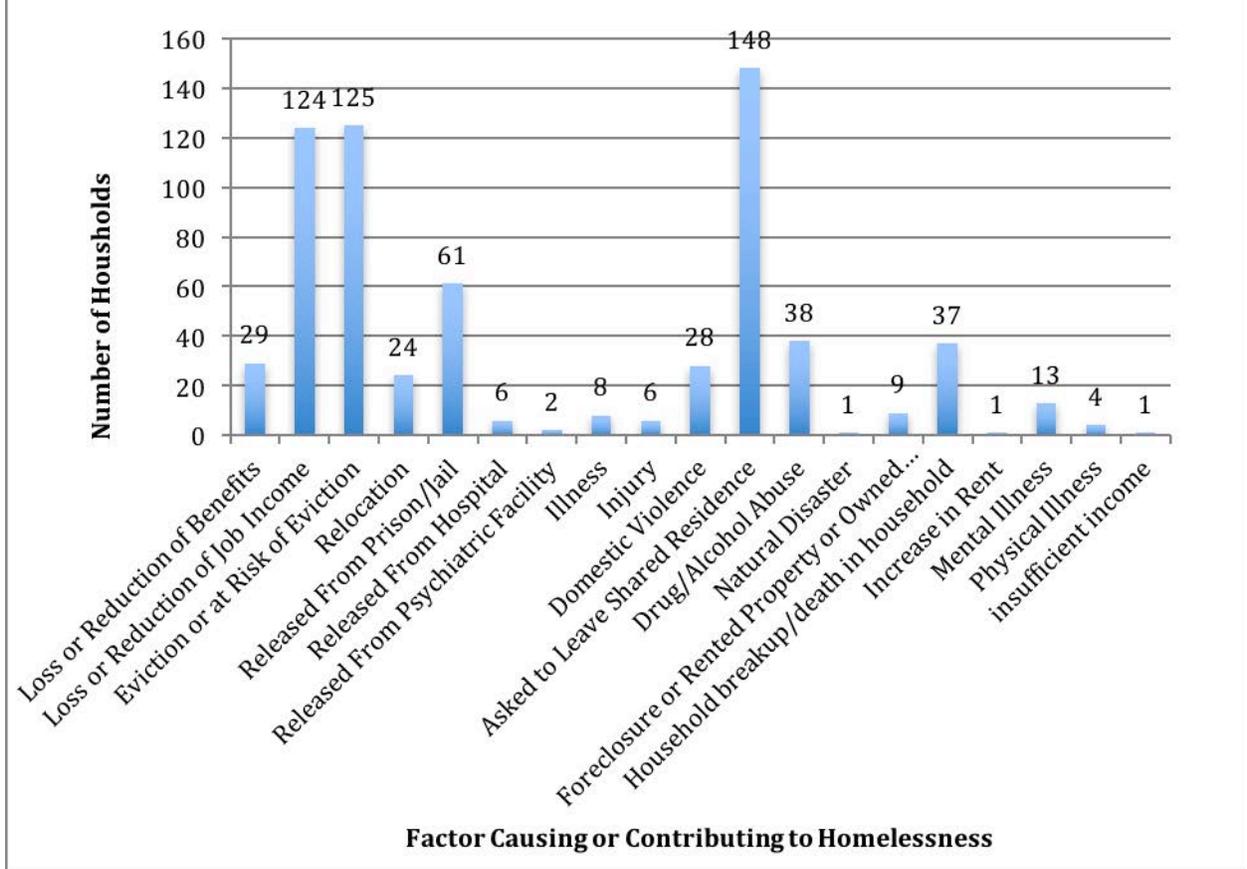
had lasted 8 days to 1 months (19.7%), different from 2016 in which the most reported length of time was more than 1 year.

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 (148 households, 20.5%) than any other cause. As Figure 13 shows, the next most common factor reported was eviction or risk of eviction (17.3%) followed by a loss or reduction of job income (17.2%).

When respondents were asked ‘what was your residence prior to your current living situation?’ more said they were residing in a place not meant for human habitation (29.1%) than any other type of residence. 23.9% reported staying in an emergency shelter prior to their current homeless location.

Fig. 13. Cause of Homelessness by Household



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. This definition has been updated since the 2015 point in time, in such that in order for a household to meet the episodic definition of chronically homeless, the 4 episodes must equal at least 12 months, which may lead to a decrease in the number of households that qualify as chronically homeless.

HUD currently has 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

170 households, made up of 176 persons, were chronically homeless in Hudson County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is an increase of 33 households (24.1%) and 37 persons (26.6%) from 2016. The rate of chronic homelessness as a percentage of overall homelessness is 21.4%; which is an increase from the 16.8% found in 2016.

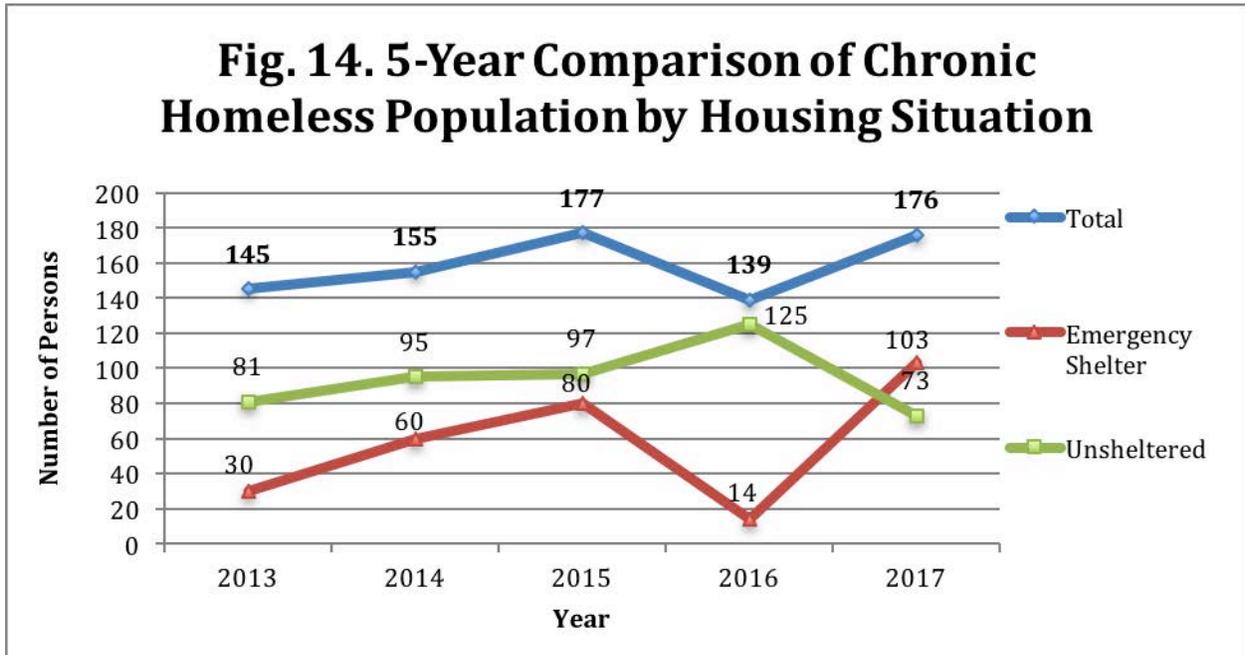
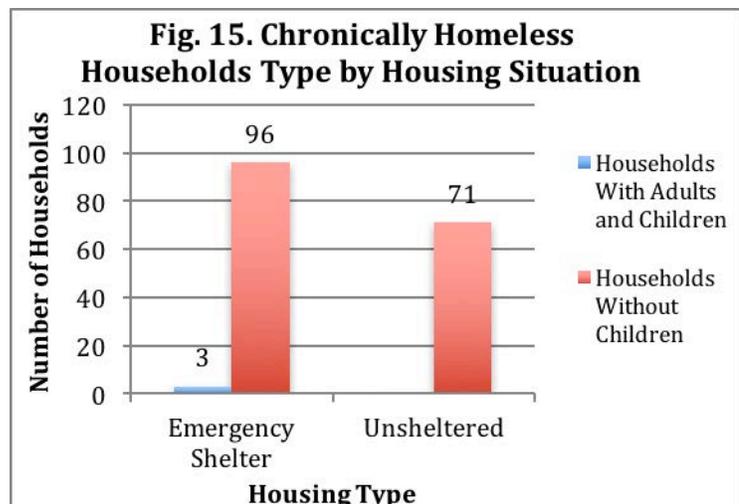


Figure 14 shows the number of chronically homeless persons who were in emergency shelter or living unsheltered in Hudson County from 2013 to 2017. Over the 5 year period from 2013 to 2017, the overall number of chronic homelessness has trended upwards, which a total increase of 21.4% between 2013 and 2017. In 2016, the number of chronically homeless persons in emergency shelter increased by 73 people but decreased for the unsheltered chronically homeless population by 8 people.

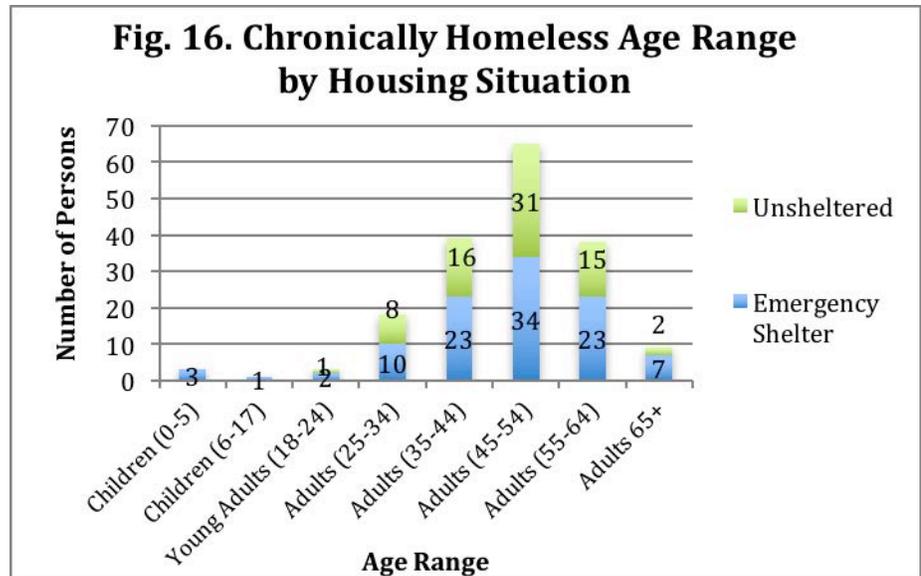
Families and Individuals

Of the 170 chronically homeless households counted in 2017, 167 (98.2%) were households without children. The other 3 households, were families with children, an increase from the 0 chronically homeless families counted in 2016.



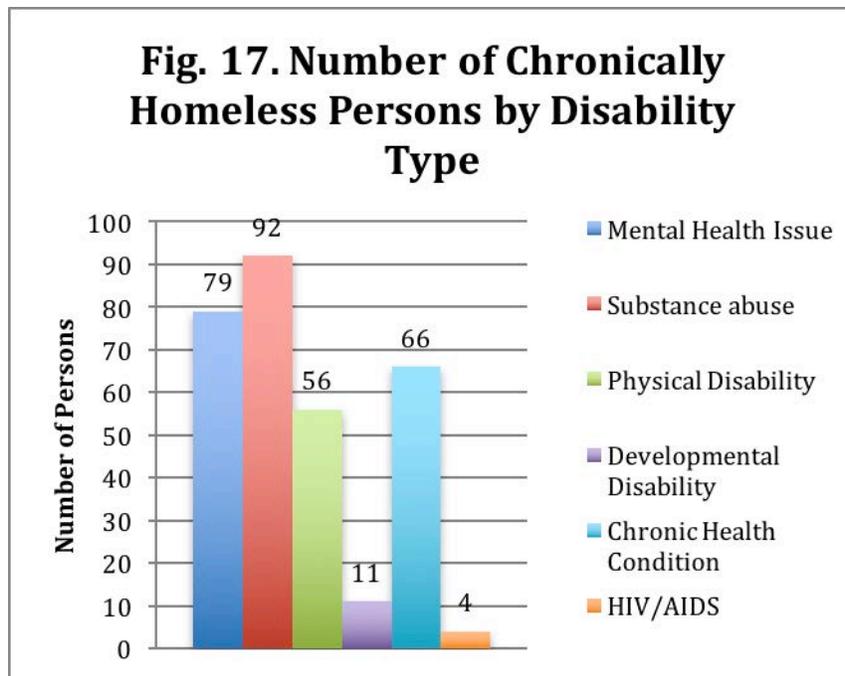
Demographics

Of the 176 total chronically homeless persons, 7 (4%) were under the age of 25. Similar to 2016, the largest number of chronically homeless persons (65, 36.9%) in a single category fell between the ages of 45 and 54 years of age.



73.3% of chronically homeless persons were male, and 26.1% were female.

The largest racial subgroup of chronically homeless persons reported their race as White (59.7%). The next largest group self-identified as Black or African-American (35.2%). With regard to ethnicity, 31.8% of chronically homeless persons 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 substance abuse disorders (52.3%) and mental health issues (44.9%). The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the chronically homeless can be seen in Figure 17.

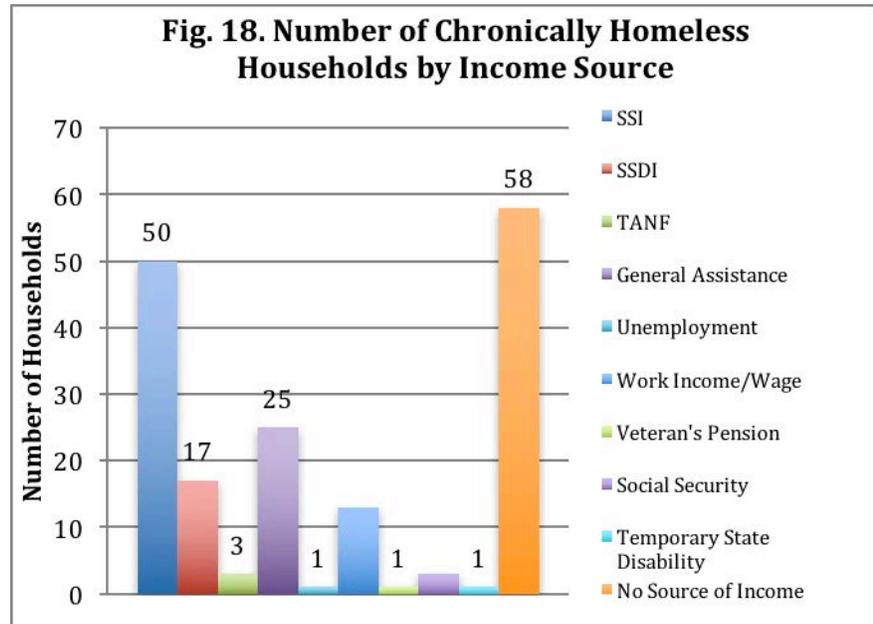
Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 22 chronically homeless households in Hudson County reported being a victim of domestic violence (12.9%). 12 (54.5%) of these victim households were staying in emergency shelter, while the remaining 10 (45.5%) were unsheltered.

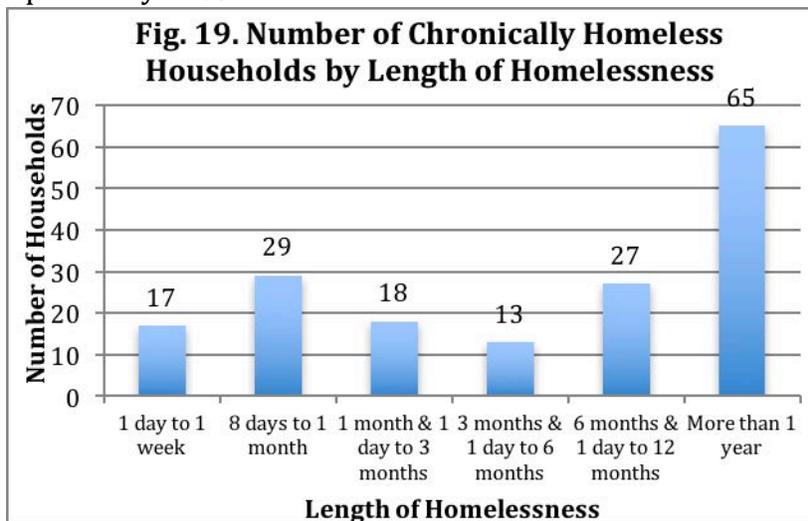
There were 7 veteran individuals identified as chronically homeless on the night of the count (4.1%).

Income and Benefits

Among all the chronically homeless households on the night of the count, 34.1% reported receiving no type of cash income. Figure 18 shows the sources of income received. The most common source of cash income among chronically homeless households was SSI, which was received by 29.4% of households. 7.6% of chronically homeless households reported earned income.



18.2% of chronically homeless households reported they were not receiving any type of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Medicaid was the top reported benefit among the chronically homeless, reported by 45.3% of households, followed by Food Stamps, reported by 40% of households.

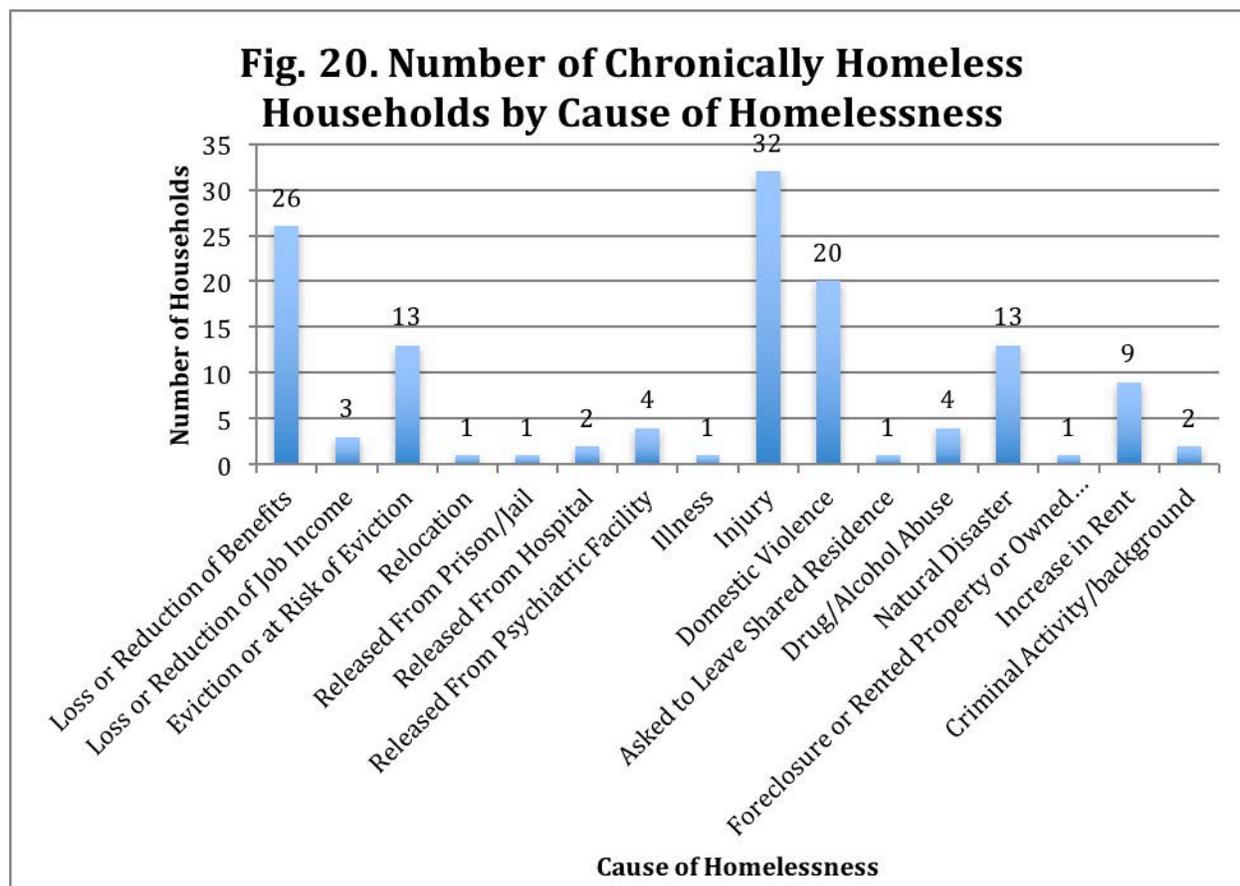


Length of Homelessness

Figure 19 shows that 65 chronically homeless households (38.2%) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted for more than 1 year, making this the most common answer.

Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more chronically homeless households cited an injury (18.8%) than any other cause. As Figure 20 shows, other common factors reported included a loss or reduction of job income or benefits (15.3%) and domestic violence (11.8%).



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

180 households, made up of 184 persons, were living unsheltered in Hudson County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 42 households (18.9%), and 42 persons (18.6%) from 2016.

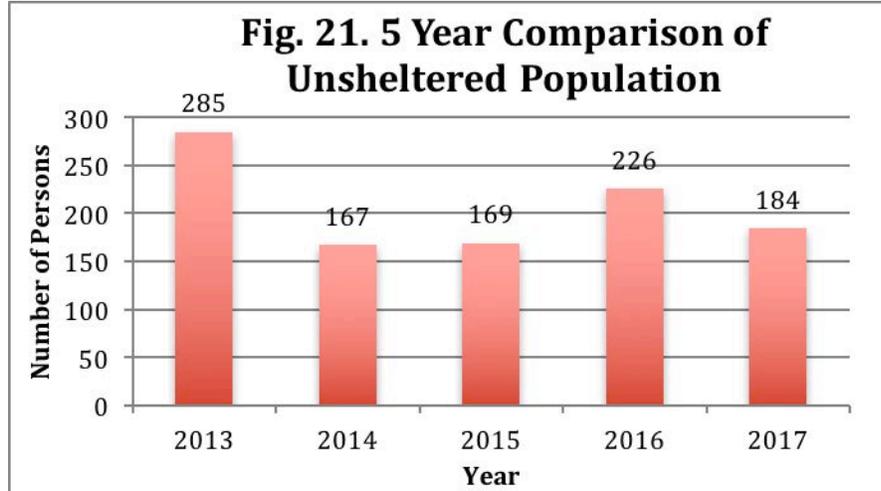


Figure 21 shows the number of unsheltered persons from 2013 to 2017. While the unsheltered population increased from 2014, the overall unsheltered population has decreased by 35.4% (101 persons) since 2013.

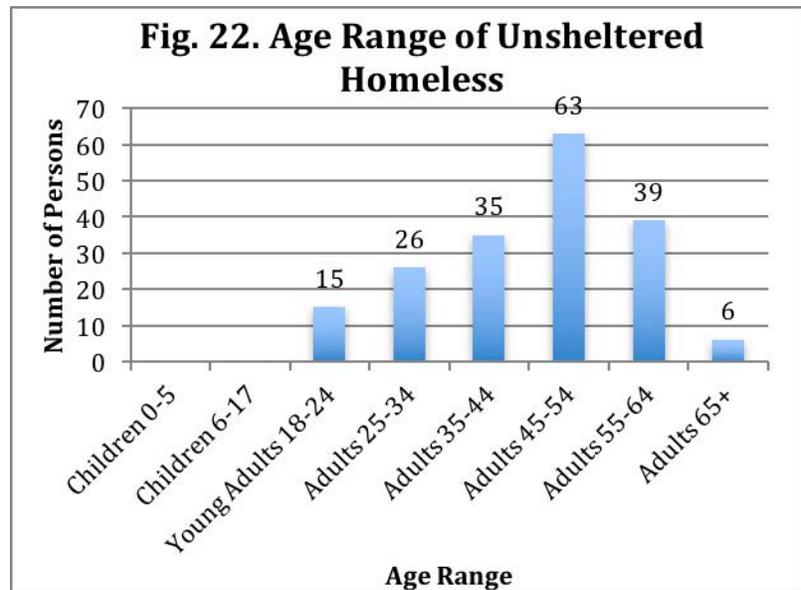
Families and Individuals

All of the 180 unsheltered households counted in 2017 were adult only households, a decrease of 1 family household from 2016. 176 of the 180 households were individuals, while the remaining 4 were adult only households composed of 8 persons.

Demographics

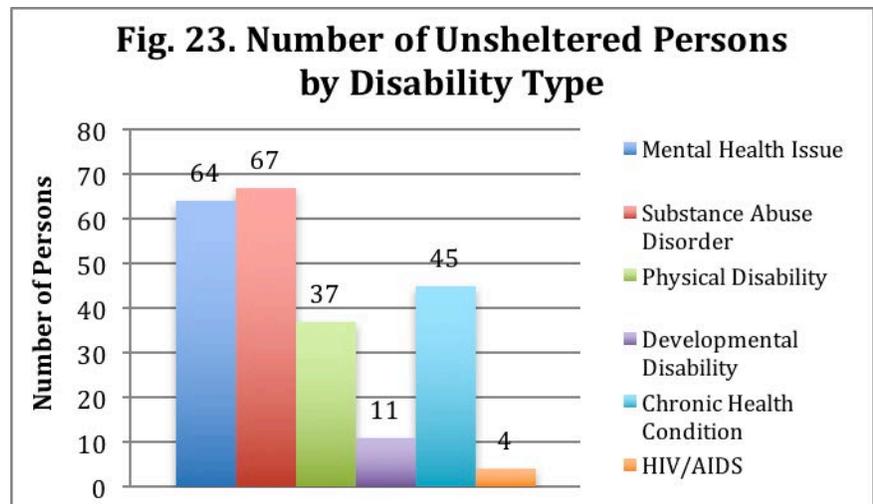
Similar to 2016, the largest portion of the 184 unsheltered persons counted in 2017, 34.2%, was between 45 and 54 years old. Figure 22 shows the age range of the unsheltered persons counted in 2017.

76.6% of unsheltered persons were male and 21.2% were female. 48.9% of unsheltered persons identified their race as Black or African-American, while 40.8% identified their race as White. 23.9% of unsheltered persons identified their ethnicity as Hispanic.



Disabilities

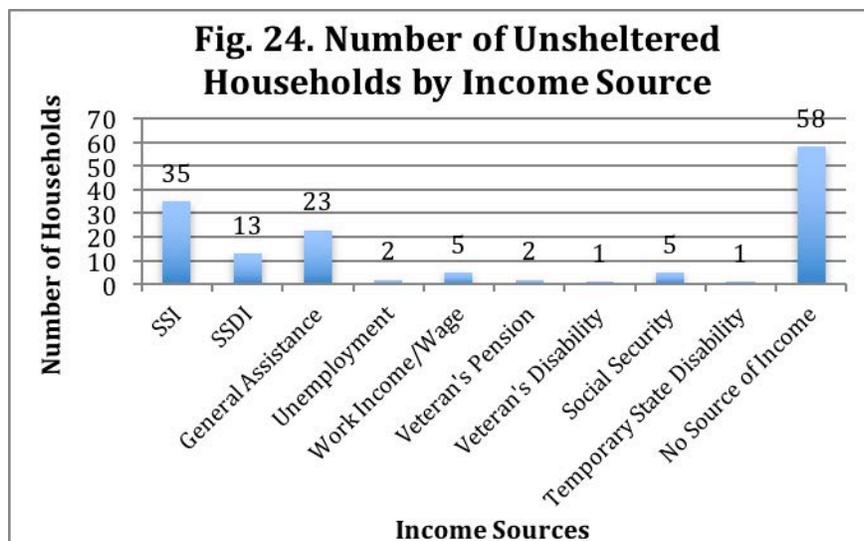
130 of the 184 unsheltered persons (70.7%) reported having some kind of disability. The disabilities most commonly identified were substance abuse disorders (51.5%) and mental health issues (49.2%). The complete numbers of reported disabilities among the unsheltered can be seen in Figure 23.



Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 23 unsheltered homeless households (12.5%) in Hudson County reported being victims of domestic violence, a decrease of 10 unsheltered domestic violence households from 2016.

There were 8 unsheltered veterans on the night of the count, 4 less than in 2016.



Income and Benefits

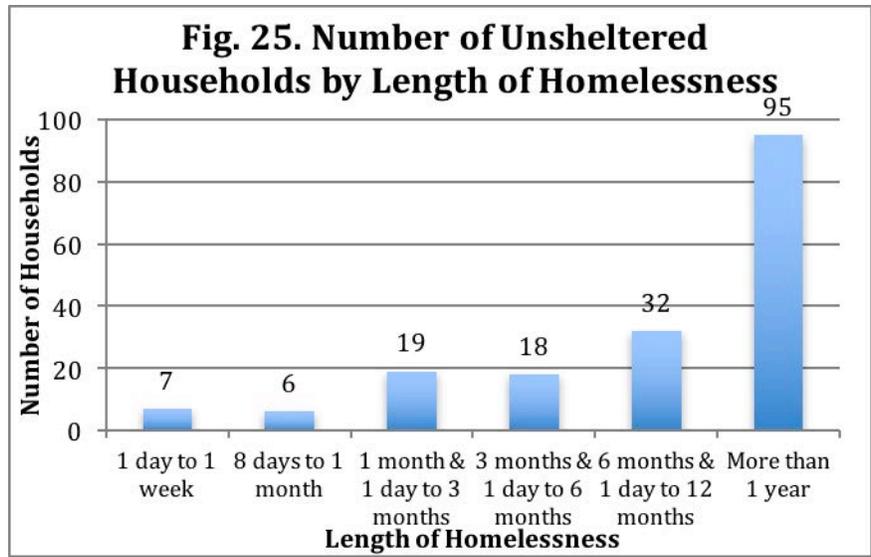
Among all the unsheltered households on the night of the count, 58 (32.2%) reported having no source of cash income, while 2.8% reported having earned income. The average monthly income reported among unsheltered households was approximately \$454.

19.4% of unsheltered households received SSI, making it the most common source of cash income. Figure 24 shows the sources of income received by the unsheltered population.

20 unsheltered households (11.1%) 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 22.8% and 20.6% receiving each of these benefits, respectively.

Length of Homelessness

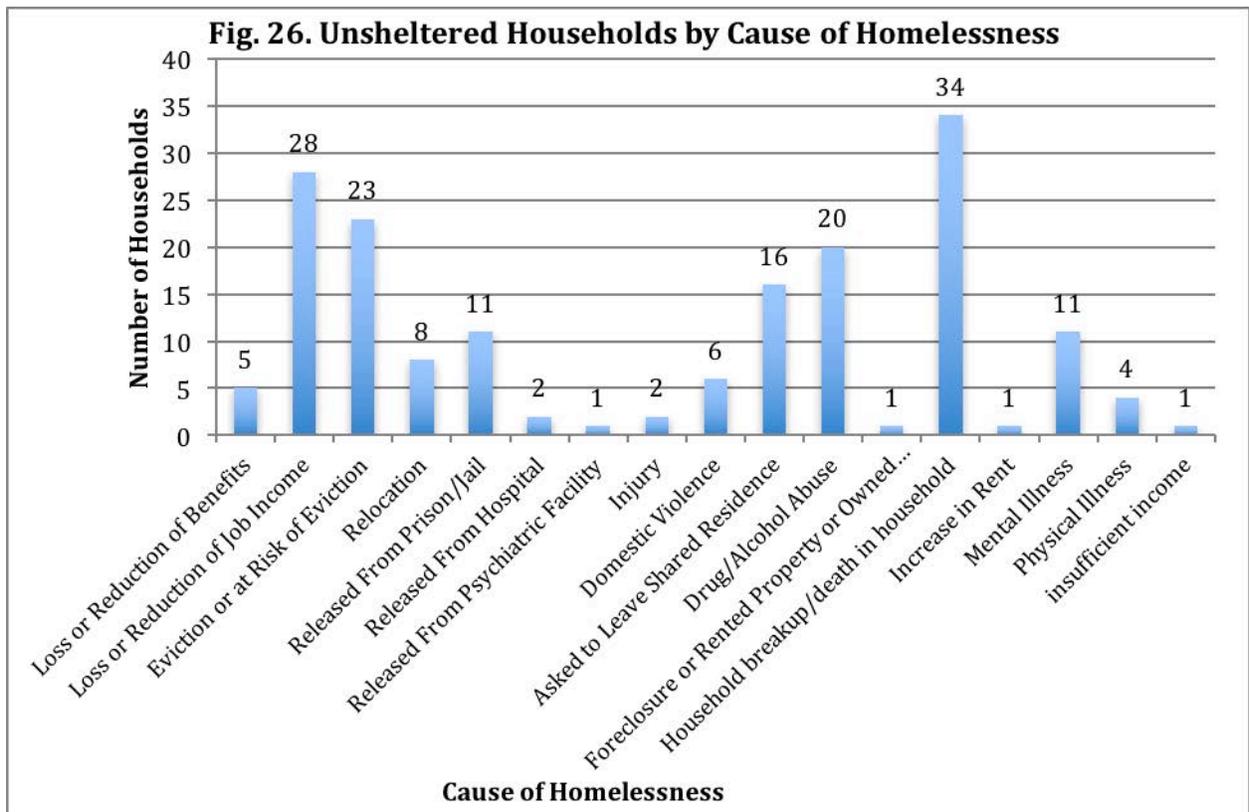
As shown in Figure 25, more unsheltered homeless households reported that their households' most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted for over a year, than any other length of time (52.8%). Another 32 households (17.8%) reported they had been



homeless between 6 months and 1 year, showing that about 70% had been continuously homeless for more than 6 months.

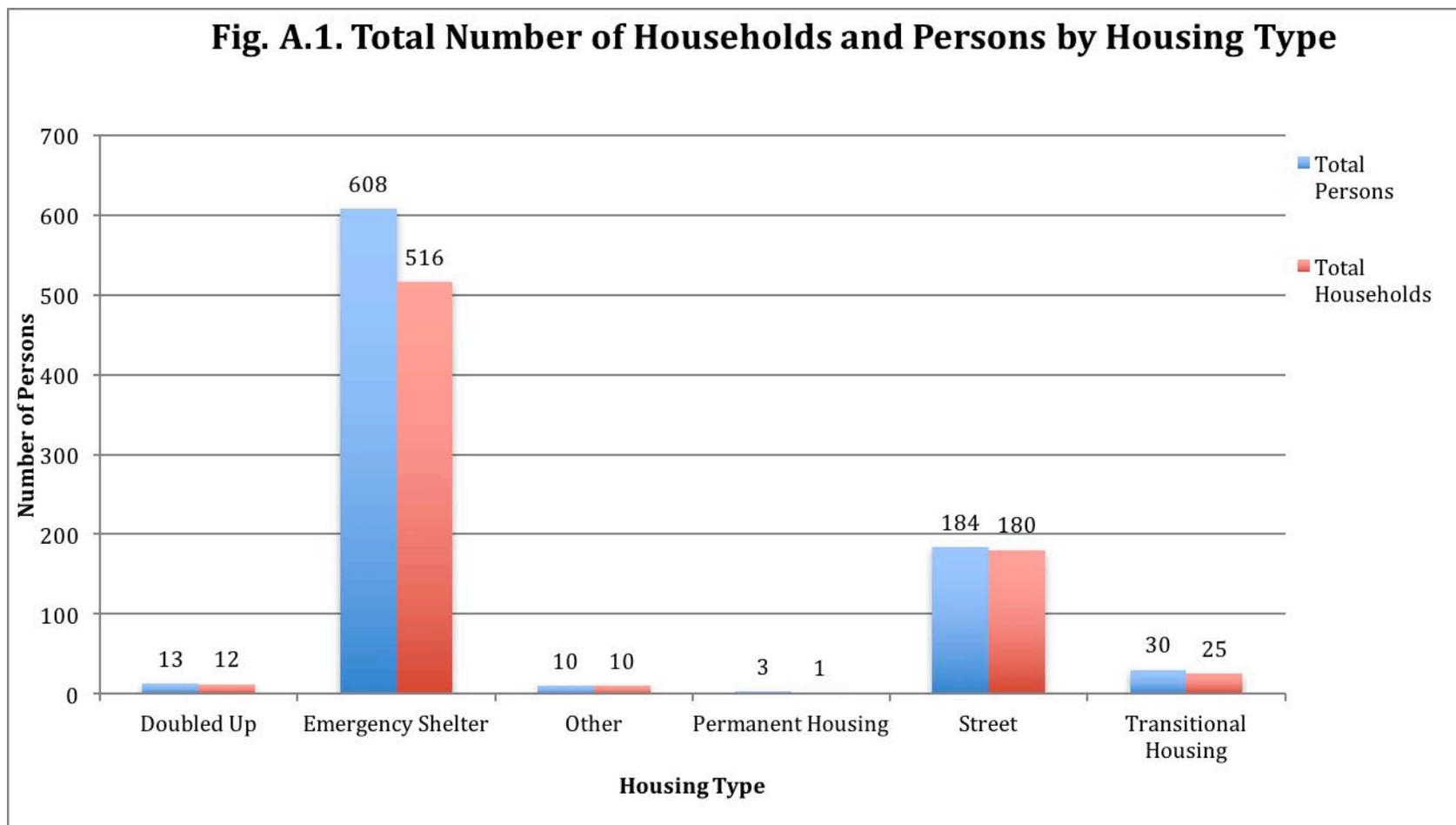
Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more unsheltered households said a household breakup or death in the household (18.9%) than any other factor. As Figure 26 shows, other common factors reported included loss or reduction of job income (15.6%) and eviction or risk of eviction (12.8%).



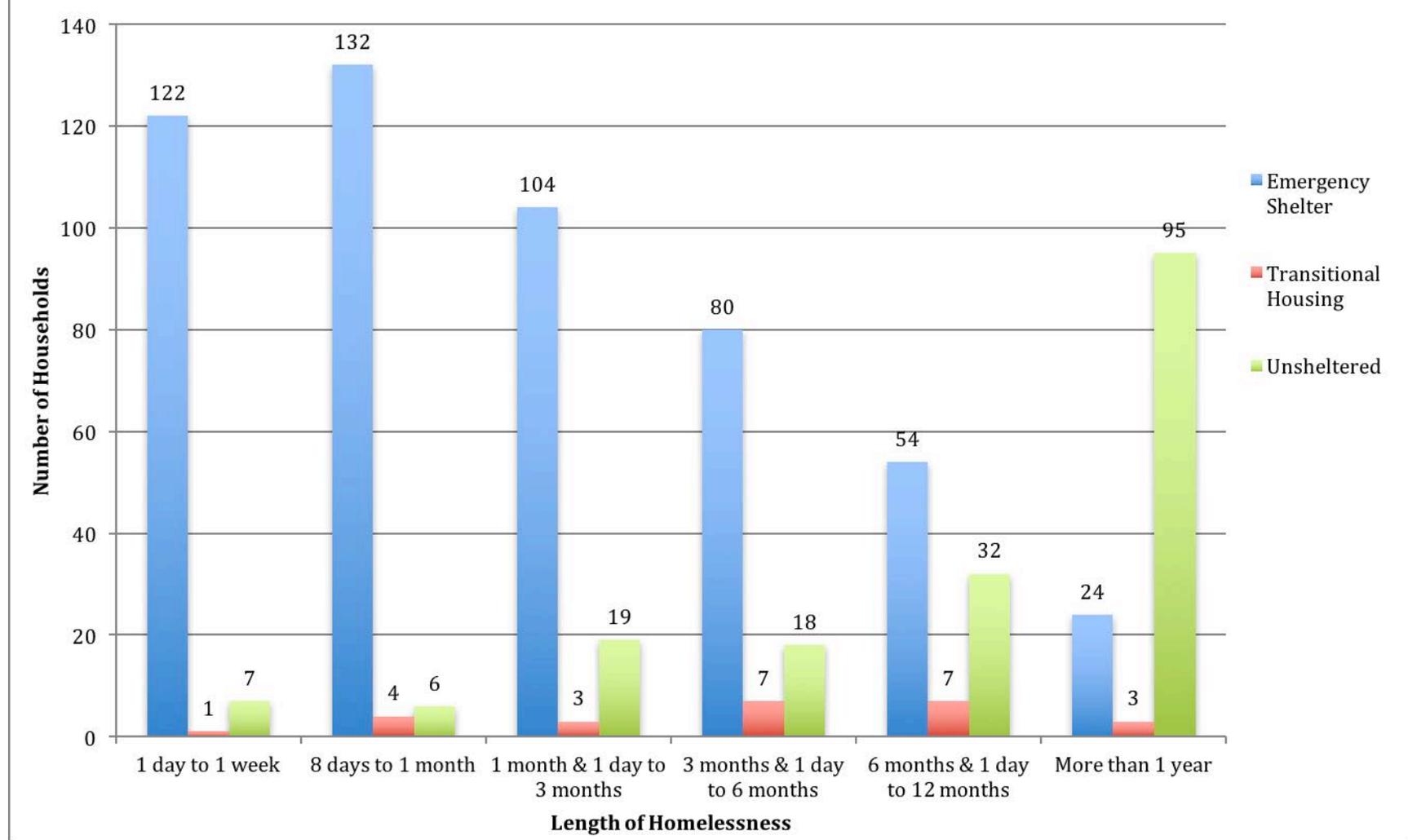
VI. Appendix

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

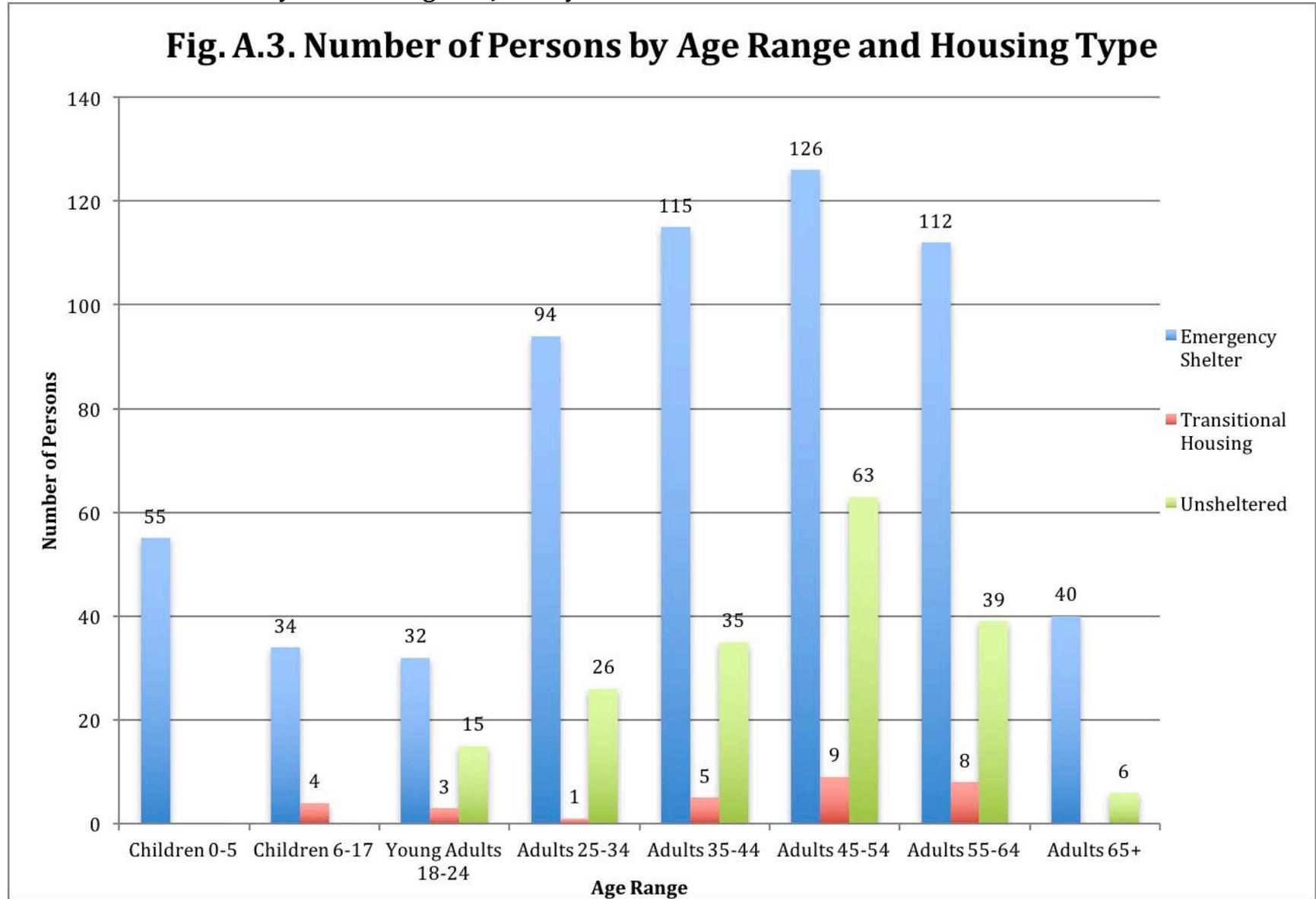


How long have you been in your current living situation?

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

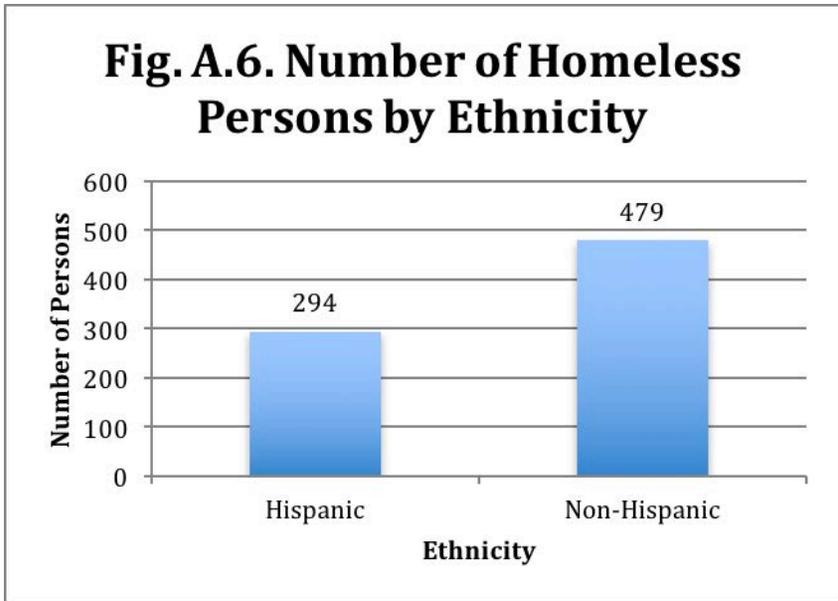
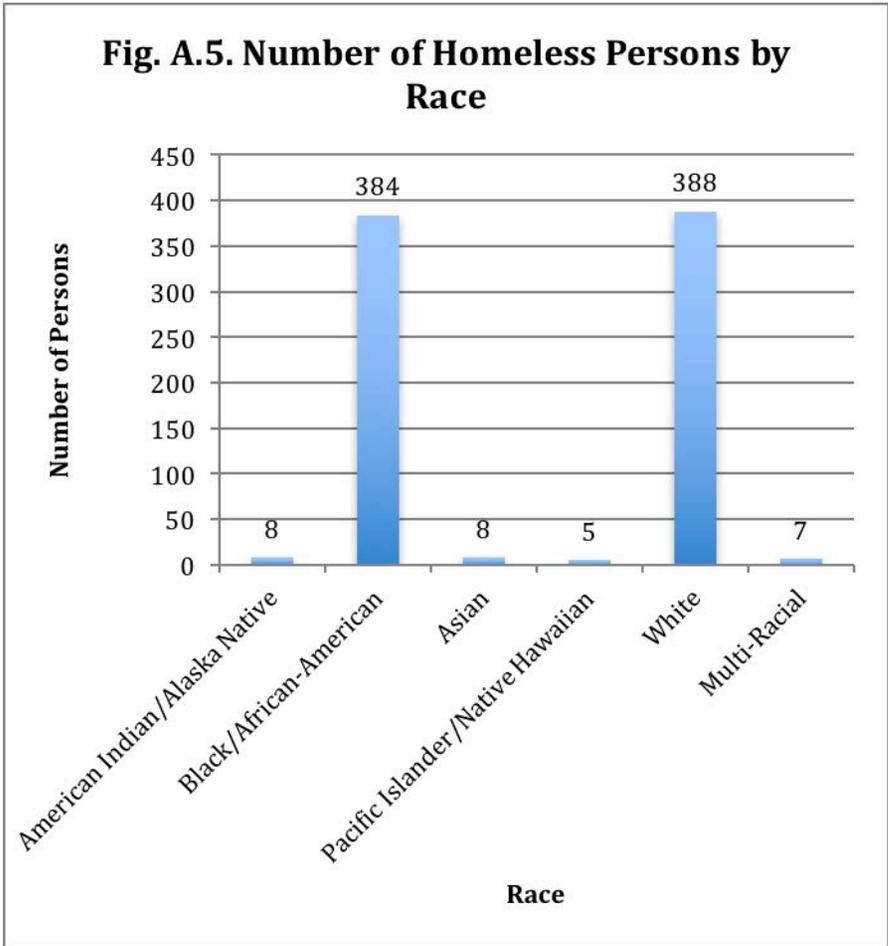
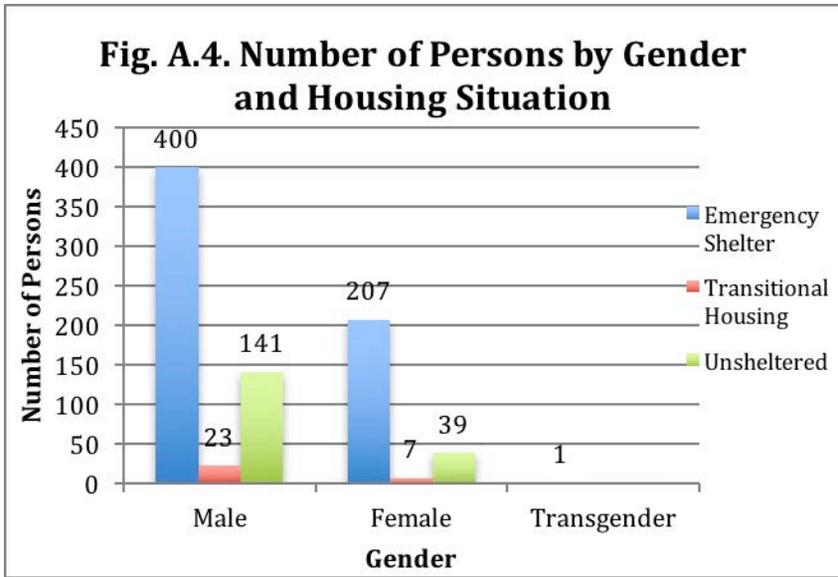
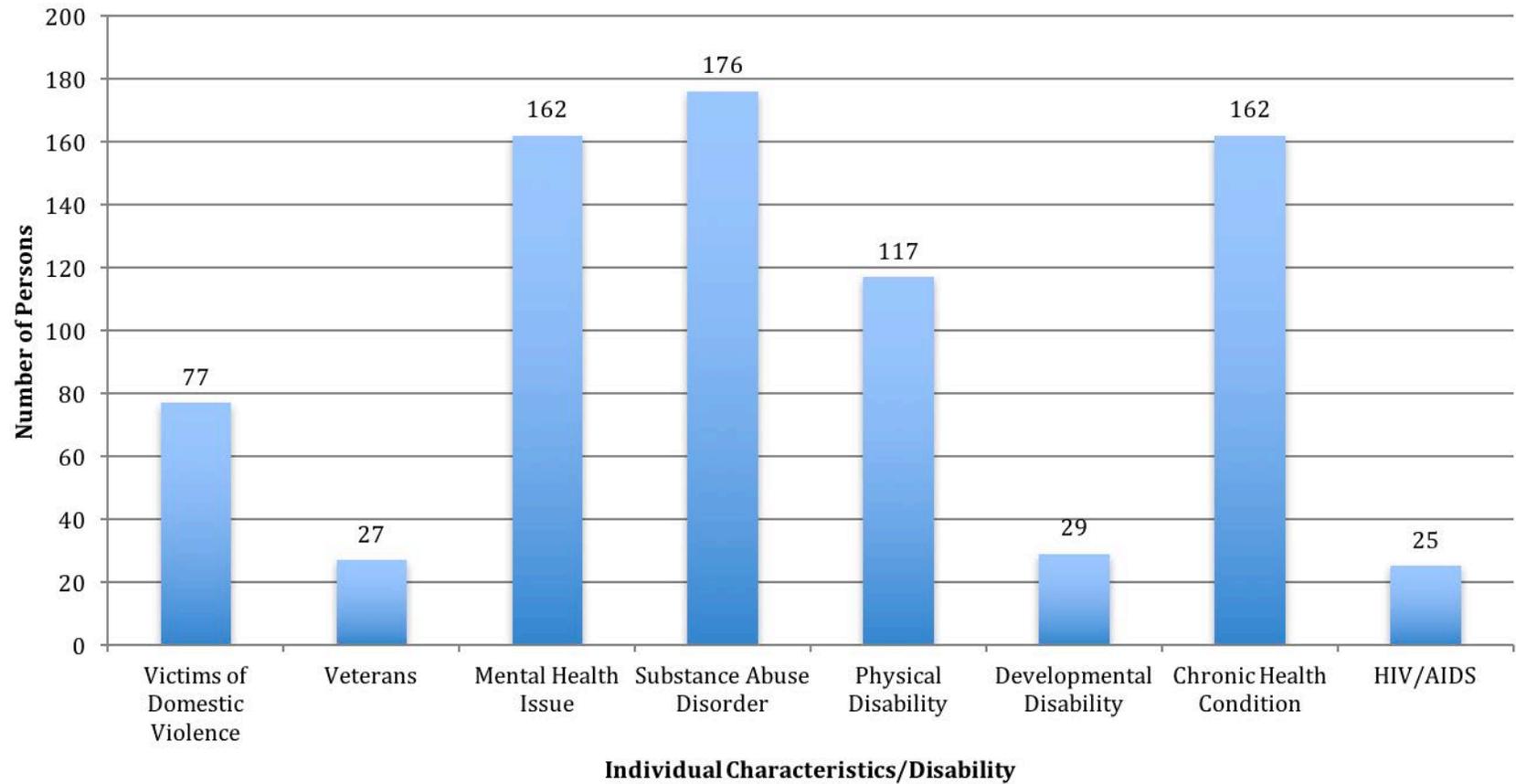


Fig. A.7. Number of Homeless Persons by Victims of Domestic Violence, Veteran Status, and Disability

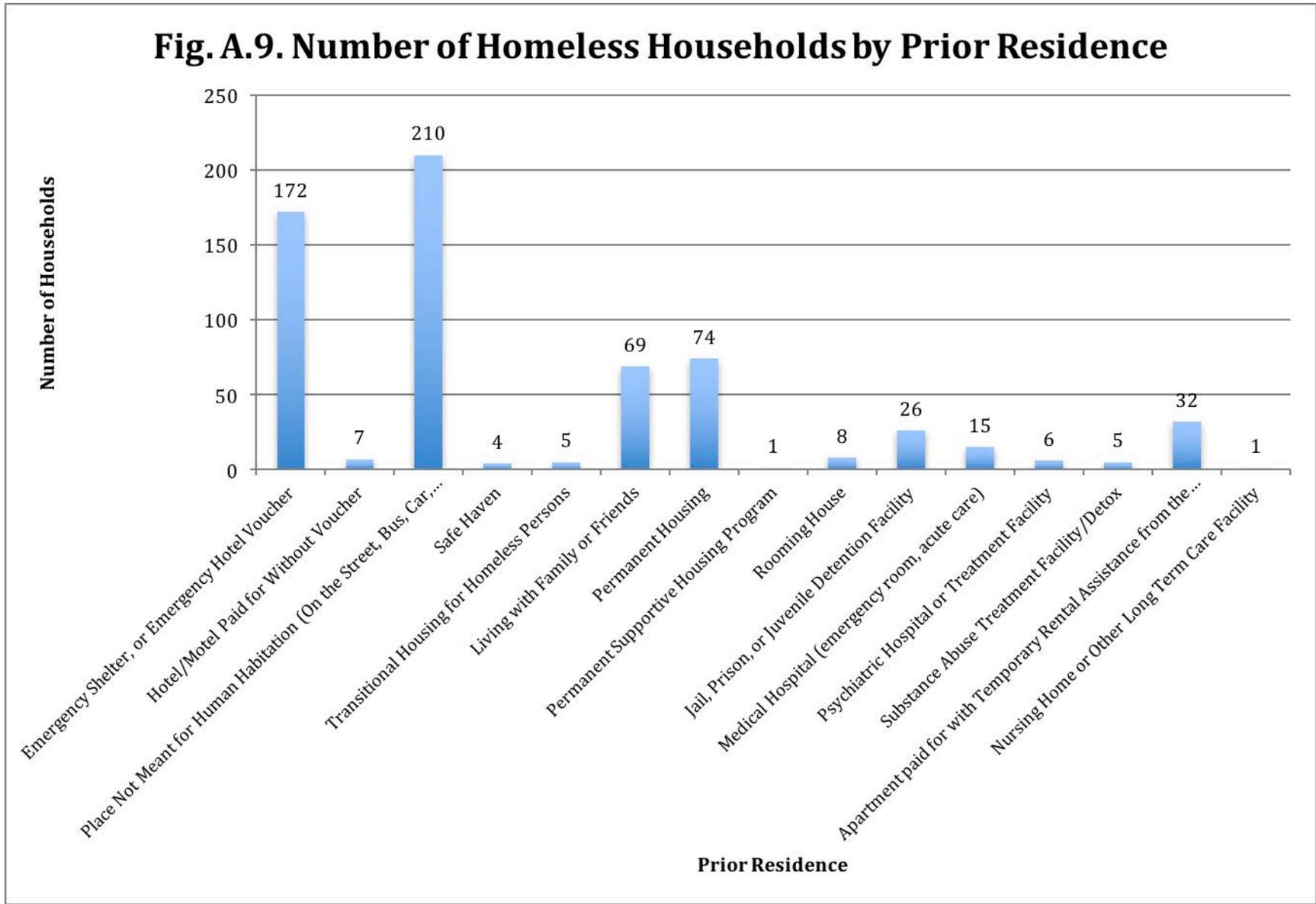


Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?

Fig. A.8. Number of Homeless Households by County, State or Country of Last Permanent Address

Last Permanent Address	Number of Households
Bergen County	10
Camden County	1
Essex County	19
Gloucester County	1
Hudson County	589
Middlesex County	3
Monmouth County	1
Morris County	4
Passaic County	4
Union County	9
California	1
Connecticut	1
Florida	3
Massachusetts	1
New York	10
North Carolina	1
Pennsylvania	3
South Carolina	1
Tennessee	1
Virginia	1

What was your residence prior to your current living situation?



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

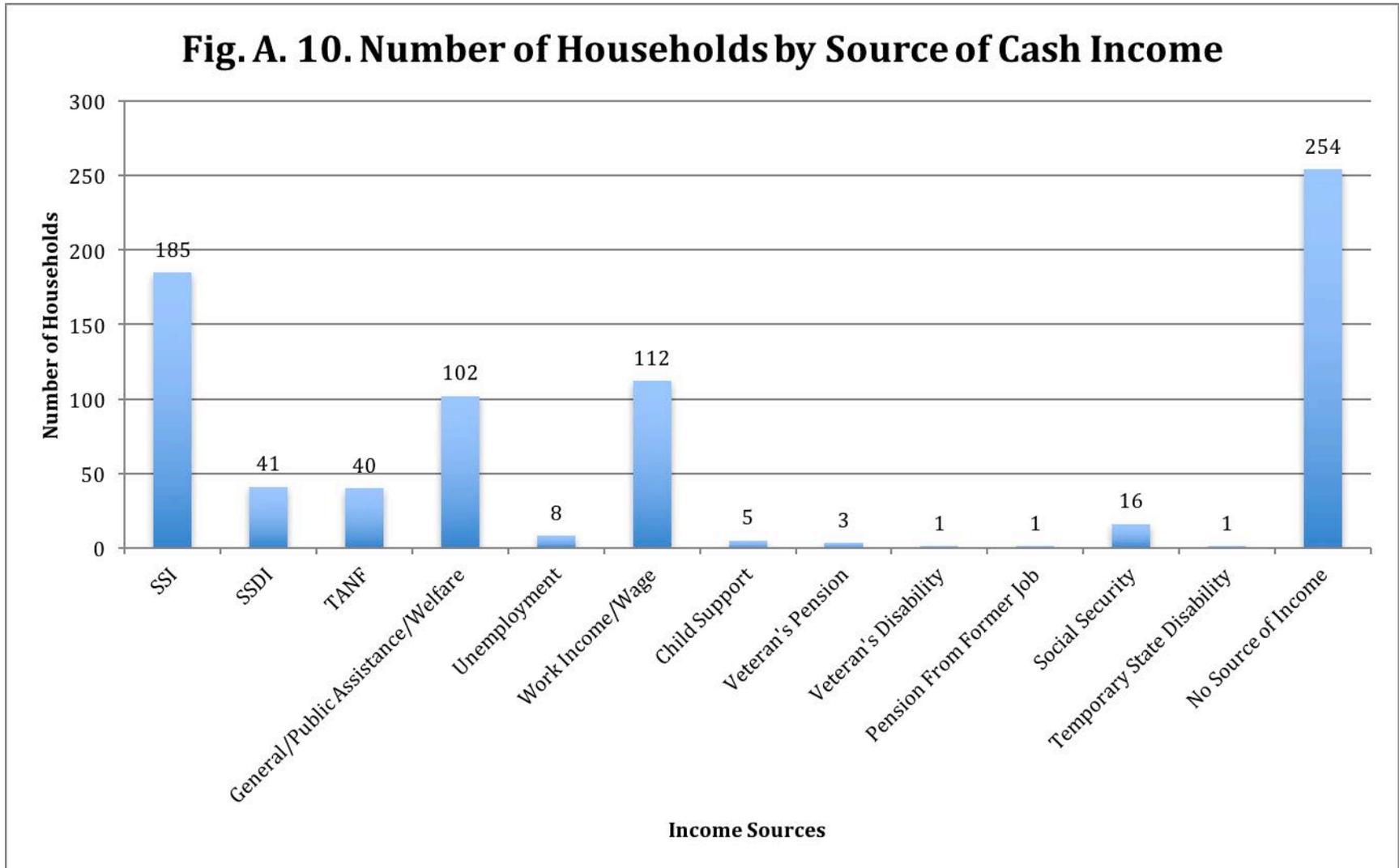
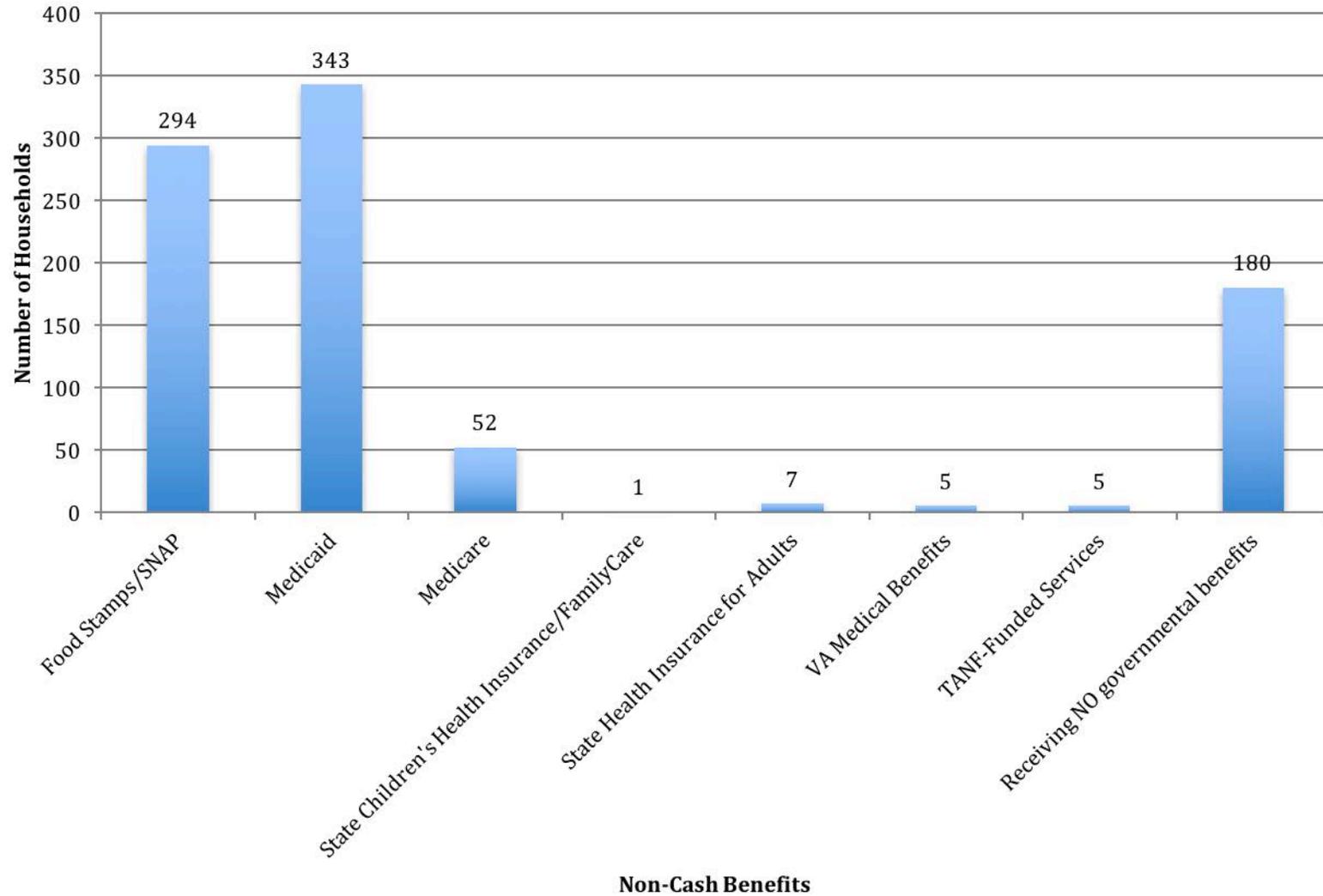
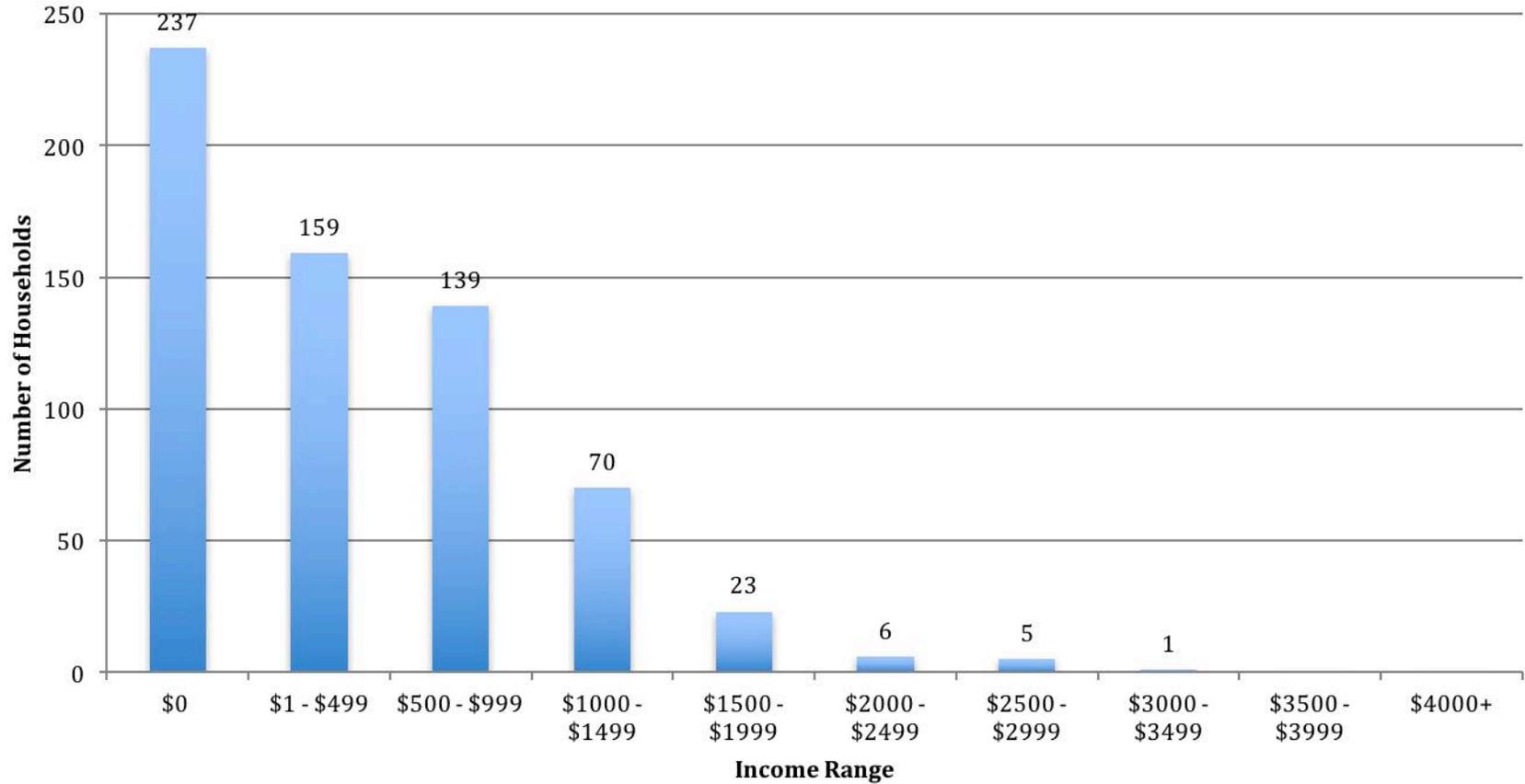


Fig. A. 11. Number of Households by Sources of Non-Cash Benefits



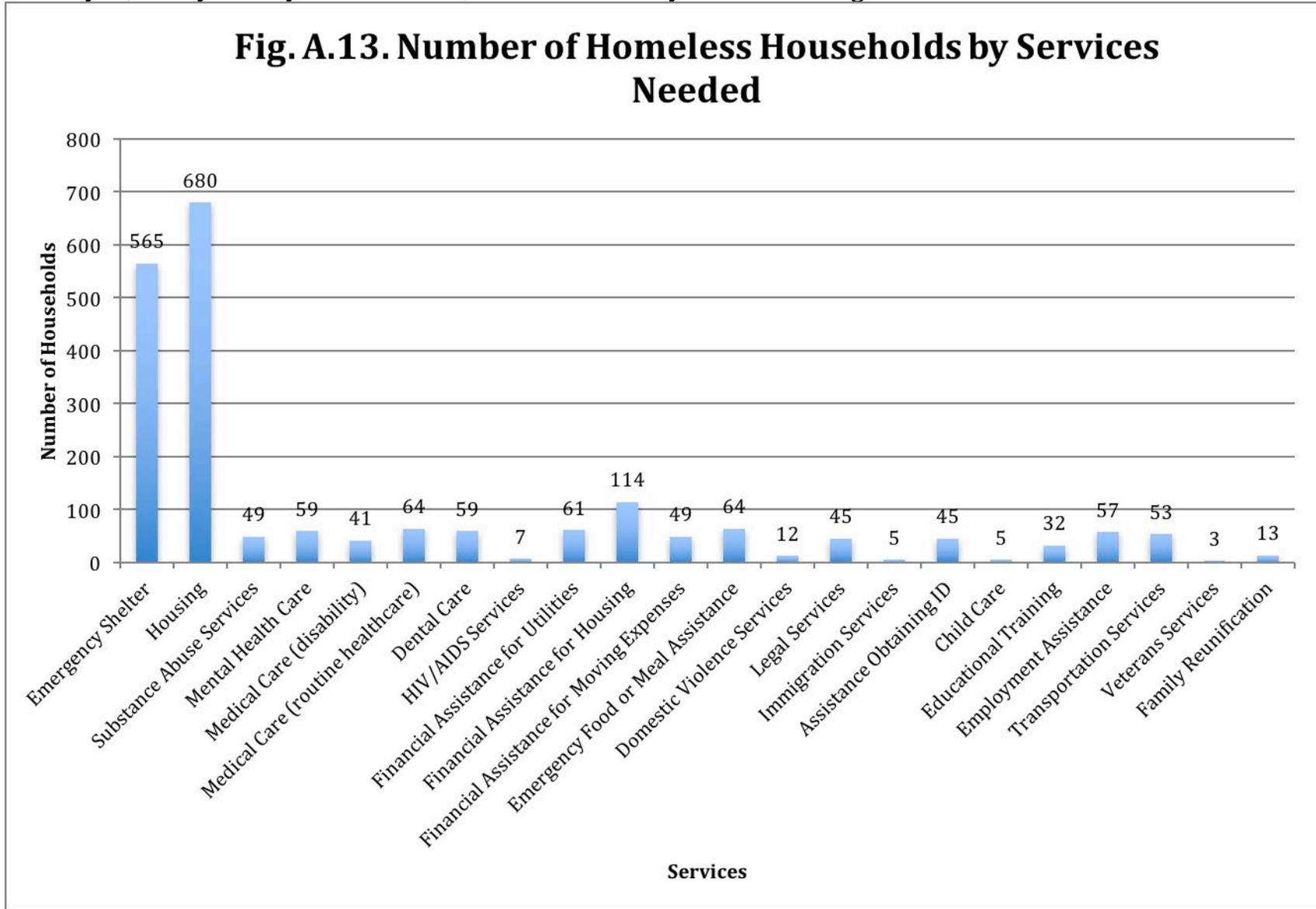
What is your monthly household income?

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

