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NJ
2017
Counts!

Hunterdon 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 119 households, including 130 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Hunterdon County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 17 households, with 17 persons, were identified as chronically homeless.
- There were 16 households, with 17 persons, unsheltered homeless persons counted.

Total Homeless Population

On the night of January 24th, 2017, a total of 130 persons, in 119 households, were experiencing homelessness in Hunterdon County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is a decrease of 3 persons (2.3%) from 2016. The number of households remained the same as in 2016. Hunterdon County had 1.5% New Jersey's statewide homeless population in 2017.

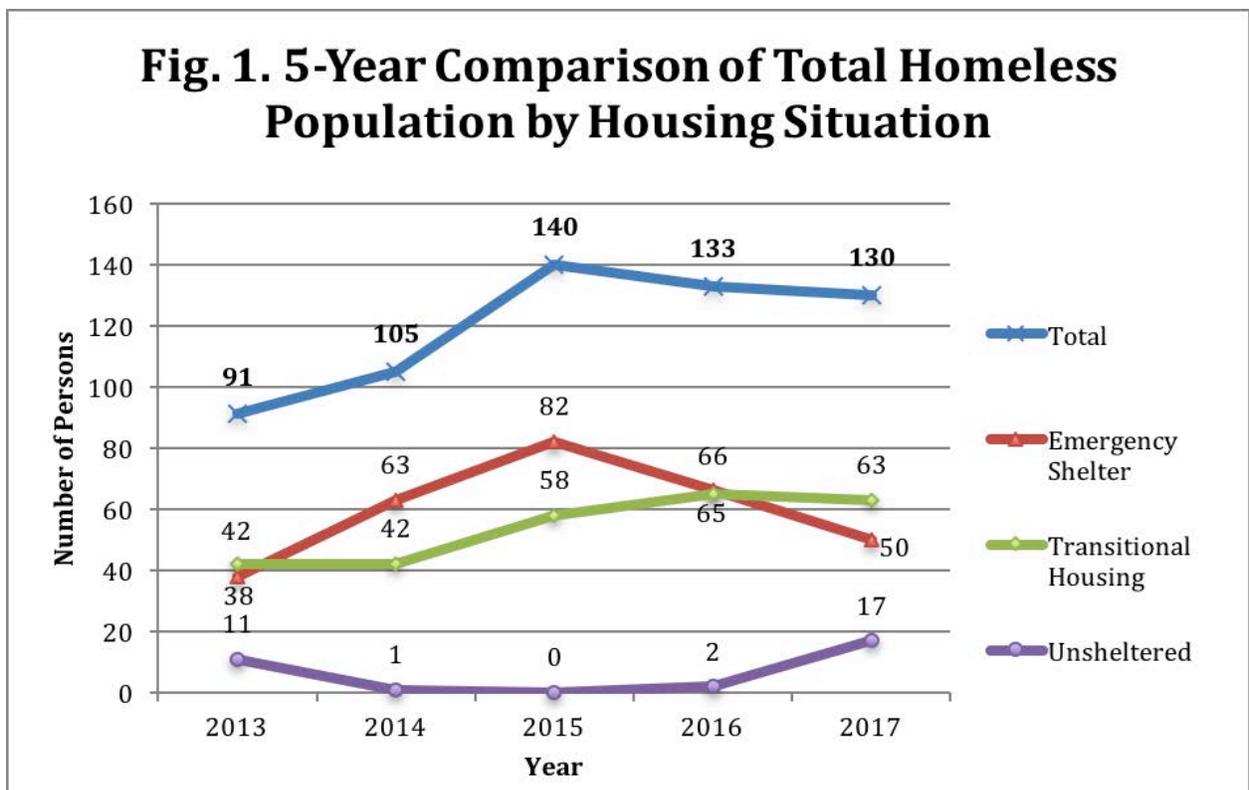
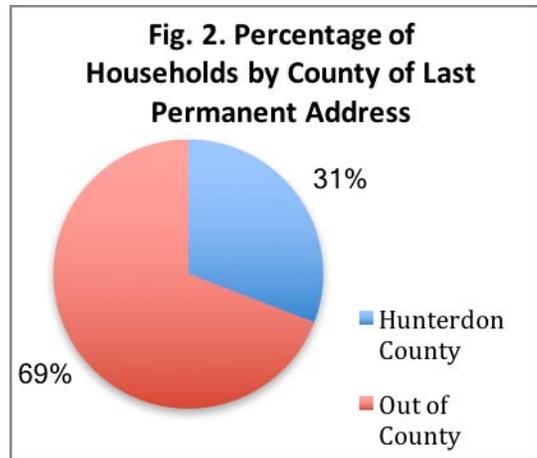


Figure 1 shows that, in 2017, 50 homeless persons (38.5%) were staying in emergency shelter, 63 in transitional housing (48.5%) and 17 (13%) were unsheltered on the night of the count. The total number of those in emergency shelter decreased by 16 (24.2%) from 2016, however, the unsheltered population increased 750% from 2 to 17 persons.

Figure 1 also shows that, over the past five years, the total number of homeless persons has been fluctuating in Hunterdon County, with the highest count in 2015 (140). There has been an overall 42.9% increase from 2013 to 2017.

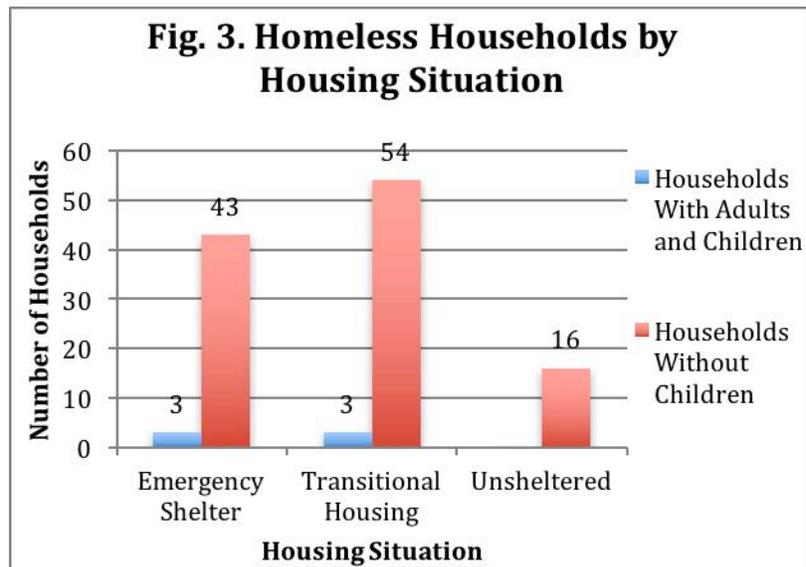
As Figure 2 shows, 69% of homeless households counted in Hunterdon County reported that their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless was outside of the county.



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’).

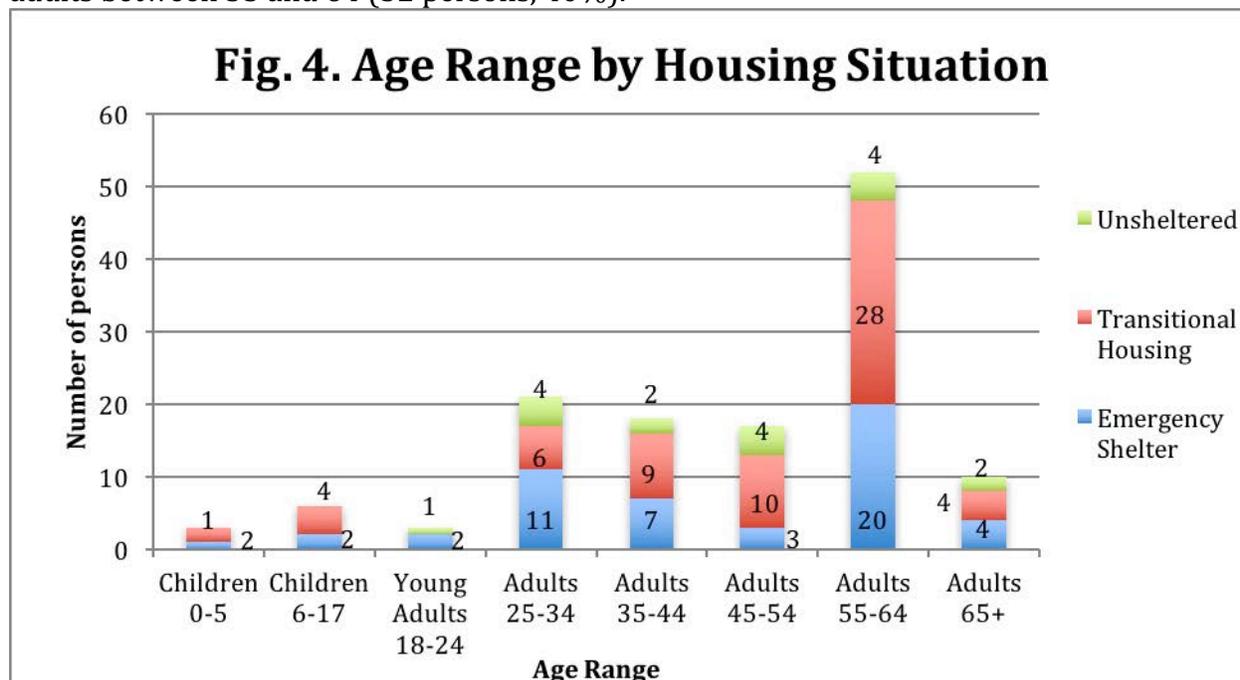
Of the 119 homeless households counted in Hunterdon County in 2016, 6 (5.0%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult. These families included 16 persons, including 9 children under age 18. The average family size was 3.2 persons. Figure 3 shows that 3 of these families (50%) were staying in transitional housing on the night of the count, while the remaining 3 families (50%) were in emergency shelters.



95% (113) of the homeless households counted in Hunterdon County were households without children under 18. All 113 households were composed of single adult individuals, except for 1 couple household. 38.1% of all adult-only households were staying in emergency shelters, while 47.8% were in transitional housing. 16 adult only households (14.2%) were unsheltered on the night of the count.

Demographics

The majority (118 persons, 90.8%) of those experiencing homelessness in Hunterdon County on the night of the count were adults over age 24. There were a total of 3 (2.3%) homeless young adults between 18 and 24 years old, and 9 (6.9%) children under 18 years old as well. Figure 4 shows that the majority of homeless children who were under the age of 18 were between 6 and 17 years of age (6, 66.7%). The age range most represented was adults between 55 and 64 (52 persons, 40%).

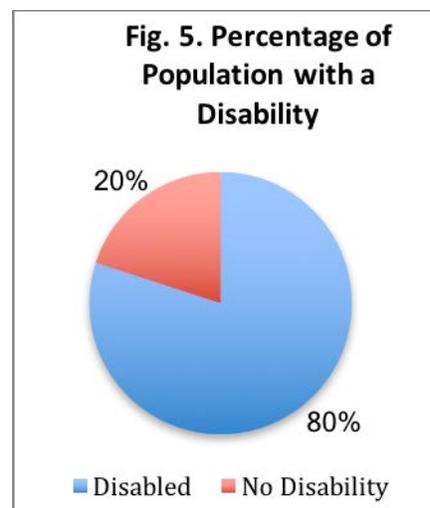


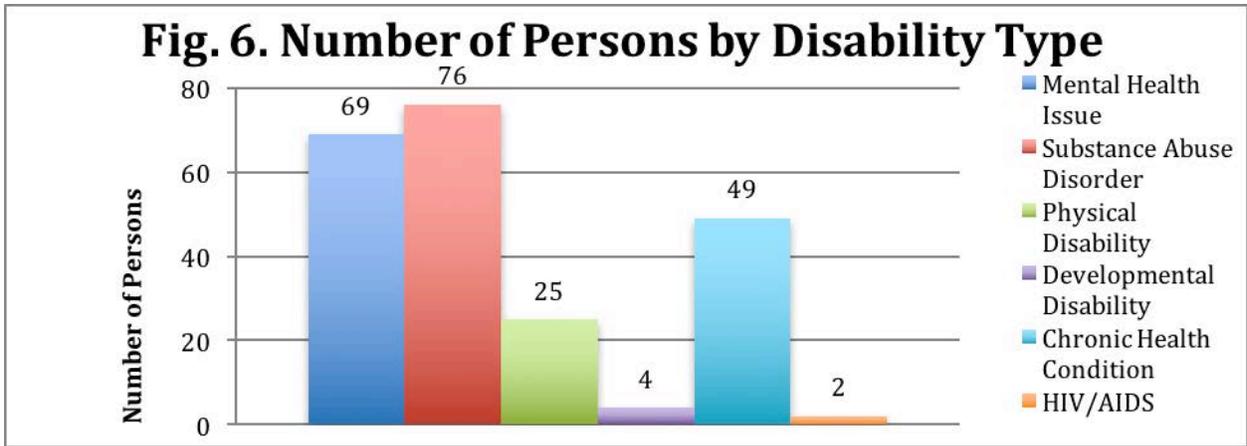
76.2% of homeless respondents were male, and 23.8% were female.

59.2% of respondents 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 (37.7%), followed by those identifying as Asian (2.3%). With regard to ethnicity, 11.5% of respondents identified themselves as Hispanic.

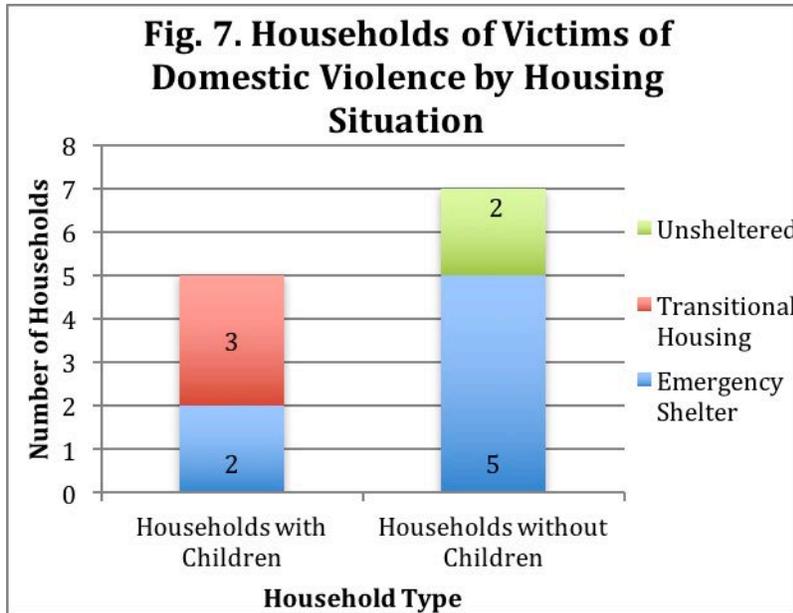
Disabilities

Figure 5 illustrates that 80% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 86% of adults 18 or older reported some type of disability and 0 children reported a disability. Figure 6 shows the number of the 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, 73.1% reported substance abuse disorder making this the most prevalent disability; representing 62.8% of the total adult homeless population.

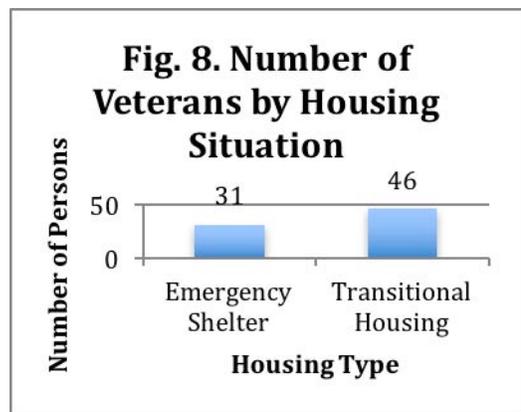


Victims of Domestic Violence

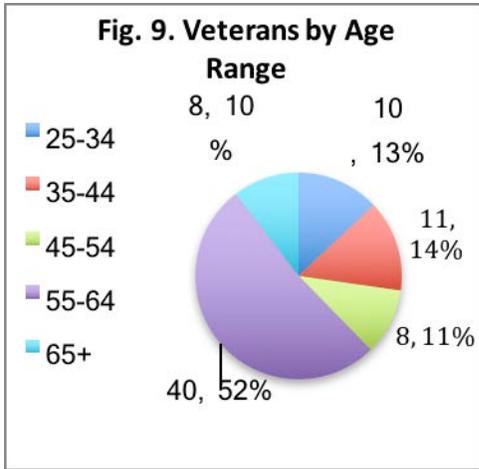
On the night of the count, in Hunterdon County, 12 homeless households reported having a victim of domestic violence. Figure 7 shows that 7 (58.3%) of these households were households made up of adult individuals, while 5 (41.7%) households were families with at least 1 adult and 1 child under 18. 2 adult households were unsheltered.

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.



77 homeless veterans were counted on the night of the count, this is an increase of 6 veterans (8.5%), from the 71 that were counted in 2016. 76 (99%) of the veterans were members of adult-only households, while 1 was part of a



family household consisting of 3 persons with one child between the ages of 6 and 17. 31 (40.3%) were staying in emergency shelter, while 46 (59.7%) were in transitional housing.

69 (89.6%) of the veterans experiencing homelessness in Hunterdon County were male, and 8 (10.4%) were female. 49.4% identified their race as White and 46.8% as Black or African-American.

72 of the 77, 93.5%, reported having some kind of disability. The most common disabilities cited among these were substance abuse issues; with 60 veterans (83.3%), and mental health issues, reported by 54 veterans (75%). The types of service that homeless veterans sought most were housing and emergency shelter, with 99% percent of veterans seeking these services. 7.8% of veterans were connected with VA pension, 32.5% were connected with VA disability benefits and 28.6% reported no source of cash income. 93.5% of veterans were connected to VA medical benefits.

Income and Benefits

Among all the households experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, 27.7% had no source of income, and 16.8% reported receiving some form of earned cash income. The most common sources of cash income among homeless households, other than earned income, were General Assistance (12.6%) and Veterans' Disability Benefits (21%).

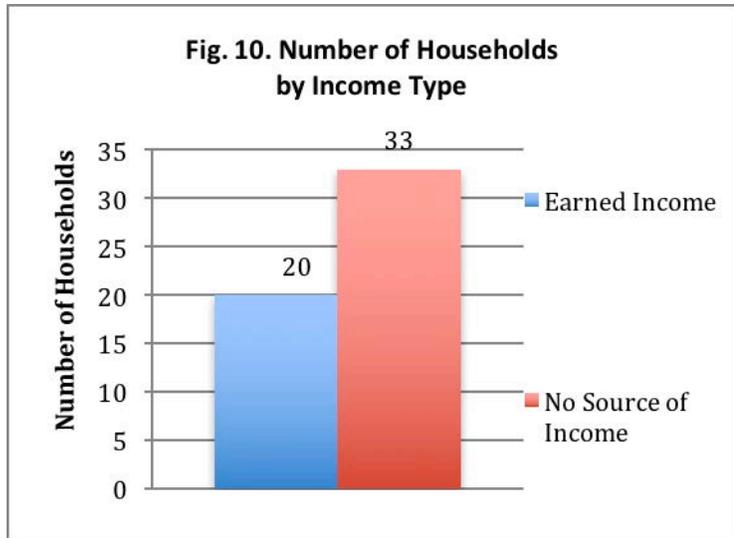


Figure 11 shows the average monthly income for all homeless households.

Figure 11. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation			
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered
Average for All Households	\$909.20	\$916.70	\$274.40

5.9% of households reported that their household was receiving no kind of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. VA Medical Benefits was the top reported non-cash benefits reported by 61.3% of households followed by Medicaid, (30.3%) and Food Stamps (SNAP) (17.6%)

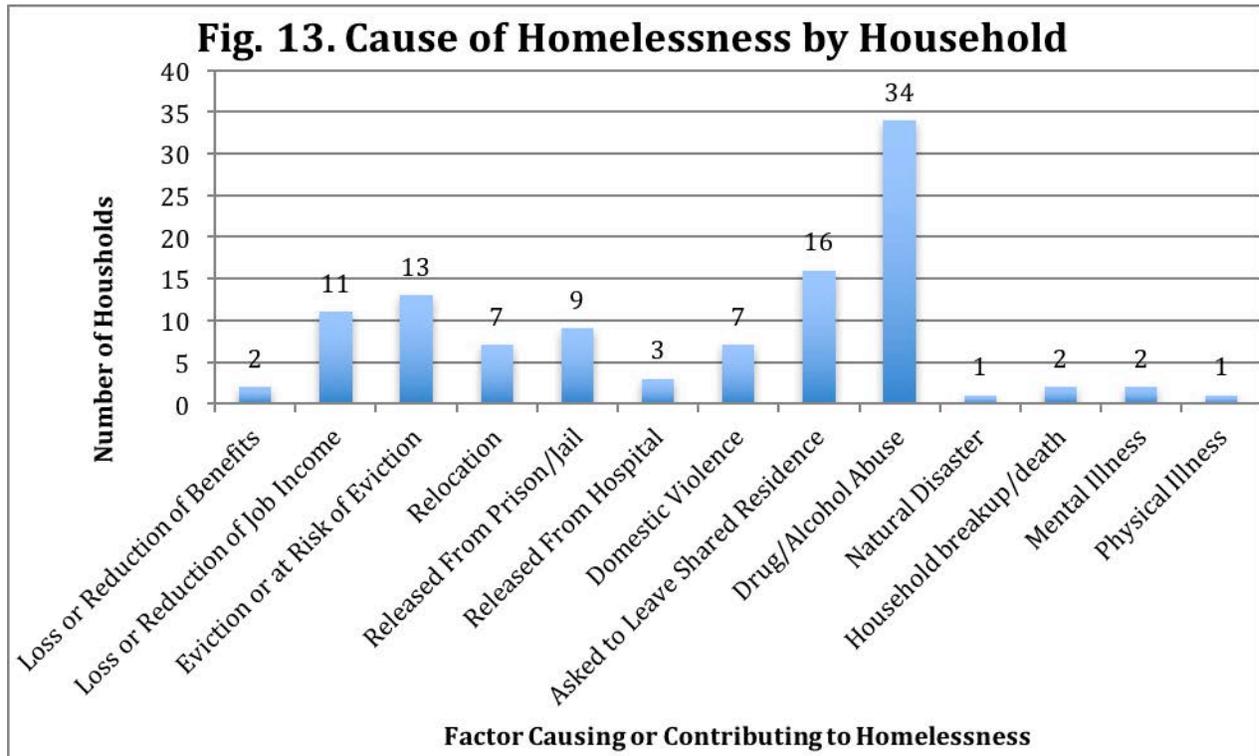
Length of Homelessness

Figure 12 shows the lengths of homeless episodes experienced on the night of the count by households in Hunterdon County. More households (41, 34.5%) reported that their most recent, continuous episode of homelessness had lasted for was between 1 month 1 day to 3 months.



Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more respondents attributed their homelessness to drug or alcohol abuse (34 households, 28.6%) than any other cause. As Figure 13 shows, the next most common factors reported were being asked to leave a shared residence (13.4%) and eviction (10.9%).



When homeless respondents were asked ‘what was your residence prior to your current living situation?’ more said they were living at an Emergency Shelter (21.8%) than any other type of residence. The next most common response was permanent housing (16.8%).

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

17 households, made up of 17 total persons, were chronically homeless in Hunterdon County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. Chronic homelessness as a percentage of overall homelessness went from 9% in 2016 to 13.1% in 2017.

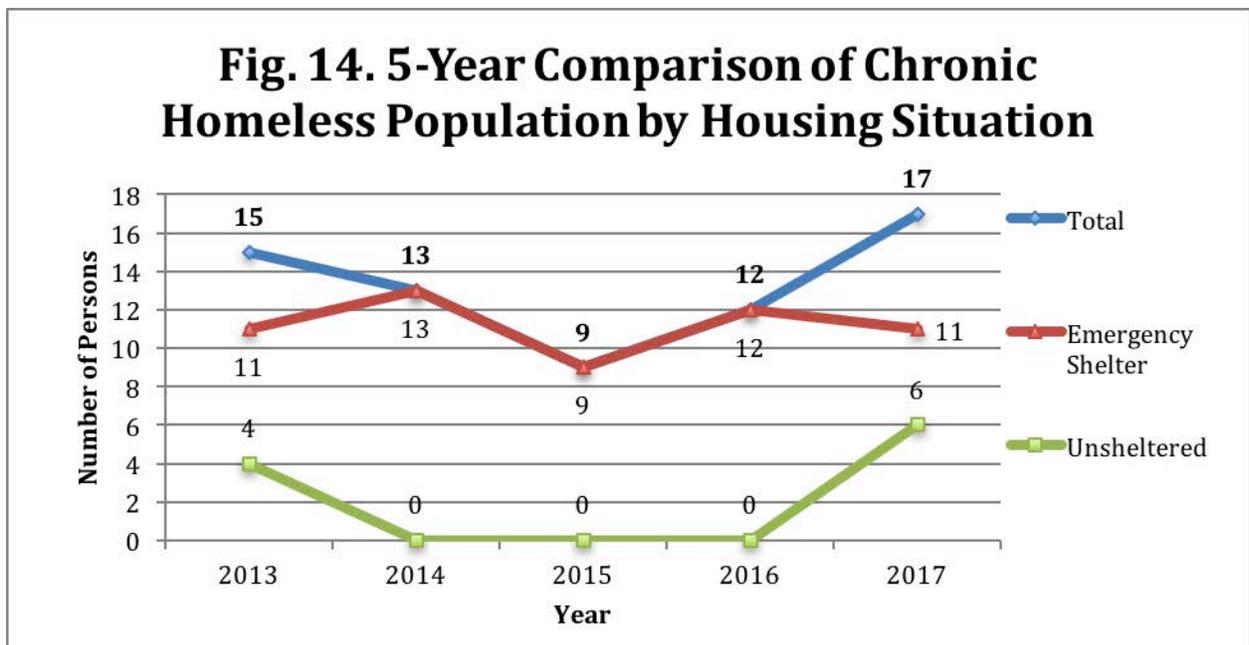
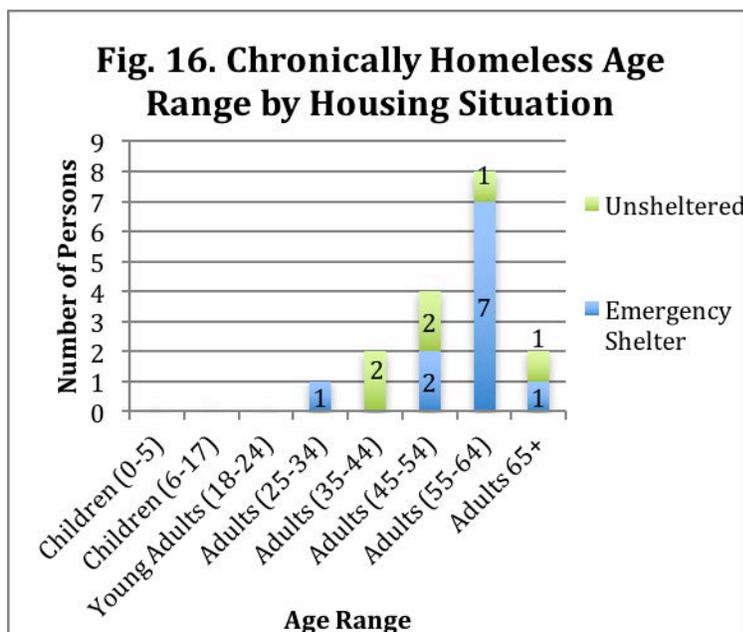
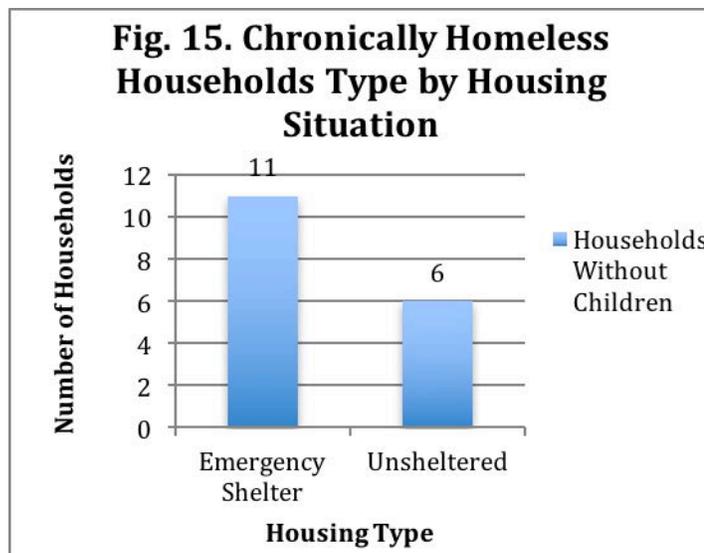


Figure 14 shows the number of chronically homeless respondents who were sheltered or living unsheltered in Hunterdon County from 2013 to 2017. While the 2017 count shows an increase of 41.7% in the chronically homeless population since 2016, overall there has been a 13.3% increase in the chronically homeless since 2013.

Families and Individuals

Of the 17 chronically homeless households counted in 2017, all were households with no children 17 or younger. All of these adult-only households were composed of single individuals. 11 (64.7%) of these adult-only households were staying in emergency shelters on the night of the count and the remaining (35.3%) were unsheltered.



Demographics

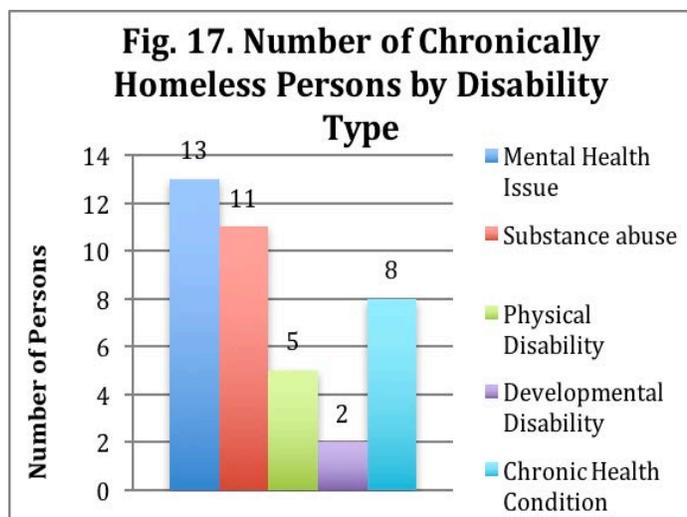
Of the 17 total chronically homeless persons, none were younger than 25 years old.

The majority of those counted as chronically homeless were male (88.2%) and 11.8% were female.

The largest racial subgroup of homeless persons reported their race as Black/African American (52.9%), and the rest self-identified as Black or White (47.1%).

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 (76.5%) and substance abuse disorders (64.7%). The complete numbers of disabilities can be seen in Figure 17.



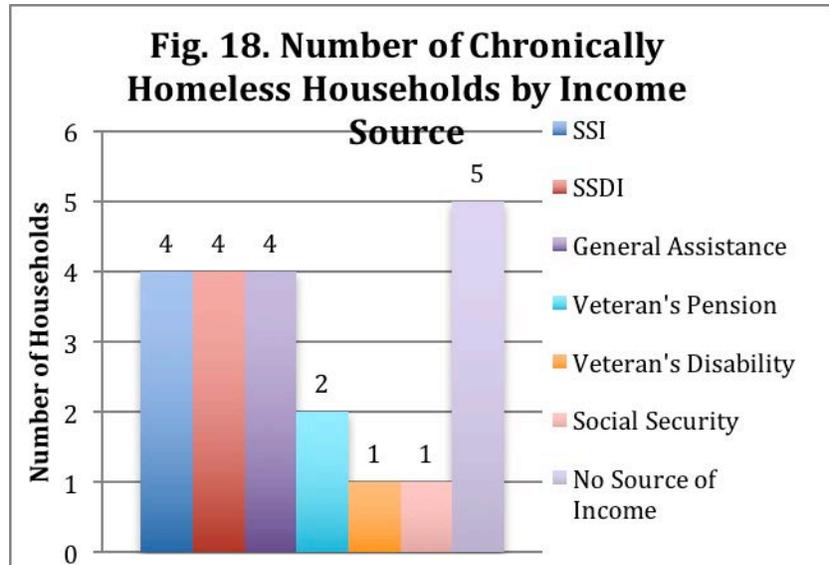
Subpopulations

There were 2 chronically homeless persons (11.8% of total) in Hunterdon County on the night of the count that identified being a victim of domestic violence both of whom were unsheltered.

There were 9 chronically homeless veterans identified on the night of the count (52.9%). All 9 were staying in emergency shelters.

Income and Benefits

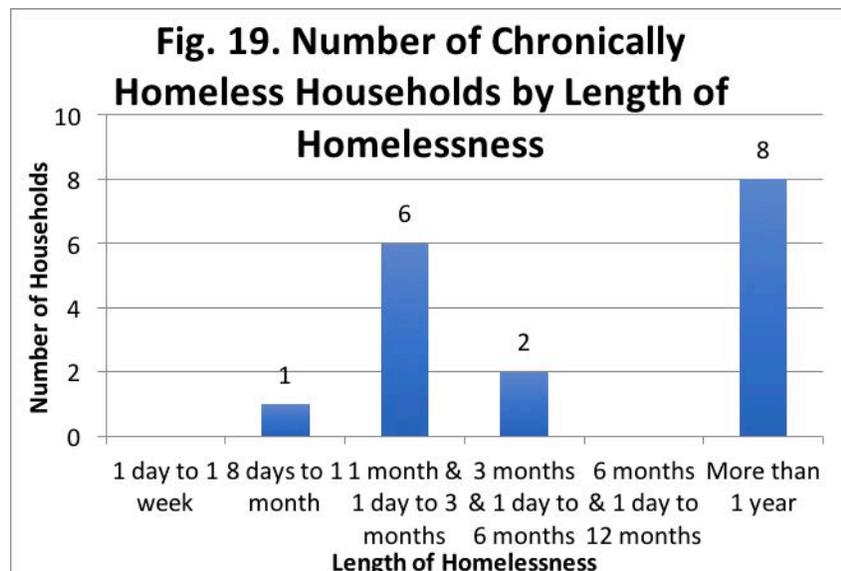
Among all the chronically homeless households on the night of the count, 5 (29.4%) reported receiving no source of income. Figure 18 shows the sources of income received. The most common sources of cash income among chronically homeless households were General Assistance, SSI & SSDI (23.5% received each). No households reported any earned income.



There were no chronically homeless households on the night of the count that reported they were not receiving at least 1 type of non-cash benefit. Medicaid, received by 41.2%, was the most reported non-cash benefit among the chronically homeless households, followed by Food Stamps (SNAP), which was reported by 35.3%.

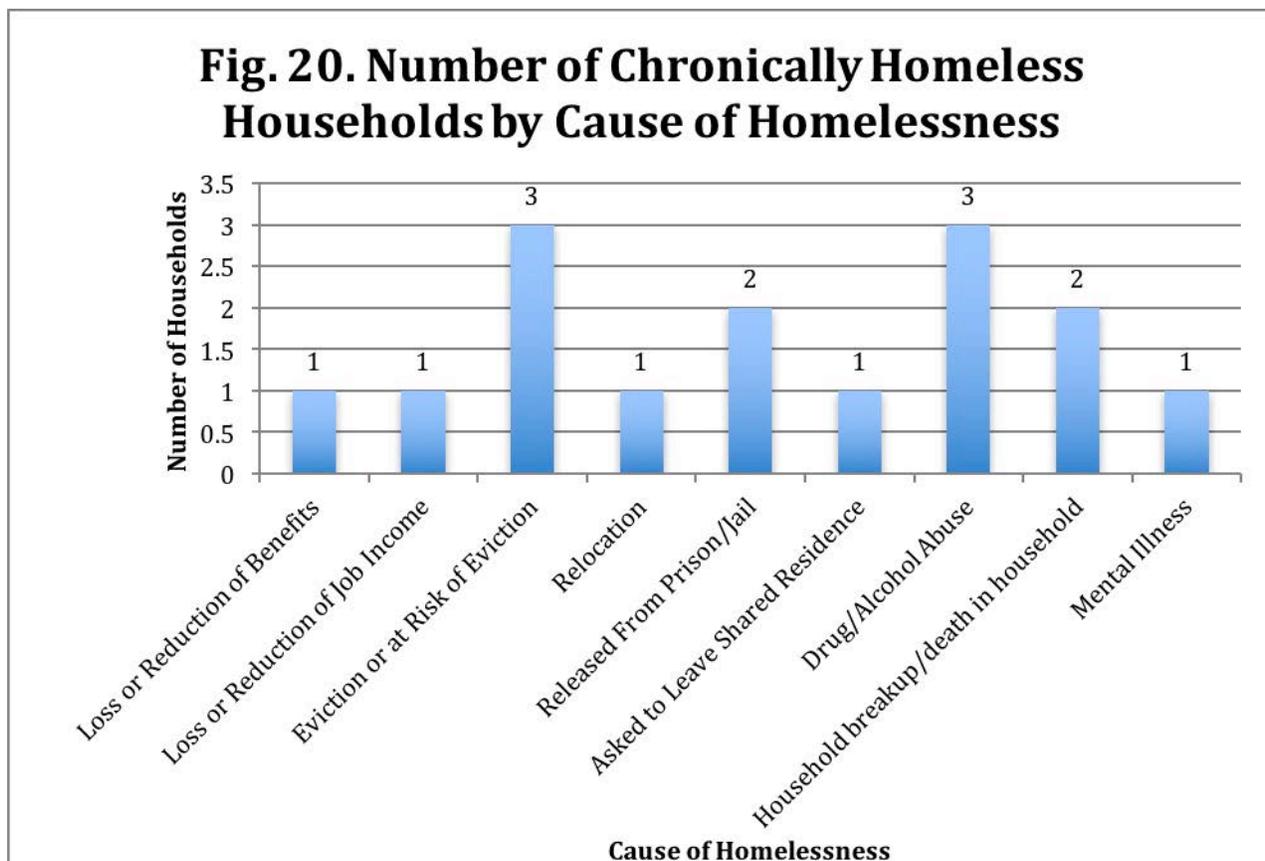
Length of Homelessness

Figure 19 shows that 47.1% of chronically homeless households reported their most recent, continuous episode of homeless had lasted for more than 1 year, a 33.3% increase from the 6 counted in 2016.



Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, 17.6% of chronically homeless households cited drug or alcohol abuse and 17.6% eviction as a primary cause of their homelessness. All the causes reported are seen in Figure 20.



V. Findings for the Unsheltered Homeless

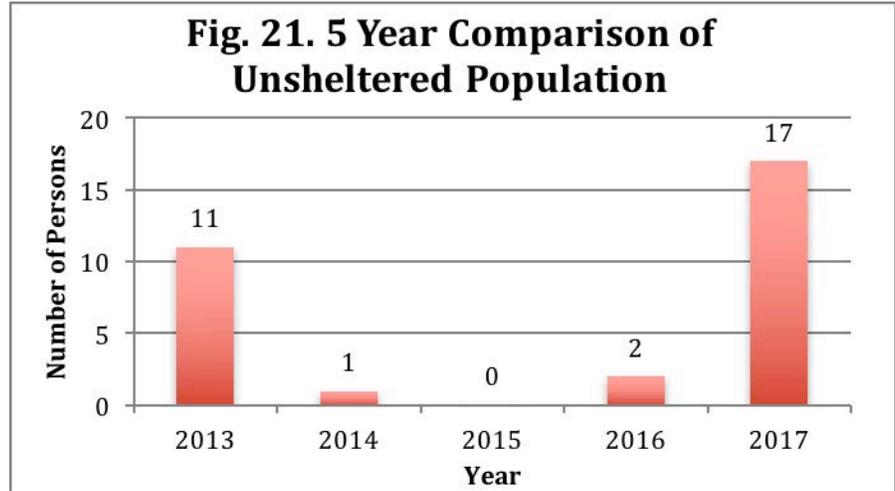
HUD’s definition of “unsheltered homeless” applies to any individual or family “with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station,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

16 households, made up of 17 persons, were living unsheltered in Hunterdon County, according to the 2017 Point-In-Time Count. This is a 700% increase from the 2 households counted in 2016.

Figure 21 shows the number of unsheltered respondents from 2013 to 2017. The numbers have fluctuated over the years, but overall the unsheltered population had trended upward since 2015.

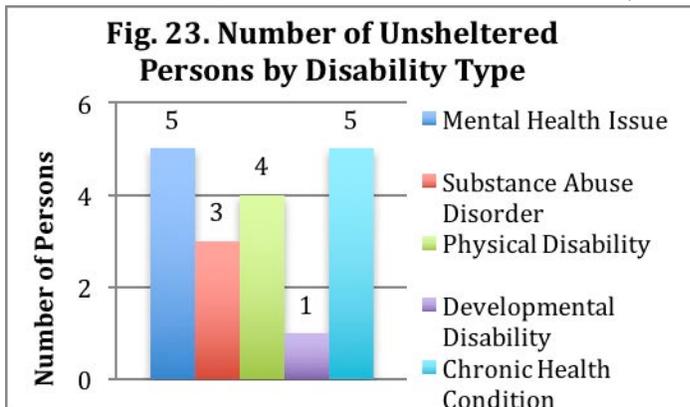
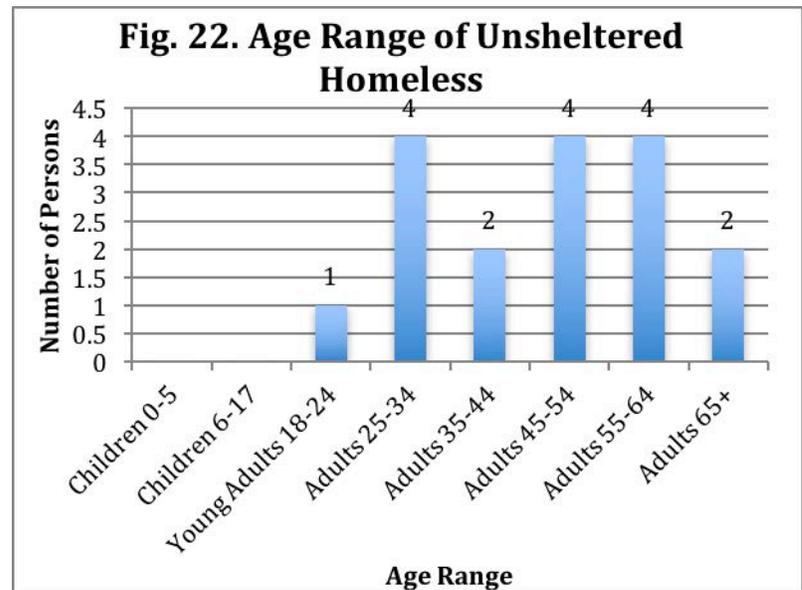


Families and Individuals

There were 0 unsheltered households with children in 2016. All the unsheltered households counted were adult-only households, one of which was a couple household.

Demographics

2 of the unsheltered persons counted in 2017 were over 65 years old. 0 were below the age of 18. 82.4%(14) of the unsheltered persons were male. 76.5%(13) identified their race as White and 17.6% as Black or African American, while no persons identified as Hispanic.



Disabilities

There were 14 (82.4%) disabilities reported among unsheltered persons. Figure 23 shows mental health and chronic health condition as the most reported type of disability (35.7% each).

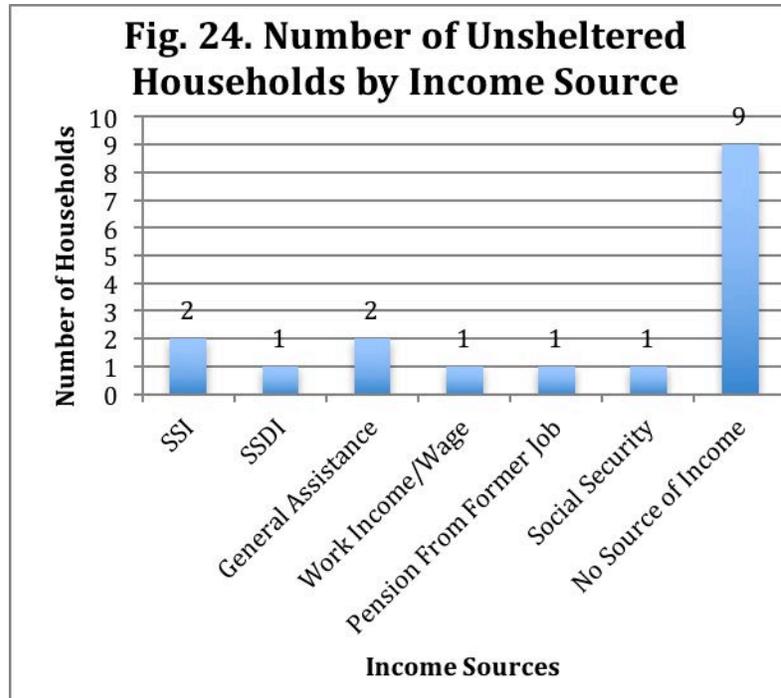
Subpopulations

On the night of the count, 2 unsheltered homeless persons in Hunterdon County reported being a victim of domestic violence.

There were no unsheltered veterans on the night of the count.

Income and Benefits

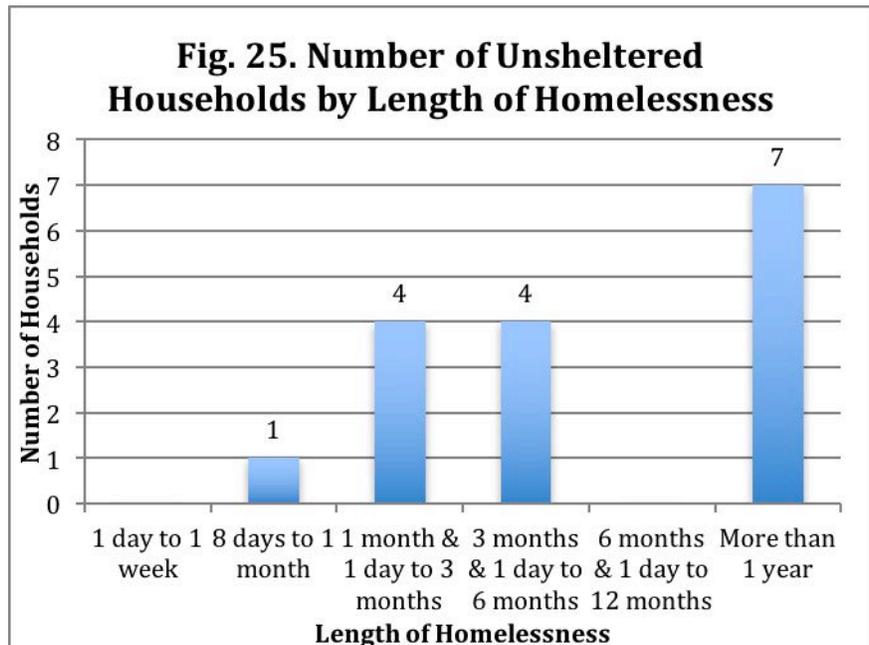
Among the 16 unsheltered households on the night of the count, only 1 (6.3%) reported having earned income. 2 (12.5%) each reported receiving SSI, and General Assistance. 56.3% reported no source of income. The average monthly income reported among unsheltered households was approximately \$274.



More unsheltered households reported receiving Medicaid (43.8%) on the night of the 2017 Point in Time Count than any other mainstream benefit.

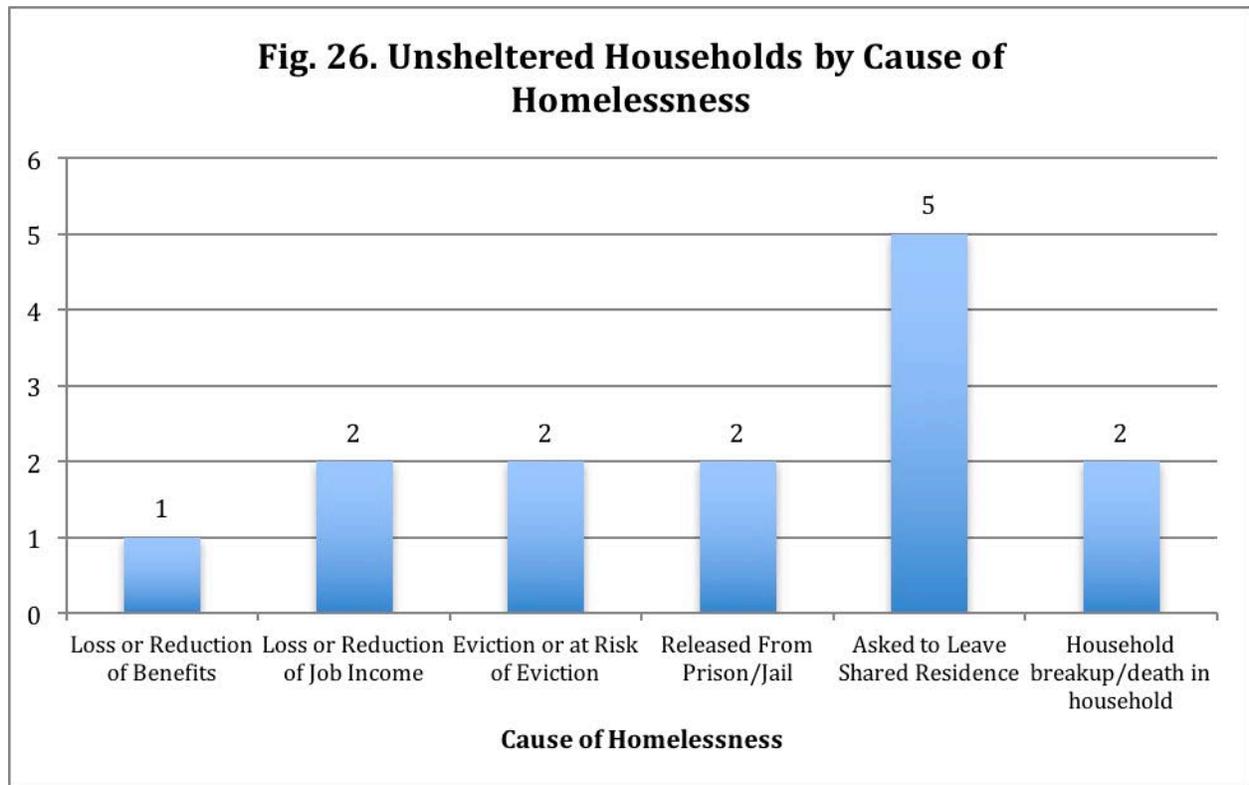
Length of Homelessness

Figure 25 shows that 43.8% of unsheltered homeless households reported their most recent, continuous episode of homeless had lasted for more than 1 year. 25% reported their most recent episode being between 1 month and 3 months, and 25% more reporting 3 months and 1 day to 6 months.



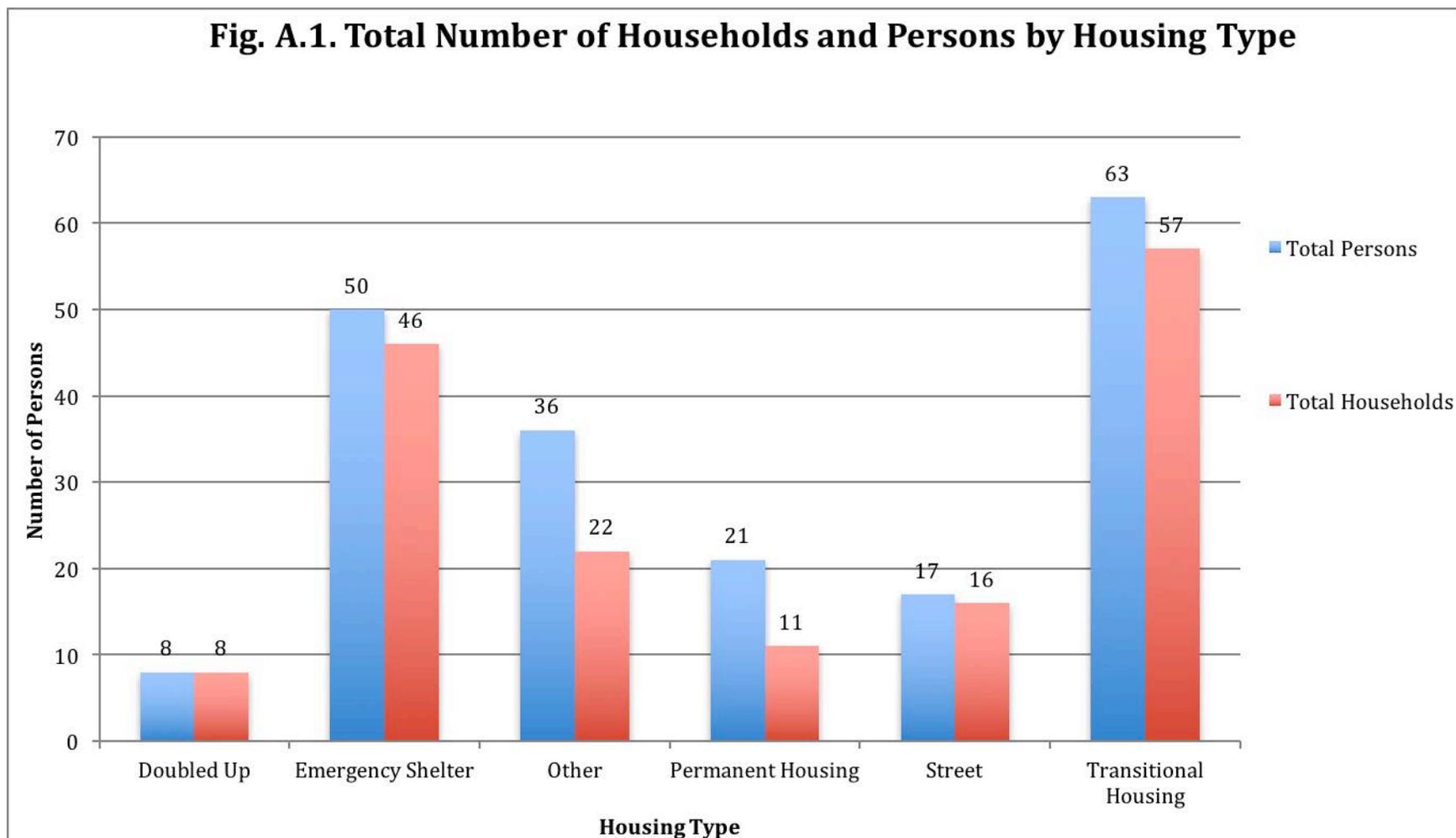
Cause of Homelessness

When asked to share the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, their homelessness, more unsheltered households reported being asked to leave a shared residence (31.3%) than any other reason. This was followed by loss or reduction of job income, eviction or risk of eviction, release from prison or jail, and household breakup or a death in the household (all reported by 12.5% of households) as seen in Figure 26.

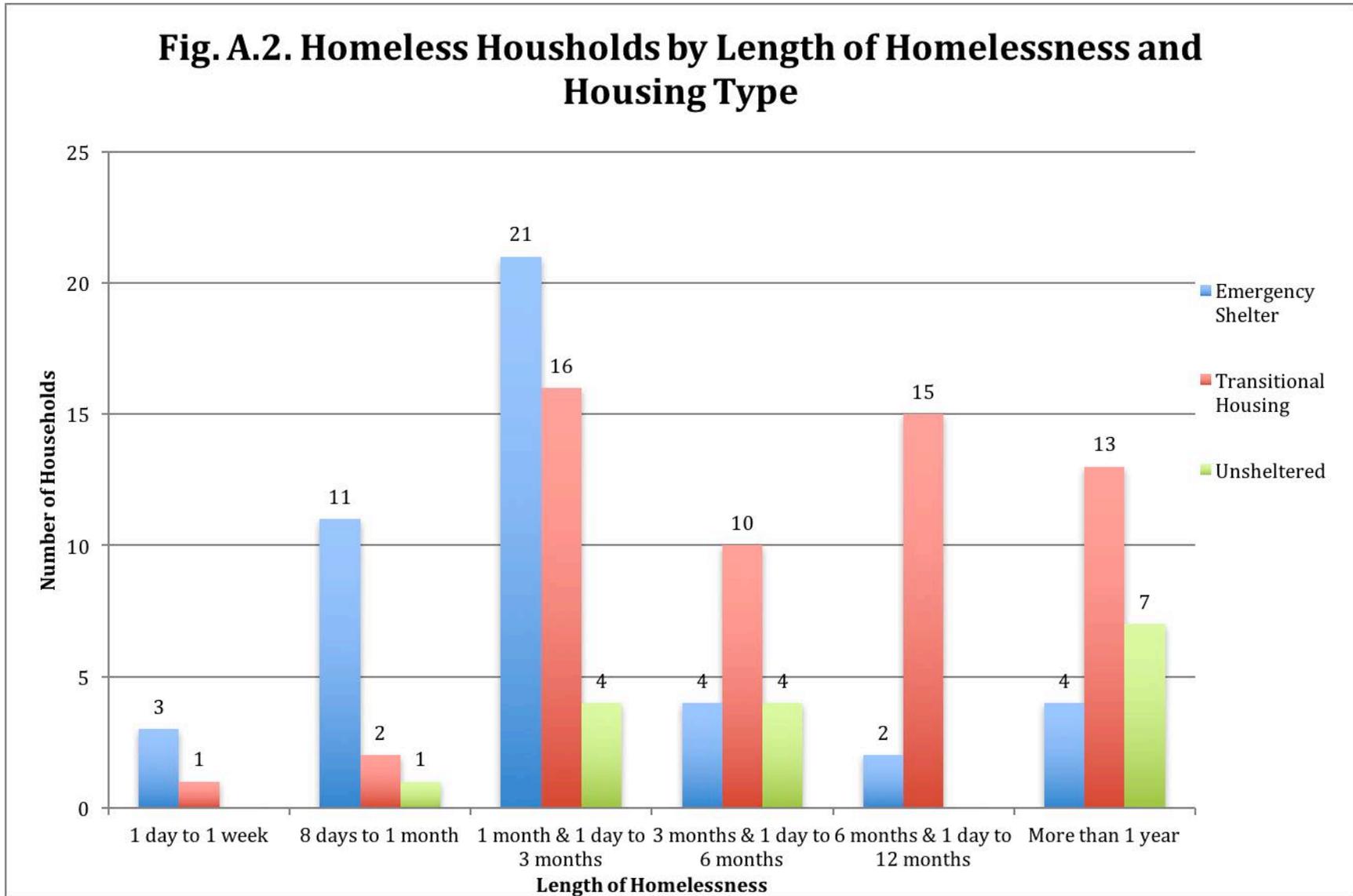


VI. Appendix

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



How long have you been in your current living situation?



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

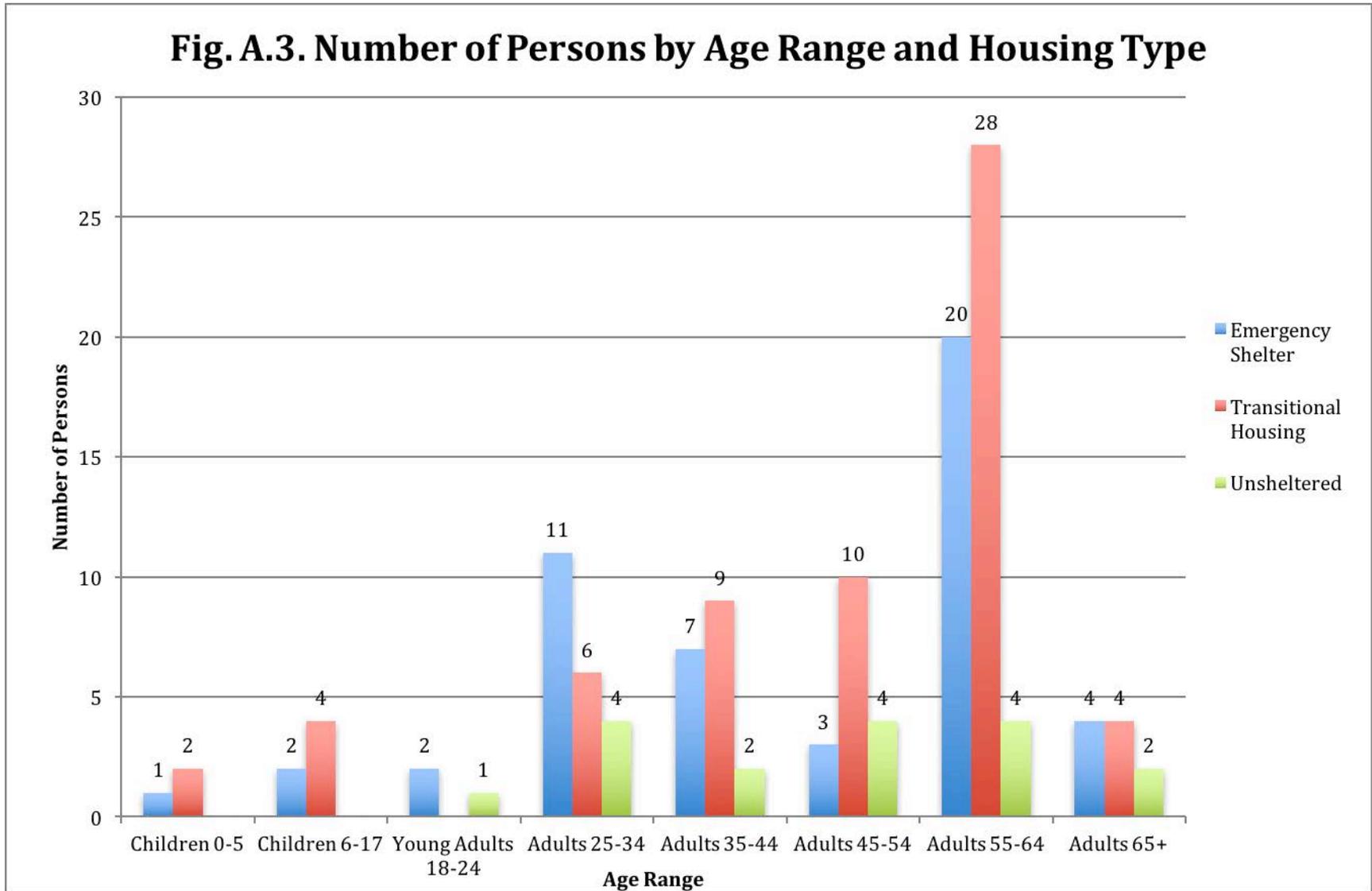


Fig. A.4. Number of Persons by Gender and Housing Situation

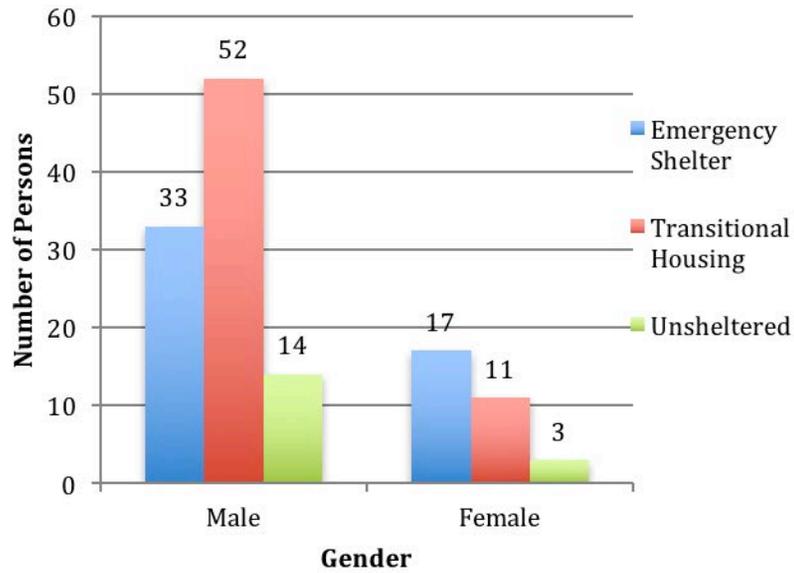


Fig. A.5. Number of Homeless Persons by Race

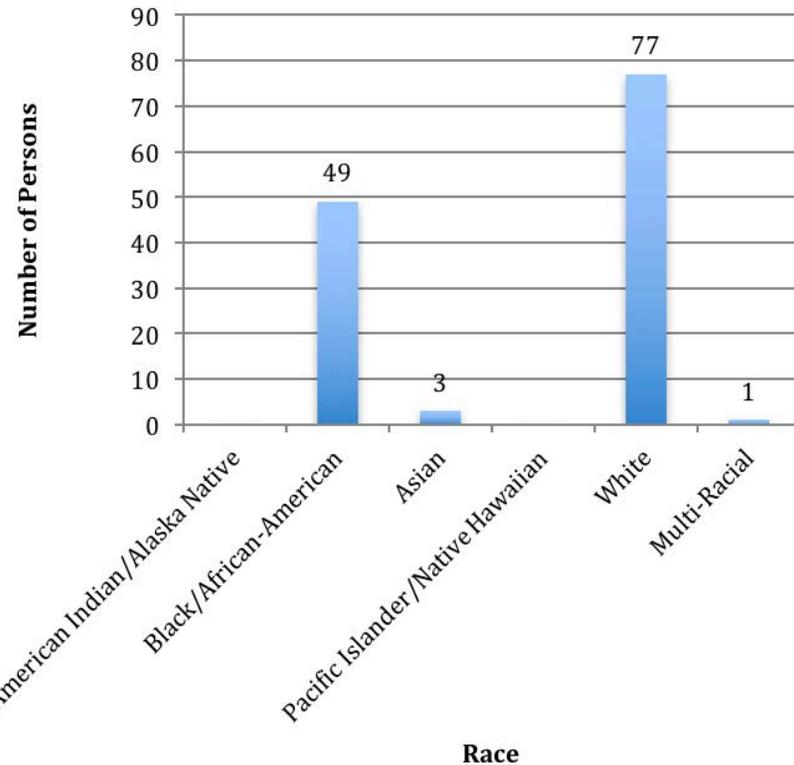
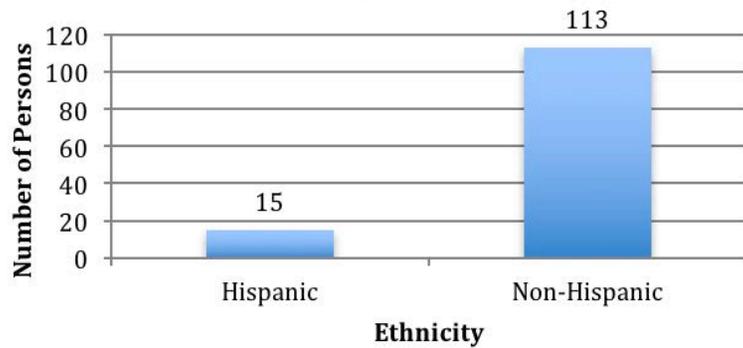
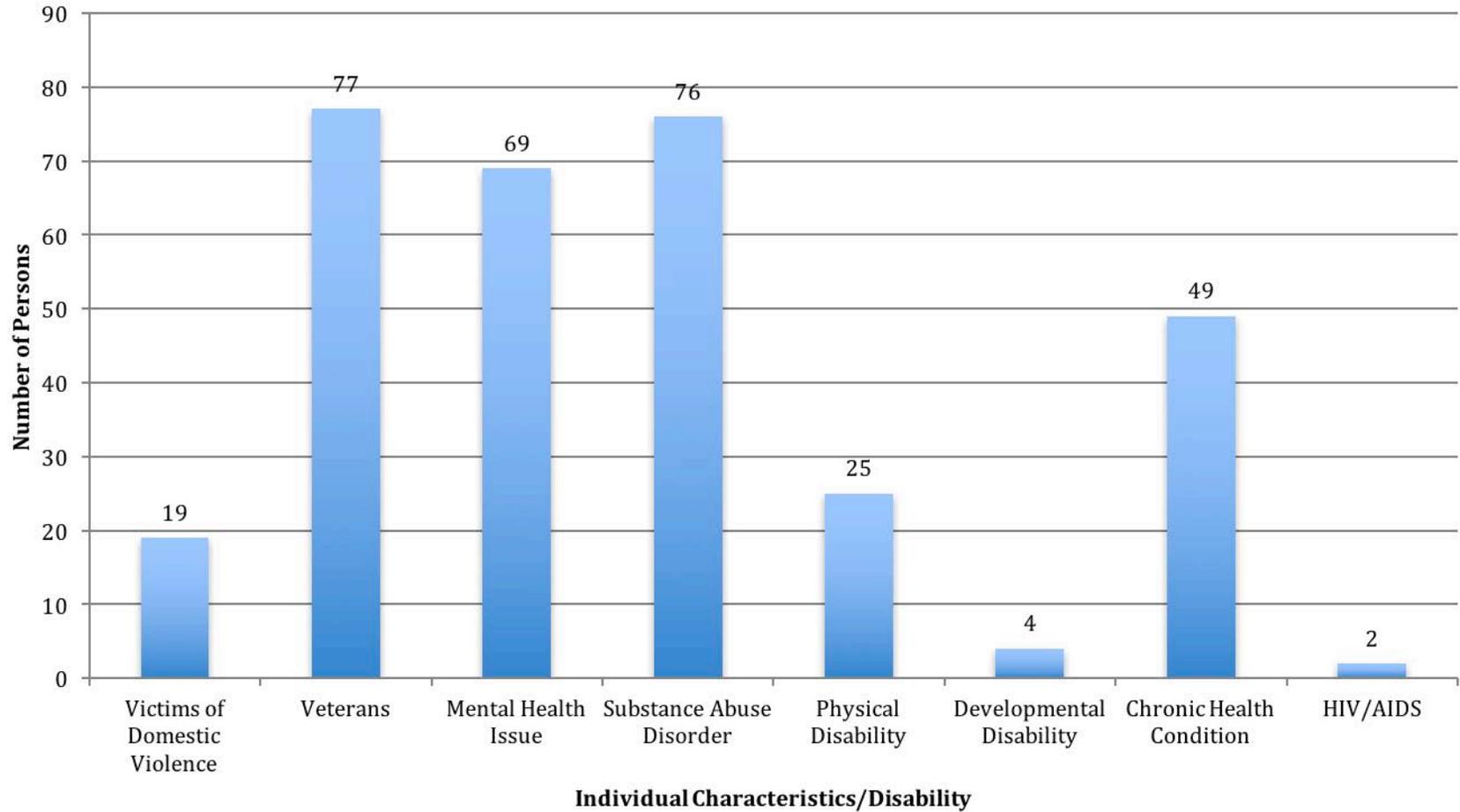


Fig. A.6. Number of Homeless Persons by Ethnicity



Household Characteristics – check all that apply to each person

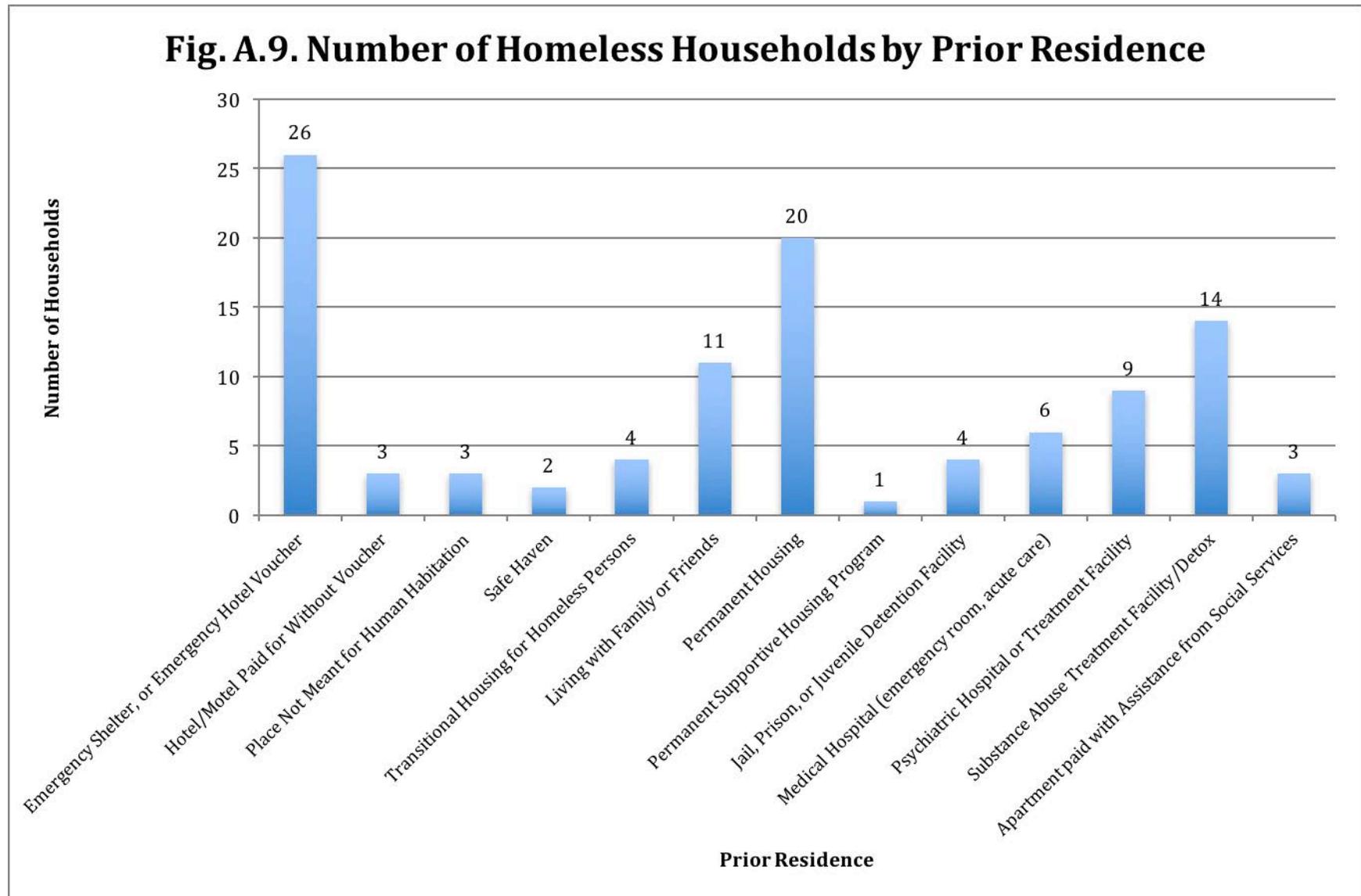
Fig. A.7. Number of Homeless Persons by Victims of Domestic Violence, Veteran Status, and Disability



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 – State	Number of Households
Essex County	19
Hunterdon County	25
Mercer County	4
Middlesex County	3
Monmouth County	3
Morris County	2
Ocean County	2
Passaic County	2
Somerset County	6
Union county	2
Warren County	5
New York	2
Pennsylvania	2
Florida	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?

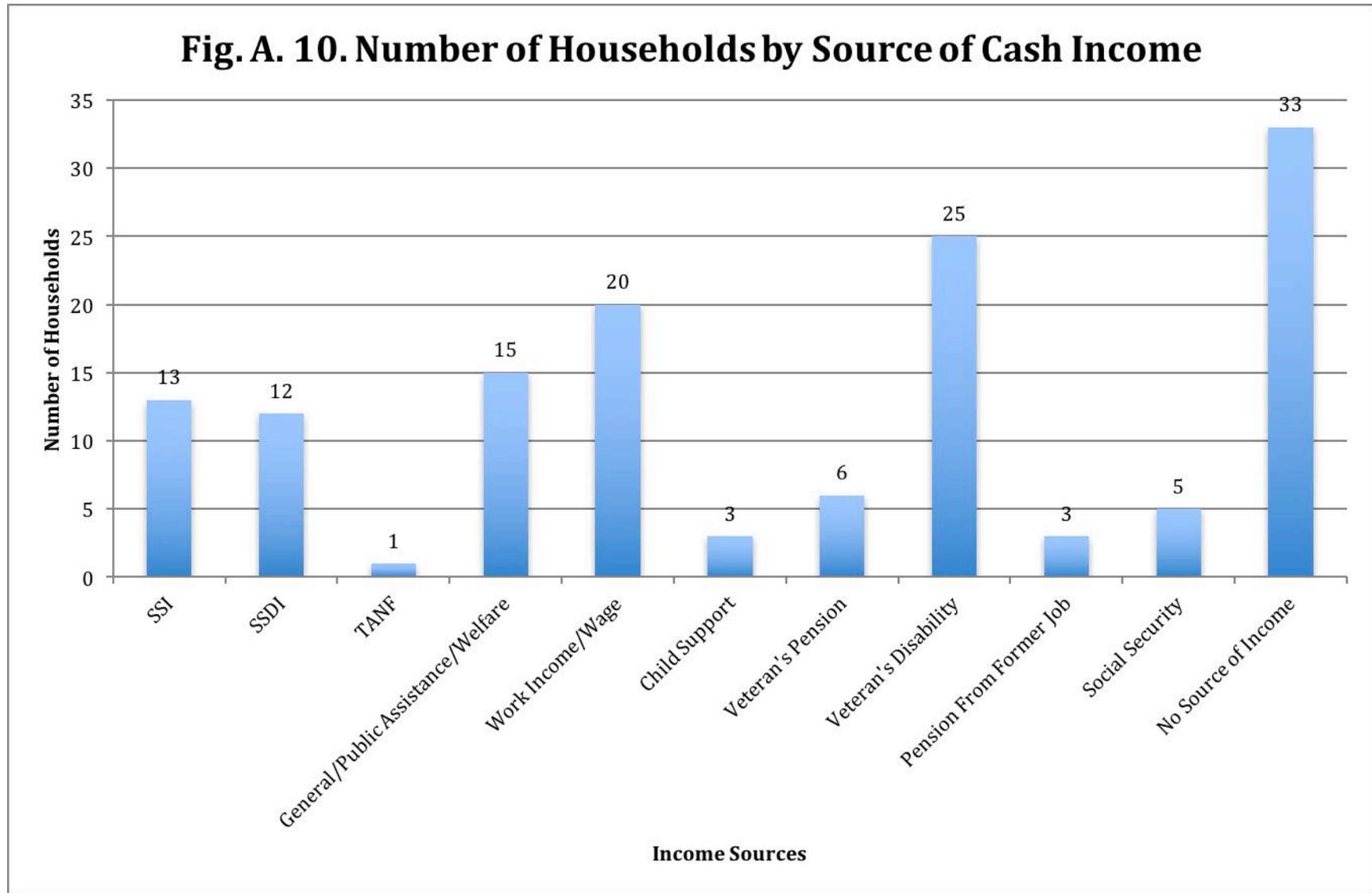
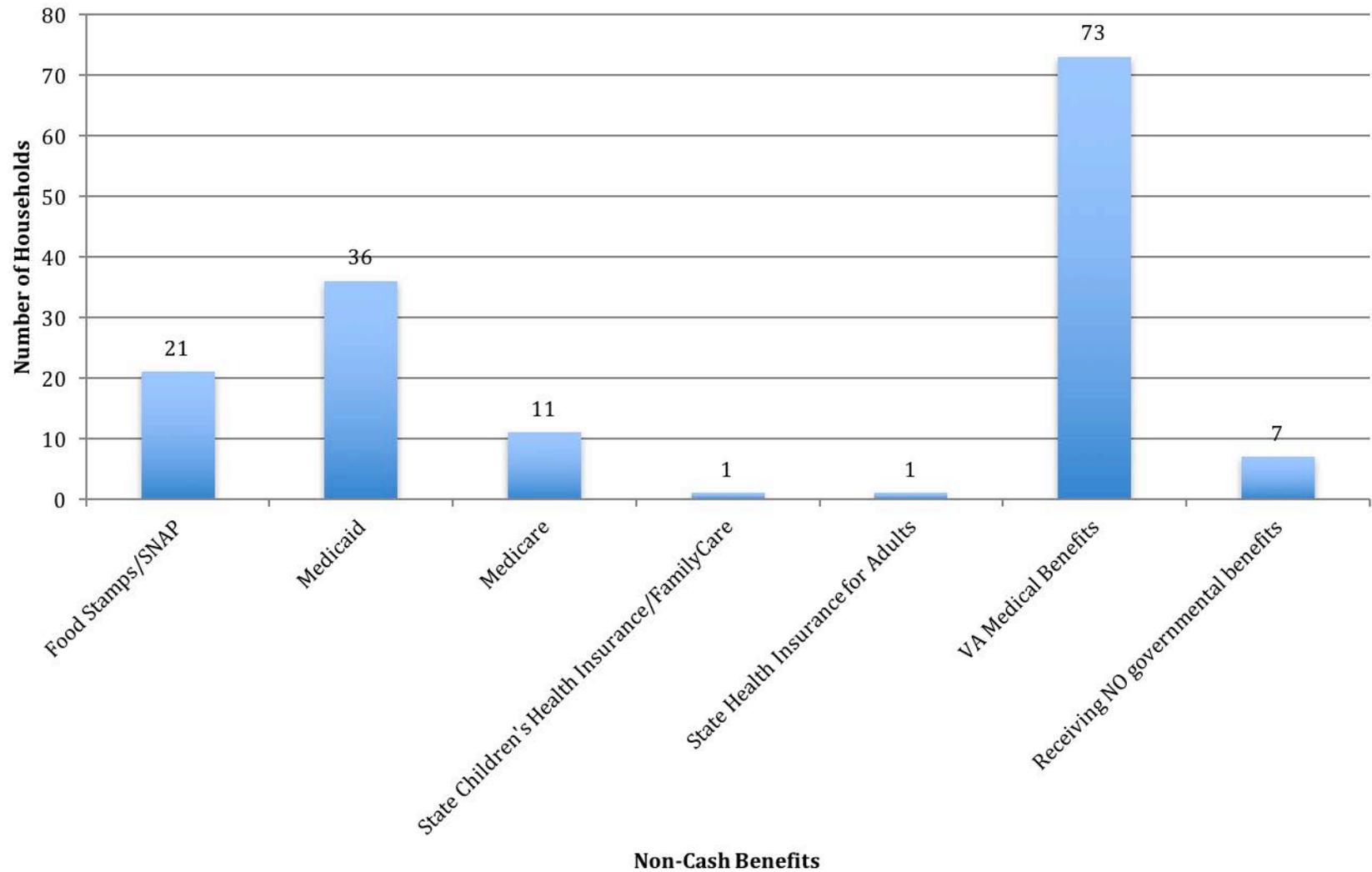
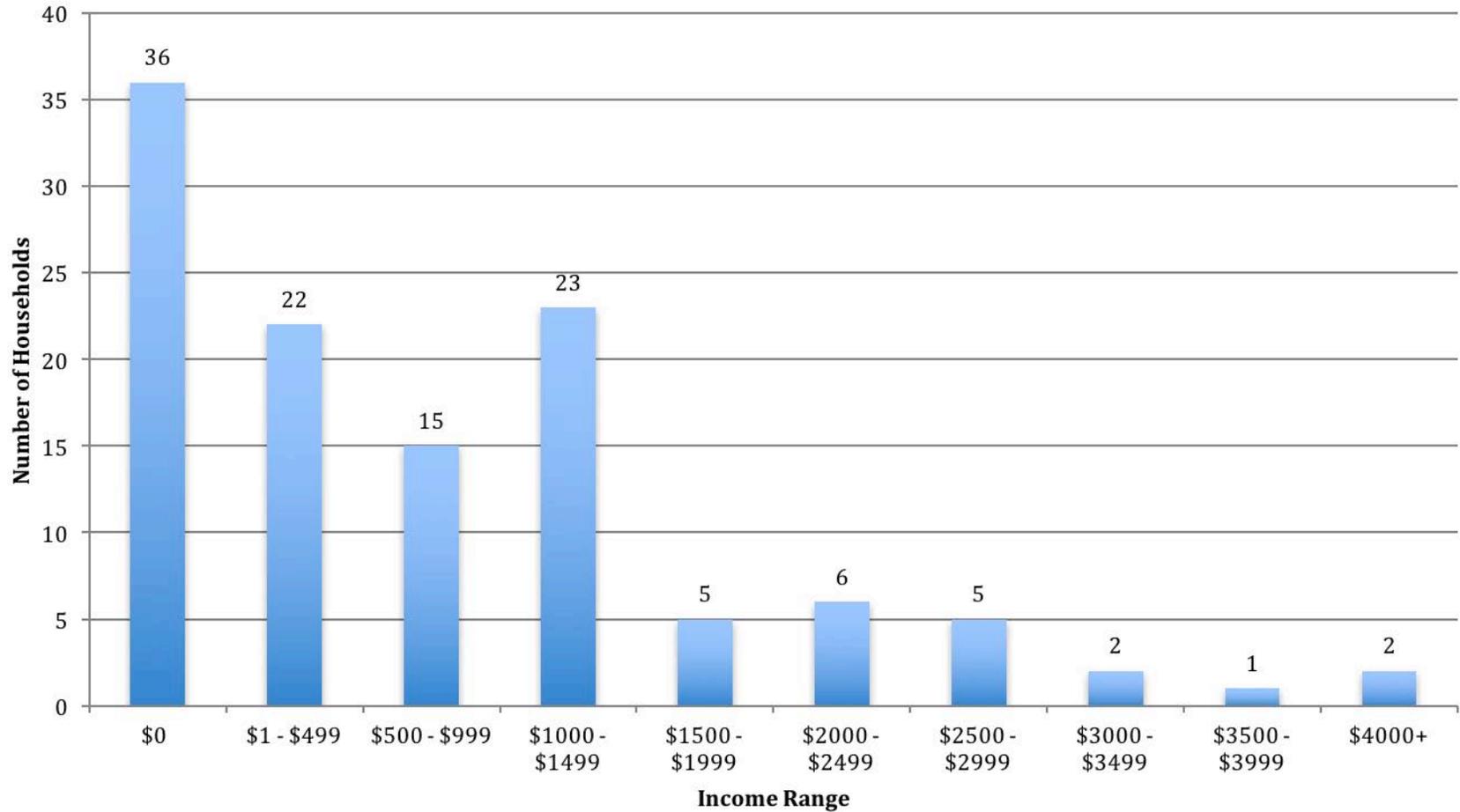


Fig. A. 11. Number of Households by Sources of Non-Cash Benefits



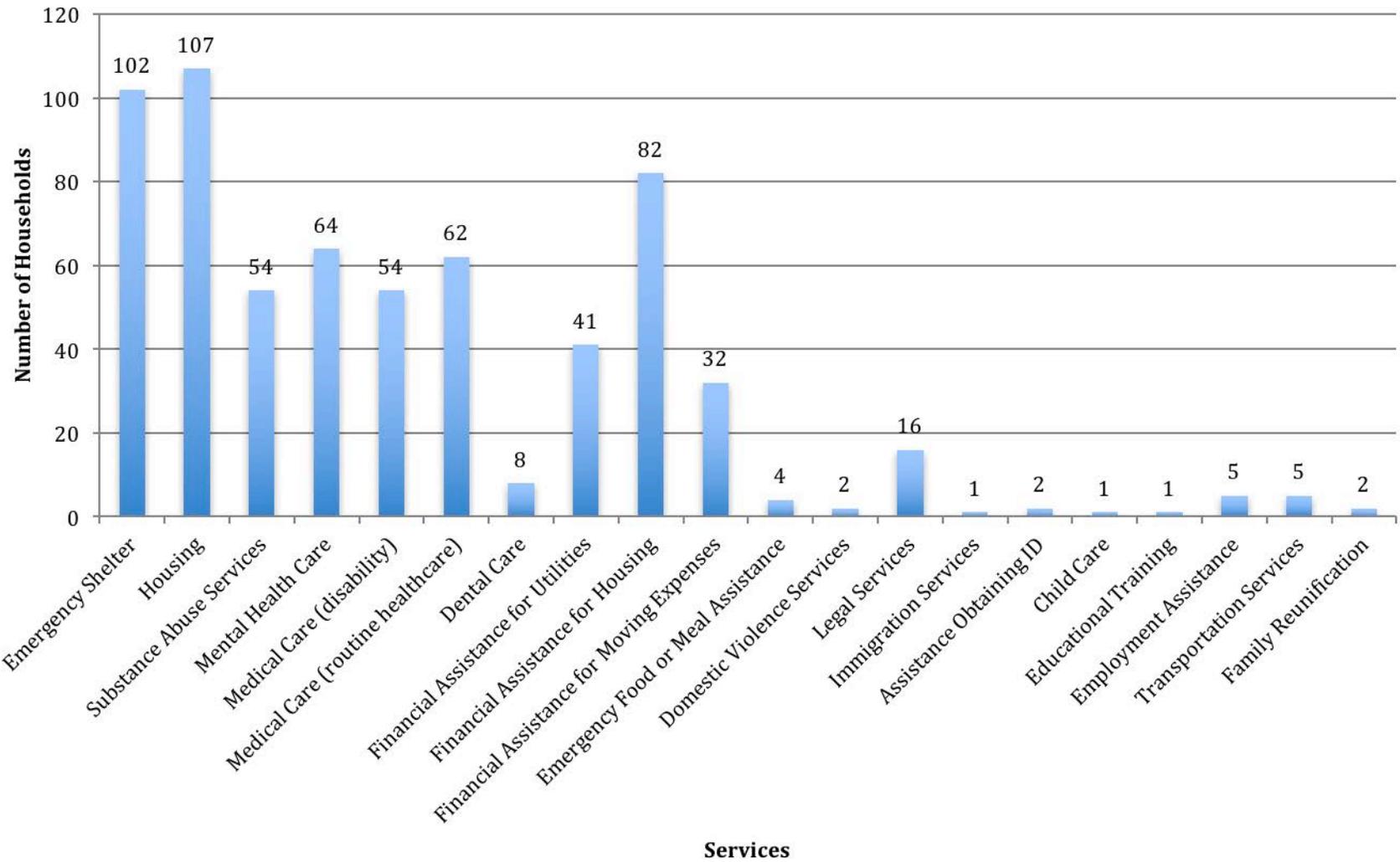
What is your monthly household income?

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?

