

A black silhouette of the state of New Jersey is positioned on the right side of the page, extending from the top to the bottom. The background is a light blue color with a pattern of faint, overlapping numbers.

NJ COUNTS

MERCER COUNTY

Point-in-Time Count of the Homeless
January 26, 2021



Acknowledgements

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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.

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I. Introduction

NJ Counts 2021

NJ Counts 2021, New Jersey's annual Point-In-Time (PIT) Count of the Homeless, provides a statewide snapshot of households experiencing homelessness in our communities; where they find shelter, what their needs are, and what factors contribute to making them homeless. The 2021 Count reveals important demographic and other information about families and individuals experiencing homelessness on the night of Tuesday, January 26th, 2021. These findings help to understand how to better allocate housing resources and services in order to prevent and end homelessness.

The 2021 Count was greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Homeless service systems and planning bodies have had to vastly alter the way they have traditionally operated for the health and safety of their clients and staff. Across NJ, communities had to alter their methodology for interviewing persons experiencing homelessness during the PIT count. Many communities have traditionally relied on Project Homeless Connect (PHC) events, along with street outreach efforts, to engage with persons experiencing homelessness, especially those experiencing unsheltered homelessness, in their communities. PHC events traditionally have had a number of service providers available to engage and enroll clients in programs, donations of gift cards, clothing, food, and other essentials, as well as services such as haircuts, showers in a one-stop service fair model. Communities were unable to host these indoor events due to COVID-19 safety protocols. PIT counts in the past have also relied heavily on volunteers to assist in completing interviews with persons experiencing homelessness. Communities altered their practices in 2021 to rely less on volunteers and more heavily on homeless service agency and outreach staff. Methodologies were altered so that more strategic outreach could be done while relying on fewer volunteers to conduct surveys.

This Report

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).

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

1. Racial Disparities among the Total Homeless Population;
2. Total homeless population;
3. Subpopulations
 - a. Unsheltered
 - b. Chronically Homeless
 - c. Veterans
 - d. Victims of Domestic Violence
 - e. Youth

In addition to the main findings presented in the body of this report, Appendix B includes charts illustrating the responses to all survey questions that were part of the 2021 Point-In-Time Count. Appendix A contains information on data collection and methodology.

Definition of Terms

Household - 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’).

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.

Emergency Shelter - any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide a temporary shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless and which does not require occupants to sign leases or occupancy agreements.

Transitional Housing - a project that is designed to provide housing and appropriate supportive services to homeless persons to facilitate movement to independent living within 24 months.

Safe Haven - a form of supportive housing that serves hard-to-reach homeless persons with severe mental illness who come primarily from the streets and have been unable or unwilling to participate in housing or supportive services. Safe Haven programs offer low barriers to program entry and low-demand services and referrals in a 24-hour residential setting to no more than 25 persons.

Changes affecting the 2021 Point-in-Time Count

Communities significantly altered their PIT count practices in response to the COVID-19 public health pandemic. The following safety measures were recommended by the CDC and HUD for all communities when planning their 2021 PIT procedures:

- decrease face-to-face interactions with clients;
- decrease the number of volunteers who would need to work in physical proximity;
- provide of PPE to all volunteers; and
- design a process that minimizes close contact.

The methodology used to identify persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness was updated to include a 14-day count. The extension from the previous year’s 7-day count occurred so that CoCs with larger geographies would have more time to conduct their surveys with less reliance on volunteers. All persons identified during the 14-day count

were asked about their housing status the night of the count (January 26th). The use of the 14-day count enabled the community to improve its connection to people experiencing unsheltered homelessness during the COVID-19 public health pandemic.

Within New Jersey, the specific methodology implemented for the PIT count is determined on a County-by-County basis within broad parameters defined by HUD. In response to the COVID-19 health pandemic, communities adjusted their PIT count methodology in the following ways:

- elimination of Project Homeless Connect events
- 14-day outreach and service-based count
- Reduction in use of volunteers to support the unsheltered count
- Increased connection with community-based services providers such as day-centers, soup kitchens and medical facilities to identify and connect with unsheltered persons
- Securing HUD waiver to skip the unsheltered count for 2021

Within Mercer County, the community decided to secure a HUD waiver and not conduct the unsheltered count for 2021.

Due to the significant changes in the 2021 PIT count methodology as compared to previous years, the following report only reflects data on the 2021 PIT count. The 2021 report does not contain comparisons to PIT counts from previous years as the significant methodological changes have rendered the data non-comparable. Also, this report does not contain data on unsheltered households.

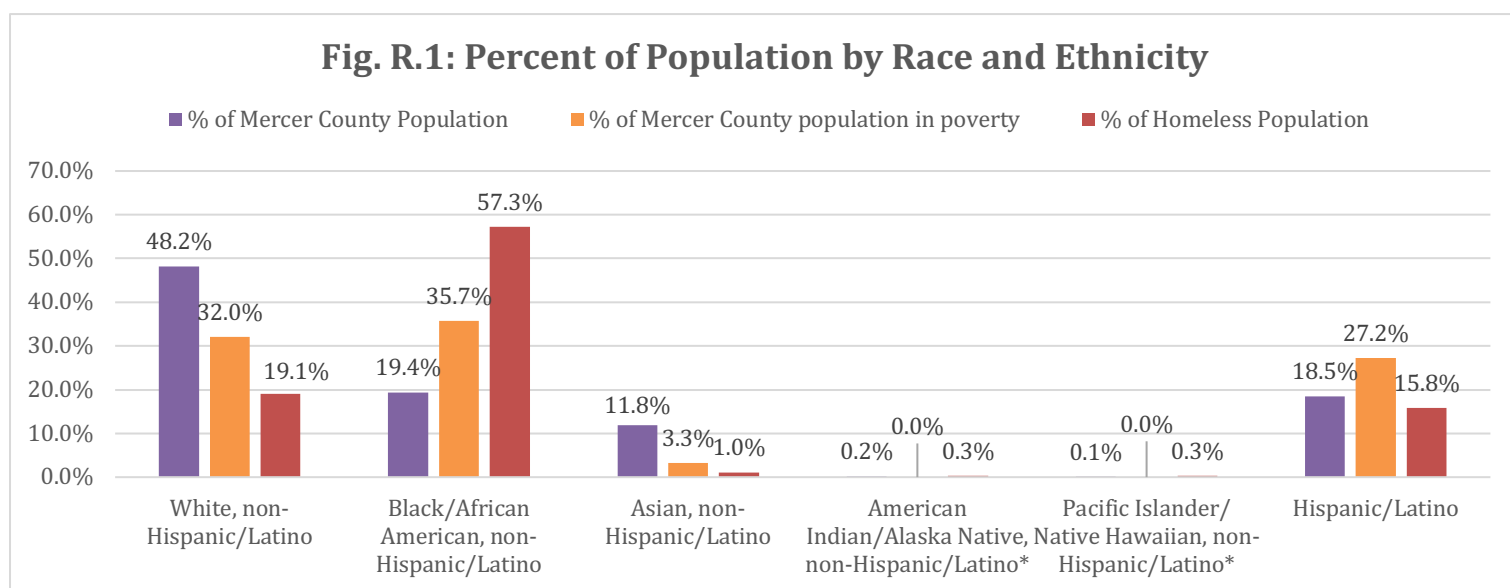
The impact of COVID-19 is seen in the methodology of the PIT count and the community-captured data. As a result of the pandemic, persons experiencing homelessness interacted with the system (outreach teams, emergency shelters, and transitional housing) in ways much different than in the past. Homeless systems also adjusted to the pandemic. This change in interaction varied County-by-County and can be seen in the number of persons identified as experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness.

When reviewing data included in this report, it is important to keep in mind that the Point-in-Time data includes a census of all persons in sheltering programs (emergency shelter, transitional housing, and safe haven programs) as well as the unsheltered population identified on the night of the count. While there is uniformity and complete coverage in data collection for those utilizing the sheltering system within communities, each county develops a local methodology to identify and engage unsheltered persons within the community. As such, the strength of the unsheltered count varies from community to community. In addition, it is generally accepted that while communities work to identify and engage all persons living unsheltered within their geographic region, the count of persons unsheltered in the community may not reflect the full population experiencing homelessness.

II. Racial Disparities in Total Homeless Population

NJ Counts 2021 provides a snapshot of the population experiencing homelessness in the Mercer County on a single night. The results of this report are intended to assist communities in understanding the characteristics and needs of those experiencing homelessness to improve service delivery and resource targeting to effectively end homelessness. As communities work to expand their understanding of the root causes of homelessness it is important recognize the structural forces impacting trajectories into and out of homelessness. Disparities in who experiences homelessness highlight the impact of a pervasive structural force: systemic racism. Acknowledging and understanding the impact of systemic racism on those experiencing homelessness is key to developing an effective system responsive to the community and strengthening cultural understanding and awareness.

On January 26, 2021, there were 393 persons experiencing homelessness on a single night in the Mercer County. Figure R.1 illustrates the racial breakdown of the total population in Mercer County, those living below the poverty line, and those experiencing homelessness.



*Data for those in poverty in racial subgroup is displayed as '0%' because the number of sample cases is too small

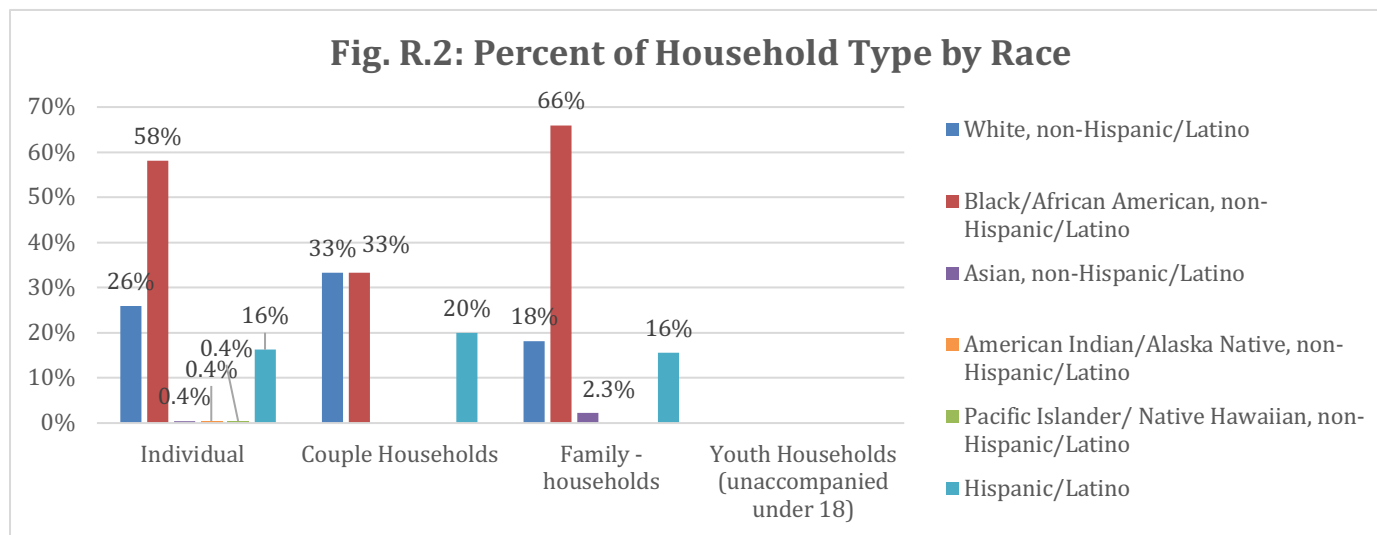
In comparing the racial breakdown of those experiencing homelessness to the racial breakdown in the general population and those living in poverty, disparate impacts along racial lines are evident. According to the American Community Survey 2019 annual estimates prepared by the Census Bureau, about 367,430 people live in Mercer County, and 12.1% (44,624 persons) of Mercer County residents are living below the poverty line. There is a strong correlation between poverty and homelessness, however, the racial disparities evident in the population indicate that poverty alone does not determine who will experience homelessness. The disparity in representation within the population experiencing homelessness as compared to the population experiencing poverty by race point to poverty being an inconclusive indicator of who will experience homelessness. The chart above highlights that race rather than poverty appears to be a more predictive

indicator of who will experience homelessness. Further analysis is necessary to understand the full scope of risk factors and protective factors for communities experiencing homelessness as they relate to race as an indicator. Within this context it is important to explore the impact of systemic racism on experiences of homelessness, both in terms of who is likely to become homeless, and how systems of care work to end homelessness.

The data from Figure R.1 indicates the following:

- Persons identifying as Black or African American are overrepresented in the population experiencing homelessness. While 19.4% of the general population, persons identifying as Black or African American are 35.7% of the population in poverty and 57.3% of the identified population experiencing homelessness.
- Persons identifying as Black or African American represent 61.1% of the sheltered population (staying in emergency shelter, transitional housing or safe havens). Persons identifying as White and not Hispanic or Latino represent 20.4% of the sheltered population and persons identifying as Hispanic/Latino represent 16.8% of the sheltered population.

Figure R.2 illustrates the racial breakdown within each household type for those experiencing homelessness.



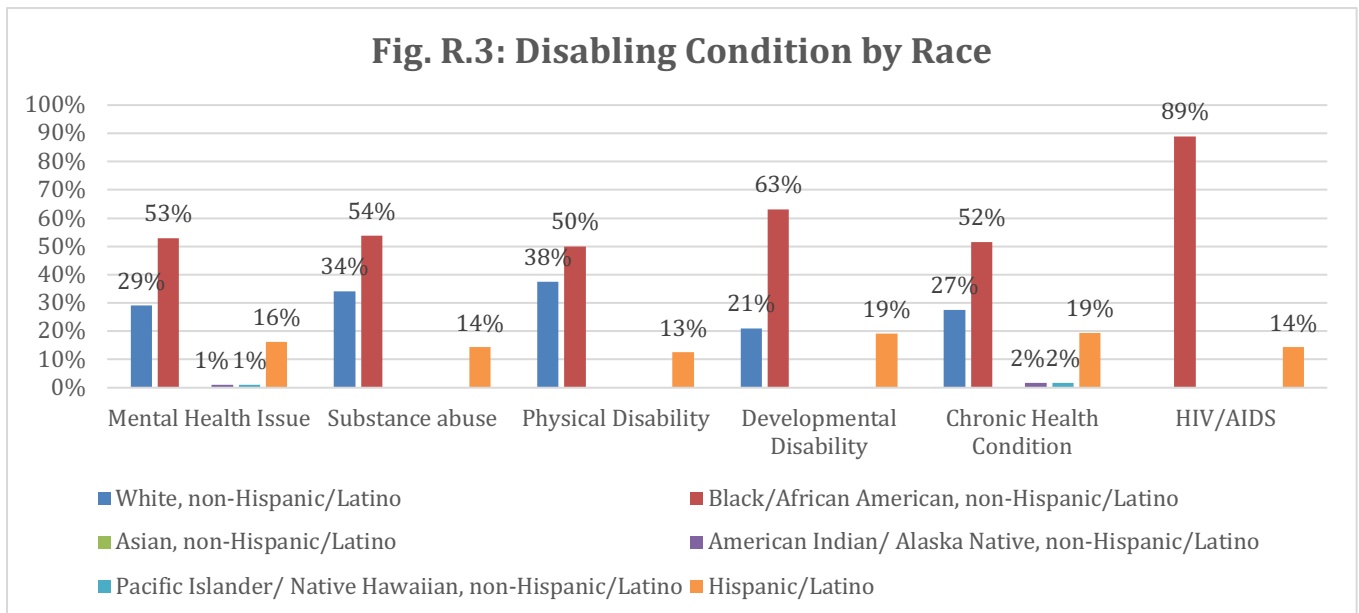
- Persons identifying as Black or African American make up the majority of individuals (58%) and the majority of family households (66%).
- 13% of persons identifying as Black or African American and 11% of persons identifying as Hispanic/Latino and White were in family households.

Disparities along racial and ethnic lines in the population experiencing homelessness are seen in a number of other areas including the following:

- 34% of persons identifying as White and 33% of persons identifying as Black or African American reported more than 1 episode of homelessness, as compared to 37% of persons identifying as Hispanic/Latino.
- 24% of persons identifying as Hispanic/Latino and 26% of persons identifying as Black or African American were children under the age of 18, as compared to 8% of persons identifying as White.

- The most common sources of income among persons identifying as Black or African American was SSI (15%), for persons identifying as White most common source of income was also SSI (18%).
- 4% of persons identifying as Hispanic/Latino and 4% of persons identifying as White reported receiving no mainstream benefits as compared to 1% of persons identifying as Black or African American.
- 69% of persons identifying as White indicated a disability as compared to 46% of person identifying as Black or African American and 53% of Hispanic/Latino persons.

Figure R.3 illustrates the racial breakdown within each disabling condition reported.



- The most prevalent disability among persons identifying as Black or African American and Hispanic/Latino was mental health issue (24% and 26%, respectively), whereas for persons identifying as White, the most prevalent disability was substance abuse disorder (41%).
- The most prevalent disability overall, Mental Health Issues, was reported by 39% of persons identifying as White, 24% of persons identifying as Black or African American and 26% of persons identifying as Hispanic/Latino.
- The second most prevalent disability reported, substance use disorders, was identified by 41% of persons identifying as White, 22% of persons identifying as Black or African American and 21% of persons identifying as Hispanic/Latino.

Disparities were seen in a number of other questions included in the PIT survey in addition to the ones reported here. Given this information, it is clear that more research is needed to fully understand the causes, correlations and impacts of racial disparities in who experiences homelessness and how they experience and navigate the systems of service. In addition, this information highlights the need for homeless service systems to make deliberate efforts to understand and address racial disparities in order to better serve those experiencing homelessness and effectively end their homelessness.

III. Findings for Total Homeless Population

Key Findings

- On the night of January 26th, 2021, a total of 294 households, including 393 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Mercer County, according to the 2021 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 25 persons, in 25 households, were identified as chronically homeless.
- Data contained within this report was collected from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) as well as from client-level interviews entered into SurveyMonkey (SM). About 91.3% of data collected for this report was generated through HMIS while 8.7% was generated through client-level interviews from SM.

Figure i. Number of Homeless Persons by Municipality and Percentage of County Total						
Municipalities	Total Homeless Population	% of Total population	Total sheltered population	% of sheltered population	Total unsheltered population	% of unsheltered population
Trenton	179	74.6%	179	74.6%		
Ewing	47	19.6%	47	19.6%		
Hamilton	13	5.4%	13	5.4%		
Lawrence	1	0.4%	1	0.4%		
Total	240*		240		0**	

*Does not reflect total homeless persons counted as some survey responses may not have included municipality

**Mercer County did not conduct an unsheltered count for the 2021 PIT

Total Homeless Population

On the night of January 26th, 2021, a total of 393 persons, in 294 households, were experiencing homelessness in Mercer County, according to the 2021 Point-In-Time Count.

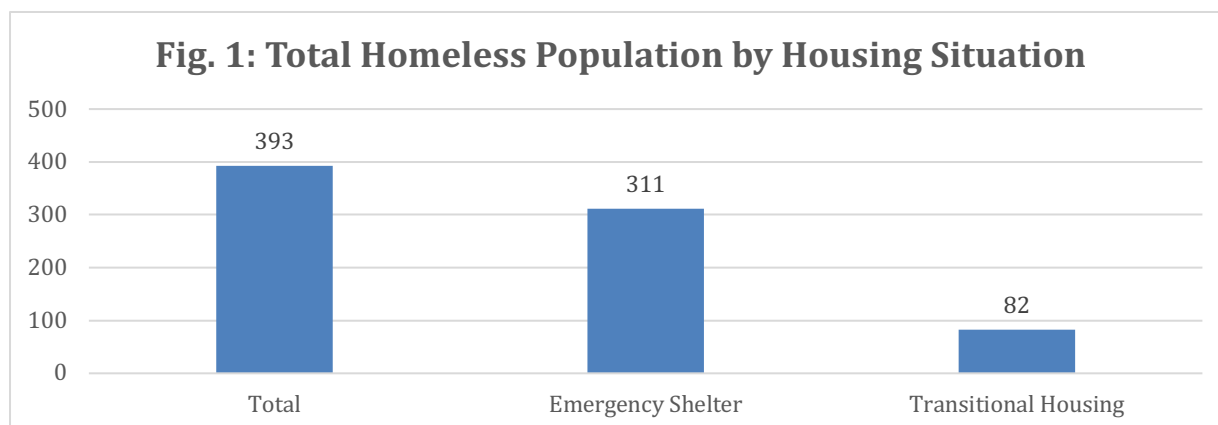
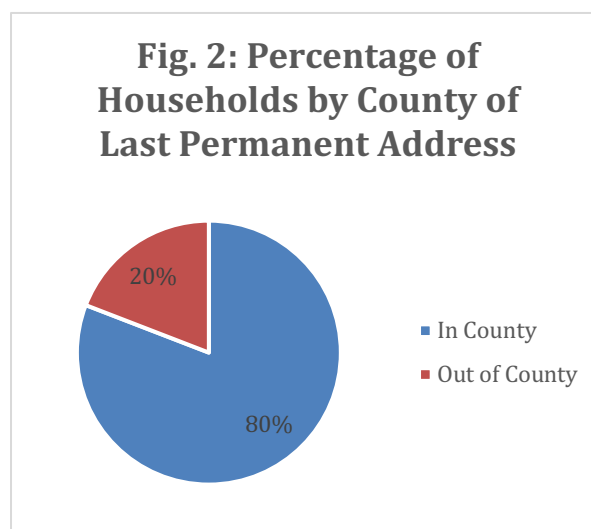


Figure 1 shows that, in 2021, 311 homeless persons stayed in emergency shelters and 82 stayed in transitional housing on the night of the count.

As Figure 2 shows, 20% of the homeless household respondents in Mercer in 2021 reported that their last permanent address prior to becoming homeless was outside of the county.

Homeless Families and Individuals

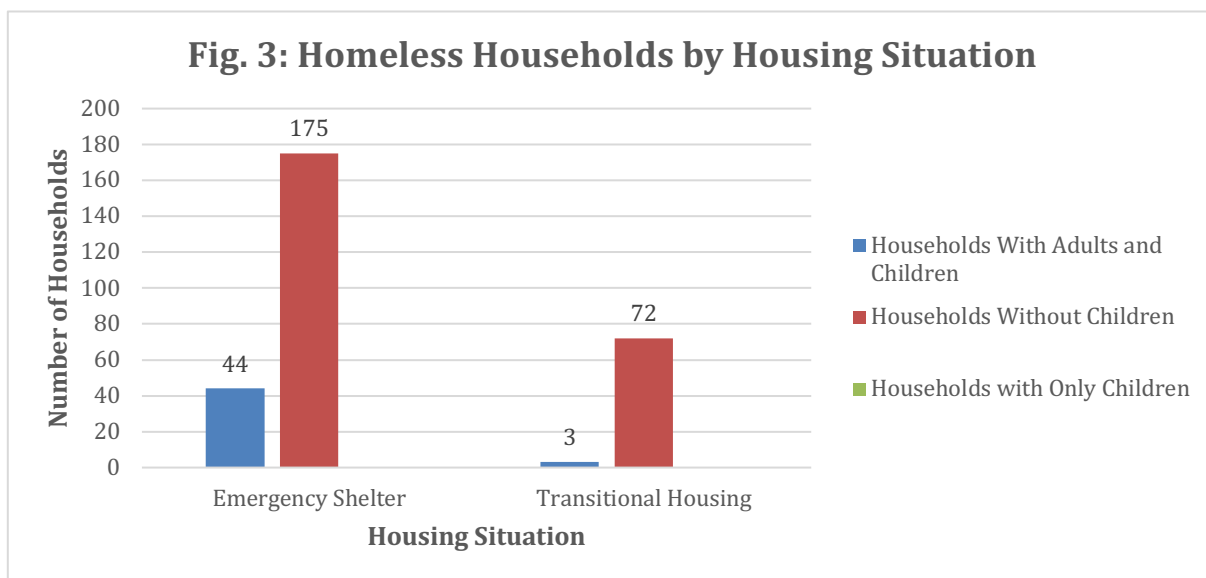
In this report, ‘household’ means “any group of persons who, if they were able to attain permanent housing, would choose to live together; and, shared the same sleeping arrangements on the night of the count.”



Of the 294 homeless households counted in Mercer in 2021, 47 (16%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult. These families included 140 persons, including 89 children under age 18 and 51 adults. The average family size was 2.97 persons. Figure 3 shows that 44 families (94%) were staying in emergency shelters. There were 3 families (6%) in transitional housing.

247 (84%) of the homeless households in Mercer County were households without children under 18, and they were composed of 253 adults. The majority of adult only households (71%, 175 persons) were staying in emergency shelter on the night of the count.

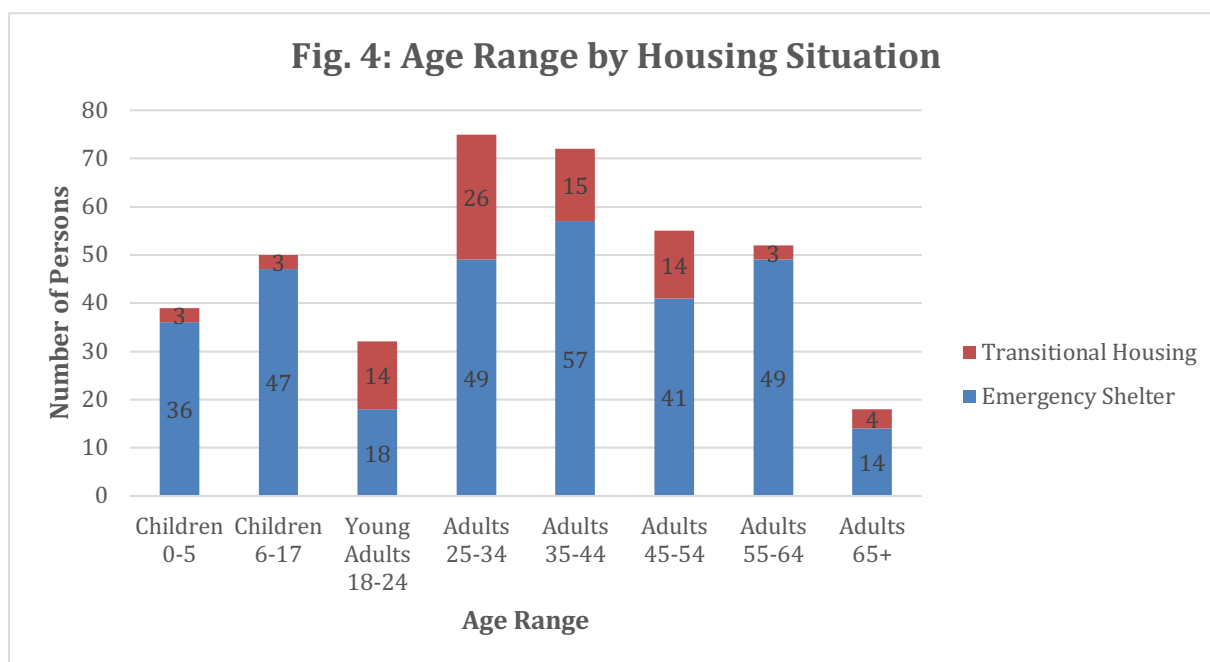
29% (72 persons) were staying in transitional housing.



Demographics

There was a total of 32 (8%) homeless adults between 18 and 24 years old, 272 (69%) adults over age 24, and 89 (23%) children under 18 years old experiencing homelessness on the night of the count. Figure 4 shows that the age range most represented are Adults between 25 and 34 (75 persons, 19%).

62.3% (245) of homeless persons were male and 37.7% (148) were female.

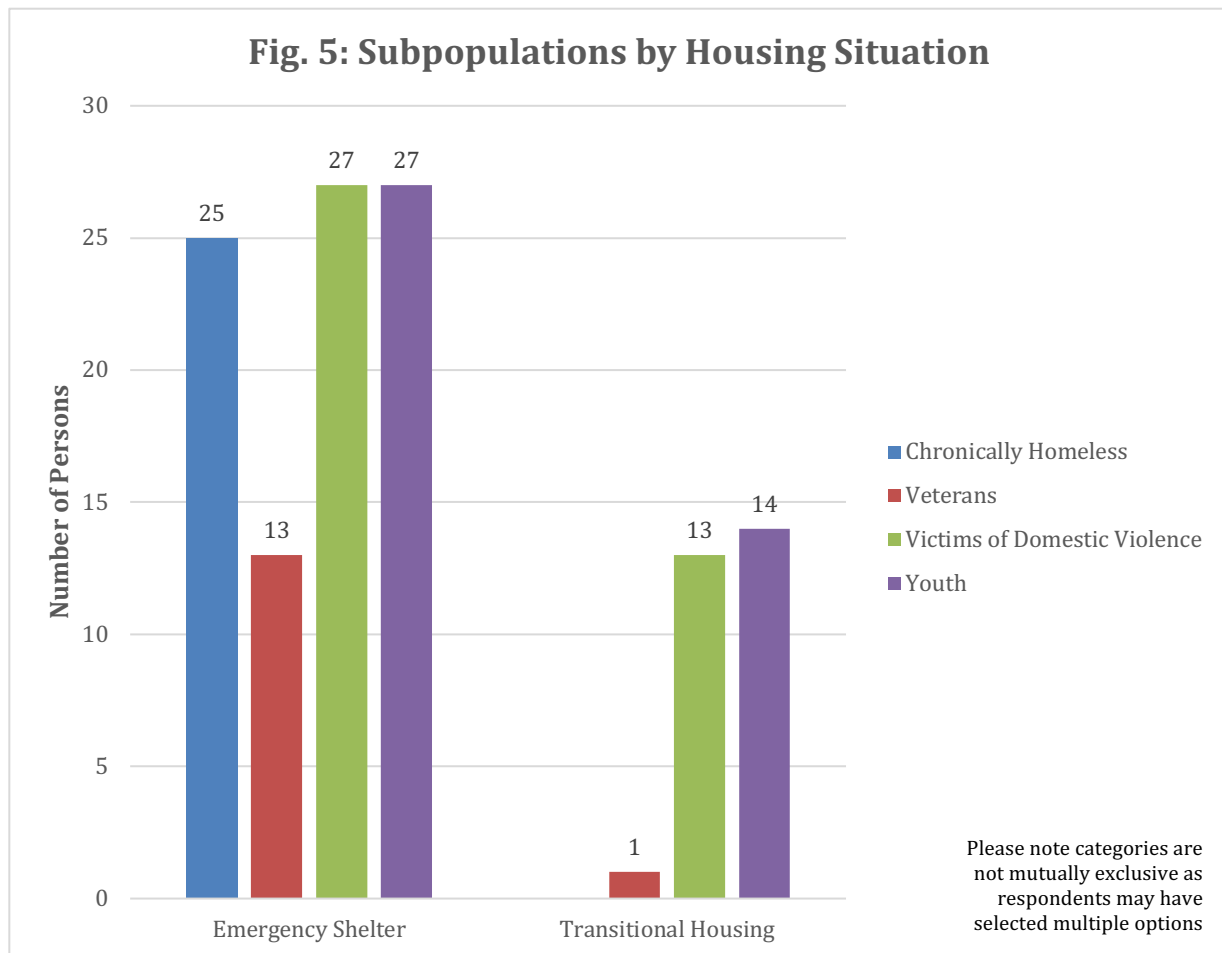


57.3% (225) of persons identified their race as Black or African American, non-Hispanic/Latino, making this the largest racial subgroup of homeless persons counted. The next largest group self-identified as White, non-Hispanic/Latino (19.1%, 75 persons). With regard to ethnicity, 15.8% (62) of persons identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.

Subpopulations

On the night of January 26, 2021, out of the 393 persons identified as homeless, there were a total of 25 Chronically Homeless persons, representing 6.4% of the homeless population. There were 14 homeless veterans representing 4.6% of the adult homeless population. 40 Victims of Domestic Violence were identified representing 10.2% of the total homeless population. Homeless Youth (individuals and families with heads of households 24 years old or younger) represented 10.4% of the homeless population with 41 persons identified.

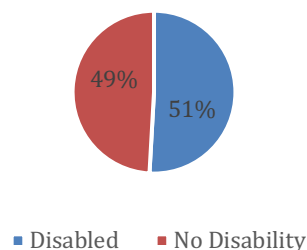
Figure 5 illustrates the break-down of each subpopulation identified by housing type. As illustrated in Figure 5 the majority Veterans, Victims of Domestic Violence, Chronically Homeless and Youth were staying in emergency shelters on the night of the count with a significant number of Youth and Victims of DV staying in transitional housing.



Disabilities

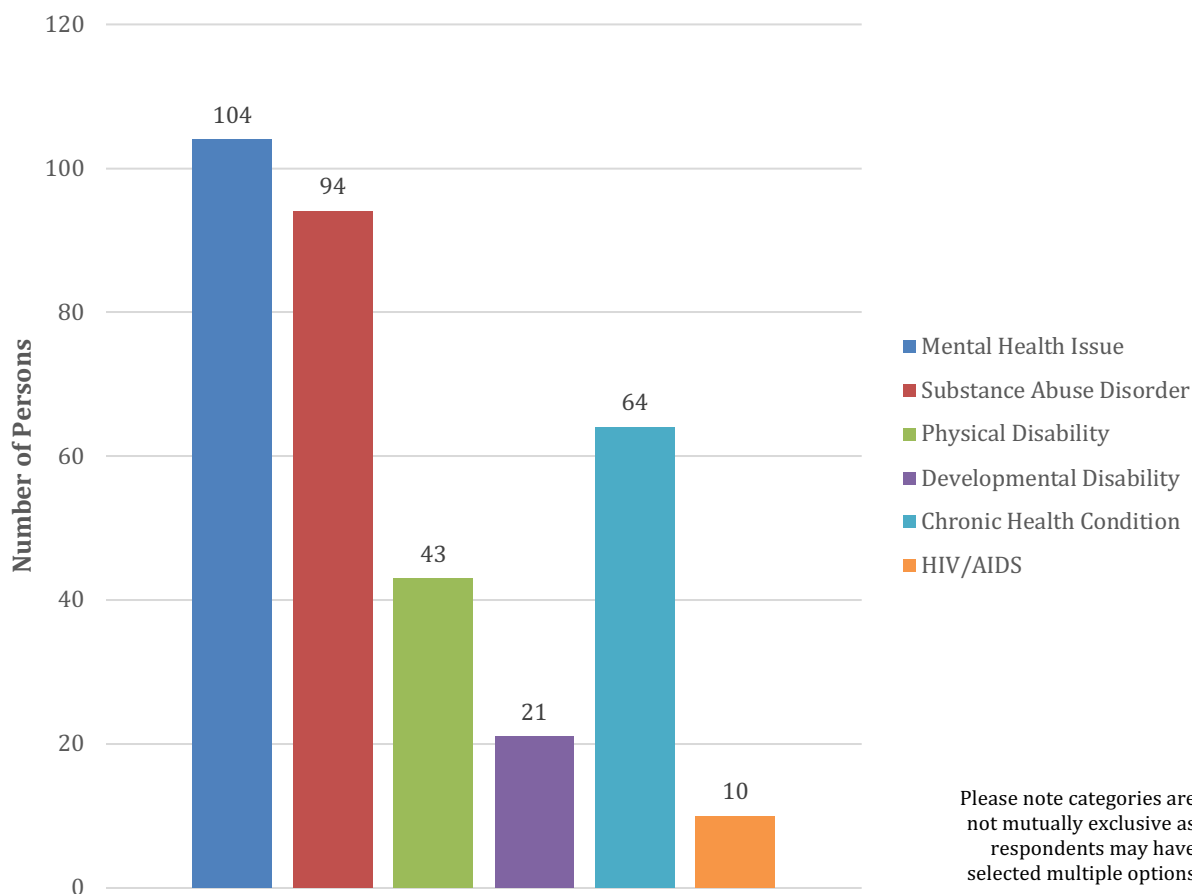
Figure 6 illustrates that 51% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 60.2% of adults 18 or older reported some type of disability compared to 19.1% of children. Figure 7 shows the number of the homeless persons that identified as having various disabilities. The most common disabilities included mental health issues and substance abuse disorders.

Fig. 6: Percent of Population with a Disability



Among disabled persons, 52% reported mental health issues making this the most prevalent disability; representing 56.3% of the disabled adult homeless population and 26.5% of the total population experiencing homelessness. 50.3% of disabled adults reported a substance use disorder and 30.1% reported a chronic health condition. Among disabled homeless children, 52.9% reported a Chronic Health Condition, and 41.2% reported a Developmental Disability.

Fig. 7: Number of Persons by Disability Type



Income and Benefits

Among all households experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, 48.9% had no source of income. The most common sources of income among homeless households were SSI (16.7%), earned income (10.3%), followed by TANF (8.9%). Figure 8 shows the income sources reported by respondents in relation to their housing situation on the night of the count.

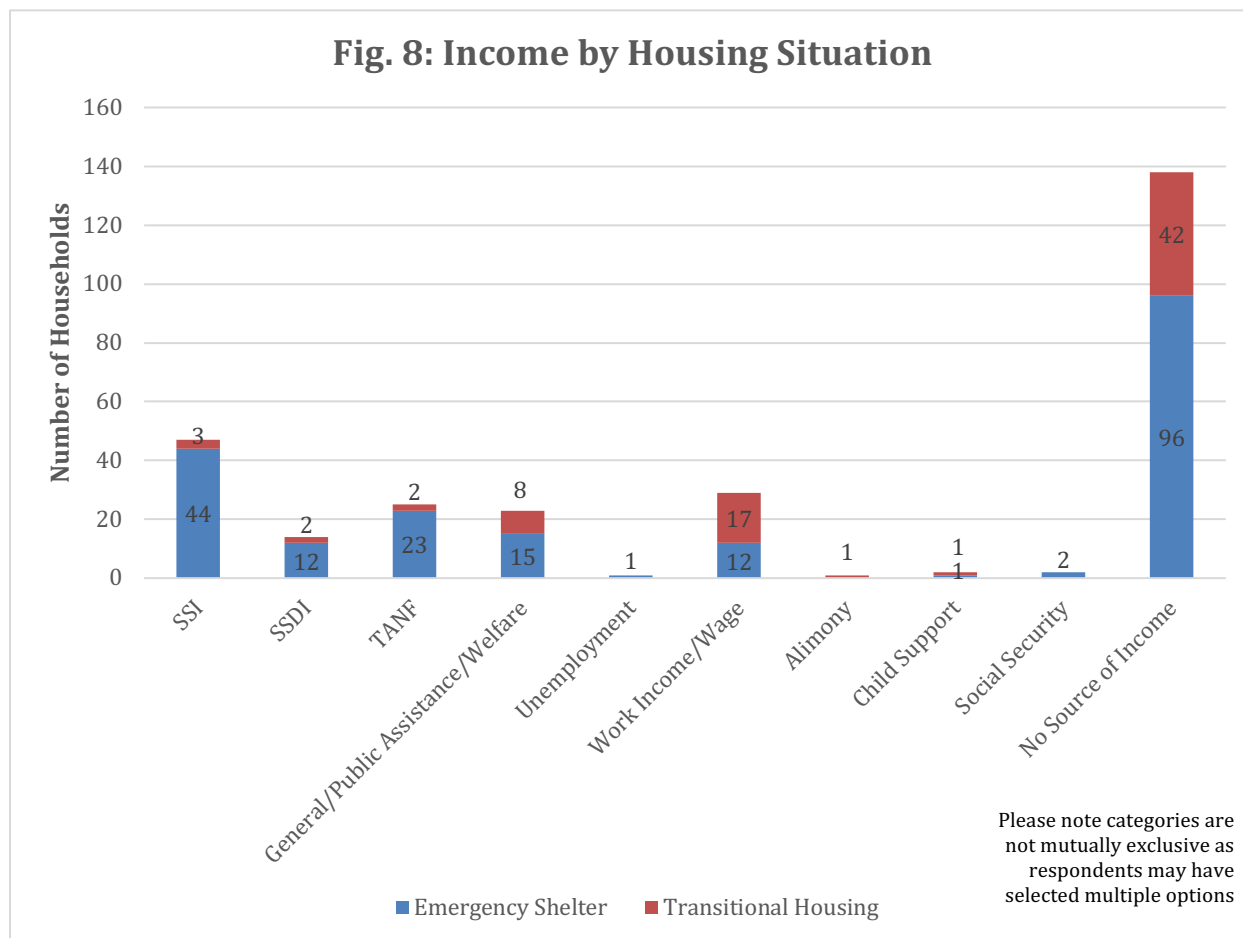


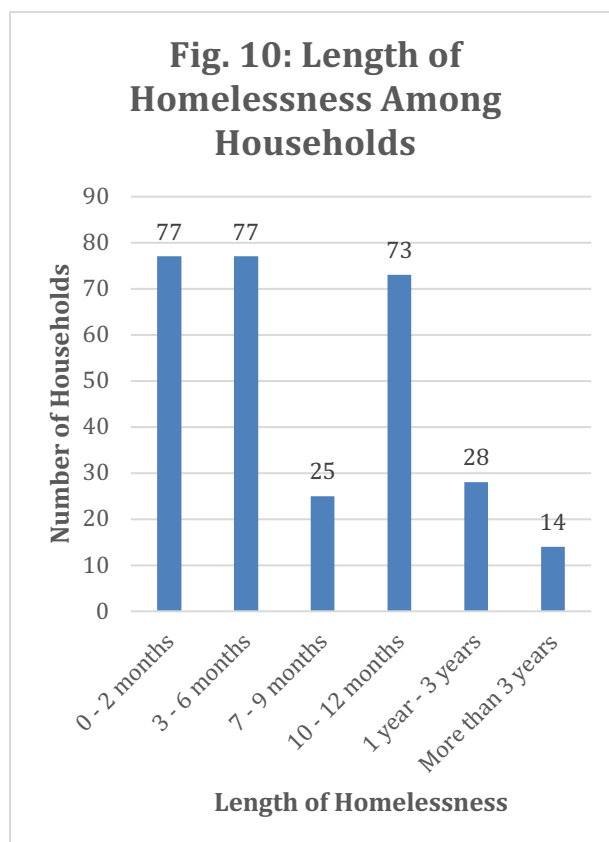
Figure 9 show the average monthly income among households in each housing situation.

Figure 9. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation		
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing
Average for All Households	\$973.62	\$1049.84

2.7% of homeless households reported receiving of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Medicaid was the top reported non-cash benefit, received by 58.5% of homeless households. Food Stamps (SNAP) was the second most reported non-cash benefit, received by 35% of homeless households.

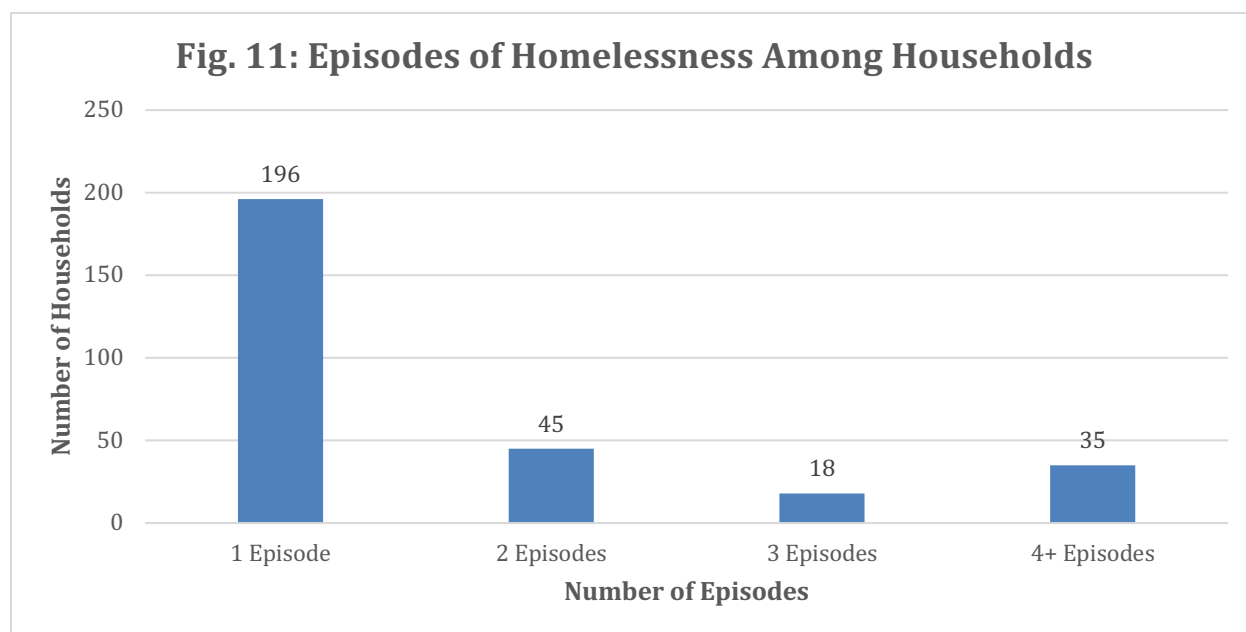
Length of Homelessness

Figure 10 illustrates the total amount of time households have reported being homeless. This includes continuous episodes of homelessness as well as the total time from various episodes of homelessness over the past 3 years. As seen in Figure 10, 52.4% of homeless households reported their total length of homelessness was between 0 and 6 months. Within this group, 26.2% were homeless from 0 – 2 months and 26.2% were homeless between 3 and 6 months. For those with longer periods of homelessness, 14.3% of homeless households reported that their total length of homelessness was more than 1 year. Among households that had lengths of homelessness exceeding one year, 28 households (9.5%) were homeless between 1 and 3 years while 14 households (4.8%) reported their total length of homelessness exceeded 3 years.



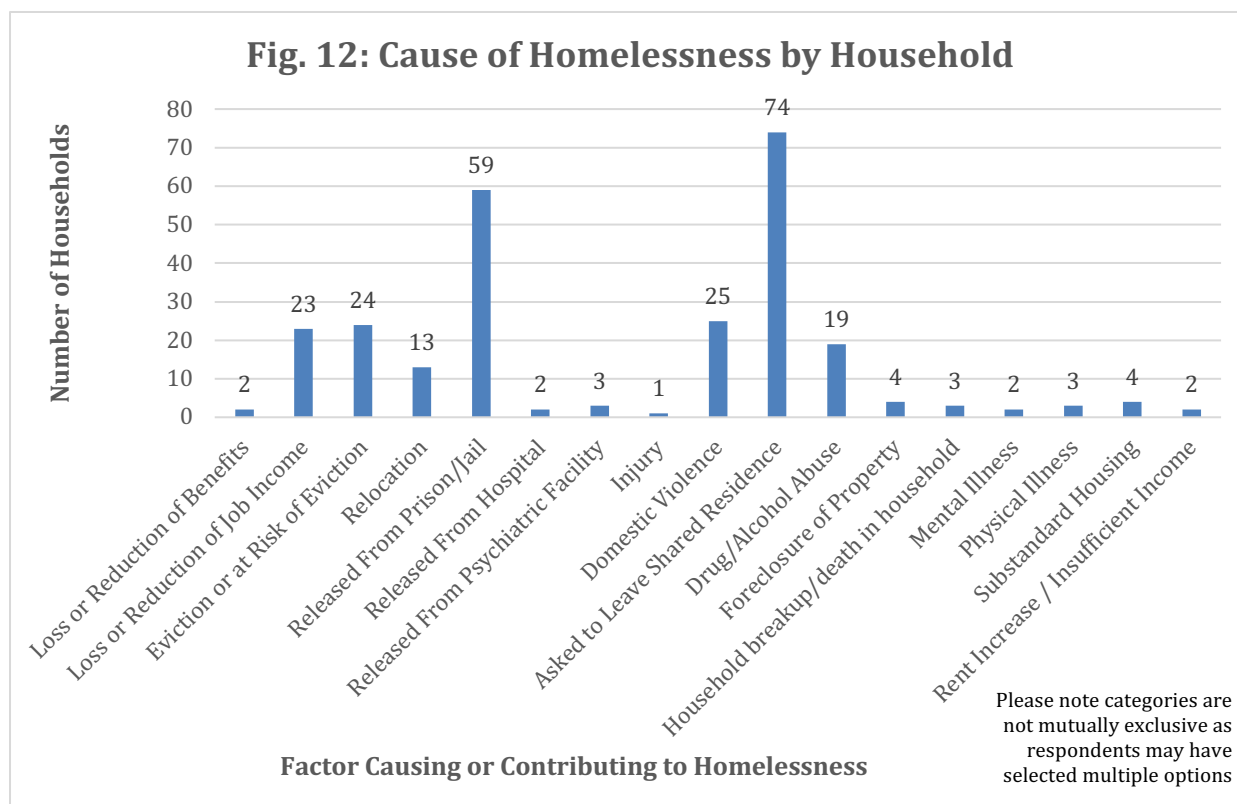
Episodes of Homelessness

There was a total of 196 households (66.7%) that reported experiencing one episode of homelessness, making this the most prevalent response. Figure 11 illustrates the total number of episodes of homelessness reported by households experiencing homelessness.



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 (74 households, 28.1%) than any other cause. As Figure 12 shows, the next most common factor reported was released from prison or jail (22.4%) followed by domestic violence (9.5%).



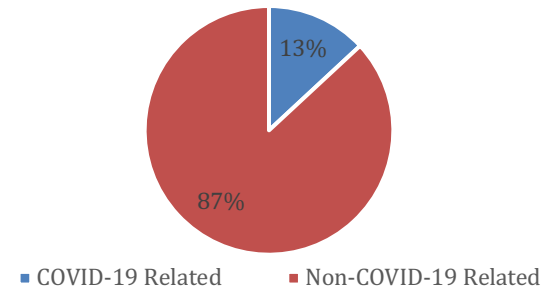
When households were asked ‘what was your residence prior to your current living situation?’ more said they were living with family or friends (33.3%) than any other type of residence. 20.9% reported their residence prior as jail, prison or juvenile detention facility and 17.7% reported staying in an emergency shelter.

Impact of COVID-19

Over the past year and a half, systems have transformed to meet the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness while also addressing the safety needs of staff and the community at large. The ways in which COVID-19 has impacted individual and families experiencing homelessness are varied and will likely evolve as we learn more and continue to emerge from the pandemic. To gain a preliminary understanding of the impact of COVID-19, the 2021 PIT survey was updated to include questions regarding household experiences with COVID-19.

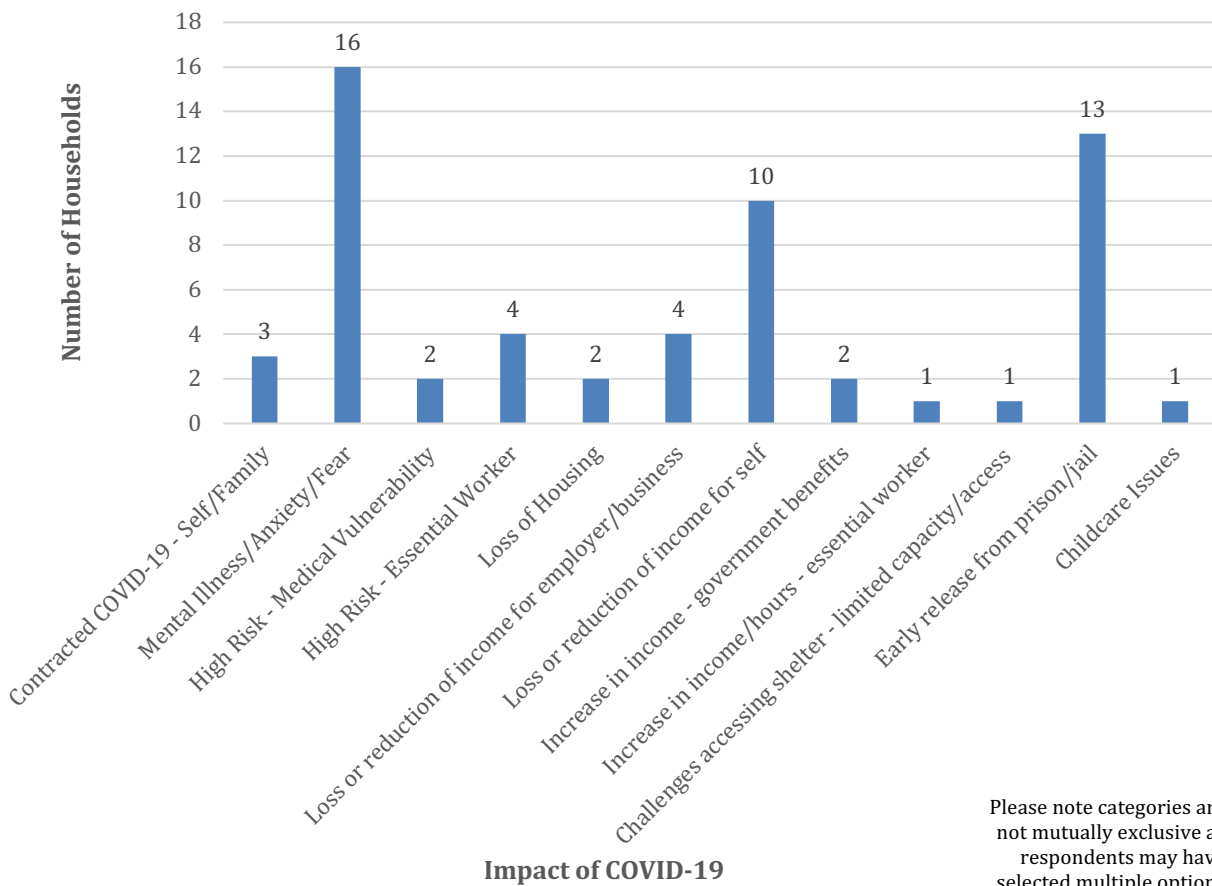
Of the 294 households identified as experiencing homelessness, 84 responded to the following question: “Are you homeless as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?” Of the 84 respondents, 13% (11 households) indicated their current homeless experience is a direct result of COVID-19.

Fig. 13: Number of Homeless Households who became Homeless as a result of COVID-19



All households were asked how the coronavirus impacted their current living situation (regardless of whether they identified COVID-19 as a direct cause of their current homeless situation). Of the 84 households that responded, Mental Illness/Anxiety/Fear was the most common impact identified by 39% of COVID-19 impacted households. The second most common response was early release from prison/jail (31.7%) followed by loss or reduction of income for self, which was identified by 24.4% of households identifying a COVID-19 impact.

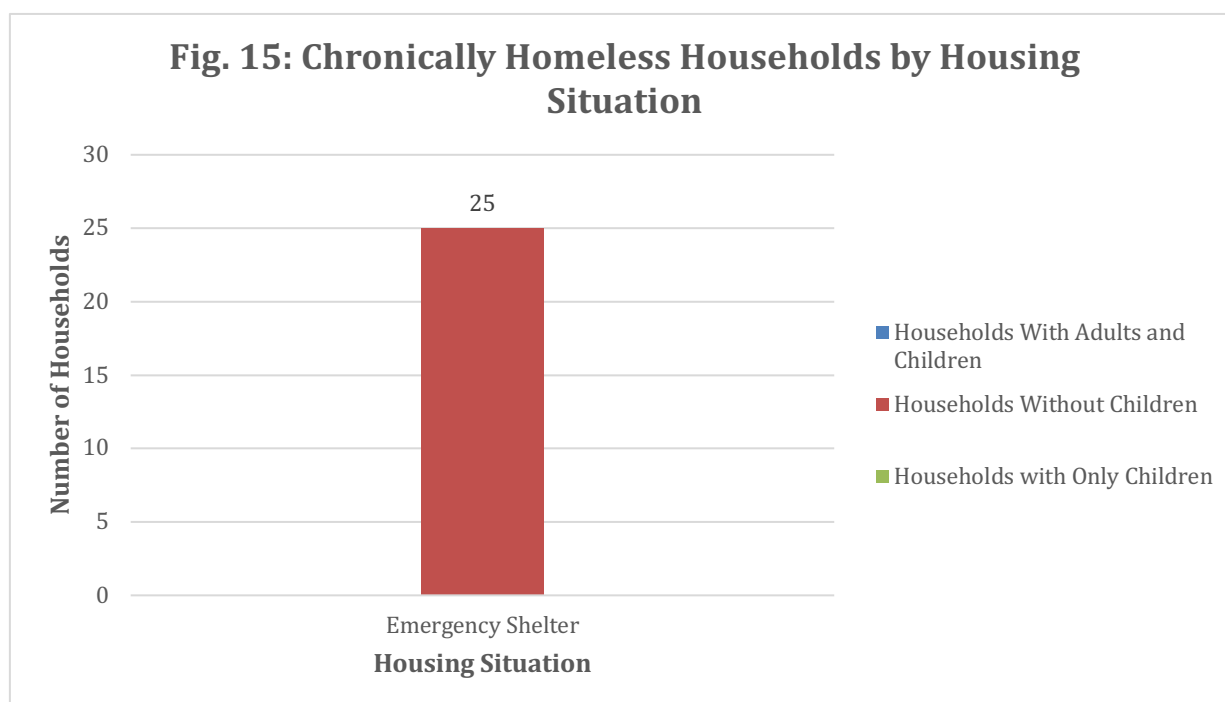
Fig. 14: Impact of COVID-19 by Household



IV. Findings for the Chronically Homeless

Chronically Homeless households, as defined by HUD, are persons with a long-term disabling condition who have 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. Any family with a head of household that meets this definition is considered a chronically homeless family.

Chronically Homeless households are one of the priority populations identified by HUD. Priority population status 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.



80% of respondents
identified as Male

28% of Adults
were between
45-54 years old

Fig. 16: Number of Chronically Homeless Persons by Disability Type

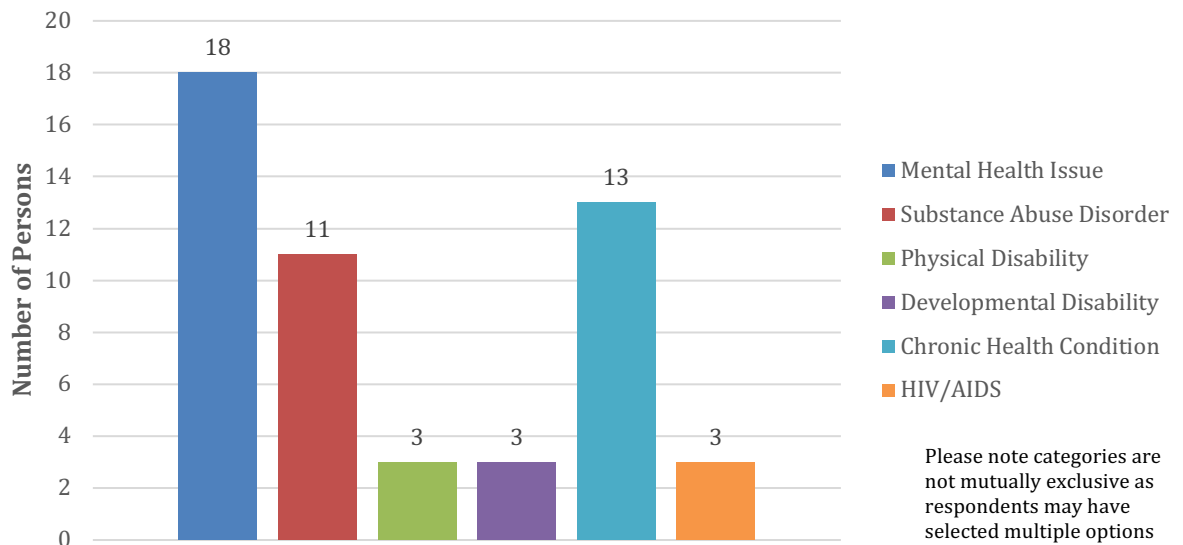
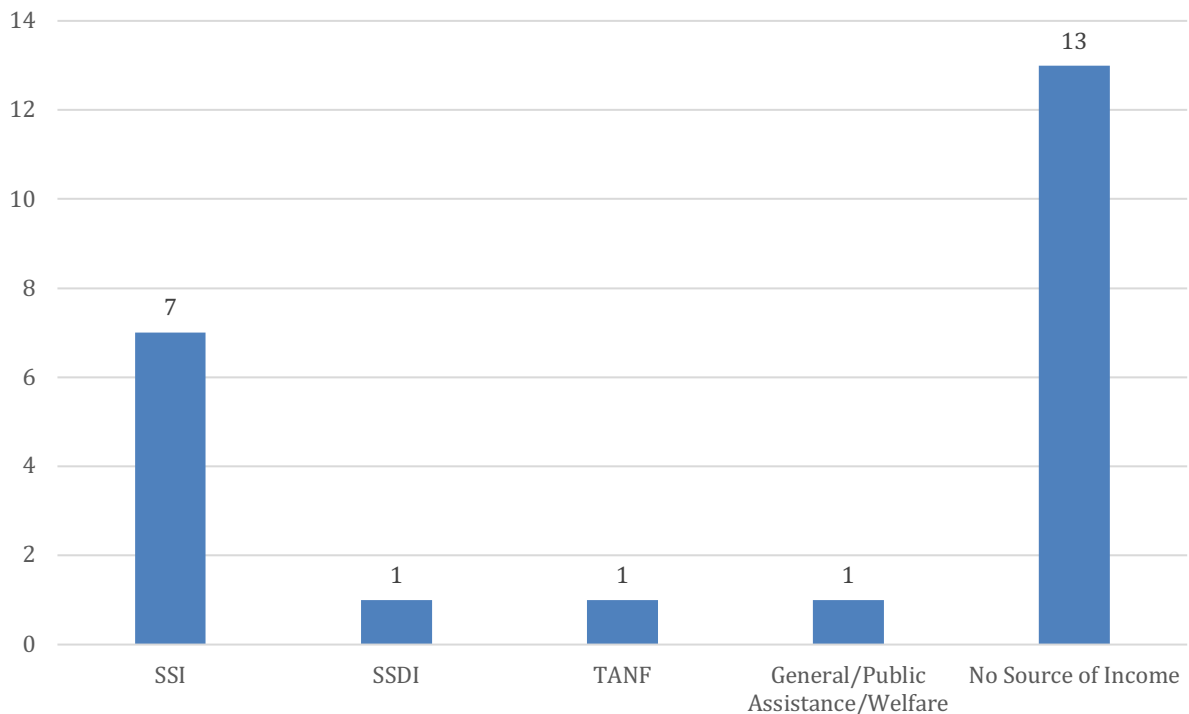


Fig. 17: Number of Chronically Homeless Households by Income Source

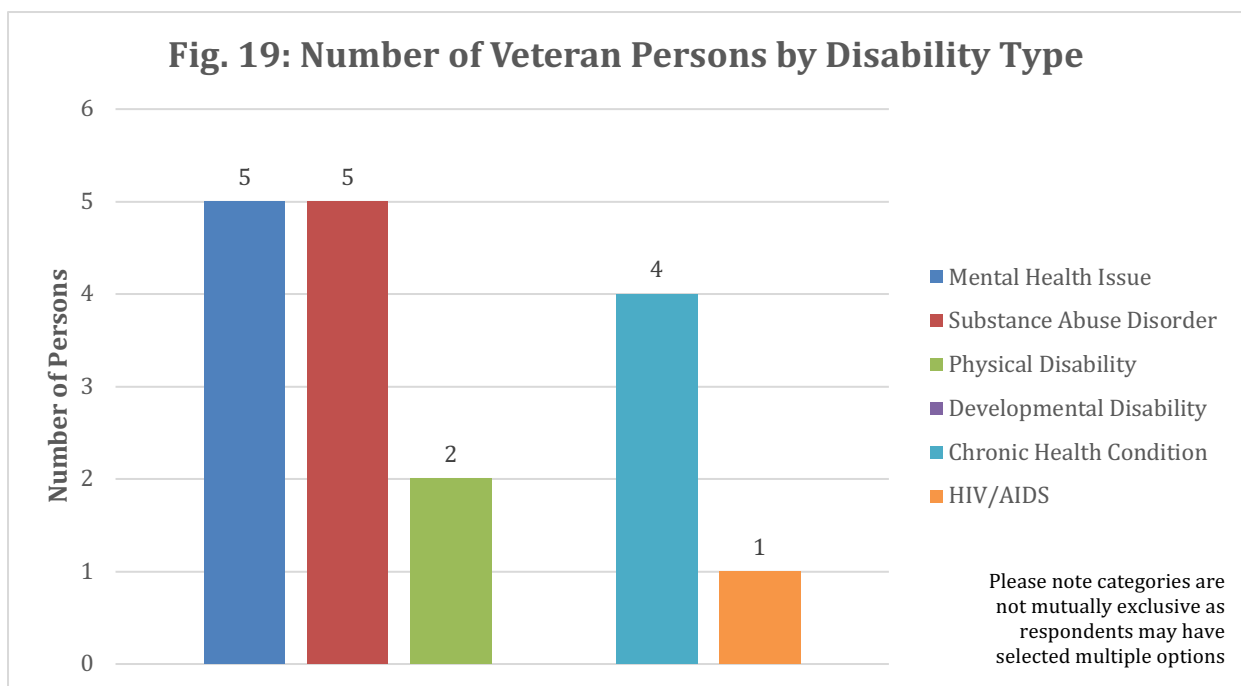
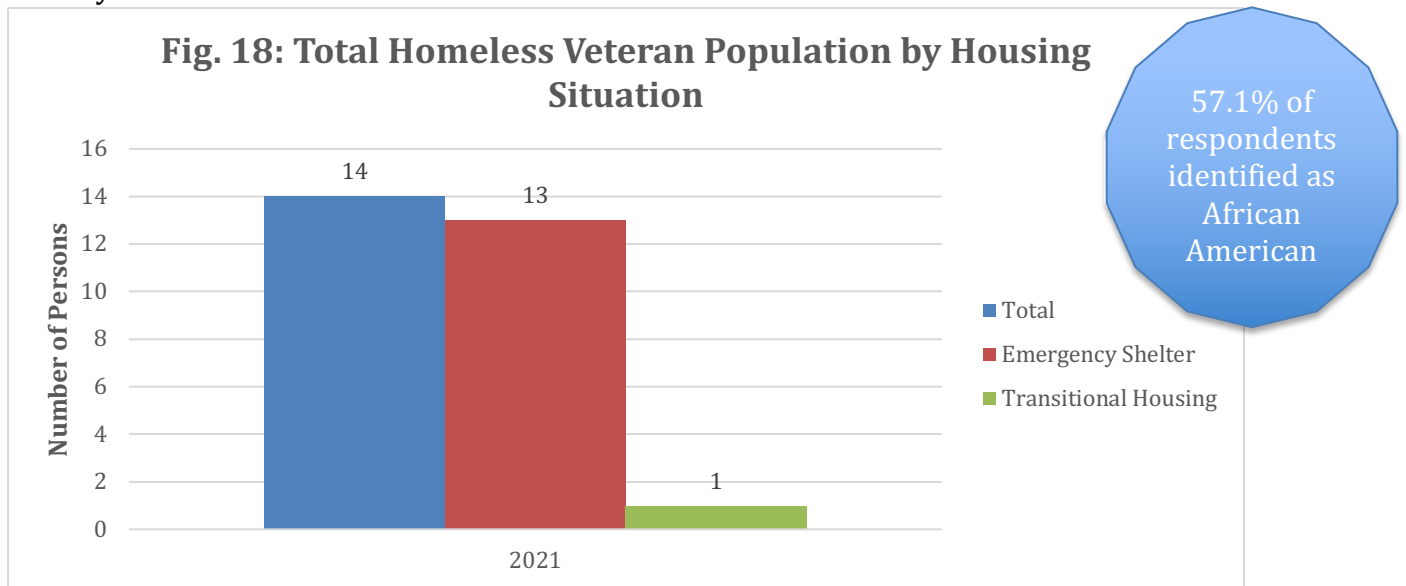


Average Monthly Income is \$947.70

Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

VI. Findings for Homeless Veterans

Veterans are defined as any person of the age of 18 who has served in any branch of the Armed Forces. For the purposes of the Point-in-Time Count, the veteran definition covers any person who has served including those who may not be eligible for veteran services through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. 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. Many communities in New Jersey have also been working hard to end homelessness among our country's servicemen and women.



Average monthly income is \$1110.89

Fig. 20: Income by Housing Situation for Veteran Households

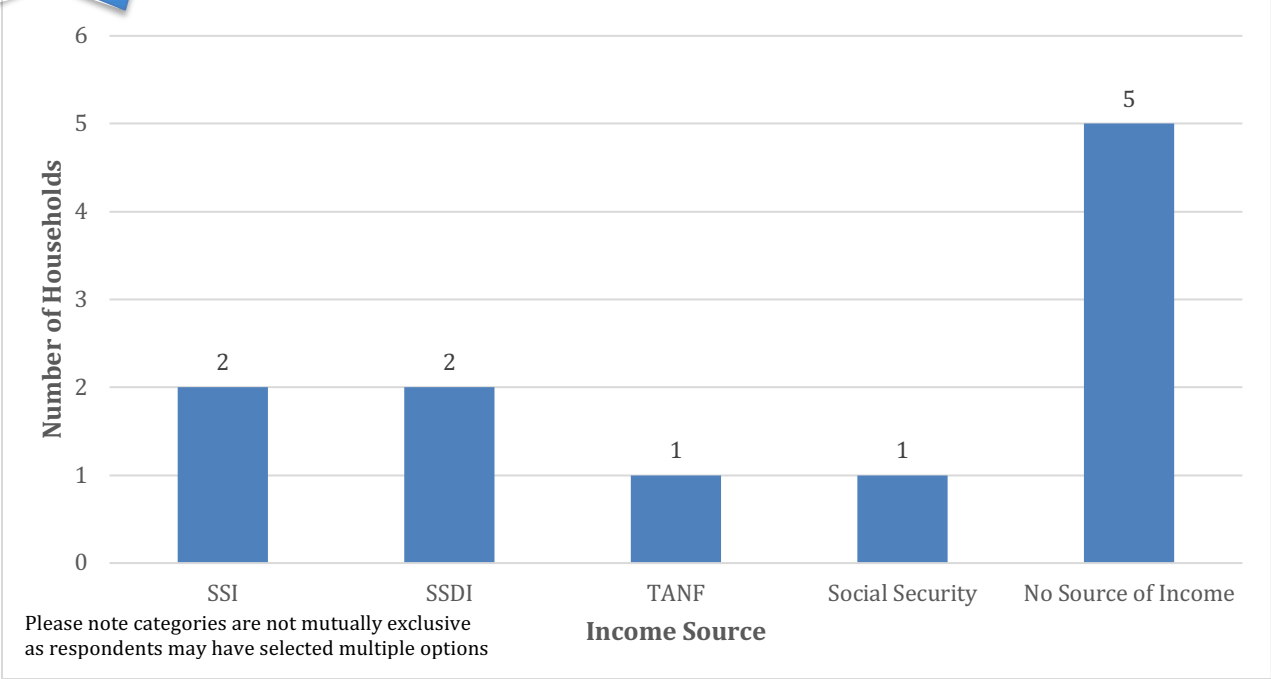


Fig. 21: Length of Homelessness Among Veteran Households

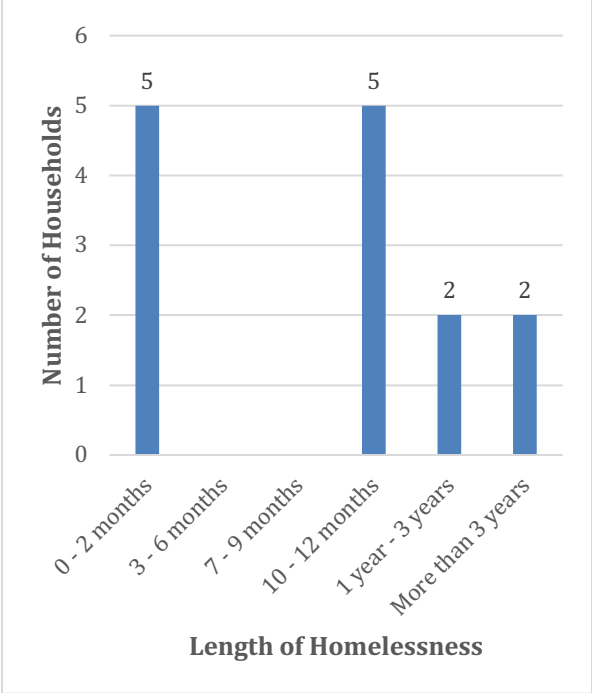
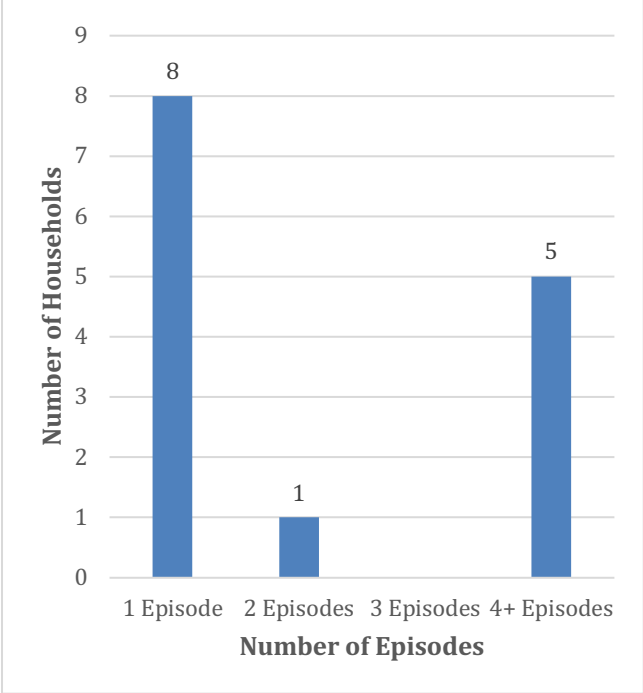


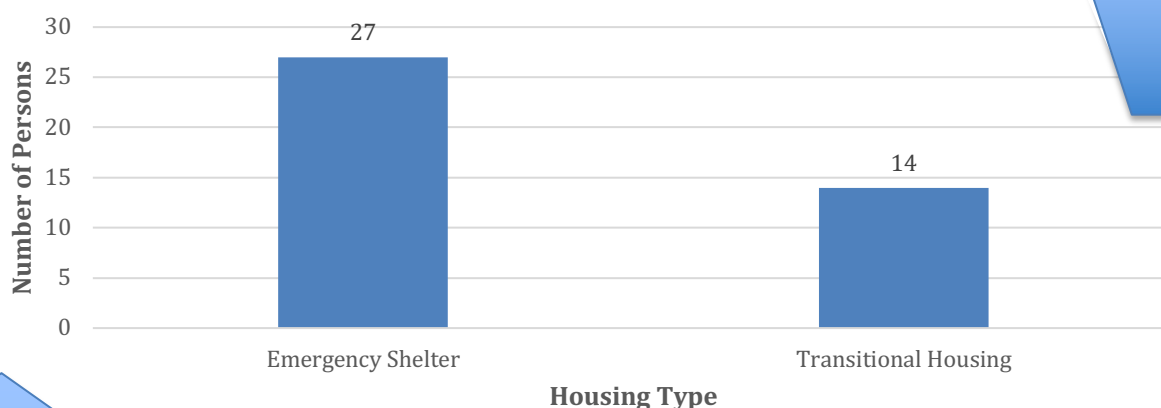
Fig. 22: Episodes of Homelessness Among Veteran Households



VII. Finding for Homeless Youth

Youth are defined as persons under the age of 25 who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian. This can include individual youth (18-24 years old), unaccompanied minors (17 or younger), households of 2 or more youth presenting together as a household, and pregnant or parenting youth who are the legal guardians of one or more children. The United States Interagency Council has identified homeless youth as one of the priority population of focus in *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*. Many communities across Mercer are working to better understand the scope and needs of the Youth population experiencing homelessness and are working with community partners to end youth homelessness.

Fig. 23: Number of Homeless Youth by Housing Situation



66% of persons are over 18 yrs. old

53.7% are female

Fig. 24: Homeless Youth Households by Housing Situation

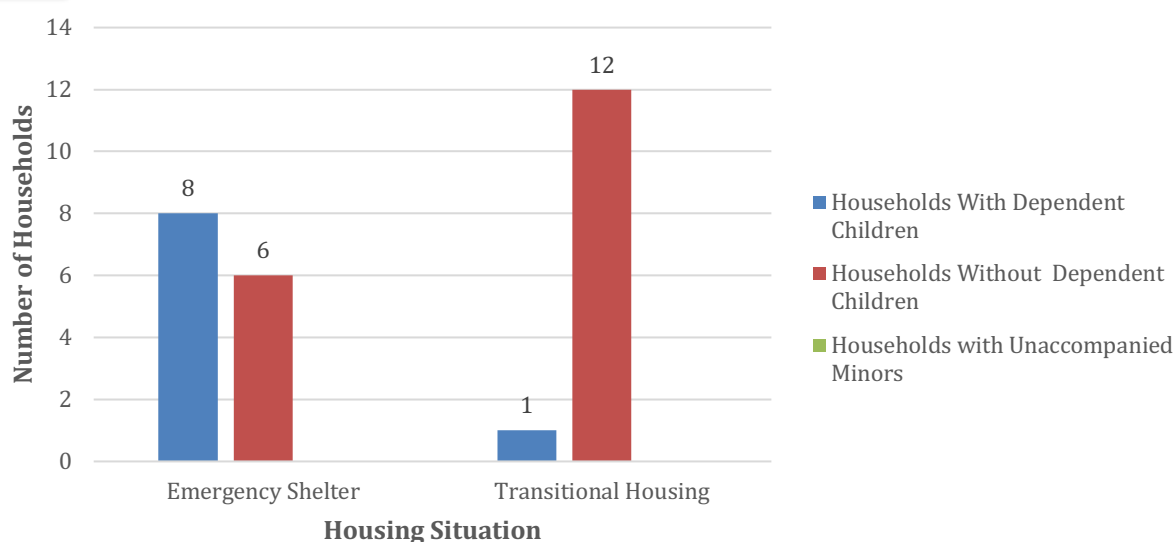


Fig. 25: Number of Youth by Disability Type

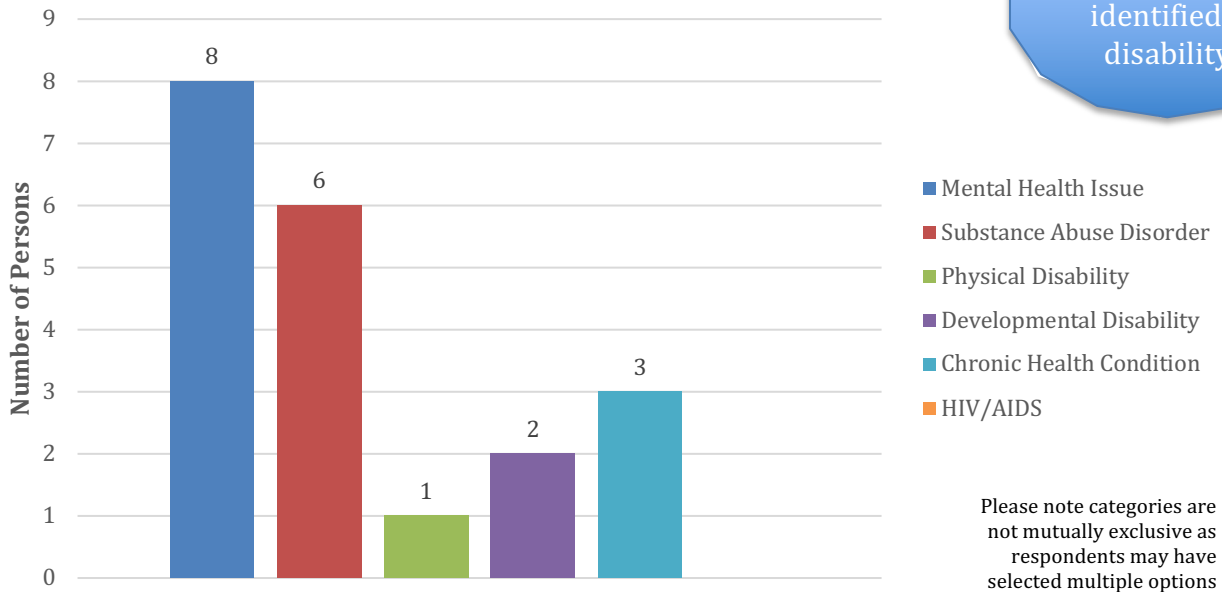
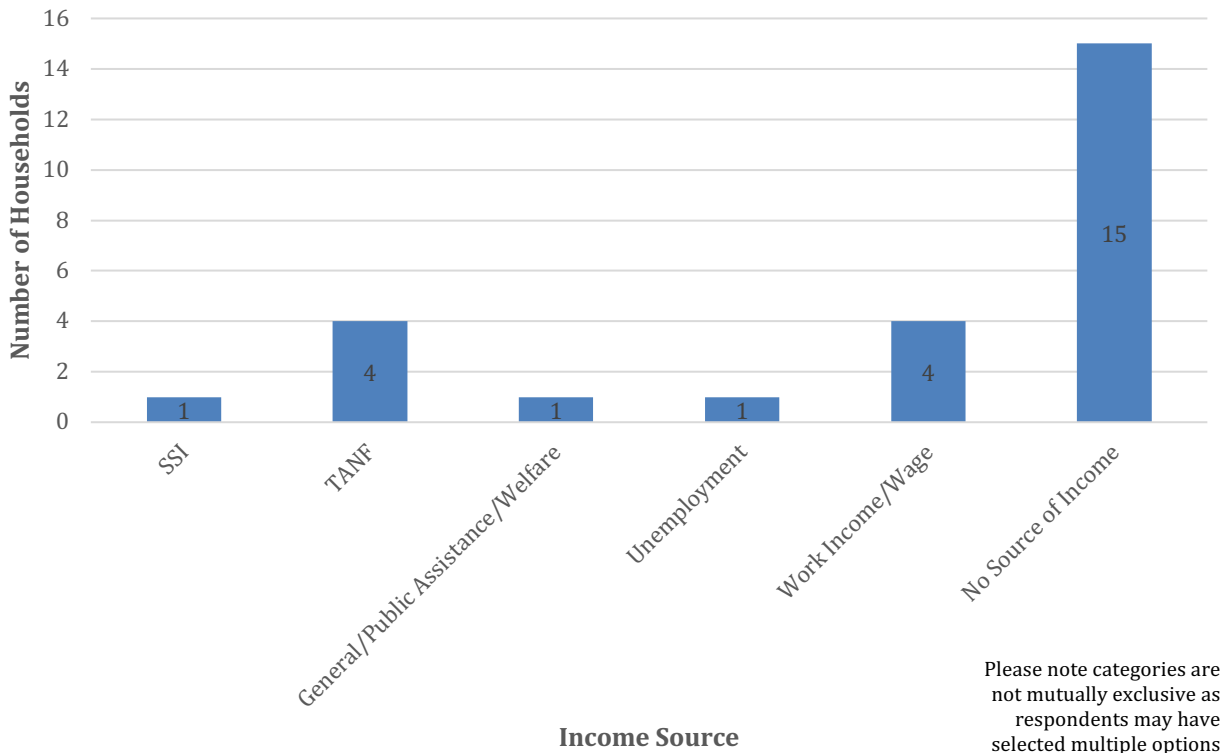


Fig. 26: Income Sources for Youth Households



Average Monthly Income is \$800.44

Fig. 27: Length of Homelessness Among Youth Households

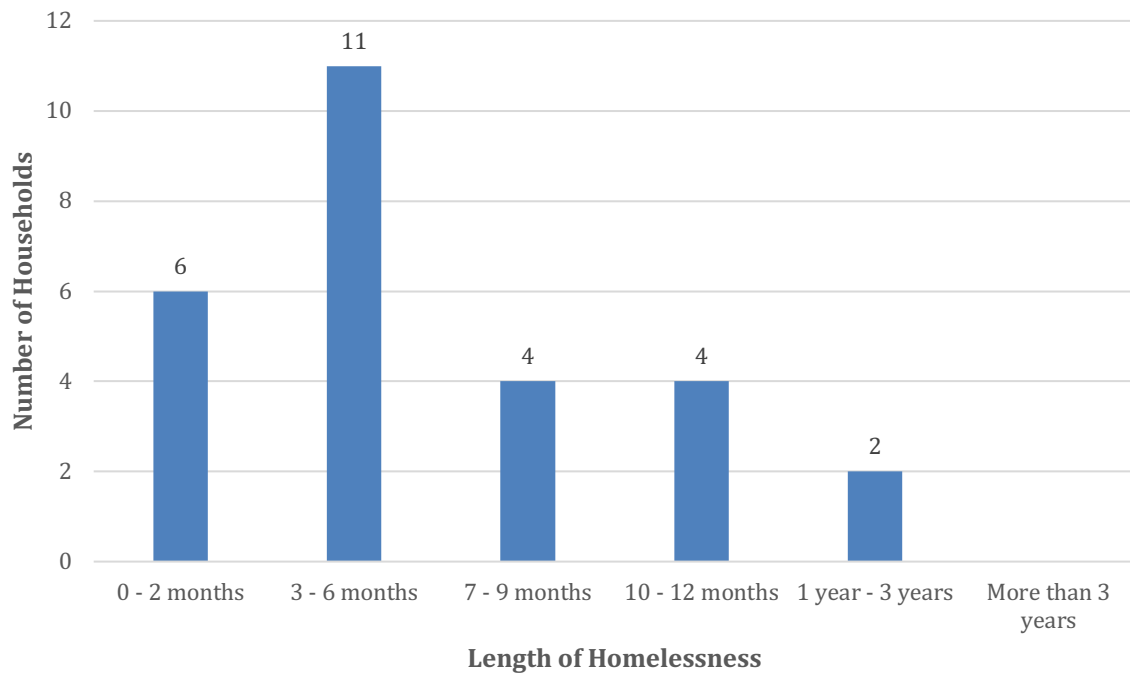
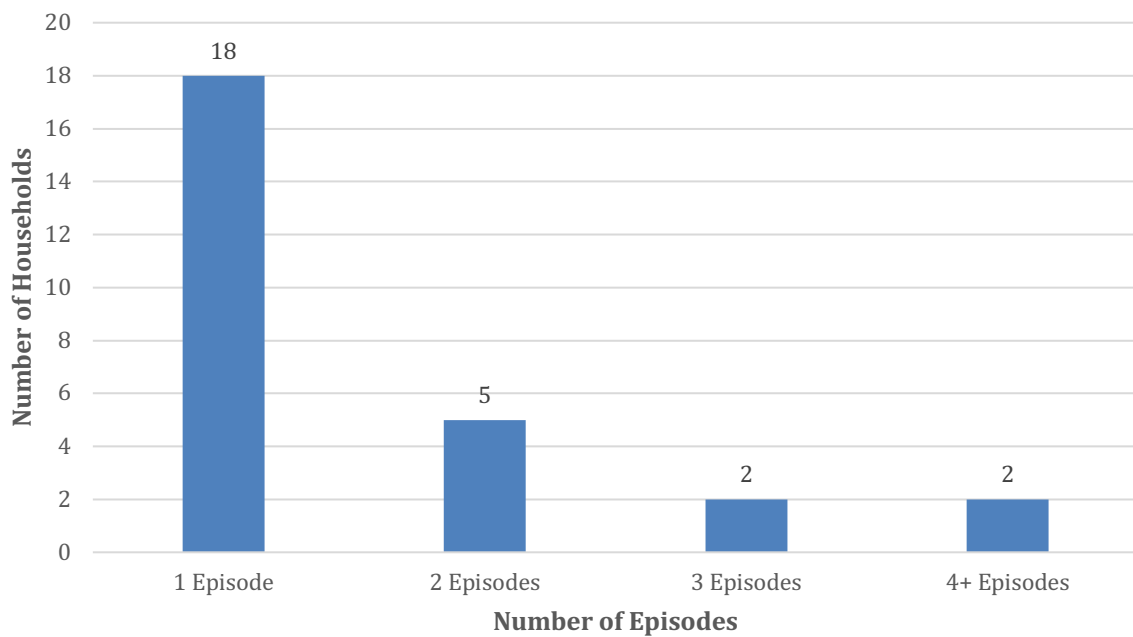
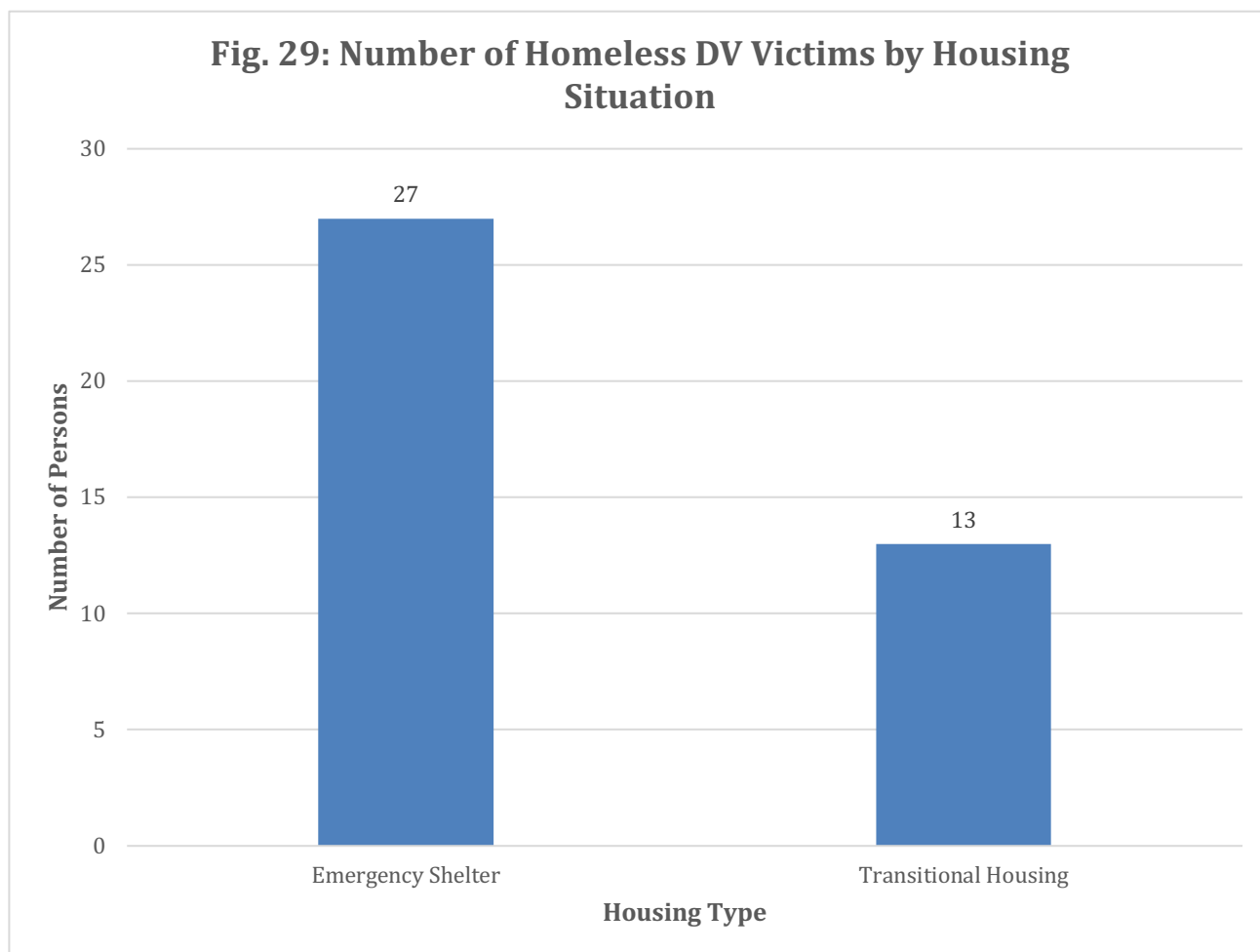


Fig. 28: Episodes of Homelessness Among Youth Households



VIII. Findings for Victims of Domestic Violence

The 2021 Point in Time Count captured information for individuals and families “Fleeing” Domestic Violence. For the purposes of the Point-In-Time Count, Domestic Violence is defined as any household that is fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member, including a child, that has taken place in their home, or has created a situation in which the individual or family is afraid to return to their home.



40% are
households
with
children

65% are
females

50% are
Black or
African
American

Fig. 30: Homeless DV Households by Housing Situation

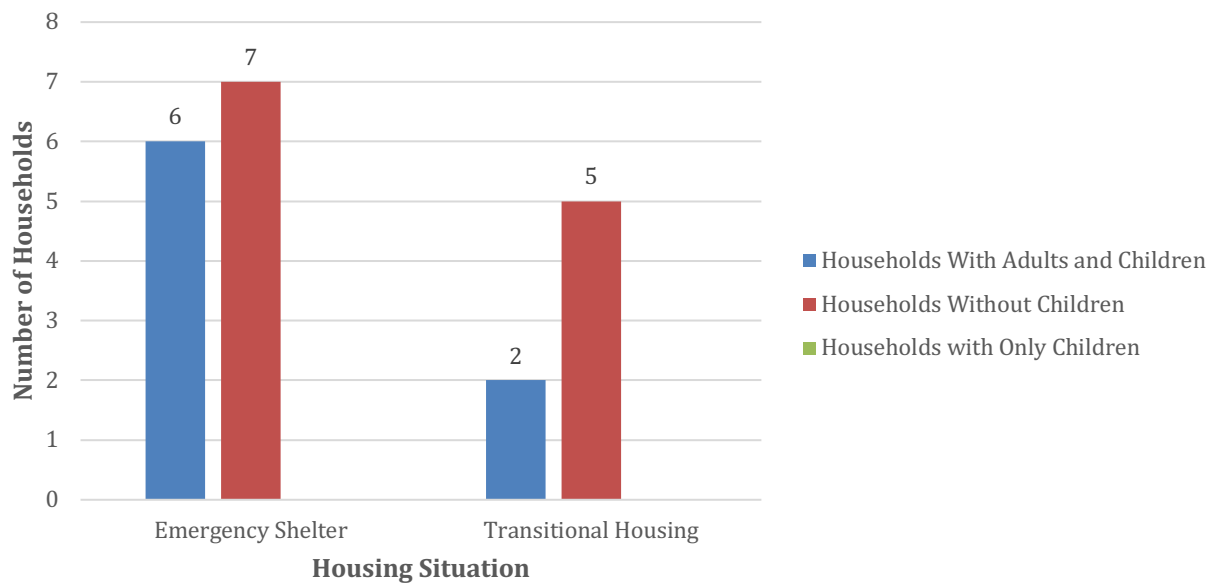
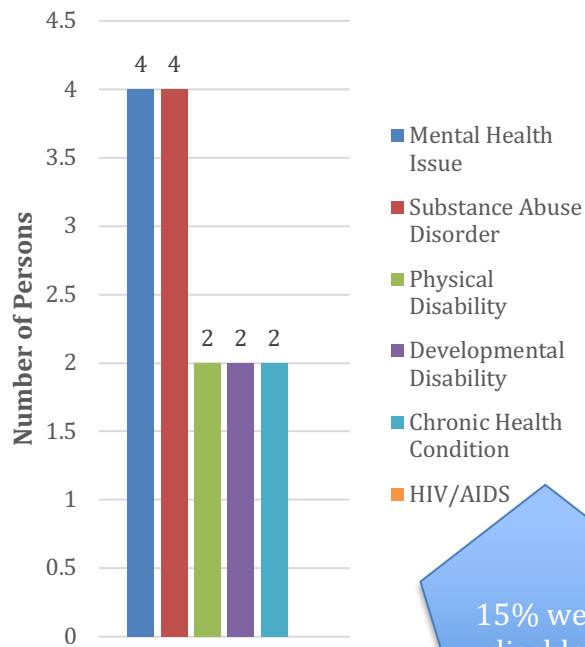


Fig. 31: Number of DV Victims by Disability Type



Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

Fig. 32: Length of Homelessness Among DV Victim Households

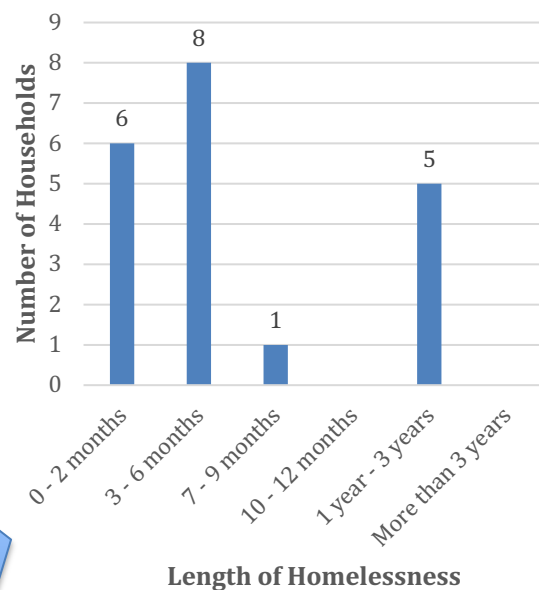
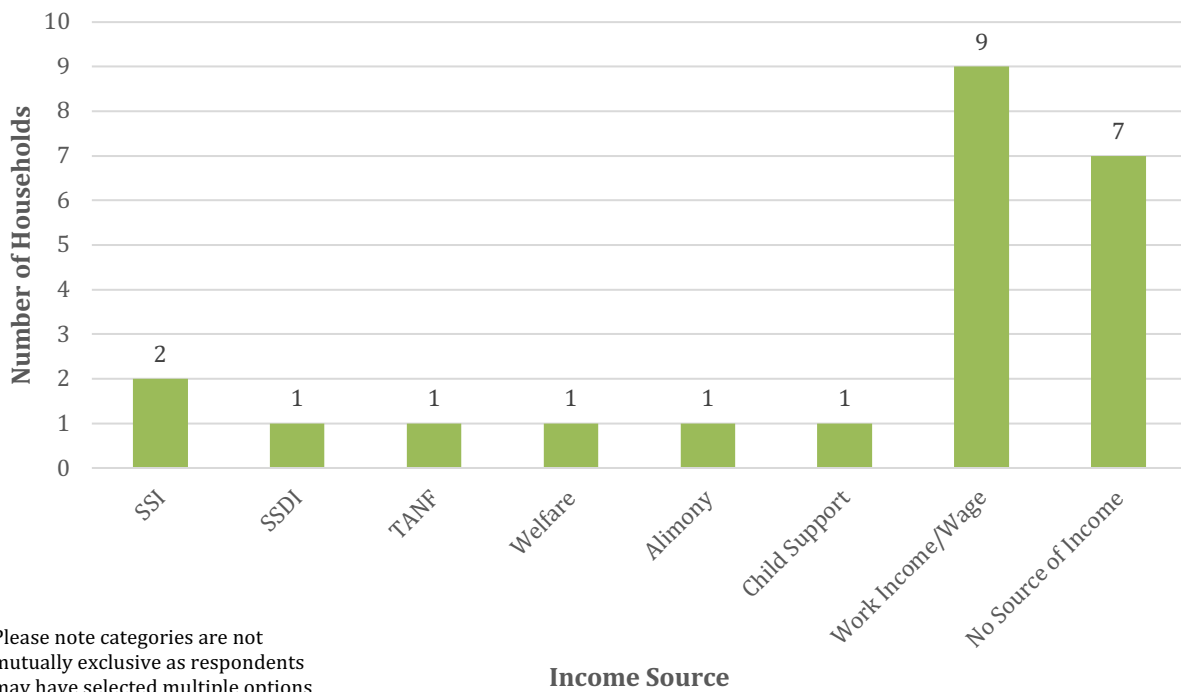
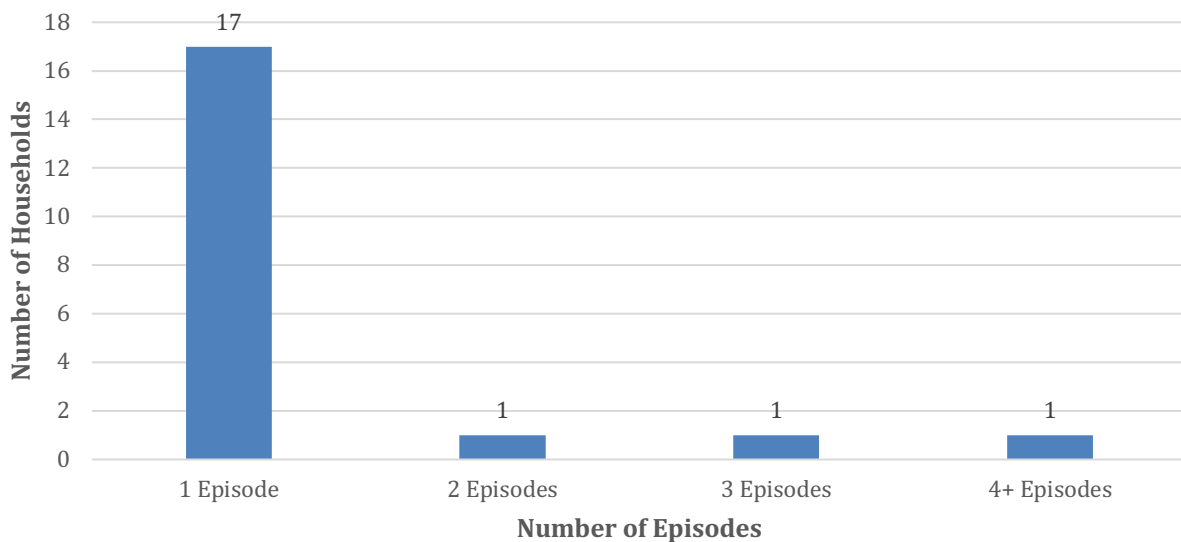


Fig. 33: Income Source for DV Victim Households



Average Monthly Income is \$1,330.50

Fig. 34: Episodes of Homelessness Among DV Victim Households



IX. Appendix A: 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. Mercer'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 their 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 live remote 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 2021 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.

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. Due to the COVID-19 health pandemic a 14-day count was utilized so communities could reduce reliance on volunteers and ensure safety protocols were implemented. About 91.3% of the records for households experiencing homelessness were generated through HMIS.

The 2021 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 household information 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. About 8.7% of the records for households experiencing homelessness were generated 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. 2021 was a HUD mandated year to conduct an unsheltered count, but due to the COVID-19 health pandemic HUD allowed for communities to waive the requirement of an unsheltered count and focus solely on the sheltered count. Communities that did conduct an unsheltered count recognize that there were limitations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Factors affecting the unsheltered account include, but are not limited to: lack of volunteers, reliance solely on homeless service provider staff of which many were understaffed, and inability to host in person events or service fairs for persons experiencing homelessness.
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 are based on the responses received, while all percentages are 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.

4. The Point in Time Count represents an attempt by communities across the State of New Jersey to capture a complete census of all persons experiencing homelessness both in shelters and on the street during a single night. While the count is coordinated as a single statewide event, each county across the state develops locally appropriate methodologies for conducting the count of unsheltered persons in the community. As such, there is variation of the scope and depth of the unsheltered count from community to community. However, the sheltered count is conducted in a uniform manner across the state and each community maintains a consistent process for completing the sheltered and unsheltered count from year to year.
5. Given the nature of the Point in Time Count as a one-day count of the population experiencing homelessness, data collected on the racial and ethnic breakdown from the PIT is not fully comparable to U.S. Census Bureau data on the racial and ethnic population for the State of New Jersey. While there are limitations on comparing the PIT data, for purposes of examining racial and ethnic disparities, as a result of the single day count, a review of the sheltered population in the State of New Jersey over the course of a full year demonstrates similar trends as seen in the PIT data in which persons identifying as African American or Black, Native American and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander are overrepresented in the population experiencing homelessness.

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.

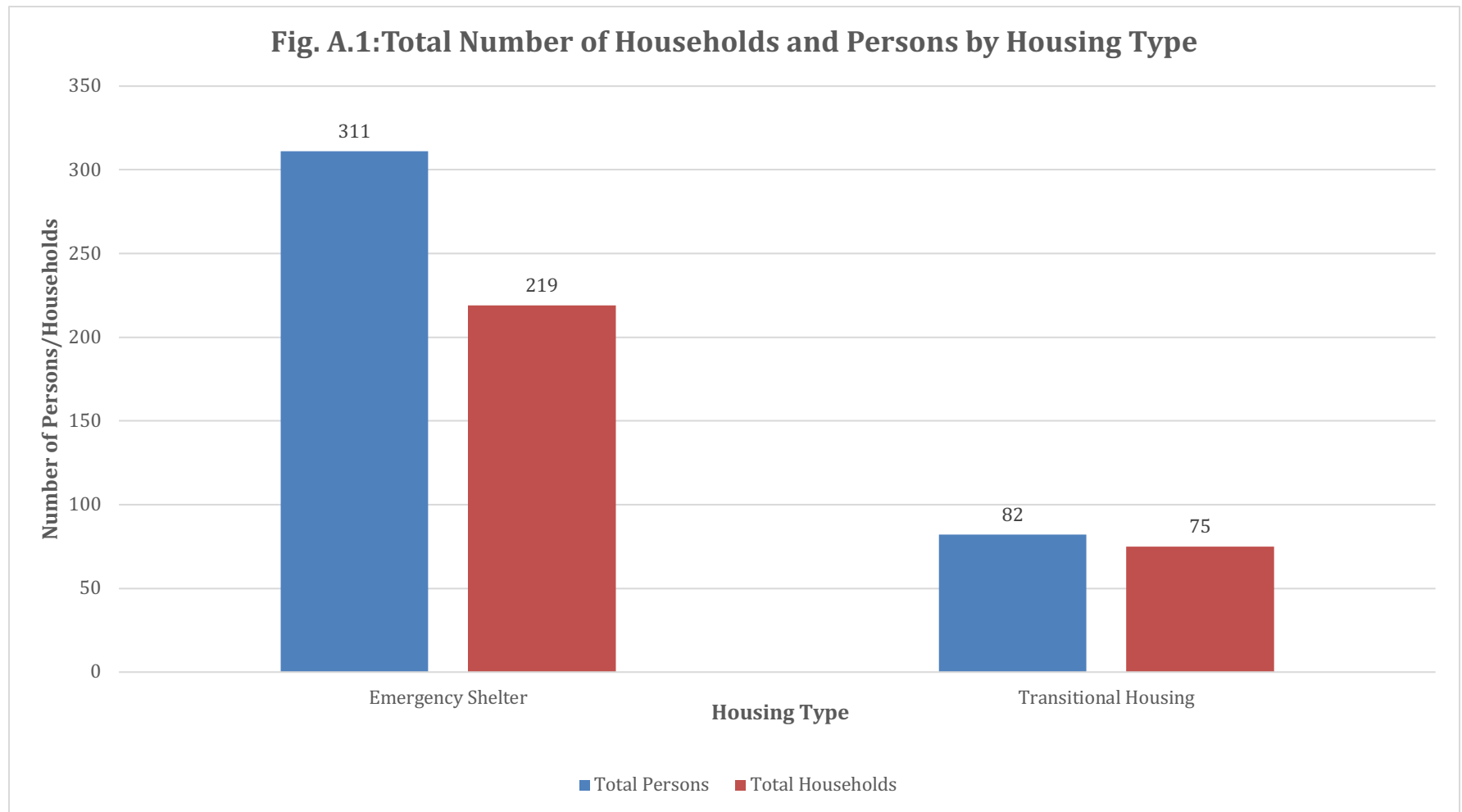
All duplicates detected through comparison of unique identifiers were then de-duplicated by the following process:

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.

X. Appendix B: Survey Responses

Where did you spend the night of January 26th, 2021?



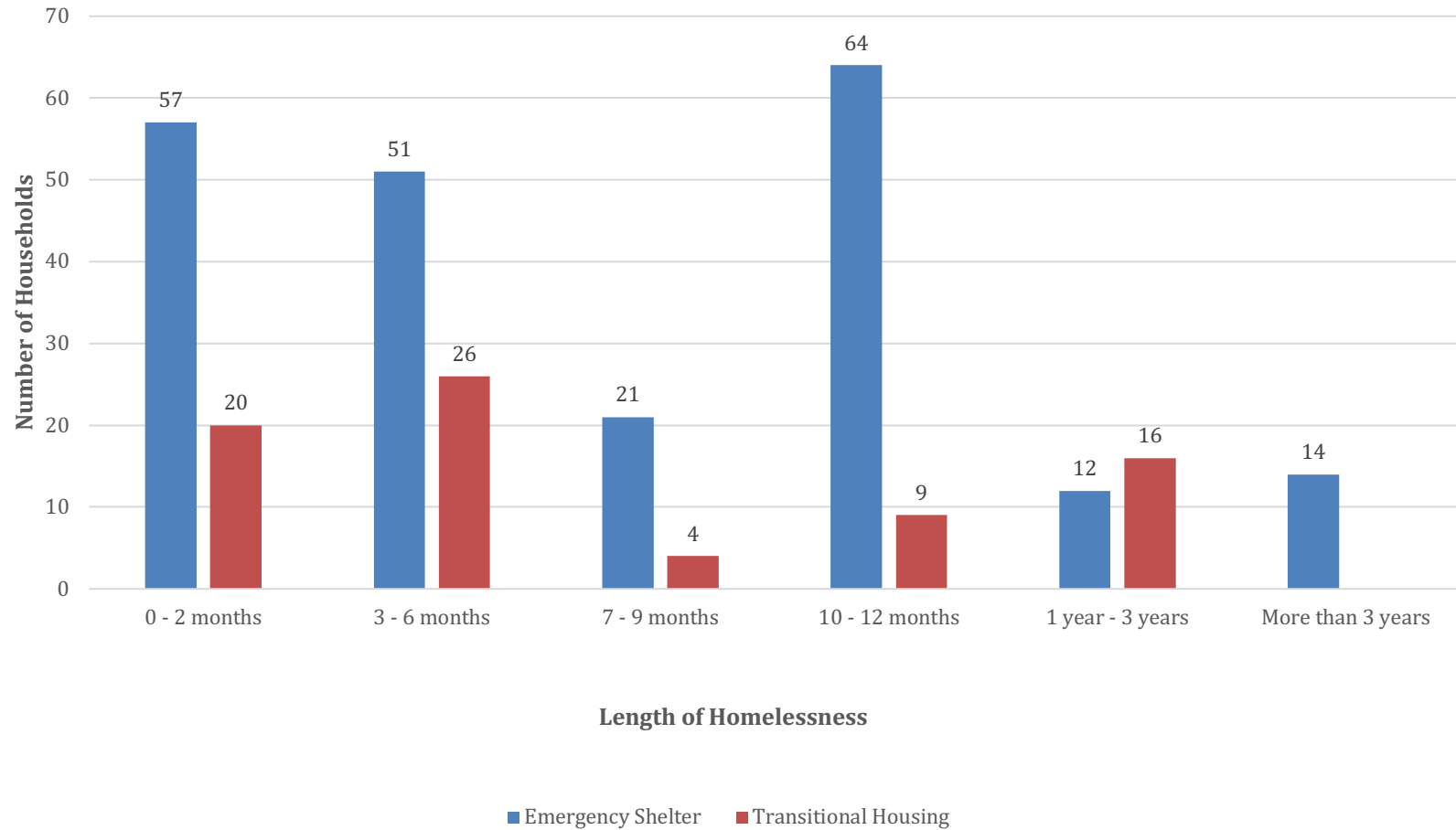
What was your location the night of the count?

Fig. A.2: Number of Homeless Persons by Municipality on the Night of the Count	
Location Night of Count – Municipality	Number of Persons
Trenton	179
Ewing	47
Hamilton	13
Lawrence	1
Total	240*

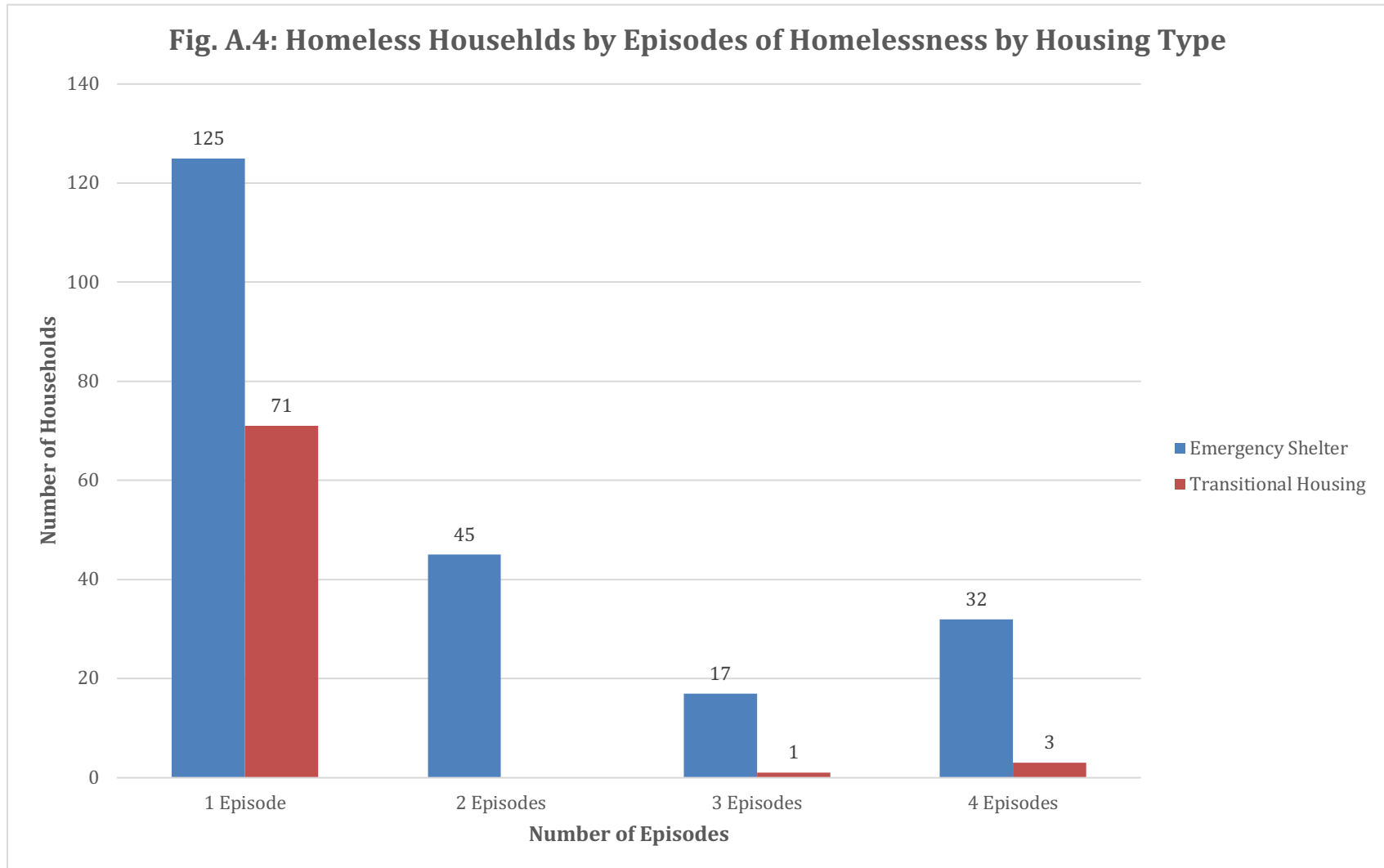
*Does not reflect total homeless persons as Mercer county did not conduct an Unsheltered count

What is your total length of homelessness?

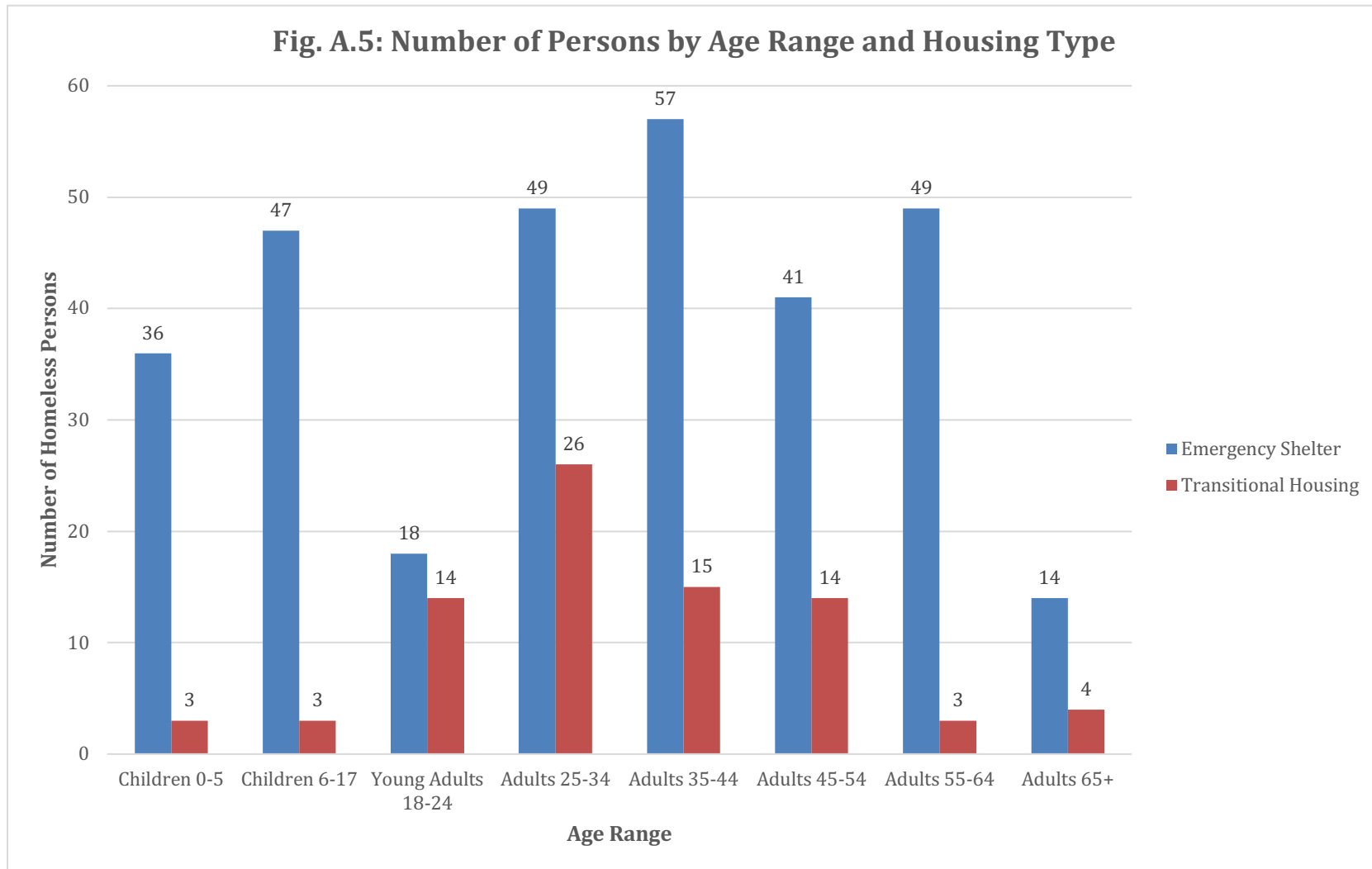
Fig. A.3: Homeless Households by Length of Homelessness and Housing Type



How many times have you been homeless in the past 3 years?



Who was homeless with you on the night of the Point in Time count?



Household Characteristics: Demographic Data – check all that apply to each person

Fig. A.6: Number of Persons by Gender and Housing Type

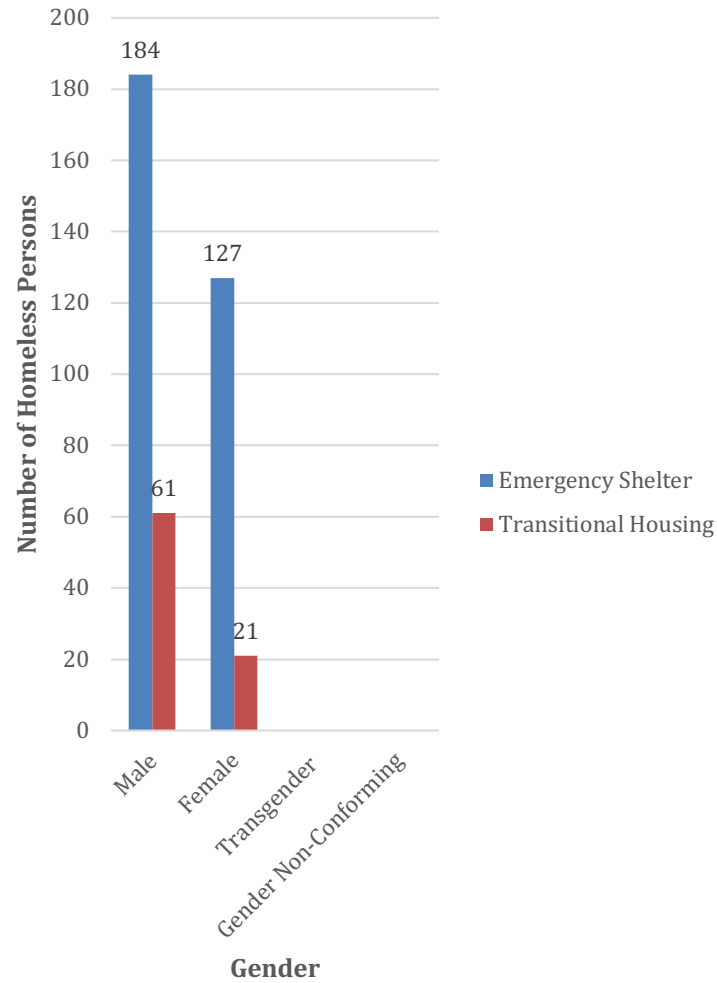
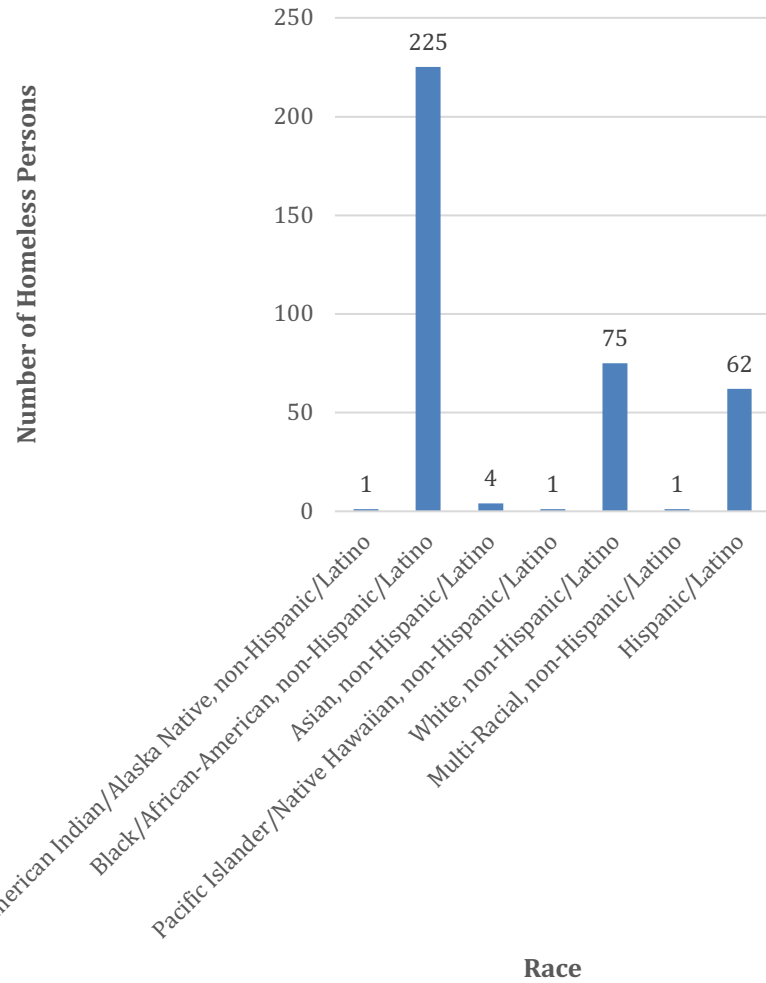
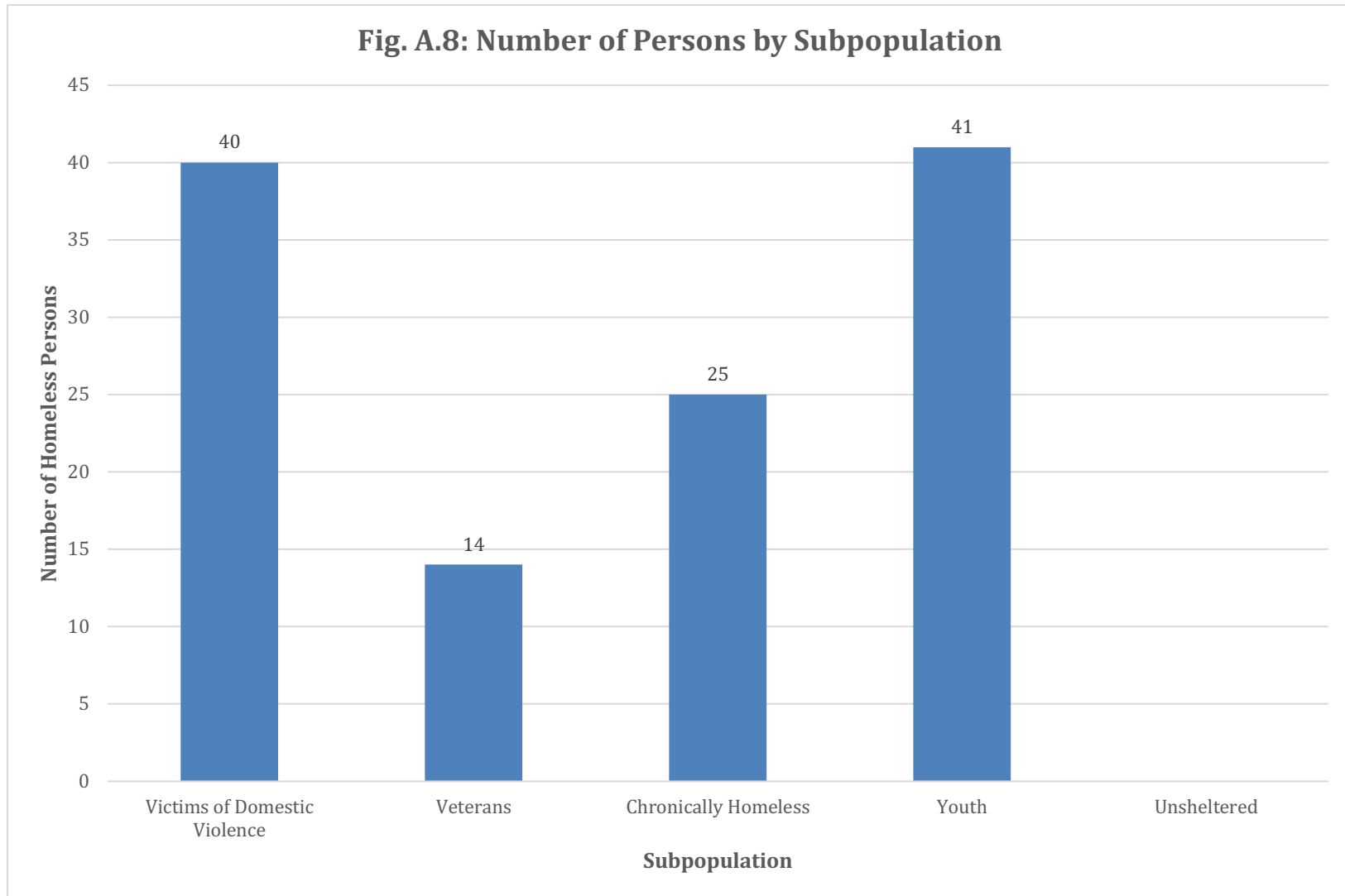


Fig. A.7: Number of Persons by Race and Housing Type

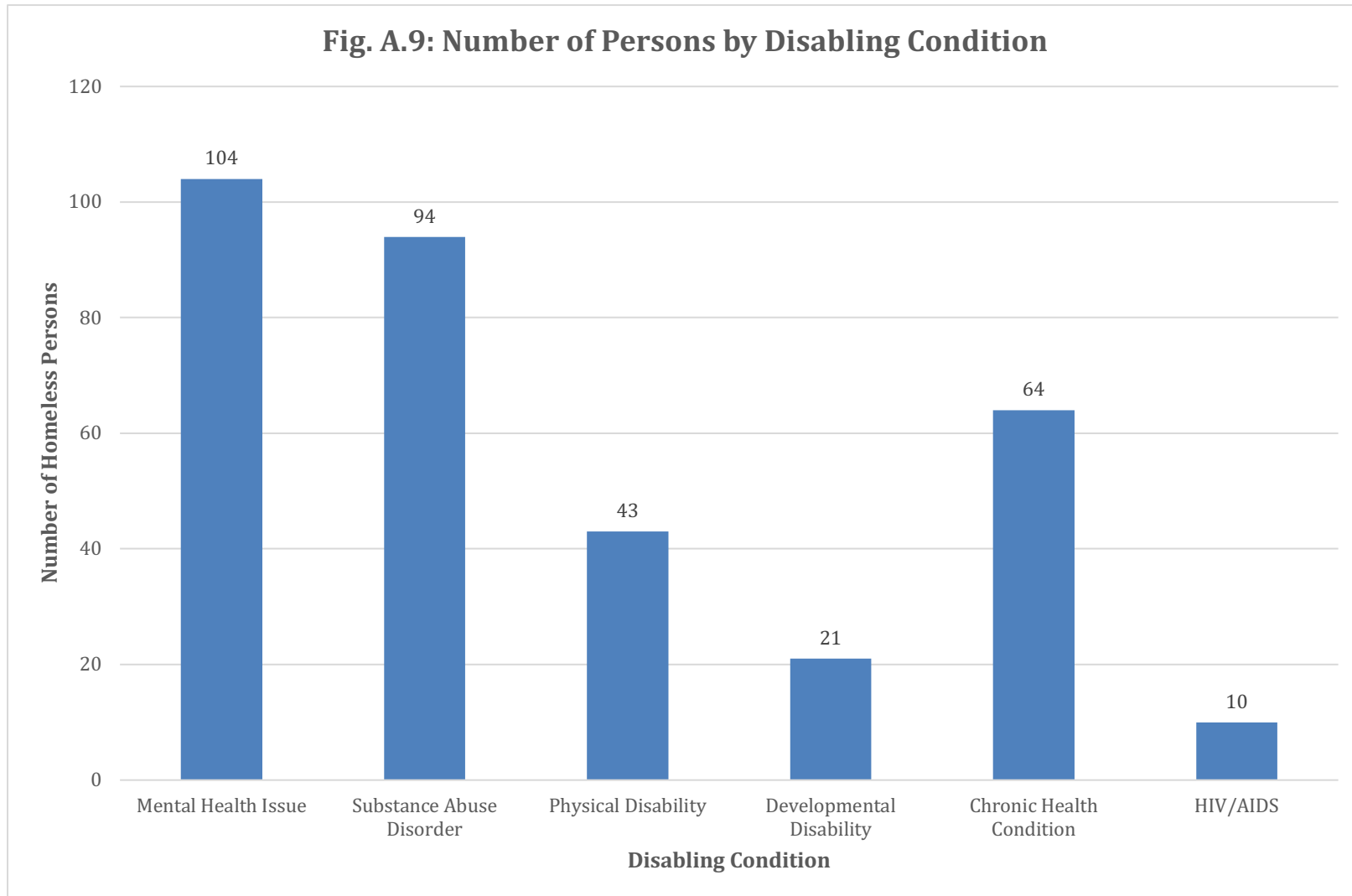


Household Characteristics: Subpopulations – check all that apply to each person



Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

Household Characteristics: Disabling Conditions – check all that apply to each person

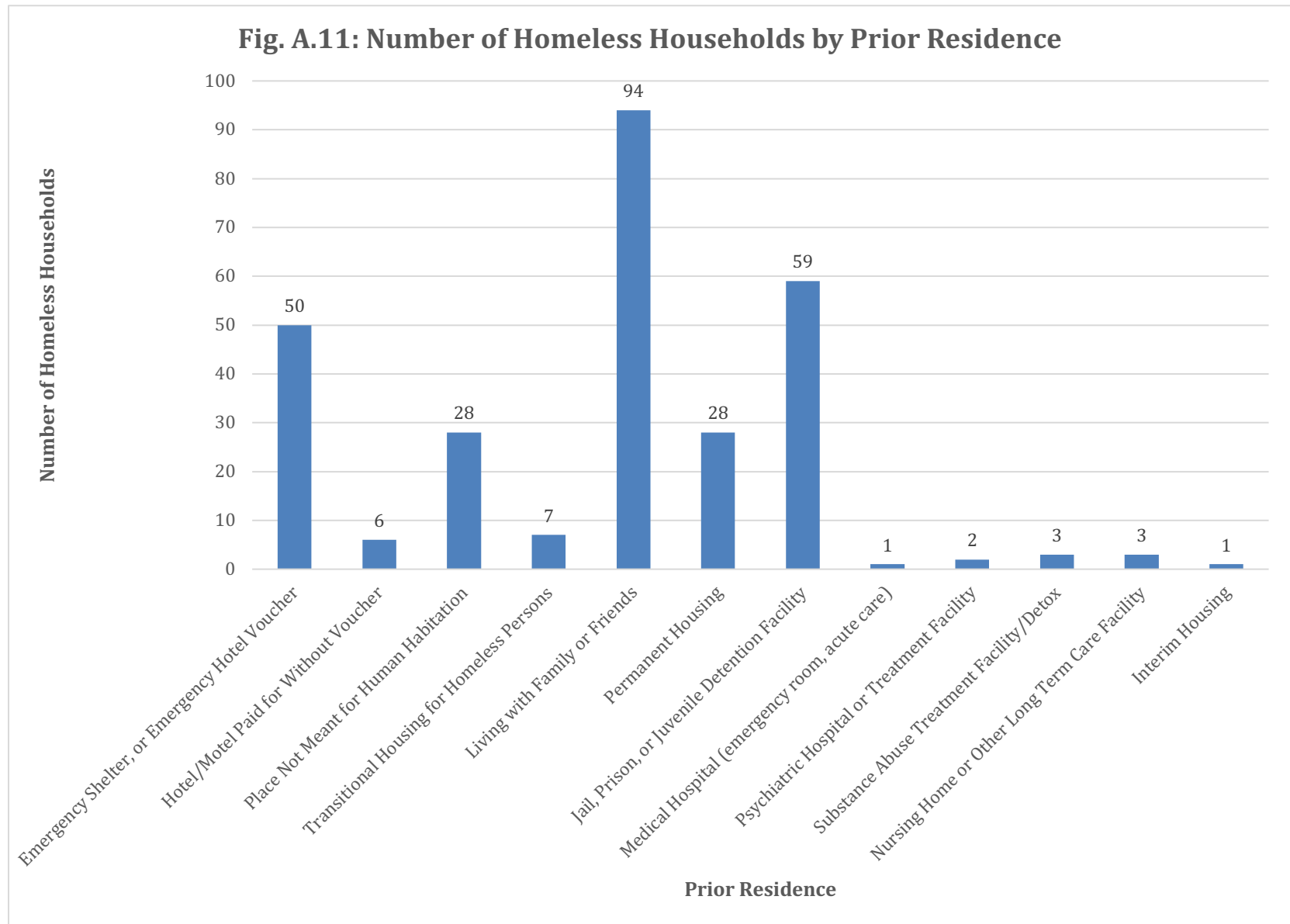


Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

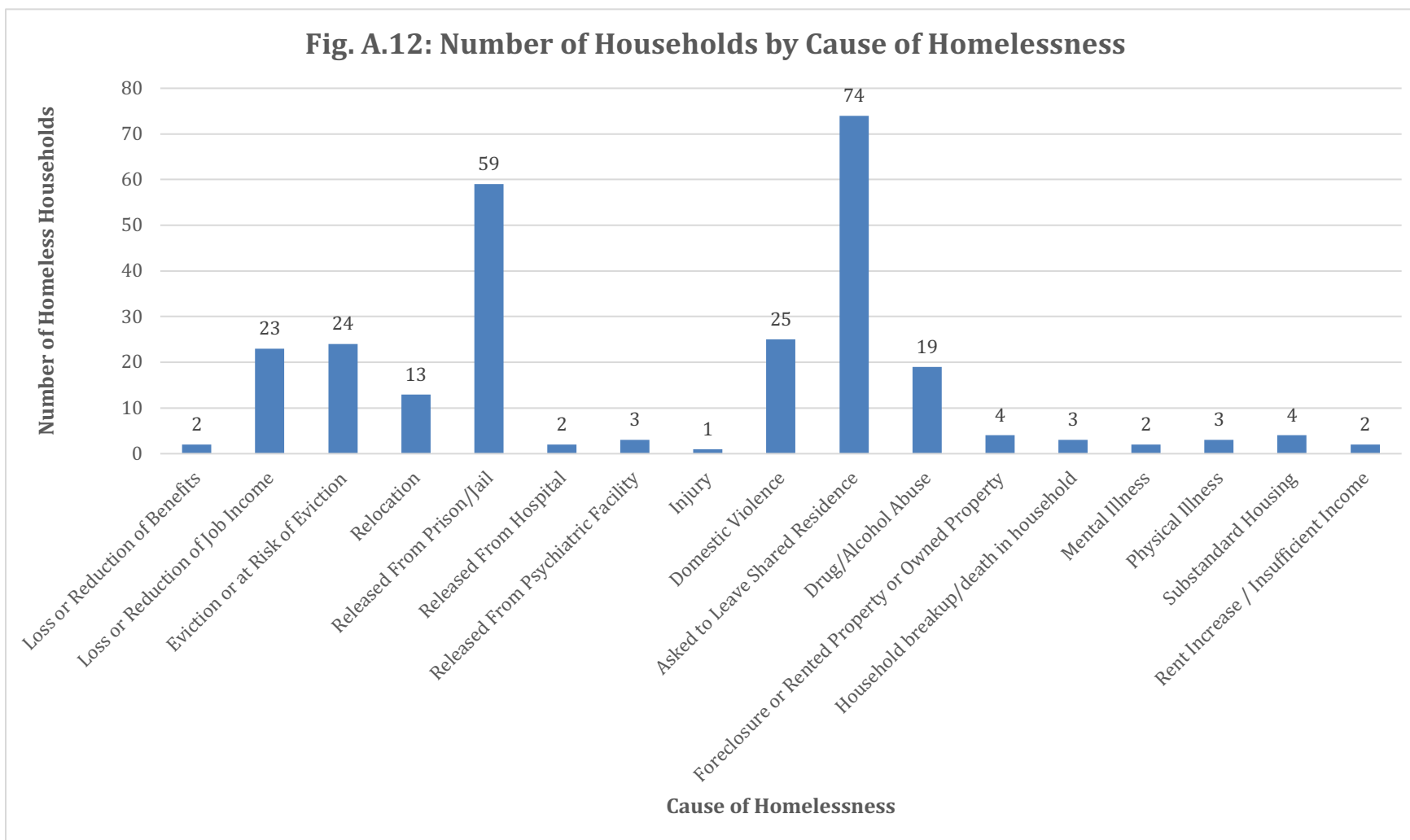
Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?

Fig. A.10. Number of Homeless Households by County or State of Last Permanent Address	
Last Permanent Address – County/State	Number of Households
Atlantic County	3
Burlington County	6
Camden County	3
Cumberland County	3
Essex County	4
Gloucester County	1
Hunterdon County	1
Mercer County	169
Middlesex County	2
Monmouth County	1
Ocean County	4
Florida	2
Georgia	1
Maryland	1
Pennsylvania	8
Puerto Rico	1

What was your residence prior to your current living situation?

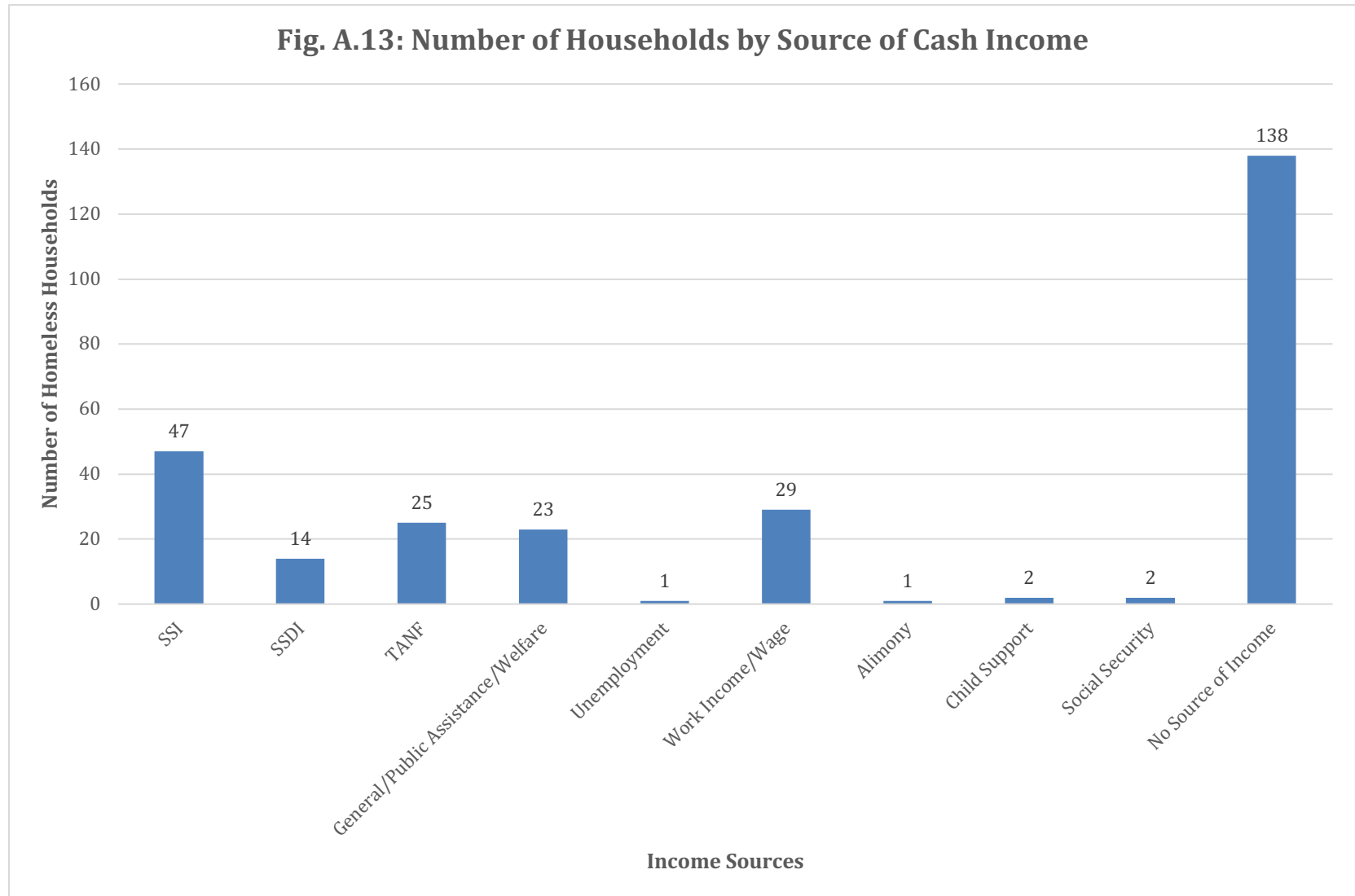


What was the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, your current living situation?



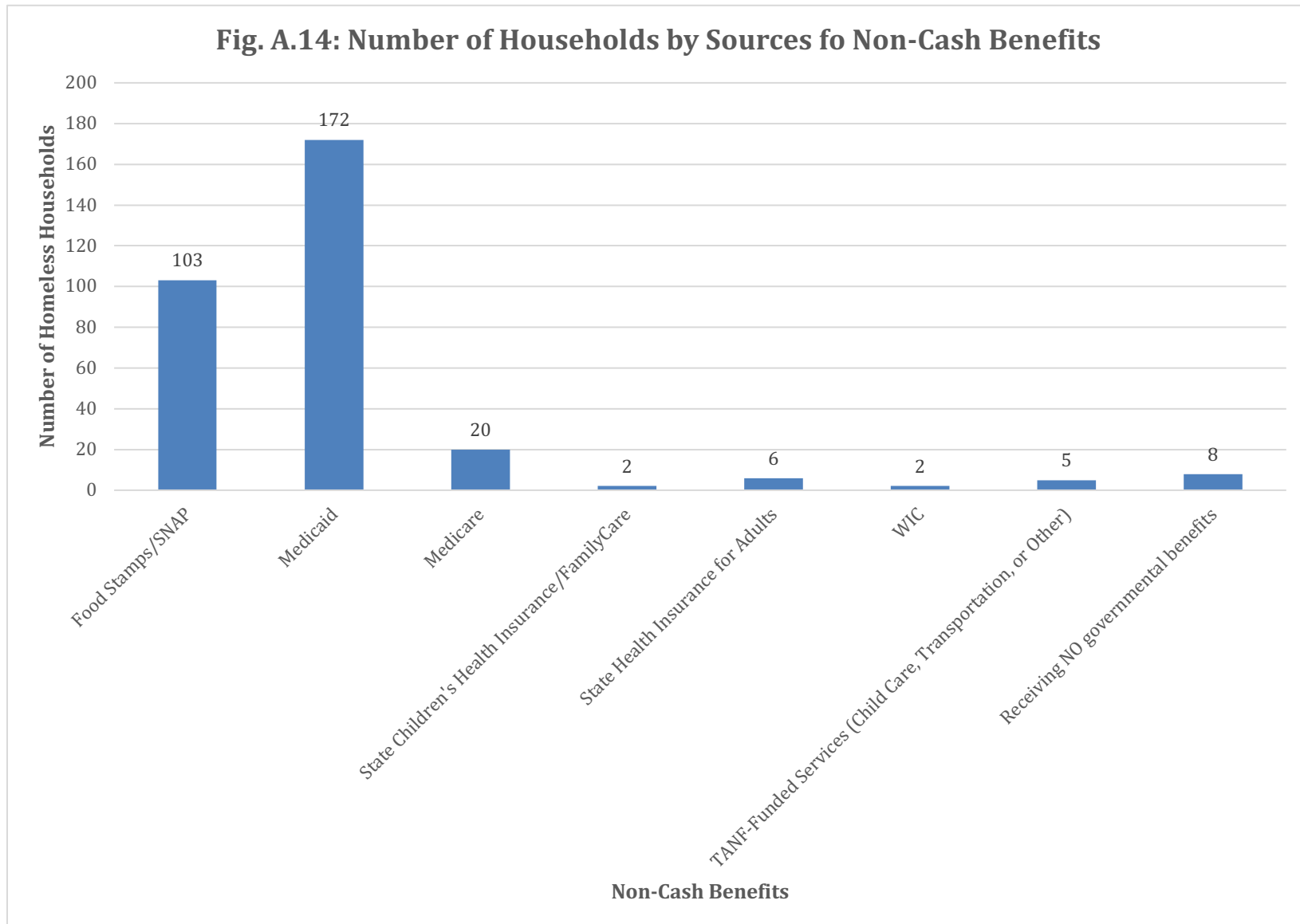
Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

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



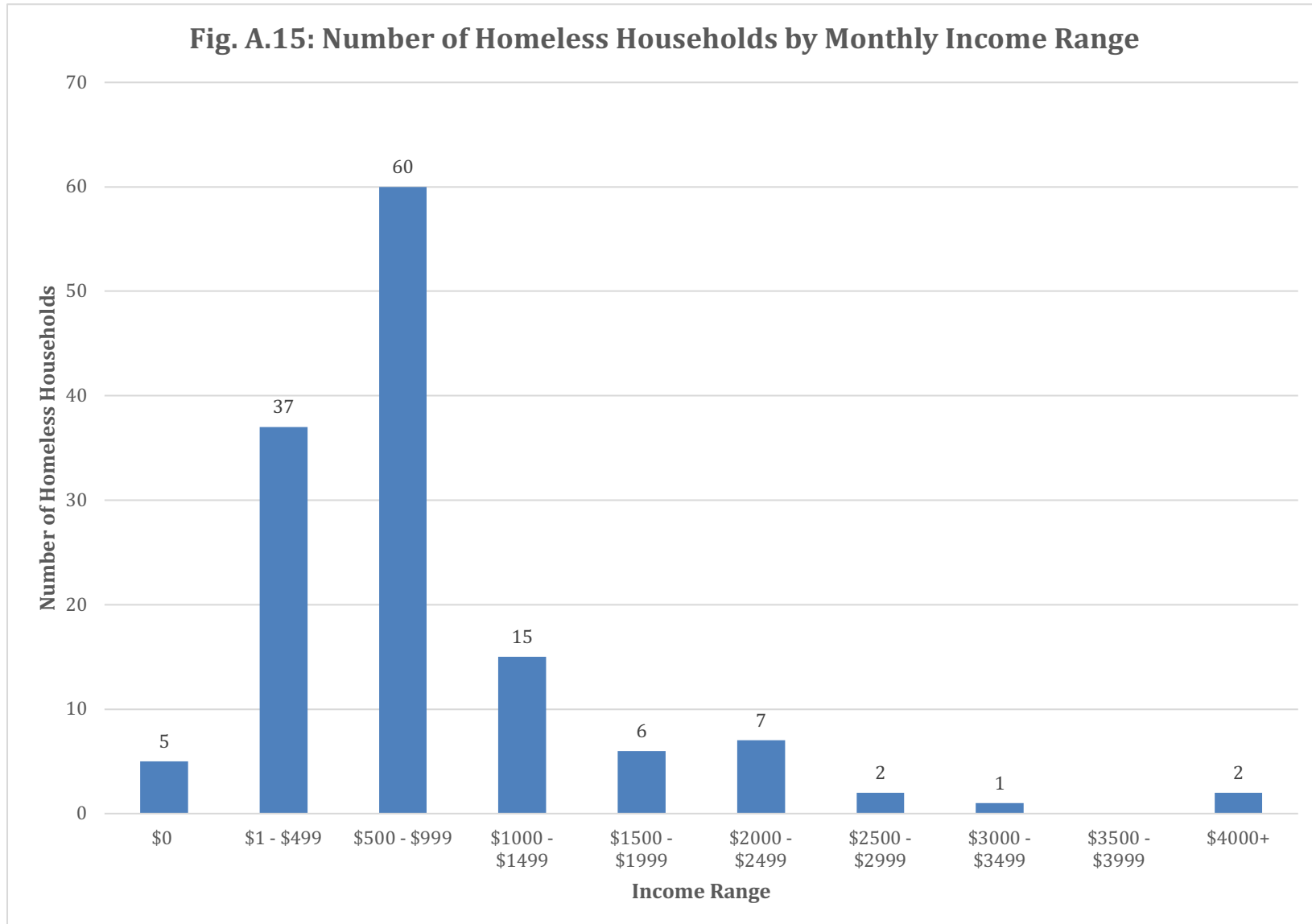
Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

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

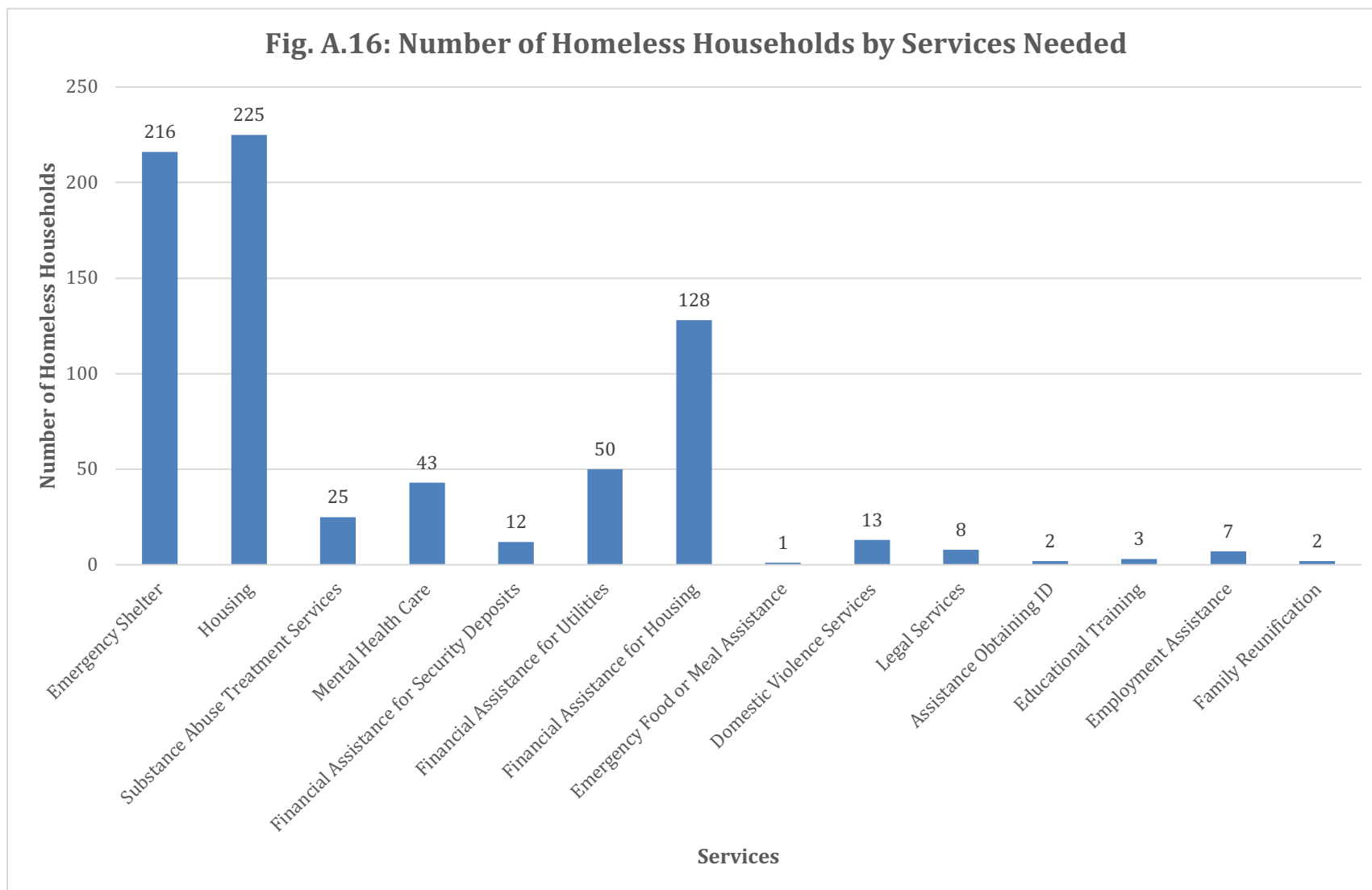


Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

What is your monthly household income?

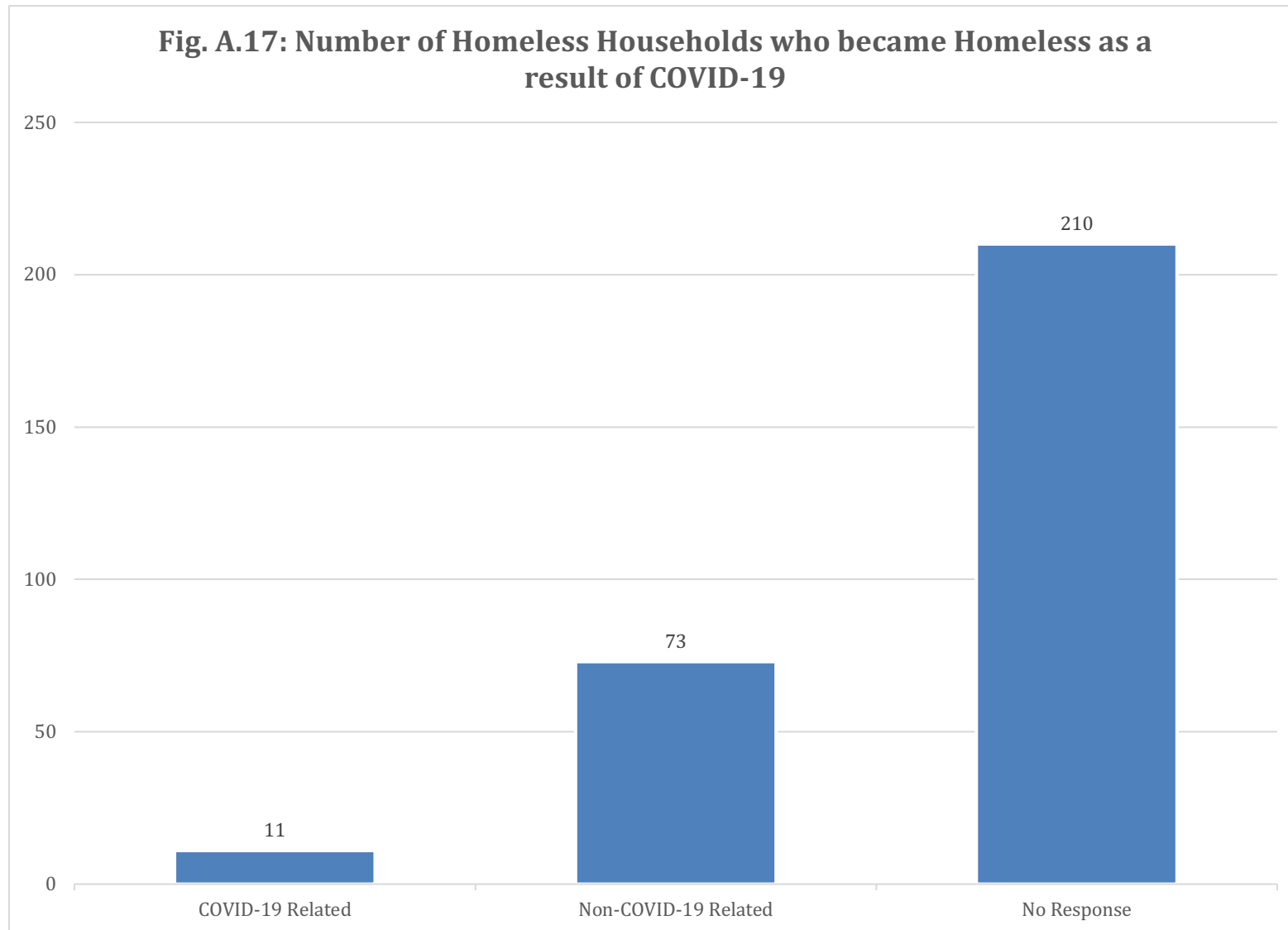


Would you, or anyone in your household, like to receive any of the following services?

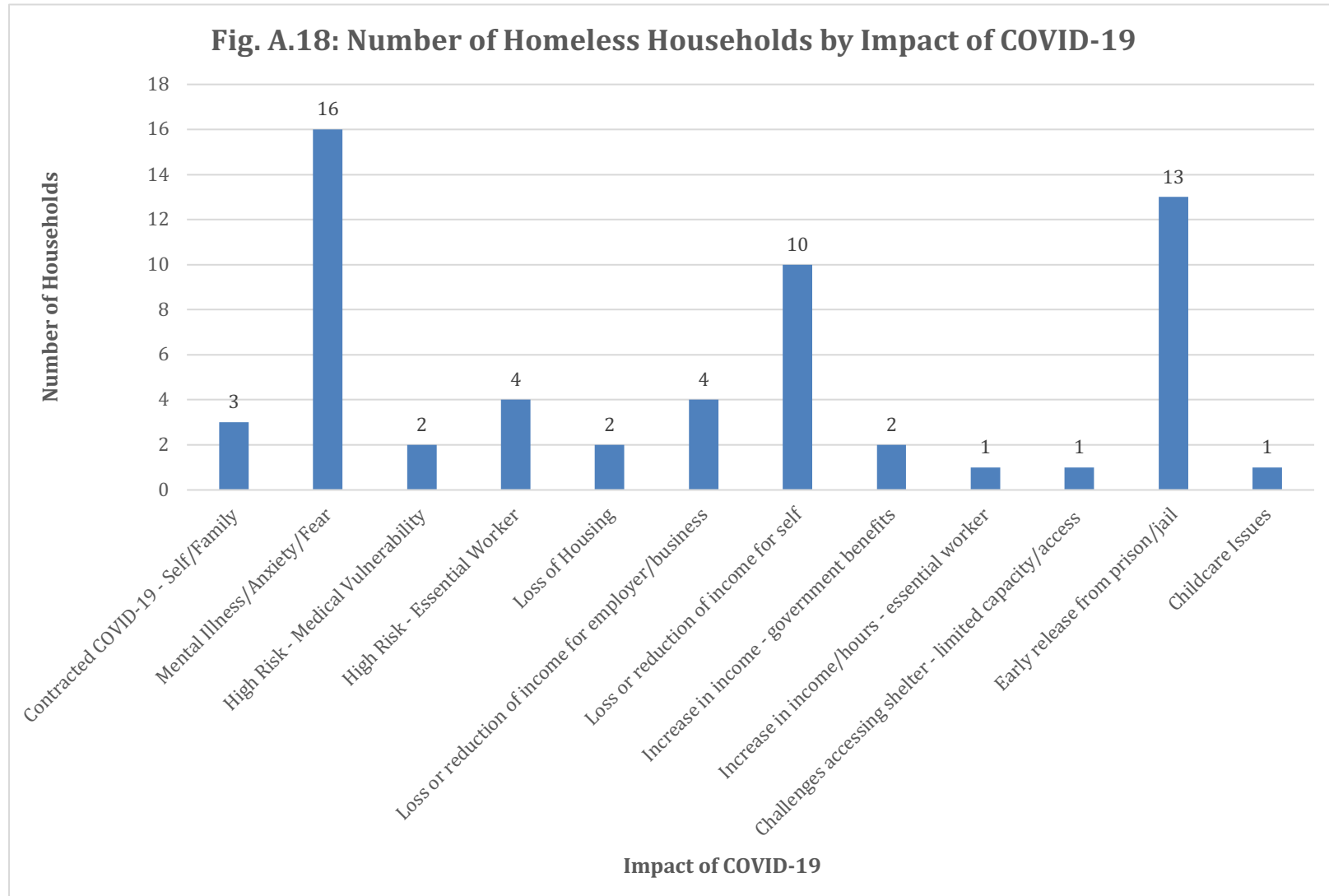


Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

Are you homeless as a result of coronavirus (COVID-19)?



How has the coronavirus impacted you and your current living situation?



Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options