

# NJ COUNTS

## MIDDLESEX COUNTY

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



monarch  
HOUSING ASSOCIATES

## 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

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.

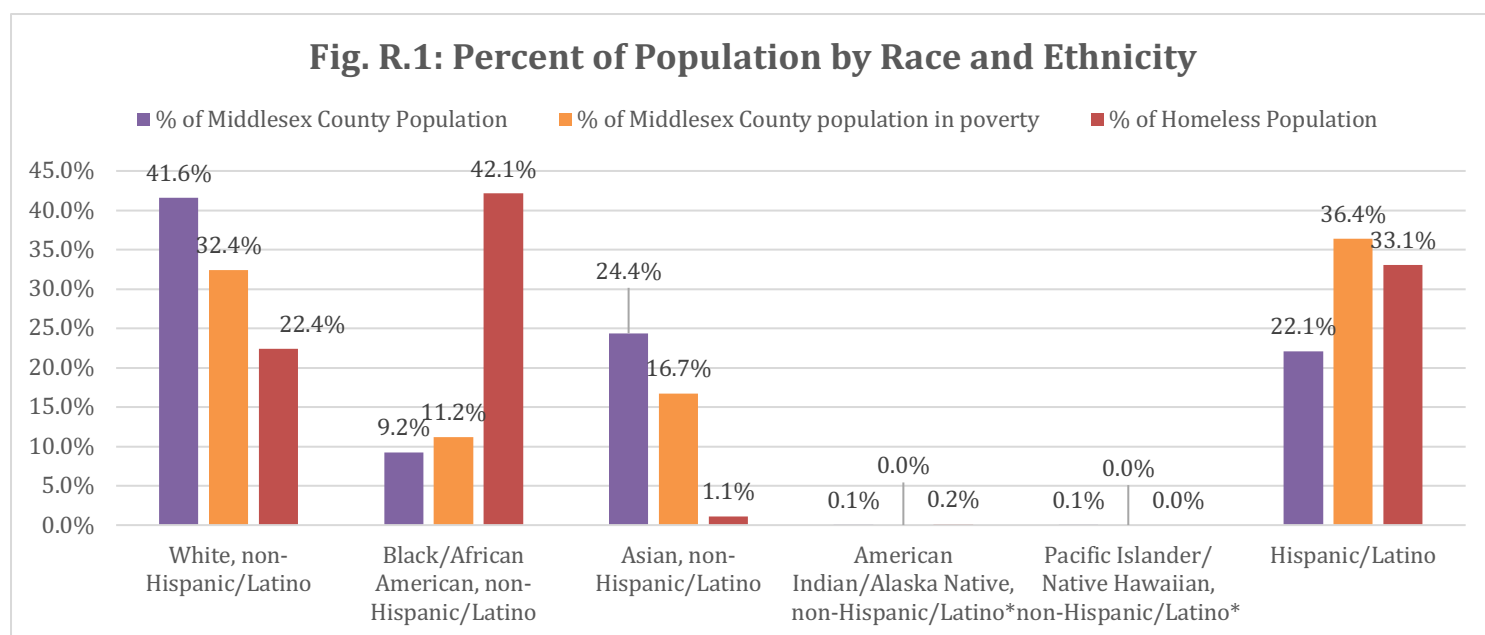
The impact of COVID-19 is seen in the methodology of the PIT count and the community-captured data. As a result of the pandemic, persons experiencing homelessness interacted with the system (outreach teams, emergency shelters, and transitional housing) in ways much different than in the past. Homeless 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 state of New Jersey 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 629 persons experiencing homelessness on a single night in Middlesex County. Figure R.1 illustrates the racial breakdown of the total population in Middlesex County, those living below the poverty line, and those experiencing homelessness.



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

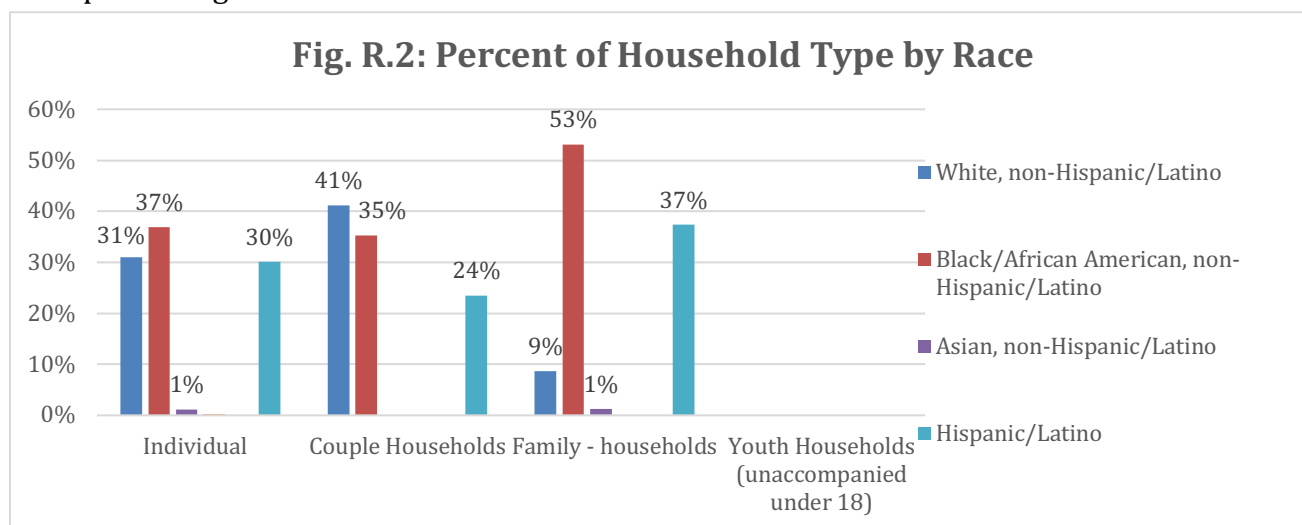
In comparing the racial breakdown of those experiencing homelessness to the racial breakdown in the general population and those living in poverty, disparate impacts along racial lines are evident. According to the American Community Survey 2019 annual estimates prepared by the Census Bureau, about 825,062 people live in Middlesex County, and 8.54% (70,496 persons) of Middlesex County residents are living below the poverty line. There is a strong correlation between poverty and homelessness, however, the racial disparities evident in the counted 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 non-Hispanic are overrepresented in the population experiencing homelessness. While 9.2% of the general population, persons identifying as Black or African American are 11.2% of the population in poverty and 42.1% of the population identified as experiencing homelessness.
- Persons identifying as American Indian/Alaskan Native have the lowest rates of homelessness making up 0.1% county population, 0% of the population living below the poverty level, and 0.2% of the counted population experiencing homelessness.
- Persons identifying as Black or African American represent 47.4% of the sheltered population (staying in emergency shelter, or transitional housing) and 24.8% of the identified unsheltered population. Persons identifying as White non-Hispanic represent 22.1% of the sheltered population and 24.8% of the identified unsheltered population.

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



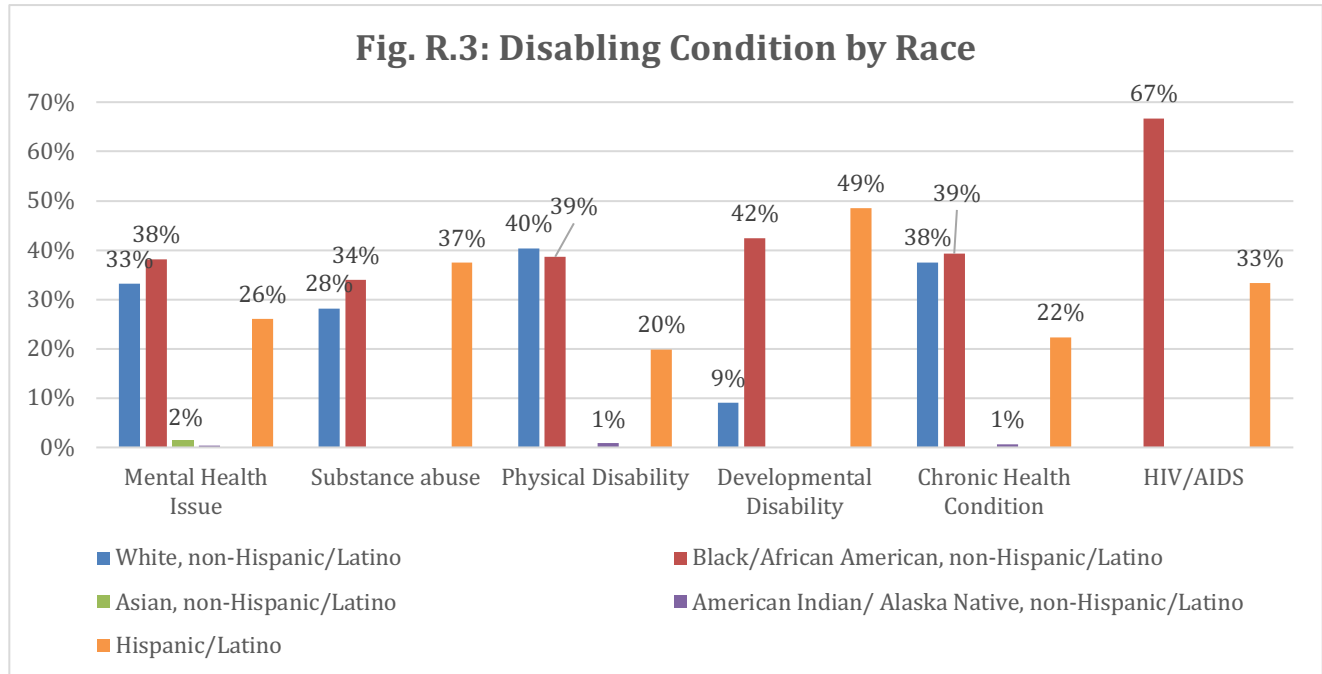
- Persons identifying as Black or African American make up the majority of individual (37%) and family households (53%) types.
- Persons identifying as White make up the majority of couple households (41%).

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



- 54% of persons indicating four (4) or more episodes of homelessness in the last three years identified as Black or African American.
- Among children ages 0 – 5, 48% identified as Black or African American.
- Among youth ages 18 – 24, 55% identified as Black or African American compared to 14% who identified as White non-Hispanic.
- 83% of White non-Hispanic indicated a disabling condition as compared to 54% Black or African American, 53% of person identifying as Hispanic/Latino.

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



- The majority of persons reporting a mental health disorder, substance abuse disorder, chronic health condition, and HIV/AIDS identified as Black/African American.
- Persons identifying as White represented the majority of persons identifying a physical disability.

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 458 households, including 629 persons, were experiencing homelessness in Middlesex County, according to the 2021 Point-In-Time Count.
- A total of 175 persons were identified as chronically homeless.
- 138 persons were unsheltered on the night of the count.
- 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 19.4% of data collected for this report was generated through HMIS while 80.6% was generated through client-level interviews from SM.

**Figure i. Number of Homeless Persons by Municipality and Percentage of County Total**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Total Homeless Persons</b>	<b>% of Total Homeless Persons</b>	<b>Sheltered Homeless Persons</b>	<b>% of Sheltered Homeless Persons</b>	<b>Unsheltered Homeless Persons</b>	<b>% of Unsheltered Homeless Persons</b>
New Brunswick	176	61.1%	98	58.3%	78	65.0%
Highland Park	1	0.3%	1	0.6%	0	0.0%
Perth Amboy	53	18.4%	12	7.1%	41	34.2%
South Amboy	58	20.1%	57	33.9%	1	0.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>288*</b>		<b>168</b>		<b>120*</b>	

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

## Total Homeless Population

On the night of January 26th, 2021, a total of 629 persons, in 458 households, were experiencing homelessness in Middlesex County.

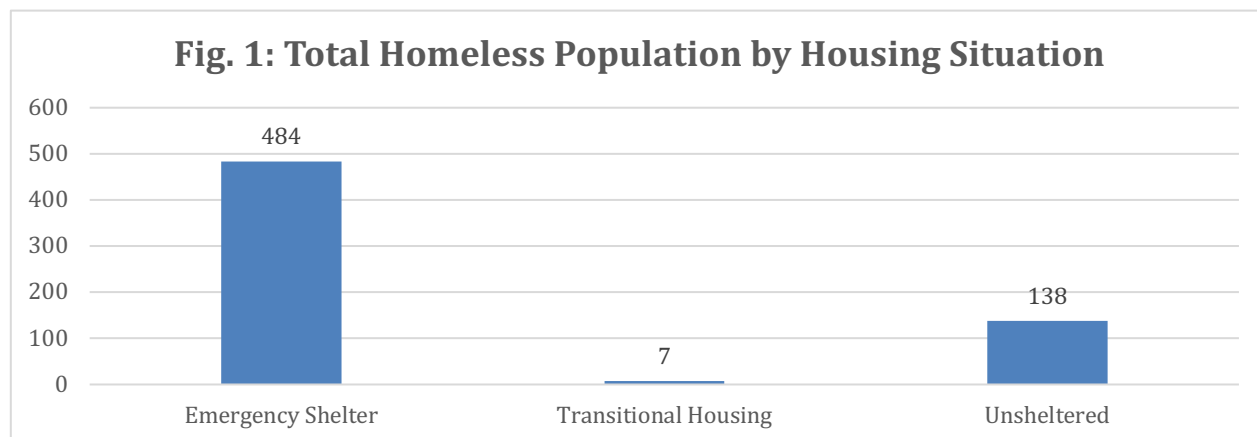
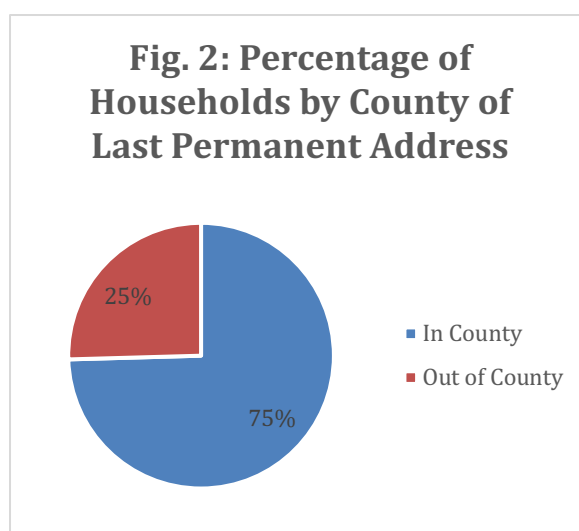


Figure 1 shows that, in 2021, 484 homeless persons stayed in emergency shelters, 7 stayed in transitional housing, and 138 were living unsheltered on the night of the count. 76.9% of the population stayed in emergency shelters on the night of the count while 1.1% were in transitional housing programs and 21.9% were identified as unsheltered.

As Figure 2 shows, 25% of the homeless household respondents in Middlesex County 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.”



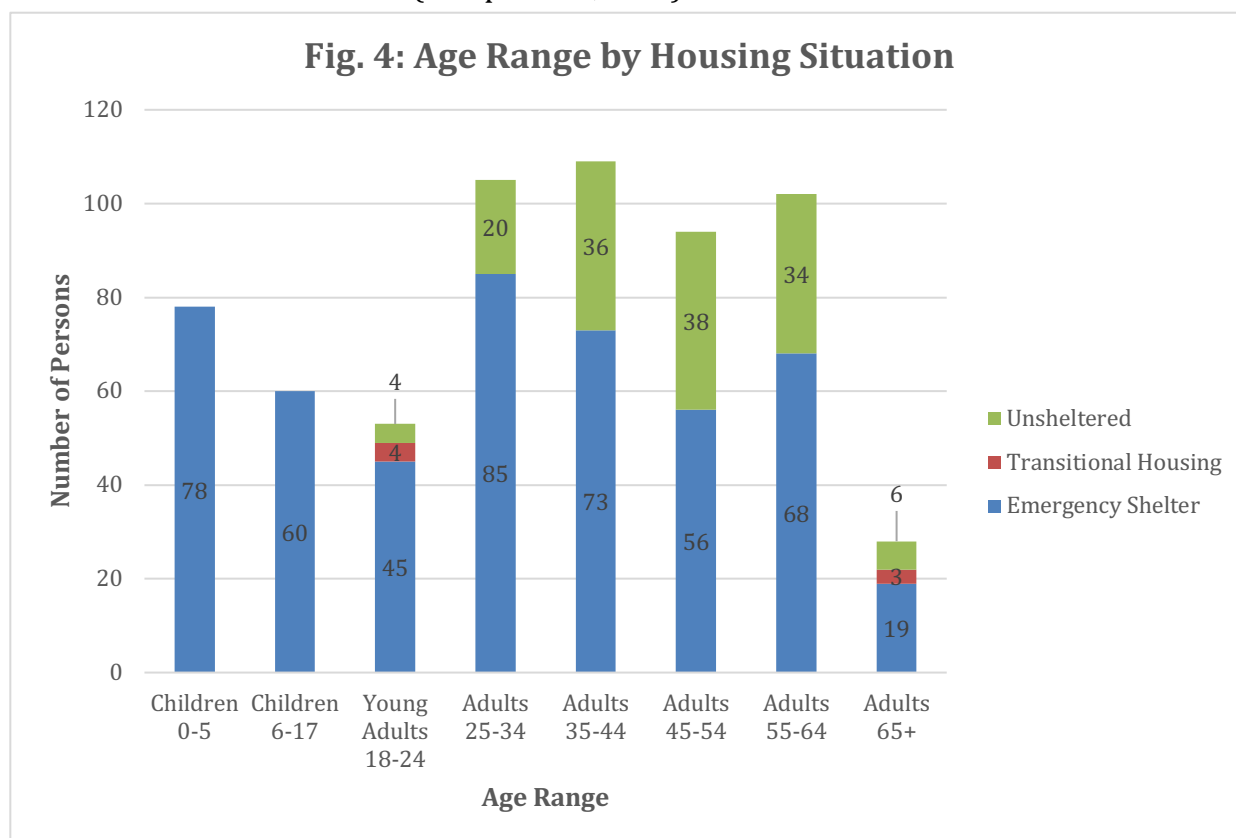
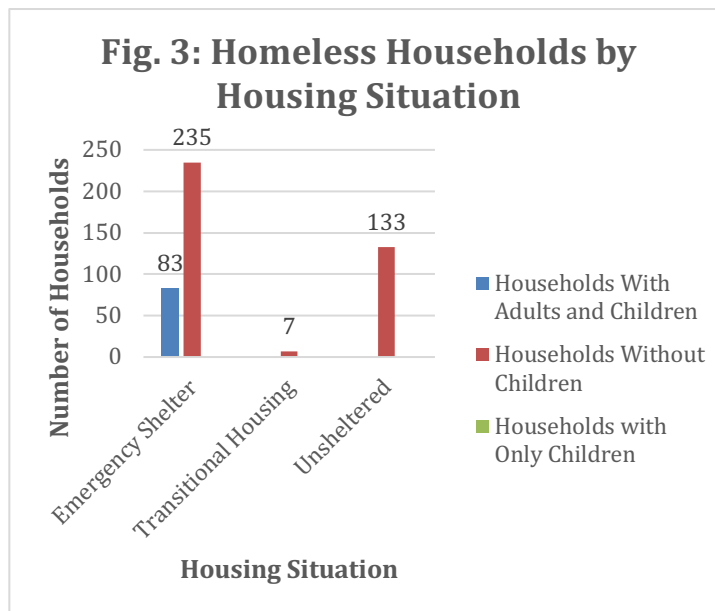
Of the 458 homeless households counted in Middlesex County in 2021, 83 (18%) were families with at least one child under the age of 18 and one adult. These families included 236 persons, including 138 children under age 18 and 98 adults. The average family size was 2.84 persons. Figure 3 shows that 83 families (100%) were staying in emergency shelters.

375 (82%) of the homeless households identified in Middlesex County were households without children under 18, and they were composed of 393 adults. The majority of adult only households (63%) were staying in emergency shelters on the night of the count. 133 adult only households (35%) were identified as unsheltered in 2021.

As Figure 3 indicates, there were no unaccompanied youth households identified in 2021.

### Demographics

There was a total of 53 (8%) identified homeless adults between 18 and 24 years old, 438 (70%) adults over age 24, and 138 (22%) children under 18 years old experiencing homelessness on the night of the count. Figure 4 shows that the age range most represented is Adults between 35 and 44 (109 persons, 17%).



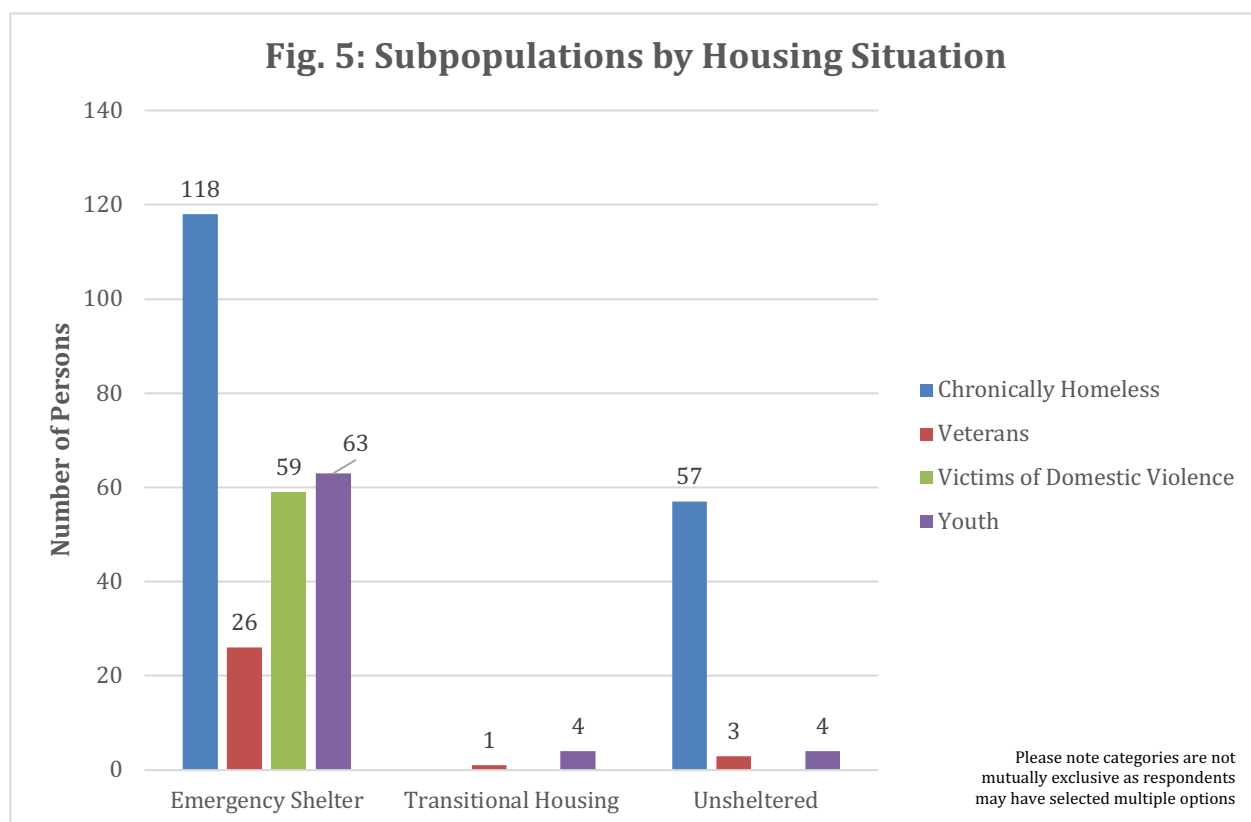
60.2% (378) of homeless persons identified as male, 39.8% (250) identified as female.

42.1% (265) of counted persons identified their race as Black or African American, making this the largest racial subgroup of homeless persons counted. The next largest group self-identified as White (22.4%, 141 counted persons), followed by those identifying as Multi-Racial and Asian (1.1%, 7 counted persons respectively). With regard to ethnicity, 33.1% of counted persons identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino.

## Subpopulations

On the night of January 26th, 2021, out of the 629 persons identified as homeless, there were a total of 175 Chronically Homeless persons, representing 27.8% of the counted homeless population. There were 30 homeless veterans representing 6.1% of the counted adult homeless population. 59 Victims of Domestic Violence were identified representing 9.4% of the total identified homeless population. Homeless Youth (individuals and families with heads of households 24 years old or younger) represented 11.3% of the counted homeless population with 71 persons identified. Figure 5 illustrates the break-down of each subpopulation identified by housing type.

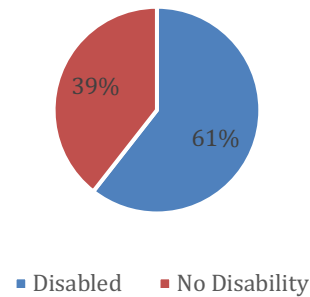
As illustrated in Figure 5 the majority of counted Chronically Homeless (118 persons), Veterans (26 persons), Victims of Domestic Violence (59 persons), and Youth (63 persons) were in emergency shelter.



## Disabilities

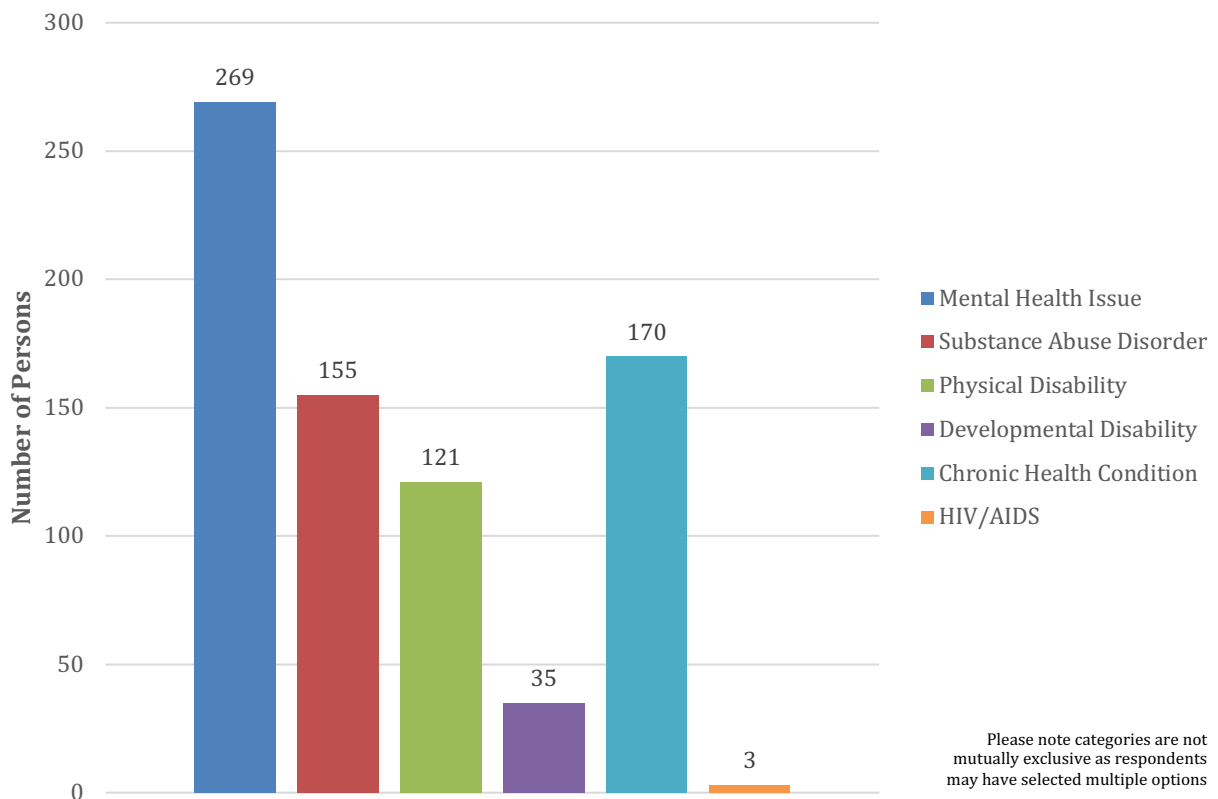
Figure 6 illustrates that 61% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 73.3% of adults 18 or older reported some type of disability compared to 15.2% of children. Figure 7 shows the number of the counted homeless persons that identified as having various disabilities. The most common disabilities included mental health issues and chronic health conditions in adults.

**Fig. 6: Percent of Population with a Disability**



Among disabled persons, 70.6% reported mental health issues making this the most prevalent disability; representing 72.5% of the identified disabled adult homeless population and 42.8% of the total identified population experiencing homelessness. 45.8% of disabled adults reported a substance abuse disorder.

**Fig. 7: Number of Persons by Disability Type**



## Income and Benefits

Among all households experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, 26.5% had no source of income; and 13.8% reported having earned income. The most common sources of income among homeless households were General Assistance/Welfare (18.8%) and SSI (14.6%) followed by Work Income (13.8%). Figure 8 shows the income sources reported by respondents in relation to their housing situation on the night of the count.

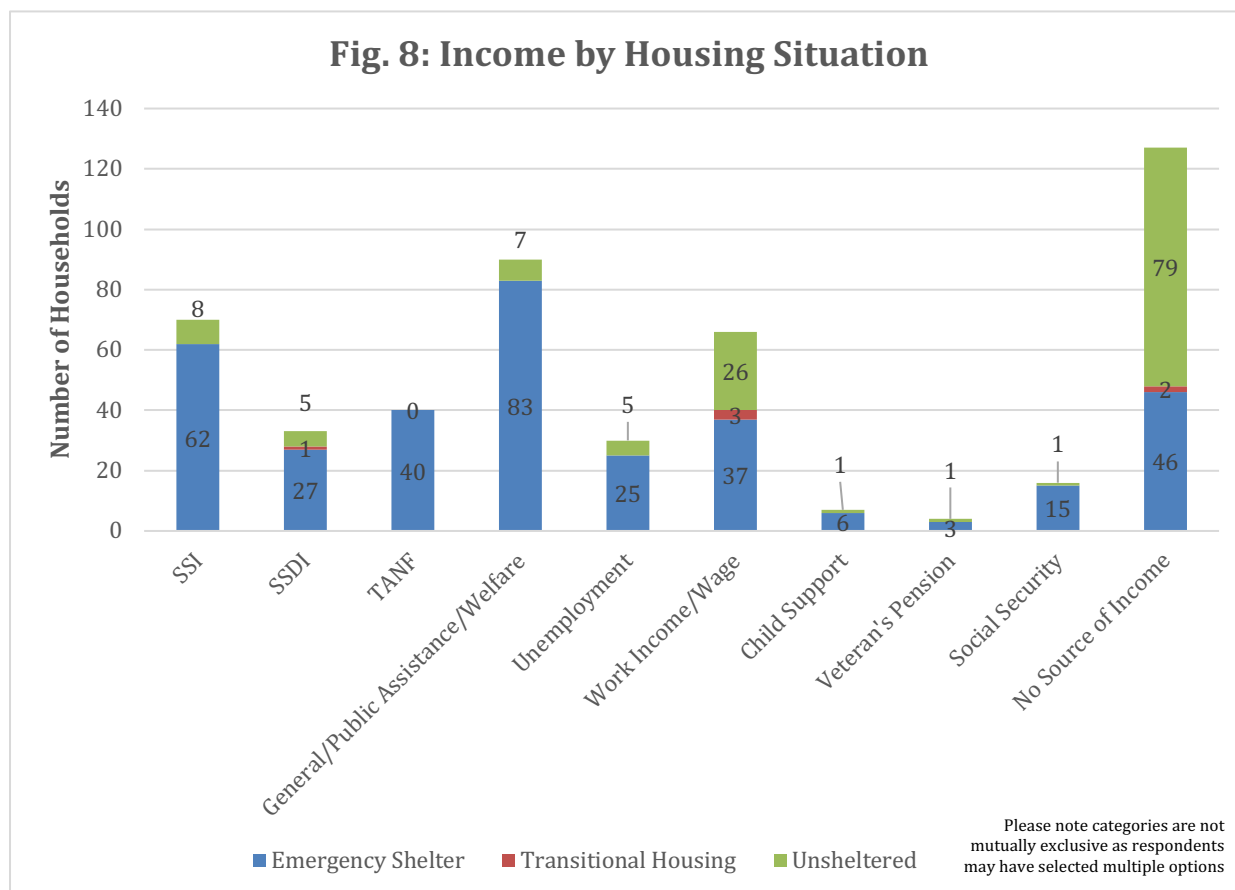


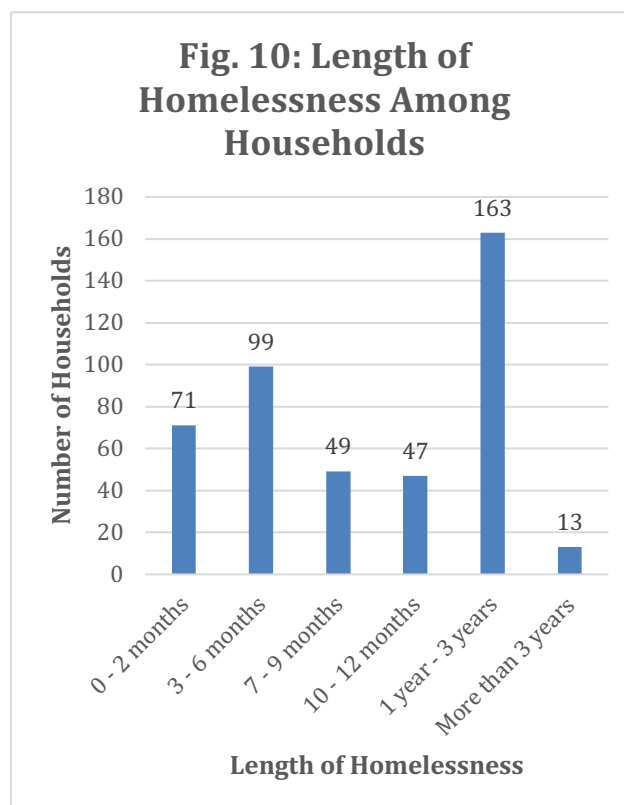
Figure 9 show the average monthly income among households in each housing situation.

<b>Figure 9. Average Monthly Income For Households by Housing Situation</b>			
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered
Average for All Households	\$ 2,607.49	\$ 811.86	\$ 430.36

18.3% of counted homeless households reported receiving of non-cash benefit on the night of the count. Medicaid was the top reported non-cash benefit, received by 66.2% of homeless households. Food Stamps (SNAP) was the second most reported non-cash benefit, received by 60.9% of homeless households.

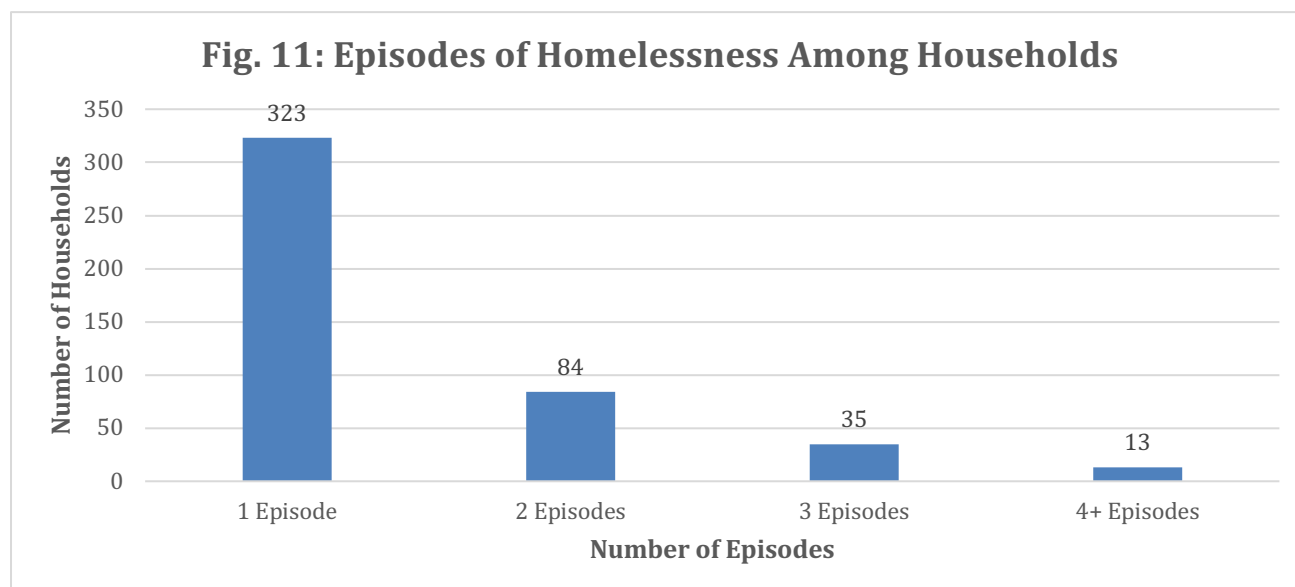
## Length of Homelessness

Figure 10 illustrates the total amount of time identified 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, 38.5% of identified homeless households reported their total length of homelessness was between 0 and 6 months. Within this group, 16.1% were homeless from 0 – 2 months and 22.4% were homeless between 3 and 6 months. For those with longer periods of homelessness, 39.8% 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, 163 households (36.9%) were homeless between 1 and 3 years while 13 households (2.9%) reported their total length of homelessness exceeded 3 years.



## Episodes of Homelessness

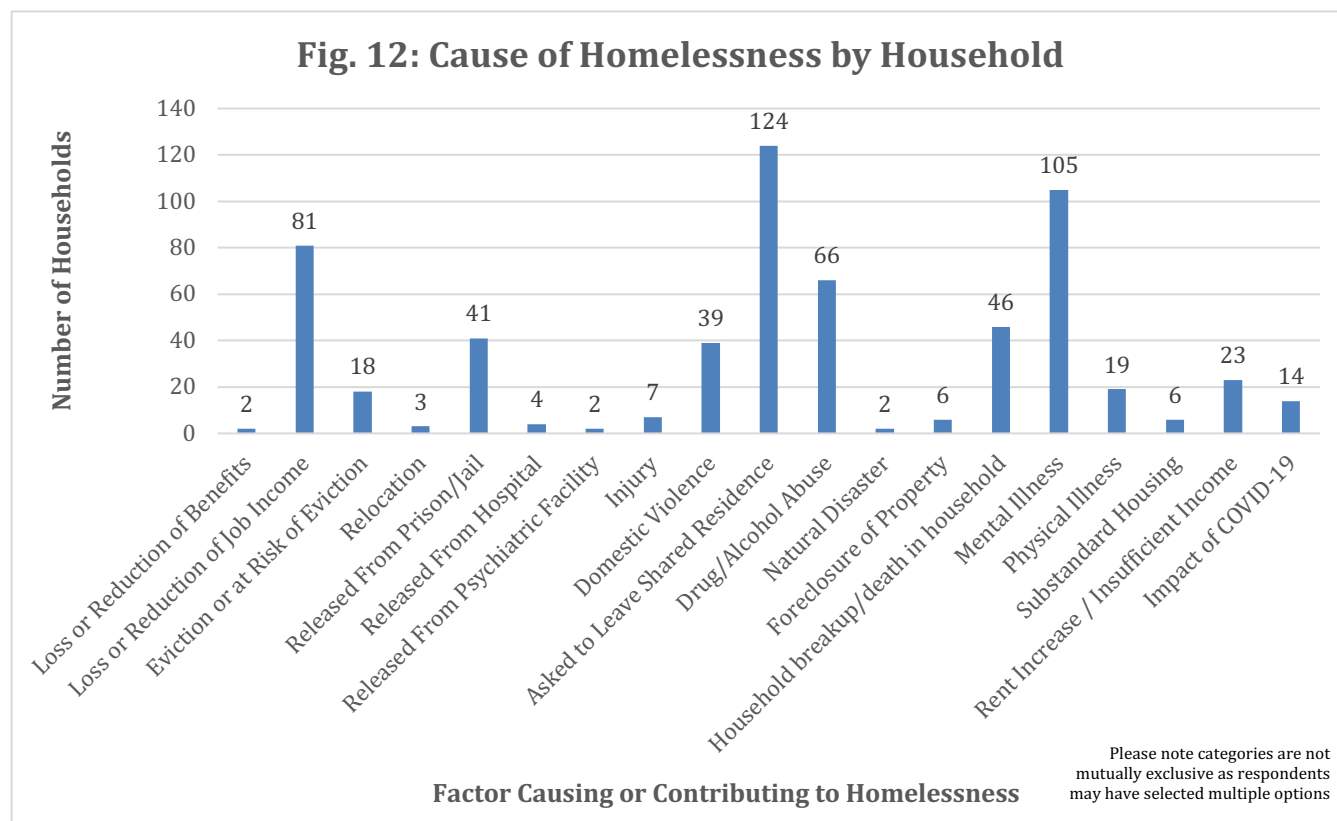
There was a total of 323 households (71%) that reported experiencing one episode of homelessness. Figure 11 illustrates the total number of episodes of homelessness reported by households experiencing homelessness.





## 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 (124 households, 20.4%) than any other cause. As Figure 12 shows, the next most common factor reported was mental illness (17.3%) followed by loss or reduction of job income (13.3%).



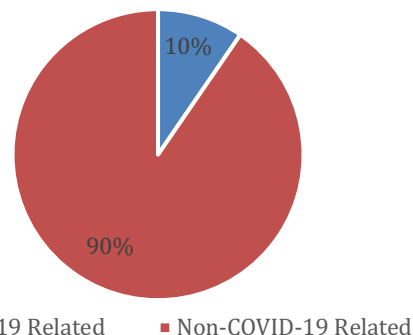
When households were asked ‘what was your residence prior to your current living situation?’ more said they were staying with friends or family (37.3%) than any other type of residence. 17.4% reported staying in a place not meant for human habitation and 16.7% reported staying in permanent housing.

## 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.

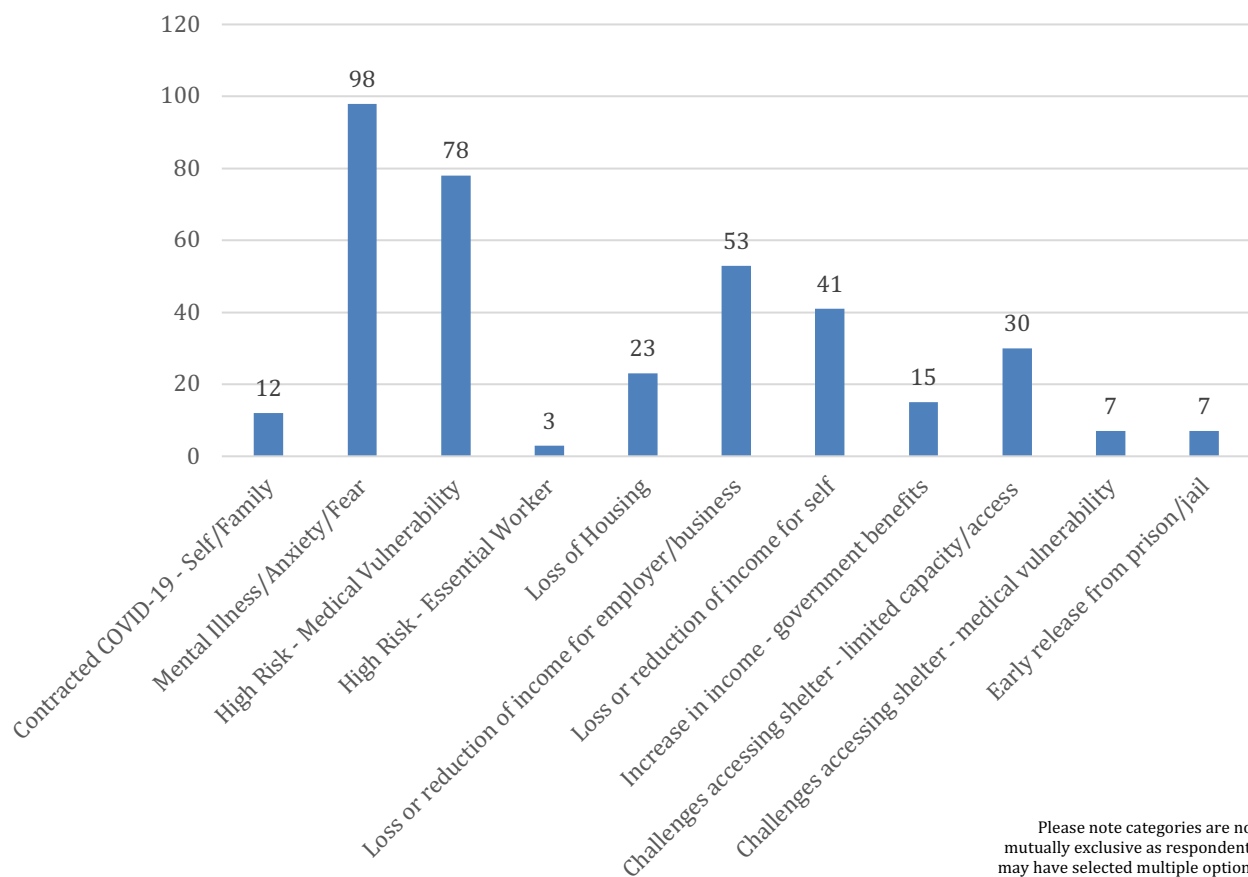
Of the 458 households identified as experiencing homelessness, 449 responded to the following question: “Are you homeless as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?” 10% (43 households) indicated their current homeless experience is a direct result of COVID-19. About 48.8% (21 households) of households who identified their current episode of homelessness was directly caused by COVID-19 were unsheltered.

**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 449 households that responded, mental illness, anxiety, and fear was the most common impact identified by 41.7% of COVID-19 impacted households. The second most common response was high risk due to medical vulnerability identified by 33.2% of households identifying a COVID-19 impact.

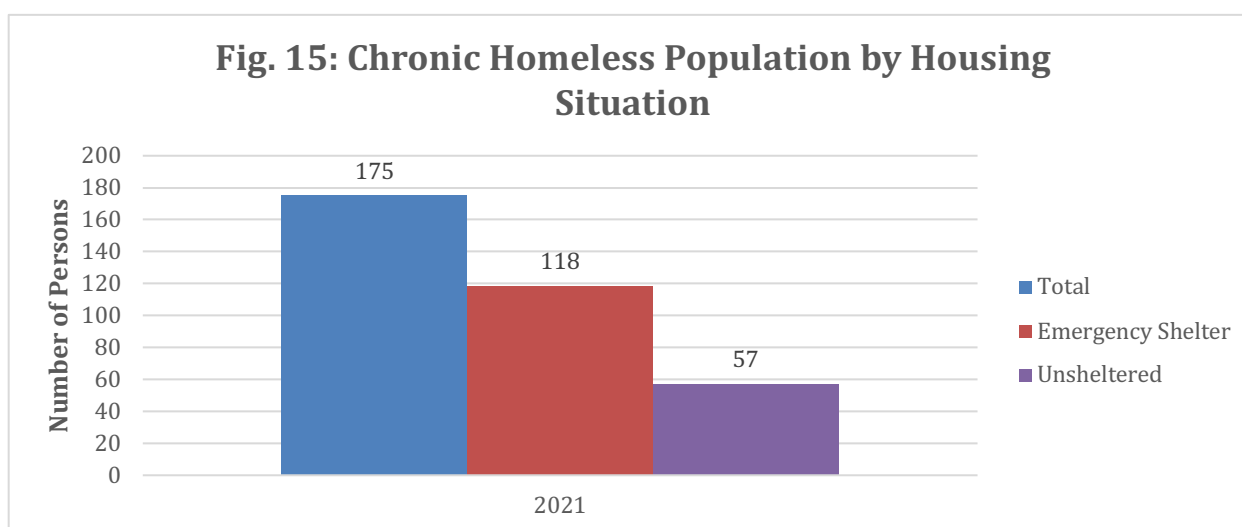
**Fig. 14: Impact of COVID-19 by Household**



## 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.

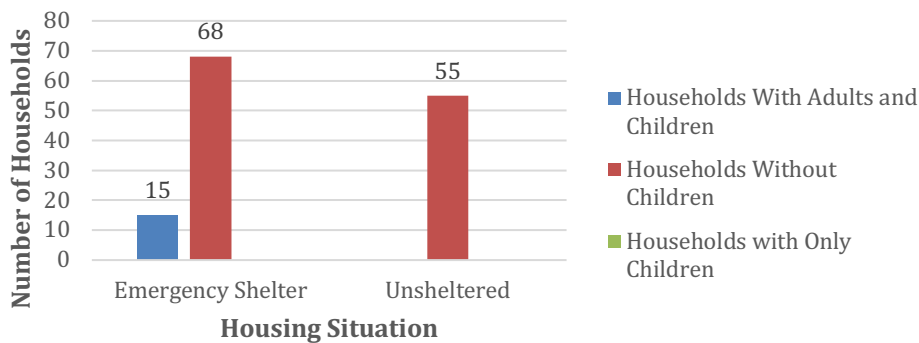


67.4% male

138  
Households  
with 175  
Persons

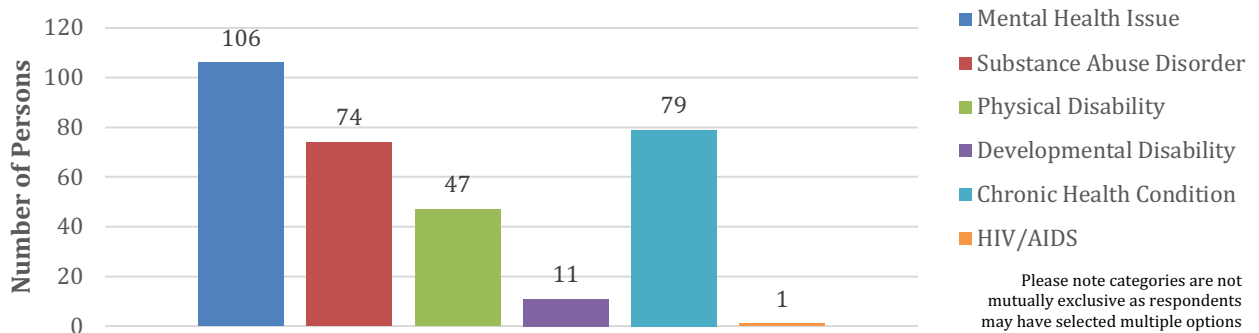
40.6%  
Black/African  
American

**Fig. 16: Chronically Homeless Households by Housing Situation**



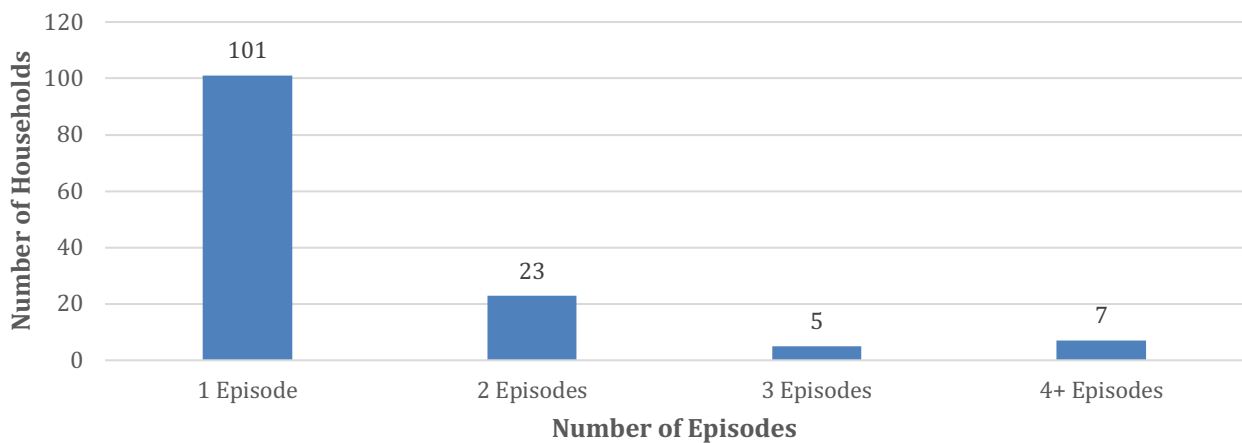
89.1% of households Adult Only Households

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

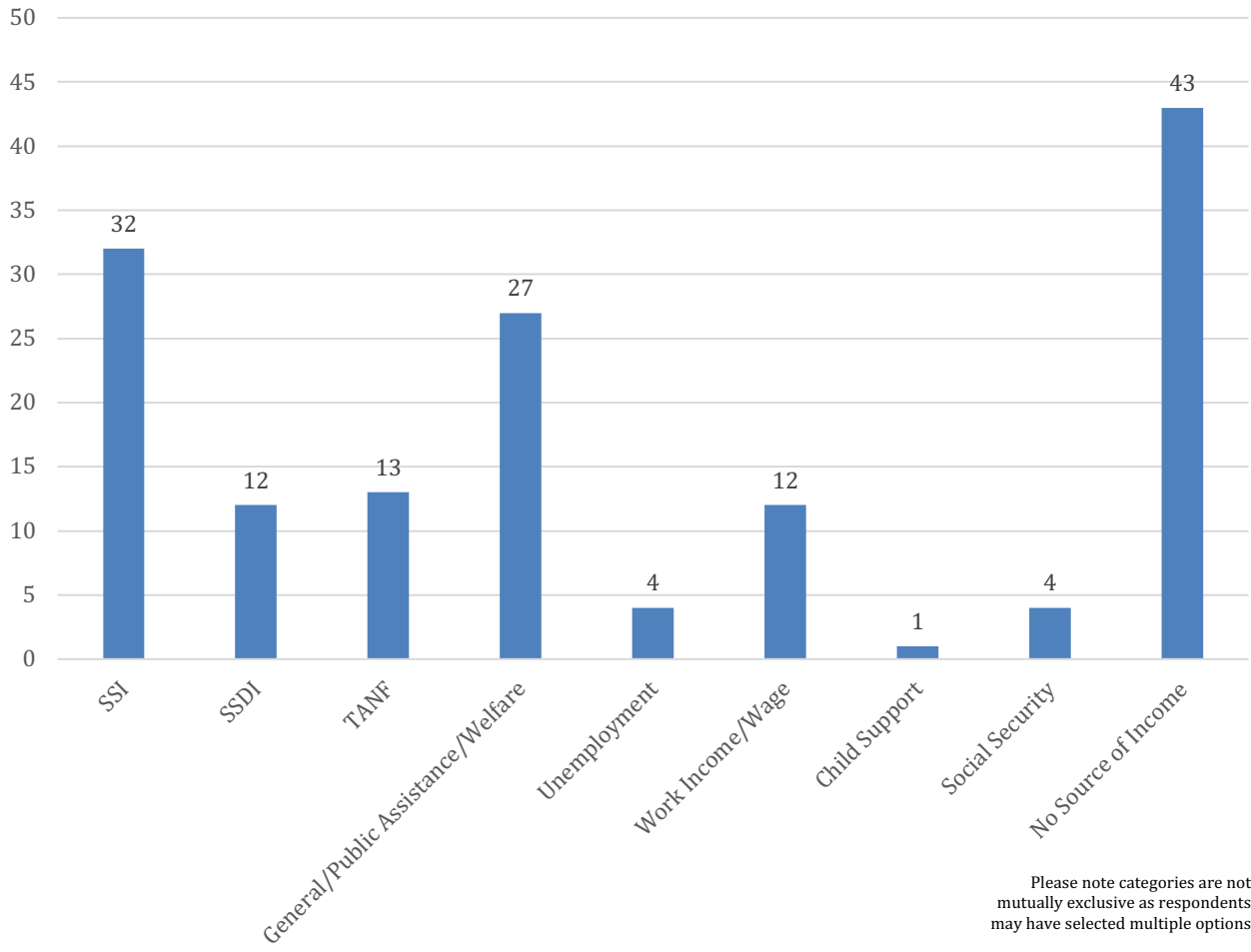


78.3 % identified multiple disabilities

**Fig. 18: Episodes of Homelessness Among Chronically Homeless Households**



**Fig. 19: Number of Chronically Homeless Households by Income Source**



Average income for chronically homeless households is \$549.29

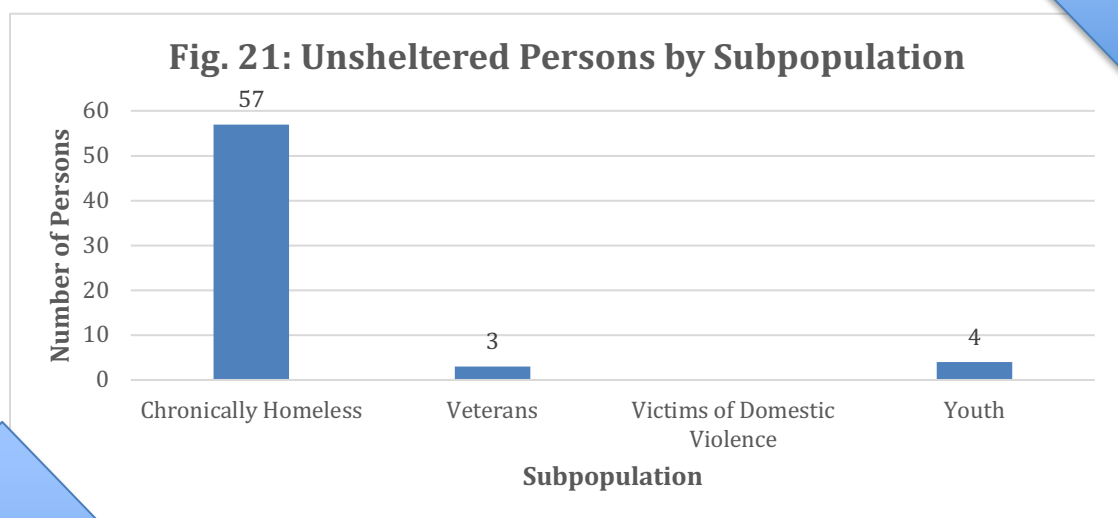
## V. Findings for the Unsheltered Homeless

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.

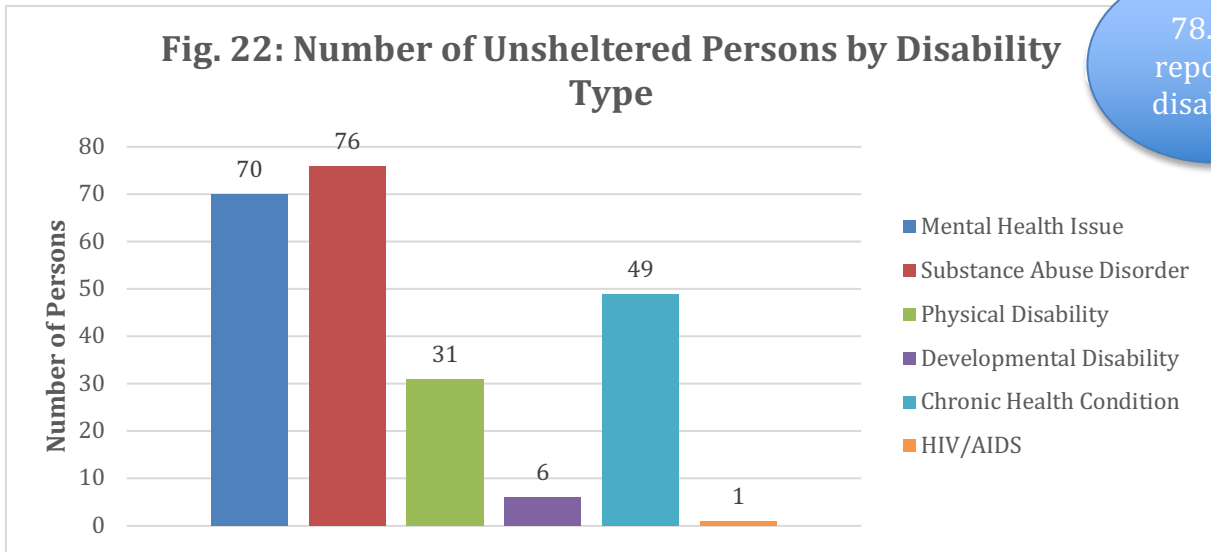


100%  
Adult  
Individuals

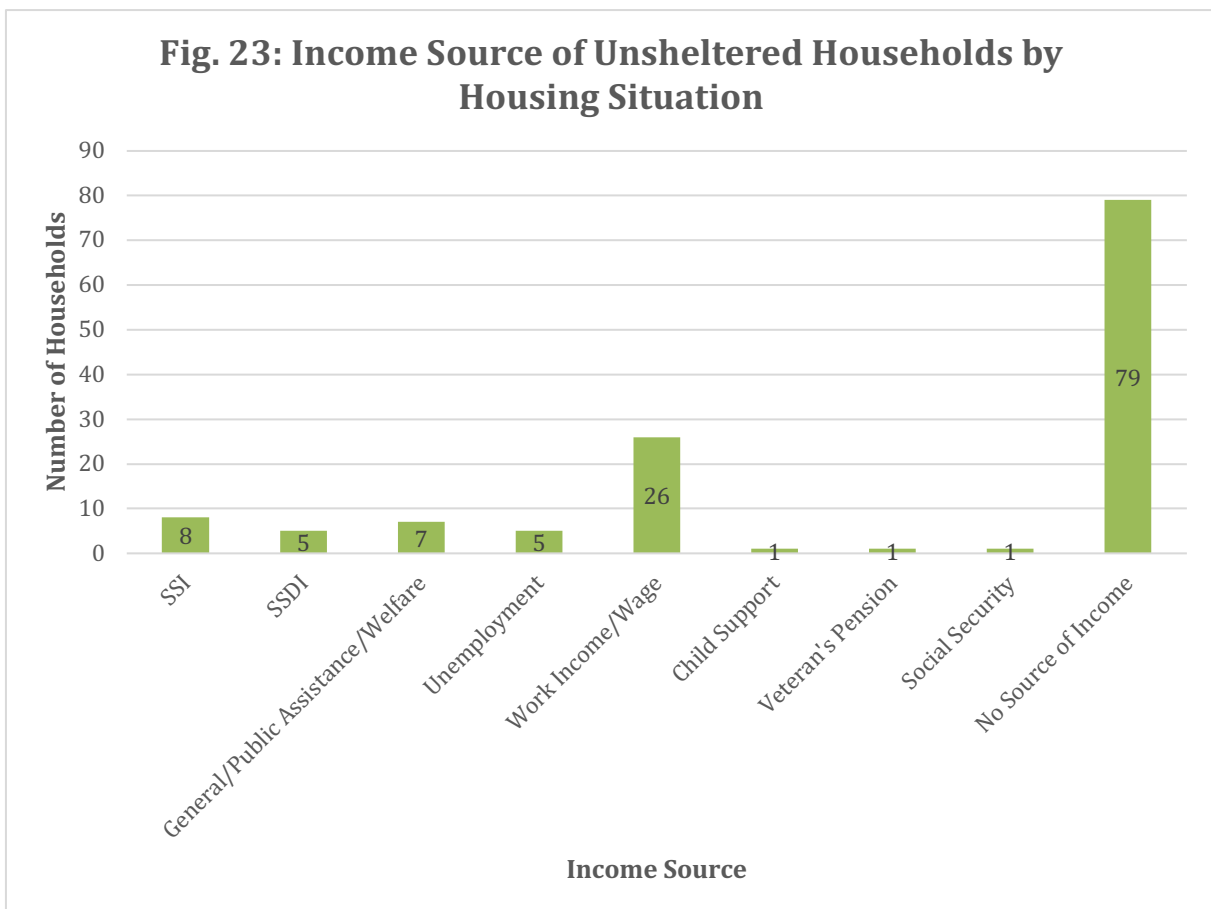


82.6%  
male

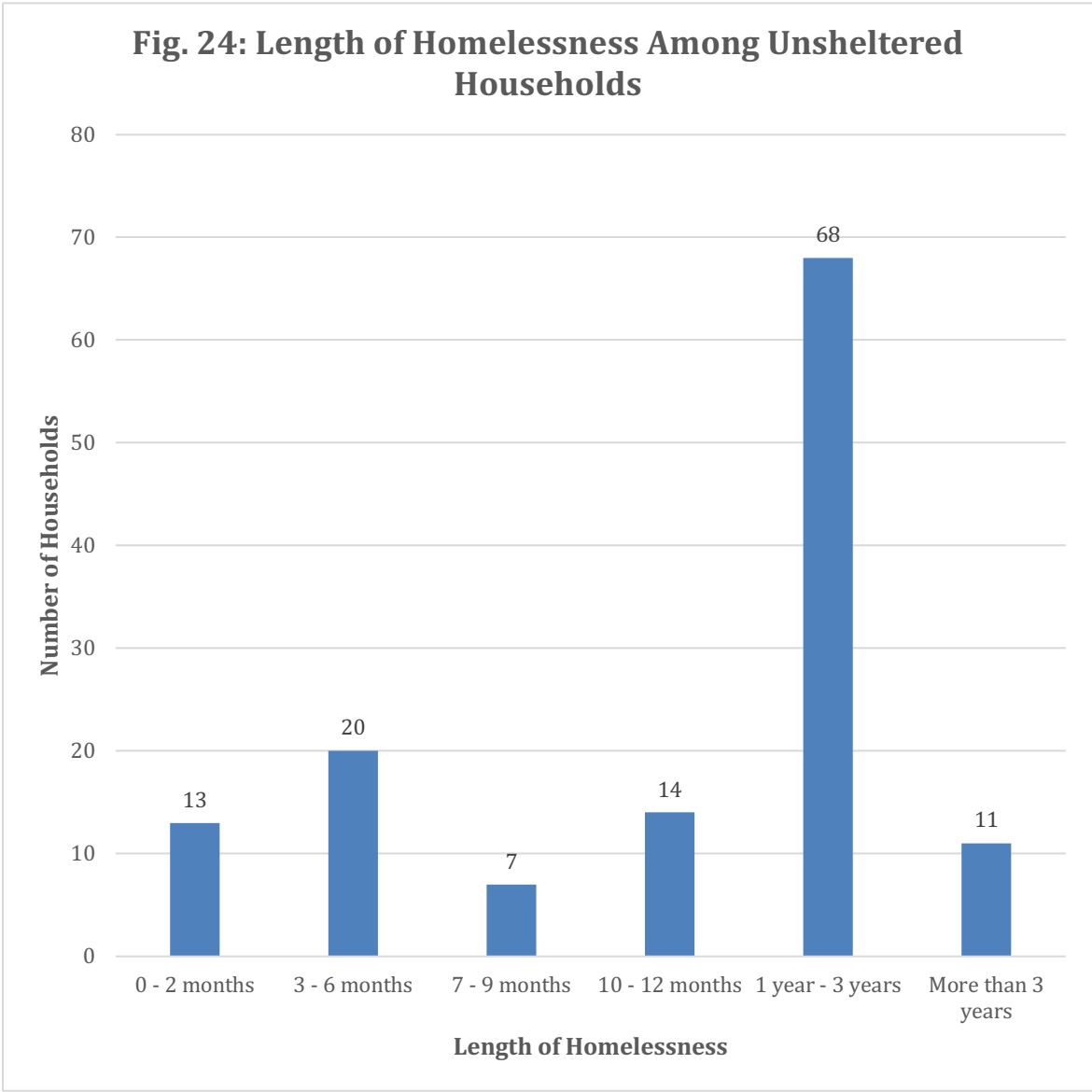
Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options



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



Average Monthly Income is \$430.36



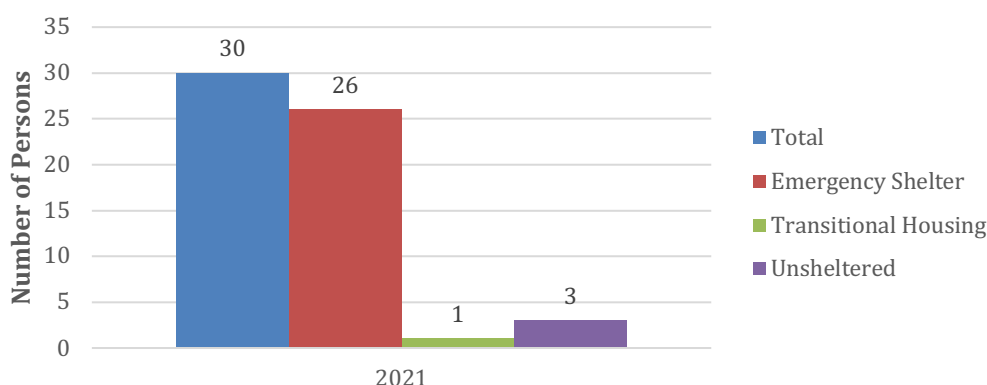
59.4% have been homeless for more than 1 year



## VI. Findings for Homeless Veterans

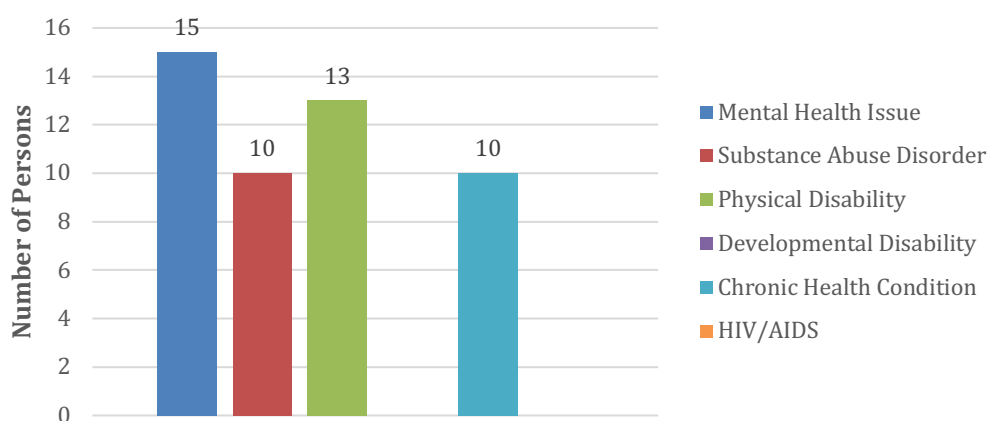
Veterans are defined as any person of the age of 18 who has served in any branch of the Armed Forces. For the purposes of the Point-in-Time Count, the veteran definition covers any person who has served including those who may not be eligible for veteran services through the U.S. Department of Veterans 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.

**Fig. 25: Total Homeless Veteran Population by Housing Situation**



50%  
African  
American

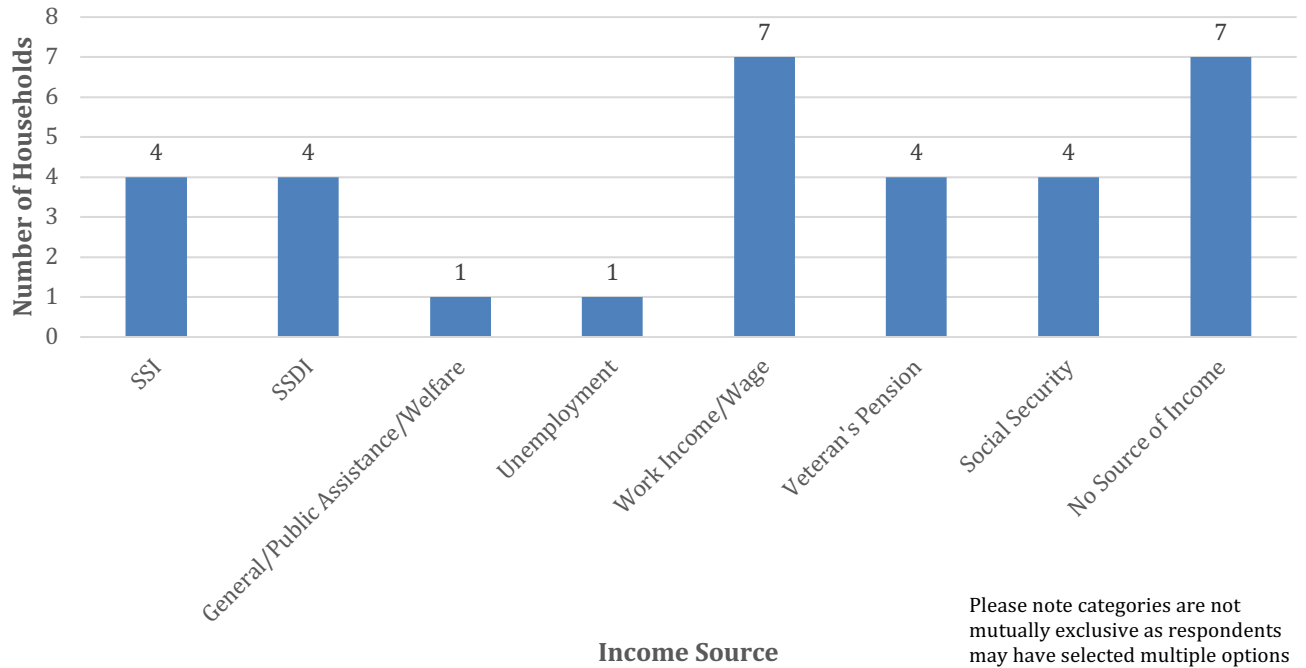
**Fig. 26: Number of Veteran Persons by Disability Type**



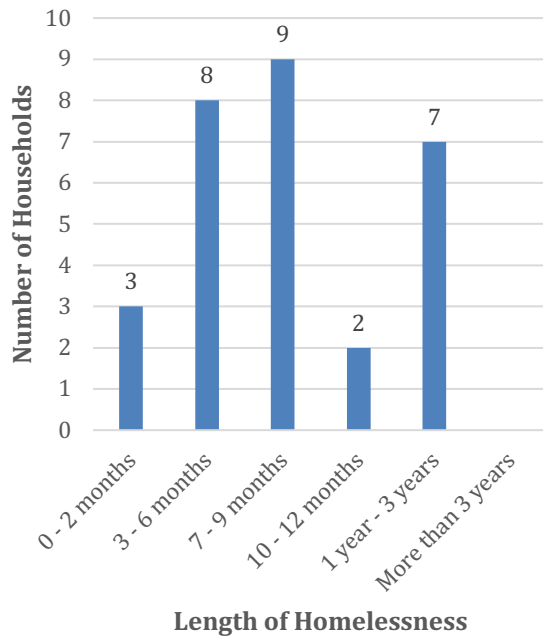
73.3% of  
homeless  
veterans  
identified a  
disability

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

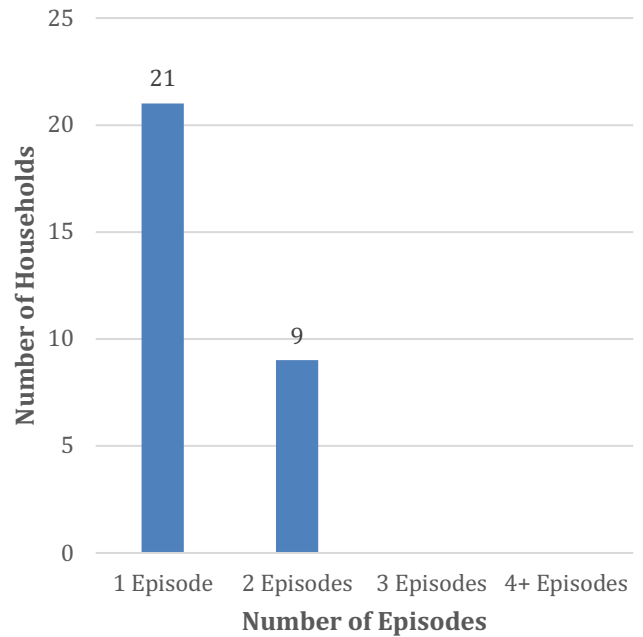
**Fig. 27: Income by Housing Situation for Veteran Households**



**Fig. 28: Length of Homelessness Among Veteran Households**



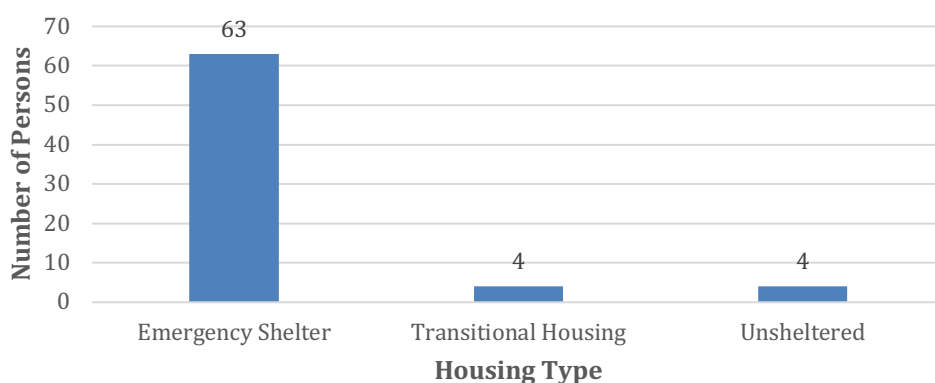
**Fig. 29: Episodes of Homelessness Among Veteran Households**



## VII. Finding for Homeless Youth

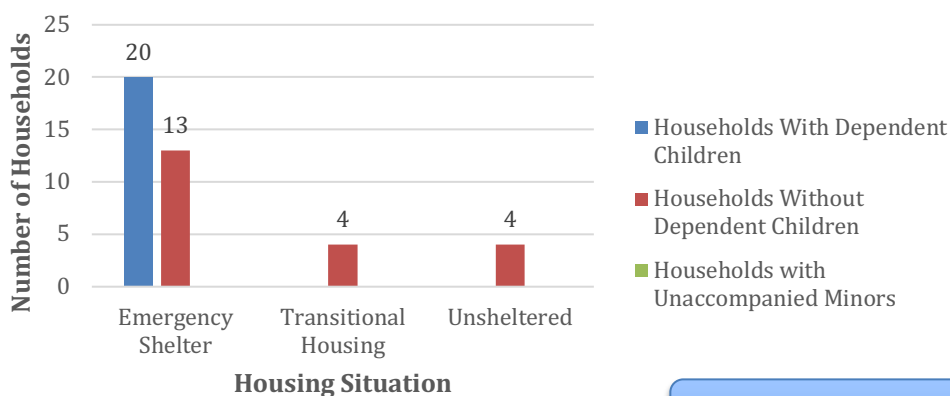
Youth are defined as persons under the age of 25 who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian. This can include individual youth (18-24 years old), unaccompanied minors (17 or younger), households of 2 or more youth presenting together as a household, and pregnant or parenting youth who are the legal 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 New Jersey 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. 30: Number of Homeless Youth by Housing Situation**



53.5%  
are  
female

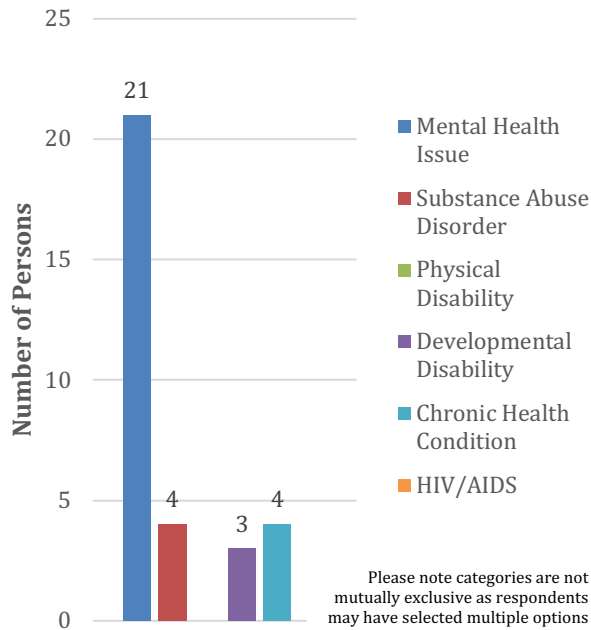
**Fig. 31: Homeless Youth Households by Housing Situation**



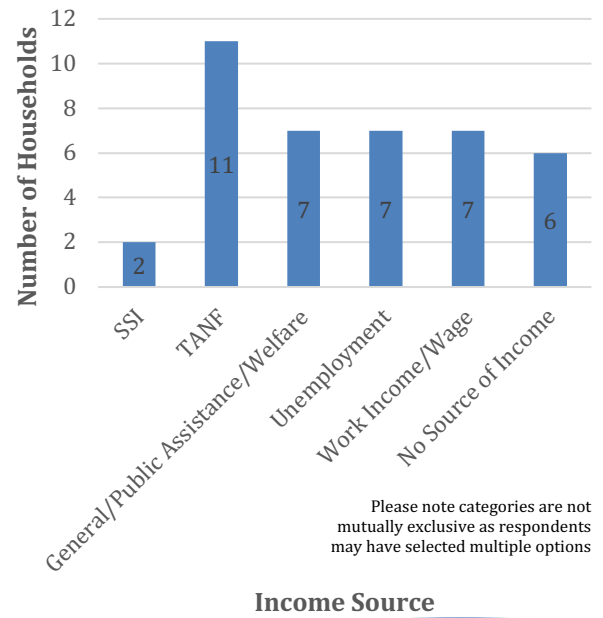
52.1% are Black/African American

33.8% of youth respondents identified a disability

**Fig. 32: Number of Youth by Disability Type**



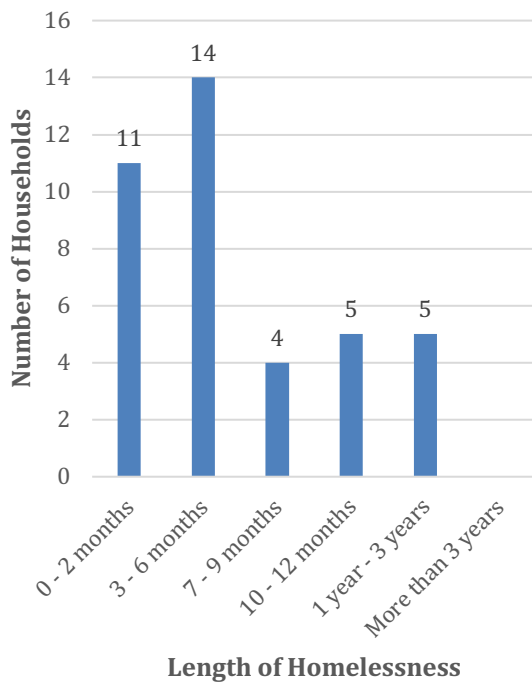
**Fig. 33: Income Sources for Youth Households**



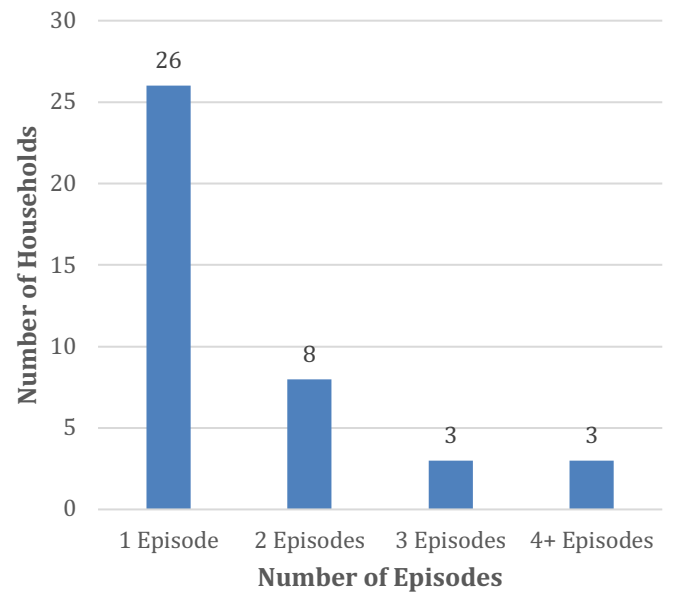
**Income Source**

Average Monthly Income is \$723.62

**Fig. 34: Length of Homelessness Among Youth Households**



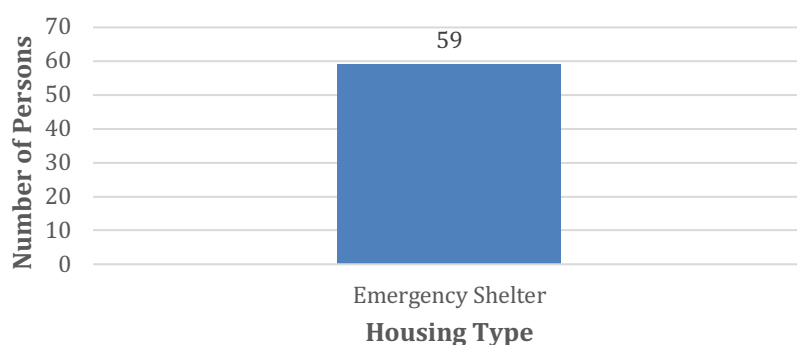
**Fig. 35: Episodes of Homelessness Among Youth Households**



## VIII. Findings for Victims of Domestic Violence

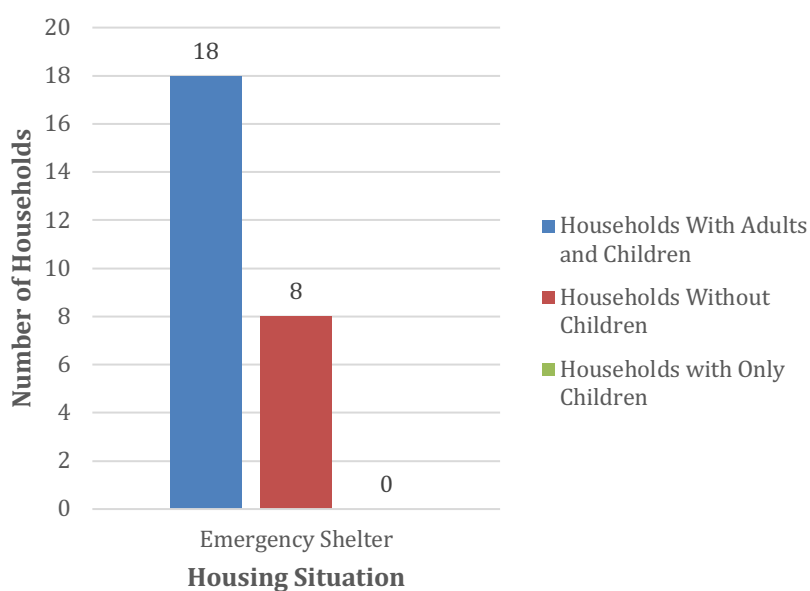
The 2021 Point In Time Count captured information for individuals and families “Fleeing” Domestic Violence. For the purposes of the Point-In-Time Count, Domestic Violence is defined as any household that is fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening 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.

**Fig. 36: Number of Homeless DV Victims by Housing Situation**



44.1%  
identified  
as Black

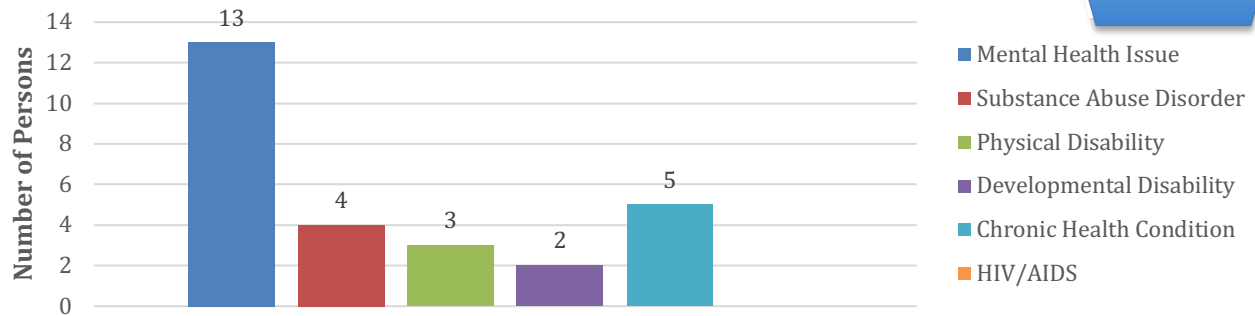
**Fig. 37: Homeless DV Households by Housing Situation**



52.5% are  
Adults

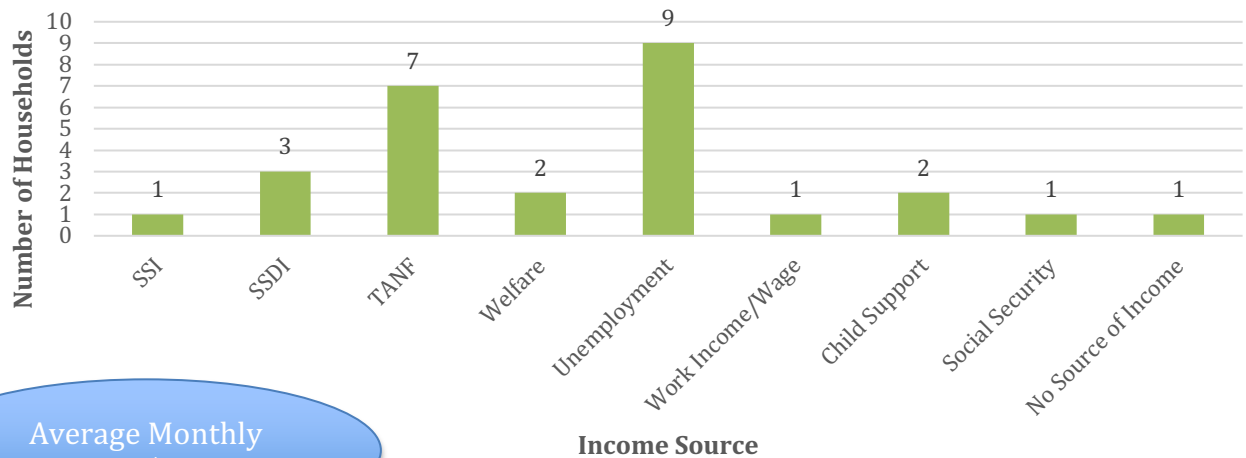
25.4%  
identified  
a disability

**Fig. 38: Number of DV Victims by Disability Type**



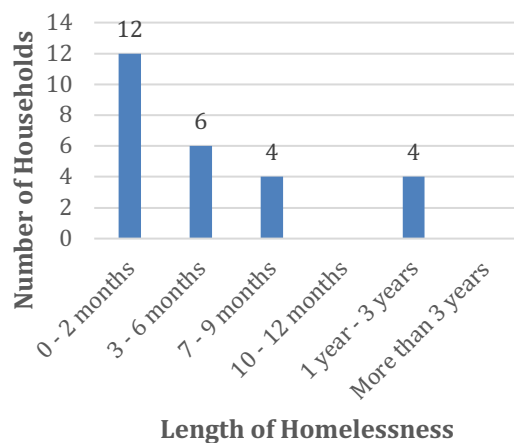
Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

**Fig. 39: Income Source for DV Victim Households**

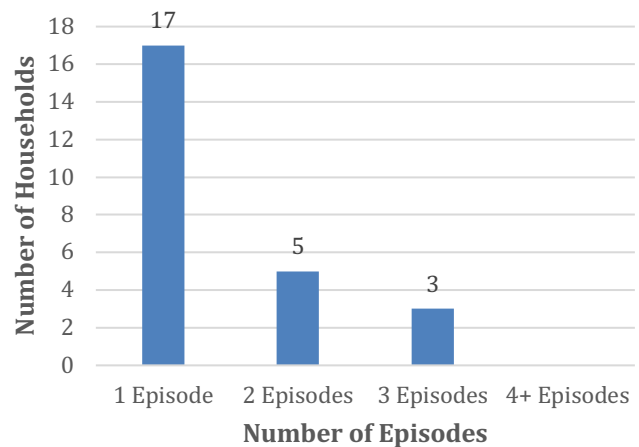


Average Monthly  
Income is \$1,093.27

**Fig. 40: Length of Homelessness Among DV Victim Households**



**Fig. 41: 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. 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 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 19.4% 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 80.6% 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.

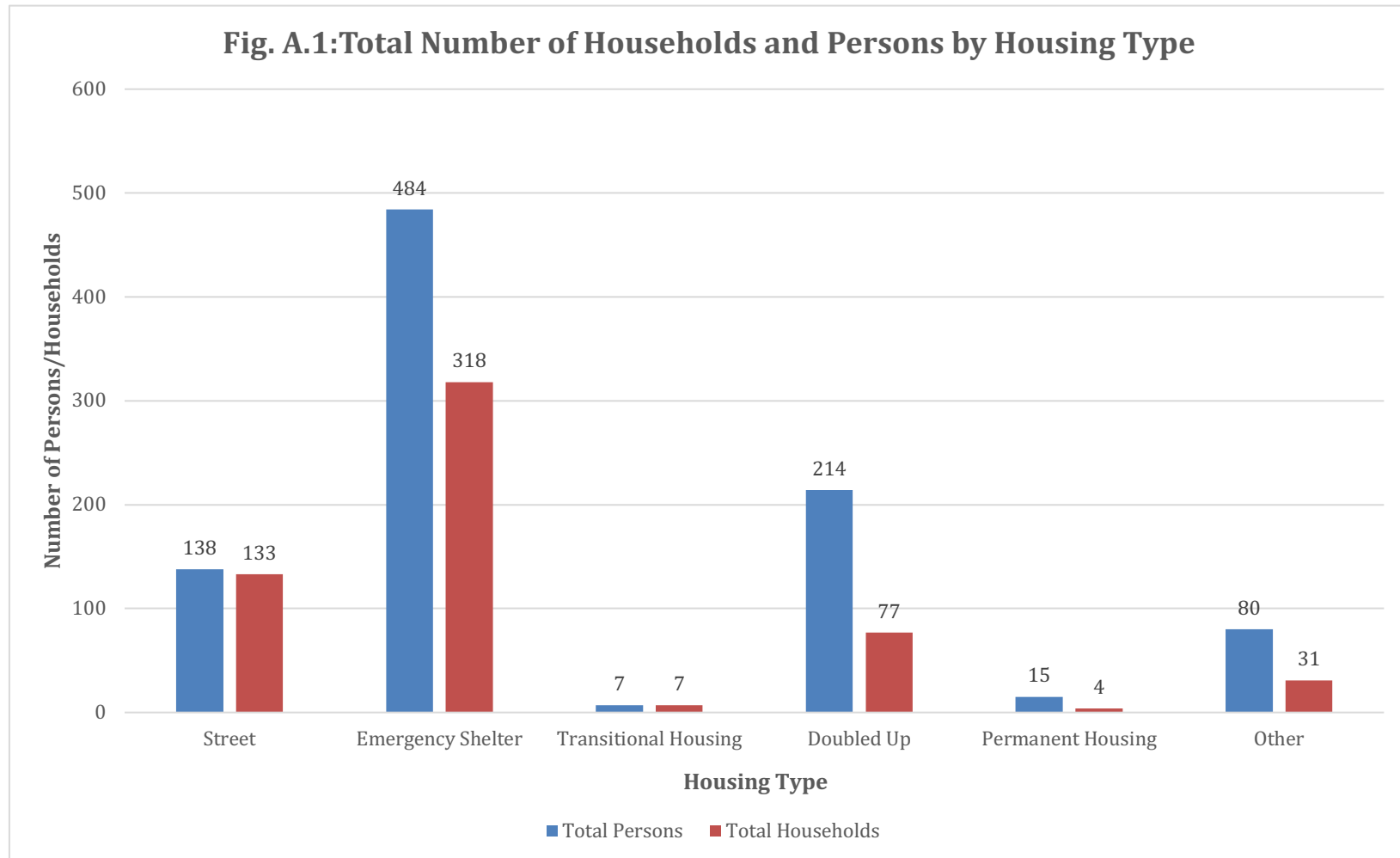
All duplicates detected through comparison of unique identifiers were then de-duplicated by the following process:

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?

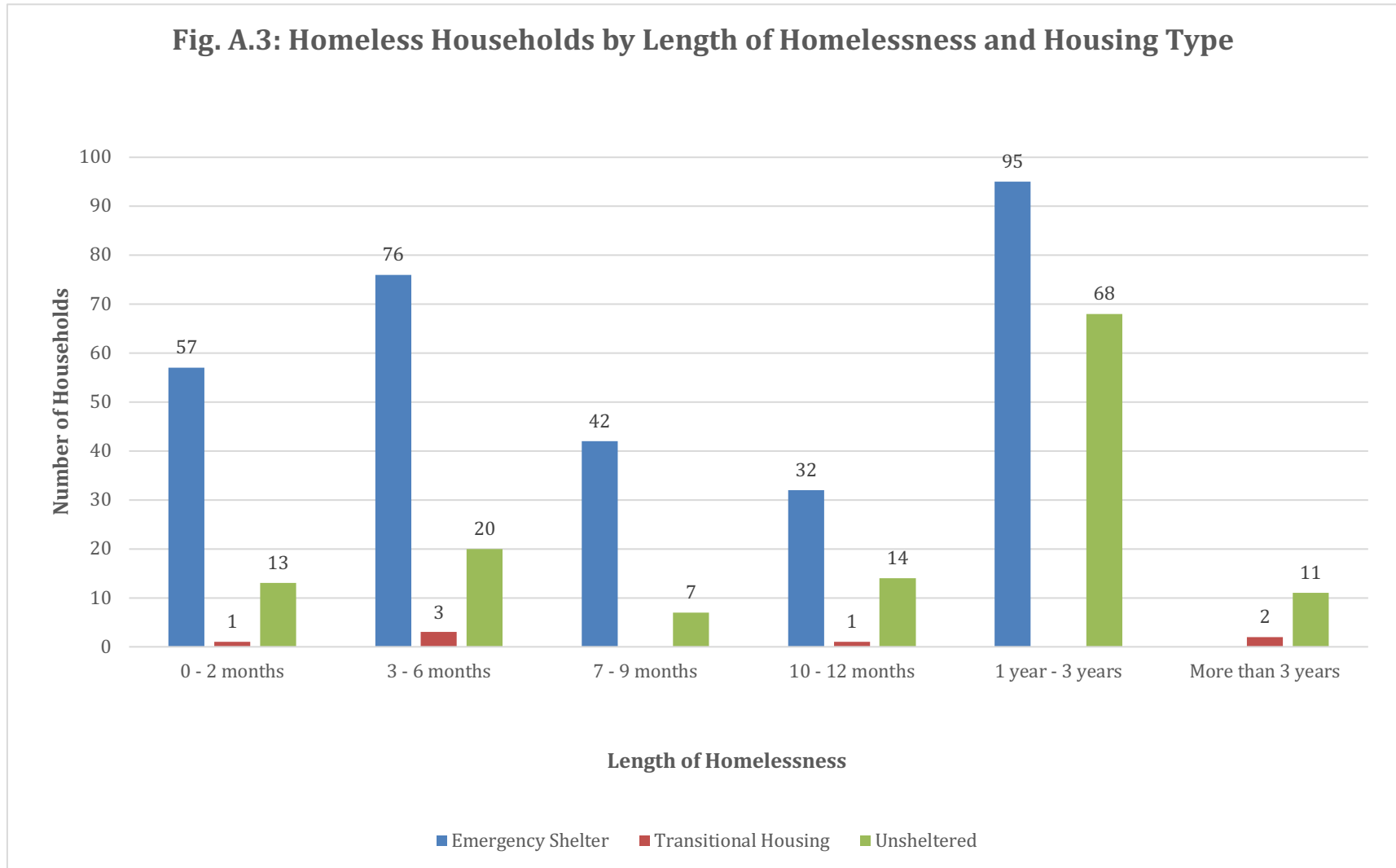


What was your location the night of the count?

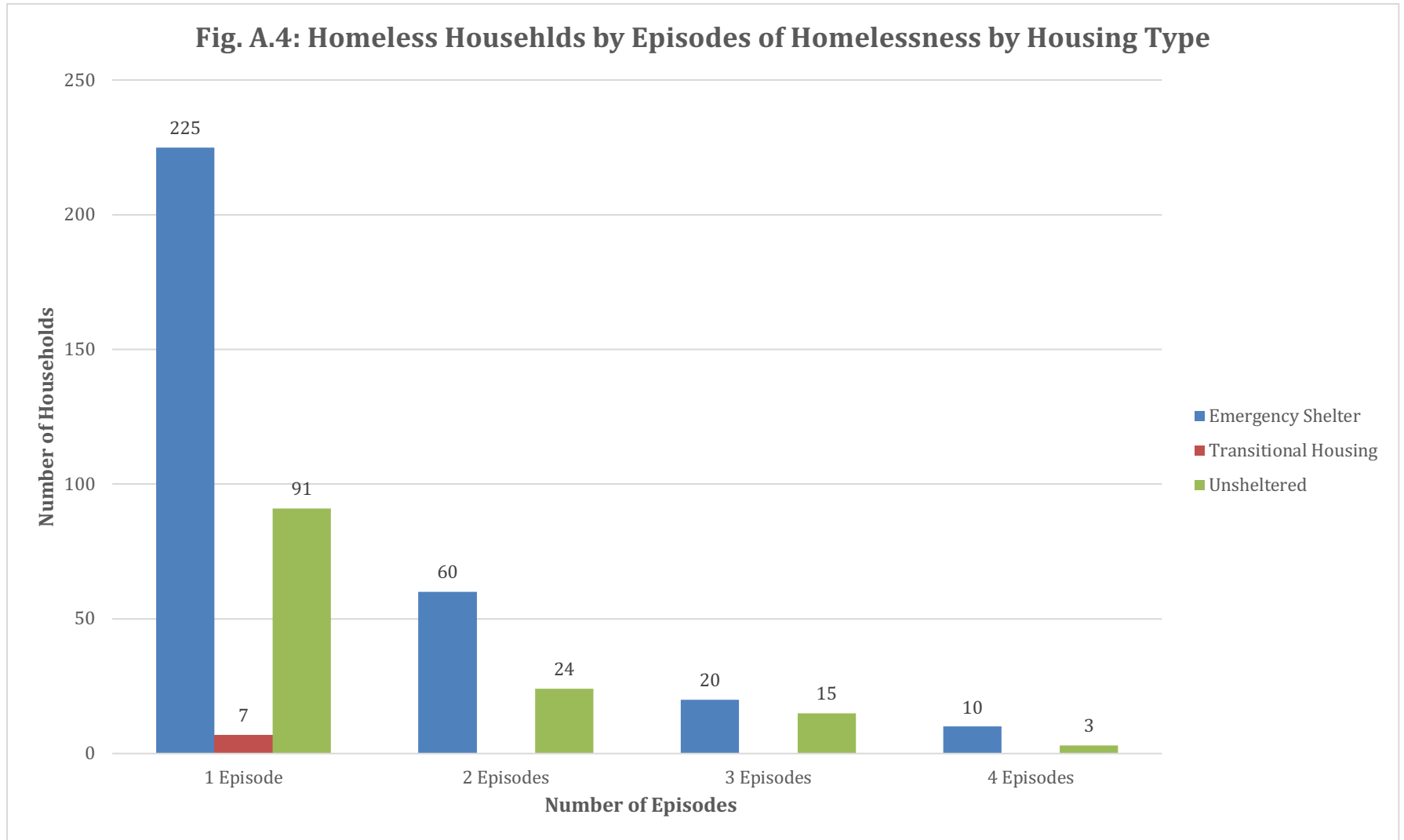
<b>Fig. A.2: Number of Homeless Persons by Municipality on the Night of the Count</b>	
<b>Location Night of Count – Municipality</b>	<b>Number of Persons</b>
New Brunswick	176
Highland Park	1
Perth Amboy	53
South Amboy	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>288*</b>

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

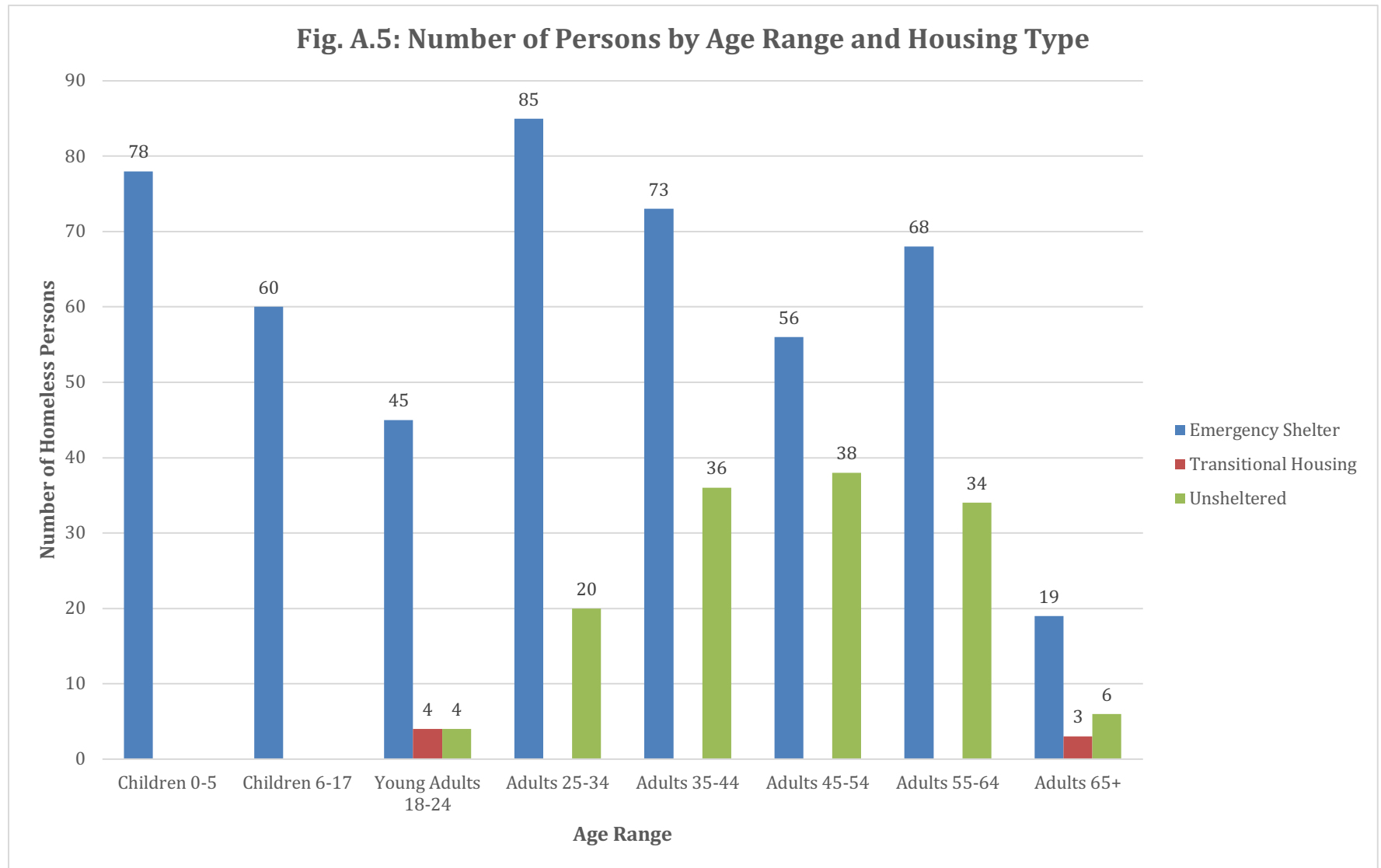
## What is your total length of homelessness?



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

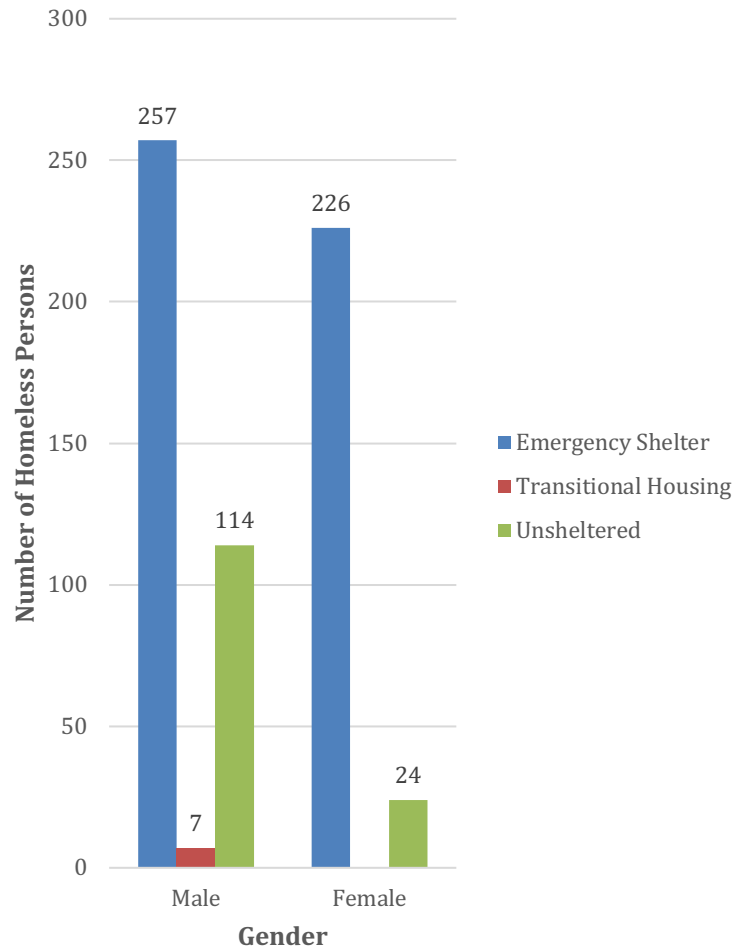


## Who was homeless with you on the night of the Point in Time count?

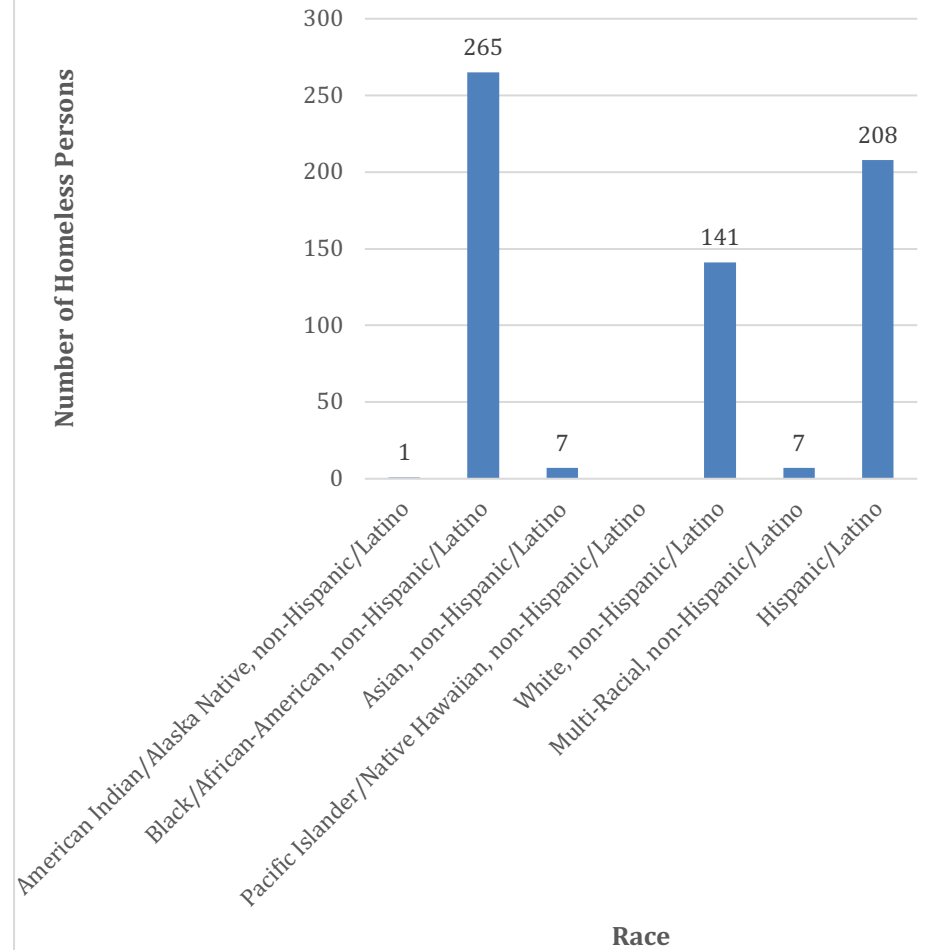


**Household Characteristics: Demographic Data – check all that apply to each person**

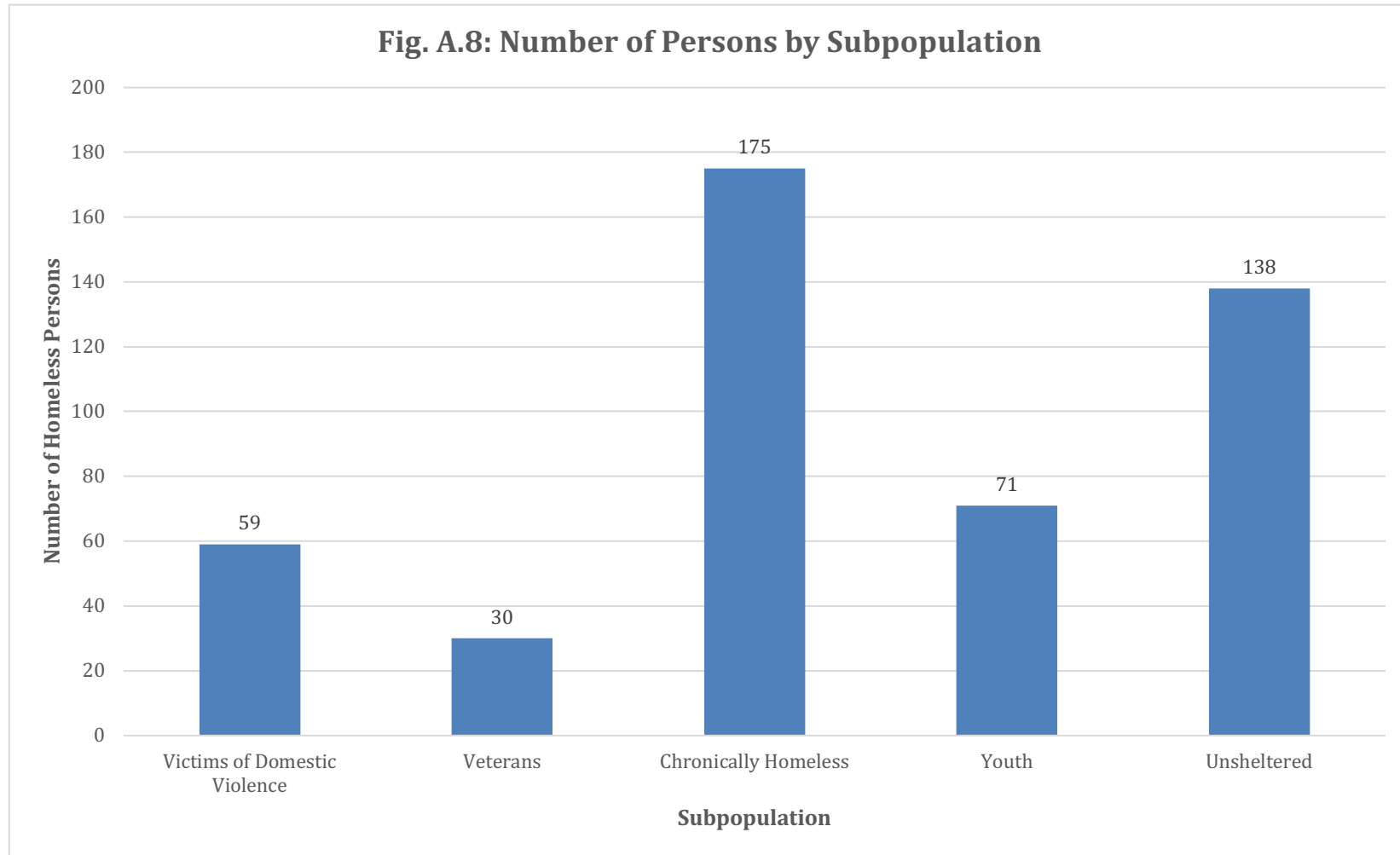
**Fig. A.6: Number of Persons by Gender and Housing Type**



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



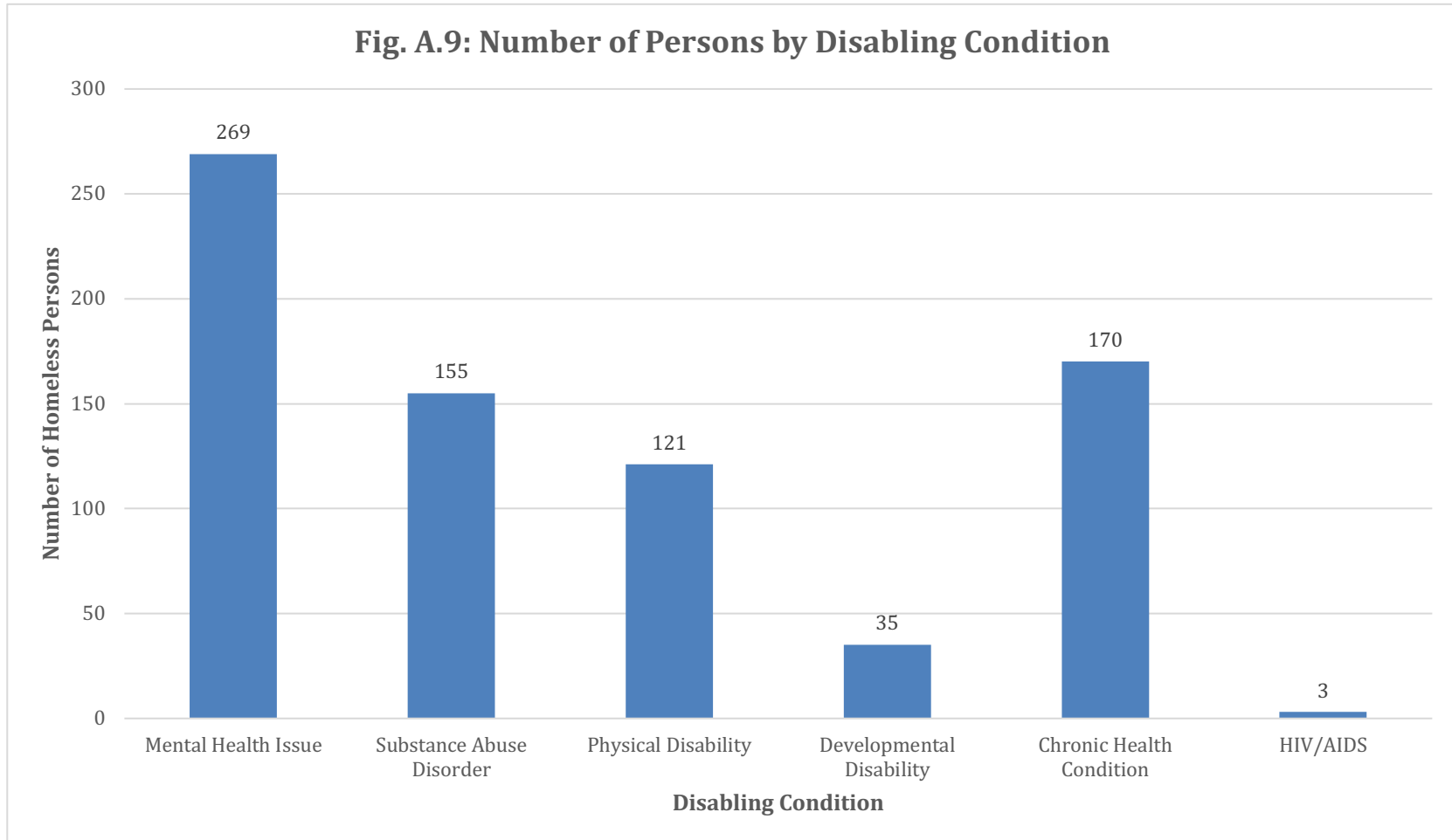
**Household Characteristics: Subpopulations – check all that apply to each person**



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**

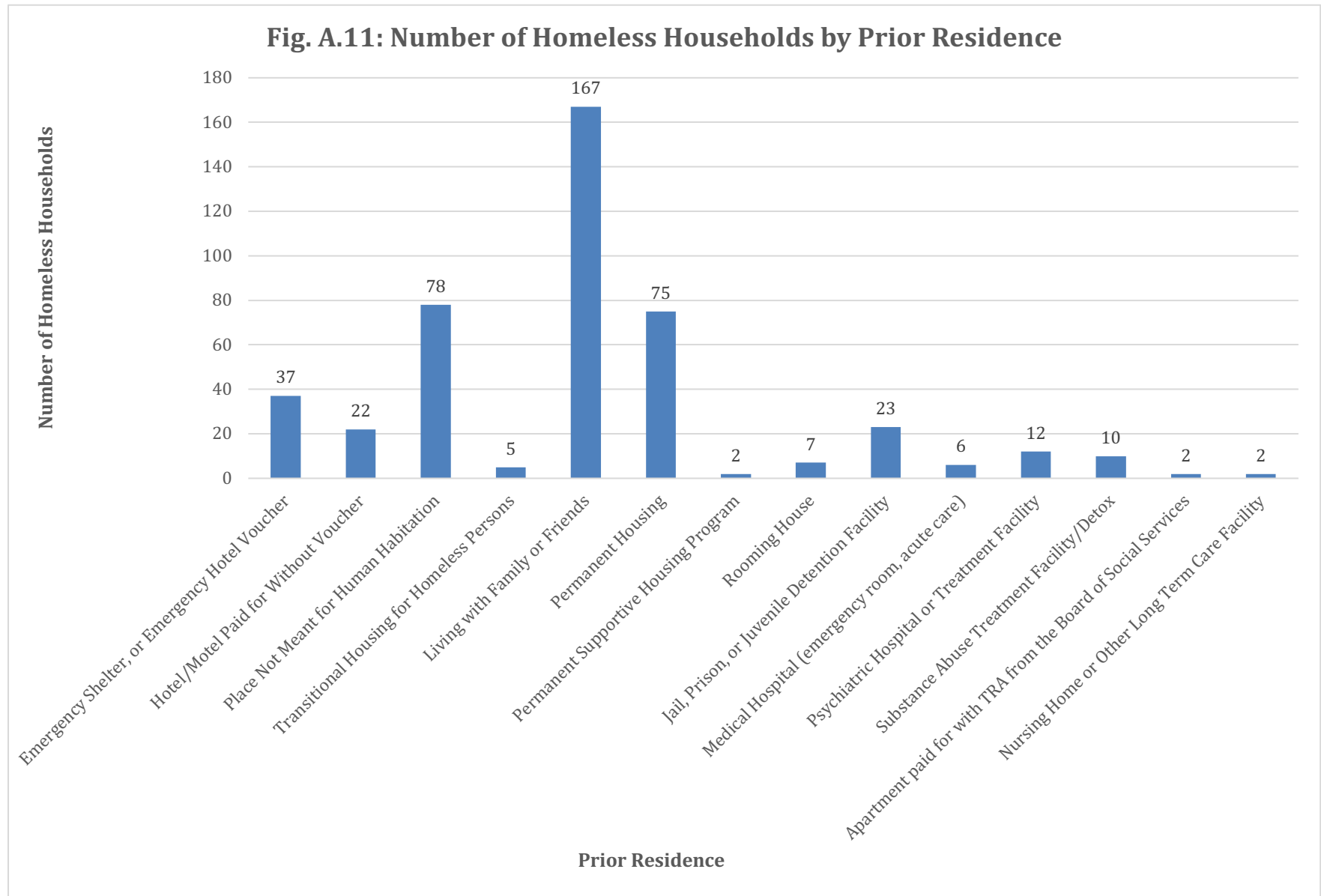


Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

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

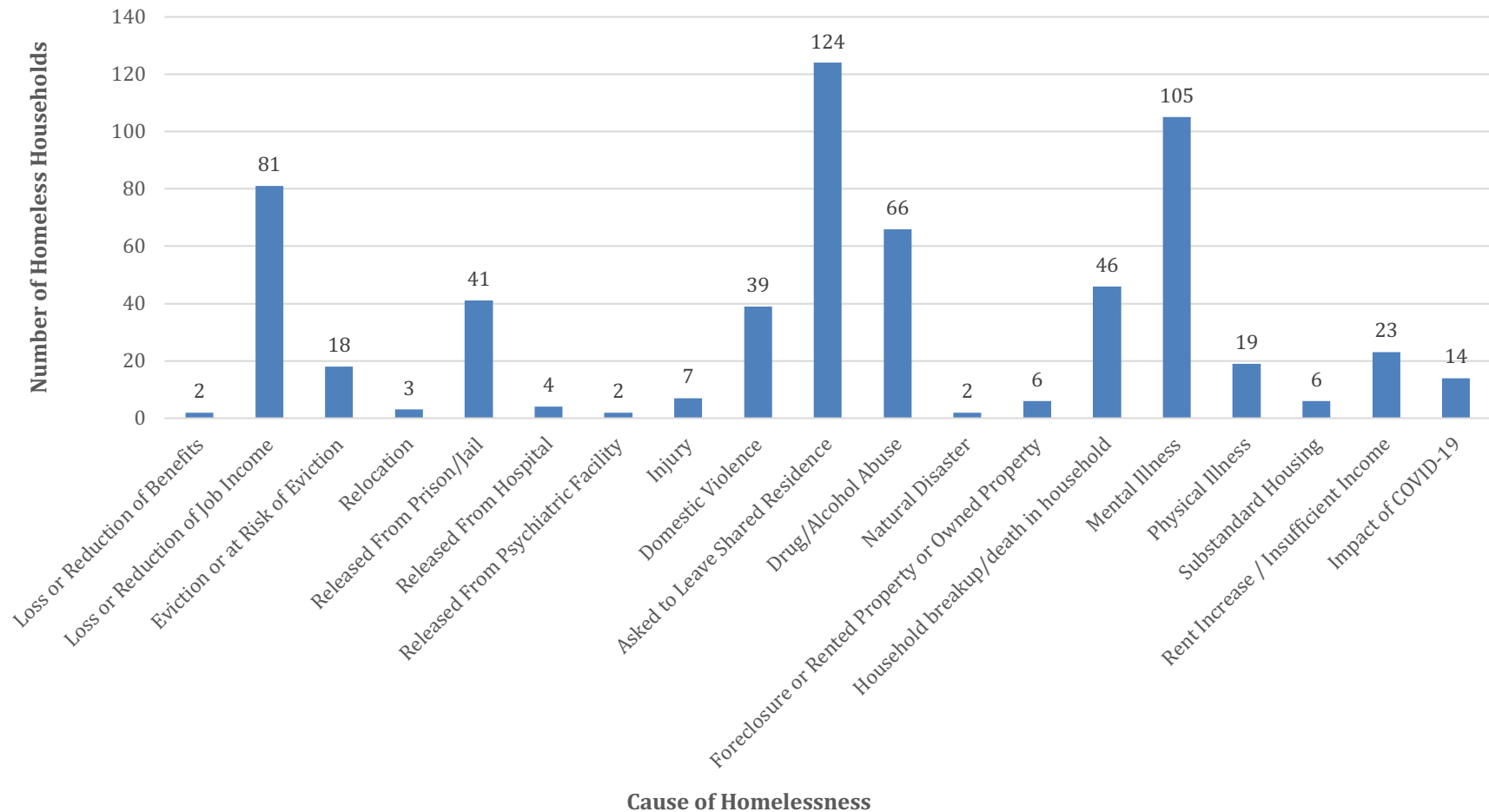
<b>Fig. A.10. Number of Homeless Households by County or State of Last Permanent Address</b>	
<b>Last Permanent Address County/State</b>	<b>Number of Households</b>
Atlantic County	1
Bergen County	1
Burlington County	2
Camden County	1
Cumberland County	4
Essex County	12
Hudson County	1
Hunterdon County	2
Mercer County	7
<b>Middlesex County</b>	<b>334</b>
Monmouth County	6
Ocean County	3
Passaic County	3
Somerset County	11
Sussex County	1
Union County	9
Colorado	1
Connecticut	2
Delaware	2
Florida	8
Georgia	3
Maine	1
Maryland	1
Massachusetts	1
Missouri	1
New York	12
North Carolina	3
Ohio	1
Pennsylvania	8
South Carolina	4
Texas	2

## What was your residence prior to your current living situation?



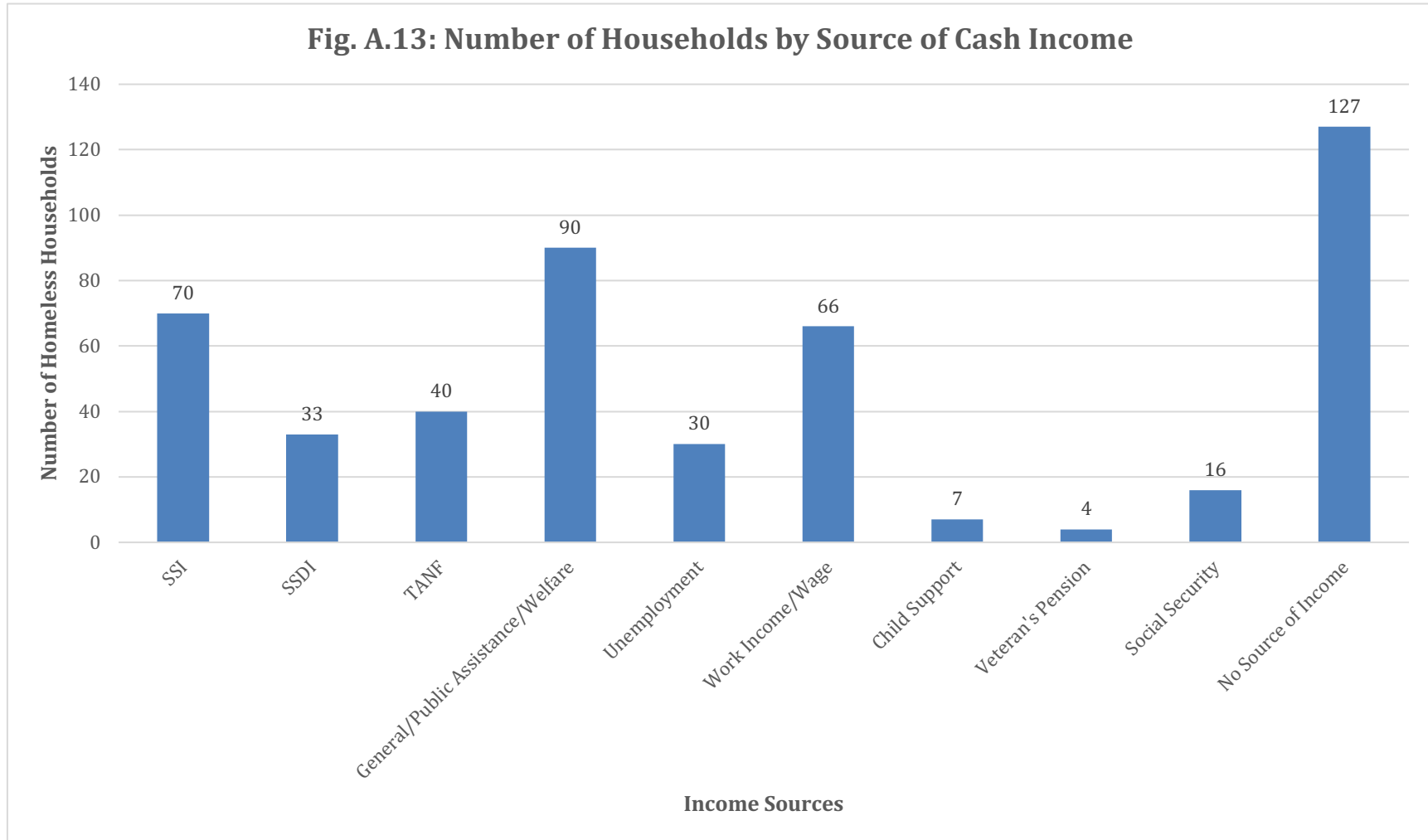
**What was the primary factor that contributed to, or caused, your current living situation?**

**Fig. A.12: Number of Households by Cause of Homelessness**



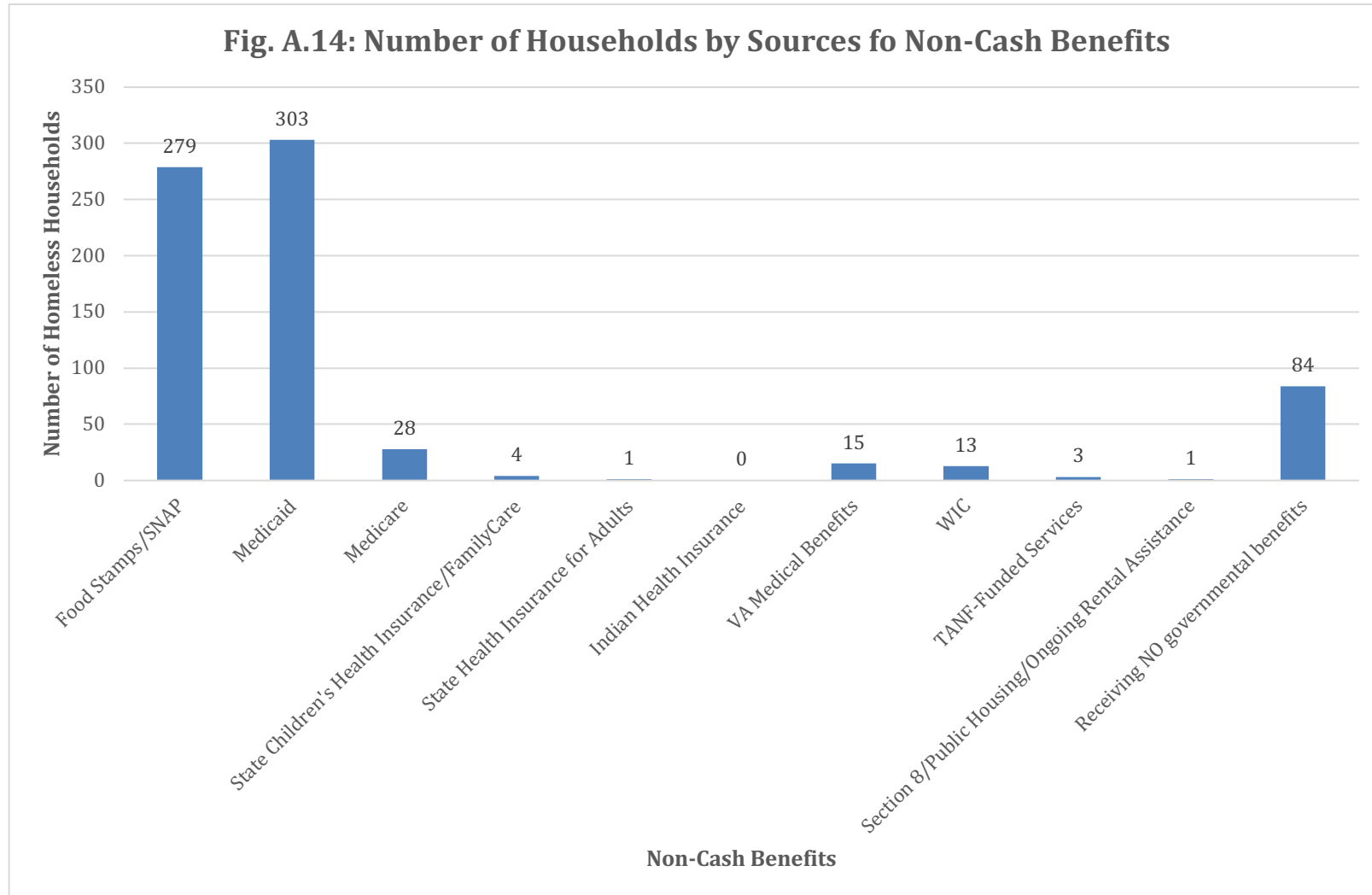
Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

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



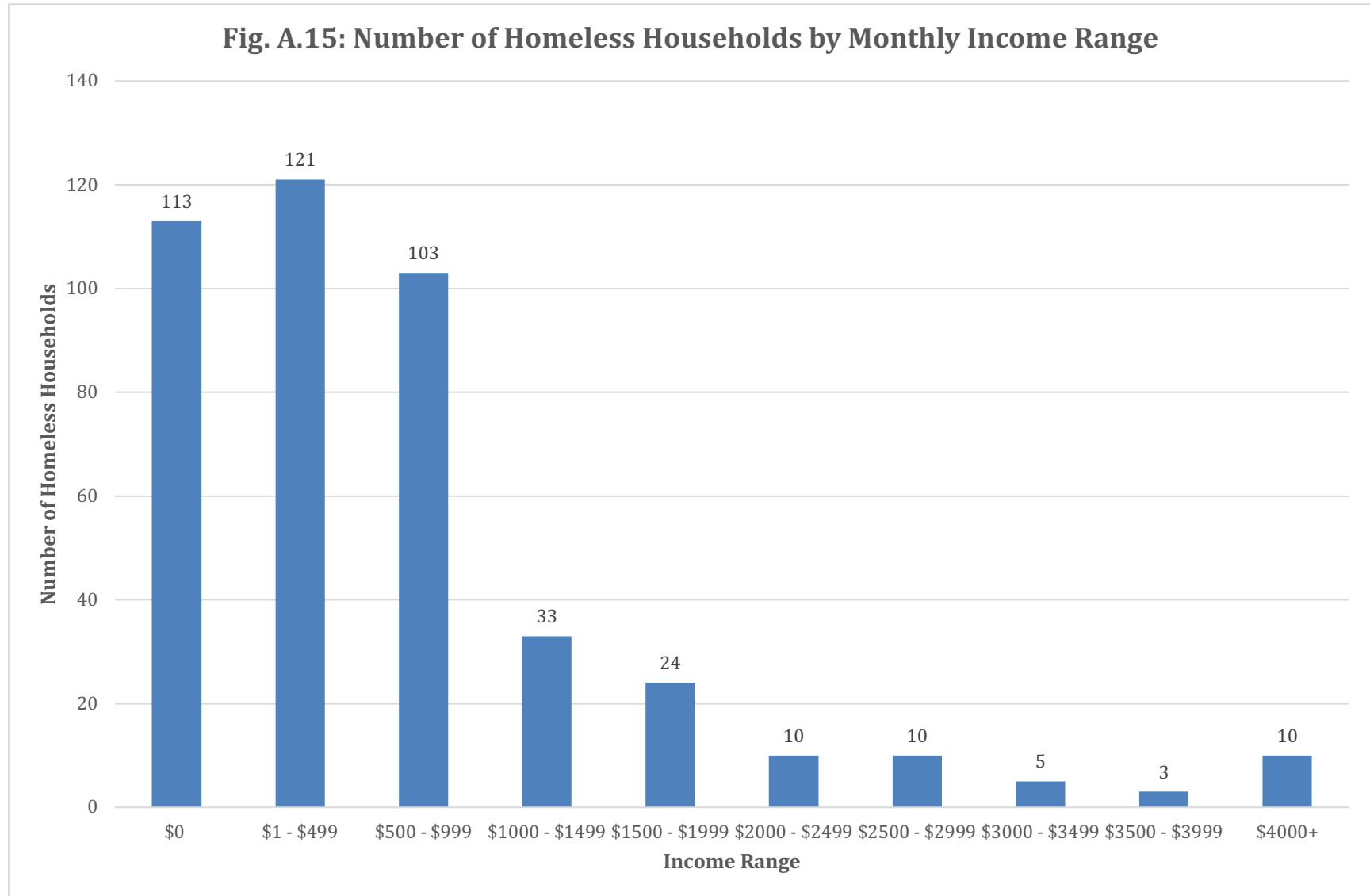
Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

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

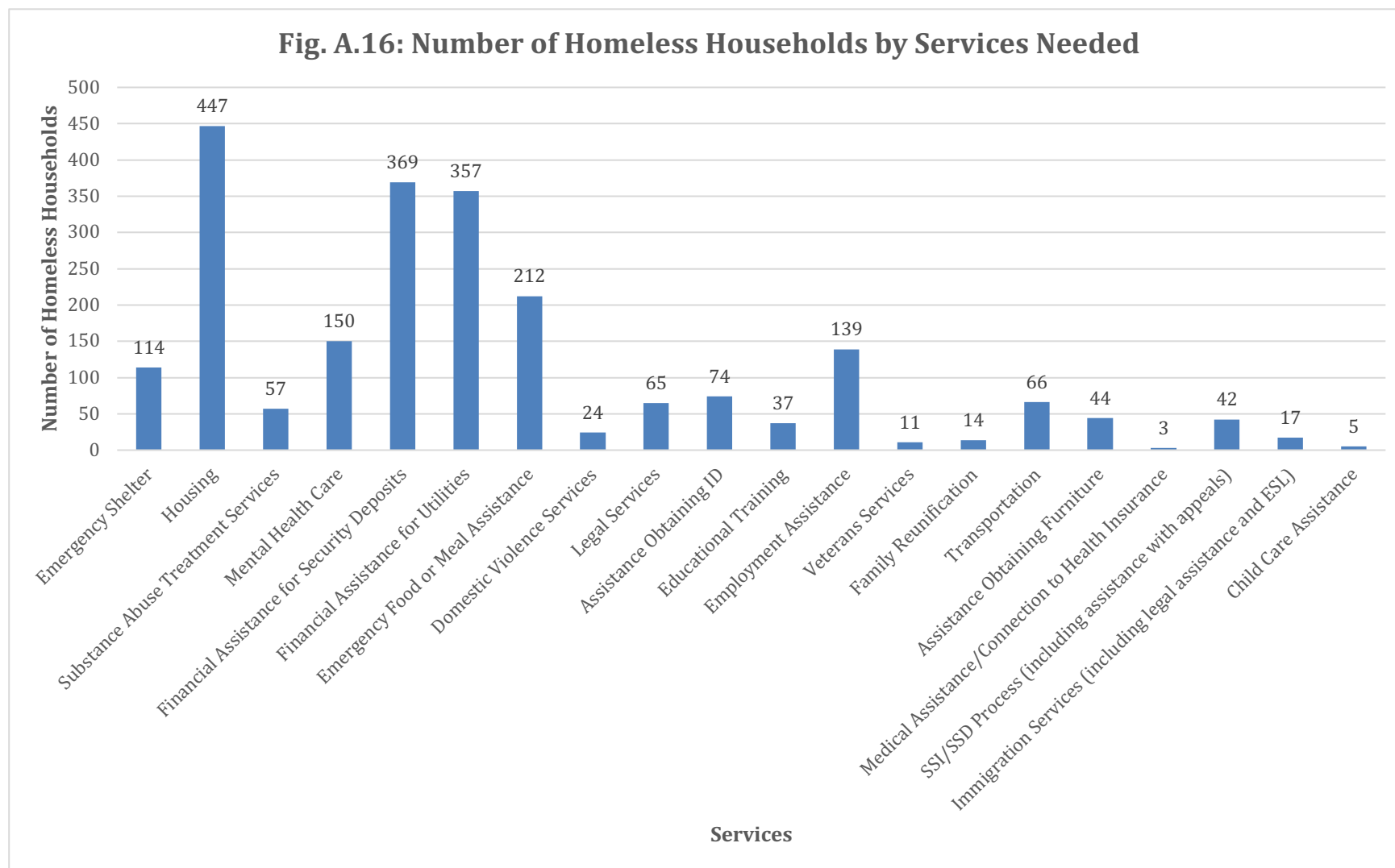


Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options

## What is your monthly household income?



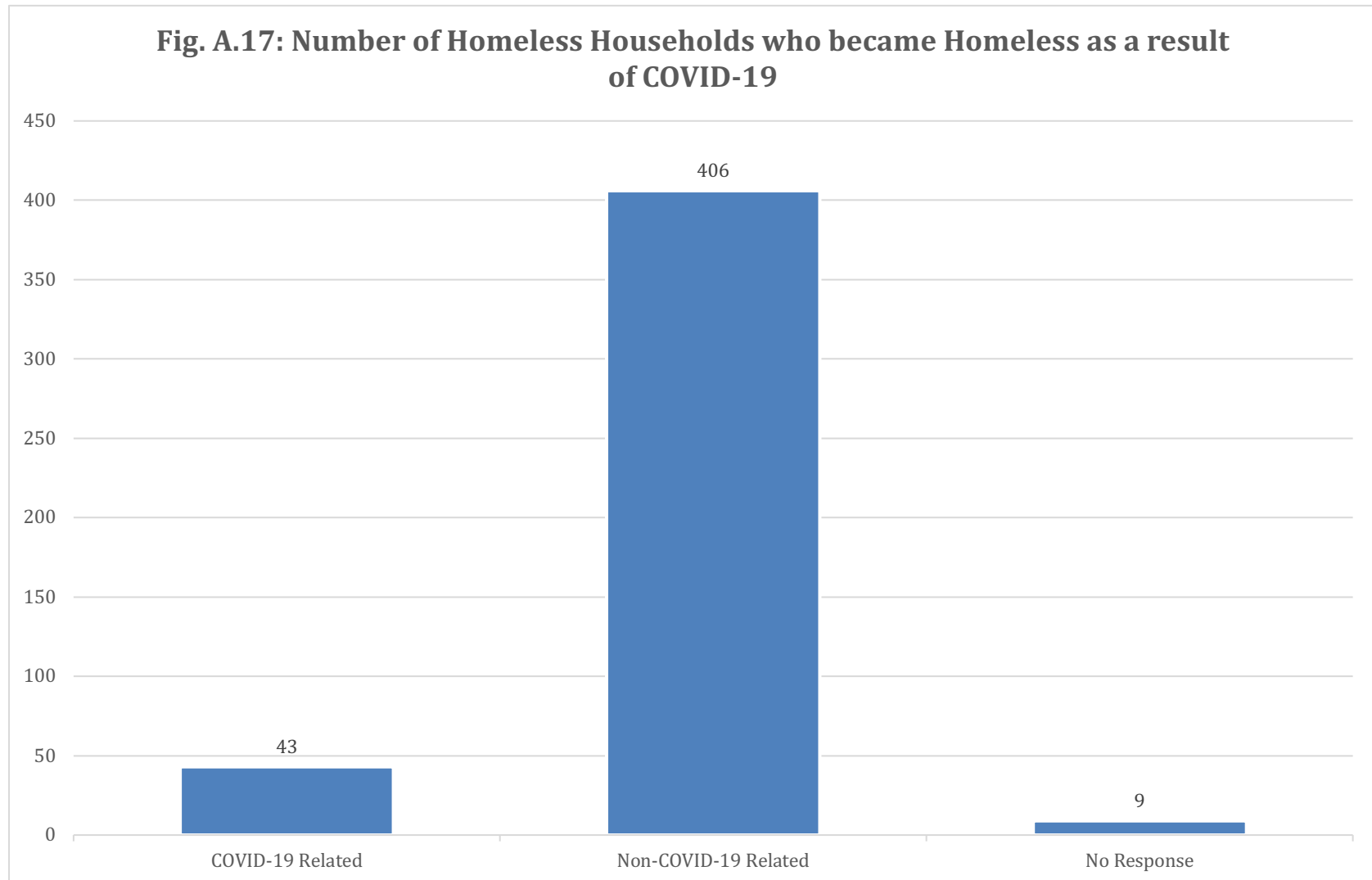
Would you, or anyone in your household, like to receive any of the following services?



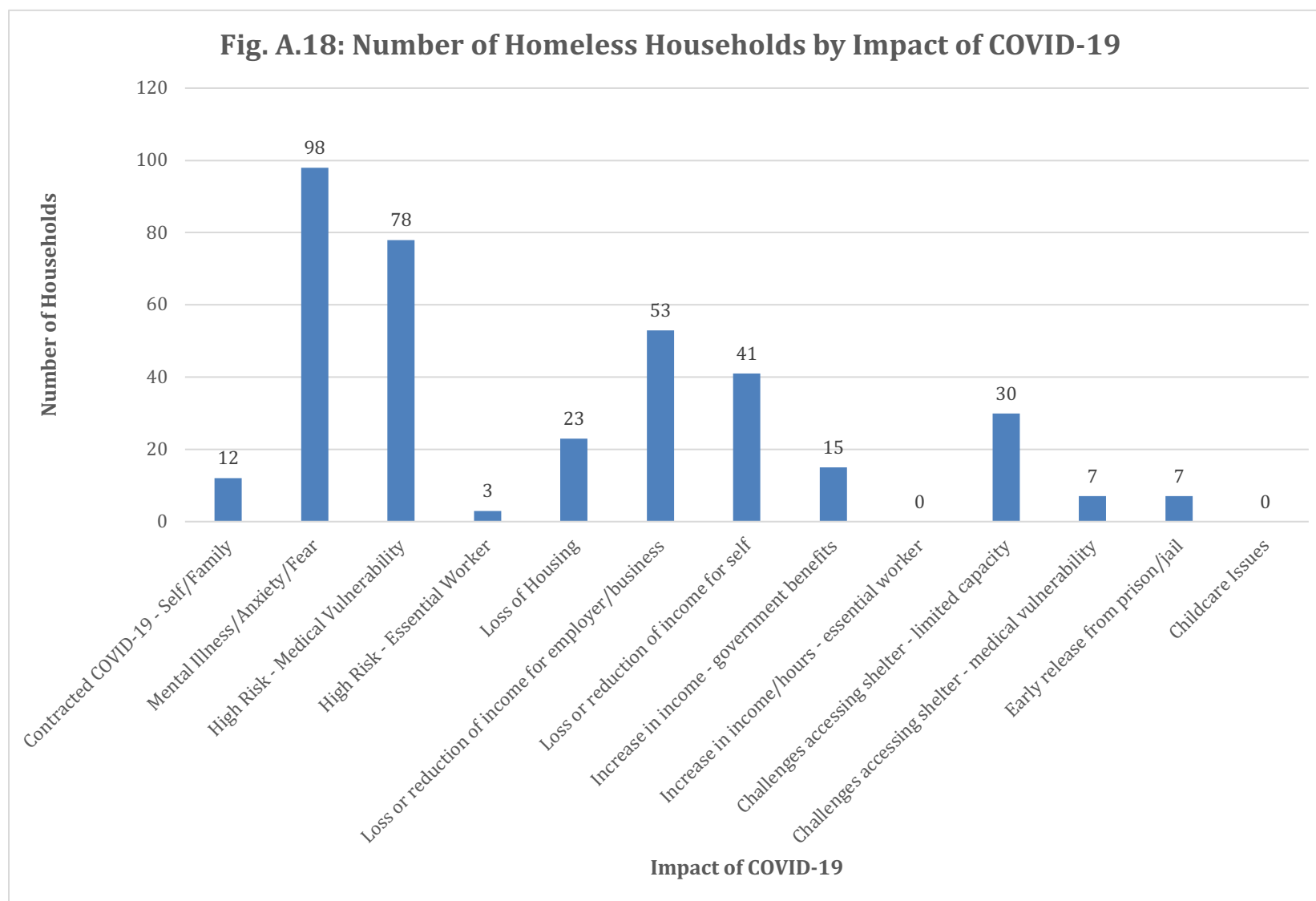
Please note categories are not mutually exclusive as respondents may have selected multiple options



**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