



Coming Home of Middlesex County, Inc.

**COMING HOME OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY
2020 POINT IN TIME (PIT) SURVEY
COMING HOME DATA ANALYSIS**



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Introduction to the Point in Time Survey

Annually across the country, communities conduct the Point in Time (PIT) survey (sponsored by the federal Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)) of homeless individuals and families on the last Wednesday in January. Surveys are created locally, with guidance from HUD, and are administered via paper survey to the homeless encountered on the street or at social service agencies and other institutions. In New Jersey, the same data is also collected from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for homeless individuals physically residing in emergency housing.

Literally Homeless vs. Precariously Housed

For the purpose of the official PIT survey, HUD only counts individuals who are “literally homeless,” i.e., those in emergency housing or on the street.

Middlesex County also chooses to gather information on those who are “precariously housed,” i.e. individuals who are staying in a hotel at their own expense and those staying temporarily with friends or family, since their housing status can, and does, change to “literally homeless” at a moment’s notice.

For additional definitions of terms used throughout this document, please refer to Appendix A.



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Summary of Survey Responses

Total: 666 individuals (456 Households¹) reported being homeless on the night of the PIT. Of this total, **565 individuals** (85% of all homeless persons), including 181 children, were **sheltered** in Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, or Hotel Placement. **Since 2016, the PIT homeless count has been steadily rising, corresponding with improved PIT survey methodology and the implementation of the Coordinated Assessment process. Middlesex County demonstrated a 7% increase in overall homelessness in the last year.**

- **Sheltered Households without Children** - Most “homeless households” were sheltered, single adults, couples without children, or parents with adult children (244 single adults, and 8 couples, plus 2 households with adult children, totaling **254 households**).
- **Sheltered Households with Children, or “Families”** - **103 homeless households** were Families, comprised of 300 individuals (including 181 children). The majority of all Sheltered Families (79%) were headed by female single parents.
- There were **99 Unsheltered households (101 persons)** on the night of the PIT, comprised of 97 individuals and 2 couples. 83% of the Unsheltered individuals were men.
- **Men comprise the majority of homeless adults without children at 74%, while women represent 80% of adults in households with children (families). Children comprise 27% of the total homeless population.**
- **“Chronically Homeless” (homeless long term and with a disability)** – There were **80 Chronically Homeless households** (comprised of 90 individuals), representing 18% of total homeless households. **This represents a 27% decrease in Chronically Homeless households from last year, reflecting a deliberate and coordinated effort to focus on the Chronically Homeless population in our community.** Approximately 69% of Chronically Homeless adults are male, and 48% of Chronically Homeless adults are unsheltered.
- **Homeless Youth (age 18-24, unaccompanied by parent)** - There were 23 Homeless Youth without children (all single young adults) on the night of the PIT, which accounts for 7% of all homeless Households without Children. Additionally, there were 14 young single mothers and 2 young parenting couples (ages 18-24), who were homeless on the night of the PIT, accounting for 16% of homeless Families.
- **Veterans** – there were 23 veterans who were homeless on the night of the PIT, which accounts for 5% of all homeless households, or 4% of total homeless persons, demonstrating a slight increase from the prior year.

¹ Throughout this report, unless indicated otherwise, numbers and percentages will be based on number of households, rather than individuals, represented in a given category. This will allow for the most accurate comparisons between household types, and will strive to prevent overrepresentation by families (who have more persons in each household).



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Changes in Homeless Populations

While there was an increase this year in the total number of homeless counted in Middlesex County on the night of the PIT, there are some considerations to note. With the full implementation of Coordinated Assessment beginning in 2016, the community agencies dedicated to homeless services continue to successfully identify and engage more homeless individuals and families than in past years, including increased street outreach efforts, enhanced relationships with treatment providers and other agencies who do not traditionally interact with homeless agencies, and the maintenance of a By Name List of homeless individuals and families. In addition, in 2019, State policies around welfare eligibility shifted, allowing more individuals and families, who had previously been ineligible for homeless assistance, to present themselves to the system to qualify through that agency.

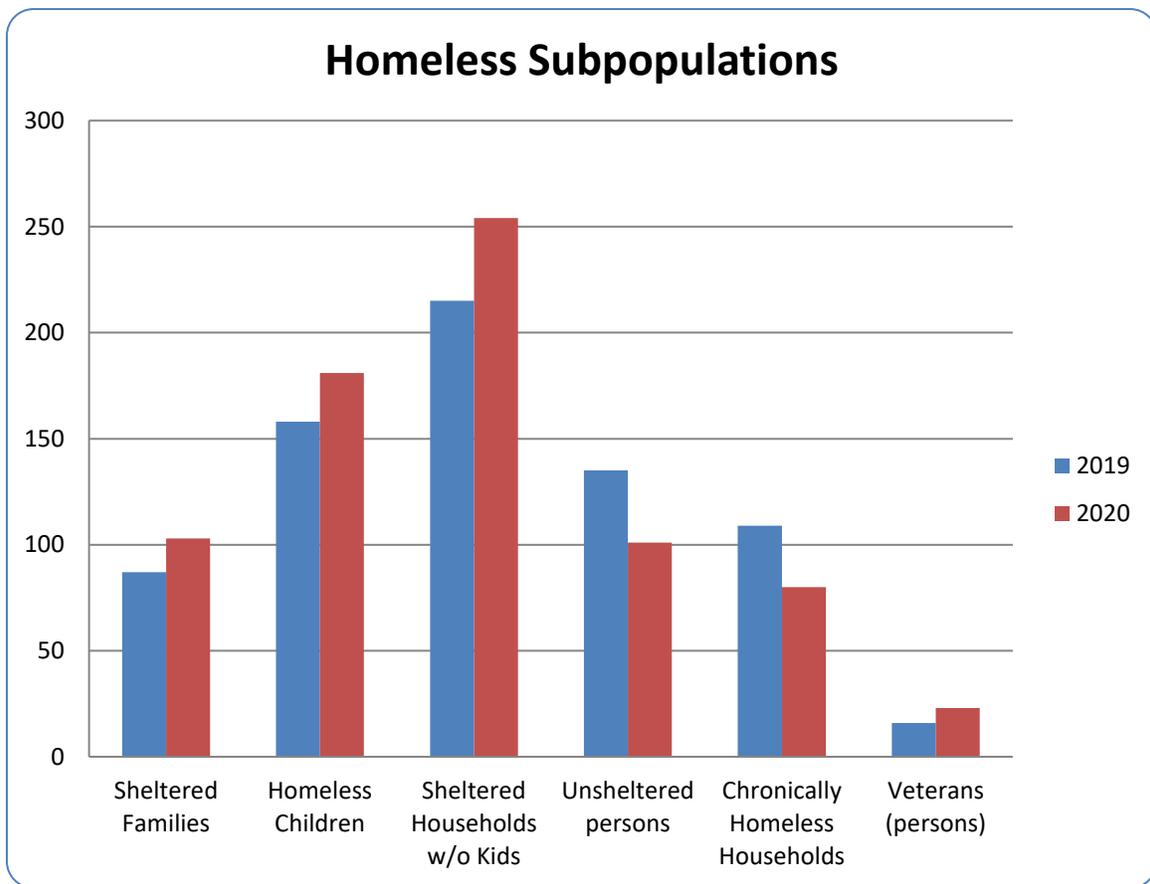


Figure 1 - Homeless Subpopulations

The count of homeless populations does not reflect the whole story of the efforts to reduce homelessness throughout the County. Through the Coordinated Assessment system, combined with a system-wide focus on increasing permanent housing opportunities, in 2019, Middlesex County successfully housed 66 Chronically Homeless households, a 32% increase in one year.



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Last Permanent Address – All Homeless Persons

Survey respondents were asked, “Where was your last permanent address before becoming homeless?”

Municipality	Last Permanent Address
Carteret	10
Cranbury	0
Dunellen	2
East Brunswick	11
Edison	18
Helmetta	0
Highland Park	6
Jamesburg	3
Metuchen	2
Middlesex	2
Milltown	2
Monroe Twp	5
New Brunswick	104
North Brunswick	29
Old Bridge	5
Perth Amboy	65
Piscataway	15
Plainsboro	1
Sayreville	9
South Amboy	12
South Brunswick	7
South Plainfield	3
South River	6
Spotswood	2
Woodbridge	23
Out of County	69
Out of State	30
Puerto Rico	1
Middlesex County (unspecified)	9
Out of Country	1
Unknown/No Response	3

- While more people continue to report New Brunswick as their last permanent address before becoming homeless than any other city, there was an 9% decrease since 2019.
- There was a large fluctuation of last permanent address locations in the 2020 PIT compared to the 2019 PIT. Most notably, there was a greater than 100% increase in persons reporting East Brunswick, North Brunswick and Piscataway as their last permanent address.
- In 2020, for all homeless persons, there was a significant increase in households from Out of County for the second year in a row (28% or 15 households).



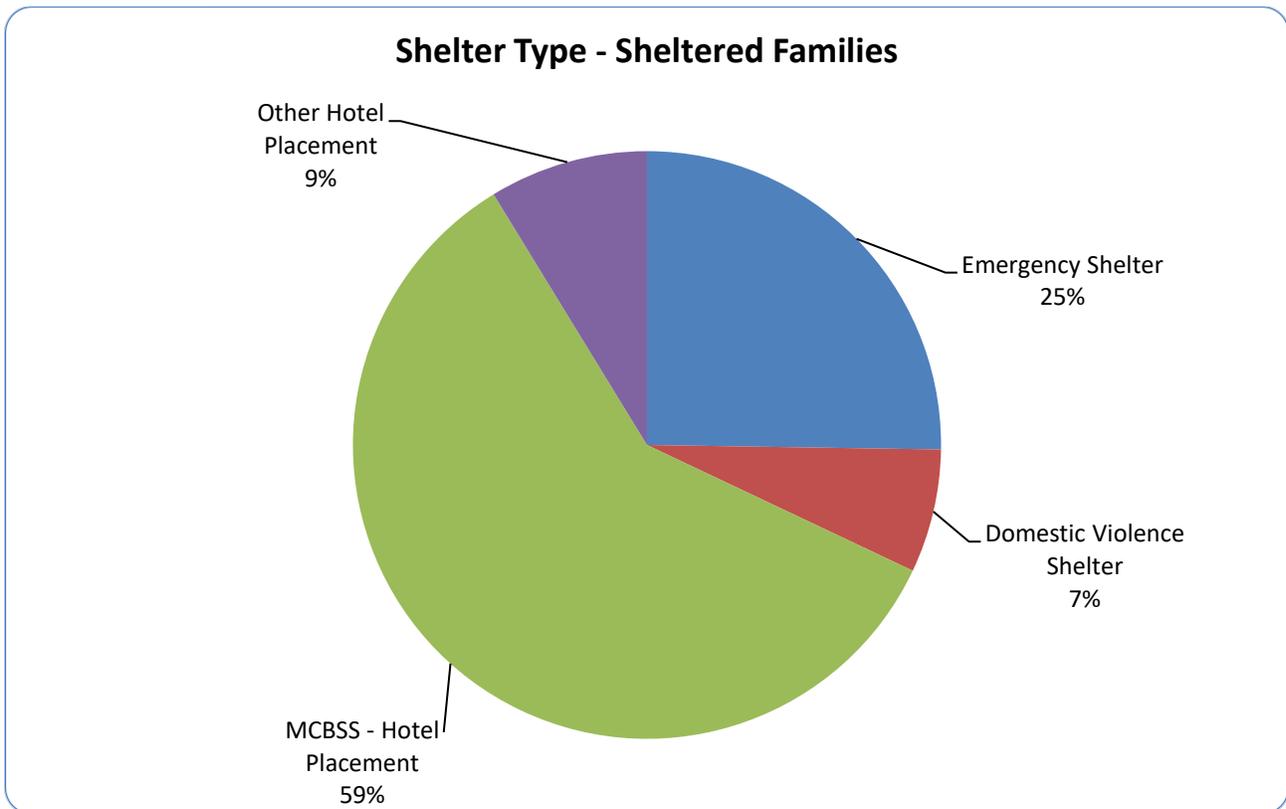
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Sheltered Households

In 2020, the **Middlesex County Board of Social Services (MCBSS)** placed 4% more households in hotels than in 2019; whereas in 2019, it placed 14% fewer than the previous year. As predicted, changes in legislation implemented after the 2019 PIT concerning Board of Social Service eligibility for Emergency Housing resulted in an increase in placements. In addition, continued increased efforts by the street outreach teams, in conjunction with a strong emphasis on identifying and housing Chronically Homeless persons through Coordinated Assessment, have resulted in engaging more unsheltered homeless and providing them at least emergency shelter.

Sheltered Families

There were 103 Sheltered Families, totaling 300 individuals on the night of the PIT. These families were comprised of 81 single mothers, 6 single fathers, and 13 two-parent households, as well as 3 grandparent-led households.

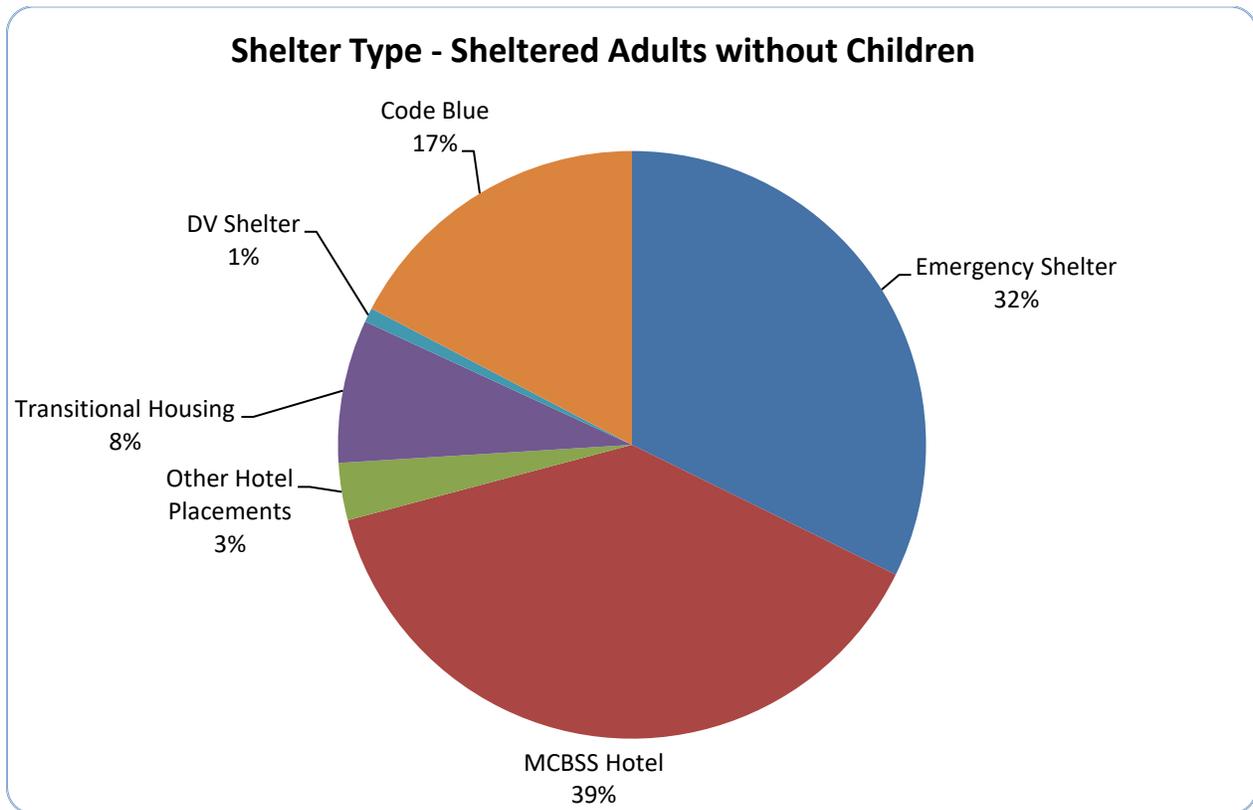




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Sheltered Adults without Children

There were 254 Sheltered Adult Households without Children comprised of 265 individuals on the night of the PIT. The majority of these households were located in Emergency Shelter and Hotel placements (71%). Of note in 2020 was the increased utilization of Code Blue sites for adults who would otherwise have been unsheltered. In the 2019 analysis, Code Blue was combined with Emergency Shelter numbers, but was broken out this year due to its dramatic increase (over 200%). Most sheltered adults without children (244 individuals) were single adults, and there were 8 couples and 2 multigenerational households (parents with their adult children).





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Disabilities²

The percentage of Sheltered families who report having at least one disability decreased in 2020, with 46% of adults in families and 15% of children having a disability (18% and 34% decreases respectively). Similarly, Unsheltered individuals reporting a disability also decreased by 27% in 2020. Conversely, sheltered adults without children reporting a disability increased 20%. The chart below represents the total number of adults in each category reporting a disability, with the last column representing the number of adults reporting multiple disabilities. The disability reported the most frequently by an adult in any cohort is mental illness and/or dual diagnosis (mental health & substance abuse disorder). There are more homeless Adults without Children with at least one disability than there are Adults with Children, with 85% of childless Sheltered and Unsheltered adults reporting having at least one disability compared to only 46% of Sheltered Adults in Families. Only 15% of children are living with disabilities, primarily mental health and/or developmental disabilities.

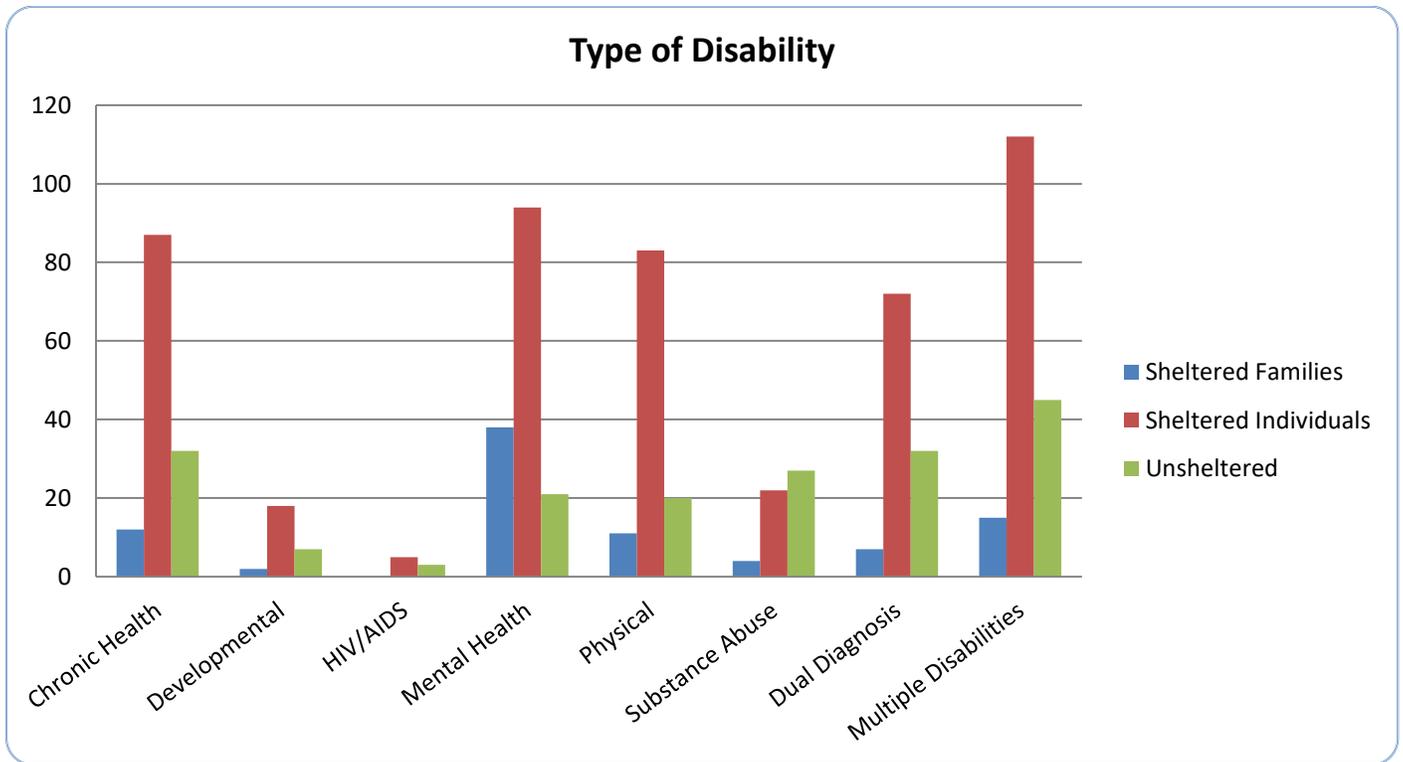


Figure 2 - Adults with Disabilities

As noted, there was a significant reduction in parents and children with disabilities, following 2 years of increases in this cohort. While these families are prioritized for shelter, they are also prioritized for homeless-dedicated housing opportunities, resulting in their exits from emergency placements. Families in which the adults are living without a disability and able to work full time may be more successfully diverted from the homeless system to stay with friends or family while stabilizing their income in order to secure permanent housing.

² The data in these graphs represents each individual adult, not the household.



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Income

Adequate income to afford housing in Middlesex County continues to be one of the biggest challenges facing homeless individuals and families.

Sheltered Households

In 2020, 52% of Sheltered Families received TANF (Temporary Aid to Needy Families) and 23% of childless Adults received GA (General Assistance) through the MCBSS. Only 25% of Families and 9% of childless Adults reported receiving employment income. For Families, this demonstrates a slight increase in employment income, but for Adults without children, this reflects a decrease for the fourth year in a row. Only 15% reported child support income, decreasing for the third year in a row, although still almost double than that reported in 2016. Both employment and child support enforcement are areas that the system will continue to explore to improve self-sufficiency and sustainability for homeless households once they secure housing.

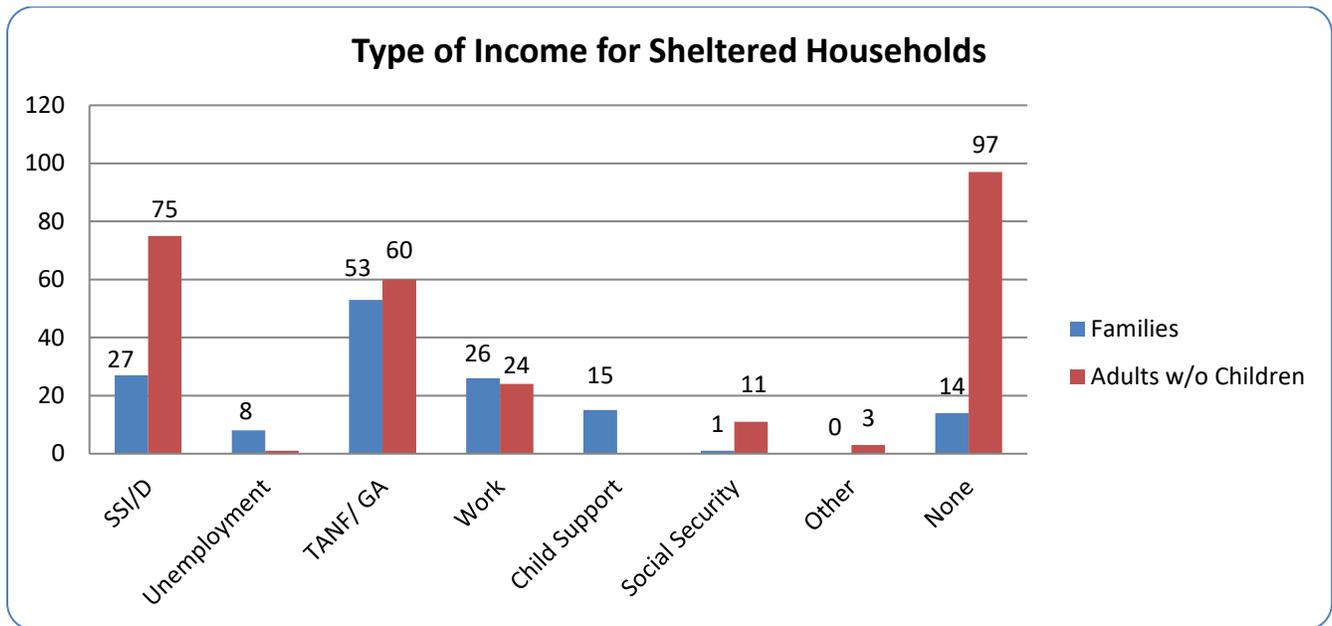


Figure 3 - Income Sources

In addition, approximately 40% of families with an adult with a disability report any kind of disability income (SSI, SSD, or other disability income), and 31% of childless Adults have disability income. Only a few more in each cohort have pending applications or applications in the appeal process. While not all individuals with disabilities meet the criteria for receiving SSI or SSD, there is still a substantial gap between those who may be eligible for these benefits and those who are receiving them. While there has been an increase in eligible households receiving benefits, this gap was identified in 2014 and is still an area that requires attention.



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Income and Housing

In 2020, Fair Market Rent (FMR) for apartments in Middlesex County indicates that permanent housing continues to be out of reach for homeless households.

Efficiency	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom
\$1,193	\$1,382	\$1,770	\$2,228

The majority of **all homeless Families** (75%) reported an income of less than \$1,500 per month, making even a 1 bedroom apartment unaffordable for them. Approximately 22% of Families reported a monthly income over \$1,500, but only 11% reported \$2,200+/month.

Based on household size, the following chart represents the minimum housing needs of **homeless Families**:

Rationale

- 1 bedroom: appropriate for 2 adults without children, or for 1 adult + 1 child
- 2 bedrooms: appropriate for 1 adult + 2-4 kids, or 2 adults & 1-2 kids
- 3 bedrooms: appropriate for 1 adult + 4+ kids, or 2 adults + 3+ kids
- 4 bedrooms: appropriate for larger families, and multi-generational families

1 Bdrm (\$1,382)	2 Bdrm (\$1,770)	3 -4 Bdrm (\$2,228-2,572)
43	54	6

The majority (84%) of **homeless childless Adults** reported an income of less than \$1,000 per month, making even an Efficiency/Studio apartment unaffordable. Even the going rate for an SRO at \$700-750/month is unaffordable to 68% of this population, whose monthly income is under \$814 (SSI amount). Only 5% of these households reported a monthly income between \$1,000-1,500, and an additional 9% reported an income over \$1,500/month.

Based on household size, the following chart represents the minimum housing needs of **homeless childless Adults** (including Unsheltered households):

Rationale

- Room (SRO): suitable for a single adult
- Studio/Efficiency: Suitable for a 1-2 adults
- 1 bedroom: appropriate for 2 adults without children

SRO or Efficiency (\$700-1,193)	1 Bdrm (\$1,382)	2 Bdrm (\$1,770)
341	10	1



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Non-Cash Benefits

Non-cash benefits include food stamps, Medicaid, Medicare, WIC and other public benefits. The most frequently reported benefits received by homeless persons are food stamps and Medicaid. Approximately 84% of all Sheltered households receive some form of non-cash benefits, down slightly from 2018 & 2019, but up significantly from 50% in 2017. For Sheltered Families, 77% of households are receiving food stamps, but only 55% of Sheltered childless Adults and 17% of Unsheltered persons are receiving this benefit. The data demonstrates that Sheltered Families have more success in accessing these benefits than homeless adults without children. While this may represent changes in the eligibility criteria for Food Stamps, the system will need to increase outreach efforts to engage childless Adults in order to ensure that all homeless individuals are able to access mainstream benefits for which they are eligible.

Causes of Homelessness

The top three causes of homelessness varied among all homeless cohorts. For Sheltered Families, the top three causes of homelessness were: Asked to Leave Shared Residence (36%), Domestic Violence (21%), and Loss/Reduction of Job Income (12%). For childless Sheltered Adults, the top causes were: Asked to Leave Shared Residence (19%), Substance Abuse (13%), and Mental Illness (13%). Lastly, for Unsheltered persons, the top causes were: Loss/Reduction of Job Income (26%), Substance Abuse (19%), and Mental Illness (13%). When all cohorts are combined, Asked to Leave Shared Residence rose to the top cause of homelessness across all groups. The cause of homelessness reported among the cohorts will impact services that agencies might offer to their clients. For Families, domestic violence was the second leading cause of homelessness. Meanwhile, all adults without children (Sheltered and Unsheltered) reported Mental Illness and Substance Abuse as leading causes, while very few Families reported these as causes.

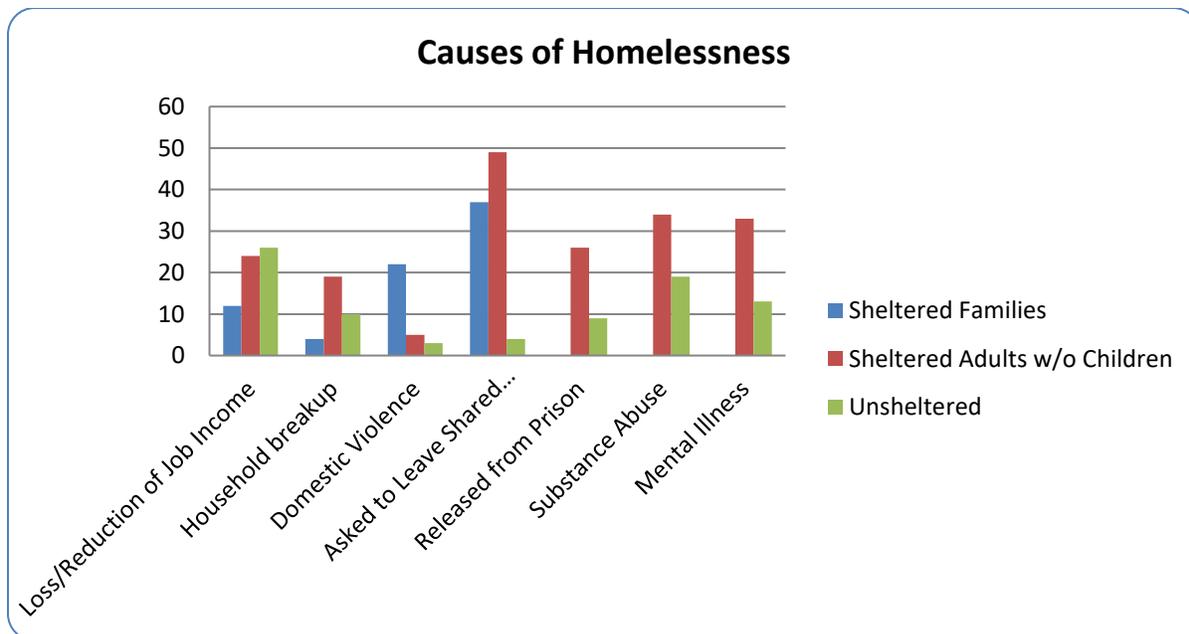


Figure 4 - Cause of Homelessness (%)



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Unsheltered

- There were 101 adults (99 households) who were Unsheltered on the night of the PIT, which represents a 23% decrease in households from 2019;
- Of the unsheltered, men outnumber women approximately 5:1;
- Of the men, the majority (43%) are between 30 – 49 years of age; 32% are age 50 – 59; and 18% are 60 years and older. These older age groups percentages are higher than in past years, representing an aging homeless population;
- Of all Unsheltered adults, only 2 qualify as “homeless youth” (18-24);
- As previously noted, there was a dramatic rise in the utilization of Code Blue warming centers in 2020 on the night of the PIT, with 44 single adults present in these locations. These individuals would otherwise have been counted as part of the Unsheltered group, and spent nights in a place not meant for habitation when the Code Blue sites were closed.

The reduction in the Unsheltered count in 2020, may be solely due to the increase in Code Blue utilization, and not a true reduction in Unsheltered since the persons who used the Code Blue sites may have been on the streets. After a steady decline in Unsheltered from 2013 – 2015, the numbers counted during the PIT started to climb in 2016. This is also the timeframe in which Middlesex County implemented Coordinated Assessment. As the community has continued to increase outreach efforts and build relationships with social service agencies, such as mental health and addiction treatment providers, the Unsheltered count has risen. While the PIT count appears to demonstrate a rise in homeless, both sheltered and unsheltered, the increase could also mean that the homeless population has always been there, and the homeless service community has improved its outreach efforts.

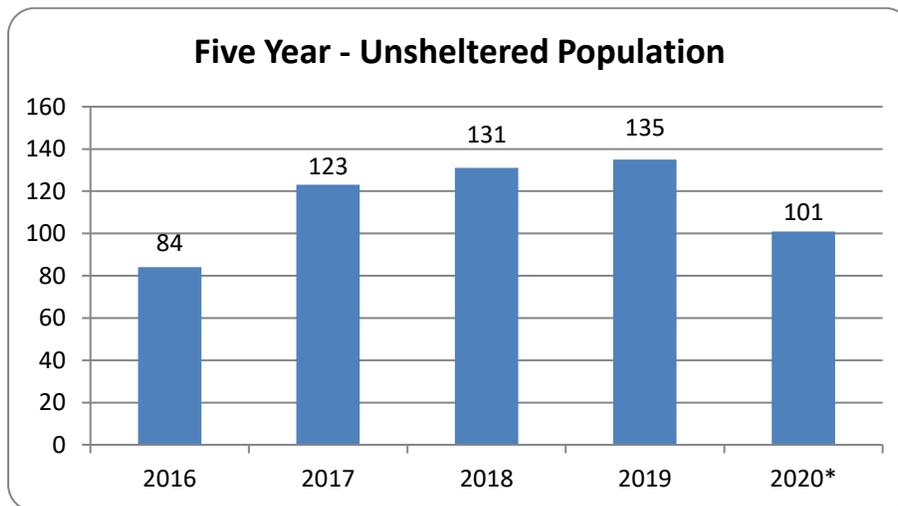


Figure 5 - Unsheltered 2016-2020



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Last Permanent Address of the Unsheltered

The PIT survey includes questions asking for the household's Last Permanent Address and household's current location (In what town did you spend the night?), as depicted in the two graphs below (Figure 6 & Figure 7).

- 36% of unsheltered households reported New Brunswick as their last permanent address, decreasing significantly from 44% in 2019; 16% reported Perth Amboy (demonstrating a dramatic increase from 8% in 2019), and 14% reported an address out of the County or out of State (decreasing from 20% in 2019) as their last permanent address.
- The majority of households reported that they spent the night of the survey in New Brunswick (59%), however, this is a significant decrease from 68% in 2019. The next city represented is Perth Amboy, with 22% spending the night there (rising approximately 10% in 2019).
- These shifts in Perth Amboy should be monitored as they may indicate a rising homeless population in the city. In 2019, the sheltered number had risen for Perth Amboy due to the implementation of Code Blue. The Perth Amboy Code Blue location continued to operate in 2020, and, despite this, the unsheltered number grew in the city.
- Similarly to the last 2 years, approximately 60% of unsheltered households report that they remained in their home town when they became homeless, indicating that these individuals tend to stay in the area with which they are familiar and where they may have a social network. Another 11% were in the next town over from their home town.

Unsheltered Households

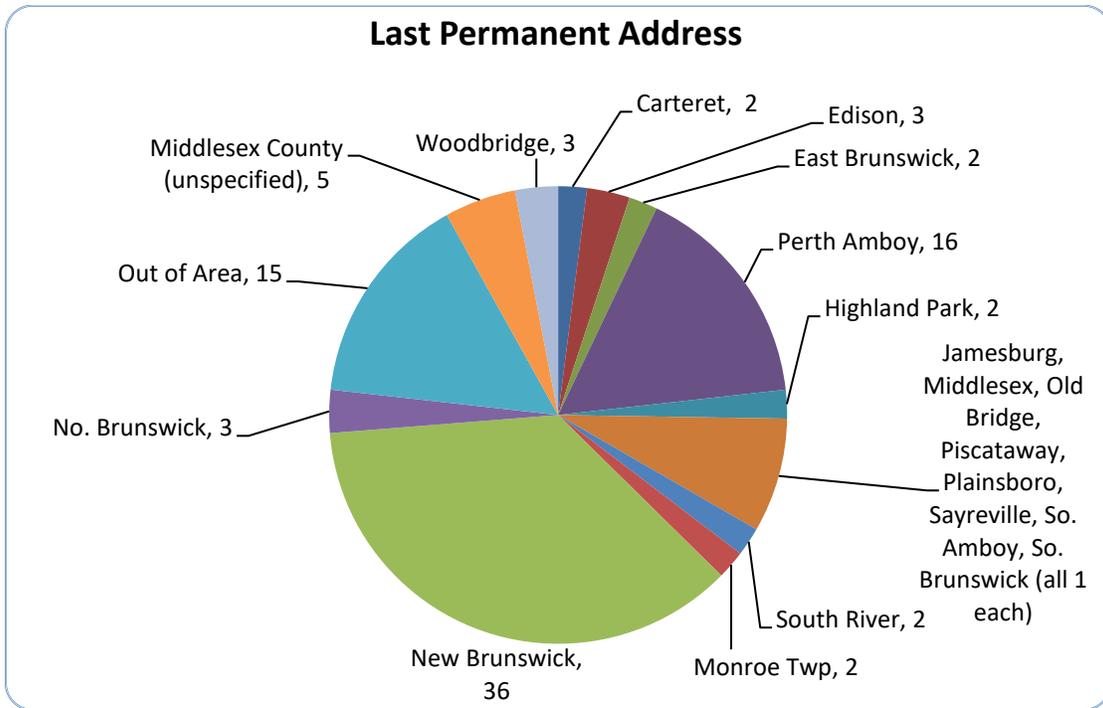


Figure 6 - Last Permanent Address of Unsheltered Households

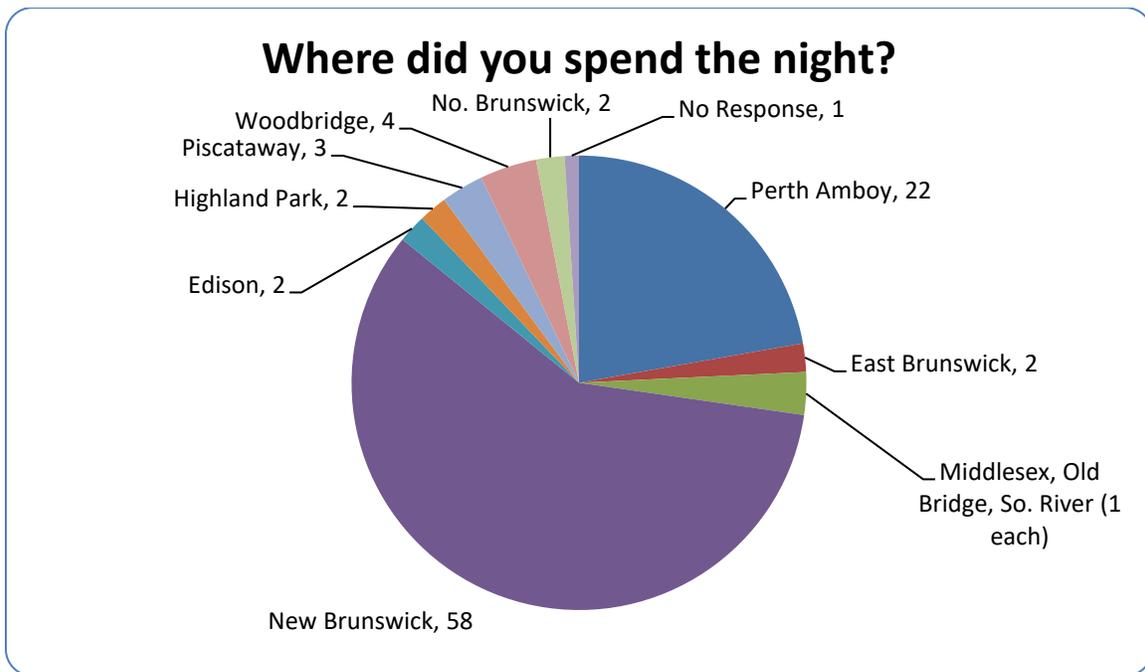


Figure 7 - In what town did you spend the night?



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Income & Non-Cash Benefits – Unsheltered

Of the Unsheltered households, **60%** reported receiving no income (up from 49% in 2019), and 15% reported receiving employment income, (up from 14% in 2019). Of those with employment income, 3 earned enough to afford an SRO in a rooming house, 3 others reported enough income to support an efficiency apartment, and 5 reported income sufficient to support a 1 bedroom apartment.

There is a high rate of adults with disabilities in the Unsheltered cohort with 85% reporting at least one disability, down from 87% in 2019. However, no Unsheltered households reported receiving welfare benefits, and 14% reported receiving disability benefits (a significant decrease from 29% in 2019). **Based on reported income, about 80% of Unsheltered households would be eligible for food stamps and Medicaid, but 43% of these households reported not receiving any non-cash benefits.**

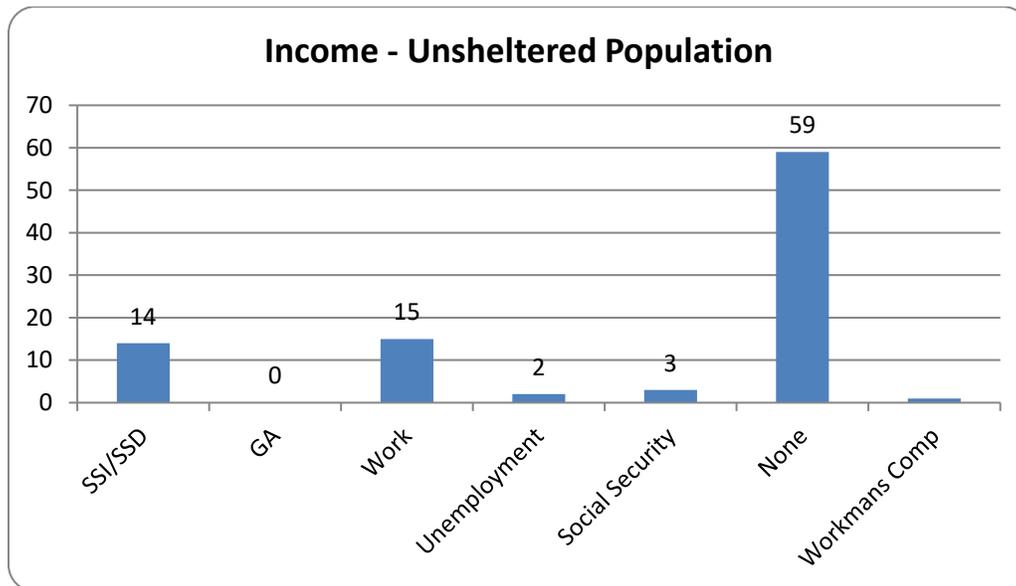


Figure 8 - Income - Unsheltered



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Chronic Homelessness

While the federal focus is on ending Chronic Homelessness (CH), only 18% of all homeless households in Middlesex County are Chronically Homeless. As noted above, homeless service providers in Middlesex County, especially through our Outreach projects (HEART and PATH programs), are actively working with the vast majority of the CH population, who through the Coordinated Assessment process, are prioritized for Permanent Supportive Housing. Through a targeted and coordinated approach on housing CH households, using case conferencing to quickly house the hardest to serve, Middlesex County homeless service providers were able to house 60 CH households in 2019, resulting in a 27% decrease in this population at the end of the year.

- In total, there were 77 Households without Children, and 3 Families who were Chronically Homeless, for a total of 80 CH households, comprised of 90 persons.
- 40 Chronically Homeless households were Unsheltered, while 37 were childless Sheltered Adults and 3 were Sheltered Families living in Hotel placements by MCBSS.
- Of the CH Unsheltered and Sheltered childless Adults, there were 57 men and 23 women. CH Families were headed by 3 single mothers.
- Among the CH households, there were only 2 single Homeless Youth (ages 18-24).
- 60% of all Chronically Homeless adults (48) have multiple disabilities. 78% (62) of the CH population have a mental health diagnosis, 34 of whom also reported a substance abuse disorder. Another 16 adults reported a substance abuse disorder without a coinciding mental health disorder (see Figure 9 below).
- The 5 CH Veterans are not known to the homeless system, 3 of whom are located in Perth Amboy. Veterans services will be advised to direct more outreach through the city of Perth Amboy to identify and engage these individuals.
- One of the CH Families has moved in to permanent supportive since the night of the PIT, and the other 2 families have been approved for supportive housing and are pending move in dates. In addition, several of the Unsheltered and Sheltered childless CH Adults have received vouchers and/or are housed. Of the remaining CH adults, most are known to the outreach teams; more than half have completed the Coordinated Assessment, and the remaining individuals continue to decline services.

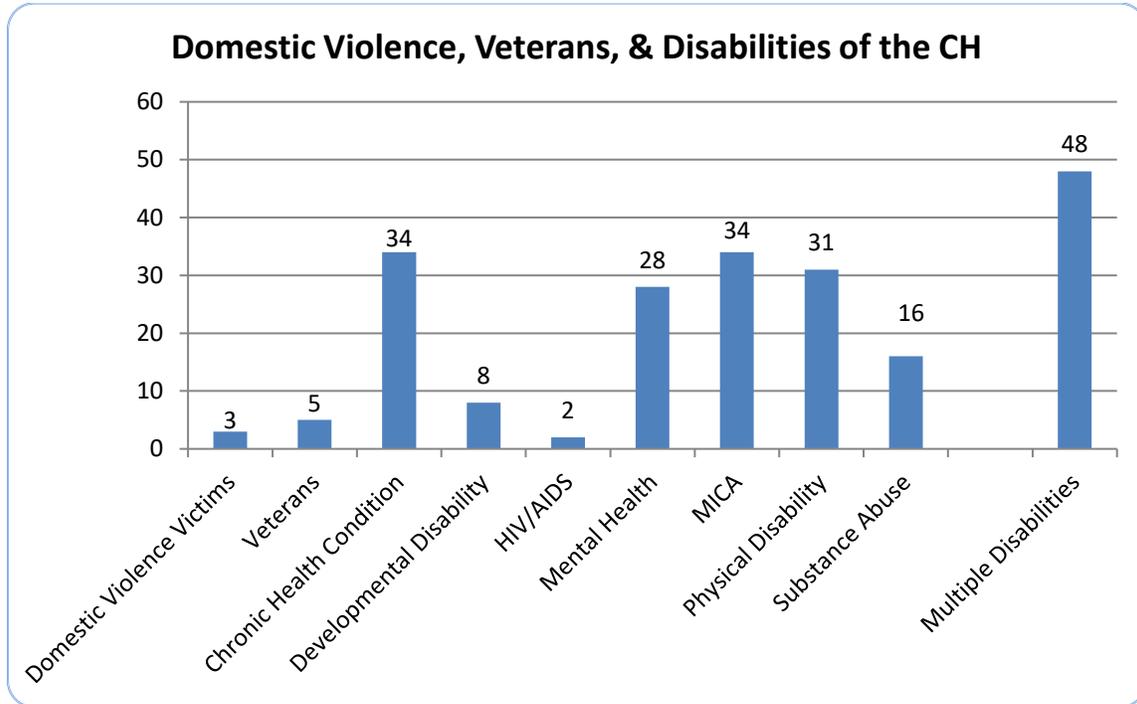


Figure 9 – Chronically Homeless – DV, Vets, & Disabilities

Chronically Homeless - Income & Non-Cash Benefits

Half of CH households report having no income and approximately 39% report having no non-cash benefits. Of those households that do report some income, only 3 Adult households (4%) report sufficient income to pay for an SRO, and none of the Families have sufficient income to afford even an Efficiency or 1 bedroom unit. Approximately 64% of CH Adults report receiving Medicaid or Medicare, while 100% of the Families have these health benefits.

Income for the Chronically Homeless has remained relatively steady, and there has been a slight increase in those receiving non-cash benefits. The outreach teams continue to work towards engaging those individuals in services, assisting them in obtaining mainstream benefits and income, and working toward securing permanent housing.



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Homeless “Youth”

Homeless Youth are a subpopulation of all Sheltered Families, Sheltered Adults without Children, and the Unsheltered cohorts. On the night of the 2020 PIT, 23 unaccompanied young Adults without Children (all single) and 16 Sheltered Families headed by young adults, ages 18-24, reported being homeless.

- In the 16 Sheltered Families, 14 young single mothers and 2 young couples were accompanied by 23 children, ranging in age from 0-5 years old. 50% of these young adults were African American, 7% were Latinx and 6% were Caucasian. Three young women reported being a victims of domestic violence.
- Of the 23 Adults without Children, 2 were Unsheltered. One of the Unsheltered and 14 Sheltered young adults were male (65%), 30% were Latinx, 43% were African American, and 26% were White.

Cause of Homelessness

Approximately 33% of Homeless Youth households reported their cause of homelessness as being Asked to Leave a Shared Residence, followed by Domestic Violence (13%), and Mental Illness (15%). Without additional information, it is unknown why these individuals were asked to leave the shared residence in which they were living. For example, they may have had a disagreement with their parents, or they may have been living with a friend or other family member and been unable to contribute financially to the household expenses due to their low income.

Income & Non-Cash Benefits

Homeless Youth reported very low income, with 44% reporting no income and another 41% reported less than \$1,000/month. However, 61% of Sheltered Homeless Youth without children and 100% of young Families receive at least Medicaid and/or Food Stamps. Of those with income, only 2 of the childless Sheltered Homeless Youth can afford an SRO, and none of the Unsheltered or the Families can afford housing to meet their household size.

Disabilities – Homeless Youth

Approximately 58% of the Homeless Youth reported having at least one disability, and 5 reported having multiple disabilities. The most prevalent disability within this cohort was Mental Health issues, with 46% (10 individuals) reporting a Mental Health condition, 3 of whom also reported a co-occurring Substance Abuse problem.



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Racial Disparity in the Homeless Population

As in years past, there continues to be an overrepresentation of minority populations experiencing homelessness and poverty in Middlesex County.

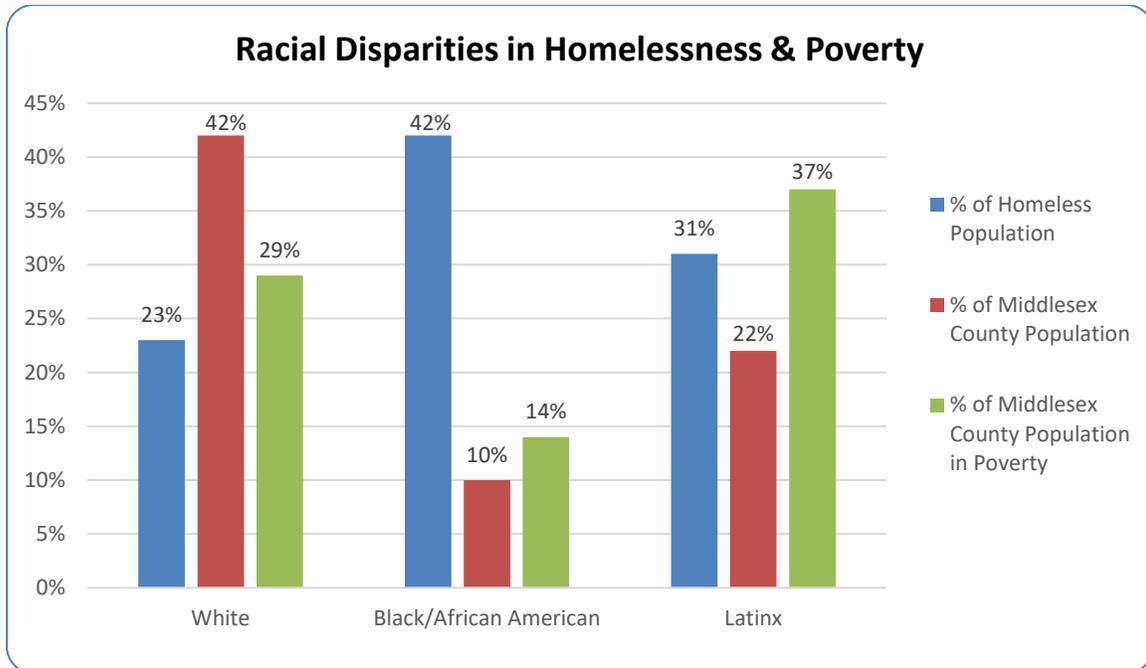


Figure 10 – Racial Disparities

The data clearly indicates a significant overrepresentation of Black/African Americans and Latinx persons experiencing homelessness and poverty in Middlesex County. Only 10% of the County’s population identifies as Black/African American, and 22% identify as Latinx, but 42% of the homeless population is Black/African American and 31% is Latinx. In addition, it is noted that only 30% of the homeless Latinx population are sheltered versus 42% who are unsheltered, which may reflect a reticence to access help due to immigration status and distrust of institutions even if citizenship is not required (as it is not by private nonprofit organizations) or it may even reflect a language barrier. In any event, it deserves our attention.



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Precariously Housed

HUD only counts the “literally homeless,” i.e., on the streets or in shelter, each year in their Point in Time census. Middlesex County adopts a broader definition of homelessness, including people who do not have permanent housing, and whose shelter is temporary and uses the term “Precariously Housed (PH)” to refer to them. Most of these households reported staying temporarily with friends or family, while others reported staying in a hotel that they paid for without assistance or being in jail or a hospital. HUD considers these households to be “at risk” of homelessness; however, they are presenting themselves for financial and housing assistance to Middlesex County homeless service providers.

- On the night of the 2020 PIT, there were 192 Households who were Precariously Housed: 98 Households without Children (109 adults) and 94 Families (131 adults and 194 children) who fell within the “precariously housed” (PH) cohort.
- 7 Families were headed by single mothers who qualify as Homeless Youth (ages 18-24). There are also 10 young Adults (18-24) without Children, and 2 adolescents under 18.
- 12 women in families and 6 individuals reported being victims of domestic violence, and 3 were veterans.
- The majority of households (77%) reported that they were staying “Temporarily with Friends or Family.”
- Of the 94 families, 71% were single mothers, 11% were single fathers, 18% were two parent households. By comparison, 79% of literally homeless families were headed by single mothers and 13% were two parent households.

Cause of Homelessness

The top cause of homelessness for PH households was economic, i.e. Loss of Job/Reduction of Income. Other factors, such as being Asked to Leave a Shared Residence, Rent Increase/Insufficient Income, Relocation, and Household breakup or death also indicate probable financial problems or loss of income leading to homelessness. For the second year in a row, Substance Abuse has risen to the second cause of homelessness/ housing crisis in the precariously housed cohort for households without children. Overall, the cause of homelessness for PH households was similar to that of literally homeless households, although there was a significantly higher percentage of literally homeless households reporting Release from an Institution, Mental Illness, and Substance Abuse.

Income & Employment

Approximately 22% of all PH households reported no income at all, as compared to 35% of homeless households, and 29% of PH households had an income at or below \$1,000. Approximately 27% of PH households reported employment income compared to only 14% of literally homeless households. The household income for PH households was generally higher than the literally homeless households with employment, with about 24% of PH households reporting an income of over \$1500/month, in comparison to only 12% of literally homeless households. Despite higher reported income for PH families, approximately 60-65% reported an income level below what would be sufficient to support a 2-3 bedroom apartment, which for most of these families would be the minimum apartment size needed. For PH Adults without Children, about 59% are unable to afford an SRO, and an additional 17% can afford an SRO, but not an efficiency apartment.

Disabilities

There was a lower number of adults living with disabilities (63%) in PH households, as compared to 75% of literally homeless adults, however, this difference has narrowed since 2019, with the rate almost doubling for adults in PH households.



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SERVICE NEEDS

Homeless Households

Generally, the service needs reported by the homeless have remained consistent year to year and across the specific populations. The top services requested by homeless adults in the 2020 PIT varied slightly across cohorts, but typically included: housing, financial assistance for housing (i.e. rental/utility assistance), emergency food, mental health treatment, shelter and transportation. Other higher ranking needs included substance abuse treatment and employment, although employment fell out of the top 5, with the exception of sheltered families. This may be a reflection of the higher rates of disabilities in the homeless population, as well as the higher representation of older adults.

Sheltered Families	Sheltered Adults without Children	Unsheltered	Chronically Homeless
Housing (97%)	Housing (95%)	Housing (90%)	Housing (93%)
Financial Assistance with Housing (97%)	Financial Assistance with Housing (86%)	Financial Assistance with Housing (62%)	Financial Assistance with Housing (73%)
Utility Assistance (95%)	Utility Assistance (84%)	Utility Assistance (58%)	Utility Assistance (70%)
Employment (39%)	Emergency Food (44%)	Emergency Shelter (54%)	Emergency Food (53%)
Emergency Food (34%)	Mental Health Treatment (25%)	Emergency Food (40%)	Mental Health Treatment (44%)
Transportation & Furniture (22% each)	Emergency Shelter (20%)	Substance Abuse Treatment (37%)	Emergency Shelter (40%)

Precariously Housed Households

PH households requested the same top 3 services: Housing, Financial Assistance for Housing, and for Utilities.

Adults without Children	Families
Housing (79%)	Housing (71%)
Financial Assistance with Housing (52%)	Financial Assistance with Housing (51%)
Utility Assistance (45%)	Utility Assistance (40%)
Employment (29%)	Employment (26%)
Emergency Shelter (24%)	Emergency Food (21%)

Precariously housed households prioritized the same needs as the homeless households, with housing and food, but also included employment. However, homeless households also reported the need for transportation, mental health and substance abuse treatment more often than PH households, while PH households highlighted Employment more frequently than homeless households, perhaps demonstrating that more PH adults are able to work than homeless adults, which is a change from prior years.



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APPENDIX A – Definitions

Chronically Homeless – pursuant to HUD, a homeless person with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for a year or more, OR who has had 4 episodes of homelessness in the last 3 years, is considered “Chronically Homeless.” The individual must have been on the streets or in an emergency shelter (not transitional housing) during their homeless episodes.

Coordinated Assessment – the process, or system, by which homeless individuals are uniformly assessed and prioritized for permanent housing solutions, generally prioritizing those with longer lengths of homelessness and greater service needs for the most intensive resources, such as Permanent Supportive Housing.

Emergency Shelter – a facility that houses groups of unrelated individuals or families who are literally homeless. This includes a single agency with shelter buildings, or a network of religious institutions, where homeless individuals rotate between the institutions each week. This also includes facilities that open as “Code Blue” sites. Typically, the average length of stay in an Emergency Shelter is 60-75 days.

HMIS – the County’s Homeless Management Information System. In Middlesex County, this system is administered by Coming Home. This is a HUD required system, and allows for the County to manage data on the homeless population for planning, operational and reporting purposes. All County funded emergency housing and permanent supportive housing programs enter data in to HMIS.

Household – any individual or a group of individuals that reside together. A household could be a single adult, a couple without children, a group of adults who live together (often related), or a family with minor children. A household could also be a “child-only” household, in which no adults are present.

Family - a household in which minor children are present, i.e. a single parent with children, a two-parent family (married or unmarried), or another guardian with minor children.

Single Adult or Couples without children – Single adults and adults living together (married or not) without children are all considered single adults by HUD.

Homeless “Youth” – unaccompanied homeless persons under the age of 25 *and* without a head of household older than 24. This would be a sub-group of homeless households within either the Family or Adults without Children and Unsheltered cohorts. If a young adult has a child, and does not have a partner over the age of 24, he/she is considered a Parenting Homeless Youth. If a young couple, both age 24 and under, are parenting, they are both considered Parenting Homeless Youth.

Literally Homeless (or Homeless) – households who were sheltered and staying in Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, Hotel Paid for by an Agency, or TRA, and those who were unsheltered, i.e. who reported being “On the Street or in a Place not meant for human habitation.”



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Middlesex County Board of Social Services (MCBSS) – the public welfare agency for the County for individuals and families with no income. MCBSS provides General Assistance (GA) for adults without minor children, Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) for families with minor children, Food Stamps, Medicaid, and Emergency Assistance (EA) for those receiving GA, TANF or SSI (Supplemental Security Income for disabled children or adults with little to no work history). MCBSS also administers additional assistance for welfare recipients, including Child Support, Child Care, Transportation, and WorkFirst NJ (to help individuals find employment).

Emergency Assistance – households receiving GA, TANF, or SSI may be eligible for additional Emergency Assistance if they are experiencing a housing crisis, including financial assistance to pay a utility bill, past due rent, security deposit, or for homeless households, hotel placement or Temporary Rental Assistance (TRA). EA can also be used as to pay Emergency Shelters a per diem rate for homeless clients who may be placed in the shelter. Households are eligible for up to 12 months of EA in a lifetime.

Hotel Placement – in Middlesex County, the MCBSS may pay for a hotel placement for eligible individuals and families (i.e. receiving GA, TANF, or sometimes SSI) who are experiencing homelessness, if the existing shelters are full, or if someone in the household is unable to live in a shelter setting due to a medical reason.

Temporary Rental Assistance (TRA) – a short term (up to 12 months) rental subsidy for eligible households.

Precariously Housed – households who reported “Temporarily Staying with Friends/Family”, in a “Hotel that they paid for” without assistance, “Jail”, “Medical Hospital”, or other location on the night of the count. HUD does not consider individuals living in these circumstances to be “homeless,” although Middlesex County recognizes that these households can become literally homeless at any time.

Single Room Occupancy (SRO) – single rooms in a multi-tenant building, in which tenants typically share bathroom and kitchen facilities. Sometimes called a Rooming House or Boarding House.

Transitional Housing – refers to programs that are designed to house individuals or families in small apartments, while providing case management on site. The average length of stay in these programs is approximately 18 months, and they are typically used for households that require some additional assistance in areas of life skills, parenting, education, or employment beyond the timeframe that is possible to address at an Emergency Shelter. In Middlesex County, the only transitional housing is one project designated for single male ex-offenders coming out of prison and one project for single male homeless youth .



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APPENDIX B – Methodology

On January 28, 2020, Middlesex County conducted its annual Point in Time (PIT) survey (sponsored by the federal Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)) of homeless individuals and families residing in Middlesex County. Surveys were primarily administered to respondents at multiple locations, including three “Project Homeless Connect (PHC)” sites (Elijah’s Promise in New Brunswick, the Cathedral in Perth Amboy, and St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in Spotswood), as well as through street outreach activities throughout the County. At the PHC sites and on the street, the surveys were read to the respondents, and their responses were recorded on the paper survey. HUD allowed for street outreach data to continue to be collected for a period of 7 days after the PIT date. In Middlesex County, street outreach teams collected data from Jan. 28 – Feb. 3rd.

Additionally, homeless service providers, government agencies addressing homelessness, school homeless liaisons, police departments and other entities throughout the County were sent copies of the surveys to gather information from individuals and families experiencing homelessness with whom they had contact. These entities may have interviewed their consumers/clients, or they may have recorded information for the survey based on previous information they had gathered from their consumers. Additionally, data was gathered on the sheltered homeless from Middlesex County’s Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). For Middlesex County Board of Social Services (MCBSS) clients, paper and electronic records were reviewed for individuals receiving Emergency Assistance benefits, and data was recorded on the survey tool from the records.

All of the paper survey responses were transferred to an online database administered by Monarch Housing Associates, Inc. (Monarch), the entity contracted by the New Jersey Housing & Mortgage Finance Agency to oversee the administration of the PIT statewide, either by the survey taker or Coming Home staff. The raw data was then pulled from the database and sent to Coming Home of Middlesex County, Inc. (CHM or Coming Home), as the PIT Coordinator. This document is a summary analysis of the raw data, after correcting for data entry errors when compared with the paper surveys, and eliminating duplicate surveys and surveys indicating that the respondent was “Permanently Housed,” i.e. not homeless.