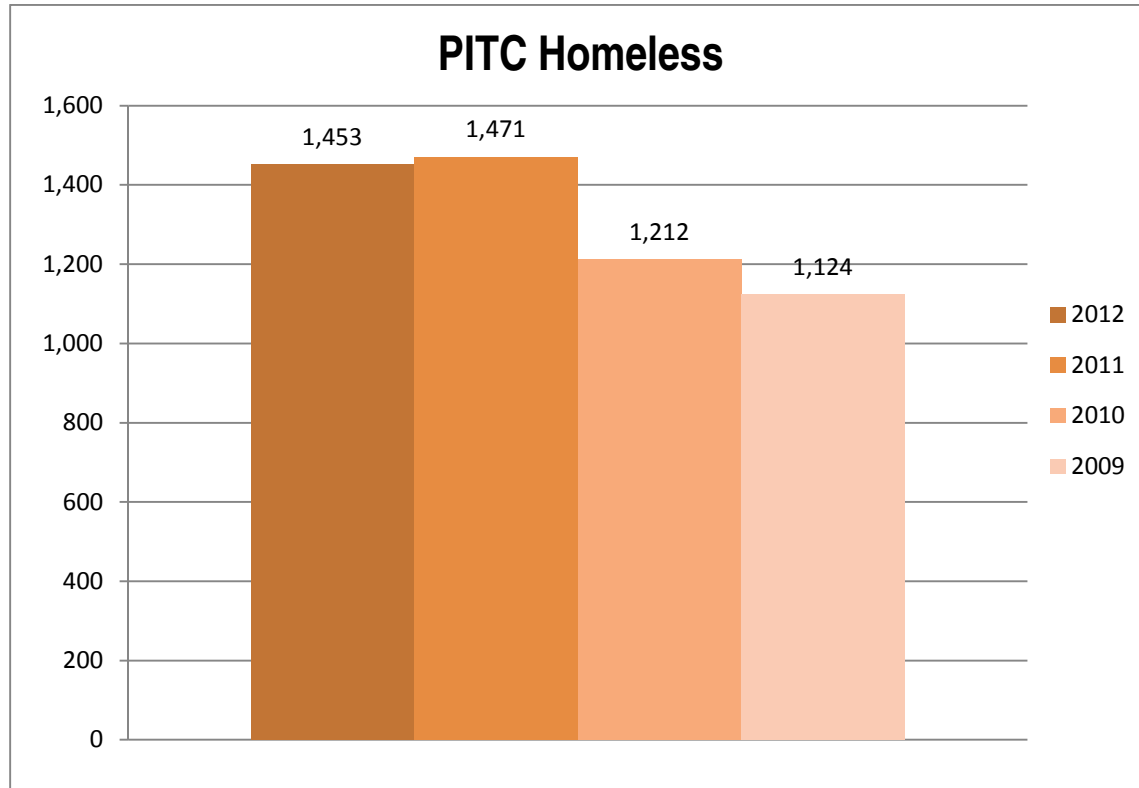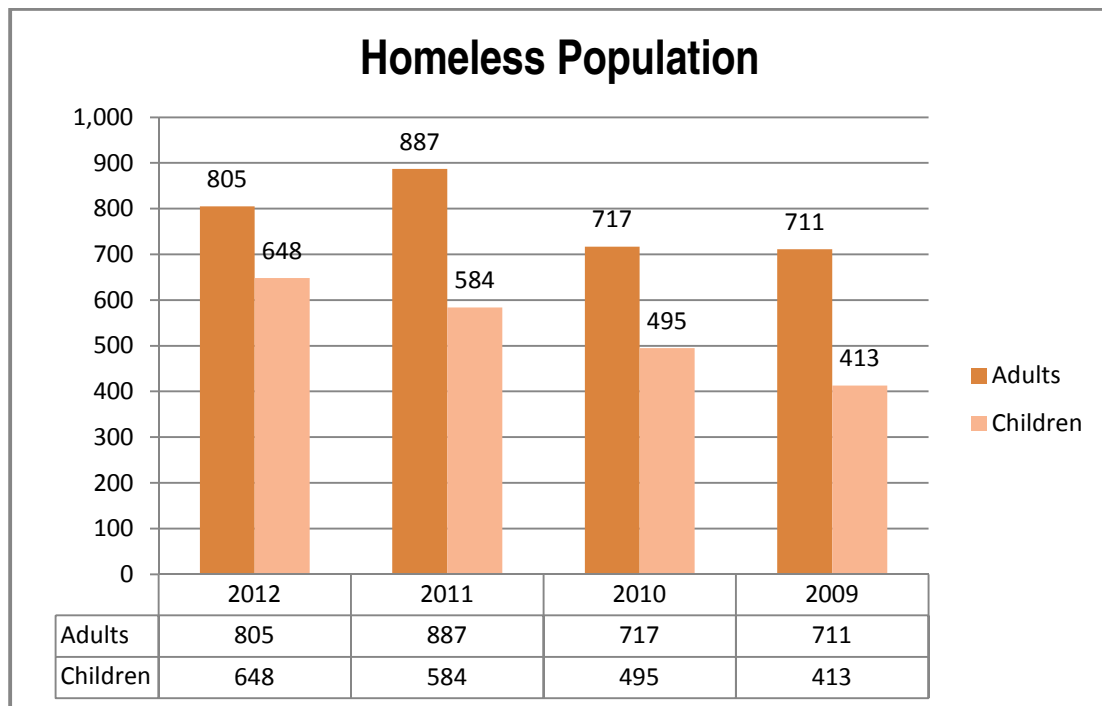# UNION COUNTY

On January 25, 2012 there were 1,453 homeless men, women and children counted in Union County according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations.

PITC Homeless

The actual number of people who are homeless over the course of the year may be between two to four times larger than the number counted at one point in time. Using the statistical formula developed in the publication "Estimating the Need," it is projected that *over the course of a year, **3,946** adults and children are homeless in Union County.*
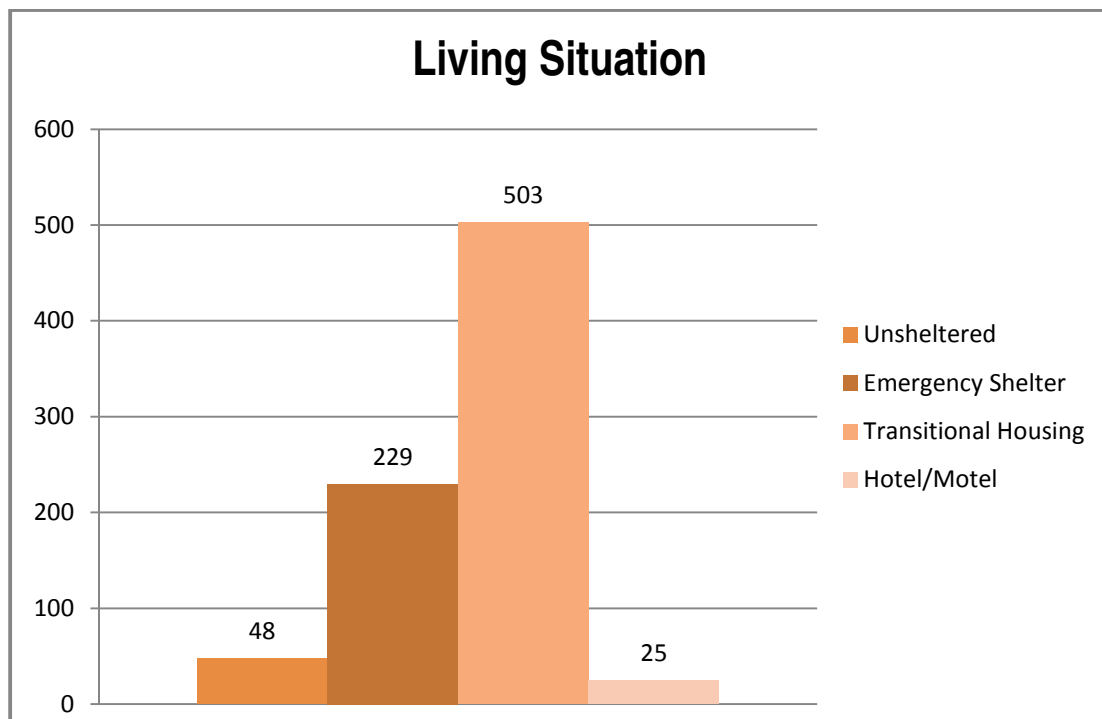
Homelessness in Union County has increased over the past four years reaching the highest level in the past two count years. Of the 1,453 people who were homeless on the night of the count 648 of them were children. As the Homeless Population chart shows the number of adults who were homeless has fluctuated while the number of children has been on the rise increasing a total of 36.2%.

2012 Homeless Breakdown	
Respondents (Adults)	805
Family Members (Children)	648
Total Homeless	**1453**

Homeless Population

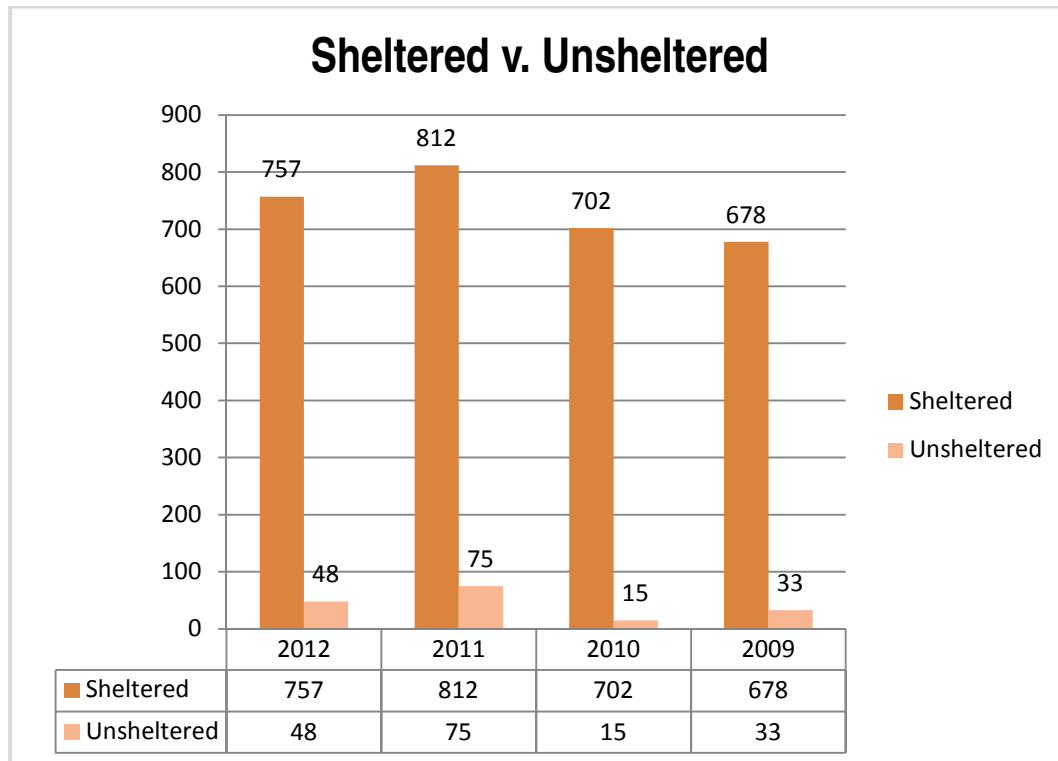|	2012	2011	2010	2009
Adults	805	887	717	711
Children	648	584	495	413

Living Situation

As reflected in the Living Situation chart below, 48 or 6% of the homeless respondents were unsheltered the night of the count. The remainder of the homeless were in living in sheltered situations with the largest population of the homeless residing in transitional housing (n=503, 62.5%).

Living Situation

- Unsheltered: 48
- Emergency Shelter: 229
- Transitional Housing: 503
- Hotel/Motel: 25

Emergency Shelter includes those in ES, Domestic Violence Shelters, Youth Shelters and Safe Havens where applicable.

2012 PITC- Union County

The number of unsheltered homeless in Union County has fluctuated over the past four count years with the highest numbers being seen in 2011. The number of sheltered homeless has mirrored the increases and decreases of the total population overall.

Sheltered v. Unsheltered

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Sheltered	757	812	702	678
Unsheltered	48	75	15	33

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

As HUD continually encourages CoCs to utilize HMIS to complete the sheltered count for a community, for the first time, as part of this 2012 report, there is a comparison of what was reported in HMIS for Emergency Shelters and Transitional Housing for the night of the count to what was reported in the same categories for the Point In Time Count. The numbers from HMIS are based on those over 17 in emergency shelter or transitional housing on the night of the Point In Time Count.
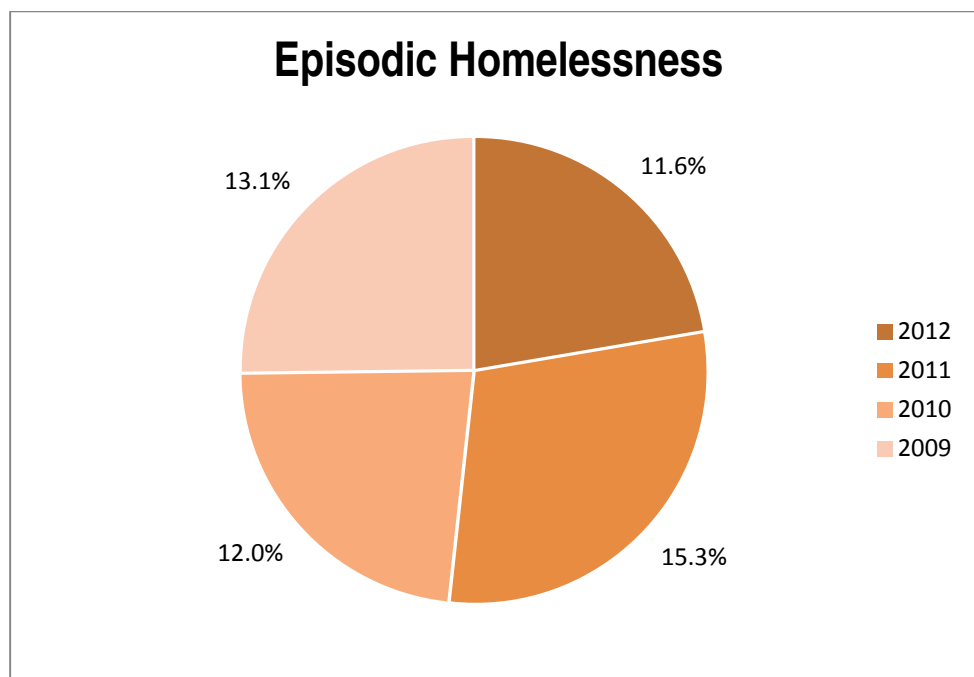
In Union County, there were a total of 143 adults in emergency shelter in the HMIS system on the night of the count and there were 39 in transitional housing in the HMIS system on the night of the count. These numbers are lower than what was recorded as part of the count. On the night of the count 221 respondents stated that they would be in emergency shelter and 503 reported residing in transitional housing.

Length and Episodes of Homelessness

Of the homeless population surveyed in Union County, 294 or 36.5% responded that they have been homeless for more than one year. Of those who were homeless less than one year, 12.7% reported that they had been homeless at least one other time within the past 12 months.

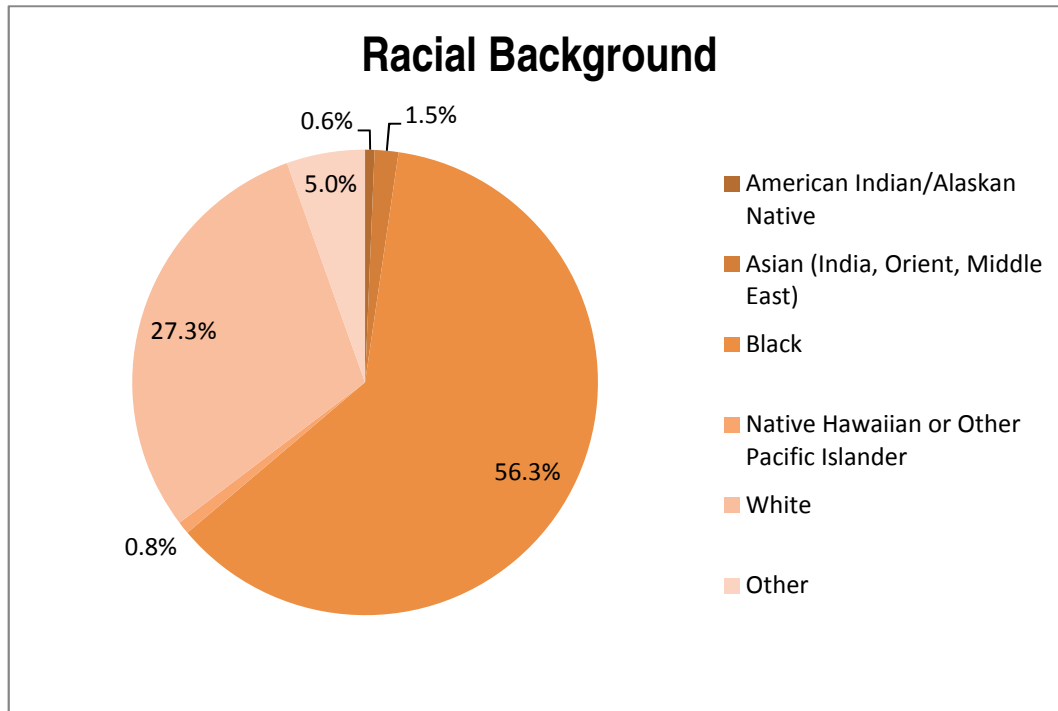| 2012 Length of Homelessness	#	%
1 day - 1 week	56	7.0%
8 days - 1 month	48	6.0%
1 month & 1 day - 3 months	119	14.8%
3 months & 1 day to 6 months	101	12.5%
6 months & 1 day to 12 months	153	19.0%
More than 1 year	**294**	**36.5%**
No response	34	4.2%

As reflected in the chart below, a total of 93 or 11.6% of the total homeless population reported having at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. Although this number has fluctuated over the past four years, this is lowest percentage over time.

Demographics

In 2012, of the total homeless population in Union County, 374 people or 46.5% were male, 417 or 51.8% were female and one (1) or 0.1% was transgender.

The Racial Background chart outlines the racial breakdown of homeless persons in the 2012 count. The largest percentage were Black (57.4%) most closely followed by White (27.2%).   The total percentage of the homeless population that defined their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino equaled 25.7%.

Racial Background

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian (India, Orient, Middle East)
- Black
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
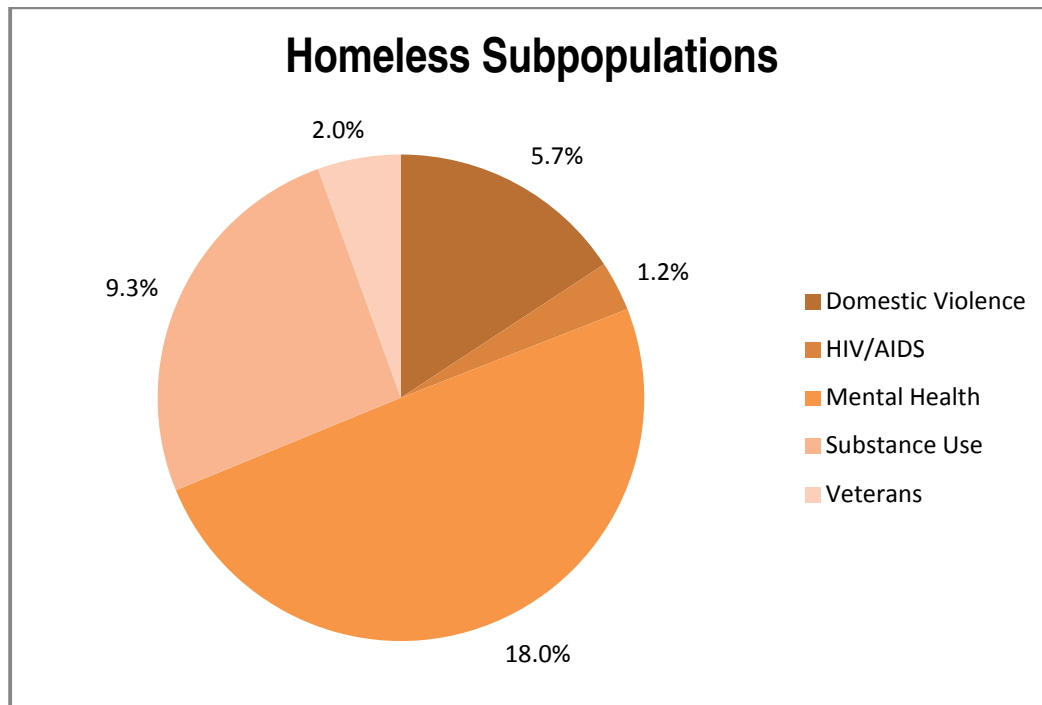- White
- Other

0.6% | 1.5%
5.0%
27.3%
56.3%
0.8%

The largest percentage of homeless in Union County fell within the 40 to 49 year old age range, totaling 27.5%, followed by those within the 30 to 39 year old age range (23.6%).

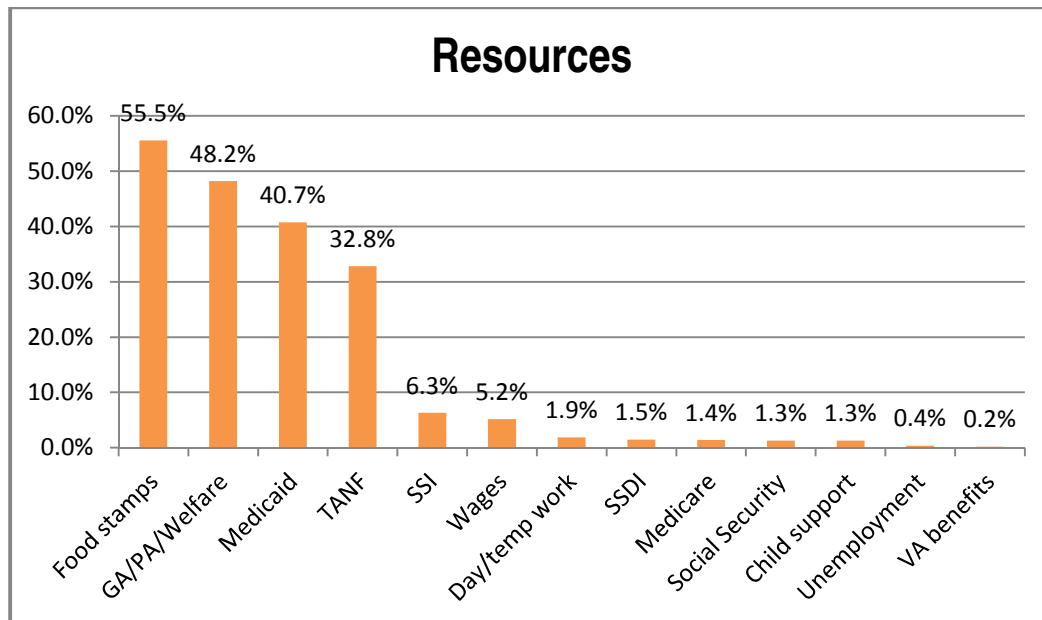| 2012 Age	#	%
Under 18	2	0.2%
18-20	19	2.4%
21-24	62	7.7%
25-29	105	13.0%
30-39	190	23.6%
40-49	**221**	**27.5%**
50-59	142	17.6%
60-64	25	3.1%
65+	11	1.4%
No response	28	3.5%

Homeless Subpopulations

The Homeless Subpopulation chart outlines the breakdown of the homeless subpopulations in Union County for the 2012 count. The largest subpopulation was the homeless who had mental health issues (18%). The number of homeless who reported serving in the US military equaled 2% (n=16).

Homeless Subpopulations

- 2.0%
- 5.7%
- 1.2%
- 9.3%
- 18.0%

Legend:
- Domestic Violence
- HIV/AIDS
- Mental Health
- Substance Use
- Veterans

Financial Resources and Income

The three main sources of income reported by people who were homeless in Union County on the night of the 2012 count were Food Stamps (55.5%), Welfare (48.2%) and Medicaid (40.7%). Additionally, 1.0% of the homeless population reported receiving no type of government benefit on the night of the count.

Resources

As part of the 2012 count, homeless respondents were asked to provide a current income that provided a potential estimated yearly income. In Union County, the largest percent of respondents stated that they had income of less than $5,000.

2012 Yearly Income	#	%
No Income	64	8.0%
$1.00-$4,999	**496**	**61.6%**
$5,000- $9,999	165	20.5%
$10,000-$14,999	29	3.6%
$15,000- $19,999	9	1.1%
$20,000-$24,999	3	0.4%
$25,000- $29,999	0	0.0%
$30,000- $34,999	1	0.1%
No Response	38	4.7%

Service Needs and Contributing Factors to Homelessness

The highest ranking factor that respondents stated contributed to their homelessness in Union County was loss of job and inability to find work. The other top ranking factor was housing costs being too high.

2012 PITC- Union County

Contributing Factors to Homelessness	%
Lost job/cannot find work	47.0%
Housing costs too high	37.6%
Medical problems/physical or developmental disability	24.0%
Eviction or at risk of Eviction	23.9%
Relationship/family breakup/death	15.2%
Mental illness/emotional problems	14.6%
Alcohol or drug abuse problems	14.4%
Have work but wages are too low	8.9%
Utility costs too high	7.3%
Domestic violence	6.1%
Incarceration	5.7%
Lost job due to lack of transportation	5.1%
Loss of child support	3.5%
Foreclosure or at risk of Foreclosure	1.2%
House condemned	0.8%
Natural disaster	0.4%

The types of services that respondents stated that they have received in the past three years or are currently needed are reflected in the chart below.   In Union County, the top service received was housing and the top service that was reported as needed was housing.

2012 Service Needs	#	%
Received		
Housing	482	53.1%
Emergency shelter	299	32.9%
Medical (routine healthcare)	227	25.0%

Need		
Housing	195	21.5%
Employment assistance	107	11.8%
Educational training	104	11.5%

Discharge from Mainstream Institutions

As part of the 2012 survey, homeless respondents were asked if they had been discharged into homelessness from certain mainstream institutions within the past three years (since January 25, 2009). The discharge information is based on the homeless population that responded to the survey and relies on self report.

As the chart shows the two institutions that had the highest numbers of respondents reporting they were discharged into homelessness were Medical Hospitals and City/County Jail.

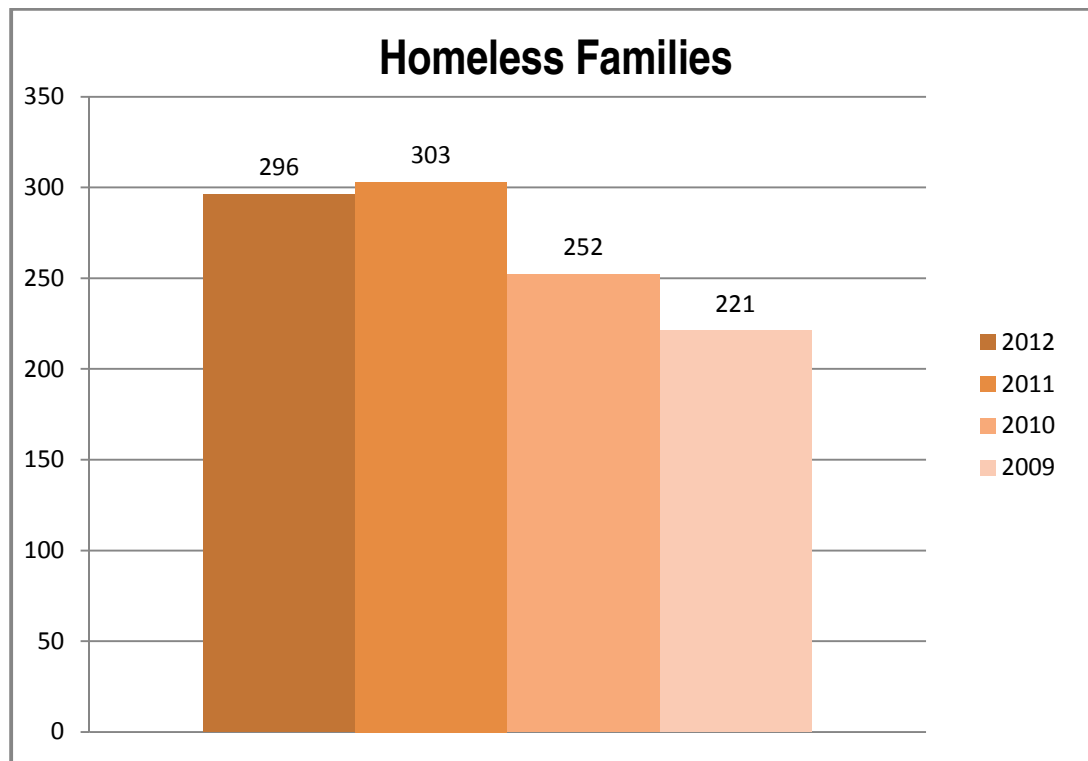| Discharged Into Homelessness (Past Three Years)		
Corrections	#	%
State Prison	31	3.9%
City/County Jail	45	5.6%
Juvenile Detention Center	0	0.0%
Inpatient Care	#	%
Hospitalized (Medical)	47	5.8%
State Inpatient Mental Health	6	0.7%
City/County Inpatient Mental Health	6	0.7%
Substance Abuse Treatment	9	1.0%

Last Permanent Address

In the 2012 count, 96.3% (n=775) of the homeless respondents lived in New Jersey before becoming homeless. In looking at the surround states, 0.9% (n=7) last lived in New York.

The cities /towns most frequently cited by respondents as the last place they lived before becoming homeless are below (those with a rate of 5% or higher). The largest number reported last living in Elizabeth.

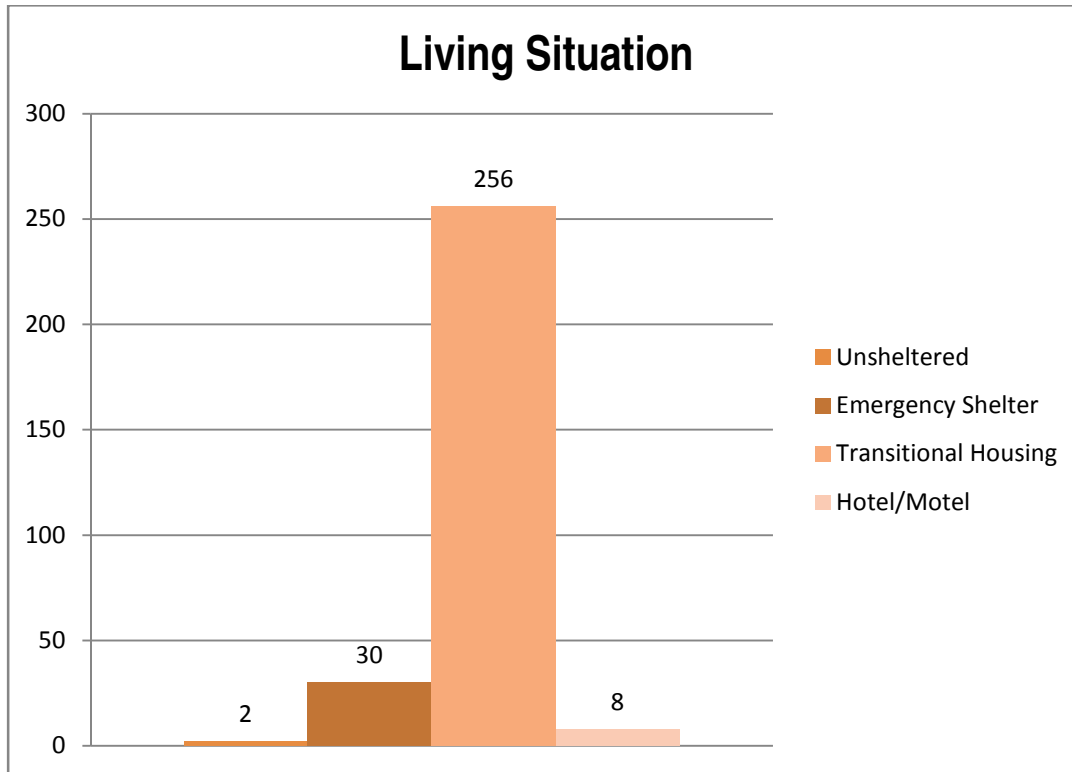| Town	#	%
Elizabeth	470	58.4%
Plainfield	100	12.4%
Linden	43	5.3%

FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

In 2012, of the 805 homeless respondents in Union County, 296 or 36.7% had at least one dependent child under 18 with them the night of the count and is considered a homeless family. Of the total of 648 homeless children in these families, 322 were six years or younger and 326 were between the ages of 7 and 17.
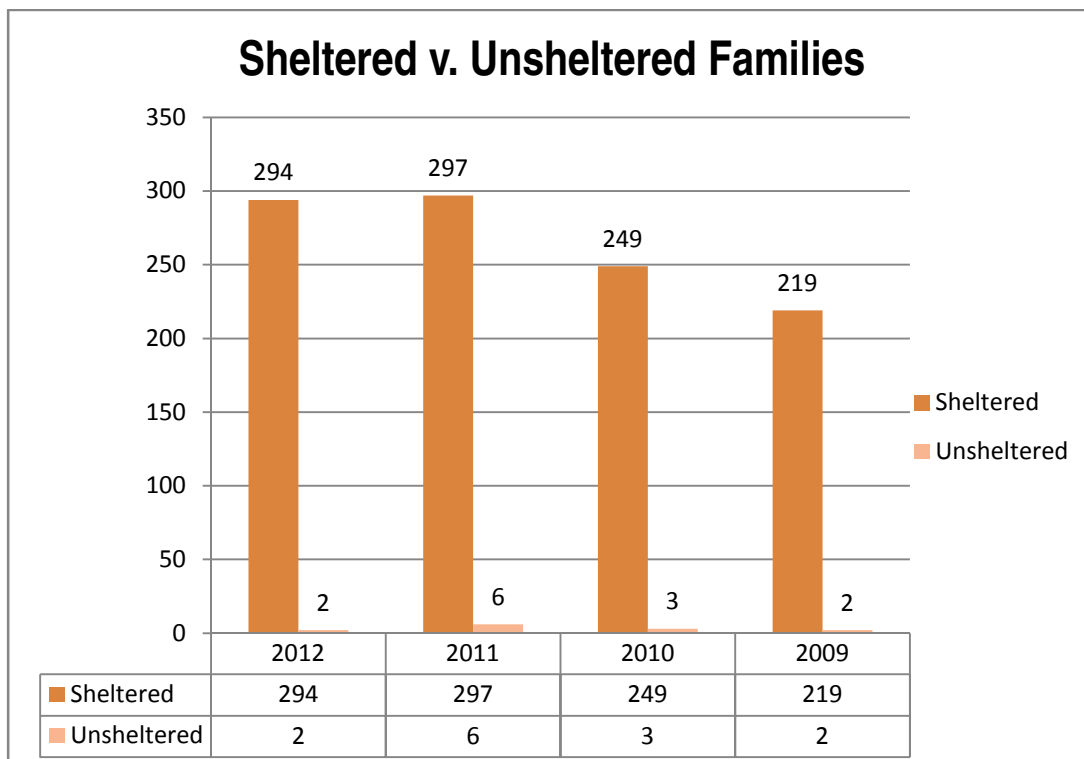
Homeless Families

Year	Count
2012	296
2011	303
2010	252
2009	221

Living Situation

In Union County, two (2) homeless families were in an unsheltered living situation on the night of the count. These unsheltered homeless families had a total of two (2) children with them on the night of the count.

The remaining 294 homeless families were in sheltered living situations that included emergency shelter and transitional housing. The largest percentage (86.5%) of homeless families were residing in transitional housing on the night of the 2012 count.

Living Situation

Category	Value
Unsheltered	2
Emergency Shelter	30
Transitional Housing	256
Hotel/Motel	8

As the chart below shows, homeless families in Union County have mainly been in sheltered living situations over the past four counts with the number of unsheltered reaching its lowest level again in this count year.

Sheltered v. Unsheltered Families

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Sheltered	294	297	249	219
Unsheltered	2	6	3	2

2012 PITC- Union County
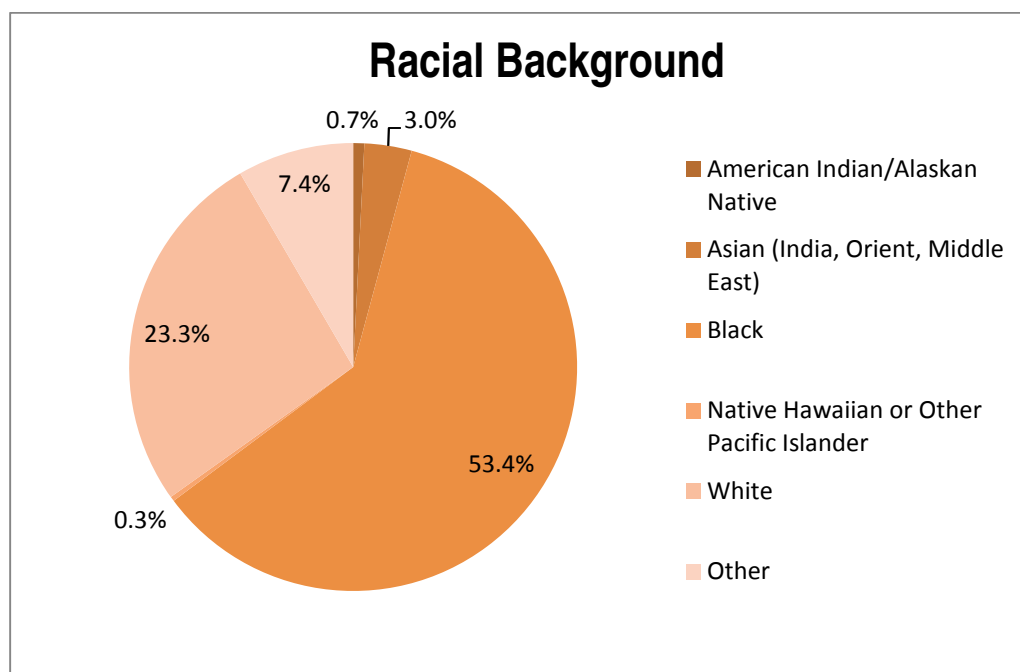
Length of Homelessness

The largest percentage (37.5%) of homeless families had been homeless more than one year. This is consistent with the total homeless population overall where the highest percentage were homeless more than one year.

2012 Length of Homelessness	#	%
1 day - 1 week	23	7.8%
8 days - 1 month	17	5.7%
1 month & 1 day - 3 months	40	13.5%
3 months & 1 day to 6 months	33	11.1%
6 months & 1 day to 12 months	54	18.2%
More than 1 year	**111**	**37.5%**
No response	18	6.1%

Demographics

Of the total 296 homeless families in Union County, 84.5% (n= 250) were female headed households and 15.2% (n=45) were male headed households.

The Racial Background chart below outlines the racial breakdown of homeless families in the 2012 count. More than one half of the respondents defined themselves as Black (53.4%). The next largest group was those that defined themselves as White at 23.3%. A total of 37.2% (n=110) defined their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino.

Racial Background

0.7%   3.0%
7.4%
23.3%
53.4%
0.3%

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian (India, Orient, Middle East)
- Black
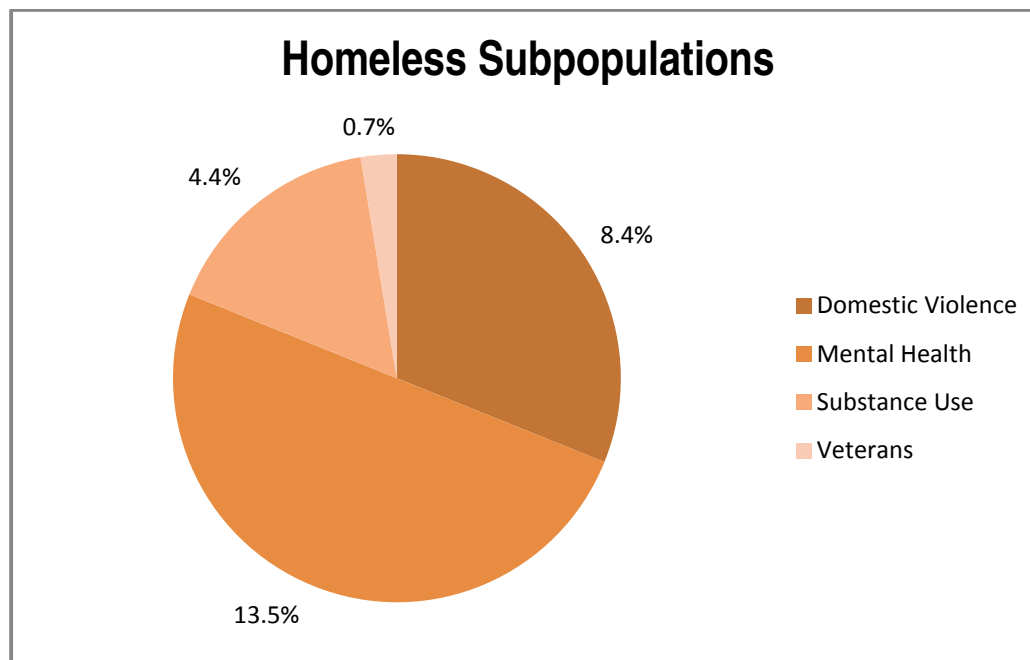- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other

The largest percentage of homeless families in Union County had a head of household that fell within the 30 to 39 year old age range. This is younger than the largest age cohort of the total homeless population in the County.

2012 Age	#	%
Under 18	1	0.3%
18-20	8	2.7%
21-24	41	13.9%
25-29	55	18.6%
30-39	**115**	**38.9%**
40-49	58	19.6%
50-59	12	4.1%
60-64	0	0.0%
65+	1	0.3%
No response	5	1.7%

Homeless Family Subpopulations

Among the HUD homeless subpopulations in the 2012 count, in Union County the largest HUD subpopulation among homeless families was those with a head of household with mental health issues. The next largest percentage was households experiencing domestic violence as reflected in the chart below.

Homeless Subpopulations

0.7%
4.4%
8.4%
13.5%

- Domestic Violence
- Mental Health
- Substance Use
- Veterans

2012 PITC- Union County

Financial Resources and Income

The three main sources of income reported by homeless families in Union County on the night of the 2012count were:

- TANF (89.2%);
- Food Stamps (61.5%); and
- Medicaid (48

All of the families reported receiving some type of government benefit on the night of the count. In looking at yearly estimated income, the majority of the homeless families were earning less than $10,000 a year.

2012 Yearly Income	#	%
No Income	2	0.7%
$1.00-$4,999	125	42.2%
$5,000- $9,999	**130**	**43.9%**
$10,000-$14,999	20	6.8%
$15,000- $19,999	4	1.4%
$20,000-$24,999	3	1.0%
$25,000- $29,999	0	0.0%
$30,000- $34,999	1	0.3%
No Response	11	3.7%

Service Needs and Contributing Factors to Homelessness

The highest ranking factor that respondents stated contributed to their homelessness in Union County was housing costs too high. The other top ranking factor was loss of job and inability to find work.
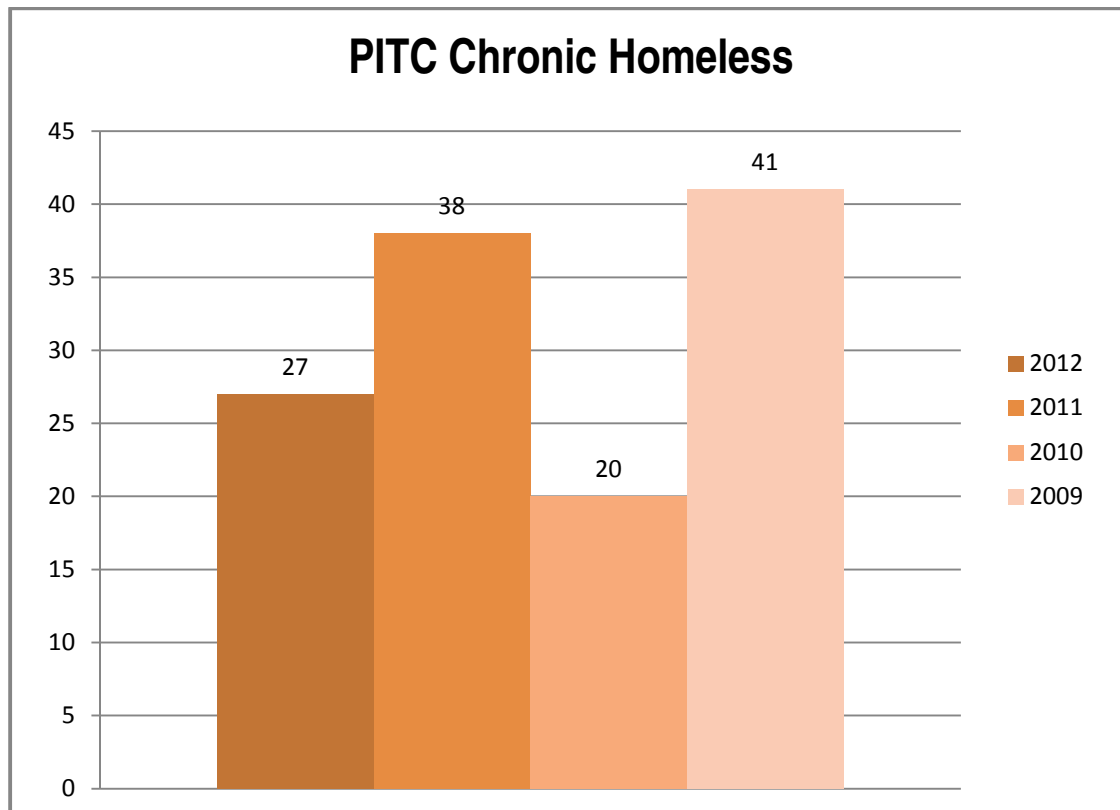
Contributing Factors to Homelessness	%
Housing costs too high	50.3%
Lost job/cannot find work	49.0%
Eviction or at risk of Eviction	27.0%
Relationship/family breakup/death	20.3%
Medical problems/physical or developmental disability	15.5%

When homeless families were asked what their top needs were on the night of the count the top three needs included:

- Educational training (10.5%);
- Housing (9.1%); and
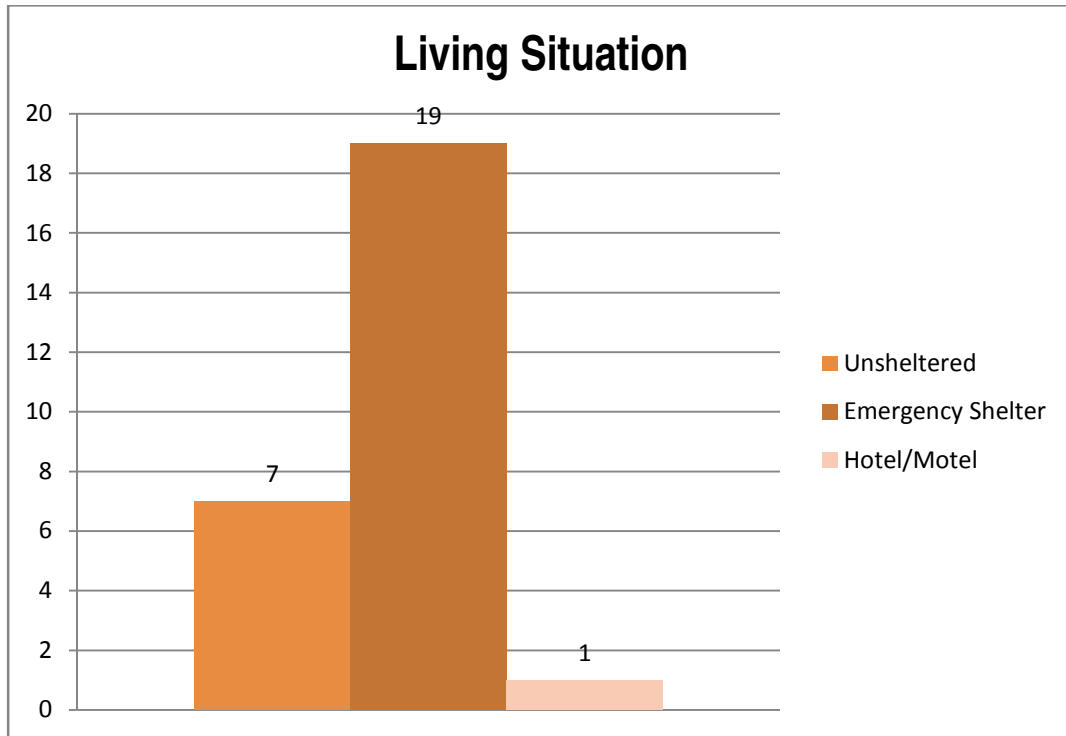- Employment assistance (8.4%)

CHRONICALLY HOMELESS

On the night of January 25, 2012, there were 27 chronically homeless individuals counted in Union County equaling 3.3% of the total homeless population. The chronically homeless individual population in Union County has fluctuated over the past four years with the lowest number being seen in non full HUD statistical count years (2010 and 2012).
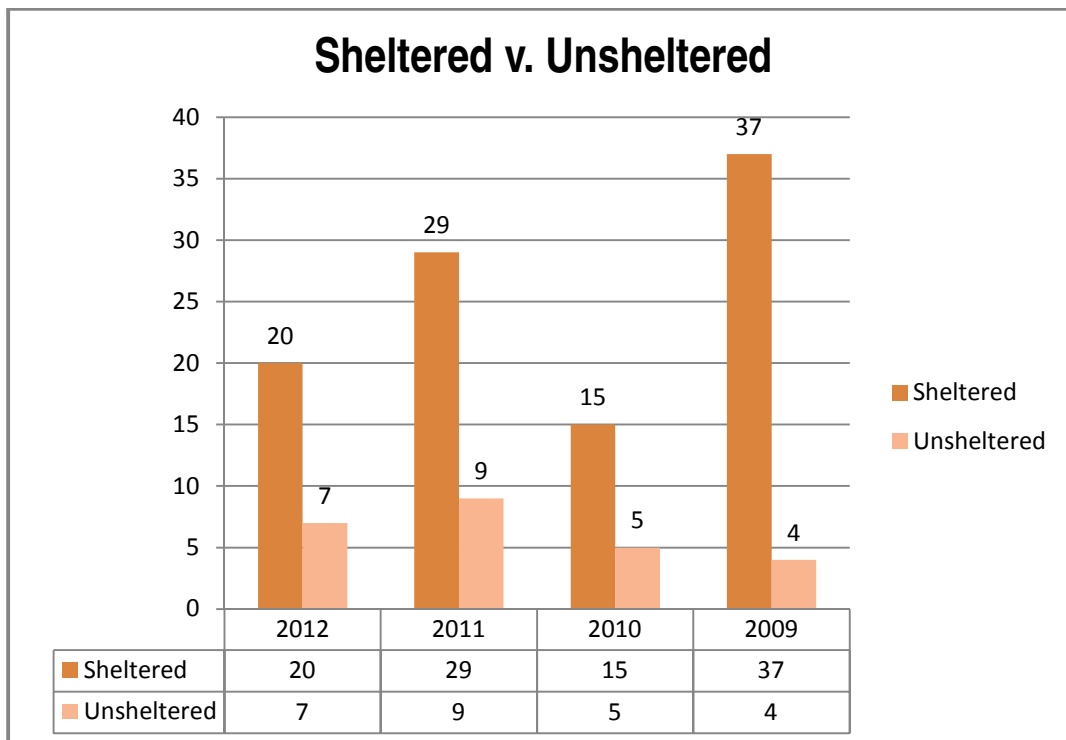
PITC Chronic Homeless

Year	Count
2012	27
2011	38
2010	20
2009	41

Living Situation
As defined, homeless living situations for the chronically homeless can only include those living on the street, in places not meant for human habitation or emergency shelter. The Living Situation chart is a breakdown of where the chronically homeless were residing on the night of the 2012 count. The largest percentage (70.45%) of the chronically homeless individual population in Union County was residing in emergency shelter on the night of the count.

Living Situation

Over the four (4) count years, the number of both the sheltered and unsheltered chronically homeless individuals in Union County has fluctuated however, the increases and decreases have mirrored the changes in the total population overall.

Sheltered v. Unsheltered

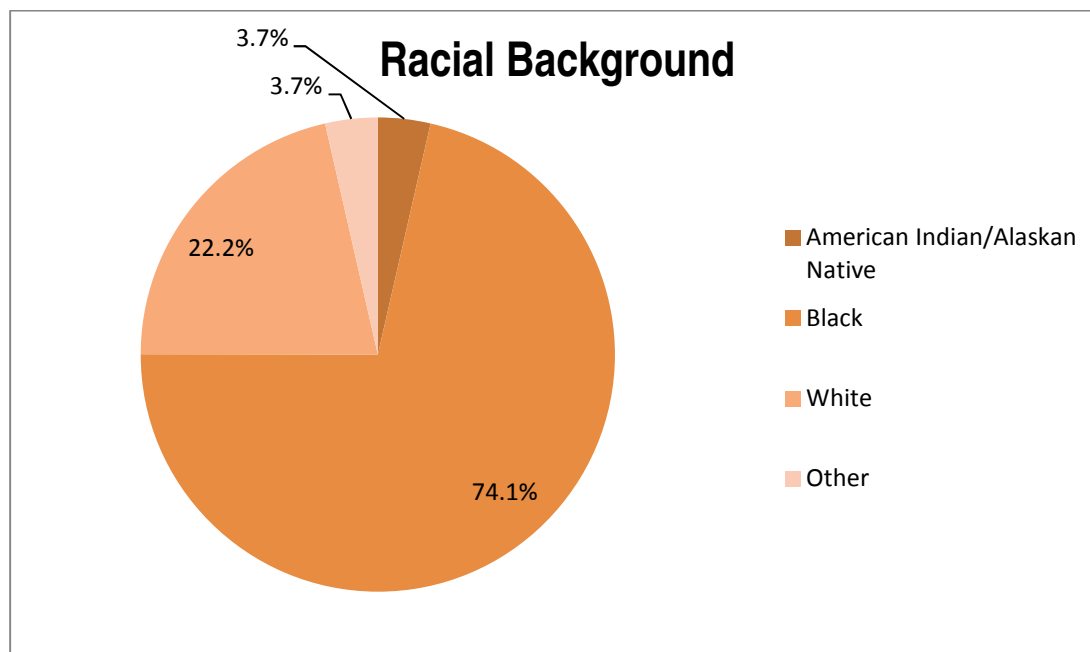|	2012	2011	2010	2009
Sheltered	20	29	15	37
Unsheltered	7	9	5	4

Length of Homelessness

Of the total chronically homeless individuals in Union County, 81.5% (n= 22) reported they had been homeless for more than one year. Also, a total of 51.9% (n= 14) reported they had four (4) episodes of homelessness in the past three (3) years.

2012 Length of Homelessness	#	%
1 month & 1 day - 3 months	2	7.4%
3 months & 1 day to 6 months	2	7.4%
6 months & 1 day to 12 months	1	3.7%
More than 1 year	**22**	**81.5%**

Demographics

In 2012, a total of 27 or 74.1% of the chronically homeless individual population was male and 7 or 25.9% was female.

As the Racial Background chart outlines, the majority of the chronically homeless individuals identified themselves as Black (74.1%) with the next largest percentage being those who identified themselves as White (22.2%). The total percentage that defined their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino equaled 11.1%.
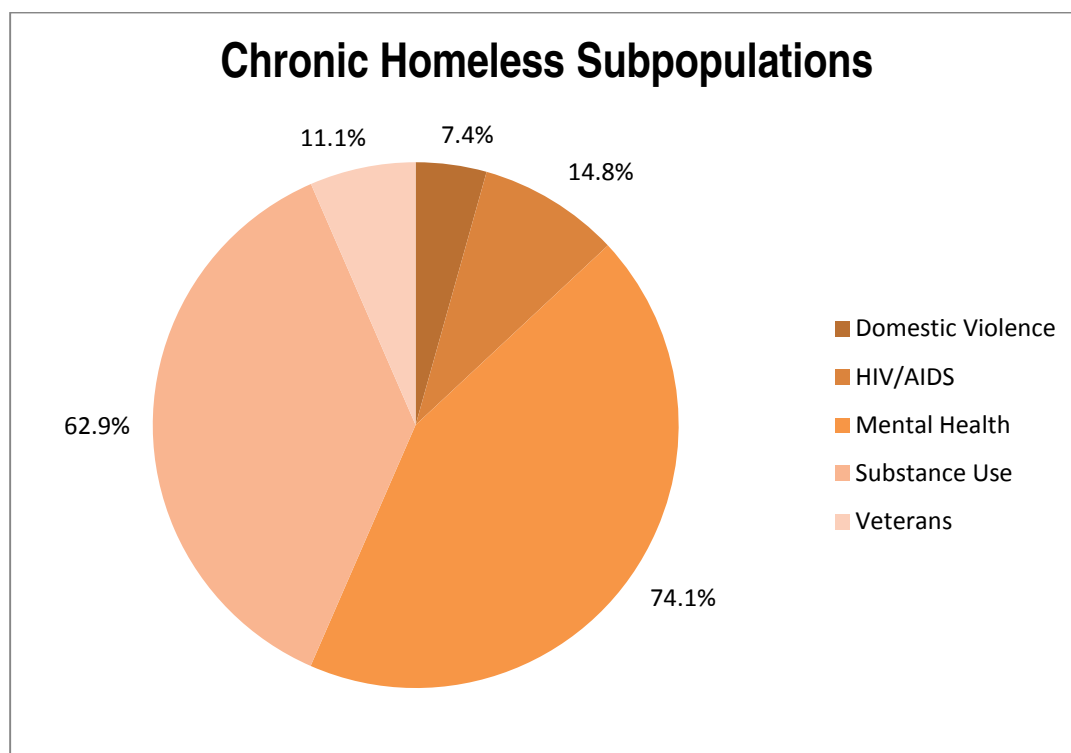
As the Age chart shows, on the night of the 2012 count in Union County, the largest percentage of chronically homeless individuals fell into the 50 to 59 year old age range (44.4%). This age group was closely followed by those between the ages of 40 and 49 years.

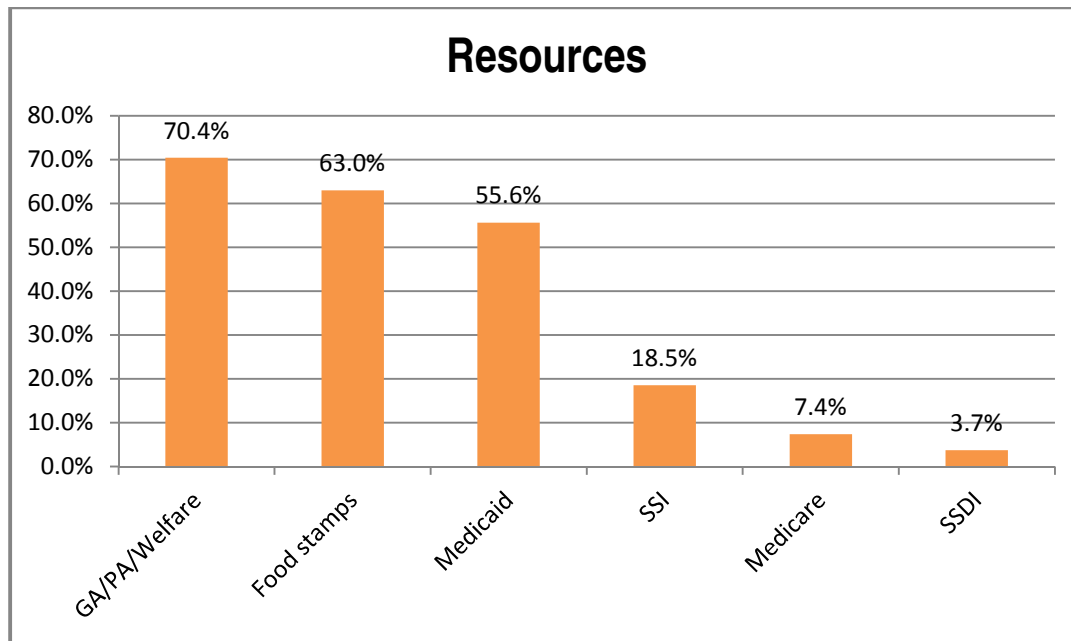| 2012 Age	#	%
30-39	2	7.4%
40-49	10	37.0%
50-59	**12**	**44.4%**
60-64	3	11.1%

Chronic Homeless Subpopulations

The Chronic Homeless Subpopulations chart below outlines the breakdown of the chronic homeless individual subpopulations for the 2012 count. As shown in the chart, 74.1% of the chronic homeless individuals reported they had mental health issues and 62.9% reported having substance use issues.

Financial Resources

The three main sources of income reported by people who were homeless in Union County on the night of the 2012 count were Welfare (70.4%), Food Stamps (63%) and Medicaid (55.6%).   Additionally, all of the chronically homeless individual population reported receiving some type of government benefit on the night of the count.

Resources

As reflected in the Income chart below, the largest percentage (63%) of chronically individuals were reporting having income $5,000. As with the total homeless population, the almost all had a projected yearly income of less than $10,000.

2012 Yearly Income	#	%
No Income	4	14.8%
$1.00-$4,999	**17**	**63.0%**
$5,000- $9,999	4	14.8%
$10,000-$14,999	1	3.7%

Service Needs and Contributing Factors to Homelessness

The highest ranking factor that chronically homeless individual respondents stated contributed to their homelessness in Union County was substance abuse problems. The other top ranking factor was medical problems, physical or development disability.

2012 Contributing Factors to Homelessness	%
Alcohol or drug abuse problems	51.9%
Medical problems/physical or developmental disability	37.0%
Incarceration	33.3%
Mental illness/emotional problems	33.3%
Relationship/family breakup/death	33.3%
Housing costs too high	29.6%
Lost job/cannot find work	29.6%
Domestic violence	22.2%
Eviction or at risk of Eviction	14.8%
Have work but wages are too low	3.7%
Loss of child support	3.7%
Lost job due to lack of transportation	3.7%
Utility costs too high	3.7%

The types of services that respondents stated that they have received in the past three years or are currently needed are reflected in the chart below. In Union County, the top service received by the chronically homeless individual population was emergency shelter and the top service that was reported as needed was housing services.

2012 Service Needs	#	%
Received		
Emergency shelter	18	66.7%
Emergency food or meal assistance	12	44.4%
Transportation	11	40.7%
Need		
Housing	14	51.9%
Transportation	10	37.0%
Dental	7	25.9%

Discharge from Mainstream Institutions

As part of the 2012 survey, the respondents were asked if they had been discharged into homelessness from certain mainstream institutions within the past three years (since January 25, 2009). The discharge information is based on the chronically homeless individual population that responded to the survey and relies on self report.

As the chart shows the two institutions that had the highest numbers of respondents reporting they were discharged into homelessness were City/County Jail and Medical Hospitals.

Discharged Into Homelessness (Past Three Years)		
Corrections	#	%
State Prison	3	11.1%
City/County Jail	9	33.3%
Juvenile Detention Center	0	0.0%
Inpatient Care	#	%
Hospitalized (Medical)	7	25.9%
State Inpatient Mental Health	1	3.7%
City/County Inpatient Mental Health	1	3.7%
Substance Abuse Treatment	3	11.1%

Last Permanent Address

In the 2012 count, 96.3% (n=26) of the chronically homeless individual respondents lived in New Jersey before becoming homeless.

The cities /towns most frequently cited by respondents as the last place they lived before becoming homeless are below (those with a rate of 5% or higher). The only town with a significant number was Elizabeth.

Town	#	%
Elizabeth	14	51.9%
Plainfield	5	18.5%
Newark	2	7.4%

CHRONICIALLY HOMELESS FAMILIES

In 2012, Union County counted no one that met the chronically homeless family definition.