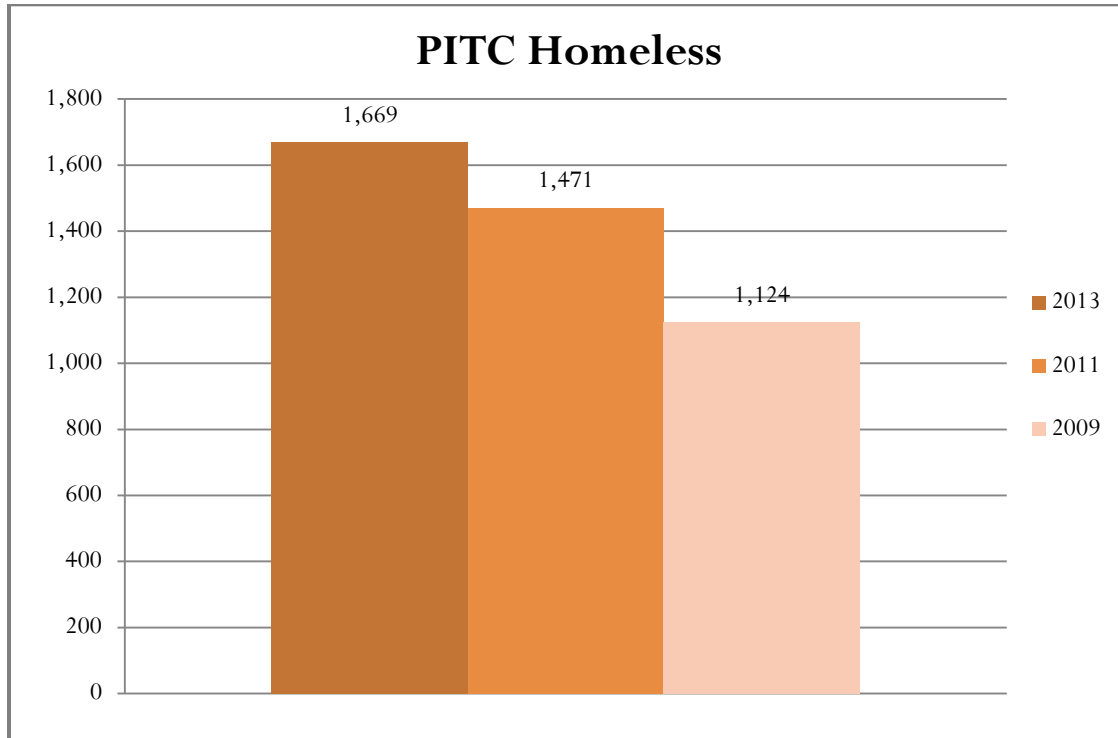# UNION COUNTY

On January 30, 2013 there were 1,669 homeless men, women and children counted in Union County according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations. Homelessness in Union County has increased over the past three (3) full HUD count years with an overall increase of 32.6%.
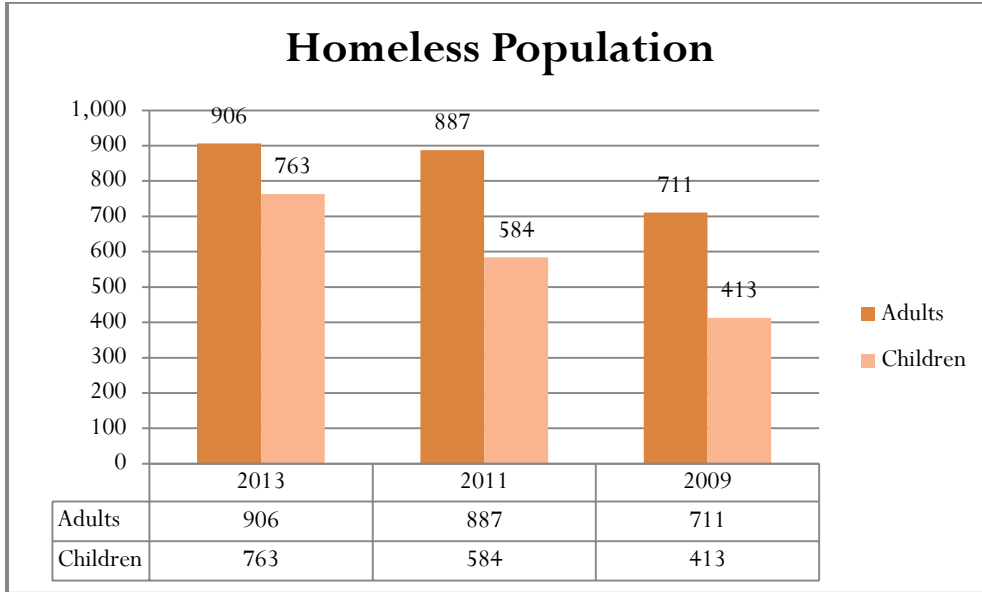
PITC Homeless

The actual number of people who are homeless over the course of the year may be 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, 4,501 adults and children are homeless in Union County*.

Of the 1,669 people who were homeless on the night of the count, 763 were children as reflected in the table below.
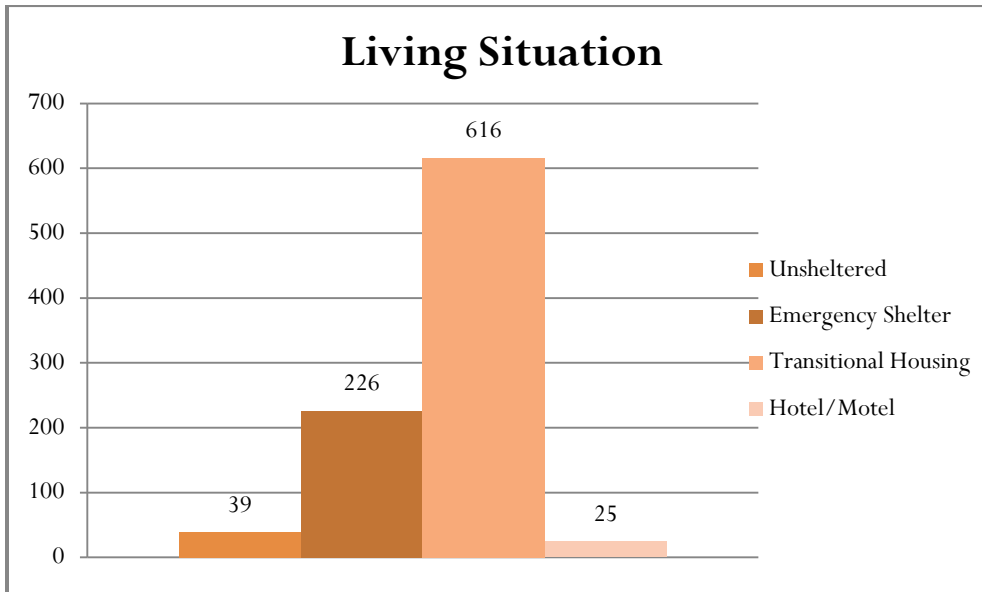
2013 Homeless Breakdown	
Respondents (Adults)	906
Family Members (Children)	763
Total Homeless	**1,669**

The chart below shows that the number of adults and children have been on rise proportionally over the past three (3) full count years which is reflective of the total population overall.
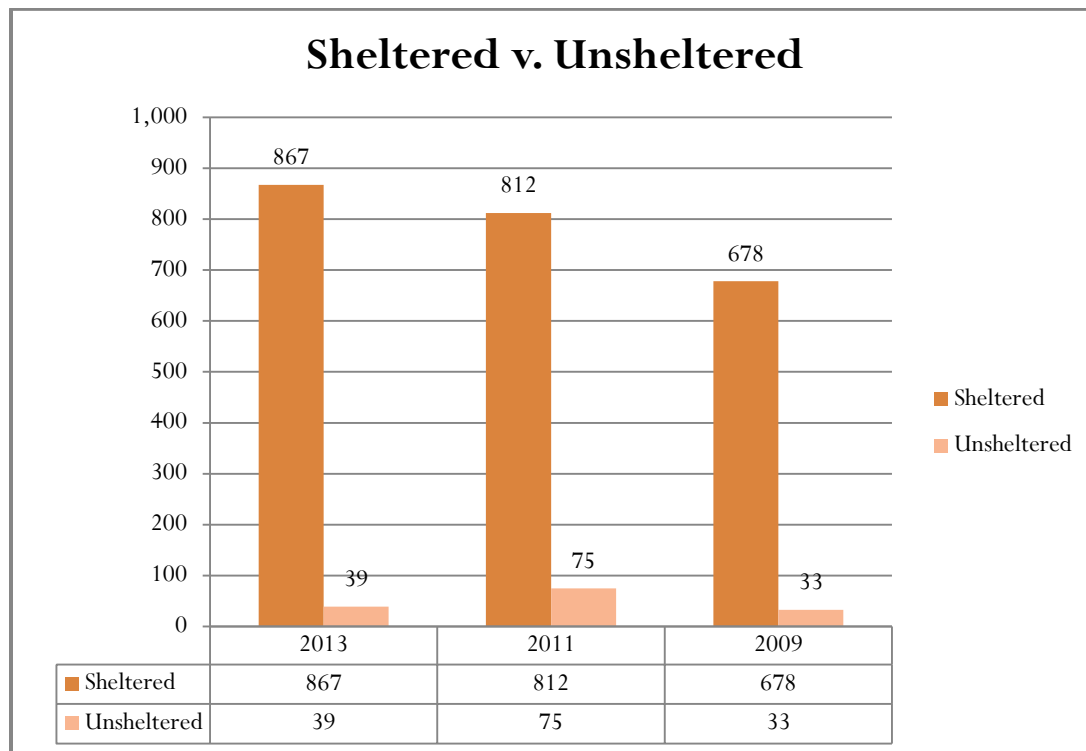
Homeless Population

	2013	2011	2009
Adults	906	887	711
Children	763	584	413

Living Situation

As reflected in the Living Situation chart following, 39 or 4.3% 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 percentage, 67.9%, residing in transitional housing (n=616).

Living Situation

- Unsheltered: 39
- Emergency Shelter: 226
- Transitional Housing: 616
- Hotel/Motel: 25

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

The number of unsheltered homeless in Union County has fluctuated over the past three (3) count years with the highest numbers occurring in 2011. The number of sheltered homeless has been steadily increasing since 2009.

Sheltered v. Unsheltered

	2013	2011	2009
Sheltered	867	812	678
Unsheltered	39	75	33

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
HUD continually encourages CoCs to utilize HMIS to complete the sheltered count for a community. As part of this 2013 report, there is a comparison between what was reported in HMIS for emergency shelters and transitional housing with what was reported in the same categories for the PITC. The numbers from HMIS are based on those over the age of 17 in emergency shelter or transitional housing on the night of the count.
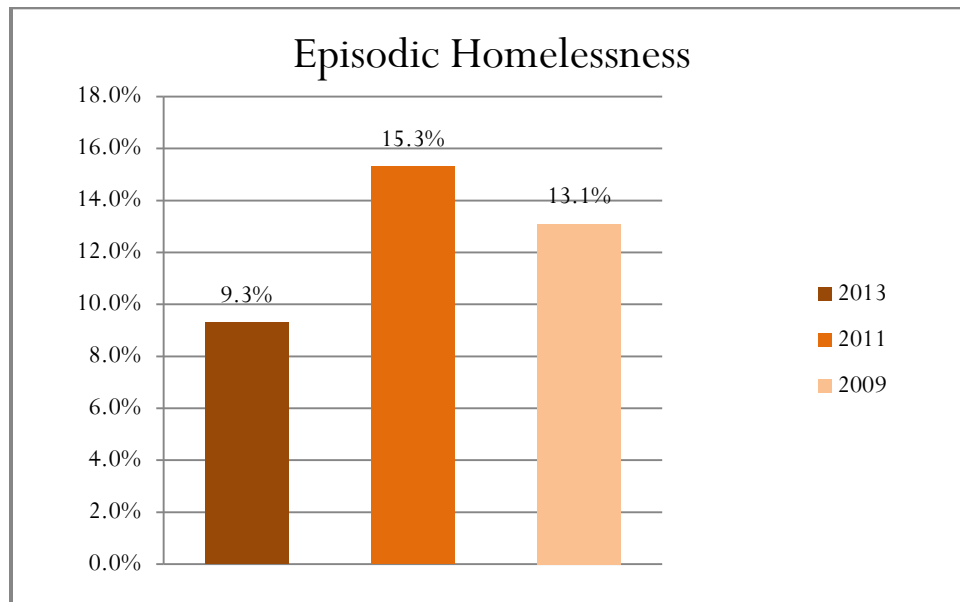
In Union County, there were a total of 219 adults in emergency shelter and 92 in transitional housing in the HMIS on the night of the count. These numbers differ than what was recorded as part of the count. On the night of the count 221 respondents stated that they would be in emergency shelter and 616 reported residing in transitional housing.

Length and Episodes of Homelessness

Of the homeless population surveyed in Union County, 333 or 36.8% responded that they have been homeless in excess of one (1) year. Of those who were homeless less than one year, 11.9% reported that they had been homeless at least one other time within the prior 12 months.

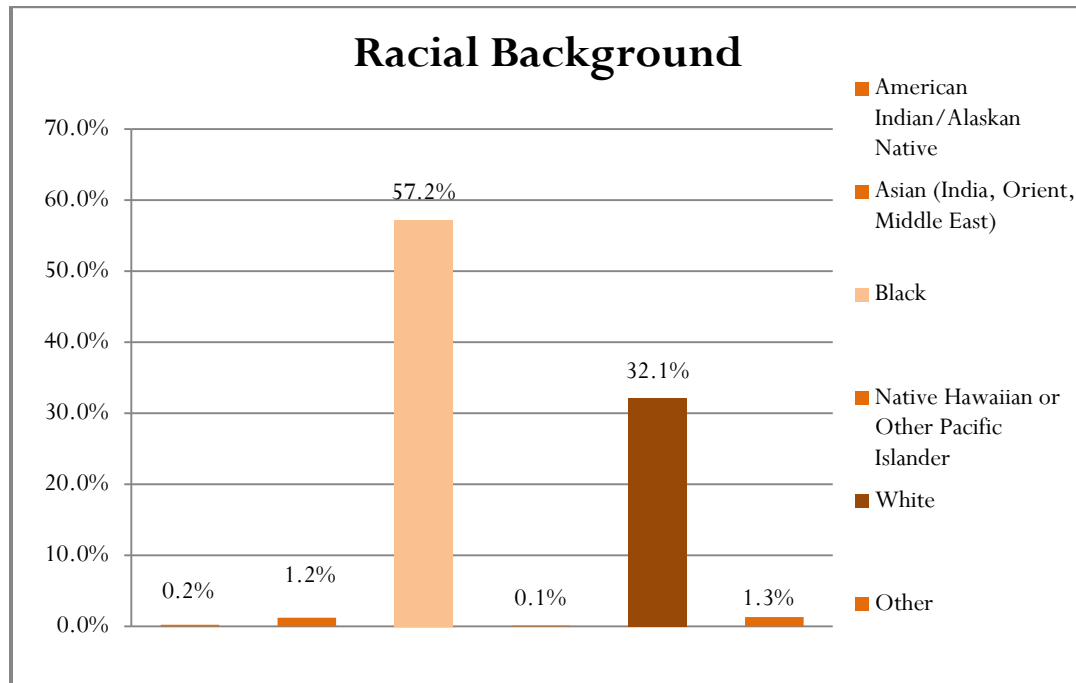| 2013 Length of Homelessness	#	%
1 day to 1 week	63	7.0
8 days to 1 month	58	6.4
1 month & 1 day to 3 months	112	12.4
3 months & 1 day to 6 months	137	15.1
6 months & 1 day to 12 months	194	21.4
More than 1 year	**333**	**36.8**

As reflected in the Episodic Homelessness chart following, a total of 84 or 9.3% adults reported having at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. Although this number has fluctuated over the past three (3) full HUD count years, it reached its lowest level in 2013.

Demographics

In 2013, of the homeless adult population in Union County, 401 people or 44.3% were male, 479 or 52.9% were female and eight (8) or 0.9% identified as transgender.

The chart below outlines the racial breakdown of homeless persons in the 2013 count. The largest percentage were Black (57.2%) most closely followed by White (32.1%). The total percentage of the homeless population that defined their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino equaled 28.1%.

Racial Background

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

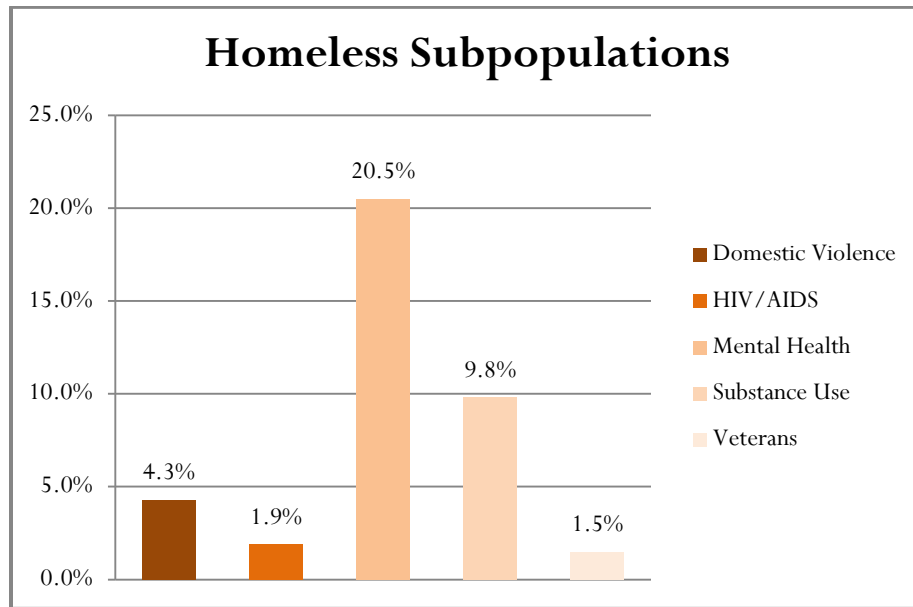Values shown: 0.2%, 1.2%, 57.2%, 0.1%, 32.1%, 1.3%

The largest percentage of the homeless in Union County fell within the 40 to 49 year old age range, totaling 24.1%, closely followed by those within the 30 to 39 year old age range (23.6%).

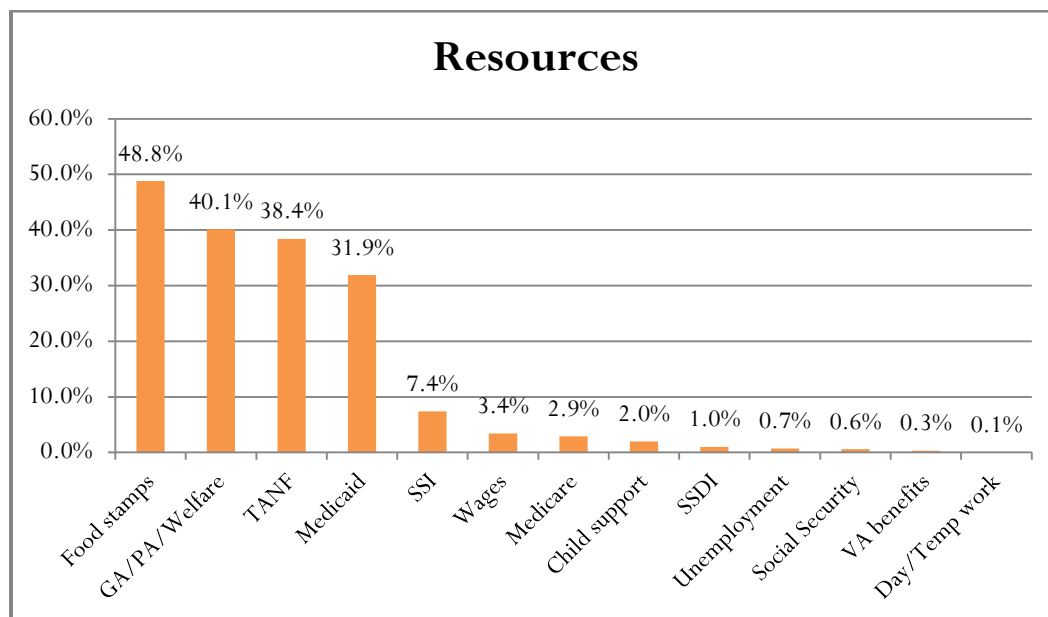| 2013 Age	#	%
Under 18	1	0.1
18-21	49	5.4
22-24	58	6.4
25-29	132	14.6
30-39	214	23.6
40-49	**218**	**24.1**
50-59	175	19.3
60-64	30	3.3
65 or older	8	0.9

Homeless Subpopulations

The Homeless Subpopulation chart outlines the breakdown of the homeless subpopulations in Union County for the 2013 count. The largest subpopulation was the homeless who had mental health issues (20.5%). The number of homeless veterans equaled 1.5% (n=14).

Financial Resources and Income

The three main sources of income reported by people who were homeless on the night of the 2013 count were Food Stamps (48.8%), Welfare (40.1%) and TANF (38.4%). 3.8% of the homeless population reported receiving no form of government benefit on the night of the count.

As part of the 2013 count, respondents were asked to report a current income that provided a potential estimated yearly income. In Union County, the largest percent of respondents stated that they had annual income of less than $5,000 with 13.0% reporting no income on the night of the count.

2013 Year Income	#	%
No Income	118	13.0
$1.00- $4,999	**585**	**64.6**
$5,000- $9,999	153	16.9
$10,000- $14,999	19	2.1
$15,000- $19,999	6	0.7
$20,000- $24,999	6	0.7
$25,000- $29,999	2	0.2
Over $30,000	3	0.3

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.

Contributing Factors to Homelessness	%
Lost job/can't find work	42.6
Housing costs are too high	32.2
Eviction or at risk of Eviction	26.8
Medical problems/physical or developmental disability	25.8
Mental illness/emotional problems	13.9
Relationship/family breakup or death	12.0
Have work but wages are too low	10.3
Alcohol or drug abuse problems	10.2
Utility costs are too high	9.4
Domestic violence	6.7
Incarceration	4.6
Loss of child support	4.6
Lost job due to lack of transportation	2.0
Foreclosure or at risk of Foreclosure	0.9
House condemned	0.9
Natural disaster	0.9

The types of services that respondents stated that they have received in the past three years or are currently in need of receiving are reflected in the table below. The top service received was housing and the top service that was reported as needing was housing.

2013 Service Needs	#	%
Received		
Housing	593	65.5
Emergency shelter	352	38.9
Medical (routine healthcare)	201	22.2
Need		
Housing	269	29.7
Employment assistance	132	14.6
Educational training	89	9.8

Discharge from Mainstream Institutions

As part of the 2013 survey, homeless respondents were asked if they had been discharged into homelessness from certain mainstream institutions within the past three years (since January 30, 2010). The discharge information is based on the homeless population that responded to the survey and relies on self-report.

As the table shows, the institution that had the highest numbers of respondents reporting they were discharged into homelessness was City/County Jail.

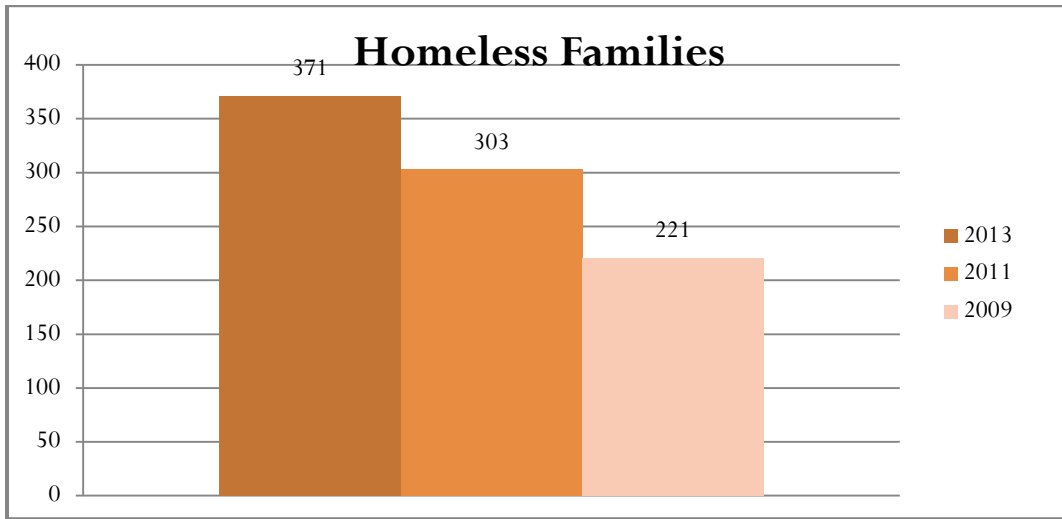| Discharged Into Homelessness (Past Three Years)		
Corrections	#	%
City or County Jail	38	4.2
State Prison	28	3.1
Inpatient Care	#	%
Medical Hospital	26	2.9
Private Inpatient Substance Use	8	0.9
State inpatient mental health	6	0.7
City/County inpatient mental health	5	0.6

Last Permanent Address

In the 2013 count, 97% (n=883) of the homeless respondents lived in New Jersey before becoming homeless. In reviewing at the surrounding states, 0.1% (n=1) last lived in Pennsylvania, and 0.7% (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 (rate of 3% or higher). The largest number reported last living in Elizabeth.

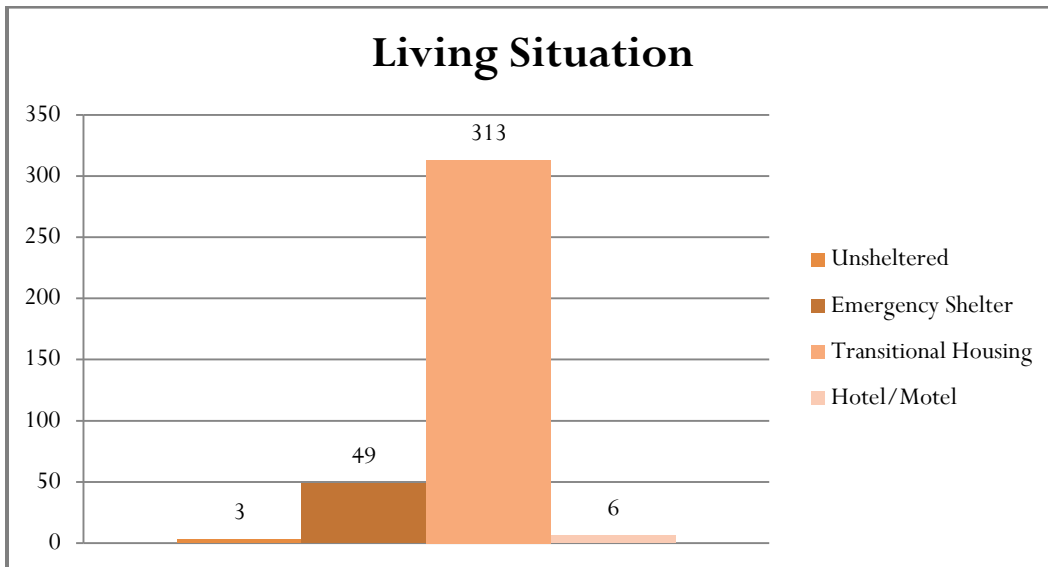| Town	#	%
Elizabeth	560	61.8
Plainfield	92	10.2
Linden	43	4.7
Roselle	35	3.9

FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

In 2013, of the 906 homeless respondents in Union County, 371 or 40.9% had at least one dependent child under the age of 18 with them the night of the count and is considered a homeless family. Of the total of 763 children in these families, 428 were six (6) years or younger and 335 were between the ages of seven (7) and 17 years of age.

Homeless Families

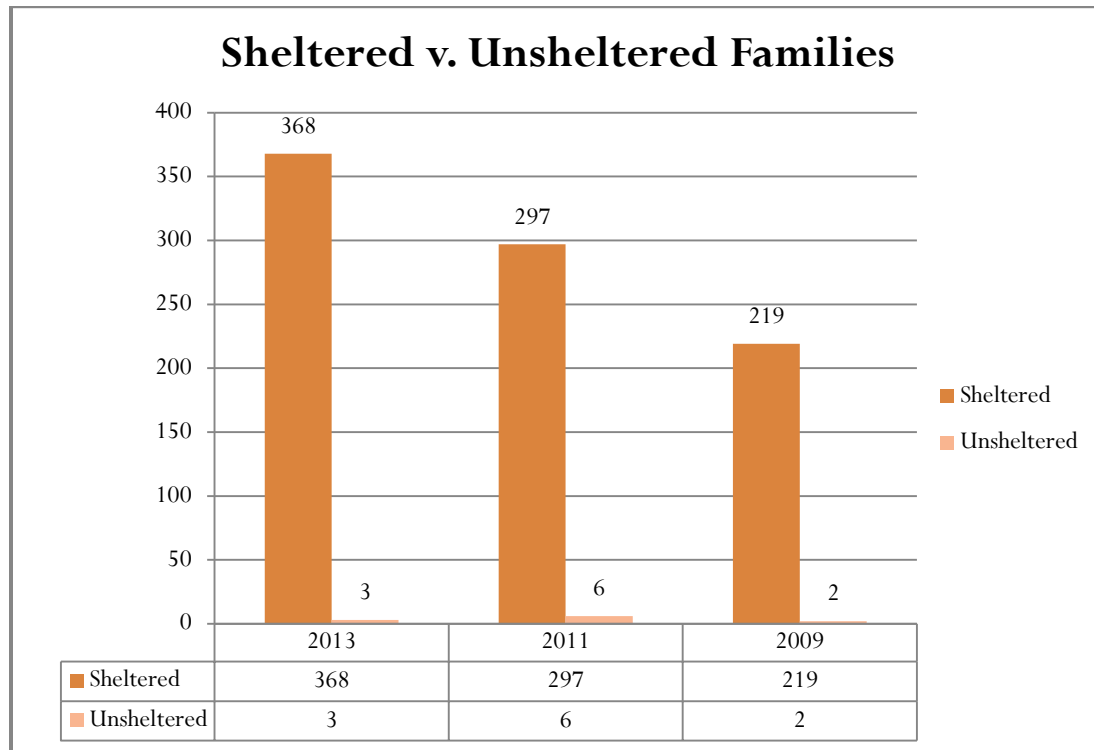|	2013	2011	2009
	371	303	221

Living Situation

In Union County, three (3) homeless families were in an unsheltered living situation and had a total of eight (8) children with them on the night of the count. The remaining 368 homeless families were in sheltered living situations that included emergency shelter, transitional housing and hotel/motel placement. The largest percentage (84.3%) of homeless families were residing in transitional housing on the night of the 2013 count as reflected in the Living Situation chart following.

Living Situation

Unsheltered	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Hotel/Motel
3	49	313	6

2013 PITC- Union County

The homeless families in Union County have primarily been in sheltered living situations over the past three (3) full HUD counts so in turn, these numbers mirror the rise in the total population overall.

Sheltered v. Unsheltered Families

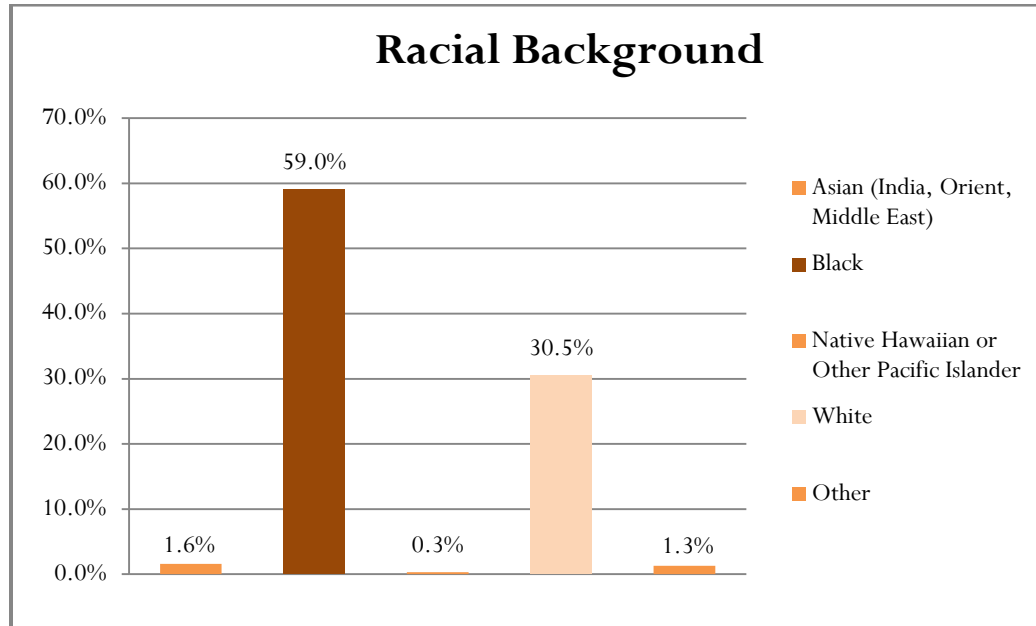|	2013	2011	2009
Sheltered	368	297	219
Unsheltered	3	6	2

Length of Homelessness

The largest percentage (41.8%) of homeless families had been homeless in excess of one (1) year. This is consistent with the total homeless population where the highest percentage was homeless in excess of one (1) year.

2013 Length of Homelessness	#	%
1 day to 1 week	28	7.5
8 days to 1 month	22	5.9
1 month & 1 day to 3 months	27	7.3
3 months & 1 day to 6 months	56	15.1
6 months & 1 day to 12 months	79	21.3
More than 1 year	**155**	**41.8**

Demographics

Of the 371 homeless families in Union County, 81.4% (n= 302) were female headed households and 15.6% (n=58) were male headed households. Three (3) households or 0.8% were headed by people identifying as transgender.

The chart below outlines the racial breakdown of homeless families in the 2013 count. 59% of the respondents defined their races as Black. The next largest group was those that defined themselves as White at 30.5%. 35% (n=130) defined their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino.

Racial Background

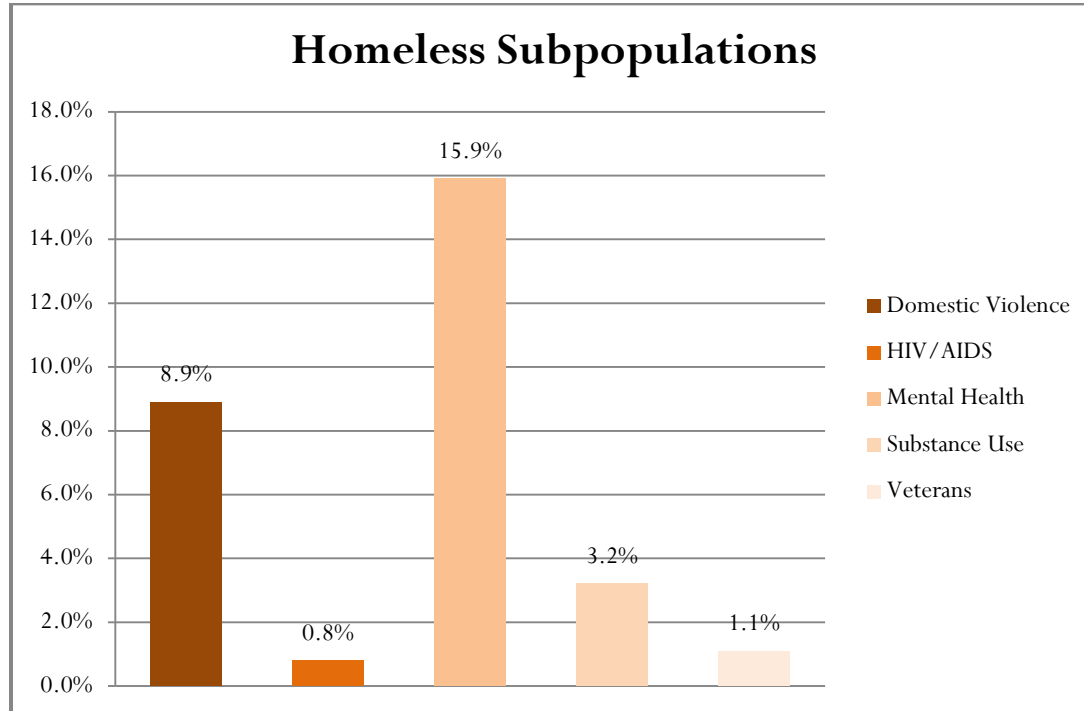| Category	Value
Asian (India, Orient, Middle East)	1.6%
Black	59.0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.3%
White	30.5%
Other	1.3%

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 (34.5%). A majority of the homeless families had heads of households between the ages of 25 and 49 years of age as reflected in the table below.

2013 Age	#	%
18-21	29	7.8
22-24	40	10.8
25-29	84	22.6
30-39	**128**	**34.5**
40-49	62	16.7
50-59	15	4.0
60-64	1	0.3

Homeless Family Subpopulations

Among the HUD homeless subpopulations in the 2013 count, the largest subpopulation amongst homeless families was those with a head of household with mental health issues (15.9%). The next largest percentage was households experiencing domestic violence (8.9%).

Financial Resources and Income

The three main sources of income reported on the night of the 2013 count were:

- TANF (85.7%)
- Food Stamps (53.6%); and
- Medicaid (32.6%)

All but 0.5% (n=2) of the families reported receiving some form of government benefit on the night of the count. In reviewing yearly estimated income, the largest percentage (60.6%) were earning less than $5,000 annually with a majority of the families earning less than $10,000 a year.

2013 Year Income	#	%
No Income	18	4.9
$1.00- $4,999	**225**	**60.6**
$5,000- $9,999	107	28.8
$10,000- $14,999	8	2.2
$15,000- $19,999	4	1.1
$20,000- $24,999	2	0.5
Over $25,000	2	0.5

Service Needs and Contributing Factors to Homelessness

The highest ranking factor that respondents stated contributed to their homelessness was loss of job or inability to find work. The other top ranking factor was housing costs being too expensive.

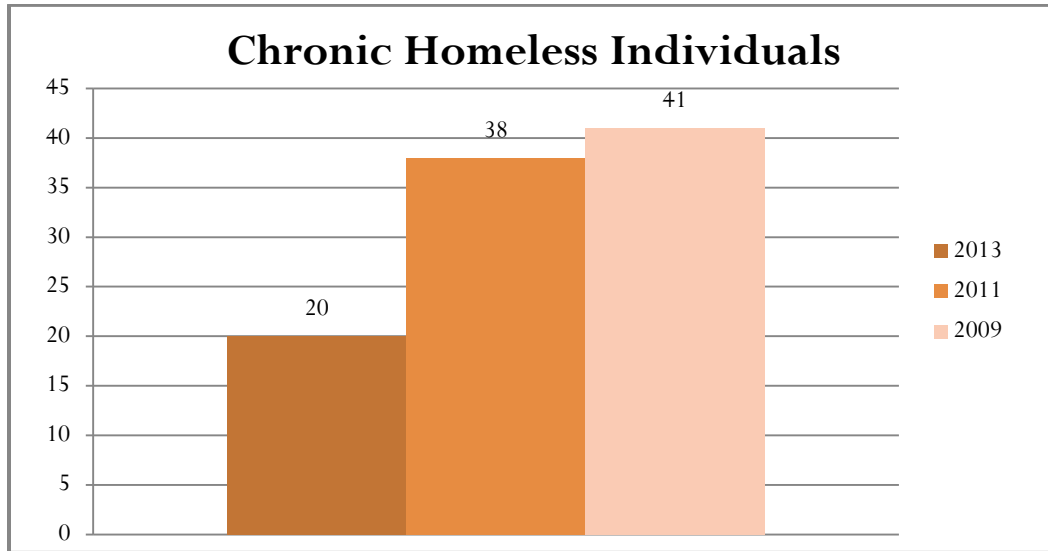| Contributing Factors to Homelessness	%
Lost job/can't find work	48.8
Housing costs are too high	39.6
Eviction or at risk of Eviction	27.5
Medical problems/physical or developmental disability	22.1
Relationship/family breakup or death	12.9

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

- Housing (23.7%)
- Employment assistance (12.1%); and
- Educational Training (11.9%)
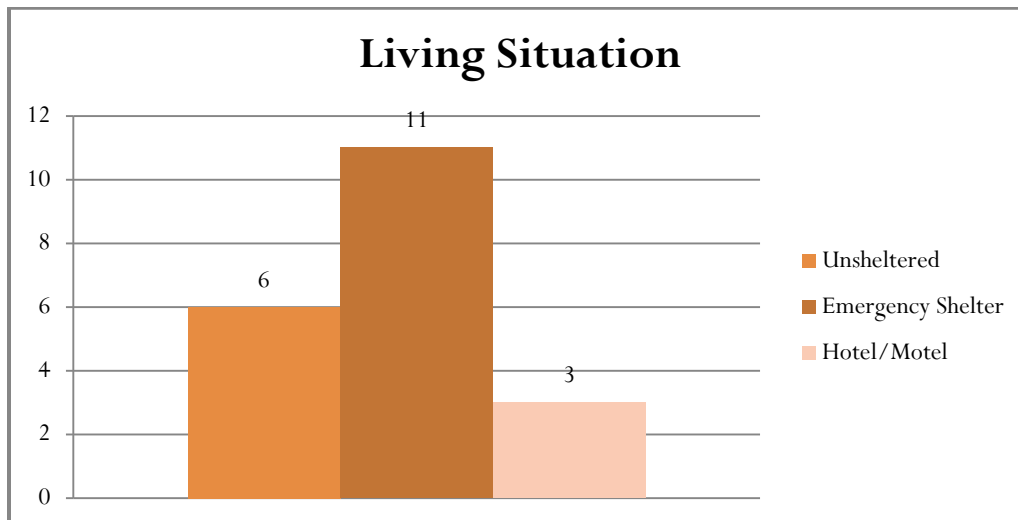
CHRONICALLY HOMELESS

INDIVIDUALS

On the night of January 30, 2013, there were 20 chronically homeless individuals counted in Union County equaling 1.2% of the total homeless population. The chronically homeless individual population in Union County has been on the decline over the past three (3) full HUD count years with an overall decrease of 51.2%.
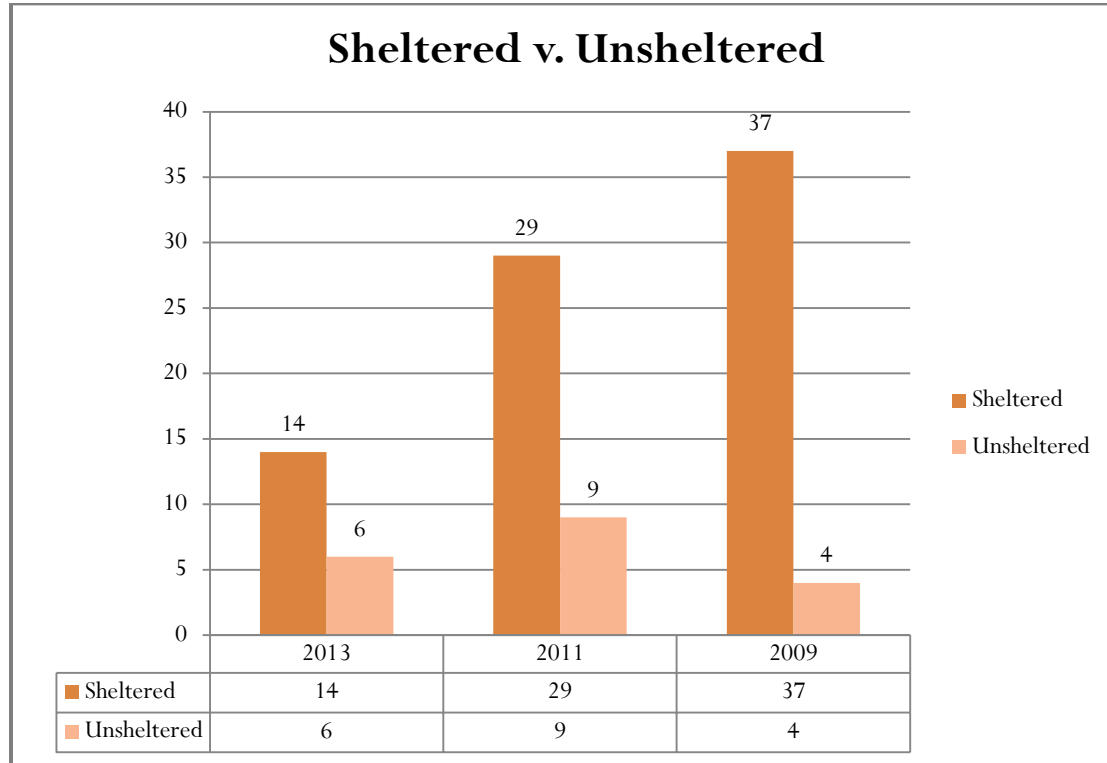

Living Situation

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 that follows is a breakdown of where the chronically homeless were residing on the night of the 2013 count. The largest percentage (55%) of the chronically homeless individual population in Union County was residing in emergency shelter on the night of the count.

The number of unsheltered chronically homeless individuals in Union County has fluctuated over the past three (3) full HUD count years but was low overall. However the sheltered population has decreased over time.

Sheltered v. Unsheltered

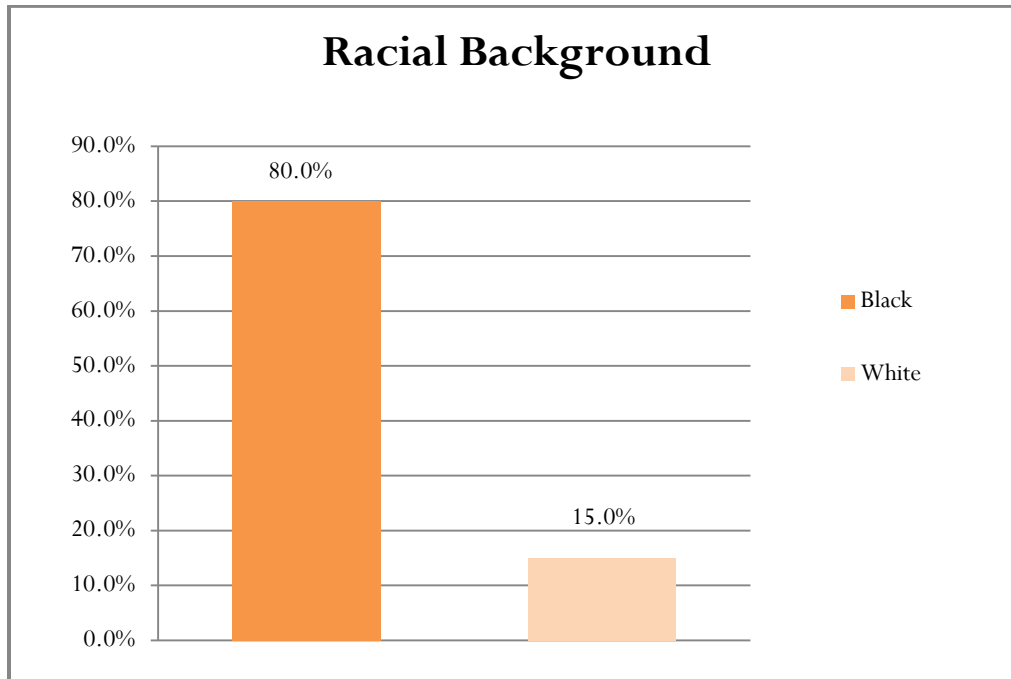|	2013	2011	2009
Sheltered	14	29	37
Unsheltered	6	9	4

Length of Homelessness
Of the total chronically homeless individuals in Union County, 65% (n= 13) reported they had been homeless in excess of one (1) year. A total of 85% (n= 17) reported having four (4) episodes of homelessness in the past three (3) years.

2013 Length of Homelessness	#	%
1 day to 1 week	1	5.0
1 month & 1 day to 3 months	1	5.0
3 months & 1 day to 6 months	2	10.0
6 months & 1 day to 12 months	3	15.0
More than 1 year	**13**	**65.0**

Demographics

In 2013, 13 or 65% of the chronically homeless individual population was male and four (4) or 20% was female.   One (1) individual identified as transgender.

As the chart below outlines, the majority of the chronically homeless individuals identified their race as Black (80%) with the next largest percentage being those who identified themselves as White (15%).   The total percentage that defined their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino equaled 20%.
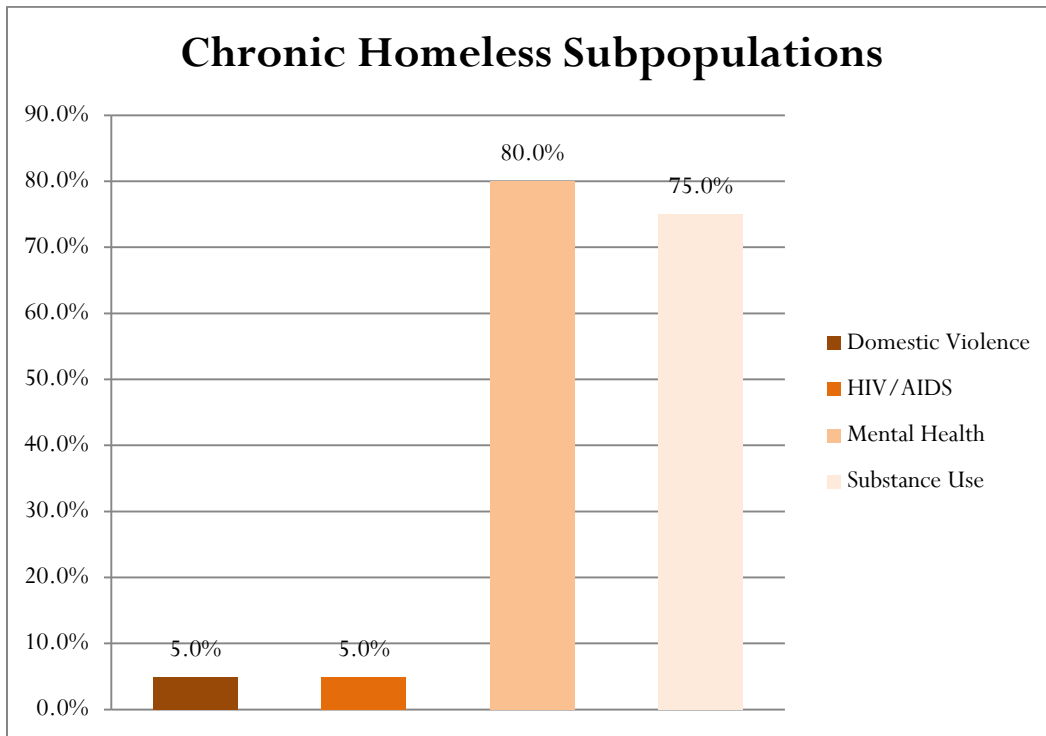

As the table reflects, on the night of the 2013 count in Union County, the largest percentage of chronically homeless individuals was between 40 and 59 years of age.

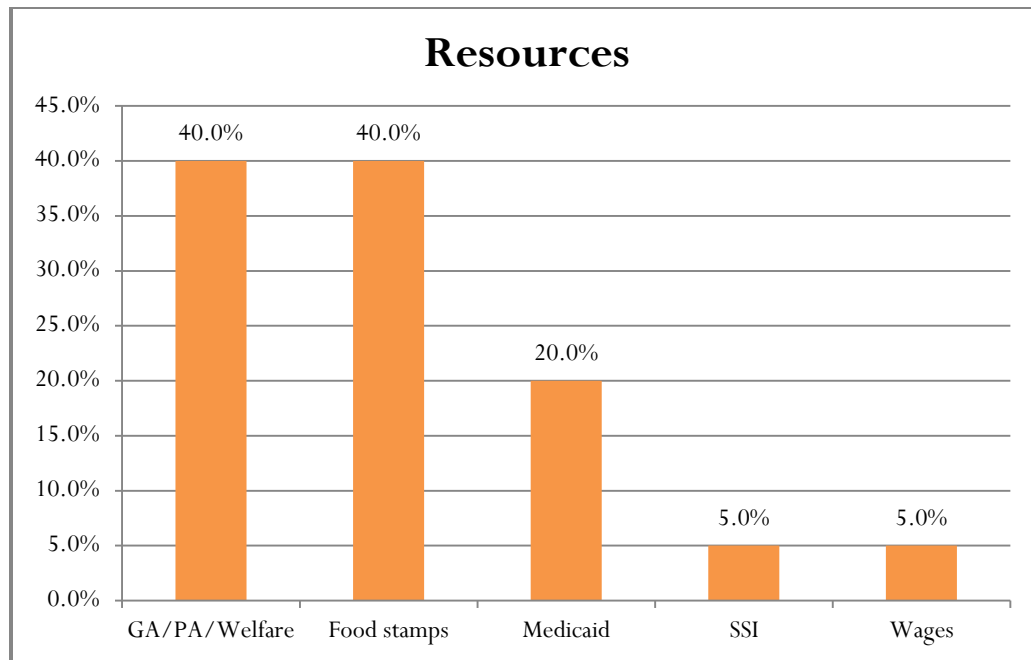| 2013 Age	#	%
18-21	2	10.0%
30-39	3	15.0%
40–49	**7**	**35.0%**
50–59	**7**	**35.0%**

Chronic Homeless Subpopulations

The chart below outlines the breakdown of the chronic homeless individual subpopulations for the 2013 count. 80% of the chronic homeless individuals reported they had mental health issues and 75% reported having substance use issues.

Financial Resources

The three (3) main sources of income reported by people who were homeless in Union County on the night of the 2013 count were Welfare (40%), Food Stamps (40%) and Medicaid (20%). All but one (1) or (5%) of the chronically homeless individual population reported receiving some form of government benefit on the night of the count.

Resources

As reflected in the table below, almost all of the chronically homeless individuals reported having an estimated annual income of less than $5,000.

2013 Year Income	#	%
No Income	**9**	**45.0%**
$1.00– $4,999	**9**	**45.0%**
Over $5,000	2	10.0%

Service Needs and Contributing Factors to Homelessness

The highest ranking factor that chronically homeless individual respondents stated contributed to their homelessness was substance abuse problems. The other top ranking factor was loss of job/inability to find work. The following table provides specifics.

2013 Contributing Factors to Homelessness	%
Alcohol or drug abuse problems	55.0
Lost job/can't find work	40.0
Housing costs are too high	35.0
Mental illness/emotional problems	25.0
Relationship/family breakup or death	20.0
Have work but wages are too low	15.0
Incarceration	15.0
Medical problems/physical or developmental disability	15.0
Utility costs are too high	15.0
Eviction or at risk of Eviction	10.0
Loss of child support	10.0
Domestic violence	5.0
Lost job due to lack of transportation	5.0

The types of services that respondents stated that they have received in the past three years or are currently in need of receiving are reflected in the table 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 being needed was housing services.

2013 Service Needs	#	%
Received		
Emergency shelter	10	50.0
Emergency food	7	35.0
Medical (disability)	3	15.0
Need		
Housing	14	70.0
Employment assistance	6	30.0
Medical (routine healthcare)	6	30.0

Discharge from Mainstream Institutions

As part of the 2013 survey, respondents were asked if they had been discharged into homelessness from certain mainstream institutions within the past three years (since January 30, 2010). The discharge information is based on the chronically homeless individual population that responded to the survey and relies on self-report.

As the table reflects, the institution that had the highest number of respondents reporting they were discharged into homelessness was the City/County Jail.

Discharged Into Homelessness (Past Three Years)		
Corrections	#	%
City or County Jail	7	35.0
State Prison	1	5.0
Inpatient Care	#	%
State inpatient mental health	1	5.0
Private Inpatient Substance Use	1	5.0

Last Permanent Address

In the 2013 count, 95.0% (n=19) 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 (rate of 5% or higher). The city with the highest number was Elizabeth.

Town	#	%
Elizabeth	8	40.0
Plainfield	6	30.0
North Plainfield	2	10.0

CHRONICALLY HOMELESS FAMILIES

In Union County, a total of three (3) families met the chronic homeless definition and could be considered a chronically homeless family. This is the same number that was counted in the 2011 count. These families had a total of four (4) children with them on the night of the count.

These three (3) families equal 0.1% of the total homeless population and 0.8% of the total family homeless population. Adding the families to the individuals gives Union County a total chronically homeless population of 27 men, women and children on the night of the 2013 count.

Living Situation and Length of Homelessness

On the night of the count all three (3) families were in a sheltered homeless living situation; two (2) resided in hotels paid for by an agency, and one (1) resided in an emergency shelter. Two (2) of the families had been homeless in excess of one year and two (2) had four (4) episodes of homelessness in the past three (3) years.

Demographics

In 2013, two (2) chronically homeless families had a female headed household, and one (1) head of household identified as transgender. The head of households were between 30 and 49 years of age. Two (2) of the families identified their race as White, and one (1) identified as Black. Two (2) families indicated Hispanic ethnicity.

Chronic Homeless Family Subpopulations

In Union County, two (2) chronically homeless families were part of the mental illness subpopulation, and one (1) was part of the domestic violence subpopulation.

Financial Resources and Income

The three main sources of income reported by the chronically homeless families were SSI, TANF, and Medicaid. While incomes differed per household, the majority had an estimated annual income of less than $10,000.

Contributing Factors to Homelessness

The top factor reported as contributing to their homelessness was mental illness. The other contributing factors reported were substance abuse issues, high housing costs, and domestic violence.