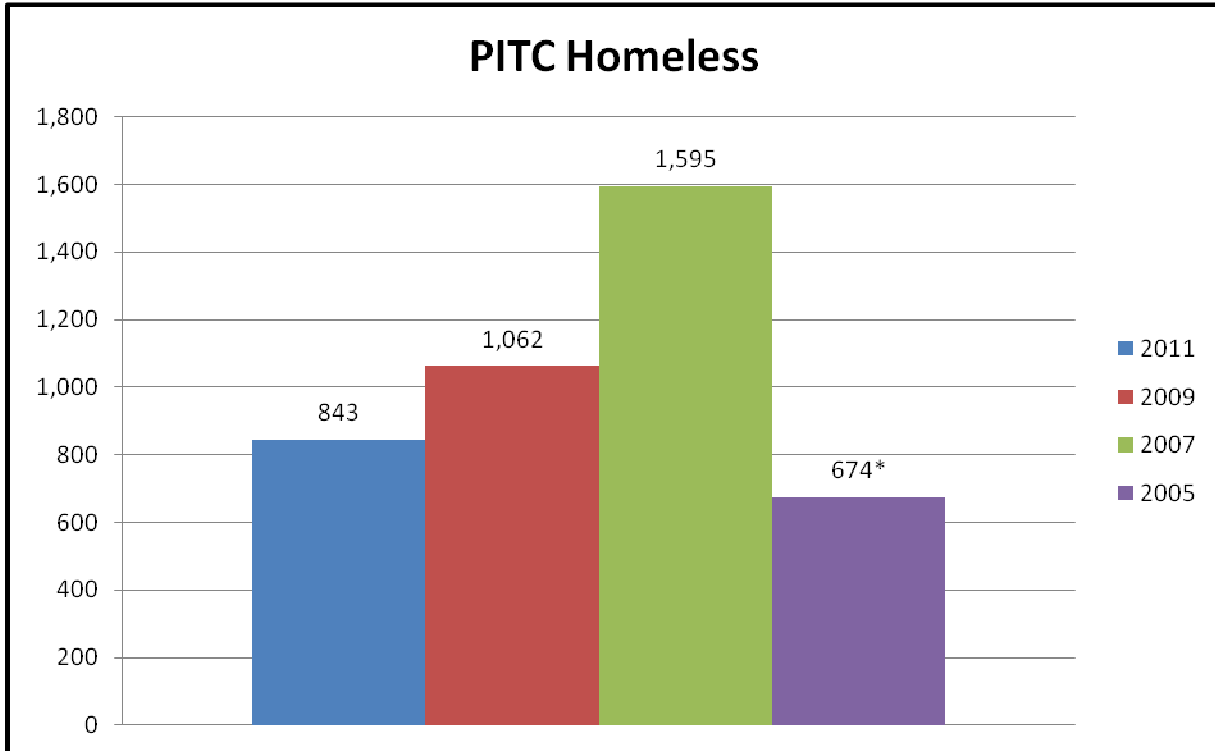


## MERCER COUNTY

On January 26, 2011 there were 843 homeless men, women and children counted in Mercer County according to the official U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness.

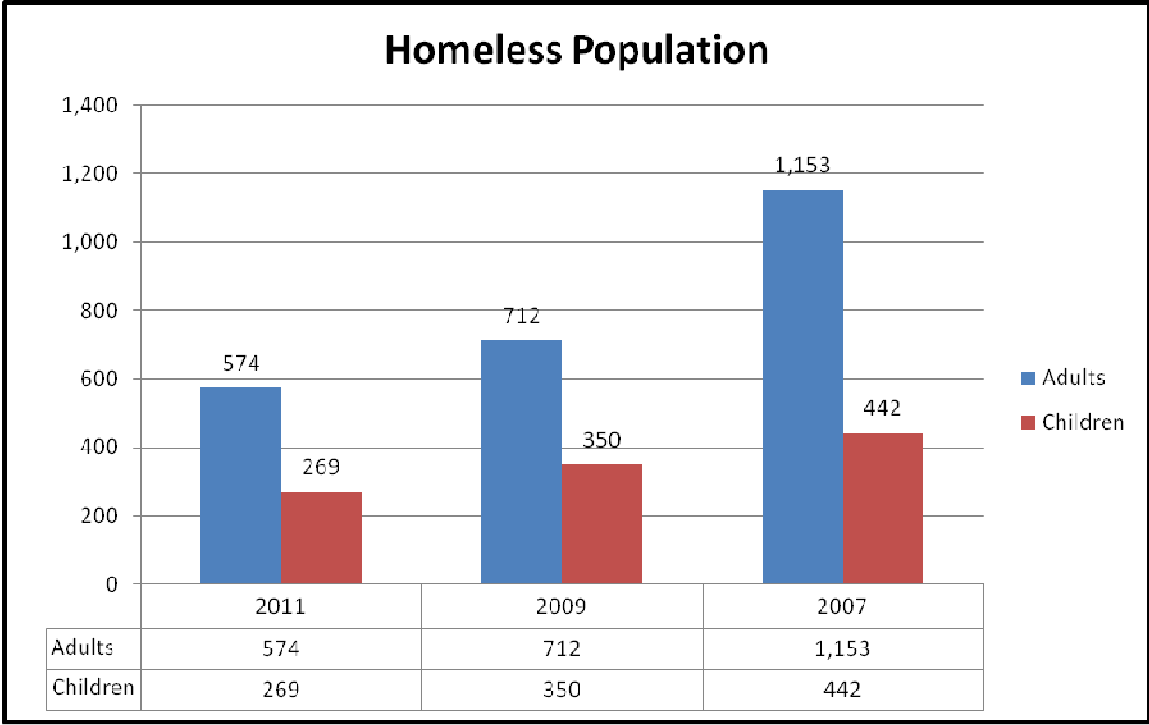


\*Adults only

Homelessness in Mercer County has been on the decline since 2007 with a 47.1% decrease overall. The number of homeless children in the County have been on the decline as well as shown in the Homeless Population chart below.

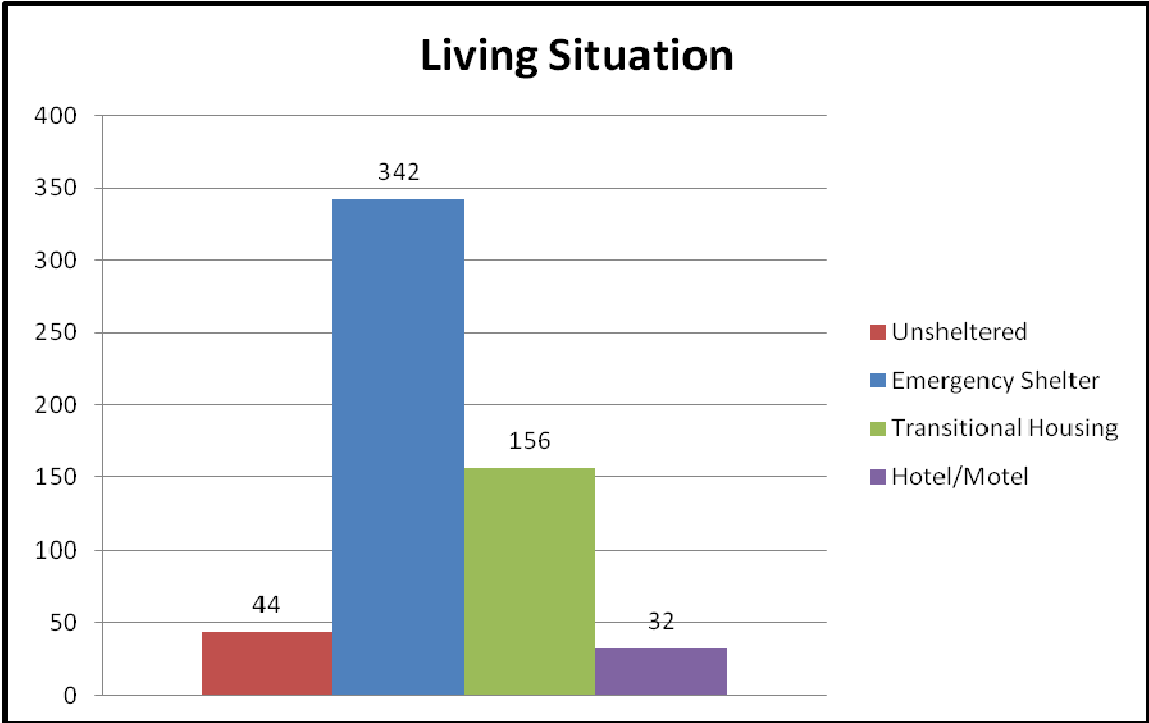
2011 Homeless Breakdown	
Respondents (Adults)	574
Family Members (Children)	269
<b>Total all Survey Homeless</b>	<b>843</b>

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, 1,526 adults and children are homeless in Mercer County.*

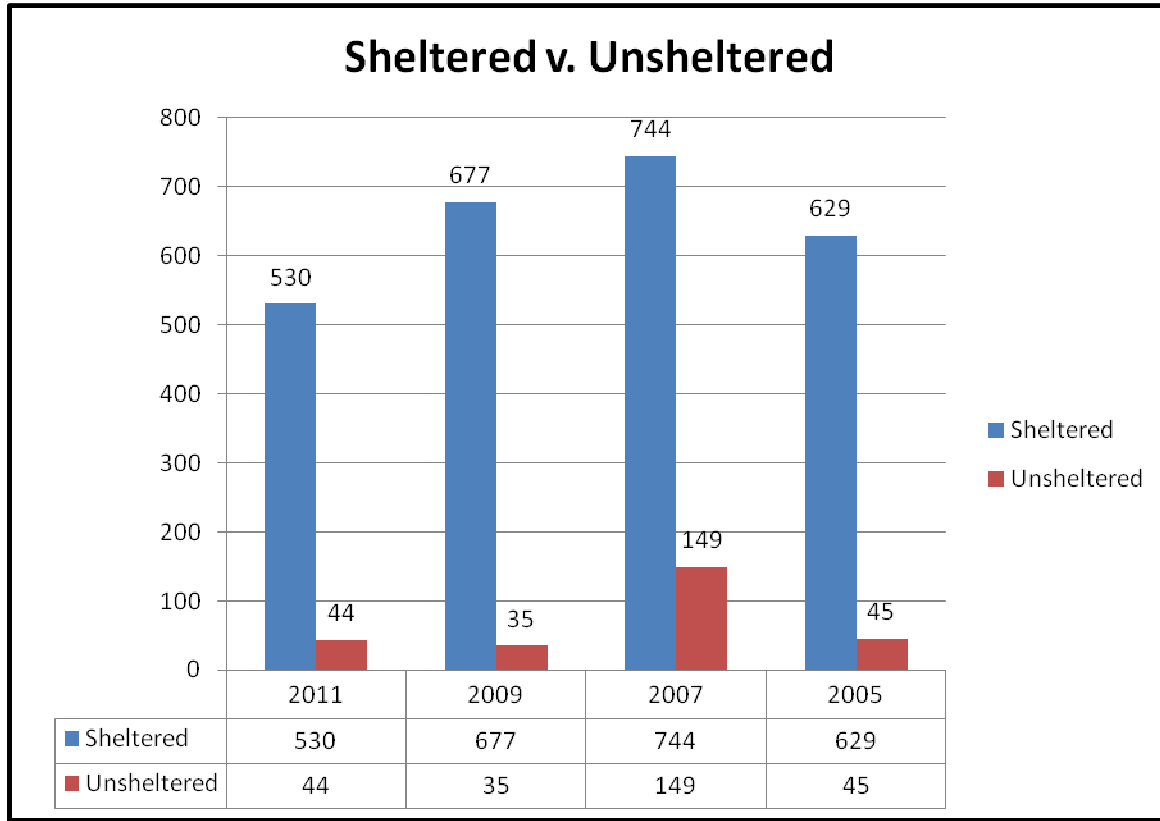


**Living Situation**

As reflected in the Living Situation chart below, 44 or 7.6% of the homeless 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 emergency shelter (n=342, 59.5%).



The number of sheltered homeless in Mercer County has been on the decline since 2007, mirroring the homeless trend overall. The number of unsheltered homeless has fluctuated over the past four HUD count years with the lowest numbers seen in 2009.



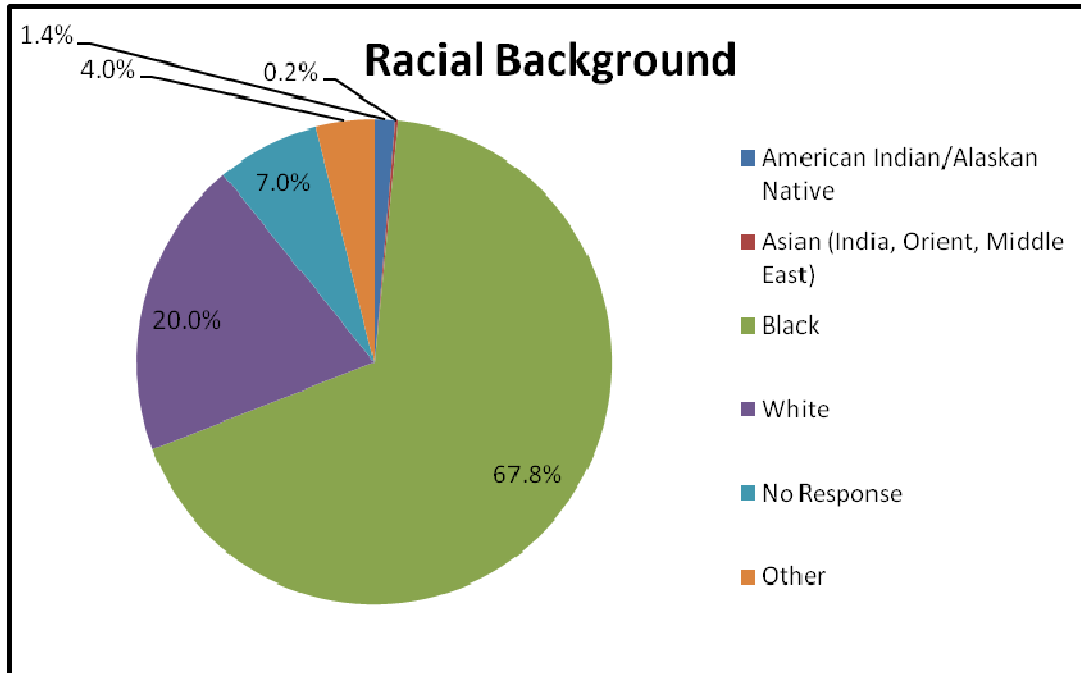
### Length and Episodes of Homelessness

The largest percentage of homeless in Mercer County was homeless for more than one year (38.7%). Of those that were homeless less than one year 25.6% reported that they had been homeless at least one other time within the past 12 months. A total of 191 or 33.3% of the total homeless population reported having at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.

<b>2011 Length of Homelessness</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
1 day - 1 week	18	3.1
8 days - 1 month	38	6.6
1 month & 1 day - 3 months	75	13.1
3 months & 1 day to 6 months	102	17.8
6 months & 1 day to 12 months	101	17.6
<b>More than 1 year</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>38.7</b>
No response	18	3.1

**Demographics**

In 2011, of the total homeless population in Mercer County, a total of 323 or 56.3% was male, 234 or 40.8% was female and two (2) or 0.3. % was transgender. The Racial Background chart below outlines the racial breakdown of the homeless persons in the 2011 count. The largest majority were Black (67.8%) followed by White (20.0%). The total percentage of the homeless population that defined their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino equaled 11.5%.



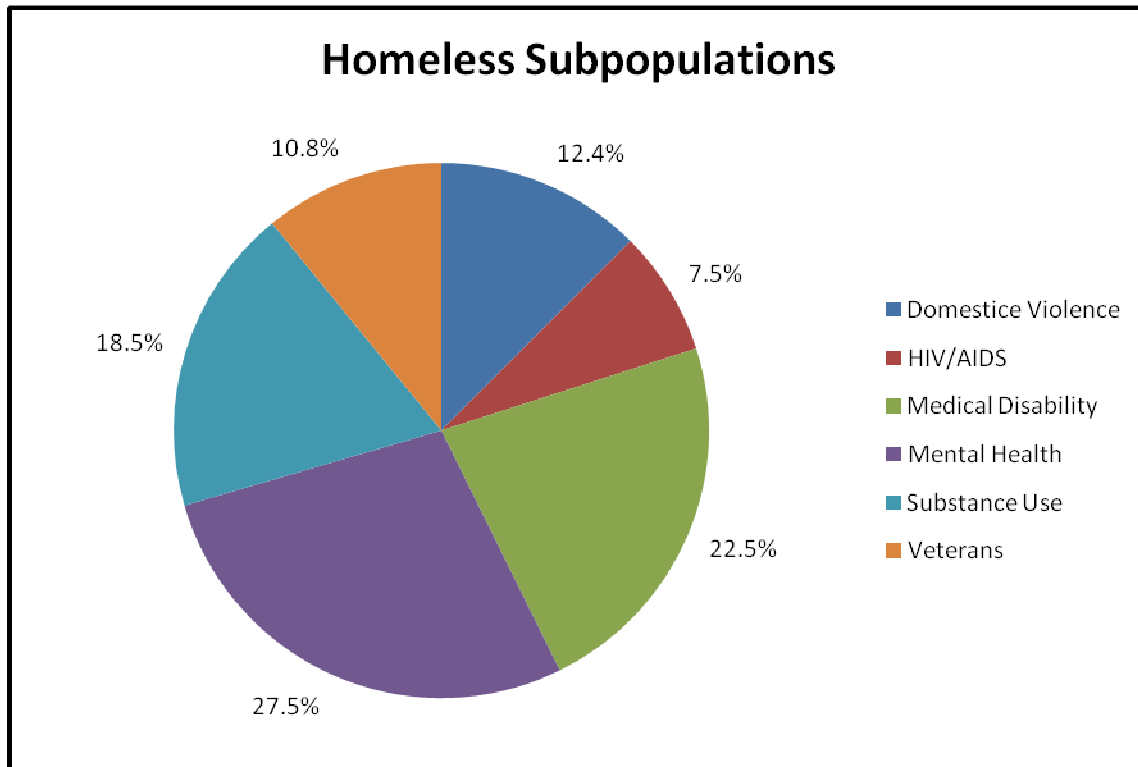
The largest percentage of homeless in Mercer County fell within the 50 to 59 year old age range, totaling 27.2%. This was then most closely followed by those within the 40 to 49 year old age range (23.2%).

Age	#	%
Under 18	4	0.7
18-20	31	5.4
21-24	57	9.9
25-29	55	9.6
30-39	89	15.5
40-49	133	23.2
<b>50-59</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>27.2</b>
60-64	21	3.7
65+	14	2.4
No response	14	2.4

**Homeless Subpopulations**

The chart below outlines the breakdown of the homeless subpopulations in Mercer County for the 2011 count. The two largest subpopulations were the homeless who had mental health issues (27.5%) and those with a medical disability (22.5%).

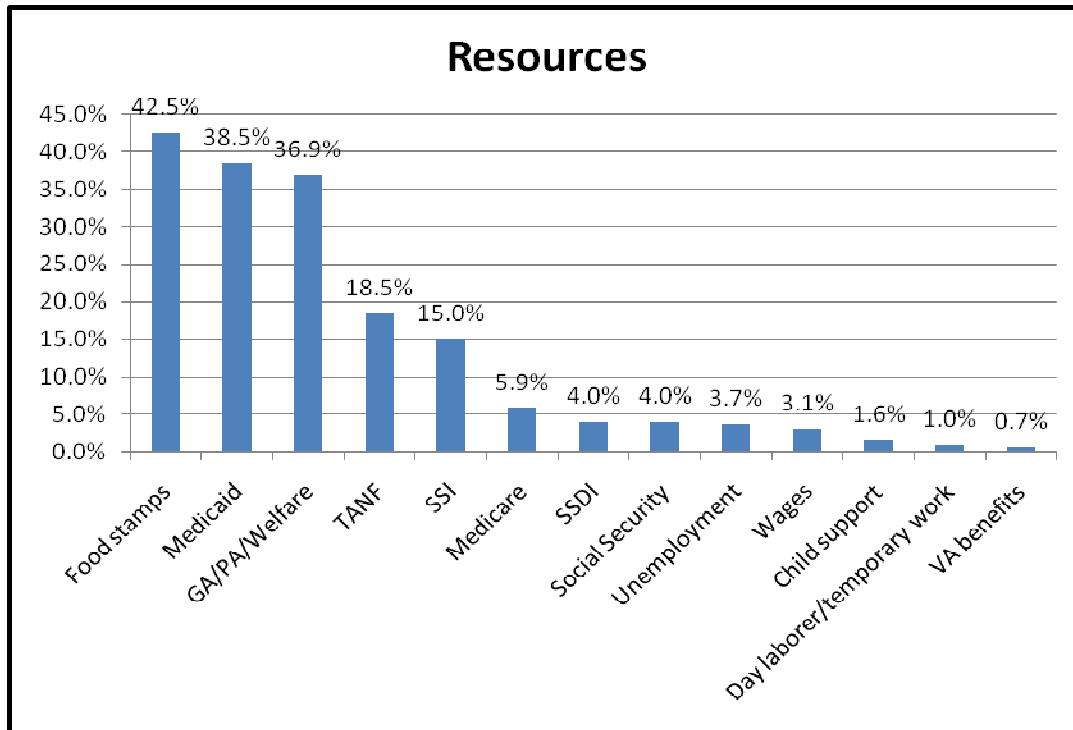
The number of homeless that reported serving in the US military equaled 10.7% (n= 62). However, the number of respondents that reported receiving or needing veterans services within the last three years equaled 6.2% (n= 36).



**Financial Resources**

The three main sources of income reported in Mercer County on the night of the 2011 count were Food Stamps (42.5%), Medicaid (38.5%) and Welfare (36.9%). The Resources chart below shows all income/financial resources that were declared on the night of the count.

Additionally, 4.4% of the homeless population reported receiving no type of government benefit and 7.7% reported having no source of income on the night of the 2011 count.



### **Contributing Factors to Homelessness**

The highest ranking factor that respondents stated contributed to their homelessness in Mercer County was the loss of a job and inability to find work. Other top ranking factors included relationship breakdown, substance use issues, and housing costs being too high.

<b>Contributing Factors to Homelessness</b>	<b>%</b>
Lost job/cannot find work	32.1
Relationship/family breakup/death	25.3
Alcohol or drug abuse problems	24.9
Housing costs too high	24.9
Eviction	19.2
Mental illness/emotional problems	17.4
Medical problems/physical or developmental disability	13.8
Domestic violence	11.7
Have work but wages are too low	11.7
Incarceration	10.1
Utility costs too high	8.2
Lost job due to lack of transportation	5.2
Foreclosure	3.1
Loss of child support	2.1
House condemned	1.7
Natural disaster	0.7

**Discharge from Mainstream Institutions**

Questions on institutional stays and discharge from mainstream institutions within the past three years (since January 26, 2008) were again a part of the 2011 count. Each of the mainstream institutions included in the survey had contact with the homeless population and discharged at least some people into homelessness, according to the survey respondents.

The system that had the most contact with the homeless was medical hospitals.

System (Past Three Years)	Homeless In System		In System Discharged into Homelessness	
	#	%	#	%
<b>Corrections</b>				
State Prison	57	9.9	40	70.2
City/County Jail	116	20.2	63	54.3
Juvenile Detention Center	9	1.6	7	77.8
<b>Inpatient Care</b>	#	%	#	
Hospitalized (Medical)	184	32.1	89	48.4
State Inpatient Mental Health	32	5.6	18	56.3
City/County Inpatient Mental Health	39	6.8	22	56.4
Substance Abuse Treatment	45	7.8	17	37.8

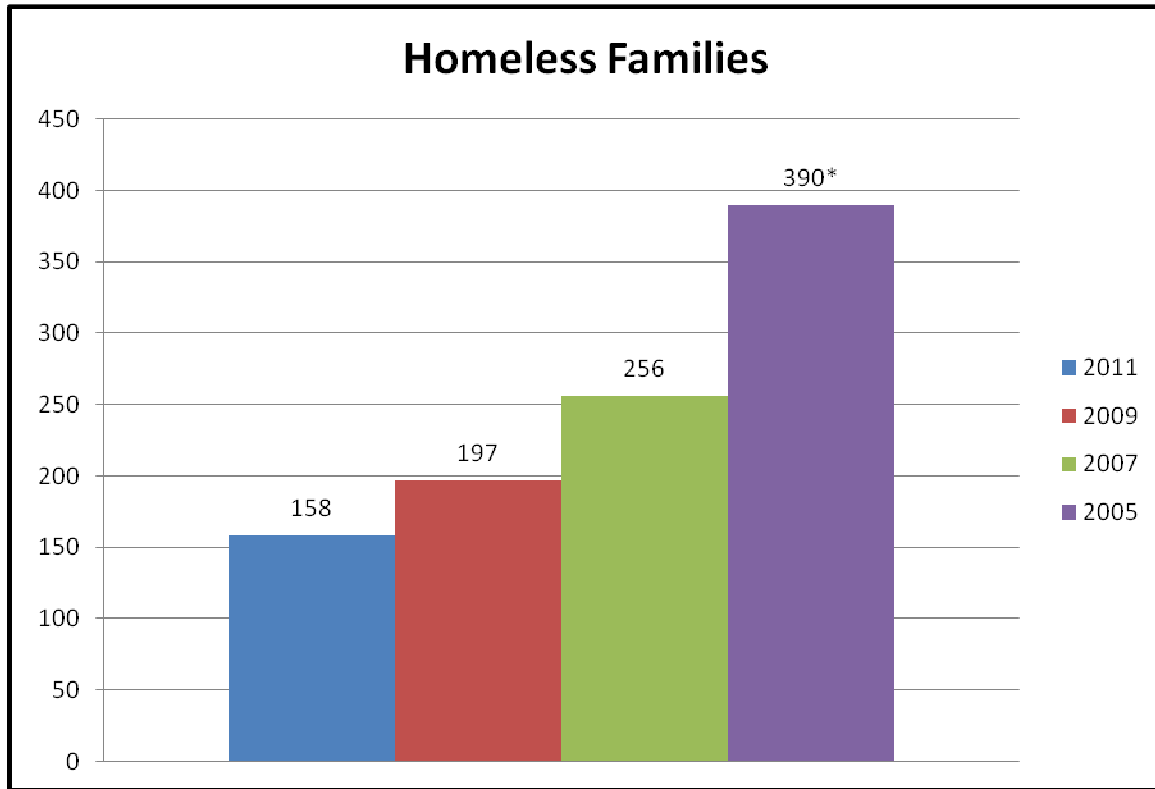
**Last Permanent Address**

In the 2011 count, 86.7% (n= 498) of respondents lived in New Jersey before becoming homeless, while 2.9% (n= 17) last lived in Pennsylvania and 1.2% (n= 7) last lived in New York. The cities most frequently cited by respondents as the last place they lived before becoming homeless are below (those that had a rate of 1% or higher). The largest percentage of the homeless population reported that their last permanent address before becoming homeless was in Trenton.

Town	%
Trenton	66.2
Hamilton	4.5
Camden	1.5

## FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

In 2011, of the 574 homeless respondents in Mercer County, 158 or 27.5% had at least one dependent child under 18 with them the night of the count and is considered a homeless family. A total of 269 children were homeless within these families, including 166 children six years or younger and 103 between the ages of 7 and 17.

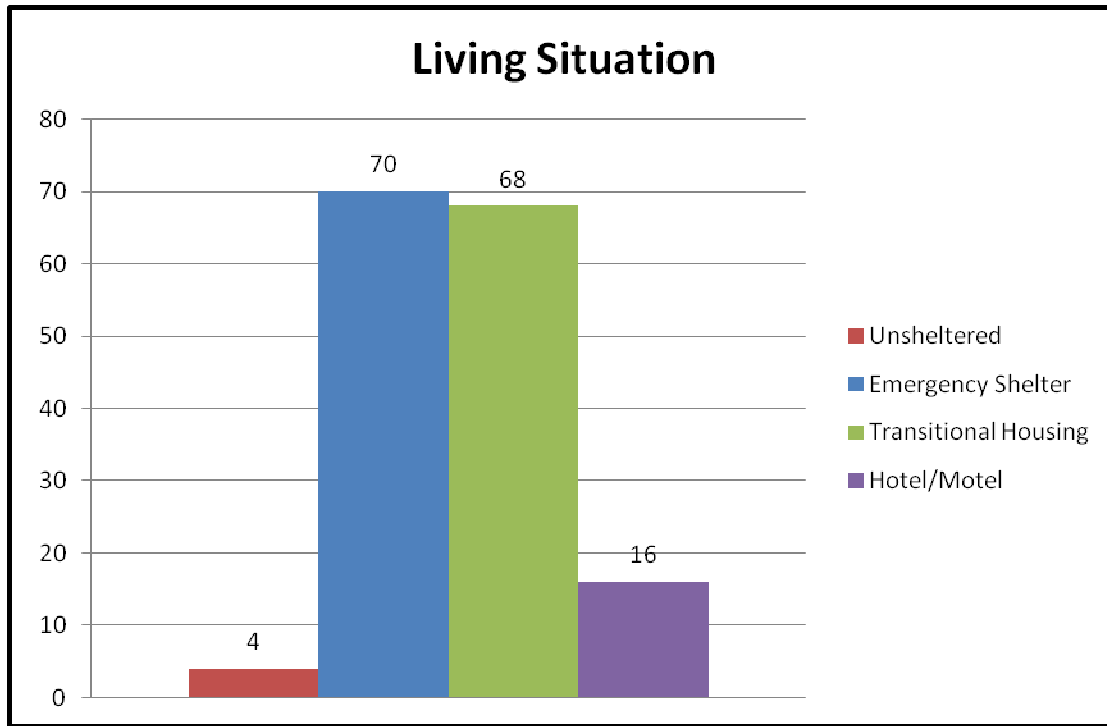


\*May include families that do not meet the HUD definition of homeless

### Living Situation

In Mercer County, a total of four (4) homeless families, including seven (7) children, were in an unsheltered living situation on the night of the count.

The remaining 154 homeless families were in sheltered living situations with the largest percentage (45.4%) of homeless families residing in emergency shelter on the night of the 2011 count as represented in the Living Situation chart below. This was very closely followed by those living in transitional housing on the night of the count.



### Length of Homelessness

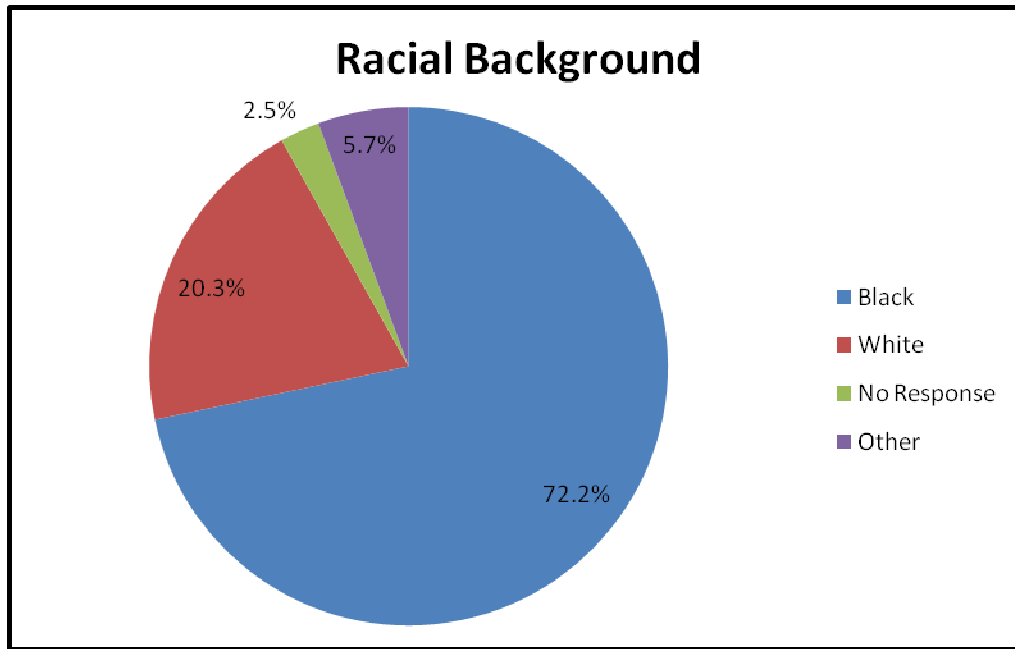
The largest percentage (29.7%) of homeless families had been homeless for more than one year. The next largest group were those homeless for from three (3) to six (6) months (27.2%).

2011 Length of Homelessness	#	%
1 day - 1 week	4	2.5
8 days - 1 month	8	5.1
1 month & 1 day - 3 months	29	18.4
3 months & 1 day to 6 months	43	27.2
6 months & 1 day to 12 months	24	15.2
<b>More than 1 year</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>29.7</b>
No response	3	1.9

### Demographics

Of the total 158 homeless families in Mercer County, 29.7% (n= 47) were male headed households, 68.4% (n= 108) were female headed households, and 0.6% (n =1) was transgender.

The Racial Background chart below outlines the racial breakdown of homeless families in the 2011 count. The majority of the families defined themselves as Black (72.2%). The next largest group was those that defined themselves as White with 20.3%. 17.1% (n= 27) defined their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino.

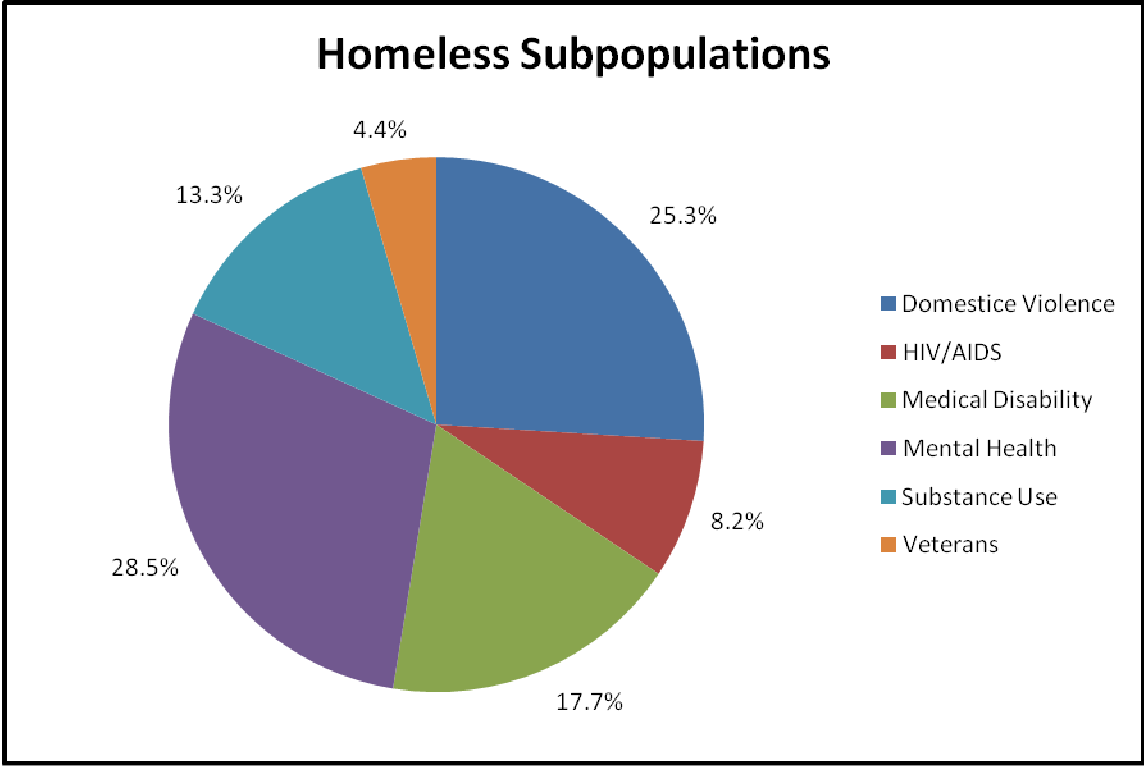


The largest percentage of homeless families in Mercer County had a head of household that fell within the 21 to 24 year old age range. However, the majority were clustered between the ages of 21 to 39 years old.

Age	#	%
Under 18	0	0.0
18-20	16	10.1
<b>21-24</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>24.1</b>
25-29	34	21.5
30-39	33	20.9
40-49	20	12.7
50-59	13	8.2
60-64	1	0.6
65+	1	0.6
No response	2	1.3

### **Homeless Family Subpopulations**

In looking at where homeless families fell within the different HUD homeless subpopulations for the 2011 count, in Mercer County, the largest number of homeless families was those where the head of household reported having mental health issues. The next largest were households with a medical disability as reflected in the Homeless Subpopulations chart below.



**Contributing Factors to Homelessness**

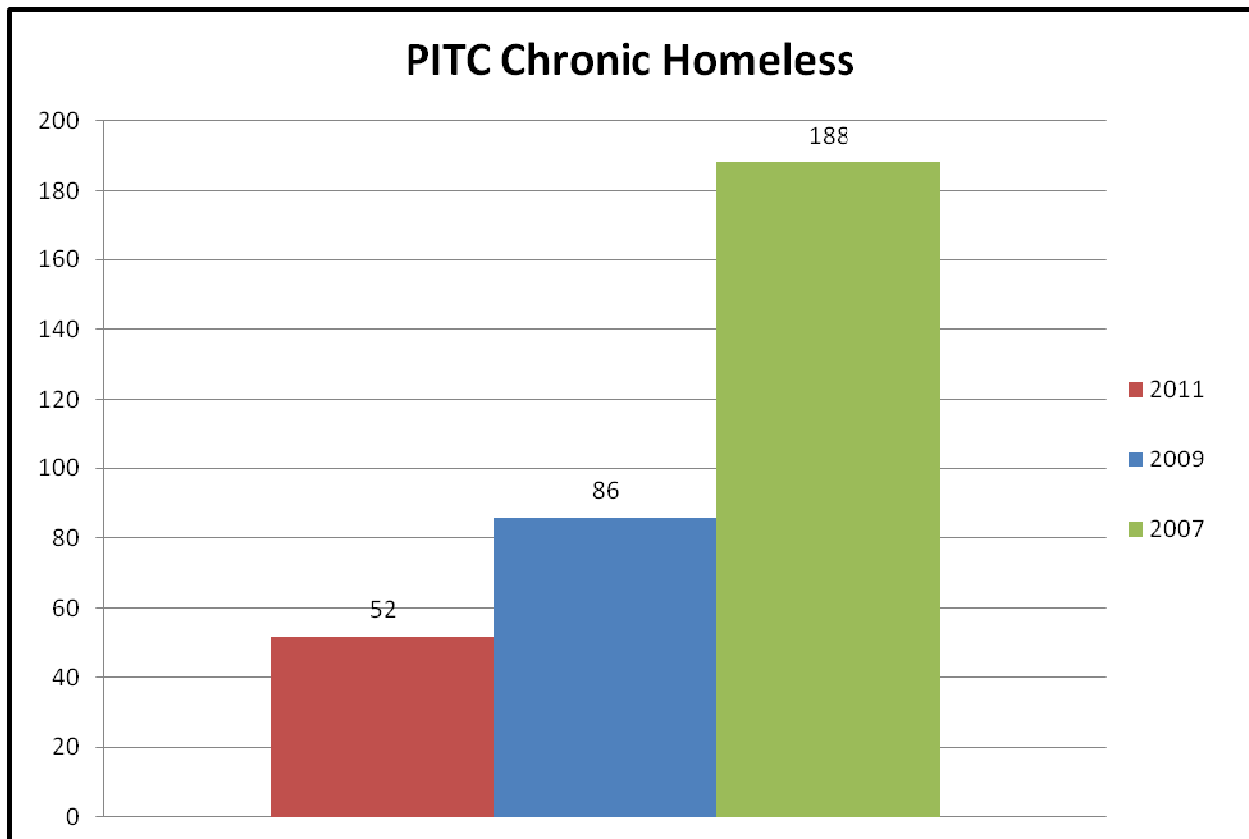
The following chart includes the top five factors, as reported by respondents in Mercer County, which led their family to become homeless. The largest percentage (33.5%) reported the top factor as unaffordable housing costs. The remaining top factors include the loss of job and inability to find work and relationship breakdown.

<b>Contributing Factors to Homelessness</b>	<b>%</b>
Housing costs too high	33.5
Lost job/cannot find work	29.1
Relationship/family breakup/death	25.3
Eviction	19.0
Have work but wages are too low	18.4

## CHRONICALLY HOMELESS

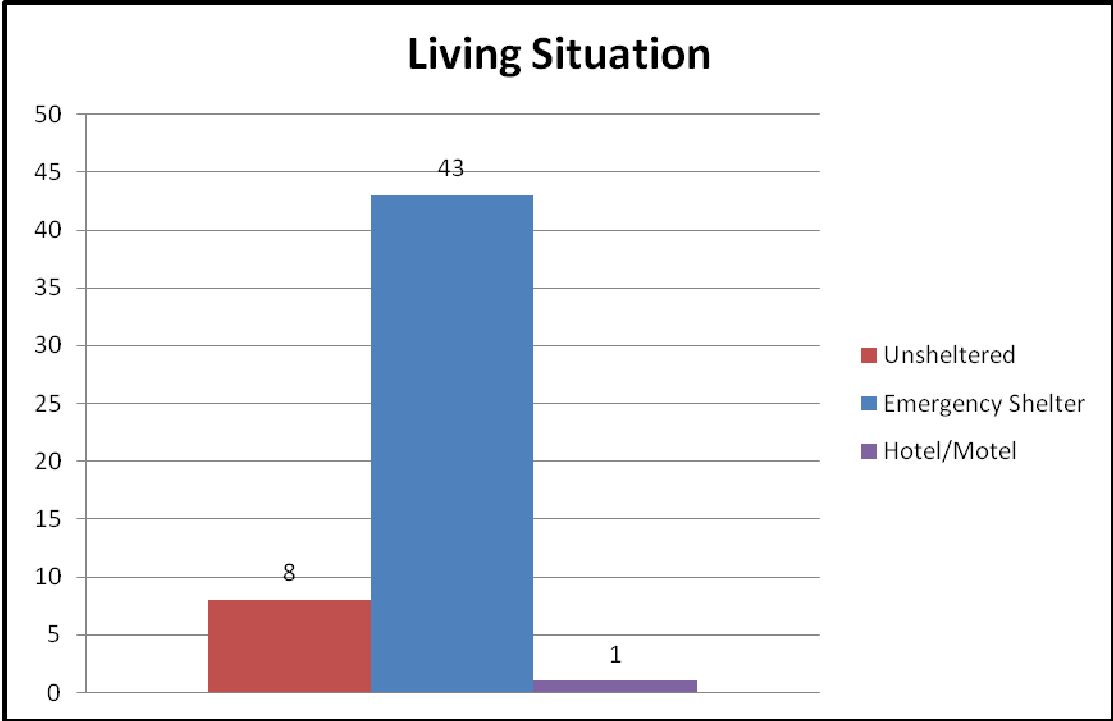
On the night of January 26, 2011, there were 52 chronically homeless individuals counted in Mercer County equaling 9.1% of the total homeless population. With the data that has been collected, we are able to compare chronic homeless numbers from the past three HUD count years which is represented in the chart below.

The number of chronically homeless in Mercer County saw a large decline from 2007 to 2009 (54.2%) and then saw a decrease again of 39.5% from the last HUD count in 2009 to the count in 2011.

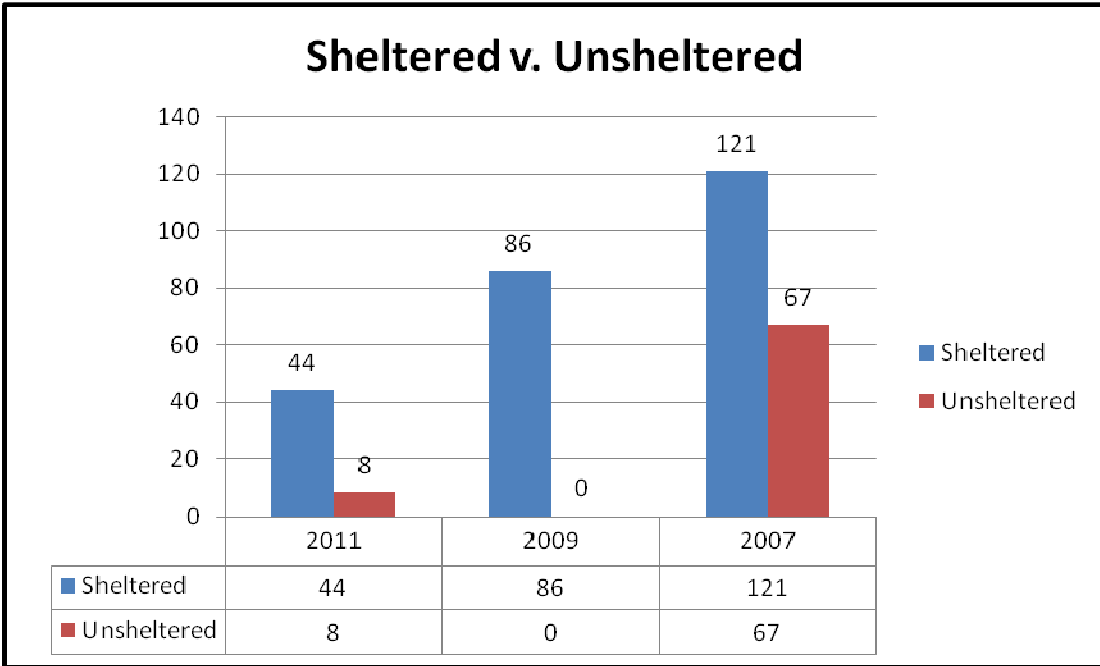


### Living Situation

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 below is a breakdown of where the chronically homeless were residing on the night of the 2011 count. The largest percentage (82.6%) of the chronically homeless population in Mercer County was living in emergency shelter on the night of the count.



Over the past three HUD count years, the number of unsheltered chronically homeless individuals in Mercer County has fluctuated with the highest numbers being in 2007 to have no unsheltered chronically homeless in 2009.

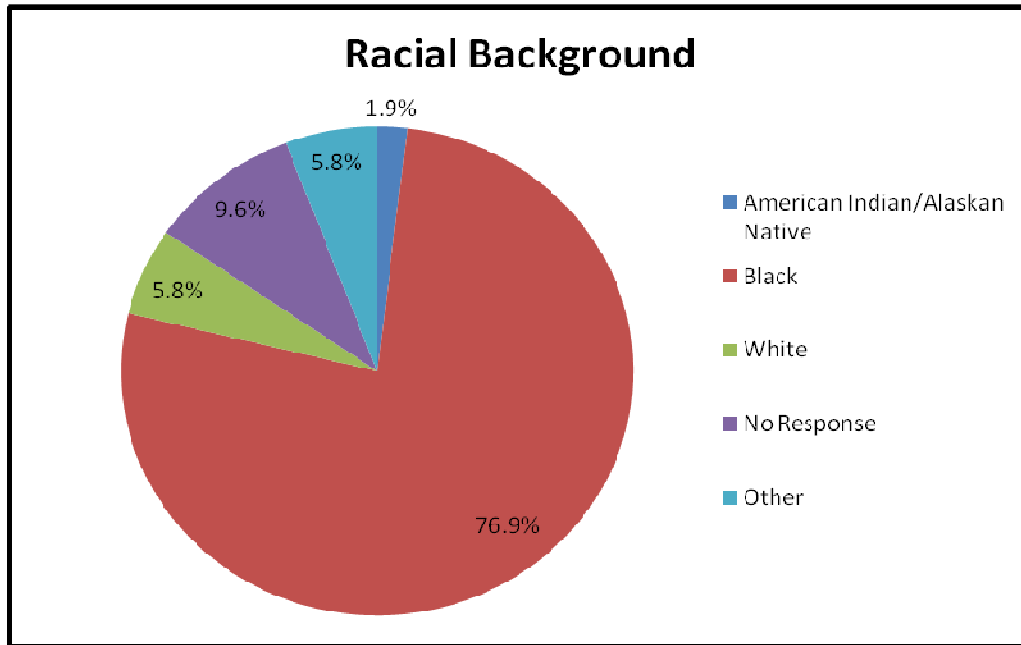


**Length of Homelessness**

Of the total chronically homeless individuals in Mercer County, 84.6% (n= 44) reported they had been homeless for more than one year. Also, a total of 84.6% (n= 44) reported they had four (4) episodes of homelessness in the past three (3) years.

**Demographics**

In 2011, a total of 32 or 61.5% of the chronically homeless population was male and 19 or 36.5% was female. As the Racial Background chart outlines, the largest percentage of chronically homeless individuals identified themselves as Black (76.9%). The total percentage that defined their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino equaled 11.5%.

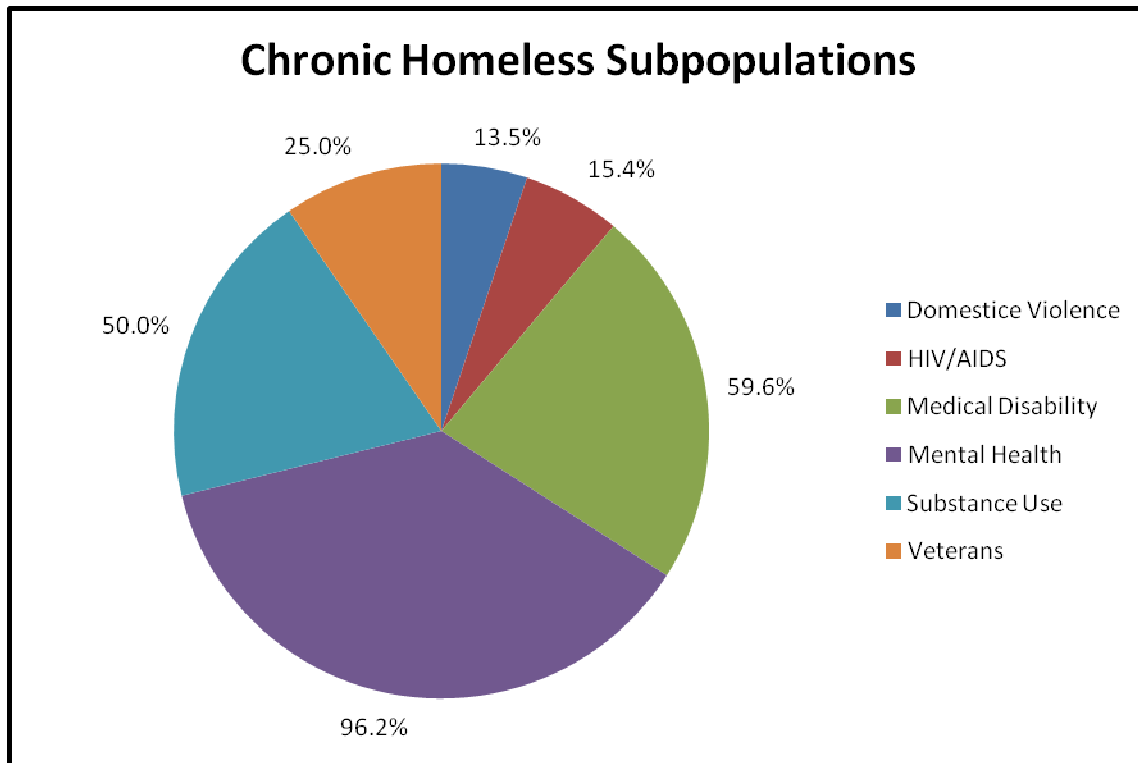


As the Age chart shows, on the night of the 2011 count in Mercer County, the largest percentage of chronically homeless individuals fell into the 50 to 59 year old age range (42.3%). The next largest were those that were in the 40 to 49 year old of age range.

Age	#	%
18-20	0	0.0
21-24	0	0.0
25-29	1	1.9
30-39	6	11.5
40-49	15	28.8
<b>50-59</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>42.3</b>
60-64	3	5.8
65+	3	5.8
No response	2	3.8

### **Chronic Homeless Subpopulations**

As with the homeless population, subpopulation information was gathered for the chronically homeless individuals in Mercer County. The Chronic Homeless Subpopulations chart below outlines the breakdown of the subpopulations for the 2011 count. The largest percent was those with mental illness (96.2%). The smallest percentage (13.5%) was those experiencing domestic violence.



### **Financial Resources**

For the chronic homeless in Mercer County the three main sources of income reported on the night of the count were:

- Medicaid (34.6%),
- Food Stamps (32.7%)
- Welfare (26.9%).

A small percentage reported receiving no government benefits (5.8%) and 17.3% reported having no source of income on the night of the count.

### **Contributing Factors to Homelessness**

The 2011 survey asked chronic homeless respondents what factors they felt contributed to their homelessness. As the Contributing Factors chart shows, the highest ranking factor that respondents stated contributed to their homelessness was substance use problems. Other top ranking factors included mental illness and eviction.

<b>Contributing Factors to Homelessness</b>	<b>%</b>
Alcohol or drug abuse problems	48.1
Mental illness/emotional problems	40.4
Eviction	30.8
Medical problems/physical or developmental disability	28.8
Lost job/cannot find work	25.0
Relationship/family breakup/death	21.2
Domestic violence	19.2
Housing costs too high	19.2
Incarceration	13.5
Have work but wages are too low	7.7
Utility costs too high	5.8
Foreclosure	3.8
Loss of child support	3.8
Lost job due to lack of transportation	1.9

### **CHRONICALLY HOMELESS FAMILIES**

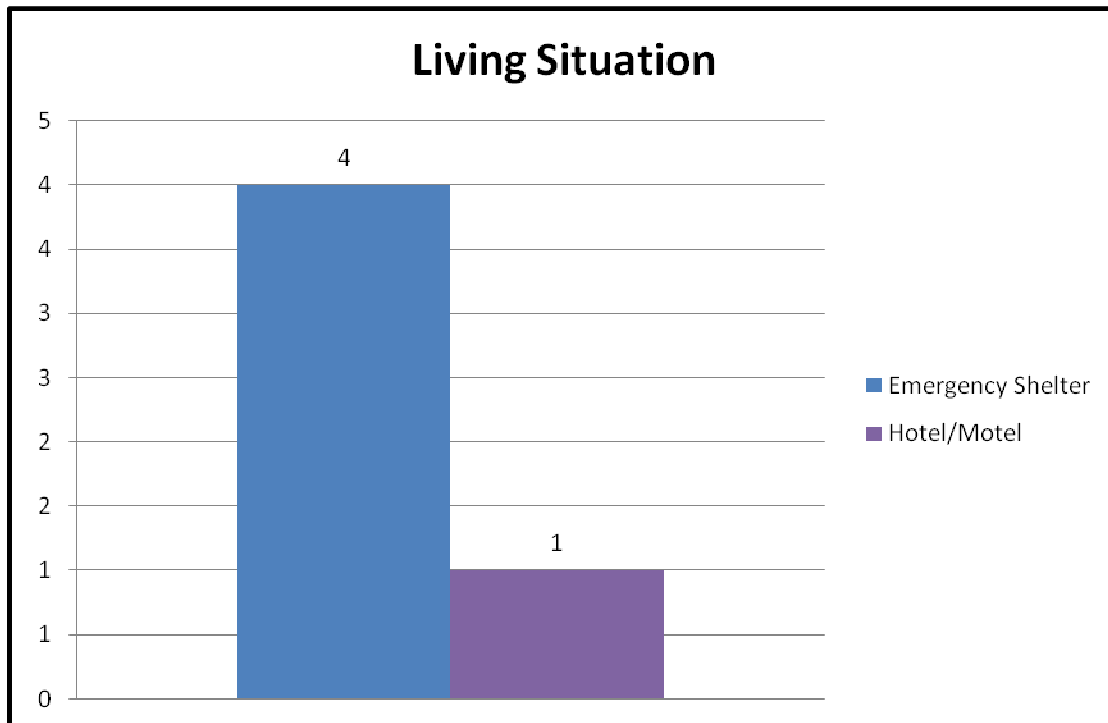
The 2011 count is the first year that HUD requested information on chronically homeless families as the definition of chronically homeless was changed with the 2010 NOFA. The information is based on responses by the head of household and there is no comparable data to previous years.

In Mercer County, a total of five (5) families met the chronic homeless definition and could be considered a chronically homeless family. This is only 0.8% of the total homeless population and 3.1% of the total family homeless population. These families had a total of six (6) children with them on the night of the count.

Adding the families to the individuals gives Mercer County a total chronically homeless population of 63 men, women and children on the night of the 2011 count.

#### **Living Situation**

The breakdown of living situation for chronically homeless families on the night of the count shows that the largest percentage (80.0%) was residing in emergency shelter. One (1) family with one (1) child was in a hotel/motel placement as emergency shelter on the night of the count.

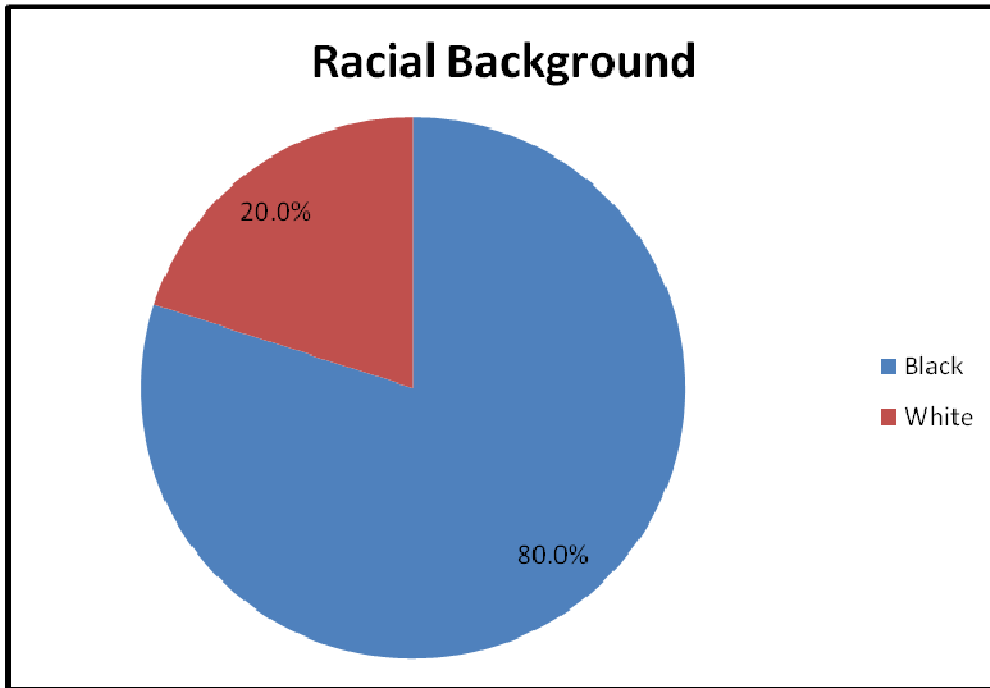


#### **Length of Homelessness**

Of the total chronically homeless families, 60.0% reported that they had been homeless for more than one year and 100.0% reported that they had been homeless four (4) times in the past three (3) years.

**Demographics**

In 2011, a total of three (3) or 60.0% of the chronically homeless families were male headed households and two (3) or 40.0% were female headed households. The Racial Background chart below outlines the racial breakdown of the chronically homeless families in Mercer County. The largest percentage defined themselves and Black (80.0%) with the other race being represented being White (20.0%).

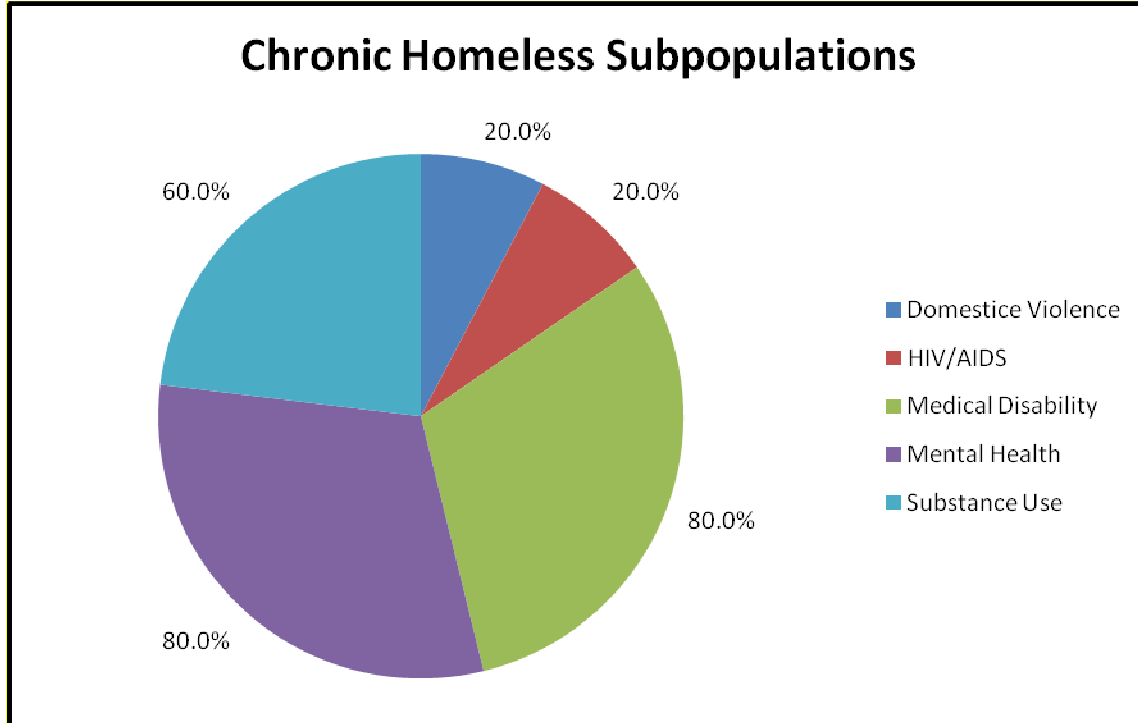


For Mercer County, the ages of the heads of households in the 2011 count were spread over several age group with one one age group having more than the other as represented in the Age chart below.

Age	#	%
18-20	0	0.0%
21-24	1	20.0%
25-29	1	20.0%
30-39	1	20.0%
40-49	1	20.0%
50-59	0	0.0%
60-64	1	20.0%
65+	0	0.0%
No response	0	0.0%

**Chronic Homeless Family Subpopulations**

The largest subpopulations for the chronically homeless families were those with mental health issues and those with a medical disability (80.0%). The next largest were those with substance use issues (60.0%).



**Contributing Factors to Homelessness**

The chart below includes the top five factors, as reported by respondents in Mercer County, which led their family to become homeless. The largest percentage (60.0%) reported substance use problems as a contributing factor. The other top factor reported was mental health issues.

<b>Contributing Factors to Homelessness</b>	<b>%</b>
Alcohol or drug abuse problems	60.0
Mental illness/emotional problems	40.0
Domestic violence	20.0
Have work but wages are too low	20.0
Housing costs too high	20.0