



**WESTCHESTER COUNTY CONTINUUM
OF CARE PARTNERSHIP FOR THE
HOMELESS**

*An Examination of Racial Equity within Westchester's
Continuum of Care FY2021*

Approved by the Board of Directors August 17, 2022

Abstract

Each CoC has unique circumstances impacting their homeless populations. The CoC Racial Equity Analysis Tool was created to help facilitate the analysis of racial disparities among people experiencing homelessness. The U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) considers this analysis to be a critical first step in identifying and changing racial and ethnic bias in their systems and services.¹

The tool illustrates racial and ethnic inequities across three populations: all people in poverty, youths experiencing homelessness, and veterans experiencing homelessness. The HUD Racial Equity's Analysis Tool identified the presence of large racial and ethnic disparities when comparing all people living in poverty to persons experiencing homelessness that were beyond the impact of poverty alone.

Additionally, The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has developed a tool to assist each CoC with determining “if” and “where” racial inequities exist within their system. This tool, Stella, examines population data on race and ethnicity along with program outcomes data. Stella can be used to analyze a CoC's system performance data by race and ethnicity, to identify any racial disparities that exist.

Methodology

The CoC Racial Equity Analysis Tool utilizes multiple data sources. The number of people experiencing homelessness represented in this tool is drawn from the 2022 Point-In-Time (PIT) Count data reported in the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to the U.S Congress. PIT Counts are unduplicated 1-night estimates of sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations conducted by CoCs nationwide during the last week of January each year.¹

HMIS data was used to examine the representation of racial and ethnic groups utilization within our system. Data provided contains community-level information on people and households during the FY2021 reporting year (10/1/20-9/30/21). Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA) is the new name for the data and report generated through Stella in HUD's HDX 2.0 site. For those people and households served during the reporting period, the LSA includes demographic information, length of time homeless and patterns of system use, information on specific populations whose needs may differ from the broader homeless population, and housing outcomes for those who exited the homeless services system.

In this analysis, persons who are experiencing sheltered homelessness are defined as “an individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately-operated shelter designed to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or

local government programs for low-income individuals,” as defined at 24 CFR 578.3 of the Homeless Definition Final Rule.¹

People who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness are defined as” an individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground,” as defined at 24 CFR 578.3 of the Homeless Definition Final Rule.¹

The distributions of people living in poverty by race and ethnicity are sourced from the American Community Survey (ACS) 2015-2019 4-year estimates. The ACS is an ongoing survey by the U.S. Census Bureau that gathers information previously contained only in the long form of the decennial census. The CoC estimates were aggregated from Tract estimates, using a Tract-to- CoC crosswalk that was created with ArcGIS mapping software. For consistency (especially for statewide CoCs), the state estimates were aggregated in the same way and, as a result, may look slightly different from the state-level estimates available directly from the ACS.¹

Individuals are counted as being in poverty if they are part of a household whose total annual income is less than the poverty threshold. Threshold levels are set by household size but are not adjusted by location. For this reason, the impact of poverty on housing affordability varies from community to community. At the time that this report was created; data was unavailable for the number of people living in poverty by age, and veteran status.

Distribution of Race Among All People Experiencing Poverty

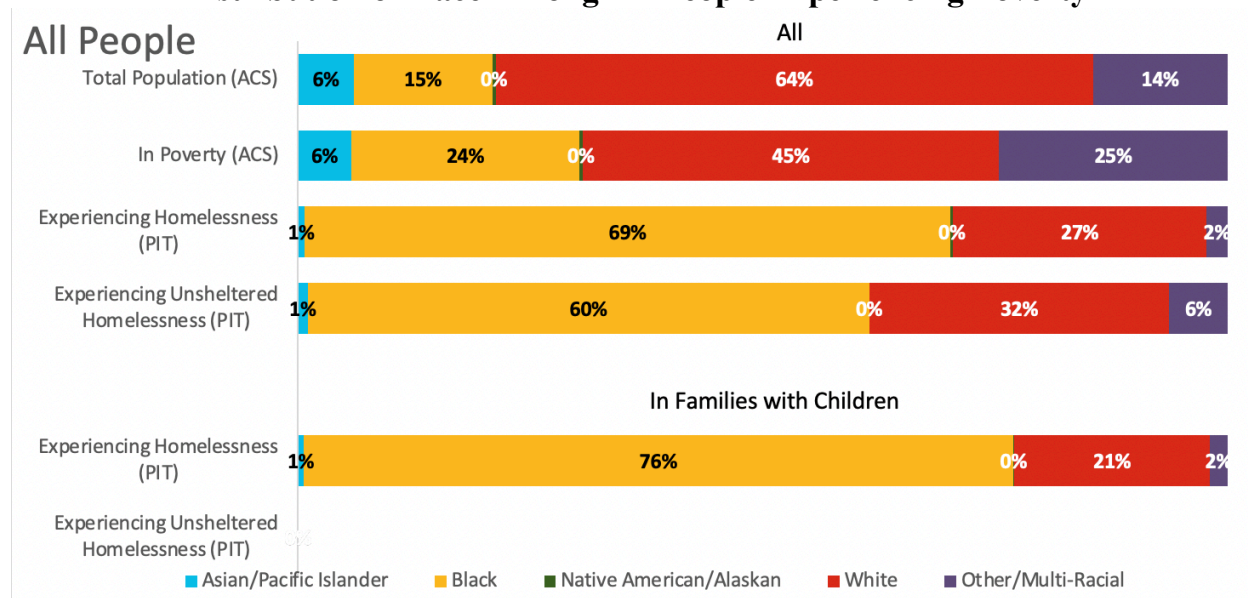


Figure 1. Distribution of race across all people living in poverty, persons experiencing homelessness, persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness, and in families with children experiencing homelessness.

The first bar chart (figure 1.) shows racial distributions for the Westchester CoC for all people living in poverty, persons experiencing homelessness, and persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness. By comparing racial distributions between persons experiencing homelessness and persons experiencing poverty, we were able to identify racial disparities in homelessness that poverty alone cannot account for.

When reading the chart above, we see that 24% of all people living in poverty identified as Black in the 2015-2019 ACS. We also see that 69% of people experiencing homelessness in the 2022 Point-In-Time Count identified as Black. In addition, according to the The data continues to demonstrate a large racial disparity in homelessness, beyond the impact of poverty.

When evaluating the percentage of families with children experiencing homelessness for Westchester's CoC, we see that 76% of families with children are Black compared to 21% identifying as White, 2% identifying as Multiracial, 0% Native American/Alaskan and 1% Asian/Pacific Islander. When comparing the percentage of families with children who are experiencing homelessness to the percent of estimated people in poverty, we see a greater disparity. While 15% of all people living in poverty identified as Black; 76% of families with children who were experiencing homelessness during the 2022 PIT Count identified as Black.

A figure was not generated depicting the racial demographics of families with children experiencing unsheltered homelessness because no families with children were identified during the 2022 Westchester's CoC Point-In-Time Count.

Distribution of Race Among Youth

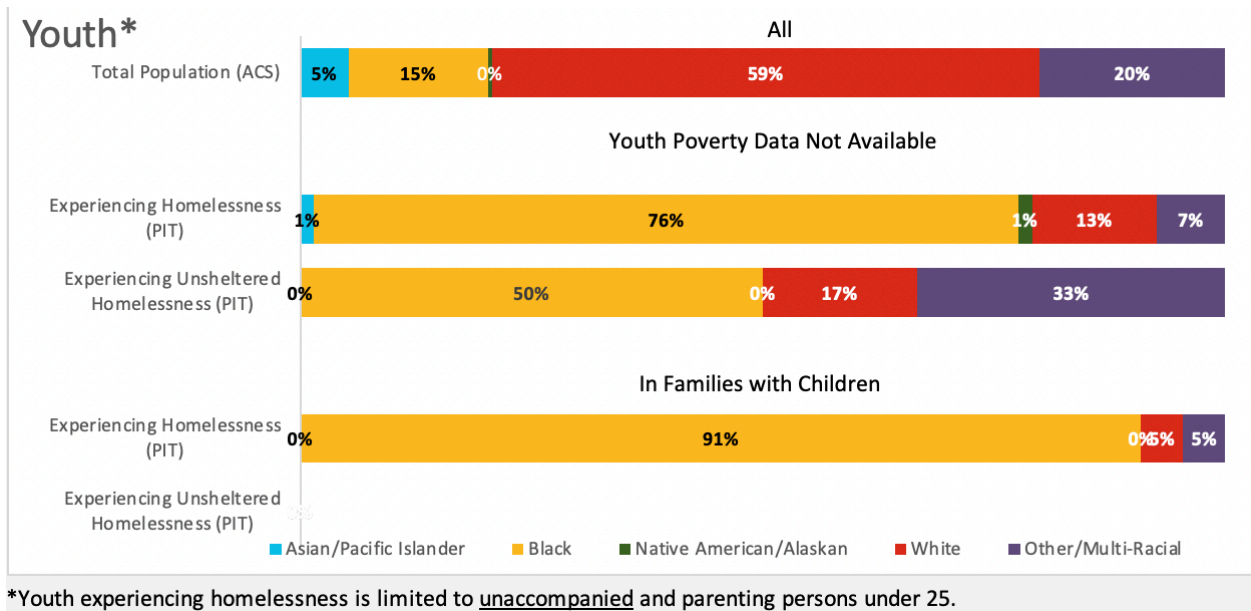


Figure 2. Distribution of race within youths who identified as experiencing homelessness, youths experiencing unsheltered homelessness, and in parenting youth (families with children experiencing homelessness). No unsheltered parenting youth were identified during the 2022 PIT Count.

This second bar chart (figure 2.) illustrates a racial breakdown of individual’s who were identified during the 2022 PIT Count as “Youths”. Youths are individuals under the age of 25 who are unaccompanied by a parent. Racial distributions were computed for youths who were experiencing homelessness, unsheltered homelessness, and parenting youth (youth in families with children) experiencing homelessness.

As noted at the bottom of figure 2; ACS youth poverty data was not available at the time of this report. For this reason, we were unable to compare the racial demographic percentages of individuals or families experiencing homelessness in this age group to the racial demographics of those in poverty. This graphic is only representative of the racial demographics for youth, and parenting youth who were experiencing homelessness during the night of the 2022 PIT Count. The racial demographics of youths of identified as experiencing homelessness the night of the 2022 PIT count are as follows; 13% identified as White, 76% identified as Black, 7% as Other/Multi- Race, 1% Native American/Alaskan and 1% as Asian.

The 2022 PIT Count resulted in the identification of no parenting youth experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The 2022 PIT Count data indicates the racial demographics of parenting youth who were experiencing homelessness. As shown above; 91% of

parenting youth who were experiencing homelessness identified as Black, 4% as White, and 5% as Other/Multi-Race.

It should also be noted that only one individual was identified as being under the age of 25 unaided by a parent and experiencing unsheltered homeless during the 2022 PIT Count. This individual identified as Black (100%). This racial disparity should be interpreted with caution. A larger sample size is needed to generate more precise estimates of the racial demographics of youth experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Westchester County, NY

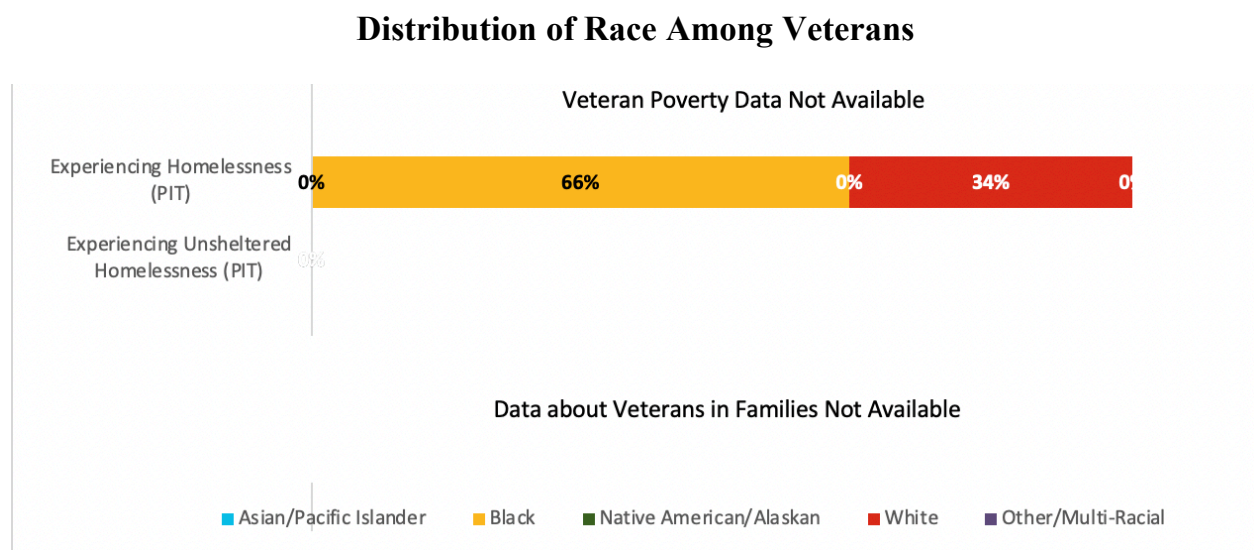


Figure 3. Distribution of race within veterans who identified as experiencing homelessness and unsheltered homelessness.

As notated at the top of Figure 3; ACS veteran poverty data was not available at the time of this report. For this reason, we were unable to compare the racial demographic percentages of veterans experiencing homelessness to the racial demographics of those in poverty. This Veteran data is only representative of the racial demographics of veterans who were experiencing homelessness during the night of the 2022 PIT Count. Data regarding Veterans in families was also not available during the time this report was generated.

The 2022 PIT Count identified 34% of veterans experiencing homelessness identified as White, with 66% identifying as Black. No individuals reported experiencing unsheltered homelessness. There is no racial distribution shown between veterans experiencing unsheltered homelessness due to small sample size.

Distribution of Ethnicity Among All People Experiencing Poverty

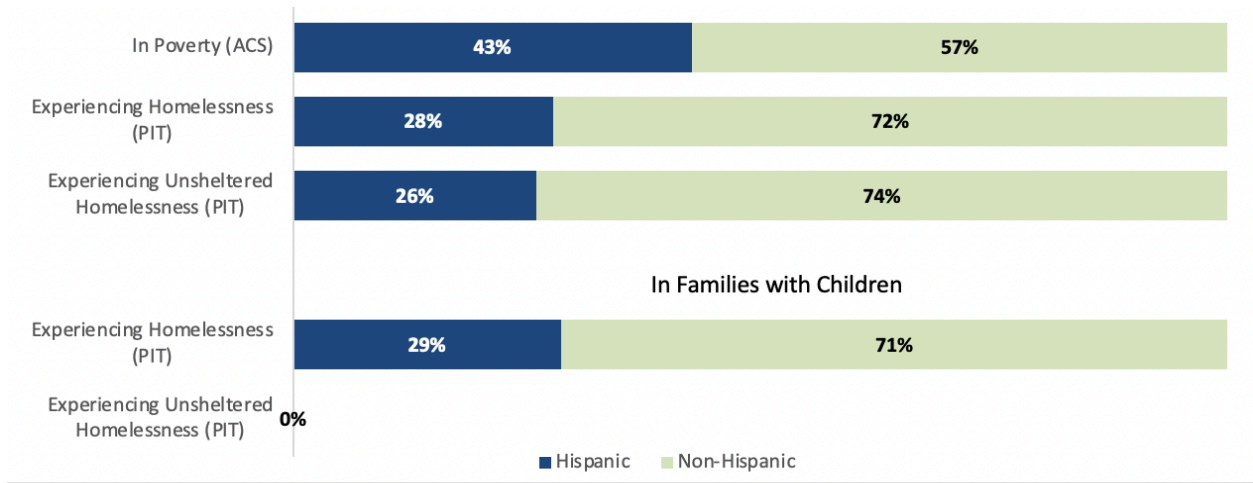


Figure 4. Distribution of ethnicity across all people living in poverty, persons experiencing homelessness, persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness, and in families with children experiencing homelessness.

Figure 4 illustrates ethnic distributions for the Westchester CoC for all persons living in poverty, persons experiencing homelessness, persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness, and in families with children experiencing homelessness. By comparing the ethnic distributions between persons experiencing homelessness and persons experiencing poverty, we were able to identify ethnic disparities in homelessness that poverty alone cannot account for.

When reading the chart above, we see that 43% of all people living in poverty identified as Hispanic in the 2015-2019 ACS. We also see that 28% of people experiencing homelessness in the 2022 Point-In-Time Count identified as Hispanic.

When evaluating the percentage of families with children experiencing homelessness for Westchester’s CoC, we see that 28% of families with children identify as Hispanic compared to 72% non-Hispanic. Thus, for both households with children and households without children, the proportion of Hispanic households among those experiencing homelessness is significantly *below* the proportion of Hispanics among people estimated in poverty.

No figures were generated to depict the ethnic demographics of families with children experiencing unsheltered homelessness because no families with children were identified during the 2022 Westchester’s CoC Point-In-Time Count.

Distribution of Ethnicity Among Youth

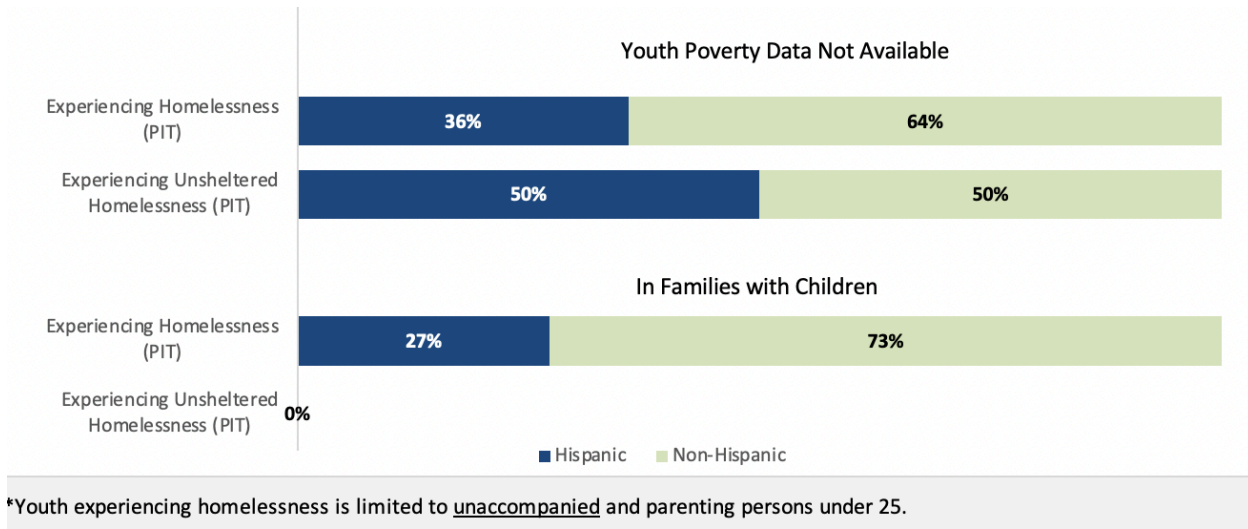


Figure 5. Distribution of ethnicity within youths who identified as experiencing homelessness, youths experiencing unsheltered homelessness, and in parenting youth (families with children experiencing homelessness).

Figure 5 illustrates ethnicity data for youths who were identified as homeless, unsheltered homeless, and as parenting youth (youth in families with children) experiencing homelessness. Due to ACS youth poverty data being unavailable; the figure above is only representative of ethnicity data for youth, and parenting youth who were experiencing sheltered or unsheltered homelessness during the night of the 2022 PIT Count.

The 2022 PIT Count data indicates that 36% of youths experiencing homelessness in Westchester County identified as Hispanic. It should also be noted that two individuals identified as being under the age of 25 unaided by a parent and experiencing unsheltered homeless during the 2022 PIT Count. One individual identified as Hispanic, with the other identifying as non-hispanic.

We can also see that 27% of parenting youth who were experiencing homelessness identified as Hispanic, and 73% identified as Non-Hispanic. Thus, for both youth households with children and youth households without children, the proportion of Hispanic households among those experiencing homelessness is significantly below the proportion of Hispanics among people estimated in poverty. As mentioned previously, the 2022 PIT Count did not result in the identification of parenting youth experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

It should be noted that this sample size should be interpreted with caution due to its small size.

Distribution of Ethnicity Among Veterans

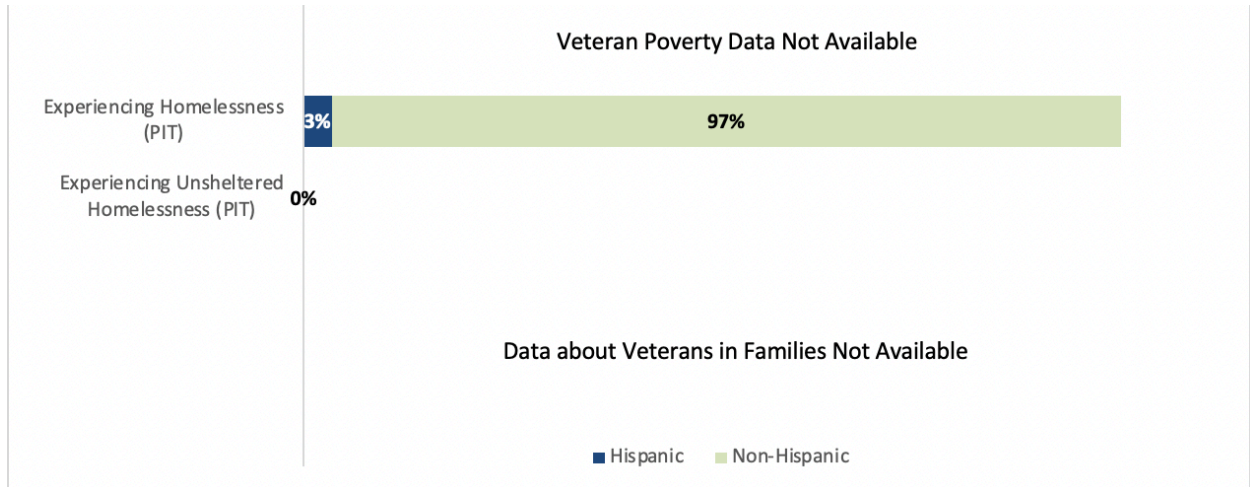


Figure 6. Distribution of ethnicity within veterans who identified as experiencing homelessness and unsheltered homelessness.

As previously stated, the ACS veteran poverty data was not available. For this reason, we were unable to compare the ethnic demographic percentages of veterans experiencing homelessness to the ethnic demographics of those in poverty. Data regarding Veterans in families was also not available during the time this report was generated.

Figure 6 represents the ethnic demographics of veterans who were experiencing homelessness during the night of the 2022 PIT Count. 3% of veterans experiencing homelessness identified as Hispanic, and 97% as non-Hispanic. With regards to the number of Veterans who were experiencing unsheltered homelessness, no Veteran reported experiencing unsheltered homelessness on the night of the 2022 PIT Count. The ethnic distribution shown between veterans experiencing unsheltered homelessness should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size ($n > 5$).

Distribution of Days Homeless by Race

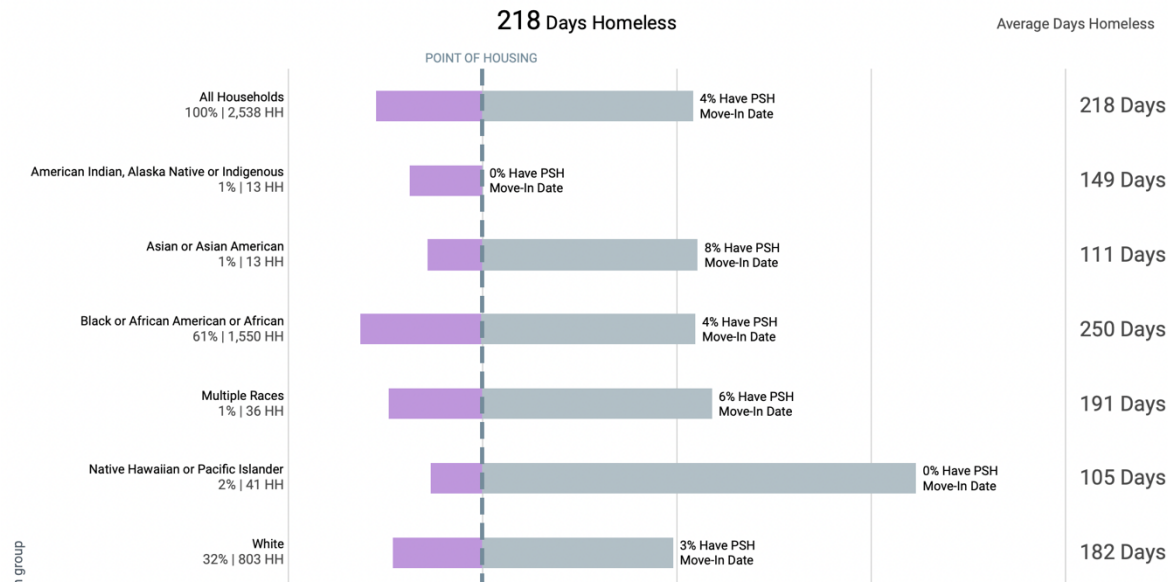


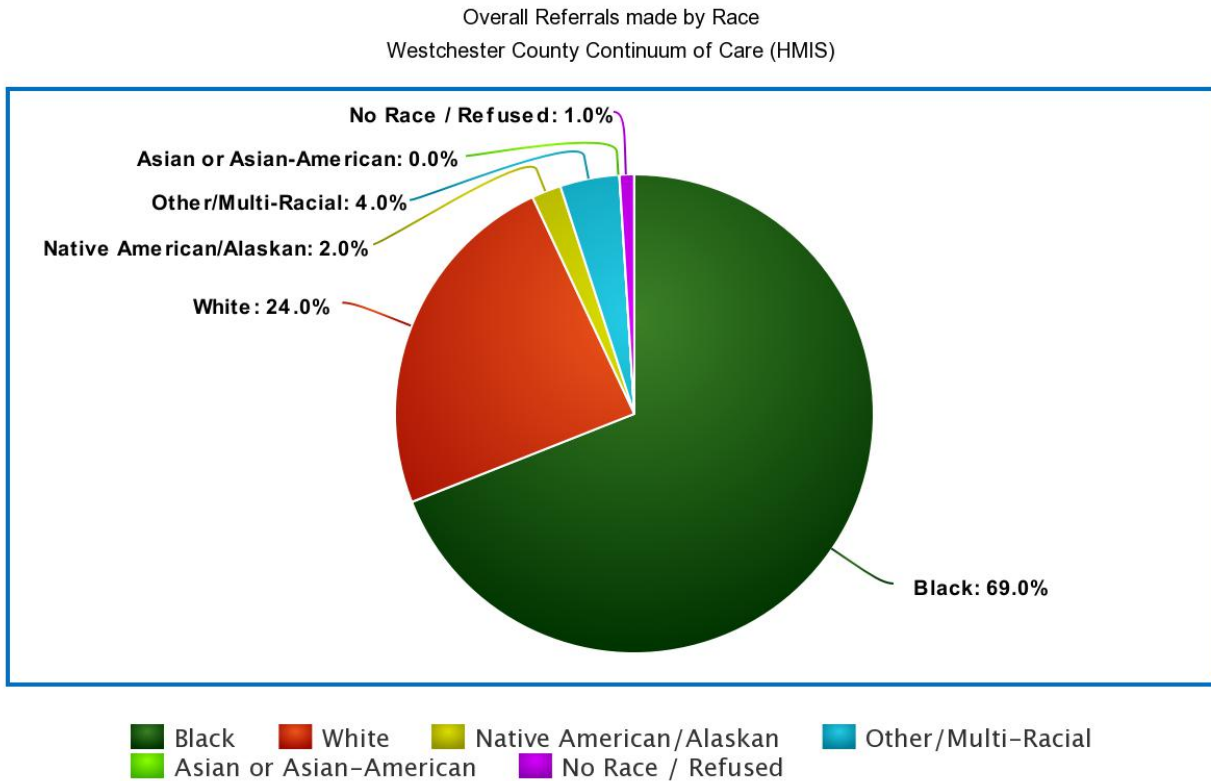
Figure 7. Percent and number of households in each race and average cumulative days that households in each were served in the homeless system.

The above chart illustrates the average cumulative length of time households distributed by race and ethnicity, were served in ES/SH or TH projects, or in RRH or PSH projects prior to move-in. It should be noted, for Stella, only White households do not include Hispanic ethnicities. The purple bars to the left of the Point of Housing line represent the average days homeless, including contiguous time in these projects prior to the report period.

The gray bars to the right of the Point of Housing line show the length of time households in each population group were served in RRH projects after move-in. The percent on the far right of the gray bar represents households in the population group who have a PSH move-in date within the report period.

Figure 7 shows racial distributions from 10/1/20 to 9/30/21 for the number of days homeless of individuals served in our Westchester County CoC. By comparing racial distributions between races served in our system, we were able to identify racial disparities in average days homelessness. All households spend an average of 218 days homeless. Black households (61%) on average spend 250 days homeless. This 68 (~2 ½ months) more days spent homeless as opposed to of Non-Hispanic White households (32%) spend homeless (182 days). We can also see that White Hispanic/Latino households (16%) spend an average of 132 days homeless. The data continues to demonstrate a large racial disparity in number of days homeless.

Distribution of Referrals by Race



meta-chart.com

Figure 8. This chart shows referrals made from our Continuum of Care within the last year. Race was focused on for the purpose of this report.

This chart has been added from HMIS data as an indicator of the equity in access provided by our Coordinated Entry System and associated. Our findings indicate that a greater proportion of Black/African American/African people were referred to housing opportunities (69%) than the proportion of the same population in the overall number of people experiencing homelessness (61%.) Conversely, White people who received referrals made up a smaller portion of the housing referrals (24%) compared to how the population is represented overall among people experiencing homelessness (32%.) Due to very small sample sizes among Asian, Indigenous and Multi-racial populations, we were not able to detect a significant difference in the amount of referrals made compared to how these populations were represented among all people experiencing homelessness.

Further study is indicated to determine the cause of a greater proportion of Black/African American/African being referred to housing openings. Our working hypothesis at the time of this report is that due to the amount of of Black/African American/African people experiencing homelessness, it may be easier to find individuals and families which meet the criteria of our housing programs. We further theorize that our direct care workforce

within the shelter/outreach system is sufficiently diverse and culturally competent when it comes to serving Black/African American/African experiencing homelessness.

Distributions of Exits to Permanent Destinations by Race

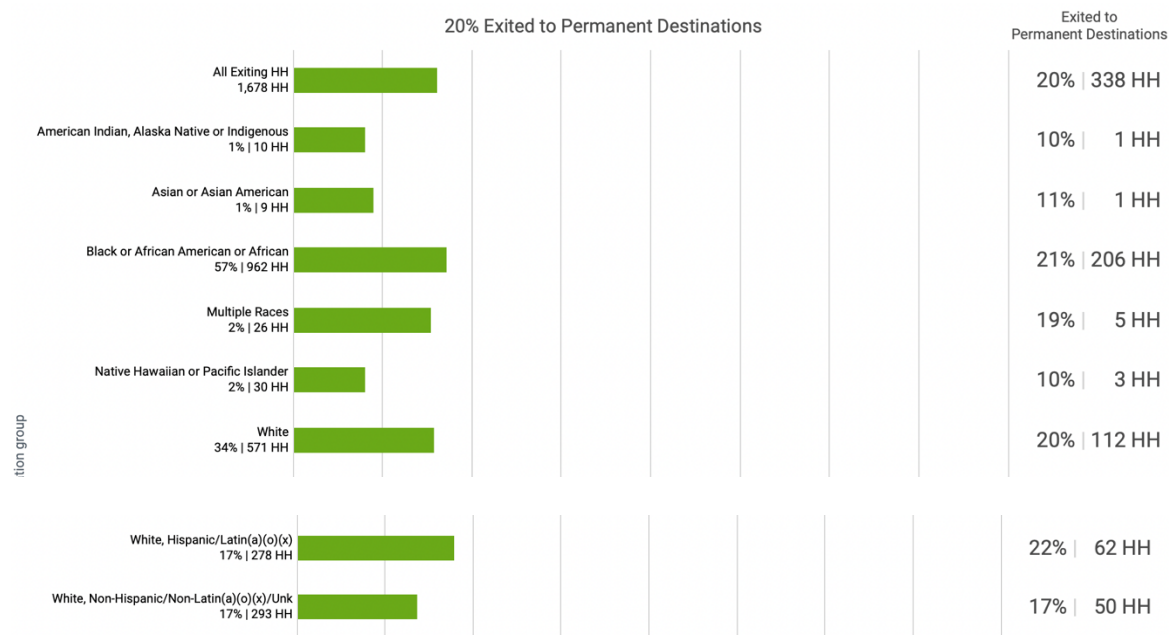
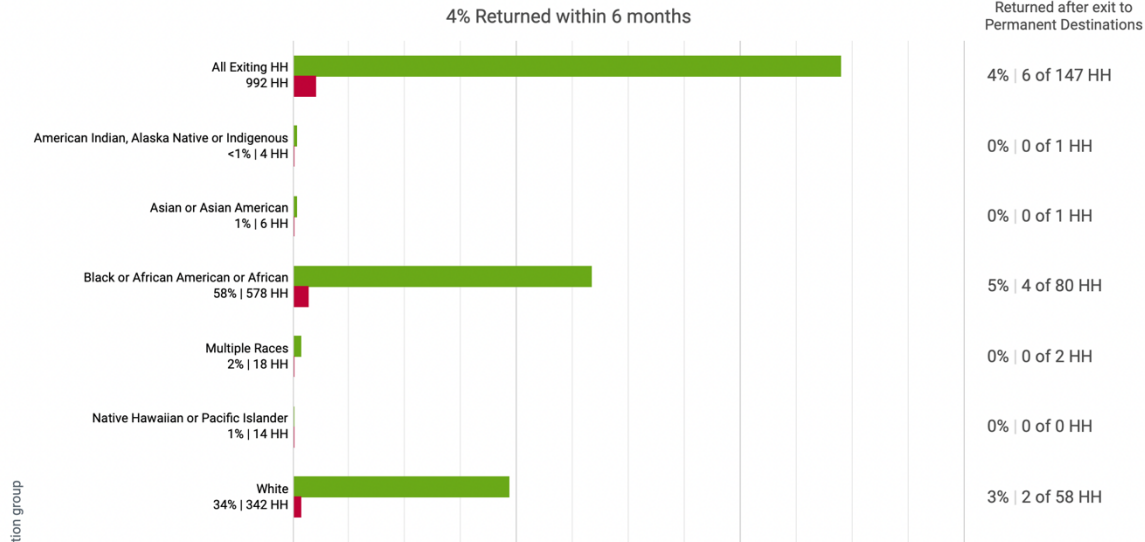


Figure 9. This chart shows exits to permanent destinations from the homeless system for households with certain demographic or system utilization characteristics called population groups. Race was focused on for the purpose of this report.

Figure 9 shows 20% of all households exited to permanent destinations. 20% of White Non-Hispanic/Latino households, 22% of White-Hispanic/Latino households, and 21% of Black households exited to permanent destinations from 10/1/20 through 9/30/21. Black households account for 57% of the households that exited to permanent destinations and White Non- Hispanic households 17%.

It should be noted that the sample size for other races including Asian and American Indian were not large enough to conclude a racial disparity within exits to permanent destinations.

Returns to Homelessness After Permanent Destinations by Race within the 1st 6 months



Months of Reporting Period



Figure 10. Illustration of returns to the homeless system within six months of exit for households with exits to permanent destinations by Race

This chart shows returns to the homeless system within six months of exit for households with certain demographic or system utilization characteristics called population groups. The top bar colored green for each race shows the percent of households that exited to permanent destinations. The bar on the bottom-colored red shows the proportion that returned within six months of exiting.

As we see in figure 10, 4% of all households returned within 6 months of their exit to a permanent destination when leaving the CoC’s homeless system. White Non-Hispanic/Latino households account for 17% of the households that exited. Of those who exited to permanent destinations, 0% returned to homelessness within 6 months. White Hispanic/Latino households account for 17% of the exits and 6% of exits to permanent

destinations; Black/African American households account for 58% of the exits. 5% returned to homelessness within 6 months.

Limitations

The race categories used in this analysis may not accurately reflect the racial identities and lived experiences of all surveyed individuals. However, the availability of this data provides a starting place to examine racial disparities in each CoC.

Another limitation is that the race data for families with children who were experiencing homelessness is based on the racial identity of the head of household. This is a proxy and may not accurately represent the racial identity of all household members.¹

Lastly, PIT Count data is not perfect, and the unsheltered count is particularly challenging. PIT data may include duplications of counts due to multiple encounters, however it is more likely that PIT data is an undercount, due to not all homeless households being identified. Staffing, weather, and geography all have an impact on the data. Nevertheless, PIT Count Data is an important indicator to consider, and our best available estimate of rates of homelessness in each community. In most communities there remains a need for improved data accuracy and increased cultural competence in outreach and engagement.

Continuums of Care can't, by themselves, solve all of the dynamics and forces that create the disparities, however further examining our data and policies practices can address racial and ethnic inequities more intentionally and comprehensively. Below are a few questions that should be considered as we continue to address disparities within Westchester County's CoC.

Recommendations

- The CoC should identify steps to help the CoC board and decision-making bodies reflect the population served in the CoC.
- The CoC should identify racial disparities depending on the source of income in an effort to identify discriminatory practices against clients who may receive a certain income such as Social Security Supplemental Income (SSI)
- The CoC should identify other barriers disproportionately affecting BIPOC as a means to address homelessness within these demographic populations.
- The CoC should review coordinated entry processes to understand the impact of people of different races and ethnicities experiencing homelessness on a continual basis.
- Further study is indicated to determine whether the diversity and cultural competency of direct care staff correlates to the finding that a greater proportion of Black/African American/African being referred to housing openings.
- Further study of whether there is disparity in access for people on the basis of ethnicity is indicated.
-

References

Westchester County Continuum of Care Partnership to End Homelessness. 2022 Point in Time Count. May, 2022.

Westchester County Continuum of Care Partnership to End Homelessness. Homelessness Management of Information System. August, 2022.

National Alliance to End Homelessness. Racial Equity: An essential component of our nation's homelessness response. September, 2017.

United States Census Bureau. American Community Survey. August, 2022.

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). CoC Analysis Tool: Race and Ethnicity. March, 2022.

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. Stella Performance Module. Homelessness Data Exchange (HUD). February, 2022.

United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). How to Start Addressing Racial Disparities in your Community. July, 2018.