



WESTCHESTER COUNTY CONTINUUM
OF CARE PARTNERSHIP FOR THE
HOMELESS

An Examination of Racial Equity Within Westchester's
Continuum of Care FY2022

AREAC Reviewed & Approved 11/29/23

Board Approved 12/20/23

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.

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.

The most striking disparity revealed is that Black/African-American/African households in Westchester have a rate of experiencing homelessness **far above their** proportion of people in poverty. Black people comprise **15%** of Westchester’s population and **25%** of its people in poverty, but **64%** of those experiencing homelessness and **70%** of families with children experiencing homelessness. Clearly **factors beyond poverty alone are driving homelessness among Westchester’s Black residents**. In contrast, Hispanic/Latinos, Westchester’s other group of people in color, are slightly **under-**represented among Westchester’s sheltered and unsheltered population experiencing homelessness.

Major Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Westchester County

Population Group	% of All Residents	% of People in Poverty	% Experiencing Homelessness*	% of Families With Children Experiencing Homelessness
Whites (all ethnicities)	60%	40%	32%	26%
Hispanics (all races)	25%	39%	33%	34%
Blacks (all ethnicities)	15%	25%	64%	70%

*“Homelessness” in this table only includes those sheltered or unsheltered as defined by HUD and documented in Westchester’s Homeless Management Information System.

One hypothesis that might theoretically explain the disproportionate of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness on Westchester’s Black residents might be that Black residents are more likely to enter shelters and less likely to use other homeless survival strategies such as “doubling up” in the homes of family, friends, or compassionate strangers. However, data on “doubled-up” homeless students regularly compiled by federally-funded Homeless School Liaisons in all American school districts show that this hypothesis is NOT true. Black non-Hispanic children make up **12.3%** of Westchester’s students in grades preK-12 but **42.7%** of our doubled-up homeless students.

Major Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Westchester PreK-12 Students

Population Group	% of All Students	% Experiencing Homelessness*	% Experiencing “Doubled-Up” Homelessness
Whites (non-Hispanic)	42.2%	5.2%	5.4%
Hispanics (all races)	35.6%	43.8%	49.5%
Blacks (non-Hispanic)	12.3%	48.4%	42.7%

*“Homelessness” in this table includes those sheltered, unsheltered, living in hotels, or doubled-up as defined by McKinney-Vento legislation and documented by each school district’s McKinney-Vento-mandated Homeless School Liaisons and reported to the NYS Education Department in 2019-2020 school year, as reported in the Westchester Children’s Association’s Westchester County Child and Youth Homelessness Dashboard, available at <https://wca4kids.org/our-work/interactive-data/homelesschildrendashboard/>.

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.

As detailed below, the Stella data also shows that Westchester’s Black residents are disproportionately impacted by homelessness. Black households experiencing homelessness in Westchester spend an average of 237 days homeless, which is 28.8% longer than the 184 days spent homeless by Westchester’s White residents.

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 2023 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.

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 FY2022 reporting year (10/1/21-9/30/22). 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.

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.

The distributions of people living in poverty by race and ethnicity are sourced from the American Community Survey (ACS) 2017-2021 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.

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

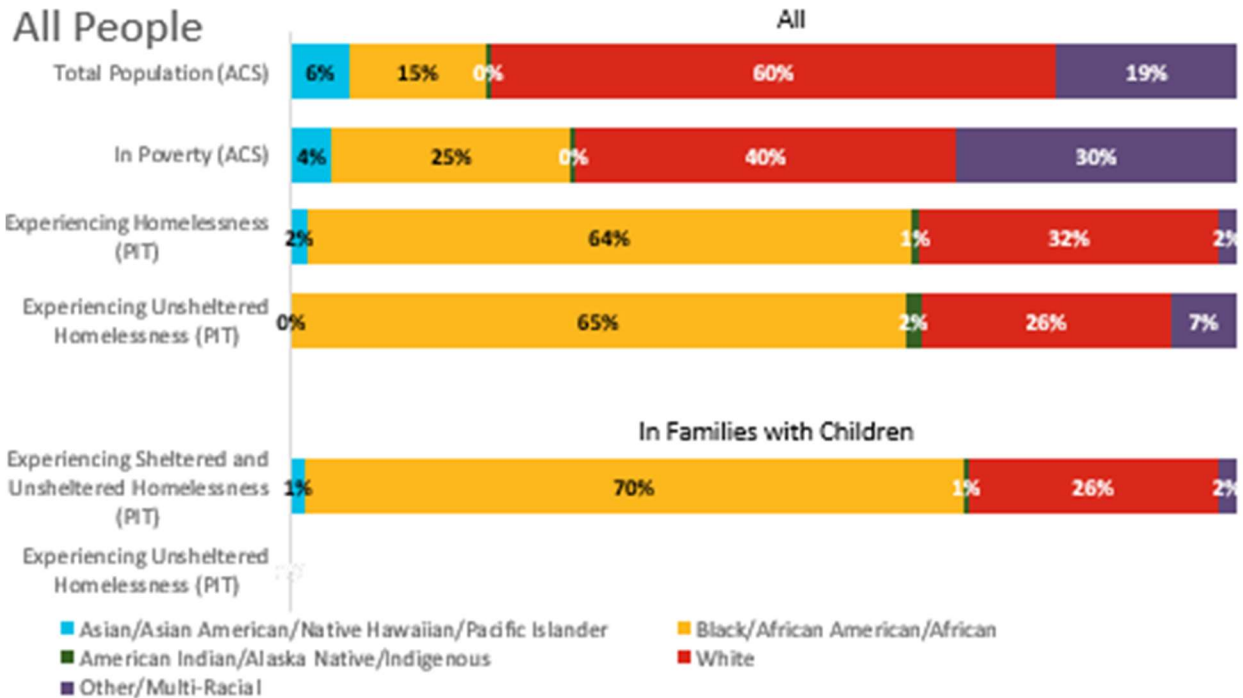


Figure 1. Distribution of race across all people living in poverty, persons experiencing homelessness, persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness, and in families with children experiencing homelessness.

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 25% of all people living in poverty identified as Black in the 2017-2021 ACS. We also see that 65% of people experiencing homelessness in the 2023 Point-In-Time Count identified as Black. This represents a 4% reduction in disparity over 2022 measurements. Regardless of the evidence of a positive trend, 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 70% of families with children are Black compared to 26% identifying as White, 2% identifying as Multiracial, 1% Native American/Alaskan/Indigenous and 1% Asian/Asian American/Native Hawaiian/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; 70% of families with children who were experiencing homelessness during the 2023 PIT Count identified as Black. This again reflects a change in the disparity between 2022 and 2023 data with a reduction from 76% to 70% of families with children who are Black while the percentage of White identified families increased from 21% to 26% and the percentage of Native American/Alaskan/Indigenous rose from no reported households to 1%.

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 2023 Westchester's CoC Point-In-Time Count.

Distribution of Race Among Youth

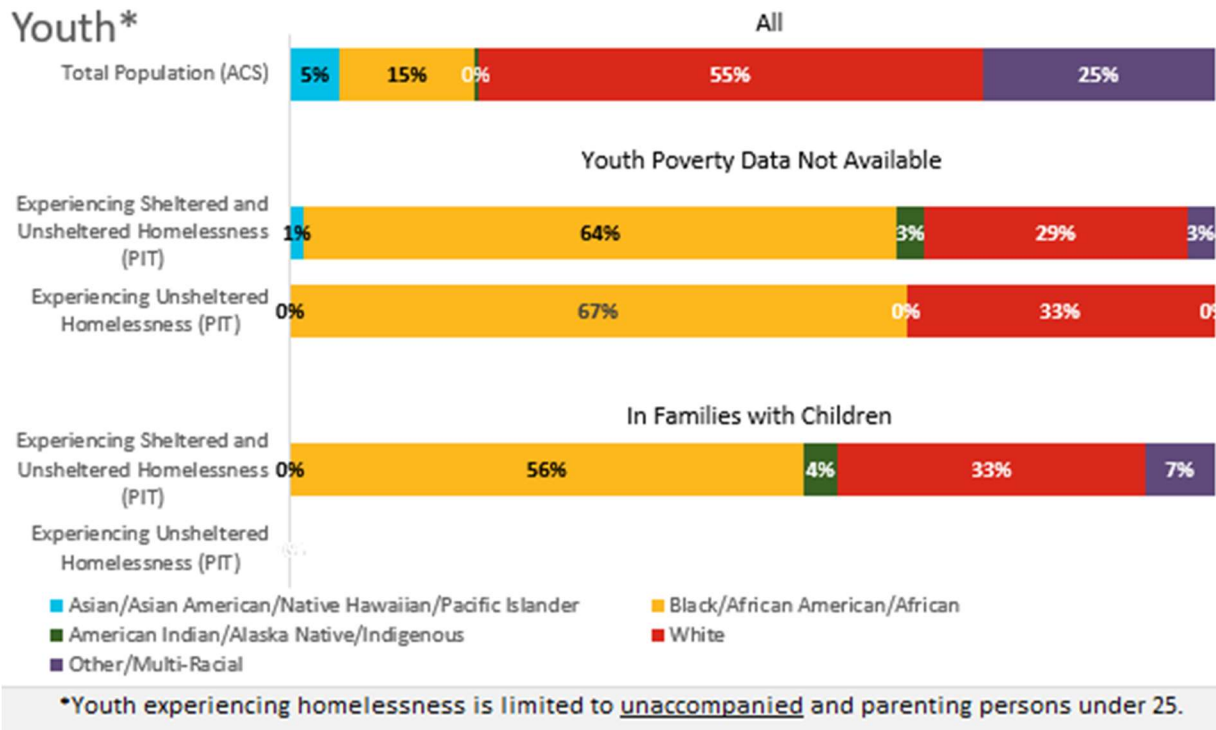


Figure 2. Distribution of race within youths who identified as experiencing homelessness, youths experiencing unsheltered homelessness, and in parenting youth (families with children experiencing homelessness). No unsheltered parenting youth were identified during the 2023 PIT Count.

This second bar chart (figure 2.) illustrates a racial breakdown of individual’s who were identified during the 2023 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. It should be noted that the sample size of Youth households experiencing homelessness is less than 100 for both 2022 and 2023. In 2023, the 70 Youth comprised 5% of all people experiencing homelessness in Westchester County.

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 2023 PIT Count. The racial demographics of youths of identified as experiencing homelessness the night of the 2023 PIT count are as follows; 64%

identified as Black, 29% identified as White, 3% as Other/Multi- Race, 3% Native American/Alaskan and 1% as Asian.

Compared to 2022 data, 2023 data demonstrates a significant shift in the racial composition of Youth experiencing homelessness in the Westchester CoC. The percentage of Black identified Youth fell from 76% to 64%, while the percentage of White identified Youth rose from 13% to 29%. Amongst the populations with the smallest representation, Multi-racial Youth data showed a decline from 7% to 3% and Native American/Alaskan Native/Indigenous Youth increased from 1% to 3% of the total population experiencing homelessness.

The 2023 PIT Count resulted in the identification of no parenting youth experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The 2023 PIT Count data indicates the racial demographics of parenting youth who were experiencing homelessness. As shown above; 56% of parenting youth who were experiencing homelessness identified as Black, 33% as White, 4% as Other/Multi-Race and 4% as Native American/Alaskan Native/Indigenous.

It should also be noted that 3 individuals were identified as being under the age of 25 unaided by a parent and experiencing unsheltered homeless during the 2022 PIT Count. 2 individuals identified as Black (67%) and 1 as White (33%.) 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

Distribution of Race Among Veterans

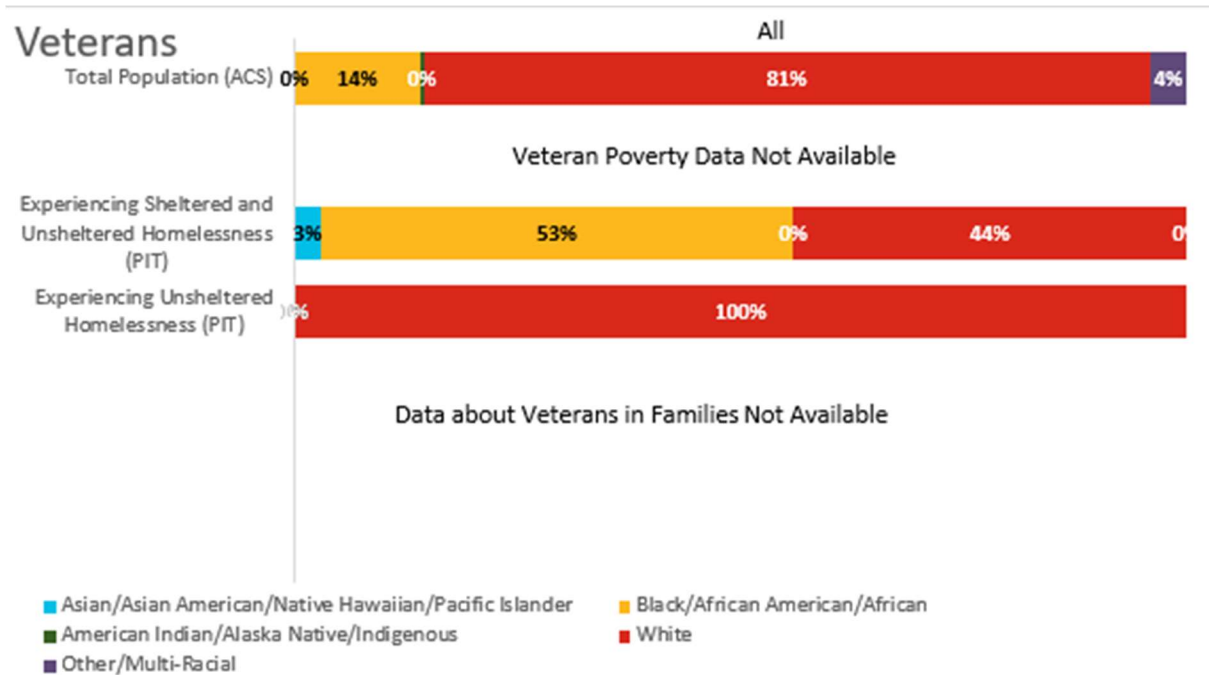


Figure 3. Distribution of race within veterans who identified as experiencing homelessness and unsheltered homelessness.

Per the notation 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 2023 PIT Count. Data regarding Veterans in families was also not available during the time this report was generated. The sample size of 34 veterans comprises 2.6% of all people experiencing homelessness during the 2023 PIT Count.

The 2023 PIT Count identified 53% of veterans experiencing homelessness identified as Black, with 44% identifying as Black and 3% identifying as Asian/Asian American/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. One individual reported experiencing unsheltered homelessness and identified as White.

Distribution of Ethnicity Among All People Experiencing Poverty

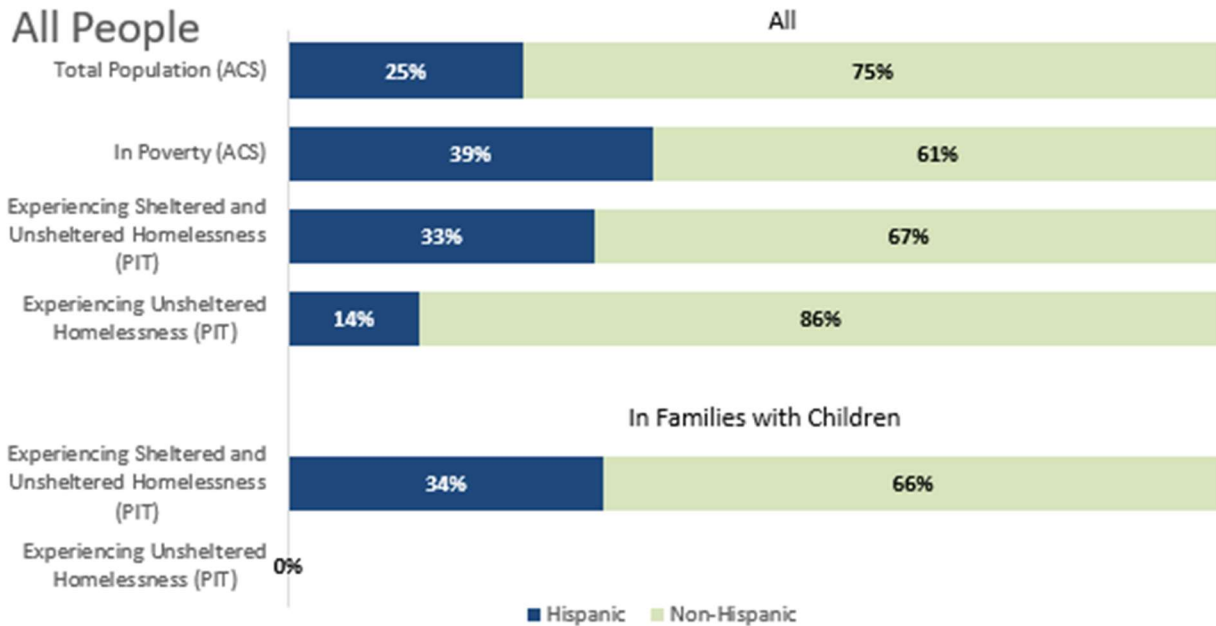


Figure 4. Distribution of ethnicity across all people living in poverty, persons experiencing homelessness, persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness, and in families with children experiencing homelessness.

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 39% of all people living in poverty identified as Hispanic in the 2017-2021 ACS, a decrease of 4% from the 2015-2019 reporting period. We also see an increase from 28% to 33% of Hispanic identified people experiencing homelessness in the 2023 Point-In-Time Count compared to 2022 data.

When evaluating the percentage of families with children experiencing homelessness for Westchester’s CoC, we see an increase 34% of families with children identify as Hispanic compared to 28% the previous year. For both households with children and households without children, the proportion of Hispanic households among those experiencing homelessness remains *below* the proportion of Hispanics among people estimated in poverty, however the margin has become significantly narrower. There was a 15% margin in 2022 vs. 6% margin in 2023.)

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 2023 Westchester's CoC Point-In-Time Count.

Distribution of Ethnicity Among Youth

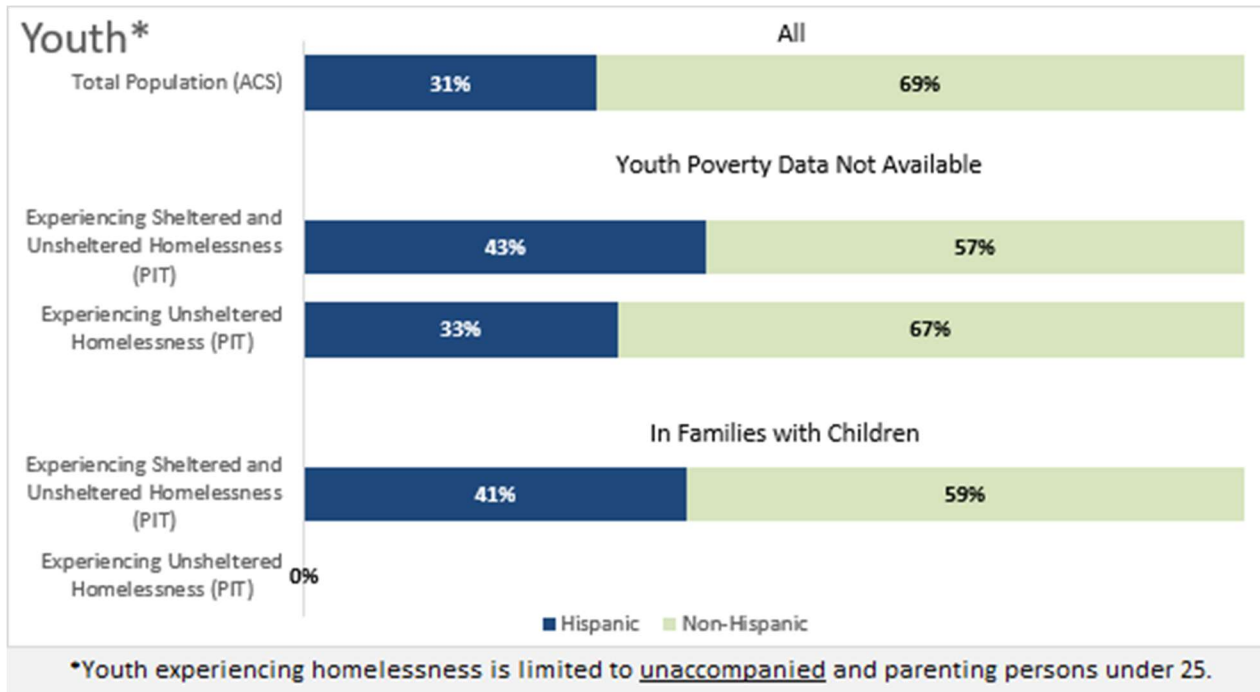


Figure 5. Distribution of ethnicity within youths who identified as experiencing homelessness, youths experiencing unsheltered homelessness, and in parenting youth (families with children experiencing homelessness).

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 2023 PIT Count.

The 2023 PIT Count data indicates that 43% of youths experiencing homelessness in Westchester County identified as Hispanic, a significant increase over 36% in 2022. It should also be noted that three individuals identified as being under the age of 25 unaided by a parent and experiencing unsheltered homeless during the 2023 PIT Count. One individual identified as Hispanic, with the other identifying as non-hispanic.

We can also see that 41% of parenting youth who were experiencing homelessness identified as Hispanic, and 59% identified as Non-Hispanic. In 2022 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 above the proportion of Hispanics among people estimated in poverty in 2023 as compared to 2022 when the proportion was lower.

As mentioned previously, the 2023 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 of 70.

Distribution of Ethnicity Among Veterans

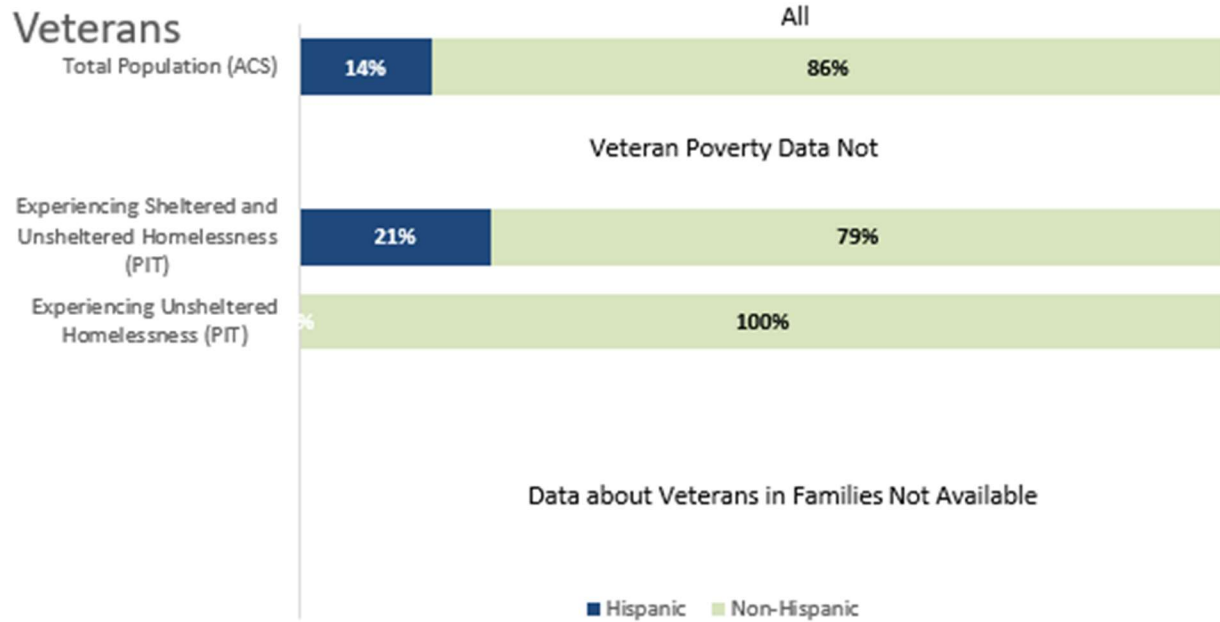


Figure 6. Distribution of ethnicity within veterans who identified as experiencing homelessness and unsheltered homelessness.

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. 21% of the 34 total Veterans experiencing homelessness identified as Hispanic, and 79% as non-Hispanic. With regards to the number of Veterans who were experiencing unsheltered homelessness, no Hispanic identified Veterans reported experiencing unsheltered homelessness on the night of the 2023 PIT Count. The ethnic distribution shown between veterans experiencing unsheltered homelessness should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size (n=1).

Distribution of Days Homeless by Race

Days Homeless by Race and Ethnicity

Percent and number of households in each race and ethnicity group and average cumulative days homeless for each group.

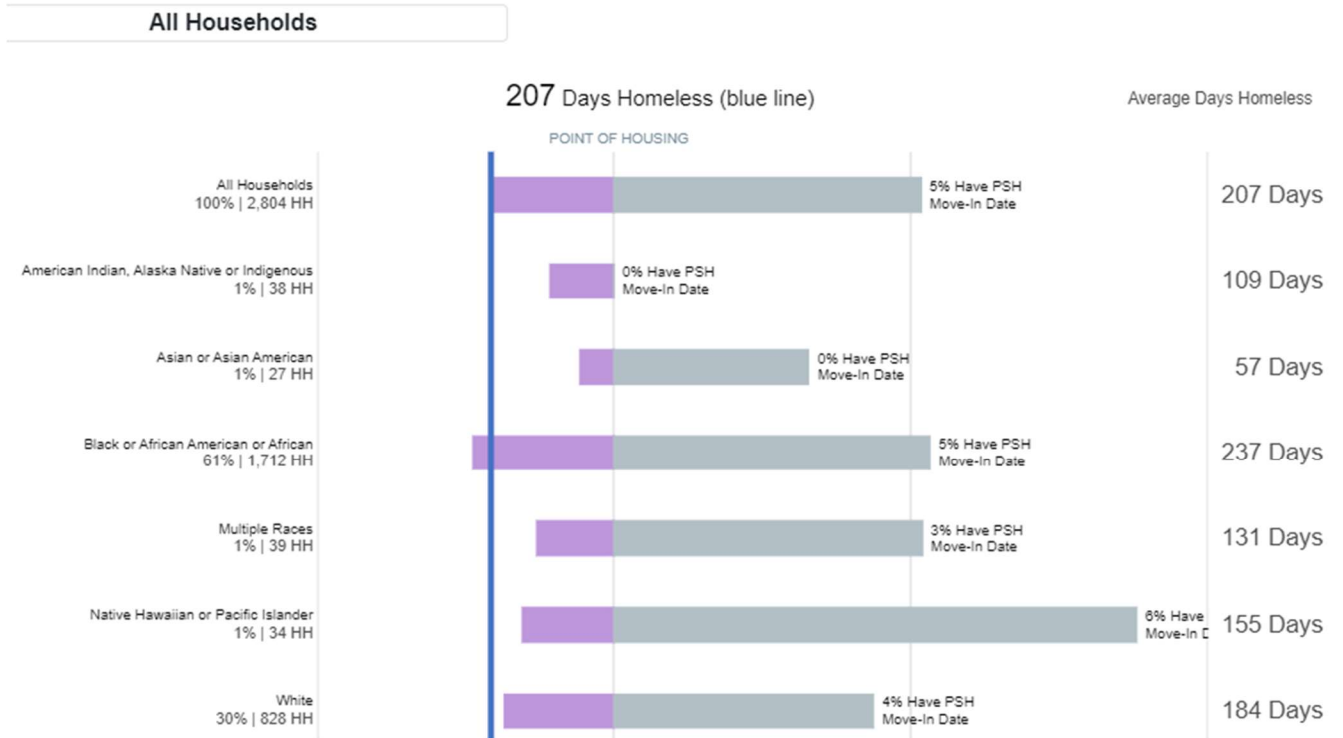


Figure 7. Percent and number of households in each race and average cumulative days that households in each were served in the homeless system.

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 10/1/21 to 9/30/22 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 207 days homeless. Black households (61%) on average spend 237 days homeless, down from 250 the previous year. This means 53 more days spent homeless as opposed to of Non-Hispanic White households (30%) spend homeless (184 days). We can also see that White Hispanic/Latino households (29%) spend an average of 177 days homeless, up from 132 days the previous year. The data continues to demonstrate a racial disparity in number of days homeless, though the margin has narrowed from year to year.

Distributions of Exits to Permanent Destinations by Race

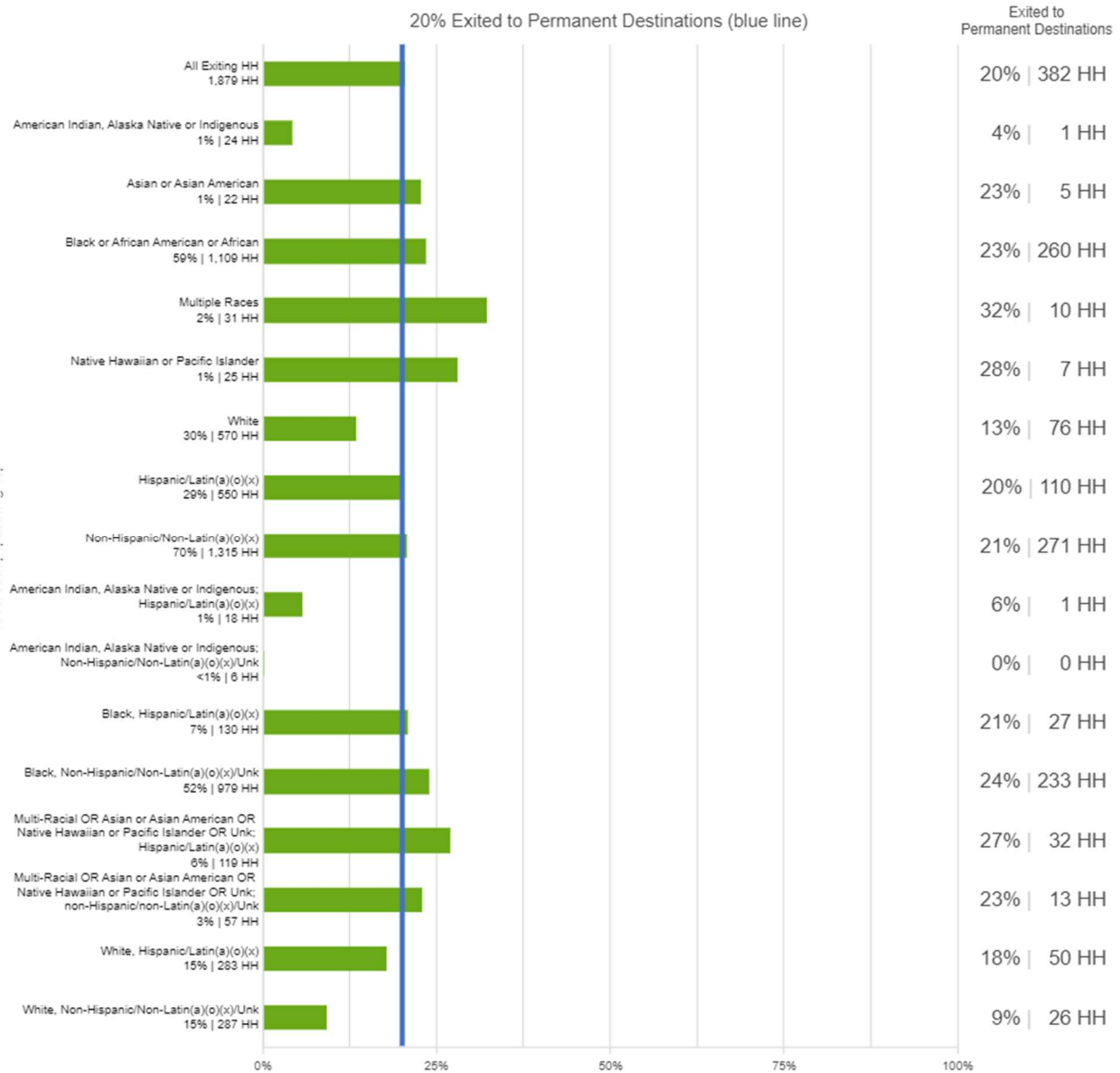


Figure 9. This chart shows exits to permanent destinations from the homeless system for households with certain demographic or system utilization characteristics called population groups. Race was focused on for the purpose of this report.

Figure 9 shows 20% of all households exited to permanent destinations. 13% of White Non-Hispanic/Latino households (down from 20% the previous year), 9% of White-Hispanic/Latino households (down from 22% the previous year), and 23% of Black households (comparable to 21% the previous year) exited to permanent destinations from 10/1/21 through 9/30/22. Black households account for 59% of the households that exited to permanent destinations and White Non- Hispanic households 15%.

It should be noted that the sample size for other races including Asian and Indigenous American 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

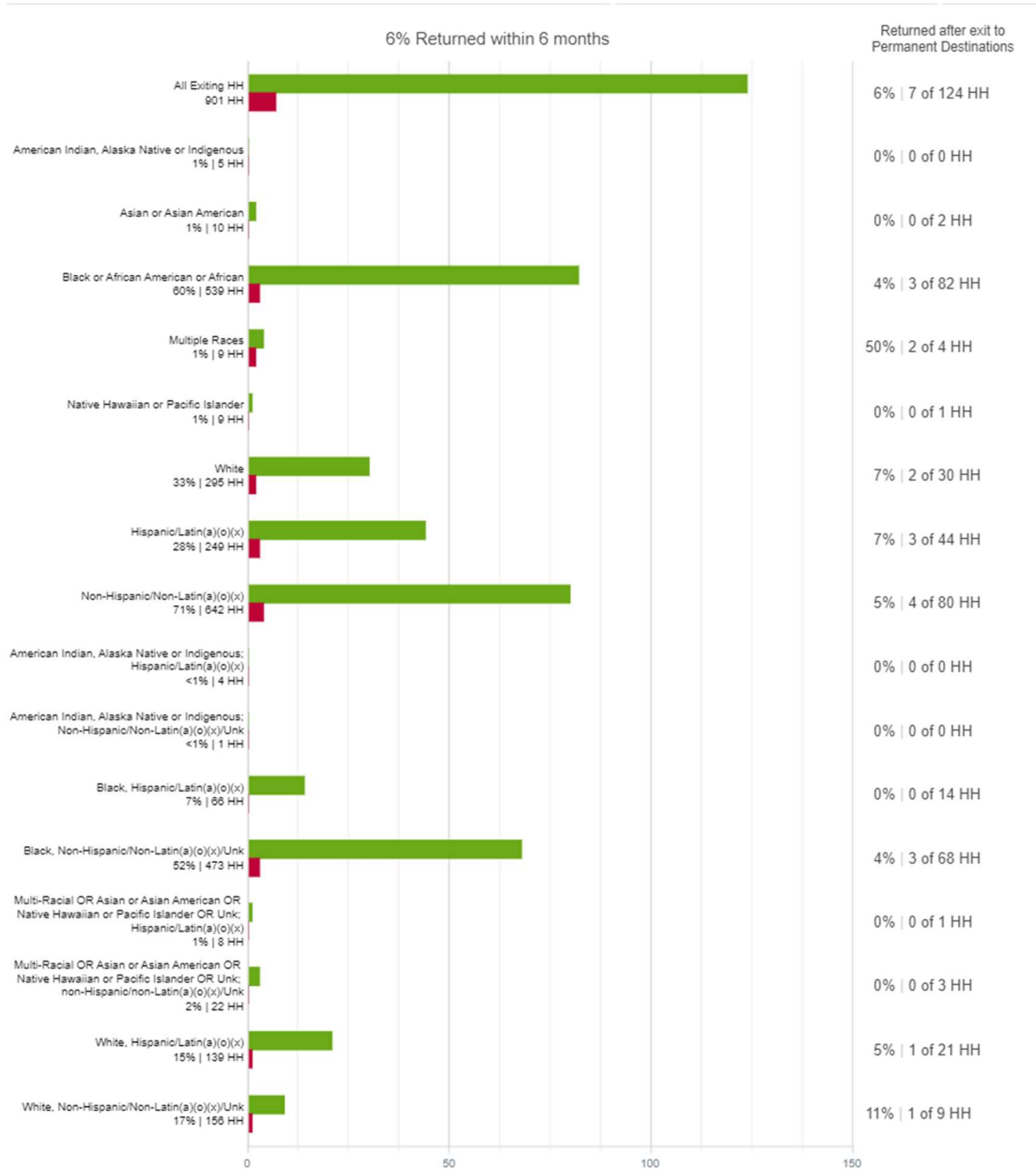


Figure 10. Illustration of returns to the homeless system within six months of exit for households with exits to permanent destinations by Race

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, 6% of all households returned within 6 months of their exit to a permanent destination when leaving the CoC's homeless system. This represents a slight increase over the return rate of 4% the previous year. White Non-Hispanic/Latino households account for 17% of the households that exited, the same proportion as the previous reporting period. Of those who exited to permanent destinations, 11% (one household) returned to homelessness within 6 months. Black/African American households account for 60% of the exits, comparable to the 58% share of overall exits the previous year. Just 4% 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.

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 cannot, 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.

Summary

The 2023 Westchester County Continuum of Care Partnership to End Homelessness (CoC) data indicates a notable racial disparity among individuals experiencing homelessness. The figures reveal that Black people are disproportionately affected by homelessness compared to other races. According to the 2023 Point-In-Time Count, while 25% of all people living in poverty in the region identified as Black, a significantly higher proportion, 65%, of people experiencing homelessness identified as Black. This suggests that Black individuals are overrepresented among those facing homelessness in Westchester County.

The report also delves into specific categories, such as families with children and youth, further highlighting the racial disparities. For instance, in families with children experiencing homelessness, 70% of them are identified as Black, compared to 26% identifying as White. Among youth experiencing homelessness, 64% identified as Black, and this percentage has decreased from 76% in the previous year. Despite a reduction in the disparity, the data underscores ongoing challenges and a substantial racial

disproportionality in homelessness, particularly affecting the Black population in Westchester County.

The data suggests that, similar to the trends observed in the Black population, there are disparities among Hispanic individuals experiencing homelessness in Westchester County. Initiatives that address the specific needs of the Hispanic community, such as culturally competent services and outreach programs, may be essential in providing effective support. Additionally, advocating for affordable housing and comprehensive solutions to address the root causes of homelessness can contribute to improving the situation for individuals of Hispanic ethnicity and other affected groups.

References

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4. Stella Performance Module. Homelessness Data Exchange (HUD). Date Published: November 2023.