



An Examination of Racial Equity Within
Westchester's Continuum of Care
February 2019

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.

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 2017 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

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) 2011-2015 5-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. CoC level estimates were calculated from ACS Block Group (BG) estimates along with a BG-to-CoC crosswalk which were created based on ArcGIS mapping software.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.

Results

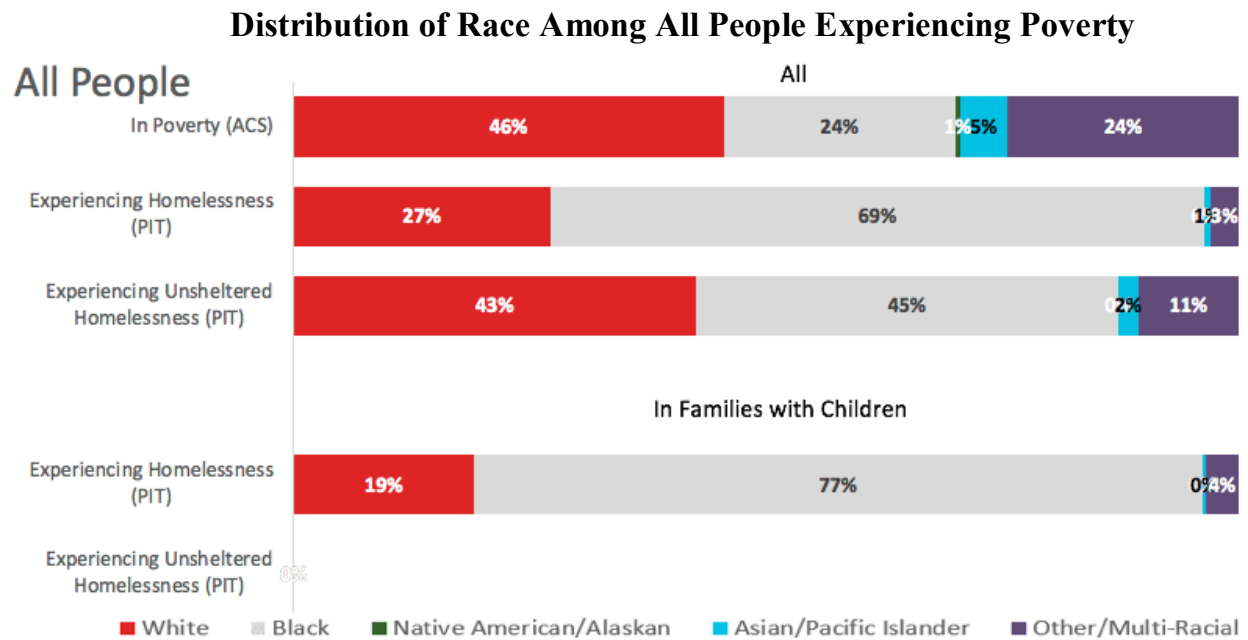


Figure 1. Distribution of race across all people living in poverty, persons experiencing homelessness, persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness, and in families with children experiencing homelessness.

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 2011-2015 ACS. We also see that 69% of people experiencing homelessness in the 2017 Point-In-Time Count identified as Black. This demonstrates 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 77% of families with children are Black compared to 19% identifying as White, 4% identifying as Multiracial, 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 24% of all people living in poverty identified as Black; 77% of families with children who were experiencing homelessness during the 2017 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 2017 Westchester’s CoC Point-In-Time Count.

Distribution of Race Among Youth

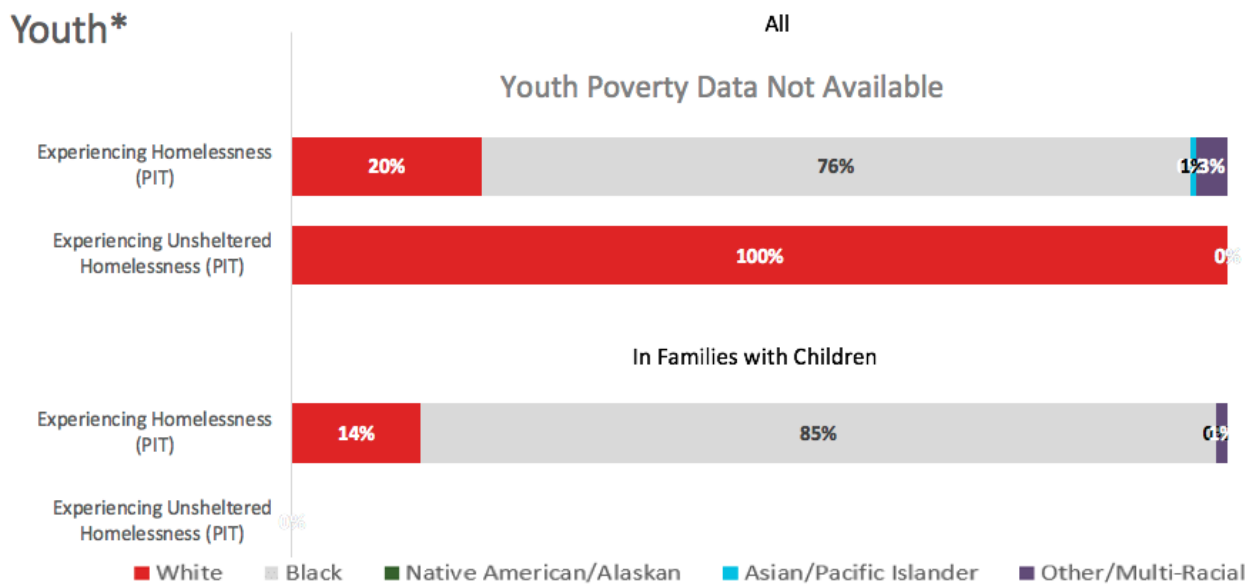


Figure 2. Distribution of race within youths who identified as experiencing homelessness, youths experiencing unsheltered homelessness, and in parenting youth (families with children experiencing homelessness).

This second bar chart (figure 2.) illustrates a racial breakdown of individual's who were identified during the 2017 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 top 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 2017 PIT Count. The racial demographics of youths of identified as experiencing homelessness the night of the 2017 PIT count are as follows; 20% identified as White, 76% identified as Black, 3% as Other/Multi-Race, and 1% as Asian.

The 2017 PIT Count did not result in the identification of parenting youth experiencing unsheltered homelessness. However, the 2017 PIT Count data does indicate the racial demographics of parenting youth who were experiencing homelessness. As shown above; 85% of parenting youth who were experiencing homelessness identified as Black, 14% as White, and 1% as Other/Multi-Race.

It should also be noted that only two individuals were identified as being under the age of 25 unaided by a parent and experiencing unsheltered homeless during the 2017 PIT Count. Both individuals identified as White (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.

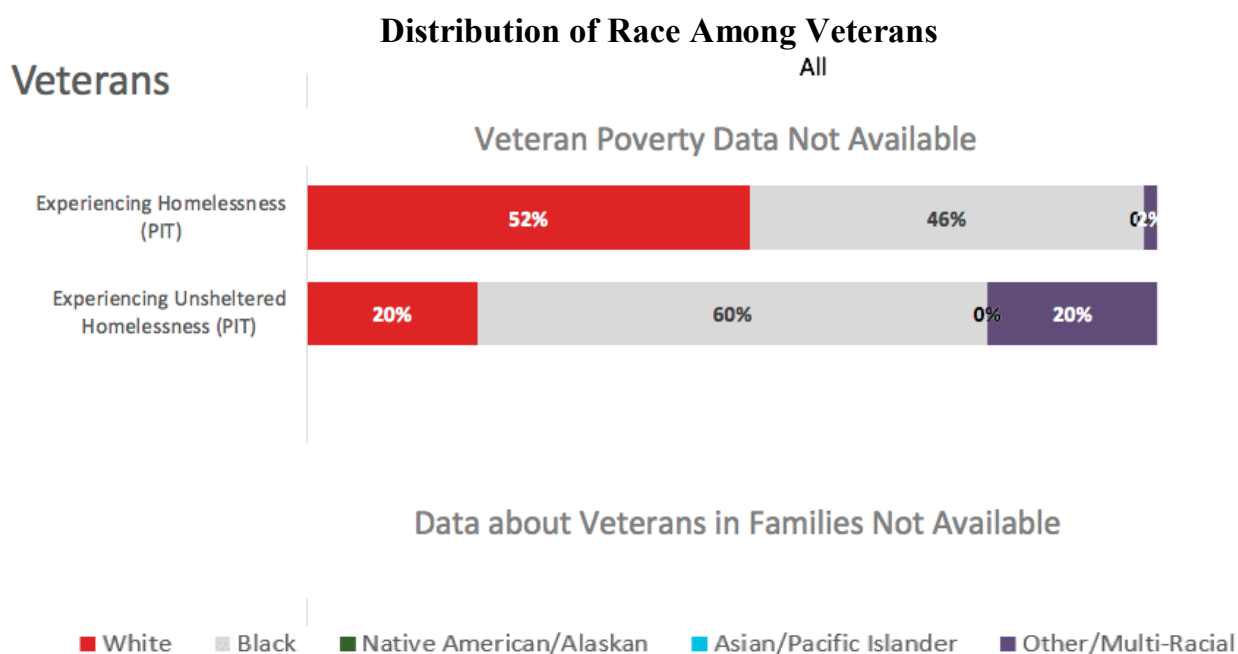


Figure 3. Distribution of race within veterans who identified as experiencing homelessness and unsheltered homelessness.

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 2017 PIT Count. Data regarding Veterans in families was also not available during the time this report was generated.

52% of veterans experiencing homelessness identified as White, 46% as Black, and 1% as Other/Multi-race. Five individuals reported experiencing unsheltered homelessness; three of which identified as Black (60%), one as White (20%), and one as Other/Multi-Race (20%). The racial distribution shown between veterans experiencing unsheltered homelessness should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size (n=5).

Distribution of Ethnicity Among All People Experiencing Poverty

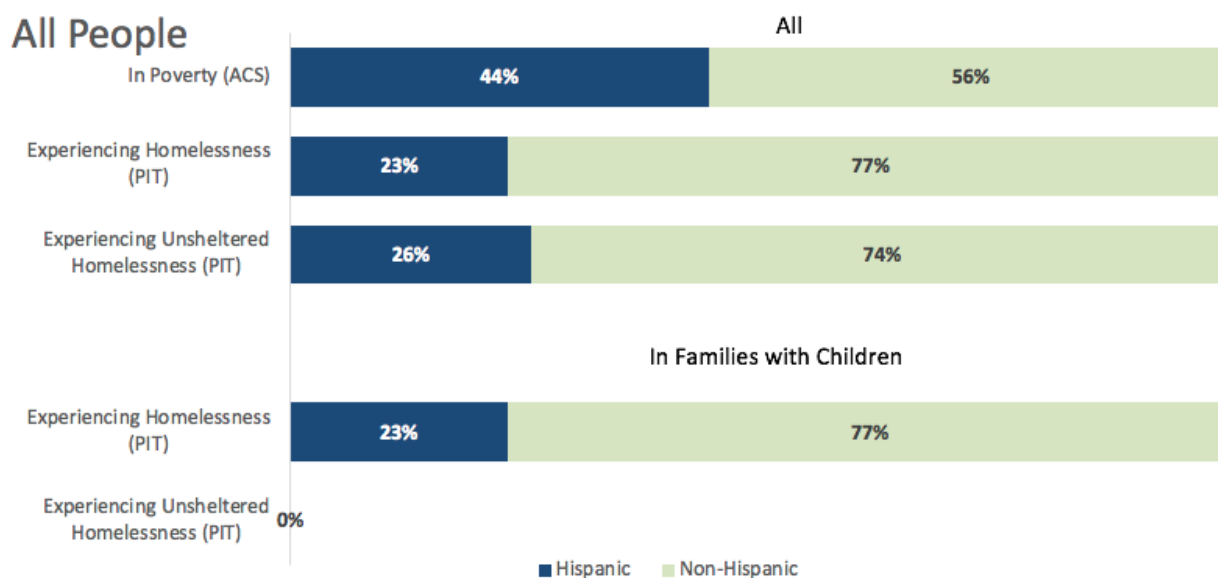


Figure 4. Distribution of ethnicity across all people living in poverty, persons experiencing homelessness, persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness, and in families with children experiencing homelessness.

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 56% of all people living in poverty identified as Non-Hispanic in the 2011-2015 ACS. We also see that 77% of people experiencing homelessness in the 2017 Point-In-Time Count identified as Non-Hispanic. This demonstrates an ethnic 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 77% of families with children are Non-Hispanic compared to 23% identifying as Hispanic. When comparing the ethnic percentages of families with children who are experiencing homelessness to the ethnic percentages of all people estimated in poverty, we see a similar disproportion (77% Non-Hispanic vs 23% Hispanic).

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 2017 Westchester's CoC Point-In-Time Count.

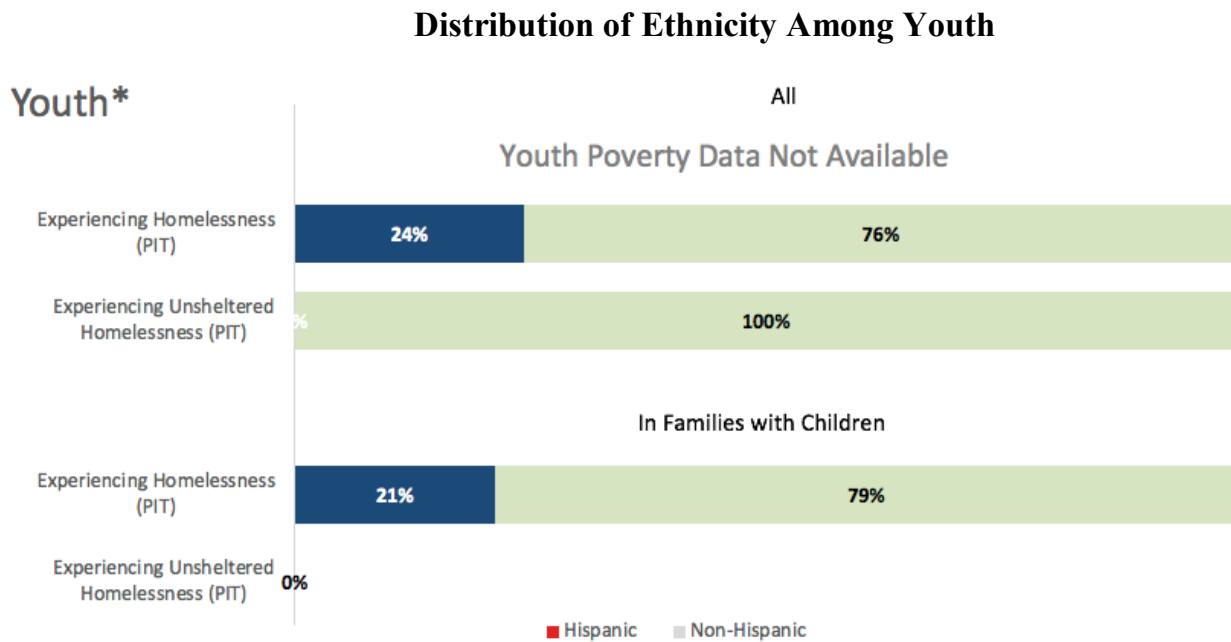


Figure 5. Distribution of ethnicity within youths who identified as experiencing homelessness, youths experiencing unsheltered homelessness, and in parenting youth (families with children experiencing homelessness).

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 2017 PIT Count.

The 2017 PIT Count data indicates that 76% of youth's experiencing homelessness in Westchester County identified as Non-Hispanic. Likewise, 24% of youths identified as Hispanic. Once again, it should also be noted that only two individuals were identified as being under the age of 25 unaided by a parent and experiencing unsheltered homeless during the 2017 PIT Count. Both individuals identified as Non-Hispanic (100%).

As mentioned previously, the 2017 PIT Count did not result in the identification of parenting youth experiencing unsheltered homelessness. However, the 2017 PIT Count data does indicate the ethnic demographics of parenting youth who were experiencing homelessness. As shown above; 79% of parenting youth who were experiencing homelessness identified as Non-Hispanic, and 21% as Hispanic.

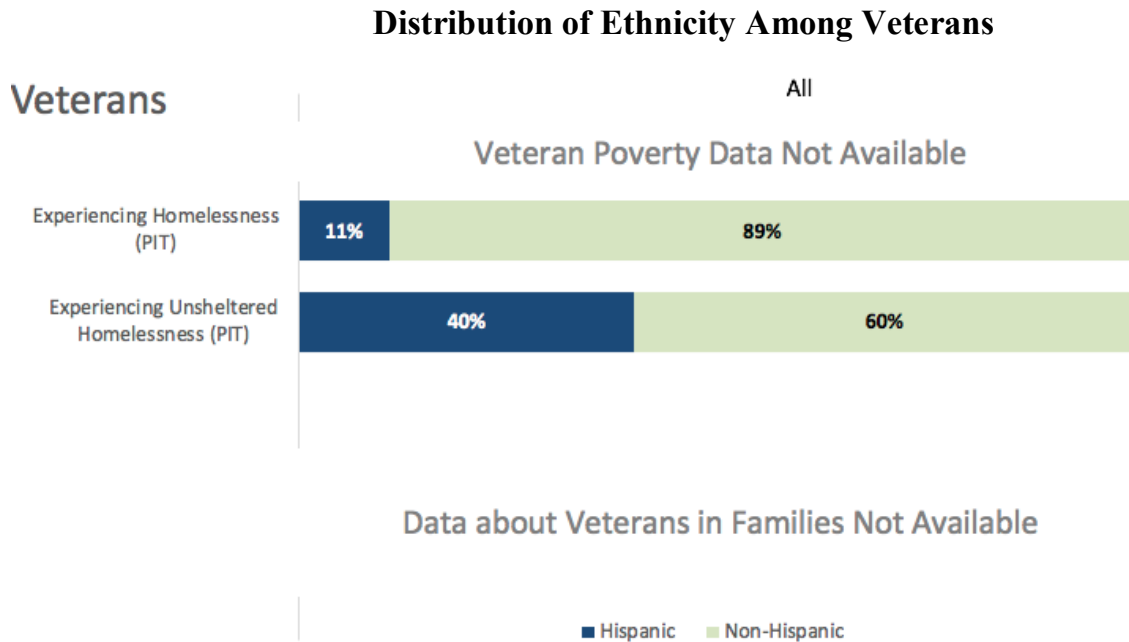


Figure 6. Distribution of ethnicity within veterans who identified as experiencing homelessness and unsheltered homelessness.

As previous 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 2017 PIT Count. 11% of veterans experiencing homelessness identified as Hispanic, and 89% as Non-Hispanic. With regards to the number of Veterans who were experiencing unsheltered homelessness; 60% identified as Non-Hispanic, and 20% identified as Hispanic. The ethnic distribution shown between veterans experiencing unsheltered homelessness should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size (n=5).

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 a given community.¹

Conclusion

Racial and ethnic disparities are driven by a complex array of inequities within systems and social dynamics such as; biases and prejudices, overt discrimination, systemic and institutional racism, and many others. All of these factors impact how our community responds to homelessness, and collectively causes and creates homelessness throughout Westchester County.²

The HUD Racial Equity's Analysis Tool identified the presence of large racial and ethnic disparities in experiences of homelessness that were beyond the impact of poverty alone. The data provided in this analysis coincides with countrywide data showing minority groups experiencing homelessness at higher rates than Whites, and therefore making up a disproportionate share of the homeless population.³

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.² Below are a few questions that should be considered as we continue to address disparities within Westchester County's CoC.²

References

- 1) U.S. Housing and Urban Development. [CoC Analysis Tool: Race and Ethnicity](#). Date Published: December 2018.
- 2) United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). [How to Start Addressing Racial Disparities in your Community](#). Published: July 9th 2018.
- 3) National Alliance to End Homelessness. [Racial Disparities in Homelessness in the United States](#). Published: June 6th 2018.

HUD Recommended Discussion Questions¹:

- 1) How does your CoC compare to state numbers? Are any racial groups over or under represented among the homeless population in your CoC?
- 2) Are there specific local or state conditions that might lead to these differences?
- 3) In PIT counts, are there significant differences between sheltered and unsheltered counts as far as over or under representation? Why might that be?
- 4) Are there differences in families and individuals in terms of racial distribution?
- 5) What does youth data look like compared to all households? What about youth in families with children?
- 6) What about veterans in your community? What do you know about your own community that gives context to the data?

Other Questions to Consider²:

- What current data points are most instructive?
- What other questions should we all be asking of our data to better understand access, service provision, and outcomes?
- What does the data tell us about the who is entering our system?
- What training do we need to better understand these dynamics, analyze data accordingly and make recommendations?
- Do our policies address and meet the needs of people of color?

Appendix

New York State Data

Race and Ethnicity	All (ACS) ¹				In Poverty (ACS) ¹				Experiencing Homelessness (PIT) ²			
	All		In Families with Children		All		In Families with Children		All		In Families with Children	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
All People	19,668,538		15,728,172		3,005,943		2,181,168		89,503		52,113	
Race												
White	12,700,000	65%	9,922,131	63%	1,404,979	47%	917,251	42%	19,894	22%	9,939	19%
Black	3,070,392	16%	2,458,956	16%	691,900	23%	519,516	24%	61,463	69%	38,047	73%
Native American/Alaskan	74,793	0%	60,630	0%	19,805	1%	15,246	1%	729	1%	470	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1,570,223	8%	1,334,863	8%	278,136	9%	213,247	10%	2,247	3%	1,279	2%
Other/Multi-Racial	2,253,130	11%	1,951,592	12%	611,123	20%	515,908	24%	5,170	6%	2,378	5%
Ethnicity												
Hispanic	3,619,658	18%	3,108,717	20%	917,179	31%	757,257	35%	29,408	33%	19,558	38%
Non-Hispanic	16,048,880	82%	12,619,455	80%	2,088,764	69%	1,423,911	65%	60,095	67%	32,555	62%
Youth <25	6,237,379		NOT AVAILABLE		1,331,958		NOT AVAILABLE		5,849		3,020	
Race												
White	3,670,002	59%	--	--	579,545	44%	--	--	1,411	24%	613	20%
Black	1,086,972	17%	--	--	319,878	24%	--	--	3,986	68%	2,163	72%
Native American/Alaskan	28,027	0%	--	--	9,209	1%	--	--	42	1%	20	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	473,862	8%	--	--	109,428	8%	--	--	144	2%	52	2%
Other/Multi-Racial	978,516	16%	--	--	313,898	24%	--	--	266	5%	172	6%
Ethnicity												
Hispanic	1,436,647	23%	--	--	444,229	33%	--	--	1,859	32%	1,117	37%
Non-Hispanic	4,800,732	77%	--	--	887,729	67%	--	--	3,990	68%	1,903	63%
Veterans	828,586		NOT AVAILABLE		NOT AVAILABLE		NOT AVAILABLE		1,244		NOT AVAILABLE	
Race												
White	697,525	84%	--	--	--	--	--	--	542	44%	--	--
Black	89,220	11%	--	--	--	--	--	--	651	52%	--	--
Native American/Alaskan	2,968	0%	--	--	--	--	--	--	9	1%	--	--
Asian/Pacific Islander	10,127	1%	--	--	--	--	--	--	7	1%	--	--
Other/Multi-Racial	28,746	3%	--	--	--	--	--	--	35	3%	--	--
Ethnicity												
Hispanic	57,847	7%	--	--	--	--	--	--	175	14%	--	--
Non-Hispanic	770,739	93%	--	--	--	--	--	--	1,069	86%	--	--

Sources:

¹ American Community Survey (ACS) 2011-2015 5-yr estimates; Veteran CoC data comes from the ACS 2015 1-yr estimates; Total youth in the American Community Survey is a rollup of race estimates of all persons under 25.

² Point-In-Time (PIT) 2017 data

Note: Race estimates of individuals in families with children are based on the race of the householder.

Table 1. Racial and Ethnic distributions for New York state, those in poverty, and persons experiencing homelessness, with a breakout of families with children.

Westchester CoC Data

Race and Ethnicity	All (ACS) ¹				In Poverty (ACS) ¹				Experiencing Homelessness (PIT) ²				Experiencing Sheltered Homelessness (PIT) ²				Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness (PIT) ²			
	All		In Families with Children		All		In Families with Children		All		In Families with Children		All		In Families with Children		All		In Families with Children	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
All People	967,315		816,196		90,752		65,946		1,832		1,163		1,785		1,163		47		0	
Race																				
White	644,076	67%	552,493	68%	41,308	46%	30,017	46%	497	27%	222	19%	477	27%	222	19%	20	43%	0	0%
Black	139,500	14%	110,607	14%	22,205	24%	16,136	24%	1,269	69%	896	77%	1,248	70%	896	77%	21	45%	0	0%
Native American/Alaskan	3,691	0%	2,701	0%	479	1%	348	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	55,240	6%	49,826	6%	4,544	5%	3,282	5%	10	1%	4	0%	9	1%	4	0%	1	2%	0	0%
Other/Multi-Racial	124,808	13%	100,569	12%	22,216	24%	16,164	25%	56	3%	41	4%	51	3%	41	4%	5	11%	0	0%
Ethnicity																				
Hispanic	225,366	23%	190,817	23%	40,221	44%	29,227	44%	423	23%	267	23%	411	23%	267	23%	12	26%	0	0%
Non-Hispanic	741,949	77%	625,379	77%	50,531	56%	36,719	56%	1,409	77%	896	77%	1,374	77%	896	77%	35	74%	0	0%
Youth <25	308,057		NOT AVAILABLE				148		80		146		80		2		0			
Race																				
White	189,174	61%	--	--	--	--	--	--	30	20%	11	14%	28	19%	11	14%	2	100%	0	0%
Black	47,152	15%	--	--	--	--	--	--	112	76%	68	85%	112	77%	68	85%	0	0%	0	0%
Native American/Alaskan	1,343	0%	--	--	--	--	--	--	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	15,364	5%	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other/Multi-Racial	55,024	18%	--	--	--	--	--	--	5	3%	1	1%	5	3%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%
Ethnicity																				
Hispanic	91,249	30%	--	--	--	--	--	--	36	24%	17	21%	36	25%	17	21%	0	0%	0	0%
Non-Hispanic	216,808	70%	--	--	--	--	--	--	112	76%	63	79%	110	75%	63	79%	2	100%	0	0%
Veterans	66,757		NOT AVAILABLE				121		NOT AVAILABLE		116		NOT AVAILABLE		5		100%		NOT AVAILABLE	
Race																				
White	51,019	76%	--	--	--	--	--	--	63	52%	--	--	62	53%	--	--	1	20%	--	--
Black	11,495	17%	--	--	--	--	--	--	56	46%	--	--	53	46%	--	--	3	60%	--	--
Native American/Alaskan	0	0%	--	--	--	--	--	--	0	0%	--	--	0	0%	--	--	0	0%	--	--
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0%	--	--	--	--	--	--	0	0%	--	--	0	0%	--	--	0	0%	--	--
Other/Multi-Racial	4,243	6%	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	2%	--	--	1	1%	--	--	1	20%	--	--
Ethnicity																				
Hispanic	6,078	9%	--	--	--	--	--	--	13	11%	--	--	11	9%	--	--	2	40%	--	--
Non-Hispanic	60,679	91%	--	--	--	--	--	--	108	89%	--	--	105	91%	--	--	3	60%	--	--

Sources:

¹ American Community Survey (ACS) 2011-2015 5-yr estimates; Veteran CoC data comes from the ACS 2015 1-yr estimates; Total youth in the American Community Survey is a rollup of race estimates of all persons under 25.

² Point-In-Time (PIT) 2017 data

Note: Race estimates of individuals in families with children are based on the race of the householder.

Table 2. The Westchester CoC Data table that is represented in the figures above, as well as additional details including; overall racial distribution in Westchester's CoC and racial distribution among persons experiencing sheltered homelessness.

Additional Resources

- [For more information on how poverty is measured](#)
- [For more information on the PIT Count and AHAR](#)
- [For more information on homelessness definitions](#)
- [For more information about the ACS](#)