

Eastern Pennsylvania Continuum of Care (PA-509)  
Preliminary Analysis of Racial Disparity in Utilization & Outcome of Homeless Services

**Introduction & Methodology**

The Eastern Pennsylvania Continuum of Care conducted an analysis regarding racial disparity in utilization and outcomes of homeless services within the CoC. This review utilized data from the US Census Bureau (*Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States, States, and Counties: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2017 & Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, 2016*), Eastern Continuum SPM by Race-Ethnicity (for the time period 7/1/18-6/30/19), and Point-in-Time Count PA-509 Eastern Pennsylvania CoC, 2018 & 2019. Also reviewed were the following background articles: *Racial Disparities in Homelessness in the United States*, National Alliance to End Homelessness, 06/06/18 and *How to Start Addressing Racial Disparities in Your Community*, United States Interagency Council on Homeless, 07/09/2018. Using this data, along with background articles for context, the CoC analyzed data related to service utilization and outcomes within the homeless system broken out by race and ethnicity to explore potential disparities related to access to the homeless system, length of stay, exits to permanent housing/retention in permanent housing, and returns to homelessness. This review substantiated the existence of racial disparity in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in the Continuum of Care, as well as disparity in the utilization of services and outcomes. These conclusions are drawn from the data tables below and explained in the accompanying narrative.

**Percentage of individuals experiencing homelessness & utilizing homeless services in the Eastern PA Continuum of Care by Race/Ethnicity (Table 1.a & 1.b)**

The first comparison of data, compiled in Table 1(a) and Table 1(b), looked at the racial/ethnic make-up of the total population of the Continuum of Care, the racial/ethnic make-up of the population of individuals living in poverty in the Continuum of Care, the racial/ethnic make-up of the individuals identified as being homeless in the Point in Time count for two consecutive years, and the racial/ethnic make-up of the individuals documented as clients of Permanent Supportive and Rapid Rehousing programs in the Continuum of Care (for the period of 07/01/18-06/30/19).

<b>Table 1.a</b>	Total # of persons in Continuum of Care	% of population by race	% of persons living below poverty line in Continuum of Care	2018 Point in Time	2019 Point in Time	2019 Point in Time Unsheltered	2019 Point in Time Sheltered	% of persons in CoC PSH or RRH programs
Total Persons	3,107,425	3,107,425	369,061	1998	1,843	337	1506	2,049
White	2,824,179	91%	82%	73%	74%	86%	71%	77%
Black or African American	151,734	5%	6%	22%	21%	10%	24%	18%
American Indian or Alaska Native	11,260	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Asian	63,708	2%	2%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Native Hawaiian	2,152	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Two or More Races	54,392	2%	4%	3%	4%	3%	4%	4%

<b>Table 1.b</b>	Total # of persons in Continuum of Care	% of population by ethnicity	% of persons living below poverty line in Continuum of Care	2018 Point in Time	2019 Point in Time	2019 Point in Time Unsheltered	2019 Point in Time Sheltered	% of persons in CoC PSH or RRH programs
Total Persons	3,107,425	3,107,425	369,061	1998	1,843	337	1506	2,049
Hispanic	247,344	8%	15%	20%	18%	7%	20%	15%
Non-Hispanic	2,860,081	92%	76%	80%	82%	92%	80%	85%

This data suggests that disproportionality based on race exists in the homeless population in this geographic area. The data indicates that people of color are overrepresented amongst those experiencing homelessness in the Eastern PA CoC region. Individuals identifying as White represent 91% of the total population of this area and 82% of those living in poverty in this community. However, these individuals represent only 74% of the population identified in the Point in Time count in 2019. By comparison, individuals identifying as Black or African Americans make up 5% of the total population of this geographic area and 6% of those living in poverty in this community but represent 21% of the individuals captured in the Point in Time count in 2019. These numbers suggest that Black or African American individuals are overrepresented in the homeless population, and White individuals are underrepresented in the homeless population. Data regarding poverty rates is included to assist in determining whether homeless rates are similar to poverty rates among these groups. This data indicates that the rate of homeless is higher than the rate of poverty for Black or African American individuals and is lower than the rate of poverty for White individuals.

Similarly, individuals identifying as Non-Hispanic compose 92% of the total population of this region, 76% of those living in poverty, and 82% of the population identified in the 2019 Point in Time count. Individuals who identify as Hispanic represent 8% of the total population of this geographic area, 15% of the population living in poverty, and 18% of the population identified in the 2019 Point in Time count. Hispanic individuals comprise 15% of the total client count of Permanent Supportive and Rapid Rehousing homeless services.

Data from the charts above indicates a potential disparity in access to Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Rehousing for people of color as compared to White individuals. While Black or African American individuals represent 21% of individuals experiencing homelessness in the 2019 Point in Time Count, they only represent 18% of individuals being served in CoC Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing programs. In addition, while Hispanic individuals represent 18% of individuals experiencing homelessness in the 2019 Point in Time count, they only represent 15% of individuals being served in CoC Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing programs. Investigating the cause of this disparity merits further exploration.

**Outcomes of Homeless Services by Race/Ethnicity in the Eastern PA Continuum of Care**

The analysis of outcomes for individuals accessing homeless services centered on four areas of data – length of stay in Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing, Length of Stay in Permanent Supportive of Rapid Rehousing, Return to Services after Exiting, and Exit to Successful Placement/Retention. **This data was run for the period of 07/01/18-06/30/19.**

Table 2	Length of Stay (in days) in Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing	Length of Stay (in days) in Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing
White	85	586
Multi-Racial	78	481
Black or African American	95	548
All Other Races (including unknown)	62	461
<b>Average Across All Races</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>572</b>
Hispanic/Latino	82	634
Non-Hispanic/Latino	89	563

Table 2 displays that the average length of stay for individuals of all races is 87 days in Emergency/Transitional Shelter and 572 days in Permanent Supportive Housing/Rapid Rehousing. When looking at average length of stay within different racial groups, there appears to be a disparity in length of stay for individuals of all other races (not White or Black/African American) (ES/TS= 62 days; PSH/RRH= 461 days), and Multi-Racial individuals (ES/TH= 78 days; PSH/RRH= 481 days) who experienced shorter than average lengths of stay in both Emergency/Transitional Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing/Rapid Rehousing. There also appears to be a small difference between the length of stay for Black/African American individuals and White individuals: Black/African individuals had a slightly longer stay in Emergency Shelter/Transitional Housing (95 days) and a slightly shorter length of stay in Permanent Supportive Housing/Rapid Rehousing(548 days) than White individuals (ES/TH= 85 days; PSH/RRH= 586 days). This difference may be worth further exploration.

Table 3.a	Percentage of Persons who returned after leaving Emergency Shelter or Transitional House within each racial/ethnic group	Percentage of Persons who returned after leaving Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing within each racial/ethnic group
White	13%	5%
Multi-Racial	15%	9%
Black or African American	12%	8%
All Other Races (including unknown)	10%	0%
<b>Average rate of return across all racial groups</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>6%</b>
Hispanic/Latino	12%	9%
Non-Hispanic/Latino	13%	5%

Table 3.b	Percentage of persons leaving Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing	Percentage of persons who returned after leaving Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing	Percentage of persons leaving Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing	Percentage of persons who returned after leaving Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing
Total Persons	1645	212	1306	72
White	64%	66%	81%	72%
Multi-Racial	3%	4%	3%	4%
Black or African American	30%	27%	16%	24%
All Other Races (including unknown)	4%	3%	1%	0%
Hispanic/Latino	25%	24%	8%	14%
Non-Hispanic/Latino	75%	76%	92%	86%

Tables 3.a & 3.b examine return to Emergency Shelter/Transitional Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing/Rapid Rehousing homeless services after exit from two different perspectives. Table 3.a shows what percentage of individuals of each racial/ethnic group return to these homeless programs/services after exiting. Table 3.b breaks down each program type and their associated percentages of total number of returns after exit in relation to each racial/ethnic group. Table 3.b indicates that Black/African American individuals showed a higher rate of return after leaving Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing, and White individuals showed a lower rate of return after leaving Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing. In addition, Hispanic/Latino individuals showed a higher rate of return after leaving Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing and Non-Hispanic/Latino individuals showed a lower rate of return. These differences merit further exploration to determine root causes and potential interventions to address these disparities.

Table 4.a	Percentage of Persons who exited Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing to a Successful Retention/Placement within each racial/ethnic group	Percentage of Persons leaving Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing to a Successful Retention/Placement within each racial/ethnic group
White	50%	90%
Multi-Racial	51%	84%
Black or African American	47%	81%
All Other Races (including unknown)	42%	76%
<b>Average rate of success exit across all racial groups</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>88%</b>
Hispanic/Latino	48%	87%
Non-Hispanic/Latino	50%	88%

Table 4.b	Percentage of persons who left Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing	Percentage of persons who left Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing to a Successful Retention/Placement	Percent of persons who left Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing	Percentage of persons who left Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing to a Successful Retention/Placement
Total Persons	3023	1481	2747	2415
White	62%	63%	77%	78%
Multi-Racial	4%	4%	4%	3%
Black or African American	29%	28%	18%	16%
All Other Races (including unknown)	5%	4%	2%	2%
Hispanic/Latino	27%	26%	13%	13%
Non-Hispanic/Latino	73%	74%	87%	87%

Tables 4.a and 4.b examine the population that exits homeless programs/services to a successful placement/retention. Tables 4.a and 4.b indicate that Black/African American and Multi-Racial individuals, as well as individuals of all other races have a lower rate of successful retention/placement (Black/African American individuals= 81%; Multi-racial individuals= 84%) after leaving permanent supportive housing or rapid rehousing than White individuals (90%). This disparity merits further exploration.

**Further Analysis of Racial Disparities- NAEH Racial Equity Analysis Tool**

The CoC also used the NAEH Racial Equity Analysis Tool to analyze data from 04/01/18-03/01/19 related to who is experiencing homelessness in the CoC, who gets into crisis housing (emergency housing and transitional housing), who gets into permanent housing, and who returns to homelessness. This data was broken down by race and ethnicity.

Table 5.a

<b>Who Experiences Homelessness?</b>				
<i>Unduplicated total number of people in HMIS for each racial and ethnic group</i>				
<i>White</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Native American</i>	<i>All Other Races</i>	<i>Total</i>
6838	2424	108	106	9476
72%	26%	1%	1%	
<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>Not Hispanic</i>	<i>Total</i>		
1814	7438	9252		
20%	80%			

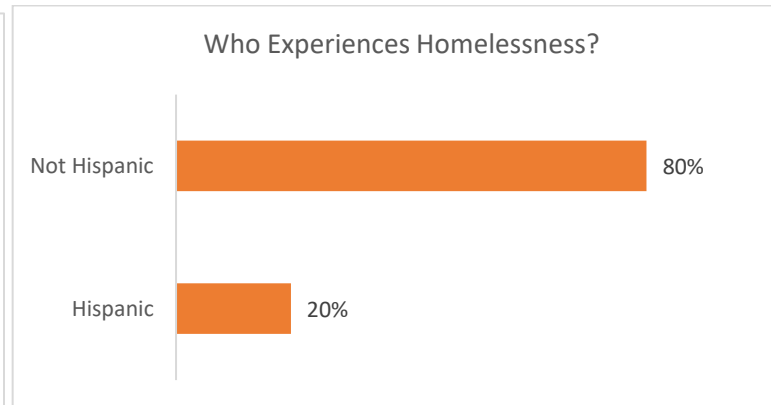
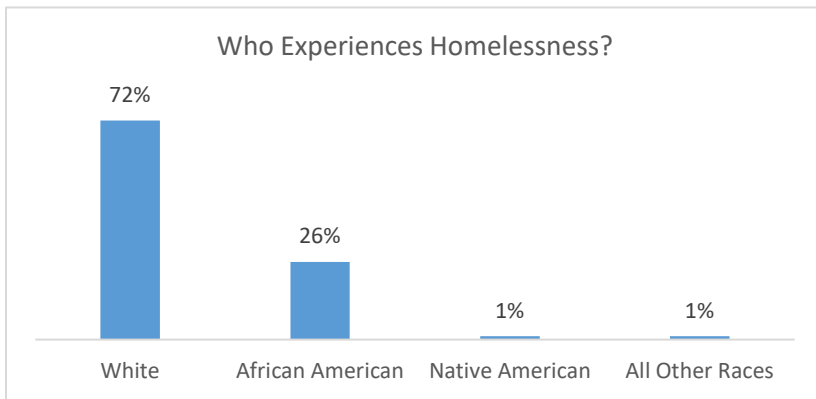
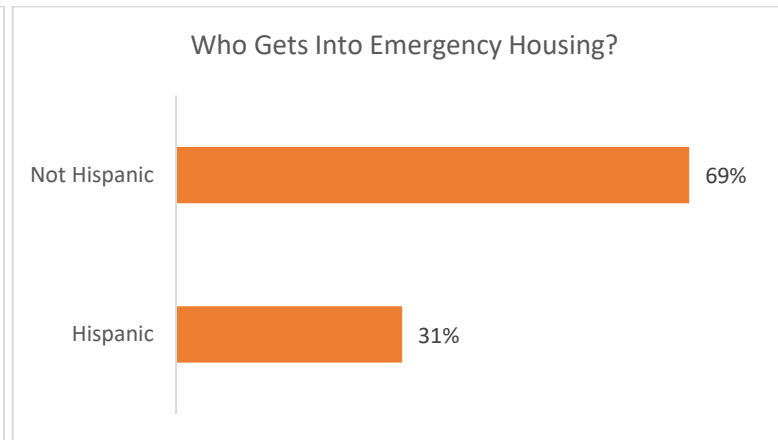
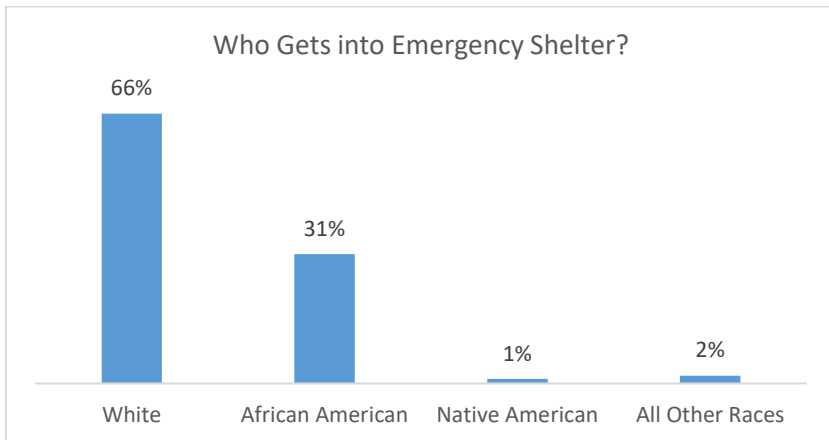


Table 5.b

<b>Who Gets into Crisis Housing?</b>				
<i>Total number of each group entering <b>Emergency Shelter</b></i>				
<i>White</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Native American</i>	<i>All Other Races</i>	<i>Total</i>
1898	909	32	54	2893
66%	31%	1%	2%	
<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>Not Hispanic</i>	<i>Total</i>		
880	1998	2878		
31%	69%			

<i>Total number of each group entering <b>Transitional Housing</b></i>				
<i>White</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Native American</i>	<i>All Other Races</i>	<i>Total</i>
483	182	3	3	671
72%	27%	0%	0%	
<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>Not Hispanic</i>	<i>Total</i>		
109	546	655		
17%	83%			



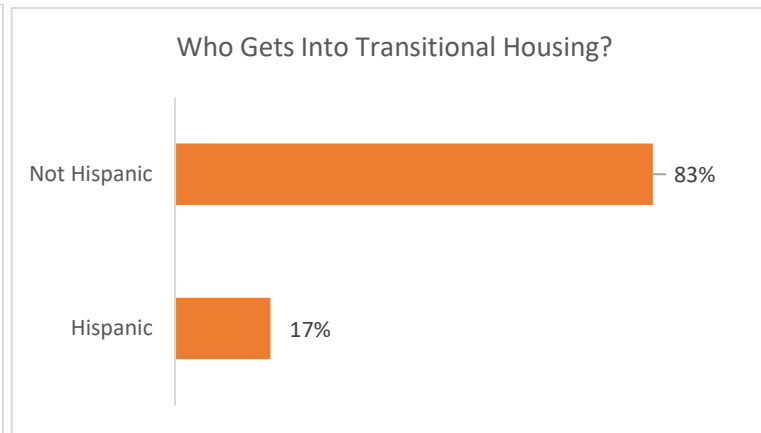
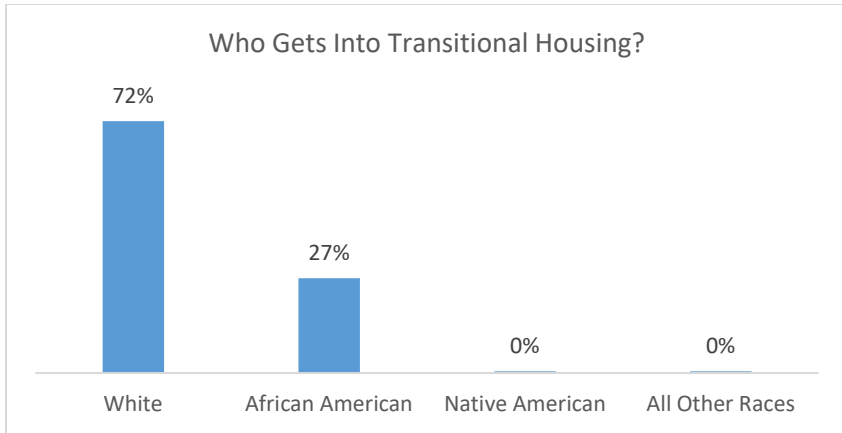


Table 5.c

Who Gets into Permanent Housing?				
<i>Total number of exits to Permanent Housing from all project types by group</i>				
<i>White</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Native American</i>	<i>All Other Races</i>	<i>Total</i>
2549	818	35	45	3447
74%	24%	1%	1%	
<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>Not Hispanic</i>	<i>Total</i>		
642	2725	3367		
19%	81%			

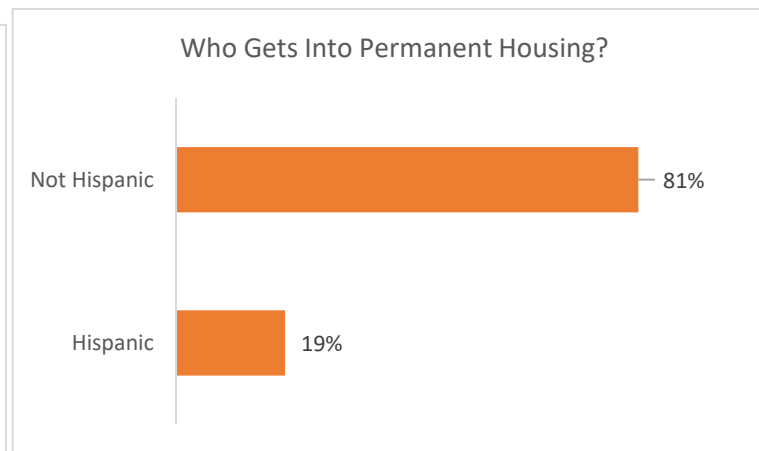
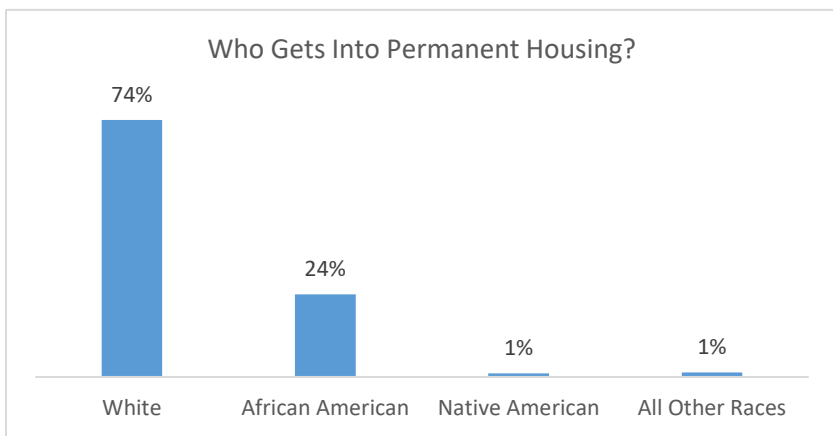
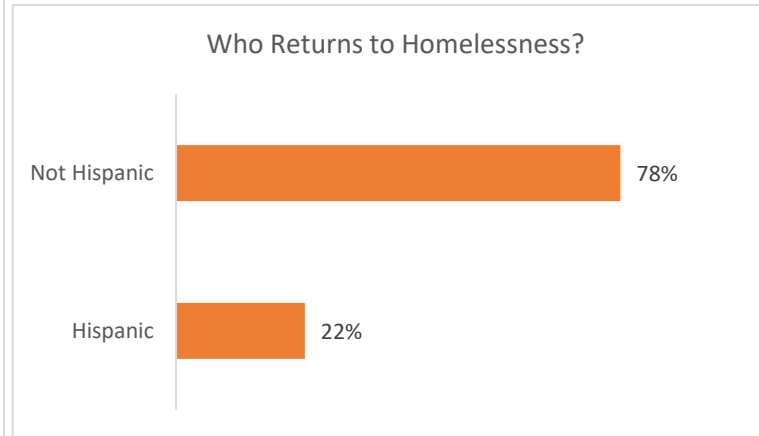
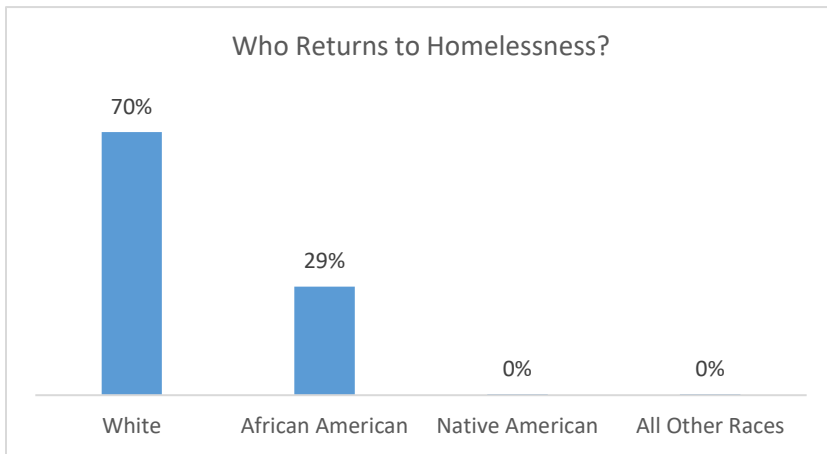


Table 5.d

<b>Who Returns to Homelessness?</b>				
<i>Total number of returns to homelessness by race</i>				
<i>White</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Native American</i>	<i>All Other Races</i>	<i>Total</i>
250	103	1	1	355
70%	29%	0%	0%	
<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>Not Hispanic</i>	<i>Total</i>		
78	269	347		
22%	78%			



Tables 5.a-5.d examine the outcomes of the Eastern PA CoC system depending on the race or ethnicity of a homeless person or family. Overall in the Eastern PA CoC from April 2018 to March 2019, 72% of the households experiencing homelessness were White, 26% were African American, 1% were Native American, and 1% were other races. The numbers of Native American households and households of other races were small relative to total households and made it difficult to analyze outcomes. 80% of the households experiencing homelessness were non-Hispanic, and 20% were Hispanic. In order to analyze potential disparities, the CoC looked at outcome data for African American households: 26% of the households experiencing homelessness in the Western PA CoC are African American, 31% of the households accessing crisis shelter are African American, 27% of the households accessing transitional housing are African American, 24% of the households accessing permanent housing are African American, and 29% of the households returning to homelessness are African American. Based on this data, there seem to be discrepancies in the rate of placement in permanent housing for African American households relative to the total households relative to the total households experiencing homelessness and accessing crisis housing. In addition, African Americans seem to be experiencing returns to homelessness at a disproportionately high rate. The CoC also looked at outcome data for Hispanic households: 20% of the households experiencing homelessness in the Western PA CoC are Hispanic, 31% of the households accessing crisis shelter are Hispanic, 17% of the households accessing transitional housing are Hispanic, 19% of the households accessing permanent housing are Hispanic, and 22% of the households returning to homelessness are Hispanic. A greater proportion of Hispanic households access crisis shelter proportionate to the percentage of Hispanic households who are experiencing homelessness; though a slightly lower percentage of households access transitional housing relative to the population. There do not seem to be evident disparities in access to permanent housing and returns to homelessness.



## Key Findings

- **Rate of homelessness:** Data suggests that disproportionality based on race exists in the homeless population in this geographic area. Black and African American individuals and Hispanic individuals are overrepresented in the homeless population of this geographic region, while White individuals are underrepresented. The rate of homelessness is higher than the rate of poverty for Black or African American and Hispanic individuals and is lower than the rate of poverty for White and Non-Hispanic individuals.
- **Access to permanent housing:** Data indicates a potential disparity in access to Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Rehousing for people of color as compared to White individuals. While Black or African American individuals represent 21% of individuals experiencing homelessness in the 2019 Point in Time Count, they only represent 18% of individuals being served in CoC Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing programs. In addition, while Hispanic individuals represent 18% of individuals experiencing homelessness in the 2019 Point in Time count, they only represent 15% of individuals being served in CoC Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing programs. Investigating the cause of this disparity merits further exploration.
- **Length of stay:** When looking at average length of stay within different racial groups, there appears to be a disparity in length of stay for individuals of all other races (not White or Black/African American) (ES/TS= 62 days; PSH/RRH= 461 days), and Multi-Racial individuals (ES/TH= 78 days; PSH/RRH= 481 days) (who experienced shorter than average lengths of stay in both Emergency/Transitional Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing/Rapid Rehousing. There also appears to be a small difference between the length of stay for Black/African American individuals and White individuals: Black/African individuals had a slightly longer stay in Emergency Shelter/Transitional Housing (95 days) and a slightly shorter length of stay in Permanent Supportive Housing/Rapid Rehousing(548 days) than White individuals (ES/TH= 85 days; PSH/RRH= 586 days). This difference may be worth further exploration.
- **Returns to homelessness:** Using the analysis of SPM data as well as the NAEH tool, both analyses indicate that Black/African American individuals experience higher rate of return after leaving Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing, while White individuals experience lower rate of return after leaving Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing. In addition, Hispanic/Latino individuals experience a higher rate of return after leaving Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing and Non-Hispanic/Latino individuals experience a lower rate of return. These differences merit further exploration to determine root causes and interventions to address these disparities.
- **Exits to permanent housing/retention in permanent housing:** Data indicates that Black/African American and Multi-Racial individuals, as well as individuals of all other races have a lower rate of successful retention/placement (Black/African American individuals= 81%; Multi-racial individuals= 84%; Individuals of other races= 76%) after leaving permanent supportive housing or rapid rehousing than White individuals (90%). This disparity merits further exploration.

## Conclusion and Next Steps

Analysis of available data regarding racial/ethnic representation in the homeless population and the homeless services population does suggest that disproportionality based on race exists, with Black/African American and Hispanic individuals being over-represented within these populations. Data also indicated disparities in outcomes for people of color as compared to white individuals within the Eastern PA CoC. Disparate outcomes are seen for people of colors in length of stay, rate of return after exit from services, and exits to permanent housing/retention in permanent housing.

The CoC Governing Board will consider a series of next steps regarding this preliminary analysis. Next steps include:

- Further analysis of data (including both quantitative and qualitative data analysis) to better understand disparities in length of stay, rate of return after exit from services, and exits to permanent housing/retention in permanent housing for people of color, to examine causality and propose strategies to address these disparities; and
- Further collection and analysis of data (both quantitative and qualitative) to better understand the pattern of program use for people of different races and ethnicities in the homeless service system; and
- Training for homeless assistance providers to better understand and address racism, implicit bias, and the intersection of racism and homelessness; and
- Additional research to understand the scope of needs of different races or ethnicities experiencing homelessness within the CoC.

Sources:

Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States, States, and Counties: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2017  
U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Release Date: June 2018

Eastern Continuum SPM by Race-Ethnicity

Point-in-Time Count PA-509 Eastern Pennsylvania CoC, 2018 & 2019

Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months, U.S. Census Bureau, 2016