

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

Introduction

The Eastern Pennsylvania Continuum of Care conducted a preliminary analysis regarding racial disparity in utilization and outcome of homeless services within the CoC. This preliminary 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, and Point-in-Time Count PA-509 Eastern Pennsylvania CoC, 2017 & 2018. Also reviewed were the following background articles: *Racial Disparities in Homelessness in the United States*, National Alliance to End Homelessness, June 6, 2018 and *How to Start Addressing Racial Disparities in Your Community*, United States Interagency Council on Homeless, 07/09/2018. 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. In regards to outcomes, this initial survey didn't clearly demonstrate or disprove disparity in the outcomes of the individuals receiving homeless services. 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 homeless services in the Continuum of Care.

| Table 1.a | Total # of persons in Continuum of Care | % of population by race | % of persons living below poverty line in Continuum of Care | 2017 Point in Time | 2018 Point in Time | 2018 Point in Time Unsheltered | 2018 Point in Time Sheltered | % of persons in CoC PSH or RRH programs |
|----------------------------------|---|-------------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Total Persons | 3,107,425 | 3,107,425 | 369,061 | 2170 | 1998 | 346 | 1652 | 3,140 |
| White | 2,824,179 | 91% | 82% | 73% | 73% | 91% | 69% | 75% |
| Black or African American | 151,734 | 5% | 6% | 22% | 22% | 8% | 25% | 20% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 11,260 | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Asian | 63,708 | 2% | 2% | <1% | <1% | 0% | <1% | <1% |
| Native Hawaiian | 2,152 | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Two or More Races | 54,392 | 2% | 4% | 3% | 3% | <1% | 3% | 3% |

| Table 1.b | Total # of persons in Continuum of Care | % of population by ethnicity | % of persons living below poverty line in Continuum of Care | 2017 Point in Time | 2018 Point in Time | 2018 Point in Time Unsheltered | 2018 Point in Time Sheltered | % of persons in CoC PSH or RRH programs |
|------------------|---|------------------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Total Persons | 3,107,425 | 3,107,425 | 369,061 | 2170 | 1998 | 346 | 1652 | 3,140 |
| Hispanic | 247,344 | 8% | 15% | 17% | 20% | 6% | 23% | 12% |
| Non-Hispanic | 2,860,081 | 92% | 76% | 82% | 80% | 94% | 77% | 87% |

This data suggests that racial disproportionality exists in the homeless population in this geographic area. 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 73% of the population identified in the Point in Time counts in both 2017 and 2018 and 75% of the population of clients accessing Permanent Supportive and Rapid Rehousing homeless services. By comparison individuals identifying as Black or African American make up 5% of the total population of this geographic areas and 6% of those living in poverty in this community, but represent 22% of the individuals captured in the Point in Time counts and 20% of the population of clients accessing Permanent Supportive and Rapid Rehousing homeless services in this Continuum of Care. These numbers suggest that Black and African Americans 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 80/82% of the population identified in the Point in Time count. Non-Hispanic individuals account for 87% of the total client count of Permanent Supportive and Rapid Rehousing homeless services. Individuals who identify as Hispanic represent 8% of the total population of this geographic area, 15% of the population living in poverty, and 17/20% of the population identified in the Point in Time count. Hispanic individuals comprise 12% of the total client count of Permanent Supportive and Rapid Rehousing homeless services. These numbers indicate that Hispanic individuals are overrepresented in the homeless population of this geographic region, but do not access Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing homeless services at the same percentage at which they experience homelessness.

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

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 Retention/Placement.

| 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 |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Average Across All Races | 114 | 604 |
| White | 114 | 645 |
| Black or African American | 115 | 480 |
| All other races (including unknown) | 96 | 464 |
| Two or More Races | 120 | 511 |
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| Hispanic | 111 | 650 |
| Non Hispanic | 112 | 597 |

Table 2 displays that the average length of stay for individuals of all races is 114 days in Emergency/Transitional Shelter and 604 days in Permanent Supportive Housing/Rapid Rehousing. When looking at average length of stay within different racial groups, there does not appear to be significant racial disparity in length of stay for Emergency Shelter/Transitional Housing. There is more significant difference in data for Length of Stay in Permanent Supportive or Rapid Rehousing housing, where the average across all races is 604, and the average within individual racial groups ranges from 464 to 645. While this difference is noted here, understanding the significance of this difference would require deeper analysis than the confines of this initial survey allow.

| 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 |
|---|--|--|
| Average rate of return across all racial groups | 15% | 8% |
| White | 16% | 6% |
| Black or African American | 15% | 9% |
| Two or more races | 11% | 48% |
| All other races (including unknown) | 6% | 0% |
| Hispanic | 14% | 0% |
| Non Hispanic | 16% | 9% |

| Table 3.b | Percentage of persons leaving Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing (% of total data set) | Percentage of persons who returned after leaving Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing | Percentage of persons leaving Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing (% of total data set) | Percentage of persons who returned after leaving Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Total Persons | 1605 | 243 (of 1605)* | 956 | 76 (of 956) |
| White | 66% | 70% | 77% | 60% |
| Black or African American | 25% | 25% | 17% | 20% |
| All other races (including unknown) | 4% | 2% | 3% | 0% |
| Two or More Races | 5% | 3% | 3% | 20% |
| Hispanic | 26% | 24% | 13% | 0% |
| Non Hispanic | 73% | 75% | 86% | 100% |

Table 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 services after exiting. Table 3.b shows what percentage of the total number of returns after exit from these are attributed to each racial/ethnic group. Table 3.a shows that White, Black or African American, Hispanic and Non-Hispanic individuals return to these service at largely the same rates within their racial ethnic groups for both types of services. That rate of return for multi-racial individuals to Permanent Supportive/Rapid Rehousing was noteworthy at 48%, compared to the average across all racial groups of 8%. Table 3.b shows that the percentage of the total persons returning to services after leaving Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing from each racial group is proportionate to the percentage each racial group composes of the total data set. For example, Whites comprise 66% of the individuals leaving these services and 70% of the individual returning to services, and Black or African Americans comprise 25% of individuals leaving services and 25% of individuals returning to services. The only area of significant interest in this data can be seen in Table 3.b regarding returns to services after leaving Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing. In these columns, Whites account for 77% of the total population leaving these services and only 60% of the individuals re-entering services, while Multi-racial individuals account for only 3% of the population leaving and 20% of the population returning. Also of interest, Hispanics account for 13% of the population leaving these services and 0% of the population returning.

| 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 who returned after leaving Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing to a Successful Retention/Placement within each racial/ethnic group |
|---|--|--|
| Average rate of success exit across all racial groups | 47% | 93% |
| White | 42% | 92% |
| Black or African American | 46% | 95% |
| All other races (including unknown) | 47% | 97% |
| Two or More Races | 55% | 88% |
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| Hispanic | 44% | 95% |
| Non Hispanic | 46% | 92% |

| Table 4.b | Percentage of persons who left Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing (% of total data set) | 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 (% of total data set) | Percentage of persons who left Permanent Supportive Housing or Rapid Rehousing to a Successful Retention/Placement |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Total Persons | 3611 | 1681 | 2210 | 2045* |
| White | 64% | 64% | 77% | 76% |
| Black or African American | 27% | 27% | 19% | 19% |
| All other races (including unknown) | 5% | 4% | 1% | 2% |
| Two or More Races | 4% | 5% | 3% | 3% |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| Hispanic | 27% | 26% | 12% | 11% |
| Non Hispanic | 73% | 74% | 88% | 87% |

Table 4.a and 4.b examine the population that exists homeless services to a successful retention/placement in other housing. Table 4.a shows the percentage of individuals of each racial/ethnic group who experience a successful exit. Table 4.b shows what percentage of the total number of successful exits can be attributed to each racial/ethnic group. Table 4.a shows that the rate of successful exit for individuals remains similar across racial/ethnic groups without much evident disparity – for both Emergency Shelter/Transitional Housing and Permanent Supportive/Rapid Rehousing. Table 4.b shows a similar picture, where the percentage of individuals with a successful exit in each racial/ethnic group is identical or very similar to the percentage of individuals of race in the entire data.

Conclusion

Preliminary analysis of available data regarding racial/ethnic representation in the homeless population and the homeless services population does suggest that racial/ethnic disproportionality exists, with individuals of color being over-represented within these populations. Examination of outcome data provides a less clear picture. While the available data does not clearly rule out the presence of racial disparity in all outcomes examined, it also does not clearly point to the existence of racial disparity.

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, 2017 & 2018

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