

HOMELESS CONNECT EVENT IMPACT REPORT



PREPARED BY

**Passaic County
Department of Human Services**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On **April 8, 2026**, Passaic County coordinated its first **Homeless Connect Event** from 10 AM to 2 PM at **Calvary Baptist Church**, located at 575 East 18th Street in Paterson, NJ. The **Passaic County Department of Human Services, Health Department, Senior Services Department**, and the **Passaic County Board of Social Services** collaborated to bring together **over 25** community- and faith-based organizations and agencies to provide resources and supportive services at the event. The event was intended to **serve the most vulnerable individuals** within the county who are unhoused or experiencing housing insecurity, including those staying in shelters, warming centers, temporary housing or other unstable living situations. **233 individuals** experiencing **housing insecurity** attended the event and received essential supportive services to help them attain stability.



Total Attendees:
233



**25+ Supportive
Service Providers**



**135 Barriers
Survey Responses**



**18 County ID
Applications**

The **goal** of the Homeless Connect Event was to offer **streamlined access** to social services and connect individuals to the appropriate supportive care they need to **achieve** their goals in **housing readiness**, health, substance use recovery, and employment. The **available services included** rental assistance to ensure stable housing, along with legal services to help address various legal challenges. **Health screenings** included vision and

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

podiatry assessments, vaccinations, and basic medical diagnostic services in collaboration with a local FQHC, where participants could receive **follow-up care**. Additionally, **vocational training** programs were also provided to enhance employability. Participants could access **behavioral health services** for mental health support and overall well-being. Furthermore, individuals could apply for an appointment to obtain a **free County ID**.

All attendees received a **hot meal** from the Senior Services Department, **transportation** to and from the event, **takeaway meal bags** provided by the Passaic County Mobile Pantry operated by CUMAC and the Board of Social Services, and **hygiene bags** from the Passaic County Department of Human Services' Hope One Van.

45+

Hope One Van
Hygiene Bags
Distributed

53+

Health Department
Health Screenings
& Referrals

100+

Board of Social Services
Service Interactions

135+

Human Services
Department
ID Wallets Distributed

197

CUMAC Mobile Pantry
Food Bags Distributed

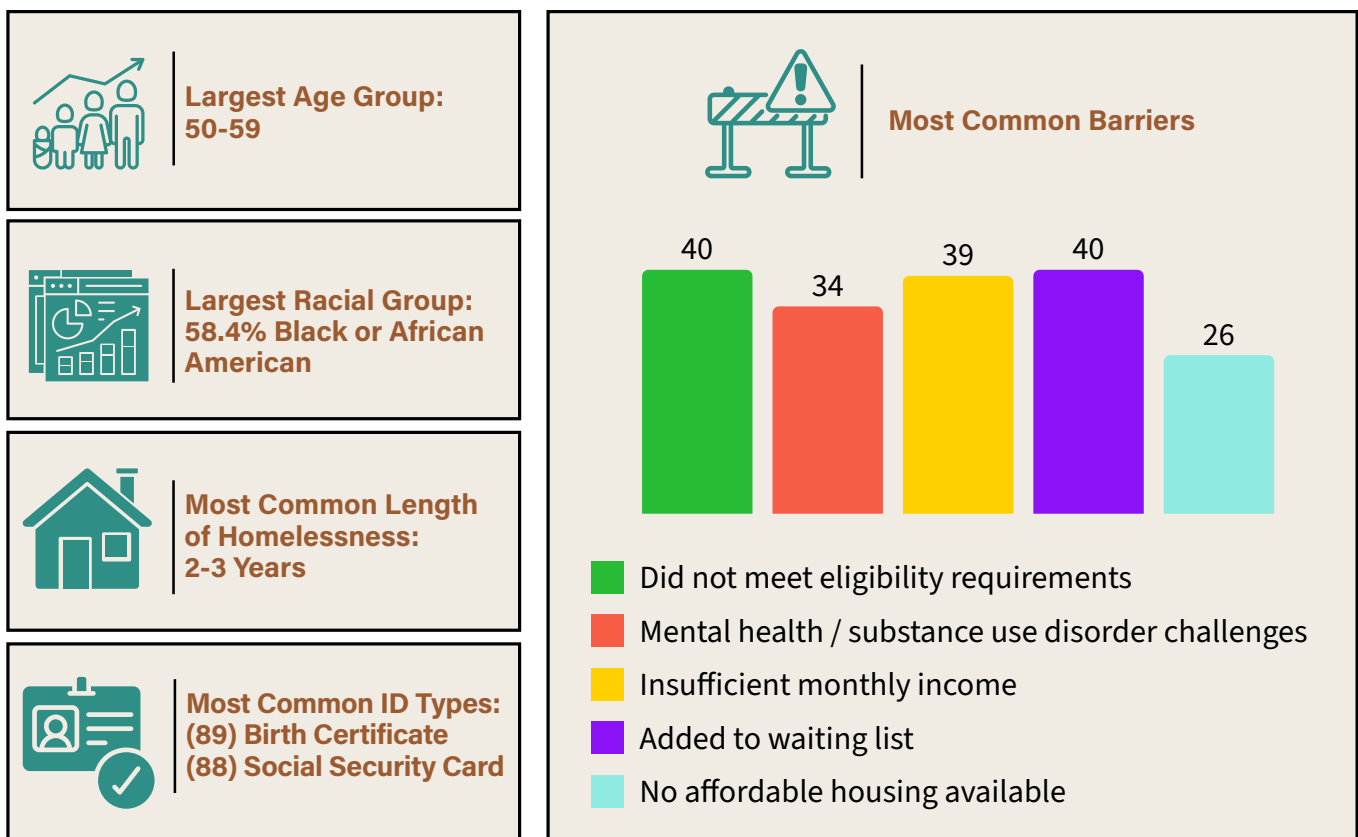
300

Senior Services
Department
Hot Meals Served

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Passaic County Department of Human Services administered a **survey** to identify **barriers** to attaining self-sufficiency and housing readiness at a granular level. **135 attendees** completed the survey.

Barriers Survey results highlights:



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

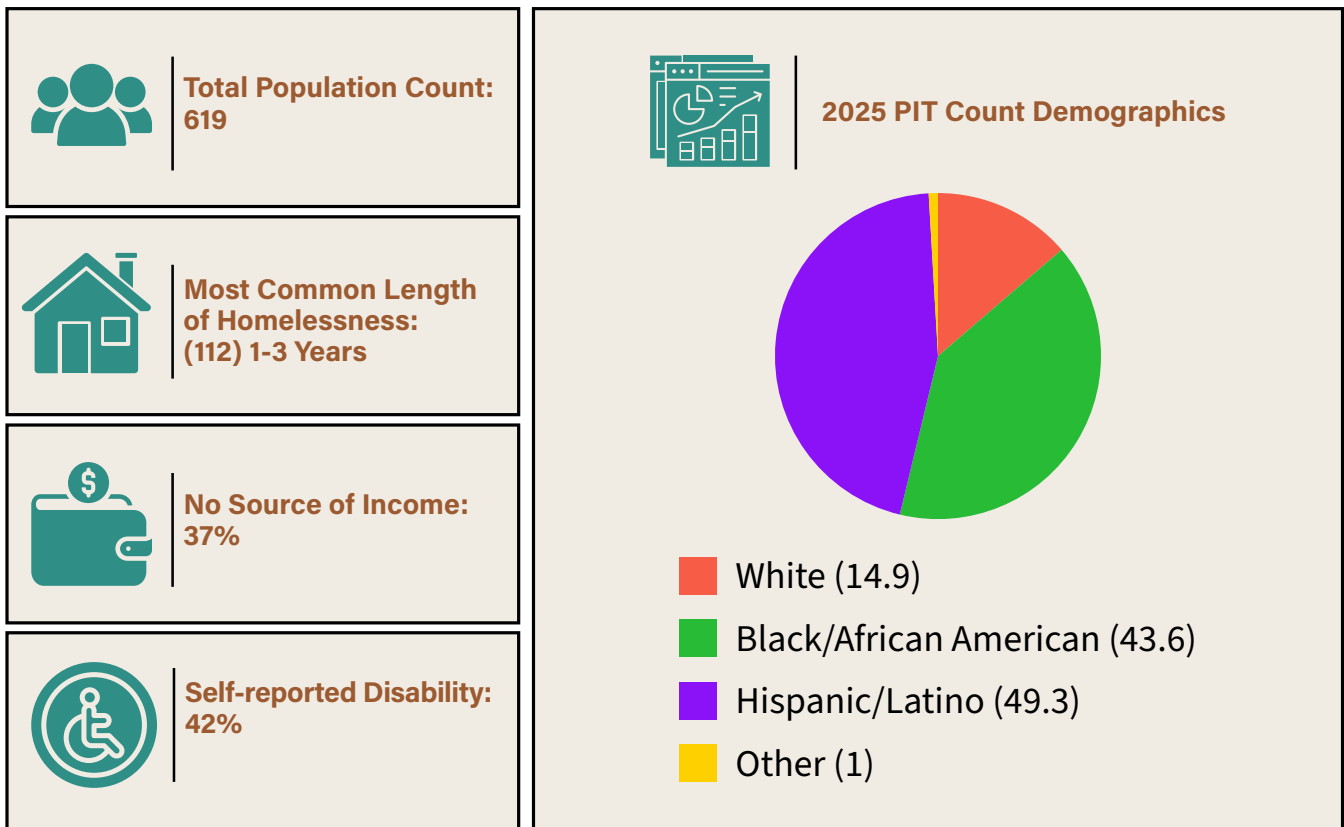
This report would not have been possible without the exceptional support and collaboration of the Passaic County Buildings and Grounds Department, Health Department, Senior Services Department and the Paratransit Division, the Board of Social Services, Sheriff's Office, the Department of Human Services staff, the Passaic County Administrator Matthew P. Jordan, Esq. and his team, and the Passaic County Board of Commissioners.

We also wish to acknowledge that the efforts detailed in this report would not have been possible without the contributions and expertise of the service provider partners: Catholic Charities, Catholic Family & Community Services, Center for Food Action, Clifton Health Department, Covenant House, CUMAC, Eva's Village, Family to Family, FQHC - North Hudson Community Action Corporation, Heart of Hannah, Hope One Van, HS&H Outreach Services, Hyacinth, Northeast NJ Legal Services, New Bridge - Recovery Center, NJ 211, NJCDC, Passaic County One Stop, Realfix, SERV Health Department, St. Joseph's Hospital, St. Joseph's Path Program, St. Mary's Hospital, Strobes Outreach for Kingdom Kids.

COUNTY PROFILE

As of the **2025 Point in Time Count**¹, Passaic County had the 10th largest count of people experiencing homelessness in the state with a total of **619 persons** experiencing homelessness.

Key data points on the background of the total homeless population in **Passaic County**:



¹ Monarch Housing Associates. (2025). *NJ Counts, Passaic County*. Retrieved from <https://monarchhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/PIT-Report-2025-Passaic.pdf>

EVENT COORDINATION

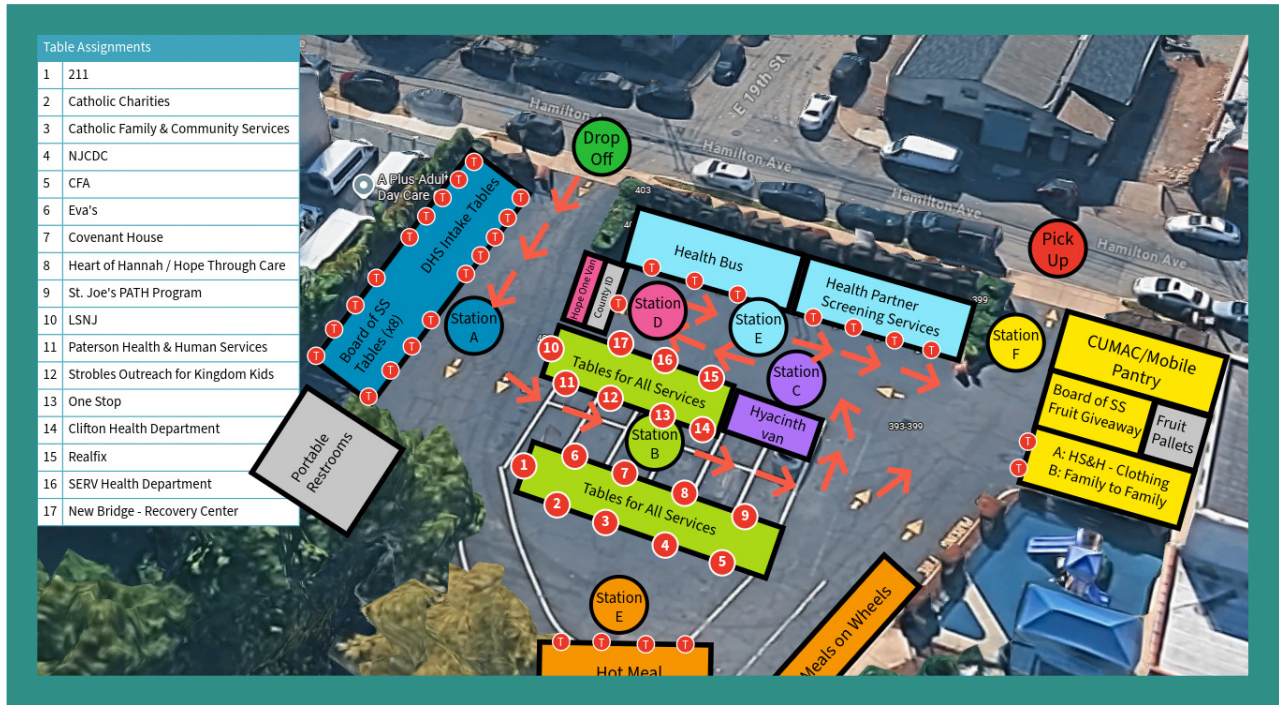
The event planning was **coordinated** between the Passaic County **Department of Human Services, Senior Services Department, Health Department, the Buildings and Grounds Department, the Board of Social Services, and the Calvary Baptist Church leadership** team. Each department **collaborated** to invite community- and faith-based organizations that would provide services for the event. The objective was to invite partners to provide **essential services** in **one location** for **streamlined access** to services for attaining stability and self-sufficiency.

Organizations were invited by the Passaic County Department of Human Services and the Health Department that provide services for **physical health, housing, County ID, food, mental health and substance use disorder, legal services, financial literacy, youth services, and clothing**. The Buildings and Grounds Department collaborated with the Department of Human Services and the Calvary Baptist Church leadership team to provide all event site supplies (tables, chairs, generators, and restrooms) and coordinated all delivery, setup and breakdown of the supplies on the day of the event.

The event was held outdoors, at the **Calvary Baptist Church** parking lot. The parking lot allowed for maximizing the number of attendees and provided a **mixed-use space** for service

EVENT COORDINATION

Figure 1
Event map for service provider table placement and client traffic flow



designate space for each provider, see **Figure 1**. Each table was **numbered** and providers were **assigned** tables. Each type of service (health, housing, substance use disorder, legal services, financial literacy, etc.) was **grouped** together to create **zones** for clients to visit during the day. **Table 1** summarizes the list of organizations and the types of services they provided.

Table 1
List of organizations and services provided at the event

Organization Name	Services Provided
Catholic Charities	Rental assistance
Catholic Family & Community Services	Rental assistance
Center for Food Action	Food/rental assistance
Clifton Health Department	Health/housing
Covenant House	Homeless youth services

EVENT COORDINATION

Table 1 (Continued)

List of organizations and services provided at the event

Organization Name	Services Provided
CUMAC / Mobile Pantry	Food
Eva's Village	Housing/shelter/substance treatment
Family to Family	Housing support
FQHC - North Hudson Community Action Corporation	Scheduling health care follow-up appointments
Heart of Hannah	Housing, etc.
Hope One Van	Screening/recovery
HS&H Outreach Services	Clothing
Hyacinth	HIV Screening
New Bridge - Recovery Center	Screening/recovery
NJ 211	Screening/HMIS intake and updates
NJCDC	Housing, etc.
Northeast NJ Legal Services	Expungement/tenant rights
Passaic County Board of Social Services	Eligibility screening/case management referrals
Passaic County One Stop	Workforce development
Passaic County Senior Services Department	Food/Hot meal
Paterson Health & Human Services	Rental assistance, etc.
Realfix	Screening/recovery
SERV Health Department	Housing/mental health
St. Joseph's Hospital	Distribute FOBT colon cancer kits
St. Joseph's Path Program	Housing/mental health
St. Mary's Hospital	Podiatry assessment
Strobes Outreach for Kingdom Kids	Financial literacy

Transportation

Free transportation was provided by the **Paratransit Division** of the Department of Senior Services with pick-up and drop-off

EVENT COORDINATION

from **multiple** locations across the county. The locations were **coordinated** with shelters and community centers that provide shelter and rental assistance. The drop-off and pick-up times were **staggered** to allow for groups of individuals to arrive and visit the service providers in **waves** to mitigate long lines and wait times (see **Table 2**). Each location was **assigned** a **wristband color** to simplify the departure process at the end of the event time slot. All passengers picked up at a single location were **assigned** a color wristband (**blue, green, yellow, or purple**). When the bus was departing at the end of the event to return passengers to their original pick-up location, the wristband color was **announced** to ensure individuals were boarding the **correct bus**.

Table 2
Transportation locations and schedule

Pickup Location Name	Wristband Color	Pickup Location Address	Pickup Time	Departure Time
Clifton Warming Center	Blue	1232 Main Ave., Clifton, NJ	9:30 AM	11:30 AM
Dignity House	Green	276 Broadway, Passaic, NJ	9:00 AM	11:30 AM
Eva's Village	Yellow	20 Jackson St., Paterson, NJ	10:00 AM	11:30 AM
Eva's Village	Yellow	20 Jackson St., Paterson, NJ	10:40 AM	12:30 PM
Highlands Family Success Center	Purple	1801 Greenwood Lake Tpke., West Milford, NJ	9:40 AM	12:50 PM

Due to the low temperature, **Code Blue** was declared the night before the event. PCDHS corresponded with the three warming centers located in Clifton, Passaic, and Paterson to **request assistance** in encouraging their guests to attend the event the

EVENT COORDINATION

next morning. In an effort to enhance the efficiency of **coordinating** transportation departure and drop-off schedules, warming centers were **requested** to allow participants waiting for transportation to the **Homeless Connect Event** to stay **longer** inside the **warming center**. On the day of the event, no passengers arrived for the pick-up time at the West Milford location due to scheduling conflicts.

Health Department

The Passaic County **Health Department** invited partners from **St. Joeseph’s** hospital **PATH program**, **St. Mary’s** hospital, **FQHC - North Hudson Community Action Corporation**, and **Hyacinth** to provide screening, referrals, and schedule follow-up appointments.

Table 3
Summary of health department client interactions

Health Department	# Clients Served
Screening	53
Financial Forms	53
Blood Pressure	50
Blood Sugar	47
Cholesterol	25
HGB (Hemoglobin)	47
Referred for Follow-up	3

EVENT COORDINATION

Table 4
Summary of clients served HIV testing, colon cancer test kits, and referrals

Agency	Type of Service Provided	# Served	Quantity of Kits Distributed
Hyacinth	HIV testing	20	N/A
	Condoms distributed	N/A	300
St. Joseph's	FOBT colon cancer kits distributed	N/A	50
St. Mary's	Podiatry assessment	1	N/A
FQHC	Scheduled appointments	3	N/A
	Vitamin supplements distributed	N/A	100

Senior Services Department

The Senior Services Department provided a **hot meal** for all attendees at the event. The meals were delivered in trays by the **Meals on Wheels** vehicles and had to be **portioned** out into **individual** serving trays for consumption at the event. The Senior Services team **assembled 300 meals** on site the morning of the event and then served them. Tables and chairs were set up as a designated area for guests to eat during the event at a time of their choosing. The **Paratransit Division** under the Senior Services Department also **coordinated** all **transportation** vehicles and **logistics** planning for the event.

NJ 211

NJ 211 connected with a total of **29 clients**, see **Table 5**. During the event, NJ 211 met with **15 clients** to complete **screenings** or make **system updates**. **14 clients** were scheduled for **appointments** to complete or update screenings after the event. **10 clients** were

EVENT COORDINATION

reached out of the **14** clients scheduled for appointments. Multiple attempts were made to contact **4** of the clients but were **not reached**.

Table 5
Summary of NJ 211 client interactions

Agency	# of Clients Completed/Updated Screening	# of Clients Scheduled for Follow-up Calls	# of Follow-up Calls Completed	# of Follow-up Clients Not Reached
NJ 211	15	14	10	4

Board of Social Services

The Passaic County **Board of Social Services** had a total of **103** service interactions for approximately **85** clients. Client interactions were counted by service type; some clients had service interactions for **multiple** types of services. Service interactions were recorded for the following programs: **Medicaid/NJ Family Care, SNAP, GA (General Assistance), TANF, and Emergency Assistance/Housing**. **Table 6** summarizes the **total** number of clients served for each type of **service interaction** for each program. Clients who currently have active coverage for a program had the opportunity to **verify** any system updates. Other clients submitted new applications or received status updates for pending applications. The **SNAP** program has an **expedited** application process for individuals who meet the eligibility criteria, which provides **accelerated** processing (approximately 7 days vs. **30** days) for households in urgent need (no or very low income and limited resources). **8 individuals** met

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the criteria for **expediting** eligibility determinations.

Table 6 summarizes the client interactions for **Emergency Assistance / Housing**. Active clients could **verify** system updates.

Table 6
Summary of Board of Social Services client interactions by program type

Program Name	Active Coverage	Application Submitted	SNAP Expedited Application	Pending	No Record Found
Medicaid/NJ Family Care	12	8	N/A	6	3
SNAP (Food Assistance)	10	0	8	10	0
General Assistance (GA)	8	0	N/A	15	0
TANF	0	0	N/A	2	0

Table 7 summarizes the client interactions for **Emergency Assistance / Housing**. Active clients could **verify** system updates.

Table 7
Summary of emergency assistance/housing client interactions

Program Name	Active Clients	Appointments Scheduled	Shelter-based Clients
Emergency Assistance/Housing	4	3	4

Table 8 summarizes the client interactions for **Case Management Referrals**.

Table 8
Summary of case management referrals

Program Name	Intensive Case Management	SSI/Disability
Case Management Referrals	3	2

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The Passaic County **Sheriff’s Department** provided applications to receive a **free County ID** for all attendees. Any attendee at the event who wanted to **apply** for a County ID first had to meet with the **Board of Social Services** to complete the **application** and receive **verification assistance**. The Board reviewed the applications for **completeness**, verified that the individual was present in the system, and verified identity information, see **Table 9**. After **completing** the verification assistance, the client brought the **completed application** to PCDHS staff to **schedule** an **appointment** with the Sheriff’s office to receive a County ID. Appointment dates and time slots were **prearranged** with the Sheriff’s Department in advance of the event. PCDHS staff **collected** the completed applications, **scheduled** the appointment, and **recorded** the individual’s name and phone number.

Table 9
Summary of county ID applications

Program Name	# Verified by Board	# Unable to Verify by Board	# Applications Submitted, No Board Review
County ID Application Verification	12	2	4

After the event, the PCDHS Team provided **follow-up support** for scheduling individuals for obtaining a County ID. A total of **18 individuals** completed applications and were each scheduled for an appointment to receive a County ID. PCDHS staff completed **follow-up calls** to provide **reminders** for the appointment and to conduct **follow-up interviews** to record all outcomes. The

EVENT COORDINATION

outcomes for the **18 applications** were as follows:

- **3** individuals were able to successfully receive a free County ID
- **15** individuals did not obtain a County ID
 - **1** applicant canceled their appointment due to a pending legal matter
 - **5** individuals did not confirm and show for their appointments for a County ID
 - **3** individuals did not return follow-up calls
 - **6** individuals did not have a phone number, and follow-up contact could not be made

Department of Human Services

PCDHS provided several services at the event and managed all **site setup logistics**. The PCDHS team provided the **event map** to the Building and Grounds Team to set up all necessary event **supplies** (tables, chairs, restrooms, trash, etc.). The team marked the locations for each agency and organization for **table set up**. Coordinated with the Paratransit division to **confirm** arrival and departures. PCDHS staff assisted in **guiding** attendees during their arrival at the event and departure times.

The PCDHS team hosted a table for the **Hope One Van** for screening and prevention services. The Hope One team distributed **over 45 hygiene bags** and scheduled **appointments for 18 individuals** who applied for a **County ID**.

There was also a team of **case workers** for meeting with individual clients who are on the **Housing Priority List** for updating information and making referrals for housing placement. Finally, **18 PCDHS staff** administered a **Barriers Survey** with **135 attendees** at the event.

BARRIERS SURVEY

The Passaic County Department of Human Services administered a **barriers survey** at the event. The survey was designed to **identify** common **barriers** individuals face in attaining **housing readiness** to achieve **self-sufficiency**. **135 individuals** completed the survey out of the 233 attendees. The survey was **administered** by PCDHS staff in both English and Spanish. The barriers survey was designed to expand on the PIT count barriers data to collect **supplemental** data that would aid in identifying more **specific** barriers that are faced.

The **2025 PIT Count**² survey had **one** question to record common barriers homeless individuals/households face when trying to access services: “**what issues have you encountered when trying to get access to services? (Check all that apply.)**” The response options were: No ID/documents; placed on the waitlist; lack of transportation; language barriers; did not qualify for specific services; prematurely discharged from program/services; issues moving or relocation between counties; limited services because of age; no physical mailing address; issues with cleanliness in program (mold, cockroaches, bed bugs, etc.); issues with county welfare agency; other.

- The **top barriers reported** during the 2025 PIT count by homeless households:
 - **84** reported being placed on a **wait list**
 - **43** reported a lack of **transportation**
 - **38** reported **not qualifying** for specific services

² Monarch Housing Associates. (2025). *NJ Counts, Passaic County*. Retrieved from <https://monarchhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/PIT-Report-2025-Passaic.pdf>

BARRIERS SURVEY

- The **top barriers** reported during the PIT count from individuals who resided in unsheltered locations:
 - **47** reported being placed on a **wait list**
 - **41** reported having **no ID/documents**

A review of **needs assessments** in other cities/states/counties illustrated that more **granular data** to identify barriers to attaining housing readiness could be collected that **has not** been previously captured in **Passaic County**. For example, in the **2022 Los Angeles County Women’s Needs Assessment**³ for women experiencing homelessness, respondents reported significant barriers to exiting homelessness and attaining housing security. One question asked respondents to indicate their barriers to permanent housing, with the following response options that **have not** been **previously** asked in a Passaic County PIT count survey: lack of available housing that you can afford; long waiting lists to access voucher or public housing; lack of housing that meets your needs and preferences; bad credit; not knowing how to use computer or lack of access to a computer or internet to help you find housing; could not find a landlord to take your voucher; previous eviction record; criminal-legal or incarceration history.

In another example, the findings in the **2023 California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness**,⁴ revealed a similar set of barriers that impacted the ability to

³ Batko, S., Herrera, S., Bond, L., and Girod, K. (2023). *Los Angeles County Women's Needs Assessment*. Urban Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/los-angeles-county-womens-needs-assessment-findings-2022-survey>

⁴ Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative. (2023). *California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness*. University of California San Francisco. Retrieved from <https://homelessness.ucsf.edu/our-impact/studies/california-statewide-study-people-experiencing-homelessness>

BARRIERS SURVEY

similar set of barriers that impacted the ability to access permanent housing. Some of these barriers included: logistical barriers (no phone, transportation, documents), criminal history, eviction history, poor credit history, landlords would not accept rental vouchers, could not find housing that accommodated physical disabilities, and mental health or substance use impacted ability to obtain housing.

Finally, in a third example, in a **2010** study prepared by HUD titled, “**Strategies for Improving Homeless People’s Access to Mainstream Benefits and Services**,”⁵ the types of barriers were categorized following the processes and protocols for accessing benefits and receiving services. In the **2010 HUD study**, researchers found that people experiencing housing insecurity encountered **three thematic barriers** in their process for accessing benefits and services. The three thematic barriers were **eligibility, structural, and capacity**. Each thematic barrier was defined and categorized as follows:

Eligibility Barriers

Individuals do not meet the eligibility requirements to be approved to receive services or access benefits. Common issues include lack of required proof of identity, do not have proof of residence, do not have a documented diagnosis, family size, housing status, criminal history, challenges with mental health or

⁵ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2010). Strategies for Improving Homeless People's Access to Mainstream Benefits and Services. Office of Policy Development and Research. Retrieved from <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/StrategiesAccessBenefitsServices.pdf>

BARRIERS SURVEY

substance use disorder, and working poor who are ineligible for needed assistance.

Structural Barriers

Individuals encounter challenges during the process of accessing benefits or receiving services. Common issues include technical issues prevent completing the application process, negative interactions with the offices/staff that will assist in the approval process or providing the services, language, transportation, requirements for maintaining enrollment, and system interaction breakdown.

Capacity Barriers

Individuals encounter challenges because they cannot obtain the benefits or access the services once they were approved for enrollment. Common issues include waiting lists, insufficient supply (of housing or beds), insufficient value of benefits and services (i.e., rental assistance or general assistance does not cover cost of housing).

The study found that these barriers could be experienced at any time in the process to access benefits or to receive services.

BARRIERS SURVEY

Survey Design Overview

The aim of collecting this data was to identify more granular, **common barriers** to accessing services and to improve the overall speed of the process, from intake to placement in stable housing as a pilot study to inform future departmental research and program design. Survey questions were designed in **thematic blocks** in accordance with the 2010 HUD study⁶ and incorporated additional granular barriers^{7,8}, organized by the thematic block. The first phase of the survey design included a series of **brainstorming sessions** for question development to identify or adapt questions from previous studies that were appropriately matched with the aim of the survey. The **question development process** included thematic topics about barriers as well as selecting questions to capture demographic information and other relevant background information such as medical history and possession of identification documents.

In the second phase, questions were **organized** according to **thematic blocks**: eligibility barriers, structural barriers, capacity barriers, background information, and demographic information. All questions selected were **closed-ended**. Several rounds of review were conducted internally to ensure that questions were phrased in **understandable language** appropriate for the population that would be surveyed, that questions were

⁶ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2010). Strategies for Improving Homeless People's Access to Mainstream Benefits and Services. Office of Policy Development and Research. Retrieved from <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/StrategiesAccessBenefitsServices.pdf>

⁷ Batko, S., Herrera, S., Bond, L., and Girod, K. (2023). *Los Angeles County Women's Needs Assessment*. Urban Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/los-angeles-county-womens-needs-assessment-findings-2022-survey>

⁸ Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative. (2023). California Statewide Study of People Experiencing Homelessness. University of California San Francisco. Retrieved from <https://homelessness.ucsf.edu/our-impact/studies/california-statewide-study-people-experiencing-homelessness>

BARRIERS SURVEY

not duplicated or phrased in a manner that was biased, and that questions were not phrased in a way that created double-barreled questions that would introduce challenges for interpreting responses. The **final survey** consisted of **five** sections, with a total of **19 questions**, and it was available in both English and Spanish.

Survey Administration Overview

The event was held offsite from the PCDHS office, with limited internet access powered by **hotspots**. Due to the logistics and technical limitations of the event, the survey was created in Google Forms. Creating the survey in Google Forms permitted the easiest method of **remote access**. It would allow for remote access backup to be possible using personal mobile devices if the hotspots failed and it could be easily edited to correct any technical errors during the process of surveying individuals if there were any technical errors discovered. The PCDHS department had access to **18 tablets** to administer the survey. **18 staff** members were identified to serve as **survey proctors**.

The survey was preloaded in **both languages** on each tablet, and all survey proctors were provided **training sessions** in small groups to practice using the tablets, running through the survey, and asking any questions or addressing any concerns that could impact the quality or clarity of administering the survey. The

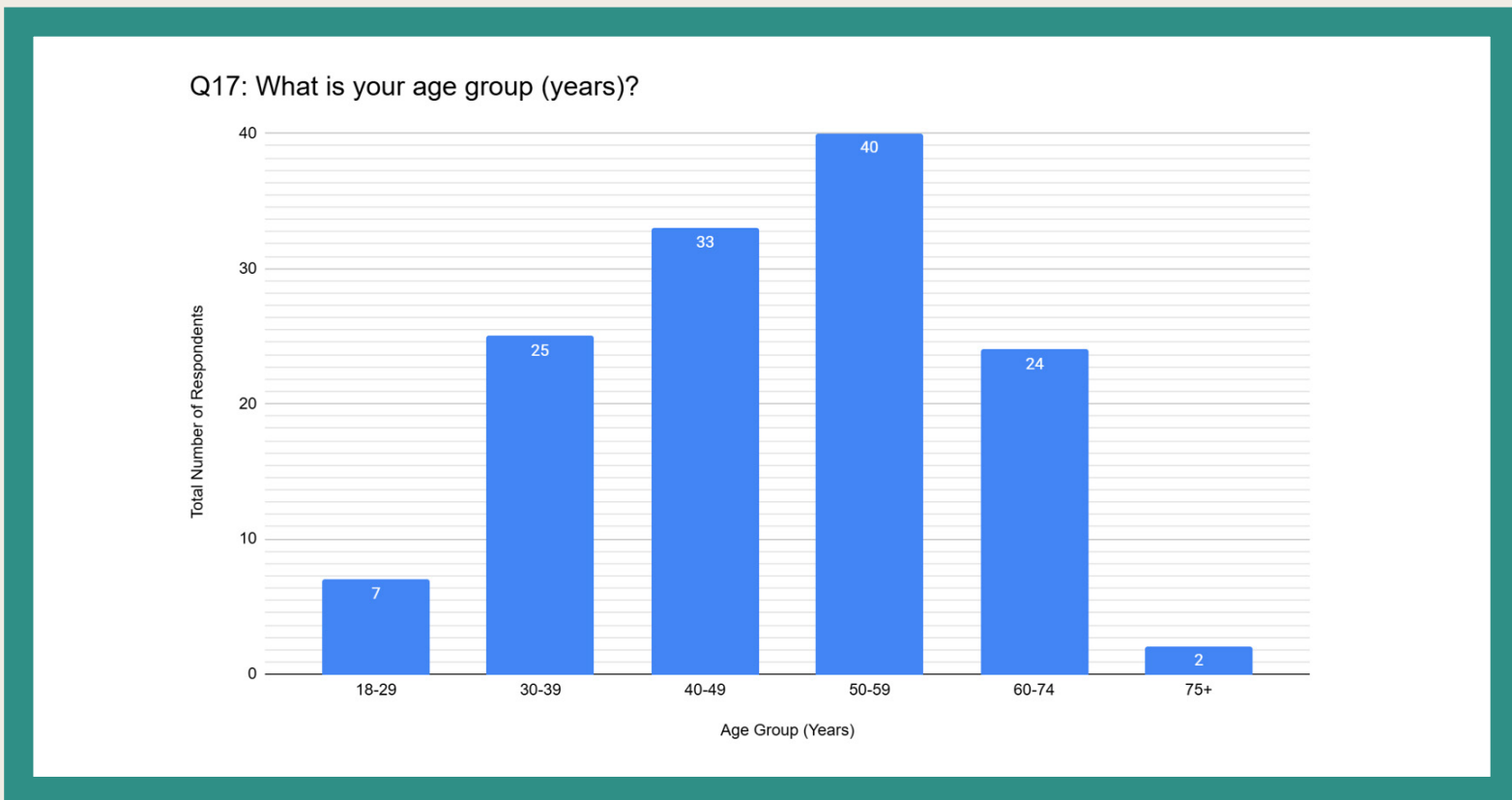
BARRIERS SURVEY

survey proctor would read the questions and response options out loud to the client and mark their responses. Some questions included response options for “decline to answer,” “does not apply,” or “don’t know” when these response options were relevant. The length of time to proctor the survey was estimated to range from **3 to 5 minutes**, but some respondents took longer to complete the survey. At the end of each survey the respondent received a **free ID wallet** to store their identification documents safely.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRAITS

Respondents were asked a series of **demographic questions** to report in the survey: age group, Hispanic or Latino(a), racial group, gender, and veteran status. The most common reported age group was 50-59 (see **Figure 2**). This age group is notable because they fall within an **aging workforce** category which faces employability challenges.

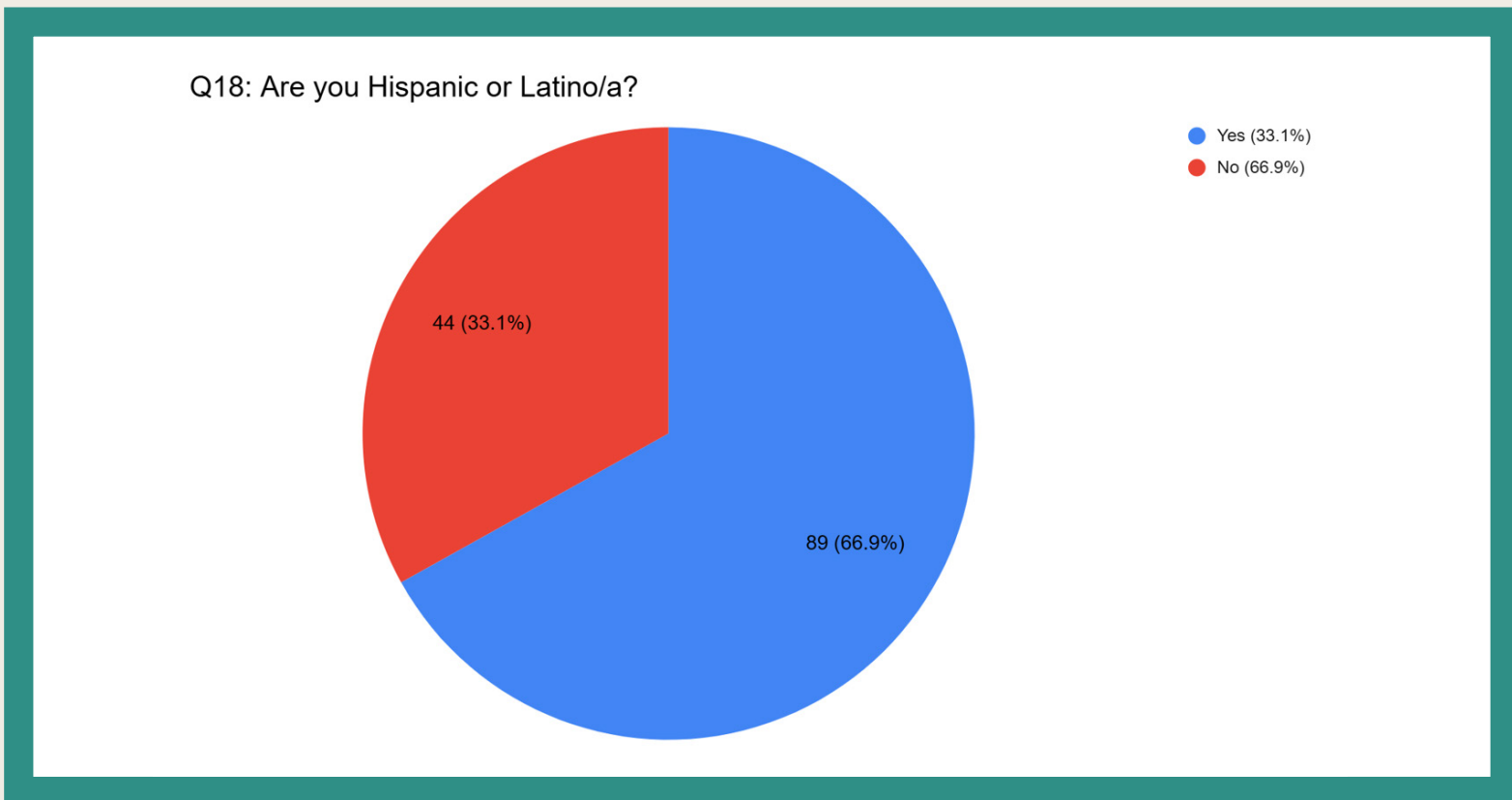
Figure 2
Age groups of respondents



DEMOGRAPHIC TRAITS

66.9% of respondents self-identified as Hispanic or Latino(a) (see **Figure 3**).

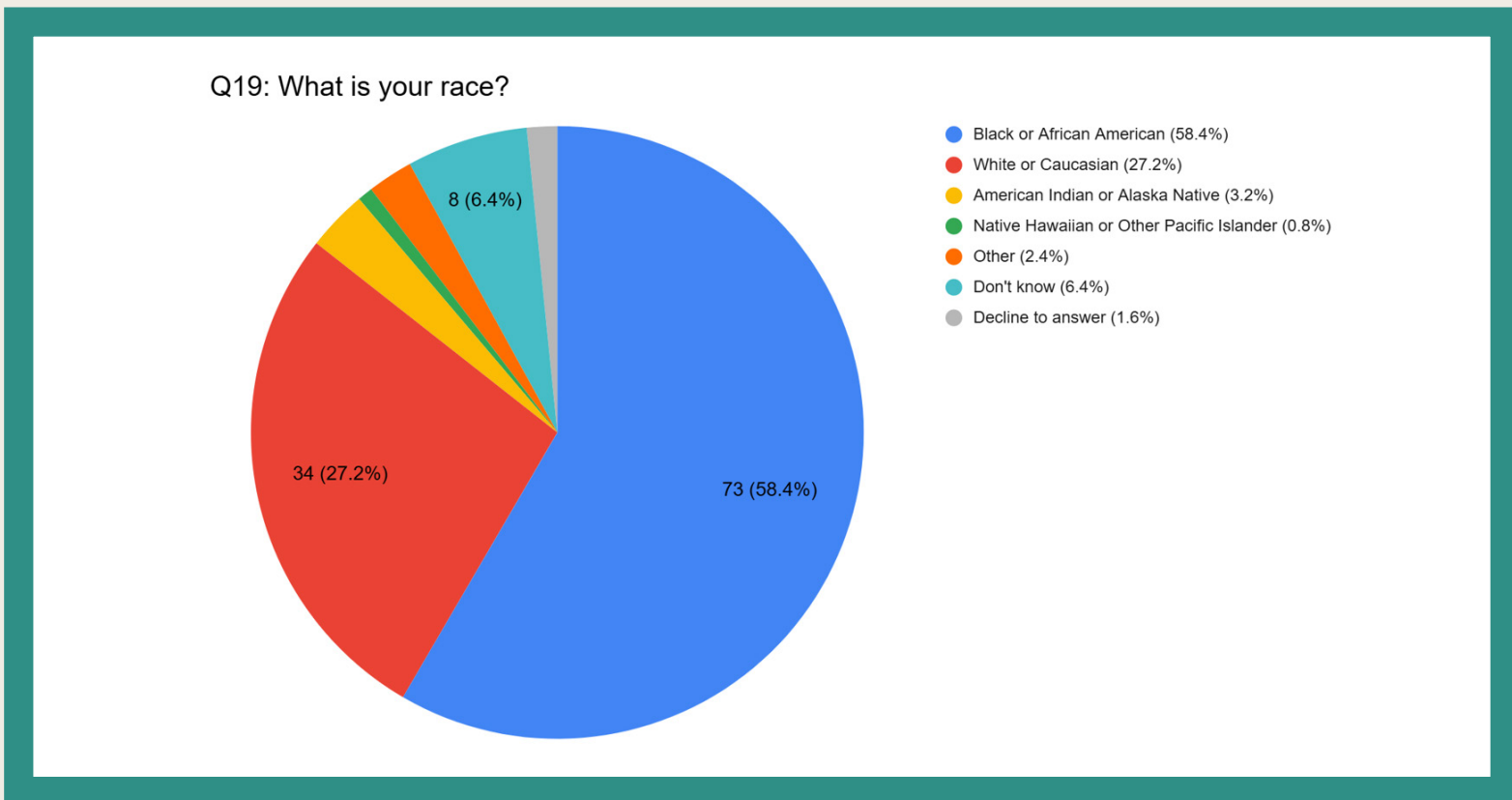
Figure 3
Self-identification as Hispanic or Latino(a) of respondents



DEMOGRAPHIC TRAITS

The most common self-identified racial group by respondents was Black or African American at **58.4%** (see **Figure 4**).

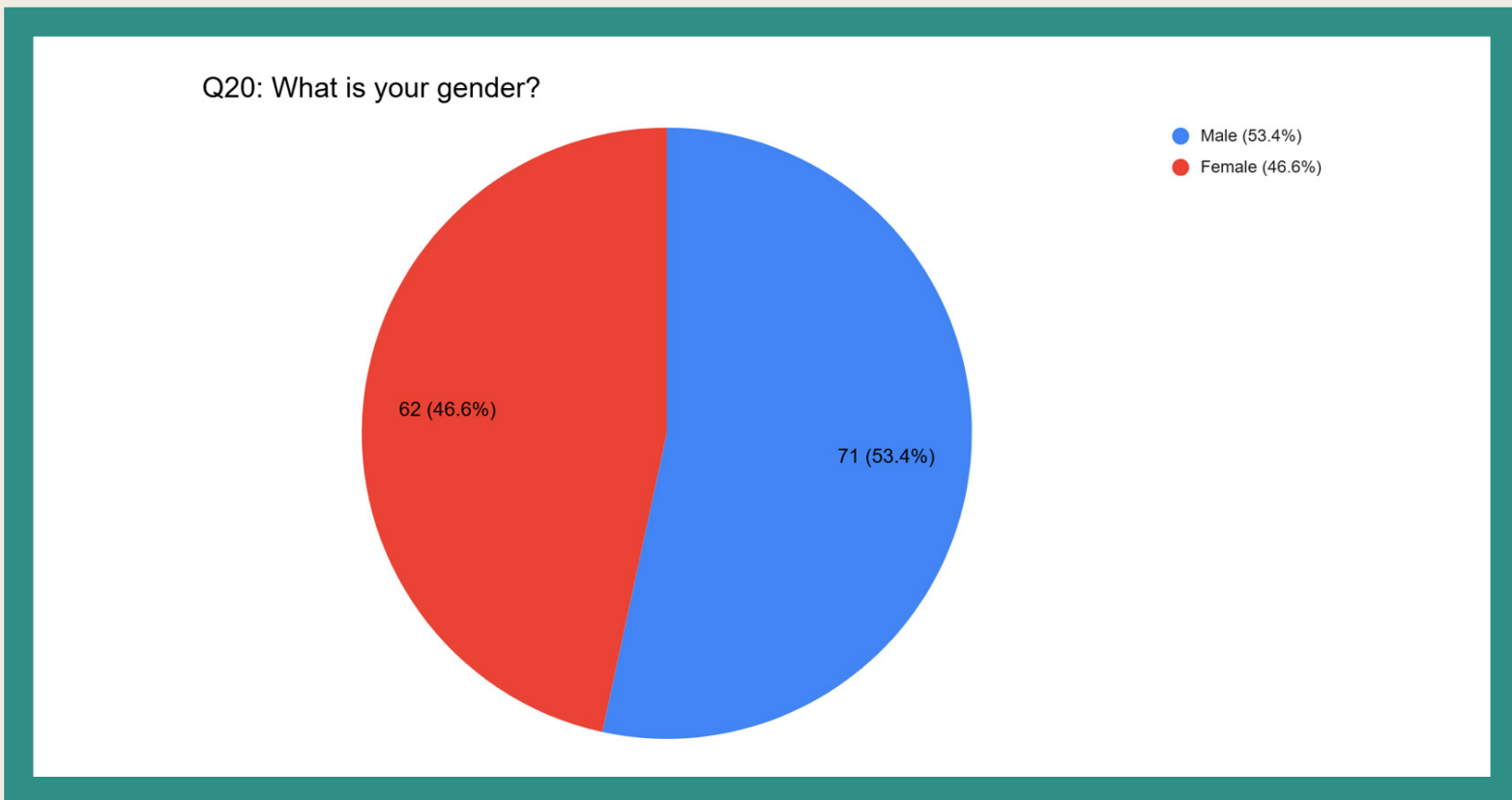
Figure 4
Self-identified racial groups of respondents



DEMOGRAPHIC TRAITS

The majority of respondents reported their gender was male at **53.4%** (see **Figure 5**).

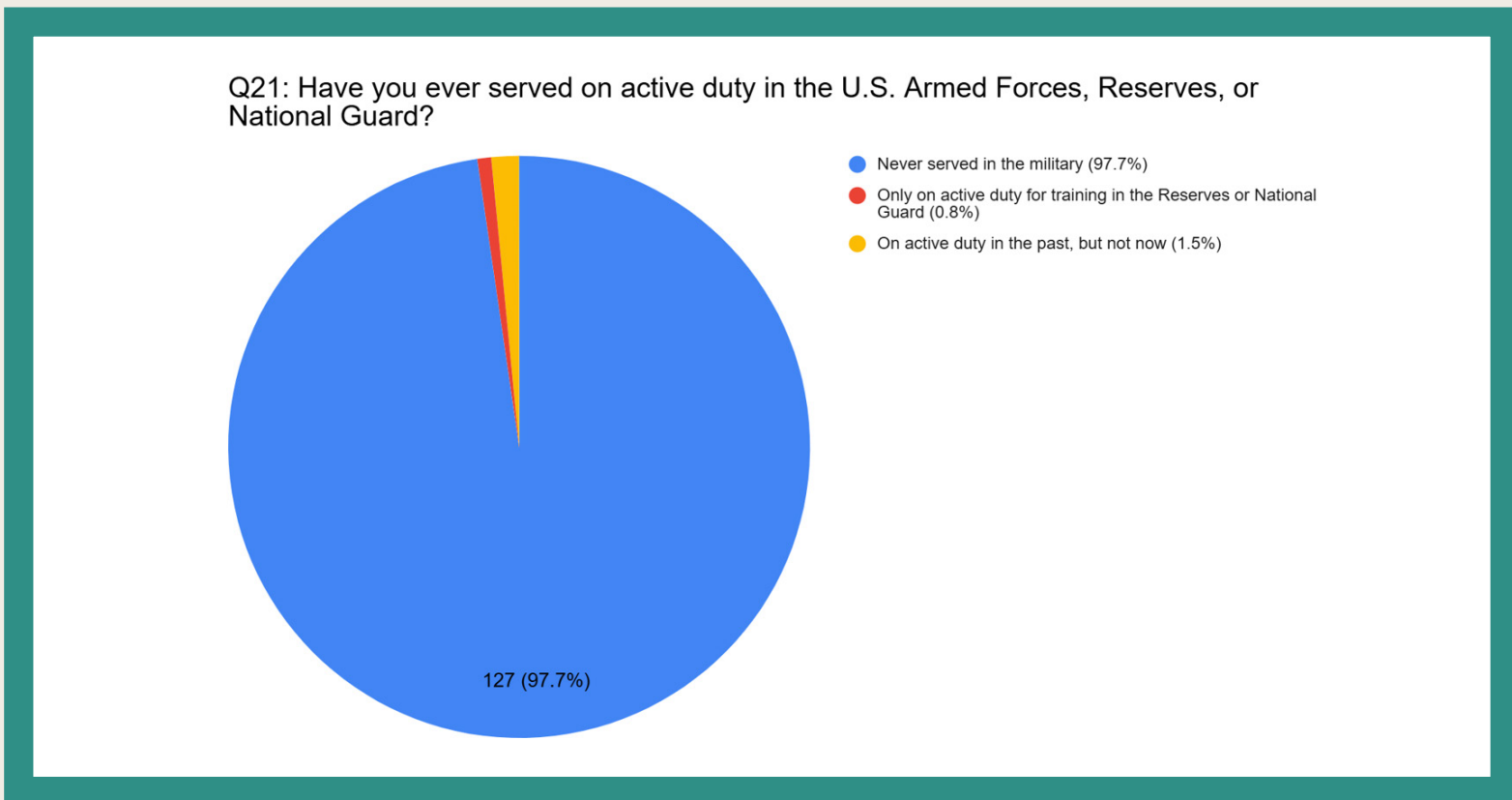
Figure 5
Gender of respondents



DEMOGRAPHIC TRAITS

The majority of respondents reported that they have **never** served in the military at **97.7%** (see **Figure 6**).

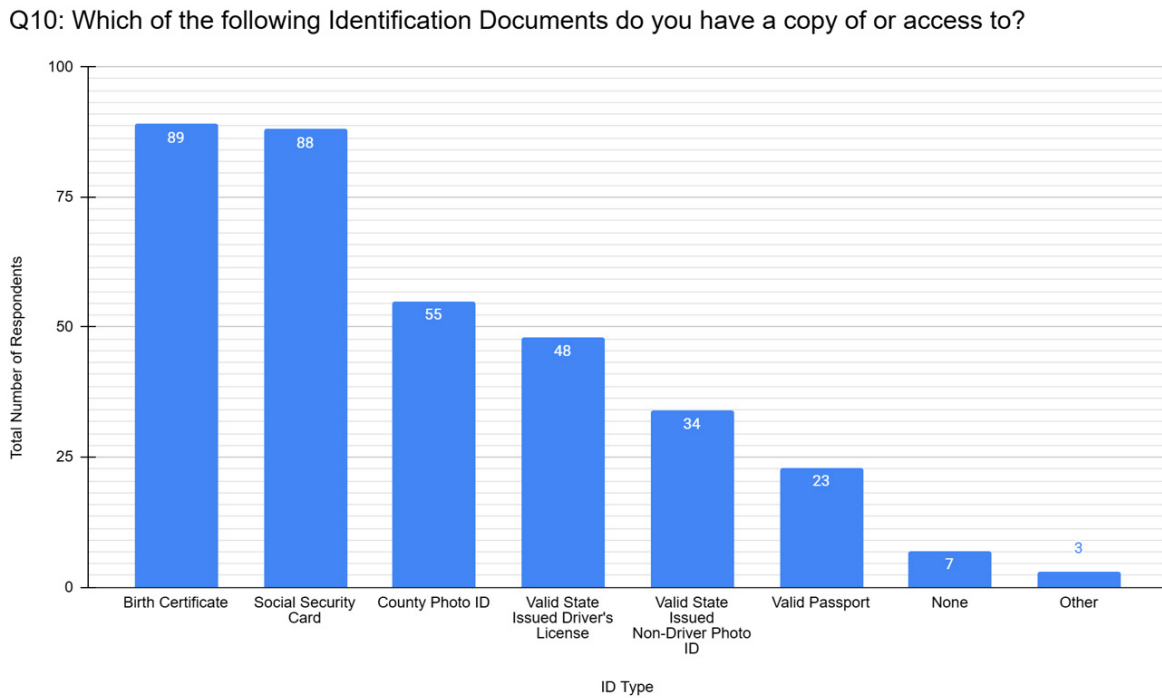
Figure 6
Veteran status of respondents



REPORTED TYPES OF ID

Respondents were asked to report which types of identification documents they had access to. The **most common** types of identification reported were a social **security card** and a **birth certificate** (see **Figure 7**). Respondents could select all that apply. It is important to note that respondents were **not asked** to show any copies of any identification document.

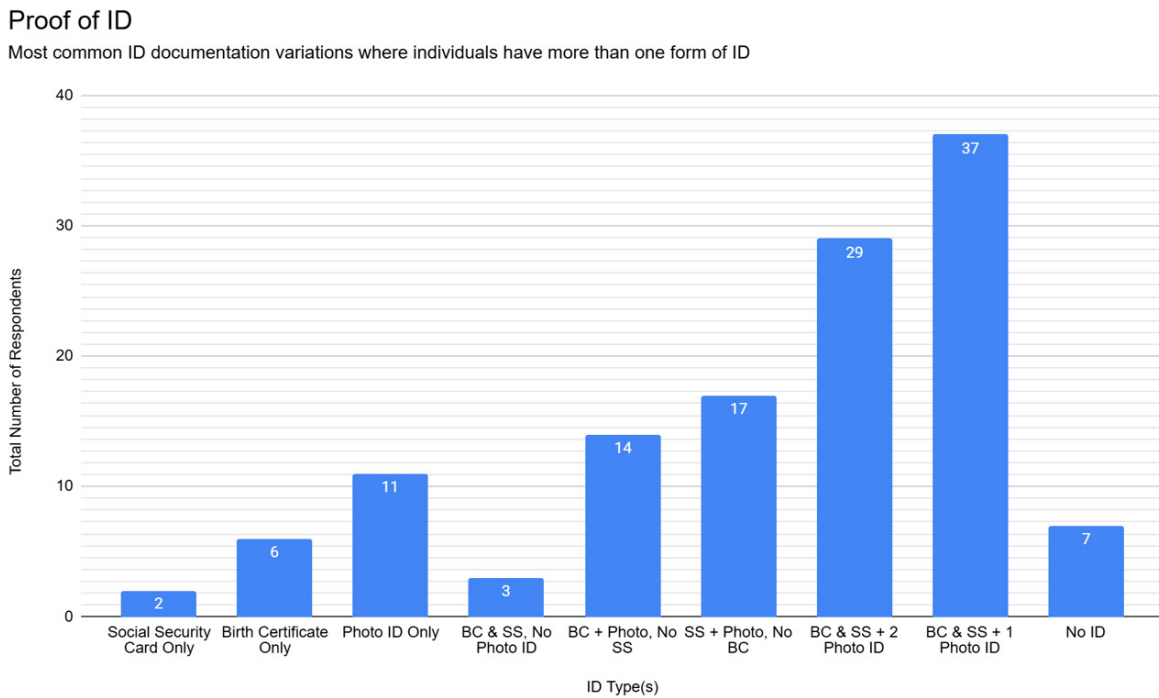
Figure 7
Types of identification documents respondents have access to



REPORTED TYPES OF ID

Respondents were asked to select all forms of identification they had access to. This chart **summarizes** the **groupings** of ID that respondents reported (see **Figure 8**).

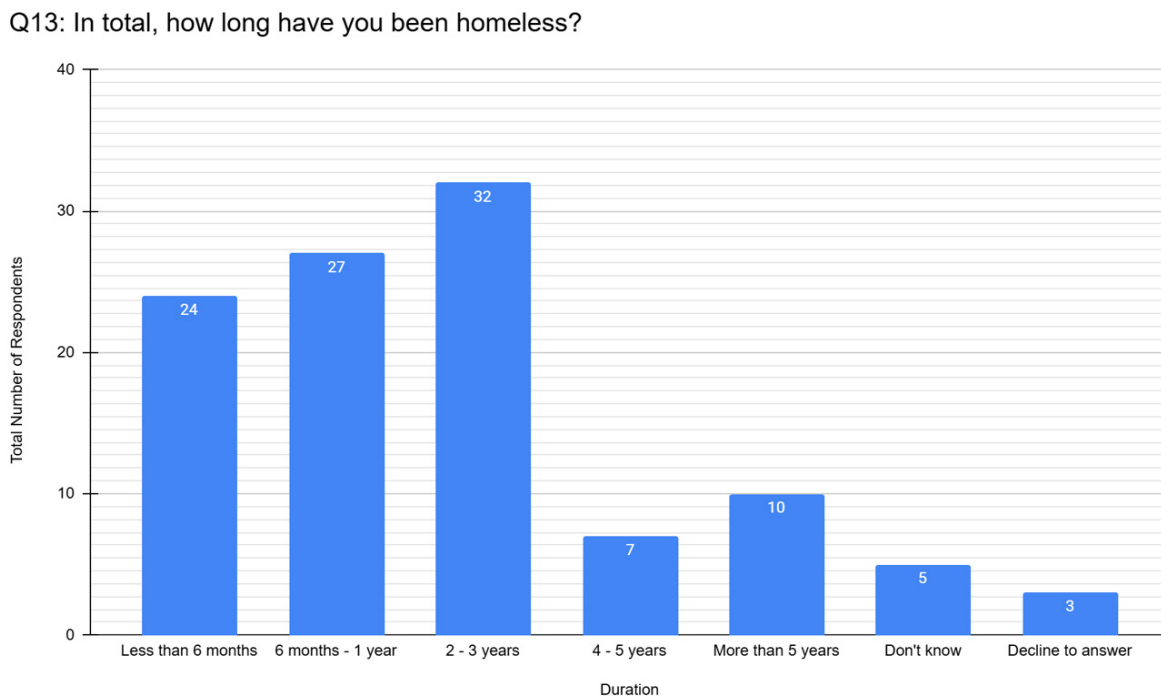
Figure 8
Summary of most common groupings of identification documents



DURATION OF HOMELESS EPISODE

Respondents were asked to report the total length of time they have been homeless. The **most common** length of time was **2-3 years** (see **Figure 9**).

Figure 9
Duration of homelessness

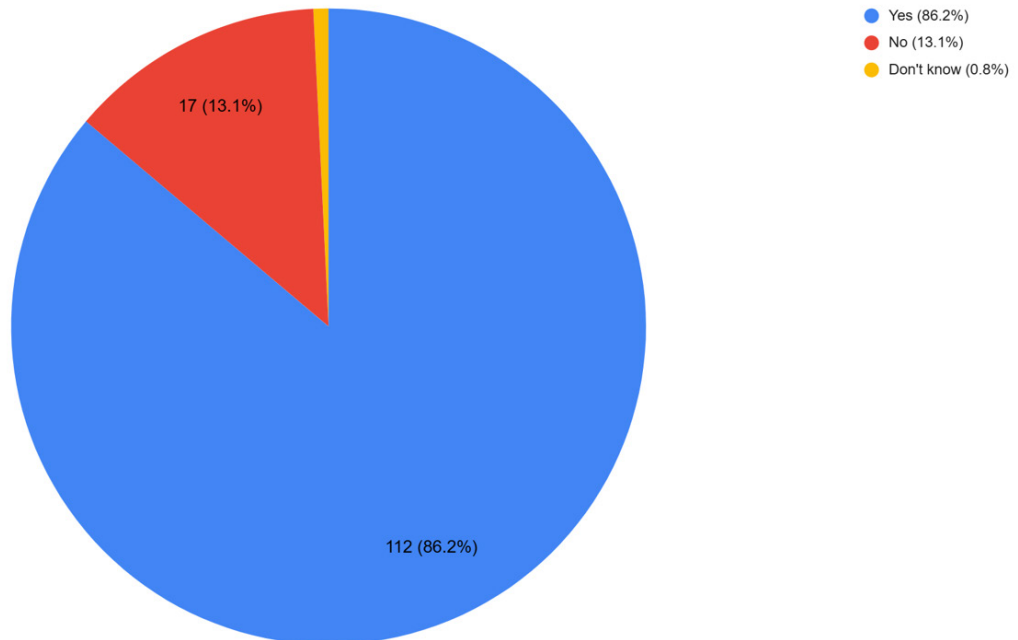


HEALTH & DISABILITY

The **majority** of respondents reported that they **have** visited a doctor in the last 5 years at **86.2%** (see **Figure 10**).

Figure 10
Number of respondents who have visited a doctor in the last 5 years

Q14: Have you visited a doctor for a routine checkup within the past 5 years?

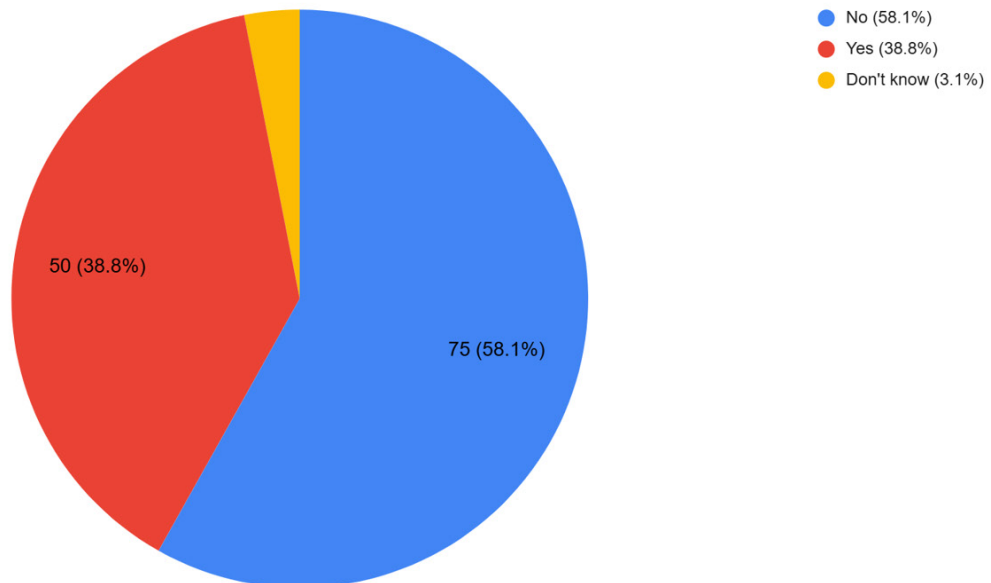


HEALTH & DISABILITY

58.1% of respondents reported that they have a chronic illness (see **Figure 11**).

Figure 11
Respondents who have been told they have a chronic illness

Q15: Has a doctor, nurse, or other health professional ever told you that you had a chronic illness (e.g., asthma, chronic bronchitis, COPD, cancer, diabetes, heart problems/stroke, HIV/AIDS)?

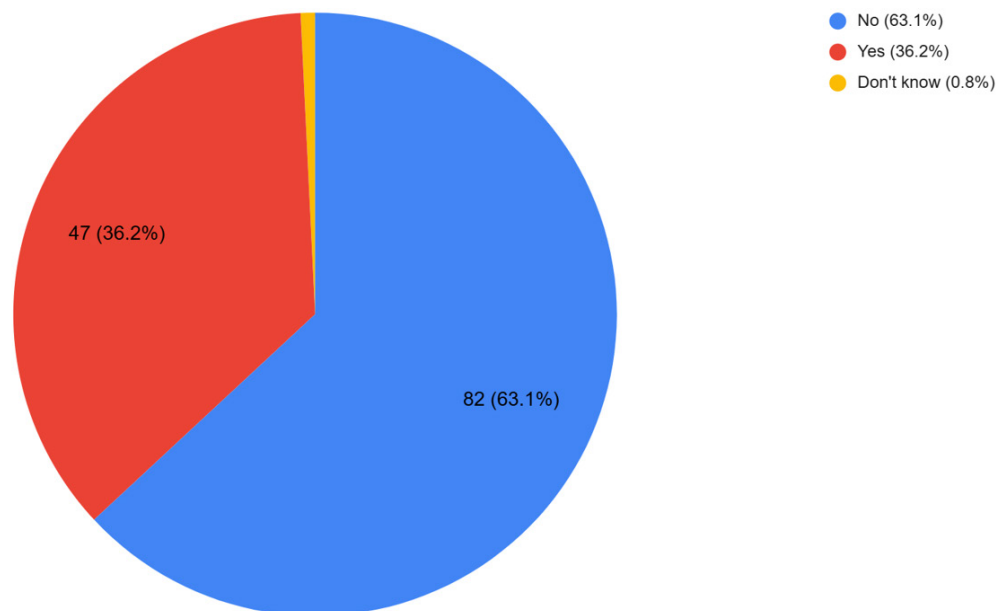


HEALTH & DISABILITY

63.1% of respondents reported that they have a physical, mental, or emotional **disability** (see **Figure 12**).

Figure 12
Respondents with a disability

Q16: Do you have a disability (i.e., physical, mental, or emotional condition that makes some tasks very difficult: vision, hearing, walking, dressing/bathing self)?

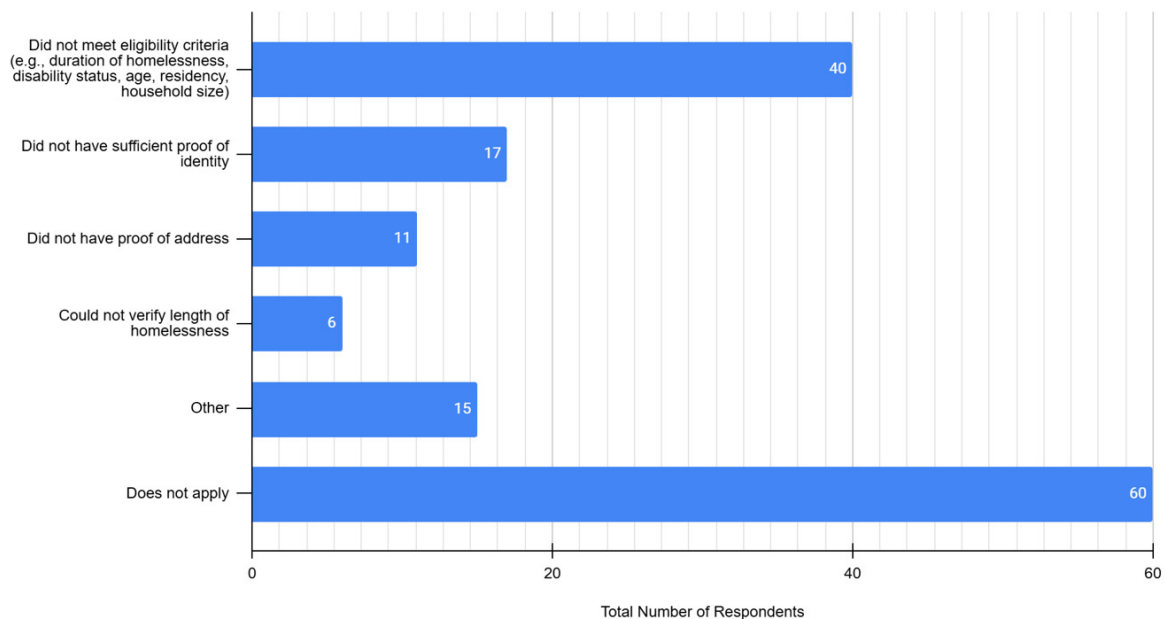


ELIGIBILITY BARRIERS

29% of respondents reported that they **did not** meet **eligibility criteria** if they previously have encountered issues in accessing benefits or receiving services (see **Figure 13**).

Figure 13
Eligibility issues due to missing or a lack of documentation

Q1: If you ever had trouble getting approved for government assistance or services you need (i.e., housing, shelter, medicaid/medicare, SNAP, etc), what were some of the issues you had?

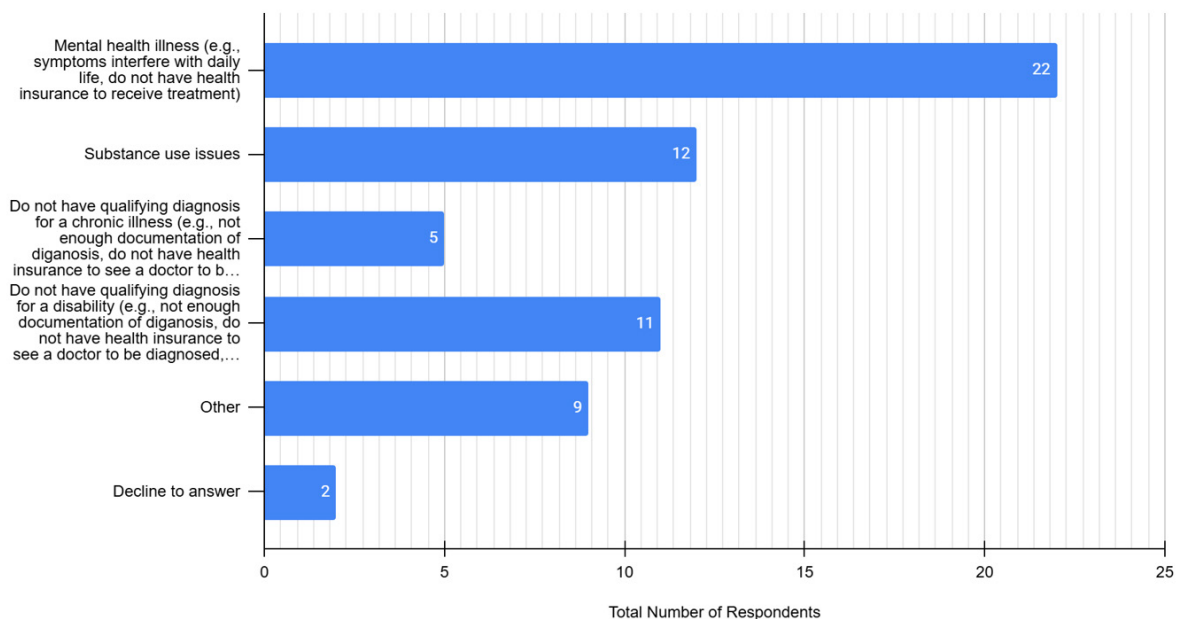


ELIGIBILITY BARRIERS

The top **two** reasons for issues with meeting eligibility criteria were **mental health illness** and **substance use**, for a combined total of **25%** (see **Figure 14**).

Figure 14
Eligibility issues due to mental health or substance use issues, or a lack of a qualifying diagnosis

Q2: If you ever had trouble getting approved for government assistance or services you need (i.e., housing, shelter, medicaid/medicare, SNAP, etc), what were some of the issues you had?

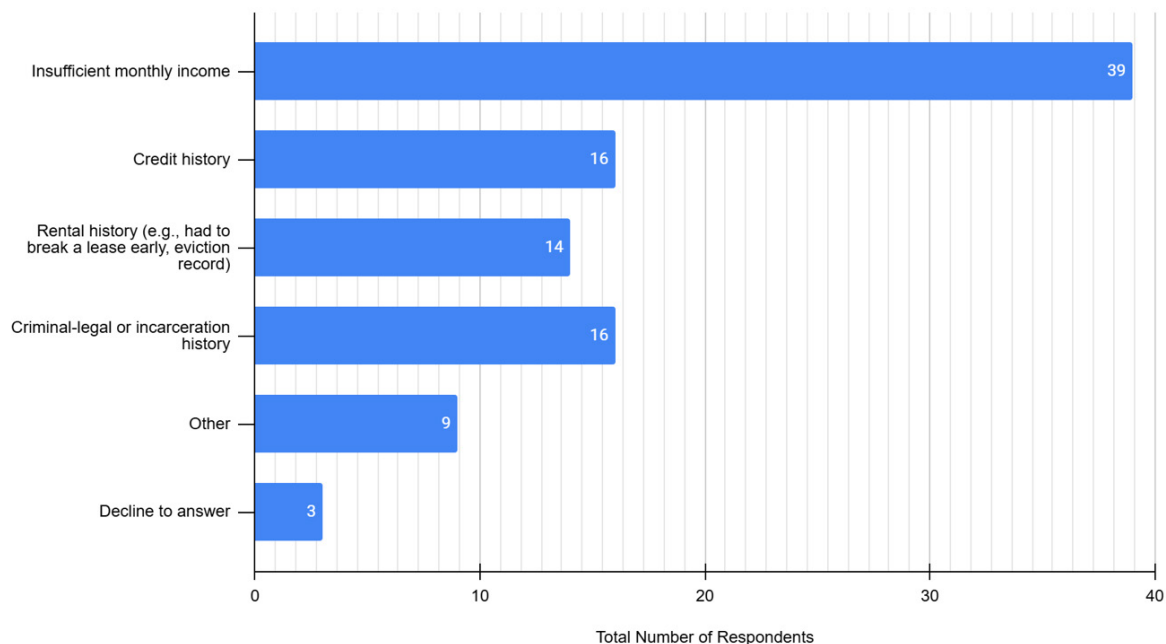


ELIGIBILITY BARRIERS

Respondents were asked if any personal or financial history **interfered** with their ability to obtain housing. **Credit history** and **criminal-legal or incarceration history** were the top reasons after insufficient monthly income (see **Figure 15**).

Figure 15
Personal background issues that interfered with eligibility requirements

Q3: If you ever had issues getting into transitional/permanent housing, what were the reasons?

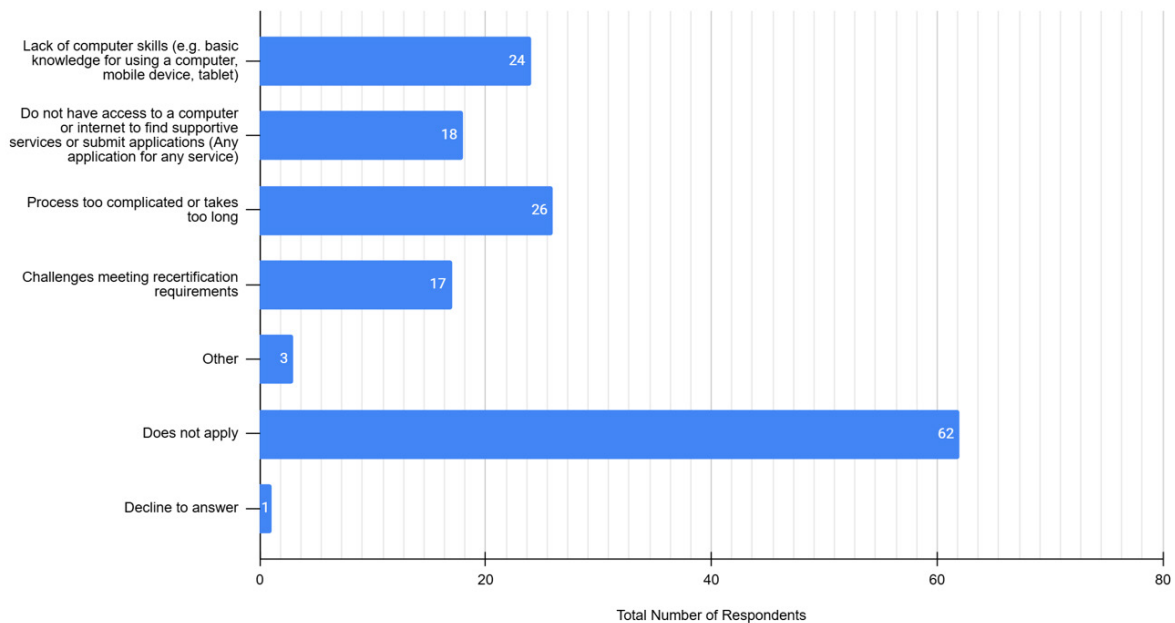


STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

The **most common** challenges that respondents encounter during the application process were the **process is too complicated or takes too long** and a **lack of computer skills** (see Figure 16).

Figure 16
Structural barriers during the application process

Q4: If you ever tried to apply for government assistance or services, what were some of the difficulties you faced that prevented you from getting the services you need during the application process?

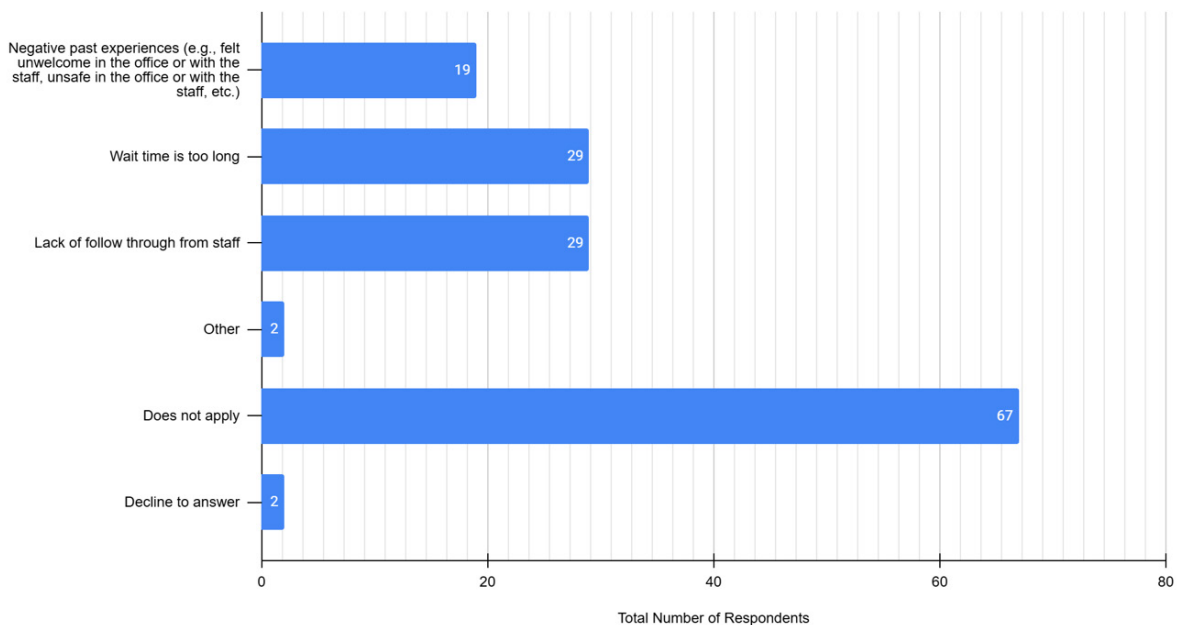


STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

Respondents who encountered challenging interactions with offices, staff, and processes reported that the **wait time was too long** and a **lack of follow through from staff** (see **Figure 17**).

Figure 17
Challenging interactions with offices, staff, and processes

Q5: If you ever tried to apply for government assistance or services, what were some of the difficulties you faced that prevented you from getting the services you need during the application process?

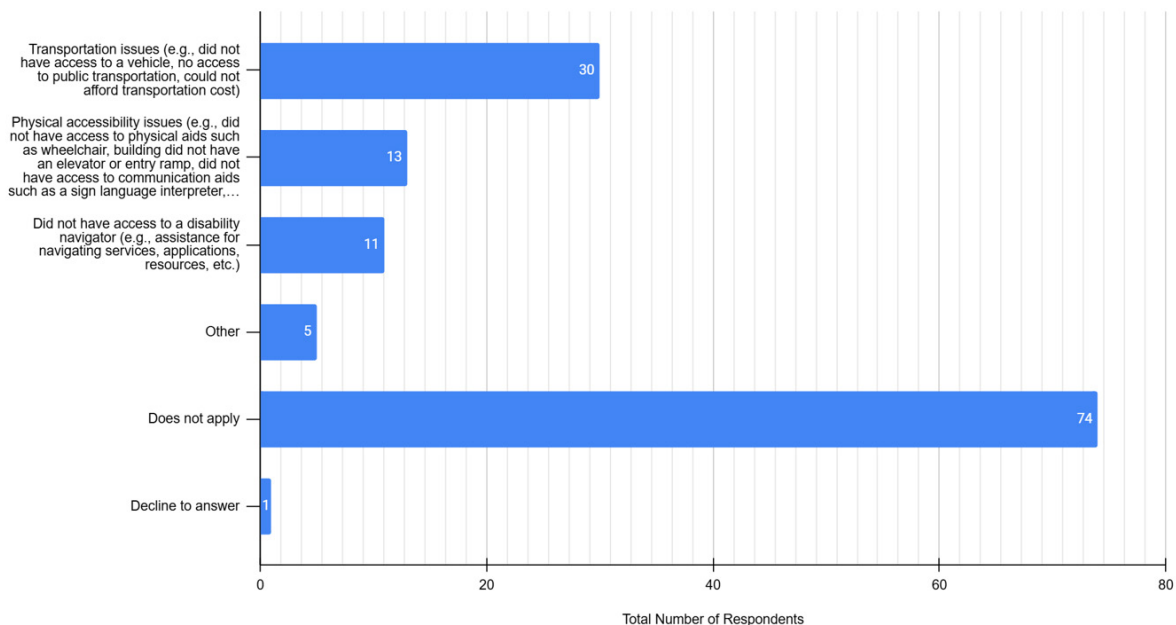


STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

Transportation was the **most common** issue that interfered with completing the application process (see **Figure 18**).

Figure 18
Mobility and transportation challenges

Q6: If you ever tried to apply for government assistance or services, what were some of the difficulties you faced that prevented you from getting the services you need during the application process?

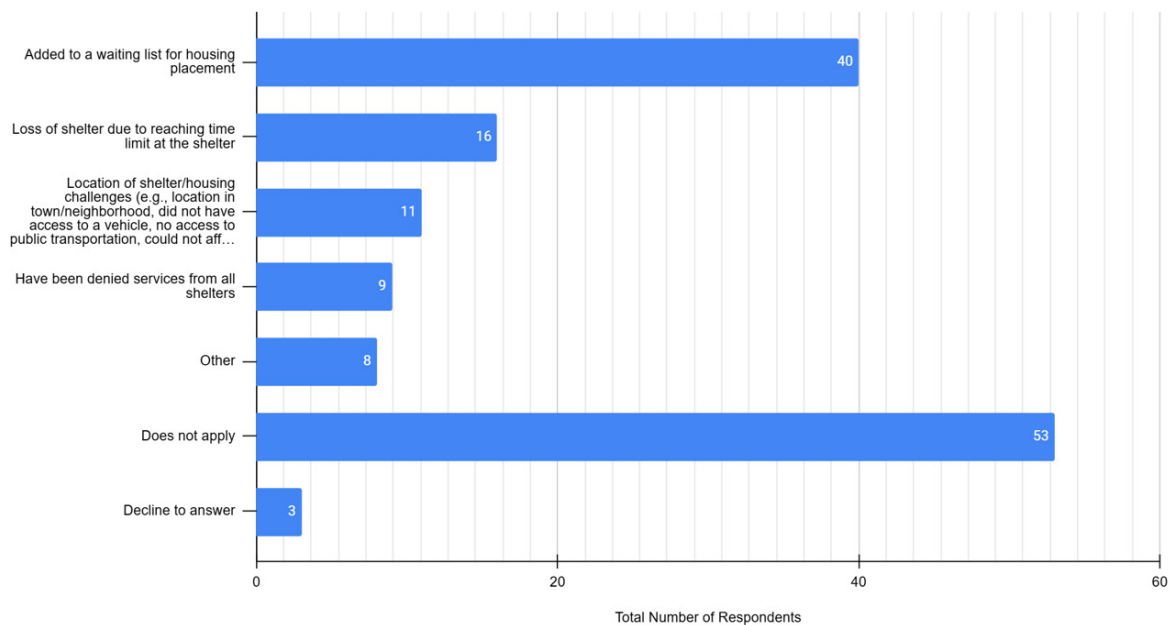


CAPACITY BARRIERS

29.6% of respondents reported that they were added to a **waiting list** for housing or shelter (see **Figure 19**).

Figure 19
Capacity and availability issues after approval

Q7: If you ever tried to get shelter, transitional or permanent housing but there were no services immediately available what were the reasons?

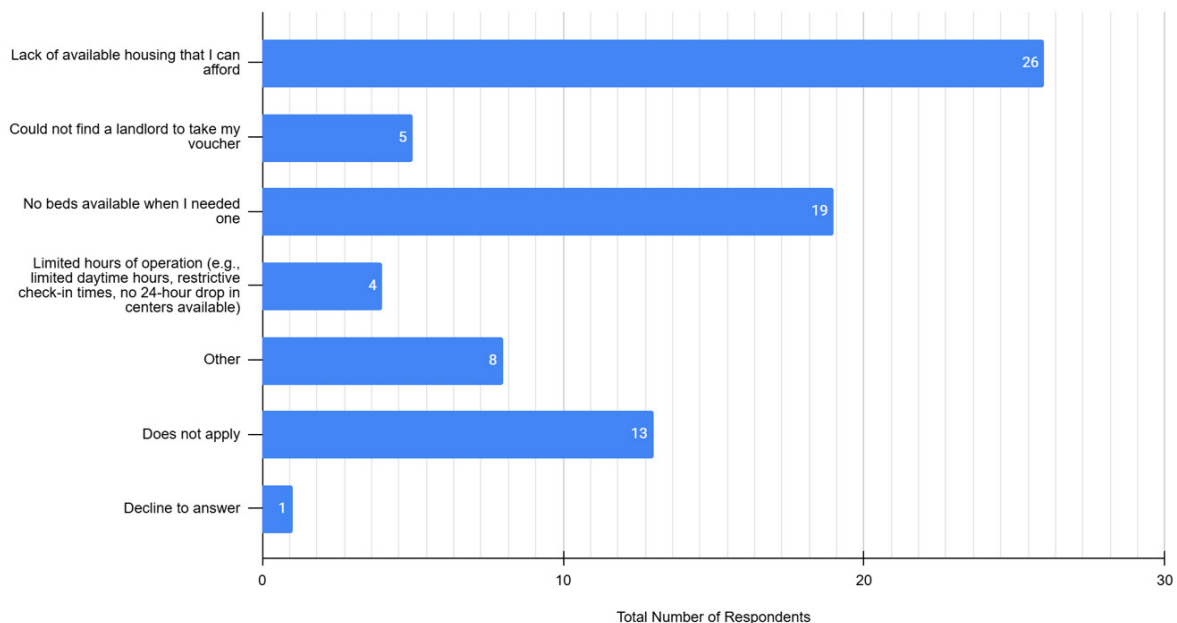


CAPACITY BARRIERS

Respondents reported that the two most common reasons for why services were not available were a **lack of available affordable housing** and that **no beds were available** (see **Figure 21**).

Figure 21
Reasons services were not available

Q9: If you ever tried to get shelter, transitional or permanent housing but there were no services immediately available what were the reasons?



LESSONS LEARNED

Health Access Needs

Many event attendees and participants who responded to the survey reported that they have seen a doctor recently but cannot afford the costs for routine visits and prescribed medications to treat chronic illnesses. One reported barrier is the inability to meet eligibility criteria because they **cannot** provide **adequate documentation** of a chronic illness or disability. **Support** is needed for **consistent access** to prescribed treatment for illness, as well as access to documentation of diagnoses.

Exhausting Emergency Benefits Lifetime Limits

The Board of Social Services reported that there are individuals who have **exhausted** the **lifetime limits** for emergency benefits and cash assistance. In New Jersey, the lifetime limits for cash assistance is 60 months and for emergency (housing/shelter) assistance is 12 months, pursuant to **N.J.A.C. § 10:90-6.4 – Time limitations**. There is a need for greater collaboration in a coordinated entry process to **improve pathways** to assistance that better incorporates diversion for supportive services in an effort to **mitigate** the speed and rate of individuals exhausting time limits. Mitigation may include diversion into other programs such as domestic violence services, veteran’s services, assisting in obtaining or recovering documentation for a qualifying diagnosis of a chronic illness or disability, providing assistance in legal services to file for a qualifying extension, or prioritizing the HPL in a manner that can include an individual’s lifetime limits for cash assistance and emergency assistance as a prioritization scoring factor.

Identification Documents

The results from the **Barriers Survey** and the **County ID** application process showed that while many individuals reported having access to at least one form of identification, only three individuals had the necessary documents to successfully obtain a County ID. **Access** to ID/documents is **critical** not only for accessing benefits and receiving services it is also for completing rental applications, opening bank accounts, and securing employment. Without the appropriate combination of various types of ID (primarily, a social security card, a birth certificate, driver’s license, non-driver photo ID, or passport) attaining housing readiness and achieving self-sufficiency will remain a challenge. Since maintaining access and **safely storing** copies of their identification documents continues to be a challenge, ID recovery needs to be addressed in a **collaborative** manner across the Continuum of Care (CoC), government departments, agencies, and organizations to assist individuals in safely storing copies in a single location. The first step in this collaborative process is to provide case management support for the individual in requesting copies of documents. In many cases, an agency or organization **may have copies** of an individual’s documents from **prior** applications for supportive services. Assisting the individual in requesting copies from agencies and then storing the documents in an organization’s file cabinet in **HMIS** would aid in storing copies in a single place. Once all copies have been **recovered** from prior service applications, an assessment for identifying supplemental documents from the issuing government agency could be made.

LESSONS LEARNED

Proof of Residence & Mailing Address

Individuals applying for a County ID are required to supply a mailing address for the application. CSPNJ was able to host a limited number of individuals to use their address for the Homeless Connect event, however, **more** mailing address **sponsor** options are needed to **expand** ID recovery services for the homeless population in the county.

County ID

Continued support for obtaining a free County ID is **necessary** for supporting the homeless population to **achieve housing readiness**. Individuals need support through the entire process to ensure they are supplying accurate information, obtaining the necessary copies of ID, establishing a mailing address, and receiving the necessary support and reminders to appear for scheduled appointments to ensure that a County ID is issued successfully. Moving forward, how can a consistent number of free applications and appointments be provided each month for the homeless population?

Transportation Needs

22% of respondents to the Barriers Survey reported that **transportation** to offices and organizations is a **barrier** to accessing benefits and receiving services. Many government offices and agencies are located throughout the county and the state that may

not have free or affordable transportation services available. A few **potential solutions** to this issue include a regular, recurring event similar to the Homeless Connect Event where all service providers are accessible at a single location for individuals to schedule appointments, expanding the Passaic County MOVE program to include locations outside of Clifton and Passaic, or to expand transportation passes/vouchers program services in Passaic County.

Utility Assistance Programs

Several attendees at the event were seeking **utility assistance**. On **February 12, 2025**, PSE&G announced **state-wide increases** for all customers at an average of **17%** that would begin on **June 1, 2025**. This increase was reported to be the highest increase in the nation.⁹ In Passaic County, the most requested need since **June 1, 2025 (2/12/25-5/31/26)** is utility assistance, with a total of **26,965** calls reported by **NJ 211** for the county.¹⁰ The data prior to the increase notification date illustrates a significant increase in calls to 211. A total of **6,884** calls for Utility Assistance were recorded from **2/12/23 – 5/31/24**. It would have been beneficial to invite PSE&G and the Weatherization and Home Energy Division to the event to assist individuals with utility assistance needs, and they will be invited for future events.

⁹ PSE&G. (2025). *NJ BGS Electric Rate Increase*. Retrieved from <https://nj.pseg.com/-/media/pseg/public-site/documents/paymentassistance/bgs-electric-rate-increase-21225.ashx>

¹⁰ NJ 211. (2026). NJ 211 Data Dashboard. Retrieved from <https://nj211.org/nj-211-data-dashboard>

LESSONS LEARNED

Legal Assistance Needs

A total of **22%** of respondents to the Barriers Survey reported that **eviction history** and **criminal-legal and incarceration history** have **interfered** with their **eligibility** for transitional or permanent housing. Legal assistance for expungement, eviction records, and credit history is needed to ensure individuals can obtain housing and identification documents successfully.

NEXT STEPS

Incorporate Homeless Connect Event into the Annual PIT Count

The Homeless Connect Event was a great **success** for attendees. Many service providers reported that attendees shared that they found the **event useful** to have every different type of service and resource available at a **single location**. Many neighboring counties in New Jersey (i.e., **Essex, Bergen, and Morris**) host a Homeless Connect Event as a kickoff event for the annual, federally mandating PIT count. Passaic County **should** host a Homeless Connect Event in the **2027 PIT Count** at an **indoor** location.

Under One Roof Pilot Study

Building off the **success** of the **Homeless Connect Event**, the Passaic County **Department of Human Services** is planning to launch a **90-day pilot study, Under One Roof – Housing Hub**, to address homelessness in the county. *The Under One Roof – Housing Hub* will

function as a point of entry for comprehensive services and a **centralized access point** for individuals and families experiencing homelessness and/or housing insecurity. During the pilot study, data will be collected to **identify common barriers** to accessing services and to **improve the overall speed** of the **process**, from intake to placement in stable housing. The pilot program will be launched in **partnership** with community- and faith-based organizations.

Identification Assistance

The Passaic County **Continuum of Care** leadership will explore more comprehensive collaborative programming, particularly for providing identification recovery assistance. Service providers can **assist** clients with **recovering copies of identification documents** and store them in the client's **HMIS digital file cabinet**.