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# YOUR WAY HOME

## Racial Equity Assessment Report



Montgomery County  
Department of  
Health and Human Services

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## Summary

The main objective of this study was to pinpoint disparities within the Your Way Home Continuum of Care (CoC) homeless response system and suggest improvements in service delivery to better serve Montgomery County residents.

To achieve this, the study employed several data collection methods:

- Conducted two (2) in-person focus groups and administered surveys to adults who have experienced homelessness in Montgomery County.
- Utilizing StellaP and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), analyzed racial demographic data from all Continuum of Care programs from 2021 to 2023.
- Reviewed existing Your Way Home Policies and Procedures.

While quantitative data analysis did not reveal significant inequities in program outcomes, qualitative responses and feedback from individuals with lived experience identified areas of inequity.

The focus group responses highlighted that Black or African American participants were less likely to report everyday discrimination but significantly more likely to experience systemic discrimination such as police harassment, barriers to education, and unfair employment practices. Overall, the focus group participants indicated they lacked empowerment to address common experiences of everyday discrimination.

Overall, there are notable racial disparities in those entering the homeless population of Montgomery County, reflecting national trends. For instance, while Black and African American individuals constitute 9% of the general population and 19% of the population in poverty, they make up 40% of the homeless population according to the 2022 Point-in-Time Count. The CoC has also seen an increase in households with children experiencing homelessness for the first time.

HMIS data analysis from 2021-2023, however, shows that Black and Multi-Racial households exiting emergency shelters had higher rates of transitioning to permanent housing compared to White households, though overall exits to permanent and temporary housing remained limited.

Moreover, analysis of the VI-SPDAT scores indicated that African Americans on average scored half a point lower than White single adults, consistent with national studies on implicit biases in VI-SPDAT assessments. This finding supports the decision of the Continuum of Care to redesign the Coordinated Entry assessment process.

## Background

### Montgomery County at a Glance

Montgomery County is a mostly suburban county outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Montgomery County sits on the lands of the Lenni Lenape Native American Nation and was incorporated in September 1784. As of the 2020 Census, it was the second most wealthy and third most populous county in the state. The total population of Montgomery County is nearly 900,000 people.

Below is the racial breakdown of Montgomery County residents, as reported in that Census ([https://data.census.gov/profile/Montgomery\\_County,\\_Pennsylvania](https://data.census.gov/profile/Montgomery_County,_Pennsylvania)):

- White or Caucasian: 78%
- Black or African American: 10.4%
- American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous: .02%
- Asian or Asian American: 8%
- Native Hawaiian: .02%
- Hispanic/Latino/a/e: 6.3%
- Two or more races: 6%

According to the [Out of Reach Report](#), an analysis published annually by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, in 2024 28% of Montgomery County households were renters. To afford rent in a two-bedroom apartment, households must make \$33.40 per hour, or \$69,480 annually. The state minimum wage remains \$7.25, leaving many households cost-burdened and struggling to afford all necessary living expenses. A minimum wage worker must work 4.6 full time jobs each week to be able to afford a moderate two-bedroom apartment in Montgomery County, a factor contributing to the fact that almost 7% of Montgomery County residents live in poverty.

Between 2021 and 2023, Emergency Shelter (ES), Transitional Housing (TH), and Street Outreach (SO) programs served 5,748 individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Montgomery County. The racial breakdown of those individuals served, as reported in HMIS is:

- White or Caucasian: 30%
- Black or African American: 47%
- American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous: 1%
- Asian or Asian American: 1%
- Native Hawaiian: 0%
- Hispanic/Latino/a/e: 1%
- Two or more races: 14%

## A History of Racial Inequity in Montgomery County

The historic background information presented below is based on a study conducted by Just Strategies, LLC, and published for Your Way Home in 2021. Your Way Home continues to be committed to accept accountability to respond to Montgomery County's experiences of racism, inequity and bias.

Since the 18th century, Montgomery County has been the center seemingly progressive political and ideological shifts. It was home to the Quaker abolitionist movement, housed several stops along the Underground Railroad, and hosted Camp William Penn- the Commonwealth's only Civil War training camp for African American soldiers. Even though the County was founded these progressive ideals, racial tensions experienced nationwide in the early 20th century created systemic policies and practices that are still felt throughout Montgomery County today. The Supreme Court ruling in *Euclid v Ambler* that gave legal permission for local townships to create zoning policy that limited the use of multi-family homes and pushed minority populations out of the suburbs towards more urban counties.

Another legal precedent that inhibited Black families from thriving in Montgomery County is a policy known as redlining. Redlining refers to the discriminatory practice of denying services (such as loans or insurance) or charging more for them based on the racial or ethnic composition of a neighborhood. The term originated from the practice of marking red lines on maps to indicate areas where banks and insurance companies would avoid investment, often based on the racial makeup of the inhabitants. This practice has historically led to disinvestment and economic hardship in minority communities, perpetuating systemic inequalities.

Redlining in Montgomery County may have had lasting effects on the socioeconomic landscape, contributing to disparities in access to quality housing, education, and employment opportunities between different racial and ethnic groups. In Glenside Township for instance, a particular neighborhood was given a D rating, “highly undesirable” due to its occupation of Italian and African American residents as well as their working class socio economic classification. While explicit redlining practices have been outlawed since the Fair Housing Act of 1968, the legacy of these discriminatory practices can still be seen in the uneven distribution of wealth and resources across the county today.

Reporting from 2021 found “that communities who had a Black population of 10% or less tended to have higher household median income and lower poverty rates compared to communities that had Black populations of 10% or higher” ([PA Department of Human Services, “Racial Equity Report 2021: Leading the Fight for Justice, Equity, and Opportunity For All People”](#)). In addition to these legal policy decisions that unjustly impacted the quality of life of Black Montgomery County residents, social service experiences and systemic racism outside of the homeless response system make BIPOC individuals less willing or likely to ask for assistance. It is sometimes believed that these households will not receive the assistance they want or need when they do eventually seek it out. This understandable hesitation can lead to harmful outcomes for minority families, including health conditions, justice involvement and homelessness.

It should be noted, however, that the differences in assistance and outcomes is not merely a perception. According to the 2020 US Census, Black students in Montgomery County are 3 times less likely to earn a degree than white students. The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services reports that there is a “more than a 10 percent difference in access to well-child visits between Black infants and white infants.” Black households are more likely to be uninsured and Black children are more likely to be diagnosed with a social or emotional disability.

## Methodologies

### Purpose

The primary goal of this study was to identify areas of inequities within the Your Way Home Continuum of Care homeless response system and to determine potential improvements to service delivery to best address these inequities to better serve the residents of Montgomery County.

## Research Methodologies

These suggestions are made following an analysis of historical and contemporary disparities data, engagement with those with the lived expertise of homelessness, and a thorough analysis of programmatic data.

To complete this research, the following data collection methods were utilized:

- Conducted two (2) in-person focus groups and administered surveys on May 22, 2024 and May 23, 2024.
  - Participation was voluntary and groups were conducted within the community at an accessible location
  - 22 single adults participated in the listening sessions and completed surveys.
- Utilizing StellaP and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), analyzed racial demographic data from all Continuum of Care programs from 2021 to 2023.
- Reviewed existing Your Way Home Policies and Procedures.

## About Your Way Home

Established in 2014, Your Way Home Montgomery County is a public-private partnership with cross-sector collaborations between county agencies, nonprofit service providers, philanthropic foundations, property owners, faith organizations, homeless advocates, people with lived expertise, and other community partners committed to ending and preventing homelessness in Montgomery County. Your Way Home is managed through the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Office of Housing and Community Development and has partnered with over 30 local nonprofit social service agencies to deliver an array of homeless services programming in Montgomery County. That program include: street outreach, emergency shelter, Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing rental assistance and case management, and court-based eviction prevention. Your Way Home funders, service providers, property owners and community partners share a common agenda to improve the housing stability, economic security and health of people experiencing, or at imminent risk of homelessness.

Informed by the collective impact model of solving complex and deeply rooted social problems, Your Way Home is a coordinated effort between Montgomery County, The Montgomery County Foundation, the Continuum of Care, and contracted service provider agencies with a goal making homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring, and is a model of cross-sector collaboration and community impact.

## Findings

### Your Way Home Equity Focus Groups – Analyzing Experiences of Discrimination

Focus groups were conducted in two locations on two days in May 2024. The participants were all individuals with current or recent experience of homelessness. The first focus group was held with the Your Way Home Lived Experience Advisory Board at HopeWorx day shelter, with members of the board as well as individuals currently experiencing homelessness who were present at the day shelter. The second focus group was held with participants in the emergency shelter program

operated by Resources for Human Development, with individuals experiencing homelessness and currently enrolled in Your Way Home programming. The focus groups included a survey and discussion session, the results of which will be analyzed in this section. The survey included questions sourced from the Everyday Discrimination Scale; Williams, D.R., Yu, Y., Jackson, J.S., and Anderson, N.B. “Racial Differences in Physical and Mental Health: Socioeconomic Status, Stress, and Discrimination.” *Journal of Health Psychology*. 1997; 2(3):335-351. The two focus groups included a diverse group of 22 participants. This analysis and data is not a comprehensive overview of experiences but a snapshot of certain individuals’ reflections on their lived experience in Montgomery County. Participants were asked to reflect on their entire experience as residents of the county, not only as Your Way Home program participants.

### Experiences of Everyday Discrimination

Experience	Experience of all respondents	Experience of Black/African American respondents	Experience of respondents who live with a disability
Treated with less courtesy than other people are	50%	29%	59%
You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores.	50%	42%	67%
People act as if they think you are not smart	55%	29%	58%
People act as if they are afraid of you.	55%	57%	58%
You are threatened or harassed.	50%	57%	50%

The responses show that these focus group members were more likely to experience everyday discrimination if they reported living with a disability (mental or physical). Responses during the focus groups support this data, with numerous participants highlighting that looking or acting outside of expected norms often accompanied experiences they had with harassment and negative interactions with other residents.

“ One time, someone said, ‘We don’t want you here. We don’t want your kind here.’ If you have mental health problems, you are discriminated against. ”

### Experiences of Systemic Discrimination

Experience	Experience of all respondents	Experience of Black/African American respondents	Experience of respondents who live with a disability
Have you ever been unfairly fired from a job or been unfairly denied a promotion?	28%	42%	25%
For unfair reasons, have you ever not been hired for a job?	28%	29%	25%
Have you ever been unfairly stopped, searched, questioned, physically threatened or abused by the police?	36%	57%	33%
Have you ever been unfairly discouraged by a teacher or advisor from continuing your education?	5%	14%	8%
Have you ever been unfairly prevented from moving into a neighborhood because the landlord or a realtor refused to sell or rent you a house or apartment?	36%	42%	58%
Have you ever been unfairly denied a bank loan?	28%	14%	33%

“

A lot of people don't tell you when they're having mental problems; we want help but we don't want to ask for the help. Wonder why people bottle up and don't say anything and then they break.

”

The response data from these focus group participants also indicates that while Black or African American respondents were less likely to report experiences of every day discrimination, they reported significantly higher instances of experiencing the effects of systemic discrimination, such as being harassed by police, being discouraged from education, or being unfairly fired from a job or denied a promotion.

Over two thirds of respondents indicated that they accepted these experiences as a fact of life, with 57% reporting that they did not attempt to do something about the behavior that was directed toward them. The focus group participants on the whole showed that their common experiences of everyday discrimination were not something they felt empowered to confront.

“

“I don't think if I wasn't African American or a person of color that they would have been so determined to get me to move...I wasn't bothering anybody and it was late at night. I don't know what I was going to do - bring down the property values sleeping in my car in that neighborhood one night?”

”

Participants in both focus groups also noted that their experiences of everyday discrimination increased drastically when they lost their housing. While other factors such as race or disability played a role in how individuals reported being treated in public and in their communities, respondents overwhelmingly agreed that being perceived as homeless greatly increased all of their experiences of discrimination.

## Homeless Response System Data Analysis

The following data analyzes how the racial and ethnic disparities and inequities that are present in the population experiencing homelessness manifest in the various components of the homeless crisis response system.

A primary goal of this analysis is to understand whether the homeless crisis response system is reproducing or exacerbating any larger racial inequities that result from larger systems (housing, education, criminal justice, healthcare, etc.) that feed into homelessness and contribute to the overrepresentation of racial and ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups in the homeless crisis response system.

To accomplish this, the report breaks down the homeless crisis response system along the following lines and, using quantitative data from the HMIS, and analyzing the differences in race/ethnicity:

- Inflow
- Length of time in the service system
- Outflow
- Coordinated Entry

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- Inflow
- Length of time in the service system
- Outflow
- Coordinated Entry

To zoom in, the report analyzes racial/ethnic disparities along the following metrics. For each of these metrics an overall data snapshot (count and percentages – individuals and households), a household type breakdown (households with children and households without children – count and percentages), and a yearly breakdown (trend analysis) is presented. For the yearly trend analysis, the numbers for each year and the year-to-year changes (counts and percentage changes) is calculated.

The following table lists the questions and metrics analyzed for each component.

Components	Questions Asked	Metrics Analyzed
Inflow	Who is coming into the system?	Program Entries – ES, TH, SO
	Who is newly entering the system?	First program entries only – ES, TH, and SO
	Where are they coming from?	Previous living situation for all new program entries – ES, TH, and SO
Length of Time Homeless	How long are households remaining in the service system?	Average length of time from entry to exit – ES, TH, SO
	How long are households staying in emergency shelter?	Average length of time - ES
	How long are households spending from entry to permanent housing?	Average length of time from entry to exit – filtering exits to PH
Outflow	Where are people exiting to and who is exiting to these destinations?	Exit destinations by destination type
Housing Retention and Returns to Homelessness	Who is retaining their housing?	Households not returning – use SPM
	Who is returning to the crisis response system?	Households returning – use SPM
	How long are people staying housed before returning?	Average LOT - exit to re-entry - StellaP
Coordinated Entry	Who is progressing through the CE process?	CE Stages
	Who is being prioritized for various interventions?	Community Queue
	How are people being assessed?	Assessment data – VI-SPDAT scores

## Overall Demographics, 2021-2023

### Emergency Shelter (ES), Transitional Housing (TH), and Street Outreach (SO) Projects

- Total unique individuals served: 5,748
- Total households served: 3,579
- Black individuals comprise 47% of people served; White individuals 30%; Multi-Racial 14%
- Black households (Head of household) are 43% of households (HH) served; white HH are 40%; Multi-Racial 12%
- The populations experiencing homelessness in Montgomery County are disproportionately Black relative to the overall population and the population in poverty
- 53% increase in individuals served from 2021 to 2023
  - 54% increase in Black individuals served
  - 56% increase in Multi-Racial individuals served
  - 35% increase in White individuals served
- 36% increase in households served from 2021 to 2023
  - 38% increase in Black households (head of household)
  - 40% increase in Multi-racial households
  - 30% increase in White households
- The growing number of households served are disproportionately Black or Multi-Racial
- Household Breakdown:
  - 67% of individuals in families are Black/African American
  - 32% are white (individuals in families)
  - 43% of individuals in households without children (adults only) are Black
  - 56% are white (adults only)
- There are racial disparities in the populations entering the YWH homelessness crisis response system (inflow).

There are significant racial disparities in the population experiencing homelessness in Montgomery County, mirroring national trends. Fig. 1 compares the proportions of people of various racial and ethnic identities who are experiencing homelessness compared to the general population. As depicted in Fig 1, Black and African American individuals experience homelessness at a greatly disproportionate rate. While Black and African American individuals make up 9% of the general population in Montgomery County and 19% of the population in poverty, they comprise 40% of the population experiencing homelessness according to 2022 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count.

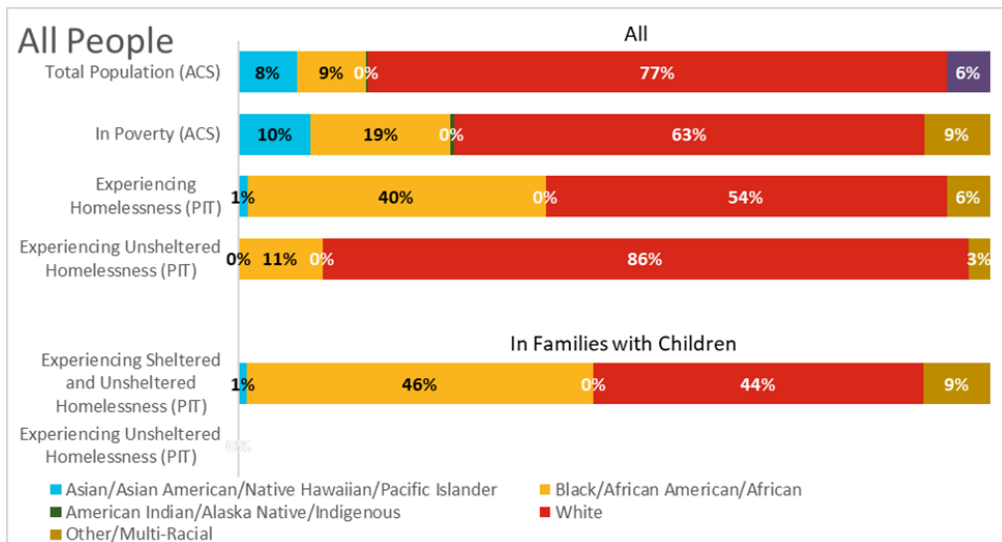


Fig. 1- HUD CoC Analysis Tool: Race and Ethnicity

Using the Montgomery County Continuum of Care’s (CoC) HMIS data, this report investigates the extent to which there are disparities in key component of the homeless service system. The overall race and ethnicity demographics of the population in ES, TH, and SO programs (which make up the Your Way Home crisis response system) from 1/1/2021 to 12/31/2023 are depicted in Figures 2-5.

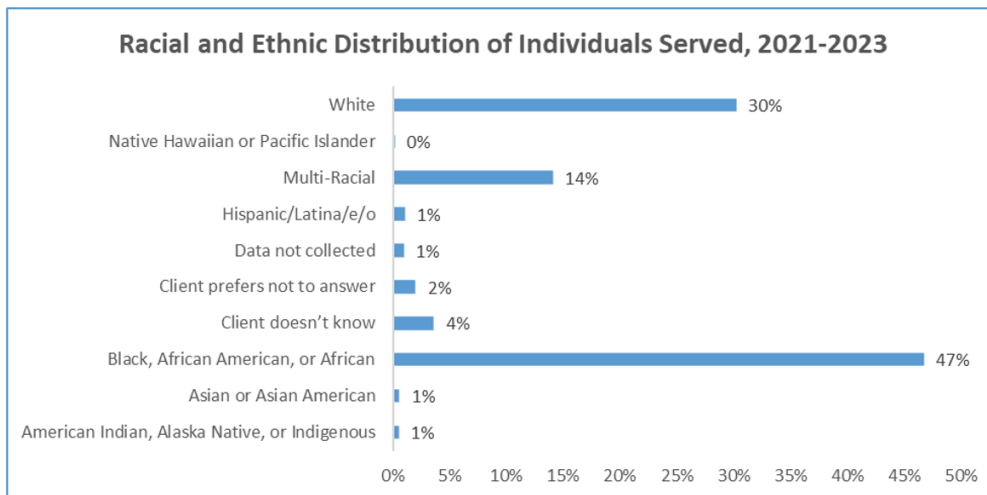


Fig. 2- Homeless Management Information System

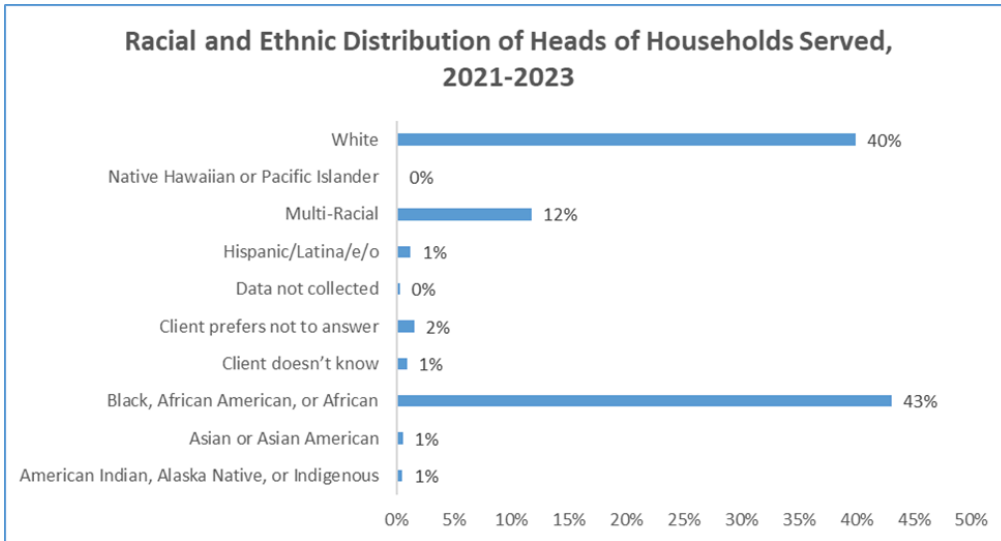


Fig. 3- Homeless Management Information System

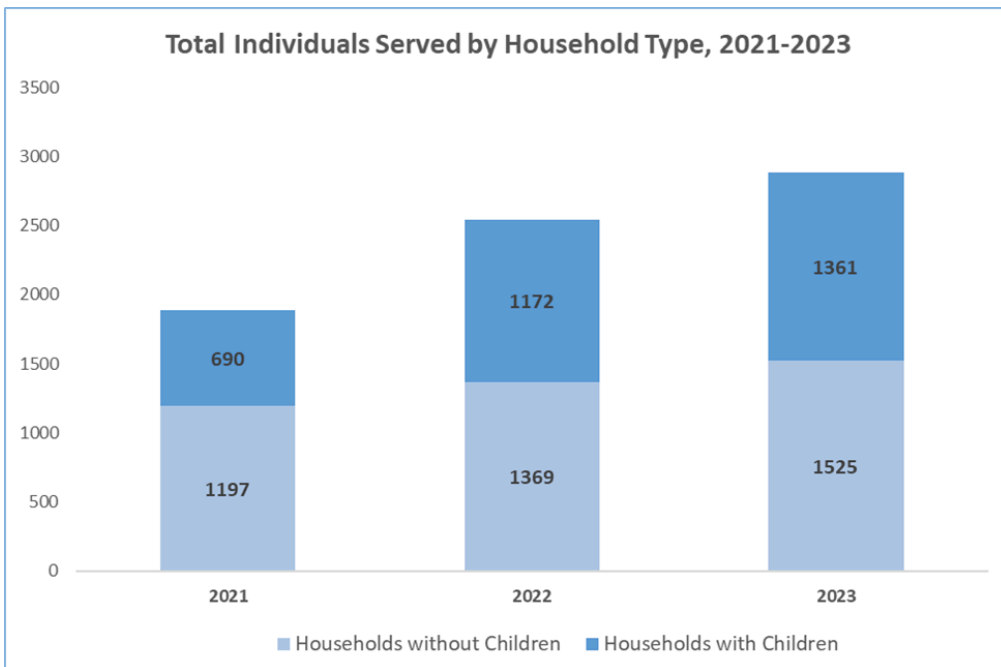


Fig. 4- Homeless Management Information System

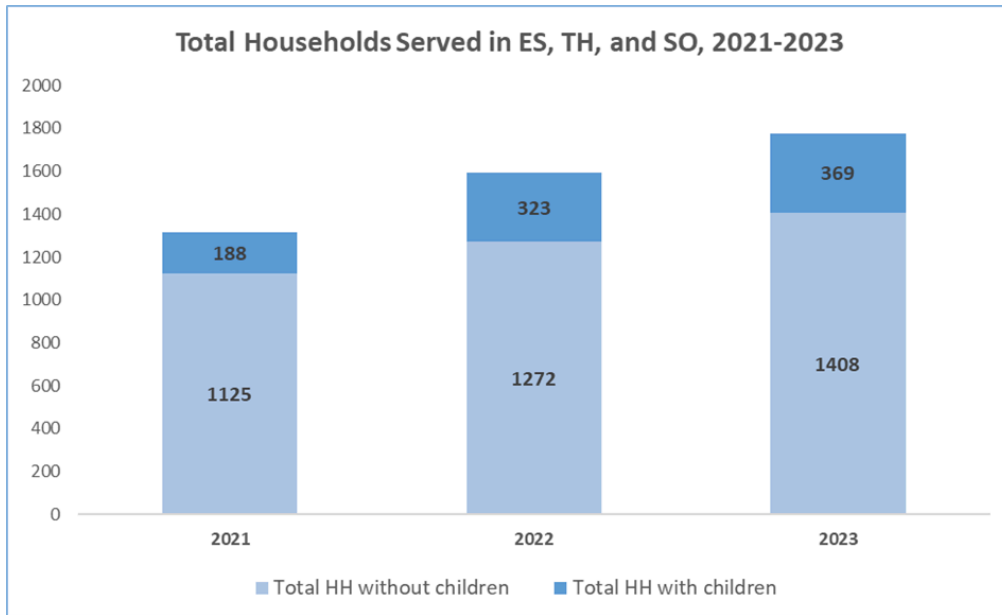


Fig 5- Homeless Management Information System

### Race and Ethnicity by Household Type (2021-2023)

Race and Ethnicity	Household with Children		Household without Children		Total
	Count of Individuals	%	Count of Individuals	%	
American Indian	23	2%	46	2%	69
Asian	10	1%	26	1%	36
Black	698	67%	895	41%	1,593
Hispanic	98	9%	174	8%	272
Middle Eastern	0	0%	0	0%	0
Native Hawaiian	6	1%	12	1%	18
White	330	32%	1,228	56%	1,558
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,047</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,189</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,236</b>

## Inflow

Inflow is defined as the process by which individuals and households enter the homeless crisis response system. The study utilized data from the HMIS spanning 2021 to 2023 to analyze variations in inflow. All entries into Emergency Shelter (ES), Transitional Housing (TH), and Street Outreach (SO) programs from January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023, were examined. To evaluate inflow, this report distinguished between total program entries and new household entries. To calculate total program entries, this report assessed the annual number of new program entries across ES, TH, and SO projects. The dataset encompassed all individuals served within these programs from January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023. To calculate new household entries, the data were filtered by program start date to include only those starting between 2021 and 2023. Duplicate entries were then removed, retaining the first program entry date system-wide. If individuals had multiple entries during this period, only their initial entry into any ES, TH, or SO program was considered. This process resulted in a reduced dataset representing the number of new program entries per year, offering insight into the annual influx of new individuals/households into the service system.

Results indicated a significant increase in the influx of new households into the YWH service system (measured by new households entering ES, TH, and SO programs) from 2021 to 2023. Overall, the total number of individuals newly entering ES, TH, and SO programs surged by 35% during this period, rising from 1,539 individuals in 2021 to 2,078 individuals in 2023. The analysis of inflow also revealed notable racial disparities among the population newly accessing the service system.

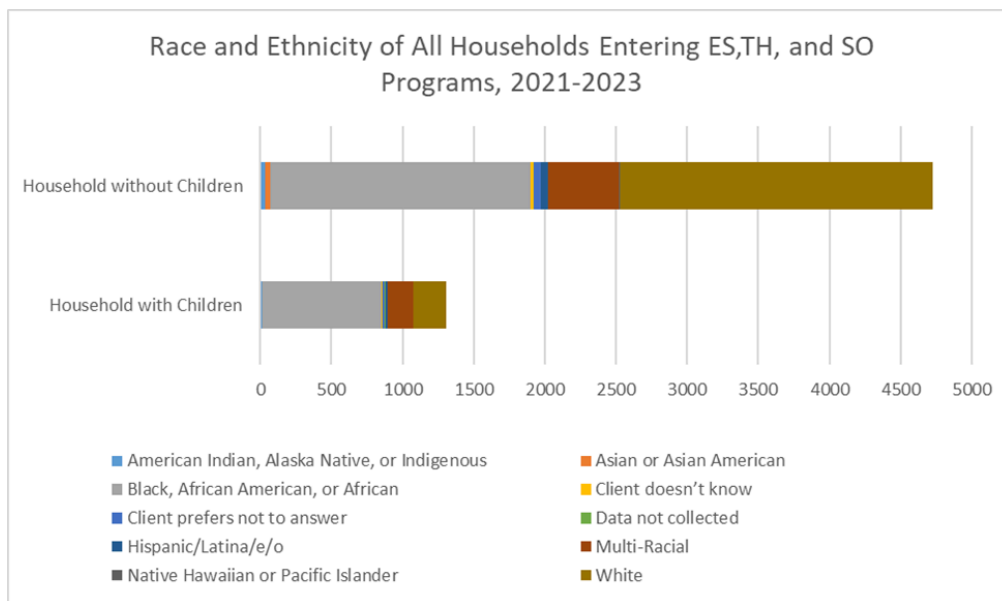


Fig. 6- Homeless Management Information System

### New Household Entries (People newly entering the service system)

This section looks specifically at the households who have entered ES, TH, or SO programs from 1/1/2021 to 12/31/2023 who have not had a prior program entry within this period. In other words, this analysis only looks at the first program entry for each household within the reporting period. This indicates how many households are newly entering the service system (entering for the first time) within the report period, and how many new households we are seeing enter the homeless crisis response system year by year.

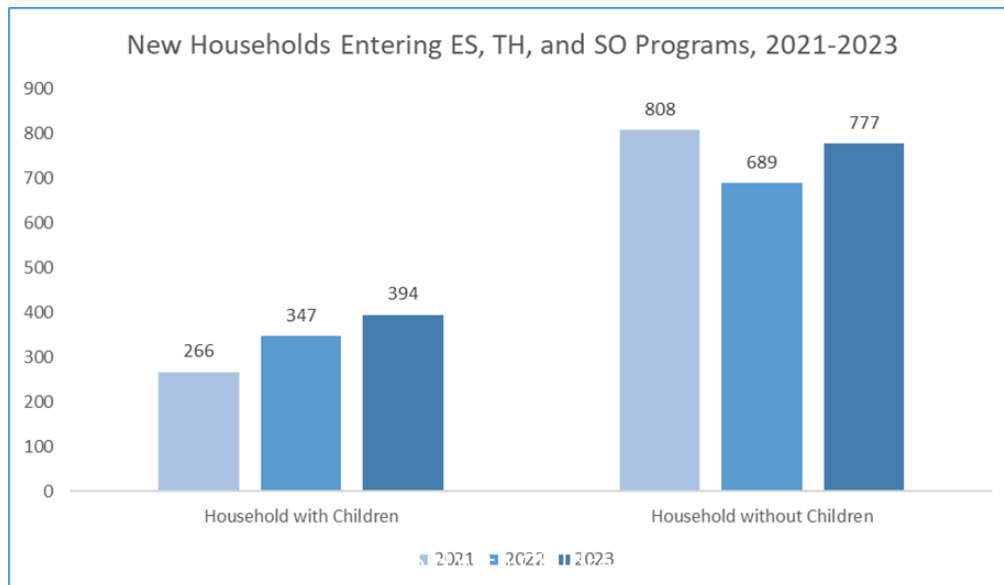


Fig. 7- Homeless Management Information System

#### Key points

- 9% overall increase in new households from 2021 to 2023
- 48% increase in new families (households with children) from 2021 to 2023
- 4% decrease in new adult only households from 2021 to 2023
- 55% increase in new households entering ES
- 51% increase in new households without children entering ES
- 67% increase in new families with children entering ES
- Inflow is increasing with new households entering the service system (without prior program entries), which indicates that increases in people served are being driven by new households losing their housing and experiencing homelessness for the first time.
- The largest increase in newly entering households are families, which indicates that families with children are increasingly losing their housing

## Enrollments Per Year – By Race

Households with Children								
Race & Ethnicity	2021 Count	2021%	2022 Count	2022%	2023 Count	2023%	Total Count	Total %
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigen	1	1%	2	1%	1	0%	4	1%
Asian or Asian American	0	0%	2	1%	1	0%	3	0%
Black, African American, or African	94	66%	132	63%	173	59%	399	62%
Client doesn't know	1	1%	5	2%	6	2%	12	2%
Client prefers not to answer	3	2%	7	3%	3	1%	13	2%
Data not collected	0	0%	1	0%	2	1%	3	0%
Multi-Racial	9	6%	15	7%	19	6%	43	7%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0%	1	0%	1	0%	2	0%
White	33	23%	45	21%	59	20%	137	21%
Data missing	1	1%	1	0%	29	10%	31	5%
<b>Total (Households with Children)</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>100%</b>
Single Adults								
Race & Ethnicity	2021		2022		2023		Total	
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigen	6	1%	9	1%	3	0%	18	1%
Asian or Asian American	6	1%	6	1%	3	0%	15	1%
Black, African American, or African	371	42%	318	42%	303	37%	992	40%
Client doesn't know	5	1%	7	1%	13	2%	25	1%
Client prefers not to answer	22	2%	17	2%	11	1%	50	2%
Data not collected	3	0%	1	0%	4	0%	8	0%
Multi-Racial	38	4%	31	4%	42	5%	111	5%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1	0%	1	0%	1	0%	3	0%
White	432	49%	369	49%	333	41%	1134	46%
Data missing		0%	1	0%	99	12%	100	4%
<b>Total (Single Adults)</b>	<b>884</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2456</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Grand Total (All Households)</b>	<b>1026</b>		<b>971</b>		<b>1106</b>		<b>3103</b>	

Fig 8 - Homeless Management Information System

### Key points

- Greater percentage increase of new Black individuals entering service system from 2021-2023
- Breakdown by household type reveals largest percentage increase of new households was Black families
- 84% increase in Black families; 79% increase in White families
- 15% decrease in new Black individuals; 21% decrease in new White individuals
- Overall increase of 9% in new households entering system from 2021 to 2023
  - Families with children: 107% increase
  - Single Adults: 6% decrease
- We are seeing less new individuals entering the service system from 2021 to 2023
- We are seeing more new families entering the service system from 2021 to 2023

## Average Length of Time in the Service System

This study analyzed the average lengths of time service users spent in ES, TH, and SO programs to see if there were any disparities along racial and ethnic lines. The length of time is defined as the time (measured in days) that a household was enrolled in a program from entry to exit.

To analyze length of time (LOT), HMIS data was filtered for all ES, TH, and SO program exits between 1/1/2021 and 12/31/2023. The LOT was then calculated for each program enrollment by calculating the number of days between program entry to program exit. These LOTs were then averaged.

The findings revealed several key points:

- For households exiting ES, TH, or SO programs between 2021 and 2023, the average length of time from entry to exit was 62 days.
  - Households with children typically spent 51 days in these programs.
  - Households without children had an average stay of 65 days.
- The average length of time in programs decreased overall for households from 2021 to 2023, declining from 70 days in 2021 to 56 days in 2023, with a temporary increase to 75 days in 2022.
- Both households with children and single adults experienced an increase in LOT from 2021 to 2022 (20 days for families and 15 days for single adults), followed by a decrease in 2023 to levels similar to those in 2021.
- In ES programs:
  - The average LOT for all exiting households was 43 days.
    - Households with children spent an average of 56 days.
    - Households without children had a shorter average stay of 40 days.
  - Asian and Asian American households had the longest overall average LOT in ES, staying for an average of 54 days.
  - White families had longer average stays (56 days) compared to Black families (55 days).
- For households transitioning from ES to permanent housing (PH):
  - The overall average LOT from ES entry to housing exit was 116 days.
  - There was a decrease in average LOT from 2021 (120 days) to 2023 (108 days).
  - Black households spent an average of 106 days in this transition.
  - Multi-racial households had an average stay of 116 days.
  - White households had the longest average duration, staying for 131 days on average.

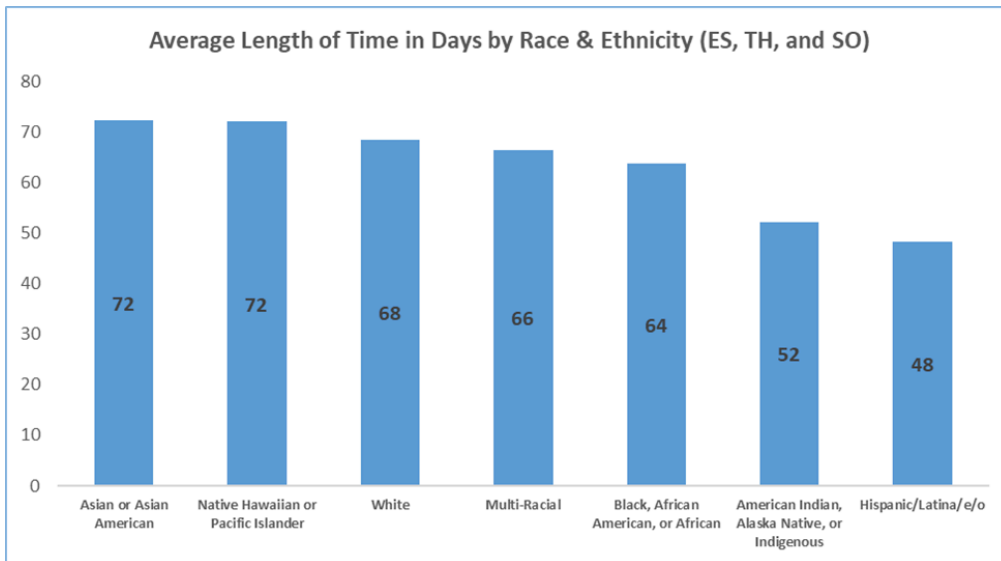


Fig. 9 - Homeless Management Information System

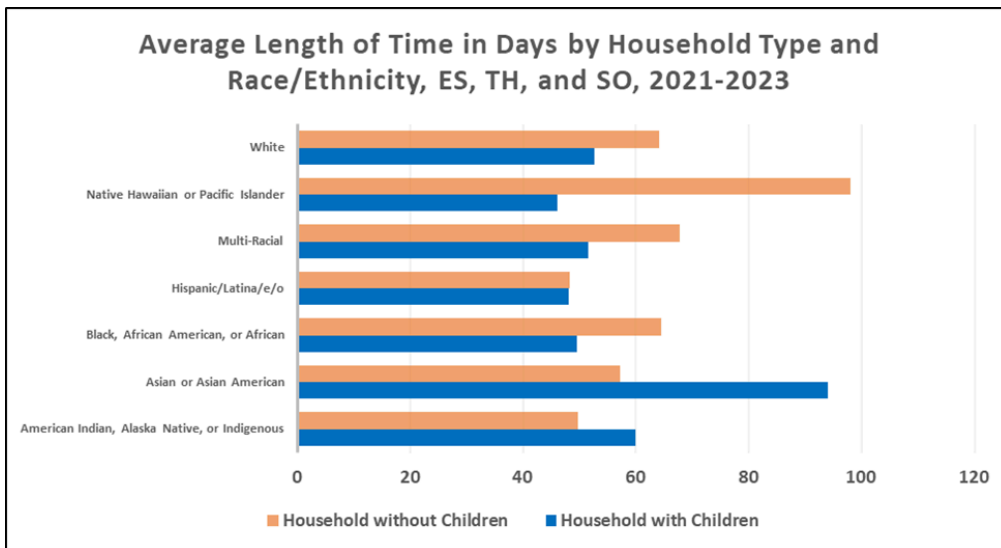


Fig. 10 - Homeless Management Information System

## Outflow

Outflow is defined as the movement of households out of the homeless crisis response system to various exit destinations.

### Exits from ES, TH, and SO

- Over the period 2021-2023, of those households who exited, 12% of households (726) exited to Permanent Housing Destinations and 7% (412) exited to temporary housing destinations
  - 14% (380) of Black households exited to permanent housing
  - 10% (227) of White households exited to permanent housing
  - 15% (100) of Multi-Racial households exited to permanent housing
  - 7% (193) of Black households and 7% (152) of white households exited to temporary housing

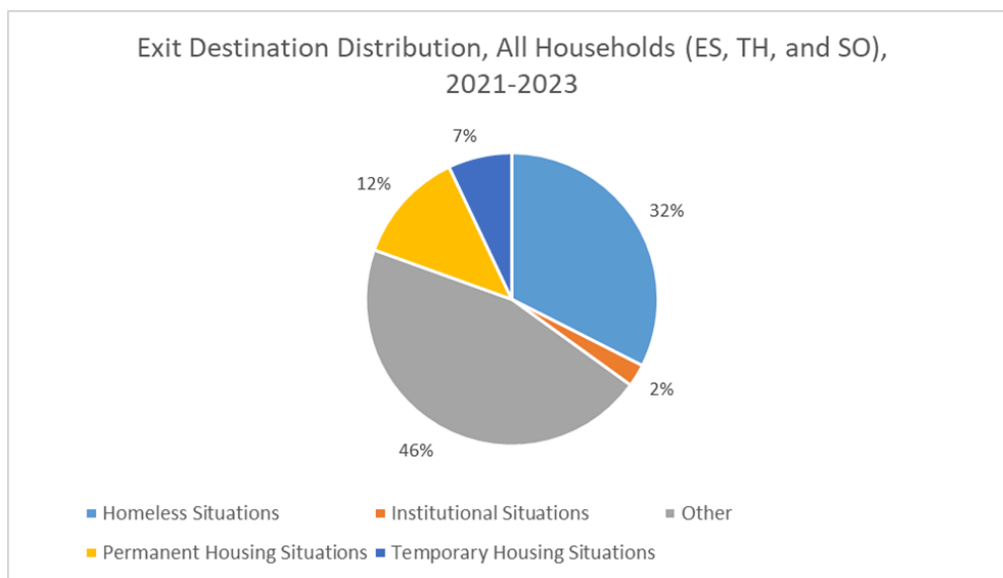


Fig 11 - Homeless Management Information System

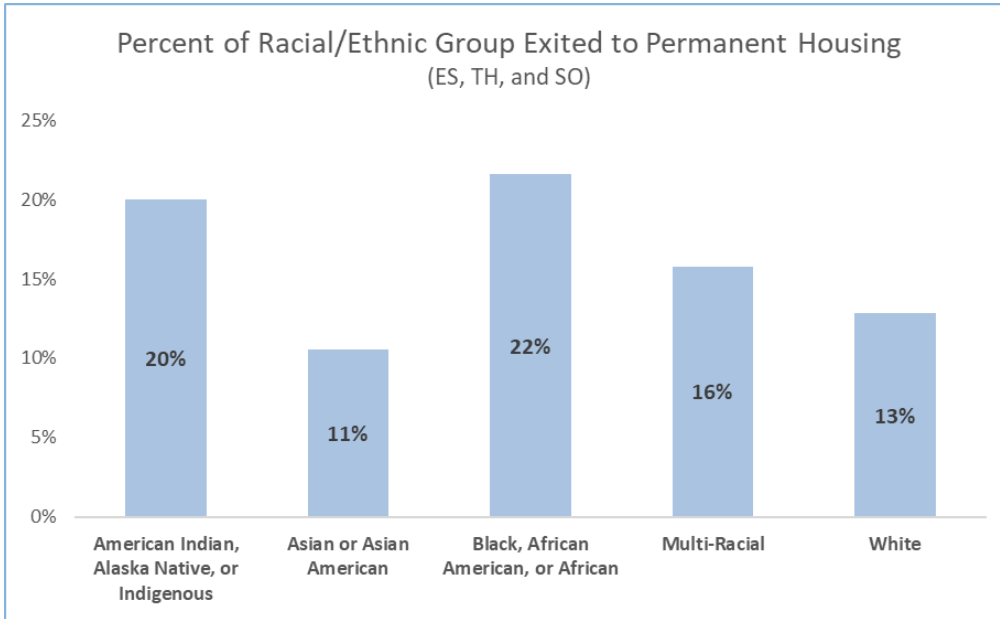


Fig 11 - Homeless Management Information System

### Exits from ES

- 17% of households enrolled in ES exited to Permanent Housing, and 7% of households who left ES exited to temporary housing
  - 22% (203) of Black households exited to Perm Housing; 9% (80) exited to temporary housing
  - 16% (36) of Multi-Racial households exited to Perm housing and 7% (17) exited to temp housing
  - 13% (116) of white households exited to Perm housing and 6% (56) of white households exited to temp housing

### Summary

Over the period 2021-2023, Black and Multi-Racial households had higher rates of exiting to permanent housing from Emergency Shelter compared to White households, though the overall outflow to permanent and temporary housing destinations remained limited. Despite the higher rates of exits to permanent housing among Black (22%) and Multi-Racial (16%) households from Emergency Shelter, White households had a notably lower exit rate of 13%. Additionally, the rates of exit to temporary housing were relatively consistent across racial groups, with Black households at 9%, Multi-Racial households at 7%, and White households at 6%.

### Race and Ethnicity Exit Destination Breakdown - All Program Enrollments (ES, TH, SO)

Race and Ethnicity	Homeless Situations	Institutional Situations	Other	Permanent Housing Situations	Temporary Situations	Grand Total
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	14		16	6	2	38
Asian or Asian American	11	2	20	3	5	41
Black, African American, or African	881	56	1,086	380	193	2,596
Client doesn't know	5		23	2	1	31
Client prefers not to answer	14	1	37	5	7	64
Data not collected	2		7		1	10
Hispanic/Latina/e/o	11		24	3	7	45
Multi-Racial	212	11	294	100	44	661
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander			4			4
White	742	75	1,144	227	152	2,340
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,892</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>2,655</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>5,830</b>

### Race and Ethnicity Exit Destination Breakdown - ES Enrollments ONLY

Race and Ethnicity	Homeless Situations	Institutional Situations	Other	Permanent Housing Situations	Temporary Situations	Grand Total
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	11		1	3		15
Asian or Asian American	6	2	7	2	2	19
Black, African American, or African	509	23	125	203	80	940
Client doesn't know	4		2			6
Client prefers not to answer	10		2		3	15
Data not collected	2				1	3
Hispanic/Latina/e/o	9		4		1	14
Multi-Racial	138		37	36	17	228
White	503	27	201	116	56	903
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,192</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>2,143</b>

Fig. 13 - Homeless Management Information System

## Coordinated Entry (CE)

Coordinated Entry Assessment data was analyzed to determine whether there were racial disparities in assessment scores. The Your Way Home Coordinated Entry (CE) Process currently uses the VI-SPDAT as its standardized assessment. The CoC is in the process of designing a new CE Assessment Tool as the VI-SPDAT has been shown to have racial and gender biases in national studies (Wilkey, Catriona, et al, “Coordinated Entry Systems: Racial Equity Analysis of Assessment Data,” 2019, C4 Innovations, accessed at: [https://c4innovates.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CES\\_Racial\\_Equity-Analysis\\_Oct112019.pdf](https://c4innovates.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CES_Racial_Equity-Analysis_Oct112019.pdf).)

This report utilized HMIS data to analyze whether similar racial disparities were found in VI-SPDAT scores locally. The CE data was restricted to Calendar Year 2023.

The following graph shows the racial and age cohort distribution of all service users who were assessed through the CE process in 2023.

### Age and Race Distribution of Individuals Served in CE in 2023

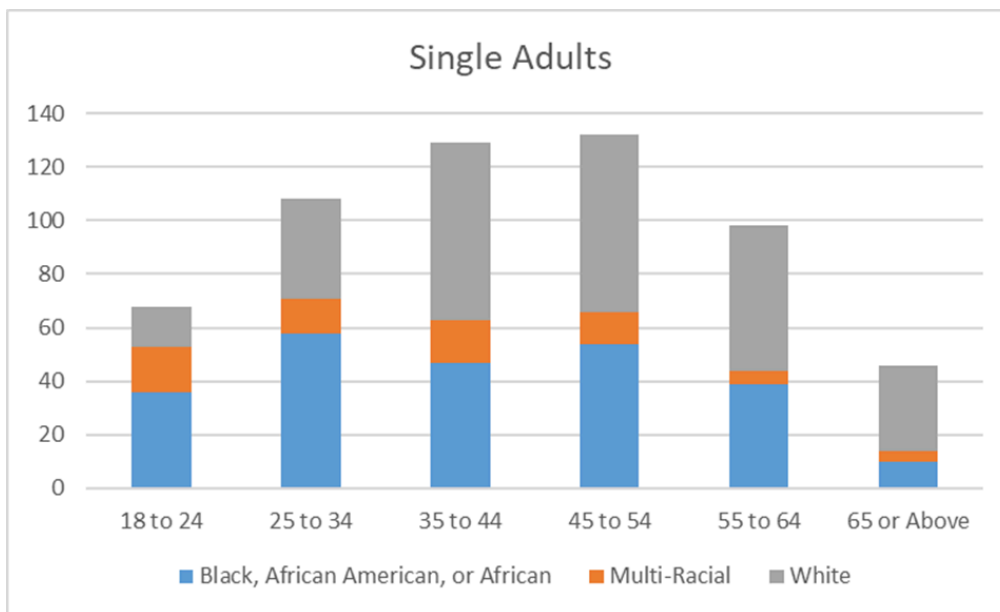


Fig. 14 - Homeless Management Information System

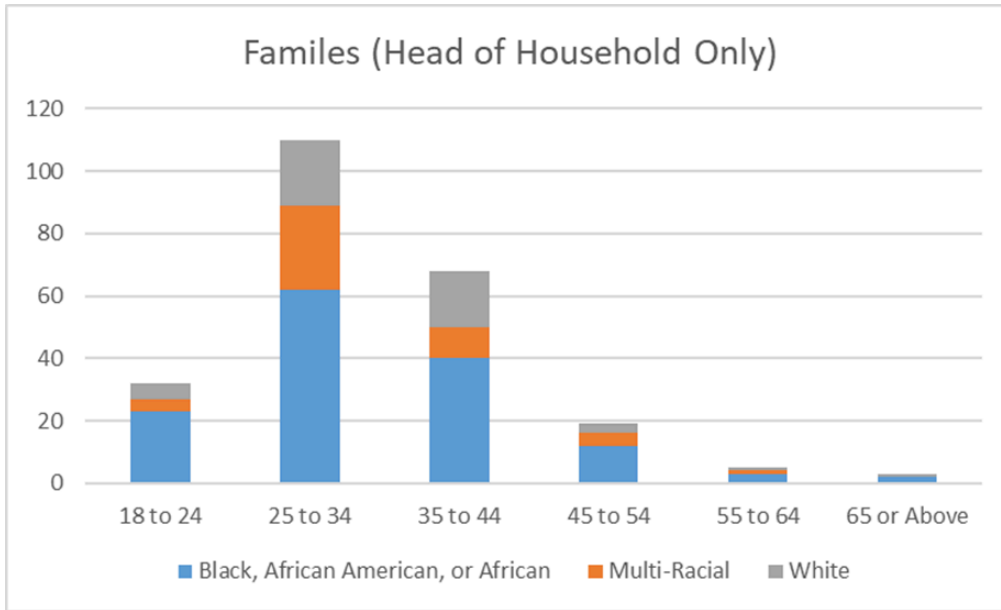


Fig 15 - Homeless Management Information System

The results of the analysis show some slight differences in the VI-SPDAT average scores along racial and ethnic lines. The following tables show the average scores by race and ethnicity for both the Single Adult VI-SPDAT and the Family VI-SPDAT.

### VI-SPDAT Family V3.0

CY 2023

Race and Ethnicity	Count	Average of VI-F-SPDAT Score
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	5	10.8
Asian or Asian American	1	6.0
Black, African American, or African	287	9.0
Client doesn't know	3	8.3
Client prefers not to answer	7	10.4
Data not collected	1	7.0
Hispanic/Latina/e/o	5	7.4
Multi-Racial	68	8.7
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2	11.5
White	84	9.1
No data	18	8.9
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>9.0</b>

## VI-SPDAT Single Adult

CY 2023

Race and Ethnicity	Count	Average of VI-SPDAT Score
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	1	12.0
Asian or Asian American	8	8.0
Black, African American, or African	277	6.9
Client doesn't know	8	8.0
Client prefers not to answer	11	7.0
Hispanic/Latina/e/o	10	7.3
Multi-Racial	68	7.1
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2	7.0
White	343	7.4
No data	27	7.5
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>7.2</b>

There is a greater difference in the scores of Black single adults relative to white single adults than there is among families with children. The average score for African Americans on the single adult VI-SPDAT is 6.9 (a half a point lower than the white single adults).

## Policies and Procedures Review and Recommendations

Quantitatively, Your Way Home consumers regardless of their race or gender receive and utilize Your Way Home services with the same success rate. Qualitatively, as found in listening sessions and in conversation with those with the lived experience of homelessness, the perception of these services and their efficacy is more negative for Black individuals seeking care from Your Way Home and throughout Montgomery County at large.

With the understanding of the differences in perception of services across those with diverse backgrounds, Your Way Home's Policy and Procedures Manual was reviewed and several improvements were identified as suggestions to improve service delivery for all Your Way Home providers and ensure all vulnerable individuals are able to access the necessary supports and identify permanent housing. These policy suggestions are meant to combat the differences in perception of services as received by BIPOC individuals experiencing homelessness.

**Suggestion:** Require all CoC Partner Agencies to Create and Maintain Internal Grievance Procedures and Solicit Annual Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

It is vital that each partner agency continues the work of analyzing their programming from a racial equity lens independent of the responses solicited from the CoC as a whole. The CoC Policies and Procedures Manual should be updated to include an expectation that each partner agency develops an annual client feedback surveys and maintains their own grievance procedures in order identify the perceived inequities of service delivery.

**Suggestion:** Updated Mandatory Training Expectations

All Your Way Home providers are required to complete ten hours of training per calendar year. The Your Way Home Policies and Procedures Manual currently states:

“All Your Way Home Montgomery County CoC providers including Coordinated Entry, Emergency Shelter, Rapid Rehousing, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Homelessness Prevention will be expected to show evidence of completion of the following trainings:

- Trauma Informed Care
- Harm Reduction
- Assertive Engagement
- Housing First Philosophy
- Motivational Interviewing
- Domestic Violence and Safety Planning
- An introduction to Rapid Rehousing
- Fair Housing
- Child Risk and Safety Assessment
- Personal Safety in the Field
- Mandated Reporter Training
- Addiction and Suicide Prevention
- De-Escalation and Problem Solving
- Diversion
- Racial Equity
- Compulsive Hoarding

Additionally, some programs require specific trainings to be completed by new staff within 30 days of hire in order to ensure a comprehensive understanding of programmatic expectations.”

To acknowledge and combat the differences in the perception of services by BIPOC individuals, it is highly encouraged to add a required annual cultural sensitivity training to the current list approved by the Continuum of Care. This training should be coordinated and provided by the CoC from an accredited trainer on an annual basis.

Additionally, policy should be updated to ensure all Your Way Home partner staff completes annual Fair Housing training from a certified fair housing provider, such as the Housing Equality Center of Pennsylvania.

Understanding cultural differences that the ways they impact program delivery is a vital understanding for all Your Way Home partners. The inclusion of cultural sensitivity and ongoing fair housing training will allow providers to differentiate between equity and equality, furthering the understanding that colorblind programming is not the goal.

**Suggestion:** Reassess All Public Facing CoC Documents and Policies to Abide By Plain Language Recommendations from HUD

In order to best facilitate this process, the CoC should reference “Bridging the Gap: Plain Language in Homelessness Response Systems” published by HUD.

When we speak of people experiencing homelessness, we are speaking about a very large and diverse population of individuals that each have a unique set of experiences before, during, and after experiencing homelessness. Plain language in homelessness response systems levels the playing field for everyone to be involved in changing the system. Plain language helps individuals understand how decisions are made and communicates that they are valued in decisions that impact people surviving homelessness. Understanding policies, procedures and prioritizations will also alleviate perceived racial disparities amongst those experiencing homelessness.

The Plain Writing Act of 2010 requires that federal agencies use clear and simple language that the public can understand, and it is suggested that all CoCs update their documents to abide by this act.

**Suggestion:** Full Implementation of a New Coordinated Entry Assessment

In 2021 Just Strategies published “Re-Imagining Coordinated Entry in Montgomery County PA from a Racial Equity Perspective.” This report outlines 7 suggestions made to ensure a more equitable approach to Coordinated Entry at Your Way Home. The primary suggestion was to modify the assessment tool used in the county to ensure a more trauma-informed approach to intake.

Since this report, Continuum of Care staff along with the Continuum of Care governing board, the Lived Experience Advisory Group, and the HMIS Data Action Team have worked diligently to develop a replacement assessment. This assessment has not yet been approved or implemented with consumers. It is suggested that this approval and roll-out be prioritized by CoC staff.

In order to complete this process the assessment must be approved by leadership and the governing board, a robust training plan must be developed and delivered to Coordinated Entry staff, and practice assessments should be completed with volunteer participants to ensure there are no concerns with the assessment.

**Suggestion:** Ongoing Monitoring of Coordinated Entry Assessment and Procedures

Though there are monitoring policies established for all Your Way Home programming, it is encouraged that the Continuum of Care establishes monitoring policies for Coordinated Entry specifically. The ongoing review of this program, the assessment and its effectiveness, and the appropriateness of each included question is necessary to ensure there continues to be few inequities amongst those seeking assistance for housing crises.

Continued monitoring of this assessment will allow Continuum of Care staff a look into the reported barriers and perception of needs that vulnerable individuals in Montgomery County experience on a regular basis.

**Suggestion:** Continue to Actively Engage Strengthen Partnerships with Organizations Led by and Serving BIPOC Individuals. Increase Engagement with Current Partners to Solicit Feedback

Due to the identified inequities in inflow data, it is vital that CoC partners are in contact with agencies directly serving those most impacted by the affordable housing crisis and other system inequities. Direct outreach and connection to a diverse network of service providers will allow the CoC to ensure proactive service delivery for those populations overrepresented in Coordinated Entry intake.

# APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Everyday Discrimination Survey
- Appendix B: Supporting Data

# Appendix A: Everyday Discrimination Survey

## 2024 Your Way Home Equity Focus Group Survey

1) What is your race or ethnicity? (Circle all that apply)

- a. White
- b. Black, African American, or African
- c. Middle Eastern or North African
- d. American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous
- e. Asian or Asian American
- f. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- g. Hispanic/Latina/e/o
- h. Prefer not to answer
- i. Other:

2) What is your gender? (Circle all that apply)

- a. Woman
- b. Man
- c. Non-Binary
- d. Culturally Specific Identity (e.g., Two-Spirit)
- e. Questioning
- f. Transgender
- g. Prefer not to answer
- h. Other

3) What is your age?

- a. 18-24 years old
- b. 25-41 years old
- c. 42-57 years old
- d. 58-67 years old
- e. 68-76 years old
- f. 77-94 years old
- g. 95-100+ years old

4) Do you live with a disability?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Prefer not to answer

5) Are you a member of the LGBTQIA2S+ community?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Prefer not to answer

6) In your day-to-day life how often have any of the following things happened to you?

	Almost everyday	At least once a week	A few times a month	A few times a year	Less than once a year	Never
You are treated with less courtesy and respect than other people						
You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores.						
People act as if they think you are not smart.						
People act as if they are afraid of you.						
You are threatened or harassed.						

7) In the following questions, we are interested in your perceptions about the way other people have treated you. Can you tell me if any of the following has ever happened to you:

	Yes	No	How many times?
Have you ever been unfairly fired from a job or been unfairly denied a promotion?			
For unfair reasons, have you ever not been hired for a job?			
Have you ever been unfairly stopped, searched, questioned, physically threatened or abused by the police?			
Have you ever been unfairly discouraged by a teacher or advisor from continuing your education?			
Have you ever been unfairly prevented from moving into a neighborhood because the landlord or a realtor refused to sell or rent you a house or apartment?			
Have you ever been unfairly denied a bank loan?			

8) How did you respond to this/these experience(s)? Please tell me if you did each of the following things.

	Yes	No
Tried to do something about it		
Accepted it as a fact of life		
Worked harder to prove them wrong		
Thought you brought it on yourself		
Talked to someone about how you were feeling		
Expressed anger or got mad		
Prayed about the situation		

## Appendix A: Supporting Data

Data is drawn from the Homeless Management Information System

### Overall Demographics Table – Unique Individuals and Households Served in ES, TH, SO from 2021-2023

#### Yearly Breakdown – Individuals Served

Unique Individuals Served - 2021, 2022, 2023

Race and Ethnicity	Individual Count	% Individuals	Household Count	% Households
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	29	1%	19	1%
Asian or Asian American	30	1%	21	1%
Black, African American, or African	2687	47%	1542	43%
Client doesn't know	205	4%	32	1%
Client prefers not to answer	112	2%	56	2%
Data not collected	54	1%	10	0%
Hispanic/Latina/e/o	60	1%	44	1%
Multi-Racial	810	14%	420	12%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	4	0%	4	0%
White	1735	30%	1430	40%
(blank)	22	0%	1	0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5748</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3579</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### Yearly Trends – Individuals and Households

Individuals Served - ES, TH, SO

Race and Ethnicity	2021	2022	2023
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	10	16	13
Asian or Asian American	10	20	16
Black, African American, or African	867	1199	1333
Client doesn't know	19	74	142
Client prefers not to answer	35	53	44
Data not collected	12	19	26
Hispanic/Latina/e/o	12	22	34
Multi-Racial	268	336	418
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1	1	3
White	643	806	870
(blank)	15	10	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1892</b>	<b>2556</b>	<b>2902</b>

Households Served - ES, TH, SO

Race and Ethnicity	2021	2022	2023
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	5	13	9
Asian or Asian American	9	12	11
Black, African American, or African	558	691	772
Client doesn't know	7	11	21
Client prefers not to answer	23	24	19
Data not collected	5	3	3
Hispanic/Latina/e/o	10	16	25
Multi-Racial	151	184	212
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1	1	3
White	561	660	728
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1330</b>	<b>1615</b>	<b>1803</b>

## ES, TH, and SO

Total program entries by household, 2021-2023

Race and Ethnicity	Household with Children	Household without Children	Total household program entries
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	9	32	41
Asian or Asian American	6	35	41
Black, African American, or African	836	1,829	2,665
Client doesn't know	9	27	36
Client prefers not to answer	16	46	62
Data not collected	2	6	8
Hispanic/Latina/e/o	13	45	58
Multi-Racial	185	501	686
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2	4	6
White	232	2,205	2,437
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>12,310</b>	<b>4,730</b>	<b>6,040</b>

## New Household Entries

(People newly entering the service system)

Household Type	2021	2022	2023	Total
Household with Children	266	347	394	1,007
Household without Children	808	689	777	2,274
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,074</b>	<b>1,036</b>	<b>1,171</b>	<b>3,281</b>

## All Households with Exits from ES, TH, SO, 2021-2023

Race and Ethnicity	Household Count	Average Length of Time in Days
Client doesn't know	31	88
Client prefers not to answer	63	84
Asian or Asian American	41	72
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	4	72
White	2,343	68
Data not collected	9	68
Multi-Racial	662	66
Black, African American, or African	2,587	64
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	38	52
Hispanic/Latina/e/o	45	48
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5,823</b>	<b>66</b>

## Exits to Permanent Housing

Destination	HH Count	% of Total
Homeless Situations	1,893	32%
Institutional Situations	145	2%
Other	2,655	46%
Permanent Housing Situations	726	12%
Temporary Housing Situations	412	7%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5,831</b>	<b>100%</b>