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AGENDA BILL

Beaverton City Council
Beaverton, Oregon

SUBJECT: Emergency Shelter COVID-19 Response

FOR AGENDA OF: 07-14-20 **BILL NO:** _____

MAYOR'S APPROVAL: _____

DEPARTMENT OF ORIGIN: Mayor's Office DS CR

DATE SUBMITTED: 07-02-20

CLEARANCES: City Attorney DS WBk

Mayor's Office DS MC

PROCEEDING: PRESENTATION

EXHIBITS: 1. Emergency Shelter COVID-19 Response: Summary and Lessons Learned

BUDGET IMPACT

EXPENDITURE REQUIRED $0	AMOUNT BUDGETED $0	APPROPRIATION REQUIRED $0

RECOMMENDED ACTION:
City Council listens to a presentation on emergency shelter COVID-19 response by Community Action Organization (CAO).

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:
The Beaverton Severe Weather Shelter (BSWS) was opened in January 2017 to provide a warm, safe space for adults experiencing homelessness to stay during the winter. The shelter is operated by Just Compassion of East Washington County, as part of the Washington County Severe Weather Shelter Response Plan, from November-March every year. This year, the BSWS was open for a total of 29 days between its planned and extra inclement weather days. Just as the winter season was wrapping up in March, the shelter was extended as part of a coordinated plan to help flatten the curve of COVID-19 among vulnerable populations experiencing homelessness through May 31, 2020. The shelter extension was possible through coordination with CAO which funded operations and staffing for three shelters in Washington County during this time.

At a time when those with secure housing were following orders to shelter-in-place, folks experiencing homelessness lacked a place to do so and were struggling with decreased access to basic services and facilities. With the extension, the shelter shifted to being open 7 days a week, 20 hours per day, for a total of 63 additional nights. During this period, operations were modified to include social distancing, health screening, and additional cleaning and precautions due to COVID-19. The extended shelter served up to 25 enrolled adults (with priority given to higher risk populations) and offered breakfast, dinner, and lunches to go. This model of shelter provided more stability for guests, more opportunities for case management and addressing barriers to housing, and successfully prevented the spread of COVID-19 among a vulnerable population.

INFORMATION FOR CONSIDERATION:
CAO will present a report for the two months of COVID-19 extended shelter offered countywide and share success stories of guests that were part of the shelter network.

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Emergency Shelter COVID 19 Response: Summary and lessons learned

The Severe Weather Shelter network began providing emergency shelter to individuals during the winter months (November to March) in 2008. Led by Washington County Department of Housing Services, the network of primarily faith based organizations opened their doors and, staffed and managed entirely by volunteers, provided a warm, dry, safe place to sleep, meals, and supports to individuals who would otherwise be unsheltered in our communities. In 2008, the shelter system was activated only during periods of extreme weather which resulted in a total of 18 days of activation and 171 bed stays provided by 442 volunteer hours. Over the course of the last 12 years, the system has grown into a fully developed winter shelter system offering safe accommodations to nearly 800 individuals at 8 sites during the winter months.

In January 2020, the membership of the Housing and Supportive Services Network completed our Continuum of Care's Point in Time Count, the annual census of shelter and unsheltered homeless individuals and families in our community. This year's count identified a total of 618 individuals in 491 households, of whom 307 individuals in 270 households were unsheltered at the time of the count. The unsheltered individuals consisted of 23 children under the age of 18, 13 young adults between the ages of 18 and 24, and 271 adults over the age of 24 including 44 older adults over the age of 55. 102 individuals were identified as chronically homeless. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development defines Chronically Homeless in 24 CFR Parts 91 and 578:

A "chronically homeless" individual is defined to mean a homeless individual with a disability who lives either in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter, or in an institutional care facility if the individual has been living in the facility for fewer than 90 days and had been living in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter immediately before entering the institutional care facility. In order to meet the "chronically homeless" definition, the individual also must have been living as described above continuously for at least 12 months, or on at least four separate occasions in the last 3 years, where the combined occasions total a length of time of at least 12 months.

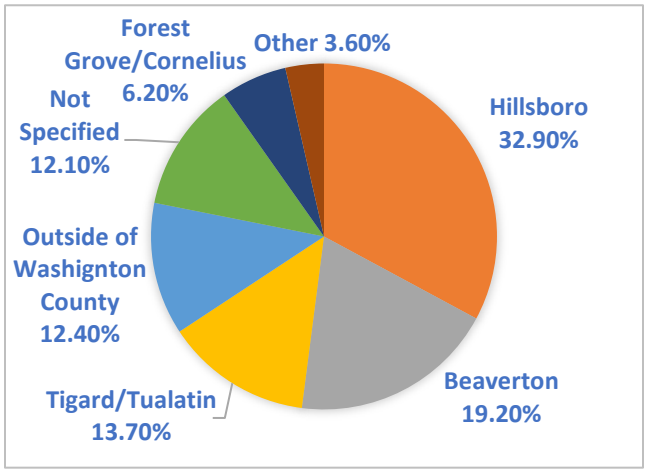

Figure 1. Geographic distribution of unsheltered population – 2020 PIT

The Point in Time Count also assess the geographic distribution of unsheltered homeless individuals within Washington County both by where individuals were contacted during the count and where they report being their primary location. Figure 1 identifies the distribution of the unsheltered population by primary location during the Point in Time count period.

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The 2019-2020 Severe Weather Shelter season began on November 1, 2019 with 8 Faith Based shelter provider partners funded by Community Action through a contract with Oregon Housing and Community Services. Still primarily volunteer driven, the programs operated independently under the collaborative model established by the Department of Housing Services. Seven of the 8 providers were open 1 to 2 nights per week at locations throughout the county and beds were offered on a first come, first served basis with people seeking shelter gathering at the entrance to each shelter awaiting entry. On nights when there were more individuals seeking shelter than the number of available beds, people were turned away at the door. One shelter program, at Sonrise Church, operated for 90 consecutive days with beds offered on an enrollment basis offering any empty beds remaining each night on a first come, first served basis.

Due to the growing threat of infection from COVID19, the State of Oregon issued guidance that communities should enact social distancing practices, and instituted a 'Stay Safe, Stay Home order". The threat of COVID19 and resulting building closures lead to the early closure of several of the Severe Weather shelter programs. On March 16th, most programs were shut down due to lack of access to buildings, lack of volunteers, and concern regarding the spread of COVID19 in their communities – particularly in spaces not large enough to allow for adequate distancing. The SOS program operated by Project Homeless Connect out of the Sonrise Baptist Church in Hillsboro had already closed their 90 day program on April 30th but was continuing to engage with unsheltered people through the operation of a day center out of the church building. The Beaverton Severe Weather Shelter also continued to operate one night per week out of building owned by the City of Beaverton.

The Beaverton Severe Weather Shelter, operated by Just Compassion and Sonrise Severe Weather Shelter, operated by Project Homeless Connect, were able to continue to operate in their buildings and retain paid staff. Due to the closure of the other programs in the network and the need to ensure access to shelter, food, basic human sanitation, and to prevent the spread of COVID in the homeless community, the shelter season was extended to May 31, 2020. On March 18, 2020 Oregon Housing and Community Services provided an additional $250,000 to Community Action to support the additional cost of extending the severe weather shelter season.

After consideration of the operating capacity of the existing network and the geographic distribution of unsheltered individuals in the January 2020 Point In Time Count, Just Compassion and Project Homeless Connect were asked to expand their services to provide emergency shelter 7 nights per week and to extend their operations to include daytime hours to reduce the risk of exposure and provide a more stable daily census in shelter. With the additional funding and the support of the Cities of Beaverton and Hillsboro, both programs agreed and began to adjust their programs, intake processes, and staffing levels to meet the need.

To mitigate the risk of COVID19 exposure and infection in the congregate settings, three significant adjustments to the program operations were identified as necessary for the safety of shelter residents and staff:

1. Real-time data available about shelter stays to facilitate contact tracing should an individual test positive for COVID19.
2. Divert symptomatic or medically vulnerable individuals from congregate settings.
3. Enhanced intake and screening procedures at shelter entry to identify and divert newly symptomatic individuals.

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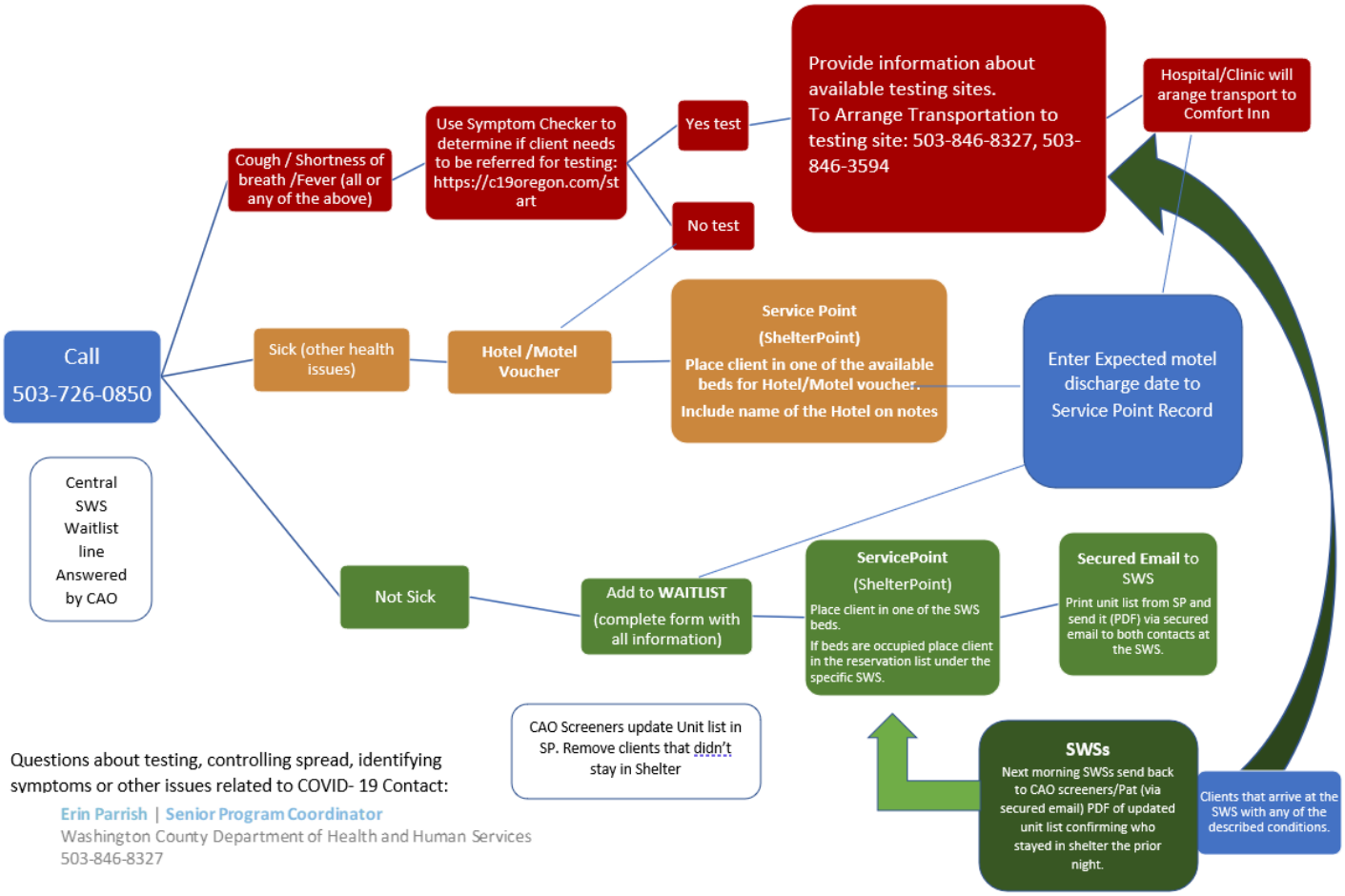
Through a phone-based screening and entry process, individuals seeking shelter who reported symptoms of COVID19 were diverted to testing sites and respite shelter at the Comfort Inn in Hillsboro operated by Washington County. Those who reported an underlying medical condition that would place them at additional risk for complications or death from exposure to COVID in a congregate setting were diverted to local motels across the county. Individuals were screened at shelter entry for newly developed symptoms after initial screening. The process used to determine placement is outlined in the flowchart below.



Shortly after reopening, Sonrise Church was no longer able to host the shelter and Project Homeless Connect worked with the City of Hillsboro and Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation District to quickly operationalize two new sites – the Salvation Army site in Hillsboro, and the Elsie Stuhr Center in Beaverton.

From March 18 to June 1, the collaboration provided 4,795 bed stays to 291 individuals. With initial screening and diversion procedures in place, the response successfully mitigated the spread of COVID19 in the homeless population. Between March 25, 2020 and June 1, 2020, all partners participated in brief, virtual meetings 3 times per week to address emerging concerns and share rapidly changing information, consult with Washington County Public Health, ensure effective processes, staff complex client situations, and facilitate strong communication and program support. As a result of the frequent communication, emerging needs in the sheltered population were identified and relationships were in place to problem solve and adjust processes or enhance services as needed. Ongoing consultation with Washington County

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Health and Human Services staff helped ensure that shelter programs had access to the information and materials needed to safely operate a congregate shelter setting in the midst of the pandemic. During the last two weeks of shelter operations Washington County Health and Human Services provided on site access to mental health and substance use assessments and supports on-site at each program. This partnership was remarkably supportive to the shelter guests and staff and resulted in improved engagement in services by several individuals.

The active participation of City staff in the collaboration meetings provided a direct line of communication between the cities and the programs.

The following is a summary of the impact of this expansion including lessons learned and recommendations for current and future consideration.

What Worked Well:

- Partnership & engagement from local jurisdictions - additional sites and expanded hours could not have been operationalized without the support of the cities and park district.
- Consolidated sites – reducing the number of sites made logistics and staffing easier & reduced potential spread of the virus. It also removed the burden of traveling across the county to access shelter day to day from people experiencing homelessness.
- Paid staffing ensured consistent and reliable coverage of additional shifts
- Expanded days and hours – operating 7 days/week and extending day-time hours allowed for more stability in shelter and enhanced the safety of the sheltered population by reducing potential exposures. Extended hours also provided more awake, non-meal time to engage with guests and supported access to services including engagement in Coordinate Entry processes (Community Connect), access to health, mental health, and substance use treatment programs, and provided shelter guests a place to be during daytime hours reducing complaints of loitering in surrounding neighborhoods.
- Reduced Shelter Census - Smaller number of individuals per site allowed for better engagement & relationship building, better oversight, and reduced the risk of virus spread.
- Coordinated enrollment facilitated access, reduced exposure, improved data quality and supported contract tracing.
- Providing mental health and addictions services on site – LifeWorks and 4D staff on-site facilitated access to services and resulted in improved engagement
- Ongoing coordination, regular communication, staffing individual client situations improved ability to be responsive and improve health, safety and efficiency
- Built for Zero – Having shelter services in place supported the efforts of the Built for Zero initiative by providing both a safe place to engage with individuals and additional contact points to help facilitate housing program enrollment processes.
- Mobile Shower Trailer – The expanded use of the one shower trailer operating in Washington County enabled shelter providers to ensure access to basic sanitation that we necessary for maintaining the health and safety of sites that did not have access to shower facilities. A schedule was developed to share access to showers for both sheltered and unsheltered people across the county.

Opportunities for improvement:

- Hotel placement for medically fragile individuals resulted in less support for those individuals due to lack of staffing. Individuals who are not able to care for themselves

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independently and are not well enough to manage in a congregate shelter setting need a safe place to be with adequate supports as permanent solutions are developed.

- The delay in connecting with Hawthorne and 4D staff was a missed opportunity to engage people early on. Having these agreements in place as well as dedicated liaison staff at opening will ensure no delay.
- There remains a significant need for access to day shelter services. For a variety of reasons, a percentage of the homeless population cannot safely engage in congregate shelter settings. However, there is still a need for access to showers, laundry, basic health assessments, and support services. Expanding access to Day Shelter services and Street Outreach wide would allow for regular contact with the unsheltered population for the purposes of ensure health and safety and engaging in housing plans.
- Training at startup and on-going for shelter staff and volunteers – with expanded days and hours resulting in more time spent in the congregate setting with others, having staff trained in maintaining a safe and healthy environment, recognizing mental health crisis, and de-escalating conflict is essential.
- Siting – identifying and gaining access to facilities in which to provide shelter was challenging. Siting issues resulted in delays in implementing programs. Opportunity for education and engagement
- Access to basic sanitation, including bathrooms and showers were a significant issue for the unsheltered population. Not having consistent access to these basic resources poses a significant health risk.
- Access to phones, charging stations and internet was essential for accessing services, including shelter, applying for benefits, and having reliable information about COVID in the community. Without reliable access to these modern essentials, unsheltered individuals are at a significant disadvantage during the Pandemic.

Recommendations:

Mitigate siting challenges in advance – Identify locations that could serve as emergency shelter for homeless individuals in a public health crisis, in periods of severe weather, and as a full-time year-round asset in your community. Consider what conversations need to happen to engage stakeholders, build political will, and secure potential sites.

Engage in preparations for the winter shelter season now. The Severe Weather Shelter system will need to function differently this coming season as we may not be able to rely on church buildings or volunteers and will likely need to reduce the number of sites, reduce movement across the county, and limit exposure by operating 7 nights in a smaller number of smaller sites. This will require investment of additional resources as well as engagement from local jurisdictions to identify and support shelter sites.

Support street outreach and harm reduction efforts. We cannot shelter or house all homeless people in our community. Therefore, for the duration of the COVID 19 threat and until additional resources are available to address the permanent housing and shelter needs of our community, increased access to basic sanitation services – specifically restrooms, showers and laundry – through a combination of expanded day shelter hours and the purchase of two additional shower trucks.

Increase Street Outreach to maintain contact with unsheltered populations, monitor for symptoms and make referrals for testing within unsheltered populations to prevent spread within camps and general populations.

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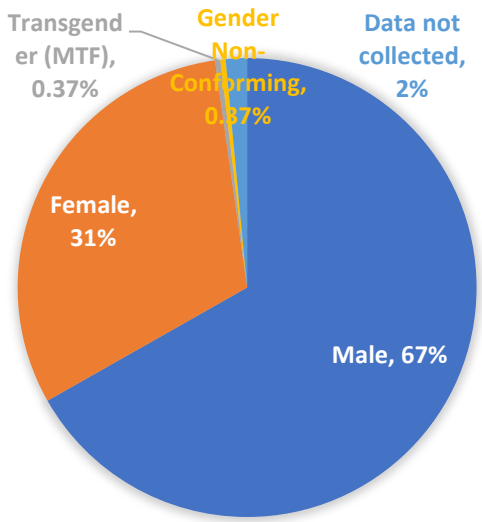
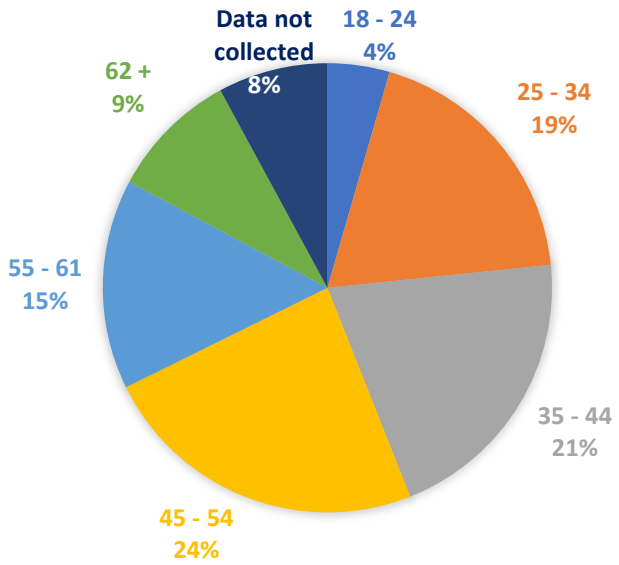
Combined Impact of All Efforts

Total Unduplicated Individuals	**291**	Total Unduplicated Households	**261**
Chronically Homeless Individuals	**60**	Individuals with disabling conditions	**124**
Youth 18-25	**12**	Veterans	**15**

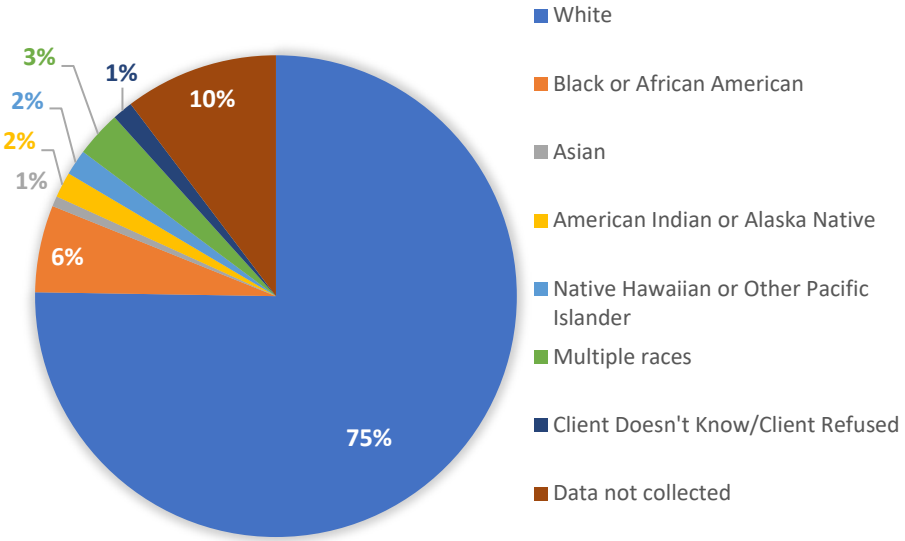
Participants by Gender:

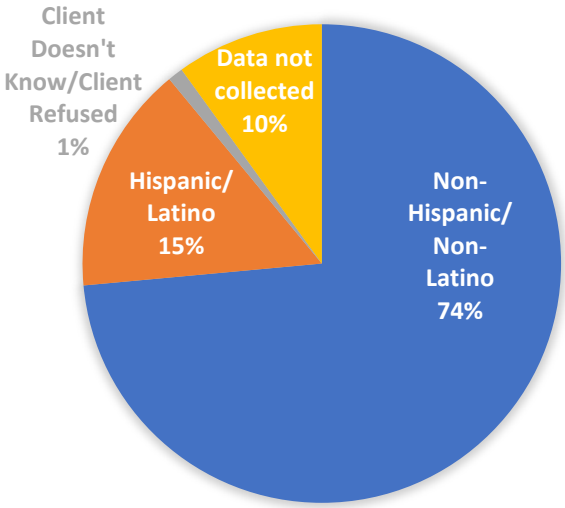


Participants by Age:



Participants by Race and Ethnicity:





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Sources of Income:

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	37
Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)	20
Earned Income	14
Other Source	11

Exit Destination:

Place not meant for habitation (e.g., a vehicle, an abandoned building, bus/train/subway station/airport or anywhere outside)	254
Rental by client, no ongoing subsidy	8
Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher	6
Substance abuse treatment facility or detox center	3
Staying or living with friends, temporary tenure (e.g., room apartment or house)	3
Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher	3
Staying or living with friends, permanent tenure	1
Staying or living with family, temporary tenure (e.g., room, apartment or house)	1
Staying or living with family, permanent tenure	1
Owned by client, no ongoing subsidy	1
Hospital or other residential non-psychiatric medical facility	1

Participant Stories

Tricia is 61 years old. She was evicted from her apartment for non-payment of rent in February and, having no place else to go, began living in her car. She was working with a career coach to improve her employment and income while she searched for a new place to live. In March, she lost her job at McDonalds due to COVID19. With no income, a recent eviction and landlord debt on her rental history, Tricia entered shelter unsure how she would be able to find a place to live and wondering how long she would be homeless. With assistance from shelter staff and a Housing Navigator, she completed the application for the Metro 300 housing assistance program through the Department of Housing Services, was approved for housing and signed a new lease on April 8. She is settled into her new home and preparing to return to work.

Monique is 64 years old, has been homeless in Washington County since January of 2019. Due to her physical needs and fragile health, she was diverted from the congregate shelters and placed in a motel. She has significant health issues and dietary restrictions that required additional supports during her stay. It became clear that Monique was not able to manage activities of daily living and would not be able to live independently. Working collaboratively, staff at Community Action, Just Compassion, LifeWorks NW and Washington County advocated for her to be connected to the Medicaid resources needed to secure placement in an assisted living facility. With the stability of a safe place to stay, she was able to seek medical care and was admitted to the hospital. She will be moving permanently to an assisted living facility in Sherwood upon her discharge putting an end to years of struggling to maintain her health and safety on the street.

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Bradley is in his early 40's and reports experiencing homelessness for the first time. Being separated from his wife after many years of marriage, he found himself homeless with no resources. Despite having several health issues Bradley made use of all services available to him. After building trusting relationships with shelter staff he disclosed being a Veteran. Shelter staff begin seeking services for Veterans. Bradley moved to a 24-hour shelter for Veterans - Do Good Multnomah - with housing services attached.

Al is in his late 40's and has been homeless in Washington County for several years. He managed to keep a full-time job while staying at the Shelter. While in the shelter he worked closely with the staff regarding his use of alcohol. With support and encouragement from shelter staff, he attended zoom Alcoholics Anonymous meetings at least twice each week while in the shelter. On May 31st he had 30 days clean, maintained full time employment, and was actively seeking housing.

Sebastian is in his mid-twenties and has experienced homeless since the age of 15. Living from tents to doorways he reports working and attending school while homeless. The shelter was a safe place which provided him with services that allowed him to be successful with his employment During his stay, he was promoted to assistant manager. With the assistance of shelter staff he was able to move into his first apartment with a roommate.

Ally had been homeless for many years, she was willing and determined to find permanent housing and full time employment. With he support of shelter staff she was able search for employment and housing on-line, receive daily bus tickets and a lunch to start her day. Despite dealing with some unseen disabilities she obtained employment at Amazon and is currently in shelter in Portland.

"Scooter" is a 69-year-old man living outside in Washington County. Once a promising musician, Scooter sustained a traumatic brain injury in the early 1980's which changed the course of his life. With the help of his family, he was able to obtain Social Security Disability benefits. However, because of the effects of his disability, Scooter is unable to manage his own finances and needs the assistance of a payee; this has made him an easy target for predatory individuals interested in gaining access to his money. While in shelter, Scooter mentioned some confusion about not receiving any payments. Working collaboratively, members of the Project Homeless Connect staff, ASSIST staff, the Hillsboro Police Department and Luke-Dorf staff learned that Scooter's former significant other had taken control of his finances and was having his disability check deposited into a checking account that he could not access. As a result, the Hillsboro Police Department opened an investigation into this possible fraud. The ASSIST team worked with Scooter to connect with the Social Security Administration, return his benefits to him and start the process of obtaining a payee who will not fraudulently use his benefits. Project Homeless Connect and Luke-Dorf staff have worked together to connect Scooter with his brother in Arizona, and are working with him to get a phone and a replacement ID to achieve his goal of moving to Arizona to live with his brother.

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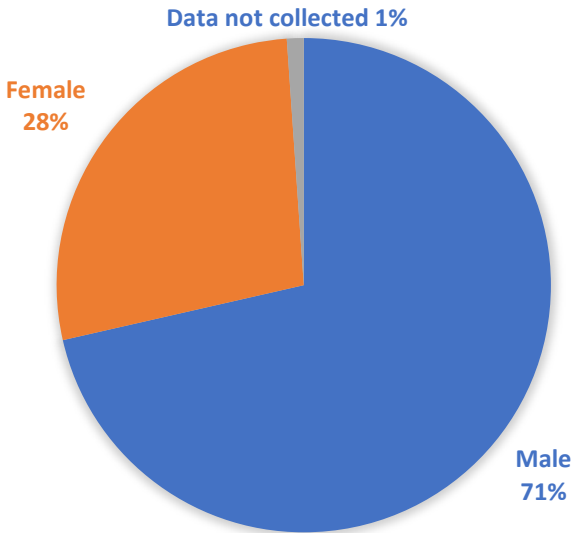
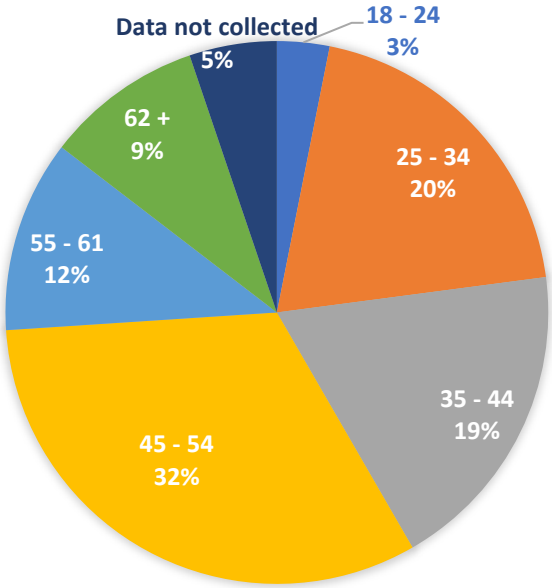
Appendix 1: Beaverton Severe Weather Shelter

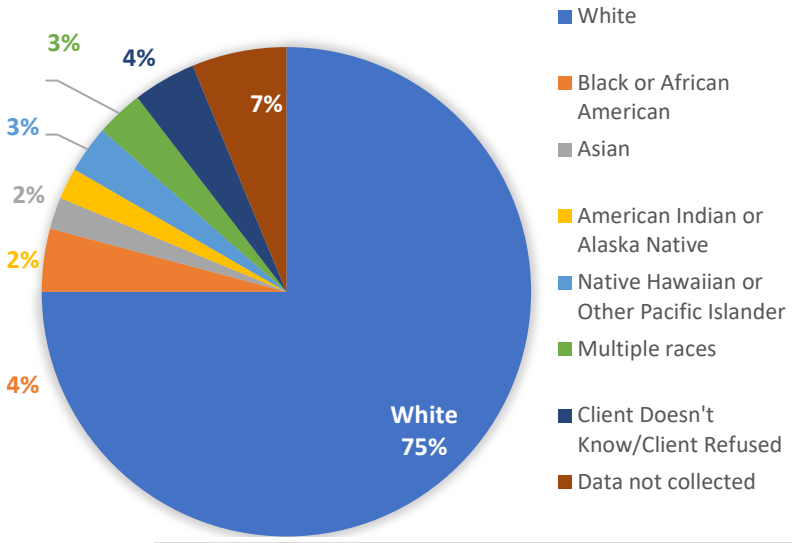
Total Unduplicated Individuals	**96**	Total Unduplicated Households	**93**
Chronically Homeless Individuals	**14**	Individuals with disabling conditions	**45**
Youth 18-25	**2**	Veterans	**5**

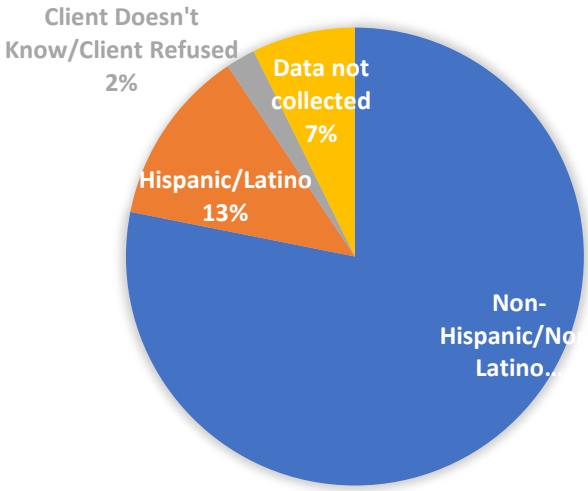
Participants By Gender





Participants by Race and Ethnicity





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Sources of income

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	8
Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)	4
Earned Income	3
Unemployment Insurance	1
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	1

Exit Destination

Place not meant for habitation (e.g., a vehicle, an abandoned building, bus/train/subway station/airport or anywhere outside)	93
Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher	3

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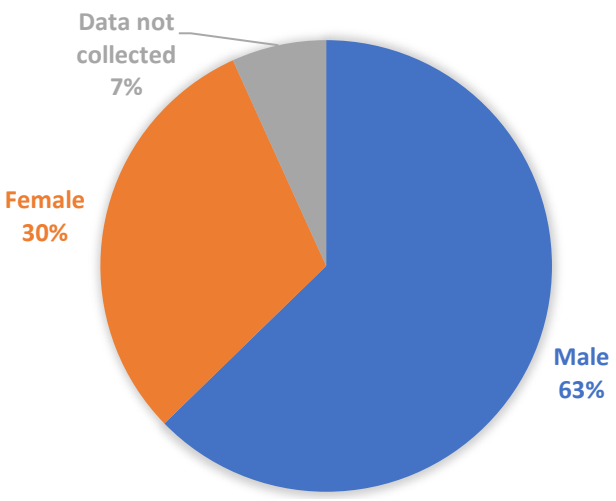
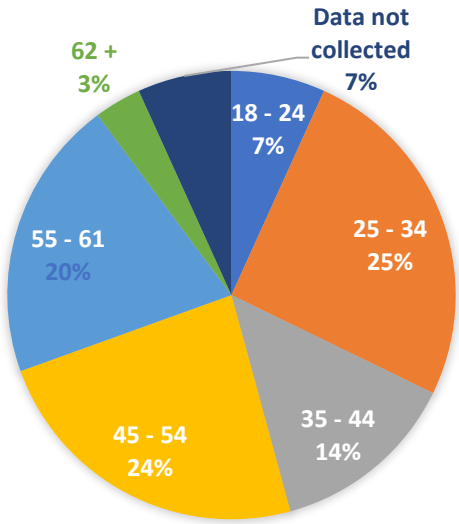
Appendix 2: Project Homeless Connect –Eslie Stuhr Center

Total Unduplicated Individuals	**59**	Total Unduplicated Households	**56**
Chronically Homeless Individuals	**15**	Individuals with disabling conditions	**25**
Youth 18-25	**3**	Veterans	**2**

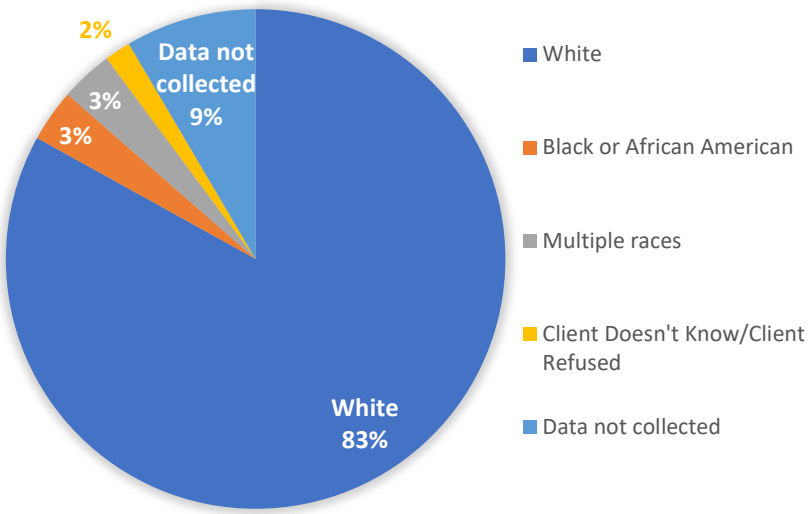
Participants by Gender

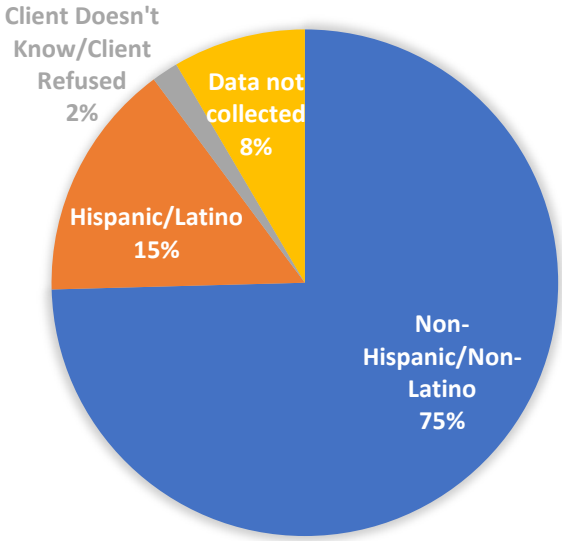


Participants by Age



Participants by Race & Ethnicity





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Sources of Income

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	6
Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)	2
Earned Income	1
Pension or retirement income from a former job	1

Exit Destination

Place not meant for habitation	33
Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher	7
Data not collected	5
Rental by client, no ongoing housing subsidy	4
Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher	3
Staying or living in a family member's room, apartment or house	3
Staying or living in a friend's room, apartment or house	2
Jail, prison, or juvenile detention facility	1
Client Doesn't Know/Client Refused	1

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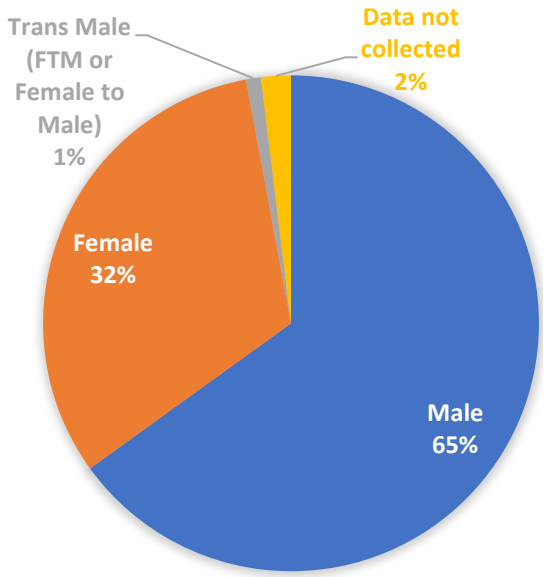
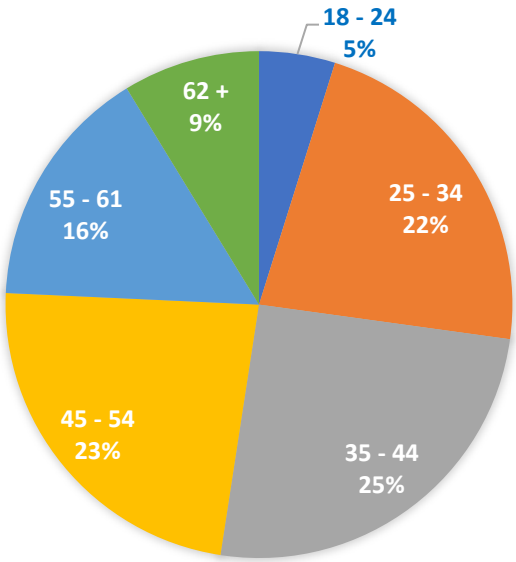
Appendix 3: Project Homeless Connect Salvation Army Center

Total Unduplicated Individuals	**103**	Total Unduplicated Households	**99**
Chronically Homeless Individuals	**20**	Individuals with disabling conditions	**51**
Youth 18-25	**5**	Veterans	**7**

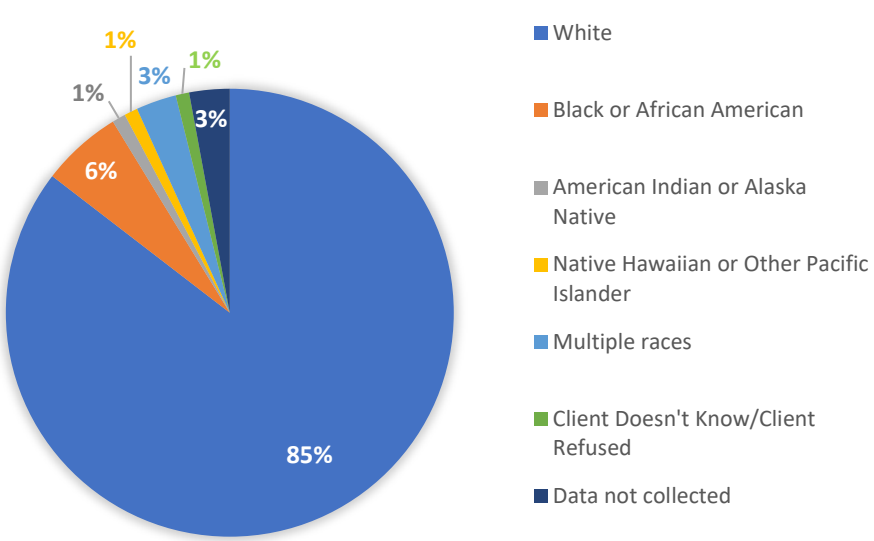
Participants by Gender

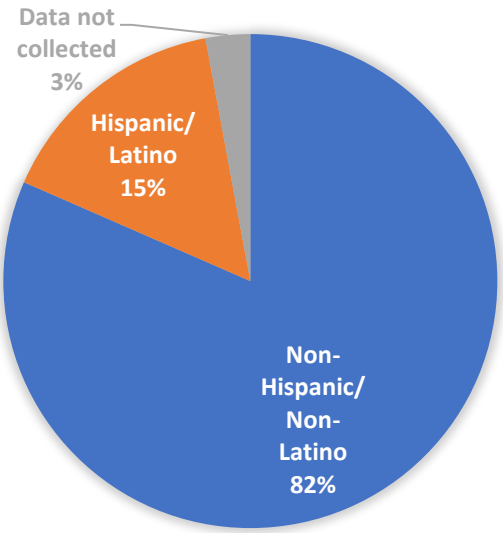


Participants by Age



Participants by Race & Ethnicity





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Sources of Income

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	16
Earned Income	10
Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)	9
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	2
General Assistance (GA)	1
Other Source	1

Exit Destination

Place not meant for habitation (e.g., a vehicle, an abandoned building, bus/train/subway station/airport or anywhere outside)	98
Rental by client, no ongoing subsidy	2
Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher	2
Hospital or other residential non-psychiatric medical facility	1

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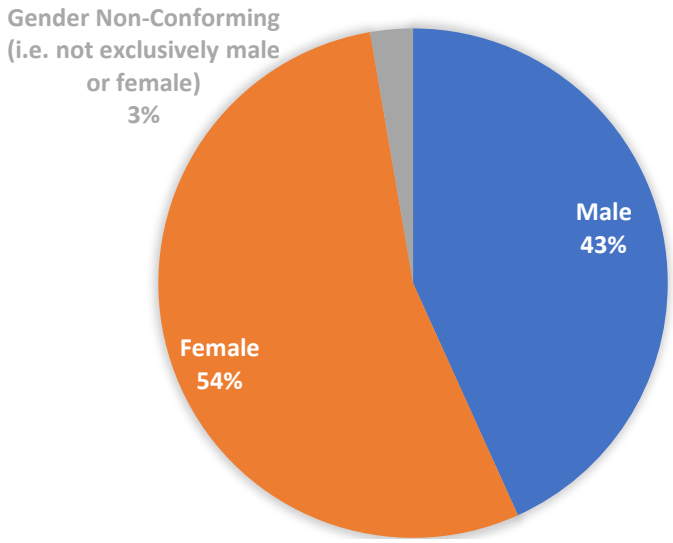
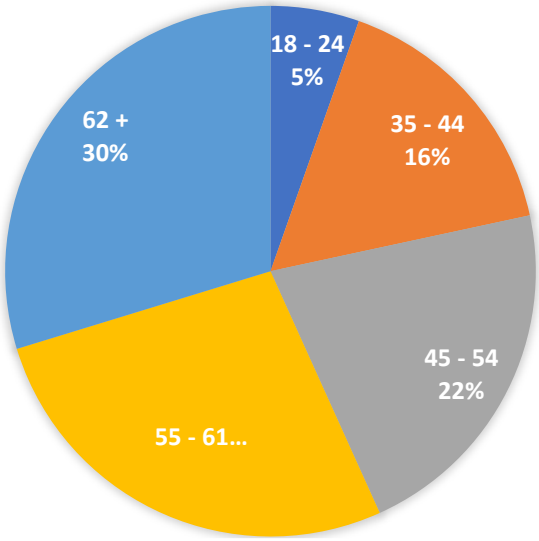
Appendix 4: Motel Vouchers – Scattered Site

Total Unduplicated Individuals	**37**	Total Unduplicated Households	**31**
Chronically Homeless Individuals	**15**	Individuals with disabling conditions	**28**
Youth 18-25	**2**	Veterans	**3**

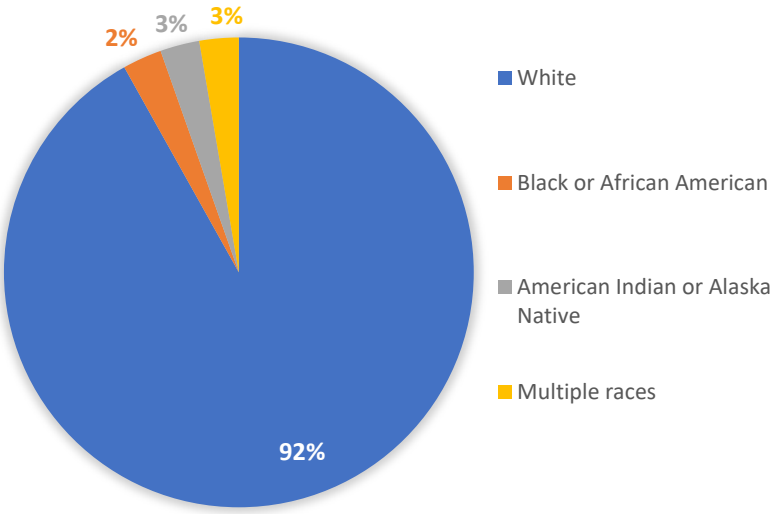
Participants by Gender

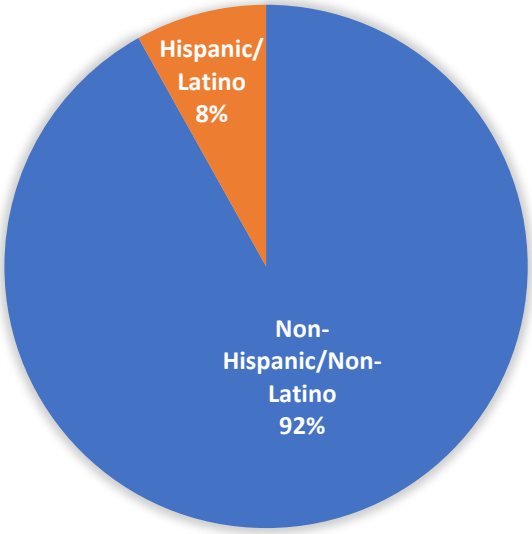


Participants by Age



Participants by Race & Ethnicity





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Sources of Income

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)	9
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	6
Earned Income	2
Private Disability Insurance	1
Pension or retirement income from a former job	1
Alimony and other spousal support	1
Other Source	1

Exit Destination

Place not meant for habitation (e.g., a vehicle, an abandoned building, bus/train/subway station/airport or anywhere outside)	23
Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher	8
Owned by client, with ongoing subsidy	1
Rental by client, no ongoing subsidy	1
Staying or living with friends, temporary tenure (e.g., room apartment or house)	1
Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher	1
Hospital or other residential non-psychiatric medical facility	1

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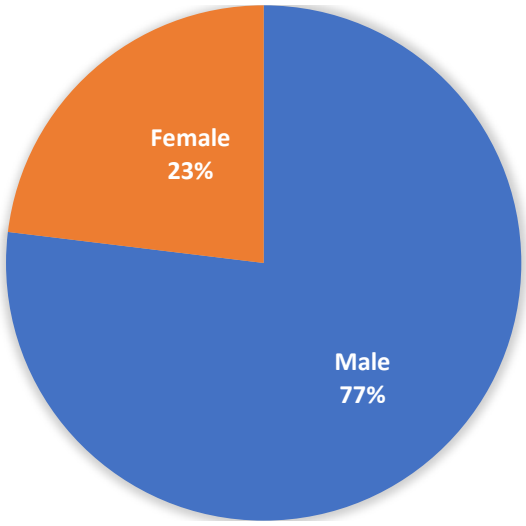
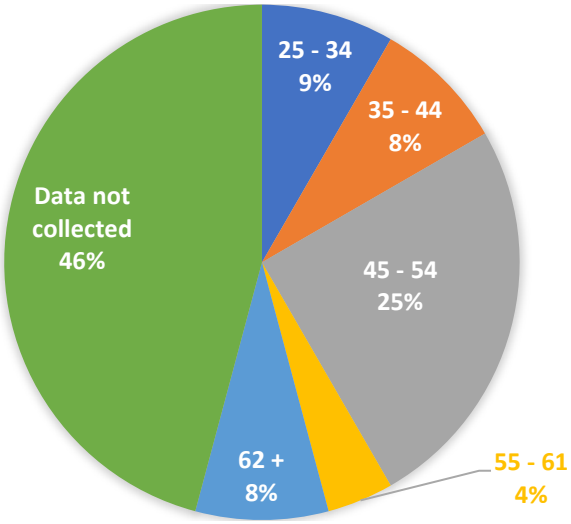
Appendix 5: Comfort Inn Respite Shelter for COVID Symptomatic/Positive

Total Unduplicated Individuals	**24**	Total Unduplicated Households	**12**
Chronically Homeless Individuals	**3**	Individuals with disabling conditions	**2**
Youth 18-25	**0**	Veterans	**0**

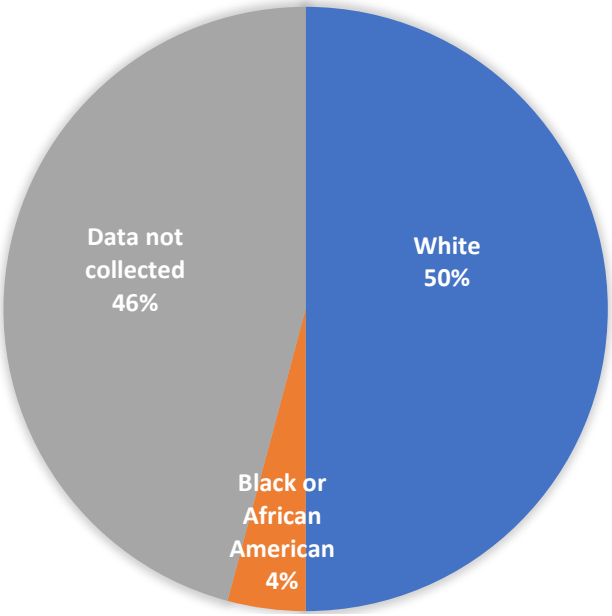
Participants by Gender

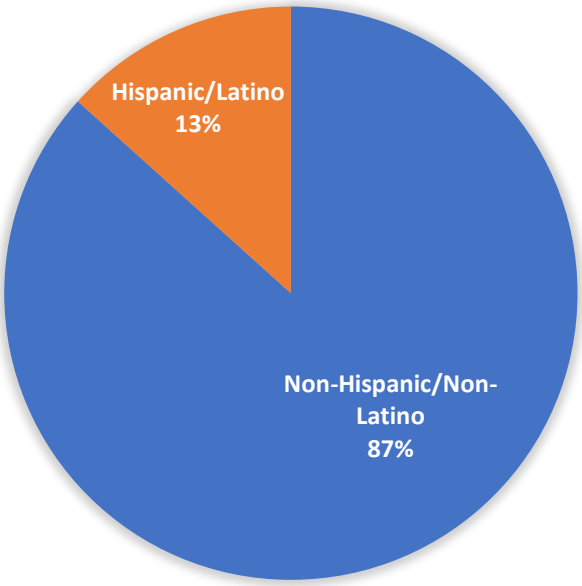


Participants by Age



Participants by Race & Ethnicity





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Income Sources

Earned Income	1
Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	4
Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)	2

Exit Destinations

Emergency shelter, including hotel or motel paid for with emergency shelter voucher	8
Rental by client, no ongoing subsidy	2
Staying or living with friends, temporary tenure (e.g., room apartment or house)	2
Owned by client, no ongoing subsidy	1
Staying or living with friends, permanent tenure	1
Staying or living with family, temporary tenure (e.g., room, apartment or house)	1
Place not meant for habitation (e.g., a vehicle, an abandoned building, bus/train/subway station/airport or anywhere outside)	1
Hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher	1