

## Racial Disparities Among People Experiencing Homelessness in the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care: Preliminary Findings

# 76%

of homeless persons are people of color

One year of local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data was reviewed to explore the occurrence of racial disparities in the indicators of homelessness within our region, across types of services received, and short-term outcomes.

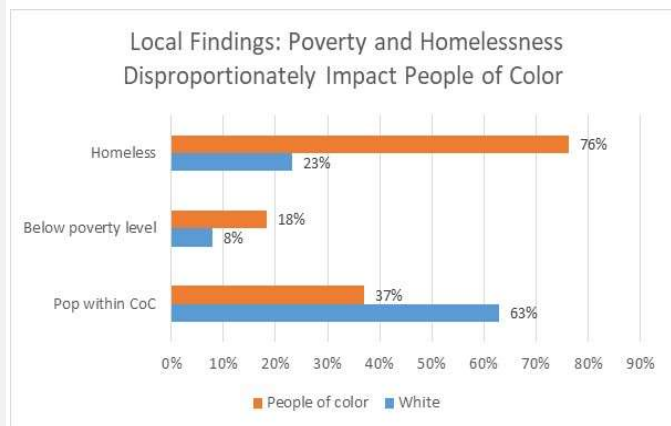
***76% of people experiencing homelessness are people of color, though they make up only 37% of our Continuum of Care's population.***

### Prevalence and Incidence of Homelessness, by Race

Racial disparities are evident in poverty rates and the experience of homelessness for people served within the Continuum of Care. Though people of color appear to be at greater risk of homelessness and have higher average lengths of overall time spent in emergency shelters, transitional housing, and Safe Havens than do Whites, they exit to permanent housing at a 34% higher rate.

#### Context

Racial disparities in rates of homelessness are seen nationally, according to the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH). Supporting Partnerships for Anti-Racist Communities (SPARC) examined data from six communities and concluded that these disparities could not be fully attributed to racial differences in poverty rates. This conclusion also holds for the Greater Richmond CoC - with rates of homelessness among people of color within the general population being 30% higher than would be expected if only poverty were accounted for.



## First time homelessness: Blacks/African Americans at higher risk for becoming homeless for the first time

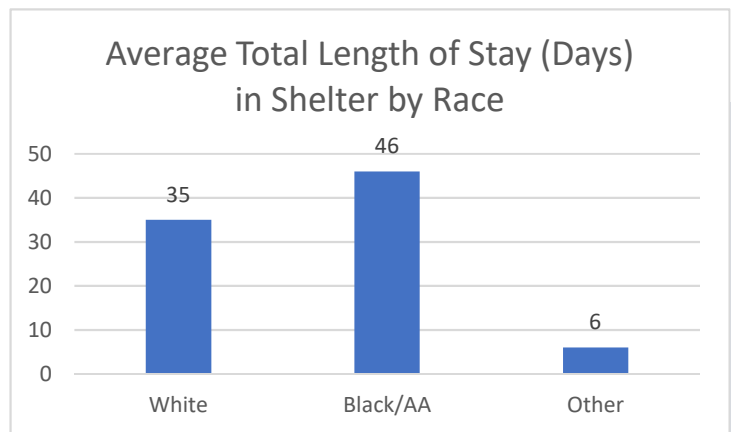
Race	First-time homeless	At-risk pop	Incidence rate
Black/AA	1547	58785	2.6%
White	710	40775	1.7%
Other	30	11785	0.3%

The rate of first-time homelessness among people living below the poverty line is highest for Blacks/African Americans, whose rates of homelessness are over 50% higher than that for Whites. (Source of poverty numbers by race: <http://worldpopulationreview.com/us-counties/va/>)

## Exploratory Data Regarding Racial Disparities and Length of Services Received

### African Americans/Blacks Spend Most Time in Shelter

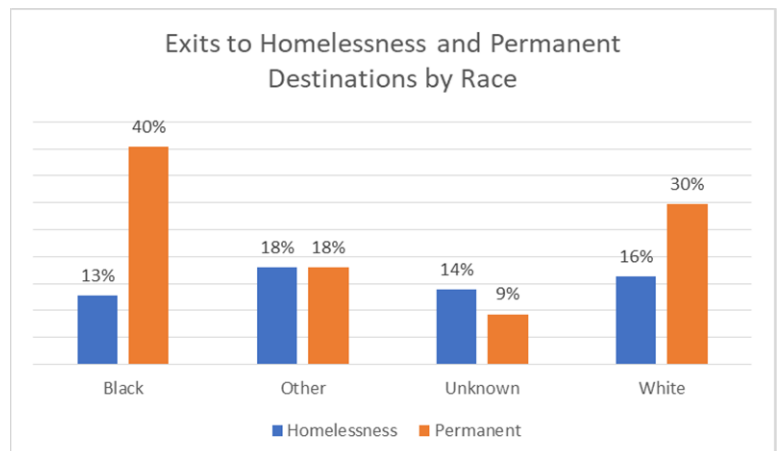
Data on the total length of time people have spent in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Haven programs reveals that Blacks/African Americans on average spend more time in shelter than people of White and other races.



## Exploratory Data Regarding Racial Disparities and Short-Term Outcomes

### The Rate of Successful Housing Outcomes Is Highest For People Who Are African American/Black

The percentage of exits to permanent destinations from emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Havens varies by race. Most notably, Blacks have higher rates of exiting to permanent destinations than do Whites or people of unknown or other races. They also have the lowest rates of exit to homelessness.



## Action Steps

Next steps will include the analysis of race along with additional demographic variables (e.g., age, family composition) and outcomes (such as returns to homelessness), assessed vulnerability, and access to the system of care. Due to the unexpected finding that people of color exit to positive destinations at a higher rate than do Whites, we should explore whether this is true for particular program types and discuss this finding with service providers and front-line staff.

## Notes and Sources

Unless otherwise noted, population and poverty data retrieved from the U.S. Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program (2017) and the American Community Survey (2016 estimates).

Data from the Homeward Community Information is available for most, but not all, service providers within the Continuum of Care. Domestic violence providers are not allowed to use HMIS.

Information reported about locality of a person's last residence is not incorporated into estimates or analysis.

SPARC report: <http://center4si.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/SPARC-Phase-1-Findings-March-20181.pdf>

National Alliance to End Homelessness - racial disparities:

<https://endhomelessness.org/resource/racial-disparities-homelessness-united-states/>

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