

# 2024 RACIAL DISPARITIES STUDY



# ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report is a summary of identified racial disparities in the provision and outcomes of homeless services as documented in the Upstate Continuum of Care's shared database, the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Racial data collected in HMIS is entirely self-reported. The production of this report was limited to the data available in our HMIS, and because of this limitation, the findings in this report should not be considered a complete depiction of how certain racial groups are advantaged or disadvantaged in their ability to obtain and succeed with existing homeless services. Disparities identified in this report are meant to inform members of the Upstate Continuum of Care and should be considered when developing or providing racially equitable homeless services. More information on the data sources and timeframe of this report can be found on the following pages. Conclusions can be found at the end of this report.



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was produced by the Upstate Continuum of Care staff members:



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Special thanks is given to all homeless service providers in the Upstate of South Carolina that document their services in HMIS, providing us with critical data and making this report possible.

Alston Wilkes Society	New Horizon Family Health Services
BattleBetty	Operation Rehabilitation
BootPrint	Our Daily Rest
Family Promise of Anderson	Pendleton Place
Family Promise of Pickens	Project Care
First Impression of South Carolina	Sunbelt Human Advancement Resources (SHARE)
Greenville County Redevelopment Authority	Step by Step Reentry Project
Greater Greenville Mental Health Center	The City of Spartanburg
Greer Relief	The Salvation Army of Greenville County
GoForth Recovery	United Housing Connections
Hope Center for Children	United Ministries
Hope Missions of the Upstate	United Way of the Lakelands

While data from our comparable database used by domestic violence victim service providers was not included in this report, we acknowledge their contribution to other reports across the Continuum.

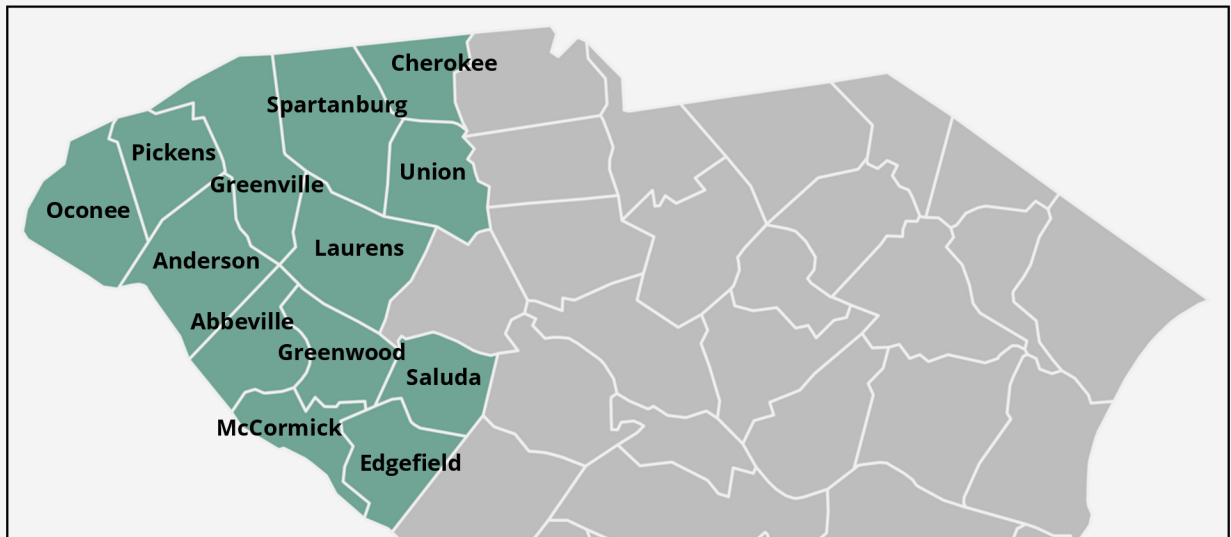
Laurens County Safe Home	Project REST
Meg's House	Safe Harbor

# GLOSSARY

## UPSTATE CONTINUUM OF CARE

The Upstate Continuum of Care is a coalition of homeless service providers, dedicated to creating an effective homeless response system across 13 counties in the Upstate of South Carolina. The Continuum of Care program was designed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to promote a community-wide response to homelessness, effectively utilize federal funding, quickly house persons while minimizing trauma, and to promote access to mainstream resources by homeless individuals and families.<sup>1</sup>

The Upstate Continuum of Care is led by United Housing Connections and consists of over 80 individual and organization members, including persons representing state agencies, school districts, faith-based organizations, veteran service providers, domestic violence victim service providers, and more.



## HOMELESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (HMIS)

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is the Continuum of Care's shared database. Members that receive funding from the Continuum of Care are required to track their participants and services in HMIS, but many members voluntarily utilize HMIS to collect data on their program outcomes and benefit from shared information.

The majority of the data analyzed in this report was exported from the Upstate Continuum of Care's Homeless Management Information System.

# DATA SOURCES

## **COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM PRIORITIZATION LIST**

The Upstate Continuum of Care utilizes a Coordinated Entry System to help persons experiencing homelessness connect with permanent housing opportunities. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires every CoC to establish and operate a Coordinated Entry System “with the goal of increasing the efficiency of local crisis response systems and improving fairness and ease of access to resources.”<sup>2</sup> The Coordinated Entry System is also “intended to help communities prioritize people who are most in need of assistance.”<sup>2</sup>

Persons who are experiencing homelessness can connect over the phone or in-person with any of our Access Points in order to be assessed for the Coordinated Entry System. All Access Points will provide the same intake experience, and all persons will be assessed using a standardized assessment that helps indicate their level of vulnerability. Once assessed, persons are placed on our Prioritization List. From there, they are referred by our Housing Determination Committee to permanent housing opportunities.

For the purposes of this report, the Coordinated Entry System (CES) Prioritization List includes all individuals and households that were assessed for our Coordinated Entry System between 10/1/2022 and 9/30/2023. This data set includes households that “exited” from the Prioritization List during that time after they were referred to a housing opportunity.

## **POINT IN TIME COUNT (PIT COUNT)**

The Point in Time (PIT) Count is an annual effort to count how many people are experiencing homelessness in our 13-county geography at one “point in time”. The Upstate Continuum of Care conducts their PIT Count during the last week of January and counts how people are experiencing homelessness on one single night-- the Night of Reference. We conclude the number of people homeless on the Night of Reference by exporting data from HMIS and by surveying people at soup kitchens, churches, homeless encampments, emergency shelters, and transitional housing programs that don’t already track their participants in HMIS.

For the purposes of this report, we will refer to the deduplicated number of persons counted in the Upstate Continuum of Care’s 2023 PIT Count, which occurred on January 25, 2023. It is possible and likely that some persons included in the PIT Count are also included in the Coordinated Entry System Prioritization List data set. We are not aiming to contrast the two data sets, but rather show how different data sources collect different information.

## ANNUAL HOMELESS ASSESSMENT REPORT (AHAR)

The Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) is “a HUD report to the U.S. Congress that provides nationwide estimates of homelessness, including information about the demographic characteristics of homeless persons, service use patterns, and the capacity to house homeless persons.”<sup>3</sup> The information included in the AHAR is a compilation of data from every Continuum of Care’s HMIS over the most recent fiscal year (September to October) and data from every Continuum of Care’s Point in Time Count.

For the purposes of this report, we will refer to the *2023 AHAR – Part 1: PIT Estimates of Homelessness in the United States*. This is the most recent AHAR and summarizes the results of 2023 PIT Counts across the nation. Comparing the Upstate Continuum of Care’s PIT Count to national data will help show differences in our local homeless population.

## SYSTEM PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Continuums of Care are given the responsibility by HUD to design a local homeless response system. The annual System Performance Measures report assesses how well our system is performing and how all participants are moving through our system based on seven performance-based criteria.<sup>4</sup> Data for the System Performance Measures report is exported from a Continuum of Care’s HMIS over the most recent fiscal year.

For the purposes of this report, we will refer to the Upstate Continuum of Care’s 2023 System Performance Measures, which includes all persons served by programs in our HMIS from 10/1/2022 to 9/30/2023. The performance measures included in this report are:

- Average Length of Time Homeless
- Exits to Permanent Housing
- Returns to Homelessness
- Increases in Income

# PROGRAM TYPES

## **SAFE HAVEN**

Safe Havens are “a form of supportive housing that serves hard-to-reach homeless persons with severe mental illness who come primarily from the streets and have been unable or unwilling to participate in housing or supportive services.”<sup>5</sup> United Housing Connections in the Upstate CoC operates the only Safe Haven in South Carolina, providing housing to 12 vulnerable individuals. HUD ended funding for any new Safe Haven programs in 2012.

## **EMERGENCY SHELTER**

Emergency Shelters are facilities that provide temporary shelter for persons experiencing homelessness in general or any subpopulation of persons experiencing homelessness, such as families, veterans, or survivors of domestic violence.<sup>6</sup> Persons typically utilize emergency shelters for 24 months or less and are provided with case management, employment assistance, and other services to help them exit shelter to permanent housing.

## **TRANSITIONAL HOUSING**

Transitional Housing programs also provide temporary housing for persons experiencing homelessness in general or any subpopulation of persons experiencing homelessness. These programs offer interim stability and supportive services. Participants will lease or sublease housing from the provider for 24 months or less before exiting to permanent housing.<sup>7</sup>

## **RAPID REHOUSING**

Rapid Rehousing programs are permanent housing programs that provide persons experiencing homelessness with tenant-based rental assistance. Participants locate and apply for a rental unit with assistance from their case manager, then their rental is fully or partially subsidized short-term (up to 3 months) or medium-term (4-24 months).<sup>8</sup> When the financial subsidy ends, participants remain housed in the unit they are leasing.

## **PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING**

Permanent Supportive Housing programs are permanent housing programs that provide persons experiencing homelessness with long-term rental assistance and extensive supportive services. These programs are for persons experiencing chronic homelessness and living with a disabling condition.<sup>8</sup> Participants sublease a unit from the provider and are connected with services to help them live independently.

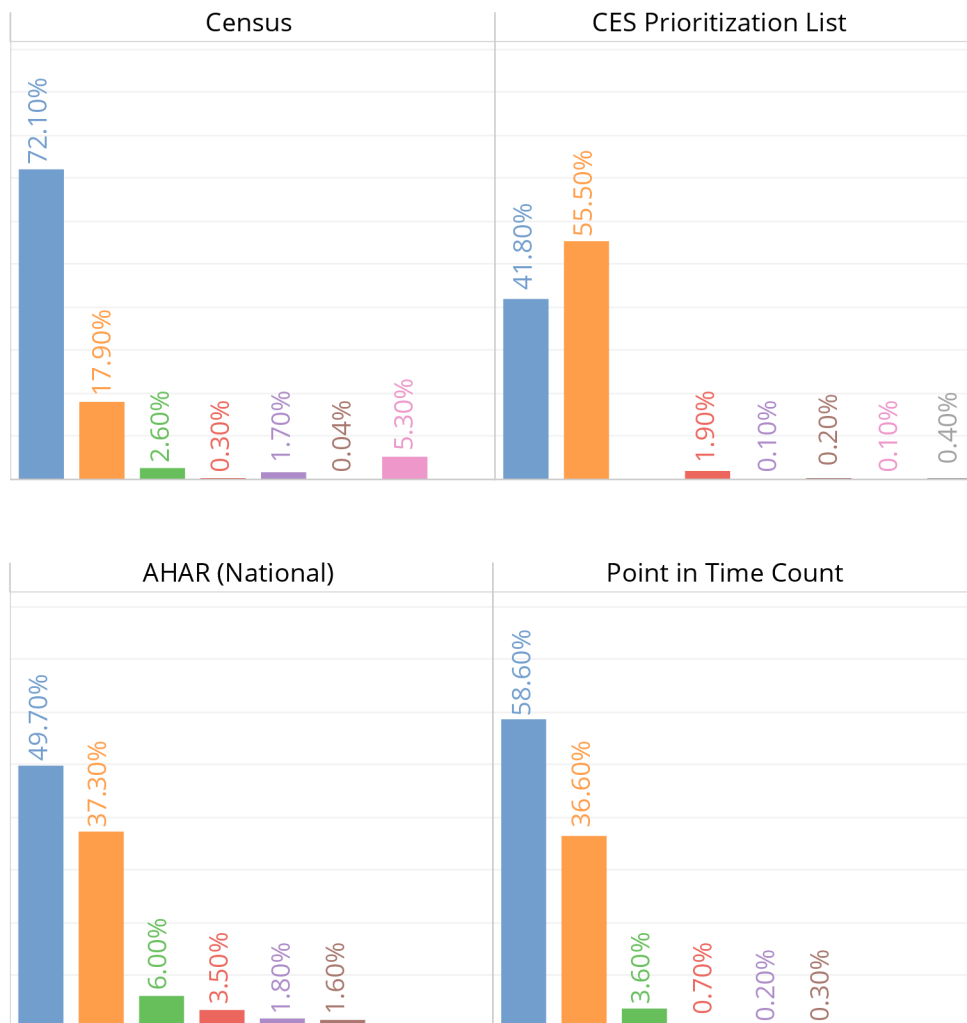
# FINDING ONE

Does the racial composition of the Upstate Continuum of Care's homeless population mirror the Census of our 13-county region and national homeless data?

## Racial Identity Legend

White	Asian or Asian-American
Black, African, or African-American	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
Multiple Races	Other
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	Refused

## Percentage of Total Populations by Race



## Results of Finding One:

The Census data included in this finding was sourced from American Community Survey's 2022: 5-Year Estimate Data Profiles and includes data from the 13 counties included in the Upstate CoC's geographical service area. According to the Census data, the majority (72.1%) of residents in the Upstate of South Carolina identify as White. However, the majority (55.5%) of persons assessed for our Coordinated Entry System Prioritization List identified as Black, African, or African American.<sup>9</sup> The CES Prioritization List is a more extensive picture of homelessness in our community than the PIT Count, since it is a compilation of persons seeking homeless services over the span of a year. When comparing the CES Prioritization List to the Census, the following racial groups were overrepresented in our CoC's homeless population: Black, African, or African-American; American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous; and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

The Upstate CoC's 2023 Point in Time Count more closely reflects the Census data. However, the PIT Count is considered a less extensive picture of homelessness as the data is only collected on persons who were homeless on one night of the year. Additionally, our PIT Count data closely reflects data from the AHAR, which is a compilation of PIT Count data from across the nation. Similar to the majority of Continuums of Care in the United States, our PIT Count concluded that a majority (58.6%) of persons experiencing homelessness identified as White. Still, the following racial groups were overrepresented in our CoC's PIT Count when compared to the Census: Black, African, or African-American; Multiple Races; and American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous.

### NOTE

Persons enrolled in the CES Prioritization List could not report multiple races until HUD released their 2024 Data Standards, which occurred after this reported timeframe. Additionally, persons could not report their racial identity as Hispanic or Latino until the 2024 Data Standards—it was previously considered an ethnicity, which was a separate reportable data point. Because of this, we could not include data on Hispanic or Latino persons in this finding.

# FINDING TWO

Are there differences in the provision of homeless services based on race?

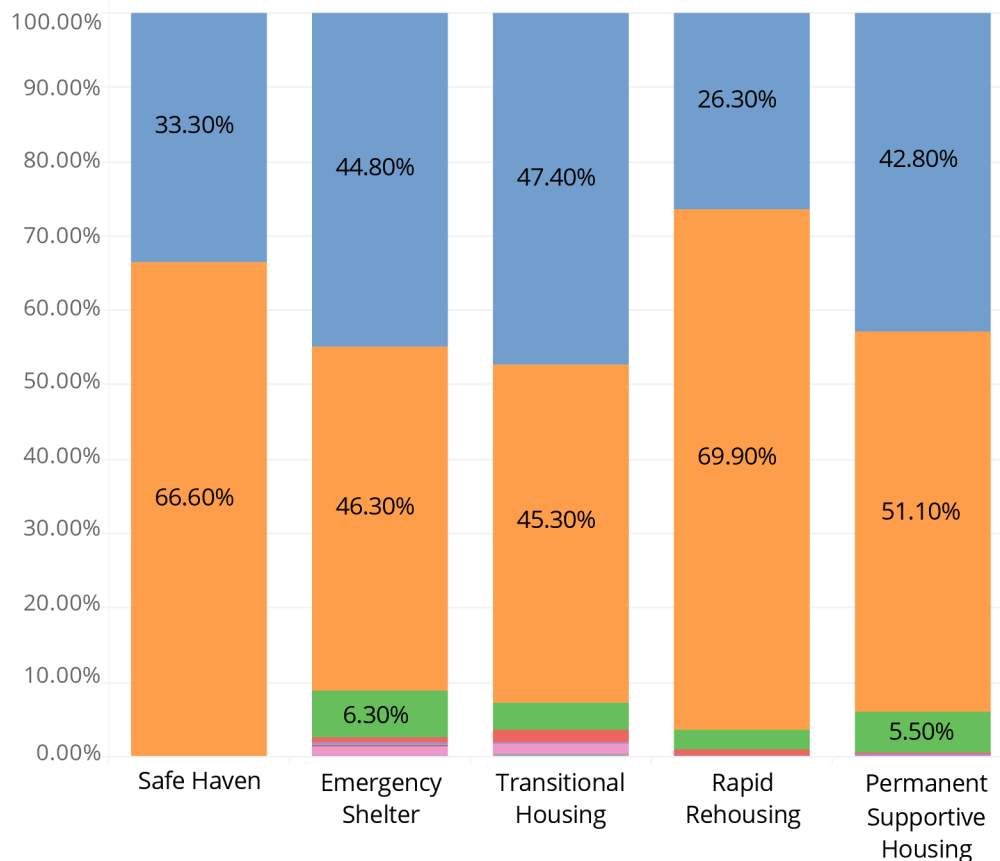
## Racial Identity Legend

White	Asian or Asian-American
Black, African, or African-American	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
Multiple Races	Hispanic or Latino
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	Data Not Collected

## Total Number of Persons Entering Each Program Type

Safe Haven	12
Emergency Shelter	1,066
Transitional Housing	190
Rapid Rehousing	353
Permanent Supportive Housing	180

## Percentage of Persons Entering Each Program Type by Race



## Expanded View of Minority Racial Group Data

	Multiple Races	American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	Asian or Asian-American	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic or Latino	Data Not Collected
Safe Haven	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Emergency Shelter	6.30%	0.50%	0.40%	0.20%	1.20%	0.30%
Transitional Housing	3.70%	1.58%	0.00%	0.00%	1.58%	0.50%
Rapid Rehousing	2.60%	0.80%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.30%
Permanent Supportive Housing	5.50%	0.00%	0.60%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

## Results of Finding Two:

The Upstate CoC's Safe Haven program only served 12 persons during the reported timeframe, and the percentage of persons served by that program type that identified as White and the percentage that identified as Black, African, or African-American are fairly similar to our homeless population as represented by our CES Prioritization List. Many more persons utilized Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing programs over the reported timeframe. The percentage of White persons and Black, African, or African-American persons served by these temporary housing programs were nearly equal.

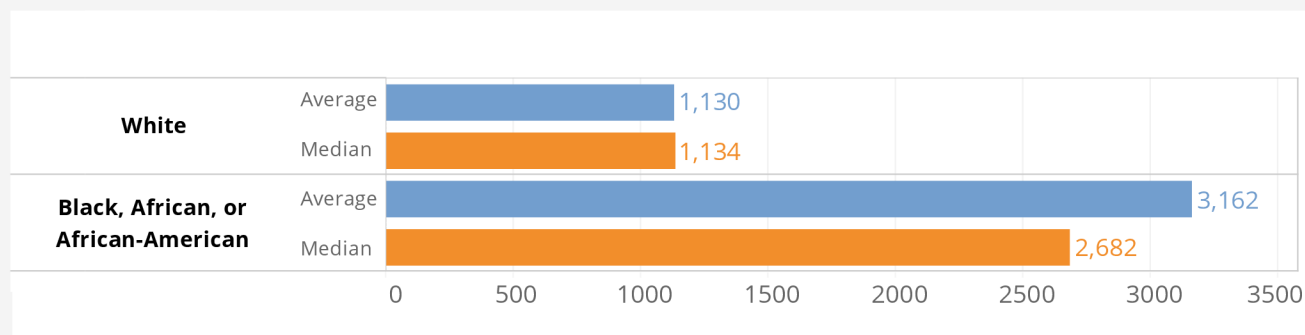
Both permanent housing programs types, Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing, had a greater percentage of Black, African, or African-American persons entering than White persons. However, this composition is more reflective of our homeless population as represented by our CES Prioritization List.

The data in this finding also shows that persons who identify their primary race as Hispanic or Latino were served by temporary housing programs but were not served by permanent housing programs. The same is true for Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander persons. It is important to note that both of these racial groups were very small samples (Hispanic or Latino = 16 persons and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander = 2 persons).

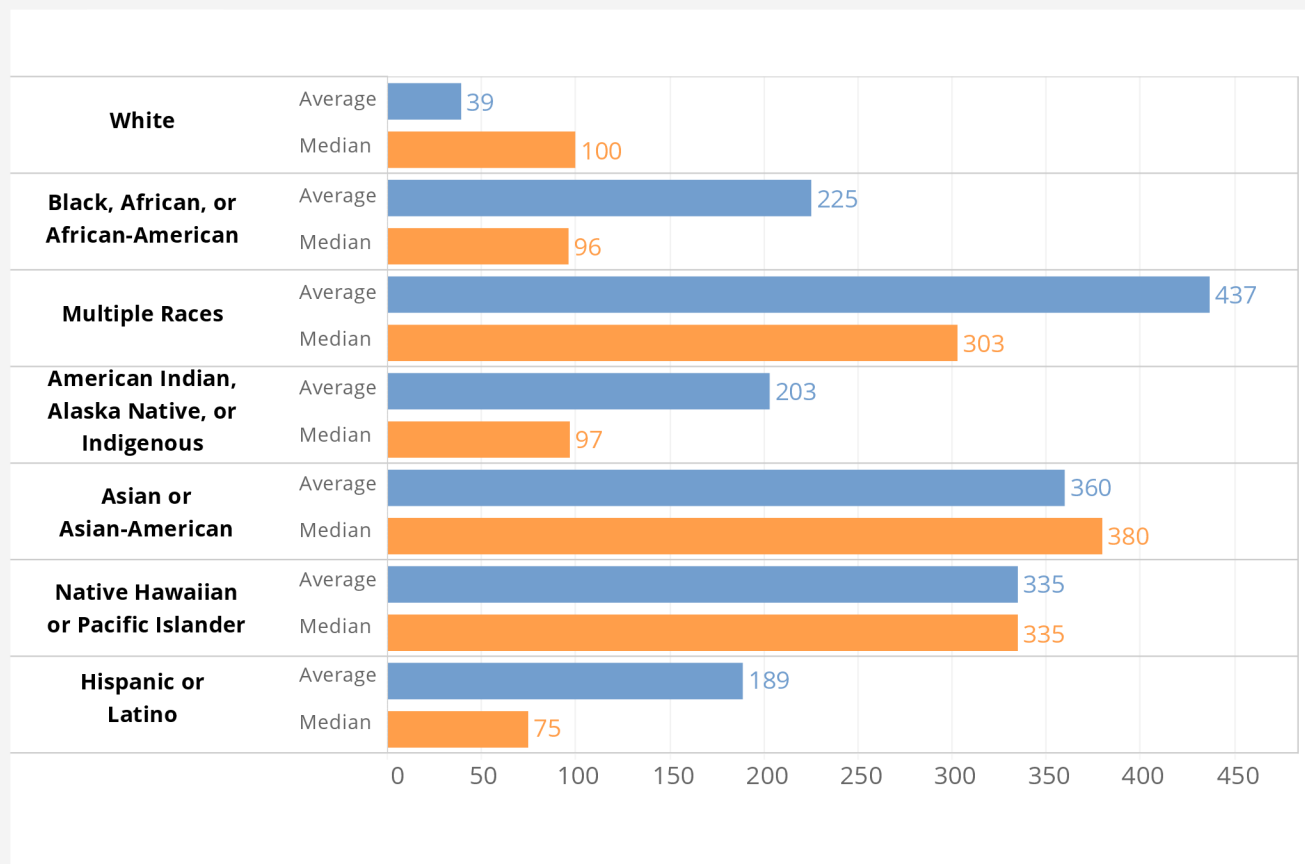
# FINDING THREE

Are there differences in the average and median number of days spent homeless in Safe Havens, Emergency Shelters, and Transitional Housing based on race?

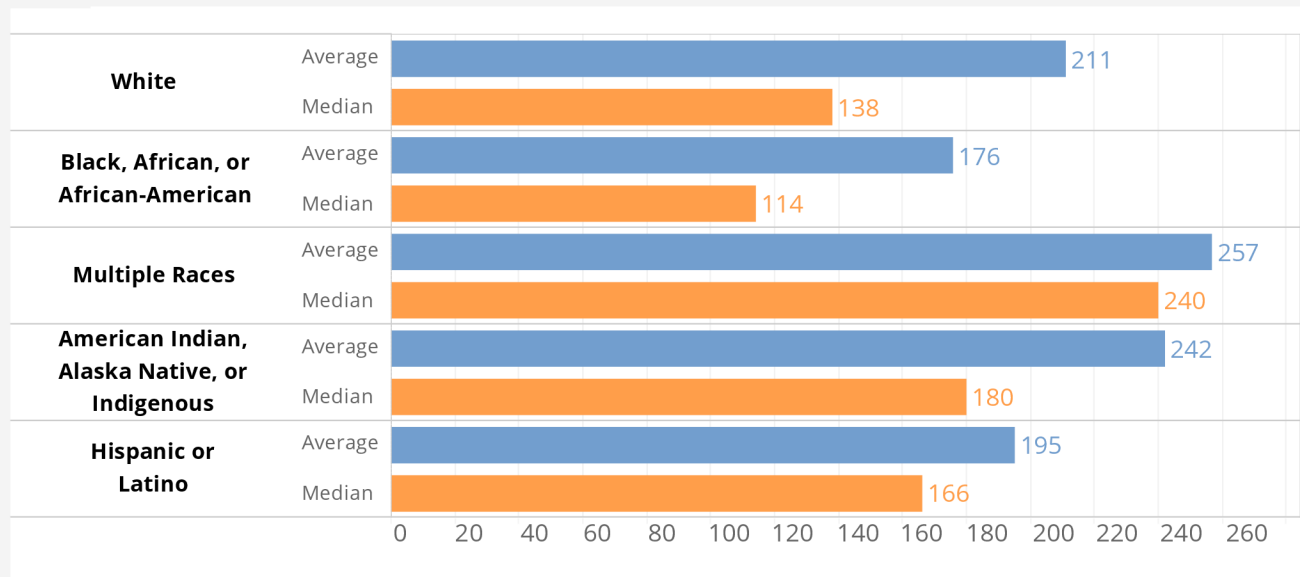
## Average and Median Days spent in Safe Haven by Race



## Average and Median Days spent in Emergency Shelter by Race



## Average and Median Days spent in Transitional Housing by Race



### Results of Finding Three:

As previously stated, only 12 persons were served by the Safe Haven during the reported timeframe. According to HUD, persons housed in a Safe Haven program retain their homeless status. In practice, our Safe Haven operates as a long-term destination for a low number of residents. Data shows that all persons utilize Safe Haven for multiple years.

The three racial groups that spend the greatest number of days in Emergency Shelter when considering averages and medians are: Multiple Races; Asian or Asian-American; and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Two of these racial groups were very small samples (Asian or Asian-American = 4 persons and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander = 2 persons). When comparing medians, White persons, Black, African, or African-American persons, and Hispanic or Latino persons spend a similar number of days in Emergency Shelter. However, Black, African, or African-American persons and Hispanic or Latino persons spend a greater number of days on average in Emergency Shelter than White persons.

There is a much smaller spread of average and median days in Transitional Housing than in Emergency Shelter due to the more structured nature of Transitional Housing programs. Participants tend to stay longer due to more intensive case management and individual living spaces. The two racial groups that spend the greatest number of days in Transitional Housing when considering averages and medians are: Multiple Races; and American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous. Note that American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous persons was a very small sample (5 persons). Black, African, or African-American persons spend the least number of days in Transitional Housing on average and median. No Asian or Asian-American persons or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander persons were served by Transitional Housing programs during the reported timeframe.

# FINDING FOUR

Are there differences in the percentage of leavers who exit from Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing to permanent housing destinations based on race?

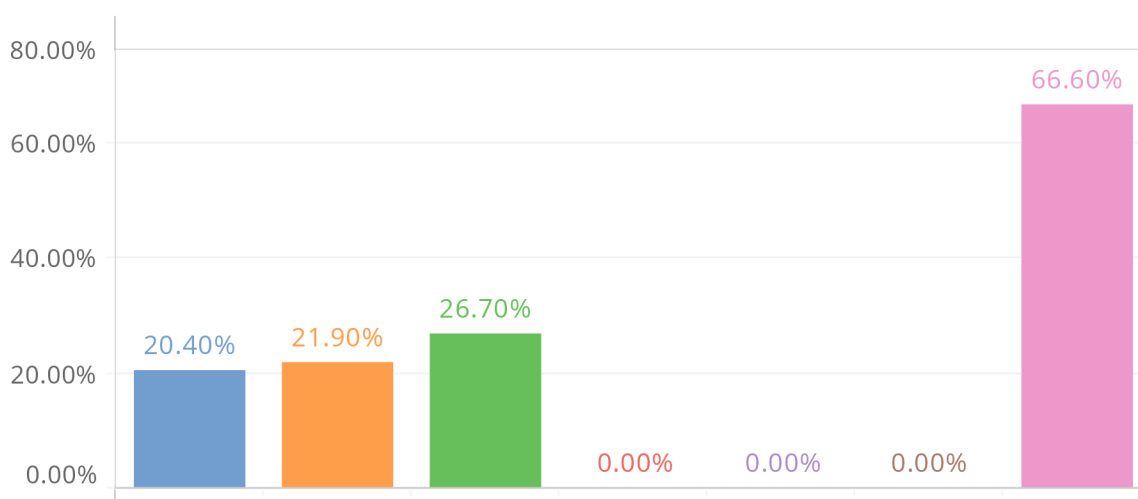
## Racial Identity Legend



## Number of Persons Leaving Emergency Shelter by Race (All Destinations)

	White	Black, African, or African-American	Multiple Races	American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	Asian or Asian-American	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic or Latino
Emergency Shelter Leavers	391	439	30	5	4	1	3

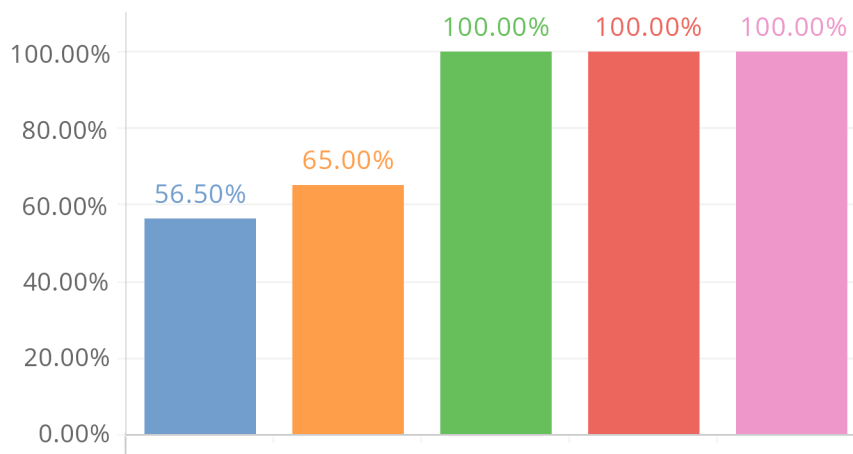
## Percentage of Persons Leaving Emergency Shelter to Permanent Housing Destinations by Race



## Number of Persons Leaving Transitional Housing by Race (All Destinations)

	White	Black, African, or African- American	Multiple Races	American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	Asian or Asian- American	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic or Latino
Transitional Housing Leavers	69	60	6	2	0	0	1

## Percentage of Persons Leaving Transitional Housing to Permanent Housing Destinations by Race



### NOTE

This data set may be more difficult to interpret at first glance. The graphs included in this finding are showing you: "Out of all of the (racial group) persons who exited Emergency Shelter/Transitional Housing, what percentage of them exited to a permanent housing destination?" For example, out of the all the Hispanic or Latino persons who exited Emergency Shelter, 66.6% of them exited to a permanent housing destination.

A permanent housing destination could be a Rapid Rehousing program, a Permanent Supportive Housing program, permanent tenure with family or friends, a home leased by the participant, or a home owned by the participant. This excludes persons who exit back to a homeless status.

## Results of Finding Four:

Persons who identified as Hispanic or Latino had the greatest percentage of persons exiting Emergency Shelter that exited to a permanent housing destination. It is important to note that Hispanic or Latino persons was a small sample. The data in this finding also shows that 0% of persons from the following three racial groups exited Emergency Shelter to permanent housing destinations: American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous; Asian or Asian American; and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. However, all three racial groups were also small samples. White persons and Black, African, or African-American persons were much larger samples. In comparison, the data shows that a slightly greater percentage of Black, African, or African-American persons exiting Emergency Shelter exited to permanent housing destinations than White persons.

The data in this finding shows that 100% of persons from the following three racial groups exited Transitional Housing to permanent housing destinations: Multiple Races; American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous; and Hispanic or Latino. It is important to note that all three racial groups were small samples. White persons and Black, African, or African-American persons were much larger samples. In comparison, a greater percentage of Black, African, or African-American persons exiting Transitional Housing exited to permanent housing destinations. No Asian or Asian-American persons or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander persons exited Transitional Housing programs during the reported timeframe.

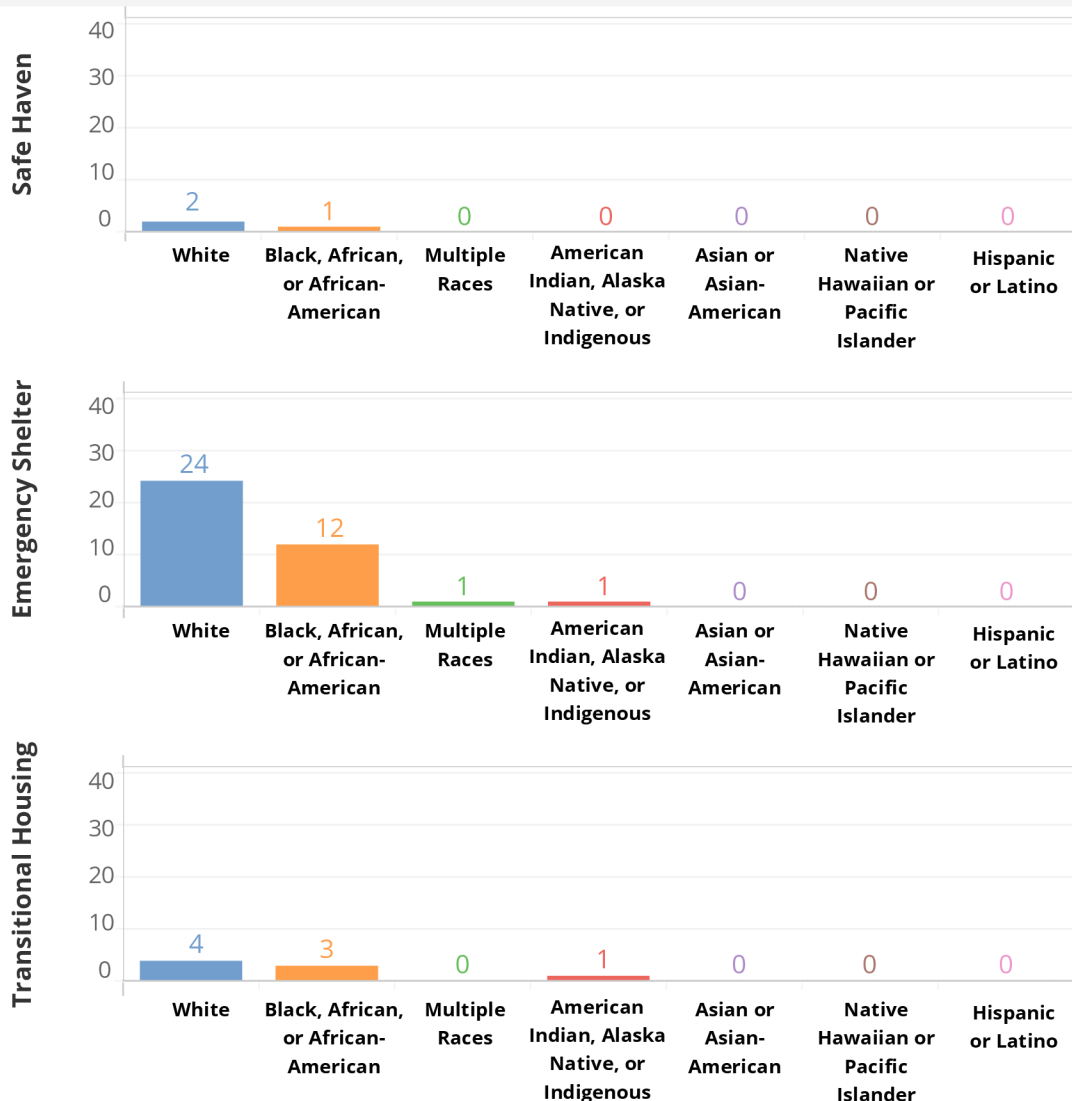
# FINDING FIVE

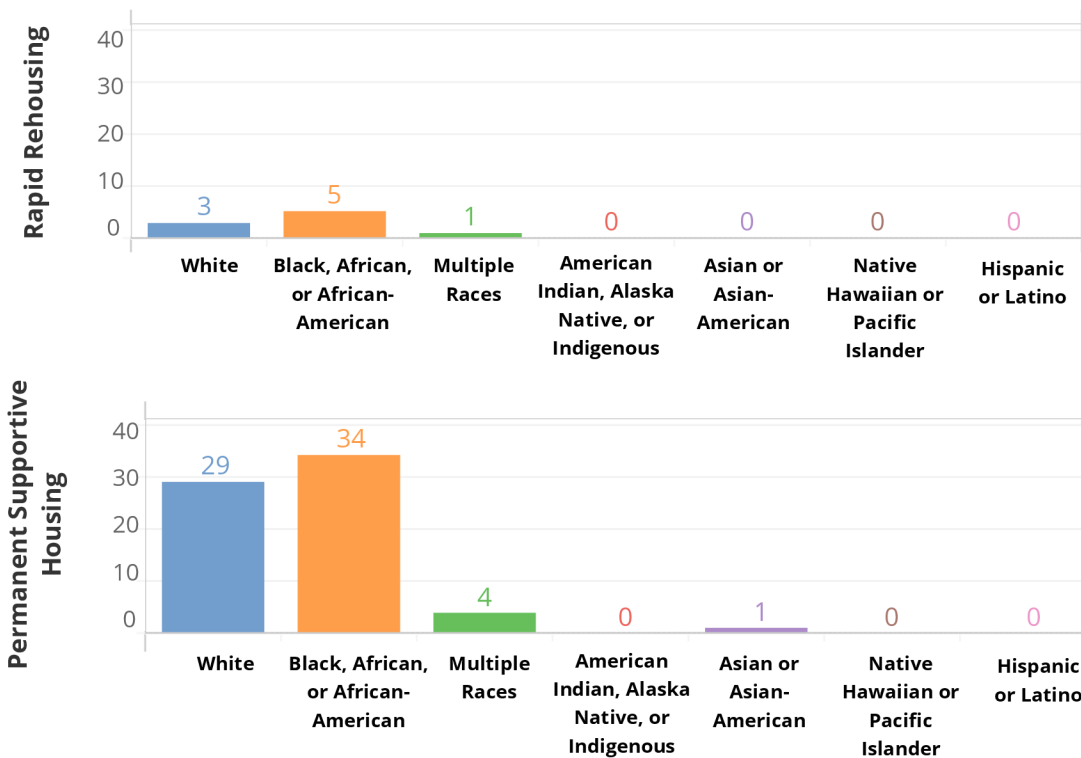
Are there differences in the number of persons who increased their income while receiving services based on race?

## Racial Identity Legend



## Number of Persons Who Had Higher Income at Exit or Annual Assessment than at Entry by Race





## NOTE

### **Why are these numbers so low?**

In order for a person to be included in this data, they must have an annual assessment or exit assessment completed that shows a higher income than recorded on their entry assessment. An entry assessment is completed when a participant enters the program, and an exit assessment is completed when a participant leaves. An annual assessment is completed when a participant spends a year in a program.

Unfortunately, out of the 1000+ persons served by all program types during the reported timeframe, very few participants had a completed annual assessment or exit assessment. This crucial action is being forgotten or completed incorrectly by many case managers in the Upstate CoC, and the results are damaging to our System Performance Measures. HMIS training will focus on this process moving forward to collect more extensive data and reflect a more accurate picture of how programs help participants increase their income.

## Results of Finding Five:

No persons exited the Safe Haven program during the reported timeframe. Of the 12 persons served by the Safe Haven, 2 White persons and 1 Black, African, or African-American person increased their income at annual assessment.

Data from temporary housing programs, Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing, shows that a greater number of White persons increased their income at exit or annual assessment than Black, African, or African-American persons. In Emergency Shelter, no persons from the following three racial groups increased their income at exit or annual assessment: Asian or Asian-American; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; and Hispanic or Latino.

In Transitional Housing, no Multiple Races persons or Hispanic or Latino persons increased their income at exit or annual assessment. No Asian or Asian-American persons or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander persons were served by Transitional Housing programs during the reported timeframe.

Data from permanent housing programs, Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing, shows the opposite of Emergency Shelter programs. A greater number of Black, African, or African-American persons increased their income at exit or annual assessment than White persons. In Rapid Rehousing, no American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous persons increased their income at exit or annual assessment. No persons from the following three racial groups were served by Rapid Rehousing during the reported timeframe: Asian or Asian-American; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; and Hispanic or Latino.

In Permanent Supportive Housing, no persons from the following three racial groups were served during the reported timeframe: American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; and Hispanic or Latino.

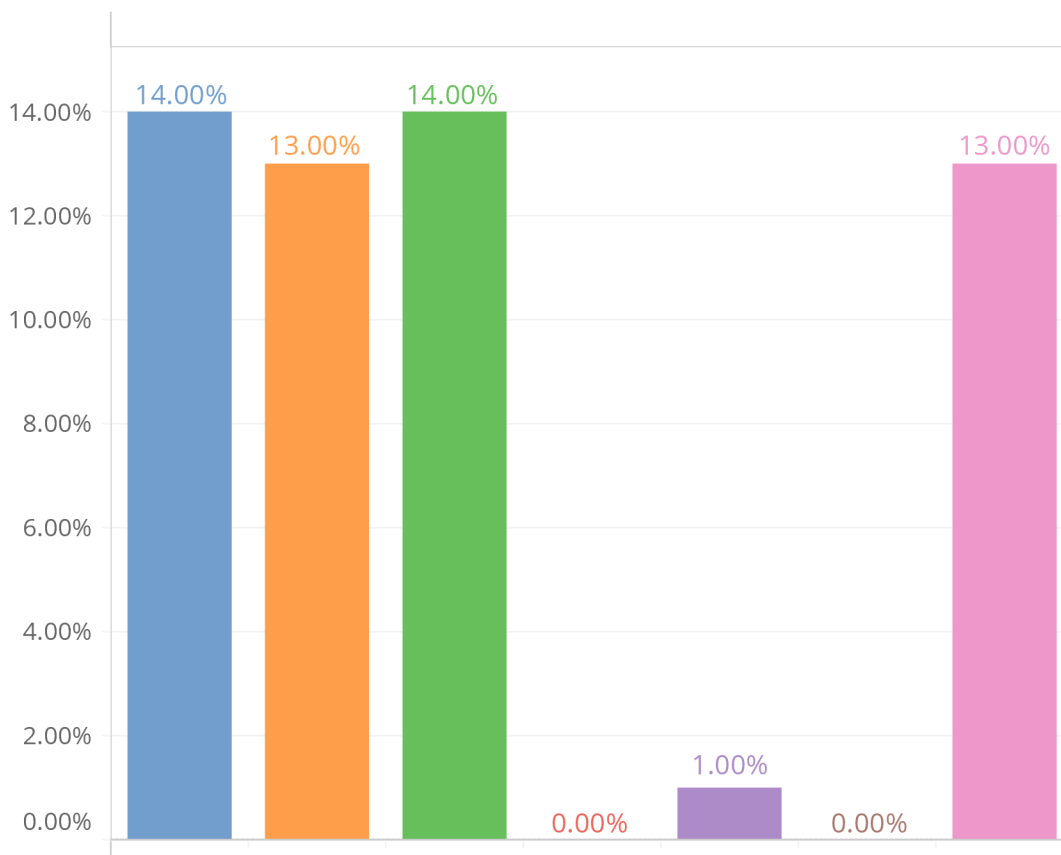
# FINDING SIX

Are there differences in the rate of returns to homelessness after exiting permanent housing based on race?

## Racial Identity Legend



## Percentage of Persons Who Have Returned to Homelessness after Exiting Permanent Housing in the Past 24 Months by Race



## NOTE

This finding shows the percentage of persons that exited from a permanent housing program (Rapid Rehousing or Permanent Supportive Housing) during the past two fiscal years (10/1/2020 - 9/30/2022) and returned to homelessness at some point during the reported timeframe (10/1/2022 - 9/30/2023). This data only includes persons whose return to homelessness was documented in HMIS.

### Results of Finding Six:

While it is important that our homeless response system quickly houses people experiencing homelessness, we will only succeed in developing the solution to homelessness if our participants remain housed. In this data finding, 14% of both White persons and Multiple Races persons who exited permanent housing within the past 2 years have returned to homelessness. Similarly, 13% of Black, African, or African-American persons and Hispanic or Latino persons who exited to permanent housing within the past 2 years have returned to homelessness.

A more significant difference is shown when looking at the three remaining racial groups. Only 1% of Asian or Asian-American persons returned to homelessness. No American Indian, Alaska Native or Indigenous persons or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander persons returned to homelessness. It is important to note that all three racial groups were small samples. Because of the larger sample sizes for White persons, Multiple Races persons, and Black, African, or African-American persons, 13-14% may be a more accurate representation of rate of returns to homelessness.

# COMMUNITY VOICES

## SANFORD WILLIAMS, ALSTON WILKES SOCIETY

How does Alston Wilkes Society case management staff help veterans staying at the Grant & Per Diem transitional house increase their income?

"Alston Wilkes Society's Greenville Grant & Per Diem case management team assists veterans in our program in a variety of ways with finding additional sources of income. We have collaborative partnerships with SC Works and Goodwill Industries, where both agencies assist our veterans with job preparedness and employment opportunities.

Prior to our new move to Rutherford Road, we had a partnership with United Ministries in a similar capacity. Our case managers also assist veterans with increasing their Social Security and VA disability ratings and claims. We are currently sitting at 60% of veterans employed at exit, on par with the VA national average."

The quarterly performance measure report from Alston Wilkes Society also shows that in their most recent quarter, 81% of veterans exited their program to permanent housing.



## STAR WHITAKER, OUR DAILY REST

How does Our Daily Rest case management staff help Rapid Rehousing program participants increase their income?



"Each day, Our Daily Rest Rapid Rehousing Case Managers are asked to do the near impossible: get clients out of homelessness and onto a lease in the midst of a raging rental crisis.

Our Daily Rest's Rapid Rehousing Case Manager takes on the responsibility of ensuring that once housed, a client stays housed. One of the main goals of Case Manager is to assist clients in increasing their income, so they can maintain their housing by creating an action plan. The action plan consists of developing individual plans to help clients address their challenges and needs: securing employment, maintaining budgeting, and mapping out the new communities they live in as well as providing referrals to partners and community agencies."

## DEMARIO LONG, UNITED HOUSING CONNECTIONS

### Why do individuals stay so long at United Housing Connections' Safe Haven program?

"While working with this population over the last six years and observing behaviors of individuals at Reedy, it is my opinion that those who have stayed at Reedy for a long period of time are very similar to individuals that tend to experience homelessness and remain homeless for many years. People can remain homeless for extended periods due to a combination of psychological, environmental, and systemic factors. For many, the immediate surroundings of homelessness can become a place of familiarity and comfort, offering a semblance of stability despite the inherent hardships. Although Reedy removes some of those hardships, it still provides a place of familiarity, comfort, and stability.

As they move into a place like Reedy, over time, their units begin to feel like home with established routines and social connections that provide a sense of community. The lack of a clear strategy or actionable steps for moving forward can also contribute to prolonged stays at Reedy. When individuals do not have access to resources like affordable housing, job opportunities, appropriate amount of income, or supportive services, the prospect of change can seem distant or unattainable.

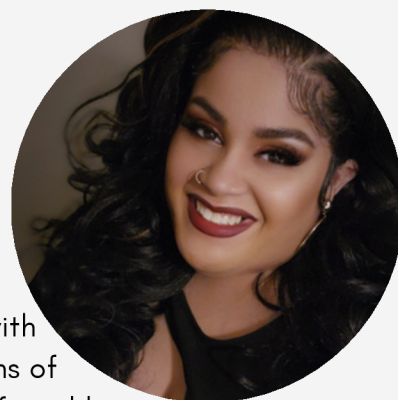
Additionally, the essential necessities for daily living, such as food, water, dependable shelter, and transportation are often conveniently located within the area of Reedy. Places such as the convenience store, Project Host (soup kitchen), local churches that donate food and other items, mental health, and restaurants are close by. This accessibility can reduce the urgency for seeking long-term solutions, as immediate needs are being met, and Reedy is viewed by many as permanent supportive housing. A place they can remain until they can no longer take care of themselves or pass away. The combination of these factors creates a complex situation where the comfort of the present environment and the lack of resources or feasible plans for the future makes it difficult to want to move on from Reedy to more independent space."



## KECIA WALKER, FAMILY PROMISE OF ANDERSON COUNTY

### Why do families stay so long at Family Promise of Anderson County's emergency shelter program?

"The mission of Family Promise of Anderson County is to assist families with children in overcoming homelessness and achieving sustainable independence. We offer case management services that enable participants to identify areas of improvement, set short-term objectives, receive financial counseling, and connect with other community resources to secure employment and various forms of support, all aimed at fostering long-term stability. The challenges faced by families with minor children in transitioning from homelessness to housing are multifaceted, particularly post-pandemic. Consequently, stays in shelters have extended to one year and, in rare instances, even beyond a year and a half. Evictions have significantly hindered their ability to secure housing, as many landlords hesitate to offer leases to those with such histories. However, the cost of living, including the average rent for a three-bedroom home, can exceed the financial capabilities of single-income households, making affordability a critical issue.



Larger families are facing challenges in finding available affordable housing, whether subsidized or not. Another factor contributing to prolonged shelter stays is the difficulty families face in securing employment that provides adequate income. Although numerous job opportunities may offer a starting salary above the minimum wage, it often falls short of the cost of living. Additionally, some families may not qualify for programs like Rapid Re-Housing due to their assessment scores. The demographic we serve frequently fails to attain high enough scores on the Coordinated Entry assessment to benefit from HUD programs like Rapid Re-Housing, which provides temporary rental assistance. Hence, they require additional time to reduce burdensome financial debt and build up savings for moving-in expenses. This form of aid is not only crucial for securing housing but also for ensuring stability during the transition to independence."

## AMANDA GRISWOLD, PROJECT R.E.S.T.

### How does Project R.E.S.T. make sure their services are accessible for all racial and ethnic groups?



"At Project R.E.S.T. we have five core values we strive to reflect in our work. These core values are excellence, compassion, collaboration, integrity, and equity. It is through these core values that we work with our clients and seek to ensure each client has an equally supportive and healing experience. Project R.E.S.T. has victim advocates that have been trained in assisting victims of all minorities and social backgrounds.

We have victim advocates fluent in Hmong and Spanish, with other administrative staff fluent in Greek and Urdu. As needed, we utilize a translation service called Globo that provides over-the-phone translation. Globo also assists advocates with virtual meetings for deaf/hard of hearing clients. These translation services are used during our therapeutic and advocacy support groups, crisis calls, and any type of meetings. Project R.E.S.T. is currently working on re-translating our intake packets into Spanish. Since we have recently updated our name and paperwork, we are updating our Spanish versions as well.

Regarding our residential program, Project R.E.S.T. victim advocates create a comfortable space for all residents by assisting a client in a minority group with any special foods or other requests they may have. Project R.E.S.T. staff ensure each client has a comfortable space to practice their religion, culture, or traditions. Project R.E.S.T. works to inform our community that we are here to assist any victim of intimate partner domestic violence and/or sexual assault no matter the victim's language, religion, or social background. All of our brochures and awareness pamphlets are available in English and Spanish. At Project R.E.S.T. we work to ensure everyone who comes to us for assistance is met with a warm and welcoming environment."

## AMY BELL, UNITED MINISTRIES

### How does United Ministries case management staff help families in your emergency shelter exit to permanent housing?

"United Ministries is a direct services organization that serves individuals and families experiencing scarcity by providing basic needs for stability and supportive services to achieve self-sufficiency.

At the initial meeting with staff, families begin to think of and talk about their goals and defining what stability looks like to them. We also help families focus on their assets: what skills, expertise, and knowledge they already have so they can obtain those goals, before talking about the barriers. Based on those conversations, families are connected to internal and external supportive services that can include community partners, financial stabilization tools, mental health coaching, and skill building opportunities. We modify our coaching to fit the needs and goals of each family, so that they are obtaining their vision of stability and success.



Success for the families exiting our program can be signing a lease on their own rental, purchasing a new home, or entering a transitional or subsidy program with a partner agency. Regardless of the goals or outcomes of each family, our staff provide everyone with support, accountability, and unconditional positive regard. Families gain stability after exiting our program with a combination of their own engagement and drive and the investment of time and resources from our staff and community."

# CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions about racial disparities in the provision and outcomes of homeless services are based solely on the data included in this report. As previously stated, the findings in this report should not be considered a complete depiction of how certain racial groups are advantaged or disadvantaged in their ability to obtain and succeed with existing homeless services.

Primarily, we notice that minority racial groups- as determined by the Census- are overrepresented in our CoC's homeless population. While Black, African, or African-American persons only constitute 17.9% of the general population in the Upstate, they constitute 55.5% of the homeless population as documented by the CES Prioritization List and 36.6% of the homeless population as documented by the local Point in Time Count.<sup>9</sup> This is the most drastic overrepresentation identified by Finding One. The following racial groups were also overrepresented in Finding One: Multiple Races; American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous; and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. It is important to note that in contrast, White persons and Asian or Asian-American were underrepresented in the homeless population. While White persons constitute 72.1% of the general population in the Upstate, they only constitute 41.8% of the homeless population as documented by the CES Prioritization List and 58.6% of the homeless population as documented by the local Point in Time Count.<sup>9</sup>

Because the CES Prioritization List and local Point in Time Count have different results, it can be difficult to determine the exact racial breakdown of our current homeless population. It is the recommendation of the Upstate CoC to regard the CES Prioritization List as a more accurate representation, since the data is collected over the span of a year. According to the CES Prioritization List, Black, African, or African-American persons constitute the majority (55.5%) of the Upstate's total homeless population. This mirrors the findings of the Upstate CoC's most recent Racial Equity Analysis report produced in 2019, where this group constituted 52% of the CES Prioritization List.

When regarding Finding Two, the percentage of persons entering each program type by race, the percentage of persons served by Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing programs that identified as White and the percentage that identified as Black, African, or African-American are nearly equal. However, when considering the CES Prioritization List information above, Black, African, or African-American persons should constitute a larger percentage of persons entering these temporary housing programs.

In contrast, a greater percentage of persons served by Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing identified as Black, African, or African-American than White. Permanent Supportive Housing results are nearly reflective of the CES Prioritization List, but White persons are underserved by Rapid Rehousing programs. Note that persons included in these permanent housing categories are persons who accepted the opportunity—this data set does not include the persons who were referred to the program but did not accept the opportunity. The conclusion is that Black, African, or African-American persons are more likely to be served by our permanent housing programs than White persons. However, this does not conclude on how likely each racial group is to be referred to permanent housing programs. Race and ethnicity are not determining factors when referring persons to Upstate CoC housing programs.

There were varied results when analyzing the average and median days spent in temporary housing solutions by race. One noticeable conclusion is that Multiple Races persons spent the greatest number of days on average in Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing than any other racial group. However, all Average and Median days spent in temporary housing are less than ideal. In 2023, the average number of days persons spent homeless across all CoCs in the United States was 166 days.<sup>3</sup> Many racial groups included in this report exceeded the national average of 166 days spent homeless. In 2023, the Upstate CoC's System Performance Measure reported that our average, across all racial groups, was 192 days. Unfortunately, this measure appears to be growing for our Continuum: in 2021, our average was 131 days. In 2022, our average was 145 days. All persons experiencing homelessness in the Upstate should be taken into consideration when reducing length of time spent homeless.

When regarding the Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing data in Finding Four, Black, African or African-American persons were more likely to exit temporary housing program to permanent housing destinations than White persons. However, the rate of exit to permanent housing destinations for these two racial groups were numerically close. Finding Four also shows that Multiple Races persons and Hispanic or Latino persons were more likely to exit Emergency Shelter to permanent housing destinations. It is important to note that these racial groups were comparatively small samples. The same is true for Transitional Housing data, which showed that persons from the following three racial groups had a 100% rate of exiting Transitional Housing to a permanent housing destination: Multiple Races; American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous; and Hispanic or Latino. While a 100% rate is ideal, it is important to note the small samples.

Unfortunately, the data we have available in HMIS for the reported timeframe does not help complete an accurate picture in Finding Five. As previously stated, many HMIS end users in the Upstate CoC are forgetting to update a participant's income at exit or annual

assessment or are completing the updates incorrectly. The importance of this data collection will be highlighted in future HMIS trainings. The Upstate CoC acknowledges that the number of participants exiting our programs with higher income is likely much greater than represented in this report. Examples of how our programs help participants increase their income can be found in the Community Voices section.

From the data available in this report, however, it is shown that a greater number of White persons increased their income at exit or annual assessment in Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing than any other racial group. A greater number of Black, African, or African-American persons increased their income at exit or annual assessment in Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing than any other racial group.

Finally, Finding Six shows that persons from the following four racial groups are returning to homelessness within 2 years of exiting permanent housing at very similar rates: White (14%); Black, African, or African-American (13%); Multiple Races (14%); and Hispanic or Latino (13%). While a lower rate of returns to homelessness is ideal, the data for the remaining racial groups may not be considered representative due to small samples.

The Upstate CoC recognizes that there are numerous factors that contribute to racial disparities in the provision and outcomes of homeless services. However, as one of the many catalysts of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness' *All In: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, it is the responsibility of the Upstate CoC to "establish tools and processes for identifying, analyzing and updating agency-specific policies, practices, and procedures for programs and agencies responsible for carrying out strategies and actions...that may inhibit opportunity to advance and promote equity."<sup>10</sup>

By sharing this report, the Upstate CoC has taken the first step in identifying where disparities exist. From here, we rely on Continuum-wide dialogue to determine where changes are needed in our local homeless response system to promote equity in all programs and services.

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