

2009 Point in Time Count of the Homeless Population in Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties

About the Point in Time (PIT) Count:

The Homeless Services Network of Central Florida (HSN) is the lead agency for the Continuum of Care encompassing Orange, Osceola, Seminole Counties and the City of Orlando. Each year, HSN is required by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to complete an annual count of the homeless in the Continuum which includes 2,500 square miles of urban, suburban and rural settings.

The data is submitted as a part of HSN's competitive Continuum of Care funding application which includes requests for homeless services funding between \$4.8 million and \$6.5 million annually from HUD. It is also reported to the State of Florida's Office on Homelessness for aggregation into an annual statewide report. County governments use the data in the preparation of their five year HUD Consolidated Plans and one-year action plans for their Community Development and Housing Departments.

HSN has partnered with the University of Central Florida's Institute on Social Policy and Research, which is headed by Dr. Jim Wright, a national expert on homelessness, to craft the tools used for the survey and aggregate the data that is collected.

Definition of homelessness:

HSN uses the HUD definition of homelessness in its Point in Time Count:

A person is considered homeless only when he/she resides in one of the places described below:

- *In places not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings (on the street).*
- *In an emergency shelter or motel paid for with an emergency shelter voucher*
- *In transitional or supportive housing for homeless persons who originally came from the streets or emergency shelters.*
- *In any of the above places but is spending a short time (up to 30 consecutive days) in a hospital or other institution.*
- *Is fleeing a domestic violence housing situation and no subsequent residence has been identified and lacks the resources and support networks needed to obtain housing.*

Who is not counted:

The following persons are NOT considered homeless based on HUD's definition:

- *Persons living in housing, even though they are paying an excessive amount for their housing, the housing is substandard and in need of repair, or the housing is crowded.*
- *Persons living doubled up with relatives or friends, despite such occupancy being a lease or housing code violation.*
- *Persons staying in a motel, including a pay-by-the-week motels*
- *Persons living in a Board and Care, Adult Congregate Living Facility, or similar place.*
- *Persons being discharged from an institution that is required to provide or arrange housing upon release such as hospitals, correctional facilities and foster care programs.*

HSN does not include data on families with children who are considered homeless by US Department of Education rules in its HUD report, but does include data on this growing population in the Annual Point in Time Count.

HSN is unable to include data on homeless persons residing in correctional facilities as their homeless status is not ascertained at booking. HSN is also unable to include data on homeless persons in hospitals as their homeless status is not ascertained during admitting and there is no systematic data collected about housing status at patient discharge.

Methodology:

The count was performed on January 25, 2009, based on HUD's requirement that the count take place within a specified ten days in January 2009. The count has three phases:

1. Sheltered homeless: HSN sends surveys to all the emergency shelter and transitional housing providers in the Continuum of Care. On Point in Time Day, agency case managers interview each client and the completed forms are return to HSN for input into the regional Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
2. Unsheltered homeless street count: HSN organizes trained teams of volunteers who visit food banks, drop-in centers, day labor pools and other gathering places where unsheltered homeless may receive services on Point in Time Day. Each person is interviewed and the results are input into the database.
3. Unsheltered homeless camp count and spot survey: HSN designates the Health Care Center for the Homeless HOPE Outreach Team to visit as many camps as feasible among the 175 camps in the region to complete surveys of camp residents.

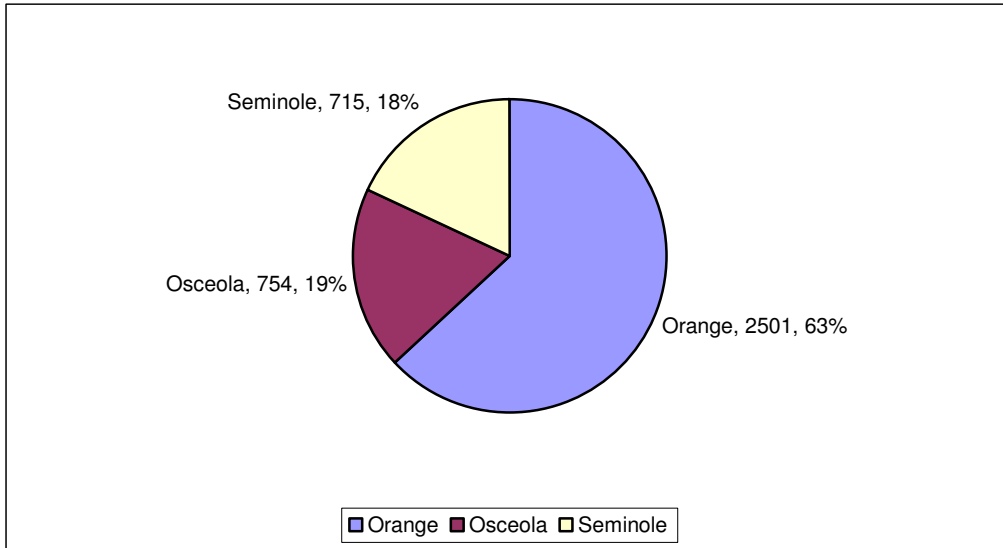
While surveys are anonymous, sufficient information about each client is obtained to "deduplicate" the database of clients who may have visited a soup kitchen, gone to a labor pool and checked into a homeless shelter during the one day count and participated in multiple interviews.

Due to lack of resources, there are limitations in the method used by HSN in counting unsheltered homeless because the agency is unable to visit all the abandoned buildings, camps and street locations where homeless congregate.

2009 PIT Results:

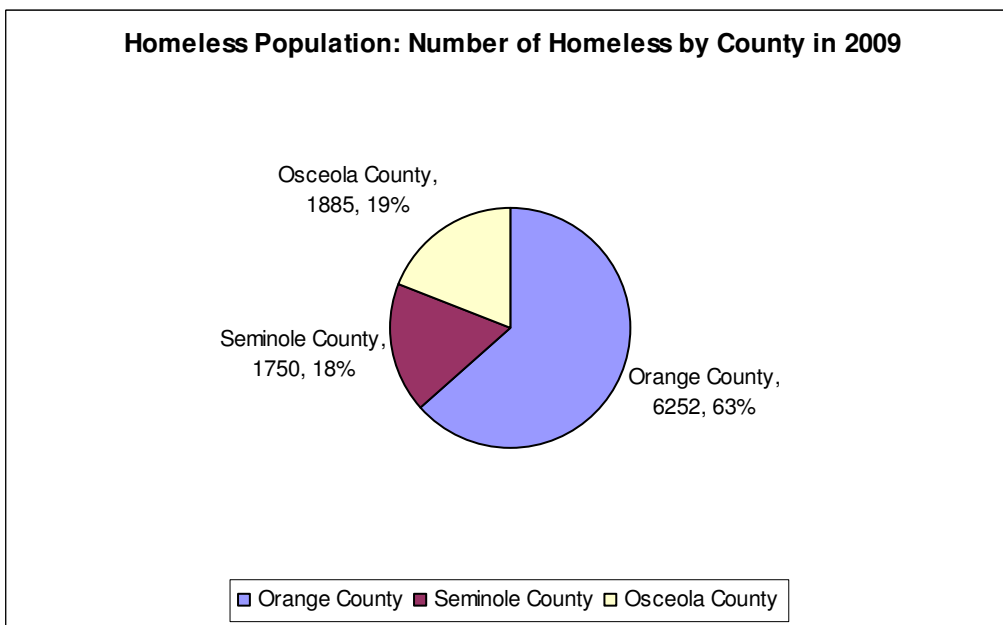
Based on the limited Point in Time Count that was conducted, HSN estimates that there are 3,970 homeless persons living in Central Florida on any given night in 2009. Their distribution is shown in Table 1A.

TABLE 1A: NUMBER OF HOMELESS IN CENTRAL FLORIDA ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT IN 2009: 3,970



Using HUD-recommended statistical analyses based on PIT data collected, HSN estimates that 9,887 persons will experience homelessness in 2009 in Central Florida

TABLE 1B: NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO WILL EXPERIENCE HOMELESSNESS IN CENTRAL FLORIDA IN 2009: 9,887



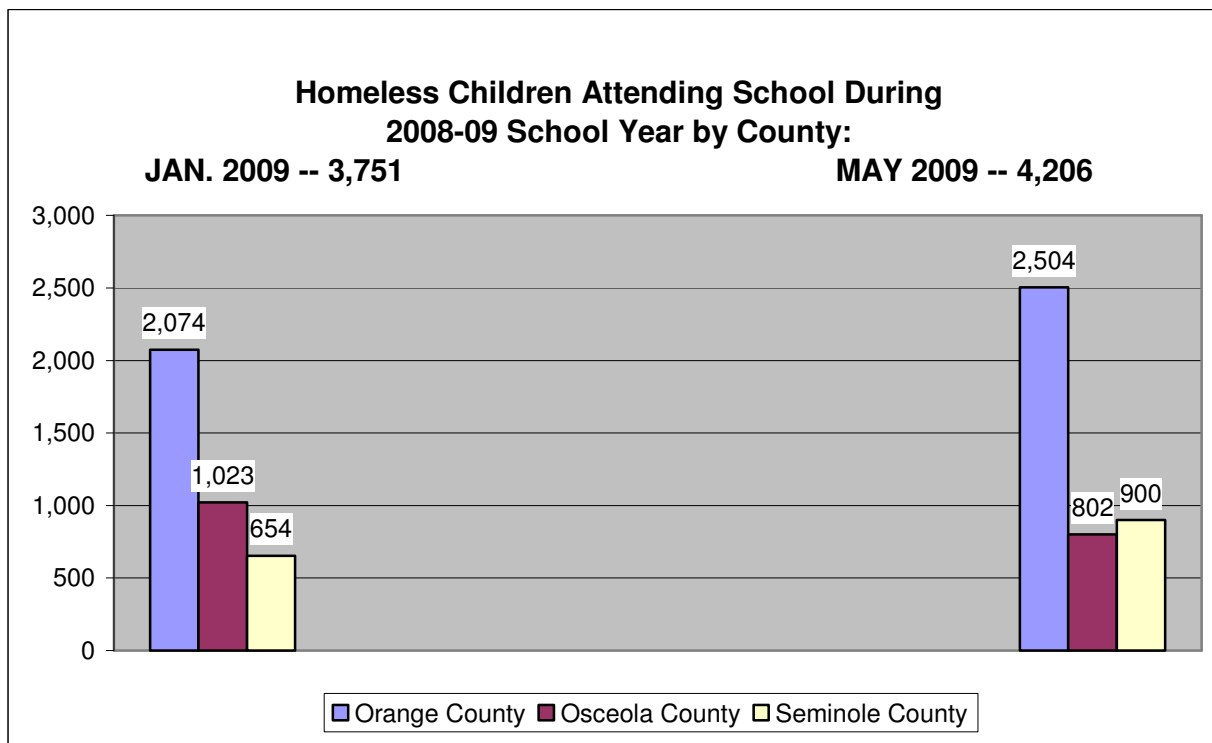
This data shows a 17% increase in the number of homeless persons in the region over 2008 results. That increase reflects, in part, HSN's greater proficiency in completing the annual Point in Time Count over 2007 and 2008 results.

The most significant changes have occurred in the following categories:

The number of homeless veterans has increased from 1,185 in 2008 to 1,680 in 2009. The increase may not be in absolute terms because HSN and the local Veterans Administration have improved the methods of surveying camps, labor pools and food banks where many homeless veterans congregate.

However, the period from discharge to homelessness has shortened considerably. On average, Vietnam War veterans became homeless six years after discharge. By contrast, Gulf War and Iraq War veterans are becoming homeless within 18 months of discharge, reflecting the intense pressure on the veterans' medical system to serve returning veterans with post traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury and serious physical disabilities.

The number of homeless families with children, as defined by US Department of Education regulations, has increased dramatically since 2008 as shown below. At the end of the 2007-08 school year, 2,700 homeless children had attended schools in the region. The following chart reflects data collected in January 2009 and May 2009 to illustrate the significant increase in this population during this school year.



These homeless families with children are living for months in motel rooms with an entire family including 2-3 children occupying one room, doubled up with families or friends where a lease or code violations are occurring or living in cars or abandoned buildings.

The high occupancy rate of the limited number of shelter beds for families with children and the increase in the total of DOE/defined homeless children are leading indicators of an impending increase in the number of homeless families with children expected during the next 12 months.

The balance of this report presents data on the characteristics of our homeless population in Central Florida based on the population HUD permits HSN to survey.

TABLE 2: GENDER

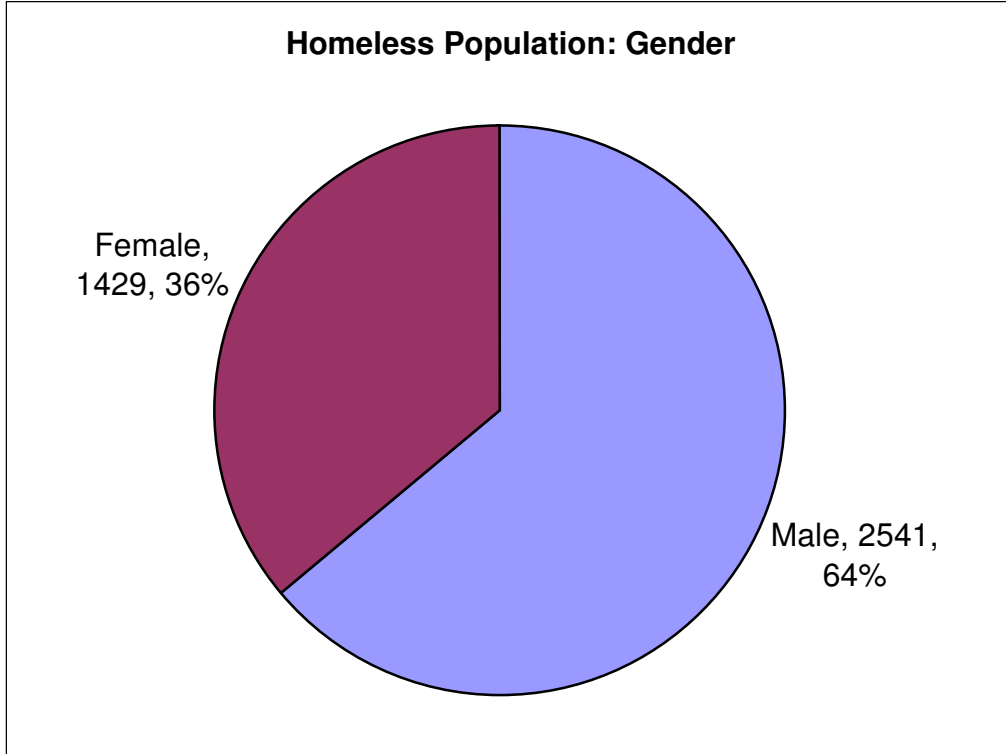


TABLE 3: AGE

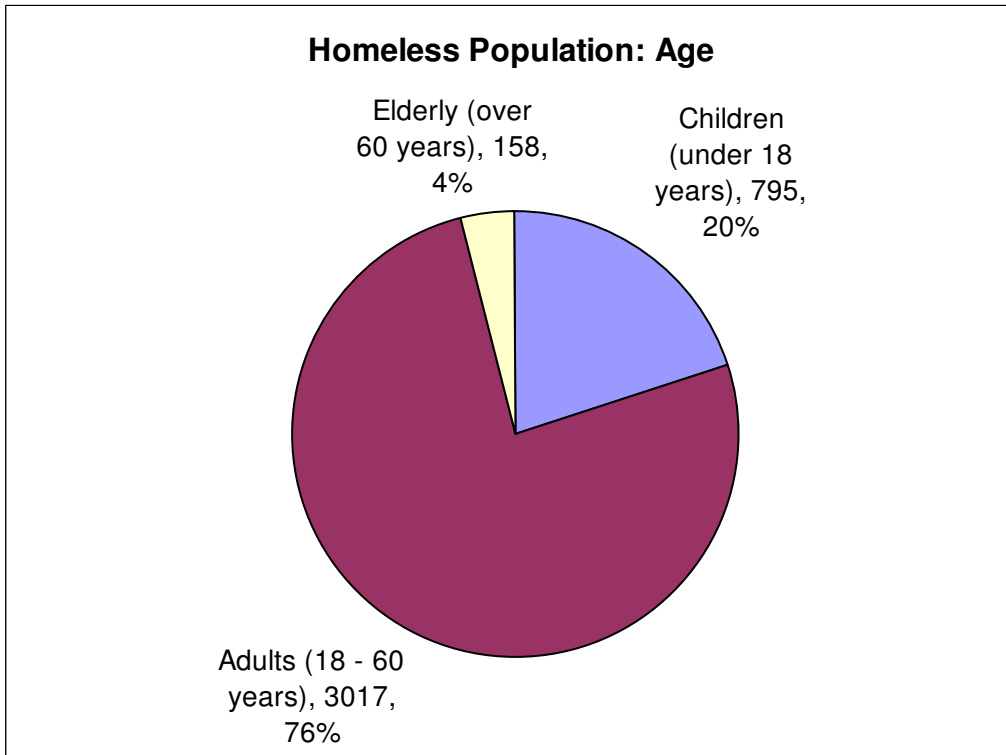


TABLE 4: RACE

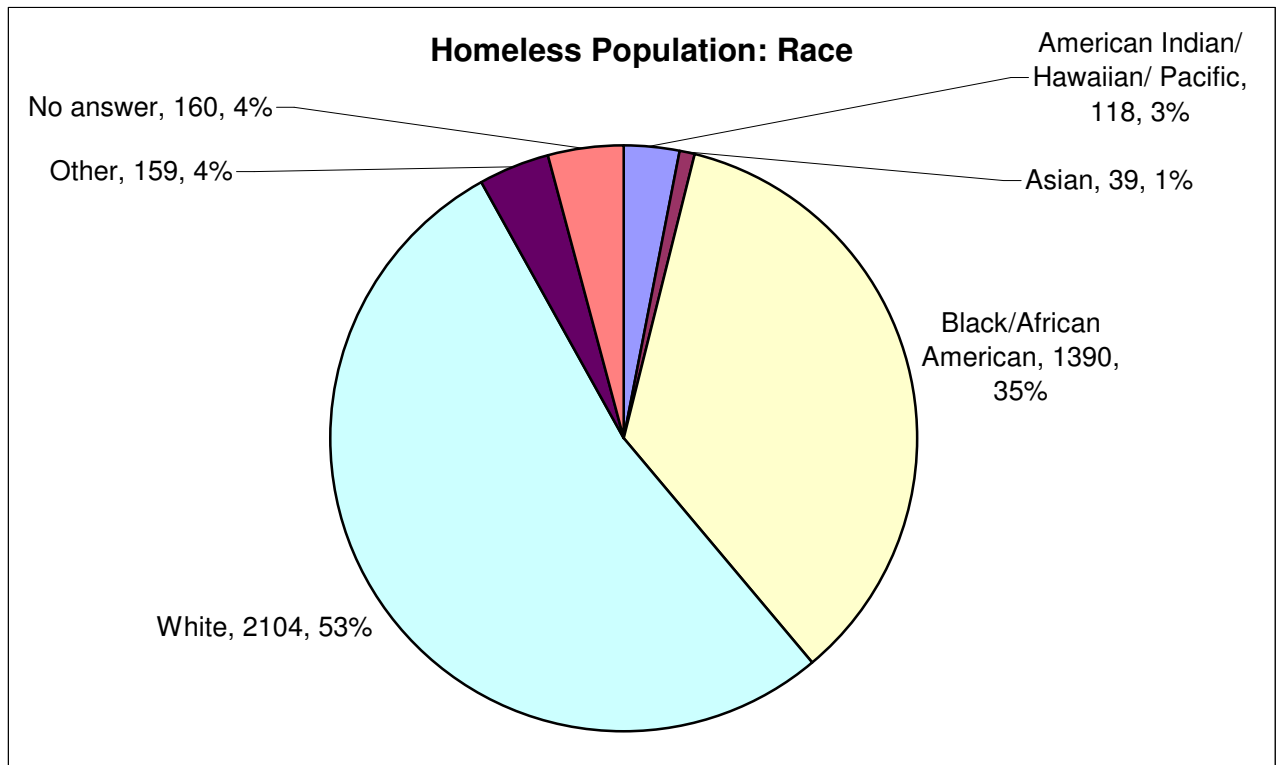


TABLE 5: ETHNICITY

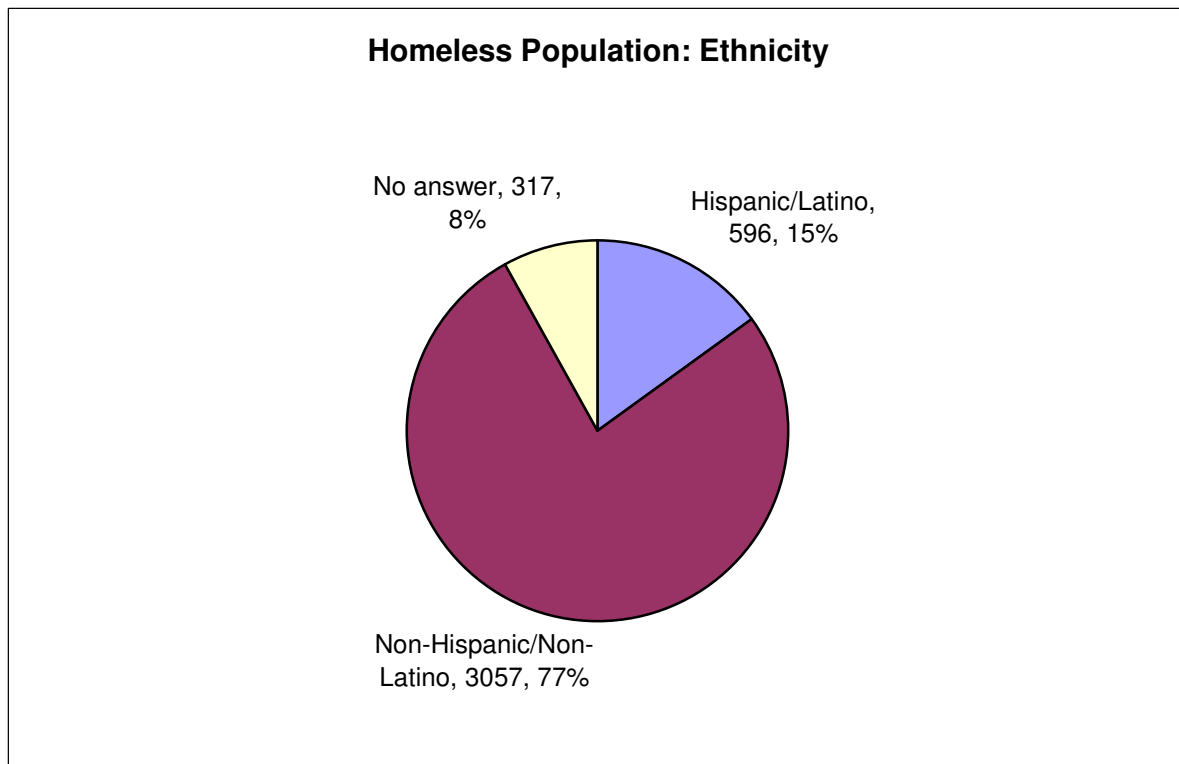


TABLE 6: VETERAN STATUS

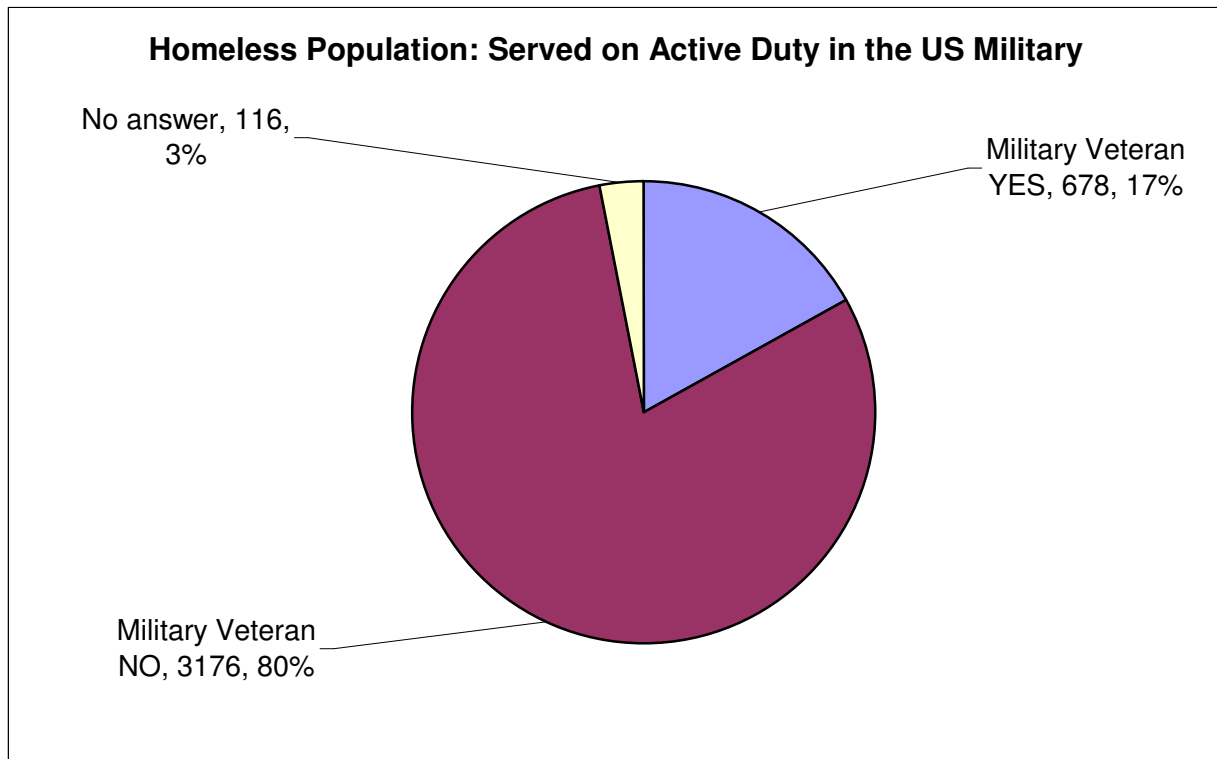


TABLE 7: PRIOR EPISODES OF HOMELESSNESS

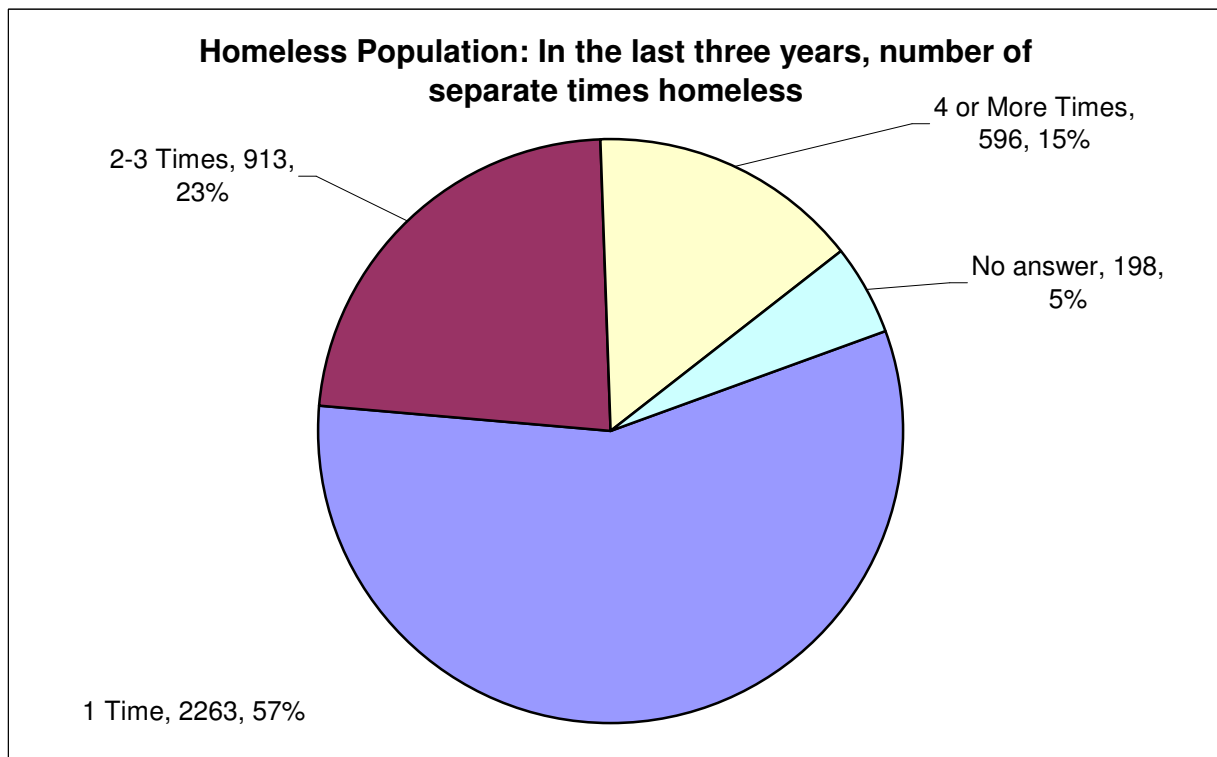


TABLE 8: LENGTH OF CURRENT HOMELESS EPISODE

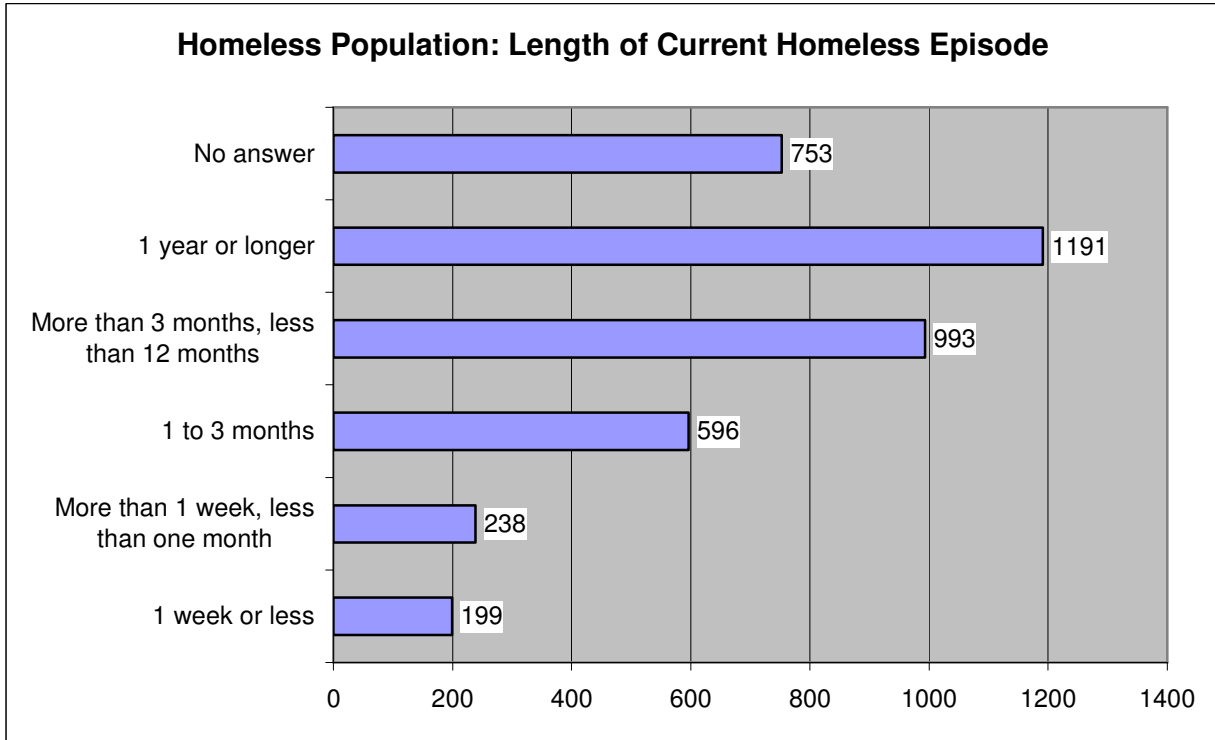


TABLE 9: DISABLING CONDITIONS

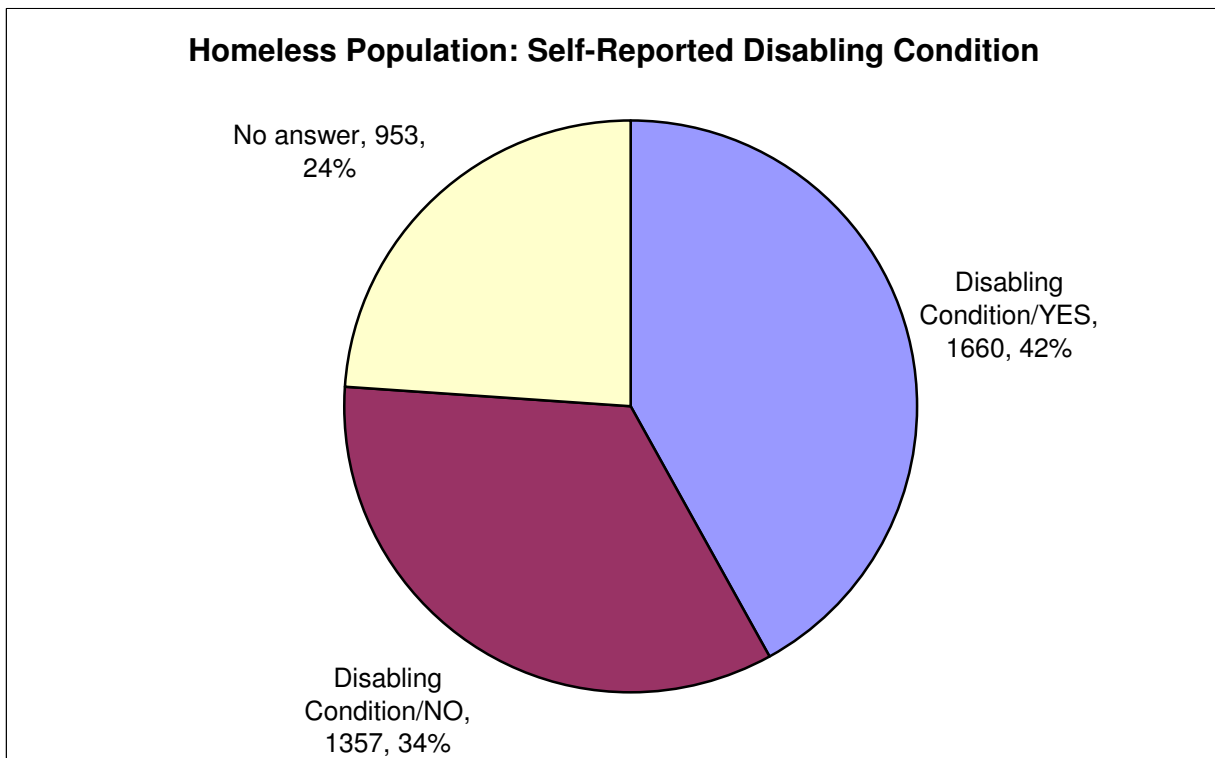


TABLE 10: TYPE OF SELF-REPORTED DISABILITIES

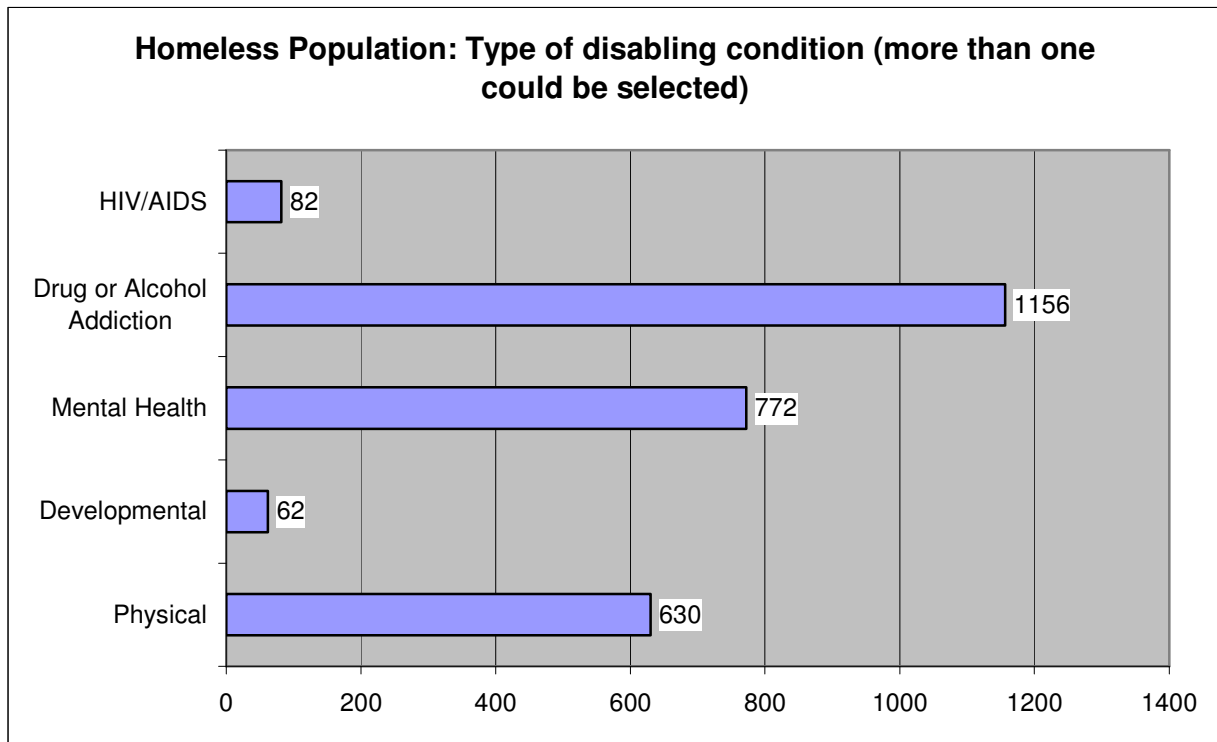


TABLE 11: CAUSE OF HOMELESSNESS

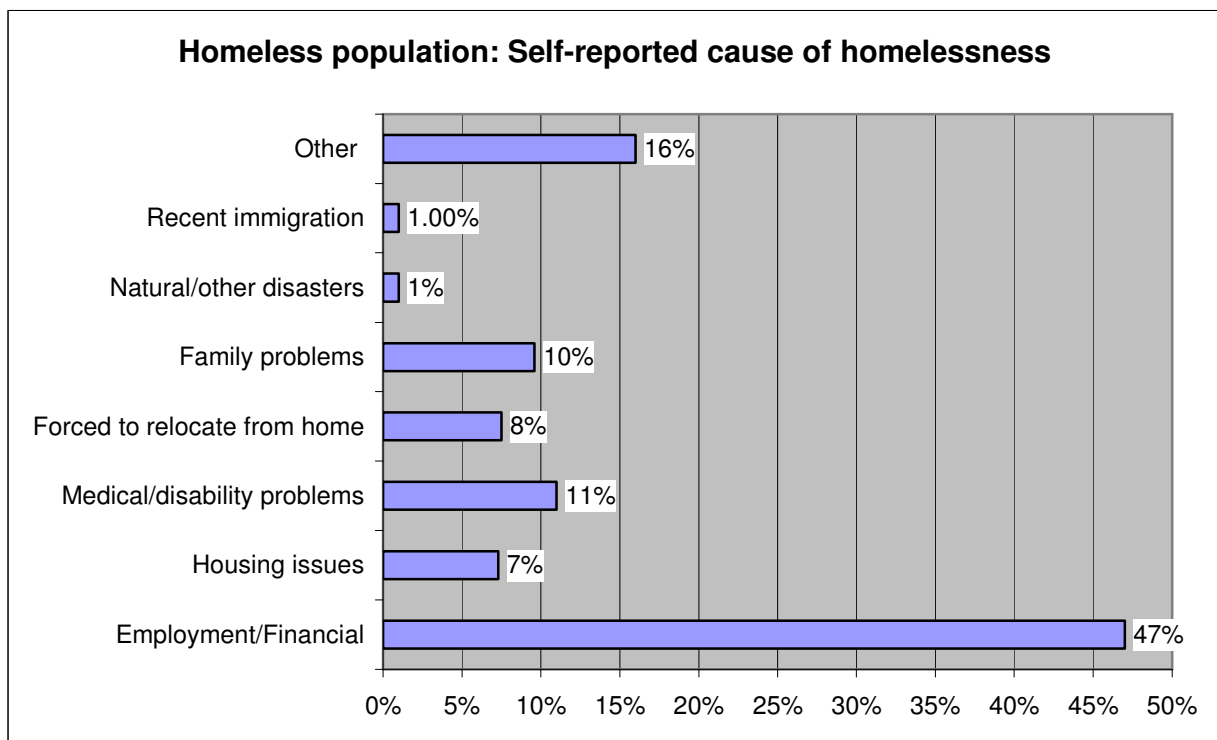


TABLE 12 A: INCOME/FINANCIAL RESOURCES

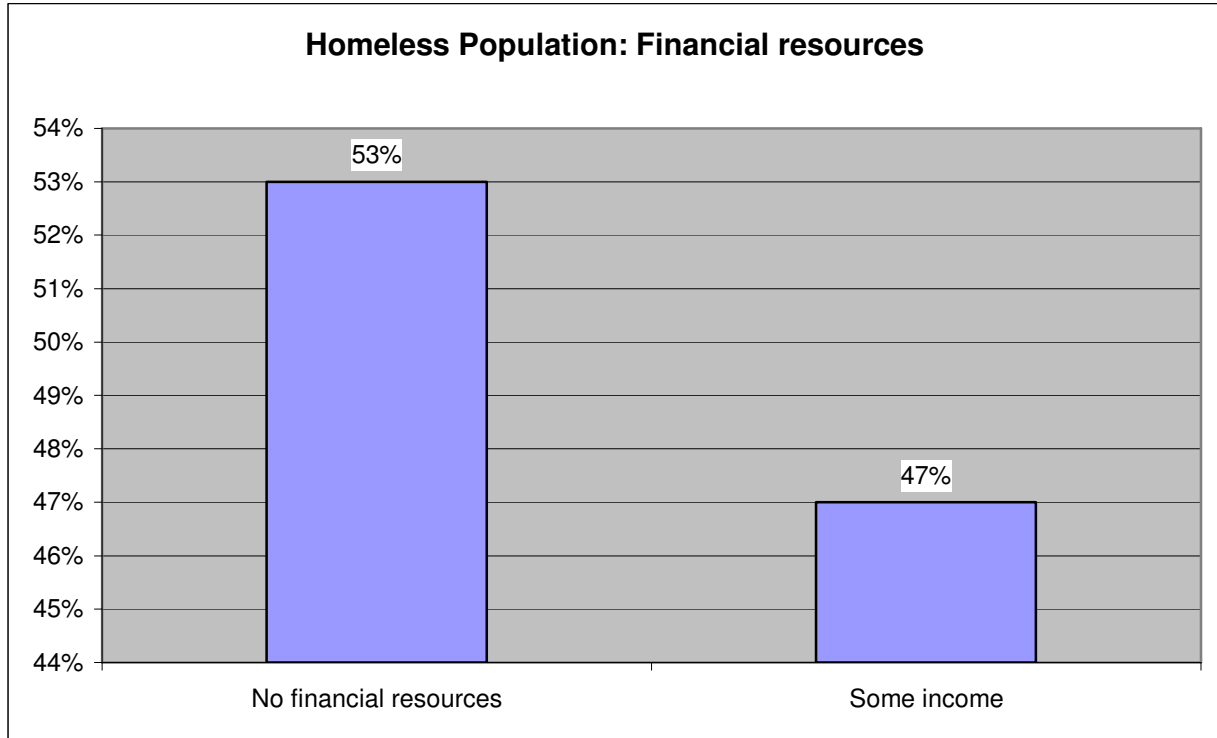


TABLE 12 B: SOURCES OF INCOME

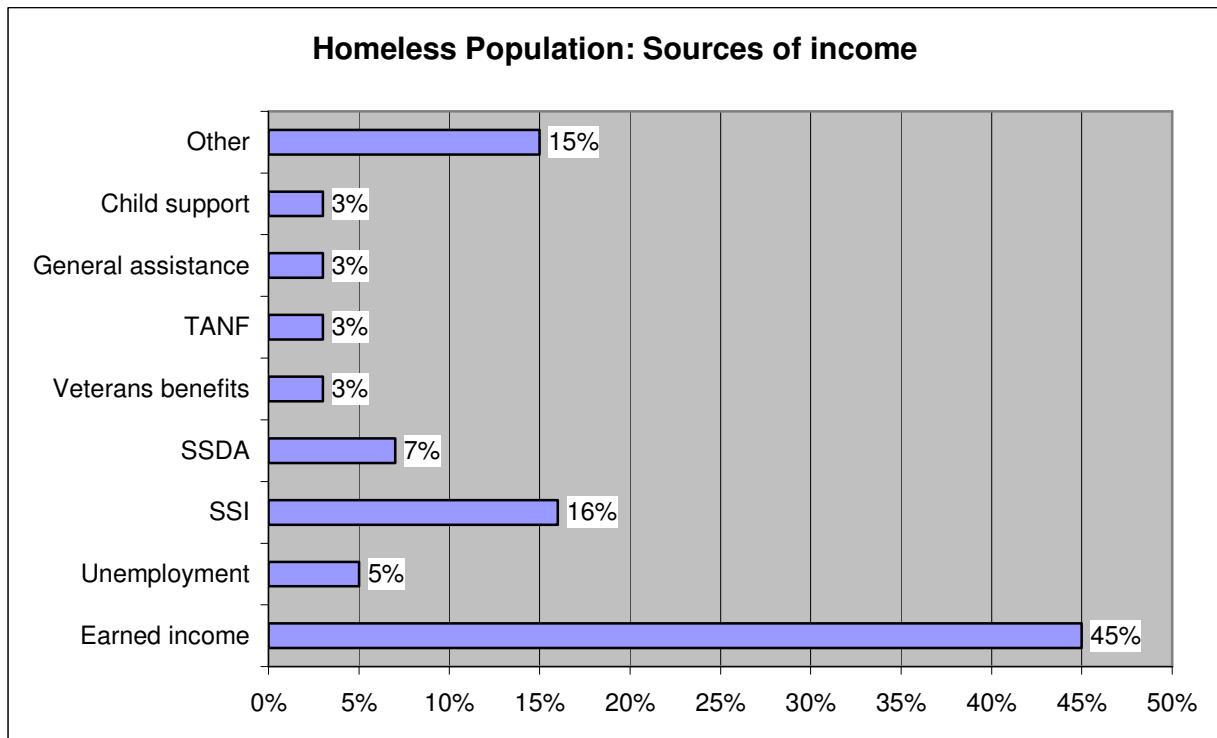
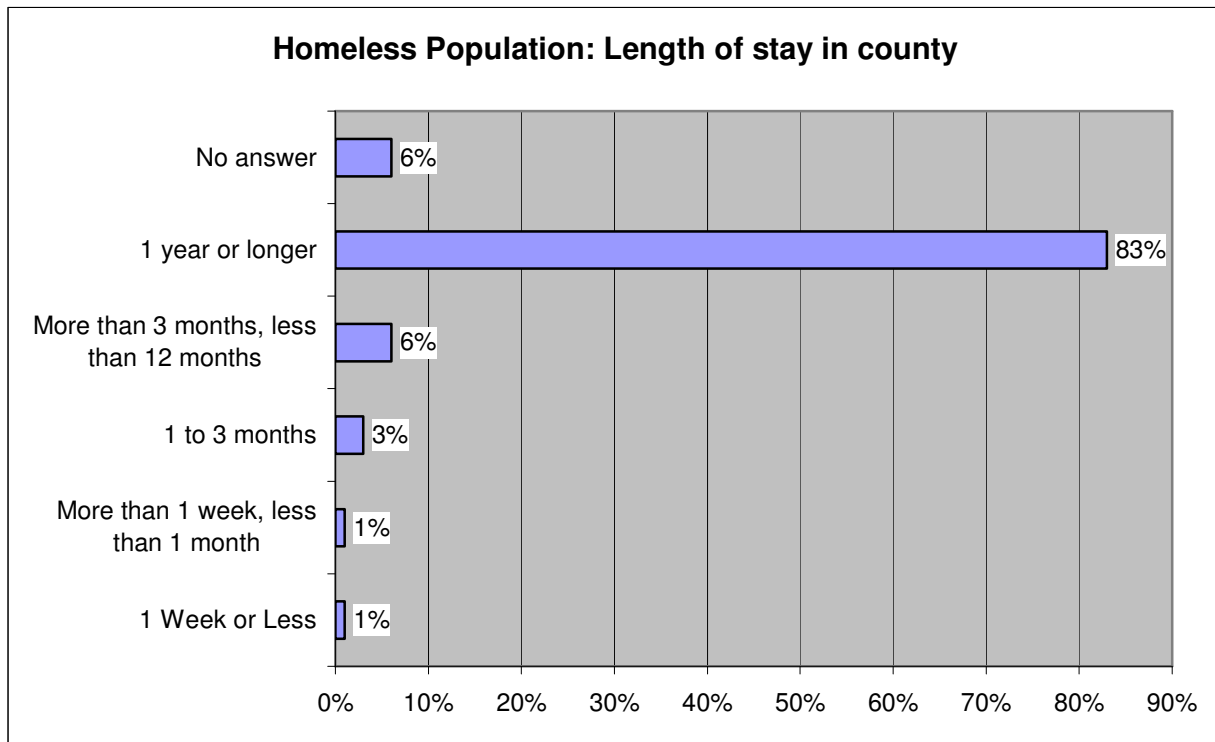


TABLE 13: LENGTH OF RESIDENCE



For more information on the homeless population of Central Florida, an overview of the current shelter resources available in each county, a gaps analysis of current needs, and research-based best practices in serving the homeless, please contact:

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