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Building Capacity and Agency in Emergency Shelters in Paterson, NJ

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Building Capacity and Agency in Emergency Shelters in Paterson, NJ



POLS 324 White Paper No.2

Edited by: Fanny Lauby, Ph.D.

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Montclair State University

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Executive Summary

Mohamed Fayez, Sofia Guzman Cintron, Mark Scott

This white paper addresses three aspects of Paterson's homeless problem: 1) medical-treatment based discrimination; 2) unavailability of emergency housing; and 3) the lack of identification paperwork for unhoused individuals.

Key Findings

This paper outlines a consistent issue with Paterson City's communication across departments, resulting in a lack of accessible data at multiple levels and a reduced knowledge among social workers and program coordinators. These citywide issues have contributed to a culture of confusion. The city of Paterson is improperly pursuing the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s "Housing First" approach, resulting in a relative lack of housing programs - constituting a matter of long-term concern for the city.

Recommendations

Grading Rubric: We propose merging together two Continuums of Care (CoC), which would provide an increase in funding and geographical boundaries. However, it would be a massive undertaking and would not likely solve the immediate problem of long lengths of stay in a timely manner. We recommend modifying the existing shelter evaluation rubric to reduce the weight of questions about the removal of individuals and for the NJ-511 Paterson-Passaic CoC to focus on funding programs that emphasize "pull factors" and providing secondary services.

Housing Capacity: An overall lack of capacity is a major problem in Paterson, adding an unwanted strain on the municipal government and citizens. Establishing a regional task force would cost little financially, but is not politically feasible, and the long time needed for implementation renders it unviable. Centralizing data and distribution suffer from similar time issues, and would cost more than the other solutions. The recommendation would be to build capacity by focusing on transitional housing,

where the unhoused are re-established and ushered back into a safe, stable environment. The lack of transitional housing has caused Passaic County to rank 16/21 counties in New Jersey for transitional bedding. Newark's transitional housing program would be an ideal model.

Medical Discrimination: Medical-based discrimination of unhoused individuals on opioid replacement therapy (ORT) by shelters discourages rehabilitation and does not allow for stability when most needed. The proposed increased emphasis on open access to ORT is not politically viable, nor will it decrease ongoing discrimination. We recommend creating an education campaign to address misconceptions about opioid use disorders, and to remind shelters of their legal duty to provide care for these individuals in compliance with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).

Identification: Identification is vital for an unhoused person to access services. It has been noted that Paterson's social workers are often unaware that they can and are sometimes required to help provide access to documents necessary for getting IDs. The innovative recommendation is that the state develops a digitized state ID database, centralizing the process into one online platform, as it yielded fruitful in Taipei, Texas, and Colorado.

For these recommendations to be effective in Paterson, it is vital to address the issue of inter-department communications. Multiple chapters within this white paper mention an education gap in social workers and coordinators, along with a lack of accessible data, as a hindrance. All recommended policies should be implemented as soon as possible. The primary concern *should be* on creating, formulating, funding, and implementing these programs to improve the quality of life for all affected persons with adjustments being made along the way.

Introduction

Fanny Lauby, Ph.D., Ian Horn, Lucas Miglin

Paterson, in Passaic County, New Jersey, was established as the nation's first industrialized city in 1792. Despite its role in America's history of industrialization, Paterson bore a burden all too familiar to large cities in the 20th century: white flight, misguided urban renewal, and widespread unemployment and poverty. After decades of stagnant population growth or decline, Census data shows the city added over 13,000 residents from 2010 to 2020.

New Jersey has seen a significant increase in the homeless population from 2019 to 2023. Paterson, in Passaic County, is no different. NJ Counts, the agency tasked with tracking the state's homeless population, reported 392 residents of Passaic County in 2023, a considerable increase from the 314 reported in 2019. In spite of this, fewer people live outside shelters. In Passaic County, 55 individuals resided in shelters in 2023 compared to 117 in 2019. From individual struggles to secure identification papers, and discrimination regarding the quality and type of care provided within shelters, changes must be made to improve care for people experiencing homelessness.

According to NJ Counts data, 109 homeless people in 2023 reported substance abuse as a disabling condition. Many of these people seek medication-assisted treatment for their condition. This status is protected under current NJ anti-discrimination laws, yet many are still denied entry to private shelters who believe these laws apply only to public shelters. As a result, it is all the more difficult for people to acquire stable housing while undergoing addiction treatment. Another barrier to stability is access to identification, which is necessary for meaningful employment and private housing. While there are laws currently meant to address this issue, they are not properly enforced: 64 individuals among those surveyed in the NJ Counts report cited lack of ID as a barrier to public or private services.

Finally, the homelessness support infrastructure in Paterson and Passaic County lags behind. The length of stay in emergency shelters is among the longest in the state, and there is a significant gap in the amount of transitional bedding compared to similar counties. The capacity of the county's entire homeless support network has been massively strained by the COVID-19 pandemic, and as a result it lags in providing the necessary care that allows people to free themselves from the cycle of homelessness.

This white paper was written as a course requirement for POLS 324 Advanced Public Policy Analysis at Montclair State University. In the course, students analyze public policy and examine current issues. The learning objectives of the course include “critically evaluate the goals and

assumptions of different policy proposals,” “create a policy proposal for public problem,” and “evaluate the proposals developed by their peers.” For the spring 2024 iteration of the course, I invited Edward Boze, Chief Innovation Officer for the City of Paterson, to bring a problem for the students to work on during the semester. He gave a presentation on several issues affecting the unhoused population in Paterson, NJ, including lack of emergency shelter space, lack of access to identification, and discrimination against those on medical opioid treatment. He tasked the students with developing actionable solutions to this problem. Students formed groups, each picking a particular aspect of the problem (shelter grading for federal grants, identification, discrimination), and worked together on solutions. Each group authored a chapter, and students competed to produce the executive summary.

The following white paper presents the students’ findings and recommendations. This is being presented as the work of the students and the professor. Nothing herein is the official opinion of Montclair State University.

Chapter I: Increasing Capacity in Passaic County's Homelessness Infrastructure

Ian Horn, Lucas Miglin, and Joseph Lauria

Introduction

In the post-COVID-19 era, American homeless policy has reached an impasse. While a potential crisis was averted during the pandemic due to massive public intervention, the homeless population has increased in the years following. In 2023, the number of homeless people nationally, according to the 2023 Point-in-Time Count, was reported to be more than 650,000, representing a record-high tally and a 12 percent increase over 2022 (Olivet, 2023). There is growing pressure from citizens that their governments must do *something* to address this, but it is vital that the form this "something" takes on is meaningful and constructive. As the Brookings Institution writes: "Local leaders must double down on evidence-based policies that address *where*, *why*, and *how* homelessness occurs" (Love et al., 2024). We must be vigilant and critical when ensuring that homeless populations have access to a fair quantity and quality of care and assistance.

Paterson and Passaic County have not been exempted from the growth of the homeless population. Comparing the 2019 and 2023 point-in-time data from NJ Counts, there is an increase in the total homeless population in Passaic County, from 314 to 392. Much of this growth has gone directly into emergency or transitional housing: over the same 2019-2023 timeframe, the amount of people in emergency shelters has gone from 244 to 329. The unsheltered homeless population has been nearly cut in half, from 117 to 55 (NJ Counts, 2023). This is a massive accomplishment by Passaic County, though these people must be given the support they so desperately need to assist them in acquiring permanent housing.

Looking at federal funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, federal support has yet to grow to the extent it should to support these shelters. Continuum of Care (CoC) is a program created by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The program's intention is to promote community wide support towards the goal of ending homelessness through funding from non-profits, states, and Native American tribes. It is done so through the process of quickly rehousing homeless individuals, families, persons fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and youth, while also providing different programs like healthcare, food assistance, and other programs utilized to help those that are

unhoused become self-sufficient and obtain permanent housing (Department of Housing and Urban Development Exchange Info, 2024). CoC funding to the Paterson/Passaic County CoC region has increased from \$4,511,971 in 2019 to \$5,048,438 in 2023, but adjusting for CPI inflation, this 2023 funding is only \$4,247,593.09 in terms of 2019 dollars. Emergency Solutions Grants tell a similar story: \$192,721 in 2019 and \$215,795 in 2023, but this becomes \$181,562.96 in terms of 2019 dollars (Department of Housing and Urban Development Exchange 2024). Graphs illustrating the stagnation of federal funding to Paterson and Passaic County can be found in Appendix A and B.

Numbers on available bedding also paint a picture of this problem: 391 emergency or transitional beds were available in 2019, with 394 available in 2023 (Department of Housing and Urban Development Exchange Info 2020, 2023). Similar amounts of funding and beds are being shared among an increasing homeless population. This is putting a massive strain on the shelters' capacity. This is evidenced by data showing a rising length of stay at emergency shelters in Passaic, and stagnant rates of income among shelter-stayers. The lack of capacity among shelters in Passaic County means that the system has very little slack to handle the increasing number of homeless people.

Paterson especially is feeling the brunt of this, as 67.8% of the total homeless population and 65.1% of the sheltered population of Passaic County reside there, per 2023 NJ Counts data. Thus, Paterson is uniquely positioned to lead the push for new and relevant solutions to homelessness in Passaic County and perhaps North Jersey. Navigating the homeless problem will take a comprehensive approach, but we believe there are several ways Paterson can be a part of this. Three approaches to relieve the strained capacity of shelters within Passaic County will be examined, hoping these policies can help move people out of emergency shelters and achieve more permanent results.

The Problem and its Context

After massive public investment during the COVID-19 era, Paterson's homelessness infrastructure faced struggles coming back down to pre-COVID-19 levels of funding and safety nets. We can understand the difficulties of a stretched capacity when we directly look at the impact on shelters. The length of stay at emergency shelters increased from 105 days in 2019, to 133 days in 2020, then ballooning to 323 days in 2022 (Boze, 2023) Part of the rising length of stay stems from interpretation of federal guidelines on when people can be kicked out of an emergency shelter. However, there is something more systemic than federal guidelines and regulations here, as Passaic County is not alone in seeing a rising length of stay among its emergency shelters. Paterson and Passaic County, though, specifically sticks out among these as having the longest average length of

stay, nearly double the second highest county. Capacity can be charged through fairer and more adequate federal funding, but requires infrastructure at the local level for that funding to support.

As to why Paterson and Passaic County should take up this cause, it is their moral imperative to act and intervene. By working with and securing funding for these shelters, they have already affirmed that every individual has the right to secure sanctuary, food, health, and privacy. Mayor Sayegh's administration has already intervened on behalf of the health of people experiencing homelessness before with the Opioid Response Team (Malinconico, 2021). A strained capacity means fewer people getting the resources they need. At 71%, Passaic had one of the highest percentages of shelter-goers not raising their income, placing it among the worst in NJ counties (Boze, 2023). This illustrates that because of a strained capacity, there is a lack of ability to empower people to transition into permanent housing or improve their socio-economic situation in general. This stems from a lack of capacity and personalized response, as does the rising length of stay. Both the rising length of stay and failures to increase shelter-goers income forces people on the streets, a public health problem, preventing people from gaining access to necessary food and shelter. Many unsheltered people already suffer from mental health conditions, AIDs, or alcoholism, while living on the streets can create a whole host of new issues (Institute of Medicine 1988). There is a necessity for bold action, as addressing the lack of capacity in homelessness support networks requires getting to the root of how we face the homelessness crisis.

Possible Solutions

Though capacity building cannot, and should not come from any one source alone, we believe there are three main sources for addressing the lack of capacity in Paterson and Passaic County. The first, building a new transitional housing structure in Paterson, represents a direct, concrete way to increase the amount of people able to come through the system, and the amount of specific support these people could receive. The second is focused on the overall approach to addressing homelessness in Passaic County, and involves using innovative technology and user-focused methods to increase the quality of help received. The final proposal revolves around a regional task force on homelessness issues, a simple way to coordinate and ensure information is shared across town and county lines.

1. Building new Transitional Housing in Paterson

When looking at building capacity within Paterson's homeless infrastructure, it is essential to recognize and play off the variety of roles that emergency shelter services provide. Alongside food and shelter, these shelters often serve specialized populations, such as domestic violence

victims and people with disabilities. Transitional housing is a form of temporary housing with supportive programs intended to assist those who experience homelessness in obtaining long-term or permanent housing. However, Passaic County significantly needs more transitional housing infrastructure, they lag behind other counties in providing this necessary service. The Independence House, operated by the New Jersey Community Development Program, is currently the only official transitional housing structure in Passaic County. It provides ten beds and support to young men aged 18-21 who have left the foster care system and are vulnerable to homelessness. The eight people housed in its transitional bedding ranks 16th out of 21 counties in the state, far behind counties such as Bergen (106 in transitional housing) and Morris (104 in transitional housing), that have a similar total number of people experiencing homelessness (NJ Counts, 2023). A table comparing different counties and percentage of their homeless population in different types of shelters in the State of New Jersey in Appendix C. Without these services, Passaic is putting extra strain on its emergency shelters; populations are not getting the specialized support they need and must turn to emergency shelters instead.

One expansion of transitional housing services in Paterson could be modeled from Hope Village II program in Newark. The Hope Village II program retrofitted storage containers to provide 20 beds of transitional housing at a cost of about \$5 million to the city (Kadosh, 2024). This program serves all people, but a similar program in Paterson should target families and the young; Passaic currently has 88 children aged 0-17 and 48 families experiencing homelessness, all of which currently reside in emergency shelters according to NJ Counts. The feasibility of implementing this by the city of Paterson would be difficult as the majority of the funding came from the Build Back Better Act, which no longer exists. However, fiscally speaking, the structure cost would be nearly identical to Newark's, as it was built very recently. Newark is also geographically close, so the costs of things would not differentiate that much.

This hypothetical new structure would provide essential support, stability, and privacy to Passaic County's underserved populations. This program could become a central part of a comprehensive response to homelessness in Passaic County. Though some of Newark's funding for this project came from the American Rescue Plan, there exists a variety of potential funding sources Paterson could utilize (Kadosh 2023). Congressional Community Project Funding is one avenue, as Paterson could submit a request for federal appropriations for this project through Congressman Pascrell; the city recently received \$2 million in grants from this program (Pascrell, 2024). Newark sourced some money for the Hope II program from HUD Community Development Block Grant (Kadosh, 2024). This is not an exhaustive list, though Paterson does have the opportunity for many different forms of funding from state and federal sources, a longer list of which can be found in Appendix D.

Equally important to funding would be picking a location for this hypothetical program. Careful consideration must be taken to minimize potential public backlash. Recent opposition to a men-only shelter in Brooklyn shows that support for people experiencing homelessness is not immune from criticism (Cuebas-Fantauzzi et al., 2024). Especially given general societal and political opposition attitudes toward those experiencing homelessness and programs intended towards assisting them (Cuebas-Fantauzzi). A program serving homeless families would likely not face backlash this severe, but building any type of new housing or structures could be deemed intrusive and face opposition. A supplemental solution instead of the construction of new transitional housing is the repurposing of old facilities, not being used, turned into the transitional housing solution. Examples of previous renovation plans in Paterson and other municipalities are displayed in Appendix E. Special care must be given when selecting a location, and a committee could be formed to locate a spot to build if Paterson decides to go through with construction or repurposing of new transitional housing.

2. Ensuring Data Innovation and Modernization in Homelessness Services

Paterson, and Passaic County, need to take initiative in utilizing data to address homelessness. The inability to leverage and compare data places an increased strain on those administering and coordinating support systems for people without housing, which leads to them being unable to give them the support they need. Passaic County could look to the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative (MDHI) as an example of leveraging data to implement homeless policy. This initiative acknowledges the scarce resources to support people experiencing homelessness, and so it analyzes vulnerability to prioritize who has access to programs (OneHome Coordinated Entry 2024). Centering focus on those affected by homelessness policy, this program provides needed support rather than a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

The state of New Jersey has made progress on this through Coordinated Entry and the 211 hotline. This provided one site, one phone number, and one place that all data and information regarding homelessness can be accessed. One simple improvement to this would be to offer dedicated Spanish-language support in the Passaic County 211 hotline (973-500-3025), given that 37.1% of the county speak Spanish at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022).

Another avenue for building capacity in emergency shelters would be State Legislature Bill A114 (S1152 in the State Senate). It would be immediately beneficial, requiring the state Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency to provide real-time data on bedding available in shelters, accessible to all operators of shelters (Guardian, 2024). This solution builds shelter capacity by making the referral process much more efficient, as shelter operators would know the exact

amount and where of available bedding. Building shelter capacity and targeting client outreach through data is infeasible for Paterson to accomplish unilaterally. However, the mayor and his administration should make the modernization of homelessness services a central component of tackling the homelessness crisis. Rethinking the ways through which we tackle homelessness not only works to reduce the immediate tension on our systems for supporting the homeless, but also eases the stress on these systems in the future.

3. Establishing a Regional Task Force on Homelessness

Due to multiple programs' lack of communication and data intersectionality, the issue of homelessness has been inadequately handled on several issues and topics—an example of this being the HUD grading system and rubrics. Counties had no coordination on the way they structured their shelter grading rubrics, leading to different interpretations of one set of federal guidelines, causing a potential variation in shelter policy at the local level. Some counties implemented harsher rules that effectively meant no shelters could kick anyone out for any reason to receive the most funds, others were more lax. Clearly, there should be better avenues of communication across county lines to prevent this kind of misinterpretation.

The Brookings Institution writes, "There is growing consensus among homelessness service providers and city and regional officials that no one institution, organization, funding source, or level of government can solve homelessness alone" (Love et al., 2024). To strengthen and embolden the unofficial connections that already exist, some change is needed to coordinate across non-profits, municipalities, and county lines. Many of the biggest cities in America have realized this, and there have been pushes for more regional approaches to homelessness policy through task forces and regional frameworks.

The King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA) exemplifies this task force. Centered across Seattle and King County, KCRHA works to form a cohesive regional response to homelessness by leveraging data and partnerships with public and private actors. The KCRHA serves more than 2 million residents in Seattle and King County at large, far more than the 500,000 residents of Passaic County alone (KCRHA, 2020). So, a task force should include not just Passaic, but potentially Bergen or Essex as well, in order to serve a greater number of people, and pool resources and data better. Hypothetical cooperation with either of these counties would have the added benefit of cross-county communication, which would allow a better spread of new ideas on tackling homelessness, as well as better discussion and understanding of existing programs and guidelines.

If properly implemented, this task force could lead the fight against homelessness in North Jersey. Paterson needs to take the lead on pushing for something in the vein of KCRHA, coordinating concerns and needs for shelter providers, government officials, and other actors in the fight against homelessness. There are difficulties present when getting organizations to shed their autonomy, especially given that some municipalities in Bergen and Passaic practice bussing their homeless populations into Paterson. Paterson could “sell” such an organization to these other groups and localities by framing it as a measure of efficiency, but it could be a tough sell. This hypothetical organization would significantly strengthen the capacity of shelters and others working on the homeless policy through innovative means.

Evaluation

Through evaluating plausible solutions for increasing the capacity of homeless shelters and general homelessness support services in Passaic County, we devised four criteria to grade potential solutions. These include the direct effect on raising the capacity of the homelessness infrastructure, the time for implementation, the monetary cost, and the political cost. To determine the scores for each criterion, we analyzed similar proposals discussed in the paper and how they performed under the same criteria.

Effect on Raising Capacity of Homelessness Infrastructure: This criterion is the most important when analyzing these selected policy solutions, as it is the most vital and pressing matter regarding the homelessness infrastructure in Paterson and Passaic county. Thus, it is given a 2x weight when scoring.

- **2** - This program would have a negligible impact on the capacity of homelessness infrastructure in Paterson.
- **4** - This program would have an intermediate effect on the capacity of homeless infrastructure in Paterson once implemented.
- **6** - This program would have a large impact on the capacity of homeless infrastructure in Paterson once implemented.

Time for Implementation: Given the pressing nature of the capacity crisis of homelessness support networks in Passaic County, it is important to keep in mind the time frame of potential policy solutions.

- **1** - This program could take 2+ years for implementation
- **2** - This program could take up to 1 year for implementation
- **3** - This program could be implemented within the next 6 months

Monetary Cost: The dollar cost of a program, as this is important to keep in mind when gauging the likelihood of implementation.

- **1** - The implementation of this program would carry a high monetary cost.
- **2** - The implementation of this program would be economically feasible.
- **3** - The implementation of this program would have little monetary cost.

Political Cost: The political cost, measured as resistance from within the government, pertaining to both elected officials and bureaucrats. As well as the public, both of which are important to keep in mind when gauging the likelihood of implementation.

- **1** - The implementation of this program would face severe public and governmental backlash.
- **2** - The implementation of this program would have moderate public and governmental backlash.
- **3** - The implementation of this program would face little to no public or governmental backlash.

Table 1. Evaluation matrix

	Effect on Capacity of Homeless Support Infrastructure	Time For Implementation	Monetary Cost	Political Cost	Totals
New Transitional Housing Structure	6	1	1	2	10
Regional Task Force on Homelessness	2	2	3	1	8
Data Innovation and Modernization	4	1	2	1	8

Recommendation

We evaluated three solutions intended to positively affect the capacity of Passaic County’s homelessness support systems: new transitional housing structures, regional task forces, and data

centralization. Based on our evaluation of the three solutions we have proposed for increasing the capacity of homelessness infrastructure, we concluded that the creation of new transitional housing is the best solution to addressing this issue.

This solution has been implemented by other cities both across the country and locally, it is something Passaic and Paterson are uniquely lacking in. Newark has taken initiative, giving them the ability to house and support many new people. While we recognize that the cost of implementing this solution is substantial, it is very achievable given the prevalence of federal grants and the analysis of Newark's program. In addition to fiscal feasibility, it addresses a significant gap in how Paterson handles homelessness. The increase in these transitional housing beds provides immediate support to those suffering from homelessness and provides them the support they need to move beyond emergency shelters and prevent further bouts of homelessness in the future.

Conclusion

This report underscores the compelling need for a comprehensive approach to combating the pervasive issue of homelessness in Paterson. It emphasizes the critical importance of constructing transitional housing and harnessing the power of state policymakers, federal grants, and existing support networks to tackle this multifaceted issue. These measures are considered paramount in light of the recurring capacity constraints experienced daily and worsened by the increasing homeless population in emergency shelters across Paterson and the broader scope of New Jersey.

Additionally, the report strongly advocates earnestly adopting data to create a targeted approach to homelessness. If executed properly, this step can empower Paterson to proactively navigate the complexities of addressing homelessness with precision and efficacy, fostering a tangible improvement in the well-being of Paterson's most underserved and needy populace. By committing to this course of action, Paterson can take a bold stance on the future of homelessness policy, cultivating a more sustainable, inclusive system where people are empowered and able to surpass their struggles.

Chapter 2: Providing Identification for Homeless Individuals

*Kayleigh Amerman, Joe Cedzidlo, Mariama Diallo,
Ben Polk, and Aaron Scott*

Problem Description

Existing in society without any form of identification is virtually impossible, and this is an issue about 50% of the homeless individuals in New Jersey face. These people cannot open bank accounts, they cannot apply for jobs, and they cannot apply for housing- contrasting to a mainstream life where people can easily apply for jobs, rent apartments or apply for a mortgage, go to the doctor, or buy a car. Without ID, there is no hope for these individuals to get off the streets (Balcerzak 2022).

Homelessness is a chronic issue within this state, there was a 17% increase this past year (Marshall 2023). With an increase that large, there are more and more people who are falling through the cracks of society. In January of 2023, a Point-In-Time count was taken of homeless individuals in the state which showed there are a total of 10,267 people experiencing homelessness, 1966 of those people are considered chronically homeless (Homeless in New Jersey- by the numbers), and about half of those people are without identification.

The main issue at hand is interpretation of the law, and there are several ways that can be addressed. The law could be revised so it cannot be misinterpreted in the future; with clearer language, the law may be more successful. There could also be an education campaign to educate social workers on the proper law so they no longer misinterpret it. Lastly, the digitization of ID may make it easier for individuals to access their identification. Many people experiencing homelessness have access to a mobile device, so if their ID is stored digitally on that device the fear of loss or theft would be reduced.

Policy Solutions

1. Revising the Law

NJSA 26:8-63, as it is written now, states: “allows for a free copy for a homeless person, requested by either a social worker or the coordinator of the emergency shelter for the homeless, where the person is temporarily residing.

This is the most recent revision of the law, but as explained by Ed Boze, is currently being misinterpreted due to an incorrect summarization. The summary social workers use does not specify that social workers and shelter coordinators are separate entities. The homeless person does not need to be residing in a shelter in order to receive their birth certificate.

This law was originally promoted by the Department of Health and Senior Services in New Jersey and was approved on January 9, 2017. This bill was also a revision of a previous law in order to properly define “fee,” which was not clear in the previous law. There is precedent of incremental change to this policy, so the wording can be cleared up with another revision. In cities like Seattle, Washington, the Homeless ID Project was launched. A supporter of rights aptly pointed out that “The legal adjustments have led to a noticeable increase in ID distribution among homeless people, indicating progress towards meeting an important need” (KOMONEW, 2023). While not only seeing an increase in the distribution of IDs, the revision also keeps costs low. The Government Accountability (GAO, 2024) has suggested strategies using funds from various sources such as state, local government, and charitable organizations. Current assembly members should prioritize additional revision because without it, this law will be continually misinterpreted which will lead to more people falling through the cracks.

2. *Education Campaign*

The crux of the problem is that the current law that provides birth certificates to the homeless is not being applied correctly by the city of Paterson. The law states: **“The request shall be transmitted on the emergency shelter's letterhead and shall include the shelter's employer identification number and an attestation by the coordinator that the person requesting the certificate is currently homeless and residing at the shelter** or the request shall be submitted on the social worker's agency or professional practice letterhead and shall include the agency's or the professional practice's employer identification number and an attestation by the social worker that the person requesting the certificate is currently homeless” (N.J. Stat. Ann. § 26:8-63, West).

One possible theory proposed by Ed Boze, Chief Innovation Officer for Paterson City, for why the homeless are being denied birth certificates is that the law is being misinterpreted and applied incorrectly. Specifically, only the first half of the law in bold that outlines the process for submitting a request for a birth certificate for a homeless individual residing in a shelter is being regularly enforced while the second half of the law that outlines the process for a social worker submitting a request for a homeless person that does not reside at an emergency shelter is not.

One solution to this problem is to educate said social workers of Paterson so that the law is enforced correctly.

To accomplish this task, Paterson should institute an educational campaign designed to clarify what the law requires from social workers. This could range from a department wide memo to in person meetings. The primary goal of either method is for the social workers to gain intellectual skills. D. Ian Allen in their paper, "Learning Objectives and Teaching Strategies," defines intellectual skills as "stored memories of how to perform a class of tasks..." (Allen et. al., 1980). The task at hand for the social workers would be submitting birth certificate requests for the homeless who do not reside at an emergency shelter. These new "[i]ntellectual skills will be most effectively developed if instruction is managed so that prerequisite skills are developed and/or recalled, and guidance is given in the new performance to be acquired." (Allen et. al., 1980). This means that either method would have to provide a step-by-step process that is easy to follow so that social workers can begin to apply the law correctly.

The first step to implement the campaign would be to utilize primary actors to oversee the process. For example, the memo could come from the NJ department Vital Statistics if they were made aware of the noncompliance in Paterson. On their website, they provide a simpler wording of the law: "People who are homeless can have a social worker... submit a request on behalf of the homeless person, one copy of their birth certificate with the fee waived" (NJ Department of Health, Vital Statistics, 2024). Therefore, in an effort to ensure the enforcement of the law, vital statistics would most likely be the best option to draft and issue the memo to social worker agencies because of their advanced familiarity with the law. They could circulate a well-worded educational memo to the social worker agencies, and request that department heads of the social worker agencies hold an in-person meeting that circumvents the possibility of workers not reading a memo. Along with the new standards, Vital Statistics should also require reporting from the agencies in Paterson. Social workers would have to report the number of homeless individuals they have submitted birth certificate requests for, creating tangible evidence of the educational campaign's effectiveness.

The most promising aspect of this solution is that it would require very little funding. Formulating the memo at Vital Statistics or having a department wide meeting at a social worker agency would not be outside the scope of either institution's regular duties. Therefore, the only funding needed would be for the time it takes to write and circulate the memo itself. Besides funding, the campaign could cause a financial strain on the social worker agencies because of the additional daily workload. However, a "report that put Paterson's homeless population at 245" shows that there would not be very many birth certificate requests to be submitted (Malinconico, 2022). Therefore, this additional financial strain should be rather low.

The greatest implementation issues of this educational campaign would be vertical integration. Social workers have many duties and have to attend to a lot of paperwork, which means it would be easy for a memo to get lost or be unread. A social worker might miss a department wide meeting and continue to misapply the law. Requiring reporting however would mitigate this issue as it would be easy to determine who did not read the memo because they would not report the number of requests they have submitted. Should Vital Statistics find that many social workers are not reporting their numbers, they could issue further notices to the agencies. This would act as an extra reminder for social workers and their department heads to properly enforce the law. Another challenge would be ensuring good communication between Vital Statistics and social worker departments as well as within the departments themselves. The departments may not relay the reporting data to Vital Statistics in a timely manner making it difficult to determine the effectiveness of the solution. There may also be a lack of communication within the departments themselves should department heads fail to circulate the memos to all of the workers or follow up with them if they fail to report their request submissions. While problems like this are sometimes unavoidable at first, the extra reminders could ensure compliance and if the agencies continue to disregard the law, making the problem more manageable overtime once all parties involved are able to adapt to the changes of their daily duties.

3. Digitization of Identification

The lack of access to identification may be solved by digitizing identification. Digitized identification mitigates the risk of destruction, theft, or loss of identification through storing it on a cellular device. Individuals experiencing homelessness often have access to cellular devices. While rates of ownership of cellular devices are not equal between people experiencing homelessness and the general population, the majority of homeless individuals have access to the devices (Heef, 2019), (Kuhn, Et. Al., 2017), (Rhoades Et. Al., 2017). Cell phones are a key resource for homeless individuals, and other programs such as shelters or food aid use the devices to disseminate information among the population (Rhoades et al., 2017).

The public sector creates millions of applications a year, and several firms focus on creating digital identification. Internationally, the Modular Open Source Identity Platform (MOSIP) has worked with seventeen countries to create national digital identification systems and register citizens. MOSIP maintains a system for digital identification that can be modified to address specific needs of the state. (Mehta, Rohit, et al., June 2022).

Domestically, Colorado has digitized their State Photo IDs through the MyColorado Application. Through this application, Colorado citizens can access their identification and make necessary changes or renewals. MyColorado is fully functional within the state, and, with the rollout of RealID, Colorado plans to make its Digital Identification functional nationally (Colorado Digital ID, 2022). MyColorado was rolled out with the intention of imperfect implementation. The digital aspect of MyColorado allows for rapid and frequent updates to the system to align with Federal Guidelines and safety standards. MyColorado is still in its early development phase, as the Colorado government plans to use MyColorado as the central application for accessing all state services and agencies (Simmons, 2017).

Coordination among the agencies that control access to identification would be needed. For this proposal to work, the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission, the County Clerk's Office, and the New Jersey Bureau of Vital Statistics must coordinate information and identification regimes. The New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission controls access to State Photo IDs and the County Clerk's office, and the New Jersey Bureau of Vital Statistics controls access to Birth Certificates. However, New Jersey's Docket App provides an example of a successful digitization of records. The app allows users to directly access their information in New Jersey's Immunization Information System. Individuals are able to see their personal documents held by New Jersey's Immunization System through the app, which were previously available through request only (Persichilli, 200). If the government fears a breach of data stemming from the public's unfettered access to government databases, the app's digital identifications can be entered by the individual citizen using their physical identification. This would lessen coordination issues during implementation and security risks to the government. However, this would harm the effectiveness of the policy (Kumanan, Et al. 2015).

Digitization of Identification carries inherent risks. The application must be secure, as identification and government data will be held there. One potential solution would be to store data only on the local phone; the application would not hold information on a cloud. Local information storage will also ensure the application can produce the identification without an internet connection. In addition to data breaches, theft of the cellular device may expose the identification to malicious actors. To mitigate this risk, access to the application should have 2-factor authentication using biometrics and dedicated processes for the removal of information from a stolen device (Simmons, 2017). However, Colorado implemented Digital Identification five years ago, which provided an example of proper digitization through the consultation of experts and private firms.

Evaluation

Policy alternatives will be measured based on three criteria. They'll receive a score of 1-5; 1 being the lowest effectiveness and 5 being highly effective. The criteria used to measure these policy alternatives are:

- **Number of ID's provided to Homeless Individuals**

The primary measure will be how many identifications are provided to homeless individuals in comparison to ID provisions prior to implementation of the policy solution. While the number of ID's actively held by homeless individuals may provide a better picture of the outcome, data will be hard to find.

- **Political Feasibility**

Political Feasibility drastically affects the ability of a policy proposal to become enforced policy. For our purposes we will look at: Coordination issued between Agencies, Finding Funding, Potential Bureaucratic Pushback, Lack of support and Too much Opposition.

- **Cost-Effectiveness**

State's and their agencies do not have infinite resources, and as such must make effective use of their resources. Policy should be utilitarian; It should provide the greatest benefit to the most people, but with as little cost as possible.

Table 2. Evaluation matrix

	Number of Identifications Provided	Political Feasibility	Cost-Effectiveness	Total
Revision of Law	3	1	3	7
Education Campaign	3	3	4	10
Digitization of Identification	5	3	3	11

Revising the law

Assessing the impact of regulations on IDs concerns requires comparing the distribution of IDs before and after policy adjustments. An increase in the issuance of IDs indicates enforcement of revisions of laws assisting individuals. Many cases demonstrate how changing laws has had a positive impact on providing IDs to individuals, which strengthens arguments about the effectiveness of updated laws in addressing identification issues faced by the homeless. Therefore, when it comes to evaluating how many IDs are provided to individuals these law revisions receive a rating of 3 because they effectively demonstrate that revising new laws results in an increase in the distribution of IDs to individuals.

When considering whether revised laws aimed at addressing identification problems for homeless individuals are practical, various factors must be considered. Factors such as collaboration between different agencies, securing funding, potential resistance from bureaucracy, stakeholder support and the level of opposition to proposed policy changes all play a role in determining the success of updated laws in practice. It is worth noting that introducing a revised law to address identification issues may encounter obstacles. Other urgent matters could surface and draw attention away from this issue. Conflicting interests or concerns among government agencies might also impede progress. For instance, Governor Murphy's veto was motivated by budgetary worries related to a bill aimed at expanding assistance for individuals experiencing homelessness (North Jersey, 2023). This lack of consideration for political feasibility results in a policy score of 1. It emphasizes the importance of evaluating and garnering support and resources because overlooking constraints and conflicting priorities among entities can lead to bills being rejected for various reasons.

The revision of the law demonstrates a cost-effective way of dealing with homelessness. Exploring different funding options can help lessen the burden on state resources, allowing for maximum benefits for individuals while reducing pressure on government agencies. This proactive financial management strategy highlights the importance of adjusting laws to achieve optimal results while keeping costs low. Overall, this policy receives a positive rating 3 because it acknowledges the advantages for individuals and suggests that government expenses can be reduced through cooperation with other entities.

Education campaign

To measure the number of IDs provided we can rely on the data to be found from the proposed reporting requirement in Vital Statistics's memo to the social worker agencies. If the number of birth certificates provided increases this way, then the campaign can be determined

successful. Additionally, the ease of implementing a campaign through something as simple as an informational memo beneficially contributes to the effectiveness of this solution because it would mean an increase in birth certificates provided with little effort from the implementing agencies. However, coordination between the agencies would be a potential problem because of the previously discussed communication issues which would take time to resolve. This could lower the amount of birth certificates provided as it would take time to properly circulate the memo's information to the agencies. Therefore, the campaign receives a 3 on the effectiveness scale for this category because of the ease of implementation but does not receive a perfect score due to the possible communication issues

Political feasibility would likely be moderate when considering the effectiveness of the educational campaign. Political pushback would not be an issue because there is nothing controversial concerning teaching workers something that should already be a part of their duties, adding to the effectiveness in this category. Additionally, no policy making agencies would need to be involved for circulating a memo about what the law already states, meaning that there would be no political pushback for this solution. While this solution would be quite effective in this category, noncompliance to the new standards would remain an obstacle for the homeless trying to receive an ID. Therefore, the campaign receives a 3 on the effectiveness scale for this category because although the campaign is quite feasible ensuring compliance still remains an issue. The cost-effectiveness of the educational strategy would be quite positive, receiving a near perfect score of 4 on the cost-effectiveness scale. There would only be the cost of developing the memo and the financial strain that accompanies the additional workload, which would be quite low.

Digitization of ID

Digitization of ID is a strong possible policy solution in terms of how innovative it is and how in an increasingly digital age it could prove to be an extremely effective method to get out a massive number of IDs to the homeless population of Paterson. The fact that several other governments including not just other cities and U.S. states, but foreign countries have implemented digitization of ID to great success and results that have improved life for the homeless populations there considerably and demonstrate great promise for our implementation of a similar model. This would seem to answer the question of whether or not the political feasibility is possible for it in most cases as long as we are able to make a case to the city government of Paterson based upon the prior success stories and examples of digitized ID significantly helping the homeless populations of the places that implemented the policy in addition to making the overall government records an online infrastructure of how the system keeps track of its citizens of various backgrounds much easier. We therefore gave it a 3 on political feasibility.

On matters of other criteria though, digitized ID is not without its flaws. When it comes to cost-effectiveness, how much the digitization of ID costs may depend entirely on not only how much the local government is willing to spend on it and how much faith they have in the project, but also depending on where they get the money from. In Taipei, the digitized system responsible for digital ID experienced the delay due to disputes between a subcontractor in the central bank which postponed the issuance of digital national ID cards due to unresolved information security issues, and had remained in a state of limbo since January 2021. The suspension of digitization cost taxpayers the equivalent of 32.57 million U.S. dollars, and additionally cost \$524 million to a subsidiary of the central bank, and a \$526 million-dollar cost to a subcontractor due to issues relating to an apparent breach of contract. (Shan 2023) While it is not guaranteed that the system set up in Paterson will have the same cybersecurity and contracting flaws as the TaipeiPass system it did in spite of its overall strengths, it does greatly highlight that the cost of digitization could be potentially high depending on how it is implemented at the local level and if there are setbacks or considerable problems with the project that could cost the local government and taxpayers considerably more than they bargained for. As such, it earns a 3 on cost effectiveness.

In terms of how many ID's would be provided, it is not necessarily clear and would depend heavily upon how the system is set up, whether through QR code, blockchain, a website or some combination of these methods or otherwise; as well as how much of the homeless population of Paterson actually participates in the digitization process and the newly created system. Digitized ID systems have a wide variety of different strategies and implementation methods which are set up and utilize to high effectiveness in countries, states and cities across the world including several in the US, making it more than viable that such technology could easily be replicated and utilized here in New Jersey and even at the city level within Paterson. Due to these reasons we rank it a 5 on number of ID's provided. Digitization of ID is politically feasible in regards to the fact that several cities and states have used it effectively, as well as multiple foreign countries. Digitization has already been implemented in several countries and U.S. states to mostly successful results and seems to be an innovation that will continue to impact the standard of living for the homeless population in America going forward.

Recommendation

Out of the possible solutions for the ID crisis concerning the homeless population there are a number of different ones which have been proposed. Each one has its own advantages and disadvantages, however the most effective long-term solution would likely be the digitization of ID. This is due to the fact that while the education campaign and revision of the law are both entirely viable and applicable solutions, whereas the education of social workers and changes to state and

local law are effective but are much more of a short-term implementation than a long term one due to lack of enforcement and the reliance placed upon social workers that are already overworked and overburdened in the system as is. Additionally, the other options do not have the scope of a digitized form of identification, and unlike an organized system of digitized identification, education and revision of the law are both dependent on enforcement and intangible factors unlike a concrete and protected method of preservation of ID in a digital format. Several U.S. states and foreign countries are already using digitized ID systems, and it is expected that the U.S. will eventually adopt it at the federal level, so it therefore makes sense that the most optimal, efficient and long-term solution would be a digitized ID system being implemented. This creates not only a prior precedent of success to go off of, but also could lead directly to policy diffusion of the other instances of digitized ID to utilize going forward to help Paterson become a leader in the region in battling the homelessness crisis and lack of identification.

Chapter 3: Discrimination against those on medically-assisted opioid treatment

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Introduction

In response to the challenge of discrimination faced by homeless individuals relying on medical assistance, tailored programs have been developed to cater to their unique needs across diverse communities. Homeless individuals encounter significant obstacles in accessing healthcare, the reluctance to engage with shelters due to such restrictions not only deprives homeless individuals of necessities like food and shelter but also limits their opportunities to access vital support services such as healthcare and counseling, and they are particularly impacted by certain health conditions despite differences in resource availability. Richard Williams, executive director of St. Paul's Community Development Corporation, claims that because of the restrictions for drug testing and cleaning, homeless individuals are becoming less inclined to utilize shelters. This chapter delves into the revolutionary Housing First concept, which prioritizes stable housing while addressing the root causes of homelessness. Finland is notable for pioneering the concept of Housing First, which views housing stability as a necessary step rather than a reward and advocates for the provision of permanent, individual houses from the start.

Furthermore, there are common threads among attempts to improve healthcare and mental health services, regardless of historical, budgetary, or support-related disparities. Open Access to Medications and awareness campaigns are crucial for increasing the availability of pharmaceuticals and reducing harm. In homeless shelters, Open Access to medical assistance is implemented to address the stigma surrounding opioid use. The Department of Human Services grants increased access to same-day entry and medication, promoting a Harm Reduction approach and education. This approach lowers contact with homeless shelters while increasing overall housing accessibility, allowing individuals to focus on medical assistance and reducing opioid usage. Paterson's Department of Human Services would create an education campaign to raise awareness about the benefits of medical aid and the need for housing for people who receive it. The campaign, directed at the Department of Human Services will include Zoom meetings with shelter personnel to combat negative stigma and advocate the right to emergency refuge.

The Problem and Its Context

Within the wide range of issues that Paterson faces with its homeless population, our team has found one of the major factors is the discrimination people face based on their form of treatment for addiction. Research shows that 7.1 percent of the population in Passaic County is made up of its homeless population (Malinconico, 2020). With that being said, out of the population who face some sort of disability and are homeless 62.6% (Monarch Housing, 2020 Appendix F). of the population who face homelessness are also the same individuals who seek treatment for substance abuse and are on the road to recovery. As of 2022, the cause of homelessness in 5 out of 81 households is substance abuse (Monarch 2022). With that in consideration, that means out of the 345 homeless population in Passaic County 126 of them face addiction and require assistance (Malinconico 2022).

Furthermore, due to the lack of medical care accessible to those who need medicated assistance, and lack of financial security. Jobs and shelters discriminating against those who need treatment that could both prevent and treat addiction have left many to continue living on the streets of Passaic County. It has forced homeless people with addiction to continue using drugs as a form of pain relief from their symptoms of withdrawal. Primarily those with a sort of substance abuse within Passaic County tend to use alcohol by 28%, heroin by 47%, and opiates by 5%. As well, 8% of those using those substances receive medicated treatment. (NJDAT 2021, Appendix G).

Solutions

1. Open Access to Medications for Opioid Use in Homeless Shelters Approach

New Jersey homeless shelters can apply for a grant from the NJ Department of Human Services called Open Access to Medications for OUD in Homeless Shelters. The grant awards a maximum of four bidders up to \$425,000 for one year and could be renewed based on next year's funding. The solution provides supplies such as the medical assistance that is essential to those fighting opioid use along with people to discuss the source for people's opioid usage. Having these types of resources in shelters results in fewer people being turned away for needed medical treatment. The cause of this population is being turned away from shelters and is having issues obtaining medical assistance due to the negative stigma surrounding the drug. The stigma of medical assistance is perpetuated by inadequate professional education about the benefits it has to the user (National Academies of Sciences et al., 2019).

The Open-Access solution would assist in mending some of this stigma by turning shelters into a resource to obtain opioid use medical assistance. Paterson homeless shelters would be able to apply for this grant so we suggest our client advocate for this solution. The services included are increased access with same-day entry and medication, use of the Harm Reduction approach with education to the population. This approach is specifically tailored to each individual suffering from substance abuse (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2021). This approach's objective is to provide each person with a realistic plan to decrease their dependence on a substance. The grant also includes availability to meet with those in need of this service through mobile outreach and telehealth, the proposal cover sheet of this application can be found in Appendix H. This grant eliminates the idea of turning people away who need medical assistance and instead supports them by giving them the resources to continue their treatment. The grant by the NJ Department of Human Services allows discrimination against homeless individuals to be stopped at the source. By giving these individuals access to the materials they need, they have no reason to be turned away.

2. Housing First Approach

The Housing First approach is a way to reduce the number of people from homelessness. In this approach, people are first supplied with a form of permanent housing and then focus on their issues which leads them to lose their place of residence initially. This concept could benefit Paterson's discrimination issue by providing these people with a form of housing that allows them to focus on their medical assistance, making it more likely for them to decrease their opioid usage. Although there are many factors to substance use there is reason to believe that opioid usage would decrease with a form of secured housing, when lifting housing concerns from this population there would be limited contact with homeless shelters which would decrease the discrimination that the population would face. This approach is used in Finland, where in 1987 the country began to use this approach, having 18,000 people considered homeless. However, at the end of 2022, that number dropped to 3,686, of which 492 slept outside (Kaakinen, 2017). When the state created apartments for this community of people the only requirement was that they paid their rent which meant they had to have a form of income. The prospect of paying a small price for housing could encourage people to use the space to look for some job, slowly acclimating them into society. In our specific case, obtaining a job could be the first step in acclimating this demographic into society by limiting being involved in opioid usage. Also, with the addition of using medical assistance, they are more likely to step away from substance abuse. The long-term approach paid off when in 2017 Y- Foundation reported that every long-term person housed saved the government 15,000 euros each year which can be translated to \$16,301 (Kaakinen, 2017). This is due to allocating resources such as police runs and emergency care for this population elsewhere.

The Housing First solution approached by the U.S. would be \$16,479 per person every year although the median benefit was \$18,247 (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2021). This applies to Paterson since like many urban cities they are using resources such as emergency services to assist this vulnerable population. However, the Housing First solution could release some of those funds back to the state over time. For example, back in 2018, The Division of Community Affairs (DCA) tried to implement the Housing First concept by giving 25 housing vouchers to Middlesex County residents over 2 years (State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, 2018). During 2020 the DCA, with the collaboration of the Camden Coalition with Hudson and Middlesex County decided to expand the housing voucher to 500 residents (State of New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, 2020). These vouchers resulted in Middlesex County saving money on emergency rooms since this population would often use emergency hospital services. The fact that New Jersey has already started the process of implementing the Housing First idea proves that this could be done in Paterson on a local scale. To pay for this program we suggest Passaic County's CoCs apply for an increase in grant money. Many of these fiscal opportunities can be found within The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development document which is in Appendix I (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Community Planning and Development, 2023). The process requires time to see results but by providing housing first this population would be able to focus on using medical assistance as a tool to heal. Thus, limiting discrimination against all homeless groups by the state providing shelter with a discounted fee.

3. Education Campaign on The Benefits of Medical Assistance

One of the more cost-efficient solutions to minimizing discrimination of this population on medical treatment is through education, specifically targeted at the homeless shelters. An education campaign to explain the benefits of being on medical assistance and why it is so important that people on medical assistance have a form of housing could be the most impactful solution. These benefits consist of having a safer withdrawal experience for users, minimizing dangerous symptoms, reducing relapse risks, increasing treatment retention, and reducing the risk of overdose deaths (Bay Area Addiction Research & Treatment Inc., 2022). This campaign would be created by the state government, specifically the Department of Human Services in Passaic County. We recommend that the Department of Human Services implement this education campaign by inviting the top 3-5 employees of each Paterson homeless shelter to a Zoom meeting. This information session with the Paterson emergency shelters will educate them about the negative stigma surrounding medical assistance and prevent a lawsuit from occurring.

Although multiple bills such as A1842 and A800 which were anti-discrimination laws died in 2022 and 2024 there is A1678 which is still in committee (Bill Track 50, 2022-2024) Even though there is no specific anti-discrimination law on homeless people active in NJ there is the ADA law. The education campaign will mention each person’s right to emergency shelter no matter if they are on medical assistance or not. The ADA law states that any person with a disability has the right to emergency housing (Whaley & Williamson, 2023). These articles showcase how the discrimination of homeless people on medical assistance is protected under the ADA law. Our third solution’s action steps would consist of the Department of Human Services creating this presentation and gathering the heads of each shelter through emails, leaving the information session to have zero cost. An education campaign could direct shelters to provide services that accept their medical treatment and treat homeless individuals in a positive way that benefits their healing journey.

Evaluation of Solutions

The proposed policy solutions have been inspired by successful existing policies in other states and countries. We will evaluate the solutions of Open Access to Medications for Opioid Use Disorder in Homeless Shelters, the Housing First Approach, and the Education Campaign based on their cost-effectiveness, political feasibility, and their impact on discrimination against medical-assisted treatment. To use these criteria, we will employ a 5-point scale.

Table 3. Evaluation matrix

Policy Solutions	Cost Effectiveness	Policy Feasibility Rating	Impact Against Discrimination	Sum of Scores
Open Access to Medications for Opioid Use Disorder	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆	11
Housing First Approach	★★☆☆☆	★★☆☆☆	★★★☆☆	7
Education Campaign on The Benefits of Medical Assistance	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★☆	13

Cost Efficiency Evaluation Method

The cornerstone of evaluating cost-efficiency lies in assessing how economically viable a policy is to implement. Taking the low-income city of Paterson into consideration, since they have

21.1% of their population living below the poverty line with a \$22,794 per capita income, cost efficiency is the most important criterion to evaluate (“Census Profile: Paterson, NJ” 2024).

We have evaluated the cost efficiency based on whether the city would need to reallocate resources, raise taxes, or whether the income is grant-based. If the policy requires more money not already available to the city it will rank low. More stars correspond to higher cost-efficiency. The Open-Access Solution ranks four out of 5 for cost-effectiveness. The reason for this is that this solution relies heavily on grants, but those grants are available to the state of NJ and applicable to the city of Paterson. New Jersey homeless shelters can apply for a grant from the NJ Department of Human Services. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is a government organization that is funding this request for proposals (RFP). If you are selected for one of these contracts, DMHAS may allow you to extend it for a further four years, but they will only do so if they are satisfied with your work. This is cost-effective because no one needs to take money from citizens or allocate money from somewhere else. If the shelter is rewarded with the money, the grant will cover the expenses of this policy. However, it does not rank a 5 because it is not certain that all shelters will be able to obtain these grants since there are only four contracts available and the grant’s longevity is not guaranteed.

The Housing-First Approach ranks two out of five for cost-effectiveness. The reason for this being that it is a very costly program that requires building new housing units. There are some grant options available but it will still not be substantial enough to cover the full cost of new housing units. If the costs are not covered then raising taxes on the people of Paterson would be the next step. Since Paterson is a low-income city this would not be very cost-effective for the citizens. The Education Campaign ranks high in cost-effectiveness with a four out of five. This policy ranks high in cost-effectiveness because information and education campaigns are typically inexpensive because they utilize existing personnel and don't require providing services. This policy, however, requires participation from The NJ Department of Human Services to make the education campaign possible but this solution does not require costly expenses or an allocation of resources.

Policy Feasibility Evaluation Method

There are some important considerations when evaluating the policy feasibility of policy solutions. First and foremost, it is imperative to comprehend the present political landscape, which includes state lawmakers’ agenda items and the governor's position on healthcare-related matters. Public opinion is important, especially when it comes to harm reduction and treatment for substance dependence. It is also necessary to consider the involvement and position of stakeholders, including law enforcement organizations, advocacy groups, and healthcare providers.

Feasibility is also influenced by the legal and regulatory environment, historical precedence, budgetary ramifications, and legislative support. We will analyze how these policy solutions have been received in their current environments and compare them to how they will be received in NJ. Policy Feasibility is also a very important criterion, in this case, we hold it second in weight when deciding which policy fits better. More stars correspond to higher policy feasibility.

The Open-Access solution ranked a 3 for political feasibility because it is seen that the state of NJ is advocating for more medical-assisted treatment (MAT), the Department has awarded contracts to increase access to medication that can support addiction recovery at homeless shelters, and Murphy signed legislation allowing mental health care providers to play a crucial role within Homeless Shelters in regards to more MAT (Department of Human Services 2023). The Housing-First approach ranked a 2 on policy feasibility because politically the state of NJ has tried a Housing-First approach in Middlesex County so we can see that there is political backing potential. However, it is ranked quite low due to the public not wanting to pay higher taxes, therefore making this policy not very feasible. The Education Campaign ranked high on policy feasibility with a 5. This solution does not require efforts from political actors or affect citizen livelihood, the only thing required to make this policy feasible is participation from the NJ Department of Human Services.

Impact on Discrimination Evaluation

Impact on Discrimination is our problem-specific criteria. Since we are dealing with discrimination against medical-assisted treatment in homeless shelters, it is important to see which policy is better combating the issue at hand. We hold this criterion in terms of importance last; the reason for this is due to cost-effectiveness and political feasibility being more significant to get a policy approved and implemented rather than the actual impact a policy may have on the problem. Although it is very important it is not as crucial as the first two because no policy in Paterson is possible if it is not cost-effective or feasible. To determine the evaluation of impact we observe how each policy tackles the issue. More stars correspond to a higher impact.

The Open-Access Solution ranked a 3 on impact because although it provides more access to medical-assisted treatment, this solution does not educate the shelters on medical-assisted treatment and it does not mandate a change in behavior so shelters may decide not to participate. The Housing-First Approach was ranked very low on impact with a 1. The reason for this is that although there would technically be “no more” homeless people to discriminate against since they would have their own housing, it still does not target the issue of discrimination against homeless people on medically assisted treatment in shelters. The Education Campaign ranked high on impact with a score of 4. This solution is ranked very high because by publicizing the benefits of medical-

assisted treatment (MAT) and drawing attention to the legal protections provided to homeless people under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) this policy solution is directly combating discrimination against medical-assisted treatment. Most shelters discriminate due to the lack of enforcement or acknowledgment of this law, by directly educating them about it, ignoring it is no longer an option. However, this solution is similar to the initial one in that it doesn't necessitate shelters to alter their behavior or impose penalties for non-compliance, informing them of the existing regulations. Its effectiveness may be constrained as a result, which is why it's rated as a 4.

Recommendation

Our recommended solution is to create an education campaign that is focused on homeless shelters. This education campaign's objective would be to teach shelters the benefits of medical assistance and debunk all negative stigmas surrounding its use. This particular solution would create a direct impact of informing the actors involved on seeing medical assistance from a positive perspective. The education campaign also ranks the highest in our cost efficiency criteria which is weighted the most since the cost would be the first barrier each solution would have to cross to be implemented in Paterson. The education campaign would consist of the Department of Human Services creating a presentation and gathering the heads of each shelter through emails, leaving the information session to have zero cost. By informing the shelters of the ADA law which the homeless population on medical assistance falls under and informing them on the benefits of medical-assisted treatment (MAT) the negative stigma around MAT could decrease. An education campaign could direct shelters to provide services that accept their medical treatment and treat homeless individuals in a positive way that benefits their healing journey. This solution would target discrimination against this population directly, generating alleviation in the way they are treated by shelters and acknowledging any misinformation on medical assistance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Housing First Approach, Open Access to Medication, and Education Campaign are some tactics to address the homeless population needing medical assistance. Open Access to Medical Assistance seeks to increase homeless shelter residents' access to resources to fight their opioid use disorder. The Education Campaign educates homeless shelters about the advantages of receiving medical assistance, while the Housing First Approach gives those who are homeless access to non-emergency housing. As mentioned previously, homeless individuals in Passaic County, which is home to around 71% of the homeless population, face discrimination when seeking medical assistance due to substance abuse. The Housing First Approach, first used in Finland, reduces the number of homeless people by providing permanent residences and focusing

on the causes of homelessness. The education campaign is the most cost-efficient solution to reducing discrimination against this population. It holds homeless shelters accountable for their behavior, explaining the importance of having a form of housing and the benefits of being on medical assistance. The Paterson homeless population is facing discrimination in medical assistance. To combat this, an education campaign should be implemented to educate shelter staff about the benefits of medical assistance. This campaign aims to dismantle negative stigmas and empower shelter actors to view medical assistance positively. This cost-effective strategy can significantly improve the well-being and recovery of the homeless population in Paterson, addressing the complex challenges they face.

Chapter 4: Addressing Length of Stay in Emergency Shelters

Mohamed Fayez, Sofia Guzman Cintron, and Mark Scott

Introduction

The current site of Paterson City in Passaic County of New Jersey was established as the first industrialized city in the new nation in 1792 (National Parks Service, 2024). Paterson eventually grew into a diverse manufacturing and commerce hub in the mid-1800s. Its economic success did not last long, and the city suffered financially through the Great Depression in the 1930s and after World War II; never regaining its status as a mass manufacturing center or a place of fiscal prosperity.

Since the mid-19th century, Paterson has had a large population of people of color due to the Great Migration and a large influx of immigrant workers (National Parks Service, 2024). As of 2022, the current population of the city of Paterson is 156,639 people (Census Bureau, 2024). The largest reported ethnic group is “Hispanic or Latino” of any race, at 98,863 people (Census Bureau, 2024). The second largest reported group is those who identified as “Some Other Race” at 64,205 people, followed by “Black or African American” at 39,838 people (Census Bureau, 2024). Overall, the city has a large population of historically disadvantaged ethnic and racial groups and a large portion of its citizens are economically disadvantaged.

The median household income is \$47,373 in Paterson, about \$3,947.75 a month, vastly lower than the New Jersey average of \$96,346, about \$8,028.83 a month (Census Bureau, 2024). The monthly average rent in Paterson is \$1,391, lower than the state average of \$1,555, but it represents a bigger proportion of the monthly median income at around 35% for those in Paterson compared to 19.4% of the state’s average (Census Bureau, 2024). A significant factor in determining housing status is the ability to pay rent and many cite high costs of rent as the reason they became homeless (New York State 2023, HRE 2017). Paterson's percentage of disabled individuals is 12.8%, a higher proportion than the state’s average of 11.2% (Census Bureau, 2024). Disability status increases the likelihood of becoming homeless, as it affects the ability to work and can lead to high medical costs (Hao et al, 2022). Only 57% of the city’s inhabitants are employed, which is below the 62.7% of the state (Census Bureau, 2022). The homeownership rate is 27.1%, less than the New Jersey average of 64.6%, meaning that the majority of people in Paterson rent and are subject to yearly increases in the amount they pay (Census Bureau, 2024).

The rich socio-political history of Paterson shows that any policy solution must be economically rational as several converging factors have left Paterson economically disadvantaged. Moreover, solutions need to be tailored to benefit the specific target population of Paterson and its heterogeneous citizenry. Policymakers, street-level providers, and other officials in the homelessness system will be confronted with many different individuals with different backgrounds, needs, and wants all requiring different care.

The problem and its administrative and political context

On the surface, the problem appears to be the extended lengths of time individuals spend in emergency shelters within the city of Paterson. The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs regulations on Emergency Shelters evaluate shelters on if “the average length of stay in an emergency shelter will be no more than 6 months” (New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, 2022). The average length of stay in emergency shelters in Paterson and Passaic County is non-compliant with the NJ DCA’s regulations, by over 100 days. This threatens their funding and also restricts bed space, lessening beds available for those who need them. Currently, the average length of stay in a Paterson emergency shelter is 323 days, the longest in New Jersey (Grant, 2023). The second-longest average length of stay in an emergency shelter is Essex County at 151 days, which is around 47% less than Passaic County’s 323 days (Grant, 2023).

However, several layers of bureaucracy compound the issue and contribute to the difficulties in addressing said issue. There are two main federal programs through the Department of Housing and Urban Development as a means of funding homelessness prevention that will be discussed here: the Continuum of Care (CoC) and the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), the primary recipient of which is the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJ-511, 2022). In our research, we discovered that different divisions across the state of New Jersey are interpreting the same statutes regarding these programs in very different ways, leading to differences in the actual implementation of programs and aid. According to regulations, programs that receive CoC funds cannot receive ESG funds and vice versa. However, many regions seem to have one entity handling CoC and ESG funds and several providers receiving funds from both, including Passaic County, which has an allocation committee deciding how to administer funds (NJ-511, 2022).

There seems to be a deficit of information available not only to the public but also to decision-makers and providers. The lack of information includes funding sources, services available, shelters in operation, and length of stay within emergency, transitional, and permanent housing, among others. All CoCs are required to establish a centralized or coordinated assessment that assesses the needs of the community, and the actions of the CoC to meet those needs. Moreover,

providers are required to take a daily census of individuals served and upload this information to the centrally managed information system (24 CFR 578.3; 24 CFR 578.7(a)(8)). However, many CoCs have either (1) not established these systems, (2) these systems do not fall under the jurisdiction of local CoCs but rather than another agency, (3) do not make the information available to the public in an easily accessible manner. Communication to receive this information about the daily census from local agencies and shelters was largely unsuccessful.

Factors affecting length of stay

Many factors increase or decrease the length of stay in an emergency shelter, including race, gender, veteran status, and disability status (Hao et al, 2022). The populations with longer stays tend to be “women, seniors, Hispanics, Asians, Black African Americans, people with a disability (including a physical disability, mental health issue, or substance use disorder),” (Hao et al, 2022). The city of Paterson has a 25.4% African American population, a 63.1% Latino population, and a disabled population of around 12% (Census Bureau, 2024).

Another factor potentially contributing to longer lengths of stay is the reality that life in an emergency shelter is preferable to life on the street (Hao et al, 2022). Emergency shelters are legally required to provide food and offer protection from dangers associated with living on the streets or other unsafe conditions. Staying in a shelter may increase quality of life, making an unhoused person reluctant to participate in other programs and leave. The main factor that decreases a person’s length of stay in a shelter is the availability and accessibility to social service programs. These can include access to treatments for disability, low-cost healthcare, mental health counseling, and treatment for substance abuse disorders (Hao et al, 2022).

Solutions

1. Merge local Continuum of Cares

Continuum of Care (CoC) is a set of guidelines and also a government agency to end homelessness by providing funding and services to and from State and Local governments and nonprofit organizations. CoCs are constituted of, govern, and coordinate local providers and government officials. Current federal regulations do not stipulate how to determine CoC jurisdictional borders, only stating that each locality must establish a CoC and must provide a minimal amount of services to the totality of its jurisdiction (24 CFR 578.5; 24 CFR 578.7). However, New Jersey State regulations do give preference to counties in determining the geographical boundaries of CoC’s (N.J.A.C. 5:15-1.3). As such, it is within the purview of the leaders of Passaic

County and other CoCs to merge NJ-511 Passaic CoC with neighboring CoCs to reduce administrative overhead and redundancy, saving costs. Several possibilities exist, including merging NJ-511 Passaic County CoC with NJ-504 Essex County CoC or with NJ-501 Bergen County.

2. *Revising Paterson funding regime*

Under the current regulatory regime, local CoCs take and review grant applications from providers within their jurisdictions, then submit their recommendations up the hierarchy to the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. According to federal guidelines issued by the H.U.D. Office of Community Planning and Development (OCPD), local CoCs are to utilize a *housing-first approach*, and as such, points are awarded if a provider demonstrates that they do not remove individuals (24 C.F.R., 578; CPD-22-02; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban, 2022). However, OCPD does use a weighted scale, and questions about the removal of individuals are weighted less, and questions to do with what types of services are provided are weighted more (CPD-22-02; 427(b)(1)(A)(viii); HUD, 2023a). According to the summary of NJ-501 Bergen County CoC's scoring rubric, 5 points are awarded if an individual demonstrates they do not terminate residents out of 35, for a total of 14% of all points, a staggering number (NJ-501, 2022). In contrast, NJ-511 Passaic County CoC places a minuscule emphasis on whether or not individuals are removed, as it reserves five points if a shelter demonstrates that it does not remove individuals out of 180 total possible points. This one question can determine less than 3% of a provider's score, minimally affecting their funding status, in comparison to other evaluation criteria (NJ-511, 2023).

This highlights the true cause of Bergen County CoC's low length of stay; many CoCs directly state that if an individual surpasses a certain length of stay, they must be discharged into more intensive care or "households residing in emergency shelter will have low average lengths of stay" (NJ-501, 2023; NJ-507, 2023). As such, NJ-511 Passaic CoC could revise its evaluation regime allowing for providers to remove individuals or require that individuals be moved into a more intense care program once they exceed a certain threshold, and a reduction in the total number of points would ensure that the questions have the full intended impacts.

3. *Increasing funding for pull factors*

Studies have shown that the length of stay in an emergency shelter is a product of several variables, with the most impactful being how many shelters are in a region, how many individuals are experiencing homelessness in a region, what the 'pull' factors out of the emergency shelters and what are the determinants that 'push' people into shelters (Culhane & Kuhn, 1998; HRE, 2017; Chen et al., 2021; Hao et al, 2022; New York State, 2023). As such the most effective solutions will

either reduce the amount of homeless or increase the amount of shelters allowing for more intense care, or increase the diversity of programs and providers allowing for a tailored approach to care. In this paper, pull factors can be defined as programs, systems, mechanics, and other factors that pull an individual out of an emergency shelter, into a later-stage program, and eventually into stable housing (Hao et al, 2022). Whereas ‘push’ factors - those that lead to periods of homelessness - are most commonly economic factors (e.g. increased rent) or healthcare factors such as mental health and substance abuse or medical debt (HRE, 2017; Chen et al., 2021; Hao et al, 2022; New York State, 2023). These studies demonstrate time and time again that the most reliable ways to reduce the length of stay is to reduce the push factors and increase the pull factors. In other words, what systems and mechanisms are available to individuals after emergency shelters? Programs that prioritize providing *permanent* housing reduce the length of stay by helping individuals move through the entire homelessness process faster (Hao et al, 2022; New York State, 2023).

Variants: Essentially, increasing the funding for any services provided to homeless individuals other than emergency shelters can be considered “increasing pull factors.” However, the primary variants are to increase funding for rapid rehousing programs, permanent support programs, education programs, and healthcare programs. While such programs may not seem designed to reduce the length of stay, they do reduce the overall load on the homeless care system, allowing for more intense care.

Increasing the pull factors can be done in multiple ways. The most politically feasible way is to simply utilize the CoC’s power to assess funding applications for programs within their jurisdiction before they are reviewed by the HUD. If the CoCs are not utilized, local decision-makers could devote additional resources to programs such as rapid rehousing or transitory housing. It is unlikely that other political institutions such as local governments would increase funding, so instead this analysis will assume that action is to be taken through the CoC board and no other institution or agency. Doing so would keep the policy process outside of the public and political realm. However, if substantial resources are to be devoted, it *will* require funding from political institutions, meaning local decision-makers will need to be convinced of the necessity of the program. This can and will be a challenge as Passaic County as a whole has been financially drained (Passaic County, 2000 - 2023).

Many CoCs outside of New Jersey prioritize programs that increase pull factors such as transitory housing. These CoCs develop questions to inquire about what services and in what intensity are offered within emergency shelters to help move individuals experiencing homelessness through the system faster (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2023a). Several New Jersey CoCs do have evaluation regimes that focus on services over removal, such as NJ-501 and NJ-507 which do not inquire about the removal process or if they occur, but

rather award points to shelters if they have systems and programs designed to help individuals move through the system by finding housing or work and actively improve said individuals' situation such as substance abuse care (NJ-501, 2023; NJ-507, 2023). In short, NJ-511 Passaic CoC can update its funding application to include questions about the length of stay or reduce the relative weight of such questions.

Evaluation of solutions

Evaluation Scale

For an outline of the grading criteria and sources, please refer to Appendix J. The lowest score possible is 1, and 5 is the highest score possible.

Proposed Solutions	Impact on Length of Stay	Ease of Implementation	Cost-Effectiveness	Impact on Continuation of Services	Total
Combining CoCs	2	2	5	3	12/20
Revising Applications	5	5	4	1	15/20
Increase Pull Factors	5	2	3	5	15/20

CoC combination

Recommended Merger: Using HUD CoC Merging Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2023, it becomes clear that it would be economically beneficial to combine NJ-511 Passaic CoC and NJ-501 Bergen County CoC (see Appendix M and N). While a Passaic-Essex merger would increase the funds available to Passaic, it is unlikely that decision-makers in Essex would agree to a merger. Essex CoC has access to far more funds than Passaic, and is considered one of the best CoCs, but merging with Passaic has several negative consequences. The merger lessens the resources devoted to Essex, has a lesser impact on the reduction of administrative burden, and worse average outcomes. Whereas Bergen County has access to similar amounts of funds and has similar outcomes as Passaic CoC, and

would benefit significantly from reducing the administrative burden. It can be expected that leaders in Bergen County would be more open to merging CoCs than Essex County CoC.

Impacts: Combining CoCs can be expected to reduce administrative costs by combining administrative structures, essentially freeing up resources to be dedicated to homelessness shelters. HuD research estimates that at the very least, administrative expenditures fall by 20% (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2023b).

On a different note, regional coordination would be increased (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2023a). Many homeless cross CoC jurisdictions frequently, some multiple times in one day, and effectively ‘float’ between different CoC geographical boundaries increasing administrative paperwork, reducing continuity in care, and reducing overall outcomes. For example, if an unsheltered individual named John Doe was in the care of a shelter in Passaic County, and for some reason traveled into Bergen County overnight, Mr. Doe would now be in the jurisdiction of Bergen County CoC. However, on paper, Mr. Doe is being served by and can only receive aid from Passaic CoC. Until Doe applies for relief from a provider in Bergen or Passaic CoC offers information on Mr. Doe, Bergen CoC has to re-do the work and paperwork that was already done in Passaic, and Mr. Doe will most likely receive redundant care. By combining CoCs with neighboring counties, the chance that a homeless individual move outside of their CoC jurisdiction is reduced because of the expansion in geographical jurisdiction, allowing their care to continue uninterrupted.

Cost: This proposal can be expected to save money. By combining CoCs, two administration structures would be reduced to one, and the number of applications needed to be received, reviewed, and forwarded and programs would be substantially reduced (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2023b). HUD CoC merging guidelines demonstrate that when CoCs merge, funds are allocated more efficiently, and funds are used more completely (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2023b).

Political Feasibility of Implementation: To combine CoCs a coalition would have to be created of county officials, providers, and community members. As federal and state regulations state, the jurisdiction of a CoC is to be determined by local governments and providers (24 CFR 578). CoCs have been merged before in New Jersey often to overcome the fiscal constraints of south Jersey counties, and have shown significant improvement in the management and use of funds, and overall capacity (Home Base, 2023). For example, NJ-503 was formed to save money on administrative costs, better use and apply funds, and better provide services (U.S. Department of Housing and Development, 2018).

Problems: One general problem is that not all shelters receive funding through NJ-511 Passaic CoC, meaning combining CoCs would have minimal impact on providers receiving funds outside the CoC network. Current research seems to point out that only three shelters within Passaic County receive no CoC funding (NJ-511, 2022). Moreover, a decrease in length of stay data could be interpreted in multiple ways: either the length of stay would be reduced because Passaic County CoC is merged with a county with a lower average length of stay, or because officials can devote more funds to homeless programs.

Application revision

Impacts: Revising the CoC funding applications can be expected to have a large impact on the length of stay data; if the consequences of removing individuals are reduced, one can expect an increase in removals thereby increasing turnover, and decreasing average length of stay. It may cause interruptions in an individual's care, in cases of removal from shelters.

Cost: The cost of changing the funding regime is minimal to none. The only fiscal change is *where* money flows and not how much.

Political Feasibility of Implementation: There can be some public backlash expected. Some providers will inevitably object as they will see funding become more competitive as higher scores are easier to achieve, whereas others will benefit from the new regime as they will be given more discretion.

Problems: There are several issues with this solution. For one, just like merging CoCs, this will have minimal impact on shelters that receive funding from sources other than their local CoCs. Moreover, simply allowing providers to cease care is simply trading one problem for another. When individuals are removed from shelters they are often removed from the system entirely, and face far worse outcomes such as an increase in mortality rate and length of homelessness (Hao et al, 2022). Emergency shelters are the gateway into the rest of the homeless care system, and by effectively removing an individual from that gateway, they are relegated to the streets with minimal services and care.

Increasing pull factors

Impact: Of all the solutions proposed, this is the only solution that has been scientifically and systematically proven to reduce the length of stay in shelters and in the homelessness system (Hao et al, 2022).

Cost: The HUD prioritizes projects that work together and create a “Housing First” approach to “quickly and successfully connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing[...].” (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Department 2023a). If Paterson and Passaic County as a whole can demonstrate that emphasis is being placed on the ‘pull factors’ NJ-511 Passaic CoC, Paterson City, and Passaic County would be afforded more funding. Passaic County does have several programs that do ‘pull’ individuals such as transitory housing programs, rapid rehousing, and partnerships with local health care providers. These programs could be expanded and emphasized in reporting to HUD. In other words, while increasing pull factors can be expected to cost money in the short term, it can be expected to attract more federal funding and decrease the amount spent on each individual in the long term.

Political Feasibility: As previously stated, it is assumed that if ‘pull’ factors are to be increased, the principal actor will be the local CoC and its board. The board has the power to review program applications and direct funds to specific programs and services, and as such have vast power in affecting the overall structure and character of the homeless care system. And because the CoC board is shielded from public scrutiny as it is not a particularly salient organization, any decision is unlikely to garner public reaction. In other words, the CoC board has a large amount of discretion and political pushback is unlikely.

Recommendations

To decrease the length of stay time in emergency shelters in Paterson city, we would recommend two remedies that work in conjunction with one another to address the problem effectively:

1) Revising the Passaic/Paterson CoC guidelines to include questions about the length of stay and a reduction in the weight given to questions about removal. The revision will also include severe modifications to its funding rubric to put a greater emphasis on transitory housing. Doing so will open up new avenues for bringing down the length of stay in a cost-effective and politically sensible manner. In conjunction with the 511 Paterson/Passaic CoC, Paterson City must modify their applications to remove questions that force applicants to allow current lengths of stay time as Bergen County has done, keeping the clients moving along the positive track towards being a homeowner.

2) Increase funding to focus on securing permanent housing and rapid rehousing for those already in the system. Case in point, much of Bergen County’s success is based upon its focus on

permanent housing for the unsheltered. Bergen’s successful permanent supportive housing projects that serve chronically homeless individuals and families and the rapid rehousing projects for homeless individuals and families can be replicated in Passaic County with comparable funding and organization. If the local CoC can secure more funding through the HUD application process with the stated goal of implementing the “Housing First” policy, the lengths of stay will be lessened.

For Paterson City and Passaic County, the main issues remain communication and funding. An optimal recommendation for a plan of action that does not unnecessarily burden the city is modifying the grading rubric to obtain more funding from the CoC. These changes will be a slow, steady process, with long-term planning like that in Bergen County, where their CoC lays out its plans five years ahead with ample room for adjustment. In conjunction with reevaluating how money is currently being used and applying for additional grants, changing the rubrics would speed up getting people into permanent housing, thus opening up beds in emergency shelters. This will likely result in normalizing the lengths of stay to medium levels, with adjustments to the process as needed.

Conclusion

Our findings highlight a need for a significant change in how the city and the local CoC provide emergency housing. These findings are a dire warning for the city that an alternative approach is needed, which humanly and effectively brings an end to the repetitive cycle of emergency housing inhabitants staying as long as possible and returning as quickly as they can. The solutions recommended are proposed with all this in mind, showcasing answers to problems that have worked under similar circumstances. If Paterson undergoes the proposed actions, the length of stay will normalize, increasing resources available to the unsheltered. If the city continues to overlook the crisis, more citizens will be lining the streets, awaiting unavailable emergency shelter spaces.

Our findings highlight the need for multi-faceted action on the issue of homelessness in the city of Paterson. There must be clarification on the regulations surrounding jurisdiction and on the separation of responsibilities of different agencies. Our research showcases effective policies that can work in the Paterson/Passaic County CoC. Increasing funds for services will provide the pull factors necessary to open up beds in emergency shelters, normalize the length of stay, and increase resources available. Furthermore, the expected low cost of a program that is largely advocacy-focused and internal, allows for our recommendations to be implemented easily by the CoC. The Office for Innovation would make these recommendations to the Passaic/Paterson CoC for implementation at their earliest possible convenience.

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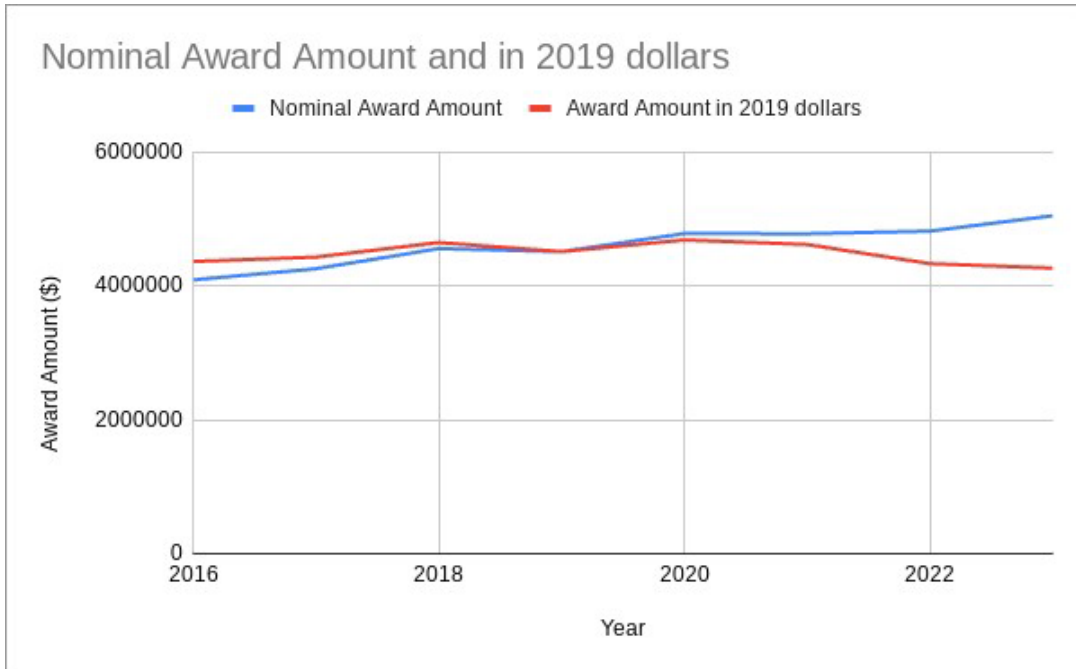
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Appendix

Appendix A. Historical Grant Funding to Paterson/Passaic County COC

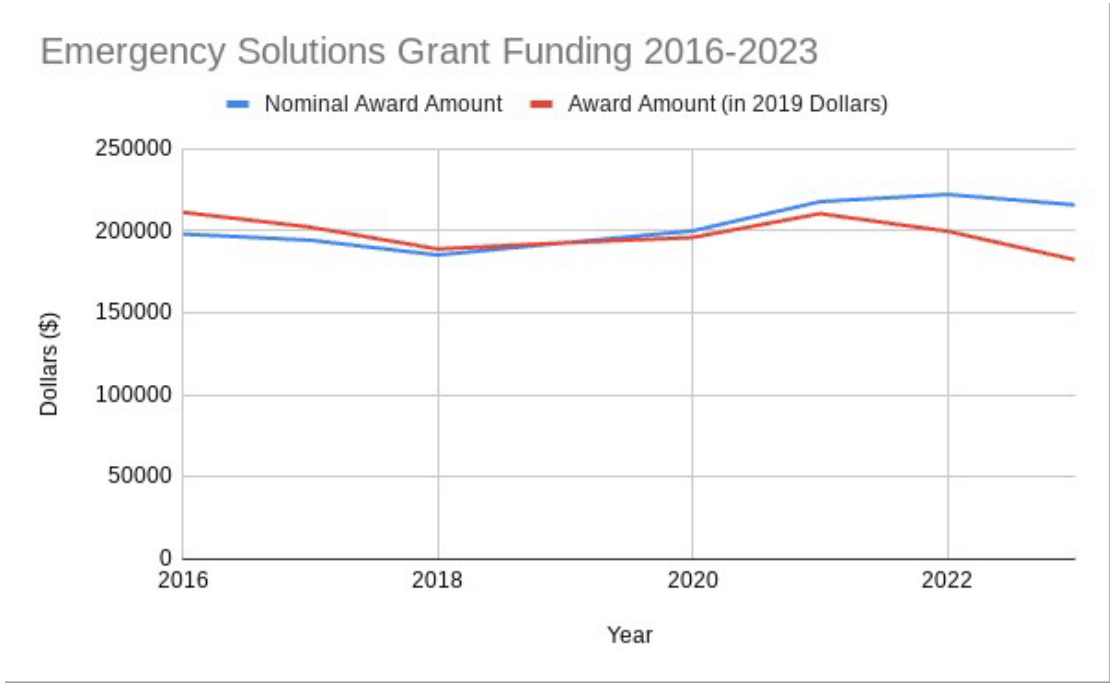
Figure A. Funding to Paterson/Passaic County COC, nominal and inflation-adjusted amounts presented



Source: Data collected by author through HUD Exchange March 2024

Appendix B: Emergency Solutions Grant Funding to Paterson, NJ

Figure B: Historical emergency solutions grant funding to Paterson, NJ, nominal and inflation-adjusted amounts presented, only normal appropriations considered



Source: Data collected by author through HUD Exchange March 2024

Appendix C: Homeless Population in all New Jersey Counties

Table C. Homeless population in NJ counties, by percentage of population in transitional shelters

Percentage of Homeless Population by Type of Shelter by County						
	E-Shelter	Transitional	Unsheltered	Safe Haven	Total Homeless	County Population
Hunterdon	59.66%	39.20%	1.14%	0.00%	176	129,777
Somerset	70.12%	28.40%	1.48%	0.00%	338	346,875
Bergen	69.49%	27.18%	3.33%	0.00%	390	952,977
Monmouth	69.36%	22.57%	8.07%	0.00%	483	644,098
Morris	71.40%	22.37%	6.24%	0.00%	465	511,151
Essex	70.16%	21.94%	7.90%	0.00%	1595	849,477
Camden	56.61%	15.82%	23.00%	4.57%	613	524,907
Union	80.47%	13.53%	6.00%	0.00%	850	569,815
Mercer	70.45%	11.20%	18.35%	0.00%	714	380,688
Sussex	83.65%	10.06%	6.29%	0.00%	159	146,084
Atlantic	37.73%	8.86%	53.41%	0.00%	440	275,638
Cape May	90.40%	7.58%	2.02%	0.00%	198	95,634
Hudson	71.30%	4.46%	24.24%	0.00%	920	703,366
Burlington	90.57%	3.00%	6.43%	0.00%	933	466,103
Ocean	89.63%	2.30%	8.06%	0.00%	434	655,735
Passaic	83.93%	2.04%	14.03%	0.00%	392	513,936
Middlesex	78.64%	0.61%	20.76%	0.00%	660	861,418
Warren	85.71%	0.00%	14.29%	0.00%	84	110,926
Salem	19.40%	0.00%	80.60%	0.00%	67	65,117
Gloucester	89.06%	0.00%	10.94%	0.00%	192	306,601
Cumberland	79.88%	0.00%	20.12%	0.00%	164	151,356

Source: Data collected by author through NJ Counts March 2024

Appendix D: Potential Sources of Funding

The Congressional Community Project Funding program, previously known as the earmarks system, provides funding for local projects through applications from Congressional sponsors. Paterson has used this system before to receive funding for municipal projects, and many organizations and towns have utilized it to receive funding for their own homeless initiatives. These include (but are not limited to):

- In 2023, Representative Jimmy Gomez of California was awarded \$1,000,000 for the Los Angeles Mission, a program designed to provide the dignity of rehabilitation for emergency and transitional housing.
- In another instance, Burlington County Human Services built a homeless shelter in Burlington County, NJ. The funding was obtained from New Jersey Senators Cory Booker and Robert Menendez and Representative Andy Kim.
- In 2023, the Diocesan Council for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Diocese of Phoenix, which constructed a 100-bed transitional community for homeless people. Congressman Ruben Gallego of Arizona requested for the development funding and was awarded \$750,000.

A local example of funding for homeless infrastructure can be seen in Cumberland County, NJ. A 2016 ordinance established the Cumberland County Homeless Trust Fund to prevent and reduce homelessness in the region. The fund, around \$75,000 annually, is financed through a tax on certain documents filed at the Cumberland County Clerk's Office. The legislation ensures that the funds are not used to pay off county debts and limits the administrative cost withdrawal to 5 percent annually. It is implemented and spent through the aptly named Cumberland County Homeless Trust Fund Task Force, composed of government members and individuals with relevant experience. Passaic County could implement a similar program to bring more funds to homelessness infrastructure and potentially a transitional housing program in Paterson.

There also exists a variety of HUD programs that funding could be sourced from. Paterson annually receives around ~\$2.5 million in Community Development Block Grants, which were used in the construction of Newark's Hope Village II. The FY23 Youth Homeless Demonstration Program could bring several hundred thousand dollars for a program that helps prevent youth homelessness, as the proposed transitional shelter does. Of course, federal grant programs can differ year to year, so there should be vigilance in noticing and applying to these opportunities as they arise.

Appendix E: Summaries of proposed shelter renovations in Paterson and in other municipalities

Malinconico, J. (2017, February 25). *Paterson weighs plan for Homeless Shelter*. North Jersey Media Group.

<https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/paterson-press/2017/02/24/paterson-weighs-plan-homeless-shelter/98363530/>

Summary: 198 women and children would be housed in a proposed transitional homeless shelter that would be built out of an almost empty apartment building. There is a double-edged motive for the proposed refurbishment. The neighborhood around the apartment building is well-known for gang activity, drug violence, and drug dealing and is home to several "notorious drug dens." Since the gangs would no longer be able to enter the building, sell illegal drugs, or engage in other unlawful and dangerous activities that put the communities in danger, renovating this apartment complex would effectively put a stop to gang activity in the region. The Board of Adjustment members voted on the motion, with a 4-3 majority in support of it. However, five votes in favor of the proposition were required to pass.

Walk-Morris, T. (2021, May 1). *How Adaptive Reuse Can Help Solve the Housing Crisis*. American Planning Association.

<https://www.planning.org/planning/2021/spring/how-adaptive-reuse-can-help-solve-the-housingcrisis/>

Summary: An innovative journal article that discusses the context of adaptive reuse, the revitalization of old buildings into housing units has witnessed an increasing trend, particularly in repurposing factories, hotels, schools, and warehouses into affordable housing. The COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the design of these adaptive reuse projects in real-time, adding new amenities and features that respond to current public health needs. Notably, the potential of repurposing empty office buildings into housing has been highlighted. However, restrictive zoning, preservation guidelines, and building codes present significant barriers to effectively

implementing adaptive reuse initiatives. Several benefits are associated with adaptive reuse, such as preserving historical value, supporting innovative and sustainable growth, encouraging investment, taking advantage of incentives, saving time and money, increasing market values, and improving public health. Additionally, adaptive reuse can bridge the gap between a community's past and present needs, contribute to growth in areas with existing infrastructure, and promote environmental and health benefits by remediation of contaminants associated with older building materials and uses.

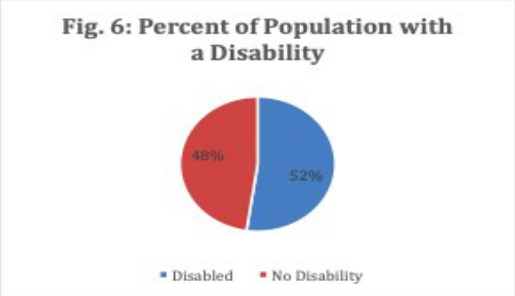
Kondo, M., Hohl, B., Han, S., & Branas, C. (2016, November). *Effects of greening and community reuse of vacant lots on crime*. Urban studies (Edinburgh, Scotland). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5436723/>

Summary: Cities nationwide are implementing innovative programs to stabilize neighborhoods and combat crime by reusing vacant lots. In Youngstown, OH, a spatially targeted approach was adopted, focusing efforts in two neighborhoods to maximize stabilization potential. The vacant-lot greening program led to significant and widespread reductions in all types of crime outcomes except for motor vehicle thefts. Specifically, the program resulted in statistically significant reductions in felony assaults, burglaries, and robberies, with the lot stabilization treatment associated most consistently with reduced burglaries. In contrast, the community reuse treatment showed a more consistent and significant reduction in violent crimes.

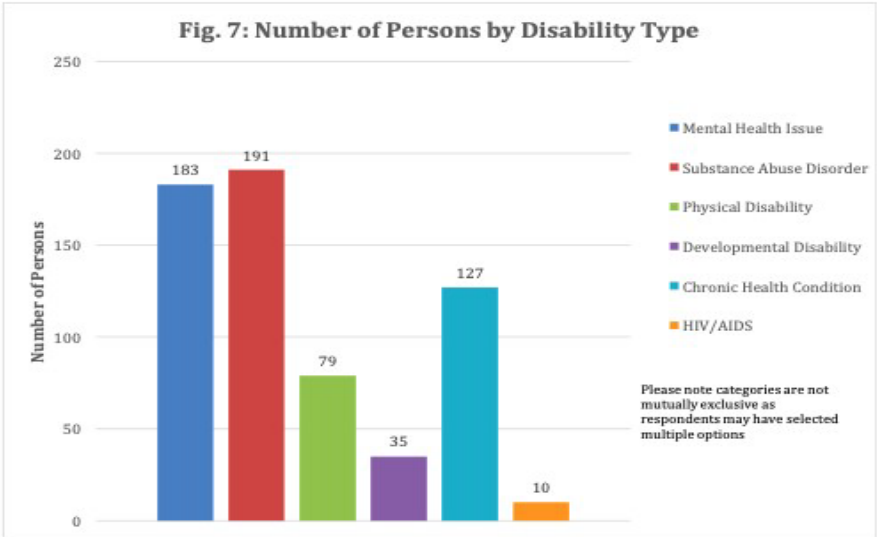
Appendix F: Proportion of Individual with Disability in Homeless Community

Disabilities

Figure 6 illustrates that 52.3% of homeless persons reported having some type of disability. 61.9% of adults 18 or older reported some type of disability compared to 22.2% of children. Figure 7 shows the number of the homeless persons that identified as having various disabilities. The most common disabilities included substance abuse disorders and mental health issues.



Among disabled persons, 62.6% reported substance abuse disorders making this the most prevalent disability; representing 67.3% of the disabled adult homeless population and 32.8% of the total population experiencing homelessness. 60% of disabled adults reported mental health issues, 41.6% reported a chronic health condition, and 25.9% reported a physical disability. Among disabled homeless children, 70.8% reported a chronic health condition, and 50% reported a developmental disability.



Source: Monarch (2024)

Appendix G: Percentage of individuals dealing with substance abuse in Passaic County

Primary Drug		
Alcohol	1,823	28%
Heroin	3,089	47%
Other Opiates	344	5%
Cocaine	359	5%
Marijuana	578	9%
Methamphetamines	41	1%
Other Drugs	363	6%
Intravenous Drug Users		
	1,923	29%
Level of Care		
Outpatient Care (OP)	850	13%
Intensive Outpatient (IOP)	1,062	16%
Partial Hospitalization	133	2%
Opioid Maintenance OP	700	11%
Opioid Maintenance IOP	91	1%
Extended Care	0	0%
Halfway House	389	6%
Long-Term Residential	890	14%
Short-Term Residential	651	10%
Hospital Based Residential	0	0%
Detox Residential	1,783	27%
Detox Hospital	2	0%
Detox Outpatient Non-Methadone	1	0%
Detox Outpatient Methadone	0	0%
Early Intervention	4	0%
Interim Services	0	0%

Appendix H: Open Access Grant Proposal Cover Sheet

Attachment A – Proposal Cover Sheet

_____ Date Received

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Proposal Cover Sheet

Name of RFP: **Open Access to Medications for OUD in Homeless Shelters** _____

Incorporated Name of Bidder: _____

Type: Public _____ Profit _____ Non-Profit _____ Hospital-Based _____

Federal ID Number: _____ Charities Reg. Number (if applicable) _____

DUNS Number: _____

Address of Bidder: _____

Chief Executive Officer Name and Title: _____

Phone No.: _____ Email Address: _____

Contact Person Name and Title: _____

Phone No.: _____ Email Address: _____

Total dollar amount requested: _____ Fiscal Year End: _____

Funding Period: From _____ to _____

Total number of unduplicated individuals to be served: _____

County in which services are to be provided: _____

Brief description of services by program name and level of service to be provided:

NOTE: In order to contract with the State of New Jersey, all providers applying for contracts, or responding to Request for Proposals (RFPs), *MUST* be pre-registered with the online eProcurement system known as NJSTART. You may register your organization by proceeding to the following web site: <https://www.nj.gov/treasury/purchase/vendor.shtml>. Or via telephone: (609) 341-3500.


Authorization: Chief Executive Officer (printed name): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Open Access to Medications for OUD in Homeless Shelters - 24

Appendix I: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Fiscal Opportunities

hud.gov / FY-2023...lication



U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Community Planning and Development

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Continuum of Care
Competition and Renewal or Replacement of Youth Homeless Demonstration Program Grants
FR-6700-N-25
09/28/2023

Appendix J: Chapter 4 evaluation matrix, sources, and criteria

Impact on length of stay:

1. No impact on the Length of stay
2. A minimal reduction in length of stay can be reasonably expected
3. A significant reduction in length of stay can be reasonably expected but still above DCA requirements
4. Length of stay can be expected to comply with DCA requirements.
5. Length of Stay can be reasonably expected to fall below DCA requirements.

Cost:

1. The price is so high, that the implementing entity cannot reasonably pay for the program with assistance.
2. To pay for the program, the implementing entity will need significant additional resources
3. The implementing entity will need additional resources.
4. The implementing entities can be expected to easily pay for the program.
5. Can be expected to save money or cost nothing.

Ease of implementation:

1. One can expect strong political pushback from other entities and the public to the point where the solution will not be able to be implemented.
2. Significant political pushback can be expected, and implementation will require significant determination and gumption from implementers.
3. Moderate political pushback can be expected and a coalition of decision makers or other entities will need to be created with moderate time delays.
4. The policy can be implemented relatively easily with minimal pushback but some require time for training, legislation, etc
5. The policy can be implemented easily and immediately.

Impact on Continuation of Services:

1. This policy can be expected to significantly reduce the overall continuity of care.
2. This policy can be expected to moderately reduce the overall continuity of care.
3. This policy can be reasonably expected to have minimal to zero impact on overall continuity of care.
4. This policy can be expected to moderately increase the overall continuity of care.
5. This policy can be expected to significantly increase the overall continuity of care.

Sources:

Proposed Solutions	Impact on Length of Stay	Ease of Implementation	Impact on Continuation of Services	Impact on Overall Quality of Care
Combining CoCs	Sullivan, 2019	(24 CFR 578) (N.J.A.C. 5:15-1.3) (Smith, 1974)	(U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2023b)	(U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2023b)
Revising Applications	(NJ-501, 2023) (NJ-507, 2023)	(24 CFR 578) (N.J.A.C. 5:15-1.3)	(U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Department 2023a)	(Troy & Cruz, 2023) (Hao et al, 2022) (want one more source)
Increase Pull Factors	(Culhane & Kuhn, 1998) (HRE, 2017) (Chen et al., 2021) (Hao et al, 2022) (New York State, 2023)	(24 CFR 578) (N.J.A.C. 5:15-1.3)	(NPSC, 2016; HUD 2023a; HUD, 2023b)	(Hao et al, 2022) (New York State, 2023) (HRE, 2017) (Chen et al., 2021)

Appendix K: CoC funding and number of homeless individuals, per county

County	Awarded_Amount_	number_of_homeless_	PP_FY2023	num_chron_hom	num_unsheltered
Atlantic	\$745,756	440	\$1,695	194	235
Bergen	\$6,956,340	396	\$17,567	6	13
Burlington	\$640,886	933	\$687	128	60
Camden/Gloucester/ Cape May/Cumberland	\$5,145,905	1167	\$4,410	242	199
Essex	\$9,508,173	1712	\$5,554	212	126
Hudson		998	\$9,527	266	223
Middlesex	\$3,688,200	664	\$5,555	175	137
Monmouth	\$4,187,973	479	\$8,743	98	39
Morris	\$2,133,870	466	\$4,579	105	29
Ocean	\$836,124	436	\$1,918	104	35
Passaic	\$5,048,438	408	\$12,374	101	55
Salem	\$173,792	67	\$2,594	11	54
Somerset	\$447,750	376	\$1,191	59	5
Mercer	\$5,584,338	714	\$7,821	101	131
Union	\$5,244,531	592	\$8,859	112	51
Warren/Sussex/ Hunterdon	\$1,471,460	419	\$3,512	52	24
Total for state	\$51,813,536	10267		1966	1416
mean	\$3,454,236	641.6875	\$6,036	122.875	88.5
median	\$3,688,200	472.5	\$5,066	104.5	54.5

Appendix L: Funding for programs related to homelessness, FY 2020-2024

Org	Program	Ammount
Paterson	ESG	3901651
Paterson	CDBG	13630491
Paterson	HOME	10275914
Paterson	CoC	0
Paterson	HOPWA	7811412
Passaic County	ESG	0
Passaic County	CDBG	5097046
Passaic County	HOME	0
Passaic County	CoC	10475031
Passaic County	HOPWA	0
Hudson County	ESG	0
Hudson County	CDBG	11561650
Hudson County	HOME	20988627
Hudson County	CoC	0
Hudson County	HOPWA	0
NJ506-Jersey Ci	CoC	17321934
Essex County	ESG	6401701
Essex County	CDBG	27319656
Essex County	HOME	9752088
Essex County	CoC	0
Essex County	HOPWA	0
NJ-504 - Newark/	COC	13720542

Appendix M: Funds available for combined CoCs NJ-511 and NJ-501

Column 1. Current CoC Code	Step 2. Estimated ARD	3. FY2012 Preliminary Pro- Rata Need	4. Estimated Final Pro-Rata Need	
NJ-511	\$4,679,403	\$4,729,379	\$4,729,379	This is the FY2024 FPRN amount for the merged CoC.
NJ-501	\$6,250,752	\$9,224,586	\$9,224,586	
		\$0	\$0	
		\$0	\$0	
		\$0	\$0	
		\$0	\$0	
Merged CoC	\$10,930,155	\$13,953,965	\$13,953,965	

Step 1. In Column 1, list each of the current CoC codes/numbers (ex. MA-500).
 Step 2. In Column 2, list the HHN amounts associated with each CoC code.

1. Geocode	2. Current CoC Code	3. FY2012 Preliminary Pro- Rata Need (PPRN)
342466	NJ-511	\$4,729,379
349003	NJ-501	\$9,224,586

Source: calculation by Chapter 4 authors using data provided by HUD in the “FY2023 Continuum of Care Program NOFO estimated Annual Renewal Demand Report”, “Geographic Code Report”, and “FY 2023 Homeless Assistance Award Report”

Appendix N: Funds available for combined CoCs NJ-511 and NJ-504

Column 1. Current CoC Code	Step 2. Estimated ARD	3. FY2012 Preliminary Pro-Rata Need	4. Estimated Final Pro-Rata Need	
NJ-511	\$4,679,403	\$4,729,379	\$4,729,379	This is the FY2024 FPRN amount for the merged CoC.
NJ-504	\$6,238,585	\$13,572,524	\$13,572,524	
		\$0	\$0	
		\$0	\$0	
		\$0	\$0	
		\$0	\$0	
Merged CoC	\$10,917,988	\$18,301,903	\$18,301,903	

Step 1. In Column 1, list each of the current CoC codes/numbers (ex. MA-500).
 Step 2. In Column 2, list the HHN amounts associated with each CoC code.

1. Geocode	2. Current CoC Code	3. FY2012 Preliminary Pro-Rata Need (PPRN)
342466	NJ-511	\$4,729,379
349013	NJ-504	\$13,572,524

Source: calculation by Chapter 4 authors using data provided by HUD in the “FY2023 Continuum of Care Program NOFO estimated Annual Renewal Demand Report”, “Geographic Code Report”, and “FY 2023 Homeless Assistance Award Report”

Appendix O: CoC funding per individual, per county

CoC	Geocode	CoC Award Amount	Number of Homeless	Ammount Per Person
NJ-511	342466	5048438	1914	2637.637409
NJ-504	349013	7409741	306	24214.83987
NJ-501	349003	6956340	374	18599.83957

Source: chapter 4 authors' based on data provided by HUD in the "FY2023 Continuum of Care Program NOFO estimated Annual Renewal Demand Report," "Geographic Code Report," and "FY 2023 Homeless Assistance Award Report"