

# Evaluating Racial Disparities in the North Carolina Balance of State CoC

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## Section 1: Introduction

“Racism is fundamental to the United States’ inception: our founding as a nation and economy depended on it. Chattel slavery and the genocide of Indigenous people supplied the labor and land for cotton, our nation’s first economic boon and lucrative export. Through social practice and policy, the U.S. has maintained a racialized underclass and the legacy of policies like redlining, black codes, and the War on Drugs have deeply disadvantaged Black and Brown lives today and will for generations to come.”<sup>1</sup> Housing, labor, and justice policies like these and others have greatly impacted Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), leading to a disproportionate rate of these populations experiencing homelessness.

The 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) demonstrates these glaring disparities, where nationally African Americans make up 39 percent of people experiencing homelessness while only representing 13 percent of the general population. While Black people represent the minority group with the largest disparities, other minority groups show significant overrepresentation amongst the homeless population versus their percentage in the wider national population.<sup>2</sup>

These disparities have spurred conversations and action across the country amongst national leaders, advocacy organizations, technical assistance collectives, direct service providers, and government departments. The United States Interagency Council on Coordinating Homeless Programs (USICH) included racial equity as an essential component to improve access to emergency assistance, housing, and supports for historically underserved populations in its updates to the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, *Home Together*.<sup>3</sup> The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) committed to ending racial disparities and began awarding points in its annual Continuum of Care Program competition to CoCs that evaluate and develop strategies to address these disparities. Both HUD and the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) have developed Racial Equity tools that use data to help communities understand who they serve and how people of different races access the available resources compared to Census data.

The North Carolina Balance of State Continuum of Care (NC BoS CoC) has committed to racial equity in its 79-county geographic area. In late 2019, the CoC developed a Racial Equity Subcommittee “to [oversee] implementation of the annual Racial Equity Assessment . . . [analyze] data collected, . . . and [recommend] data-informed action steps to the NC BoS CoC Steering Committee to improve equity across the CoC.”<sup>4</sup> This assessment represents the most recent NC BoS CoC data using the above referenced HUD and NAEH tools as well as the Stella Performance Module in HUD’s HDX data reporting software and CoC coordinated entry system. The CoC will use this data to continue further analysis of racial disparities and a guide to decision-making in the CoC.

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<sup>1</sup> NAEH: <https://endhomelessness.org/equity-is-the-answer-all-along-addressing-racial-trauma-and-homelessness/>

<sup>2</sup> NAEH: <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2020-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> USICH: [link](#)

<sup>4</sup> NC BoS CoC Governance Charter: <https://www.nceh.org/media/files/files/eb0cb776/bos-governance-charter-2019-revisions-final-sc-approved.pdf>

## **North Carolina Balance of State Continuum of Care**

The North Carolina Balance of State CoC serves as a regional planning body, including various public and private stakeholders committed to preventing and ending homelessness. The NC BoS CoC is one of 12 CoCs in North Carolina, representing 79 out of 100 counties in the state. Specifically, the counties that encompass the NC BoS CoC are:

*Alamance, Alexander, Anson, Beaufort, Bertie, Bladen, Burke, Cabarrus, Caldwell, Camden, Carteret, Caswell, Catawba, Chatham, Cherokee, Chowan, Clay, Columbus, Craven, Currituck, Dare, Davidson, Davie, Duplin, Edgecombe, Franklin, Gates, Graham, Granville, Greene, Halifax, Harnett, Haywood, Henderson, Hertford, Hoke, Hyde, Iredell, Jackson, Johnston, Jones, Lee, Lenoir, Macon, Madison, Martin, McDowell, Montgomery, Moore, Nash, Northampton, Onslow, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Person, Pitt, Polk, Randolph, Richmond, Robeson, Rockingham, Rowan, Rutherford, Sampson, Scotland, Stanly, Stokes, Surry, Swain, Transylvania, Tyrrell, Union, Vance, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Wilson, Yadkin*

To respond to the immediate needs of people experiencing homelessness as well as create a robust system to ensure homelessness remains rare, brief, and one-time only, the NC BoS CoC has formed 13 local planning bodies called Regional Committees. Regional Committees support NC BoS CoC activities at the local level and form geographic representation on the NC BoS CoC Governance Committee and other subcommittees and workgroups.

Based on 2017 U.S. Census Data estimates, NC has a population of 10,052,564 people.<sup>5</sup> The NC BoS CoC geographic area encompasses 51 percent of the state's population at 5,079,511 people. The Census estimates 1,579,871 people live in poverty in NC with 55% of people experiencing poverty in the NC BoS CoC's 79 counties. In the latest statewide Point-In-Time Count from 2020, 9,280 people experienced homelessness on a given night, 3,185 or 34 percent of which reside in the NC BoS CoC.

The strategies the NC BoS CoC employs and its performance outcomes make a big impact on the state as a whole. The NC BoS CoC has committed to ensuring all people experiencing homelessness in its 79 counties can successfully access a permanent place to live. The CoC reflects its strong commitment to equality through its Anti-Discrimination Policy, which states:

*...NC BoS CoC is committed to providing housing and services in an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity and have equal treatment and opportunity. The NC BoS CoC's Anti-Discrimination Policies and Procedures ensure all people experiencing homelessness in the CoC have equal access to the housing and services necessary to end homelessness. The Policies and Procedures apply to staff, volunteers, and contractors at all partner agencies. We strongly encourage all NC BoS CoC partners, regardless of funding source,*

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<sup>5</sup> HUD Racial Equity Tool.

*to adopt these Anti-Discrimination policies [which adhere] to the Department of Housing Urban and Development (HUD) Equal Access Rule.*

While robust policies and procedures with a strong equity lens can help guide the CoC, we know it takes ongoing vigilance, oversight, technical assistance, and evaluation to ensure we meet the goals and outcomes we intend with our work.

## **Section 2: Our Approach**

The NC BoS CoC is committed to dismantling racism and eliminating racial, ethnic, and gender disparities. Through its Racial Equity Subcommittee, the CoC will continue to use this assessment as an access point for understanding who the CoC serves and how people of different racial and ethnic identities access the system. Along with assessment, the Racial Equity Subcommittee will foster dialogue on the intersections of racism, white supremacy, and ending homelessness, develop a tool for the CoC to use when making decisions to ensure fidelity to racial equity, and review and enhance current and new policies with a racial equity lens.

Using tools created by federal and national partners, the CoC has conducted an initial analysis of Point-in-Time Count, HMIS, and coordinated entry data to clarify who accesses our system and housing resources.

This document focuses on answering these basic questions:

1. Who does the CoC serve in comparison to people in NC and people in poverty?
2. Who accesses permanent housing in the CoC's system?
3. How does the system support people to end their homelessness?
4. Who has access to coordinated entry and permanent housing resources?

The document answers these questions using HUD's Continuum of Care Assessment Tool, the National Alliance to End Homelessness' Racial Equity Tool, HUD's Stella Performance Module, and local coordinated entry data. The subsequent sections provide more detail about each tool and the results. The CoC uses these results to discuss our observations and next steps.

## Section 3: Methodology and Results

### Question 1: Who does the CoC serve in comparison to people in NC and people in poverty?

Assessment Tool: HUD Continuum of Care Racial Equity Assessment Tool (HUD Tool)<sup>6</sup>

Description: The HUD Tool provides information about racial distributions of people living in poverty and for people experiencing homelessness by race, ethnicity, age, and Veteran status. It allows CoCs to visualize the racial dimensions of poverty and homelessness within their state and geographic area.

Data Source:

- Population Estimates: The tool sources state and CoC population estimates (for everyone and people in poverty) from the U.S. Census, specifically, the American Community Survey (ACS) 2013-2017 5-year estimates. The tool also uses Tract estimates<sup>7</sup> to crosswalk CoC data, which look slightly different from state-level estimates available directly from the ACS.
- Homelessness: Homeless population and subpopulation data comes from the 2020 Point-In-Time Count data reported in the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to the U.S. Congress. PIT Counts serve as an unduplicated, 1-night estimate of sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations conducted annually during the last 10 days of January.

Limitations:

- The HUD Tool uses 2020 PIT Count data only. While more recent PIT Count data exists, the 2020 data remains relevant. With more time and resources, the NC BoS CoC can recreate the tool and use more recent data.
- Point-In-Time Count data is limited because it only records one night during a year. The CoC should combine analysis completed using PIT Count data with other data sources, such as HMIS data.
- The tool identifies race solely on the head of household for individuals living in families. This proxy may not accurately represent the racial identity of each household member.

HUD Definitions Used in the Tool:

- *Race Categories:* White, Black<sup>8</sup>, Native American/Alaskan, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Other/Multi-Racial
- *Ethnic Categories:* Hispanic and Non-Hispanic
- *Families:* A household with a least one adult 18 years or older and one child under 18
- *Unaccompanied Youth:* Youth under age 25 who do not live in households with adults 25 years or older or other children under 18

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.hudexchange.info/news/new-coc-racial-equity-analysis-tool/>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www2.census.gov/geo/tiger/TIGER\\_DP/2017ACS/ACS\\_2017\\_5YR\\_TRACT.gdb.zip](https://www2.census.gov/geo/tiger/TIGER_DP/2017ACS/ACS_2017_5YR_TRACT.gdb.zip)

<sup>8</sup> The CoC uses the term “Black” in this report to align with HUD’s language and because it incorporates all people who identify as black. Because of the importance of terminology, the CoC will continue to evaluate and update it as it addresses racial disparities.

## Key Results from the HUD Continuum of Care Racial Assessment Tool

### North Carolina and the NC Balance of State CoC Populations & Race

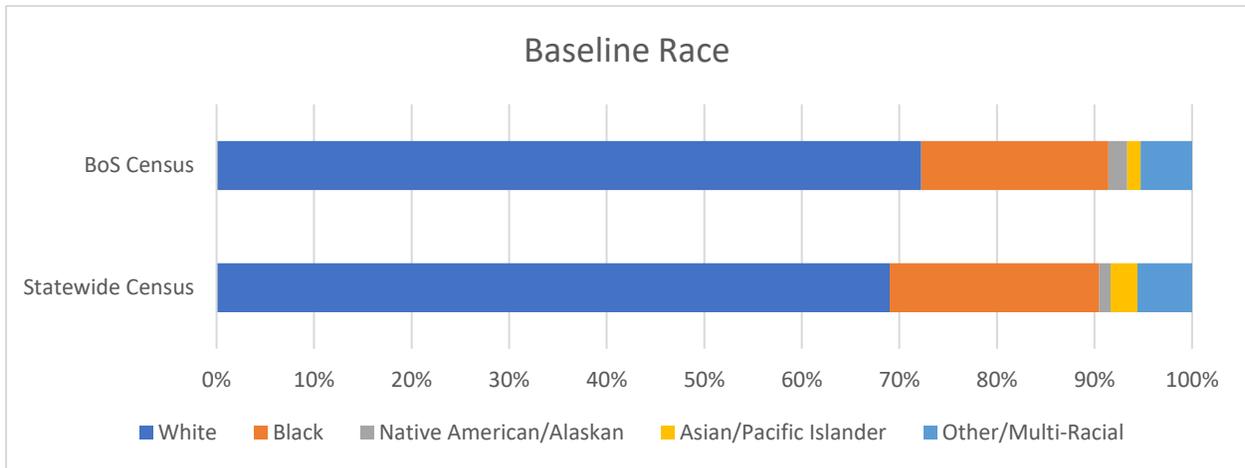


Table 1: Race in North Carolina and the NC Balance of State CoC (HUD Tool)

When comparing the population of everyone within the 79 counties of the NC BoS CoC and the general populations of North Carolina, more people identified as White in the CoC (72%) versus people throughout North Carolina (69%) and slightly fewer people identified as Black (19% versus 21%), more people identified as Native American (2% versus 1%), fewer people identified as Asian/Pacific Islander (1% versus 3%), and fewer people identified as Other/Multi-Racial (5% versus 6%).

### North Carolina and the NC Balance of State CoC Populations and Ethnicity

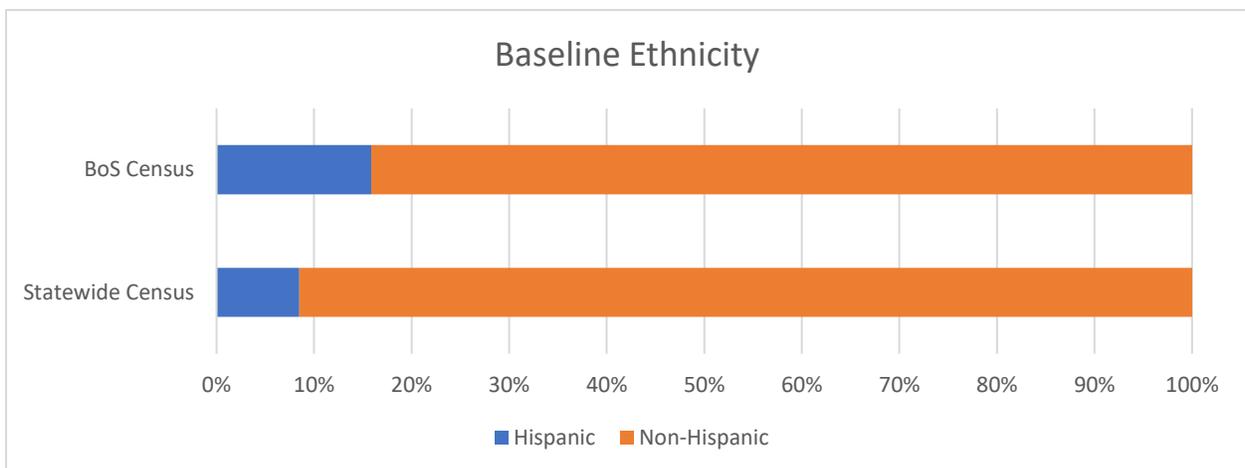


Table 2: Ethnicity in North Carolina and the NC Balance of State CoC (HUD Tool)

While we see differences in racial makeup, the NC BoS CoC geographic area has a very similar ethnic profile to everyone in North Carolina, with an estimated 8% of people identifying as Hispanic in the NC BoS CoC versus 9% of people in the full state.

NC Balance of State CoC: Poverty, Homelessness, Race

	White	Black	Native American/Alaskan	Asian/Pacific Islander	Other/Multi-Racial
<b>% of Everyone</b>	72%	19%	2%	1%	5%
<b>% of People Experiencing Poverty</b>	55%	31%	3%	1%	10%
<b>% of People in Families Experiencing Poverty</b>	49%	34%	4%	1%	12%
<b>% of Everyone Experiencing Homelessness</b>	56%	38%	2%	1%	4%
<b>% of People in Families Experiencing Homelessness</b>	47%	43%	2%	1%	7%

Table 3: NC Balance of State CoC (HUD Tool)

As the data in Table 3 demonstrates, people who identify as White made up 72% of the entire population in the NC BoS CoC geographic area. Narrowing our lens, first to people experiencing poverty and then to people experiencing homelessness, we see significantly less people identifying as White than in the general population. For White families, fewer families experience homelessness than experience poverty.

In contrast, people who identify as Black make up only 19% of the entire population in the NC BoS CoC's 79 counties, while the percentage of people who identify as Black increased when looking at poverty (31%), homelessness (37%), and especially families experiencing homelessness (43%).

While dealing with far lower raw numbers of people identifying as Native American/Alaskan, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Other/Multi-Racial, we observe similar or slightly increased percentages of people who make up the general population and people who experiencing poverty and homelessness.

NC Balance of State CoC: Poverty, Homelessness, and Ethnicity

	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
<b>% of Everyone</b>	8%	92%
<b>% of People Experiencing Poverty</b>	16%	84%
<b>% of People in Families Experiencing Poverty</b>	23%	77%
<b>% of People Experiencing Homelessness</b>	5%	95%
<b>% of People in Families Experiencing Homelessness</b>	8%	92%

Table 4: NC Balance of State CoC Populations and Ethnicity (HUD Tool)

Reviewing data on ethnicity in the NC BoS CoC, we see significant jumps in the percent of people identifying as Hispanic living in poverty (both individuals and families) as compared to the overall population. While only 8% of people identify as Hispanic in the general population of the NC BoS CoC’s 79 counties, 16% of people identifying as Hispanic experience poverty and families identifying as Hispanic spike to 23%. The rates of individuals and families identifying as Hispanic experiencing homelessness seem lower than expected at 5% and 8% respectively. Several factors might contribute to these lower numbers including data collection issues during the PIT night where ethnicity is a commonly unasked question and the general fear for Hispanic people to identify as Hispanic because they believe providers will report them to the government. The CoC must provide better training on data collection during the PIT count, especially differentiating race and ethnicity questions, and work to determine other reasons for lower rates of homelessness.

NC Balance of State CoC: Sheltered and Unsheltered

As discussed previously, the total number of people experiencing homelessness in the NC BoS CoC who identify as Black (38%) is overrepresented versus the total population of people identifying as Black in the general population in NC BoS CoC counties. When looking where these individuals experience their homelessness, the majority access emergency shelters and do so at a higher percentage (41%) than that in the overall homeless population. Fewer people experiencing unsheltered homelessness identify as Black (31%) whereas people identifying as White have lower than expected sheltered homelessness (52% sheltered versus 56% overall homelessness) and higher than expected unsheltered homelessness (65% unsheltered versus 56% overall homelessness).

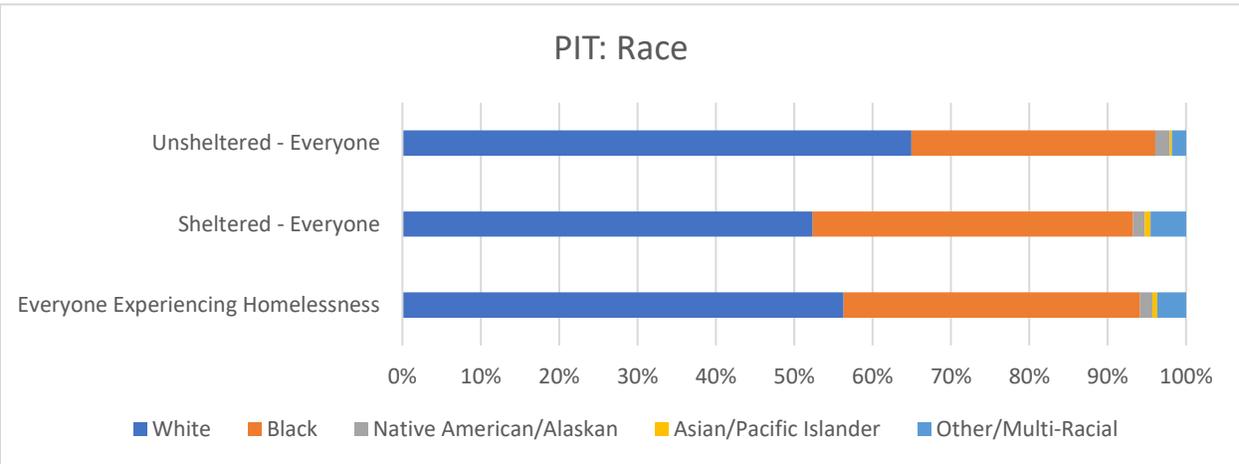


Table 5: NC Balance of State CoC Populations: Race (HUD Tool)

When looking at living situation and ethnicity, the percentage of people who identify as Hispanic and Non-Hispanic stays consistent in the overall sheltered and unsheltered populations. In all categories of housing status while homeless, people identifying as Hispanic make up 5% of the total population. As mentioned previously, people identifying as Hispanic seem underrepresented when compared to the number of people identifying as Hispanic in the general population within NC BoS CoC counties (8%).

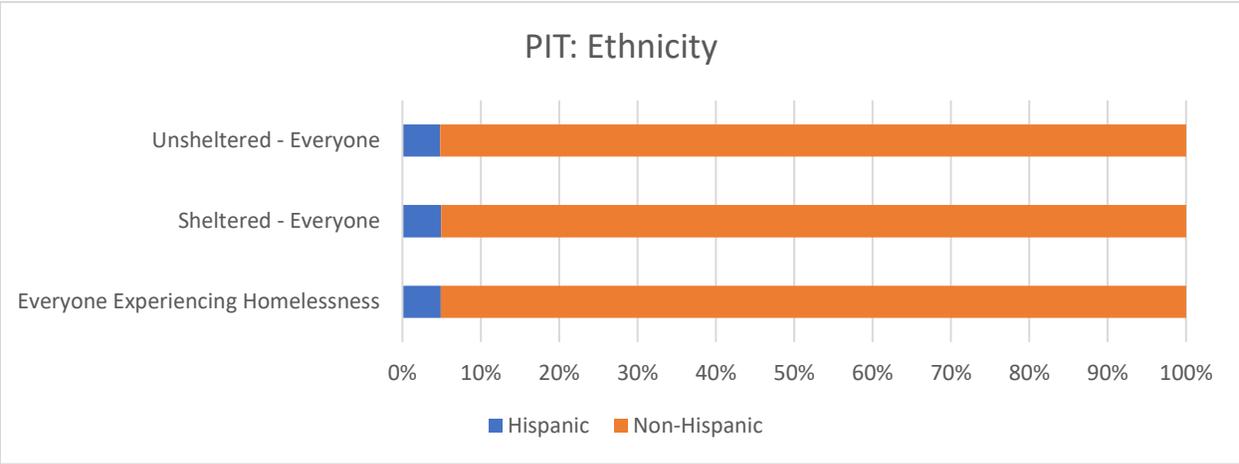


Table 6: NC Balance of State CoC Populations: Ethnicity (HUD Tool)

Additional Populations: Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness

The total youth experiencing homelessness counted in the 2020 Point-In-Time Count was just 195 or 6% of the total number of people counted in the NC BoS CoC. The small percentage of youth counted means that small fluctuations in people identifying as different races on the night of the count can skew how we evaluate this information using the HUD Racial Equity Tool.

In last year’s assessment the racial identity of youth experiencing homelessness differed widely from the percentages of like races in the total NC population. This year, we see ~~that the far~~ results are ~~far~~ closer (less

disproportionate). Youth identifying as White in the total youth census in NC is higher than White youth experiencing homelessness (66% versus 58% respectively). For youth identifying as Black, the data shows the opposite discrepancy, where the total census of youth identifying as Black in NC is 21% while the PIT count shows 35% of youth experiencing homelessness identifying as Black.

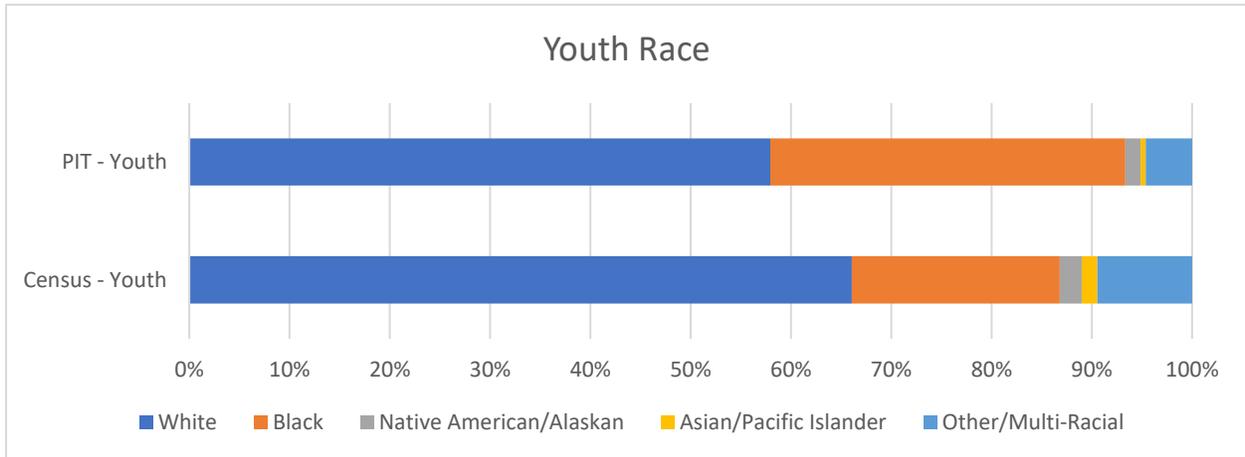


Table 7: NC Balance of State CoC Populations: Unaccompanied Youth-Race (HUD Tool)

Like race of youth, data indicates a wide discrepancy between the number of youth identifying as Hispanic in the total population versus the number counted as homeless during the Point-In-Time Count (14% versus 8% respectively). The youth count for ethnicity mirrors the underrepresentation trend we see in the total population counts for people identifying as Hispanic.

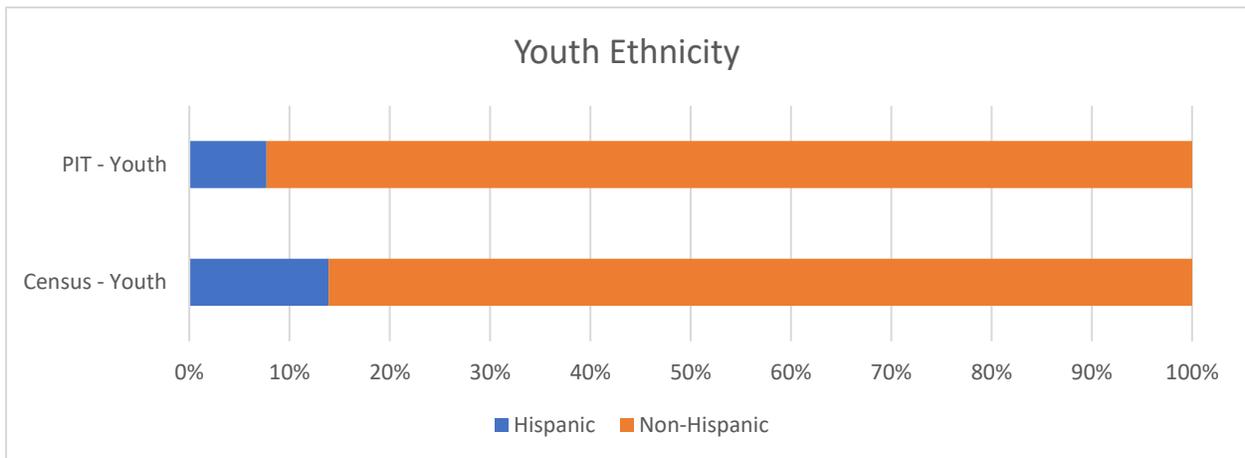


Table 8: NC Balance of State CoC Populations: Unaccompanied Youth-Ethnicities (HUD Tool)

**Additional Populations: Veterans**

As with youth, Veterans make up a small percentage of the overall population of people experiencing homelessness in the NC BoS CoC (151 people or 5%). Compared to Veterans across the state, the percentage of Veterans identifying as Black experiencing homelessness is more than two times larger (17% versus 42%).

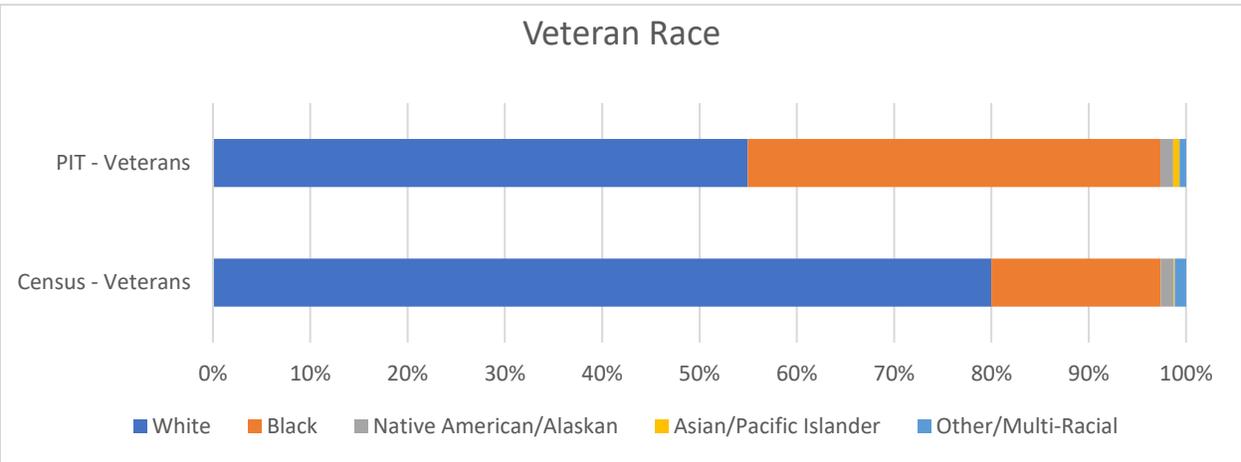


Table 9: NC Balance of State CoC Populations: Veterans-Race (HUD Tool)

When looking at ethnicity amongst Veterans, a similar trend exists as seen with the total population and other subpopulations such as Youth. The same percentage of Veterans identifying as Hispanic experiencing homelessness versus the total population of Veterans in NC BoS CoC exists (3% versus 3%).

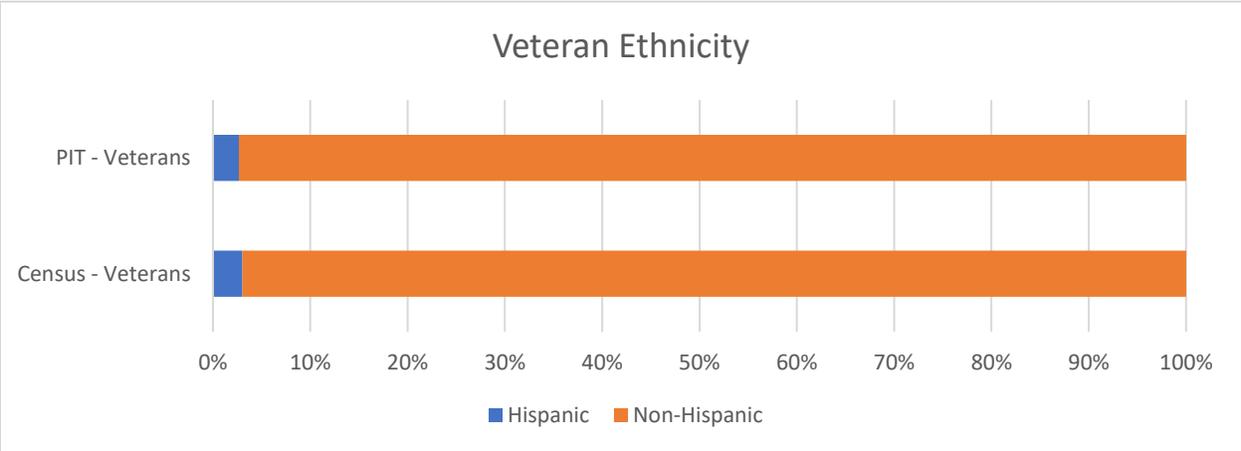


Table 10: NC Balance of State CoC Populations: Veterans-Ethnicity (HUD Tool)

## Question 2: Who accesses permanent housing in the CoC's system?

Assessment Tool: National Alliance to End Homelessness Race Equity Tool (NAEH Tool)<sup>9</sup>

Description: The National Alliance to End Homelessness' Race Equity Tool provides a simple dashboard measuring key areas of the homeless and housing system and how and who the system serves. The tool asks four basic questions:

1. Who is homeless?
2. Who gets into crisis housing?
3. Who gets into permanent housing?
4. Who returns to homelessness?

Data Sources: The tool uses Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data from 01/01/2020-12/31/2020.

### Limitations:

- HMIS only documents people who access homeless service providers participating in the system. The CoC may not document many people experiencing homelessness in HMIS because they live unsheltered or access services from victims' service providers or mainstream service providers not using the HMIS. Currently, the NC BoS CoC has 49% ES, 34% TH, 93% RRH, and 85% PSH bed coverage in HMIS<sup>10</sup>.
- Component type also limits the data. The NAEH tool includes Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, and Permanent Supportive Housing only.
- The current tool only provides high level summaries and does not provide detail on household type, Veteran, or youth status.

### Definitions:

- *Race Categories:* The tool measures four categories: White, Black, Native American, and Other Races.
  - Native American matches the Native American/Alaskan category used in the HUD Tool.
  - Other Races includes the Asian/Pacific Islander and Other/Multi-Racial categories used in the HUD Tool.
- *Ethnicity Categories:* Hispanic and Non-Hispanic

## Key Results from the NAEH Race Equity Tool

### Who are we serving?

Using NC BoS CoC Census data and comparing the percentages of people identifying with different races in HMIS from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020, we observe a smaller percentage of people experiencing

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<sup>9</sup> <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/the-alliances-racial-equity-network-toolkit/>

<sup>10</sup> NC BoS CoC data submitted in the 2021 Housing Inventory Count (HIC).

homelessness who identify as White (72% versus 48%) and a larger percentage of people experiencing homelessness identifying as Black (19% versus 50%). People identifying as Native American show a similar percentage of people experiencing homelessness compared to the Census data in the NC BoS CoC (2% versus 1%). People identifying as Other Races show less people experiencing homelessness compared to the Census data in the NC BoS CoC (7% versus 1%, respectively).

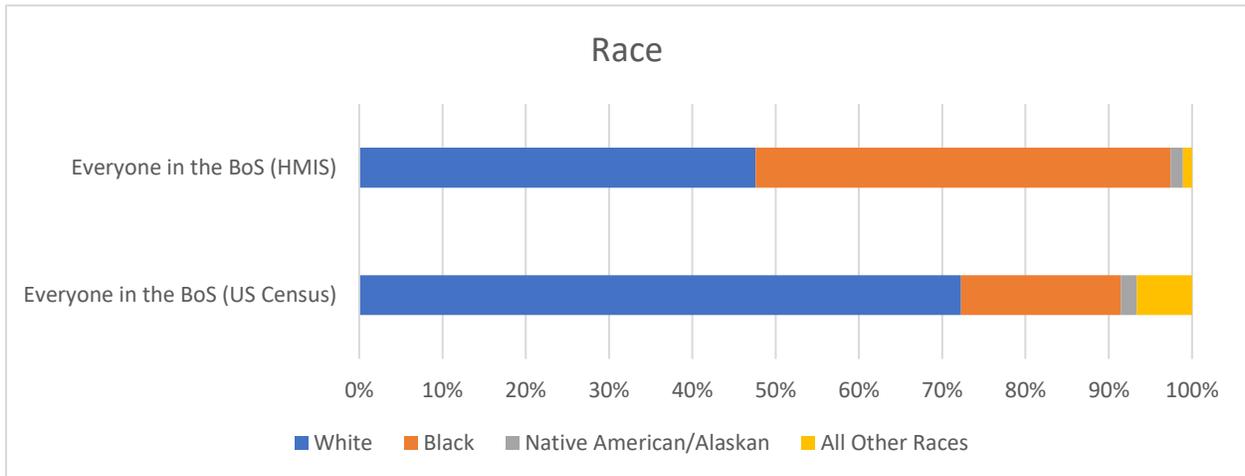


Table 11: NC Balance of State CoC: Everyone and People Experiencing Homelessness-Race (NAEH Tool)

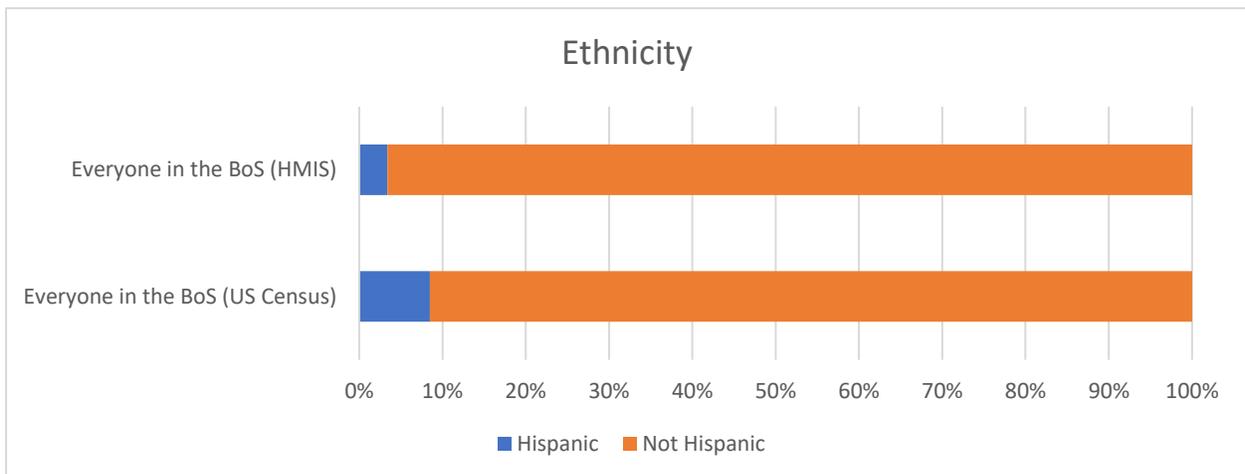


Table 12: NC Balance of State CoC: Everyone and People Experiencing Homelessness-Ethnicity (NAEH Tool)

In a similar comparison of ethnicity for everyone counted in the NC BoS CoC Census and people experiencing homelessness, the data shows a smaller percentage of people experiencing homelessness identifying as Hispanic than the Census count across the NC BoS CoC geographic area (3% versus 8% respectively).

Who accesses Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, and Permanent Housing?

The NAEH Race Equity Tool allows us to review the percentage of people who accessed Emergency Shelter (ES), Transitional Housing (TH), Rapid Rehousing (RRH), and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). HMIS shows that 49% used ES, 5% used TH, 28% used RRH, and 19% used PSH. It is important to note that certain areas of the NC BoS CoC have limited availability of ES, TH, RRH, and PSH programs, meaning people of all races and ethnicities have limited access to certain types of services depending on where they seek services.

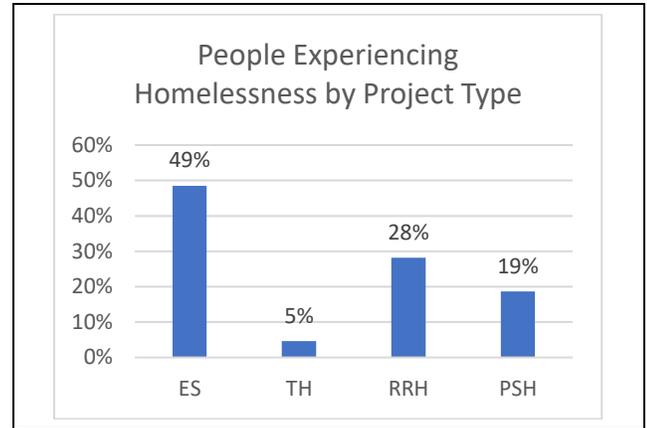


Table 13: % of people accessing ES, TH, RRH, and PSH (NAEH Tool)

The tool also provides detail about race of people accessing these four program types. It shows that 56% of people that access ES identify as White. In the other three program types, TH, RRH, and PSH, people identifying as Black access these programs in greater percentages than all other races.

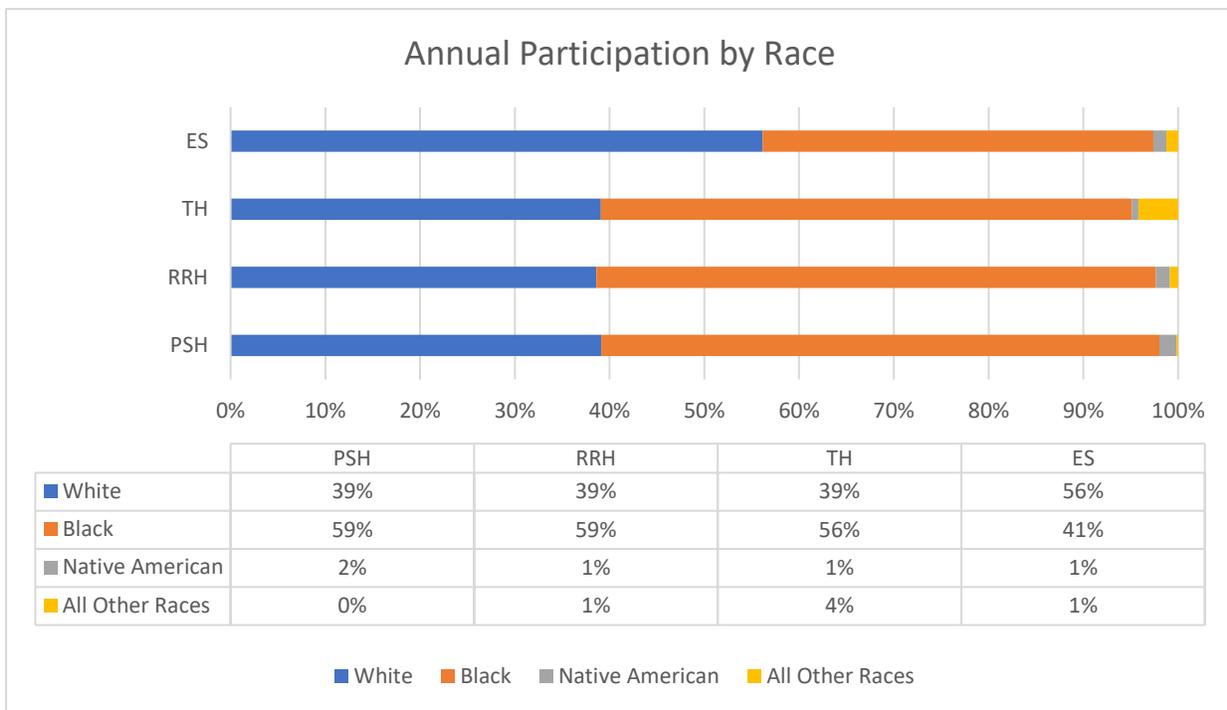


Table 14: NC Balance of State CoC: % of People in ES, TH, RRH, and PH (NAEH Tool)

Who exits to permanent housing and returns to homelessness?

To end homelessness, we understand that homelessness needs to be rare, brief, and one-time only. People experiencing homelessness need access to affordable, safe, permanent housing. From the data, we understand that homelessness and poverty have direct correlations to race and people’s life experiences.

These factors make it that much more difficult to end a household’s homelessness. The NAEH Tool allows the CoC to review the number of people experiencing homelessness exiting to permanent housing and subsequently how many people have returned to homelessness within two years.

When reviewing the data to determine how people of different races exit programs to permanent housing against the total Census of people experiencing homelessness in the NC BoS CoC, the data shows that people identifying as White exit to permanent destinations at a slightly higher rate than the overall percentage of people experiencing homelessness identifying as White (49% versus 48% respectively). In contrast, people identifying as Black exit to permanent destinations at a slightly lower rate than the overall percentage of people experiencing homelessness identifying as Black (49% versus 50% respectively). All other racial categories exit to permanent housing at the same percentage as the percentage of that race in the total homeless population.

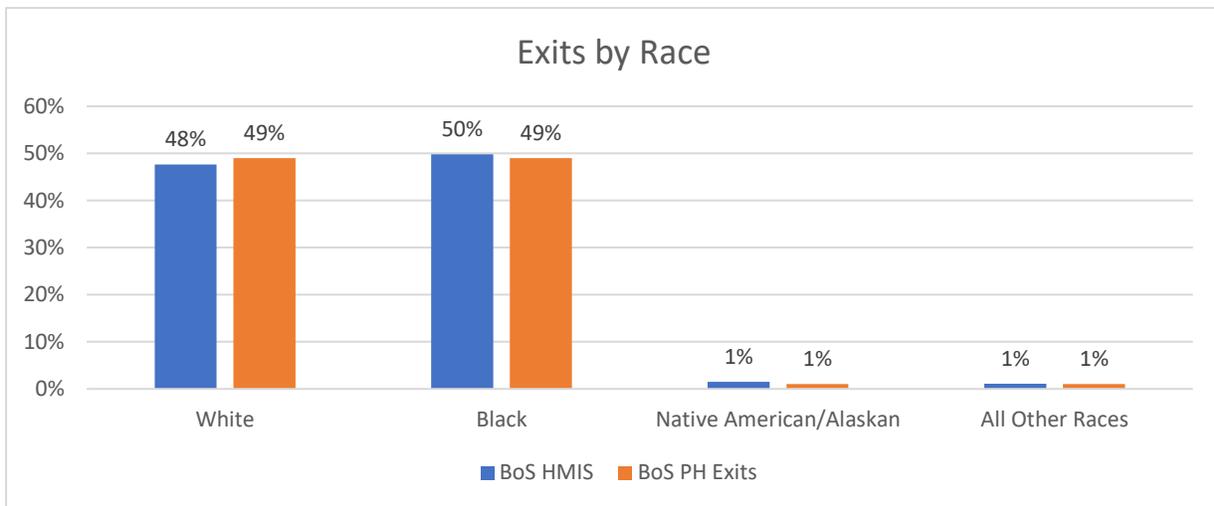


Table 15: NC Balance of State CoC: % of Exits to PH-Race (NAEH Tool)

When reviewing data to determine how people of different ethnicities exit programs to permanent housing against the total Census of people experiencing homelessness in the NC BoS CoC, the data shows that people identifying as Hispanic have a slightly higher rate of exits to permanent destinations (4%) than the percentage of people experiencing homelessness identifying as Hispanic (3%).

In the future, the CoC might want to consider strategies to follow-up with households at intervals after exit from programs to determine continued stability in permanent housing.

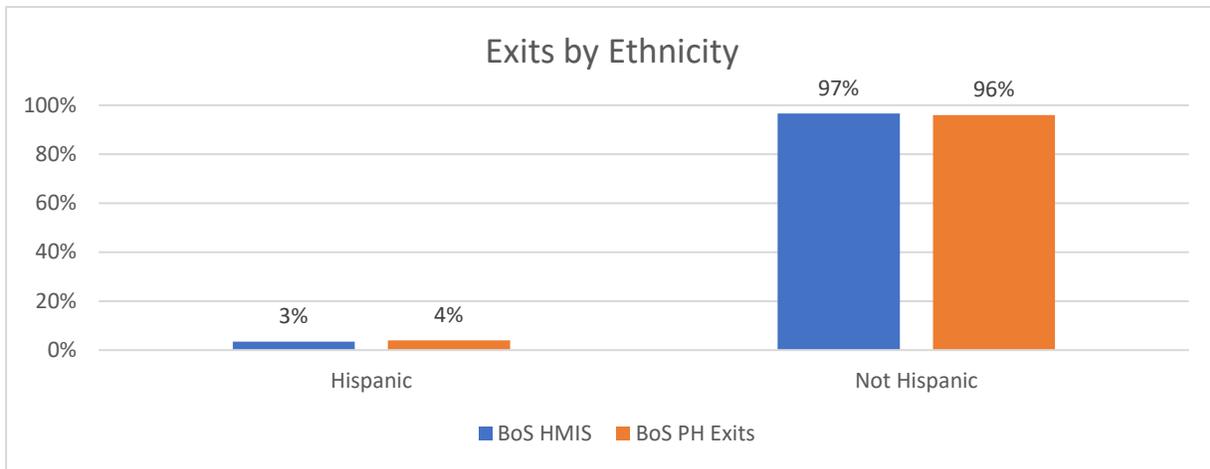


Table 16: NC Balance of State CoC: % of Exits to PH-Ethnicity (NAEH Tool)

The 2020 HMIS data shows 507 people returning to homelessness (6% of those with permanent housing exits) within 2 years. Of those returning to homelessness, people identifying as White returned to homelessness more often than other races at 54%, followed by people identifying as Black at 45%, and people identifying as Native American returning to homelessness at less than 1%. People identifying as White are overrepresented in their returns to homelessness when comparing to the percentage of people identifying as White experiencing homelessness (54% versus 48%). The opposite is true for people identifying as Black where they are underrepresented in their returns to homelessness compared to the percentage of people identifying as Black in the total homeless population (45% versus 50%).

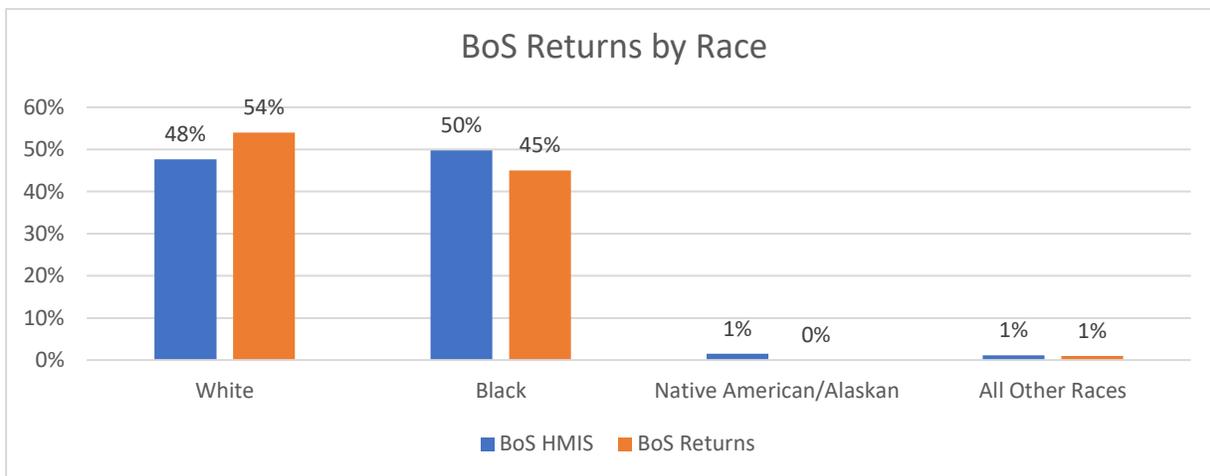


Table 17: NC Balance of State CoC: % of Returns to Homelessness-Race (NAEH Tool)

In relation to returns to homelessness and ethnicity, people identifying as Hispanic return to homelessness at a higher percentage than the total people identifying as non-Hispanic experiencing homelessness in the NC BoS CoC (5% versus 3%). Due to such small number of people identifying as Hispanic in the HMIS data, a small number of returns leads to larger percentage changes. As mentioned above, better identification of people identifying as Hispanic could help the CoC better understand exits to permanent destinations and returns to homelessness for this population.

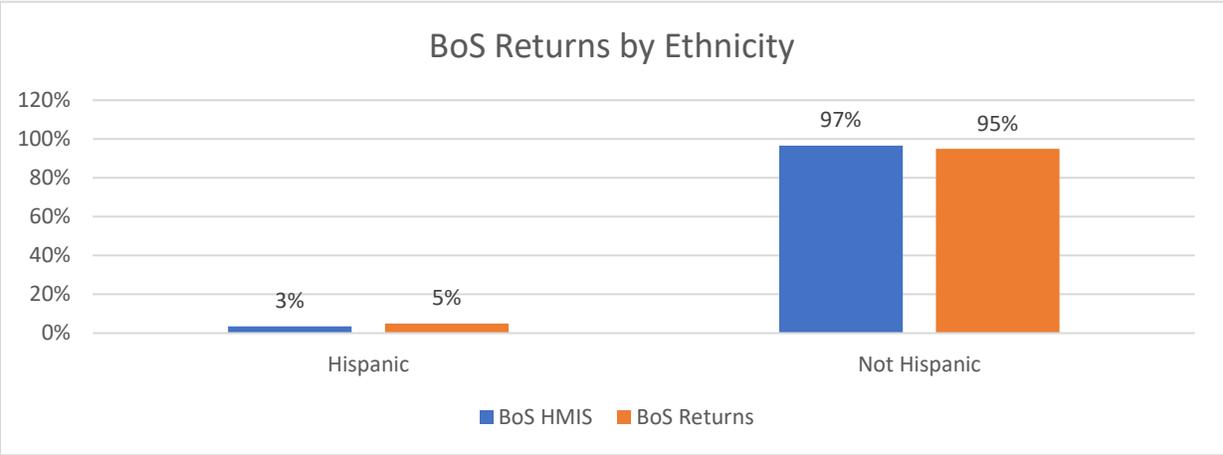


Table 18: NC Balance of State CoC: % of Returns to Homelessness-Ethnicity (NAEH Tool)

### **Question 3: How does the system support people to end their homelessness ?**

Assessment Tool: Stella P in HUD 2.0

Description: HUD provides Stella as a strategy and analysis tool to help CoCs understand how their system performs. Available in HUD's HDX 2.0, Stella P visualizes Longitudinal System Analysis (LSA) data to illustrate how households move through the homeless service system, highlighting demographic and outcome disparities.

Data Sources: The tool uses CoC LSA data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data from 10/01/2019-09/30/2020.

#### Limitations:

- HMIS only documents people who access homeless service providers participating in the system. The CoC may not document many people experiencing homelessness in HMIS because they live unsheltered or access services from victims' service providers or mainstream service providers not using the HMIS. Currently, the NC BoS CoC has 49% ES, 34% TH, 93% RRH, and 85% PSH bed coverage in HMIS<sup>11</sup>.
- Component type also limits the data. LSA data only includes Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Other Permanent Housing projects. People recorded in HMIS in street outreach, supportive services only, and coordinated entry projects without entries in the project types listed above will not be included.
- While Stella can provide data showing the intersection of race, ethnicity, gender, and age, the data presented focuses solely on race and ethnicity. Later analysis of Stella data might include additional points of interest. The tool bases a household's race and ethnicity solely on the head of household, which may not align with the race and ethnicity of all household members.
- The tool specifies ethnicity as White Hispanic or White Non-Hispanic and does not include Hispanic origin in other racial categories.
- With only 205 heads of households exiting the system identifying as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Native, White Hispanic or Latino, and Multiple Races, small changes could overtime shift percentages and patterns.

#### Definitions:

- *Race Categories:* The tool measures several racial categories including: White Non-Hispanic, Black or African American, Multiple Races, White Hispanic, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- *Ethnicity Categories:* White Hispanic and White Non-Hispanic

### **Key Results from Stella P visualization of the Longitudinal System Analysis**

Where do households exit?

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<sup>11</sup> NC BoS CoC data submitted in the 2021 Housing Inventory Count (HIC).

Using Stella to compare exit data for different races and ethnicities, we see that people identifying as White Non-Hispanic and people identifying as Black or African American exit to permanent destinations at equal rates (40%). People identifying as Black exit to temporary destinations at a slightly lower rate than people identifying as White non-Hispanic (45% versus 46% respectively). People identifying as White Hispanic have far lower positive exit percentages than people identifying as White Non-Hispanic (31% versus 40% respectively) and higher percentage exits to temporary destinations (54% versus 46% respectively). With high unknown exit percentages (15% for people identifying as Black or African American, White Non-Hispanic, and White Hispanic), the comparisons between racial and ethnic populations could quickly become disproportionate. The CoC must work with providers to collect as much exit data as possible to fully understand this data.

When reviewing exit data for other races, we see low positive exit rates for people identifying as American Indian/Alaska Native and Asian (29% and 38% respectively) compared to people identifying as Black/African American or White Non-Hispanic (40% for both). In contrast, they have higher percentage exits to temporary destinations (54% for people identifying as American Indian/Alaskan Native and 48% for people identifying as Asian). People identifying as Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander has relatively high exits to permanent destinations at 60%. However, the low number of people identifying as Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander in the HMIS data could easily shift these percentages over time (10 people).

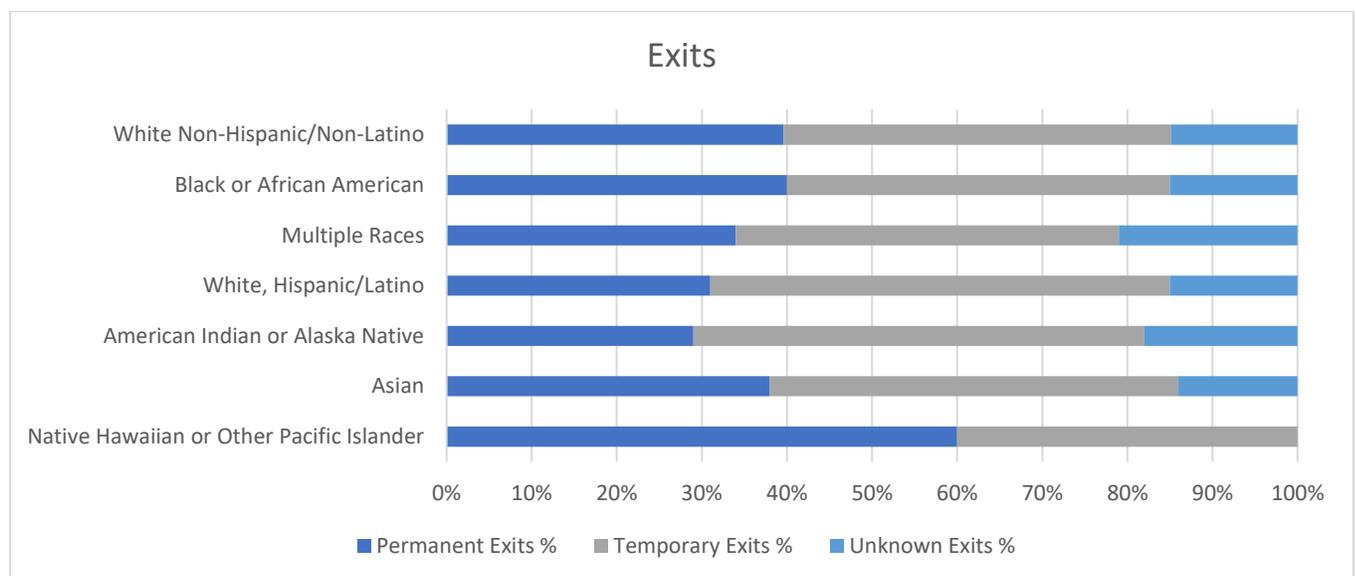


Table 19: NC Balance of State CoC: % of Exits from Homelessness (Stella P)

### How often do households return to homelessness?

When comparing returns to homelessness after an exit to a permanent destination based on race and ethnicity, we see varying degrees of sustainability for BIPOC. People identifying as White Non-Hispanic exit at a higher rate than people identifying as Black/African America (11% versus 8% respectively). People identifying as American Indian/Alaska Native also have a relatively low return rate to homelessness and a lower percentage than people identifying as White Non-Hispanic (7% versus 11% respectively). However, two racial groups as mentioned above that have lower exits to permanent destinations have disproportionately high percentages of returns to homelessness after one year. People identifying as

Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and Multiple Races return to homelessness more readily than people identifying as White Non-Hispanic (17% and 12% versus 11% respectively).

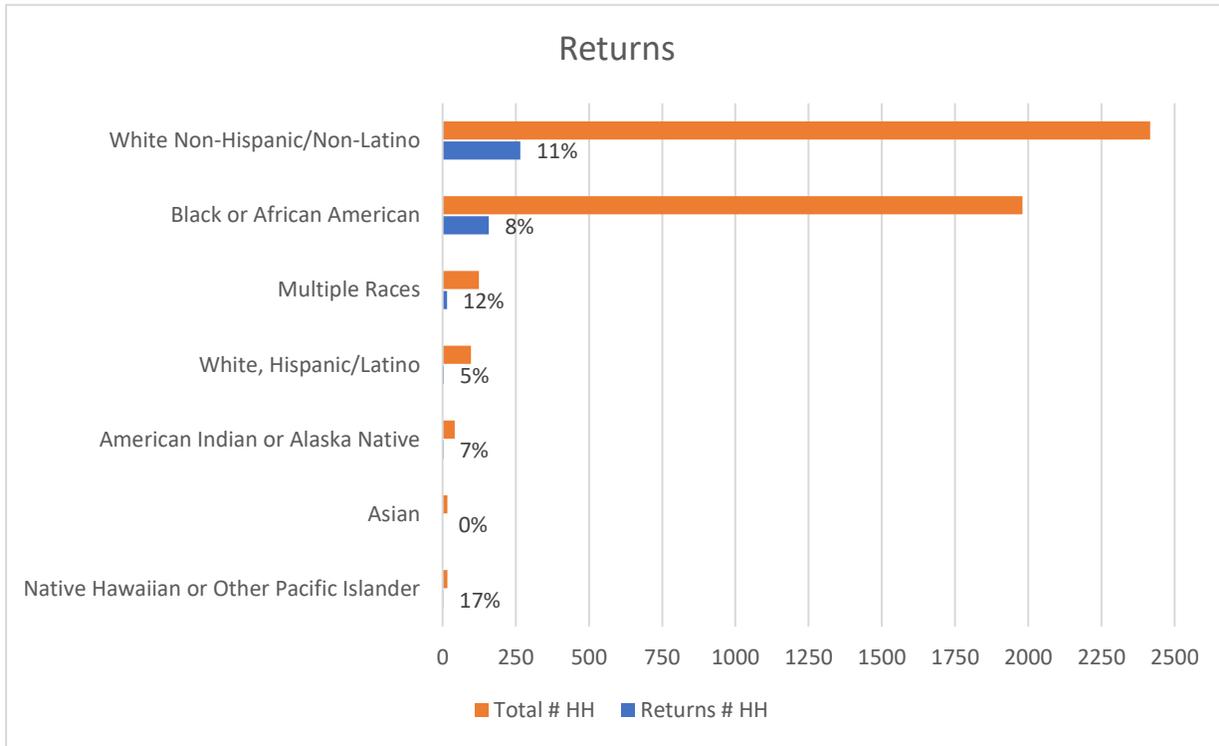


Table 20: NC Balance of State CoC: % of Returns to Homelessness (Stella P)

How long do households remain homeless?

People identifying as Black/African American have the longest lengths of stay in projects at 137 days. People identifying as White Non-Hispanic and Asian follow closely with 107 days and 103 days respectively. All other race categories stay in programs less than 100 days, although the universe of people for races other than Black/African American and White Non-Hispanic is quite small (all less than 100 people versus 2,208 people identifying as Black/African American and 2,611 people identifying as White Non-Hispanic). The smaller universe and lengths of stay in programs for these races could imply that people of color other than Black/African American have access issues to essential services such as shelter and permanent housing projects.

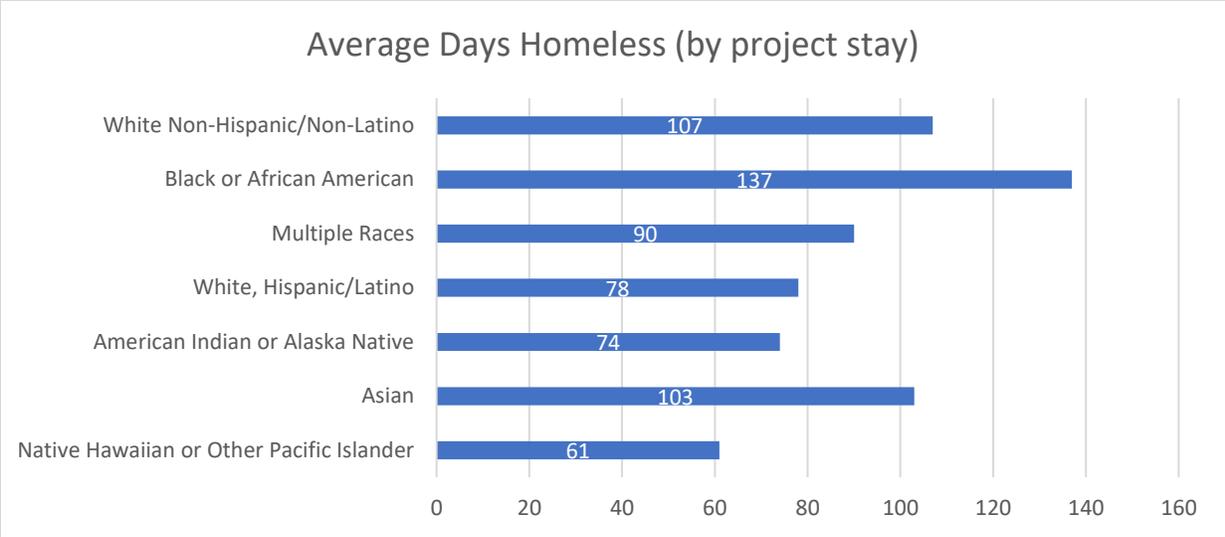


Table 21: NC Balance of State CoC: Average Days Homeless by Project Stay (Stella P)

When evaluating the comparison to lengths of stay in projects with self-reported lengths of time experiencing homelessness, we see a stark contrast. All racial and ethnic populations report average lengths of time experiencing homelessness of at least one year with White Non-Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Natives reporting the greatest number of days homeless at 488 days each. This demonstrates the limits of HMIS in reporting actual length of time homeless for individual households. A length of stay in a project is helpful for individual agencies to evaluate service effectiveness but less so to help the CoC understand homeless history. Self-reported homelessness shares similar issues because households understand their housing crises differently than HUD’s definitions of homelessness. The data on self-reported homelessness does indicate at the very least that all populations accessing the system, whether they meet HUD’s narrow definition of homelessness or not, have long-term housing insecurity.

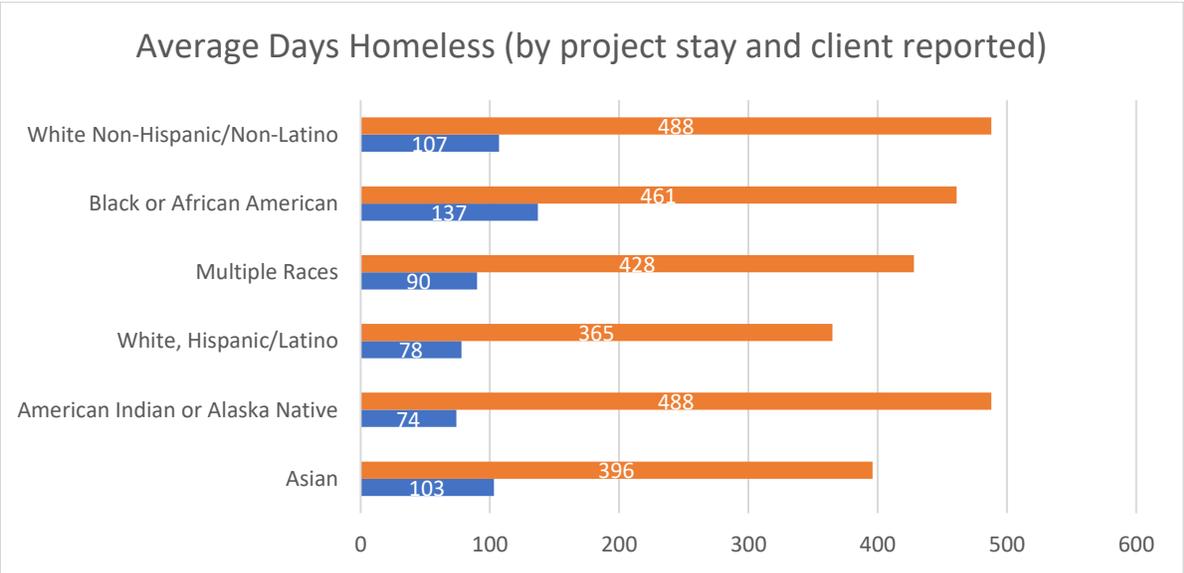


Table 22: NC Balance of State CoC: Average Days Homeless – Project Stay vs. Self-Report (Stella P)

#### **Question 4: Who has access to coordinated entry and permanent housing resources?**

Description: HUD requires CoC's to operate a coordinated entry system to assess, prioritize, and provide access to housing resources for all people experiencing homelessness in its geographic area. The NC BoS CoC coordinated entry system uses the VI-SPDAT to assess households, prioritizing households on a by-name list generated through HMIS.

#### Data Sources:

- NC BoS CoC Coordinated Entry HMIS data from 10/01/2020-06/30/2021 for CE Project Entries and VI-SPDAT scores.
- Back@Home Referral System (Smartsheet) from 10/01/2020-06/30/2021 for Housing Barriers Assessment.

#### Limitations:

- HMIS only documents people who access homeless service providers participating in the system. Many people experiencing homelessness, specifically through Victim Service Providers, may not be documented.
- While the CE system attempts to capture all people experiencing literal homelessness in a separate HMIS CE project, some agencies refuse to participate in the CE process and many of their clients are not connected to the system.
- Assessments are completed for Heads of Households on behalf of the entire household. Our analysis bases a household's race and ethnicity solely on the head of household, which may not align with the race and ethnicity of all household members. Secondary or multiple racial identities not able to be included.

#### Definitions:

- *Race Categories:* White, Black, Asian, American Indian, and Native Hawaiian
- *Ethnicity Categories:* Hispanic and Non-Hispanic
- *VI-SPDAT Level of Priority:*
  - Highest = 15+ points
  - Higher = 11-14 points
  - High = 8-10
  - Medium = 4-7
  - Low = 0-3

#### **Key Results Analysis of CE Assessment Tools: VI-SPDAT and Back@Home Housing Barriers Assessment**

When reviewing VI-SPDAT and VI-FSPDAT data from the NC BoS CoC Coordinated Entry System, the assessment tools seem to prioritize people identifying as White over people of color. In the Highest, Higher, and High levels of priority, people identifying as White are disproportionately represented (85%, 72%, and 61% respectively). In the Highest and Higher priority

levels, which corresponds to placement in the most intensive housing interventions such as permanent supportive housing, people identifying as White have greater opportunity to end their homelessness than BIPOC. The low percentages of Black, Asian, American Indian, and Native Hawaiian individuals scoring in the Highest, Higher, and High priority levels could indicate several things: the assessment tools do not account for specific issues that affect people of color and indicate their vulnerability; the invasive nature of the questions cause people of color to under share intimate details of their lives that could help them score higher on the assessment; the assessment’s scoring mechanism weights issues that more readily affect people identifying as White.

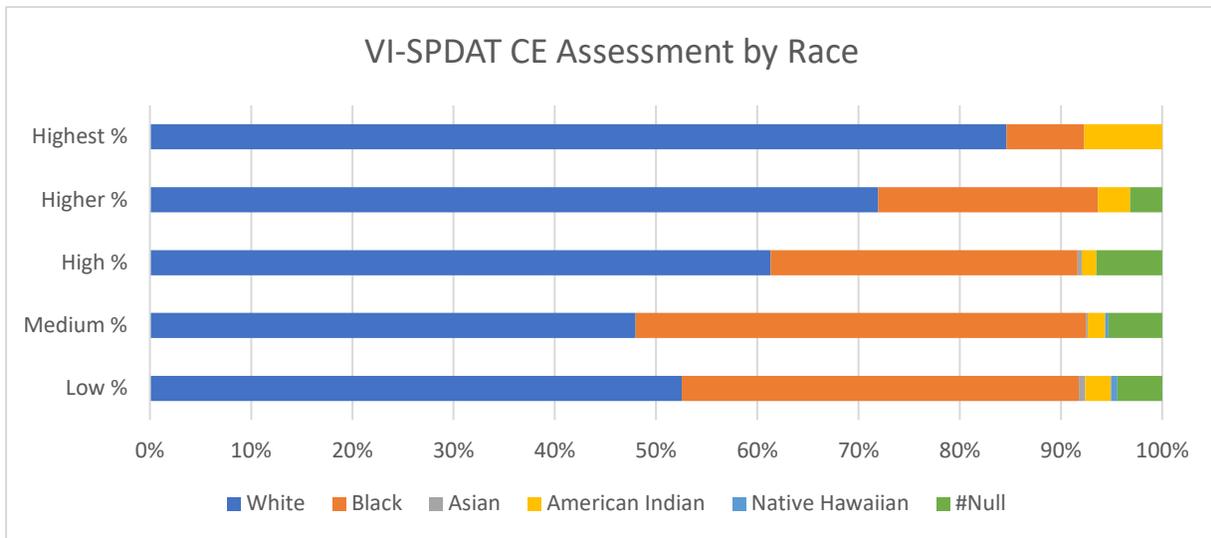


Table 23: NC Balance of State CoC: FY21 through June 2021 breakdown of VI-SPDAT scores by Race - Individuals (HMIS data)

The VI-SPDAT and VI-FSDPAT seems to show the same effect when considering a household’s ethnicity. The percentage of people scoring in the Highest, Higher, and High levels of priority weigh heavily towards people identifying as non-Hispanic. 100% of people in the highest level of priority are people identifying as non-Hispanic with gradually higher percentages of people identifying as Hispanic as the priority level decreases. This data indicates that people identifying as Hispanic likely have very little access to the highest-level housing interventions such as permanent supportive housing. Like their usage with people of color, the assessments likely do not account for specific issues that affect people identifying as Hispanic to indicate their real vulnerability.

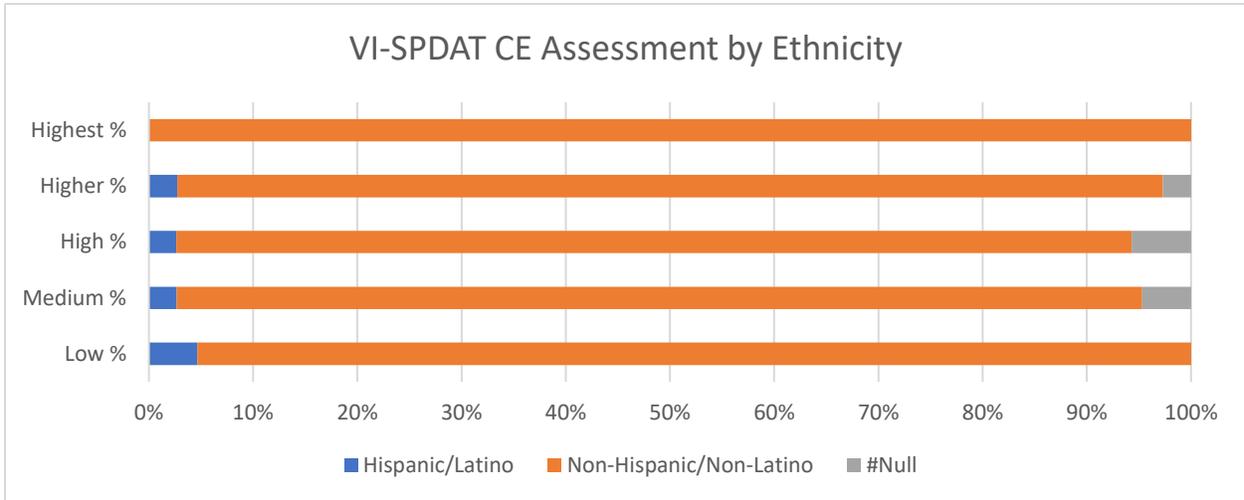


Table 24: NC Balance of State CoC: FY21 through June 2021 breakdown of VI-SPDAT scores by Ethnicity - Individuals (HMIS data)

NC BoS CoC rehousing agencies participate in a state-sponsored program called Back@Home North Carolina which uses Emergency Solutions Grant – Coronavirus funding to provide rapid rehousing and homelessness prevention services. This program uses a different assessment called the Housing Barriers Assessment to determine prioritization of households for services. The NC BoS CoC have been closely monitoring its usage to determine if this new assessment provides better access to BIPOC.

The Housing Barriers Assessment prioritizes different aspects of households than the VI-SPDAT and VI-FSPDAT. Whereas the VI-SPDAT and VI-FSPDAT weight risks, socialization and daily functioning, and wellness as the highest risk factors, the Housing Barriers Assessment gives greater weight to homeless or housing history while adding two areas not accounted for in the other assessments – marginalized identities and Vets not eligible for VA services.

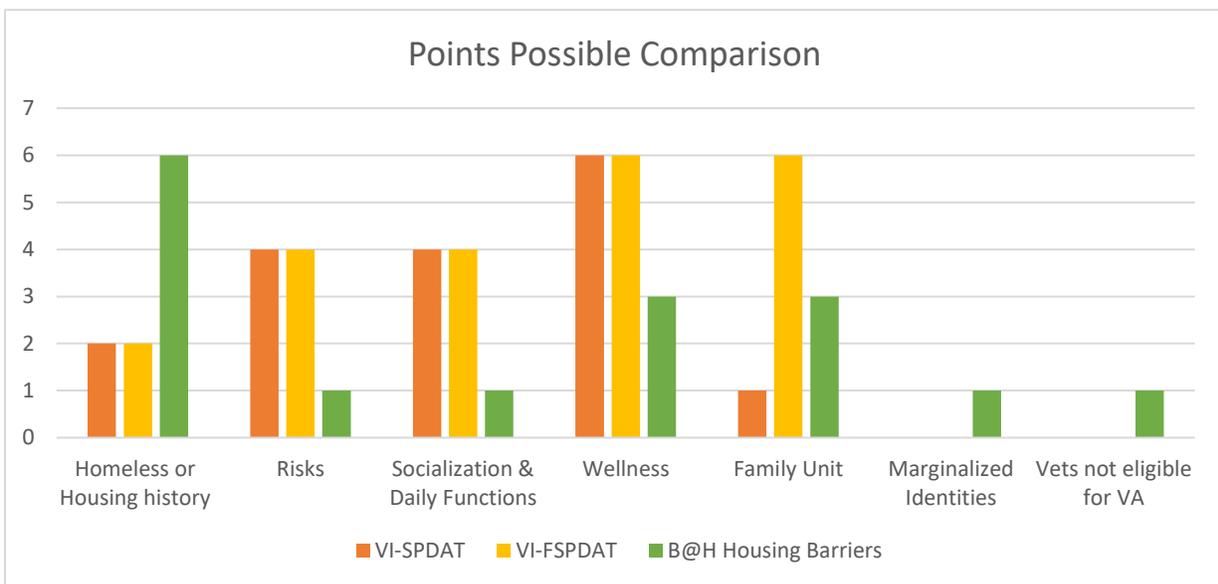


Table 25: NC Balance of State CoC: Prioritization Tool Comparison by Points Possible

Preliminary data from Housing Barriers Assessment usage seems to indicate that the tool does a better job of prioritizing BIPoC. The tool prioritizes people identifying as Black in greater percentages than people identifying as White in the three highest priority levels (51% versus 25% for Priority 1, 49% versus 42% for Priority 2, 47% versus 45% for Priority 3). The percentage of people identifying as Black in the highest priority areas of the Housing Barriers Assessment are larger than in the highest priority areas of the VI-SPDAT and VI-FSPDAT. The same seems to hold true for other racial groups such as people identifying as American Indian, Asian, Multi-Racial, and Native Hawaiian.

Because the Housing Barriers Assessment is conducted from a centralized access point at NC 2-1-1 rather than at multiple access points within local communities, it seems people of color generally have more access to the system and thus permanent housing opportunities. This seems especially true for people identifying as American Indian. The NC BoS CoC will continue to monitor the usage of the Housing Barriers Assessment and its ability to prioritize BIPoC and use this data to assist stakeholders as the CoC shifts away from the VI-SPDAT and VI-FSPDAT to another more inclusive and equitable coordinated entry assessment.

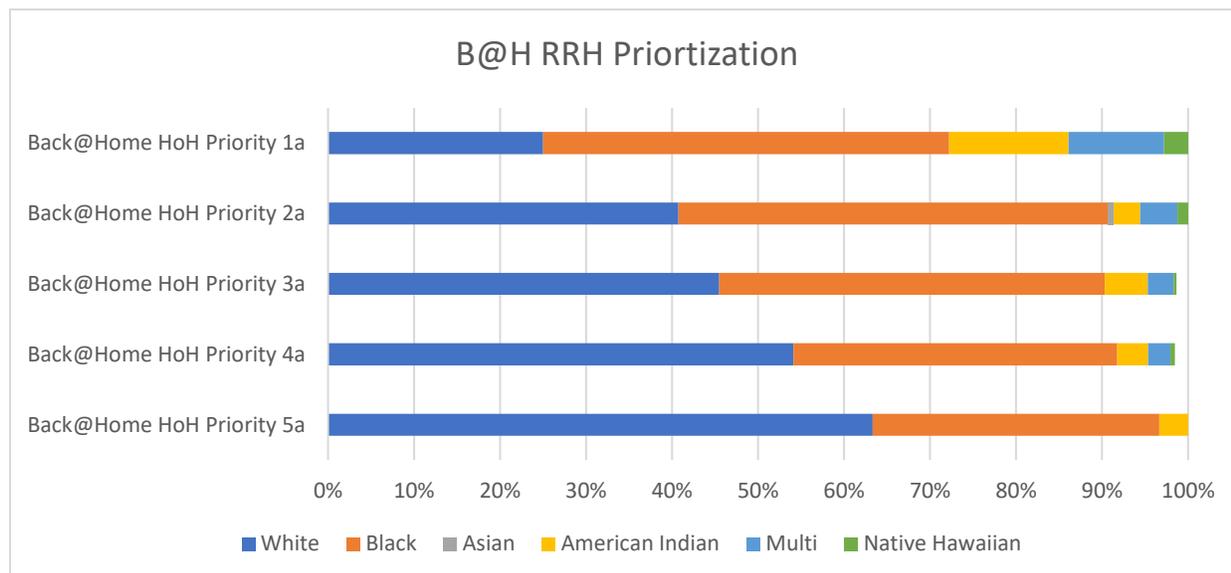


Table 26: NC Balance of State CoC: % of Back@Home Housing Barriers Prioritization-Race (B@H Referral System data)

## Section 4: Discussion

Like the rest of the country, the NC Balance of State CoC data demonstrates that BIPOC represent disproportionately high rates of poverty and homelessness across its geographic area. To effectively end homelessness, the NC BoS CoC needs to vigilantly vet and update its strategies with an equity lens to ensure everyone has a safe, affordable, permanent place to live.

Both PIT Count and HMIS data have limitations. While the PIT Count data provides the most comprehensive data set because it includes unsheltered, sheltered, and domestic violence shelter data, as a one-day count, it simply shows a snapshot of the system at a particular moment and does not demonstrate seasonal and current trends. HMIS data provides richer, more nuanced data, which the CoC can use to show current need and trends. However, many providers do not use the system, and the data does not account for people those providers serve. People living unsheltered are also less frequently accounted for due to the lack of street outreach across the 79 counties. For the most accurate and comprehensive picture of homelessness in the NC BoS CoC, we will need to combine these resources and use data from the coordinated entry and other peripheral systems, including municipal, county, and state government systems, Community Action agencies, and other relevant partners that serve people experiencing homelessness. This year's assessment uses local coordinated entry data as well as Longitudinal System Analysis data to enhance the CoC's understanding of our system and how race and ethnicity factor into access and success.

The NC BoS CoC gleans the following information from assessing our data:

- The percentage of people experiencing homelessness identifying as Black was higher in the annual HMIS data (50% versus 38%) than PIT night data. To understand these differences, the CoC will need to partner with non-HMIS participating agencies and other outreach programs to gather information on people experiencing unsheltered homelessness and domestic violence who may have accessed shelter services.
- The percentage of people identifying as Native American was higher in the PIT Count (2% versus 1%). Both percentages seem low considering Native Americans experiencing homelessness tend to be higher disproportionately nationally than the Census data for people identifying as Native American. The NC BoS CoC has two areas in which Native Americans reside in large numbers, the Cherokee Nation in Western NC and the Lumbee Tribe in Southeastern NC. Both regions have smaller provider capacity to perform the annual PIT Count and the providers that do exist focus on domestic violence services, which cannot be included in HMIS. The Housing Barriers Assessment data demonstrates that more people experiencing homelessness identifying as Native American exist than our PIT Count and HMIS data capture. Having a well-advertised, central access point seems to indicate that more BIPOC access is possible.
- Similar to the Native American population, the percentage of people identifying as Hispanic seems artificially low. HMIS data showed only 3% of people identifying as Hispanic and PIT Count data only 5% of people identifying as Hispanic. Because the NC BoS CoC geographic area covers 79 counties, the lack of people identifying as Hispanic could be due to lack of HMIS or PIT Count coverage in regions with lower capacity. The CoC also understands from providers that migration during certain portions of the year could deflate PIT Count numbers for this population because of the timing of the

count. The CoC believes that the number of people identifying as Hispanic are undercounted and potentially underserved.

- The HUD and NAEH tools effectively measure race and ethnicity but do not allow users to understand the intersection of race, ethnicity, and gender. In future research, the CoC needs to dig deeper to understand the intersections of race, ethnicity, and gender to illuminate and address these more nuanced discrepancies.
- NC Balance of State CoC HMIS and PIT Count data show small percentages of people experiencing homelessness identifying as Hispanic (3% and 5% respectively) when compared to the total people identifying as Hispanic in the Census data (8%) and people experiencing poverty identifying as Hispanic (16%). The CoC needs to do further research to see if data collection and system access deficiencies cause lower counts of people identifying as Hispanic and/or if cultural protective factors exist that prevent people identifying as Hispanic from experiencing homelessness. If the latter exists, the CoC could investigate ways that these factors could be used to support other populations as well.
- People identifying as White experience unsheltered homelessness more often than other races and at higher rates than all people identifying as White experiencing homelessness. The data shows a much lower rate of people identifying as Black experiencing unsheltered homelessness with more accessing shelter. Over time because of generational poverty and homelessness, many people identifying as Black have needed to ask for assistance and relied on the human services network to make ends meet whereas people identifying as White, in a system catering to their values and needs, find asking for help or being forced to follow strict shelter rules and guidelines less palatable. The CoC could research data on generational poverty and eligibility for public assistance to further understand how this may play a role in where people of different races access services. The NC BoS CoC has seen an increase in the number of counties with street outreach services since the pandemic. Analyzing street outreach data in HMIS could assist the CoC to better understand longer term trends in people living unsheltered.
- According to PIT Count data, the NC Balance of State CoC has low raw numbers of youth and Veterans experiencing homelessness. With renewed effort and specific strategies catering to their particular needs, the CoC could effectively end homelessness for these subpopulations. For both youth and Veterans experiencing homelessness, data indicates that people identifying as Black are disproportionately affected. 35% of youth experiencing homelessness are Black (versus 21% of the total youth identifying as Black in NC). Unlike in the general homeless population of people identifying as Black, youth identifying as Black access shelter at much lower rates than their adult counterparts and have higher incidences of unsheltered homelessness. This may indicate that shelters do not provide the services that Black youth need. 42% of Veterans experiencing homelessness identify as Black (versus only 17% of Veterans identifying as Black in NC). The CoC should do further research on the historical treatment of Black and other people of color in the armed forces that could help us understand the context and causes of this disproportional data and strategies to combat it.

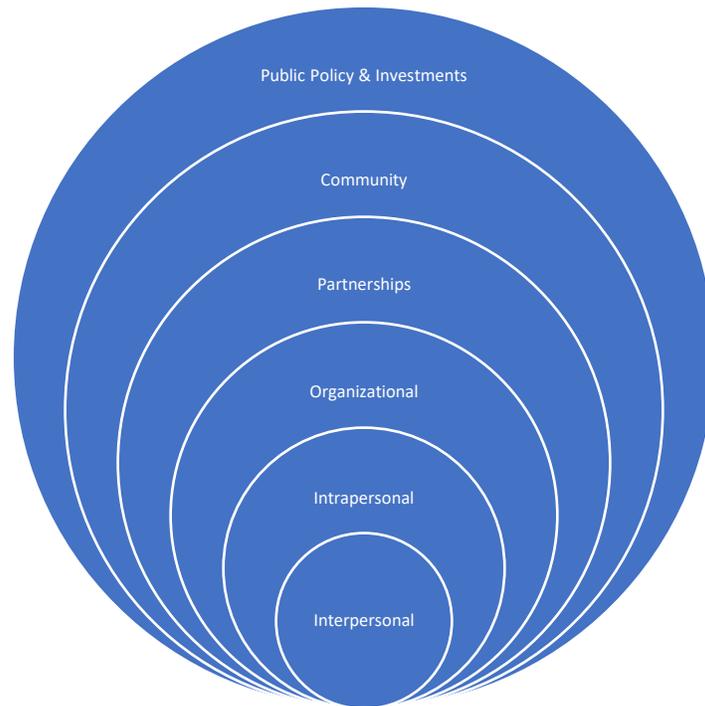
- People identifying as Black accessed permanent housing resources at the same rate as people identifying as White (both at 49%) and much lower percentages of returns to homelessness (45% versus 54% respectively). As program types providing more robust, higher-level services, the following could be inferred:
  - Within the limits of the data, this suggests that the NC BoS CoC housing crisis response system may be counteracting disparities caused by race. Observing trends in coordinated entry data over time could help the CoC better understand how these resources and strategies impact people of color.
  - Within the NC BoS CoC, the coordinated entry system does not do shelter placement. Further research could help the CoC understand if policies and procedures unfairly screen out or create barriers for people of color to enter the shelter system.
  - People identifying as White likely have more resources to self-resolve their housing crises before needing higher level services such as TH, RRH, and PSH. All people in the housing crisis response system need services earlier in their crises to have better chances of self-resolving.
  
- Exit data from HUD's Stella Performance Module shows that people identifying as Multi-Racial, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Asian have lower exits to permanent destinations and higher exits to temporary destinations than people identifying as Black or White Non-Hispanic. The data shows a similar trend when reviewing ethnic data with people identifying as White Hispanic exiting to permanent destinations at a far lower percentage than people identifying as White Non-Hispanic. Combining these unique data sets help the CoC to better understand how people of different races and ethnicities flow through the system and their relative success at accessing and maintaining housing.
  
- Stella Performance Module data demonstrates a stark difference in how people perceive their homelessness through self-report and the data HMIS provides on the length of stay in programs. By self-report, all racial and ethnic populations show an average time of homelessness of over one year. Because people experiencing homelessness do not necessarily define their homelessness to meet HUD's homelessness definition, self-reporting probably does not clearly define the length of time that these households experience literal homelessness. However, it does highlight at the very least that all populations served by the CoC live with housing insecurity.
  
- VI-SPDAT and VI-FSPDAT data clearly demonstrates that people identifying as White are prioritized at significantly higher rates than BIPoC. 85% of all people in the highest scoring category (15+ points) identify as White, 72% of all people in the higher scoring category (11-14 points) identify as White, and 63% of all people in the high scoring category (8-10 points) identify as White. VI-SPDAT and VI-FSPDAT data shows that these assessments disproportionately favor people identifying as White who only make up 56% of the total homeless population. When comparing these assessments with a new Housing Barriers Assessment being piloted for the Back@Home North Carolina COVID-19-response rehousing program, the differences for prioritization of different races are quite stark. Housing

Barriers Assessment data shows that in the comparable prioritization categories, people identifying as Black have higher or equal percentages of access to people identifying as White. 47% of all people in the highest scoring category (8+ barriers) identify as Black (versus 25% for people identifying as White), 50% of all people in the next highest scoring category (7 barriers) identify as Black (versus 41% of people identifying as White), and 45% of all people in the third highest scoring category (6 barriers) identify as Black (equal to the percentage of people identifying as White).

The assessment data suggests that the VI-SPDAT and VI-FSPDAT favor people identifying as White over BIPOC, especially when comparing against a different assessment that weighs barriers equally to prioritize households for permanent housing resources. The NC BoS CoC is currently exploring other options for the standardized coordinated entry assessment and will be working with HUD TA over the next few months to select an assessment that ensures BIPOC have equal access to permanent housing resources.

## Section 5: Next Steps

To combat racism and make decisions with a racial equity lens, the CoC uses the Social Ecological Model<sup>12</sup>, which explains the multiple relationships and experiences a person or group of people has with race. Together, these relationships develop cultures and norms.



From the individual to system level, these experiences define how the CoC can approach its work and focus on the challenges and opportunities that have the greatest impact on dismantling racism and guiding a racial equity approach to ending homelessness.

- *Intrapersonal* experiences happen within a single person and include the thoughts, feelings, and reactions to the world.
- *Interpersonal* experiences happen when people interact with each other, such as an interaction between a case manager and a shelter guest.
- *Organizational* experiences incorporate the processes, actions, and activities of a group of people or organizations, such as a local Regional Committee.
- *Partnership* experiences emerge as groups of people form collaborations or partnerships and interact with one another as groups, such as a service provider working closely with a public housing authority.

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<sup>12</sup> 2019 NAEH Conference: Pre-Conference Session – Race and Homelessness: What You Should Know about the Past and Present to Address Racial Inequities in Your System (Regina Cannon, Earl Edwards, Daryl Fraser, Stephanie Odera, Alex Wagman).

- *Community* experiences occur through interacting with people and structures within a community, such as a neighborhood or city.
- *Public Policy and Investment* experiences happen as people, groups, or organizations interact with policies that regulate, support, and enforce actions within society, such as a provider and its clients interacting with police officers enforcing local ordinances.

The NC Balance of State CoC and its stakeholders can and should use their institutional power, access to decision-makers, and knowledge and experience to make decisions at every level with a racial equity lens. By evaluating and analyzing our data, incorporating the voices of people from historically marginalized populations and with lived experience into CoC governance, and taking responsibility for substantive change, we can build a stronger, more just system that works for everyone equally.

### **Key area of action**

- *Staff and stakeholder engagement*: What can the CoC do to ensure that we understand the impact of our interactions and intentionally encourage conversation and dialogue that support racial equity? How do we adjust/change policies that reflect historical discrepancies? How do we advocate for legislation and policy to include rather than exclude BIPOC?
- *CoC and agency policies and activities*: How do we design programs, policies, and procedures that drive racial equity? How do we ensure that we include BIPOC and people with lived experience in the decisions-making of policies and activities?
- *CoC governance and accountability*: How does the CoC use governance to drive racial equity throughout the CoC and with our partners in the state and nation? How do we incorporate voices of people from historically marginalized populations and with lived experience?

### **Strategies and activities**

Collaborative and Inclusive Dialogue and Action: The CoC will engage in intentional, potentially difficult conversations and dialogue, identifying areas of action and engaging people with lived experience and historically marginalized populations to lead and be part of governance, subcommittees, and workgroups.

#### *Activities*

- Recruit new members to improve representation on Steering Committee, subcommittees, and workgroups to be part of decision-making for the CoC.
- Support the Racial Equity Subcommittee, drawing on their expertise to guide discussions.
  - Include a standing agenda item for updates on the subcommittee's work at the monthly Steering Committee meeting.
  - Leverage anti-discrimination policy and written standards to facilitate these discussions.
- Host dialogue calls on racial equity that engage CoC stakeholders on relevant and associated topics and systems.
- Share training and funding resources with CoC stakeholders to encourage independent action.
- Recruit and foster partnerships led by people of color to increase opportunities for investment in projects serving and led by people of color.

Data Collection and Assessment: The CoC will develop a plan for evaluating additional quantitative data from HMIS, PIT Count, and other systems as well as qualitative data to begin answering additional questions the current assessment does not answer. Data will be used by the Steering Committee, Racial Equity Subcommittee, Coordinated Entry Council, and Funding and Performance Subcommittee to build strategies to improve racial equity.

#### *Activities*

- Encourage and support better data entry, allowing more detailed evaluation (such as documenting chronic homeless status, NC county of service, and zip code in HMIS).
- Include age, ethnicity, and gender in analysis to better understand how the intersection of these variables affect access to services and positive and negative outcomes.
- Use the Stella Performance Module in HDX 2.0 to understand how people of color access the housing response system and their outcomes.
- Conduct qualitative research to enhance the current assessment to understand the experience of people accessing the system.
- Develop additional questions with support from the Racial Equity Prioritization Workgroup that existing data sets such as by-name lists, domestic violence programs, and targeted programs connected to coordinated entry can help answer.
  - Develop a more equitable Prioritization Tool for Coordinated Entry
- Study the demographics of agency staff providing services and compare to the people being served.
- Review the Racial Equity Scorecard for effectiveness in funding competition.

Training and Support: The CoC will engage professional staff to provide training and support to set a baseline understanding of racial disparities and equity for stakeholders. The CoC will incorporate learning opportunities for people with lived experience, agency staff, partners and collaborators, and CoC leadership throughout the year.

#### *Activities*

- Include racial equity and the CoC Anti-Discrimination Policy as a topic in presentations throughout the CoC.
- Incorporate racial equity questions and checks in funding process scorecards and program monitoring and oversight.
- Share resources on racial equity with CoC stakeholders and offer time to stakeholders for dialogue and questions.