

2023 Racial Equity Assessment

Evaluating Racial Disparities in the North Carolina Balance of State CoC

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Section 1: Introduction

While the past several years have brought a spotlight to the importance of racial equity, our analysis must still begin further back in history. “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.”¹ 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 2022 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) highlights that “There continues to be an overrepresentation of people who identify as Black, African American or African, as well as indigenous people (including Native Americans and Pacific Islanders) among the population experiencing homelessness compared to the U.S. population.” While Black Americans make up 12 percent of the general population, an overwhelming 37 percent of all people and 50 percent of people with children identified experiencing homelessness also identified as Black. While Black people represent the minority group with the largest disparities, other minority groups show significant overrepresentation amongst the homeless population.²

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 housing and supports, crisis response, and prevention for historically underserved populations in its updates to the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, *All In*.³ The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) committed to ending racial disparities, began awarding points in its annual Continuum of Care (CoC) Program competition to CoCs that evaluate and develop strategies to address these disparities, and committed to technical assistance that prioritizes racial equity improvements to homeless response systems. 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.”⁴ This assessment represents the most recent NC BoS CoC data using the above referenced HUD and NAEH tools as

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

² NAEH: <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2022-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

³ USICH: <https://www.usich.gov/fsp>

⁴ NC BoS CoC Governance Charter: <https://www.ncceh.org/files/12692/>

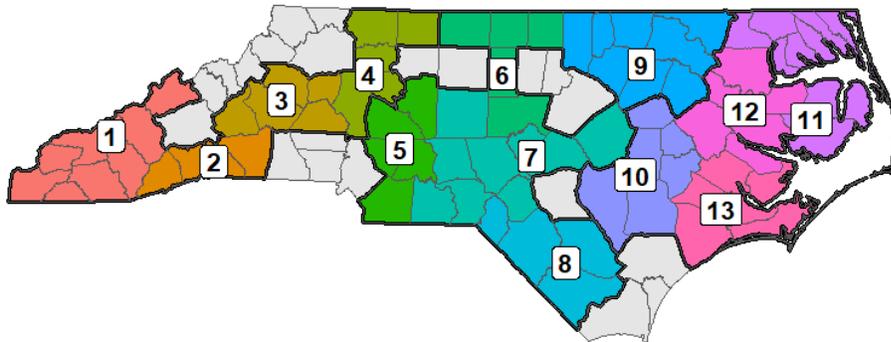
well as the Stella Performance Module in HUD’s HDX data reporting software and CoC coordinated entry system. The CoC will use this data to continue further analysis of racial disparities and as a guide to decision-making in the CoC.

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 2021 U.S. Census Data estimates, NC has a population of 10,367,022 people.⁵ The NC BoS CoC geographic area encompasses 49 percent of the state’s population at 5,128,806 people. The Census estimates 754,196 people or about 15% of people in the NC BoS CoC’s 79 counties live in poverty. In the

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate (2021)

latest statewide Point-In-Time Count from 2023, 9,754 people experienced homelessness on a given night, 3,311 or 34 percent of which reside in the NC BoS CoC.

The strategies the NC BoS CoC employs 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 equity 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, 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 analysis as tool 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 the Census Bureau's American Community Survey data, HUD's Stella Performance Module, and local HMIS 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: Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) 2017-2021 5-year estimates.⁶

Description: The ACS provides information about racial distributions of people living in poverty and of 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 CoC extracted state and CoC population estimates (for everyone and people in poverty) from the U.S. Census, specifically, the ACS 2017-2021 5-year estimates. The tool also uses Tract estimates 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 2023 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 2023 PIT has not been officially reviewed by HUD or published in the Annual Homeless Assessment Report. The NC BoS CoC has created its own dataset to use more recent PIT and Census data than previous assessments. Any errors are our own.
- Point-In-Time Count data is limited because it only records one night during a year. The CoC should consider the analysis completed using PIT Count data with other data sources, such as HMIS data.
- Census data 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.
- The Census ACS data relies heavily on the 2020 full Census. Nationally, the Census Bureau estimates that some historically undercounted communities were again undercounted during the 2020 count⁷. Specifically, Black or African American population (by 3.3%), Hispanic or Latino population (by 4.99%), American Indian or Alaskan Native (by 5.64%) were undercounted. The CoC acknowledges that the Census is a tool for estimating the housed population’s demographics despite these limitations.

HUD Definitions Used in the Tool:

⁶ <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/technical-documentation/table-and-geography-changes/2021/5-year.html>

⁷ <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2022/2020-census-estimates-of-undercount-and-overcount.html>

- *Race Categories:* White, Black or African American⁸, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Some Other and Two or More Races
- *Ethnic Categories:* Hispanic or Latino and Non-Hispanic or Non-Latino
- *Families:* A household with at 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

Key Results from the Census and Point in Time Analysis

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

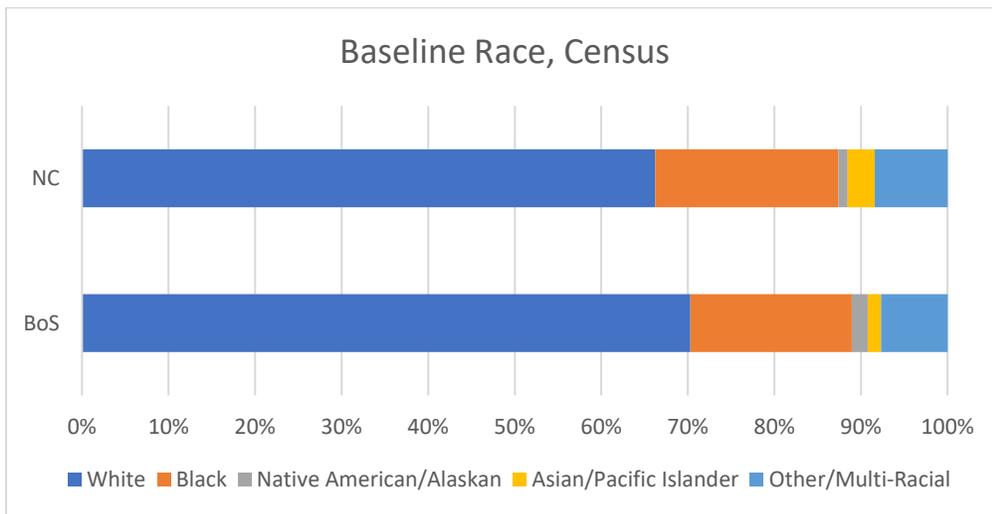


Table 1: Race in North Carolina and the NC Balance of State CoC (Census ACS)

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 (70%) versus people throughout North Carolina (66%), 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 (2% versus 3%), and about the same proportion of people identified as Other/Multi-Racial (both 8%).

However, when the 79 counties of the NC BoS CoC are broken down into 13 regions ranging from the Mountains to the West with Region 1 and the Coast to the East with Region 13, the proportions of racial identities vary significantly.

⁸ 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. However, the CoC references when different tools use slightly different categories before each section. Because of the importance of terminology, the CoC will continue to evaluate and update it as it addresses racial disparities.

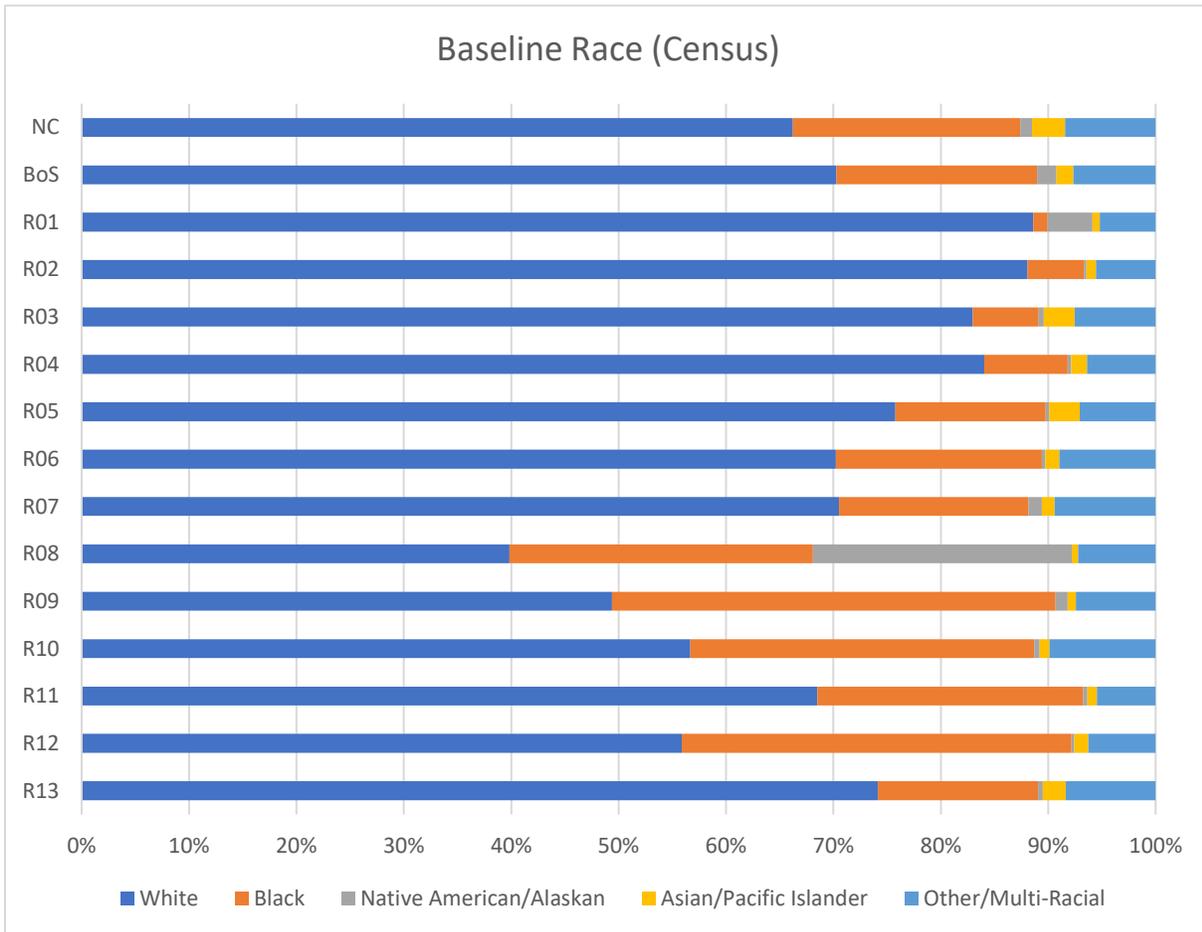
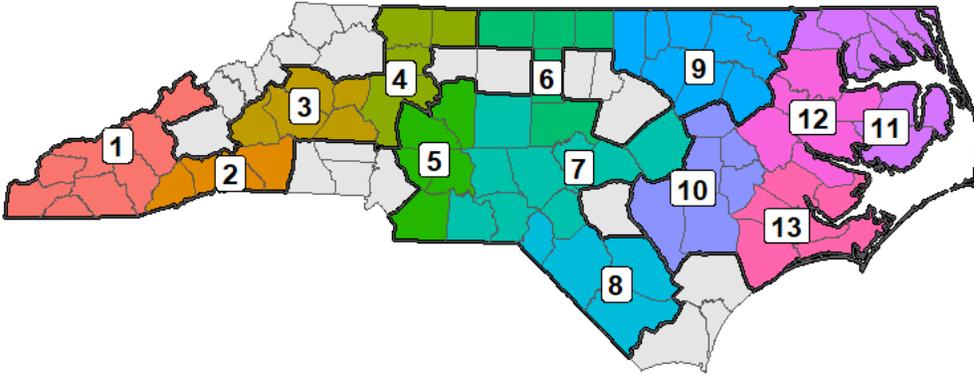


Table 2: Race in North Carolina and the NC Balance of State CoC's 13 Regions (Census ACS)

The percent of people identifying as White ranges significantly from the Southwest Region 1 deep in the Appalachian Mountains (89%) to the Southeast Region 8 which includes Lumberton (40%). Congruently, people identifying as Black range from a low of in Region 1 (just 1%) to a high of in the Northeast Region 9 that includes Rocky Mount (41%). While less populous Asian/Pacific Islander and Multi-racial categories swing less significantly across the state, the percent of people identifying as Native American/Alaskan Native is consistently 0-1 percent except in Region 1 (4%) where the federally recognized Eastern Band of Cherokee

nation resides and in Region 8 (24%) where the state recognized Lumbee tribe primarily lives. The demographics of the local community can help inform the CoC about the local racial disparities.

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

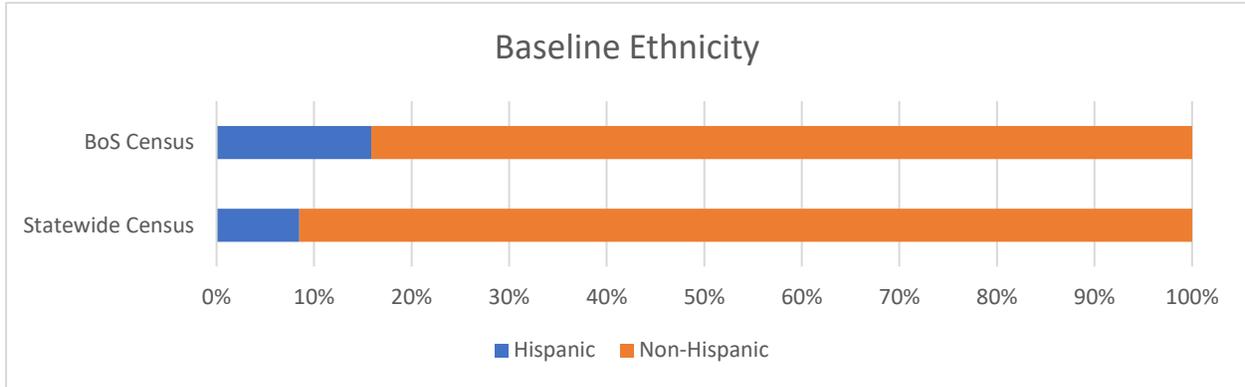


Table 3: Ethnicity in North Carolina and the NC Balance of State CoC (Census ACS)

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 13% of people identifying as Hispanic in the NC BoS CoC versus 14% of people in the full state.

When comparing the local Census ethnic identities, there is significant variation between NC BoS CoC regions. The lowest proportion of the population identifying as Hispanic is in Region 1 (5%), whereas the highest is in Region 10 (22%) which includes Goldsboro.

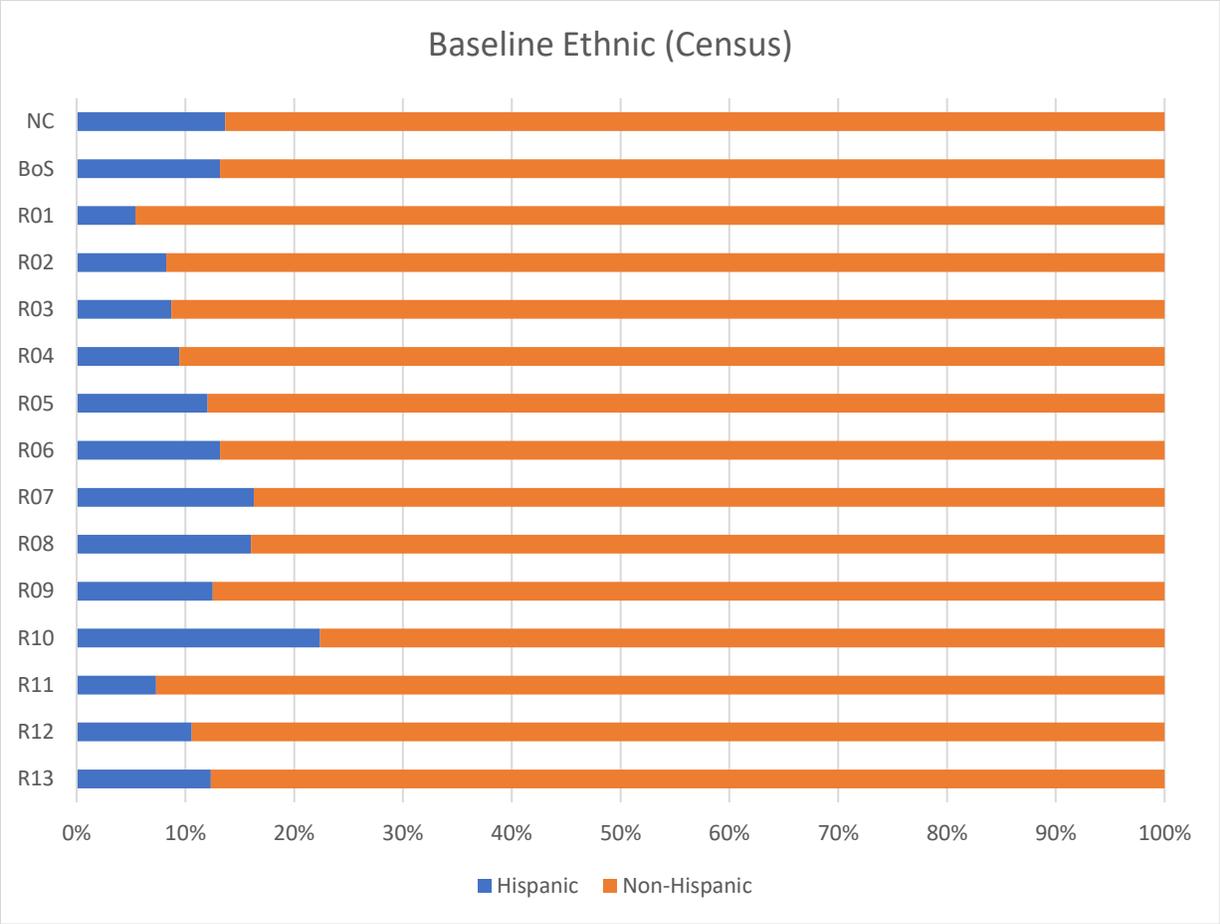


Table 4: Ethnicity in North Carolina and the NC Balance of State CoC’s 13 Regions (Census ACS)

NC Balance of State CoC: Poverty, Homelessness, Race

	White	Black	Native American/ Alaskan	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Other/ Multi-Racial
Total Population	70%	19%	2%	2%	8%
% of People Experiencing Poverty	53%	31%	3%	1%	12%
% of People in Families Experiencing Poverty	49%	34%	3%	1%	12%
Total Homeless Population	56%	37%	2%	1%	4%

% of Everyone Experiencing Sheltered Homelessness (n = 1,935)	51%	42%	2%	1%	4%
% of People in Families Experiencing Sheltered Homelessness (n = 753)	37%	53%	2%	1%	6%
% of Everyone Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness (n = 1,239)	64%	27%	3%	1%	5%
% of People in Families Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness (n = 182)	33%	59%	1%	0%	8%

Table 5: NC Balance of State CoC (Census ACS and 2023 PIT)

As the data in Table 5 demonstrates, people who identify as White made up 70% 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 fewer people identifying as White than in the general population.

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 (53% for sheltered and 59% for unsheltered).

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

When the 79 counties of the NC Balance of State CoC is separated into its 13 regions, the disparities become more nuanced. Western (1-4) and Central (5-9) regions reflect the disproportionate representation of people identifying as Black like the overall CoC. However, the Eastern (10-13) regions buck that trend and show underrepresentation compared to Census rates. The census rates of people identifying as Black range from very low in the mountainous regions in the west (1% in Region 1, 5% in Region 2) to significantly higher rates further east (41% in Region 9, 36% in region 12%) where, historically, there were higher rates of enslaved persons and their descendants.

Regional Point in Time vs Census by Race

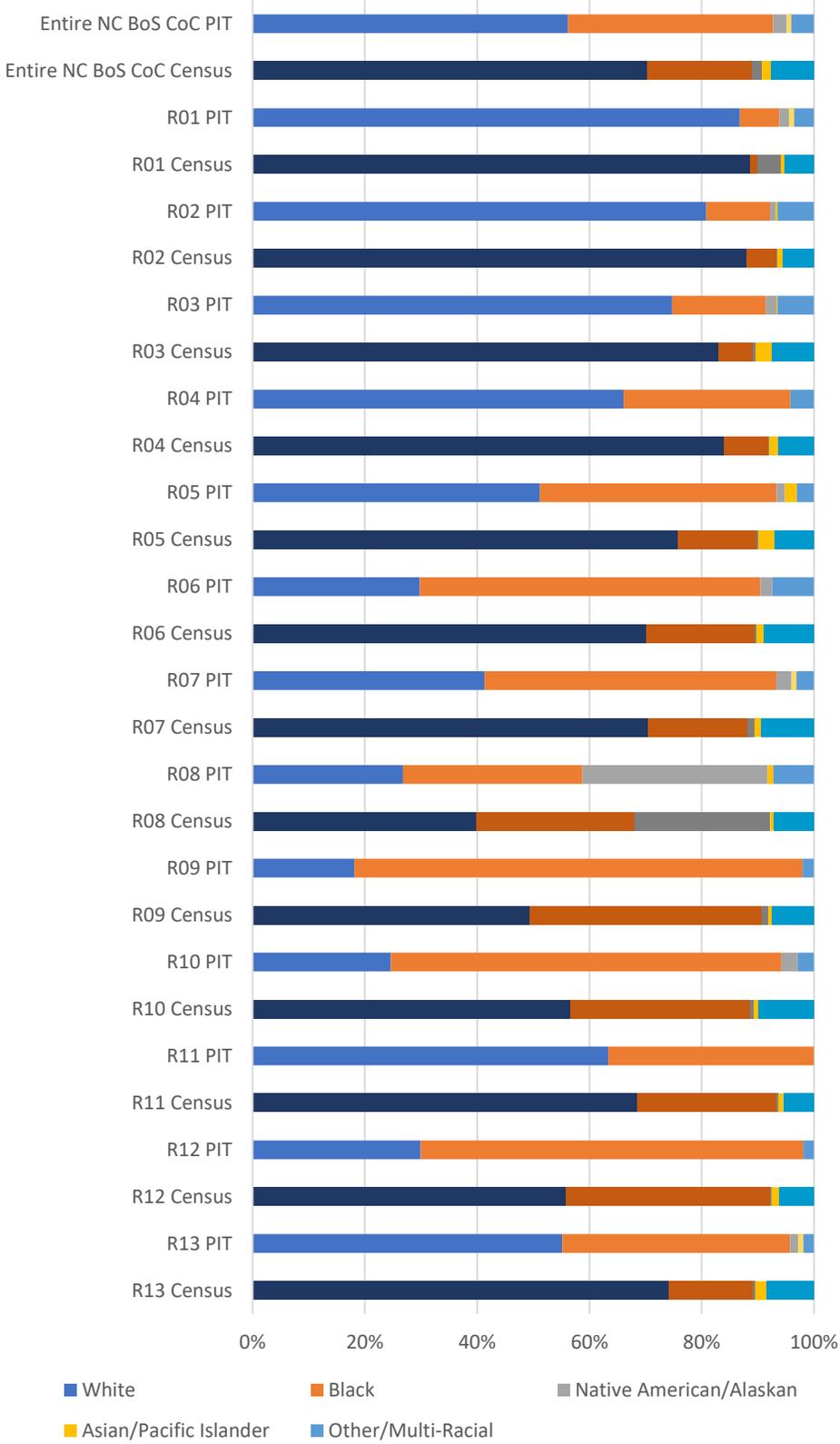


Table 6: NC Balance of State CoC Populations and Ethnicity (Census ACS and 2023 PIT)

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

	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
Total Population	9%	91%
% of People Experiencing Poverty	15%	85%
% of People in Families Experiencing Poverty	17%	83%
Total Homeless Population	6%	94%
% of Everyone Experiencing Sheltered Homelessness (n = 1,963)	7%	93%
% of People in Families Experiencing Sheltered Homelessness (n = 774)	12%	88%
% of Everyone Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness (n = 1,206)	4%	96%
% of People in Families Experiencing Unsheltered Homelessness (n = 178)	6%	94%

Table 6: NC Balance of State CoC Populations and Ethnicity (Census ACS and 2023 PIT)

Reviewing data on ethnicity in the NC BoS CoC, we see significant jumps in the percentage of people identifying as Hispanic living in poverty (both individuals and families) as compared to the overall population. While only 9% of people identify as Hispanic in the general population of the NC BoS CoC’s 79 counties, 15% of people experiencing poverty and 17% of families experiencing poverty identify as Hispanic. The rates of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness identifying as Hispanic seem lower than expected at 7% and 4% 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, as well as work to determine other reasons for lower rates of homelessness.

In terms of Ethnicity, the census rates of people identifying as Hispanic vary between the regions with lower rates in the west (5% in Region 1) and higher rates in the central (16% in Regions 7 and 8) and east (Region 10 22%). The PIT counts across region reflect consistently reflect underrepresentation, except in one region (Region 1 with 13% PIT and 5% Census). Only Regions 1 and 7 reached significant populations with Hispanic identification topping 10%. Whether these higher rates of self-identification are due to local social and economic landscape or due to exceptional outreach efforts should be researched further. These regional

differences emphasize the importance of analysis with a local community lens across such a large geographical CoC.

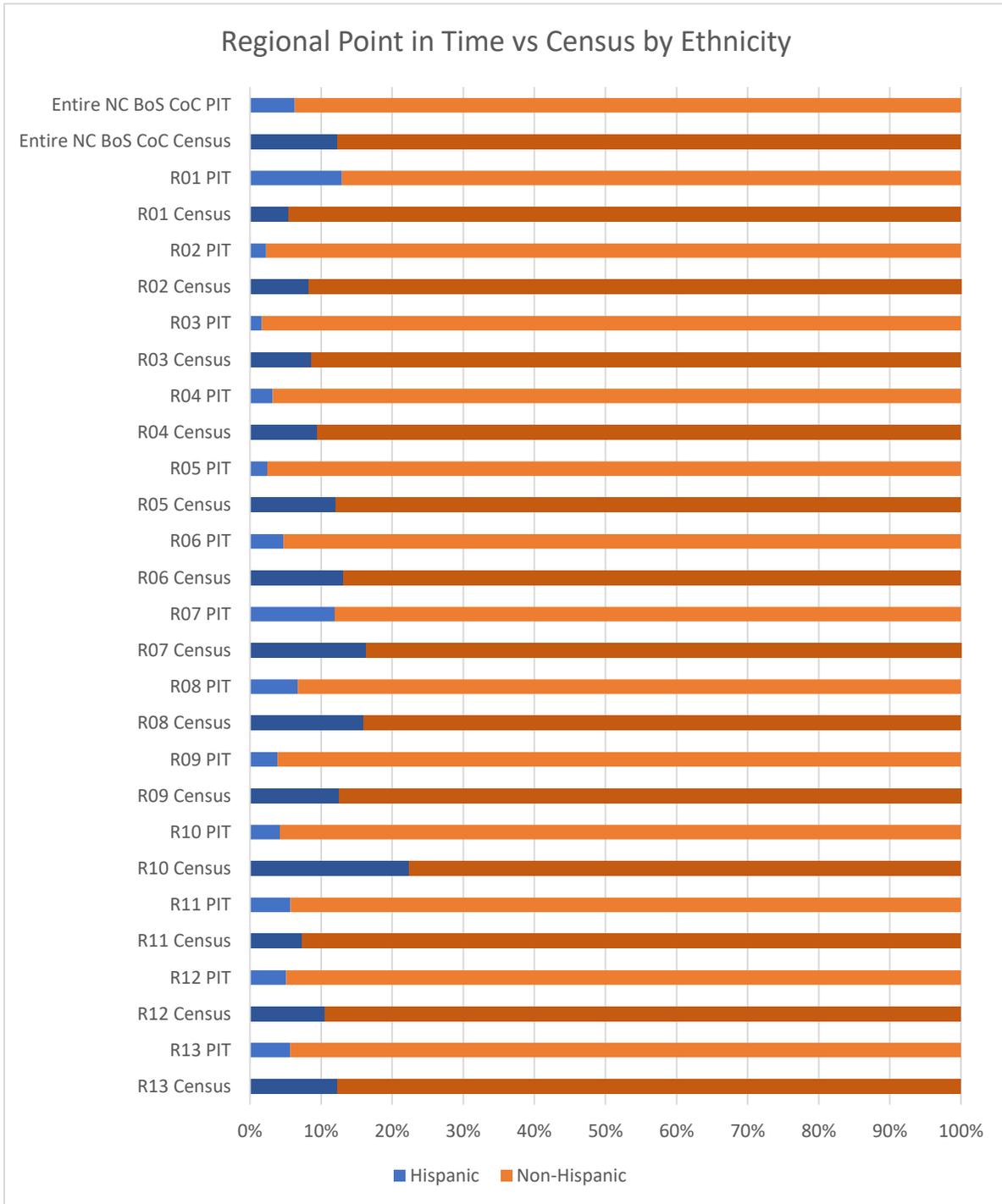


Table 6: NC Balance of State CoC Populations and Ethnicity (Census ACS and 2023 PIT)

Additional Populations: Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness

The total number of youth experiencing homelessness counted in the 2023 Point-In-Time Count was just 157 or almost 5% 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 Point in Time and Census data.

In previous assessments, the racial identity of youth experiencing homelessness aligned with the percentages of like races in the total NC population. This year, we see that the results are more disproportionate. Youth identifying as White in the total census in NC is slightly higher than White youth experiencing homelessness (64% versus 61% respectively). For youth identifying as Black, the data shows the opposite discrepancy, where the total census of youth identifying as Black in NC is 20% while the PIT count shows 31% of youth experiencing homelessness identifying as Black. Additionally, there is a significant difference for people identifying as Multi-Racial – 13% of youth identify as multi-racial in the Census but only 5% in the Point in Time Count. This may be due to a lack of clarity during data collection. The CoC has heard some feedback from providers that people responding to the Point in Time may not understand or be shown the option to select multiple racial identity categories. Data collection for race will hopefully improve with updated Data Standards combining race and ethnicity in October of 2023. The youth data reflects the ongoing need for better data collection methods that encourage accurate representation of intersectional demographics.

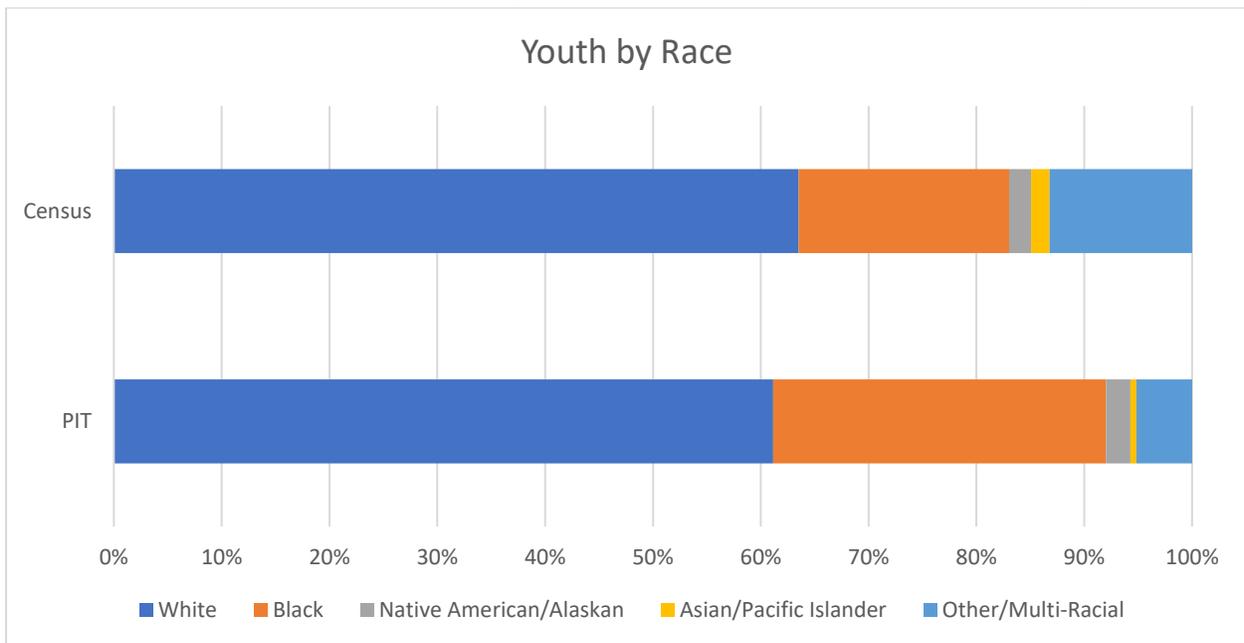


Table 7: NC Balance of State CoC Populations: Unaccompanied Youth-Race (Census ACS and 2023 PIT)

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 (15% versus 7% respectively). The youth count for ethnicity mirrors the underrepresentation trend we see in the total population counts for people identifying as Hispanic.

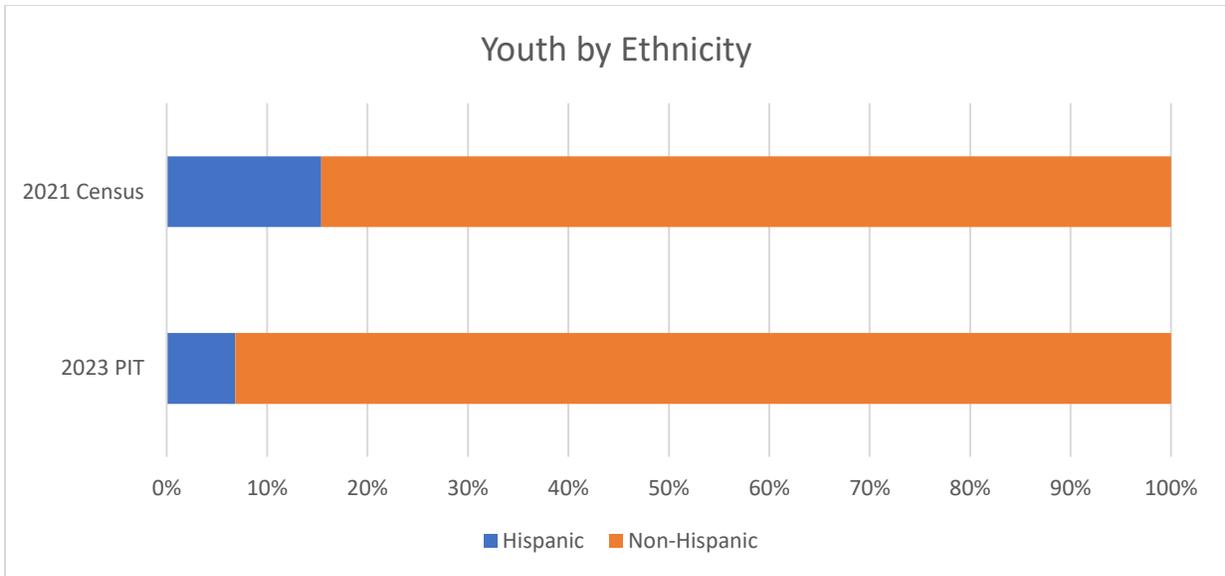


Table 8: NC Balance of State CoC Populations: Unaccompanied Youth-Ethnicities (Census ACS and 2023 PIT)

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 (172 people or 5%). Compared to Veterans across the Balance of State, the percentage of Veterans identifying as Black experiencing homelessness is more than two times larger (18% versus 41%).

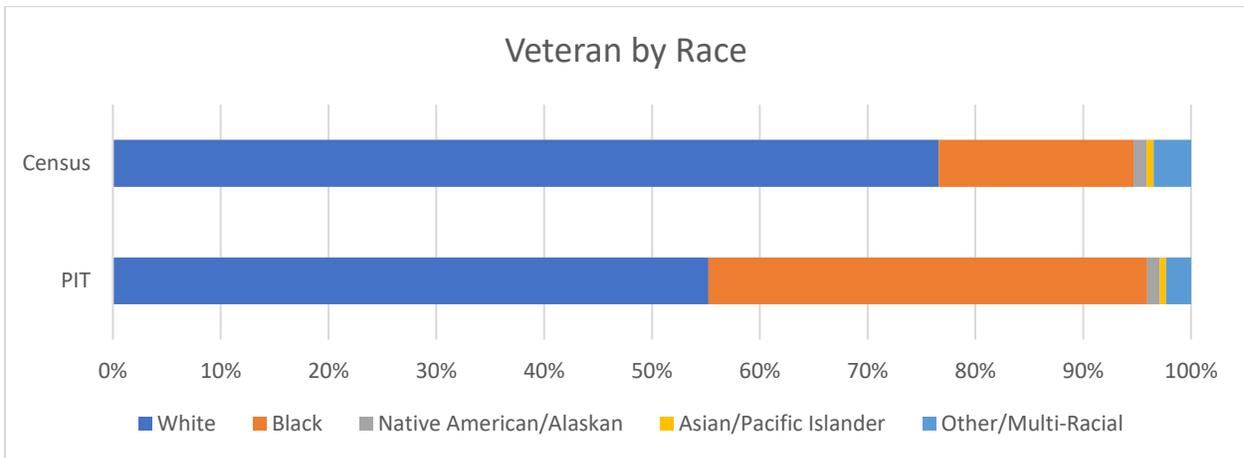


Table 9: NC Balance of State CoC Populations: Veterans-Race (Census ACS and 2023 PIT)

When looking at ethnicity amongst Veterans, a similar trend exists as seen with the total population and other subpopulations such as Youth. A similar percentage of Veterans identifying as Hispanic report experiencing homelessness versus the total population of Veterans in NC BoS CoC (2% versus 3%).

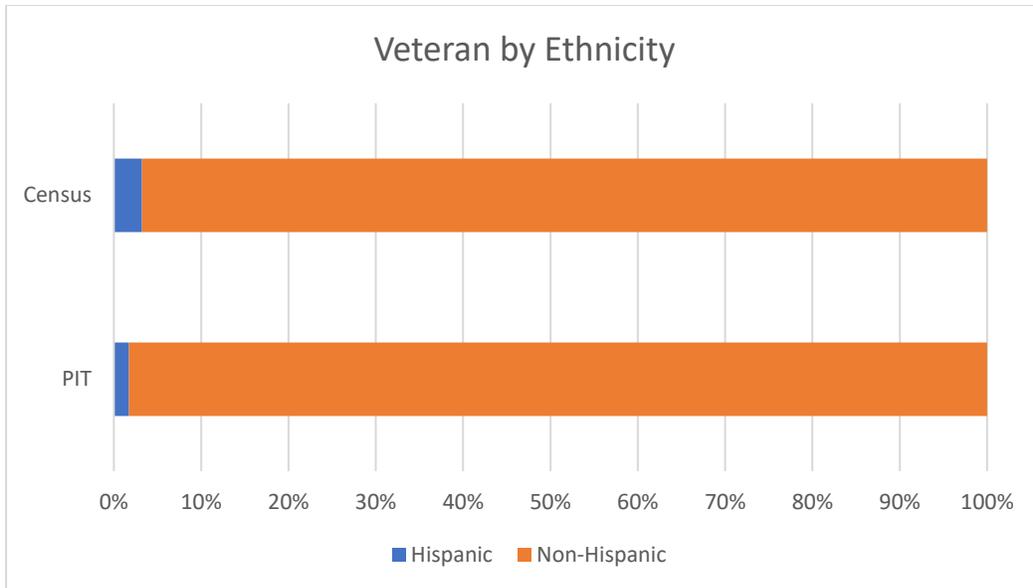


Table 8: NC Balance of State CoC Populations: Veterans-Ethnicity (HUD Tool)

NC Balance of State CoC: Changes over Time

For a look at the racial and ethnic breakdown of the PIT Count over four years, the CoC has included the 2023 PIT count results that have not been formally published by HUD and are therefore subject to change. Given the CoC was introduced a new methodology for the unsheltered PIT Count in 2022, the inclusion of two unsheltered counts back to back is useful. The 2023 data yields trends that differ from the pre-pandemic 2020 count.

The degree of over-representation for people identifying as Black has decreased slightly by 1% across these four years. On the other hand, the increase in people identifying as Native American (pre-rounding) brings the PIT Count in line with the NC Balance of State CoC Census population rate. Additionally, the change in ethnicity may be promising. The rate of people identifying as Hispanic or Latinx increased by 1% to 6% in 2020 and that trend has held firm across a volatile period, inching closer to proportional representation. While marginal changes overall, it is crucial to evaluate these results, especially in comparison to annualized HMIS data.

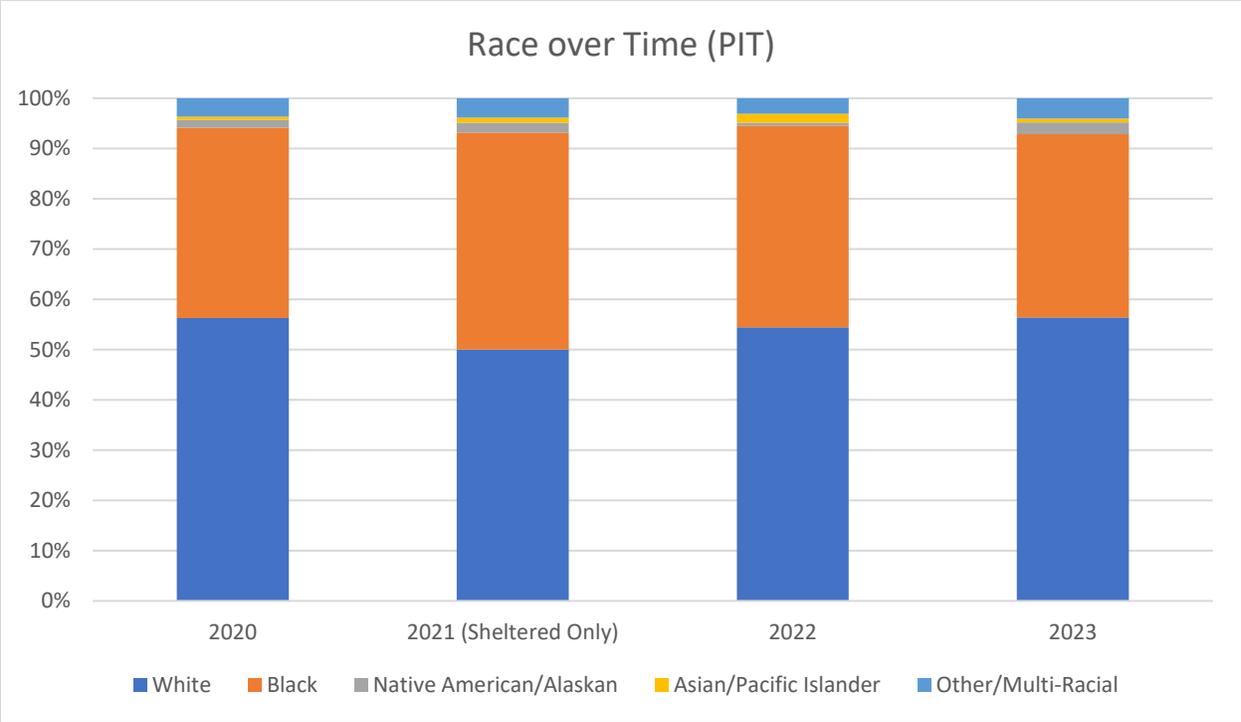


Table 9: NC Balance of State CoC Populations: PIT Count of Race 2020-2023

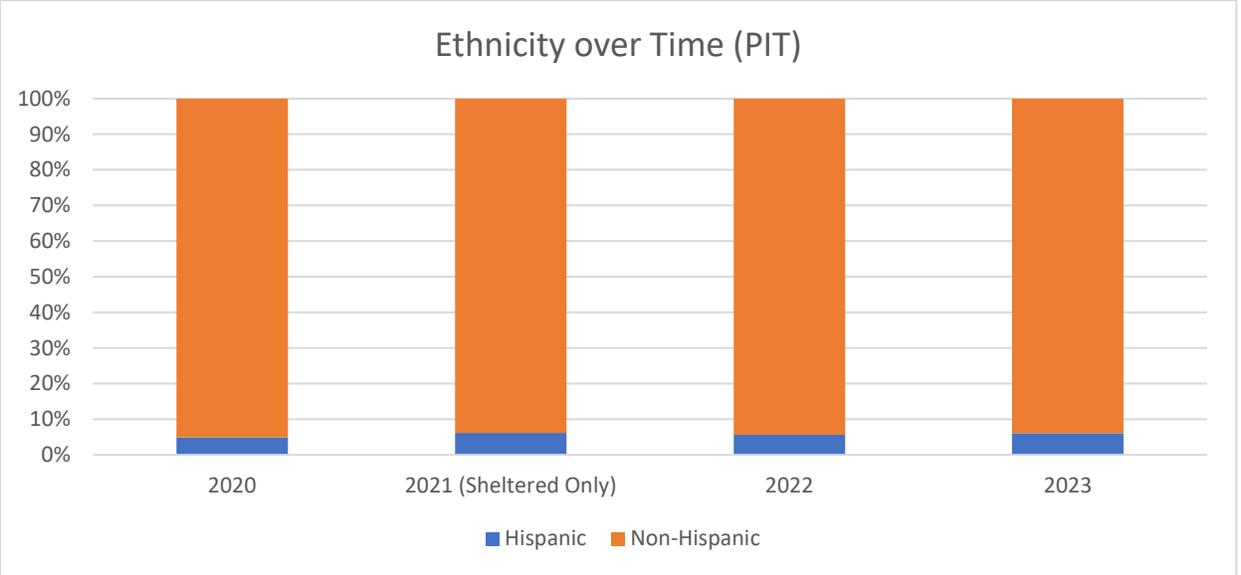


Table 10: NC Balance of State CoC Populations: PIT Count of Ethnicity 2020-2023

Race or Ethnicity	2020	2021 (Sheltered Only)	2022	2023	Changes
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Asian Pacific Islander	1%	1%	2%	1%	0%
Black	38%	43%	39%	36%	-1%
Native American Alaskan	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%
White	56%	51%	55%	56%	0%
Other Multi-Racial	4%	4%	3%	4%	0%
Hispanic	5%	6%	6%	6%	1%
Non-Hispanic	95%	94%	94%	95%	-1%

Table 11: NC Balance of State CoC Populations: PIT Count of Ethnicity 2020-2023

Question 2: Who accesses temporary and permanent housing?

Assessment Tool: Stella P (Performance) 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 10/01/2021-09/30/2022. For longitudinal analysis, fiscal years 2019, 2020, and 2021 were included for comparison.

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 63% ES, 46% TH, 93% RRH, and 85% PSH bed coverage in HMIS⁹.
- 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. It is also 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.
- While Stella P 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 P 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 alongside race for some groups such as White Hispanic/Latinx or White Non-Hispanic/Latinx and but does not include Hispanic origin in other racial categories.
- With only small numbers of heads of households exiting the system identifying as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (18), Asian (26), American Indian or Alaskan Native or Indigenous (94), White Hispanic or Latinx (155), and Multiple Races (198), small changes could overtime shift percentages and patterns significantly.

Definitions:

⁹ NC BoS CoC data submitted in 2023

- *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 or Indigenous, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- *Ethnicity Categories:* Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x) and Non-Hispanic/Non- Latin(a)(o)(x)
- *Intersectional Race and Ethnicity Categories (when available):* White Hispanic, White Non-Hispanic, Black or African American or African Hispanic, Black or African American or African Non-Hispanic, American Indian or Alaska Native or Indigenous Hispanic, and American Indian or Alaska Native or Indigenous Non-Hispanic. Asian or Asian American and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander are not available with Ethnicity.

Key Results from Stella P visualization of the Longitudinal System Analysis

Who has access to the homeless response system?

Like the disproportionality seen in annual Point in Time Count data, people accessing the homeless response system (using the Homeless Management Information System or HMIS) identify as Black more often than the general population. This is still true when our HMIS data is divided by project type where the heads of households and adults identify as Black in 41% of ES or TH, 52% of RRH, and 43% of PSH enrollments. Even as people experiencing homelessness identify as Black, the most significant resources the system can offer are also being utilized at proportionate rates. When Ethnicity is analyzed separately from Race, people identifying as Hispanic or Latin(a)(o)(x) are underrepresented in the most intensive program. Rates of Hispanic or Latin(a)(o)(x) people begin higher in Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing (4.4%), the lowers in Rapid Re-Housing (3.6%), and the lowest representation is in Permanent Supportive Housing programs (1.3%). The CoC should continue to investigate how populations move through the system and whether they can access tenancy services from robust RRH or PSH programs equitably and proportionately.

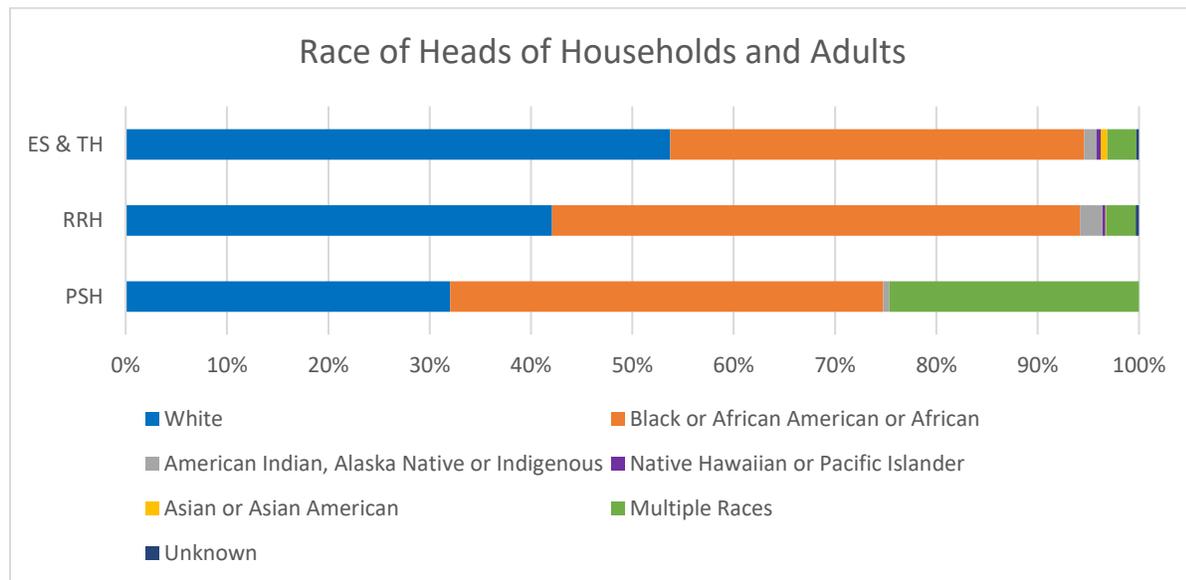


Table 12: NC Balance of State CoC: FY22 Heads of Households and Adults with enrollments in ES, TH, RRH, PSH Projects (Stella P)

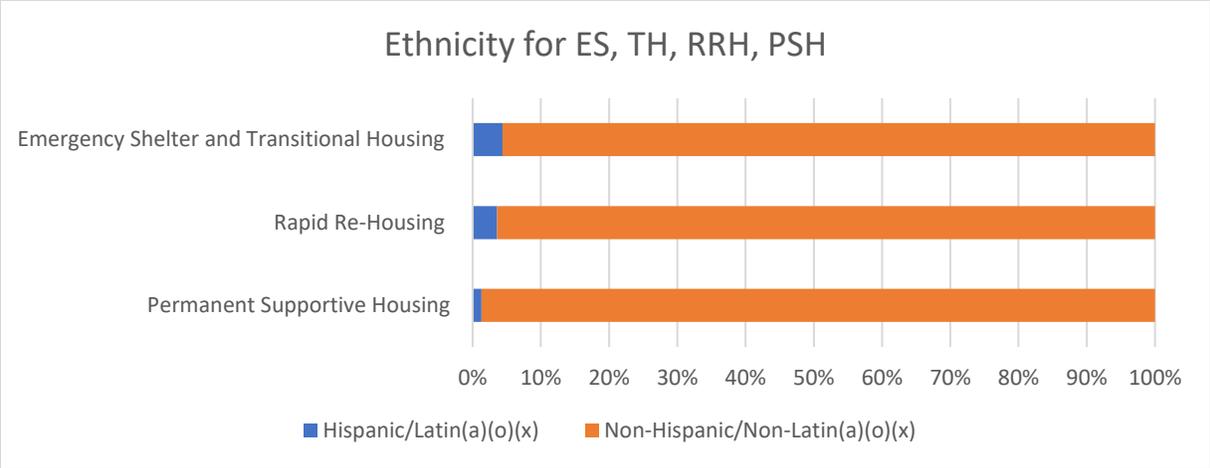


Table xx: NC Balance of State CoC: FY22 Heads of Households and Adults with enrollments in ES, TH, RRH, PSH Projects (Stella P)

How long do households experience homelessness?

People identifying as Black/African American have the longest lengths of stay in projects at 135 days. People identifying as White have much shorter stays with an average of 101 days. All other race categories stay in programs for less than the overall average of 116 days, although the universe of people for races other than Black/African American and White is quite small. A total of 335 people identify as Multiple Races, Native Hawaiian, Indigenous, or Asian American, in contrast to 2,763 people identifying as Black/African American and 3,133 people identifying as White). The smaller universe and shorter 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.

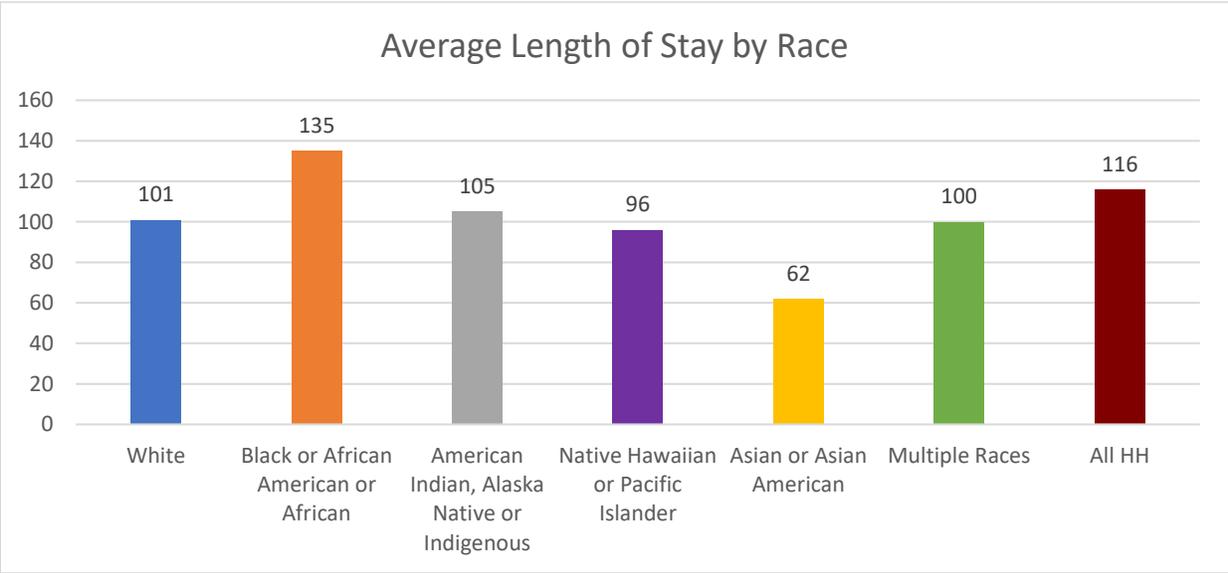


Table 13: NC Balance of State CoC: Average Days Homeless by ES, TH, RRH, PSH Project Stay (Stella P)

The intersectional data available in Stella P do not reveal disparities compounded by race and ethnicity in length of stay. Overall, people identifying as Hispanic or Latinx have shorter length of stays (99 average) than

those identifying as Non-Hispanic or Non-Latinx (116 average) across race. Those with the shortest stays on average represent a small universe (244 heads of households identify as Hispanic or Latinx compared to 5,986 identifying as Non-Hispanic or Non-Latinx). As greater outreach and engagement efforts are attempted with Hispanic/Latinx communities, the CoC will monitor this data by ethnicity and try to avoid negatively impacting average length of stay.

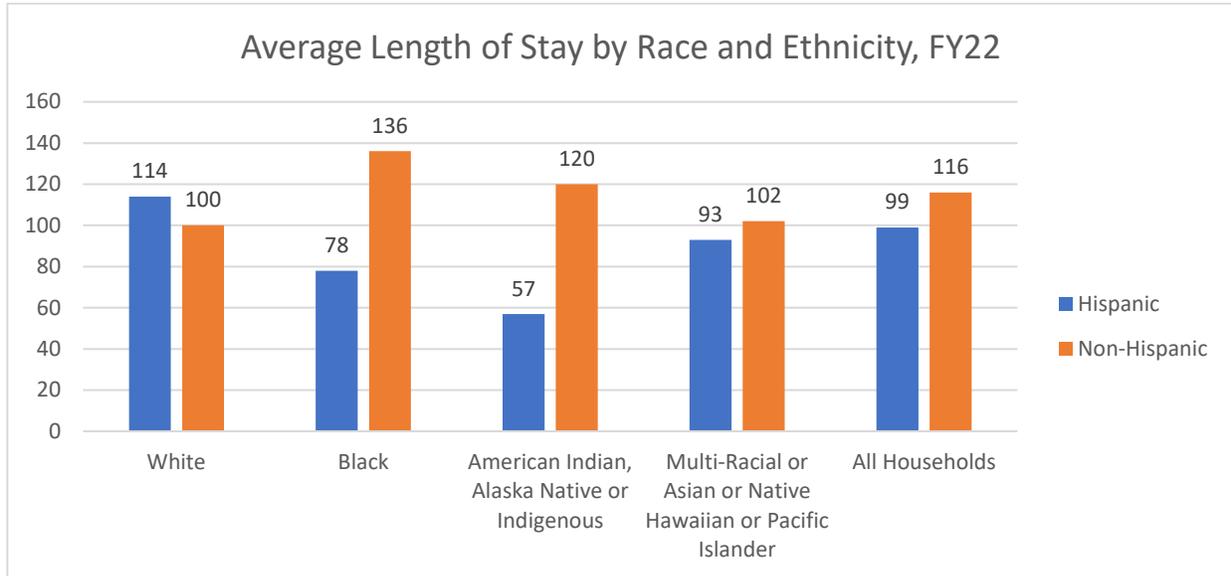


Table 14: NC Balance of State CoC: Average Days Homeless by ES, TH, RRH, PSH Project Stay (Stella P)

When evaluating the comparison to lengths of stay in projects with self-reported lengths of time experiencing homelessness, we see a stark contrast. Every racial and ethnic population, except Native Hawaiian and Hispanic/Latinx people, self-reports time homeless twice as long as program stays report average lengths of time. Multiple Races reporting the highest number of self-reported days homeless at 310 days. The huge difference between the project stays and self-reported average length of homelessness 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.

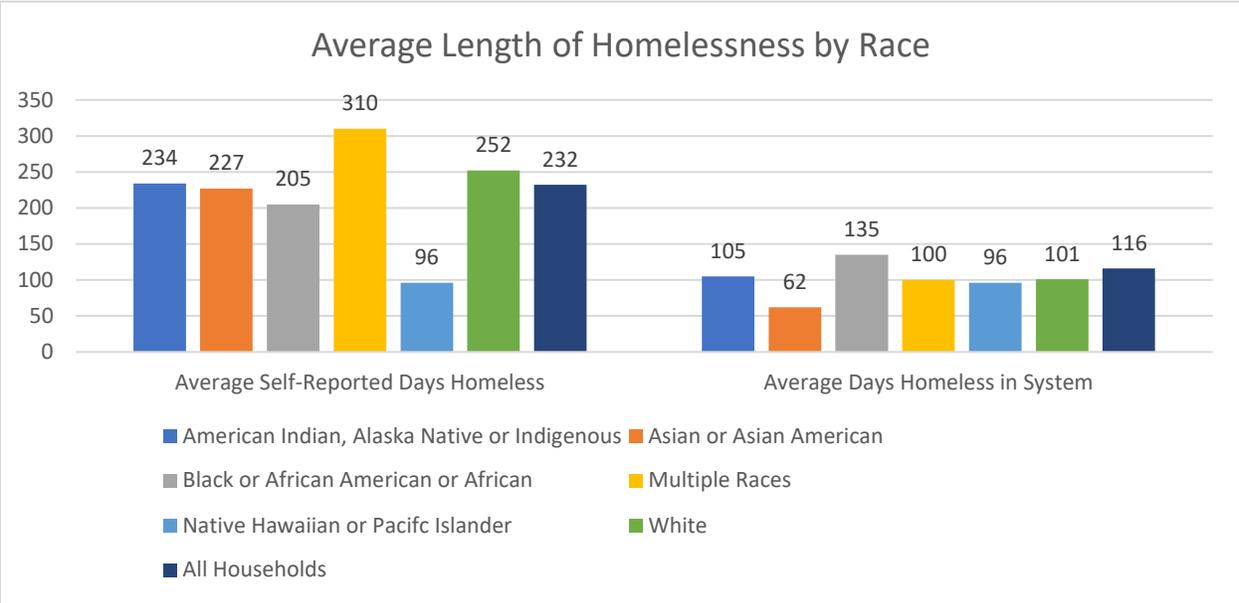


Table 15: NC Balance of State CoC: Average Days Homeless – Project Stay vs. Self-Reported (Stella P)

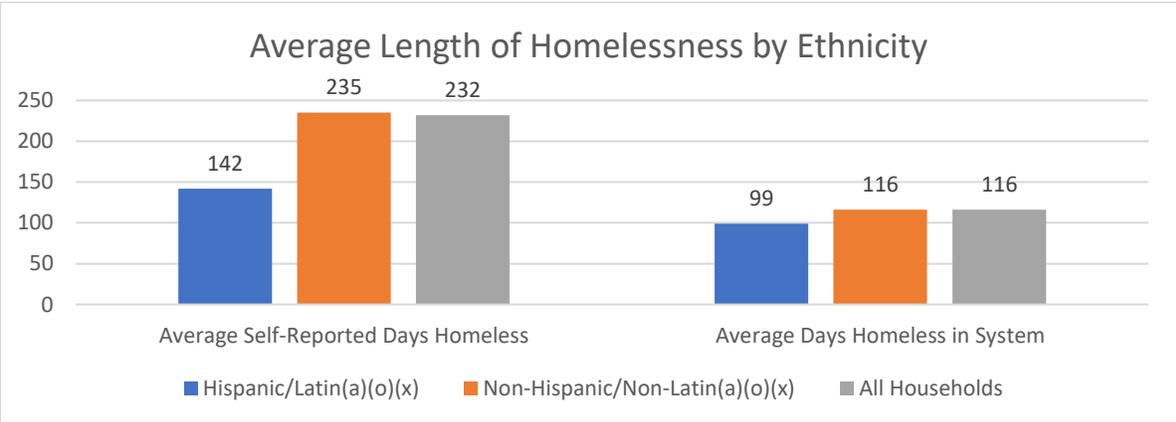


Table 16: NC Balance of State CoC: Average Days Homeless – Project Stay vs. Self-Reported (Stella P)

Where do households exit?

Using Stella to compare exit data for different races and ethnicities. Overall BIPOC clients have above-average exits to permanent housing destinations in FY21 (for example Black clients have 37% vs 35% average). As the CoC makes changes to address disparities, the CoC will need to watch Exits to Permanent Housing to prevent any dips in positive outcomes.

With high unknown exit destination percentages (over 10% for people identifying as Asian or Asian American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Black or African American, and White), the comparisons between racial and ethnic populations could be revealed as disproportionate. For example, people identifying as Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander has relatively high exits to unknown destinations at 13%. However, the low number of people identifying as Native

Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander in the HMIS data could easily shift these percentages over time (16 people). The CoC must work with providers to collect as much exit data as possible to fully understand this data.

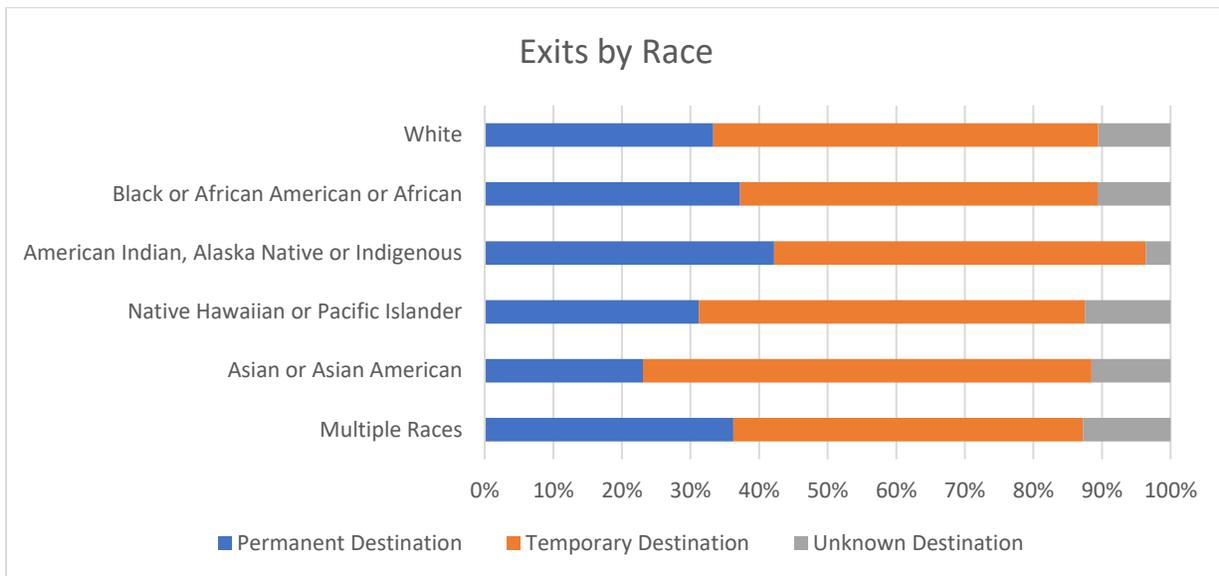
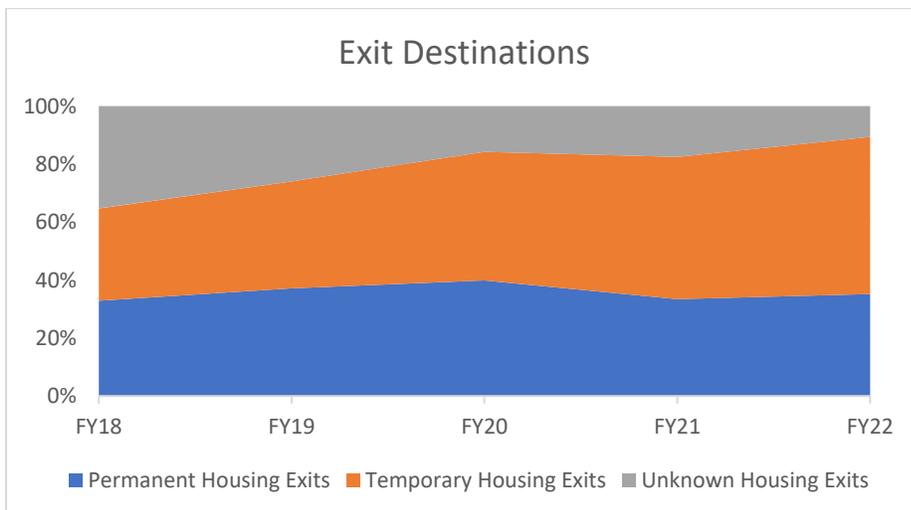


Table 17: NC Balance of State CoC: % of Exits from Homelessness (Stella P)

In a year-to-year comparison including the first 3 quarters of Fiscal Year 2022, we see promising signs from our Exits Destination data in Stella P. Unknown Exit Destinations have decreased significantly from 35% in FY18 down to 13% FY22. The bulk of that difference seems to have landed in Temporary Exits, which increased from 32% to 54% over the same time. While Exits to Permanent Housing Destinations has remained constant at 33%, there was a brief increase just before and during the beginning of the pandemic. The fact that positive exits peaked at 40% amid a worldwide health catastrophe is inspiring to see.



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 regional Point in Time County 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.

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

- The HMIS database effectively measures 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 into our raw Point in Time data to understand the intersections of race, ethnicity, and gender to illuminate and address these more nuanced discrepancies. In 2023, the HUD HMIS and PIT Data Standards will be updated to better reflect the intersectional nature of racial and ethnic identify – one question with multi-select responses will be introduced October 1, 2023.
- The percentage of people identifying as Native American was higher in the PIT Count than the HMIS data from Stella P (3% versus 2%). 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 larger numbers, the Cherokee Nation in Western NC and the Lumbee Tribe in Southeastern NC. This year, Region 6 with rural counties west of the Triangle area also reported a high proportion of people experiencing homelessness and identifying as Native American. The Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation is a state-recognized tribe in the Burlington Alamance area of Region 6. All three 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. Having a well-advertised, central access point seems to indicate that more BIPOC access is possible.
- Like the Native American population, the percentage of people identifying as Hispanic seems artificially low. NC Balance of State CoC HMIS and PIT Count data show small percentages of people experiencing homelessness identifying as Hispanic (4% and 6% respectively) when compared to the total people identifying as Hispanic in the Census data (9%) and people experiencing poverty

identifying as Hispanic (15%). 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. There are known issues around paper forms and language accessibility leading the CoC to believe that the number of people identifying as Hispanic are undercounted and potentially underserved. For example, HMIS and unsheltered PIT paper forms are usually only available in English. However, the most recent information available suggests that 7% of North Carolinians speak Spanish at home and another 4% speak another language (2009-2013 American Community Survey). A lack of consistent language interpretation and translation services and culturally welcoming services are significant obstacles to better access.

- Among sub-populations data in the PIT Count, 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 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. 31% of youth experiencing sheltered homelessness are Black (versus 20% 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. 50% of Veterans experiencing homelessness identify as Black (versus only 18% 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.
- The data shows people identifying as Black still experience homelessness at a disproportionate rate (with 37% of the PIT Count and 41% of sheltered HMIS clients identifying as Black). Numerous studies note that Black households have significantly less wealth¹⁰ to navigate crises, lower rates of homeownership¹¹, and higher rates of housing cost burden¹². Disproportionality in housing, income, and wealth are known factors for disproportionate experiences of homelessness nationally. These factors emphasize the need for the CoC to work on prevention, diversion, and affordable housing partners to counter these trends locally.

¹⁰ Aladangady, Aditya, and Akila Forde. "Wealth Inequality and the Racial Wealth Gap." The Fed – Wealth Inequality and the Racial Wealth Gap, www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/wealth-inequality-and-the-racial-wealth-gap-20211022.html. Accessed 11 Sept. 2023.

¹¹ Fernald, Marcia. "The state of the nation's housing 2019." *Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University*, http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/research/state_nations_housing (2019).

¹² Hess C, Colburn G, Crowder K, Allen R. Hess. "Racial disparity in exposure to housing cost burden in the United States: 1980-2017." *Housing studies* vol. 37,10 (2022).

- People identifying as Black accessed permanent housing resources at a higher rate (52% of RRH and 43% of PSH enrollments) as people identifying as White (42% of RRH and 32% of PSH). 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.
 - People identifying as White may have more resources to self-resolve their housing crises before needing higher level services such as RRH, and PSH. Reviewing income resources of people in ES and TH compared to RRH and PSH by race and ethnicity could help validate this hypothesis. 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 Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (31%), and Asian or Asian American (23%) have lower exits to permanent destinations and higher exits to temporary destinations than people identifying as American Indian, Alaska Native or Indigenous (42%), Black (37%) or White (33%). The data does not show a similar trend when reviewing ethnic data with people identifying as Hispanic exiting to permanent destinations at a little higher percentage (40%) than people identifying as Non-Hispanic (35%). American Indian, Alaska Native or Indigenous, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Asian, and Hispanic populations have low total numbers and trends should continue to be reviewed over time to better understand the meaning.

- Stella Performance tool 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 six months. 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. Better data collection training for providers should help the CoC understand the differences between self-reported and project length of time experiencing homelessness.

- Within the CoC's influence to a greater extent is the time that people experience homelessness while participating in the system's projects. Stella P ES, TH, RRH, and PSH data show that people identifying as Black also experience homelessness longer than people identifying as White (136 days to 101 days). The reason for this month-long disparity is less clear.
 - It could be the barriers such as justice involvement and background checks that disproportionately impact Black people meaning that housing units are denied to clients identifying as Black more often. Another possible reason is that landlord recruitment is extremely difficult. Community partners report that landlords routinely do not want to rent to people utilizing homeless services (case management, financial assistance over vouchers)

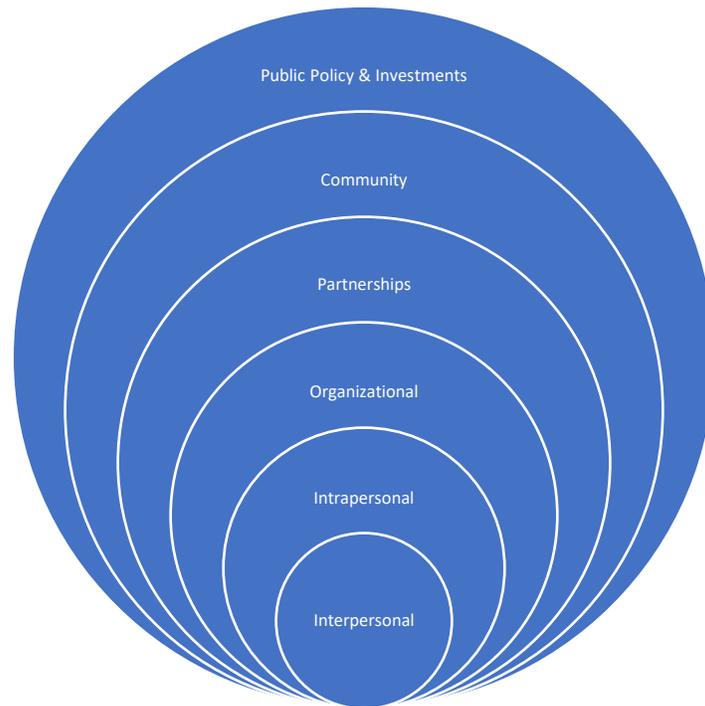
can appear to not be discrimination based on race, on the surface. However, since clients using homeless services are disproportionately identifying as Black, the ripple effect could impact the length of stay data disparities. The CoC should identify opportunities to build better relationships with landlords to counter-act prejudice against CoC programs.

- The CoC should also dive deeper into the Coordinated Entry length of time data to identify where the bottleneck lies. Is it the time between shelter entry and assessment, assessment to permanent housing referral, or from permanent housing project entry to move-in date? The results would better direct CoC efforts for provider-level technical assistance. The CoC should also consider that actions taken to improve the length of stay in the group with the highest starting average will likely be able to be replicated to improve the data for everyone after testing.

2021's Racial Equity Assessment data illustrated 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 finishing over a year and a half of work with HUD TA's Equity Initiative to build a diverse Core Team and plan a new standardized coordinated entry assessment that supports equal access for BIPOC to permanent housing resources. The CoC's goal is to launch the new assessment in January 2024.

Section 5: Next Steps

To combat racism and make decisions with a racial equity lens, the CoC uses the Social Ecological Model¹³, 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 the 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 or Coordinated Entry System.

¹³ 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).

- *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.
- *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. Examples include a provider and its clients interacting with police officers enforcing local ordinances or how federal dollars are distributed in a community.

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 equitably.

Key areas 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 decision-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? How does the CoC empower providers to drive racial equity locally?

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 the decision-making for the CoC.
- Support the Racial Equity Subcommittee and the Lived Expertise Advisory Council (LEAC), drawing on their expertise to guide CoC goals and priorities.
 - Integrate these groups into the CoC review of policy changes and procedure changes.
 - Leverage anti-discrimination policy and written standards to facilitate these discussions.

- Coordinate joint-action between the Lived Expertise Advisory Council (LEAC) and Racial Equity Subcommittee
- Host dialogue calls on racial equity that engage CoC stakeholders on relevant and associated topics and systems.

Policy Development and Accountability Advocacy: The CoC will develop and promote policies that address the systemic obstacles contributing to racial and ethnic disparities. Enforcement of said policies will be incorporated into CoC governance where possible and advocated for with partner outside of the homeless response system.

Activities

- Deepen the racial equity questions and checks in funding process scorecards and program monitoring and oversight. Include ways to demonstrate compliance with agency policies including but not limited to:
 - Client Bill of Rights
 - Anti-Discrimination Policy
- Support revisions to HUD’s Fair Market Rent to be more realistic and incorporate the true costs of housing like utilities.
- Support increasing availability of Affordable Housing, especially:
 - For renters with no income at program start or with 30% of Area Median Income or below
 - For safe, clean housing with habitable minimum standards
 - For accountability of landlords that fail to provide safe, clean, habitable housing. Coordinate with local, state, or federal regulatory bodies for monitoring and resident rights organizations like Legal Aid for improved conditions.
- Recruit and foster partnerships led by people of color to increase opportunities for investment in projects serving and led by people of color.
- Recruit funders for services and financial assistance gaps in public funding sources. Including but not limited to non-rent housing costs like utilities, pet fees, essentials like transportation or phone access, employment or income support.

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

- Continue to encourage and support better data quality, allowing more detailed evaluation (such as improving documentation of exit destination, 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 affects access to services and positive and negative 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 Equity Initiative’s Core Team and the Lived Expertise Advisory Council that existing data sets such as by-name lists, domestic violence programs, and targeted programs connected to coordinated entry can help answer. Discussions with the Core Team have already brainstormed avenues:
 - Chronic Homeless rates by race and ethnicity
 - Regional racial and ethnic disparities
 - Prevention/Diversion project enrollment by race and ethnicity
- Develop a more equitable Assessment and Prioritization Tool for Coordinated Entry leveraging the breadth of experience in the Core Team group from HUD’s 2022 Equity Initiative.
 - Monitor equitable outcomes, especially Length of Stay / Length of Time Homeless
- Report on Length of Time, Returns, and Exits to Permanent Housing for the Coordinated Entry System, by race and ethnicity
- Study the demographics of agency staff providing services and compare to the people being served.

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

- Share resources on racial equity with CoC stakeholders and offer time to stakeholders for dialogue and questions, especially around analyzing their agency’s data.
- Direct providers to expert training sources for support developing more racially equitable practices within agencies and community systems like Coordinated Entry.
- Develop educational materials for landlords to provide safer, cleaner rental opportunities to program participants. Develop messaging that encourages landlords to treat renters with dignity and humanity.
- Develop template contracts or commitments for landlords to benefit from housing program assistance.