

Evaluating Racial Disparities in the North Carolina Balance of State CoC

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Section 1: Introduction

“Most minority groups in the United States experience homelessness at higher rates than Whites, and therefore make up a disproportionate share of the homeless population. This includes African Americans, American Indian/Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. From slavery to segregation, African Americans have been systematically denied equal rights and opportunities. The effects of long-standing discrimination linger and perpetuate disparities in poverty, housing, criminal justice, and health care, among other areas. These disparities, in turn, can contribute to more African Americans experiencing homelessness.”¹

The 2019 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) demonstrates these glaring disparities, where nationally African Americans make up 40 percent of people experiencing homelessness while they only represent 13 percent of the general population. When accounting for families, the disparity is even larger with 52% of all families with children experiencing homelessness identifying as African American. While Blacks 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.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 emergency assistance, housing, and supports for historically underserved populations in its updates to the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, *Home Together*.³ 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.”⁴ This assessment represents current NC BoS CoC data using the above referenced HUD and NAEH tools and will be used as a starting point for further analysis of racial disparities and a guide to decision-making in the CoC.

¹ NAEH: <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/what-causes-homelessness/inequality/>

² NAEH: <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2019-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

³ USICH: [link](#)

⁴ NC BoS CoC Governance Charter: <https://www.ncceh.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.⁵ 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 2019, 9,314 people experienced homelessness on a given night, 2,989 or 32 percent of which reside in the NC BoS CoC.

The strategies the NC BoS CoC chooses to employ 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 experience success through access to 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,

⁵ 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 has committed to dismantling racism and eliminating racial, ethnic, and gender disparities. Through the recently formed Racial Equity Subcommittee, the CoC intends to use this assessment as a jumping off 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 decision 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 and HMIS data to clarify who accesses our system and housing resources. While this initial analysis focuses solely on race and ethnicity in the whole geographic area, the CoC would like to drill down and look more closely at this data at a regional level and how gender factors into access to services and housing. Over the course of the next year, we intend to use the Stella Performance Module⁶ to dig more deeply into these interest areas.

This document focuses on answering two 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?

The document answers these questions using HUD's Continuum of Care Assessment Tool and the National Alliance to End Homelessness' Racial Equity Tool. The subsequent section provides more detail about each tool and the results. The CoC uses these results to discuss our observations and next steps.

⁶ <https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/stella/>

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)⁷

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 estimates⁸ 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 2019 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 2019 PIT Count data only. While more recent PIT Count data exists, the 2019 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 bases racial identity 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, Black⁹, 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 other children under 18

⁷ <https://www.hudexchange.info/news/new-coc-racial-equity-analysis-tool/>

⁸ https://www2.census.gov/geo/tiger/TIGER_DP/2017ACS/ACS_2017_5YR_TRACT.gdb.zip

⁹ 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

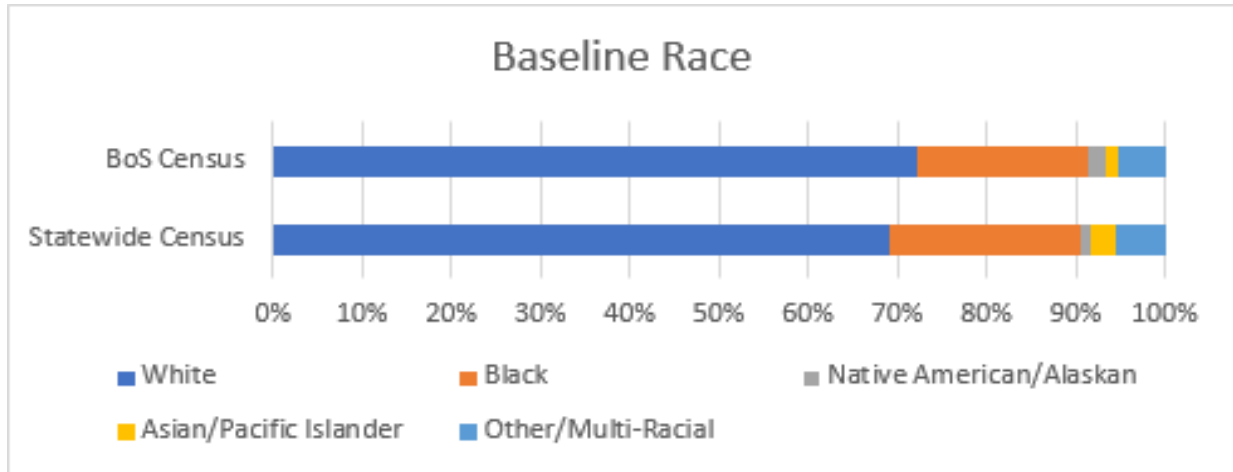


Table 1: Race in North Carolina and the NC Balance of State CoC (HUD Tool)

When comparing the general populations of North Carolina and the population of everyone within the 79 counties of the NC BoS CoC, 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

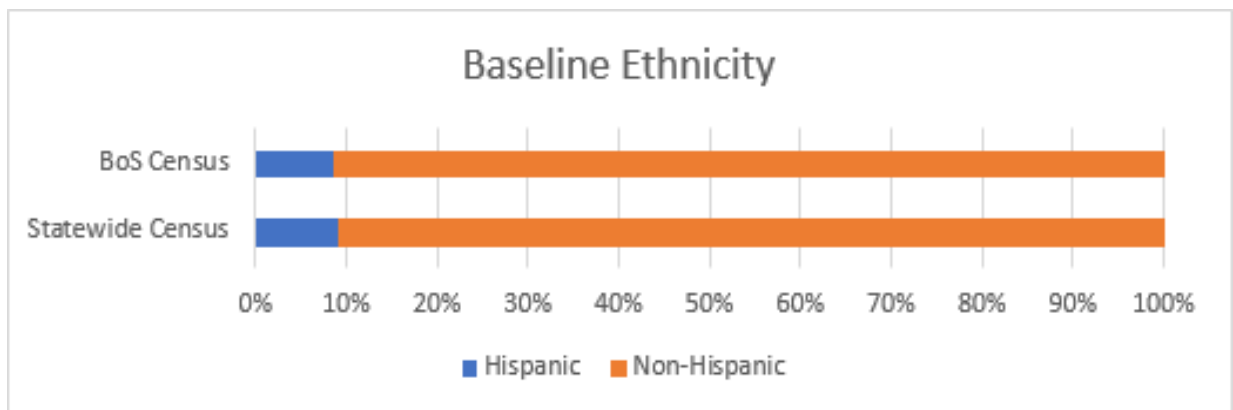


Table 2: Ethnicity in North Carolina and the NC Balance of State CoC (HUD Tool)

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
% of Everyone	72%	19%	2%	1%	5%
% of People Experiencing Poverty	55%	31%	3%	1%	10%
% of People in Families Experiencing Poverty	49%	34%	4%	1%	12%
% of Everyone Experiencing Homelessness	57%	37%	2%	1%	4%
% of People in Families Experiencing Homelessness	46%	45%	1%	0%	8%

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, less 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 (45%).

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
% of Everyone	8%	92%
% of People Experiencing Poverty	16%	84%
% of People in Families Experiencing Poverty	23%	77%
% of People Experiencing Homelessness	4%	96%
% of People in Families Experiencing Homelessness	5%	95%

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 4% and 5% respectively. This may be due to several factors such as data collection issues during the PIT night counting ethnicity and the fear for Hispanic people to officially identify as Hispanic at shelters that believe are connected to the government. The CoC must do more work to review this data for accuracy and 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 (37%) 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 (40%) than that in the overall homeless population. Fewer people experiencing unsheltered homelessness identify as Black (30%) whereas people identifying as White have lower than expected sheltered homelessness (53% sheltered versus 57% overall homelessness) and higher than expected unsheltered homelessness (66% unsheltered versus 57% overall homelessness).

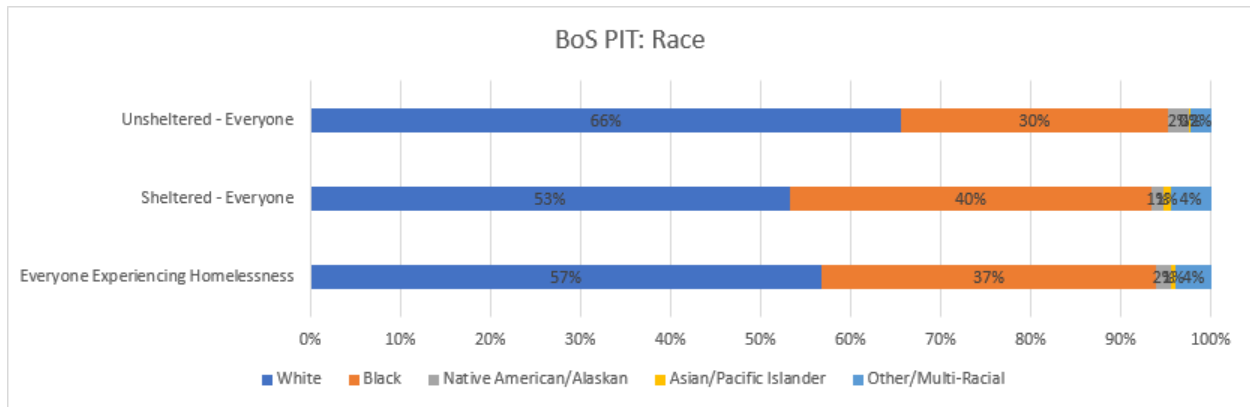


Table 5: NC Balance of State CoC Populations: Race (HUD Tool)

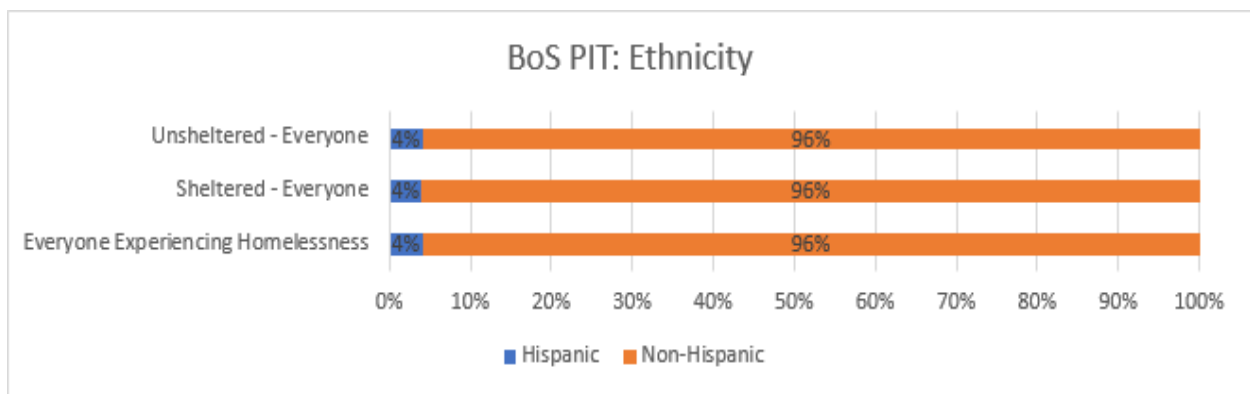


Table 6: NC Balance of State CoC Populations: Ethnicity (HUD Tool)

When looking at housing status 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 4% 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%).

Additional Populations: Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness

The total youth experiencing homelessness counted in the 2019 Point-In-Time Count was just 165 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.

Unlike what the CoC saw in last year's assessment where the racial identity of youth experiencing homelessness closely matched the percentages of like races in the total population in NC, this year, we see far different results. Youth identifying as White in the total youth census in NC is far higher than White youth experiencing homelessness (75% versus 50% 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 42% of youth experiencing homelessness identifying as Black.

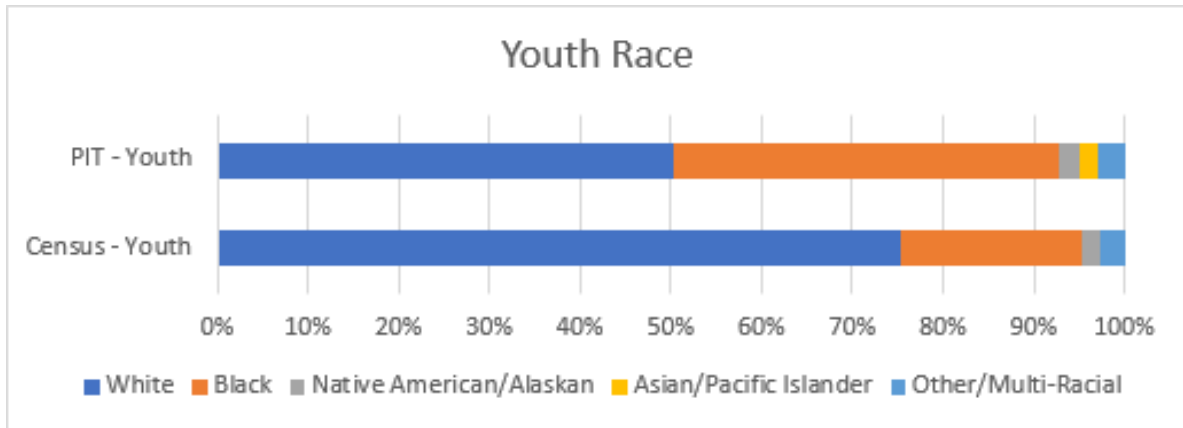


Table 7: NC Balance of State CoC Populations: Unaccompanied Youth-Race (HUD Tool)

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 2% respectively). The youth count for ethnicity mirrors the underrepresentation trend we see in the total population counts for people identifying as Hispanic.

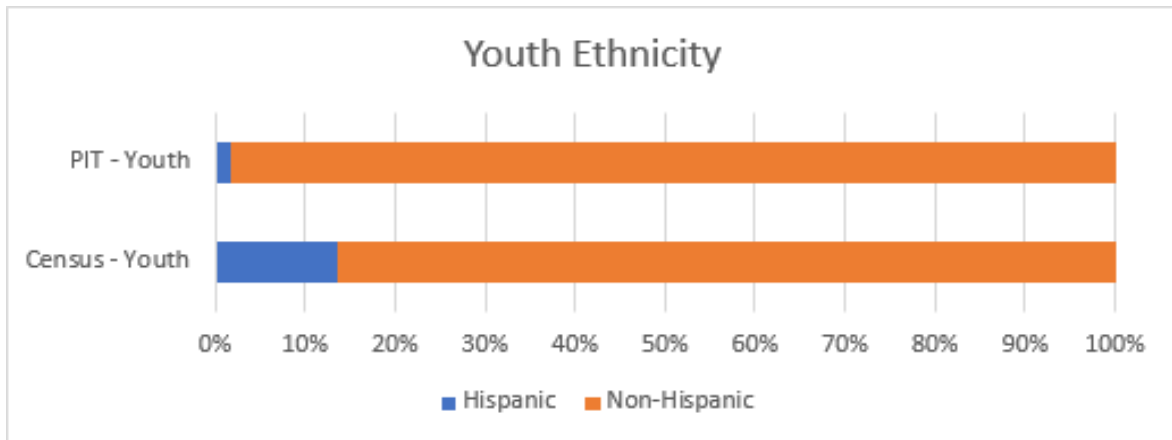


Table 8: NC Balance of State CoC Populations: Unaccompanied Youth-Ethnicities (HUD Tool)

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 (157 people or 5%). Compared to Veterans across the state, the percentage of Veterans identifying as Black experiencing homelessness is almost three times larger (17% versus 48%).

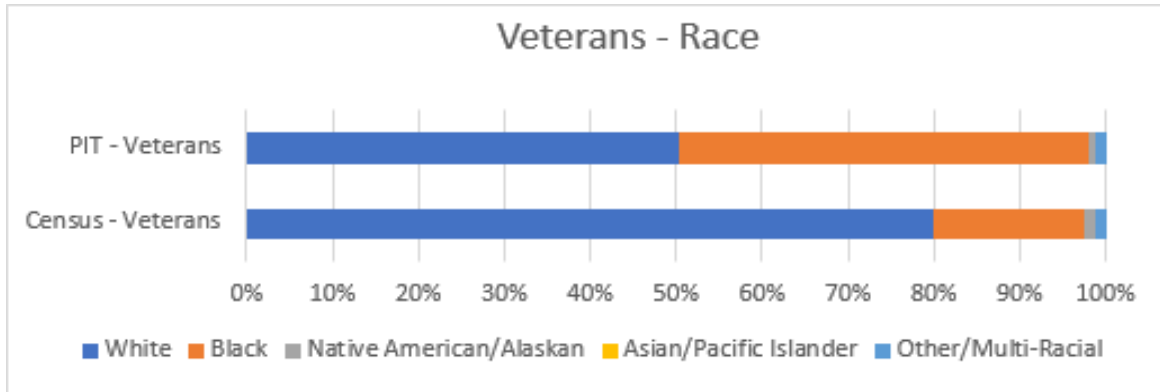


Table 9: NC Balance of State CoC Populations: Veterans-Race (HUD Tool)

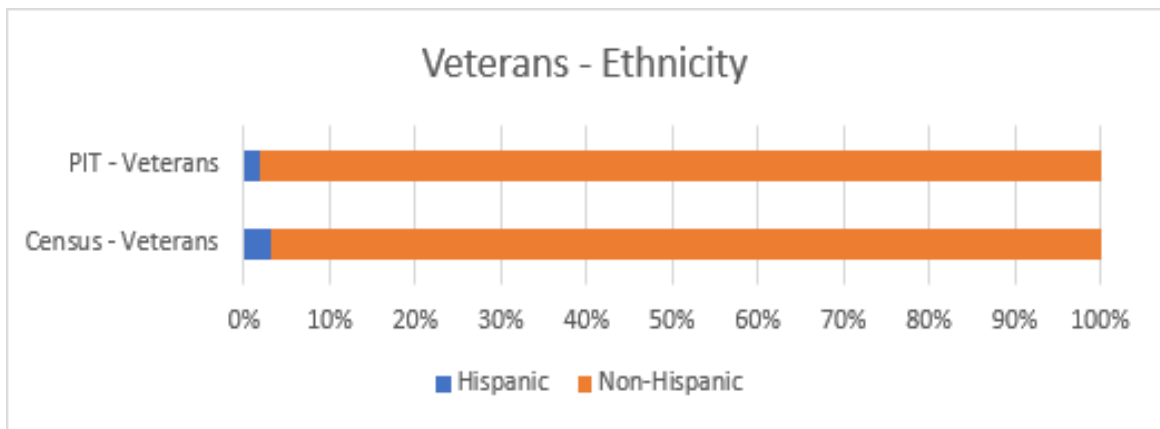


Table 10: NC Balance of State CoC Populations: Veterans-Ethnicity (HUD Tool)

When looking at ethnicity amongst Veterans, the trend lines seen with the total population and other subpopulations such as Youth holds true with Veterans as well. A smaller percentage of Veterans identifying as Hispanic experiencing homelessness versus the total population of Veterans in NC¹⁰ exists (2% versus 3%).

¹⁰ The HUD Tool did not provide Veteran population estimates for the NC BoS CoC's 79 counties. The CoC compared Veterans experiencing homelessness against the estimates for Veterans in the entire state.

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

Assessment Tool: National Alliance to End Homelessness Race Equity Tool (NAEH Tool)¹¹

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 shelter?
3. Who gets into transitional housing?
4. Who gets into permanent housing?
5. Who returns to homelessness?

Data Sources: The tool uses Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data from 01/01/2019-12/31/2019.

Limitations:

- HMIS only documents people who access homeless service providers participating in the system. Many people experiencing homelessness may not be documented in HMIS because they live unsheltered or access services from victims' service providers or mainstream service providers not using the HMIS.
- 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

¹¹ <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/the-alliances-racial-equity-network-toolkit/>

Key Results from the NAEH Race Equity Tool

Who are we serving?

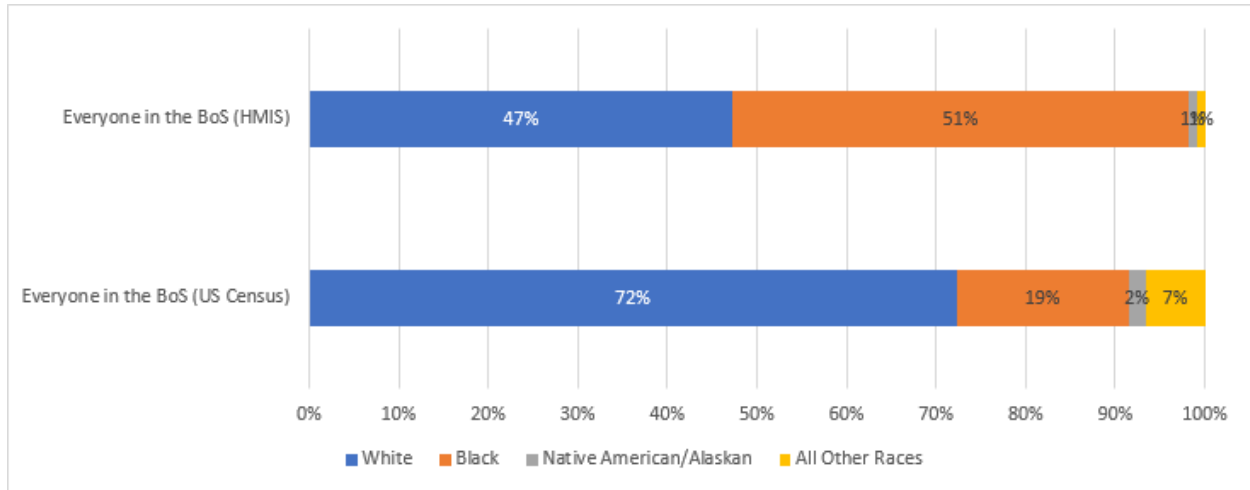


Table 11: NC Balance of State CoC: Everyone and People Experiencing Homelessness-Race (NAEH Tool)

Using NC BoS CoC Census data and comparing the percentages of people identifying with different races in HMIS from January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019, we observe a smaller percentage of people experiencing homelessness who identify as White (72% versus 47%) and a larger percentage of people experiencing homelessness identifying as Black (19% versus 51%). People identifying as Native American or Other Races show smaller percentages of people experiencing homelessness compared to the Census data in the NC BoS CoC (2% versus 1% and 7% versus 1%, respectively).

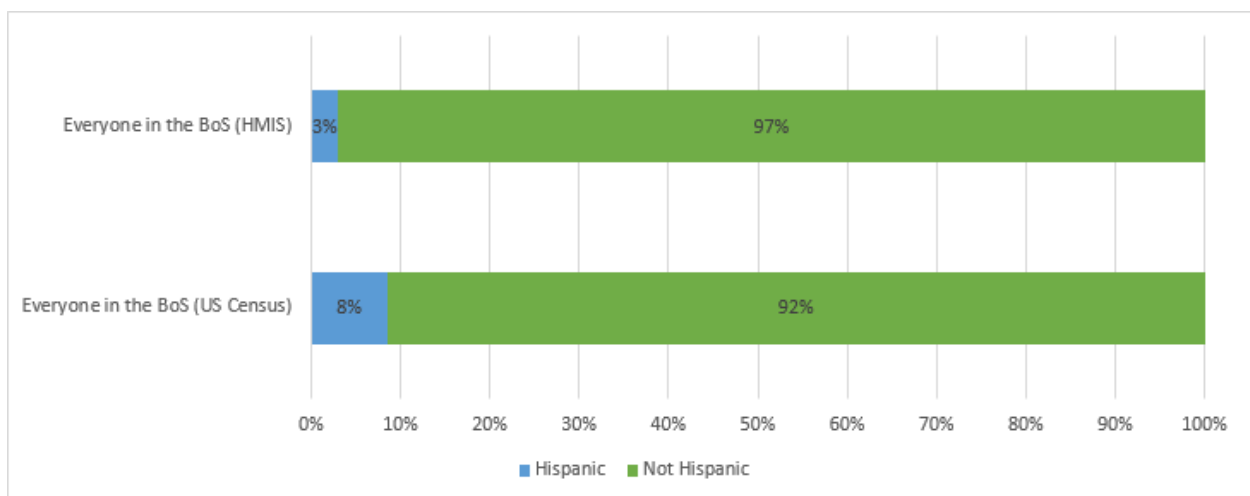


Table 12: NC Balance of State CoC: Everyone and People Experiencing Homelessness-Ethnicity (NAEH Tool)

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 55% used ES, 4% used TH, 23% used RRH, and 18% 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.

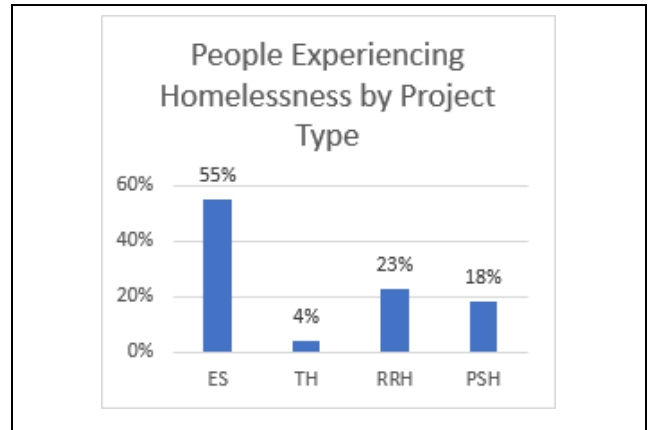


Table 13: % of people accessing ES, TH, RRH, and PSH (NAEH Tool)

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 programs types, TH, RRH, and PSH, people identifying as Black access these programs in greater percentages than all other races.

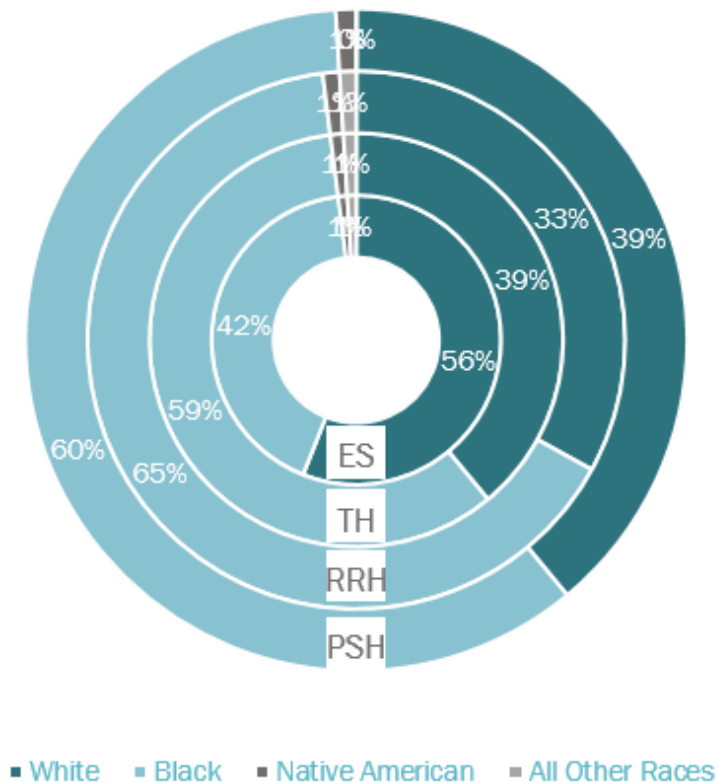


Table 14: NC Balance of State CoC: % of People in ES, TH, RRH, and PH (NAEH Tool)

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 all racial categories exit to permanent housing at the same percentage as the percentage of that race in the total homeless population. Once people participate in NC CoC BoS ES, TH, RRH, or PSH programs, their race does not seem to determine their opportunity to exit to permanent housing.

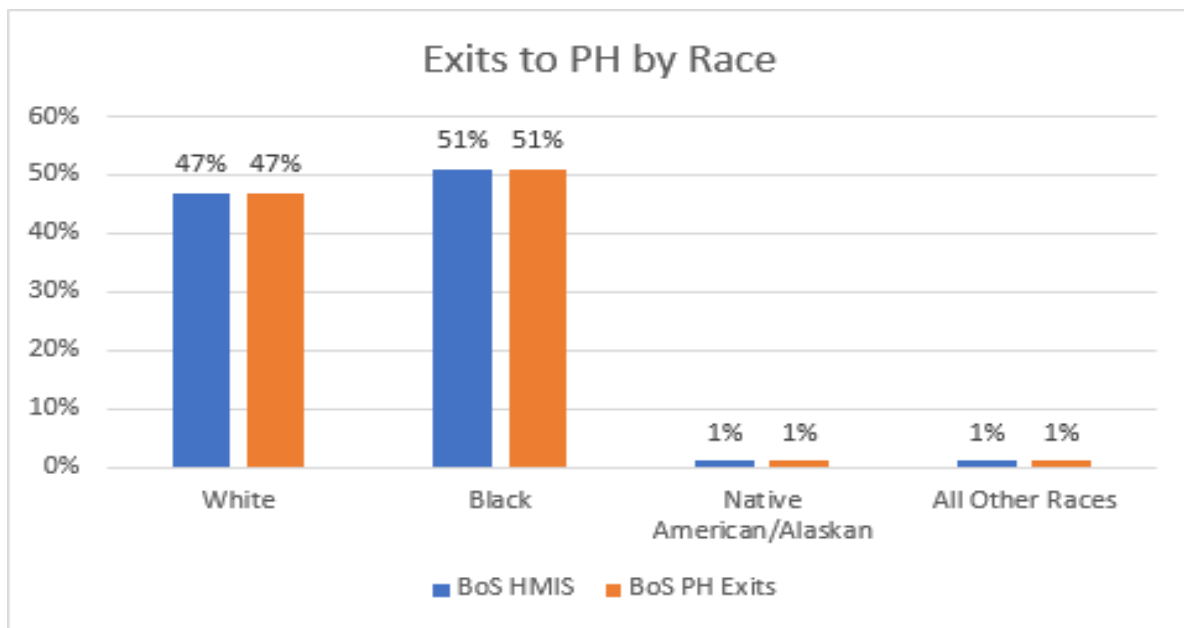


Table 15: NC Balance of State CoC: % of Exits to PH-Race (NAEH Tool)

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 housing (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.

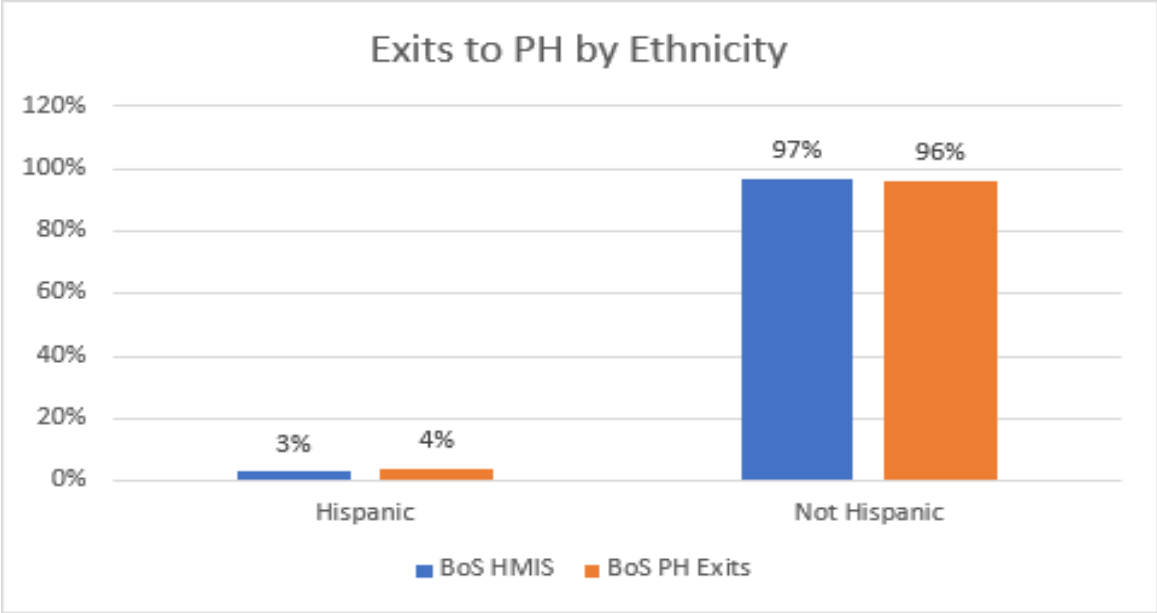


Table 16: NC Balance of State CoC: % of Exits to PH-Ethnicity (NAEH Tool)

The 2019 HMIS data shows 598 people returning to homelessness (6% of everyone experiencing homelessness). Of those returning to homelessness, people identifying as White returned to homelessness more often than other races at 52%, followed by people identifying as Black at 47%, and people identifying as Native American returning to homelessness at 1%. People identifying as White are overrepresented in their returns to homelessness when comparing to the percentage of people identifying as White experiencing homelessness (52% versus 47%). 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 (46% versus 51%).

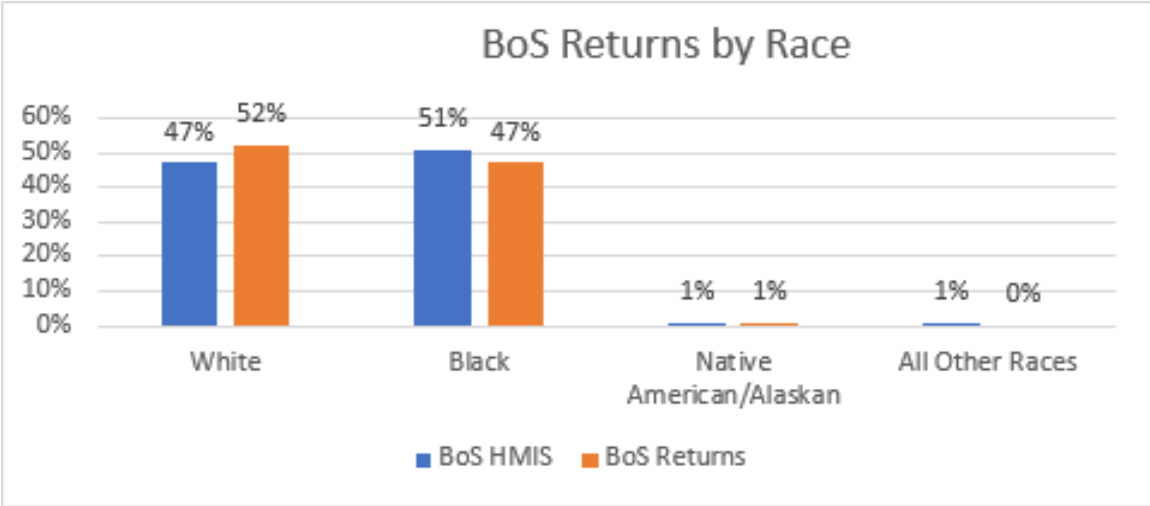


Table 17: NC Balance of State CoC: % of Returns to Homelessness-Race (NAEH Tool)

In relation to returns to homelessness and ethnicity, people identifying as Hispanic return to homelessness at a lower percentage than the total people identifying as non-Hispanic experiencing homelessness in the NC BoS CoC (1% versus 3%).

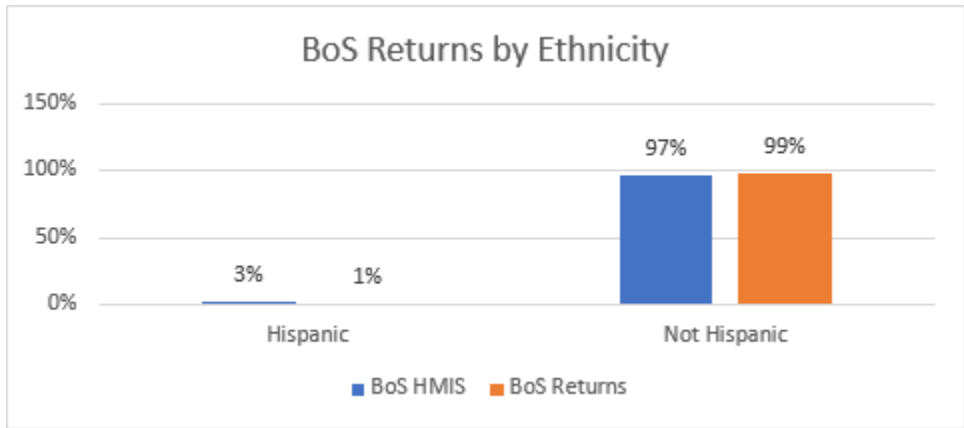


Table 18: NC Balance of State CoC: % of Returns to Homelessness-Ethnicity (NAEH Tool)

Section 4: Discussion

- The NC Balance of State CoC mirrors the trend present in the rest of the U.S.: people of color represent disproportionately high rates of poverty and homelessness across its geographic area. To effectively end homelessness, the NC BoS CoC will need to pursue racial equity in its strategies to ensure everyone has a safe, affordable, permanent place to live.
- Both PIT Count and HMIS data have limitations. PIT Count data is the most comprehensive data set because it includes unsheltered, sheltered, and domestic violence shelter data. However, as a one-day count, it only shows a snapshot of the system at a particular moment and does not demonstrate seasonal and current trends. HMIS data provides a richer, more nuanced annual data, which the CoC can use to show current need. However, it does not account for people served by programs not participating in HMIS and people living unsheltered. 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.
 - The percentage of people experiencing homelessness identifying as Black was higher in the HMIS data (51% versus 37%) than PIT night data. To understand these differences, the CoC should 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. More research to understand the housing needs and access for people identifying as Native American could help the CoC incorporate them more fully in the housing crisis response system.
 - 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 4% 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

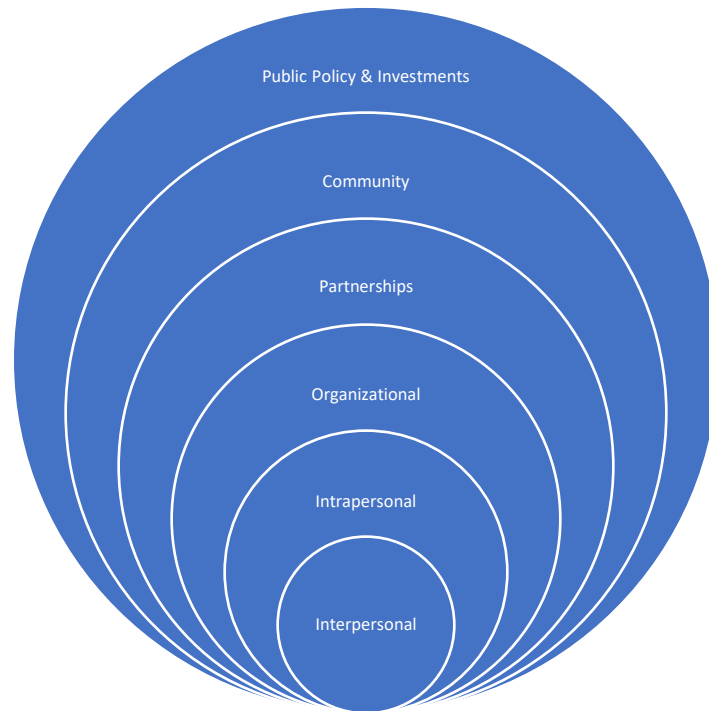
the intersections of race, ethnicity, and gender to illuminate and address these more nuanced discrepancies.

- NC Balance of State CoC HMIS and PIT Count data show small percentages of people experiencing homelessness identifying as Hispanic (3% and 4% 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 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 with more accessing shelter than living unsheltered. 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 generational dependence on public assistance to further understand how this may play a role in where people of different races access services. Also, more analysis of unsheltered data from HMIS could help the CoC understand the stark differences seen in unsheltered PIT results.
- 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. 42% of youth experiencing homelessness are Black (versus 20% of the total youth identifying as Black in NC). 48% of Veterans experiencing homelessness are 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 transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing at higher rates than all other races combined. 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.
 - Coordinated entry policies and procedures that prioritize people with the highest vulnerability show that people identifying as Black may have higher acuity than people identifying as White because of years of systemic racism.

- 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.
- People identifying as Black have higher percentages of permanent housing exits than people identifying as White (51% versus 47%). The percentages of permanent housing exits for both people identifying as Black and people identifying as White match the percentages of each race in the total entries of people experiencing homelessness. People identifying as Black have a lower percentage of returns to homelessness than people identifying as White and the total entries of people experiencing homelessness identifying as Black. Conversely, people identifying as White return to homelessness at a greater percentage than the total number of people experiencing homelessness identifying as White. To better understand why people identifying as White return to homelessness more often and disproportionately to the total, the CoC should do further research, looking at average length of stay of people who have exited positively in different program types.

Section 5: Next Steps

One way the CoC can combat racism and bring equity to our work is to approach the work using the Social Ecological Model¹², which helps to explain 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 work has been and could be approached and deserve focus to understand their challenges and opportunities to 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.

¹² 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 people of color?
- *CoC and agency policies and activities*: How do our CoC and agencies design programs, policies, and procedures that drive racial equity? How do we ensure that people of color and people with lived experience are part of the leadership making decisions on 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.
- Adopt a decision-making tool that guides CoC governance and staff to make decisions with a racial equity lens.
- Host dialogue calls on racial equity that engage CoC stakeholders on relevant and associated topics and systems.
- Recruit and foster partnerships led by people of color to increase opportunities for investment in projects serving and led by people of color.

- Incentivize funding and resources to agencies, programs, and stakeholders that actively engage in activities that increase racial equity.

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, 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.
- Partner with other systems to understand the effect COVID-19 has had on people of color, especially people who because of circumstances have touched the housing crisis response system.
- 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 Assessment Workgroup that existing data sets such as by-name lists, domestic violence programs, and targeted programs connected to coordinated entry can help answer.
- Study the demographics of agency staff providing services and compare to the people being served.
- Use the Stella platform in HDX 2.0 to understand how people of color access the housing response system and their outcomes.

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.
- Hire professional facilitators experienced in racial equity to provide training and coaching to set a baseline understanding of racial disparities and equity in the CoC.
- Share resources on racial equity with CoC stakeholders and offer time to stakeholders for dialogue and questions.