



## THREE COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE RACE AND HOMELESSNESS FACT SHEET

FEBRUARY 2021

### National Background

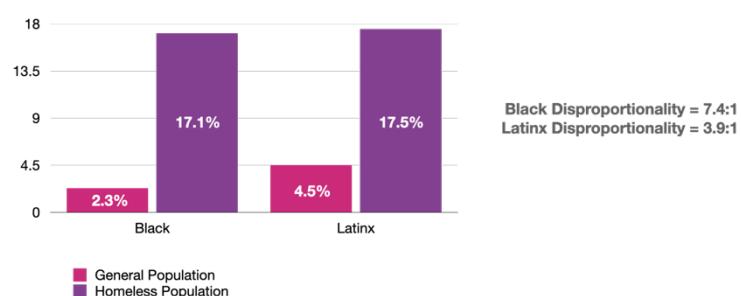
People of color are more likely than their white counterparts to experience housing instability and homelessness in the United States. For example, Native Americans and African Americans are consistently the most significantly over-represented groups among people experiencing homelessness,<sup>1</sup> and the scope of Latino homelessness has often been underestimated due to counting methodologies, program eligibility requirements, and lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate services.<sup>2,3</sup> Further, the novel coronavirus pandemic has hit communities of color the hardest, with Black, Native, and Latino people most likely to suffer infection, death, economic devastation, and risk of eviction.

Given the historical and current racial injustices in the United States, it is imperative that public and private organizations working to end homelessness and advance housing justice engage in focused work to address racial inequity, both in their internal operations and in the services they provide.

### Local Data

Western Massachusetts is not immune to racial inequities in homelessness. The counties that make up the Three County Continuum of Care (CoC) are Berkshire, Franklin, and Hampshire counties. In this region, Black and Latinx people are dramatically more likely than their white peers to experience homelessness. In fact, Black people in the region comprise 17.1% of the homeless population, compared to 2.3% of the general population—a 7.4 to 1 ratio. Latinx people comprise 17.5% of the homeless population, compared to 4.5% of the general population—a ratio of 3.9 to 1. Such racial disparities are both shocking and unacceptable.

**Franklin/Hampshire/Berkshire Counties:**  
Racial Disproportionality in Homelessness

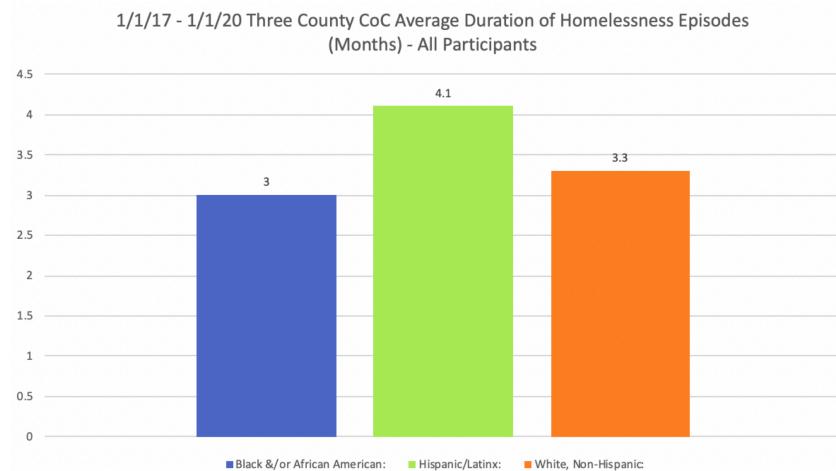


<sup>1</sup> Olivet, J., Dones, M., Richard, M., Wilkey, C., Yampolskaya, S., Beit-Arie, M., & Joseph, L.. (2018). *Supporting Partners for Anti-Racist Communities: Phase I Study Findings*. C4 Innovations. Available at <https://center4si.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/SPARC-Phase-1-Findings-March-2018.pdf>

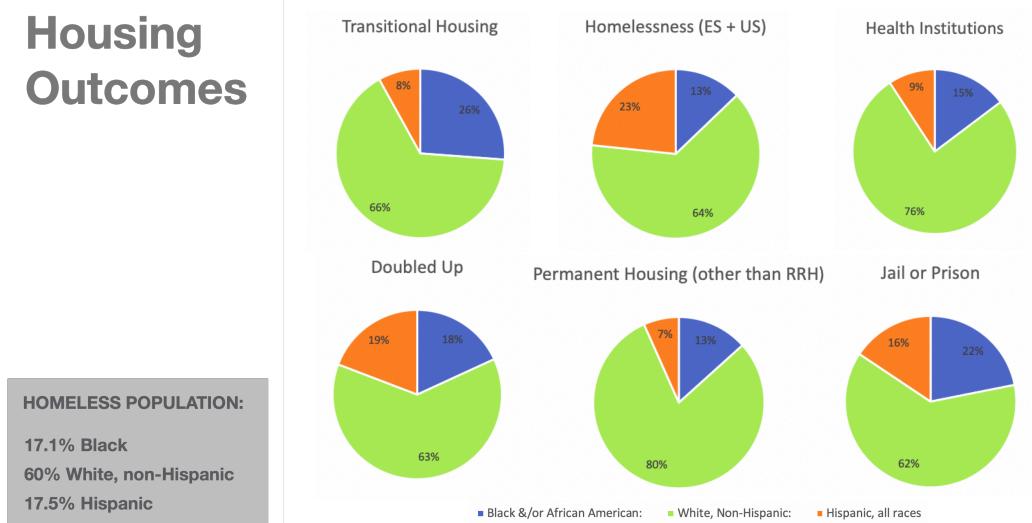
<sup>2</sup> Conroy, S. J., & Heer, D. M. (2003). Hidden Hispanic homelessness in Los Angeles: The “Latino paradox” revisited. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 25(4), 530-538.

<sup>3</sup> Olivet, J., Joseph, L., Beit-Arie, M. (2019). *Racial Equity and Homelessness in Montgomery Co., PA: Initial Findings*. Available at <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59e4bd08d7bdce1e8a5b15bb/t/5c77eced6e9a7f75cd22af5e/1551363312965/Your+Way+Home+Racial+Equity+Evaluation+Phase+I+Report.pdf>.

Notably, Latinx people also stay homeless longer than other racial or ethnic groups (see figure below).



Finally, housing outcomes differ by race and ethnicity. The following charts show where people go after they leave the homelessness system. Because the vast majority of people experiencing homelessness in our region are Black, white, or Latinx, these charts focus only on these three groups, showing that white people are significantly more likely to end up in permanent housing, while Black and Latinx people are more likely than their white counterparts to be doubled up, in jail or prison, or returning to homelessness.



## Conclusion

It is critical, as we continue the important work of preventing and ending homelessness, that we understand structural racism as a root cause of homelessness and work to center racial equity in our response to homelessness in our communities.