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# KENSINGTON COUNTS

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Event Date  
June 16, 2016  
7pm – 11pm



## PARTICIPATING AGENCIES:

Angels in Motion  
Covenant House PA  
Heaven Will Wait  
House of Grace Catholic Worker  
Impact Services Corporation  
Mother of Mercy House  
Pathways to Housing PA  
Prevention Point Philadelphia  
Project HOME  
St. Francis Inn  
St. Marks Church

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## FINAL REPORT

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# Background & Significance

In the spring of 2015 representatives from the Office of Supportive Housing (OSH) and the Department of Behavioral Health (DBHIDS) convened a meeting with representatives from Prevention Point and Impact Services Corporation to discuss the issue of homelessness in Kensington. The meeting highlighted several trends including:

For the past 5 years there has been a steady increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness in Kensington. Totals from city quarterly counts are frequently in the low to mid 100s, second only to Center City.

There are several unique factors surrounding homelessness in Kensington including high rates of drug use, a large number of abandoned buildings, particularly large out of use factories and warehouses, and the overall economic depression of the area.

Of particular concern is the Conrail tracks, an approximately 1.5 mile long stretch of freight line along Gurney and Tusculum Streets that has become home to a ‘tent city’ of 60-75 individuals. Many of these individuals are monolingual Spanish speakers with limited access to city services.

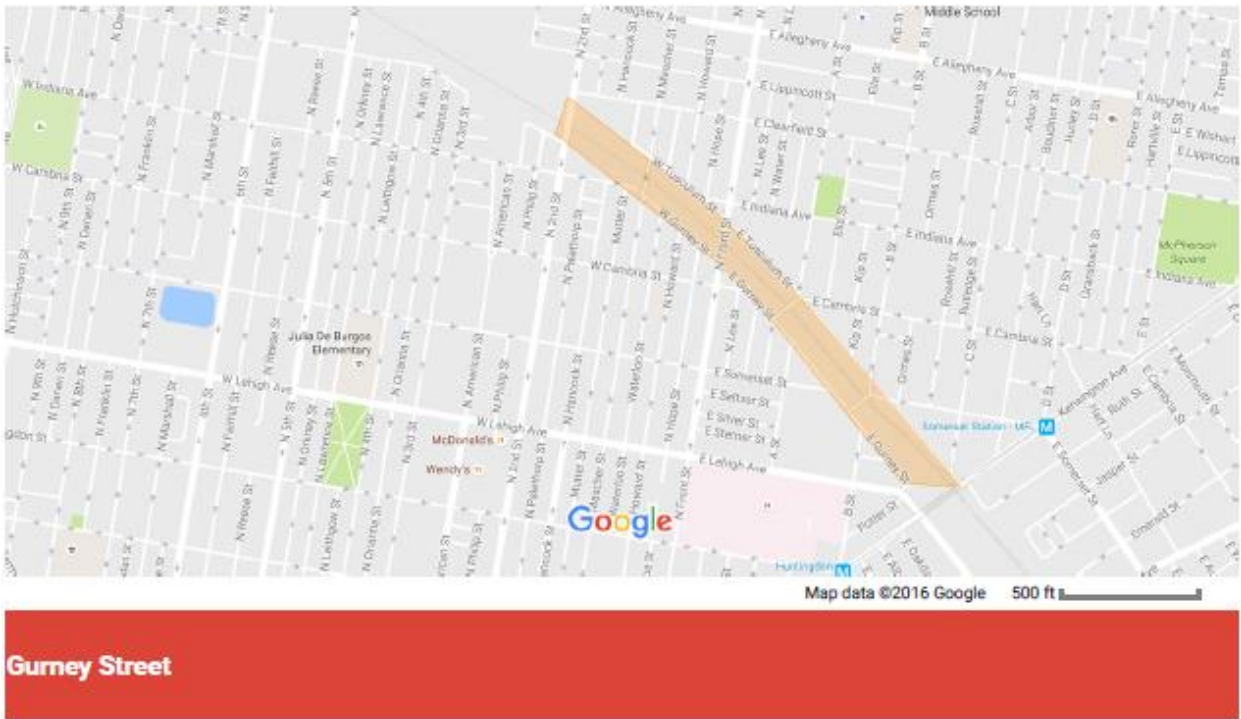


Figure 1: Map of 1.5 mile stretch of freight line along Gurney and Tusculum Streets

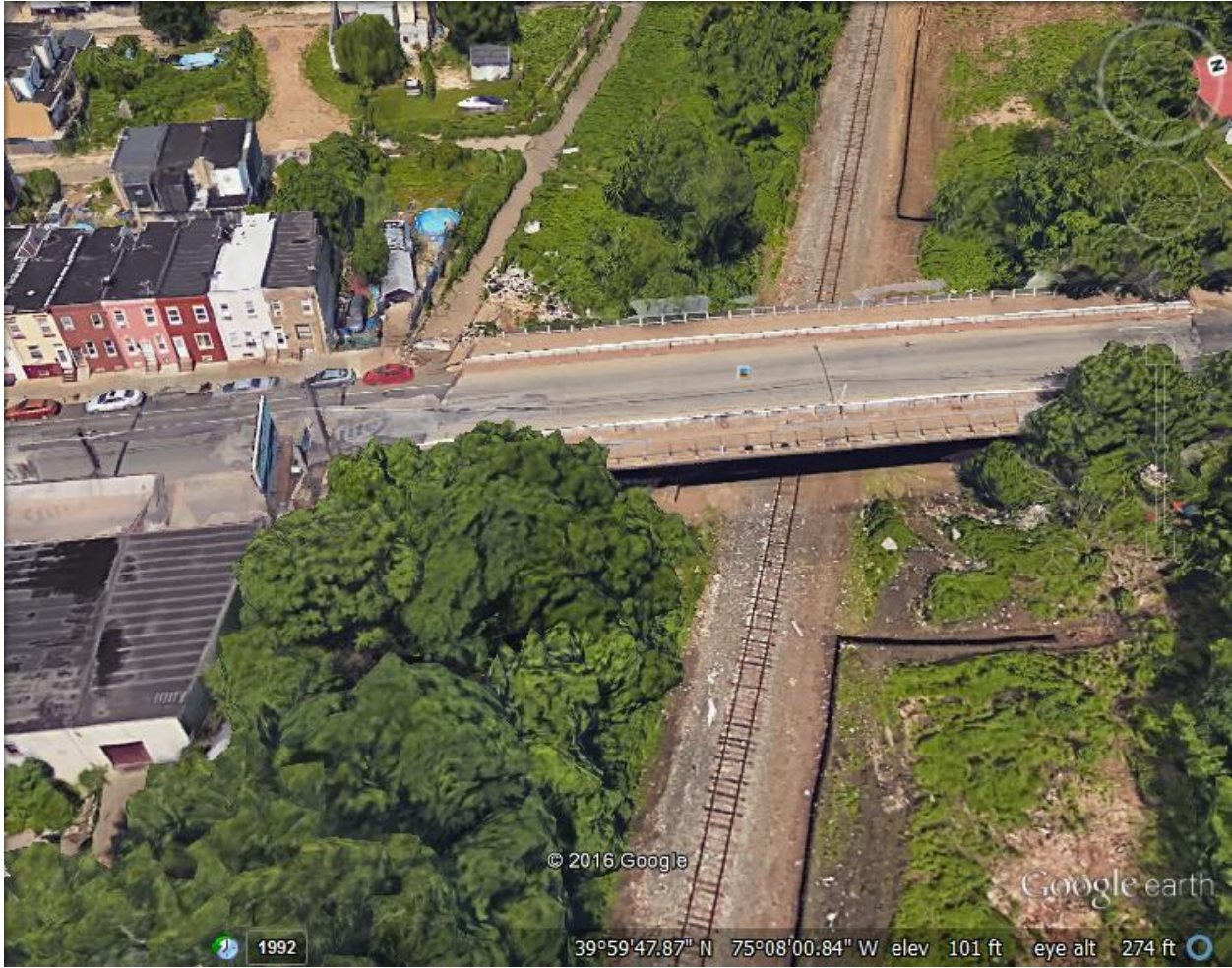


Figure 2: Aerial view of overpass along Gurney St

It was recommended that a boot camp event be planned for Kensington similar to the city efforts around Veteran homelessness. A boot camp would allow for a concentrated effort to identify the full extent of homelessness in Kensington as well as the co-occurring issues individuals are facing. Additionally, it was noted that an assessment should be made of what housing resources would be most beneficial in the immediate neighborhood including winter respite, safe haven, and housing first units. It was agreed that efforts should be made to implement a boot camp event in Kensington by fall 2015.

## Task Force Formation & Establishment of Kensington Counts

In the fall of 2015, after several months of no follow-up on the spring meeting or the boot camp, Impact Services and Prevention Point brought neighborhood stakeholders together to form the Kensington Homelessness Task Force. The task force is made up of representatives from the following community agencies: Prevention Point, Impact Services, House of Grace Catholic Worker, St. Francis Inn, Mother of Mercy House, St. Marks Church, Covenant House PA, Project HOME, and Pathways to Housing PA (see Appendix A for full membership). All of these organizations have established history providing food, clothing, shelter, and other services to homeless persons in Kensington and surrounding areas. The task force quickly established three primary goals:

Plan and implement a stand down-style event in Kensington with support and collaboration from OSH and DBHIDS. The event would be modeled on Veteran homelessness efforts and homeless youth count events which use familiar service providers as drop-in site hosts. Drop-ins are used as an opportunity to count and survey individuals experiencing homelessness as well as connect them to vital resources and services.

Use data collected from the stand down event and already existing databases (including Prevention Point outreach data and WebFocus) to create a names-based list of all persons experiencing street homelessness and housing instability in the Kensington area.

Create a comprehensive needs assessment and strategic plan for addressing homelessness and housing instability in Kensington. This assessment would highlight the unique issues of the area, the existing resources, and gaps in needed services. It would ultimately advocate for increased housing resources specifically targeted to Kensington including a city outreach team and a year round emergency shelter program. This needs assessment is currently in its 4<sup>th</sup> draft and will be finalized in the near future.

Several attempts were made by the task force to directly collaborate with city agencies on a stand down style event in Kensington. When the task force initially set a date for January, 2016 they were told to wait until spring when a new OSH director would be established and winter respites would be closed allowing for a more accurate count of the street homeless population. In late March a meeting was held with the OSH Director of Chronic Homelessness to discuss the task force's plans for the count as well as long term plans for housing services in the area. In late April, 2016 the task force made a decision to move forward with the event – now called Kensington

Counts – and set a date of June 16, 2016. While several city officials supported the idea of the count, no agency initially gave official sponsorship to the event. However, after the event was announced the Deputy Director of DBHIDS did recommend that all data collected during the event be included in WebFocus. Additionally, two representatives from CBH were invited to attend the event and assist participants in accessing drug treatment.

## Event Planning

The following lays out the design and structure of Kensington Counts as agreed to and executed by all task force members:

A total for 4 drop-in locations would open for the event from 7pm to 11pm: Catholic Worker (1813 Hagert St), Prevention Point (2913 Kensington Ave), Mother of Mercy House (801 W Allegheny Ave), and St. Mark's Church (4442 Frankford Ave).

In addition to the drop-in locations, 5 cars would go out from 7pm to 11pm to conduct surveys and outreach with individuals unable or unwilling to go to drop-ins. Prevention Point would also station their medical van near the entrance to the tent city tracks at Hancock St and Indiana Ave.

Volunteers for all sites were recruited by task force members. Team leaders were established for each drop-in, the van at Gurney Street, and the outreach cars. All team leaders would be individuals with experience in conducting street outreach and participating in city Point-in-Time counts (see Appendix B).

The event would be advertised to homeless individuals during services provided by task force member agencies and through distribution of postcards, similar to strategies used during youth count events.

All drop-ins and street teams would provide food, toiletry kits, and socks. Additionally, basic medical care would be available at three locations: Catholic Worker, Prevention Point, and the tent city tracks.

## Data Collection & Fidelity to Outreach Protocol

All individuals who came to drop-ins or were encountered by street outreach would be asked to complete a brief survey on their homelessness history. The survey would be modeled on data collection instruments used during city street outreach encounters and Point-in-Time surveys (see Appendix C). Questions would seek to learn about individuals' episodes of homelessness as well as total length of homelessness, co-occurring issues, and basic demographic information.

Team leaders at each location oversaw the administration of surveys and provided a brief orientation to all volunteers and how to conduct survey.

Surveys were administered primarily on paper and then immediately transcribed onto tablets rented through Grassroots Unwired. Transcription onto tablets would allow for easy collection of information into one dataset.

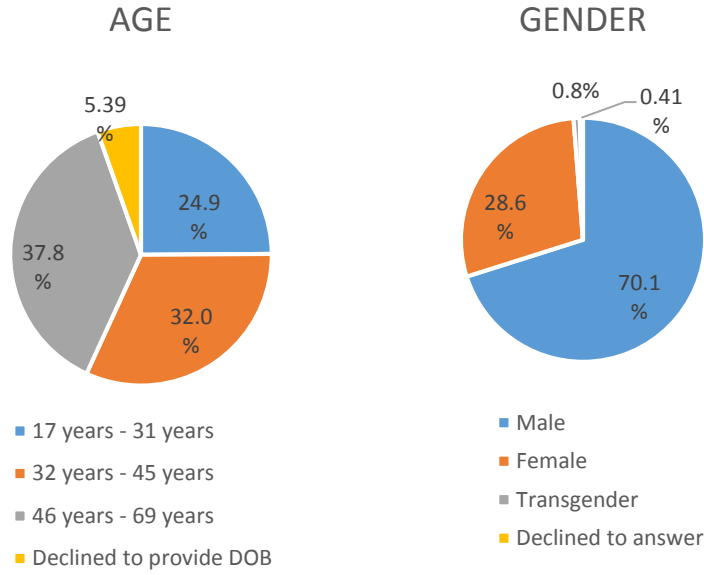
The final dataset from the event would be provided to OSH and DBHIDS officials for inclusion in the city's outreach database and comparison to city priority lists.

## Results & Analysis

Over 50 volunteers representing 11 different agencies volunteered the night of the event, providing services and support to an estimated 300 community members. Additional support was provided through donations of food, toiletries, and socks.

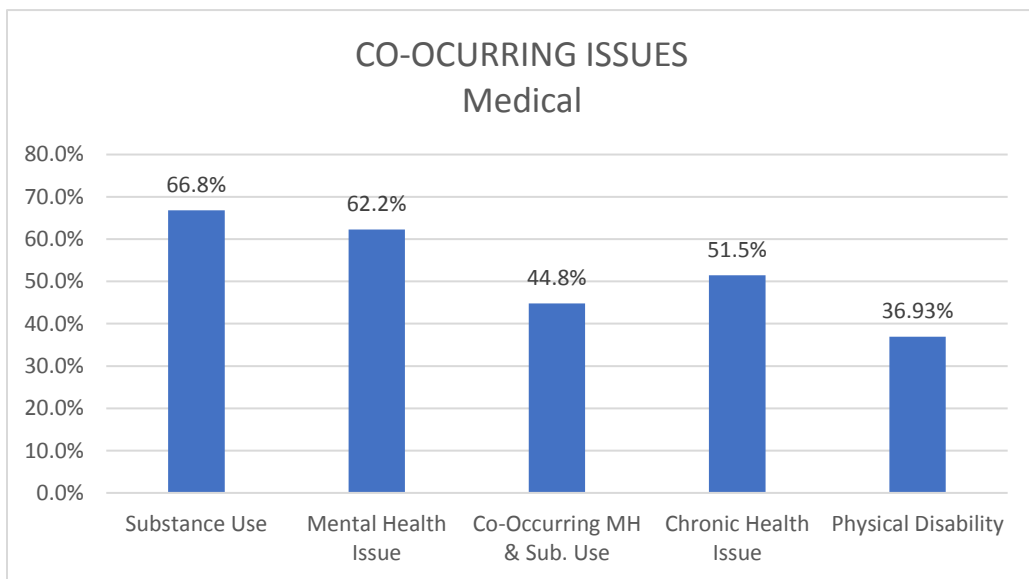
At least 17 individuals were seen by medical staff at Prevention Point, Catholic Worker, and the tent city tracks area. Additionally staff from Community Behavioral Health (CBH) were on site at Prevention Point to talk with individuals about accessing drug treatment.

In total, 241 street homeless or unstably housed individuals were surveyed. A full breakdown of survey responses is attached with major highlights noted below (see Appendix D).



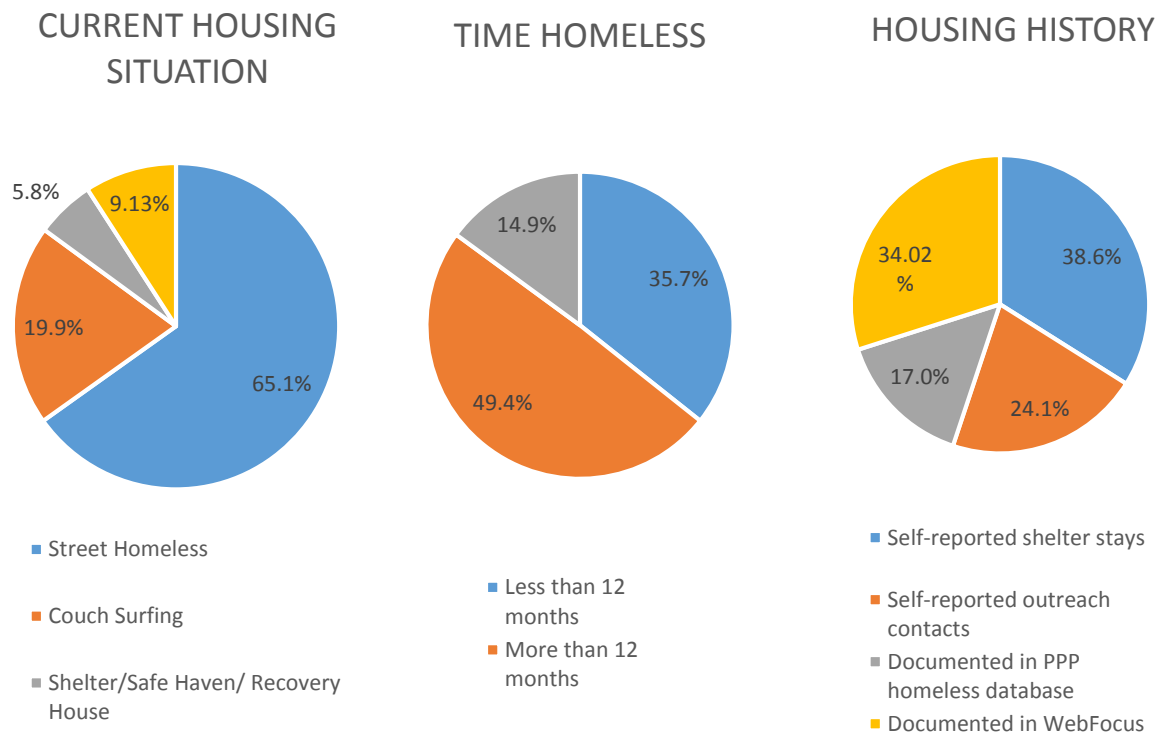
Survey respondents were overwhelmingly male (70%) however, a total of 30% female respondents is a higher male to female ratio than previous data collection efforts which often showed 80-20 or 90-10 ratios. The average age of respondents was 41 with the youngest person surveyed age 17 and the oldest 69.

An alarming number of individuals (51%) reported having a chronic health issue. 62% of respondents reported having been diagnosed with a mental health issue and 67% reported active substance use. 45% reported having co-occurring mental health issues with active substance use.



When asked about current living situations 157 (65%) respondents reported street homelessness, 48 (20%) reported couch surfing, and 14 (6%) reported staying in shelters or safe havens.<sup>1</sup> Individuals reported experiencing an average of 37 months homeless in their lifetime with 86 stating they had been homeless for less than 12 months and 119 reporting being homeless 12 months or more. Average length of time homeless increased proportionally with age, with 17-31 year olds averaging 19 months, 32-45 year olds 31 months, and 46-69 year olds 57 months. Men reported an average of 41 months homeless, while women averaged 29 months, a surprisingly large difference.

Overall, there was very low self-report of engagement with city homeless services. Only 93 individuals (39%) reported having stayed in city shelters and 58 (24%) reported engagement with outreach services. However, cross reference with WebFocus found 82 individuals who have been encountered by outreach at least once between 2006 and now.



1. 22 individuals declined to report or were not asked their current living situation but did report current homelessness.



## APPENDIX A

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### Kensington Homeless Task Force Membership

ORGANIZATION	NAME
Covenant House PA	Carl Hill
	Hugh Organ
Mother of Mercy House	Sr. Ann Raymond
	Fr. Joseph Devlin
	Fr. Liam Murphy
Pathways to Housing PA	Matt Tice
	Carrie Wagner
Prevention Point	Silvana Mazzella
	Jose Benitez
	Kate Perch
St. Francis Inn	Karen Pushaw
	Br. John Gill
House of Grace Catholic Worker	Mary Beth Appel
	Johanna Berrigan
Impact Services Corpotation	Steve Culbertson
St. Mark's Church Frankford	Phil Geliebter
Project HOME	Laura Weinbaum
	Carol Thomas

## Appendix B

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### Kensington Counts Drop-in and Outreach Team Leaders

<b>Name</b>	<b>Team/Site</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Position</b>
Carl Hill	Street Outreach	Covenant House PA	Outreach Coordinator
Elby Katumkeeryil	Tent City/Tracks	Prevention Point	Case Management Coordinator
Elvis Rosado	St. Mark's Church	Prevention Point	Education & Training Coordinator
Jose Benitez	Mother of Mercy House	Prevention Point	Executive Director
Carol Rostucher	Street Outreach	Angels in Motion	President
Caitlin Balch	Street Outreach	Prevention Point	Testing Coordinator
Clayton Ruley	Prevention Point	Prevention Point	Streetside Health Project Coordinator
Silvana Mazzella	Prevention Point	Prevention Point	Director of Programs
Tracy Esteves-Camacho	Catholic Worker	Prevention Point	Case Manager
Matt Tice	Catholic Worker	Pathways to Housing PA	Clinical Director
Kate Perch	Street Outreach	Prevention Point	Housing Coordinator

# Appendix C

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## Survey Template

### Kensington Counts Survey

**Site/Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

*We are trying to gather some information on people experiencing homelessness in our area. We hope this information will help secure more housing opportunities and funds. It might help you with future housing opportunities as well. I would like to ask you a few brief questions about your homeless history and other issues. You may decline to answer any questions you wish.*

*First, I would like to ask you some basic demographic information:*

**What is your name?**

First name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last name: \_\_\_\_\_

Declined to give name

**What is your date of birth?** \_\_\_\_\_

Don't know/don't remember

Declined to answer

**What is the last 4 digits of your social security number?** \_\_\_\_\_

Don't know/don't remember

Declined to answer

**What is your gender?**

Male

Female

Transgender male to female

Transgender female to male

Declined to answer

**What is your race or ethnicity?**

White

Black/African-American

Asian

Latino

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Declined to answer

**Do you currently have Philadelphia health insurance?**

Yes

No

Declined to answer

**Do you currently have Philadelphia ID?**

Yes

No

Declined to answer

*Now I would like to ask a few questions about your housing history:*

**Are you currently homeless?**

- Yes       No       Declined to answer

**If yes, what is the total length of time you have been homeless? \_\_\_\_\_**

- Declined to answer

**For the last three times you were homeless, are you able to tell me the dates and locations where you stayed?**

Start date: \_\_\_\_\_ End date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Start date: \_\_\_\_\_ End date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Start date: \_\_\_\_\_ End date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**Where are you currently staying?**

- Streets/park/car       Recovery House  
 Shelter       Couch surfing/family/friends  
 Safe haven       Declined to answer

**Have you ever stayed in a Philadelphia shelter?**

- Yes       No       Don't know/don't remember       Declined to answer

**Have you ever worked with Philadelphia homeless outreach?**

- Yes       No       Don't know/don't remember       Declined to answer

*Now I'd like to ask just a few questions about other issues you might be facing:*

**Do you currently have a physical disability that limits your mobility?**

- Yes       No       Don't know/don't remember       Declined to answer

**Have you ever been diagnosed with a chronic health issues (such as diabetes, heart disease, etc.)?**

- Yes       No       Don't know/don't remember       Declined to answer

**Have you ever been diagnosed with a mental health issue?**

- Yes       No       Don't know/don't remember       Declined to answer

**Are you currently using drugs and/or alcohol?**

- Yes  
 No  
 Declined to answer

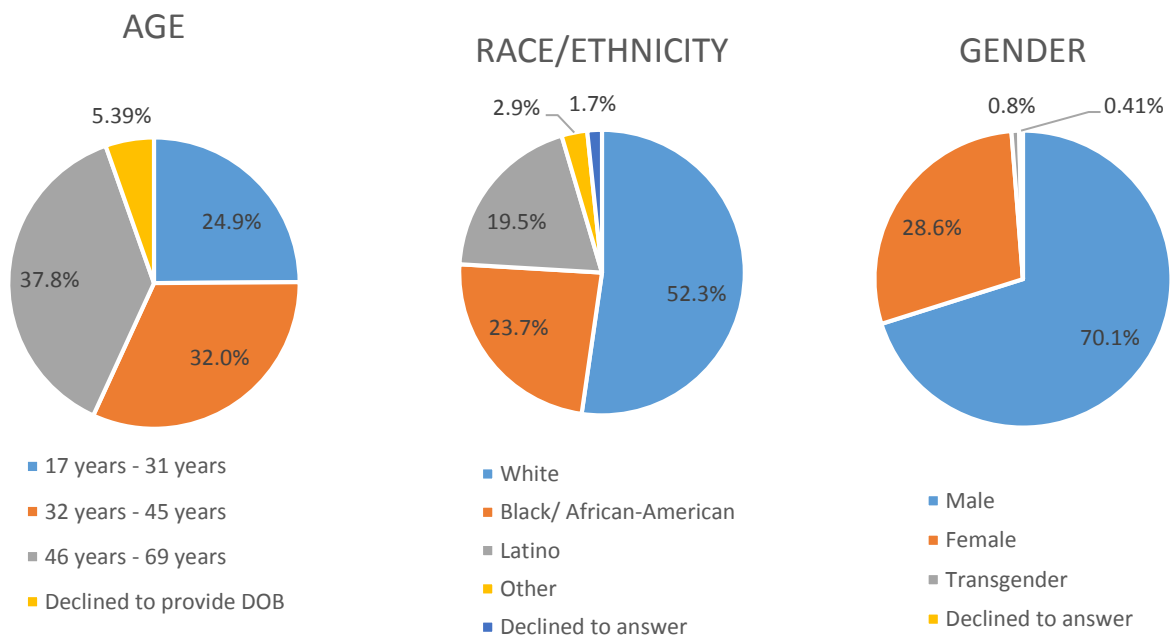
*We would like to send this information to the city's homeless outreach database. This will allow you to be recognized as homeless in the city's system and possibly help with eligibility for housing services in the future. Will you allow this information to be shared with city outreach?       Yes       No*

# Appendix D

## Kensington Counts Data Collection Summary

### DEMOGRAPHICS (n=241)

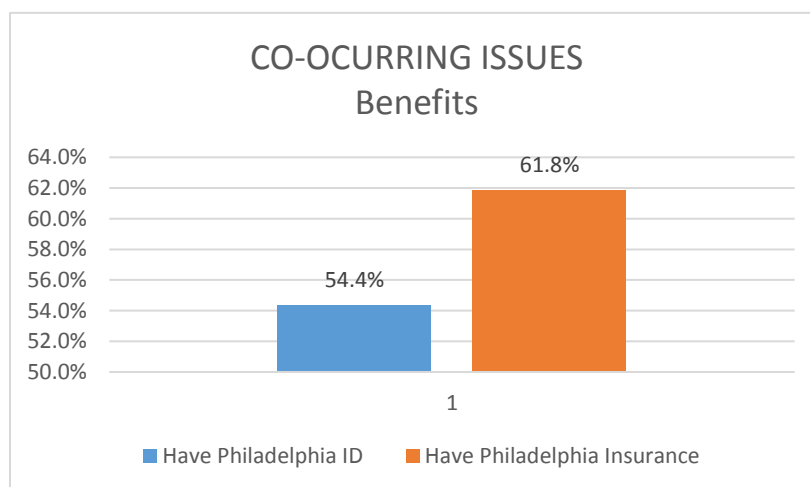
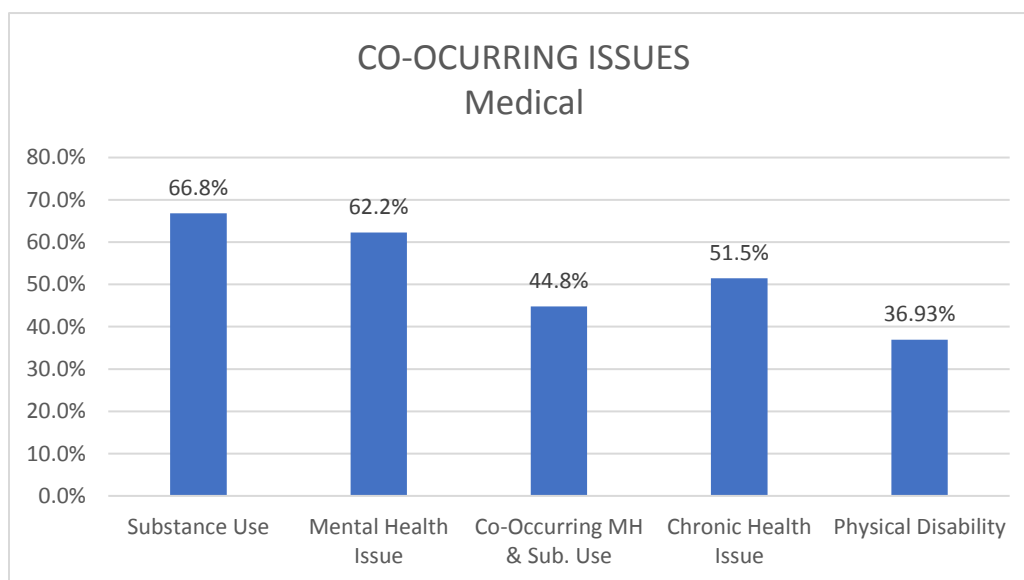
		Number	Percent
<b>Gender</b>	Male	169	70.1%
	Female	69	28.6%
	Transgender	2	0.8%
	Declined to answer	1	0.41%
<b>Race/ Ethnicity</b>	White	126	52.3%
	Black/ African-American	57	23.7%
	Latino	47	19.5%
	Other	7	2.9%
	Declined to answer	4	1.7%
<b>Age</b>	17 years - 31 years	60	24.9%
	32 years - 45 years	77	32.0%
	46 years - 69 years	91	37.8%
	Declined to provide DOB	13	5.39%



## Co-Occurring Issues (n=241)

		Number	Percent
<b>Medical</b>	Substance Use	161	66.8%
	Mental Health Issue	150	62.2%
	Co-Occurring MH & Sub. Use	108	44.8%
	Chronic Health Issue	124	51.5%
	Physical Disability	89	36.93%

<b>Benefits</b>	Have Philadelphia ID	131	54.4%
	Have Philadelphia Insurance	149	61.8%



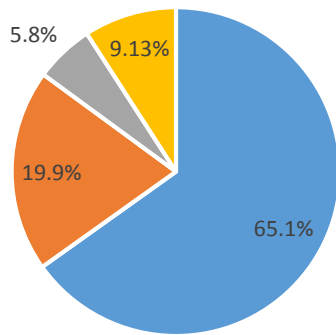
## Housing Data (n=241)

		Number	Percent
<b>Current Housing Situation</b>	Street Homeless	157	65.1%
	Couch Surfing	48	19.9%
	Shelter/Safe Haven/ Recovery House	14	5.8%
	Declined to answer	22	9.13%

<b>Time Homeless</b>	Less than 12 months	86	35.7%
	More than 12 months	119	49.4%
	Declined to answer	36	14.9%

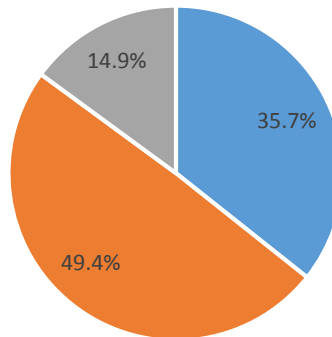
<b>Housing History</b>	Self-reported shelter stays	93	38.6%
	Self-reported outreach contacts	58	24.1%
	Documented in PPP homeless database	41	17.0%
	Documented in WebFocus	82	34.02%

CURRENT HOUSING SITUATION



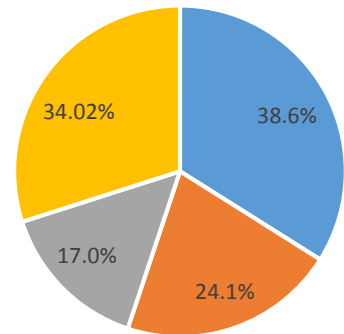
- Street Homeless
- Couch Surfing
- Shelter/Safe Haven/ Recovery House

TIME HOMELESS



- Less than 12 months
- More than 12 months
- Declined to answer

HOUSING HISTORY



- Self-reported shelter stays
- Self-reported outreach contacts
- Documented in PPP homeless database
- Documented in WebFocus