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strategies

DUVAL, NASSAU, AND CLAY COUNTIES (FL-510)

SYSTEM LEVEL DISPARITIES ANALYSIS

Prepared for Changing Homelessness by Focus Strategies

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OVERVIEW

Focus Strategies conducted an analysis of racial, ethnic, and gender disparities in the homelessness response system for Changing Homelessness, the Lead Agency for Duval, Nassau, and Clay counties in Northeast Florida (CoC FL-510). A primary goal of this work was to identify the degree to which groups of people are over- or underrepresented in the homelessness response system relative to the makeup of the community. We also investigated disparities in outcomes based on participant race, ethnicity, and gender. We noted whether COVID-19 appeared to impact disparities in the characteristics of those who receive services and on their outcomes. Consequently, HMIS data are segmented by pre-COVID (3/1/19-2/29/20) and COVID (3/1/20-2/28/21) time periods.

RESULTS

A. Characteristics of the Population

We first examined the racial, gender, and ethnic composition of households¹ who participated in a homeless program (emergency shelter, safe haven, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing programs) captured in HMIS compared to:

- All people living in Northeast Florida CoC (Duval, Nassau, and Clay counties)²
- People living in households in NE Florida with incomes less than 125% of the federal poverty level (FPL)

The results are presented in the graphs below, including the proportion of clients in HMIS missing race or ethnicity.³ Given that Black or African American and White clients make up more than 90% of the clients served, we combined all other races into a single category in the body of the report. Disaggregated race data is provided in Appendix A. We note that, compared to the total population and people in households with incomes < 125% FPL:

- White residents were underrepresented in the homeless services population.
- Black or African American residents were overrepresented in the homeless services population.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all HMIS data is reported at the level of unique head of household.

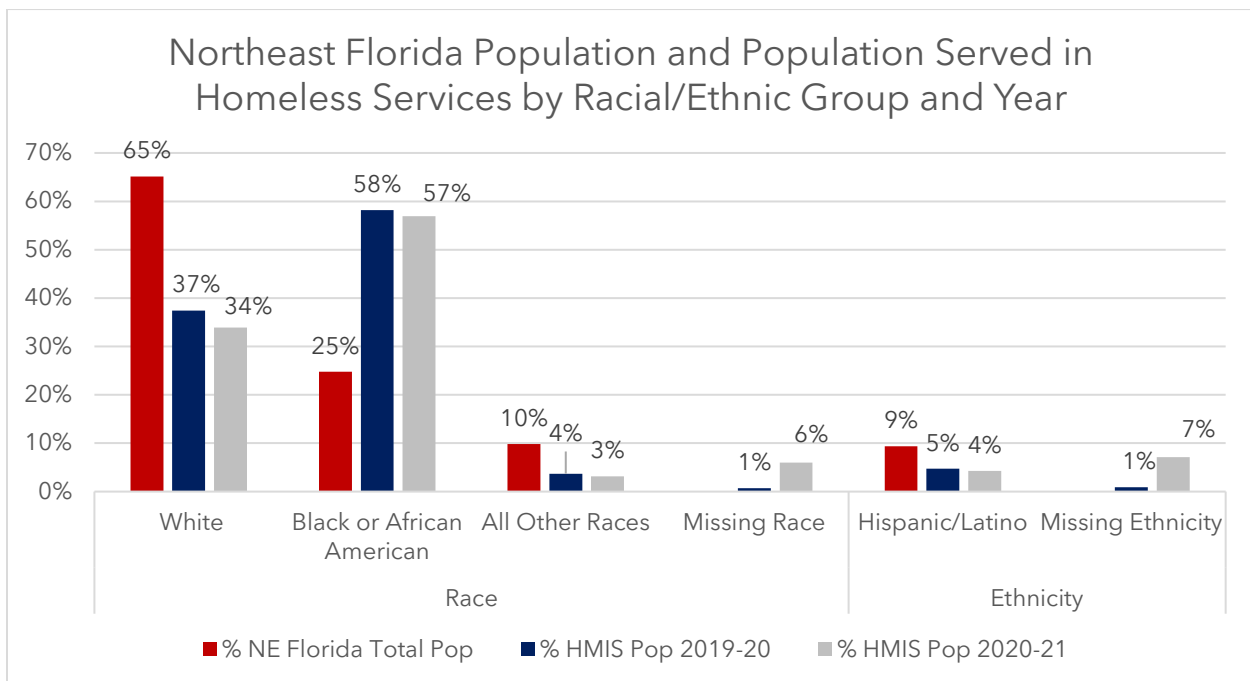
² Population and poverty estimates are derived from the 2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

³ A spike in the number of HMIS records missing race or ethnicity data in 2020-21 is due to an emergency shelter that started using HMIS. They have since been improving the capture of this data.

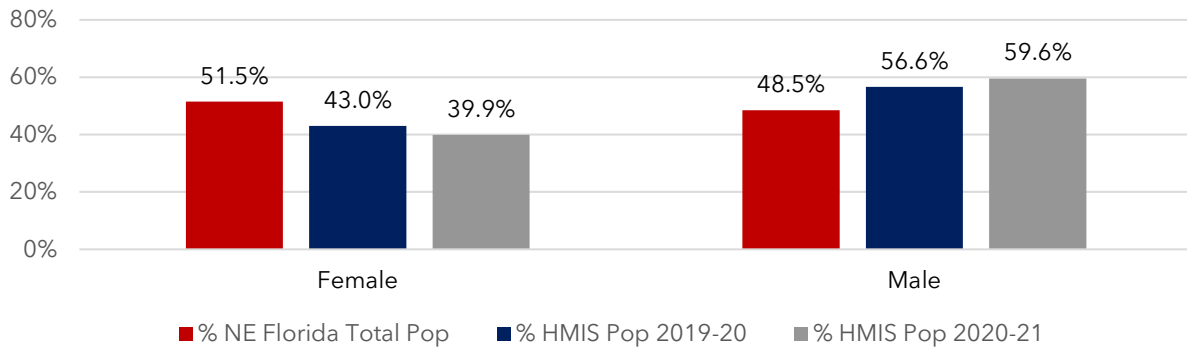


- Residents in the category of all other races combined were underrepresented in the homeless services population.
- Hispanic residents were underrepresented in the homeless services population.
- Female residents were underrepresented in the homeless services population while males were overrepresented.

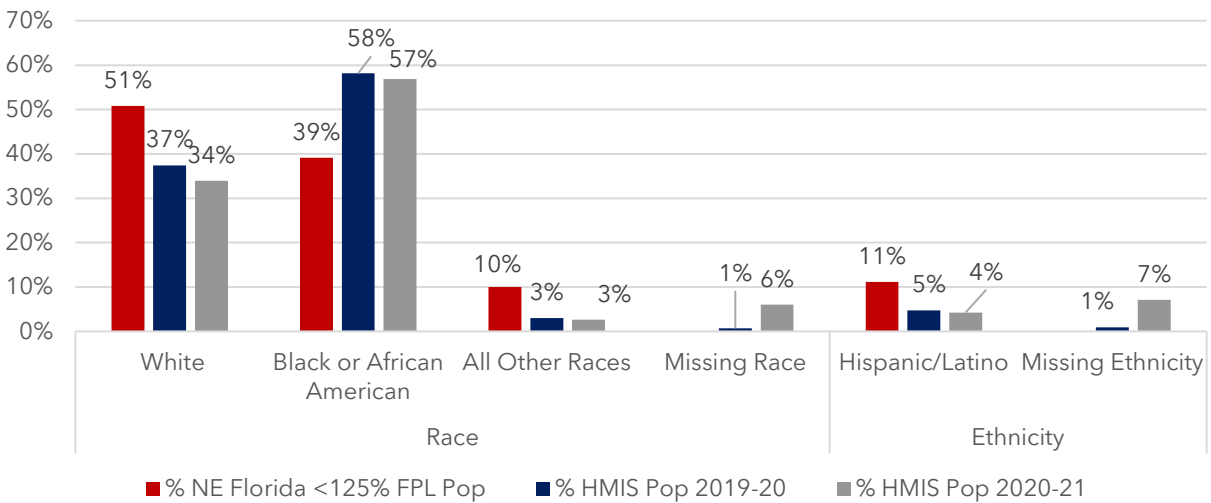
There were no indications that racial/ethnic disparities in who receives homeless services were substantially impacted by COVID-19, though there was suggestive evidence that the proportion of females receiving services during the pandemic declined compared to the year preceding the pandemic.

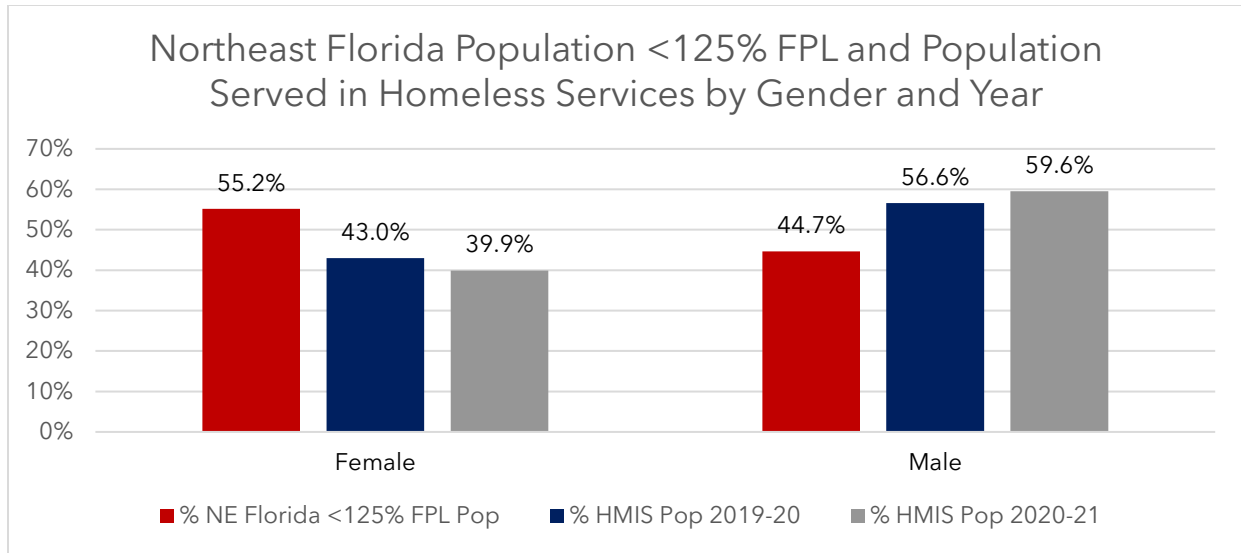


Northeast Florida Population and Population Served in Homeless Services by Gender and Year



Northeast Florida Population <125% FPL and Population Served in Homeless Services by Racial/Ethnic Group and Year





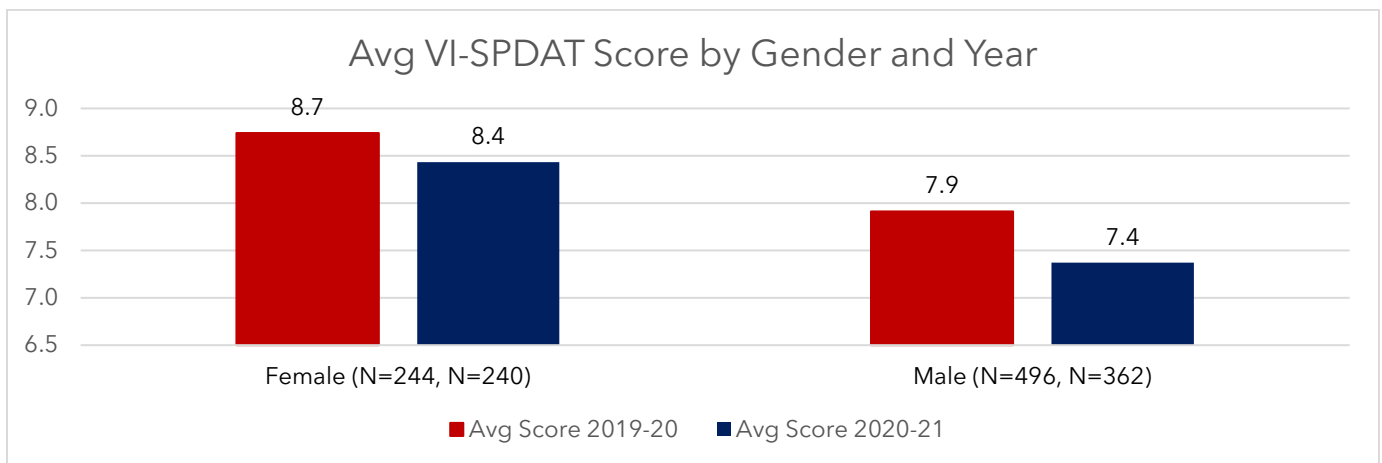
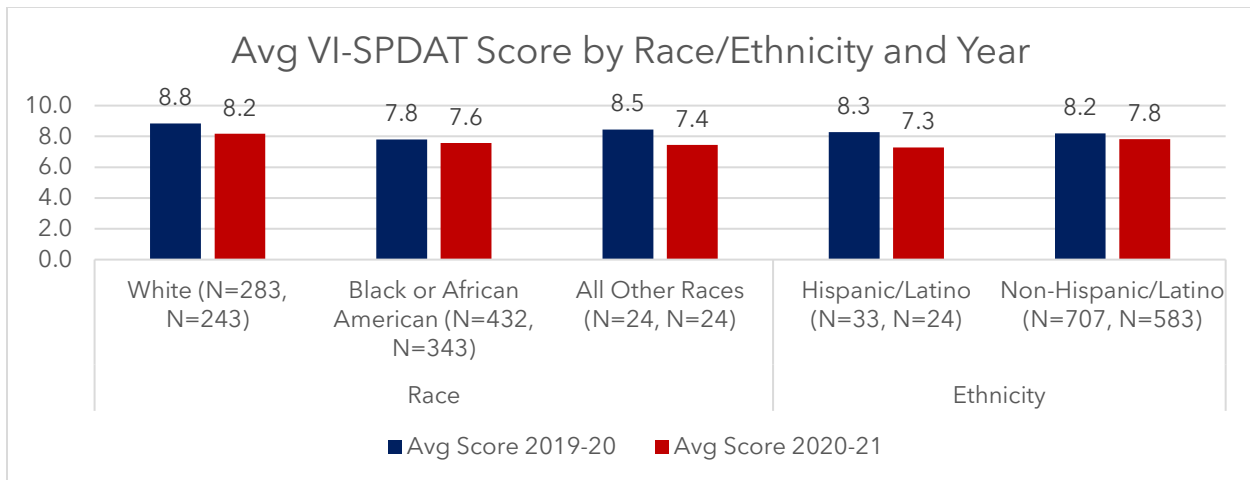
B. Coordinated Entry Assessment Scores

We next examined the average VI-SPDAT assessment scores by client race, ethnicity, and gender. Assessment scores are intended to reflect client vulnerability (though this is dependent on many factors, including the instrument used, timing, interviewer training, etc.). Importantly, assessment scores impact access to homeless services, with higher scores more likely to result in a referral for housing.

Results are presented in the graphs below. Overall, the data indicates that:

- White clients scored the highest among racial groups.
- Hispanic clients scored slightly higher than non-Hispanic clients pre-pandemic and slightly lower in the pandemic period.
- Female clients scored higher on average compared with male clients.
- Across the board, assessment scores were lower on average in the pandemic period compared with the pre-COVID period.



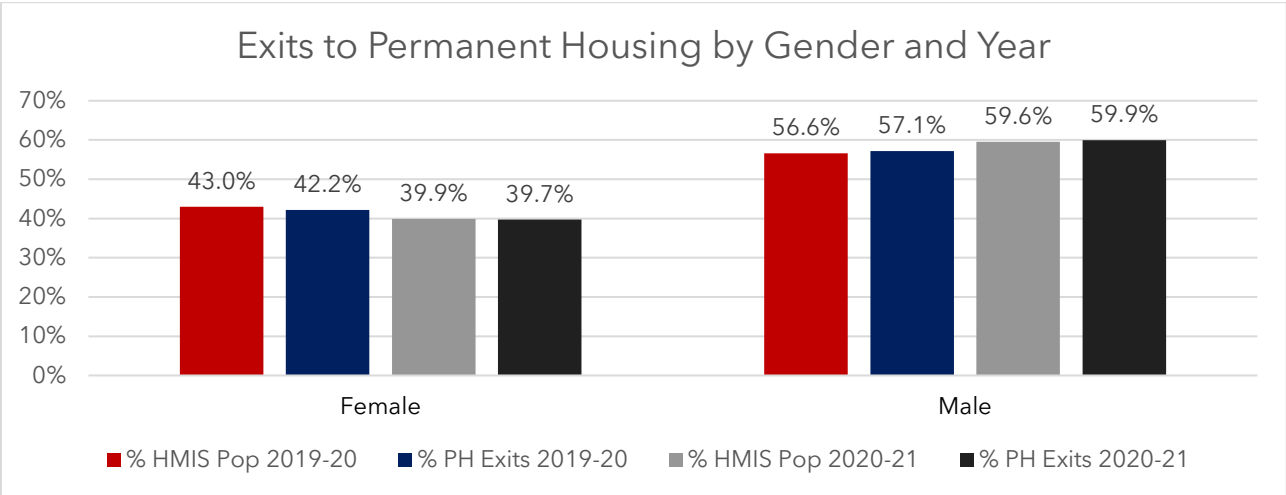
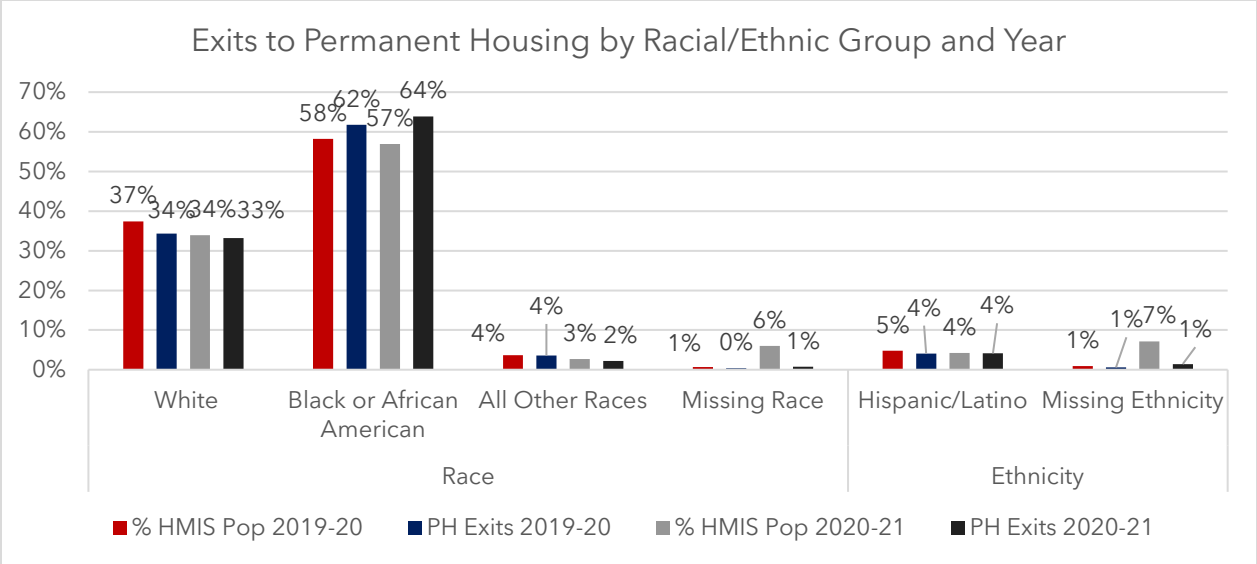


C. Outcomes of Services Provided

The final focus of this analysis centers on disparities in outcomes – specifically, exits to permanent housing, and returns to homelessness. Findings are shown in the graphs below. For permanent housing exits we note that, compared to their representation in the homeless services population:

- Black or African American clients were more likely to exit to permanent housing during both time periods, while White clients were less likely to exit to permanent housing.
- The ratio of permanent housing exits to HMIS population increased during the pandemic for Black or African American clients.

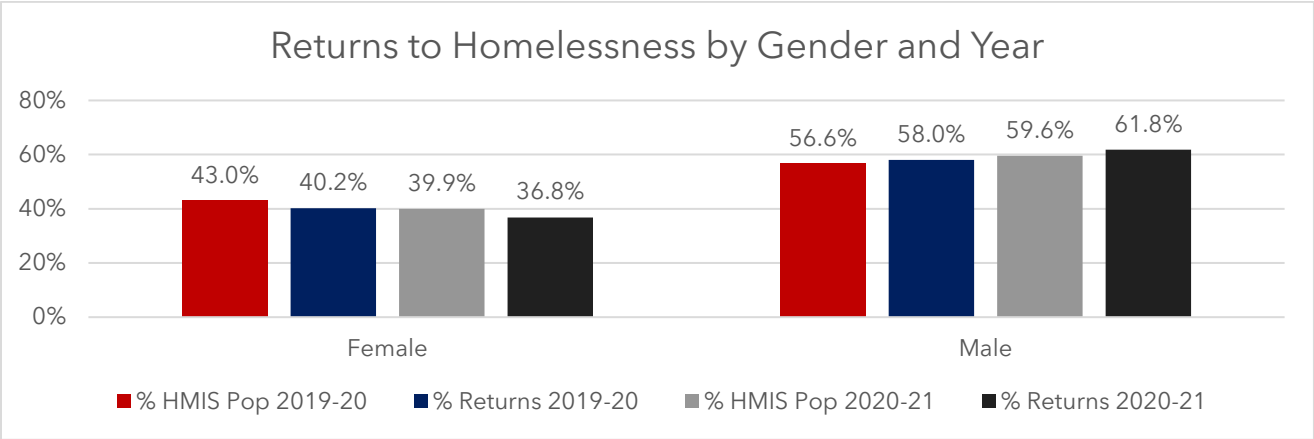
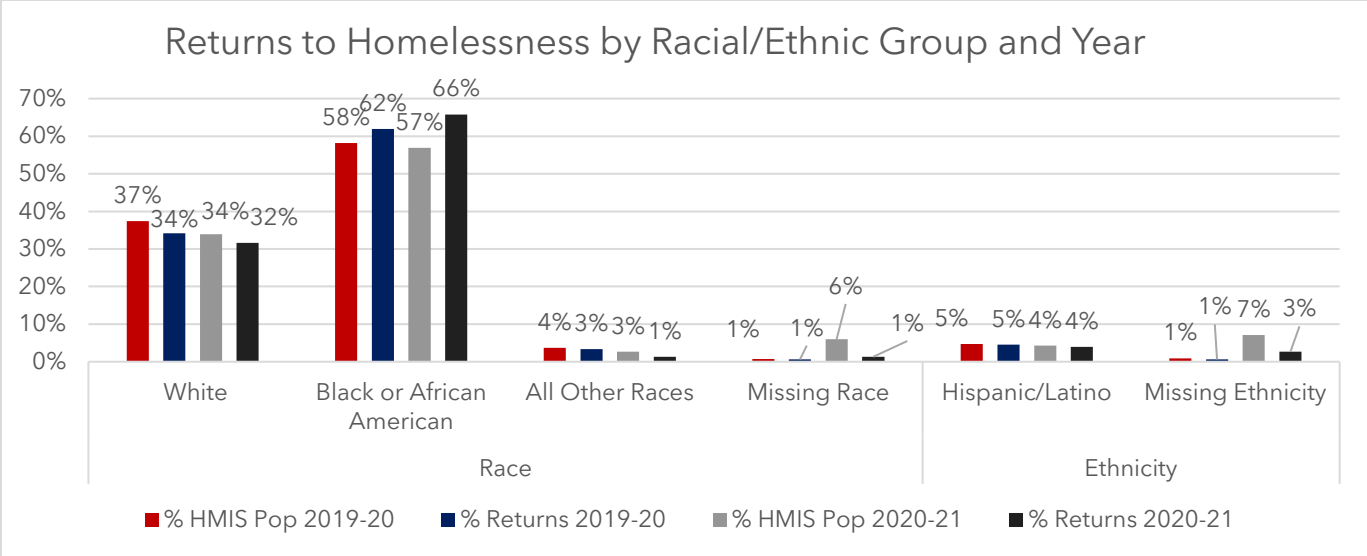




As depicted in the graphs below, returns to homelessness following an exit to permanent housing largely matched the pattern found with permanent exits. Specifically,

- Black or African American clients were overrepresented in the returns to homelessness population, while White clients were underrepresented.
- The proportion of clients returning to homelessness who were Hispanic was in line with the proportion of clients in the HMIS population who were Hispanic.
- Females were less likely to return to homelessness.
- The ratio of returns to homelessness to HMIS population increased during the pandemic for Black or African American clients.





SUMMARY

Overall, the data indicate that race, ethnicity, and gender are important factors predicting who enters the homelessness response system in NE Florida, access to scarce housing resources once engaged, and outcomes from interactions with the system. Notably, we found that Black or African American clients were:

- Overrepresented in the homelessness response system when compared to the general and poverty populations,
- Scored lower on the VI-SPDAT compared to White clients,
- More likely to exit homeless programs to permanent housing, and
- More likely to return to homelessness after a permanent housing exit.



In terms of ethnicity, we found that Hispanic clients were:

- Underrepresented in the homelessness response system when compared to the general and poverty populations.

Finally, we found that females were:

- Underrepresented in the homelessness response system when compared to the general and poverty populations,
- Scored higher on the VI-SPDAT compared to male clients, and
- Less likely to return to homelessness after a permanent housing exit.

These differences were largely consistent between the pre-COVID and pandemic time periods, though we did observe a couple of variations in findings between the two time periods. Specifically,

- The proportion of females in the homeless services population dropped during the pandemic, and;
- VI-SPDAT scores were lower, on average, for all racial, ethnic, and gender categories during the pandemic compared with pre-COVID.



APPENDIX A: DISAGGREGATED RACE DATA

		American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Multi-Racial / Other	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Missing
NE FL Population	<i>% Total Population</i>	0.2%	4.1%	24.8%	5.7%	0.1%	65.2%	--
	<i>% Pop in HH < 125% FPL</i>	0.3%	2.9%	39.1%	6.8%	0.0%	50.8%	--
HMIS Population	<i>HMIS N (2019-20)</i>	31	11	2691	107	22	1731	32
	<i>% HMIS (2019-20)</i>	0.7%	0.2%	58.2%	2.3%	0.5%	37.4%	0.7%
	<i>HMIS N (2020-21)</i>	31	25	3589	106	37	2140	380
	<i>% HMIS (2020-21)</i>	0.5%	0.4%	56.9%	1.7%	0.6%	33.9%	6.0%
VI-SPDAT	<i>VI-SPDAT N (2019-20)</i>	4	1	432	17	2	283	5
	<i>Avg VI-SPDAT (2019-20)</i>	7.0	9.0	7.8	8.9	4.5	8.8	6.2
	<i>VI-SPDAT N (2020-21)</i>	6	2	343	12	4	243	1
	<i>Avg VI-SPDAT (2020-21)</i>	6.3	4.5	7.6	7.5	8.8	8.2	5.0
PH Exits	<i>PH Exits N (2019-20)</i>	8	6	830	29	5	461	5
	<i>% PH Exits (2019-20)</i>	0.6%	0.4%	61.8%	2.2%	0.4%	34.3%	0.4%
	<i>PH Exits N (2020-21)</i>	4	3	666	13	3	346	8
	<i>% PH Exits (2020-21)</i>	0.4%	0.3%	63.9%	1.2%	0.3%	33.2%	0.8%
Returns	<i>Returns N (2019-20)</i>	2	2	205	7	0	113	2
	<i>% Returns (2019-20)</i>	0.6%	0.6%	61.9%	2.1%	0.0%	34.1%	0.6%
	<i>Returns N (2020-21)</i>	1	0	50	0	0	24	1
	<i>% Returns (2020-21)</i>	1.3%	0.0%	65.8%	0.0%	0.0%	31.6%	1.3%

