

Westchester Recovery Housing Network

Recommendation: The Westchester CoC needs to target more permanent housing resources to serving individuals and families with chronic substance abuse.

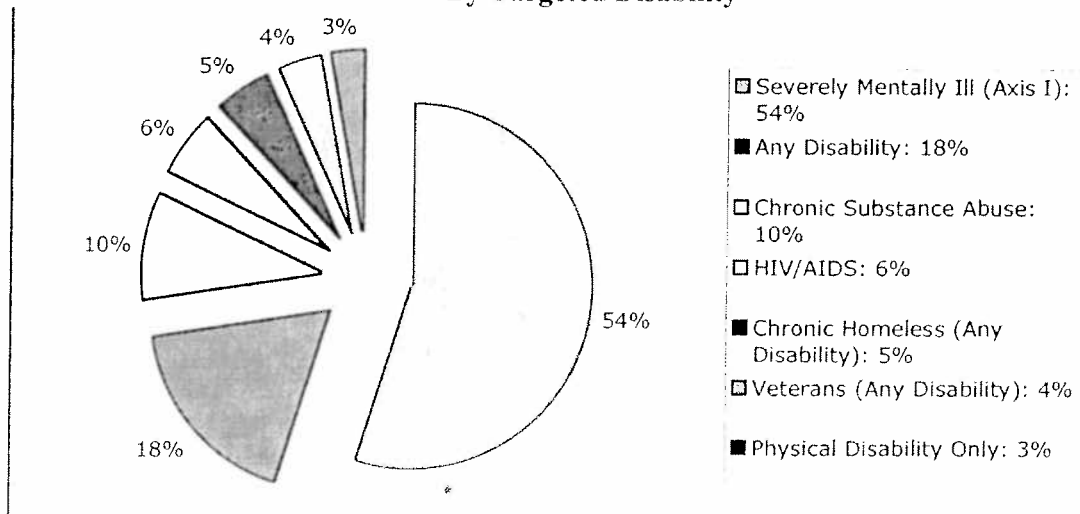
Chronic Substance Abusers are the largest disability group in our shelters.

The most recent Point-In-Time Homeless Count conducted by the Westchester County Continuum of Care on 1/31/2012 found that chronic substance abuse was the most common disability identified among homeless people in Westchester's shelters and transitional housing, with **231** chronic substance abusers identified compared to **184** people with severe mental illness. (This data is far from perfect, but it confirms shelter operators' subjective impressions that chronic substance abusers make up a high proportion of sheltered homeless adults and national data that shows that approximately 1/3 of homeless people are chronic substance abusers.)

But Chronic Substance Abusers are Under-Represented in our CoC-Funded Permanent Housing.

The Westchester CoC has traditionally focused on providing permanent housing for the severely mentally ill rather than for chronic substance abusers. The result is that the **54%** of all CoC-funded permanent housing units in Westchester are specifically targeted to the severely mentally ill, while only 10% are specifically targeted to chronic substance abusers. In fact, only **43%** of our CoC-funded permanent housing units would accept a chronic substance abuser with no serious (Axis I) mental health diagnosis.

**Allocation of Total Westchester CoC-Funded Permanent Housing Units
By Targeted Disability**



About the RHN: The Recovery Housing Network is a group of local providers working to engage and house chemically dependent homeless adults in early stages of recovery, including the chronically homeless. The group provides a forum to share ideas and resources, and helps forge a coherent county-wide continuum of housing services that effectively serves this high-need population.