



**RACIAL EQUITY  
IN HONOLULU COUNTY  
HOMELESSNESS SERVICES**

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REPORT PREPARED FOR PARTNERS IN CARE, O'AHU'S CONTINUUM OF CARE  
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The following report examines racial equity in the homeless population, homelessness service utilization, and housing service outcomes for the Honolulu County Continuum of Care (CoC), Partners in Care (PIC), for the time period July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019.

Specific research questions included:

- Do racial disparities exist in the homelessness population?
- Do racial disparities exist in service provision?
- Do racial disparities exist in housing services outcomes?

To answer these questions, researchers from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa examined U.S. Census data, 2019 Point-in-Time Count data, and data from the CoC’s Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS). *Preliminary* findings are presented in this report.

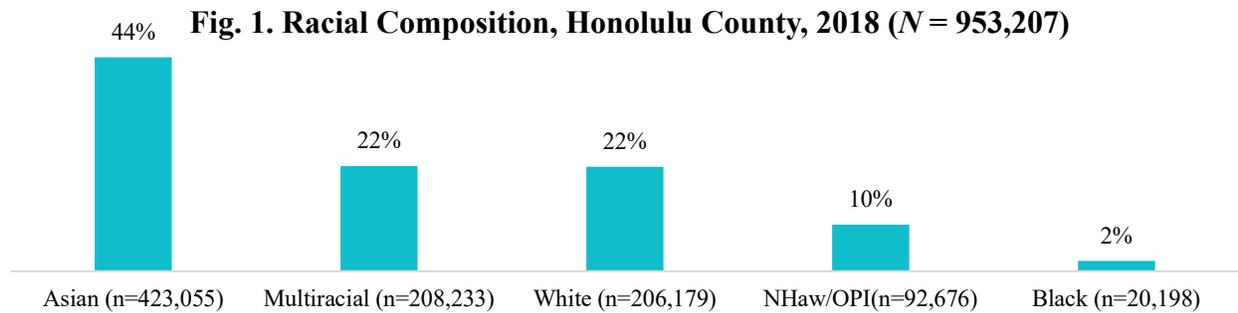
Notably, this report relies on U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) categorizations of race, but this categorization may obscure existing disparities. Additionally, findings presented here should be considered while keeping in mind the significant limitations discussed in Section IV of this report.

## I. Racial Disparities in the Homeless Population

In order to understand disparities in the homeless population, researchers compared the racial composition of Honolulu County to the racial composition of the 2019 Point-in-Time Count for the same area, using HUD-defined mutually exclusive racial categories.

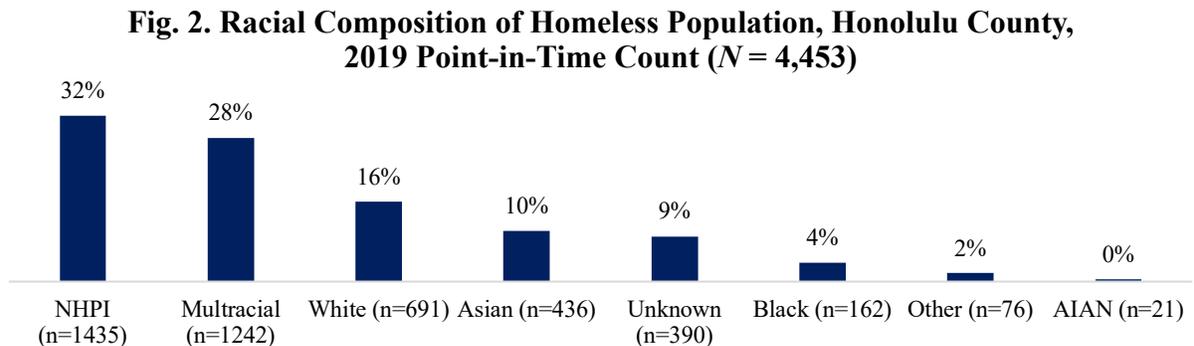
### Racial Composition of Honolulu County

While no racial group has a majority in Honolulu County using this categorization, Asians made up the largest percentage in 2018, comprising 44% ( $n = 423,055$ ) of the total population in 2018 ( $N = 953,207$ ).<sup>1</sup> Multiracial individuals and Whites each comprised 22% of the total population, with Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders (NHPI) and Blacks/African-Americans (Black), comprising 10% and 2%, respectively (see Fig. 1).<sup>2</sup>



### Racial Composition of Homeless Population in Honolulu County

According to the 2019 Point-in-Time Count, NHPIs comprised the largest percentage of the homeless population (32%), followed by multiracial (28%), White (16%), Asian (10%), Black (4%), “other” (2%), and American Indian/Alaskan Native (AIAN) individuals (<1%; see Fig. 2).<sup>3</sup>



<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census. (2018). Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States, States, and Counties: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2018, 2018 Population Estimates. Retrieved from: [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=PEP\\_2018\\_PEPSR6H&prodType=table](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=PEP_2018_PEPSR6H&prodType=table)

<sup>2</sup> Note: American Indians/Alaskan Natives <1%

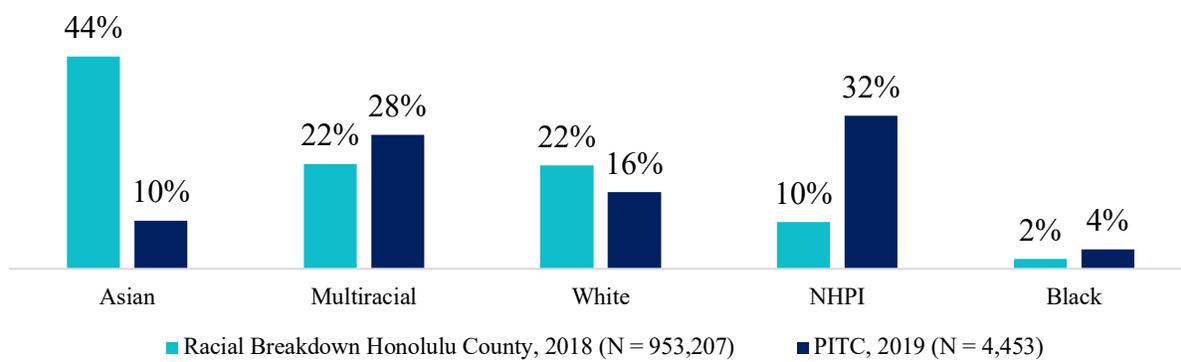
<sup>3</sup> Partners in Care (2019). The Oahu 2019 Point in Time Count Comprehensive Report. Retrieved from [https://www.partnersincareoahu.org/sites/default/files/PIC%202019%20Oahu%20PIT%20Count%20Report%20-%20FINAL\\_0.pdf](https://www.partnersincareoahu.org/sites/default/files/PIC%202019%20Oahu%20PIT%20Count%20Report%20-%20FINAL_0.pdf)

## Racial Disparities in the Homeless Population

Compared to the general population of Honolulu County, NHPIs, multiracial individuals, and Blacks were all overrepresented in the homeless population—NHPIs, substantially. While NHPIs comprised 10% of the general Honolulu County population, they comprised 32% of the homeless population (see Fig. 3).

On the other hand, Asians and Whites are underrepresented in the homeless population—Asians substantially. While the general population in Honolulu County is 44% Asian, only 10% of the homeless population in Honolulu County identifies as Asian.

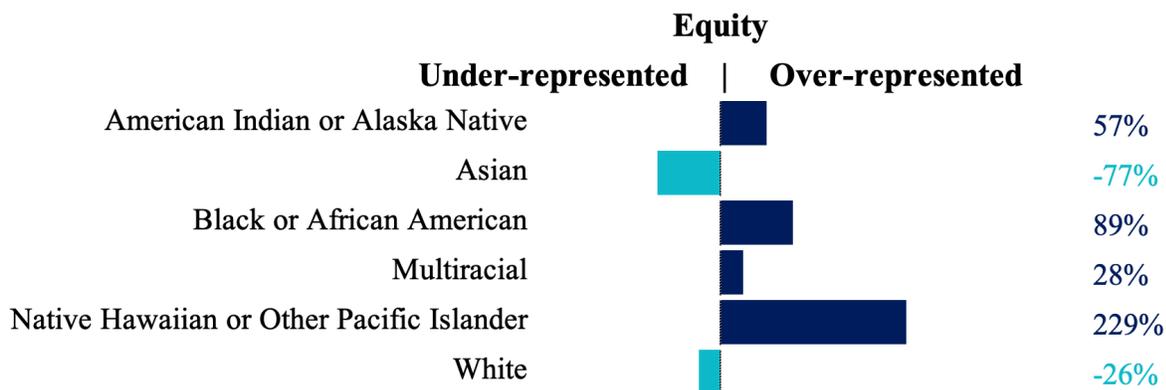
**Fig. 3. Comparison of Racial Composition of Honolulu County, 2018, and Homeless Population, 2019\*\***



\*\*American Indian/Alaskan Native <1%

Comparing the percentage of each the racial groups in Honolulu County to the percentage of each of the racial groups included in the 2019 Point-in-Time Count, NHPIs represented 2.29 times (or 229%) greater proportion of the Point-in-Time Count compared to general population of Honolulu County. Conversely, Asians were 0.23 times (or 77%) less likely to represent individuals in the Point-in-Time Count compared to the general population (see Fig. 4).

**Fig. 4. Racial Equity in Homeless Population Compared to Overall Population in Honolulu County**



## II. Racial Disparities in Housing Services

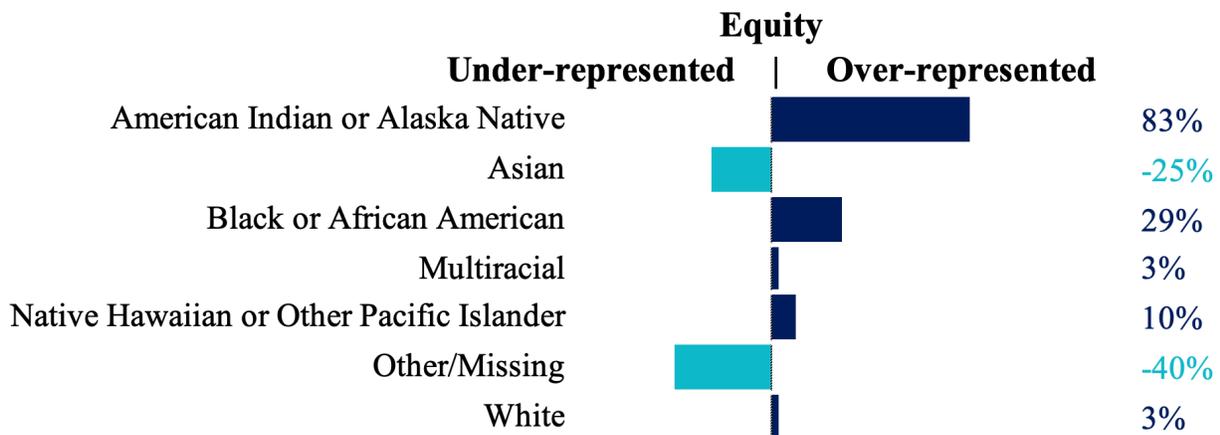
To determine if racial disparities exist in service provision, utilization, and outcomes, researchers examined entries in PIC’s HMIS. Between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019, a total of 16,527 people received some form of housing services or assessment in Honolulu County, resulting in 28,644 total service usage entries in HMIS.<sup>4</sup> Of the 28,644 entries, 35% were NHPI clients ( $n = 10,098$ ), followed by 29% multiracial ( $n = 8,242$ ), 17% White ( $n = 4,717$ ), 8% Asian ( $n = 2,159$ ), 5% Black ( $n = 1,475$ ), 1% Other ( $n = 310$ ), and <1% AIAN ( $n = 233$ ). Notably, 6% of entries were missing race data ( $n = 1,410$ ; see Fig. 5).

**Fig. 5. Comparison of Racial Composition of Homeless Population with HMIS Entries, July 1, 2018—June 30, 2019**

	<b>% of Homeless Population</b>	<b>% of HMIS Entries</b>
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0%	1%
Asian	10%	8%
Black or African American	4%	5%
Multiracial	28%	29%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	32%	35%
Other/Missing	10%	6%
White	16%	16%

To examine racial equity in service provision, researchers compared the percentage of each the racial groups in the homeless population to the percentage of each of the racial groups in HMIS entries. AIAN and Black clients represented a greater proportion of HMIS entries compared to the overall homeless population, while Asian clients were under-represented in HMIS entries. White, multiracial, and NHPI clients—the groups that comprise the largest percentage of the homeless population—were close to equity (see Fig. 6).

**Fig. 6. Racial Equity in HMIS Entries Compared to Overall Homeless Population, July 1, 2018—June 30, 2019**



<sup>4</sup> Individuals can receive multiple services; thus, multiple entries per person can exist.

## Types of Services

Next, researchers examined racial equity in the types of services utilized between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019. For all racial categories, the most common HMIS entry was assessment (e.g., VI-SPDAT assessments), comprising between 30–34% of all HMIS entries in each racial category. Zooming in on housing services ( $n = 18,832$ ), the most common service for all racial categories included emergency shelters, comprising 21–39% of housing services for each racial category (see Fig. 7).

**Fig. 7. Percentage of Each Race by Service**

	Emergency Shelter	Housing Prevention	Outreach	Permanent Housing	Rapid Rehousing	Services Only	Transitional Housing
American Indian or Alaskan Native	34%	11%	13%	10%	20%	1%	11%
Asian	30%	15%	21%	12%	14%	0%	8%
Black	32%	13%	13%	6%	21%	1%	14%
Multiracial	21%	20%	19%	9%	19%	1%	11%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	23%	21%	19%	4%	19%	1%	14%
Other	39%	16%	12%	3%	24%	0%	6%
White	37%	7%	20%	12%	13%	1%	11%

Although emergency shelters were the most commonly used service for all racial categories, they were used by a smaller percentage of NHPI and multiracial clients, suggesting that these racial categories may be less likely to use shelters than other racial groups. Also, NHPI and multiracial individuals were almost just as likely to use housing prevention, outreach, and rapid rehousing services as they were to use emergency shelters.

Looking at the racial composition of each type of service, NHPI, multiracial, and White clients, together, made up the majority of all service types. However, important differences emerged between these groups.

NHPI and multiracial clients made up larger percentages of housing prevention, rapid rehousing, and transitional housing services than Whites; while Whites and multiracial clients made up larger percentages of permanent housing than NHPIs (see Fig. 8).

**Fig. 8. Racial Composition by Program Type**

	% of Assessments	% of ES Services	% of HP Services	% of Outreach Services	% of PH Services	% of RRR Services	% of Services Only	% of TH Services	% of HMIS Total Services
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Asian	7%	9%	7%	8%	12%	6%	4%	5%	8%
Black or African American	5%	6%	4%	3%	4%	6%	4%	6%	5%
Multiracial	25%	25%	36%	30%	35%	33%	25%	29%	29%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	32%	33%	45%	35%	20%	41%	33%	42%	35%
Other	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Missing	12%	0%	0%	5%	1%	0%	2%	2%	5%
White	17%	24%	7%	17%	26%	12%	30%	15%	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Examining racial equity by each type of service, researchers compared the percentage of each the racial groups in HMIS service entries to the percentage of each of the racial groups who received each type of service, including outreach, emergency shelters, homeless prevention, rapid rehousing, transitional housing, and permanent housing services.

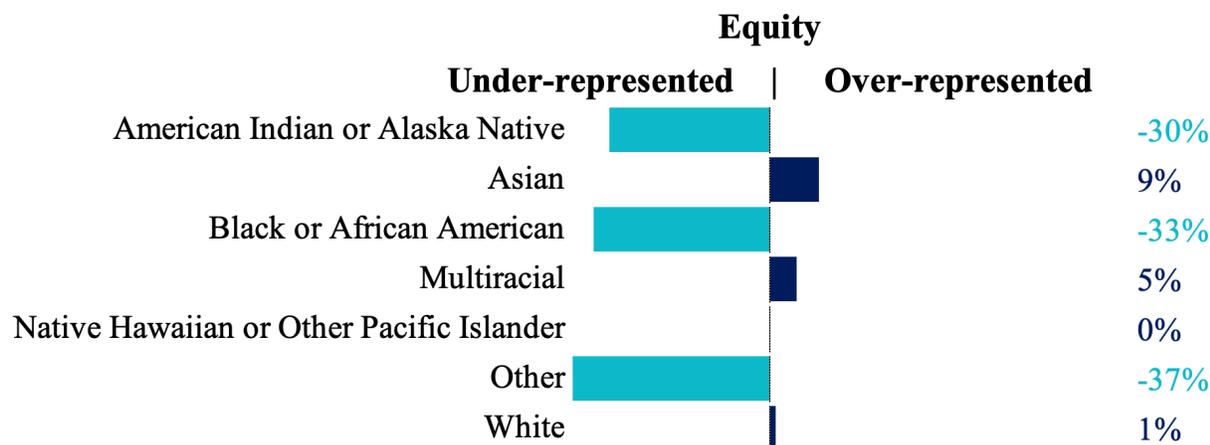
**Outreach services.** Asians, multiracial clients, NPHIs, and Whites were close to equity in outreach service entries (see Figs. 9 and 10). However, AIANs, Blacks, and “other” races were under-represented.

**Fig. 9. Racial Composition of Outreach Services Compared to HMIS Entries**

	% of HMIS Services	% of Outreach Services
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.8%	0.6%
Asian	7.5%	8.2%
Black or African American	5%	3%
Multiracial	29%	30%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	35%	35%
Other	1.1%	0.7%
White	16%	17%

Black clients were 33% less likely to represent individuals receiving outreach services compared to overall HMIS services. Clients identifying as “other” races and AIAN were also under-represented, making up 0.68% and 0.57% of outreach services and 1.08% and 0.81% of the total HMIS services entries, respectively.

**Fig. 10. Racial Equity in Outreach Services**



While the racial groups that make up the largest percentage of HMIS entries and the homeless population are at equity for outreach services, Blacks, “other” races, and AIANs are less likely to be represented in individuals receiving outreach services compared to their representation in overall HMIS services.

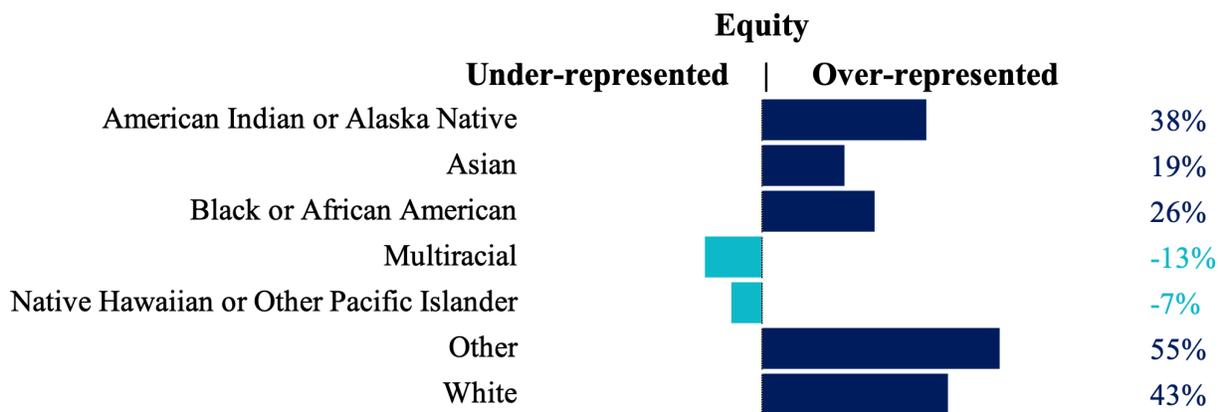
**Emergency shelters.** NHPI and multiracial clients were under-represented in emergency shelter services. NHPI and multiracial individuals were respectively 7% and 13% less likely to represent individuals in emergency shelter services compared to their representation in overall HMIS services. Making up 35% and 29% of HMIS total services, they made up 33% and 25%, respectively, of emergency shelter usage (see Fig. 11).

**Fig. 11. Racial Composition of Emergency Shelter Services Compared to HMIS Entries**

	<b>% of HMIS Services</b>	<b>% of Emer. Shelter Services</b>
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.8%	1%
Asian	8%	9%
Black or African American	5.1%	6%
Multiracial	29%	25%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	35%	33%
Other	1.1%	2%
White	16%	24%

All other racial categories were over-represented in emergency shelter service usage (see Fig. 12). For example, Whites were 43% more likely to represent individuals receiving emergency shelter services, compared to overall HMIS services, comprising 24% of emergency shelter usage compared to 16% of all HMIS service entries.

**Fig. 12. Racial Equity in Emergency Shelter Services**



These findings suggest that all other racial groups—Whites, in particular—were more likely to represent individuals receiving emergency shelter services when compared to overall HMIS services than NHPIs and multiracial clients.

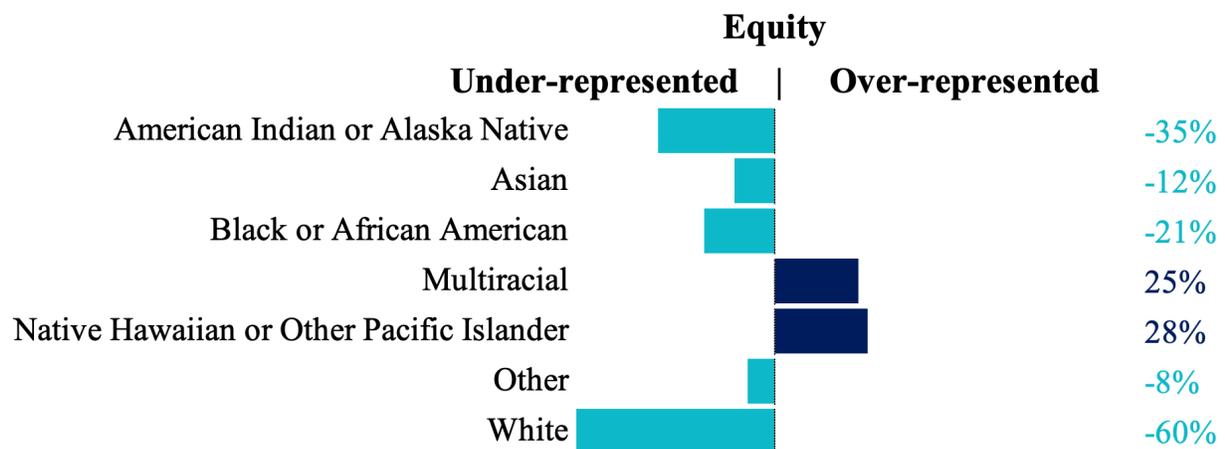
**Housing prevention services.** In contrast to emergency shelter usage, multiracial and NHPI clients were over-represented in homeless prevention services, while all other racial categories were under-represented—whites, substantially. White clients were 60% less likely to represent individuals receiving housing prevention services compared to the overall HMIS service entries, comprising only 7% of homeless prevention services compared to 16% of HMIS service entries (see Fig. 13). Asians, AIANs, Blacks, and other races are also under-represented (see Fig. 14).

**Fig. 13. Racial Composition of Homeless Prevention Services Compared to HMIS Entries**

	% of HMIS Services	% of Homeless Prevention Services
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.81%	0.53%
Asian	8%	7%
Black or African American	5.15%	4.06%
Multiracial	29%	36%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	35%	45%
Other	1.08%	0.99%
White	16%	7%

NHPI and multiracial clients were over-represented in homeless prevention services, with NHPI and multiracial clients comprising 45% and 36% of homeless prevention services and 35% and 29% of HMIS service entries, respectively.

**Fig. 14. Racial Equity in Homeless Prevention Services**



These findings suggest that NHPIs and multiracial clients were 28% and 25%, respectively, more likely to represent individuals receiving homeless prevention services compared to HMIS service entries.

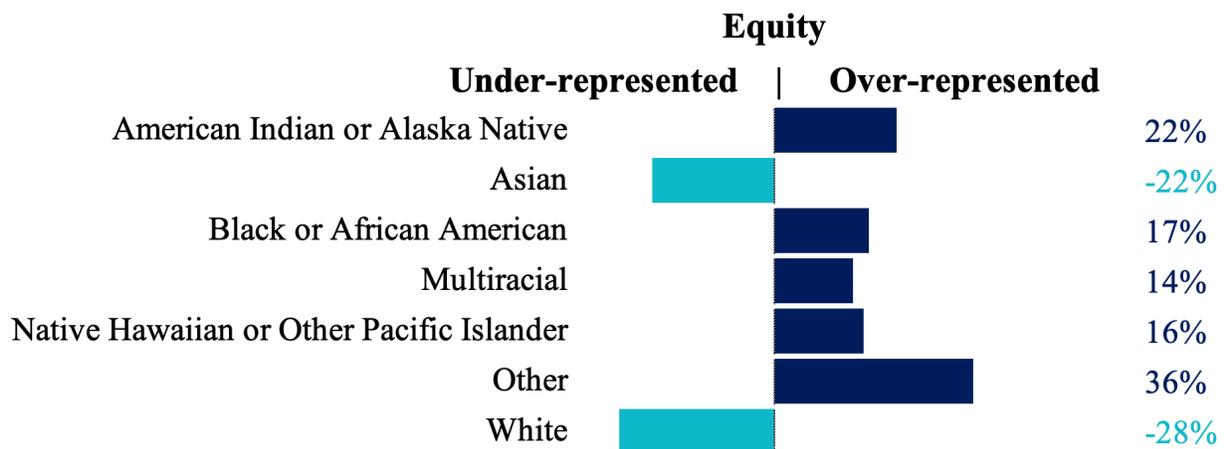
**Rapid rehousing services.** Similarly, NHPs and multiracial clients were over-represented in rapid rehousing services. NHPs comprised 41% of rapid rehousing services compared to 35% of HMIS service entries and multiracial clients comprised 33% compared to 39% (see Fig. 15).

**Fig. 15. Racial Composition of Rapid Rehousing Services Compared to HMIS Entries**

	<b>% of HMIS Services</b>	<b>% of RRH Services</b>
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.81%	0.99%
Asian	8%	6%
Black or African American	5.15%	6.03%
Multiracial	29%	33%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	35%	41%
Other	1.08%	1.48%
White	16%	12%

Whites were under-represented in rapid rehousing services, comprising 12% of rapid rehousing services compared to 16% of all HMIS service entries. Asians were under-represented as well, comprising 6% of rapid rehousing services compared to 8% of all HMIS service entries. All other groups were over-represented in rapid rehousing services (see Fig. 16).

**Fig. 16. Racial Equity in Rapid Rehousing Services**



Thus, Whites and Asians were 28% and 22%, respectively, less likely to receive rapid rehousing services compared to HMIS service entries, while other racial groups were more likely to receive these services compared to their representation in the overall HMIS service entries.

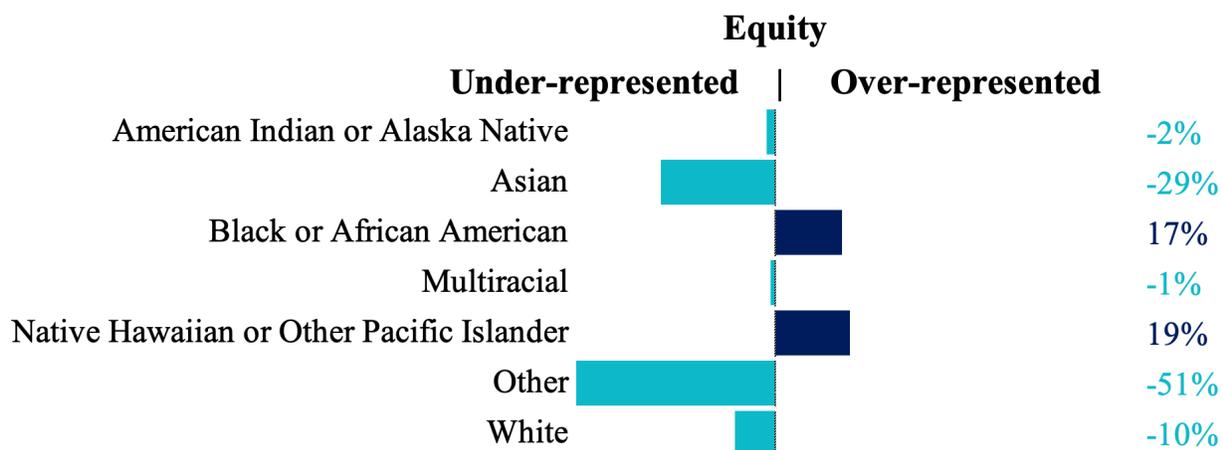
**Transitional housing services.** Blacks and NHPIs were the only racial groups over-represented in transitional housing services. NHPIs were 19% more likely to represent individuals receiving transitional housing services compared to their representation in HMIS service entries, comprising 42% of transitional housing services but only 35% of HMIS service entries; Black clients were 17% more likely to represent individuals receiving transitional housing services compared to their representation in HMIS service entries, comprising 6% of transitional housing services and 5% of HMIS service entries (see Figs. 17 and 18).

**Fig. 17. Racial Composition of Transitional Housing Services Compared to HMIS Entries**

	<b>% of HMIS Services</b>	<b>% of Trans. Housing Services</b>
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.81%	0.80%
Asian	8%	5%
Black or African American	5.15%	6.03%
Multiracial	28.77%	28.53%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	35%	42%
Other	1.08%	0.53%
White	16%	15%

While all Asians and individuals identifying as “other” races were under-represented, multiracial clients, AIAN, and Whites were close to equity. Asians were 29% less likely to represent individuals receiving transitional housing services compared to their representation in HMIS service entries, comprising 5% of transitional housing services compared to 8% of HMIS services.

**Fig. 18. Racial Equity in Transitional Housing Services**



Asians and individuals identifying as “other” races were less likely to represent individuals receiving transitional housing services compared to HMIS entries, while NHPIs and Blacks were more likely to be over-represented in these services compared to overall HMIS services.

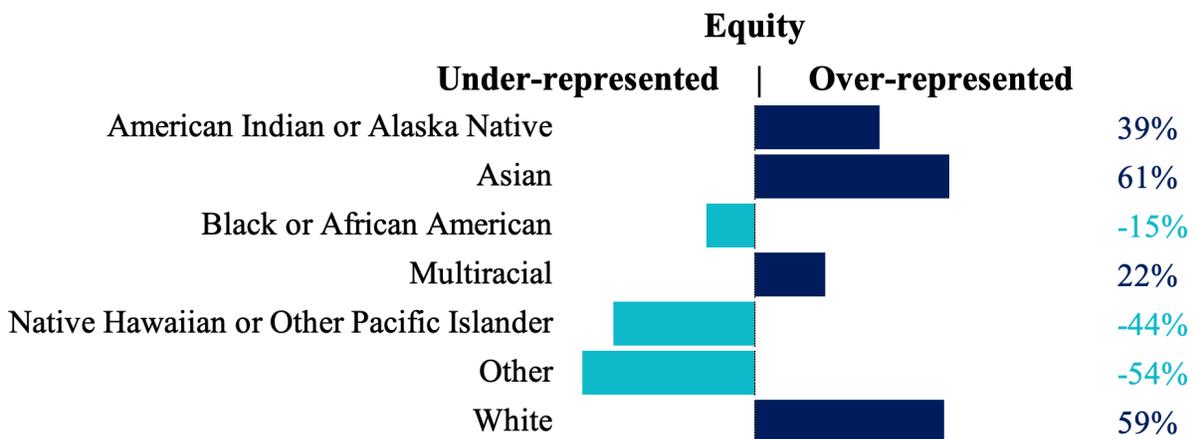
**Permanent housing.** Whites, Asians, AIANs, and multiracial clients were over-represented—Whites and Asians substantially—in permanent housing services. While Whites and Asians comprised 16% and 8% of HMIS service entries, they comprised 26% and 12% of permanent housing services, respectively (see Fig. 19). In fact, Whites were 59% more likely to represent individuals receiving permanent housing services compared to HMIS services, and Asians were 61% more likely (see Fig. 20).

**Fig. 19. Racial Composition of Permanent Housing Services Compared to HMIS Entries**

	% of HMIS Services	% of Perm. Housing Services
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.81%	1.13%
Asian	8%	12%
Black or African American	5.15%	4.39%
Multiracial	29%	35%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	35%	20%
Other	1.08%	0.50%
White	16%	26%

On the other hand, Blacks, NHPI, and “Other” races were under-represented in permanent housing services—NHPIs substantially. NHPI clients were 44% less likely to represent individuals receiving permanent housing services compared to overall HMIS services, comprising 35% of all HMIS services but only 20% of permanent housing services.

**Fig. 20. Racial Equity in Permanent Housing Services**



Inequities existed in permanent housing services, with NHPI and “other” races being less likely to receive these services, and Whites and Asians being more likely to receive permanent housing when compared to overall HMIS services.

### III. Racial Disparities in Housing Outcomes

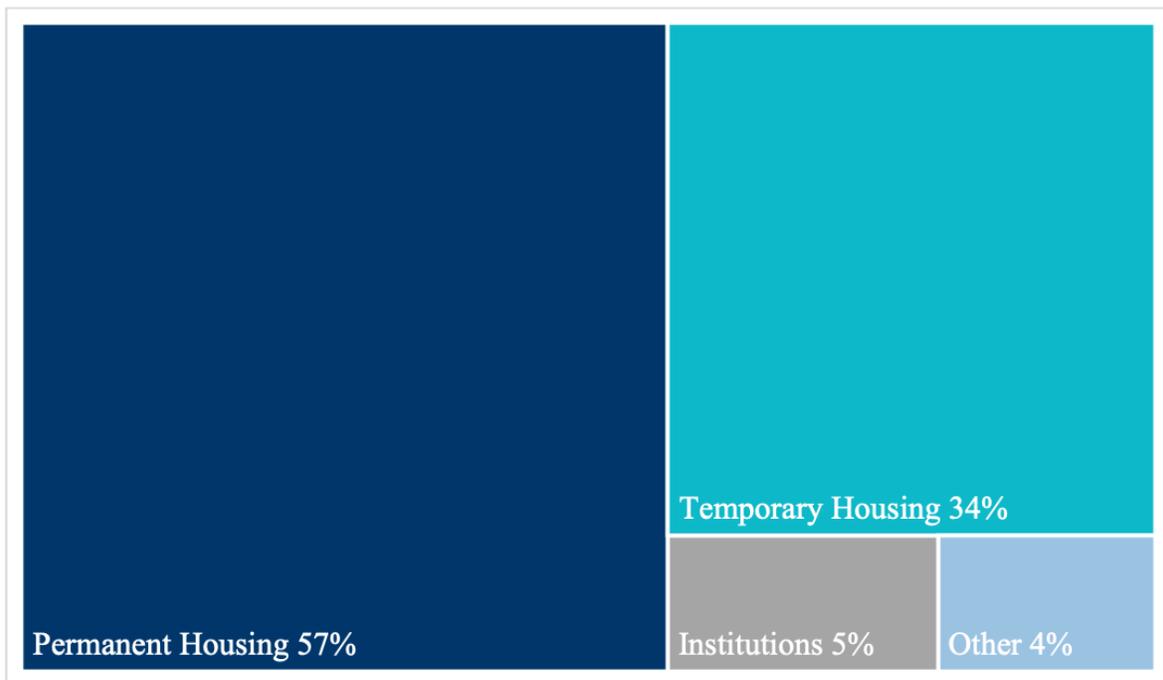
Housing outcomes were assessed using recorded client exit destinations in HMIS. Of the 28,644 service entries for the year of July 1, 2018—June 30, 2019, 6,117 destinations were recorded. Exit information was not required for 15,722 entries (e.g., outreach services and assessment entries), leaving 12,922 entries requiring exit destination information. Of these entries, 53% had missing exit information ( $n = 6,805$ ). Thus, the following assessment relies on the 6,117 entries for which exit data was available.

#### Exit Destinations

This analysis relies on HMIS categorizations of exit destinations—permanent destinations, temporary destinations, institutions, and “other” destinations. Permanent destinations include both subsidized and unsubsidized housing and staying or living with friends or family. Temporary destinations include emergency shelters, places not meant for habitation, transitional housing and staying or living with friends or family temporarily. Institutional destinations refer to jails, prisons, hospitals, and psychiatric facilities. “Other” destinations include exits of individuals who are deceased and who exited to a safe house.

The majority of recorded exits were to permanent destinations (57%;  $n = 3,480$ ); Thirty-four percent of exits ( $n = 2,108$ ) were to temporary destinations, A small percentage of exits were to institutions and to “other” destinations (see Fig. 21).

**Fig. 21. HMIS Exits, July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019 ( $n = 6,117$ )**



## Racial Disparities in Exit Destinations

Overall NHPI, multiracial clients, and White clients comprised the largest percentage of HMIS exits—33%, 26%, and 22%, respectively (see Fig. 22).

The majority of each racial group, except Whites, exited to permanent destinations (54%–63%). Forty-five percent of White clients' exits were to permanent housing ( $n = 602$ ) and 43% were to temporary destinations ( $n = 577$ ).

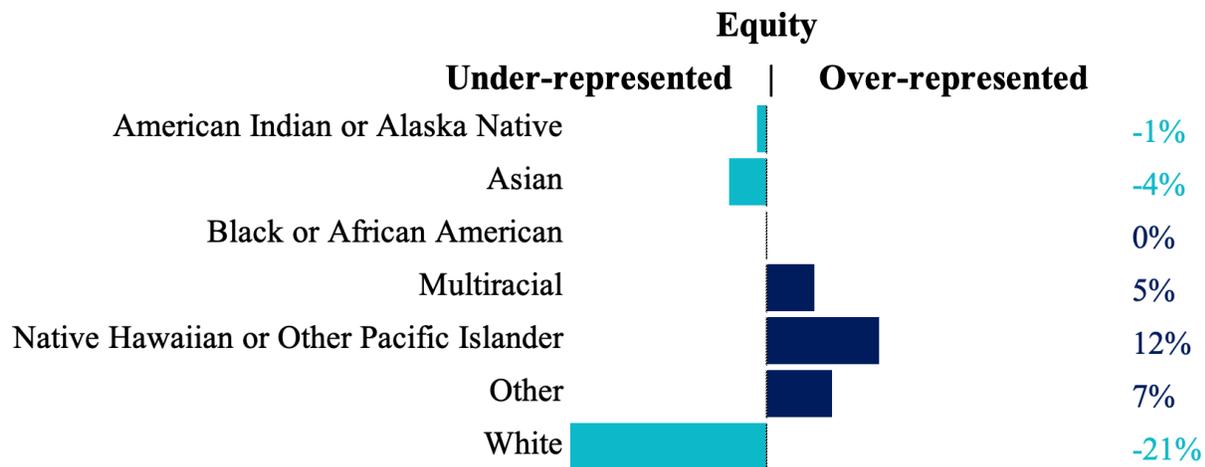
**Fig. 22. Racial Composition of Exits by Destination Type**

	<b>Perm. Dest.</b>	<b>Temp. Dest.</b>	<b>Instit.</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>HMIS Exits</b>
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Asian	8%	9%	10%	6%	9%
Black or African American	8%	7%	9%	7%	8%
Missing	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Multiracial	27%	24%	19%	29%	26%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	37%	28%	23%	30%	33%
Other	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%
White	17%	27%	36%	26%	22%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>Perm. Dest.</b>	<b>Temp. Dest.</b>	<b>Instit.</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>HMIS Exits</b>
American Indian or Alaska Native	45	29	4	2	80
Asian	287	196	29	15	527
Black or African American	263	158	25	16	462
Missing	9	9	1	1	20
Multiracial	942	511	55	72	1580
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1274	595	64	75	2008
Other	58	33	2	2	95
White	602	577	103	63	1345
<b>Total</b>	<b>3480</b>	<b>2108</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>6117</b>

Researchers investigated racial equity for each destination type by comparing the percentage of HMIS exits by racial group to that group's percentage of each exit type.

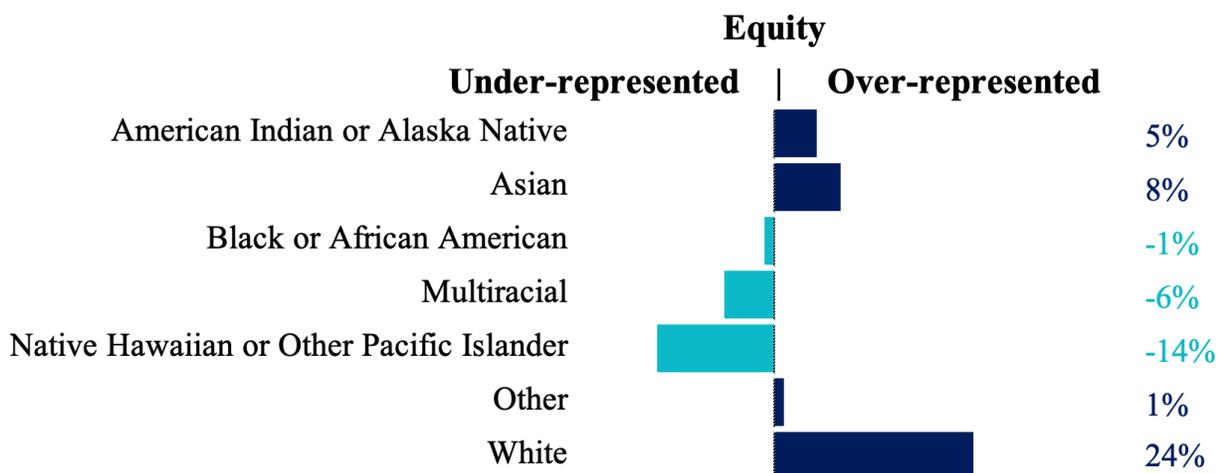
**Permanent destinations.** Multiracial clients, clients who identified as “other”, Asians, and AIANs were close to equity when comparing their composition of exits to permanent destinations to overall HMIS exit destinations (see Fig. 23). NHPIs were over-represented in permanent destination exits, being 12% more likely to represent individuals who exit to permanent destinations compared to overall exit destinations. On the other hand, Whites were under-represented, being 21% less likely to represent individuals in permanent destination exits compared to overall exit destinations.

**Fig. 23. Racial Equity in Exits to Permanent Destinations Compared to % of HMIS Exits**



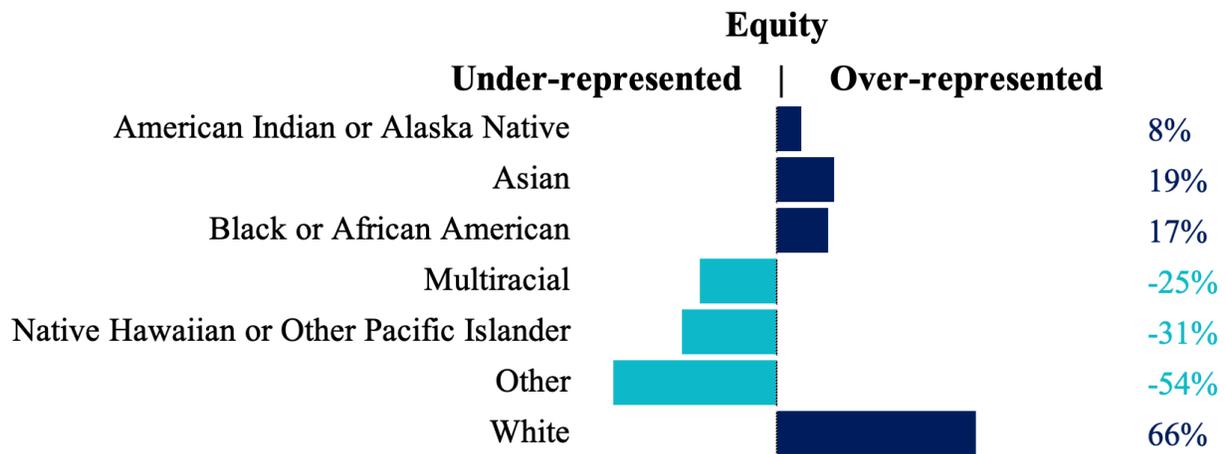
**Temporary destinations.** While under-represented in permanent housing exits, Whites were over-represented in exits to temporary destinations, comprising 27% of exits to temporary housing compared to 22% of HMIS total exits (see Fig. 24). Whites were 24% more likely to represent exits to temporary destinations compared to all exits. Contrastingly, NHPIs were 14% less likely to represent exits to temporary destinations compared to overall exits. All other racial groups were close to equity on exits to temporary destinations.

**Fig. 24. Racial Equity in Exits to Temporary Destinations Compared to % of HMIS Exits**



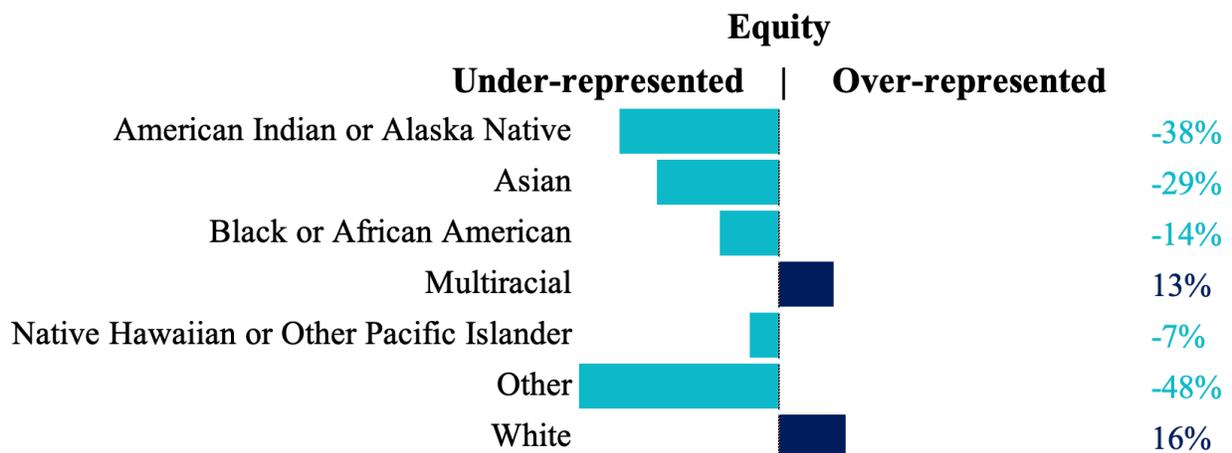
**Institutions.** Whites, Asians, and Blacks were all over-represented in exits to institutions—Whites substantially (see Fig. 25). Whites comprised 36% of exits to institutions compared to 22% of all HMIS exits and were 66% more likely to represent exits to institutions compared to overall exit destinations. NHPI, multiracial, and “other” race individuals were under-represented in exits to institutions. NHPI clients were 31% less likely to represent exits to institutions compared to HMIS exits. Similarly, multiracial clients were 25% less likely to represent exits to institutions compared to overall HMIS exits.

**Fig. 25. Racial Equity in Exits to Institutions Compared to % of HMIS Exits**



**Other destinations.** The only racial groups over-represented in exits to “other” destinations included White and multiracial individuals (see Fig. 26). They comprised 26% and 29% of exits to “other” destinations compared to comprising 22% and 26% of total HMIS exits. NHPIs were close to equity.

**Fig. 26. Racial Equity in Exits to Other Destinations Compared to % of HMIS Exits**

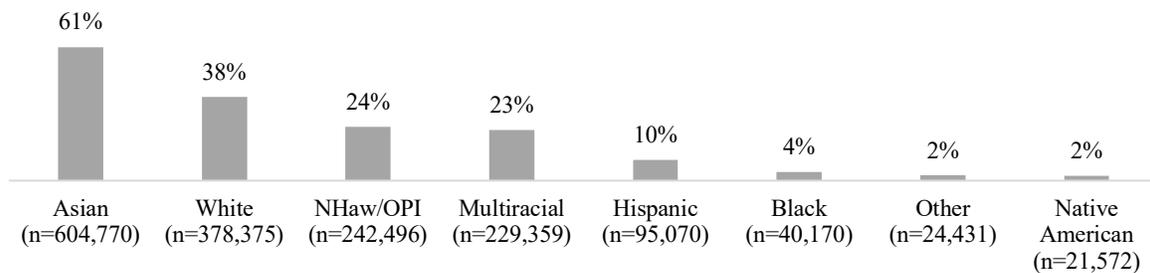


Overall, while equity existed in outcomes for some groups, important differences emerged. Whites were more disproportionately represented in exits to temporary destinations, while NHPIs were disproportionately represented in exits to permanent destinations.

## IV. Limitations

Findings reported here are preliminary and come with important caveats. Notably, Honolulu County is unique in the number of multiracial, multiethnic, and multicultural people in its population compared to the rest of the nation. Therefore, HUD racial categories that collapse various races into one category may obscure important differences. For example, differences likely exist between groups within these racial categories (e.g., Micronesians and Native Hawaiians may have different experiences with homelessness services despite being categorized as NHPI). Large categories obscure these differences. Additionally, the numbers of certain racial categories, particularly Asian and NHPIs, are underestimated. When considering Native Hawaiians with multiple racial backgrounds, the percentage of Native Hawaiians rises, with 2017 estimates showing 24% of the population have Native Hawaiian ancestry (see Fig. 27).<sup>5</sup> The percentage of Asians also increases to a majority of 61% when considering one or more races. Thus, the number of NHPIs who are experiencing homelessness is likely higher when considering race in combination.

**Fig. 27. Racial/Ethnic Composition, Honolulu County, 2017 (N = 990,060)\*\***



Additional limitations include the fact that the data available for this investigation does not capture other outcomes of interest. Additionally, because many programs do not require exit interviews, exit destination may not be the best outcome to measure. Thus, additional variables should be considered when accessing racial equity in program outcomes in the future, including health and wellness, financial status, and social support indicators.

Data quality is another concern. The problems of using exit destination as the only outcome is compounded by the fact that more than half of the data on housing exit destinations was missing. Additionally, HMIS duplicates and mis-categorization of race was common in the database.

Due to the nature of the data and the type of analysis performed, researchers were unable to identify causes of these disparities conclusively. For example, it is unclear if racial disparities exist in service utilization because different racial groups are not being offered certain services or because they are not interested in using them. Future research should investigate this question.

Finally, due to the small numbers of individuals in certain racial groups, racial equity percentages are more sensitive to small differences in numbers. Results should be interpreted with this fact in mind.

<sup>5</sup> American Community Survey. (2017). 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Retrieved from: <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>

## V. Conclusions

With these caveats in mind, researchers made the following conclusions regarding the original research questions:

### **Do racial disparities exist in the homelessness population?**

- Yes; NHPIs, multiracial individuals, and Blacks are overrepresented in the homeless population, while Whites and Asians are underrepresented compared to the general population of Honolulu County.

### **Do racial disparities exist in service provision?**

- Yes, with qualifications. In terms of *overall* HMIS service usage, there do not appear to be any significant racial disparities. However, racial disparities exist in the type of services used and outcomes associated with those services.
- CoC service providers appeared to be offering outreach services to the groups most represented in the homelessness population and the HMIS. However, Blacks, AIANs, and “other” races were less likely to be represented in individuals receiving outreach services compared to their representation in overall HMIS services.
- NHPI and multiracial clients were less likely to be represented in individuals receiving emergency shelter services and were more likely to be represented in individuals using RRH and homelessness prevention when compared to their representation in overall HMIS services.
- Whites and Asians were more likely to be represented in individuals receiving emergency shelter services and less likely to be represented in individuals receiving rapid rehousing and transitional housing services compared to their representation in overall HMIS services
- Whites and Asians were under-represented in the homeless population but were over-represented in individuals receiving permanent housing services compared to their representation in overall HMIS services. NHPI and “other” races were less likely to represent individuals receiving these services.

### **Do racial disparities exist in housing services outcomes?**

- Overall, while equity existed in outcomes for some groups, important differences emerged. Whites were more disproportionately represented in exits to temporary destinations, while NHPIs were disproportionately represented in exits to permanent destinations.

## **VI. Addressing Racial Disparities**

To further understand and address racial disparities in the homeless population and service utilization/provision, the CoC's PIC has launched several research initiatives. In May 2019, PIC reached out to community researchers at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa to assist in further researching, understanding, and addressing these disparities. Specifically, this research will leverage advanced statistics (e.g., latent class growth analysis) to examine racial differences in pathways into and out of homelessness as well as will examine why Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders make up a larger percentage of the unsheltered population and appear to be less likely to use emergency shelters and to receive permanent housing services.

Additionally, PIC is working with local service and research organizations to specifically address Native Hawaiian homelessness.

Finally, PIC has expanded its Point-in-Time Count survey to include additional questions related to race and is considering adding questions regarding specific service use and needs.

## VII. Recommendations

Based on these findings, researchers make the following recommendations.

### For Future Research

- Future research should expand to include outcomes beyond exit destination in an effort to detect potential racial disparities in program effects.
- Future research should examine further WHY these disparities exist. Mixed-methods research projects would likely be useful, including longitudinal research that tracks changes over time in service use and outcomes and qualitative methods that ask individuals experiencing homelessness directly about their service use experiences.
- Future research should consider different outcomes and service use trajectories by different breakdowns of HUD-defined racial categories—particularly, for Native Hawaiians.

### For the CoC

- The CoC might consider including questions related to service usage and needs in their annual Point-in-Time Count survey in order to detect differences in self-reported service use and needs between different racial groups.
- The CoC should considering examining different entry points in the system to determine why Whites and Asians are over-represented in emergency shelter and permanent housing services and NHPIs are under-represented in these areas.
  - In particular, in order to determine if these disparities represent a difference in need between the groups or a difference in services offered by providers, the CoC might work with the CoC's Coordinated Entry System to examine differences in assessments that determine program eligibility.
  - Additionally, the CoC might work with providers to understand why Whites are more likely to represent exits back into homelessness compared to their overall representation in program exits. A collaboration with researchers and program providers is suggested in order to address these disparities.
- Due to the amount of missing data on exit destinations, the number of duplicates, and the inaccurate race data, the CoC's HMIS technicians should continue their recent efforts to require extensive training on data entry for service providers using HMIS.