ABOUT THIS REPORT

Report
This is a visual report that describes 1) the number and characteristics of the homeless population in Austin and Travis County, 2) their current needs, 3) our current community public investments to address homelessness, 4) gaps in services, and 5) what we see as the main trends and takeaways.

Acknowledgements
This report was created by staff at the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO). The lead researcher and writer was Mariana Salazar, Director of Research and Evaluation with the support of Katy Manganella (HMIS Director), Richard Dodson (HMIS Administrator), Preston Petty (Coordinated Assessment Director) and Ann Howard (Executive Director).

Methodology
Most of the data presented in this report was extracted from our Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) and comes from various sources including surveys from our Coordinated Assessment process, our annual Point-in-Time Count and our Housing Inventory Count. Supplemental data was used from the American Community Survey, other local studies and interviews from staff working on the ground with persons experiencing homelessness.

We hope this information is helpful in efforts to improve programs, plan community investments, and shape local policies. We encourage users to borrow and cite this material.

Questions or Comments?
For questions or for more information, please contact Ann Howard (Executive Director) at annhoward@austinecho.org or Mariana Salazar (Director of Research and Evaluation) at marianasalazar@austinecho.org.
Coordinated Assessment

- It is the process through which persons experiencing homelessness in Austin and Travis County are surveyed with one standard tool made up of 50 questions that assess a person’s health and well-being. The tool is called the VI-SPDAT.

- A person’s score on the tool is used to prioritize their level of vulnerability compared to other homeless persons in the community who have been assessed with the same tool. Given our limited resources, our community prioritizes to first serve those most vulnerable.

- Since October 2014, over 5,000 persons have been assessed through this Coordinated Assessment process. Given the wealth of information collected through these 5,000+ surveys and its large sample size, this data is one of the main sources of information on this report.

- Coordinated Assessment is a process required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for communities receiving HUD funds. In Austin, it was launched by our partner agencies Caritas of Austin, Front Steps, Salvation Army and Austin Travis County Integral Care.

Annual Point-in-Time Homeless Count data

- Every year, communities around the country count the number of persons sleeping in shelters, in the streets or other places not meant for human habitation on a given day.

- The count is required by HUD for communities receiving HUD funding. It takes place during the last week of January every year. It provides a one-day snapshot on the number of persons that are literally homeless.

Annual Housing Inventory Count

- Every year, communities around the country count the number of beds dedicated to persons experiencing homelessness, including shelter beds, beds in transitional housing or permanent supportive housing programs.

- The count is required by HUD for communities receiving HUD funding and takes place during the last week of January every year on the same day of the point-in-time count. This count provides a one-day snapshot of the number of beds dedicated to serving persons experiencing homelessness.
HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN OVER THE YEARS

Snapshot of persons experiencing homelessness on a given day

Annual count of persons experiencing homelessness on a given year

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Data source: Point-in-Time (PIT) counts and HMIS data. The “sheltered homeless” on a given day, includes those in transitional housing as required by PIT guidelines. The annual count includes unduplicated persons from Emergency Shelters + Safe Haven + Transitional Housing + Street Outreach + Coordinated Assessment and those meeting the homeless definition for Rapid Re-Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing.
WHY IS OUR HOMELESS POPULATION GROWING IN AUSTIN?

- Are more people falling into homelessness?
- Are we getting better at counting more people that were already homeless?
- How is the homeless population being affected by Austin’s demographic changes?
- Are some of the people who are moving to Austin everyday, falling into homelessness?
- Is minimum wage too small to support increased costs of living like rent?
- How is the tight rental market that Austin is experiencing & the affordability crisis, affecting the rate of the newly homeless? How is it affecting our ability to improve our housing placement rate?

**Population Growth in Austin**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>740,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>760,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>780,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>860,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population increased over 100,000 from 2010-2014
Expected to double every 20 years
Fastest growing large (500K+) city in the U.S. from 2010-2013

Population sources: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates: Austin Geography, Population DP05 & A Demographic Snapshot of Austin, Experience Austin, 02/12/16, Ryan Robinson, City Demographer.
# Homelessness in Austin: Where Are People Sleeping?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Sidewalk or Doorway</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach Riverbed Park</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car Van RV</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (e.g. Bridges, Abandoned Buildings)</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus Train</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Places not meant for human habitation*

- Percentages based on Coordinated Assessment surveys of 4,771 persons per 01/29/2016.
- The percentages for the people staying in “shelter” does not include those staying in transitional housing.
WHO IS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN?

S N A P S H O T

Over 7,000 persons experienced homelessness in 2015 staying in the streets, cars, parks and shelters

- 80.0% are unemployed (no earned income)
- 79.7% are individuals
- 61.8% are males
- 60% report a problem with drugs/alcohol sometime in their lifetime
- 45.0% report having a current mental health problem
- 28.3% have experienced domestic violence in their lifetime
- 22.1% are chronically homeless
- 19.9% are children
- 14.4% are veterans

- Categories are not mutually exclusive.
- Percentages based on Coordinated Assessment surveys of 4,771 persons per 01/29/2016.
WHO IS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN?

DEMOGRAPHICS

GENDER
- 61.8% Male
- 38% Female
- .2% Non-binary

RACE + ETHNICITY
- African American: 42.4%
- Non-Hispanic White: 31.0%
- Latinos: 23.5%
- Other: 1.7%
- American Indian: 1.4%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

- 50% Have no income
- 50% Have some income

Income Sources
- 29% Earned Income
- 28% SSI
- 24% Other
- 19% SSDI

- Categories not mutually exclusive.
- Percentages based on Coordinated Assessment surveys of 4,771 persons per 01/29/2016.
HOMELESS POPULATION IN TRAVIS COUNTY

- **Age Distribution**
  - 0-17: 19.4%
  - 18-24: 32.5%
  - 25-44: 40.2%
  - 45-64: 6.7%
  - 65+: 3.1%

- **Race + Ethnicity**
  - African American: 42.4%
  - Non-Hispanic White: 31.0%
  - Latinos: 23.5%
  - Other: 1.7%
  - American Indian: 1.4%

ALL TRAVIS COUNTY RESIDENTS

- **Age Distribution**
  - 0-17: 23%
  - 18-24: 36%
  - 25-44: 23%
  - 45-64: 8%
  - 65+: 10%

- **Race + Ethnicity**
  - Non-Hispanic White: 50%
  - Latinos: 34%
  - African American: 23.5%
  - Other: 6%
  - Asian: 1.4%

*Source for homeless population: Coordinated Assessment surveys of 4,771 persons per 01/29/16.*
*Source for Travis County Residents: Travis County Snapshot from the American Community Survey 2014.*
HOMELESSNESS + HEALTH IN AUSTIN

DRUGS OR ALCOHOL

- 60% report a problem with drugs/alcohol sometime in their lifetime
- 38.2% report having been treated and returning to drinking or using drugs
- 15% report consuming almost every day or every day for the past month

MENTAL HEALTH

- 48% report speaking to a mental health professional in the past 6 months
- 45% report having been taken to the hospital for a mental health reason

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

- 25.7% report a history of heat stroke and heat exhaustion
- 25.1% report a history of heart disease, Arrhythmia or irregular heartbeat
- 19.8% report a history of Hepatitis C

- Categories not mutually exclusive.
- Percentages based on Coordinated Assessment surveys of 4,771 persons per 01/29/16.
Health Care Access

- **62.8%** report having been in the emergency room in the past 6 months
- **39.9%** report having been taken to the hospital in an ambulance in the past 6 months
- **32.8%** report having been hospitalized in the last 6 months

Where do the homeless report going for care when they are not feeling well?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinic</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not go for care</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Well-being: 52%

Report having no planned activities that bring them happiness or fulfillment

- Categories not mutually exclusive
- Percentages based on Coordinated Assessment surveys of 4,771 persons per 01/29/2016.
THE CASE FOR SOME OF THE HOMELESS IN AUSTIN: A REVOLVING DOOR BETWEEN CRISIS CENTERS

Data Source: Joint Analysis conducted by Central Health, Travis County Justice Planning and ECHO for a Pay for Success Initiative of high utilizers of crisis systems—Rev. 12/30/2015
**Annual Average Health Costs**

for top 250 High-Cost Homeless Users in Travis Co.

**Current Encounters/Person**

- **Inpatient Hospital Days**
  - 37 days @ $4,800/day
  - Costs/Person: $178K/year

- **Emergency Room Visits**
  - 21 visits @ $1,400/visit
  - Costs/Person: $30K/year

- **EMS Transports**
  - 19 transport @ $876/transport
  - Costs/Person: $14K/year

Average total annual cost per person: **$222K**

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**Sample estimated benefit of Permanent Supportive Housing**

- Current Estimated Health Care costs before housing: **$222K**
- Public Health Cost Avoidance after housing: **$179.7K**
- Estimated annual housing Cost/person: **$22.3K** (including:
  - Rental Subsidy = $8,300
  - Intensive Case Management = $14,000)

Data Source: Joint Analysis conducted by Central Health, Travis County Justice Planning and ECHO for a Pay for Success Initiative of high utilizers of crisis systems—Rev. 03/17/16.
FREQUENT RENTAL HOUSING BARRIERS
for the Homeless Population in Austin

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND

Charged with *misdemeanors* → No renting if it happened recently
Charged with *felonies* → No renting at all

INCOME/DEBT

Low or no *income* → No renting, even if benefit program covers income
Usage of *vouchers* → Landlords not taking vouchers
Rental or utility *debt*, bankruptcy → Screened out if outstanding

Data source: Interviews with housing placement staff working to find housing for persons experiencing homelessness.
HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN
KNOWN CURRENT NEED FOR 2,800 HOUSEHOLDS (3,700 persons)

POPULATION

- 81.3% individuals
- 13.4% 2-3 persons HH
- 5.3% 4-9 persons HH

HOUSING NEED

- 2,277 studios or 1 BR units
- 375 1-2 BR units
- 148 3-4 BR units

Vulnerability (according to VI-SPDAT Scores)

- 53.5% Moderate Vulnerability
- 35.5% High Vulnerability
- 11% Low Vulnerability

Recommended Intervention Type

- 1,498 HHs Rapid Re-Housing
- 994 HHs Permanent Supportive Housing
- 308 HHs Minimal Housing Assistance

Numbers and percentages based on Coordinated Assessment surveys (VI-SPDATs) of 5,066 persons per 03/03/16.
KNOWN CURRENT NEED FOR THE CHRONICALLY HOMELESS IN AUSTIN

Total housing need = 2,800 households

62.7%
Or 1,756 Non-chronic HHs

37.3%
or 1,044 Chronic HHs in need of housing

Recommended Intervention Type

523 HHs
Rapid Re-Housing

521 HHs
Permanent Supportive Housing

2,471 non-chronic persons (66.8%)
1,229 chronically homeless persons (33.2%)

Total housing need = 3,700 persons

Numbers and percentages based on Coordinated Assessment surveys of 5,066 persons per 03/03/16.
KNOWN CURRENT NEED FOR
LITERALLY HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN AUSTIN

2,495 HHs (89.1%)
Without Children

Total housing need
= 2,800 households

305 HHs (10.9%)
Families with Children in need of housing

Recommended Intervention
for 305 families

Chronically Homeless families= 58

256 HHs
Rapid Re-Housing

49 HHs
Permanent Supportive Housing

Affordable +
Low Barrier housing units needed for 305 families

105 HHs → 3-persons units
100 HHs → 2-persons units
55 HHs → 4-persons units
36 HHs → 5-persons units
15 HHs → 6-persons units
3 HHs → 7-persons units
1 HH → 8-persons unit
1 HH → 9-persons unit

Numbers and percentages based on Coordinated Assessment surveys of 5,066 persons per 03/03/16.
Literally homeless families refer to households with children sleeping in the streets, cars or emergency shelters, it does not include families who are “doubled up” or living with friends or family due to economic need.
HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN
ESTIMATED NEEDS FOR 2,800 HOUSEHOLDS (3,700 persons)

**POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS**

**Economic Security**
- **80%** Persons unemployed

**Health & Stability**
- **58.2%** Persons whose primary access to healthcare is a hospital or don’t go for care at all
- **52%** Persons with no daily activities planned that bring fulfillment or happiness
- **45%** Persons with mental health issues
- **20%** Children under 18
- **15%** Persons currently using substances
- **3.31%** Unaccompanied Youth

**INTERCONNECTED NEEDS**

- **2,291** Jobs that hire the hard to employ & pay enough to afford a place to live
- **2,153** Persons that need improved health care access to appropriate settings
- **1,924** Persons that need to reconnect to a healthy sense of community
- **1,665** Persons that need mental health treatment
- **740** Children that need family & housing stability
- **555** Persons that need substance use treatment
- **122** Young adults who need housing & other support

Analysis based on Coordinated Assessment surveys of 5,066 persons per 03/03/2016.
## Homelessness in Austin 2015 Community Assets

### Emergency Shelter Beds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Beds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women + Children</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Men</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV Survivors</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Women + Children:** 314 beds (Salvation Army, Front Steps)
- **Adult Men:** 230 beds (DV Survivors: 106, Families: 95, Veterans: 36, Youth: 20)

### Permanent Supportive Housing Beds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Authority</th>
<th>Beds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing Authority of the City of Austin</td>
<td>494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin Travis County Integral Care (ATCIC)</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caritas</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Communities</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Steps</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LifeWorks</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greendoors</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Housing Authority of the City of Austin:** 494 beds
- **Austin Travis County Integral Care (ATCIC):** 245 beds
- **Caritas:** 133 beds
- **Foundation Communities:** 80 beds
- **Front Steps:** 54 beds
- **LifeWorks:** 20 beds
- **Greendoors:** 16 beds

### Transitional Housing Beds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Beds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DV Survivors</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **DV Survivors:** 164 beds (Safeplace)
- **Families:** 120 beds (Salvation Army, Blackland CDC)
- **Youth:** 54 beds (Lifeworks)
- **Veterans:** 32 beds (Greendoors, Frontsteps)
- **Individuals:** 6 beds

### Additional Beds

- **6** Recuperative Care beds
- **0** Beds for end of life/hospice services

*Source: 2015 Housing Inventory Count (HIC). Rev. 03/30/16.*
### Homelessness in Austin

**Annual Public Investments**

- **Shelter**: $6.4 M (33.5%)
- **Permanent Supportive Housing**: $5.9 M (31.1%)
- **Prevention**: $2.7 M (14.2%)
- **Rapid Re-Housing**: $2.3 M (12%)
- **Transitional Housing**: $1.3 M (6.5%)
- **HMIS + Planning**: $0.5 M (2.7%)

**Total** = $19.1 million dollars/year

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*Analysis based on funding from the City of Austin, HUD Continuum of Care, Travis County and TDHCA in 2015 from data available as of November 2015.*
Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) Investments

Individuals housed in 2015 through RRH = 820
RRH Public Investments in a given year = 2.3 Million
Av. RRH Public Investments in a given year/ housed person = $2,804

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Units

Estimated PSH units that turn over annually = 156
(15% of 1,042)
Newly PSH units to be created in 2016 = 100
(1/4 of the 400 currently committed 400 PSH units from the City of Austin)

Minimal Housing Assistance Resources

Overall shelter capacity = 808
Overall recuperative beds capacity = 6
Individuals that can be diverted in a year = 360

Individuals served through RRH is based on HMIS data. PSH units are based on the 2015 Housing Inventory Count (HIC). PHS turnover rate is based on HUD-estimated annual average turnover rate nationally.
Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)

1,500 HHs  
In need of RRH

820 HHs  
With placements possible with current assets

Gap in capacity/funding for  
680 HHs

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

1,000 HHs  
In need of PSH

256 HHs  
Housing placements possible with current assets

Housing Gap for  
744 HHs

Transitional Housing (TH)

? individuals  
In need of TH

376 individuals  
Placements possible with current assets

Gap for  
? individuals
Shelter beds

- 2,197 individuals
  - In need of shelter on a given day
- 1,382 individuals
  - Placements possible with current assets

Shelter Gap for 815 individuals on a given day

Medical Recuperative beds

- 36 individuals
  - In need of medical respite on a given day
- 6 individuals
  - Placements possible with current assets

Gap for 30 individuals on a given day

End-of-Life Service beds

- ? individuals
  - In need of hospice on a given day
- 0 individuals
  - Placements possible with current assets

Gap for ? individuals on a given day
1. **At least 2,800 households (3,700 people) are literally homeless and in need of 2,800 affordable and low-barrier housing units now.**

   ➢ As of March 2016, our coordinated assessment process has surveyed and identified this many literally homeless persons as currently in need of housing. This is easily an undercount, considering not everyone who is literally homeless engages our system and a few providers in the community are not yet participating in our coordinated assessment process.

   ➢ **What we currently need:**
     Given the household composition of the assessed homeless population, the types of housing units currently needed are at least:

     ▪ 2,300 studios or one-bedroom units,
     ▪ 350 one-to-two bedroom units, and
     ▪ 150 three-to-four bedroom units.
2. **Access to affordable and low barrier housing remains the single greatest challenge to ending homelessness.**

- In a city whose population is rapidly increasing with unprecedented demand for rental units, and whose overall affordability is collapsing, finding affordable housing stands as the single most pressing challenge faced by individuals experiencing homelessness themselves and by the services providers assisting them.

- People experiencing homelessness face even greater barriers than those already experienced by lower income residents when it comes to securing housing. These barriers may include having criminal history, substance use, poor employment history, poor credit history, poor rental history and very low or no income at all.

- Households experiencing homelessness face enormous competition for a limited number of affordable units, not only competing with other low income residents but also increasingly competing with other moderate and middle income residents attracted to the same affordable units.

- As a community, we have been developing a system to successfully house persons experiencing homelessness by 1) creating partnerships with private landlords to make units accessible and low-barrier, 2) using flexible funding to provide incentives to landlords, and 3) working with affordable housing providers including Public Housing Authorities to create homeless preferences.

**What we currently need is:**

- Flexible funding to work directly with landlords and provide the right incentives to house the homeless population.

- Access to public affordable low-barrier housing units ranging from Public Housing Authorities, Tax Credit properties to other HUD-funded multifamily properties, where households are not screened out based on their criminal history or use of substances.

- Landlords who do not screen out tenants because on household’s source of income and are willing to accept tenants with *Housing Choice Vouchers* or whose rent will be covered by other assistance programs.
3. Considerable larger public and private investments are needed to significantly reduce homelessness in Austin.

- Given the current needs for persons experiencing homelessness and our current assets, it will take a considerable larger allocation of resources to significantly reduce homelessness and get to a place where homelessness is brief, short and non-recurring for most persons who fall into homelessness.

- We know we has worked at a smaller scale.  
  *What we currently need is:*

  - Creating a dedicated funding stream for local homeless services.
  - Scaling up of programs that work such as Permanent Supportive Housing.
  - Adopting new funding models that leverage private and public funds such as Pay for Success.
  - Supporting the community at large as it works strategically to end chronic homelessness by 2017 and family and youth homelessness by 2020.
SNAPSHOT
HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN AS 100 PEOPLE

62 male
38 female
81 are individuals
11 families with children
8 HHs without children

26 in the streets
16 in parks
13 in a car
9 in bridges
2 in a bus stop

34 shelter

22 are

78 are not

86 are not

72 are not

34 shelter
26 in the streets
16 in parks
13 in a car
9 in bridges
2 in a bus stop

80 do not work
20 work

41 hospital
31 clinic
16 do not go for care
10 VA
2 Other

WHERE THEY ACCESS HEALTH CARE

13 in a car
16 in parks
26 in the streets
34 shelter

78 are not
22 are

28 are

86 are not
14 are

15 use
85 do not

CHRONICALLY HOMELESS (CH)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Veterans

FULLFILLMENT

80 do not work
20 work

41 hospital
31 clinic
16 do not go for care
10 VA
2 Other

CURRENT SUBSTANCE USE

85 do not
15 use

19 aged 0-17
33 aged 25-44
5 aged 18-24
3 aged 65+
40 aged 45-65

48 have activities that bring fulfillment
52 do not

55 do not have
45 have

100 PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Data based on Coordinated Assessment surveys of 4,771 persons per 01/29/2016.
Design inspired by the work of artist Jack Hagley, The World as 100 people, as published on The Best American Infographics 2014.
HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN

YOUR THOUGHTS?