

Rapid Rehousing for Families with Children

As the Council discusses the potential for additional funding for rapid rehousing and wrap-around services, I'd like to bring our focus to families with children experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

Austin currently has about 2,300 homeless students (AISD Project HELP data), most of whom are housing insecure, but many of whom are living on the streets or in temporary shelters, such as the Salvation Army. More dollars toward rapid rehousing and wrap-around services for our most vulnerable will mean better outcomes for these young people and their families.

To be clear, families with children and youth are experiencing homelessness and are housing insecure if they are living outdoors in public spaces or in substandard housing, doubled up with other families, living in motels/hotels, living in shelters, or are migratory families living in any of the above situations.

Any additional rapid rehousing dollars this Council approves needs to be flexible enough to serve our most vulnerable populations and to fill financial gaps where and when needed. For instance, the Salvation Army will open 200 new shelter beds for women and children in spring of 2019, funded with private dollars from their recent capital campaign, but will require at least \$2.5 million annually to operate.

This is just one destination for our extra housing and wrap-around service dollars. The key is getting our Public Health director and our community partners the additional funds to make meaningful progress this fiscal year in housing our most vulnerable populations.

- Housing Works (with AISD's Project HELP data):
<http://housingworksaustin.org/news/austin-isd-2017-2018-homeless-student-data-shows-disturbing-problem-persists/>
- ECHO & Lifeworks' Austin/Travis County Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness: <http://www.austinecho.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/171222-Austin-CCP-Final.pdf>