



**District 1 Community Forum
Responses to Questions on Homelessness**

1. I have been working with some homeless people. I have learned that just at one location, there are 35 homeless people in this north area of our district. Are there plans to address this growing homeless problem? Citywide?

RESPONSE: The current estimate is that on any given day there are 1,900 individuals who are homeless in Travis County. Of those, several hundred are considered to be chronically homeless. Multiple agencies are working on providing for the needs of individuals who are homeless. The solution to homelessness is housing and there is currently not enough affordable housing for funds to help everyone.

Austin Travis County Integral Care (Integral Care) provides a continuum of homeless services and supported housing services. The Integral Care Path Outreach program works to engage homeless individuals into services and uses a Coordinated Assessment process to identify individuals and connect them to appropriate housing resources. Integral Care provides intensive case management while individuals are experiencing homelessness in an effort to connect them with housing and ongoing supports to maintain that housing. Today, we are helping more than 500 people access housing and providing supportive services for approximately 1,700 formerly homeless individuals to help them maintain housing.

2. Number of beds for homeless in community are not adequate for the number of homeless. No shelters in North Austin. Good work to assess but a list (waiting list) can take years to get a bed.

RESPONSE: The community has recently implemented the coordinated assessment, described above. The coordinated assessment process is helping service providers to determine the number of individuals experiencing homelessness and better advocate for more affordable and subsidized housing. In the meantime, the limited resources the community has to offer are going through Coordinated Assessment which identifies the most vulnerable, in need individuals of the community. This coordinated efforts helps us insure that we are using our limited resources in the most effective way possible.

3. Does Integral Care have standards for owners to meet before a federal voucher is used for a person? What will code violations do?

RESPONSE: Integral Care uses federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines to assess the health and safety of a property, using a thorough assessment tool. At the time of initial move in and annual inspections, any code violations will trigger a request for the owner to fix the program and all rental payments will cease until the violations are rectified. HUD

also requires that any federal voucher be used with a property which pays taxes on their rental income and enters into a formal Texas Apartment Association Lease agreement.

4. What happened to restitution centers? (from follow up conversations this is regarding centers from the 80's and 90's where convicted people could be placed rather than prison/jail and have a reentry program and experience.)

NO RESPONSE

5. Libraries and Homelessness. Do library staff and management undergo sensitivity training about this special population?

RESPONSE: Integral Care has provided Mental Health First Aid training to some library staff across Austin.

6. As gentrification continues to change the landscapes of Austin, is the plan to move undesirables further east or completely out of Austin? In 24 years Austin will be 200 years old, can we imagine Austin curing these issues? (Homelessness)

RESPONSE: Gentrification is surely impacting every resident in Austin and certainly makes placement of individuals who are homeless more challenging. Integral Care works to place individuals in housing across the community. We have landlord outreach specialists that work throughout the county to build relationships with property owners and integrate individuals with disabling conditions into the community.

7. The voucher programs are not fair because majority of the time there is no limit in duration. Can a limit be set to give encouragement to others? What will become of the homeless population of this city, after ARC is torn down? Where will they be located? Will they still have an opportunity for medical treatment, to see other doctors for medical or mental problems? Will they have consulting to help them get out of the chronic situation they are in?

RESPONSE: Integral Care provides Permanent Supported Housing, which means that an individual can stay in the housing as long as necessary. Once an individual becomes stable in housing, he/she transitions to a standard Section 8 Housing Voucher which makes a slot available for another individual experiencing homelessness. Transitioning individuals off of Section 8 or Public Housing is more challenging, as it requires addressing additional issues such as lack of employment and poverty. Although it is very challenging, it is not impossible. Integral Care provides supportive services to work toward helping individuals become more independent through employment, education and family reunification.