Homelessness in Austin Current Needs + Gaps

DRAFT

Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO)

May 11, 2017

ECHO

About this Report

ECHO created this report on data, trends, and actions to address the needs of persons experiencing homelessness to inform ongoing efforts to prevent and end homelessness in our community.

This visual report describes (1) the characteristics of the homeless population in Austin and Travis County, (2) their current needs, (3) our current community public investments to address homelessness, and (4) gaps in services.

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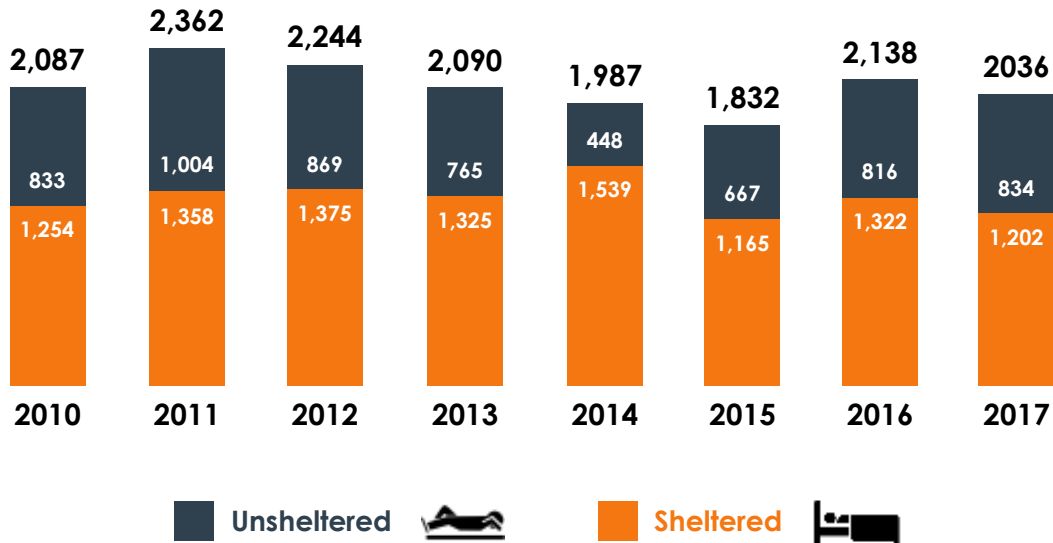
Data Sources

The primary data and information sources for this document include the following:
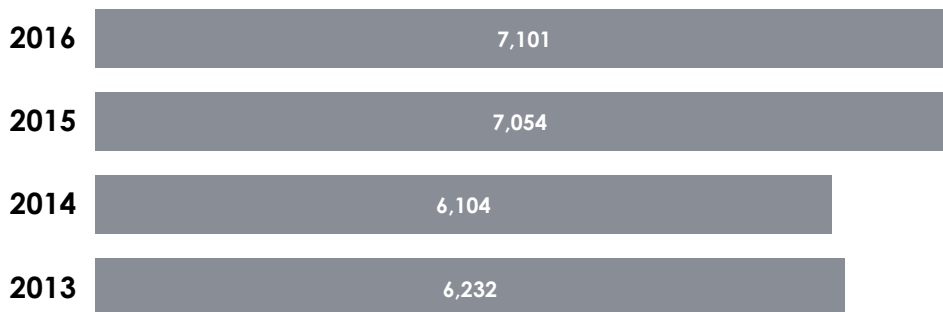- Surveys of over 5,836 households experiencing homelessness conducted since October 2014 (Coordinated Assessment Surveys) assessing their needs.
- Historical data on the number of persons experiencing homelessness on a given day since 2007 (Persons counted during the annual Point in Time Count).
- Data on the number of shelter beds provided by different agencies (data reported to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as a part of the Housing Inventory Count).
- Population data from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey.
- A public input process that included interviews and meetings with over 70 stakeholders during December 2016 though March 2017.
- Literature review of research and effective practices from other communities around the country.
- Consultation with national industry experts.
- Analysis of existing local homeless programs including investments and system performance measures.

Literally Homeless Population in Austin/Travis County

Persons counted experiencing homelessness _in a given day_

Year	Unsheltered	Sheltered	Total
2010	833	1,254	2,087
2011	1,004	1,358	2,362
2012	869	1,375	2,244
2013	765	1,325	2,090
2014	448	1,539	1,987
2015	667	1,165	1,832
2016	816	1,322	2,138
2017	834	1,202	2036

■ **Unsheltered** 🛌   ■ **Sheltered** 🛏

Persons known to have experienced homelessness _in a given year_

Year	Count
2016	7,101
2015	7,054
2014	6,104
2013	6,232

Persons identified in need of housing _as of Jan. 2017_: 4,541 (3,350 households)

- The "sheltered homeless" in a given day includes those in transitional housing per PIT guidelines.
- The number of "newly homeless" or persons who become homeless for the first time is based on the System Performance Measure # 5, a measure from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO). "Point in Time Count." Jan. 2010 - 2017.
- Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO). "Newly Homeless System Users." Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), 2017.

A Snapshot of Persons Experiencing Homelessness

Persons experiencing homelessness often have many inter-related health, social and economic challenges that make it difficult to end homelessness on their own.

67%
Are unemployed/do not have earned income

62%
Report having <u>no</u> planned activities that bring them happiness or fulfillment

61%
Report going to the hospital or do not go for care at all when they are not feeling well

56%
Report experiencing an emotional, physical, psychological, sexual, or other type of abuse or trauma in their life

44%
Report currently experiencing a mental health problem

42%
Of the homeless population are African American, despite the fact that African Americans only make up 8% of Travis County's population

36%
Report having legal stuff going on that may result in them being locked up or having to pay fines

29%
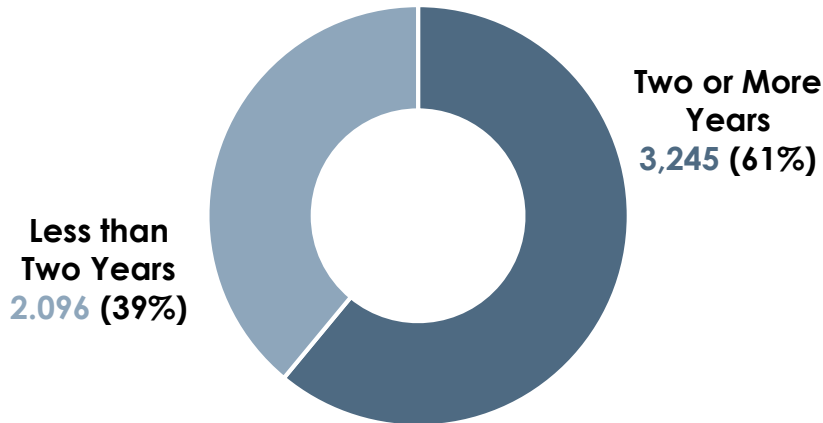Report having experienced domestic violence in their lifetime

17%
Report consuming drugs and/or alcohol almost everyday or everyday for the <u>past month</u>

- Categories not mutually exclusive.
- Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO). "Coordinated Assessment Surveys of 5,836 Households." Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), 5 Dec. 2016.
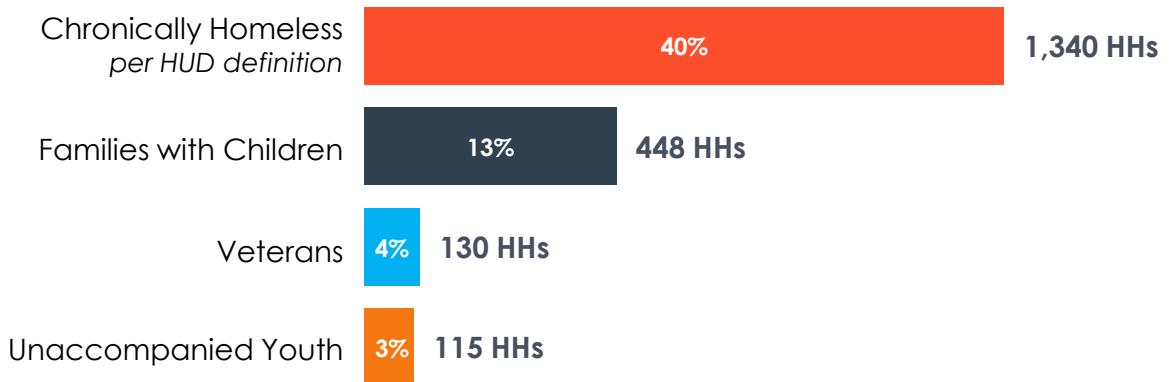
Homeless Subpopulations

Most persons experiencing homelessness have lived on the streets for two or more years, and many have experienced several episodes of homelessness.

Total Length of Time Living on the Streets or in Shelters

Two or More Years
3,245 (61%)

Less than Two Years
2.096 (39%)

Households (HHs) identified in need of housing <u>as of January 2017</u>: 3,350

Subpopulations

Subpopulation	%	HHs
Chronically Homeless *per HUD definition*	40%	1,340 HHs
Families with Children	13%	448 HHs
Veterans	4%	130 HHs
Unaccompanied Youth	3%	115 HHs

- Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO). Coordinated Assessment Surveys of 5,836 Households. 5 Dec. 2016. Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), Austin.

Factors Contributing to Homelessness

Homelessness is often caused by the breakdown and failure of many inter-related systems and safety nets.

Family/Support Network

Unstable environments

Lack of support systems

Domestic violence or abuse

Parental substance abuse

Rejection by parent or guardian due to sexual orientation, gender identity or pregnancy

Mental health issues

Community/Environment

High barriers to limited affordable housing

Displacement from housing due to natural disasters

Limited access to jobs and housing after incarceration

Lack of jobs with living wages

Criminal Justice

Criminal justice system involvement

Accumulation of court costs (with no address, courts bills are not received, leading to increased fees)

Systemic racial discrimination

Supportive Services

Inadequate welfare benefits

Difficulty navigating resources and services

Lack of formal education and support to help youth stay in school

Exit from foster care with no housing or income support

Lack of job skills

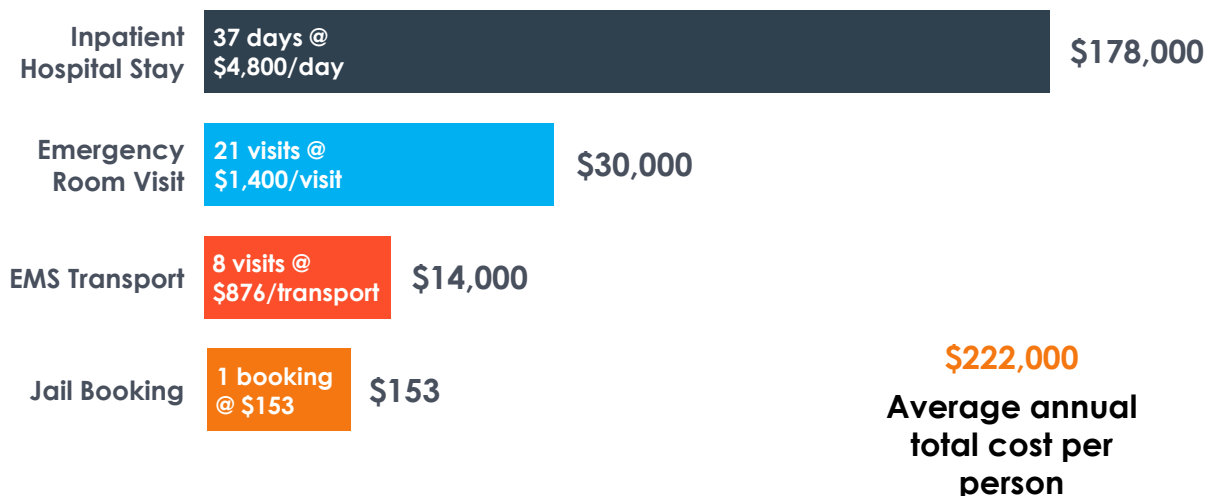### Economic Factors

Unstable jobs

Lack of medical insurance

Lack of transportation

Insufficient wages

The Costly Cycle of Homelessness for Many

A subset of the homeless population experiences complex health and social issues, frequently cycling between shelters, hospitals, and jails, and disproportionately impacting public spending.

Jails

Crisis Center Cycle

Shelters

Hospitals
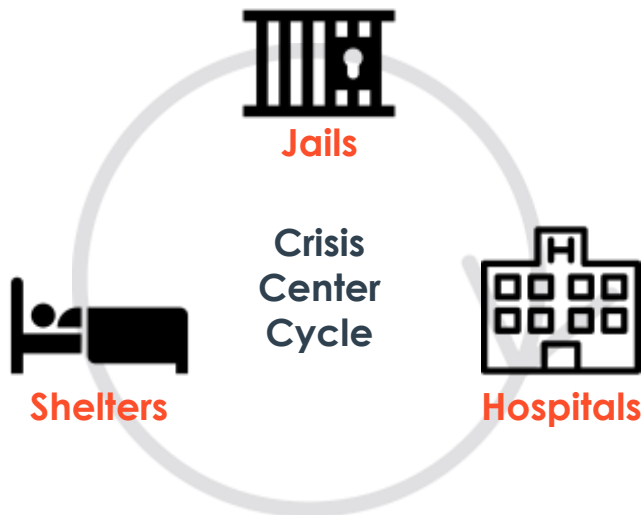
Average Annual Costs for Top 250 High-Cost Homeless Users of Public Crisis Services in Travis County

|		
Inpatient Hospital Stay	37 days @ $4,800/day	**$178,000**
Emergency Room Visit	21 visits @ $1,400/visit	**$30,000**
EMS Transport	8 visits @ $876/transport	**$14,000**
Jail Booking	1 booking @ $153	**$153**

$222,000
Average annual total cost per person

• Corporation for Supportive Housing. *Social Innovation Fund Pay for Success Feasibility Report: ECHO Austin Travis County*. Rep. N.p., Apr. 2016. Web. Mar. 2017.
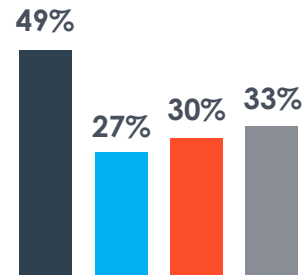
Racial + Ethnic Disparities Across Systems in Austin/Travis County

African Americans are incarcerated and experience poverty at significantly higher rates compared to their makeup in the general Travis County population and are disproportionately represented in the homeless population.
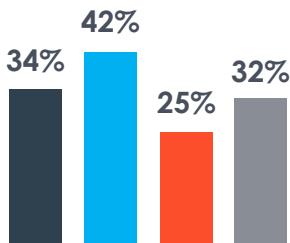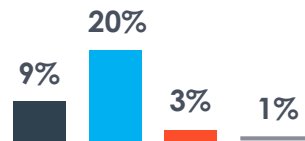
Black/African American

8%	11%	42%	26%

Non-Hispanic White

49%	27%	30%	33%
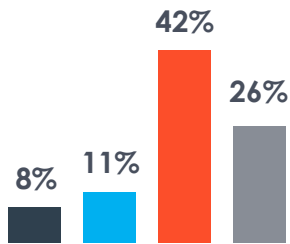
Hispanic or Latino

34%	42%	25%	32%

Other

9%	20%	3%	1%

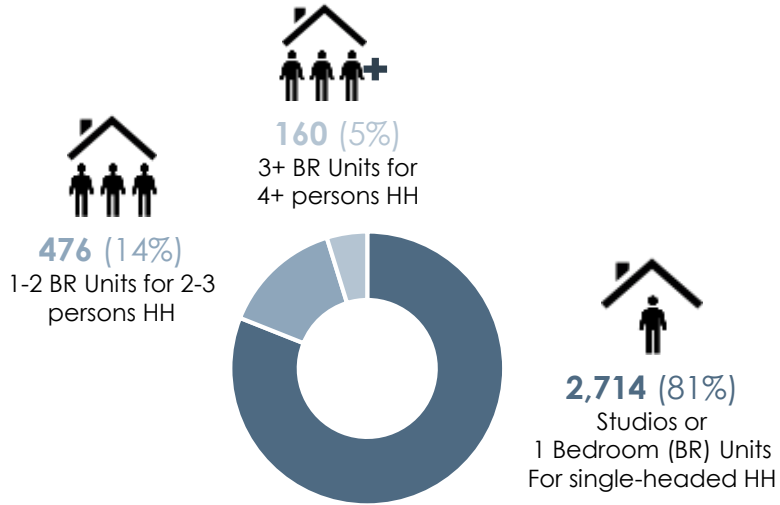■ County Population   ■ Below Poverty Level   ■ Homeless Population   ■ Jail

- Ayres, Brittain, et al. "Travis County Snapshot from the American Community Survey." Travis County Health & Human Services, Dec. 2016, www.traviscountytx.gov/health-human-services/research-planning/snapshot. Accessed Feb. 2017.
- US Census Bureau. "Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months." 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, S1701.
- Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO). Coordinated Assessment Surveys of 5,836 Households. 5 Dec. 2016. Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), Austin.
- Vera Institute of Justice. "Incarceration Trends: Disparate Impacts: Race." *Vera Institute of Justice*. N.p., 15 Dec. 2015. Web. 23 Feb. 2017.
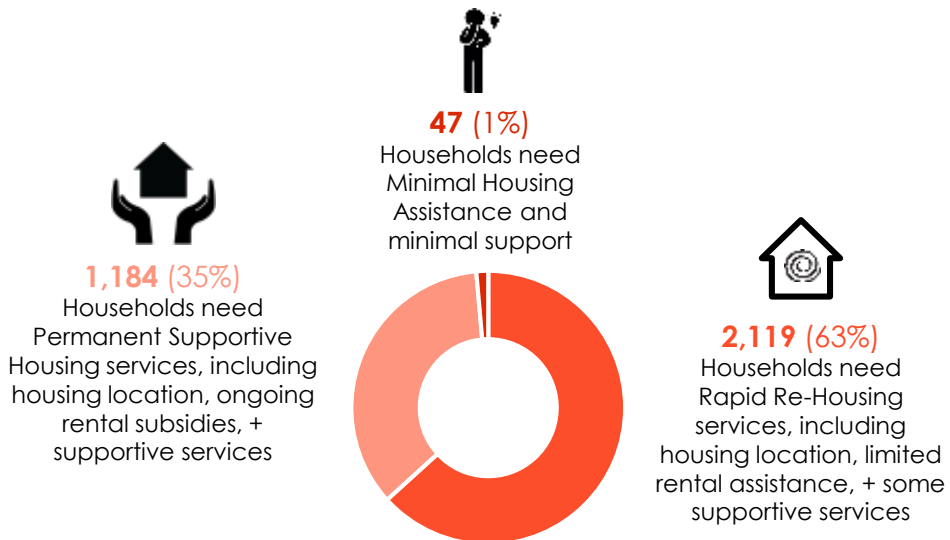
Current Needs of 3,350 Households (HHs) Experiencing Homelessness

Since the majority of the persons who experience homelessness are single-person households, the greatest housing need is for studios or one bedroom units. The types of services required by persons experiencing homelessness varies according to their vulnerability.

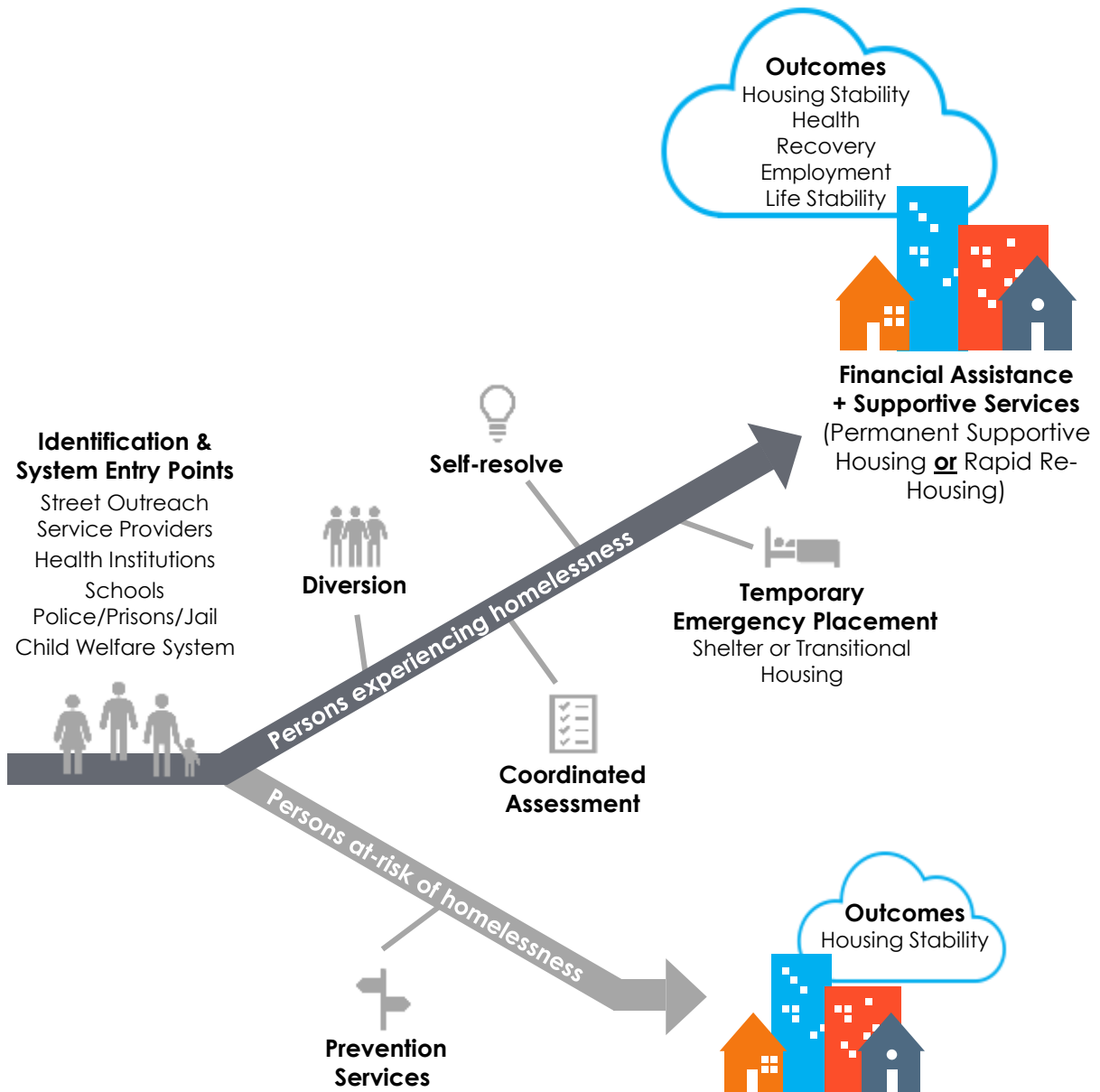## Affordable + Low Barrier Housing Units Needed

160 (5%)
3+ BR Units for
4+ persons HH

476 (14%)
1-2 BR Units for 2-3
persons HH

2,714 (81%)
Studios or
1 Bedroom (BR) Units
For single-headed HH

Types of Services Needed According to Vulnerability Level

47 (1%)
Households need
Minimal Housing
Assistance and
minimal support

1,184 (35%)
Households need
Permanent Supportive
Housing services, including
housing location, ongoing
rental subsidies, +
supportive services

2,119 (63%)
Households need
Rapid Re-Housing
services, including
housing location, limited
rental assistance, + some
supportive services

• Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO). Coordinated Assessment Surveys of 5,836 Households. 5 Dec. 2016. Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), Austin.

Our System to Prevent + End Homelessness

Our ultimate goals are to prevent homelessness whenever possible and quickly help people get back into housing, minimizing the length of their homelessness. This flow chart provides a broad overview of different paths to permanent housing.

Outcomes
Housing Stability
Health
Recovery
Employment
Life Stability

Financial Assistance + Supportive Services
(Permanent Supportive Housing **or** Rapid Re-Housing)

Identification & System Entry Points
Street Outreach
Service Providers
Health Institutions
Schools
Police/Prisons/Jail
Child Welfare System

Self-resolve

Diversion

Persons experiencing homelessness

Temporary Emergency Placement
Shelter or Transitional Housing

Coordinated Assessment

Persons at-risk of homelessness

Prevention Services
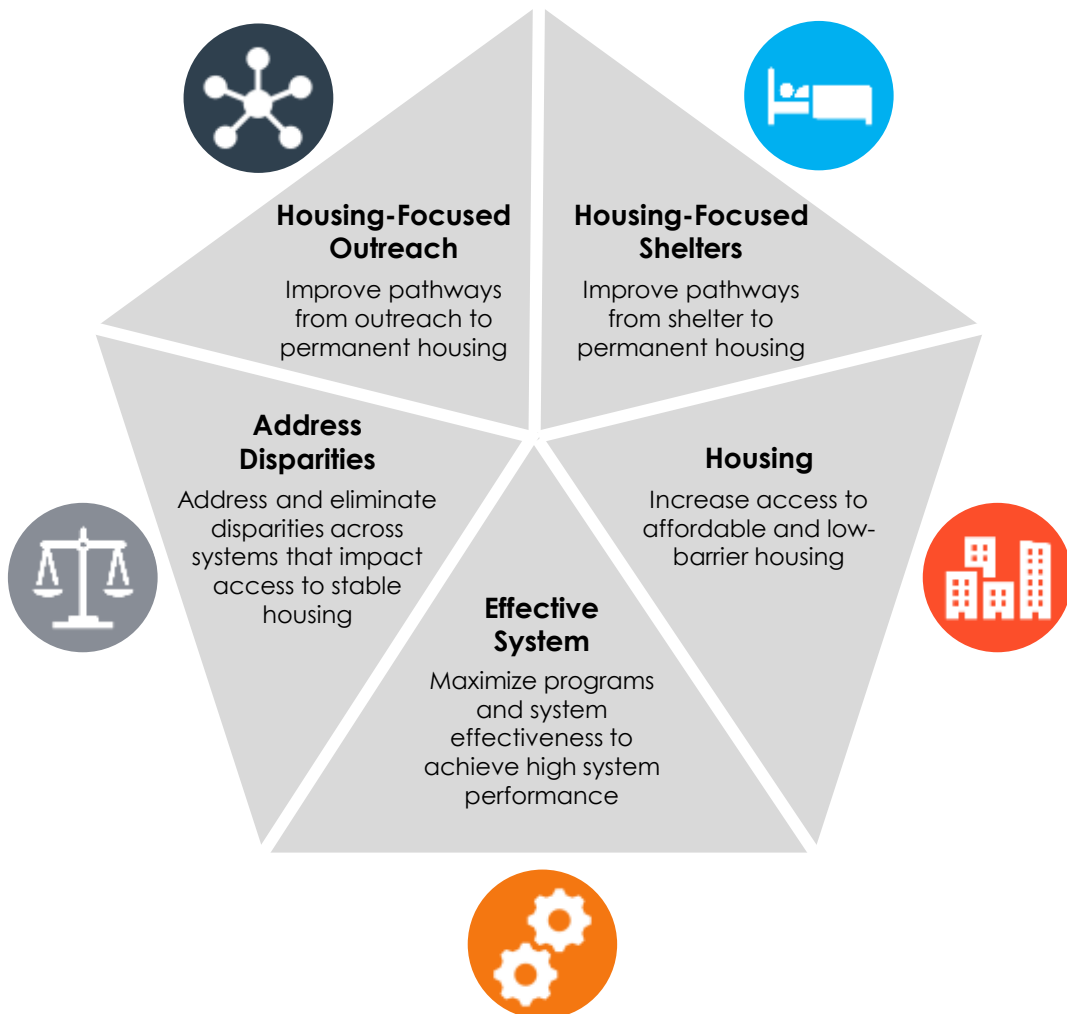
Outcomes
Housing Stability

- Refer to the Glossary section of the document for explanations of different terms.

System Vision for Ending Homelessness in Austin/Travis County

Our vision is that all community homeless services and their system elements are focused on connecting people to permanent housing. We envision a system in which (1) there are enough resources so that every person experiencing homelessness can be reached and offered a path to permanent housing, (2) all shelters are linked to a path to permanent housing, all housing barriers are addressed, (3) all programs and agencies work together to maximize the number of people who are stably housed in a cost-effective manner and offer support services, and (4) programs are designed intentionally to address racial and other disparities affecting the homeless population.

System Elements

Housing-Focused Outreach

Improve pathways from outreach to permanent housing

Housing-Focused Shelters

Improve pathways from shelter to permanent housing

Address Disparities

Address and eliminate disparities across systems that impact access to stable housing

Housing

Increase access to affordable and low-barrier housing

Effective System

Maximize programs and system effectiveness to achieve high system performance

Addressing Homelessness Downtown

Austin's homelessness population is most visibly concentrated downtown; on a given night, 472 persons sleep at the ARCH and the Salvation Army while 178 persons sleep in the surrounding streets, a total of 650.

Reasons for Downtown Concentration

Not enough housing and service resources to assist the 7,000+ persons who experience homelessness every year

Many homeless services are clustered down

There is activity in the area day and night

Problems of Downtown Concentration

Cheap street drugs like K2 readily available to homeless population without enough access to treatment

Downtown hotels and businesses are exposed to trespassing, panhandling, and alcohol and drug use, impacting customers

Homelessness is criminalized in the forms of trespassing and possession of substances, creating more housing barriers

Strategies that _Together_ will Reduce Homelessness Downtown + Beyond

STRATEGIES

Outreach. Expanding outreach resources to connect to all unsheltered persons.

Shelters + Navigation Centers. Increasing temporary shelter beds & creating multiple "housing navigation centers" or resource hubs throughout the city, alleviating the pressure at the ARCH and other downtown service providers

Housing + Services. Increasing rental assistance and subsidies to serve all persons needing assistance, accessing more affordable and low- barrier rental units, and increasing access to other services (e.g. case management, employment + substance use).

Addressing Disparities. Addressing housing barriers and designing programs to address racial and other disparities.

Effective System. Ensuring all strategies connect persons to housing, ending their homelessness. Aligning stakeholders' vision, streamlining coordination and collaboration and tracking community progress.

RESULTS

- Reduced homelessness, more persons housed, off the streets

- Decreased public nuisances

- Persons get connected to permanent housing, jobs, + healthcare

- Increased housing stability

- Increased appropriate healthcare usage

- Increased positive community connections

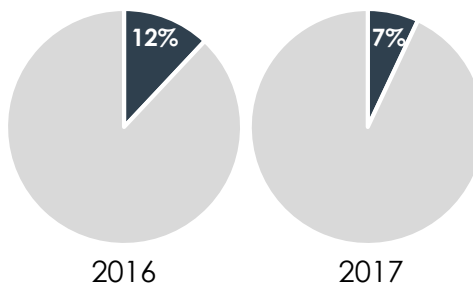# Success: Ending Veteran Homelessness + Housing More Youth

Focusing on subpopulations in Austin/Travis County led to a dramatic reduction in the numbers of veterans and youth experiencing homelessness.

Veteran Successes, 2015 - 2017
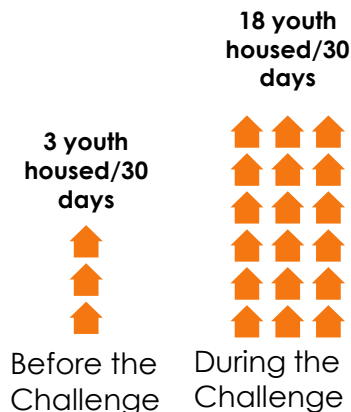
Veteran Housing Rate Improved

Year	Value
2011	69
2012	177
2013	188
2014	231
2015	388
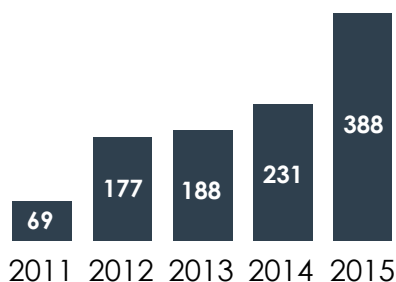
Veterans Experiencing Homelessness in a Given Day Decreased

2016: 12%
2017: 7%

Days to Housing for Veterans Decreased

2014: 238 Days
2015: 95 Days

Youth Successes, 2016 - 2017

3 youth housed/30 days — Before the Challenge

18 youth housed/30 days — During the Challenge

During the 100 Day Challenge, Austin housed 62 youth, surpassing its goal of 50
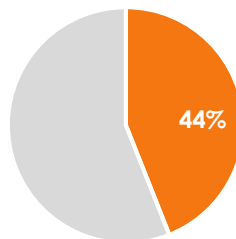
44% of youth who moved into housing during 100 Day Challenge had a history of foster care. Studies show youth with a history of foster care are disproportionately represented in homelessness

$5.2 M Awarded to Austin in Jan. 2017 to become a demonstration site to end youth homelessness

- Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO). "Point in Time Count (Preliminary data)." Jan. 2017.
- Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO). "Coordinated Assessment Surveys of 5,836 Households." Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), 5 Dec. 2016.
- Roman, Nan P, and Phyllis Wolfe. "Web of Failure: The Relationship Between Foster Care and Homelessness." *National Alliance to End Homelessness*, 16 Aug. 2006, www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/web-of-failure-the-relationship-between-foster-care-and-homelessness. Accessed 15 Mar. 2017.

Questions or Comments?

For questions or for more information, please contact Ann Howard, ECHO's Executive Director at annhoward@austinecho.org or Mariana Salazar, ECHO's Director of Research and Evaluation at marianasalazar@austinecho.org.