



# Austin Public Health



Office of the Director

P.O. Box 1088

Austin, Texas 78767

Phone (512) 972-5010

Fax (512) 972-5016

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and Council  
**FROM:** Stephanie Hayden, LMSW, Director *SHayden*  
**DATE:** July 10, 2018  
**SUBJECT:** Update on Contract for the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH)

On October 12, 2017, Council passed Resolution No. 20171012-015. The resolution directs the City Manager to conduct a stakeholder engagement process to redefine the scope of services at the ARCH, with a focus on operating within the intended built capacity. The resolution also directs that the scope consider recommendations from the Bloomberg iTeam, the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO), the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), as well as other community partners.

The following is a summary of actions taken to date:

### **Stakeholder Engagement: Community Forums & On-line Input**

Austin Public Health (APH) conducted seven community forums to generate input regarding operations at the ARCH from December 2017 through February 2018. A feedback survey was sent to all interested forum attendees as well as other stakeholders which yielded responses from 79 individuals. Additionally, an email address was established and shared through press releases to a community listserv with over 500 members and at all community forums.

### **Bloomberg iTeam Recommendations**

The City Innovation Office's Bloomberg iTeam interviewed over 100 persons experiencing homelessness and obtained input and ideas from the Homelessness Advisory Council of Austin (HACA), which is comprised of persons with current or former lived experiences of homelessness. Through this intensive research, the iTeam developed and presented several recommendations for the operation of the ARCH and the broader sheltering system in Austin.

### **National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) Recommendations**

APH executed a contract with the NAEH, a national expert out of Washington, D.C., which provides consulting services, data analysis, and technical assistance to provide recommendations pertaining to Austin's emergency shelter system and the ARCH solicitation scope of work. As a part of this agreement, NAEH will provide training for the named contractor for operation and services at the ARCH as well as other community providers. The recommendations are attached.



# Austin Public Health



## **ECHO's Action Plan to End Homelessness**

On April 26, 2018, City Council endorsed the *ECHO Action Plan to End Homelessness*, which includes re-designing shelter services at the ARCH as a current strategy. The City continues to work with ECHO on the broader community efforts related to homelessness.

## **Transitioning to New Contract, Services and Program Design**

In May 2018, Council authorized a six month extension option for the current ARCH operations contract, to begin October 1, 2018. Due to the importance of emergency shelter services for individuals experiencing homelessness, transitioning from the current operations to new operations requires deliberate planning and adequate time for implementation, training, communication, and changes to services and the facility.

## **Next steps**

Attached is the draft scope of work for ARCH operations that is being today, released on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The draft is available for public feedback through a Pre-Solicitation process. The timeline for collecting feedback is 2 weeks, July 10<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup>, and the formal solicitation is expected to be open August 6<sup>th</sup> through September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Please feel free to provide comments to me as we want to make sure you have the opportunity to provide your input.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager  
Sara Hensley, Interim Assistant City Manager  
Assistant city Managers  
Adrienne Sturup, Interim Assistant Director, Austin Public Health

## **Attachments**

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE RE-DESIGN OF EMERGENCY SHELTERS IN AUSTIN

National Alliance to End Homelessness  
OrgCode Consulting, Inc.

## About the National Alliance to End Homelessness

The National Alliance to End Homelessness (“the Alliance”) is a leading voice on the issue of homelessness, and analyzes policy and develops pragmatic, cost-effective policy solutions. The Alliance works collaboratively with the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to build state and local capacity, leading to stronger programs and policies that help communities achieve their goal of ending homelessness. The Alliance provides data and research to policymakers and elected officials in order to inform policy debates and educate public and opinion leaders nationwide. The Alliance provides capacity-building assistance through its Center for Capacity Building to help communities turn policy solutions and proven best practices into viable, on-the-ground programs.

## About OrgCode Consulting, Inc.

OrgCode Consulting, Inc. works with non-profits, government, private companies and non-governmental organizations. We are catalysts for better outcomes. Hip and nerdy, we are the antidotes to the status quo across the multi-disciplinary skill set of the team. OrgCode excels in strategy, planning, training, research, community engagement, and positive social change.

## Project Scope and Methodology

### Project Scope

Austin Public Health contracted with the Alliance to provide recommendations to improve emergency shelter services and specific design recommendations for the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH) to the City of Austin. The Alliance, with the assistance of OrgCode Consulting Inc. (“OrgCode”), collected, assessed and synthesized data on existing shelter services and outcomes provided by local leadership, as well as input from community and stakeholder interviews and consumer surveys. The Alliance and OrgCode facilitated stakeholder meetings to present an analysis of existing shelter services, recommend best practices, and guide a process for re-designing the ARCH, its role in the crisis response system, as well as best practices for other shelters in Austin. The goal of these recommendations is to inform the design of an RFQS for the ARCH and other future shelter services in order to decrease the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness and improve the housing outcomes for the people who are in shelters. The recommendations involve evaluating and re-designing shelter capacity, implementing housing-focused services in shelter, lowering barriers to shelter, implementing diversion services prior to shelter entry, aligning shelter entry into Austin’s Coordinating Entry System,

standardizing shelter services more broadly, and evaluating shelter performance with the goal of developing a more effective crisis response system that meets the needs of people experiencing homelessness in Austin.

## Methodology

These recommendations use research, best practices from other communities, historical knowledge of Austin/Travis County's homeless services, and an analysis of the community's current homeless crisis response system to provide guidance and recommendations for housing and support services for people experiencing homelessness in Austin. The recommendations in this report are focused on reducing homelessness quickly, efficiently, and at a reasonable cost, and improving the lives of people experiencing or imminently at risk of experiencing homelessness.

In conducting this assessment, the Alliance reviewed the following:

- Continuum of Care (CoC) Governance documents, Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) Reports, Community Dashboards
- CoC coordinated entry documents and process, written standards
- Emergency Shelter contracted performance outcomes
- Policies and Procedures, job descriptions, staffing patterns, etc. for the ARCH
- Demographic data, utilization rates, and performance outcomes data for the ARCH and emergency shelters where available
- I-Team products and materials, including:
  - ARCH Memo
  - Early Learnings: Outside of Downtown Service Providers
  - ARCH Feedback from People with Lived Experience
  - Austin's Lived Experience Insights
  - Homelessness Advisory Committee of Austin
  - ARCH Service Blueprint
  - Pop-Up Early Learnings
  - Sleeping as a Service Report
  - ARCH Communications Audit
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Austin Public Health Community Forums Feedback

- Phases I and II of City Audit of Homelessness Assistance

The Alliance interviewed the following stakeholders:

- ARCH consumers
- ARCH staff
- Austin Public Health Staff
- CommUnityCare staff
- ECHO HMIS and Coordinated Entry staff
- Downtown Austin Alliance staff
- Downtown Austin Community Court staff
- The Salvation Army shelter staff
- HOST Team Members
- Department of Veteran Affairs staff

## Table of Contents

About the National Alliance to End Homelessness.....	1
About OrgCode .....	1
Project Scope and Methodology.....	1
Project Scope .....	1
Methodology.....	2
Executive Summary.....	5
Key Concepts in This Report .....	6
Housing First .....	6
Typology of Shelter Utilizers .....	8
State of Homelessness: Austin/Travis County, Texas, and United States .....	10
Emergency Shelter Demographics .....	13
Design Elements, Issues and Recommendations for the ARCH.....	18
Design Element: Access to Shelter and Shelter Entry.....	21
Design Element: Physical Capacity, Health and Safety .....	24
Design Element: Programming and Service Delivery Inside the ARCH Issues at the ARCH:.....	26
Design Element: Day Resource Center and Day Services .....	30
System Recommendations to Support the ARCH's Success .....	33



## Executive Summary

Austin/Travis County can reduce homelessness by ensuring that experiences of homelessness are rare, brief, and non-recurring. The Austin community has many dedicated shelter, homeless services, and housing providers, very strong CoC (Continuum of Care) leadership through ECHO (Ending Community Homelessness Coalition), and engaged City, County and collaborative community partners committed to ending homelessness. To accomplish the goal of building a system that ends homelessness, such as through strategies outlined in [Austin's 2018 Action Plan to End Homelessness](#)<sup>1</sup>, the CoC should continue to develop a coordinated homeless crisis response system that quickly and permanently houses all people who experience homelessness and prevents other people from falling into homelessness. The development of an effective homeless crisis response system requires a re-design of the ARCH's current emergency shelter programs, policies, and operations, as well as a standardization of operations of other shelters, especially and including the Salvation Army. The recommendations made about the ARCH in this report should be used as a framework to guide the program design of the Salvation Army and other shelters in Austin. The re-design of emergency shelters in Austin requires implementation of a Housing First approach that is low-barrier, provides housing-focused and rapid housing exits services, and uses outcome data to drive decision making. Aligning shelter operations with these best practices will advance the community's goals to prevent and to end homelessness. This re-design will also help alleviate the growing issues related to unsheltered homelessness directly outside of the ARCH.

Emergency shelters are a critical component of an effective crisis response system because people experiencing a housing crisis or fleeing an unsafe situation need access to a safe and decent place to stay for a brief period until they can obtain permanent housing. In an effective homeless crisis response system, anyone experiencing a housing crisis should easily access shelter and housing supports without pre-requisites or access appropriate support to retain their current housing situation or identify a safe, appropriate alternative, so they do not have to enter emergency shelter. *The goal of emergency shelter in Austin should be to focus on re-connecting people to housing as quickly as possible.* Thus, shelter and housing must be always considered in tandem. To help people exit from shelter and return to permanent housing as quickly as possible, it is critical that the community:

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<sup>1</sup> Austin's Action Plan to End Homelessness, Ending Community Homelessness Coalition, Working Document, April 23, 2018, see <http://www.austinecho.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/180423-Action-Plan-to-end-Homelessness.pdf>



- Increase investment in skilled staffing and housing-focused services and healthy operations within shelters.
- Vastly expand re-housing capacity for single adults by investing in evidence-based housing solutions, including facilitating self-resolution as a part of re-housing households, rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing.
- Ensure strategic and strong partnership with mainstream agencies and housing providers to help people obtain and stabilize in permanent housing as quickly as possible.

## Key Concepts in This Report

These recommendations use two key concepts to inform recommendations: Housing First and the typology of shelter users, explained below.

### Housing First

Housing First is an approach to ending homelessness that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness, thus ending their homelessness and serving as a platform from which they can pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life. This approach is guided by the belief that people need basic necessities like food and a place to live before attending to anything less critical, such as getting a job, learning how to budget, or attending to substance use issues. Additionally, Housing First is based on the theory that client choice in housing selection and supportive service participation, will likely make a person or household more successful in remaining housed and improving their life.<sup>2</sup>

A large and growing evidence base demonstrates that Housing First is an effective solution to homelessness. Consumers in a Housing First model access housing more quickly<sup>3</sup> and are more likely to remain stably housed.<sup>4</sup> This is true for both permanent supportive housing (PSH) and RRH programs. Permanent supportive housing has a long-term housing retention rate of up to 98 percent.<sup>5</sup> Studies

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<sup>2</sup> Tsemberis, S. & Eisenberg, R. Pathways to Housing: Supported Housing for Street-Dwelling Homeless Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities. 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Gulcur, L., Stefancic, A., Shinn, M., Tsemberis, S., & Fischer, S. Housing, Hospitalization, and Cost Outcomes for Homeless Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities Participating in Continuum of Care and Housing First Programs. 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Tsemberis, S. & Eisenberg, R. Pathways to Housing: Supported Housing for Street-Dwelling Homeless Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities. 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Montgomery, A.E., Hill, L., Kane, V., & Culhane, D. Housing Chronically Homeless Veterans: Evaluating the Efficacy of a Housing First Approach to HUD-VASH. 2013.

show that RRH helps people exit homelessness quickly—in one study, an average of two months<sup>6</sup>—and remain housed. A variety of studies show that between 75 percent and 91 percent of households remain housed a year after being rapidly re-housed.<sup>7</sup>

The Housing First approach does not require people experiencing homelessness to address all of their problems including behavioral health or substance use, or to graduate through a series of services programs before they can access housing. Housing First does not mandate participation in services either before obtaining housing or in order to retain housing. The Housing First approach views housing as the foundation for life improvement and enables access to permanent housing without prerequisites or conditions beyond those of a typical renter. Supportive services are offered to support people with housing stability and individual well-being, but participation is not required, as services are more effective when a person chooses to engage in them.

#### **Housing First Principles**

- Homelessness is foremost a housing problem and should be treated as such.
- Permanent housing is a right to which all are entitled.
- People should be returned to or stabilized in permanent housing as quickly as possible and connected to necessary resources to sustain housing.
- Issues that may have contributed to a household's homelessness can best be addressed once they are permanently housed.

To accomplish the goal of making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring in Austin/Travis County, more than a few organizations must embrace the Housing First philosophy. Rather, the CoC must be aligned with a Housing First approach to quickly house everyone experiencing homelessness, regardless of their barriers. To align a system that uses a Housing First approach, anyone experiencing homelessness should be able to enter shelter or any permanent housing intervention without prerequisites and services should be focused entirely on reconnecting people to housing as quickly as possible or stabilizing them in housing. If people are unable to access the homeless response system

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<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Family Options Study: Short-Term Impacts. 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Byrne, T., Treglia, D., Culhane, D., Kuhn, J., & Kane, V. Predictors of Homelessness Among Families and Individuals After Exit from Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Programs: Evidence from the Department of Veterans Affairs Supportive Services for Veterans Program. 2015.

because they are not clean and sober, and/or do not wish to participate in services such as drug and alcohol treatment or behavioral health treatment, this places significant barrier in front of the opportunity to access and sustain permanent housing options.

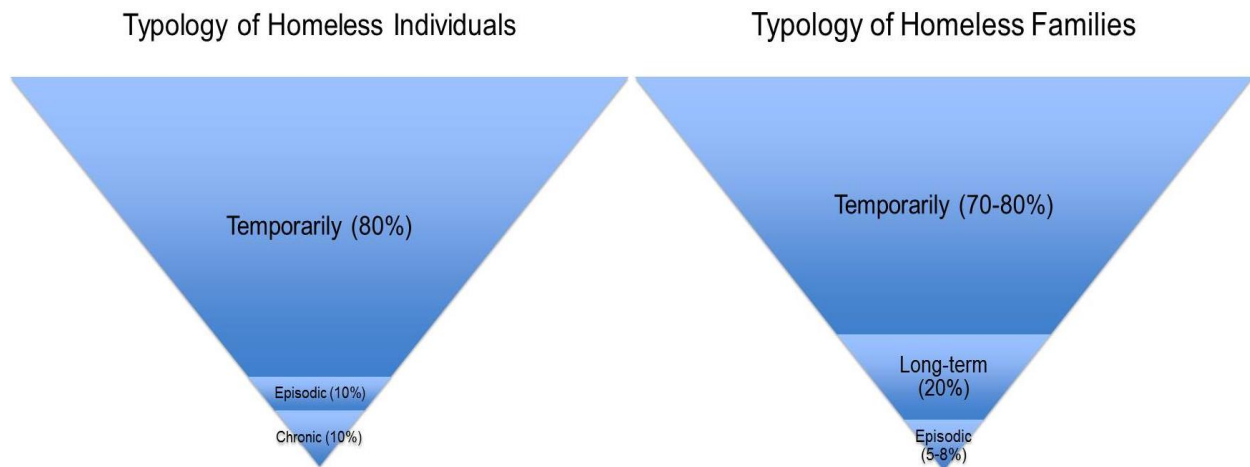
### Typology of Shelter Utilizers

To better understand how shelters in the CoC can more effectively address the needs of people experiencing homelessness, it is helpful to understand how shelters are utilized. A typology of shelter utilizers developed by the researcher Dennis Culhane<sup>8</sup> sheds light on who uses shelter and for how long. In Culhane's study among individuals, the largest group of shelter users (80%), called the temporary group, only stayed in shelter once, for a short period of time. The remaining 20% of individuals were divided into two groups. The episodic group comprised 10% of the population and was characterized by shuttling in and out of homelessness as well as between institutions such as jails and hospitals. The chronic group comprised only 10% of the population, but because they stayed in shelter for a very long time, this group consumed half of the total shelter days. This group had very high service needs, and experienced higher rates of mental health and substance use challenges.

Among families, the largest group (70 to 80%) was also homeless for a short period of time. The episodic group among families is very small (5 to 8%) as compared to individuals. The long-term group (20% of families) differed significantly from the chronic group of individuals. Families in the long-term group had low service needs, and their experience of homelessness was categorized by long stays in transitional housing. Members of this group were the most costly to the homelessness system because of their long lengths of stay, but they did not have the highest service needs.

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<sup>8</sup> Kuhn, R., and Dennis, C.. "Applying Cluster Analysis to Test a Typology of Homelessness by Pattern of Shelter Utilization: Results from the Analysis of Administrative Data." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 26.2 (1998): 207-32.



This research indicates that most people have relatively brief episodes of homelessness: they exit homelessness within three to six months and do not return. This research also indicates that people with short- and long-term stays in homeless service programs face myriad challenges, but these are similar to the challenges faced by many other low-income families who never become homeless. It is only a small subset of people who experience multiple episodes of homelessness. The study also indicates that program rules and requirements caused people to stay homeless for longer periods of time, rather than the challenges that the households were facing.

This informs Austin/Travis County shelter design by indicating that shelters should tailor services to facilitate self-resolution for people who need a light touch of services to be re-housed, provide support through progressive engagement to ensure a rapid exit from shelter to housing for everyone who enters shelter, provide more intensive services to the small number of people experiencing multiple episodes of homelessness, and create low-barrier entry and programming so more people who are unsheltered can access shelter in order to shorten the length of time people experience homelessness.

## State of Homelessness: Austin/Travis County, Texas, and United States

It can be helpful to view Austin/Travis County in the broader context of the state of Texas as well as the rest of the United States. Austin/Travis County makes up 4.24% of the population of Texas and represents 6.9% of the population of people experiencing homelessness in the state. Homelessness in Austin/Travis County has decreased at a lesser pace than across the United States as a whole, and even less so than across the state of Texas.

People experiencing homelessness in Austin/Travis County are likely to be single adults as in Texas and the United States. People experience chronic homelessness in the county at almost double the rate than the rest of the state and the United States. Unsheltered homelessness in Austin/Travis County is at comparable rates to both Texas and the United States.

Austin/Travis County dedicates slightly more beds to permanent supportive housing and fewer to emergency shelter than the rest of Texas. The county dedicates less resources to rapid re-housing than Texas as whole and the United States. The county dedicates more resources to transitional housing than Texas and the United States and less emergency shelter as a percentage of all beds.

*Table 1: Data collected from 2017 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) Part 1: PIT Estimates of Homelessness in the U.S*

2017 Homelessness Data from Austin/Travis County, the State of Texas, and the United States			
Data Point	Austin/Travis County	State of Texas	U.S.
2017 PIT Count	2,036	23,548	553,742
Change in Homelessness Between 2013 and 2017	-2.60%	-20.5%	-9.2%
Percent Adults Without Children	69.0%	70.0%	67.0%
Percent Families	28.0%	29.0%	33.0%
Percent Transition Age Youth (18-24)	7.0%	7.4%	9.7%
Percent Chronic	26.0%	15.0%	15.7%
Percent Unsheltered	34.0%	36.0%	35.0%
Emergency Shelter as Percentage of All Beds	29.0%	33.0%	31.0%
Transitional Housing as Percentage of All Beds	16.0%	14.0%	13.0%
Permanent Supportive Housing as Percentage of All Beds	42.0%	35.0%	39.0%
Rapid Re-Housing as a Percentage of All Beds	9.4%	12.0%	10.0%

To better understand the current state of homelessness and the response to homelessness in Austin/Travis County, the Alliance examined publicly available data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) including the Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR), the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), as well as other publicly available information as cited.

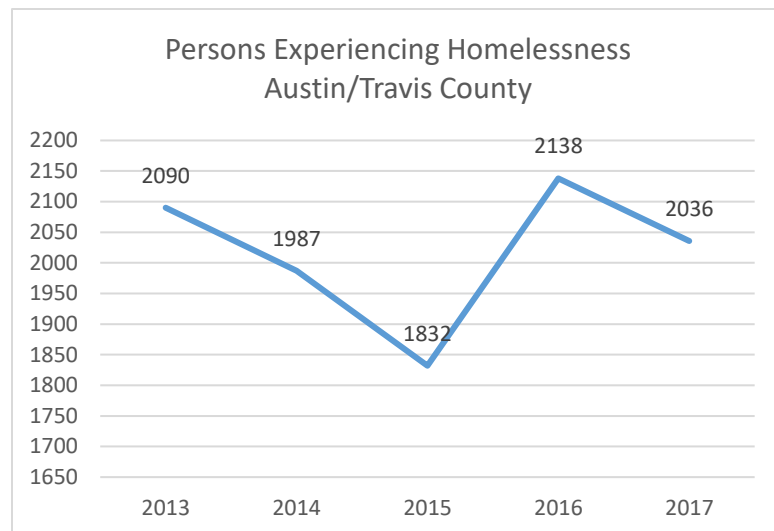


Figure 1: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Point in Time Counts 2013-2017

Between 2013 and 2015 homelessness steadily decreased in Austin/Travis County. The total number of people experiencing homelessness fell by 12% over the same period of time. The county saw an uptick in overall homelessness between 2015 and 2016 due to an increase in transitional housing (35 person increase) and unsheltered (149 person increase) homeless populations. It is important to note that HUD considers transitional housing as meeting the definition of homelessness.

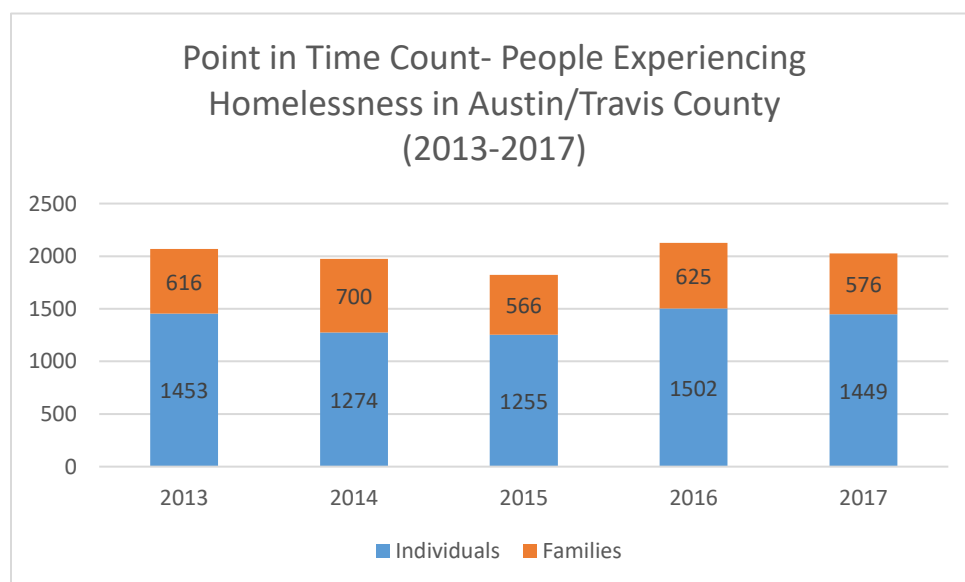


Figure 2: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Point in Time Counts 2013-2017

69% of people experiencing homelessness in Austin/Travis County are individuals. While the total number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness fluctuated up and down over the years examined, between

2013 and 2017 family homelessness decreased by 6.5% while individual homelessness decreased by only .2%

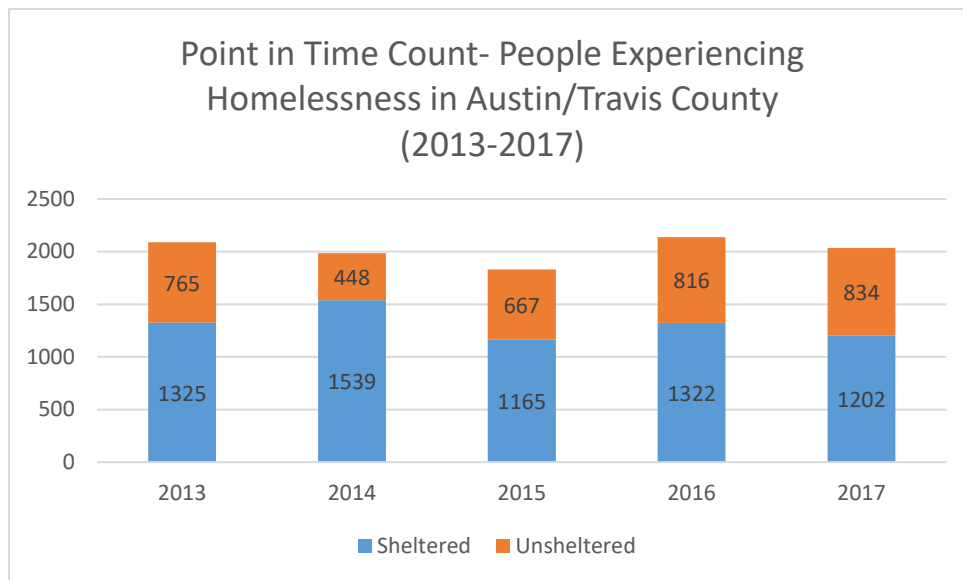


Figure 3: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Point in Time Counts 2013-2017

homelessness increased by 9%.

A majority of people experiencing homelessness in Austin/Travis County are sheltered: 52% are sheltered and 36% are unsheltered. Sheltered homelessness decreased by 9.3% between 2013 and 2017, unsheltered

Permanent Supportive Housing makes up the largest portion of homeless assistance beds in Austin/Travis County between 2013 and 2017. During that same time, the number of transitional housing beds declined in 2013 and 2014 and then increased in 2016 and 2017 to levels closer to that in 2013 and 2014. The number of rapid re-housing beds has steadily increased since 2013 from 1 RRH bed to 277 in 2017. Emergency shelter beds have fluctuated slightly in that same time but remained consistent.

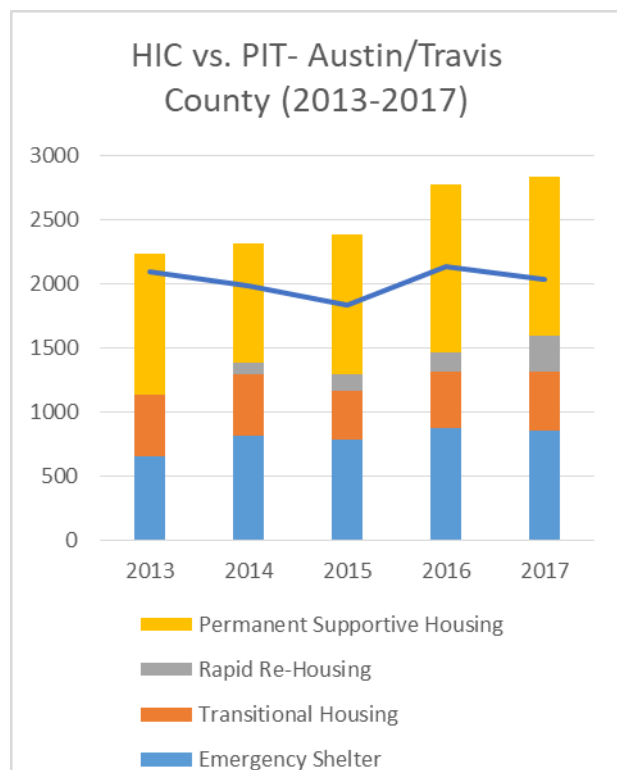


Figure 4: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Point in Time Counts and the Housing Inventory Counts 2013-2017



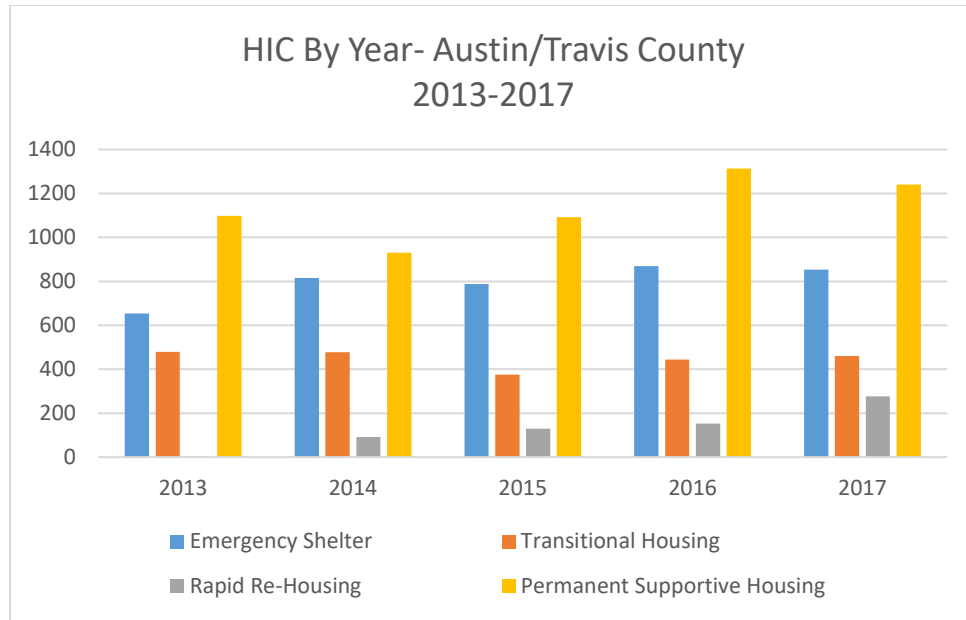


Figure 5: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Housing Inventory Counts 2013-2017

## Emergency Shelter Demographics

A review of residence prior to shelter and length of stay in shelter data shows that the majority of individuals entering shelter are coming from the homeless response system or from an institutional setting (63%) and an additional 20% are doubled up with friends or family. Prior residence of families before entering shelter shows that 35% of families are already in the system while 44% are coming from doubled up situations.

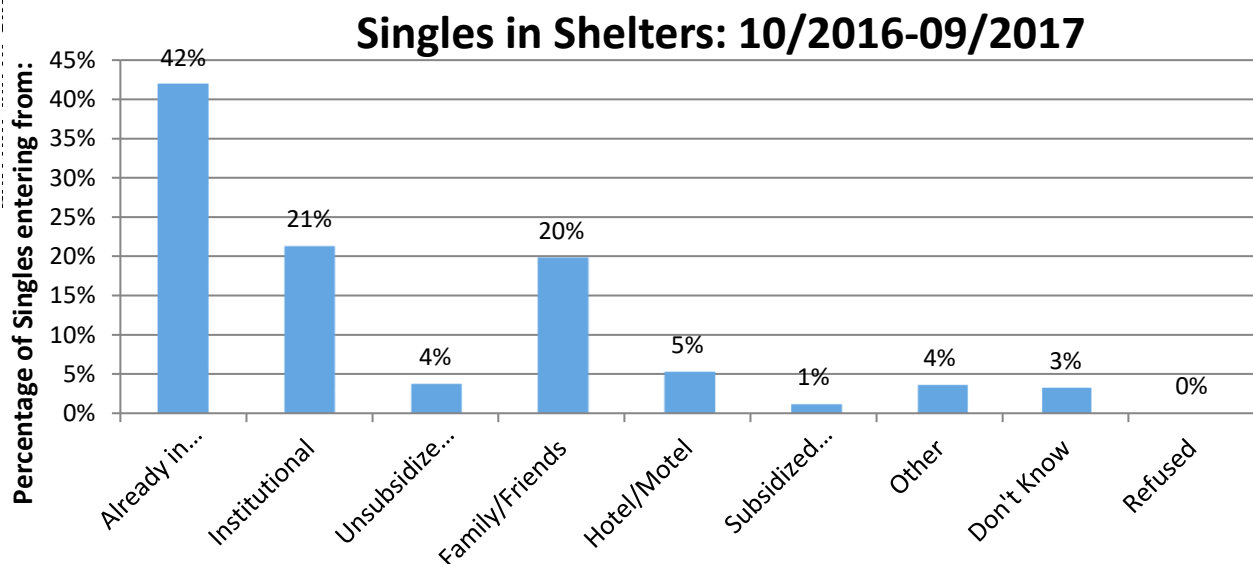


Figure 6: Data collected from Austin/Travis County TX-503: Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

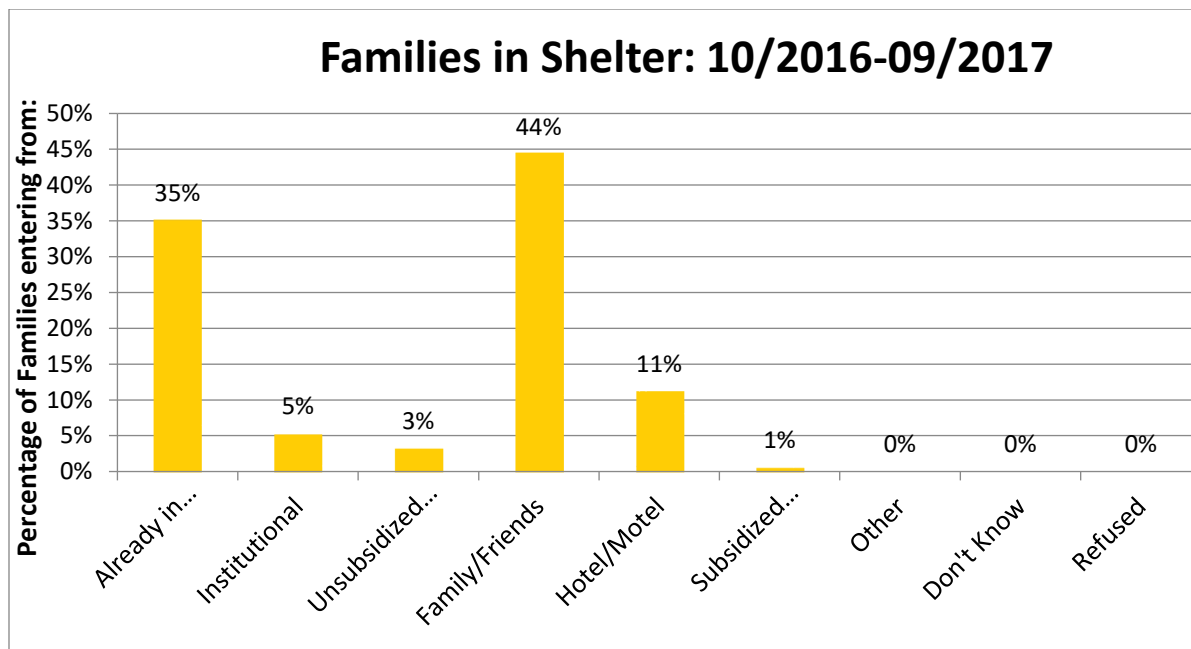


Figure 7: Data collected from Austin/Travis County TX-503: Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

An analysis of the data shows that from 2015 to 2017, length of stay trends in shelter stayed consistent for individuals with the majority of individuals exiting shelter within the first seven days (41%) and 30 days (20%) while the majority of families exited shelter within 1-3 months (35%) and 3-6 months (33%).

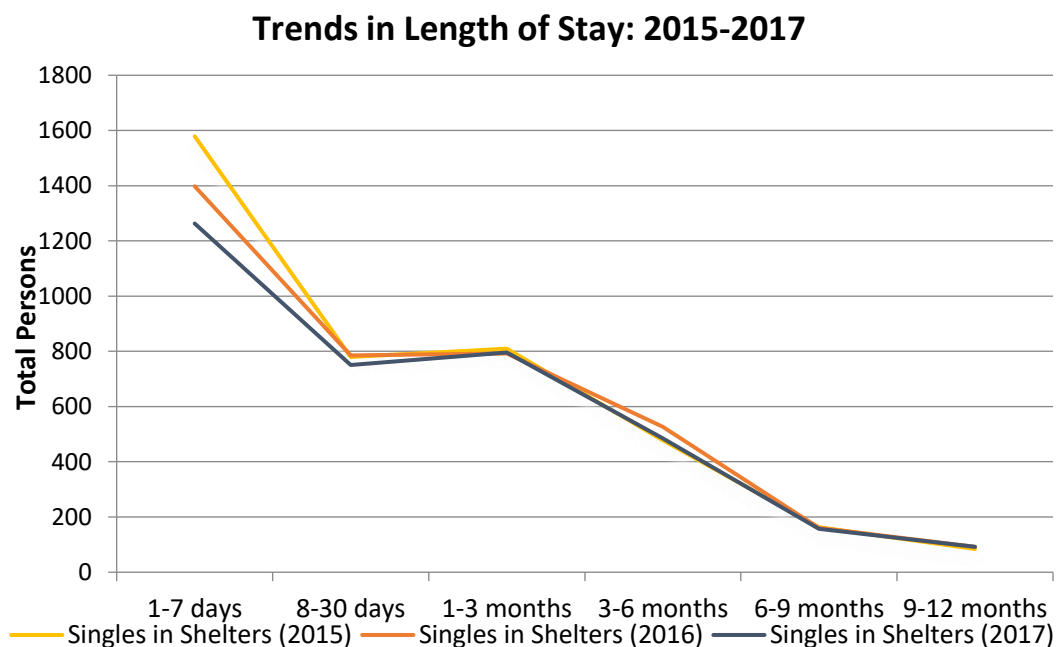


Figure 8: Data collected from Austin/Travis County TX-503: Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

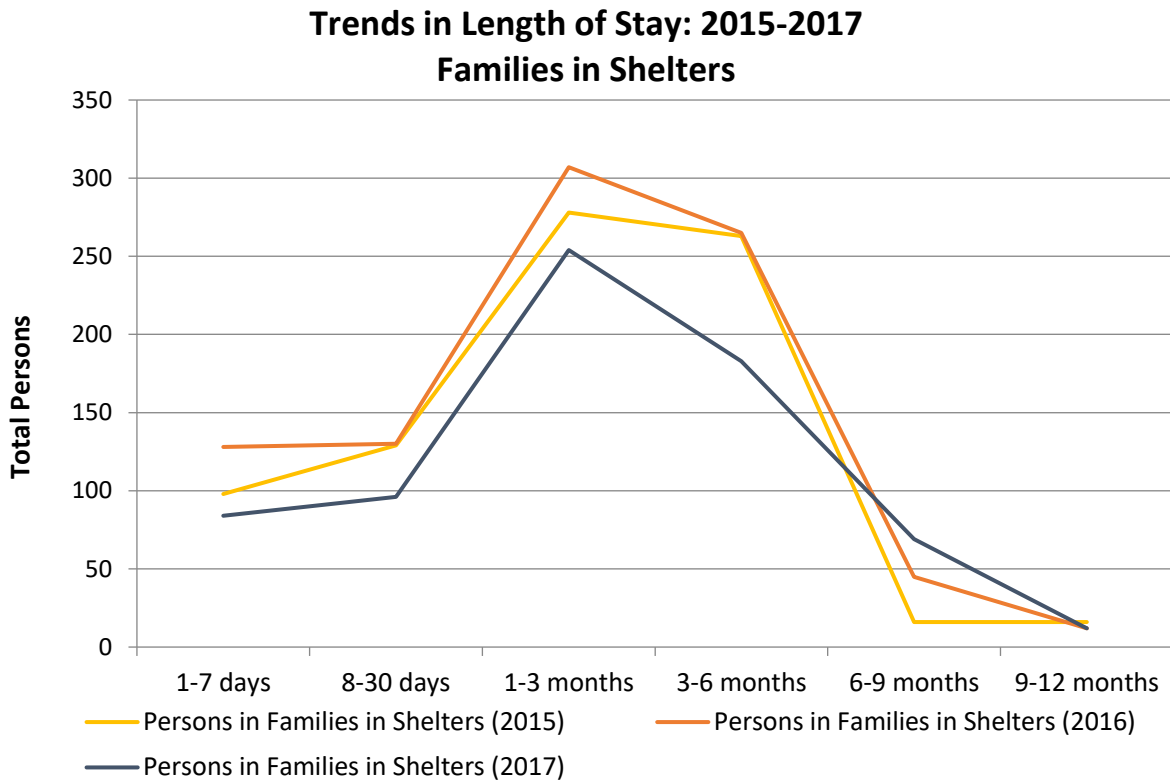


Figure 9: Data collected from Austin/Travis County TX-503: Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

In 2017, length of stay by performance exit shows the average length of stay no matter the exit destination for individuals was 41.5 days and 97.2 days for families. This is an increase for individuals of 10.2 days in 2016 and 12.4 days in 2015 and an increase for families of 10.5 days in 2016 and 3.4 days in 2015.

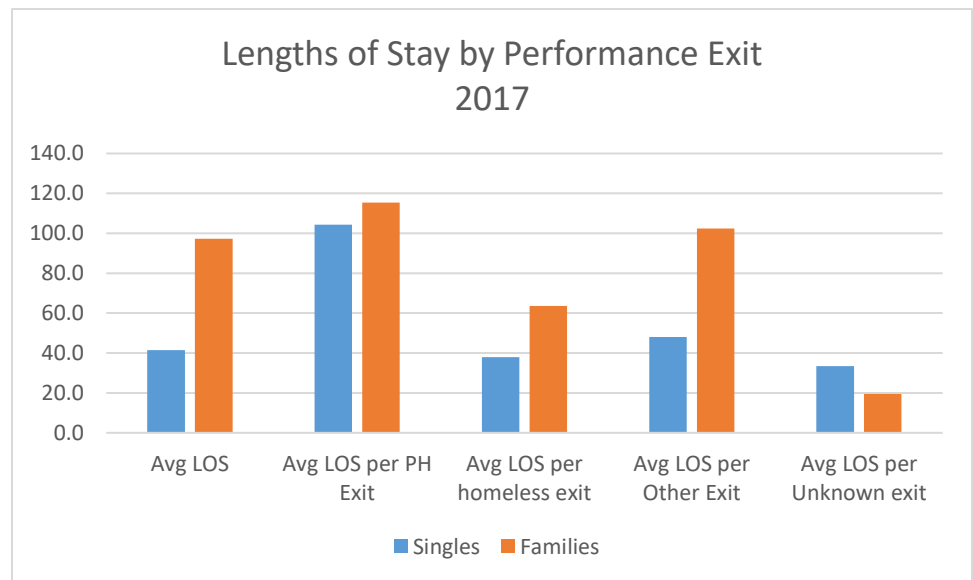


Figure 10: Data collected from Austin/Travis County TX-503: Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

Data for the ARCH shows that in 2017, two individuals out of 1,526 exits (.1%) of all individuals staying at the ARCH and not receiving case management, exited to a permanent housing destination, 18 individuals exited to homelessness (1.2%), and 1,502 (98.4%) exits were to “Unknown.” For the 195 individuals receiving case management<sup>9</sup> who exited the ARCH, 96 (49%) exited to permanent housing, 44 exited to homelessness (22.6%) and 37 (19%) exited to “Unknown.” Data for the Salvation Army Downtown Shelter shows that 133 (10.6%) out of 1,249 individuals who exited, exited to a permanent housing destination and 858 (68.7%) out of 1,249 exited to “Unknown” destinations. The Salvation Army’s Austin Shelter for Women and Children data shows that in 2017, seven (43.8%) individuals out of 16 exited to permanent housing. 2016 and 2015 length of stay performance shared above for both the ARCH and the Salvation Army is consistent.

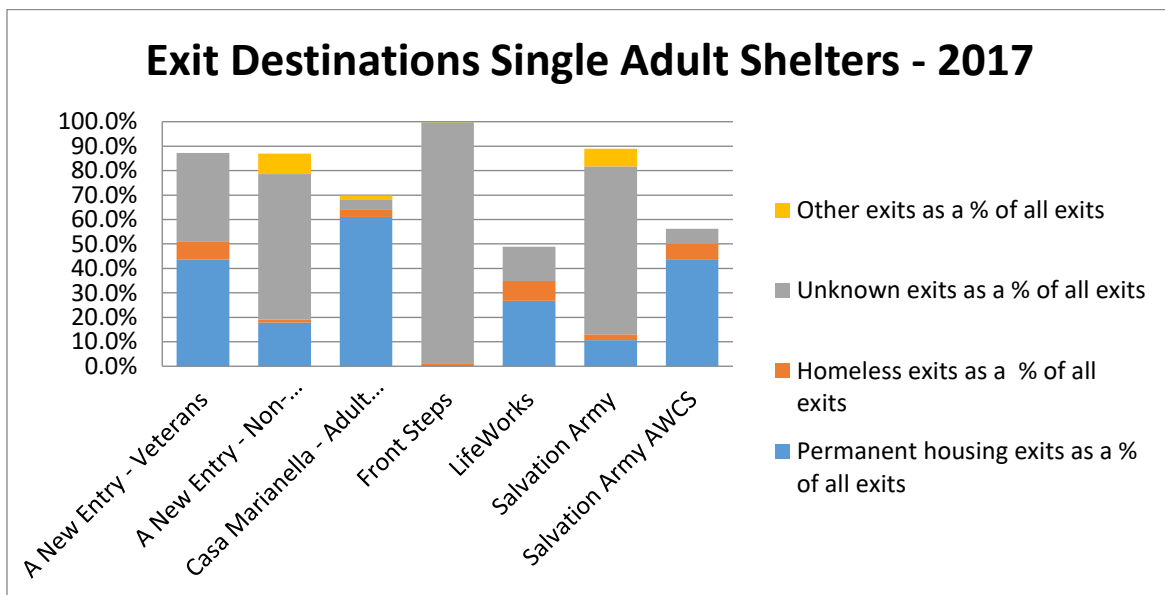


Figure 11: Data collected from Austin/Travis County TX-503: Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

Program level exit destination data in 2017 for families shows that the Salvation Army’s Downtown Shelter data shows that 29 out of 186 families (15.6%) exited to permanent housing destinations, while 38 (20.4%) exited to “Unknown” exits and 100 (53.8%) exited to “Other”<sup>10</sup>. Data for the Austin Shelter

<sup>9</sup> Case management services are not offered to all individuals who access services or sleep at the ARCH and may currently be provided by individuals who are not currently utilizing any services at the ARCH or who may be permanently housed.

<sup>10</sup> Please see U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HMIS Data Standards, Data Dictionary, June 2017, Version 1.2, Universal Data Element 3.12 Destination Responses: Psychiatric Hospital or other psychiatric facility; Substance abuse treatment facility or detox center; Hospital or other residential non-psychiatric medical facility; Jail, prison, or juvenile detention facility; staying or living with family, temporary tenure; staying or living with friends, temporary tenure; hotel or motel paid for without emergency shelter voucher; foster care or foster care group home; other; safe haven; and deceased; at <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/3824/hmis-data-dictionary/>.

for Women and Children shows that 98 (56.3%) out 174 families exited to permanent housing, while 16 (9.2%) exited to “Unknown” and zero families exited to “Other”.

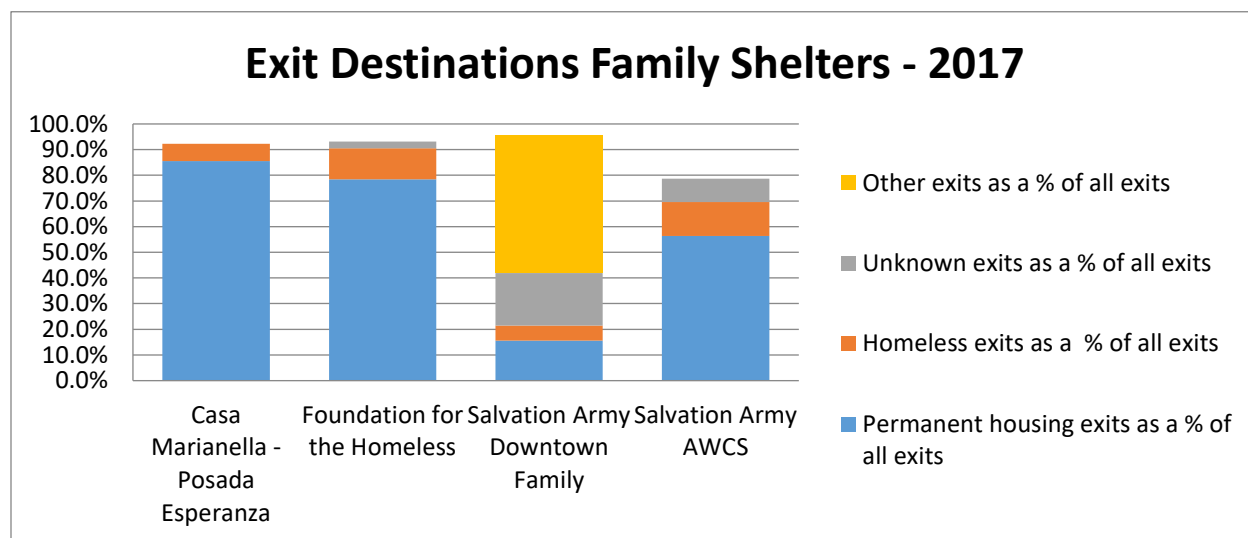


Figure 12: Data collected from Austin/Travis County TX-503: Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

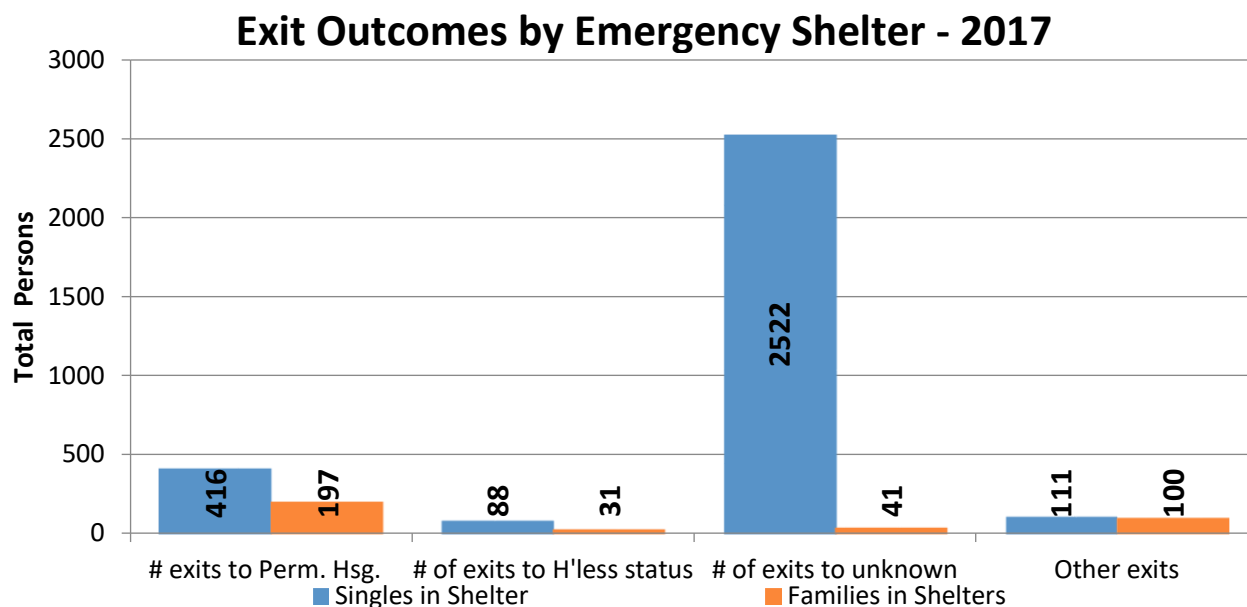


Figure 13: Data collected from Austin/Travis County TX-503: Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

An analysis of the 2016 System Performance Measure 2: *The Extent to which Persons who Exit Homelessness to Permanent Housing Destinations Return to Homelessness*<sup>11</sup> and a review of APR data shows those persons who exited from emergency shelter, 63 individuals (16%) and four families (2%) returned to homelessness in the 12 months since exiting, leaving 84% of individuals and 98% of families not recorded as having re-entered the homeless system since being permanently housed.

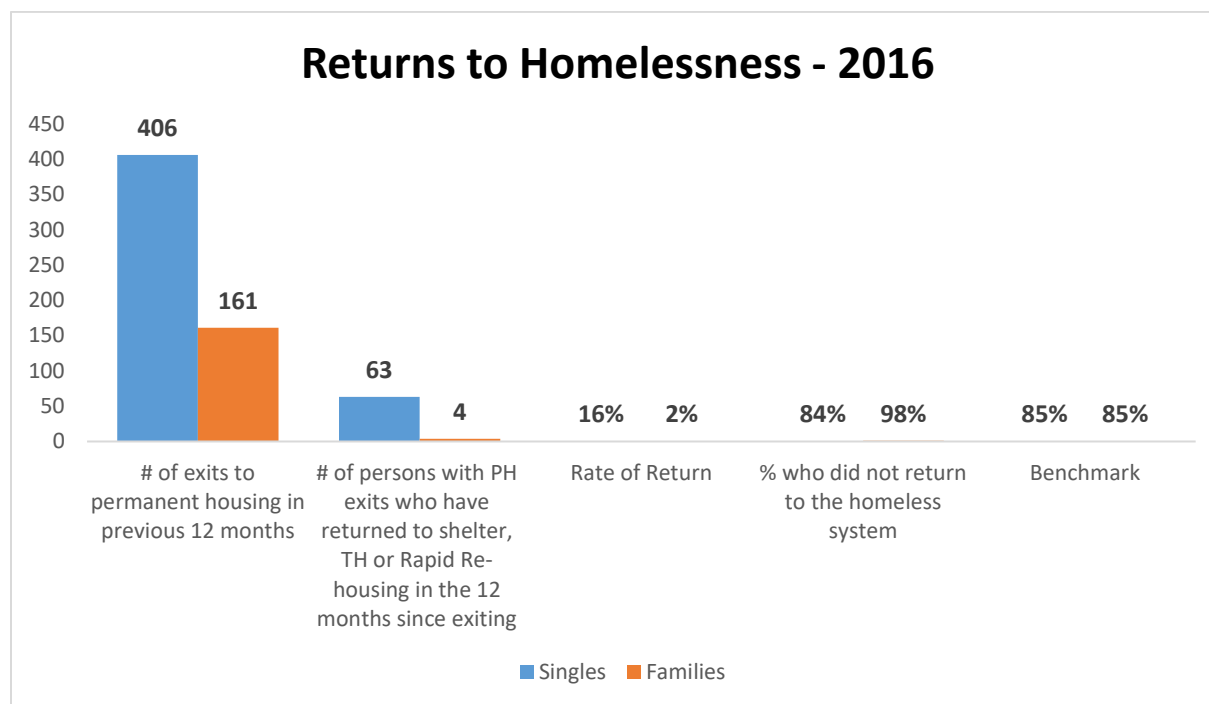


Figure 14: Data collected from Austin/Travis County TX-503: Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

## Design Elements, Issues and Recommendations for the ARCH

**The determined goal of shelter should be clear and guide the design of how it operates and how services are delivered.** A shelter will produce the outcomes for which it is designed. Ideally, emergency shelters should be a part of a crisis response system’s process for getting someone housed as quickly as possible, not serve as a destination or as a solution for homelessness. A shelter should not be designed as a place to stay for long periods of time or serve as a “one-stop” shop for various services; if so, the shelter will generate the mixed outcomes for which it is designed.

<sup>11</sup> System Performance Measure 2, measures participants who exited Services Only (SO), Emergency Shelter (ES), Transitional Housing (TH), Safe Haven (SH) or Permanent Housing (PH) to a permanent housing destination in the data range two years prior to the report date range. Of those participants, the measure reports on how many of them returned to homelessness as indicated in the HMIS for up to two years after their initial exit. For more information on HUD’s System Performance Measures visit: <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/system-performance-measures/>

**Shelters can serve various purposes.** One type of shelter may have the goal of managing homelessness. This type of shelter provides temporary shelter and meets basic needs for individuals and/or families. A shelter designed to meet this goal provides a place to sleep for the night, operates a “hostel” like environment where people come back for their bed or mat each night, provides basic needs such as showers and bathrooms, laundry, and mail services, as well as self-directed resources, information, and referrals.

**A shelter can also be designed with the goal to end homelessness for its participants.** A shelter designed to end homelessness has as its goal the permanent resolution of a household’s housing crisis. Shelter services are designed to assist in facilitating self-resolution, re-house households quickly, and reduce unsheltered homelessness. Shelters designed to achieve these goals do so by creating increased flow in the system by housing people more quickly, connecting households to coordinated entry, and connecting households to housing search and other resources to help them stabilize once housed.

**Currently, the ARCH is a blend of both shelter models described above.** Having both models within the same facility results in the mixed outcomes observed inside and directly outside the ARCH. The various types of programs at the ARCH – overnight shelter, day resource center, and day sleep –primarily offer temporary shelter or basic needs services and do not have the shared goal of assisting people to get back into permanent housing. While the ARCH is low-barrier, serving people that would likely have nowhere else to access services or shelter in the community, and the staff work very hard to provide services to as many people as they can, the programs are not designed with the goal of helping people resolve their housing crises. This disconnect among staff and the community’s understanding of the ARCH’s role and purpose results in varying outcomes across all levels of the organization. The ARCH is managing the experience of homelessness rather than permanently resolving it for a significant portion of people who use any of these programs.

**The Alliance and OrgCode recommend that the goal of the ARCH should be to end homelessness.** This goal should be achieved by transitioning the ARCH from managing people’s homelessness to resolving homelessness for every person staying at the ARCH. The ARCH’s staff should be provided the adequate resources, training, and support to build operational and staff capacity to provide low-barrier and housing-focused services and shelter while serving the people with the highest needs. All staff should be



trained on a Housing First and trauma-informed approach in order to adopt a new shared mission and vision to end homelessness for each person who uses the ARCH.

As the ARCH transitions to a shelter that is focused on ending homelessness and operates a low-barrier, housing-focused model, it should use data to measure both shelter and overall system performance as a whole. Key performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of shelter and the shelter system include:

- Increased exits to permanent housing
- Decreased length of stay in shelter
- Reduction in returns to homelessness

In addition to the above key performance measures, the ARCH and all shelters within the system should track monthly performance measures including:

- Total number of beds (i.e. unaccompanied individuals and/or families)
- Total unique households served
- Total households entering shelter
- Total households exiting
- Total households exiting to permanent housing
- Average length of shelter stay in days for all households exiting the shelter to any destination
- Average length of shelter stay in days for all households exiting to a permanent housing destination
- Total household stayers (those households who entered in previous months and did not exit this month)

Performance should be monitored regularly because shelter performance impacts the entire crisis response system in Austin. It is important that the data and narrative of operations and service delivery match as data illustrates need, capacity, local coordination, and the strategies taken to end homelessness. Ensuring performance data is used for strategic decision making ensures improved system performance and more participants served with best practices.

The ARCH and *all shelters* within the system should be contracted to track their performance by analyzing:

- The number of long stayers being housed more quickly as compared to the number of households are staying in shelter for over a year.
- How shelter is prioritizing people who are unsheltered, the most vulnerable, have infants or small children versus whether shelter is taking households on a first-come, first served basis.
- Whether shelter utilization is at 90-100% capacity versus 60-80% capacity.

To ensure improved performance at the ARCH and create an effective shelter system focused on reducing homelessness in Austin/Travis County, Austin Public Health, relevant stakeholders, and funders should engage emergency shelters and related programs in a shelter re-design process. The re-design process should focus on transitioning high-barrier shelters to low-barrier and housing-focused shelters that are part of a system to reduce how long people are homeless, increase exits to permanent housing, and reduce returns to homelessness.

The Alliance and OrgCode identified key design elements and issues impacting the outcomes of the ARCH and make the following recommendations to improve performance aimed at ending homelessness for those staying at the ARCH. **To effectively implement the recommendations below, a higher investment in shelter staff's salaries, skills, training, and knowledge will likely be needed.**

### Design Element: Access to Shelter and Shelter Entry

#### Issues at the ARCH:

- According to the HOST Team, I-TEAM, Austin Police Department, and various stakeholders, many people living outside the ARCH would rather not enter the ARCH because of various barriers and health and safety concerns.
- The ARCH has adopted a low-barrier approach with regard to people who are under the influence of alcohol and drugs; however, it's not always clear to consumers how decisions to screen out those who are under the influence are made.
- The ARCH does not allow pets, partners of the opposite sex, nor possessions other than what can be carried on one's back.
- The ARCH has a curfew and sometimes lets people come in after hours for various reasons (employment, appointments, etc.) but the policy is not applied consistently.
- The ARCH does not prioritize individuals based on vulnerability factors for entry into shelter. It uses a first-come, first-served approach to entry using a lottery or partner referral process.

- Everyone staying in the ARCH's overnight shelter must leave each morning. Despite being able to come back to use day services, they must physically leave the building and line back up for entry. This makes it less appealing for people who don't want to leave between 5:00-7:00am.
- The ARCH does not practice diversion strategies at the front door of shelter.
- The rules at the ARCH are posted out front and throughout the shelter but many consumers have voiced a lack of understanding of staff discretion about who can stay and who is exited.

**Recommendation: Remove unnecessary barriers and improve access to shelter for those who need it most by ensuring low-barrier access**

While the ARCH currently operates a partially low-barrier model, there are other barriers that could be removed to make the ARCH more accessible and accommodating to people who are living unsheltered.

To lower barriers, the ARCH should:

- Operate the ARCH 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Avoid making people leave early in the morning or line up in the evenings at a certain time to get their bed.
- Integrate the day services with the overnight shelter into a seamless service delivery model targeted for people staying overnight at the ARCH.
  - People who are staying overnight should not have to leave in the morning and come back to receive services during the day. Allow for current "day resource center" services (case management, basic needs services, employment, and health services) to be targeted to the people in the overnight shelter.
- Day Resource Center's basic needs services that are utilized by people who are not staying overnight at the ARCH should either be moved to a separate area or another location to make it easier for people staying overnight to get the housing-focused services they need to permanent resolve their housing crisis. The Day Resource Center's basic needs and health services are important to the people using them but do not have the goal of permanent housing and cause many challenges in managing the building and the space inside and directly outside of the ARCH. The Day Resource Center's services should be evaluated to get a better understanding of who is using them. (See recommendations below regarding services at the ARCH for more details.).
- Eliminate any current entry requirements not pertaining to safety, funding, or legal requirements.
- Accommodate the ability to bring more of people's possessions inside with them.
- Encourage re-configuration of space to allow for people to come in with their partners.

- Encourage re-configuration of space to allow for people to come in with pets (if possible).
- Allow people to come in after hours if needed.
- Use “Amnesty Totes” for possessions:
  - Amnesty Totes should be made available to all shelter participants to place weapons, alcohol and drugs - as well as anything else - during their stay in the shelter.
  - Access to Amnesty Totes should be prohibited while people are in the shelter and made available only upon entry and exit from the shelter, daily.
- Create a more welcoming entry into shelter while still maintaining safety for participants and staff.
  - Re-design the entry and security process to be more welcoming while prioritizing safety.
  - Staff should greet participants as they enter instead of having participants being first greeted by security guards and metal detectors. This can create an institutional and punitive atmosphere and often creates more of a feeling of anxiety and an unhelpful power dynamic between staff and participants, rather than creating a safer environment. Staff can be trained on how to provide client safety services and security searches upon entry in a more respectful manner.
- Eliminate shelter entry rules not necessary for the safety of residents and staff and have transparent behavioral expectations.
  - Focus on behaviors and safety of shelter participants.
    - It is fair, reasonable, and appropriate for the ARCH to have policies and procedures that inform service users that they cannot take weapons, alcohol or drugs into the building, and must turn over prescription medications for safe storage when in the shelter and receiving services.
- If the ARCH chooses to implement metal detectors or search of belongings, this should happen with the provision of amnesty totes. Otherwise, or in addition, use safety officers that are a trained part of the staff and understand the mission of the organization to end homelessness rather than traditional contracted security guards.
  - The intention of safety offices is to have presence and circulate regularly throughout the facility while using engagement and non-violent de-escalation to deal with any issues as they come up.
  - Safety officers are present to promote peace and safety, not to police the activity of shelter participants.

## Recommendation: Prioritize the most vulnerable households for shelter

To ensure that the most vulnerable households are prioritized for shelter, the ARCH should:

- Eliminate lottery and first-come first-serve options for entry.
- Use community-determined prioritization factors to decide who should sleep at the ARCH.
- **Assign 50% of beds to coordinated entry referral.**
  - The process that a community goes through to identify the factors is as important as the factors themselves so everyone has buy-in. A community-wide decision making process should be used to determine prioritization.
  - While the system needs a consistent prioritization process for matching people to available housing interventions, the system has to **also** have a prioritization process for who gets shelter beds.
  - The prioritization, assessment, and referral procedures to shelter **may be different** than those used for matching people to housing interventions. This is because people who should be prioritized for a permanent housing intervention may be different than people who need immediate shelter.

## Design Element: Physical Capacity, Health and Safety

### Issues at the ARCH:

- Consumers of the ARCH and the community-at-large believe the ARCH is overcrowded and operating at over maximum capacity thus fueling a chaotic environment inside and out.
- The ARCH building was originally meant to serve less people (approximately 100 people in bunk beds).
- Bed bugs are mentioned as a common concern amongst staff, consumers, and stakeholders.
- Consumers cited bed bugs as a reason they won't sleep overnight or are uncomfortable staying overnight.

## Recommendation: Improve physical conditions and building operation for people who stay overnight at the ARCH

To ensure a safe and healthy environment while operating at maximum capacity, the ARCH should ensure:

#### Capacity:

- Each bed should have 37.7 square feet of space within a designated sleeping area.
- A 200 square foot room, therefore, could accommodate 2 bunks and 1 separate bed or 5 separate beds.
- Each bed, including lateral distance in bunks, should have a 2.5 foot space buffer between beds.
- Based on the current square footage at the ARCH:
  - 3rd floor can accommodate 68 beds or 34 bunks (decrease from 100 beds)
  - 2nd floor can accommodate the 30 mats (currently accommodates this)
  - 1st floor could accommodate up to 69 mats
  - Can serve a total of 167 people according to space available
- If the ARCH serves a total of 167 people according to space available:
  - Must provide case management to all 167 people
  - Case management ratios should be 1:20 therefore ARCH needs about 8 FTE housing case management positions. The ARCH should *explore the re-positioning/changing the role of other staff to be housing case managers*

#### Air Flow:

- Meet minimum “ASHRAE” standards for outdoor air flow
- Meet a minimum of 6 air changes per hour, and preferably 12 air changes per hour
- Ensure proper filtration in place
- Ensure bathrooms are vented with adequate air flow

#### Urinals, Toilets, Showers, and Sinks:

- A minimum of one (1) washroom that is barrier-free, fully accessible and designated gender neutral in each shelter.
- A minimum of one (1) toilet for every fifteen (15) participants up to the first one-hundred (100). participants, and one (1) toilet for every thirty (30) participants thereafter. Urinals may replace up to half the number of required toilets in men’s washrooms.
- A minimum of one (1) washbasin for every fifteen (15) participants.
- A minimum of one (1) soap dispenser within 0.6 m. (2 ft.) of each washbasin.

### *Kitchen*

- A commercial kitchen is best, designed and maintained to the same requirements that public health inspectors have for restaurants in the community.
- Any kitchen is only as safe as the safety of the food that is brought onto the premises and the food handling certification and practices of food preparation and serving staff.

### *Health & Safety*

- Implement robust pest management protocol, including the following routine activities like:
  - Separation distance between beds and walls
  - Routine spraying and monitoring
  - Bed bug resistant furniture
  - Frequently washed bedding in high heat and wash/dry
  - Voluntary heat treatment for clothing, bedding and belongings
  - Dusting bed legs, window sills, electrical sockets, etc. with diatomaceous earth (pest control product)
- During periods of considerable bed bug infestation, stricter protocols and actions are in place and necessary. These include activities like:
  - Mandatory heat treatment of clothing, bedding and belongings being brought into the facility
  - Providing bins for belongings
  - Increases in traps to monitor bed bug activity
  - More frequent spraying and eradication
  - In very specific circumstances, removal of infested furnishings from the premises
- Provide clean linens and towels and launder regularly.
- Improve plumbing and other over-taxed building operations.
- Plumbing and other over-taxed building operations – review I-team recommendations.

### *Design Element: Programming and Service Delivery Inside the ARCH*

#### *Issues at the ARCH:*

- ARCH has various service delivery programs:
  - **Overnight Shelter:**
    - Overnight sleeping capacity is 100 beds and 90 mats for homeless single adult men seven nights per week.



- Services for overnight shelter participants include: on-site breakfast, dinner, showers and lockers, and case management.
  - Participants obtain a bed or mat through participation in case management or a nightly lottery.
- **Day Sleeping:**
  - 50 beds available for women and men
  - This is far underutilized usually, averaging far less people using day sleeping normally
- **Day Resource Center (DRC):**
  - Provides homeless individuals with information, referrals and case management
  - Basic services include: showers, telephones, voicemail boxes, mailing address, laundry facilities, clothing, and lockers.
- **Cold Weather Shelter:**
  - Coordinates church shelters and with the City of Austin, Salvation Army, Red Cross, Parks and Recreation to offer additional shelter when the temperature gets below 35 degrees.
- **Current Co-Located Agencies:**
  - Mental health and substance abuse outreach and counseling
  - Social Service agencies assisting connecting participants with programs such as Social Security, Disability, internet access, employment
  - Veterans Administrations services
  - CommUnity Care Clinic that offers free and low cost health services
- **Structure split between shelter and housing programs which have different goals**
  - Shelter case management is under Housing Programs (disconnected from shelter)
- **Case Management Services**
  - Case management at the ARCH is focused on three areas: income, housing, and self-care.
  - Only 80-100 people are in “case management” beds and those are the people who receive case management if they choose.
  - It is unclear what kind of case management services are delivered based on the focus area and how the case management is geared to moving people quickly into housing.
  - How someone is prioritized for case management services is not clear nor transparent

to consumers or the community-at-large and may not be based on serving the most vulnerable individuals.

- Data shows that approximately 50% of people in case management beds are exiting to some kind of housing (broadly defined).
- People in mats are not offered case management but do have access to other resources, such as the resource navigators and floor managers, as well as co-located services during the day.
- Case management services are not offered to all individuals who access services or sleep at the ARCH and may currently be provided to individuals who are not currently utilizing any services at the ARCH or who may be permanently housed.
- Housing outcome data (i.e. exits to permanent housing, exits to homelessness, length of stay) is not tracked for individuals who access night shelter or recuperation beds (non-case management beds).

**Recommendation: Make all services and programming at the ARCH focused on obtaining and sustaining housing and connect all people staying at the ARCH to voluntary housing-focused case management**

To ensure that the primary goal of the ARCH is to resolve an individual's housing crisis, as quickly as possible, ARCH staff should engage all persons served at the ARCH in housing-focused services. The following steps should be taken to achieve this recommendation:

- Work with community partners to develop a system-wide diversion strategy before people enter shelter
  - Shelter diversion services for all individuals seeking shelter is a critical component to an effective homeless response system and can happen at the ARCH or just before someone is enrolled at the ARCH.
  - Diversion is about providing services to help individuals navigate a safe housing alternative to shelter that is appropriate to their specific circumstances through an investment of staff time (often dedicated staff) that have specific problem-solving skills and access to flexible resources to put the solution into action.
  - Only after Diversion activities/strategies are exhausted and the client still chooses to enter shelter should persons be admitted into shelter.
- Promote housing-focused services and solutions throughout every part of a person's experience

of the ARCH

- The focus on moving people out of shelter into a permanent housing solution should begin at the moment someone enters shelter.
- Participants should understand that the sole focus of their efforts and the staff's assistance is to help participants end their homelessness by finding a housing solution as quickly as possible.
- To accomplish a housing-focused infrastructure:
  - Develop a housing plan within the first week of a participant's stay in shelter that includes short-term and achievable goals that are created by the participant rather than the staff person and have short-term benchmarks to show progress.
  - Create a "housing-focused" environment throughout the shelter, including apartment listings, guidance on how to apply for housing, information on how to access benefits, and messaging that celebrates the success of each household that moves into housing.
  - Focus case management activities on obtaining and sustaining housing.
  - Identify participants' barriers to housing and identify resources to address barriers.
  - Conduct regular and frequent in-person case management meetings that focus on a housing plan and adjust the plan as needed.
  - Promote messaging that everyone is housing ready as soon as they enter shelter.
- Change staff job descriptions and job titles to align with Housing First principles and housing-focused activities. Examples include:
  - **Housing Resources Engagement Specialist**
    - Intake, Assessment, Resource, Information and Referral
  - **Housing Navigator**
    - Housing Search
  - **Housing Case Manager**
    - Housing-focused case plans
- Re-train staff to serve as housing specialists
  - Trauma-informed care
  - Housing search
  - Housing case planning
  - Document readiness
  - Assessing and removing barriers to housing

- Salaries should match higher level of skills needed to perform housing-focused services
- Unrelenting housing focus for each person staying at the ARCH should begin at intake
  - Intensive engagement on housing begins on day one with a strong focus on self-resolution.
  - This should continue for approximately the first two weeks; a combination of staff engagement and use of passive resources to support this process.
- For those unable to self-resolve, and at approximately 14 days, housing case management supports should be approximately 1:20 and available during daytime hours.

### Recommendation: Increase availability of Rapid Re-housing and Permanent Supportive Housing

To support system flow at the ARCH, the homeless response system must at the same time continue efforts to expand housing resources. Stakeholders and funders should keep in mind the following:

- If the system is going to add a shelter bed (because data shows the need), the community must think through how people will get out of shelter.
- One shelter bed added to the system requires approximately six housing resources per year to avoid warehousing people in shelter.
- If each bed in the shelter needs to turn over once every 60 days, then it will turn over 6 times in a year.
- Each turnover needs a pathway to a positive destination; the system must resource shelter exits at the same time that the system resources shelter expansion.
- Adopt Rapid Re-Housing as the community's primary response to homelessness and bring it to scale.
  - Standardize and improve practice – adopt national performance benchmark and program standards
  - Mobilize partners to support Rapid Re-Housing
- Target PSH to most vulnerable people in shelter.

### Design Element: Day Resource Center and Day Services

Issues at the ARCH:

- Data is lacking to determine who utilizes the basic needs services of the ARCH and whether those services are being utilized by the individuals sleeping there.
- Individuals experiencing homelessness that are accessing basic needs services at the ARCH are

not strategically engaged in housing-focused services.

- The co-located services may or may not be integrated into the ARCH's case management services, may be duplicative (i.e. VA is also on-site at Salvation Army) and it is unclear whether the co-located services are services best matched to a housing focus.
- Day services causes service interruptions for the people sleeping at the ARCH (causing them to have to leave in the morning).
- Day services are offered to people who aren't sleeping at the ARCH, which means a different population is accessing the ARCH during the day than during the night. This may be correlated to the people who are crowding around the ARCH during the day.

**Recommendation: Integrate the ARCH's Day Resource Center services into a service delivery model only for people who are sleeping at the ARCH and move basic needs services for other people to another location**

#### *Day Resource Center:*

If the ARCH is positioned towards ending homelessness, then the current Day Resource Center services should seamlessly integrate into the work of ending homelessness through housing.

- With a seamlessly integrated service delivery model at the ARCH for overnight participants, non-shelter participants would no longer be able to access the ARCH for the purpose of solely using a telephone, restroom, shower, mail, locker, etc. However, ***THESE SERVICES SHOULD BE PROVIDED ELSEWHERE TO PEOPLE NOT STAYING AT THE ARCH AND SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY HOUSING CRISIS RESOLUTION ASSISTANCE AS WELL.***

One of the primary problems with the ARCH and the circumstances outside its doors is that it operates as a drop-in service as well as a shelter. If the ARCH is a housing-focused shelter and stops operating drop-in services, then:

- Occupants can work on housing and associated work during the day, leaving the facility when engaged in housing visits, landlord meetings, etc.
- Occupants can maximize the use of computers for housing search.
- Safe document storage for housing-related documents occurs.
- Staff time in the Day Resource Center becomes exclusively focused on assisting occupants with housing search and related activities like securing documentation (that are then stored in the

document bank).

*Co-Located Services:*

- Co-located services should support the ARCH's new housing-focused services delivery model and made available to people staying at the ARCH rather than to anyone in the community who needs them.

*Outside the ARCH:*

- Make the agency responsible for the impact of its own service delivery. For example:
  - Lining up outside
  - Hours of operation that cause issues outside
  - Incidents that ARCH participants are involved in immediately outside the ARCH
- Make staff engage people outside regularly for services, trust-building, shelter entry.

## System Recommendations to Support the ARCH's Success

The Alliance and OrgCode make the following additional recommendations to the overall homeless response system to ensure the ARCH's successful transition to a low-barrier access, and housing-focused shelter.

### Resolving Issues "Outside" the ARCH

It is important for the community to be clear about what the ARCH's role and purpose is and what responsibilities come with that role in regard to homelessness as a whole in Austin. With a goal of ending homelessness for the participants staying at the ARCH, the ARCH *is* responsible for what directly impacts its participants as well as the outcomes of its service delivery model and operations. The ARCH *is not* responsible for all street homelessness. Such a broad responsibility rests with the entire community including several city agencies besides Austin Public Health; the community must look at what is happening immediately outside of the ARCH as not being solely as a result of the ARCH's service delivery model and respond accordingly. The issue of street homelessness is one that requires a broader response than changes inside the ARCH can produce.

That being said, service delivery changes inside the ARCH can make a positive impact in what is happening directly outside the building. If the community chooses to allow day resources at the ARCH to be integrated into the overall service delivery for those staying at the ARCH, and changes policies that result in long lines outside the ARCH in the mornings and evenings, the impact of those changes should result in less unwanted activity directly outside the ARCH.

Whether true or not, there is a perception that the community accepts that people can camp and sleep on the front steps of the ARCH and that illegal activities in front of and adjacent to the ARCH are tolerated. The result of this perception is a growing sense of permanency and acceptance around the establishment of what appear to be encampments in the direct vicinity of the ARCH and the block it is located on. While NAEH strongly recommends not implementing any policies that criminalize behaviors associated with homelessness (such as sleeping or sitting on the sidewalk), there are ways that partnerships with law enforcement, outreach staff, emergency medical staff, and neighborhood agencies can work to change this perception that currently exists and reduce the concentration of activities that currently exist outside the building.



While identification and services have been offered to people outside of the ARCH in the past, any new attempts to engage people who are outside the ARCH *must include providing services and housing that are different than what they have been offered in the past and actually respond to their housing needs*, rather than offering them a shelter bed or a mat that will not lead to a permanent resolution of their homelessness. **People who are living outside and using the day services at the ARCH need to be offered solutions that work to permanently take them off the street.**

### Recommendations to Address Issues Outside the ARCH

The Alliance and Orgcode recommend that Austin/Travis County develop strategies and secure resources and funding to:

- Implement intensive street outreach, identification, and service engagement to everyone outside the ARCH for a period of time that coincides with the transition to a low-barrier, housing-focused model the Alliance recommends for the ARCH.
- Increase the presence of the Austin Police Department and HOST Team outside and in the vicinity of the ARCH
- Employ front-to-back Encampment Housing-focused Resolution Strategies such as those developed and executed in San Francisco
- Staff the outside of the ARCH with “client safety service staff” that are trained in crisis de-escalation, positive relationship management, and can manage the flow into and out of the building much better than security guards are able to do
- Evaluate the need to **potentially increase shelter bed capacity for single adults** in the community through a data-driven process to determine need; the community may need to create smaller, temporary shelter sites throughout the area to alleviate the need for people to sleep outside until shelter capacity is at a more optimal flow. **Any increase in shelter capacity should be matched with an increase in re-housing capacity.**

# APPENDIX FOR THE RE-DESIGN OF EMERGENCY SHELTERS IN AUSTIN

National Alliance to End Homelessness  
OrgCode Consulting, Inc.

## Appendix Contents

Enclosed within the appendix are resources to assist the City of Austin as they re-design the ARCH, including: resources from [LA Family Housing](#), one of the largest comprehensive real estate developer and homeless service provider agencies in Los Angeles as well as resources from the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) [Emergency Shelter Learning Series](#).

- Housing Coordinator Position Description – Source: LA Family Housing
- Housing Navigator Position Description – Source: LA Family Housing
- Housing Stabilization Coordinator – Source: LA Family Housing
- Housing Stabilizer – Source: LA Family Housing
- Emergency Shelter Monthly Metrics Form – Source: NAEH
- 10 Steps to Evaluating Your Shelter Rules Source: NAEH
- The Five Keys to Effective Shelter: NAEH

All above resources are shared with permission by LA Family Housing and the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

# LA FAMILY HOUSING

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

**POSITION TITLE:** Housing Coordinator II

**SECTION:** Programs

**LOCATION:** North Hollywood

### SUMMARY OF CORE VALUES

LA Family Housing (LAFH) helps people transition out of homelessness and poverty by providing a continuum of housing enriched with supportive services. Our model is based on an individualized approach to meet each program participant's unique needs.

This model connects participants to permanent housing and helps them achieve long-term housing stability through a full continuum of services. Through our outreach & assessment process, LAFH connects participants with housing placement combined with supportive services to help thousands of people transition out of homelessness and retain long-term housing stability. We increase our impact through community partnerships and real estate development, supported by financial sustainability.

We base all of our work on **four core values**; *DIGNITY, PERSISTENCE, COLLABORATION*, and *LEADERSHIP*. Everything we do is connected to one or more of these four values and is reflected in the job duties of each staff position.

### SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible for providing assistance and support to homeless families and individuals in the following area: housing readiness documents, accessing housing assistance programs (e.g. Section 8, RRH, Crisis Housing), and permanent housing placement. Responsible for the development and implementation of a housing plan for each program participant including a projected budget plan. In addition, the Housing Coordinator will be responsible for teaching housing skills in an individual or group format. This position requires extensive coordination with multiple components within the LAFH Program Department (e.g. Family Response Team, Housing Location Team, and Stabilization Team) and Property Management (e.g. when applying for LAFH properties) to facilitate optimum outcomes for families and individuals moving into

# LA FAMILY HOUSING

permanent housing. May provide training and mentoring to other team members including new staff hires.

## **SPECIFIC DUTIES**

1. Review the housing intake and assessment for each family/individual accessing services to evaluate housing needs, history and service/support needs. Develop and implement an individual housing plan for each client.
2. Facilitate access to services required to foster housing readiness (credit repair, legal aid, housekeeping, money management, tenant rights and responsibilities, etc.) as needed.
3. Develop a projected budget plan that enables families and individuals to see what type of housing is affordable and manageable after assistance ends (for those in RRH) and how to live within their means.
4. Provide advocacy on behalf of program participants for housing and/or services related issues.
5. Provide information and instruction to clients regarding how to complete a housing application, housing search, tenant rights and responsibilities, including: observation of rental agreement rules, and being a good neighbor.
6. Document all resident encounters and maintain thorough and accurate records for reporting purposes.
7. Assist clients in obtaining rental assistance including, but not limited to Section 8 certification, RRH, PSH, and other housing programs.
8. Provide referrals to WorkSource Centers for employment resumes and work in collaboration with the LAFH job development team for employment placement opportunities.
9. Provide referrals for mental health, substance abuse, and other services as deemed necessary (e.g. food banks, credit repair).
10. Attend agency and community meetings as directed by supervisor.
11. Additional tasks, projects and responsibilities as assigned by supervisor.

# LA FAMILY HOUSING

## ACCOUNTABILITY AND REVIEW

Position reports to: Housing Services Manager-Family Programs

Performance review: Annual

## DIRECT REPORTS

Number of employees receiving work direction: None

Position titles reporting to position: None

## MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

### KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:
  - Demonstrated knowledge of housing search skills including housing location, filling out housing applications, and the lease-up process
  - Ability to teach housing search skills to participant in individual or group setting
  - Knowledge of housing assistance programs including: CalWorks Move-In Assistance, EHAP, etc.
  - Tenant/landlord law and tenant/landlord/relations
  - Creative problem-solving skills
  - Must be able to perform extensive charting, electronic data entry and documentation
  - Advocacy skills
  - Excellent written and verbal communication skills
  - Ability to work in a team and independently
  - Bilingual: Spanish/English preferred, but not required
  - Must have valid CA driver's license

### EDUCATION

- Master's Degree in social services or BA degree and three years of experience in social services

# LA FAMILY HOUSING

## EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION

FLSA Status: Non-Exempt

Payroll Status: Hourly

Work Schedule: Full-time

## PHYSICAL DEMANDS, ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS, EQUIPMENT

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of the job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential job functions. Employee may be in contact with individuals and families in crisis who may be ill, using substances and/or not attentive to personal health and safety for themselves. The employee may experience a number of unpleasant sensory demands associated with the client's use of alcohol and drugs, and the lack of personal care. The employee must be ready to respond quickly and effectively to many types of situations, including crisis situations and potentially hostile situations. Employee is required to: Walk and climb stairs; Handle, finger, grasp and feel objects and equipment; Reach with hands and arms; Communicate, receive and exchange ideas, information by means of the spoken and written word; Be mobile by moving oneself from place to place quickly and easily; Repeat various motions with the wrists, hands and fingers; Be able to have visual activity for (including, but not limited to) administrative and clerical tasks; Drive personal vehicle in and around Los Angeles County and periodically transport clients; Be able to enter various buildings that may require climbing stairs. Be subjected to outside environmental conditions. Use a personal and/or laptop computer; copy, postage and fax machines. Complete all required forms in personal writing.

Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions. If you require an accommodation, please make sure to inform the Human Resources Department by the first week of employment. If an accommodation is not required at the time of employment, but is later required, you must inform the Human Resources Department of the need for accommodation at the time it is needed.

# LA FAMILY HOUSING

***With my signature below, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the above job description. I understand that if I have questions regarding my job duties, responsibilities and/or Core Values, I should contact my immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Department.***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# LA FAMILY HOUSING

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

<b>POSITION TITLE:</b>	Housing Navigator II
<b>SECTION:</b>	Programs
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Field-SPA 2

### SUMMARY OF CORE VALUES

LA Family Housing (LAFH) helps people transition out of homelessness and poverty by providing a continuum of housing enriched with supportive services. Our model is based on an individualized approach to meet each program participant's unique needs.

This model connects participants to permanent housing and helps them achieve long-term housing stability through a full continuum of services. Through our outreach & assessment process, LAFH connects participants with housing placement combined with supportive services to help thousands of people transition out of homelessness and retain long-term housing stability. We increase our impact through community partnerships and real estate development, supported by financial sustainability.

We base all of our work on **four core values**; *DIGNITY, PERSERVERENCE, COLLABORATION*, and *LEADERSHIP*. Everything we do is connected to one or more of these four values and is reflected in the job duties of each staff position.

### SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The Housing Navigator II is responsible for providing assistance and support to homeless individuals and veterans in the following areas: housing focused case management, housing readiness, accessing housing assistance programs (e.g. Rapid Rehousing) and permanent housing placement. Duties include securing income documentation, creating a budget/savings plan, coordinating service referrals and crisis intervention. Coordination with Coordinated Entry System Navigation and Housing Stabilization team is required. Needed skillset includes maintenance of thorough and accurate records in both written form and through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). This position is field based. The goal will be to identify

# LA FAMILY HOUSING

homeless persons seeking services, administer assessment tool, and develop a Housing Stability Plan (HSP) to streamline program enrolled participants to permanent housing and needed services.

## **SPECIFIC DUTIES**

1. Conduct CES survey and housing assessment to determine appropriate permanent housing intervention and service needs. Navigate persons to permanent housing placement or programs that will assist with safe and stable housing.
2. Develop and implement an individual housing plan for each participant.
3. Connect program participants to community resources that will support the goal of permanent housing acquisition (i.e. benefits advocacy, food pantries, employment services).
4. Facilitate access to services required to foster housing readiness (credit repair, legal aid, housekeeping, money management, tenant rights and responsibilities, etc.).
5. Ensure participants have the necessary items to secure housing (e.g. valid identification, income verification, bank statements). Assist in the development and encourage adherence to a personal budget.
6. Work with Navigators from other agencies in SPA 2 to provide regional team engagement services.
7. Assist participants with completing housing applications and securing housing of their choice. Transport participants to housing and job searches and occasional visits to relevant social service agencies.
8. Provide participant with listings from housing location team, housing authority, internet (e.g. Craigslist), and internal database of landlords/management firms/owners.

# LA FAMILY HOUSING

9. Provide advocacy to help address issues and barriers between landlord and participant that may prevent move in. Assist with referrals to Fair Housing as needed.
10. Provide information and instruction to participants regarding how to complete a housing application, housing search, tenant rights and responsibilities, including observation of rental agreement rules, and being a good neighbor.
11. Follow-up with each participant at least weekly to ensure they are making progress towards their housing placement goals.
12. Assist clients in obtaining rental and move-in assistance as available.
13. Ensure that there is a “warm” hand-off to the housing stabilizer to provide ongoing in home supportive services.
14. Maintain accurate and complete participant files, daily activity logs, mileage logs, HMIS and other reports as directed.
15. Establish and maintain positive, productive working relationships with mental health programs, shelter programs, police, local neighborhood councils (and other local officials), and providers of services and resources to homeless persons.
16. Attend staff meetings, case conferences, training workshops and community meetings as needed.
17. Additional tasks, projects and responsibilities as assigned by supervisor.

## ACCOUNTABILITY AND REVIEW

Position reports to: Housing Manager

Performance review: Annual

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Revised 04.2017

Page 3 of 7

*LAFH is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work performed. They are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, and skills required of personnel in this classification.*

•Dignity

•Perseverance

•Collaboration

•Leadership

# LA FAMILY HOUSING

## DIRECT REPORTS

Number of employees receiving work direction: None

Position titles reporting to position: N/A

## MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- Passion for ending homelessness
- Maintaining a non-judgmental attitude and a display of unconditional positive regard when working with persons experiencing homelessness.
- Ability to have a “whatever it takes” attitude when working with challenging individuals. In addition to working in a typical office environment, Navigator will be required to work in areas inhabited by homeless persons, to include working in dirty environments and dealing with challenging individuals.
- Demonstrated knowledge of housing search skills including housing location, filling out housing applications, and the lease-up process
- Ability to work independently in a field based position and flexible hours
- Ability to teach housing search skills to participant in individual or group setting
- Knowledge of housing assistance programs including Veteran Services, Rapid Rehousing, and Section 8.
- Knowledge familiarity with Harm Reduction and Housing First models of service delivery.
- Ability to network and build relationships; locate and develop housing contacts
- Ability to act as a liaison between the client and landlord/property owner to resolve issues
- Creative problem-solving skills
- Must be able to perform extensive charting, electronic data entry and documentation
- Strong advocacy skills
- Ability to work in a team and independently
- Bilingual: Spanish/English preferred, but not required
- Must have valid CA driver’s license

## EDUCATION

- BA degree and three years of experience in social services or Master’s Degree in social work or related field.

# LA FAMILY HOUSING

## EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION

FLSA Status: Non-Exempt

Payroll Status: Hourly

Work Schedule: Full-time

## PHYSICAL DEMANDS, ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS, EQUIPMENT

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of the job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential job functions. Employee may be in contact with individuals and families in crisis who may be ill, using substances and/or not attentive to personal health and safety for themselves. The employee may experience a number of unpleasant sensory demands associated with the client's use of alcohol and drugs, and the lack of personal care.

The employee must be ready to respond quickly and effectively to many types of situations, including crisis situations and potentially hostile situations Employee is required to: Walk and climb stairs; Handle, finger, grasp and feel objects and equipment; Reach with hands and arms; Communicate, receive and exchange ideas, information by means of the spoken and written word; Be mobile by moving oneself from place to place quickly and easily; Repeat various motions with the wrists, hands and fingers; Be able to have visual activity for (including, but not limited to) administrative and clerical tasks; Drive personal vehicle in and around Los Angeles County and periodically transport clients; Be able to enter various buildings that may require climbing stairs. Be subjected to outside environmental conditions. Use a personal and/or laptop computer; copy, postage and fax machines. Complete all required forms in personal writing.

# LA FAMILY HOUSING

***With my signature below, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the above job description. I understand that if I have questions regarding my job duties, responsibilities and/or Core Values, I should contact my immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Department.***

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# POSITION DESCRIPTION

<b>POSITION TITLE:</b>	Housing Stabilization Coordinator II
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	Programs
<b>LOCATION:</b>	North Hollywood

## SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible for providing assistance and support to formerly homeless individuals/families who are newly housed through the RRH Program (Rapid Re-Housing for Individuals/Families and Veterans) in the following areas: housing sustainability, increasing income, accessing housing assistance programs (e.g. utility arrear programs, eviction prevention resources), and linkage to housing retention resources in the community. Responsible for the development and implementation of a housing retention plan for each program participant and assess for rental assistance provision. Identify potential housing barriers and interventions to address such barriers. Conduct follow-up support via phone, mail, or in person. May be tasked with mentoring and coaching new team hires.

## SPECIFIC DUTIES:

1. Create a Housing Retention Plan with tenants enrolled in RRH to evaluate rental assistance needs, and service/support needs. Coordinate retention plan with other support persons that tenants may be linked to and ensure tenants have the necessary items to retain permanent housing beyond the rental assistance period (e.g. employment support, resources for food, assistance with landlord/tenant mediation if needed, etc.).
2. Provide case management by facilitating access to services required to foster housing sustainability (employment, credit repair, legal aid, money management, tenant rights and responsibilities, mental health, benefits enrollment, etc.). Provide assistance (one-on-one and group settings) to tenants in the area of increasing skills of independent living such as paying bills, household management, personal care, cooking and nutrition.

3. Provide crisis intervention as needed, if tenant is at imminent risk of returning to homelessness.
4. Provide advocacy as needed to help address issues and barriers between landlord and client; assist with referrals to Fair Housing.
5. Conduct regular home visits and accompany tenants to appointments related to their housing retention as needed (court appearances, benefit hearings, etc.). Report issues and concerns to Housing Stabilization Manager immediately to ensure the most successful outcome possible.
6. Work closely with other LAFH departments (i.e. RRH Housing Coordination and Employment Department) to address needs and issues from a strengths-based perspective; participate in case conferences, tenant meetings, staff meetings, and community meetings as required.
7. Keep up-to-date, accurate, well-written/well-documented case notes in HMIS that correspond to services provided to each tenant; complete all documentation and paperwork within the mandated timeframes.
8. Conduct quarterly assessments to determine ongoing service needs and level of progress or regression. If determined that longer care is required, make necessary program referrals (e.g. Section 8, Shelter-Plus Care).
9. Ensure families and individuals are taking the necessary steps to assume full liability of their permanent housing. This requires follow through, patience and persistence.



10. Must be comfortable working in a harm reduction setting.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY AND REVIEW**

Position reports to:                      Housing Stabilization Manager

Performance review:                      Annual

## **DIRECT REPORTS**

Number of employees receiving work direction:                      None

Position titles reporting to position:                                      N/A

## **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS**

### **EXPERIENCE:**

- Position requires a minimum of three years of experience in homeless services, case management, service coordination, and utilization of best practice modalities.

### **KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:**

- Bilingual: Spanish/English preferred, but not required
- Knowledge of housing assistance programs
- Tenant/landlord law and tenant/landlord/relations
- Understanding of best practices including progressive engagement, motivational interviewing, strengths-based case management, housing first, and harm reduction

- Strong understanding of case noting and participant tracking
- Experience in working with computer database systems
- Advocacy and negotiation skills
- Creative problem-solving skills
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Ability to work in a team and independently
- Ability to provide training and mentoring
- Must have valid CA driver's license, as driving vehicle to potential housing sites is required

#### EDUCATION:

- Preferred Master's in social science field or related field preferred or Bachelor's plus four years of experience in working with the homeless or relative field.

#### EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION

FLSA Status: Non-Exempt

Payroll Status: Hourly

Work Schedule: Full-time

# LA FAMILY HOUSING

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

<b>POSITION TITLE:</b>	Housing Stabilizer II
<b>SECTION:</b>	Programs
<b>LOCATION:</b>	North Hollywood

### SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible for the development and implementation of a housing stabilization plan for the formerly homeless who are newly housed; housing stabilization plan will focus on increasing housing sustainability through a “*whatever it takes*” approach - non-traditional case management that encourages flexibility, creativity, and **perseverance** in your work as well as **collaboration** with outside resources and partners to limit/remove barriers impeding participants’ access to housing, transportation, income, health, mental health, housing stability, and overall well-being. Stabilizers will provide support and treat every participant with **dignity** via phone, email, mail and/or face-to-face meetings. Responsible for building and maintaining relationships with landlords/management firms/property owners as well as with partner agencies and resource providers in the Coordinated Entry System. Stabilizers need to demonstrate strong **leadership** skills and are also responsible for learning and staying up-to-date on the best practices in homeless services (e.g. Housing First Model, Harm Reduction, Motivational Interviewing, etc.)

### SPECIFIC DUTIES

1. **Assessment:** Assess each participant’s acuity using evidence-based assessment tools and work with participants to create a housing stabilization plan that will maximize housing retention and increase quality of life and community engagement. Assessments will be conducted face-to-face and in the participant’s home whenever possible.
2. **Case Management Services:** Assist participants with accessing resources and services to increase housing stability (e.g. linkage to primary care physicians, health insurance, food banks, credit repair, legal aid, In Home Supportive Services (IHSS), money management, tenant rights and responsibilities, mental health, benefits enrollment, etc.). Conduct regular home visits and accompany participants as needed to appointments related

# LA FAMILY HOUSING

to housing stability (e.g. HACLA appointments, doctor appointments, court appearances, benefit hearings, etc.).

3. **Daily Living Skills:** Provide counseling, instruction, and assistance (one-on-one and in group settings) to participants in the area of increasing skills of independent living such as paying bills, household management, personal care, cooking and nutrition.
4. **Education and Employment:** Assist participants in developing and attaining goals related to employment, education, and/or vocational training with the intention of increasing income.
5. **Crisis Intervention:** Provide crisis intervention as needed, if participant is at imminent risk of returning to homelessness.
6. **Advocacy:** Provide advocacy as needed to help address issues and barriers between landlord and participants; assist with referrals to Fair Housing.
7. **Partnership Development and Collaboration:** Work to consistently develop and maintain collaborative relationships with partner agencies and services providers within the Coordinated Entry System to address participant needs relevant to increasing income, improving daily living skills, and increasing community engagement. Participate in case conferences, tenant meetings, staff meetings, and community meetings as required.
8. **Administrative:** Keep up-to-date, accurate, well-written/well-documented case notes that correspond to services provided to each participant; complete all documentation and paperwork within the mandated timeframes; prepare clear, thorough written assessments and referrals for inclusion in individual case files and provide supervisor with any and all information requested in the timeframe given. Develop, maintain, and regularly update files with all required documents from various funders.
9. **Training and Education:** Attend required trainings; seek out learning opportunities for continued education; stay up-to-date on the best practices in ending homelessness and participant care; assist in the supervision/training of interns.
10. **Additional tasks, projects and responsibilities as assigned by supervisor**

# LA FAMILY HOUSING

## ACCOUNTABILITY AND REVIEW

Position reports to: Stability Manager

Performance review: Annual

## DIRECT REPORTS

Number of employees receiving work direction: None

Position titles reporting to position: N/A

## MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

### EDUCATION:

- BA in social services or AA degree and three years of experience in social services.

### KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:

- Demonstrated ability to stabilize formerly homeless individuals in housing, including knowledge of tenant responsibilities, standard lease agreement adherence, and community resource-linkage
- Knowledge of housing and employment assistance programs
- Tenant/landlord law and tenant/landlord relations
- Ability to network and build relationships; locate and develop housing contacts
- Ability to act as a liaison between the client and landlord/property owner to resolve issues
- Creative and solution-focused problem-solving skills
- Must be able to perform extensive charting, electronic data entry and documentation
- Strong advocacy skills
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Ability to work in a team and independently
- Bilingual: Spanish/English preferred, but not required
- Knowledge of Housing First Model, Harm Reduction, and Motivational Interviewing
- Must have valid CA driver's license as driving to participants' homes and community/staff meetings is required

# LA FAMILY HOUSING

## EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION

FLSA Status: Non-Exempt

Payroll Status: Hourly

Work Schedule: Full-time

## PHYSICAL DEMANDS, ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS, EQUIPMENT

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Walk and climb stairs; Handle, finger, grasp and feel objects and equipment; Reach with hands and arms; Communicate, receive and exchange ideas, information by means of the spoken and written word; Be mobile by moving oneself from place to place quickly and easily; Repeat various motions with the wrists, hands and fingers; Be able to have visual activity for (including, but not limited to) administrative and clerical tasks; Drive personal vehicle in and around Los Angeles County and periodically transport clients; Be able to enter various buildings that may require climbing stairs. Be subjected to outside environmental conditions. Use a personal and/or laptop computer; copy, postage and fax machines. Complete all required forms in personal writing.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# LA FAMILY HOUSING

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Emergency Shelter Monthly Metrics Form

**Instructions:** Fill in your shelter’s monthly results for each measure below to evaluate shelter performance.

**Note:** All measures are per “household,” not “persons.” If your organization serves couples or families with children, each couple or family is counted as “1 household” for each measure. For a more in-depth explanation of each measure, see page 2.

#	Measure	May 2017	June 2017	July 2017	August 2017	Sept 2017	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Dec 2017
1	Total number of beds – update only if changed a. Total beds for unaccompanied individuals b. Total beds for families								
2	Total unique <b>households</b> served								
3	Total <b>households</b> entering shelter								
4	Total <b>households</b> exiting								
5	Total <b>households</b> exiting to a permanent housing destination								
6	Average length of shelter stay in days for all <b>households</b> exiting the shelter to any destination								
7	Average length of shelter stay in days for all <b>households</b> exiting to a permanent housing destination								
8	Total <b>household</b> stayers (those households who entered in previous months and did not exit this month)								
9	Average length of shelter stay in days for all stayer <b>households</b>								



## **DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS**

### **1. Total number of beds**

Enter the total number of beds available each month for each household type.

### **2. Total unique households served**

During each month, the total number of households served.

### **3. Total households entering shelter**

During each month, the total number of new households who entered the shelter.

### **4. Total households exiting**

During each month, the total number of households exiting to any destination

### **5. Total households exiting to a permanent housing destination**

During each month, enter the total number of households exiting to a permanent housing destination. Permanent housing may include private, unsubsidized housing; subsidized housing; permanent supportive housing; or housing shared with friends or family in a sustainable living situation (one that should not be categorized as “temporary”). Permanent housing does not include shelter, a transitional housing program, jail or prison, or a treatment facility.

### **6. Average length of shelter stay in days for all households exiting the shelter to any destination**

This measure requires calculating the average number of days from entry into shelter to exit to any destination each month. To calculate the average, add together the total number of days that each household who exited that month from date of shelter entry to date of exit. Then, divide this sum by the total number of households who exited each month.

### **7. Average length of shelter stay in days for all households exiting to a permanent housing destination**

This measure requires calculating the average number of days from entry into shelter to exit to permanent housing each month. To calculate the average, add together the number of days that each household who exited to permanent housing that month from date of shelter entry to date of exit. Then, divide this sum by the total number of households who exited to permanent housing each month. For a definition of what is considered “permanent housing” see explanation under measure 5.

### **8. Total household stayers (those households who entered in previous months and did not exit this month)**

For this measure, enter the total number of households who entered in previous months who did not exit that month. Households who entered in the reporting month and did not exit should not be included. For example, for May, enter households who entered in all previous months (April, March, February, etc.) who did not exit shelter in May. Any household who entered in May but did not exit in May would **not** be included.

9. **Average length of shelter stay in days for all stayer households** This measure requires calculating the average number of days households who entered shelter in previous months, but did not exit this month, (“stayer households”) remained in shelter. To calculate the average, add together the number of days that each stayer household remained in shelter. Then, divide this sum by the total number of stayer households.



# THE FIVE KEYS TO EFFECTIVE SHELTER



## HOUSING FIRST APPROACH

Align shelter eligibility criteria, policies, and practices with a Housing First approach so that anyone experiencing homelessness can access shelter without prerequisites, make services voluntary, and assist people to access permanent housing options as quickly as possible.



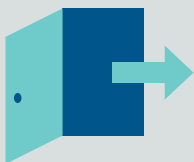
## SAFE & APPROPRIATE DIVERSION

Provide diversion services to find safe and appropriate housing alternatives to entering shelter through problem-solving conversations, identifying community supports, and offering lighter touch solutions.



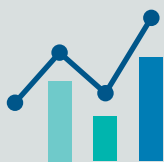
## IMMEDIATE & LOW-BARRIER ACCESS

Ensure immediate and easy access to shelter by lowering barriers to entry such as sobriety and income requirements and eliminate rules and policies that make it difficult to stay in shelter or access housing and income opportunities.



## HOUSING-FOCUSED, RAPID EXIT SERVICES

Focus services in shelter on assisting people to access permanent housing options as quickly as possible.



## DATA TO MEASURE PERFORMANCE

Measure data on percentage of exits to housing, average length of stay in shelter, and returns to homelessness to evaluate the effectiveness of shelter and improve services.

# **DRAFT SCOPE OF WORK**

## **Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH) Shelter Operations & Services**

### **1. GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

The City of Austin (“City”) seeks to establish a Grant Agreement with an operator of the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH) at 7<sup>th</sup> and Neches in downtown Austin. The ARCH, which opened in 2004, is a 28,000-square foot facility designed to offer a variety of services for individuals experiencing homelessness with the goal of resolving a household’s housing crisis. The City contracts with a nonprofit agency to provide facility operations and management, as well as service provision and programmatic oversight.

The contractor will have the following:

- Minimum of two (2) years established experience in providing shelter services, case management, housing navigation, and shelter operations and maintenance in a jurisdiction of a metropolitan population equal to or greater than Austin, Texas.
- Ability to meet the City’s Insurance Requirements for Social Services Grantees
- An active Board of Directors that meets regularly and reviews program performance, financial performance, and annually approves the agency budget
- Eligible to legally contract with the City of Austin and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
  1. City policy does not permit entering into an agreement with an entity that owes taxes to the City.
  2. The Applicant and its principals may not be currently suspended or debarred from doing business with the Federal Government, as indicated by the United States General Services Administration list of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Non-Procurement Programs, the State of Texas, or the City of Austin.
- Proven experience complying with local, state and federal funding requirements, including monthly reporting, segregation of funds, HUD habitability standards, etc.

The City of Austin funds the operation and management of the facility, working in partnership with the nonprofit agency. Approximately \$2.7 million in local and federal funding is available annually to operate the ARCH. The initial 30-month agreement term will run April 1, 2019 through September 30, 2021, with up to four 12-month renewal options.

The ARCH will be operated under the following guidelines:

1. Housing First shelter principles
2. Emphasis on strategies for appropriate diversion from shelter
3. Low-barrier access to shelter (remove unnecessary barriers and improve access to those who need it most)
4. Case Management available to all staying in shelter
5. Prioritization of shelter beds

6. Day Resource Center only available to shelter clients
7. Oversight and management of entrance and area outside shelter, including outreach to people camping outside the shelter

The City of Austin is dedicated to selecting a shelter operator with a strong understanding of the needs of individuals who are homeless, and a demonstrated history of respect and compassion for their clients. The environment established by the operator – which includes staffing, client participation, and opportunities for feedback – must reflect a positive, respectful culture. The shelter’s programming will be focused on ending homelessness for its participants by housing people as quickly as possible, using the Coordinated Entry system, and connecting households to other resources to help them stabilize once housed.

Key performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of shelter and the shelter system include:

- Exits to permanent housing
- Length of stay in shelter
- Rate of returns to homelessness

## **2. PROGRAM CLIENTS SERVED**

Individuals receiving shelter services, case management, housing location and navigation services will have the following client eligibility:

### **HUD Category 1: Literally Homeless**

Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:

- Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation;
- Is living in a publicly or privately-operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, and local government programs; or
- Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

### **HUD Category 4- Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence**

Any individual or family who:

- Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee domestic violence;
- Has no other residence; and
- Lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

### 3. PROGRAM SERVICES & DELIVERY

#### Principles of Service Delivery

The ARCH will be operated under the following guidelines:

- a) Housing First shelter principles
- b) Safe and appropriate diversion from shelter
- c) Case Management available to all in shelter
- d) Prioritization of shelter beds
- e) Day Resource center only available to shelter guests
- f) Outreach to people camping outside the shelter

#### General Shelter Structure

167 beds or mats will be available to adult men, configured to align with best practices on personal space calculations.

The shelter will be open and available 24/7 to shelter guests with minimal restrictions on entry and exit. Safety and security will be provided for persons and their belongings.

The commercial kitchen will be used to serve nutritious meals. Shelter guests will have access to toilets, sinks, showers, storage for personal belongings and other services.

All persons staying at the shelter will have access to case management services, linking them to appropriate housing programs.

#### Shelter Services

When a person walks in the door, there will be shelter staff who will welcome, provide support and work to assess the needs of the individual.

Shelter will be **low-barrier**, and will not restrict access due to an individual's lack of income, criminal history background, or outside use of drugs or alcohol.

Shelter beds will be reserved for the **most vulnerable** so there will be a community-agreed upon assessment done to determine the best way to evaluate an individual's need for shelter.

Half of the beds will be reserved for Coordinated Entry referrals. ARCH staff will work with community providers to locate and bring referred guests into available shelter beds.

The shelter will have staff focused on **diversion** from shelter and have a process in place that will connect individuals with other community resources, reconnect them with family and find safe, appropriate, permanent housing solutions for them that may be better than entering shelter. Staff will have creative and problem-solving conversations that help to identify

whether individuals are fleeing an unsafe situation, have better alternative housing options, or need help to stay in the place where they have recently been staying.

Shelter will be compliant with the HUD **Equal Access Rule** and is open to all eligible individuals regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status.

### **Housing Focused, Rapid Exit Support Services and Case Management**

All clients will be allowed time to adjust, but after about 2 weeks, clients will be asked to participate in **case management**. Through case management, basic needs will be addressed like getting identification documents and other needed items, but the focus of all work in the shelter will be on finding housing. If the client hasn't been connected with Coordinated Entry, they will go through the process and depending on the housing intervention identified, will be connected to those resources.

The shelter's housing placement programs will follow Housing First principles: support participants in moving into permanent housing in the most rapid and streamlined way possible, without unnecessary service pre-requisites, rules, or program requirements.

National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) recommendations to accomplish a housing-focused infrastructure:

- Develop a housing plan within the first week of a participant's stay in shelter that includes short-term and achievable goals that are created by the participant rather than the staff person and have short-term benchmarks to show progress
- Create a "housing-focused" environment throughout the shelter, including apartment listings, guidance on how to apply for housing, information on how to access benefits, and messaging that celebrates the success of each household that moves into housing
- Focus case management activities on obtaining and sustaining housing
- Identify participants' barriers to housing and identify resources to address barriers
- Conduct regular and frequent in-person case management meetings that focus on a housing plan and adjust the plan as needed
- Promote messaging that everyone is housing ready as soon as they enter shelter

### **Day Resources: Service Coordination**

The Day Resource Center's basic needs and health services are important to the people using them but do not have the goal of permanent housing and cause many challenges in managing the building and the space inside and directly outside of the ARCH. To streamline and provide the most important housing-related services, the Day Resource Center will only be available for shelter guests and closed to the general public. Day Resource Center services will be integrated into a service delivery model only for people who are sleeping at the ARCH. Non-shelter guests will no longer be able to access the ARCH for using a telephone, restroom, shower, mail, locker, etc.



ARCH staff, co-located agencies and community partners will provide day resources to shelter guests that will move them toward permanent housing. The shelter services will be housing focused and needs for other services will be referred to community providers. Shelter guests can stay inside during the day to work on housing and associated work, leaving the facility when they choose. ARCH staff time spent in the Day Resource Center becomes almost exclusively focused on assisting guests with housing search and related activities like securing documentation.

#### **4. MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS**

The operator of the ARCH will be responsible for overall operations, maintenance, repairs and oversight of the facility and the activities located therein. ARCH staff will manage a preventative maintenance schedule and will submit maintenance reports monthly to Austin Public Health staff for review.

ARCH staff will not be responsible for managing the lease between the City of Austin and the Healthcare District for the operation of the Health Care for the Homeless ARCH Community Care Clinic.

##### **Adverse Weather Services**

- **Cold Weather Shelter:** Community partners for this program include area churches, Salvation Army, Capital Metro, Red Cross, City of Austin Office of Emergency Management, Parks and Recreation Department, and the Austin Public Health. Since ARCH operates at-capacity year-round, there are no additional beds or mats typically available on Cold Weather Shelter nights; however, homeless individuals seeking shelter on those nights can also access shelter at the Salvation Army, area churches, or the designated Parks and Recreation Department Neighborhood Center through the Cold Weather Shelter program. ARCH staff will coordinate all services related to the Cold Weather Shelter.
- **Heat Emergency Services and Protocol:** In the event of a heat emergency, ARCH staff will actively monitor homeless visitors to the ARCH for signs of heat exhaustion or other heat-related issues (calling for emergency medical services should the need arise) and establish cooling areas during the hottest part of the day.

##### **ARCH Entrance and Surrounding Area**

ARCH staff will work with Austin Public Health and community partners on strategies to address congregation and camping immediately outside of the ARCH. Shelter staff will engage people outside the building regularly for services, trust-building and shelter entry. “Client safety service staff” that are trained in crisis de-escalation and positive relationship management will manage the flow into and out of the building, providing oversight of the entrance and surrounding area.

## 5. STAFFING

Staff will be trained and proficient in trauma-informed care and housing-focused shelter service delivery. The housing focus should start with client intake on day one with a strong focus on self-resolution. Shelter program staff positions and duties should include the following:

### **Housing Resources Engagement Specialist / Diversion**

- Welcome individuals who are entering the shelter and provide immediate connection to available resources; Be available regularly for guests and non-guests for questions and follow-up on information and referrals
- Conduct outreach and engage homeless individuals directly outside the shelter with resources to resolve housing crisis
- Divert homeless individuals from utilizing shelter by connecting them with resources to resolve their homeless situation
- Conduct Coordinated Assessment to determine appropriate permanent housing intervention and service needs

### **Shelter Housing Navigator**

- Develop an individual housing plan for each shelter guest
- Connect program participants to community resources that will support the goal of permanent housing acquisition
- Navigate persons to permanent housing placement or programs that will assist with safe and stable housing
- Ensure participants have the necessary items to secure housing (e.g. valid identification, income verification, bank statements, etc.)

While sheltering individuals experiencing homelessness is the day-to-day function of the shelter, the focus of all staff resources will be on obtaining and maintaining permanent housing. The operator of the ARCH will connect shelter guests with rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing, and other housing programs. These program services may be administered by the same agency operating the ARCH or through partnerships with other community agencies working to house individuals experiencing homelessness. Housing staff positions and duties should include:

### **Housing Search and Placement Case Manager**

- Housing search
- Outreach to and negotiation with property managers, landlords, and owners
- Assessment of housing units for compliance with certain state and federal grants for habitability, lead-based paint restrictions, and rent reasonableness
- Assistance with obtaining utilities and making moving arrangements
- Coordination with rental and move-in assistance, as available
- Ensure a “warm hand-off” to the Housing Stability Case Manager to provide ongoing in-home supportive services, as needed

### **Housing Stability Case Manager**

- Develop and implement a housing stabilization plan for resident
- Build and maintain relationships with landlords/management firms/property owners as well as with partner agencies and resource providers in the Coordinated Entry System
- Demonstrate strong leadership skills and stay up-to-date on best practices in housing stabilization services (e.g. Housing First Model, Harm Reduction, Motivational Interviewing, etc.)
- Develop, secure, and coordinate services for the client; Obtain federal, state, and local benefits including linking client to housing, stabilization and support services
- Meet with client regularly and evaluate client's changing needs

## **6. COLLECTING & REPORTING DATA**

Organizations receiving funding from the City of Austin for homelessness prevention and homeless intervention services are required to utilize the local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to track and report client information for individuals who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless. A high level of data quality is required. The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) currently serves as the local HMIS administrator and manages all user licenses. HMIS related expenses may be included in the program budget, and City requirements include:

- All settings for client records will be in accordance with HMIS policy to reduce duplication of records and improve service coordination
- HMIS user licenses must be purchased for staff entering data into City-funded programs (may use City funds for licenses)
- Organizations must have an ECHO HMIS Memorandum of Understanding
- Data quality report(s) submitted monthly with a rating of "Excellent" or "Acceptable"
- Participation in Annual Point-in-Time Count, Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR), and other required HUD reporting
- Participation in the required annual training for each licensed user as well as attendance at required City-sponsored training(s) regarding HMIS and Austin Public Health's electronic reporting system

Periodic reporting to the City will include levels of compliance with all requirements listed above as well as any feedback regarding the HMIS system.

ARCH staff will maintain updated and complete client files and program documents, and follow protocols for client confidentiality and records retention. Quarterly performance reporting and additional reporting as required will be submitted to Austin Public Health.

## **7. PROGRAM EVALUATION & QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**

### **Performance evaluation:**

ARCH staff will have a weekly case review process covering file review and case presentations to ensure achievable goals are being developed and met for each individual. Frequent meetings between the program director and case managers will provide follow-up on any corrective action plans created regarding program participant success.

Leadership will meet regularly to discuss strengths and challenges that arise with overall program success, use of program funds and overall program needs. Whenever applicable and possible, program participants will be given the opportunity to provide feedback on the effectiveness of a program component such as housing assistance or other services.

### **Quality Improvement:**

ARCH staff will provide a regular input process for feedback from ARCH guests on ways to improve the quality of services and shelter.

ARCH staff will convene meetings with the community, co-located agencies, clients and staff to regularly provide opportunities for open feedback and coordination with community partners about shelter policies and performance.

ARCH staff leadership will implement other strategies to improve program performance, promote a positive, solutions-oriented environment, and maintain high standards of data management.

## **8. AGENCY SERVICE COORDINATION**

### **Service Cooperation with Other Agencies**

ARCH staff will coordinate services with Integral Care, Veterans Administration and other key community services that are necessary for ARCH shelter guests.

ARCH staff will work with community Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) providers to access appropriate housing resources for shelter clients.

ARCH staff will work with CommUnity Care clinic staff and representatives of other co-located agencies to convene regular staff meetings to discuss services for clients and problem-solve challenging cases. The agency will work in collaboration with ECHO in taking a lead role in data pilots, Coordinated Entry pilots and coordination of Permanent Supportive Housing and/or HUD projects.

## **9. COMMUNITY PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

ARCH staff will actively participate in and facilitate community conversations, ECHO Committees and Sub-Committees. The agency will work with community partners on homeless initiatives as they emerge, e.g. Ending Veteran Homelessness, Ending Youth Homelessness, Downtown Homeless Solutions and other planning efforts. The agency will work collaboratively with the Downtown Austin Alliance, Sixth Street Association and Downtown Neighborhood Association on a variety of issues and initiatives.