
CITY INITIATIVES ADDRESSING HOMELESS-RELATED ISSUES

VERONICA BRISEÑO, INTERIM HOMELESS STRATEGY OFFICER

HOMELESS STRATEGY OFFICE

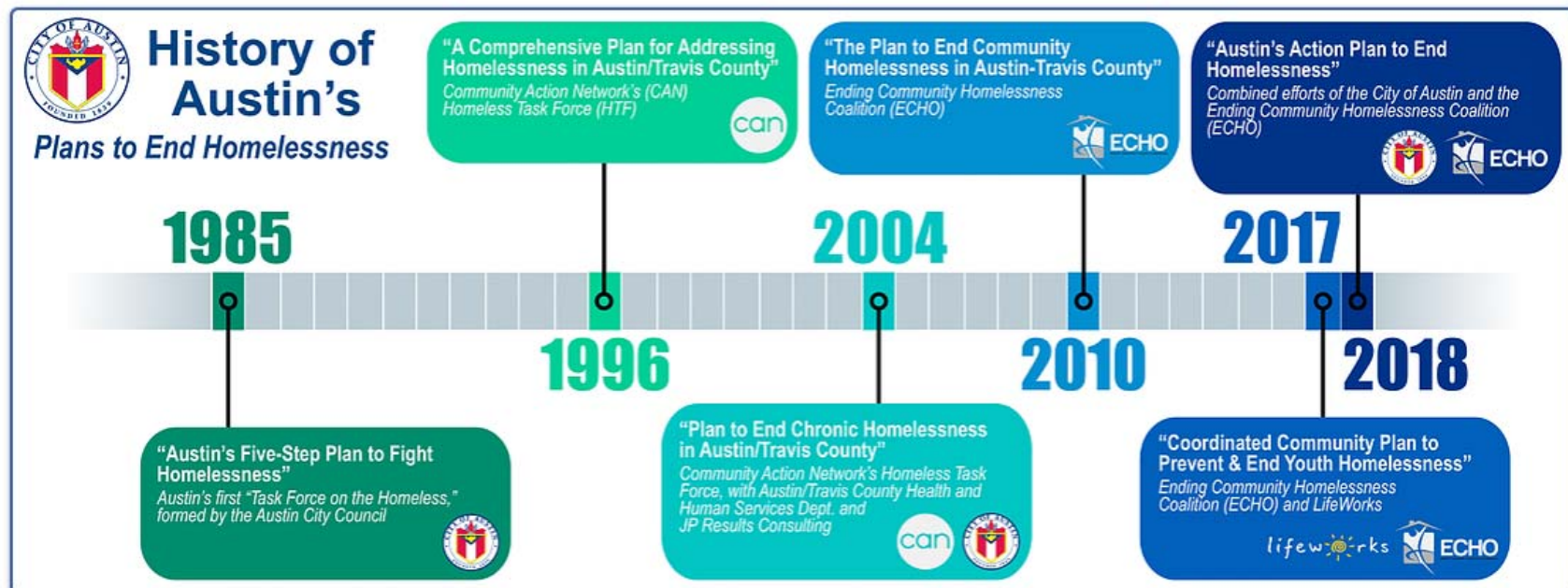
JUNE 4, 2019



A SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- Animal Services Office
- Austin Public Health
- Austin Public Library
- Austin Police Department
- City Manager's Office
- Communications & Public Information Office
- Downtown Austin Community Court
- Emergency Medical Services
- Innovation Office
- Neighborhood Housing & Community Development
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Public Works Department
- Watershed Protection Department
- Former Interim Assistant City Manager Sara Hensley

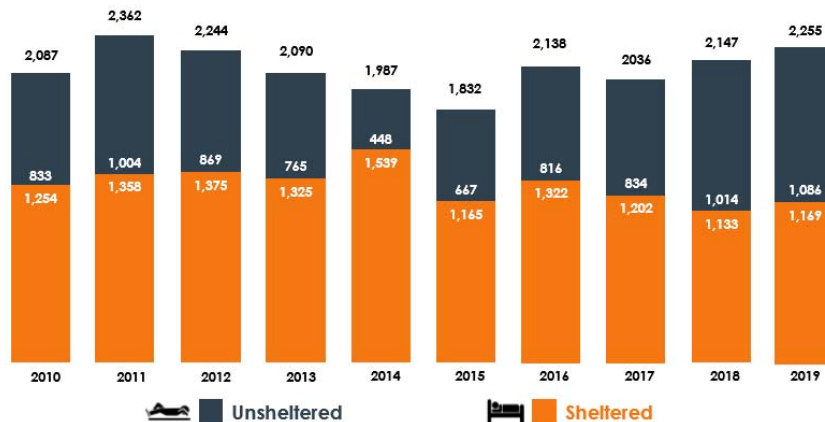
HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN HISTORY



<https://austininnovation.wixsite.com/solveforhomelessness>

ANNUAL POINT-IN-TIME (PIT) COUNT

Persons Counted Experiencing Homelessness in Point-in-Time Counts (PIT)



Source: Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO)

The 2018 Point-in-Time count revealed:

- 2,147 Individuals Experiencing Homelessness
 - 1,014 were unsheltered.

In 2019, we saw a 5% increase from the Point-in-Time Count:

- 2,255 Individuals Experiencing Homelessness
 - 1,086 were unsheltered.

Over the past five years, the number of unsheltered individuals increased by 142%.

The overall Austin population grew by 12% during this same period.

Greatest population are unaccompanied (single) adults.

HOMELESSNESS CONTINUES TO BE A PRIORITY FOR COUNCIL

Over the past five years, City Council has approved over 30 resolutions relating to homelessness.

Topics have been wide-ranging and include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Identifying alternative and dedicated funding sources for homeless-related services;
- Evaluation of the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH) Contract;
- Alternatives to panhandling;
- 24-hour free public toilets downtown;
- Researching and evaluating temporary work opportunities;
- The *Pay for Success* program, a Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) program; and
- Supporting community partnerships.

IN RESPONSE, THE CITY HAS MADE ADDITIONAL OUTWARD FACING CHANGES

Most recently, the City has made significant changes in the way we respond to homelessness-related issues, with a focus on the following:

- Restructuring ARCH Contract
- Endorsement of the *Austin Action Plan to End Homelessness*
- Implementation of the *Pay for Success* program
- Creation of a Community Brain Trust

MEANWHILE, THE CITY HAS CHANGED WITHIN

In response, departments have begun to restructure and redesign business practices to meet the needs of the community and those experiencing homelessness.

- Austin Public Health (APH)
 - Austin Public Health provides funding for rapid rehousing services through multiple social service contracts totaling \$2,909,624, of which \$1.12M is federal grant funding
- Austin Public Library
 - Two Community Services Coordinator positions to conduct Coordinated Assessments
 - Service hours in place for various branch libraries and the Central Library with Pop-up Resource Clinics at Terrazas Branch Library
- APD and EMS: Homeless Outreach Street Team (HOST) in partnership with Integral Care
 - HOST is a proactive approach to engage and assist individuals experiencing homelessness

MEANWHILE, THE CITY HAS CHANGED WITHIN

- Downtown Austin Community Court (DACC)
 - Aims to end homelessness by providing comprehensive, long term services to individuals experiencing homelessness
- Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD)
 - Provides housing and community development services to benefit eligible residents
- Office of Innovation
 - In 2017, the Innovation Office secured a three-year \$1.25M Bloomberg grant, and is also a recipient of a \$409,000 grant from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, for people experiencing homelessness
 - The Austin Homelessness Advisory Committee (AHAC) was created in the fall of 2017 in coordination with the Department of Public Health and ECHO
- Parks and Recreation Department (PARD)
 - In partnership with The Other Ones Foundation, created Workforce First, to offer those who are experiencing homelessness day labor opportunities in an Austin park

AND SERVICES HAVE EVOLVED

- Public Works Department (PWD)
 - Contracted with WorkQuest to provide under-bridge cleanups of 60+ highway underpass locations within Austin's city limits
- Watershed Protection Department (WPD)
 - Watershed encampment pilot programs such as Leave No Trace and Purple Bag Program, as well as collaboration with Other Ones foundation (through APH) and Keep Austin Beautiful
 - Partnership with Integral Care to connect individuals with wrap around services
- Creation of the Homeless Strategy Officer (HSO)
 - The HSO is an executive level position to strategize initiatives to address the issue of homelessness within the City as an organization and with community partners



“IT’S THE RIGHT THING TO DO”

In all these efforts brought forward by staff, it should be noted departments are doing things *intentionally* different from before.

Departments have also provided mental health training, through Integral Care, to staff interacting with those experiencing homelessness and several have regular meetings with community organizations providing direct social services to build networks.

It is not uncommon to see employees engaged with a human-centered service-oriented approach to dealing with homeless encampments— staff realizes the responsive approach cannot be a one size fits all.

POP UP CLINIC AT THE ARCH



WATERSHED ENCAMPMENT CLEANUP

Before



After

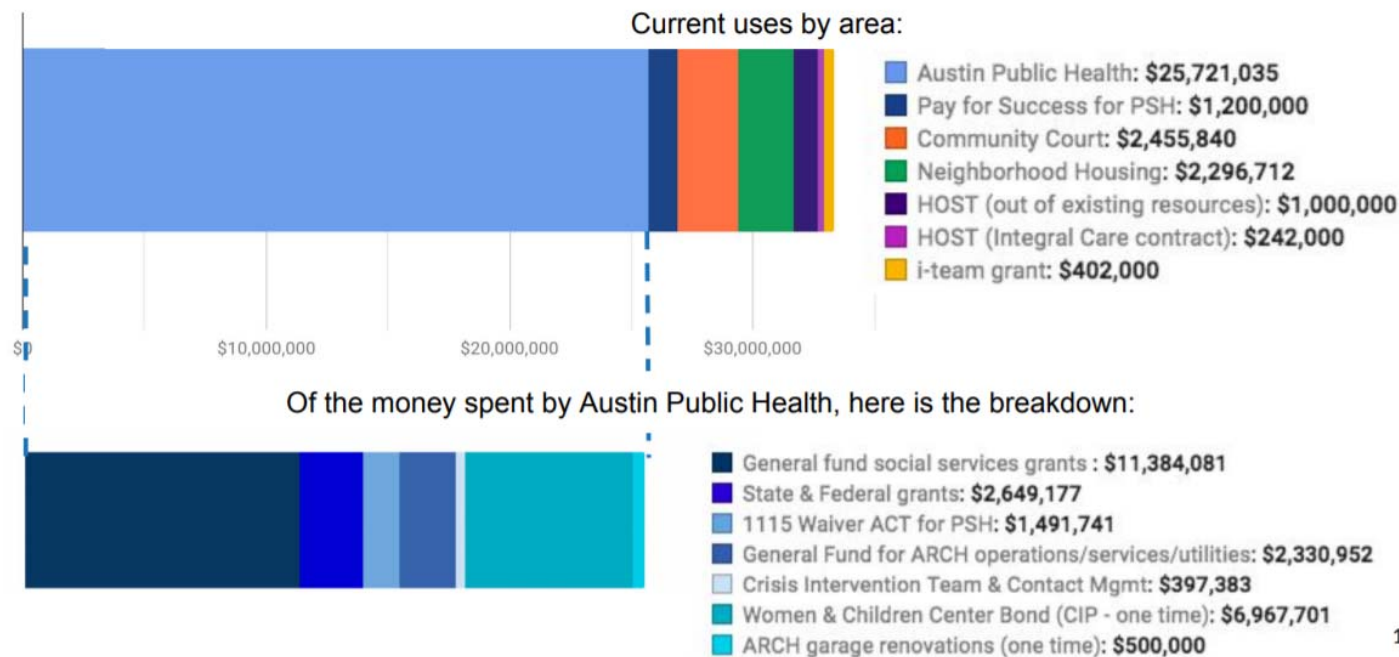


MEMBERS OF THE AUSTIN HOMELESSNESS ADVISORY COUNCIL



SNAPSHOT OF CURRENT FUNDING EFFORTS

Citywide Budget for Direct Services



14

Update on Homelessness; A System of Care.

AUSTIN AREA SHELTER BEDS

Shelter	Beds	Notes
ARCH	165	Individuals
Anew Entry - Substance Abuse Shelter/Transitional Housing	56	30 beds for veterans
Austin Shelter for Women and Children - Salvation Army	81	17 rooms – families 3 rooms – single women
Casa Marianella	75	Dedicated to solely immigrants, with 65% asylum seekers 39 beds – women and children
Downtown Service Center- Salvation Army	242	55 beds - families 107 beds - single women 80 beds – single men
Foundation for the Homeless- Family Rehousing Shelter	36	Dedicated families with children
Integral Care - SafeHaven	16	Veterans
LifeWorks	16	Youth
SAFE Alliance - Domestic Violence shelter beds	106	Dedicated to families
SAFE Alliance - Children's Emergency Shelter	29	16 beds – youth 13 beds – teen parents
TOTAL BEDS	822	

PROGRAM CHANGES OCCURRING AT THE ARCH

Changes in Operations & Service Delivery



Part ARCH Operations	Redesigned ARCH Operations
190 beds/mats for overnight sleeping	130 beds/mats for overnight sleeping
Day Resource Center serves 200-300 people per day	Day Resource Center services available for 130 clients with reserved beds/mats
25-30% of clients receiving case management	100% of clients receive case management
Some beds/mats reserved; Daily lottery system for other beds/mats so clients secure shelter on a day-to-day basis	All beds/mats reserved, so clients have short-term shelter stability and can focus on goals for housing, income, stability
All overnight stayers must leave early morning and return at specified time each evening	Overnight stayers will have flexibility to come and go, with limited restrictions on access
Services offered for basic needs; some case management and housing services available	Services focused on meeting basic needs and connections to housing for ALL clients
First come-first served / lottery system for clients to receive shelter	Strategic prioritization system for clients getting bed/mat reservations and services
Coordinated Assessment not provided at the ARCH	Coordinated Assessment access for all ARCH clients

High Level Transition Phases 2019



March - April

- Planning, facility improvements, communications plan, staffing changes, developing performance metrics

May - June

- NAEH visits, performance data baseline, identification of alternative day resources

July - September

- Reduction of beds/mats, 100% of clients case managed, pilot new prioritization system

October - December

- ARCH open only to 130 shelter guests, performance data review and evaluation

COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO. 20190131-078

Council Resolution No. 20190131-078 Immediate Shelter and Support Services

- Pilot immediate shelter and support services with the intent to provide a pathway to permanent housing
 - Consultation with internal and external entities, including NAEH, regarding best practices for shelter operations and standards
 - How individuals are identified to receive shelter services and connections to support services and housing programs
 - Include Costs and Funding Options

TEMPORARY SHELTER BEST PRACTICES

Based on stakeholder input, and in consultation with the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), the following considerations are considered best practices:

- The shelter should be a temporary solution built with an immediate exit plan to housing
- Case management and wraparound services should be provided for all shelter guests
- Smaller shelters are recognized as a best practice, allowing services to be tailored to the individual's needs
- Space for storage and pets should be included on the property
- Medical and mental health services nearby or on-site
- Access to public transportation
- Locations in close proximity to individuals experiencing homelessness
- Low barrier shelter
- Access to individuals regardless of background

NEXT STEPS

In response to Council Resolution No. 20190131-078, the Homeless Strategy Office recommends immediately engaging a new temporary shelter based on the best practices identified:

- Staff has been collaborating to identify city- and privately-owned property that will meet ideal criteria
- Consideration of existing structures, temporary structures or new structures
- Discussion of a potential site will follow in Executive Session
- Provide case management and wraparound services for ***all*** shelter guests
- Include Rapid Rehousing
 - NHCD has recently infused \$600,000 of *ongoing* HOME funds for tenant based rental assistance
 - In addition to \$1.1 million in Federal and State Grants, APH also funds nearly \$1.8 million for Rapid Rehousing and Housing Placement services
- Set shelter capacity at 100 guests

SHELTER FUNDING AND MANAGEMENT

The purchase of the shelter could be potentially funded by:

- Waller Creek Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ)
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds allocated for a homeless shelter
- Certificates of Obligation Bonds

Management of the shelter

- A solicitation process would be initiated to contract with a provider for management of the shelter
 - Outreach will be conducted to communicate with potential providers about the opportunity
- Funding for this contract (estimated at about \$2.5 million annually) would need to be added to the Fiscal Year 2020 Budget and beyond

COUNCIL RESOLUTION 20190411-026

Council Resolution 20190411-026

Salvation Army Rathgeber Center and Downtown Social Service Center

- Identify funding for the Salvation Army's shelters and case management activities
 - Assist the Rathgeber Center in becoming fully operational and
 - Identify funding for the Downtown Social Service Center to assist in case management services

SALVATION ARMY RATHGEBER CENTER



THE SALVATION ARMY RATHGEBER CENTER

<http://salvationarmyaustin.org/the-salvation-army-rathgeber-center/>

This shelter will focus on *families*

- Total capacity of 212 beds
- Opens 55 beds at the Downtown Social Service Center which will be reprogrammed for individuals
- Goal is to provide 100% case management services to individuals at the Downtown Social Service Center
- The HSO recommends \$1M to fully-fund 100% case management at the Downtown Social Service Center and the rest towards closing the gap at the Rathgeber Center

NEXT STEPS

Homelessness is a complex issue that needs not one solution, but several. Continued efforts of the Homeless Strategy Office will include:

- Consideration of the need for a location(s) for day resources services
- Navigation centers
- Storage space locations
- Continuing the priority of a housing continuum
 - Temporary shelter is exactly that – temporary. A comprehensive strategy will not only focus on the immediate need of shelter and support/ case management services, but ensure a pipeline to exit shelter and enter housing is in place
- Evaluation of existing and new funding sources required for these initiatives
- Exploration of a mechanism to optimize philanthropic opportunities

All resources need to be geographically dispersed throughout the city.

Collaboration with the Equity Office will be an ongoing part of this process.



QUESTIONS?