

# Let's Learn About Homelessness in Austin

## What do we know about homelessness in our community?

A lot, actually! While homelessness is a complex issue, information from reliable sources can help us understand more about what's happening and what we can do to create a community where everyone thrives.

### ***How many people in Austin are experiencing homelessness?***

While the most recent Point in Time Count estimated that 2,506 people experience homelessness on any given night, National Consultants puts our homeless population at about 10,000 out of the million Travis County residents, so roughly **1 percent**.

### ***Why are there so many people experiencing homelessness in Austin?***

The path in and out of homelessness is different for every person and includes both **individual** and **systemic** factors. A group of researchers in Austin studied homelessness locally, which aligns with national studies on the subject.

**Individuals** may become homeless from leaving an abusive relationship, losing a job, taking on medical debt, or losing access to credit; while others have conditions like mental illness or addiction that make it hard to maintain housing. Youth may become homeless when they age out of the foster care system or are disowned by families (Trevor project estimates that 40% of homeless youth are LGBTQIA+).

**Systemic** factors like generational poverty, affordability, racism, education, healthcare, and the criminal justice system cause

### ***Has the number of people experiencing homeless in Austin drastically increased?***

According to ECHO, the proportion of homelessness has tracked with overall population growth since 2011. This means that as the total number of people in Central Texas has grown, so has the number of people experiencing homelessness.

And with changes to our City ordinances in 2019 that allow public camping, people who were previously hidden are now more visible to us.

However, COVID-19's impact our economy could lead to an even greater increase in the individuals and families entering homelessness.

instability that can lead to homelessness and complicate the process of becoming and staying housed.

According to Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies, Austin's acute affordability crisis can largely be attributed to the fact that "Austin's median income and its housing stock have failed to keep pace with the boom in both land prices and population."

Access to affordable housing is critical to ending homelessness.

**WEEK OF ACTION**  
TO SUPPORT ENDING HOMELESSNESS

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## ***What is the City of Austin doing to address homelessness?***

Increased resources are going to proven solutions for meeting immediate needs, creating housing solutions, and preventing more people from entering homelessness.

Austin's Mayor and City Council made ending homelessness their top priority in 2018.

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Ending homelessness isn't just the work of the City; for decades social service agencies, nonprofits, and religious groups have served those who are homeless in our community.

The same national consultants confirmed that Austin is on the right track, but advised that to succeed we must increase the **connections between programs** and the **scale of investment**.

## ***What can I do to help end homelessness in Austin?***

There are lots of things people can do in our community to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.

1. Show kindness and compassion to those experiencing homelessness among us; it isn't always easy, but it does more to make progress than the alternative.
2. Support great organizations with your time, talent and financial resources to help them serve more individuals in need (this is the most effective way to get help directly to people experiencing homelessness).
3. Advocate for policies and large scale investments to provide affordable housing, healthcare, and housing to keep people healthy and housed - and reforming those systems referenced earlier that disproportionately cause people of color to become homeless.

## ***It's up to us***

Ending homelessness is possible in Austin if enough of us –

**government, businesses, nonprofits, neighborhoods, schools, churches, caring individuals**

work together to make it happen. We invite you to join us in creating a community where everyone has the safety, stability, and dignity of a roof over their head.

For more information please visit: [austintexas.gov/homelessness](http://austintexas.gov/homelessness) or call 3-1-1

For more information on the Week of Action please visit: [www.austintexas.gov/homelessness-get-involved](http://www.austintexas.gov/homelessness-get-involved)

