

2020 Point-in-Time Count Austin/Travis County

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PIT Count – Purpose & Background



Purpose: To understand the number, characteristics, and subpopulations of people experiencing homelessness in Austin/Travis County so that funding and services may be targeted appropriately.

Background:

- The Point-in-Time Count (PIT Count) is an annual count of the Austin/Travis County population experiencing homelessness on a given night. Data from this count contributes to both local and national efforts to end homelessness.
- Required by Housing & Urban Development (HUD) of Continuums of Care (CoC) in each community in order to receive HUD funding.
- Provides a “snapshot” or prevalence estimate of homelessness on one night in our community.

- Prevalence estimate of sheltered and unsheltered individuals in Austin/Travis County at a single point in time
- **Methodological changes in 2020 included:** web-based survey with geolocation capability, increased volunteer count (39%), and subdivided geographic sections (from 36 in 2019 to 74 sections in 2020)
- Survey: anonymous with contact info option, observation only option, 11 survey items
 - Questions: mix of closed-ended, multiple choice, and open-ended on age, gender, veteran status, disability status, description of sleeping circumstance, history of homelessness, barriers to housing, history of benefits, prior involvement in Coordinated Assessment, pet ownership, contact info (optional)
- Data collection timeframe: Six hours on 1/25/2020 from 3am-9am
- 861 Volunteer Survey Administrators; 25 Command Center staff and volunteers (total of 886 deployed “volunteers”)

PIT Count – Limitations ¹

- Methodology - Variations in count methodology year-to-year within and across communities.
- Variable Conditions - Unsheltered counts are subject to more variation in methodology due to geography, weather, and volunteer considerations.
- Visibility – Per HUD guidelines, people must be seen to be counted. Some hard-to-reach individuals may not be counted.
- Potential Duplication – Processes are in place to avoid, minimize, and remove duplicate counts but the possibility of duplication remains.
- Selection Bias – The unsheltered count relies on a combination of survey and observation data. It is possible that those surveyed differ from those observed in the count.

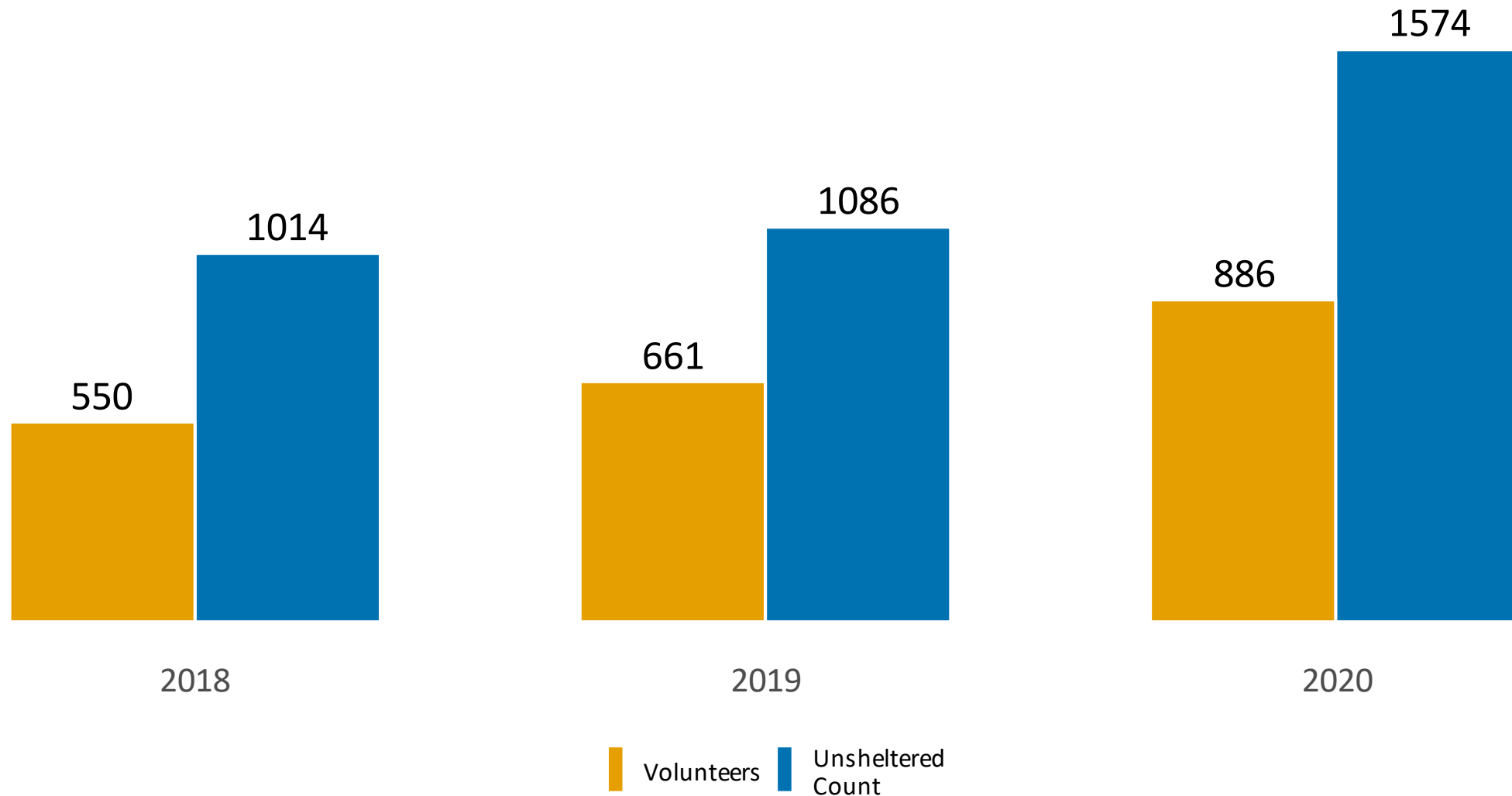
2020 PIT Count – Results

PIT Count Data – Comparison of Total Point in Time Count Numbers (2019-2020)

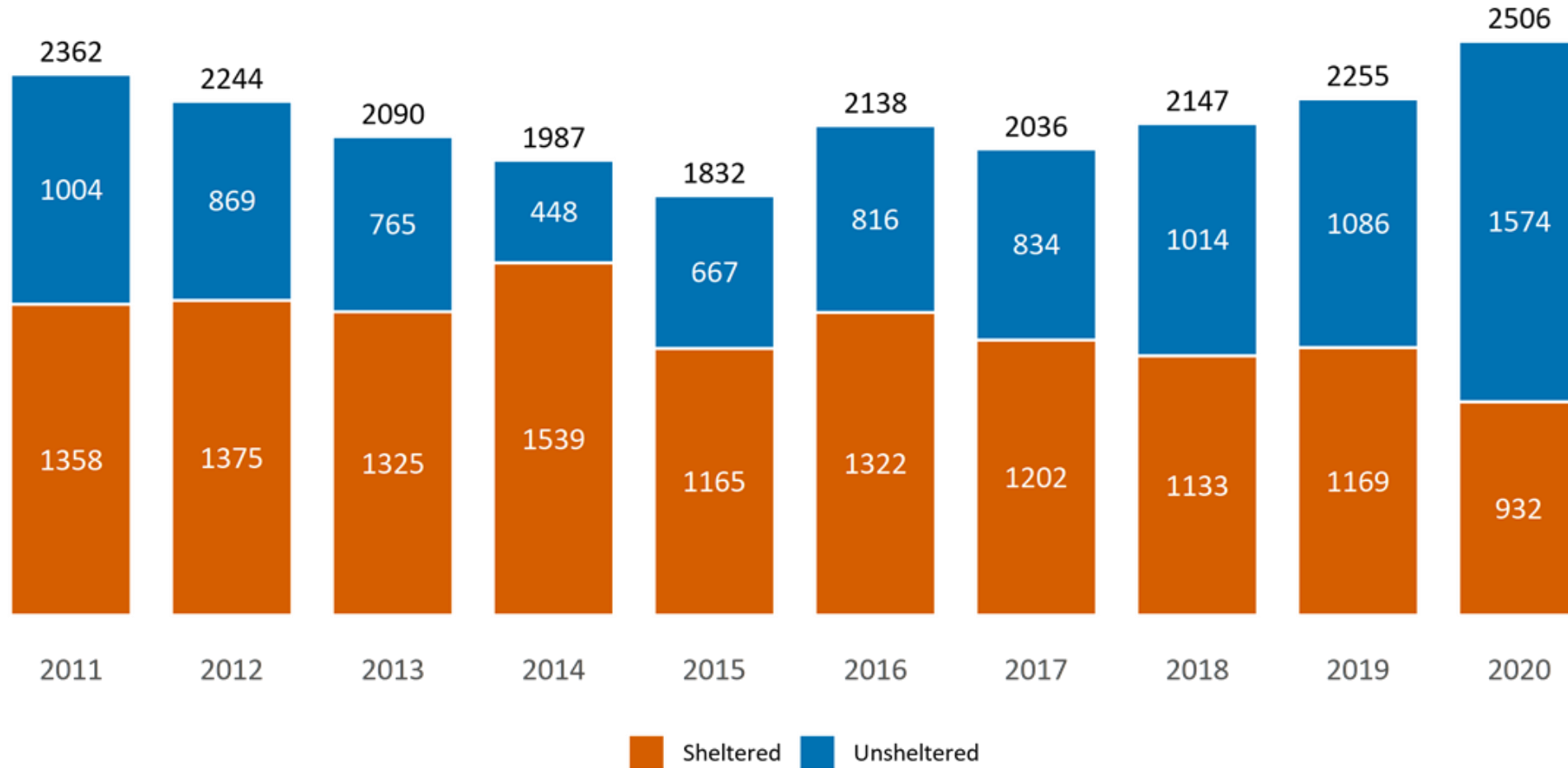


Year	Volunteer Count	Unsheltered Homeless Count	Sheltered Homeless Count	Total Homeless Count
2020	886	1574	932	2506
2019	661	1086	1169	2255
Change	+ 255 (39%)	+ 488 (45%)	- 237 (20%)	+ 251 (11%)

PIT Count Data – Increase in Volunteer and Unsheltered Counts (2018-2020)



PIT Count Data – Austin/Travis County Point in Time Counts (2011-2020)

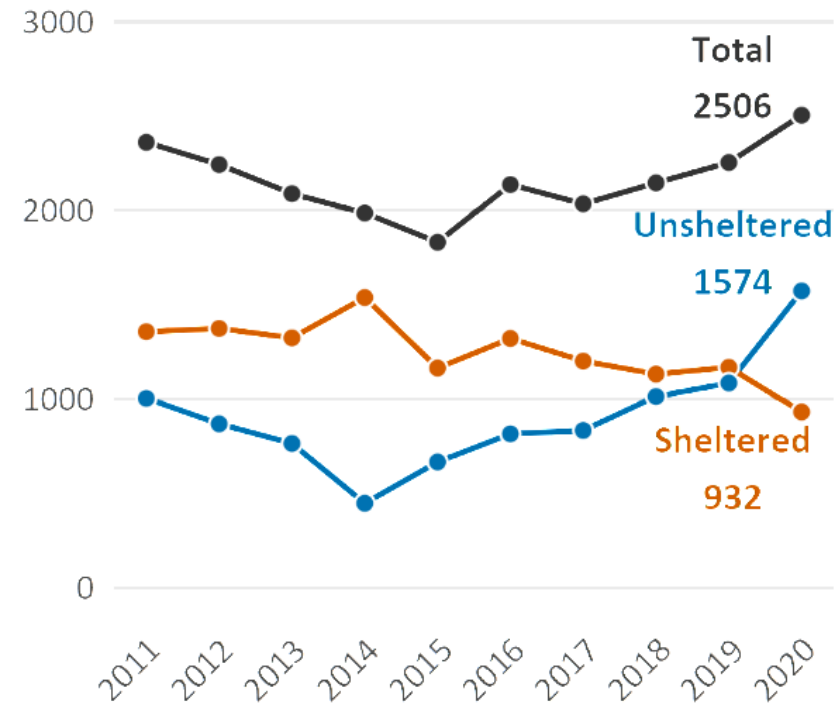


PIT Count Data – Austin/Travis County Point in Time Count, Projected Population, and Count Per Capita (2011-2020)



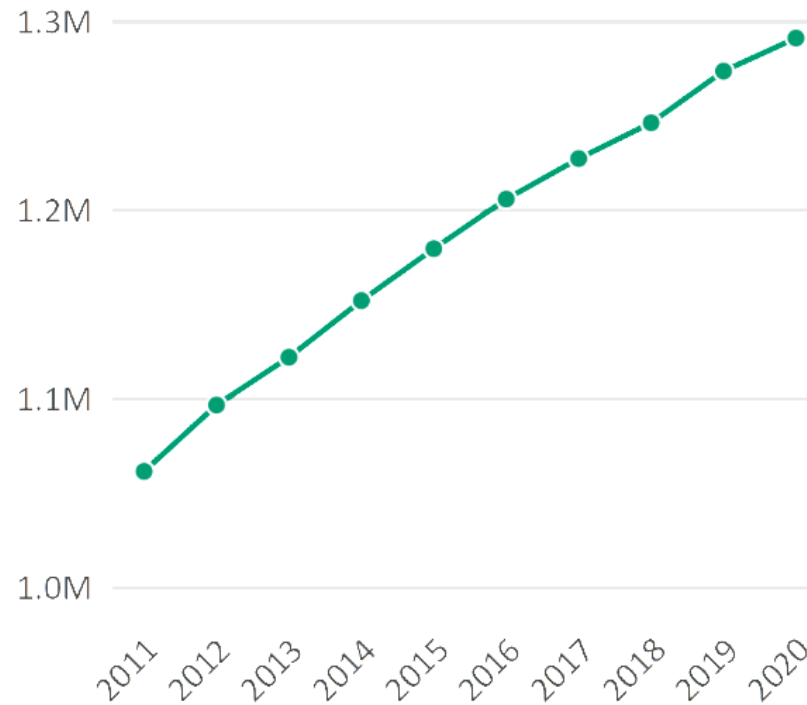
Point-in-Time Count

Raw Counts



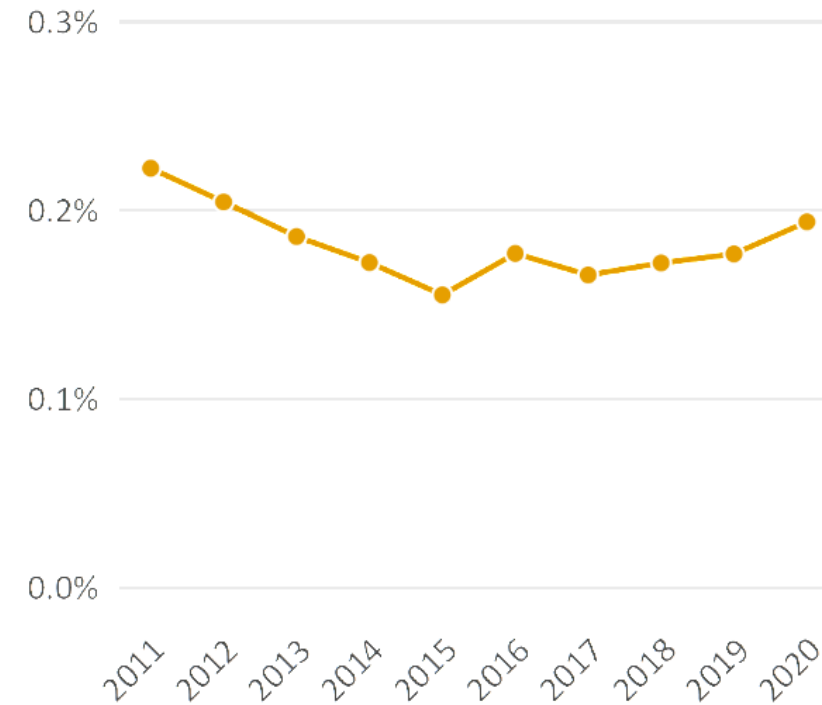
Travis County

Projected Population

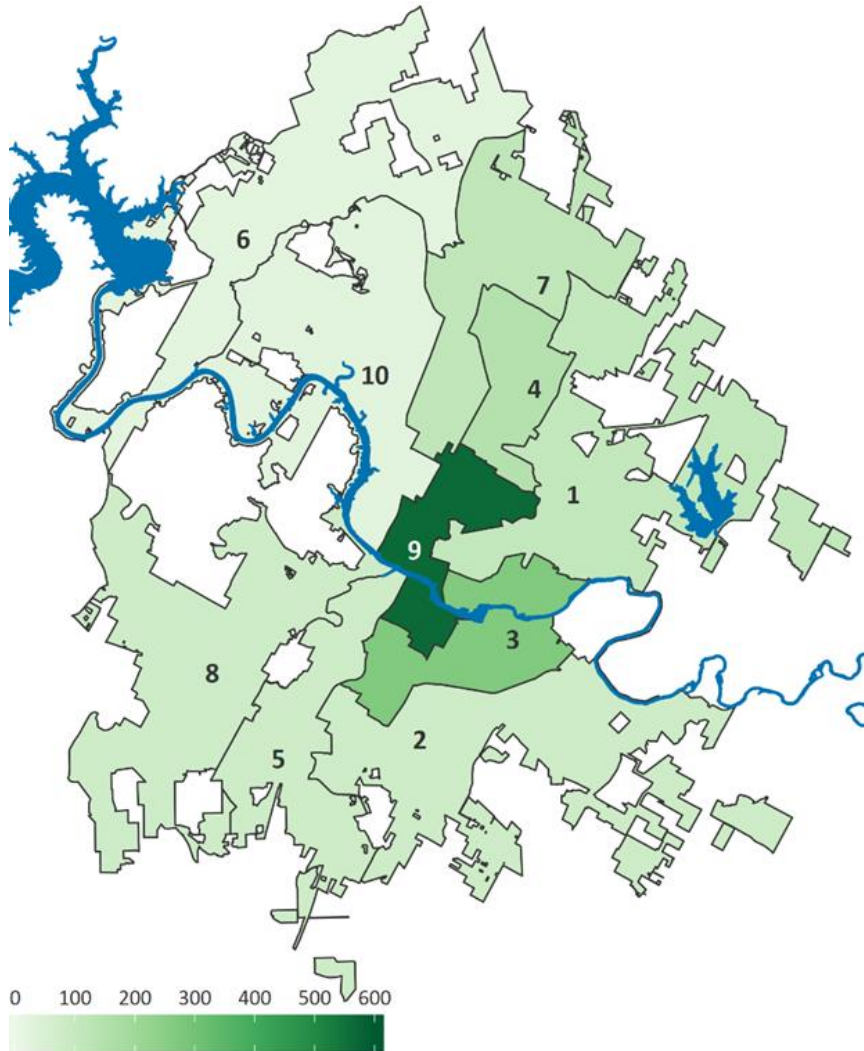


Point-in-Time Count

Total Count Per Capita



PIT Count Data – Map of Unsheltered Homelessness by City Council District (2020)



Homelessness by District...

- A concentration remains in the city center (District 9)
- However, an analysis of dispersion showed more unsheltered individuals were counted away from the urban core in 2020 than in 2019 ($t = -2.47, p = 0.01$).

PIT Count Data –Unsheltered Homelessness by City Council District and Municipality (2020)



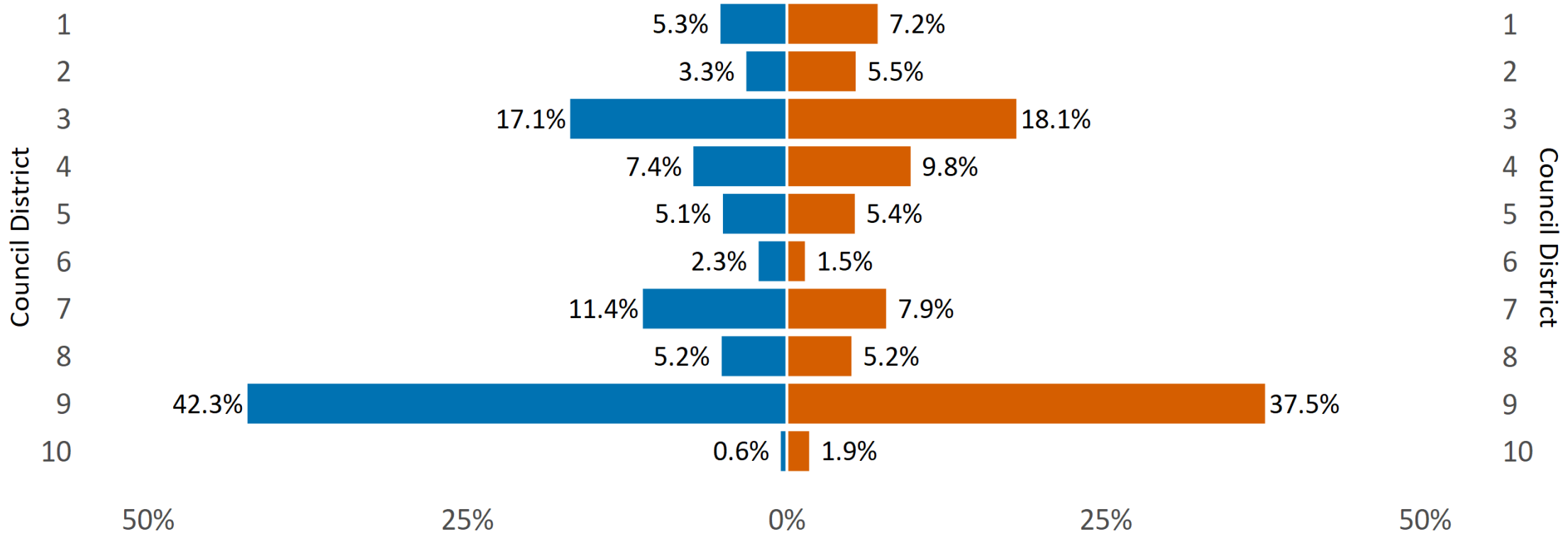
City Council District	2019	2020	Change
District 1	55	109	+ 54
District 2	34	83	+ 49
District 3	177	273	+ 96
District 4	77	148	+ 71
District 5	53	84	+ 31
District 6	24	23	- 1
District 7	118	120	+ 2
District 8	54	78	+ 24
District 9	439	567	+ 128
District 10	6	28	+ 22
Total	1037	1513	+ 476

Municipality	2019	2020	Change
Austin	1037	1513	+ 476
Bee Cave	1	0	- 1
Elgin	0	1	+ 1
Jonestown	1	2	+ 1
Manor	0	4	+ 4
Pflugerville	0	3	+ 3
Sunset Valley	0	23	+ 23
Webberville	1	0	- 1
Unincorporated	46	28	- 18
Total	1086	1574	+ 488

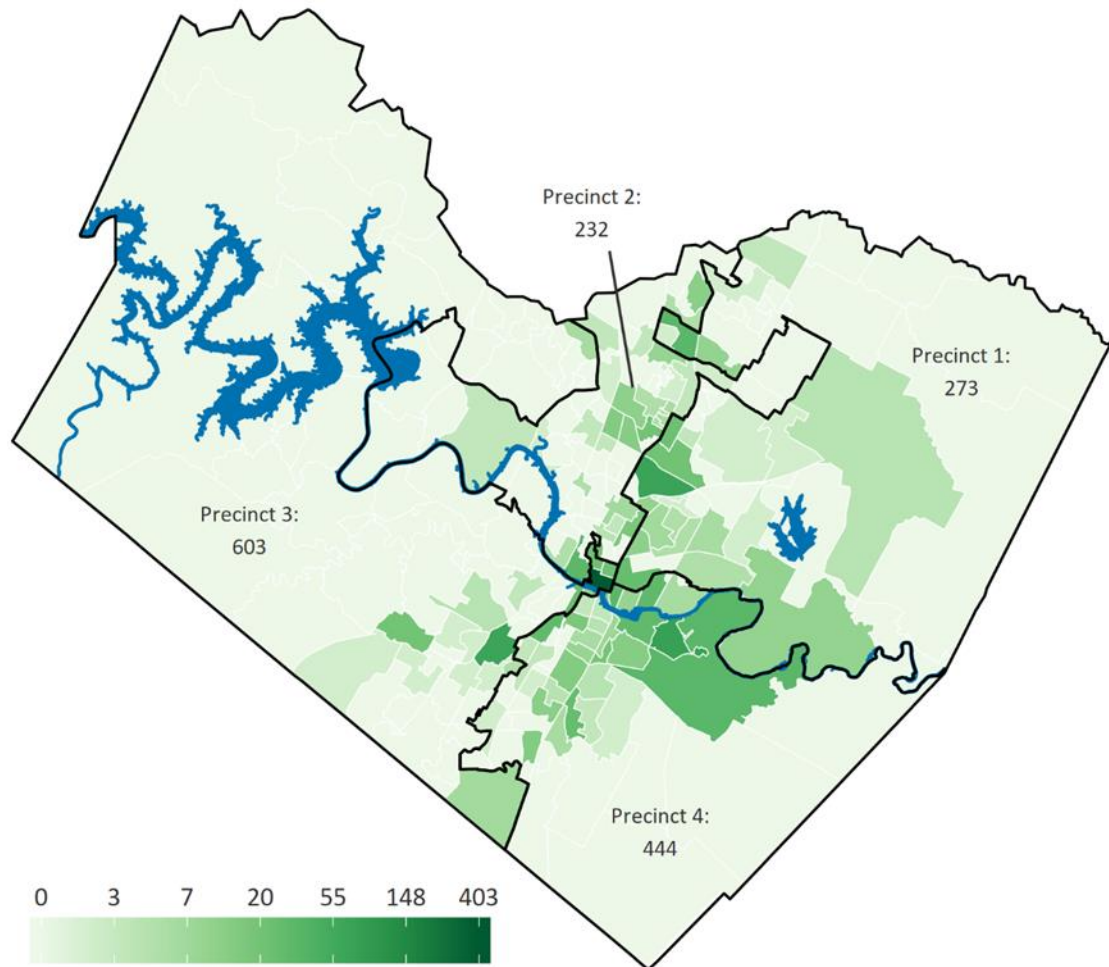
PIT Count Data – Comparison of Proportion of People Counted in PIT Count (2019 – 2020)



2019 2020



PIT Count Data – Map of Unsheltered Homelessness by County Commissioner Precinct & Election Precinct (2020)



Homelessness by Precinct...

- A concentration remains in the city center (Precinct 3)
- Increased dispersion in 2020 is illustrated in the outlying election precincts ($t = -2.47$, $p = 0.01$).

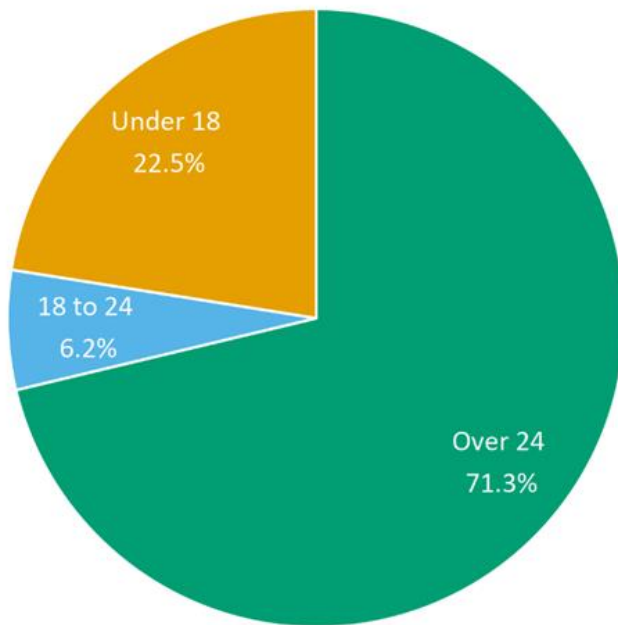
2020 PIT Count: Demographics

PIT Count and Coordinated Entry

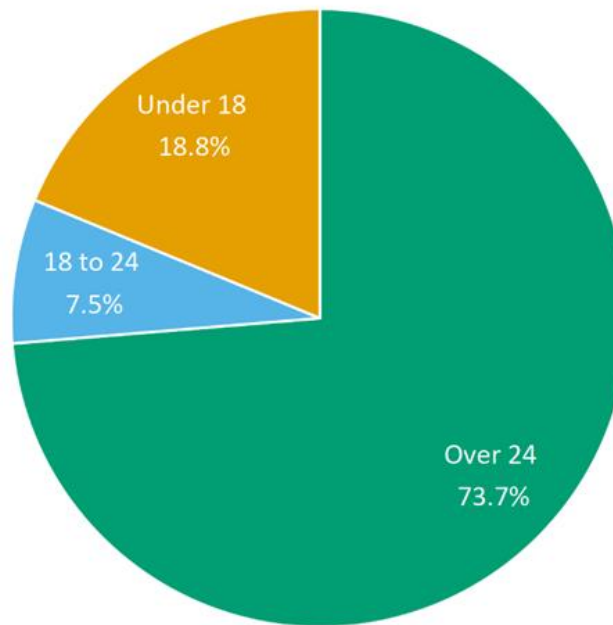


- If the **PIT Count provides a snapshot of homelessness** on one day per year, the Coordinated Entry system (captured within the Homeless Management Information System or HMIS) provides a **rolling video of people served** over time.
- ECHO's Coordinated Entry system provides a **single-entry point** for people experiencing homelessness to access vital community resources.
- Coordinated Entry is required for **Continuum of Care** funded programs.
- The Coordinated Entry team develops, implements, and oversees a system that ensures community providers collaboratively and efficiently **connect households to the services, support programs, and housing** to help end their homelessness.

PIT Count Data – Age (2019-2020)



2019

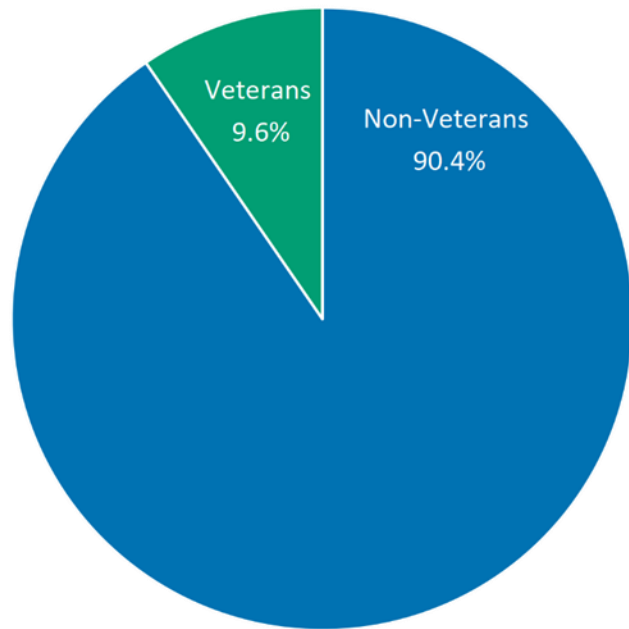


2020

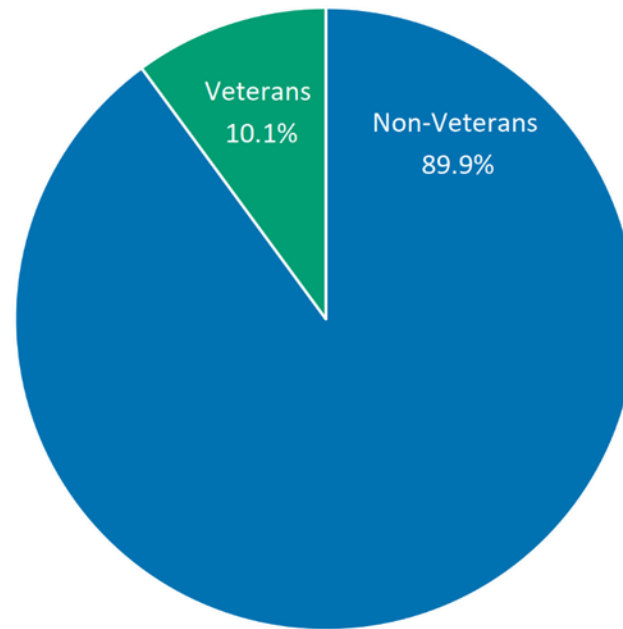
Homelessness by Age...

- Proportion of children (<18 years) decreased by 3.7% ($t = 2.62$, $p = 0.009$)
- Youth (18-24 years) and adults (>24 years) increased slightly (YOY comparison not statistically significant)
- Per Coordinated Entry, Youth homelessness dropped 8.1% and when self-resolved homelessness is accounted for by 28% in 2019

PIT Count Data – Veterans (2019-2020)



2019

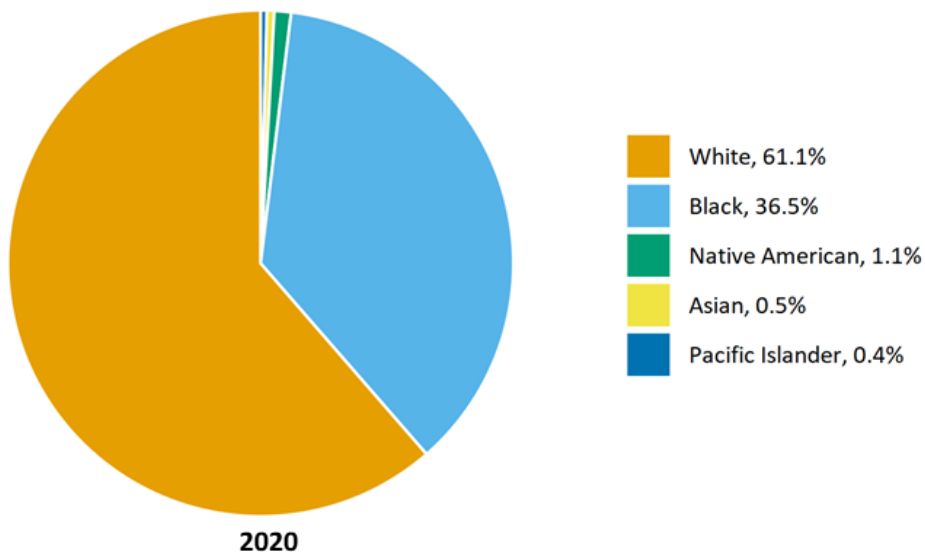
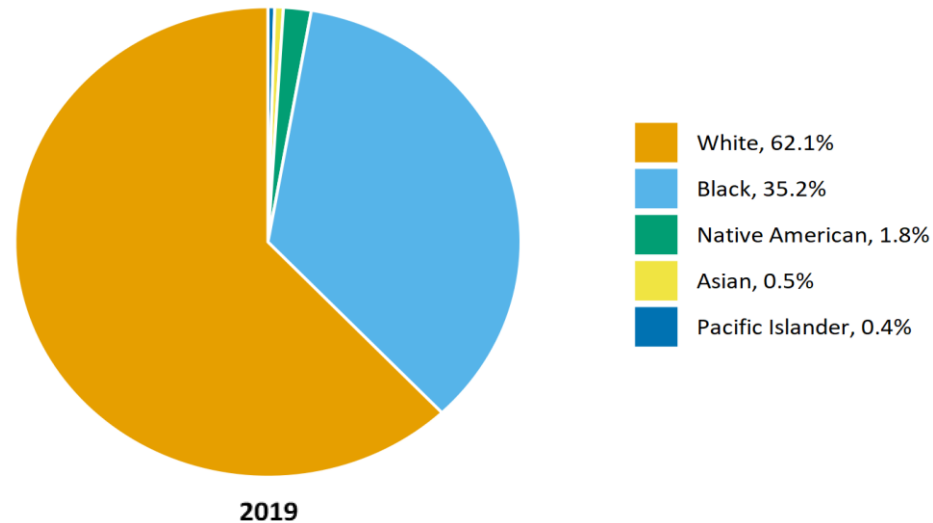


2020

Homelessness by Veteran Status...

- Proportion of veterans increased slightly by 0.5% (YOY comparison was not statistically significant)
- Per Coordinated Entry system, homelessness was reduced by 40.1% among Veterans

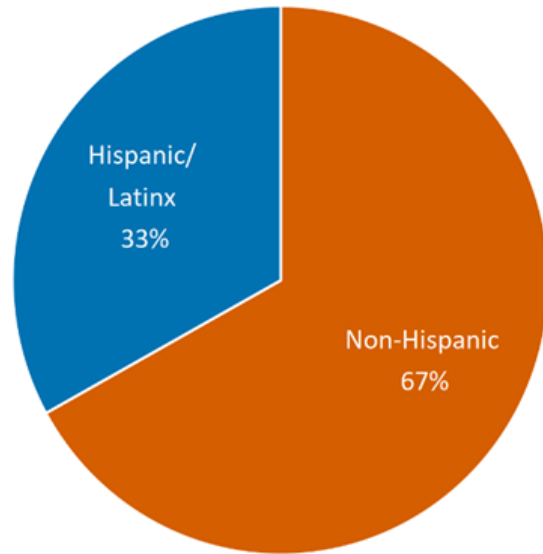
PIT Count Data – Race (2019-2020)



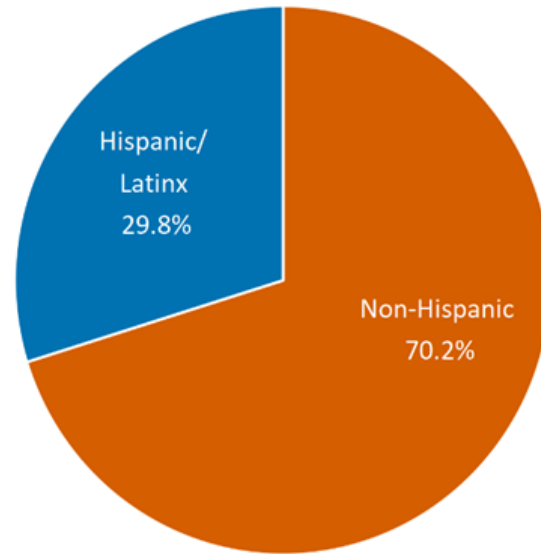
Homelessness by Race...

- Proportion of Black/African American increased slightly by 1.3% (YOY comparison was not statistically significant)
- Black/African Americans represented 36.5% of the 2020 PIT count (over 1 in 3 individuals) but represent less than 1 in 10 individuals in the population of Travis County.
- Per Coordinated Entry System, homelessness was reduced by 1.9%

PIT Count Data – Ethnicity (2019-2020)



2019

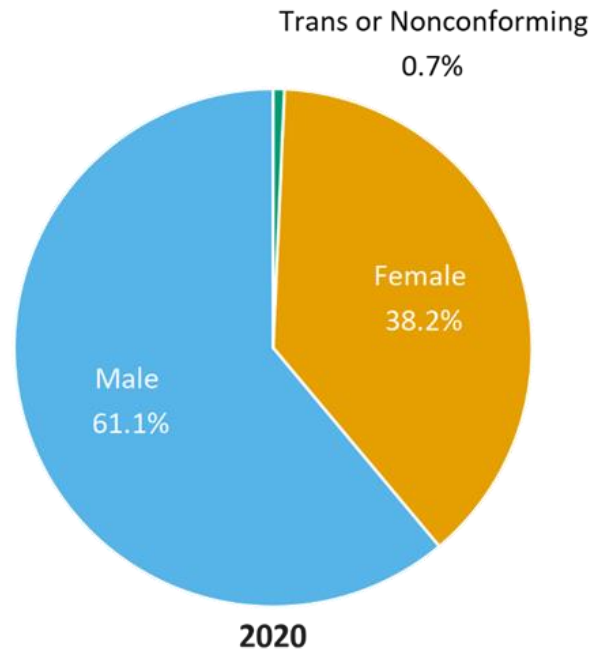
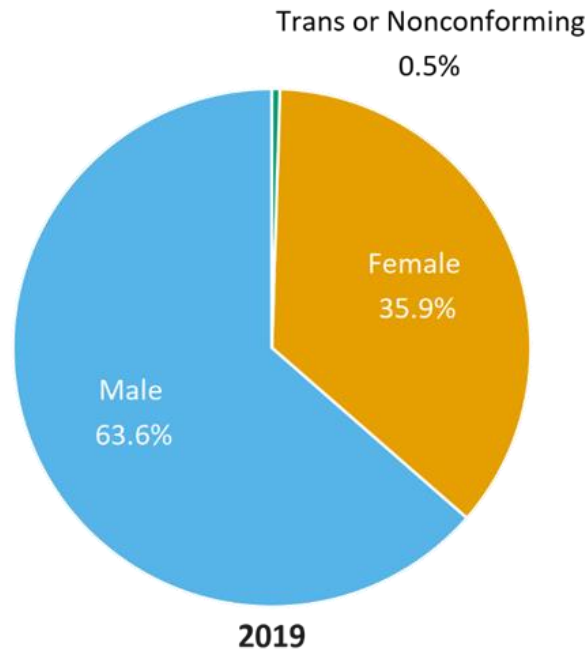


2020

Homelessness by Ethnicity...

- Proportion of Hispanic/Latinx decreased by 3.2% (YOY comparison approaching statistical significance, $t = 1.93$, $p = 0.053$).
- Hispanic/Latinx are slightly underrepresented in the PIT Count as compared to the population of Austin/Travis County
- Per Coordinated Entry System, homelessness was reduced by 10.6%

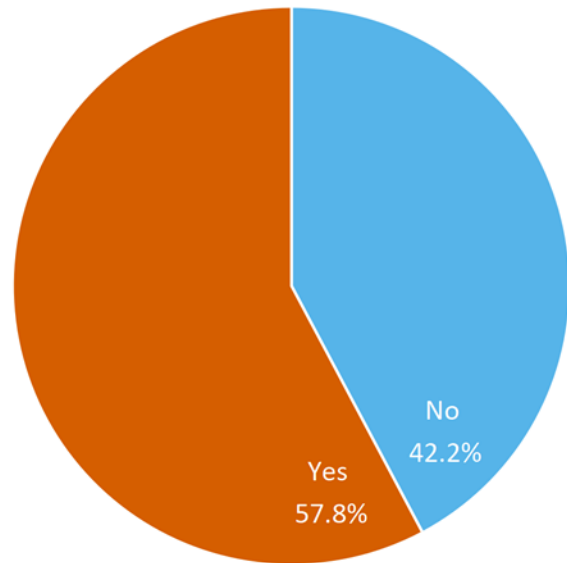
PIT Count Data – Gender (2019-2020)



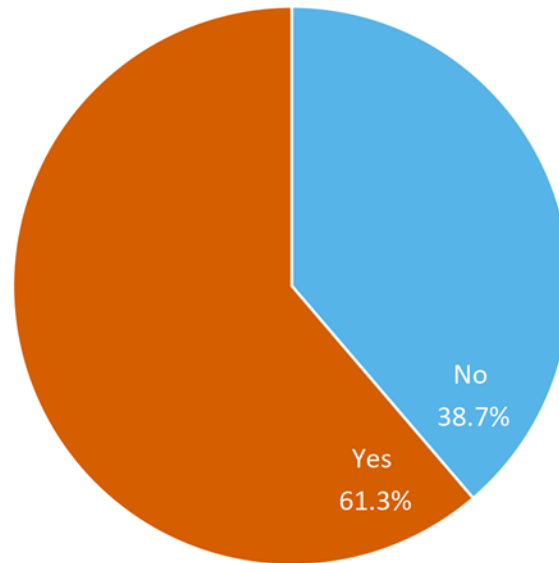
Homelessness by Gender...

- Proportion of Females increased by 2.3%
- Proportion of Males decreased by 2.5%
- Proportion of Trans or Nonconforming increased by 0.2%
- None of the above YOY comparisons were statistically significant

PIT Count Data – Prior Experience with Homelessness (2019-2020)



2019

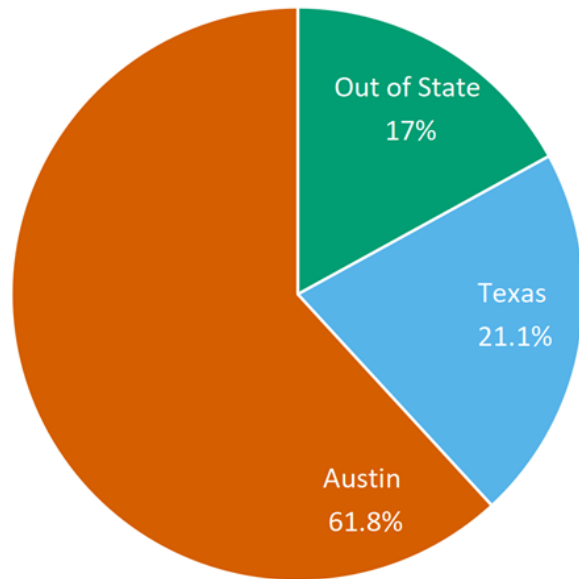


2020

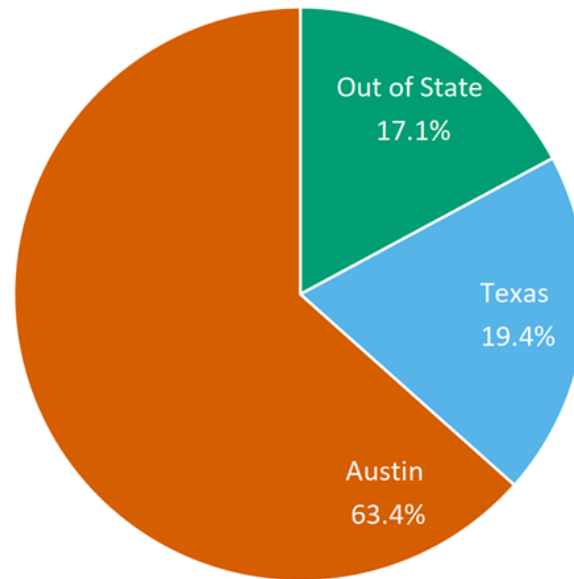
Prior Experience with Homelessness...

- Proportion of people reporting “Yes” increased by 3.5%
- YOY comparison not statistically significant

PIT Count Data – Location of First Homelessness (2019-2020)



2019



2020

Location of First Homelessness...

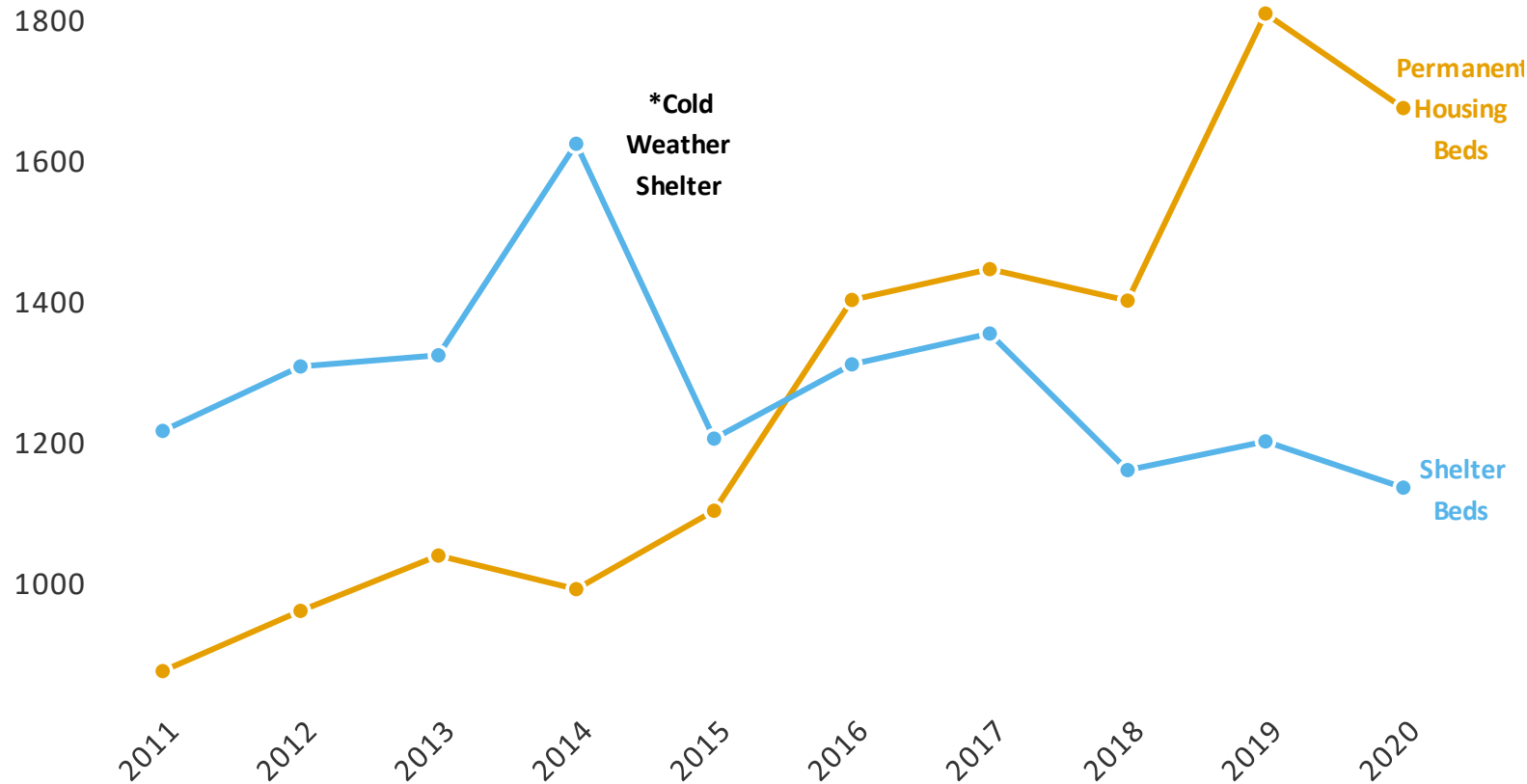
- Proportion of people reporting “Austin” increased by 1.6%
- Proportion of people reporting “Other Texas Location” decreased by 1.7%
- Proportion of people reporting “Out of State” remained fairly constant
- None of the above YOY comparisons were statistically significant

Partner Efforts to End Homelessness in Austin/Travis County

What is Housing First?

- This approach focuses on **quickly and effectively** connecting individuals and families experiencing homelessness with permanent housing
- **Removing barriers to entry**, such as sobriety, treatment or service participation requirements.
- As emergency shelters provide increasingly efficient housing-focused case management, the City of Austin, ECHO, and community partners are coalescing to **expand available permanent housing and services** to meet the need in Austin/Travis County.
- The [Housing First](#) approach has shown to be **effective**²⁻⁷ and **cost efficient**^{8,9} but increased permanent **housing resources are needed** to keep up with need in Austin/Travis County.

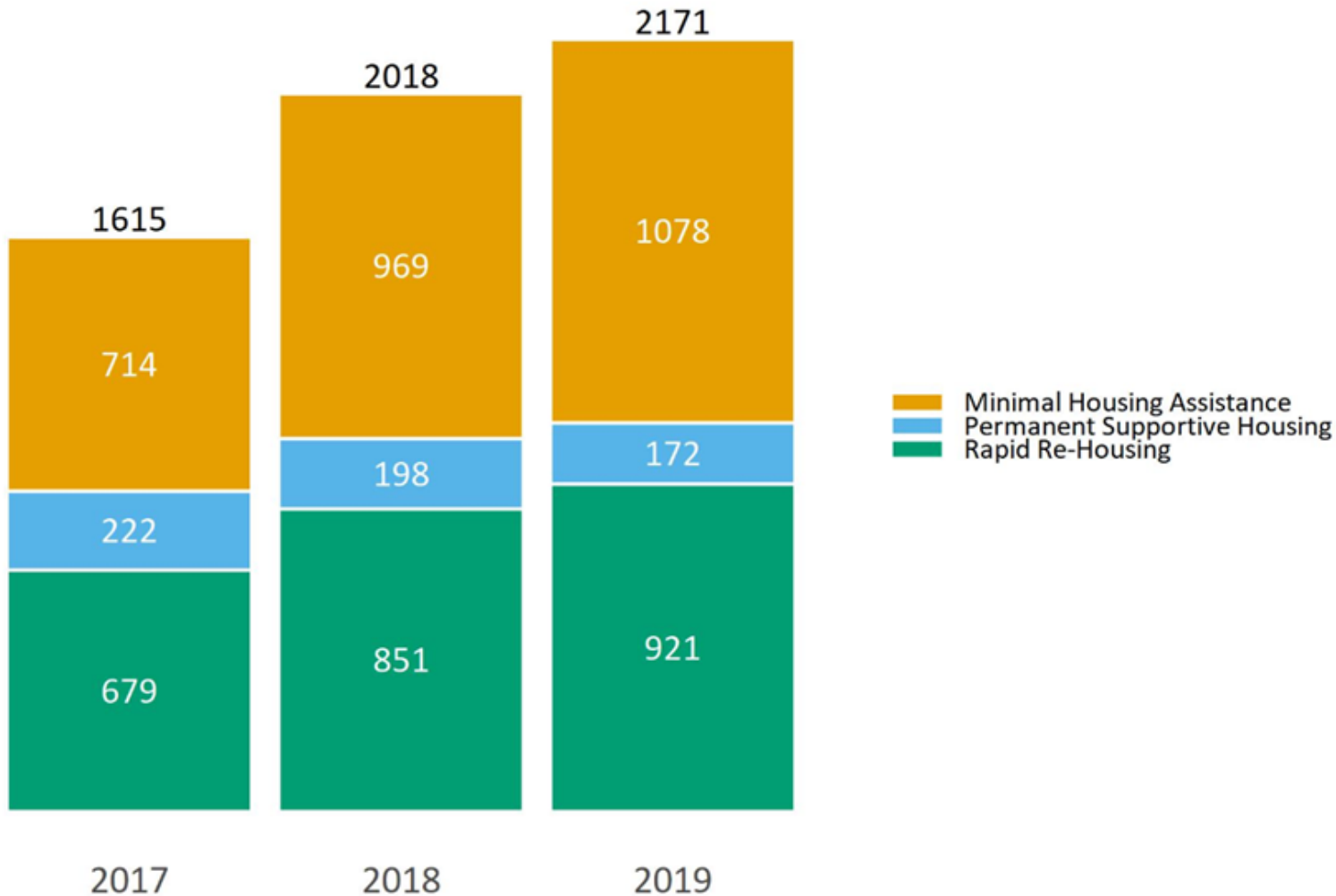
Housing First – Shift in Resource Capacity Toward Permanent Housing (2011-2020)



Housing First Research Shows Participants...

- Access housing faster and are more likely to remain housed²⁻⁴
- Are less likely to use emergency services including hospitals, jails, and emergency shelters⁶⁻⁷
- Can utilize up to **\$23,000 less** per person per year in public resources than when in a shelter program⁹

Total Number of Clients Housed in Austin/Travis County (2017-2019)



Permanent Housing Includes:

- **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH):** is a housing intervention that includes ongoing rental subsidy and support services.
- **Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)** is a short-term intervention that includes financial and support services.
- **Minimal Housing Assistance (MHA):** Support services designed to assist individuals with low housing barriers or persons likely to self-resolve their homelessness.

Addressing Racial Disparities in Homelessness



“Where we put our energy is where we see movement. I would like to challenge us – service providers, decision makers, the community and system at large – not just to talk but to act, to move past the equality lens and move toward providing real equity in housing services.” – Quiana Fisher, BSS+ Program Manager at Caritas of Austin and co-chair of ECHO’s Racial Equity Task Group

- The disproportionate impact of homelessness on the Black/African American community remains concerning and unacceptable.
- Racial Equity Task Group: ECHO and community partners formed the Racial Equity Task Group to find solutions and ensure equity in access to housing opportunities within our homeless response system.
- Community Level: The problem is bigger than our homeless response system. Our community needs decision makers to tackle broader structural inequities that impact our most vulnerable populations.

Covid-19 & The Homeless Response System



- Covid-19 Risk: People experiencing homelessness are twice as likely to be hospitalized, 2-4 times as likely to need critical care, and 2-3 times as likely to die from Covid-19¹⁰
- Insecurity: New wave of economic insecurity due to the pandemic (food, healthcare and health insurance, housing) puts more people at risk of becoming and remaining homeless
- Resources: The City of Austin, ECHO, and *many* community partners are leading the charge to stand up more resources to support people experiencing homelessness
 - Testing and protection: Protective lodges for at risk individuals and isolation facilities for Covid-19+ individuals
 - Eat Apart Together (EAT): Coordinated food delivery program
 - Mobile hygiene clinics: showers, toiletries, clothing, food, tents for social isolation

Partner Efforts Toward Ending Homelessness



- The **City** allocated **\$62.7 million** toward homelessness services in the FY2019/20 Budget. This historic allocation emphasizes the fact that preventing and ending homelessness is Council's highest priority.
- **Continuum of Care (CoC) partners** in the homeless response system collectively received over **\$10.3 million** toward provision of programs, services, and housing in Austin/Travis County.
 - **Integral Care** opened the Terrace at Oak Springs housing development providing **50 units of PSH** using a Housing First and Harm Reduction approach.
 - **LifeWorks** opened The Works II **adding 29 more affordable housing units** for youth and young families exiting homelessness
 - **SAFE** is using HUD funding to expand housing to 55 additional households impacted by domestic violence during 2020 and beyond
 - **Salvation Army's Rathgeber Center for Families** opened in February of 2020 adding 212 beds to Austin/Travis County's emergency shelter capacity.
 - **Caritas of Austin's Youth Housing Stability initiative** permanently housed 30 youth ages 18-24 and provided support to build well-being.
 - **Front Steps' downtown ARCH** implemented housing-focused case management to house 80% of their "top 25 stayers" in 2019
- **Family Eldercare** has housed 26 older adults in the last six months alone, and they have enrolled 150 clients in a total value of \$609,000 in benefits supporting homeless prevention since January 2020.
- **The Other Ones Foundation's** alternative employment model paid working participants over \$194,000, removed over 241,000 pounds of trash out of green space, and housed 35 individuals in 2019.

What's Next?

- **Motel Conversion Strategy:** In partnership with **ECHO** and **community partners**, the **City** is implementing a Motel Conversion Strategy that will create **300 additional PH** units. **Rodeway Inn** was purchased in April of 2020. The City is seeking to purchase additional motel properties toward the goal of ending homelessness.
- **Mobile Loaves and Fishes** expect to complete their Phase II expansion of the **Community First! Village** during the summer of 2020 adding an **additional 300 homes** to their community.
- **Foundation Communities** will open their 25th community at **Waterloo Terrace** adding a total of **132 new affordable housing units** in an effort to prevent homelessness.

Key Takeaways – PIT Count & Homeless Response

- **Increased PIT count volunteer capacity and improved survey methods** over the past three years have enabled a **more thorough count** of the **existing**, unsheltered homeless population.
- The count of **unsheltered homelessness has increased**, while the **per capita rate** of unsheltered homelessness has **remained fairly constant over the last decade**.
- **Our community still has progress to make** on eliminating **racial disparities** and housing **populations disproportionately affected** by homelessness such as **Black/African Americans, Veterans, and Youth**.
- **A continued majority of people falling into homelessness are Austin/Travis County residents** and **many factors** contribute to this including: rising cost of rent, lack of affordable and permanent supportive housing inventory, stagnant minimum wage, lack of health insurance, and economic and racial inequity.
- **Housing First programs are effective** in addressing homelessness and **increased permanent housing is needed to keep up with demand in Austin/Travis County**, particularly in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

References



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4. Tsemberis, S. & Eisenberg, R. Pathways to Housing: Supported Housing for Street-Dwelling Homeless Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities. 2000.
5. 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.
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7. Byrne, T., Treglia, D., Culhane, D., Kuhn, J., & Kane, V. Predictors of Homelessness Among Families and Single Adults After Exit from Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Programs: Evidence from the Department of Veterans Affairs Supportive Services for Veterans Program. 2015
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9. Tsemberis, S. & Stefancic, A. Housing First for Long-Term Shelter Dwellers with Psychiatric Disabilities in a Suburban County: A Four Year Study of Housing Access and Retention. 2007.
10. Culhane, D., Treglia, D., Steif, K., et al. Estimated Emergency and Observational/Quarantine Capacity Need for the US Homeless Population Related to COVID-19 Exposure by County; Projected Hospitalizations, Intensive Care Units and Mortality. 2020-03-27. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9g0992bm>

*Thank you to all of our
2020 PIT Count Volunteers and
Community Partners!*

Questions?