

HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN

CURRENT NEEDS & GAPS REPORT



Rev. 03/30/2016

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Report

This is a visual report that describes 1) the number and characteristics of the homeless population in Austin and Travis County, 2) their current needs, 3) our current community public investments to address homelessness, 4) gaps in services, and 5) what we see as the main trends and takeaways.

Acknowledgements

This report was created by staff at the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO). The lead researcher and writer was Mariana Salazar, Director of Research and Evaluation with the support of Katy Manganello (HMIS Director), Richard Dodson (HMIS Administrator), Preston Petty (Coordinated Assessment Director) and Ann Howard (Executive Director).

Methodology

Most of the data presented in this report was extracted from our Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS) and comes from various sources including surveys from our *Coordinated Assessment* process, our annual *Point-in-Time Count* and our *Housing Inventory Count*. Supplemental data was used from the American Community Survey, other local studies and interviews from staff working on the ground with persons experiencing homelessness.

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

Questions or Comments?

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

MORE ABOUT OUR DATA SOURCES

Coordinated Assessment

- *It is the process through which persons experiencing homelessness in Austin and Travis County are surveyed with one standard tool made up of 50 questions that assess a person's health and well-being. The tool is called the VI-SPDAT.*
- *A person's score on the tool is used to prioritize their level of vulnerability compared to other homeless persons in the community who have been assessed with the same tool. Given our limited resources, our community prioritizes to first serve those most vulnerable.*
- *Since October 2014, over 5,000 persons have been assessed through this Coordinated Assessment process. Given the wealth of information collected through these 5,000+ surveys and its large sample size, this data is one of the main sources of information on this report.*
- *Coordinated Assessment is a process required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for communities receiving HUD funds. In Austin, it was launched by our partner agencies Caritas of Austin, Front Steps, Salvation Army and Austin Travis County Integral Care.*

Annual Point-in-Time Homeless Count data

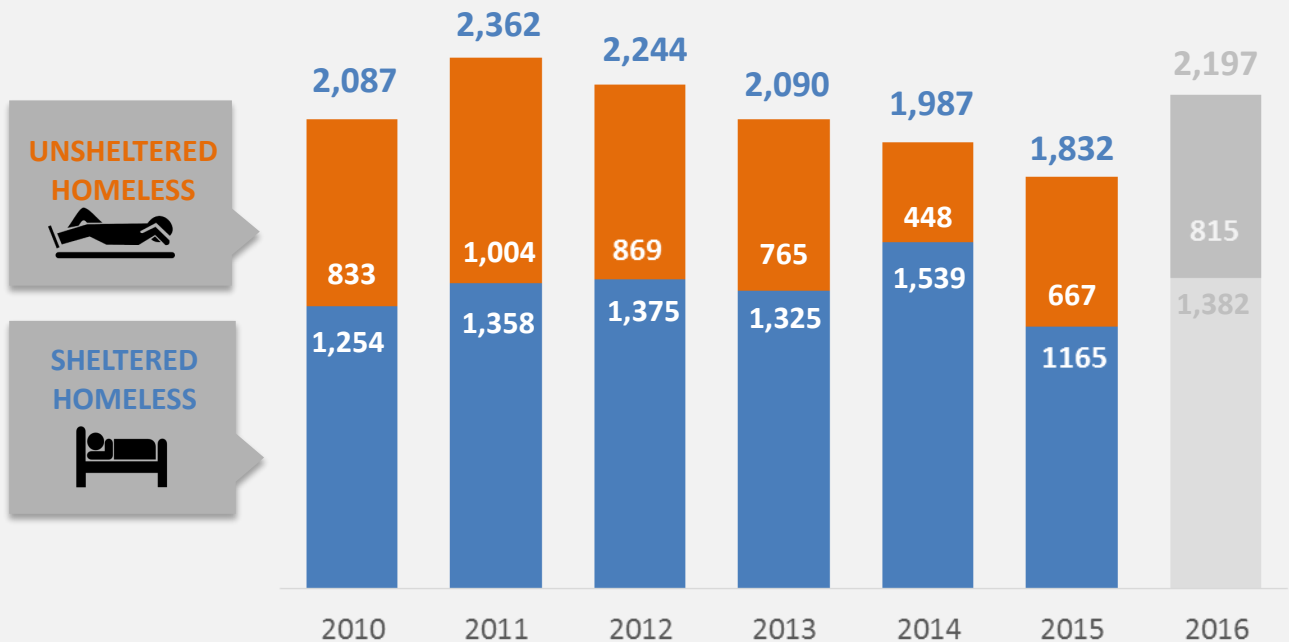
- *Every year, communities around the country count the number of persons sleeping in shelters, in the streets or other places not meant for human habitation on a given day.*
- *The count is required by HUD for communities receiving HUD funding. It takes place during the last week of January every year. It provides a one-day snapshot on the number of persons that are literally homeless.*

Annual Housing Inventory Count

- *Every year, communities around the country count the number of beds dedicated to persons experiencing homelessness, including shelter beds, beds in transitional housing or permanent supportive housing programs.*
- *The count is required by HUD for communities receiving HUD funding and takes place during the last week of January every year on the same day of the point-in-time count. This count provides a one-day snapshot of the number of beds dedicated to serving persons experiencing homelessness.*

HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN OVER THE YEARS

Snapshot of persons experiencing homelessness on a given day



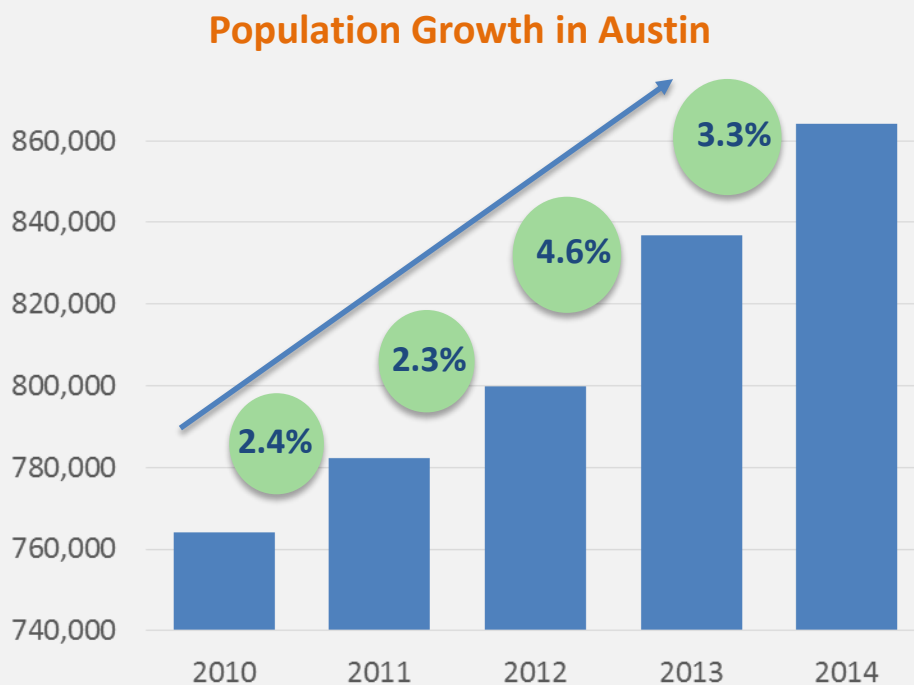
Annual count of persons experiencing homelessness on a given year



Data source: Point-in-Time (PIT) counts and HMIS data. The “sheltered homeless” on a given day, includes those in transitional housing as required by PIT guidelines. The annual count includes unduplicated persons from Emergency Shelters + Safe Haven + Transitional Housing + Street Outreach + Coordinated Assessment and those meeting the homeless definition for Rapid Re-Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing.

WHY IS OUR HOMELESS POPULATION GROWING IN AUSTIN?

- *Are more people falling into homelessness?*
- *Are we getting better at counting more people that were already homeless?*
- *How is the homeless population being affected by Austin's demographic changes?*
- *Are some of the people who are moving to Austin everyday, falling into homelessness?*
- *Is minimum wage too small to support increased costs of living like rent?*
- *How is the tight rental market that Austin is experiencing & the affordability crisis, affecting the rate of the newly homeless? How is it affecting our ability to improve our housing placement rate?*



Population increased over 100,000 from 2010-2014
Expected to double every 20 years
Fastest growing large (500K+) city in the U.S. from 2010-2013

HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN

WHERE ARE PEOPLE SLEEPING?

Places not meant for human habitation



Shelter

34.4%



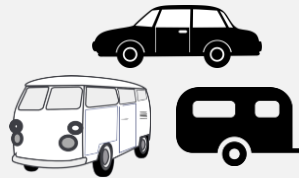
**Street
Sidewalk or
Doorway**

25.7%



**Beach
Riverbed
Park**

15.7%



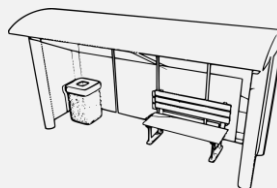
**Car
Van
RV**

13.1%



**Other
(e.g. Bridges,
Abandoned Buildings)**

9.2%



**Bus
Train**

1.9%

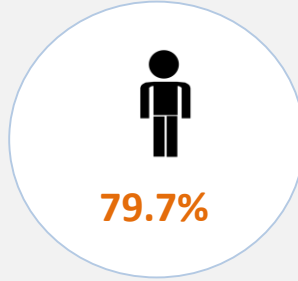
WHO IS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN?

S N A P S H O T

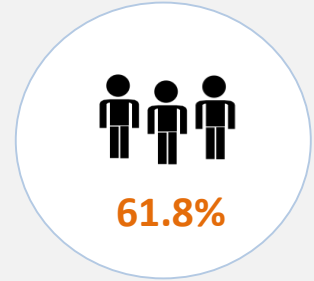
Over 7,000 persons experienced homelessness in 2015
staying in the streets, cars, parks and shelters



are unemployed
(no earned income)



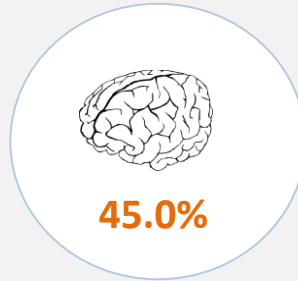
are individuals



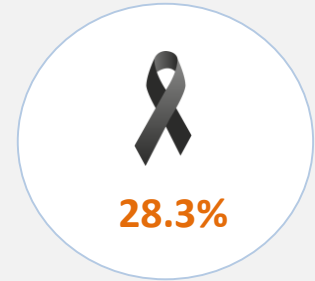
are males



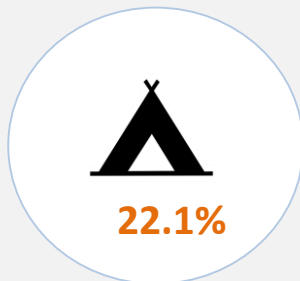
report a problem
with drugs/alcohol
sometime in their lifetime



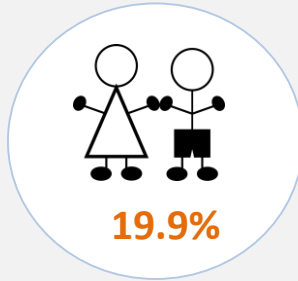
report having a current
mental health problem



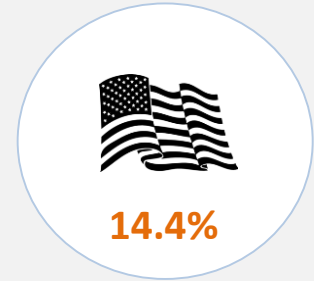
have experienced
domestic violence
in their lifetime



are chronically homeless



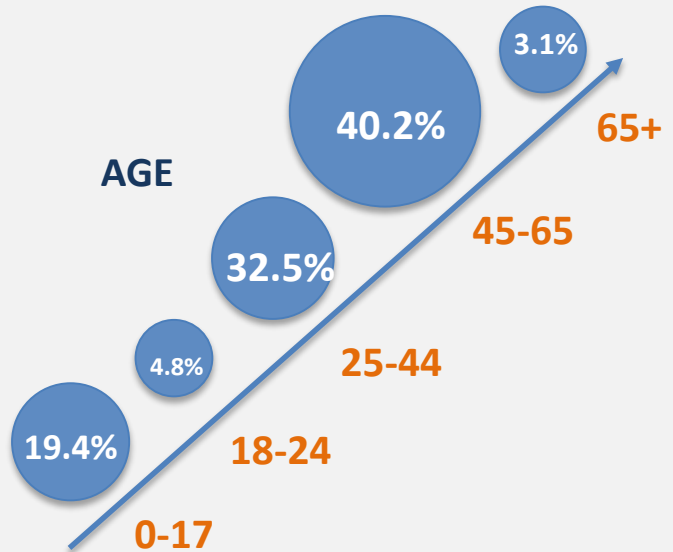
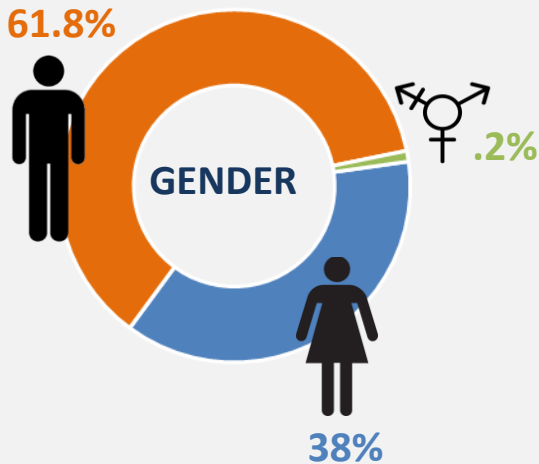
are children



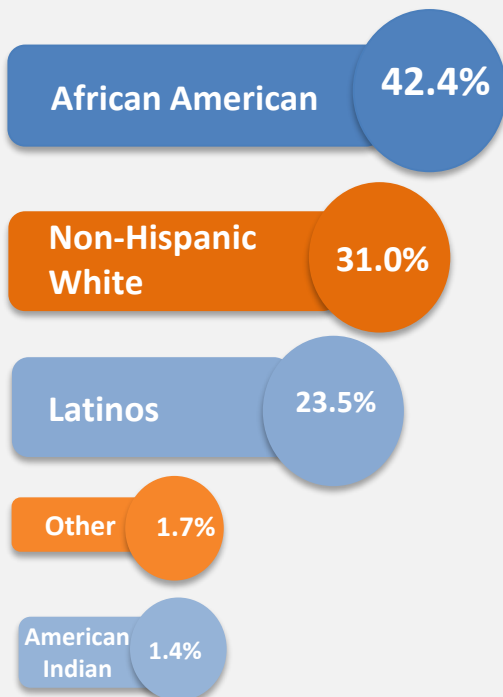
are veterans

WHO IS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN?

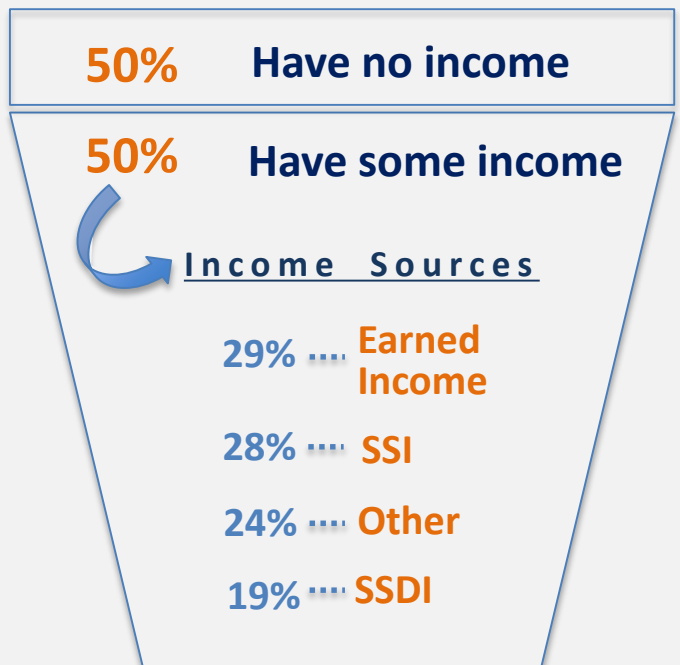
DEMOGRAPHICS



RACE + ETHNICITY



HOUSEHOLD INCOME

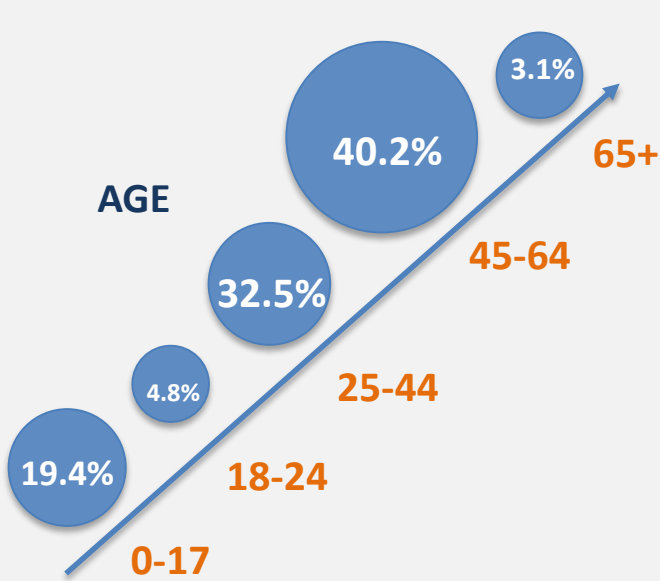


- Categories not mutually exclusive.

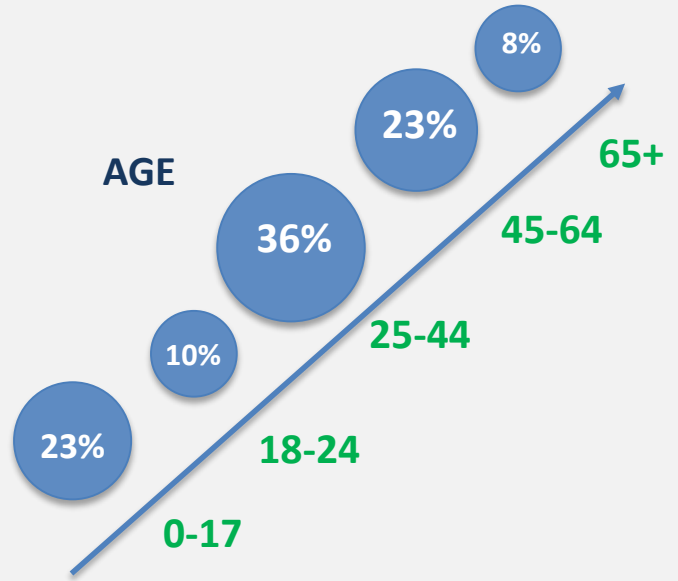
- Percentages based on Coordinated Assessment surveys of 4,771 persons per 01/29/2016.

COMPARISON

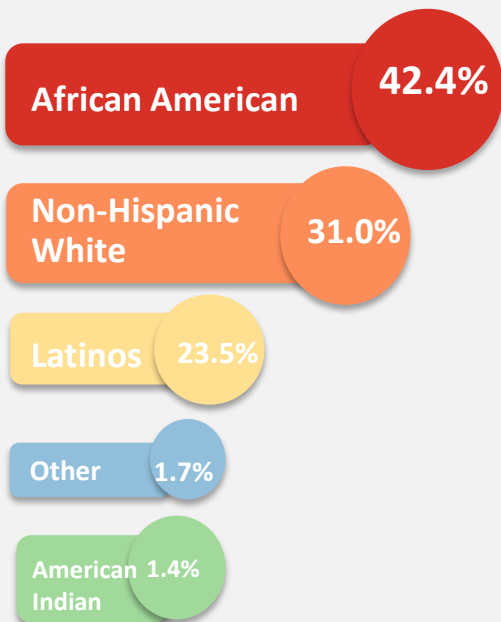
HOMELESS POPULATION IN TRAVIS COUNTY



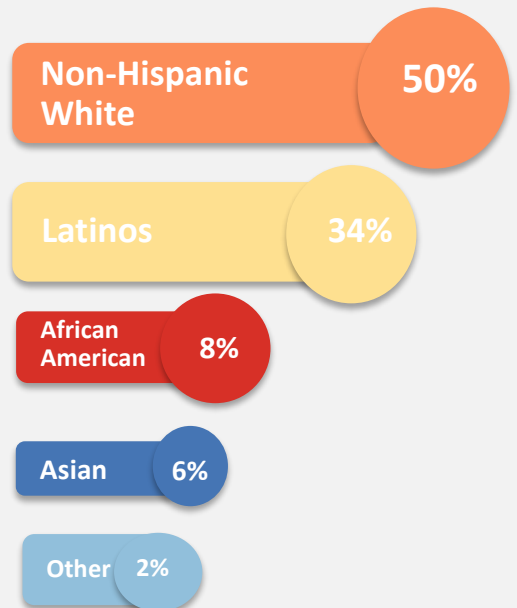
ALL TRAVIS COUNTY RESIDENTS



RACE + ETHNICITY



RACE + ETHNICITY



HOMELESSNESS + HEALTH IN AUSTIN

DRUGS OR ALCOHOL

60%

report a problem with drugs/alcohol sometime in their lifetime

38.2%

report having been treated and returning to drinking or using drugs

15%

report consuming almost every day or every day for the past month

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

25.7%

report a history of heat stroke and heat exhaustion

25.1%

report a history of heart disease, Arrhythmia or irregular heartbeat

19.8%

report a history of Hepatitis C

MENTAL HEALTH

48%

report speaking to a mental health professional in the past 6 months

45%

report having a current mental health problem

20%

report having been taking to the hospital for a mental health reason

HOMELESSNESS + HEALTH IN AUSTIN

Health Care Access



62.8%

report having been in the emergency room in the past 6 months



39.9%

report having been taken to the hospital in an ambulance in the past 6 months



32.8%

report having been hospitalized in the last 6 months

Where do the homeless report going for care when they are not feeling well?

Hospital

41.4%

Clinic

30.6%

Do not go for care

16.6%

VA

10%

Other

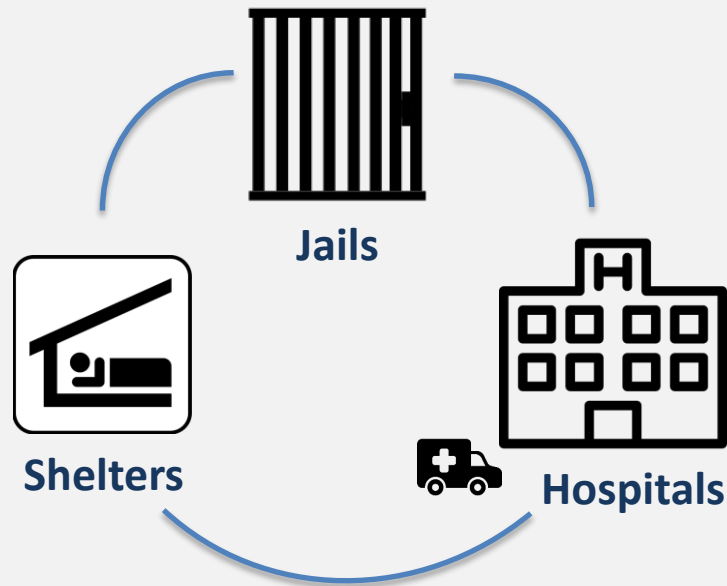
1.4%

Well-being

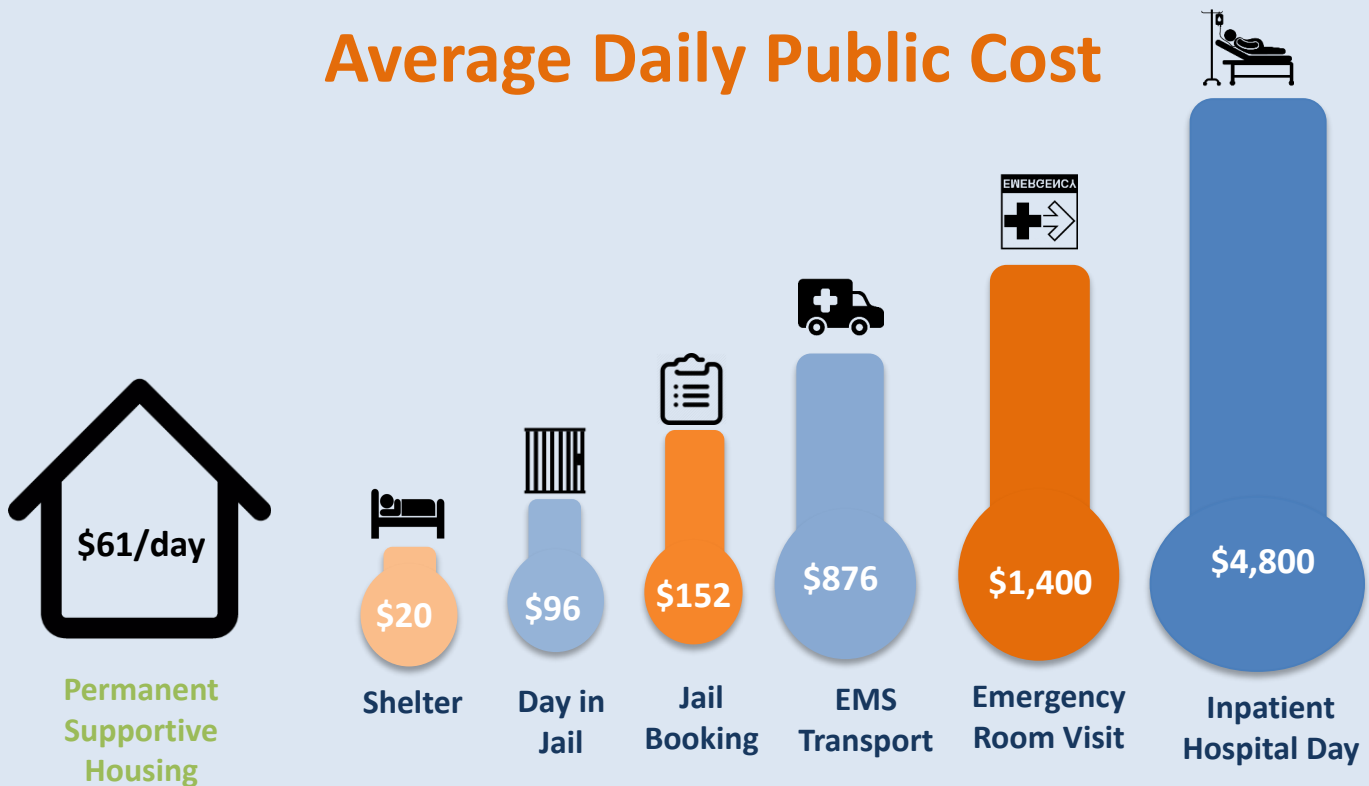
52%

Report having no planned activities that bring them happiness or fulfillment

THE CASE FOR SOME OF THE HOMELESS IN AUSTIN: A REVOLVING DOOR BETWEEN CRISIS CENTERS



Average Daily Public Cost



Annual Average Health Costs

for top 250 High-Cost Homeless Users in Travis Co.

Current Encounters/Person

Costs/Person

Inpatient
Hospital
Days



37 days @ \$4,800/day

\$178K/year

Emergency
Room
Visits



21 visits @ \$1,400/visit

\$30K/year

EMS
Transports

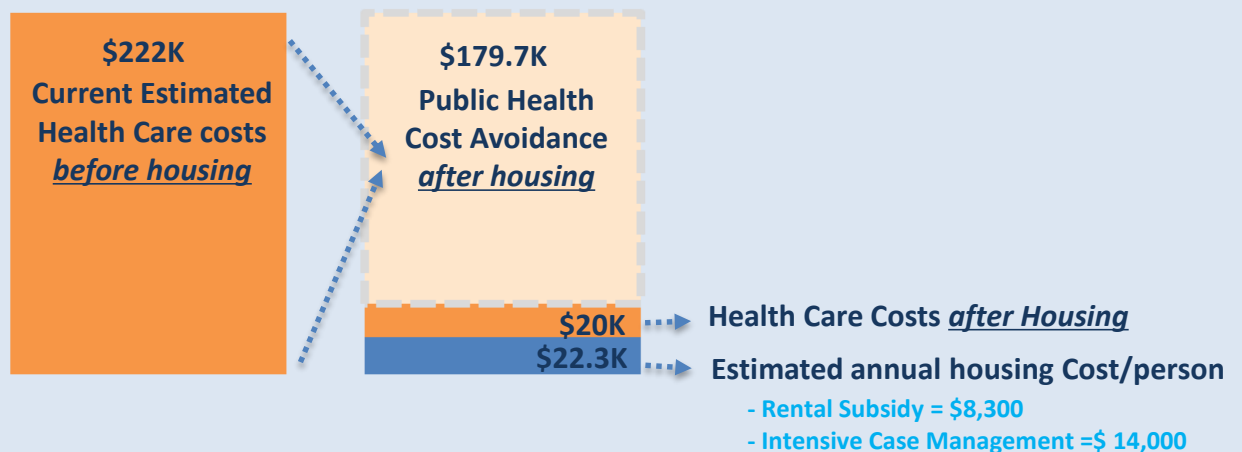


19 transport @ \$876/transport

\$14K/year

Average total annual cost per person: \$222K

Sample estimated benefit of Permanent Supportive Housing



FREQUENT RENTAL HOUSING BARRIERS

for the Homeless Population in Austin

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND



Charged with *misdemeanors*



No renting if it happened recently



Charged with *felonies*



No renting at all

INCOME/DEBT



Low or no *income*



No renting, even if benefit program covers income



Usage of *vouchers*



Landlords not taking vouchers



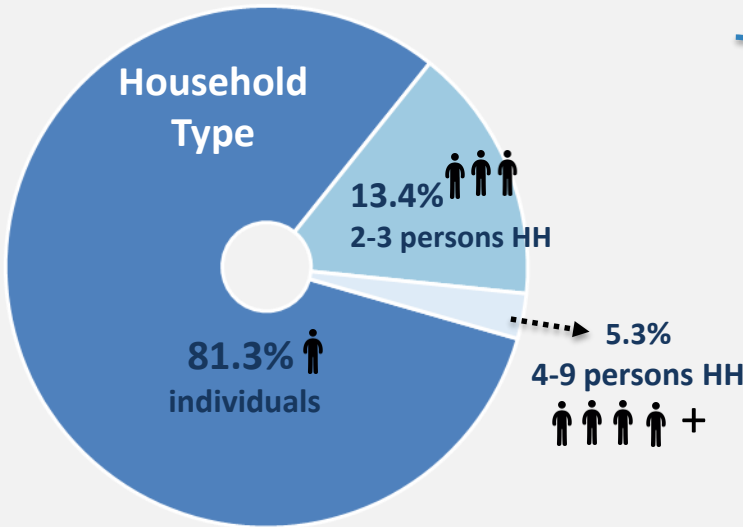
Rental or utility *debt*, bankruptcy



Screened out if outstanding

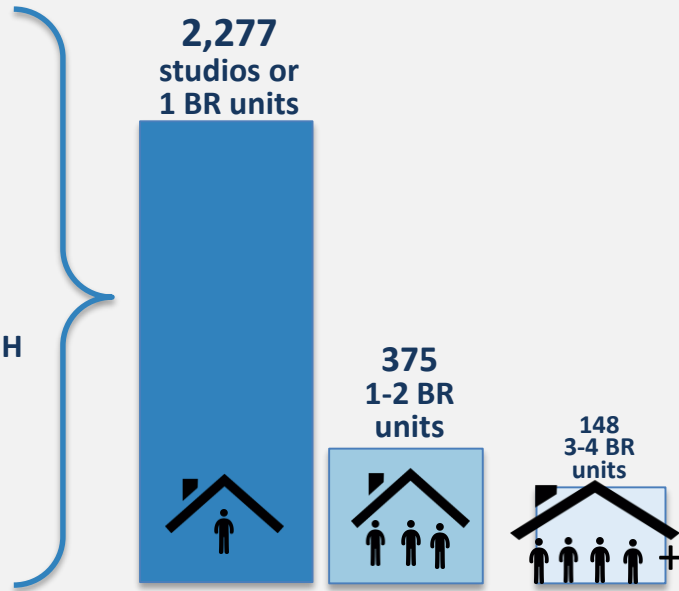
HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN
KNOWN CURRENT NEED FOR 2,800 HOUSEHOLDS (3,700 persons)

POPULATION

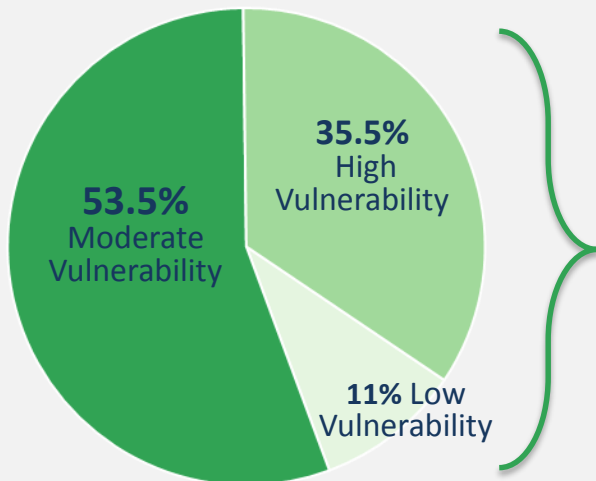


HOUSING NEED

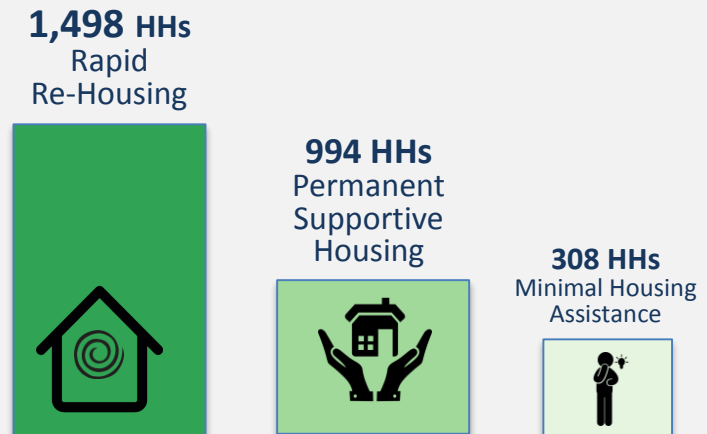
Affordable + Low Barrier housing units



Vulnerability
 (according to VI-SPDAT Scores)

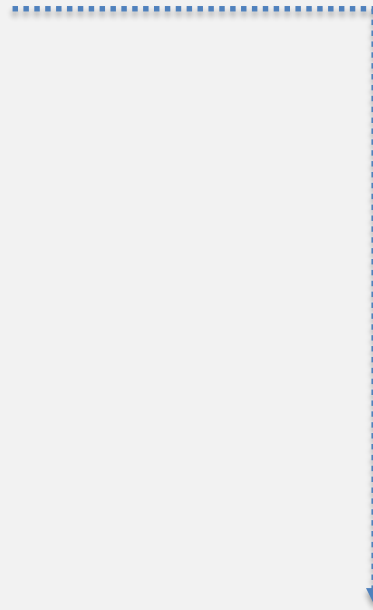
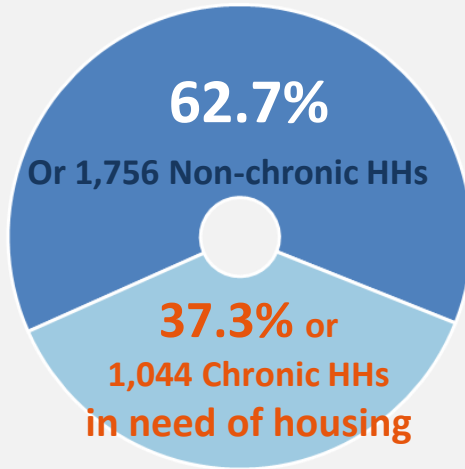


Recommended Intervention Type

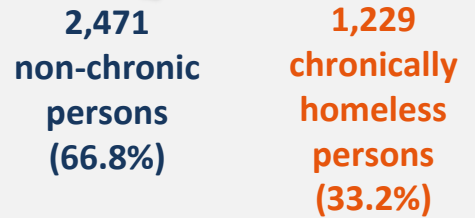


KNOWN CURRENT NEED FOR THE CHRONICALLY HOMELESS IN AUSTIN

Total housing need = 2,800 households



Total housing need = 3,700 persons



Recommended Intervention Type

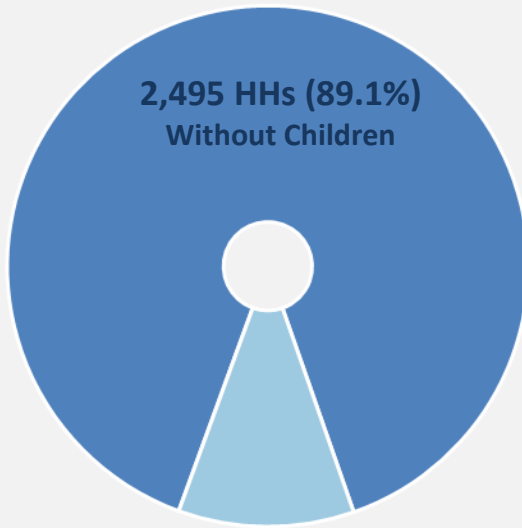
523 HHs
Rapid
Re-Housing



521 HHs
Permanent
Supportive
Housing



KNOWN CURRENT NEED FOR LITERALLY HOMELESS FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN AUSTIN



Total housing need = 2,800 households

305 HHs (10.9%)

Families with Children in need of housing

Affordable + Low Barrier housing units needed for 305 families

Chronically Homeless families = 58

Recommended Intervention for 305 families

256 HHs Rapid Re-Housing



49 HHs Permanent Supportive Housing



105 HHs	→	3-persons units
100 HHs	→	2-persons units
55 HHs	→	4-persons units
36 HHs	→	5-persons units
15 HHs	→	6-persons units
3 HHs	→	7-persons units
1 HH	→	8-persons unit
1 HH	→	9-persons unit

HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN

ESTIMATED NEEDS FOR 2,800 HOUSEHOLDS (3,700 persons)

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

INTERCONNECTED NEEDS

Economic Security

80%

Persons unemployed



2,291

Jobs that hire the hard to employ & pay enough to afford a place to live

58.2%

Persons whose primary access to healthcare is a hospital or don't go for care at all



2,153

Persons that need improved health care access to appropriate settings

52%

Persons with no daily activities planned that bring fulfillment or happiness



1,924

Persons that need to reconnect to a healthy sense of community

45%

Persons with mental health issues



1,665

Persons that need mental health treatment

20%

Children under 18



740

Children that need family & housing stability

15%

Persons currently using substances



555

Persons that need substance use treatment

3.31%

Unaccompanied Youth



122

Young adults who need housing & other support

Health & Stability

HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN 2015 COMMUNITY ASSETS

801 Emergency Shelter Beds

Women + Children 314 Salvation Army	Adult Men 230 Front Steps	DV Survivors 106 Safeplace	Families 95 Casa Marianella Foundation for the Homeless	Veterans 36 A New Entry	Youth 20 LifeWorks
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1042 Permanent Supportive Housing Beds

Housing Authority of the City of Austin	494
Austin Travis County Integral Care (ATCIC)	245
Caritas	133
Foundation Communities	80
Front Steps	54
LifeWorks	20
Greendoors	16

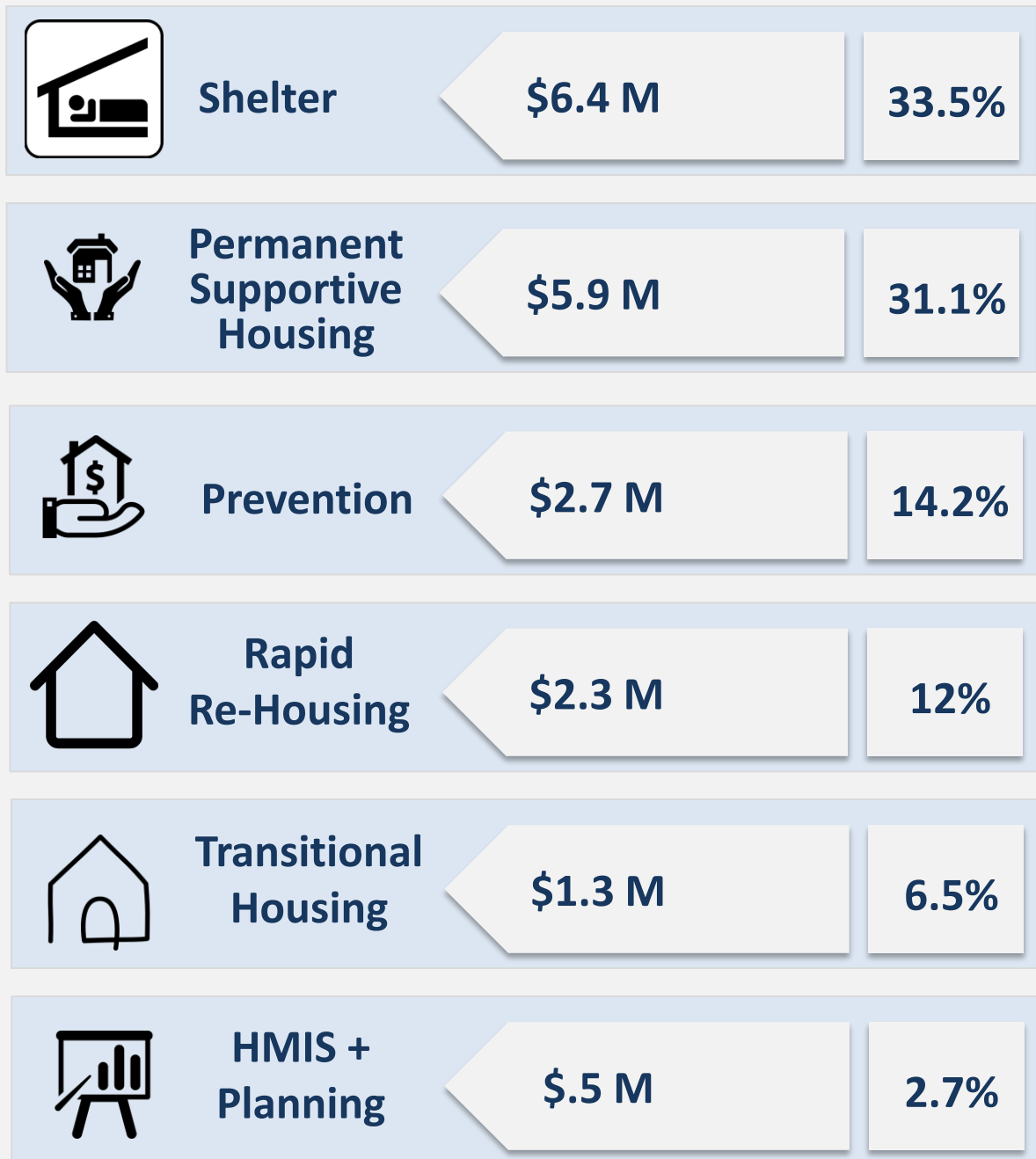
376 Transitional Housing Beds

DV Survivors 164 Safeplace	Families 120 Salvation Army Blackland CDC	Youth 54 Lifeworks	Veterans 32 Greendoors	Individuals 6 Frontsteps
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6 Recuperative Care beds

0 Beds for end-of-life/hospice services

HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN ANNUAL PUBLIC INVESTMENTS



TOTAL = \$19.1 million dollars/year

HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN 2016 PROJECTED COMMUNITY ASSETS?

Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) Investments

Individuals housed in 2015 through RRH = **820**

RRH Public Investments in a given year = **2.3 Million**

Av. RRH Public Investments in a given year/ housed person = **\$2,804**

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Units

Estimated PSH units that turn over annually = **156**
(15% of 1,042)

Newly PSH units to be created in 2016 = **100**
(1/4 of the 400 currently committed 400 PSH units from the City of Austin)

256

Minimal Housing Assistance Resources

Overall shelter capacity = **808**

Overall recuperative beds capacity = **6**

Individuals that can be diverted in a year = **360**

HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN PROJECTED 2016 GAP?

Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)



Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)



Transitional Housing (TH)



HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN PROJECTED 2016 GAP?

Shelter beds



Medical Recuperative beds



End-of-Life Service beds



HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN TRENDS AND TAKEAWAYS

1. At least 2,800 households (3,700 people) are literally homeless and in need of 2,800 affordable and low-barrier housing units now.

➤ As of March 2016, our coordinated assessment process has surveyed and identified this many literally homeless persons as currently in need of housing. This is easily an undercount, considering not everyone who is literally homeless engages our system and a few providers in the community are not yet participating in our coordinated assessment process.

➤ What we currently need:

Given the household composition of the assessed homeless population, the types of housing units currently needed are at least:

- 2,300 studios or one-bedroom units,
- 350 one-to-two bedroom units, and
- 150 three-to-four bedroom units.

HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN TRENDS AND TAKEAWAYS

2. Access to affordable and low barrier housing remains the single greatest challenge to ending homelessness.

- In a city whose population is rapidly increasing with unprecedented demand for rental units, and whose overall affordability is collapsing, finding affordable housing stands as the single most pressing challenge faced by individuals experiencing homelessness themselves and by the services providers assisting them.
- People experiencing homelessness face even greater barriers than those already experienced by lower income residents when it comes to securing housing. These barriers may include having criminal history, substance use, poor employment history, poor credit history, poor rental history and very low or no income at all.
- Households experiencing homelessness face enormous competition for a limited number of affordable units, not only competing with other low income residents but also increasingly competing with other moderate and middle income residents attracted to the same affordable units.
- As a community, we have been developing a system to successfully house persons experiencing homelessness by 1) creating partnerships with private landlords to make units accessible and low-barrier, 2) using flexible funding to provide incentives to landlords, and 3) working with affordable housing providers including Public Housing Authorities to create homeless preferences.

What we currently need is:

- Flexible funding to work directly with landlords and provide the right incentives to house the homeless population.
- Access to public affordable low-barrier housing units ranging from Public Housing Authorities, Tax Credit properties to other HUD-funded multifamily properties, where households are not screened out based on their criminal history or use of substances.
- Landlords who do not screen out tenants because on household's source of income and are willing to accept tenants with *Housing Choice Vouchers* or whose rent will be covered by other assistance programs.

HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN TRENDS AND TAKEAWAYS

3. Considerable larger public and private investments are needed to significantly reduce homelessness in Austin.

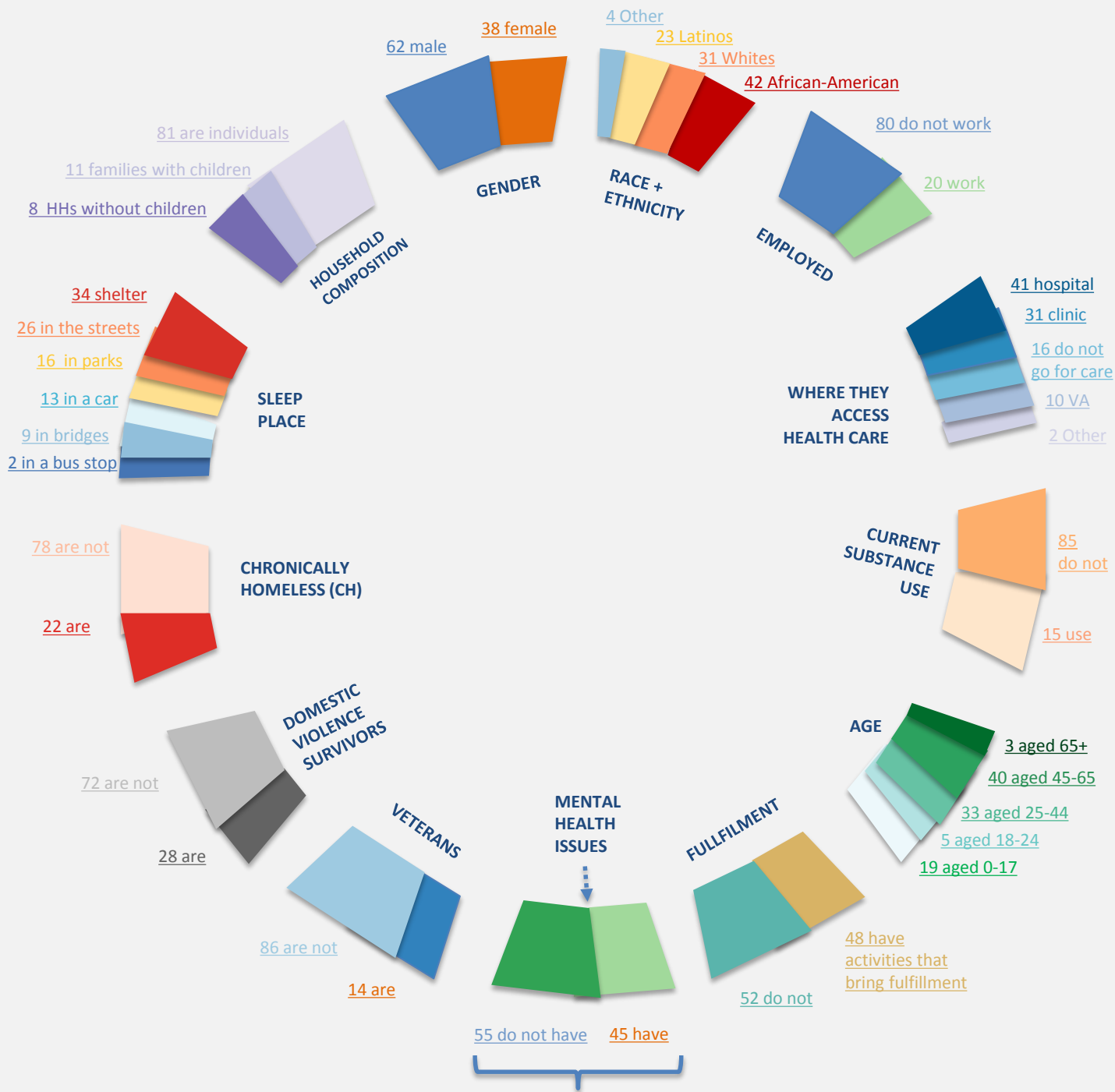
- Given the current needs for persons experiencing homelessness and our current assets, it will take a considerable larger allocation of resources to significantly reduce homelessness and get to a place where homelessness is brief, short and non-recurring for most persons who fall into homelessness.

- We know we has worked at a smaller scale.

What we currently need is:

- Creating a dedicated funding stream for local homeless services.
- Scaling up of programs that work such as Permanent Supportive Housing.
- Adopting new funding models that leverage private and public funds such as Pay for Success.
- Supporting the community at large as it works strategically to end chronic homelessness by 2017 and family and youth homelessness by 2020.

SNAPSHOT HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN AS 100 PEOPLE



100 PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTIN
YOUR THOUGHTS?