



To the Mayor and Members of the City Council

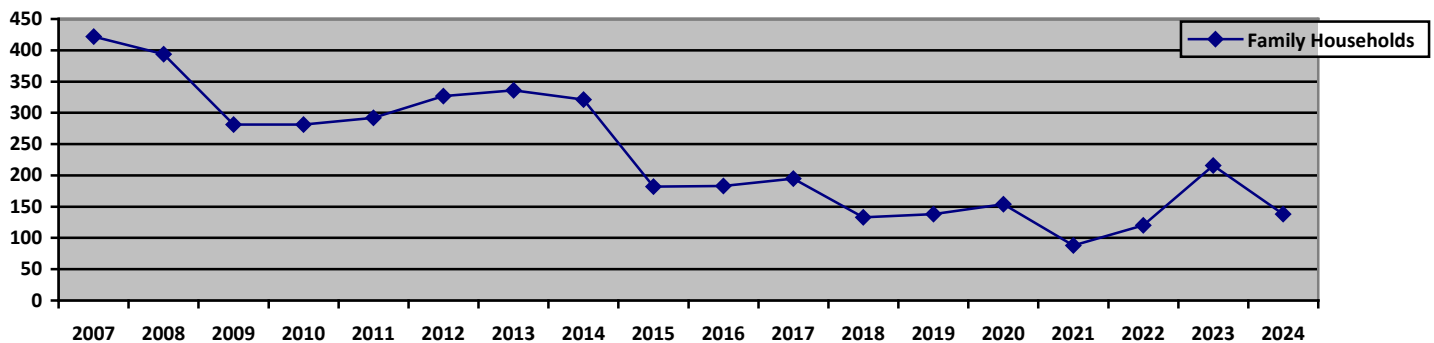
April 2, 2024

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SUBJECT: UPDATE ON FAMILY HOMELESSNESS

On October 18, 2022, the City Council requested an informal report on increases in family homelessness. That report discussed how expiration of the federal eviction moratorium, the end of federal emergency rental assistance, sharp rent increases, and inflation all led to a significant increase in families experiencing homelessness. This informal report is therefore an update on the status of family homelessness in Fort Worth. For purposes of this report, the term “family” means households with at least one adult and one minor. There are two main ways to evaluate trends in family homelessness: the annual point-in-time count and the monthly point-in-time count.

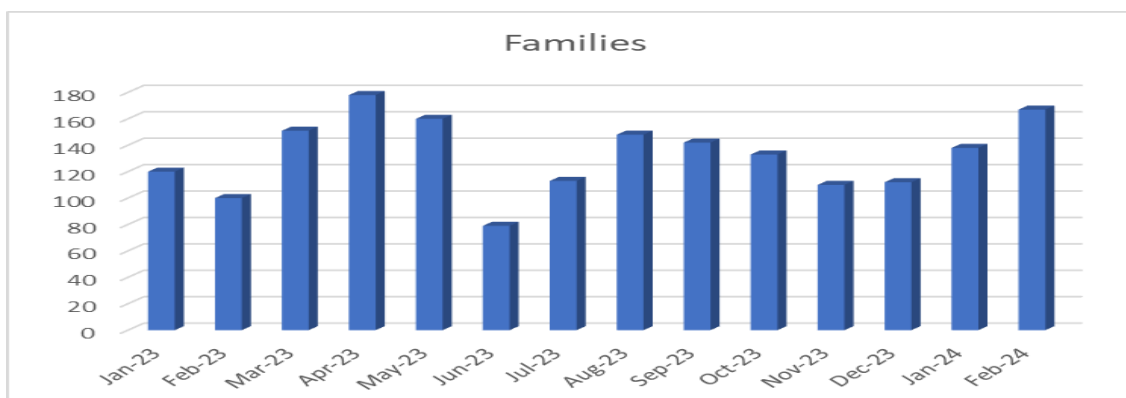
Annual Point-in-Time Count: Families



Sources: “2007-2023 PIT Estimates by CoC,” Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2024 PIT Estimate from Tarrant County Homeless Coalition

Each Continuum of Care (CoC) submits results of a one-night count in late January each year of people experiencing homelessness. The graph above shows change in the number of family households experiencing homelessness in Tarrant and Parker counties over time. Fort Worth ordinarily accounts for approximately 85 percent of the system numbers. On January 25, 2024, there were an estimated 138 family households experiencing homelessness, with approximately 117 in Fort Worth. This figure represents a 36 percent decrease in the number of families experiencing homelessness from the 2023 PIT to the 2024 PIT.

Monthly Point-in-Time Estimate: Families



Source: Tarrant County Homeless Coalition

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As a result of improvements in local homeless data, a more accurate figure on families is usually the monthly point-in-time estimate that the Tarrant County Homeless Coalition (TCHC) tracks using shelter and outreach data. The graph above shows the number of homeless families in the system as of the 25th of each month.

System Changes for Families

In the face of rising family homelessness, the homeless system has acted quickly to address the issue. The following system changes/interventions have enabled the decrease in our number of families experiencing homelessness.

Allocation of Emergency Housing Vouchers: Because TCHC had quickly been able to use the first round of emergency housing vouchers, the State of Texas awarded TCHC approximately 350 more vouchers. The original intent was to use these 350 vouchers for those experiencing chronic homelessness. The plan was for TCHC to provide homeless persons with the rental assistance voucher and for the City to provide case management. However, as family homelessness continued to spike, there was a system decision to allocate the majority of new vouchers to families. The City supported this decision by enabling case management support to be for disabled families as well as those experiencing chronic homelessness. So far, 147 families have been housed with emergency housing vouchers and 67 additional families with vouchers are seeking housing now, thereby accounting for a total of 214 families assisted with vouchers.

Prioritization of Families for Rapid Exit: The City has prioritized families to receive rapid exit assistance which is one-time assistance for employed households provided by Presbyterian Night Shelter. The City also increased funding for rapid-exit housing for FY 2024. These actions have enabled employed families to get rehoused quickly.

Support for Safety Net: The primary family emergency shelter in Fort Worth, the Salvation Army, closed for construction in the fall of 2023. In order to avoid families being on the street, TCHC and the City worked to establish an overflow family shelter at Broadway Baptist Church, with shelter staffing provided by When We Love. This overflow shelter began operations on September 18, 2023, and will close after the anticipated re-opening of the Salvation Army family shelter in mid-April 2024.

Future Support for Families: TCHC has been awarded a \$2.5 million grant for two years from the Bezos Family Foundation. These new funds will be used to fund social services, rapid-exit housing, and diversion, as well as linkage and navigation services for families who are experiencing homelessness.

By shifting system resources, primarily rental assistance and case management, to families from other groups, the system has been able to combat the increase in family homelessness. For more information, please contact Directions Home Manager Tara Perez at Tara.Perez@fortworthtexas.gov.

David Cooke
City Manager