



To the Mayor and Members of the City Council

February 4, 2020

Page 1 of 2

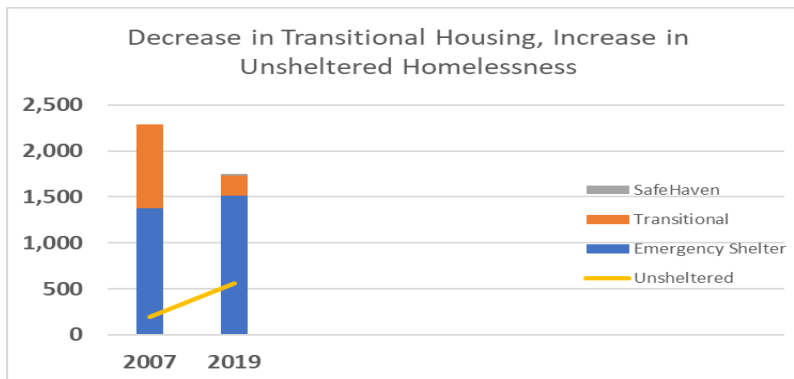
SUBJECT: 2019 ANNUAL HOMELESS ASSESSMENT REPORT TO CONGRESS

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) annually publishes results of the prior year's Point in Time (PIT) count of homeless populations. These data are used to analyze successes and inform funding decisions. The purpose of this Informal Report is to review homeless data trends, particularly for Fort Worth and our Continuum of Care (CoC) service area, which consists of Tarrant and Parker counties. The City of Fort Worth comprises 87 percent of the CoC homeless population, while the City of Arlington comprises another 12 percent. Reliable homeless data begins in 2007.

Long-Term Trends, 2007-2019

Since 2007, overall homelessness in the United States has declined by 12 percent, while in Texas it has declined by 35 percent and in Tarrant/Parker counties it has declined by 29 percent. These declines are evidenced in most subpopulations, including veterans, family, chronic and youth (defined by HUD as ages 18-24). The only group experiencing an increase locally is the unsheltered population. In Tarrant/Parker counties, there has been an increase in unsheltered homelessness of 179 percent from 2007 to 2019.

Much of the local increase in unsheltered homelessness is attributable to the loss of most transitional housing beds. HUD considers people in emergency shelter beds, in transitional housing, and in safe havens (small programs for the severely mentally ill) to be sheltered for the purposes of the PIT count. From 2007 to 2019, there was a loss of 703 transitional beds and the corresponding increase of 141 emergency shelter beds was not enough to offset that loss, resulting in fewer beds and an increased unsheltered population. HUD has drastically reduced funding for transitional housing because data showed it was an expensive and relatively ineffective intervention. Rapid rehousing is substantially cheaper and has higher success rates.



Annual Changes, 2018-2019

While the long-term trend shows homelessness to be decreasing, from 2018-2019 there was a nationwide increase of 3 percent in overall homelessness, a 2 percent increase in Texas, and a 1 percent increase in Tarrant/Parker counties. Tarrant/Parker counties saw a 14 percent decrease in youth homelessness and a 17 percent decrease in unsheltered homelessness. Youth are a prioritized population for local rapid rehousing, which contributes to lowering that homelessness rate. The City of Fort Worth through Directions Home has invested resources to reduce unsheltered homelessness. In 2018, the City funded overflow emergency shelter beds because regular shelter beds were at or nearing capacity on many nights. These overflow beds were highly utilized and contributed to a 17 percent reduction in unsheltered homelessness. Considering this success, Directions Home continued to provide overflow shelter beds in 2019.

Chronic homelessness did increase by 12 percent in Tarrant/Parker counties from 2018-2019. There was a reduction of 30 permanent supportive housing (PSH) beds from 2018-2019. PSH beds also have low turnover, which means that people are staying housed, but it also reduces opportunities to house new chronically homeless.

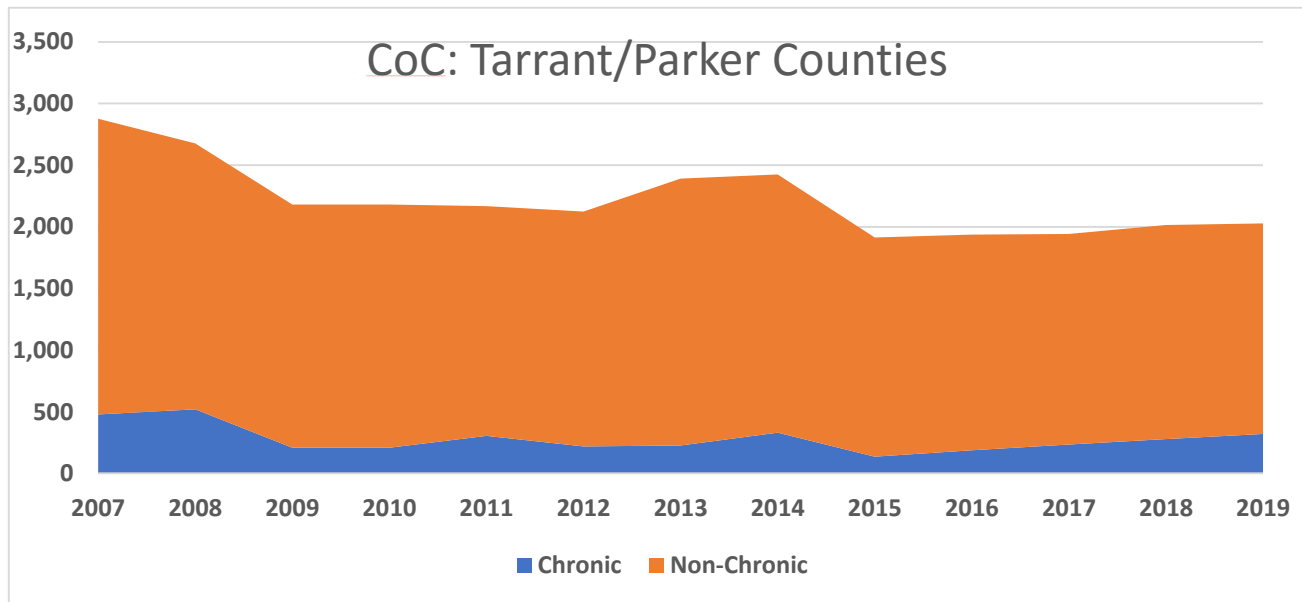


To the Mayor and Members of the City Council

February 4, 2020

Page 2 of 2

SUBJECT: 2019 ANNUAL HOMELESS ASSESSMENT REPORT TO CONGRESS



Chronic and non-chronic populations have different needs and thus different interventions address these populations. For chronic homelessness, the most effective intervention is permanent supportive housing. The allocation of \$5 million for the development of permanent supportive housing by the Fort Worth Housing Finance Corporation, with a matching \$5 million from local foundations, will spur development of new units.

There are several effective interventions for non-chronic population based on vulnerability. A large portion of this population exits on its own without any funding. Directions Home has created a new intervention, known as rapid exit, which provides one-time assistance to return people quickly to housing. Directions Home has also increased funding for diversion to decrease the number of people who even enter homelessness. Rapid rehousing programs provide rental assistance and case management for up to 12 months for non-chronic households needing more support.

Comparison to Other Texas Metros

The Fort Worth area has one of lowest rates of homelessness among large Texas CoCs. Houston has experienced the state's greatest reduction in homelessness during the past fifteen years. This success is attributable to various factors, including (a) development of coordinated-entry system, (b) allocation of housing vouchers for homeless persons (up to 250 vouchers per year plus 1,000 project-based PSH vouchers), and (c) development of 2,500 units of permanent supportive housing. The same strategies can help Fort Worth and other cities to achieve similar levels of success toward reducing homelessness.

For any questions or more information, please contact Tara Perez, Directions Home Manager, at Tara.Perez@fortworthtexas.gov or ext. 2235.

David Cooke
City Manager