

Handouts provided by Texas Homeless Network staff at the July 10, 2018, Quarterly TICH meeting

1. 2018 Point-in-Time Count Infographic

2. Texas Homeless Resource Organizational Workshops (THROW) Project Justification

2018 Point-in-Time Count

Key Figures and Questions to Consider

25152

During this year's Point-in-Time count, 25,152 people experiencing homelessness were counted in the State of Texas. This figure includes 14,795 individuals counted in sheltered conditions, and 10,357 counted in unsheltered conditions.

6.81%

This overall figure is 6.81% higher than 2017's PIT total, and the highest figure for the State of Texas since 2014. *How much of this is attributable to improved collection and volunteer-training methods? Hurricane Harvey? Broader forces pushing more vulnerable populations into literal homelessness?*

21.95%

Although the sheltered count went down slightly, the unsheltered count went up nearly 22%. We know even this is an underestimate, given one CoC did not do an unsheltered count this year. *What factors have kept the sheltered count relatively stable while causing the unsheltered count to rise considerably?*

Figure 1: Total, Sheltered, and Unsheltered PIT Counts for Texas, 2014-2018

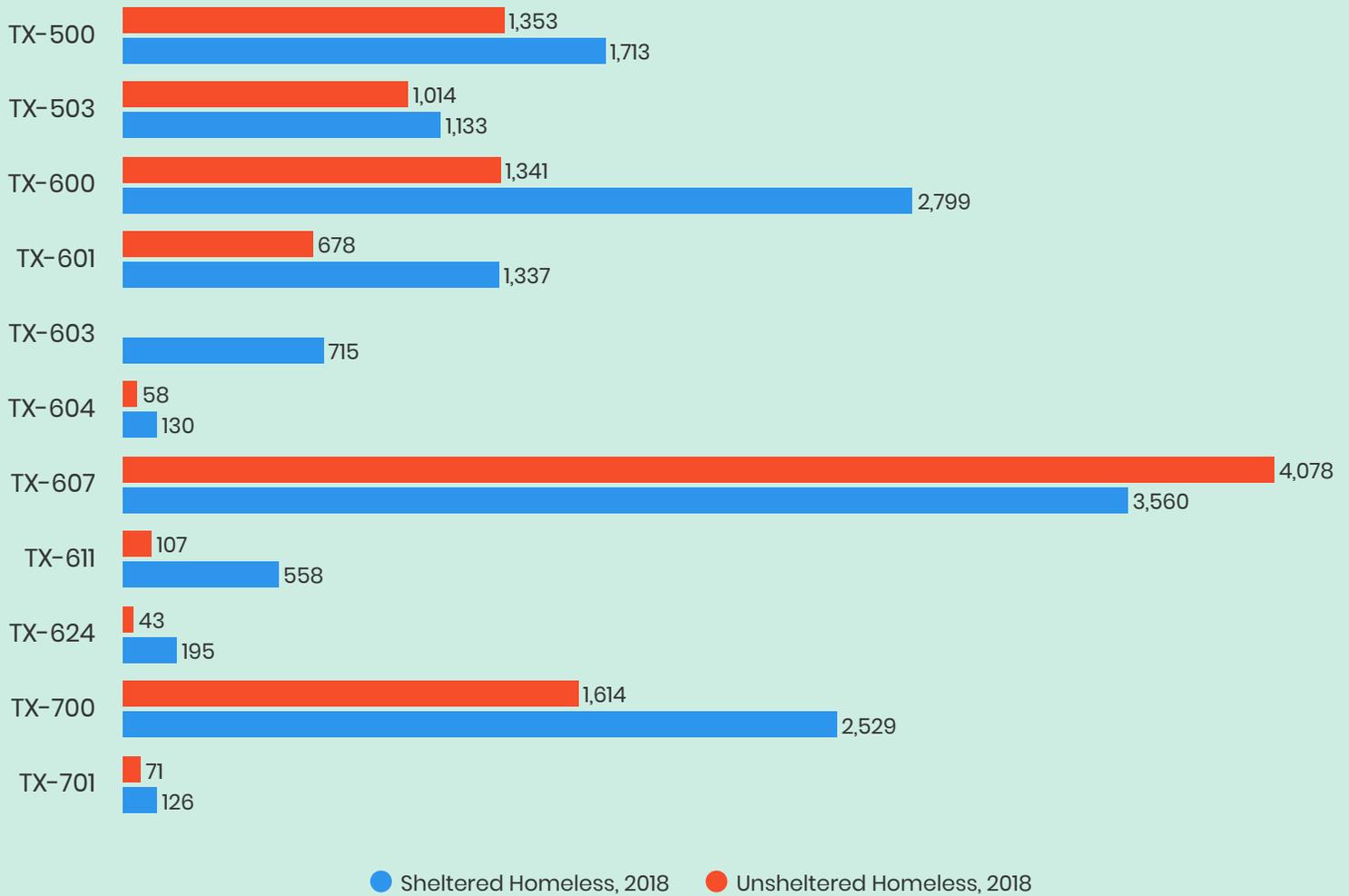
Although the overall 2018 figures are noticeably higher than the year before, they still reflect over a 10% decrease since 2014.

Despite that overall decrease, the unsheltered figures are now higher than other were in 2014.

What factors specific to the PIT Count have created this increase--and what factors external to the count itself have caused unsheltered numbers to swell?



Figure 2: Sheltered and Unsheltered Counts for 2018 PIT, by CoC



Although people experiencing homelessness in **unsheltered conditions** remain the minority of individuals observed during the PIT count, they accounted for **over 40%** of individuals counted in 2018.

In 3 CoCs, unsheltered individuals accounted for over 40% of their jurisdiction's PIT count. For one CoC (Balance of State CoC), unsheltered individuals accounted for more than half of all individuals counted during the 2018 Point-in-Time.

Notable Decreases



The chronic homelessness count decreased by 6.28% between last year and this year. This decrease came entirely from a considerable drop in counted unsheltered individuals experiencing chronic homelessness (16.37% decrease).



The number of veterans experiencing homelessness decreased by 10.27% in 2018, and is now under 2000. This decrease can be observed in both sheltered and unsheltered veteran counts.



The number of homeless people in families decreased by over 10% from last year. Most notably, the number of unsheltered homeless people in families counted has decreased by nearly half between 2017 and 2018 (499 vs. 252)

Texas Homeless Resource Organizational Workshops (THROW) Project Justification

1. The Problem

Many communities throughout Texas want to effectively reduce homelessness, but are held back by uncertainty about the scope of available services in their area. It often remains unclear who can provide which services, as well as what gaps in services exist. Many metropolitan areas are split between two or even three Continuums of Care, several independent school districts, and multiple city limits. A family experiencing homelessness in Round Rock, for example, will be connected to a different scope of homeless services in a completely different manner than a family experiencing homelessness in Travis County, even though both are part of the greater Austin metropolitan area.

The net result of these barriers is that service providers who should be talking to each other in a metropolitan area are often not. This limits how homeless shelters, case managers, guidance counselors, mental health providers, hospitals, street outreach, community organizers, criminal justice, municipal leadership and other entities working on ending homelessness communicate with one another. This also limits how well 2-1-1 can connect people experiencing homelessness to the full range of available services. We know firsthand from Hurricane Harvey that a lack of coordinated efforts can seriously slow down disaster homelessness recovery efforts—wasting time, money, and energy.

2. Toward a Solution

2.1 Project Purpose

The purpose of the Texas Homeless Resource Organizational Workshops (THROW) program will be to ensure that communities throughout Texas collaboratively work toward understanding the full scope of homeless and homeless-related services in their area, identify service gaps that exist, and use that knowledge to develop dynamic resource guides and community action plans.

2.2. Project Components

THROW will have four key components: a program coordinator, a series of statewide workshops, an integrative digital resource guide, and community action plans:

- Program Coordinator: THROW will be directed by a program coordinator, based out of THN, who will be responsible for: communicating with various communities' homelessness service providers; brokering relationships with other organizations that also seek to end homelessness; fostering buy-in from additional state and local agencies; developing, scheduling, and facilitating workshops on homeless resource

coordination; designing dynamic digital resource guides for communities based on material generated at workshops; and collaboratively working with communities to develop action plans for reducing the rate and severity of homelessness.

- Workshops: The THROW coordinator will design and facilitate a series of one-day workshops throughout the state, in which a community's various service providers will map out the scope and depth of homelessness resources in their area. These workshops will allow organizations that operate under different criteria for homelessness to better understand how they can work together to maximize their reach, as well as prevent households in precarious housing situations from falling into literal homelessness. These workshops will allow organizations that work with people experiencing homelessness as part of their broader mission to engage with service providers that have a more specific focus.
- Resource Guide: One major deliverable from the THROW coordinator will be a statewide resource guide that organizations can use to better connect people experiencing homelessness to the full set of available services in their community. This resource guide will be developed digitally, in order to encourage consistent updating while reducing the overall work needed to keep materials current. This resource guide will also ultimately be used by 2-1-1 and other information brokers.
- Community Action Plans: The other key deliverable from the THROW coordinator will be a set of community action plans developed from ideas generated during workshop discussions. Community Action Plans will be tailored to meet the needs of each city, and include tangible time-tabled steps for community partners to take. In order to draft these community action plans, the program coordinator may also use additional means for maintaining communication with workshop participants, such as a Slack channel, Basecamp, or check-in calls.

2.3. Project Objectives

THROW has several related objectives:

- To develop greater relationships between organizations that are working toward ending homelessness in Texas communities, and which have an impact on the wellbeing of people experiencing homelessness, but which use different standards for defining homelessness.
- To enable case managers, guidance counselors, medical professionals, mental health specialists, legal professionals, street outreach leaders, community organizers, and municipal leadership to connect people experiencing homelessness to services that address a wide range of needs.

- To identify through collaborative discussions what gaps exist in communities' homeless services and inter-organizational communication.
- To determine what tangible, time-tabled, and goal-oriented measures can be taken to close those service and communication gaps, as well as foster municipal leadership participation, through the development of community action plans.
- To eliminate the risk of outdated or incomplete information on community homelessness services by developing a robust digital statewide resource guide.

3. Lead Organization and Potential Partners

THN will be the organization primarily responsible for creating and enacting the THROW program. Other statewide agencies and organizations will be welcomed as key collaborators, especially if they are able to facilitate workshop coordination or community partner cultivation.

4. Timeline

The initial THROW cycle will have three distinct stages and take place over the course of a year.

- *Stage 1*—Months 1-3: During this stage the THROW coordinator will:
 - Reach out to homelessness service providers in towns and cities throughout the state to begin making arrangements for the workshop series.
 - Broker relationships with other organizations working to reduce the rate and severity of homelessness in their area (e.g., local mental health authorities, school district administrators, hospital administrators, public health officials, public defenders, criminal justice authorities, street outreach ministries, municipal leaders).
 - Engage in sustained conversations in order to understand which areas in homelessness reduction and homeless service provision each community's partners find most challenging.
 - Develop tailored workshops designed to increase interaction among each participating community's homelessness reduction partners

- *Stage 2*—Months 4-8: During this stage the THROW coordinator will:
 - Facilitate one-day workshops throughout the state, involving both community partners with whom the program coordinator has already built relationships as well as additional representatives who have stakes in addressing homelessness.
 - Use workshops to get participants to determine their shared priorities in eliminating homelessness,
 - Get workshop participants to collaboratively map out the scope of available services in their area.
 - Have workshop participants determine what gaps in services and communication remain.
 - Empower workshop participants to determine what tangible, time-tabled steps can be taken both individually and collaboratively to fix these service connection and communication issues.

- *Stage 3*—Months 9-12: During this stage, the THROW coordinator will:
 - Maintain contact with the communities where workshops were hosted, either by check-in calls or through a platform such as Slack or Basecamp.
 - Use information generated in the one-day workshops to develop tailored community action plans with tangible, time-tabled goals toward reducing the rate and severity of homelessness in a community
 - Work with municipal, county, and state leaders to develop overarching policies for effectively reducing homelessness
 - Launch a statewide resource guide organizations can use to better connect people experiencing homelessness to the full expanse of local resources.

5. Costs

The primary expenses required for THROW will be: 1) salary and overhead costs for a program coordinator; 2) costs for staging workshops throughout the state; and 3) costs for project deliverables. THN will pursue a variety of funding opportunities to attain the necessary funds for this program, including private grants, state funds, and partner buy-in.

6. Contact

Agencies and organizations interested in further discussing or developing the THROW program should contact Keegan Shepherd, PhD, Statewide Initiatives Coordinator (VISTA) for Texas Homeless Network, either by phone at (512) 861-2154 or via email at keegan@thn.org.