

2019 Denton County Homelessness Data Report

Data-Driven Impact

April 2019



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Introduction

No single source of data tells the whole story of homelessness in Denton County. This report highlights the various **data sources** and **definitions of homelessness** that inform collective efforts to implement **data-driven** solutions for people experiencing homelessness in our community and Make Homelessness Rare, Brief, and Nonrecurring.

The [Denton County Homelessness Leadership Team](#) and the [Denton County Homeless Coalition](#) contribute to and utilize the data in this report to identify and solve complex problems like homelessness and housing insecurity.



Defining Homelessness

Identifying how homelessness is defined is important to understanding how data is collected, tracked and utilized.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines homelessness in four categories:

1. **Literal:** People who are living in a place not meant for human habitation, in emergency shelter, in transitional housing, or are exiting an institution where they temporarily resided.
2. **At-Risk:** People who are losing their primary nighttime residence, which may include a motel or hotel or a doubled-up situation, within 14 days.
3. **Youth:** Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth who are unstably housed and likely to continue in that state.
4. **Domestic Violence:** People who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, have no other residence, and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

Definitions 1, 3 and 4 inform data measurements for the Denton County Housing Priority List and Point-In-Time Count

The Department of Education (ED) applies a broader definition of homelessness for children and youth from the McKinney Vento Act:

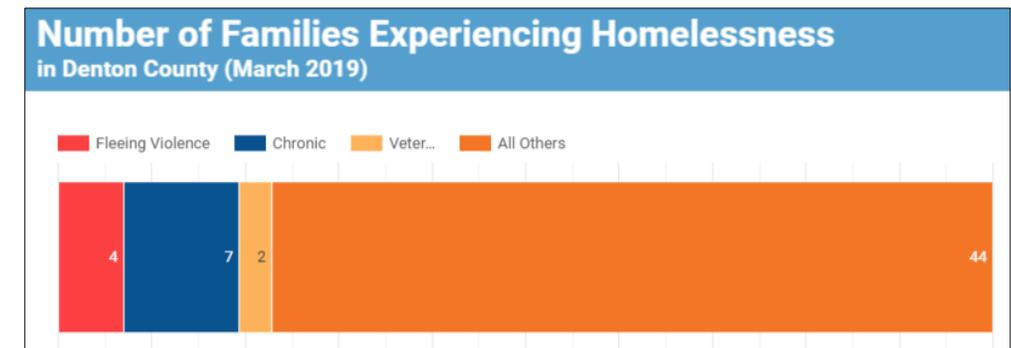
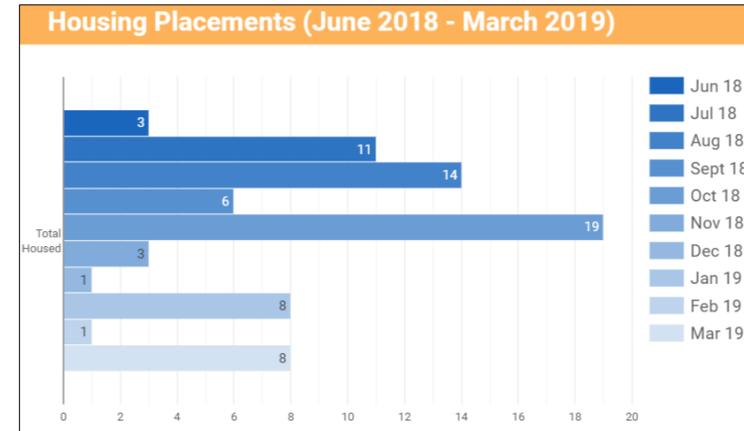
1. **Literal:** Children and youth whose primary nighttime residence is a public or private place not designed for or is ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings e.g. living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, substandard housing, or similar settings.
2. **Doubled-Up:** Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing; economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement.

These definitions inform data measurement for the public school systems across the United States.

Denton County Homelessness Data Dashboard



- The primary source of homelessness data in Denton County is the **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)**. Service providers in the **Denton County Housing Crisis Response System (HCRS)** share information and make referrals for housing assistance and other supportive services through HMIS. When a person experiencing homelessness accesses services in Denton County the most common referral made in the HMIS is through **Coordinated Entry (CE)**.
- **CE** is the system and process that ensures people experiencing homelessness are quickly identified, assessed, prioritized, and referred to housing assistance and supportive services that promote housing stability.
- Data collected through CE contributes to the **Housing Priority List (HPL)**, a tool local providers use to quickly identify and consistently track actively homeless households in Denton County. The HPL also helps providers prioritize households for limited resources based on their level of need.
- HPL data is visualized through the [Denton County Homelessness Data Dashboard](#)



View the full dashboard:
www.unitedwaydenton.org/homelessness-data-denton-county

Denton County Homelessness Data Dashboard



- The Denton County Homelessness Data Dashboard tracks actively homeless households in Denton County from month-to-month. **Actively Homeless households** are households currently seeking housing assistance whose whereabouts are known by Denton County service providers.
- In Denton County **Veterans, chronically homeless households** and households **fleeing domestic violence** are special populations prioritized for available housing resources.

Total Number of Households Experiencing Homelessness In Denton County and Priority Populations				
Date	Actively Homeless	Veterans	Chronically Homeless	Fleeing Domestic Violence
Mar 31, 2019	528	56	117	17
Feb 28, 2019	504	53	112	17
Jan 31, 2019	629	49	128	66
Dec 30, 2018	603	48	126	64
Nov 30, 2018	578	48	121	62
Oct 30, 2018	552	48	118	57

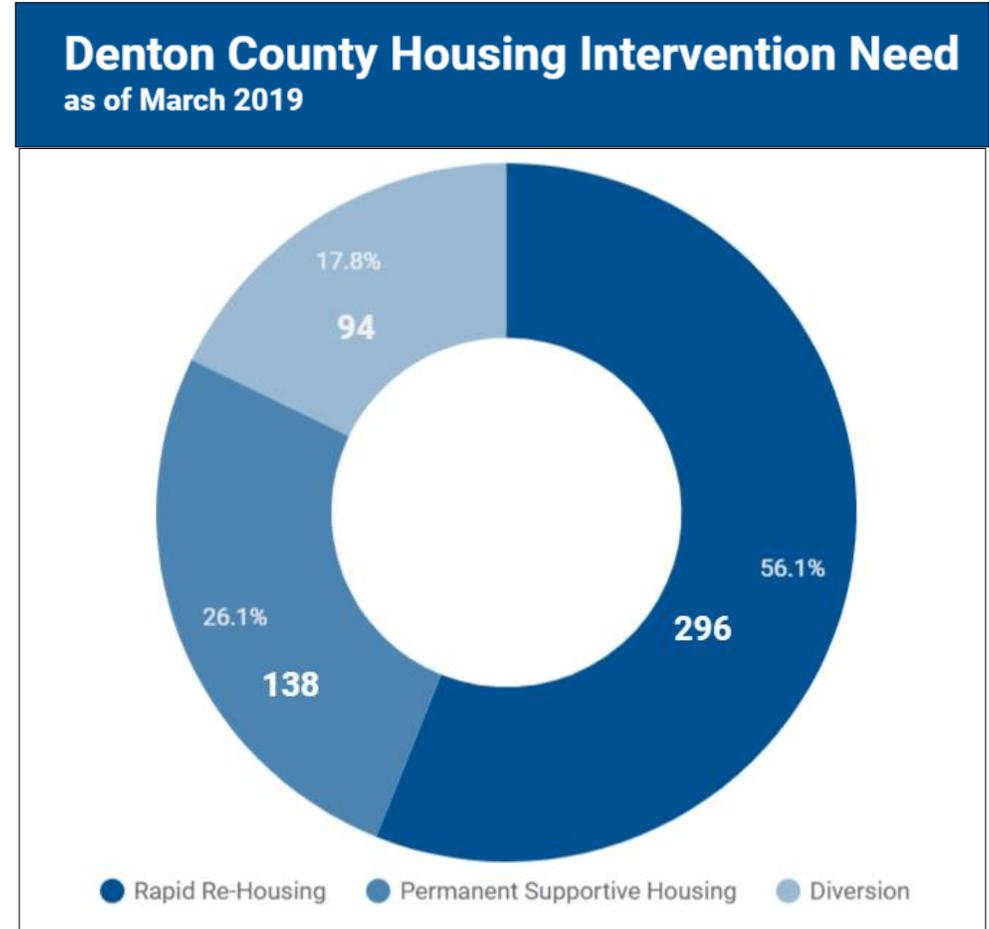
- **Chronic homelessness** includes individuals experiencing literal homelessness with a disabling condition who have been continuously homeless for a year or more or have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.
- **Improved data management** is crucial to reducing homelessness. **Data cleanup** efforts are useful for identifying which households are actively experiencing homeless in our community. Significant decreases in the number of actively homeless households (such as the 27% decrease in March 2019) may be explained by people no longer actively seeking services by self-resolving their homelessness and/or moving out of Denton.

Denton County Homelessness Data Dashboard

With a lack of available housing in Denton County, HMIS, the CE system and the HPL tool provide data to help identify overall community housing needs and gaps in housing.

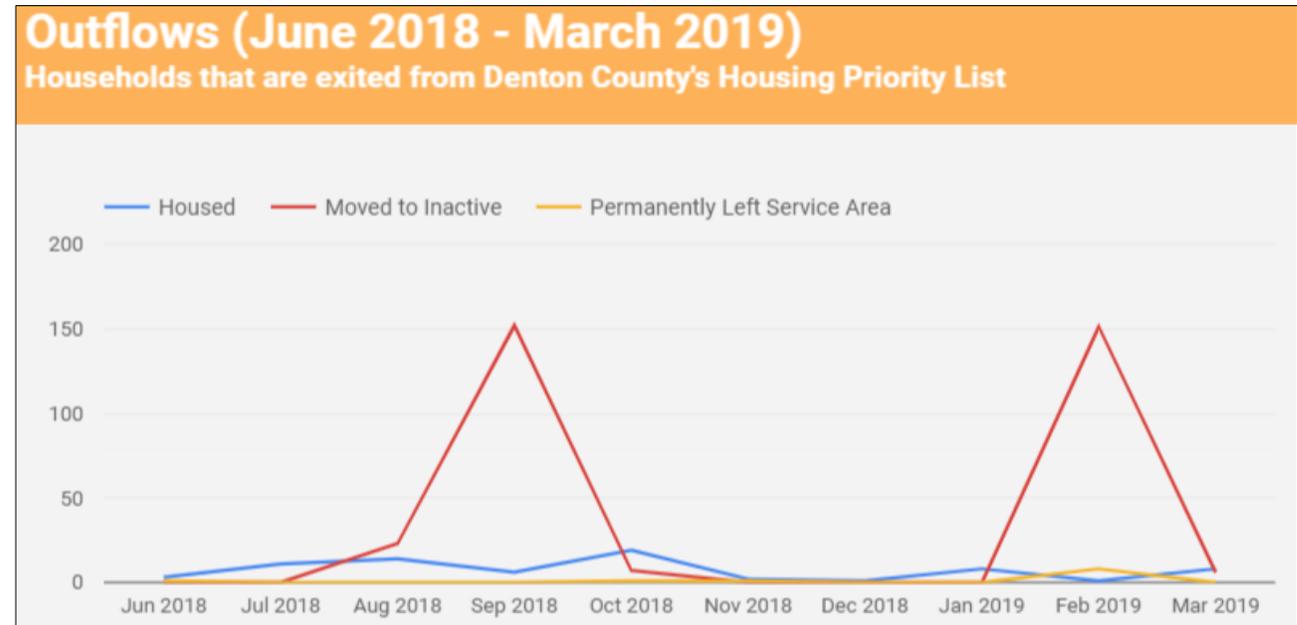
Housing Assistance needed by type:

- **Diversion** is a housing intervention used to assist households by helping them identify an immediate alternative housing arrangements, and if necessary, contacting them with services and/or financial assistance needed to return to permanent housing quickly.
- **Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)** provides medium to long-term housing assistance (up to 24 months) to move households from homelessness to stable permanent housing.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)** provides long-term assistance along with intensive wrap around services (i.e. transportation, education, and employment) to chronically homeless households that could not support themselves otherwise.



Denton County Homelessness Data Dashboard

- The **Housing Priority List (HPL)** is actively managed to track **inflows** and **outflows**. Balancing data this way helps our housing crises response system better meet the needs of the often fluid populations served by homeless and housing support services.
- Outflows occur when households have been permanently **housed**, moved to **inactive** status due to inactivity greater than 90 days and whose whereabouts are unknown by Denton County service providers, or when households have permanently **left our service area**.
- Significant increases in outflows in one month are often a result of data cleanup, which allows service providers to more accurately and identify households in need of assistance.

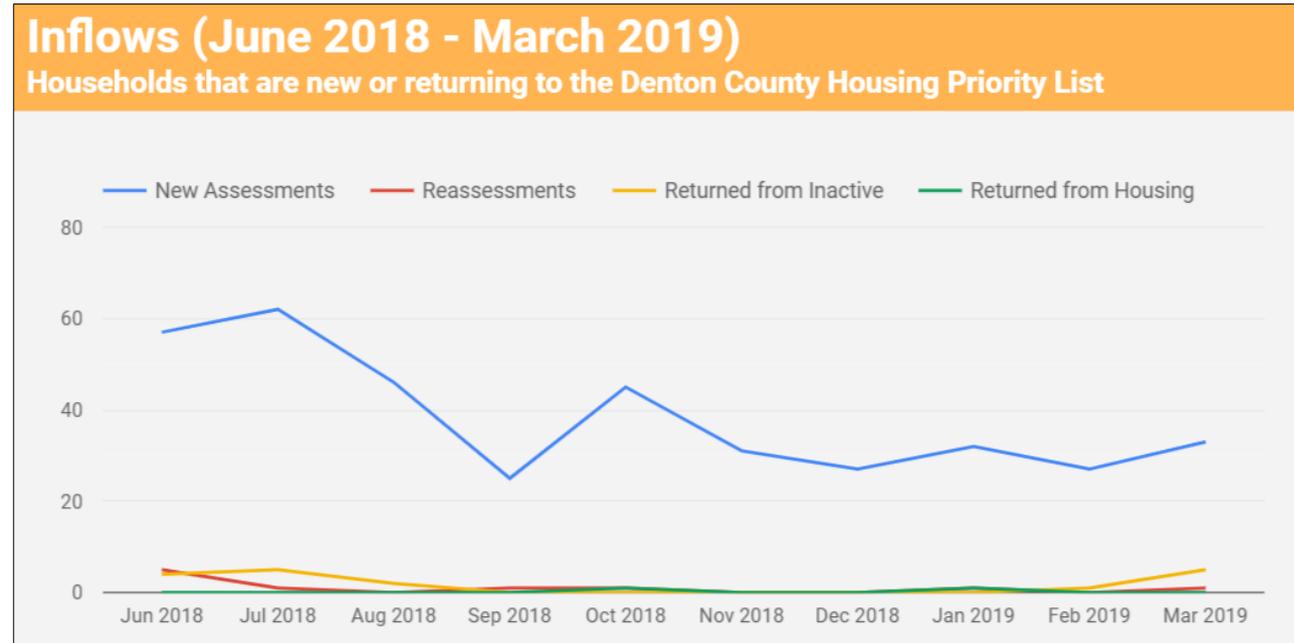


Outflow Type	Jun 2018	Jul 2018	Aug 2018	Sept 2018	Oct 2018	Nov 2018	Dec 2018	Jan 2019	Feb 2019	Mar 2019	Total
Housed	3	11	14	6	19	2	1	8	1	8	73
Permanently Left Area	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	8	0	11
Moved to Inactive	0	0	23	152	7	0	0	0	151	6	339
Total	4	11	37	158	27	3	1	8	160	14	423

Denton County Homelessness Data Dashboard



- The **Housing Priority List (HPL)** is actively managed to track inflows and outflows.
- Inflows may include **new Coordinated Entry assessments** for households entering Denton County's housing crisis response system for the first time, **reassessments** if an extended period of time has passed or if something has changed in the household's life, **returns from inactive** or **returns from permanent housing**.
- Households return from inactive when they access emergency shelter, housing or supportive services or are identified through street outreach.
- Households that have been assessed and housed through Denton County's Coordinated Entry system and return to homelessness are tracked as returns from housing.



Inflow Type	Jun 2018	Jul 2018	Aug 2018	Sept 2018	Oct 2018	Nov 2018	Dec 2018	Jan 2019	Feb 2019	Mar 2019	Total
New Assessments	57	62	46	25	45	31	27	32	27	33	385
Reassessments	5	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	10
Returned from Inactive	4	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	17
Returned from Housing	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Total	66	68	48	26	47	31	27	34	28	39	414

2019 Point-In-Time Count



The **Point-In-Time (PIT) Count** happens once a year across the nation, and provides a **snapshot of the homeless experience** on a single day. A point-in-time count is an unduplicated count on a single night of the people in a community who are experiencing homelessness that includes both sheltered and unsheltered populations.

The PIT Count is dependent on factors like weather and the number of volunteers who commit their time to training for the count and surveying the entirety of the county.

People experiencing homelessness voluntarily provide **self-reported information** of their current situation. This count gives provides data of the experiences and needs of people experiencing homelessness in our community.

The Point-In-Time Count is refined annually to include new or questions are adjusted to gather targeted data to improve programs and services.

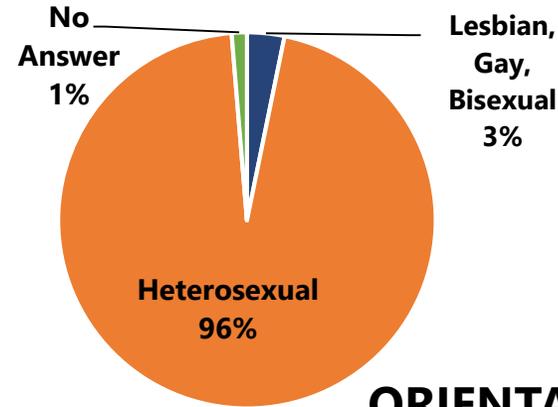
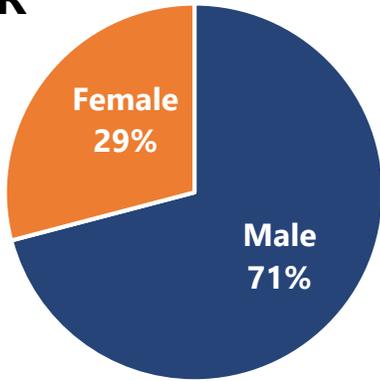
A promotional graphic for the 2019 Point-In-Time Count. The background is light gray with silhouettes of hands raised. The text is as follows:
2019 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT
THURSDAY | JANUARY 24TH
#DENCOCOUNTS
DONATE. VOLUNTEER. MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
Sign Up: <https://tinyurl.com/DenCoCounts>
At the bottom, there are logos for: City of Denton, Denton County Homeless Coalition, Flower Mound, Frisco, Lewisville, and United Way of Denton County, Inc.

All data specify percentages unless otherwise indicated. Charts with an asterisk (*) indicate questions to which survey participants may have provided more than one response.

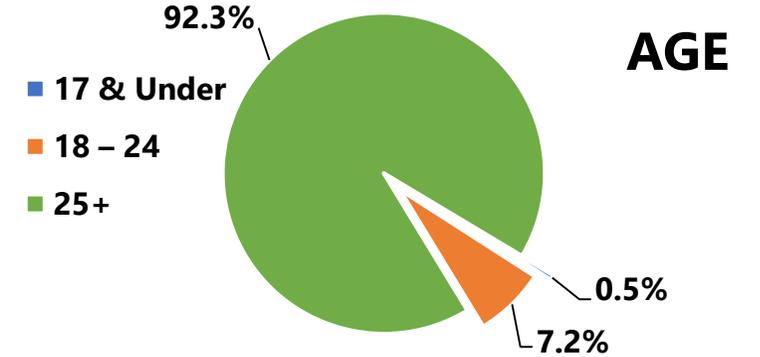
TOTAL PERSONS SURVEYED



GENDER

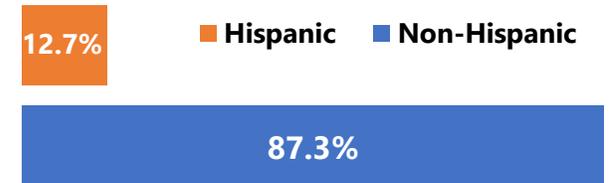


ORIENTATION

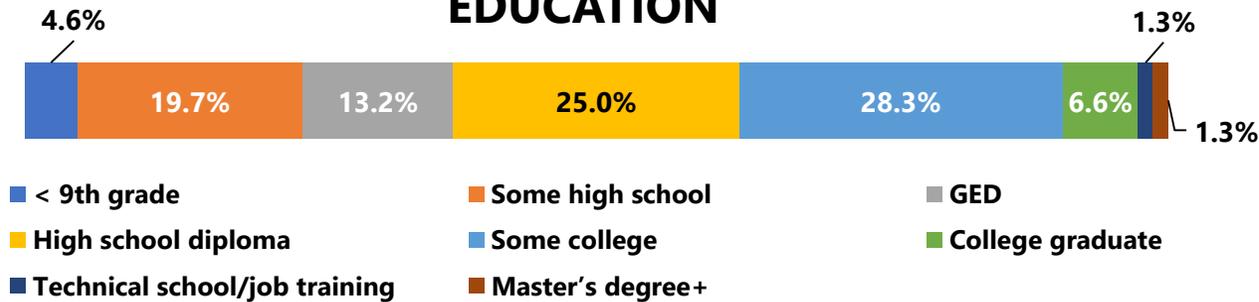


AGE

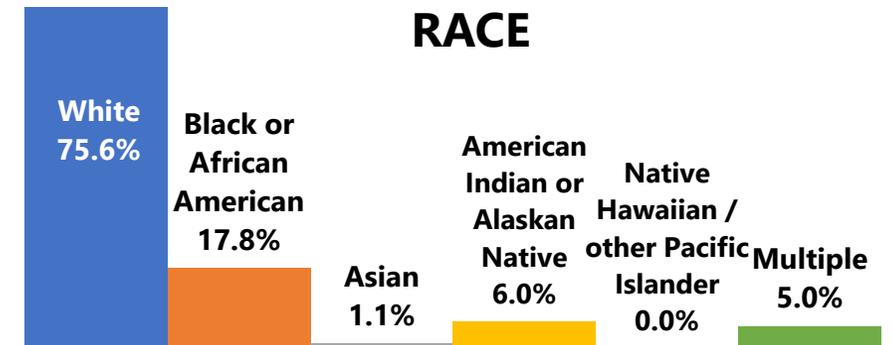
ETHNICITY



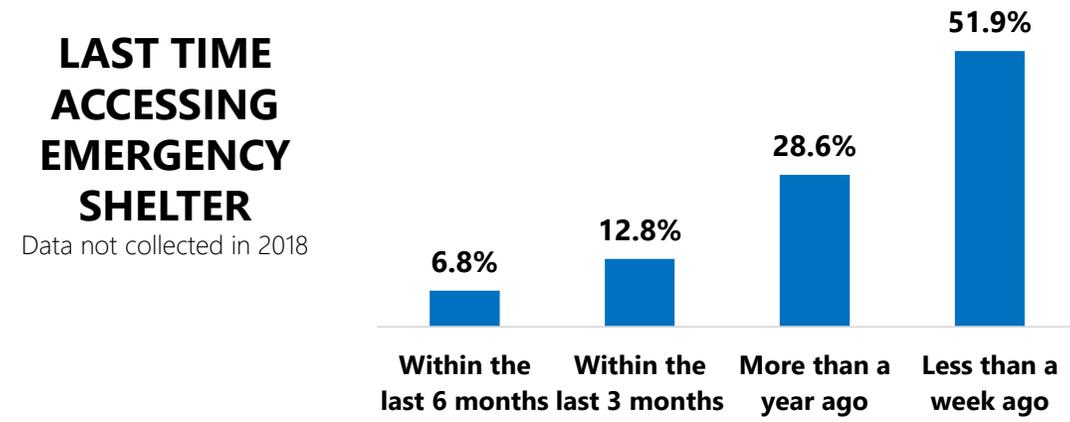
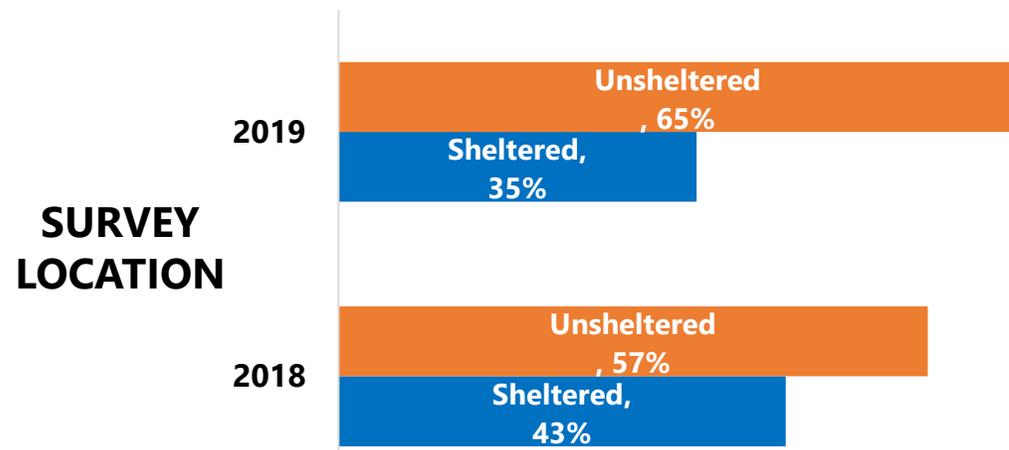
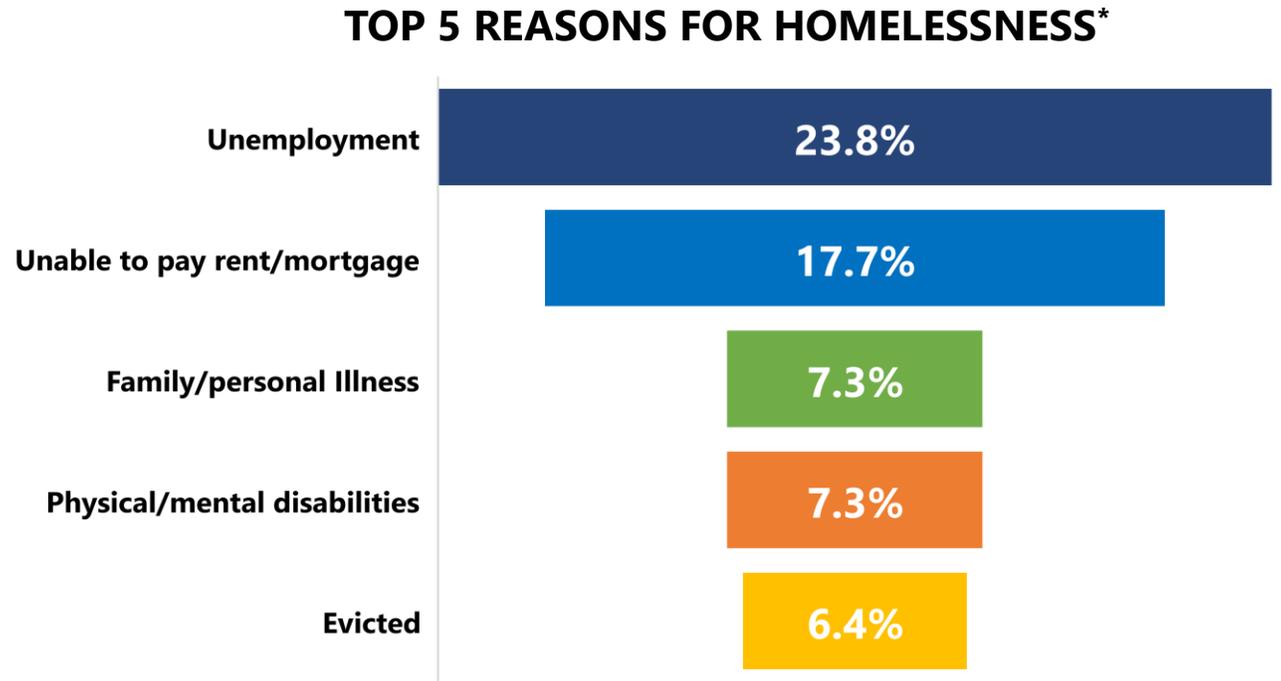
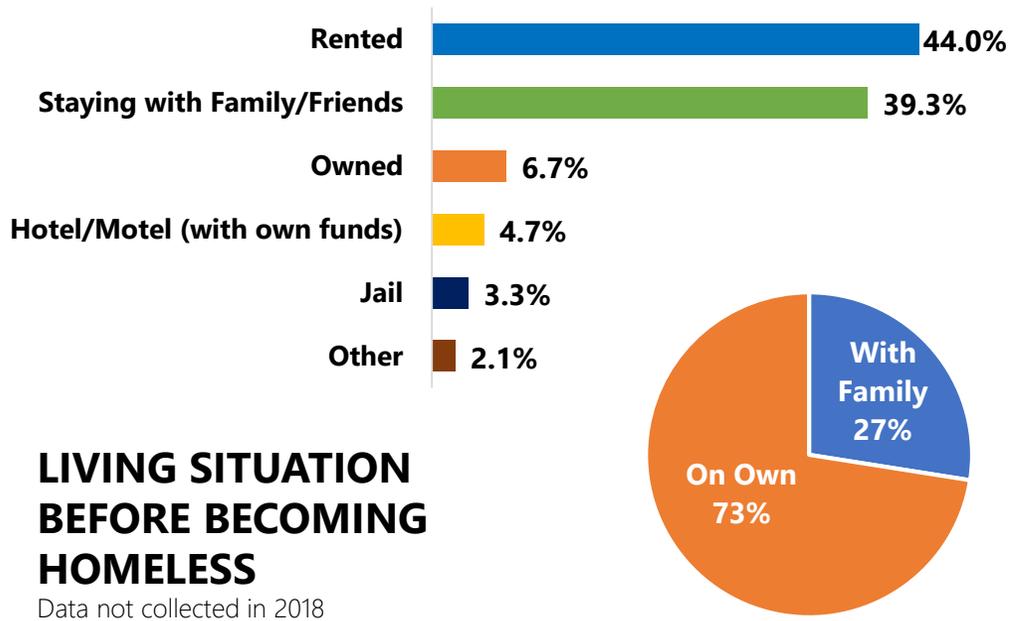
EDUCATION



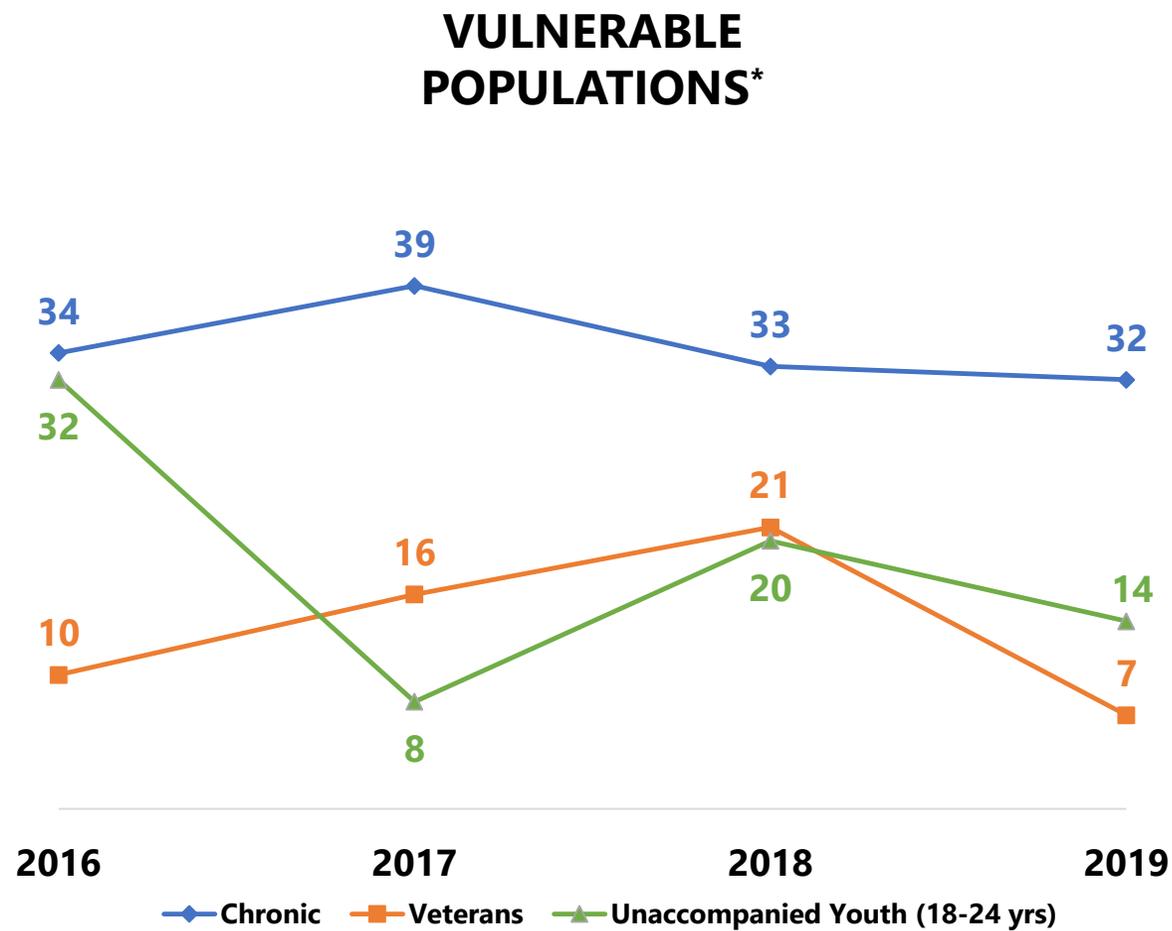
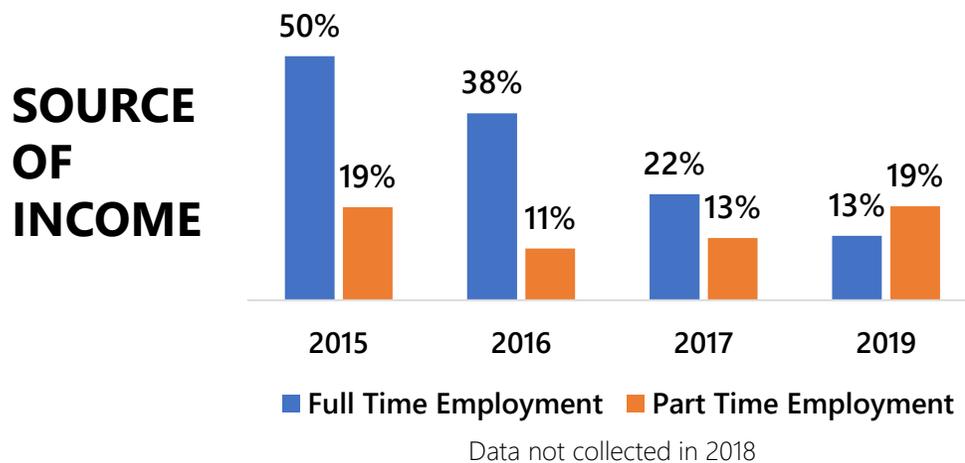
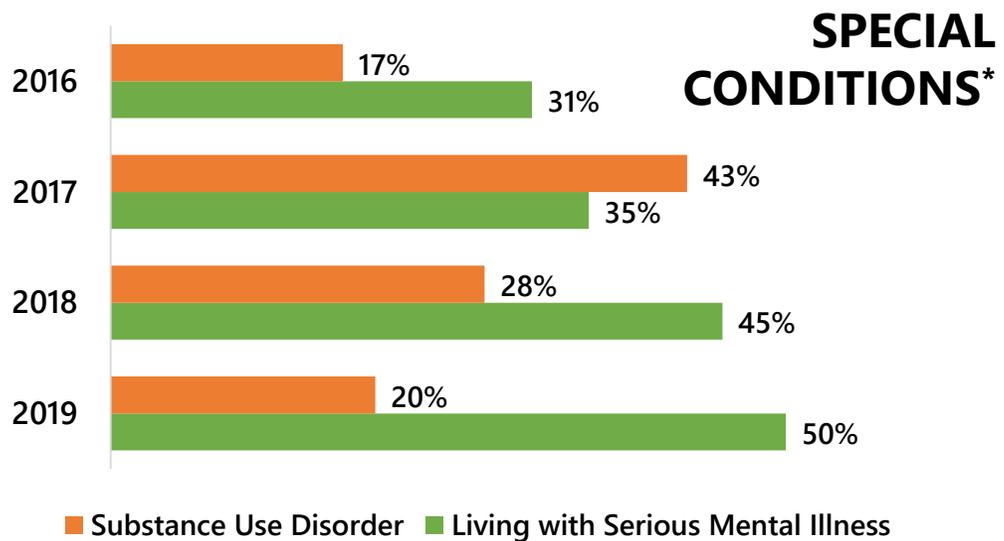
RACE



All data specify percentages unless otherwise indicated. Charts with an asterisk (*) indicate questions to which survey participants may have provided more than one response.



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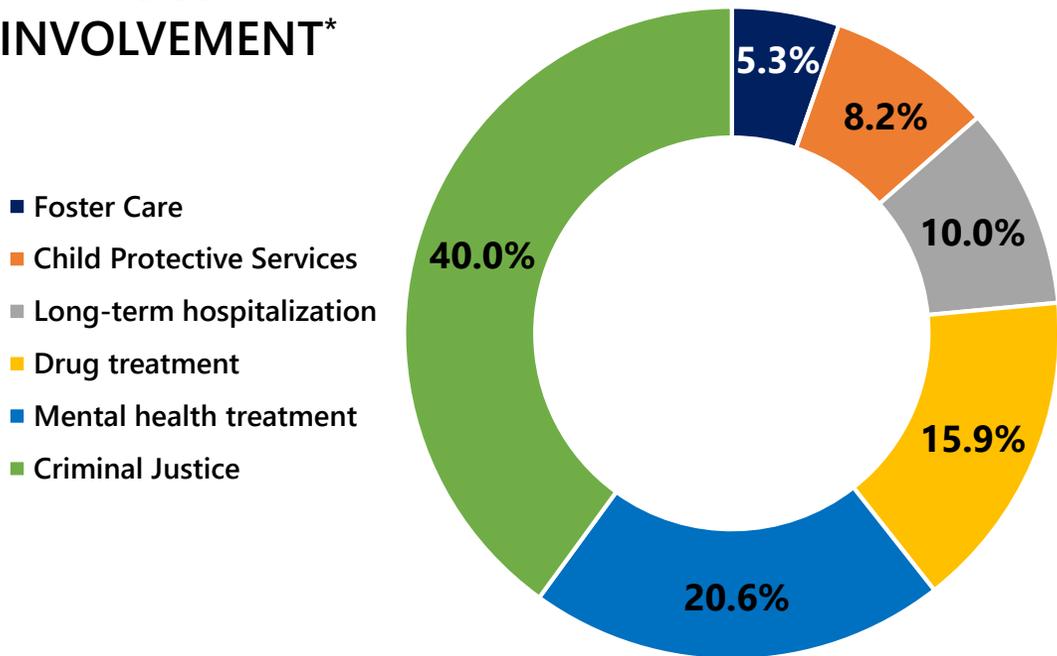


Data indicate frequency of responses.

All data specify percentages unless otherwise indicated. Charts with an asterisk (*) indicate questions to which survey participants may have provided more than one response.

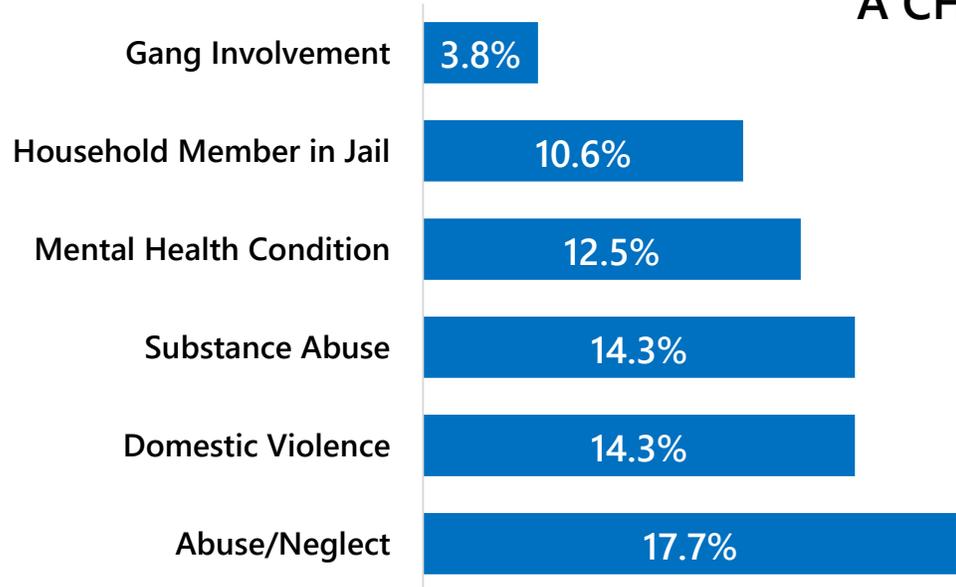
CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO HOMELESSNESS

PREVIOUS INVOLVEMENT*



Participants were asked to identify institutions they have been involved with at any point in their life.

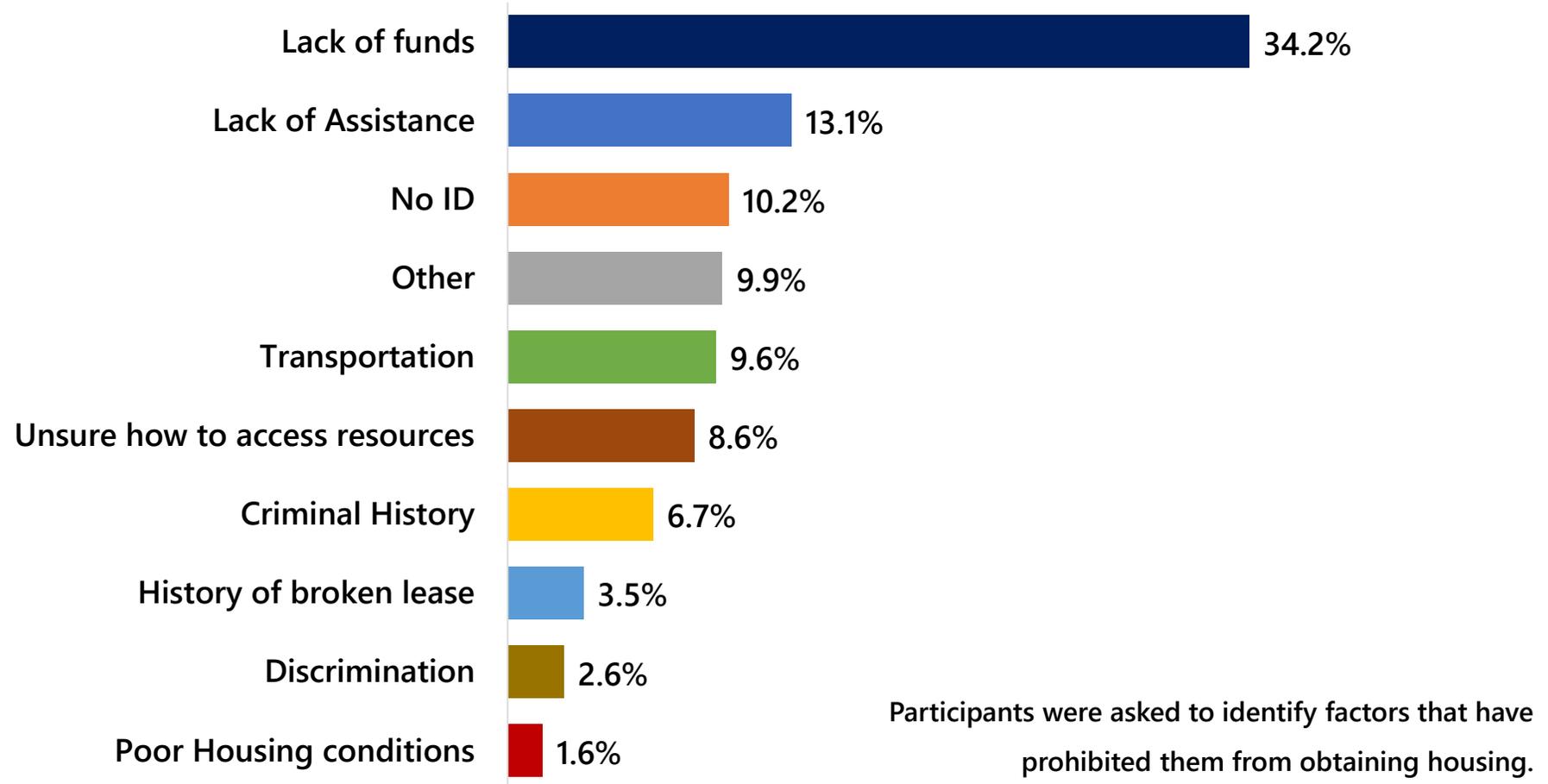
EXPOSURE AS A CHILD*



Participants were asked to identify experiences they were exposed to as a child (0-18 years).

All data specify percentages unless otherwise indicated. Charts with an asterisk (*) indicate questions to which survey participants may have provided more than one response.

BARRIERS TO HOUSING*



2019 Point-In-Time Count Findings

- **75 volunteers** canvassed the county to survey people experiencing literal homelessness.
- The data suggest that **the number of people experiencing homelessness is decreasing**. Because of certain external factors like those discussed in page 10, there may not be as much as the 24% decrease in homelessness in Denton County identified in the PIT Count alone.
- Compared to general population demographic data for Denton County, African Americans are disproportionately affected by homelessness. **African Americans account for 8.4% of the general population*, while they make up 17.8% of total people surveyed for the 2019 PIT Count.**
- While **males (71%) are disproportionately impacted by homelessness**, the roughly two-thirds male to one-thirds female ratio is consistent with previous years.
- **Renter households (44%) and people living on their own (73%)** before becoming homeless are at greater risk of experiencing homelessness.
- **Unemployment (23.8%) and inability to pay rent/mortgage (17.7%)** have been the top two reasons for becoming homeless for the past two years.
- The majority of respondents indicated they were **sleeping unsheltered (65%) but over half indicated they had accessed shelter in the last 7 days (51.9%).**

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau American FactFinder

2019 Point-In-Time Count Findings

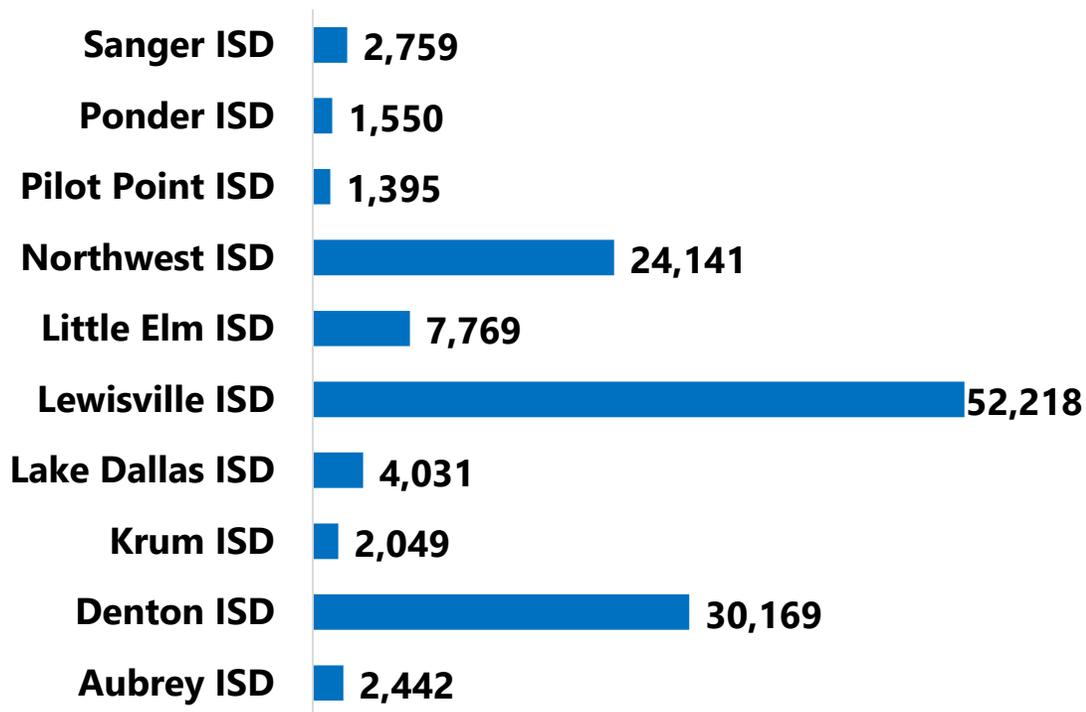
- Fewer survey participants reported living with a **substance use disorder (20%)** this year than in previous years, while more reported living with a **serious mental illness (50%)**. This data is often unreported by individuals engaged in Denton County's Housing Crisis Response System.
- Vulnerable populations of chronically homeless, Veteran and unaccompanied youth households all decreased this year. **Veterans saw the biggest drop from 21 to 7 identified Veteran households experiencing homelessness.**
- **2019 is the first year since 2016 that unaccompanied homeless youth (14) have outnumbered Veterans (7).** HUD defines unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness as individuals experiencing literal homelessness ages 18 to 24 years.
- Fewer people are working this year than in previous years. **Part-time employment income (19%) surpassed full-time employment (13%) for the first time since 2014** for people experiencing homelessness.
- Survey participants identified **abuse/neglect (17.7%), domestic violence (14.8%), substance abuse (14.3%) and mental health conditions (12.5%) as the top 4 experiences/exposures in the first 18 years of life.**
- Over one-third of respondents identified a **lack of funds (34.2%) as the number one barrier to housing.** The remaining top five housing barriers include a lack of assistance/support (13.1%), lack of a state-issued ID (10.2%), transportation (9.6%) and uncertainty of how to access resources (8.6%).
- The top three institutions with which respondents reported previous involvement at any point in their life include **criminal justice (40%), mental health treatment (20.6%) and drug treatment (15.9%).**

Student Homelessness

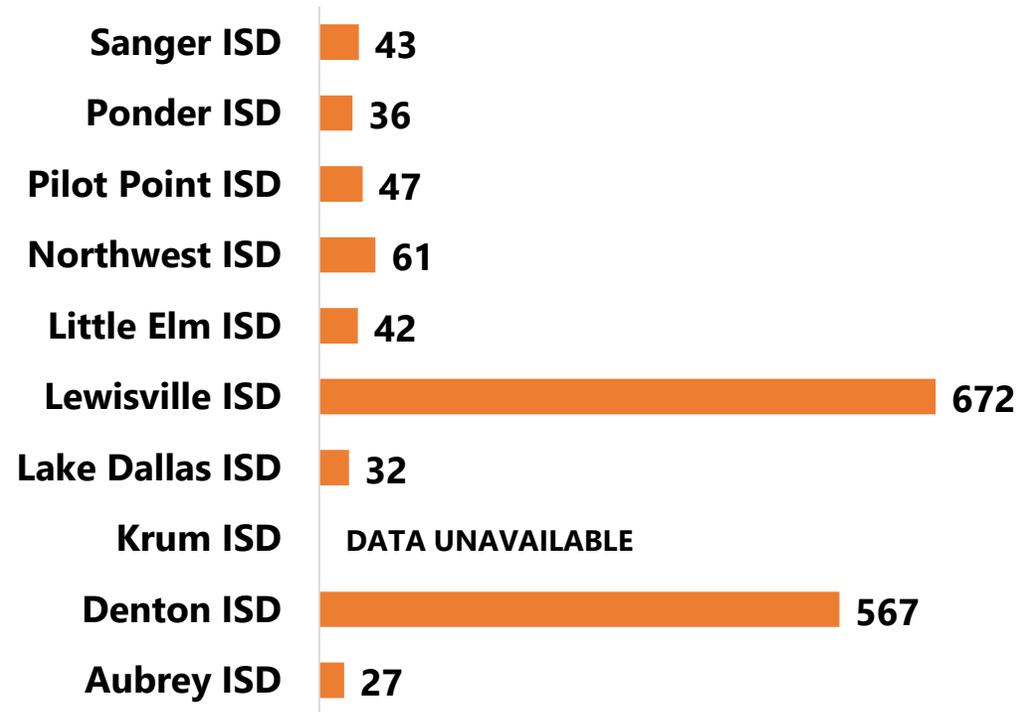


Homeless Liaisons verify homeless student data and school district administrators report data of students experiencing homelessness to the Texas Education Agency. The below data include individuals 0-24 years of age involved with the public school system. It does not include college or university students in Denton County.

Total Enrollment for Denton County School Districts



Total Number of Students Experiencing Homelessness in Denton County School Districts

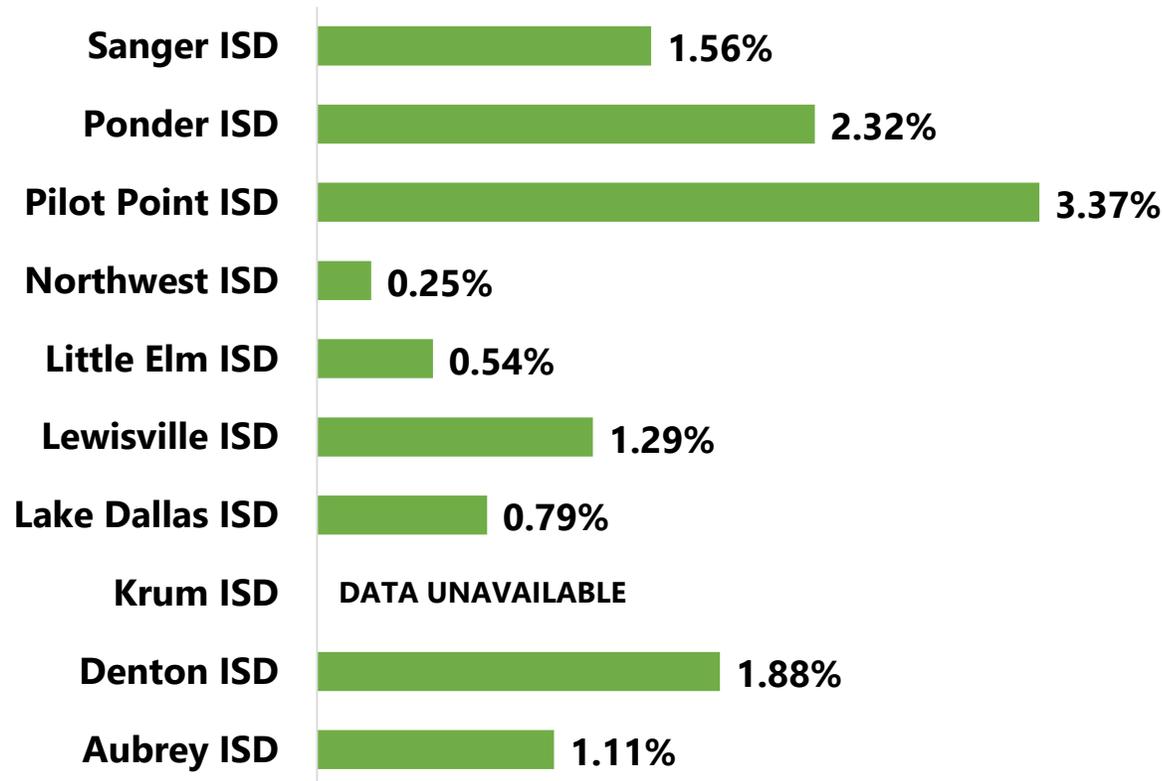


Source: The above information comes from a fall snapshot report published by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for the 2018-2019 school year.

Student Homelessness



Percentage of Students Experiencing Homelessness in Denton County School Districts



State agencies speculate that homelessness among students is underreported and makes up a larger percentage of the total number of students enrolled in school districts throughout Texas.

Source: The above information comes from a fall snapshot report published by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for the 2018-2019 school year.

Data-Driven Impact



END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS IN DENTON COUNTY BY 2020



In response to data that has identified Veterans who are experiencing homelessness in Denton County, Veterans have been identified as a priority population in Denton County's Housing Crisis Response System. Initially, this data supported a request by the City of Denton in partnership with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for 20 HUD-VASH vouchers. The HUD-VASH Program combines Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rental assistance for homeless veterans and their families with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) at its medical centers and in the community.

Date	Actively Homeless	Veterans
Mar 31, 2019	528	56
Feb 28, 2019	504	53
Jan 31, 2019	629	49
Dec 30, 2018	603	48
Nov 30, 2018	578	48
Oct 30, 2018	552	48

The Denton County Homelessness Leadership Team adopted the goal to End Veteran Homelessness by 2020 into its strategic plan, and City of Denton Mayor Chris Watts signed on to the national mayor's challenge in fall of 2018.

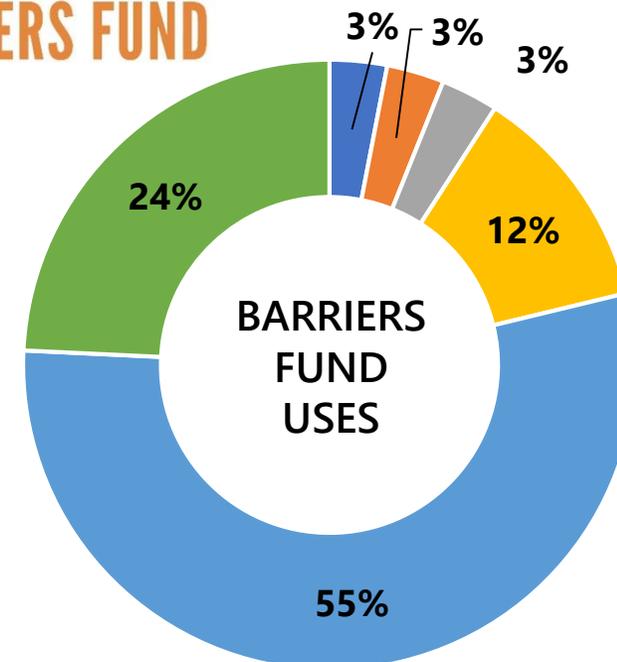
- An end to Veteran homelessness means that the community will have a systematic response in place that ensures homelessness among Veterans is prevented whenever possible or is otherwise a rare, brief, and non-recurring experience.
- Improvements in Veteran homelessness data and targeted data analyses allow community partners to efficiently allocate and mobilize resources needed to fill gaps in housing and supportive services.

Data-Driven Impact

- Data are used to identify barriers to housing for families in crisis and develop resources to reduce those barriers.
- The Denton County Homeless Coalition developed the Denton County Homelessness Barriers Fund (Barriers Fund) to assist families enrolled in housing and supportive service programs to help overcome barriers to permanent housing.
- Since its launch in May of 2018, the Barriers Fund has assisted **31 households** with an average of **\$430 per household**.
- Funding is used as a **prevention and stabilization** tool to assist with rent and utility payments, provide transportation for mothers fleeing domestic violence who are going back to work, to purchase bus and plane tickets home to be reunited with family, and to cover medical costs that would have otherwise jeopardized a households ability to pay for housing.



DENTON COUNTY HOMELESSNESS BARRIERS FUND



- Critical Documents
- Employment & Training
- Health Care
- Household
- Income / Housing Support
- Transportation

Data-Driven Impact



One of the Denton County Homelessness Leadership Team's (DCHLT) strategic goals is to **increase access to housing by 10%**, and that means increasing the number of existing housing units available to individuals and families. Data has identified the different housing needs for those assessed through CE and identified for housing on the HPL. However, finding open doors to house people experiencing homelessness who may have higher barriers is a significant challenge the Doors for Denton County program is addressing.



- The **Doors for Denton County** landlord outreach initiative collaboratively developed by the **DCHLT Housing Workgroup**.
- The cities of Denton and Lewisville, along with a private donor, fund a **Housing Navigator** position to test the effectiveness of a process to **centralize locating available housing units** in support of agencies providing financial assistance to help house families experiencing homelessness.
- The Housing Navigator **networks with landlords** and **advocates for households with barriers to housing** like criminal histories or past evictions.
- The Housing Navigator has successfully recruited **10 landlords** to accept as tenants homeless households being assisted in local agency programs since January 2019.

Data-Driven Impact



- Denton County Homelessness Leadership Team (DCHLT) workgroups continue to collect, analyze and utilize data to improve service provision.
- In the Fall of 2018, the DCHLT Shelter Planning Workgroup conducted a study measuring the quality and accessibility of emergency shelters in Denton County. Data from the report were utilized to make recommendations for **improving and enhancing emergency shelter programming**.
- Recommendations to improve the current environment include **reducing barriers to entry, increasing access to transportation and improved communication** to people accessing shelter resources, providing shelter resources and the community at large
- The workgroup continues to explore opportunities and make recommendations for enhanced shelter programming to the DCHLT and other governing/funding entities.



EMERGENCY SHELTER ACCESSIBILITY

Survey respondents were asked to provide feedback regarding their experiences or fear of experiencing if accessing shelter. If they had accessed shelter in Denton County, they were asked to respond based on their experiences or fears of different scenarios. If they had not accessed shelter, they were asked to identify if any of the provided scenarios made them hesitant to seek shelter. Respondents were asked to select as many scenarios as applicable.

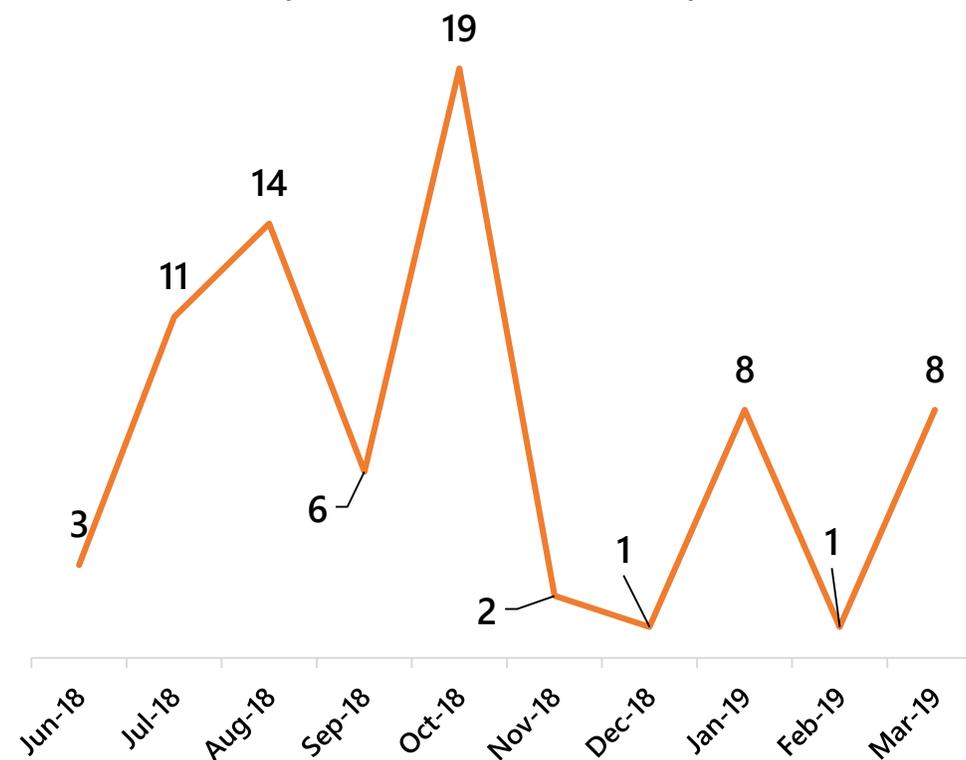
*Source: DCHLT Shelter Planning Workgroup Fall Summary Report

Data-Driven Impact

- Continuous improvement of data management is one of the Denton County Homelessness Leadership Team's strategic goals. **Data cleanup** efforts are useful in identifying which households are actively experiencing homeless in our community and it allows service providers to efficiently prioritize households for available resources.
- Homeless and housing service providers utilize data from the **Housing Priority List (HPL)** during collaborative **Case Conferencing** meetings to prioritize households for housing, share resources, and develop housing plans for people living unhoused.
- Data identified during the **PIT Count** like self-identified reasons for homelessness (such as lack of employment) informs the **housing-focused case management** provided households, and the **wrap-around services** they are connected to in their journey towards housing stability.



Total Number of Households Permanently Housed through Denton County's Housing Crisis Response System (June 2018 – March 2019)



As a result of collaborative case-conferencing and prioritization, 73 actively homeless households were housed between June 2018 and March 2019.

Data-Driven Impact



- The Denton County Homelessness Leadership Team developed the [Standards of Excellence](#), a set of guidelines for service providers working to prevent and end homelessness.
- The Standards of Excellence are a set of **performance goals** and **quality standards** for outreach and engagement, emergency and temporary housing and supportive housing programs.
- Concrete, consistent standards are critical to ensuring efforts and resources are focused in the most effective ways possible. In a reality where resources are limited, thinking smarter about strategies and investments in the community will bring us closer to achieving our **mission of making homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring** in Denton County.

Next Steps

- The Denton County Homelessness Leadership Team and the Denton County Homeless Coalition continue to partner and identify improvement opportunities for Denton County's housing crisis response system.
- The Denton County Homelessness Leadership Team has identified seven metrics that will communicate performance of our local housing crisis response system and continue to inform innovative solutions to **make homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring** in our community.
- These **System Performance Measures** will allow us to definitively say we are reducing homelessness and improving outcomes for unhoused families in Denton County.



System Performance Measures

1. **Number** – Reduce number of people experiencing homelessness
2. **Length** – Reduce the length of time households are enrolled in emergency shelter and transitional housing experiencing homelessness.
3. **First Time Homeless** – Reduce the number of persons who become homeless for the first time
4. **Recidivism** – Reduce the number of people who return to homelessness after receiving permanent housing
5. **Barriers** – Increase access to housing through a variety of successful housing placement options
6. **Income** – Increase income of homeless adults being served
7. **Outreach** – Identify vulnerable populations

Community Impact

Solving complex problems like homelessness and housing insecurity requires a diverse set of solutions. There are many opportunities for members of the Denton County community to **make a difference**.



Donate to the Denton County Homelessness Barriers Fund

www.unitedwaydenton.org/barriers-fund



Follow community efforts to end Veteran homelessness

<https://www.unitedwaydenton.org/end-veteran-homelessness>



Follow the Denton County Homelessness Leadership Team
www.unitedwaydenton.org/DCHLT



Become a member of the Denton County Homeless Coalition
www.endhomelessnessdenton.com



Are you a landlord or property manager with available units? Email housingnavigator@unitedwaydenton.org to become a Doors for Denton County partner.