



# Voices of Homeless Persons

- September 2008 -

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Ending Community Homelessness (ECHO) Coalition

With support from  
Community Action Network  
Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department



# Acknowledgements

A special dedication goes to our homeless fellows.

We thank all community leaders, volunteers, advocates, and agency staff for their tireless work and commitment to improving the lives of our homeless neighbors and friends. Especially:

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## **I. Introduction**

As the state capital and seat of Travis County, Austin has been known as a city with high quality of life. Austin is the 16<sup>th</sup> largest city in the United States, and fifth fastest-growing metropolis, with a population increase of 4.3 percent in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. As the area has grown, Austin has faced tough challenges such as the high cost of housing and an increase in demand for services.

After homelessness got attention from the federal government in 1987, municipalities and local communities have received federal grant funds to address the needs of homeless persons. In the 1990s, Austin organized a community planning process in order to apply for several annual grant funds such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs, which bring millions of dollars to the community every year.

As a required part of the grant application process, communities must identify and evaluate community needs and develop a strategic plan to address those needs. Austin also understood it is also critical to identify the number of homeless persons as well as to understand their characteristics and service needs in order to address the problem of homelessness. One of the challenges Austin experienced, however, is the difficulty in precisely quantifying the nature and extent of homelessness especially for families and individuals who are not using shelters and/or services.

After years of experiments, the Austin community made remarkable progress in planning for and operation in a point-in-time count and surveys for unsheltered homeless people in 2007. In addition to its efforts to comply with federal requirements on data collection, Austin began working with other local partners and utilizing various events to gather information about persons on the street.

As thousands of hours of community volunteers, service agencies, and city staff were contributed to this data/information collection process, there has been a consensus that we as a community need to have a better understating of the existing data on homelessness and to provide a more coordinated data collection effort focused on homelessness in our region.

The purpose of this report, therefore, is to communicate the process, results, and past findings to the public after collecting information about and from our homeless neighbors in Austin/Travis County.

The report on data collection in Section III covers the period January 2007 to May 2008.

## II. Local Homeless Data and Key Findings

The Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care (CoC) has formed a committee to initiate the planning and coordination of the homeless count and survey, which is required, by the HUD, to be conducted on a bi-annual basis starting in 2005.<sup>1</sup> In order to collect data from all area shelters as well as other places not meant for human habitation in our region, the Austin/Travis County CoC had to utilize numerous groups, in the community, that daily conduct outreach and provide services to homeless people.

The numbers shown in the box below are the total number of point-in-time homeless persons that the Austin community has reported in the HUD Continuum of Care funding application since 2004. Persons who do not meet HUD’s definition of being homeless were not included in the count.

### Total number of persons who did meet HUD definition of being homeless

Austin Homeless Population (Point-in-time)/Year of Count	2004	2005	2006	2007
Sheltered (Emergency Shelter or Transitional Housing)	1,337	1,166	1,171	1,305
Unsheltered	2,452	726	1,854	3,163
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,789</b>	<b>1,892</b>	<b>3,025</b>	<b>4,468</b>

According to HUD’s definition, a person is considered homeless only when he/she resides in one of the following places:

- In places not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings, or on the streets.
- In an emergency shelter or transitional or supportive housing for homeless persons who originally came from the streets or emergency shelters.
- In any of the above places but is spending a short time (up to 30 consecutive days) in a hospital or other institution.

The HUD definition does not include person who are staying in a hotel/motel, with relatives or friends, in a Board and Care, Adult Congregate Living Facility, or similar place, or in the jail.

The difference in reported number from year to year is mainly a reflection of an increase or decrease in unsheltered numbers. The reduction in the number of unsheltered homeless persons in 2005 was directly attributed to changes in the HUD rules and guidelines on the count method whereas the increase of the 2007 numbers was resulted from a more in-depth count supported by increased volunteers and local partners.

As the Austin community gets more organized to find ways of determining the size and scope of the homeless problem at the local level, innovative ideas of gathering

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<sup>1</sup> The lead group in planning and conducting the count/survey was the Homeless Task Force’s Resources and Programs Committee (until June 2007) and now is the Planning and Evaluation’s Count/Survey Subcommittee of the Ending Community Homelessness (ECHO) Coalition in Austin/Travis County.

information on homeless persons or listening to their voices were tested through various venues such as Austin Stand Down and Women's Resource Fair for the Homeless over the past year. The following are highlights from survey findings (see Section III for detailed information):

- Thirty percent of the respondents in the unsheltered survey were under 25.
- Sixty percent of the respondents in the Stand Down survey were between forty and fifty-four years of age.
- Almost sixty percent of the respondents in the unsheltered survey indicated unemployment as a reason for their homelessness, with "unable to pay rent/mortgage" as the second most common response.
- Almost fifty percent of respondents in the Women's Resource Fair survey listed multiple causes of homelessness. Domestic violence and prison/jail history were two main reasons for becoming homeless.
- Only 29 percent of respondents in the Stand Down survey indicated multiple causes for their homelessness. Unemployment was listed as the first common response and physical or mental disability as the second most common response.
- More than sixty-five percent of the unsheltered survey respondents requested basic needs such as clothing and food whereas the biggest unmet need for the survey respondents was permanent supportive housing/affordable housing.
- Respondents in the Women's Resource Fair survey indicated housing as the first requested assistance, food as the second, and transportation as the third.
- Sixty-one percent of respondents in the unsheltered survey had been in jail or prison.
- More than thirty percent of the unsheltered survey respondents identified insufficient income as a barrier to housing
- All three survey data confirms that homeless persons in Austin/Travis County have unmet needs for mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, employment/job assistance, food stamps, and housing. Transportation was another high demand service requested by respondents in both Stand Down and Women's Resource Fair surveys.

### **III. Review of Survey Findings**

#### **A. Unsheltered Survey Results**

##### **1. Methodology**

The Austin/Travis 2007 homeless count took place on the night of January 25, 2007 (the numbers reported in Section II). Between 4 pm and 9 pm, more than 100 volunteers and outreach staff took to the streets to count unsheltered homeless individuals and families living in cars, on the streets, and in camps. Simultaneously, agency staff counted sheltered homeless persons staying in emergency sheltered and transitional housing. To prevent duplicate count, volunteers were assigned to teams with leaders and team leaders were assigned to twenty different known areas. Before the count, members of the local coalition, services providers, homeless and formerly homeless persons, and city staff held numerous meetings to plan logistics, identify locations, build local partnership, educate homeless persons and the public about the count/survey, and recruit/train volunteers.

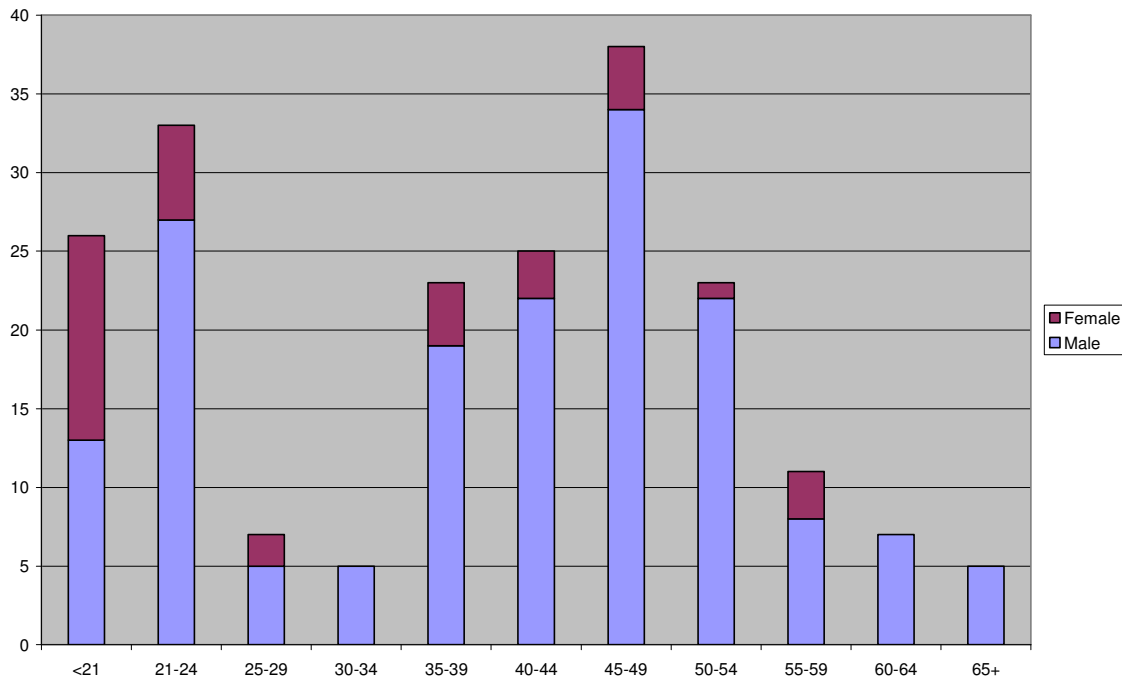
In order to gather more in-dept information on homeless persons and to maximize limited local resources, a post-count survey of both sheltered and unsheltered homeless took place during the week of May 27-31, 2007. The purpose of the survey was to obtain a snapshot of the homeless population in Austin/Travis County, gather information on service and housing needs, and record the trend that can be compared with future data. The survey was targeted to homeless persons on the street or in shelters, which methodology involved the process of identifying locations throughout the city where homeless persons were known to congregate. Areas A-Z that include downtown, creek shores, encampments, rural areas, and the greenbelts were identified and assigned to seven team leaders with over 50 volunteers. The survey results provided in this report record only homeless persons who were not using a shelter at the time of the survey. Survey interviewers were asked to use a screening question that asked the respondent where he/she slept the night before the survey day. The survey of 208 unsheltered homeless persons in this report represents about 10% of the unsheltered homeless population counted in January, 2007. A copy of the survey form is located in Appendix C.

##### **2. Survey Findings**

###### **Age and Gender**

Respondents to this survey ranged from 17 to 76, and their ages were not normally distributed, as shown in the graph below.

Unsheltered - Ages



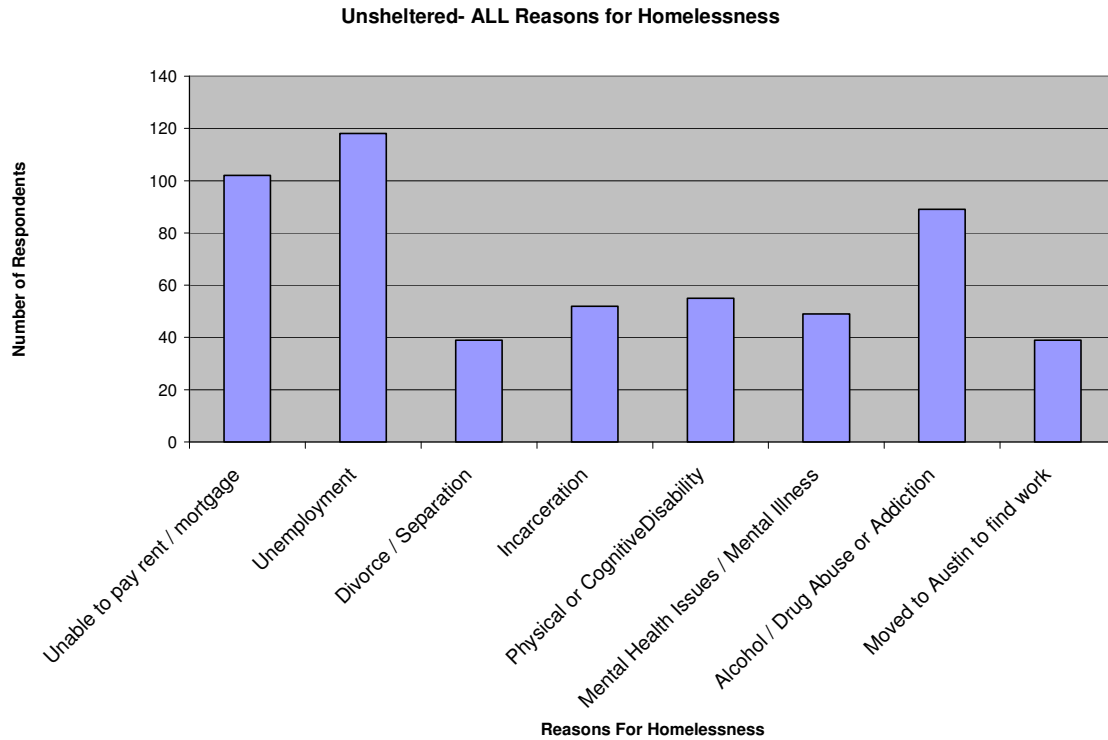
Thirty percent of the respondents were under 25, and a third of them are in their forties, with very few between 25 and 40 years of age. Of 208 respondents, 41 (20%) were female, and 167 (80%) were male. Even with this vast gender disparity, there were as many females under 21 as males. Six respondents (3%) did not list an age.

### **Race/Ethnicity**

Sixty-two percent of respondents reported their ethnicity/race as white; 15% selected black/African American, and 10% chose Hispanic or Latino. One survey did not list an ethnicity. According to the American Community Survey, in 2006 Travis County's overall population was 52% non-Hispanic white, 8% black, and 33% Hispanic or Latino.

### **Causes of Homelessness**

In this survey, respondents were asked to list all causes which had contributed to their homelessness (in contrast to the Stand Down survey in which respondents were asked only to list the primary cause of their homelessness).

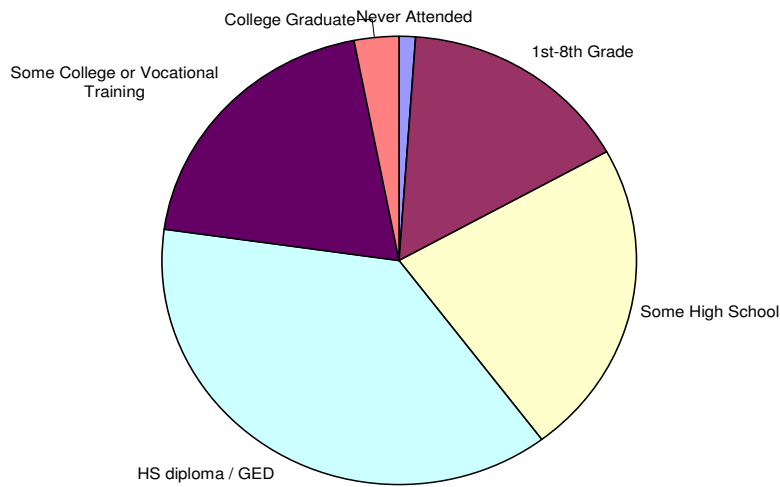


Almost sixty percent of the respondents mentioned unemployment as a reason for their homelessness, with ‘unable to pay rent/mortgage’ as the second most common response, which was a driver for half the respondents. ‘Alcohol/drug abuse or addiction’ was the third most common factor, affecting over 40% of those surveyed. Two respondents (1%) gave no reason.

**Education Level**

Thirty-eight percent of respondents had a high school diploma or GED; 20% had some college, and 23% had some high school. Six respondents (3%) did not answer this question.

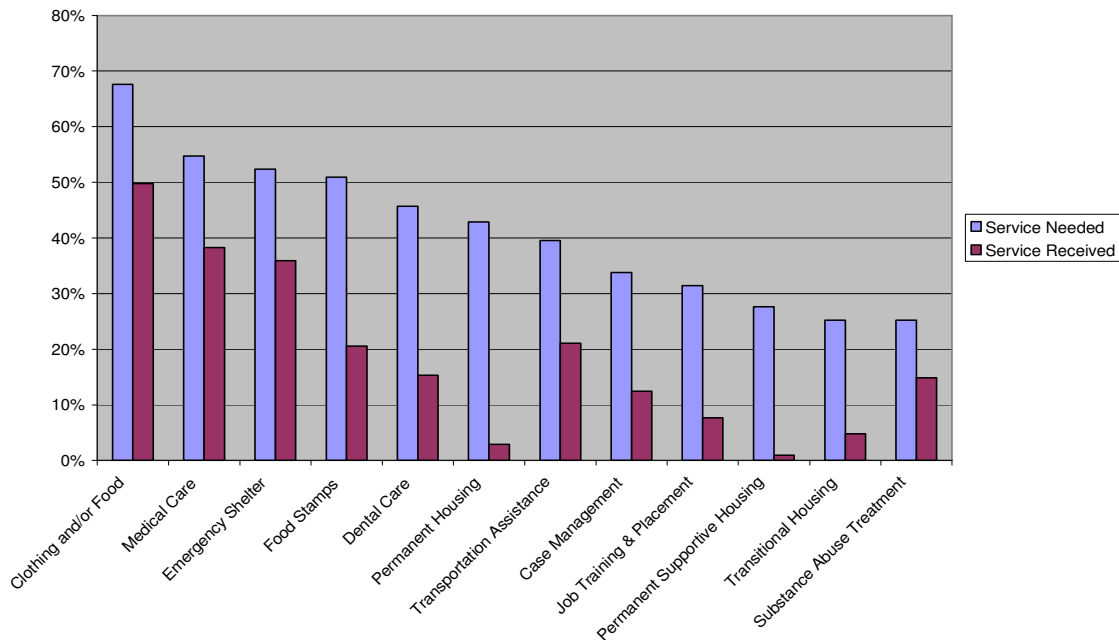
### Unsheltered-Education Level



### Services Requested

The Unsheltered Persons survey instrument offered a list of 26 services and asked respondents to list those which they had needed while homeless. Thirteen respondents (6%) indicated that they needed no services from the given list. The following graph shows the twelve categories which more than a quarter of respondents said they had needed, and shows the percentage of respondents who reported receiving each service.

### Unsheltered-Services Needed and Received

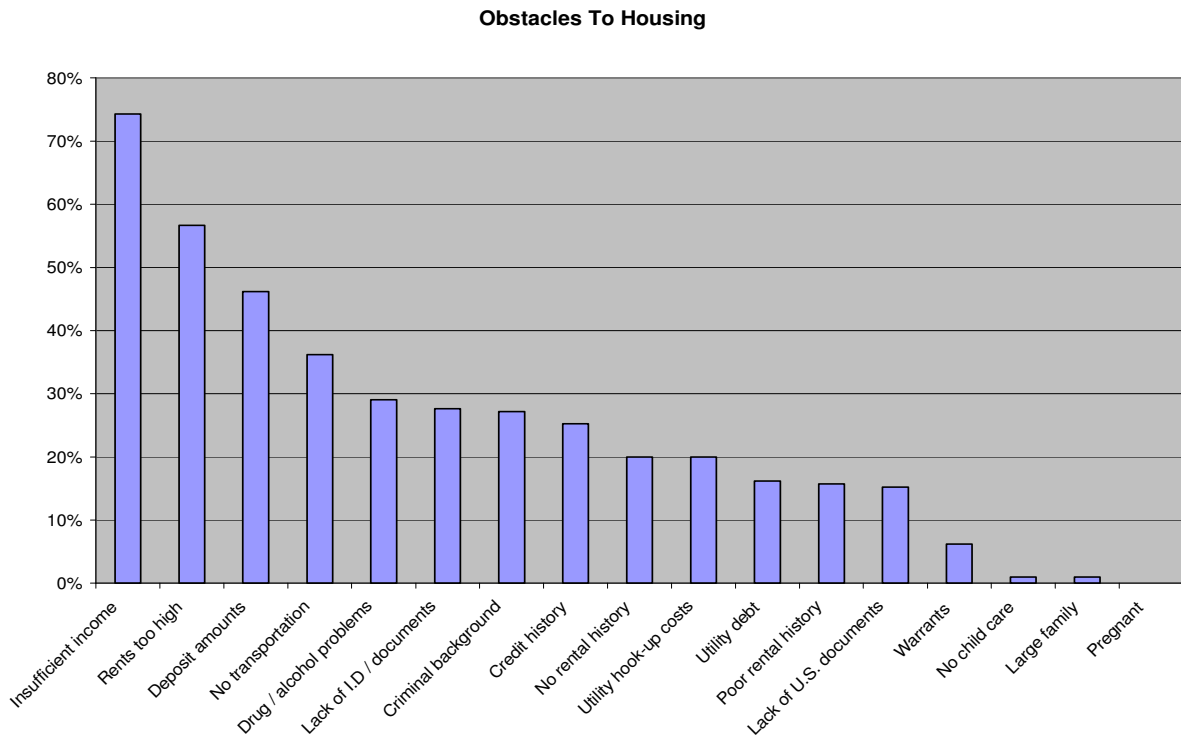


### **History with Public Institutions**

Sixty-one percent of respondents had been in jail or prison. One-third had been in drug or alcohol abuse treatment, and one third had been in a hospital or other medical facility. Eleven percent had been in a state hospital or long-term care facility. Less than 5% had been in foster care. There was no non-answer to this question: there is no way to determine whether respondents didn't answer, or had never been in a public institution.

### **Housing Barriers**

Three-quarters of respondents cited insufficient income as an obstacle to housing. High rent, deposit amounts, and lack of transportation were all barriers for more than a third of respondents. Five respondents (2%) listed no barriers to housing.



## **B. Stand Down Survey Results**

### **1. Methodology**

Stand Down Austin is a one day event linking people who are homeless to agencies and resources that can assist them on many different levels. “Stand Down” is a military term for “a period of rest and recuperation as a means of respite from the rigors of war.” After the first Stand Down was founded in San Diego, California, in 1988, its concept was adapted in Austin to meet the needs of homeless persons – both veterans and non-veterans – in 2001. Since its creation, Austin Stand Down, with services provided by over 40 social services organizations, serves an average of 700 clients each year.

Originally, the survey was designed to offer a better understanding of characteristics of people who receive services at the Stand Down, to plan services and programs appropriately to address their needs, and identify barriers to services or housing. Since many “Stand Down users” are known as people who do not use current services, the event was recognized as an opportunity to capture data on hard-to-reach homeless veterans and other homeless persons.

With assistance from over 30 volunteers, a survey of participants was conducted during the registration process in November 3, 2007. In order to avoid waiting in a long line at on-site registration, homeless persons were encouraged to preregister in shelters or service agencies such as the Trinity Center, Salvation Army shelters, and Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH). The survey form became available a couple of weeks before the event. Five hundred ninety-two surveys were submitted for this study. A copy of the survey form is located in Appendix A.

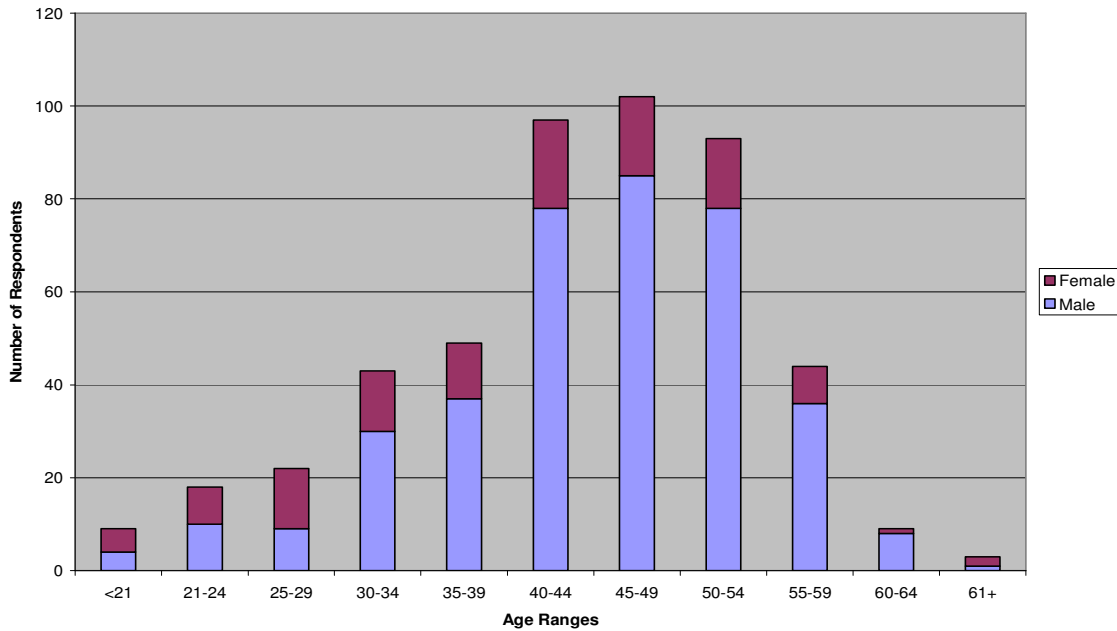
### **2. Survey Findings**

An analysis of the results from the surveys completed at the November 2007 Stand Down event yields interesting data in several areas: age distribution, causes of homelessness, desired services, and substance abuse. Data from incomplete surveys was considered, leaving differing numbers of results for the various elements of the following analysis. Despite some incomplete surveys, these results are strongly indicative of overall homeless trends, due to the very large size of the respondent pool – 515 respondents reported they were homeless.

#### **Age**

Sixty percent of the respondents were between forty and fifty-four years of age. This is an unusually large percentage of respondents to have such similar ages. In a normal distribution or ‘bell curve,’ this bar graph would show a smooth increase from low ages to a fairly flat peak, then the results would taper back down. The deviation from an expected bell curve in the chart below shows this ‘bubble.’

**Gender-Separated Ages of Stand Down Respondents**



This bubble includes a larger percentage of men than women: 64% of male respondents were in this age range. Women’s ages were fairly evenly distributed. Six respondents (1%) did not list a meaningful age.

**Race/Ethnicity and Language**

Respondents were asked two separate questions: to indicate their race, and indicate whether they Hispanic. Thirty percent of respondents were black, 44% were white, and 17% were Hispanic. One hundred seven (21%) of respondents did not list a race; 289 (56%) did not give a response indicating whether they were Hispanic. According to the American Community Survey, in 2006 Travis County’s overall population was 8% black, 52% non-Hispanic white, and 33% Hispanic or Latino.

Survey respondents were more likely to be male: almost ¾ of the respondents that specified a gender indicated that they were male. Almost 90% spoke only English; less than 5% spoke only Spanish, and less than 4% spoke both English and Spanish. American Sign Language was the third most common language preference. Thirty-three respondents (6%) did not answer this question.

**Family Status**

Seven percent had no children living with them, one-third had one child with them, eight percent had two children, and five percent live with three or more children. Thirty-eight respondents (7%) said they lived in a household of zero; 234 (45%) gave no answer.

**Physical Health (Immunization Status)**

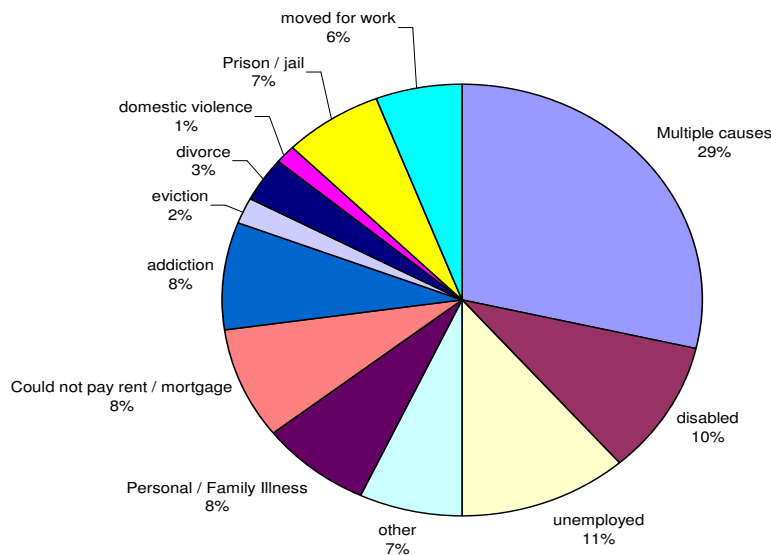
Forty-eight percent said their immunizations were up-to-date, 19% said they were not, and one-third didn’t know or didn’t answer.

### **Substance Abuse**

Of 515 homeless respondents, 189 (37%) said they had a substance abuse problem, though only 18% stated that this was the primary cause of their homelessness. Two-thirds of this group was using alcohol; of those who abuse alcohol, almost 2/3 were drinking daily. More than a third used marijuana at least monthly, while 16% abused prescription drugs. A quarter used hard drugs, and less than 2% used inhalants. More than half of all respondents reported no substance abuse at all. Eleven percent of all homeless respondents had received in-patient treatment for addiction, and six percent had received out-patient treatment. For this question, there is no way to tell whether respondents skipped the question or answered in the negative.

### **Causes of Homelessness**

Respondents were asked to choose the primary reason they became homeless. Even with this instruction, 29% listed multiple causes. Of the single causes selected, ‘unemployment’ topped the list, with ‘physical or mental disability’ as the second most common response.



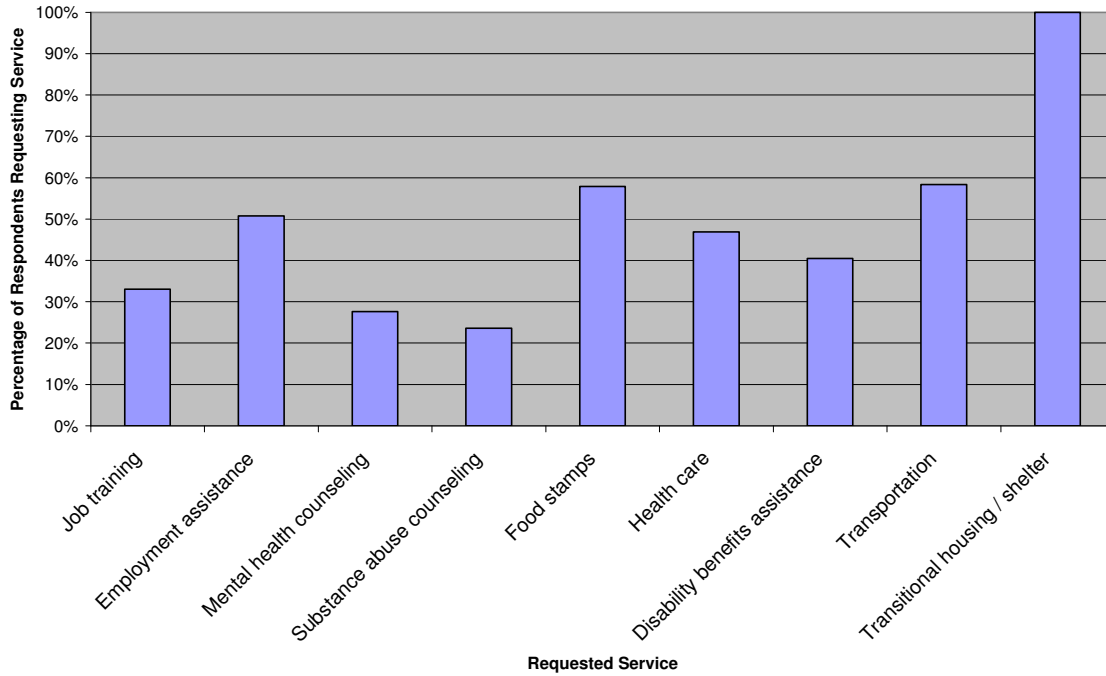
When these results were separated by gender, ‘multiple causes’ still topped the list for both groups. For women, ‘could not pay rent/mortgage’ and ‘personal or family illness’ were the top two responses, with 13% of the women listing domestic violence as a reason for homelessness; the male list was the same as the overall result listed above. Fifty-seven respondents (11%) gave no answer.

### **Services Requested**

Respondents were asked to list services that would help them maintain financial or personal stability, or both. All respondents who answered this question said that

transitional housing or shelter would help them. Fifty-four surveys (10%) did not list an answer to this question.

**Stand Down - Services to Increase Stability**



Employment and legal assistance, food stamps, and transportation were all requested by more than half of the respondents.

## C. Women’s Resource Fair Survey Results

### 1. Methodology

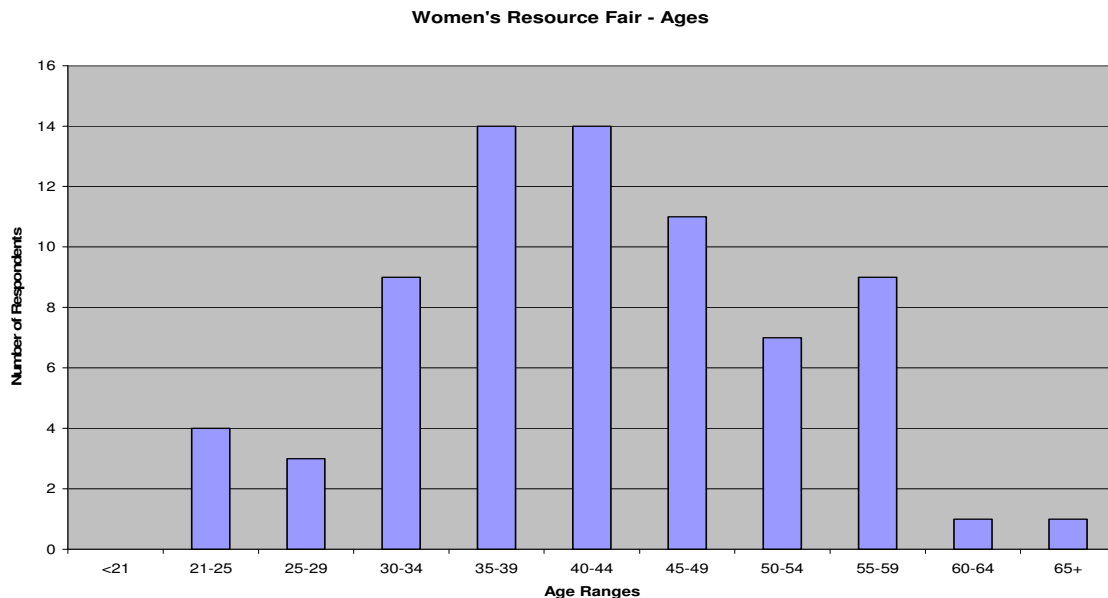
The first Women’s Resource Fair (WRF), organized by the Austin Young Lawyers' Association, took place on Saturday, May 3, 2008, in downtown Austin. It was a comprehensive all day event that provided a variety of free resources and services to homeless and battered women and their children, including legal assistance, medical services, job skills and educational counseling, social services and veteran’s assistance, shelter referrals, mental health counseling, spiritual care, child care, breakfast, and lunch.

Since the event targeted homeless women and their children, the survey was conducted to record and deliver the same kind of information as indicated for the Stand Down survey. The survey form was distributed to case managers who worked with homeless clients in shelters or resource centers a month before the event. Several AmeriCorps members were assigned to conduct the survey at the registration table during the day of the event. A copy of the survey form is located in Appendix B.

### 2. Survey Findings

#### Age

Of the 200 surveys received, 76 listed a homeless respondent. With a data set this small, the ages of the respondents are well within the expectations of a normally distributed population.



### **Race/Ethnicity and Language**

In this survey, respondents were asked for their race (Black, White, Asian, or Other), then were asked if they were Hispanic or Latino in a separate question. Fifty-one percent of the respondents indicated that they were white, 24% selected black, 7% chose other, and 20% did not answer. Twenty-four percent responded that they were Hispanic or Latino; 36% did not answer.

### **Family Status**

Of those who responded to a question about children living with them, 46% of respondents said they lived with no children. Eight percent live with one, 16% with two, 14% with three, and 16% with four or more children. Thirty-nine percent skipped the question.

### **Physical Health (Immunization Status)**

Forty-eight percent said their immunizations were up-to-date, 19% said they were not, and one-third did not know or did not answer.

### **Substance Abuse**

Thirty percent of homeless respondents indicated a substance addiction. Of these, 58% reported abusing hard drugs, 46% abuse alcohol, 38% abuse marijuana, 21% abuse prescription drugs, and 17% abuse inhalants. Of the respondents who said they did not abuse alcohol or drugs, 18% still indicated use of one of these substances.

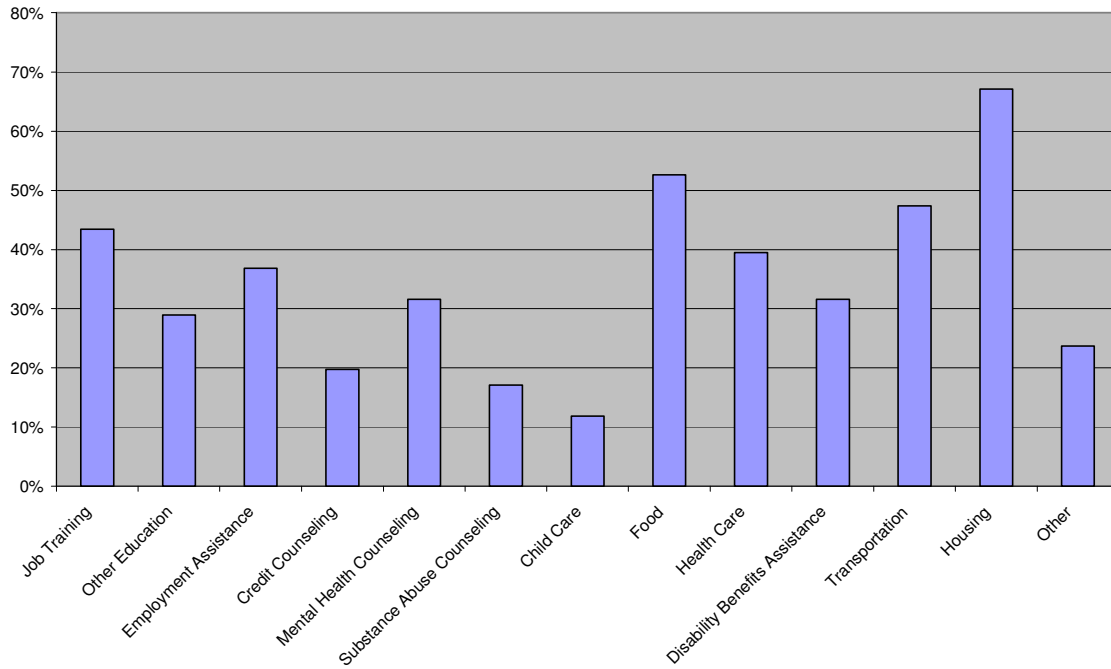
### **Causes of Homelessness**

In this survey, respondents could give multiple causes of homelessness. Almost half listed multiple causes. Of the single causes, domestic violence and prison/jail tied for most common reasons for homelessness, each claiming 8% of the responses. Among multiple causes, the three most common were unemployment, inability to pay mortgage or rent, and domestic violence.

### **Services Needed**

Two-thirds of homeless respondents indicated that housing assistance would be helpful to them. Food assistance would help more than half; transportation was the third most requested service. Eight percent of the respondents listed no answer to this question.

**Women's Resource Fair - Services Needed**



## **D. Messages from our neighbors on the street**

At the 2007, Austin Stand Down, homeless participants were asked to share their responses to a variety of questions. While their responses had some common themes, they represented the diversity of opinions among the homeless.

### **What would you say to the President?**

Respondents demonstrated an awareness of current federal policies, especially the war in Iraq. While there were a few positive comments, many expressed anger either at federal policies or the President personally. One-third of the comments stated that the United States should get out of the war in Iraq. A substantial number of the other comments focused on a desire that the federal government focus more resources on domestic issues such as social services spending and increasing social security payments. The following is an example of a typical comment “Let’s get out of Iraq and let them handle their own affairs. Let’s spend some of that money on issues here”. In other questions, several respondents expressed a desire that the United States close the borders and address immigration issues.

### **What would you like to say to the Mayor of Austin?**

There were several themes that emerged as participants were asked to provide feedback to the Mayor, including:

- A desire not to be ticketed for sleeping on the street
- A request for an increase in the number of shelters
- A desire for an increase in available restrooms downtown for the homeless
- Concern about the amount of drugs that are available around the shelters, especially in the alley between ARCH and the Salvation Army
- Requests that the City spend more on social services

While there were some comments that expressed concern about the way in which the homeless are treated by the police, there were also several comments that expressed appreciation for Austin and the efforts it makes to support the homeless.

### **If you could talk to the entire homeless community at once, what would you say?**

For the most part, respondents shared a feeling of hope and faith with their fellow homeless. Several people stated “don’t give up” or “there is hope.” Respondents also encouraged others to become more self-sufficient by “stop drugs and drinking – live normal,” “pull your straps up and get going” or “put all your efforts into getting off the street and be kind to people”. There were also comments encouraging the homeless to work together and treat each other more respectfully such as: “We need to stick together – all races,” and “we need to organize ourselves so that we’re more likely to be heard.” Respondents also stated a desire that people pick up their own trash and not prey on each other.

**If you could talk to all of the social service providers at one time, what would you say?**

Many of the respondents expressed gratitude for the social service agencies and their social workers using comments such as “Everyone is so supportive” and “Good job, God Bless.” Some respondents questioned the sincerity of some workers and requested more respect. There were several comments reflecting frustration with trying to keep up with appointments, the accessibility of services, and the complexity of navigating the systems with which they are involved. One comment which seemed to typify this was “There should be a one stop office for all social services. Trying to juggle numerous social services can be overwhelming and confusing.” A couple of comments expressed concern about ensuring that the mentally ill can access services and are monitored to ensure that they are well served. A couple of additional comments expressed a desire for more services that focus on women.

**Housing First is a concept that homeless people should be given housing very quickly after they become homeless. Housing First concept believes that people are better able to get stable once they are housed – rather than trying to get stable on the streets or in a shelter. What do you think?**

Of those who responded, 70 percent agreed with the concept that providing housing is essential to stability. Typical comments included: “It is impossible to become stable while living on the streets” and “Stability comes only after one has been housed”. Twenty-six percent disagreed with the Housing First concept expressing concern that there may not be enough affordable housing units available or that long waiting lists would be created. Others stated that it should be determined on a case by case basis and that people should be clean and sober first and express a willingness to improve themselves in order to be allowed to access housing. Four percent were unsure about the policy.

**Do you think that people who are alcoholics or addicted to drugs should be given housing?**

A slight majority (54%) of the surveyed homeless believe that alcoholics or addicts should be provided with housing with no pre-conditions. They stated “everyone deserves a safe place to sleep,” “they are still human,” and “that might be a way to get them off drugs.” One-third stated that housing should only be provided if the person is either in recovery or undergoing treatment. One person stated “If they are in recovery, otherwise you’re enabling them to further fall into their addiction.” Fourteen percent stated that alcoholics or addicts should not be provided with housing.

**What services do you need most?**

Respondents were clear that housing was the number one service that they needed. This was followed by jobs and healthcare (a tie). Next came requests for transportation and counseling/life skills followed by assistance with food and access to disability services. There were also individual requests for access to fitness facilities, laundry, identification, a backpack, and a place to put bags.

**Do you use the shelters? If so,why? If not, why not?**

Three-quarters of the respondents use the shelters. The primary reasons include: safety; a place to sleep; access to toilets, food, and showers; and a place to get out of the weather. Typical comments include: “ Yes, I use ARCH and Salvation Army because they help me”. Those that stated that they do not use the shelters cited concerns about safety and drug use. One person stated “I hate the shelter environment. It perpetuates itself.”

**Panhandling has become an issue in the news recently. What do you think of panhandling?**

Respondents had strong feelings on both sides of the panhandling issue. Those who agreed with panhandling expressed sentiments such as: “People have the choice to give or not give, so if someone’s in a position to where they are in desperate need, they should be able to ask for help” or “This is, for some, the only source of income. If you’re going to outlaw it, make jobs more accessible for those in need.” On the other end of the spectrum, respondents stated: “It is a dangerous safety and traffic issue. It is debatable that it is necessary besides it looks bad” or “I don’t agree with it. People need help, but they shouldn’t expect hand-outs.” Even among those who agreed that panhandling is an allowable activity, many stated that there should be limits and that aggressive panhandling is not acceptable. Comments included: “Following people is not OK...asking one time is OK...should not bother people,” or “Aggressive panhandling is wrong. As long as no one is bothered, it’s OK.” A couple of people stated that if panhandling is outlawed, then stealing/crime would increase.

## IV. Review of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

Austin, like other cities around the nation, is currently implementing the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) that provides data on sheltered homeless clients and services they receive. Selected in 2001, the ServicePoint system has been successfully implemented to capture community-wide information over time about the characteristics and service needs of persons experiencing homelessness. The HMIS also provides another source of valuable data to assist in setting priorities regarding housing and service option.

The following table provides the number of unduplicated clients who were entered in HMIS as they received services from the HUD Continuum of Care funded programs from 2004 through 2007:

<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
# of Unduplicated Clients Entered in HMIS for Continuum of Care	6,118	8,140	5,818	6,947

Current challenges to on-going implementation of the HMIS include (1) the overtaxing of service providers who are required to enter data into multiple client data systems, resulting in duplication of data entry, (2) lesser interest and incentive to participate among non-HUD funded agencies, (3) challenges with creating reports, and (4) inadequate resources to enhance the system.

With HUD increasing its emphasis on the use of HMIS as the primary tool for data collection, it will be important that Austin/Travis County has a system that is user-friendly and able to produce the necessary reports without causing a data entry burden. The HMIS subcommittee of ECHO Planning and Evaluation Committee is charged with overseeing the HMIS implementation and addressing issues that are raised.

## V. Next Steps

The data obtained from three homeless surveys from May 2007 through May 2008 has been compiled for the first time in Austin's history. Even with our best efforts, we acknowledge that these surveys are only a snapshot of small populations that we could access and do not account for all needs and characteristics. Based on past experience, we have identified opportunities for improvement,

- Maintaining consistency from year-to-year and momentum in consistent data collection efforts, in collaboration with local partners and community volunteers is on-going challenge. Most current data collection efforts are driven by community leaders/volunteers whose commitment and time can be limited.
- As a community, we must work on potential solutions that include increasing supportive housing units and affordable units, and/or providing resources to assist people in securing and maintaining housing. As we make progress in the data collection process and reporting the numbers, we must make sure that we focus on solutions rather than problems.
- It is important to provide on-going efforts to work with other communities to advocate and address issues of inconsistency in the data reporting requirements by HUD and among other government entities (e.g. differences in definition of being homeless).
- It is critical to utilize existing resources wisely and efficiently. Utilizing professional expertise and community partnerships to obtain data on certain subpopulation and improving existing survey instruments are two major steps that need to be taken over the next few months.
- We must provide more coordinated efforts to increase awareness about homelessness and issues of "community ownership" as we resume our planning process for 2009 point-in-time count and future surveys. Although the process needs to comply with HUD requirements on a certain level, that does not mean that we cannot explore or develop new strategies that work for our community and benefit homeless persons in our region.

**[Appendix A]**

2007 Stand Down Non Veteran registration Form  
Veterans Contact Andrew Miller 389-6504 or Linda Saucedo 389-6556

**Please write information in blanks and circle appropriate answers.**

First Initial \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial \_\_\_\_\_ Last Initial \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security # XXX - XX - \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you have ID? Y N Registered to Vote? Y N

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

Age \_\_\_\_\_ City/State of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: M F TG  
Language \_\_\_\_\_  
Race: Black White Asian Other Hispanic or Latino? Y N Marital Status: S M D W  
Seperate

**Current Living Situation: Streets Shelter Apartment Public Housing Boarding Home Treatment Center**

From how long \_\_\_\_\_ Number Living in Household \_\_\_\_\_ Number of children (<18 yrs) \_\_\_\_\_

Are you homeless? Y N Main Reason for being homeless: Circle One  
Addiction Divorce Domestic Violence Evicted within Past Week Family/Personal Illness  
Prison/Jail Moved to seek Work Physical/Mental Disabilities Unable to Pay Rent/Mortgage  
Unemployment Other  
First time homeless? Y N Date first became homeless \_\_\_\_\_ In foster care prior to age 18?  
Y N

**Physical Health**

Medical Insurance: MAP Medicaid Private  
Presently Experiencing Health Problems and/or taking medication? Y N  
What? \_\_\_\_\_  
Allergies? Y N Pregnant? Y N If yes, receiving prenatal care? Y N  
TB Test Date \_\_\_\_\_ Results: Pos. Neg. HIV Test Date \_\_\_\_\_ Results: Pos. Neg.  
Date Last Medical Exam \_\_\_\_\_ Immunizations up-to-date? Y N

**Addictions**

Alcohol/Drug Abuse? Y N If yes, please answer the following:  
Alcohol? Daily Weekly Monthly Hard Drugs? Daily Weekly  
Monthly  
Marijuana/Psychedelics? Daily Weekly Monthly Inhalants? Daily Weekly Monthly  
Rx Drugs? Daily Weekly Monthly  
Ever treated for any addiction? Y N If yes, in patient (30 days or less) or out patient (30 to 90 days)  
AA NA attendance? Last date of alcohol or drug use? \_\_\_\_\_

**Emotional/Mental Health**

Been hospitalized, receive treatment and/ or medication for emotional or mental condition? Y N If yes, explain  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Are you depressed now? Y N If yes, what are you doing for it?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Employment History**

Work Status: Unemployed    Emp. FT    Emp. PTemp. FT temp.    Emp. PT temp./Day Labor

Are you able to work? Y N    WHY?    Mental Health problems    Medical Problems

If you are unemployed when was your last job? From (date)\_\_\_\_\_ to (date)\_\_\_\_\_

Reason for leaving? \_\_\_\_\_

**If you are currently employed: Hours Per Week**\_\_\_\_\_ **Hourly Wage \$**\_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL Monthly Income from any source**        \$\_\_\_\_\_ x 12 mos. =

\$\_\_\_\_\_

**Food Stamps, WIC, or Other In-Kind**        \$\_\_\_\_\_ x 12 mos. =

\$\_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following services do you think would be helpful to you in maintaining financial and/or personal stability?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job Training _____         | <input type="checkbox"/> Food Stamps                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Education _____      | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment Assistance      | <input type="checkbox"/> Disability Benefits Assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Credit Counseling          | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Counseling   | <input type="checkbox"/> Transitional Housing/Shelter   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Substance Abuse Counseling | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child Care                 |   |

Thank you for completing this registration form



**[Appendix B]**

2008 WOMEN'S RESOURCE FAIR REGISTRATION FORM  
Saturday, May 3, 2008

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**Schmidt-Jones Family Life Center**  
**1300 Lavaca Street**  
**9:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.**

**Please write information in blanks and circle appropriate answers.**

First Name or Initial \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial \_\_\_\_\_  
Last Name or Initial \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security # XXX - XX - \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you have ID? Y N Registered to Vote? Y N  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
Center: \_\_\_\_\_

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

Age \_\_\_\_ City/State of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Language \_\_\_\_\_  
Race: Black White Asian Other Hispanic or Latino? Y N Marital Status: S M D W  
Separated

**Current Living Situation: Streets Shelter Apartment Public Housing Boarding Home  
Treatment Center**

From how long \_\_\_\_\_ Number Living in Household \_\_\_\_\_ Number of children (<18 yrs)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are you homeless? Y N Main Reason for being homeless: Circle One  
Addiction Divorce Domestic Violence Evicted within Past Week Family/Personal Illness  
Prison/Jail Moved to seek Work Physical/Mental Disabilities Unable to Pay Rent/Mortgage  
Unemployment Other  
First time homeless? Y N Date first became homeless \_\_\_\_\_ In foster care prior to age 18?  
Y N

**Physical Health**

Medical Insurance: MAP Medicaid Private  
Presently Experiencing Health Problems and/or taking medication? Y N  
What? \_\_\_\_\_  
Allergies? Y N Pregnant? Y N If yes, receiving prenatal care? Y N  
TB Test Date \_\_\_\_\_ Results: Pos. Neg. HIV Test Date \_\_\_\_\_ Results: Pos. Neg.  
Date Last Medical Exam \_\_\_\_\_ Immunizations up-to-date? Y N

**Addictions**

Alcohol/Drug Abuse? Y N If yes, please answer the following:  
Alcohol? Daily Weekly Monthly Hard Drugs? Daily Weekly  
Monthly  
Marijuana/Psychedelics? Daily Weekly Monthly Inhalants ? Daily Weekly Monthly  
Rx Drugs? Daily Weekly Monthly  
Ever treated for any addiction? Y N If yes, in patient (30 days or less) or out patient (30 to 90  
days)  
AA NA attendance? Last date of alcohol or drug use? \_\_\_\_\_

**Emotional/Mental Health**

Been hospitalized, receive treatment and/ or medication for emotional or mental condition? Y N If yes, explain

Are you depressed now? Y N If yes, what are you doing for it?

**Employment History**

Work Status: Unemployed Emp. FT Emp. PTemp. FT temp. Emp. PT temp./Day Labor

Are you able to work? Y N WHY? Mental Heath problems Medical Problems

If you are unemployed when was your last job? From (date)\_\_\_\_\_ to (date)\_\_\_\_\_

Reason for leaving? \_\_\_\_\_

If you are currently employed: Hours Per Week\_\_\_\_\_ Hourly Wage \$\_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL Monthly Income from any source \$\_\_\_\_\_ x 12 mos. =  
\$\_\_\_\_\_

Food Stamps, WIC, or Other In-Kind \$\_\_\_\_\_ x 12 mos. =  
\$\_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following services do you think would be helpful to you in maintaining financial and/or personal stability?

- Job Training \_\_\_\_\_
- Other Education \_\_\_\_\_
- Employment Assistance
- Credit Counseling
- Mental Health Counseling
- Substance Abuse Counseling
- Child Care
- Food
- Health Care
- Disability Benefits Assistance
- Transportation
- Housing
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for completing this registration form

[Appendix C]

Point-In-Time Survey: Unsheltered Persons

Please complete this form by May 30, 2007. Refer any questions pertaining to this form to Angela Atwood (512) 735-2411.

Staff/Volunteer Completing Survey: \_\_\_\_\_

Survey Location: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Person is: (Check one)

Single Adult: \_\_\_ Male \_\_\_ Female

Unaccompanied Youth: \_\_\_ Male \_\_\_ Female

Adult in Family: \_\_\_ Male \_\_\_ Female

2. First letter of first name: \_\_\_\_\_ First letter of middle name: \_\_\_\_\_

First three letters of last name: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Person's birth date: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_ (month) (day) (year)

4. Where did you spend the night last night?

- Emergency Shelter
On the Street/Car/Abandoned building/Park
Transitional Housing
Hospital
Domestic Violence Shelter
Corrections Facility/Jail
In a place that you are being evicted from within a week
Other:

5. What is your sex?

- Male Female Transgendered

6. Do you have any family members living you?

No Yes (IF YES, LIST AGE, GENDER, AND RELATIONSHIP TO RESPONDENT OF EACH INDIVIDUAL)

Age Gender Relationship
Age Gender Relationship
Age Gender Relationship
Age Gender Relationship
Age Gender Relationship

7. Which of the following best describes your family living situation?

- 1. family, one parent 4. single person
2. family, two-parents 5. other extended family
3. couple, no children 6. other (specify)

8. What is your ethnicity/race?

- White American Indian or Alaska Native
Hispanic or Latino Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
Black/African American Multi-Racial
Asian Other

9. Have you ever been in the U.S. military? Yes No

10. How long have you been homeless? Years: \_\_\_\_\_

Months: \_\_\_\_\_ Days: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Which of the following best describes your situation?

- 1st time homeless in the past 3 years
2-3 episodes in the past 3 years
At least 4 episodes in the past 3 years
Continuously homeless for a year or more

12. Have you had another, separate homeless episode within the past twelve months? Yes No

13. Please check all the reasons why you became homeless:

- Unable to pay rent/mortgage
Unemployment
Divorce/Separation
Domestic Violence (between intimate partners)
Family Violence (abuse, neglect or violence)
Sexual Orientation
Incarceration
Family/Personal Illness
Physical Disability
Cognitive Disability
Mental Health Issues/Mental Illness
Alcohol/Drug Abuse or Addiction
Evicted
Moved to Austin to find work
Other:

14. How old were you when you first became homeless? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Where were you living when you became homeless?

- In Texas: City: \_\_\_\_\_
County: \_\_\_\_\_
Other State or Country: \_\_\_\_\_

16. How far did you go in school?

- Never attended 1-8th grade Some high school
HS diploma/GED Some college or vocational training College Graduate
Post Graduate Degree Did not attend school in U.S.

17. Are you able to work? Yes No

18. What best describes your job status? Regular full time
Temp/Contract Day labor Part time Unemployed

19. On average, how many hours a week do you work for pay?
\_\_\_\_\_ hours/week

20. If unemployed, how long? \_\_\_\_\_ months \_\_\_\_\_ years

21. Why are you not working? (check all that apply)

- Permanent/Temporary physical disability
- Mental health issues
- Poor health
- Don't want to
- Lack skills/education
- Lack of proper clothing
- No transportation
- Drug/alcohol problem
- Lack of US documents
- Lack of child care
- Lack of permanent address
- Criminal background
- Learning/developmental disability
- Caring for dependent adult or child with medical/disability issues
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Pregnant

22. What is your monthly income?

- \$0
- \$1-100
- \$101-500
- \$501-\$1000
- \$1001-2000
- \$2000+

23. From which sources do you get income? (check all that apply)

- Child Support
- Employer Wages
- Food Stamps
- Medicaid/Medicare
- Pension/Retirement
- Asking for money on streets
- Illegal Activity
- Family/Friends
- TANF
- Unemployment Benefits
- VA Benefits
- Social Security/SSDI/SSI
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

24. Have you or are you receiving treatment or services for any of the conditions below? (Please check all that apply.)

- Mental illness
- Drug abuse
- Other physical condition
- Alcohol abuse
- HIV/AIDS related illnesses
- Have not or do not receive treatment or services

25. Since you've been homeless which of the following services have you needed? Which of the following services have you been able to receive? (Check all that apply)

Need	Shelter and Services	Receive
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emergency Shelter	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Transitional Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Permanent Supportive Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Permanent Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Job Training & Placement	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Case Management	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Domestic Violence Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mental Health Treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Substance Abuse Treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medical Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dental Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Child Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medicaid/Medicare	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	SSI or SSDI	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Life Skills Training	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Food stamps	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	TANF	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Veterans Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation Assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	GED or Educational Training	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	English as a 2nd Language	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Legal Aid	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clothing and/or food	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Treatment for HIV/AIDS	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Treatment for Hepatitis C	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	No services Needed	<input type="checkbox"/>

26. Have you ever been in:

- Drug or Alcohol abuse treatment ....
- State Hospital/long-term care facility
- Hospital or other Medical facility
- Jail/prison
- Foster care

27. When discharged, did you have a place to live?  Yes  No

28. Currently, what makes it hard to find housing? (check all that apply)

- Insufficient income
- Deposit amounts
- Rents too high
- Utility debt
- Credit history
- Criminal background
- No rental history
- Poor rental history
- No transportation
- No child care
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Drug/alcohol problems
- Lack of US documents
- Utility hook-up costs
- Lack of ID/documents
- Warrants
- Large family

29. Are you on a subsidized housing waiting list?  Yes  No

30. Check all that apply to person you are interviewing:

- Chronically Homeless
- Severe Mental Illness
- Chronic Substance Abuse
- Veteran
- Victim of Domestic Violence
- Unaccompanied Youth
- Person with HIV/AIDS

31. Was this client homeless on January 25, 2007?  Yes  No

32. Was this client counted on January 25, 2007?  Yes  No

[Appendix D]

**A Combined Survey**

Staff/Volunteer Completing Survey \_\_\_\_\_

Location/Event \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Where did you spend last night? (See Key)

- A. Emergency Shelter
- B. Corrections Facility/Jail
- C. Hotel/Motel
- D. On the Street/Car/Park/Abandoned building
- H. Not Homeless (if E was selected, do not continue past #5)
- E. Transitional Housing
- F. Hospital
- G. Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. Why did you come to this event (if applicable)?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Last four digits of SSN: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Date of Birth \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_ (mm-dd-yyyy)

5. Have you received case management services within the past 6 months? Y N (If yes, specify agency \_\_\_\_\_)

**Demographic Information:**

6. Gender: A. Male B. Female C. Transgender

7. Age: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Race/Ethnicity: A. White B. Black C. Native American D. Asian E. Hispanic F. Multiracial or Other

8-1. Spoken Language (other than English):

- A. Spanish
- B. American Sign Language
- D. Other \_\_\_\_\_

9. Marital Status: A. Married B. Single

9-1. Does a partner or spouse live with you? Y N

10. Do you have dependent family members who live with you? Y N (If no, go to # 11)

10-1. If yes, how many children under 18 years of age live with you? \_\_\_\_\_

**Military History:**

11. Did you serve in the military? Y N (If no, go to question 16)

12. How long did you serve in the military? \_\_\_\_\_ (years)

13. Are you eligible for veteran's benefits? Y N

14. Are you currently receiving veteran's benefits? Y N

15. Combat Duty: A. Korea B. Vietnam C. Kuwait (Desert Storm) D. Iraq E. Afghanistan F. Other

**Homeless History:**

16. How long have you been homeless? \_\_\_\_\_ (years)

17. How many times have you been homeless in the past 3 years? A. up to 3 times B. 4 times or more

18. Do you have a disabling condition? Y N (See Key)

18-1. If yes, what is your disabling condition?

- A. Substance Abuse Disorder
- B. Serious Mental Illness
- C. Developmental Disability (physical and/or mental impairments that occur before the age of 22)
- D. Chronic physical illness
- E. Disability including the co-occurrence of 2 or more of the above

19. Where did you become homeless? \_\_\_\_\_ (City)

20. What is the main reason you became homeless? (Check One)

- A. Addiction/Substance Abuse
- B. Divorce
- C. Domestic Violence
- D. Evicted
- E. Illness
- F. Prison/Jail
- G. Disability
- H. Lost Job
- I. Foreclosure
- J. Other

**Institutional History:**

21. Which of the following have you been in? (Check all that apply)

21.	22. Y/N	23. Y/N	24. A/B/C
A. Drug/alcohol abuse treatment center			
B. State hospital/long-term care facility			
C. Hospital or other medical facility			
D. Jail/Prison			
E. Foster Care			

22. Were you homeless before entering the institution? Y N

23. Did you have a place to stay when you were discharged? Y N

24. How were you at the place you were discharged to? A. 30 days or less B. 31 to 60 days C. over 60 days

**Health:**

25. When was your last medical exam? \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (mm/yyyy)

25-1. Where did you receive your last medical exam? \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_(City/State)

26. Do you have health insurance?

- A. MAP
- B. Medicaid
- C. Medicare
- D. Private
- E. None

26-1. Is your health insurance employer-sponsored? Y N

26-2. If dependent children are part of family, do they have health Insurance? Y N

27. Which services have you received?
- A. Substance Abuse
  - B. Physical Health
  - C. Mental Illness
  - D. HIV/AIDS
  - E. Hepatitis
  - F. Tuberculosis (TB)
  - G. Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault
  - H. Immunizations

28. Which medical services do you need and not receive?
- A. Substance Abuse
  - B. Physical Health
  - C. Mental Illness
  - D. HIV/AIDS
  - E. Hepatitis
  - F. Tuberculosis (TB)
  - G. Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault
  - H. Immunizations

**Education/Employment/Income:**

29. Are you currently employed? Y N (If no, go to question #32)

30. How many hours per week do you work? \_\_\_\_\_

31. How much do you earn hourly/weekly? \$\_\_\_\_/\$\_\_\_\_ (If employed, go to question #36)

32. How long have you been unemployed? \_\_\_/\_\_\_ (mm/yy)

33. Are you able to work? Y N

34. Are you receiving unemployment benefits? Y N

35. What is your main reason for your unemployment? (Check One)

- A. Addiction/Substance Abuse
- B. Divorce
- C. Domestic Violence
- D. Evicted
- E. Illness
- F. Prison/Jail
- G. Disability
- H. Lost Job
- I. Foreclosure
- J. Other

36. Do you have another source of income? Y N (If no, go to question #38)

37. What is your other source(s) of income?

- A. Child Support
- B. Food Stamps
- C. Pension/Retirement
- D. Illegal Activity
- E. Unemployment Benefit
- F. Social Security/SSDI/SSI
- G. Family/Friends
- H. Medicaid/Medicare
- I. Asking for money on streets
- J. VA Benefits
- K. TANF
- L. Other \_\_\_\_\_

38. How far did you go in school?

- A. Never attended
- B. Some high school
- C. Job training program
- D. Post College
- E. Grades 1 to 8
- F. HS diploma/GED
- G. Some college/university
- H. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Housing/Service Needs:**

39. Which of the following types of shelter/housing do you need the most and/or have you been able to receive? (Check Only One Housing option that you need)

39-1. Need	39-2. Receive	Shelter and Housing (See Key)
		A. Emergency Shelter
		B. Transitional Housing
		C. Permanent Supportive Housing
		D. Affordable Housing
		E. No Supportive Housing (A, B, C) Needed

39-3. If E was selected, please explain why:

40. Which of the following services do you think would be most helpful to you in maintaining financial and/or personal stability and/or have you been able to receive? (Check only 3 services that you need. Check all services that you have received.)

40-1. Need	40-2. Receive	Supportive Services
		A. Basic Needs – food and/or clothing
		B. Child Care
		C. Educational Training – GED/Language
		D. Job Training and/or Placement
		E. Life Skills
		F. Transportation Assistance
		G. Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Counseling
		H. Financial Assistance
		I. Legal Assistance
		J. Probation/Parole Assistance
		K. Food stamps
		L. Medicaid/Medicare/MAP
		M. SSI or SSDI
		N. TANF
		O. Treatment for HIV/AIDS
		P. Veterans Benefits
		Q. Mental Health Treatment
		R. Primary Healthcare
		S. Substance Abuse Treatment
		T. Therapeutic counseling services
		U. No Services Needed

40-3. If U was selected, please explain why:

40-4. Do you need case management? Y or N

## [Appendix E] Q & A

### **1. What is the purpose of the Voices of Homeless Persons Report?**

The purpose of this report is to communicate the process, results, and past findings to the public after collecting information about and from our homeless neighbors in Austin/Travis County.

### **2. Is it okay to use and/or cite information in this report?**

Yes, but please do so with caution. Hard as we try, the information we can gather on homelessness is almost always less than the complete picture. As a community we have made a lot of progress in our information collection process, but what we know is still subject to data limitations. And interpretation of specific pieces of information should be done within the proper context. We therefore encourage all community members to read the full report for a better understanding of the limitations before quoting specific pieces of information.

### **3. Who is in charge of planning, conducting, analyzing, and reporting community data on homelessness in Austin/Travis County?**

The Ending Community Homelessness (ECHO) Coalition is the entity responsible for this process. ECHO is a local partnership of more than 70 organizations and community members. It is an official planning group on homelessness in Austin/Travis County. In conjunction with Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department, ECHO has been responsible for assessing the needs of homeless individuals, reviewing existing services, identifying gaps, and developing a strategic plan to address our community's priority needs. ECHO always needs talented volunteers and committed partners with resources. Putting together a report like this requires community leadership and support.

This is our first report that compiles all community-wide data pertaining to homelessness from January 2007 to May 2008. In order to collect and analyze information for this report, more than 180 community volunteers, agency staff, and city and county staff were mobilized. Nearly two thousands of hours of their time got into this process.

### **4. How can I or my organization participate in planning groups and/or homeless survey team in the future?**

The Count/Survey Subcommittee of ECHO Planning and Evaluation Committee is the first place for you to visit. For more information, please visit the ECHO Website at [www.AustinECHO.org](http://www.AustinECHO.org). (Go to the "About the ECHO Coalition" or "Stand Up and Be Counted" section.)

## [Appendix F] Glossary

**Definitions of Homeless:** Our community definition of homeless includes a person who is staying in a hotel/motel, with relatives or friends, in a Board and Care, Adult Congregate Living Facility, or similar place and who meet HUD's definition:

According to HUD's definition, a person is considered homeless only when he/she resides in one of the following places:

- A. In places not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings, or on the streets.
- B. In an emergency shelter or transitional or supportive housing for homeless persons who originally came from the streets or emergency shelters.
- C. In any of the above places but is spending a short time (up to 30 consecutive days) in a hospital or other institution.

**Definition of Chronically Homeless:** HUD defines chronically homeless as a person who is 1) unaccompanied homeless individual; 2) with a disabling condition; and 3) who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more OR has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.

In order to be considered chronically homeless, a person must have been sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g., living on the streets) and/or in an emergency homeless shelter or Safe Haven.

An episode of homelessness is a separate, distinct, and sustained stay on the streets and/or in an emergency homeless shelter.

**Emergency Shelter:** Any facility with overnight sleeping accommodations, the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of homeless persons. The length of stay can range from one night up to as much as three months.

**Transitional Housing:** HUD defines transitional housing as a project that is designed to provide housing and appropriate support services to homeless persons to facilitate movement to independent living within 24 months.

**Permanent Supportive Housing:** Long-term community-based housing and supportive services for homeless persons with disabilities. The intent of this type of supportive housing is to enable this special needs population to live as independently as possible in a permanent setting. The supportive services may be provided by the organization managing the housing or provided by other public or private service agencies. There is no definite length of stay.

**Affordable Housing:** The generally accepted definition of affordability is for a household to pay no more than 30 percent of its annual income on housing.