As newly elected leaders of the City of Austin and Travis County, we share ECHO’s vision of creating “a community that is fiercely focused on ending homelessness.” We know that many people – employees of the City and County, and staff at many non-profit agencies and volunteers throughout central Texas - have worked tirelessly to develop programs, and identify resources to support and house people who need it. The data that shows we are making steady progress in ending homelessness. And for this, we are very grateful. However, we stand ready to support changes needed to accelerate progress toward ending veteran homelessness by December 2015, chronic homelessness by 2017 and family and youth homelessness by 2020.

We applaud the participation of housing and social service agencies in the new Coordinated Assessment process that identifies client housing needs and prioritizes clients by vulnerability. This work is hard, changing how you operate is hard, and the collaboration is complicated – but all of it together gives us hope. We support exploring the connection between healthcare and housing, and we will support innovative funding mechanisms like Pay for Success to scale up interventions that end homelessness, such as Permanent Supportive Housing.

Together, we call on property owners to make units available through supportive housing programs for our neighbors who need it most…those sleeping in shelters and on the streets. At the County, we are looking at how best to use County owned property - perhaps converting some to housing – and investing in “whole family” supports including housing. At the City, we are investing in Housing First (low-barrier) Permanent Supportive Housing, developing a Good Landlord program, and exploring a Landlord Incentive Fund. We need partners in this work. If you own housing or are developing housing, contact us to learn how you can help.

**Mayor**
**SARAH ECKHARDT**

**Mayor**
**STEVE ADLER**

**COMMUNITY PROGRESS ON ENDING HOMELESSNESS-2011-2015**

Looking back 5 years, we’ve seen a **21% decrease** in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Austin/Travis County. This steady decline is testament that this community can **end homelessness**.

This chart indicates this steady decline from 2011-2015

**PHOTOS:** TOMAS FIERRO (cover, pages 4-6), NIKOLA IVANOVSKI (cover - young girl), DUSTIN DIAZ (inside front cover)
The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition, Inc. (ECHO) was created in 2011 to provide leadership throughout Austin/Travis County for the purpose of building collaboration to end homelessness. Today, ECHO works to engage policymakers and stakeholders around best practices and promising strategies that will indeed end homelessness for families and individuals.

ECHO is a small 501(c)3 agency led by a volunteer board of directors, a membership council/CoC governing board representing stakeholder organizations working to end homelessness, workgroups that engage local expertise, and 12 full time staff. With this governance structure, ECHO serves as the liaison to federal and state government regarding housing programs focused on ending homelessness. HUD refers to this group of stakeholders as well as the programs they represent as the Continuum of Care (COC), which is funded by The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act as amended by The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act in 2009. HUD is still promulgating rules that govern COC programs ECHO leads the community through this HUD process to maintain and work to expand the current allocation of $5.6M.

In addition to serving as the lead collaborative applicant for HUD CoC funds, ECHO provides leadership and participation with many community stakeholder groups such as the Healthy Communities Collaborative, CAN Indicator, Dashboard Steering Committee, the Permanent Supportive Housing Finance Leadership Committee, Travis County Justice Re-investment Initiative, the Mayor’s Task Force on the Innovation Zone, the Central Health Psychiatric Stakeholders Committee and Housing Works.

But, the lack of affordable housing and the barriers many individuals have experienced (criminal backgrounds, poor rental history, unpaid utilities, etc.) threaten our progress.

WHO IS ECHO?

A Tsunami of Opportunity… and Barriers

- City and County leadership committed to ending homelessness – focus on ending Veteran homelessness by December 2015
- Community goal to develop 400 new units of PSH by 2019
- New state funding to provide supportive services to individuals needing housing and behavioral health care
- Coordinated Assessment identifies and prioritizes need – creates ‘system approach’ to ending homelessness
- Medicaid reform driving healthcare to invest in housing
- Street Medicine – serving/engaging unsheltered individuals and families
- Criminal Justice Reform recognizes that housing is a critical key to reduction in recidivism cycle of recidivism
- ECHO leads community partners in developing “Pay for Success” private/public partnership to fund housing/support services

But, the lack of affordable housing and the barriers many individuals have experienced (criminal backgrounds, poor rental history, unpaid utilities, etc.) threaten our progress.
The men and women we see on the street and in our shelters mirror the rest of the community in many ways: families with and without children, married and singles, varied ages and ethnicity, strong and struggling to manage chronic disease such as alcoholism and cancer.

In 2011, Austin participated in the national 100,000 Homes Campaign. 48% of the unsheltered homeless population surveyed met the definition of "vulnerable for death on the street in the next 5 years if left alone.” Indeed, the oldest veteran found during the campaign died on the street within 2 weeks of the event. These neighbors, like many in our homeless population today struggled with chronic disease and well-known predictors of homelessness.

2015 POINT IN TIME COUNT

The Point In Time Count is the national standard for collecting census data on local homeless populations. The unsheltered count is added to the number of individuals staying in emergency shelters, and transitional housing the same night to provide a snapshot of the number of people experiencing homelessness on any given night in Austin/Travis County.

We see people needing help all across Austin, but concentrated areas in central Austin fanning out north and east. Current city policy in the Imagine Austin Plan is inclusive, recognizing the need to establish a diverse stock of housing citywide for everyone: “singles, families with and without children, seniors, persons with disabilities, and multi-generational families” Currently, Austin needs about 100,000 more rental units affordable for people earning less than $50,000 per year; only one in six of those workers can find affordable housing in Austin right now. Other barriers to housing besides low-income: bad debt and criminal history; poor rental history; substance abuse and mental illness.

Where did you become homeless for the first time?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CENTRAL TEXAS</td>
<td>12,576</td>
<td>72.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTH/EAST TEXAS</td>
<td>2,792</td>
<td>16.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH/WEST TEXAS</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>0.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUT OF STATE</td>
<td>1,854</td>
<td>10.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>17,364</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2015 POINT IN TIME HOMELESS COUNT BY COUNCIL DISTRICT

- District 1
- District 2
- District 3
- District 4
- District 5
- District 6
- District 7
- District 8
- District 9
- District 10
ECHO works under a 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness 2010 - 2020

**COMMUNITY PROGRESS – FIRST FIVE YEARS**

**FOCUS 1 – PREVENTION HOMELESSNESS**

1. Expand on-going efforts that provide housing & financial stability for at-risk populations
2. Develop new and expand on-going efforts to address prevention strategies
3. Educate community about Homelessness and advocate for evidence-based practices & solutions

**FOCUS 2 - ADDRESS SHORT-TERM HOMELESSNESS**

1. Expand rapid re-housing strategies
2. Expand job training, employment & access to mainstream services
3. Enhance community collaboration to improve & redesign current prevention programs

**FOCUS 3 - ADDRESS CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS**

1. Pilot and expand effective strategies to serve targeted populations
2. Enhance partnerships to increase capacity & access for both housing and services, including integrated healthcare
3. Expand Family support services

**FOCUS 4 – HIGHLY EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION**

1. Establish a sustainable structure to implement community-wide strategies to end homelessness
2. Strengthen policy development & advocacy efforts to end homelessness
3. Continue to manage & improve annual HUD COC process
4. Improve Data Quality & Reporting

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**PREVENTION GOALS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. There will be fewer homeless individuals and families.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of individuals counted during Point-In-Time Count</td>
<td>2,087</td>
<td>2,362</td>
<td>2,244</td>
<td>2,080</td>
<td>1,987</td>
<td>1,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsheltered</td>
<td>833</td>
<td>1,004</td>
<td>869</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheltered</td>
<td>1,254</td>
<td>1,358</td>
<td>1,375</td>
<td>1,325</td>
<td>1,539</td>
<td>1,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique number of people (single individuals and families) accessing emergency shelter and transitional housing (non-DV)</td>
<td>1512</td>
<td>3,760</td>
<td>5,193</td>
<td>5,353</td>
<td>5,675</td>
<td>DNA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Decrease the number of homeless households with children from 215 to a maximum of 185</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of homeless households with children counted during Point-in-Time Count</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SHORT-TERM GOALS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Increase the number of people moving rapidly from emergency shelter to housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of people who exited from emergency housing to permanent housing in 90 days or less (most recent entry in year)</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percent of leavers who exited from emergency housing to permanent housing in 90 days or less (most recent entry in year)</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
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<th>2011</th>
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<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Maintain at least a 72% rate of homeless persons in transitional housing moving to permanent housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percentage of people moving from CoC-funded TH to permanent housing</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LONG-TERM GOALS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase the number of beds for the chronically homeless from 75 to 200 in 10 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Inventory Chart Comparison</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
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<th>2011</th>
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<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintain at least 92% of homeless in permanent supportive housing for at least six months – 2009 level 95%*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of individuals in CoC-funded PSH programs who stay for at least six months</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
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<th>2011</th>
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<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintain at least 40% of homeless persons exiting support programs with employment – 2009 43%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percent of people exiting CoC-funded projects with earned income</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
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<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase the percentage of individuals who increase their income through access to mainstream services *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The percent of people in CoC-funded projects with at least one source of non-cash benefits</td>
<td>DNA</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING GOAL**

“In 2010, Austin identified the need for an additional 1,889 units of PSH to end chronic homelessness. Since 2010, Austin has increased its PSH capacity by 503 units. In 2014, the community set a new goal to identify an additional 400 units with at least 200 Housing First units by 2018. With the implementation of Coordinated Assessment, ECHO is evaluating the specific types of housing intervention needed to address the homelessness crisis.”

**2,560 PEOPLE SECURED PERMANENT HOUSING IN THE LAST 2 YEARS**

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**Fiercely Committed to Ending Homelessness**

www.austinecho.org | 4
ECHO is leveraging a HUD requirement for equitable access, assessment and referral (known as Coordinated Assessment) to redesign how the community responds to homelessness. This system relies heavily on the use of data, and will use the ECHO run Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). We have started the process with Caritas of Austin and Front Steps. Soon Salvation Army, ATCIC PATH, and other outreach teams will be equipped to do the process.

1. Divert families and individuals from homelessness by negotiating with family, landlords or employers, for example to assist them in solving their homelessness
2. End homelessness for families and individuals who have a history of independent living with short term supports using Rapid Rehousing Strategies
3. End chronic homelessness with long term supportive services that help people access and maintain permanent housing

The focus of this improved system is to end homelessness by providing just enough assistance to stabilize families and individuals in permanent housing. Permanent = lease based, with clients able to move when they are ready and wanting to move. Just enough assistance = from contact information to rental subsidies and everything in between.

The benefits improved client access to services, increased referral appropriateness, reduced administrative burden on clients and providers, improved communication and coordination among providers, a focus on the most vulnerable and improved data quality— all of which lead to greater system efficiency and effectiveness for the client and the community.
RAPID REHOUSING

Rapid re-housing is an intervention designed to help individuals and families to quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing, with reasonable belief that client will soon stabilize and afford to maintain housing. Rapid re-housing assistance is offered without preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety) and the resources and services provided are typically tailored to the unique needs of the household. The core components of rapid rehousing are below:

- Housing location-identification of available housing that client can move into quickly
- Rent and Move-In assistance (financial)
- Rapid Re-housing case management

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Permanent supportive housing programs allow people with one or more serious disabling conditions to stabilize their housing and address underlying conditions that often have gone untreated for many years. The combination of housing and supportive services creates a synergy that allows tenants to take steps toward recovery and independence. The “permanent” in “permanent supportive housing” means the length of stay is up to the individual or family. There is no time limitation, and tenants may live in their homes as long as they meet the basic obligations of tenancy. While participation in services is encouraged, it is not a condition of living in the housing. Housing affordability is ensured either through a rent subsidy or by setting rents at affordable levels. Components include:

- Rental Subsidy
- Support Services
- Case Management

HOUSING FIRST-COMMUNITY WIDE DEFINITION (AUSTIN/TRAVIS COUNTY)

Housing First is an approach that centers on providing individuals experiencing homelessness with appropriate housing quickly, regardless of potential housing barriers, then providing support services as needed. What differentiates a Housing First approach from other strategies is that there is an immediate and primary focus on helping individuals and families access long-term, sustainable housing and quickly possible. This approach has the benefit of now only being consistent with what most people experiencing homelessness want and prefer, but also being associated with consistently high outcomes across a variety of communities.

COORDINATED ASSESSMENT RESULTS

As of April 2015, 1100 households have been assessed.

- 55% were recommended for RRH
- 30% were recommended for PSH
- 14% were recommended for Minimal Intervention (are expected to self-house without formal program enrollment)
- 1% were diverted from the system straight into a stable housing situation

CORE ELEMENTS OF HOUSING FIRST:

- Acceptance of applicants regardless of their sobriety, any past or current use of substances, any completion of rehabilitation or treatment, or participation in any other supportive services.
- Applicants are seldom rejected solely on the basis of poor credit or financial history, poor absent rental history, criminal convictions, or any other behaviors are generally held to indicate a lack of “housing readiness.”
- Discretionary funds are available to support basic needs for both clients without income and clients who experience financial crises. Tenants are given reasonable flexibility in paying their tenant share of rent. Typical case manager to client ratio 1:10 to 1:15.
- Supportive services emphasize engagement and problem-solving over therapeutic goals. Services plans are highly tenant-driven without standardized or predetermined goals, and client choice is key. Participation in services or program compliance (unrelated to lease terms) is not a condition of tenancy.
- Use of alcohol or drugs in and of itself (without other lease violations) is not considered a reason for eviction.
- Tenant selection process includes the prioritization of eligible tenants based on criteria such as duration/chronicity of homelessness, vulnerability, or high utilization of crisis services.
- Case managers/service coordinators are trained in and actively employ evidence-based practices for client/tenant engagement, such as motivational interviewing and client-centered counseling.
- Services are informed by a harm reduction philosophy that recognizes that drug and alcohol use and addiction may be a part of tenants’ lives; tenants are engaged in non-judgmental communication, and tenants are offered education regarding how to avoid risky behaviors and engage in safer practices.
- Building and apartment unit may include special physical features that accommodate disabilities, reduce harm, and promote health among tenants.
- Community has a coordinated assessment system for matching people experiencing homelessness to the most appropriate housing and services; individuals experiencing chronic homelessness and high need families are matched to appropriate permanent supportive housing/Housing First opportunities.
- Every effort is made to offer a transfer to a tenant from one housing situation to an alternative option, if a tenancy is in jeopardy. Programs avoid eviction back into homelessness whenever possible.
JOIN US – Be Fiercely Focused on Ending Homelessness

1. **Be Vocal** with landlords and property owners to encourage their involvement with non-profits to lease apartments to currently homeless veterans & non-veterans, families & individuals.

2. **Invest Strategically** whether it’s affordable housing, health & human services or law enforcement, ask, “Does this investment or policy further our Plan to End Homeless?”

3. **Support Coordinated Assessment** so long as it remains Client focused, Provider informed, Funder directed and Data driven.

HELP US END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

**OUR GOAL**
To connect every single veteran experiencing homelessness to a safe and affordable home-one apartment at a time!

**OUR ASK**
The OneKeyATX campaign needs landlords and property owners to commit at least one unit to veteran families that may have rental barriers.

We are currently looking for landlords and property owners willing to partner with OneKeyATX to help end veteran homelessness.

**Will you commit ONE unit?**

TO FIND OUT MORE GO TO
www.austinecho.org
#onekeyatx

BE SOCIAL WITH US

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