Homeless in Houston: We’re Making a Difference

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DEFINITIONS OF HOMELESSNESS

HUD definition

- Literally homeless
  - On the streets and in encampments
  - Places not meant for human habitation: car, abandoned building, parks, and no electricity or plumbing
  - Emergency shelter, transitional housing, or safe haven
WHO IS NOT REPORTED AS HOMELESS FOR THE PIT ACCORDING TO HUD

- Persons incarcerated in jail or penitentiary
- Persons in hotels/bunk houses on self pay
- Persons in substance abuse treatment facility unless specifically designated homeless bed
- Wards of the state CPS
- Living with a family member or friend (doubled up)
- In permanent supportive housing
- In hospital beds or waiting rooms
ENUMERATION: POINT IN TIME COUNT

• Federally mandated count of homeless Point- in-Time (P-I-T) last ten days of January
• Must determine percent of vets, families with children, chronic homelessness
• Canvass all of Houston/Harris County/Fort Bend County
• Street Count and Sheltered Count
CITIES THAT FIT INTO HOUSTON & ETJ COMPARISON

HOUSTON DEMOGRAPHICS
City of Houston - 644 sq. miles
Population - 2,145,000
Population Density - 3,372 per sq. mile
ETJ (excluding city limits) - 1172 sq. miles
Transit - 7.5 miles

MAP NOTES
- The cities represented within Houston’s city limits have approximately 373 cumulative miles of transit.
- The cities represented within Houston’s ETJ have approximately 262 cumulative miles of transit.
- The cities represented within Houston’s ETJ have approximately 1161 cumulative sq. miles of area

LAND AREA COMPARISON: HOUSTON AND OTHER U.S. TRANSIT CITIES

From: Knudson,LP www.knudsonlp.com
NEW METHODOLOGIES EMPLOYED

• ICS
• Joint effort between academia and community
• Just-in-Time training
• Plant and Capture method
• SWAT teams
• More staging areas/teams
INCIDENT COMMAND STRUCTURE

Hotwash held after each count
A JOINT ACADEMIC/COMMUNITY EFFORT

IC located at HDHHS
• IC – CFTH
• Deputy IC - UTSPH
• Planning Chief – HDHHS
• Operations Chief – HDHHS
• Logistics Chief – CFTH
• Finance/Admin – CFTH
• Safety officer – HDHHS/HPD
• Street teams – CFTH, UT, UH, and other students, other community orgs, HDHHS
• SWAT teams - HDHHS
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Continuum of Care housing providers
- Service Providers
- Consumers, CAC, and Corps
- Schools
- Faith-based community
- Specialized outreach teams
- Special sub-populations
- Citizen Corps
- Student group
- Public officials
- Citizen groups and organizations
- Homeless and formerly homeless veterans
P-I-T: WAYS WE COUNTED

- Surface teams
- Specialized outreach teams
- Shelter count using HMIS
- Next day interviews to determine make-up of population
SURFACE TEAMS

• Ten staging areas – Houston/Harris Co/Ft. Bend Co/Baytown
• ~ 30 map areas
• ~ 80 teams
• Each car had:
  • Driver
  • Navigator
  • Homeless guide
  • Recorder
OUTREACH SPECIALIST TEAMS

• Sub-population specialists
• Canvassed encampments, under bridges, off surface surveillance
• Interviews and engagement
SHELTER COUNT

- HMIS data confirmed for each housing provider for night of the count
- DV and non-HMIS shelter data confirmed through self-report
- Utilize expanded CoC including faith based programs
- Calls made to shelters to verify
- Information obtained on clients using the shelter
P-I-T INTERVIEWS

Service providers
- Day shelter
- Food services providers

Outreach specialist

Street interviews
WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE HOMELESS IN HOUSTON

On January 30 2014, there were 5,351* people experiencing homeless in Houston/Harris County

- Approximately 1 in 7 identified as chronically homeless individual
- Only 2 individuals were identified as members of a chronically homeless family
- 1 in 3 had substance abuse problems
- 2 in 5 had mental health issues
- 1 in 8 was a veteran

*HUD definition
Chronic homeless individual* only sheltered individuals in emergency shelters can be considered chronically homeless

** among adults only
Military Discharge Status

- Unsheltered veterans
  - Other discharge: 16%
  - Honorable/General Discharge: 4%
- Sheltered veterans
  - Honorable/General Discharge: 10%
Expanded Homeless in Houston/Harris/Ft. Bend Counties, 2014 (n=6,876)

- Harris Co. Jail: 1,525
- Sheltered: 3,060
- Unsheltered: 2,291
Total Homeless, 2011 and 2014

- **2011**
  - Jail: 2614
  - Sheltered: 4120
  - Unsheltered: 4418

- **2014**
  - Jail: 1525
  - Sheltered: 3060
  - Unsheltered: 2291
2014 Clients in Permanent Housing, n=4,007

- Permanent Supportive Housing, 3563
- Rapid Rehousing, 444
SUMMARY

• 5,351 persons experiencing homeless were counted
  • 2,291 (43%) staying place not meant for human habitation
  • 3,060 (57%) staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing, or safe haven that evening.

• Expanded definition - 6,876 individuals

• 2014 PIT count represents:
  • 16% decrease compared to 2013
  • 37% decrease compared to 2011

• Increase in number in PSH
  • 28% increase compared to 2013
  • 81% increase compared to 2011

• Significant percent have mental health and/or substance abuse issues