Houston, Pasadena, Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery Counties

2018 Point-in-Time Homeless Count & Survey Report

Overview

A Point-In-Time (PIT) Count & Survey of sheltered (i.e., those in emergency shelters or transitional housing) and unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness in the Houston, Pasadena, Harris County, Fort Bend County, and Montgomery County area was conducted over a three-day period from January 23-25, 2018 with an official date of the night of 22 January. The purpose of the Count is to determine the number of persons experiencing homelessness [defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as those staying in emergency shelter, transitional housing, or safe haven with beds dedicated for homeless persons or those persons who are unsheltered (i.e., staying in a place not meant for human habitation)]. The Count is a federal requirement for all communities receiving McKinney-Vento funding from HUD. The Way Home Continuum of Care (CoC) covers a vast geographic region (3,711 sq. miles, including all of Houston, Pasadena, Harris County, Fort Bend County, and Montgomery County) with a large dispersed unsheltered population. Due to the size of the geographic area covered by the Count, we know that not all unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness can be identified in a short period of time (we are much more confident about counting the number of those experiencing homelessness who are sheltered). However, the Count gives a good assessment of the extent of the problem in the region and can allow for comparisons over time to help understand how well a community is solving the problem of homelessness.

The Count was organized and led by the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County in consultation with UTHealth School of Public Health. Many homeless services providers participated as well as community volunteers, including homeless and formerly homeless persons.

The 2018 Count included individuals staying in a total of 54 programs including emergency shelters (27 different programs), transitional housing units (27 different programs), and safe havens (n=0) on the night of 22 January based on reports received from the providers and data

entered into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Unsheltered homeless individuals (those sleeping on the streets or in other places not meant for habitation) were counted using direct engagement and interviews when possible, and observation if not. Teams walked under bridges, along the bayous and other areas where encampments of homeless individuals had been identified. They also investigated abandoned buildings where homeless persons may be residing.

Changes from 2011 through 2018 in PIT Count Methodology

A major change to the Count in 2017 was the addition of Montgomery County to the geographical area to be canvassed. Montgomery County lies to the north of Harris County with 1,047 square miles[1]. While results from Montgomery County are included in the description of findings from the 2018 Count, only comparisons with the previous two years include these data; the previous six years' results exclude this additional area to allow for a valid assessment.

In the past, the Count was a purely observational one, performed during a single night between the hours of approximately 5 to 11 pm. Beginning in 2016, we undertook to directly engage and interview, when possible[2], every person experiencing homelessness in the jurisdiction using a Coordinated Access approach. This was possible because of the dramatic decrease in the number of those experiencing homelessness in the area due to the community's success in housing individuals through permanent housing. There is a danger of counting people twice or mistaking them as unsheltered with this method, as someone on the street during the day may have been in a shelter the night before or approached twice during the three-day period. We guarded against this in three ways:

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[1] http://www.mctx.org/for_visitors/index.php
[2] We were not able to engage and interview those who refused, those who were sleeping, those who were physically impossible to reach (e.g., spotted across a highway), or those whom the interviewer felt it would be dangerous to approach. This was approximately two-thirds of those approached or sighted.

- The geographic region to be covered was divided into three areas and each area was canvassed on a specific day of the Count
- Interviewees were asked if they had been questioned previously and, if so, they were not included more than once in the Count
- Interviewees were asked where they slept on the night of 22 January 2018 (the official night of the Count) and were classified as unsheltered homeless only if they slept in a place not meant for human habitation, per HUD guidelines. This assured that we did not double count someone who was included in the HMIS shelter count and that we did not include those who appeared as if they were experiencing homelessness but were not, according to HUD guidelines.

An additional change implemented this year is the use of SimTech Solutions software (Cambridge, MA) in place of a locally designed survey used in previous years. The software, Counting Us, is a mobile application that can be readily implemented to help count unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness. Due to this change, some of the questions asked varied in wording from previous years and an assumption was made that missing data were negative answers. In the past, the percent of those answering positive to a question was extrapolated to the entire surveyed population.

Several improvements implemented in previous years were continued. Traditional homeless services providers were involved as partners of The Way Home CoC, along with academia (UTHealth School of Public Health). This included the use of over 200 surveyors recruited from the homeless provider community, outreach teams, and VA staff. The CoC drew on consumer volunteers (persons who had in the past or were currently experiencing homelessness) to provide expertise and guidance during the Count. Observational counts of people not able to be interviewed (see footnote above) were performed.

With approval from HUD, the unsheltered Count took place over three days, January 23-25, 2018, with the night of 22 January designated as the official date for the Count. The geographic area for the Count was divided into three sections for purposes of counting unsheltered individuals. On each day of the Count, at least 60 volunteer teams canvassed the area designated for that day to interview unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness. Four to five Staging Area locations were set up each day of the Count with a total of 15 Staging Area Captains and co-Captains between all locations.

The use of a tablet survey had several advantages including the ability to link to HMIS. All individuals and families who were identified as being chronically homeless, young adults (18-24 years), and veterans were assessed for housing on the spot by one of 35 trained Coordinated Access Assessors. Due to GPS mapping technology included with the tablets, the Count execution and data could be monitored in real time. Volunteers could be tracked while conducting assessments based on the user IDs assigned.

The enhanced methodology developed in previous years for the sheltered count was continued. All emergency shelters and transitional housing in the area, whether or not they were officially part of the HMIS, were contacted and inventoried. Shelter providers were trained on entering data and assessments into HMIS and given the opportunity to confirm the data counted on the night of the Count. Shelters that do not use HMIS such as domestic violence shelters were asked to report their numbers on 22 January using the housing inventory chart.

The following training sessions were held before the 2018 Count:

- The Coalition for the Homeless hosted a Lunch & Learn on December 14, 2017 dedicated to filling key positions for the PIT Count by members of The Way Home CoC. A one-hour presentation on the new PIT Count methodology was conducted.

- Three volunteer trainings were conducted on the 16th & 17th of January 2018, respectively.
  - These trainings involved the use of the new PIT count app, creating user IDs, & passwords. A test count site was available so that volunteers could conduct test surveys. Each question on the survey was reviewed.
  - Trainings also included the role of the driver, how to read maps, how to identify homeless hot spots, and proper etiquette to follow when approaching someone that might be experiencing homelessness.
- Staging Area Captains were trained on January 22, 2018. This included an introduction to the Counting Us application, the distribution of t-shirts, volunteer sign-in, distribution of maps, and map interpretation.

2018 PIT Count Key Findings

Data collected shows a total of 4,143 sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals (per HUD's definition) in the Houston/Pasadena/Harris County/Fort Bend County/Montgomery County region during the PIT Count (Figure 1). Breaking down where those experiencing homelessness were located, we determined that most were in Houston/Harris County with only one out of fifty (2%) counted in Fort Bend County while approximately one out of fourteen persons experiencing homelessness were found in Montgomery County (7%). This represents a decrease for Montgomery County where in 2017, one out of twenty persons experiencing homelessness were located there. For Fort Bend County, however, this represents an increase compared to the one out of 75 persons counted in that jurisdiction during the 2017 PIT Count. It is important to note that, for those who were unsheltered on the night of 22 January, geographical assignment was determined by where they were interviewed during the day, which may be near where they seek services, not necessarily where they sleep.

The estimated combined population of Houston, Harris County, Fort Bend County and Montgomery County, according to population estimates on 1 July 2017, was 5,988,742[3]. This puts the percent of homeless individuals within these three counties at 0.0691% or one out of every 1,446 residents. This compares with one out of every 1,629 residents of the three-county area last year. To allow comparisons since 2011 (when Montgomery County was not included), we calculated the homelessness rate in only Houston/Harris County and Fort Bend County. The combined population within these two counties on 1 July 2017 was 5,417,808. This puts the number of homeless individuals at one out of every 1,400 residents compared to one out of every 450 residents in 2011, a substantial decrease.
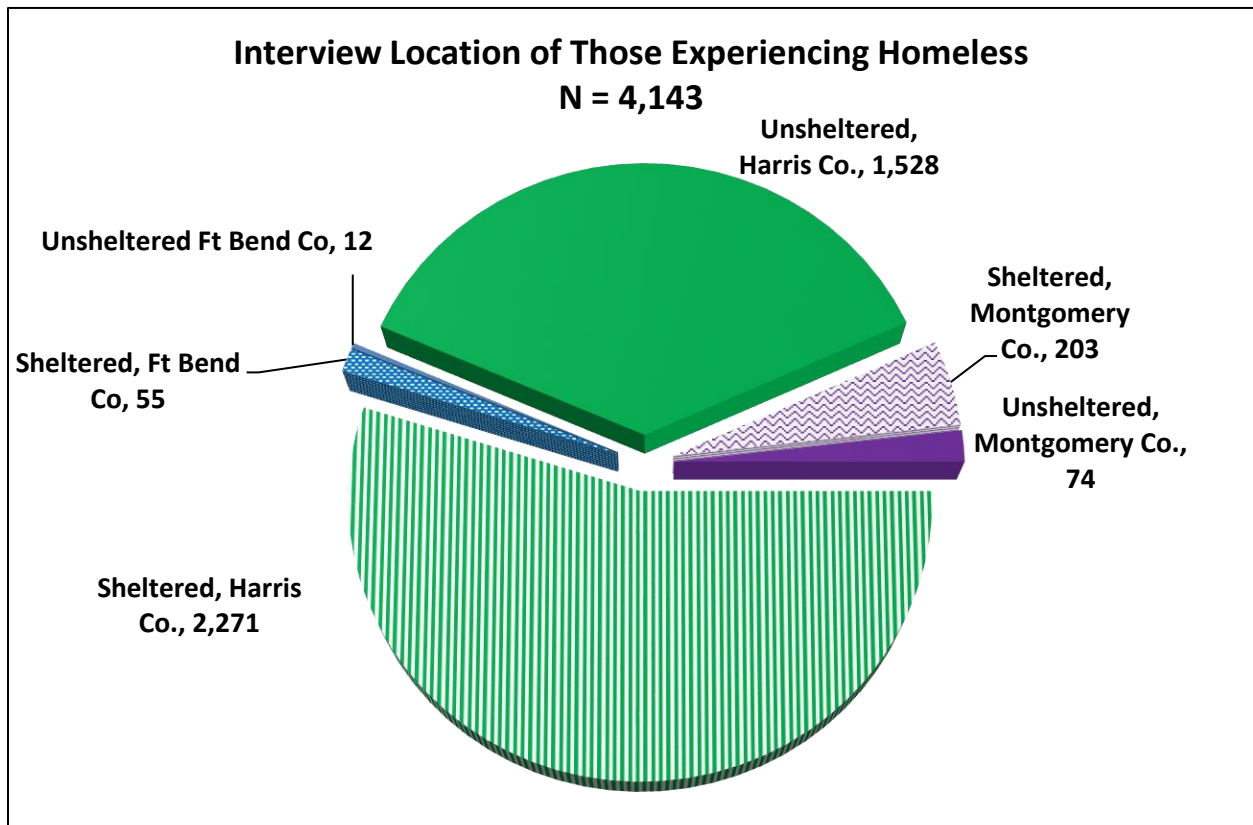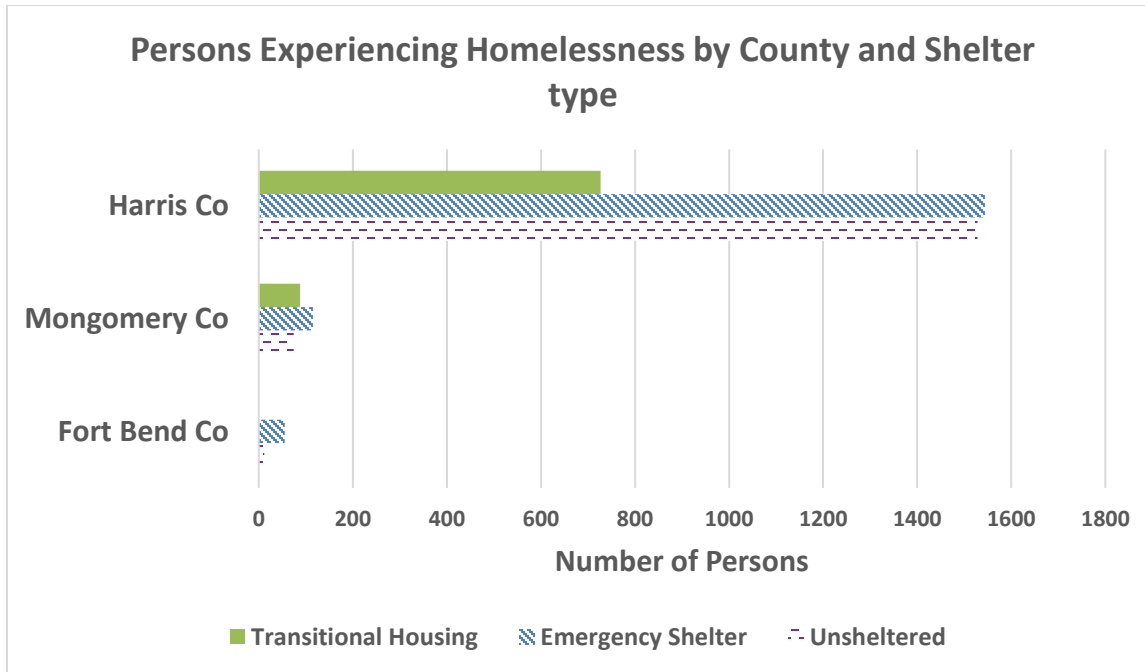

Interview Location of Those Experiencing Homeless
N = 4,143

Unsheltered, Harris Co., 1,528

Unsheltered Ft Bend Co, 12

Sheltered, Ft Bend Co, 55

Sheltered, Montgomery Co., 203

Unsheltered, Montgomery Co., 74
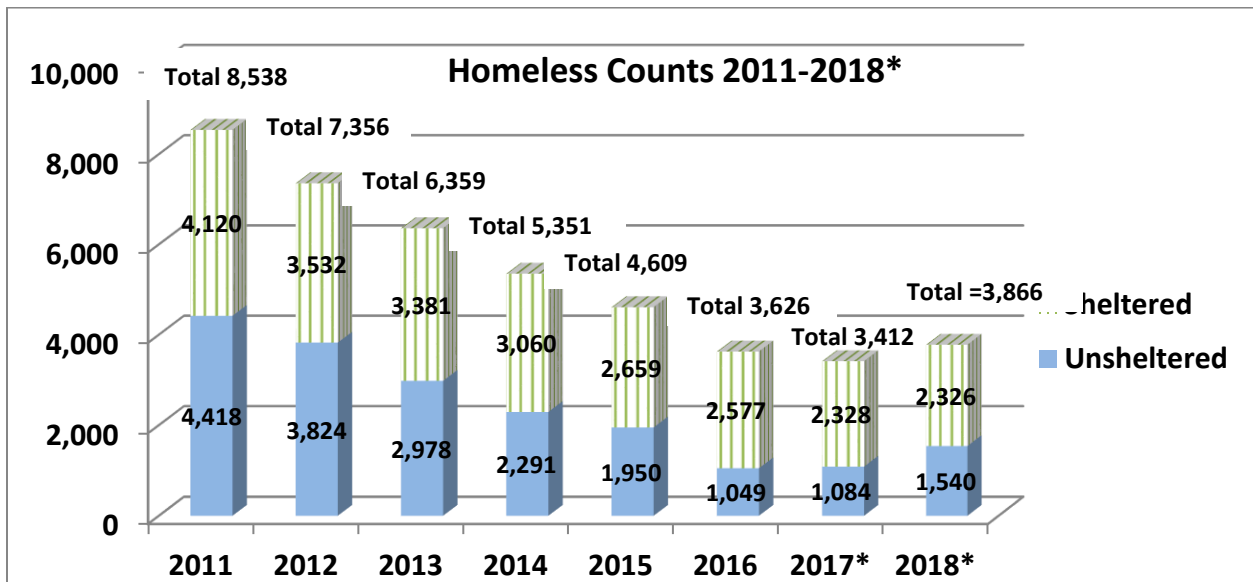
Sheltered, Harris Co., 2,271

Figure 1

Figure 2

Comparison between 2018 and 2011-2017 PIT Counts

Figure 3 shows findings from the last eight years of the Count (data from Montgomery County are not included in the comparisons in Figure 3 as 2017 was the first year the CoC included that area in the Count). While the Counts during years 2011-2015 used a standardized observational count methodology and so valid comparisons can be made between those years, the methodology changed significantly in 2016 and so evaluations must be made with caution. An observational count over our vast geographic area during a single night (like those Counts conducted from 2011-2015) is likely to miss some people and therefore result in an undercount. In addition, there is no way to verify that those observed during an observational count are actually homeless per the HUD definition or that they were not counted before, despite best efforts, which may have led to an over count. In 2016, to obtain a more accurate count, we began directly engaging and interviewing all persons presumed to be experiencing homeless. This method also has limitations. We may not have identified all persons (leading to

an undercount) or may count persons twice (leading to an over count), despite best efforts to avoid this. However, we had the advantage of talking to those interviewed and so could ask them if they had been interviewed previously and we could also collect information to determine whether they qualified as homeless per the HUD definition. Despite best efforts, we were not able to interview approximately two-thirds of the total unsheltered population who were sleeping, unable to be accessed, or refused the interview. We applied the percentage of those not homeless or previously counted among those we were able to interview to those we were not able to interview. We then subtracted that percent of people from the "not interviewed" group, assuming the same percent of the "not interviewed" were not truly homeless or had been previously counted as we found in the interviewed population.
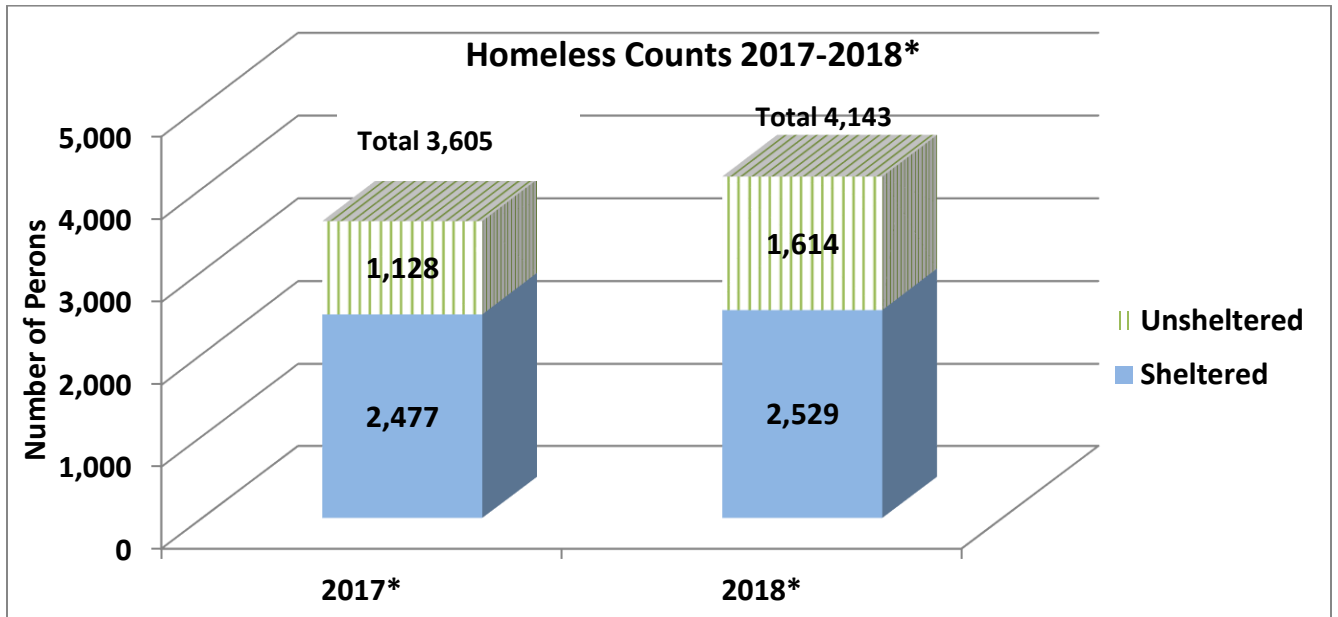

*includes data from Houston/Harris County/Ft. Bend County only for comparison purposes with previous years

Figure 3

The 2018 Count of 3,866 persons experiencing homelessness in Houston/Pasadena/Harris/Fort Bend Counties only shows a decrease of 4,672 persons from that found in that area in 2011. This corresponds to a 55% decrease compared to the 2011 count. However, there was a 12% increase seen in 2018 compared to the 2017 Count. This may be due to the effects of Hurricane Harvey (see next paragraph). However, the overall decrease over the past seven years is

encouraging, particularly given the increase in population of the Houston/Pasadena/Harris County/Fort Bend County area by approximately 739,974. While the precise magnitude of homelessness cannot be determined, the level and trend of the decrease does provide solid evidence that the number of persons experiencing homelessness in the Houston/Pasadena/Harris County/Fort Bend County area has decreased since 2011.

Homeless Counts 2017-2018*

	2017*	2018*
Unsheltered	1,128	1,614
Sheltered	2,477	2,529
Total	3,605	4,143

*includes data from total Continuum of Care geographic area

Figure 3

Data from the whole area of the Continuum of Care (CoC) are included in Figure 4 for 2017 and 2018 (the only two years we surveyed all three counties). A total of 4,143 individuals experiencing homelessness was observed, an increase of 15% over the 2017 Count for the total area.

While the reasons for the increase found this year cannot be determined by the Count, we do know that Hurricane Harvey affected housing in the Houston area tremendously with an estimated 122,000 homes damaged and almost 1,000 homes destroyed in the three-county

area.[4] The Houston Housing Authority reported damage to over 1,000 affordable housing units in its inventory[5]. Almost one in five (17.9%) persons who were unsheltered at the time of the Count reported that they became homeless due to Hurricane Harvey. The increase in homelessness observed this year among the unsheltered on the night of the Count may then be due in large part to the loss of housing following the flooding, particularly for those precariously housed.

In 2018, in Houston/Pasadena/Harris County/Ft. Bend County only, 1,540 of those experiencing homelessness (40% or two of five) were found on the streets or in places not meant for habitation compared to over 50% in 2011 (Figure 2). However, this percent was lower in 2017 (32%) than in 2018. Again, this increase seen in unsheltered homeless during the last year may be reflecting the effect of Hurricane Harvey in this area. However, this is still an encouraging overall trend since 2011 and may reflect successes of the effort to house chronically homeless individuals coupled with the implementation of Coordinated Access to create a standardized entry process into housing.

Permanent Housing

At the same time as the observed decrease in the number of persons counted experiencing homelessness is an increase in the number of persons placed in Permanent Housing. Permanent Housing (PH) consists of Rapid Re-housing (RRH) and Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) programs. From January 1, 2012 to March 30, 2018, 11,665 persons were placed in permanent housing, of whom 2,650 were placed during the past year. During this past six and one quarter year period, another 2,838 veterans were housed through the HUD-VASH program. Of these, 617 veterans were housed during the past year (note: household member numbers for these veterans are not available). The total number of persons housed during the past six and a half years is therefore at least 14,503 (we do not have number of veteran

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[4] http://abc13.com/harvey-destroyed-more-than-15500-homes-in-texas/2454379/
[5] Personal communication, Mark Thiele, Houston Housing Authority

household members housed and so can't include that number) with 3,267 of these placements occurring during the past year (Figure 4).
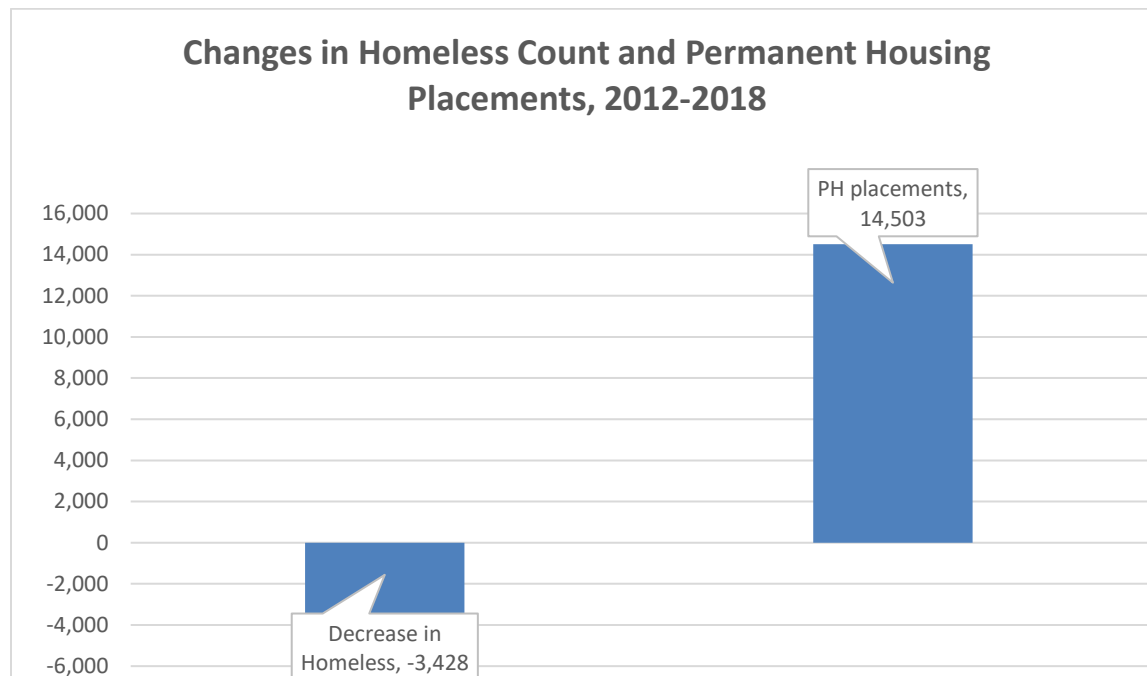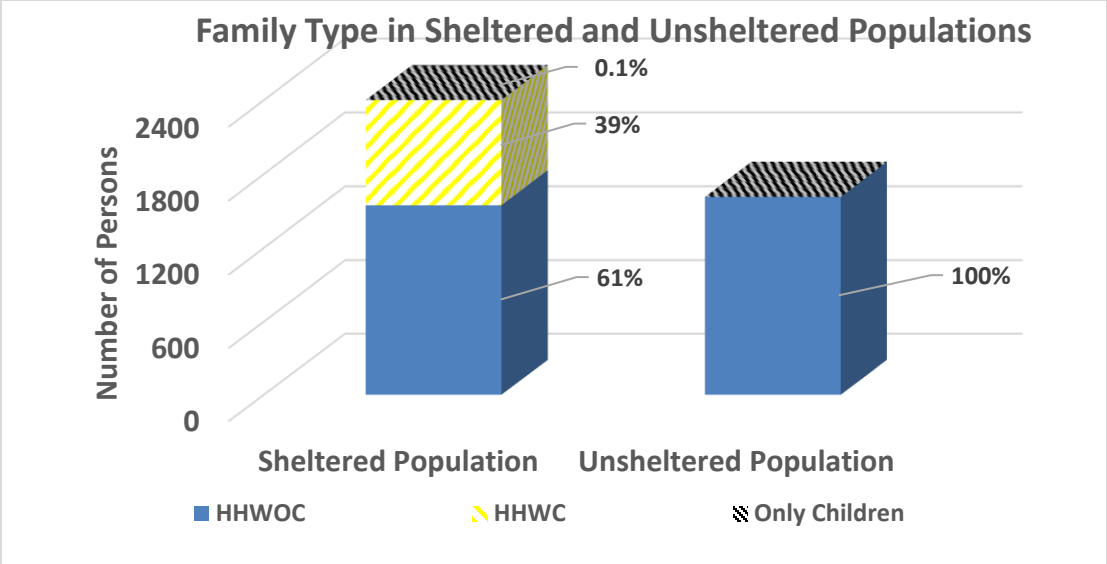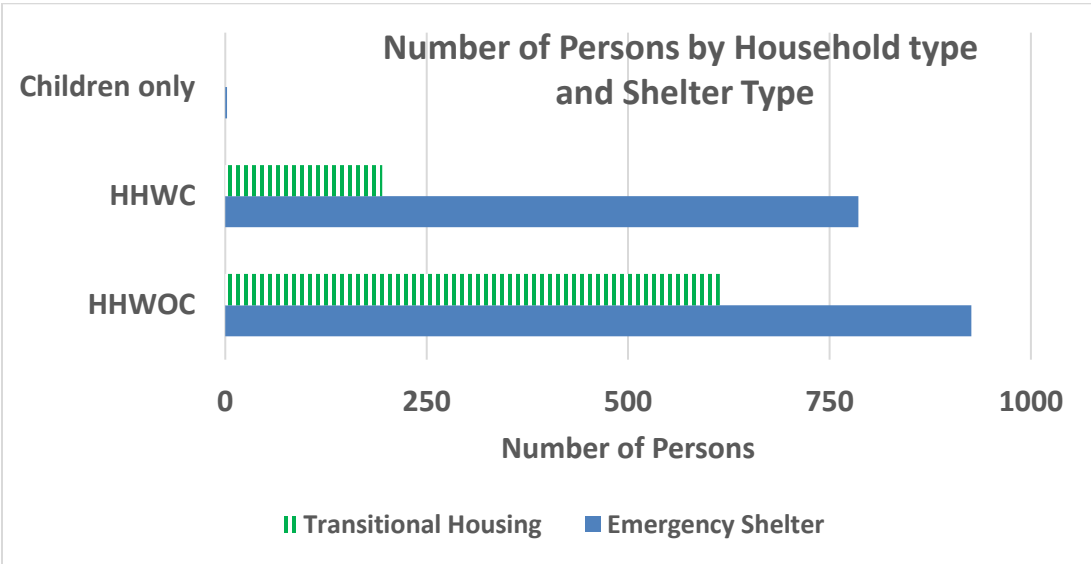
Changes in Homeless Count and Permanent Housing Placements, 2012-2018

Figure 4

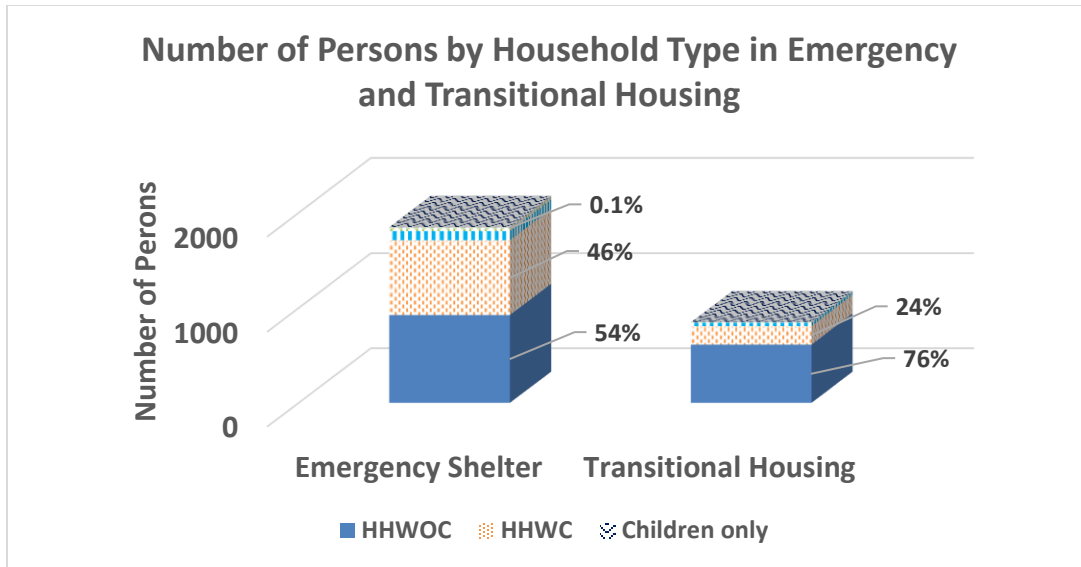**Characteristics of Those Experiencing Homelessness**

Persons experiencing homeless are classified into three household types: persons in households without children (HHWOC), persons in households with children under age 18 years (HHWC), and households with only children (under the age of 18 years). Figure 5 shows the number of people in these household types among the sheltered and unsheltered population (there were no households with children or children only households among the unsheltered population). Figure 5 shows the breakdown of these groups between emergency shelters and transitional housing for the sheltered group while Figure 6 graphs these data in a way to show among each household type, what number/percent were in emergency shelter and transitional housing (there were no children only households in transitional housing).

Figure 5

Figure 6

Number of Persons by Household Type in Emergency and Transitional Housing

Emergency Shelter: 0.1%, 46%, 54%
Transitional Housing: 24%, 76%

Legend: HHWOC, HHWC, Children only

Y-axis: Number of Perons — 0, 1000, 2000

Figure 7

SUBPOPULATIONS

HUD requires that certain subpopulations of persons experiencing homelessness be enumerated along with the total number of homeless persons. These subpopulations include:

- Veterans

- Chronically homeless individuals and families[6]

- Survivors of domestic violence

- Persons with HIV/AIDS

- Severely mentally ill

- Experiencing chronic substance use disorder (alcohol and/or drugs)

- Unaccompanied young adults and parenting young adults

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[6] HUD's definition of chronic homelessness is four or more episodes of homelessness within the past three years for a total of 12 months or longer or one or more current consecutive years of homelessness. In addition, the individual must have a disabling condition which makes daily activities difficult (e.g., medical, psychological, substance abuse) and prevents them from holding a job. A chronically homeless family meets the above definition with at least one child under the age of 18 years living with his/her parent(s). For sheltered individuals, they must be staying in emergency shelter or safe haven, but not in transitional housing.

This information can be captured by HMIS for those in shelters (although only those answering positively to a question are counted and so we cannot distinguish between negative responses and missing responses). The total shelter (or total number of adults in the shelter) population was used as the denominator to calculate percentages, but the actual percent may be higher, given that some responses may be missing.

It is more difficult to get this information on the unsheltered population as these characteristics cannot be determined by observation. For the 2018 Count, SimTech Solutions software was used to capture information for those interviewed. Unfortunately, however, only approximately one-third of the unsheltered homeless were able to be interviewed due to interviewee refusal or inability to access the person. It may also be possible that there is potential over-reporting in some categories (e.g., veterans) or underreporting due to fear of stigmatization in others (e.g., HIV/AIDS, mental illness, substance use disorder). Missing information was considered negative and so results may underestimate the prevalence of these populations. In addition, information that was reported was based on self-reporting and so may not represent the true proportions in the homeless population.

The age range of the total homeless population and by sheltered or unsheltered status is shown in Figures 8a-c. In the total population, almost four out of five persons experiencing homelessness were over the age of 24. Approximately one out of seven were under the age of 18; however, all of those under age 18 were in sheltered situations. One-sixth of those under age 18 were in transitional housing, a decrease from last year when it was one-third. Two unaccompanied youth under the age of 18 years were in an emergency shelter the night of the Count. The unsheltered population was older with nineteen out of twenty (96%) 25 or older. The sheltered homeless population was younger. Of the 2,529 persons in emergency shelter or transitional housing, one of five (22%) was below the age of 18 years and one out of 18 (6%), ages 18-24 years.

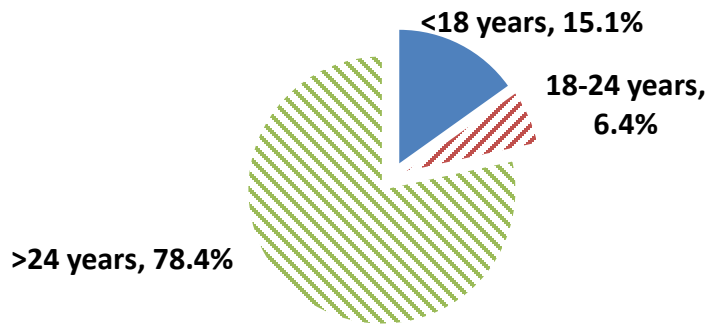**Age Distribution of Total Population Experiencing Homelessness**

<18 years, 15.1%

18-24 years, 6.4%

>24 years, 78.4%

Figure 8a

Age Distribution of Unsheltered Persons Experiencing Homelessness

<18 years 0.2%

18-24 years 4%

>24 years 96%

Figure 8b

Age Distribution of Sheltered Persons Experiencing Homelessness
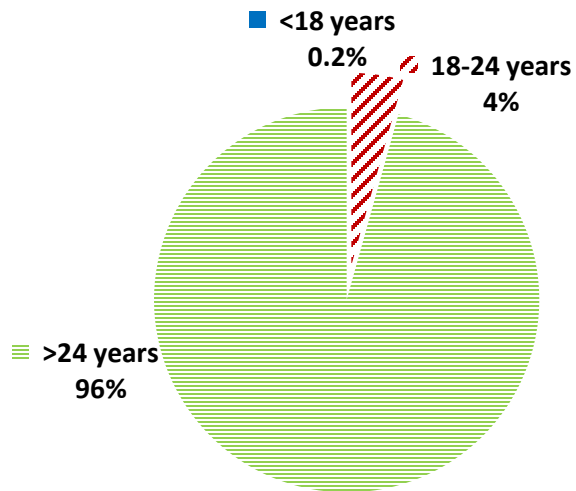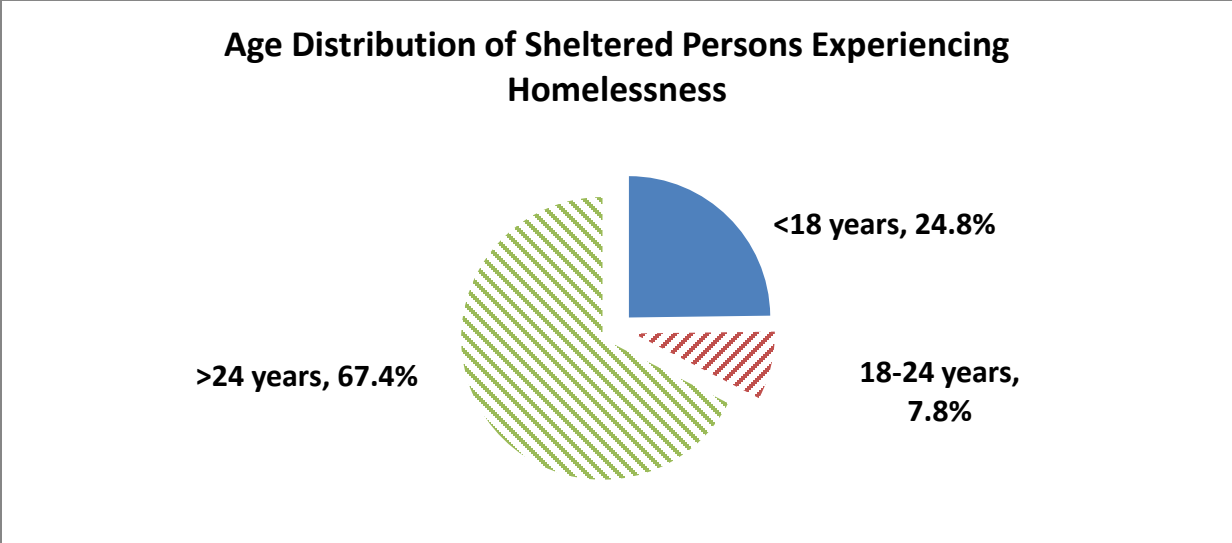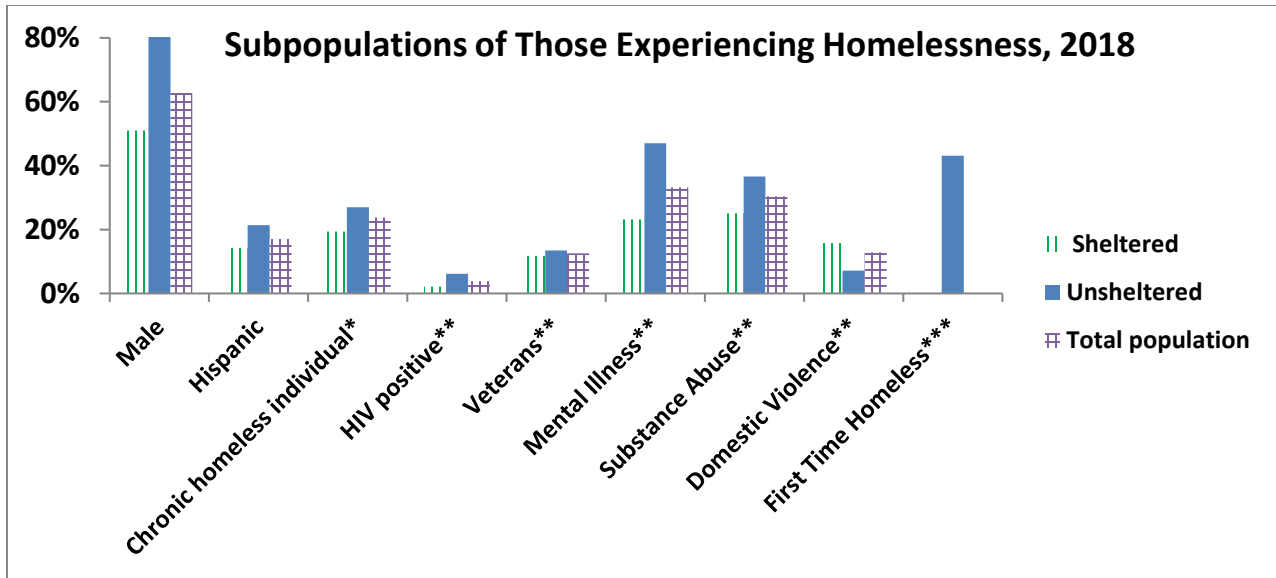
<18 years, 24.8%

>24 years, 67.4%

18-24 years, 7.8%

Figure 8c

Figures 9 and 10 show subpopulations for the total homeless population surveyed as well as a breakdown by sheltered and unsheltered status. Overall, three out of five persons in the total population experiencing homeless were male with a higher percentage in the unsheltered population (80%). Only seven persons experiencing homelessness identified as transgender. One out of eighteen (5.5%) identified as Hispanic with a slightly higher representation in the unsheltered population.

Among the total homeless population counted, 669 persons or not quite one in four (23.8%) met the HUD definition of a chronically homeless individual, a similar percent to that found last year. The percentage of chronically homeless persons was higher among the unsheltered versus sheltered population (27.0% vs. 19.4%).

There were 443 self-reported veterans experiencing homelessness in 2018, representing an increase of 9% over the 2017 Count. Half (50.8%) of veterans were in sheltered conditions. This represents an increase of 9% over the 2017 Count number.

Subpopulations of Those Experiencing Homelessness, 2018

Legend: Sheltered, Unsheltered, Total population

Categories: Male, Hispanic, Chronic homeless individual*, HIV positive**, Veterans**, Mental Illness**, Substance Abuse**, Domestic Violence**, First Time Homeless***

Figure 9

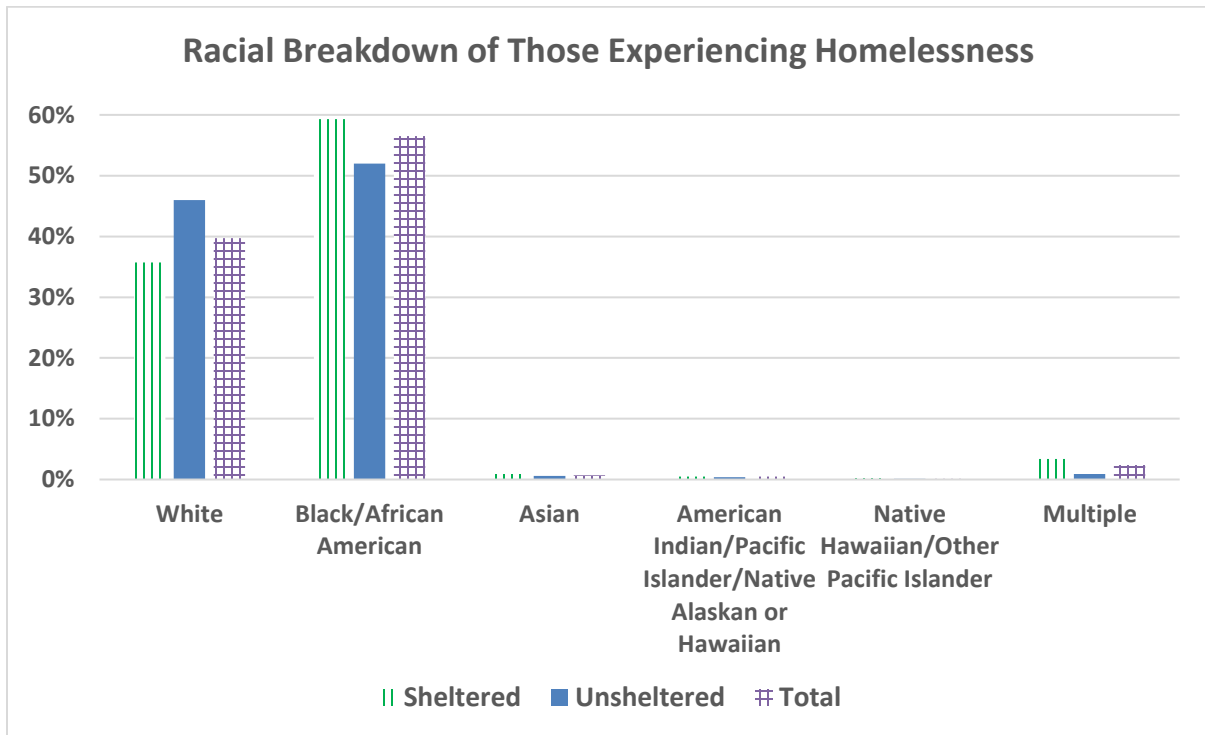*among sheltered individuals, only those in emergency shelters can be designated chronically homeless
**among adults only
***information only collected on unsheltered individuals

Of these 443 veterans, 122 (27.5%) were classified as chronically homeless. Of the chronically homeless, more than four out of five were unsheltered (83.6%). Gap analysis and take down targeting have been predicting an annual steady state volume of between 1200 and 1400 homeless veterans based on opposing actions of successful housing efforts versus returning veterans and those falling temporarily back into homelessness. However, despite the increase this year, our findings this year are still well below that number.   We did not ask this year about type of discharge and so we do not know what percent of veterans experiencing homelessness were not eligible for VA benefits. Last year, that percentage was 21% among the unsheltered.

Other subpopulations reported in the total adult population experiencing homelessness include one in three (33.2%) with self-reported serious mental illness and nearly one in three (30.4%) with a substance use disorder (alcohol and/or other drugs). Unsurprisingly, both mental illness and substance abuse were higher in the unsheltered vs. the sheltered population, with almost half the unsheltered population self-reporting mental illness.

18

Approximately one in twenty (3.8%) of the total population experiencing homelessness self-reported as HIV positive although the true percentage may be higher since many may not have been tested and therefore don't know their status. Overall, approximately one in eight of those experiencing homeless had experienced domestic violence. This percent was higher in the sheltered population (12.8% vs 7.1% among unsheltered), not surprising since there are shelter beds specifically dedicated to those fleeing domestic violence.

Figure 10

Figure 10 shows the racial self-classification of those experiencing homelessness. The clear majority of those experiencing homelessness were White or Black/African-American. Racial classification did not vary substantially between the sheltered and unsheltered populations. However, there are significant disparities between the overall racial/ethnic breakdown of the total Harris County population and those experiencing homelessness (Table 1).

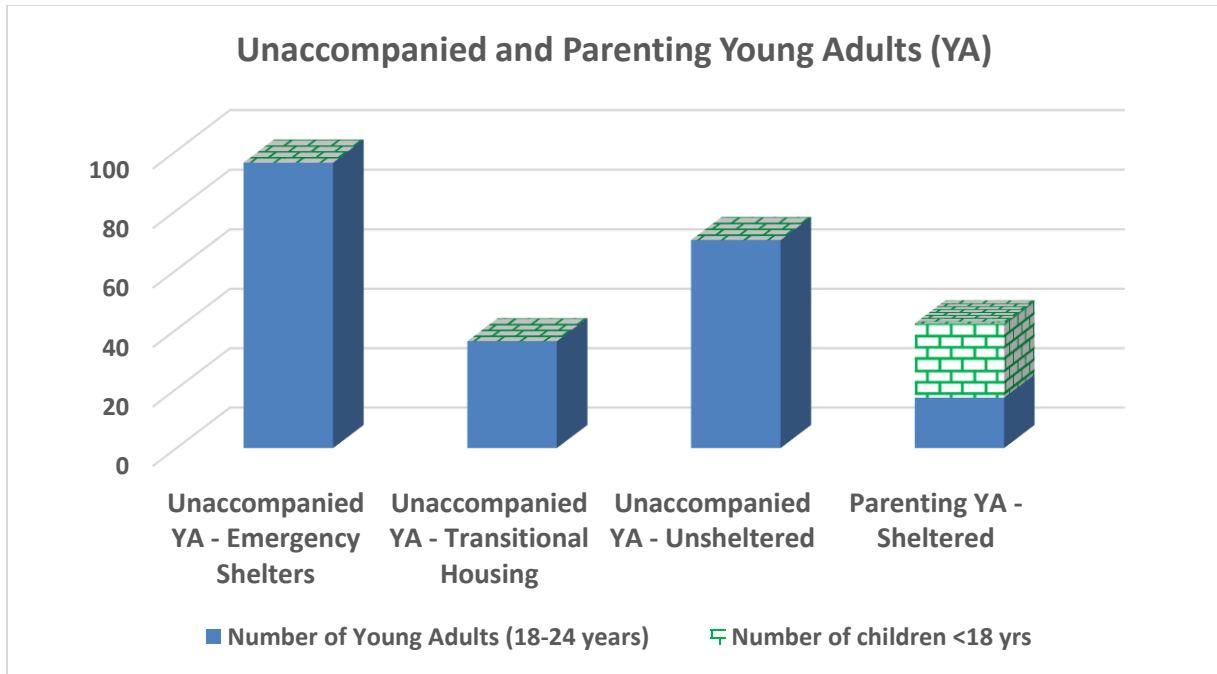**Comparison of racial/ethnic percentages in Harris County total and those experiencing homelessness**

Race/Ethnicity[7]	Harris Co Population	Total experiencing homelessness	Sheltered experiencing homelessness	Unsheltered experiencing homelessness	Young Adults experiencing homelessness
White	70.0%	39.7%	35.7%	46.0%	38.8%
Black/African American	19.7%	56.5%	59.3%	52.0%	55.7%
Asian	7.2%	0.7%	0.9%	0.6%	0.5%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.1%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%
Multiple Races	1.9%	2.4%	3.4%	0.5%	4.6%
Hispanic	42.4%	17.1%	14.3%	21.4%	18.3%

Table 1

Finally, Figure 11 shows the number of sheltered and unsheltered young adults (ages 18-24 years). These are further divided into unaccompanied young adults and parenting young adults. All parenting young adults were sheltered and there were 25 children under the age of 18 years in these young adult households.

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[7] https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/harriscountytexas/PST045216

Figure 11

Summary and Conclusions

New methodology designed in 2011 to increase the completeness and accuracy of the Point-In-Time Homeless Count of sheltered and unsheltered persons experiencing homelessness in the Houston/Pasadena/Harris County/Fort Bend County region was used until 2015. Beginning in 2016, due to the community's success in decreasing the number of those experiencing homelessness, we implemented a modified approach using direct engagement and interview to count those who were unsheltered. An important change in 2017, continuing this year, is that Montgomery County was added to the Count, and so data from that region was not included in comparisons with Counts from 2011-2016 which only included Houston/Pasadena/Harris County/Fort Bend County.

The unsheltered count took place over three days in January and we attempted to interview every person identified who was thought to be experiencing homelessness. Tablet computers

using the Counting Us application from SimTech Solutions (Cambridge, MA) were used to enter data. If someone could not be interviewed, observational data was recorded. We were able to interview only one-third of those thought to be homeless.

A total of 4,143 persons experiencing homelessness were counted in Houston/Pasadena/Harris County/Fort Bend County/Montgomery County, corresponding to one out of 1,466 residents. Of these, 1,614 (39%) were unsheltered (staying in a place not meant for human habitation) while 2,529 (61%) were staying in emergency shelters or transitional housing the evening of 22 January 2018. No persons were staying in safe havens. These percentages in 2017 were 31% and 69%, respectively, indicating an increase in those experiencing homelessness who were unsheltered. Most of these individuals were interviewed in Harris County (91.7%). A much smaller percent of individuals was interviewed in Fort Bend County (3.1%) and Montgomery County (5.2%). While the percent of individuals interviewed in Montgomery County remained the same from 2017 to 2018, the percent interviewed in Fort Bend County increased from 1.3% to 3.1%. This could represent an increase in homelessness in Fort Bend County or it could indicate that we are doing a better job at counting individuals in the County. However, it is important to note that the unsheltered persons were classified as to where they were interviewed or spotted, not where they slept the night of the Count. Persons move around during the day and may congregate near services.

The 2018 PIT Count represents a 55% decrease in the number of homeless individuals counted in Houston, Pasadena, Harris County, and Fort Bend County compared to the number counted in January 2011. This corresponds to over 4,600 fewer people experiencing homelessness over the past seven years in the Houston/Pasadena/Harris County/Fort Bend County area. This is even more impressive given that the population of that area has increased by approximately 739,000 during that time. Concomitant with this has been an increase in those placed in in permanent housing with over 14,500 persons housed since 2012 (Figure 4).

There was, however, an increase in those experiencing homelessness between 2017 and 2018 in the tri-County area. We can't determine the exact cause of this increase but the area experienced unprecedented flooding during Hurricane Harvey in August, 2017 and many were left homeless, particularly those who were precariously housed to begin with. The Houston Housing Authority estimates that there were over 1,000 affordable housing units damaged by the storm, putting additional pressure on the housing market. Additional evidence that the increase in homelessness seen is due to Harvey is reflected in the finding that, among the unsheltered, over two out of five were experiencing their first homelessness episode and almost one in five (18%) reported they had become homeless due to Harvey. Interestingly, this corresponds closely to the increase in homelessness seen this year (15%).

Nearly one in four of those experiencing homelessness were classified as being chronically homeless using the HUD definition, representing a slight decrease from that found in 2017. The percentage of chronically homeless was higher among the unsheltered. The sheltered population had a younger population reflecting the fact that all families with children under the age of 18 years were sheltered. Unsheltered persons were older and more likely to be individuals. More males than females were counted, especially among the unsheltered. High rates of substance abuse and mental illness were found in both populations. The number of military veterans experiencing homelessness also increased this year by 12%, similar to the increase found in the general population. We did not ask veterans this year about discharge type (which determines eligibility for benefits) but last year 21% were not eligible.

As seen with many other social determinants of health, there were major racial disparities among those experiencing homelessness. While Blacks/African-Americans represent not quite 20% of the composition of the total population of Harris County, they comprised over half of those experiencing homelessness. Even more disturbingly, Black/African-Americans represented almost three in five of those who were unsheltered on the night of the Count. Conversely, all other racial groups, along with Hispanics, were underrepresented among those

experiencing homelessness. This represents an issue that needs to be examined and addressed, if homelessness is to be defeated in this area.

While the increase in those experiencing homelessness is disappointing this year, we are confident that this represents the devastating effects of Hurricane Harvey on housing in the area. However, despite this increase this past year, the decrease since 2011 is impressive and represents continued success of The Way Home and we fully expect the 2019 results to show the decrease in persons experiencing homelessness seen from 2011 to 2017. These findings provide evidence that the number of those experiencing homelessness is being addressed and reduced and that the focus on housing vulnerable and chronically homeless individuals is helping reduce the number of those experiencing homelessness in Houston/Pasadena/Harris County/Fort Bend County/Montgomery County.