

# 100 HOMES

## Background

The 100 Homes Campaign aims to identify and engage with the most long-term and medically vulnerable homeless individuals in order to find them a permanent home and support to improve their health, wellbeing and opportunities. ‘Vulnerability’ refers to those who are likely to die within five years unless they are housed. Austin’s campaign is part of the national 100,000 Homes Campaign. The campaign takes a ‘Housing First’ approach, prioritizing housing people first and then using that stable base to begin tackling other challenges and support needs like mental health and substance abuse.

## Austin Registry Week

Austin’s 100 Homes Campaign Registry Week took place from November 7 – 9, 2011. Over three mornings of intensive outreach more than 80 volunteers took to the city’s streets, homeless shelters, hospitals, and parks to find homeless individuals and gather information from them using a Vulnerability Index survey. The Vulnerability Index survey asks people to self-report on their histories of housing and homelessness, their state of health, where they usually sleep, what support they are able to access and who they stay with. Every individual who was surveyed consented and did not have to answer questions they did not want to. A photo was also taken (also with consent) to ensure people can be easily identified in the future as part of the effort to prioritize housing and services for the most vulnerable. The data from the Vulnerability Index survey was entered by volunteers into a database that generates reports identifying the individual’s medical vulnerabilities and barriers to housing. Volunteers completed 289 surveys.

## Results

Over the course of the three days the Vulnerability Index Survey was administered, 289 people agreed to participate and were surveyed. Of these 289, 47% were assessed as being vulnerable – at risk of dying in the next five years if they remain on the streets. The vulnerable homeless population has been on the street an average of 7 years.

- Kevin, a Vietnam veteran, has been homeless in Austin for 45 years.
- Cory, who is 25, has been sleeping on the streets for the past 3 years.

Austin Sub-populations	Percent
Veterans	20%
Youth under 25	8%
Seniors over 65	3%
Foster Care	13%
Women	19%
Jail	83%
Prison	42%
Frequent Hospital Users	27%

Disability	Percent
Heart Disease	<b>20%</b>
Asthma	<b>24%</b>
Hepatitis C	<b>21%</b>
Emphysema	<b>10%</b>
<b>Cancer</b>	<b>8%</b>
Mental Health	<b>48%</b>
Substance Abuse	<b>72%</b>
Dually Diagnosed	<b>34%</b>



Risk Indicator	Individuals	Percent
<b>Vulnerable</b>	137	47%
<b>3 visits to ER or hospital last year</b>	64	22%
<b>3 visits to ER in last 3 months</b>	49	17%
<b>Over 60 years old</b>	26	9%
<b>Mental Health issues cited</b>	140	48%
<b>Victims of physical attack while homeless</b>	100	35%
<b>Tri-morbid (substance abuse serious medical problem and mental illness)</b>	72	25%

Community Cost of the 100 Vulnerable Homeless in 2010	
EMS Calls	\$252,290
Emergency Room Visits	\$518,000
Hospital Stays	\$5,883,584
Single nights in Jail	\$50,398
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,704,272.00</b>
Cost of Housing + Services	\$2,400,000
Potential Savings from Housing + Services	\$4,304,272

## Volunteers

120 volunteers from 25 organizations participated in Registry Week. The volunteers came from local councils, social work courses, community agencies and partner organizations. The event was a fantastic opportunity for staff from different organizations to collaborate on the same project.

Volunteers came from:

- Austin Travis County Integral Care
- Caritas of Austin
- CAN Community Council
- Clean Slate Austin
- City of Austin City Council
- City of Austin EMS
- City of Austin Neighborhood Housing & Community Development Department
- City of Austin's Health & Human Services Department
- Downtown Austin Community Court
- ECHO Board of Directors
- First United Methodist Church
- Foundation Communities
- Foundation for the Homeless
- Front Steps
- Goodwill
- LifeWorks
- Salvation Army
- Seton Family of Hospitals
- St. Edwards University
- St. Martin's Lutheran Church
- Texas Department of Housing & Community Affairs
- Texas State University
- Travis County
- UT Chi Omega: Iota Chapter
- UT School of Social Work

"What struck me was one of the gentlemen I was interviewing has been chronically homeless for two to three years, but before that had an apartment, a job, and another was even a college graduate."

Meghann Flynn – 100 Homes Volunteer

"I think about homelessness as a community problem that sits at the vortex of where a number of community problems converge [such as] affordable housing, unemployment, access to affordable health care, family violence, mental health problems and substance abuse and addictions."

Cal Streater, ECHO Board Member & 100 Homes Volunteer

"My hope is that we will come up with a current list that is more comprehensive and more accurate than any we have in place so we will know who is out there and what services they need so we can get them the services they need."

City Council Member, Chris Riley – Registry Week Volunteer

For many volunteers, participating in the week challenged assumptions and was a profound insight into the life of the homeless population in Austin. Their observations and anecdotes can be found online at: <http://www.facebook.com/100HomesAustin>

## What Next

The 100 Homes Campaign approach is based on the idea that medically vulnerable people need priority assistance, and particularly need housing. The information gathered during Registry Week has identified entrenched and vulnerable homeless individuals in Austin to be identified, with information about their individual needs and situations, and this group will be the initial focus for the 100 Homes Campaign.

Providing the most vulnerable homeless individuals with permanent housing and effective support is expected to result in significant improvement in their health, wellbeing and opportunity to move back to self-sufficiency. It is also envisioned that effective implementation of the project will see significant cost savings, as has been demonstrated in other communities across the country.

Housing someone who has been homeless, and giving them the support services they need to tackle their problems, costs less than 'maintaining homeless individuals in a cycle of hospital admissions, jail and crisis accommodation, temporary shelters, and other support. For example, the cost of a three-day hospital stay following an emergency room visit is approximately \$17,034 and cost of keeping someone in jail approximately \$223 a night. People sleeping rough are frequent users of these costly services; one man interviewed had been admitted to the Emergency Room 15 times in the past 3 months due to a chronic condition that could not be effectively treated while he remained on the streets. Once someone is supported in permanent housing, and their health and overall situation is stabilized, reliance on these services is significantly reduced, as they are better able to address their conditions in a preventive manner.

## Housing

Housing is the linchpin of the 100 Homes Campaign. It is also an immense challenge to find housing for homeless individuals that is permanent, appropriate and affordable. The Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) is currently advocating for improved access for the homeless to existing public and community housing stock, and further investment in affordable housing.

## More Information

100 Homes Facebook  
<http://www.facebook.com/MS2HFB>

100 Homes Twitter  
[@100HomesAustin](https://twitter.com/100HomesAustin)

100 Homes Campaign website  
<http://www.100HomesAustin.org>

Ending Community Homelessness Coalition  
[www.austinecho.org](http://www.austinecho.org)

## Contribute

Donate to the 100 Homes Campaign at  
[www.austinecho.org/100homescampaign](http://www.austinecho.org/100homescampaign)

## Contact

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