

2018

State of Family Homelessness

Colorado Springs/El Paso County, Colorado

The “20 – 40” Plan



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November 2018

(Revised 11.14.2018)

Introduction

The safety net system for addressing family homelessness in Colorado Springs/El Paso County is diffuse and under-resourced in a number of important areas. Significant gaps exist in emergency sheltering, homeless prevention, transitional housing, and affordable, low-income housing. This paper provides data on the scope and impact of family homelessness, the current situation in our community, and suggests immediate and longer term strategies to close resource and service gaps, collectively referred to as the “20 – 40” Plan.

Scope and Impact of Family Homelessness

- Nearly 40 million people (1 in 8) in the U.S. live below the poverty line with 80,000 people living in poverty in El Paso County. Poverty is a leading factor in child homelessness.ⁱ
- 35% of all homeless persons nationwide are families with children. This includes 2.5 million childrenⁱⁱ “Nearly two-thirds of families with children experiencing homelessness were counted in four states: California, Florida, Oregon and Colorado.”ⁱⁱⁱ
- The reasons for family homelessness include lack of affordable housing, poverty, family violence and unemployment.
- Homeless families are often hidden—they are living in shelters, cars, campgrounds, or doubled up in overcrowded apartments. Families fear of having their children removed from their care.
- Students experiencing homelessness are up to nine times more likely than their non-homeless peers to repeat a grade.
- “Children who experience long-term homelessness are five times more likely than their peers to become homeless as adults”^{iv}
- “Housing is essential to ending homelessness, but it is not sufficient. Families need basic supports beyond decent affordable housing to thrive: food, education, employment, child care, transportation, health and mental health care, trauma-informed care, and children’s services.”^v

Current Situation – Counts, Resources, and Gaps

2018 Community Point-in-Time (PIT) Count for Colorado Springs/El Paso County Results^{vi} (Appendix 3)

- 2,209 people counted as homeless across all populations—chronic adult, youth, children, and veterans
- Number of homeless households with children rose to 122, an increase of 5 over 2017.
(Note: This number accounts for just a fraction of the 2,339 families entered into HMIS during the last 12 months with a last permanent address inside El Paso County)
- The typical homeless family is a single mother with children < 5 years, many have larger family sizes with 40% of families having 3 or more members and an 11% increase in household size over 2017.
- The number of students experiencing homelessness was 1,117 with the majority living in “doubled up” circumstances with multiple families or precariously housed in motels. This number is self-reported and does not include children from infancy through preschool.
 - 10% report living in a shelter or camping. Assuming at least one adult plus the student in a household that accounts for 304 unsheltered individuals alone, far exceeding PIT counts.

Adequacy of Family Emergency, Transitional, and Permanent Housing Resources

- Emergency shelter is a critical part of an effective homeless response system, but only a handful of shelter beds are allocated for families in our shelter system and none are low barrier
 - Salvation Army shelters families in its RJ Montgomery Center
 - 40 beds housed in the women's shelter are allocated to mothers with children
 - Single fathers are given priority for one of four single family quarters at the shelter
 - Aug-Oct family shelter beds have been full; more than 118 families turned away
 - Catholic Charities of Central Colorado provides seasonal motel vouchers to help bridge the gap for families seeking shelter with up to 5 families a night between November - April
 - Family Promise of Colorado Springs provides transitional shelter for 5 families at a time who are housed in single occupancy rooms at church facilities across El Paso County
 - TESSA is the leading domestic violence shelter/safe house in Colorado Springs with 32 beds
- Transitional housing is the backbone of our community system for sheltering and stabilizing families, housing and intensive supportive services lead to long term stability and never being homeless again
 - Partners in Housing is the largest provider of transitional housing in Colorado Springs with 60 units. In FY 2018, PIH housed 130 adults and 244 children in 121 households. Applications for an additional 938 adults and 1,818 children were received beyond capacity
 - Family Promise has 3 housing units families use as a 3-6 month bridge to permanent housing
 - Salvation Army has 9 transitional housing units for families in its Fresh Start program
 - Mary's Home currently has 12 housing units for families, increasing to 15 in 2019. Last year they had 400 inquiries over capacity.
 - Family Life Services has 9 transitional housing units for families
 - Homeward Pikes Peak's Bloom Program provides TH for 5 moms and their infant for 12 months
- Permanent housing through HUD programs: Rapid Re-housing, Transitional Housing, and Permanent Supportive Housing. Vouchers prioritized through Coordinated Entry and housing vulnerability score
 - In any given month, roughly 100 families are listed on the by-name list awaiting housing
 - 20 families were housed from Jan – Oct 2018; an average of 2 per month vs 100+ listed

Summary Assessment of Gaps:

- Estimated 6,000 people in families with children < age 18 are homeless in our community
- Little to no shelter to keep families intact; no low barrier family shelter
- 118 families turned away from emergency shelter in last 3 months due to space
- Demand for transitional housing in 2018 dwarfed supply – 3,000+ individuals turned away
- 91 family households await permanent housing on Coordinated Entry list

Strategies to Address Family Shelter and Housing Gaps

- Immediate:
 - Add family solutions as 9th Goal in Action Plan for Homelessness Response (see Appendix 1)
 - 20 single-occupancy family emergency shelter units through lease or purchase.
 - Comprehensive needs assessment and meaningful PIT strategy for family counts
 - Collaboration with McKinney-Vento and expansion of school-based case management
- Longer Term:
 - 40 new Transitional Housing units along with the intensive services to provide the needed supports for adult and children to overcome trauma, thrive, and to never be homeless again
 - Develop family shelter diversion strategies and increase homeless prevention resources

APPENDIX 1

Draft language: 2018-2019 Action Plan for Homelessness Response (City of Colorado Springs)

9. Add emergency shelter and transitional housing units for families experiencing homelessness.

Homeless families often hide from counts like Point in Time for fear of having their children removed from their care. The more accurate measurement is performed by school districts which are required by the McKinney-Vento Act to perform annual counts of homeless students. The most recent of these counts in Colorado Springs identified 1,117 school age students experiencing homelessness (defined as living in cars, camps and shelters as well as “doubled up” with multiple families or precariously housed in motels).

Colorado Springs has no low barrier family shelter and has limited options that allow families to stay together. 118 families were turned away from emergency shelter between August and October of this year. Similarly, transitional housing providers lack the housing inventory to meet the need. Last year, at least 938 adults and 1,818 children were waitlisted due to lack of space.

According to the Urban Institute, “...ignoring family homelessness today will make single adult homelessness worse in the future, as children who experience long-term homelessness are five times more likely than their peers to become homeless as adults.”

The City will collaborate with service providers with a goal of adding an additional 20 single-occupancy family emergency shelter units and 40 new Transitional Housing units. Alongside agencies that provide homelessness prevention and case management for families, we will work to bring relief for this vulnerable and hidden homeless population.

APPENDIX 2

Timeline

2018

- Create Homeless Family Solutions Collaborative
- Add Family Solutions Goal (#9) to City Action Plan
- Outreach to School Districts and McKinney-Vento Liaisons
- Community Advocacy for Homeless Family Solutions
- Goal Mapping for Family Solutions Initiatives
- Create Meaningful PIT Outreach Strategy for Families

2019

- Develop Funding Proposal for 20 Single-Occupancy Family Shelter
- Comprehensive Family Housing Needs Assessment
- Data-mining of Existing Community Data on Family Homelessness
- Map Family Triage Process and Family Housing System Resources
- **Secure 20 Single-Occupancy Family Shelter Units; Open Fall 2019**
- Feasibility Assessment for 40 New Family Transitional Housing Units
- Assessment of Low-Barrier, Housing First Transitional Housing Model

2020

- Assess 2019 Family Solutions Initiatives via Community Outcomes Report
- Increase School-Based Family Case Management
- Deploy Shelter Diversion and Homeless Prevention Strategies
- Funding and Operating Strategies for 40 New Family TH Units
- **Commitment to Build/Purchase 40 TH Units**

**PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS FOR
FAMILIES, YOUTH, AND CHILDREN IN 2020**

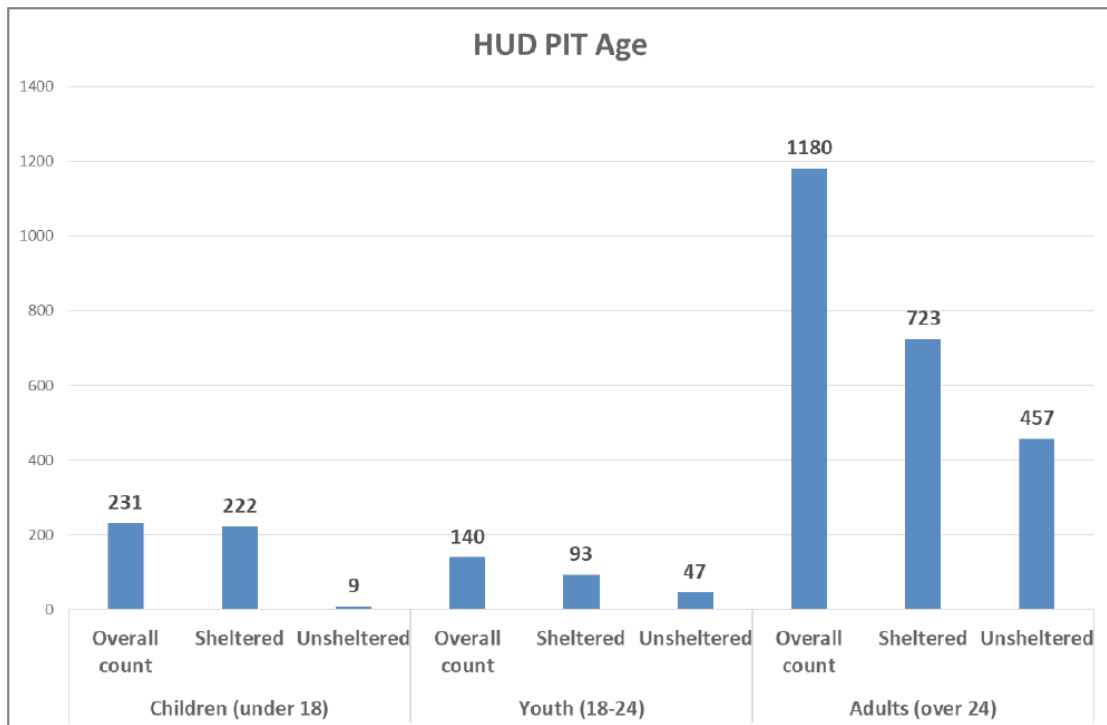
*Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent
and End Homelessness*

APPENDIX 3

2018 Point-in-Time Data – Child and Student Homelessness

Extracted from Endhomelessness.org: the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requires a point-in-time (PIT) count of sheltered and unsheltered people identifying as homeless. Our community conducts a full count of both populations annually, during the last week of January. The count provides demographic and other data insights which help the community track progress toward the goal of ending homelessness. The PIT count is not without limitations. There may be variation in count methodology or outreach from one year to the next and the PIT, by very definition, measures a “point in time” or snapshot of shelter status on a single night. Additionally, families and youth are often afraid or unwilling to participate in PIT counts due to concerns about system involvement and visibility.

	Total Students	Total Families
Academy D 20	91	64
Calhan D R J1	-	-
Cheyenne Mtn D12	12	8
Colorado Springs D11	472	Not Reported
Edison 54JT	1	1
Ellicott D22	-	-
Falcon D49	78	51
FFC D8	212	153
Hanover D28	-	-
Harrison D 2	146	92
Lewis Palmer D38	19	18
Manitou D14	52	36
Miami-Yoder 60JT	0	0
Peyton 23JT	-	-
Widefield D3	34	26
Total # Students	1117	449

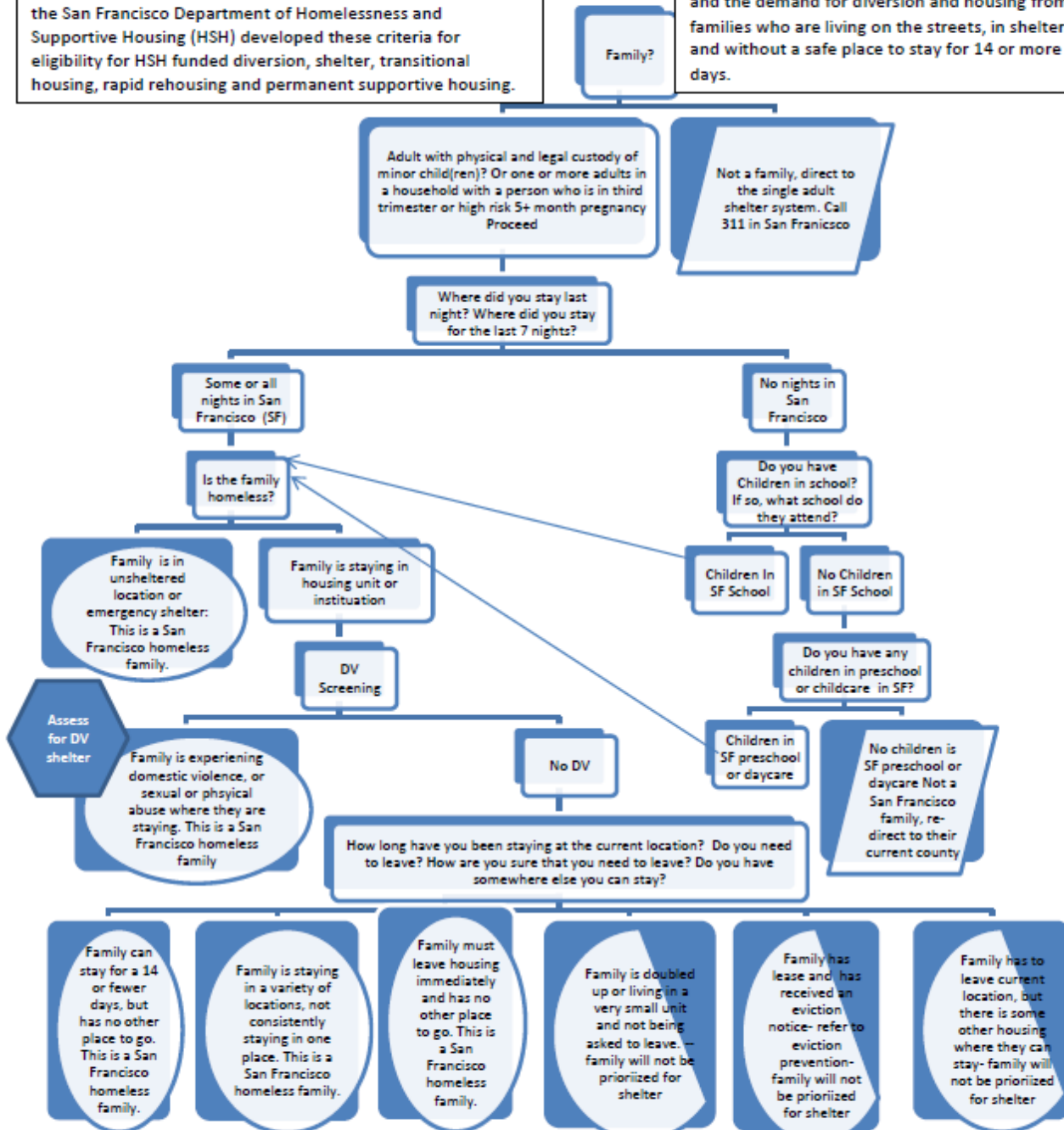


APPENDIX 4

Family Triage Process – San Francisco Model
San Francisco Homeless Family Triage Process

There are several definitions of homelessness used for families in San Francisco. There are not enough resources in San Francisco to offer shelter, and other resources to all families that meet one or more definition of homelessness, so the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) developed these criteria for eligibility for HSH funded diversion, shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing.

In consultation with the San Francisco community, HSH will consider serving homeless families who are not prioritized according to these criteria in the future based on the availability of resources, and the demand for diversion and housing from families who are living on the streets, in shelter and without a safe place to stay for 14 or more days.



April 14, 2017

Families in transitional housing and these living situations are eligible for services and rapid rehousing. Families will be prioritized and served with housing assistance based on housing assistance availability and the demand

APPENDIX 5

Citations and Resource Links

Causes and Solutions for Family Homelessness

<https://www.bassukcenter.org/services-matter/>

<https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/what-causes-homelessness/inequality/>

<https://homestretchva.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/White-Paper-Homestretch-October-2018-A-Better-Way.pdf>

https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/92566/ending_family_homelessness_through_pfs_1.pdf

https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/family-criteria-benchmarks-july-2017-revision.pdf

https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/USICH_OpeningDoors_Amendment2015_FINAL.pdf

<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/Family-Options-Study-Full-Report.pdf>

Effects of Homelessness on Children

http://www.fhfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Homlessness_Effects_Children.pdf

<https://www.nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/2018-supplemental-anticipatory-guidance.pdf>

Transitional Housing Programs

<http://solutionsforchange.org/transitional-housing-is-essential-in-solving-family-homelessness/>

<https://www.legalclinic.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Set-up-to-fail-2nd-edition.pdf>

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Recovery-Housing-Policy-Brief.pdf>

Citations/End Notes:

ⁱ Bassuk, Ellen (November 2014) retrieved from: <https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/Americas-Youngest-Outcasts-Child-Homelessness-Nov2014.pdf>, (11/9/2018)

ⁱⁱ Family Promise, retrieved from: <https://familypromise.org/homelessness-fact-sheet/>, (10/31/2018)

ⁱⁱⁱ United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (September 2018) retrieved from https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Homeslessness_in_America_Families_with_Children.pdf, page 5, (11/12/2018)

^{iv} Hamilton Family Center (February 2016) retrieved from: (<https://hamiltonfamilies.org/wp-content/themes/HamiltonFamilyCenter/images/HamiltonPublicSchoolWhitePaper-Electronic-Copy.pdf>, (11/12/2018)

^v Bassuk, Ellen et al (2015) retrieved from: <http://www.bassukcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Services-Matter.pdf>, (11/12/2018)

^{vi} Community Health Partnership (August 2018) retrieved from: https://www.ppchp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/2018_PIT_HIC_CommunityReport_FNL.pdf, page 11, (10/31/2018)

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