



RECOVERY IN MOTION



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April 2025 Edition

Homelessness in Texas on the rise amid high housing costs, federal estimates show

Texas Tribune, By Joshua Fechter, Jan. 11, 2024

The number of Texans experiencing homelessness is back at pre-pandemic levels, federal data shows.

Homelessness in Texas grew by more than 12% in 2023, in line with national trends, according to estimates released by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development last month. More than 27,000 Texans did not have a permanent roof over their heads when advocates and volunteers across the country walked Texas streets on a night last January to conduct the Point-in-Time Count annual estimate of people experiencing homelessness. About 43% of those — or some 11,700 people — lived on the streets.

Low-income households in Texas now face significantly higher rents than they did prior to the pandemic — and no longer have the pandemic-era safety net afforded by federal rent relief funds and pauses on evictions that aimed to prevent landlords from ousting tenants who couldn't make rent. Those factors have contributed to an overall increase in homelessness, homeless experts and advocates say.

"We're in a huge affordability crisis," said Eric Samuels, president and CEO of Texas Homeless Network. "There's a lot of people out there at risk of homelessness. And if they fall into homelessness, we have a lot fewer units to help them escape homelessness."

Homelessness rose in nearly every demographic group measured by the Point-in-Time Count estimate. The number of unhoused veterans and families with children grew in 2023 by 19% and 4.9% respectively. More Black and Hispanic people experienced homelessness than in the previous year.

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Experts and advocates noted some bright spots.

Efforts in major Texas cities aimed at quickly getting people experiencing homelessness into new housing and connecting them with support services helped reduce chronic homelessness, which fell year-over-year by about 9%, estimates show. Someone experiences chronic homelessness when they have been unhoused for at least a year or multiple times “while struggling with a disabling condition such as a serious mental illness, substance use disorder, or physical disability,” according to The National Alliance to End Homelessness.

Meanwhile, the state’s overall population of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness — meaning they slept in outdoor spaces like encampments or other places people aren’t meant to live — grew by 6.5%, but fell in places like Dallas and Houston.

The Dallas region saw double-digit decreases in the numbers of people experiencing unsheltered and chronic homelessness last year, which local advocates attribute to a \$72 million initiative launched in 2021 to rehouse people and families experiencing homelessness.

The push, dubbed the R.E.A.L. Time Rehousing Initiative and fueled in part by federal pandemic relief funds, relies on close collaboration between dozens of nonprofits who work in homelessness response and a network of landlords willing to give the unhoused a roof over their heads, said Sarah Kahn, CEO of Housing Forward, the lead agency in charge of tackling homelessness in Dallas and Collin counties. When city crews’ clear homeless encampments, outreach workers offer to connect people with housing and services, she said.

That approach has worked, Kahn said. In October, the initiative reached a goal of placing 2,700 people experiencing homelessness into new housing — and aims to house 6,000 by the end of 2025.

“It’s just important to remember that this work is hard,” Kahn said. “I know it feels slow to a lot of the public and a lot of people are wondering why we’re not making more progress than we are. I think the most important thing to remember is we have a proof point of what works and we have to keep investing and scaling those proven solutions if we want to see those numbers continue to go in the right direction.”

In Houston, federal pandemic relief funds supercharged yearslong efforts to reduce the region’s homeless population by placing those experiencing homelessness into apartments before providing them with support services — efforts Dallas officials took inspiration from when crafting its strategy to address homelessness. The region’s Community COVID Housing Program, buoyed by federal relief dollars, has housed or diverted from homelessness nearly 17,000 people since it launched in October 2020, according to Houston’s Coalition for the Homeless. Last year, the region’s population of people experiencing unsheltered and chronic homelessness fell by 17.3% and 3.7%, respectively.

But federal funds that paid for the program are set to expire by the end of the year, said Ana Rausch, vice president of program operations for the Coalition for the Homeless, leaving policymakers and those who work in homelessness response to figure out how to fund at least some aspects of the program after that money runs out.

“We have to continue to invest in housing if we want to continue to see a downward trend in our homeless numbers,” Rausch said.



This is a phone number where mental health peers can call outside of Agape Center hours and talk to the staff about their daily struggles and concerns. Feel free to use the Warm Line telephone number whenever you need to talk to a peer.

Warm Line Phone Number

1-806-367-0028

Warm Line Hours of Operation

Monday - Thursday 5:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Friday - 5:00pm - 11:00pm

Saturday - 12:00pm - 12:00am

Sunday - 12:00pm - 11:00pm

"Communion"

by Jeanann Verlee who has bipolar disorder and trauma survivor

I know a boy who said his girlfriend's body was a "crime scene." Dad, my body is a crime scene. My body is lint and gasoline and matchstick. My body is a brush fire. It's ticking, Dad, a slow alarm. I have rain boots. Lots of them. It isn't raining anymore. The words are coming back, Dad. The way they fit and jump in the mouth. I want ice cream and long letters. I want to read long love letters but I don't think he loves me. I think I'm used up. I think I'm the grit under his nails, the girl who looks good in pictures. I don't think he loves me. I think they broke me, Dad. I think I drink too much and it's because they broke me. I heard about two girls recently, two women crushed like cherries in a boy's jaw. It opened me, Dad. My body is melted wax, it is ripe and stink and bent. It is a mistake. I walk like an apology. I don't hate men, Dad, I don't. I want a washing machine. I want someone else to do the dishes, someone to walk the dog. I have a hornet in my head, Dad. A hornet. She's an angry bitch — she hurls herself against my skull. She stings. And stings. I know I don't make sense, Dad. This is the problem. I'm a sick girl, a crazy wishbone. I have razors under my tongue. I'm sorry I cut you, Dad, I'm so--so sorry. I gave you a card for Father's Day once, it said you were my hero. You are. Your laugh is a thunder clap; you love like surgery. I think they broke me, Dad. I can't erase their faces. I want to swim, Dad. Remember when I used to hopscotch? I used to make you laugh. My feet are hot. The bottoms of my feet are scorched sand, August asphalt. My body is a slug, a mob of sticky wet rot. No one touches me anymore because I'm rot. Because my body is a spill no one wants to clean up. They cracked me open, Dad, I know you don't want to hear about it. You don't want to hear how they scissored me, how they gnawed me like raw meat. No one wants to hear how they made me drink lemon juice, how they kicked the dog, how they upturned the furniture, no one wants to hear how my skin turned to a dark thick of purple and black and lead. I watch the homeless a lot, Dad. I watched a man with a cup of coins and chips of skin carved out of his face. He had freckles. He needs medicine, Dad. He needs to stop the hornet. My body is a hive. I am red ants and jellyfish. A yellow sickness. My body is a used condom in an alley in Jersey City. I don't think he loves me, Dad. My body is a fetus in a biohazard tank. A Polaroid pinned to a corkboard in Brooklyn. I think I'm hurt, Dad. I think I was the tough girl for too long. My body is a wafer, a thin, soft melt on a choir boy's tongue.

Ever notice how sometimes the people around us seem to have it all together, always smiling and confident? Sometimes, those outward signs of strength can actually be masks they wear to hide pain, stress, or even trauma that isn't easy to talk about. It's a reminder that we can never truly know what others might be dealing with beneath the surface.

Checking in with those we care about, creating safe spaces, and offering compassion can be invaluable. Sometimes, a small act of kindness can help someone feel safe enough to take off their mask, even if only for a moment.

- Melissa Preece, LCSW - S, LCDC, SAP -



Monday Classes, 2:30 - 3:30 & Wednesday Classes, 2:45 - 3:45

Art supplies provided

(Home lessons by reservation only, call 335-5896)

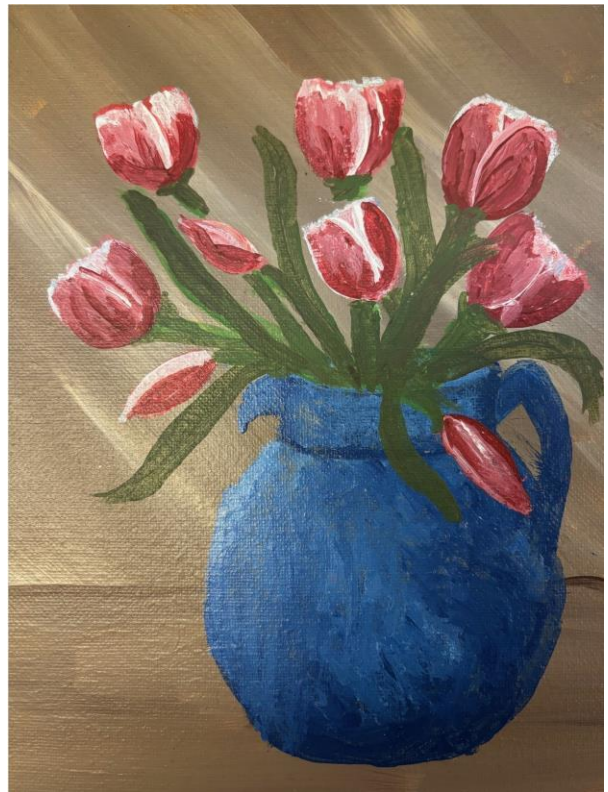


Agape Center Artwork

Real Artwork done by Agape Center Members



Tinker Bell – B.M.



Flower Medley – D.B.




Beautiful Pegasus – E.H.



Tropical Sunset – M.D.

April 2025 Calendar
Telegroup Phone Number: 1-(720)-740-9050

\$\$ - Bring money for Social Outings, Red Groups can be done over the phone

MON 9:30 – 4:30	TUE 9:30-4:30	WED 9:30 – 4:30	THU 1:00-4:00	FRI 9:30 – 4:30
	<u>1</u> Advanced Computer <u>10:00-11:00</u> Mental Health Ball Toss <u>1:00-2:00</u> Recipe Making <u>2:30-3:30</u>	<u>2</u> Consumer Programming <u>10:00-11:00</u> Yoga <u>11:00-12:00</u> NOW SERVING LUNCH Agape Caring & Sharing <u>1:15 – 2:15</u> Art Class <u>2:45 – 3:45</u>	<u>3</u> 	<u>4</u> Show & Tell About Yourself <u>10:00-11:00</u> Burgers & Bowling \$\$  <u>12:00-4:00</u>
<u>7</u> Beginner's Computer Class <u>10:00-11:00</u> Constructive Criticism <u>1:00-2:00</u> Art <u>2:30-3:30</u>	<u>8</u> Advanced Computer <u>10:00-11:00</u> The Dangers of Gossip <u>1:00-2:00</u> Adult Bullying <u>2:30-3:30</u>	<u>9</u> Guest Speaker Lacey Epperson <u>10:00-11:00</u> Yoga <u>11:00-12:00</u> NOW SERVING LUNCH Agape Caring & Sharing <u>1:15 – 2:15</u> Art Class <u>2:45 – 3:45</u>	<u>10</u> 	<u>11</u> Celebrating Easter With An Easter Egg Hunt  <u>10:00-11:00</u> CC'S Pizza \$\$ Movies \$\$ <u>12:00-4:00</u>
<u>14</u> Beginner's Computer Class <u>10:00-11:00</u> Ways To Manage Insomnia <u>1:00-2:00</u> Art <u>2:30-3:30</u>	<u>15</u> Advanced Computer <u>10:00-11:00</u> Movie Analysis <u>1:00-2:00</u> Boot Camp Exercise <u>2:30-3:30</u>	<u>16</u> Friendly Concerns <u>10:00-11:00</u> Yoga <u>11:00-12:00</u> NOW SERVING LUNCH Agape Caring & Sharing <u>1:15 – 2:15</u> Art Class <u>2:45 – 3:45</u>	<u>17</u> 	<u>18</u>  <u>10:00 – 12:00</u>
<u>21</u> Beginner's Computer Class <u>10:00-11:00</u> Assertiveness Without Aggression <u>1:00-2:00</u> Art <u>2:30-3:30</u>	<u>22</u> Advanced Computer <u>10:00-11:00</u> Music Analysis <u>1:00-2:00</u> Mindful Self Compassion <u>2:30-3:30</u> Board Meeting: <u>2:30-4:00</u>	<u>23</u> Guest Speaker Patrick Miller <u>10:00-11:00</u> Yoga <u>11:00-12:00</u> NOW SERVING LUNCH Agape Caring & Sharing <u>1:15 – 2:15</u> Art Class <u>2:45 – 3:45</u>	<u>24</u> Birthday Celebration  <u>1:00 – 4:00</u>	<u>25</u> Housing Group: Spring Cleaning <u>10:00-11:00</u> Lins Grand Buffet \$\$ Botanical Gardens \$\$ <u>12:00-4:00</u>
<u>28</u> Beginner's Computer Class <u>10:00-11:00</u> Motivation <u>1:00-2:00</u> Art <u>2:30-3:30</u>	<u>29</u> Newsletter Assembly <u>10:00-11:00</u> Trauma Awareness <u>1:00-2:00</u> How to Manage Greif <u>2:30-3:30</u>	<u>30</u> Types of Triggers <u>10:00-11:00</u> Yoga <u>11:00-12:00</u> NOW SERVING LUNCH Agape Caring & Sharing <u>1:15 – 2:15</u> Art Class <u>2:45 – 3:45</u>		



AAMHC

P.O. Box 44

Amarillo, TX 79105-0044

Physical location:

1601 S. Georgia St.

(St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Lowndes Hall)

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Asst. Treasurer: **Open**

Asst. Secretary: **Open**

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Angel/Outreach committee Chair: **Anna Derda**

Program Chairman: **Open**

Member-at-large: **Debra Blanks**

Member-at-large: **Open**

Member-at-large: **Open**

AAMHC Staff & Volunteers

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Yoga Instructor: **Margie Netherton**

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Newsletter Creators: **Tony Foster &**

Gerri Whittington

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