



City of Denton

City Hall
215 E. McKinney Street
Denton, Texas
www.cityofdenton.com

AGENDA INFORMATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Community Services

CM/ DCM/ ACM: Christine Taylor

DATE: June 2, 2026

SUBJECT

Receive a report and hold a discussion regarding homelessness initiatives.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

This action supports Key Focus Area: Foster Economic Opportunity and Affordability.

BACKGROUND

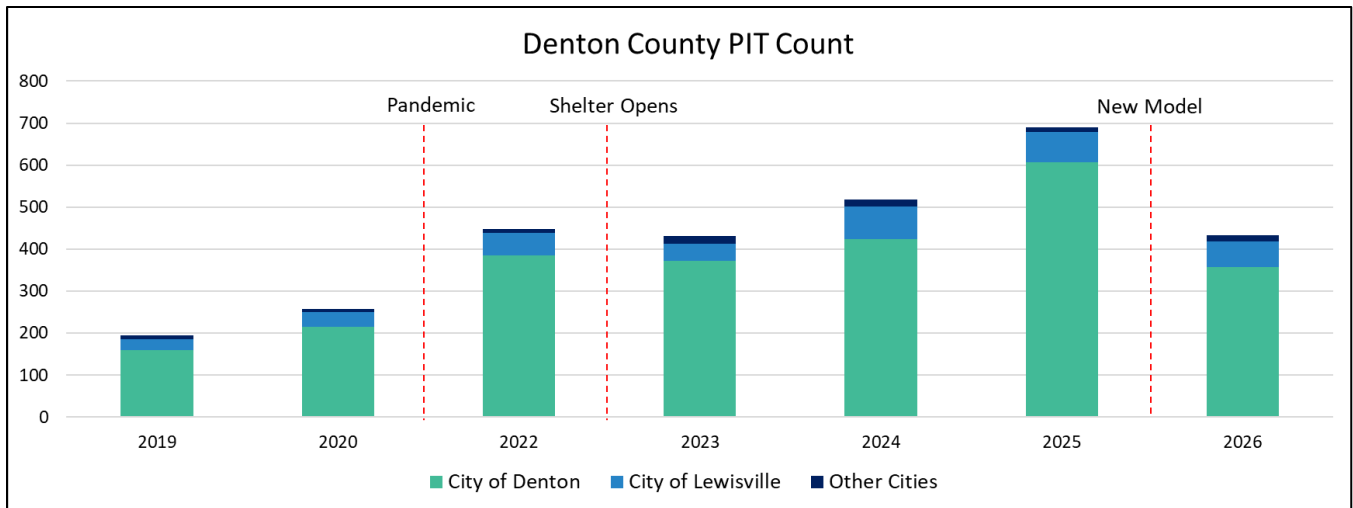
The City of Denton addresses homelessness in a strategic, coordinated and collaborative manner, centering public health and safety of all residents, and recognizing the dignity and worth of individuals. The City funds organizations for the provision of homelessness services and works interdepartmentally to address public health and safety impacts. These efforts are informed by direct and indirect indicators of homelessness and are organized into three broad categories: inflows, sustaining services, and outflows.

State of Homelessness

When assessing the state of homelessness in our community, Staff look at several direct and indirect indicators, including: the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, the Housing Priority List, confirmed encampments, public safety data, and community perception of the issue measured by the 2026 Community Survey.

The PIT Count:

The PIT Count is the annual census of individuals experiencing homelessness conducted each year by communities nation-wide as mandated by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The all-volunteer count in Denton County is organized by The Path Home (formerly the Denton County Homelessness Coalition) with the support of partner agency staff. It occurs over the course of one day in late January when volunteers work in teams and shifts to count as many individuals as possible through conducting surveys of individuals in sheltered and unsheltered environments and by recording observations of individuals who appear homeless. It is not a perfect representation of the number of individuals who are experiencing homelessness in our community, and it is very unlikely that all such individuals are counted on the day. It is, however, consistent in its shortcomings, which makes it a useful data point to consider, in context, for comparison year over year.



	2019	2020	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
City of Denton	159	214	384	371	424	607	357
City of Lewisville	26	35	55	42	78	72	62
Other Cities	9	9	9	18	16	11	14
Total	194	258	448	431	518	690	433
City of Denton change in %	-	35%	79%	-3%	14%	43%	-41%

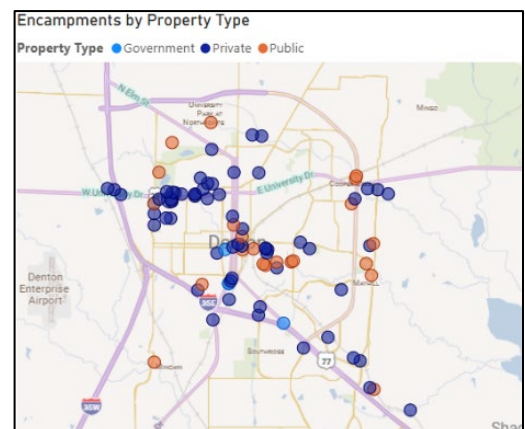
According to the PIT Count, homelessness in the City of Denton had risen 382% from 159 individuals counted in 2019 to 607 counted in 2025. In 2026, the Count had decreased by 41% year over year in the City of Denton to 357 counted individuals.

The Housing Priority List (HPL):

The HPL, managed by United Way of Denton County, shows the total number of people experiencing homelessness in Denton County who have been assessed by front door agencies and have accessed services in the last 90 days. This list includes everyone who has completed a Coordinated Entry (CE) housing assessment. CE is a process that helps connect people experiencing homelessness with housing and support services as quickly as possible. Local service providers use the HPL to identify and prioritize people for limited housing assistance based on need and eligibility. This process helps ensure accuracy by marking households as inactive if they haven't engaged with a participating agency in over 90 days. The number of households actively accessing services and assessed on the Housing Priority List reduced from 580 in January 2025 to 347 in January 2026, a decrease of 40%.

Encampments:

Another direct way our picture of homelessness is informed is by looking at encampment activity. Since September 2025 any reports of encampments have been assessed and identified as confirmed, or not an encampment. An average of 15 encampments per month have been confirmed from September 2025 to April 2026, with a total of 109 confirmed and closed encampments so far in FY 25-26. The definition of camping in Texas Penal Code § 48.05 is used. Tracked encampments are categorized by property ownership: City owned, private property, and Government owned (TXDOT, County, etc.). The number of encampments has stayed relatively steady over time.



The 2026 Community Survey:

14. To what degree, if at all, is homelessness a problem in the City of Denton?			
	2024	2026	Change
Major Problem	50%	44%	-6.0
Moderate Problem	35%	40%	4.6
Minor Problem	14%	13%	-0.9
Not a Problem	2%	3%	1.4

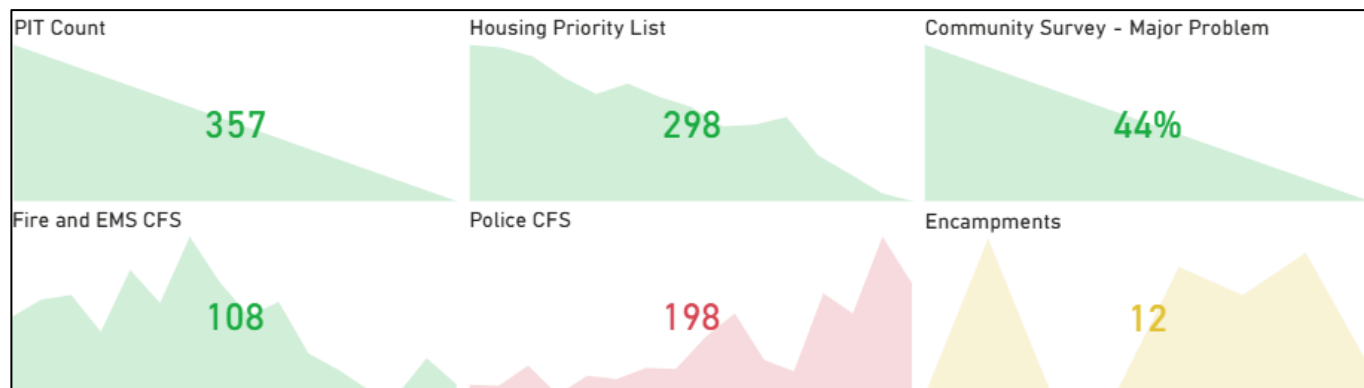
In the 2026 Community Survey, 84% of residents viewed homelessness as a moderate or major problem, with concern about the visibility and impact of homelessness in public spaces focused on enforcement and law-and-order, while supporting service-based approaches to exit homelessness. Both perspectives were meaningfully present in responses, and reflect a strong public desire to address homelessness.

Public Safety:

Our public safety organizations track interactions with individuals experiencing homelessness, and trends in Fire, EMS, and Police incidents can be used to indicate the prevalence of homelessness in the community. Fire and EMS had previously been responding to calls at the Denton Community Shelter 1.56 times per day in April of 2025. As of April 2026, this is down to 0.23 times per day, a reduction in calls of 85%. However, Police calls for service citywide increased by 102% in the same period. Public initiated police calls increased by 50%, while officer-initiated calls increased by 553%, from 13 in April of 2025 to 72 in April of 2026. A change in how calls for service are entered into the database utilized by the Police Department, which now requires an input of whether the call involved an unhoused person, instead of making the input optional, may account for some of the increase in overall calls for service.

State of Homelessness Indicators:

The majority, though not all, of indicators we look at to assess the state of homelessness in the City of Denton show a reduction, pointing towards a downward trend in homelessness.



Audit of Homelessness Initiatives

The Audit of Homelessness Initiatives presented to City Council in April 2025 provided findings and recommendations to improve the City’s homelessness response. Those recommendations can be organized under the categories of Encampments and Outreach, Mental Health, Community Shelter, and Community Engagement. An official follow-up audit is scheduled in 2027 and will elucidate the effectiveness of audit recommendation implementation, which is progressing apace.

Recommendations 6 and 7 focus on Mental Health and will be addressed in a separate work session.

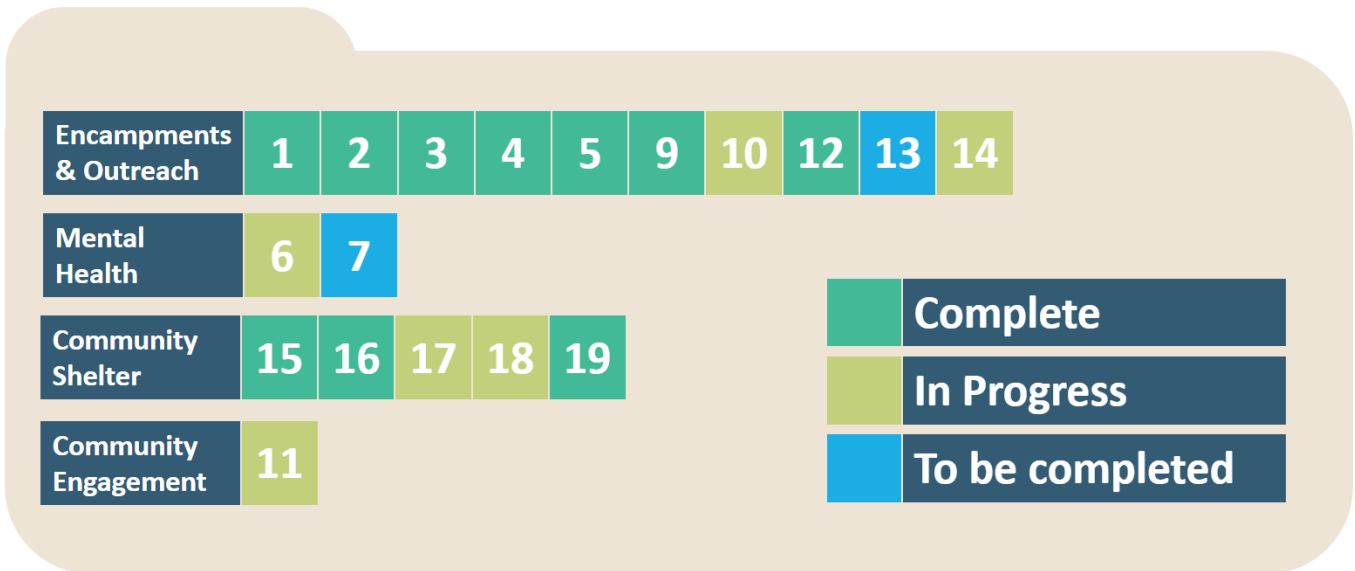
Recommendation 11 to engage community members is in progress.

Recommendations 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13 and 14 are focused on improvements to the City's approach to Encampments and Outreach.

- Rec. 1 is to centralize tracking of encampments. The software Airtable is being utilized for tracking from initial report through closing an encampment. All City departments are directed to send any reports to the Homeless Programs Manager.
- Rec. 2 is to update response guidelines to align with state law. The new Administrative Directive 513.01 aligns with the illegal camping ban (Texas Penal Code § 48.05) and definition of camping.
- Rec. 3 is to post notice of encampment closure in English and Spanish. Notice signs for public property cleanup in English and Spanish have been created and are being posted by Street Outreach upon assessment.
- Rec. 4 is to provide storage, which was found to be not feasible with current resources.
- Rec. 5 is to assess and monitor encampments on private property, and balance the rights of property owners with individuals experiencing homelessness. A property owner guide has been created, with information on street outreach and Enforcement Authorizations. Permission is requested from property owners for street outreach to come onto the property and assess any encampments present.
- Rec. 9 regarding street outreach tracking has been completed, Airtable is being utilized to track key performance indicators.
- Rec. 10 informing and assisting people experiencing unsheltered homelessness during inclement weather events is in progress.
- Rec. 12 Homeless Outreach Team reallocation has been completed.
- Rec. 13 reporting on length of time from unsheltered homelessness to housing is to be completed.
- Rec. 14 identifying new funding sources for emergency and supportive housing programs is in progress, with an application submitted for the now cancelled Continuum of Care Notice of Funding Opportunity by HUD.

Recommendations 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 focus on improvements to the Denton Community Shelter.

- Rec. 15 eliminating arbitrary exits caused by the lottery system and greater focus on housing placement and rec. 16 ensuring dedicated case management and a housing plan after entry have been addressed by a shift in the shelter model from a lottery system to a waitlist and tying capacity to case management, implementing a Shelter Stay Policy to create the Housing Focused Program which went into effect on Sept. 1, 2025. In Q2 of FY 25-26, 31% (34/109) of clients exited were exited to a permanent housing solution. This is up from 18% in Q1. Over the life of the program the rate is 23%, compared to 8% before the program change, according to the April 2025 audit. 30% of exits to permanent housing is a programmatic benchmark based on national data. A randomized audit of client files from February 2026 and March 2026 showed 59% had a Housing Plan within seven days of enrollment.
- Rec. 17 to verify performance metrics is in progress, with utilization of the Homeless Management Information System and the shelter contractor's internal waitlist tracking spreadsheet.
- Rec. 18 written procedures for reviewing guest suspension and expulsion is to be completed.
- Rec. 19 to review guest feedback is completed, flyers with a QR code to an online survey are posted throughout the shelter, and a lock box with paper versions of the survey is installed in the common area, and 12 client feedback surveys have been received since November.



Staff Focus

Implementation of audit recommendations and improvement of homeless response is staff’s primary focus. Staff is seeking to codify the shelter model changes in a contract amendment with Our Daily Bread, the Community Shelter operator. There are upcoming decisions regarding the FY 26-27 budget which allow a fresh evaluation of the effective use of resources to address homelessness. The Community Services Department has established a partnership with the Child Poverty Action Lab and is investigating homelessness prevention options for City of Denton residents. To further foster community involvement, grassroots organizations are encouraged to engage, as well as interested citizens. Ongoing refinement of evaluation methods, including data quality and reporting, provide a feedback loop to assess effectiveness of efforts.

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1 – Agenda Information Sheet
- Exhibit 2 – Presentation
- Exhibit 3 – 513.01 Encampment Response Directive
- Exhibit 4 – Property Owner Guide
- Exhibit 5 – Shelter Stay Policy

Respectfully submitted:
 Jesse Kent
 Director of Community Services