



Audit of Homelessness Response

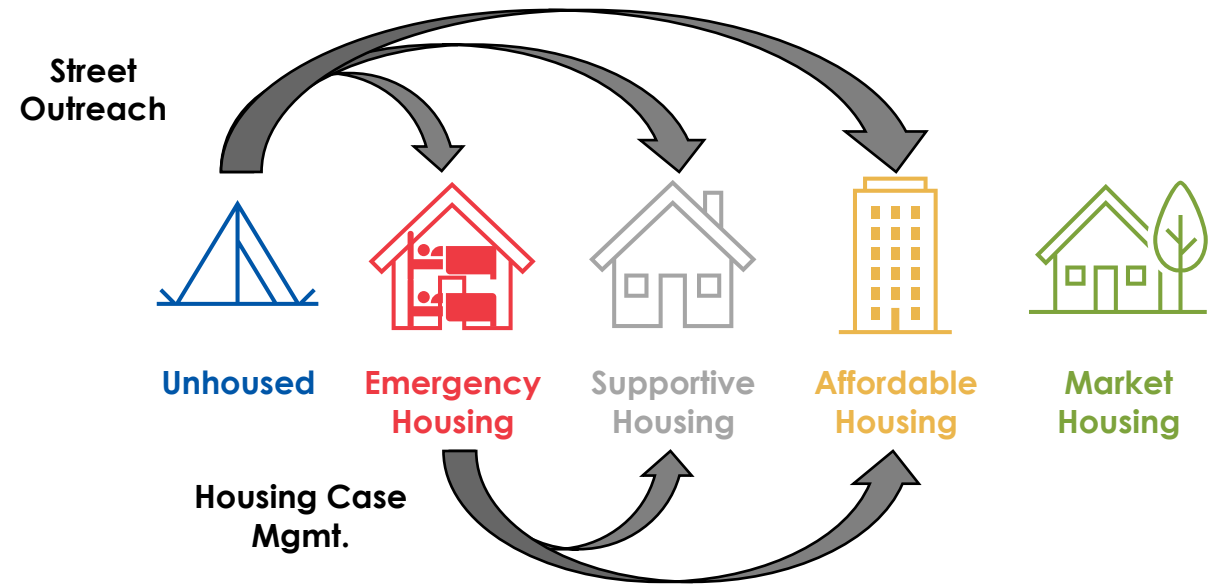
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Purpose of the Audit

- This audit generally evaluated the effectiveness of the City's homelessness assistance programs and enforcement activity compliance with relevant laws and alignment with Federal guidance.
- Nine in ten Denton residents viewed homelessness as a major or minor problem facing the community in 2024.

Simplified Housing Stability Spectrum & Assistance Services



Some Laws Impact People Experiencing Homelessness

- Some State and local laws adopted for public health and safety purposes impact people experiencing homelessness.
 - About 30% of the 228 individuals cited were cited more than once.
 - About 3% of fines assessed for these citations was collected.
- The City provides resources to people experiencing homelessness who have been cited and arrested.

Enforcement Actions per Law that May Impact People Experiencing Homelessness

Law	FY23 Viol.	FY24 Viol.	Issued to People at Transient Addresses
Penal Code 48.05: Camping in Public Places	151	102	82%
Sec. 22-31: Camping in Parks	8	4	83%
Trans. Code 522.007: Solicitation in Roadways	29	9	76%
Sec. 25-5 Soliciting in Thoroughfares	62	12	68%
Sec. 17-101: Living in Vehicles	0	0	NA

Encampment Response Should be Further Coordinated for Efficiency

- Encampment response processes are reactive and driven by Homeless Outreach Team officers.
- Written guidelines for responding to private property encampments do not exist.
- Encampment clean-up decisions are not well documented and increase the risk of people's belongings being destroyed.
- Costs for cleaning small encampments on City property and all private property encampments are not tracked.



CIRT does not Clearly Divert People Experiencing Mental Health Crises to Licensed Clinical Staff

- The City has created a mobile crisis response function; however, its purpose, procedures, and goals are not well defined.
- Most mental health calls are not responded to by CIRT and all included at least one officer.
- Mental health call follow-up practices are not well defined and may have been an inefficient use of CIRT officers.

Summary of Mental Health Calls by Service & Unit Type

Service	Officers Only	Officers & CIRT	CIRT Only	Percent by Service
Enforcement	2	1	2	8%
Transport	10	5	0	25%
In-Person Contact	14	1	6	34%
Virtual Contact	9	1	2	20%
Other	8	0	0	13%
Percent by Unit:	71%	13%	16%	

Street Outreach Activities are not Coordinated and Resource Allocation may not Promote Housing Stability Most Effectively

- The City has funded two street outreach programs, a Homeless Outreach Team and a Contractor. However, these efforts have not been coordinated to ensure efficiency.
- HOT does not appear to effectively connect people experiencing homelessness with housing solutions.
 - This appears to be, at least in part, because police officers are not well positioned to perform street outreach activities and lack dedicated resources.
- The Street Outreach Contractor is generally meeting contracted housing outcome goals.

Street Outreach Contractor FY24 Housing Outcome Performance



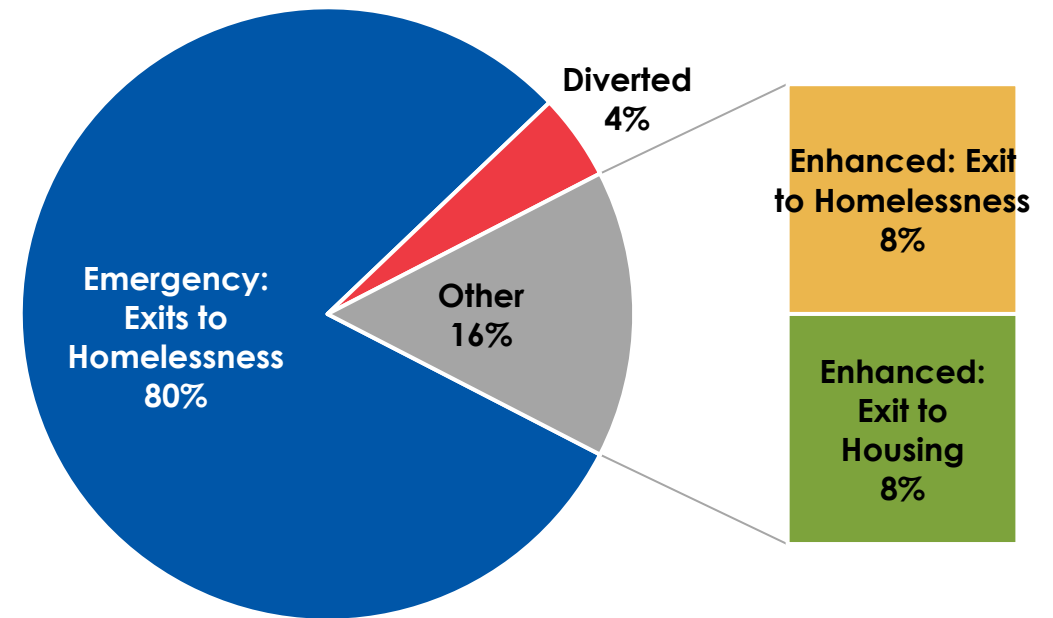
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Outcome Metric	Goal	Performance	Avg. Days to Exit
Individuals Served	235	364	NA
Temporary Housing Exits	39	25	28
Permanent Housing Exits	5	23	74

The Community Shelter Contractor's Practices Don't Align with Housing-First or Low-Barrier Approaches as Required by Contract

- The City's contract to operate the Community Shelter with housing-first and low-barrier approaches align with best practices.
 - Enhanced shelter is no longer provided as originally envisioned.
- The Community Shelter Contractor has not adopted housing-first practices.
 - Staffing resources don't allow for case management of all guests.
 - Length of stay data is not reliable.

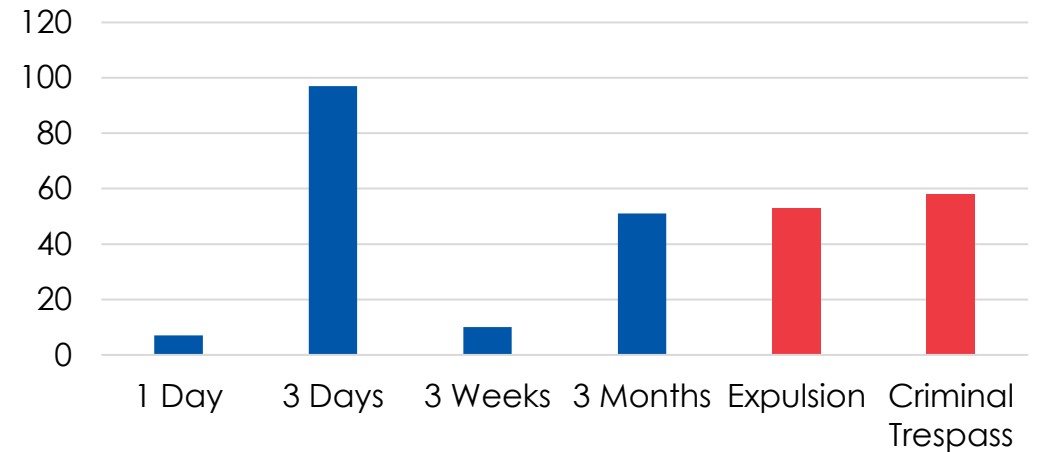
Summary of Shelter Service Exits



The Community Shelter Contractor's Practices Don't Align with Housing-First or Low-Barrier Approaches as Required by Contract

- Some low-barrier practices have been adopted.
- The Community Shelter Contractor has extensive rules and a punitive punishment system.
 - System's progressive nature results in longer punishments.
 - Five individuals were expelled for the violation of "Board Issued/Approved."
- The City has not historically requested or received feedback from Community Shelter guests.

FY24 Punishment Type Frequency Chart



FY24 Punishment Type Frequency Chart

Punishment	Assessed Safety Risk		
	Low	Medium	High
1 Day	1	0	0
3 Days	6	5	0
3 Weeks	4	2	0
3 Months	2	2	0
Expulsion	1	2	4
Criminal Trespass	2	4	2
All:	16	15	6



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Management Response Summary

Rec.	Recommendations*	Response	Implementation Actions*
1	Centrally track and regularly monitor all large encampments.	Agree	Will continue to develop encampment tracking tools.
2	Update the Encampment Response Guidelines to align with State law.	Agree	Will update the Encampment Response Guidelines.
3	Provide notice of encampment closures in English & Spanish.	Agree	Is working to improve process including noticing in English & Spanish
4	Explore options for providing temporary storage.	Partially Agree	Resources to store items from encampment cleanup don't exist
5	Develop a process to monitor private property encampments.	Agree	Will create a process that mirrors City prop. Process
6	Create a process to allow for increased diversion of mental health calls.	Agree	Will make civilian mental health resources responsive to dispatch
7	Explore responding without officers to low-risk 9-1-1 mental health calls.	Partially Agree	Can explore diverting calls directly to clinicians for low-threat responses.
8	Provide guidance to Dispatch on assessing mental health call risk level.	Disagree	Currently use International Association of Emergency Dispatch protocols.
9	Regularly measure & report on City-wide street outreach performance.	Agree	Will continue to develop street outreach reporting City-wide
10	Formalize a coordinate procedure for inclement weather.	Agree	Will work with internal & external partners to develop procedures
11	Consider engaging the community in ongoing homelessness response.	Agree	Will explore opportunities to engage community members
12	Evaluate reallocating HOT resources to better align with street outreach.	Agree	Outreach will explore further collaboration with Community Services
13	Work with Street Outreach Contract to report on additional metrics.	Partially Agree	Will work with contractor to improve data collection & reporting
14	Assist Street Outreach Contractor in identifying new funding.	Agree	Will continue to take a more active role in supporting contractors
15	Eliminate arbitrary exits at the Community Shelter.	Agree	Seeking Council direction on proposed solutions to arbitrary exits
16	Ensure all Community Shelter guests receive case management support.	Agree	Seeking Council direction on proposed solutions to case mgmt.
17	Verify Community Shelter Contractor performance metrics regularly.	Agree	Seeking Council recommendation on MSOA changes
18	Establish written procedures for reviewing guest suspension & expulsions.	Agree	Seeking Council recommendations on guest suspension/expulsions
19	Regularly review shelter guest feedback.	Agree	Will review feedback & investigate a direct feedback mechanism

*Detailed recommendations and implementation actions can be seen in the full audit report.

Questions?

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