

Permanent Supportive Housing Needs Assessment Jefferson County

March 2022

Executive Summary

While housing is the solution to homelessness, for many individuals and families experiencing [chronic homelessness](#), housing alone will not prevent future episodes of homelessness. Supportive housing, in partnership with permanent rental subsidies, allow for people with significant barriers to stabilize in their housing. Permanent supportive housing not only provides residents the opportunity to maintain relationships with their mental health providers, primary care providers, and family contacts, but provides the space in which to thrive. Jefferson County is a safer community when all of its residents are housed and have sufficient supports to maintain that housing.

By developing permanent supportive housing (PSH) at scale, Jefferson County is in a unique position within the Denver Metro area to resolve and end chronic homelessness within the community. Unlike neighboring counties where chronic homelessness is overwhelming its public systems, data within Jefferson County suggests that ending the housing crisis for those experiencing chronic homelessness is achievable.

This document is intended to be a tool to help support developers, municipalities, and local non-profits as they pursue permanent housing solutions for people experiencing chronic homelessness.

Document Outline:

- What is Permanent Supportive Housing?
- Benefits of Permanent Supportive Housing
- Existing Inventory of Permanent Supportive Housing in Jefferson County
- Chronic Homelessness in Jefferson County
- Identification of the Unmet Need in Jefferson County for Permanent Supportive Housing

Thank you for the time and commitment of the thoughtful non-profit, government, and faith-based leaders comprising the Supportive Housing Workgroup of the Heading Home Committee for drafting this document.

What is Permanent Supportive Housing?

Permanent supportive housing is an housing model and intervention that combines rental assistance with voluntary support services to address the needs of chronically homeless individuals who often face the most complex challenges to live with stability, autonomy and dignity. [Permanent supportive housing](#) allows people with one or more serious disabling conditions to stabilize their housing and address underlying conditions that often have gone untreated for many years. The combination of housing and supportive services creates a synergy that allows residents to take steps toward recovery and independence.

The [Housing First](#) philosophy, which lies at the heart of effective permanent supportive housing models, values flexibility, individualized supports, client choice and autonomy. Housing First does *not* mean housing *only*. Supportive services within the housing are designed to build independent living and tenancy skills and connect people with community-based health care, treatment and services. These services *in combination with* a permanent rental subsidy can end the cycle of homelessness for our most vulnerable community members.

Benefits of Permanent Supportive Housing

Permanent supportive housing has shown to be an effective and evidence-based housing model that can end the cycles of chronic homelessness. The model also has a cost benefit to our community as a whole. According to one [groundbreaking study](#) on the Denver Social Impact Bond Initiative, permanent supportive housing lowered public costs associated with the use of crisis services such as shelters, hospitals, jails and prisons. Research cited in this article includes:

- After two years of living in permanent supportive housing, 81% of participants remained stably housed
- After three years:
 - 77% of participants remained stably housed
 - 34% reduction in police contacts and a 40% reduction in arrests
 - 65% decrease in the use of detoxification facilities
 - 40% average reduction in shelter visits and 35% reduction in number of days at shelter

Existing Supportive Housing Inventory in Jefferson County

The table below includes a list of existing permanent supportive housing options in Jefferson County as of April 2021.

Organization (Program)	Subpopulation Served	Funding Source	# of Units	Project Based or Scattered Site
Jefferson Center(DOH State Housing Vouchers)	Chronically Homeless, Individuals or Families, Very Low-Income (30% AMI)	Division of Housing	49	Scattered Site

Jefferson Center (DOH State Housing Vouchers-Yarrow Gardens)	Chronically Homeless, Individuals or Families, Very Low-Income (30% AMI)	One Home Referral	10	Project Based
Jefferson Center (DOH Metro One)	Chronically Homeless, Individuals or Families, Very Low-Income (30% AMI)	One Home Referral	74	Scattered Site
Family Tree (Bonus Program DOH Metro One)	Chronically Homeless, Individuals or Families, Very Low-Income (30% AMI)	One Home Referral	36	Scattered Site
Family Tree (Brookview)	Chronically Homeless, Individuals or Families, Very Low-Income (30% AMI)	One Home Referral	36	Scattered Site
Family Tree (Eaton St)	Literally Homeless, Families, Very Low-Income (30% AMI)	One Home Referral	7	Project Based
Family Tree (Demo)	Chronically Homeless, Individuals or Families, Very Low-Income (30% AMI)	One Home Referral	10	Scattered Site

Inventory Summary:

While the 222 units listed above are prioritized for Jefferson County, only 17 are dedicated for Jefferson County residents, the Jefferson Center Yarrow Gardens Project and the Family Tree Eaton St. Project. All housing opportunities listed above are available to anyone eligible within the Metro Denver [Continuum of Care](#) (CoC), however these organizations attempt to prioritize Jefferson County residents.

Additionally, these units are most often fully occupied with little to no turnover. On average [nationally](#), approximately 15% of permanent supportive housing units turnover annually. Because of this low turnover rate and lack of units dedicated for Jeffco residents, the current inventory does not meet the need this housing resource. The current inventory only keeps those who have previously experienced homelessness from becoming homeless again.

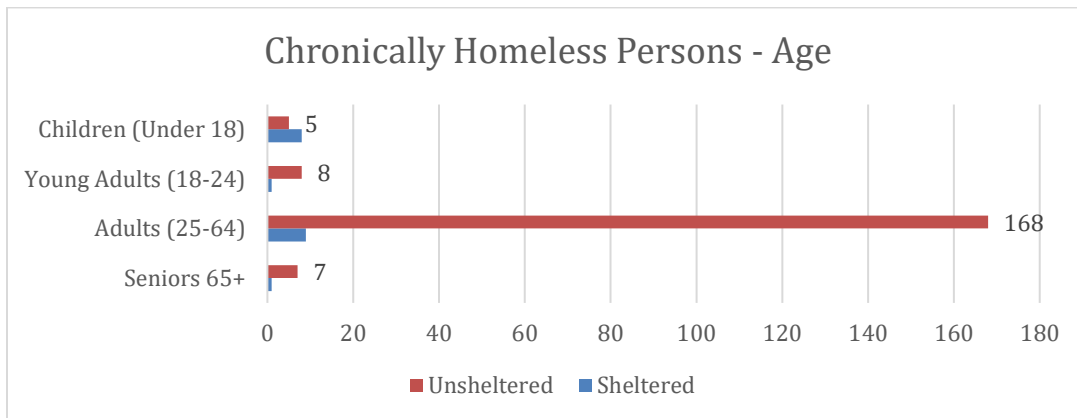
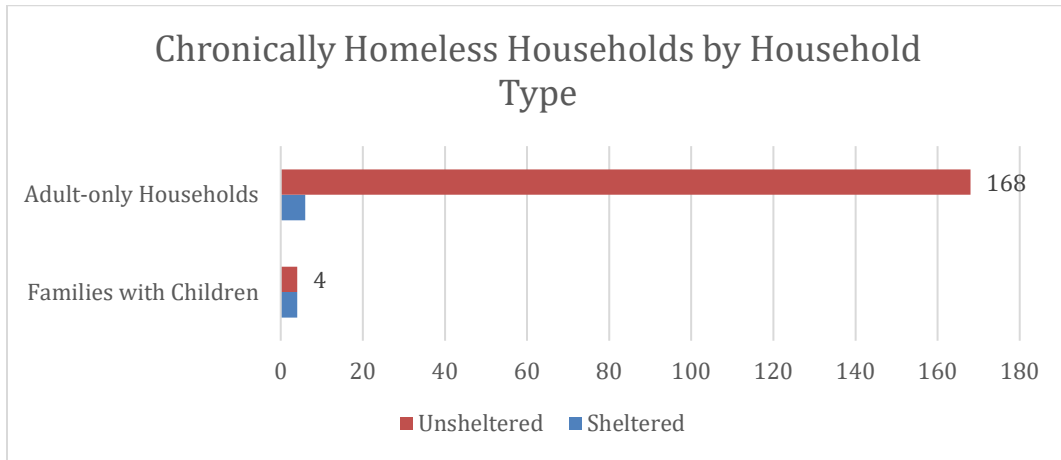
Chronic Homeless Population in Jefferson County

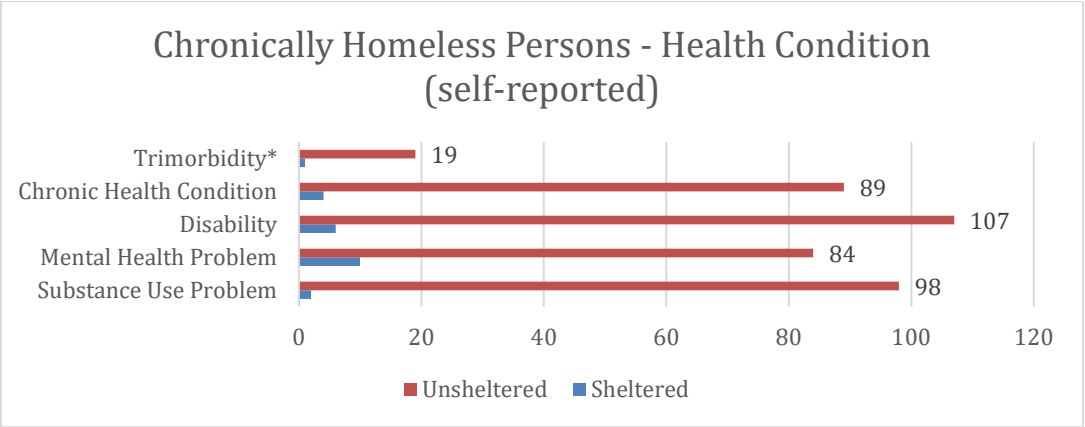
As described above, permanent supportive housing is best suited and targeted for people experiencing *chronic* homelessness. As such, the data points below provide more information on the chronically homeless population in Jefferson County. In August 2019 a month-long census count (Comprehensive Homeless Count) was completed throughout Jefferson County¹. Key data was collected on demographics, subpopulations and conditions of residents experiencing chronic homelessness.

The below charts illustrate data collected from 2019 count. The numbers next to the red bars represent the percentage of *unsheltered* persons/households in that respective category. Persons living in unsheltered settings (versus emergency shelters) are typically more vulnerable to illness, injury, violence

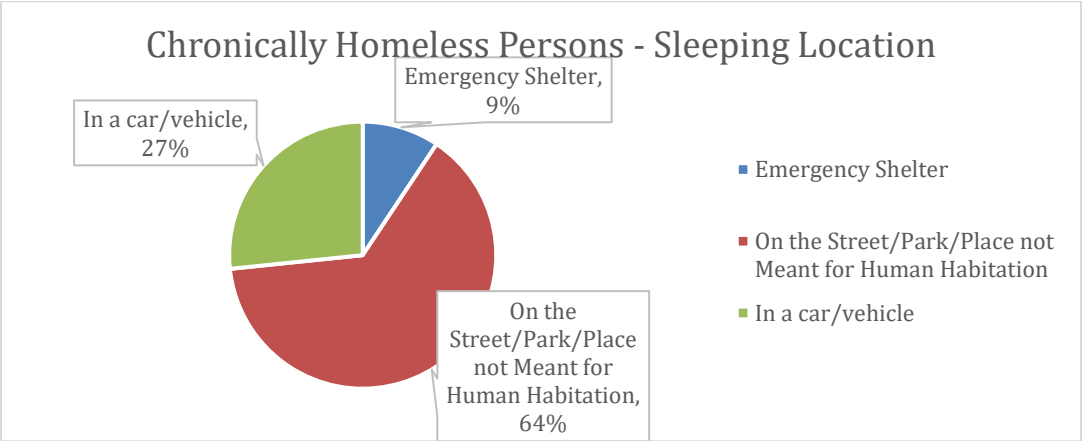
¹ 2019 Comprehensive Homeless Count [2019 JeffCo Comprehensive Survey Final Report March3 1.pdf \(arvada.org\)](#)

and unsanitary conditions and are not as likely be well connected with services as those living in sheltered settings. All data is self-reported. As a result, it's likely that more stigmatized data points, such as those involving health conditions, are underreported.





*Trimorbidity= psychiatric disorder, substance use disorder and other chronic health condition



Summary of Chronic Homeless Population in Jefferson County:

In August of 2019, there were 214 people identified as chronically homeless. Of those experiencing chronic homelessness, 194 (91%) of Jefferson County residents were living unsheltered at the time they were counted. The majority of those households were single adults who identified as male. For the purpose of this survey, disability was defined by having a physical or mental impairment that

substantially limits one or more major life activities. A chronic health condition is a condition that lasts one year or more and requires ongoing medical attention or limits activities of daily living or both. Approximately two out of every three persons over 18 surveyed (62%) reported having at least one disabling condition.

Unmet Need for Permanent Supportive Housing in Jefferson County

Of the literally homeless persons counted in the Comprehensive Count (668), 32% were chronically homeless. Literally homeless is defined as an individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, meaning it:

1. Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation; or
2. Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs); or
3. Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

Summary of Data from Jefferson County 2019 Homelessness Count	
Literal Homelessness Persons	668
Literal Homelessness Households	504
Chronically Homeless Individuals	214
Chronically Homeless Households	200

Jefferson County’s current permanent supportive housing options within the community are currently occupied and have minimal turnover. The current permanent supportive housing inventory in Jefferson County cannot meet the demand of the current chronic homeless population. In Jefferson County, it is essential to develop new permanent supportive housing units to meet the current demand as well as future demands. According to recent [Point in Time](#) data, the chronic homeless community has increased annually by 10 people a year in Jefferson County.

Summary of Unmet Needs in Jefferson County:

In order to meet the current permanent supportive housing needs of unsheltered, chronically homeless households in Jefferson County, a minimum of 150-200 units are needed immediately. In order to meet future demands, 20 additional units are needed annually, this in addition to the typical turnover that happens each year.

Additional Units Needed to Address Chronic Homelessness	
Immediately	150-200

Annually Thereafter	20
Annual Increase in Chronically Homeless Per Year	10.33 average (past 3y)

Conclusion

The benefits of Permanent Supportive Housing have been clearly identified and outlined throughout this document. However, in order to develop Permanent Supportive Housing in Jefferson County, more information is still needed in the areas of regulatory, policy, financing barriers as well as market trends. Research from the [Boulder County Permanent Supportive Housing Study \(2016\)](#) may assist Jefferson County in further identifying both long-term benefits and barriers to implementation. Creating additional permanent supportive housing units for Jefferson County residents will not only increase the quality of life for those households' receiving assistance, it will decrease public costs associated with homelessness and have a positive impact on the livelihood of the entire Jefferson County community.