

Houston, Texas

Community Encampment Report



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Submitted by:
Lauren Dunton
Kimberly Burnett
Rachel Jollie
Jill Khadduri
Abt Associates

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About This Report

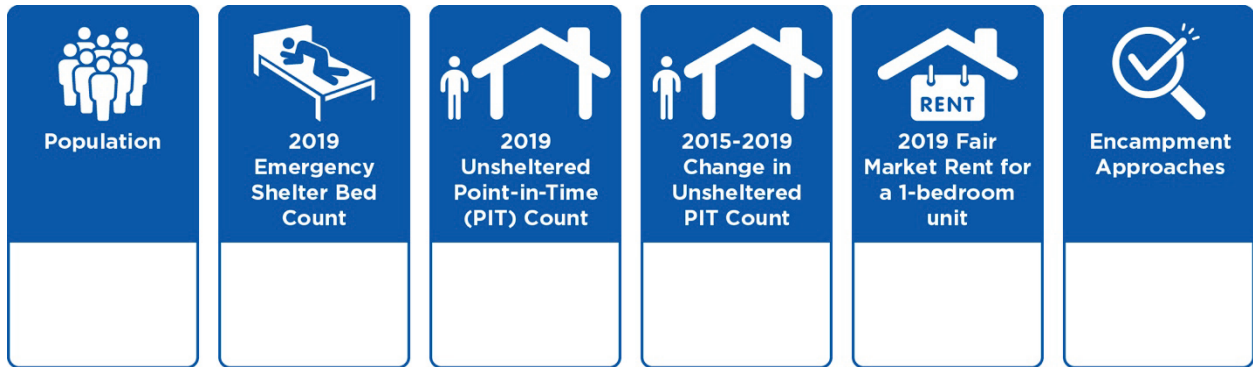
The community encampment reports are among the products of a study called *Exploring Homelessness Among People Living in Encampments and Associated Costs*. The study is sponsored by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

In the fall of 2019, Abt Associates conducted site visits to four communities to collect information about each community's response to encampments and the costs associated with those responses. The study team met with stakeholders involved in encampment response, including city staff, nonprofit outreach workers, and nonprofit organizations. In each community, the study team conducted observations of encampments and interviewed two people who have lived in encampments. In addition to this report, community encampment reports are available for Chicago, Illinois; San Jose, California; and Tacoma, Washington.

CONTENTS

Description of Houston Encampments	1
Encampments in Houston.....	1
Description of encampments	2
Characteristics of people living in Houston encampments	3
Stakeholders Involved in Encampment Responses	5
City departments	5
Mayor’s Office for Homeless Initiatives	5
Health Department.....	5
Police Department	5
Solid Waste Department.....	5
Fire Department.....	5
Homeless services providers.....	5
Business partners.....	6
Houston’s Encampment Response	7
Encampment response strategy	7
Cleanings and deep cleanings	7
Outreach to encampment residents	7
Closure of Wheeler encampment.....	8
Plan to close the Chartres encampment	8
Changes to homeless system in response to encampments	8
Public Response to Encampments	10
Public and business reactions	10
City ordinances.....	10
Encampment Costs in Houston	11
Overall spending	11
Spending by activity.....	11
Spending by stakeholder group	13
Funding for encampment activities	14
Spending on the Wheeler Street encampment closure	16

Description of Houston Encampments



Encampments in Houston

In the past decade, encampments in Houston have been small, densely populated, tented encampments scattered throughout the city, mostly underneath highways and along the bayous. Those encampments received little public attention and were generally allowed to remain. Despite overall declines in unsheltered homelessness across Harris County, in 2016 three major encampments emerged in downtown Houston under highway overpasses in the city's downtown core. Those locations protect encampment residents from wind and rain. Currently, the city estimates that approximately 300 people live in Houston encampments.

The growth in downtown Houston encampments can be attributed to several factors.

- The increased redevelopment of vacant properties in the Midtown and Downtown regions of Houston where people experiencing unsheltered homelessness used to sleep. The development of the green spaces along the bayou and recent flooding of those low-lying areas during hurricanes and other major storms also removed another area where people experiencing unsheltered homelessness used to stay.
- The failure of the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) to enforce the camping bans on their land under highway overpasses around Houston. TXDOT now contracts with the City of Houston to maintain and clean many of those areas, but the agreement provides for only general maintenance, such as landscaping and trash removal.
- An increase in the visibility of illicit drug use among people experiencing homelessness. Some stakeholders attribute the emergence of encampments to an increase in drug use, saying that encampments provide a community in which the use of illegal drugs is accepted. Other stakeholders say that encampments may simply be easy targets for people selling drugs.

In 2016, three main encampments existed in downtown Houston: Wheeler Street (closed in 2018), Chartres, and Hamilton/Pierce. Stakeholders noted the presence of other encampments, which do not receive as much attention because of their smaller size and lesser impact on the community.

Definition of Encampment

The City of Houston does not have an official definition of an *encampment*. All agencies involved in the city's encampment strategy defined encampments as having multiple structures, collections of personal belongings, and a sense of community or permanency. The biggest disagreement was on the number of people that constituted an encampment: a minimum of 3 or a minimum of 8.

Description of encampments

Houston's largest and most visible encampments occupy TXDOT property below highway underpasses. Those encampments receive the bulk of the city's response and services and are in the Downtown and Midtown districts—primarily commercial areas of the city.

Wheeler encampment. From 2016 until late 2018, the Wheeler encampment occupied TXDOT property under Highway 69 near Wheeler Avenue and Caroline Street in the Midtown area of Houston. According to stakeholders, the Wheeler encampment had more than 80 tents in close proximity to one another before its closure. Sanitary conditions at Wheeler were difficult to maintain, but dumpsters and portable toilets were available for residents to use. In November 2018, the city closed the Wheeler encampment, offered all remaining residents shelter or other housing, and fenced off the land. As of late 2019, a few scattered tents remain in the vicinity outside the fenced border of the original encampment location.

Chartres encampment. The Chartres encampment occupies an area under Highway 69, between Chartres and Hamilton Street. Parking for Minute Maid Park, Houston's professional baseball stadium, borders the Chartres encampment on both sides. This location is less than one-tenth of a mile from two homeless service providers—SEARCH and the Star of Hope men's shelter—as well as the Loaves and Fishes Soup Kitchen. Chartres' tents are concentrated between Commerce and Ruiz Street, on a single block with roughly 40 to 50 tents, and then thin out over the next few blocks. Most nights, a number of people also bed down in sleeping bags along the sidewalks on Commerce Street, moving their belongings in the morning.

Nearly all of the structures are camping tents designed for two or three people, with a few larger, family-sized tents mixed through the encampment. Most tents are reinforced with blankets or tarps. Often, bicycles and coolers stand outside the tents. The Downtown Management District provided a portable toilet and dumpster for Chartres encampment residents to use. Litter—mostly aluminum cans and plastic grocery bags—lies in the gutters and in the spaces between tents. A few dogs live in the encampment. Many implementation partners reported high rates of violent and drug-related crimes at the encampment in recent months, including the sale of synthetic marijuana (Kush) and methamphetamines and gun violence.

During the day, many encampment residents who live in the heart of the encampment walk from tent to tent, visiting people living in neighboring tents and sitting on chairs. Stakeholders report that this more densely populated part of the encampment has a clear social structure. Residents socialize with each other and also greet outreach workers and members of the police department's Homeless Outreach Team when they visit the encampment. Around midday, some encampment residents cross Chartres St. to get lunch at

the Loaves and Fishes Soup Kitchen. Some people living in the farther corners of the encampments keep to themselves, but they benefit from the safety of the large number of other people living in proximity.

Hamilton/Pierce encampment. The Hamilton/Pierce encampment occupies a grassy hill under the intersection of Highways 69 and 45, less than a mile from the Chartres encampment and 2 blocks from a public transit station. The entire encampment—about 15 tents—occupies about the area of a single block and is one-half the size of Chartres. Many of the tents, lined up in neat rows, have improvised doormats. The encampment does not have a portable toilet but does have trash cans that seem to be used regularly because virtually no trash is on the ground. The noise of overhead traffic is significant, but that does not prevent encampment residents from congregating in a circle together to talk and share meals. Pierce also has at least one resident dog that greets people as they approach the encampment.



Pierce encampment, October 27, 2019.

Living in the Pierce Encampment

A current resident of the Pierce encampment told how she had moved to the encampment on the recommendation of a friend when she was no longer able to stay with family. She is working odd jobs to save all her money to rent her own apartment in the private market. In the encampment, she feels she is “definitely part of a community and a family” and she “feels safe here.” She described her role in the encampment as the person who makes sure everyone is fed and who keeps medical supplies and clothes for people who need them.

Other encampments. Smaller encampments exist in the area of Dart Street near Harmony House Inc., a homeless services provider, and the post office, and a small cluster of tents off Broadway huddle along a section of I-45S near the airport. As of late 2019, residents of those encampments receive outreach services, but they are much less the focus of Houston’s efforts than are the larger encampments.

Characteristics of people living in Houston encampments

At both the Pierce and Chartres encampments, residents are about 60 percent African-American, and more than 70 percent are male. People between the ages of 25 and 50 make up about one-half of the population, and about one-fourth are between the ages of 51 and 60. Outreach workers noted, however, that new people moving into the encampments tend to be younger than past residents. Most encampment residents are single, living alone in one of the encampment tents.

A very high percentage of Houston’s encampment residents have significant barriers to housing. According to assessment data entered into the local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), 96 percent of Chartres residents have at least one disabling condition, such as a mental illness (88 percent), substance use disorder (65 percent), developmental disability (48 percent), or physical disability (77 percent). At the Pierce encampment, 98 percent of residents have a disabling condition, including mental illness (91 percent), substance use disorder (87 percent), physical disability (83 percent), or developmental disability (43 percent). Those conditions may prevent encampment residents from entering city emergency shelters, vacant beds are available every night. Stakeholders believe that shelter sobriety requirements may discourage encampment residents from going there or cause them to be turned away if they try. Some encampment residents may perceive that being in shelter would exacerbate their mental illness symptoms. More than three-fourths of the encampment residents are reported to have chronic patterns of homelessness.

Several stakeholders said that some encampment residents are not originally from Houston. They report that, in the past year, people have been arriving in the Houston encampments from other locations, hoping to access housing assistance.

Implementation Partners Involved in Encampment Responses

City departments

The City of Houston does not have funding specifically for addressing homeless encampments; however, several city agencies contribute significantly—both financially and with staff time—to the city’s response to encampments.

Mayor’s Office for Homeless Initiatives

The Mayor’s Office for Homeless Initiatives is responsible for coordinating the city’s response to encampments. They also manage the storage unit where residents of encampments are permitted to store their property for 90 days after a major encampment cleaning.

Health Department

The Health Department oversees the deep encampment cleanings that occur roughly once per quarter at the direction of the mayor’s office. First, the city’s Health Authority (the physician who oversees the Health Department) inspects the encampments and authorizes the deep cleanings. At the conclusion of the cleaning, the Health Authority inspects the encampment to confirm that conditions are sanitary (more information on what happens during deep cleanings is in the discussion of Houston’s encampment response strategy on page 8).

Police Department

The Houston Police Department (HPD) created a team specifically to assist people experiencing homelessness, the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT). The team consists of a sergeant, six officers trained in crisis intervention, and three case managers with training in mental health services. Although the HOT has the authority to make arrests if they observe illegal activity, the intent of their involvement is to build rapport with encampment residents, connect them with services, and ensure their safety. They focus their efforts on outreach and establishing connections with people living in encampment settings, including offering connections to shelter and other available assistance.

Distinct from the HOT team, the HPD’s Differential Response Teams (DRTs) provide a law enforcement presence for cleaning crews during all encampment cleanups. The DRTs also have sometimes enforced the city’s encampment ordinance by removing property from the encampment that exceeds each person’s legal limit of 27 cubic feet of personal belongings.

Solid Waste Department

The Solid Waste Department plays a major role in the deep cleanings of encampments. The department engages a biohazard cleaning crew to conduct the deep cleanings ordered by the city’s Health Authority. During those cleanings, department personnel also remove trash and litter from encampments and provide clear trash bags to encampment residents for storing their property during cleanups.

Fire Department

The Fire Department responds frequently to emergency calls, both from encampment residents and from concerned passersby. A vast majority are calls for emergency medical services, although during the winter months, the department also receives calls to address open fires and trash burning.

Homeless services providers

The *Houston Coalition for the Homeless*, the Continuum of Care’s lead agency, funds and coordinates the efforts of several nonprofit organizations to provide outreach and assistance to people living in encampments. *SEARCH* and *Star of Hope* outreach workers primarily focus on “pre-navigation,” assisting Chartres and Pierce encampment residents in preparing to enter shelter or permanent housing, including obtaining their personal documentation. *Houston Recovery Center’s* primary focus is addiction treatment. The center employs an outreach worker who coordinates with Star of Hope and SEARCH staff

to inform encampment residents of available services to address their addiction, including its Sobering Center. *Healthcare for the Homeless* supports a nurse practitioner who provides low-level care during outreach at the encampments, including blood pressure checks, basic assessments of medical needs, and wound cleaning. She also makes appointments for encampment residents to visit health clinics for further medical treatment.

Business partners

In 2016, the mayor requested that the two of Houston’s Management Districts, Downtown and Midtown, assist with more regular cleaning of the downtown encampments. Created by the Texas legislature, Management Districts receive funding through taxes and assessments on all properties within a designated geography, aside from single-family detached residences. The Management District’s mission is to supplement and provide improvements to existing public services to local residents and businesses. In addition to the activities described below, both Management Districts currently fund private security to help deter the establishment of additional encampments in their sections of the city.

- The ***Downtown Management District*** provides dumpsters and portable toilets to the Chartres Encampment. The organization is heavily involved in the twice-weekly cleanings of encampments. A team of 11—including a project manager, team lead, and trash truck driver—provide surface-level cleaning at Pierce and Chartres on Mondays and Fridays. Downtown Management District staff operate ATLVs (all-terrain litter vacuums)—ride-on street vacuum cleaners—for trash pickup at encampments. During the quarterly deep cleanings conducted at the direction of the Health Authority, the Downtown Management District is responsible for transporting the personal property of encampment residents to the city-run storage facility.
- The ***Midtown Management District*** helps staff the quarterly deep cleanings of the encampments and subsequently transports encampment residents’ personal property to the city’s storage facility. Before the Wheeler Street encampment closure, the Midtown Management District provided a dumpster at the encampment that was emptied twice a week.

Houston's Encampment Response

Encampment response strategy

Houston's encampment strategy focuses almost exclusively on the three locations with multiple tents in close proximity to the city's core. Houston's approach to addressing the largest encampments is clearance and closure with notice to residents and referrals to housing and services. The city takes a more tolerant approach toward smaller, less visible encampments. This section summarizes Houston's past and current encampment responses.

Cleanings and deep cleanings

A key component of the Houston response to encampments is twice-weekly cleanings of the largest encampments, Chartres and Hamilton/Pierce. During the cleanings, the portable toilet and dumpster are emptied, and the trash around the encampment is picked up. For these short cleanings that take only a few hours, encampment residents do not have to leave or move their belongings. Outreach staff and HOT members are present for the cleanings, offering assistance and referrals for other services.

The second component of the response is deep cleanings, which occur when the mayor requests that the Health Authority inspect the encampments. Deep cleanings began at Wheeler and Chartres in 2016. Typically, deep cleanings occur quarterly. An inspection that results in a deep cleaning triggers a temporary closure to facilitate the cleaning process. Seventy-two hours before a deep cleaning, notices are posted in English and Spanish to alert encampment residents that they must remove all of their property from the area during the cleaning. If belongings remain at the time of the deep cleaning, they are removed as trash. Outreach workers and the HOT team also notify encampment residents of upcoming deep cleanings to ensure they are present to move their belongings.

On the day of the deep cleaning, many stakeholders are on site at the encampment, including staff from the mayor's Office of Homeless Initiatives, the Health Authority, Department of Health, Department of Solid Waste, HOT and DRT staff from HPD, and staff from the Downtown and Midtown Management Districts. If residents cannot or choose not to remove their property, Department of Solid Waste staff provide them with clear plastic bags to store personal property. After inspection for contaminants, Health Department staff tag and bag any belongings that encampment residents want the city to store. The Midtown and Downtown Districts' Management staff transport the property to city storage before any trash removal. Belongings may be stored for up to 90 days, and extensions are possible. The storage facility is open at a set time once a week for people to retrieve their belongings. A bus that transports people experiencing homelessness to different service locations recently added a bus stop near the storage facility to enable people to more easily claim their belongings.

Once residents move their tents and belongings or send property to city storage, staff from the Department of Solid Waste's contractor powerwash the sidewalks and other paved areas; remove contaminated dirt; and vacuum sewers, drains, manholes, and sidewalk gutters of human waste and trash. If necessary, new dirt or limestone is delivered to recondition the ground. Deep cleanings take from 6 to 12 hours. The Health Authority completes a final inspection before allowing encampment residents to return to the location.

Outreach to encampment residents

Outreach workers from SEARCH, Star of Hope, and the Recovery Center use a progressive approach to build rapport with encampment residents. Assessments of the needs and eligibility of encampment residents occur first, and people are added to a by-name list maintained for each encampment. Outreach workers then use the by-name list to prioritize pre-navigation with encampment residents, primarily

focusing on assisting people in obtaining their eligibility documents for housing placements.¹ A Police Services Officer is in charge of helping people living in encampments with acquiring identification cards. The police-issued identification cards can be used to access housing search assistance while encampment residents are working on obtaining other official forms of identification (e.g., birth certificates, Social Security cards).

The outreach workers also transport encampment residents to appointments at other service providers. They can access a van to take people to obtain their identification documents. The outreach staff also serve as housing navigators, working to connect encampment residents with housing opportunities available to them based on their assessments. The outreach teams sometimes include caseworkers from the Sobriety Center and a nurse practitioner from Health Care for the Homeless.

Closure of Wheeler encampment

In 2018, the City of Houston dedicated significant resources to clearing and closing the Wheeler encampment through the Homeless Housing Initiative. This targeted housing initiative focused on providing intensive housing navigation and case management services to move people from the Wheeler encampment into permanent housing. Between March and August 2018, The Way Home coordinated efforts that succeeded in housing 58 percent of the original residents of the Wheeler encampment in permanent supportive housing. Another 15 percent of encampment residents started the navigation process, often accessing dedicated beds in emergency shelters (“bridge beds”) that allowed them to leave the encampment before securing permanent housing. Four months before the planned closure, homeless services providers engaged in frequent outreach to generate a by-name list of 73 individuals residing in the encampment. Forty-two people from the by-name list worked with four housing navigators to find permanent housing. During that period, 16 people could not be located consistently by the navigators.² In early November 2018, TXDOT fenced off the encampment site to prevent people from gathering there again. The approximately 30 people at the Wheeler encampment at the time of the closure were offered temporary housing, but about one-half opted to leave and are thought to have moved to another encampment. Overall, the city considered the initiative a success and is using it as a model to close the Chartres encampment.

Plan to close the Chartres encampment

Under Housing Harvey’s Homeless (H3), a \$2.5 million initiative to assist households experiencing homelessness, stakeholders are working toward eventually clearing and closing the Chartres encampment. As of the beginning of October 2019, outreach workers created a by-name list of all people residing in the encampment. They then began assessing Chartres residents, using a city-developed prioritization tool. During a defined time limit—likely between 90 and 120 days—individuals on the by-name list will receive priority for housing referral, working with outreach workers and housing navigators to identify permanent housing. Referrals can be to permanent supportive housing or permanent housing that will eventually be converted to a housing choice voucher provided by one of the local public housing agencies. Currently, the Houston and Harris County housing authorities have homeless preferences, as do some of the HUD-assisted multifamily properties in Houston. The city aims to fence off the Chartres encampment area once all current residents receive an offer of housing.

¹ Prioritization criteria include chronicity, physical or mental health conditions, substance use, criminal justice involvement, domestic violence, and lack of income.

² Executive Summary of the Homeless Housing Initiative for the Wheeler Encampment provided by the Special Assistance to the Mayor for Homeless Initiatives.

Changes to the homeless system in response to encampments

Houston is currently planning to open a housing navigation center, a temporary emergency shelter with low barriers to entry and intensive services. The new facility will serve people currently living in encampment settings or otherwise unsheltered and who are referred through outreach workers for assistance. The navigation center will be open during the day, provide meals, and have a curfew that is much later than the curfews at Houston's current shelters. Although not requiring sobriety, the navigation center will likely not allow substance use on the premises. The navigation center will offer temporary shelter in a consistent location for people experiencing homelessness to use while they work with staff to identify permanent housing and employment. The city expects to open the navigation center in late 2020, and it will operate for a 2-year pilot period. One stakeholder said that, depending on the location of the navigation center, it may not be as appealing as encampments that are close to other homeless services organizations.

Public Response to Encampments

Public and business reactions

Although encampments are not new in Houston, large, publicly visible encampments are a relatively recent development. In the past 3 years, responding to encampments has been an important political issue. The Midtown and Downtown Management Districts are funded by commercial property taxes, and business owners pressure them to clear encampments. Stakeholders say that in response to encampments, the city and businesses have increased their spending on security near popular public spaces, such as the public library and the Greyhound bus station, where many of Houston’s homeless people spend time during the day.

Despite the public’s generally negative reaction to encampments, many Houstonians are involved in unofficial services to the encampments, mostly in the form of feeding and material donations. Many agencies involved in the city’s coordinated efforts to address encampments note that the donations are excessive and frequently conflict with the goal of housing people experiencing homelessness. Mayor Turner campaigned to redirect Houstonians’ well-meaning gifts to donations to local outreach organizations and the Health Department, which hosts a program designed to help coordinate and improve the quality of charitable feeding. Most stakeholders report that the efforts to address unorganized charitable giving have not been successful, however.

Public Support of Encampments

Each weekend, dozens of organizations visit the encampments and provide food to encampment residents. One outreach worker said that some former encampment residents who are now permanently housed in other parts of the city return to the encampments on the weekend to access the free meals provided by various groups and organizations. The meal distribution generates a significant amount of trash at the encampments that then needs to be cleaned by city and management staff each week.

City ordinances

The City of Houston has two ordinances that apply to homeless individuals: an encampment ordinance and a charitable feeding ordinance. Neither of the ordinances is being enforced at this time.

Encampment ordinance: The encampment ordinance authorizes police to give written warnings and then arrest individuals who are part of any encampment on public property. The ordinance defines an encampment as the unauthorized use of materials for a temporary structure meant for habitation, use of a heating device, or the accumulation of personal property beyond what can fit within 27 cubic feet (medical devices are not included). Encampment residents also are allowed to possess one bicycle and one tent.

Tammy Korh et al. v. City of Houston was filed in civil court on May 12, 2017, on behalf of three homeless individuals seeking to overturn Houston’s encampment ordinance. In August 2019, the ACLU of Texas and the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty withdrew from the case. The courts are expected to rule in favor of the City of Houston and dismiss the lawsuit. Pending the resolution of the lawsuit, the encampment ordinance is not being enforced.

Charitable feeding ordinance: This ordinance bans the distribution of free food on public property by an organization or individual without the written consent of “individual(s) with lawful control of the property.” The ordinance created the voluntary City of Houston Recognized Charitable Food Service Provider Program to encourage coordination with the city’s homeless outreach efforts and safe-food handling practices. Food Not Bombs (FNB) is currently challenging the charitable feeding ordinance in court.

Encampment Costs in Houston

Houston expends significant resources to implement the City’s encampment response. This section summarizes the costs associated with this response, including overall spending, spending across implementation partners, by type of activity, and by source of funding.³

Overall spending

The total estimated cost of Houston’s encampment response for one year⁴ was almost \$3.4 million (in 2019 dollars). To put this in context, the expenditure amounted to \$1.47 per resident of Houston and \$2,102 per unsheltered person in HUD’s 2019 point-in-time (PIT) count (see Exhibit 1). It is *not* the cost per encampment resident, as the unsheltered number includes people staying by themselves rather than in groups in locations with tents or other structures. Stakeholders we interviewed in Houston estimate that the average number of people in an encampment per night is roughly 20 percent of unsheltered homeless people, or 300 people. If that is accurate, the cost of the encampment response in 2019 was \$11,309 per encampment resident. As a point of comparison, the cost of a voucher for a one-bedroom apartment in Houston is estimated at \$963 per month (\$11,556 per year).⁵ The total cost of \$3.4 million does not include the cost of shelter stays for encampment residents referred to shelters, as shelter capacity has not been expanded in response to encampments. Encampment-related costs will increase if Houston goes ahead with plans to develop a navigation center as part of the encampment response. This total cost does include the FY 2019 voucher costs of the permanent supportive housing (PSH) units in which former residents of the Wheeler Street encampment were placed when that encampment was closed.

Exhibit 1. Total estimated spending on Houston’s encampment response in FY 2019

Total spending on encampment activities	Population of Houston	Cost per capita	Unsheltered homeless per 2019 PIT	Estimated number of encampment residents in 2019	Cost per unsheltered homeless individual in 2019 PIT
\$ 3,392,823	2,312,717	\$1.47	1,614	300	\$2,102

PIT = point-in-time.

Spending by activity

Of the roughly \$3.4 million spent responding to encampments, about \$1.9 million was for labor and roughly \$1.5 million was for nonlabor costs, including financial assistance to encampment residents (Exhibit 2). Labor costs were primarily associated with the staff and contractors conducting encampment cleanup, members of the police department’s Homeless Outreach Team, and outreach workers from the homeless services system conducting outreach and housing navigation.⁶ Nonlabor costs included new vouchers for permanent supportive housing for former residents of the Wheeler Street encampment, dumpsters, vehicles for the Homeless Outreach Team and other outreach workers, trash bags, a city truck

³ For details on the methodology used to gather and analyze these costs, please see the methodology discussion in Appendix A of the study’s final report, *City Approaches to Encampments and What They Cost*.

⁴ The City of Houston’s FY 2019 was from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, and most of Houston’s implementation partners reported data for that period. A few partners reported data from slightly different periods. In all cases, we have included costs for only the most recent year available.

⁵ This estimate is a weighted average of the payment standards in Houston set by the Houston Housing Authority.

⁶ The value of meals donated to encampments is not included; those data were not available.

for trash removal, trash disposal, a storage facility for encampment residents' belongings, and blankets and hygiene kits for encampment residents.

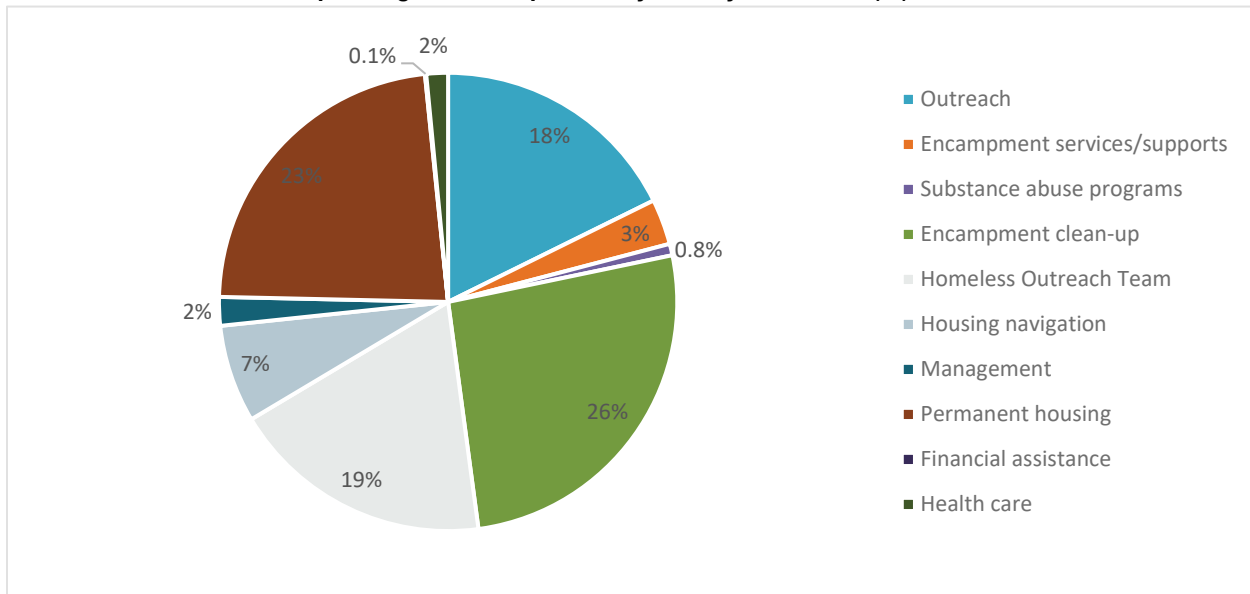
Exhibit 2. Total estimated spending on responding to encampments in FY 2019

	Labor	Nonlabor	Total
Encampment cleanup	\$ 620,186	\$ 267,121	\$ 887,307
Permanent housing	\$ 0	\$ 781,521	\$ 781,521
Homeless Outreach Team (police)	\$ 612,078	\$ 17,536	\$ 629,614
Outreach and engagement	\$ 200,298	\$ 400,264	\$ 600,562
Housing navigation	\$ 233,909	\$ -	\$ 233,909
Encampment supports	\$ 89,648	\$ 19,586	\$ 109,234
Management of encampment response	\$ 68,455	\$ -	\$ 68,455
Provision of health care to encampment residents	\$ 31,465	\$ 20,300	\$ 51,765
Substance abuse assistance	\$ 27,456	\$ -	\$ 27,456
Financial assistance to encampment residents	\$ 0	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
Total	\$ 1,883,495	\$1,509,328	\$ 3,392,823

Exhibit 3 shows that encampment cleanup accounted for the largest share of spending, at 26 percent of total expenditures. That total included routine cleaning, biohazard disposal, and inspections by the Health Authority after cleanups concluded. Permanent housing was the next-largest category of expenditures, at 23 percent of the total. It was for project-based vouchers for residents of the Wheeler Street encampment in FY 2019. The Police Department's Homeless Outreach Team represented the next-largest share of spending, at 19 percent of the total—roughly equal to spending on outreach services, at 18 percent of the total. Related activities included biweekly visits by outreach workers to the Chartres and Hamilton/Pierce encampments. Housing navigation accounted for another 7 percent of spending.

Relatively minimal resources were spent on the remaining activities. Encampment services/supports—which include a portable toilet and dumpster at the Chartres encampment and a police department staff member who issues identification cards to encampment residents—made up 3 percent of spending. Management of encampment response activities by the Department of Housing and Community Development was 2 percent of the total, and health care provided by Healthcare for the Homeless was 2 percent. Substance abuse assistance and financial support for encampment residents in the form of bus passes for those moving from Houston encampments made up the remaining 1 percent.

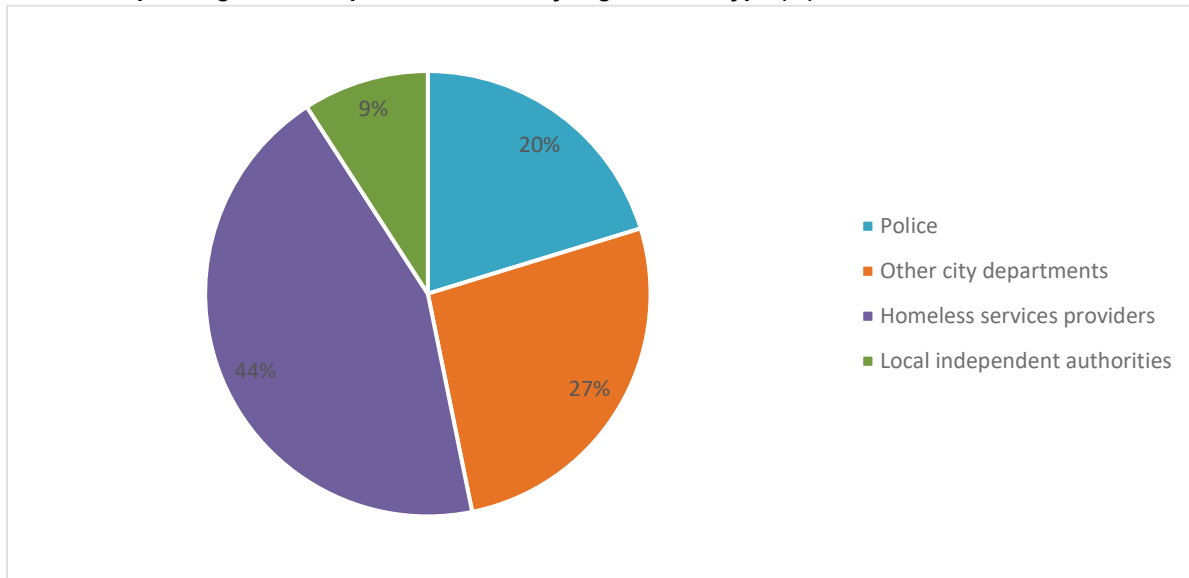
Exhibit 3. Total estimated spending on encampments by activity in FY 2019 (%)



Spending by implementation partners

At least 13 different public agencies and community organizations directly participated in Houston’s response to encampments during FY 2019. These included the Houston police, other city departments, homeless services providers, and local independent authorities (two business management districts). Exhibit 4 shows expenditures amongst each implementation partner group—that is, how much each partner spent. The participating organizations in Houston’s encampment response were not necessarily the same entities that funded these efforts. (Costs by funder are shown later in Exhibits 5 and 6.) Homeless services providers incurred the largest share of expenditures, at about 44 percent (about \$1.7 million). As described in Exhibit 7 below, these activities were funded by a variety of sources. The police incurred about 21 percent of all expenses related to encampment activities at about \$720,000, and other city departments incurred another 18 percent at about \$620,000. The local independent authorities, which are funded by taxes on local residential and commercial properties, expended the remaining 10 percent on encampment activities, at about \$350,000.

Exhibit 4. Spending on encampment activities by organization type (%)



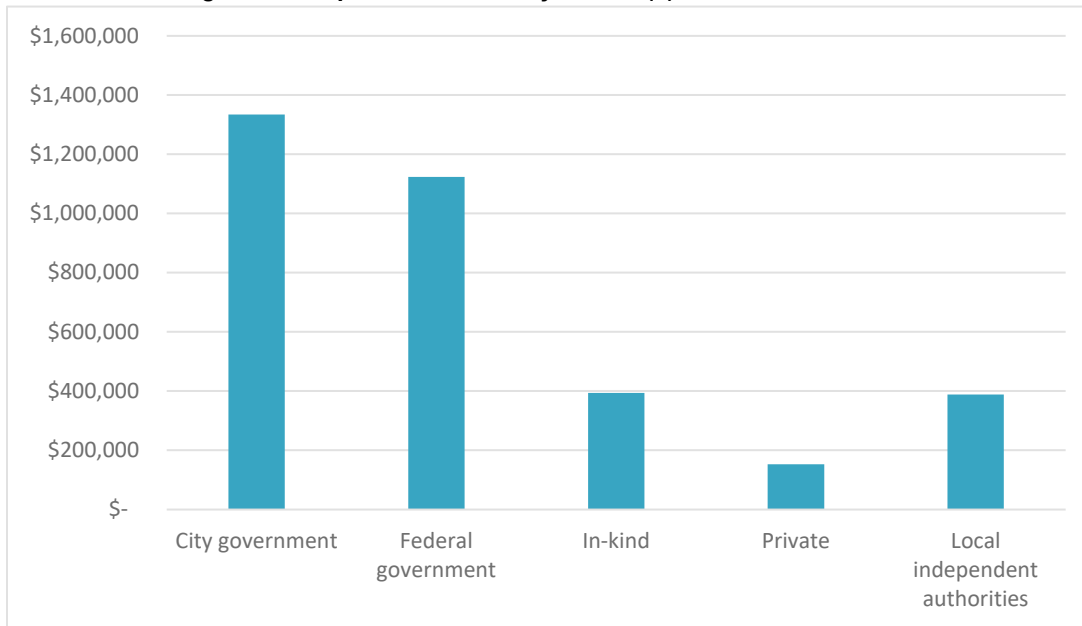
Funding for encampment activities

Exhibits 5 and 6 show the dollar amounts and share of funding for encampment activities by funding source. The City of Houston is the largest funder of the encampment response, spending \$1.3 million, or about 39 percent of the total. Another 17 percent of funding came from private cash donations and in-kind donations combined (5 percent and 12 percent, respectively). A large share of the in-kind donations were Star of Hope’s Love in Action van and supplies distributed by the van to encampment residents, including blankets, water, and hygiene kits. Together, the van and supplies were valued at roughly \$370,000.

The remaining 44 percent of funding came from two sources: the federal government (HUD and HHS, 33 percent⁷) and a local independent authority funded by a special purpose tax fund that covered the costs of encampment cleanups and some encampment supports and services within a specific commercial district (11 percent).

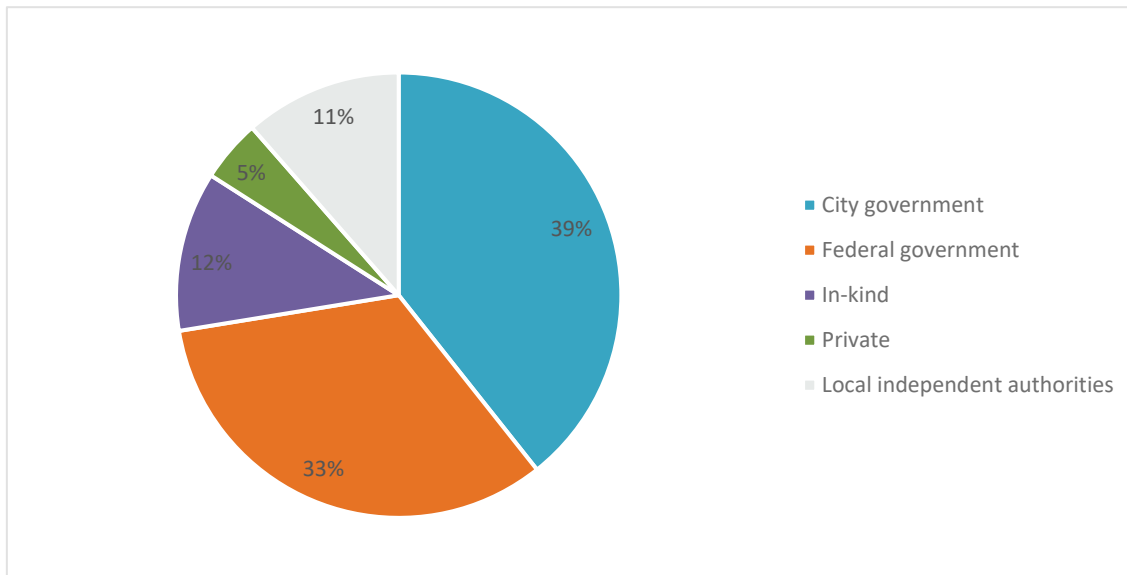
⁷ The large majority of federal funding was from HUD.

Exhibit 5. Funding for encampment activities by source (\$)



The 12 percent of funding from in-kind donations included items such as blankets, hygiene kits, hepatitis A vaccines, and a vehicle for the Homeless Outreach Team. The total cash expenditure on encampment response activities in the past year was about \$3 million.

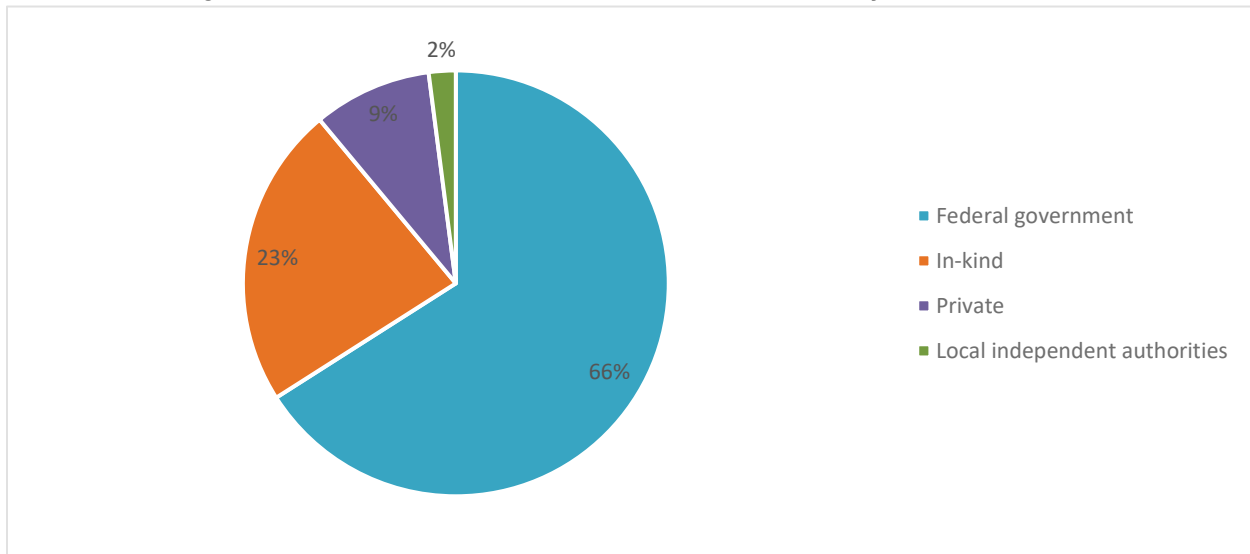
Exhibit 6. Funding for encampment activities by source (%)



The largest share of homeless services providers' activities, 66 percent (Exhibit 7), were funded by the federal government. Most of those funds were allocated through the CoC or the City of Houston. Almost three-fourths of that amount was for the project-based permanent supportive housing vouchers for

Wheeler Street encampment residents. The second largest source of funding for homeless services providers' activities—23 percent—came from in-kind donations. As noted above, virtually all of those donations went toward the Love in Action van and for supplies distributed by the van to encampment residents. Another 9 percent of funding came from private sources (typically raised through providers' fundraising efforts). The last 2 percent of funding came from a business management district, which helped to fund outreach. Although some city departments designated a portion of federal funding for homeless service providers, city departments themselves did not directly fund any of those activities.

Exhibit 7. Funding for homeless service providers' encampment activities by source (%)



Spending on the Wheeler Street encampment closure in 2018

The costs described above include the ongoing costs of the Wheeler Street encampment closure that were incurred in FY 2019—primarily the costs of the PSH vouchers used by former residents of the Wheeler Street encampment but also bridge beds and costs of housing navigation. Estimated costs related to the Wheeler Street encampment closure totaled about \$983,000 in FY 2019.

A number of public agencies and community partners participated in helping to close the Wheeler Street encampment, including the city's Sanitation and Public Health departments, the Midtown Management District, and homeless services providers, including SEARCH, Star of Hope, Salvation Army, and the Coalition for the Homeless, among others. Activities included the following:

- Clearing and deep cleaning the encampment.
- A Public Health department inspection of the encampment after cleaning.
- Security during the process of closing the encampment.
- Providing bridge beds for encampment residents while they waited for permanent housing.
- Housing navigation services for encampment residents.
- Project-based PSH vouchers for 125 encampment residents.

In addition, some encampment residents received bus passes to assist them with transportation to shelter or other housing.

Of the approximate \$983,000 cost incurred in FY 2019, about 80 percent was for bridge beds and PSH. Less than 1 percent was for financial assistance to encampment residents in the form of bus passes, and the remaining 19 percent was for labor. The large majority of labor expenses, 87 percent, comprised housing navigation services offered to encampment residents beginning in March 2018 through the encampment’s closure in late 2018. The remaining labor expenses included encampment cleaning and inspection and security during the process of closing the encampment.

Costs related to the Housing Harvey’s Homeless initiative

In late 2019, Housing Harvey’s Homeless (H³) began spending \$2.5 million to assist people living in the Chartres encampment and other small encampments that emerged after Harvey. The funding, gifted from the State of Qatar, will allow for the Coalition for the Homeless to fund the following activities:

Exhibit 8. H³ Preliminary Estimated Budget

Activity	Cost
Immediate temporary housing	\$531,000
Permanent housing	\$524,400
Housing navigation	\$318,773
Supportive services	\$550,892
Program staff	\$178,000
Administration	\$265,435
Grant administration	\$50,000
Planning	\$81,500
Total	\$ 2,500,000

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Policy Development and Research
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