Office Hours:
COVID-19 Planning and Response

June 5, 2020

Housekeeping

- A recording of today's session, along with the slide deck and a copy of the Chat and Q&A content will be posted to the HUD Exchange within 2-3 business days

- Event information for upcoming Office Hours, along with copies of all materials can be found here:

https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/diseases/#covid-19-webinars-and-office-hours

- To join the webinar via the phone, please call in using:

      1-855-797-9485   Access code: 610 976 677

Chat Feature

Select the Chat icon to make a comment or ask a question.

Be certain the To field is set to **All Participants**

An orange dot on the Chat icon indicates that you have unread messages.
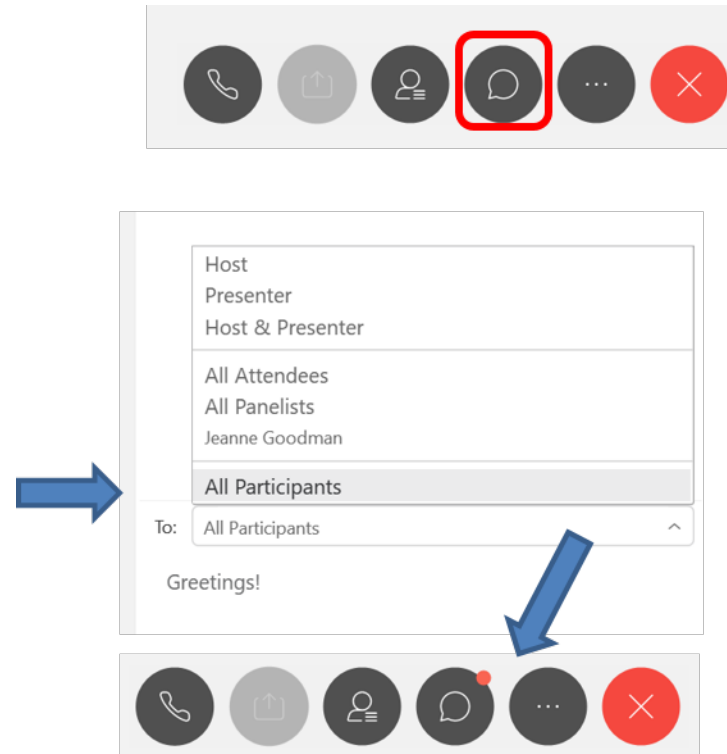
Speakers & Resource Advisors

Department of Housing and Urban Development

- Norm Suchar
- Lisa Coffman
- Brett Esders

- Marlisa Grogan
- Abby Miller
- April Mitchell

- Ebony Rankin
- Aaron Weaver

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- Emily Mosites, PhD MPH- COVID-19 At-Risk Population Task Force, Senior Advisor on Health and Homelessness
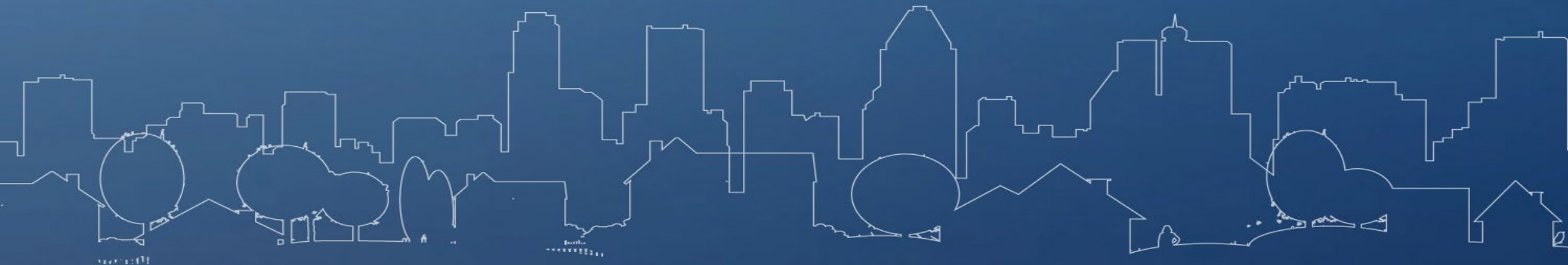
Speakers & Resource Advisors

City of Missoula, Montana

- Theresa Williams, LCSW, Program Manager, Reaching Home, City of Missoula Office of Housing and Community Development

- Amy Allison Thompson, LCSW, Executive Director, Poverello Center, Inc.

- Eran Pehan, MSW, Director, City of Missoula Office of Housing and Community Development

City of Amarillo, Texas

- Julianna Kitten, LCSW, Director of Community Development

MISSOULA, MT

COVID-19 Homelessness Response – Missoula County

June 5, 2020

Presenters:

- Theresa Williams, LCSW
  - Reaching Home Program Manager
  - City of Missoula, Office of Housing and Community Development
    - Lead Entity of Missoula's Coordinated Entry System

- Amy Allison Thompson, LCSW
  - Executive Director
  - Poverello Center, Inc.

- Eran Pehan, MSW
  - Director
  - City of Missoula, Office of Housing and Community Development

Unique Features of Rural Homelessness

- Montana represents one Statewide Continuum of Care – it is comprised of 12 local districts

- Missoula County is District XI – Ravalli, Missoula and Mineral Counties

- 2019 PIT Count
  - Total Statewide: 1343
    - District XI: 367 (27%)
  - Total Statewide Unsheltered: 333
    - District XI: 74 (22%)

- Cover a large geographic area, homelessness is more hidden and therefore undercounted, fewer housing resources, fewer shelters and people travel to larger communities for resources

- Harsh Winters, largest encampment is in a flood zone

- Strong collaboration and social networks, innovative, commitment to working smarter, not harder
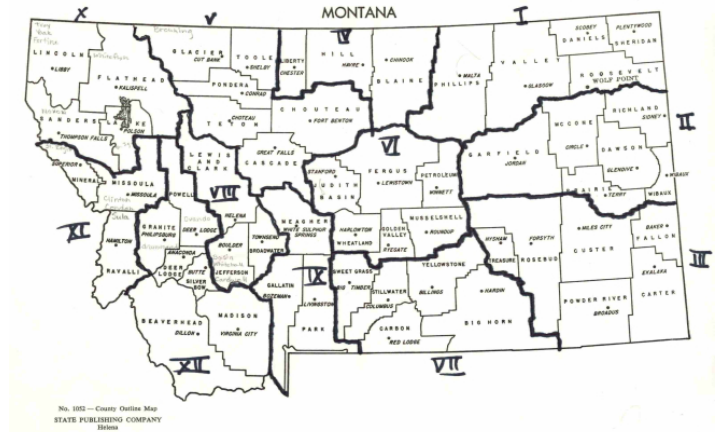
Rural Coordination of Crisis Response Strategy during COVID-19

- March 2020
  - Started to prepare for the pandemic by educating street outreach and shelter staff
  - Poverello proactively reached out to the Health Dept. and established new protocols and policies in line with CDC Guidance and information from Seattle. We kept asking, "what is the plan for people experiencing homelessness?"
  - Montana Governor Steve Bullock signed Executive Order on March 12 declaring a state of emergency to exist within the State of Montana related to the Communicable Disease COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus
  - Proactively pulled together our Statewide CES Leads for COVID-19 Planning and Response.
  - Proactively shifted all CES and local CoC meetings to online format
  - Advocated for Missoula County Office of Emergency Management to approve Missoula Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) Homelessness Taskforce
  - Requested our Statewide CoC and HMIS Provider to add the COVID-19 Screening questions
  - Recruited volunteers to respond and meet basic needs of people sleeping outdoors
  - Largest shelter is de-intensified to meet CDC Guidelines and unsheltered homelessness increases

Rural Coordination of Crisis Response Strategy during COVID-19

- April 2020
  - Taskforce officially launches (mission and objectives on next slides)
    - Lead by City, Poverello and our Federally Qualified Health Center, Partnership Health Center
    - Identified all funding sources and strategized how to maximize each source (i.e., FEMA, CDBG-CV, County COVID Relief Fund)
  - Advocated for Statewide CoC to apply for HUD TA to help with COVID-19 Response and navigating FEMA, specifically unsheltered homelessness response efforts
  - Held meetings with Montana Healthcare Foundation and specifically discussed impacts on our FUSE population. Coordinated with Corporation for Supportive Housing, our FUSE TA Provider.
  - Request for Approval of Non-Congregate Sheltering Activities Approved
    - Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 that do not require hospitalization, but need isolation or quarantine (including those exiting from hospitals);
    - Individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19 (as documented by a state or local public health official, or medical health professional) that do not require hospitalization, but need isolation or quarantine; and
    - Individuals who are at "high-risk," such as people over 65 or who have certain underlying health conditions (respiratory, compromised immunities, chronic disease), and who require Emergency NCS as a social distancing measure.

- May 2020
  - City of Missoula purchased an operational motel to serve as a FEMA approved non-congregate shelter.
  - Missoula County starts seeing new cases stabilize and we enter Phase 1 of re-opening.
  - No COVID cases reported in homeless population.
  - Continue to strategize Emergency Winter Shelter needs during COVID

Rural Coordination of Crisis Response Strategy during COVID-19

- Task Force Mission:
  - In order to slow the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the need for emergency services or hospital service needs, this Task Force was created to support and coordinate services for the vulnerable (i.e. (harder to self-isolate, increased comorbidities and complications due to COVID-19, and increased risk of death) populations of people experiencing unsheltered and sheltered homelessness and those at risk of experiencing homelessness in Missoula during COVID-19 response.
  - We will increase communication with the existing Covid-19 response structure to help organize our response and tap into volunteers and federal dollars.
  - In order to accomplish our mission, existing structures and supports for the homelessness crisis response system will need to be maintained as well as prepare for the anticipated increase of homelessness due to the economic downturn. This work will happen in parallel with this Task Force through the At-Risk Housing Coalition (we recognize there may be some overlap).

Rural Coordination of Crisis Response Strategy during COVID-19

- Task Force Objectives:
  - To identify overflow homeless shelter (staffing, food, supplies, cleaning) options in order to **de-intensify existing shelters** (including Pov and YWCA).
  - To **support** temporary housing options for **Q (quarantine) & I (Isolation)** for approx. 180 people (about 40% of 400 per PIT 1/20), which includes supportive services, food, supplies and discharge planning.
  - To coordinate an **unsheltered homelessness response** and provide education, harm reduction info and support, access to sanitization, mapping the encampments and the numbers, providing food and supplies.
  - To ensure **shelters have the necessary staffing capacity** to adhere to CDC COVID-19 guidelines, like social distancing, screening, and cleaning systems.
  - To ensure our **homeless population has access to the necessary resources to adhere to the CDC COVID-19** guidelines, including technology for screening and telehealth, and places to be during the day to practice social distancing since public places are closed, have limited hours or may close in the near future.
  - To **avoid unnecessary entries into homelessness** that will challenge homeless providers' ability to adhere to CDC COVID-19 guidelines and increase the community need for isolation and quarantine resources.

Purchase of motel for COVID 19 response to be repurposed for affordable housing

- This move was driven and supported by community need and a local health-officer directive in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Until the purchase, we relied on privately owned motel rooms to meet this need. Prior to the establishment of FEMA non-congregate shelter, the City of Missoula housed more than 40 people temporarily in motel facilities.

- The acquisition of the motel allows us to meet a short-term need while addressing a long-term community need of more affordable homes consistent with our Housing Policy.

- This site is in an Urban Renewal District and access to Tax Increment Financing.

Adaptations to Coordinated Entry System during COVID -19 Crisis Response

- Increased funding and relaxed criteria for our Centralized Housing Solution Fund in order to decrease inflow and increase outflow.

- COVID helped increase urgency to expand Coordinated Entry System to include homeless prevention, locally and statewide.

- Slack was implemented to increase coordination/collaboration and streamline communication.

- CES Implementation Team requested temporary voting privileges in regards to our Prioritization Policy.
  - Ex/ Incorporating COVID at-risk populations and Non-Congregate Shelter

- Increased capacity:
  - Social Worker at the Health Department for Non-Congregate Shelter (CDBG-CV)
  - 3 Outreach Worker at the Poverello Center (CDBG-CV)
  - Additional hours for our Part-time CES Program Specialist to move the in-person CES training to an online format.

- Increased Landlord Recruitment and Engagement Strategy
  - Emergency housing assistance fund for qualifying landlords who maintain lease agreements with tenants who are temporarily unable to afford housing due to the COVID-19 economic crisis and seed money for our risk mitigation fund to incentivize qualified landlords to provide access to rental housing for applicants who bear increased barriers due to the crisis.
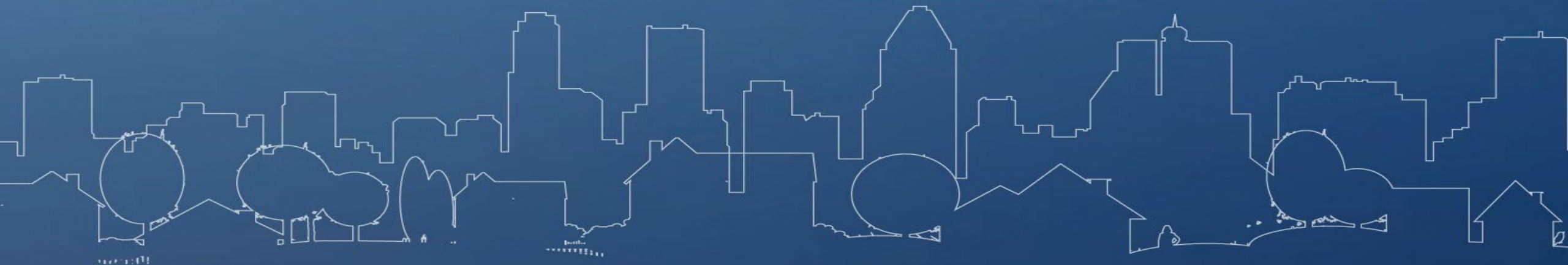
Prison Pre-Release Program

- The Poverello Center is formalizing a partnership with the Pre-Release Center due to recent success with five shelter employees who are involved with Pre-Release Program.

- It is proven to be a mutually beneficial arrangement that the Poverello Executive Director is really excited about, describing the five employees to date as "really impressive and reliable."

- The shelter has offered promotions to three team members engaged with Pre-Release, moving from front line shelter staff to an administrative assistant and a lead staff member, with wage increases, access to benefits and increased responsibility.

- Four of five of shelter employees have moved from Pre-Release into permanent housing while working at the shelter; the benefit is strong for both individual stability as well as the shelter's opportunity to "walk the walk" in giving folks re-entering the community a good employment opportunity.

Thank you!

Please reach out to us if you have any follow up questions.

- Theresa Williams, LCSW
  - Reaching Home Program Manager
  - City of Missoula, Office of Housing and Community Development
    - Lead Entity of Missoula's Coordinated Entry System
  - williamst@ci.Missoula.mt.us / 406-552-6398
  - https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/2086/Housing-Community-Development

- Amy Allison Thompson, LCSW
  - Executive Director
  - Poverello Center, Inc.
  - aallisonthompson@thepoverellocenter.org / 406-728-1809
  - https://www.thepoverellocenter.org/

- Eran Pehan, MSW
  - Director
  - City of Missoula, Office of Housing and Community Development
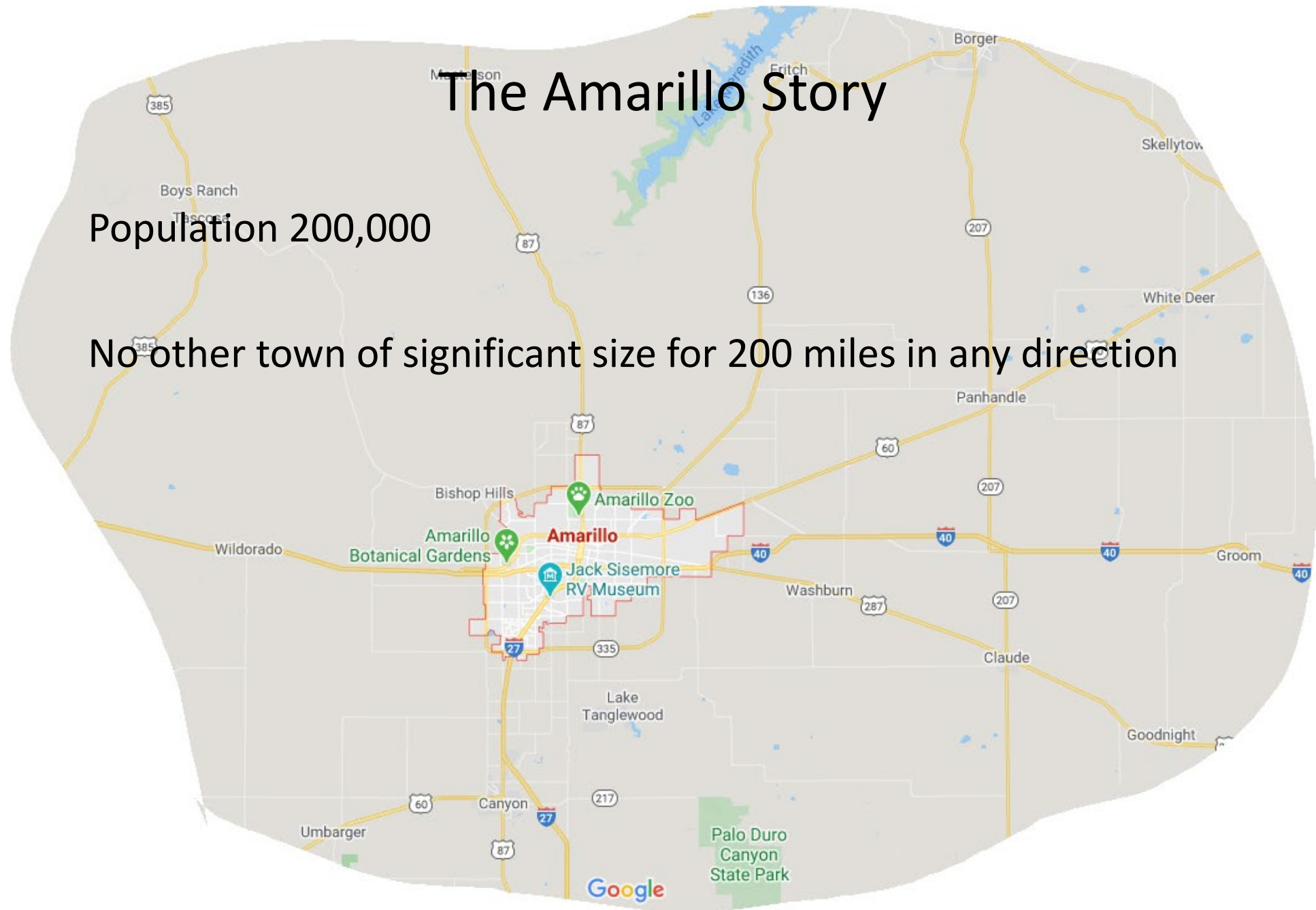 - pehane@ci.Missoula.mt.us / 406-552-6399

AMARILLO, TX

The Amarillo Story

Population 200,000

No other town of significant size for 200 miles in any direction

Total Homeless Population in Amarillo
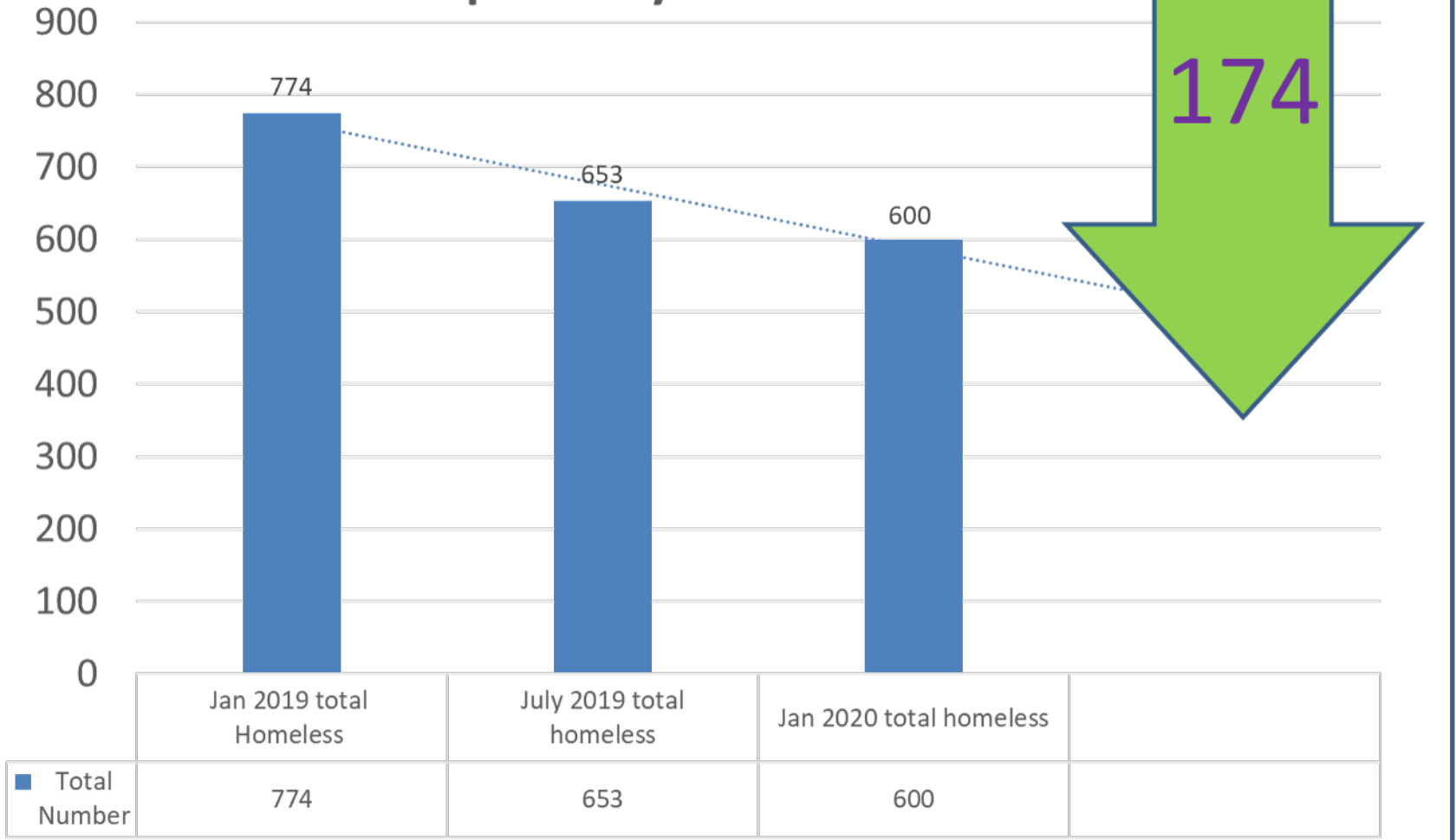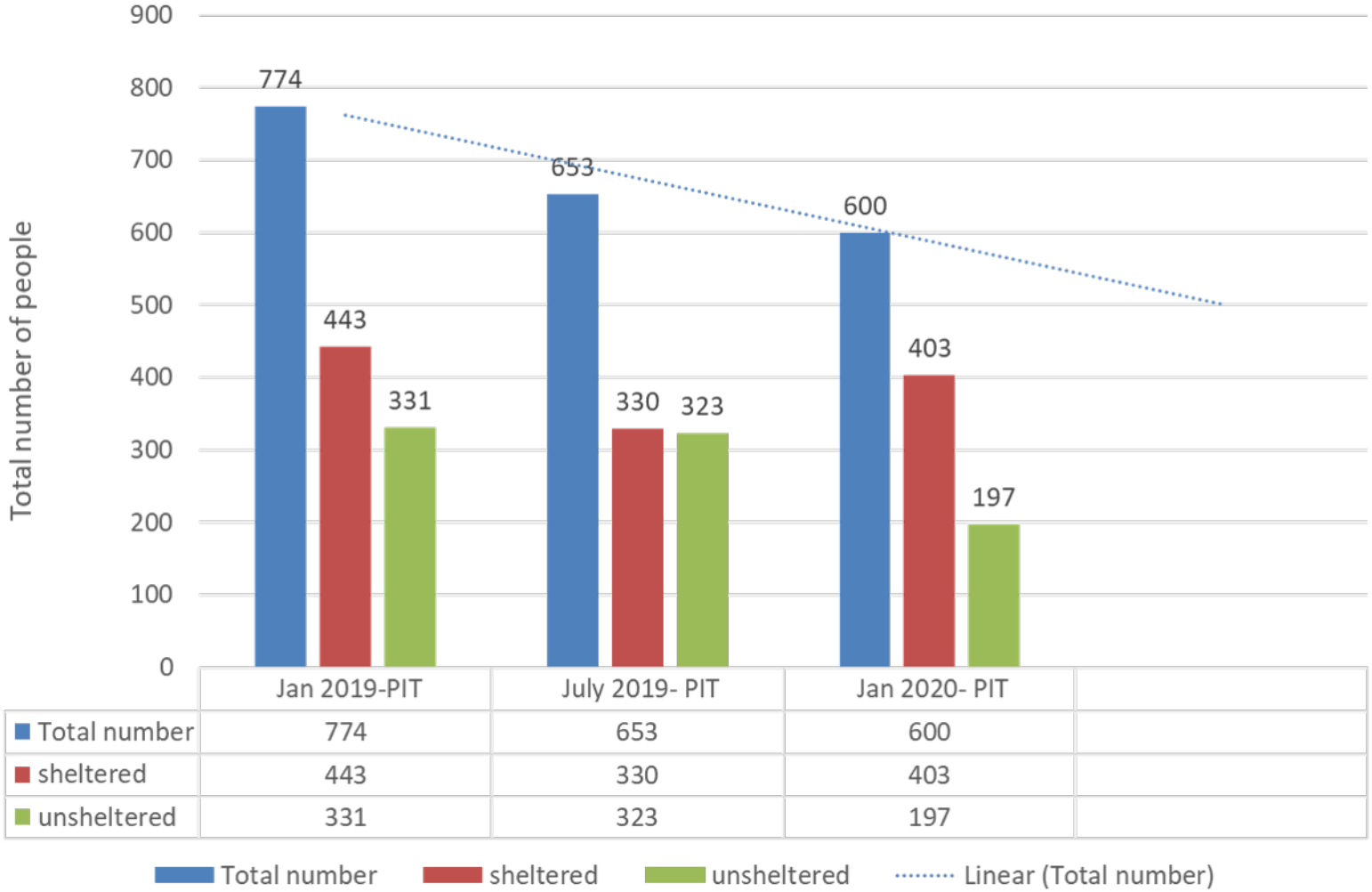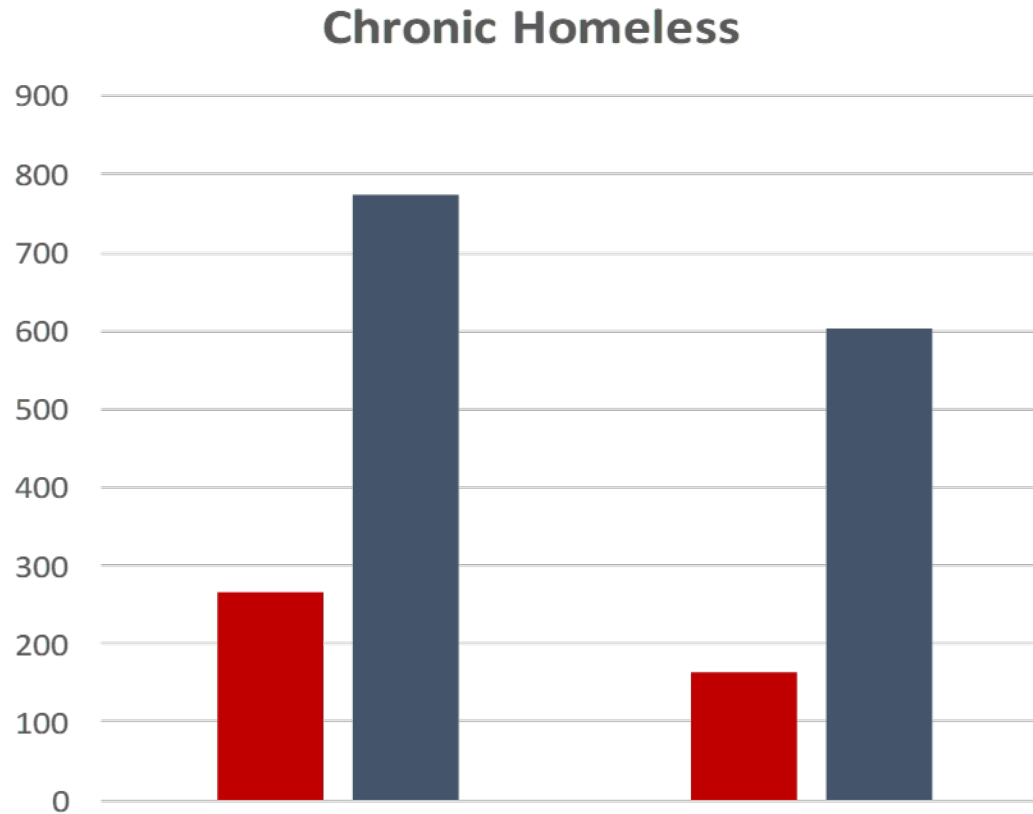Down 174 People in 1 year

	Jan 2019 total Homeless	July 2019 total homeless	Jan 2020 total homeless	
Total Number	774	653	600	

Chart Title

	Jan 2019-PIT	July 2019- PIT	Jan 2020- PIT	
■ Total number	774	653	600	
■ sheltered	443	330	403	
■ unsheltered	331	323	197	

■ Total number   ■ sheltered   ■ unsheltered   ·······Linear (Total number)

Total Chronic Homeless Count

Chronic Homeless

900
800
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0

2019 January
265 Persons
34.2%

2020 January
163 Persons
27%

According to HUD's Office of
Community Planning and
Development national average
in 2019 for Chronic
Homelessness was 24%

Surrounding Areas PIT Information

2019 Abilene PIT Count				
Shelter	**Unsheltered**	**Chronically Homeless**	**% Chronically Homeless**	**Total**
86	120	16	7.8%	206
2019 Dallas PIT Count				
Shelter	**Unsheltered**	**Chronically Homeless**	**% Chronically Homeless**	**Total**
3086	1452	533	11.75%	4538
2019 Lubbock PIT Count				
Shelter	**Unsheltered**	**Chronically Homeless**	**% Chronically Homeless**	**Total**
164	129	37	12.6%	293
2019 January Amarillo PIT Count				
Shelter & TH	**Unsheltered**	**Chronically Homeless**	**% Chronically Homeless**	**Total**
443	331	265	34.2%	774
2020 January Amarillo PIT Count				
Shelter & TH	**Unsheltered**	**Chronically Homeless**	**% Chronically Homeless**	**Total**
403	197	163	27.%	600

Veteran Homelessness

■ # of Homeless Veterans	35	27
■ Total Homeless Population	774	600
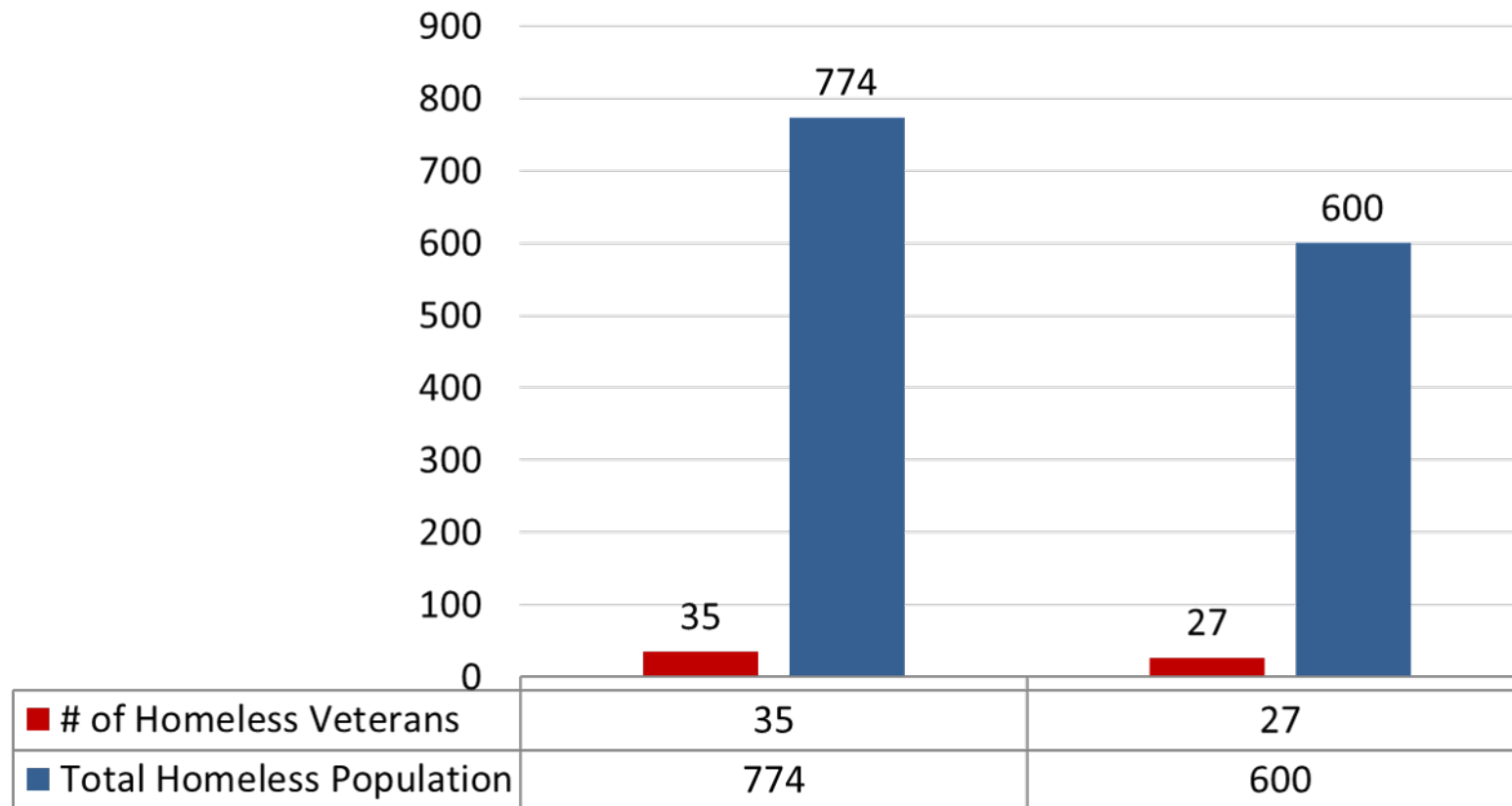
Veteran Homeless Count
2019 January
35 Persons
4.52% of all homeless persons

Veteran Homeless Count
2020 January
27 people

Only 3 were new to us

How did we do this

- Implemented Housing First
- Educated the CoC membership and Board – tied it to funding
- Made the CoC functional
- Educated the Community- Mayor's Summit on Homelessness
- Received more Funding
- Emphasized the Cost Benefit Analysis
- Utilized HCV vouchers

Coming Home Cost
Started Program 10/11/18

Average cost per night in an Emergency Shelter-

$70.00 X 365X 66 adults =

25,500.00 per person

Cost of Coming Home

$156,020.07 for Services of current COA investment=2,363.99per person X 66=156,023.34

HUD pays average of 663.00 for a 1 bedroom x12X66 = 525,096

Total HUD dollars and Support Services = 681,119.34

10,319.99 per person

COMING HOME Expansion

Received grants to expand starting 12/19

- We now have a total of 66 households leased

- We will have 70 within next 60 days

- Now have a team of 5 social workers and 2 peer supports

We have a 98.48% housing retention (one person went to jail and did not come back) – all are chronically homeless

- 5 people are working with us on graduation

COVID Response

- Only one shelter remained open
- Their census when Covid Started was 180 per night
- Step 1 -We moved 21 households of the most medically vulnerable, elderly and families into apartments – Using Home Funds and then transferring to HCV – March 20th
- Step 2 – Found 2 hotels willing to work with us
- Made sure all hospitals and other places who may test some one for COVID that was homeless has my phone number
- We have moved 71 into the hotel and 40 of those into housing using HOME funds and will use HCV for those that need on-going support
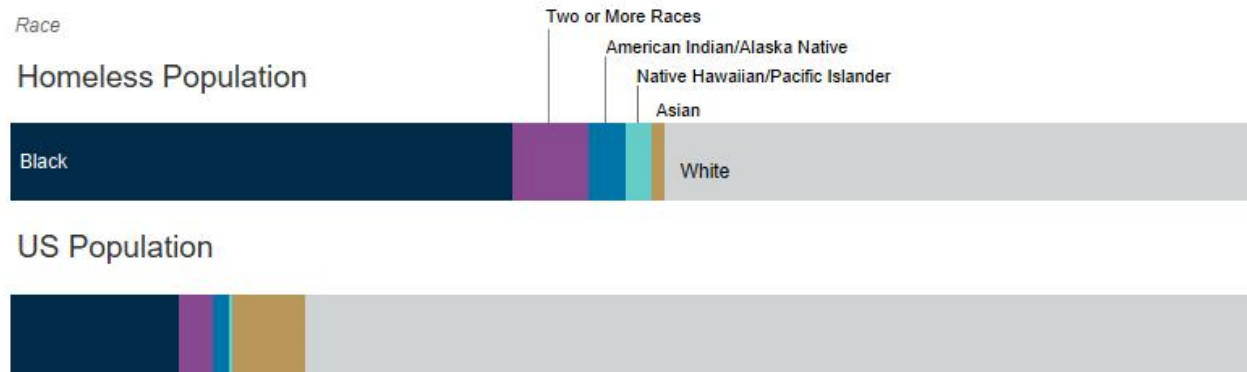
HUD UPDATES

Call to Action

Most Minority Groups Make up a Larger Share of the Homeless Population than They Do of the General Population

Race and ethnicity of those experiencing homelessness compared with the general population

Homeless population data are for a given night in 2019.
Source: *Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, Part 1*, 2020.

Disaster Response Rehousing

Key Websites

HUD: https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/diseases/infectious-disease-prevention-response/

CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/index.html

NHCHC: https://nhchc.org/clinical-practice/diseases-and-conditions/influenza/

USICH: https://www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/coronavirus-covid-19-resources/

VA: https://www.publichealth.va.gov/n-coronavirus/index.asp

HRSA: https://bphc.hrsa.gov/emergency-response/coronavirus-frequently-asked-questions.html
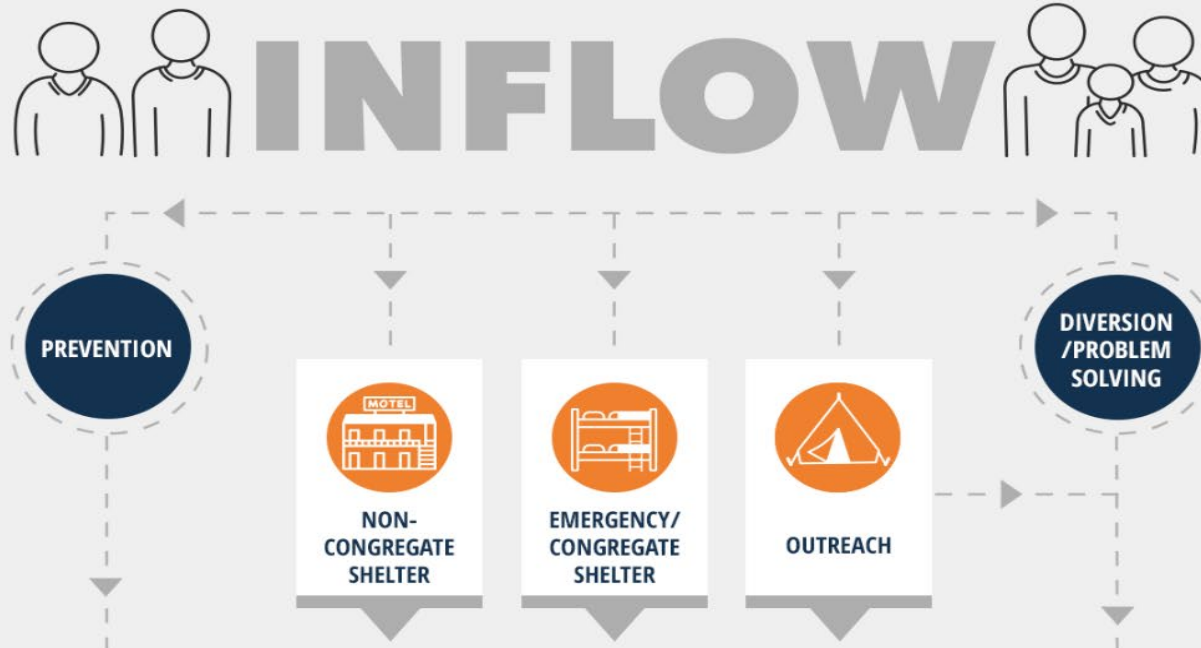
Federal Partner Contacts

For additional information or assistance, contact:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/COVID19; 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636); TTY: 1-888-232-6348

- Department of Housing and Urban Development: HUD Exchange Ask-A-Question (AAQ) Portal

- Department of Veterans Affairs High Consequence Infection (HCI) Preparedness Program: vhahcigenerall@va.gov

Q & A