

Documenting Childhood Homelessness in Tarrant County



Center for
Transforming Lives
From Poverty to Possibility

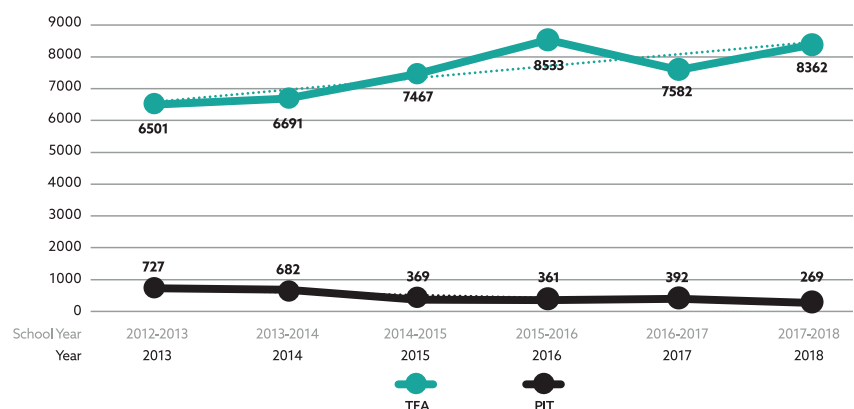
- Different agencies collect data on children experiencing homelessness and they define homelessness in different ways, which leads to extreme differences in reporting.
- School based data, such as those collected by school districts and reported by Texas Education Agency (TEA), use the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness.
 - This definition includes children who are unsheltered, sheltered, doubled-up, and in hotels/motels (Table 1).
 - Note, that children included in the school-based data are school-age children only.¹
 - Children identified as homeless by schools may then receive assistance with school enrollment, attendance, and transportation.²
- In contrast, the Point in Time Count and Annual Homeless Assessment Report data utilize the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of homelessness as these data are used to provide a national estimate of homelessness and determine eligibility for HUD assistance and services. This definition includes unsheltered and sheltered children less than age 18.³

Table 1. Definitions of homelessness and data sources ^{1,3}

Term	Definition	Data Sources
Unsheltered	Primary nighttime residence is a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for people (e.g., streets, parks, vehicles)	Point In Time Count School Data
Emergency Shelter	Facility with the primary purpose of providing temporary shelter for people.	Point In Time Count School Data
Transitional Housing	Facility with the primary purpose of providing a place to stay with supportive services for up to 24 months.	Point In Time Count School Data
Doubled-Up	Sharing the house of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.	School Data
Hotels/Motels	Living in motels or hotels due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.	School Data

- According to the 2018 Point in Time Count data for Tarrant County, 269 children were counted on count night. This included 254 children in emergency shelter, 10 children in transitional housing, and 5 children counted as unsheltered (Figure 1).⁴
- During the 2017-2018 school year, 8,362 children were identified as homeless in Tarrant County school districts. Among these children, 70% are living in doubled-up situations, 15% living in motels/hotels, 11% living in shelters, and 3% unsheltered.⁵

Figure 1. Number of Children Experiencing Homelessness in Tarrant County Identified by Data Source ^{4,5}



1. National Center for Homeless Education. The McKinney-Vento Definition of Homeless. Retrieved from: <https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento-definition/>
 2. Family and Youth Services Bureau. Practical Application of the McKinney-Vento Act. Retrieved from: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fysb/mckvenapp20120829.pdf>
 3. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Homeless Definition. Retrieved from: https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HomelessDefinition_RecordkeepingRequirementsandCriteria.pdf
 4. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. HUD 2018 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs Homeless Populations and Subpopulations. Retrieved from: https://files.hudexchange.info/reports/published/CoC_PopSub_CoC_TX-601-2018_TX_2018.pdf
 5. Texas Education Agency. Public Information Request.