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Ending Community Homelessness (ECHO)  
Coalition:  
2008 Update on Homeless Issues

**Presentation to the CAN Resource Council**

Presented by Ed McHorse, ECHO Chair  
July 11, 2008

# Outline

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- **ECHO Overview**
- **HUD Continuum of Care Funding**
- **The Local Challenge**
- **2007 HUD CoC funded Support Services**
- **Efforts to Increase Housing Emphasis**
- **The Risk**
- **Potential Reward**
- **What ECHO has done**
- **Request to Resource Council**

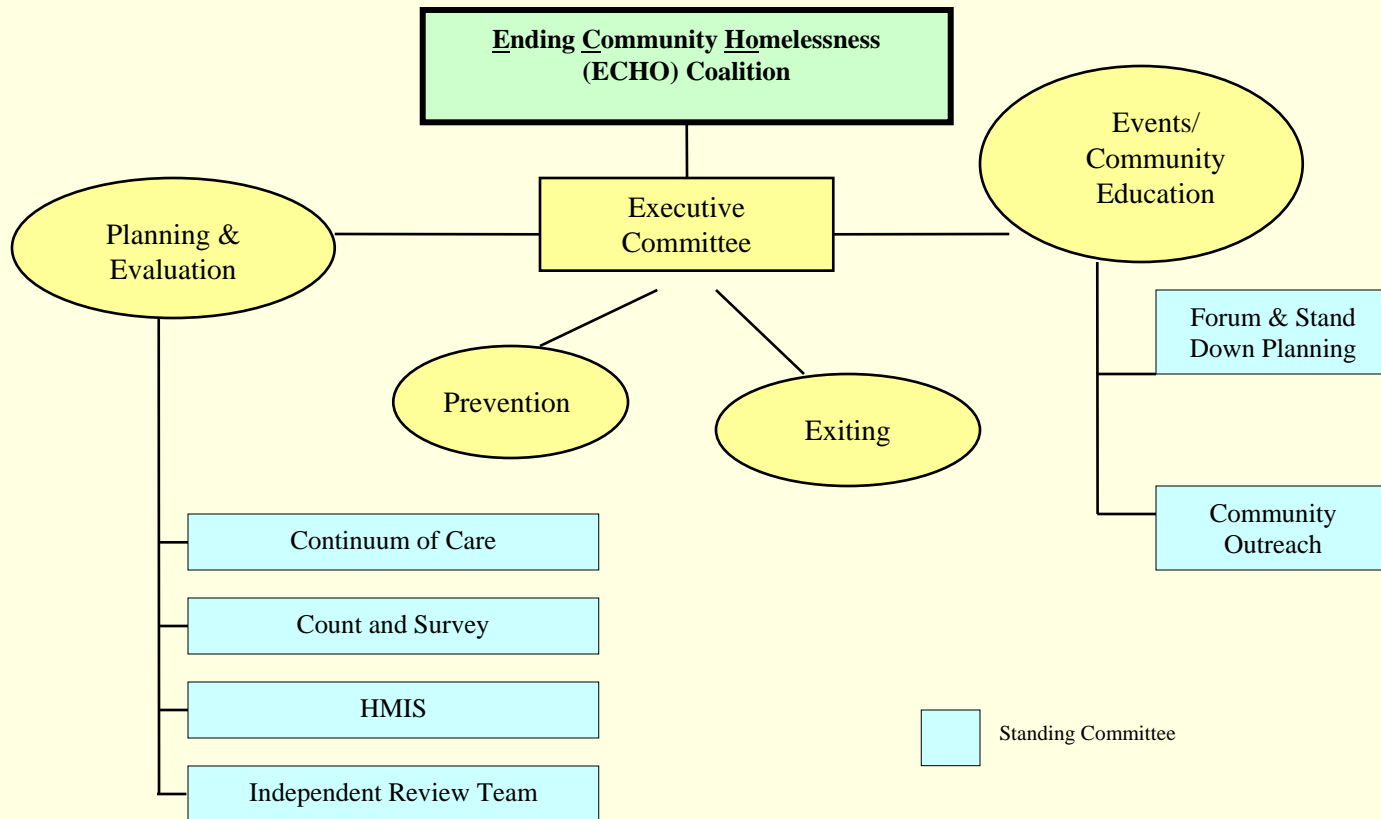
# ECHO Background

## Ending Community Homelessness (ECHO) Coalition

***Vision:*** *A community fiercely focused on ending homelessness*

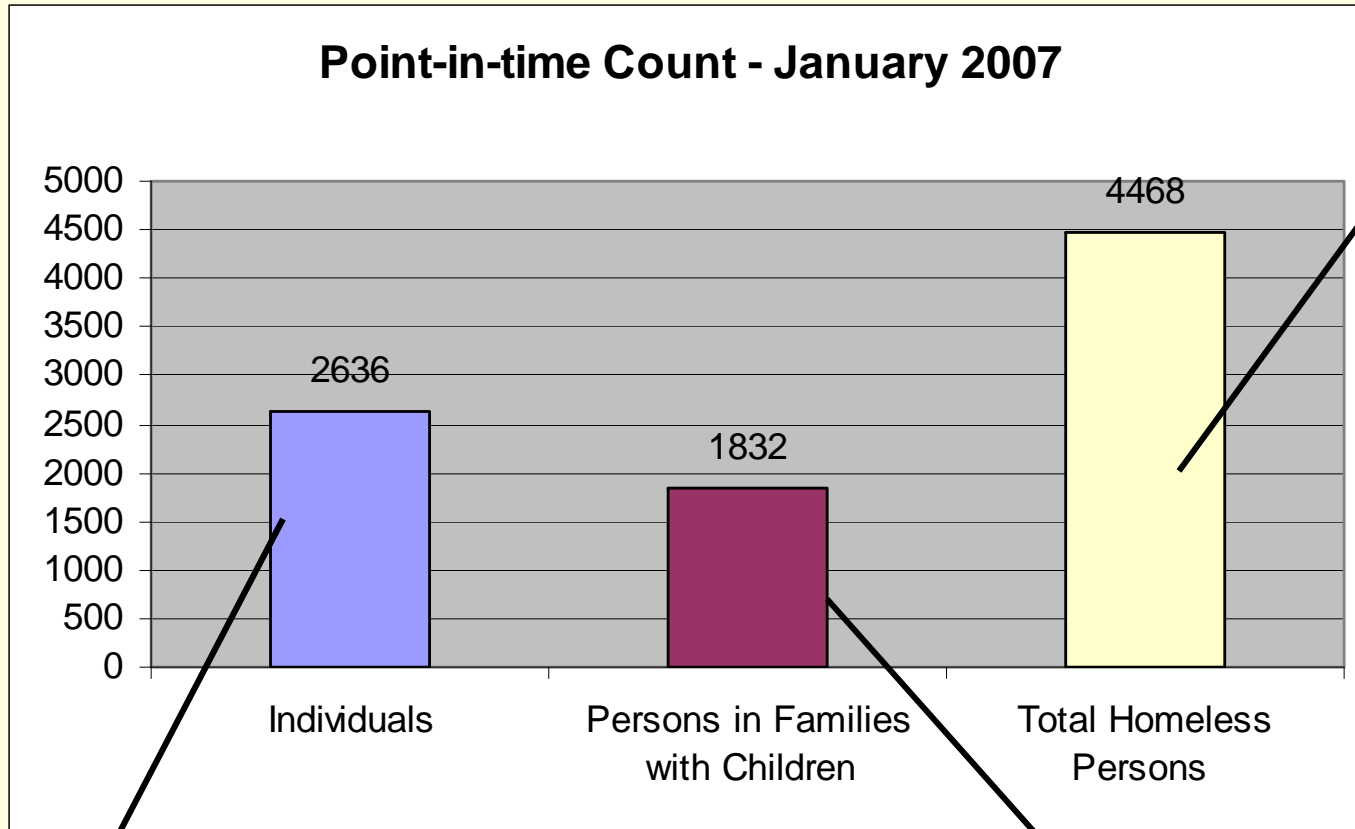
***Mission:*** *To provide dynamic, proactive leadership that engages policy makers and the community to end homelessness*

# ECHO Organization



**Ending Community Homelessness (ECHO) Coalition**

# Introduction: Homeless Population



Unsheltered:  
3,163

Chronically Homeless Persons: 372

Number of Households with Children: 520



# HUD Continuum of Care Funding

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- Austin/Travis County receives approximately \$3.7 million per year in HUD Continuum of Care funding. This funding is provided for homeless assistance and has been static for several years
- Other similar metropolitan areas have successfully increased their HUD CoC funding by increasing their housing emphasis and adding bonus projects, e.g., Fort Worth receives \$9.6 million



# The Local Challenge

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- In initial HUD grants, HUD supported funding for services
- Over recent years, HUD has moved back to its roots and placed an increasing emphasis on HUD CoC funds being used to build new permanent housing
- Austin/Travis County currently has a 26% housing vs 74% services ratio
- To be more competitive, we must move toward an 85% housing vs 15% services ratio



# The Local Challenge (Cont'd)

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- In 2006 and 2007 Austin/Travis County failed to meet the threshold score – this can place a community in jeopardy of losing part or all of its HUD CoC funding
- The threshold score is a moving target which has increased each year
- Austin/Travis County can most drastically improve its local score by increasing its housing emphasis
- In 2007, Austin/Travis County scored 5.5 out of 12 for its housing emphasis

# 2007 HUD CoC Funded Support Services

Salvation Army - Passages collaboration	\$702,935
SafePlace	\$607,708
ATCMHMR - Safe Haven	\$227,074
LifeWorks - Youth	\$208,686
Caritas - Re-entry	\$193,778
Caritas - Spring Terrace	\$39,298
Front Steps	\$18,041
<b>Support Services TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,997, 520</b>

# Efforts to Increase Housing Emphasis - 2007

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- In 2007, Travis County tried a number of solutions including: reaching out to regional partners and reducing support services budgets by 5%
- Result: Travis County increased its score by 3 points but missed threshold by 1.5 points



# Efforts to Increase Housing Emphasis - 2008

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- Budget amendments were made to move resources from services to operational budgets
- Individual organizations agreed to reduce the amount that they would request for support services
- ECHO approved community priorities that focus on creating more permanent housing options

# The Risk of Increasing Housing Emphasis

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- HUD could change its funding emphasis again in the future
- We could try this strategy and be unsuccessful putting current funding at risk
- Loss of support services for the homeless, including:
  - case management
  - street outreach for youth
  - child care
  - financial assistance
  - mental health and substance abuse assessment and treatment
  - life skills classes

# Potential Reward of Increasing Housing Emphasis

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- Increase in the amount of permanent housing for single adults, especially those who meet the criteria of chronic homelessness
- Opportunity to increase the amount of federal dollars for other housing opportunities coming to our community

# What ECHO has done

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- Convened funding organizations: resulted in potential funding from West Austin realtors for youth street outreach
- Convened agency grant writers to discuss possibilities for other federal and state grants. Group has agreed to meet quarterly
- Written letters encouraging congregations to participate in the City of Austin drainage fee waiver program, which provides funding for homeless services



# Request to Resource Council

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- In legislative agendas, include a request that the state provide funding of support services for the homeless
- Write a letter to TDCJ requesting that they provide support services for the disproportionate number of offenders being released into our county
- Consider funding the support services that are being lost