

ADDRESSING UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS

Because the CDC still recommends that cities allow people who are living unsheltered or in encampments to remain where they are, we have put together some solutions to help Tulsa respond to people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

The number of emergency shelters in Tulsa grew from 8 to 11 in 2021. However, the capacity limits brought on by COVID ultimately decreased the number of emergency shelter beds, down 14% from 613 in January of 2020 to 529 in 2021. At the same time, 2021's Point in Time Count reflected a 7.1% year over year increase in the number of people who were unsheltered – 287 in 2021 vs. 268 in 2020.

IN COMMUNITIES WITH LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE LIVING UNSHELTERED WHERE EMERGENCY SHELTER BEDS ARE LIMITED, IT IS CRITICAL THAT ACCESS TO THOSE BEDS BE AS LOW-BARRIER AS POSSIBLE.

OUR WORK

In the fall of 2020, Tulsa opened a low-barrier shelter in partnership with the City of Tulsa and Tulsa County. The former Juvenile Detention Center on Gilcrease Museum Road housed 51 residents overnight and provided meals and vital services for up to 150 people during the day. The Mental Health Association Oklahoma ran the day-to-day operations of the facility, helping participants with housing applications, mental health care, case management, pet care, and much more.

Between August 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021, 459 clients were served at the low-barrier Overflow Shelter. 63% of the clients served came from other homeless situations (35% unsheltered); 5% came from institutional settings including jail and hospitals; 18% came from permanent housing; and 14% did not have this information collected. In that time, 15% of the participants were able to access permanent housing. This facility closed on June 30, 2021.

Tulsa's multifamily unit occupancy rate is 94%. This makes it extremely difficult for our teams to help people find housing. It currently takes an average of 10 months from the time someone becomes homeless to the time they obtain permanent housing.

Despite the challenges, the Tulsa Continuum of Care housed **1,255** individuals and families since January 2020. We are currently working across the continuum to secure funds from the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The bill includes several important low-income housing and homelessness provisions – most notably \$5 billion in new funding specifically to reduce homelessness, more than \$21.5 billion to replenish the emergency rental assistance fund, and \$5 billion in emergency housing vouchers.

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- Low-barrier Emergency Shelter
- Additional Voucher-Accepting Properties
- Permanent Hotel to Housing Program
- Flexible Housing Funding
- Expanded Coordinated Outreach Efforts
- Collaborative DOC Release Planning
- 400 Units of Permanent Supportive Housing
- Services Hub in South Tulsa

LOCAL MUNICIPALITY EXAMPLES

- [City of Wenatchee RFP for Low-Barrier Shelter](#)
- [City of Fairfield RFP for Low-Barrier Shelter](#)

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