

Better Together Initiative – Initial Needs Assessment

City Council Work Session | July 21, 2026

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Better Together Initiative – Guiding Principles

- Addressing homelessness requires a **united community effort**.
- A healthy community requires a **shared sense of safety and well-being** for all residents.
- We will ensure solutions focus on **providing tailored services and resources** that respond to everyone's unique needs with compassion and dignity.
- To ensure effectiveness and efficiency, any implemented strategy must be **guided by empirical data, not assumptions**.
- **Preventing homelessness** is as important as responding to it.

The Better Together Initiative recognizes that no single group or organization can address complex social challenges alone. In fostering collaboration across public, private, and nonprofit partners, this city-led initiative hopes to build coordinated, long-term strategies that enhance community well-being and resilience.

Better Together Initiative - Components



City of McKinney's Better Together Initiative

Initial Needs Assessment

Presentation to McKinney City Council | July 2026 | PRELIMINARY



Prepared by the UT Dallas EPPS PNM Team | For the City of McKinney, Texas

Scale of the Issue

SCALE

PIT Count 2021–2026 | McKinney compared to regional, state, and national trends

240

individuals during
2026 PIT Count

0.1%

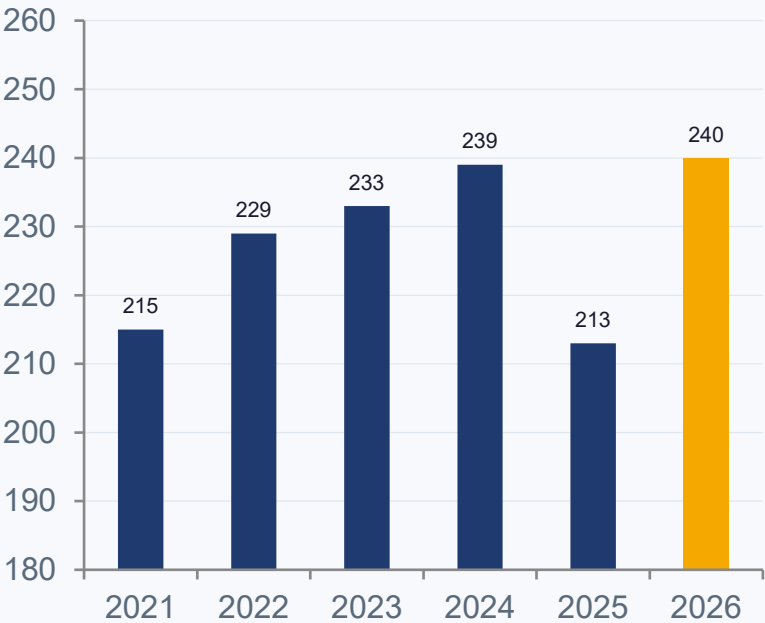
of City population
(stable 2021-2026)

42.5%

in family units with
children

75.8%

sheltered*



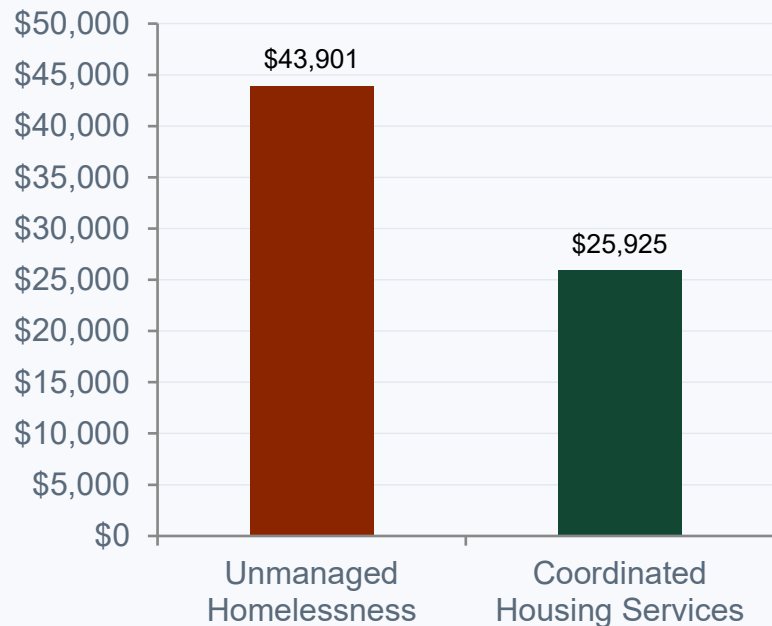
PIT counts only individuals visibly unsheltered or in shelter on a single January night — true housing instability is higher.

- Homeless Population is Primarily Transitional
- The Rate of Homelessness in the Region has Declined
- The Rate of Homelessness in McKinney has Remained Stable
- Encampments Concentrated in One District

What Homelessness Costs the Community

COSTS

City + partner/agency combined costs (\$9M–\$15M) | ER and hospitalization costs are borne by hospitals/Medicaid, NOT the City budget



~\$18,000

potential savings per person with coordinated approach
(Dallas County HHS, 2024 – directional estimate)
ER/hospital costs go to Medicaid/hospitals, not the city

\$3M

Transitional Shelter
(Samaritan Inn)

~\$144K

EMS + Transport

Not city budget

ER & Hospitalization
(hospitals/Medicaid)

\$300K–\$1M

Law Enforcement
~1,000 calls/year

City investment: \$330K CSG grants + \$907K CDBG + \$345K HOME annually. Applied to ~240 individuals: unmanaged ~\$10.5M/yr vs. coordinated ~\$6.2M/yr. Direct City costs (EMS + Law Enforcement + Cleanup) ≈ \$1.6M/yr.

What the Community Said

COMMUNITY

7 listening sessions (May–July 2026) • 270 completed responses • 265 valid for analysis

CROSS-SESSION CONSENSUS: (1) More shelter and housing capacity needed in Collin County • (2) Better coordination needed among organizations already operating • (3) Lack of public transportation as a key barrier

First Responders & City Staff

- Concerns about scope of direct city involvement
- Favors coordination over new resources

Downtown & Hwy 380 Businesses

- Concerns about enforcement, cleanups, outreach, and ordinance compliance citywide

Westside Residents and Faith Groups

- Existing compassion based services/programs
- Need for centralized coordination for services/programs

Service Organizations

- Real and perceived structural barriers:
 - Program eligibility
 - Zoning/Land Use for facility siting
 - Client data coordination

Eastside Residents

- Prevention focus
- City as coordinator, not operator

Field Outreach (MPD + Unhoused)

- Practical needs (laundry, daytime space, transportation, document assistance)
- Housing only with no follow-up is inadequate

Identified consistently across data, listening sessions, and the community survey

Root Causes of Homelessness

- McKinney as the County Seat
- Housing costs rising faster than wages
- Re-Entry barriers after incarceration or evictions
- Domestic violence, familial conflicts, etc.

Homeless Experience

- Different types of homelessness
- Loss of identification and other key documents
- Lack of secure storage and practical needs
- Lack of low barrier/emergency shelter for single individuals

Symptoms of Homelessness

- Reliance on EMS and Emergency Rooms
- Concentrated police contact
- Recurring encampments in hot spots

Systemic Barriers

- Lack of knowledge of the Police Department's Community Services Unit, and enforcement capabilities.
- Lack of knowledge of available resources/programs
- Lack of coordination and data sharing between existing resources
- Federal eligibility rules that require individuals to be "literally unsheltered"
- Insufficient funding

Key Considerations for Leadership

LEADERSHIP

What Council needs to weigh before the Strategic Plan sets priorities

Cost Tradeoffs

Savings from coordinated intervention accrue across EMS, police, and healthcare — not to the same budget line that bears the investment cost. Upfront investment required.

County Seat Effect

McKinney's county seat role — jail, courthouse, and behavioral health facilities — concentrates chronic homelessness locally. This is structural, not a policy outcome.

Regional Responsibility

The single-adult shelter gap is countywide. McKinney cannot resolve it alone. Collin County and neighboring city engagement is necessary.

Existing Infrastructure

The McKinney Homeless Coalition (MHC) and SOAR program are existing coordination assets. The Strategic Plan should build on them, not duplicate them.

Data Investment

The lack of coordinated data collection makes it difficult to measure outcomes across systems. Any significant investment should include a data infrastructure component.

MPD Unit Continuity

Current promotion policy rotates officers out of the Community Services Unit upon advancement. Years of built expertise are at risk. May warrant policy review.

From Needs Assessment to Strategic Plan

WHAT COMES NEXT

The Needs Assessment describes existing conditions. The Strategic Plan — developed with community working groups — will set priorities and define action steps.

What the Initial Needs Assessment Provides

- Scale of homelessness in McKinney (2021-2026)
- Cost of homelessness across all systems (\$9-15M)
- Community Input: 7 listening sessions and 350+ survey responses
- Key gaps
- Key leadership considerations

What the Strategic Plan Provides

- Set community-backed priorities among identified gaps
- Define goals, strategies, and responsible parties
- Clarify which gaps the City leads vs. partners on
- Engage working groups and the public throughout

What the Implementation Plan Provides

- Establishes specific action steps
- Establish timeline and performance metrics

Priority-setting is the function of the Strategic Plan — not this Initial Needs Assessment.

Thank You

City of McKinney's Better Together Initiative — Initial Needs Assessment

Questions & Discussion

Summer 2026

- Complete survey & finalize Needs Assessment (July)
- Follow up on two uncorroborated claims
- Refine cost estimates; request agency data

Fall 2026

- Launch Strategic Plan with working groups
- Public engagement on community priorities
- Set goals, strategies & responsible parties

Implementation Plan

- Adopt Strategic & Implementation Plans
- Execute priority strategies
- Initiate Collin County shelter conversations



mckinneytexas.org/BTI

Get Involved: Working groups open to community • Public engagement opportunities Fall 2026 • Visit mckinneytexas.org/BTI for updates
Priority-setting among options is the function of the Strategic Plan — not this Needs Assessment.