



## BrainGain@PEC

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**Date: February 2020**

BrainGain@PEC provides brief summaries of research or publications on family homelessness and related issues. Previous issues of BrainGain@PEC can be found at <http://bit.ly/2iaczvQ>

## A Consideration of the Philadelphia Point in Time Count (PIT) and Housing Inventory Chart (HIC) for “Persons in Families”<sup>i</sup>

### Highlights:

- Adding all units of housing and beds in the family homeless system, the system’s **capacity to serve homeless families decreased** between 2009 to 2019.
- **Transitional housing** units and beds for families have **decreased** in particular. In fact, it could be suggested that the decrease in the number of homeless family households in TH counted by the PIT between 2012 and 2019 could be **accounted for by the decrease in TH units for families** in that same timeframe.
- There was a **47% decrease** in the **number of homeless persons in families** who were counted in the PIT Count from 2007 to 2019.
- From 2014 to 2019 the number of **Rapid Rehousing units** for families **more than doubled**, and the number of **beds increased by 96%** during the same time frame.
- The number of **Permanent Supportive Housing** units and beds for families **decreased** from 2016 to 2019.



This report summarizes Philadelphia’s **Point in Time (PIT)**<sup>ii</sup> count and the **Housing Inventory Chart (HIC)** as they relate to **“persons in families”**<sup>1</sup> experiencing homelessness.

**Data Sources:** The source of the 2019 PIT data is the Philadelphia Office of Homeless Services. HIC data for 2019 and previous years and PIT data come from the “HUD Exchange,” found at <http://bit.ly/380GHyp> and from the Philadelphia Office of Homeless Services.

This BrainGain@PEC presents three sections:

1. PIT Data
2. PIT Data on children and youth
3. HIC data

Readers should understand that HUD and homeless service leaders use the PIT and HIC to understand trends. However, the documents at HUD’s website do not offer an analysis of why numbers increase or decrease over time.

Using only this publicly available data, **it seems to be the case in Philadelphia that family homelessness is declining because of the decrease in beds and units** in transitional housing and the increasing number of beds in Rapid Rehousing, housing that is managed by the homeless system but, legally, the residents are no longer defined as homeless.

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## Section 1: PIT Data on Homeless People in Families in Philadelphia Fiscal Years 2007-2019

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The PIT charts below indicate that:

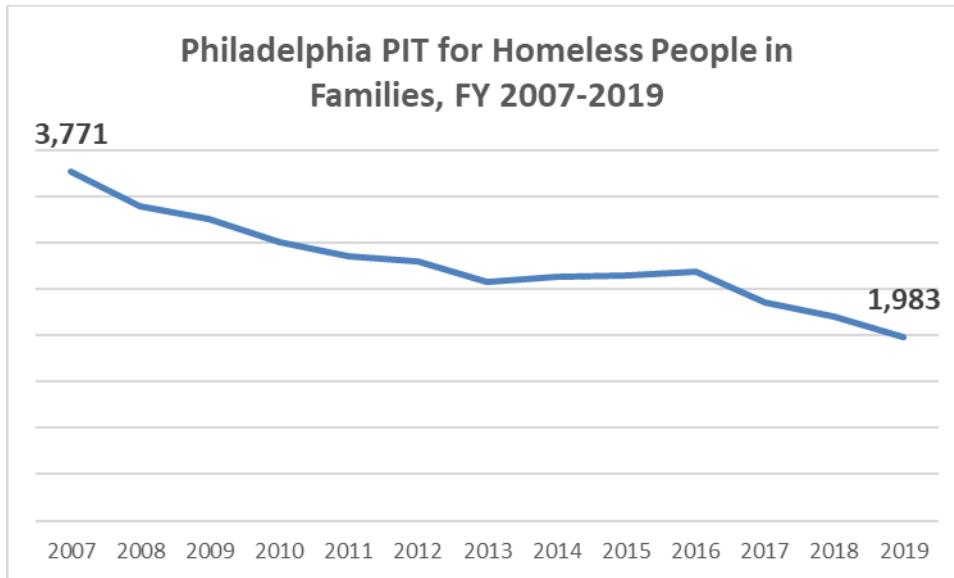
- From FY 2007 to 2019, the Philadelphia PIT Count of homeless people in families **decreased** by nearly 2,000 people.

**Readers should be cautious in drawing conclusions from these data** for a variety of reasons. For instance, HUD has suggested that family homelessness is in decline<sup>1</sup>. It relies on the PIT count to make this assertion. However, the PIT is based, in part, on the number of emergency and transitional housing units and beds available. A person occupying an emergency or transitional housing bed is counted in PIT; a family couch surfing is not. **When the number of beds is reduced or is increased, so would the PIT count be reduced or increased.** The PIT count also does not count sheltered homeless individuals and families who are doubled up and therefore not in the homeless housing system.

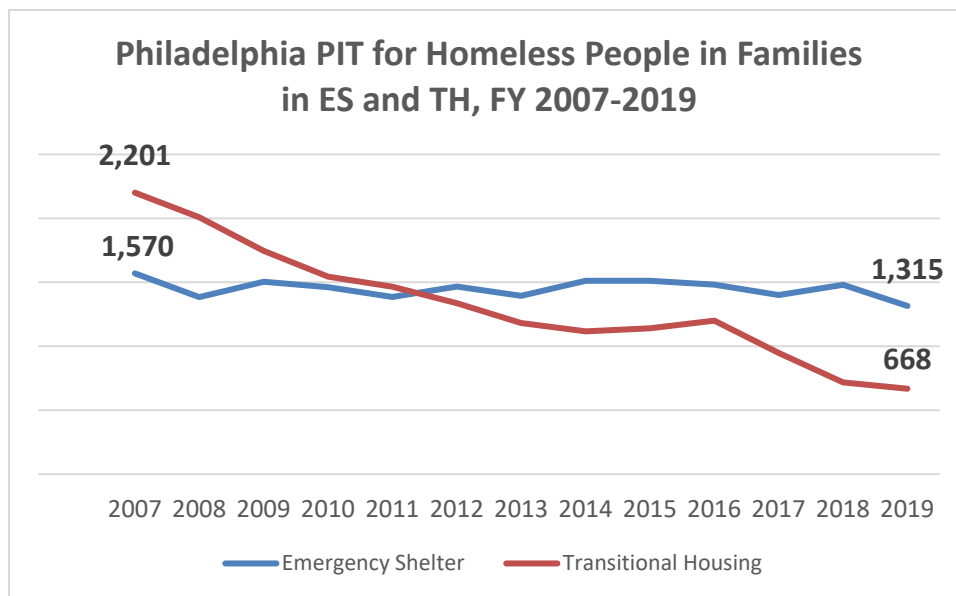
Using only this publicly available data, **it seems to be the case in Philadelphia that family homelessness is declining because of the decrease in beds and units** in transitional housing and the increasing number of beds in Rapid Rehousing, whose occupants are no longer counted as homeless. It is likely that other factors are involved, including changing definitions and standards set by HUD. A key challenge is that the **United States Interagency Council on Homelessness** has set a **benchmark**<sup>1</sup> that all regions identify **all** homeless persons, encouraging local agencies to go beyond the PIT.

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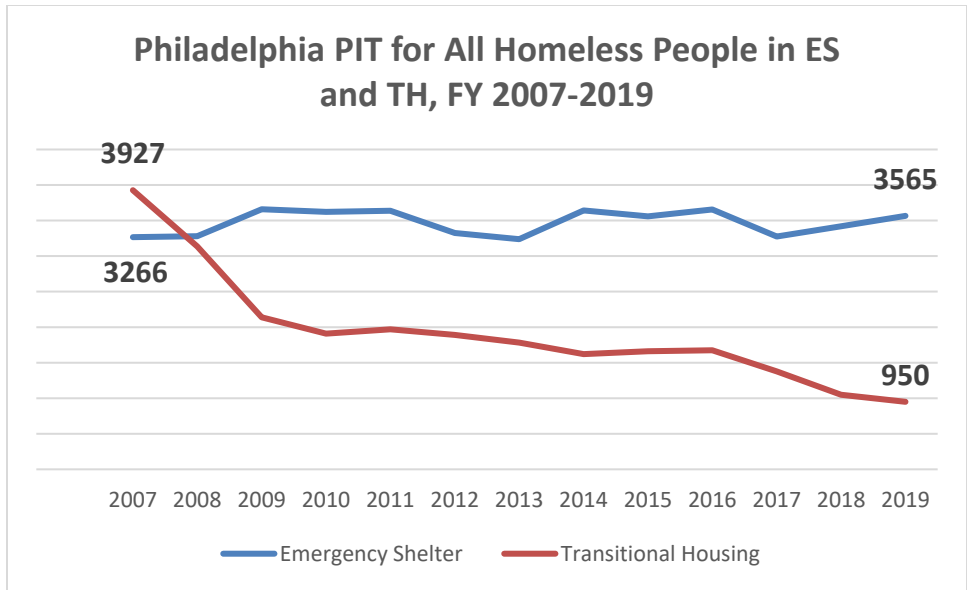
<sup>1</sup> “Persons in Families” is a phrase used by HUD to distinguish between homeless single individuals and homeless persons who are with their families.



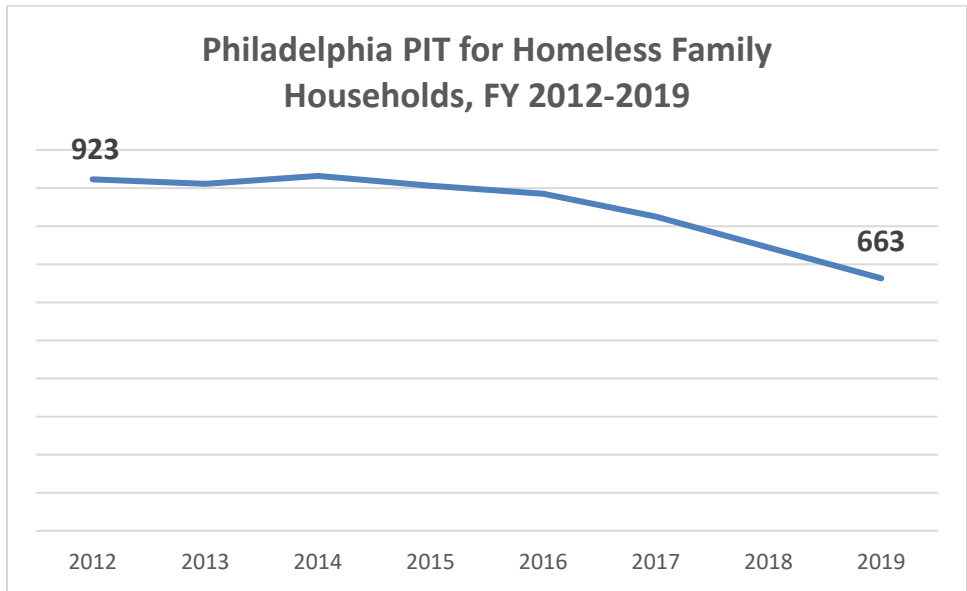
- In the same timeframe, the number being served in **emergency shelter (ES)** or **transitional housing (TH)** and counted on a single day by the PIT **decreased**.

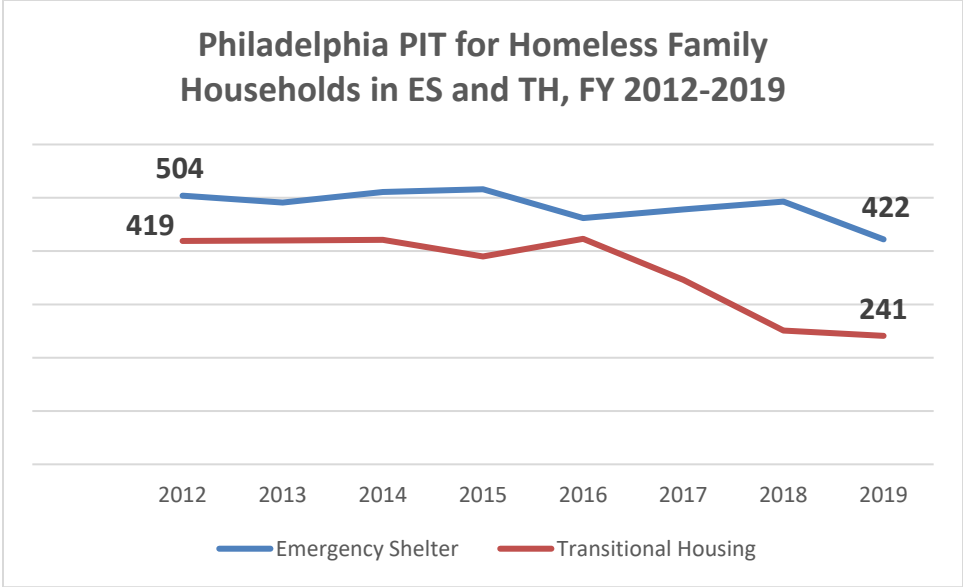


- The decline in families identified in emergency or transitional housing was **similar to the overall drop of all PERSONS** (single individuals plus ‘persons in families’) in emergency or transitional housing in Philadelphia.



- The charts below show **decreases** in the number of **homeless family HOUSEHOLDS** counted by the PIT between FY 2012 and 2019.

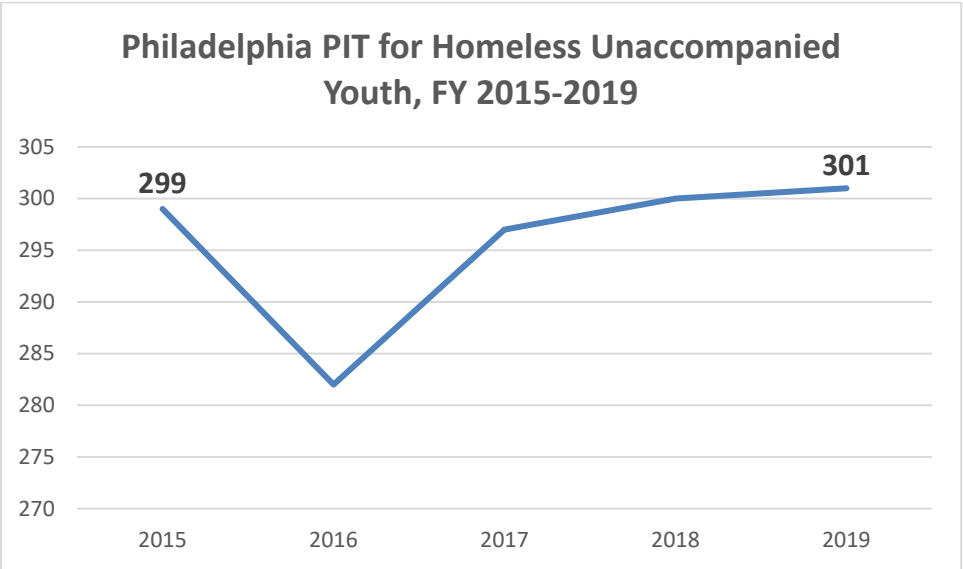


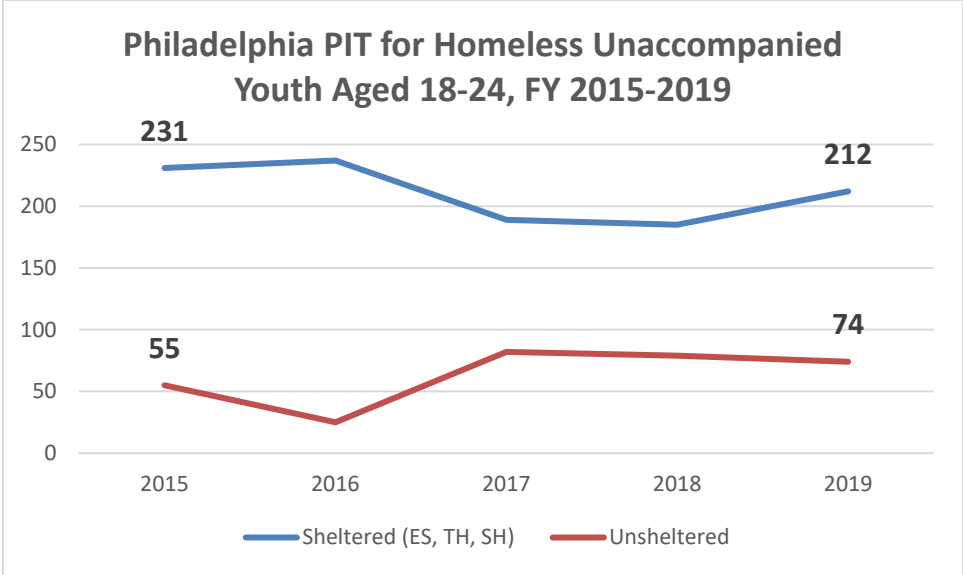



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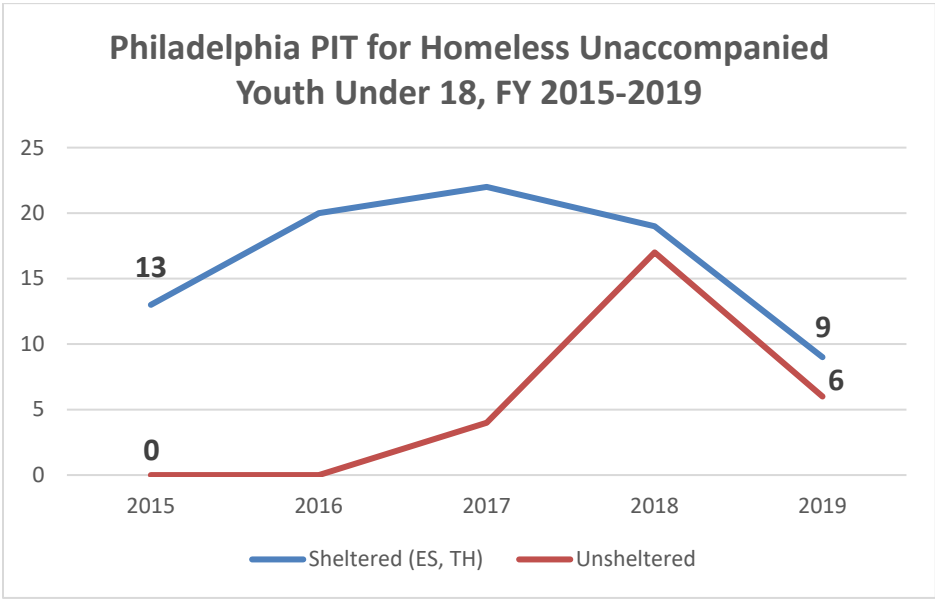
## Section 2: PIT Data on Homeless Unaccompanied Children and Youth in Philadelphia, Fiscal Years 2015-2019

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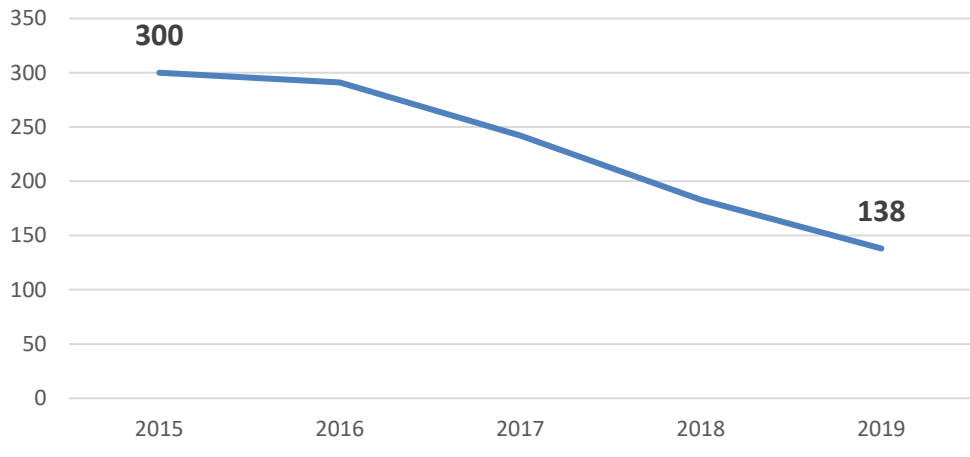




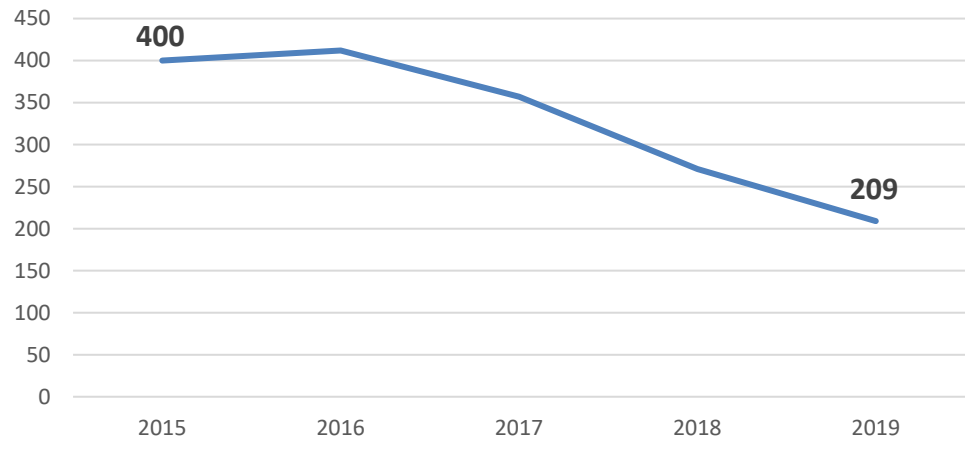
- Note: Safe Haven programs are only included in 2019.



**Philadelphia PIT for Homeless Parenting Youth,  
FY 2015-2019**



**Philadelphia PIT for Homeless Children of  
Parenting Youth, FY 2015-2019**



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### Section 3: Housing Inventory Chart (HIC) Data for Homeless Families in Philadelphia, Fiscal Years 2009-2019

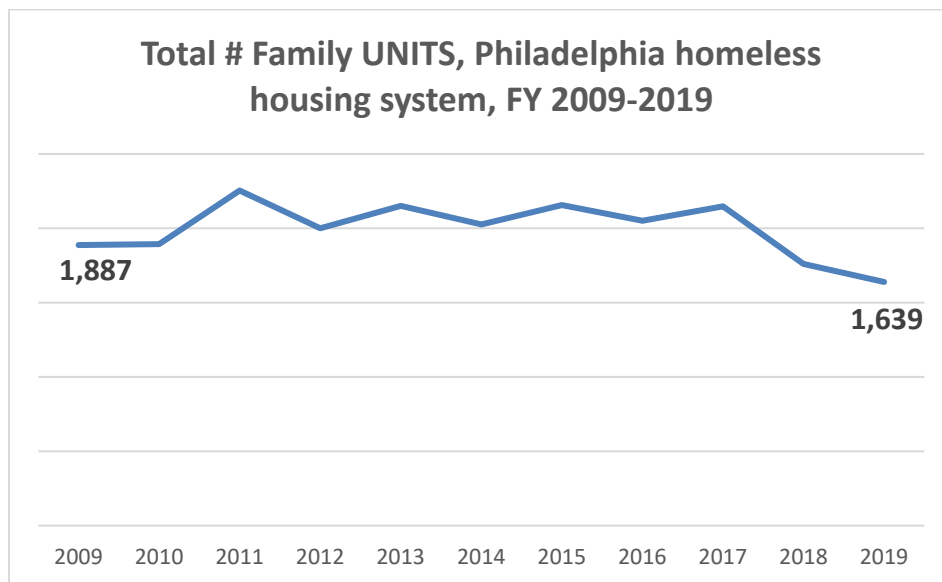
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The Housing Inventory Chart (HIC) shows the number of beds and units, i.e., the system’s capacity. The HIC does not offer commentary on the reason(s) that these numbers change over time. The charts below total all emergency, transitional, rapid rehousing, permanent supportive, and ‘other permanent’ housing.

**Note:** In fiscal year 2013, HUD included RRH units and beds in the Transitional Housing Category.

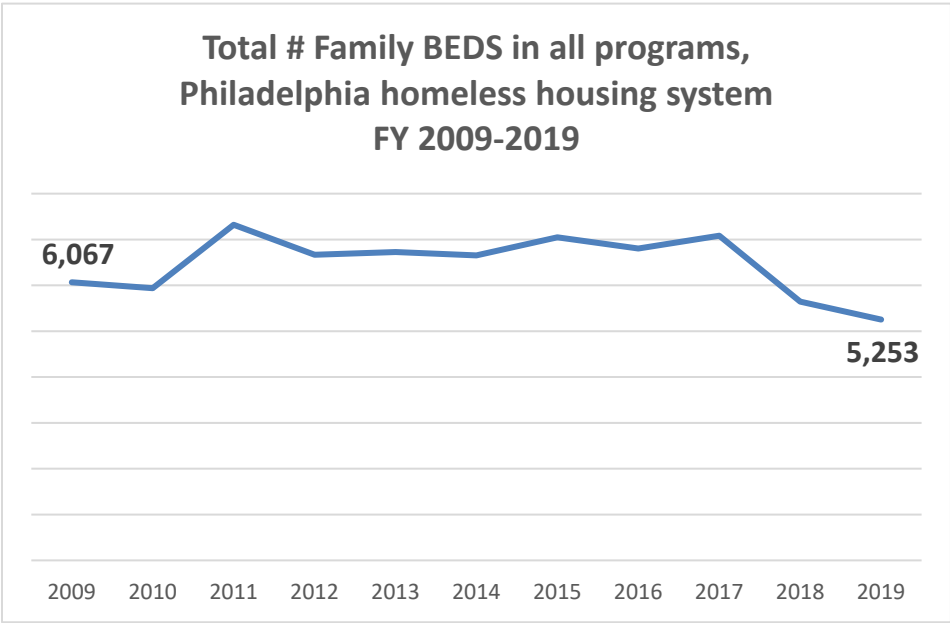
The charts below indicate that:

- The **number** of family **units** and **beds** in all types of housing programs have fluctuated since 2009.



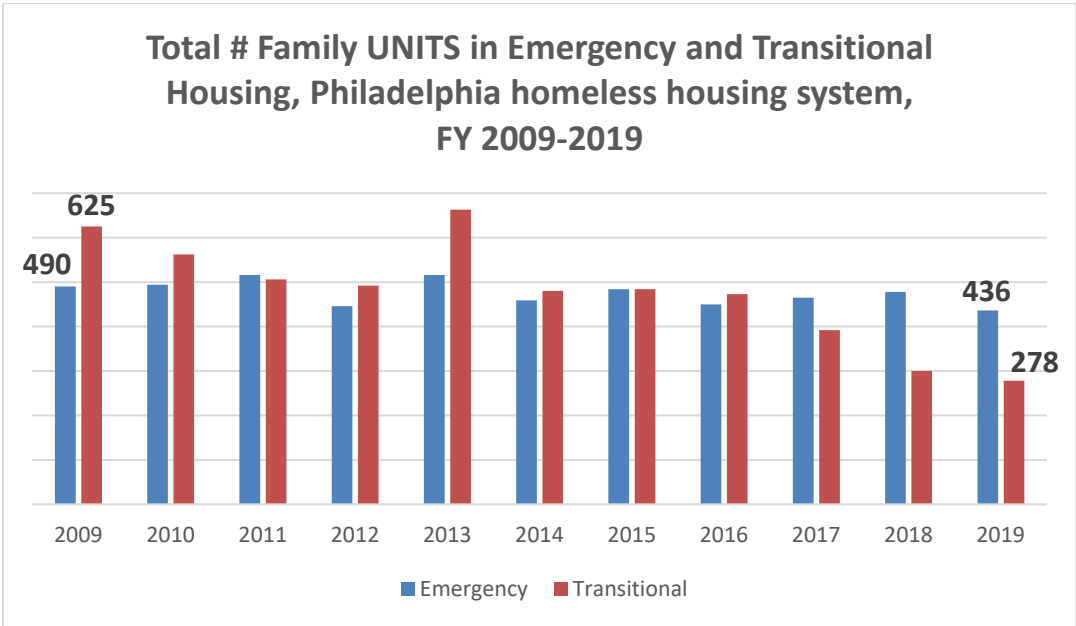


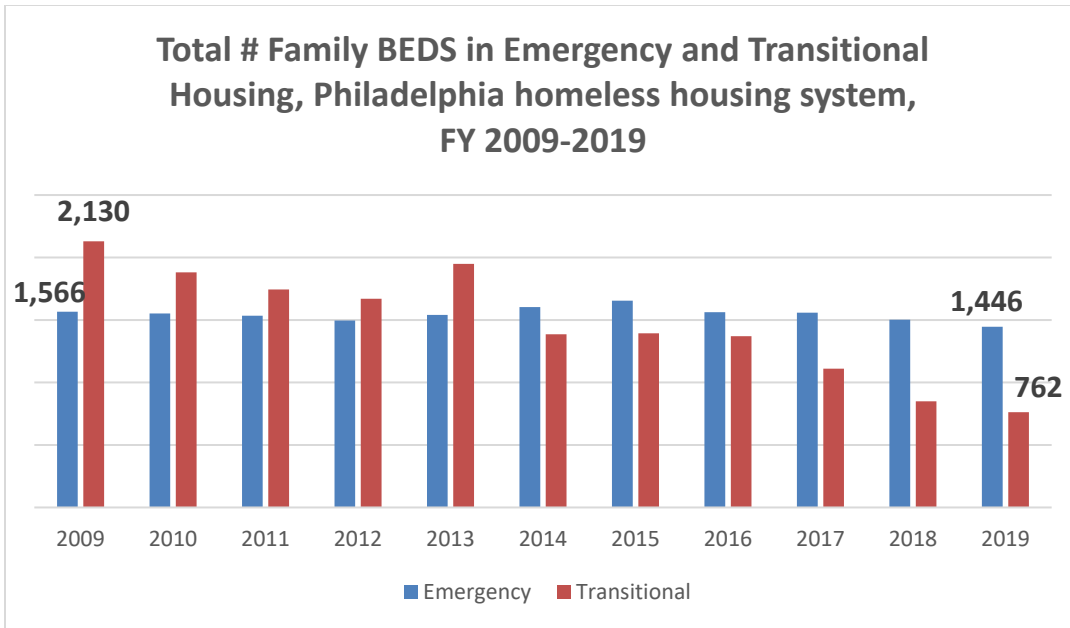
<b>Total # Family UNITS, Philadelphia homeless housing system</b>											
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Emergency</b>	490	494	516	446	516	459	484	450	465	478	436
<b>Transitional</b>	625	562	506	492	663	480	484	473	392	300	278
<b>Rapid Re-Housing</b>		21	385	184		134	147	118	291	284	285
<b>Permanent Supportive Housing</b>	772	817	847	878	972	653	741	710	699	698	640
<b>Other Permanent Housing</b>						300	300	300	300		
<b>Total Family Units</b>	<b>1,887</b>	<b>1,894</b>	<b>2,254</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>2,151</b>	<b>2,026</b>	<b>2,156</b>	<b>2,051</b>	<b>2,147</b>	<b>1,760</b>	<b>1,639</b>



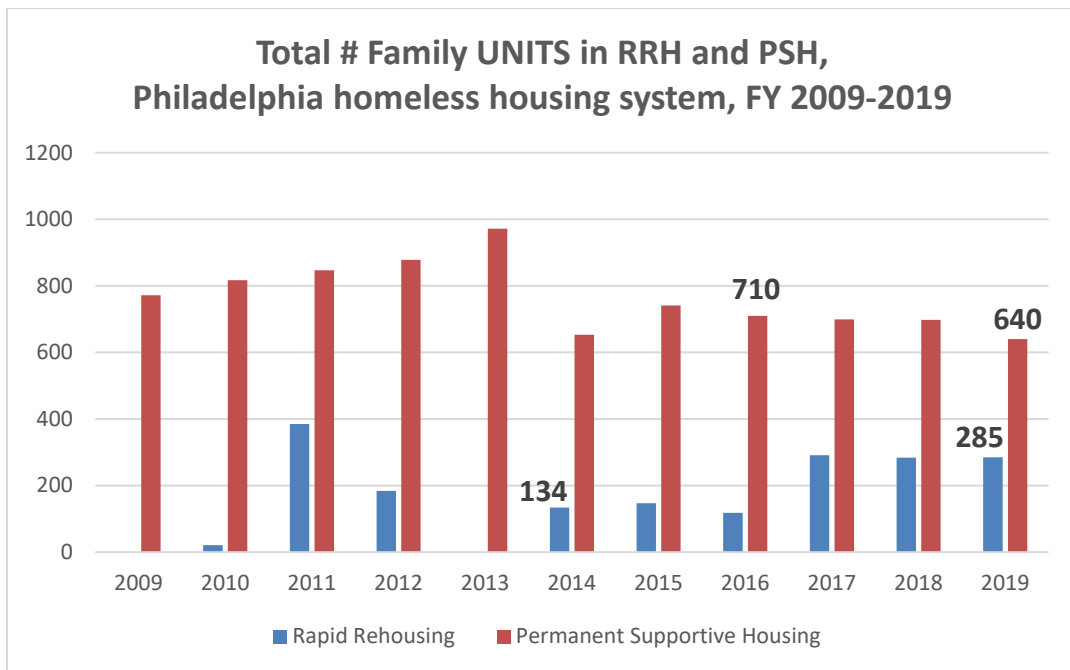
Total # Family BEDS, Philadelphia homeless housing system											
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Emergency	1,566	1,552	1,535	1,496	1,541	1,604	1,655	1,562	1,559	1,503	1,446
Transitional	2,130	1,881	1,744	1,670	1,949	1,386	1,394	1,370	1,110	850	762
Rapid Re-Housing		70	1,165	596		451	544	425	926	936	885
Permanent Supportive Housing	2,371	2,435	2,877	2,904	3,237	2,311	2,554	2,547	2,586	2,356	2,160
Other Permanent Housing						900	900	900	900		
<b>Total Family Beds</b>	<b>6,067</b>	<b>5,938</b>	<b>7,321</b>	<b>6,666</b>	<b>6,727</b>	<b>6,652</b>	<b>7,047</b>	<b>6,804</b>	<b>7,081</b>	<b>5,645</b>	<b>5,253</b>

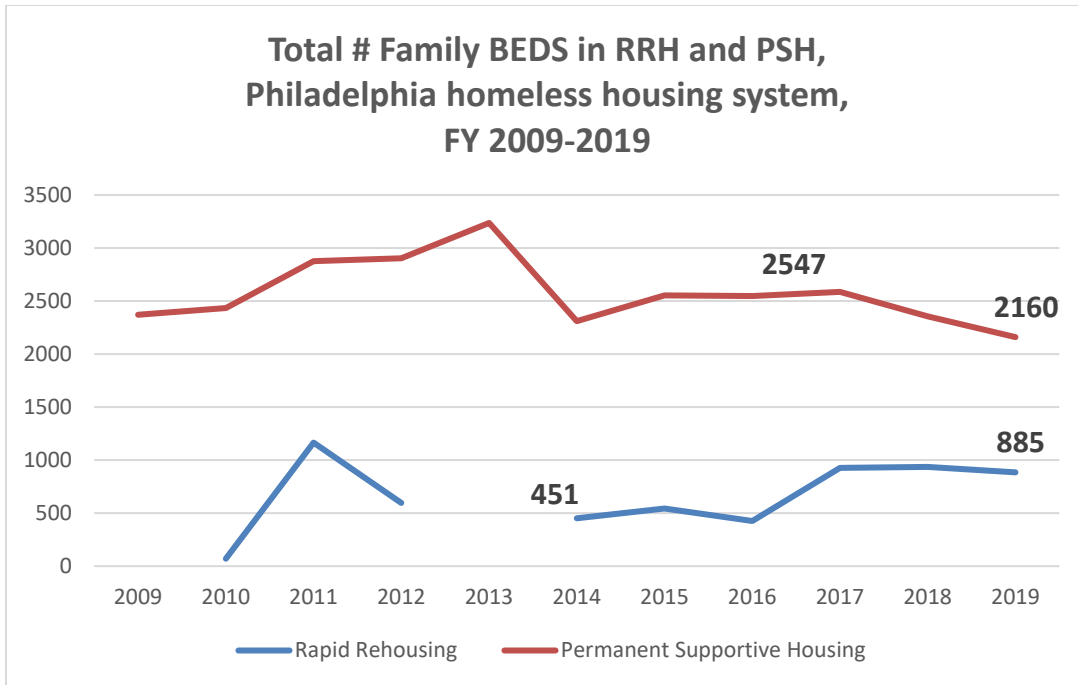
- From 2009 to 2019 there was a **decrease** in the total number of **units and beds** available for families in **emergency and transitional housing**.
- **Emergency housing:** From 2009 to 2019 the number of **units** available for families in EH **decreased by 11%** and the number of **beds** available for families in EH **decreased by 8%**.
- **Transitional housing:** From 2009 to 2019 the number of **units** available for families in TH **decreased by 56%** and the number of **beds** available for families in TH **decreased by 64%**.





- From 2016 to 2019 there has been a **decrease** in the number of **Permanent Supportive Housing units and beds** available for families.
- From 2014 to 2019 there has been a **large increase** in the number of **Rapid Rehousing units and beds** available for families.





PEC is responsible for the content of this document. We thank the individuals who reviewed the document.

<sup>i</sup> 1. According to HUD, the Point in Time Count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January. HUD requires that Continuums of Care conduct an annual count of homeless persons who are sheltered in emergency shelter, transitional housing, and Safe Havens on a single night. The PIT is just one way to count Pennsylvania’s families and individuals who are experiencing homelessness. The PIT data is used for program planning. The phrase “persons in families” represents people living as a family in contrast to single individuals who are homeless without their families.

2. According to HUD, “These data are used to measure homelessness on a local and national level and are published annually on HUD’s ‘HUD Exchange’ website, which can be viewed by the general public. PIT Count data are also provided annually to Congress as part of the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR). The AHAR is used by Congress, HUD, other federal departments, and the general public to understand the nature and extent of homelessness. HUD’s PIT count data has become increasingly important as a measure of our local and national progress related to preventing and ending homelessness, especially with relation to our progress towards meeting the goals of Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. Therefore, it has become necessary to ask for more detailed information and to ensure that the data submitted to HUD are as complete and accurate as practicable.” (source: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/PIT-Count-Methodology-Guide.pdf>).

<sup>ii</sup> Data source is the Philadelphia Office of Homeless Services. Learn more at <http://www.philadelphiaofficeofhomelesservices.org/know-homelessness/point-in-time-count/>