2018 THURSTON COUNTY HOMELESS CENSUS

Who's Homeless and Why?

Produced by a Countywide Partnership in Conjunction with the 5-Year Homeless Housing Plan

THURSTON COUNTY
WASHINGTON
SINCE 1852

Thurston County 2018 Point-in-Time Homeless Census Report

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Preface

The 2018 Thurston County Homeless Census Report presents the results of the annual "Point in Time Count of Homeless Persons" coordinated statewide by the Washington State Department of Commerce. These results, along with the results from other Washington Counties can also be found on the Department of Commerce website located at: http://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/homelessness/annual-point-time-count/

This report was produced on behalf of the Thurston County Board of Commissioners and by the City of Olympia as contracted to complete the annual Point in Time Count and Thurston County Homeless Census Report on behalf of the County.   Copies may be found online at the following websites:

> http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/sscp/index.html
> http://olympiawa.gov/homelessness

Note on photographs: Unless otherwise noted, this report contains stock photographs in order to protect the identity of local homeless people who did not want their photographs to be published.

For questions, comments, or to request a digital copy of this report:

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Facility Partners

The following facilities hosted Homeless Connect Events or Homeless Census Activities in conjunction with the Homeless Census:

- Providence Community Care Center & Sidewalk
- Interfaith Works
- Rochester Organization of Families (ROOF)
- Rosie's Place Youth Drop-in Center (CYS)
- Family Support Center of South Sound
- Lacey Veteran's Services Hub
- Yelm Community Service Center
- Billy Frank Jr. Place & the Low Income Housing Institute
- Just Housing Alliance

Service Provider Partners

- Capitol Recovery Center & the PATH Program
- City of Olympia
- Community Youth Services staff
- Covenant Creatures & Leanne Johnson
- Family Support Center staff
- Hair by Jesse
- Interfaith works staff
- Jamie Lee & Company Salon
- Olympia Barber School & Maria Ferris
- Rochester Organization of Families (ROOF) staff
- Salvation Army of Olympia & Major Richard Pease
- Sidewalk staff & volunteers
- Thurston County Food Bank
- Washington Clippers Foot Care
- YWCA of Olympia

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- John Hutchings, Commission Vice- Chair
- Gary Edwards, Commissioner

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- Clark Gilman, Council Member
- Renata Rollins, Council Member
- Jessica Bateman, Council Member
- Keith Stahley, Community Development Department Director
- Anna Schlecht, Community Service Program Manager
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- ✧ Mike Matlock, Community Development Director
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Washington State Department of Veteran Affairs

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Donations Providers:

Anna Schlecht
Big Tom's Garden
Olive Garden
Salvation Army
Thurston County Food Bank
YWCA of Olympia.

Figure 1PIT Homeless Census Volunteers Stephanie Taylor, Chanita Jackson & an unidentified woman prepare survival bags for distribution to Homeless Connect Event participants.

Overview

The annual Thurston County Homeless Census tells us who is homeless and why. On January 25, 2018 Thurston County participated in the 13th annual statewide "Point in Time Count of Homeless Persons", referred to as the Homeless Census or PIT Census. This census is required by the State Homeless Housing and Assistance Act as well as the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a way to accurately count those Americans who are without permanent housing. Census results help governments to ensure a proportionate level of public funding for local shelters, transitional housing, and related supportive services. These numbers also help to create the most accurate picture of homelessness throughout our state and across our nation.

Locally, census results are examined by many community stakeholders – policy makers, funders, service providers, concerned citizens and homeless people themselves. Together, we can look at who is homeless, why they are homeless, and what resources we have available. Effective responses to homelessness require accurate data and solid analysis to identify and create data-driven solutions.

PIT Homeless Census Counts: 2006 – 2018

The primary source for this report is the Thurston County PIT Homeless Census. The chart below presents 13 years of PIT data, with 835 homeless individuals found in 2018, representing an increase of 56% or 301 more people since last year. It also shows a 89% increase from the 2006 baseline number of 441 homeless people. The numbers follow the broad economic trends of the past decade - - the rise of the recession, a drop during the recovery and most recently a rise that appears to correlate with sharp rent increases in Thurston County, mirroring trends on the entire West Coast (*2017 Thurston County Assessment of Fair Housing Report).*
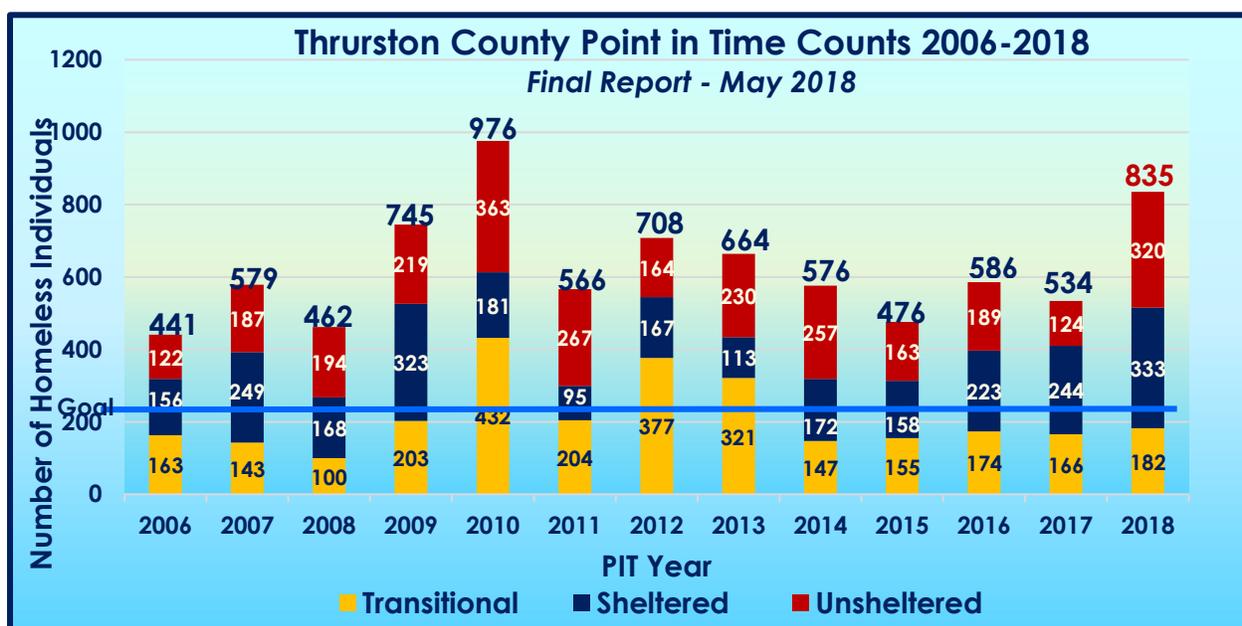
Homeless Students in Public Schools

The second source of homeless data is a parallel census, conducted by all eight (8) of Thurston County's school districts, which found 1,670 homeless public school students (Kindergarten through 12th grade) in data available from the most recent school year of 2016 – 2017. This represents a 10% or 153 student increase over last year, and 1,016 more students and a 155% increase since the 2006 baseline of 654 students. As presented later in this report, these data are compiled from a year-long census that includes students staying with friends and family—a demographic not included in the County Census.

Thurston County Homeless Students 2008-2017

Year	Total Homeless Youth Grades Pre K-12
2008-09	1269
2009-10	1158
2010-11	1126
2011-12	1123
2012-13	1584
2013-14	1670
2014-15	1770
2015-16	1512
2016-17	1670
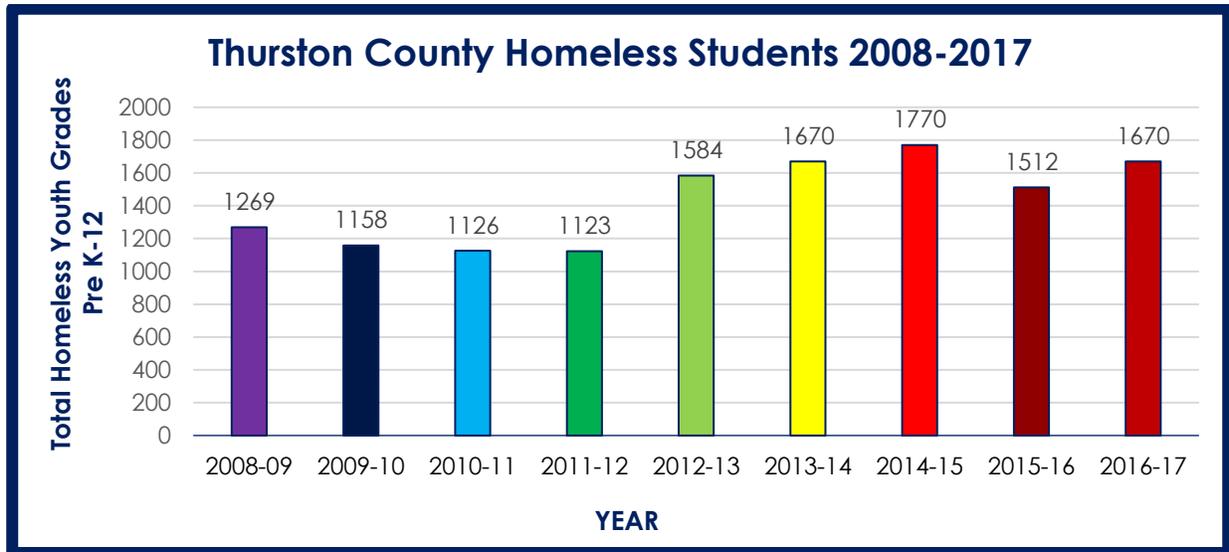
City of Olympia Homeless Data

New this year, City of Olympia conducted two additional efforts to better understand homelessness in the urban hub. Together, these two counts found 763 unsheltered people in the urban hub, far more than the 320 unsheltered people found in the formal PIT Homeless Count. ***Please note:*** In an effort to broaden the count to include people who typically refuse to give their names (Please see "**Methodology Chapter 9)** the Olympia Counts did not collect names or any additional information. Because of this difference in methodology, these numbers could not be certified as part of the formal PIT Count which is based on the State's PIT Census survey in which names must be collected. Without names it is not possible to prevent double counting.

Pre-Dawn Doorway Count The first Urban Hub Count was the Downtown Pre-dawn Doorway Count, conducted four times over a six (6) month period. At 5:00 am, Census Workers conducted a rapid visual scan of an area roughly nine (9) by eight (8) blocks in the urban hub. On the morning of January 25, 2018, this revealed 135 people camping in the alcoves.

Camp Census with Homeless Guides The second methodology involved sending out teams with homeless guides to go into homeless camps throughout the urban hub of Olympia and the nearby parts of Lacey and Tumwater. These teams found a total 628 people living in camps.

Accomplishments in Context of 2018 PIT Homeless Census

Homelessness in Thurston County is rising, and it appears that while many people are finding housing and other resources, new people are falling into homelessness. This year's census total of 835 represents an 89 % increase, or 394 more people than identified in the 2006 census of 441 people. However, this year's results indicate a significant 15% drop in homelessness from the 2010 all-time high of 976. In spite of this increases, there have been significant accomplishments in strengthening the network of housing, shelter and homeless services. Following is an overview of the accomplishments of Thurston County and City of Olympia in responding to homelessness:

Figure 2   The Providence Foundation Community Care Center opened in 2017, providing a walk-in clinic, social services, and referrals for shelter and housing.

1) **Continued Regional Leadership:** Thurston County continues to work across the region with all jurisdictions through the Thurston Thrives network and its Housing Action Team.
2) **Emerging City Leadership:** Two of the urban hub cities have prioritized homeless response planning, with the City of Tumwater hiring a policy consultant to guide their response planning and the City of Olympia Council formulating a Homeless Plan of action (presented in an Olympia Council Resolution contained in the Appendix) and hiring a Homeless Response Coordinator. Citizens of Olympia also passed the sales tax-funded **Home Fund** to generate an estimated 2.8 million annually for affordable housing projects.
3) **Strengthened Partnerships:** Local governments are working more closely with Faith Communities, including the Evergreen Christian Center donation of $300,000 for Olympia's Homeless Coordination Plan and Union Gospel Mission's partnership with the County's Extreme Weather Shelter program. Thurston County has explored options to expertise of private sector developers and other stakeholders in the ad hoc group, "Incentivize Housing".
4) **Strengthened Service Models and Networks:** Local non-profit housing, shelter and service providers continued to strengthen the Coordinated Entry System as well as their individual service models. In particular, the **Providence Foundation's Community Care Clinic** has emerged as a new partnership model for providing centralized services for homeless, mentally ill and other street dependent people.

Together, these four elements are helping to slowly reduce homelessness in Thurston County.

Countywide Actions to Reduce Homelessness

Since 2006, Thurston County has invested nearly $35 million dollars (Includes $3.5 M each for 2016 & 2017) to support many successful projects and programs to reduce homelessness.

These funds have been invested in providing affordable housing, rental assistance and other essential services to reduce homelessness throughout the county.

The funding for these projects and programs is managed by the Thurston County in consultation with the Thurston Thrives Housing Action Team, the Community Investment Partnership (CIP), and all seven (7) jurisdictions in Thurston County, Bucoda, Lacey, Olympia, Rainier Tenino, Tumwater and Yelm. The funding sources include: the federal HOME Program, the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and the two state-funded programs called the Homeless Housing Program and the Affordable Housing Program, which are funded by document recording fee dollars which are collected by Thurston County.

Since 2015, Thurston County invested nearly $ 10.5 Million dollars of federal and local funds in local projects and programs intended to alleviate homelessness. Notable accomplishments include:

Rapid Re-housing: Each year, an average of 450 households received rental assistance through contracts with a number of housing providers.

Figure 3Billy Frank Jr. Place - 43 homes for formerly homeless people

New Housing Production: The County and City worked together to support two new construction projects that created 99 new housing units for veterans, transition age youth and other formerly homeless people (50 rental units at Drexel II in Olympia, 43 rental units at Billy Frank Jr. Place in Olympia and six (6) single family units at Habitat for Humanity's Deyoe Vista in Lacey).

Housing Improvement: approximately 27 total units of housing rehabilitation (43 – Community Action Council, 11 units – Homes First, 15 units - Housing Authority, and 2 other units)

Minor Home Repairs: Rebuilding Together was funded to complete minor home repairs for 14 low income single family homeowners.

Emergency Shelter: Provided 242 year-round shelter beds with another 54 Extreme (cold) weather beds for a total of 296 shelter beds.

Social & Supportive Services: 14 Social service agencies received support for operations and maintenance costs, ultimately benefitting an estimate of over 1,400 low and moderate income people.

Together these projects and programs provided housing and essential services that helped hundreds of households across Thurston County. These accomplishments show that a significant number of homeless and at-risk people were assisted, likely preventing them from becoming homeless. If not for the County funding provided, the rate of homelessness in Thurston County would be significantly higher.

Overview

Each year at the end of January, Thurston County participates in a statewide effort to conduct a census of homeless people and then produces a report examining the results. As a "Point in Time" census, this represents a finite count of people from a specific 24-hour period near the end of January, selected as the end of the coldest month of the year. The results are presented in this homeless census report which serves to:

1) **Examine 'Who's Homeless and Why'** by obtaining the most accurate census of homeless people, the causes of their homelessness, and other useful demographic information;
2) **Quantify Needs** by reporting the number and demographics of homeless people, which in turn brings in federal and state dollars to provide homeless shelter, transitional housing, and other services;
3) **Assess Resources** by tracking currently available housing and service resources; and
4) **Analyze Data and Refine Strategies** by examining needs and resources and supporting the development of better strategies for local responses to homelessness.

Figure 4 A Census Worker prepares to head out to survey unsheltered people

Definitions of Homelessness

This census report is primarily based on the State's definition of homelessness, which includes people living in the following accommodations:

- **Unsheltered** - places not meant for human habitation such as cars, tents, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings, on the street); and,
- **Substandard Housing** - defined as a dwelling lacking drinking water, restroom, heat, ability to cook hot food, or ability to bathe.
- **Emergency Shelter** - also termed homeless shelters, provides emergency housing for up to 90 days;
- **Transitional Housing** - a form of temporary housing assistance lasting for less than two years;

This definition derives from the federal definition of homelessness, which comes from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD defines homelessness as (1) an individual who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence; and (2) an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is:

- A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing);

- An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or
- A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

For the purposes of this count, transitional housing refers to housing with a 2-year stay limit where being homeless is a prerequisite for eligibility. Transitional housing also typically offers case-management services that are required as part of the program. Persons in transitional housing programs that allow them to continue living permanently in housing after a transition period ("transition in place") are not considered homeless if participation in case management is not a condition of residency.

Other People without Permanent Housing

While the State definition of homelessness is limited to those listed above, the Homeless Census also collects information on other people without permanent homes in order to capture a more comprehensive count of people who impact social and shelter services, including:

- People staying with friends and family.
- People held in jails or medical institutions who will be released to homelessness.

These numbers are useful for understanding the impact of people in jails or institutions who will be released to homelessness. It is also helpful in looking at the people who temporarily stay with friends or family, many of whom may cycle to living in their cars or homeless shelters. This standard was used to produce the numbers referred to as the "county census" count of homeless individuals. All data presented herein will cite the standard as either "state count" or "full count."

2018 Census Data Accuracy

Statewide, the Homeless Census provides the single best measure of how successful we have been at reducing homelessness. However, there were conditions that may have compromised the accuracy, sometimes referred to as the statistical validity of the Homeless Census, listed as follows:

Rainy Weather on Homeless Census Date: This year the Homeless Census was held on very cold and rainy day, thereby reducing the ability of volunteers to reach homeless neighbors, and the willingness of people to stand and answer questions out of doors.

Change in Housing Resource Utilization: This year, more transitional housing inventory had been converted to permanent supportive housing. As part of system-wide trend, Drexel House converted 20 units of transitional housing that would have been included in the total Homeless Census to becoming permanent supportive housing, not included in the Homeless Census. This trend has been driven by the need for more permanent housing and the fact that many people are not "transitioning" out of transitional housing units.

Non-cooperation by Some Unsheltered Homeless Populations: Many unsheltered homeless people are concerned that participation in the Homeless Census might lead to camp clearances or police harassment. Some homeless people harbor a general distrust of government and do not want their names in a data base. Service providers and homeless advocates confirm that this perception is

prevalent among unsheltered people. These concerns stem from the fact that most unsheltered people must break either laws or rules to sleep in cars, abandoned buildings or to camp in the woods. Unsheltered parents are often reluctant to self-identify as homeless for fear of losing their children. Additionally, those with outstanding criminal warrants may fear any contact with government related activities such as a census.

Rural Homeless - Hard to Find: Rural homeless people remain elusive. Rural officials estimate there are a significant number of people living in substandard housing (lacking in heating, cooking or sanitation facilities) that would meet the definition of homeless.

Many rurally-based homeless people tend to exist "off the grid" of homeless services, where fewer services exist, which makes it difficult to locate them via service providers. Methodologies used in urban areas – such as using homeless outreach events or field census teams – are less effective in areas with scattered-site camp locations.

Consistent Methodology vs. Continual Improvement: A government-conducted census effort runs into two conflicting standards. First, standard practices in social research requires consistent methodology in order to achieve accurate and comparable data, year over year. However, standard government practices dictate the need for continual improvement in public services, seeking critical feedback to enhance the methodology as a continual feedback/improvement loop.

Some critics have cited the change in methodology as a threat to census validity. Still other critics have challenged the scope of methodology in given years as having insufficient reach. In preparation for the 2018 Homeless Census, outreach was done to look at best practices across Washington State and the nation. Conversations were held with State, County, and City officials, as well as with providers of homeless services and local stakeholders. PIT methodologies were enhanced in 2018 to reach more unsheltered people.

Figure 5Census Workers approach a camp under a bridge to conduct the PIT survey

Chapter 3: Examining the Numbers

Overview

The following series of charts present the results of the 2018 PIT Homeless Census, primarily using the state definition of homelessness. Additional information is available in the Appendix D. Titled, " **Full 2018 PIT Census Data At a Glance**". *Please Note:* Some respondents only answered the threshold PIT questions of name, gender and where did you stay in order to be included in the formal PIT Census. As a result, some questions show the smaller, actual number of respondents for each question. Additionally, this report presents some charts and information on people living with friends or families and people in jail or medical facilities who will be released to homelessness. Although these homeless people do not meet the HUD definition of homelessness, they clearly present a significant impact on local services and the community at large. Please note that due to technical issues with the state's database, some of the totals and subtotals may be off by 5 persons or less.

Causes of Homelessness

Understanding the root or precipitating causes of homelessness is key to identifying the most appropriate resources. The chart below presents the self-reported causes of homelessness by respondents in the county census. Each respondent was asked to report all situations that applied, recognizing that causes of homelessness may have a multiplier effect.

Causes of Homelessness All PIT Homeless
522 Responses

Cause	Count
Job Loss/…	108
Eviction/Loss of housing	85
Family…	63
Domestic violence	54
Mental Illness	51
Physical…	48
Alcohol/substance…	46
Lack of job…	42
Discharged from…	21
Other	15
Guardian mental…	12
Discharged from…	10
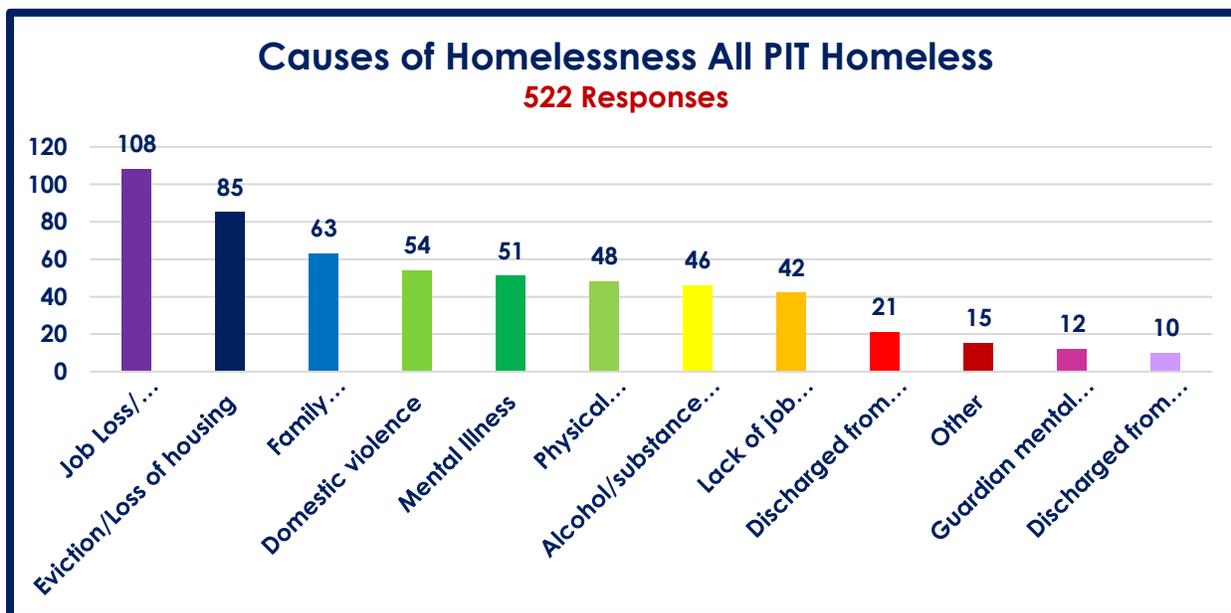
The chart above shows that the largest reported cause of homelessness was job loss, reported by 108 people or 21% of the respondents. The second largest cause was eviction or loss of housing, cited by 85 or 16% of respondents. The third and fourth most commonly stated causes reflect family instability, with family rejection sited in 12% and domestic violence in 10% of responses.

Other significant causes of homelessness are mental illness, physical disabilities, alcohol/substance abuse, and lack of a job, cited by between 42 and 51 persons. These statistics may be problematic given the conflicting directives of the WA State Department of Commerce to collect names of all respondents and the federal HIPAA law (the "Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act" of 1996) that protects the medical privacy of mentally ill people and other respondents with medical conditions covered by HIPAA.

In general, service providers are prohibited from releasing medical information with the names of their clients. On a different question regarding self-reported disabilities, 98, or 19%, self-disclosed mental illness, and 140 (28%) cited chronic health conditions, which may have been a contributing factor in their homelessness.

Where the Homeless Find Refuge

Where do people find refuge?

To be included in this homeless census, respondents had to meet the definition for homelessness on the night of January 25, 2018, when the census was conducted.

The results present a snapshot of where the homeless take shelter, which includes a broad array of formal and informal accommodations.

The graph to the right represents the range of those answers. More than one third of all homeless people reported they were unsheltered, 320 people, or 38% respondents.

Of this number, there were 169 of the people living out of doors, 146 people living in vehicles or RV's and 5 living in abandoned buildings.

Another 40% of all local homeless or 333 people spent the night in emergency homeless shelters.   The remaining 182 people, or 22% of all homeless households, were living in transitional housing, defined as housing that is designed to facilitate the movement of homeless individuals or families to permanent housing within a reasonable amount of time, usually 24 months or less.

Other People without Homes

Beyond the HUD-defined number of homeless people, the census also collected information on individuals who "lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence" (HUD definition).

This included an estimated 38 people in jails, based on the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USCIH) estimate that at least 15% of incarcerated people will be released to homelessness *("Reducing Criminal Justice System Involvement among People Experiencing Homelessness", the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, August 2016)* and 34 people in medical facilities who will be released to homelessness. It also includes 64 people temporarily staying with
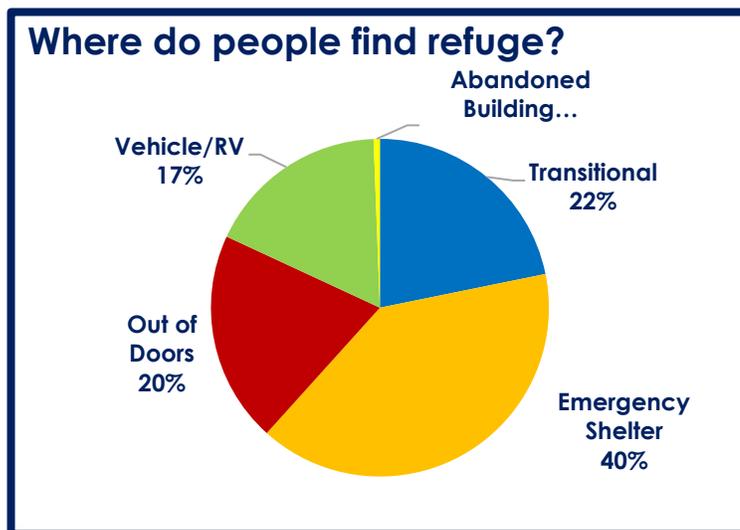
friends or families. While these numbers are not included in the state-defined total of 835 (page <mark>9</mark>, "Definitions of Homelessness"), these homeless people typically have a significant impact on local services such as food banks, soup kitchens and other services. Many report that they "run out of" friends and family and ultimately end up in homeless shelters.

Among this number of "other homeless people" are the unaccompanied minors who are not living with parents or guardians. These youth typically cycle from staying with friends, sometimes termed "couch surfing," and living on the streets. Providing shelter for unaccompanied minors presents a significant challenge, because many avoid going into "the system" being returned to their parents or guardians as a result of Washington State's "Becca Laws", which are intended to keep families together.

Geography of Homelessness

The geography of homelessness shows where homeless people go to find survival resources. For the purposes of the PIT, this data takes the form of two discreet sets. People were asked both where their last permanent address was, and what their current City of residence was. By comparing these two sets of information, the movement of homeless persons in Thurston County can be tracked.

Current City   The vast majority of homeless respondents called Olympia their current home. Information on Transitional and Emergency Shelter client data is garnered from the location of their respective service facilities, the majority or 99.6% are in Olympia. The unsheltered population, however, was interviewed throughout Thurston County on the day of the count, and more accurately reflects demographics. There is still a level of difficulty in capturing rural homeless, as people experiencing this struggle in rural communities are far less likely to be found in centralized location, or be willing to answer the PIT survey questions.

Current City (Unsheltered Only)

Olympia 80%
Lacey 9%
Tumwater 2%
Yelm 6%
Rochester 2%
Other 1%
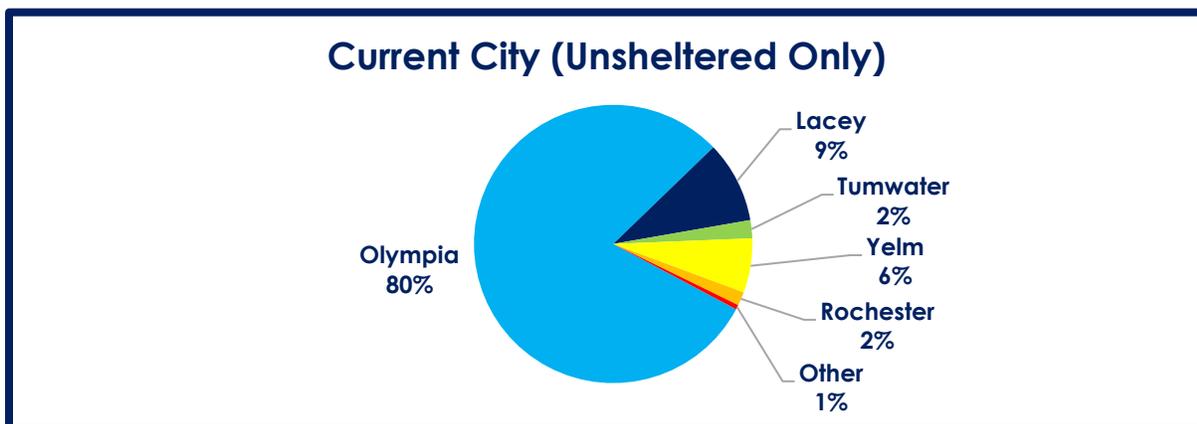
The chart above shows that for the unsheltered population, the vast majority of surveys were conducted in Olympia, and people identified Olympia as their current home in 152 of 190 survey responses (80%). The next most common answers were Yelm, followed by Lacey. This represents a change from past years, as the Yelm Homeless Count is the highest ever recorded from that jurisdiction.

Last Permanent Residence A very different geography is presented by the answers of where the respondents had their last permanent residence, meaning a home with an address. Only 36% of the total respondents stated that Olympia was the location of their last permanent residence. Another 3% said they had lived in Lacey and 11%, stated that they had lived in Tumwater. 9% of people said they

were from other parts of rural Thurston County, while 13% were from other parts of Washington State. The remaining 28%, said they were from other states. This is a rise in out of state persons from previous years – in the last City run PIT count (2015) the out of state demographic was only 4% of total respondents. It is important to note that the vast majority of those who replied to this questions were unsheltered (164 of 189), with 25 responses from emergency shelters. Because of state reporting limitations, demographic data was not available at all for the 182 persons listed as staying in Transitional Housing.

Last Known Address for Total PIT

Out of State 28%
Olympia 36%
Other WA 13%
Other Thurston 9%
Lacey 3%
Tumwater 11%

189 RESPONDENTS
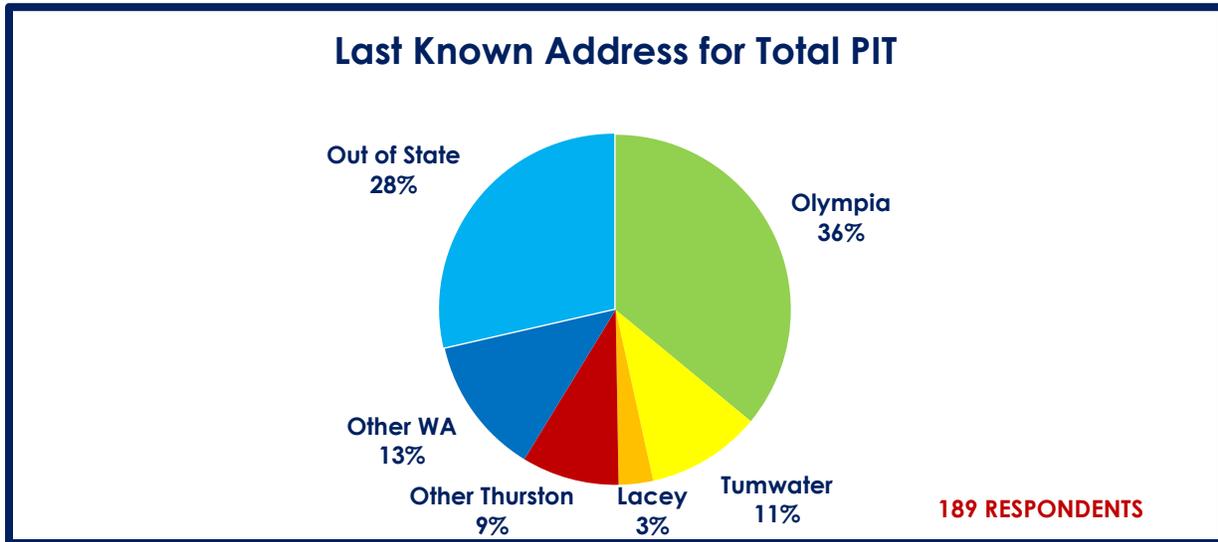
This data suggests that limited choices for services in rural areas can drive homeless people into areas with more available help in a concentrated area. In a dynamic repeated across the country, homeless people from small towns and rural areas are forced to migrate to areas with higher concentrations of services, shelter and transitional housing.

Current City vs Last Known Address

Out of State
Other WA
Other Thurston
Yelm
Tumwater
Lacey
Olympia

0   100   200   300   400   500   600   700

■ Last Known Address   ■ Current City
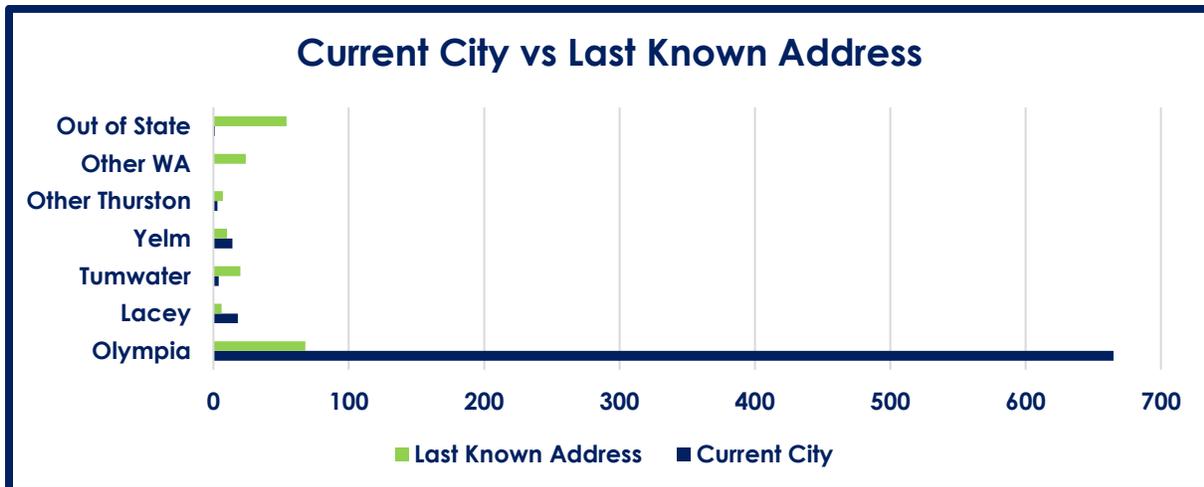
The chart above shows a comparison between the last permanent address of residence and current City of refuge answers for the homeless population. While there is some inconsistency in the data because Transitional Housing providers do not capture information on the last known address.   However, this

clearly shows that where ever they came from, the vast majority of Thurston County's homeless citizens are now in Olympia.

Ages of the Homeless

Homelessness affects persons of all ages: families with small children, youth, single adults, and elderly are all represented in the Point-in-Time count. Indeed, the largest single demographic falls in the under 18 age group, where 26% of Thurston County's homeless population are children. A separate data set from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction shows there are 1670 homeless school age children in Thurston County. See the section on OSPI data for more on the demographic between the ages of 30-45, and 19% between the ages of 45-60. Only 6% of homeless persons are over 60 years of age. With the exception of the population of people over 60 population, ages are ranged nearly equally across the spectrum, with nearly a quarter of the population falling into each group. This shows how homelessness affects people of every age in our community. The 2018 data also shows 24% of people surveyed were between 18-30 years of age, and 25% were age 30-45.

Age of Total PIT Homeless

Over 60
6%

Under 18
26%

45-60
19%

30-45
25%

18-30
24%

742 Responses
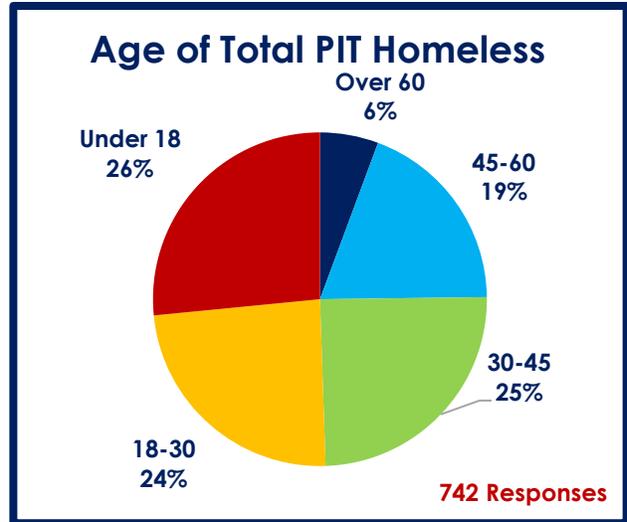
Disabilities for the Homeless

Many people who experience homelessness self-report that they live with disabilities. These can impact their ability to successfully access social services, find work, and stay housed. In 2018, the largest reported disability was chronic health conditions, with 140 persons, or 28% of respondents reporting that their health was a major factor in their lives. A further 119 people, 24%, reported a physical disability.
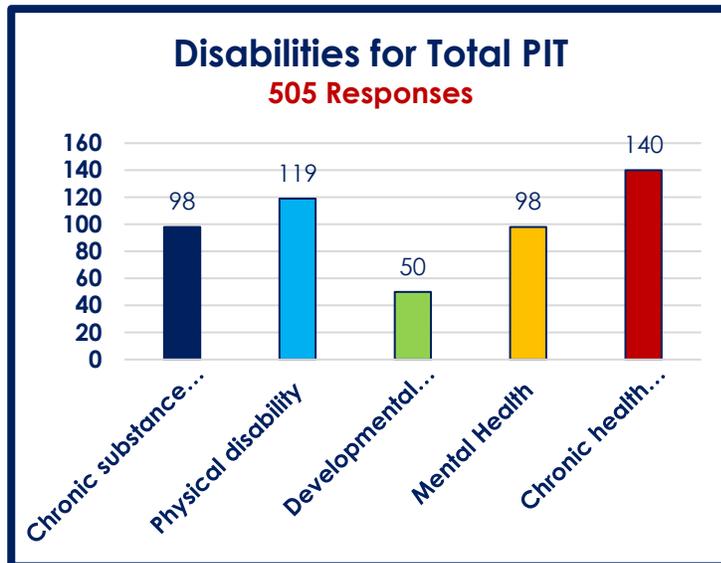
Disabilities for Total PIT
505 Responses

Category	Value
Chronic substance...	98
Physical disability	119
Developmental...	50
Mental Health	98
Chronic health...	140

Mental health and chronic substance/alcohol abuse continue to be relevant factors in the homeless population as well, with 19% of respondents reporting suffering from these conditions. A lesser number of people, 50 (10%) reported living with a developmental disability in 2018.

Overall, the data this year suggests that access to adequate health care is a significant issue for homeless people in Thurston County.

Sources of Income for Homeless People

Using data to ascertain the sources of income which are a resource for homeless persons in Thurston County helps to alleviate misconceptions. While people often see homeless persons panhandling, the PIT data shows that a relatively small number of homeless persons reported panhandling as a source of income. Of those who responded, the majority of the homeless, 69% reported they had some form of income. Only 31%, reported "no income." The form of income varied, but the majority of reported income came in the form of public assistance programs. The largest reported source of income was TANF, or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, with 92 people, 11% of the total count reporting using this resource. The second largest group, 75 or 9%, reported Social Security or Social Security Disability as a source of income. The third largest group of 72 people or 8.6% reported Medicare or Medicaid as a source of support. Another 48 people, or 5.7% reported receiving income from work, being employed either part time, full time, or as a seasonal worker.

Do the Homeless (Total PIT) Have Income?

No 31%
Yes 69%
406 Responses
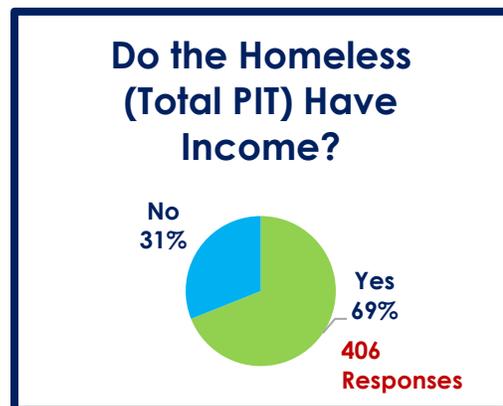
The remainder reported a variety of income sources. Information for this question is limited by the lack of data in the State database from people living in Transitional housing or staying at shelters. The chart below presents the breakdown of sources of income.

Sources of Household Income for Total PIT

Category	Value
TANF	92
SSI/SSDI	75
Medicare/caid	72
Panhandling	35
Relatives/Friends	21
Employment	48
Disability	6
VA	4
Unemployment	3
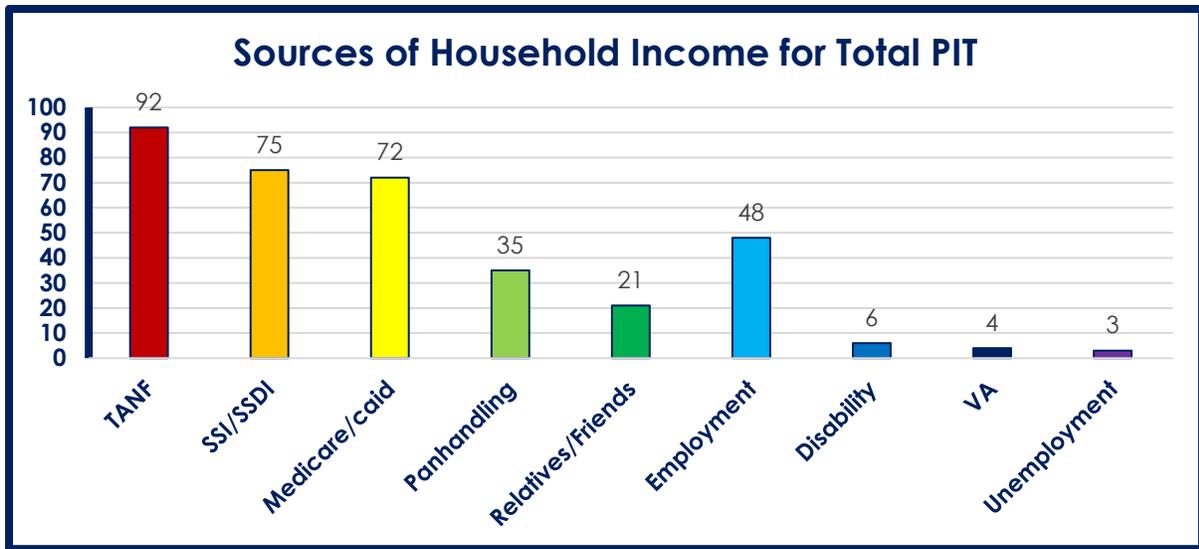
How Long Have They Been Homeless

HUD Defines Chronic Homelessness as someone with a disability who has also: 1) been homeless for over one year; or, 2) has been homeless at least four times in three years.

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, people who are chronically homeless are among the most vulnerable in the homeless population, tending to have high rates of behavioral health problems that are often exacerbated by physical illness, injury or trauma.

To determine the number of chronically homeless people, the census examined data on three questions.

One of the census questions asked how long people were homeless. Nearly half of the respondents, 259 or (62%), said they had been homeless for more than a year, which is one qualifier for being chronically homeless. The responses for more than 1 year of homelessness were consistent across all those who identified as unsheltered and those who stayed in emergency shelter, while only 50% of those in transitional housing were unhoused more than 1 year.

PIT Total Homeless More Than 1 Year

No 38%

Yes 62%

417 Responses
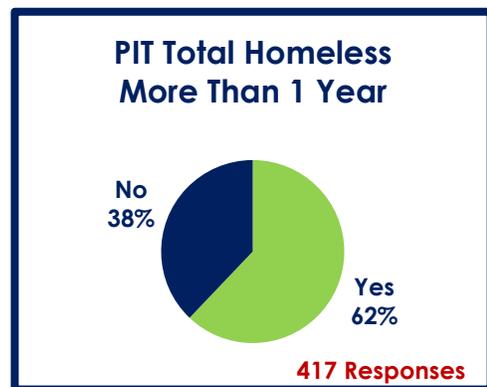
To capture the second indicator of chronic homelessness, another question asked if people had they had experienced four or more episodes of homelessness in the past three years. Fewer respondents answered this question, but the data shows that 142 or 44% reported they had been homeless for four or more times in three years.

Have you been homeless 4 or more times in the last 3 years?

No
56%

Yes
44%

326 Responses
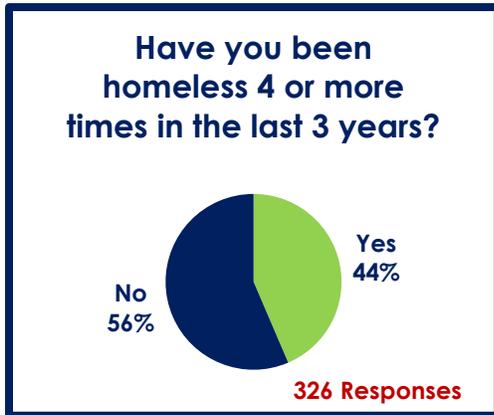
By examining the number of persons who live with a disability and comparing that against the number of persons who have been homeless more than one year, and/or have been homeless 4 or more times in the last 3 years, the Washington State Department of Commerce's chronic homeless calculator estimates that 196, or just over 23% of people in Thurston County's homeless population qualify as chronically homeless.

Overview

Homeless citizens are as diverse as any group of people, and they have arrived at homelessness via many different paths. Because successful service and shelter programs are designed to meet the unique needs of specific subpopulations, it is essential to understand the diverse characteristics of homeless people as individuals in order to develop meaningful responses. The chart below breaks out some of these distinct sub-populations, and is followed by a brief overview of some of the unique characteristics of the primary sub-groups of homeless persons in Thurston County. Included in this chapter is also a short description of current best practices for responding to the needs of unique populations.

Sub-Populations in Thurston County Homeless Population*

Sub-Population	Count
Chronically Homeless	229
Male	438
Female	369
NonConforming or...	21
Mental Health Issues	98
Alcohol/Substance...	98
Veterans	39
Domestic Violence...	128
Unaccompanied...	10
Kids under 18 in...	197
Chronic Health Issues	140
Physical Disability	119
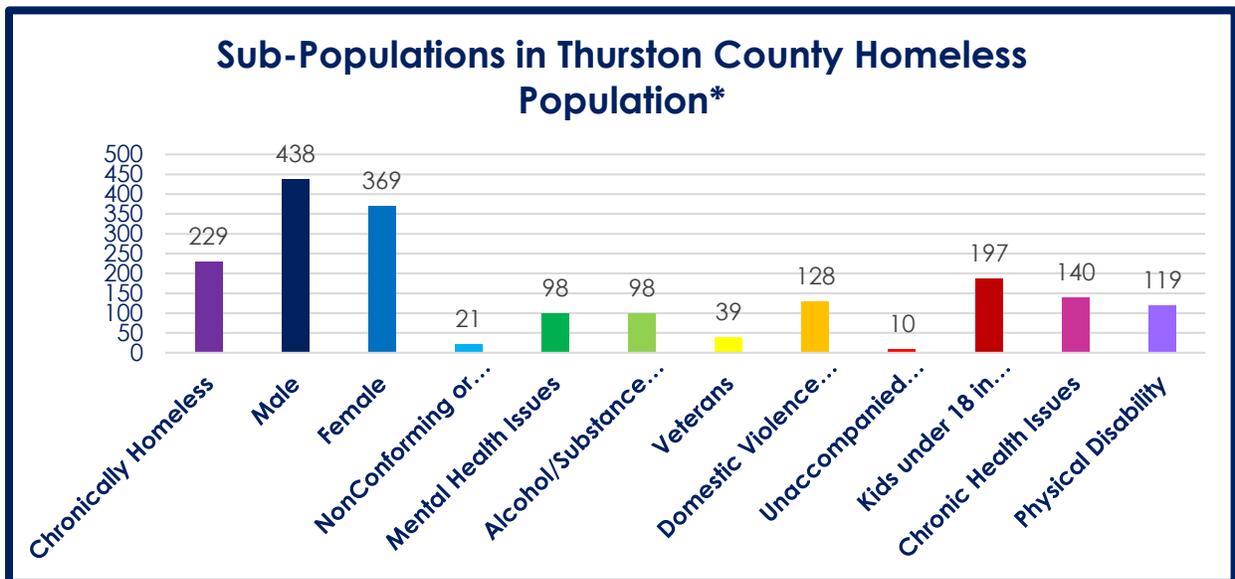
* More than one answer allowed, not a percentage representation.

Gender Identity and Homelessness

One of the key questions for inclusion in the census was gender, offering respondents five options: 1) Male; 2) Female; 3) Gender Non-Conforming; 4) Trans, Male to Female, and 5) Trans, Female to Male. 2018 is the first year all five of these options have been offered.

Respondents for the full census, (which included the unsheltered, sheltered and transitionally housed) found that a majority of the homeless are male, with 438 (53%). The remaining population identified as female, 369 or 45%, and 21 people identified as non-conforming (1.4%) or transgender (1.1%). The issue of gender identity is critical in that homeless shelters are not protected under the state Fair Housing laws, given that shelters do not provide a "place of regular domicile" which leaves transgender people vulnerable to discrimination by faith-based shelters.

Gender Identity and the Unsheltered Among the unsheltered—people who are literally homeless outside the shelter or transitional housing system—the gender breakdown was more than half male

(53%) and a lesser number who were female (41%). This is a stark shift from demographics in the last city run survey in 2015, where 73% of the unsheltered were male, and only 26% female.

These statistics suggest the percentages of need among the unsheltered populations are shifting as well, and highlight a need for more shelter beds and programs for women.

While there appears to be only 21 self-reported transgendered or gender non-conforming homeless people, anecdotal reports suggest there may be more, perhaps among people who refused to respond to the question. While transgendered people are a protected class in the state Fair Housing law, the State Human Rights Commission does not have clear jurisdiction in homeless shelters. This means that some local shelters can and do discriminate against transgendered and gender non-conforming homeless people.

UNSHELTERED BY GENDER

Women 41%

Non-Conforming 3%

No Answer 2%

Trans 1%

Men 53%

320 RESPONDENTS
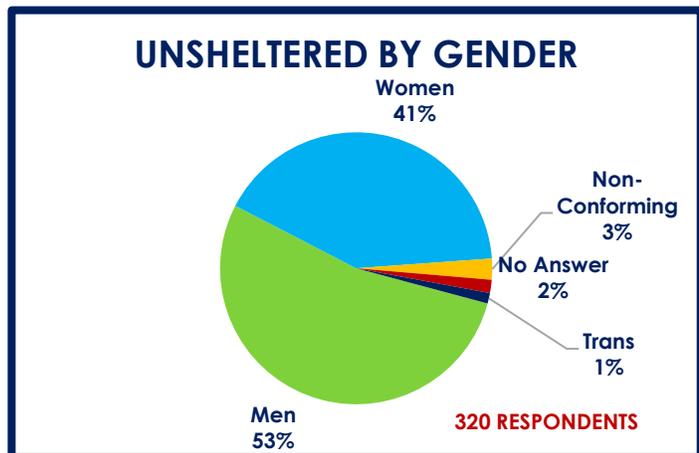
Strategic Response: There is a need to address the discrepancy between the State's Non-discrimination laws, which include Gender Identity as a protected class and the jurisdiction of the State Human Right's Commission, which is not legally able to address discrimination of any form in emergency shelters because they do not fall under the definition of "regular place of domicile".

Mental Illness and Homelessness

Mental illness is typically among the top three causes of homelessness, according to the National Coalition for the Homeless. Severe mental illness often impedes the ability to maintain employment or to manage expenses, which in turn makes it difficult to maintain stable housing. Once homeless, people with mental illnesses can find it difficult to understand or cooperate with the rules of emergency shelters. Those who are unsheltered and mentally ill may find it difficult to access services that would help them to stabilize.

In Thurston County, the numbers of the mentally disabled have decreased from a high of 407 or 42% in 2010 to the current number of 98 or 19%. Many people who are mentally ill are eligible for some form of benefits related to their mental illness. Chronically mentally ill people tend to have symptom escalation on a cyclical basis, and sometimes hospitalization may be necessary to re-establish stability. Once hospitalized, people may lose their benefits due to nonpayment or abandonment.

If jailed, mentally ill people may lose their housing subsidies with supportive services. Upon release from incarceration, many mentally ill people must re-establish their housing and service subsidies, a process that can take several weeks. During periods of hospitalization, landlords may evict them for non-payment and dispose of their belongings as abandoned. After several episodes of homelessness, it can be difficult to find a new landlord to accept their rental history.

Strategic Response: The primary strategy for chronically mentally ill homeless people is to provide Permanent Supportive Housing, or what is often referred to as "service enriched" housing, typically

owned and staffed by non-profit organizations. Currently, Thurston County has 121 beds of permanent supportive housing available for those with disabilities, including mental illness, plus 50 beds for veterans who also may have mental health issues. PIT data of an additional 98 persons with mental illness living without homes suggests more beds are needed.

Housing alone, or "Housing First" may succeed in helping to establish initial stability, but without immediate and ongoing treatment and services, many mentally ill homeless people will fail to keep their housing.

Homeless Victims of Domestic Violence

Figure 6The Census found 128 Victims of Domestic Violence, 54 citing DV as a cause of their homelessness, yet only 29 DV shelter beds.

According to the "National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty," domestic violence is one of the leading causes of homelessness for women and children. According to multiple studies cited by the Families and Youth Services Division of the US Department of Health and Human Services, domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness for women and children.

Locally, there were 128 people or 25% of homeless respondents (out of 507 who answered this question) who were victims of domestic violence. However, there are only 29 DV shelter beds, which are usually full if not over-full. There is also a population (15, or 24% of those listed in this demographic) of persons fleeing DV among those who are staying with family/friends, who are not counted for the purposes of PIT. Victims of domestic violence often have fewer options to seek temporary shelter with friends and family because their abusers would then be able to find them. As a result, they are disproportionately dependent on shelters, typically operated in confidential locations.

Safeplace, the local domestic violence shelter, offers beds that are configured into family rooms rather than being offered in a dormitory style. This means smaller families may occupy rooms without using all the beds, which can appear to be an under-utilization of the capacity. Other local homeless shelters and transitional housing facilities also provide shelter for domestic violence victims. The numbers clearly indicate a significant need for increased domestic violence shelter capacity along with training for other shelter providers.

Strategic Response: Homeless victims of domestic violence often require a "**Continuum of Care"** response. Initially, they are best served by domestic violence shelters, either formal or informal, or through friend networks that can ensure protection from abusers. Many domestic violence shelters seek to expand into providing service-enriched transitional housing to provide a secure stepping-stone from shelter to independence. Housing First is not always the best option in that it may reveal a survivor's whereabouts to abusers.

Chronically Homeless

Over one quarter of the homeless are "chronically homeless," with 196 or 23%, who meet the HUD definition as "either (1) an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for a year or more, OR (2) an unaccompanied individual with a disabling condition who has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years." This represents a 90% increase from the 103 chronically homeless people who were identified in the 2006 homeless census.

The definition above derives from the recognition that when persistent homelessness is compounded by disabling conditions, it becomes exponentially difficult to overcome homelessness. Typically, people without those disabling conditions are more successful at getting the services, jobs or other support necessary to get back into permanent housing.

Stereotypes of homelessness are based on the most visible people, which is often chronically homeless and street-dependent people. The number of Chronically homeless people nearly doubled in the past year, and many are dependent on the concentration of services in downtown Olympia.

Chronically Homeless Population 2010-2018
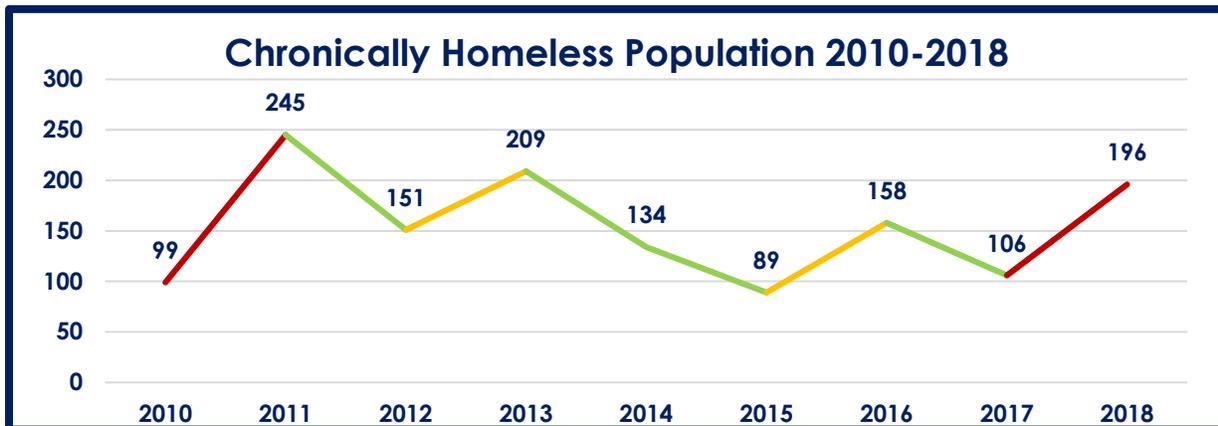
As shown on the above chart, the number of chronically homeless people has fluctuated between 89 and 245 people identified as chronically homeless.

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, chronically homeless people comprise only 16% of the total homeless population but use nearly half of all available shelter and homeless services along with other public services such as police and emergency medical response. Chronically homeless people typically cycle between shelters, hospitals, jails and other facilities.

Strategic Response: Given the compounding affect of homelessness with disabilities, Chronically Homeless people typically need Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). While PSH is more expensive than lighter subsidies such as Rapid Re-housing, Chronically Homeless people often rack up more expenses by cycling through emergency services as illustrated in the 2006 New Yorker article titled, "Million Dollar Murray".

Homeless Veterans

In Thurston County, there were 39, or 5%, of the homeless self-identified as veterans. Nationwide, about one-third of the adult homeless population are veterans. Unfortunately, numerous studies show that veterans are the least likely among the homeless sub-populations to be willing to work with government or other institutional services.

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), homeless veterans are predominantly male, with roughly five percent being female. The majority of homeless veterans are single, come from urban areas, and suffer from mental illness, alcohol and/or substance abuse, or other co-occurring disorders. America's homeless veterans have served in World War II, the Korean War, Cold War, Vietnam War, Grenada, Panama, Lebanon, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Nearly half of homeless veterans served during the Vietnam era. Two-thirds served our country for at least three years, and one-third were stationed in a war zone.

Strategic Response: The most effective response to homeless veterans is to ensure they are linked to all possible VA benefits, including housing, mental health care, drug and alcohol treatment, employment assistance, and other services. This linkage will ensure that a community makes the best use of these distinct revenue streams. Like most homeless subpopulations, veterans benefit from the Housing First model followed up with supportive services. The Lacey Veterans Services Hub provides a safe and veteran centered space for vets to access services. Sidewalk, a rapid re-housing agency has a veteran services representative available at the Community Care Center one day per week.

For individuals unwilling or unable to cooperate with a government or non-profit housing program, the next best solution is to offer survival resources, such as outdoor clothing, camping gear, food and other supplies.

Figure 7Homeless Veterans are best served with referrals to VA resources

Homeless Individuals

Homeless individuals, i.e. single people without dependent children are the largest sub-population of homeless people. The PIT Census found 505 single adults, comprising 60.5% of the total 835 respondents. Homeless single adults who are not mentally ill, veterans or victims of domestic violence are generally excluded from many forms of public assistance, including housing. As a result, it can be difficult to find resources to serve them. Many chronically homeless individuals are typically in single-person households.

Strategic Response: Homeless individuals should be screened to identify their needs and eligibility for potential resources. While most homeless individuals benefit from the Housing First model, case managers may recommend lighter forms of assistance such as temporary emergency shelter, shallow rental subsidies, or job referrals to help stabilize them and facilitate their return to independence. For

individuals unable or unwilling to cooperate with a government or non-profit housing program, the next best solution is to offer survival resources, such as outdoor clothing, camping gear, food and other supplies.

Homeless Families

Figure 8The Census found 197 youth younger than 18

The PIT Census found 320 total people in homeless families where there was at least on child and one adult, accounting for 38.3% of the homeless population. However, there appears to be a much larger number of homeless families who find shelter by living with friends or family members or in their vehicles, thereby eluding the census methodology and being excluded from the census count. Homeless families often cite job loss or the loss of their housing related to the economy as the cause of homelessness.

In addition, many homeless families avoid shelters or the streets because parents fear losing their children as the result of potential intervention by child welfare agencies. Families also avoid the forced separation of family members in order to fit into shelter regulations that can be restrictive about the number and gender configuration of families in their facilities.

Strategic Response: Strategies for homeless families include "Rapid Re-housing" or quickly dispersed rental assistance to stabilize them. Other responses include emergency shelters specifically for families with separate family suites that preserve family cohesion. Shelter case management should be followed by rental subsidies to allow them to secure housing as quickly as possible. It is also important to encourage families to access all potential school-based resources for their school age children.

Other useful resources are the informal networks of friends, school-based or faith community ties. These networks are often the first options pursued by homeless families. Efforts to strengthen informal networks through school associations, faith communities or neighborhood associations could be highly effective.

Homeless Youth

There were 190 homeless children aged 17 and below, 23% of the total homeless population in the PIT Census. When counting "transitional age youth" who are between 18 and 24 years of age, the number of youth becomes 300, or 36% of the total homeless population. Ten of these children were unaccompanied homeless youth 17 or under in the census, comprising 1% of the total population.

The State Department of Commerce, which administers the statewide Homeless Census, considers youth homeless only when they meet the state definition of "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." The state definition includes youth who are living in shelters,

transitional housing, out of doors in vehicles or in abandoned buildings. However, a significant number of homeless youth do not fit this state definition but they do fit the federal McKinney Vento definition because they are "migratory" and live temporarily in hotels or motels or with a succession of friends or family. As a result, the School Census presents much higher numbers deriving from a different methodology.

The PIT Census found 110 young people ages 18 to 24 considered to be "Transition-age Youth". While those under 18 can't stay in adult shelters, those who are between 18 and 24 are at high risk for victimization when placed in general population emergency shelters. Homeless youth and young adults present a significant challenge to Housing First programs in that those under 18 can't legally sign leases and don't fit into the adult homeless housing model.

Without appropriately focused interventions, they are likely to become part of the chronically homeless adult population. Adolescents and young adults have different biological, psychological, social, and developmental cognitive needs than adults, and may be more responsive to a structured transitional housing program.

Best practice service models are designed to focus on prevention/intervention strategies that are geared to a young person's developmental stages. These models utilize multiple "best practice" interventions within a harm reduction model, recognizing that one size will not fit all.

Strategic Response: Priority strategies for Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) focus on preventing and ending homelessness, trafficking, sexual abuse and exploitation of young people by providing supportive services that help decrease vulnerability and increase self-esteem. Local strategies are drawn from the "Core Outcomes for Youth" published by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH): 1) Provide stable housing and safety; 2) Build permanent connections; 3) Foster self-sufficiency through employment and education; and, 4) Foster social and emotional well-being.

"Youth Bridge" is a current best practice service model that incorporates both shelter and transitional housing into a hybrid program that provides system entry for young people, allowing them to move from street dependence to affordable permanent housing at their own pace, assisted by supportive services. Youth Bridge and other effective shelter and housing programs recognize the need to serve both youth who are 17 and younger, as well as "transition-age youth" ages 17 to 22 who are essentially young adults. Absent shelter or housing resources, the primary service models are street outreach and drop-in centers that offer survival goods, service referrals, and general case management that emphasizes "harm reduction".

Figure 9State law makes it difficult to shelter youth under 17 without contacting parents or guardians who may have caused their homelessness

Homeless Sex Offenders

Homeless Sex Offenders Of the 215 total registered sex offenders in Thurston County, all 55 transient sex offenders are registered in Olympia. Much like other homeless people, transient sex offenders are dependent upon the services that are concentrated in Olympia.

Many states have enacted some variation of a sex offender registry as a way to track sex offenders for public safety purposes. In Washington State, the law requires public notification for level two (moderate risk of repeat offenses) and level three (high risk of repeat offenses) sex offenders. Thurston County uses the "Offender Watch" trademarked program to "manage and monitor the whereabouts, conduct and compliance of all registered sex offenders" (excerpt from Thurston County Sheriff's website) in the county. This online registry presents online photos, descriptions of the crime, designations of their threat level, and maps of where they live.

Supporters of housing restrictions believe that public safety is strengthened by monitoring sex offenders and restricting them from residing close to schools, playgrounds or other places that children congregate. Critics believe that such laws have unintended consequences that increase the number of transient sex offenders unable to secure permanent housing. These critics challenge the public safety value of not knowing where sex offenders reside.

Information on homeless sex offenders is not included as a sub-population of the formal PIT Census Report because the PIT Survey did not specifically seek information on sex offender status. As a result, the Sheriff Department's data is presented here is likely to represent overlapping homeless people in Thurston County.

Strategic Response: Most studies show that stable housing allows for better public safety through better tracking of registered sex offenders as well as lower recidivism. Absent resources to provide permanent housing, transitional housing, group homes and/or shelters that accept sex offenders, the public will not know where unsheltered sex offenders are.

Figure 10 Homeless Sex Offenders have high barriers with housing, yet communities are safer when Sex Offenders have registered addresses.

Trends in Thurston County Homelessness

Thirteen years of PIT Census data reveals who's homeless in a given year as well as the trends of who is homeless over time. The chart on this page presents 13 years of data on who the homeless are, where they were accommodated, and some of the issues they face. The questions that emerge in examining this data include: (1) How many people remain homeless year after year? 2) How many leave homelessness and find permanent housing? 3) How many are newly homeless each year? 4) How do we measure progress more accurately, i.e. compare the ratio of newly homeless to housed people?

Trends in Thurston County Homelessness 2006 - 2018

***	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Out of Doors	122	187	154	219	363	269	171	237	263	163	189	166	320
Shelters	156	167	118	123	181	141	171	180	155	158	223	242	333
Transitional Housing	163	143	100	203	432	260	382	269	181	155	174	171	182
Subtotals	441	579	462	745	976	568	724	686	599	476	586	579	**835**
Jails & Medical Institutions	55	38	17	109	146	98	122	175	214	74	ND	ND	154
Friends	104	103	150	159	162	74	156	145	113	71	47	ND	64
Total	600	720	629	1013	1284	740	1110	1006	926	621	633**	579**	**1,053**
Youth - Total Sheltered & Unsheltered	115	111	187	228	420	144	188	157	106	100	3	68	197
Families with Children - Total	151	196	151	275	289	162	121	277	195	161	209	77	320
Single Men & Women - Total	290	383	311	470	663	387	603	409	404	306	377	231	505
Elderly – Total Sheltered & Unsheltered (65 & over)	4	3	11	7	16	3	10	7	11	8	13	6	42
Veterans – Total	75	6	76	18	68	42	63	38	45	39	50	56	39
Mental Illness (self-reported disability)	156	292	288	356	407	249	153	222	141	132	119	58	98
Drug and Alcohol Addicted	122	149	125	164	168	41	37	80	60	56	30	12	98
Chronically Homeless	103	210	84	98	99	78	151	209	257	89	158	106	196

ND = No Data
* Estimate of 115 inmates released to homelessness based on USCIH estimates of 15% applied to the total 766 County population of inmates, which in turn deriving from the HUD sources and "Exploration of Arres Activity Among Homeless Youth Adults in Four US Cities", Social Work Research, 2012.
**Totals do not contain missing data elements
*** Years 2006-2008 and 2016-2017 presented limited data.

The first five years show that the total number of homeless people appears to trend upward, following the broad economic trends of the Recession. The total numbers begin to drop off radically by 2011 as a result of emergency funding for housing provided by the State and Federal governments, yet it also follows the broad economic trend of the recovery. Then the numbers begin to climb again in 2016, mirroring trends along the entire West Coast related to rent increases. The 2016 PIT Census results were affected by a limited staff capacity.

Some of the fairly static populations include the chronically homeless, who appear to average around 144 with outlier years of 84 in 2008 and 229 this year in 2018. The number of homeless veterans also seem to remain fairly static at an average of 45 with one outlier year of 6 homeless veterans in 2007.

The number of respondents who self-reported substance and alcohol use in 2018 is 98, or 12% of the total population, a significant rise from the two years prior, where the numbers were likely under-reported. The 2018 number is more in line with overall trends. Still, these statistics are contrary to the anecdotal reports of street outreach workers, emergency service providers and other public employees, who report a much higher percentage of their clients with substance abuse issues.

Overview

One of the related data sources on homelessness comes from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Because the methodology differs from the PIT Homeless Census, these numbers can not be added together. However, viewed together they present a broader and arguably more accurate picture of family homelessness in Thurston County.

Homeless School Children and the McKinney Act

All Washington state publically funded schools are required to count homeless students, kindergarten through 12th grade. The federal McKinney-Vento Act declares that homeless school children are also entitled to the protections listed under the section entitled, "Education for Homeless Children and Youths." The Act defines homeless children as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." The act goes on to give examples of children who would fall under this definition:

- **Shared Housing** families sharing housing due to economic hardship or loss of housing;
- **Motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds** due to lack of alternative accommodations;
- **Emergency or transitional shelters**;
- **Awaiting foster care placement**;
- **Not an intended sleeping area** Primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation, for example: Cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations . . ."

Thurston County Homeless School Children

The chart below is provided by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and shows Thurston County count of students who were unsheltered, sheltered, doubled up, or staying in a hotel/motel. This data is important to tell more clearly the story of homelessness in Thurston County, as the numbers of students doubled up or in motels would not be counted in the Point in Time data. A deeper understanding of the struggles for children and families will help build more accurate interventions.

Thurston County Homeless Students by District

Legend: Shelters, Doubled-Up, Unsheltered, Hotels/Motels, Total, Unaccompanied Homeless Youth
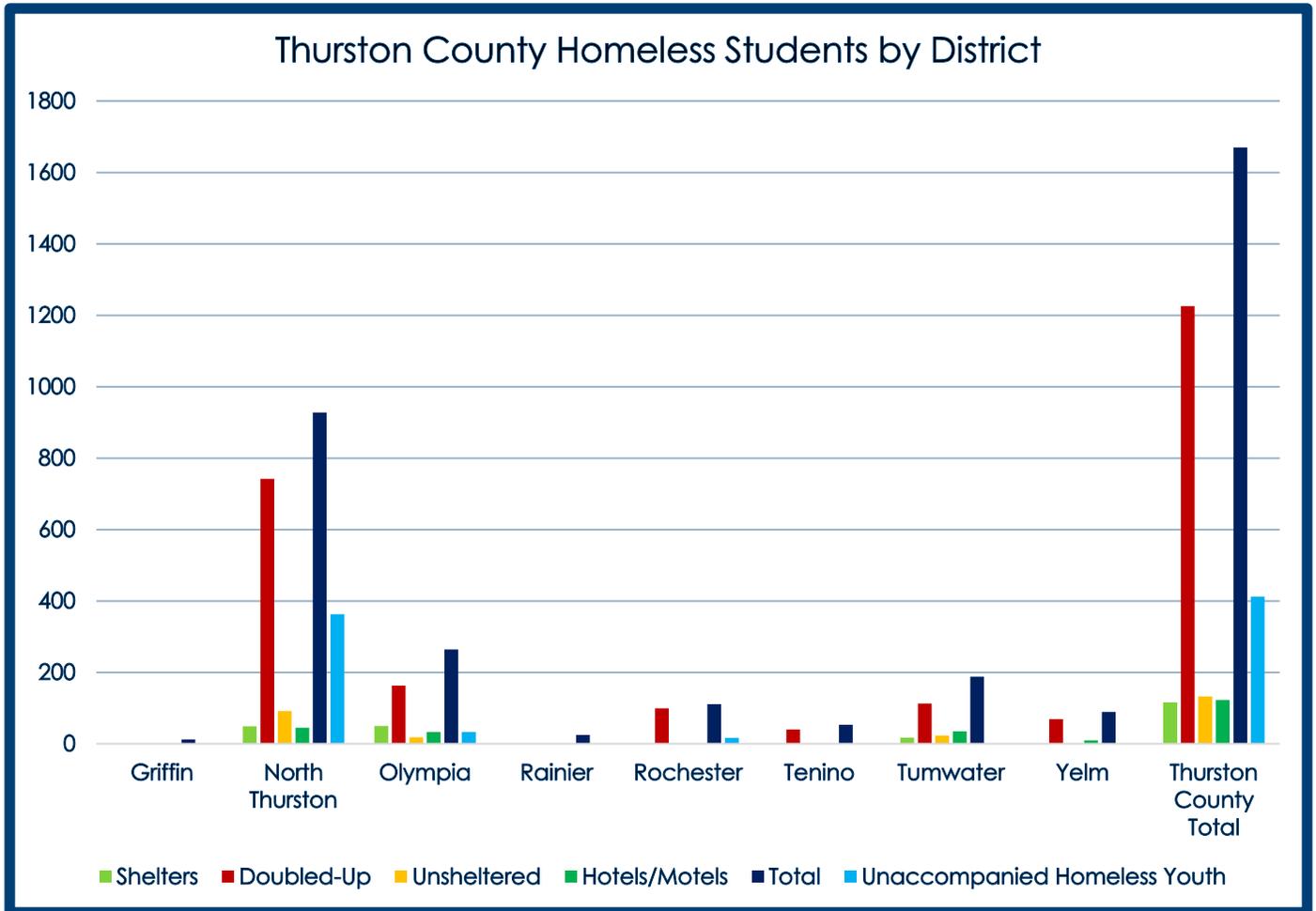
Each year, OSPI works with local school districts throughout the state to identify children and youth attending school who are experiencing homelessness. The purpose of this effort is to offer appropriate services to the family, child, or youth and to report the number of homeless students to federal, state, and local governments. This count does not include school-age children who are not attending school.

Thurston County Homeless Students Pre K - 12

Number of Students (vertical axis)

School District	Number of Students
Griffin	12
North Thurston	928
Olympia	264
Rainier	25
Rochester	111
Tenino	53
Tumwater	188
Yelm	89
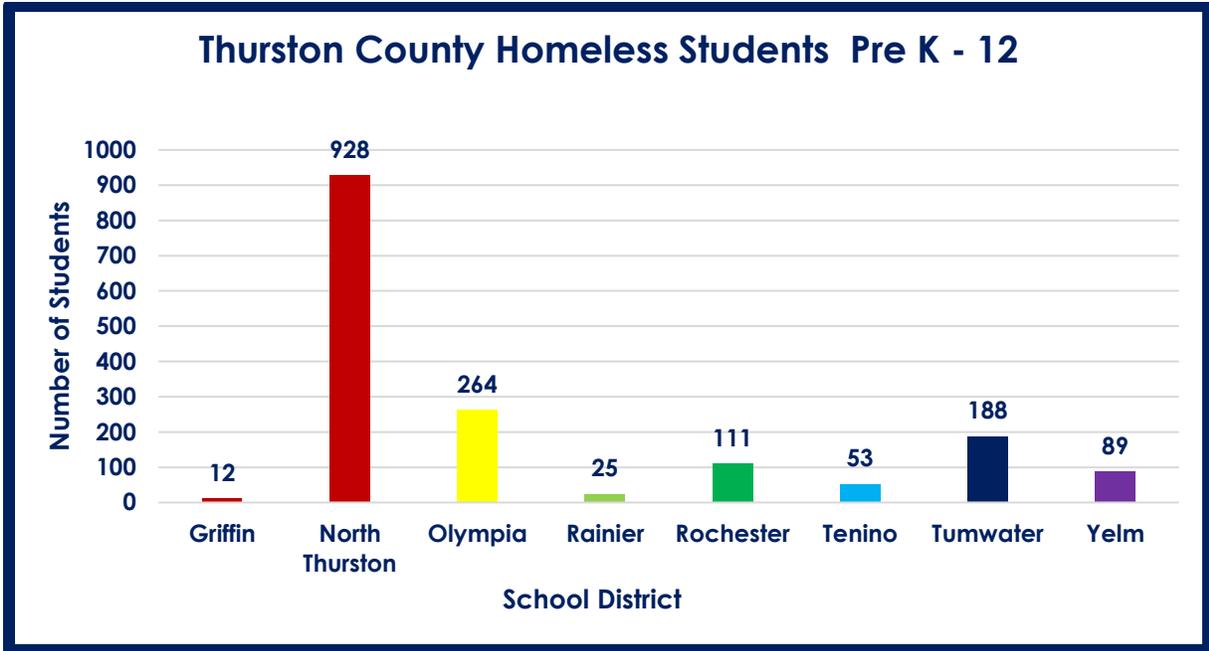
Statewide Homeless School Children

The chart below shows the year-over-year changes of homeless school children enrolled Washington State schools. These numbers are produced by the local school districts and reported to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Washington State Homeless Students
Reported by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Year	Number of Students
2007-08	18670
2008-09	20780
2009-10	21826
2010-11	26049
2011-12	27390
2012-13	30609
2013-14	32494
2014-15	35511
2015-16	39671
2016-17	40934
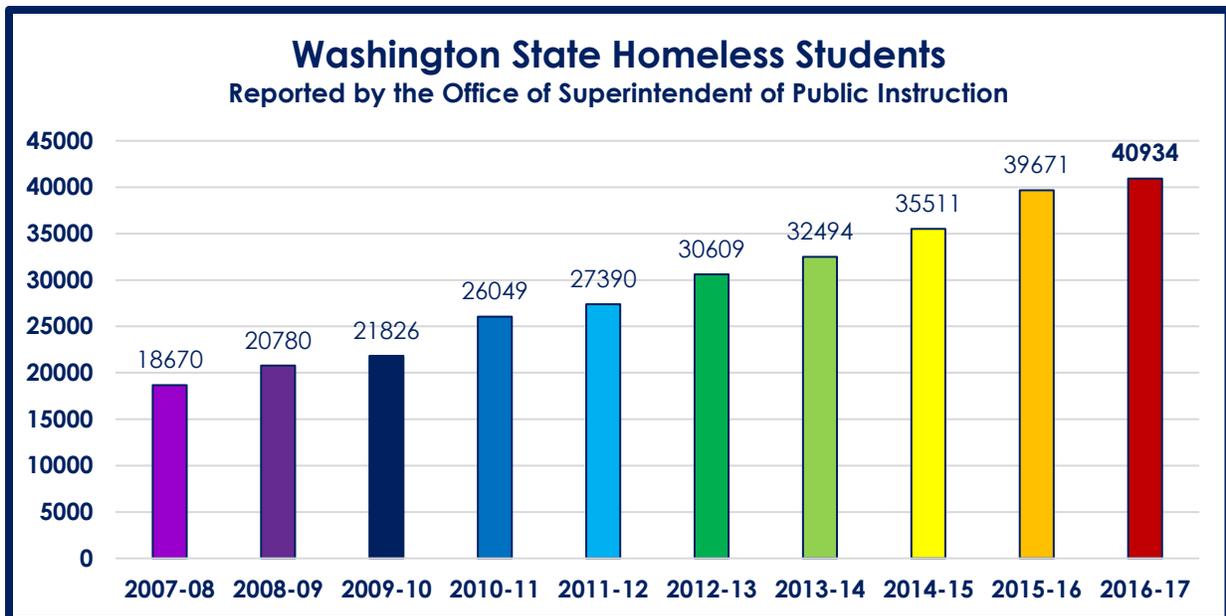
Ten-Year Plan to Reduce Homelessness in Public Schools

In Thurston County, the OSPI developed a 10-year plan and set the goal to reduce student homelessness in public schools by 50%, to 327 students by 2015. The reality however is that student homelessness has risen 55% since 2011. In Thurston County, 4% of all students are homeless, and 37% are enrolled in the

Free & Reduced lunch program, indicating more than 1/3 of Thurston County students are living at or below the poverty line.

Prior to 2015, it appeared that school homelessness mirrored the rise and fall of the County's Homeless Census, with a steady rise to 2010 however, followed by a slight decline to 1,123. However, in 2014 the number spiked radically up by 41%. Public officials attribute some of this increase to better school reporting.

Comparatively, Washington State as a whole has seen student homelessness rise steadily, going from 18,670 homeless students during the 2007-08 school year to 40,934 in the 2016-17 school year, which is an increase of 119%. According the OSPI press release, "About one out of every 25 K-12 students in Washington State – nearly one in every classroom – will experience homelessness, living in hotels or in cars, or with friends, sometime during the school year."

Correlation of District Numbers with Census Numbers

Homeless student data from OSPI does not directly correlate with PIT Census data, yet still provides a composite view of homelessness. Together, they mirror a general trend of homelessness in Thurston County rising to an all-time high in 2010 and since then drop until 2014, when the numbers shot up 41%. This year, the number is the second highest since beginning this methodology.

The OSPI homeless student numbers are collected over the most recently completed school year, in this case, 2016-17, which ended seven months before the January 2018 PIT Census. The OSPI numbers also include students who live with friends or family, an accommodation not included in the PIT Census numbers. A further difference is that some of the PIT Census numbers include homeless students who were counted by the school districts. These differences in methodologies mean that these figures cannot be directly added together or be directly compared statistically.

The school numbers include only students enrolled during the school year 2016-2017, but do not include their families—particularly younger siblings who are not school age. On the other hand, the PIT Census is a one-day snapshot of homelessness in Thurston County, which includes many students staying with their families in shelters, transitional housing, or out of doors. While derived from different methodologies and timelines, these two sets of numbers clearly show that the number of homeless individuals is increasing since the baseline year of 2006.

Poverty in Public Schools: Free & Reduced Lunch Rates

Another useful source of information on poverty among public school age children is the "Free and Reduced Meal" data published by OSPI on an annual basis. Enrollment in this program serves as an index of poverty for families with children in each of the districts.

The eligibility of students to participate in the state's free and reduced price school lunch program is determined by federal income guidelines according to family size and regionally adjusted poverty line of household income. Nationally, it is estimated that 12.7% (40.6 million) of the population has an income at or below the federal poverty line.

In 2018, the federal poverty level annual income for a household size of three was $20,780. To qualify for free meals, a household of three cannot make more than 130% of the federal poverty annual

income, or $27,014 annually. Statewide, 465,407or 42% of the total 1,100,779 students enrolled in Washington State public schools (K-12) participated in the Free and Reduced lunch program during the 2016-17 school year.

The "**Free and Reduced Meal Program**" is funded jointly by the federal Department of Agriculture and Washington state public school system to ensure that hunger is not a deterrent to a quality education. All households with income levels below certain amounts are encouraged to apply for any or all of the following programs:

- **National School Lunch Program**
- **School Breakfast Program**
- **Special Milk Program**

Poverty is clearly an indicator for being at risk of homeless for families with children, so this data provides a useful perspective on how Thurston County families with school-aged children are doing. Unfortunately, across the board, all seven districts show a deepening of poverty in public school.

Comparative School Data

The chart below presents comparative data from the OSPI "Report Card", an online database that presents statewide and district level information on K-12 students. The OSPI website also presents other information, including the number of homeless students by district. Please note: as with the homeless student data, this information is collected for school years that straddle a biennium, which falls seven months prior to the Homeless Census.

Thurston County Students Homelessness & Free Lunch

District	# of students Homeless	# of students on Free & reduced
Griffin	116	12
North...	14833	6189
Olympia	10042	2,832
Rainier	802	390
Roche...	2267	1,132
Tenino	1079	591
Tumw...	6636	1,935
Yelm	5760	2408

(Additional values shown: 625, 928, 264, 23, 111, 53, 188, 89)
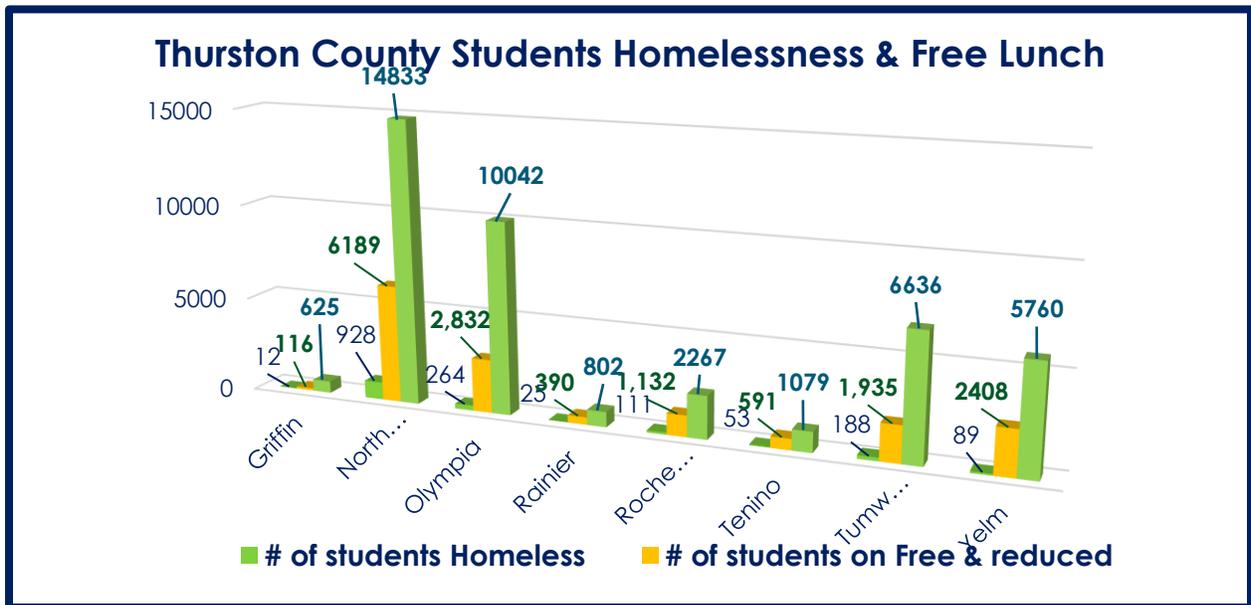
Comparing School Districts in Thurston County

Thurston County school districts range in size from the small rural Griffin school district with 647 students to the sprawling North Thurston School District with 14,833 students. However, raw numbers sometime have less impact the percentage that certain demographics have on the entire district. While the Rochester School District is one of the smaller districts with only 2,267 or 5.4% of the County's students, nearly 50% of their student body is on free and reduced lunch. Following is some comparative data on the eight different school districts, comparing the total number of students with the number of students who are on free and reduced lunch and those whose families are homeless.

Urban Student Poverty The urban school districts have the highest concentration of students, with 31,511, or 75% of the population compared to 10,533 or 25% of students in the rural school districts. The chart below shows that 10,956 or 70% of the students on Free and Reduced Lunch are enrolled in the urban school districts. This is a lower percentage than the 1,380 or 82% of the total number of homeless students. In particular, North Thurston has 9268 or 56% of County's homeless students.

Urban Students Homeless & Hungry

District	# of students on Free & reduced	# of students Homeless
Tumwater	1935	188
Olympia	2832	264
North Thurston	6189	928
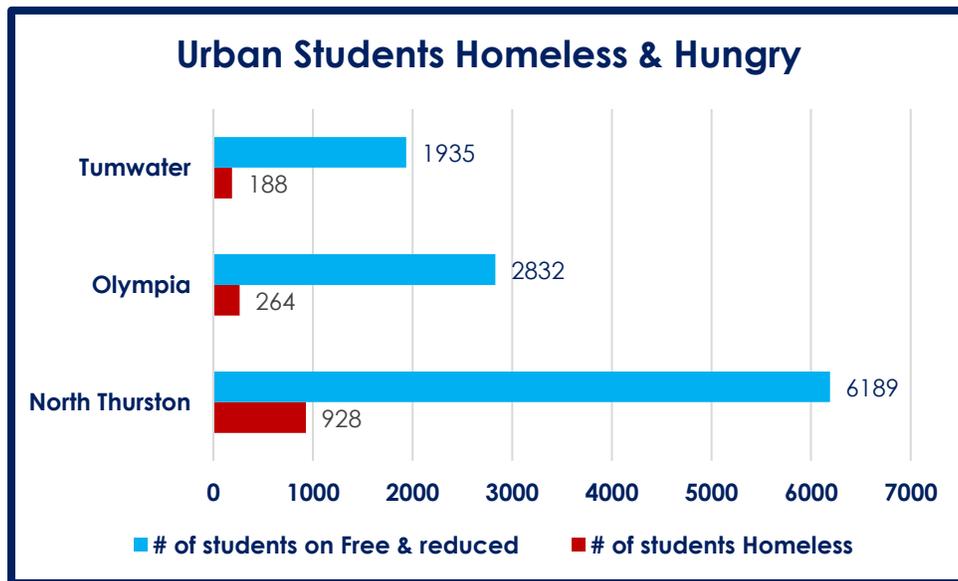
Rural Student Poverty The rural school districts had 4637 or 30% of the students on free and reduced lunch are enrolled in the rural school districts, a high percentage of the overall. The number of homeless students is less, with 290 or 17% of the County's homeless students in the rural districts.

The Yelm District continues to grow, and now has 5760 students Kindergarten thru 12th grade. This number is nearly as many as Tumwater, and Yelm has 2408 or nearly 42% of its students participating in the Free and Reduced lunch program.
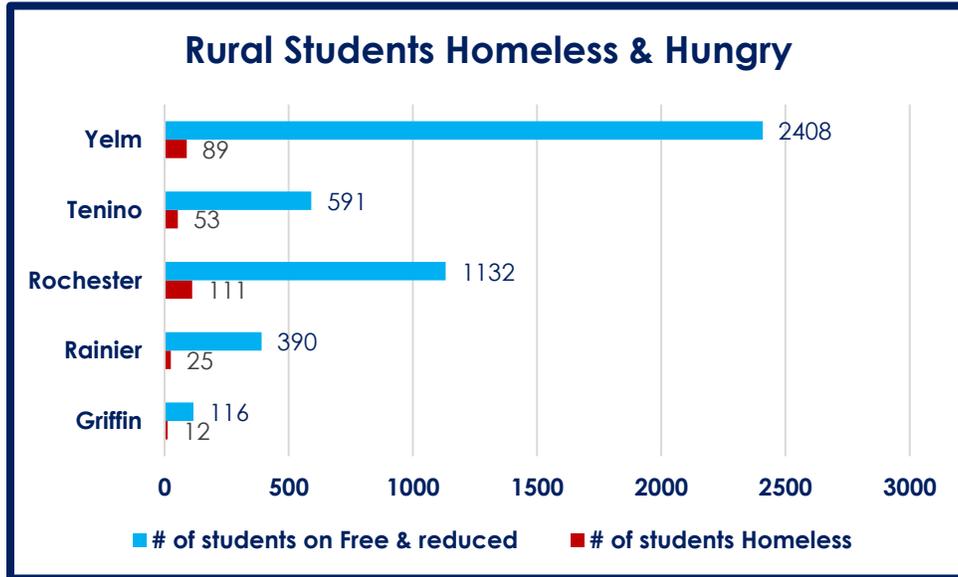
The Tumwater District, which has 6,636 students, has 1935 or 29% of the students enrolled in the Free and Reduced lunch program. This represents a percentage increase in Tumwater.

More Homeless Pre-School Children at Home

According to the National Center on Family Homelessness, 42% of the total homeless children are estimated to be under the age of six, and thus not counted in the public school homeless census.

Another way of looking at that number is that school age children are only 58% of the larger total number of homeless children, ages 0-18. Taking that into consideration, it could be calculated that the OSPI total for homeless students is capturing only slightly more than half the total number of homeless children.

$$\frac{\text{\# SCHOOL AGE HOMELESS CHILDREN} \times 100}{58} = \text{TOTAL \# OF HOMELESS CHILDREN}$$

In Thurston County, that would mean that the total number of homeless children would go from 1,670 to 2879.

Chapter 6: Homelessness Statewide

Overview

While homelessness is experienced most profoundly at the local level, it is useful to examine homeless trends across Washington State. Since 2006, homelessness statewide has increased by 2% from 21,962 in 2006 to 22,416, which fell significantly short of the Ten-Year Plan goal to reduce homelessness by 50% to 10,981 by 2015. Since that time, homelessness continues to increase.

Each year, the state has combined the homeless census numbers of all the counties. While each county has worked diligently to reduce homelessness, it appears that the total statewide population has remained fairly static, rising and falling from year to year by approximately 10%.

Snapshot of Six Counties – Five Years of Census Results

The following chart presents ten years of homeless census data, 2014 through 2018, from the six most urban counties in Western Washington. The area known as the "I-5 Corridor" is the most densely populated region of Washington State, and is a good indicator of State-wide trends.

Western Washington Counties 2014-2018

County	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Whatcom	806	720		625	559
Thurston	835	530	586	479	576
Snohomish	858	1066	960	829	949
King	12112	11643	10730	10122	8336
Pierce	1628	1321	1762	1283	1181
Clark	795	749	688	662	695
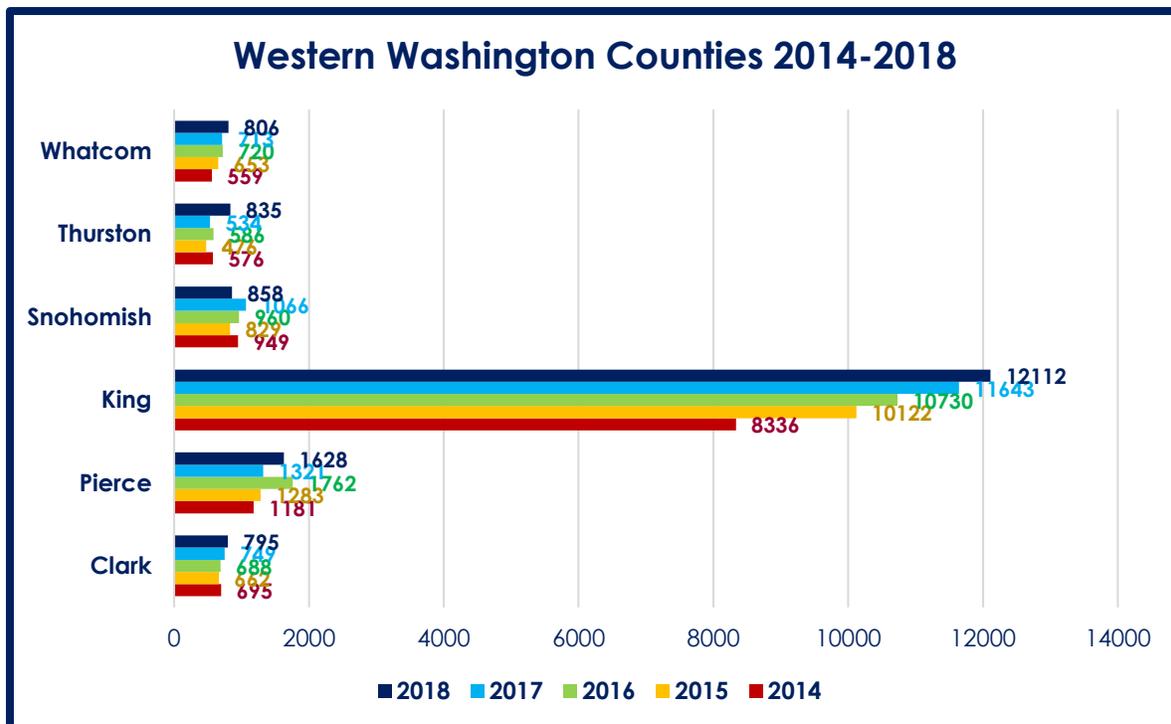
In mid-2011, Thurston County began a coordinated point of intake for single adults, a new practice that is designed to maximize the utilization of services, shelter and housing resources. In early 2012, the County hired a Homeless Coordinator to analyze and improve the entire homeless resource system.

Absent a more comprehensive analysis of all contributing factors, it does appear there is a population shift to King County. The proximity of these six urban counties presents the opportunity for migration toward areas that may offer more comprehensive services, or potentially a more welcoming environment.

Overview

The first five chapters of this report present a composite picture of homeless needs; the next portion of the report presents an assessment of the existing resources. This data will be directly used by the Thurston County Continuum of Care to implement the soon to be released **2018 Five-Year Homeless Housing Plan**. It will also be used by the emerging network of Homeless Coordinators (County, City of Olympia and City of Tumwater) to develop homeless response plans. These respective plans will also address other strategies and resources, for example Thurston County has been exploring strategies to expand housing inventory through the ad hoc group called Incentivize Housing and the City of Olympia is currently planning the first publicly sanctioned camp. For the purposes of this report, the information that follows presents shelter and housing resources.

Thurston County Shelter and Homeless Housing Capacity

The following charts provide an overview of the current capacities and occupancy rates of our existing network of shelter and housing in Thurston County, both for emergency shelters and transitional housing units.

EMERGENCY SHELTER	BEDS AVAILABLE	BEDS UTILIZED	% FILLED
Union Gospel Mission Cold Weather Shelter	50	74	148%
St. Michael's Parish Cold Weather Shelter	12	11	91.7%
Interfaith Works/First Christian All Yr. Shelter	42	42	100%
Rosie's Place/ YAS All Year Shelter + *Cold***	12 5	35	206%
Safe Place All Year Shelter	29	36	124%
Drexel House All Year Shelter	16	11	68.8%
Pear Blossom Place/ FSC All Year + *Cold***	36 20	55	98%
Salvation Army Shelter** + *Cold****	40 29	69	100%
TOTALS verified by Dept. of Commerce	**291**	**333**	**114%**

***Salvation Army beds reclassified as shelter beds (Previously classified as Transitional Housing)*
**** *Green triangle indicates additional shelter beds added via the Cold Weather Task Force Plan for Seasonal Shelter expansion.*

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING SHELTER	BEDS AVAILABLE	BEDS UTILIZED	% FILLED
Union Gospel Mission Genesis/Jeremiah	20	15	75%
Yelm Community Services All Year Shelter	5	2	40%
CYS Transitional Housing	43	43	100%
Housing Authority of Thurston County	90	122	136%
TOTALS verified by Dept. of Commerce	**158**	**182**	**115%**

It is clear that shelter beds are at or over capacity in most cases. Drexel House is outside of the City of Olympia core, and has spaces specifically for Veterans which might explain its lower utilization rate on PIT night. Transitional housing is also over capacity, where lower rates are seen only in Yelm, and at Union Gospel Mission Houses, which are specific to persons in recovery who are willing to embrace religious programs as part of their housing.

Please note: the above listed inventory of shelter and homeless housing resources is supplemented with supportive services to help stabilize people and support them in becoming more independent.

Shelter & Housing Capacity Costs

The Costs of Shelter In order to evaluate the current shelter system, this report includes a "Cost-Benefit Analysis" of selected shelter resources to provide a side by side comparison of costs of shelter. The following chart presents a simple comparison of programs, citing the staff structure (volunteer vs. professional staff), type of facility (tent, single-family residence, or multi-story facility), along with the operational costs per year and number of clients accommodated.

The apparent tiers present the range of costs of providing shelter. Some of the cost variables include the difference between programs with volunteers vs. professional staff. Other cost variables reflect the differences in utilizing a converted residential structure vs. a dedicated multi-story facility. One outlier tier is the high cost of running a homeless youth shelter, which is subject to stringent operating regulations. However, the greatest difference is between all homeless shelters and the county jail, which is included given the high number of homeless inmates included in the expanded homeless census numbers—an estimated total of 38 people who will be released to homelessness when they leave incarceration. This number is based on the total combined Thurston County Jails population of 768 multiplied by the USICH estimate of 5% of incarcerated people being released to homelessness, in turn cited by the 2013 HUD Annual Homeless Assessment Report: Part 2 – Estimates of Homelessness in the U.S.

However, costs are not the only factor to consider in the value of shelter. Volunteer-staffed shelters typically cost less than $10 per night compared to the minimum $30 per bed night for professionally-staffed shelters. Volunteers typically do not have the same capacity that trained and credentialed professional case managers and service providers. Following is an overview of costs per bed night as reported by the host agencies:

Cost / Benefit Comparison of Shelter Beds:

The following chart presents some rudimentary comparisons of shelter costs by calculating the cost of a single bed night by dividing the total shelter operating budget by the total available number of beds:

Facility	Annual Budget (operating at capacity)	Beds Available	Bed Night Cost
FSC Pear Blossom Place	$470,120	56	$23
Interfaith Works	$499,685	42	$32.60
CYS Rosie's Place	$289,445	17	$46.65
Salvation Army	$473,405	69	$18.80
Drexel House	$251,120	16	$43
Union Gospel Mission	$60,955	50	$3.34
St. Michael's	$86,870	12	$19.81
SafePlace*	Unk.	29	Unk.
TOTALS	Average $304,514	291	Average Bed Night $27

Shelter and bed night information not provided

Community Costs of Unsheltered Homelessness

As illustrated in the 2006 New Yorker article titled, "**Million Dollar Murray**" by Michael Gladwell, chronically homeless people often cost more per bed night than the default options of County jails or emergency services. The locally estimated "*default accommodation*" costs per bed night listed below:

Provider	Description	Cost per person Per day
County Jail	1 day incarceration	$111.28
State Prison	1 day incarceration	$111
City Jail	1 day incarceration	$45
Thurston Telecare	1 day overnight	$1000
Emergency Room	8 hours @ facility	$2200*
Medic One	Emergency Response	$338
OPD	2 OPD Officers respond to call	$97.38

History of Thurston County's Census

Thurston County pioneered the concept of the "point-in-time" homeless census now practiced statewide. This innovation arose from over 25 years of collaborative efforts between non-profits, local governments, and faith communities.

In the early 1990's, there were initial efforts by John Walsh of the Community Action Council and other local service providers to enumerate the number of local homeless people. In 2002, Selena Kilmoyer, of the Thurston County Housing Task Force, recognized the problem of serving an undefined population. The solution to this problem was to find out how many homeless people there were by counting them. Kilmoyer presented this idea to the Thurston County Housing Task Force, and proposed that Task Force members conduct a homeless census to determine how large the homeless population was. Theresa Slusher of the Thurston County Housing Authority, now the County Housing Stability Manager with the State Department of Health and Human Services (DSHS), further developed this idea into a viable work plan. Drawing on representatives from all local service and shelter providers, the Task Force launched the first comprehensive census of homeless people in the county in 2003.

This approach was recognized as a valuable way to evaluate efforts to end homelessness and apportion funding. The 2005 state "Homeless Housing and Assistance Act" codified this practice, and created a mandate for all counties that received state and federal homeless and housing funds to use the census as a way to measure performance and document needs for continued future funding.

Aside from the highly valuable data produced by the statewide "Point-in -Time Count of Homeless Persons", the process of developing the census underscored the value of collaboration between faith-based communities, non-profits and governmental agencies. The problem of homelessness affects all parts of the community; linking these diverse stakeholders to coordinate effort is essential to making progress. This collaboration between government, non -profits, and faith-based communities was a guiding principle in making the homeless census successful.

The Roles of Government: Federal, State, County & City of Olympia

Federal Government's Role in Census   The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) reports to Congress on the number of homeless people in the United States. HUD directs federal McKinney grant recipients to perform a point-in-time count of homeless persons during the last full week of January.

In order to avoid duplication of efforts, the state-mandated count is conducted on the fourth Thursday in January. This year the count occurred on January 25, 2018. HUD uses the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to track data and locally implemented homeless counts to arrive at the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless people and the characteristics of homeless people living in shelters.

The report offers a baseline for reports that explore patterns of homelessness over time. Homeless service providers across the country, such as emergency shelters and transitional and supportive housing programs, collect information about their clients to match it with information from other providers to get accurate counts of homeless clients and the services they need.

Washington State's Role in Census   The 2005 Washington State "Homeless Housing and Assistance Act" requires an annual count of homeless persons in Washington State. The purpose of these guidelines is to define the common elements required of all local counts, to ensure that data is comparable between counties, and to ensure that confidentiality is protected. Communities are encouraged to adapt this basic framework for the annual census to the specific conditions and infrastructure of their community.

Local government is directed to make every effort to count all homeless individuals living outdoors, in shelters, and in transitional housing, coordinated, when reasonably feasible, with already existing homeless census projects including those funded in part by HUD under the McKinney-Vento homeless assistance program. The department determines, in consultation with local governments, the data to be collected. All personal information collected in the census is confidential, and the department and each local government is to take all necessary steps to protect the identity and confidentiality of each person counted.

Thurston County's Role in Census   Thurston County is the local unit of government mandated (RCW 43.185C) to count the county's homeless population annually. The County is also the lead jurisdiction in administering federal HOME Program dollars along with the state recording fee dollars intended to fund homeless and housing projects.

The results of this count are reported to both the state and federal governments. Additionally, the county's census report includes an expanded definition to include people living with friends or family, people in jail and mental or other health facilities that will be released to homelessness. This information helps local governments, non-profits, faith communities,

and others to understand the extent of homelessness, its impact on local resources, and helps to develop strategies to reduce the number of people without permanent homes.

The County plays a crucial role in ensuring a comprehensive census that identifies all local homeless people, including rural areas surrounding Rochester, Tenino and Yelm.

Homeless people from beyond the urban core often find refuge "off the grid" of traditional shelter and services, which can limit the usefulness of urban-oriented census methodologies.

City of Olympia's Role in Census   Thurston County contracts with the City of Olympia to coordinate the annual homeless census, analyze the results, and to produce a final report. New this year, the City provided additional resources to fund two parallel homeless counts in the urban hub.

Olympia has a unique role related to Thurston County's homeless population. While homelessness is a regional problem, its locus is concentrated in Olympia because it is the urban core of the county. Federal, state, and local funds support a vibrant continuum of services, shelter and housing, most of which are located within Olympia.

This means that homeless people from more rural areas like Rochester and Yelm gravitate towards the urban core where 90% of the shelter, housing and service resources are located. As shown in this report, the number of homeless people exceeds the number of shelter beds and transitional housing units, which means that unsheltered homeless people must resort to car camping on the streets, sleeping in public parks, using libraries as warming centers, and other areas not primarily intended to serve as de facto homeless facilities. As a result, Olympia becomes a focal point in addressing many local homeless policies and strategies.

Chapter 9: Methodology

2018 Census Methodology

The PIT Census utilized three primary methodologies:

1) **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)** data collection for people living at formally recognized homeless shelters or transitional housing facilities;
2) **Homeless Connect Events** PIT Census workers were stationed at four (4) regional Homeless Connect Events intended to draw homeless people together for meals, services and other resources;
3) **Homeless PIT Census Rovers** PIT Census workers were deployed in teams to conduct a "street census" in the urban hub areas that included sidewalks, alcoves, under bridges and public facilities known to be welcoming to homeless people.

HMIS Data

PIT Census workers worked closely with State Commerce and various service providers to confirm data on people living in homeless shelters and transitional housing facilities. This included work to "de-duplicate" the records for people counted twice and efforts to ensure that agencies provided the most comprehensive information on their residents. As noted elsewhere in the report, significant parts of the PIT requested information is not routinely collected by Transitional Housing providers and so that data was missing.

Homeless Connect Events

In order to connect with unsheltered people, the PIT Census held four (4) Homeless Connect Events on Thursday, January 25, 2018 at four different locations. In cooperation with local service providers, Connect Events were held at the Family Support Center, Rosie's Place Youth Drop-In Center, Community Care Center, and ROOF (Rochester Organization of Families). The intent of these Events is two-fold: 1) to provide needed goods and services to the homeless in our community; and, 2) to create welcoming places for homeless citizens to have meals and obtain services and other resources while allowing Census Workers to administer the PIT Census surveys.

Figure 11 Maria Ferris, owner of the Olympia Barber School brings her students to provide free haircuts, featured here at the 2015 Homeless Connect Event

New Methodology: City of Olympia Homeless Survey

New this year, City of Olympia conducted two additional efforts to gain a more accurate sense of homelessness in the urban hub. Together, these two counts found 763 unsheltered people in the urban hub, far more than the 320 unsheltered people found in the formal PIT Homeless Count. ***Please note:*** In an effort to broaden the count to include people who typically refuse to give their names, the Olympia methodologies did not collect names or any additional information. Because of this difference in methodology, these numbers could not be certified as part of the formal PIT Count which is based on the State's PIT Census survey in which names must be collected. Without names it is not possible to prevent double counting.

Pre-Dawn Doorway Count In recognition of the concentrated impact of unsheltered homelessness in urban hub, the City of Olympia launched an effort to accurately measure how many people slept in doorways and alcoves. This Downtown Pre-dawn Doorway Count was conducted four times over a Five month period, including the 2018 PIT Census date. At 5:00 am, Census Workers deployed in teams of two and conducted a rapid visual scan of an area roughly nine (9) by eight (8) blocks in heart of downtown Olympia. On the morning of January 25, 2018, this revealed 135 people camping in the alcoves. Because names were not collected, these numbers are not included in the formal PIT Census.

Camp Census with Homeless Guides The second methodology involved sending out teams with homeless guides to go into homeless camps throughout the urban hub of Olympia and the nearby parts of Lacey and Tumwater. These teams found a total 628 people living in camps. As stated above, these numbers could not be included in the formal PIT count because names were not collected.

Volunteers and Outreach

This year, the PIT Census was conducted by a small City of Olympia staff via contract with Thurston County.   This staff was expanded with three academic interns and over 136 volunteers. These volunteers participated in the Point in Time Census, either as census takers, donators of services, Homeless Connect assistants, or clean up/ set up crews. Volunteers worked at Family Support Center, Community Care Center, Rosie's Place, ROOF, Lacey Veteran's Hub, Yelm Community Services, Tenino Food Bank, Union Gospel Mission, and in roving teams both in downtown Olympia and across Thurston County.

Distribution of Resources

In additional to conducting the PIT Census survey, PIT volunteers were able to supply our homeless neighbors with:

- ♢ 20 boxes of diapers (Thurston County Sheriff's Office Diaper Drive)
- ♢ 91 Coats (City of Olympia Coat Drive)
- ♢ 350 IKEA waterproof bags
- ♢ 300 Warm blankets (Salvation Army)
- ♢ 350 Pairs of Socks

- ✧ 30 Veterinary Examinations (Covenant Creatures)
- ✧ 98 Haircuts (Jamie Lee & Company, Olympia Barber School, Hair by Jesse)
- ✧ 14 Foot care treatments (Washington Clippers)
- ✧ 200 Breakfast burritos at Camps
- ✧ 40 Burger lunches for Youth (Big Tom's Burgers)
- ✧ 40 Lunches for families (Olive Garden)
- ✧ 1200 Pounds of pet food (Covenant Creatures)
- ✧ 8400 Snack bars, crackers & protein bars (Thurston County Food Bank)

Chapter 10: Focus Group Perspectives

Overview

The 2018 PIT Homeless Census work plan included a process to seek out community perspectives on homeless causes and impacts as well as to capture recommendations from people beyond the current leadership circles on homeless policy. This practice of community-based analysis allows for a broader range of viewpoints on homelessness – an issue that affects people all across Thurston County.

Four focus group discussions were held with the following groups: 1) College Students from Evergreen (Students from the Evergreen Program, "Poverty: What, Why and How"); 2) Downtown employees (Cross-section of City employees from Olympia City Hall); 3) Downtown business and property owners; and, 4) Formerly homeless people now residing at Quixote Village. Each group was provided with a copy of the "2018 Thurston County Point-in-Time Snapshot" as well as a list of questions. Responses were captured and tabulated.

Community Perspectives on Causes & Impacts

Different trends emerged among the focus group participants. *College students* were keen to examine the root causes and use that understanding to develop comprehensive solutions rather than smaller scale mitigations. *Downtown employees* were highly cognizant of the humanitarian impacts on homeless people as well as the negative impacts on business, pedestrians and visitors. *Business and building owners* identified the complex problems that caused homelessness and offered constructive ideas for effective responses, much like developing a business plan. And last, *formerly homeless people* understood the issues from personal experience and urged responses that provided easier access to critically needed services, particularly drug and alcohol treatment as well as mental health services. Overall, all the participants agreed there was a radical increase in homelessness in Thurston County, so profound that it has changed the visual landscape of areas like downtown Olympia.

Causes All the focus groups acknowledged the huge increase in homelessness appeared to be related to rent increases and limited housing availability. Many also recognized the prevalence of addiction (drug and alcohol) as well as mental health as major causes of homelessness. Most participants acknowledged the high concentration of services in Olympia as a draw, although not everyone agreed this brought new homeless people from across the nation.

Impacts Some participants noted that the increased population seemed even bigger because it was so heavily concentrated in one area – downtown Olympia, with much lighter impacts on other parts of the County.   Some participants also noted that the concentration of services and street dependent people in the urban hub had an extremely negative impact on businesses, causing numerous businesses to relocate. Other participants noted that they have experienced increased harassment and threats of violence from people they perceived as being homeless and street dependent.

Community Recommendations

The focus groups varied in the scope of their recommendations, with the top recommendations summarized as follows:

Student Recommendations: Develop employment models that offer housing with jobs, like the military; empowerment for more diverse, small scale providers not just "mega" service providers; development of more full scale resources that resolve homelessness rather than just manage it; education on the underlying issues; and, provide more housing.

Downtown Employee Recommendations: Urge a Statewide initiative to face a Statewide crisis; urge more resources be developed in Lacey and Tumwater; insist on a regional response; separate and address negative behaviors (open drug use, violence, public defecation, littering) from a class of people (homeless); and, explore options for rent control to allow easier access to housing.

Downtown Business & Building Owner Recommendations: Encourage schools to develop "Homeless Prevention" programs to deal with a wide-spread crisis; Insist that Lacey, Tumwater and other communities help provide resources; relocate some of the services to create other easy-access high service hubs; continue to have Police respond to violent and anti-social behavior; make sure that vulnerable street dependent people are not being preyed on; and, treat homeless people respectfully.

Formerly Homeless People: Create more resources like Quixote Village (safe place with services and a sense of community); treat homeless people respectfully; create easier access to addiction treatment (cost is prohibitive, limited number of beds in treatment facilities); offer public storage; offer more showers (allow people to maintain their hygiene) revoke laws that target homeless people; create more shelters that allow families and couples to stay together; cap the rent increases; and urge homeless people to take more responsibility (stop dumping needles and trashing the woods where they camp).

Appendices

Point In Time Count Survey   **January 2018**

UNSHELTERED/LIVING WITH FAMILY OR FRIENDS

Is the Household actively fleeing domestic violence?

Use consent refused DV form or use this form and not sign the back.

Location where household was surveyed _____   Current City/Town: _____

If individual/household is staying at shelter program, do not use this form, their information will be collected at the program.

A. *Location: Where did you stay last night? (choose one - applies to entire household)

O **Out of Doors (street, tent, etc.)**	O Temp. Living w/ Family or Friends †
O **Vehicle**	O Currently in Hosp/Detox/Other facility †
O **Abandoned Building**	O Currently in Jail †
O **RV/Boat Lacking Any of the Following Amenities** Drinking water, restroom, heat, ability to cook hot food, ability to bathe	†Not considered homeless for PIT by HUD; Optional

B. *Length of Time Homeless

Have you or anyone in the household been continuously without housing for a year or more?

O Yes (skip to Household Information section)   O   No

Have you or anyone in the household been without housing 4 or more times in the last 3 years?

O Yes O No (skip to Household Information Section)

Do these times without housing, added together, amount to a year or more?   O Yes   O   No

C. *Household (HH) Information

(Please enter each HH member below. Use additional form if household has more than four members.) **Please check a HH type in the next box.**

Household without Children ____ Household with Adults & Children_____ Households with only Children_____

i. Last known permanent City_____ Zip_____									v. Disabilities				
	ii.		**iii.**	**iv. Population Data**					Check **all** that apply to each client				
Relation to Head of Household (if applicable) Spouse/ Partner/ Child/Etc.	**First Name**	**Last Name**	**Birth Date** (or if DOB refused; Year of Birth)	**Gender** [1]	**Race**[2] (enter all that apply)	**Ethnicity** (Hispanic (H) or Non-Hispanic (N))	**Fleeing Domestic Violence**	**Veteran** (ever served in the military)	**Chronic Substance Abuse**	**Physical Disability** (Permanent)	**Developmental Disability**	**Mental Health** (Substantial & Long-Term)	**Chronic Health Condition** (Permanently Disabling)
Self													

[1] Male (M), Female (F), Transgender Male-Female (TMF), Transgender Female-Male (TFM), Gender Non-Conforming (not exclusively M or F) (D), Refused (R)
[2] White (W), Black or African-American (B), Asian (A), American Indian or Alaska Native (I), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (H), Refused (R)

D. Circumstances leading to your housing status		Check all that apply	□ Don't Know
Housing & Economic	System & Legal	Health Issues	Family Conflict
□ Job Loss/unemployment	□ Discharged from hospital or other medical facility	□ Mental Illness	□ Domestic Violence
□ Eviction/Loss of housing	□ Discharged from criminal/juvenile justice system	□ Physical health/disability	□ Guardian mental health/substance abuse
□ Lack of job training/ unable to work	□ Aged out of foster care	□ Alcohol/substance abuse	□ Family Rejection/Kicked out

□	Lack of childcare	□	Medical costs		□	Illness		□	Abuse/Neglect	

E. Source(s) of Household Income and Benefits (check **all** that apply)				□ Refused		□ Don't Know	
Public Assistance/Benefits				Employment		Other	
□	TANF	□	VA	□	Part time	□	None
□	SSI/SSDI	□	Unemployment	□	Full time	□	Panhandling
□	Temporary Disability	□	Medicare/Medicaid	□	Farm/seasonal	□	Relative/friends

* Denotes data that HUD requires for the PIT Count. All answers from the individuals surveyed are voluntary.

Client Release of Information

Washington State HMIS for Annual Point in Time Count

IMPORTANT: Do not enter personally identifying information into HMIS for clients who are: 1) in DV agencies or; 2) currently fleeing or in danger from a domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking situation; 3) are being served in a program that requires disclosure of HIV/AIDS status (i.e.; HOPWA); or 4) under 18 with no parent or guardian available to consent to sharing the minor's information on HMIS.

*If this applies to you, **STOP- Do not sign this form**.*

This agency participates in the Washington State Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) by collecting information, over time, about the characteristics and service needs of men, women, and children experiencing homelessness. **RCW 43.185C.180**

- To provide the most effective services in moving people from homelessness to permanent housing, we need an accurate count of all people experiencing homelessness in Washington State. In order to insure that clients are not counted twice, we need to collect four pieces of personal information. Specifically, we need**: name, birth date, race/ethnicity, and last permanent address.** You may also choose to provide your social security number. However, signing this form does not require you to do so. Your information will be stored in our database for 7 years. If you have questions about collection of data or your rights regarding your personally identifying information, contact the HMIS System Administrator at: (360) 725-2982
- **We** use strict security policies designed to protect your privacy. Our computer system is highly secure and uses up-to-date protection features such as data encryption, passwords, and identity checks required for each system user. There is a small risk of a security breach, and someone might obtain and use your information inappropriately. If you ever suspect the data in HMIS has been misused, immediately contact the HMIS System Administrator at: (360) 725-2982
- **The** data you provide will be combined with data from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) for the purpose of further analysis. Your name and other identifying information will not be included in any reports or publications. Only a limited number of staff members, who have signed confidentiality agreements, will be able to see this information. Your information will not be used to determine eligibility for DSHS programs. Washington State HMIS system administrators have full access to all information in HMIS. This includes the Department of Commerce staff, designated HMIS system administrators, and the software vendor.
- **By** signing this form, you acknowledge and allow Department of Commerce staff to obtain additional records of information from other state agencies with which there is a data sharing agreement on file between Commerce and the other agency. Our data share agreement guides data transfer and storage security protocols. If data share agreements are in place, Commerce is authorized by you to obtain, add to HMIS, and use for evaluation purposes any other data you have provided to other Washington state agencies. **Your** decision to participate in the HMIS will not affect the quality or quantity of services you are eligible to receive from this agency, and will not be used to deny outreach, assistance, shelter or housing. However, if you do choose to participate, services in the region may improve if we have accurate information about homeless individuals and the services they need. Furthermore, some funders MAY require that you consent to your information be supplied in HMIS in order for you to receive services from that funding source.

I understand the above statements and consent to the inclusion of personal information in HMIS about me and any dependents listed below, and authorize information collected to be shared with partner agencies. I understand that my personal information will not be made public and will only be used with strict confidentiality. I also understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time by filing a 'Client Revocation of Consent' form with this agency.

I agree to the inclusion of my household's information for count purposes described in the release on the back of this form.

Signature(s) (each adult or legally emancipated youth must sign): _____

Adult #2 (if applicable): _____

If you would like to be contacted by a housing provider regarding housing assistance, please provide your phone number or email below:

_____

Thank you for helping us improve services to persons with unstable housing

Department of Commerce | January 2018

2018 THURSTON COUNTY POINT-IN-TIME HOMELESSNESS SNAPSHOT

2018 Point-In-Time Count Results

Each January, Thurston County conducts a "point-in-time count" to capture the number and characteristics of people living without a home.

835
Homeless persons counted

1.2% Unaccompanied youth & young adults
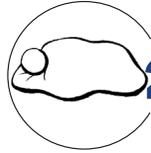
23% Chronically homeless

38% Households with children

45% Female

25% Victims of domestic violence

7% Veterans

29% People of color*
*However, people of color make up only 18% of the Thurston County population.

How long have people been homeless?

Less than one year **38%**

More than one year **62%**
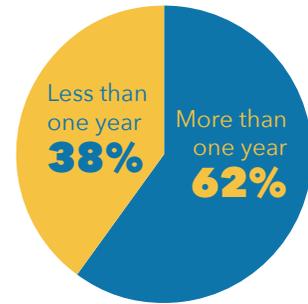
Not all people experiencing homelessness sleep outside

40% Emergency shelter
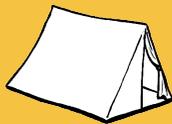
20% Out of doors (street, tent, etc.)

22% Transitional housing

18% Vehicle, abandoned building, other

Most said they lived in Thurston County before becoming homeless

59% Thurston County | 13% | 28% Outside WA

Other WA counties

The main causes of homelessness are related to economic & family stability

Survey respondents shared many causes for becoming homeless. These are the top four:

1. **Job loss/unemployment**
2. **Eviction/loss of housing**
3. **Family rejection**
4. **Domestic violence**

Physical health is the most commonly reported disability

Here is the breakdown of the most commonly reported disabilities. Some people reported having multiple disabilities.

Chronic health condition
28%

Physical disability
24%

Mental illness
19%

Substance use
19%

Developmental disability
10%
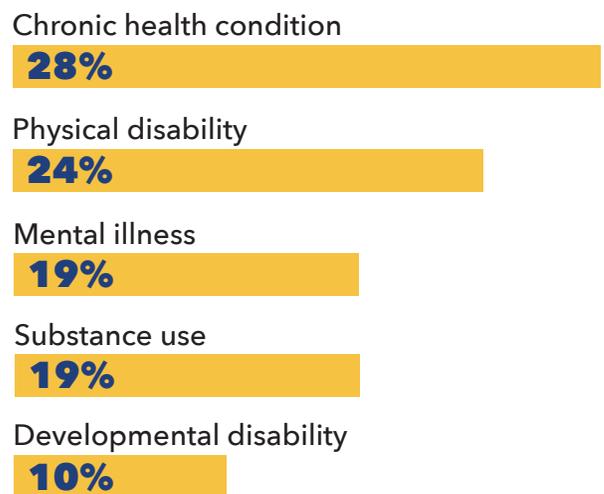
Coming soon:
A City of Olympia website with information on homelessness.

For more info contact:
Anna Schlecht | aschlech@ci.olympia.wa.us

THURSTON COUNTY
WASHINGTON
SINCE 1852

Thurston County - Point in Time Homeless Counts 2006-2018
Final Report - May 2018

Number of Homeless Individuals (Y-axis), PIT Year (X-axis)

PIT Year	Total	Unsheltered	Sheltered	Transitional
2006	441	122	156	163
2007	579	187	249	143
2008	462	194	168	100
2009	745	219	323	203
2010	976	363	181	432
2011	566	267	95	204
2012	708	164	167	377
2013	664	230	113	321
2014	576	257	172	147
2015	476	163	158	155
2016	586	189	223	174
2017	534	124	244	166
2018	835	320	333	182

Goal 220

Legend: ■ Transitional ■ Sheltered ■ Unsheltered

Thurston County PIT Progress Chart – Explanatory Notes by Year

2006: 1st year baseline of 441 - Reduction goal = 222

2008: Decrease due to large inventory of new housing

2010: Increase correlates with Recession highpoint

2011: Transitional Housing Stock converted to Permanent

2011: Decrease due to large inventory of new housing

2015: Homelessness drops with Recession recovery

2017: Decrease due to limited staff capacity

2018: Homeless increase correlates with rent increases

THURSTON COUNTY
HOMELESS CENSUS 2018

SHELTER & HOUSING CAPACITY – 2018 PIT HOMELESS CENSUS
FINAL COUNT - May 3, 2018

UNSHELTERED REPORT – *Out of doors, vehicles, abandoned or substandard buildings:*   **320**
SHELTERED REPORT – *Emergency Shelter Utilization:*   **333**
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING REPORT – *Temporary Housing offering 18 months or less:*   **182**

835

EMERGENCY SHELTER	BEDS AVAILABLE	BEDS UTILIZED	% FILLED
Union Gospel Mission Cold Weather Shelter	50	74	148%
St. Michael's Parish Cold Weather Shelter	12	11	91.7%
Interfaith Works/First Christian All Yr. Shelter	42	42	100%
Rosie's Place/ YAS All Year Shelter + *Cold***	12 5	35	206%
Safe Place All Year Shelter	29	36	124%
Drexel House All Year Shelter	16	11	68.8%
Pear Blossom Place/ FSC All Year + *Cold***	36 20	55	98%
Salvation Army Shelter** + *Cold****	40 29	69	100%
TOTALS verified by Dept. of Commerce	**296**	**333**	**112.5%**

***Salvation Army beds reclassified as shelter beds (Previously classified as Transitional Housing)*
**** Blue triangle indicates additional shelter beds added via the Cold Weather Task Force Plan for Seasonal Shelter expansion*

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING SHELTER	BEDS AVAILABLE	BEDS UTILIZED	% FILLED
Union Gospel Mission Genesis/Jeremiah	20	15	75%
Yelm Community Services All Year Shelter	5	2	40%
CYS Transitional Housing	43	43	100%
Housing Authority of Thurston County	90	122	136%
TOTALS verified by Dept. of Commerce	**158**	**182**	**115%**

For more information, contact Anna Schlecht: aschlech@ci.olympia.wa.us

Thurston County – Full 2018 PIT Homeless Census – Data at a Glance

Individuals	**835**		Children 17 & under	197	24%
Males	438	53%	Adults 18-30	178	21%
Females	369	44.5%	Adults 30 - 45	183	22%
Transgendered	21	3.5%	Adults 45 - 60	142	17%
Unaccompanied Minors	10	1%	Adults 60+	42	5%
Veterans	39	5%			

Disabilities as Indicated by Individual* (400 Responses)

Physical (permanent)	*119*	*30%*	*Developmental Disability*	*50*	*13%*
Mental Health***	98	25%	Alcohol or drug addiction	98	25%
Chronic Health Problem	*140*	*35%*	*No Reply/Refused*	435	

Current Living Status by Individual (835 Respondents)

Emergency Shelter/ Motel Voucher Program	333	40%	Out of Doors	169	20%
Transitional Housing	182	22%	Vehicle / RV /Boat	146	17%
			Abandoned Building	5	1%
Jail or Medical Facility (Estimates)	154	N/A	Friends or Family *		

Situations that caused Homelessness for Households* (522 Responses)

Domestic Violence	54	10%	Alcohol or Drug Use	46	9%
Job Lost	*108*	*21%*	*Family Break-up*	*63*	*12%*
Evicted-Non-payment	*85*	*16%*	*Out of Home Youth*	*10*	*2%*
Lack of Job Skills	*42*	*8%*	*Discharged Institution/Jail*	*31*	*4%*
Mental Illness	*41*	*10%*	*Discharged from Hospital*	*10*	*2%*

All Sources of Household Income** (835Responses)

TANF	92	11%	Disability Benefits	6	.7%
Social Security	75	9%	Relatives, Partners, Friends	21	2.5%
Unemployment Insurance	3	1%	VA Benefits	4	5%
Part-time Work	48	6%	Panhandling	35	4%
Medicaide/Medicare	72	9%			

Length of Time Households Have Been Homeless (417 Responses)

More than 1 year*	259	62%	Less than 1 year	158	38%

Episodes of Homelessness in Past 3 Years (599 Responses)

More than 4 episodes of * homelessness in 3 years			Less than 4 episodes of homelessness in 3 years		

Race (417 Responses)

White / Caucasian	502	71.1%	Asian	6	.08%
Black / African American	86	12.2%	Hawaiian / Asian Pacific Islander	13	1.8%
American Indian	21`	3%	Multiple Races	78	11%

OVERVIEW - **Thurston County 5-Year Homeless Housing Plan Summary**

Thurston County is in the final review phase of the draft Five-Year Homeless Housing Plan, intended to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief and a one-time occurrence**.**   Local homeless housing plans are required by RCW 43.185c.050 which provides guidance centered on 10-year plans to end homelessness. The 10 year mark has passed and commerce is providing further guidance on developing local homeless plans for all state and local recording fees, federal Continuum of Care (CoC) and Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) funded counties. Federal Consolidated Homeless Grant (CHG) guidelines also require that counties must update and approve local plans to address homelessness at least every five years. These plans and updates must be submitted to State Department of Commerce annually to assess performance. This detailed plan outlines three strategy areas and details the specific activities, timeline and the lead entity responsible for facilitation progress and reporting, summarized as follows:

Expand Housing Resources and Safety Net

- Increase housing solutions for all target populations *(single adults, families with children, unaccompanied youth and transition age youth)*
- Increase family reunification and diversion
- Strengthen existing shelter capacity

Standardize Best Practices

- Prioritization of housing based on vulnerability *(using a standardized "Vulnerability Index" assessment tool)*
- Integrate housing services with behavioral health
- Continue to develop the Coordinated Entry (CE) System
- Improve and enhance system reporting *(i.e. synchronize and standardize all related homeless and housing reporting systems)*
- Improve Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) reporting

Regionalize Public Homeless Policy

- Develop closer alignment of Regional Comprehensive Plans, housing development standards and related government plans
- Explore other municipal resources and funding sources
- Develop a comprehensive list of affordable and low-cost housing resources
- Clarify the roles and relationships of all regional planning groups

For Draft-phase information please contact:

Derek Harris
Chair, Homeless Housing Hub Committee of the County's Housing Action Team
Deputy Director, Community Youth Services
360-943-0780 #187
dharris@communityyouthservices.org

2018 Thurston County Homeless Census
Focus Group Script:

Participants: Evergreen State College Students of the "Poverty: What, Why & How" Program
Location: Evergreen State College Room Seminar 2 Room A3109
Date: March 10, 2018

Please examine the attached charts: <u>Homeless Census 13 Year Matrix</u> which presents data
the Countywide formal PIT Census of homeless people in 2006 – 2018).

Discuss & record responses to the following questions:

1) What do these numbers suggest about homelessness in Olympia? Thurston County? Do you think this is an accurate census of homeless people?
   - Noticed that the allotment of resources flipped – in 2010 there was a 2.5 to 1 ratio of Transitional Housing to Shelter. Now it is almost 2 to 1 ratio of shelter to Transitional Housing
   - The increase probably reflects improved methodology
   - In Grays Harbor, the PIT opening line is, "Please tell me your story", which is far more compassionate approach
   - Please note the difference between "accuracy" which literally means a consistent process vs. "precise" which means the correct answer
   - Are we spending money on the right resources?
   - We need more transitional housing

2) How should the **broader community** respond to these specific homeless census results? To homelessness in general? Do you have specific recommendations?
   - Offer more services
   - Build more housing
   - Conduct the Census with focal events (We do) and ask Restaurants to offer food
   - We should do more – we are responsible to each other

3) How should **local government(s)** respond to these census results? To Homelessness in general? Do these responsibilities **vary from County to City**? Do you have specific recommendations?
   - Empower more individuals to offer DIY services
   - Diversify the service network to include smaller service providers, not just mega organizations
   - Response to the above: concerned that the lack of regulation could be dangerous – rotten food, discriminatory treatment, etc
   - Offer jobs that include both pay & housing – like the military
   - Examine what works well & fund more of that – **fund "evidence-based practices" & "data-driven practices"**
   - Provide government funded matching funds for all programs, i.e. federal match for local dollars
   - Operate with more goal setting – **strategic planning**
   - Identify big goals, half steps get us nowhere

4) How should **Evergreen Students** respond to these census results? To Homelessness in general? Do you have specific recommendations?

- Create more affordable housing directly associated with the school for students
- Make Evergreen focus on a couple of key issues – not everything under the sun
- Encourage Evergreen-based giving like the Christmas Tree concepts in workplaces where you can adopt a family & pay for specific needs anonymously
- Foster more awareness of homelessness on campus & in the community
- Students should be on the front lines of responding to homelessness
- Recognize that Evergreen is a giant echo chamber where different opinions are not tolerated – encourage more ideas & opinions
- Evergreen should offer more homeless student support – much like the OSPI mandated Homeless Liaisons

5) How should **homeless/houseless people** themselves respond to these census results? To Homelessness in general? Do you have specific recommendations?

- Vote!!!
- Give back once (and if) they get back on their feet
- Be shameless about their needs – be direct
- Ask for help
- Build awareness of all the resources
- Mentor newly homeless people about how to survive

6) **What else should be considered** when looking at these census results?
   Scattered sites for housing needs to be created within neighboring counties.

- Homeless people should "Come out" to help show the full range of homelessness
- We need to work on prevention programs, not just responses
- Showcase the high-functioning programs like Well Spring
- Make sure that the funding allocators/decision-makers see the data to ensure data-driven decisions
- Dig into the data to really understand who's homeless & why

Focus Group Transcript:

Participants: Downtown Workers – Olympia City Hall Staff
Location: City Hall - CR 112
Date: Friday**,** April 20, 2018
Time: Noon – 1 pm

Please examine the attached charts:
    1) "Homeless Census 13 Year Matrix" *(showing data on the Countywide formal PIT Census of homeless people in 2006 – 2018).*

Discuss & record responses to the following questions:

1) **What do these numbers suggest about homelessness in Olympia? Thurston County? Do you think this is an accurate census of homeless people?**
   - There is some concern that the 2017 census results were too low.
   - The current numbers suggests that homelessness is an ongoing and increasing issue in Olympia and Thurston County. This is a Statewide crisis.
   - The number of unsheltered homeless is potentially higher than current data records. (Consider the time of year the data is collected. 828 is possibly accurate for the time of year the census is conducted but possibly higher during other times of the year.
   - A significant number of low income youth are smokers. The "No Smoking" policies in public parks may have an impact on the visibility and absence of homeless youth. Youth are adhering to the new smoking policies.
   - There IS a big increase of new faces in the downtown homeless population.
   - The new faces in downtown Olympia are possibly here as a result of the Providence Community Care Center.
   - Increasing resources in the area draws more homeless to Olympia, particularly downtown

2) **How should the *broader community* respond to these specific homeless census results? To homelessness in general? Do you have specific recommendations?**
   - Many homeless come from other places and are drawn to Olympia. (Residential/Native concerns).
   - Olympia's environment is walking friendly and has a downtown core, whereas Lacey has driving environment. This potentially has an impact on homelessness visibility in Olympia's downtown core.
   - There is a lack of resources in surrounding cities such as Lacey, Tenino, and Tumwater.

- Olympia's property owners and taxpayers are carrying majority of the fiscal responsibility to fund homelessness projects and programs. This also correlates with renters who suffer from rent increases as a result of tax increase on property owners (COLA).

3) **How should *local government(s)* respond to these census results? To Homelessness in general? Do these responsibilities *vary from County to City?* Do you have specific recommendations?**

- There needs to be a state wide initiative to combat homelessness.
- The city of Aberdeen has signs that enforce the restriction of pan handling on the streets.
- It must be a regional effort to solve this crisis.
- Treat the homeless as individuals – treat them with respect.
- Provide training to city government employees on economic diversity – specifically Implicit Bias training).

4) **How should *Downtown Office Workers* respond to these census results? To Homelessness in general? Do you have specific recommendations?**

- Separate negative behavior from the catch all phrase "Homelessness".
- Focus on the behavior not the demographics.
- Vandalism, physical violence, profanity, and open drug use are some the behaviors present in the downtown area. OPD walking patrols may help decrease this activity in the coming months.

5) **How should *homeless/houseless people* themselves respond to these census results? To Homelessness in general? Do you have specific recommendations?**
- Homeless advocates within the homeless population can educate the public and initiate involvement in their community instead of waiting on government services and programs to do it for them.

6) **What else should be considered when looking at these census results?**
- Rent control may be the most effective way to control homelessness in Thurston County.

2018 Thurston County Homeless Census
Focus Group Transcript:

Participants: Downtown Olympia Business Owners
Location: Olympia City Hall, Room 224 (2nd Floor)
Date & Time: Friday May 4th, 2018 – 12:00 Noon to 1:00pm

Please examine the attached charts: 1) "Homeless Census 13 Year Matrix" *(showing data on the Countywide formal PIT Census of homeless people in 2006 – 2018).* **Discuss & record responses to the following questions:**

1) **What do these numbers suggest about homelessness in Olympia? Thurston County? Do you think this is an accurate census of homeless people?**
- Despite and improving and recovering economy, homelessness continues to increase in Thurston County. Rent increase appears to be a contributing factor.
- The census is under reported and it doesn't accurately account for individuals outside the downtown core. However it seems to accurately reflect the downtown homeless population.
- Providing social services draws the homeless to downtown Olympia. It appears it's commonly known in the homeless community to migrate to the downtown area for assistance.

2) **How does homelessness affect Downtown Business Owners? Do these numbers have unique impacts on certain businesses? Areas of downtown?**
- Some business owners have difficulty convincing customers that homelessness has little impact and downtown business and that it's relatively safe to come downtown more often to shop.
- Some homeless individuals block and sleep at the entrances to various business establishments.
- Customers choose to purchase goods online to avoid homeless individuals in the area.
- One particular owner spends approximately 50% of the time discussing safety and homelessness issues in the downtown area as opposed to spending that time on business priorities.
- Many business / property owners and customers believe that homelessness is linked to crime and inappropriate conduct in the downtown area.
- Graffiti, garbage, and human wastes have been previously discovered on several business properties.
- Overflow of people loitering in the parking lot of the Harlequin Theatre.
- Several business owners are considering moving their businesses out of downtown.

- Some owners and staff have safety concerns when leaving after closing hours at night.
- Recently, downtown Tacoma feels safer than downtown Olympia.

3) How should the broader community respond to these census results? To homelessness in general? Do you have specific recommendations?

- School districts should work with city government to work on homelessness prevention programs.
- Homelessness is a regional issue, however the City of Olympia cannot fix homelessness alone.
- There is a need for services in Lacey and other parts of the county.
- There is deep frustration that other jurisdictions within county lines do not feel a sense of responsibility to fix the issue. It appears they rely on Olympia for support and to provide resources.

4) How should local government(s) respond to these census results? To Homelessness in general? Do these responsibilities vary from County to City? Should the responses vary between different cities? Do you have specific recommendations?

- Downtown Tacoma provides services but not in the economic core of the city. The City of Olympia should consider spreading services out away from Olympia's downtown core.
- Recognize the difference between bad behavior (violence, threats, public defecation, open drug use) and a class of people.
- Police should deal with violent and threatening and anti-social behavior
- Make sure that vulnerable homeless people are not being preyed on.
- Encourage schools to develop "Homeless Prevention Programs" to help address a widespread problem.
- Lacey, Tumwater and other parts of the region need to step up to help provide resources.
- Olympia must insist that more of the services are spread out across the region.

5) How should Downtown Business Owners respond to these census results? To Homelessness in general? Do you have specific recommendations?

- We should treat homeless people respectfully, you have to give respect to receive respect
- Seek to hire security contractors to provide additional security presence in the area.
- Business owners are taking safety precautions in their businesses for personal protection.

6) How should homeless/houseless people respond to these census results? To Homelessness in general? Do you have specific recommendations?

- Some homeless individuals should improve their behavior in public spaces.

7) What else should be considered when looking at these census results?
- It's important to distinguish the homeless from "street" people. Street people are Thurston County outsiders that prey on the most vulnerable individuals in the county (homeless). The actual homeless are affected by the criminal conduct of these outsiders.

Focus Group Script:

Participants: Quixote Village – Formerly Homeless People
Location: Mottman Road SW, Olympia, WA 98501
Date: Tuesday**,** May 29, 2018
Time: 5:15 – 6:15 pm

Please examine the attached charts:
   1) "Homeless Census 13 Year Matrix" *(showing data on the Countywide formal PIT Census of homeless people in 2006 – 2018).*

Discuss & record responses to the following questions:

1) **What do these numbers suggest about homelessness in Olympia? Thurston County? Do you think this is an accurate census of homeless people?**

   Inflation of the prices to rent, food, gas, while personal wages remain the same or decrease. This has caused the increase in the homeless population.

   Gentrification of Seattle is causing a rise in rent in Pierce and Thurston Counties.

   Criminal records keep people homeless and creates a barrier for them to come out of homelessness.

   The competiveness of housing market creates additional barriers for those eligible for affordable housing.

   It's probably not accurate, there are many homeless people who don't want to be included in the Census. Lots of folks don't trust the government.

   Yes it's accurate - there is a huge increase, lots of new faces. Lots of people are coming here from all over – Olympia is well known for having great resources.

   Rents are too high – and everything else costs more too – gas, food, doctors.

2) **How should the broader community respond to these specific homeless census results? To homelessness in general? Do you have specific recommendations?**

   - They should treat homeless people respectfully.
   - The broader community needs more resources for physical and mental health referrals.

- There is a need for additional permanent supportive housing.
- Rent needs to be controlled. Many property developers say they are building for "low income" individuals and families but actually are unaffordable.

3) **How should local government(s) respond to these census results? To Homelessness in general? Do these responsibilities vary from County to City? Do you have specific recommendations?**
   - Many homeless have either lost faith in the government or do not trust it.
   - Access to free healthcare access is essential to overall well-being. "Sliding-scale" fees do not work. Especially access to mental health care.
   - More public restrooms – otherwise people are left without any options.
   - Sidewalk needs more funding to continue serving the growing population.
   - Male domestic violence victims need resources and physical shelters such as "Rosie's Place".
   - There needs to be more funding for non-profit organizations to build more places like Quixote Village. QV is a safe place to get clean and sober drug use.
   - There should be more addiction treatment facilities – many people who want to get clean and sober can't.
   - Revoke the anti-homeless laws.
   - Support more family shelters so families don't have to split up to have a warm bed.
   - Cap rents and control inflation.

4) **How should Quixote Village Residents respond to these census results? To Homelessness in general? Do you have specific recommendations?**
   - Continue educating the public on homeless.
   - Maintain their homes at Quixote Village.

5) **How should homeless/houseless people themselves respond to these census results? To Homelessness in general? Do you have specific recommendations?**
   - The homeless need to behave responsibly in order to change public opinion and receive more assistance.
   - Campers should clean up after themselves – nobody like the all the needles and garbage that get left behind. It costs a lot to clean-up.

6) **What else should be considered when looking at these census results?**
   - LGBT youth are a significant portion of the homeless population. It is difficult for them to find shelters that are genuinely accepting.

- It is not a priority for shelters to keep unmarried couples together. This needs to be a priority in order to increase morale and individual support.

2018 Homeless Census Glossary

[Adapted from Pierce County Affordable Housing Consortium website (affordablehousingconsortium.org), which was adapted from HDC, Seattle]

Affordable Housing   Housing should cost no more than 30% of your total income, including utilities. Affordable rental housing usually has a maximum income limit of 60% of median income. In Thurston County, this equates to an annual income of $29,580 for one person or $38,040 for three persons. Homeownership programs generally allow up to 80% of median or $39,400 for one person or $50,700 for a three-person household.

Chronically Homeless   Chronically homeless people are defined as "an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who have either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.

CHG   Consolidated Homeless Grant Program, state funding administered by the County to support a variety of activities, including: operation of homeless shelter and transitional housing units, rental assistance, data collection and reporting.

Continuum of Care   The Continuum of Care (CoC) Program is designed to promote communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, and State and local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness; promote access to and effect utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Coordinated Entry System (CES)   Coordinated entry is process required by State and Federal funders through which people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness can access the crisis response system in a streamlined way, have their strengths and needs quickly assessed, and quickly connect to appropriate, tailored housing and mainstream services within the community or designated region. Standardized assessment tools and practices used within local coordinated assessment processes take into account the unique needs of children and their families as well as youth. When possible, the assessment provides the ability for households to gain access to the best options to address their needs, incorporating participants' choice, rather than being evaluated for a single program within the system. The most intensive interventions are prioritized for those with the highest needs.

ESG   Emergency Shelter Grant Program, federal funding administered by the County for homeless prevention assistance to households who would otherwise become homeless and to provide assistance to rapidly re-house persons who

are experiencing homelessness. The funds are intended to target individuals and families who would be homeless but for this assistance.

HEN Housing and Essential Needs Grants Program, state funding administered by the County that are limited to providing rental assistance, utility assistance and essential needs for medical service recipients whose eligibility is determined by the State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

HMIS Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is the Washington State data system managed by the State Department of Commerce and is used by homeless and housing services providers to collect and manage data gathered during the course of providing housing assistance to people experiencing homelessness. HMIS is used to manage all PIT Homeless Census data for counties in the Balance of State who are not managing their own data with independent data systems.

HUD Abbreviation for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Harm Reduction Harm Reduction is a service model that refers to policies, programs and practices that aim to reduce the harms associated with the use of drugs or other destructive and self-harming behavior in people unable or unwilling to stop. The defining features are the focus on the prevention of harmful behavior, rather than on the prevention of drug use itself or other harmful behaviors, and the focus on people who continue to use drugs or engage in harmful behavior.

High Barrier Shelter High-Barrier shelter or High Barrier Entry refers to a service model that operates with rules dictating behavior standards on drugs or alcohol, separates residents by gender or other behavioral issues.

HOME Consortium The Thurston County HOME Consortium was an inter-jurisdictional body that governs the use of federal HOME funds and the two state funded programs called the Homeless Housing Program and the Affordable Housing Program. PLEASE NOTE: The Thurston County HOME Consortium is now defunct, although HUD funded program regulations refer to this body.

Housing Action Team of Thurston Thrives The Housing Action Team (HAT) is one of eight action teams within Thurston with the goal to establish and implement community health improvement targets related to affordable housing and homelessness. The HAT works together to achieve goals on the "Housing for Health Strategy Map" in three key areas: Affordable Housing/New Construction; Homeless and Crisis Response (aka Homeless Housing Hub); and, Green and Healthy Homes/Safe and Affordable Rentals. This group combines efforts of HOME Consortium (former), Home Citizens Advisory Committee (former), Housing Task Force (former), Continuum of Care, Housing Pipeline, Hazardous Weather Task Force, and Incentivized Housing and the Coordinated Entry group.

| **Homeless** | The federal definition of homelessness, which comes from United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD defines homeless as (1) an individual who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence; and (2) an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is: |

- A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill).
- An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

Homeless Coordinator

Local governments now have staff or consultant positions charged with coordinating their respective homeless response plans. Key goals for Homeless Coordination include; 1) Assessment of the current system of services, shelter and housing resources, 2) Homeless Housing Plan Updates and Implementation, 3) Enhanced Data Management; and, 4) Public education. City of Olympia has hired a Homeless Response Coordinator, Thurston County is in the process of hiring their third Homeless Coordinator, and City of Tumwater has retained a consultant to provide homeless coordination.

Homeless Housing Hub

The Homeless Housing Hub (HHH) is one of three committees of the Thurston Thrives Housing Action Team . The HHH is charged with hosting the Continuum of Care planning; drafting the 5-Year Homeless Housing Plan; continual improvement of the Coordinated Entry System; Continual improvement of the HMIS data collection system and other coordination of homeless housing and services; and, alignment between local, state and federal goals to end homelessness.

Housing Authority

Housing authorities are public corporations with boards appointed by the local government. Their mission is to provide affordable housing to low- and moderate-income people. In addition to public housing, housing authorities also provide other types of subsidized housing such as the federal HUD- subsidized Section 8 program.

Housing First

Housing First is an approach to quickly and successfully connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment or service participation requirements. Supportive services are offered to maximize housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness as opposed to addressing predetermined treatment goals prior to permanent housing entry.
Housing First is a recent innovation in human service programs and social policy in responding to homelessness. It is an alternative to the a system of emergency shelter/transitional housing progressions known as the Continuum of Care, whereby each level moves them closer to "independent housing" (for example: from the streets to a public shelter, and from a public shelter to a transitional

housing program, and from there to their own apartment in the community) Housing First moves the homeless individual or household immediately from the streets or homeless shelters into their own apartments.

Housing Task Force   *PLEASE NOTE: Now defunct* The Thurston County Housing Task Force was an ad hoc association formed in 1988 to address issues of affordable housing and homelessness in Thurston County. For many years this body managed the "Continuum of Care" for Thurston County. It was originally composed of service providers, advocates, government housing program staff and elected officials and served as a networking and advocacy group to promote local housing policy. In recent years it has become a coalition of homeless shelter, housing and service providers who meet monthly to network homeless services and address current issues.

Income Limits   Income limits for households to qualify for subsidized housing opportunities are based on the Area Median Income (AMI) for a family of four. In Thurston County the 2010 AMI is $68,100. Specific household sizes are used to determine eligibility for each household.
Low-income: 80% or less of AMI = $61,050 for household of 4
Very-low-income: 50% or less of AMI = $38,150 for household of 4
Extremely-low-income: 30% or less of AMI = $24,100 for household of 4

Low Barrier Shelter   Low-barrier shelter is a service model that offers safe housing where a minimum number of expectations are placed on people who wish to stay there, allowing more people access to shelter and services. Specific definitions of how "low" those barriers are vary between providers, but include non-segregation by gender, no requirement for sobriety, in and out privileges, etc.

**Low Income
Housing Tax Credit**   Government authorized tax credits issued to both for-profit and nonprofit-developed rental properties to develop affordable housing. The Washington State Housing Finance Commission allocates these credits to developers to build or fix up low-income housing. Large corporations, institutions, pension funds, and insurance companies invest in the housing as a method to gain the tax credits and reduce their income tax obligations. These apartments must serve residents below 60% of median income and must accept Section 8 vouchers.

Market Rate Rent   The prevailing monthly cost for rental housing based on some combination of what the rental market will bear and 30% of the Average Median Income (AMI). Sometimes called "street rents", market rent rates are set by landlords without government restrictions unless public subsidies require a defined level or period of affordability.

Median Income   This is a statistical number set at the level where half of all households have income above it and half below it. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Regional Economist calculates and publishes this median income data annually in the Federal Register. See the Washington State Median Income

and Income Limit figures for 2017 at
https://www.huduser.gov/portal/elist/2018-apr_10.html

Mixed-Income Housing

A multi-family housing property that contains both market-rate units for people with incomes at or above the median family income along with subsidized units for lower income residents.

Nonprofit Housing

Non-profit housing is developed by nonprofit corporations with a community board of directors and mission. Most housing developed by nonprofit developers is affordable with rents or prices below market-rate. Income generated from the housing is put back into the mission of the organization, rather than being distributed to stockholders or individual investors.

Nonprofit Housing Developer

A nonprofit organization with a not-for profit mission that involves the creation, preservation, renovation, operation or maintenance of affordable housing.

Overflow Shelters

Overflow shelters are informal emergency shelters operated by non-profit organizations or faith communities inside their facilities to accommodate the "overflow" of homeless people who are turned away from traditional emergency shelters. Typically, overflow shelters rotate on a cyclical basis in order to be compliant with local zoning and building codes. Staffing is typically offered by trained volunteers along with other community volunteers.

Permanent Housing

Rental apartments or ownership homes that provide individuals and families with a fixed street address and residence.   While leases may have rental term limits set by the rental property owner, those limits are not tied to a rental assistance program.

Permanent Supportive Housing

Rental apartments or single family homes that provide individuals and families with a fixed street address and residence along with a set of supportive services and case management. Permanent Supportive (or Supported) Housing (PSH) combines rental or housing assistance with individualized, flexible and voluntary support services for people with high needs related to physical or mental health, developmental disabilities or substance use.

People Experiencing Homelessness

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines people experiencing homelessness as "an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; as well an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations, an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings."

Privately Developed or For-Profit Housing   Housing rents or sells at market-rate and is developed and owned by for-profit individuals, partnerships, or corporations. Also called "Market-Rate Housing", this housing is typically affordable to people at or above the median family income.

Project-Based Section 8 Housing   A federal HUD program that provides site-based rental subsidies, initially based on 20-year commitments of rent subsidy to developers of privately owned rental housing stock in the community to encourage them to build affordable housing.

Many Section 8 contracts have expired or will expire soon, and the property owners must now decide whether to renew their contract or leave the program ("opt out"). Most of these contracts are now renewed on a one-year basis. Projects with high risk of opting out typically have rents set by the Section 8 contract below the prevailing market rents for comparable units. Owners thus have an incentive to leave the program and convert their property to private market rentals.

Public Housing   Public housing is housing owned and run by a local housing authority under the oldest federal housing program—the Housing Act of 1937. To be eligible to live in public housing, you must be low income and meet certain other requirements. In most cases, rent including utilities can comprise no more than 30% of your income.

Rapid Re-housing   Rapid Re-housing is a housing strategy is based on the "housing first" philosophy of "rapidly" providing housing resources to people who are newly homeless or on the verge of homelessness. Rapid Re-housing differs from other housing models by having an immediate and primary focus on helping families access and sustain permanent housing as quickly as possible. Rapid re-housing is funded by a HUD initiative called "Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)".

Rapid re-housing is a solution to homelessness designed to help individuals and families to quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing. It is offered without preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety) and the resources and services provided are typically tailored to the unique needs of the household.

Encampment   Open spaces where one or more individuals experiencing homelessness have set up unsanctioned camping arrangements along with other forms of makeshift sleeping and living areas. These areas are often unsafe and unsanitary.

PATH Team   Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH), is a federally funded grant program that provides outreach and assistance to individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have serious mental illnesses.

Section 8 Vouchers   This federal HUD program that is administered by the local Housing Authority of Thurston County. Eligible tenants receive vouchers they can use to help them pay for apartments in the private market. Vouchers pay that portion of the low income tenants rent that is above 30% of their monthly income.

Shared Housing   A housing intervention that offers individuals and families innovative and affordable solutions to prevent homelessness and foster independence through home sharing and transitional housing programs that include case management services and connections to vital community resources.

Shelters   Also called emergency shelters, provides temporary overnight living accommodations for homeless people. Shelters are typically dedicated to specific populations, i.e. single males, families or domestic violence victims. Shelters are operated by both non-profit organizations or faith communities, with each shelter being administered under a unique set of rules. Generally, shelter guests must leave the facility during the day.

SRO   Single room occupancy units. The traditional SRO unit is a single room, usually less than 100 square feet, designed to accommodate one person. Amenities such as a bathroom, kitchen or common areas are located outside the unit and are shared with other residents. Many SROs can be found in renovated hotels. SRO housing serves a variety of people by providing three types of settings: 1) Emergency housing for homeless people, including the elderly. Occupancy is usually on a nightly or weekly basis. 2) Transitional housing for previously homeless or marginally housed persons, including older people, who are progressing to permanent housing. 3) Permanent housing for older people who will move to this setting and often live here until their death or until their increasing frailty forces them to move to a more supportive setting.

Subsidized Housing   A generic term covering all federal, state or local government programs that reduce the cost of housing for low- and moderate-income residents. Housing can be subsidized in numerous ways— giving tenants a rent voucher, helping homebuyers with down payment assistance, reducing the interest on a mortgage, providing deferred loans to help developers acquire and develop property, giving tax credits to encourage investment in low- and moderate-income housing, authorizing tax- exempt bond authority to finance the housing, providing ongoing assistance to reduce the operating costs of housing, and others.

Supportive Housing   Also referred to as "Permanent Supportive Housing", this combines affordable housing with individualized health, counseling and employment services for persons with mental illness, chemical dependency, chronic health problems, or other challenges. Generally it is transitional housing, but it can be permanent housing in cases such as a group home for persons with mental illness or developmental disabilities. Supportive housing is a solution to homelessness because it addresses its root causes by providing a proven, effective means of

re- integrating families and individuals into the community by addressing their basic needs for housing and on-going support.

Transitional Housing   This housing provides stability for residents for a limited time period, usually two weeks to 24 months, to allow them to recover from a crisis such as homelessness or domestic violence before transitioning into permanent housing. Transitional housing often offers supportive services, which enable a person to transition to an independent living situation.

Trauma Informed Care   Trauma Informed Care is a service model that emphasizes understanding, compassion and responding to the effects of all types of trauma experienced by service clients. By recognizing the intersectionality of multiple traumatic events in the lives of homeless people, service providers can avoid re-traumatizing clients who need support and individually-conscious care.

Tent City   A term used to describe a variety of temporary outdoor shelter facilities that often use tents. Authorized and unauthorized tent cities, created by and for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, are now found across the country.

"Tent City" is a term for a long standing practice where homeless people develop informal communities composed of tents and other temporary structures. During the Great Depression, these communities where derisively termed, "Hoovervilles" after then President Hoover in a negative reference to the failed federal efforts to revive the economy.
Present day tent cities are often created by homeless people for needed shelter on public or under- utilized lands. Sometimes tent cities are created by homeless advocates as a form of protest. In recent years, local governments have struggled to find ways to balance regulatory compliance with

Vulnerability Index   A Vulnerability Index is an analytic tool to measure of the exposure of a population to defined hazards and to develop a prioritization of care based on the score(s). Typically, the index is a composite of multiple quantitative indicators that via some formula, delivers a single numerical result which can then be used to compare the levels of need. The use of vulnerability indexes originated in the United Nations Environmental Program. The term and methodology was then adapted by Dr. James O'Connell of Boston Healthcare for use in assessing the needs of homeless people.   HUD requires funding recipients to prioritize assistance the most vulnerable homeless people at greatest risk of death or the need for shelter and community provided by Tent Cities.