



May  
2015  
Thurston  
County

# Homeless Census Report



*Who's Homeless and Why?*

Produced by a Countywide partnership  
Part of 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness







## 2015 Thurston County Homeless Census Report

May 2015

### Produced by a Countywide Partnership in Conjunction with the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness

The 2015 Thurston County Homeless Census Report is the product of the annual “**Point in Time Count of Homeless Persons**” coordinated statewide by the Washington State Department of Commerce. The results of the Thurston County Homeless Census are included along with the data from all other Washington Counties on the Department of Commerce website located at: <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/site/1064/default.aspx>

This report is presented on behalf of the Thurston County Board of Commissioners and the Thurston County HOME Consortium, an eight jurisdiction inter-governmental body that governs the County’s allocation of federal HOME dollars along with the state funded Homeless Housing and Affordable Housing Programs.

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

**Note to Readers:** Due to potential reconfiguration of the 2015 PIT Homeless Census data by state or local officials, the total number of 476 homeless people is subject to change by as much as 10 people.

**Questions, comments, or to request a digital copy of this report:**

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## Census Volunteers:

**In addition to previously listed participants, the 2015 census was staffed by approximately 70 volunteers from faith-based communities, nonprofit organizations, local and state government, business community, local high schools, and other parts of the community:**

Maria Ferris & the Olympia Barber School, Alfie Ramos, Alliea Phipps, Allison Eby, Ami Renecker, Brian Wilson, Carley James, Cary Retlin, Chris Ward, Cindy Powell, Cole Ketcherside, Don Hutchings, Ed Deed, Gavyn Tann, Georgine Abbott, Heather Sturdevant, Helen Johnston, Ian Franzen, Jen Butti, Jennifer Kelly, Jessica Colleran, Joan Martin, Katherine Cox, Katherine Trahan, Kay Fox, Keith Stahley, Kitty Watkins, Kris Tucker, Mary Captain, Mary Ybarra, Michael Burnham, Michael Collins-Wolaver, Michelle, Mindie Reule, Mindy Chambers, Minday Owens, Nancy Baker-Kroft, Nancy Curtis, Pat Carlson, Pat Fealy, Paul Spivak, Rita Reynoldson, Sabina Wagner-Lewis, Sage Bingley, Sharon Holley, Terry Barber, Travis Sayers, Warren Carlson, Wendy Hamlin, Zoe Spanogians and others.

### Facility Partners:

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

- \* DSHS Community Services Office
- \* First Christian Church
- \* Olympia City Hall
- \* Olympia Timberland Library
- \* Rochester Organization of Families (ROOF)
- \* Tenino Quarry House
- \* Yelm Community Service Center

**Thurston County contracted with the City of Olympia to conduct the 2014 Annual Homeless Count and produce the Homeless Census Report.**

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# CITIZEN SUMMARY

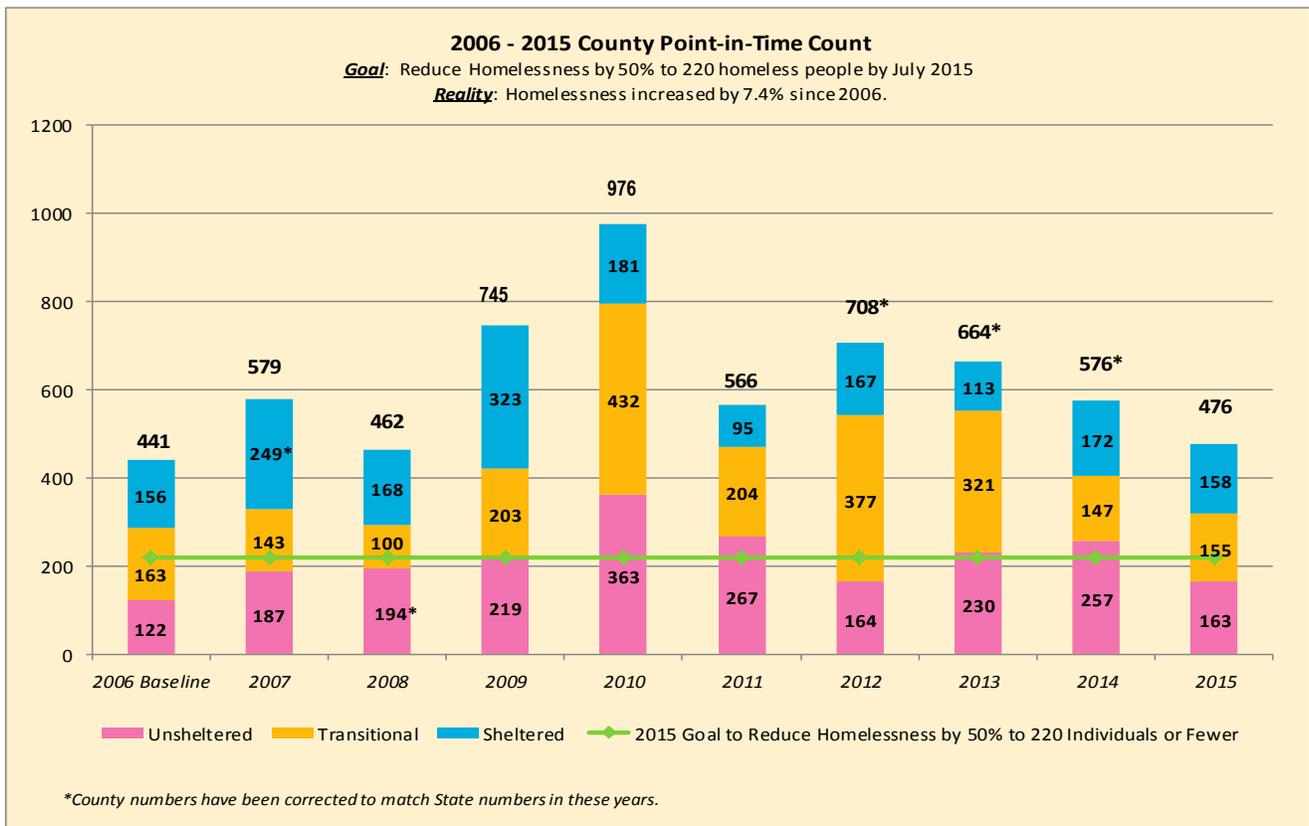
## Overview

In January 29 2015, Thurston County participated in the ninth annual statewide “**Point in Time Count of Homeless Persons,**” referred to as the “**Homeless Census.**” This census is conducted each year in January to monitor progress in the County’s 10-Year Plan to Reduce Homelessness. Census results are reported to the state and federal 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.

This final year of the 10-Year Plan, with the goal to reduce homelessness by half. Instead, the 2015 Homeless Census found 476 people were homeless, nearly bringing it the total down to the 2006 starting point.

The primary source for this initial report is the County’s 2015 Homeless Census which identified 476 *homeless individuals*. **This represents a 7.4% increase from the 2006 baseline number of 441 homeless people, but a 51.2% drop from 2010’s high of 976 homeless individuals and a 17.4% drop from 2014.** This report also examines an additional source of data from the public school count of homeless students, Kindergarten—12th grade. Together, the data presented in this “**2015 Thurston County Homeless Census Report**” allows for an in depth examination of who is homeless and why, with specific data on homelessness by jurisdiction, demographics and the causes of homelessness.

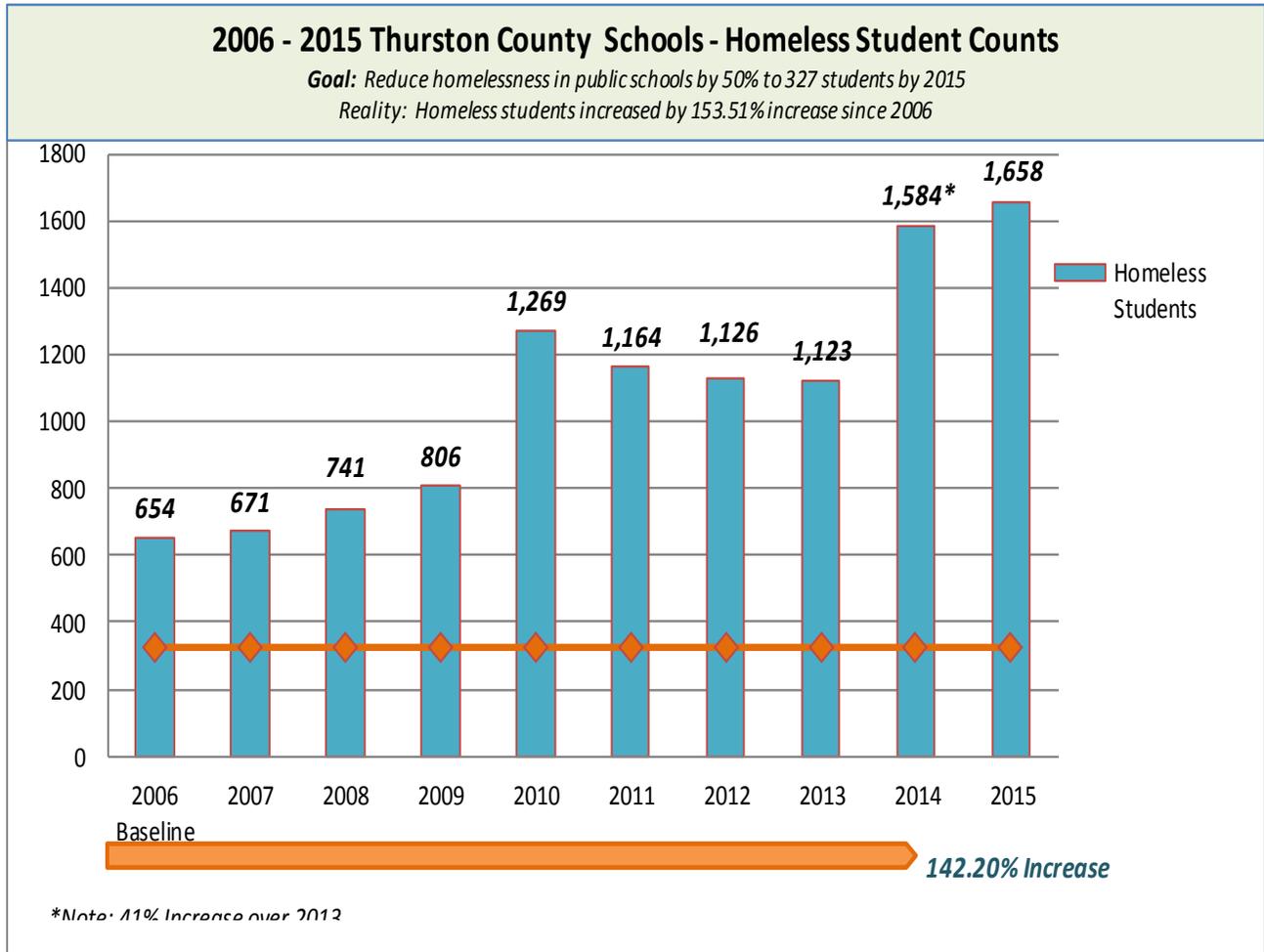
Locally, census results are shared with all community stakeholders – policy makers, funders, service providers, concerned citizens and the homeless themselves. Together, we can look at who is homeless, why they are homeless, and what resources we have to offer. Analyzing these three elements allows us to develop more effective responses to homelessness.



## HOMELESS STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The second source of homeless data is a parallel census, conducted by the county’s school districts, that found 1,658 homeless public school students (Kindergarten through 12th grade) which is 461 more students—a 4.7% increase since last year and a 153.51% 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. (Please see “Correlation of School District Numbers with County Census Numbers” on page 27.)

Together these sources reflect an *increase in homelessness since 2006*, not the 50% reduction identified as the county’s Ten-Year Plan goal. This report analyzes who is homeless and why. It also looks at available resources and presents priority actions from the Homeless Coordinator.



## Citizen Summary: Accomplishments in Context of the Ten-Year Plan

This year's census total of 476 represents an 7.4 % increase, or 35 more people than identified in the 2006 census of 441 people. However, this year's results indicate a significant 51.2% drop in homelessness from the 2010 all-time high of 976.

Once statewide data is released, the final version of this report will include some analysis of how other counties across the state are doing in their efforts to reduce homelessness.

Given the census results on page one, it appears that our county is making slow progress in reducing homelessness. Reasons are likely to include:

- 1) **Continued Leadership** from the HOME Consortium, the Homeless Coordinator and the HOME Citizens Advisory Committee (HCAC).
- 2) **Improved Coordinated System Entry** Local non-profit service and shelter providers continued to strengthen the work of three coordinated points of system entry: **SideWalk** (single adults) **Family Support Center** (families) and **Community Youth Services** (unaccompanied youth 17 and under and transition-age youth ages 18 to 22).
- 3) **Success via "Rapid Re-housing"** through HOME Consortium's increased funding of rental assistance.
- 4) **Stronger Economy** with a local reduction in unemployment.

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

## Citizen Summary: Countywide Actions to Reduce Homelessness

Since 2006, Thurston County has invested nearly \$18 million dollars 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 HOME Consortium, an eight member inter-jurisdictional body composed of Thurston County, Bucoda, Lacey, Olympia, Rainier Tenino, Tumwater and Yelm. The Consortium governs the use of federal HOME funds and the two state-funded programs called the Homeless Housing Program and the Affordable Housing Program, which are funded by document recording fee dollars (collected by the County).

During program year 2013 (September 1, 2013 – August 31, 2014) the County HOME Consortium invested \$4,821,481 of federal and local funds in local projects and programs intended to alleviate homelessness. Notable accomplishments include:

- **Homeless Coordinator Project:** Thurston County's Homeless Coordinator project continued with a focus on system improvements.
- **Rapid Re-housing:** 497 households were quickly "re-housed" with rental housing vouchers.
- **Housing Improvement:** approximately 21 total units of housing renovation, including 8 units by the Housing Authority,



*Rapid Re-housing stabilizes families and single adults quickly, offering better outcomes*

eight (8) units by Yelm Community Services, and five (5) units by Homes First!

- **Emergency Shelter** : Regional shelters provided shelter for 1,585 households.
- **More Social & Supportive Services:** 10 Social service agencies received support for operations and maintenance costs, ultimately benefitting an estimated 1,464 low and moderate income people.

Together these projects and programs provided housing and essential services that helped hundreds of households across Thurston County.

The census results do show a 36% increase in homelessness since 2006. However, as shown above, a significant number of homeless and at-risk people were assisted, likely preventing them from becoming homeless. If not for the funding provided through the HOME Consortium, the rate of homelessness in Thurston County would be significantly higher.



*Homeless Coordinator Theresa Slusher takes down census information at the Homeless Connect Event held at First Christian Church on January 23, 2014*

## Citizen Summary: Homelessness Coordinator’s Third Year Report on System Improvement

This was the third year of the Homeless Coordinator project, intended to provide guidance and coordination of a multi-faceted homeless service, shelter and housing system. In year three, the Homeless System Coordinator worked with county staff and a broad range of stakeholders to:

- Standardize Rapid Re-housing and ensure access through Coordinated Entry
- Continue improvements to data quality in HMIS
- Finalize and implement other strategies as identified in the Ten-Year Plan and monitor progress toward achieving goals

## Emerging Leadership: Thurston Thrives—”Housing for Health Strategies”

**Thurston Thrives** created an expansive public-private-non profit partnership dedicated to forging an integrated approach to health. Under the guidance of the County Board of Health, Thurston Thrives founded the **Housing Action Team** in late 2013 to examine housing needs and develop a Housing for Health strategy map. Three teams emerged to focus on three distinct elements of housing across Thurston County:

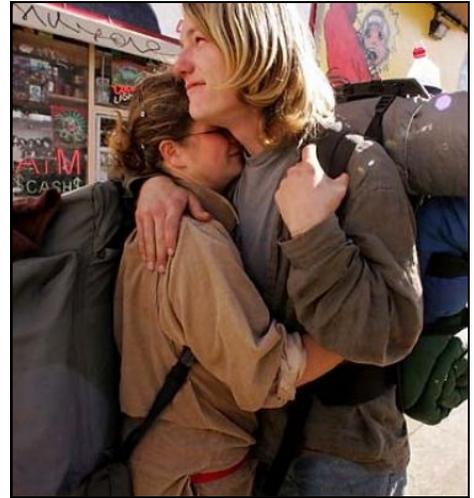
- **RED TEAM: Homeless Housing** Fostering system improvement through coordinated entry and best use of existing resources, linkage to supportive services and other resources.
- **ORANGE TEAM: Rental Housing**—Focus on existing rental housing, rehabilitation, maintenance, and landlord/tenant education to ensure best access to healthy and affordable homes and best use of the existing housing resources.
- **BLUE TEAM: New Housing Development**—Expanding the affordable housing stock available for low income families and individuals by blending private sector efficiency with non-profit sector resources and addressing other barriers.

# CH1: OVERVIEW OF THE HOMELESS CENSUS

## Purpose of the Point in Time Count of Homeless People

**E**ach 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 night, January 23rd, 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) **Foster Analysis and Refine Strategies** by examining needs and resources and supporting the development of better strategies for local responses to homelessness.



*163, or 34%, of all homeless were unsheltered, taking refuge wherever they could*



*Of the 163 unsheltered people 110, or 23%, of the respondents reported living out of doors, many of whom were in camps*

## Definitions of Homelessness

This census report is primarily based on the state definition of homelessness, which includes people living in:

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

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 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.

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 Homes

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.”



*The Census found 71 people staying with friends & family; they often cycle through shelters and cars to living out of doors*



*The Census found 37 people living in their vehicles, 8% of total respondents*

## 2015 Census Data Validity

Statewide, the Homeless Census provides the single best measure of how successful we have been at reducing homelessness. However, as with all statistical studies, it is useful to acknowledge the conditions that may compromise the validity of the Homeless Census. Following is a list of issues that may have affected the accuracy of this census:

### 1. Sunny Weather on Homeless Census Date

This year the Homeless Census was held on an unseasonably warm and sunny day, thereby reducing the dependence of homeless people on services and shelter resources.

### 2. Change in Resource Utilization

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.

### 3. Non-cooperation by Some Unsheltered Homeless Populations

Some 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. 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.



*Homeless people in rural areas find places hidden from view and are often less visible than those in the urban hubs, creating a perception that homelessness is primarily an urban problem.*

#### **4. Rural Homeless Hard to Find**

Rural homeless people remain elusive. This year’s census methodology included three rural homeless connect events, each featuring some combination of commodities, services and community meals. These events were conducted over multiple days (with safe guards to protect from over-counts) as a more comprehensive effort to reach rural homeless people. In spite of this, the Homeless Census continues to under-count people who meet the definition of homeless in rural areas. 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, often because fewer services exist in rural areas, which makes it difficult to find them. 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.

#### **5. Consistent Methodology vs. Continual Improvement**

A government-conducted census effort runs into two conflicting standards. First, standard practices in social research requires consistent methodology as essential to producing accurate and comparable data, year over year. Yet, another standard dictates the need for continual improvement in government services, seeking critical feedback to be incorporated into operating procedures to ensure 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 2014 Homeless Census, meetings were held with the elected officials from each HOME jurisdiction and other stakeholders to develop and confirm the proposed methodologies.

## CH2: SOURCE 1 - EXAMINING THE NUMBERS

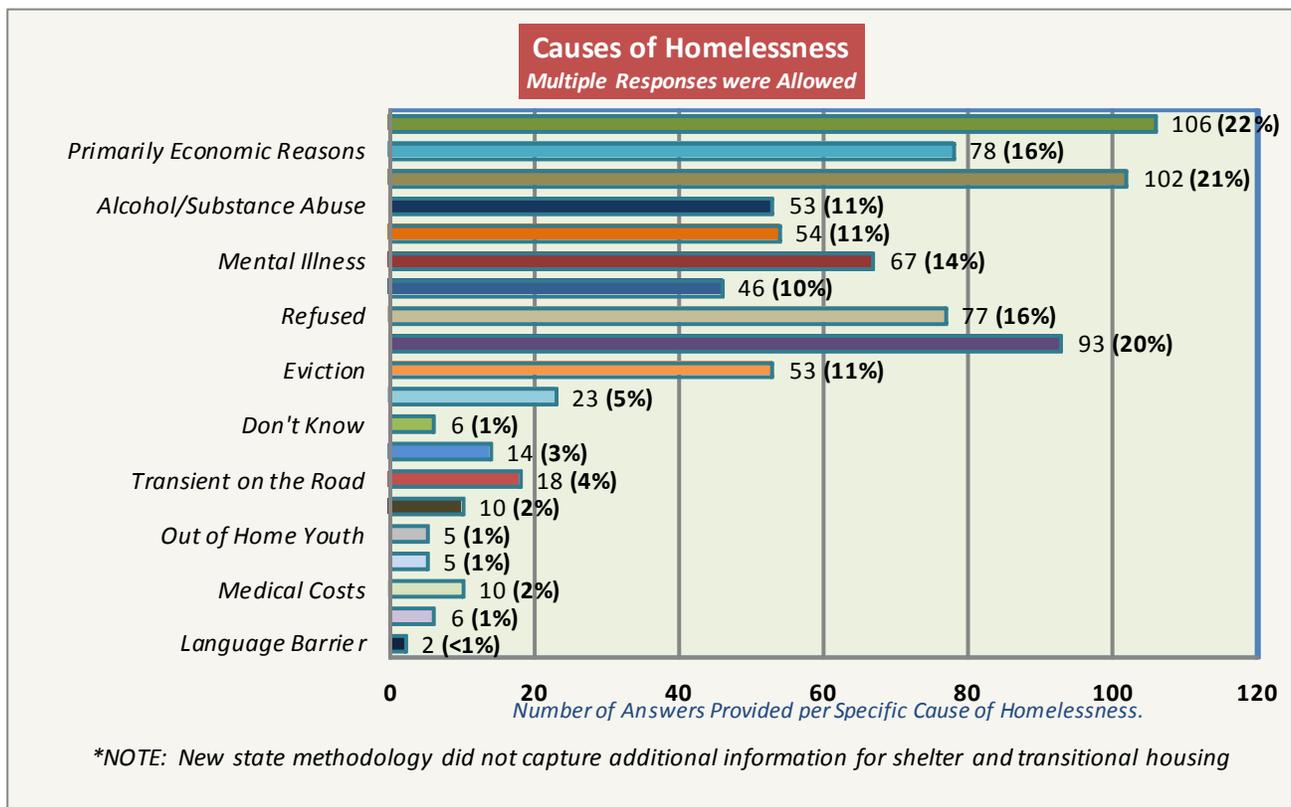
Following is a series of charts presented with background information that provide a deeper look into the results of the 2015 Homeless Census, including the causes of homelessness, the ages of homeless people, disabilities they face, and other information. *(More detailed information contained in Appendix c)*

### Scope of the Data

The following information represents the results of the 2015 Homeless Census, primarily focusing on a count of homeless people that meets the state definition of homelessness. 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 state definition of homelessness, they clearly present a significant impact on local services and the community at large. Please note that due to technical constraints with the state's database, some of the totals and subtotals are off by five (5) 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.



The largest reported cause of homelessness was job loss, reported by 106 people or 22% of the respondents. The second largest cause was family crisis or break-up cited by 102 or 21% of respondents. Third largest caused was illness or health problems cited by 93 people or 20%. This statistic underscores the importance of tracking the number of people staying with friends or family—while some people ultimately get back on their feet, many slip into literal homelessness.

Tied for fourth place mental illness and alcohol substance abuse, cited by 60 people or 10% of the respondents cited mental illness. However, this statistic 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, 141, or 18%, self-disclosed mental illness, which may have been a contributing factor in their homelessness.

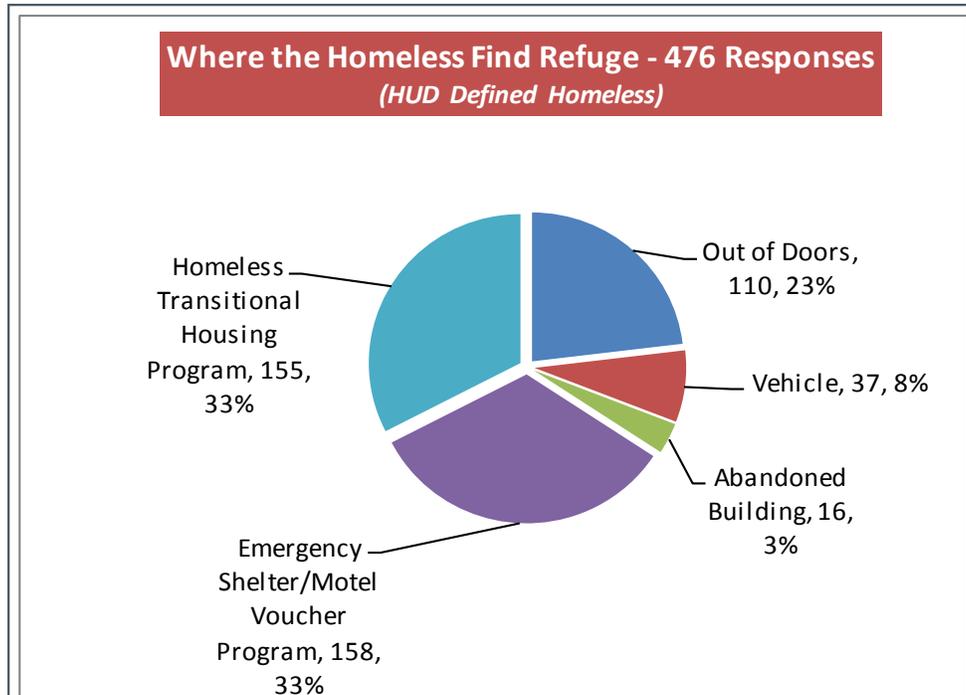
## Where the Homeless Find Refuge

To be included in this homeless census, the respondent had to meet the definition for homelessness (see “Definition of Homeless” on page 11 on the night of January 29, 2015, 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. Over one third of all homeless people reported they were unsheltered, 163 people, or 34% respondents.

Of this number, there were 110 of the people living out of doors, 37 people living in vehicles and 16 living in abandoned buildings. Another 26% of all local homeless or 158 people or 33% of respondents spent the night in homeless shelters.



The remaining 155 people, or 33% 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.

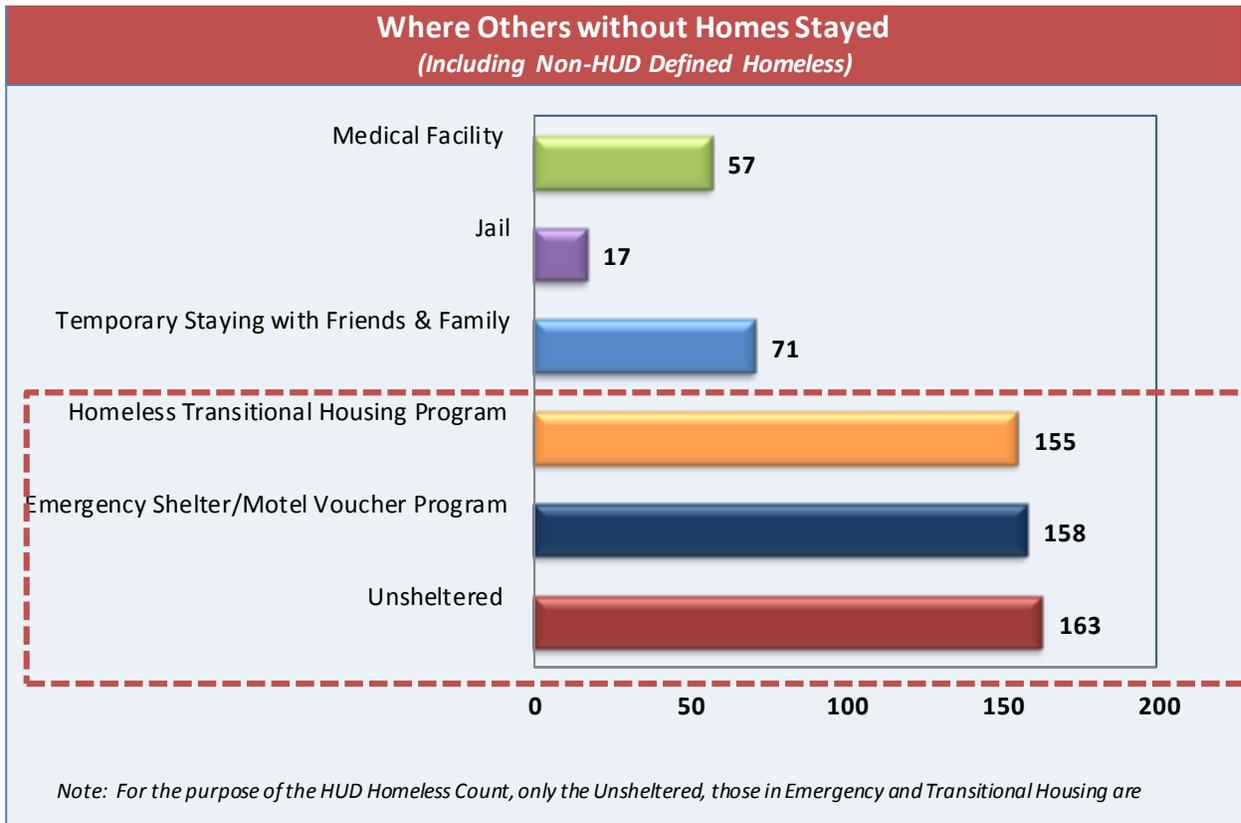
## Other People without Homes

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 17 people in jail and 57 people in medical facilities who will be released to homelessness. It also includes 71 people temporarily staying with friends or families. While these numbers are not included in the state-defined total of 599 (page 9, “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. One significant challenge in providing shelter for unaccompanied minors is that many avoid going into “the system”

for  
feared



of

being returned to their parents or guardians as a result of Washington State’s “Becca Laws”, which are intended to keep families together.

While these categories of homelessness do not meet the state definition, the chart on page 14 “Causes of Homelessness” shows that 64 people, or 11%, became homeless after losing a temporary living situation; 16 people, or 3%, lost their homes because of criminal convictions; and 12, or 2%, were discharged from a medical institution. Clearly, these figures will have a direct impact on the local population of homeless people.

### Geography of Homelessness

The geography of homelessness shows where homeless people go to find survival resources. However, the present location of homeless people shown under the “Current City” is often different than the last place they called home. To convey this migration from home to homelessness, the following chart presents

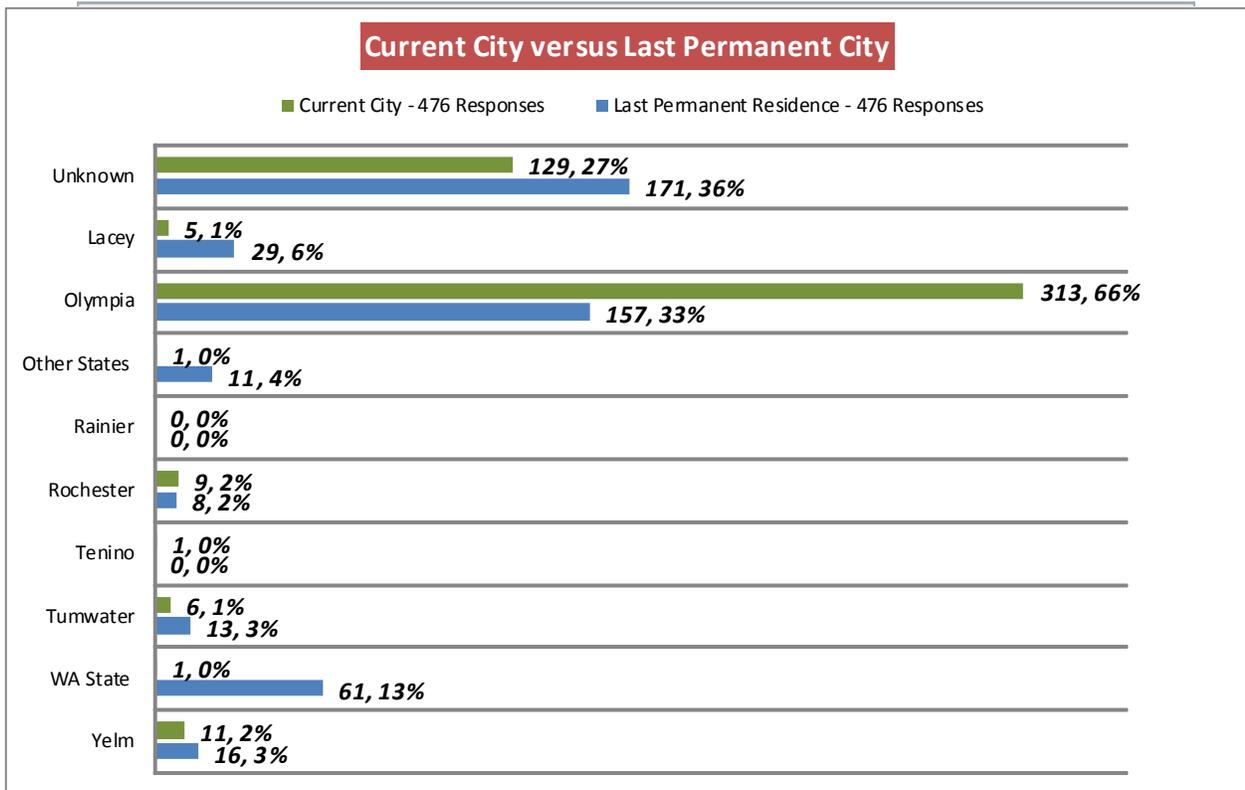
- 1) where the homeless spent the night on January 29th and,
- 2) where their last permanent address was.

#### Current City

On the night of the January 29th Homeless Census, the vast majority – 313 or 66%, spent the night somewhere in Olympia. Yelm was the location for 11 or 2% of the respondents. Rochester was the location where 9 or 2% of the homeless were found. Tumwater had 6 or 1% and Lacey had only 5 or 1% of the current homeless population. While 129 people or 27% did not answer where they were staying, they were surveyed in Olympia.

#### 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 157, or 33%, of the total 476 respondents stated that Olympia was the location of their last permanent residence. Another 29 people or 6% said they had lived in Lacey and 16 or 3%, stated that they had lived in Yelm. Another 13 or 3% said they lived in Tumwater. Very few people said they were from other parts of rural



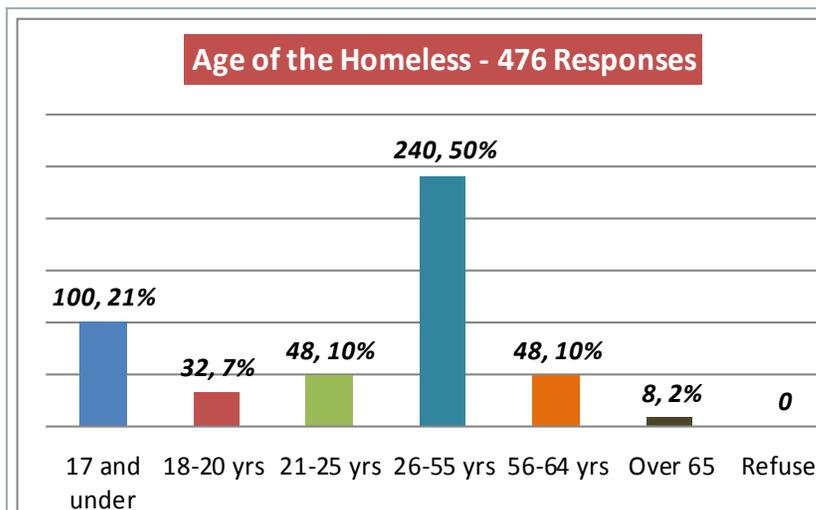
Thurston County, with only 8 or 2% were from Rochester. Another 61 or 13% were from other parts of Washington while the remaining 11, or 4%, said they were from other states.

The chart above combines these two data sets—current and permanent city to show the migration of homeless people into the urban hub. This chart also suggests that limited choices in rural areas can drive homeless people into areas of more concentrated services. 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. Once there, homeless people often feel like displaced persons, unable to build new community bonds or to tap neighborhood resources.

### Ages of the Homeless

The chart presents the age spread of homeless people, with the largest number of respondents, 291, or 49%, falling between the ages of 26 to 55 years old. The elderly account for only 1% or 8 of the local homeless population.

This chart also shows that 106, or 18%, of all homeless people are children 17 years old or younger. Together with those respondents who are between 18 to 20 years old, there were 168, or 28%, of the homeless are under 21 years of age. The school census data presented on page 26 (“2006-2014 School Year Homeless Counts”) shows that this number has nearly doubled in the past eight years.



### Disabilities of the Homeless

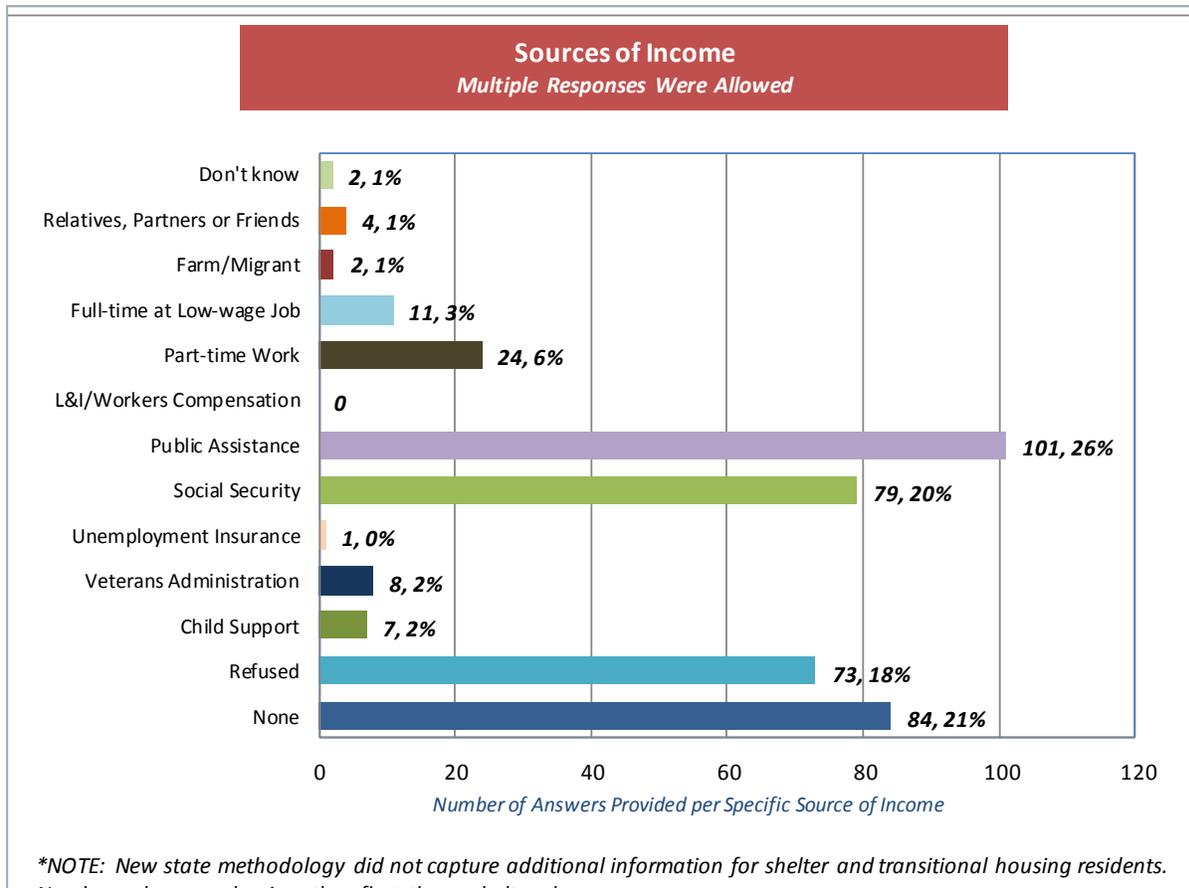
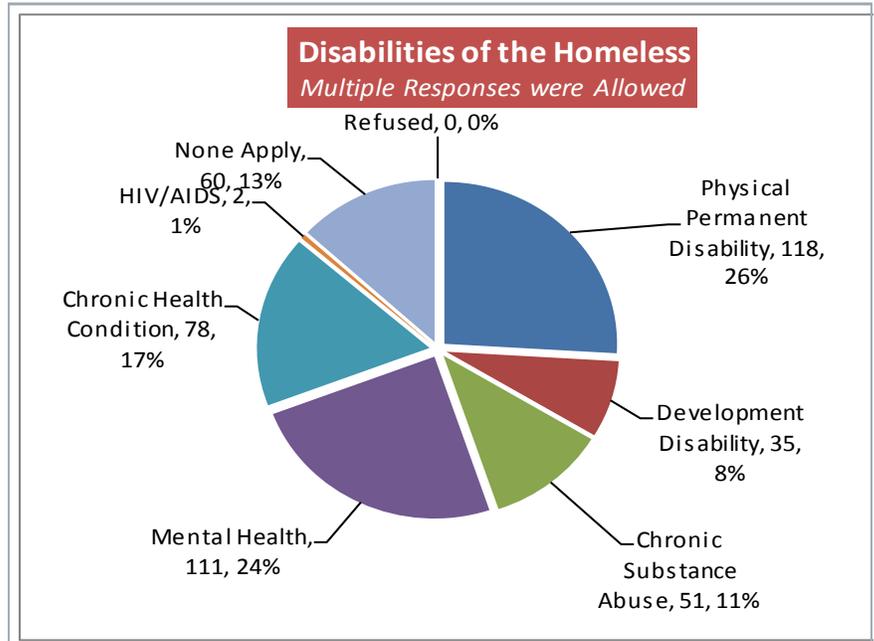
This chart presents the range of self-reported disabilities affecting local homeless people, showing that mental health

impacts 111 people, or 24%, almost a quarter of the local homeless population who answered that question.

Another 118 people, or 26%, reported a permanent physical disability; 51, or 11%, or respondents reported a drug or alcohol dependency.

### Sources of Income for Homeless People

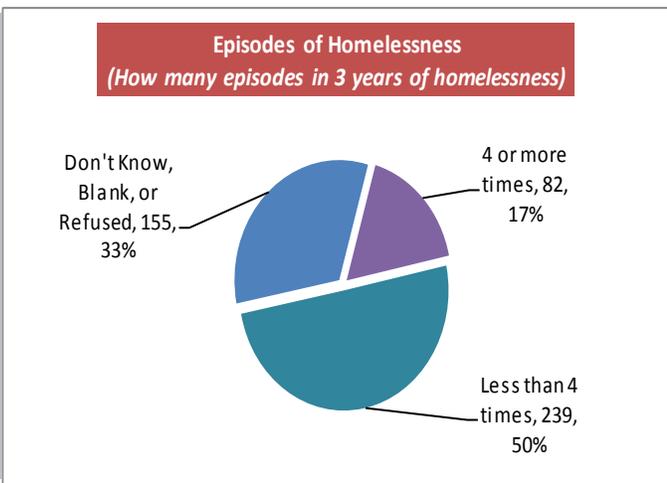
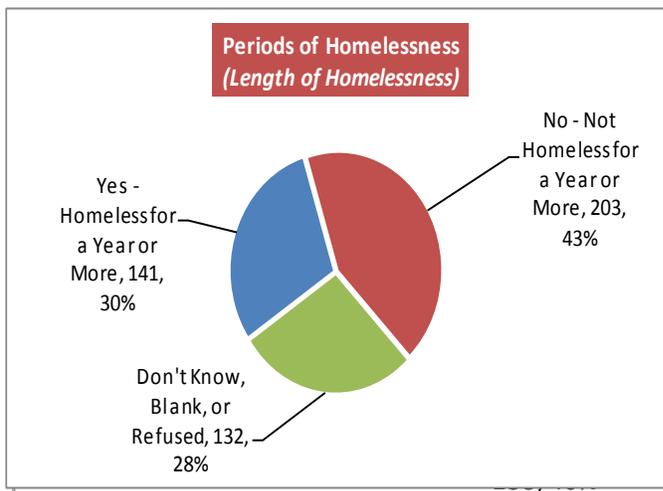
Of those who responded, the majority of the homeless, 101 or 26% reported they had some form of “public assistance”. Another 84 or 21%, reported “no income.” The second largest group, 63 or 11%, reported public assistance as a source of income. The third largest group of 79 people or 20% reported social security, which indicated either disability status or being over the age of 62. The remainder reported a variety of income sources. Information for this question is limited by the state’s data base lack of data and by the fact that a significant number of Thurston County’s homeless people did not want to discuss their income with strangers; 58 people refused to answer questions about the source of their income. The chart presents the breakdown of sources of income.



## 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. As a direct result of these conditions, the chronically homeless are high service users, often described as the 10% of the population who use 90% of the resources. As high service users, chronically homeless people tax the system the most, draw the most attention.

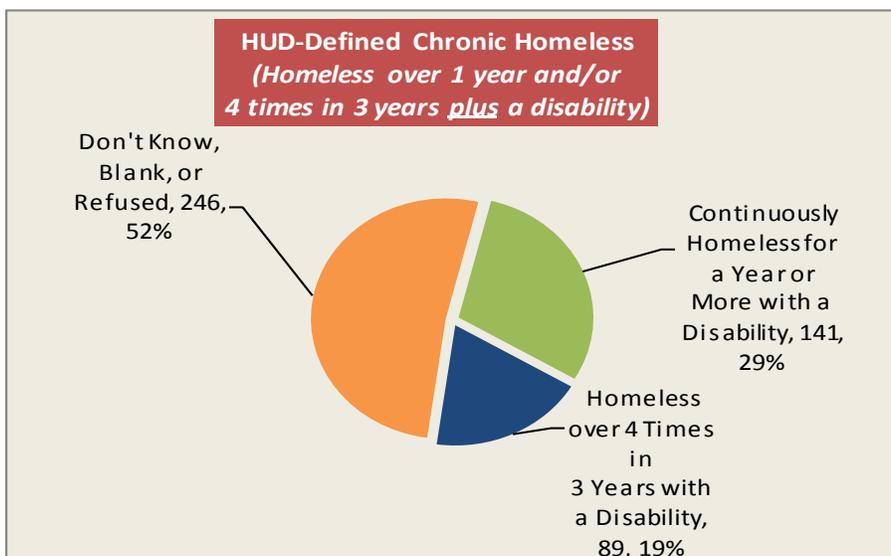


To determine the number of chronically homeless people, the census examined data on three questions.

One of the census questions asked **how long** people were homeless. Nearly half of the respondents, or 203 (43%), said they had been homeless for more than a year, which is one qualifier for being chronically homeless.

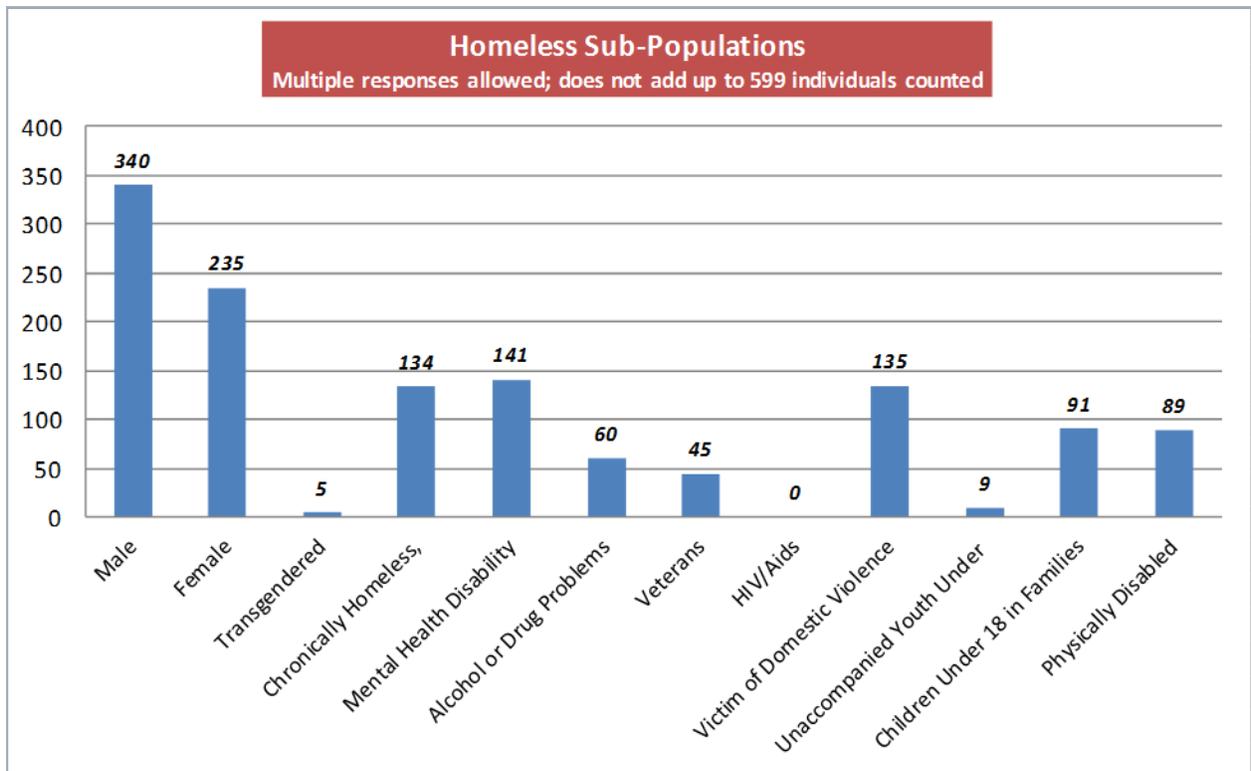
To capture the second indicator of chronic homelessness, another question asked if they had experienced **four or more episodes of homelessness in the past three years**. The census found that 82 or 17% reported they had been homeless for four or more times in three years.

Finally, these two questions were cross-tabulated with data with information on disabilities, essentially determining who was likely to remain homeless as a result of their disabilities and lack of resources for permanent housing. By combining this data, the census found that 89 individuals or 19% fall under the category of being chronically homeless.



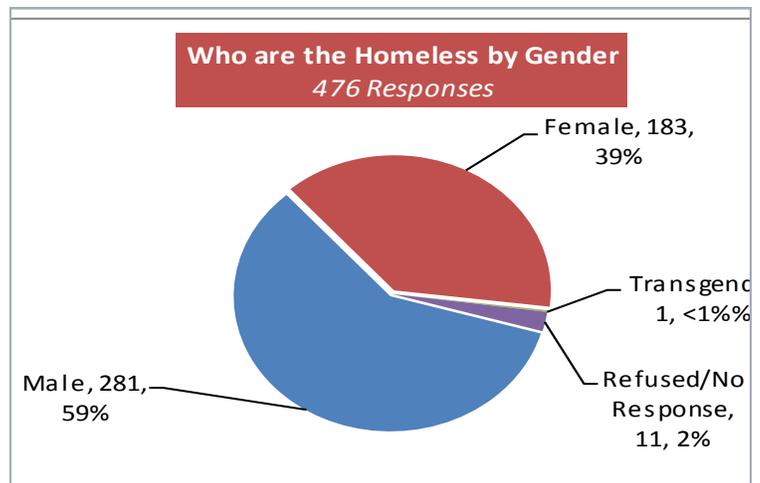
# CH3: WHO ARE THE HOMELESS?

The pathways to homelessness come from many directions. This results in a broad range of sub-populations of the homeless. Because most service and shelter programs are tailored to meet the unique needs of these specific sub-populations, it is essential to understand the diverse characteristics of homeless people as individuals in order to develop successful responses. The chart below breaks out some of these distinct sub-populations. Following is a brief overview of some of these unique characteristics of the primary sub-groups of homeless people. Included is a short description of the current best practice standards for responding to their needs.

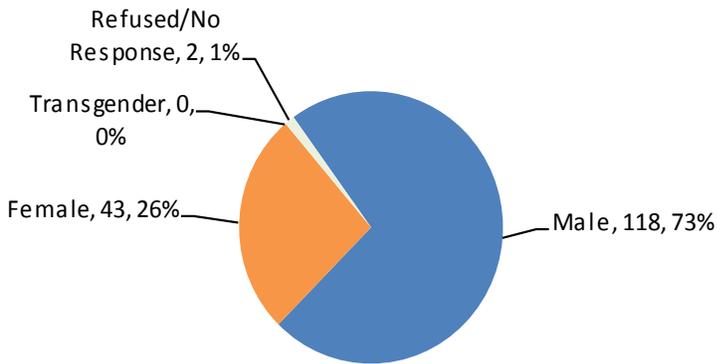


## Gender Identity of the Homeless

One of the key questions for inclusion in the census was gender, offering respondents three options: 1) Male; 2) female; and, 3) transgender. Respondents for the full census, (which included the unsheltered, sheltered and transitionally housed) found that a majority of the homeless are male (281 people or 59%) a lesser number were female (183 or 39%) and a very small number were transgender ( 1 person or <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.



### Who are the Unsheltered Homeless by Gender



## Gender Identity and the Unsheltered

Among the unsheltered—people who are literally homeless outside the shelter or transitional housing system—the gender breakdown was overwhelmingly male (118 or 73%) with a lesser number who were female (43 or 26%). There were zero people self-identified as transgender among the unsheltered.

These statistics suggest the percentages of need among the unsheltered populations, showing that we need three additional shelter beds for males to every additional shelter bed for females.

While there appears to be only four self-reported transgendered homeless people, anecdotal reports suggest there may be more, perhaps among the five people who refused to respond to the question. While transgendered people are protected by the state against discrimination in housing, 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 homeless people. However, the need to maintain safety for residents is the compelling reasons stated by the Salvation Army who feel they cannot assure the safety of transgendered shelter residents in a dormitory setting.

## 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 132 or 24%. 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 non-payment 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.



*132 Homeless people self-reported mental illness as a disability*

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.

## Victims of Domestic Violence

According to the “National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty,” domestic violence is one of the leading causes of homelessness for women and children. A 2005 study commissioned by the US Conference of Cities found that domestic violence was the leading cause of homelessness for women and children in half of the cities reporting, including Seattle.

Locally, there were 46 people or 10% of the homeless who were directly made homeless by domestic violence with a total of 111 homeless victims of domestic violence (DV), representing 23% of the total population of homeless respondents. However, there are only 28 DV shelter beds. 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.



*46, or 10%, of people were made homeless by domestic violence, with a total of 111 or 23% saying they were survivors of domestic violence*



*Stereotypes of homelessness are based on who is most visible, often chronically homeless and street-dependent people*

## Chronically Homeless

Over one quarter of the homeless are “chronically homeless,” with 89 or 19%, 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 13.6% decrease 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.

However, in recent years, the face of persistent homelessness is changing, apparently as a result of the economy.

As shown on the “Trends of the Demographics of Homelessness” chart on page 27, the number of chronically homeless people has fluctuated between 19% - 23%, with one outlier year of 36% of the total homeless population in the past ten years.

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 resources. They typically cycle between shelters, hospitals, jails and other facilities. The chronically homeless also tend to be the heaviest consumers of shelter and homeless services along with public services such as emergency medical response and police.

People who are chronically homeless are often the most visible, giving rise to many negative stereotypes. A 2006 New Yorker article infamously chronicled the price of ignoring the chronically homeless with a story about “Million Dollar Murray,” a homeless man in Reno who cost the state of Nevada one million dollars in emergency care and court costs over the course of ten years, averaging \$100,000 per year – costs which would have been cut by half or two-thirds using a Housing First approach.

**Strategic Response:** As illustrated by the “Million Dollar Murray” article and the 1811 Eastlake model, it’s cheaper to provide housing and services for chronically homeless people than it is to sustain the high cost of emergency service responses. Such a cost-benefit analysis approach supports the Housing First model as a strategy to stabilize chronically homeless people by getting them into housing first and then providing the essential services. Housing is a proven way to save other public funds from law enforcement in order to provide more cost-effective case management.



*8%, or 45, local homeless people self-identify as Veterans*

## Veterans

In Thurston County, 39, or 8%, of the homeless self-identified as veterans. Nationwide, about one-third of the adult homeless population are veterans. 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. 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.

**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 sub-populations, veterans benefit from the Housing First model followed up with supportive services. 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.

## Homeless Individuals

Homeless individuals, i.e. single people without kids typically make up the largest sub-population of homeless people.



*306, or 64%, of the homeless were single adults*

Locally, the census revealed 306 single adults, comprising 64% of the total 476 respondents. People are considered homeless individuals when they do not have dependent children, are not expecting a child, or do not have other familial obligations that prohibit them from arranging their individual accommodations. Individuals 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 elect to utilize 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

The census found 161 total people in 65 homeless families, accounting for 35% of the homeless population. However, there appears to be a much larger number of families without a home of their own 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.

Many homeless families often choose to stay temporarily with other people, in motels, or in their cars in order to keep their families together. Families tend to avoid shelters in order to prevent potentially negative impacts on their children. As a result, many families with children are disproportionately excluded by the current HUD definition of homelessness.



*The Census found 161 homeless family members; 35% of the total population*

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 are often 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.



*While only 9 unaccompanied youth were counted, service providers indicate there are many more who are reluctant to be counted*

## Homeless Youth

There were 100 homeless children, 21% of the total number and an additional 71 “transitional age youth” or 15% of the 476 total who were 25 years of age and under. “Transitional Aged Youth” (defined on the next page). Nine of these children were unaccompanied homeless youth 17 or under in the census, comprising 1% of the total population. (Please note: this number appears to be significantly lower than the School Census numbers addressed on page 27) 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.

An additional 71 young people ages 18 to 24, were part of a category of young homeless people who are termed “Transition-age Youth”. While those under 18 can’t stay in adult shelters, those who are between 18 to 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:** “*Youth Bridge*” is an emerging 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”.



*Without intervention, many homeless youth are likely to become part of the chronically homeless adult population*

## Homeless Sex Offenders

Of the 237 total registered sex offenders in Thurston County, all 48 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.

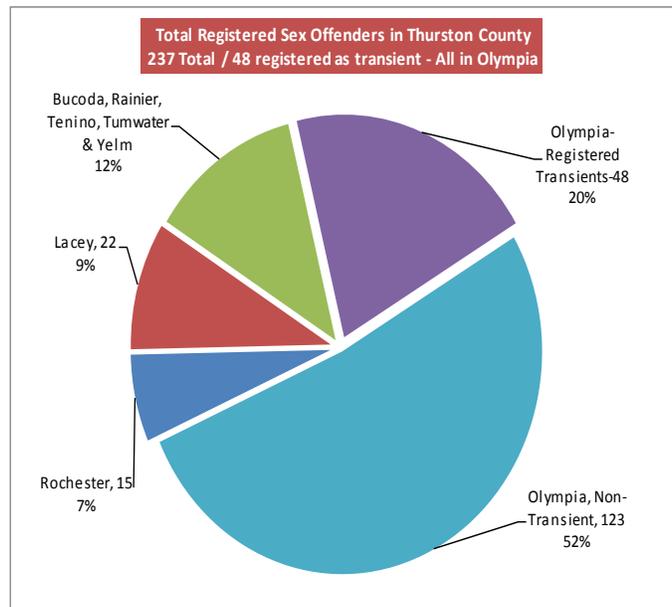
### Background on Sex Offender Registration

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. Locally, this debate has factored into public discourse surrounding the proposed People’s House and the potential inclusion of sex offenders among the proposed clientele.

Public debate of the value of laws restricting housing for sex offender registration was illustrated by the Florida “Tuttle Causeway Colony”. In 2007, news reports began to surface about a makeshift homeless encampment located under the Julia Tuttle Causeway outside of Miami. Local authorities cited the highly restrictive sex offender laws in Dade County made it nearly impossible for registered sex offenders to secure housing. Ultimately, the Causeway Colony grew to 140 residents until it was shut down in 2010.

Information on homeless sex offenders is not included in the charts or narratives contained elsewhere in this Thurston County Homeless Census Report because methodology does not specifically seek information on sex offender status. As a result, the Sheriff Department’s data is presented here is likely to represent additional homeless people in Thurston County.



## Trends in Thurston County Homelessness

**Ten years** of conducting a Thurston County census of homeless citizens offers a look into the trends of who is homeless in a given year and how that changes over time. The chart on this page presents ten 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) Who are the homeless; (2) Are we making progress with certain demographics by concentrating services; and, (3) Do we have information to differentiate whether these are the same people year-over-year, or are some people overcoming homelessness while new people are becoming homeless?

The first five years show that the **total number of homeless people** appears to trend upward and then drops off radically by Year 6 in 2011. (This drop off is widely perceived as an anomaly caused by a change in homeless definitions by previous administrators). Some of the fairly static populations include the chronically homeless, who appear to fluctuate around 100 with one outlier year of 210 people. The number of homeless veterans also seem to remain fairly static, fluctuating between 38 and 75 with two outlier years (6 homeless veterans in 2007 and 18 in 2009).

Individuals with **mental illness** trended sharply upwards in the first five years, and again, dropped radically in the sixth year, likely due to a lack of data from mental health service providers. These radically divergent numbers suggest the need to work closely with veteran's assistance organizations to gain the trust of homeless veterans in order to include them in **the census**.

The number of respondents who self-reported **drug and alcohol addicted**, yet this appears incongruent with prior year's data. In 2009 and 2010, there were 164 and 168 respondents with drug and alcohol addiction, dropping to 37 by 2012. These statistics are contrary to the anecdotal reports of street outreach workers, emergency service providers and other public employees. These low numbers seem to obscure the number of people who are chronic inebriates.

Thurston County Census 2006 – 2014: Trends in Demographics of Homelessness										
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Out of Doors</b>	122	187	154-94*	219	363	269	164	230	257	163
<b>Shelters</b>	156	167-132*	118	123	181	141	167	113	172	158
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	163	143	100	203	432	260	377	321	147	155
<b>Subtotals**</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>976</b>	<b>568</b>	<b>708</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>476</b>
<b>Jails &amp; Medical Institutions</b>	55	38	17	109	146	98	122	175	214	74*
<b>Friends</b>	104	103	150	159	162	74	156	145	113	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>1,013</b>	<b>1,284</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>1,110</b>	<b>1,006</b>	<b>926</b>	<b>621</b>
Youth - Total Sheltered & Unsheltered (17 & under)	115	111	187	228	420	144	188	157	106	100
Families with Children - Total Sheltered & Unsheltered	151	196	151	275	289	162	121	277	195	161
Single Men & Women - Total Sheltered & Unsheltered	290	383	311	470	663	387	603	409	404	306
Elderly – Total Sheltered & Unsheltered (65 & over)	4	3	11	7	16	3	10	7	11	8
Veterans – Total	75	6	76	18	68	42	63	38	45	39
Mental Illness (self-reported disability)	156	292	288	356	407	249	153	222	141	132
Drug and Alcohol Addicted	122	149	125	164	168	41	37	80	60	56
Chronically Homeless	103	210	84	98	99	78	64	125	124	89

\*Numbers vary between state report and county report for this demographic in these years.

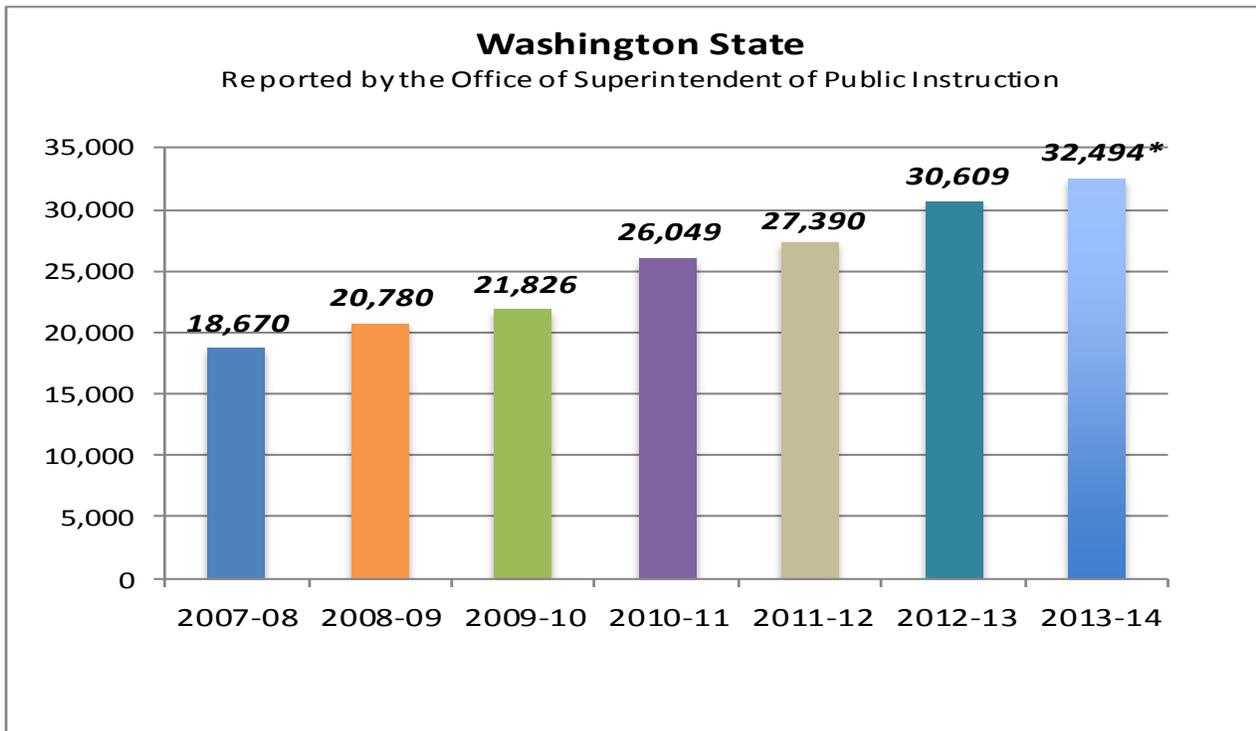
\*\*HUD-defined Homelessness

## Homeless School Children and the McKinney Act

**A**cross the state, publically funded schools are required to count homeless students, kindergarten through 12th grade, as part of the McKinney-Vento Act, which 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:

- Children sharing housing due to economic hardship or loss of housing;
- Children living in "motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations;"
- Children living in "emergency or transitional shelters;"
- Children "awaiting foster care placement;"
- Children whose primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (e.g., park);
- Children living in "cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations . . ."

Each year, the State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (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.



## Homeless School Children in Thurston County

The chart below shows the year-over-year changes of homeless school children enrolled in the eight school districts of Thurston County. These numbers are produced by the local school districts and reported to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. **(Please note: table below presents info from the immediately preceding school year)**

## Ten-Year Plan to Reduce Homelessness in Public Schools

In Thurston County, the 10-year plan set the goal to reduce homelessness in public schools by 50%, to 327 students by 2015. The reality however is that student homelessness has risen 142% since 2006. At the end of the 2014 (reported as 2015 on the chart below) school year, Thurston County had 1,658 homeless students.

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 reported but acknowledge an increase.

Comparatively, Washington State as a whole has seen student homelessness rise 74%, from 18,670 homeless students during the 2007-08 school year to 32,494 in the 2013-14 school year. While Thurston County may only hold 4% of the state’s student population, it is also home to 5% of the homeless students.

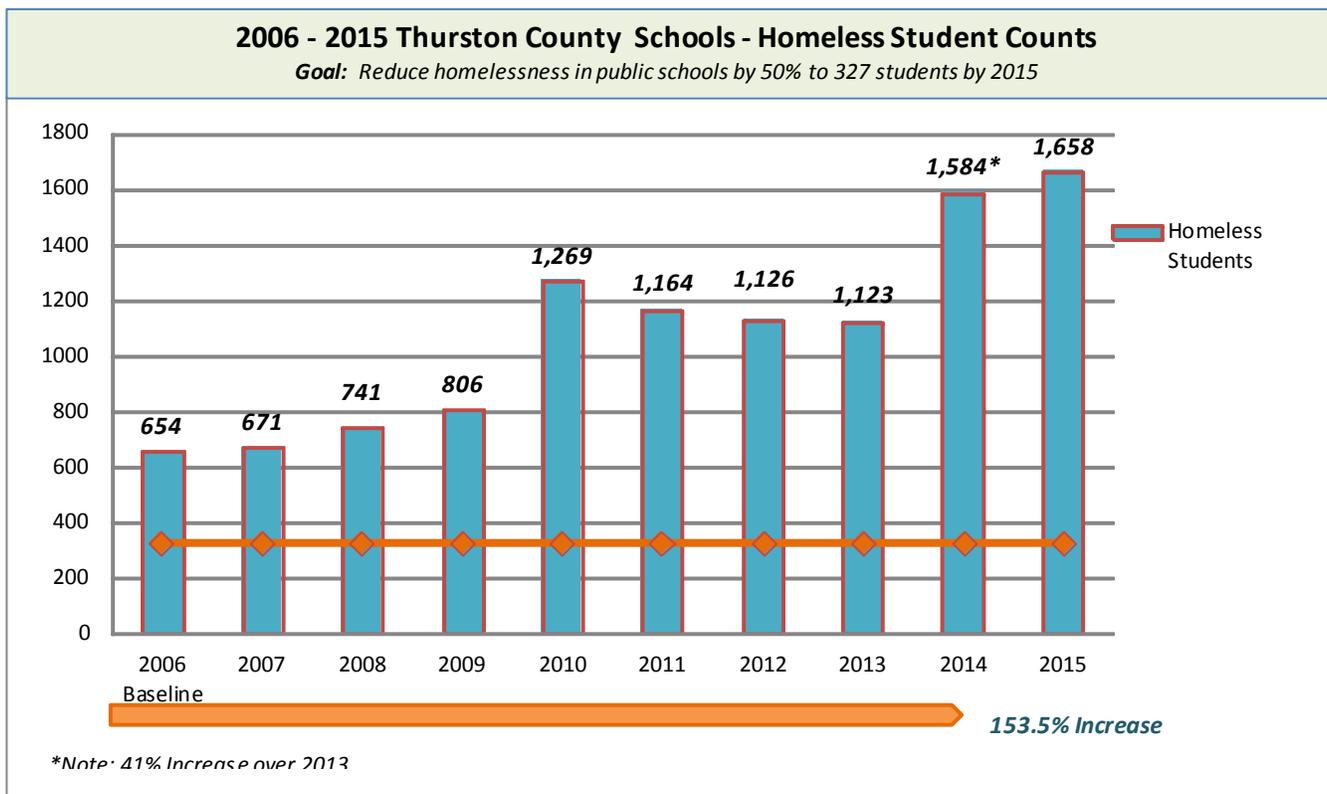
## Correlation of School District Numbers with County Homeless Census Numbers

While the two sets of homeless statistics come from different sources - the Homeless Census and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) - they do offer 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 .

The School District homeless student numbers are collected over the prior full school year, in this case, 2013-2014, which ended seven months before the January 2015 census. A further difference is that some of the county’s census numbers include homeless students who were counted by the school districts.

Last, the school district’s numbers include students who live with friends or family, an accommodation not included in the county numbers. This difference in methodologies means that these figures cannot be directly added together or be directly compared statistically.

The school numbers include only students enrolled during the school year 2013-2014, but do not include their families—particularly absent are other siblings who are not school age. On the other hand, the “Point in Time” homeless 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 – Other Data

Another useful source of information on poverty among public school age children is the “Free and Reduced Meal” data published by the State Office of Public Instruction (OSPI) on an annual basis.

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 schools are doing. Unfortunately, across the board, all seven districts show a deepening of poverty in public schools.

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.

The Free and Reduced lunch program serves as an index of poverty for families with children in each of the districts. Nationally, it is estimated that 1 in 29 people with income at or below the federal poverty line become homeless.

In 2012, the federal poverty level annual income for a household size of three was \$19,090.

To participate in the **reduced meals program**, a household size of three’s annual income cannot be more than 185% of the federal poverty annual income, or \$35,317 annually.

To qualify for **free meals**, a household of three cannot make more than 130% of the federal poverty annual income, or \$24,817 annually. Statewide, 482,634 or 46% of the total 1,047,390 students enrolled in Washington State public schools participated in the Free and Reduced lunch program during the 2012-13 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:

1. National School Lunch Program
2. School Breakfast Program
3. Special Milk Program



*The “Free and Reduced Lunch” Program offers an index of family poverty county-wide*



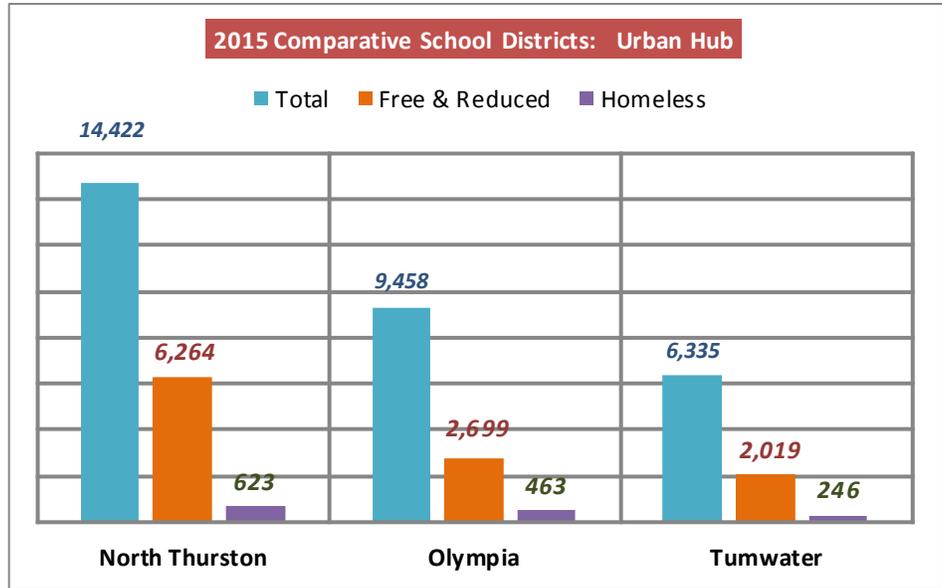
*1,658 students, Kindergarten through 12th Grade were identified in the school count*

This data is included in 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.

## Poverty Measurement: Free & Reduced Lunch Rates

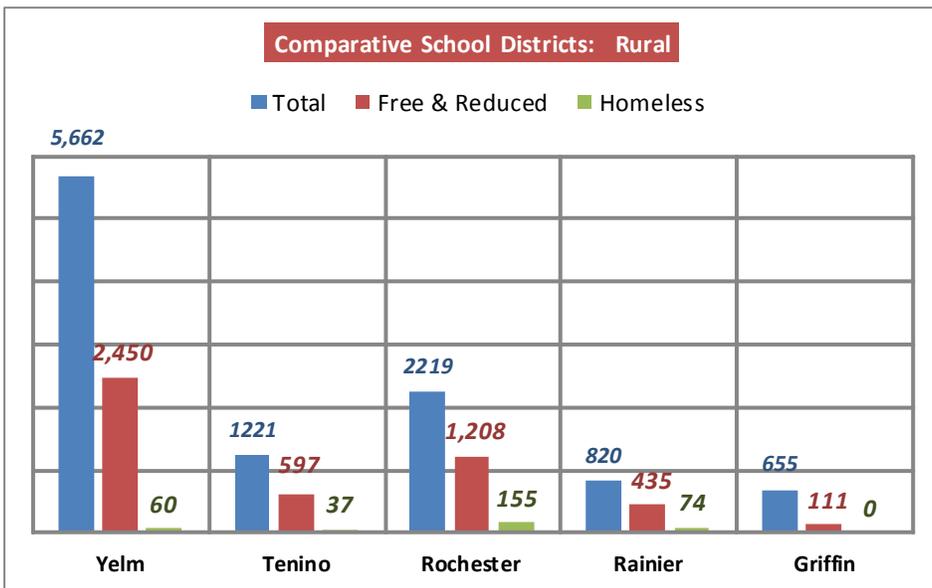
### Comparing School Districts in Thurston County

Thurston County school districts range in size from the tiny rural Griffin school district with 641 students to the sprawling North Thurston School District with 14,422 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 2,232 or 2% of the County's students, nearly 55% 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.



The urban school districts have the high concentration of students, with 30,215, or 74% of the population compared to 10,637 or 26% of students in the rural school districts.

However, 4,801 or 30% of the students on free and reduced lunch are enrolled in the rural school districts, documenting a significantly higher level of poverty among students. The number of homeless students is more proportional to the total student body, with 326 or 20% of the County's homeless students in the rural districts.



The Yelm District, with 5,662 students has an enrollment total similar to those within the urban hub, still has 2,543 or nearly 45% of its students participating in the Free and Reduced lunch program.

Compared to the Tumwater District, which has 6,335 students, where only 2,019 or 32% of the students are enrolled in the Free and Reduced lunch program.

Although comparable in size, this is a very telling gap between the poverty levels within the rural and urban districts.

## 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 1,658 to 2,354

In Washington State, it could be estimated that the total number of homeless children statewide is not 32,494, but actually 46,141.



By utilizing the algorithm of the National Center on Family Homelessness An additional 696 pre-school aged children in Thurston County are missed by the annual Office of State Public Instruction's Count of Homeless School Children., bringing the estimated total of homeless children to 2,354.

# CH6: HOMELESSNESS STATEWIDE

*Updated with 20145 data from State Department of Commerce*

## Examining Homelessness across Washington State (Based on 2013 Data)

Since 2006, homelessness statewide has decreased by 11.58% from 21,962 to 19,418. While this is an improvement, it falls far short of the Ten-Year Plan goal to reduce homelessness by 50% or 10,981 by 2015.

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 %. However, this year's low count of 19,428 is the lowest ever compared with the highest number to date occurring in 2009 with 22,827 people.

## Snapshot of Six Counties - Ten Years of Census Results

The following chart presents ten years of homeless census data, 2006 through 2015, from the six most urban counties in Western Washington. What is striking is that two of the counties with the most comprehensive efforts underway to coordinate their homeless services do indeed show significant decreases in their homeless counts since 2006, with Snohomish County decreasing by 64% from 2,302 in 2006 to 829 in 2015 and Clark County decreasing by 52.4% from 1,391 to 662.

Conversely, in the same ten-year timeframe, King County shows a 28 % increase from 7,910 to 10,122. Pierce County did not increase as it did in years past, instead decreasing by 8.3% from 1,399 in 2006 to 1,283 in 2015. These two counties also represent the most populous areas with arguably the most extensive service and shelter resources, which may attract some number of homeless people from regions with fewer resources.

Here in Thurston County, we have decreased 51.2% from our all time high Of 976 homeless people in 2010, yet we still show a 7.9% increase in homelessness since 2006 from 441 to 476.

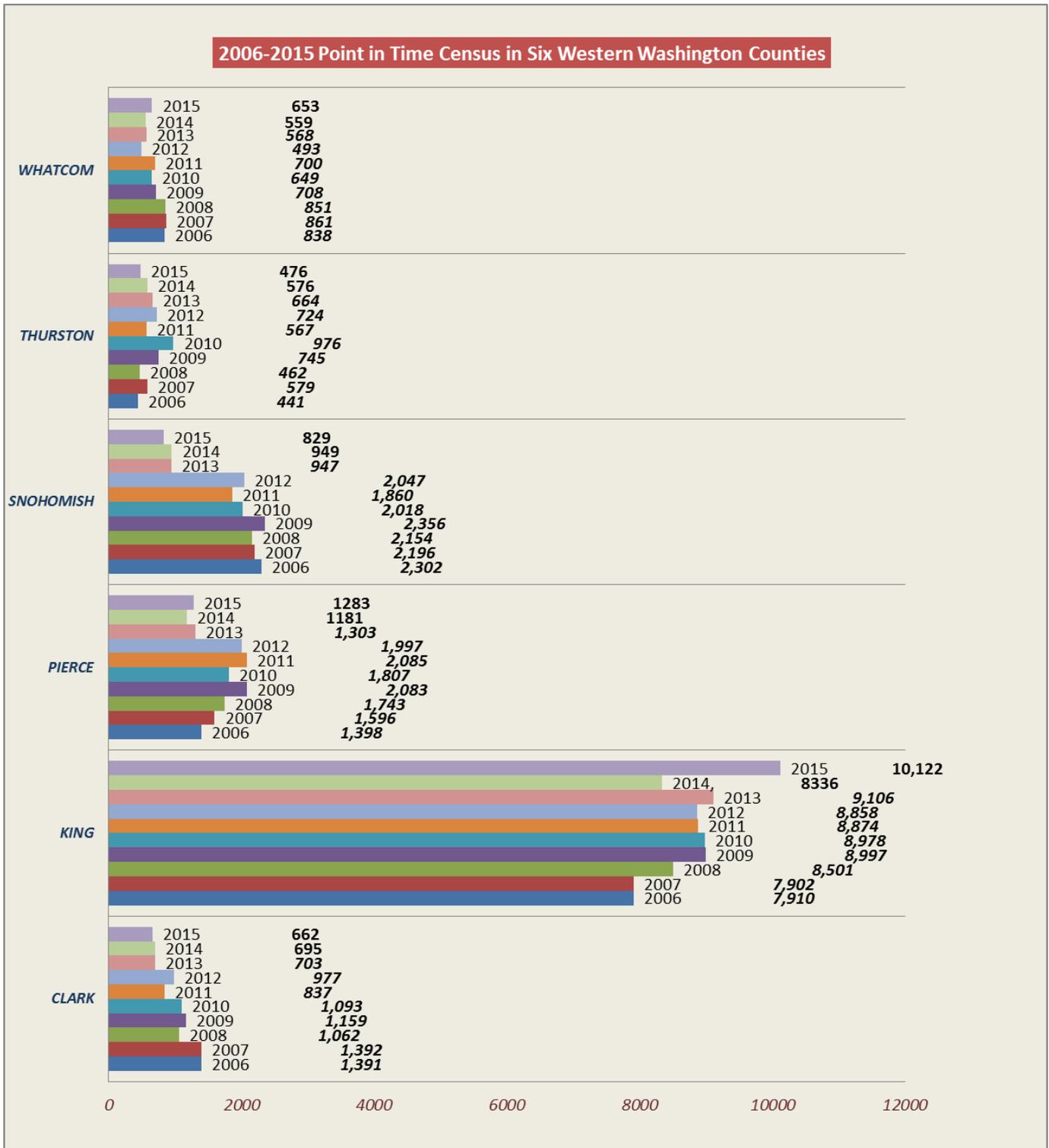
In mid-2011, Thurston County began a coordinated point of intake for single adults, a new practice that is designed to maximize the utilization of services, shelter and housing resources. In early 2012, the County hired a Homeless Coordinator to analyze and improve the entire homeless resource system. It is expected that both of these innovations will continue to reduce homelessness locally.

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 does present the opportunity for migration toward areas that may offer more comprehensive services, or simply presents a more welcoming environment.

*Much of Washington's Homeless Population is concentrated in the Western Washington Counties of Clark, King, Pierce, Snohomish, Thurston, and Whatcom Counties.*



## Snapshot of Six Counties: Ten Years of PIT Homeless Census Results



## CH7: EXAMINING THE RESOURCES

### Thurston County Shelter and Homeless Housing Capacity

**A**n essential key to reducing homelessness is to maximize the use of all shelter and housing resources, and to ensure the appropriate shelter and housing resources are matched to the needs of the individuals.

In addition, shelter and housing must be supplemented with supportive services to help stabilize people and support them in becoming more independent.

The chart entitled, “**Emergency Shelter & Transitional Housing Capacities**” on the following page provides an overview of the current capacities and occupancy rates of our existing network of shelter and housing in Thurston County.

**Pease note:** The chart on the next page presents shelter and housing resources which are grouped by type (i.e., emergency shelters or transitional housing); the demographics served (i.e., single men vs. families with children); and, the bed capacities and the household capacities.



*Homeless women represent 39% of the total number of homeless people*



*Faith communities now host 75% of all shelter beds*

This distinction is important because the number of available beds may be configured as dormitory style or as family rooms, which means that a family of four might occupy a six-bed family room and therefore fill that room to capacity even though two beds remain open.

**Thurston County 2015 - Emergency Shelter & Transitional Housing Capacities**

**\*Emergency Shelter Capacity (up to 90-days stay)**

<b>SINGLE MEN 95 BEDS</b>	<b>Beds</b>	<b>Households</b>
Salvation Army – Men	42	42
<b>Salvation Army – Men (Cold weather)</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Saint Michael’s/Sacred Heart (Cold Weather Shelter)</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>
Drexel House	16	16
<b>SINGLE WOMEN 50 BEDS</b>	<b>Beds</b>	<b>Households</b>
Salvation Army	16	16
<b>Salvation Army – Women (Cold weather)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
Emergency Shelter Network – Interfaith Works	37	18
<b>FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN 88 BEDS</b>	<b>Beds</b>	<b>Households</b>
SafePlace	28	10
Yelm Community Services	6	1
Family Support Center - Pear Blossom Place	31	7
<b>Family Support Center—Pear Blossom Lobby</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5</b>
Emergency Shelter Network – Out of the Woods	12	3
<b>YOUTH 20 BEDS</b>	<b>Beds</b>	<b>Households</b>
Community Youth Services-Haven House	10	10
Community Youth Services- Rosie’s Shelter	10	10
<b>Community Youth Services—Rosie’s Cold Weather</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Totals: EXCLUDING cold weather capacity</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>Totals: Including cold weather capacity (66 more beds)</b>	<b>273*</b>	<b>184</b>

**\*\*Transitional Capacity (up to two years stay)**

<b>SINGLE MEN &amp; WOMEN</b>	<b>Beds</b>	<b>Households</b>
Olympia Union Gospel Mission – Men in Recovery	7	7
Olympia Union Gospel Mission – Women in Recovery	3	3
LIHI Arbor Manor – Women’s transitional beds	5	5
Drexel House – <i>Converted to Permanent Supportive Housing</i>	0	0
<b>FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN</b>	<b>Beds</b>	<b>Households</b>
Housing Authority of Thurston County ( <i>Number subject to correction</i> )	40	14
Olympia Union Gospel Mission	13	4
<b>YOUTH</b>	<b>Beds</b>	<b>Households</b>
Community Youth Services ( <i>reduced by 6 from 2012</i> )	50	30
<b>Totals</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>63</b>

**Total Thurston County Capacity**

	<b>Beds</b>	<b>Households</b>
Emergency Shelter	208	133
<b>Cold Weather Emergency Shelter Beds</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>51</b>
Transitional	118	63
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>326 – Warm Weather</b>	<b>196</b>
	<b>392– Cold Weather</b>	<b>247</b>

## Shelter & Housing Capacity Changes

In 2015, Thurston County decreased its year-round shelter capacity to a total of 208 beds. The cold weather overflow capacity also lost a number of beds, resulting in a reduced total of 66 cold weather beds, bringing the cold weather capacity to a new total of 273 shelter beds.

According to the chart above, Thurston County did not have the capacity to accommodate all of our homeless residents. And the existing capacity was significantly under-utilized on the night of the PIT Census, with a 58% occupancy on January 29th or 158 occupants of the 273 existing shelter beds. However, there were 163 unsheltered people living out of doors.

While the available capacity could be better utilized, there is an insufficient number of shelter beds available for homeless people.

Shelter and Homeless Housing Capacity Compared to Number of Homeless Surveyed by Homeless Individuals				
Census Information	Date Census Completed	Number of Homeless People	Countywide Capacity	Percentage of Capacity to Meet Needs for Shelter
2006 PIT Census	January 26, 2006	441	393	89%
2007 PIT Census	January 25, 2007	579	351	61%
2008 PIT Census	January 24, 2008	462	445*	58%
2009 PIT Census	January 29, 2009	745	431	51%
2010 PIT Census	January 28, 2010	976	544	56%
2011 PIT Census	January 27, 2011	566	544	96%
2012 PIT Census	January 29, 2012	708*	463	65%*
2013 PIT Census	January 24, 2013	664*	442	67%*
2014 PIT Census	January 23, 2014	576*	444	77%*
* 2015 PIT Census	January 29, 2015	476	392	82%

Please Note: PIT Homeless Census data revised based on State finalized census results

## Percentage of Unsheltered People

The 2014 census results showed that 263, or 44%, of the homeless were unsheltered, seeking shelter out of doors, in vehicles, or in abandoned or substandard buildings.

Over the years the percentage of the total homeless population, this percentage has fluctuated between 24% in 2012 to a high point of 44% in 2014. The 48% unsheltered reported in 2011 seems to be the result of census validity issues that were addressed in the 2011 report. According to the chart on page 37, Thurston County did not have the capacity to accommodate all of our homeless residents - with 159 people in the available 253 shelter beds and another 263 unsheltered people living out of doors.

In terms of raw numbers, the number of unsheltered people has trended upwards since 2006, going from 122 in 2006 to a high point of 363 in 2010 and decreasing to 263 in 2014. In terms of percentages, the unsheltered remain roughly one quarter to nearly half of the total homeless population. We continue to have a significant percentage and number of

people, including families, who are living outside the accepted continuum of care that spans from emergency shelter to transitional and permanent housing.

## 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—a total of 156 people who will be released to homelessness when they leave incarceration.

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. So while the bed

Shelter & Homeless Services – Cost/Benefit Matrix (2014 Data)			
Shelter or Service Agency	Annual Program Budget	Total Available Capacity	Cost per day or Service Unit
Family Support Center	\$62,127 (2012 budget)	26 Bed Capacity /9,490 Bednights/year	\$6.55 per bed night
<b>Cold Weather Shelter</b> - St. Michaels	\$6,395	12 Bed Capacity 82 Bednights/year	\$6.50 per Bednight
<b>Salvation Army</b> (Professionally staffed, single-story facility)	\$323,011	58 Bed Capacity Single Adults 21,170 Bednights/Year	\$15.26 per Bednight
<b>Out of the Woods</b> (Professionally coordinated, volunteer staffed, housed at Unitarian Church)	\$72,000	12 Bed Capacity 4,380 Bednights/Year	\$16.44 per Bednight
<b>Drexel House - CCS</b> (Professionally staffed, multi-story facility)	\$242,291	16 Bed Capacity Single Men 5,840 Bednights/Year	\$41.49 per Bednight
<b>Young Adult Shelter - CYS</b> Rosie’s Shelter (Professionally staffed, operated inside existing facility, secured access)	\$190,000	10 Bed Capacity Transition-age youth, 18-22 3,650 Bednights/year	\$52.05 per Bednight
<b>SafePlace</b> (Staffed by professionals and volunteers, multi-story facility, medium security)	\$661,643	28 Bed Capacity Domestic Violence Victims 10,220 Bednights/Year	\$64.742 per Bednight
<b>Thurston County Jail**</b> (Professionally staffed, high security lock-up)	\$10,465,330 (operations) \$1,499,478 (pro-rated annual facility costs)*	352 Bed Capacity	\$92 per Bednight
<b>Haven House - CYS</b> (Professionally staffed, converted residence, secured populations, low security)	\$757,296	10 Bed Capacity Youth 7 & Under 3,650 Bednights/Year	\$207.48 per Bednight

*This chart presents a comparison of shelter and social service costs, the number of people served and the cost per service unit.*

## Shelter & Housing Cost Calculator

A primary use of PIT Homeless Census data is for determining how and where to invest limited public funding. For planning purposes, public officials examine **homeless needs** and calculate what **homeless resources** are necessary to accommodate those needs.

The following chart takes raw 2014 PIT Homeless Census data and extrapolates raw costs per year for providing shelter and/or housing, i.e. not all people reporting mental illness require hospitalization, not all unsheltered people consent to entering shelter, etc...Calculations below are based on general assumptions about the particular demographics and the costs for shelter and housing on the preceding page. Costs in the “Total Annual Costs” present a general idea of the costs of shelter and housing.

### SHELTER & HOUSING CALCULATOR

Demographic	#	Cost per night / year / individual*	Total Annual**	Notes
Chronically Homeless	134	\$7/ \$2,555 – Shelter \$42/\$15,330 – Shelter	\$342,370 \$2,054,220	<b>St. Michael’s</b> Faith based shelter – no services  Drexel House– shelter plus case management, options to move on to transitional housing
Domestic Violence Survivors	113	\$65/\$23,725 – DV Shelter	\$2,680,925	<b>Safeplace</b> helter plus case management, legal advocacy and security
Unaccompanied Youth	9	\$207 / \$75,555 – Haven House	\$679,995	<b>Haven House</b> Court or parent placed shelter, case management and security
Homeless Family members***	195	\$7 /\$2,555 – Faith based shelter	\$498,225	<b>Family Support Center</b> Current family shelter - soon to move to new facility and staff model
Unsheltered	263	\$13 / \$4,745 – Shared housing ( <b>SideWalk</b> Estimates)  \$34 / \$12,410 – Apartment	\$1,247,395  \$3,263,830	Shared housing (room rental with other tenants – presumes social compatibility)  Independent rental housing with utility costs – not shared
Mentally Ill	141	\$2,500 / \$912,500 – Hospitalization	\$128,662,500	<b>St. Peter’s</b> in-patient mental health care cost metric
Homeless In-mates	156	\$92 / \$33,580 – Jail	\$5,238,480	<b>Thurston County Jail</b> Costs of incarcerating homeless people

\*Costs are presented for “bednights” per night / per year per individual

\*\*Annual costs are based on multiplying bed night costs per person per year, **not based on actual agency budgets** and do not take into account indirect agency costs.

\*\*\*2013 Family Shelter costs based on a low-cost faith-based facility. Costs per bednight subject to change upon relocation to the new Family Support Center facility to be located at the City of Olympia’s former Smith Building

# CH8: BACKGROUND OF THE HOMELESS CENSUS

## The Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness

**T**he Thurston County Ten-Year Plan, first adopted in 2005 and revised in 2010, requires that we track progress toward the goal of reducing homelessness by half. Since 2006, the first year of the Ten-Year Plan, homelessness in Thurston County has instead increased by 56%.

The Ten-Year Plan was a product of the 2005 State Legislature’s “Homeless Housing and Assistance Act” as a way to guide statewide efforts to reduce homelessness in Washington State by fifty percent by July 1, 2015. The creation of the “Ten-Year Plan” approach marked a significant change in how Thurston County, much like other counties across the state, responds to homelessness.

Historically in Thurston County a small group of homeless housing and service providers had collaborated to manage homelessness with limited resources. The Ten-Year Plan now requires all counties in Washington State—including Thurston County—to work toward ending homelessness.

In addition to the Ten-Year Plan, the act provided funding generated by surcharge fees on recording documents in each county, with some funds retained by the state. These surcharge monies fund the Thurston County Affordable Housing and Homeless Housing Program.

Specifically, the act requires the county to:

- Develop a Ten-Year Homeless Plan to reduce homelessness by 50% by the year 2015.
- Use a portion of local document recording fees to reduce homelessness.
- Conduct an annual Point-in-Time Homeless Census.
- Implement the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
- Report annually to the state legislature.

## Ten-Year Plan Accomplishments: 2006 - 2014

In the first five years, Thurston County spent more than \$13 million in federal and local funds on affordable and homeless housing, including shelter and transitional housing projects that assisted 613 homeless families and individuals and for housing support services. The target goal in 2005 was to create 300 new units of permanent housing by 2015. In the first half of the Ten-Year Homeless Plan, 180 new units were completed.

In addition, 223 at-risk households were provided transitional housing under the Tenant-based Rental Assistance Program and over \$900,000 was provided to local housing agencies to support operations and maintenance costs.

## Ten-Year Plan Revised Housing Goals: 2011 – 2015

Despite significant gains made during the first five years, Thurston County’s homeless population has grown from 441 persons in 2006 to 686 in 2014—an increase of 56%. This growth in population necessitates the need for a renewed focus on the county’s homeless problem, requiring new and higher benchmark goals, housing strategies, and supportive services.

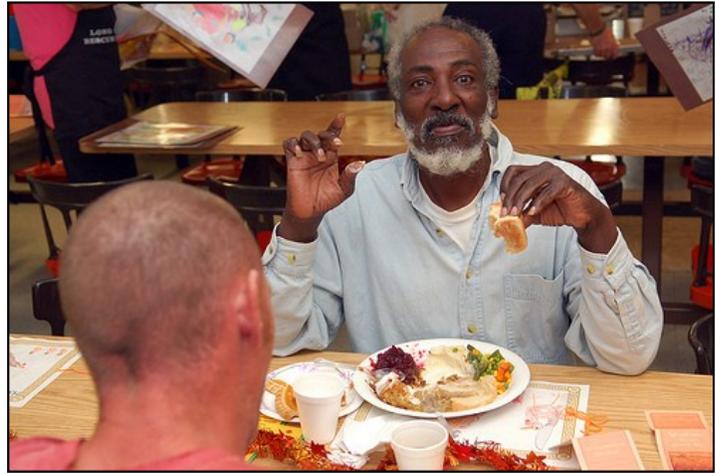


*The 10-Year Plan goal is to reduce homelessness by half to 220 people. Instead, it has increased by 36% to 599.*

The first half of the Ten-Year Plan (2006 - 2010) called for 225 new permanent housing units and 16 new shelter beds being built. The new target goal for housing is to create 690 units of low-income and affordable housing by creating 150 homeless units, 200 affordable units, and providing 340 new housing rental assistance vouchers. The plan will be updated later in 2014 to ensure that it is consistent with the federal strategies identified in the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness.

Following is a summary of the 2010 revision of the Ten-Year Plan goals:

1. Expand the Supply of Homeless Housing Units: 150 new units (39 new units by 2014).
2. Expand the Supply of Affordable Housing Units: 200 Affordable Housing Units (137 new units by 2014).
3. Expand the Supply of Rental Assistance: Rental assistance for 340 homeless and at-risk households.
4. Preserve Existing Subsidized and Low-income Housing.
5. Consolidate Homeless Resources and Improve Service Delivery.
6. Maximize Housing Funding Opportunities.
7. Enhance Supportive Housing Services and Prevention.
8. Establish a Coordinated System for Discharging Clients Leaving Jail and Treatment Facilities.
9. Conduct Adequate Data Collection and Planning to Efficiently Manage Limited Resources for Homelessness.
10. Change Policy, Law and Legislation Where Necessary.



*Enhanced supportive housing services and prevention are part of the 10-Year Plan*

*Information above excerpted from the original 2005 Thurston County Ten-Year Plan and the "Thurston County Ten-Year Homeless Housing Plan Revision" dated December 2010, prepared in collaboration of the Thurston County HOME Consortium and the HOME Citizens Advisory Committee.*

## 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.



*Outreach programs link homeless people to services*

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 Homeless Coordinator, further developed this idea into a viable work plan. Drawing on Housing Authority staff resources and Housing Task Force 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 by Tedd Kelleher of the State Department of Community Trade & Economic Development (CTED, now known as the Department of Commerce) 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 value of the **product** of the statewide “Point-in-Time Count of Homeless Persons,” which produces highly valuable data, the **process** of developing the census underscored the value of collaboration between faith-based communities, non-profits and the government. The problem of homelessness spills over/across all parts of the community; linking these diverse elements to work together 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.



*A “Point-in-Time” count of homeless persons helps us to know who’s homeless and why*

## 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 24, 2014.

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 State’s “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 Bucoda, Rainier, 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.



*While homelessness is a regional problem, 70% of the County's homeless come to Olympia to find services and shelter*

## 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.



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 Bucoda or Rochester 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.

## 2015 Census Methodology

**A** comprehensive census of homeless people is challenging—it's hard to find people without a permanent home address. Many who are unsheltered strive to avoid detection by census workers and public officials alike. A continuing number of respondents refuse to participate in the census, either fearing criminal warrants or claiming that local government uses the information to clear homeless camps or step up harassment of street-dependent people. While these clearances and police enforcement actions are typically initiated in response to complaints, the perceived linkage between the Homeless Census and clearance activities caused many unsheltered homeless people to conceal their camps, move their cars, and otherwise take steps to hide, making census work more challenging.

### List of Methodologies

Following is a listing of methodologies used to conduct the census. Generally, homeless people in shelter or transitional housing were captured by agency staff who directly reported data on their homeless clients using the standards of eligibility for their services. Unsheltered populations were surveyed using paper census forms completed by volunteer census workers who fanned out through out the County. The standards of eligibility for the surveys used by the census workers was to allow people to self-identify as homeless unless they obviously did not fit the criteria.

Following is an overview of the processes used to survey the homeless:

- **Housed & Sheltered Homeless —Agency Direct Reporters:** The state directed each agency providing shelter or transitional housing to directly enter their data as part of their HMIS reporting. Approximately 56% of the homeless were in shelter or transitional housing. Approximately 36% of this data was successfully entered directly entered into the HMIS database by agency staff. The remaining 20% of the sheltered/housed homeless data was entered into HMIS with the assistance of state Commerce or Homeless Census staff. The remaining 44% was gathered by paper surveys and directly entered by Homeless Census staff. A growing number of service providers are becoming trained and proficient as necessary to be direct reporters. Ultimately, the County's goal is to encourage all providers to utilize HMIS to make it a comprehensive database on all service, shelter, and housing capacities and occupancies.
- **Homeless Connect Events:** This year the Census featured five "Homeless Connect Events" (HCE). **Urban Hub HCE:** one urban HCE was called "YOUTH COUNT!" , planned as an outdoor festival that blended elements of a block party, gay pride festival and the homeless census. These elements combined created a very youth-friendly environment. The second urban hub event was held at the First Christian Church in downtown Olympia and served over 300 homeless and street dependent people through out the day. As the largest of the three events, the Olympia event also offered valet storage of bicycles and back-packs, pet care, medical services and an extensive array of coats and warm clothes. **Rural Hub Homeless Connect Events:** three events were held in three separate rural service hub areas, including the Yelm Community Center; the Rochester Organization of Families (ROOF) and at the Tenino Quarry House .All three events offered some combination of commodities, hot meals, social services and a drop-in center environment. Developed from the earlier homeless outreach events hosted in previous years, these events drew hundreds of people. As a replacement for the camp census (see below) these events create a draw for unsheltered populations.



*Three Homeless Connect Events provided a wide range of services—food, haircuts, medical, coats— for nearly 500 homeless and street dependent*

- **Street Outreach:** Teams of volunteers and experienced outreach workers fanned out through the urban hub to areas frequented by homeless people to find and survey homeless people. A total of four teams were sent out: dawn, lunch, dinner and late night.
- **Youth Census:** In addition to the **YOUTH COUNT!** event, Community Youth Services (CYS) conducted several activities to reach unaccompanied homeless youth, 17 years and younger as well as transition age youth, ages 18 - 24. These efforts included a small scale Homeless Connect Event at the Rosie's youth drop-in center; a survey of youth in the two CYS shelters (Haven House and Rosie's Place), special street outreach teams along with other activities.
- **Roving Census Teams:** Teams of "rovers", or car-based census workers were sent out twice (mid-morning and mid-afternoon) to shopping areas where homeless and street dependent people hold signs seeking donations. These teams were deployed through-out the urban hub, including Olympia's Westside, Tumwater's shopping areas and Lacey's three shopping hubs.
- **Site-based Census:** Census workers were stationed at numerous locations or regularly scheduled events likely to host homeless people, including the Salvation Army meal service (breakfast, lunch and dinner); the Union Gospel Mission's meal service (breakfast and lunch); the Olympia Downtown Library; all eight regional food banks; and, the Olympia Community Service Office (state's social services center).
- **Field Census of Homeless Camps Suspended Indefinitely:** The Homeless Census has formally abandoned the Camp Census or field survey of known homeless camps. Reasons include the personal security of homeless camp residents and the safety of census workers. Prior to 2012, census volunteers were sent out in teams to survey the areas of known homeless camps and other wooded areas in and around the urban core. This methodology has been controversial among many homeless people and their advocates as being invasive and potentially leading to camp clearances. Safety concerns stem from 2012 when there were five homicides involving transient assailants, with two of the victims being attacked in homeless camps.



*Homeless census workers teamed up with seasoned street outreach workers to conduct a "Street Census" in the urban hub, surveying street dependent and homeless people*

# 2015 Thurston County Homeless Census Report

## APPENDIXES

- A. State Mandate
- B. Index of Thurston County HUD-Defined Homeless Data
- C. Thurston County 2015—Emergency Shelter & Transitional Housing Capacities
- D. Ten-Year Plan to Reduce Homelessness
- E. Point in Time Census Forms
- F. Glossary

## APPENDIX A

### *State Mandate: A Point in Time Count of Homeless People*

The State Department of Commerce provides the guidelines for the “Point in Time Count of Homeless Persons,” also known as the Homeless Census. In short, the directive is to count individuals found living unsheltered (out of doors, in vehicles, or abandoned buildings) or in emergency shelters, transitional housing, and specifically defined permanent housing with supportive services. “*The department shall annually conduct a Washington homeless census or count consistent with the requirements of RCW 43.63A.655. The census shall make every effort to count all homeless individuals living outdoors, in shelters, and in transitional housing...*”

The Department of Commerce website posts the results of past homeless census numbers across the state for individuals, not households, as evidenced in the below-listed link.

<http://www.commerce.wa.gov/site/1064/default.aspx>

## APPENDIX B:

### Index of Thurston County HUD Defined Homeless Point-in-Time Data for January 29, 2015

Total Count Numbers by Individual					
Individuals	476		Children 17 & under	100	21%
Males	281	59%	Adults 18-24	80	17%
Females	183	38%			
Transgendered	1	1%	Adults 26-55	240	50%
Unaccompanied Minors	9	2%	Adults 56-64	48	10%
Veterans	39	8%	Adults 65+	8	2%
Disabilities as Indicated by Individual* (599 Responses)					
Physical (permanent)	118	26%	Developmental Disability	35	8%
Mental Health***	132	24%	HIV/AIDS	2	<1%
Chronic Health Problem	78	17%	Alcohol or drug abuse	56	11%
None apply	60	13%	No Reply/Refused	12	2%
Current Living Status by Individual (599 Respondents)					
Emergency Shelter/ Motel Voucher Program	158	33%	Permanent Supportive Housing	0	0%
Transitional Housing	155	33%	Vehicle	37	8%
Jail or Medical Facility *	n/a		Abandoned Building	16	3%
Friends or Family *	n/a		Out of Doors	110	23%
Situations that caused Homelessness for Households* (599 Responses)					
Domestic Violence****	46	10%	Alcohol or Drug Use	53	11%
Job Lost	106	22%	Family Break-up	102	21%
Evicted-Non-payment	53	11%	Convicted-Misdemeanor/Felony	23	5%
Lack of Job Skills	10	2%	Discharged Institution/Jail	14	3%
Lack of Child Care	6	1%	Loss of Temp Living Situation	54	11%
Medical Costs	10	2%	Out of Home Youth	5	1%
Mental Illness ***	67	14%	Aged out of Foster Care	5	1%
Illness/Health Problems	93	20%	Language Barrier	2	<1%
Economic Reasons	78	16%	Don't Know	6	1%
Transient on the Road	18	4%	Refused	73	16%
All Sources of Household Income** (599 Responses)					
None	84	21%	Employed at low wage job	11	3%
Social Security	79	20%	Relatives, Partners, Friends	4	1%
Unemployment Insurance	1	1%	L & I Payments	0	0%
Part-time Work	24	6%	VA Benefits	8	2%
Public Assistance	101	26%	Don't know	2	1%
			Refused	73	108
Length of Time Households Have Been Homeless (599 Responses)					
More than 1 year*	141	30%	Less than 1 year	203	43%
Episodes of Homelessness in Past 3 Years (599 Responses)					
More than 4 episodes of * homelessness in 3 years	89	19%	Less than 4 episodes of homelessness in 3 years	239	50%

## APPENDIX C:

### Thurston County 2015—Emergency Shelter & Transitional Housing Capacities

Thurston County 2015 - Emergency Shelter & Transitional Housing Capacities		
<b>*Emergency Shelter Capacity (up to 90-days stay)</b>		
<b>SINGLE MEN 95 BEDS</b>	<b>Beds</b>	<b>Households</b>
Salvation Army – Men	42	42
<b>Salvation Army – Men (Cold weather)</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Saint Michael's/Sacred Heart (Cold Weather Shelter)</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>
Drexel House	16	16
<b>SINGLE WOMEN 50 BEDS</b>	<b>Beds</b>	<b>Households</b>
Salvation Army	16	16
<b>Salvation Army – Women (Cold weather)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
Emergency Shelter Network – Interfaith Works	37	18
<b>FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN 88 BEDS</b>	<b>Beds</b>	<b>Households</b>
SafePlace	28	10
Yelm Community Services	6	1
Family Support Center - Pear Blossom Place	31	7
<b>Family Support Center—Pear Blossom Lobby</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5</b>
Emergency Shelter Network – Out of the Woods	12	3
<b>YOUTH 20 BEDS</b>	<b>Beds</b>	<b>Households</b>
Community Youth Services-Haven House	10	10
Community Youth Services- Rosie's Shelter	10	10
<b>Community Youth Services—Rosie's Cold Weather</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Totals: EXCLUDING cold weather capacity</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>Totals: Including cold weather capacity (66 more beds)</b>	<b>273*</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>**Transitional Capacity (up to two years stay)</b>		
<b>SINGLE MEN &amp; WOMEN</b>	<b>Beds</b>	<b>Households</b>
Olympia Union Gospel Mission – Men in Recovery	7	7
Olympia Union Gospel Mission – Women in Recovery	3	3
LIHI Arbor Manor – Women's transitional beds	5	5
Drexel House – <i>Converted to Permanent Supportive Housing</i>	0	0
<b>FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN</b>	<b>Beds</b>	<b>Households</b>
Housing Authority of Thurston County ( <i>Number subject to correction</i> )	40	14
Olympia Union Gospel Mission	13	4
<b>YOUTH</b>	<b>Beds</b>	<b>Households</b>
Community Youth Services ( <i>reduced by 6 from 2012</i> )	50	30
<b>Totals</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Total Thurston County Capacity</b>		
	<b>Beds</b>	<b>Households</b>
Emergency Shelter	208	133
<b>Cold Weather Emergency Shelter Beds</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>51</b>
Transitional	118	63
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>326 – Warm Weather</b>	<b>196</b>
	<b>392– Cold Weather</b>	<b>247</b>

## APPENDIX D:

### Thurston County Ten-Year Plan to Reduce Homelessness

#### Overview

Homelessness is a concern that affects virtually every community in the United States. The homeless sleep in streets, in cars, underneath bridges, or at the homes of family and friends. They include adults and children, individuals and couples, mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers. They are homeless for a variety of reasons, such as mental illness, a physical disability, substance abuse, unemployment and low wages.

Homelessness takes a heavy toll on these individuals and their local communities. Homeless people are less able to find social services and jobs when their lives are eclipsed by the need to find shelter. They are also more likely to need costly emergency services because of the ravages of weather and crime, the inability to pay for preventative care and – in many cases – their own physical and mental disabilities. Communities with high rates of homelessness are also concerned about the character of their communities and the affect on nearby businesses.

This Ten-Year Plan is designed to reduce homelessness in Thurston County even further -- by 50 percent by July 2015. The Plan calls for creating 300 new permanent housing units, and guiding more people into services before they become homeless.

#### Ten-Year Plan Revision Excerpts:

In order to reduce the homeless population, we need to examine new models or approaches that allow the community to strategically allocate federal, county, and local housing resources to get people off the streets, out of the shelters, and into appropriate permanent housing linked with comprehensive supportive services. This Plan recommends variety of new initiatives and strategies that targets resources more efficiently and effectively. The major recommendations of the plan fall into four broad areas of need:

##### *The Need to Increase and Preserve the Supply of Affordable Housing*

The Thurston County Consolidated Plan identifies small and large families as having the greatest housing problems in the county because they experience the greatest housing cost burden (paying a disproportionate share of their income for housing). Additionally, there is a significant affordability mismatch, with higher income persons occupying lower income housing units, which contributes to the shortage of affordable and available housing for low and very-low income persons.

##### *The Need for a Housing First Approach and Flexible Rental Assistance Programs*

While the chronically homeless make up only 10% of the county's homeless population, they consume a disproportionate share of the county's homeless funds and housing resources because they generally require a higher level of comprehensive support services.

Historically, the county has relied on the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program (TBRA), paired with extensive case management services and the emergency shelter system, to meet this need. TBRA has been successful in reducing the number of homeless who would otherwise have been on the streets and in providing much needed transitional housing. However, an excessively long Section 8 waiting list (up to five years) and the shrinking availability of federal funded housing vouchers makes it extremely difficult to move people off transitional housing into permanent housing.

The Housing First approach (also referred to as Rapid Re-housing) provides the missing link between the emergency shelter and transitional housing systems by quickly moving people into permanent housing first to provide housing stability and then providing them with the non-mandatory supportive housing services they need. This model is particularly effective and more appropriate for persons with long-term special needs and the chronically homeless. This plan also recommends that the county design a rental assistance program to compliment the TBRA Program that is flexible enough to meet the both short-term and the long-term needs of residents.

### *The Need for Better Coordination of Housing Resources and Services*

A major component of this plan is to strategically target homeless resources more effectively and improve the community's capacity to coordinate and deliver homeless services more efficiently. The Home Citizens Advisory Committee will formulate a plan to coordinate resources and placement.

### *The Need to Strategically Target Funds to Meet the County's Housing Goals*

Currently, the county distributes its federal and local housing funds through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process that targets funding primarily based on the needs of service providers, and to a lesser degree, the housing needs of the county. This plan recommends a change in funding strategy by moving towards a needs-driven process that ensures that the county's housing funds are strategically targeted to meet the prioritized housing needs of the community.

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS:***

The target goal is to create 350 new housing units and provide 340 new rental vouchers by 2015. The following is a summary of the ten objectives and short-term activities identified in the plan. Short term activities are defined as projects that are anticipated to be completed by 2013.

<b>Rapid Re-housing</b>	Rapid Re-housing is a new housing program model is based on the "housing first" approach. 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 new HUD initiative called "Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)".
<b>Section 8 Vouchers</b>	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.
<b>Shelters</b>	Also called emergency shelters, provides temporary overnight living accommodations for home less 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 commu nities, with each shelter being administered under a unique set of rules. Generally, shelter guests must leave the facility during the day.
<b>SRO</b>	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 hous ing 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.
<b>Subsidized Housing</b>	A generic term to describe 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 operat ing costs of housing, and others.
<b>Supportive Housing</b>	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.

**UNSHELTERED/LIVING WITH FAMILY OR FRIENDS**

ONE FORM PER HOUSEHOLD

Location where household was surveyed \_\_\_\_\_

Location: Where did you stay last night? (choose one - applies to entire household)	
<input type="radio"/> <b>Out of Doors (street, tent, etc)</b>	<input type="radio"/> Temp. Living w/ Family or Friends*
<input type="radio"/> <b>Vehicle</b>	<input type="radio"/> Currently in Hosp/Detox/Other facility*
<input type="radio"/> <b>Abandoned Building</b>	<input type="radio"/> Currently in Jail*
<input type="radio"/> <b>Structure Lacking Any of the Following Amenities</b> <small>Drinking water, restroom, heat, ability to cook hot food, ability to bathe</small>	*Not considered homeless for PIT by HUD; Optional

Current City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been continuously homeless for a year or more?  Yes  No

How many episodes of homelessness have you had in the past 3 years?  Less than 4  At least 4

Household Information														
(Please enter each HH member below. Use additional form if household has more than four members.)														
How many people are in your household? Adults: _____ Children: _____										Disabilities				
Last Known Permanent City _____ ZIP _____										Check all that apply to each client				
Relation to Head of Household (if applicable) <small>Spouse/ Partner/ Child/Etc.</small>	First Name	Last Name	Birth Date (or if DOB refused; Year of Birth)	Gender (M, F, Transgender M to F, or F to M)	Race* (enter all that apply)	Ethnicity (Hispanic (H) or Non-Hispanic (N))	Domestic Violence Survivor (check if yes)	Veteran (ever served in the military)	Chronic Substance Abuse	Physical Disability (Permanent)	Developmental Disability	Mental Health (Substantial & Long-Term)	Chronic Health Condition (Permanently Disabling)	HIV/AIDS (enter as consent refused in HMIS)
Self														

\*White (W), Black or African-American (B), Asian (A), American Indian or Alaska Native (I), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (H), Other (O)

Circumstances that Caused Your Homelessness (check all that apply)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol/Substance Abuse	<input type="checkbox"/> Primarily Economic Reasons	<input type="checkbox"/> Displacement/lost temp. living sit.	<input type="checkbox"/> Language Barrier
<input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence	<input type="checkbox"/> Job Loss	<input type="checkbox"/> Aged out of Foster Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Out of Home Youth
<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Illness	<input type="checkbox"/> Eviction	<input type="checkbox"/> Discharged from an Institution	<input type="checkbox"/> Transient on the Road
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Crisis/Break-up	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of Childcare	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of Job Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/> Illness/Health Problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical Costs	<input type="checkbox"/> Conviction (misdemeanor/felony)	<input type="checkbox"/> Refused

Source(s) of Household Income and Benefits (check all that apply)			
<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Assistance	<input type="checkbox"/> Farm/Other Migrant Agricultural Work	
<input type="checkbox"/> Veterans Administration Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> L&I/Workers' Compensation	<input type="checkbox"/> Relatives, Partners or Friends	
<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment Insurance	<input type="checkbox"/> Part-time Work	<input type="checkbox"/> Child Support	
<input type="checkbox"/> Social Security	<input type="checkbox"/> Employed Full-time at Low-wage Job	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know	<input type="checkbox"/> Refused

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): \_\_\_\_\_

**HOUSING PROGRAMS (EMERGENCY/TRANSITIONAL)**

Households threatened by DV and households with an individual with HIV/AIDS: Do not sign the form at the bottom

ONE FORM PER HOUSEHOLD

\*unsheltered households should instead use *Unsheltered/Living with Family or Friends* form

Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Shelter                       Transitional Housing Program (only required if client is not already in HMIS)

Have you been continuously homeless for a year or more?     Yes     No

How many episodes of homelessness have you had in the past 3 years?     Less than 4     At least 4

Household Information														
(Please enter each HH member below. Use additional form if household has more than four members.)														
How many people are in your household? Adults: _____ Children: _____										Disabilities				
Last Known Permanent City _____ ZIP _____										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 (M, F, Transgender M to F, or F to M)	Race* (enter all that apply)	Ethnicity (Hispanic (H) or Non-Hispanic (N))	Domestic Violence Survivor (check if yes)	Veteran (ever served in the military)	Chronic Substance Abuse	Physical Disability (Permanent)	Developmental Disability	Mental Health (Substantial & Long-Term)	Chronic Health Condition (Permanently Disabling)	HIV/AIDS (enter as consent refused in HMIS)
Self														

\*White (W), Black or African-American (B), Asian (A), American Indian or Alaska Native (I), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (H), Other (O)

**Circumstances that Caused Your Homelessness** (check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol/Substance Abuse	<input type="checkbox"/> Primarily Economic Reasons	<input type="checkbox"/> Displacement/lost temp. living sit.	<input type="checkbox"/> Language Barrier
<input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence	<input type="checkbox"/> Job Loss	<input type="checkbox"/> Aged out of Foster Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Out of Home Youth
<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Illness	<input type="checkbox"/> Eviction	<input type="checkbox"/> Discharged from an Institution	<input type="checkbox"/> Transient on the Road
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Crisis/Break-up	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of Childcare	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of Job Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/> Illness/Health Problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical Costs	<input type="checkbox"/> Conviction (misdemeanor/felony)	<input type="checkbox"/> Refused

**Source(s) of Household Income and Benefits** (check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Assistance	<input type="checkbox"/> Farm/Other Migrant Agricultural Work
<input type="checkbox"/> Veterans Administration Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> L&I/Workers' Compensation	<input type="checkbox"/> Relatives, Partners or Friends
<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment Insurance	<input type="checkbox"/> Part-time Work	<input type="checkbox"/> Child Support
<input type="checkbox"/> Social Security	<input type="checkbox"/> Employed Full-time at Low-wage Job	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/> Refused

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 unaccompanied youth must sign): \_\_\_\_\_

Adult #2 (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E - GLOSSARY OF HOUSING & HOMELESS PROGRAM TERMS

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

<b>Affordable Housing</b>	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.
<b>Chronically Homeless</b>	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.
<b>CHG</b>	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.
<b>ESG</b>	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.
<b>HEN</b>	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).
<b>HUD</b>	Abbreviation for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
<b>HOME Consortium</b>	The HOME Consortium is the Thurston County 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. This eight member body is composed of one appointed representative from each jurisdiction in Thurston County, including Bucoda, Lacey, Olympia, Rainier, Tenino, Tumwater, Yelm and Thurston County.
<b>HOME Citizens Advisory Committee</b>	The HOME Citizens Advisory Committee is a committee established by the HOME Consortium composed of appointed members who represent service providers, non-profit housing developers, private sector housing industry, faith-based communities, homeless people and other stakeholders in local homeless and affordable housing policy and funding issues.

<b>Homeless</b>	<p>The <b>federal definition</b> 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:</p> <p>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).</p> <p>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</p>
<b>Homeless Coordinator</b>	<p>Newly created Thurston County one-year position funded to provide strategic coordination to the countywide network of service, shelter, and housing providers. Key goals for the Homeless Coordinator include; 1) Assessment of the Current System, 2) Ten-Year Plan Update, 3) Enhanced Data Management, and, 4) Implementation of a Revised Ten-Year Plan</p>
<b>Housing Authority</b>	<p>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.</p>
<b>Housing First</b>	<p>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.</p>
<b>Housing Task Force</b>	<p>The Thurston County Housing Task Force is 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 an 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.</p>
<b>Income Limits</b>	<p>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.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Low-income: 80% or less of AMI = \$56,300 for household of 4</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Very-low-income: 50% or less of AMI = \$35,200 for household of 4</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Extremely-low-income: 30% or less of AMI = \$21,100 for household of 4</p>
<b>Low Income Housing Tax Credit</b>	<p>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.</p>

<b>Market Rate Rent</b>	The prevailing monthly cost for rental housing, also called “street rents”. It is set by the landlord without restrictions.
<b>Median Income</b>	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 2009-2010, at <a href="http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il/il2009/st.odt">http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il/il2009/st.odt</a>
<b>Mixed-Income Housing</b>	A multi-family housing property that contains both market-rate units and subsidized units for low income residents.
<b>Nonprofit Housing</b>	Nonprofit 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.
<b>Nonprofit Housing Developer</b>	A nonprofit organization with a mission that involves the creation, preservation, renovation, operation or maintenance of affordable housing.
<b>Overflow Shelters</b>	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.
<b>Permanent Housing</b>	Rental apartments or ownership homes that provide individuals and families with a fixed street address and residence.
<b>Privately Developed or For-Profit Housing</b>	This housing rents or sells at market-rate and is developed and owned by for-profit individuals, partnerships, or corporations. Most housing in Thurston County is privately developed.
<b>Project-Based Section 8 Housing</b>	<p>A federal HUD program 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.</p> <p>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.</p>
<b>Public Housing</b>	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.

**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.

**Tent City**

“Tent City” is a newly minted 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 were derisively termed, “Hooverilles” 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 the need for shelter and community provided by Tent Cities..



## **For More information:**

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