



HEADING HOME

Kitsap Homeless Crisis Response and Housing Plan

2018 Update

Released for Public Comment 4/26/18



Kitsap County
Department of Human Services



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	5
Crisis and Response	9
A Housing Affordability Crisis	9
Progress and Innovation	11
Current Resources	15
Kitsap Homelessness Today	17
Action Plan	
Needs, Gaps, Core Strategies, and Action Areas	25
Action Plan Detail: Goals, Core Strategies, and Action Steps	31
Defining and Documenting Success	38
Conclusion	40
Appendix	41

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the many people and organizations that provided input and supported this effort to update the Plan, including citizens, mayors, city council members, social service providers, and people experiencing homelessness.

Kitsap County Board of Commissioners	Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition Member Agencies	
Robert Gelder , Chair Charlotte Garrido Ed Wolfe	Agape Unlimited Beacon Communities Brain Injury Alliance of Washington Bremerton Foodline Bremerton Housing Authority Bremerton School District Catholic Community Services Catholic Housing Services - Max Hale Center City of Bremerton CDBG Program Coffee Oasis Crime Victim Assistance Center DSHS – Bremerton CSO Goodwill Industries Habitat for Humanity of Kitsap County Helpline House – Bainbridge Island House of Hope Ministries Housing Kitsap Housing Resources Bainbridge Kingston Cares Kitsap Community Resources Kitsap County CDBG Grant Program Kitsap County Aging and Long Term Care Kitsap County Housing & Homelessness Div. Kitsap County Sheriff’s Office Kitsap County Veteran’s Assistance Program Kitsap Interfaith Network	Kitsap Legal Services Kitsap Mental Health Services Kitsap Public Health District Kitsap Recovery Center Kitsap Rescue Mission Kitsap Transit Meals on Wheels Kitsap North Kitsap Fishline Olalla Recovery Center Olive Crest Parent-Child Assistance Program Peninsula Community Health R W Martin Youth Services Saint Vincent de Paul The Salvation Army Sound Grants South Kitsap Helpline StandUp for Kids United Way of Kitsap County WA Department of Veteran’s Affairs WA Employment Security Department Weaver Foundation ~ Georgia’s House West Sound Free Clinic West Sound Treatment Center West Sound Youth for Christ YWCA of Kitsap County
Homeless Housing Plan Update Committee Kirsten Jewell , <i>Housing and Homelessness Program Coordinator, Kitsap County Human Services (Chair)</i> Monica Bernhard , <i>Community Services and Development Manager, Kitsap Mental Health Services</i> Bridget Callahan , <i>Housing Solutions Center Manager, Kitsap Community Resources</i> Marta Holt , <i>Property Manager and Homeshare Administrator, Housing Resources Bainbridge</i> Beverly Kincaid , <i>Partner & Grant Professional, Sound Grants</i> Sheryl Piercy , <i>Social Services Director, Salvation Army</i> Sandra Paulino-Winborn , <i>Financial Services Specialist 4, DSHS</i> Sean Raybell , <i>Housing Specialist, Department of Corrections</i> Sarah Van Cleve , <i>Housing Director, Bremerton Housing Authority</i>		

Executive Summary

The Kitsap Homeless Housing Plan contains data and information collected in 2017 and 2018, as noted. It was updated during 2018 and approved by the Kitsap County Board of Commissioners on _____.

History

Historically there had been no statewide, integrated approach to homelessness in Washington. House Bill 2163, passed in 2005, attempted to remedy this situation by requiring each county to develop a homeless housing plan, providing a funding source through document recording fees to directly address the goals identified in these plans, and outlining reporting requirements. Subsequent changes to the legislation have added funding and changed requirements. Most recently, legislation passed in March 2018 increased the amount of funding available, specified additional performance and reporting requirements, and changed required elements for homeless housing plans.

Progress Since Last Plan

Action Steps identified in the 2016 Plan and implemented during the last two years resulted in significant shifts in the homeless crisis response system to:

- 1) Target prevention to those most needy and divert people from experiencing homelessness as much as possible,
- 2) Identify and prioritize serving the most vulnerable people experiencing homelessness, including expanding street outreach and providing more immediate shelter beds,
- 3) Increase alternative housing options,
- 4) Improve system efficiency by using performance measures and evidence-based practices, and
- 5) Improve communication with the public about homelessness.

The 2018 Plan builds on these accomplishments to further improve the Kitsap Homeless Crisis Response System.

Development of this Plan

The Kitsap Homeless Housing Plan Update Committee, a subcommittee of the Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition (formerly called the Kitsap Continuum of Care Coalition), a network of homeless services and affordable housing providers, worked extensively with Kitsap County Human Services Housing and Homelessness Division staff to analyze the needs of people experiencing homelessness in Kitsap County by reviewing the Homeless Point In Time count data, Homeless Management Information System data, results from a survey of community members and providers, a survey of people experiencing homelessness, a stakeholders workshop, meetings with elected officials, and review of national evidence-based practices.

The Plan includes data analysis, a needs assessment, coordination and linkage of resources to avoid duplications, and identification of community-wide collaborative approaches. The included Action Plan is intended to address homelessness by promoting a continuum of housing and support services that augment individual and family stability, resiliency, and economic independence.

This Plan is intended to complement the 2016-2020 CDBG/HOME Consolidated Plan (HUD), the Kitsap County Comprehensive Plan, the Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness Plan and other local plans that address homelessness and affordable housing.

The Plan has been updated every 3-4 years to respond to changes in legislative and policy requirements, changing availability of homeless services, new evidence-based practices, completion of identified action steps, and identification of new focus areas.

Scope of the Plan

This plan addresses issues of homelessness throughout Kitsap County, including:

- Information about progress made over the last ten years,
- Current demographics of homelessness in Kitsap,
- Resources available,
- Current needs and gaps, and
- An Action Plan that outlines specific action steps that will be undertaken over the next 3-5 years.

Plan Goals

The overall goal of the Plan is to ***work together as a community to make homelessness a rare, brief, and one time occurrence in Kitsap County through an efficient and effective homeless response system.***

The Action Plan is comprised of five Goals, each with supporting Core Strategies and New Action Steps, which will be used over the next five years to address homelessness. Each Goal also includes Performance Indicators of Success.

- 1) **Make homelessness rare** (prevention strategies).
- 2) **Make homelessness brief** (crisis response strategies).
- 3) **Make homelessness one-time** (ensure long-term housing stability strategies).
- 4) **Continuously improve the homeless response system** (increase capacity and efficiency strategies).
- 5) **Expand community engagement** (leadership, planning, and communication strategies).

Gaps and New Action Focus Areas

Needs and gaps in the homeless crisis response system have been identified, with specific new action steps, timelines, and responsible parties identified to address them:

- **Implement discharge planning** for homeless individuals entering the community from jails, correctional facilities, foster care, hospitals, and behavioral health systems of care
- **Encourage development of affordable housing** and alternative housing models through incentives and policy changes
- **Add 120 low-barrier night-by-night shelter beds** and alternative shelter options (tiny houses, safe parks, etc.) throughout the County
- **Add 15 respite care shelter beds** for people with medical needs that are not able to be supported in other shelters
- **Add 60-80 Permanent Supportive Housing** units for people with long-term behavioral health and physical health issues that create challenges to stable housing
- Focus on **tenancy supports and employment/education connections**, including the new Medicaid Transformation Project Supported Housing and Supported Housing benefits
- Expand the use of **performance measures and data** to ensure the most efficient use of public funds
- Implement **trauma-informed care and evidence-based practices**
- **Expand leadership, accountability, and opportunities for community education and volunteering**

The Plan in its entirety is available online at
<https://www.kitsapgov.com/hs/Pages/HH-Housing-and-Homelessness-Landing.aspx>

Introduction

Homelessness Among our Neighbors

Here in Kitsap County, homelessness is not as visible as it may be on the streets of Seattle, but it affects hundreds of people directly, every day, right here in our urban and rural communities. These are our friends, neighbors, co-workers, and community members.

According to the 2018 Point In Time Homeless Count, on any given day there are estimated to be more than 450 people living on the streets, in vehicles, and in the woods of Kitsap County, in shelters, and in transitional housing.

Homelessness happens to people of all ages, genders, education levels, races, income levels, and household types. It happens to good people in our community who work hard to be self-sufficient but live on the brink of economic instability. Health issues, poor credit, job loss, family break-up, domestic violence, mental illness or substance use disorders can also push people into homelessness. Whatever the underlying reason for their homelessness, they are in crisis. Visible or hidden, everyone deserves a safe and decent place to live.

History of Homelessness

Homelessness was a relatively rare phenomenon until the 1980s, when many economic and social changes converged to cause its dramatic rise. These changes included:

- Lack of growth in real earnings for those with low incomes,
- Growing scarcity of appropriate affordable housing,
- Demolition of old buildings that provided inexpensive Single Room Occupancy (SRO) opportunities, and
- Closing of institutions (*i.e.* beds at Western State Hospital) that had long served individuals with mental illnesses.

The number of homeless families and individuals continued to rise during the 1990's. Factors included:

- On-going deinstitutionalization of persons with mental illness without the development of adequate community-based housing and appropriate support services,
- Foreign out-sourcing of manufacturing jobs that paid a living wage,
- Rise of a service economy with low paying jobs, and
- Flat and/or reduced spending on social programs at the state and federal level.

More recently, the Great Recession of 2009-2012 created the highest unemployment rates in decades, resulting in fewer workers employed, a decline in earned income, fluctuating rents, an increase in home foreclosures, and a reduction in state and federal funding for need-based assistance programs. These factors pushed many low-income households, and even some middle-income families, into crisis, including homelessness.

Spectrum of Services at Coffee Oasis Spark Charlie's Hope

Street Hope, Coffee Oasis' Street and School Outreach program found Charlie, age 19, as he exited Renaissance Alternative High School due to lack of stable housing. Charlie's parents' addictions to methamphetamines had torn the family apart and his sister was placed in Child Protective Services.

Once connected to Coffee Oasis, Charlie's relationship with the Program's director blossomed. During that time his father entered an Oxford House to support his addiction recovery.

Soon Charlie entered Coffee Oasis' Partnering Hope program to support his goals of getting a driver's license, completing his education at Renaissance High School and working with his dad to secure housing in order to bring his sister back into the family.

Next steps brought Charlie into Coffee Oasis' HOPE INC job training program, resulting in an internship, and eventually a permanent job at the YMCA. Also, following monitored weekly visits, Charlie's sister was returned to the care of Charlie's dad, who secured employment and rented a three-bedroom home that the three now live as a family unit. Sadly, Charlie's mom has not overcome her addictions.

Causes of Homelessness

Today, many of our community's low-income households are at-risk of becoming homeless – often a single paycheck away from losing their housing. Many individuals lack education and job skills to be prepared to compete for living-wage jobs, have an insufficient personal safety net to successfully weather temporary or chronic adversity, and may have limited options for improving their situation. Ultimately, they lose hope for a future that envisions economic self-sufficiency and social resiliency.

While economic problems and evictions are often the final event leading to homelessness, individuals with serious behavioral health issues are particularly vulnerable. They are often unable to maintain a job (or if they do, it is at very low pay), have difficulty managing medicines appropriately and rely on multiple services to sustain self-sufficiency. Others at-risk are members of dysfunctional families who are often victims of domestic violence, runaway or abandoned youth or youth who have aged out of foster care, large families, or veterans who have been negatively impacted by the traumas of war. The combination of rising housing costs, limited income and a severe shortage of affordable housing are other major factors leading to homelessness. The issue of homelessness is evident across Kitsap County.

Ultimately, homelessness is a result of other societal factors that create financial instability and inability to afford housing: lack of affordable housing, inter-generational poverty, expensive health care costs, lack of living-wage jobs, lack of education and training, severe mental illness, and substance use disorders. Addressing homelessness is, necessarily, working backwards attempting to fix the condition (homelessness) and then providing individualized social supports to address the underlying social issues facing each individual household.

Social Impact of Homelessness: The Cost of Doing Nothing

Homelessness not only has huge impacts on the individuals experiencing it, it is also expensive for our community. Homelessness almost always escalates an already unstable family situation. Youth and adults with mental illness or drug and alcohol problems get worse when they do not have stable housing to get the behavioral and/or medical attention they need.

Homelessness costs our community in other ways, as well. Each year, Kitsap County residents' tax dollars are spent caring for homeless people through our emergency services – including 911, emergency rooms and clinics, law enforcement, fire and rescue units, jails, detoxification programs, public health system, the judiciary system and more.

Homelessness has a particularly troubling impact on children. Homeless children often are impacted by adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) resulting in impediments to growth and development and overall weak performance in school. Numerous studies have found that housing instability and homelessness lower academic performance, increase the chances of repeating a grade, and reduce high school completion rates. Homelessness also puts children at greater risk of serious physical health problems.¹ All of these factors contribute to perpetuating the cycle of homelessness.

Homeless adults have a hard time gaining employment and holding a job. Evictions and foreclosures hurt landlords, banks, and neighborhoods. Law enforcement spends countless hours responding to complaints about illegal camping and illegal overnight parking.

Downhill Slide, Then Hope

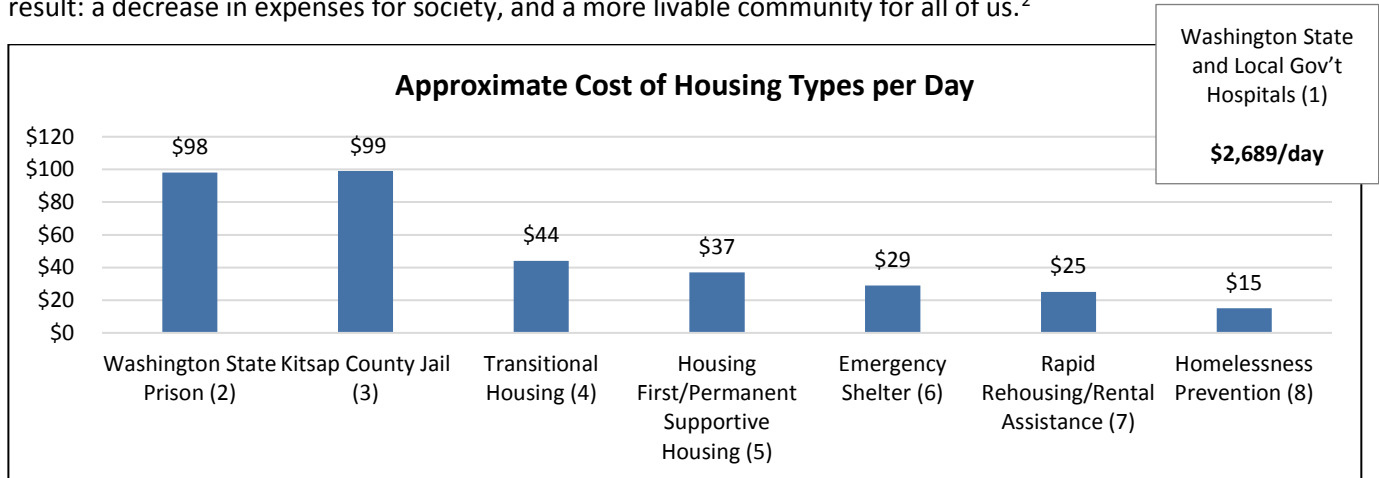
In his mid-30's, Tom, who had a long history of using and selling cocaine, arrived at Benedict House, a Kitsap shelter and transitional residence for men. He had worked as a truck driver for most of his life, but had a serious accident that crushed his right hand making it impossible to continue driving.

Lost, injured, homeless, and stigmatized, Tom ended up at the Benedict House. Tom's case manager was able to help him access an orthopedic specialist to perform restorative surgery on his hand.

Tom is making excellent progress as a result of the restorative surgeries and therapy that he is receiving, while concurrently participating in a 12-Step program to curb his addiction. Tom has been accepted into permanent housing at Catholic Housing Services Max Hale Center and will now live independently.

¹ The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, Report: Recession Could Cause Large Increases in Poverty and Push Millions into Deep Poverty, 11/24/08.

Cost studies around the nation, however, have proven that many of these individuals and households can succeed in transitioning back to stable housing, and often self-sufficiency, if they access appropriate supportive services. Once housed, their use of emergency services declines sharply as family or individual’s stability improves. The result: a decrease in expenses for society, and a more livable community for all of us.²



(1) 2010 Kaiser State Health Facts
 (2) Washington State Prison, 2016
 (3) Kitsap County Sheriff’s Office, 2017
 (4)(6)(7)(8) Washington State Department of Commerce, State Homeless Housing System Overview
 (5) 1811 East Lake Project, Seattle, DESC.

Although implementing the Kitsap Homeless Housing Plan will require significant community investment, it will not cost our community as much as continuing to try to manage homelessness indirectly through law enforcement, emergency services, and less effective temporary solutions over the years to come.

History of the Plan

This plan is part of a national movement to end homelessness. As part of that national effort, Washington State passed legislation in 2005 (ESSHB 2163), and subsequent legislation in later years, mandating that each county focus on reducing homelessness. Each county is required to (1) develop and periodically update a Homeless Housing Plan, (2) collect funds to pay for its implementation through a document recording surcharge at the county Auditor level, (3) collect data about homeless households and the services they receive to evaluate progress, and (4) coordinate efforts among homeless service providers.

The Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition developed the first Kitsap Homeless Housing Plan, which was approved by the Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council in December 2005. Since that time, the Plan has been updated every three to four years.

2018 Plan Update

The picture of homelessness and the body of research about the most effective ways to help people regain housing stability have changed rapidly. Since the first Plan in 2005 many new strategies have been implemented, the landscape of providers has changed, we have much better data about our homeless households, and new evidence-based practices have been developed and replicated around the country.

While the original 2005 legislative mandate was to “reduce homelessness by 50% by 2015”, there is now a more sophisticated understanding of the causes of homelessness. The goal in Kitsap now, and nationwide, is to **make homelessness rare, brief, and a one-time event**. Until the underlying social issues that lead people to become homeless are addressed, the homeless crisis response system’s role is to prevent homelessness whenever possible and help people quickly regain stable housing and overcome their barriers to sustaining that housing.

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Medicaid and Supportive Housing for Chronically Homeless Individuals: Literature Synthesis and Environmental Scan, Martha Burt, Carol Wilkins and Danna Mauch, 1/6/11

For this latest update, the Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition formed an *Ad hoc* Homeless Housing Plan Update Committee to oversee the process of updating the plan to reflect the current situation. One objective of this update is to focus on gaps in what's currently being provided and offer specific goals and strategies to fill them. Another objective is to incorporate strategic thinking about what is needed over the next three to five years to continue the progress effectively addressing homelessness in Kitsap County.

Input for the plan was gathered from a broad range of sources:

- Point in Time Count data,
- Homeless Management Information System data,
- Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition members through survey of service providers,
- Community members through a survey and a stakeholder workshop,
- Individuals experiencing homelessness through a survey,
- Meetings with elected officials, and
- Other plans and evidence-based practices from around the country.

This Plan includes three substantive sections:

- **A Progress Report**, which briefly discusses progress made in addressing homelessness since the last Plan update, and outlines the current homeless response system and resources available;
- **The State of Homelessness**, which provides a review of data and statistics regarding homelessness in Kitsap in 2017; and
- **The Action Plan**, including the current needs and gaps, as well as goals, core strategies, and new action steps that our community should undertake to address homelessness over the next three to five years.

Although these sections overlap, each can “stand alone,” presenting relevant information on a single aspect of homelessness in Kitsap. Collectively, these sections complete the picture of what will be required to make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time.

Purpose of the Plan

The Homeless Housing Plan Update Committee identified three main purposes of the plan, in addition to fulfilling the legislative mandate:

- **Blueprint for Implementation:** A clear and concise agreement about the community's plan to reduce homelessness.
- **Tool for Advocacy:** An informational focal point to inspire local advocacy and leadership to embrace homelessness as a priority for action.
- **Reference for Funders:** An articulation of the community's priorities for funding, ensuring that these priorities meet the Federal, State, and local requirements that the funded programs are in alignment with the community's homelessness plan.

The plan lays out broad goals and strategies to guide government, non-profit agencies, and other partners to achieve the desired outcomes necessary to reduce homelessness and create community impact.

Future Plan Updates

The Homeless Housing Plan Update Committee recommends updating the plan periodically to reflect the changing factors that affect homelessness, recent successes in reducing homelessness, new innovations in homeless housing programs, as well as new legislation. The plan should be updated every three to five years, or as required by the Washington State Department of Commerce.

Crisis and Response

The past decade has been challenging for many Kitsap County citizens, as the value of their wages has diminished, the number of households living in poverty has risen, and the lack of affordable housing has affected many households, resulting in housing instability and homelessness. In response, Kitsap’s social service providers have created a homeless crisis response system to meet the growing demand, with more beds and units available even in the face of diminishing state and federal resources. Together this “Continuum of Care” has been recognized by Commerce as a leader in implementing major changes in the way people are assisted to regain housing stability. However, barriers and gaps still exist that impede progress toward the goal of making homelessness rare, brief, and one-time.

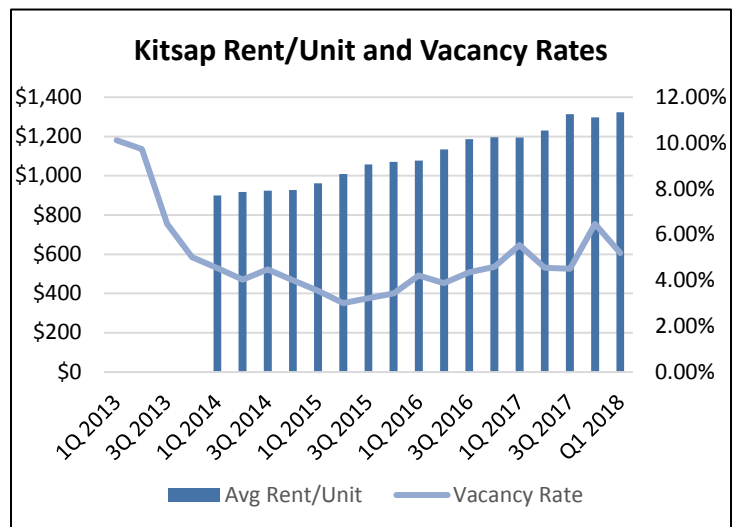
A HOUSING AFFORDABILITY CRISIS

Although Kitsap’s economy is recovering, mirroring positive economic forecasts around the state, those households at the lowest income levels are still struggling to find and maintain stable housing.

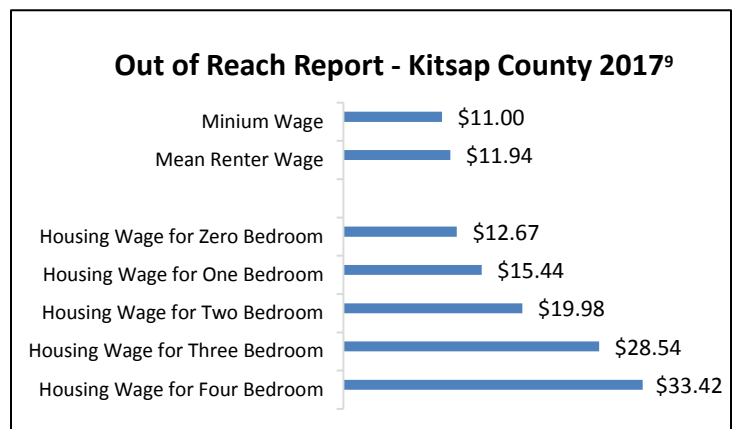
Affordable Housing Shortage

The gap between incomes and the cost of available housing pushes many people into homelessness, particularly in a market like Kitsap where housing prices rise faster than incomes.

Research conducted by the Washington State Department of Commerce shows that increasing rents is the largest driver of homelessness in Washington State.³ National research indicates that every \$100 increase in rent is associated with an increase in homelessness of 6% in metro areas and 32% in non-metro areas.⁴ Kitsap County includes both.



At the end of first quarter 2018, the average rent per unit in Kitsap County was \$1,323. The average unit rent increased \$128 (10.7%) from the prior year and \$424 (47%) since the beginning of 2014. Vacancy rates have fallen from 10.12% at the beginning of 2013 to below 5% for the last several years. Vacancy rates were 5.2% at the end of first quarter 2018.⁵ Vacancy rates can also fluctuate due to changes in Naval Base Kitsap personnel levels.



Housing is considered “affordable” when it costs no more than 30% of household income. Kitsap housing costs are well beyond the affordability of low-income households, particularly households with children, where an adult must provide childcare⁶:

³ “Why is homelessness increasing?”, Washington State Department of Commerce, Housing Assistance Unit, 2017

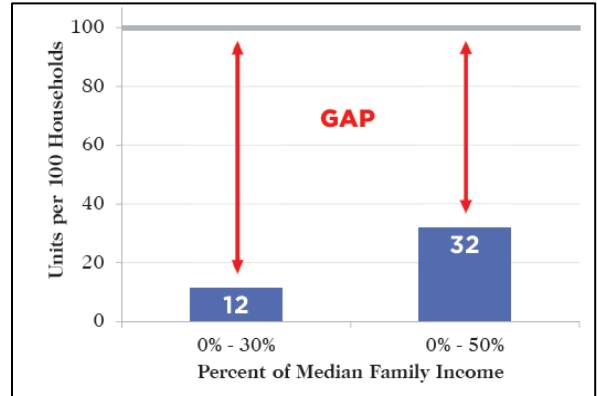
⁴ Journal of Urban Affairs, New Perspectives on Community-Level Determinants of Homelessness, 2012

⁵ Apartment Insights Washington, 2018

⁶ National Alliance to End Homelessness, Out of Reach Report, Kitsap County, 2017.

- In 2017 affordable rent for a person earning minimum wage (\$11.00) was \$572.
- In Kitsap, the estimated mean renter wage was \$11.94; making \$621 an affordable rent with a single wage-earner.
- However, in Kitsap the fair market rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment was \$1,039 (statewide: \$1,229). The annual household income needed to make this affordable was \$41,560, or \$19.98 per hour.
- For a household of any size earning 30% or less of Area Median Income (\$23,130), affordable rent would be no more than \$578.
- For households receiving a disability payment through Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (\$781/month), they can afford rent of only \$234.

The Eviction Lab at Princeton University recently released data showing that Kitsap County had about one eviction per day in 2016 (357 evictions), a 1.09% eviction rate, nearly double the .58% eviction rate in 2014 (187 evictions).⁷ As rents increase and households are unable to keep up with the cost of housing, evictions are an inevitable result.



In addition, a 2015 Washington State Housing Needs Assessment revealed that for Kitsap County, there are only 12 affordable and available housing units for every 100 households earning less than 30% of the Median Family Income (about \$22,500).⁸

Declining Value of Wages

Nationally, statewide, and locally, the value of wages has not kept pace with inflation and the cost of goods and housing. In 2017 in Washington, a minimum wage worker earned an hourly wage of \$11.00 and the average wage earned by Kitsap renter households was \$11.94, however those wages are not nearly sufficient to afford housing and other basic needs.⁹ In addition, in Washington State households with the lowest 30% of income pay the highest proportion of taxes than in any other state due to the state’s regressive tax system which results in a greater tax burden on the poor.¹⁰

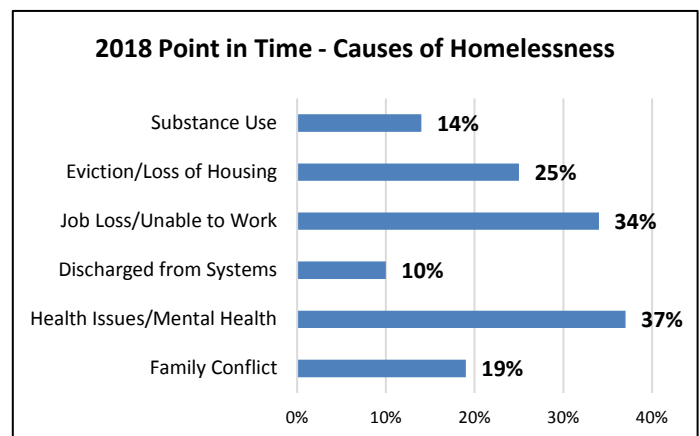
Rising Poverty Rates

According to community health indicators prepared by the Kitsap Public Health District, more of our Kitsap neighbors are experiencing poverty than ever before¹¹:

- 10% of residents are living below the Federal poverty level (2015), an increase from 8% in 2005.
- 9% of youth are living below the Federal poverty level (2015), an increase from 6% in 2005.
- 31% (2015) of households are spending more than 30% of income on housing, similar to 32% in 2005.

Other Causes of Homelessness

The lack of income to pay for housing is a result of the breakdown of other social factors, such as economic security, employment, education, and the health care system. The Great Recession that began in 2008 had a huge impact on economic and housing factors that affect homelessness. The effects of the Great



⁷ 2018 Eviction Lab data, Princeton University

⁸ 2015 Washington State Housing Needs Assessment.

⁹ MIT Living Wage Calculator, Kitsap County, 2017.

¹⁰ Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, 2015 Report

¹¹ Kitsap Public Health District, Public Health Indicators, September 2017.

Recession still affect many households today. The resulting economic instability, foreclosure, unemployment, insufficient outreach to some of the most vulnerable citizens including veterans, loss of retirement and savings, and loss of health benefits forced an unprecedented number of households into homelessness. Many of these households were not previously considered to be at risk of homelessness, but were affected by prolonged unemployment, foreclosure, or rising health care costs.

Mental health, substance use disorders, and physical health issues are a factor in a large number of households' homelessness. Inadequate resources to address their needs is a significant challenge today. Another key reason for homelessness is discharges from other systems of care, such as jail, foster care, and health care systems. During the Summer 2017 Point in Time Count, surveys collected in the Kitsap County Jail revealed that 43% of inmates had involvement with homelessness in the past or anticipated upon release. Of these, 67% were homeless immediately prior to jail and 78% expected to be homeless upon release.

With so many of our neighbors living on the edge of housing instability, small crises are often the tipping point leading to homelessness. These crises are often related to loss of employment or financial hardship, physical or mental health issues, being discharged from other systems of care (jail/prison, foster care, physical or mental health), substance use disorders, or family break-ups¹². In addition, emerging research shows the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on the physical and behavioral health of adults, increasing the likelihood of homelessness.

PROGRESS AND INNOVATION

When individuals or families are in danger of becoming homeless, or have already lost their housing, the goal is to get them into housing and provide services that best meet their needs as quickly as possible. This "homeless crisis response system" involves many organizations, a diverse set of programmatic tools, and multiple funding sources. Twelve years after the originating legislation, Kitsap has made progress in many areas, adding emergency housing beds, expanding outreach, and supportive services and programs.

Action Steps identified in the [2016 Plan](#) called for a significant shift in the homeless crisis response system to:

- 1) Divert people from experiencing homelessness and target prevention to those most needy
- 2) Identify and prioritize serving the most vulnerable people experiencing homelessness, including expanding street outreach and providing additional immediate shelter beds
- 3) Increase short-term and long-term alternative housing options
- 4) Improve system efficiency by using performance measures and evidence-based practices, and
- 5) Improve communication with the public about homelessness.

Below are highlighted significant changes or accomplishments since the last update of the Homeless Housing Plan for 2016 – a lot was accomplished in 2 ½ years!

Prevention and Diversion

The most cost-effective way to decrease homelessness is to intervene before individuals and families lose their housing. Often, a household on the brink of homelessness can avert the crisis with a small amount of financial support and the necessary supportive services to regain financial stability. Contrast this minimal cost for prevention with the immense cost to the family, social service agencies, and the community

Prevention and Diversion

- Housing Solutions Center implemented a Diversion Program
- Prevention programs focused on most needy
- Therapeutic courts expanded and divert people with behavioral health issues from jail
- Steps to Housing program provides easy one-stop connection with resources

¹² 2018 Kitsap Point in Time Count

when individuals or families become homeless. By focusing on diversion and prevention, we can effectively reduce homelessness.

The Housing Solutions Center of Kitsap County (HSC, opened in 2012) is our coordinated entry program, a single point of entry where all residents seeking assistance with housing or homeless services are welcomed, assessed, and referred to appropriate housing and resources for which they are eligible. The HSC also keeps a community-wide emergency housing waitlist. In mid-2016, the HSC launched a more robust diversion component to the intake process, working with each client to determine ways to avoid going into shelter if other options are available – such as family and friend resources, employment supports, or assistance negotiating with landlords.

Prevention programs were re-oriented to focus on identifying households that had the least other resources available to them, were the most vulnerable, or the least likely to be able to help themselves. Prevention was also targeted to those who would be successful after a one-time infusion of rental assistance.

Therapeutic court diversion programs were expanded in Kitsap over the last several years to identify good candidates for alternative sentencing and supportive services to help people get treatment for underlying behavioral issues and keep them out of jail and prison where these issues would not be addressed. There are now therapeutic courts for mental health, substance use, and veterans.

The HSC also launched a Steps to Housing program, which provides a weekly drop-in opportunity for household concerned about housing stability to easily get connected with resources.

Identifying and Prioritizing the Most Vulnerable

Both philosophically and financially, it makes sense to focus on helping those in our community who are most at-risk of harm living on the street and/or least able to help themselves – we often refer to people in these situations as “most vulnerable.” Since its inception, the homeless crisis response system has, by default, focused resources on those who could seek resources and advocate for themselves. Programs prioritized households who were thought to have the best outcomes for the least amount of investment. However, this has meant that people at the other end of the spectrum have been neglected in the system and this has contributed to extending their homelessness. In response to directives from the Department of Commerce and a growing recognition of this problem locally, the 2016 Kitsap Homeless Housing Plan began to shift the system to identify and prioritize the hardest to serve individuals – focusing efforts to bring the services to the people who need it most.

The HSC began experimenting with vulnerability assessment tools – giving incoming households an additional screening tool to determine their capacity in various areas. This screening results in a vulnerability index score, which assists with determining who is prioritized for shelter and housing program placement. Through trying various vulnerability index tools, the HSC has developed and implemented a customized tool for Kitsap.

In addition, the HSC has expanded outreach to the Bremerton ferry terminal, select libraries, and the Kitsap County Jail. The Coffee Oasis, our primary youth homelessness provider, launched a jail outreach program for young adults, and West Sound Treatment Center started a jail outreach program for people who are seeking treatment for substance use disorders upon discharge. The Kitsap Rescue Mission has stepped up to be a key organization in outreach to encampments, as well as opening a day room program for people to have a safe and welcoming place to go during the day.

Identify/Prioritize Most Vulnerable

- Housing Solutions Center implemented vulnerability index screening tool
- Greatly expanded outreach, including several programs in the jail
- Expansion of Severe Weather Shelter program to North Kitsap and South Kitsap
- Opening of Salvation Army low-barrier Winter Shelter and Kitsap Rescue Mission night-by-night shelter
- Kitsap Connect program serves most vulnerable high utilizers of emergency services

Building on a program launched many years ago by the Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition and the Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management (DEM), the Severe Weather Shelter (SWS) program was greatly expanded in the last two years. The SWS relies on host organizations to supply volunteers to open shelter beds in churches and community centers when the DEM determines that inclement weather make it dangerous for anyone to be sleeping outside. A single SWS operated for many years in Bremerton and moved in 2016 to operate out of the Bremerton Salvation Army. Over the last several years, organizations in Kingston, Poulsbo, and Port Orchard have volunteered to host additional severe weather shelters so that people experiencing homelessness throughout the county are able to survive these winter nights.

The Salvation Army Winter Shelter served 470+ unique individuals between December 2017 and March 2018.

The Severe Weather Shelter at the Salvation Army was so highly utilized that the Salvation Army opened a 60-bed Winter Shelter, open every night during December through March rather than only on severe weather nights. It has been extremely popular with guests, and served more than 470 unique individuals. The low-barrier model welcomed guests with their spouses/partners, accommodated their possessions, and sheltered their pets – this encouraged many people who had not been eligible and/or willing to come into shelter in the past to participate in the program and begin building relationships and accessing other services. The Winter Shelter ran over capacity most nights during the 2017-2018 season. Upon its closing in March 2018, many of the guests will go back to living in the woods and on the streets.

Also in Bremerton, the Kitsap Rescue Mission started a night-by-night shelter with 25-beds. Guests are required to register in advance with the HSC and must meet certain requirements. The Mission shelter works closely with the Winter Shelter to take referrals for families and others that need a more structured environment.

The Kitsap Connect program was launched through a partnership with Kitsap Public Health, the Salvation Army, the Housing Solutions Center, and Kitsap Mental Health Services. It works to identify the highest utilizers of emergency rooms, emergency medical services, and law enforcement with the goal of reducing costs to these systems and improving health outcomes through a coordinated care model that includes public health nurses, behavioral health professionals, and a housing specialist. The vast majority of their clients are chronically homeless and extremely high-needs. Through 2017, they have assisted 67 individuals to form positive social relationships, connect with resources, improve their health, and (for some) find housing.

This shift to focus on outreach to those who may not be accessing resources and prioritization of emergency housing for those who are the most vulnerable has not been easy, but a good start is underway. It has been challenging for shelters to serve people with higher needs, often with staff and programs structures that are not equipped for this population’s needs. Shelter stays can be longer because it can take longer to get high-needs clients stabilized and is even more difficult to find permanent housing placements for them. Action Steps in the 2018 Plan will continue this work.

Alternative Housing Options

Another focus over the last two years has been expanding alternative housing options, such as legal encampments, boarding houses, home sharing, and tiny houses. Kitsap County Commissioners approved a permanent Transitory Accommodation Ordinance that allows permitting of encampments, tiny house villages, boarding houses, and other temporary housing solutions on both small and large scales. Despite some promising opportunities, no organizations have applied for a permit under this new code to date.

- Alternative Housing Options**
- Kitsap County Transitory Accommodation Ordinance
 - Homes for All Tiny Cottages project underway
 - City of Poulsbo/Coffee Oasis youth Boarding House

In 2016, the County, Cities, and Tribes sponsored a Homelessness Workshop with nationally recognized guest speakers, drawing more than 120 Kitsap leaders from across many sectors. This convening led to the creation of

a cross-sector leadership group, the Homes for All Leadership Group, which has been spearheading the development of tiny cottages for use as emergency housing. Partnering with area churches and a wide array of organizations in different sectors, the Homes for All project hopes to pilot a tiny cottage village in South Kitsap in 2018.

The City of Poulsbo has partnered with the Coffee Oasis, a youth housing provider, on piloting a youth boarding house model on city property. The City hopes to expand the model to other sites in the next few years.

System Efficiency

Each year progress has been made to improve the efficiency of the housing and services delivery system; the last two years continued this work with some additional changes.

A Strategic Analysis of Funding Sources undertaken in 2010 resulted in the creation of the Coordinated Grant Application Process, implemented in 2011, which combines the applications for the major local government funding sources for homeless housing, social services, and community development into a single application and review process. This eliminates duplication of funding, and increases the efficiency for grant administration and for grantees. In 2017, the Consolidated Homeless Grant, a funding source from the Washington State Department of Commerce, was brought under the administration of the Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Division. This has resulted in a more consistent and coordinated approach to funding homeless programs and services. Work will continue to streamline and maximize efficiency in the funding process over the next several years.

System Efficiency

- Better funding coordination with Consolidated Homeless Grant
- Expansion of Project Connects and Point in Time Count outreach

The Point in Time Count has been conducted in coordination with a low-income services fair, Project Connect, for the last ten years. In 2017, large-scale outreach efforts were added to the survey process to locate more households living on the streets and in wooded areas. Also in 2017, a Summer Point in Time Count was piloted. In 2018, Project Connect resource fairs were added in North Kitsap and South Kitsap to improve access for households throughout the county and to improve data collection during the Point in Time Count.

Communication and Engagement

As mentioned earlier, elected leaders and key organizations gathered for a Homelessness Workshop in June 2016. This led to the formation of the Homes for All Leadership Group, which is working on creating a tiny cottage pilot program in South Kitsap.

Responding to citizen requests for more information about homelessness, the Housing and Homelessness Division began producing various data summaries about different aspects of homelessness. In addition, the Division assists organizations and individuals with data upon request.

Communication and Engagement

- Homes for All Leadership Group
- Homelessness Data Summaries and information available
- Community group presentations
- Promoting Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week activities
- Point in Time Count volunteer project

The Housing and Homelessness Division staff and leaders from other Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition organizations frequently respond to requests from community groups (such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Elks, League of Women Voters, citizen advisory groups, and school groups) to make presentations. Over the last two years, they have presented information about homelessness to more than 20 groups.

In 2017, the Housing and Homelessness Division launched a volunteer effort to support outreach efforts for surveying during the Point in Time Count. More than 100 citizen volunteers have participated during the last three Point in Time Counts.

Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, usually held the week before Thanksgiving, is organized nationally. Over the last two years, the Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition has been building support and promoting specific activities to raise community awareness during this week, including a Hunger and Homelessness Awareness March.

Specific Population Programs

Certain homeless populations require specific services or housing situations to be able to acquire and sustain housing. Several programs exist to serve particular populations, such as veterans, youth, severely mentally ill, those with chemical use disorders, and survivors of domestic violence. In addition, people who are on fixed incomes and/or disabled experience significant challenges affording permanent stable housing. As our population ages, we can expect this to affect a growing number of Kitsap residents. We need to further develop innovative, evidence-based programs in order to move these sub-populations out of homelessness.

Specific Population Programs

- Youth: Coffee Oasis – HOST Home Program, Youth Crisis Hotline, youth boarding home, and Kingston services
- Veterans: Homes for All Who Served – Functional zero for unsheltered veterans

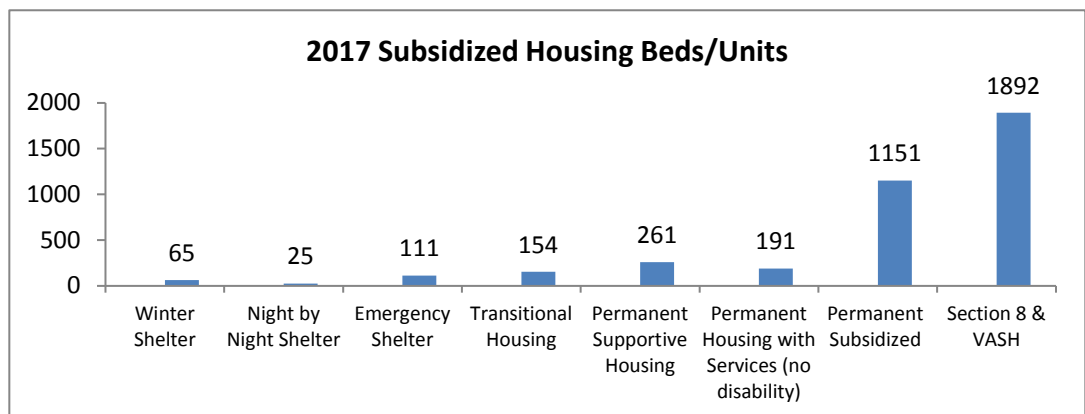
Homeless youth, countywide, have benefitted from an ever-expanding array of services offered by the Coffee Oasis programs. In addition to youth street outreach, drop-in centers, case management, job training, and a youth shelter, over the last two years the organization has brought online a 24-hour youth crisis hotline, is piloting a HOST home program wherein youth are temporarily placed with volunteer families, opened a youth boarding house in Poulsbo, and is expanding services to Kingston.

Following the lead of a national initiative to end veteran homelessness, federal, state, and local veteran housing providers came together to form the Homes for All Who Served initiative. The group did a needs analysis, developed a plan to improve services for homeless veterans, and implemented many improvements for service delivery to veterans. Hundreds of veterans have been successfully housed and the goal of “functional zero” for unsheltered veterans was achieved. More work remains to ensure that sheltered veterans are able to get into permanent stable housing.

CURRENT RESOURCES

Leadership

The political and community commitment to address the issue of homelessness is essential. Over the last few years, leadership in this effort has enabled Kitsap to make extraordinary progress in addressing homelessness through HMIS implementation, the Housing Solutions Center, and support for the Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition.



The leadership has been by Kitsap elected officials, the Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition, and many faith-based organizations.

Providers

The Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition is a very active organized network of over 50 different homeless housing and service organizations that create a continuum of housing and services for homeless households. Together these organizations comprise the homeless crisis response system.

Housing Units

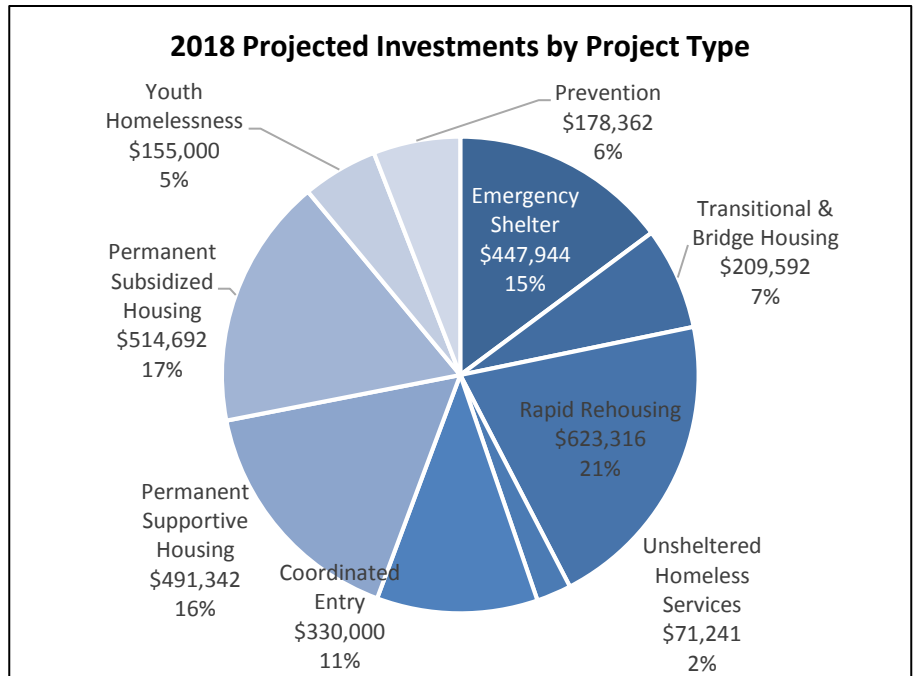
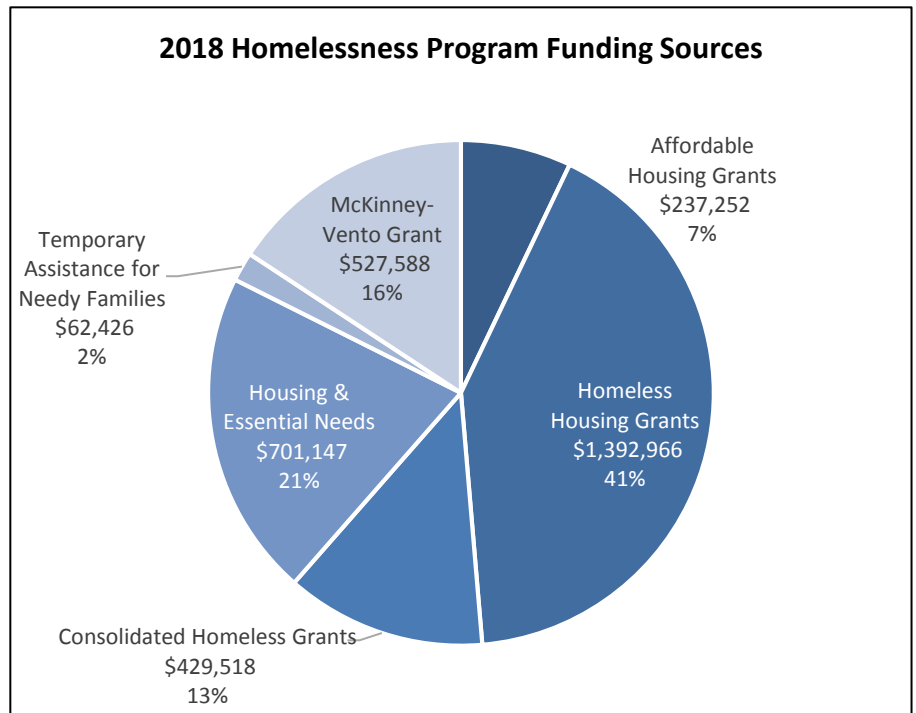
Through these providers, the emergency, interim, and subsidized housing listed on the chart above are currently available.

Funding Sources

In order to fund these programs, Kitsap County housing and services providers rely on a number of federal, state, local and private funding sources of funds.

Many of these funding sources are specifically “targeted” towards homelessness and are restricted to services and projects which directly benefit homeless individuals and families and others with special needs. These charts summarize state and local targeted funding sources and how they are spent on Kitsap program types.

In March 2018, the Washington State legislature made a significant increase to the amount of funding available for homeless programs through local and state grants. However, this funding will not start to become available until mid-2019 to 2020.



Kitsap Homelessness Today

DEMOGRAPHICS

Understanding the scope of homelessness in Kitsap County is an important step in developing key strategies to address it. Homelessness is an extremely complex social challenge and requires significant community investments to create an impact. There is a constant flow of people becoming homeless while others move out of homelessness into housing. Many may only experience one episode of homelessness, while others (often termed “chronically homeless”) may experience multiple episodes over several years or remain homeless for many years. Fortunately, we have better data and statistics on the homeless population than ever before to guide our efforts.

Before discussing statistics and data, it is important to recognize that it is very difficult to arrive at a definitive number of homeless households or accurate statistics about our homeless population. The following variables impede our ability to accurately identify the number of individuals and families that are homeless and the complex barriers they face while attempting to overcome homelessness:

- The face and composition of homelessness is changing all the time. Each day new households are forced into homelessness and each day homeless households are re-housed and re-gain self-sufficiency.
- Due to the ongoing stigmatization of being homeless, many individuals and households either do not self-identify as homeless and do not seek services, or do not admit to being homeless. Our data collection efforts require voluntary participation, so households that do not seek services or volunteer to be counted in our homeless census are not included in statistics. This is the hidden face of homelessness.
- Data about homelessness gathered from different sources does not always provide a consistent picture, since it may define homelessness differently or collect data differently.

Data about homelessness is collected in several ways, through the efforts of the social service and housing providers who work with people experiencing homelessness:

Point in Time Count

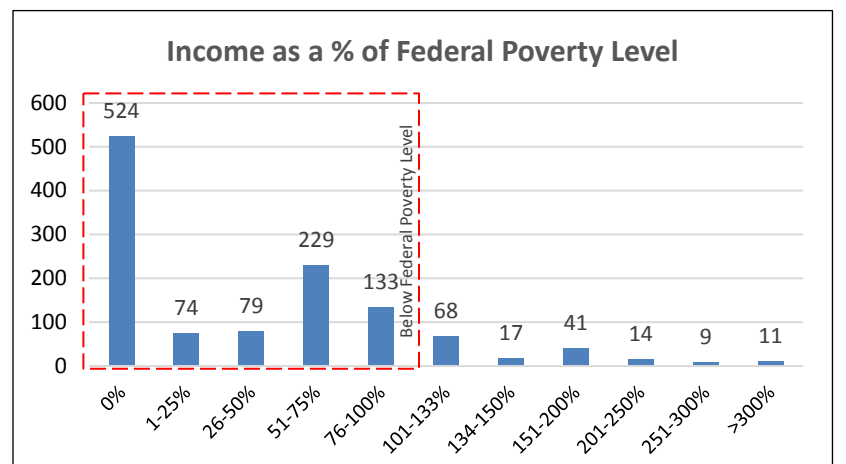
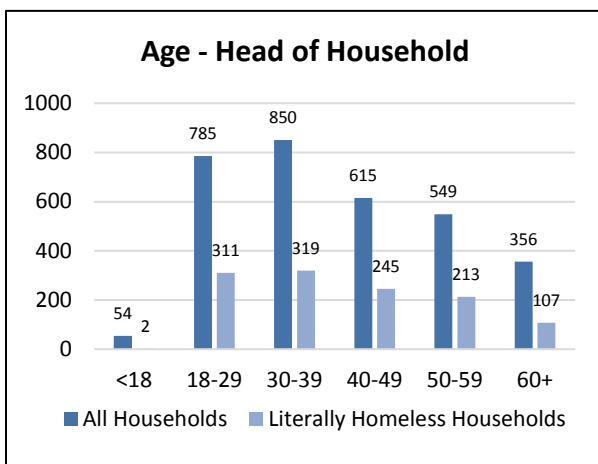
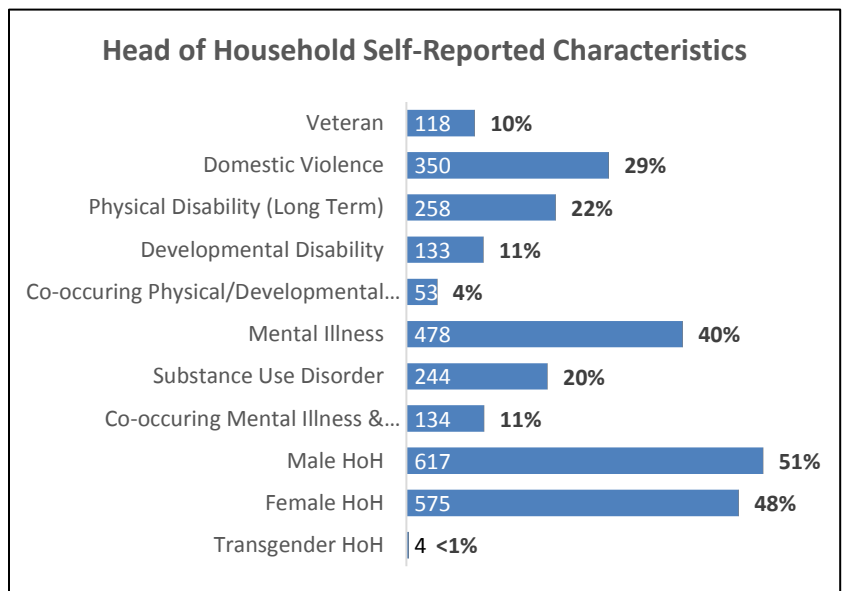
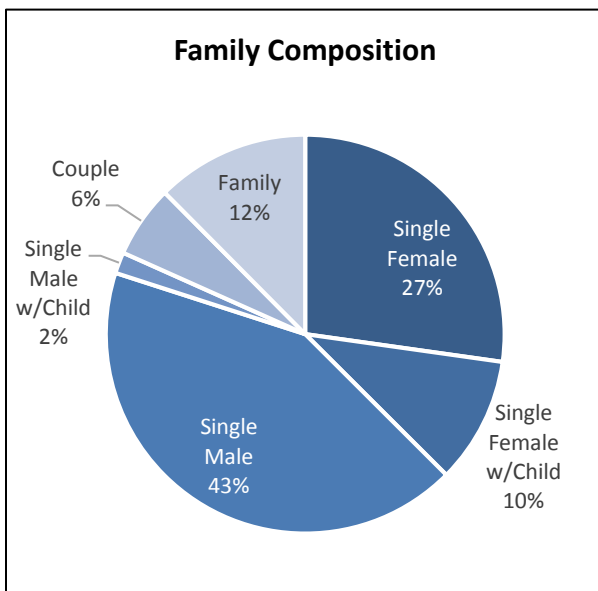
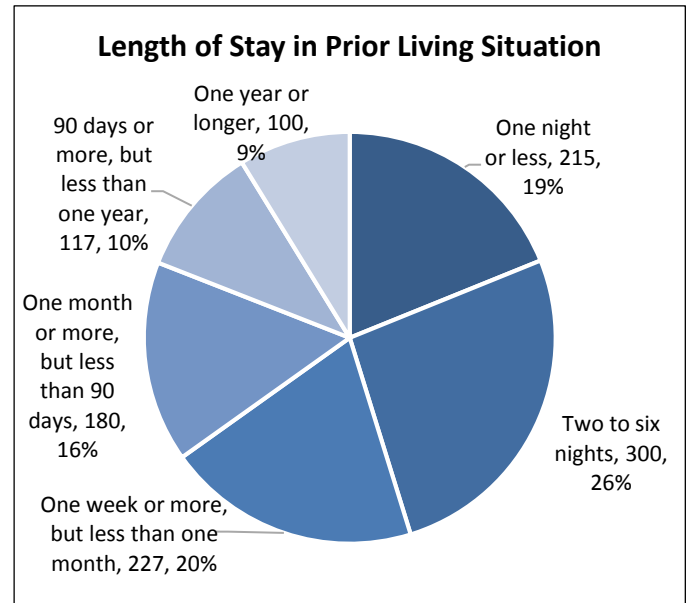
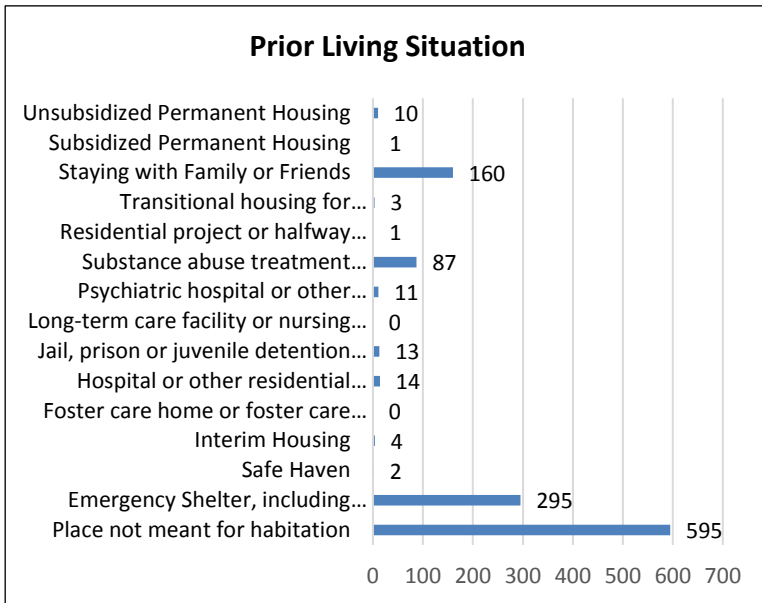
The Point in Time Count (PiT) is required by the Department of Commerce and HUD in order to receive homeless grant funds. The information from the count is compiled and submitted to WA State and is used locally for evaluation and planning purposes. The PiT surveys sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on the fourth Thursday in January during a specific 24-hour period in all WA counties. Kitsap County has conducted an annual Point in Time Count of the homeless since 2005. The PiT provides limited information about the full scope of homelessness, because external factors affect the results: weather, volunteers, and the social stigma of homelessness. Many communities consider the PiT to undercount homelessness by a factor of two to three times. However, the PiT provides a large sample, from which we can extrapolate general information about our homeless population, including reasons for homelessness.

Homeless Management Information System and Housing Solutions Center

The second tool that is used to collect information about homelessness in Kitsap is the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). This is a federally-mandated and state-managed database of information that is required to be collected by homeless housing and service providers about every client who receives homeless assistance provided by federal or state funding. Faith-based or privately-funded programs are not required to participate, though in Kitsap several of these programs choose to do so.

Required HMIS data includes demographic information such as gender, age, prior living situation, length of time homeless, education level, ethnicity, and family composition. Clients must provide signed consent to have identifying information entered into the system. When a client enters a particular housing or homeless services program, information about their participation in the program is also recorded in HMIS.

2017 Demographics for Households Experiencing Homelessness in Kitsap¹³

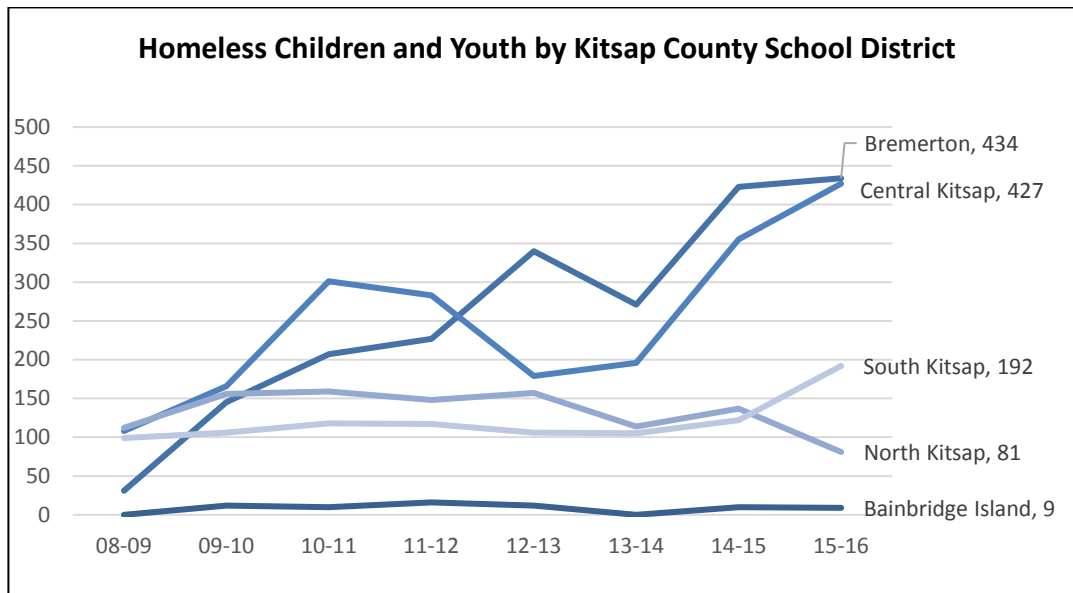


¹³ Data from the Homeless Management Information System, through the Housing Solutions Center, 2017, Literally Homeless Households.

HMIS information is used at the state level to develop state-wide statistics and models. At the local level it provides accurate information about clients who access services. Its limitation is that clients, who are not using services, either by choice or because needed services are not available, are not included. Thus, it provides limited information about under-served populations or gaps in service.

Youth Homelessness

Each school district is also required to collect information about student homelessness and submit it to the state Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. This represents students that were identified by school district staff as experiencing homelessness, but is considered to be a fraction of the actual number.



Statistically, this equates to about one student in every classroom experiencing homelessness.

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE MEASURES

To make sure that what we are doing is having the desired effect, specific system performance measures are used, based on data collected through the HMIS and other sources. Some of the performance measures listed below are mandated by the Department of Commerce – these are indicated by a ★.

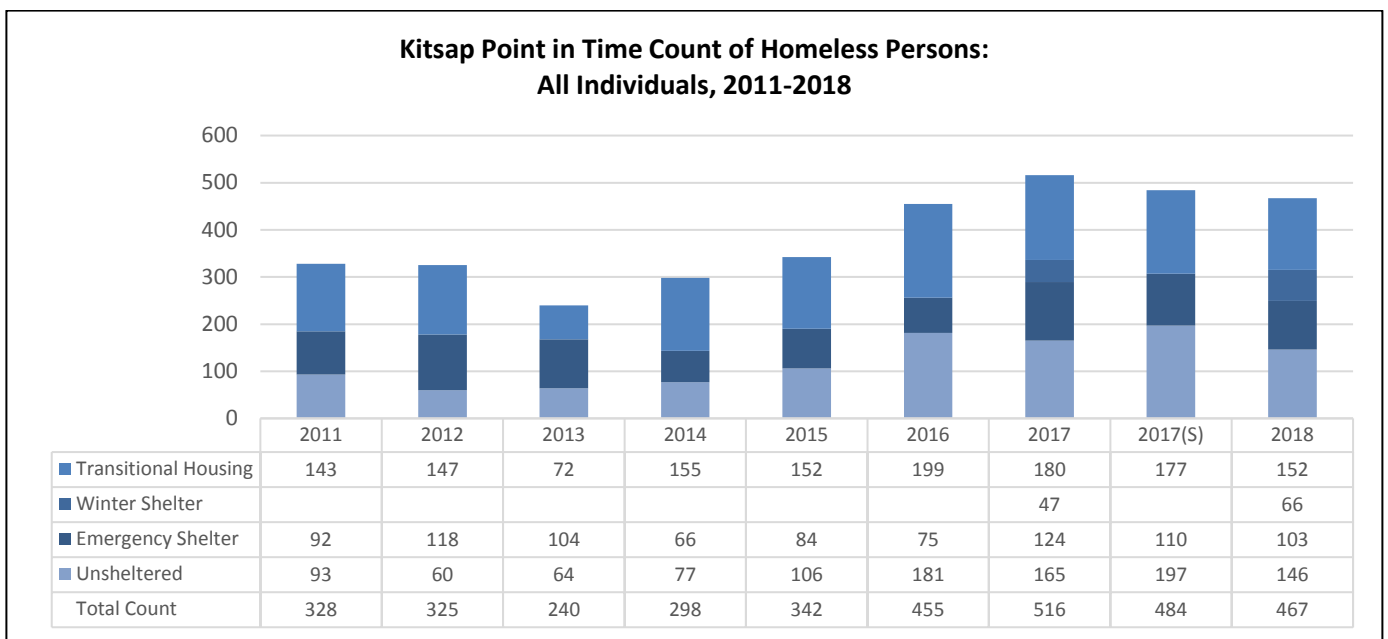
RARE: How many people experience homelessness?

The Point in Time Count provides information about homeless households who choose to participate in a survey on one particular day, regardless of whether they are seeking or receiving services and includes individuals who are sheltered and unsheltered, by federal definition. The Homeless Management Information System and the Housing Solutions Center provide information only about clients who seek and access services.

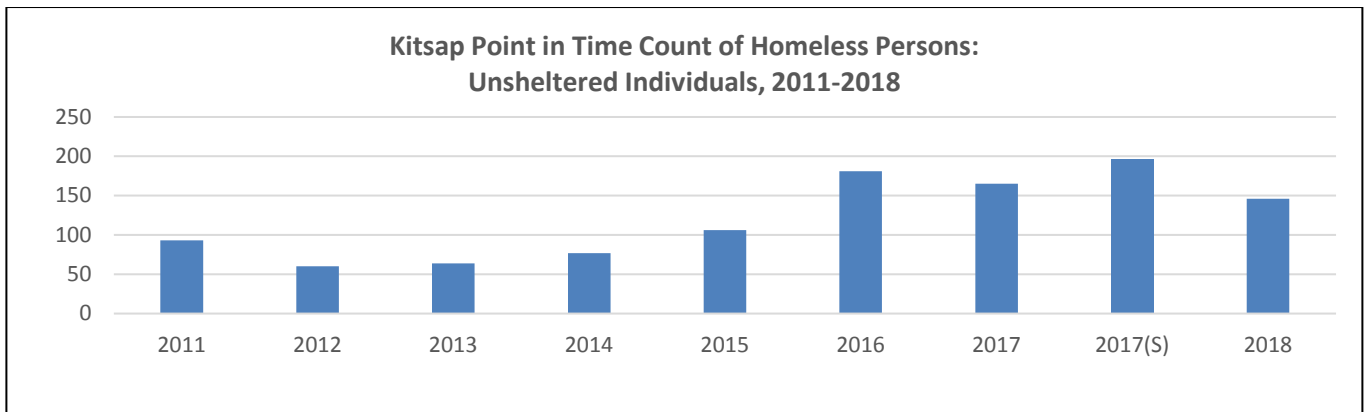
★ At a Point in Time

The following table shows data compiled from annual Point In Time count from 2011-2018.

- In 2018, 69% were being served by current facilities, staying in emergency shelter or transitional housing.
- 31%, or 146 individuals, were not being served by current homeless housing programs and were living in situations not meant for human habitation, such as abandoned buildings, illegal encampments on private and public property, on the streets, or in their cars.



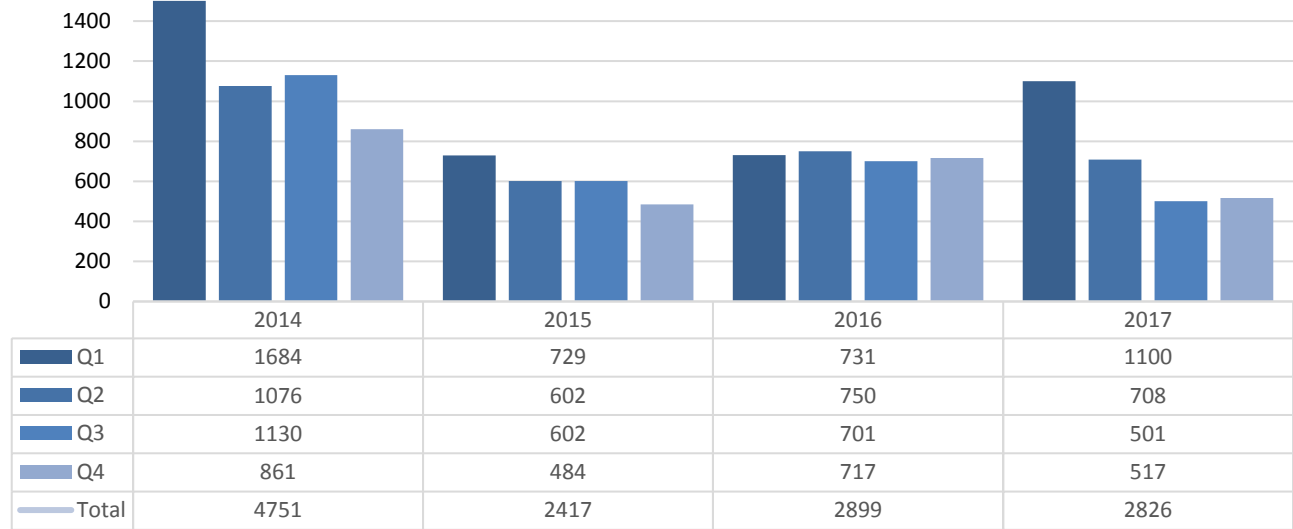
The overall number of individuals who were counted in the annual Point in Time Count has decreased between 2017 and 2018 by 9%. However, the number of sheltered people is a direct reflection of the number of transitional housing units and emergency shelter beds available. For example, the chart above shows an additional 47 people sheltered in the Winter Shelter for 2017 and 66 for 2018. Winter Shelter capacity increased between 2017 and 2018, so that Winter Shelter-stayers plus unsheltered people add up to the same number for both years (212).



Annually

HMIS data collected upon entry into the Housing Solutions Center program indicates the number of households seeking assistance for housing stability.

**HSC Quarterly Enrollments by Household:
2014-2017 Literally Homeless and At-Risk**



Key 2017 statistics for people seeking housing stability assistance at the Housing Solutions Center:

- **Housing Status:** In 2017, the HSC enrolled 2,826 unduplicated households comprising 4,847 individuals. Of these, 33% or 1,199 households comprising 1,756 individuals, reported being literally homeless.
- **Prior Living Situation:** The prior living situation for literally homeless households: 50% were in an unsheltered situation (such as an encampment, living in a car, or place not meant for human habitation), 24% were previously staying in a shelter, 13% were staying with family and friends, and 7.3% were in a substance abuse treatment facility or detox.
- **Characteristics:** The following are literally homeless self-reported characteristics: Mental illness (40%), domestic violence (29%), physical disability (22%), and substance use disorder (20%).
- **Income:** 43% of literally homeless households reported \$0 income, 87% of households have incomes at or below the federal poverty level. \$700 is the minimum income for a household to be considered able to maintain housing independently, though at this income level, they are very likely to be severely rent-burdened (paying 50% or more of income on housing).

Per Capita Homelessness

The Kitsap Public Health District reported that in 2016, 1.7% of individuals in the County were currently or imminently experiencing homelessness, an increase from 1.5% in 2011.

2017 HSC data indicates that 1,756 unduplicated individuals were literally homeless over the course of the year. With an estimated Kitsap population of 264,811, that means that 1 in every 150 residents experienced homelessness in 2017.

★ New to Homelessness

Another performance metric is measuring the number of people who are new to homelessness. This is measured by the number of households who were literally homeless or at imminent risk of losing housing and who received HSC services, and had not received homeless services within the last two years. 2017 HMIS data indicates that 680 households were new to homelessness (75%) and had not received homeless services in the prior two year period.

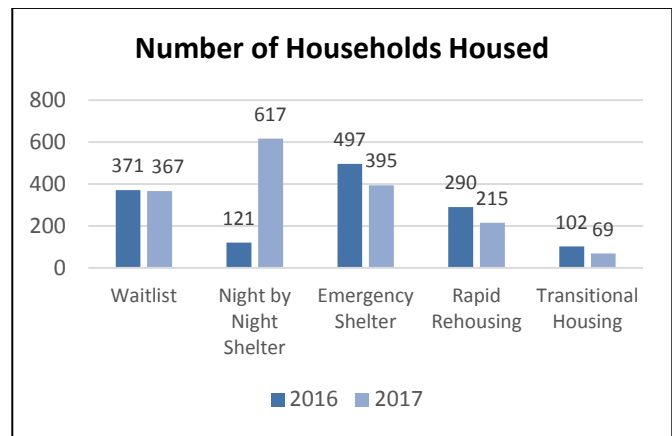
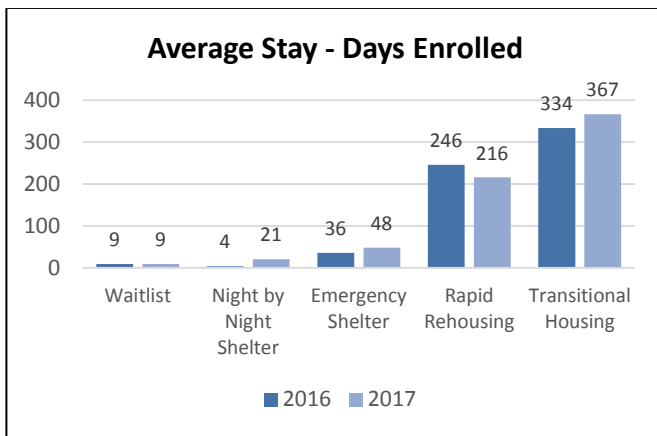
★ **Prevented from Homelessness**

In 2017, the homeless crisis response system provided targeted prevention assistance to 259 households, about the same number as in 2016.

BRIEF: How long are people homeless?

★ **Length of Time in Housing Programs**

HMIS records the length of time people spend in different types of housing and the number of households served. Between 2016 and 2017, shelter stays and transitional housing stays increased, while the length of time people were in a rapid rehousing program decreased. Night by night shelter beds were added, so there was a significant increase in the number of households able to be served. As emergency shelter stays increased, the number of people able to be served over the course of a year decreased; the same is true for transitional housing. Waitlist times and households stayed the same between the two years.

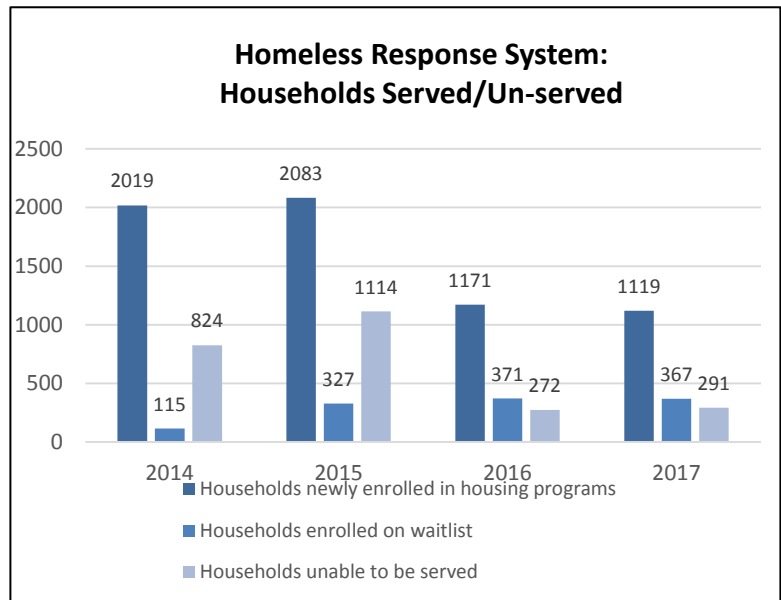


Shorter stays in temporary housing are considered to be better for building long-term stability. In addition, when people regain permanent housing faster, more people are able to be served with the limited temporary housing resources. HUD sets the goal of less than 20 days in emergency shelter.

This data does not include people who are unsheltered and are NOT seeking services – often these individuals experiencing “chronic homelessness” are unsheltered for extended periods of time (1+ years) or repeatedly over the course of many years.

Length of Time Homeless

Sixty-five percent of Kitsap’s homeless individuals who access services through the Housing Solutions Center are homeless for less than one month before seeking services, being housed through one of Kitsap’s social service agencies, or overcoming homelessness on their own. (Chart under Demographics section.)

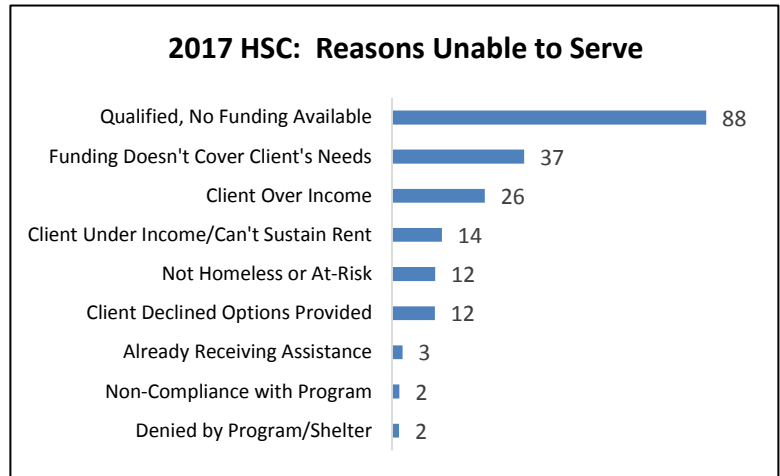


At the same time, 100 individuals were identified as “chronically homeless” (i.e. they have been without housing 1+ years or have had four episodes of homelessness within three years).

Unable to Be Served

This metric reflects whether the homeless crisis response system has adequate capacity to assist all households who need it. When households are assessed at the HSC, they are 1) immediately referred to shelter or a housing program, 2) placed on a waiting list if there is a shelter that they are eligible that will have an opening in the near future, or 3) if there are no housing programs for which they are currently eligible, they are considered “unable to be served”. For these households, they are connected with as many other resources as possible to address.

A breakdown of reasons people are unable to be served shows that the most frequent reason is that no rental assistance funding or insufficient rental assistance funding was available at the time. Some clients were unable to be served due to being over income or under income to qualify for programs.

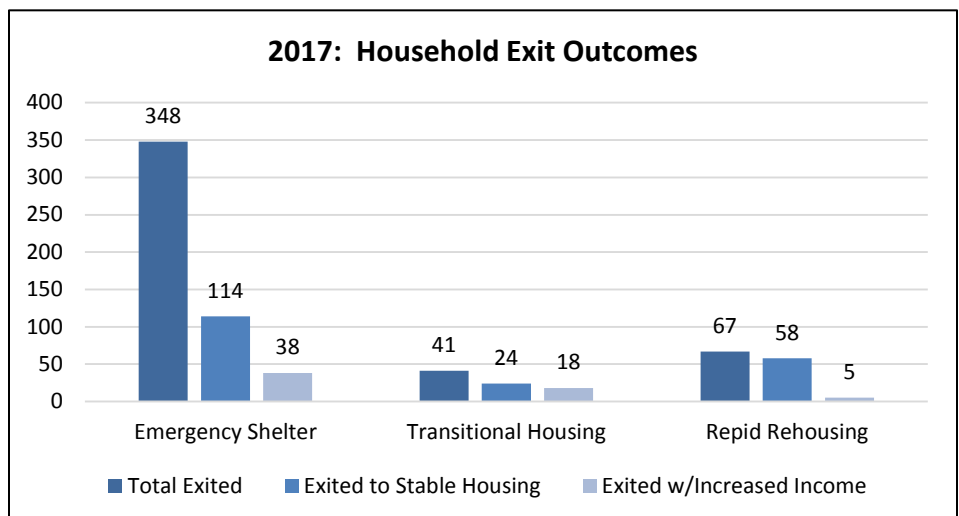
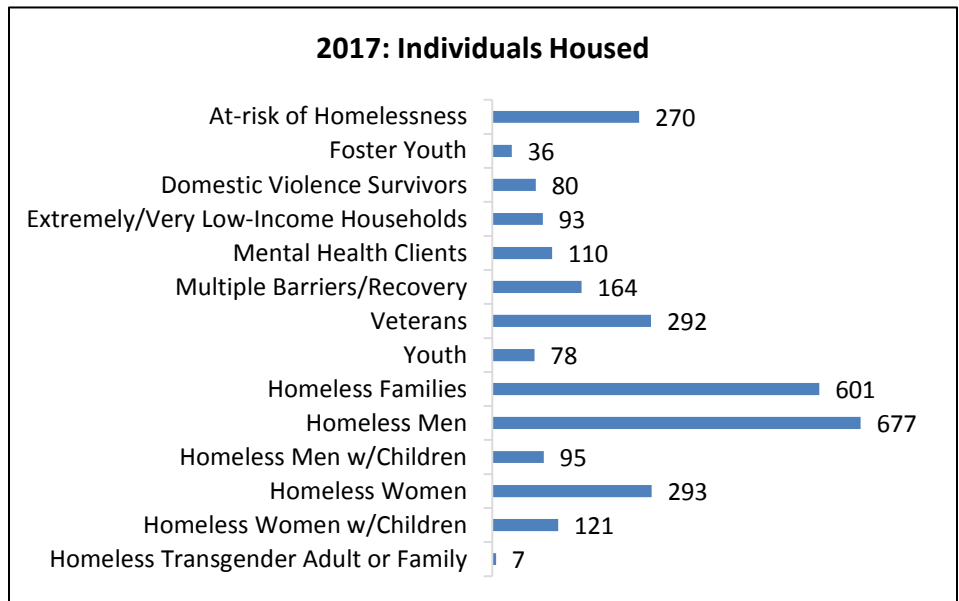


ONE-TIME: How many people are re-housed? How many people experience homelessness again?

A total of 2,917 individuals were housed in the homeless response system during 2017, broken roughly into these demographic categories.

★ Exits to Stable Housing, Increased Income

Households exiting housing programs to stable housing destinations is the ultimate goal of the homeless crisis response system. Increased income indicates a higher likelihood of self-sufficient housing in the future. Of the 456 households exiting emergency shelter, transitional housing, and rapid rehousing programs in 2017, 196 exited to stable housing and 61 exited with increased income (of those exiting emergency shelter, transitional housing and rapid rehousing programs).



★ **Returns to Homelessness**

Of the 468 households who exited to permanent housing in the two years prior to 2017, 85% had not returned to homelessness; 15% returned to homelessness (71 households), a significant increase from 7.6% in 2016.

Conclusion

Though no single data source provides definitive information about homeless demographics, the picture that results from the data sources cited above indicate more than 2,800 households, with a variety of household compositions and needs, require homeless housing and services on an annual basis. Each household has unique needs that must be met in order for them to access a path to regain stable housing and self-sufficiency.

Single males make up the largest demographic of literally homeless households, though women are more likely to be head of household. The vast majority have incomes that are below the federal poverty line, making it difficult to secure and maintain long-term housing without some increase in income. Mental illness is the most frequently reported characteristic – highlighting the need for emergency and permanent housing for people with behavioral health issues.

Economic factors continue to precipitate households being pushed into homelessness, particularly the dramatic increase in rents over the last several years. People with fixed incomes are particularly vulnerable to rent increases.

Overall, Kitsap providers are doing a better job of quickly providing immediate housing and services, however the focus on prioritizing the most difficult to serve, has put a strain on shelters and has slowed exits to permanent housing because of insufficient permanent supportive housing. While the waiting list for shelter time is relatively short for most households, there are a significant number of households that are unable to be helped because we do not have the programs and resources to do so.

Most households are able to maintain stable housing after leaving programs to a stable housing destination, which points to successful program models. However, some households cycle through the system and use a higher proportion of resources. This calls for solutions that target highly vulnerable households with many needs and barriers – they will be more expensive to serve in the short-term, but this will have the biggest long-term impact on community resources, the quality of life for these households, and our ability to make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time.

RARE
1 in 150 people experienced homelessness in 2017.
About 150 people were unsheltered on a given day; many more when the Winter Shelter is closed.

BRIEF
1 in 6 were not able to be housed immediately.
1 in 8 were not able to be housed with existing resources.

ONE-TIME
75% of households seeking housing assistance were new to homelessness had not received assistance within the last 2 years.
85% of households who exit to stable housing are not homeless again within 2 years.

Action Plan

Needs and Gaps, Core Strategies, and New Action Steps

We will work together as a community to make homelessness a rare, brief, and one time occurrence in Kitsap County through an efficient and effective homeless response system.

Despite strong leadership and a diversity of existing resources, homelessness is still a persistent issue in Kitsap, illustrated by the current demographics of homelessness. The update process revealed specific barriers and gaps that represent some of the underlying causes of Kitsap's inability to meet the needs of all homeless residents.

This plan is not intended to be a comprehensive list of the existing strategies and programs already in place in our county. Instead, it anticipates that the existing continuum of housing and homeless services that has been developed over the last decade is maintained, with improvements that reflect evidence-based practices. This plan also does not enumerate every possible action step that could be implemented; instead it focuses on achievable action steps that are needed to fill identified gaps in housing and services. The Action Plan includes a narrative description of goals, current needs and gaps, core strategies, and new actions steps. It is followed by an Action Plan Matrix organized in the following way:

- Goals constitute the overarching critical path to making homelessness rare, brief, and one-time, while improving our response system and engaging our community.
- Core Strategies for each goal outline our overall methodology, principles, and current approaches to achieve each goal. They often encompass multiple actions and programs already in effect.
- New Action Steps to for each goal are listed with projected timelines and responsible organizations – these action steps are the focus for improving the homeless crisis response system over the next 3-5 years. Because many of the strategies are closely related, some of the action steps support more than one strategy.
- Indicators of Success are the performance metrics that help us measure our progress on achieving each goal. These indicators are not linked to individual strategies or actions, but show the aggregate impact of all of the strategies and actions.

Focus Areas of This Update

Building on the re-orienting of the system in the 2016 Plan towards prioritizing the most vulnerable, the 2018 Plan expands emergency and permanent housing options for this population. In addition, based on analyzing the many different sources of input during the planning process, the additional needs and gaps in the homeless crisis response system have been identified, with specific new action steps, timelines, and responsible parties to address them.

- **Implement discharge planning** for homeless individuals entering the community from jails, correctional facilities, hospitals, and behavioral health systems of care
- **Encourage development of affordable housing** and alternative housing models through incentives and policy changes
- **Add 120 low-barrier night-by-night shelter beds** and alternative shelter options (tiny houses, safe parks, etc.) throughout the County
- **Add 15 respite care shelter beds** for people with medical needs that are not able to be supported in other shelters
- **Add 60-80 Permanent Supportive Housing** units for people with long-term behavioral health and physical health challenges to stable housing
- Focus on **tenancy supports and employment/education connections**, including the new Medicaid Supported Housing and Supported Employment benefits

- Expand the use of **performance measures and data** to ensure the most efficient use of grant funds
- Implement **trauma-informed care and evidence-based practices**
- **Expand leadership, accountability, and opportunities for community education and volunteering**

1. Make homelessness rare

One of the most cost-effective ways to decrease homelessness is to prevent the endless flow of individuals and families who become homeless from entering the system.

Current Needs and Gaps

Increased Demand: The numbers of homeless individuals and households and requests for homeless services have grown over the past decade, as evidenced by data referenced earlier. As long as the myriad underlying social causes of housing crises exist, households will continue to become homeless. National research indicates that many households who report needing assistance to prevent homelessness may actually be resilient enough to resolve the issue independently, whereas those who are most vulnerable should be prioritized for assistance.

People Re-entering the Community from Systems of Care: People are frequently discharged from other systems of care, such as jails, hospitals, behavioral health programs, substance use disorder treatment, and foster care, into homelessness due to lack of housing options. In addition, Kitsap currently has very few emergency housing beds for people who have high behavioral health needs, significant medical needs not able to be tended while living homeless, or criminal histories.

Affordable Housing Shortage: Kitsap County, like many other cities and counties, is in the midst of a shortage of affordable housing – both subsidized and market-rate. The 2015 Washington State Affordable Housing Needs Assessment estimates that there are only 12 units of affordable housing for every 100 units needed by people earning less than 30% of Area Median Income (AMI). This results in 4,545 renter households at 30% of AMI and 4,110 renter households at 50% of AMI being cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of their income on housing. An addition 2,700 home-owner households at 30% of AMI and 2,845 households at 50% AMI are cost-burdened. These are the households most at risk of housing instability and homelessness. The 2016-2020 Kitsap County Consolidated Plan includes a comprehensive affordable housing needs assessment and gap analysis.

Core Strategies

Preventing homelessness through targeted prevention can avert eviction or foreclosure for those *most likely* to become homeless. **Diversion programs** make smaller investments of funds for non-housing items that prevent housing instability or homelessness. Prevention programs have improved efficacy if connections to existing supports (such as job training and placement, basic life skills, financial literacy, and education) are included, so that households can address the underlying reasons for their housing crisis.

Pro-actively planning for housing and services for individuals re-entering the community from jails, correctional facilities, foster care, hospitals, mental health programs, substance use disorder treatment, and homeless shelters, transitional housing, and other housing programs will prevent homelessness among people in these situations. In addition, **respite beds** are needed for people with complex medical and/or behavioral health needs who do not have stable housing and are in need of related supportive services either temporarily or long-term.

Additional units of affordable housing for households at very low- and low- income levels are required to prevent the large number of rent-burdened households being forced into homelessness. *This plan does not attempt to specifically identify strategies and actions to increase the number of affordable housing units.* Alternative housing models may also provide some solutions – in other counties Single Room Occupancy units, boarding houses, shared housing and tiny cottage houses have proved to be a viable way for more low-income households to remain intact.

New Action Steps

Proposed Action Steps for 2018 – 2020 focus on:

- Reducing discharges from other systems of care into homelessness
- Increase the availability of affordable housing through developing and implementing policies that incentivize development of affordable housing and allowing alternative housing models

2. Make homelessness brief

For all households who experience homelessness, being identified, connected with resources, and getting into emergency housing as quickly as possible is the goal. After they are stabilized, transitioning to permanent housing as quickly as possible ends their homelessness.

Current Needs and Gaps

Accessibility: While the coordinated entry system is successfully doing intake, assessments, and referrals, the accessibility of these beds remains a challenge for some households. Households who are particularly vulnerable and/or unable to advocate for themselves are often not accessing services. The vast majority of shelter beds are located in Bremerton, making it difficult for households in other parts of the county to use these beds.

Housing and Resources for Chronically Unsheltered Individuals: Currently individuals with the most severe, persistent, or complex barriers to housing stability are the most under-served. Because they are often not seeking housing, it is difficult to estimate how many are living in places not meant for human habitation, such as camping illegally, living in cars, or in abandoned buildings. They tend to be difficult to place in existing shelter beds and, if they are unwilling or unable to comply with programmatic rules are unsuccessful in existing permanent supportive housing programs. Mental illness is reported by 40% of people experiencing homelessness in Kitsap, and substance abuse is reported by 24% - these factors usually significantly contributes to housing challenges. A growing body of research supports a Housing First housing model for these individuals to become stably re-housed, prioritizing keeping them in housing and then making supportive services available but not mandatory.

Immediate Shelter: While Kitsap added 20 night-by-night shelter beds and 60+ winter only night-by-night shelter beds since 2016, the demand still outstrips the supply, particularly when the winter shelter is closed 8 months of the year. Additional year 'round low-barrier night-by-night shelter beds are needed that will serve people with high needs – accepting people's pets, possessions, and partners – that will serve as temporary respites for these households until a longer-term solution could be arranged, rather than returning to unstable living conditions or situations unsuitable for human habitation.

Permanent Housing Availability: Many people seeking referrals from the Housing Solutions Center are not able to be referred because although they may have housing instability and are at imminent risk of losing their housing. These households are often under income to be able to afford the minimum rent to provide long-term sustainability required for some programs (many have \$0 income), or they are over income to qualify for other programs (sometimes with fixed incomes), despite being extremely low-income. In particular, Kitsap has a severe shortage of housing for people with long-term behavioral health and/or physical health impairments that make housing stability impossible without additional supports.

Core Strategies

Vulnerable and chronically homeless households should be **identified as quickly as possible and prioritized** for shelter and services. **Easy access and appropriate connections to crisis response housing through the coordinated entry program** makes unsheltered homelessness brief.

Providing immediate shelter beds for all who want it and having low-barrier shelter beds in more geographic locations means that more households will not be forced to survive outside. **Alternative models of emergency**

housing, such as tiny shelters, safe parks, and legal encampments can expand the options available for people moving out of homelessness – they should not be considered permanent housing, but an interim step to build relationships with providers and improve connections with supportive services.

The goal is to **place all households into permanent housing as quickly as possible**. To achieve this, appropriate and affordable housing must be available. For households with low barriers to self-sufficiency, **rapid rehousing** with short graduated subsidies and short term support services is appropriate. Households with more complex behavioral and health barriers are not able to afford or successfully maintain mainstream housing and need **permanent supportive housing**. **Housing First** is a model of permanent supportive housing that provides housing with low barriers or requirements, and is paired with tenancy supports and offers of supportive services, with the goal of keeping people with significant behavioral health, chronic substance abuse disorders, and/or physical health issues permanently housed for as long as possible.

New state legislation prohibits landlords from discriminating on the basis of income source, such as rental assistance or housing vouchers. It also provides a mitigation fund for landlords who have damage to their units. **Education for landlords** about these new laws will help expand landlord partnerships.

New Action Steps

Proposed Action Steps for 2018 – 2020 focus on:

- Increasing the number of low-barrier shelter beds, and disbursing them geographically throughout the county.
- Increasing alternative shelter options, such as tiny houses and safe park programs.
- Creating new units of permanent supported housing for people who need long-term behavioral health and physical health supports to stay housed.
- Leveraging more existing housing units to assist people moving out of homelessness, both through Housing Authorities and in the private market.

3. Make homelessness one-time

To ensure long-term housing stability, households must be quickly connected with resources to help them address and overcome any barriers to housing stability.

Current Needs and Gaps

Supportive Services: Expanding connections with supportive services is needed, including consistently incorporating these resources into housing stability plans. In addition, an increased focus on personal safety net and skill-building is needed to help households retain housing stability.

Employment and Education: Employment is frequently reported as a challenge for people experiencing homelessness – both the ability to get and maintain employment while living homeless, and to find employment that generates sufficient income to move back into housing when large deposits are often required.

Core Strategies

Once households are stabilized in appropriate permanent housing, they can address the issues or barriers to self-sufficiency that caused the housing crisis. Rapid **connection with individually tailored services and resources**, including employment supports and education are essential. In addition, **developing resiliency** through personal skill-building provides long-term benefits, including prevention of further episodes of homelessness.

In addition, **criminalization of homelessness** should be prevented – a growing trend throughout the country, despite evidence that it is expensive and ineffective.

New Action Steps

Proposed Action Steps for 2018 – 2020 focus on:

- Implementing new Medicaid Supported Housing and Supported Employment benefits
- Incorporating employment/education strategies into housing stability plans

4. Continuously improve the homeless response system

Although Kitsap has a robust homeless response system, it must continuously innovate to respond to changing needs and incorporate emerging successful strategies.

Current Needs and Gaps

Performance Measurement: Although many individual organizations are using performance indicators, including outputs and outcomes, currently there is not widespread use of performance measures at the countywide and agency level to help identify whether collective progress is being made to accomplish community impact. In addition, organizations could benefit from training on how to use performance measures and targets to improve their performance.

Best Practices: Over the last 10 years, significant research has demonstrated the most effective practices in delivering homeless housing and programs, yet in some areas Kitsap has not yet widely adopted these practices. This is often due to the organizational capacity issues discussed below.

Limited Capacity: Capacity issues exist on two levels in our community. First, the existing emergency, supportive and permanent affordable housing available is not adequate to meet the demand. Homeless services, such as emergency shelters, are being strained and usually run at capacity. Since there are not sufficient homeless housing units or beds available to meet the demand, homeless individuals and families are forced to find shelter in temporary or unsuitable conditions. Waiting lists for permanent subsidized housing, such as Public Housing, are often years long.

Second, some agencies' abilities to manage the expansion of an existing program or develop a new program are limited. This may be due to a need for more specific expertise and experience within agencies. Agencies can also be reluctant to expand or create new programs without assurance that they have funding for the ongoing operation and maintenance of these programs. Agencies may also need assistance developing their agency capacity through training on capacity-building and emerging evidence-based practices.

Core Strategies

At a time when demand is increasing and resources are decreasing, doing more with less is imperative. Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the homeless housing system through maximizing system coordination, provider capacity, and overall system capacity is critical.

Using performance measures and data to drive decision-making and improving coordination among different systems of care and among service providers will improve efficiency.

In addition, ensuring that **planning for homelessness and affordable housing are integrated** with other planning effort and the evolution of other services delivery will provide a more cohesive and comprehensive response.

We must **ensure the strategic investment of public funds** through incorporating evidence-based practices in new and existing programs to shift the response system. In particular, **incorporating trauma-informed care and person-centered care** principles throughout the homeless crisis response system will provide a more compassionate and effective response.

Provider capacity and outcomes can be improved through providing training on evidence-base practices, performance measurement, and implementing shelter care standards.

New Action Steps

Proposed Action Steps for 2018 – 2020 focus on:

- Expanding the use of performance measurements, including providing training
- Ensuring the most efficient investments of grant funds
- Increasing the use of trauma-informed care and other evidence-based practices

5. Expand community engagement

Community understanding and support for addressing homelessness is essential for generating the leadership and resources to be successful.

Current Needs and Gaps

Leadership: Although leadership for homeless issues is strong within the homeless response system, it would be strengthened to incorporate a broader representation from other sectors and systems of care that interact with the issues of affordable housing and homelessness and to widen its scope beyond tiny cottages to the many other homelessness issues facing Kitsap.

Citizens Outreach and Involvement: One of the most frequent themes at the Stakeholders meetings for this Plan was the need for having coordinated and consistent communication about the issue of homelessness with the broader community so that compassion for those experiencing homelessness can be increased, leading to greater community support and involvement.

Planning Integration: Housing stability is increasingly being identified as an important component of the success of other sectors, such as health care and behavioral health. Coordinating and integrating strategies is just beginning to be recognized as essential to success for clients in all these systems of care. The timing of the update to this Plan is intended to allow for increased coordination between planning efforts.

Insufficient Funding: While Kitsap County agencies have funding sources targeted to reducing homelessness, the demand for services and housing continues to grow. Federal funding sources that support permanent subsidized and permanent supportive housing have been reduced or stagnated over the past three to five years. More expensive operating costs mean that funding does not stretch as far as it once did. Because of this limited funding, existing funding must be invested as effectively as possible and advocacy at the state and federal level is essential.

Core Strategies

Leadership on the issue of homelessness by our elected officials and representatives from across the different sectors that touch individuals experiencing homelessness is required to make the policy changes that are needed. **Raising awareness and engaging our community** is essential to creating the community and political involvement to expand solutions.

Creating and implementing a **specific communication plan** and providing data about homelessness to the community will raise awareness. Paired with specific **volunteer opportunities**, more community members will be able to engage in solutions.

Advocacy at the local, state and federal level increases the likelihood of the needed funding streams to implement this plan and make significant investments into affordable housing flowing into Kitsap County.

New Action Steps

Proposed Action Steps for 2018 – 2020 focus on:

- Ensuring cross-sector leadership and accountability.
- Developing a communication plan to improve community outreach and education.
- Creating additional volunteer opportunities for the public.
- Advocating for additional funding.

By focusing efforts on these core strategies and specific new action steps that support them, we can make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time.

Action Plan: Detail Matrix

GOAL 1		<i>Make homelessness rare.</i>	
★ Performance Indicators of Success		Core Strategies	
<p>PI - 1.1 Fewer people experience homelessness for the first time</p> <p>PI - 1.2 Fewer people discharged from institutions to homelessness</p>		<p>1.1 Prevention and diversion: People are prevented from losing their homes through targeted prevention and diversion programs that keep people out of shelter.</p> <p>1.2 Prevent discharges to homelessness: People are not discharged into homelessness from other systems of care.</p> <p>1.3 Diversion in court system: Whenever possible, pre-adjudication and alternative sentencing programs are used to divert people experiencing homelessness from incarceration, to avoid criminal histories and prevent increased financial burdens both for people experiencing homelessness and for first responder systems.</p> <p>1.4 Affordable Housing: Increasing the availability and accessibility of housing that is affordable to people with low incomes is promoted.</p> <p>1.5 Alternative housing options: Non-traditional housing options are available and affordable for people at risk of homelessness.</p> <p>1.6 Connection with services: Households are connected with appropriate existing supports and benefits to avoid homelessness.</p>	
🔗 New Action Steps		Implementation Timeline	Responsible Parties
<p>1.2.A Create a plan for medical discharge coordination: Establish procedures for coordination between the coordinated entry system and local hospitals to improve housing placements at discharge</p>		4Q 2020	Housing Solutions Center CHI Franciscan/Harrison
<p>1.2.B Create a plan for behavioral health discharge coordination: Establish procedures for coordination between the coordinated entry system and behavioral health providers to improve housing placements at discharge</p>		4Q 2018	Housing Solutions Center Kitsap Mental Health Services
<p>1.2.C Identify homeless youth in Juvenile Court system: Implement a youth homelessness risk-assessment tool in the Kitsap Juvenile & Family Court</p>		1Q 2020	Kitsap Juvenile & Family Court Services
<p>1.2.D Respite beds: Create 15 respite housing beds for short-term stays for people with medical needs that are not able to be supported in other shelters</p>		3Q 2019	Catholic Community Services Kitsap Mental Health Services Peninsula Community Health Bremerton Housing Authority
<p>1.4.A Affordable Housing Task Force: Convene a task force to specifically identify and implement strategies to increase the availability and number of units of housing affordable to households earning 0% - 80% of area median income throughout Kitsap County</p>		1Q 2019	Bremerton Housing Authority Housing Kitsap Housing Resources Bainbridge Kitsap Community Resources Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Division Landlords

HEADING HOME: Kitsap Homeless Crisis Response and Housing Plan – 2018 Update

		Home builders Housing funders/financers Other interested stakeholders
1.4.B Affordable Housing Inventory Report: Produce an affordable housing inventory and transportation analysis report to determine Kitsap’s current housing landscape and inventory to determine what types of housing are needed currently and in the future and how housing distribution aligns with the transportation network	3Q 2019	Kitsap County Block Grant Program Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Division
1.4.C Policies supporting affordable housing and Permanent Supportive Housing: Adopt inclusionary zoning and incentives to developers of affordable housing to increase units of affordable housing and permanent supportive housing	1Q – 4Q 2019	Cities Kitsap County
1.5.A Alternative housing models: Develop and adopt planning policies that allow alternative housing models including SROs, boarding houses, home sharing programs, tiny houses, and others	1Q – 4Q 2019	Cities Kitsap County
1.5.B Toolkits for Alternative Housing: Develop toolkits for organizations/people who want to operate boarding houses, tiny shelters, home sharing programs, and other types of alternative housing	2Q 2019	Homes for All Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Division
1.6.A Resource Guides: Develop and distribute resource brochures about housing and homelessness services for specific populations, such as youth, seniors, veterans, and jail inmates	3Q 2019	Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Division Other interested stakeholders

GOAL 2 ***Make homelessness brief.***

★ Performance Indicators of Success	Core Strategies
<p>PI - 2.1 People experience fewer days of homelessness before being sheltered</p> <p>PI - 2.2 People experience fewer days of homelessness in shelters</p> <p>PI - 2.3 Fewer people are experiencing unsheltered homelessness</p>	<p>2.1 Identification and engagement: People experiencing homelessness are quickly identified and engaged.</p> <p>2.2 Coordinated Entry Program: Kitsap’s coordinated entry program ensures easy access and appropriate connections to crisis response housing and services.</p> <p>2.3 Prioritize based on need: Prioritize assistance for people who are the most vulnerable, unsheltered, and/or chronically homeless.</p> <p>2.4 Immediate shelter: Immediate shelter is available for all who want it, including a low-barrier shelter option.</p> <p>2.5 Connection with resources: Households in shelter and in the shelter pool are connected with other community resources and benefits as quickly as possible.</p> <p>2.6 Appropriate permanent housing: Households are moved as quickly as possible to appropriate permanent housing:</p>

HEADING HOME: Kitsap Homeless Crisis Response and Housing Plan – 2018 Update

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid Rehousing in market rate housing with an income-based sliding scale subsidy; • Permanent subsidized housing for people with fixed incomes and no need for supportive services; or • Permanent supported housing for people with a disability that affects their ability to live independently. <p>2.7 Partner with landlords: Existing housing units are used whenever possible through partnerships with for-profit and non-profit landlords.</p>	
🌟 New Action Steps	Implementation Timeline	Responsible Parties
2.1.A Master List: Use a Master List to identify, engage, and build relationships with unsheltered homeless individuals	3Q 2019	Housing Solutions Center Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Division Department of Commerce KHHC Members
2.4.A Create low-barrier shelter beds in Bremerton: Create 80 year-round low-barrier shelter beds in Bremerton/CK that accept “pets, possessions, and partners”	4Q 2018	Kitsap Mental Health Services Peninsula Community Health
2.4.B Create low-barrier shelter beds in North Kitsap: Create 20 year-round low-barrier shelter beds in North Kitsap that accept “pets, possessions, and partners”	1Q 2020	Kitsap Rescue Mission
2.4.C Create low-barrier shelter beds in South Kitsap: Create 20 year-round low-barrier shelter beds in Bremerton that accept “pets, possessions, and partners”	1Q 2020	Kitsap Rescue Mission
2.4.D Tiny Houses: Create opportunities for tiny houses to be used as emergency housing – in villages, clusters, or individually sited	4Q 2019	Homes for All members Kitsap faith organizations Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Division
2.4.E Safe Park: Create a Safe Park Program for men, serving 6-10 men living in their vehicles while connected with housing case management	4Q 2019	Kitsap Community Resources Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Division
2.4.F Legal outdoor living options: Create additional housing options to provide safety, sanitation, and security for people who chose to live outside, such as legal long-term camping or legal encampments	4Q 2019	Kitsap Rescue Mission
2.5.A Youth Resource Guide App: Develop and distribute a mobile app to homeless youth to provide information on youth resources	4Q 2019	Commission on Children and Youth
2.6.A Permanent Supportive Housing/Housing First: Create 80 new units of permanent supportive housing, including but not limited to units employing a Housing First model, to serve people with severe, long-term behavioral and/or physical health issues	2018 - 2021	Bremerton Housing Authority Kitsap Community Resources Kitsap Mental Health Services Peninsula Community Health
2.6.B Homeless Preference for Section 8 and Public Housing: Adopt a homeless preference for Section	2Q 2019	Bremerton Housing Authority

HEADING HOME: Kitsap Homeless Crisis Response and Housing Plan – 2018 Update

8 and Public Housing units		
2.7.A Source of income discrimination/landlord mitigation program: Produce and distribute materials to educate and inform landlords about new laws prohibiting source of income discrimination and the state landlord mitigation program	4Q 2018	Housing Solutions Center Bremerton Housing Authority Washington Low Income Housing Alliance Department of Commerce

GOAL 3	<i>Make homelessness one-time.</i>
---------------	---

★ Performance Indicators of Success	Core Strategies
<p>PI - 3.1 More people exit homelessness to stable housing</p> <p>PI - 3.2 More people exit homelessness with increased income and/or benefits</p> <p>PI - 3.3 Fewer people return to homelessness after being stably housed</p>	<p>3.1 Provide supportive services: Supportive services and tenancy supports are provided for people moving out of homelessness to remain in their housing.</p> <p>3.2 Employment and education connections: Sturdy connections to employment and education are provided for people moving out of homelessness to increase their incomes.</p> <p>3.3 Tailored services: Connections to appropriate tailored services and benefits are provided.</p> <p>3.4 De-criminalize homelessness: Homelessness is not criminalized and life-sustaining activities (sleeping, eating) are allowed in public places while interim survival mechanisms that create pathways to housing are supported.</p> <p>3.5 Cultivate Resilience: Resilience strategies for individuals and communities are supported and expanded.</p>

🔄 New Action Steps	Implementation Timeline	Responsible Parties
3.1.A Implement Medicaid Supported Housing Program: Implement Medicaid Transformation Project Supported Housing Program	1Q 2019	Kitsap Mental Health Services Kitsap Community Resources
3.2.A Employment and education planning: Incorporate employment and education goals into housing stability plans	1Q 2019	Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Division KC Housing & Homelessness Division Grantees
3.2.B Implement Medicaid Supported Employment Program: Implement Medicaid Transformation Project Supported Employment Program	1Q 2019	Kitsap Mental Health Services
3.5.A Youth Peer Network: Develop a youth peer network/program to provide support and mentoring for youth experiencing housing instability and homelessness.	4Q 2019	Coffee Oasis Kitsap Juvenile and Family Court Services Commission on Children and Youth

GOAL 4 <i>Continuously improve the homeless crisis response system.</i>		
★ Performance Indicators of Success	Core Strategies	
<p>PI - 4.1 Countywide performance indicators are being used</p> <p>PI - 4.2 Trauma-informed care practices are being used</p> <p>PI - 4.3 Evidence-based practices are being used</p> <p>PI - 4.4 Shelter care standards have been developed and adopted</p>	<p>4.1 Performance measurement: Performance measures and data are used to drive decision-making and evaluate program progress.</p> <p>4.2 Data collection and sharing: Accurate data is collected and shared between organizations in the response system, and is shared (to the extent legal) with other systems of care working with people experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>4.3 Systems coordination: There is robust coordination and planning among different systems of care and service providers.</p> <p>4.4 Best investments of funding: Strategic investments of public funds are prioritized.</p> <p>4.5 Improve system capacity: Increasing provider capacity to improve outcomes is supported.</p> <p>4.6 Evidence-based practices: Evidence based practices are incorporated into the response system, including progressive engagement, harm reduction, trauma-informed care, person-centered care, motivational interviewing, and others.</p>	
🔄 New Action Steps	Implementation Timeline	Responsible Parties
<p>4.1.A Report on countywide performance measurement: Provide periodic reports on county-wide performance indicators and metrics to track progress</p>	3Q 2018	Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Division
<p>4.1.B Provide technical assistance on performance measurement: Provide technical assistance to homeless housing and services providers on performance indicators and data analysis</p>	2Q, 3Q, 4Q 2019	Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Division Department of Commerce
<p>4.1.D Washington State Quality Award: Apply for the Washington State Quality Award, an evaluation of overall program efficiency and effectiveness</p>	1Q, 2Q 2019	Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Division Kitsap Community Resources Catholic Community Services
<p>4.3.A Develop a Multi-Disciplinary Team model: Develop a strategy for integrating a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) approach into the Juvenile Court and other youth service programs</p>	2Q 2019	Kitsap Homeless Youth Taskforce
<p>4.3.B Engage McKinney-Vento representatives: Provide opportunities for networking, coordination, and training on homelessness for McKinney-Vento representatives from school districts</p>	1Q 2020	Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Division Olympic Educational Services District
<p>4.4.A Align funding sources: Realign existing funding and new funding sources to meet funding requirements, maximize efficiency, and improve outcomes and reporting</p>	1Q 2019	Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Division
<p>4.6.A Adopt trauma-informed care model: Implement trauma-informed care practices throughout the homeless crisis response system and the providers</p>	1Q, 2Q, 3Q, 4Q 2019	Kitsap Strong KC Housing & Homelessness Division Grantees

HEADING HOME: Kitsap Homeless Crisis Response and Housing Plan – 2018 Update

who are part of the system		Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition
4.6.B Training on evidence-based practices: Provide training to providers on trauma-informed care and on other evidence-based practices to expand organizational capacities and improve outcomes (e.g. progressive engagement, harm reduction, motivational interviewing)	2Q, 3Q, 4Q 2019	Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Division Department of Commerce
4.6.C Implement shelter care standards: Develop and implement minimum standards of care/code of ethics and enforcement method for resident shelters and overnight shelters	1Q 2020	Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Division KC Housing & Homelessness Division Grantees Housing Solutions Center

GOAL 5	<i>Expand community engagement.</i>
---------------	--

★ Performance Indicators of Success	Core Strategies
<p>PI - 5.1 Leadership group is convened and actively engaged</p> <p>PI - 5.2 Communication plan is developed and implemented</p> <p>PI - 5.3 Homelessness and affordable housing are included in on-going planning efforts in other sectors</p>	<p>5.1 Leadership: Accountable community leadership supports this work with strategic and innovative solutions.</p> <p>5.2 Community education: Materials and opportunities for education about homelessness issues are available to decision-makers and the public.</p> <p>5.3 Community engagement: Community leaders and citizens are engaged to inspire taking action.</p> <p>5.4 Integrated planning: Planning for homelessness and affordable housing are integrated with other planning efforts.</p> <p>5.5 Advocacy to increase funding: Advocacy for programs and funding that support homelessness and affordable housing is critical to implementing this plan.</p>

🌟 New Action Steps	Implementation Timeline	Responsible Parties
<p>5.1.A Leadership Group: Establish a strategic community leadership council on homelessness that includes participation at the executive level from a broad range of sectors including but not limited to: elected officials, policy-makers, homeless service providers, behavioral health providers, substance use treatment providers, medical providers, law enforcement, business-owners, emergency responders, land use planners, transit, education, youth providers, faith organizations, and others. The purpose of the group is to provide leadership on ending homelessness, improve cross-sector coordination of programs serving people experiencing homelessness, and devise and implement cross-sector strategies to support implementation of the Homeless Housing Plan.</p>	2Q 2019	Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Division Various other stakeholder groups (as listed)
<p>5.2.A Communication Plan: Create a coordinated communication and outreach plan about</p>	2Q 2019, then ongoing	Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition

HEADING HOME: Kitsap Homeless Crisis Response and Housing Plan – 2018 Update

homelessness to community members to raise awareness, de-stigmatize homelessness, promote compassion, encourage community engagement, using as many different avenues as possible (e.g. speakers bureau, newspapers, radio, podcasts, social media, website, events, etc.)		Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Division
5.2.B Data reporting: Provide periodic easily accessible reports on data about homelessness and affordable housing to stakeholders, elected officials, decision makers, community leaders, and the public	3Q 2018, then ongoing	Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Division
5.3.A Volunteer opportunities: Work with community partners on specific volunteer events to promote opportunities for personal connection and “humanizing” homelessness through volunteer projects	Ongoing	Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition United Way Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Division
5.3.B Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week: Sponsor events and activities during the annual national awareness week to increase community awareness and understanding of the issue of homelessness	4Q 2018, 4Q 2019, 4Q 2020	Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition
5.5.A Advocate for additional funding: Advocate for, create, and attract additional dedicated funding to Kitsap for homeless housing and services	Ongoing	Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition Community members and organizations

FUTURE ACTION STEPS	<i>Action Steps that are needed, but do not yet have responsible parties or an implementation timeline.</i>
----------------------------	--

🌟 Future Action Steps	Notes
Employment/training program: Implement a new employment/training program specifically designed for people moving out of homelessness (like FareStart, Millionair’s Club, etc.), possibly including an employment mentorship program	
Subsidized Housing for Households with Fixed Incomes: Develop additional new units of housing for households who are on a fixed income, including seniors and people with permanent disabilities	This project would require a lead agency and significant fundraising.

Defining and Documenting Success

Defining Success

For many years success in homeless programs was defined by how many people received housing services. Over time, the idea of what constitutes success has shifted to focus on outcomes for the individuals served. It is not enough to say that services were received, but instead we must determine the efficacy of those services in reducing homelessness. This can be a difficult process, since long-term follow-up of people who received housing or services is difficult and impractical.

Challenges

In addition, determining success in the realm of reducing overall homelessness is an elusive proposition. Several factors contribute to the challenge:

- **Dynamic Population** The homeless population is not static: there is a constant influx of people who are becoming homeless at any given time, while at the same time previously homeless people are being housed. While hundreds of homeless people may have been housed over a period of time, more have become homeless over the same period. Therefore, the overall number of homeless may have stayed the same or increased.
- **Prevention Efforts** Many of our efforts are geared at preventing homelessness and evaluating the long-term effectiveness of these programs is difficult to measure.
- **Inaccurate Data & Counts** There are numerous homeless people who either do not consider themselves to be homeless because they are “staying with friends” or “living in their car” or who do not want to be counted due to a variety of personal issues. Our community experiences these people and their homelessness, but they are not included in our voluntary homeless counts.

Challenges notwithstanding, it is crucial that we develop ways to assess whether the time, effort, and financial commitments to the issue of homelessness are effective.

Tools

In addition to data from community partners, two primary tools will be used to assist with evaluating success:

Annual Point in Time Count

Each January the Kitsap County Department of Human Services Housing and Homelessness Program in partnership with the Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition is mandated to carry out a countywide count of homeless people, both sheltered (currently receiving subsidized emergency or transitional housing) and unsheltered (living on the streets, in cars, with friends, or identified as incarcerated transients). Participation by people experiencing homelessness is voluntary. Data collected from this effort provides the state with basic statistics about Kitsap’s progress in reducing homelessness, and provides the County and the community with information about the housing and services gaps.

Homeless Management Information System

This state- and federally-mandated database project collects detailed data about users of homeless housing and services. The collected data is used by the state to analyze the resources necessary to move individuals from homelessness to self-sufficiency. On a local level, it facilitates coordination among agencies and delivery of services to homeless individuals. It also allows excellent quality demographic and programmatic information to be collected about homeless households who are receiving services.

Performance Indicators

For each of the Plan’s five goals, specific indicators of success are listed. Some are data-based, whereas others are performance-based. These performance indicators are also drawn from measures developed by the Washington State Department of Commerce, HUD, and referenced in the HEARTH Act.

Performance Indicators for the Kitsap Homeless Crisis Response and Housing Plan				
	Name	Measure	Metric	Source
GOAL 1: Make homelessness rare.				
1.1 ★	Prevention	Fewer people experience homelessness for the first time	# of new people who have become homeless	HMIS
1.2	Institutional Discharges	Fewer people discharged from institutions to homelessness	# of people discharged from institutions	Hospitals, Jail, Foster Care, etc.
GOAL 2: Make homelessness brief.				
2.1	Term of Homelessness	People experience fewer days of homelessness before being sheltered	Average # of days before getting into emergency shelter	Community Waiting List, HMIS
2.2 ★	Term in Shelter	People experience fewer days of homelessness in shelters	Average # of days spent in shelter	HMIS
2.3 ★	Unsheltered Homelessness	Fewer people are experiencing unsheltered homelessness	# of people unsheltered, sheltered, or in temporary housing	Point in Time Count, HSC
GOAL 3: Make homelessness one-time.				
3.1 ★	Exit Destination	More people exit homelessness into stable housing	# of people exiting from each type of program to each type of destination	HMIS
3.2 ★	Income at Exit	More people exit homelessness with increased income and/or benefits	# of people exiting programs with increased income	HMIS
3.3 ★	Housing Stability	Fewer people return to homelessness after being stably housed	# returns to homelessness within 2 years of stable exit	HMIS
GOAL 4: Continuously improve the homeless response system.				
4.1	Countywide Indicators	Countywide performance indicators are being used	Countywide indicators report is being produced	KHHC, KC Human Services
4.2	Trauma-informed Practices	Trauma-informed care practices are being used	# of	KHHC, KC Human Services
4.3	Evidence-based Practices	Evidence-based practices are being used in delivering services	# of KC contracts that include evidence-based practices	KHHC, KC Human Services
4.4	Shelter Care Standards	Shelter care standards have been developed and adopted	# of shelters that have adopted care standards	HSC Advisory Council
GOAL 5: Expand community engagement.				
5.1	Leadership Group	Leadership group is convened and actively engaged	Leadership group is selected and is meeting	KC Human Services
5.2	Communication Plan	Communication plan is developed and implemented	Communication plan is being used	KHHC, KC Human Services
5.3	Coordinated Planning	Homelessness and affordable housing are included in on-going planning efforts in other sectors	Housing and homelessness representatives participate in planning efforts	KC Human Services, other planning groups

★ Denotes performance measures that are mandated by the Department of Commerce.

Conclusion

Ending Homelessness Requires Commitment

Making homelessness rare, brief, and one-time must be one of our community's top priorities. It will require us to meld specific strategies to decrease homelessness and to implement broader policy changes to achieve an overall increase in affordable housing.

Our county's Homeless Housing Plan is an expression of a collective commitment to actively seek long-term and sustainable solutions to the issue rather than to simply manage episodes of homelessness as they occur.

We will need to examine our past assumptions about this issue and honestly and critically assess our present activities and initiatives. We need to do business differently – changing systems, redirecting existing resources, and securing additional funding commitments.

We must rely on all community stakeholders to drive policy changes that will result in reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness in Kitsap County:

- County Commissioners, Mayors, City Council Members, Port Commissioners
- Tribes
- Federal, State and County Agencies / Department Heads
- Business & civic leaders
- General Public / Homeless Population
- Housing Developers & Service Providers
- Non-profit organizations
- Foundations
- Faith-based organizations

Moving Forward to Reduce Homelessness

It is evident that a new approach is needed since people continue to become homeless; those who are chronically homeless continue to lapse into homelessness using precious resources without successfully regaining housing; and too many people are turned away from assistance because of lack of capacity. This Plan proposes strategies to correct the flaws. This will require community investment. It builds on the successful programs we already have in place, expanding capacity to meet the level of need, and implementing policies and agreements to weave them together into one comprehensive and effective countywide system of care.

However, our success dependent on all of the organizations that make up the Kitsap Homeless Crisis Response System continuing to work together to implement the core strategies and the new action steps in this Plan. Together, we can make a huge impact on many people's futures.

The Future of Homelessness

Many social and governmental factors beyond the control of Kitsap community members contribute to the epidemic of homelessness: low minimum wage, declining job market, lack of affordable housing, and high housing and rental prices. Huge efforts will be needed to meet the needs of people who become homeless.

However, with a clear plan to reduce homelessness, the community's investment of resources, and an unwavering commitment to our community members in crisis, we can be successful in making homelessness rare, brief, and one-time.

Appendix A. Kitsap County Homeless Shelter & Housing Availability Matrix

Note: This chart shows public and non-profit shelter and affordable housing options. Additional shelter is provided by faith-based organizations on a small scale. Additional units of affordable housing are also available in the private market, some subsidized through rental assistance programs.

Type of Shelter/Housing		Accessible to These Populations														
		Total # of beds/units available	No Income	Single Men	Single Women	Women w/children	Men w/children	Couples	Large Families w/children	Un-accompanied Youth	Veterans	Pets Allowed	Criminal History	Sex-Offender	Substance Use Disordered	Behavioral Health
No CM	Severe Weather Shelter	about 70	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Winter Shelter (Dec - Mar)	50	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Night-by-Night Shelter	20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Case by Case	Case by Case	Case by Case	
Yes Case Management	Youth Overnight Shelter (ages 16-21)	6	✓	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓		Case by Case			
	Safe Car Park	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	Case by Case			
	Legal Tent Camp	0														
	Respite Shelter (Medical care available)	0														
	Short-term Residential Shelter (up to 3 months)	105	✓	✓	✓	✓	No girls 10+ in dorm		✓	18+	✓		Case by Case			
	Transitional Housing	174		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		Case by Case	Case by Case	✓	
	Tiny House Village - Permanent Supportive Housing	0														
	Permanent Supportive Housing - Rq'd Treatment	122 beds/units		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		Case by Case	Case by Case	✓	✓
	Housing First Model - Harm Reduction	4 units					DV only									
	Crisis Triage Center (up to 5 days stay)	16	✓	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		✓	TBD	Case by Case	✓	✓	
	Residential Treatment Facility	16 total (11-30 day, 5 permanent)	Medicaid eligible	✓	✓						✓	TBD	✓	✓	✓	
No Case Management	Oxford Houses	185 beds		✓	✓			✓			✓		✓		outpatient	
	Boarding Houses (identified through HSC)	8 rooms		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				
	Permanent Subsidized Housing for 55+ or Disabled	191		✓	✓	N/A	N/A	✓	N/A	N/A	✓	✓				
	Permanent Subsidized Housing for 62+	331		✓	✓	N/A	N/A	✓	N/A	N/A	✓	✓				
	Housing Choice Vouchers	1938		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				
	Veteran Assistance Supported Housing (VASH) Vouchers	42		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓				
	Permanent Subsidized Housing for Individuals and Families	913		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				

KEY

Housing Options are Available

No Housing Available

Case by Case Consideration

Updated 4/10/18