

Chelan-Douglas Homeless Housing Strategic Plan 2019 - 2024

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- The Chelan-Douglas Homeless Task Force (formerly the Homeless Steering Committee)
- The Chelan-Douglas Homeless Advisory Committee (formerly the Homeless Task Force)
- The members of the CE Site Group
- The residents of Chelan and Douglas Counties

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Introduction

About the Original Ten-Year Plan & Subsequent Updates

In 2005, the Washington State Legislature passed the Homeless Housing and Assistance Act calling on each county to develop a local ten-year plan (“the Plan”) to reduce and eliminate homelessness. In addition, the law requires the counties to:

- Establish a Homeless Task Force,
- Use homeless funds generated as a result of the legislation specifically for homeless reduction activities,
- Implement a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to measure performance, and
- Conduct a Point-in-Time Count, an annual, one-time “snapshot” of all homeless individuals in our region

Following the direction of the legislature, representatives of the City of Wenatchee, the City of East Wenatchee and Chelan and Douglas counties came together and established the Homeless Task Force (formerly the Homeless Steering Committee) to direct a regional response to homelessness. This cooperative body serves as a joint coordinating and grant-making group for both counties. The City of Wenatchee (“the City”) accepted the role of facilitating and administering the Plan, and the associated local and state funds. The partners have revisited and affirmed this agreement over the ensuing years, most recently in 2019.

The City coordinates regular updates to the Plan in Chelan & Douglas Counties with the direction of the Homeless Task Force and the collaboration and input of the Chelan Douglas Homeless Advisory Committee and various members of the community. Each iteration of the Plan documents the community's commitment to reducing homelessness regionally while outlining strategies that focus on long-term, proactive, and sustainable solutions.

Mandate

In 2018, the Legislature passed House Bill 1570¹ calling on all counties to update their local plans by Dec. 1, 2019. As the administrative entity for both the homeless housing funds and the Plan, the City has facilitated the development of this document to meet the Legislative mandate.

Historical Approaches to Addressing Homelessness

In 2005, the Plan drew on the best practices available at the time. It took an incremental approach, called “Housing Ready”, to resolving housing crises. In order to be “Housing Ready”, a household had to meet certain criteria prescribed by their housing service, often an emergency shelter or transitional housing program. This might include getting a job, staying sober, attending mandatory meetings and case-management, obeying curfews, and abstaining from other prohibited activities. After completing the requisite personal development goals during their stay in temporary housing, they would be “ready” to enter permanent housing.

Since that time, research has demonstrated the efficacy of Rapid Re-housing and “Housing First” approaches^{2 3}. The Housing First approach holds that a homeless individual’s first and primary need is to obtain stable housing, and that service providers should follow with supports when the household obtains housing and in the months after.

Beyond a preferred approach to addressing homelessness in 2005, the Plan described homelessness as a narrow, isolated issue. The activities within fell to agencies that specialized in homeless services. In reality, homelessness

¹ Revised Code of Washington 43.185C.050: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=43.185C.050>

² Montgomery, Ann Elizabeth, “Housing Chronically Homeless Veterans: Evaluating The Efficacy of a Housing First Approach To HUD-VASH”, March 2013, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/jcop.21554>

³ Temberis, Sam et al, Housing First, Consumer Choice, and Harm Reduction for Homeless Individuals With a Dual Diagnosis”, April 2003, <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.94.4.651>

requires a broad community response. Addressing the traumas and needs of people living in a housing crisis depends on the cooperation of hospitals, mental health providers, chemical dependency providers, law enforcement, non-housing social service providers, school districts, veterans' organizations, faith-based groups, business groups, and the broader community. Local efforts cannot operate in a silo, and must align with broader regional, state, and national initiatives such as the regional Accountable Communities of Health, the Washington State Homeless Housing Strategic Plan, and the Federal Strategic Plan.

Progress Since Last Plan Update

Much progress has been made since the Plan was updated in 2015. Below are some highlights.

Establish the Coordinated Entry Process

The City facilitated the initiation of a coordinated intake system that spans both counties. This system provides five different sites that screen and refer households to local housing providers.

Homeless Outreach Program

The Homeless Task Force and the City collaborated with the Women's Resource Center (WRC) of North Central Washington to expand the WRC's Homeless Outreach Program across all of Chelan and Douglas counties.

Provider Training

The City coordinates social service training opportunities for providers serving homeless households.

Landlord Tenant Liaison

A community-based process developed a model for a landlord liaison program. The Homeless Task Force awarded a grant to WRC and over thirty households have been permanently housed in two years.

Shifting to Housing First Approach & Adopting Low-Barrier Principles

The Homeless Task Force and the City have encouraged providers to evaluate their programs for Housing First and Low-Barrier fidelity. Many providers have revised criteria or started new programs to meet the needs they see in the community.

Plan Development

This document is the result of extensive community consultation and stakeholder collaboration. The City facilitated stakeholder meetings with the Homeless Advisory Committee as well as other groups. The City provided for an extensive public comment period, and brought the plan to the city councils of both the City of Wenatchee and City of East Wenatchee as well as the commissions of both counties. The collected written and verbal public input created a plan that reflects the priorities of the residents of Chelan and Douglas counties while maintaining alignment with state and federal initiatives.

Purpose

Governance & Roles

The Plan describes the strategic priorities of the Homeless Task Force, the inter-governmental working group representing Chelan and Douglas Counties and their constituent jurisdictions. The Plan relies on the continued work of the Chelan-Douglas Homeless Advisory Committee, a coalition of diverse individuals and organizations committed to addressing homelessness in our region. The City, via an inter-local agreement with both counties and the City of East Wenatchee, continues to serve as the administrative entity for the Plan as well as the state and local homeless funds.

Scope

The Chelan-Douglas Homeless Task Force and the Chelan-Douglas Homeless Advisory Committee present this document as a regional roadmap to reducing and ultimately eliminating homelessness. This plan supports and strengthens certain government activities and efforts while inviting both public and private agencies to consult, plan, and collaborate in the reduction of homelessness.

Though the Plan describes regional efforts to eliminate homelessness, it is not a comprehensive review of the homeless continuum of care; rather, the Plan assumes the existence and operation of a continuum of care, and identifies specific areas for focused attention and improvement. The six priorities described herein represent the goals of the Homeless Task Force.

Approach

While maintaining a commitment to Housing First and Rapid-Rehousing strategies, the Plan will guide the community's efforts to prevent and reduce homelessness over the next several years with the expectation that:

- Services will rely on data, both qualitative and quantitative, to aid in program design and decision-making;
- Funders will use the Plan in making decisions regarding allocations of resources;
- Providers of homeless services will use the Plan to inform service delivery and program design; and
- Specialized task forces will be developed to implement specific parts of the Plan.

Vision

This document will enhance the community's response to preventing and ending homelessness and work for:

A community where homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time.

Priorities

To further the vision presented above, the Chelan-Douglas Homeless Task Force has identified six priorities to guide community work on reducing and eliminating homelessness.

- Priority 1: Increase capacity and strengthen practices to prevent housing crises and homelessness.
- Priority 2: Identify and engage all people experiencing homelessness as quickly as possible.
- Priority 3: Provide access to temporary accommodations to all unsheltered people experiencing homelessness who need it.
- Priority 4: Streamline and improve the Coordinated Entry process and its connections to housing and services.
- Priority 5: Assist people to move swiftly into permanent housing with appropriate and person-centered services.
- Priority 6: Prevent returns to homelessness through connections to adequate services and opportunities.

Landscape Assessment: Homelessness in Chelan-Douglas Counties

The Causes of Homelessness

Homelessness has many causes, and often these factors to combine to bring about a household's housing crisis. Among these are Housing Costs & Scarcity; Poverty, Employment & Wages; Disabling Conditions; Substance Use Disorders; Criminal History; and Domestic Violence.

Housing Costs & Scarcity

The cost of housing has risen steadily in both counties over the past decade. From 2009 to 2019 area median incomes have grown 17% from \$58,600 to \$68,400 for the Wenatchee MSA (Chelan and Douglas Counties)⁴, however the Fair Market Rent ("FMR") for a two-bedroom rose 41% from \$696 to \$981 in the same period.⁵ With rising housing costs, households must pay a higher proportion of their income to retain their housing, creating a housing "cost-burden".

Data from the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University⁶ for 2017 estimates that 34% of the Wenatchee MSA's renter households are cost-burdened: paying 30% or more of their income towards housing. Those households deemed "severely cost-burdened", around 14% of renters, spend over 50% of their income on housing. Households seeking to avoid this cost-burden will seek out more affordable rentals, creating scarcity within the regional housing supply.

The scarcity of rentals, especially affordable units, hampers the ability of people experiencing homelessness to return to permanent housing. In Chelan and Douglas counties, a report issued by the Runstad Center for Real Estate Studies at the University of Washington estimated a rental vacancy rate of 0-1% in the fall of 2017⁷, a finding confirmed by a Housing Needs Assessment commissioned by the City of Wenatchee.⁸ A household trying to resolve a housing crisis has few affordable options to rent.

Poverty, Employment & Wages

Income and generational wealth contribute to a household's risk of homelessness. Both employment and wage growth allow households, especially those with few intergenerational resources, to retain their current housing or seek housing that better meets their needs. Data from 2008 to 2018 have shown a change of \$36,837 to \$39,765, or 7% growth in average wages⁹ across Chelan and Douglas Counties. The top employers in the Counties, agriculture; retail; and food service, showed average annual wages of \$26,418, \$29,400, and \$20,120 for the year 2017¹⁰. That same year, the Federal Poverty Guideline was \$24,600¹¹ for a family of four. Figure A, below, describes the housing affordability crisis in Chelan and Douglas counties ("Wenatchee MSA"), one in which households are increasingly under enormous financial strain to pay their housing costs. In addition, national trade policy, including foreign tariffs on agricultural exports, affect key industries in Chelan and Douglas counties and harm the livelihoods of local families.

⁴ Income limits retrieved from: <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il.html#2019>

⁵ Fair Market Rent data retrieved from: <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/fmr.html#2009>

⁶ Housing burden data retrieved at: <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/son-2019-cost-burdens-map>

⁷ See: <http://realestate.washington.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/apartmentfall-2017.pdf>

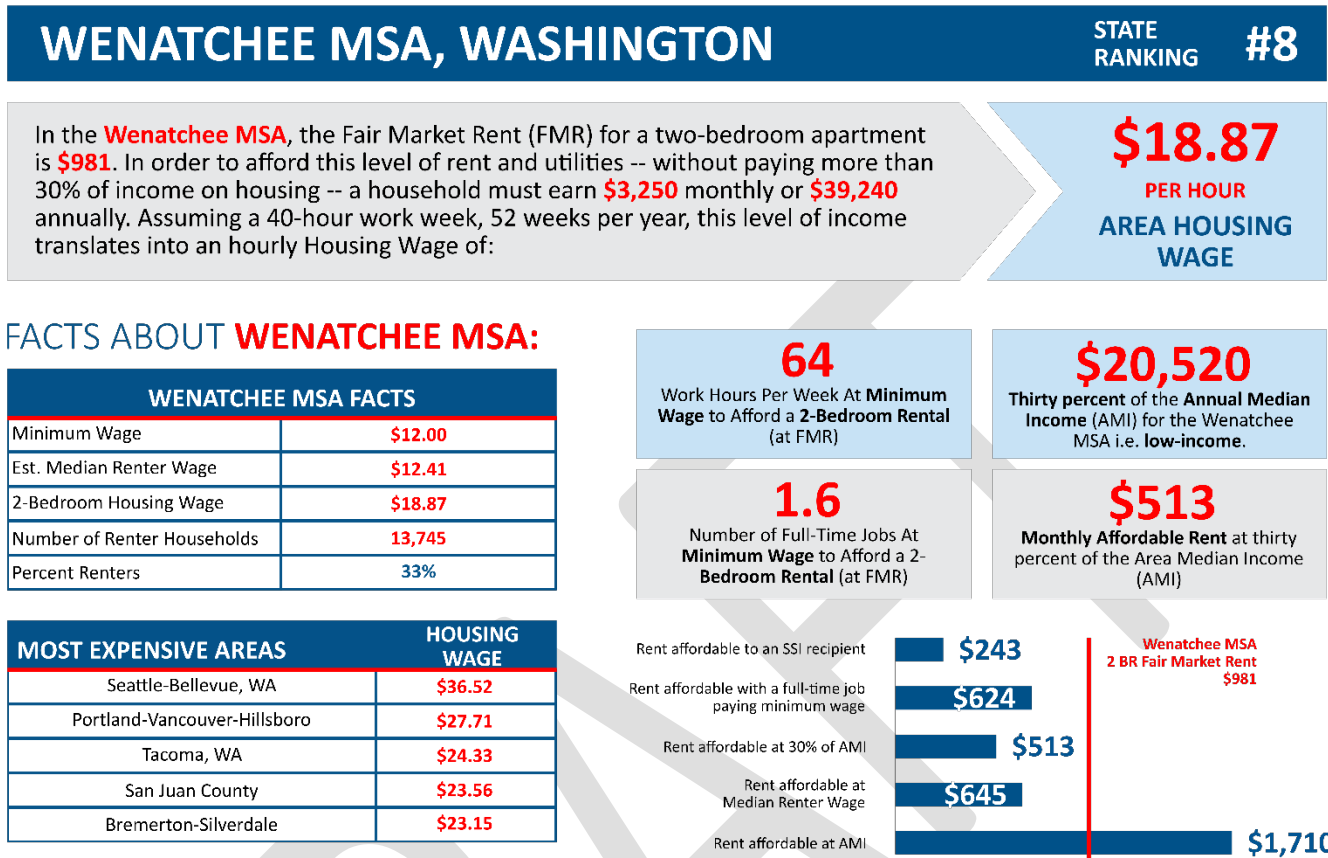
⁸ Housing Needs Assessment, Berk Consulting: <https://www.wenatcheewa.gov/home/showdocument?id=15122>

⁹ Source: http://chelandouglastrends.com/graph.cfm?cat_id=2&sub_cat_id=1&ind_id=3, accessed 8/27/2019

¹⁰ Source: http://chelandouglastrends.com/graph.cfm?cat_id=2&sub_cat_id=1&ind_id=4, accessed 8/27/2019

¹¹ Source: <https://www.peoplekeep.com/blog/2017-federal-poverty-level-guidelines>, accessed 8/27/2019

Figure A: Housing Affordability in the Wenatchee Metropolitan Statistical Area (“MSA”), 2019^{12 13}



Disabling Conditions

Based on self-reporting, which experts believe undercounts the true magnitude of the problem, 22% of the homeless in 2016 reported disabilities¹⁴. Twenty-five percent (25%) were found to have serious mental illness, many of whom are extremely vulnerable. The closing of mental health hospitals across the nation, which began in earnest in the 1990s, continues to place mentally ill persons in jeopardy as community supports have proven inadequate to assure their stability. Sadly, rents that are affordable to persons on SSI are only \$243 per month, well below the Fair Market Rent (“FMR”) for a two-bedroom apartment at \$981 in the Wenatchee MSA¹⁵. Nationally, the rate of people receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI) benefits rose 9% between 2008 and 2017. In Chelan and Douglas counties, the same population grew 15% during that time.

Substance use disorders

Substance abuse causes and exacerbates the dysfunction of many homeless persons. Often alcohol or drugs are a self-administered medication used to cope with pain and other issues they face. Substance abuse also becomes a major obstacle to recovery and return to self-sufficiency.

¹² The Wenatchee MSA is a US Census Bureau defined region that comprises both Chelan and Douglas Counties.

¹³ NLIHC, *Out of Reach 2019*, https://reports.nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/OOR_2019.pdf

¹⁴ Department of Housing and Urban Development, *The 2016 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress*, <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2016-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

¹⁵ NLIHC, *Out of Reach 2019*, https://reports.nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/OOR_2019.pdf

Criminal history

Persons with criminal records have a much more difficult time in obtaining living wage jobs and obtaining rental housing, let alone obtaining a mortgage. In addition, persons leaving correctional institutions without strong community/family supports are highly susceptible to becoming homeless upon their release.

Domestic violence

Nationally, 30% of the homeless report having experienced domestic violence; and 50%¹⁶ of homeless women with children identified domestic violence as a factor in their homelessness. Domestic violence is particularly devastating to children with many suffering child abuse or neglect as a result. Children who suffer from abuse often experience long-term emotional trauma and are at greater risk of becoming homeless later in their lives.

Local Data

Addressing homelessness in rural communities like Chelan and Douglas counties presents unique challenges. The dispersed nature of the population reduces the visibility of homelessness as people take shelter in campgrounds, parks, and other areas far removed from urban centers. Families band together in support of one another, sharing rooms and risking their tenancy to ensure that their loved ones and friends have a safe place to stay. Regardless of its visibility, homelessness has a powerful impact on the communities of Chelan and Douglas counties.

Point-In-Time Count

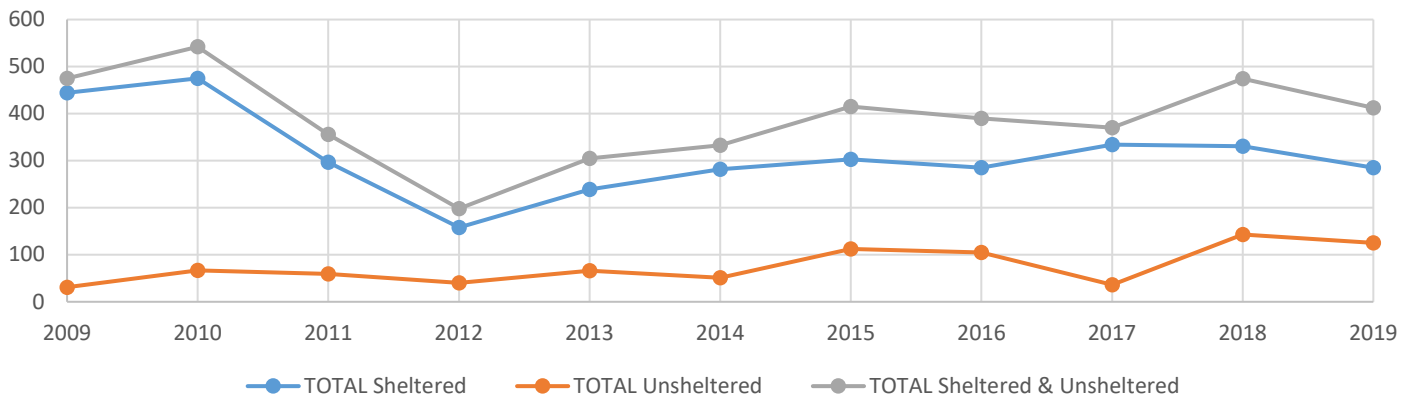
Chelan and Douglas counties have commissioned a Point-In-Time Count of homelessness every January since 2006. Since 2013, the City has coordinated this event. The 2019 Point-In-Time Count found that 412 people lacked a permanent residence and met the Washington State definition of

Figure B: Point-In-Time Count Summary
 In 2019 the annual Point-In-Time Count estimated

412 people

lived on the streets, in vehicles, in shelters, or in transitional housing in Chelan and Douglas Counties.

Figure C: Point-in-Time Count by Year



homelessness. The data collection and reporting methodologies have evolved over time, but Figure C: Point-In-Time Count by Year shows the trends in homeless persons identified from 2009 to 2019.

In addition to the data shown, the 2019 Point-In-Time Count revealed that 36 chronically homeless people resided in Chelan and Douglas counties, a 112% increase since 2009 when 17 people were counted. These households presented as primarily single-adult and predominately male. These households often present with complex physical and behavioral health needs, and tend to use emergency services at higher rates than the population overall.

¹⁶ Source: <https://www.domesticshelters.org/resources/statistics/homelessness-and-domestic-violence>

Coordinated Entry & HMIS Data

In 2015, Chelan and Douglas counties responded to a federal mandate to create a system of coordinated entry for all housing services. As of 2019, this system comprises

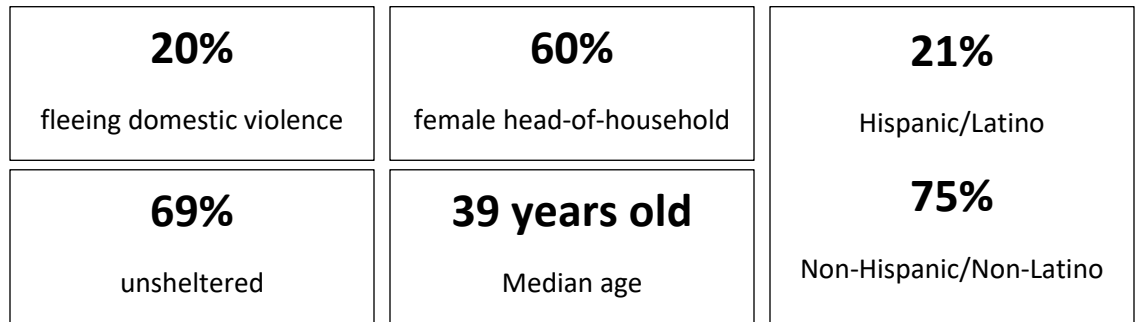


Figure D: Coordinated Entry Summary Household Data

five geographically dispersed sites that provide screening, in-take and referral services for all households seeking housing assistance funded with state or local grants. Between 2017 and 2019, HMIS records show that they served 1,387 households. This system is fully integrated within the State’s Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), and allows for the cross-referencing of housing in-takes with program enrollments. Figure D shows summary statistics about the households screened through the coordinated entry process.

Sub-population Data

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recognizes the unique needs of certain households. Figure E below describes the portion of HMIS program enrollments for each of these household types for July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2019.

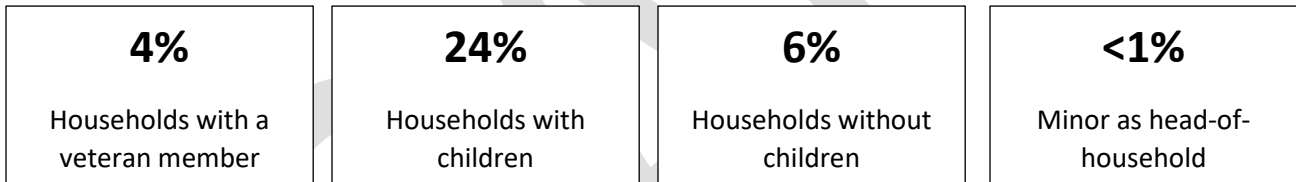


Figure E: HMIS Sub-population Summary Data

The Cost of Homelessness

The human toll of homelessness cannot be overstated. It rips apart families, traumatizes children, and pushes individuals into harmful behaviors. Struggling to meet the needs of safety, security, and privacy that come with a place to call home, individuals stumble as they balance their mental and physical health. As public services intervene, the community as a whole pays to help manage these crises.

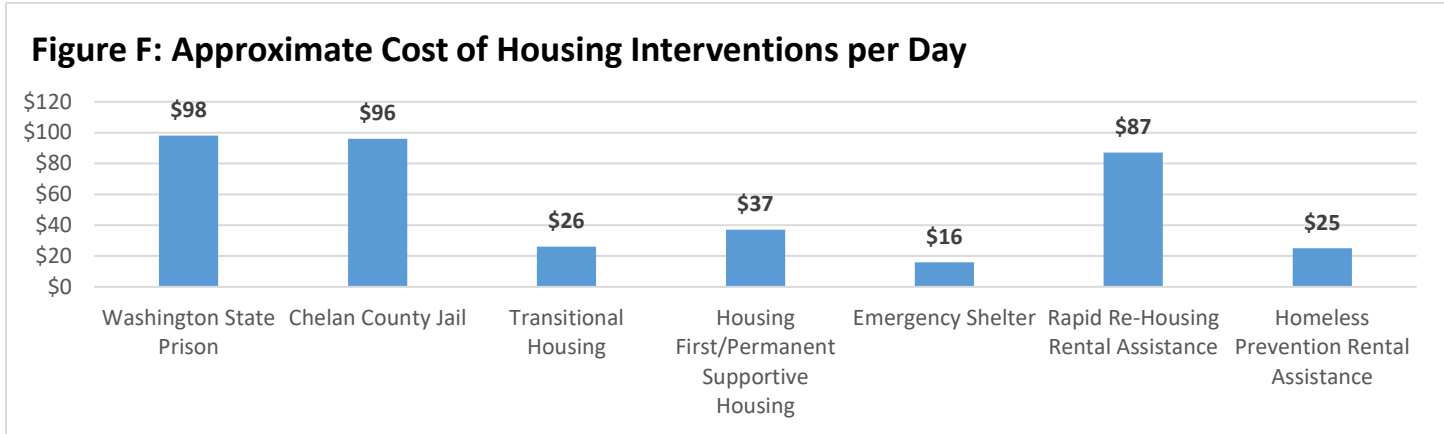
Private businesses and taxpayers take on the burden of providing for these homeless households in a multitude of ways. As people experiencing homelessness take shelter in public spaces, police and proprietors have to respond to welfare and public safety concerns more frequently. EMS, hospitals, and the local fire district respond to the needs of homeless residents, and local treatment and behavioral health providers struggle to make sure that transient patients follow-through on their recovery plans. Jails come to serve as expensive tax-funded way stations, and emergency rooms offer respite from the weather and the realities of unsheltered living. The lack of stable, permanent, affordable housing precludes the effective, on-going treatment and management of mental health and substance use disorders.

The Figure F below details the cost of different housing interventions based on the best data available. The Washington State Dept. of Commerce releases report cards for each county¹⁷ at the end of every State Fiscal Year (SFY) detailing the

¹⁷ County Report Card -

<https://public.tableau.com/profile/comhau#!/vizhome/WashingtonStateHomelessSystemPerformanceCountyReportCardsSFY2018/ReportCard>

performance of that county’s homeless crisis response system and the costs associated with helping households obtain permanent housing.



18

The average cost of a hospital bed for one day, in Washington State, is **\$3,101**.

Source: George Kaiser Family Foundation¹¹

Emergency medical and public safety services prove to be a costly and ineffective approach to help households resolve their housing crises. Luckily, cost studies around the nation have proven that many of these individuals and households can succeed in returning to stable housing and self-sufficiency with the right combination of resources and supports. Studies also show that, once housed, the use of emergency services drops sharply as stability improves.^{19 20}

¹⁸ Sources: (1) Washington Dept. of Corrections, 2016, (2) Wenatchee Police Dept., 2019, (3)(5)(6) <https://public.tableau.com/profile/comhau#!/vizhome/WashingtonStateHomelessSystemPerformanceCountyReportCardsSFY2018/ReportCard> accessed 8/29/2019, (4) DESC JAMA Eastlake 1811 Study https://www.desc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/DESC_1811_JAMA_info.pdf accessed 8/29/2019, (7) Washington State Dept. of Commerce Homeless System Performance State-wide

Source of hospital bed cost, <https://www.kff.org/health-costs/state-indicator/expenses-per-inpatient-day-by-ownership/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

¹⁹ 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

²⁰ Larimer, Mary et al, “Health Care and Public Service Use and Costs Before and After Provision of Housing for Chronically Homeless Persons With Severe Alcohol Problems”, April 2009, <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/183666>

The Landscape of Services

To achieve a vision of ensuring homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time, Chelan and Douglas Counties, along with the cities of Wenatchee and East Wenatchee, have come together and committed to investing in evidence-based best practices. They recognize that the indirect management of homelessness through emergency services, law enforcement, and ineffective temporary solutions results in greater costs for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, and for the community at-large.

Current Services

Over the past several decades, through public and private efforts, an increasingly complex patchwork of homeless services have arisen to serve the many needs of people who lack a permanent residence or are at-risk of losing their housing.

- (1) **Homeless Prevention Rent Assistance** – seeks to avert a household’s eviction by assisting with overdue rent or utilities expenses.
- (2) **Homeless Outreach** – engages with households residing outside to better connect them to services, employment, shelter, and permanent housing.
- (3) **Emergency Shelters** – provide safe, short-term housing for households with a focus on quickly regaining permanent housing.
- (4) **Transitional Housing** – are programs designed to provide housing and appropriate supportive services to people who are literally homeless to facilitate movement to permanent housing.
- (5) **Rapid-Rehousing Vouchers** – secure permanent housing quickly through housing identification, move-in and rent assistance, and case management based on progressive engagement.
- (6) **Permanent Supportive Housing** – performs a key role as a resource for chronically homeless households with high needs. Provides a permanent, affordable, and safe place for the household to thrive with supportive services and case management.
- (7) **Permanent Housing for Formerly Homeless Persons** – furthers the stability of formerly homeless households by providing targeted, affordable rental opportunities.
- (8) **Supportive Services** – wrap-around households as they transition into permanent housing.

System Gaps and Needs

Despite more options than ever before for households experiencing housing instability in Chelan and Douglas counties, key obstacles remain.

Housing Service Providers in Chelan & Douglas Counties



- The need for higher-access services and low-barrier emergency shelter** – The 2019 Point-In-Time Count of Homelessness reported that 127 people lacked shelter in Chelan and Douglas counties and 412 people lacked a permanent residence. The report identified 36 people as chronically homeless, with a combined period of homelessness totaling one year or more and a disabling condition. Currently, no shelters in Chelan and Douglas counties are ADA-accessible, and all shelters require clean alcohol and drug tests. All transitional housing programs and some shelters in both counties require some form of rent or work-trade. Finally, many shelters cannot accommodate pets or service animals. Taken together 44% of households screened through the coordinated entry process face two or more of these barriers, and subsequently cannot access temporary housing and services. Many resources in the two counties still follow a “Housing Ready” model, and serve households with fewer obstacles to securing permanent housing.
- Creating homeless medical respite resources** – An analysis of patient services by Confluence Health and Central Washington Hospital showed that of 165 homeless inpatient services provided over a two-year period, 67% were due to illness and 15% were due to mental health. Median length of stay was 5 days, but some stayed as long as 126 days, at great cost to federal, state and local care systems. Currently, no housing provider in the community can accommodate a patient recovering from medical treatment outside of a hospital setting. Therefore, hospitals are reluctant to discharge patients who no longer require ongoing medical intervention, but simply need supervised respite space to recover.
- Streamlining referral processes to and within the homeless crisis response system** – Though the Homeless Crisis Response System continues to innovate and improve, challenges remain. In focus groups, community members report being passed around like a “hot potato” from one agency to another, and social service staff report confusion around the criteria and referral processes for other housing and non-housing programs in Chelan and Douglas counties. Law enforcement regularly requests assistance with persons experiencing homelessness, but they are unsure who to call and what services they will provide.
- Enhancing high quality, equitable services** – The City and the Homeless Task Force have implemented a homeless provider training program, in line with Dept. of Commerce guidance, to assist agencies in providing high quality programs. However, service gaps still exist. Not all agencies have access to bilingual staff or interpretative services. HMIS data analysis reveals that though the Latino/Hispanic population represents 29% of the total population of both counties, they represent only 21% of households identifying as homeless. Though this may be due to cultural differences, there are concerns about the lack of culturally competent services and the absence of underrepresented communities in the Homeless Crisis Response System. In addition, clients have shared concerns about possible violations of State and Federal Fair Housing Laws.
- Prioritizing the greatest needs** – Both State and Federal regulations call on the local Homeless Crisis Response System to prioritize households with the greatest need. The system has made progress in this regard, but recent coordinated entry data shows that a household in top 20% of most vulnerable households waits a median of 98 days for assistance, while the overall waiting time for all households is a median of 76 days.
- Strengthening Housing First** – The philosophical shift from a “Housing Ready” system to a “Housing First” system requires time and persistent effort. The local Homeless Crisis Response System continues to work to adopt Housing First principles within programs and across services. Regardless, “Housing Ready” approaches continue to persist for many programs, with an emphasis on “stabilization” within shelters or transitional housing before permanent housing placement can occur.

44%

of households seeking emergency services reported barriers that could limit access to those key supportive services including:

- Physical disability
- Substance use disorder
- Criminal history
- Lack of income

5 days

average length of stay for homeless patients admitted to Central Washington Hospital.

A Path Home:

The Chelan-Douglas Homeless Housing Strategic Plan 2019-2024

Priority 1

Increase capacity and strengthen practices to prevent housing crises and homelessness.

Gaps addressed:

- Streamlining referral processes
- Prioritizing the greatest needs

Strategies	Activities	Responsible Entity	Timeline	Measure of Success
1.1 - Strengthen the collection, reporting, and utilization of data in all areas of the homeless crisis response system.	1.1.1 - Expand data-sharing protocols between different agencies serving people experiencing homelessness.	City of Wenatchee		- Meetings with partner agencies - Data-sharing agreements & protocols established
	1.1.2 - Analyze data, both quantitative and qualitative, to identify areas of improvement in all aspects of the Homeless Crisis Response System.	City of Wenatchee		- Clear, concise data analysis policies and procedures developed and implemented.
	1.1.3 - Present regular reports on grantee and system performance to governing and stakeholder groups, as well as the public.	City of Wenatchee		- Produce a report schedule for Homeless Task Force
1.2 - Further engage and support state and local officials, and educate partners and the public about the size and scope of homelessness in Chelan-Douglas counties.	1.2.1 - Further community engagement through consistent and well-planned outreach around the scope and scale of homelessness with public officials, partners, and the public throughout Chelan-Douglas counties.	City of Wenatchee		- Consistent, regular community engagement activities
1.3 - Promote the development of safe and affordable housing.	1.3.1 - Provide input that informs planners and decision-makers and supports regional affordable housing efforts as they relate to homelessness.	City of Wenatchee		- Written and verbal input as requested by community partners
	1.3.2 - Encourage revised housing development standards in local zoning codes that allow for diversification of housing stock.	Our Valley Our Future Local governments		- Amended codes and standards
1.4 - Coordinate with other care systems (hospitals, jails, nursing homes, etc.) to identify and engage at-risk individuals and families with resources and opportunities that strengthen housing stability.	1.4.1 - Use Homeless Advisory Committee as a forum for agencies to share about their services and building working relationships.	City of Wenatchee Homeless Advisory Committee		- Diversity of Homeless Advisory Committee membership increased - Number of unique presenters to Homeless Advisory Committee increased
	1.4.2 - Coordinate with the North Central Accountable Community of Health to identify and assist households in healthcare settings that are at-risk of losing their housing.	City of Wenatchee NCACH		- Coordination meeting to develop referral protocol(s)
1.5 - Prevent homelessness for households facing loss of housing through timely rent assistance, and low-cost problem solving and mediation strategies.	1.5.1 - Provide targeted rent assistance to households at high risk of homelessness or with a history of homelessness.	City of Wenatchee CE Site Group		- 90% of households receiving prevention are at high-risk or have a documented history of homelessness.

Priority 2

Identify and engage all people experiencing homelessness as quickly as possible.

Gaps addressed:

- Streamlining referral processes
- Prioritizing the greatest needs
- Strengthening Housing First

Strategies	Activities	Responsible Entity	Timeline	Measure of Success
2.1 - Provide targeted, professional outreach to households residing in places not meant for habitation.	2.1.1 – Collaborate with the WRC Homeless Outreach Program to offer mobile CE services and to better link unsheltered households to the homeless crisis response system.	WRC City of Wenatchee		- WRC Outreach staff offer CE assessment services
	2.1.2 – Strengthen outreach programs ability to assist unsheltered homeless households.	City of Wenatchee		- At least 50% of engaged clients move into a positive outcome destination such as an emergency shelter, transitional housing program, substance abuse treatment center, or permanent housing situation.
2.2 - Linking people to the homeless crisis response system through agency cooperation and coordination.	2.2.1 - Establish referral protocols with the following systems: - Law enforcement - Medical providers; - Behavioral health and substance use treatment providers; - Chelan County jail; - DCYF - Juvenile courts - Veterans' aid organizations.	City of Wenatchee Homeless Advisory Committee		- Referral protocol established - Regular coordination and check-in
	2.2.2 - Continue to collaborate with McKinney-Vento Liaisons at local school districts and with HSSP grantees.	City of Wenatchee		- Referral protocol established - Regular coordination and check-in
	2.2.3 - Medical respite beds: Create 5 respite housing beds for short-term stays for people with medical needs that are not able to be supported in other shelters.	Recommended Partner(s): NCACH Confluence Health		- 5 respite beds available in the community by Jan. 1, 2023
2.3 - Produce a highly accurate Point-In-Time Count of homeless households in Chelan and Douglas counties.	2.3.1 - Execute and continuously improve a cross-community Point-In-Time count that produces an accurate census of people experiencing homelessness.	City of Wenatchee Homeless Advisory Committee		- Maintain Point-In-Time Count participation rate of 100% of City grantees

Priority 3

Provide access to temporary accommodations to all unsheltered people experiencing homelessness who need it.

Gaps addressed:

- The need for higher-access services and low-barrier emergency shelter
- Prioritizing the greatest needs

Strategies	Activities	Responsible Entity	Timeline	Measure of Success
3.1 - Strengthen the capacity of the Chelan-Douglas homeless services system to serve households experiencing homelessness with high barriers such as criminal history, rent history, addiction, and disability.	3.1.1 - Convene a Low Barrier Shelter Task Force that includes a wide range of stakeholders to specifically develop and implement a plan to establish a low barrier shelter program with 20 beds (site-based or voucher-based) for chronically homeless men in Chelan-Douglas counties.	Homeless Task Force City of Wenatchee		- Investigate Severe Weather shelter options, Q1 - 2020 - 20 low-barrier beds available in the community by Jan. 1, 2024
3.2 - Increase access to service-enriched, longer-term temporary accommodations when needed and appropriate.	3.2.1 – Re-evaluate the role of transitional housing within the Homeless Crisis Response System with all stakeholders in order to better serve households experiencing homelessness.	City of Wenatchee Homeless Task Force		- Consider revisions to RFPs for Transitional Housing

Priority 4

Streamline and improve the Coordinated Entry process and its connections to housing and services.

Gaps addressed:

- Streamlining referral processes
- Enhancing high-quality, equitable services
- Strengthening Housing First
- Prioritizing the greatest needs

Strategies	Activities	Responsible Entity	Timeline	Measure of Success
4.1 – Prioritize people with the greatest needs for housing and services.	4.1.1 – Successful implementation of prioritization policies for all projects receiving state and local homeless funds resulting in prioritized people being consistently housed in a timely manner.	City of Wenatchee		- Median wait time for top 20% of list at 70 days or less by Q3 - 2023
	4.1.2 – Compliance with state and federal Coordinated Entry requirements for all projects receiving state and local homeless funds.	City of Wenatchee		- Respond to Commerce CE guidance in a timely manner
4.2 - Encourage a wide range of programs to develop or strengthen partnerships with coordinated entry through effective referral practices so that households experiencing homelessness can access services swiftly.	4.2.1 - Increase access to coordinated entry services through continued multi-platform marketing in partnership with community-based organizations.	City of Wenatchee CE Site Group		- Schedule of marketing events drafted Marketing materials ordered and distributed
	4.2.2 - Create bilingual navigator position(s) to help households quickly identify solutions and rapidly resolve housing crises using evidence-based diversion and rapid-resolution techniques.	Homeless Task Force City of Wenatchee		- Bilingual navigator position(s) created and funded in Q3 - 2021
	4.2.3 - Strengthen referral processes by implementing required HMIS policies and procedures for Coordinated Entry.	City of Wenatchee CE Site Group		- All CE functions are integrated in HMIS by the Commerce deadline (TBD).
	4.2.4 – Review implementation of the Coordinated Entry Core Element recommendations and the State Office of Homeless Youth’s Five Recommendations for Making Coordinated Entry Work for Youth and Young Adults.	City of Wenatchee		- Review and revise CE Policies & Procedures on an annual basis as needed and/or required.
4.3 - Resolve homelessness crises through low-cost problem-solving and mediation strategies.	4.3.1 - Implement evidence-based diversion and problem-solving best practices for all CE providers and their staff.	Homeless Task Force City of Wenatchee		- 100% of CE staff receive training on diversion and rapid-resolution best practices.

Priority 5

Assist people to move swiftly into permanent housing with appropriate, person-centered services.

Gaps addressed:

- Enhancing high-quality, equitable services
- Strengthening Housing First
- Prioritizing the greatest needs
- The need for higher-access services and low-barrier emergency shelter

System-wide performance measures:

- Increase percentage of exits to permanent housing to 59% (Top Quintile Nationally).
- Reduce returns to homelessness after exit to permanent housing to less than 10 percent.
- Reduce average length of stay in temporary housing projects to less than 90 days.

Strategies	Activities	Responsible Entity	Timeline	Measure of Success
5.1 - Secure high-quality training for homeless services providers in order to meet the needs of prioritized households.	5.1.1 - Coordinate high-quality training opportunities for homeless service providers in social service best practices.	City of Wenatchee		- Trainers hired, trainings scheduled and schedules published regularly - 100% of staff at funded programs meet all local and state training requirements.
5.2 - Promote and strengthen people’s ability to obtain and maintain long-term rental housing.	5.2.1 - Support the implementation of the Medicaid Supportive Housing and Supportive Employment benefits (FCS).	City of Wenatchee CE Site Group		- Encourage CE Site Group agencies to explore FCS services
	5.2.2 - Continue to incorporate progressive engagement strategies into all services funded by local and state grants.	City of Wenatchee CE Site Group		- Maintain 100% of contracts require progressive engagement - Progressive engagement incorporated into Provider Training Program
	5.2.3 - Provide tenant education and supportive services to households participating in Landlord Tenant Liaison services.	WRC Volunteer Attorney Services Suggested partners: Wenatchee Valley Dispute Resolution Center		- 95% of LTL clients receive tenant education services

Chelan-Douglas Homeless Housing Strategic Plan 2019-2024

Strategies	Activities	Responsible Entity	Timeline	Measure of Success
<p>5.3 - Expand the rental housing inventory through landlord engagement & outreach.</p>	<p>5.3.1 - Expand and continuously improve the Chelan-Douglas Landlord Tenant Liaison program.</p>	<p>Homeless Task Force City of Wenatchee WRC</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 80% of LTL clients, when exited, have permanent housing - 80% of LTL clients will be placed in a rental unit with 2 months of enrollment - Less than 5% of LTL clients will return to homelessness within 12 months of program exit - Landlord partnerships increase each year
	<p>5.3.2 - Explore partnerships between the Landlord Tenant Liaison Program and the Housing Authority to serve 5 homeless households with Housing Choice Vouchers each year.</p>	<p>City of Wenatchee WRC</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partnership meetings - Partnership agreement
	<p>5.3.3 - Explore partnerships with private and public property owners including the Wenatchee Valley Rental Association in order to make units available to households exiting homeless (including nontraditional room-shares, etc.), and raise awareness of State resources among landlords (e.g. the Chelan-Douglas Homeless Crisis Response System, the State Landlord Mitigation Fund, and the Landlord Tenant Liaison Program.)</p>	<p>City of Wenatchee WRC</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partnership meetings - Partnership agreements - Increase in landlord enrollment in State Mitigation fund in Chelan-Douglas county - Increase in Landlord Tenant Liaison partnerships
	<p>5.3.4 - Ensure Landlord Tenant Liaison clients have access to bilingual and culturally responsive services.</p>	<p>WRC</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100% of LTL clients have access to interpretative services
<p>5.4 - Fund programs that meet or demonstrate progress towards ending homelessness.</p>	<p>5.4.1 - All programs receiving Local or State housing funds must demonstrate progress towards eliminating homelessness using HMIS or other quantitative or qualitative data sources.</p>	<p>Homeless Task Force City of Wenatchee</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 90% of funded programs meet contract performance metrics - 100% of funded programs not meeting contract performance metrics receive technical assistance plans.
	<p>5.4.2 - Support the capacity of local homeless service providers through reporting, monitoring, and evaluation.</p>	<p>Homeless Task Force City of Wenatchee</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100% of funded programs access technical assistance or provider training opportunities.

Priority 6

Prevent returns to homelessness through connections to adequate services and opportunities.

Gaps addressed:

- Enhancing high-quality, equitable services
- Strengthening Housing First
- Prioritizing the greatest needs

Strategies	Activities	Responsible Entity	Timeline	Measure of Success
6.1 - Strengthen effective implementation of the core components of rapid-rehousing (housing identification, rent & move-in assistance, and case management).	6.1.1 - Fund staff capacity and core components to serve 50 households a year.	Homeless Task Force City of Wenatchee		- Expansion is fully funded
	6.1.2 - Strengthen the link between Landlord Tenant Liaison and Rapid-Rehousing by collaborating in the implementation of core components of Rapid-Rehousing.	City of Wenatchee WRC CAC		- Quarterly coordinating meetings - Weekly case conferences and enrollments
6.2 - Support the stability and success of formerly homeless households as part of an inter-agency, whole-family approach.	6.2.1 - Invite local employers, employment agencies, case managers, early childhood, education, housing agencies and other stakeholders to participate and present to the Homeless Advisory Committee regarding resources and opportunities.	City of Wenatchee Homeless Advisory Committee		- Spotlight regional services regularly at Homeless Advisory Committee meetings - Increase representation of community services on Homeless Advisory Committee

Conclusion

Reducing Homelessness in Chelan and Douglas Counties

This plan seeks to reduce and eliminate homelessness in Chelan and Douglas counties. The Homeless Task Force recognizes that there still is much work to be done, and invites all interested parties to engage in discussion and cooperation to further the goals outlined within this document.

Homelessness is an intractable social ill, a symptom of poverty, ill health, mental illness, and many other factors. This plan seeks to address it swiftly and assist households in rapidly resolving their housing crises. Over time, the solutions have shifted, but the ultimate definition of success remains the same: safe, affordable, permanent housing for all who need it. This plan focuses not only on the services that can bring about the counties' vision, but also their efficacy and effectiveness.

Making homelessness rare, brief, and one-time must continue to be one of our community's top priorities. It will require the community to come together and meld specific strategies that decrease homelessness while implementing broader policy changes to achieve an overall increase in affordable housing. We must rely on all community stakeholders to drive the necessary changes that will result in reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness across Chelan and Douglas counties. These include:

- County Commissioners, Mayors, City Council Members, Port Commissioners, the Health District
- Federal, State, and local agencies / department heads
- Business & civic leaders
- Faith-based organizations
- Landlords
- The residents of Chelan and Douglas counties
- The local homeless population
- Housing developers
- Housing service providers
- Non-profit organizations
- Foundations

Many social and governmental factors beyond local control contribute to the epidemic of homelessness. The needs of those experiencing homelessness will often surpass the local response. However, with a clear plan, the investment of community resources, and an unwavering commitment to our community members in crisis, we can be successful in making homeless rare, brief and one-time.

Appendix I: Homeless Crisis Response System Equity Analysis

As part of the Local Plan Guidelines (June 2019), the Washington State Dept. of Commerce requested that all counties analyze their homeless crisis response systems for possible racial or ethnic disparities.

County Comparisons

Chelan-Douglas counties are comparable to Cowlitz, Grant and Skagit counties in terms of population and distribution of population. Chelan and Douglas counties have a homeless population of 332 people, 135 of whom experienced unsheltered homelessness.

Cowlitz County

Cowlitz County has a lower number of households experiencing homelessness (260), but a higher number experiencing unsheltered homelessness (153). The proportion of Latino/Hispanic households experiencing homelessness is significantly lower, but proportional to their presence in the county.

Grant County

Grant County has a significantly lower number of households experiencing homelessness (127); both sheltered and unsheltered (78). Grant has a higher proportion of Latino/Hispanic households experiencing homelessness (35% of homeless), but roughly proportional to their presence in the county (41%).

Skagit County

Skagit County has a similar number of homeless households (315), and a similar number of unsheltered homeless households (123). Native Americans appear to be overrepresented in the county's homeless population (11% of homeless vs. 2% of population).

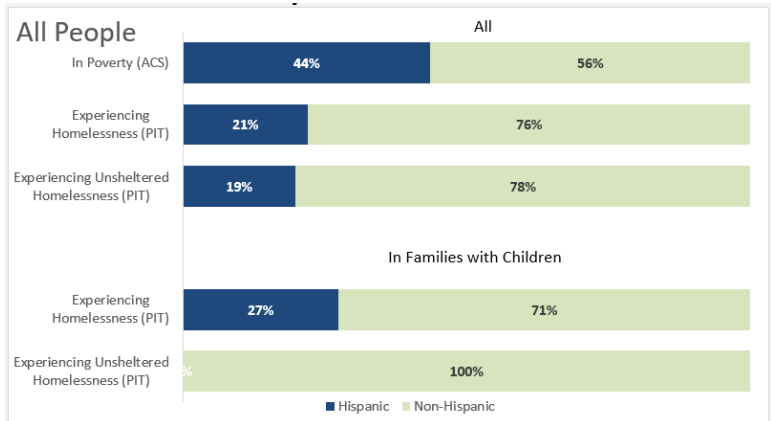


Figure G: Analysis by ethnicity of homelessness in Chelan-Douglas counties

Race and Ethnicity	All (ACS) ¹				In Poverty (ACS) ¹				Experiencing Homelessness (PIT) ²			
	All		In Families with Children		All		In Families with Children		All		In Families with Children	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
All People	115,723		91,500		15,215		9,224		332		138	
Race												
White	95,973	83%	76,685	84%	10,881	72%	6,321	69%	307	92%	125	91%
Black	493	0%	292	0%	87	1%	0	0%	4	1%	1	1%
Native American/Alaskan	1,094	1%	564	1%	144	1%	138	1%	5	2%	1	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1,218	1%	657	1%	176	1%	126	1%	0	0%	0	0%
Other/Multi-Racial	16,945	15%	13,302	15%	3,927	26%	2,639	29%	16	5%	11	8%
Ethnicity												
Hispanic	33,236	29%	28,312	31%	6,638	44%	5,451	59%	71	21%	37	27%
Non-Hispanic	82,487	71%	63,188	69%	8,577	56%	3,773	41%	251	76%	98	71%

Race and Ethnicity	All (ACS) ¹				In Poverty (ACS) ¹				Experiencing Homelessness (PIT) ²			
	All		In Families with Children		All		In Families with Children		All		In Families with Children	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
All People	6,985,464		5,578,748		908,512		613,290		20,894		5,988	
Race												
White	5,434,177	78%	4,287,649	77%	621,592	68%	396,054	65%	12,120	58%	2,878	48%
Black	253,224	4%	190,276	3%	60,210	7%	43,671	7%	4,102	20%	1,337	22%
Native American/Alaskan	93,266	1%	74,934	1%	24,176	3%	18,340	3%	1,245	6%	375	6%
Asian/Pacific Islander	535,501	8%	447,916	8%	63,202	7%	39,194	6%	789	4%	363	6%
Other/Multi-Racial	669,296	10%	577,973	10%	139,332	15%	116,031	19%	2,638	13%	1,035	17%
Ethnicity												
Hispanic	835,488	12%	741,261	13%	203,237	22%	180,822	29%	2,734	13%	1,046	17%
Non-Hispanic	6,149,976	88%	4,837,487	87%	705,275	78%	432,468	71%	17,766	85%	4,866	81%

Figure H: Chelan-Douglas demographic data (top) vs. Washington State (bottom)

Over- or Under-represented Groups

Two groups appear to be under-represented in the Chelan-Douglas homeless population. Multi-racial people make up 15% of the general population but only 5% of the homeless population. Hispanic/Latino households make up 29% of the general population, but account for only 21% of the homeless population.

Examining ethnicity more closely, the non-Hispanic population appears to be relatively over-represented. This group makes up only 56% of all households in poverty, yet account for 76% of all households experiencing homelessness.

Analysis: Families with Children vs. All Households

Table 2: Rates of Homelessness Among Families with Children vs. All Households by Select Racial and Ethnic Groups

	% In Families w/ Children				All households			
	White	Multi-Racial	Non-Hispanic	Hispanic	White	Multi-Racial	Non-Hispanic	Hispanic
In poverty n = 15,215 people	69%	29%	41%	59%	72%	26%	56%	44%
Homeless n = 332	91%	8%	71%	27%	92%	5%	76%	21%
Sheltered homeless n = 197	90%	8%	70%	28%	90%	8%	74%	23%
Unsheltered homeless n = 135	100%	0%	100%	0%	96%	1%	78%	19%

Data derived from Dept. of Commerce Social Equity Analysis Tool

Analysis: PIT Count Sheltered vs. Unsheltered Counts

Using Table 2 above, the PIT counts do not show significant differences between the sheltered (23%) and unsheltered (19%) counts for Latino/Hispanic persons. Differences between the Sheltered (28%) and Unsheltered (0%) statistics for Hispanic Families with Children may be due to the small sample size (n=6, 2018 PIT). There do appear to be significant differences between the two counts for multi-racial households. Some 8% reported as sheltered homeless while 0% reported as unsheltered homeless. This may be due to the small sample size (n=16, 2018 PIT).

Local and State Contributing Factors

The City of Wenatchee solicited public feedback through the local Homeless Advisory Committee and several community focus groups to understand the factors that may influence differences in racial or ethnic representation among people experiencing homelessness. Below is a summary of the feedback.

Feedback

- Current political/immigration climate nationally, state-wide, and locally
- Fears of immigration status being reported
- Different cultural norms and expectations: households are invited to stay with family and friends
- Lack of bilingual or culturally competent services
- People from non-White racial/ethnic backgrounds feel their needs aren't taken seriously
- Lack of services for the needs of people non-White racial/ethnic backgrounds
- Unequal treatment, discrimination and/or racism
- Lack of engagement and advertising among non-White communities
- Lack of peer support in organizations
- Seasonal nature of agricultural work
- Regulatory barriers (e.g. definition of homelessness)

Local Solutions to Addressing Disparities

A number of different solutions have been included in the Plan to address some of the disparities outlined above. These include greater outreach to diverse populations within Chelan and Douglas counties, bilingual and culturally responsive services, identifying regulatory barriers that may hamper access to services, clarifying the relationship between the homeless crisis response system and the immigration enforcement system, and continuously seeking feedback from underrepresented communities. This is not an exhaustive list, and efforts will be made to identify solutions that make the homeless crisis response system more equitable.

Appendix II: Modeling the Impact of this Plan

As part of their Local Plan Guidelines (June 2019), the Washington State Dept. of Commerce (“Commerce”) requested that all counties model the impact of their fully implemented local plans. They specifically requested that counties produce estimates of:

- People experiencing homelessness that would be housed in 2024
- People experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the Point-In-Time Count in 2024

Using the Model EZ v7 tool developed by Commerce, the City of Wenatchee generated projections based on the following housing inventory numbers.

	Current State	Future State	Summary of Changes
Emergency Shelter	15	40	+5 medical respite beds +20 low-barrier shelter beds
Transitional Housing	48	48	No changes
Rapid Re-Housing	21	50	+29 households served per year
Permanent Supportive Housing	27	47	+20 units in 2020
Permanent Housing	0	33	+33 units in 2020

The model included adjustments for inflation, population growth, and an estimated increase of 100 people experiencing homelessness annually in 2024 to produce the following projections.

	Households
Experiencing Homelessness that Were Housed (2018)	346
Estimated additional households seeking assistance (2019-2024)	100
Estimated Experiencing Homelessness that Were Housed (2024) (Plan Implemented)	752
Point-In-Time Count Unsheltered (2018)	134
Estimated Point-In-Time Count Unsheltered (2024)	100

The model forecasts a decrease in unsheltered homelessness, with 34 fewer people staying outside in 2024.

Appendix III: Biennial Homeless Crisis Response System Performance Report

Submitted July 2019, Report period July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2019

MAKING HOMELESSNESS RARE -

Goal: Reduce the number of people who are newly homeless through targeted eviction prevention and short-term rental assistance.

Prevented From Homelessness

July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2019
170 Households

New to Homelessness

July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2019
232 Households 88%

MAKING HOMELESSNESS ONE-TIME -

Goal: Decrease the number of returns to homelessness and increase the number of exits to stable housing through placements into Permanent Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing, and connection with employment and education.

Returns to Homelessness

July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2019
105 Households 16%

Regained Stable Housing

	Total Households Exited	Exited to Stable Housing
Emergency Shelter	268	51 (19%)
Transitional Housing	154	96 (63%)
Rapid Re-Housing	146	124 (85%)

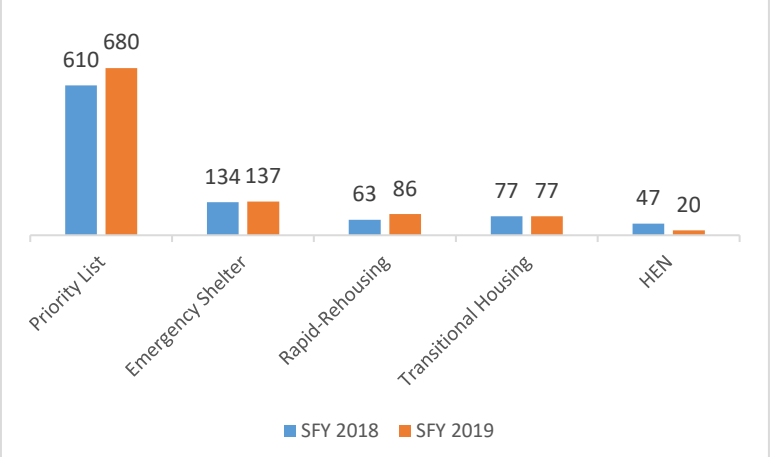
New to homelessness - % of households entering shelter or transitional housing with no homeless housing services within the last 2 years.

Returns to homelessness – Households that received homeless housing services and previously exited to permanent housing within 2 years.

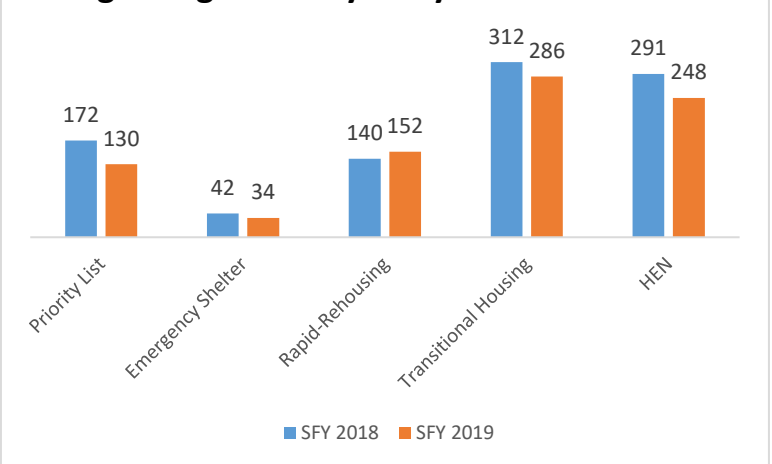
MAKING HOMELESSNESS BRIEF -

Goal: Get people sheltered as quickly as possible and reduce the number of days spent in emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, or on a wait list.

Number of Households Served



Average Length of Stay - Days Enrolled



System Capacity

July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2019

- Estimated 1,700 households contact CE requesting assistance
- 1070 households screened through Coordinated Entry as homeless or at-risk of homelessness
- 908 households placed on Priority List
- 626 households enrolled in Housing Programs
- 396 households achieved permanent housing

Appendix IV: State Performance Metrics**Figure I: Washington State Homeless Crisis Response System Performance Measures***Washington State Dept. of Commerce*

Intervention Type	Performance Measure	SFY 2018 Baseline	Change from Baseline	June 30, 2020 Benchmark	June 30, 2021 Benchmark
Emergency Shelter	Increase Percent Exits to Permanent Housing	24%	Increase by at least 5 percentage points	29%	TBD
Transitional Housing	Increase Percent Exits to Permanent Housing	51%	Increase by at least 5 percentage points	56%	TBD
Rapid Re-Housing	Increase Percent Exits to Permanent Housing	77%	Increase by at least 5 percentage points	No less than 80%	TBD
Permanent Supportive Housing	Increase Exits to or Retention of Permanent Housing	95%	Maintain current rate	No less than 95%	TBD
System	Increase Percent Unsheltered or Fleeing Violence	35%	Increase by 5 percentage points	40%	TBD