

Homelessness in Washington



2023 annual report to meet requirements in RCW 43.185C

HOUSING DIVISION

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Report to the Legislature

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Executive summary

Overview

This annual report complements the [State of Washington Homeless Housing Crisis Response System Strategic Plan 2019-2024](#), which was updated in 2019. It fulfills reporting requirements outlined in several Homeless Housing and Assistance Act chapters, including [RCW 43.185C.010, 040, 045, 170, 340](#), and [RCW 43.63A.305](#) and [311](#).

Highlights

- The Snapshot of Homelessness in Washington showed a 9% increase in homelessness from January 2022 to January 2023.
- The January [2023 Point in Time Count](#) (which employs a less consistent methodology than the Snapshot) showed a 12% growth in sheltered homelessness. Unsheltered homelessness increased 21%, excluding King County, which did not conduct an unsheltered count in 2023.
- State and local governments have increased investments in housing acquisition and capital investments.
- Housing prices have increased significantly,¹ and rental costs continue to be out of reach for many.
- Temporary federal assistance has been essential in the COVID-19 response, but there are concerns about the contraction of funding once these fund sources are spent in September 2023.
- Services supporting homeless youth have expanded to address gaps in need. More work is needed to address available housing and shelter options.
- Commerce is identifying innovative ways to measure and address racial and ethnic disparities in homeless services.

¹ Washington Center for Real Estate Research, [City House Price Data](#)

Annual statutory reporting requirements

Table 1: Guide to annual reporting requirements in this report

Subsection	Excerpted reporting requirements	Location in report
RCW 43.185C.045: Homeless housing strategic plan—Annual report of department and local governments.		
(1)(a)	"An assessment of the current condition of homelessness in Washington state and the state's performance in meeting the goals in the state homeless housing strategic plan;"	Assessing the current conditions of homelessness, Homeless system performance, State plan accomplishments
(1)(b)	"A report on the results of the annual homeless point-in-time census conducted statewide under RCW 43.185C.030 ;"	Point-in-Time count
(1)(c)	"The amount of federal, state, local, and private funds spent on homelessness assistance, categorized by funding source and the following major assistance types: (i) Emergency shelter; (ii) Homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing; (iii) Permanent housing; (iv) Permanent supportive housing; (v) Transitional housing; (vi) Services only; and (vii) Any other activity in which more than five hundred thousand dollars of category funds were expended;"	Homeless housing project expenditure and data report - GOLDEN
(1)(d)	"A report on the expenditures, performance, and outcomes of state funds distributed through the consolidated homeless grant program, including the grant recipient, award amount expended, use of the funds, counties served, and households served;"	State-funded homeless housing reports
(1)(e)	"A report on state and local homelessness document recording fee expenditure by county, including the total amount of fee spending, percentage of total spending from fees, number of people served by major assistance type, and amount of expenditures for private rental housing payments required in RCW 36.22.179 ;"	Homeless housing project expenditure and data report
(1)(f) and (g)	"(f) A report on the expenditures, performance, and outcomes of the essential needs and housing support program meeting the requirements of RCW 43.185C.220 ; and (g) A report on the expenditures, performance, and outcomes of the independent youth housing program meeting the requirements of RCW 43.63A.311 ;"	State-funded homeless housing reports
(3)	"...the department must produce and post information on the local government's homelessness spending from all sources by project during the prior state fiscal year in a format similar to the department's report under subsection (1)(c) of this section."	Homeless housing project expenditure and data report
(3)	"Any local government receiving state funds for homelessness assistance or state or local homelessness document recording fees under RCW 36.22.178 , 36.22.179 , or 36.22.1791 must provide an annual report on the current condition of homelessness in its jurisdiction..."	Planning, reporting, auditing and procuring
RCW 43.185C.170: Interagency council on homelessness—Duties—Reports.		
(1)	"The interagency council on homelessness, as defined in RCW 43.185C.010 ... shall report to the appropriate committees of the legislature annually by December 31st on its activities."	Planning, reporting, auditing and procuring
RCW 43.185C.220: Essential needs and housing support program—Distribution of funds.		
(7)(c)	"In collaboration with the department of social and health services, submit a report annually to the relevant policy and fiscal committees of the legislature. A preliminary report shall be submitted by December 31, 2011, and must include	State-funded homeless housing reports

Subsection	Excerpted reporting requirements	Location in report
	<p>(c)(i), (iii), and (v) of this subsection. Annual reports must be submitted beginning December 1, 2012, and must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) A description of the actions the department has taken to achieve the objectives of chapter 36, Laws of 2011 1st sp. sess.; (ii) The amount of funds used by the department to administer the program; (iii) Information on the housing status of essential needs and housing support recipients served by housing support entities, and individuals who have requested housing support but did not receive housing support; (iv) Grantee expenditure data related to administration and services provided under this section; and (v) Efforts made to partner with other entities and leverage sources or public and private funds;" 	
<p>RCW 43.185C.340: Students experiencing homelessness—Grant program to link families with housing—Program goals—Grant process—Requirements—Grantees report to the department.</p>		
(8)	<p>"(a) Grantee organizations must compile and report information to the department. The department shall report to the legislature the findings of the grantee, the housing stability of the homeless families, and any related policy recommendations.</p> <p>(b) Grantees must track and report on the following measures including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Length of time enrolled in the grant program; (ii) Housing destination at program exit; (iii) Type of residence prior to enrollment in the grant program; and (iv) Number of times homeless in the past three years. <p>(c) Grantees must also include in their reports a narrative description discussing its partnership with school districts as set forth in the memorandum outlined in subsection (4) of this section. Reports must also include the kinds of supports grantees are providing students and families to support academic learning."</p>	<p>State-funded homeless housing reports</p>
<p>RCW 43.63A.311: Independent youth housing program—Subcontractor organization performance review and report.</p>		
(2)(a) through (f)	<p>"The independent youth housing program report must include, at a minimum, an update on the following program performance measures, as well as any other performance measures the department may establish, for enrolled youth in consultation with the department of social and health services, to be measured statewide and by county:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Increases in housing stability; (b) Increases in economic self-sufficiency; (c) Increases in independent living skills; (d) Increases in education and job training attainment; (e) Decreases in the use of all state-funded services over time;" 	<p>State-funded homeless housing reports</p>

Assessing the current conditions of homelessness

Available evidence points toward homelessness increasing in the past year in Washington and the United States in general.² Rents have increased, and vacancy rates remain low, factors strongly associated with increases in homelessness.³ Additional housing price inflation from growing incomes has left people at the margins, such as those on fixed incomes, less able to pay market rates.⁴

Recent significant increases in rent assistance and capital subsidies for affordable housing have helped many. However, the scale of the long-term mismatch between incomes and rent levels continues, with only one in four people eligible for rent assistance receiving any.⁵

For some people living outside, substance use disorder impedes their ability to secure and maintain housing.⁶ State and national post-COVID-19 deterioration in mental health has included an increase in substance use disorder.⁷ Dramatic increases in drug overdose deaths in Washington point to growing problems with substance use disorder that likely contribute to the increase in unsheltered homelessness.⁸ Increases in funding for behavioral health treatment will help address the problem as facilities and trained staff are deployed. However, at this point, there is not enough capacity to quickly move people into treatment when requested.

Finally, apart from substance use disorder, many people living outside with severe and persistent behavioral health problems lack the income and services necessary to stably move inside.⁹

Over time, the factors that contribute to homelessness ebb and flow. A system capable of keeping everyone inside must be able to flex and adjust to address changes in employment, drug epidemics, family structures, and other societal drivers of homelessness. After decades of stagnant employment, jobs are now as plentiful as is likely possible, and the overall percentage of people employed is near historic highs.¹⁰ However, rental prices are increasingly out of reach for people with lower incomes, and substance use disorder and other behavioral health problems persist.¹¹

Through experimentation and research over the past decade, more is known about how to successfully bring people inside. When interventions are applied at the necessary intensity, they result in positive housing

² Washington State Department of Commerce, "Snapshot of Homelessness Reports: January 2022 and January 2023," Annual Point in Time Count, (September 2023), <https://deptofcommerce.app.box.com/s/hnpkedlkifogzx8i892cu0k34nzsrbtp>

³ Gregg Colburn and Clayton Page Aldern, "Homelessness is a Housing Problem," University of California Press, (2022), page 133

⁴ Washington State Department of Commerce, "Rents and Homelessness: A presentation to the Washington State Legislature House committee on Housing, Human Services, and Veterans," (October 19, 2022)

⁵ Congressional Budget Office, *Reduce Funding for the Housing Choice Voucher Program or Eliminate the Program*, (December 18, 2018), <https://www.cbo.gov/budget-options/2018/54781>

⁶ Stefan Gutwinski et al, "The prevalence of mental disorder among homeless people in high-income countries: An updated systematic review and meta-regression analysis," PLOS Medicine, (August 18, 2021), <https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1003750>

⁷ Natalia C. Chacon et al, "Substance use during COVID-19 pandemic: impact on the underserved communities," Discoveries (Craiova), December 31, 2021, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8896880/>

⁸ Washington State Department of Health, *Opioid and Drug Overdose Data*, Washington Tracking Network, (July 25, 2023), <https://doh.wa.gov/data-and-statistical-reports/washington-tracking-network-wtn/opioids/overdose-dashboard>

⁹ National Alliance to End Homelessness, *Chronic Homelessness*. Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness, (updated April 2018), <http://www.evidenceonhomelessness.com/topic/chronic-homelessness/>

¹⁰ Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, *Employment Rate: Aged 25-54: All Persons for United States*, FRED Economic Data, St. Louis Fed, (updated September 12 2023), <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/LREM25TTUSM156S>

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, *American Community Survey 1-year estimates, Table B25057: Lower Contract Rent Quartile (Dollars)*, (2022), <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2022.B25057?tid=ACSST1Y2022.B25057>

U.S. Social Security Administration, *SSI Federal Payment Amounts, 1975-2024*, <https://www.ssa.gov/oact/cola/SSlamts.html>

outcomes for most people now living outside. For example, more than 80% of people living on prioritized sites near state highways moved inside when temporary housing and services were offered.¹² However, current resources are inadequate to meet the need, leading to people being turned away entirely or interventions not being intensive enough to be effective. Overall, Washington's current system of income supports, subsidized housing, supportive services, treatment, and outreach is inadequate to bring everyone inside.

Youth and young adult homelessness

In Washington, at least 13,000 young people, ages 12 through 24 are on the street or in unsafe or unstable housing situations.¹³ These young people are without a parent or guardian. This is often referred to as experiencing unaccompanied homelessness.

Young people experience homelessness due to various circumstances that are often complex, overlapping, and cumulative. Researchers from the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness have outlined a model for understanding the root causes of youth homelessness, which holds true in the United States and Washington as well. The model outlines the complex and intricate interplay between three domains: structural factors, systems failures, and individual and relational factors.¹⁴

At the individual level, family dysfunction, conflict, or rejection due to sexual orientation or gender identity can lead to separation from family and experiences of unaccompanied homelessness. Chapin Hall interviews show that young people often link the beginning of their homelessness to earlier disruptions of family and home, including family homelessness and entrance into foster care.¹⁵

System failures occur when engagement in public systems such as foster care, juvenile justice, or behavioral health systems contributes to the likelihood that a young person will become homeless. For example, young people may transition out of the care of public systems without a home or the needed supports to maintain stability. In Washington, 15% of young people experience homelessness within 12 months of exiting a public system. One in five youth who exit foster care and nearly one in four who exit the criminal legal system experience homelessness.¹⁶

Structural factors include economic instability, underemployment, generational poverty, and institutional racism. These factors occur at the societal level and create the underlying conditions that contribute to homelessness as well as many other negative outcomes for individuals, families, and communities.

Some young people are at greater risk of homelessness

- **At least 50% of homeless youth are youth of color**, with the highest rates of disproportionality occurring among Black and Native young people. Racial disparities largely exist due to structural racism. Marginalized groups have historically experienced segregation and housing discrimination and over-criminalization and have been denied rights and access to opportunity.

¹² Department of Commerce, Encampment Resolution Program, 2023

¹³ Washington State Department of Commerce, "Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs 2016 Report," (December 2016), <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/hau-ohy-report-2016-update.pdf>

¹⁴ Stephen Gatez, et al, "The Roadmap for the Prevention of Youth Homelessness," Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press, (2018), https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/Structural_Prevention.pdf

¹⁵ Chapin Hall, "Missed Opportunities in Youth Pathways Through Homelessness," University of Chicago, (2019), https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/ChapinHall_VoYC_Youth-Pathways-FINAL.pdf

¹⁶ Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, "Homelessness Among Youth Exiting Systems of Care in Washington state," (2023), <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/rda/reports/research-11-254.pdf>

- Up to 40% of youth experiencing homelessness **identify as LGBTQ+**, while only 3% to 5% of the United States population identifies as LGBTQ.¹⁷ Family conflict and rejection due to a youth's sexual orientation and/or gender identity is a primary cause of homelessness among LGBTQ+ young people.
- Youth who **have not earned a high school diploma or GED** have a 346% higher risk of homelessness than those who have.¹⁸ There is an inverse relationship between education and homelessness. Lack of educational completion increases the risk of homelessness, while experiences of homelessness disrupt a young person's ability to engage in and complete their education.

Efforts must center youth voice

Efforts to address youth and young adult homelessness must involve those who have lived experience of housing instability. A core value of the Office of Homeless Youth (OHY) is to ensure young people with lived experience are central to the Office's planning, service delivery, and strategic direction.

In May of 2023, OHY brought together nearly 60 youth with lived experience to review and evaluate \$120 million in funding requests through the lens of their own personal experience and that of their peers. Their evaluations, alongside other criteria identified in the competitive funding process, determined the allocation of \$40 million in state and federal grants to organizations across Washington.

Other examples of OHY's youth engagement include the Youth for Youth (Y4Y) Board that guides implementation of the federal Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program grant and the Prevention Steering Committee of people with lived experience, which directs Washington's efforts to prevent youth and young adult homelessness.

Efforts such as these provide a platform for young people to take a lead role in shaping programs and policy, while receiving support from organizations and adult professionals. In order to be successful and authentic, young people must be compensated for their time. Efforts must be made to make engagement accessible by, for example, providing onsite childcare; advance payment for travel, lodging, and meals; and designing engagement to accommodate a variety of participation styles.

Prevention is key to ending youth and young adult homelessness

Current investments to address homelessness are heavily concentrated on crisis response. While important, these interventions are costly and focused only on serving people after they have lost housing, been separated from family, or are living unsheltered. We need a more balanced approach that invests in preventing experiences of homelessness from occurring in the first place.

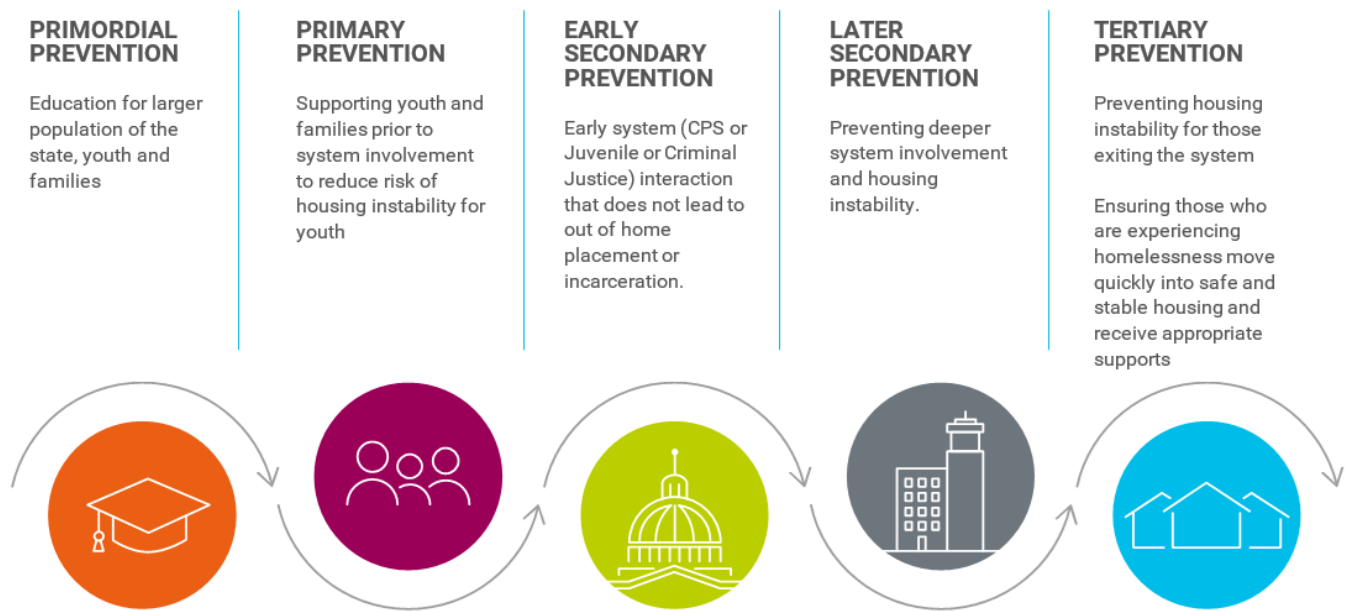
Even a single experience of homelessness can have a deep and enduring impact on a young person's life. Young people face the risk of victimization, trauma, and violence when living unsheltered or in other unsafe and unstable living situations. Further, preventing experiences of homelessness during adolescence will help prevent experiences of chronic homelessness later in life. According to one community's analysis, almost 50% of adults experiencing homelessness became homeless for the first time before age 25. Prevention occurs along a continuum and can be a valuable intervention at any point along a young person's journey.

¹⁷ Ray, N., "[Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth: An epidemic of homelessness](#)," (2006)

¹⁸ Chapin Hall, [Voices of Youth Count](#), University of Chicago, (2018)

Prevention continuum

Figure 1: Prevention continuum



Recent legislation and state funding investments have begun to shift the focus to earlier prevention:

- In 2018, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 6560, which established a goal that any unaccompanied youth discharged from a publicly funded system of care will be discharged into safe and stable housing: [RCW 43.330.720](#)
- In 2022, House Bill 1905 established four interventions to prevent housing instability for young people exiting public systems of care, such as foster care, the criminal legal system, and inpatient behavioral health:
 - A Rapid Response Team to bring together representatives from multiple state agencies to respond to complex cases in which young people are exiting systems without identified housing: [RCW 43.126.205](#)
 - Flexible funding that can be provided directly to a young person to meet any immediate need that will help them avoid homelessness: [RCW 43.330.723](#)
 - The Housing Stability for Youth in Courts pilot program in six counties to identify youth involved in the juvenile court system who may be at risk of homelessness and provide support to help them obtain stable housing: [RCW 43.330.724](#)
 - System of Care grants to provide a broad range of support to youth transitioning out of public systems: [RCW 43.330.725](#)
- A legislative budget proviso in 2022 directed the creation of a workgroup focused on the prevention of youth and young adult homelessness and other negative outcomes. Funding was provided to support the involvement of young people and families with lived experience of housing instability, child welfare involvement, justice system involvement, or inpatient behavioral health involvement.

Challenges to reducing homelessness

Shortage of market-rate and subsidized housing units

A key challenge to reducing homelessness is a shortage of affordable, non-congregate¹⁹ places for people to live. When subsidized rental housing and non-congregate temporary housing are offered to people living outside, more than 80% move inside.²⁰ Without an adequate supply of places for people living outside, local governments are left with the choices of 1) shifting people to other outside places in their jurisdiction, 2) shifting people to a neighboring jurisdiction, or 3) leaving them living outside.

Washington's vacancy rate is 3.7%,²¹ well below the balanced rate of 7%.²² This shortfall of units results in higher rents, and increases in rents are strongly associated with increases in homelessness.²³ An overall increase in the supply of housing would reduce rent inflation, and correspondingly reduce homelessness.²⁴

Even with an adequate overall supply of housing, the inadequate supply of subsidized housing in Washington would still leave many people homeless. Some households' incomes are not high enough to afford market-rate housing. They need a subsidy to have an affordable place to live. For example, a person working full time at minimum wage with dependent children cannot afford lower tier rental housing in Washington.²⁵ In addition, federal disability payments are inadequate for a single person to afford lower tier housing.²⁶ Through creative solutions and assistance from family and friends, most people with lower incomes remain housed. Additional homelessness prevention investments in education, family stability and behavioral health would likely marginally reduce the number of people becoming homeless. However, without additional subsidized units, people will continue to experience homelessness in Washington.

Estimates of housing need released this year by Commerce call for 1.1 million additional housing units over the next 20 years, or 55,000 new units each year for 20 years. The report also shares that half of these (550,000 units) should be affordable to people with incomes less than 50% of area median incomes.²⁷ Assuming the majority of units for low-income people need a subsidy to be affordable, current federal, state, and local investment levels are not adequate to meet the 20-year housing affordability targets.²⁸

¹⁹ Locations where each individual or household has living space that offers some level of privacy such as hotels, motels, or dormitories.

²⁰ Washington State Department of Commerce, Encampment Resolution Program, 2023

²¹ U.S. Census Bureau, [Quarterly Vacancy and Homeownership Rates, Second Quarter 2023](#), (August 2, 2023)

²² U.S. Census Bureau, *Average and median of historic national vacancy rates, 1956 to 2023*

²³ Gregg Colburn and Clayton Page Aldern, "Homelessness is a Housing Problem," University of California Press, (2022), page 133

²⁴ Shane Phillips et al, [Research Roundup: The Effect of Market-Rate Development on Neighborhood Rents](#), UCLA Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies, (2021)

²⁵ Peggy Bailey, [Priced Out: The State of Housing in America](#), Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, (2022)

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Washington State Department of Commerce, [Updating GMA Housing Elements](#), "[Housing All Planning Tool](#)," (March 2023).

²⁸ The Department of Commerce estimates recent higher levels of investment at the federal, state, and local levels, will result in about 5,000 more units of subsidized housing each year. The HB 1220 housing targets are 648,252 low-income units over the next 20 years. Assuming at least half would need a subsidy to be affordable (a conservatively low estimate), each year over 16,000 subsidized additional units would be needed to meet the 20-year target.

Shortage of behavioral health supports

Some people need behavioral health and other supportive services to remain stably housed. Without supports, their behavior would lead to eviction. Inadequate funding for services is the issue in some cases, and in many cases hiring and retaining skilled staff is another barrier.

Grantees of Commerce have reported that even in projects designed for people with significant needs, such as Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), some tenants require a higher level of care than the grantee can provide currently. Additional supports needed include short-term or longer-term behavioral health support provided by licensed treatment facilities, and behavioral health professionals who can respond to incidents promptly.

Difficulty siting emergency shelters, affordable housing, and licensed behavioral health facilities

Grantees report difficulty siting the housing and facilities needed to bring people experiencing homelessness inside. Local governments have used land use and permitting processes to exclude emergency shelters and affordable housing. In some cases, neighborhood opposition to siting leads to local governments not using funding available for homeless housing.

Current gaps in the youth and young adult systems limit prevention and pathways out of homelessness

Geographic gaps

Youth and young adults experience homelessness in every region of our state. Despite what many people assume, rates of youth homelessness are similar in rural and urban areas.²⁹ Yet, while youth are experiencing homelessness in all Washington communities, resources to help them are not always available.

Lack of prevention services

Families experiencing conflict or disruption lack the support needed to build resilience and resolve challenges. More robust crisis intervention, family counseling and reconciliation, and access to behavioral health services are needed to prevent young people from experiencing homelessness.

Public systems are a pipeline to homelessness

Young people transitioning from public systems of care, such as foster care, inpatient behavioral health treatment and the justice system, are leaving without the proper preparation and support to ensure their safety and stability.

Lack of longer-term housing supports for minors

Youths under the age of 18 who are unable to return home safely lack stable housing options. Shelters are limited to short-term stays. Host homes provide an option for longer-term support, but only a handful of these programs exist in the state.

²⁹ Chapin Hall, [Voices of Youth Count](#), (2018)

Homeless system performance

Goals and targets

Commerce established homeless system prioritization requirements in 2016, which required grantees to prioritize unsheltered homeless households for services and housing. In July 2017, Commerce introduced housing outcome performance improvement requirements to the Consolidated Homeless Grant (CHG). Commerce issued updates and refinements to these in 2019. In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, Commerce released a set of temporary changes and suspensions of performance requirements for grantees. Commerce suspended performance monitoring for the contract period through June 2023, resuming in 2024. Communities can now continue to monitor their progress using the CHG Performance Tracker, which is updated quarterly.

From July 2022 to June 2023, Commerce updated the existing homeless system performance requirements in partnership with grantees. These new requirements integrated concepts introduced in Chapter 214, Laws of 2021 (ESHB 1277) and stakeholder feedback into Commerce's homeless contracts starting in July 2023.

For each intervention type funded by CHG, grantees must adopt the required housing outcome performance measure outlined in Table 2 below. Grantees must make progress toward the statewide performance target. The target states the level of desirable performance, and indicates a high performing system. Additionally, the housing outcomes of the exited households must be similar, regardless of race or ethnicity.

Table 2: Required housing outcome performance measures

Intervention type	Performance measure	Calculation	Performance target
Drop-in Emergency Shelter	Increase Exits to Positive Outcomes	Of people in Emergency Shelter who exited, those who exited to Positive Outcome destinations	50%
Emergency Shelter	Increase Exits to Permanent Housing	Of people in Emergency Shelter who exited, those who exited to Permanent Housing destinations	50%
Transitional Housing	Increase Exits to Permanent Housing	Of people in Transitional Housing who exited, those who exited to Permanent Housing destinations	80%
Rapid Re-Housing	Increase Exits to Permanent Housing	Of people in Rapid Re-Housing who exited, those who exited to Permanent Housing destinations	80%
Permanent Supportive Housing or any Permanent Housing type (excluding Rapid RE-Housing)	Increase Exits to or Retention of Permanent Housing	Of people in Permanent Supportive Housing, those who remained in Permanent Supportive Housing or exited to Permanent Housing destinations	95%
TESTING: Homelessness Prevention	TESTING: Housing Retention after one month Housing Retention after six months	TESTING: Of the people in Homelessness Prevention who exited to a Permanent Housing destination, those who did not enter the homeless system after exit	Not established

* Drop-in Emergency Shelters offer night-by-night living arrangements that allow households to enter and exit on an irregular or daily basis and often use a Night-By-Night tracking method in HMIS.

** Excludes Drop-in Emergency Shelters

Grantees that improve or meet performance targets will also meet the requirement to improve housing outcomes. If Commerce or grantees identify racial or ethnic disparities in housing outcomes, Commerce will determine if the requirement has been met. Grantees that do not make progress towards performance targets will enter into a performance improvement plan with Commerce that will include an investigation into the potential causes and technical assistance to address the identified barriers to progress.

Commerce will calculate baseline and performance results with data from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). This includes data from all applicable projects without regard to fund sources. For example, to monitor compliance with "Increase Percent Exits to Permanent Housing from Rapid Re-Housing," all Rapid Re-Housing projects in a given community will be included in the calculation. Data for the previous state fiscal year will serve as the baseline.

Performance results can be found on the [CHG Performance Tracker](#), which is updated quarterly. This new version of the CHG Performance Tracker includes outcomes separated by age group, gender, race and ethnicity.

Equitable access

Nationally and in Washington, people of color and other historically marginalized communities are dramatically over-represented in homeless and unstably housed populations.

[Chapter 214, Laws of 2021 \(ESHB 1277\)](#), required that Commerce develop performance measures that ensure that the race and ethnicity of households served are proportional to the numbers of people in need of services in each county. The race and ethnicity of households entering the homeless system as measured using HMIS data will be compared to the race and ethnicity of the homeless and unstably housed population as reported in the [Snapshot of Homelessness Report](#) (Tables 6 and 8). Significant variations in the homeless and unstably housed populations and the populations accessing services will indicate that a given community requires additional strategies to promote racially equitable access to the homeless services system.

In 2024, Commerce will facilitate activities to improve data literacy, identify barriers to equitable access and identify strategies to improve equitable access.

State Plan accomplishments

Homeless Strategic Plan vision, mission and guiding principles

In 2005, the Washington Legislature passed the Homeless Housing and Assistance Act ([RCW 43.185C](#)). The act outlined policies to address homelessness and directed Commerce to “prepare and publish a five-year homeless housing strategic plan which must outline statewide goals and performance measures.”

Figure 1: Homelessness Strategic Plan vision, mission and guiding principles

Our Vision	No person left living outside.
Our Mission	Support homeless crisis response systems that efficiently reduce the number of people living outside and, when scaled appropriately, can house all unsheltered people.
Guiding Principles	All people deserve a safe place to live. Urgent and bold action is the appropriate response to people living outside. Interventions must be data-driven and evidence-based.

Commerce completed the [2019-2024 Washington Homeless Housing Crisis Strategic Plan](#) in November 2019. To learn more, visit the [State Strategic Plan, Annual Reports and Audits webpage](#).

An update to the 5-year plan is scheduled for release by July 2024. Commerce will then distribute updated guidance to county governments to update their local plans by July 2025.

2019-2024 Strategic Plan objectives

Objective 1: Quickly identify and engage people experiencing homelessness through outreach and coordination with systems that assist homeless subpopulations.

Connection to the goal: People living unsheltered cannot be housed if they are not identified, and progress toward the goal of ending homelessness cannot be accurately assessed without knowing the universe of people experiencing homelessness.

Commerce action	Measure of success	Timeline	Update
Provide effective problem-solving strategies and technical assistance on how to identify and engage people living in places not meant for human habitation.	Office of Family and Adult Homelessness and Office of Homeless Youth grantees access technical assistance. Coordinated Entry Systems comply with Coordinated Entry System requirements	2019-2021, ongoing	The 2023-2025 biennium training plan includes Diversion and Problem Solving when engaging with individuals experiencing homelessness. The training is led by subject matter experts and made available at no cost around the state.
Provide technical assistance to ensure coordinated entry process accessibility, safety and confidentiality for households whose members are fleeing violence (including domestic violence, dating violence, and sexual assault, stalking or trafficking).	Coordinated Entry Systems access technical assistance and comply with Coordinated Entry requirements.	2019-2021, ongoing	All communities are required to work with their local victim service providers to ensure a safe and confidential process per the Commerce Coordinated Entry guidelines . Commerce provides quarterly training to local Coordinated Entry staff including guidance regarding processes for people fleeing violence. Most importantly, Commerce provided direct technical assistance to communities that had challenges in assuring a safe and confidential Coordinated Entry process for people fleeing violence.

Objective 2: Prioritize housing for people who have the greatest need for immediate access to assistance.

Connection to the goal: When people who have the greatest needs are left outside, they are more likely to experience trauma or injury, making it more difficult to ultimately bring them inside.

Commerce action	Measure of success	Timeline	Update
Provide training and technical assistance on the Washington State Coordinated Entry Guidelines.	Office of Family and Adult Homelessness (OFAH) and Office of Homeless Youth (OHY) grantees access technical assistance.	2019-2021, ongoing	Commerce provides training to local Coordinated Entry staff and Coordinated Entry committee meetings quarterly. Commerce responds to requests for technical assistance on specific, locally identified challenges.
Assess the coordinated entry process performance and compliance with requirements and provide technical assistance on any deficiencies.	Assess 60% of counties in 2019 and 40% in 2020. Develop a plan to ensure compliance with federal Coordinated Entry Requirements.	2019-2021	Commerce worked in partnership with local communities in the Balance of State region to establish a Coordinated Entry governance structure that complies with federal Coordinated Entry requirements in 2021.
Explore performance improvement requirements and benchmarks for successful housing placements or housing retention of prioritized people.	Establish performance improvement requirements and benchmarks for successful housing placements or housing retention of prioritized people	2024	Per legislative direction in RCW 43.185C.060 , Commerce was required to work with stakeholders and develop new performance measures. The homeless system performance requirements included in the Consolidated Homeless Grant were updated to remove prioritization requirements starting in July 2023. New rental assistance performance measures in RCW 43.185C.185 required the agency to develop performance measures and benchmarks that promote both equitable program access and equitable program outcomes. Performance requirements associated with equitable access and outcomes were added to the Consolidated Homeless Grant starting in July 2023. RCW 43.185C.060 requires the agency to develop performance measures associated with county government actions to prevent and reduce homelessness.
Annually monitor the unsheltered prioritization performance improvement requirements and provide technical assistance on any deficiencies.	80% of counties move into compliance after any corrective action.	2019, ongoing	The homeless system performance requirements included in the Consolidated Homeless Grant were updated to remove prioritization requirements starting in July 2023. Performance monitoring was postponed due to the pandemic and new legislation directing the development of new measures in RCW 43.185C.185 and 43.185c.060 . The new performance measures are in effect now and scheduled to be monitored in 2024.

Objective 3: Work toward people living unsheltered having immediate access to temporary housing.

Connection to the goal: Living outside is a barrier to resolving the issues that contribute to people becoming homeless.			
Commerce action	Measure of success	Timeline	Update
Publish estimates of the unmet temporary housing and services need and the costs of meeting the state’s vision that no person is left living outside.	Estimates include: Rents increase at the same rate as inflation Rents annually decrease 2% below the rate of inflation Rents annually increase by 2% above the rate of inflation	2020	New requirements in RCW 36.70A070(2) , 35A.21.430 and 34.21.683 provide additional targets that local governments are required to use as part of the Growth Management Act .
Monitor low-barrier requirements and provide technical assistance on any deficiencies.	Assess 80% of counties in 2019 and 20% in 2020. Counties receive technical assistance plans that, if implemented, would bring them into compliance with state low-barrier requirements.	2019-2021	Monitoring is ongoing.
Support state-funded projects to expand low-barrier requirements to reduce barriers	80% of counties expand low barrier program and facility access by 2025.	2022-2024	After stakeholder feedback, Commerce is requiring that by July 1, 2025, no less than 80% of a county’s Consolidated Homeless Grant funded projects (programs and facilities) be low barrier.

Objective 4: Work toward people experiencing homelessness having permanent housing options.

Connection to the goal: People living in temporary housing are considered homeless, so moving people into permanent and stable housing options is central to the goal of ending homelessness.			
Commerce action	Measure of success	Timeline	Update
Publish estimates of the unmet permanent housing and services need and the costs of meeting the state’s vision that no person is left living outside.	Estimates include: Rents increase at the same rate as inflation Rents annually decrease 2% below the rate of inflation Rents annually increase by 2% above the rate of inflation	2020	New requirements in RCW 36.70A070(2) , 35A.21.430 and 34.21.683 provide additional targets that local governments are required to use as part of the Growth Management Act.
Apply annually for federal Continuum of Care funds for the Balance of State projects and comply with reporting requirements.	Applications include new and existing projects. Submit applications and reports on time.	2019, ongoing	Applications were submitted on time for annual renewals and new projects in the Balance of State Continuum of Care competition in 2023. Applications were submitted for renewals and new Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project projects in 2023.
Actively seek new federal fund opportunities for Balance of State counties to expand housing inventory.	Award applications.	Ongoing	All reporting deadlines to HUD were met in 2023 for Point in Time Count data and Housing Inventory Count for Balance of State Continuum of Care projects.

Objective 5: Prevent youth and young adults from experiencing homelessness.

Connection to the goal: Preventing youth and young adults from becoming homeless directly contributes to the goal of ending homelessness.

Commerce action	Measure of success	Timeline	Update
<p>Ensure that youth who exit public systems of care exit into safe and stable housing, per Chapter 82, Laws of 2018 (SSB 6560). Public systems of care include foster care, juvenile justice, behavioral health and the Office of Homeless Youth programs.</p>	<p>Submit a state plan to the Legislature by Dec. 31, 2019. Develop data-tracking mechanisms to measure the number of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness or housing instability within 12 months of exit from a public system. Implement and evaluate system-of-care/innovation grants to test innovative approaches to prevent youth from exiting systems of care into homelessness</p>	<p>2018, ongoing</p>	<p>In 2020, OHY and the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) submitted a state plan to the Legislature focused on (1) Effective Transitions from Care, (2) Community Connections, and (3) Housing. OHY, DCYF and the Healthcare Authority (HCA) continue to collaborate through the SSB 6560 interagency workgroup established in 2018 to support the transition process for young people in child welfare, juvenile rehabilitation, and inpatient behavioral health treatment. OHY led a Transitional Living Pilot for youth ages 16 and 17 and, through SB 5566 (2022), expanded the Independent Youth Housing Program for former foster youth and young adults in Extended Foster Care.</p> <p>In 2020, OHY and DSHS's Research and Data Analysis Division developed a dashboard measuring homelessness or housing instability among youth and young adults three to 12 months after exiting public systems. OHY and RDA update the dashboard at least semiannually.</p> <p>In 2022, OHY and state agency partners implemented components of SHB 1905 (2022), deploying \$4,434,00 of state funds to end exits to homelessness from public systems of care for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Forming a Rapid Response Team of OHY, DCYF, HCA, and DSHS staff supporting youth with complex cases exiting public systems of care ○ Expanding flexible homelessness diversion supports for youth exiting systems of care ○ Creating grants for Housing Stability for Youth in Courts (HSYNC) programs in six counties to prevent exits to homelessness from county juvenile detention facilities ○ Expanding the System of Care grant program to fund community-based services that prevent youth from exiting public systems of care into homelessness <p>In 2023, OHY hired a Prevention Manager to serve on the Rapid Response Team and support grantees implementing prevention initiatives. OHY launched a Prevention Community of Practice for organizations to share learnings and coordinate approaches.</p>
<p>Develop policy and funding solutions that provide families and youth in crisis with the supports they need to become or stay healthy and resilient.</p>	<p>Submit recommendations to the Legislature through the Families and Youth in Crisis report (2018 supplemental operating budget, section 127, subsection 24).</p>	<p>2018, ongoing</p>	<p>In 2020, the Legislature tasked the Office of Homeless Youth, with financial support from the Raikes Foundation, with drafting a strategic plan to prevent youth homelessness.</p> <p>After drafting a plan outlining existing prevention efforts and identifying root causes, OHY and two grassroots, BIPOC-led organizations worked with a steering committee of people with lived experience to identify recommendations in the report "Shifting Services and Systems to Prevent Youth Housing Instability."</p>

Connection to the goal: Preventing youth and young adults from becoming homeless directly contributes to the goal of ending homelessness.

			<p>The final strategic plan outlines recommendations under four main pillars of prevention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support and invest in whole family well-being ○ Eliminate trauma and racism in systems that serve youth and families ○ Shift power to BIPOC communities ○ Universal support for fundamental human rights <p>In 2022, OHY was directed to establish an interagency work group to oversee the implementation of the strategic plan for youth homelessness prevention. OHY received funding from the Legislature to re-establish the steering committee of people with lived experience to continue to inform the implementation of the recommendations outlined in the plan.</p>
<p>Make diversion an allowable activity through the Office of Homeless Youth's Street Outreach Services grant. Provide technical assistance to grantees on effective diversion strategies. Measure effectiveness and implement continuous quality improvement processes.</p>	<p>Update the 2019-21 Street Outreach Services program guidelines to include diversion as an allowable cost. 90% of Street Outreach Services grantees receive technical assistance. Data reflects that youth and young adults served through diversion avoid entering the homeless crisis response system.</p>	<p>2019, ongoing</p>	<p>In 2020, OHY updated the Street Outreach Services grant guidelines to include diversion as an allowable expense and activity.</p> <p>Beginning July 1, 2020, the OHY issued grants to operate a Centralized Diversion Fund to provide diversion services and flexible funding to youth and young adults in the Anchor Communities (Spokane, Walla Walla, Pierce, and Yakima counties).</p> <p>In 2022, the Legislature passed Chapter 137, Laws of 2022 (HB 1905), which included a new flexible fund program for young people exiting public systems of care to ensure they obtain stable housing.</p> <p>A Way Home Washington provides technical assistance and delivers a comprehensive curriculum to train community partners on diversion best practice approaches and how to utilize flexible funding to meet the needs of young people to avoid homelessness.</p>

Objective 6: Make certain that youth experiencing homelessness are offered age and developmentally appropriate access to services that support permanent connections, education and employment, and well-being.

Connection to the goal: Services can help youth build resiliency that prevents homelessness and promotes stability through increased income, connections to supportive social networks and general well-being.

Commerce action	Measure of success	Timeline	Update
Through the Office of Homeless Youth, lead the Interagency Workgroup on Youth Homelessness to engage state agencies in addressing the education, employment, and well-being needs of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. Implement the Office of Homeless Youth program performance measures that evaluate outcomes related to stable housing, education, employment, permanent connections, and social and emotional well-being.	2019-21 program contracts include performance measures and data-reporting requirements. The Interagency Workgroup on Youth Homelessness develops cross-sector strategies to address youth and young adult homelessness.	2019, ongoing	<p>In 2020, Commerce introduced proposed performance measures after feedback sessions from people with lived experience and stakeholders.</p> <p>In 2022, Commerce updated the draft performance measures to focus on best practices and youth-led programming. Feedback sessions occurred with the Office of Homeless Youth (OHY), youth with lived experience, and grantees.</p> <p>Commerce published live dashboards online for OHY staff, OHY grantees and the community in January 2023. These dashboards illustrate current grantee performance and will guide future monitoring.</p> <p>The final performance measures were implemented into guidelines in January 2023.</p>

Objective 7: Address inequities in services and outcomes among people experiencing homelessness

Connection to the goal: Systems that cannot effectively engage all people cannot end homelessness.

Commerce action	Measure of success	Timeline	Update
Conduct data analysis to understand the scope of inequities as it relates to race, ethnicity, disabilities, people who identify as LGBTQ+ and other marginalized communities.	Conduct research and publish a report.	2022	Analysis of race and ethnicity in the homeless services system was conducted in 2019, which resulted in the publication of a public dashboard on racial equity. Newly published performance dashboards included program outcomes separated by race, ethnicity and other demographic factors.
Work with stakeholders to develop equity measures and benchmarks that are added to the state and county report cards and included in contracts for state homeless housing funds.	Hold feedback sessions with stakeholders to identify measures and benchmarks after publishing the report.	2022-2023	New county and equity-based performance measures in RCW 43.185c.060 and 43.185c.185 require stakeholder feedback. New terms were added to contracts in July 2023.
Procure trainer on protected classes for Commerce homeless housing staff and grantees.	Trainer under contract.	2020, ongoing	Ongoing
Use an equity tool to review and evaluate homeless program guidelines and policies. Use the tool to ensure the equitable distribution of resources.	Identify subject matter experts and peer state agency consultants to advise on the equity tool. Develop policies to use the tool to ensure equitable resource distribution.	2020	The Housing Division and the broader Department of Commerce are developing policies to ensure equitable resource distribution.

Objective 8: Maintain an effective, efficient and transparent homeless crisis response system.

Connection to the goal: Improved efficiency increases the number of people who can be housed with limited resources, and a system that transparently demonstrates its efficiency is more likely to receive the resources necessary to end homelessness.

Commerce action	Measure of success	Timeline	Update
Publish Washington’s homeless system performance as compared to other states	Publish performance results annually.	2019, ongoing	CoC System Performance Data
Publish state, county and project-level homeless system performance outcomes.	Publish annual and quarterly performance outcomes.	2019, ongoing	The Washington State Homeless System Performance County Report Card was updated for 2022. Additionally, performance outcomes of homeless systems and youth programs are published quarterly on dashboards .
Complete annual state and federal reporting.	Submit accurate reports on time.	Ongoing	All federally required reports were submitted on time, including the Action Plan, Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report, Housing Inventory Count, and Point in Time Count data.
Require progress toward homeless system performance targets as a condition of state funding.	The Consolidated Homeless Grant contracts include the homeless system performance improvement requirements for rapid rehousing, emergency shelter, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing.	2019, ongoing	Performance monitoring will occur in 2024. In 2023, The Consolidated Homeless Grant’s performance requirements were updated to include new performance requirements for homelessness prevention programs and to incorporate the equitable access and outcome measures required by RCW 43.185C.185 and 43.185c.060 .
Provide technical assistance and training on homeless system performance improvement strategies. Develop performance improvement plans for grantees who are not meeting performance improvement benchmarks.	The percentage of exits to permanent housing reaches the level of the top-performing 20% of homeless systems nationwide. Reduce returns to homelessness after exits to permanent housing to less than 10%. Reduce the average length of time homeless to fewer than 90 days.	2019-2024	
Improve homeless system performance measures through consultation with national experts and peer agencies on the Washington State Interagency Council on Homelessness.	Meet with the Washington State Interagency Council on Homelessness quarterly. Maintain a contract with a performance consultant.	Ongoing	Ongoing.
Engage people who have experienced homelessness to provide meaningful opportunities for input and expert advice.	Schedule listening tours and meet with advocacy groups to gather feedback on the Office of Family and Adult Homelessness and Office of Homeless Youth program policies.	Ongoing	Commerce contracted with a consultant to conduct six focus groups with people with lived experience around the state to provide feedback on programs and services in 2023. We are also launching a new Lived Experience Advisory Committee to inform our work. Additionally, we have established a Qualitative Data Coordinator position dedicated to collecting information directly from people interacting with homeless

			services systems in order to assess the quality of services.
Pursue federal and state policy changes necessary to achieve the state’s vision that no person is left living outside.	Provide feedback on federal homeless housing policy changes and advocate for program improvements. Develop budget requests that increase funding for homeless housing programs.	Ongoing	In the 2023-2025 biennium, the Legislature adopted \$400 million in the capital budget for the development of affordable housing. In addition, the Legislature adopted an operating budget that included \$290 million for homeless services and housing programs.
Provide training on homeless service provision core competencies, including trauma-informed care, mental health first aid, racial equity, LGBTQ+ competency, and other training identified by the Office of Homeless Youth and Office of Family and Adult Homelessness.	Office of Family and Adult Homelessness and Office of Homeless Youth grantees comply with the training requirements.	2019 - 2022, ongoing	The training plan for the 2023-2025 biennium encompasses best practices when engaging with individuals experiencing homelessness. The plan includes the following: Racial Equity 101 & Advanced training, LGBTQ+ Competency and Advanced training, Lowering Barriers & Harm Reduction, Trauma Informed Services, and Introduction to Case Management Training Series. Information about how to schedule new training for Consolidated Homeless Grant contractors, Coordinated Entry staff and Balance of State counties is coming soon.

Planning, reporting, auditing and procuring

State Strategic Plan and local homeless plans

Commerce produced an updated [2019-2024 State Homeless Housing Strategic Plan](#) in 2019 and will publish periodic updates through 2024. Commerce will make updates to this plan in 2024.

[Local county plans and annual reports](#) are available on the Commerce website.

Audits

More information on state audits and examinations of Commerce's management of the homeless funding and programming is on the [State Strategic Plan section of the Commerce website](#).

Procurement

Federal COVID-19 relief funds

The first Treasury Rent Assistance Program (T-RAP 1.0) began in March 2021 and ran through September 2022. Two T-RAP 1.0 contracts were extended and ended in December 2022. The program served 39,794 households and awarded \$345,000,000 for temporary rent assistance. The second iteration of the T-RAP program (T-RAP 2.0) began in winter 2021 and ended in June 2023. T-RAP 2.0 served 30,963 households and awarded \$269,937,246 for further temporary rent assistance. The Eviction Rent Assistance Program (ERAP 2.0) began in the fall of 2021 and ended in June 2023. It served 81,800 households and distributed \$370,665,128 for rent assistance programs. Though T-RAP 2.0 and ERAP 2.0 contracts both ended in June 2023, half of the state's grantees distributed all awarded funds by January 2023. Consequently, many grantees closed their temporary rent assistance programs well in advance of funding expiration. More information is available on the [TRAP webpage](#).

HOME Tenant-Based Rental Assistance and Emergency Solutions Grant

Annually, Commerce completes an action plan to secure federal HOME Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) homeless housing funding. More information on the annual action plan and five-year Consolidated Plan for ESG and HOME TBRA is located on the [Plan webpage](#).

Balance of State Continuum of Care

Commerce applies for HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) Program funding on behalf of the Balance of State (BoS) CoC, which is comprised of 34 counties in Washington (the large counties, including King, Pierce, Snohomish, Clark and Spokane, each manages their own CoC program). In the federal fiscal year 2022 competition for CoC and Youth Homeless Demonstration Program (YHDP) grant funds, HUD awarded the BoS CoC \$14,016,292 of annually renewable funding for:

- 45 renewal projects providing permanent housing solutions to families and single adults experiencing homelessness
- 17 renewal YHDP projects for youth and young adults experiencing homelessness
- 5 new permanent housing projects, including some dedicated to serving survivors of domestic violence

New projects started in mid-to-late 2023.

More information on the CoC funding is located on the [CoC webpage](#).

Table 3: Federal grant funds

FFY 2023 Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)	FFY 2023 HOME Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)	New non-YHDP BoS CoC Project Funds	Non-YHDP BoS CoC Funds for Existing Programs	BoS Youth Homeless Demonstration Program (YHDP)	FFY 2023 Temporary Federal Eviction Rent Assistance (T-RAP 2.0 and ERAP 2.0)
\$2,707,147	\$2,888,156 (est.)	\$1,374,627	\$10,224,382	\$2,417,283	\$213,622,451

Interagency Council on Homelessness

The Interagency Council on Homelessness met quarterly through state fiscal year 2023 to maintain cross-agency communication and coordinate activities addressing homelessness. Additional details on the Council's work are on the [Commerce Homeless Councils webpage](#).

Organizational outline

The Housing Division is composed of seven units and offices in response to legislative requirements and responsibilities.

Table 4: Units within the Housing Division

Policy Unit	Multifamily Housing Unit	Homelessness Assistance Unit	Homeownership Unit	Data and Performance Unit	Office of Homeless Youth	Office of Apple Health and Homes and Permanent Supportive Housing
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The units and offices responsible for the information within this report are the Homelessness Assistance Unit, Data and Performance Unit, and Office of Homeless Youth.

Homelessness Assistance Unit

Office of Family and Adult Homelessness

The Office of Family and Adult Homelessness (OFAH) in the Homelessness Assistance Unit administers state and federal fund sources granted to local governments and nonprofits. These include:

Table 5: Fund sources of Office of Family and Adult Homelessness-managed grants

Grant	Fund source
Consolidated Homeless Grant/System Demonstration Grant	Housing surcharge/document recording fee
Housing and Essential Needs	General Fund-State
Diversion Program Grant	General Fund-State
HOME Tenant-Based Rental Assistance	Federal
Emergency Solutions Grant	Federal
Temporary COVID Relief Funding (Emergency Solutions Grant-CV, Eviction Rent Assistance Program 1.0 and 2.0, Treasury Rent Assistance Program 1.0 and 2.0)	Federal

More information is available on the [OFAH webpage](#).

Balance of State Continuum of Care and Reporting Office

The Balance of State Continuum of Care and Reporting Office in the Homelessness Assistance Unit works with 34 counties in Washington's Balance of State Continuum of Care to submit a consolidated application for funding from Commerce to Housing and Urban Development. It is also responsible for coordinating the annual Point-in-Time Count.

More information is available on the [CoC webpage](#).

Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs

The Office of Homeless Youth (OHY) Prevention and Protection Programs administers state fund sources granted to local governments and nonprofits. More information is available on the [OHY webpage](#).

Table 6: Fund sources of Office of Homeless Youth-managed grants

Grant	Fund source
Crisis Residential Centers	Housing surcharge/Document recording fee
Secure Crisis Residential Center	Housing surcharge/Document recording fees
HOPE Centers	Housing surcharge/Document recording fee
Independent Youth Housing Program	Housing surcharge/Document recording fee
Street Outreach Services	General Fund-State/Housing surcharge/Document recording fee
Young Adult Shelter	General Fund-State
Youth Adult Housing Program	Housing surcharge/Document recording fee
Transitional Living Program	General Fund-State
Ancillary Therapeutic Services	General Fund-State
System of Care	General Fund-State/Housing Document recording fee
Homeless Student Stability Program	Housing surcharge/Document recording fee
Homelessness Prevention Diversion Fund, formerly Centralized Diversion Fund	General Fund-State
Anchor Community Initiative	General Fund-State
Youth Homeless Demonstration Program	Federal

Data and Performance Unit

Homeless System Performance Team

The Homeless System Performance Team leads compliance efforts with coordinated entry requirements for Consolidated Homeless Grant grantees. In partnership with the Analytics and Reporting team, they produce reports and dashboards to monitor the performance of homeless housing and services grants.

Learn more about how this office provides information on the [Homeless System Performance webpage](#).

Homeless Management Information System Administration Team

This team administers the state's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). It provides solutions for the Balance of State and King County Continuums. They also provide data integration technology to bring the other continuum data into the statewide database. HMIS is the data source for most of the information used in Commerce's performance reports. Homeless housing service providers use HMIS to collect and manage data gathered while providing housing assistance to people experiencing homelessness.

More information is on the [HMIS webpage](#).

Analytics and Reporting Team

The Analytics and Reporting Team produces the Homeless System Performance Reports and County Report Cards, dashboards on homeless interventions, the annual "Golden" report and more. They work in partnership with the Homeless System Performance team and the Homelessness Assistance Unit to produce reports that assist with the monitoring of homeless housing and services contracts.

Homeless housing project expenditure and data report

[RCW 43.185C.045](#) requires that each county in Washington report all expenditures by funding sources (federal, state and local) for homeless housing projects in their community. Commerce combines expenditures data with Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data to create a comprehensive report that includes expenditures and links them to outcomes. In state fiscal year 2023, projects spent over \$600 million assisting households who were homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness. The table below summarizes the number of beds and cost per intervention.

Table 7: Homeless housing project expenditures for state fiscal year 2023

Service type	Beds	Total expenditures	Cost per day per household	Cost per successful exit per household
Rapid Rehousing	NA	\$71,577,815.24	\$43.21	\$21,331.50
Emergency Shelter	7,268	\$43,761,017.43	\$53.95	\$153,283.34
Transitional Housing	NA	\$12,271,867.12	\$3.82	\$5,092.21
Homeless Prevention	NA	\$843,959.30	\$0.69	\$2,397.61
Permanent Supportive Housing	76	NA	NA	NA
Other Permanent Housing	12,467	\$145,275,445.80	\$44.26	\$236,354.55
Street Outreach	NA	\$6,841,079.55	\$1.36	\$899.67
Services Only	4,044	\$17,247,692.80	\$32.49	\$18,081.72
Eviction Rent Assistance	14,679	\$158,777,594.07	\$60.47	\$25,844.82
Coordinated Entry	NA	\$14,698,818.04	\$8.33	\$9,920.84
Day Shelter	NA	\$62,347,018.91	\$32.40	\$9,958.00
Safe Haven	21,010	\$74,227,891.74	\$62.61	\$58,688.47
Permanent Housing With Services	NA	\$71,577,815.24	\$43.21	\$21,331.50
Other, Unknown, NA	7,268	\$43,761,017.43	\$53.95	\$153,283.34
Totals	59,544	\$607,870,200.00	NA	NA

The state fiscal year 2023 homeless housing project expenditure and data report are on the [State Strategic Plan, Annual Reports and Audits webpage](#). More information on how the Performance Office uses the expenditure and data is on the [Homeless System Performance webpage](#).

State-funded homeless housing reports

Several RCWs require Commerce to report on expenditures, performance and outcomes of state funds for the following:

- Consolidated Homeless Grant: [RCW 434.285C.045](#)
- Housing and Essential Needs: [RCW 43.185C.220](#)
- Homeless Student Stability Program: [RCW 43.185C.340](#)
- Independent Youth Housing Program: [RCW 43.63A.311](#)

Commerce reports include the grant recipient and service area, expenditures, interventions and the number of households assisted. They may also include additional specific information required in each RCW.

The state fiscal year 2023 state-funded homeless housing reports are on the [State Strategic Plan, Annual Reports and Audits website](#).

Point-in-Time Count

The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count is an annual count of people living in transitional housing, emergency shelters, safe havens and places not meant for human habitation on one night in January. Federal and state law require the PIT Count. Commerce supports county governments or designated leads in coordinating the PIT Count each year. Local paid staff and volunteers gather the data for the PIT Count. [RCW 43.185C.030](#) and [CFR Part 578](#) outline the demographic information collected and the allowable means of collection.

In 2023, King County opted out of conducting the unsheltered portion of the PIT Count. King County typically accounts for approximately 50% of the unhoused population of the state, so a 2023 statewide count of people living in places not meant for habitation is not available. However, King County did conduct a census of individuals and households residing in shelters and transitional housing.

After collecting, tabulating, and verifying the data, Commerce submits a summary report to the Legislature as required by [RCW 43.185C.045](#).

Summary of results

Between 2022 and 2023 sheltered homeless rose an estimated 12% statewide. This increase was primarily driven by a 15% rise in emergency shelter use, as shown in [Table 1](#). This complements an increase between 2022 and 2023 in overall emergency shelter capacity, a trend occurring as federal COVID-19 temporary housing funds expired. Additionally, the PIT Count recorded a slightly smaller increase for transitional housing.

Over the past year, unsheltered homelessness has increased 21% statewide, excluding King County, which did not conduct a 2023 unsheltered homelessness census. Generally, populous counties located along the I-5 corridor reported the highest numbers of people living in places not meant for habitation; however, Spokane and Okanogan counties also reported large numbers of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

In 2023, the total number of people residing in permanent supportive housing plateaued after a jump between 2021 and 2022, declining a modest 2%. Rapid re-housing and other permanent housing interventions continued to see increases in utilization, with 11% and 33% increases in year-over-year utilization, respectively.

Overall, the number of people accessing a permanent housing intervention increased by 15% from 2022 to 2023. The increase in utilization of other permanent housing interventions represents a rebound to 2021 levels after a drop in 2022. This, however, has not kept pace with the increases in sheltered and unsheltered homelessness.

Count results by county are located on the [Annual Point in Time Count webpage](#).