

# Homelessness in Washington



2022 annual report to meet requirements in RCW 43.185C

 **HOUSING DIVISION**

June 2023

Report to the Legislature

**Director Mike Fong**

# Acknowledgments

## **Washington State Department of Commerce**

Corina Grigoras, Assistant Director,  
Housing Division

Tedd Kelleher, Housing Policy Director,  
Housing Division

Kathy Kinard, Managing Director,  
Homelessness Assistance Unit

Kyle Gitchell, Deputy Director, Homelessness  
Assistance Unit

Nick Mondau, Point in Time Count Manager,  
Homelessness Assistance Unit

Emily Burgess, Performance Manager,  
Data and Performance Unit

Talia Scott, Homeless Management Information  
System Manager, Data and Performance Unit

Graham Parrington, Policy and Communications  
Coordinator, Housing Division

---

## **Washington State Department of Commerce**

1011 Plum St. SE  
P.O. Box 42525  
Olympia, WA 98504-2525

[www.commerce.wa.gov](http://www.commerce.wa.gov)

For people with disabilities, this report is available  
on request in other formats. To submit a request,  
please call 360-725-4000 (TTY 360-586-0772)

# Table of contents

**Executive summary..... 2**

**Assessing the current conditions of homelessness ..... 5**

**Challenges to reducing homelessness ..... 9**

**Homeless system performance..... 11**

**State plan accomplishments ..... 14**

**Planning, reporting, auditing and procuring ..... 25**

**Organizational outline..... 27**

**Homeless housing project expenditure and data report ..... 30**

**State-funded homeless housing reports..... 31**

**Point in Time Count ..... 32**

# 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 [2022 Point in Time Count](#) saw a 16% growth in homelessness.
- State and local governments have increased investments in housing acquisition and capital investments.
- Housing prices have increased significantly,<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annual statutory reporting requirements

**Table 1: Guide to annual reporting requirements in this report**

| Subsection   | Excerpted reporting requirements  | Location in report  |
|--|---|---|
| <a href="#">RCW 43.185C.045</a> : 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 <a href="#">RCW 43.185C.030</a> ;"   | 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:<br>(i) Emergency shelter;<br>(ii) Homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing;<br>(iii) Permanent housing;<br>(iv) Permanent supportive housing;<br>(v) Transitional housing;<br>(vi) Services only; and<br>(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   |

<sup>1</sup> Washington Center for Real Estate Research, *Rental Housing Markets*, <https://wcrer.be.uw.edu/housing-market-data-toolkit/rental-market/>

| Subsection  | Excerpted reporting requirements  | Location in report                                   |
|---|---|--|
| (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 <a href="#">RCW 36.22.179</a> ,"   | 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 <a href="#">RCW 43.185C.220</a> ; and<br>(g) A report on the expenditures, performance, and outcomes of the independent youth housing program meeting the requirements of <a href="#">RCW 43.63A.311</a> ,"   | 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 <a href="#">RCW 36.22.178</a> , <a href="#">36.22.179</a> , or <a href="#">36.22.1791</a> must provide an annual report on the current condition of homelessness in its jurisdiction..."   | Planning, Reporting, Auditing and Procuring          |
| <a href="#">RCW 43.185C.170: Interagency council on homelessness—Duties—Reports.</a>  |   |  |
| (1)   | "The interagency council on homelessness, as defined in <a href="#">RCW 43.185C.010</a> ... shall report to the appropriate committees of the legislature annually by December 31st on its activities."   | Planning, Reporting, Auditing and Procuring          |
| <a href="#">RCW 43.185C.220: Essential needs and housing support program—Distribution of funds.</a>   |   |  |
| (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 (c)(i), (iii), and (v) of this subsection. Annual reports must be submitted beginning December 1, 2012, and must include:<br>(i) A description of the actions the department has taken to achieve the objectives of chapter 36, Laws of 2011 1st sp. sess.;<br>(ii) The amount of funds used by the department to administer the program;<br>(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;<br>(iv) Grantee expenditure data related to administration and services provided under this section; and<br>(v) Efforts made to partner with other entities and leverage sources or public and private funds;" | State-Funded Homeless Housing Reports                |
| <a href="#">RCW 43.185C.340: Students experiencing homelessness—Grant program to link families with housing—Program goals—Grant process—Requirements—Grantees report to the department.</a> |   |  |
| (8)   | "(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.<br>(b) Grantees must track and report on the following measures including, but not limited to:<br>(i) Length of time enrolled in the grant program;<br>(ii) Housing destination at program exit;<br>(iii) Type of residence prior to enrollment in the grant program; and<br>(iv) Number of times homeless in the past three years.<br>(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."  | State-Funded Homeless Housing Reports                |

| Subsection  | Excerpted reporting requirements  | Location in report   |
|---|---|--|
| RCW 43.63A.311: Independent youth housing program—Subcontractor organization performance review and report. |   |  |
| (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"> <li>(a) Increases in housing stability;</li> <li>(b) Increases in economic self-sufficiency;</li> <li>(c) Increases in independent living skills;</li> <li>(d) Increases in education and job training attainment;</li> <li>(e) Decreases in the use of all state-funded services over time;"</li> </ul> | State-Funded Homeless Housing Reports  |
| (2)(g)  | <p>"Recommendations to the legislature and to the interagency council on homelessness as described under <a href="#">RCW 43.185C.170</a> on program improvements and on departmental strategies that might assist the state to reach its goals of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Ensuring that all youth aging out of the state dependency system have access to a decent, appropriate, and affordable home in a healthy safe environment to prevent such youth from experiencing homelessness; and</li> <li>(ii) Reducing each year the percentage of young people eligible for state assistance upon aging out of the state dependency system." </li></ul>               | <p>This content is presented in a separate report that Commerce and the Department of Children, Youth and Families are submitting separately: "Improving Stability for Youth Exiting Systems of Care."</p> |

# Assessing the current conditions of homelessness

In response to the pandemic, state and local homeless crisis response funding and staff capacity were redirected to the immediate creation of quarantine and isolation beds, additional shelter beds, and rent assistance to prevent evictions and increase the solvency of landlords. This expansion and targeting of housing resources was part of Washington's above-average success in reducing deaths from COVID-19.<sup>2</sup>

The crisis phase of the disaster response has ended. Now the homeless crisis response system is scaling down temporary programs and refocusing resources back to the primary goal of addressing unsheltered homelessness. Although the pandemic has waned, it has left behind troubling disruptions throughout society, exacerbating housing affordability and behavioral health problems that have contributed to an all-time high in homelessness in Washington.<sup>3</sup>

In broad terms, employment has returned to pre-pandemic levels. Continuing the trend over the last decade, strong employment and income growth bid up housing prices, exacerbated by housing unit construction not keeping pace with population growth. A considerable increase in remote work put further pressure on the cost of housing, as people wanted more space to work at home.

Before the pandemic, the affordable housing and emergency housing systems were oversubscribed, with only one in four eligible people receiving rent assistance<sup>4</sup> and thousands of people living outside — who would readily come indoors if existing programs had room.

One-time temporary COVID-19-related programs partially offset the well-documented link between higher rents and increased homeless. State and local governments have made unprecedented investments in housing acquisition, and a significant increase in ongoing funding for affordable housing and homelessness provides critical funding to sustainably operating these capital investments.

Beyond funding, Gov. Inslee and the Legislature enacted structural reforms to how supportive housing is managed and financed, creating the Office of Apple Health and Homes (AHAH) through the passage of [Chapter 216, Laws of 2022 \(ESHB 1866\)](#). AHAH is a foundation of a coordinated system that, at scale, could bring the most vulnerable living unsheltered inside. Chapter 216, Laws of 2022, also expanded shelter capacity throughout the state, funding an array of community-designed responses to bring people inside, including leased hotel rooms and tiny shelters. During the last two years, state and local homeless programs enacted overdue changes to address longstanding racial inequity in who is served and outcomes, including system-wide racial equity performance measures to see how reforms work in practice.

And with the [legislatively required release of projected housing needs for each county](#), communities now have specific goals to work toward through land use reforms, infrastructure investment increases, and additional funding.

This real progress is threatened by a post-pandemic surge in housing prices, leaving an even larger structural mismatch between the cost of housing and the incomes of people left behind by Washington's vibrant

---

<sup>2</sup> The Lancet, "Estimating excess mortality due to the COVID-19 pandemic: a systematic analysis of COVID-19-related mortality, 2020-21," (March 10, 2022), [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(21\)02796-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(21)02796-3/fulltext)

<sup>3</sup> Washington State Department of Commerce, "2022 PIT Summary," (Last updated: Aug. 29, 2022), <https://deptofcommerce.app.box.com/s/ek9pu2w07oz8d77qq6c1rlpxuwcw0515/file/992821877661>

<sup>4</sup> Congressional Budget Office, *Reduce Funding for the Housing Choice Voucher Program or Eliminate the Program*, (December 13, 2018), <https://www.cbo.gov/budget-options/2018/54781>

economy.<sup>5</sup> This material mismatch is compounded by the nationwide increase in behavioral health problems, which have put an even larger pool of people at-risk of becoming homeless.<sup>6</sup>

At this post-pandemic inflection point, we are challenged to expand Washington's success in building a vibrant economy and growing prosperity to include abundant affordable housing and a system that does not leave people living outside.

## 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.<sup>7</sup> These young people are without a parent or guardian. They are often referred to as "unaccompanied" homeless.

Young people can experience homelessness for various reasons, including family dysfunction or conflict, rejection due to sexual orientation or gender identity, or economic instability that leads to separation from family. Chapin Hall interviews show that young people link the beginning of their homelessness to earlier disruptions of family and home, including family homelessness and entrance into foster care.<sup>8</sup> In short, young people become homeless when their home is unsafe, not supportive or does not exist.

### Some young people are at greater risk of homelessness

- **Youth of color** experience homelessness at much higher rates than the rest of the youth population. Black youth in Washington make up 24% of the homeless youth population but represent only 6% of the total youth population.<sup>9</sup>
- Up to 40% of youth experiencing homelessness **identify as LGBTQ**, while only 3% to 5% of the United States population identifies as LGBTQ.<sup>10</sup>
- About 1 in 4 youth who **exit foster care** and 1 in 3 youth who exit the **juvenile or adult justice systems** experience homelessness. Each year, nearly 1,200 youth and young adults who exit behavioral health inpatient treatment experience homelessness (23% of those exiting).<sup>11</sup>
- Youth who **have not earned a high school diploma or GED** have a 346% higher risk of homelessness than those who have.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Census Bureau, American Community Survey, DP04 – Selected Housing Characteristics, 2019 to 2021, <https://data.census.gov/table?q=DP04>

<sup>6</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation, *The Implications of COVID-19 for Mental Health and Substance Use*, (March 20, 2023), <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use/>

<sup>7</sup> Washington State Department of Commerce, "Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs 2016 Report," (2016), <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/hau-ohy-report-2016-update.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Chapin Hall, "Missed Opportunities in Youth Pathways Through Homelessness," (2019), [https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/ChapinHall\\_VoYC\\_Youth-Pathways-FINAL.pdf](https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/ChapinHall_VoYC_Youth-Pathways-FINAL.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Washington State Department of Commerce, "Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs 2016 Report"

<sup>10</sup> Ray, N., "Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth: An epidemic of homelessness," (2006), <http://www.thetaskforce.org/lgbt-youth-an-epidemic-of-homelessness/>

<sup>11</sup> Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, "Housing Status of Youth Exiting Foster Care, Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice Systems," (2017), <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ffa/rda/research-reports/housing-status-youth-exiting-foster-care-behavioral-health-and-criminal-justice-systems>

<sup>12</sup> Chapin Hall, "Voices of Youth Count," (2018), <http://voicesofyouthcount.org/>

## Adolescence is a unique period that demands a tailored approach


Experiencing homelessness during adolescence can have a profound and enduring impact on a person's life. Youths aged 12 through 24 are in a critical developmental window during which significant changes happen physically, emotionally, psychologically and socially. The adolescent brain is plastic, so to speak, meaning that it is malleable and highly sensitive to its environment. During times of heightened sensitivity, especially during early childhood and adolescence, the brain is more vulnerable to damage from physical harms, such as drugs and environmental toxins, or psychological ones, such as trauma and stress.<sup>13</sup> However, the brain is also more responsive to positive influences during this time, making interventions more impactful on young people's success and stability into adulthood.

The conditions under which young people enter into homelessness require a holistic response rather than one focused on housing alone. That is because young people experiencing homelessness typically lack work experience, have not completed their education, and do not have experience living independently, so they have not developed life skills such as budgeting, housekeeping and job searching. Due to their age, they are also at greater risk of victimization.<sup>14</sup> Commerce's Office of Homeless Youth addresses youth homelessness through five key components to prepare young people for a bright future:

- 1) Stable housing
- 2) Permanent connections
- 3) Family reconciliation
- 4) Education and employment
- 5) Social and emotional well-being

## Washington can lead the way

State government, advocates and service providers working together will ensure that all young people have a safe and stable home and the support they need to thrive. Establishing the Office of Homeless Youth (OHY) in 2015 solidified the state's commitment via a laser-like approach to this issue. There is a strong movement of leaders, funders and young people working together to end youth and young adult homelessness. Bold initiatives currently underway include the following.

-  **Anchor Community Initiative:** The Anchor Community Initiative is an innovative program led by [A Way Home Washington](#). It aims to prevent and end youth and young adult homelessness through an intensive support program with tailored coaching and technical assistance, Centralized Diversion Funding to address immediate barriers and resolve a young person's housing crisis, and a By-Name List that identifies each unaccompanied young person its system engages with. This list is used to connect young people to available resources. Current Anchor Communities<sup>15</sup> include Clallam, Clark, Jefferson, Pierce,

---

<sup>13</sup> Steinberg, Laurence, "Age of Opportunity, Lessons from the New Science of Adolescence," (2014), *Houghton Mifflin Harcourt*

<sup>14</sup> National Network for Youth, "What Works to End Youth Homelessness?", (2015), <https://www.nn4youth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015-What-Works-to-End-Youth-Homlessness.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Anchor Communities commit to a model to address youth and young adult homelessness, which includes ongoing community and stakeholder engagement, a pledge to end disproportional impacts, setting measurable goals, and funding important staff positions, among others. For a full description: <https://awayhomewa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/AWHWA-FAQs.pdf>

Skagit, Spokane, Thurston, Walla Walla, Whatcom and Yakima Counties.<sup>16</sup> The Office of Homeless Youth is currently partnering in this effort, providing \$8 million in grants to these communities to support interventions that drive reductions in youth and young adult homelessness.

- **The Homeless Student Stability Program moved from the Housing Assistance Unit to the Office of Homeless Youth:** [The Homeless Student Stability Program](#) (HSSP) is now managed by the Office of Homeless Youth (OHY) as of state fiscal year 2022. Grants are administered by both the Office of Superintendent Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Department of Commerce. The program's primary goal is to address the housing and academic needs of youth and young adults in Washington. HSSP projects address system gaps in housing for families and students who are housing unstable<sup>17</sup> or experiencing homelessness. Commerce's OHY is providing \$865,000 to HSSP efforts in Yakima, Pierce, King, Whatcom and Clark counties to support innovative strategies between housing and education providers and promote stable housing to families in Washington.
- **Improving Stability for Youth Exiting Systems of Care Report:** Together, OHY and the Department of Children, Youth and Families developed a [plan for youth exiting systems of care](#), such as foster care and juvenile justice, to move into safe and stable housing. This work responds to the Legislature's directive in [Chapter 157, Laws of 2018 \(SSB 6560\)](#).
- **Preliminary Strategic Plan: Prevention of Youth Homelessness:** OHY worked with two community-based organizations, [Communities of Color Coalition](#) and [Innovations Human Trafficking Collaborative](#), to establish a steering committee to develop [a strategic plan](#) to prevent youth and young adult homelessness. The plan was published in September 2021. The steering committee had young people with lived experience of housing instability and caretakers of young people who had experienced homelessness and/or systems involvement. Committee members identified key recommendations to address the root causes of youth homelessness and housing instability in Washington. Read more on the [Youth Homelessness Prevention webpage](#).
- **Progress toward recommendations in the OHY 2016 report:** Significant progress was made on recommendations proposed in the [Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs 2016 Report](#), including expanded access to the Extended Foster Care Program, increased funding for housing and shelter, and policies to support the academic success of students experiencing homelessness. However, while progress was made, much work remains. Washington must remain steadfast in its commitment to prevent and end youth and young adult homelessness.

---

<sup>16</sup> A Way Home Washington, *The Anchor Communities Initiative is A Way Home Washington's flagship program*, <https://awayhomewa.org/anchor-community-initiative/>

<sup>17</sup> "Housing unstable" includes households that have trouble paying rent, overcrowded households, moving frequently, or spending the majority of household income on housing. Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Housing Instability*, <https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health/literature-summaries/housing-instability#:~:text=Housing%20instability%20encompasses%20a%20number.of%20household%20income%20on%20housing.>

# Challenges to reducing homelessness

The systemic problems driving the increase in homelessness pre-pandemic remain and appear to be growing:

- A vibrant economy leads to growing incomes for most and related income-driven housing cost increases, leaving some people at the margins unable to afford housing costs with low and slow-growing incomes.
- An undersupply of market rate and subsidized housing makes it difficult for people at all income levels to find a place to live, forcing those at the margins out of their communities or into unsheltered homelessness.

There are several proven approaches to attaining the state strategic plan vision of “No person left living outside.” In 2020, the governor proposed,<sup>18</sup> and the Legislature partially funded,<sup>19</sup> an expansion of dignified and accessible shelter opportunities throughout the state. This shelter expansion funded more than 1,000 new beds for temporary housing in the 22 counties that applied for grants from Commerce and additional permanent supportive housing beds. Additional permanent funding enacted by the Legislature in 2020 for rent assistance to prevent evictions and subsidized housing and services brings Washington closer to having the capacity to implement an at-scale solution.

Additional federal pandemic response funding helped support shelter space through hotel and motel vouchers and other non-congregant shelter spaces to provide temporary places and curtail the spread of COVID-19. However, these funds are temporary and will no longer be available at the end of 2023.

Washington has the fewest housing units per household of any state.<sup>20</sup> This undersupply has contributed to dramatic home price growth. From 2000 to 2020, the median home price in Washington increased 157%; from 2019 to 2020, median home prices rose 13.7% in just one year.<sup>21</sup> The issue of housing affordability is not limited to urban areas. Many rural areas have attracted remote workers as employers have shifted to allowing more work from home. The largest home price growth has occurred in rural areas, such as Chelan, Okanogan, and Pacific counties.<sup>22</sup> BIPOC households, in particular, have found homeownership out of reach. According to an analysis of census American Community Survey (ACS) data, the BIPOC homeownership rate in Washington is 49%, slightly higher than the national BIPOC homeownership rate but 19 percentage points below that of non-Hispanic white households in Washington (with a homeownership rate of 68%, as of 2019).<sup>23</sup>

There is also a mismatch of incomes versus units affordable to people's incomes at the margins. According to a National Low Income Housing Coalition study, Washington has the country's sixth most expensive rental

---

<sup>18</sup> Office of Financial Management, "Proposed 2020 Supplemental Budget & Policy Highlights,"

[https://ofm.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/budget/statebudget/highlights/budget20/Proposed-2020-Supplemental-Budget-and-Policy-Highlights\\_Full\\_Final.pdf](https://ofm.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/budget/statebudget/highlights/budget20/Proposed-2020-Supplemental-Budget-and-Policy-Highlights_Full_Final.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Washington State Legislature, "OPERATING BUDGET--SUPPLEMENTAL," <http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/budget/lbns/2020Omni6168-S.SL.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> EconNorthwest, "Redefining Economic Success in Washington State: 3 KEYS TO QUALITY GROWTH," (Feb. 2022), [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d70140860791400013fe3ce/t/6217b31c7e41665a132480fe/1645720372018/Redefining+Economic+Success+in+WA\\_3+Keys+to+Quality+Growth\\_FEB+2022\\_FullReport\\_email.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d70140860791400013fe3ce/t/6217b31c7e41665a132480fe/1645720372018/Redefining+Economic+Success+in+WA_3+Keys+to+Quality+Growth_FEB+2022_FullReport_email.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Office of Financial Management, *Median home price*, (Last updated Aug. 12, 2022), <https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/statewide-data/washington-trends/economic-trends/median-home-price>

<sup>22</sup> Puget Sound Business Journal, "Home prices up all over, but especially in 'Zoom towns' like Chelan," (Dec. 8, 2020), <https://www.bizjournals.com/seattle/news/2020/12/08/home-prices-up-throughout-washington-state.html>

<sup>23</sup> Homeownership Disparities Work Group, "Improving Homeownership Rates for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in Washington," (Sept. 2022), <https://deptofcommerce.app.box.com/s/zqs8xhdhskn4mvma9tp3a42xmc19slch>

housing.<sup>24</sup> The average statewide housing wage for a two-bedroom rental is \$31.33 an hour and \$19.64 an hour for non-metropolitan areas.<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, 37% of renter households are below 50% AMI and 22% are below 30% AMI.<sup>25</sup>

The state and local governments do not have an at-scale answer to the question sometimes voiced by people living outside: “Where do you want me to go?” A meaningful answer to this question can be built on different values, politics and priorities. But at this point, communities do not have agreed-upon and transparent answers to that question and the systematic at-scale response necessary to bring everyone inside to a dignified place to live.

## Current gaps in the youth and young adult system 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.<sup>26</sup> 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 having even a single experience of 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

Youth under age 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.

---

<sup>24</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition, *Out of Reach: The High Cost of Housing*, <https://nlihc.org/oor>

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Chapin Hall, *Voices of Youth Count*, (2018), <http://voicesofyouthcount.org/>

# Homeless system performance

## Homeless system performance goals and targets

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, temporary changes and requirements suspensions were made regarding grantee performance requirements through June 2023.

Prioritization requirements, established in 2016, required grantees to prioritize unsheltered homeless households and households fleeing violence for services and projects.

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, Commerce recommended that communities continue prioritizing people experiencing unsheltered homelessness and people fleeing violence because they cannot safely self-isolate or shelter in place. These factors must be considered as part of the local prioritization process.

In July 2017, Commerce introduced housing outcome performance improvement requirements to the Consolidated Homeless Grant (CHG). The housing outcome performance improvement requirements were updated and refined in 2019. Before the contract period, Commerce provides grantees with a menu of performance measures specific to intervention types. For each intervention type funded by CHG, grantees adopted the required performance measure. Using local data, they chose short-term improvement goals.

From July 2022 to June 2023, Commerce will review and update the existing homeless system performance requirements, including prioritization requirements and housing outcome requirements. New homeless system performance requirements will integrate the concepts introduced in ESHB 1277 into state homeless contracts starting in July 2023.

## ESHB 1277 performance requirements implementation

Passed by the Washington State Legislature in 2021, the new rental assistance and homeless system performance measures in [Chapter 214, Laws of 2021 \(ESHB 1277\)](#) provide an additional revenue source for eviction prevention and housing stability services. Additionally, this act requires Commerce to award a portion of the funds to eligible grantees in a manner that distributes 15% of the funding as a performance-based allocation following the agency's performance metrics.

Commerce has been working to fulfill the new performance requirements by consulting with stakeholders to create performance metrics and to inform the design of measures and benchmarks to promote equitable program access and outcomes.

Commerce was required to consult with the following stakeholder groups to create the performance metrics described above, as well as create additional equity benchmarks and measures:

- People at risk of homelessness due to unpaid rent
- Representative of a community(s) of color
- Homeless service provider
- Landlord representative
- A representative of a local government that administers homelessness assistance
- A statewide association representing a city
- A statewide association representing a county
- A representative of homeless youth and young adults
- Affordable housing advocates

A steering committee of the stakeholders listed above was formed to provide recommendations to satisfy this requirement and create a cross-sectional group of stakeholders to advise Commerce.

County governments and the steering committee developed an initial performance framework and metrics for the project-based vouchers and related services portion of the ESHB 1277 funding: [The County Action Menu](#).

The County Action Menu requires county governments to take actions to prevent and reduce homelessness. Beginning July 1, 2023, this requirement will apply to the funds described in section 1(1)(c) of Chapter 214, Laws of 2021 (ESHB 1277).

## The strategies identified to prevent and reduce homelessness:

- **Increase housing capacity/inventory**
- **Improve financial and supportive services/increase housing placements**
- **Address racial disparities**

Counties will select two action items per strategy at contract negotiation for a total of six actions. At mid-contract and near contract end, Commerce will evaluate if counties achieved their selected actions. The county is awarded the performance-based allocation if most actions are achieved.

This County Action Menu was developed specifically to acknowledge and address the wide variety of actions needed to make gains in each strategy. There must be available actions appropriate to both rural communities and large urban centers.

## Process requirements

Nationally and in Washington, people of color and other historically marginalized communities<sup>27</sup> are dramatically over-represented in homeless and unstably housed populations. This disproportionality is due to structural oppression. The decision-making processes of homeless service systems must work to stop perpetuating disparities, inequity and oppression.

Counties must use an equity-based decision-making framework<sup>28</sup> when selecting actions to achieve each strategy. In addition, counties must include historically marginalized communities in decision making relating to this performance requirement.

## Communicating performance

Commerce analyzes homeless system performance quarterly and annually to assess the degree to which systems are making progress on their benchmarks. Performance outcomes are communicated through data visualizations, which provide information on critical homeless system performance measures and other contextual information about a community's homeless crisis response system.

---

<sup>27</sup> Communities that should be considered to be historically marginalized and disproportionately impacted by homelessness in the United States include: Black and African Americans; people who identify as Latinx, Native, or Pacific Islander; individuals with disabilities; people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ); incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals; and undocumented individuals and mixed-immigration-status families and communities. Source: National Innovation Service, *Equity Based Decision Making Framework*, <https://dandelion-flute-fa5x.squarespace.com/equity-based-decision-making-framework/>

<sup>28</sup> [Ibid.](#)

The [County Report Card](#) provides annual performance outcome results for Washington as a whole and for each county. Data from all homeless housing projects that participate in HMIS are included in this report. The County Report Card was updated in September 2022 for state fiscal year 2021.

## Performance monitoring

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, Commerce suspended performance monitoring for the contract period through June 2023. However, communities monitored their progress using the CHG Performance Tracker, which was updated quarterly throughout the contract period.

# 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 bold policies to address homelessness and directs 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**

|  |
|--|
| <b>OUR VISION</b>  |
| No person left living outside.   |
| <b>OUR MISSION</b>   |
| Support homeless crisis response systems that efficiently reduce the number of people living outside and, when scaled appropriately, can house all unsheltered people. |
| <b>GUIDING PRINCIPLES</b>  |
| 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 2019](#). To learn more, visit the [State Strategic Plan, Annual Reports and Audits webpage](#).

# 2019-2024 Strategic Plan objectives

## Objective 1: Identify and engage people experiencing homelessness

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 | Due to the pandemic, staffing resources were diverted to administering the temporary eviction rent assistance programs. Staff provided technical assistance primarily focused on administering new federally funded eviction prevention programming. Technical assistance on how to identify and engage people living in places not meant for human habitation has resumed. |
| 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 | <a href="#">New Coordinated Entry guidance</a> (developed with input from the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence) on helping households fleeing violence was released in October 2021. All communities are required to work with their local victim service providers to ensure a safe and confidential process.  |

## Objective 2: Prioritize the greatest need

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 | In October 2021, <a href="#">new Coordinated Entry guidelines</a> were released, and OFAH and OHY grantees are receiving training and technical assistance. Every county in the Balance of State met individually with the Coordinated Entry Performance Specialist to assess technical assistance needs and made plans for implementation by July 2022.   |
| 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.<br><br>Develop a plan to ensure compliance with federal Coordinated Entry Requirements.    | 2019-2021          | Fourteen counties in the Balance of State Continuum of Care were assessed for compliance in 2019. All were provided reports identifying deficiencies in their Coordinated Entry processes and offered technical assistance. The assessment found common issues, and the Coordinated Entry Performance Specialist was able to use this information to provide technical assistance to all communities in Washington.  |
| 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               | New county performance measures in <a href="#">RCW 43.185C.060</a> require the agency to develop performance measures and award 15% based on compliance with performance metrics.<br><br>New rental assistance performance measures in <a href="#">RCW 43.185C.185</a> require the agency to develop performance measures and benchmarks that promote both equitable program access and equitable program outcomes.<br><br>The new requirements required a lengthy stakeholder process and will be implemented in July 2023. |
| 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      | Performance monitoring was postponed due to the pandemic and new legislation directing the development of new measures in <a href="#">RCW 43.185C.185</a> and <a href="#">43.185c.060</a> .  |

## Objective 3: Bring everyone inside

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rents increase at the same rate as inflation</li> <li>Rents annually decrease 2% below the rate of inflation</li> <li>Rents annually increase by 2% above the rate of inflation</li> </ul> | 2020      | New requirements in RCW <a href="#">36.70A070(2)</a> , <a href="#">35A.21.430</a> and <a href="#">34.21.683</a> provide additional targets that local governments are required to use as part of the <a href="#">Growth Management Act</a> .       |
| Monitor low-barrier requirements and provide technical assistance on any deficiencies.  | Assess 80% of counties in 2019 and 20% in 2020.<br><br>Counties receive technical assistance plans that, if implemented, would bring them into compliance with state low-barrier requirements.   | 2019-2021 | Due to the pandemic, monitoring was postponed in 2020 and 2021. It resumed in 2022. New targets will be established in a monitoring plan in 2023.  |
| Support state-funded projects to expand low-barrier requirements to reduce barriers   | 40% of counties expand low-barrier programs and facilities access by 2022.<br><br>60% of counties expand low-barrier program and facility access by 2024.  | 2022-2024 | Due to the pandemic, efforts to expand low-barrier requirements to additional state-funded projects were postponed. The agency is working with stakeholders and grantees to determine a new timeframe, with the goal of having a plan in mid-2023. |

## Objective 4: House everyone permanently

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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rents increase at the same rate as inflation</li> <li>Rents annually decrease 2% below the rate of inflation</li> <li>Rents annually increase by 2% above the rate of inflation</li> </ul> | 2020          | New requirements in RCW <a href="#">36.70A070(2)</a> , <a href="#">35A.21.430</a> and <a href="#">34.21.683</a> 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.<br><br>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 2021 and 2022; the 2020 application was suspended by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in response to the pandemic.   |
| Actively seek new federal fund opportunities for Balance of State counties to expand housing inventory.   | Award applications.  | Ongoing       | Applications were submitted for renewals and new Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project projects in 2022.<br>Application submitted for new projects in the Balance of State Continuum of Care supplemental to address unsheltered and rural homelessness in 2022.<br><br>All reporting deadlines to HUD were met in 2020, 2021 and 2022 for Point in Time Count data and Housing Inventory Count for Balance of State Continuum of Care projects. |

## Objective 5: Prevent youth homelessness

### 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  |
|---|--|---------------|---|
| Ensure that youth who exit public systems of care exit into safe and stable housing, per <a href="#">Chapter 82, Laws of 2018 (SSB 6560)</a> . Public systems of care include foster care, juvenile justice, behavioral health and the Office of Homeless Youth programs. | Submit a state plan to the Legislature by Dec. 31, 2019.<br>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 | 2018, ongoing | <p>In 2020, OHY and DCYF submitted a state plan to the Legislature that outlined recommendations in three priority areas: Effective Transitions From Care, Community Connections, and Housing. OHY has collaborated with DCYF and the Health Care Authority through the interagency work group authorized in Chapter 157, Laws of 2018 (SSB 6560) to support the development of new transition planning processes for young people in child welfare, juvenile rehabilitation and inpatient behavioral health treatment. OHY has also worked to pilot a Transitional Living Pilot for youth ages 16 and 17 and, through <a href="#">Chapter 154, Laws of 2022 (SB 5566)</a>, expanded funding and eligibility for the Independent Youth Housing Program for former foster youth and young adults in <a href="#">Extended Foster Care</a>.</p> <p>In 2020, OHY contracted with DSHS's Research and Data Analysis division to produce a dashboard that measures the number of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness or housing instability within three and 12 months of exit from a public system. OHY continues to work with RDA to refine the dashboard and anticipates a semiannual update release schedule.</p> <p>In 2022, OHY worked with state agency partners to implement four components of <a href="#">Chapter 137, Laws of 2022 (SHB 1905)</a>, representing a \$4,434,00 state investment towards the goal of ending exits to homelessness from public systems of care. The four components are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A new Rapid Response Team of OHY, DCYF, HCA, and DSHS representatives to respond to complex cases involving a youth exiting a publicly funded system of care</li> <li>2. A new flexible funding program to expand homelessness diversion supports for individual youth exiting systems of care</li> <li>3. Funding for six counties to implement the Housing Stability for Youth in Courts (HSYNC) model to prevent exits to homelessness from county juvenile detention facilities</li> <li>4. Expand the System of Care grant program to fund community-based services that prevent youth from exiting a publicly funded system of care into homelessness</li> </ol> |

## Prevent youth and young adults from experiencing homelessness.

|   |   |               |  |
|---|---|---------------|--|
| Develop policy and funding solutions that provide families and youth in crisis with the supports they need to become or stay healthy and resilient.   | Submit recommendations to the Legislature through the Families and Youth in Crisis report ( <a href="#">2018 supplemental operating budget, section 127, subsection 24</a> ).   | 2018, ongoing | <p>In 2020, the Washington State Legislature asked the Office of Homeless Youth to draft a strategic plan to prevent youth homelessness with financial support from the Raikes Foundation.</p> <p>After drafting a <a href="#">preliminary plan</a> outlining existing prevention efforts and identifying root causes, OHY worked with two grassroots, BIPOC-led organizations to establish a steering committee of lived experts to identify recommendations in the report "<a href="#">Shifting Services and Systems to Prevent Youth Housing Instability</a>."</p> <p>The final strategic plan outlines recommendations under four main pillars of prevention:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support and invest in whole family well being</li> <li>2. Eliminate trauma and racism in systems that serve youth and families</li> <li>3. Shift power to BIPOC communities</li> <li>4. Universal support for fundamental human rights</li> </ol> <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 lived experts to continue to inform the implementation of the recommendations outlined in the plan.</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. | 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. | 2019, ongoing | <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 <a href="#">Chapter 137, Laws of 2022 (HB 1905)</a>, 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 receive appropriate services

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, proposed performance measures were introduced after feedback sessions from lived experts and stakeholders.</p> <p>In 2022, the draft performance measures were updated to focus on best practices and youth-led programming. Feedback sessions occurred with the Office of Homeless Youth (OHY), lived experts, and grantees.</p> <p>Live dashboards were published on the Department of Commerce Performance webpage for OHY staff, OHY grantees and the community in January 2023. These dashboards reflect the current state of each grantee's 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

### 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 <a href="#">public dashboard</a> on racial equity.  |
| 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 <a href="#">RCW 43.185c.060</a> and <a href="#">43.185c.185</a> require stakeholder feedback. New terms will be added to contracts beginning 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          | New pandemic eviction rent assistance programs included equity performance measures. That work has carried over to other crisis response grants. The Homelessness Assistance Unit Racial Equity Team is receiving racial equity training and consultation. We are working with the Commerce Housing Division and the whole agency to develop 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 | The project was placed on hold due to inconsistencies in data collection during the COVID-19 pandemic.   |
| Publish state, county and project-level homeless system performance outcomes.                | Publish annual and quarterly performance outcomes.  | 2019, ongoing | System performance reporting was suspended for 2020 due to a shift of staff focus toward COVID-19 relief response. The <a href="#">Washington State Homeless System Performance County Report Card</a> was updated for 2021 and is on track to be updated for 2022.  |
| Complete annual state and federal reporting.   | Submit accurate reports on time.  | Ongoing       | Due to the pandemic, the Department did not submit an annual state report in 2020. The 2021 annual state report was submitted late.<br><br>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 and technical assistance were suspended in 2020 and 2021, and new legislation requiring new performance measures in 2022 will be implemented in mid-2023.   |

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.

|   |  |                     |   |
|---|--|---------------------|---|
| 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             | Contract with performance consultant postponed.   |
| 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             | The Office of Family and Adult Homelessness and the Office of Homeless Youth meet with stakeholders and groups of people with lived experience. |
| 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             | Ongoing   |
| 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 | Ongoing   |

# 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 2023.

Commerce released Local Homeless Plan guidance in December 2018 and secured a technical assistance provider for local governments. [Local county plans and annual reports](#) are available on the Commerce website.

## State and Federal reporting

At a minimum, Commerce completes seven annual reports required in RCW 43.185C and 11 reports to the federal government on homeless housing expenditures and program data. More information about these [HAU reports](#) is on our 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. Approximately 38,000 households were served, and \$345,000,000 was awarded under this program. The second iteration of the T-RAP program (T-RAP 2.0) began in winter 2021. It is ongoing until June 2023. Approximately 25,000 households have been served, and \$270,000,000 has been awarded under this program. The Eviction Rent Assistance Program (ERAP 2.0) began in fall 2021 and runs until June 2023. Approximately 35,000 households have been served, and \$365,000,000 has been awarded. While T-RAP 2.0 and ERAP 2.0 contracts both end in June 2023, half of the grantees across the state will be fully expended across all three programs by January 2023 and will close their temporary rent assistance programs. More information on [T-RAP is available online](#).

### 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. The [annual action plan and five-year Consolidated Plan for ESG and HOME TBRA](#) funding are available online.

### 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, HUD awarded the BoS CoC \$13,321,164 of annually renewable funding for:

- 43 renewal projects that provide permanent housing solutions to families and single adults experiencing homelessness

- 17 new Youth Homeless Demonstration Program projects for youth and young adults experiencing homelessness
- Four other new permanent housing projects, including an innovative three-county rental assistance project for survivors of domestic violence

New projects started in mid-to-late 2022.

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

**Table 2: Federal grant funds**

| FFY 2022<br>Emergency<br>Solutions<br>Grant (ESG) | FFY 2022<br>HOME<br>Tenant-<br>Based Rental<br>Assistance<br>(TBRA) | New non-<br>YHDP BoS<br>CoC Project<br>Funds | Non-YHDP<br>BoS CoC<br>Funds for<br>Existing<br>Programs | BoS Youth<br>Homeless<br>Demonstration<br>Program<br>(YHDP) | FFY 2022<br>Temporary<br>Federal<br>Eviction Rent<br>Assistance<br>(T-RAP 2.0<br>and ERAP<br>2.0) |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| \$2,857,396                                       | \$2,528,911   | \$1,391,864                                  | \$9,512,017  | \$2,417,283   | \$734,296,778   |

## Interagency Council on Homelessness

The Interagency Council on Homelessness met quarterly through state fiscal year 2022 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

In June 2022, the Department of Commerce reorganized its Community Services and Housing Division into two distinct divisions: the Community Services Division and the Housing Division. The Housing Division is composed of several units and offices in response to legislative requirements and responsibilities.

**Table 3: Offices within the Housing Division**

| Housing Division         |                              |                    |                           |                          |   |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 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 |

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.

**Table 4: 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                       |
| Shelter Program Grant  | Home Security Fund                       |
| HOME Tenant-Based Rental Assistance  | Federal                                  |
| Emergency Solutions Grant  | Federal                                  |
| Temporary COVID Relief Funding<br>(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 the Balance of Washington State Continuum of Care to submit a consolidated application for funding from the Department of 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. These include:

**Table 5: Fund sources of Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection managed grants**

| Grant                                | Fund source   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Crisis Residential Centers           | Housing surcharge/Document recording fee                    |
| 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 Grants                | General Fund-State/Housing Document recording fee           |
| Homeless Student Stability Program   | Housing surcharge/Document recording fee                    |
| Centralized Diversion Fund           | General Fund-State  |
| Anchor Community Initiative          | General Fund-State  |
| Youth Homeless Demonstration Program | Federal   |

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

## Data and Performance Unit

### Homeless System Performance Team

The Homeless System Performance Team produces the Homeless System Performance Reports and County Report Cards, Dashboards on homeless interventions, and more. This team also leads compliance efforts with the low-barrier and coordinated entry requirements for Consolidated Homeless Grant grantees.

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 front-end solutions for the Balance of State and King County Continuums and data integration technology to bring the other continuum data into the statewide database. HMIS is the data source for most 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](#).

# 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 data to create a more comprehensive report that reports expenditures and links them to outcomes. In state fiscal year 2022, 2,872 projects spent almost \$1.25 billion assisting 238,000 households who were homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness. The table below summarizes the number of beds and cost per intervention.

**Table 6: Homeless housing project expenditures for state fiscal year 2022**

| Service type                    | Beds   | Total expenditures | Cost per day per household | Cost per successful exit per household |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Rapid Rehousing                 | NA     | \$75,213,443.23    | \$48.03                    | \$23,339.77                            |
| Emergency Shelter               | 11,929 | \$141,547,413.40   | \$65.70                    | \$28,976.79                            |
| Transitional Housing            | 2,857  | \$35,591,280.79    | \$65.98                    | \$38,873.70                            |
| Homeless Prevention             | NA     | \$106,535,342.60   | \$57.27                    | \$11,837.28                            |
| Permanent Supportive            | 11,565 | \$109,019,498.60   | \$38.47                    | \$187,333.90                           |
| Other Permanent Housing         | 2,214  | \$12,253,314.58    | \$37.95                    | \$165,030.71                           |
| Street Outreach                 | NA     | \$15,611,592.98    | \$4.79                     | \$10,007.43                            |
| Services Only                   | NA     | \$11,789,824.95    | \$9.13                     | \$7,538.25                             |
| Eviction Rent Assistance        | NA     | \$673,746,888.92   | \$377.62                   | \$8,238.32                             |
| Coordinated Entry               | NA     | \$9,631,685        | \$1.63                     | \$1,393.67                             |
| Day Shelter                     | NA     | \$11,586,490.87    | \$12.07                    | \$44,392.69                            |
| Safe Haven                      | 45     | \$663,852.84       | \$33.55                    | \$24,587.14                            |
| Permanent Housing With Services | 2193   | \$15,800,237.46    | \$36.71                    | \$133,658.15                           |
| Other, Unknown, NA              | 1,569  | \$24,439,436.01    | \$22.65                    | \$34,627.14                            |

The state fiscal year 2022 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 2022 state-funded homeless housing reports are on the [State Strategic Plan, Annual Reports and Audits website](#).

## Point in Time Count

[RCW 43.185C.045](#) requires that Commerce report on the annual homeless point-in-time census conducted under [RCW 43.185C.030](#). Each county is required to conduct an annual one-day survey of people who are without permanent housing. Due to planning considerations around COVID-19, HUD and Commerce allowed Continuums of Care the flexibility to pick its own date for the 2022 Point in Time Count. This allowed communities to find a date that made sense based on local COVID-19 transmission rates and staff availability. Pierce County conducted its count on January 27. Snohomish County conducted its count on February 21. The Balance of the State, Clark County, and Spokane County conducted their counts on February 24. King County conducted its count on March 1.

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