

Pierce County Homeless Housing Plan



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Table of Contents

- Acknowledgements 2
 - Pierce County Steering Committee Members 2
 - Homeless planning Participants 2
 - Facilitator 2
 - Staff 2
 - Focus Group Participants 2
- Table of Contents 3
- Executive Summary 5
 - The Issue 5
 - The Strategies 5
 - Community Will strategies 5
 - Housing Strategies 5
 - Prevention Strategies 5
 - Service Strategies 5
 - Systems Strategies 6
 - The Cost 6
- SECTION 1: Introduction 7
 - Vision 7
 - Principles to Operate 7
 - Planning Process Overview 7
 - Systems Analysis of Homelessness in Pierce County 8
- SECTION 2: Homelessness 10
 - Federal Definitions of Homelessness 10
 - Barriers to Housing 11
 - Poverty 11
 - Affordable Housing 12
 - General Need for Affordable Housing 12
 - Housing for Homeless Individuals and Families 13
 - Cost of Health Care 15
 - Emergency Services 15
 - Decreased Economic Growth 15
- SECTION 3: Homelessness in Pierce County 17
 - Total Homeless 17
 - Transitional Shelter 17
 - Homeless Individuals 17
 - Homeless Families 17
 - Homeless Children by Age & Type 18
 - Homeless by Race 18
 - Special Needs 18
 - Employment/Income 18
 - Barriers to Obtaining/Sustaining Housing 19
- SECTION 4: Pierce County Affordable and Supportive Housing Needs 20
 - Shelter Inventory 20
 - Discharge from Systems 20
 - Incarcerated 20

Hospitals	20
Foster Care	20
Pierce County Housing Opportunities and Services	21
Prevention	21
Emergency Shelter	21
Transitional Housing.....	21
Permanent Supportive Housing.....	21
SECTION 5: Sub populations.....	22
Chronic Homeless Population.....	22
Homeless Veterans.....	22
Persons With Serious Mental Illness.....	23
Persons With Serious Substance Abuse Issues	23
Persons with HIV/AIDS	23
Persons With Co-Occurring Diagnoses.....	23
Victims Of Domestic Violence	23
Felony Convictions.....	24
Unaccompanied Youth.....	24
Unaccompanied Youth School District Report.....	24
Populations at Risk of Homelessness	24
SECTION 6: Annual Performance Reports Summary	25
About the Data	25
Where Did Homeless Clients Live Before Entering Program	25
Client Income Before (Entry) and After (Exit) Programs	26
Destination when Leaving Programs	26
Length of Time In Housing By Program Type	26
How Many Completed Programs	26
Reason for Leaving Program	27
Summary of APR Data.....	27
SECTION 7: Strategies to End Homeless	28
Community Will Strategies.....	28
Housing Strategies.....	28
Permanent Supportive Housing (indefinite stays).....	29
Permanent Affordable Housing.....	29
Emergency Shelter (generally for immediate needs but up to 90 days)	29
Transitional Housing (3-24 months stay)	29
Prevention Strategies.....	29
Service Strategies.....	30
Systems Strategies	30
SECTION 8: Cost of Plan Implementation	32
Attachment A.....	34
Endnotes and Resources	42

Executive Summary

The passage of Substitute House Bill 2163, subsequently named the “Ending Homelessness Act” in the Washington State legislature in 2005 session, created a unique opportunity for Pierce County to create a community wide plan to reduce homelessness by half over the next decade.

In order to accomplish the task as described in the Ending Homelessness Act, Pierce County Community Services facilitated a community wide discussion that included the input of community non-profit agencies, homeless persons, elected and appointed officials, and interested community members.

The plan incorporates essential elements of plans previously completed in the community and complies with Continuum of Care and Consolidated Plan federal funding agencies.

The goal of the legislation is to move homeless households into safe, decent permanent affordable housing with appropriate services to allow them to remain stable, housed, and as self sufficient as possible.

To effectively solve the challenge of homelessness in Pierce County, all facets of our community must work together to provide safe, decent and affordable housing and appropriate services to those in need.

The Issue

The Tacoma Pierce County Coalition for the Homeless conducted a 24-hour survey in January of 2008. 1,743 individuals met the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) criteria for homelessness.

Homeless individuals and families face multiple challenges that impact their ability to stay housed. They may be the victim of domestic violence fleeing an abusive situation or lack adequate reliable income

to sustain housing. They may have insufficient education; have few employment skills; have a physical and/or mental disability; or they may have a drug or alcohol addiction problem.

There are 32 agencies in Pierce County working to provide housing and assistance to homeless individuals and families. All are at or near full capacity.

The Strategies

Five strategies have been identified as fundamental to reducing homelessness and ultimately ending homelessness in Pierce County. They include activities centered on the development of community will, creating housing, prevention of homelessness, provision of appropriate client centered services and systems changes.

Community Will strategies

Are designed to create a sustainable political and community will to end homelessness, starting reducing the number experiencing homelessness by 50% before 2016.

Housing Strategies

Are in place to develop and sustain a continuum of housing for all households experiencing homelessness – families, adult individuals, and youth - while building toward permanent housing resources adequate to rapidly re-house those experiencing homelessness.

Prevention Strategies

Are targeted to close the front door to homelessness in households at risk of losing stable housing by creating new prevention services and expand successful programs.

Service Strategies

Are planned that provide a continuum of client-centered services accessible to those households throughout the county

who are experiencing homelessness and/or are tenuously housed.

Systems Strategies

Have been proposed to initiate systems changes to support Ten Year Plan Strategies.

There are at least 79 distinct “systems” operating in Pierce County that fund, regulate, administer, house, and provide services to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Each system operates independently and is governed by federal, state, or local regulations or statutes.

In many instances, the systems are significantly under-funded and overwhelmed by the need in our community for assistance.

The coordination of the array of systems designed to assist those in need into a single organized, targeted, and client-centered system may be the greatest challenge facing our community.

The Cost

This plan is designed to meet the requirements of legislation that requires a reduction in the homeless population in Pierce County by ½ from the date of the authorizing legislation in 2005.

Key to meeting that requirement is the provision of housing and services to those who are considered homeless, including

those who are currently living in transitional housing programs funded with public resources. This population makes up the majority of those considered homeless in our community.

The total cost to implement this plan utilizing the least expensive (private sector) leasing model of housing is \$8,391,600 per year for housing subsidies and services

The cost of plan implementation including the development of new dedicated publicly funded housing is estimated to be \$111,991,600 plus an additional \$5,749,800¹ for operating costs and services each subsequent year past the initial year of operation. All known resources that could be targeted to housing development and service provision on an annual basis represent 29 percent of the total needed to develop the housing required. This would require significant reprogramming of current funding priorities. Additional leverage of federal, state, private, and foundation resources are necessary to achieve the goal.

Without sufficient and significant new resources from federal, state, or local sources targeted to serving the homeless population, the goal of this plan to reduce homelessness in our community may remain out of reach.

SECTION 1: Introduction

Vision

To end homelessness through a combination of collaborative, preventative, and remedial strategies designed to eliminate causes of homelessness and move all individuals and families experiencing homelessness into safe, affordable, permanent housing on a self-sustaining basis.

Principles to Operate

We believe that our community:

- Refuses to tolerate homelessness
- Can provide its residents with a continuum of housing options
- Should focus efforts on the development of Permanent Housing
- Should operate systems responsive to individuals
- Must maintain on-going, updated information and data on all local homelessness
- Must strive to be culturally sensitive in programs and policies
- Supports programs that encourage economic and social empowerment
- Is capable of providing readily accessible services to those in need
- Has the ability to make flexible funding available
- Has the capacity for unified advocacy
- Must provide treatment on demand for people experiencing mental illness and/or substance addiction
- Practices outcome-based program accountability
- Can meet the housing needs of underserved populations

- Has the ability to establish incentives for developers to create easily affordable housing units to those in need, throughout Pierce County
- Must create incentives for landlords to create additional housing units

Planning Process Overview

In 2004, the Tacoma/Pierce County Coalition for the Homeless responded to a HUD mandate and developed a ten-year plan to end chronic homelessness in Pierce County. "The Road Home: Ending Chronic Homelessness --- A Ten Year Plan for Pierce County" is being implemented with encouraging initial results.

When the Washington legislature passed the Homelessness Housing and Assistance Act of 2005 (E2SHB 2163), Pierce County accepted this new challenge to implement a ten year plan to reduce homelessness in the county by 50%.

In addition, there are planning requirements attached to Federal funds received for services and housing. Currently, this includes the Consolidated Plan and the Continuum of Care planning processes.

These converging initiatives led to the development of this comprehensive plan, "Tacoma/Pierce County's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness." An initial document was submitted to Washington State in December of 2005 as a working draft of the county's plan to address the requirements of E2SHB 2163. This draft created the framework for continued discussion of the community's response to homelessness, including the provision of safe, decent, affordable housing and essential services to all Pierce County residents.

In response to the draft, a series of professionally facilitated meetings were conducted from the fall of 2007 to the late summer of 2008. During the meetings,

the planning committee reviewed the state of homelessness in Pierce County, compared existing plans, identified barriers to housing stability, and developed strategies designed to reduce homelessness.

Systems Analysis of Homelessness in Pierce County

Through a generous grant from the Boeing Company, the Road Home Leadership Team was supported to conduct an assessment and analysis of the current service delivery system to inform the development of the new plan.

In December 2005, The Road Home Leadership Team approached the University of Puget Sound (UPS) to discuss the possibility of providing research on the issues of homelessness in Pierce County. UPS faculty submitted a work plan, subsequently approved by the Leadership Team, to conduct a systems analysis based on information from the following: 1) personal interviews with key stakeholders, 2) focus groups of the community, 3) representation of homelessness in the most widely circulated local newspaper, and 4) interview/surveys with a sample of the homeless population.

The major conclusions contained herein are based on analyses of the four key data sources, incorporating the perceptions and opinions of those who responded to the interviews, surveys, and focus groups².

1. A public education campaign should be planned to help the public more fully understand homeless characteristics and needs. This information should engage the community and create a new public will to support initiatives and needs for resources.
2. Based on findings related to social and psychological variables, services that promote social support and connectedness, future time

perspective, and motivation should be explored as a means to increase positive outcomes related to housing, employment, and well-being. Care should be taken in planning an integrated solution for housing that creates opportunities for variety of social contacts and relationships.

3. Educational and job training services should be expanded, especially for those with a high school degree or less, who constitute nearly 60% of the sample. Fare Start in Seattle is an example of a job-training program that could be studied for adoption in Pierce County.
4. Health care, dental care and mental health services should be expanded in order to reach the majority of those in need who do not receive the appropriate help.
5. Drawing on the helpfulness reported by those who participated in childcare services, those services should be expanded in order to increase labor force participation.
6. Transitional housing has lower rates of helpfulness for men, black individuals, and current users of alcohol or drugs. These programs may need to adopt different practices for these subgroups. Consumer choice programs like Housing First may provide a successful model for those with addiction problems.
7. Transitional housing provides access to many other services. The self-reported helpfulness of these services is lower for those who report participating in transitional housing than for those who do not. The causes for this disparity should be identified and addressed.

8. Future research is needed to:
- Identify the reasons for the lower rates of helpfulness of services by men and minorities;
 - Examine and analyze information available from a variety of sources, including data collected in this research effort and additional information that could be obtained from groups not reached in this study (e.g. Housing First participants, non-English speakers, and youth).
- Compare assessment and data collection methods currently in use across service organizations to improve consistency and to increase opportunities for aligning goals across organizations.

SECTION 2: Homelessness

The issue of homelessness emerged as a significant social problem in the U.S. more than 20 years ago. National estimates indicate that approximately, 671,888 individuals in the United States experienced homelessness during a point in time in January 2007.³ This is about 6% or (23,600) less than 2006⁴.

In Washington State, an estimated 21,947 individuals were homeless in January 2008. This includes 9,940 persons in families and 12,007 individuals⁵. Since 2006, the number of individuals identified as homeless is relatively unchanged. In January 2006, 21,962 individuals were homeless and 22,045 in January 2007.⁶

In Pierce County, many residents have limited impressions of the homeless population. As part of the Pierce County Systems Analysis, focus group participants reported thinking of homeless individuals as those who stand on the streets with signs, or as those with mental health issues, substance abuse or drug and alcohol problems. Most of the business leaders participating in focus groups sensed that homelessness was static; whereas Pierce County residents perceived that the homeless populations was growing. 60% of all focus group participants expressed surprise and anguish over the homeless status of families.⁷

Federal Definitions of Homelessness

Studies of homelessness are complicated by problems of definitions. Federal programs to assist persons who are homeless provide a wide range of services. Many of these programs are targeted to serve the needs of different segments of the homeless population (e.g. veterans or runaway youth), while others are intended to reach a broader number of persons, including those who may be at risk of homelessness.

There are five federal statutory definitions of homelessness, as well as non-regulatory and regulatory guidance issued by Federal Agencies. There are aspects of definitions that also come in conflict with another.

For the most part these definitions share common language that defines homelessness as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Differences in definitions primarily relate to the inclusion both of individuals who are sharing the housing of other persons (i.e. 'doubled-up') due to loss of housing or economic hardship and of persons living in trailer parks and substandard housing. The latter definition references a much broader population of individuals that may not be living on the streets or in shelters, but could be construed as experiencing homelessness due to housing instability.

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development defines a homeless individual as one who:

- lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and
- has a primary nighttime residence that is
 - A) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill); or
 - B) an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or (C) a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.⁸

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines a homeless youth as "homeless child or youth' under the age

of 18, who lacks a fixed regular, and adequate night time residence.” The living situation is described as “living in cars, abandoned buildings, parks, the streets, or other public spaces, in a runaway or homeless youth shelter, doubled up in housing with other families or friends, living in a hotel or motel, in shelters with family members, in campgrounds or inadequate trailer homes.”

According to Washington State House Bill 2163, Homeless Housing Assistance Act a "Homeless person" means an individual living outside or in a building not meant for human habitation or which they have no legal right to occupy, in an emergency shelter, or in a temporary housing program which may include a transitional and supportive housing program if habitation time limits exist. This definition includes substance abusers, mentally ill people, and sex offenders who are homeless.

Barriers to Housing

As elsewhere in the nation, homelessness is usually the result of multiple factors that converge in a person's life. The combination of loss of employment; inability to find a job due to economic issues; and the high cost of housing, leads to loss of housing for some individuals and families. For others, the loss of housing is due to chronic health problems physical disabilities, mental health disabilities or drug and alcohol addictions along with the inability to access the services and long-term support needed to address these conditions. According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, there are two trends responsible for the rise in homelessness: the increase in poverty and the growing shortage of affordable housing.

Poverty

The 2008 Federal Poverty Guidelines identify an individual in poverty if their income is at or less than \$10,400 a year. A family of three is in poverty if their income is at or less than \$17,600 a year⁹.

- In Pierce County, 11.5% of the total population live below the poverty level
- Families account for 8%¹⁰ of those in poverty.
- Households headed by women account for 23.8% of the total population living in poverty.
- 14.3% of all children under 18 live below the poverty level.

According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, two factors contribute to increasing poverty:

- Availability of living wage employment
- The decline in value and availability of public assistance

Most low-wage workers receive no health or retirement benefits, and no family or sick leave. Affordable, quality childcare is out of reach, let alone the ability to further one's education. Workers with less education find it difficult to find quality jobs. Employers who employ workers with less education have an additional expense of providing training. American business currently spends approximately \$60 billion each year training poorly educated workers, much of that remedial reading, writing, and mathematics.¹¹

The declining value and availability of public assistance is another source of increasing poverty and homeless. Current Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) benefits and Food Stamps combined are below the poverty level in every state; the current maximum TANF benefit for a single mother of two children is 29% of the federal poverty level.¹² In addition to the reduction of benefits to families, public assistance for individuals has been reduced or eliminated.

As a result, families leaving welfare struggle to get health care, food, and housing. Housing is rarely affordable on low wages and subsidized housing is so

limited in supply that few TANF families live in public housing or receive housing vouchers.¹³

Affordable Housing

The lack of affordable housing and the limited scale of housing assistance programs have contributed to the current housing crisis and to homelessness. The 'housing wage' (the wage necessary to rent a two-bedroom apartment and still pay no more than 30% of income for shelter costs) in Pierce County in 2008 was \$16.25 per hour (\$33,800 annually, working full time)¹⁴. The gap between the number of affordable housing units and the number of people needing them has created a housing crisis for individuals in poverty.

Pierce County owner and renter occupied households make up 93% of total housing units.¹⁵ With 23,191 vacant housing units, there is an opportunity for homeless households to be housed but not housed affordably.

Extremely cost burdened renter occupied households total 16,469, and owner occupied households total 15,510.¹⁶ Extremely HUD defines cost burdened as paying more than 50% of gross income for housing including utilities and at risk of homelessness. These households are one illness, one accident, or loss of one paycheck away from becoming homeless.

The lack of affordable housing has led to high rent burdens (rents that absorb a high proportion of income), overcrowding, and substandard housing. These phenomena, in turn, have not only forced many individuals to become homeless; they have put a large and growing number of households at risk of becoming homeless.

General Need for Affordable Housing

The un-met need for affordable housing in Pierce County is estimated to be at least 30,000 units of affordable housing.¹⁷ This

would include additional emergency shelter beds, transitional housing units with services, permanent supportive housing units for homeless populations, and general affordable housing units for low-income populations.

If there were a sufficient supply of affordable housing units in Pierce County, the majority of those who become homeless could remain housed. While there is ample evidence to show that there are households and individuals who need a high level of supportive services coupled with housing subsidies in order to remain stable, that group is in the minority.

The challenge for many households is, despite the fact that they work; they do not have sufficient resources to pay the escalating cost of keeping a roof over their heads. For those who are on fixed incomes due to disability or age it is a daily struggle to balance paying rent, food and other costs of daily life. Based on the U.S. American Communities Survey (2007), 12.5% of the Pierce County population lives below the federal poverty standard. This group includes many who are seniors, young families, and single parent households. This group is also at much higher risk of being cost burdened and potentially homeless.

The county will need to establish targets for affordable housing production if it hopes to have a meaningful impact, and, like other major societal issues, finding solutions to these issues will require strategies that cross city and county boundaries. Efforts toward this goal are being made through the Growth Management Coordinating Committee, a group of elected officials and others from all jurisdictions who are establishing targets for affordable housing development in all of our communities. Under this policy, referred to as "Fair Share," all jurisdictions determine the number of housing units needed for low-income households throughout Pierce County.

In addition to the creation of “Fair Share” policy guidance, further work needs to be completed including the development of a regional affordable housing strategy. A range of actions is necessary and there is a strong consensus in the community that if Pierce County is going to make real progress in solving the challenge of homelessness and the provision of affordable housing, additional public subsidy will be essential.

The development of housing is becoming increasingly expensive as the costs of land, building materials and infrastructure escalate. For both non-profit and for-profit developers, creating housing for those families earning less than fifty percent of area median income requires subsidies in a variety of formats to make the development financially feasible.

Subsidies will reduce the price of rents or purchase prices for low-income populations. County Council Ordinance created the Pierce County Housing Affordability Task Force in 2005, to examine all methods available to increase the availability of affordable housing. Their Final Report suggests that without new local revenues other strategies by themselves are not sufficient to make substantial progress toward meeting affordable housing needs.

Affordable housing as an issue, while significant to many people, competes with a variety of other equally significant public policy priorities for funding. The amount committed to this effort has remained stable or in many instances declined over the last 20 years. Countywide, an average of 100 new units of housing targeted to low income populations come on line each year. Based on the projection of 30,000 units needed, it will take 300 years to meet the current need.

Effectively reducing the shortage of affordable housing will demand that new federal initiatives, state attention and local revenues all be committed to the task at hand. For any affordable housing

development strategies to be successful, the County must make a commitment to work with other organizations to create a public outreach and education effort regarding the needs in Pierce County and the region.

Strategies with the greatest potential for creating affordable housing will require strong political leadership and considerable public will to implement. Public education and outreach will be essential to creating that support in Pierce County.

Housing for Homeless Individuals and Families

Once a family or individual becomes homeless, they are eligible to receive housing and assistance through a variety of programs funded with federal, state, and local resources, as well as foundation funding.

32 agencies in Pierce County provide housing and assistance to homeless individuals and families. 9 agencies work only with single populations, 11 work exclusively with families, and 12 agencies work with both singles and families.

The current inventory of units programmed to shelter the homeless includes a wide variety of models.¹⁸ Dormitory-type housing and single-family housing units provide emergency shelter beds for individuals and families. Single-family homes and apartments provide transitional units for individuals and families. Scattered site apartments provide permanent supportive housing for people with disabilities.

All housing units serving the homeless have some level of public subsidy. Funding comes from a variety of sources and pays for operating costs, construction, or acquisition of the real property.

There are however limited resources that concentrate on preventing homelessness, such as rental assistance programs or foreclosure prevention activities.

According to Superior Court records, in Pierce County an average of 2,650 households are evicted from their dwellings through a legal process each year. A family or individual with an eviction on their record will find it extremely challenging to locate new housing due to tenant screening processes that are generally used by landlords.

All known subsidized housing programs have waiting lists and always report utilization near 100% of existing capacity. In addition, clients often need supportive services, and those programs typically operate at capacity and still do not meet the demand for those services.

In some cases, individuals and families exiting a "homeless housing and assistance program" are able to move into units in the general housing market-place and maintain a stable housing situation. Sometimes the households receive financial assistance through the Section 8 program for rental of private sector units. In other cases, they may move into a federally funded public housing unit or a unit built with federal, state, or local funding which ensures affordability. However, in the majority of cases they return to live with family members or in market rate properties, which places them at risk of becoming homeless again. Programs to assist the homeless or to prevent homelessness will continue to be overwhelmed unless the general need for housing affordability is addressed.

Currently, in various stages of development by local non-profit organizations in Pierce County, there are 250 units of new emergency shelter beds, new transitional housing units, new permanent supportive housing units and other affordable housing.

Based on the need as identified in the 2006 Homeless Survey, 306 units of additional housing were needed, including 98 housing units for single persons, 102 for those classified as chronically

homeless and 105 for families. Based on the current 2008 Homeless Survey, the need level has increased significantly to 225 units for single persons, 151 for those classified as chronic homeless and 143 family units, for a total of 519.

Due to a growing homeless population, the need for additional units increases even as new units are produced. As an example, the significant increase in the chronic population, as shown in the 2008 Homeless Survey, has occurred at the same time that several new programs specifically targeted to serving the chronic homeless opened. According to Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Data, transitional units targeted to families are always occupied, and based on agency reports they turn away numerous families on a monthly basis.

In addition, individuals and families who enter into homeless programs designed to teach skills that will lead to self-sufficiency are exiting those programs at extremely high rates before completion. This is the case for programs involving permanent as well as transitional housing models. This suggests that in addition to changes in the number and characteristics of the homeless, the challenges they face may also be changing, and programs serving that population need to be adjusted to meet the need.

Current economic conditions threaten to exacerbate the problems described here. The economic expansion from 2001 through 2006 did not benefit low-income households to same degree as other portions of the economic spectrum. With the current contraction focused on the housing sector, it is easy to imagine coming increases in homelessness among populations who were struggling to stay afloat during a strong economy. When those people cross the threshold into homelessness, the existing overburdened programs are the only safety net available to them.

Cost of Health Care

For households struggling to pay the rent, a serious illness or disability can start a downward spiral into homelessness, beginning with a lost job, depletion of savings to pay for care, and eventual eviction. A third of individuals in poverty have no health insurance of any kind.¹⁹ The coverage held by many would not carry them through a catastrophic illness.

Individuals experiencing homelessness are more likely to access costly emergency health care services, which often do not lead to lasting solutions to medical problems. Those experiencing homelessness spend an average of 4 days longer per hospital visit than those who are not homeless. This extra cost, approximately \$2,414 per hospitalization, is attributable to homelessness.²⁰

A study of hospital admissions of homeless individuals living without permanent housing revealed that 1,751 adults were responsible for \$4 million in admission costs. The rate of psychiatric hospitalization was over 100 times their non-homeless cohort. The researchers conducting the study estimate that the excess cost for treating these homeless individuals was \$3.5 million.²¹

Homeless children get sick twice as often as other children do. They have twice as many ear infections, four times as many asthma attacks, five times more stomach problems, six times as many speech problems, and twice as many hospitalizations. Nearly 20% of homeless children lack a regular source of medical care, and 15% rely solely on hospital emergency rooms.²²

Emergency Services

In 2001, the Tacoma News Tribune estimated that one of the county's most well known chronically homeless individuals cost an estimated \$525 per day, every day, for eleven years in emergency services.²³ While necessary for short-term crises, emergency shelters

too often serve as long-term, temporary housing. Without the program components necessary to assist homeless individuals to transition to more permanent options, shelters do not reduce the over-reliance of homeless citizens on other emergency services, i.e. medical and law enforcement.

The approximate cost per day for emergency shelter is \$68. To house an inmate at the Pierce County jail, the cost is about \$80 per day, not including court-related costs. Permanent supported housing for individuals with chronic mental illness and/or substance abuse costs from \$20 to \$38 per day.²⁴ Not only is this the most economical housing option, it has the best chance of reducing a person's need for emergency services and assisting them to become contributing members of the community.

Decreased Economic Growth

Though difficult to quantify, the damage to the economy due to lost human potential and productivity is significant. Poor health, addictions and more time spent in jails or prisons, means that homeless people have many obstacles that prevent them from contributing to society through their work and creativity.

Homeless children also face difficult barriers to education. Because many homeless children have such poor education experiences, their future productivity and career prospects often suffer. This generational effect of homelessness can produce a much longer-lasting problem.

Approximately 87% of school age homeless children are enrolled in school, although only about 77% attend school regularly.²⁵ Homeless children who are able to attend school have more problems learning in school. Compared to children in stable housing, homeless children are:

- Four times as likely to have developmental delays

- Twice as likely to have learning disabilities
- Twice as likely to repeat a grade, most often due to frequent absences and moves to new schools (28% go to three or more schools in a single year).
- 20% of pre-school aged children have emotional problems serious enough to require professional care
- 47% of school-aged children suffer anxiety, depression, and withdrawal.

SECTION 3: Homelessness in Pierce County

Total Homeless

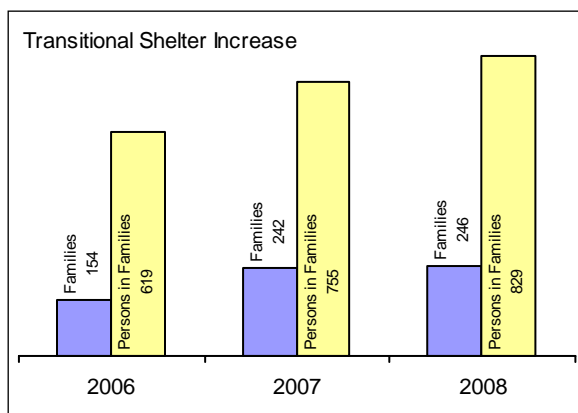
The Tacoma Pierce County Coalition for the Homeless conducted a 24-hour survey in January 2008. 1,743 individuals met the HUD definition of homelessness.

The 2008 survey shows a 9% increase over the 2007 survey. The emergency and transitional shelter count reflects occupancy during the 24-hour period of the survey that is close to the known numbers of available beds and family units. In 2007, there were 242 families living in transitional shelter, accounting for 755 individuals. The number of families living in transitional shelter in 2008 was 246, accounting for 829 individuals. The number of families in transitional shelter in 2008 increased minimally over 2007.

Transitional Shelter

Although the number of individuals counted in the transitional shelter count increased, the amount of individuals counted in the emergency shelter remained at the same levels. During the night of the survey, 470 individuals were in emergency shelter in 2007 versus 466 in 2008.

232 households indicated they had no housing and were on the streets, 377 households resided in emergency shelters, and 429 households indicated they resided in transitional housing.



Homeless Individuals

Total Singles	Not Housed		Emergency Shelter		Transitional		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
	227	30	343	46	183	24	753

The total number of single individuals counted was 753. The majority were residing in emergency housing when the survey was conducted (343 or 45.5%). Additionally, 227 individuals were not housed and 183 identified as residing in transitional housing.

There are fewer emergency, transitional, and permanent housing options for homeless individuals than for families in Pierce County. For singles with mental illness or an active drug or alcohol addiction, those options are further reduced.

Homeless Families

	Not Housed		Emergency Shelter		Transitional		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Total Families w/ Children	5	2%	34	12%	246	87%	285
Total People in Families	38	4%	123	12%	829	84%	990

Two hundred and eighty-five families, totaling 990 individuals are represented in the survey. Eighty-seven percent (246) of families resided in transitional housing. Twelve percent (34) were identified in emergency shelters. About 2% (5) of the families were identified as being without shelter (in automobiles, camps, under bridges, on the streets, etc.)

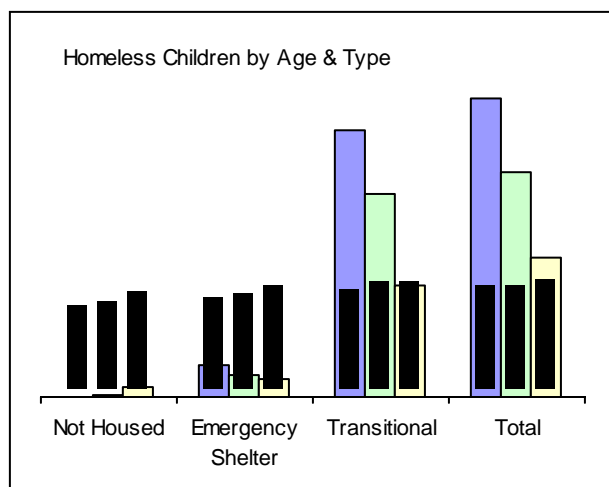
The high percentage of families in transitional housing may be a reflection of how the community's resources have been targeted over the past decade, when families were identified as Pierce County's largest and fastest growing homeless subset. Local agencies focused on development of transitional housing to

provide families with relatively long-term opportunities to regain housing stability.

Children, age 0 to 18, living with their parent(s), accounted for 30.5% (531) of the total count, a decrease of 2% from 2007. Only three youth were identified as unaccompanied and on the street at the time of the survey.

Homeless Children by Age & Type

With emphasis placed on the needs of chronically homeless individuals, data shows that families can also be chronically homeless. For example, 66 families were identified as homeless for more than one year and as being homeless multiple times. In this instance, the need to address issues of chronic homelessness is also compounded with the need to address family issues.



Homeless by Race

Among the homeless population counted in the 2008 survey, over half (52.7%) are white as compared to 77.6% of Pierce County's overall population. Also underrepresented are the Asians who account for 1.4% of the homeless population as compared to 5.9% of the overall population.

The following groups are overrepresented in the homeless population: African Americans, 22.1% as compared to 6.9% of the overall population; American Indian or Alaskan Native, 3.6% as compared to 1.4% of the overall population; Native

Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, 2.7% as compared to .89% of the overall population and multi-racial, 12% as compared to 9% of the overall population.

Special Needs

Households were asked to identify from a list of issues what may have been a contributing factor in their current circumstances. The cause of homelessness may have happened as an isolated incidence or as in many cases a combination of reasons.

One of the major barriers faced by families and individuals exiting emergency shelters and transitional housing is an insufficiency of available permanent housing that is affordable for low and very low-income households.

Improving household stability, including gaining full-time employment, does not guarantee that household income will meet the demand of today's housing market. Section 8 rental subsidy program changes and reductions further impact these households' ability to obtain and retain housing.

Employment/Income

Only 113 (11%) heads of household reported some type of employment, 241 had no income and 326 (31%) relied on public assistance or benefit.

- Income source was not reported by 244 (22.7%) respondents
- "Benefit" includes Unemployment Insurance, Public Assistance, Relatives or friends, Workman's Compensation or Social Security
- While 154 respondents reported being employed, only 113 reported having income from employment

Barriers to Obtaining/Sustaining Housing

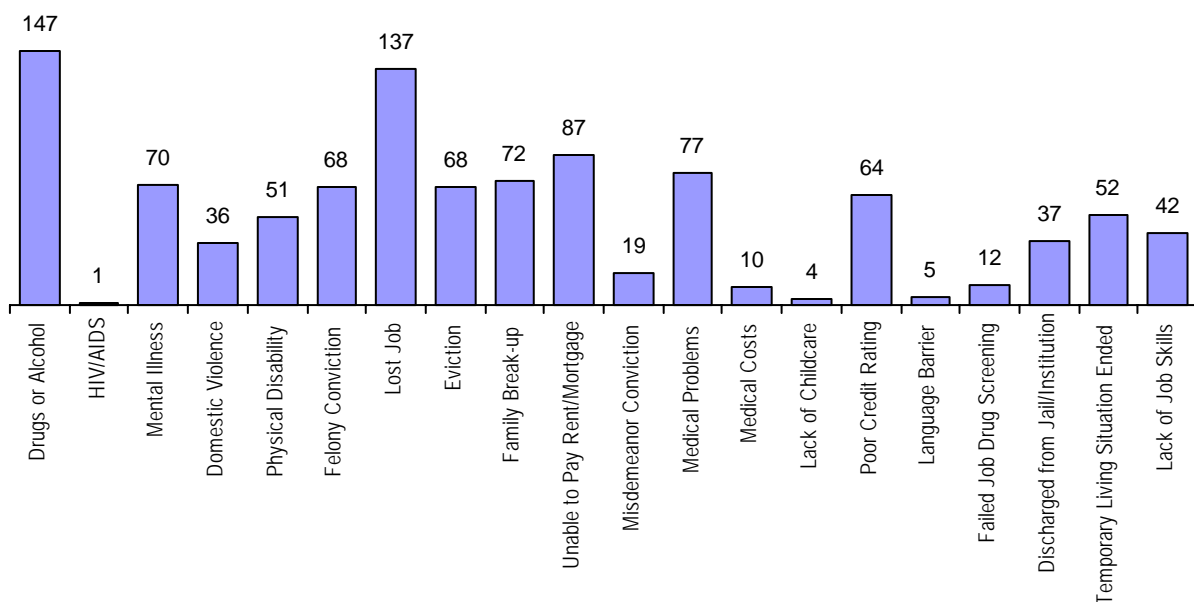
In addition to economic barriers facing a household's ability to stay housed, there is a list of disabilities and characteristics that are attributed to becoming or being homeless.

Heads of household voluntarily reported that:

- 276 were affected by drugs and alcohol, including 160 unsheltered or in emergency shelter and 116 in transitional shelter
- 134 had a mental illness
- 97 had a physical disability
- 3 were affected by AIDS/HIV
- 132 reported they were victims of domestic violence
- 123 individuals had a felony conviction

Reasons for Housing Loss

(based on 2008 Homeless Survey responses)



SECTION 4: Pierce County Affordable and Supportive Housing Needs

Shelter Inventory

	Family Units	Family Beds	Individual Beds	Total Beds
Emergency	40	178	262	440
Transitional	314	1030	127	1,157
Permanent Supportive	3	9	279	288

*Out of 288 PH beds 101 are reserved for the chronically homeless

There is a countywide need of 30,000 units of affordable housing. Affordable housing units with appropriate supportive services for those with disabilities are crucial to any effort to end homelessness. We currently have 17,945 publicly funded beds/units available for all populations as described below.

- 440 Emergency Shelter Beds/Units for homeless individuals and families
- 282 units of permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals and families
- 314 Transitional Housing Units with Services for homeless individuals and families
- 10,761 units of low income housing serving all populations (non-homeless)
- 6,100 Housing Choice Voucher's (Section 8)

In addition, there are 469 units in the planning process, some of which are nearing the construction phase.

Discharge from Systems

Homeless individuals may experience incarceration or hospitalization. In each instance, plans need to be put in place to ensure that individuals identified as homeless are moved from the corrections or health system into stable housing.

Incarcerated

Ensuring that individuals released from prison and jail find appropriate places to live is critical to public safety and healthy families and communities. People who do not find stable housing in the community are more likely to recidivate than those who do. With each move after release from prison, a person's likelihood of re-arrest increases by 25%. Re-arrest and re-incarceration disrupts income and the ability of the person arrested and their family to comply with lease agreements.²⁶

Hospitals

Discharge of homeless patients from the health care or mental health system is a concern, particularly those who still need a low level of care to remain healthy. The primary health systems in Pierce County have entered into discussion with Pierce County government to find alternatives to extending hospital care past the normal point of release. These discussions are expected to result in development of a discharge policy that protects the interests of homeless patients. The costs to extending hospital care past discharge can be approximately \$800 per day.

Foster Care

"Today, the typical homeless person in America is a child. If his or her parent was in foster care as a child, chances are one in four that he or she will enter the foster care system before age eighteen."²⁷

It is estimated that approximately 400 youth exit foster care at age 18 each year in Washington. In May 2005, Pierce County had 138 youth who were 17 years of age or older (approximately 30% of the state total) in foster care. According to the "Foster Youth Transition to Independence Study" conducted by the Office of Children's Administrative Research (2004) within one year of exiting foster care, approximately:

- 13% had experienced homelessness

- 50% completed high school or obtained GED
- Less than 50% were employed and of those who were employed 47% were making wages at or below the poverty line
- 30% were enrolled in at least one public assistance program.

Youth exiting the Foster Care system at age 18 are at extremely high risk of experiencing homelessness due to life experiences, failure to obtain education, lack of life skills, and extremely low incomes.

Washington State Legislature passed House Bill 1922 in April 2007. The legislature finds that providing needy youth aging out of the state foster care system with safe and viable options for housing to avoid homelessness confers a valuable benefit on the public that is intended to improve public health, safety, and welfare. The goal of this legislation is to ensure 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 young people from experiencing homelessness and reduce each year the percentage of young people eligible for state assistance upon aging out of the state dependency system.²⁸

Pierce County Housing Opportunities and Services

Within Pierce County there are non-profit community-based agencies providing housing opportunities and services to homeless individuals and families. Services are targeted to certain geographic areas or are spread countywide. Some agencies focus on families and others on subpopulations with special needs such as domestic violence victims and those living with AIDS/HIV. The housing opportunities and services cover a continuum of services from

prevention to permanent supportive housing.

Prevention

In general, services have included short and long-term rental assistance, short and long-term case management, basic financial literacy workshops, and utility assistance.

Emergency Shelter

Emergency shelter includes any facility, with the primary purpose of providing temporary shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless.

Transitional Housing

Transitional housing facilitates the movement of homeless individuals and families to permanent housing within a reasonable amount of time (usually 24 months).

Permanent Supportive Housing

Permanent supportive housing is long term, community-based housing that provides supportive services for low-income or homeless people with developmental disabilities, severe mental illness, substance abuse, or HIV/AIDS. This type of supportive housing enables special needs populations to live as independently as possible in a permanent setting. Supportive services may be provided by the organization managing the housing, or coordinated by the applicant and provided by other public or private service agencies. Permanent housing can be provided in one structure, in several structures at one site, or in multiple structures at scattered sites.

SECTION 5: Sub populations

Chronic Homeless Population

“Chronically Homeless” is defined as an individual with a disability who has been homeless for more than one year or 4 times or more in the past 3 years. In 2007, options for the chronically homeless increased with targeted effort by the Continuum of Care, Homeless Housing Assistance funds and the City of Tacoma’s encampment initiative to provide client directed housing to the chronically homeless. However, there are no new units due to open in the next year or so for permanent supportive housing. Units for this population are in development and may not be available for the next 2 to 3 years.

The number of individuals identified as being chronically homeless and not housed or living in emergency shelters has increased from 192 in 2007 to 314 in 2008, a 63% increase. Veterans increased by 69% (+31) compared to 2007.

Total Chronic Homeless	372
Total Unsheltered Individuals	227
Total Unsheltered & Chronic	161
Average Age - All Records	
Male	44.4
Female	35.1
Chronic Average Age	
Male	46.0
Female	40.3
Non-Chronic Average Age	
Male	44.1
Female	37.3
Chronic Status Unknown Average Age	
Male	41.6
Female	32.7
Unsheltered Chronic Sub-Population	
Mentally Disabled	30
Drug/Alcohol Problems	62
Drug/Alcohol & Mental Health Problems	11
Domestic Violence Victims	18
Physically Disabled	24
Senior Citizens (age 65+)	3
Veterans	47
HIV/AIDS	1

Homeless Veterans

Nationally, approximately 23%²⁹ of homeless men are veterans.

- In Pierce County, 255 individuals have identified as being a veteran (15%)
- 134 chronically homeless individuals are veterans, including those on the streets, in emergency shelters and in transitional housing
- Chronically Homeless Veterans make up 36% of the chronically homeless population

	Chronic Homeless Veterans	All Homeless Veterans
Unsheltered Veterans	42	62
Reason for Housing Loss		
Drugs or alcohol	61	114
HIV/AIDS	0	2
Mental Illness	24	51
Domestic Violence	9	20
Physical Disability	20	38
Felony Conviction	29	45
Lost job	53	82
Eviction	22	44
Family break-up	24	38
Unable to pay rent/mortgage	32	72
Misdemeanor conviction	3	5
Medical problems	33	58
Medical costs	2	9
Lack of child care	0	1
Poor credit rating	23	40
Language barrier	0	0
Failed job drug screening	6	8
Discharged from institution/jail	15	22
Temporary living situation ended	17	42
Lack of job skills	11	13
Source of Income		
None	44	72
Unemployment insurance	3	3
Public assistance	21	31
Relatives/partners/friends	2	6
L&I/workman’s compensation	0	0
Social Security	24	43
Employed	13	32
Other	34	77

Persons With Serious Mental Illness

Mental illness often makes it difficult for individuals to find and retain housing, maintain employment, and navigate the health, housing, and social service system. Individuals in poverty with mental illness are at increased risk of homelessness. Homeless individuals with mental disorders remain homeless for longer periods and have less contact with family and friends. Mental illness prevents individuals from carrying out essential aspects of daily life, such as self-care, household management, and interpersonal relationships.

A significant percentage of people who are homeless have mental illnesses. While only 4% of the U.S. population has a serious mental illness, 20-25% of the homeless population has serious mental illnesses.³⁰ Less than 7% of Pierce County's general population is estimated to have a mental illness,³¹ and 7.7% of individuals reported having a mental illness in the 2008 Homeless Survey.

Persons With Serious Substance Abuse Issues

While most individuals affected by substance abuse never become homeless, those who are in poverty and addicted are clearly at increased risk. Untreated disorders contribute to homelessness. For many, the onset of an addictive disorder may be the catalyst to homelessness. For individuals who are addicted and homeless, the health condition may be prolonged by the very life circumstance in which they find themselves. Alcohol and drug use distract from activities oriented toward stability.³² In the 2008 Homeless survey, 15.8% of adult individuals reported substance abuse as an issue.

Persons with HIV/AIDS

For homeless individuals living with HIV/AIDS the conditions of homelessness are even more dire. The impact of HIV/AIDS on a person's immune system makes homelessness a serious health risk. Homeless shelters, while they provide respite from the elements are often a significant threat to people with HIV/AIDS. Shelter conditions can expose people with HIV/AIDS to dangerous and even life threatening infections such as hepatitis A, pneumonia, tuberculosis, and skin infections.

Homelessness not only puts individuals with HIV/AIDS at a high risk of contracting an infection, it also makes obtaining and using common HIV/AIDS medications more difficult.³³ Antiretroviral medications used to treat HIV come with demanding and rigorous regimens. Without stable housing, access to clean water, bathrooms, refrigeration, and food, the likelihood of taking the medication on a regular schedule, which is vital for proper treatment, is severely impaired.³⁴

Persons With Co-Occurring Diagnoses

Persons with co-occurring disorders are much more likely to be jailed or homeless. An estimated 50% of homeless adults with serious mental illness have a co-occurring substance abuse disorder. Meanwhile, 16% of jail and prison inmates are estimated to have severe mental and substance abuse disorders. Among detainees with mental disorders, 72% also have a co-occurring substance abuse disorder.³⁵

Victims Of Domestic Violence

A sizable portion of the population in poverty experience domestic violence at any given time. Without housing support, many of those in poverty are at risk of homelessness or continued violence. Lack of affordable housing and long waiting lists for assisted housing mean

that people experiencing domestic violence may be forced to choose between abuses at home and those they may face on the streets³⁶. Frequently, shelters are filled to capacity and must turn away people experiencing domestic violence. Shelters provide immediate safety to those affected by domestic violence and help individuals gain control over their lives.

Felony Convictions

Felony convictions create a barrier to accessing safe and affordable housing. Nationally, 54% of homeless adults have experienced incarceration, 49% have spent five or more days in a city or county jail at some point, and 18% have spent time in a state or federal prison. In Pierce County's 2008 Homeless Survey, 187 adults reported having a felony conviction or 18% of the total adult homeless population. This included 23 adults in families and 164 individuals.

Unaccompanied Youth

The majority of unaccompanied youth (youth who are not living with a parent or guardian) do not meet HUD's definition of homelessness. In Pierce County, most unaccompanied youth are living with family or friends. According to HUD's definition of homelessness, couch surfing or being doubled up does not constitute homelessness. Also, due to issues of legal liability, shelters and transitional housing programs that are not licensed foster care facilities do not accept individuals under the age of 18 who are not accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

Bethel, Clover Park, Sumner, and Tacoma school districts reported 87 unaccompanied youth between the ages of 14 - 21. Three unaccompanied youth were either identified to be unsheltered or in emergency shelter. School districts reported that the majority of unaccompanied youth (51) were living with family or friends. There were 52 youth

between the ages of 14 - 17 and 35 between the ages of 18 - 21. Eight unaccompanied youth were identified outside of the school district reports.

Unaccompanied Youth School District Report

Age 14 – 18 Years

	Total Youth	Unaccompanied	With Other Youth, No Adults
Unsheltered Male	1	1	0
Unsheltered Female	1	1	0
Emergency Male	0	0	0
Emergency Female	1	1	0
Transitional Male	2	0	2
Transitional Female	2	0	2
Family/Friends Male	19	19	0
Family/Friends Female	32	32	0
Other Male	1	1	0
Other Female	1	1	0
Total Male	23	21	2
Total Female	37	35	2
Total	60	56	4

Populations at Risk of Homelessness

Each year in Pierce County an average of 2,650 households are legally evicted from their rental units. As there is no system of follow-up, it is unknown where these households end up. Some of these households most likely end up homeless.

In Pierce County, 11.5% of the population is in poverty. This includes 36,559 households that have approximately 85,914 members. The majority of those households are cost burdened (paying more than 30% of their income towards housing expenses) leaving them at high risk of homelessness.

SECTION 6: Annual Performance Reports Summary

About the Data

All HUD funded agencies must complete an Annual Performance Report (APR) for Supportive Housing Programs funded activities. This data is from reports filed from 2005-2007. Sample size: 625 Households in Transitional Housing Programs and 180 Households in Permanent Supportive Housing.

Transitional Housing Definition:

Housing and Services provided for individuals and families for a maximum of 2 years.

Permanent Housing definition:

Housing and Services provided for individuals with disabilities with no time limit or service restrictions. Data compiled from 6 Agencies APR's, providing 8 Permanent Housing programs and 10 Agencies APR's providing 21 Transitional Housing Programs.

APR data is provided to congress by HUD, provides information on overall performance, and indicates trends in our local programs.

Where Did Homeless Clients Live Before Entering Program

The responses to this question show where clients lived before they entered programs. The majority of permanent housing residents (single persons with disabilities) came from the street and the majority of those in transitional programs came from emergency shelters often operated by the agency that provides the transitional housing.

	Permanent	Transitional	All Programs
Street	56.34%	8.97%	24.28%
Emergency Shelter	16.43%	60.54%	46.28%
Transitional Housing	4.69%	9.87%	8.19%
Psychiatric Facility	1.41%	0%	0.46%
Abuse Treatment Facility	0.94%	1.35%	1.21%
Hospital	0.47%	0%	0.15%
Jail / Prison	0%	0%	0%
Domestic Violence Situation	5.63%	1.12%	2.58%
Living w/ Relatives or Friends	6.57%	11.21%	9.71%
Rental Housing	2.35%	1.35%	1.67%
Other	5.16%	5.61%	5.46%

Client Income Before (Entry) and After (Exit) Programs

Incomes levels for all clients at program entry show that only 7.3% of clients had incomes over \$1,000 per month at the time of entering programs. At program exit, 19.21% of all clients had income of more than \$1,000 per month. Incomes in this range however are not sufficient to maintain housing and place the households at risk of homelessness.

ENTRY	Permanent	Transitional	All Programs
None	16.86%	17.81%	17.54%
\$1-150	0%	0%	0%
\$151-250	4.65%	1.83%	2.62%
\$251-500	38.37%	37.67%	37.87%
\$501-1000	36.63%	33.79%	34.59%
\$1001-5000	3.49%	6.85%	5.90%
\$1501-2000	0%	2.05%	1.48%
\$2000 +	0%	0%	0%

EXIT	Permanent	Transitional	All Programs
None	13.07%	8.22%	9.61%
\$1-150	0%	0.46%	0.33%
\$151-250	0.57%	2.97%	2.28%
\$251-500	35.23%	32.65%	33.39%
\$501-1000	46.02%	30.82%	35.18%
\$1001-5000	3.41%	12.56%	9.93%
\$1501-2000	1.14%	8.68%	6.51%
\$2000 +	0.57%	3.65%	2.77%

Destination when Leaving Programs

When households leave programs, the majority exit to non-permanent housing or family and friends, which again places them at risk of homelessness.

	Permanent Housing	Permanent Housing w/ Family or Friends	Non-Permanent Housing
Permanent	40.00%	16.00%	44.00%
Transitional	55.02%	16.21%	28.77%

Length of Time In Housing By Program Type

Of clients entering permanent housing programs where there is no expectation they will leave, clients exit those programs 55% within 12 months of entry. Nearly 70% of all households in transitional programs leave before a year and 1 out of 3 stay for less than 6 months. Transitional programs are designed to provide services to stabilize households and give them the tools to effectively transition from homelessness to self-sufficiency.

	0 – 6 Months	7 – 12 Months	13-23 Months	2 Years or More
Permanent	33.89%	21.11%	22.78%	22.22%
Transitional	34.38%	35.06%	27.19%	3.37%
All Programs	34.24%	31.04%	25.92%	8.80%

How Many Completed Programs

Less than 3 out of 10 households successfully complete the programs that are designed to assist them. 52% of those in permanent housing and nearly 44% of those in transitional programs are removed for non-compliance with program rules. 70% of all participants were either removed from programs or left of their own volition.

	Completed Program	Left Before Completing Program	Non-Compliance
Permanent	22.86%	25.14%	52.00%
Transitional	30.14%	36.03%	43.84%
All Programs	28.06%	25.77%	44.37%

Reason for Leaving Program

The chart below provides information on the reason clients leave programs. These add up to the non-compliance number shown in previous chart.

	Permanent	Transitional	All Programs
Non-payment of rent	1.14%	2.05%	1.79%
Non-compliance	12.57%	21.69%	19.09%
Criminal Activity / Violence	14.86%	4.11%	7.18%
Maximum Time Reached	0%	0.23%	0.16%
Needs Not Met	1.71%	2.28%	2.12%
Disagree with Rules / Persons	3.43%	4.11%	3.92%
Death	2.29%	0%	0.65%
Other	13.14%	5.48%	7.67%
Unknown	2.86%	3.88%	3.59%

Summary of APR Data

The majority of permanent housing program participants:

- Enter with incomes below poverty level;
- Are removed for non compliance with program rules;
- Exit to a living situation that places them at risk of homelessness;
- Exit with incomes below poverty level.

The majority of transitional housing program participants:

- Enter with income at or below poverty level;
- Do not complete agency programs;
- Stay less than 1 year;
- Exit with incomes insufficient to sustain housing.

SECTION 7: Strategies to End Homeless

Five strategies have been identified as fundamental to reducing homelessness and to the success of ending homelessness in Pierce County.

1. Community Will
2. Housing
3. Prevention
4. Services
5. Systems

Each strategy is presented below and is supported by activities that will advance our goal of ending homelessness. The order in which strategies are presented does not imply priority.

Community Will Strategies

Goal: Create a sustainable political and community will to end homelessness as we know it by reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness by 50% before 2016.

1. Develop a strong voice in the community through unified approaches to advocacy and engagement and education of the community.
2. Enlist and educate the political leadership and provide them with 1) key information to promote and support Ten Year Plan strategies and 2) tools to assist them in decision-making on actions to reduce the number of persons experiencing homelessness.
3. Work with existing leadership efforts (i.e. The Road Home Leadership Team, Tacoma Pierce County Coalition for the Homeless and Continuum of Care) to steward and promote the implementation of the Ten Year Plan.
4. Establish the staffing capacity to support improved coordination planning among providers.

5. Coordinate with other homeless planning efforts and efforts to expand affordable housing and create living wages.

Housing Strategies

Goal: Develop and sustain a continuum of housing for all households experiencing homelessness – families, adult individuals, and youth - while creating permanent housing resources adequate to rapidly re-house those experiencing homelessness.

1. Create new units to meet the housing needs of those experiencing homelessness, by engaging the following key elements of the community in the development of housing solutions: businesses, employers, developers, landlords, schools, law enforcement, government, funders, for-profit developers, and the Pierce County Housing Affordability Task Force and Affordable Housing Consortium.
2. Assure any new emergency shelter and transitional facilities are designed to be feasibly converted to long-term housing when no longer needed for short-term housing.
3. Assure that both long-term and short-term housing resources are available when needed and that all homeless populations have access to an array of wrap-around services. Services should be readily accessible throughout Pierce County, to help people avoid or exit homelessness, should include but not be limited to:
 - Access to living wage jobs
 - Childcare
 - Children services, including non-traditional hours
 - Comprehensive case management

- Early intervention/education and support for families
 - Education
 - Employment services
 - Financial planning and training
 - Mental health and substance abuse treatment
 - Rental assistance
 - Transportation
 - Transportation priorities for special needs populations as listed in the Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Plan
 - Youth services
4. Provide housing with varied lengths of stay to meet the needs of all unserved populations.
 5. Develop, create, and invite the capacity and resources in Pierce County to meet the housing goals contained in the following plans:
 6. Disperse facilities geographically throughout the county.

Permanent Supportive Housing (indefinite stays)

1. Increase the supply of permanent supportive housing for persons with disabilities.
2. Develop facilities with controlled access to maintain safety.
3. Promote the development of housing with treatment and intensive services.
4. Prevent the loss of housing due to temporary absence while in treatment.

Permanent Affordable Housing

1. Create a system with resources available for rapidly re-housing persons experiencing homelessness ready for permanent housing and provide supports where needed.

2. Support regional and local efforts to expand the supply and choices for affordable housing.

Emergency Shelter (generally for immediate needs but up to 90 days)

1. Focus funding and planning efforts on the development of rapid re-housing projects that eliminate the need for expansion of the emergency housing system, and assure that adequate emergency shelter beds are available to
 - Meet the immediate and urgent needs of persons and families coming off the streets so that assessment and placement can be accomplished
 - Provide safe and temporary housing for immediate crisis and stabilization needs.

Transitional Housing (3-24 months stay)

1. Assure sufficient transitional housing resources are available for all populations and that adequate permanent housing resources are available at exit.
2. Provide a comprehensive set of client-based services for all transitional housing to increase services.

Prevention Strategies

Goal: Prevent homelessness in households at risk of losing stable housing by creating new prevention services and expand successful programs.

1. Develop flexible funding resources to provide “whatever it takes” to prevent loss of housing.
2. Assist households facing eviction to resolve their housing issues.

3. Increase rental assistance funding, together with supportive services, to prevent loss of housing with flexible time periods up to six months for assistance.
4. Work cooperatively with institutions such as corrections/jails, treatment facilities, hospitals, and foster care to prevent homelessness upon client discharge through advocacy/exit planning and community supports.
5. Provide basic education on the prevention of homelessness.
6. Advocate for other housing and supportive-services organizations and systems that focus on the root causes of homelessness, including but not limited to: poverty, family dysfunction, personal instability, living wages, affordable housing, and schools.

Service Strategies

Goal: Provide a continuum of client-centered services accessible to those households throughout the county who are experiencing homelessness or are tenuously housed.

1. Develop programs and resources for a readily available and flexible fund to support those experiencing homelessness as they move into a transitional housing and permanent affordable housing.
2. Promote an environment of culturally sensitive programs and policies among providers.
3. Increase the potential of financial independence through employment services aimed at raising wages to livable levels.
4. Provide an array of wrap-around services throughout Pierce County that are readily accessible and are either on-site or off-site, to help people avoid or exit homelessness, including but not limited to:

- Access to living wage jobs
- Childcare
- Children services, including for non-traditional hours
- Comprehensive case management
- Early intervention/education and support for families
- Education
- Employment services
- Financial planning and training
- Mental health and substance abuse treatment
- Rental assistance
- Transportation
- Transportation priorities for special needs populations as listed in the Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Plan
- Youth services

Systems Strategies

Goal: Initiate systems changes to support Ten Year Plan Strategies.

1. Continue improving the process to respond/advocate efficiently and innovatively to new state, regional, or local funding initiatives through planning, decision making, and coordination.
2. Maintain a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) capable of reporting on homeless program progress and providing on-going data on homelessness.
3. Develop strong collaboration and effective coordination among agency partners in the continuum to:
 - A. Create common intake application forms and procedures as a first step to a centralized intake/referral system.

- B.** Improve systems coordination between programs and agencies, especially for housing placement.
 - C.** Investigate habitability standards for transitional housing.
- 4.** Align evaluation systems to measure, improve program success, and use the results to promote the expansion of resources for homeless activities in the county.

Each system operates independently and is governed by federal, state, or local regulations or statutes.

The coordination of the array of systems designed to assist those in need into a single organized, targeted, and client-centered system may be the greatest challenge facing our community.

There are at least 79 distinct “systems” operating in Pierce County that fund, regulate, administer, house, and provide services to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

SECTION 8: Cost of Plan Implementation

This plan is designed to meet the requirements of legislation which requires a reduction in the homeless population in Pierce County by ½ from the date of the authorizing legislation in 2005.

Key to meeting that requirement is the provision of housing and services to those who are considered homeless, including those who are currently living in transitional housing programs funded with public resources. This population makes up the majority of those considered homeless in our community.

The goal of the legislation is for homeless households to be placed in safe, decent “permanent” affordable housing with appropriate services to allow them to remain stable and housed. None of our community agencies has, as of now, decided to convert their transitional housing to the permanent housing model. As a result, the estimated costs for providing housing units accounts for the population in transitional programs.

Two options exist to address this issue:

Construct new housing units:

Based on current production costs of new construction at \$200,000 per unit it would cost \$103,600,000 to develop and construct 518 units of housing to serve the population in need. This cost would be a one-time investment for the housing development but agencies would need to receive ongoing operating costs for the housing units. The estimated operating cost of 518 units of housing would be the same as the leasing costs identified below under the leasing model.

Or:

Utilizing a leasing model, which is the least expensive housing assistance option, (households secure private sector housing with a housing subsidy) would cost \$5,283,600 per year for 518 Households at an average of \$850 per unit in monthly subsidy. This cost would be expected to continue indefinitely.

And:

It is estimated that all homeless households will require some level of services in order to stabilize and become reengaged with their community. Currently, services provided by non-profit organizations show an average cost of \$6,000 per year for a full range of assistance. Services for 518 Households (at an annual cost of \$6,000 per year) would total \$3,108,000 per year.

Using the above models, this would serve ½ of the current estimated homeless population in our county.

The total cost to implement this plan utilizing the least expensive (private sector leasing model) of housing: \$8,391,600 for housing subsidy and services. Based on the currently available resources through the Ending Homelessness Act, Pierce County has approximately 18% of the funding to meet this goal.

The cost of plan implementation including the development of new dedicated publicly funded housing: is estimated to be \$111,991,600 plus an additional \$5,749,800³⁷ for operating costs and services each subsequent year past the initial year of operation. All known resources that could be targeted to housing development on an annual basis represent 4 percent of the total needed to develop the housing required. Additional leverage of federal, state, private, and foundation resources are necessary to achieve the goal.

Historically, projects that apply for funding for housing projects through Pierce County provide a leverage ratio of between five and twelve dollars for every 1 dollar of County funds.

Without sufficient and significant new resources from federal, state, or local sources targeted to serving the homeless population, the goal of this plan to reduce homelessness in our community may remain out of reach.

The Annual Action Plan for Year 1 of this document is included as Attachment A.

The specific activities suggested by the community for each strategy are detailed in this section. Additional efforts will be made to quantify each action step and identify, where possible, appropriate funding to accomplish the goals.

Attachment A

Year 1

Community Will Strategy				
Create a sustainable political and community will to end homelessness as we know it by reducing the number experiencing homelessness by 50% before 2016.				
	Objective	Activities	Target Date	Completion Date
	Develop a strong voice in the community through unified approaches to advocacy and engagement and education in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine organization most appropriate to lead effort • Develop a compelling new unified message (coordinated with the 10 Year Plan and The Road Home) • Determine the target audiences for delivery of the message • Identify opportunities and venue to provide education • Create a speakers bureau • Develop a calendar of scheduled presentations • Initiate delivery of the message 	Begin April 2008	Implemented October 2008
	Enlist and educate the political leadership and provide them with 1) key information to promote and support Ten Year Plan strategies and 2) tools to assist them in decision-making on actions to reduce the number of persons experiencing homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a reader friendly public format for the 10 Year Plan • Identify teams to contact jurisdictions in person • Request jurisdictions to adopt the plan by resolution • Provide opportunities and materials on policies and practices (Round Table) • Create a catalogue of best approaches to end homelessness • Provide technical assistance to craft policies and materials to adopt • Develop dialogue – countywide approaches on homelessness 		Implemented six months after County Adoption

	<p>Work with existing leadership efforts (i.e. The Road Home Leadership Team, Tacoma Pierce County Coalition for the Homeless and Continuum of Care) to steward and promote the implementation of the Ten Year Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with members of the Road Home Leadership Team and Tacoma Pierce County Coalition for the Homeless and Continuum of Care to review draft plan • Meet with representatives of implementation partners listed above to review and generate ownership of the plan • Support existing public education and awareness initiatives of The Road Home Leadership Team • Support existing initiatives (Project Homeless Connect, Homeless Awareness Week, etc.) of Tacoma Pierce County Coalition for the Homeless and Continuum of Care 		<p>Present Draft to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2060/2163 Steering Committee – September 2008 • The Road Home Leadership Team and Tacoma Pierce County Coalition for the Homeless, October 2008 • Review existing public education and awareness initiatives to identify likely partnership opportunities October 2008
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Prevention Strategy

Prevent homelessness in households at risk of losing stable housing by creating new prevention services and expand successful programs.				
	Objective	Activities	Target Date	Completion Date
	<p>Increase rental assistance funding, together with supportive services, to prevent loss of housing with flexible time periods up to six months for assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a funding plan targeted to expanding rental assistance available to those at risk of homelessness • Make assistance and case management available for longer periods • Create relationships with other service providers • Section 8 priority placement • Research best practices and implement those findings • Expand resources through 2163 and CDBG funding sources 	<p>August 2008</p>	

	Work cooperatively with institutions such as corrections/jails, treatment facilities, hospitals, and foster care to prevent homelessness upon client discharge through advocacy/exit planning and community supports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene institutions to discuss what is being done and what changes are needed to improve discharge policies • Research what resources are available and apply for those resources • HGAP, Year 2 Develop project to address discharge process for application in Year 3 • Youth, Year 2 Expand resources for youth exiting foster care • Encourage THOR to develop housing for persons being discharged 		
	Provide basic education on the prevention of homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research best practices on case management and eviction prevention • Provide education to service providers • Create community information campaign on eviction prevention • Provide education to at-risk populations 	Begin July 2008	
	Advocate for other housing and supportive services organizations and systems that focus on the root causes of homelessness, including but not limited to: Poverty, Family dysfunction, Personal instability, Living wages, Affordable Housing, and Schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research who does what – map current services available in the community • Research best practices • Support the service organizations and systems in what they are doing 	July 2008 and ongoing	
Service Strategy				
	Provide a continuum of client-centered services accessible to those households throughout the county who are experiencing homelessness and/or are tenuously housed.			

Systems Strategy					
		Initiate systems changes to support Ten Year Plan Strategies.			
		Maintain a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) capable of reporting on homeless program progress and providing on-going data on all those experiencing homelessness in the continuum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to maintain 75% community beds reporting in the HMIS • Work with all funders to make HMIS reporting a contract deliverable • Explore expansion of program to track persons experiencing and at risk of homelessness • Research how other reporting agencies account for domestic violence 	January 2009 and ongoing	
		Align evaluation systems to measure and improve program success and use the results to promote the expansion of resources for homeless activities in the County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify outcome-based systems currently in use and determine if data is comparable and/or align into a common measurement under each system • Establish goals for outcomes • Communicate expectations to providers • Communicate the results of performance measurement to promote community will University of Puget Sound report (part 2) 	June 2008 and ongoing	

Housing Strategy				
		Develop and sustain a continuum of housing for all households experiencing homelessness – families, adult individuals and youth – while building toward permanent housing resources adequate to rapidly re-house those experiencing homelessness.		
	<p>Create new units to meet the housing needs of those experiencing homelessness, by engaging the following key elements of the community in the development of housing solutions: businesses, employers, developers, landlords, schools, law enforcement, government, funders, for-profit developers, and the Pierce County Housing Affordability Task Force and Affordable Housing Consortium.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain the number of units needed by each area of the county from the Housing Affordability Task Force, consolidated plans and census data • Identify the number of units needed in the incorporated jurisdictions • Pierce County Community Services to engage individual jurisdictions to review reports and make recommendations • Present priorities for the Ten Year Plan to local funders • Establish partnerships of agencies to develop new projects 	<p>Immediately - Ongoing</p>	
	<p>Assure any new emergency shelter and transitional facilities are designed to be feasibly converted to long-term housing when no longer needed for short-term housing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assure community, funding sources, and steering committees are aware of this policy 	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p>	

Permanent Supportive Housing (indefinite stays)					
		Increase the supply of permanent supportive housing for persons with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set funding priorities to meet identified needs • Utilize point system to encourage priority projects • Assure a viable Samaritan chronic homeless project is submitted for HUD financing each year • Establish partnerships between homeless service/operating agencies and developers • Build local development capacity through education and training opportunities 	July 2008 and ongoing	
		Develop facilities with controlled access to maintain safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set funding priorities to meet identified needs • Develop team of organizations/agencies to develop a plan for purchase or development of a 30-40 unit, owned and operated by a nonprofit agency, with controlled access building with services on site to serve the population for whom scattered site housing is not successful for the 2008 HUD COC application • Research how other communities are addressing tenant/landlord and operating controlled access buildings 	July 2008	
		Promote the development of housing with treatment and intensive services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review systems that are currently in place (i.e. Housing First projects), to determine effective practices and where remaining challenges exist • Target funding to support expansion of successful housing projects that have integrated services • Assist housing providers in identifying and accessing supportive service funding 	July 2008	

		Prevent the loss of housing due to temporary absence while in treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and support implementation of housing first model where temporary treatment or incarceration is not grounds for eviction • Provide technical assistance to service providers in implementing a housing first model and using motivational interviewing • Remove funding barriers that encourage eviction for temporary absence or non egregious non-compliance • Include as an expectation in solicitation of Continuum of Care applications 	Ongoing	
Permanent Affordable Housing					
		Support regional and local efforts to expand the supply and choices for affordable housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and support the Housing Affordability Task Force • Monitor and support the Affordable Housing Consortium 	Immediate and Ongoing	
Emergency Shelter (generally for immediate needs but can be for up to 90-days)					
		Focus funding and planning efforts on the development of rapid re-housing projects that eliminate the need for expansion of the emergency housing system, and Assure that adequate emergency shelter beds are available to 1) meet the immediate and urgent needs of persons and families coming off the streets so that assessment and placement can be accomplished and 2) Provide safe and temporary housing for immediate crisis and stabilization needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey shelters to identify closure plans and to determine policies on length of stay • Assess current capacity of the emergency shelter system • Develop a plan of action to assure adequate emergency shelter capacity is maintained • Engage existing shelters in development of centralized intake system • Tie maintenance of minimum shelter standards to local government funding 	July 2008	

Transitional Housing (generally for 3-24 months stay)					
		Assure sufficient transitional housing resources are available for all populations and that adequate permanent housing resources are available at exit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with the Affordable Housing Consortium to assure new permanent housing resources provide an inventory that can be used for housing first and by graduates of transitional housing • Map existing transitional housing units by type, including those that do not participate in HMIS and are not government funded • Work with Public Housing Authorities to expand programs that tie participation in and graduation from transitional housing to access to portable Section 8 vouchers 	January 2009	

Endnotes and Resources

- ¹ Based on State of Washington Housing Trust Fund Operating and Maintenance Guidelines, 2008.
- ² Preliminary Systems Analysis, University of Puget Sound, Dr. Renee Houston, Dr. Carolyn Weisz, Dr. Richard Anderson-Connolly. August 2006
- ³ The Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress, February 2008
- ⁴ The annual change is based on data reported by housing providers receiving Housing and Urban Development funding for Continuum of Care and is based on a specific point in time survey. It does not include data reported by housing providers that did not conduct a point in time survey but rather reported counts on enumerated 2005 numbers.
- ⁵ 10 Year Homeless Plan, State of Washington, July 2008
- ⁶ 10 Year Homeless Plan, State of Washington, July 2006 and July 2007
- ⁷ Preliminary Systems Analysis, University of Puget Sound, Dr. Renee Houston, Dr. Carolyn Weisz, Dr. Richard Anderson-Connolly. August 2006
- ⁸ US Code, Title 42, Chapter 119, Subchapter I, 11302. General Definition Of Homeless Individual
- ⁹ 2004 US Census, Preliminary Estimates of Weighted Average Poverty Thresholds for 2006
- ¹⁰ US Census: American Survey 2004
- ¹¹ National Association of Manufacturers, 2001
- ¹² National Coalition for the Homeless, Fact Sheet #1, June 2006
- ¹³ National Coalition for the Homeless, Fact Sheet #1, June 2006
- ¹⁴ 2008 Out of Reach, National Low Income Housing Coalition
- ¹⁵ US Census: American Survey 2005
- ¹⁶ 2000 US Census, HUD Study
- ¹⁷ The estimate is based on two distinct processes designed to determine the need for affordable housing in the county. The first is the Pierce County Affordable Housing Task Force which determined the need level based on a formula that subtracted the number of units targeted to serve that population versus the number of low income persons in the county. The second estimate is a formula developed by the Growth Management Coordinating Committee which used several factors to arrive at their final figure.
- In both instances, the numbers are considered to be estimates but they do clearly identify a significant unmet need in the availability of affordable housing in our community.
- ¹⁸ In some cases housing is time-limited; for example, 1-90 days for emergency shelters, and up to 24 months for transitional units.
- ¹⁹ US Census, 2005
- ²⁰ New England Journal of Medicine, 1998
- ²¹ Annals of Internal Medicine 1992
- ²² America's Homeless Children, The National Center on Family Homelessness, 2003
- ²³ The News Tribune, Tacoma, July 15, 2001.
- ²⁴ HUD grants awarded to Pierce County RSN, 2005.
- ²⁵ The National Center on Family Homelessness, America's Homeless Children
- ²⁶ Bureau of Justice Assistance, Strategies for Addressing Housing Needs and Risks in Prisoner Re-Entry, 2005
- ²⁷ Homes for the Homeless, a report, August 1993
- ²⁸ Washington State House Bill 1922, April 2007
- ²⁹ National Coalition for Homeless Veterans
- ³⁰ National Resource and Training Center on Homelessness and Mental Illness, 2003
- ³¹ US Census: American Survey 2005
- ³² Addiction Disorders and Homelessness, NCH Fact Sheet #6, National Coalition for the Homeless, June 2006
- ³³ Curry, Jen, "Homelessness and HIV/AIDS," *CRIA Update*, Vol.9, No. 3 Community Research Initiative on AIDS, (Summer 2000)
- ³⁴ National Alliance to End Homelessness, *Homelessness and AIDS*
- ³⁵ NAMI, *Dual Diagnosis and Integrated Treatment of Mental Illness and Substance Abuse Disorder*
- ³⁶ Domestic Violence and Homelessness, NCH Fact Sheet #7, National Coalition for the Homeless, June 2006
- ³⁷ Based on State of Washington Housing Trust Fund Operating and Maintenance Guidelines, 2008.