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Homeless Housing

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Introduction

This page focuses principally on two aspects of homeless housing: the ten year plans to end chronic homelessness by 2015 and the tent city movement that started around 2002.

How Many Homeless Persons?

The most recent available data on homelessness is the 2012 point-in-time counts as reported by jurisdictions to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Washington's Point-in-Time Count for 2013 was January 24, 2013 and data was to be reported to HUD March 6, 2013.

In January 2012, the State of Washington's homeless population was 20,504; 15,027 were living in emergency shelters or transitional housing and 5,477 were unsheltered - living on the streets, or in cars, abandoned buildings, or other places not intended for human habitation. The percent of change in the number of homeless people in Washington between 2011 and 2012 was 0.3% The national rate of homelessness in 2012 was 20 homeless persons per 10,000 general population. In Washington it was 30 homeless persons per 10,000 general population. Washington ranked 43rd in overall homelessness compared to the other states.

In the 2012 point-in time count, ten percent of Washington's homeless population was chronically homeless. The number of homeless people in families in 2012 was 9,231. The number of family households was 2,871 - a slight decrease from 2011. Washington's homeless veteran population in 2012 was 1475 persons. The state ranked 24.7 in the number of homeless veterans per 10,000 Veterans in the general population. For data references, see the National Alliance to End Homelessness, *State of Homelessness in America 2013* [Appendices](#) and for more detailed state information, see Department of Commerce, [Washington State Point in Time Count of Homeless Persons](#) () , January 2012.

In 2005 the Washington state legislature passed the Homelessness Housing Assistance Act, concluding that the fiscal and societal costs of homelessness are high for both the public and private sectors, and that ending homelessness should be a goal for state and local government. The ultimate goal of ending homelessness is to end homelessness in Washington by July 1, 2015.

Legislation

Legislation on Homeless Housing Plans

The Homelessness Housing and Assistance Act ([Ch. 43.185C RCW](#)), passed in 2005, established a statewide homeless housing program with the goal of ending homelessness in Washington State within the next 10 years. See Department of Commerce [Homeless Plan](#).

[Laws of 2005, ch. 484 \(ESSHB 2163\)](#) (📄) provided that local governments that choose to participate in the homeless housing program must create and implement a program to reduce homelessness by 50 percent within 10 years. The program establishes a \$10 additional surcharge on document recording, a state competitive grant program, and a statewide homeless census.

[Laws of 2005, ch. 485 \(SSB 5767\)](#) (📄) provided that counties that opt to participate in the homeless housing program must create a task force to develop a 10-year plan, addressing short and long term housing solutions for the homeless. As needed, each task force must adopt guidelines for establishing emergency shelters, temporary encampments, and supportive housing. Counties that already have an existing group focused on homelessness are not required to create a new task force. Counties may decline to participate in the program by forwarding a resolution to the Department of Commerce, in which case the department will contract with a nonprofit entity to develop the county's plan. Local governments that choose to participate may develop their 10-year plans individually, create a joint plan with other local governments, or contract with another entity to develop the plan.

Legislation on Temporary Encampments for the Homeless

In 2010, the Washington Legislature passed Ch. 175 (ESHB 1956), codified as [RCW 36.01.290](#) which authorized religious organizations to host temporary encampments for homeless persons on property owned or controlled by a religious organization. The legislation grants broad authority to religious organizations to provide shelter or housing to homeless persons on property owned or controlled by such organizations. It prohibits local governments from enacting an ordinance or regulation that imposes conditions other than those necessary to protect the public health and safety and that do not substantially burden the decisions or actions of a religious organization with respect to the provision of homeless housing. It also prohibits the imposition of permit fees in excess of the actual costs associated with the review and approval of the required permit applications for homeless housing encampments. (From [House Bill Report ESHB 1956](#) (📄))

Local Government Planning and Programs

Washington jurisdictions have developed strategic plans to end homelessness. A few have been listed here.

- Adams County [Homelessness: Break the Cycle](#) (📄), written by Barbara A. Anderson and Steven L. Lodahl, edited by Adams County Emergency Food and Shelter Board, Housing Task Force, 2006-2016 - A ten year plan for Adams County
- Benton County [Interlocal agreement between Benton County and the cities of Benton City, Kennewick, Prosser, Richland and West Richland for providing for local homeless housing and assistance plans and programs](#) (📄)
- Chelan-Douglas County [Chelan-Douglas Plan to End Homelessness](#), City of Wenatchee website - Provides link to ten year plan, updates, and accomplishments
- Clark County [Homelessness Housing & Assistance Act](#) - Provides copies of ten year plan and updates
- Grays Harbor County [Grays Harbor County Housing and Homeless Plans](#)
- King County [Homeless Programs](#)
 - [Committee to End Homelessness in King County](#)
 - [A Roof Over Every Bed in King County: Our Community's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness](#)
 - Bellevue [Resolution No. 7322](#) (📄), passed 01/17/2006 - States the intent of the City of Bellevue to work with other organizations and governmental entities in the implementation of this plan
 - Seattle [Resolution No. 30758](#), passed 04/11/2005 - Endorses the goals of "A Roof Over Every Bed in King County: Our Community's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness" and states the city's intent to work with other organizations and governmental entities in the implementation of this plan
- Pierce County [Homelessness](#) - Provides link to 2012 Tacoma, Lakewood, Pierce County Continuum of Care plan.
 - Pierce County [Resolution No. R2005-154](#) (📄) - Adopts the road home: homeless housing and

assistance plan to reduce homelessness by 50 percent in 2015

- [The Road Home: A Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in Pierce County](#) (PDF)
- [Tacoma/Pierce County Coalition for the Homeless](#) - The Tacoma-Pierce County Coalition to End Homelessness is the City of Tacoma and Pierce County's response to homelessness. It is the mission of the Coalition to preserve and create affordable housing, prevent homelessness, restore homeless persons to stable living environments, and promote community awareness of homelessness issues through education, legislative advocacy, mutual support and the sharing of resources.
- Spokane County - Spokane Community, Housing, and Community Services [Homeless](#) - A Joint Initiative of the City of Spokane and Spokane County
- Whatcom County - Bellingham
 - [Whatcom County Coalition for the Homeless](#), Bellingham Planning and Community Development
 - [A Way Back Home: A Ten-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in Whatcom County](#) (PDF), City of Bellingham and Low Income Housing Institute, 2003-2013
 - Whatcom County [Resolution No. 2005-077](#) (PDF), passed 12/13/2005 - Adopts the Whatcom County 10-Year Homeless Housing Plan as recommended by the Whatcom County Advisory Committee (copy of plan attached to Resolution, entitled: A Home for Everyone, Whatcom County 10-Year Homeless Housing Plan, Phase 1)
- Yakima County [A 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Yakima County](#) (PDF), Homeless Network of Yakima County, 2006
 - Yakima County [Resolution 66-2005](#) (PDF), passed 01/2005 - County endorses the Homeless Network Plan
 - [City of Yakima Proclamation](#) (PDF), 02/15/2005 - Supports the goals and strategies expressed in the Homeless Network of Yakima County Ten Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness

Tent City - Temporary Homeless Encampments

The Tent Cities are temporary encampments of homeless persons who live in a group of tents on the property of a host for approximately 90 days. The camps have managers and a code of conduct for residents. To accommodate homeless encampments jurisdictions have developed regulations consistent with [RCW 36.01.290](#). A few are provided as examples. Most of the provisions are in response to the movement of Tent Cities around King County. The program in King County is sponsored and managed by [SHARE/WHEEL](#) [Seattle Housing and Resource Efforts (SHARE) and Women's Housing, Equality, and Enhancement League (WHEEL)]. The first community, called Tent City 3, was located in Seattle. The program was allowed to continue in Seattle under a 2002 consent decree. SHARE/WHEEL Tent City 3 has had camp sites in the communities on the west side of Lake Washington. Share/Wheel established Tent City 4 in the spring of 2004 on the Eastside after working out an agreement with King County. Local governments in King County issue conditional use permits for the temporary camps, and Seattle-King County Public Health provides support services to camp managers.

Tent City Provisions

- King County [Citizen's Advisory Commission on Homeless Encampments Final Report](#) (PDF), 08/13/2004 - The Metropolitan King County Council created the King County Citizens' Advisory Commission on Homeless Encampments (CACHE) in 2004 to address four specific topics related to the complex and controversial issue of encampments of persons who are homeless in King County.
- Edmonds Municipal Code [Ch. 17.20](#) - Temporary Homeless Encampment
- Bothell [Ordinance No. 1955](#) (PDF), passed 12/2005 - Establishes regulations concerning transitory accommodations Also see Bothell Municipal Code [Section 12.06.160](#) - Temporary uses.
- Kirkland [Homeless Encampments](#)
 - Kirkland [Ordinance No. 4047](#) (PDF) - Temporary use provisions for homeless encampments. See also provisions in the Kirkland Zoning Code [Ch. 127](#) - Temporary Use
- Lynnwood Municipal Code [Ch. 21.74](#) - Temporary Tent Encampments
- Mercer Island [Tent City Information](#)
- Mountlake Terrace [Ordinance No. 2568](#) (PDF) - Adds Ch. 19.111 on temporary shelter encampments,

passed 07/05/2011

- Olympia Municipal Code [Homeless Encampments](#)
- Seattle
 - [Considering Our Options for a City-Sanctioned Homeless Encampment](#), Mayor McGuinn, 11/08/2010
 - [Consent Decree](#) (📄) between SHARE/WHEEL, El Centro de la Raza and the City of Seattle, 03/13/2002 - Tent City 3 is governed by its consent decree with the City of Seattle when it locates within city boundaries. That consent decree was signed in 2002. It is a different model but similar to the King County model. (The county used Seattle's consent decree in settling with SHARE/WHEEL regarding the dispute over the first siting of Tent City 4 in Bothell.) The city's consent decree operates as an omnibus temporary use permit.
- Shoreline [Ordinance No. 368](#) (📄), passed 02/2005 - Amended Ch. 20.40 of the development code. It requires applicant to hold a neighborhood meeting prior to application
- Spokane Municipal Code [Ch. 10.08C](#) Homeless Encampments
- Tacoma [Housing First Encampment Elimination Program](#)
 - [Get the Facts / Contact Us / Maps](#)
- Woodinville (Tent City 4) - [Chronology of Tent City 4 in Woodinville](#)

Additional References

- [Homeless Programs](#), Washington State Department of Commerce
- [Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program \(HVRP\) Information](#), U.S. Department of Labor
 - [Best Practice Profiles of Employment Assistance Programs](#)
- [Homeless Veterans Services](#), Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs
- [Homelessness](#), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
 - [Strategic Action Plan on Homelessness](#), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007
- [Housing and Homelessness](#), Washington State Library - Resources to help manage mortgages and foreclosures, prevent or assist with homelessness, find affordable housing, and more
- [National Alliance to End Homelessness](#), State of Homelessness in America 2013
- [Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#) (📄), United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2010
- [State of Homelessness in America 2013](#), National Alliance to End Homelessness
- [Toolkit for Ending Long-Term Homelessness](#), Corporation for Supportive Housing

Agencies and Organizations

- [Corporation for Supportive Housing](#)
- [Homeless Policy Academies](#), Health Resources and Services Administration
 - [Washington's In-State Academy](#)
- [Interagency Council on Homelessness](#)
- [National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)
- [Washington State Coalition for Homeless](#)
 - [Local Coalitions](#)

<https://www.mrsc.org/subjects/humanservices/homeless.aspx>