

December 2023 Annual Plan Update

Mason County Local 5 Year Homeless Housing Plan Annual Report November 2019 through November 2024

The Local Plan Annual Report requirement is in [RCW 43.185C.045](#):

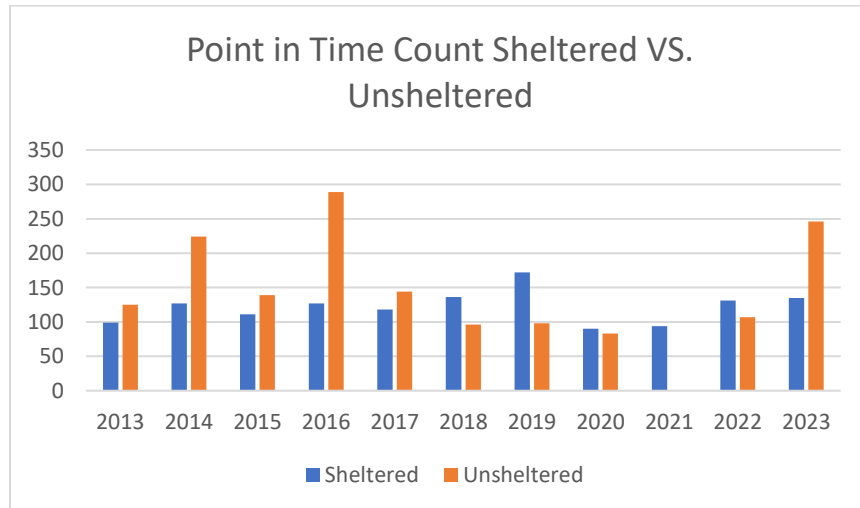
Any local government receiving state funds for homelessness assistance or state or local homelessness document recording fees under RCW [36.22.178](#), [36.22.179](#), or [36.22.1791](#) must provide an annual report on the current condition of homelessness in its jurisdiction, its performance in meeting the goals in its local homeless housing plan, and any significant changes made to the plan. The annual report must be posted on the department's web site.

The length and format of the Annual Report is up to the local government, and at least, must address the following:

1. Current condition of homelessness in its jurisdiction.
2. Significant changes made to the plan.

Point in Time Count Results

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Sheltered	99	127	111	127	118	136	172	90	94	131	135
Unsheltered	125	224	139	289	144	96	98	83	N/A	107	246
Total	224	351	250	416	262	232	273	178	N/A	238	381



Each year, on the night of the last Thursday in January, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Washington state require a statewide count of all persons

staying in temporary housing programs (sheltered count) and places not meant for human habitation (unsheltered count). A count includes a brief survey of each person or household. A person or household can choose to be counted, but all the information remains anonymous.

The unsheltered count has been below 145 persons for seven of the eleven past years. 2016 was an anomaly where records were entered that didn't meet the HUD definition of homelessness. Homelessness is defined as lacking "a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence" or residing "in an emergency shelter or a place not meant for human habitation". In 2021, Washington State received a waiver from HUD to postpone the unsheltered count due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In 2023, there was a dedicated team that conducted more outreach to homeless encampments prior to the PIT Count date and followed up on these locations for the count. Additionally, there was outreach to people sleeping in vehicles. All these efforts contributed to the higher unsheltered count in 2023. Other factors such increased rental costs described in this annual report and other economic influences such as recovery from the pandemic and higher inflation are also contributing factors to people experiencing homelessness.

Coordinated Entry is another indicator of the number of people experiencing homelessness as this is the access point and centralized referral system for people experiencing a housing crisis and/or housing instability. The number of households that meet the HUD definition entering Coordinated Entry are as follows:

Fiscal Years	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Unhoused Households	241	172	239	280	221

Over the past five years, the average number of unhoused households accessing Coordinated Entry is 230.

Older adults are the fastest-growing age group of those experiencing homelessness, according to a report by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ([Addressing Homelessness Among Older Adults: Final Report \(hhs.gov\)](#)). Housing units for single adults is a limiting factor to house this subpopulation. Additional gaps exist in connecting individuals unsheltered or sheltered with the health care needs that would be better served by an assisted living facility. As the data below indicates, health is a major contributing factor contributing to or keeping a person from maintaining housing. This data supports the need for the development of supportive housing.

Top reasons contributing to a person being unhoused:

- In all emergency shelters and rapid rehousing programs at entrance to the program, people were unhoused due to:
 - Domestic violence or fleeing domestic violence at 58%,
 - Mental health at 45%
 - Physical or developmental disabilities at 43%.

- Of people entering the coordinated entry system people were unhoused due to:
 - Disabilities at 74%
 - Mental health at 35%
 - Chronic health at 22.5%.

Households Served by Project Intervention Types: Fiscal Year 2023

Coordinated Entry
221 total households that were literally homeless and assisted

Temporary Housing
755 households stayed in emergency shelters
38 households stayed in transitional housing
170 households housed from emergency shelters
33 households housed from transitional housing

Rapid Rehousing Programs
300 households participated
183 households were permanently housed

Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) Program Prevention and Rapid Rehousing
221 adults served, 7 youth under 25 years old, and 7 veterans

Racial Equity

According to the Consolidated Homeless Grant Guidelines section 10.4.5 “Equitable Access”, The Department of Commerce is developing performance measures that ensure that race and ethnicity of households served are proportional to the numbers of people in need of services in each county. The Coordinated Entry Board is examining the homeless response system and evaluating the data to help eliminate disparities.

Race	HP Total “at risk of homelessness”	PIT Count total	CE Total	Emergency Shelter Total	Transitional Housing	Rapid Rehousing
White	76%	91%	74%	67%	89%	71%
Black, African American, African	2%	4%	4%	9%	0%	4%
Asian or Asian American	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%
AIAN	4%	8%	5%	1%	11%	8%
NHPI	Less than 1%	Less than 1%	2%	2%	0%	3%
Multiple Race	5%	4%	6%	9%	0%	9%
Non-Hispanic	77%	91%	84%	83%	89%	86%
Hispanic	16%	9%	14%	15%	11%	14%

Rent

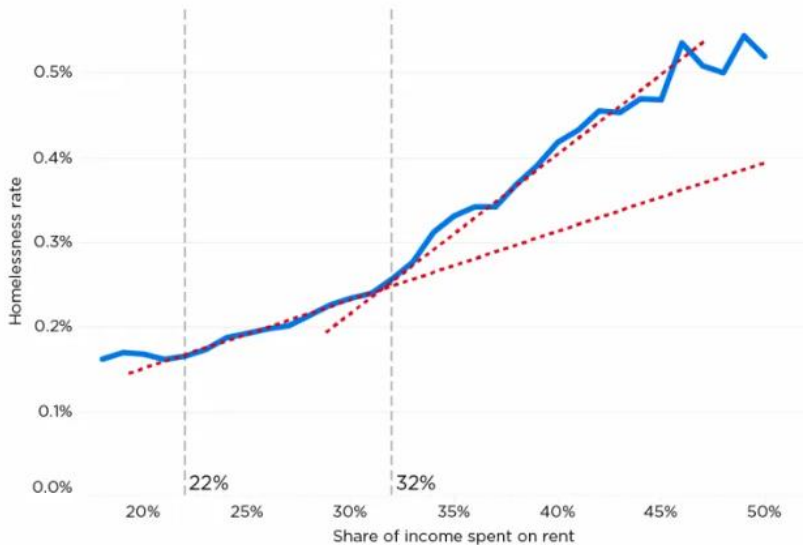
Available rental units within 150% of Fair Market Rent have been tracked. This is the amount the primary fund source, The Consolidated Homeless Grant will pay for rental assistance. The average rental prices are as follows:

Year / Bdrm.	Studio	1	2	3	4	Ave.
2021	\$1,125	\$1,095	\$1,275	\$1,732	\$1,800	\$1,355
2022	\$983	\$1,105	\$1,458	\$2,094	\$2,511	\$1,592
2023	\$1,114	\$1,223	\$1,641	\$2,156	\$2,854	\$1,788

There has been a total increase in average rent cost of \$433 dollars or a 25% increase in the past three years. In a paper, “Why is homelessness increasing?”, published by the Department of Commerce, it states that increasing rents are the main driver of increases in homelessness (reference [hau-why-homelessness-increase-2017.pdf \(wa.gov\)](#)). A recent article, “Homelessness Rises Faster Where Rent Exceeds a Third of the Income” ([Homelessness Rises Faster Where Rent Exceeds a Third of Income - Zillow Research](#)) continues to show the link between the percentage of housing costs of gross income and the rate of people experiencing homelessness. When housing costs are more than 32% of gross income, there is an increased rate of homelessness as shown in the graph below.

Homelessness climbs faster when rent affordability reaches 22% and 32% thresholds

An uptick in rent affordability beyond 22 percent translates into more people experiencing homelessness. Beyond 32 percent means a faster-rising rate of homelessness — which could mean a homelessness crisis, unless there are mitigating factors within a community.



Reduction in Local Document Recording Fees

The Homeless Housing and Assistance Act (Chapter 43.185C RCW) in 2005 (the “Act”) authorizes these funds to support an affordable housing and a homeless response system. The Act, along with legislation, allows the collection of surcharges on documents recorded for the sale and/or transfer of real property to fund homeless programs. The document recording surcharge funds (“surcharge funds”) are used by the state and local government agencies to reduce homelessness (RCW 36.22.179).

According to Annual Expenditures Reports, collections for the past three years have declined as follows: FY21 \$988,536; FY22 \$876,515, and FY23 \$563,729. In 2023, collection is 42% less than the previous calendar year.

A \$312,786 reduction from FY22 to FY23 would cut out all emergency shelter supports and provide \$100,000 less for rental assistance. Or it would result in a total reduction in Rapid Rehousing (rental assistance costs) project funding equating to 223 months less of rental assistance or a 44% reduction in the number of households served.

Fortunately for the FY24 and FY25 funding years, the Department of Commerce has been able to appropriate state funds in the Consolidated Homeless Grant in the amount of \$86,804 each fiscal year as “Local DRF Support” to help offset the reductions mentioned. The Department of Commerce has also been able to use Federal and State funds in the form of the Emergency Housing Fund to help maintain services that were available as of February 2023. While these funds are not enough to serve everyone, they have helped maintain services post-pandemic.

New Agency, Housing, and Program

In July 2023, Quixote Communities completed the construction of 30-tiny home village of permanent supportive housing for veterans within the city limits of Shelton. This village will go a long way in providing new housing units and moving in the direction of functional zero for veteran homelessness.

Community Collaboration: Shared Goal

Increase Exits to Permanent Housing

In relation to Objective 3, “Operate an effective and efficient homeless crisis response system that swiftly moves people into stable permanent housing”, we are working collectively in our community to impact this outcome. Mason County Public Health and Human Services is working with all subcontracted agencies to improve exits to permanent housing from emergency shelters, transitional housing, and rapid rehousing programs. Each agency has developed an action plan, and we are meeting quarterly to discuss outcomes, progress, collaboration, and best practices. Improvements have been made in each program type except one emergency shelter where 67% of the households were moved into transitional housing programs for additional support to gain housing stability.

Program Type	FY23 Percent Exits to Permanent Housing	Quarter 1 FY 2024 Exits to Permanent Housing
Rapid Rehousing HEN	37%	50%
Rapid Rehousing non-HEN	58%	92%
Young Adult RRH	100%	100%
Transitional Housing	100%	100%
Single Adult Emergency Shelter	7%	17%
Family Emergency Shelter	15%	0%
Family off-site Emergency Shelter	19%	21%
Domestic Violence Shelter	21%	37%

The local providers are also meeting regularly to discuss a joint application on funding for either a transitional housing project and/or additional permanent supportive housing.

5-Year Plan Changes

No significant changes have been made to the 5-year plan.