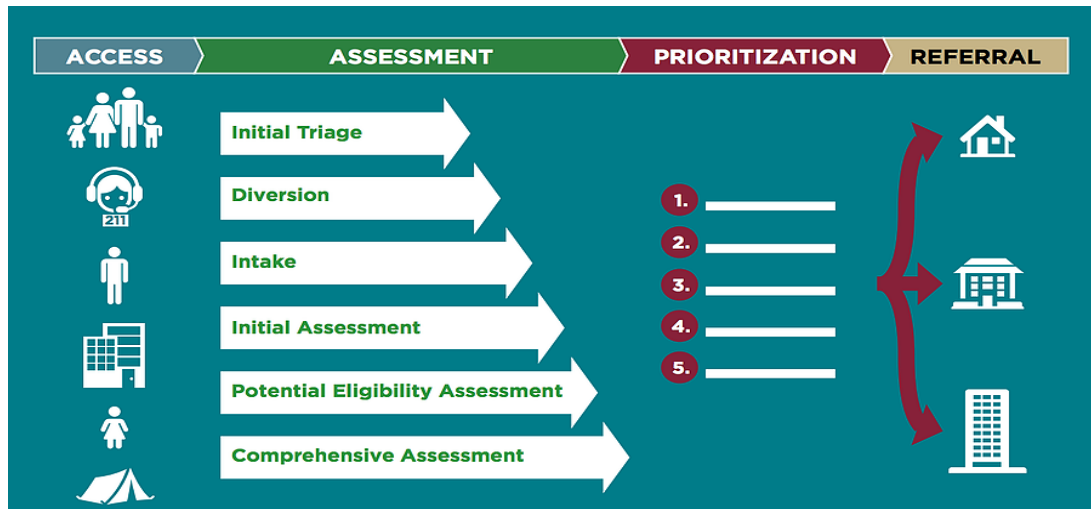


## Section D: System Coordination

### Coordinated Entry

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that Continuums of Care (CoCs) establish and operate a coordinated entry process. The diagram below shows the key core elements to the coordinated entry system.



\*\* From HUD\*\*

Coordinated entry is an access point for a person experiencing a housing crisis. Once coming to the organizations an assessment will be conducted to assess the person's immediate needs (i.e. safety), resources, housing needs, preferences, and vulnerability. From the assessment, the person or household will be prioritized to ensure that those persons with the greatest need and vulnerability receive the supports to resolve housing crisis. The final step is the referral process that help people receive housing resources and other services such as behavioral health, food, medical, hygiene, etc.

From HMIS, the following is a description of the Mason County Coordinated Entry demographic between Jan 2021 to Dec 2021. 55% were female, 44% were male, 0.23% were no single gender, and 0.46% were transgender. 74% of the population was disabled, 22.5% had a chronic health condition, 35% had Mental Health Disorder, and 12% had SUD.

### By Name

In Mason County, there are currently four meetings held monthly to bring together nonprofit organizations to collaborate and discuss ideas to best serve people experiencing homelessness and to share resources that best assist the people they serve. Currently, these meetings are

conducted by Zoom. The coordinated entry list is used to determine and prioritize the persons or households that are brought to the meeting to assist the most vulnerable. One of the meetings are focused on housing agencies and behavioral health agencies to bring forth clients that need resources and discuss resources to help best serve the clients in need. The other meeting uses the coordinated entry list to discuss the most vulnerable on the list and the other one focuses specifically on veterans and veteran support services. The other meeting focuses specifically on people with the highest behavioral health needs. All these meetings help to discuss and address needs within the community.

### **Balance of State**

Mason County is one the counties that is part of the Balance of State. The Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC) provides leadership and coordination throughout 34-county jurisdiction toward the goal of ending homelessness and working to prevent occurrence of homelessness within the area. The Balance of State provides support and leadership on decision making on project funding, development of strategies to end homelessness, coordination of the Annual Point in Time Count, manage the HMIS data base and provide technical assistance to McKinney-Vento and ESG grantees. At a local level, Mason County's responsibility is to plan and coordinate steps to reduce homelessness, support outreach and entry systems, advocate for resources, coordinate the local Point in Time Count, and update BoS on current needs.

In Mason County, there are two programs supported through the Balance of State. Crossroads Housing operates a transitional housing program that has a 5-unit complex and at least 7 homes under Master Lease conditions. The Youth Connection is the recipient of the Youth Homeless Demonstration Project to serve unaccompanied homeless youth through street outreach and case management services to obtain stable housing.

### **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)**

HMIS is used by state and federally funded homeless and housing services providers to collect and manage data gathered during providing housing assistance to people already experiencing homelessness and households at risk of losing their housing. CoCs use HMIS to collect standard data at the local level. The data can be used to produce unduplicated count of homeless persons and understand patterns of services to use locally. Data can be collected daily, covers both unsheltered and shelter persons, and covers housing inventory and utilization. HMIS locally can collect eligibility, case management, and other data to assist service providers, policy makers, and project participants to end homelessness in their community.

## **Veterans**

The Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program was established to rapidly rehouse homeless Veteran families and prevent homelessness for those at imminent risk due to a housing crisis. The US Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) makes grants available for private non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives to provide Veteran families with outreach, case management, and assistance and work to promote housing stability and community integration.

Before the Point in Time Count each year, the Veteran Standdown is hosted by Veterans Services Organization and takes place in Mason County and gets a count for how many homeless veterans are currently in our community. The Stand Down is typically a one-to-three day event during which the VA staff and volunteers provide food, clothing, and health screening to homeless and at-risk Veterans. Veterans also receive referrals for health care, housing solutions, employment, substance use treatment, mental health counseling and other essential services. The Veterans Stand Down was held recently on December 1, 2021, at Memorial Hall. The following was collected from the Stand Down:

- 15 homeless veterans were served (11 were scheduled and 4 walked in).
- 12 veterans took full kits made up of warm clothes and sleeping bags
- 3 veterans took clothing items
- Several gift cards were handed out to each veteran

There are also programs specifically for veterans such as the HUD-VASH grant. The HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program combines HUD's Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rental assistance for homeless Veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

## **Point In Time (PIT) Count**

Homelessness is defined in 4 categories by The United States Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD):

- HUD definition of Homeless (Category 1): An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinary used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or campground; or an individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living arrangements, or an individual who is exiting an institution where he and she resided for 120 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering an institution.

- HUD definition of At Imminent Risk of Homelessness (Category 2): Individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that: Residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of the application for homeless assistance; no subsequent residence has been identified; and the individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.
- HUD definition of Homeless under other Federal statutes (Category 3): Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who are defined as homeless under the other listed federal statutes; have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the homeless assistance application; have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or move during the preceding 60 days; and can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time due to special needs or barriers.
- HUD definition of Homelessness under other Federal statutes (Category 4): Any individual or family who: is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence; has no other residence; and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

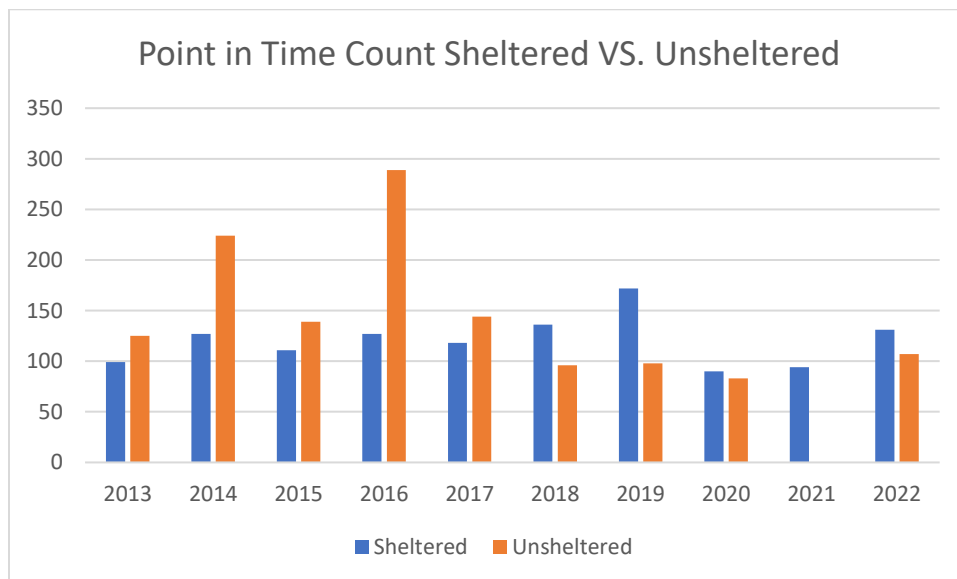
Some challenges to determining how many people experience homelessness in Mason County is the rural terrain and locating the homeless population so it is challenging to get a total number of how many people experience homelessness in Mason County but one way to get a count is through the Point in Time Count. In a national effort to conduct a homeless census, every county across the United States participates in a Point in Time Count (PIT Count), usually the last Thursday in January. HUD requires the PIT Count to be conducted once every two years. In 2022, the PIT count got rescheduled for the last Thursday in February, in response to the COVID pandemic and increased number of cases. For the PIT count, one night is chosen as a reference point to “where did you stay last night?” and to determine a snapshot of how many persons are experiencing homelessness. Each person is physically counted, and an attempt is made to survey each person to gather some basic information. The reason why the last week of January was chosen in the past for the PIT count to is because it is a cold time of year with the rationale that it will count those who are truly homeless. A standard methodology is strongly encouraged, and efforts are made each year to implement a standard process. Mason County holds “Project Connect” events to feed participants, hand out donations, and have volunteers at different sites to get a count and representation of the population. Mason County also go out to the encampments as part of the Point in Time Count as well.

The PIT count follows the HUD definition of homelessness and has two categories of the count, which are sheltered and unsheltered. Sheltered refers to any persons staying in a shelter that is either night by night, short-term (usually 90 days) and transitional housing

(up to two years of temporary housing) programs. Unsheltered homelessness includes outdoors, vehicle, abandoned building, and a structure that is not meant for human habitation (e.g., no potable water, heat, ability to cook, restroom and/or ability to bathe). Housing situations that do not count under this definition include temporarily living with family or friends, “couch surfing”, currently in a hospital, detox, or other facility, or currently in jail. In 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, data was not collected for the unsheltered PIT count. The results for the past ten years follow:

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

\*\*From preliminary data, awaiting review from the Department of Commerce. \*\*



The PIT Count took place on February 25, 2022, in downtown Shelton, Belfair, street outreach, and groups went out to the encampments and asked people where they slept on the night of February 24th. The PIT Count survey had five parts: A) Location: Where did you sleep last night? B) Length of time homeless (helps to identify chronic homelessness) C) Demographics household information such as gender, race, age, ethnicity, veteran, disabling conditions or barriers, and fleeing domestic violence. D) Circumstances that caused homelessness and E) sources of household income and benefits. Survey participants may refuse to answer any of the

questions, answer it anonymously or give consent to be associated with answers provided. All data is entered into the Homeless Management and Information Systems (HMIS) database that is managed by the Department of Commerce.

## Poverty

Nearly 34 million or 10.5% of the United States population are currently living in poverty and 6.3 million households experienced severe housing cost burden in 2019. In Mason County, between 2015-2019, the United State Census Bureau reported that the median household income was \$57,634. The per capita income in the past 12 months was \$28,862 in 2019. The percentage of poverty in Mason County from the Census shows that 12.6% people are living in poverty. That is higher than the percentage living in poverty for the whole state of Washington which is 9.8%. Poverty can be broken down by age groups in Mason County as under 18 years old having poverty rates of 23.1%, ages 18 to 64 having a poverty rate of 13.7%, and 65 and over having a poverty rate of 6.7%. The current minimum wage in 2022, in Mason County is \$13.50 an hour so if one was to work 40 hours a week, that is approximately \$27,864 a year. A living wage is about \$13.23 per hour for 1 adult and 0 children and \$18.82 for 2 adults (both working) and 2 children. For the Fair Market Rate from HUD 2022 data, it is currently \$710 for a studio apartment, \$938 for a 1 bedroom, \$1069 for a two-bedroom rental, \$1504 for a 3-bedroom, and \$1529 for a 4-bedroom. For one working minimum wage full time, it would be close to half the person’s income before taxes.

In Mason County, poverty rates can be presented by zip code:

Zip Code	Cities	% of poverty all people (2019)
98524	Allyn	7.8%
98528	Belfair	10.5%
98546	Grapeview	5.0%
98548	Hoodsport	12.9%
98555	Lilliwaup	18.2%
98560	Matlock	2.6%
98584	Shelton, Skok, Skokomish Nation	17.2%
98588	Tahuya	6.8%
98592	Union	4.1%

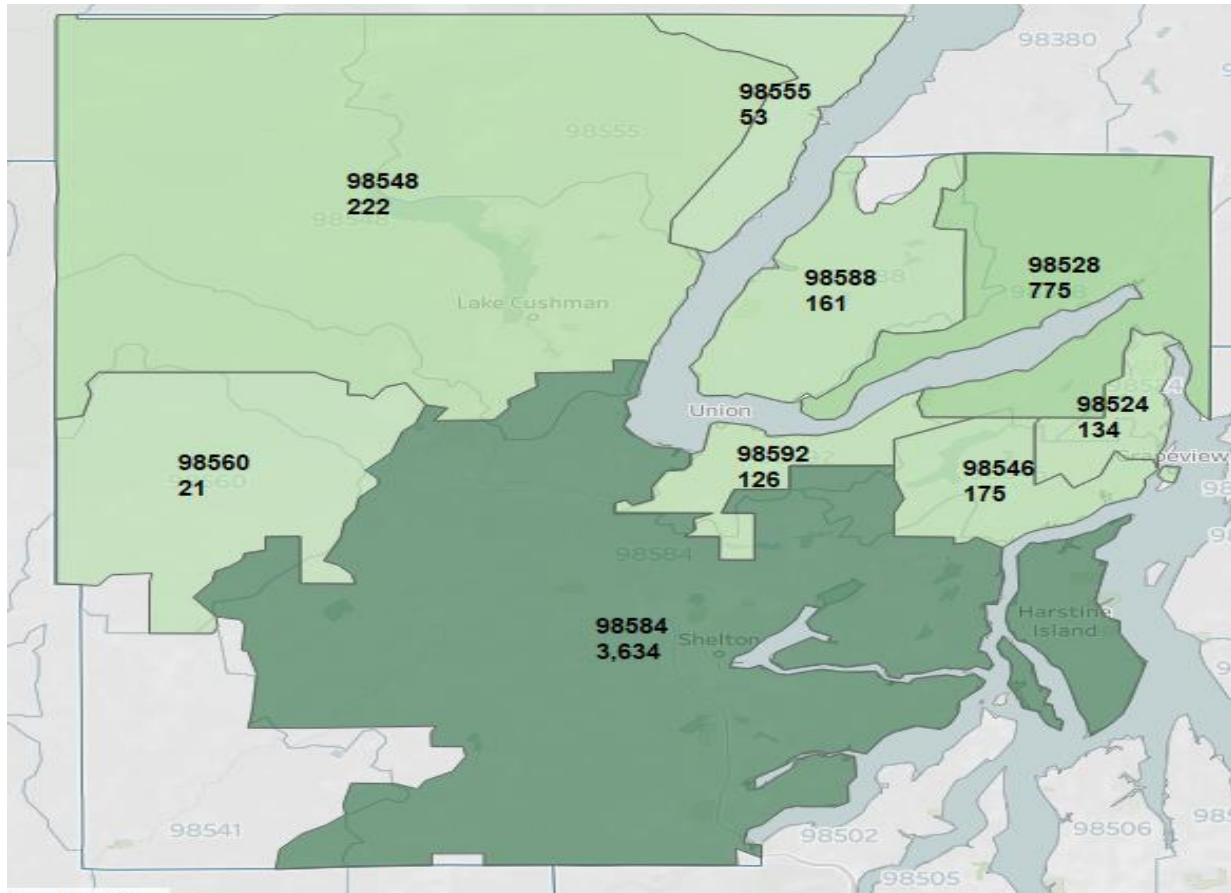
Zip Code	Cities	% of poverty all families(2019)
98524	Allyn	3.5%
98528	Belfair	6.0%
98546	Grapeview	3.3%
98548	Hoodsport	12.2%
98555	Lilliwaup	0.0%
98560	Matlock	0.0%
98584	Shelton, Skok, Skokomish Nation	11.9%
98588	Tahuya	0.0%
98592	Union	2.5%

Poverty rates compared to other counties that are nearby in Washington is displayed in the following table:

County	Poverty Rates 2021
Mason County	12.6%
Grays Harbor	15.1%
Kitsap	8.3%
Lewis	13.3%
Thurston	9.7%

In 2020, the following was the amount of people in each zip code that received DSHS Food Stamps/SNAP:

Zip code	# of people	Area	% of total
98584	3634	Shelton/ Harstine Island	69%
98592	126	Union	2%
98546	175	Grapeview/Allyn	3%
95842	134	Grapeview/Allyn	3%
98528	775	Belfair	15%
98588	161	Tahuya	3%
98560	21	Matlock	0%
98548	222	Hoodsport	4%
98555	53	North Hoodsport	1%



According to the Social Security Administration Mason County in 2018, had 1,637 people who received SSI benefits which is 2.5% of the population. 187 were under 18 years old; 1,220 were between the ages of 18 to 64 years old; and 230 were 65 or older.

According to the United States Census Bureau, in Mason County in 2019, the median gross rent in Mason County was \$948. This could be further broken down into percentage based on rent: 11.3% were less than \$500; 40% were between \$500 to \$990; 37.1% were between \$1,000 and \$1,499; 9.0% were between \$1,500 and \$1,999; 1.2% were between \$2,000 to \$2,499; and 1.4% were \$3000 and more.

According to National Alliance to End Homelessness, one solution to ending homelessness is increasing employment and income opportunities for the homeless. Factors such as reduction in work hours, a lost job, an illness or unexpected expense, an eviction, reliance on extended family for a place to stay and sometimes entry into a homeless shelter can contribute to vulnerability for homelessness and housing instability. Government programs such as TANF or unemployment are often inaccessible, and the benefits may be insufficient to help them achieve stability. This means that to help stabilize the vulnerable populations, more opportunities are needed for income and employment.



## **COVID-19 Impact**

HUD 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress shows that 580,466 people were counted as homeless in 2020 PIT Count. This represents a 2.2% increase over 2019. This adds to the four years of increases in homelessness. The areas where there has been the largest increases were among people experiencing chronic homelessness and people living unsheltered. Chronic homelessness has increased by 15% between 2019 and 2020 and 7% increase among individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

At a local level, Mason County was impacted by COVID-19 in 2020 by having a loss of shelter beds due to social distancing requirements combined with the increased costs from moving to 24-hour operation and a reduction of available volunteers.

According to the Employment Security Department, in 2010 unemployment touched 11.9 percent, during the COVID outbreak in April 2020 saw the rate jump to 17.5 percent. Previously, in 2019 there were 14,521 jobs covered by unemployment insurance in Mason County. Currently the labor force participation rate of 51.2% of individuals 16 years and old.

## **Schools and Youth**

In Washington, nearly 13,000 unaccompanied youth and young adults experience homelessness a year. 33% of foster youth in Washington experience homelessness. Youth is defined as anyone under age 18 and young adults are between the ages of 18-24. For a youth to be considered unaccompanied this means that they are living on their own, without a parent or guardian, and are without a safe, stable living arrangement. The emancipation age in Washington State is 16 years old. According to the Washington State Department of Commerce Office of Homeless Youth, youth homelessness has 3 main factors that contribute to homelessness. The factors are structural factors: large systemic issues that are intractable from an individual's perspective which includes historic harms, practices, policies and processes that continue to impact communities today; system failures: systems include government agencies in charge of designing and implementing programs and services for people at the state and local level; individual and relational factors: Individual factors are attributes at an individual level that affect a young person's experiences. Examples of factors are listed: 49% of young people between 18-24 years are low income or experiencing poverty in Washington; Black, Native, Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian youth are removed from their homes and placed in out of home care at two times the rate of their white peers; and according to Diversion of Vocational Rehabilitation 9,286 young people (ages 14-24) with disabilities were unstably housed in 2018.

Many factors increase a young person's odds of becoming homeless. These factors include family conflict and family dynamics, a youth's sexual orientation, sexual activity, school problem, demographic risk factors, pregnancy, and substance use.

The McKinney-Vento Act provides that students be given the same access to their education as other students and cannot be separated from other students. The McKinney-Vento law provides some funding for states and Washington typically receives about \$1 million annually. The funds go to the school districts with the greatest need and can be used for a variety of purposes including helping to minimize excess cost of transportation; tutoring, instruction, and enriched educational services; providing supplies and other educational materials; and providing early childhood education programs.

The McKinney-Vento defines a student as homeless if they lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The definition also includes students that are “doubled up,” which occurs when the student doesn’t have a fixed address but instead must stay with family and friends at various times. “Doubling up” is not included as literally homeless under HUD definition.

The following table summarizes the 2020-2021 school district demographic data reported to the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). In the table, the number of children and youth identified as homeless represents an accumulative number throughout the school year. This does not represent how many youths are experiencing homelessness at one time. It also includes children and youth that are considered unstably housed which can mean they are displaced from their home and are couch surfing or living with friends or family that are not their biological parents or legal guardians. This data helps contribute to the story of youth homelessness and who is affected in Mason County but cannot be treated entirely separate from other data sources since many of the person identified as homeless will relate to and counted in other programs such as Coordinated Entry data.

<u>School</u>	<u>District Enrollment</u>	<u># of Identified Homeless*</u>
<b>Hood Canal</b>	313	16
<b>Mary M Knight</b>	2,212	2
<b>North Mason</b>	2,263	200
<b>Pioneer</b>	661	25
<b>Shelton</b>	4,379	251
<b>South Side</b>	203	26
<b>Total</b>	10,031	520

\*Homeless: accumulative number throughout the school year and differs from the HUD definition of homeless.

\*\* From Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction\*\*

In Washington, according to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, there are a total number of 39,972 homeless students. This could be further broken down; total number of unaccompanied homeless student was 6,392; the total number of unsheltered was 2,830; the number of sheltered was \$4,785; the amount living in hotel/motels was 2,486; and the amount doubled up was 29,871.

**Equity**

Equity impacts homelessness. Equity refers to proportional representation (by race, class, gender, etc.) of opportunities in housing, healthcare, employment, and all indicators of living a healthy life. According to HUD, when looking at racial equity, African Americans accounted for 40 percent of all people experiencing homelessness in 2019 and 52 percent of people experiencing homelessness as members of families with children, this is 13 percent of the U.S population. 48 percent of all people experiencing homelessness were white compared with 77 percent of the U.S. population. People identifying as Hispanic, or Latino are about 22 percent of the homeless population and only 18 percent of population overall. During the COVID-19 pandemic, African Americans, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders continue to be overrepresented among the homeless population compared to their share of the US population. Mason County Public Health is addressing racial disparities among people experiencing homelessness and is included as one of the key objectives in the five-year plan. This objective has several action steps such as using racial equity tools and the Coordinated Entry advisory board and agencies evaluating data and devise plans to minimize any disparities that exist.

In the table, data shows the race and ethnicity make up of Mason County and how many people experience homelessness based off race and ethnicity. The data was taken from HMIS and looked at agency’s programs in Mason County:

<b>Race and Equity</b>	<b>Population % (2021)</b>	<b>Experiencing Homelessness All # and % (HMIS Data)</b>
<b><u>Race</u></b>		
<b>White</b>	87.5%	73.60%
<b>Black</b>	1.5%	3.65%
<b>Native</b>	4.8%	8.99%
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander</b>	1.3%	0.84%
<b>Other/ Multi-Race</b>	4.4%	7.58%

**\*\*Data from HMIS\*\***

In the table, data shows the people below the poverty level, by percentages by race and ethnicity for head of households served in 2018.

Race	
Persons of Color	43%
Black or African American	4%
American Indian and Alaska Native	5%
Hispanic (Any race)	32%

The Department of Commerce shows a breakdown of demographics of homeless or unstably housed persons by household type in Mason County in their Snapshot of Homelessness in WA Jan 2021. These numbers are based on combined Medicaid, economic service, and HMIS population.

	Total	Youth and young adult	Households no children (25+)	Household with adults and children (25+)	Unknown
White, Non-Hispanic	1,133	122	722	287	<11
Black/African American	80	12	39	29	0
Hispanic	178	18	68	92	0
Asian	29	<11	16	<11	0
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	41	0	38	<11	0
American Indian/Alaskan Native	225	20	137	68	0
Unknown	13	<11	<11	<11	0

**\*\*Data from Department of Commerce\*\***

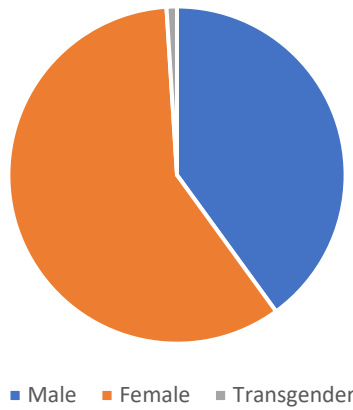
Below in the next table show the percentages for each category:

	Total	Youth and young adult	Households no children (25+)	Household with adults and children (25+)	Unknown
<b>White, Non-Hispanic</b>	71.1%	7.7%	45.3%	18.0%	<11
<b>Black/African American</b>	5.0%	0.8%	2.4%	1.8%	0.0%
<b>Hispanic</b>	11.2%	1.1%	4.3%	5.8%	0.0%
<b>Asian</b>	1.8%	<11	1.0%	<11	0.0%
<b>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</b>	2.6%	0.0%	2.4%	<11	0.0%
<b>American Indian/Alaskan Native</b>	14.1%	1.3%	8.6%	4.3%	0.0%
<b>Unknown</b>	0.8%	<11	<11	<11	0.0%

\*\*Data from the Department of Commerce\*\*

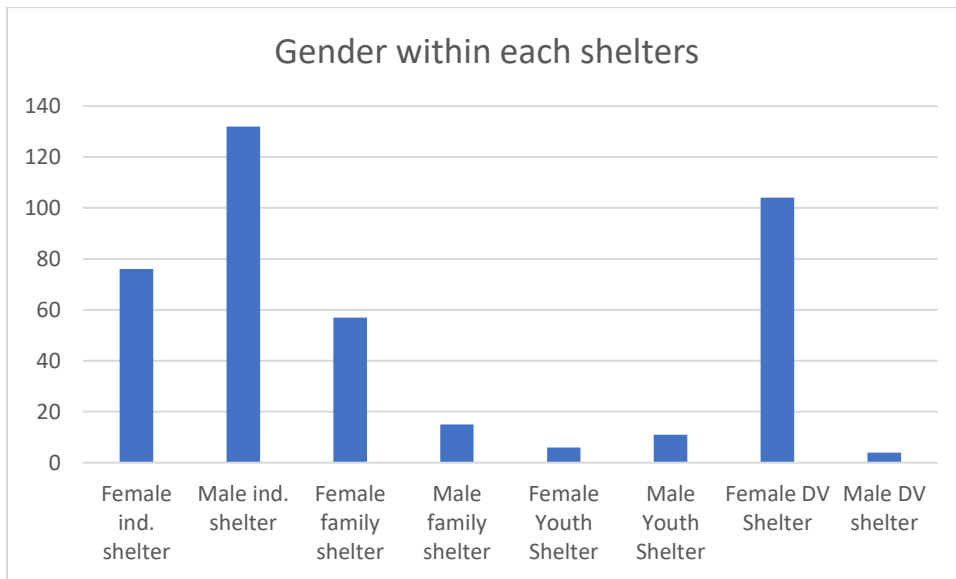
According to the 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, in 2020 nationally the demographics of a homeless individual, for gender was female made up 31.1% for sheltered individuals, 68.1% were male, 0.7% were transgender, and 0.2% were gender non-conforming. Additionally, in Washington a substantial number of people in families were found in unsheltered location with a total of 1,884 in 2020. Along with race and ethnicity, gender can also be broken down specific to Mason County and who is impacted by homelessness. In Mason County from January 2021 to December 2021, the percentages in emergency shelters and transitional housing were 59% female, 40% male, and 1% transgender. This shows that the females are in emergency shelters at a higher rate than males and transgender participants in Mason County. The emergency shelters and transitional housing that are available in Mason County include a domestic violence shelter, a family shelter, individual shelters, and youth shelters. In the individual shelter there was a larger amount of males, in the family shelter there was a larger number of females, in the youth shelter there was a larger amount of males, and in the domestic violence shelter there was a larger amount of females for 2021. From the 2022 unofficial Point in Time data, it shows that approximately 38% of unsheltered homeless were male, 20% were female, and 42% were consent refused. The consent refused, could be due to domestic violence history or not willing to provide information. This shows that from the data collected, that males and females did not have large amount of difference between the two for the unsheltered population in comparison to previous years. For example, in 2020 unsheltered counts, Point in Time Counts about 62% were male and 38% were female and in 2021 there was not an unsheltered count, due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

### Genders in Emergency Shelters and Transitional Housing 2021



**\*\*Data from HMIS all emergency shelters and transitional housing 2021\*\***

### Gender within each shelters



**\*\*Data from HMIS all emergency shelters and transitional housing 2021\*\***