2010 Thurston County Homeless Census Report

Losing Ground on the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness
2006-2010 Homelessness Has Doubled

2007 Census volunteer surveying local homeless resident (reprinted with permission of The Olympian)

June 2010
Thurston County, Washington

Produced in partnership with the City of Olympia Housing Program, the Thurston County HOME Consortium, and a broad range of local governments, non-profit organizations, business, faith-based community, high schools, homeless individuals and other community members
June 2010

Friends,

This report --our annual homeless count-- tells a sobering story about life for some in Thurston County. Despite our community's best efforts and having invested several million dollars in housing and services, the number of homeless in our community continues to increase. Even more disturbing is the increasing number of homeless students and families with children.

Over the past five years, the Thurston County HOME Consortium has distributed more than $7.5 million in federal and local funds to support projects that address homelessness. Yet during that same time, homelessness in our county more than doubled. It is clear that while we have much to celebrate in terms of our accomplishments, there is much left to do.

This report represents the collaborative efforts of many in our county: business people, non-profit organizations, the faith-based community, high school students, public servants and the homeless themselves, who worked together to conduct the homeless count in January of this year, examine the results, and develop recommendations. The HOME Consortium held a forum, "Housing the Homeless: How are we doing?" in May to increase community awareness of and involvement in the fight against homelessness. See the last section of this document for a report on that forum. Out of that day came a renewed resolve on the part of participants to redouble our efforts to find lasting solutions.

The Citizens Advisory Committee of the HOME Consortium has embarked on a review and revision of the county’s Ten-Year Plan to Reduce Homelessness to look for gaps in our planning process in order to identify a more viable pathway to success in the fight against homelessness. If you see yourself as part of that success and you truly want to make a difference right where you live, please contact any one of us to see what we can do together to achieve the goal of reducing homelessness in our community.

Sincerely,

Karen Valenzuela
Thurston County Commissioner
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Census Worker Volunteers: The census was staffed by approximately 100 volunteers from faith-based communities, non-profit organizations, local and state government, the business community, local high schools and many other parts of the community.

The Homeless Census is based upon the visionary work of Selena Kilmoyer, Theresa Slusher and the 2002 Thurston County Housing Task Force.

Thurston County contracted with the City of Olympia to conduct the 2010 annual homeless count. The report was authored by Anna Schlecht, Olympia Housing Program Manager.
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Thurston County 2010 Homeless Census Executive Summary

Overview

On January 28, 2010, Thurston County participated in the statewide annual “Point in Time Count of Homeless Persons” referred to as the “homeless census.” The census provides a way to determine the number of homeless people and the causes of their homelessness. These numbers help facilitate an analysis of local needs and resources, which in turn will help to develop a framework to build a comprehensive strategic response to homelessness. These numbers are reported to the state and federal governments to ensure a proportionate level of public funding for local shelters, transitional housing and other services. The census also helps track the county’s progress on the goal of the Ten-Year Plan to reduce homelessness by 50%.

Homeless Census Numbers

The bottom line of this chart shows the 2010 census found 976 homeless individuals in transitional housing or a shelter, which represents a 121% increase from the 2006 baseline number of 441 homeless individuals. The number of homeless public school students (Kindergarten – 12th grade) totals 1,269, a 94% increase since the 2006 baseline of 654 students. (These two sets of numbers result from separate efforts to count the homeless as addressed under “Correlation of School District Numbers with County Census Numbers” on page 7. The school district numbers are compiled seven months prior to the Point in Time Count.) Despite the efforts of the HOME Consortium and other local housing funders to reduce homelessness by half, instead it has doubled. Thurston County is losing ground.

Five-Year Matrix of Homeless Census and School Homeless Census Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>COUNTY CENSUS</th>
<th>% CHANGE YEAR TO 2006</th>
<th>SCHOOL CENSUS</th>
<th>% CHANGE YEAR TO 2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>671</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>976</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>1,269</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2010</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>121%</td>
<td>615</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clarified Data from Past Homeless Census Reports

This year’s report is based primarily on the state’s guidelines to count individuals rather than households found living unsheltered (out of doors, in vehicles or abandoned buildings) or in emergency shelters, transitional housing and specifically defined permanent housing with supportive services. As a result, this report presents historical numbers different from those included in the previous four annual reports. (Detailed explanation in Appendix B, page 32.)
Recommendations for Responding to Homelessness

Conducting the census to get the number of homeless people was the first step. The next step was to look hard at the numbers and explore ways to respond. Seven different focus groups examined the census results and took a broad view of responsibility for reducing homelessness. They produced a series of recommendations that challenge all parts of the community to be part of creating solutions (see pages 22-25). The priority recommendations are as follows:

Recommendations for Local Government:
1) Get out of the way: Allow churches to provide shelter with minimal government restrictions.
2) Revise & stick to the plan: Update Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness and use it.
3) Make the recession work for us: Tap the real estate downturn to buy distressed properties.

Recommendations for Non-Profit Organizations:
4) Continue to push rapid re-housing: Catch newly homeless people before they spiral downward.
5) Incentivize participation of homeless people in their own services.
6) Push for a homeless coordinator (also recommended to local government).

Recommendations for Business Community:
7) Foster a climate of respect: Work toward mutual understanding of needs and respect.
8) Explore “right sized” housing development: Work with local government to modify building codes to allow lower cost, highly energy efficient, small footprint housing.
9) Private-public partnerships: Develop service-enriched housing.

Recommendations for Faith-Based Communities:
10) Pool resources: With over 150 faith-based communities in the county, smaller contributions can be aggregated into a large pool of resources.
11) Coordinate efforts: Work as efficiently as possible with referrals, shelter and other services.
12) Encourage “adopt-a-homeless family”: Spread the responsibility across many churches.

Recommendations for High Schools:
13) Extended study halls: Provide evening and weekend academic support for homeless students.
14) Cafeteria-soup kitchens: Open cafeterias on evenings and weekends to provide food for homeless students and their families.

HOME Consortium Chair and Yelm Councilmember Mike McGowan (center right) convenes a panel presentation at the Housing the Homeless forum on May 1, 2010.
15) Promote volunteerism: Foster an ethic of involvement by creating community service class or club to educate about local social service needs and to widely disseminate service opportunities.

Recommendations for the Broader Community:
16) Family responsibility: Families need to take more responsibility for homeless family members and stay involved with providing support.
17) Re-examine attitudes towards ex-offenders: Housing and job bias against ex-felons and sex-offenders creates a significant pool of homelessness and does not improve community safety.
18) Talk to the homeless: Respect homeless people as members of the community, look them in the eye and talk to them.

Recommendations for Homeless People:
19) Help the community to help you: Help run shelters and tent cities like Camp Quixote.
20) Keep the parks clean: Make allies by keeping homeless camps cleaner and garbage manageable.
21) Foster a climate of respect: work toward mutual understanding of needs and respect with business owners and park users.

_Lacey Mayor Pro-Tem Virgil Clarkson speaks at the Housing the Homeless forum on May 1, 2010_
Overview of the Homeless Census

Purpose of the Point in Time Count of Homeless People

Each year at the end of January, Thurston County participates in a statewide census of homeless people and then produces a report examining the results. This homeless census report serves to:

1) Provide the most accurate census of homeless people, the causes of their homelessness and other demographic information;
2) Quantify needs based on number of homeless people, which in turn brings in federal and state dollars to provide homeless shelter, transitional housing and other services;
3) Provide an accurate assessment of current available housing and service resources; and
4) Allow for the analysis of needs and resources to serve as the basis for local strategic responses to homelessness.

Definitions of Homeless

While the census was conducted with two definitions of homeless, the census report is primarily based on the more finite definition used by the state. This is the standard for producing the numbers referred to as the “state census” count of homeless numbers. The county uses a more expanded definition to capture a broader range of people who do not have a permanent address or regular place to live. This standard produced the numbers referred to as the “county census” count of homeless numbers. All data presented herein will cite the standard as either “state count” or “full count.”

The state definition of homelessness includes people living in 1) emergency shelter, 2) transitional housing, and 3) unsheltered situations (in places not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings, on the street). Persons living in a dwelling lacking drinking water, restroom, heat, ability to cook hot food, or ability to bathe\(^1\) are also considered homeless.

For the purposes of counting all people without a permanent residence, the county definition includes all of the above, plus people living: 1) temporarily with family or friends due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (often referred to as “doubled-up” or “couch surfing;” 2) in jail without a permanent address who will become homeless upon release, and, 3) in a mental health or other health facility without a permanent address who will be released to homelessness. This expanded definition offers data that is useful in identifying the local need for housing and services in Thurston County.

Both of these definitions are derived from the federal

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\(^1\) Washington Commerce Website, Annual Point in Time count

“I was born homeless. My mom died a year ago, so now I’m on my own. I’d like to get a job and my own apartment, but it’s hard when you’re living in the woods.” – Young woman in a homeless camp
Definition of homelessness, which comes from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD defines the homeless as (1) an individual who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, and, (2) an individual who 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);
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. ²

For the purposes of this count, transitional housing refers to housing with a two-year stay limit where being homeless is a prerequisite for eligibility and case management services are required as part of the program [such as Transitional Housing Operation and Rent (THOR) and HOME Tenant Base Rental Assistance (TBRA)]. Persons in transitional housing programs that allow them to continue living permanently in housing after a transition period (“transition in place”) are not considered homeless if participation in case management is not a condition of residency.

History of Thurston County’s Census

Thurston County pioneered the concept of the “point in time” homeless census now practiced statewide. For over 25 years, the county has fostered collaborative efforts to respond to homelessness involving non-profits, local government and faith-based communities. In 2002, Selena Kilmoyer of the Thurston County Housing Task Force recognized the difficulty of serving an undefined population. The solution to this problem was to find out how many homeless people there were by counting them. Kilmoyer presented this idea to the Thurston County Housing Task Force and proposed that Task Force members conduct a homeless census to determine how large the homeless population was. Theresa Slusher of the Thurston County Housing Authority developed this idea into a viable work plan. Drawing on Housing Authority staff resources and Housing Task Force representatives from all local service and shelter providers, the Task Force launched the first comprehensive census of homeless people in the county in 2003.

This approach was recognized by Tedd Kelleher of the State Department of Community Trade & Economic Development (now the Department of Commerce) as a valuable way to evaluate efforts to end homelessness and apportion funding. The 2005 state “Homeless Housing and Assistance Act” codified this practice and created a mandate for all counties that received state and federal homeless

² HUD.GOV website: http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/topics/homelessness/definition
and housing funds to use the census to measure performance and document needs for continued future funding.

Aside from the practical result of creating the statewide “Point in Time Count of Homeless Persons,” the process of developing the census underscored the value of collaboration between faith-based communities, non-profits and the government. The problem of homelessness spills across all parts of the community; linking these diverse elements to work together is essential to making progress. This collaboration among government, non-profits and faith-based communities was a guiding principle in making the homeless census successful.

Federal Government’s Role in Census

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) reports to Congress on the number of homeless people in the United States. HUD directs federal McKinney grant recipients to perform a point-in-time count of homeless persons during the last full week of January. In order to avoid duplication of efforts, the state-mandated count is conducted on the fourth Thursday in January. This year, the count occurred on January 28, 2010.

HUD uses the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to track data and locally implemented homeless counts to arrive at the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless people and the characteristics of homeless people living in shelters. The report offers a baseline for reports that explore patterns of homelessness over time. Homeless service providers across the country, such as emergency shelters, transitional and supportive housing programs, collect information about their clients to match it with information from other providers to get accurate counts of homeless clients and the services they need.

Washington State’s Role in Census

The 2005 state’s “Homeless Housing and Assistance Act” requires an annual count of homeless persons in Washington State. The purpose of these guidelines is to define the common elements required of all local counts, to ensure that data is comparable between counties, and to ensure that confidentiality is protected. Communities are encouraged to adapt this basic framework to the specific conditions and count infrastructure of their community.

Local government is directed to make every effort to count all homeless individuals living outdoors, in shelters, in transitional housing, coordinated, when feasible, with already existing homeless census projects including those funded in part by HUD under the McKinney-Vento homeless assistance program. In consultation with local governments, the department determines the data to be collected. All personal information collected in the census is confidential; therefore, the department and each local government take all necessary steps to protect the identity and confidentiality of each person counted.
Thurston County’s Role in Census

Thurston County is the local unit of government mandated (RCW 43.185C) to count the county’s homeless population annually. The results of this count are reported to both the state and federal governments. Additionally, the county’s census report includes an expanded definition to include people living with friends or family and people in jail and mental or other health facilities that will be released to homelessness. This information helps local governments, non-profits, faith-based communities and others to understand the extent of homelessness, its impact on local resources, and helps to develop strategies to reduce the number of people without permanent homes.

City of Olympia’s Role in Census

Historically, the homeless census has been administered by the Thurston County Housing Authority through a contract with Thurston County as a sole-source provider. A larger number of entities expressed interest in administering the 2010 homeless census, which would have required a lengthy formal selection process. In order to expedite the selection process, the county entered into an inter-local agreement with the City of Olympia to administer this census.

The city’s approach was to conduct the census, analyze the results and involve stakeholder groups to help develop a comprehensive set of recommendations directed towards all parts of the community.

Olympia has a unique role related to our county’s homeless population. While homelessness is a regional problem, its focus is concentrated in the urban core of the county. Federal, state and local funds support a vibrant continuum of services, shelter and housing, most of which are located within Olympia. This means that homeless people from more rural areas like Bucoda or Rochester gravitate towards the urban core. As shown in this report, the number of homeless people exceeds the number of shelter beds and transitional housing units, which means that unsheltered homeless people often resort to car camping on the streets, sleeping in public parks, using libraries as warming centers and other areas not primarily intended to serve as de facto homeless facilities. As a result, Olympia becomes a focal point in addressing many local homeless policies and strategies.

Public Schools’ Role in the Census – Homeless Schoolchildren and the McKinney Act

Homeless school children are also entitled to the protections of the McKinney-Vento Act under the section entitled “Education for Homeless Children and Youths.” The act defines homeless children as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.” The act goes on to give examples of children who would fall under this definition:

- Children sharing housing due to economic hardship or loss of housing;
- Children living in “motels, hotels, trailer parks, or campgrounds due to lack of alternative accommodations”;
- Children living in “emergency or transitional shelters”;  
- Children “awaiting foster care placement”;

Thurston County 2010 Homeless Census Report
- Children whose primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (e.g. park benches, etc);
- Children living in “cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations.”

Each year, the state Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) works with local school districts throughout the state to identify children and youth attending school experiencing homelessness. The purpose is to offer appropriate services to the family, child or youth and to report the number of homeless students to federal, state and local governments. The count does not include school age children not attending school.

**Homeless School Children in Thurston County**

The chart below shows the year to year changes in the number of homeless school children enrolled in the eight school districts of Thurston County. These numbers are produced by the local school districts and reported to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

**Correlation of School District Numbers with County Homeless Census Numbers**

The data on homeless school students and the data from the Homeless Census derive from two separate methodologies and timelines. The school district numbers are compiled seven months prior to the Point in Time Census. As a result, these figures cannot be directly added together or otherwise compared. The homeless student numbers are reported for the past full school year, in this case 2008 – 2009, which ended seven months before the January 2010 census. What is informative is that both methodologies and sets of data reflect the growing homeless population.
The school numbers include only students enrolled during the school year 2008 – 2009 and does not include their families. The “Point in Time” homeless census is a one-day snapshot of homelessness in Thurston County, which includes many students staying with their families in shelters, transitional housing or out of doors. Together, these two sets of numbers reflect a higher total number of homeless individuals, but it is not possible to determine the exact combined total.

**The Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness**

The Thurston County Ten-Year Plan requires that we track progress toward the goal of reducing homelessness by half. Since 2006, the first year of the plan, homelessness has instead increased by 121%. *(Please note that the chart below presents individuals, not households, based on state guidelines explained in Appendix B, page 32.)*

![Ten-Year Plan Progress Chart](chart.png)

The Thurston County Ten-Year Plan, adopted in December 2005, was designed to reduce homelessness in Thurston County by 50 percent by July 2015. The purpose of this Ten-Year Homeless Housing Plan is to:

1) **Provide information and data on homelessness in Thurston County;**
2) **Describe our system of providing housing and services to those who experience homelessness or who are at risk of becoming homeless in Thurston County;**
3) **Explore the gaps in our system of providing housing and services to those who experience homelessness or who are at risk of becoming homeless in Thurston County;**
4) **Analyze impacts of homelessness in terms of the financial, social and humanitarian cost;** and
5) **Outline strategies to reduce homelessness in Thurston County by 50 percent by 2015.**

The Ten-Year Plan was intended to be a “living” document that adjusts to the evolving and changing needs of our community. The plan was designed to be assessed annually in terms of the performance measures, as required by the “Homeless Housing Assistance Act of 2005,” yet the vision was intended to remain constant: to open the door to a brighter future for homeless individuals and our community.
Creation of the county’s Ten-Year Plan marked a significant change in how our community responds to homelessness. Historically, in Thurston County, a small group of homeless housing and service providers collaborated to manage homelessness with very limited and, in most cases, dwindling resources. With the passage of the Homeless Housing and Assistance Act of 2005 (RCW 43.185C), all counties in Washington state – including Thurston County – are now charged with the task of ending homelessness. The act makes local governments responsible for developing ten-year plans to address homelessness. At a minimum, the plans must aim to reduce homelessness by 50 percent in ten years (by 2015). While the plan was developed to meet the legislative mandate, the goal was to create a local tool to address community needs from a countywide perspective.3

Ten Year Plan Progress: The Ten Year Plan’s Executive Summary presents a clear list of strategies to reduce homelessness (Appendix E: “Ten-Year Homeless Housing Plan Executive Summary” and page 31). The primary strategy in the plan called for creating 300 new permanent housing units and guiding more people into services before they become homeless. In the first half of the Ten-Year Plan, 135 new permanent housing units were built, with an additional 80 housing units underway. – Ten Year Plan Excerpt

The HOME Consortium’s Citizens Advisory Committee is currently reviewing the county’s Ten-Year Plan with any needed revisions targeted for completion by November 2010.

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3 Excerpted from the Thurston County 10-Year Homeless Housing Plan
Census Data – Examining the Numbers

The following is a series of charts presented with background information that provide a deeper look into the results of the 2010 Homeless Census, including the causes of homelessness, the ages of homeless people, disabilities they face and other information.

Disclaimers on Data

Be advised that unless otherwise noted, the following information represents the total results of the 2010 Homeless Census, which includes the additional numbers of people who lack a permanent address. This includes people living with friends and families and people in jail and medical facilities who will be released to homelessness. While these people do not meet the state definition of homelessness, they clearly present an impact on local services and the community at large.

It must be noted that due to constraints with the state’s database, some of the totals and subtotals are off by five (5) or more. Hopefully, these inconsistencies will be corrected by the final draft of this report.

Individuals vs. Households

Please note that some charts represent the homeless as individuals and other charts represent them as households. This is a result of the configuration of the state’s database, which only allows for the data entry of some information in the form of households, while other information is available for both individuals and households.

This also represents a shift in practices by some social service providers and shelter providers in looking at homeless populations by households rather than by individuals. This allows some practitioners to focus on the differing needs of individuals versus households, given that the former are sometimes accommodated in a dormitory form of shelter, whereas the latter are typically sheltered as a household or family unit.

Causes of Homelessness

Understanding the causes of homelessness is key to developing viable solutions. This chart presents the self-reported causes of homelessness by respondents in the census. Each respondent was asked to check all situations that applied in recognition that causes of homelessness often have a multiplier effect.
In 2010, the **single greatest cause of homelessness was “Mental Illness”**, as self-reported by 41% of respondents. Other than 2009, in which the single greatest cause of homelessness was the economy, mental illness has been the single greatest cause of homelessness each year since 2006.

*Respondents checked all categories that applied to their situation, resulting in multiple causes.*

**Where the Homeless Find Shelter**

To be included in this homeless census, the respondent had to meet the definition for homelessness (see “definitions” on page 3) the immediate night before the January 28th census was conducted. The results present a snapshot of where the homeless take shelter, which includes a broad array of formal and informal accommodations.
The following graph represents the range of those answers. Nearly one-third of all local homeless households spent the night unsheltered, with 277 people living out of doors, 66 living in vehicles and 20 staying in abandoned buildings. Another quarter of all homeless households were living in transitional housing, defined as housing that is designed to facilitate the movement of homeless individuals and families to permanent housing within a reasonable amount of time, usually 24 months.

Another 162 individuals were temporarily living with friends and family. While these numbers are not included in the state defined total of 976 homeless individuals (page 1 chart, “5-Year Matrix of Homeless Census and School Census Results”), these people typically have a significant impact on local services such as food banks, soup kitchens and other services. Included in this number are the unaccompanied minors who are not living with parents or guardians. These youth typically cycle from staying with friends, sometimes termed “couch surfing,” and living on the streets. One significant challenge in providing shelter for unaccompanied minors is that many avoid going into “the system” for fear of being returned to their parents or guardians.

There were 146 individuals being held in local jails or medical facilities who, upon release, would become homeless. While this status does not meet the state definition, the chart above shows that 21% were formerly incarcerated and 41% of the homeless are mentally ill. Clearly, these figures will have a direct impact on the local population of homelessness.

**Population Growth and Increased Homelessness**

Homelessness occurs within the context of population growth, with the potential of correlation between population growth and the increase of homelessness. However, the graph below shows that the
county’s population has grown 10% since 2006, while homelessness has increased 121%. While some of the increase in homeless residents is related to population growth, clearly the doubling of homelessness in Thurston County cannot be attributed to the gradual increase of the general population.

Comparison of Population Growth & Increased Homelessness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>COUNTY POPULATION (ESTIMATED)</th>
<th>% INCREASE FROM 2006</th>
<th># OF HOMELESS</th>
<th>% INCREASE FROM 2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>231,100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>238,000</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>245,181</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>249,800</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>255,000</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>976</td>
<td>121%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Homeless data based on state defined count.

Age of the Homeless

The chart below shows that 420 or nearly one-third of all homeless people are children, 17 years old or younger. The school census data presented on page 9 shows that this number has nearly doubled in the past five years. The elderly account for only 1% of the local homeless population; however, this number reflects a 100% increase since 2006’s count of seven homeless elders.

Disabilities of the Homeless

This chart presents the range of disabilities affecting local homeless people, which shows that mental health impacts 71% of the local homeless population that were counted.

---

4 Population Estimates from Thurston Regional Planning Council
Data based on full count. Respondents could choose multiple categories; percentages do not add up to 100%.

Sources of Income for Homeless People

The majority of homeless people have some form of income, with nearly a quarter relying on Social Security (24%) and one fifth subsisting on other forms of public assistance (20%). Over one third tap a wide range of sources, including low wage jobs (3%), day labor (2%) or part-time work (6%). However, another fifth have no steady income at all. The chart below presents the breakdown of sources of income.
Who are the Homeless?

The road to homelessness comes from many directions, resulting in a broad range of sub-populations of the homeless. Most service and shelter programs are tailored to meet the unique needs of these specific sub-populations; understanding these diverse characteristics is the key to developing successful responses. Below is a chart that breaks out some of these distinct sub-populations.

Following is a brief overview of the primary sub-groups of the homeless.

Mental Illness and Homelessness

Mental illness was the single greatest cause of homelessness in Thurston County, as self-reported by 41% or 407 of the respondents. Given that respondents could choose several categories, those identified as mentally ill were also veterans, victims of domestic violence and other categories.

Many people who are mentally ill are eligible for some form of benefits related to the disability caused by their mental illness. Chronically mentally ill people tend to have symptom escalation on an episodic basis. When inadequate community support is available to them during their periods of decompensation, sometimes hospitalization is necessary to re-establish stability. Once hospitalized, people may lose their entitlement funding because of governmental safeguards against “double-dipping” or paying for their care in the hospital plus providing income for the disabled person to live in the community. Upon release from medical facilities, many of these people find themselves in difficult circumstances. Since many hospitalizations are unplanned, landlords often evict them for non-payment and dispose of their belongings as abandoned. After several episodes, it is difficult to find a new landlord who will accept their rental history.
The primary strategy for chronically mentally ill homeless people is to provide **Permanent Supportive Housing** typically owned by non-profit organizations.

**Victims of Domestic Violence**

According to the National Law Center on Homeless and Poverty, domestic violence is one of the leading causes of homelessness for women and children.\(^5\) A 2005 study commissioned by the US Conference of Cities found that domestic violence was the leading cause of homelessness for women and children in half of the cities reporting, including Seattle.\(^6\)

Locally, there were 171 homeless victims of domestic violence, representing 18\% of the total population. Victims of domestic violence often have fewer options to seek temporary shelter with friends and family because their abusers would then be able to find them. As a result, they are disproportionately dependent on shelters, typically operated in confidential locations.

**Chronically Homeless**

Locally, 99 or 10\% of the homeless population is chronically homeless. Chronically homeless people are defined as "an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years."\(^7\) Typically comprising 10\% of the total homeless population, people who are chronically homeless tend to be the most visible, giving rise to many negative stereotypes. They also tend to be the heaviest consumers of shelter and homeless services.

A 2006 *New Yorker* article famously chronicled the price of ignoring the chronically homeless with a story about “Million Dollar Murray,” a homeless man in Reno who cost the state of Nevada one million dollars over ten years in emergency care.\(^8\) This article and other efforts to examine chronic homelessness from a cost-benefit perspective support the “**Housing First**” model as a strategy to stabilize chronically homeless people in order to provide more cost effective case management.

**Homeless Individuals**

Homeless individuals typically make up the largest sub-population of homeless people. Locally, the census revealed 645 single adults, comprising 66\% of the total population. Individuals are considered homeless when they do not have dependent children, are not expecting a child or are not ‘vulnerable’ in a way that prohibits their arranging their own accommodation. Those individuals or households that are not mentally ill, veterans or victims of domestic violence are generally excluded from many forms of public assistance, including housing.

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\(^5\) National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, nlahp.org
\(^7\) Housing and Urban Development definitions
Veterans

In Thurston County, 68 or 7% of the homeless self-identified as veterans. Nationwide, about one-third of the adult homeless populations are veterans. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), homeless veterans are predominantly male, with roughly five percent being female. The majority of homeless veterans are single, come from urban areas, and suffer from mental illness, alcohol and/or substance abuse, or co-occurring disorders. America’s homeless veterans have served in World War II, the Korean War, Cold War, Vietnam War, Grenada, Panama, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Iraq, and the military’s anti-drug cultivation efforts in South America. Nearly half of homeless veterans served during the Vietnam era. Two-thirds served our country for at least three years, and one-third were stationed in a war zone.

The strategic response to homeless veterans is to ensure they are linked to all possible VA benefits for which they may be eligible, including housing, mental health care, drug and alcohol treatment, employment assistance and other services.

Homeless Families

The census found 87 total homeless families with 289 family members, making them 9% of the homeless population. However, there appears to be a much larger number of families without a home of their own who find shelter by living with friends or family members, eluding the census methodology and being excluded from the census numbers. Homeless families often cite job loss or the loss of their housing related to the economy as the cause of homelessness.

Many homeless families choose to stay temporarily with other people or in motels, often in overcrowded and unsafe circumstances. As a result, many families, children, and youth on their own are disproportionately excluded by the current HUD definition of homelessness. The streets are untenable for families who lose their housing because living on the streets puts parents at risk of losing their children because of the potential intervention by child welfare agencies or the separation of the family because of restrictive shelter regulations.

Strategies for homeless families include “Rapid Re-housing” to stabilize them or emergency shelters specifically for families and then rental subsidies to allow them to secure housing.

Homeless Youth

There were 26 homeless youth in the census, comprising 3% of the total population. HUD regards youth as homeless only when they meet the federal definition of “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.” The definition includes youth who are living in shelters, transitional housing, out of doors, in vehicles or abandoned buildings. Although a significant number of homeless youth do not fit the HUD definition, they do fit the McKinney-Vento definition because they are “migratory” and live temporarily in hotels, motels or with a succession of friends or
family. As a result, the School Census (see page 8) presents numbers deriving from a different methodology.

Homeless youth and young adults present a significant challenge to community housing programs in that they don’t fit into the adult homeless housing model and they are at high-risk for victimization. Without appropriately focused interventions, they are likely to become part of the chronically homeless adult population. Adolescents and young adults have different biological, psychological, social, and developmental cognitive needs than adults and are often more responsive and receptive to Transitional Housing services. They respond best when offered a program that is designed to focus on prevention/intervention strategies that are geared to a young person’s developmental stages and use multiple “best practice” interventions. Experience and studies show that Transitional Housing is the most effective housing strategy to prevent or arrest homelessness with youth and young adults.

How long have they been homeless?

One of the questions included in the census was how long people were homeless. Nearly half or 173 (44%) said they had been homeless for less than a month. Over one third or 150 (38%) said they had been homeless for over a year. This underscores the national averages that show most homeless people experience short periods of homelessness and respond well to intervention programs such as “Rapid Re-housing” that quickly get them back into housing. Locally and nationally, the numbers of chronically homeless people are a very small percentage of the homeless population.

![Length of Time of Homelessness](image)

**Shelter and Homeless Housing Capacity**

**Thurston County Shelter and Homeless Housing Capacity**

In 2009, Thurston County lost some shelter capacity when the Salvation Army closed its family shelter as a result of internal review and community concerns. There were no additional shelter facilities or additional homeless housing units added, resulting in a net loss of capacity for eight households or 30 individuals.

Given the increase in the numbers of homeless people viewed against this loss of capacity, Thurston County was only able to accommodate 40% of our homeless residents. The chart below shows that in the past five years, the increase in the number of homeless people is outpacing the increases of
Thurston County has gone from meeting 73% of the shelter and homeless housing needs in 2006 to only 40% of the needs in 2010.

### Shelter and Homeless Housing Capacity Compared to Number of Homeless Surveyed by Household (not Individuals)
(Based on Full County Census Numbers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CENSUS INFORMATION</th>
<th>DATE CENSUS COMPLETED</th>
<th>HOUSEHOLDS IDENTIFIED</th>
<th>COUNTYWIDE CAPACITY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF NEED MET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006 Census</td>
<td>January 26, 2006</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>393*</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 Census</td>
<td>January 25, 2007</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>351**</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 Census</td>
<td>January 24, 2008</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>445***</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 Census</td>
<td>January 29, 2009</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Census</td>
<td>January 28, 2010</td>
<td>1052</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Old Devoe Street shelter in operation  ** Old Devoe Street Shelter shut down  
***Drexel House and Tumwater Gardens opened; significant expansion of TBRA (Tenant Based Rental Assistance)

### Number of Unsheltered People on the Rise

This decreasing percentage of shelter and housing capacity means that an increasing number of homeless people are seeking other accommodations. As per the “Homelessness by Current Living Status” chart on page 14, 162 people were living with friends and family. Service providers stress the temporary nature of such arrangements, particularly for homeless youth who tend to cycle between staying with friends and the street.

The 2010 Census results showed that 363 of the homeless population sought shelter out of doors, in vehicles or in abandoned buildings. The chart below shows a five-year matrix of unsheltered people as a percentage of the total number of homeless people. Starting in 2006, the 115 unsheltered people were 26% of the total homeless population. The percentage of unsheltered to the total homeless population has remained fairly static. However, the raw numbers of unsheltered people have more than tripled since 2006. More people, including families, are living outside the accepted continuum of care that spans from emergency shelter to transitional and permanent housing.

### Unsheltered People as Percent of Total Homeless Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th># SHELTERED</th>
<th># OF UNSHELTERED PEOPLE</th>
<th>TOTAL HOMELESS POPULATION</th>
<th>% OF UNSHELTERED HOMELESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>976</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Shelter Alternatives

As a creative response to the increased needs to accommodate the homeless, new forms of shelter and transitional housing have arisen in recent years.

Camp Quixote

In 2007, Camp Quixote, the local “tent city”, was created as a protest against a local ordinance to ban sidewalk sitting. Inspired by Dignity Village, a self-governed community for the homeless in Portland, Oregon, Camp Quixote was developed to be a democratically-run transitional housing camp to provide a community for people who would otherwise be living in cars, abandoned buildings, vehicles or the woods.

In response to the creation of the camp, local governments developed ordinances that would allow the camp to operate on a temporary basis in a succession of locations with conditions to address the concerns of immediate neighbors. As currently operated, the camp rotates every three months to a new location hosted by a faith-based community.

Overflow Shelters

For 20 years, there have been successions of “Overflow Shelters” that operate during the cold weather months of November 1 through March 3 to accommodate single men and families on nights when the temperature drops below freezing.

While these overflow shelters have been operated by a series of agencies, they are currently managed by the Family Support Center (for families), Interfaith Works (for single women), and the Salvation Army (for single men). The family shelter and single women’s shelter rotates every two weeks to participating faith-based communities. The single men’s shelter is hosted in an area of the Salvation Army. In the wake of the 2009 closure of the Salvation Army’s family shelter, a second rotating overflow shelter was created to accommodate the additional number of homeless families.
First Christian Church at 7th and Franklin in downtown Olympia has served as the location for the Overflow Shelter program operated by Interfaith Works and the Family Support Center. Negotiations are currently underway to make this a permanent location for a family shelter.

Advocates for both Camp Quixote and the overflow shelter system are exploring ways to strengthen their capacities by securing permanent or semi-permanent locations. Efforts are also underway to explore ways to expand the number of people who can be accommodated in both the camp and the churches.
Thurston County Capacity for Homeless Persons & Families - January 28, 2010

### Emergency Shelter Capacity
(just 90 days stay)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beds</th>
<th>Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individuals – Men</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army – Men</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Michael’s/Sacred Heart</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drexel House</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individuals – Women</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Families with Children</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Authority of Thurston County</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SafePlace</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yelm Community Services</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Shelter Network – Interfaith Works</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Shelter Network – Out of the Woods</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Youth Services-Haven House</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>173</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Transitional Capacity
(just 2 years stay)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beds</th>
<th>Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individuals – Men &amp; Women</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread &amp; Roses – Duplex</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army – Men</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army – Women</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympia Union Gospel Mission – Men in Recovery</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympia Union Gospel Mission – Women in Recovery</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Health Resources – TBRA</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arbor Manor</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drexel House – Single Men and Women</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Families with Children</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Authority of Thurston County</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympia Union Gospel Mission</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Youth Services</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>371</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Permanent Supportive Capacity
(no limit on length of stay – units only available for homeless households)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beds</th>
<th>Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individuals – Men &amp; Women</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fleetwood</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drexel House</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gardens</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Families with Children</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails End</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Families – Supporting Family Self-Sufficiency Program</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evergreen Vista Phase II</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>170</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Total Thurston County Capacity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beds</th>
<th>Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Shelter</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Supportive</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>714</td>
<td>424</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Collateral Impacts of Homelessness

The primary impact of homelessness affects the families and individuals who struggle to live without the benefit of a permanent home of their own. However, there can also be collateral impacts of homelessness on the community at large resulting from the way that homeless people are forced to live their lives on the streets, in the woods or in other areas not intended to offer shelter.

Business Impacts

In a trend played out across the country, the homeless of Thurston County tend to gravitate from rural areas to the urban hub. This migration is generally related to the concentration of homeless and related social services in Olympia’s downtown core. It is also related to the social needs of people who are unable to access more conventional gathering places, such as community centers, restaurants, or other public accommodations. In the absence of other facilities, many homeless people will use the streets, under-utilized parking lots and other areas to foster a sense of community.

When the number of homeless people on the streets hits a critical mass, it often generates complaints from some businesses and their patrons who feel impacted or threatened. In recent years, these complaints have resulted in the City of Olympia adopting a number of ordinances such as the sidewalk pedestrian interference ban and the Recreational Vehicles (RV) ban in the downtown core. The first “Tent City” ordinance allowing faith-based communities to host a rotating homeless encampment was enacted in response to a homeless encampment that emerged as a protest in downtown Olympia in 2007. The cities of Tumwater and Lacey have a similar ordinance and Thurston County is in the process of developing and adopting an ordinance in 2010. In spite of these ordinances, there continues to be complaints about the chilling effect that homeless people have on businesses.

“...I do care about what happens to homeless people and how few resources they have. But I also care about our local parks – they were not created as campgrounds. That becomes obvious when you see the garbage and human waste that gets generated.”
- Anonymous Park User

Parks and Trails Impacts

Over 363 homeless people were unsheltered on the day of the count, meaning that they lived out of doors, in vehicles and in abandoned buildings. Of those living out of doors, many find areas to camp that offer some combination of sheltering trees, access to water, proximity to the urban hub or other commercial areas and relative seclusion. Campsites tend to go unnoticed over the winter months when park usage is low. By spring, improved weather tends to increase recreational use of trails and parks, which in turn increases the number of complaints about homeless camps. Park users express safety concerns and complain about garbage, debris and impacts to the environment.
Environmental Impacts

Homeless camps can have negative impacts on watersheds, wellheads, other critical areas and habitats. The lack of basic sanitation facilities can allow human waste to pollute watersheds. The lack of systematic trash removal typically results in an accumulation of garbage that is a source of pollution and an eyesore. Clean up of abandoned camp sites can present biohazards for those directly involved in the clean up due to the mixture of garbage, human waste and occasional hypodermic needles.

Methodology of Thurston County’s Homeless Census

A comprehensive census of people without a permanent address is challenging—without an address, these people are hard to find. Many who are unsheltered strive to avoid detection by census workers and public officials alike. There has been an unfortunate coincidence that the January homeless census was followed by homeless camp clearances. While these clearances are typically spurred by complaints from park users and neighboring citizens, there is an incorrect perception that the census causes the clearances. This perception caused many unsheltered homeless people to conceal their camps, move their cars and otherwise take steps to hide, making census work more challenging.

In order to meet this challenge, efforts have been made to mobilize a broad range of community members to assist. The vast majority of the homeless were surveyed within the social service agencies and/or shelter and transitional housing facilities by professional staff that were able to confirm the individuals were homeless. Field and street census workers surveyed those people who self-declared that they were homeless, unless it was obvious to the workers that they did not fit the criteria. The 2010 homeless census used a four-point approach on conducting the census:

1) Institutional Survey: An institutional survey was conducted within all local social service agencies that provided homeless services, emergency shelter, transitional housing or specifically designated permanent housing with supportive services. Agency liaisons were provided the definitions of homelessness and guidelines for completing the census forms;

2) Field Census: Teams of census workers canvassed areas with known homeless camps, primarily in the urban areas of the county, seeking out homeless people to survey. Volunteers were provided the definition of homelessness and guidelines for completing the census forms and were instructed to allow homeless people to self-identify;

3) Evening Street Census: An evening street census was conducted in downtown Olympia, specifically seeking homeless youth by youth advocates and case workers who were provided the definition of homelessness and guidelines for completing the census forms and were instructed to allow homeless people to self-identify; and

4) Satellite Census Locations: Census volunteers and staffers, stationed at specific sites known to draw high numbers of homeless people, were provided the definition of homelessness and guidelines for completing the census forms and were instructed to allow homeless people to self-identify. Locations included all four major Food Banks (Olympia, Rochester, Tenino and Yelm), an evening street ministry program, the state’s Social Service Center and the Olympia downtown library.
As stated above, agencies providing direct services, shelter or housing submitted reports on homeless people whose homeless status was documented. However, the field, street and satellite location census activities did not conduct a rigorous screening of persons to determine whether they were homeless. Generally, persons who self identified as homeless were counted, unless they obviously did not fit the criteria.

**Focus Groups**

In addition to developing a plan for surveying the homeless, this census also provided for some community-based analysis of the census results. This process of community analysis was facilitated through a series of seven focus/discussion groups charged with examining the census results and developing recommendations for reducing homelessness.

Seven focus groups were held with participants drawn from sub-sets of the community: a business group, a faith-based community group, a non-profit social service providers group, a homeless adult group from Camp Quixote, a homeless youth group from Community Youth Services, a Tumwater High School group, and an Olympia High School group.

Each focus group was presented with a matrix of the census results and a set of questions tailored to solicit their unique perspectives. The outcome of these focus groups is a comprehensive list of recommendations that address the broad range of responsibility for responding to homelessness. These recommendations are included in the appendix and are summarized in both the “Executive Summary” and the “Recommendations” section.

**Census Release Forum**

The 2010 Thurston County Homeless Census revealed that homelessness has increased 121% in the first five years of the Ten-Year Plan. On May 1, 2010, the HOME Consortium hosted a community forum to:

1) Examine the results of the 2010 Thurston County Homeless Census Report, and
2) Look at how to expand involvement in homeless issues in Thurston County.

This forum featured a panel presentation that examined the conditions that are driving the increases in homelessness and possible responses. Small group discussions allowed for more in depth exploration of responses in four areas, including schools, non-profits and faith-based communities, local governments and the business community.

Nearly 60 people attended, including faith-based community members, high school students, homeless advocates, non-profit representatives, elected officials from multiple jurisdictions and others.

Many of the ideas generated were similar to the recommendations put forth by the focus groups (pages 2 - 3), including hiring a homeless coordinator, finding a permanent location for Camp Quixote, following a cohesive plan and striving to improve the overall efficiency of the existing networks of service and shelter provision. There were some new ideas, however, including developing new sources of funding among local governments and exploring ways to shift the public funding paradigm to explore new, more successful responses.
Next steps included:

1) **Faith Community Action**: Faith Communities forum entitled “Thurston Based Network” held at Temple Beth Hatfiloh on May 26th.

2) **Ten Year Plan Revision**: HOME Consortium’s Citizens Advisory Committee is continuing to revise the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness to make it into a useful and viable document. Target completion date: November 2010.

3) **Paradigm Shift in Government Funding**: Continued dialogue in local governments about how funding allocation cycles are managed.

4) **Homeless Coordinator**: Continued dialogue in the Citizens Advisory Committee (meets at the Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department, 1–3pm every third Thursday) and the Housing and Homeless Task Force (meets at the Olympia Timberland Library every third Monday);

5) **Homeless Encampment Ordinance**: Continued discussion at Thurston County’s Public Hearing on the county’s Comprehensive Plan on June 1st at the Thurston County Courthouse, Building 1.

A summary of that forum is included in the appendices under “*Homeless Census Release Forum – Outcomes*” on page 39.
Appendix A

Summary of Focus Group Recommendations

The methodology of this census included a provision for community based analysis of the census results. This process of community analysis was conducted through a series of seven focus groups charged with examining the census results and developing recommendations for reducing homelessness. These focus groups used participants drawn from sub-sets of the community, which included the following: a business group, a faith-based community group, a non-profit social service providers group, a homeless adult group from Camp Quixote, a homeless youth group from Community Youth Services, a Tumwater High School group and an Olympia High School group. Each focus group was presented with a matrix of the census results and a set of questions tailored to solicit their unique perspectives. Following is a summary of their recommendations.

Recommendations for Local Government

- Get out of the way of the churches – let them house the homeless without all the government rules, regulations and zoning;
- Allow homeless shelters and transitional housing to be located in single family neighborhoods – don’t make it so difficult;
- Work with the churches and non-profits to create more tent cities and homeless RV parks;
- Stop the “harassment ordinances” that target people in RVs, cars or on downtown sidewalks;
- Overcome the polarization between the three cities and the county;
- Work off of a cogent plan (Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness);
- The HOME Consortium should stay focused on the Ten-Year Plan;
- Hire a homeless coordinator to provide stronger networking between the service and shelter providers;
- Take advantage of the recession to buy distressed properties, including stalled subdivisions to create affordable housing;
- Use bonding capacity to raise capital to develop affordable housing;
- Allow creative, small scale, highly energy efficient housing models for affordable housing (right sized housing);
- Let the churches provide shelter. Remove or relax zoning and regulatory restrictions that impede the ability of faith-based communities to provide shelter;
• Local officials need more flexibility for developing creative responses, i.e. Homeless Camp ordinance;

• Develop public work projects to put homeless people to work, i.e. cleaning sidewalks;

• Elected officials should spend time with the homeless at Camp Quixote to really understand what’s going on before they make funding decisions;

• Local officials must change their pattern of building then abandoning local housing facilities like Drexel – housing needs operation and maintenance funding;

• Improve relationship between local police and homeless people - many complaints of harassment;

• Look at other communities to learn from their “best practices”;

• Implement the Ten-Year Plan.

**Recommendations for Business Community**

• Develop public-private partnerships to generate funds and develop housing and services to get people off the street;

• Develop “right-sized” housing models in cooperation with local government and promote very low cost housing developments;

• Foster mutual respect between business people and homeless people;

• Urge local governments and non-profits to use resources wisely.

**Recommendations for Faith-Based Communities**

• There needs to be more Tent Cities, preferably a little farther out where people could garden and not be camping on pavement;

• Faith-based communities involved in ministering to the poor and homeless need better coordination of their efforts and services among other faith-based communities and to link with secular non-profits;

• Faith-based communities should pool their resources;

• Faith-based communities need to continue to find ways to work with local government;

• Look at other faith-based communities to learn from their “best practices”;

• With over 150 faith-based communities in Thurston County, if every faith-based community adopted one homeless family or person, we could start to turn this problem around.
Recommendations for Social Service Agencies

- Rapid Re-housing: Catch newly homeless people and work swiftly to get them into housing;
- Develop community centers with expanded hours – offer people somewhere besides the streets;
- Ask homeless people what programs and services they really need;
- Need more outreach and case workers to provide assistance for mentally ill homeless people who live on the street;
- Intervene early with homeless children to break the cycle of homelessness;
- Develop family shelters that allow people to stay indoors during the day (current policy is to kick people out on the street by 7am);
- Improve networking, improve the referral systems in place, avoid duplication of services;
- Identify new revenue sources and become even more resourceful about how to run non-profit agencies;
- Consider micro-loan programs for homeless people and at-risk people - if it works in the Third World, it should work here;
- Do a better job of networking with other services;
- Continue to push for low-barrier shelters that provide for basic human needs without demanding compliance with rules;
- Continue to push for a homeless coordinator.

Recommendations for High Schools

- Consider evening and weekend study halls for homeless students;
- Open the cafeterias at night and on weekends to provide a soup kitchen for homeless students and their families;
- Develop a community service class to teach students about being involved in their own communities;
- Announce volunteer opportunities along with sports opportunities to get students more involved in homeless services;
- Develop a buddy system or peer support network to provide support for homeless students;
- Food drives should be encouraged at all grade levels and all year round;
- Develop a clothing bank for very low income and homeless students.

**Recommendations for Community Members**

- Consider an “Adopt a Homeless Person” relationship to help support homeless people as individuals;
- Take the time to actually talk to homeless people and see what causes homelessness;
- Shop locally to support the local economy which in turn generates tax dollars to support homeless services and shelters;
- Community-based responses to homelessness can be more flexible;
- Re-examine attitudes toward felons and sex-offenders; if you don’t like these people, you’ll like them even less if you don’t know where they are living;
- We need to find a way to increase wages or lower rents to allow the working poor to remain housed;
- Families need to step up to take responsibility for their own family members who become homeless. These numbers really underscore the disintegration of the family;
- In a county with 230,000 residents, if everyone donated $20, there would be enough money to build a new facility or to supplement the services and housing budget for each homeless household.

**Recommendations for Homeless People**

- We need to find ways to get homeless people to step up to the plate to help themselves, like Camp Quixote;
- Taking a page from the Habitat play book, how can we incentivize the participation of homeless in their own services?
Appendix B

Clarification of Data from Past Census Reports

Reporting in this census is primarily based on the state’s guidelines to count individuals rather than households found living unsheltered (out of doors, in vehicles or abandoned buildings) or in emergency shelters, transitional housing and specifically defined permanent housing with supportive services. “The department shall annually conduct a Washington homeless census or count consistent with the requirements of RCW 43.63A.655. The census shall make every effort to count all homeless individuals living outdoors, in shelters, and in transitional housing...”

The Department of Commerce website posts the results of past homeless census numbers across the state for individuals, not households, as evidenced in the link listed below.

http://www.commerce.wa.gov/site/1064/default.aspx

Other differences in methodologies existed between reporting years, such as including the number of people living with friends and family together with the state defined population numbers. The homeless census reports from 2006 and 2007 included people living with friends and family. The 2008 and 2009 reports were based on the number of households, not individuals. This explains differences between the 2010 report and the four previous annual reports.

In order to ensure an accurate presentation of the same demographics of homelessness, (unsheltered [out of doors, in vehicles or abandoned buildings] or in emergency shelters, transitional housing and specifically defined permanent housing with supportive services.) this report re-examined past homeless census data to extract only the numbers that fit the state definition of homelessness. This correction provides a more accurate comparison, year over year, of the homeless population. More importantly, it allows for an accurate tracking of Thurston County’s progress on the Ten Year Plan to end homelessness.

9 Department of Commerce, Point in Time Census website
Appendix C

Report to State Department of Commerce

Thurston County Point in Time Count of Homeless Persons

Report to State Department of Commerce - March 30, 2010

This initial report is offered in advance of the final “2010 Thurston County Point in Time Count of Homeless Persons,” which will be made available after March 30, 2010. In summary, the HUD count identified 976 homeless individuals and 755 homeless households with a total of 87 homeless families with children. The total Thurston County count identified 1,339 total homeless individuals and 1,052 homeless households, which includes people staying with friends and relatives and people in jails and medical institutions.

1. Briefly describe your efforts to count unsheltered persons.

The Thurston County Homeless Census used the following activities to seek out unsheltered persons: a) In preparation for the census, city officials conducted a comprehensive preparatory field survey of all know camping areas and queried all public, private and non-profit entities with knowledge of areas with known homeless camps as well as car campers and RV homeless people. b) Field census of known homeless camps. c) Evening street census in areas known to attract unsheltered homeless people. d) Stationing census workers at all local food banks and soup kitchens. e) Working with non-profits who provide outreach services to unsheltered homeless people.

2. Briefly describe how you minimized the duplication of those that were counted.

Efforts were made to avoid duplication of people counted in the following manner: a) All homeless census workers were directed to ask potential respondents if they had already filled out the form. b) Each respondent not protected by designated confidentiality policies or laws were directed to provide their full initials, birth date and to sign the back of the form. c) Data entry was conducted by a supervised team instructed to identify all potential duplicate surveys and eliminate as necessary.

3. What quantitative data or qualitative impressions do you have on how complete the count was in your county? (i.e., “One-hundred percent of sheltered persons were counted, but we were not able to safely count about 10 percent of the unsheltered homeless population that live in the southwestern forests and were not willing to come to our stand down.”)

We are confident that we included 100% of all homeless people in shelters and transitional housing. We were less successful in counting unsheltered people for the following reasons: a) As a result of municipal policies to clear out homeless camps, unsheltered people are very difficult to find and survey. b) Car campers and RV occupants are very hard to count because of their high mobility and need to avoid detection by public officials. c) In spite of significant volunteer resources, we were unable to cover a sufficiently broad range of the county; areas omitted include the Capital Forest (rumored to have many well established homeless camps) and rural areas surrounding the smaller communities of Bucoda, Rainier, Rochester, Tenino and Yelm. d) We found many individual, well maintained camp sites unoccupied early in the morning, indicating that the occupant(s) may be employed homeless who live out of doors, but do not use services and are, therefore, difficult to count.
In view of the four points identified above, we may have undercounted the unsheltered population by 10 – 25%, meaning a potential increase from the 363 unsheltered homeless people included in this report to somewhere between 399 to 453 total unsheltered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 1: Homeless Population</th>
<th>Sheltered</th>
<th>Unsheltered</th>
<th>Temporarily Living with Family or Friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emergency</td>
<td>Transitional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Families with Children</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Households without Children</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>111*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Households without Adults (nobody over 17 years old)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Number of Persons in Families with Children</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Number of Single Individuals and Persons in Households without Children</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>117</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Number of Persons in Households without Adults (nobody over 17 years old)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Persons: (Add Lines Numbered 1, 2 &amp; 3)</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>162</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 2: Homeless Sub Populations*</th>
<th>Sheltered</th>
<th>Unsheltered</th>
<th>Temporarily Living with Family or Friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emergency</td>
<td>Transitional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Chronically Homeless</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Mentally Disabled</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Persons with alcohol and/or other drug problems</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>52**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Veterans</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Persons with HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Victims of Domestic Violence</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Unaccompanied Youth (Under 18)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Children (Under 18) in Families</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Physically Disabled</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Seasonal Agricultural Workers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Persons with both substance use and mental health problems</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l. Senior citizens (aged 65 or older)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*A homeless person could be identified under one or more sub populations

**Optional

For more information on this March 30, 2010 report to State Department of Commerce, please contact:

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Thurston County Public Health & Social Services
Community Housing Program Manager
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Email: riverac@co.thurston.wa.us

OR

M. Anna Schlecht
City of Olympia
Olympia Housing Program Manager
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Email: aschlech@ci.olympia.wa.us
### Appendix D

Thurston County Homeless Census Data for January 28, 2010
(Full Census Profile)

#### Total Count Numbers by Individual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Individuals 1339</th>
<th>Children 5 &amp; under 165</th>
<th>Adults 21-25 133</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Households</td>
<td>1052</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children under 17</td>
<td>420 31%</td>
<td>170 13%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>762 57%</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>577 43%</td>
<td>153 10%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals with a Disability</td>
<td>655 49%</td>
<td>196 15%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals who are Veterans</td>
<td>84 6%</td>
<td>451 34%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans receiving VA Assistance</td>
<td>26 2%</td>
<td>49 4%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaccompanied Minors</td>
<td>4 &lt;1%</td>
<td>16 1%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Disabilities as Indicated by Individual* (801 Respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical/Medical (permanent)</td>
<td>197 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical (temporary)</td>
<td>51 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>567 71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>44 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual (Uncorrected)</td>
<td>77 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>8 1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Current Living Status by Individual (1339 Respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Housing</td>
<td>432 32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Supportive Housing</td>
<td>56 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends or Family</td>
<td>162 12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Situations that caused Homelessness for Households* (1142 Respondents)

1. Unable to pay Rent/Mortgage | 141 12% |
2. Job Lost                     | 169 15% |
3. Poor Credit Rating           | 96 8%    |
4. Evicted-Non-payment          | 47 4%    |
5. Lack of Job Skills           | 54 5%    |
6. Lack of Child Care           | 12 1%    |
7. Medical Costs                | 52 5%    |
8. Mental Illness               | 463 41%  |
9. Medical Problems             | 98 9%    |
10. Family Break-up             | 137 12%  |
11. Domestic Violence Victim    | 106 9%   |

#### Percentages of Situations that Caused Homelessness Grouped by Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty Related Issues (1-6)</td>
<td>519 45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Related Issues (7-9)</td>
<td>613 54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Dysfunction Issues (10-11)</td>
<td>243 21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug &amp; Alcohol Issues (12-13)</td>
<td>160 14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### All Sources of Household Income* (866 Respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>176 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
<td>209 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Insurance</td>
<td>21 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time Work</td>
<td>55 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Assistance</td>
<td>171 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed at low wage job</td>
<td>27 3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Labor</td>
<td>15 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L &amp; I Payments</td>
<td>4 &lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>43 5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Zip Code Where Household Last Resided for 6 Consecutive Months or More (666 Respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zip Code</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>98501</td>
<td>214 32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98502</td>
<td>61 9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98503</td>
<td>85 13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98506</td>
<td>54 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98512</td>
<td>55 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98513</td>
<td>11 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98516</td>
<td>7 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98579</td>
<td>8 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98597</td>
<td>32 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>67 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>43 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>47 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>27 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>455</td>
<td>455 68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Length of Time Households Have Been Homeless

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 month or less</td>
<td>173 44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to 3 months</td>
<td>12 3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 12 months</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 1 year</td>
<td>150 38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*More than one answer is possible. Summation of percentages will not equal 100%.
Appendix E

Thurston County Ten-Year Homeless Plan
Executive Summary

Introduction

Homelessness is a concern that affects virtually every community in the United States. The homeless sleep in streets, in cars, underneath bridges, or at the homes of family and friends. They include adults and children, individuals and couples, mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers. They are homeless for a variety of reasons: mental illness, a physical disability, substance abuse, unemployment and low wages.

Homelessness takes a heavy toll on these individuals and their local communities. Homeless people are less able to find social services and jobs when their lives are eclipsed by the need to find shelter. They are also more likely to need costly emergency services because of the ravages of weather and crime, the inability to pay for preventative care and – in many cases – their own physical and mental disabilities. Communities with high rates of homelessness are also concerned about the character of their communities and the effects on nearby businesses.

Thurston County is fortunate to have a strong network of agencies and social service providers dedicated to ending homelessness. Our county also has a history of success upon which to build. In 2002, for example, representatives from Thurston County and local cities jointly applied for HOME program funds from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. The group referred to as the Home Consortium set a goal to reduce homelessness in Thurston County by 50 percent by 2005. The Home Consortium exceeded its expectations. Three homeless point-in-time counts conducted between 2003 and 2005 revealed that homelessness decreased by more than 50 percent during the three-year time period (see section 5.1).

Despite our success in reducing homelessness, challenges remain. The January 26, 2005 Census revealed that 697 individuals were homeless that day, and that the community lacked the capacity to house 90 of them (13 percent). Most of the homeless individuals were men between the ages of 36 and 54, who were unemployed and/or unable to afford housing, or who had mental illnesses or drug and alcohol abuse problems. The majority were staying in emergency shelters, sleeping on the streets, in vehicles or in outdoor areas, or “couch-surfing” with family and friends.

This Ten-Year Plan is designed to reduce homelessness in Thurston County even further by 50 percent by July 2015. The plan calls for creating 300 new permanent housing units and guiding more people into services before they become homeless.
Recommendations

Below is a summary of activities recommended in this Ten-Year Plan:

- Create 75 new housing units for *homeless families*, with the majority located at Evergreen Vista on Fern Street. The plan also calls for increased funding for rental assistance and to help prevent eviction.

- Develop 25 new housing units for *non-chronically homeless* individuals.

- Develop 100 new housing units for *chronically (repeat) homeless* individuals. Most of the new units would come from two projects that are already underway. Catholic Community Services plans to replace the existing Devoe Street shelter with a new transitional housing and homeless shelter by 2007. (The Devoe Street shelter is currently owned and operated by Bread and Roses and houses about 30 men overnight.) Behavioral Health Resources is working to convert the Tumwater Gardens apartment complex into housing for people with chronic and severe mental illness.

- Develop 100 new housing units for *homeless youth*. As a start, Community Youth Services would continue its current effort to purchase nine new units on Pear Street. An additional 24 units would be created in a low-barrier shelter for homeless youth. (“Low barrier” means those youths in the shelter would face fewer restrictions than traditional crisis residential centers — i.e.: hours of operation and length of stay).

- Reduce the number of offenders, including sex offenders, who are released to homelessness. In the short term, this will involve collecting data about offenders in Thurston County, their barriers to housing, and available housing and service programs. Ultimately, the plan recommends creating a re-entry program for offenders, including “re-entry coaches” who would counsel offenders and help them find resources. The coaches would not be employed by the Department of Corrections.

- Collect information and develop strategies to manage limited resources. This plan recommends hiring a homeless coordinator and making the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development’s “Homeless Management Information System” (HMIS, a homeless database system) available to a broader network of trained local service-providers.

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**How to Get Involved**

- Attend HOME Consortium Citizens Advisory Committee meetings every third Thursday, 1 to 3pm at Thurston County Public Health and Social Services, 412 Lilly RD NE in Olympia. Contact Dwight Edwards at edwardd@co.thurston.wa.us or call (360) 867-2531.

- Volunteer as we conduct the annual homeless census on the fourth Thursday in January. Contact Connie Rivera at riverac@co.thurston.wa.us or call (360) 867-2532 for more information.

- Attend Housing Task Force meetings held the third Monday of each month at the Olympia Timberland Regional Library, 313 8th Avenue in Olympia, from noon to 1pm. Contact the homeless housing or service provider of your choice to volunteer your time or to offer financial assistance.

- Contact Thurston County for more information on the Ten-Year Homeless Housing Plan. Contact Connie Rivera at riverac@co.thurston.wa.us or call (360) 867-2532.
Launch the “Dream the Dream” project, which will involve asking community organizations to consult with others in their organizations and “Dream the Dream.” Participants will be asked to share how they would expand current programs or add new and innovative programs if they had the resources. (“Dream the Dream” is further described in Chapter 6.)

Assess the needs and gaps in the homeless provider system and share the information with the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army plans to replace its existing Fifth Avenue shelter with a two-story social service and shelter facility by 2008.

The Costs

The Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development estimates Thurston County will receive roughly $273,000 to $354,000 a year under the Homeless Housing Assistance Act, a 2005 law that provides a revenue source for local governments to write ten-year homeless plans. The estimated cost of enacting this plan is $55.8 million over a ten-year period. Of that amount, $11.9 million is already funded through grants. The gap between costs and revenue means funding packages must be pulled together on a project-by-project basis, using all available resources. It also suggests that the ability to actually implement this plan will depend largely on the revenues available to Thurston County.

Future Updates on the Ten-Year Plan

This plan is intended to be a “living” document that adjusts to the evolving and changing needs of our community. The plan will be updated annually, as required by the “Homeless Housing Assistance Act of 2005,” yet the vision will remain constant: to open the door to a brighter future for homeless individuals and our community.
Appendix F

Homeless Census Release Forum – Outcomes
May 1, 2010

The 2010 Thurston County Homeless Census revealed that homelessness has increased 121% in the first five years of the Ten-year Plan. On May 1, 2010, the HOME Consortium hosted a community forum to:

1) Examine the results of the 2010 Thurston County Homeless Census Report; and,

2) Look at how to expand involvement in homeless issues in Thurston County.

This forum featured a panel presentation that examined the conditions that are driving the increases in homelessness and possible responses. Small group discussions allowed for more in-depth exploration of responses in four areas, including schools, non-profits and faith-based communities, local governments and the business community.

Nearly 60 people attended, including faith-based community members, high school students, homeless advocates, non-profit representatives, elected officials from multiple jurisdictions and others.

Many of the ideas generated were similar to the recommendations put forth by the focus groups (pages 2 - 3), including hiring a homeless coordinator, finding a permanent location for Camp Quixote, following a cohesive plan and striving to improve the overall efficiency of the existing networks of service and shelter provision. There were some new ideas, however, including developing new sources of funding among local governments and exploring ways to shift the public funding paradigm to explore new, more successful responses.

Next steps included:

1) **Faith-Based Community Action:** Faith Communities forum entitled “Thurston Based Network” held at Temple Beth Hatfiloh on May 26th.

2) **Ten-Year Plan Revision:** HOME Consortium’s Citizens Advisory Committee is continuing to revise the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness to make it into a useful and viable document. Target completion date: November 2010.

3) **Paradigm Shift in Government Funding:** Continued dialogue in local governments about how funding allocation cycles are managed.

4) **Homeless Coordinator:** Continued dialogue in the Citizen’s Advisory Body (Meets at the Thurston County Health Department 1 – 3pm on the third Thursday) and the Housing and Homeless Task Force (meets at the Olympia Timberland Library on third Mondays); and,

5) **Homeless Encampment Ordinance:** Continued discussion at Thurston County’s Public Hearing on the county’s Comprehensive Plan on June 1st at the Thurston County Courthouse, Building 1.
Following is full summary of outcomes reported by each of the small group discussions:

**Small Group Reports**

**Government Small Group Report**

1) Need to find a permanent location for Camp Quixote;
2) Need to increase available funding – possible levy lid lift;
3) Need a paradigm shift in our response to homelessness. Specifically, we need to shift our planning process from an RFP process to a strategic plan process backed with resources and intent. This would be a system to end homelessness (Incident Command Model);
4) Need to understand the Census Report data better, make sure that it informs the paradigm shift;
5) Need to educate about the social service delivery and referral system;
6) Need to develop a “Community Care Center” to ensure better coordination of resources. Center to serve as single point of entry, providing full range of service and shelter and housing referrals; collecting client data at the point of entry into the system; showers and laundry available. Models: Seattle YWCA?

**Schools Small Group Report**

The school small group identified four primary areas of need for homeless students:

1) Food
2) Shelter
3) Academic Support
4) Clothing

The available resources to meet those needs are as follows:

1) Existing facilities: rent or fund the extended hours of gyms, cafeterias or other parts to the school to provide combination study halls, drop in center, warming center, etc., if possible to access cafeterias, provide soup kitchen. Provide funding to extend Rosie’s Place hours.

2) Curriculum:
   a. Community Service Projects: Tap student service project requirements (seniors must have 30 hours of community service to graduate) to engage students in safe, age-appropriate homeless services;
   b. Home Economics and Soup Kitchens: Explore ways that Home Economics classes can provide food for homeless students and their families;
   c. Social Service Clubs: Develop a program of homeless support service projects;
   d. Business clubs, i.e. DECA (the association of high school and college students studying marketing, management and entrepreneurship in business, finance, hospitality and marketing sales and service): Organize a charitable non-profit clothing bank.

3) Volunteers:
   a. Develop a campaign to encourage more volunteerism from the student body that benefits homeless students and their families;
b. Develop a buddy system to pair housed students with homeless students.

**Faith-Based Community / Non-Profit Small Group Report**

1) Follow a cohesive plan
   a. Hire a homeless coordinator – the lack of coordination and awareness between service and shelter programs greatly impedes the service delivery system. Enhance the services and facilities that we have with better coordination and referrals;
   b. Single point of entry will greatly simplify the referral system(s);
   c. Revise the Ten-Year Plan and use it;
   d. Find ways to plug faith community volunteers into the existing network of support and shelter systems.

2) Expand Housing Resources
   a. Catalogue all housing resources – including non-profit and privately owned;
   b. Don’t build new housing – find ways to access and use the huge volume of vacant housing;
   c. Develop housing plan for the hard-to-house people like sex offenders and felons;
   d. Develop a better referral system.

3) Ensure Support for Housing

4) Faith-Based Community Forum on Wednesday, May 26th at Temple Beth Hatfiloh

**Business Small Group Report**

1) Must be more engagement between business sector and non-profits and government;
2) Need an action plan that produces results;
3) Explore different funding sources:
   a. Ask Chamber of Commerce to donate $1 from dues for homeless projects
   b. Approach different civic organizations to request funding
   c. Develop specific projects that will draw investors
4) Create a business mentorship program to help non-profits with marketing, management, etc.