May 2015
Thurston County
Homeless Census Report
Who’s Homeless and Why?
Produced by a Countywide partnership
Part of 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness
2015 is the 10th year of a 10-year plan to reduce homelessness by half. Instead homelessness in Thurston county has increased 7.4% since 2006.

The number of unsheltered people decreased from 257 in 2014 to only 163 in 2015, a decrease of over 36%.

**10-Year Plan Progress:** The chart above represents the progress on the County’s 10-Year Plan to reduce homelessness by half, with a goal to bring it down to 221 by the final year of the plan in 2015. Progress is tracked each year with the Point in Time Homeless Census (PIT), a Countywide census conducted each year at the end of January. On January 29, 2015, 476 homeless individuals were counted—158 in homeless shelters, 155 in transitional (non-permanent Housing) and 163 who were unsheltered. After 10 years of concerted efforts to reduce homelessness, the net results have been to bring *almost* back to the starting point in

**Homeless Refuge:** The chart above presents information about where people stayed. While the term, “Homeless” brings up an image of living out of doors or in a vehicle, the HUD definition includes people staying in homeless shelters and transitional housing, given that both accommodations are temporary in nature.
Who are the Homeless? Of the 476 people who identified as homeless in Thurston County in 2015, 281 or 59% are male, 183 or 38% are female and 2115 or 24% are children under the age of 18. Of children under 18 years of age, 106 or 22% were living with their families and 9 or 2% were unaccompanied youth on their own.

Ages of the Homeless: The majority, 240 of homeless people found were between the ages of 26 and 55. However, 100 or over 21% were children, of whom 9 were unaccompanied minors living on their own. An additional 71 or 15% were “transition-age youth” ages 18—24, a demographic that faces many of the challenges of younger homeless youth.

Gender: 281 or 59% of the homeless are male-identified, 183 or 38% are female identified, and one person identified as transgender.

Mental Illness: 132 people or 28% of respondents reported mental illness.

Domestic Violence: There were 111 or 23% were victims of domestic violence.
**Chronically Homeless:**

There were 89 or 19% chronically homeless. Chronically homeless people tend to be the most expensive population to serve, tending to rely on expensive emergency services.

**Chronic Homelessness** is determined by the length of homelessness and the presence of a compounding disability, or a condition that makes it much harder to escape homelessness. Of the 476 people who identified as homeless in **Thurston County** in 2015, 141 or 30% had been consistently homeless for a year or more; 203 people or 43% had not been homeless that long and 132 or 28% refused to answer.

**Cycling—Episodes of Homelessness:** Of the 476 respondents, 89 people or 19% had been homeless 4 or more times in the past 3 years, indicating they had been cycling between staying with friends and family, shelters, living in their cars or other accommodations.
**CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS**

**Job Loss:** 106 people or 22%

**Family crisis or break-up:** 102 or 21%

**Illness:** 93 people or 20%

**Primarily Economic Reasons:** 78 people or 16%

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**Causes:** The largest reported cause of homelessness was job loss, reported by 106 people or 22% of the respondents. The second largest cause was family crisis or break-up cited by 102 or 21% of respondents. Third largest caused was illness or health problems cited by 93 people or 20%. Significantly, 54 or 11% of respondents were staying with friends or family—while some people ultimately get back on their feet, many slip into literal homelessness.

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**Homeless Sex Offenders:** Homeless or transient sex offenders are one group of unsheltered homeless people who are tracked closely by local government. Of the 237 registered sex offenders in Thurston County, all 48 transient sex offenders reported they live in Olympia. Unwillingness to hire or house sex offenders leaves this population disproportionately homeless, with 20% of the total population living as transients.
**Geography of Homelessness:** The geography of homelessness shows where homeless people go to find survival resources. However, the present location of homeless people shown under the “Current City” is often different that the last place they called home. To convey this migration from home to homelessness, the following chart presents

1) where the homeless spent the night on January 23rd; and,

2) where their last permanent address was.

The chart above combines these two data sets—current and permanent city to show the migration of homeless people into the urban hub. This chart also suggests that limited choices in rural areas can drive homeless people into areas of more concentrated services.

In a dynamic repeated across the country, homeless people from small towns and rural areas are forced to migrate to areas with higher concentrations of services, shelter and transitional housing. Once there, homeless people often feel like displaced persons, unable to build new community bonds or to tap neighborhood resources.

**Current City:** 313 people, or 66%, spent the night somewhere in Olympia.

**Last Permanent Residence:** Only 157, or 33%, stated that Olympia was the location of their last permanent residence.
The totals here represent those individuals who meet the Federal definition of “homeless”, which comes from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Count Numbers by Individual</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transgendered</td>
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<td>Unaccompanied Minors</td>
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<tr>
<th>Disabilities as Indicated by Individual* (599 Responses)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Physical (permanent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic Health Problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None apply</td>
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<tr>
<th>Current Living Status by Individual (599 Respondents)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Shelter/ Motel Voucher Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transitional Housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jail or Medical Facility *</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends or Family *</td>
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<th>Situations that caused Homelessness for Households* (599 Responses)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evicted-Non-payment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Job Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Child Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Illness ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness/Health Problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Reasons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transient on the Road</td>
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<tr>
<th>All Sources of Household Income** (599 Responses)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Assistance</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Length of Time Households Have Been Homeless (599 Responses)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 1 year*</td>
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<tr>
<th>Episodes of Homelessness in Past 3 Years (599 Responses)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 4 episodes of homelessness in 3 years</td>
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</table>

*No response: 132 or 28%
**No response: 155 or 33%
Homelessness in Thurston County public schools shows a **153.52% increase** since 2006.

Statewide, the number of homeless students has increased by **74%**

Because pre-school aged children are not captured in the School Census, experts estimate that **42%** of the total homeless

**Homeless Students:** A second parallel census is conducted by Thurston County’s school districts during the school year preceding the County PIT Homeless Census. The school count shows the number of homeless students, K-12, as required by the McKinney-Vento Act. The student count includes a broader definition of homelessness than that used in the PIT, including students living “doubled up”.

In Washington State, the graph shows the total for the school year in which the students were

**Undercounted Pre-schoolers:** According to the National Center on Family Homelessness, school age children are only **58%** of the larger total number of homeless children, ages 0-18. This means that the total number of homeless school children, reported by OSPI, captures only slightly more than half the total number of homeless children.

**# School age homeless children X 100 = total # of homeless children**

58

That would make Thurston County’s **total homeless children 2,859** not 1,658 and Washington State’s total homeless children **56,024**.
**THURSTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS DATA**

*Snapshot of family poverty and homelessness*

**Federal poverty level annual income:** $19,090

**Reduced meals:** 185% of federal level, or $35,317 annually

**Free meals:** 130% of federal level, or $24,817

**North Thurston District:** 43% of students in the FR lunch program

**Rochester School District:** 54% of students in the FR lunch program

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**Countywide Family Poverty Data:** Poverty is a strong indicator for being at risk of homelessness for families with children, and the Free and Reduced lunch program serves as an index of poverty for families with children in each school district.

This data, provided by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) provides a useful perspective on how Thurston County schools are doing. Unfortunately, across the board, all eight districts show a deepening of poverty among families in public schools.

The **urban school districts** have the highest concentration of students, with 30,215 or 74% of the population compared to 10,577 or 26% of students in the rural school districts. However, rural school districts have a significantly higher level of poverty documented by the 4883 or 46% of all rural students enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program. In the urban districts, there were 10,982 or 36% of all students enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program.
In 2015, Families with Children were 34% of the total homeless population.

Youth under the age of 18 are 21% of the total homeless counted.

Those people

Total Homelessness: There are 476 individuals in Thurston County who meet the HUD criteria for homelessness, which includes people living in transitional housing programs, emergency shelter, or unsheltered. The state however also includes people leaving medical facilities, exiting jail, or temporarily living with friends and family. That total is 621 people.
There are currently 326 year round beds, (Shelter & transitional housing) with 66 more available in cold weather.

**Total Cold Weather Capacity: 392**

**Total Homeless: 476**

The cold weather capacity could hold 82% of the homeless during winter and only 68% of the homeless in warmer months.
In order to evaluate the current shelter system, the 2015 report includes a “cost benefit analysis” of selected shelter resources to provide a side by side comparison of costs of shelter. The following chart presents a simple comparison of programs, citing the staff structure, type of facility, along with the operational costs per year and number of clients accommodated.

The tiers present the range of costs of providing shelter. Some cost variables include the difference between programs with volunteers vs. professional staff, and the differences in utilizing a converted residential structure vs. a dedicated multi-story facility. One outlier tier is the high cost of running a homeless youth shelter (subject to stringent operating regulations). However, the greatest difference is between all homeless shelters and the county jail, which is included given the high number of homeless inmates included in the expanded homeless census numbers—a total of 156 people who will be released to homelessness when they leave incarceration.

Costs are not the only factor to consider in the value of shelter. Volunteer-staffed shelters typically cost less for professionally-staffed shelters. Volunteers typically do not have the same capacity as trained and credentialed professional case managers and service providers. While the bed night costs are much cheaper, the outcomes may not be as positive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shelter or Service Agency</th>
<th>Annual Program Budget</th>
<th>Total Available Capacity</th>
<th>Cost per day or Service Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cold Weather Shelter - St. Michaels (Seasonal)</td>
<td>$6,395</td>
<td>12 Bed Capacity 82 Bednights/Season</td>
<td>$6.50 per Bednight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army (Professionally staffed, single-story facility)</td>
<td>$323,011</td>
<td>58 Bed Capacity Single Adults 21,170 Bednights/Year</td>
<td>$15.26 per Bednight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of the Woods (Professionally coordinated, volunteer staffed, housed at Unitarian Church)</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
<td>12 Bed Capacity 4,380 Bednights/Year</td>
<td>$17.12 per Bednight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drexel House - CCS (Professionally staffed, multi-story facility)</td>
<td>$242,291</td>
<td>16 Bed Capacity Single Men 5,840 Bednights/Year</td>
<td>$41.49 per Bednight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Young Adult Shelter - CYS (Professionally staffed, operated inside existing facility, secured access)</td>
<td>$190,000</td>
<td>10 Bed Capacity Transition-age youth, 18-22 3,650 Bednights/year</td>
<td>$52.05 per Bednight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SafePlace (Staffed by professionals and volunteers, multi-story facility, medium security)</td>
<td>$661,643</td>
<td>28 Bed Capacity Domestic Violence Victims 10,220 Bednights/Year</td>
<td>$64.742 per Bednight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurston County Jail** (Professionally staffed, high security lock-up)</td>
<td>$10,465,330 (operations) $1,499,478 (pro-rated annual facility costs)</td>
<td>352 Bed Capacity</td>
<td>$92 per Bednight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haven House - CYS (Professionally staffed, converted residence, secured populations, low security)</td>
<td>$757,296</td>
<td>10 Bed Capacity Youth 17 &amp; Under 3,650 Bednights/Year</td>
<td>$207.48 per Bednight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chart presents a comparison of shelter and social service costs, the number of people served and the cost per service unit. **Cost of incarceration quoted by Thurston County Drug Court and corroborated by Sherry Grand, intern researcher.
The Point in Time Homeless Census provides useful data on who is homeless and why. For planning purposes, public officials examine homeless needs and calculate what homeless resources are necessary to accommodate those needs. However, not all documented homeless needs translate directly into successful projects and programs because of other criteria in the funding allocation process, including the organizational capacity of applicants, project readiness, etc..

The following chart takes raw needs from 2015 PIT Homeless Census data and extrapolates raw costs per year for providing shelter and/or housing. Calculations below are based on general assumptions about the particular demographics and the costs for shelter and housing on the preceding page.

**Please note:** not all people reporting mental illness require hospitalization, not all unsheltered people consent to entering shelter, etc... Costs in the “Total Annual Costs” column present a general framework of the costs of shelter and housing, however they do not reflect agency capacities or annual budgets. And are not to be confused with actual reports of agency budgets or capacities.

### Shelter & Housing Cost Calculator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>#*</th>
<th>Cost per night / year / individual**</th>
<th>Total Annual Costs***</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chronically Homeless</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>$7/ $2,555 – Shelter</td>
<td>$227,395</td>
<td>St. Michael’s Faith based shelter – no services. 12 bed capacity.****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$42/$15,330 – Shelter</td>
<td>$1,364,370</td>
<td>Drexel House Shelter plus professional case management, options to move on to transitional housing. 16 bed capacity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence Survivors</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>$65/$23,725 – Domestic Violence Shelter</td>
<td>$2,633,475</td>
<td>Safeplace DV shelter plus case management, legal advocacy and security. 28 bed capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaccompanied Youth</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>$207 / $75,555 – Haven House</td>
<td>$679,995</td>
<td>Haven House Court or parent placed shelter, case management and security 10 bed capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsheltered</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>$13 / $4,745 – Shared housing</td>
<td>$773,435</td>
<td>SideWalk Referrals for shared housing (room rental with other tenants – presumes social compatibility)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$34 / $12,410 – Apartment</td>
<td>$3,263,830</td>
<td>SideWalk Referrals for independent rental housing with utility costs – not shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentally Ill</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>$2,500 / $912,500 – Hospitalization</td>
<td>$120,450,000</td>
<td>St. Peter’s in-patient mental health care cost metric (Homeless patients typically kept only short periods of time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless Inmates****</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>$92 / $33,580 – Jail</td>
<td>$3,358,000</td>
<td>Thurston County Jail Costs of incarcerating homeless people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Number of people by demographic reported in 2015 Thurston County PIT Homeless Census

**Costs are presented for “bed nights” per night / per year per individual

***Annual costs are based on multiplying bed night costs per person per year, not based on actual agency budgets and do not take into account indirect agency costs.

****Please note: St. Michael’s shelter can only operate at this low cost with volunteers, increased number of beds would require professional staff and significant cost increases.

***** PLEASE NOTE: Thurston County Jail did not count inmates in 2015 who will be released to homelessness, however there has been a steady average of 100 inmates who met this definition
APPENDIX C - GLOSSARY OF HOUSING & HOMELESS PROGRAM TERMS

[Adapted from Pierce County Affordable Housing Consortium website (affordablehousingconsortium.org), which was adapted from HDC, Seattle]

Affordable Housing
Housing should cost no more than 30% of your total income, including utilities. Affordable rental housing usually has a maximum income limit of 60% of median income. In Thurston County, this equates to an annual income of $29,580 for one person or $38,040 for three persons. Homeownership programs generally allow up to 80% of median or $39,400 for one person or $50,700 for a three-person household.

Chronically Homeless
Chronically homeless people are defined as "an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who have either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.

CHG
Consolidated Homeless Grant Program, state funding administered by the County to support a variety of activities, including: operation of homeless shelter and transitional housing units, rental assistance, data collection and reporting.

ESG
Emergency Shelter Grant Program, federal funding administered by the County for homeless prevention assistance to households who would otherwise become homeless and to provide assistance to rapidly re-house persons who are experiencing homelessness. The funds are intended to target individuals and families who would be homeless but for this assistance.

HEN
Housing and Essential Needs Grants Program, state funding administered by the County that are limited to providing rental assistance, utility assistance and essential needs for medical service recipients whose eligibility is determined by the State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

HUD
Abbreviation for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

HOME Consortium
The HOME Consortium is the Thurston County inter-jurisdictional body that governs the use of federal HOME funds and the two state funded programs called the Homeless Housing Program and the Affordable Housing Program. This eight member body is composed of one appointed representative from each jurisdiction in Thurston County, including Bucoda, Lacey, Olympia, Rainier, Tenino, Tumwater, Yelm and Thurston County.

HOME Citizens Advisory Committee
The HOME Citizens Advisory Committee is a committee established by the HOME Consortium composed of appointed members who represent service providers, non-profit housing developers, private sector housing industry, faith-based communities, homeless people and other stakeholders in local homeless and affordable housing policy and funding issues.

Homeless
The federal definition of homelessness, which comes from United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD defines 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 supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill).

An institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
Newly created Thurston County one-year position funded to provide strategic coordination to the countywide network of service, shelter, and housing providers. Key goals for the Homeless Coordinator include; 1) Assessment of the Current System, 2) Ten-Year Plan Update, 3) Enhanced Data Management, and, 4) Implementation of a Revised Ten-Year Plan

Housing authorities are public corporations with boards appointed by the local government. Their mission is to provide affordable housing to low- and moderate-income people. In addition to public housing, housing authorities also provide other types of subsidized housing such as the federal HUD-subsidized Section 8 program.

Housing First is a recent innovation in human service programs and social policy in responding to homelessness. It is an alternative to the a system of emergency shelter/transitional housing progressions known as the Continuum of Care, whereby each level moves them closer to "independent housing" (for example: from the streets to a public shelter, and from a public shelter to a transitional housing program, and from there to their own apartment in the community) Housing First moves the homeless individual or household immediately from the streets or homeless shelters into their own apartments.

The Thurston County Housing Task Force is an ad hoc association formed in 1988 to address issues of affordable housing and homelessness in Thurston County. For many years this body managed the “Continuum of Care” for Thurston County. It was originally composed of service providers, advocates, government housing program staff and elected officials and served as an networking and advocacy group to promote local housing policy. In recent years it has become a coalition of homeless shelter, housing and service providers who meet monthly to network homeless services and address current issues.

Income limits for households to qualify for subsidized housing opportunities are based on the Area Median Income (AMI) for a family of four. In Thurston County the 2010 AMI is $68,100. Specific household sizes are used to determine eligibility for each household.

Low-income: 80% or less of AMI = $56,300 for household of 4
Very-low-income: 50% or less of AMI = $35,200 for household of 4
Extremely-low-income: 30% or less of AMI = $21,100 for household of 4

Government authorized tax credits issued to both for-profit and nonprofit-developed rental properties to develop affordable housing. The Washington State Housing Finance Commission allocates these credits to developers to build or fix up low-income housing. Large corporations, institutions, pension funds, and insurance companies invest in the housing as a method to gain the tax credits and reduce their income tax obligations. These apartments must serve residents below 60% of median income and must accept Section 8 vouchers.

The prevailing monthly cost for rental housing, also called “street rents”. It is set by the landlord without restrictions.

This is a statistical number set at the level where half of all households have income above it and half below it. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Regional Economist calculates and publishes this median income data annually in the Federal Register. See the Washington State Median Income and Income Limit figures for 2009-2010, at

http://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il/il2009/st.odb
### Mixed-Income Housing
A multi-family housing property that contains both market-rate units and subsidized units for low income residents.

### Nonprofit Housing
Nonprofit housing is developed by nonprofit corporations with a community board of directors and mission. Most housing developed by nonprofit developers is affordable with rents or prices below market-rate. Income generated from the housing is put back into the mission of the organization, rather than being distributed to stockholders or individual investors.

### Nonprofit Housing Developer
A nonprofit organization with a mission that involves the creation, preservation, renovation, operation or maintenance of affordable housing.

### Overflow Shelters
Overflow shelters are informal emergency shelters operated by non-profit organizations or faith communities inside their facilities to accommodate the “overflow” of homeless people who are turned away from traditional emergency shelters. Typically, overflow shelters rotate on a cyclical basis in order to be compliant with local zoning and building codes. Staffing is typically offered by trained volunteers.

### Permanent Housing
Rental apartments or ownership homes that provide individuals and families with a fixed street address and residence.

### Privately Developed or For-Profit Housing
This housing rents or sells at market-rate and is developed and owned by for-profit individuals, partnerships, or corporations. Most housing in Thurston County is privately developed.

### Project-Based Section 8 Housing
A federal HUD program initially based on 20-year commitments of rent subsidy to developers of privately owned rental housing stock in the community to encourage them to build affordable housing.

Many Section 8 contracts have expired or will expire soon, and the property owners must now decide whether to renew their contract or leave the program ("opt out"). Most of these contracts are now renewed on a one-year basis. Projects with high risk of opting out typically have rents set by the Section 8 contract below the prevailing market rents for comparable units. Owners thus have an incentive to leave the program and convert their property to private market rentals.

### Public Housing
Public housing is housing owned and run by a local housing authority under the oldest federal housing program—the Housing Act of 1937. To be eligible to live in public housing, you must be low income and meet certain other requirements. In most cases, rent including utilities can comprise no more than 30% of your income.

### Rapid Re-housing
Rapid Re-housing is a new housing program model is based on the "housing first" approach. Rapid Re-housing differs from other housing models by having an immediate and primary focus on helping families access and sustain permanent housing as quickly as possible. Rapid Re-housing is funded by a new HUD initiative called “Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)”.

### Section 8 Vouchers
This federal HUD program that is administered by the local Housing Authority of Thurston County. Eligible tenants receive vouchers they can use to help them pay for apartments in the private market. Vouchers pay that portion of the low income tenants rent that is above 30% of their monthly income.
Shelters
Also called emergency shelters, provides temporary overnight living accommodations for homeless people. Shelters are typically dedicated to specific populations, i.e. single males, families or domestic violence victims. Shelters are operated by both non-profit organizations or faith communities, with each shelter being administered under a unique set of rules. Generally, shelter guests must leave the facility during the day.

SRO
Single room occupancy units. The traditional SRO unit is a single room, usually less than 100 square feet, designed to accommodate one person. Amenities such as a bathroom, kitchen or common areas are located outside the unit and are shared with other residents. Many SROs can be found in renovated hotels. SRO housing serves a variety of people by providing three types of settings: 1) Emergency housing for homeless people, including the elderly. Occupancy is usually on a nightly or weekly basis. 2) Transitional housing for previously homeless or marginally housed persons, including older people, who are progressing to permanent housing. 3) Permanent housing for older people who will move to this setting and often live here until their death or until their increasing frailty forces them to move to a more supportive setting.

Subsidized Housing
A generic term covering all federal, state or local government programs that reduce the cost of housing for low- and moderate-income residents. Housing can be subsidized in numerous ways—giving tenants a rent voucher, helping homebuyers with down payment assistance, reducing the interest on a mortgage, providing deferred loans to help developers acquire and develop property, giving tax credits to encourage investment in low- and moderate-income housing, authorizing tax-exempt bond authority to finance the housing, providing ongoing assistance to reduce the operating costs of housing, and others.

Supportive Housing
Combines affordable housing with individualized health, counseling and employment services for persons with mental illness, chemical dependency, chronic health problems, or other challenges. Generally it is transitional housing, but it can be permanent housing in cases such as a group home for persons with mental illness or developmental disabilities. Supportive housing is a solution to homelessness because it addresses its root causes by providing a proven, effective means of re-integrating families and individuals into the community by addressing their basic needs for housing and on-going support.

Transitional Housing
This housing provides stability for residents for a limited time period, usually two weeks to 24 months, to allow them to recover from a crisis such as homelessness or domestic violence before transitioning into permanent housing. Transitional housing often offers supportive services, which enable a person to transition to an independent living situation.

Tent City
“Tent City” is a newly minted term for a long standing practice where homeless people develop informal communities composed of tents and other temporary structures. During the Great Depression, these communities where derisively termed, “Hoovervilles” after then President Hoover in a negative reference to the failed federal efforts to revive the economy.

Present day tent cities are often created by homeless people for needed shelter on public or under-utilized lands. Sometimes tent cities are created by homeless advocates as a form of protest. In recent years, local governments have struggled to find ways to balance regulatory compliance with the need for shelter and community provided by Tent Cities.
The 2015 Thurston County Homeless Census Report is the product of the annual “Point in Time Count of Homeless Persons” coordinated statewide by the Washington State Department of Commerce.

The results of the Thurston County Homeless Census are included along with the data from all other Washington Counties on the Department of Commerce website located at:

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

Questions, comments or to request a digital copy of this report please contact:

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