

2018 Homeless Census Glossary

[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.
- Continuum of Care** The Continuum of Care (CoC) Program is designed to promote communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, and State and local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness; promote access to and effect utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
- Coordinated Entry System (CES)** Coordinated entry is process required by State and Federal funders through which people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness can access the crisis response system in a streamlined way, have their strengths and needs quickly assessed, and quickly connect to appropriate, tailored housing and mainstream services within the community or designated region. Standardized assessment tools and practices used within local coordinated assessment processes take into account the unique needs of children and their families as well as youth. When possible, the assessment provides the ability for households to gain access to the best options to address their needs, incorporating participants' choice, rather than being evaluated for a single program within the system. The most intensive interventions are prioritized for those with the highest needs.
- 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).
HMIS	Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is the Washington State data system managed by the State Department of Commerce and is used by homeless and housing services providers to collect and manage data gathered during the course of providing housing assistance to people experiencing homelessness. HMIS is used to manage all PIT Homeless Census data for counties in the Balance of State who are not managing their own data with independent data systems.
HUD	Abbreviation for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
Harm Reduction	Harm Reduction is a service model that refers to policies, programs and practices that aim to reduce the harms associated with the use of drugs or other destructive and self-harming behavior in people unable or unwilling to stop. The defining features are the focus on the prevention of harmful behavior, rather than on the prevention of drug use itself or other harmful behaviors, and the focus on people who continue to use drugs or engage in harmful behavior.
High Barrier Shelter	High-Barrier shelter or High Barrier Entry refers to a service model that operates with rules dictating behavior standards on drugs or alcohol, separates residents by gender or other behavioral issues.
HOME Consortium	The Thurston County HOME Consortium was an 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. PLEASE NOTE: The Thurston County HOME Consortium is now defunct, although HUD funded program regulations refer to this body.
Housing Action Team of Thurston Thrives	The Housing Action Team (HAT) is one of eight action teams within Thurston with the goal to establish and implement community health improvement targets related to affordable housing and homelessness. The HAT works together to achieve goals on the “Housing for Health Strategy Map” in three key areas: Affordable Housing/New Construction; Homeless and Crisis Response (aka Homeless Housing Hub); and, Green and Healthy Homes/Safe and Affordable Rentals. This group combines efforts of HOME Consortium (former), Home Citizens Advisory Committee (former), Housing Task Force (former), Continuum of Care, Housing Pipeline, Hazardous Weather Task Force, and Incentivized Housing and the Coordinated Entry group.

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.

**Homeless
Coordinator**

Local governments now have staff or consultant positions charged with coordinating their respective homeless response plans. Key goals for Homeless Coordination include; 1) Assessment of the current system of services, shelter and housing resources, 2) Homeless Housing Plan Updates and Implementation, 3) Enhanced Data Management; and, 4) Public education. City of Olympia has hired a Homeless Response Coordinator, Thurston County is in the process of hiring their third Homeless Coordinator, and City of Tumwater has retained a consultant to provide homeless coordination.

**Homeless
Housing Hub**

The Homeless Housing Hub (HHH) is one of three committees of the Thurston Thrives Housing Action Team . The HHH is charged with hosting the Continuum of Care planning; drafting the 5-Year Homeless Housing Plan; continual improvement of the Coordinated Entry System; Continual improvement of the HMIS data collection system and other coordination of homeless housing and services; and, alignment between local, state and federal goals to end homelessness.

Housing Authority

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

Housing First is an approach to quickly and successfully connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment or service participation requirements. Supportive services are offered to maximize housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness as opposed to addressing predetermined treatment goals prior to permanent housing entry. 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.

Housing Task Force ***PLEASE NOTE: Now defunct*** The Thurston County Housing Task Force was 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 a 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 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 = \$61,050 for household of 4
Very-low-income: 50% or less of AMI = \$38,150 for household of 4
Extremely-low-income: 30% or less of AMI = \$24,100 for household of 4

Low Barrier Shelter Low-barrier shelter is a service model that offers safe housing where a minimum number of expectations are placed on people who wish to stay there, allowing more people access to shelter and services. Specific definitions of how “low” those barriers are vary between providers, but include non-segregation by gender, no requirement for sobriety, in and out privileges, etc.

Low Income Housing Tax Credit 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.

Market Rate Rent The prevailing monthly cost for rental housing based on some combination of what the rental market will bear and 30% of the Average Median Income (AMI). Sometimes called “street rents”, market rent rates are set by landlords without government restrictions unless public subsidies require a defined level or period of affordability.

Median Income 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 2017 at
https://www.huduser.gov/portal/elist/2018-apr_10.html

**Mixed-Income
Housing**

A multi-family housing property that contains both market-rate units for people with incomes at or above the median family income along with subsidized units for lower income residents.

Nonprofit Housing

Non-profit 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 not-for profit 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 along with other community volunteers.

Permanent Housing

Rental apartments or ownership homes that provide individuals and families with a fixed street address and residence. While leases may have rental term limits set by the rental property owner, those limits are not tied to a rental assistance program.

**Permanent
Supportive Housing**

Rental apartments or single family homes that provide individuals and families with a fixed street address and residence along with a set of supportive services and case management. Permanent Supportive (or Supported) Housing (PSH) combines rental or housing assistance with individualized, flexible and voluntary support services for people with high needs related to physical or mental health, developmental disabilities or substance use.

**People Experiencing
Homelessness**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines people experiencing homelessness as “an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; as well an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations, 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.”

**Privately Developed
or For-Profit Housing**

Housing rents or sells at market-rate and is developed and owned by for-profit individuals, partnerships, or corporations. Also called “Market-Rate Housing”, this housing is typically affordable to people at or above the median family income.

**Project-Based
Section 8 Housing**

A federal HUD program that provides site-based rental subsidies, 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 housing strategy based on the "housing first" philosophy of “rapidly” providing housing resources to people who are newly homeless or on the verge of homelessness. 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 HUD initiative called “Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)”.

Rapid re-housing is a solution to homelessness designed to help individuals and families to quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing. It is offered without preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety) and the resources and services provided are typically tailored to the unique needs of the household.

Encampment

Open spaces where one or more individuals experiencing homelessness have set up unsanctioned camping arrangements along with other forms of makeshift sleeping and living areas. These areas are often unsafe and unsanitary.

PATH Team

Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH), is a federally funded grant program that provides outreach and assistance to individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have serious mental illnesses.

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.
Shared Housing	A housing intervention that offers individuals and families innovative and affordable solutions to prevent homelessness and foster independence through home sharing and transitional housing programs that include case management services and connections to vital community resources.
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	Also referred to as “Permanent Supportive Housing”, this 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.

Trauma Informed Care Trauma Informed Care is a service model that emphasizes understanding, compassion and responding to the effects of all types of trauma experienced by service clients. By recognizing the intersectionality of multiple traumatic events in the lives of homeless people, service providers can avoid re-traumatizing clients who need support and individually-conscious care.

Tent City A term used to describe a variety of temporary outdoor shelter facilities that often use tents. Authorized and unauthorized tent cities, created by and for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, are now found across the country.

“Tent City” is a 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 were 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

Vulnerability Index A Vulnerability Index is an analytic tool to measure of the exposure of a population to defined hazards and to develop a prioritization of care based on the score(s). Typically, the index is a composite of multiple quantitative indicators that via some formula, delivers a single numerical result which can then be used to compare the levels of need. The use of vulnerability indexes originated in the United Nations Environmental Program. The term and methodology was then adapted by Dr. James O’Connell of Boston Healthcare for use in assessing the needs of homeless people. HUD requires funding recipients to prioritize assistance the most vulnerable homeless people at greatest risk of death or the need for shelter and community provided by Tent Cities.