



PIERCE COUNTY HOMELESS FAMILIES PLAN

OVERALL SYSTEM LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

Updated: April 26, 2010

PIERCE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Pat McCarthy

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dave Bugher, Assistant Manager of Development Services, City of Lakewood

Dave Stewart, Director, Pierce County Human Services

Rev. David Alger, Faith Community Member

Helen Myrick, Vice President - Community Impact, United Way of Pierce County

John Briehl, Director - Human Services and Human Rights, City of Tacoma

Ken Ristine, Senior Program Officer, Ben B. Cheney Foundation

Keri Rooney, Executive Director, Pierce County Executive's Office

Linda Nguyen, Chief Executive Officer, Work Force Central

Michael Mirra, Executive Director, Tacoma Housing Authority

Dr. Renee Huston, Associate Professor, University of Puget Sound Department of Communication Studies

Ron Murphy, Casey Family Programs

Rose Lincoln Hamilton, President and Chief Executive Officer, The Greater Tacoma Community Foundation

Dr. Stephen Woolworth, Associate Dean, Pacific Lutheran University

Tammy Williams, Tacoma Public Schools

Tom Hilyard, Director, Pierce County Community Services

Troy Christensen, Clinical Coordinator II, Pierce County Human Services

PARTNERS

Kollin Minn, Program Officer, Pacific Northwest, Gates Foundation

Charlie Corrigan, Building Changes

Emily Nolan, Washington Families Fund Manager, Building Changes

Mark Putnam, Consulting Services Manager, Building Changes

Ranita Jahn, Building Changes

CONSULTANT/FACILITATOR

John Howell, Cedar River Group

STAFF MEMBERS

Gary Aden, Program Manager I, Pierce County Community Services

Ursula Kehaulani, Community Services Planner II, Pierce County Community Services

Jeff Rodgers, Community Services Planner II, Pierce County Community Services

Rae Anne Giron, Community Services Planner II, Pierce County Community Services

Rob Allen, Economic Development Specialist, Pierce County Economic Development

Lynda Buchanan, Office Assistant II, Pierce County Community Services

WORK GROUP MEMBERS

Rapid Rehousing & Prevention Work Group

Ken Ristine (Chair), Cheney Foundation

Charlie Corrigan, Building Changes

Stella Jones, Shared Housing Services

Lisa Conklin, Shared Housing Services

Karin White-Tautfest, YWCA

Mar Corpuz, Tacoma Rescue Mission

Frank Walton, Salvation Army

Debbie Bergthold, City of Tacoma

Charlie Gray, Pierce County Housing Authority

Ron Murphy, Casey Family Programs

Jeannie Darneille, Korean Women's Association

Ursula Kehaulani, Pierce County Community Services

Tom Hilyard, Pierce County Community Services

Troy Christensen, Pierce County Human Services

Coordinated Entry and Tailored Services Work Group

Renee Houston (Chair), University of Puget Sound

Chris Morton, Associated Ministries

Charlie Corrigan, Building Changes

Cindy McNabb, Nativity House

Nola Renz, Helping Hand House

Tamie Williams, Tacoma School District

Janne Hutchins, Lakewood Area Shelter Association

Roberta Marsh, South Sound Outreach

Mary Syslo-Seel, Tacoma Housing Authority

Debbie Bergthold, City of Tacoma

Rose Stidham, Metropolitan Development Council

Ursula Kehaulani, Pierce County Community Services

Tom Hilyard, Pierce County Community Services

Troy Christensen, Pierce County Human Services

Economic Opportunities Work Group

Helen Myrick (Chair), United Way

LorieAnn Larson, Pioneer Human Services

Dani Small, Tacoma Goodwill

Debi La Fleur, Washington Womens Employment and Education

Mark Putnam, Building Changes

Cristeen Crouchet, Clover Park Technical College

Susan Paredes, Tacoma Public Schools

Judy Colarusso, Tacoma Community College

Diane Powers, City of Tacoma

Barbara Gorzinski, Associated Ministries

Vicky McLaurin, Department of Social and Health Services

Ursula Kehaulani, Pierce County Community Services

Tom Hilyard, Pierce County Community Services

Troy Christensen, Pierce County Human Services

Data Work Group

Ursula Kehaulani, Pierce County Community Services

Tom Hilyard, Pierce County Community Services

Troy Christensen, Pierce County Human Services

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Executive Summary

The Washington Families Fund (managed by Building Changes), with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other private sector funders, is seeking to expand its work in targeted counties in Washington in order to test emerging new concepts and strategies that have proven effective in reducing family homelessness in a number of communities across the United States.

To this end, the Foundation and Building Changes have asked Pierce, King and Snohomish Counties to develop a Plan to End Family Homelessness with the ultimate goal for each county to identify a series of systems change interventions related to five strategies the Foundation hypothesizes will have the greatest impact. These key concepts/strategies include prevention, coordinated entry, rapid re-housing, tailored programs and economic opportunities.

Hundreds of families are affected by homelessness in Pierce County at any given time, and many more are at serious risk of homelessness. Exactly how many is difficult to say. There are multiple methods by which this phenomenon is measured and none of them are without their pitfalls. As a result this landscape report recommends significant enhancements to the way in which data is gathered and reported on families experiencing and at-risk of homelessness.

While the total number of families (and individuals represented in families) continues to rise in Pierce County, the number of families unsheltered remains relatively low (10 families identified during the one-day survey in 2009). The majority are in emergency shelters, time-limited transitional housing, motels, and staying with family/friends.

The housing and services providers who provide services to families affected by homelessness were surveyed as part of this process. The housing inventory, services available, and agency descriptions are detailed in this report.

The five strategy areas were compared against current resources being used within the system, and gaps were identified in each of the five areas.

Current resources being used to support these families in terms of federal, state, local, and philanthropic investments are detailed along with their current use, and the flexibility allowed to shift that funding to support work in the five strategy areas.

Finally detail on the outcomes of one of the major sources of funding for housing and services is reported to give a sense of where improvements can be made in the system with the investment in the strategies.

This landscape report will be followed by two other planning phases— a strategy development phase, and an implementation planning phase.

County Family Homelessness Planning Process Overview

The Family Homelessness Planning efforts being conducted in Pierce, King and Snohomish Counties are part of an expanding set of investments by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in the work of ending family homelessness in Washington State. In addition to the County Plans, the Foundation will also be investing in 1) Growing the role of Building Changes to assume a leadership position as the administrator of the expanding activities of the Washington Families Fund; 2) Convening key stakeholders in all three target counties to identify both existing and new opportunities for increased collaboration and coordination with activities that are already underway, (e.g., the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness); 3) Expanding advocacy activities related to the needs of homeless families; and 4) Creating a framework for measuring and evaluating the impact of this work.

The Plans are designed to be the first step in a long term relationship between the Counties, Building Changes, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Following the guidelines of the County Family Homelessness Plan initiative, this project will contain three distinct phases of work:

1. A Landscape Assessment Phase that contains a detailed cross-departmental analysis of the county's existing resources and systems for addressing the needs of homeless families;
2. A Strategy Development Phase that proposes specific strategies for improving county systems with particular emphasis on five topic areas (coordinated entry, tailored services, early intervention and prevention, rapid re-housing, and economic opportunities); and
3. An Implementation Planning Phase that describes specific timelines, responsibilities, and desired outcomes for implementing the strategies identified in Phase 2.

Each phase of this planning effort is slated to take 3 to 6 months to complete and is in line with the requirements of the initiative to be consumer-centered, provider-informed and funder-driven.

The initial task is to gather all evidence available on the homeless family population and the network of providers that support them. Once we have a clear picture of our community we will be in a position to develop a "gap analysis" that flags those places and spaces in the continuum of care where families are being underserved or not served at all by the system.

The questions to be answered through the examination of our current systems include:

1. How many homeless and high risk families do we have in our county? How has this been trending over time? What do we know about this population in terms of their demographic characteristics, location, and the prevalence of specific barriers to housing (e.g., substance abuse), etc.?
2. What does the current network of housing and service providers for homeless/high risk families look like? What are the locations, capabilities, capacity, and utilization of different providers in the network?
3. What are the key gaps in meeting the needs of homeless/high risk families? Where are families most likely to fall through the cracks in the system?
4. What are the current resources being used to support these families in terms of federal, state, and local government spending as well as that provided by private philanthropy?

The initial element of the plan, the Landscape Assessment Phase, is outlined in the following pages.

Data Sources

HMIS

Homeless Management Information System: a federal and state required data base containing information about homeless individuals and families in Pierce County. All emergency, transitional, and permanent housing programs receiving government funding are required to enter this data into the HMIS.

ONE NIGHT SURVEY

An annual survey or census of homeless individuals and families conducted during a single night in January of each year in response to federal and state rules and regulations. It is used to identify and strengthen the planning process to meet the housing and supportive services needs of those experiencing, and at-risk of, homelessness.

OSPI

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, by federal requirement of the McKinney-Vent Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act of 2001, requires all school districts in the State of Washington to report contacts with students experiencing or at serious risk of homelessness. The statutes for this program are designed to ensure all homeless children and youth have equal access to public school education by removing barriers to enrollment, attendance, and academic achievement.

Homeless Definitions

HOMELESS DEFINITIONS

Federal HUD Definition of "homeless" or "homeless individual or homeless person" includes-

- any individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and
- any 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.

McKinney-Vento homelessness refers to children and youth and means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); and includes

- children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
- children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses 1 through 3.

The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services defines homelessness as:

- a person lacking a fixed and regular nighttime residence or a person whose primary nighttime residence is a supervised shelter, halfway house, temporary residence with others, or place not ordinarily used as sleeping accommodations for humans.

Those considered at-risk of homelessness are generally not counted in any of the above definitions. This term is often used to describe individuals or families who are facing eviction, or cannot pay their utilities and are at risk of having their utilities cut off. This category also includes individuals or families who are doubled-up living with another household.

HOMELESS HOUSING DEFINITIONS

Prevention: Funding or services intended to help individuals or families avoid becoming homeless.

Emergency Shelter: This designation is generally assigned to beds or units temporarily housing individuals and/or families. The length of stay ranges from a single night to 90 days.

Transitional Housing: This designation is generally assigned to beds or units temporarily housing individuals and/or families. The length of stay generally ranges from 91 days to 24 months. Transitional housing often has more services associated with it than emergency shelter.

Permanent Housing: Any housing where there is no expectation that the individual or family will move on, or if there is an expectation there is no arbitrary expected length of stay. Generally permanent housing comes with a landlord-tenant lease and no expectation the individual or family will be involved in any particular services.

Permanent Supportive Housing: Similar to permanent housing, with supportive services available to the tenants. This designation is often used for people with significant disabilities who may need long-term support.

Part 1 - Overall System Landscape

HOMELESS FAMILIES

For the purpose of this study, homeless families are considered households with children including single or partnered-pregnant-females who meet the federal HUD definition of homeless.

Accurate estimates of those who are at risk of homelessness is far more challenging. Our community has not determined an accurate method of counting those who are “doubled up” (living with friends or family) in a non-permanent or unstable housing situation, facing foreclosure or eviction or are at risk due to CPS involvement.

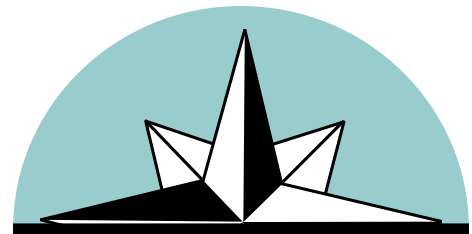
Since 1996, Pierce County has been conducting an annual “Homeless Count, Point in Time (PIT) Survey” in order to inform our community about the nature and extent of homelessness in the County (at times referred to as a count, survey or census). Each county in the State of Washington conducts a statewide survey within a single night in January of each year. These efforts do not account for every person or household who experiences homelessness. Instead, they are characterized as a “snapshot” of who is homeless in our community in any given 24-hour period.

The State has recently, in response to the Ending Homelessness Act, began reporting annually on the numbers of homeless individuals or families in each county in 2007 based on numbers provided by the PIT Survey. The Washington State Department of Commerce is the responsible state agency for this data collection. The reports are provided to the legislature on an annual basis to inform them of the numbers of homeless in our communities and our progress in reducing and ultimately ending homelessness.

These same numbers for each county and the state are reported to HUD through the Continuum of Care (CoC) application cycle. These numbers are then compiled at a national level into the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) which is used to inform congress on the number of homeless individuals and families and their characteristics across the nation.

Overall, those who are identified as homeless in Pierce County represent .2% of the total population. This includes both individuals and families who are in emergency shelters, transitional housing and those living on the streets of our communities. It does not include those served for subsidized in permanent or permanent supportive housing.†

When specifically looking at families (households), Pierce County has approximately 260,800 households and 398 of them were re-



Typical Homeless Family in Pierce County

“I was living up in Bellingham and then I left a relationship, and at that point I was homeless because I wasn’t employable. So we came down here and we stayed from house to house to house, and that was really hard.”

-Focus Group Participant

ported as homeless in the 2009 survey. Another way to describe this projection is out of every 655 households in the county, one is homeless on any given day.

In the January, 2009 Point in Time (PIT) homeless survey, 398 families, totaling 1335 individuals were identified as homeless, of those 338 families (85%) resided in transitional housing, 50 families (13%) were identified in emergency shelters, and about 10 families (3%) of families were identified as being without shelter (such as living in automobiles, encampments, under bridges, on the street, etc.). Those in emergency and transitional housing were much easier to count as a finite population on that day. Unsheltered, however, is a sample of the total population experiencing no shelter on that day.

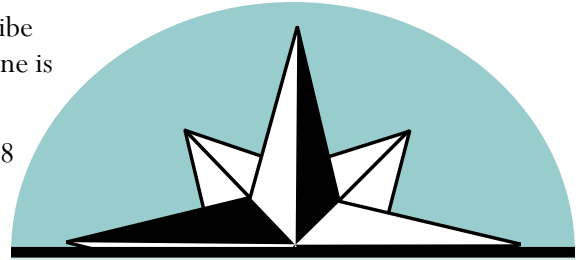
Children, between the ages of 0-18, living with their parent (s), accounted for 31% (644) of the total census, an increase of 1% from 2008. Only 4 youth, under the age of 18, were identified as unaccompanied, and on the street at the time of the survey. The research occurring during this landscape assessment phase, however, has revealed that most homeless families and youth are not on the street for the point-in-time counts.

Accurate tracking of the families who have been homeless or have a history of unstable housing is not an area that Pierce County has been collecting data on other than the information available through the PIT counts. Families are seldom tracked once they leave an agency's program or shelter program.

In Pierce County, the demographic profile of our homeless families includes:

- 77% of families are led by a single head of household
- 96% are female with an average age of 33.4 years
- Male heads of household represent 4% of total homeless families with an average age of 43
- Average single head of household family size is 2.8 people
- Only 23% of families were headed by 2 parents that were on average of 36 years of age
- In households with two families, the average family size is 4.6 people.

TRENDS OVER TIME



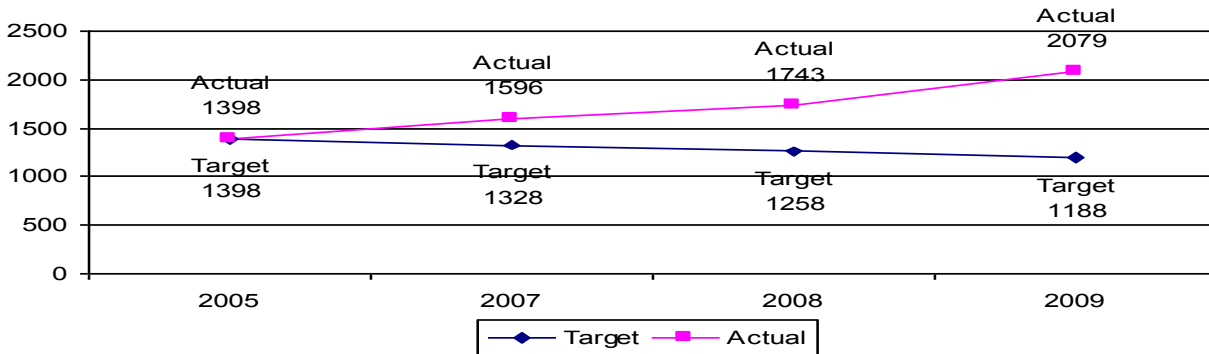
Typical Homeless Family in Pierce County

- 77% are single parent households
- Average age is 33.4 years
- Average education level is 11.7 years
- Average family size 2.8
- 76% of children are under the age of 12
- Some have Drug/alcohol, felony history
- Low wage employment history
- Unskilled work history

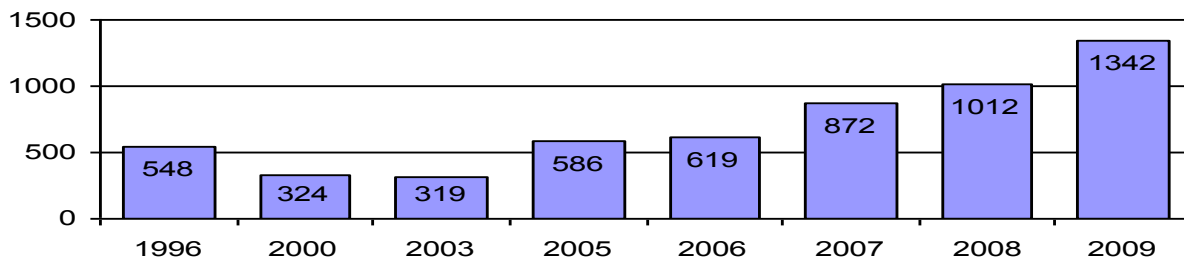
The data provided from homeless surveys over the years has not located a significant number of homeless families living unsheltered . Overall homeless families have increased in our surveys but the increase has occurred in those who are counted as living in transitional housing units.

As new transitional units are brought on-line they are immediately occupied by eligible families. Although these families are housed up to 24 months, they are still considered homeless by the definition used by the federal and state governments.

State Goal Chart for Pierce County



Transitional Housing for Pierce County



The State Goal chart shown below, indicates the current data based on the PIT count of all homeless in Pierce County (given a gradual, step-wise approach to reducing homelessness). The number noted as Actual is the total count of persons who were included as homeless in each PIT effort. The chart shows a target projection which indicates where we should be in terms of achieving the goal of reducing homelessness over the next decade. The State sets the target based on the initial PIT count conducted in 2005 which is then projected to be reduced by 50% over the next 10 years. For example, in Pierce County the original PIT count in 2005 was 1,398 and should be reduced to 699 by 2015.

The PIT counts show increases in the homeless populations corresponding to the increase in available transitional housing units. This increase is due to both new units being created, and our awareness being increased surrounding existing units we previously did not know about. Transitional housing units with services provide an important subsidized housing opportunity for those who are currently experiencing homelessness. Assuming those admitted into transitional housing programs needed that level of care, the increase would be interpreted as a good thing. Anecdotal data would suggest that families entering these transitional housing programs are coming from situations where they are “doubled-up” resulting in their data not being captured in the

PIT Survey.

Not only has the number of the unsheltered or street homeless population increased statewide, those who are in transitional housing has also increased. The State of Washington has recently issued the results compiled from each county’s annual PIT homeless survey. The 2009 results indicate that overall homelessness has increased by approximately 4% statewide. Statewide there are 3,465 homeless families including 787 living in emergency shelters, 2293 living in transitional housing programs and 385 on the street or unsheltered. It may be important to note here that the street homeless count decreased by 68% from 2005 to 2009 in Pierce County following our focused efforts on ending chronic homelessness.

While the numbers of homeless seem to be growing in Pierce County, the increases could be contributed to the lack of affordable housing. Families who approach agencies for housing are primarily seeking affordable housing. Numerous needs assessments have been conducted over the years for a variety of purposes and uniformly the number one need for low income households was the provision of affordable housing.

Pierce County is not unique in this situation and national research by a variety of authors suggests that the best way to reduce homelessness in our communities is through the provision of subsidized housing. Further, many suggest that supportive services are secondary to the overall issue and that as long as we have a lack of affordable housing we will have a steady stream of families experiencing and at risk of homelessness poised to enter available units in our communities.

In trying to determine the total size of our homeless population we are faced with a difficult challenge. The primary data source is our Homeless PIT surveys which does not provide a significant level of detail other than a snap-shot one day per year. Our homeless housing and service provider agencies report higher numbers of families requesting assistance but there is no clear method of collecting and documenting those who are seeking assistance or would be considered at-risk of homelessness.

The Turn Away Table shows the number of calls and requests for assistance in the areas of prevention and emergency shelter as recorded by the United Way 2-1-1 system which provides a connection for the community to housing and a variety of social services.

Turn Away Table

Report Ending	Shelter turn-aways	Prevention turn-aways	Total	211 calls Prevention Housing	PC Homeless Count families
June 2002	8611	3920	12531		
June 2003	7425	8292	15717		188
June 2004	17759	12060	29819		
June 2005	7507	14694	22201		
June 2006	9588	11007	20595		206
June 2007	5167	15138	20300	11,685	296



Typical Homeless Family in Pierce County

“Before I got into (housing program), I was living with three kids in a two bedroom apartment, paying \$675. We had to get of there because of the mold.”

-Focus Group Participant

Those that requested or called in for assistance and were unable to receive assistance are known as “turn-aways.” The 13 emergency shelters operating in Pierce County collect information that is compiled into a State funded Emergency Shelter Assistance Report specifically for county residents. The numbers in the chart are only for families not individuals and there is no clear explanation for the change in numbers of turn-aways from year to year.

Overall, numbers do not show clear trends in those seeking emergency shelter or prevention programs. The highest number of requests in the Emergency Shelter Assistance Program (ESAP) program occurred in 2004 and 2005. The 2-1-1 program has only been operating a short time and does not have data reflecting earlier years.

The ESAP is funded by the State of Washington. Participating shelters track both the number of families they can help and those who had to be “turned away” due to lack of available shelter or funding for prevention programs. In the majority of cases the prevention programs provide short-term rental assistance (one month) and referrals to other assistance resources.

It is clear we do not have enough accurate data about our homeless family population. However, there are at least three ways to understand the size of the homeless family population: first, the number of people in families with children who are experiencing homeless at a given time; second, the number of people who are in families experiencing homeless in a given year; and third, the number of people in unstable housing situations with an elevated risk of becoming homeless (see page XXX).

The primary data source for estimating the number of people homeless at a given time is estimated through the annual the PIT count. Ultimately a more thoroughly thought-out data collection system will need to be implemented so that in the future we can have real, as opposed to estimated, counts of those experiencing, and at-risk of, homelessness.

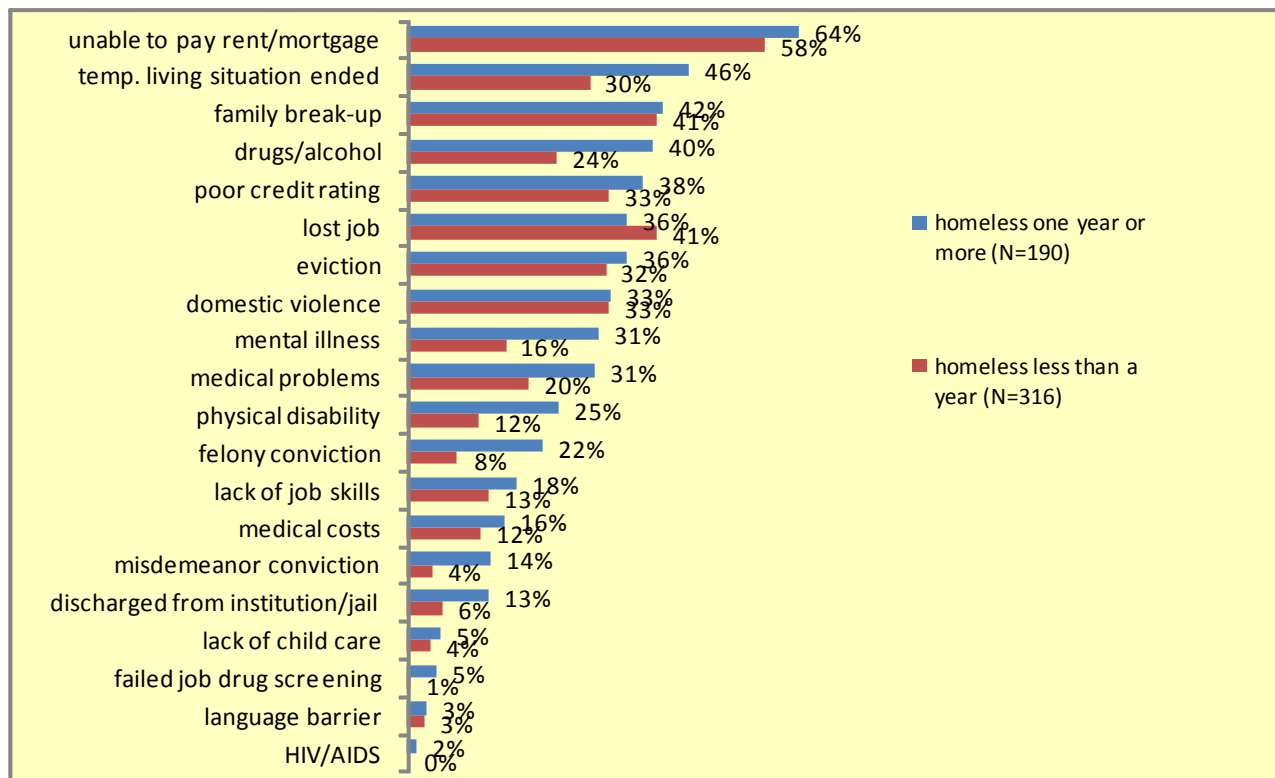
Families at Risk of Homelessness

Understanding families at risk of homelessness in Pierce County is an even greater challenge than understanding families experiencing homelessness. There are so many factors that may lead to risk that using these factors would result in significantly over-identifying a population that will not need assistance to avoid homelessness.

The chart below indicates the top reasons families reported losing their housing. While this survey has been completed in a variety of methods, it continues to show similar causal factors for the reasons they became homeless. This focus group shows the results reflecting only families and their reasons for becoming homeless. This is from the 2007 Pierce County Needs Assessment.

While in truth nearly everyone may experience a major illness, job loss or addiction that could lead to homelessness at some time in their life, people who currently have very low incomes and pay a high proportion of their income in housing costs are at the highest risk. The Department of Housing and Urban Development, using data from the 2000 Census, found there were 15,576 people living in non-senior family households with incomes 50% or less of the county median family income and paying 50% or more of their income in housing costs in Pierce County. When that figure is adjusted to account for population growth in the county, assuming the proportion of people in that housing/income situation remains the same, we estimate there are about 18,083 people who can reasonably be considered at risk of becoming homeless (see Appendix 1 for the estimation formula).

Chart of Top Reported Reasons Families Lost



The responses from the families demonstrate the varied challenges we face in trying to address the issue of homelessness. Affordable housing (or the lack of), substance abuse, disabilities of several types, lack of stable employment, criminal history and many other reasons are tied to our families' inability to remain stably housed.

Our community does not currently have a reliable method of determining who is at risk of homelessness. The recently completed agency surveys revealed that only 50% of the organizations maintained a waitlist. Of those who did, one organization notified their waitlist via a twice weekly orientation meeting, about half of the organizations contacted (phone, e-mail, notified case manager) the family directly, and the other half required the families to call in regularly to see if there was an opening.

The number of people on shelter waitlists for each non-profit ranged from 7 to 500, with a total of 934 people on all waitlists combined. It is unclear if all of those on waitlists are still searching for homes, and unclear if families are on multiple waitlists. Further, there is no real level of detail about these families that would provide us with a profile of who is at risk in our community.

HMIS data is currently used to track families who are in programs or shelters and assigned to beds or units and thus provides little relevant data about the at-risk populations who have not accessed the homeless system.

The Emergency Shelter Assistance Program (ESAP) administered by the State of Washington provides duplicated numbers for Households with Children turned away from emergency shelter and prevention programs. Looking at the summary report covering 2002-2007, the data shows a high in 2004 of 29,819 families turned away, and a decrease since then to the 2007 figure of 20,300.

HUD provides estimates specific to our populations who are defined as the most at-risk of homelessness based on the idea that they are very low-income, renting their housing units, and are cost burdened (paying more than 30% of their income towards housing expenses). These estimates, called Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) Data Tables, show there are 23,119 large and small families in the at risk-group in Pierce County.

People in homeless families seem to share a number of common traits or characteristics. For example, results from Pierce County's Point in Time (PIT) count have found that homeless families consist of about 2 to 3 children, with about 75% of families having only one adult, and nearly 70% having a single female in her late 20's to early 30's as head of household, most often with 2 to 3 children and just short of a high-school diploma. Compared to the general population, they are more likely to be African American, although most families by far are White, and are more likely to have substance abuse problems.

However, when looking at the population as a whole, none of those characteristics alone are precise predictors of who will become homeless. For example, in 2007, there were about 84,000 people in Pierce County living below the poverty level, but the PIT count found about 930 total people or just over 1% living in homeless families.



Typical Homeless Family in Pierce County

“My biggest challenge was finding myself homeless 11 months ago, that’s probably one of the hardest things I’ve ever experienced.”



Estimated Number of At Risk Families in Pierce County

- Agency Waitlists: 934
- ESAP Data: 20,300 families
- Pierce County Analysis: 18,083
- HUD Data: 23,119

WORKING ESTIMATES OF HOMELESSNESS AND AT-RISK IN PIERCE COUNTY

As should be clear from the information presented so far accurate, real-time data does not exist in any meaningful way as numbers representing the three areas we are interested in— 1) number of homeless families at any given time; 2) number of families experiencing homelessness in any given year; 3) number of families at risk of homelessness.

Given that, we have chosen to use factors applied to our PIT count, as is being done in other parts of the state and country.

1. Point In Time Survey (2009): Total number of people in families counted on that day- 1,335 (398 families)
2. Annual Estimation from that number: $1,335 \times 2.2 = 2,937$ (877 families)
3. Total at-significant risk estimate: $1,335 \times 3.6 = 4,806$ (1433 families)

These are estimates based upon formulas developed in other jurisdictions, and may not apply directly to Pierce County. Given that, it will be essential to focus on the improvement of data systems for both actual homelessness and at-risk of homelessness as we move forward with strategy development.

Typical Housing Search Experience

For individuals and families searching for housing, including emergency and transitional shelter, there are three main options within the current system they may follow. Households may call Associated Ministries to find out where emergency or transitional shelter is currently available (must call during business hours only), call the United Way 211 line to find out where emergency, transitional or permanent affordable shelter is currently available (lines are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) and/or call housing providers directly to find out if they have openings in their shelter.

Families attempting to find housing may be given a list of potential housing programs from one of the resource lines. Looking at the current system of finding housing, a typical attempt to find housing for a family of 4 usually goes in sequence like this: the family calls a housing program provider to find out they do not have any openings, they then call another program to find out they have openings, but only for single individuals, then call yet another program to finally locate an opening and a program that serves families. The family is then scheduled for an intake appointment three business days from the initial call. However, within the three business day window, they still need housing for the interim. They then need to find a place to stay for three days and secure transportation to their housing appointment. If the family misses the appointment, they may not be granted another, or may learn the unit was given to another family who did show up. If they are able to make the appointment, they may learn the family constellation was the wrong size for the available unit; or their background information make them ineligible (either rental history, or criminal background); or the program is specifically for people with a particular mental/physical challenge, or even if the family head of household has a major challenge (mental/physical) they may be required to seek full-time employment or education, regardless of your disabilities/barriers because of program policies. There are also age restrictions for dependents. Some programs only allow males to stay with parents in the shelter if they are under a certain age. For example, a family's 15-year old son may be too old for the program and the family can only be accepted if they agree to send their son somewhere else. The end result being, the family must continue to call each housing program to find openings and hope their needs can be met.

For individuals and families that are seeking transitional housing, no master vacancy waiting list exists within the County. Not all housing providers maintain a wait list, so households must be proactive in finding housing. To determine whether an opening exists with a housing provider, and whether that opening will meet the needs of the particular household, they must speak with a representative at the specific agency during business hours.

Depending on the housing provider some do very little screening of applicants, while others conduct extensive assessments. However, all transitional housing providers conduct extensive assessments to determine if someone meets the criteria for admission/fit. Some organizations that provide both emergency and transitional housing use the time a household spends in their emergency housing as a screening tool for their transitional housing programs. In other words, if a household is not already within an agency's emergency housing, their chance of finding a direct placement within their transitional housing is slim.

Network of Providers

A broad network of providers of housing and services for homeless households exists in our community. There are at least 63 different entities that comprise our delivery systems including:

- 5 Governmental entities
- 7 Foundations
- 17 Housing Providers
- 22 Service Providers
- 12 Faith Based Organizations

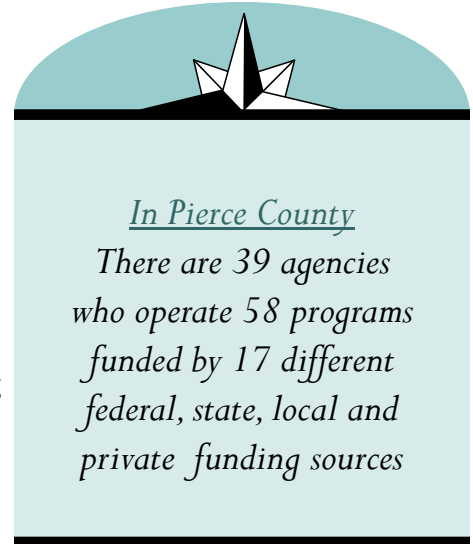
These agencies and systems have been developed over the last 100 years and include public funders, private philanthropy, housing and service delivery systems, educational and employment systems.

Specifically, the system of housing and service providers targeted to serving families is comprised of 39 agencies who operate 58 programs funded by 17 different sources (federal, state, local and private) offering 454 units of housing and 974 beds located across the entire community of Pierce County with concentrations of programs and housing in the urban areas.

The agencies that provide housing and services operate as independent businesses, are competitors for resources from all funding sources, operate under a variety of business models, provide varying degrees of service levels and have a wide range of service delivery costs for activities that are similar.

Measurements of successful outcomes through Federal and locally required reports (Annual Performance Reporting and Outcome Based Evaluations) show that no one agency has developed a program model that results in greater success in moving households toward self-sufficiency. This is consistent with the information gathered during the survey for this initiative.

Overall, agencies have few significant partnerships with other agencies due to the fact that they are most often competitors for limited funding. In certain cases a framework exists through Memorandums of Agreement with outside providers of generally specialized services that are not available within the agency.



System Supportive Services

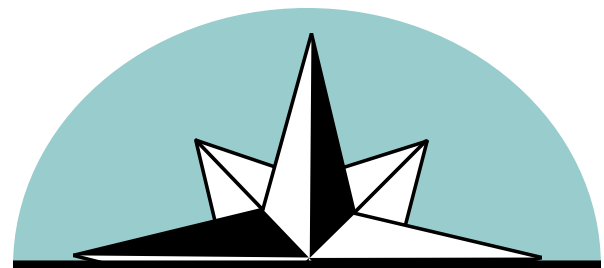
Federal, state, and local funding sources can provide for a wide range of services to households that are experiencing homelessness. Private funders can often be approached for financial assistance from agencies to provide services outside of the existing eligible governmental activities.

Supportive services are provided to make independence possible for households or individuals who are homeless or formerly homeless. Services are intended to address barriers that may prevent individuals from maintaining permanent housing. HUD authorizes the following general supportive service activities (many of these services are also supported with state, local, and private funding as well):

- Alcohol and Drug Abuse programs primarily designed to prevent, deter, reduce or eliminate substance abuse or addictive behaviors. Treatment services may include intake and assessment, treatment matching and planning, behavioral therapy and counseling appropriate to the client and the severity of the problem; substance abuse toxicology and screening; clinical and case management; outcome evaluation; and self-help and peer support activities.
- Case Management Services consist of activities for the arrangement, coordination, monitoring, and delivery of services to meet the needs of individuals and families. Component services and activities may include individual service plan development; counseling; monitoring, developing, securing and coordinating services; monitoring and evaluating client progress; and assuring that client's rights are protected.
- Child Care Services for children (including infants, pre-school children, and school age children) are services or activities provided in a setting that meets applicable standards of state and local law, in a center or in a home, for a portion of a 24-hour day. Component services or activities may include a comprehensive and coordinated set of appropriate developmental activities for children, recreation, meals and snacks, transportation, health support services, social service counseling for parents and plan development.
- Education and Instructional Services are those training services provided to improve knowledge, daily living skills, or social skills. Services may include instruction or training in (but not limited to) such issues as consumer education, health education, education to prevent substance abuse, community protection and safety education, literacy education, English as a second language and General Education Development (GED). Component services or activities may include screening, assessment and testing; individual or group instruction; tutoring. Provision of books, supplies and instructional material; counseling and referral to community resources.
- Employment Services are those services or activities provided to assist individuals in securing employment; acquiring or learning skills that promote opportunities for employment, advancement, and increase earning potential; and in retaining a job. Component services or activities may include employment screening, assessment, or testing; structured job skills and job seeking skills; specialized therapy (occupational, speech, physical); special training and tutoring, including literacy training and pre-vocational training; provision of books, supplies and instructional material; counseling or job coaching; transportation and referral to community resources.
- Health Related and Home Health Services are those in-home or out-of-home services or activities that provide direct treatments or are designed to assist individuals and families to attain and maintain a favorable condition of health. Component services and activities may include providing an analysis or assessment of an individual's health problems and the development of a treatment plan; assisting individuals to identify

and understand their health needs- providing directly or assisting individuals to locate, provide or secure, and utilize appropriate health services and emergency medical services; provision of appropriate medication; and providing follow-up services as needed.

- HIV/AIDS Services include HIV/AIDS primary and secondary prevention services, HIV/AIDS counseling and testing, primary care, provision of HIV/AIDS anti-retroviral and other medications, rehabilitative, and supportive services for persons affected by and/or infected with HIV.
- Housing Services are those services or activities designed to assist individuals in locating and obtaining suitable housing. Component services or activities may include tenant counseling; assisting individuals and families to understand leases, secure utilities, make moving arrangements; representative payee services concerning rent and utilities; and mediation services related to neighbor/landlord problems that may arise.
- Information and Referral Services are those services or activities designed to provide information about services provided by public and private service providers and a brief assessment of client needs (but not diagnosis and evaluation) to facilitate appropriate referral to these community resources.
- Legal Services are those services or activities provided by a lawyer or other person(s) under the supervision of a lawyer to assist individuals in seeking or obtaining legal help in civil matters such as housing, divorce, child support, guardianship, paternity, and legal separation. Component services or activities may include receiving and preparing cases for trial, provision of legal advice, representation at hearings, and counseling.
- Life Skills training provides critical life management skills that may never have been learned or have been lost during the course of mental illness, substance abuse, and homelessness. They are targeted to assist the individual to function independently in the community. Component life skills training includes the budgeting of resources and money management, household management, conflict management, shopping for food and needed items, nutrition, the use of public transportation, and peer training.
- Mental Health and Counseling Services are those services and activities that apply therapeutic processes to personal, family, situational, or occupational problems in order to bring about a positive resolution of the problem or improved individual or family functioning or circumstances. Problem areas may include family and marital relationships, parent-child problems, or



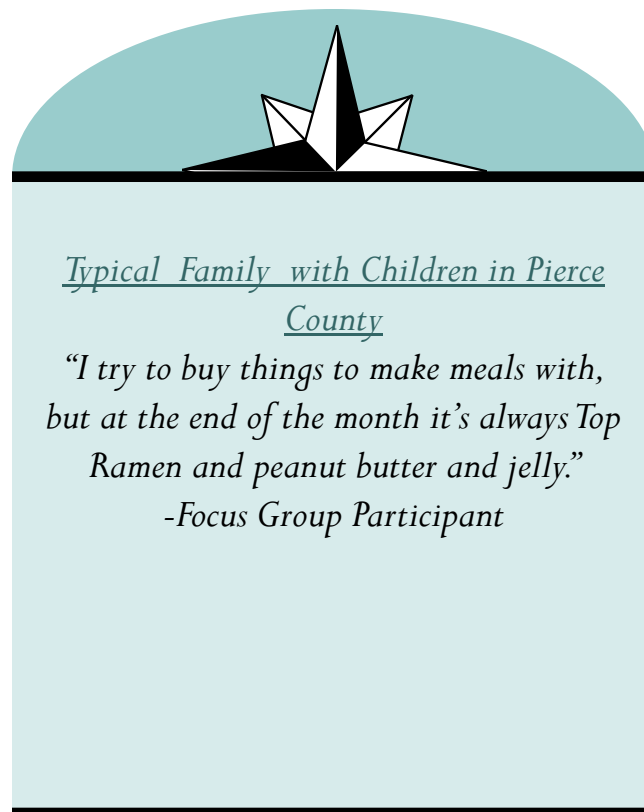
Typical Homeless Family in Pierce
County

“You want to put your past in the past. You’re trying to go forward and your past kind of catches up with you. You’re trying to live a clean life, get your life right on track, and you’ve got maybe a felony or an assault charge against you, and they kind of discriminate against you because of what happened in the past. They don’t really know why you got into that predicament in the first place; all they’re looking at is your record, just judging you on that.”

- Focus Group Participant

symptom management. Component services may include crisis interventions; individual, family or group therapy sessions; the prescription of psychotropic medications or explanations about the use and management of medications; and combinations of therapeutic approaches to address multiple problems.

- Outreach Services include extending services or assistance in order to provide basic materials, such as meals, blankets, or clothes, to persons experiencing homelessness; or to publicize the availability of shelters and programs to make applicable persons aware of various services and programs.
- Transitional Living Services are those services or activities designed to help make the transition from homelessness to stable housing. Component services or activities may include supervised practice living, budgeting, one-time payments associated with establishing tenancy, food planning and preparation, and post-foster care services for persons experiencing homelessness.
- Transportation Services are those services or activities that provide and arrange for the travel, including travel costs, of individuals in order to access treatment, medical care, services, or employment. Component services or activities may include special travel arrangements such as special modes of transportation and personnel to accompany or assist individuals or families to utilize transportation.



The following chart summarizes the Agency and Services provided in our community.

Provider Organizations	Prevention			Outreach		Housing		Supportive Services																		
	Mortgage Assistance	Rental Assistance	Utilities Assistance	Counseling/Advocacy	Legal Assistance	Street Outreach	Mobile Clinic	Law Enforcement	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Permanent Supportive	Case Management	Life Skills	Alcohol & Drug Abuse	Mental Health Counseling	Healthcare	HIV/AIDS	Education	Employment	Child Care	Transportation	Information & Referral	Transitional Living Services	Housing Services	Legal Services	
AIDS Housing Association	•									•	•	•					•									
Another Chance for Women									•		•															
Associated Ministries	•	•	•	•											•											
Camp Fire Boys and Girls						•																				
Catholic Community Services		•		•					•	•		•	•		•											
City of Tacoma					•															•						
CLEAR				•	•																					
Comprehensive Mental Health				•		•				•	•			•								•				
Exodus Housing				•					•			•	•													
Fair Housing Center of WA.				•	•																					
Guadalupe House									•		•															
GLMH				•		•				•	•	•		•												
Good Samaritan				•		•				•	•	•		•												
Got Jesus? Ministries						•					•	•														
Helping Hand House		•	•						•	•	•	•	•						•		•	•		•	•	
Hospitality Kitchen																					•					
Intercommunity									•		•															
Korean Women's Association									•																	
LASA		•							•	•		•	•													
MDC		•	•			•	•		•	•	•	•	•		•				•	•	•					
Nativity House						•																•				
Network Tacoma									•		•	•										•				
New Phoebe House Association									•	•		•	•													
NW Legal Services				•	•																					
PC AIDS Foundation		•										•	•				•									
PC Housing Authority		•																								
PC Veterans Bureau				•																						
Pierce County Community Services	•	•	•	•														•	•		•					
Salvation Army									•		•	•									•					
Shared Housing									•		•	•														
South Sound Outreach				•		•						•	•													
Step by Step									•		•	•														
TACID		•	•								•	•							•	•						
Tacoma Housing Authority		•																								
Tacoma Rescue Mission									•	•	•	•	•					•	•		•					
The Caring Place		•							•		•	•														
TPC Health Department						•										•										
Under the Bridge Ministries						•																				
UW Parent Child Assistance						•						•	•	•	•											
Veterans Administration									•	•		•	•	•	•			•	•							
VIEW									•		•									•			•			
WA Dept. Social & Health Services		•																•	•	•	•					
WWE											•	•						•	•							
Youth Resources									•	•		•	•										•			
YWCA Pierce County				•	•				•	•		•	•						•							

Agency Survey Information

As part of this initiative Pierce County mailed surveys to agencies that provide housing to families experiencing homelessness in the county. Of the 25 agencies that received surveys 20 responded with 33 surveys (some agencies have more than one program that provide housing to families experiencing homelessness). The purpose of the survey was to seek input from those with knowledge and experience in the myriad of issues that cause families to become homeless and affect them once they are—specific to their programs. The survey resulted in input from our community based experts in the issues that surround our families in need. The goal is to use the information fairly and responsibly to look at systems issues and solutions. The participation from leaders and decision makers in the community will lead us on a path to ending family homelessness in our County.

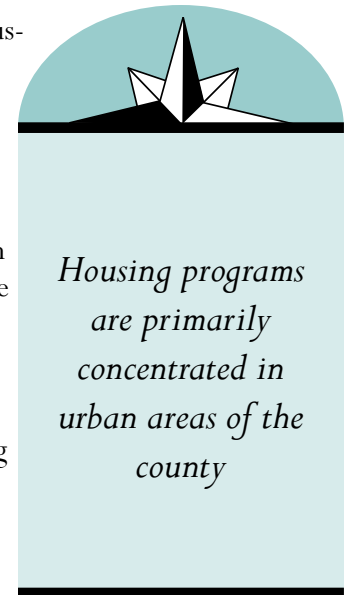
Following the survey, county staff conducted follow-up interviews to create dialog between the County and agencies. The result of the information gathered is listed in the following sections and is intended to better understand the overall costs of providing housing services, gaps in funding, geographic needs, etc. in order to develop an informed strategic plan in response to those findings.

The information listed in the following survey sections is based on the agencies as a whole, and not by the individual programs. The percentage may not equal to 100 percent due to programs serving more than one area, providing more than one service or housing type, or because in their completed survey they left a section blank. The information is limited to the accuracy of information submitted to the County by the agencies.

DEFINITIONS

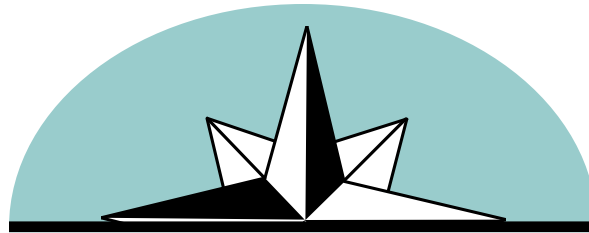
These definitions are terms that were used in the provider survey.

- Emergency Housing: short-term housing, often one night, no more than 90 days.
- Facility Based: care or services that are provided on-site attached to the housing program
- Memorandum of Agreement (MoA): a written agreement that outlines the agreement between two programs or organizations.
- Overflow: accepting persons into an emergency shelter beyond the usual capacity.
- Permanent Housing: housing with no expected end-date.
- Permanent Supportive Housing: housing with no expected end-date and some form of service to assist an individual or family in maintaining housing, health, and safety.
- Revolving Shelter: shelter that is not tied to a specific site- the most common is cold-weather shelters that move from one church to another during the winter.
- Scattered Site: transitional or permanent housing that is located throughout the community in fair-market rental properties with no more than a few units dedicated to a housing program- the remainder are non-program renters.
- Supportive Services: services designed to provide housing stability, health, and safety for housing recipients- common examples include case management, budgeting assistance, mental health or chemical dependency services, and community building.
- Tenant Vouchers: a housing subsidy that can be attached to an individual, a location, or a program- most commonly the tenant pays 1/3 of their income and the remainder is subsidized by the voucher.



- Transition in Place: the process of completing a program and no longer needing the supportive services, while staying in the same housing/unit.
- Transitional Housing: time-limited housing, usually with supportive services and a rental subsidy.

In addition to the surveys conducted by Pierce County, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation hired a research company from Rockville, MD, Westat, to independently survey the family homelessness system in Pierce County. They interviewed leaders from government and non-profit organizations involved in the system. The emerging issues they reported finding in Pierce County included a lack of a defined provider/funder system; concerns with involving providers in a meaningful way in planning processes, weaknesses within each of the pillars identified in this planning process, and an overall concern about data issues (accurate reporting, helpful universal elements, end-user usefulness, and compliance issues).



*Typical Homeless Family in Pierce
County*

“I didn’t have a lot of employment experience throughout my adult life, and I financially depended on a lot of other people, mostly men . . . So when I was in a situation where I needed to leave, I wasn’t prepared. It took eight months to get housing after I became homeless.”

- Focus Group Participant

Agency Descriptions

The following provides a description of agencies that were sent a provider survey.

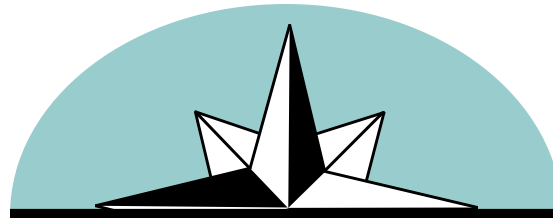
- **Alesek Institute** Promote social welfare of Native Americans through the lessening of neighborhood tensions, the elimination of prejudice, discrimination, the combating of community deterioration, and the provision of regional housing, health and social services.
- **Another Chance for Women and Children** A 24-month transitional housing program for recovering women with or without their children to have a safe place to live.
- **Associated Ministries** Offers religious referrals and programs, coordinates severe weather shelter and is the lead agency in the Emergency Shelter Assistance Program (ESAP).
- **Catholic Community Services** Phoenix Housing Network is a shelter and transitional housing program. Shelter - The shelter includes a network of churches and schools that provide shelter and meals to homeless families with children. All families receive case management services to help them move toward self-sufficiency and permanent housing and has the capacity to serve 5 families at a time. Transitional Housing - Phoenix Housing Network has 70 transitional housing units for families at several sites throughout Pierce County. Case management and Life Skills classes are provided to everyone in transitional housing and mental health services are also available. Rent Assistance – Rental assistance for families at risk of homelessness.
- **Exodus Housing** Provides transitional housing for homeless families with children and for families who have experienced domestic violence.
- **Guadalupe House** Interim clean and sober housing for single men and women.
- **Helping Hand House** Dedicated in preventing and ending family homelessness in Pierce County. Provides prevention assistance, permanent supportive housing and emergency and transitional housing and rapid re-housing (permanent).
- **Intercommunity Mercy Housing** 50 low income, affordable housing units. The agency also provides: parenting classes, homework help, kids' programs, teen programs, education and employment resources, community events, home ownership classes, developmental disorder programs, a computer lab, and community center.
- **Korean Women's Association** Provides low income senior housing and low income multi-family housing to Pierce County residents.
- **Lakewood Area Shelter Association (LASA)** Provides emergency transitional housing and temporary shelter to Pierce County families with children. The outreach/homeless prevention program focuses on Lakewood households however, some services are open to all Pierce County residents. LASA's Outreach program offers emergency assistance with utilities, rent, transportation and prescriptions.
- **Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI)** Low Income Housing Institute has been combining housing for the working poor with supportive housing for households experiencing homelessness in residential communities. Residents are integrated with widely varying needs as seamlessly as possible. Provides housing for low income families and individuals.
- **Metropolitan Development Council** Housing programs include single rooms, duplexes, homes, apart-

ments and special need housing – for chemically dependent, mentally ill and families in transition.

- **Multi-Service Center** To provide low-cost housing and supportive services to homeless families. Families are defined as one or two adults, with one or more minor children living with them. The agency goal is to help families develop or improve skills that will allow them to increase their incomes, keep permanent housing, and become more self-sufficient.
- **Network Tacoma** Transitional housing for homeless families with children. Comprehensive six to eighteen month program to assist families to move into permanent housing at end of program.
- **New Phoebe House** Provides eviction prevention, safe, clean and sober emergency shelter and transitional housing to homeless women with preschool children whose lives have been impacted by substance abuse. Also, provides housing, support and services to secure future housing stability. The ultimate goal is to give women the skills necessary to move from dependency to self-sufficiency in a permanent sustainable, safe environment. Request will be used to provide case management and operating subsidies
- **Open Hearth Ministries** Serves homeless families with children under 18 in East Pierce County with motel vouchers for up to two nights.
- **Pierce County Alliance** Provides assistance to teenagers in foster care and transitioning out of foster care, placement in foster homes and may assist youth, who are aging-out in finding housing and case management.
- **Pierce County Human Services** Protects and promotes quality of life for people living in licensed, long-term adult care facilities.
- **Pioneer Human Services** Provides housing for persons in Drug/Alcohol recovery. Placement for single adults and/or families for up to 18 months.
- **Pierce County Housing Authority** PCHA provides Section 8, Low Income Public Housing (LIPH), and affordable housing in Pierce County outside the city limits of Tacoma. PCHA also provides supportive services to agency clients, including the Family Self Sufficiency program, designed to provide the tools for economic independence; Homeownership opportunities for Section 8 and LIPH participants, and; Ready to Rent, training in becoming a successful tenant and neighbor.
- **Salvation Army** Provides services in the following areas: emergency shelter (for families and single women), a food bank, utility assistance, rental assistance, child care program, medical prescriptions, clothing, youth programs, youth summer camp and activities for seniors and disaster services.
- **Shared Housing Services** Facilitates matches between home providers and homeless families or individuals for reduced costs and companionship to maintain independence. Programs: referral match programs, family transitional housing.
- **Step-by-Step Family Support Center** Provides transitional housing to homeless families with children in Lakewood and Pierce County. The housing is linked to supportive services that assist families with transitioning from homelessness to self-sufficiency.
- **Tacoma Area Coalition of Individuals with Disabilities (TACID)** A resource center that addresses the need of people with disabilities including their Housing and Employment Link Program (HELP), homeless crisis case management for people with disabilities who live in Tacoma, Lakewood or Pierce County, blind independent living assistance, information and referral,
- **Tacoma Housing Authority** Works with issues surrounding low income housing in Tacoma. Provides

housing for families, elderly, and handicapped persons.

- **Tacoma Rescue Mission** Offers services to homeless and low-income families and individuals of the community. Services include a family shelter, men's emergency shelter, family transitional housing, long term case management, adult basic education, affordable housing and a residential recovery program.
- **Washington Women's Employment and Education** The goal of the Self-Sufficiency Program is to assist low income residents of Pierce County with achieving economic self-sufficiency. Transitional housing is available to eligible participants. Also run computer applications training program, Reach Plus.
- **YWCA Pierce County** Provides emergency shelter for victims of domestic violence and their children who are fleeing imminent danger. Transitional housing is available for survivors of domestic violence who are referred through a partner agency.



Typical Homeless Family in Pierce
County

“Anything worth supporting your family with, you have to have a bachelor’s or you have to have a certain amount of higher education. A high school degree, that ain’t cutting it, you’re just making minimum wage with that no matter where you go.”

- Focus Group Participant

Agency Survey - Services Provided

A survey was conducted with non-profit agencies which represented those with housing and service programs that specifically served families in our community. Agencies were specifically asked to describe the types of services, indicate if they provided them in-house, contracted with others or had Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) that formalized any partner relationships in provision of services.

Agencies provided the following information about the services they provide:

PREVENTION OF LOSS OF TENANCY

There are some prevention programs that operate in the community providing typically one time or very short term rental assistance. Very few provide limited case management and some require that clients seeking assistance take budgeting classes as a condition of receiving help. It is typical to target clients who have a 3 day pay or vacate notice for assistance. Approximately 24% of our agencies provide rental assistance for short to long term (1 month-3 months), the majority (60%) refer clients in need of homeless prevention to other agencies in the community. Only 3% of Pierce County's providers reported having MOA's with prevention programs outside of their agency.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

There are several agencies that provide mental health support within our community. The primary providers of the Regional Support Network (RSN) include: Comprehensive Mental Health, Good Samaritan Outreach Services, Greater Lakes Mental Healthcare and Catholic Community Services. There are smaller agencies providing counseling and other related services, but generally they do not have a lot of capacity, especially for individuals and families requiring concurrent case management.

Some of these programs use a sliding scale fee system to serve low income populations.

Of the homeless agencies surveyed, 18% of the agencies provide mental health services in-house, 76% refer to outside agencies for help and 6% of agencies have Memorandum of Agreements with providers of mental health services to assist their clients.

STABILIZATION/RECOVERY FROM SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The following agencies provide substance abuse services to family housing providers. Greater Lakes Mental Healthcare, MDC's The Center, Pioneer Human Services, Puyallup Tribal Health, University of Washington Parent Child Assistance Program, Pierce County Alliance, Sea Mar, and Tacoma Rescue Mission.

- 21% of programs have staff that provide drug or alcohol programs
- 79% of agencies refer clients in need to other agencies
- 3% have MOA with providers

SANCTUARY FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

There are 3 current programs that target survivors of domestic violence in Pierce County. They include Exodus Housing, Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the Korean Women's Association.



Typical Homeless Family in Pierce County

"I get \$847 a month from social security. Where can I go for that? For something with utilities included, you can't."

- Focus Group Participant

Of our existing agencies 21% have staff that deal with clients that are experiencing Domestic Violence, 70% of agencies refer to other providers and 6% have MOA's with providers.

PROVISION OF CHILD CARE

No known homeless service providers of child care exist in our community. Agency Staff at times provide in house assistance but the vast majority (82%) refer to other agencies in the community. Three percent of our programs have a MOA with child care providers.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (INCLUDING TRAINING, EDUCATION, AND JOB PLACEMENT)

Forty-two percent of agencies provide employment preparation, job readiness, or job search services within their agencies. Considering that less than half of the agencies provide employment preparation, this would not be considered adequate participation that would significantly impact clients needing assistance for economic opportunities. In addition 76% refer clients to WORKFORCE or other employment services. The outcome of the referrals to Workforce are unknown and would be considered a gap that needs further investigation.

HOUSING (EMERGENCY, TRANSITIONAL, PERMANENT)

Refer to Housing Inventory Chart (Appendix 3) for information on location, type and operating agency.

TENANT ADVOCACY

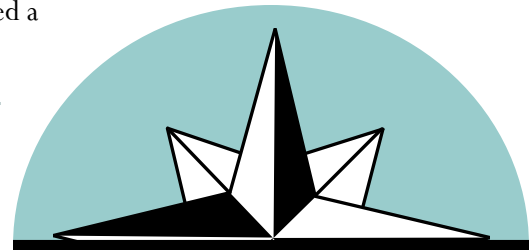
Tenant/Landlord Education programs are provided by 42% of our agencies and 42% refer their participants to other agencies for service in this area. Six percent of programs have a MOA to formalize the relationship. Housing Search activities are conducted by clients with staff help in 67% of our programs, 24% refer to other providers and 6% have MOA's in place.

The Fair Housing Center of Washington provides fair housing services throughout the community and all transitional and permanent housing providers work with landlords at various times to secure housing opportunities.

CASE MANAGEMENT

All housing providers provide some level of case management to their clients. Agencies report:

- Basic action planning – 64% staff, 15% refer, 6% MOA
- Individual action plan - 61% staff, 24% refer, 6% MOA
- Post program case management - 48% staff, 27% refer, 6% MOA



Typical Homeless Family in Pierce County

“The best thing in the US is fair housing laws, you can report discrimination. [Some tenants] had complaints but were too afraid to speak up, but now there are fair housing laws and they can stand up for their rights. (To other participants) you need to self-educate on housing laws and meet with city officials to let them know what’s going on.”
- Focus Group Participant

EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT

- 38% of our agencies had a mandatory requirement that clients were involved in some form of active education or employment activity that mimicked a typical 40-hour work week schedule.
- Not all agencies had such a requirement but overall, 81% of the surveyed agencies encouraged participation in an educational and/or employment activity during their stay.
- 19% neither required nor encouraged employment or education as part of the program, although if it was an issue raised by the client, or came up as topic, they referred out to partner agencies.

All programs track income level at time of entry and exit. Most agencies thought there was a slight increase in income, one reported a moderate increase. Many reported the increase was the result of receiving government entitlements, with TANF listed as the most common. No interviewee knew the amount of the increase. No organization mentioned using “increase in income” data to improve programming. Very few organizations had their own employment programs- only 18%- most of those included assistance with job search, résumé writing, and job skills training. Partners for education and employment included: Washington Women’s Employment and Education, Tacoma Community House, The Evergreen State College, Bates Technical College, Tacoma Community College, Clover Park Technical College, DSHS and Goodwill Industries. Some organizations have formal relationships with higher learning institutions, up to and including some specialized support for people attending programs. Some simply refer people to an admissions office if they know they are qualified. There is a program through Clover Park Technical College where Opportunity Grants are used specifically for people who were formerly chronically homeless (not families, but the model may apply in the future). These individuals are trained in mid-level wage (up to \$65,000/year to start) trades following a college preparation course designed specifically for this project. The project is being formally evaluated by the several professors at the University of Puget Sound. Twenty-five percent of the organizations had hired graduated clients into entry-level positions within their programs.

OTHER SERVICES

Many of our non-profits provide a variety of other services to eligible clients including basic needs (food, clothing). Health related services are provided by agencies outside the homeless provider network for families; HIV-AIDS Services are provided throughout the county by the Pierce County AIDS Foundation; Information and Referral services and Legal assistance is provided by N.W. Justice and Columbia Legal services.

Agency staff also provide life skills, outreach services, transitional living services and transportation services) (including bus passes/tickets either directly to the clients or via referral to other provider).

PROGRAM REGION WHERE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED (SURVEYED AGENCIES MAY SERVE MORE THAN ONE AREA)

In the survey, area nonprofits selected from a list of possible service areas within the County. Some of the agencies reported they served multiple areas of the County which would explain an overlap with the percentages. The highest served areas according to the survey are:

- All of Pierce County (including Tacoma) with 36%;
- Downtown Tacoma with 30%;
- East Pierce County with 27%;
- All other areas of Pierce County and Tacoma were at 18% or below.

The service areas of Pierce County consisted of All of Pierce County (including Tacoma) where 36% of the agencies provided services; Pierce County (not including Tacoma) where 6% of the agencies provided services; North Pierce County where 3% of the agencies provided services; East Pierce County where 27% of the agencies provided services; in South Pierce County where 12% of the agencies provided services; and in West Pierce County where 6% of the agencies provided services.

The service areas of Tacoma consisted of All of Tacoma (Scattered) with 18% of agencies providing services; in Central Tacoma where 15% of the agencies provided services; in Downtown Tacoma where 30% of the agencies provided services; in Northwest and Northeast Tacoma where 6% of the agencies provided services; in the Southeast where 18% of agencies provided services; and in the Southwest where 12% of agencies provided services.

SERVICES PROVIDED TO CLIENTS

Nonprofits selected from a list of possible services that programs provide to the majority of clients. Some of the agencies reported they provided multiple types of services which would explain an overlap in the percentages. A majority of the agencies 'referred' services which means agency staff would make referrals for the services of other programs/agencies. Some of the programs were 'staffed', meaning the service is provided by agency staff and there were some that had Memorandums of Agreement (MOA's) with other agencies. The service types that had a referral rate of 75% or higher consisted of Alcohol/CD Treatment, Child Care, High school/GED completion, Employment Preparation/Job Search, English as a Second Language/Literacy, Healthcare, Legal Assistance and Mental health/Counseling services. The number of services that were provided by agency staff were lower on the percentage scale. The services that had a staffing rate of 50% or higher consisted of Benefit Sign Up (public assistance benefits), Food/Clothing vouchers, Housing Search, and Case Management. For a complete list of the service type and associated percentage ranking, please refer to Appendix 5.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

Information provided by area nonprofits in the survey, included Memorandums of Agreement they have with other agencies with which they contract for services. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is an agreement, or cooperative agreement, document written between parties to cooperatively work together on an agreed upon project or meet an agreed upon objective. The purpose of an MOA is to have a written understanding of the agreement between parties. The type of agencies involved with MOAs consisted of education and employment agencies, social and health services, housing providers, and mental health providers. A complete list of the agencies that were named to have MOAs with other agencies have been provided in Appendix 5.

• SERVICES/RESOURCES MOST DIFFICULT TO ATTAIN FOR CLIENTS

Information provided by area nonprofits in the survey, included services/resources most difficult to attain for clients. The word that usually went in tandem with a service description was the word 'affordable.' Agencies stated that 'affordable' services were difficult to obtain for clients such as affordable childcare, affordable healthcare, and affordable permanent housing. Other services that were named as difficult to obtain consisted of chemical dependency (CD) services and housing for those with CD-related issues, eviction prevention, family counseling and job placement/employment. Most of the services exist in some form within the county, but are not obtainable due to the cost or qualifications. For example, obtaining mental health or chemical dependency treatment without a Medicaid coupon is extremely difficult in Pierce County for someone coming out of homelessness. For a complete list of the resources/services named as the most difficult to obtain, please refer to Appendix 5.

CAPACITY OF HOUSING SERVICES (SURVEYED AGENCIES MAY PROVIDE MORE THAN ONE TYPE)

Information provided by area nonprofits in the survey included the types of housing available. From the survey, the most common housing strategy in Pierce County is transitional housing at 48%, followed by Supportive services at 27%. Permanent and Emergency housing were ranked at 15%, Permanent Supportive Housing was ranked at 12%, with Transition in Place at 6% and the lowest was Overflow with 3%. These percentages may overlap since nonprofits may provide more than one housing type.

HOUSING STOCK TYPE (SURVEYED AGENCIES MAY PROVIDE MORE THAN ONE TYPE)

Information provided by area nonprofits in the survey included the housing stock type in Pierce County. According to the survey information, the most common housing stock type was Scattered Site at 33%, followed by Facility Based at 24%. Revolving shelter was at 9% and Tenant Vouchers was the lowest at 6%. These percentages may overlap since nonprofits may have more than one stock type.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR ENROLLMENT (SURVEYED AGENCIES MAY CATER TO MORE THAN ONE)

From information gathered in the survey, 1 or 2 parent families was the most common eligibility description with 45%, followed by single parent families with 36%. Agencies with no eligibility restrictions was 27%, single/individual requirement was 15%, couples with no children was 6% and Other was 18%. Percentages may overlap since nonprofits may have more than one family type.

CRITERIA FOR ENROLLMENT IN PROGRAM (AGENCIES MAY HAVE MORE THAN ONE TYPE)

Nonprofits selected from a list of client characteristics that are required for enrollment and had to select a typical characteristic or more than 50% of the majority of the population they serve. The two *top criteria* for enrollment in programs were Active Chemical Dependency and Domestic Violence victim where 15% of the agencies required one of these two criteria. Chronically homeless, Developmental Disability and mental health were 3% of the agencies. The *typical characteristic* of the majority (more than 50% of the population served) was Mental Health at 52%, Domestic Violence victims at 48%, followed by Recovering Chemical Dependency at 42%. For a complete list of the service type and associated percentage ranking, please refer to Appendix 5.



Typical Homeless Family in Pierce County

“With (local housing program) you get resources without having to live with strict rules. My only source of income is child support and this program helps get back to where I was, build myself back up...It has been the best thing that I’ve actually come into contact with.” - Focus Group Participant

Housing Available (Current Inventory)

Based on the Pierce County Homeless Housing Inventory Chart which covers all known emergency shelters for 2008, transitional and permanent housing units dedicated to serving homeless populations came to a total of 521 units.

The units are predominantly located in the urban areas. Eleven percent of the units are utilized as emergency shelter, 80% are transitional housing with services and 9% are permanent supportive housing.

GENERAL SUMMARY INFORMATION

Table 1.1 Family Emergency Shelter percentage by location (151 beds/56 units)

Percent	Location	Beds
68%	Tacoma	105
14%	Puyallup	29
10%	Scattered Site	15
6%	Lakewood	10

Table 1.2 Family Permanent Supportive Housing by location (157 beds/45 units)

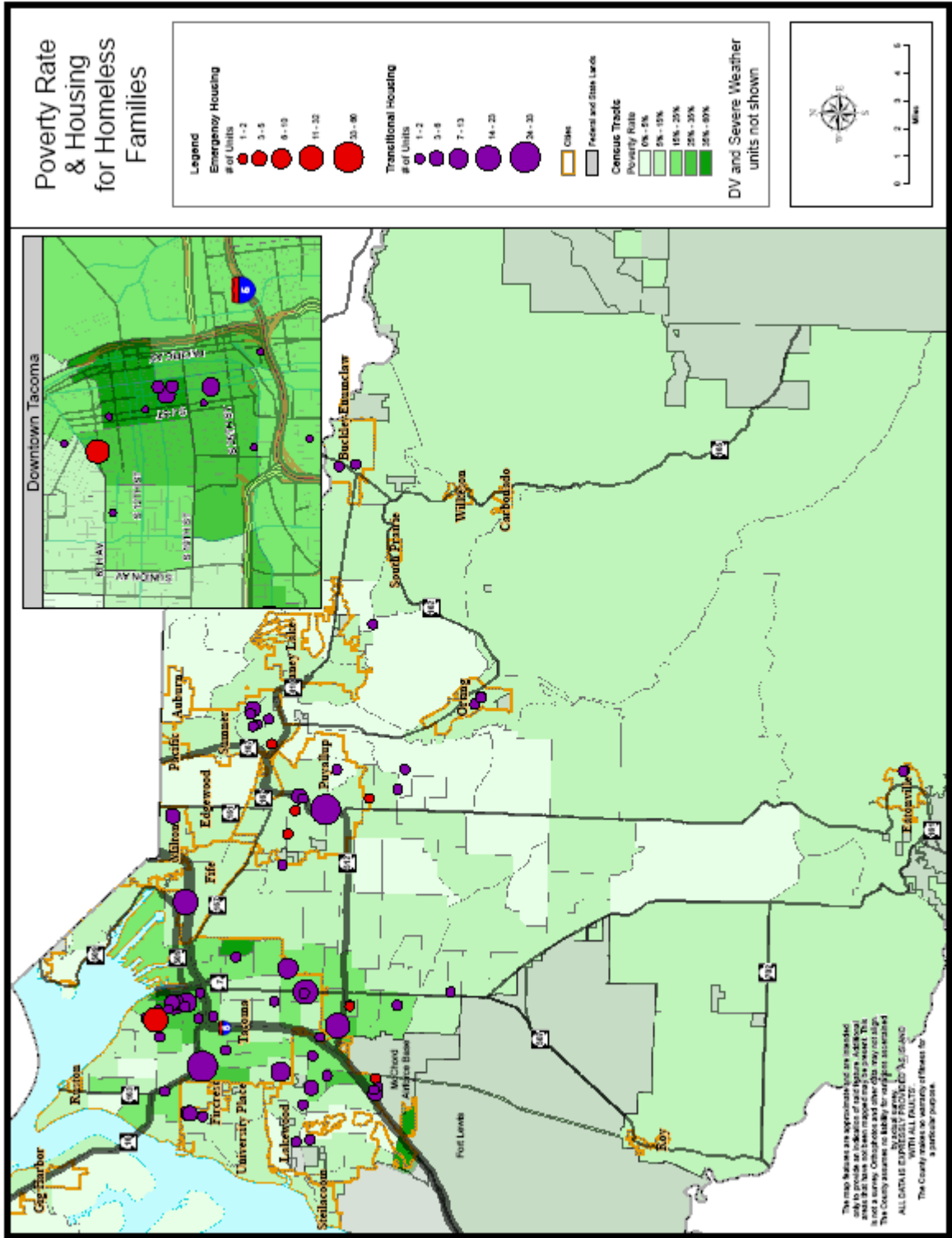
Percent	Location	Beds
62%	Tacoma	98
35%	Sumner	55
3%	Scattered Site	4

Table 1.3 Family Transitional Housing by location (420 units)

Percent	Location	Beds
55%	Tacoma	232
13%	Scattered Site	54
7%	Puyallup	30
7%	Milton (6), Orting (3), Sumner (9), Buckley (2), Eatonville (2), Bonney Lake (3), Spanaway (2)	27
5%	Parkland	21
5%	University Place	21
4%	Lakewood	18
4%	Fife	17

HOUSING INVENTORY

In addition to the total units available to, and targeted toward, families experiencing homelessness, Pierce County has 700 units that are targeted to serve individuals homelessness including permanent supportive housing for the people with disabilities.



As stated earlier the overall need for affordable housing in our community is acute and some have gone as far as labeling it a crisis. Affordable housing could be defined as a way for families to afford decent and safe housing whether subsidized or unsubsidized. Income limits in relation to housing market rates of the specific area are used to determine the “affordability” of housing. A unit is typically considered “affordable” if it costs no more than 30% of the family’s income. For example, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition April 2009 data, the typical fair market rate for a 2-bedroom apartment in the State of Washington is \$874 a month and for a family to afford this housing level and be within the 30% rule, they would need to make an hourly wage of \$16.81. The estimated need level for all low-income populations is approximately 30,000 units and reflects all groups including homeless supportive housing (families and individuals), housing for those with disabilities, senior housing and general affordable housing.

Pierce County’s current affordable inventory includes:

- 2,550 Tax credit financed low income apartments (targeted to seniors and very-low income)
- 1,100 Subsidized apartments (non-section 8 targeted to low income all populations)
- 1,238 Public housing units (owned and operated by the Tacoma Housing Authority and Pierce County Housing Authority)
- 6,124 Section 8 Housing Choice rental vouchers used at a variety of scattered sites throughout the county
- 4,282 Other affordable units created through multiple public funding sources that target homeownership, domestic violence victims, affordable rental units and special needs housing.
- 16,515 Total units available

All of the housing providers report extremely low vacancy rates and long waiting lists of households who need affordable housing.



Current Resources - Funding Sources and Amounts

The following section outlines funding resources known to the county at this time to address housing and services for all homeless populations. Some of the resources are awarded on a competitive basis from non-county organizations. It is not possible to predict the amount of funding that will be made available or if the programs identified below will be in operation during the next decade.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Community Development Block Grant

Grant program for urban communities choosing to do neighborhood revitalization, economic development, improvement of community facilities, prevention and elimination of slums, and other activities aiding low- and moderate-income families. This program is administered by the Pierce County Department of Community Services (Community Development Block Grant programs are administered in the Cities of Tacoma and Lakewood as well). Eligible sub recipients: Non-profit organizations providing housing and services that meet local and national objectives. Funds can be used for: Neighborhood revitalization, economic development, improvement of community facilities, prevention and elimination of slums, activities aiding low- and moderate-income families. The CDBG program is the most flexible federal tool for addressing the needs of low-income residents in both housing and basic infrastructure.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Program Funds

Grants for housing production, acquisition and rehabilitation and services to persons and families experiencing homelessness. Funds are awarded through a national competitive process to a variety of local "selectee's" (sub-recipients) to create new programs and services in the community targeting the homeless. Eligible applicants: Non-profit housing and service agencies. These funds are administered by the Pierce County Department of Community Services.

Emergency Shelter Grants Program (ESGP)

Federal grants provided to Pierce County to improve the quality of existing emergency shelters and to increase the number of developing shelters for the homeless. Funds can be used for renovation, conversion of buildings, rehabilitation, essential social services, and operating costs, and homeless prevention, but not for staff payroll.

Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS Program (HOPWA)

Two types of grants, entitlement and competitive, for housing assistance and supportive services for low-income persons with AIDS or related diseases and their families. Funds can be used for acquisition, rehabilitation, conversion, lease, and repair of facilities; new construction; project-based or tenant-based rental assistance; planning; support services; operating costs; short-term rent, mortgage, and utility payment; administrative expenses; and other proposed activities (for competitive grants only). Eligible applicants: Entitlement grants: Eligible states and qualifying cities for eligible metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) with the largest number of cases of AIDS. Pierce County, as a government, does not receive HOPWA funding. Two agencies in Pierce County—Pierce County AIDS Foundation, and AIDS Housing Association of Tacoma—both receive HOPWA funding directly from the state. Local funding

Transitional Housing Operating and Rent Assistance (THORA)

Made available through the State of Washington, this fund provides resources to serve families and individuals experiencing homelessness providing rental assistance, case management and agency operating costs.

SHB 2060 -Affordable Housing For All Act

Made available through legislation from the State of Washington, this fund generates resources based on documents recorded by the county auditor. A \$10 surcharge is placed on certain documents when recorded. Sixty percent of the funding from the surcharge is provided to non-profit and for-profit agencies and city and county governments to develop and rehabilitate housing units affordable to those at 50 percent of HUD median income or less throughout Pierce County. A certain amount of the annual funding from this surcharge is also provided to all of Pierce county's non-profit owned emergency shelters for operating and maintenance monies.

SHB 2163 - Ending Homelessness Act

Made available through legislation from the State of Washington, this fund generates resources based on documents recorded by the county auditor. A surcharge is placed on certain documents when recorded. The surcharge is split between the County of origin and the state of Washington. This law has been amended twice in the last 3 years increasing the amount of the surcharge.

General Fund (County, City)

County and City governments have utilized general fund revenues to provide selected agencies with dollars to operate programs. In Pierce County, a category labeled Miscellaneous Current Expense has occasionally provided resources at the sole discretion of the County Council. Similarly in Tacoma, there have been occasional funding amounts provided to non-profits to provide services to homeless populations.

PRIVATE PHILANTHROPY

A variety of private foundations provide funding to local non-profit agencies to deliver selected homeless programs. Historically private funders have each set their own priorities for funding. In more recent years, however, the Tacoma/Pierce County Continuum of Care has provided its priorities to all funders in an effort to ensure every funding entity in the system was moving in the same direction. Multiple funders (including The United Way of Pierce County, The Greater Tacoma Community Foundation, The Ben B. Cheney Foundation, and The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) are all involved in the current planning process. One of the goals of their involvement was better understanding of how the systems being addressed through this initiative are shifting towards supporting ending homelessness— in particular family homelessness.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The Federal Government has included a new program called Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP) in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). This program focuses resources on prevention of homelessness and the rapid re-housing of families and individuals who have recently become homeless. Under a three year contract, the City of Tacoma, the City of Lakewood and Pierce County will contract with non-profit housing and service providers to provide assistance allowed under the program guidelines. This funding resource is not projected to be renewed at the current time.

FUNDING INFORMATION

See Appendix 6 for a breakdown of the funding sources, agencies and programs receiving assistance to serve homeless and at risk families in Pierce County. The information is limited to the accuracy of information submitted to the County by the funding sources and various reporting data submitted by the agencies themselves.

The information in the following table, Table 1, summarizes the responsible funding entity, the annual amount and the percentage of the total funds used for housing programs for families and individuals in the County. According to the information submitted and county records, the total funding available from all sources in 2009 was \$16,559,206 targeted to low-income populations and needs from all funding sources. Of that amount, \$10,109,067 was targeted to housing and services specifically for homeless families. In summary,

Agency and Amount Funded		
Funding Provider	2009 Funding	2009 Families Funding
Pierce County	\$8,895,403	\$5,918,676
Associated Ministries	\$829,949	\$787,092
Metropolitan Development Council	\$630,982	-0-
Aids Housing Association of Tacoma	\$107,000	-0-
Veterans Administration	-0-	-0-
Private Foundations	\$532,838	\$532,838
United Way of Pierce County	\$2492,832	\$231,292
City of Tacoma	\$3,880,401	\$1,461,408
City of Lakewood	\$1,369,801	\$1,177,761
TOTALS	\$16,599,206	\$10,109,067

FUNDING FLEXIBILITY

Funding received through Federal and State programs have statutory requirements attached that specify what the funds can be used for and the target population, unlike funding from private donors and foundations which could have more flexibility on their use but ultimately may have certain requirements that are commanded by the donor or foundation. In Table 1 above, the majority of funds available in Pierce County is allocated to the County itself followed by the City of Tacoma and Associated Ministries. These funding amounts were targeted toward family programs in Pierce County for the year 2008. The possibility of re-purposing funds would require the review of Federal and State regulations. The County may direct funds to certain target populations or needs within the County by altering the application requirements when funds are available— to take a different approach: rather than the client to fit available agency homeless/low income programs, the agency programs instead are created to fit the needs of the clients.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

In an effort to fully understand the issue of homelessness, Federal and State agencies that fund homeless programs require local jurisdictions to implement a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) which is used to collect and analyze information about all persons experiencing homelessness, including single individuals and households including families with or without children, and the services they use. Pierce County has chosen to use the ServicePoint web-based system provided by Bowman Internet Systems of Shreveport, Louisiana. The HMIS database will assist us as we guide our efforts and document our progress of reducing homelessness.

Since May 2004, all homeless housing and service providers receiving funding from Pierce County and the City of Tacoma have been required to participate and enter data into the HMIS system. Over the past five years there have been over 8,000 persons entered into the system by 18 agencies providing data for 65 programs that provide emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing for persons with disabilities. In an effort to protect victims of domestic violence, programs that serve this special need population are not entering data into the system.

In 2009, all emergency shelters and transitional housing providers were asked to complete and maintain bed lists on the HMIS. This means the families who are in current programs are assigned to specific housing units and beds within those units.

The HMIS and the annual Point In Time (PIT) homeless count are the two primary data sources used by both the State of Washington and HUD to document the number of homeless in our communities. The HMIS does not record those in need of prevention services or record information on those at-risk.

The HMIS system in Pierce County is utilized by all agencies that receive funding from all public sources with the exception of agencies that serve victims of domestic violence. Both the State and Federal law regarding DV victims allow for them to not have personally identifying information collected.

HMIS data in the county is uploaded to the state on a quarterly basis and is used to compile the federal Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) on an annual basis.

The HMIS is currently operating as a “closed system”. That means that only the agency entering the data at the program specific level can see the data about that client family. In many instances the information about clients is not shared between programs in an agency that operates multiple programs.

The polar opposite to a closed system is an open system in which all homeless agencies in all programs have access to all client information served through any agency. This type of system provides the line staff of each agency with the most current and up-to-date information about the client’s interaction with previous aspects of the homeless service system.

While the data collection “system” is compliant with all federal and state requirements there are three challenges we face that significantly affect our ability to use the HMIS as a tool to analyze the homeless and at-risk populations it is designed to describe and analyze.

OVERALL QUALITY OF DATA ENTRY:

A data collection system is only as effective as the quality of the data input. Overall, agencies do not provide data for all required fields for every client (family). Nearly every agency currently using the system has null data of some form in the system. In some cases agencies have failed to exit families from their programs, not

assigned them to programs, or do not provide information other than name, social security number and gender.

The lack of information yields multiple null data reports that make data analysis challenging at best.

TIMELINESS OF DATA ENTRY

Agencies do not enter complete information in a timely manner. In multiple cases, while some information is entered about clients when they first contact the agencies, the family demographics and details of program assignments are entered at various times throughout the tenure of the client. Often clients are not exited from the programs which results in inaccurate program status.

STAFF TURNOVER

Agencies indicate that staff turnover is often a contributor to inadequate data. In some cases, staff are provided training on the system and then leave the agency after a short time.

Attached to this document are Annual Homeless Assessment Reports (AHAR) reports for the system as a whole that indicate the areas of deficiency in our data collection.

The County has worked with agencies over the last year to encourage them to clean up their data and this effort has been met with mixed results that are not achieving acceptable standards. In preparation for the participation in the AHAR and to use the HMIS to its full capacity, additional steps need to be taken to ensure that the data in the HMIS is reliable and can serve as a descriptive tool to evaluate our homeless population, and those at risk of homelessness. The County needs to develop other approaches to inspire active participation in the system. This will be addressed with a data pillar group that will begin work after the five key strategy pillar groups have made their recommendations to the Steering Committee.

The following page details the specific data elements currently required to be completed by each agency on each family entered into the system. While in some elements the response will be a yes or no (veterans status for example), other elements offer multiple dropdown screens to detail the specific activity (services or income for example).

In 2009 HUD issued new HMIS Data Standards that expand the reporting requirements in several areas. For example, some data items are project specific in that they are only required if a participating agency is operating a street outreach program or if the agency is accessing the new federal Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing program.

The new data standards will require that agencies who work with domestic violence survivors to begin reporting in a HMIS-comparable data base their activities with the families they serve. In Pierce County there are three agencies who serve domestic violence clients, which may be affected by the this requirement if they receive federal resources.

The new federal reporting requirements are currently scheduled to be out for public comment in the fall of 2009 and expected to be implemented (made a requirement) by January of 2010 for all HMIS participating jurisdictions.

Outcomes (APR Data)



Transitional Housing Definition

Housing and Services provided for individuals and families for a maximum of 2 years.

All HUD funded agencies must complete an Annual Performance Report (APR) for Supportive Housing Programs . This data is from reports filed from 2005-2008. Sample size: 590 Households in Transitional Housing Programs serving Families.

Data is compiled from 10 Agencies' APR's providing 21 Transitional Housing Programs. APR data is provided to congress by HUD and provides information on overall performance and indicates trends in our local programs.

This is also the primary method for determining the ultimate outcomes of the investments made in transitional and permanent housing programs for families in Pierce County.

LIVING SITUATION PRIOR TO ENTRY

As reported in the APR's system-wide information, these numbers indicate where households lived prior to entering a transitional housing program. The majority come from emergency shelter programs most often operated by the same agency that operates the transitional housing program.

	2005	2006	2007	2008
Street	6.67%	3.97%	14.86%	15.48%
Emergency Shelter	55.83%	70.86%	54.86%	50.60%
Transitional Housing	10.00%	9.27%	10.29%	6.55%
Psychiatric Facility	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Abuse Treatment Facility	0.00%	1.99%	1.71%	5.36%
Hospital	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Jail/Prison	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Domestic Violence Situation	1.67%	0.66%	1.14%	4.17%
Living w/ Friends or Family	15.83%	9.93%	9.14%	9.52%
Rental Housing	0.83%	1.32%	1.71%	2.98%
Other	9.17%	1.99%	6.29%	5.36%

INCOME BEFORE PROGRAM (ENTRY)

The table below shows the monthly income of clients before becoming enrolled in a transitional housing program. The vast majority of clients were in the extremely low-income category or most often in poverty at program entry.

	2005	2006	2007	2008
No Income	15.79%	16.43%	20.61%	16.58%
\$1 - \$150	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
\$151 - 250	1.50%	2.86%	1.21%	1.07%
\$251 - \$500	42.11%	40.71%	31.52%	30.48%
\$501 - \$1,000	33.83%	31.43%	35.76%	40.11%
\$1,001 - \$1,500	6.02%	3.57%	10.30%	6.42%
\$1,501 - \$2,000	75.00%	5.00%	61.00%	2.67%
\$2,000 +	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.67%

INCOME AFTER PROGRAM (EXIT)

At the exit from a program agencies provided information on monthly household income. The data indicates that the majority of families exit programs with insufficient income to obtain stable housing and provide for the necessary support to maintain their families in a self-sufficient status. The majority of clients obtain government subsidy (TANF, Social Security) or low-paying jobs as their primary income source at time of program exit.

	2005	2006	2007	2008
No Income	6.77%	5.00%	12.12%	5.85%
\$1 - \$150	0.75%	0.71%	0.00%	0.00%
\$151 - 250	0.00%	8.57%	0.61%	6.91%
\$251 - \$500	34.59%	37.14%	27.27%	18.62%
\$501 - \$1,000	31.59%	24.29%	35.76%	39.89%
\$1,001 - \$1,500	13.53%	8.57%	15.15%	11.70%
\$1,501 - \$2,000	7.52%	12.14%	6.67%	11.17%
\$2,000 +	5.26%	3.57%	2.42%	5.85%

LENGTH OF TIME IN FAMILY TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

This data shows that the majority (6 out of 10 households) leave transitional programs prior to the 24 month available time period.

	2005	2006	2007	2008
0-6 Months	28.57%	31.54%	41.72%	28.19%
7-12 Months	40.60%	41.61%	24.54%	29.26%
13-23 Months	24.06%	26.17%	30.67%	40.96%
2 Years or More	6.77%	0.67%	3.07%	1.60%

HOW MANY COMPLETED PROGRAM

The majority of clients do not complete the agency created programs prior to leaving and 2 of every 10 households are removed for non-compliance with program rules.

	2005	2006	2007	2008
Completed Program	38.35%	25.71%	27.27%	40.43%
Left Before Completing Program	28.57%	30.00%	20.61%	18.62%

REASONS FOR LEAVING PROGRAM

There are many reasons for leaving the programs prior to completing the objectives designed by agencies as indicated below.

	2005	2006	2007	2008
Non-Payment of Rent	3.01%	2.14%	1.21%	2.13%
Non-Compliance	17.29%	26.43%	21.21%	20.74%
Criminal Activity/Violence	4.51%	2.14%	5.54%	2.13%
Maximum Time Reached	0.00%	0.00%	61.00%	0.53%
Needs Not Met	3.01%	2.14%	1.82%	1.06%
Disagree w/ Rules/Persons	1.50%	2.86%	7.27%	5.32%
Death	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.53%
Other	3.76%	6.43%	6.06%	4.79%
Unknown	0.00%	2.14%	8.48%	3.72%

DESTINATION WHEN LEAVING PROGRAMS

Where do our families go upon exit from transitional housing programs? The majority leave to permanent housing or live with family or friends.

	2005	2006	2007	2008
Permanent Housing	59.40%	58.57%	48.48%	58.51%
Permanent - Family or Friends	22.56%	10.72%	9.70%	11.17%

Repeat Clients in Programs

Previous homeless surveys have identified the issue of long-term or repeated homelessness among some of our families. Many have multiple experiences with homelessness and there is data from our HMIS System that identify households who have over the last few years entered one program, exited from the program, returned to homelessness and were enrolled in another or on occasion the same providers' programs.

While we know that this phenomenon exists, we have no clear data to identify the size or depth of chronic homelessness. Through our agency survey results, agency staff estimate that between 1% to 35% of families return to homelessness after leaving programs. They estimate an average of 13% of households system wide return to homelessness after being in a program.

There is a great deal of diversity in response to the question of accepting households back into programs after a first failed effort. Some agencies indicate they would absolutely take families back, others say never, some offer on a case-by-case basis, some indicate only if the family left voluntarily, but not if they were evicted from the program. Some agencies have never had someone request to return, so there is no policy in effect and others establish time limits under which households could return to programs.

Program Activity Currently in Line with Pillars

CENTRALIZED INTAKE

There are two organization within Pierce County that provide call centers for families experiencing homelessness searching for resources (among other populations). The United Way of Pierce County operates the local 2-1-1 line and provides information on shelters and transitional housing. Part of their process is to determine which shelters have openings so they can refer callers to the available resources. Associated Ministries has two components to their shelter program- shelter availability line and the severe weather program. Both programs were designed to help callers (individuals and families) find available shelter. Although, the United Way and Associated Ministries programs can be considered as primary sources for obtaining information regarding shelter, it still remains up to the individual or family searching for housing to call each agency they are referred to.

The City of Tacoma, through the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) process they will be initiating a coordinated entry system. Their coordinated entry system is specifically for the HPRP program and not for all programs available for low-income/homeless families. The HPRP initiative is stimulus funds from the Federal Government to provide housing assistance for households at risk of homelessness and rapid re-housing programs for households that are homeless. These funds are available for individual single people, households with or without children, and families.

PREVENTION

Several organizations in Pierce County have homeless prevention as part of their mission. But there is no coordinated process among agencies for preventing homelessness. Many organizations have rental assistance programs, but most of those organizations do not have housing stability as part of that assistance. Additionally these organizations generally provide a single month's rent or a single month's utility. Without some additional assistance and some housing stability case management, families are not likely to avoid homelessness longer than one additional month.

RAPID RE-HOUSING

Depending upon the definition of re-housing, the organizations providing services to families experiencing homelessness do a relatively good job. The number of families in Pierce County experiencing street homelessness is very low. The majority of transitional housing programs prioritize women and families. Families leaving transitional housing, however, often do not have the economic stability required to decrease the odds of them becoming homeless in the future.

TAILORED SERVICES

Many organizations (69%) reported tailoring their services based upon the needs of the residents. The remainder (31%) provided the exact same services to every family, or rated families on a tiered system and provided services based on the tier rating.



“As a program manager, the most difficult thing I have to do to refer people to is mental health. Unless they’re suicidal, I can’t for the life of me with all the resources that I have available get people in there.”
- Transitional Housing Service Provider

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

There are a number of organizations focusing on economic opportunities in Pierce County such as, Work-Source, the Goodwill, and Washington Women's Employment and Education (WWEE). These organizations focus on the education, job training, job search preparation and job placement. These organizations have historically not been well-connected to the homeless systems providing services to families. While these organizations do not discriminate against people who have been homeless, there is no specific mechanism to ensure these agencies are reaching out or tailoring their programming to individuals with the unique needs associated with homelessness. WWEE has recently begun some housing programming, including rental assistance and transitional housing. This has resulted in a much greater link for the women in their programs to receive services sensitive to the needs of people coming out of, or at risk of, homelessness. The connecting families currently in the homeless system would be a factor in changing a families economic opportunity.

In addition to modeling tailored services after those organizations that have the best tailored care and assessments, the community mental health centers have a model for tailored care. This model consists of individual assessments along a variety of life areas that could be used as a model for tailoring services to families experiencing homelessness.

Key Gaps in our Homeless Family System

CENTRALIZED INTAKE

- Currently no comprehensive centralized intake or coordinated entry system exists within Pierce County.
- There are two phone lines (Associated Ministries and United Way's 2-1-1 line) that have resources for shelter availability, but they do not screen applicants to determine if they meet criteria for those beds.
- Each agency uses their own intake/assessment tools to determine if a family/individual meets criteria for their programs.
- Individual agencies providing housing and services to families experiencing homelessness have been reluctant to provide details about their admission criteria, and to allow a centralization of intake.
- Associated Ministries is piloting a homeless prevention centralized intake for the City of Tacoma. It is hoped they will develop tools that will be helpful in a full coordinated entry system within the next year, and they have agreed to allow us to watch their progress to see what can be learned about our system.

PREVENTION

- With the exception of the new Federal Stimulus funded Housing Prevention money, there has been no coordinated effort to prevent homelessness for families in Pierce County.
- Multiple organizations provide rental and utility assistance to families at risk of homelessness, but this is usually for a single month within the program activity year, and does not come with stabilization services focused on helping the family retain their housing by improving their overall economic situation.

RAPID RE-HOUSING

- With the exception of the new Federal Stimulus funded Rapid Re-housing, there has been no coordinated effort to rapidly re-house families experiencing homelessness.
- Multiple organizations do provide re-housing services for families, but many programs offer only brief housing assistance and no wrap around services to ensure stability. While this service is helpful to families in crisis, it is often applied to families who need significantly more than 30-90 days rental assistance. At the end of the assistance period there is no improvement in the family's overall situation and they are facing eviction again. Tailored supportive services, even for the duration of the financial assistance, may provide needed boost for the family to move past the crisis.

TAILORED SERVICES

Services of all types are cited as being needed but the top areas identified by our agencies include those that are most difficult to obtain within current funding guidelines and would provide the most significant impact. The top areas include:

- Transportation
- Child Care
- Health Care
- Mental Health Services

- Substance Abuse Services
- Oftentimes organizations require program recipients to receive a packaged set of services, not necessarily based on the unique needs of the individual family

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- Opportunities need to be developed that will provide an enhanced skill set for those who lack education or work histories
- These opportunities need to be integrated into initial comprehensive intake processes to ensure all families' economic needs (skills, interests, etc.) are assessed in early phases of assistance
- Integration of educational and occupational services needs to occur in within the system of services provided to Pierce County families (currently the systems are very separate)
- Tied clearly to the issue of economic opportunity our families need access to programs that provide for high school completion or GED and educational opportunities that focus on creating a set of job skills that are useful in today's competitive work environment. Our homeless population in many cases do not have a significant work history and will require employability skills and remedial training to allow them to be successful in generating sufficient income to remain housed.

DATA ISSUES

- The ultimate answer to gathering sufficient data about our populations in need would be to open the HMIS system county wide to all providers of housing and services and work diligently with agencies and their staff to require accurate and timely data entry so the system can be used to its maximum potential. This will require a large number of safeguards be put in place to protect the confidential information that would be contained in the system.
- Customize the current HMIS system to ensure it allows for the data necessary to fully evaluate the system being enhanced.
- HMIS requirements are not currently funder-driven. Therefore it will be imperative to ensure the value received by access to the data entered equals or outweighs the cost of data collection and entry.

OTHER

- Pierce County's non-profits act as competitors for resources which creates barriers to cooperation and client services.
- We need to look for ways to decrease competition and help agencies work collaboratively, moving to a mindset that there are enough resources for everyone.
- Families that are non-compliant with the rules of the programs often are forced to exit programs before they have gained the skills needed to move them toward self sufficiency.
- Families that exit service enriched transitional housing programs often exit to at risk situations due to a lack of sufficient income to pay for their housing expenses.
- Currently there is little financial or contractual consequence for high eviction rates among housing providers (consider making this a funder-driven concern).

Other than the prescribed HUD, APR outcomes measures and the Outcome Based Evaluation Reports required by some of our local funding agencies we do not have a community wide vision of what we would describe as a successful outcome from the over 5 million dollar investment made annually in serving home-

less and at-risk families in our community. The development of a community wide blueprint for successful investment toward a shared vision of success should be a priority for the Steering Committee.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS WITH A MULTIPLE RANGE OF SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

- Including a diverse range of housing options, (with range of supportive services, rapid re-housing models for those who do not require a full program in order to stabilize)
- Oftentimes organizations require program recipients to receive a packaged set of services, not necessarily based on the unique needs of the individual family
- Many programs offer only brief housing assistance and no wrap around services to ensure stability. While this service is helpful to families in crisis, it is often applied to families who need significantly more than 30 -90 days rental assistance. At the end of the assistance period there is no improvement in the family's overall situation and they are facing eviction again. Tailored supportive services, even for the duration of the financial assistance, may provide needed boost for the family to move past the crisis.

SERVICES

Services of all types are cited as being needed but the top areas identified by our agencies include those that are most difficult to obtain within current funding guidelines and would provide the most significant impact. The top areas include:

- Transportation
- Child Care
- Health Care
- Mental Health Services
- Substance Abuse Services

EMPLOYMENT/EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Tied clearly to the issue of economic opportunity our families need access to programs that provide for high school completion or GED and post-secondary educational opportunities that focus on creating a set of job skills that are useful in today's competitive work environment. Our homeless population in many cases do not have a significant work history and will require employability skills and remedial training to allow them to be successful in generating sufficient income to remain housed.

AGENCY COOPERATION/COLLABORATION NEEDED

- Pierce County's non-profits act as competitors for resources which creates barriers to cooperation and client services.
- We need to look for ways to decrease competition and help agencies work collaboratively, moving to a mindset that there are enough resources for everyone.

DEFINITION OF SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME NEEDED

Other than the prescribed HUD, APR outcomes measures and the Outcome Based Evaluation Reports required by some of our local funding agencies we do not have a community wide vision of what we would describe as a successful outcome from the over 5 million dollar investment made annually in serving homeless

and at-risk families in our community. The development of a community wide blueprint for successful investment toward a shared vision of success should be a priority for the Steering Committee.

WHERE ARE FAMILIES MOST LIKELY TO FALL THROUGH THE CRACKS IN THE SYSTEM?

- Families that are non-compliant with the rules of the programs often are forced to exit programs before they have gained the skills needed to move them toward self sufficiency.
- Families that exit service enriched transitional housing programs often exit to at risk situations due to a lack of sufficient income to pay for their housing expenses.
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1. Estimate of Homeless and At Risk Populations in Pierce County
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3. Pierce County Housing Inventory Chart
4. Agency Survey Form
5. Agency Survey Results
6. Funding Sources—Uses and Limitations
7. WFF Systems Initiative—Baseline Evaluation—Summary of Housing and Homeless Services Providers in Pierce County
8. HUD Data Elements HMIS
9. Pierce County AHAR Report—Emergency Shelter HMIS
10. Pierce County AHAR Report—Transitional Housing HMIS
11. Pierce County Homeless Survey, 2009
12. OSPI Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
13. Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (Tables and Data provided by HUD from Census Data Extracts)

