Homeless Crisis Response Systems

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New group aims to help homeless

By LEAH ALLEN @Leah_SVH   Oct 20, 2018

Jeffery Hill (left) and Keith Johnson chat Friday morning after a Welcome Home Community Co-op meeting at the Mount Vernon Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Johnson is a leader of the co-op, which formed to find local solutions to homelessness.

Scott Terrell / Skagit Valley Herald

8,500+ people are trying to survive outside each day.

What's not working?

1. Too many people *becoming* homeless

2. Not enough affordable *houses* for people to live in

3. A lack of *money* to pay the rent

Once someone is housed in a place they can afford, they are almost always able to maintain that housing.

Commerce Interlude!

Tedd Kelleher

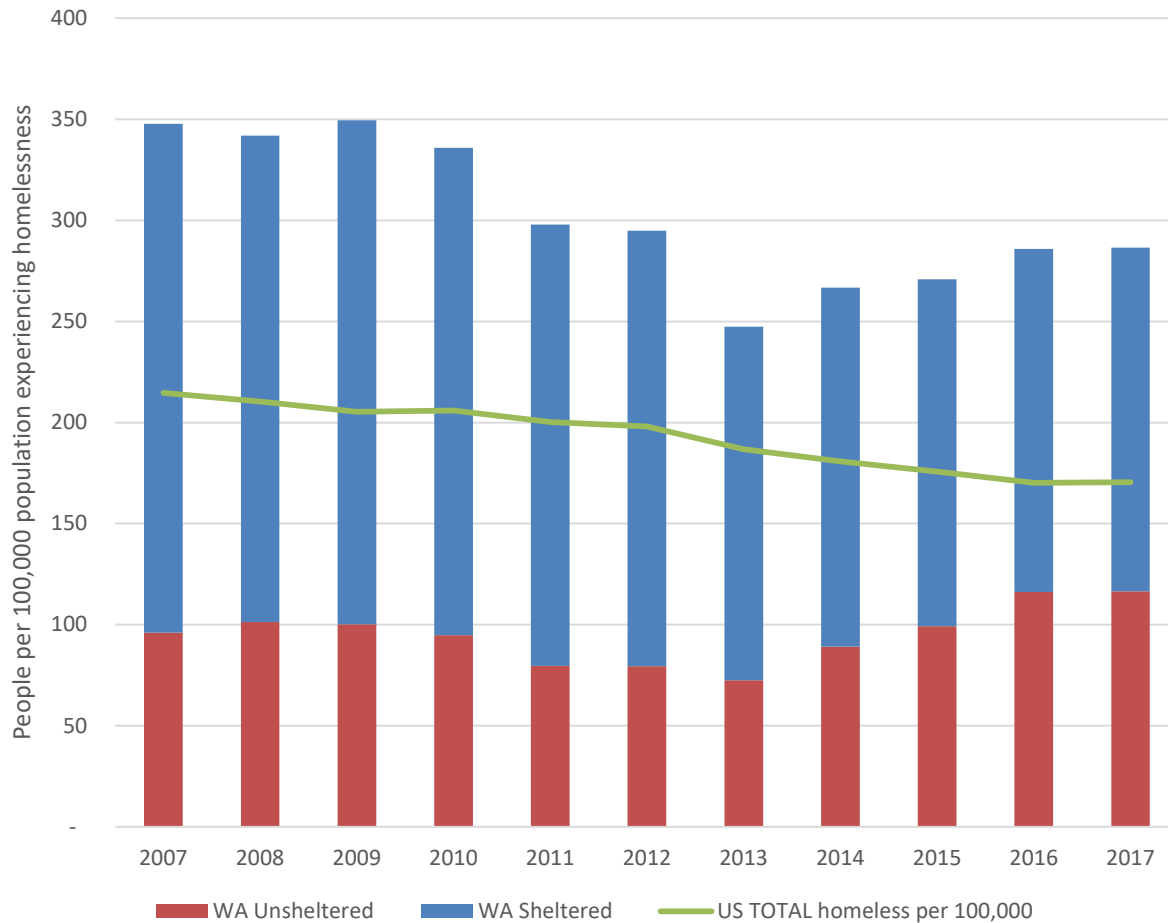*Managing Director*

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https://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/homelessness/

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Homelessness – WA 5ᵗʰ highest per capita rate
WA: 0.29%, US: 0.17%

Chart: People per 100,000 population experiencing homelessness, 2007–2017.
Legend: WA Unsheltered, WA Sheltered, US TOTAL homeless per 100,000.
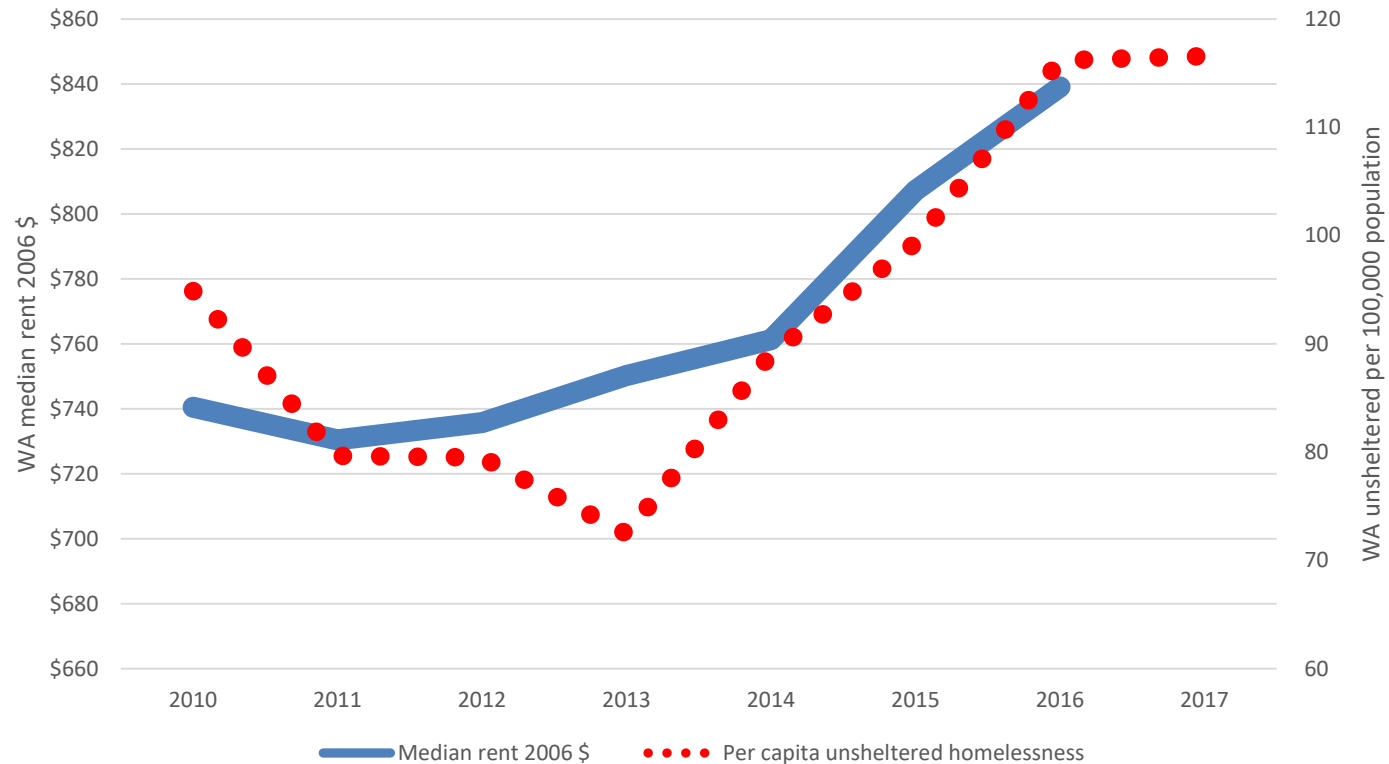
January 2018

22,416 people

10,673 living unsheltered

9,734 in households without children

939 people in households with children

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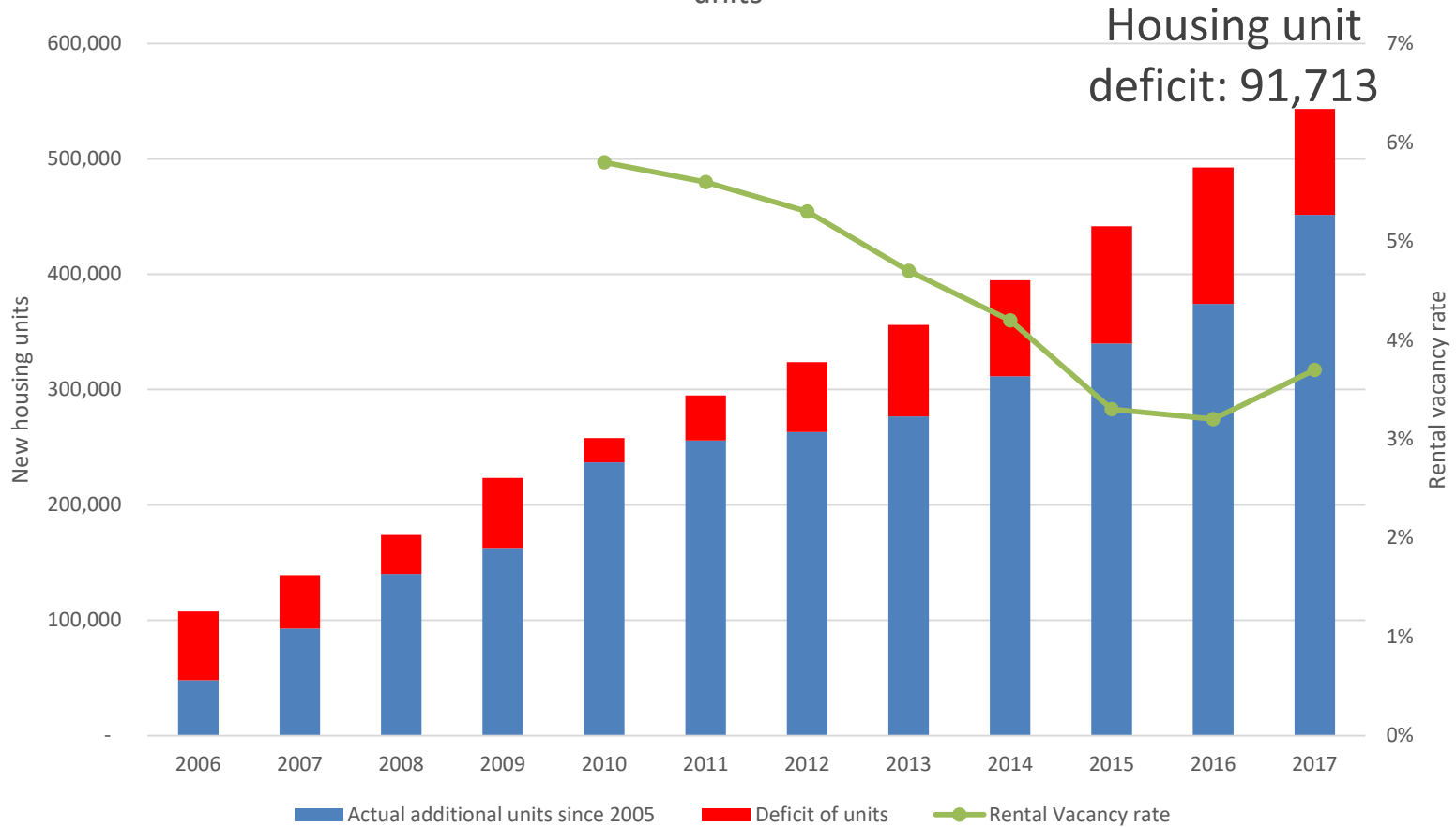
As rents grow, homelessness increases

Sources:
Rent: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey one-year estimates for Washington State, B25058, inflation adjusted using Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI-U
Homelessness: WA point in time count, adjusted by : U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey one-year population estimate for Washington State
1 - Journal of Urban Affairs, *New Perspectives on Community-Level Determinants of Homelessness*, 2012
2 - Dynamics of homelessness in urban America, arXiv:1707.09380

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Since 2005 in WA: Population +21%, Housing units +17%

Deficit of new housing units necessary to maintain 2005 ratio of people to housing units

Housing unit deficit: 91,713

Legend: Actual additional units since 2005 | Deficit of units | Rental Vacancy rate

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WA rental vacancy lowest in the US in 2017 [1]

	2010	2012	2014	2015	2016	2017
United States	8.2%	6.8%	6.3%	5.9%	5.9%	6.2%
California	5.9%	4.5%	3.9%	3.3%	3.3%	3.5%
Massachusetts	5.8%	4.5%	4.0%	3.5%	4.0%	3.9%
Oregon	5.6%	4.7%	3.6%	3.6%	3.2%	3.8%
Texas	10.6%	8.5%	7.3%	7.0%	7.7%	8.5%
Washington	**5.8%**	**5.3%**	**4.2%**	**3.3%**	**3.2%**	**3.7%**
Clark County	8.2%	3.4%	2.4%	2.2%	3.0%	3.7%
Clallam County	11.4%	11.3%	6.1%	3.5%	1.8%	3.2%
King County	5.2%	4.1%	2.5%	2.6%	2.7%	3.5%
Pierce County	6.6%	5.4%	5.7%	3.3%	2.0%	4.7%
Spokane County	4.0%	7.2%	5.5%	3.7%	3.7%	2.4%
Yakima County	3.1%	4.5%	5.1%	3.6%	2.2%	2.3%
Whatcom County	3.9%	5.5%	4.1%	1.8%	1.8%	2.6%
Thurston County	4.0%	5.5%	5.9%	3.5%	4.7%	4.3%
Seattle	4.0%	3.5%	1.2%	2.7%	2.5%	3.9%
San Francisco	4.4%	2.8%	2.5%	2.5%	3.0%	3.5%
Atlanta	16.4%	8.6%	9.3%	6.6%	6.4%	7.6%
Houston	15.9%	11.2%	7.2%	7.7%	7.7%	10.4%

A 7% vacancy rate is considered the balanced, or "natural" rate [2]
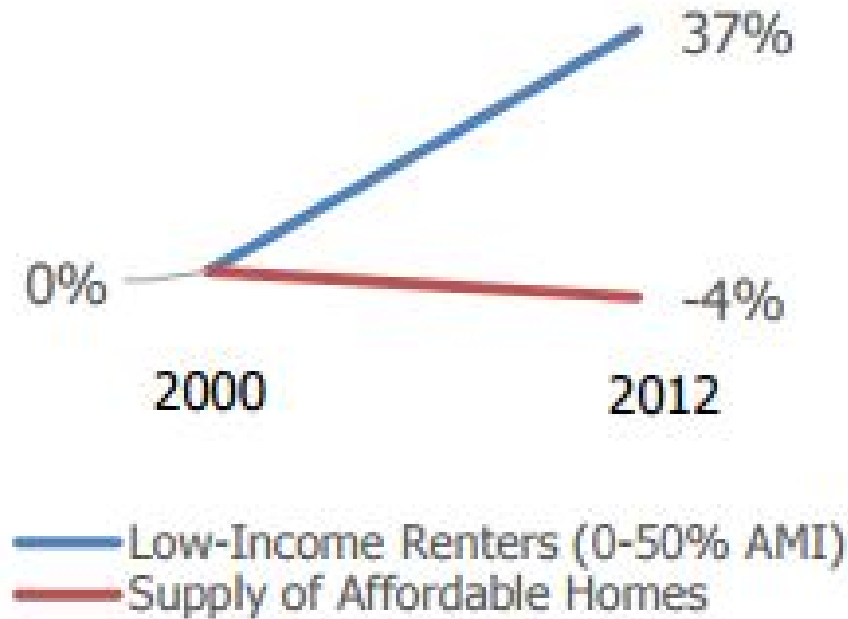
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Back to Counties!

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There is dramatically less affordable housing than there once was.

Affordable Home Supply Has Decreased While Need Has Skyrocketed

37%

0%

-4%

2000   2012

— Low-Income Renters (0-50% AMI)
— Supply of Affordable Homes

HUD, CHAS Data, 2000, 2008-2012.

What are we doing to address homelessness?

Washington State – Homelessness Partners

- Legislature
- State Advisory Council on Homelessness
- Interagency Council on Homelessness
- Affordable Housing Advisory Board
- Youth Homelessness Advisory Board
- Department of Commerce – Housing Assistance Unit
  - Office of Family and Adult Homelessness
  - Office of Homeless Youth
- County, City, & Tribal Governments
- Non-profit service providers

Local Homeless Housings Plans

Bringing Everyone Indoors

Definitions

Homeless: Someone living outside, fleeing domestic violence, or living in a place not meant for human habitation.

At-risk of homelessness: Someone with a 14 day "pay or vacate" notice.

Local Homeless Housings Plans

- Five-year plan

- Aimed at eliminating homelessness

- Must convene a broad and representative task force

- Due December 1, 2019

Local Homeless Housings Plans, Cont.

- Quickly identify and engage people experiencing homelessness

- Prioritize housing for people with the greatest needs

- Operate an effective and efficient homeless crisis response system that swiftly moves people into **stable permanent housing**

- Project the impact of the fully implemented local plans on the number of households housed and the number of households left unsheltered, assuming existing resources and state policies

- Address racial disparities among people experiencing homelessness

- Focus on action, responsible parties, timelines, and how success will be measured

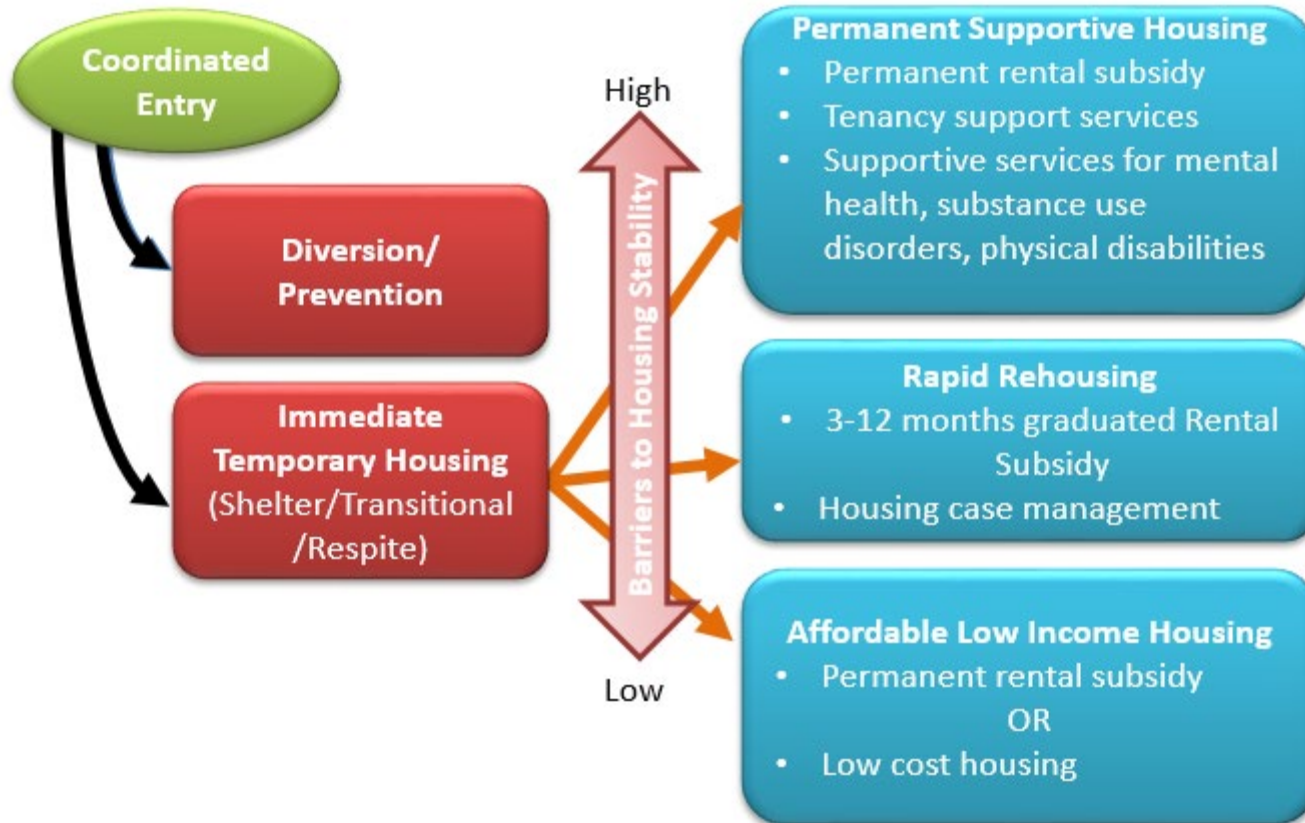- Provide recommendations to the state

We don't have a "plan" problem…

County Homeless Crisis Response Systems

Recent shifts to:

- Everyone goes through a "coordinated entry program"

- Outreach to vulnerable & unsheltered populations

- Identify and prioritize people who are the most vulnerable and unsheltered

- Quickly resolve the crisis of homelessness and "divert" people from entering the system

- Cost-effective, individually tailored programs

County Homeless Crisis Response Systems

Humanitarian Response

- Local leaders also want to address the humanitarian concerns of people living on the streets.

- Other programs—safe storage, bathrooms, parking, hygiene facilities, alternative shelter models—are an important crisis response.

- But, they are not permanent housing.

Funding for Homeless Programs

- Commerce contracts for specific activities with each county (CHG)

- Counties have locally controlled funds, which are distributed to non-profits that are working to implement the county's homeless housing plan (document recording fees)

- Foundations & independent donations

Data Collection

- Counties and their sub-contractors required to collect data about EVERY person receiving homeless services and enter in database: Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

    ✓ Demographic data
    ✓ Programmatic data

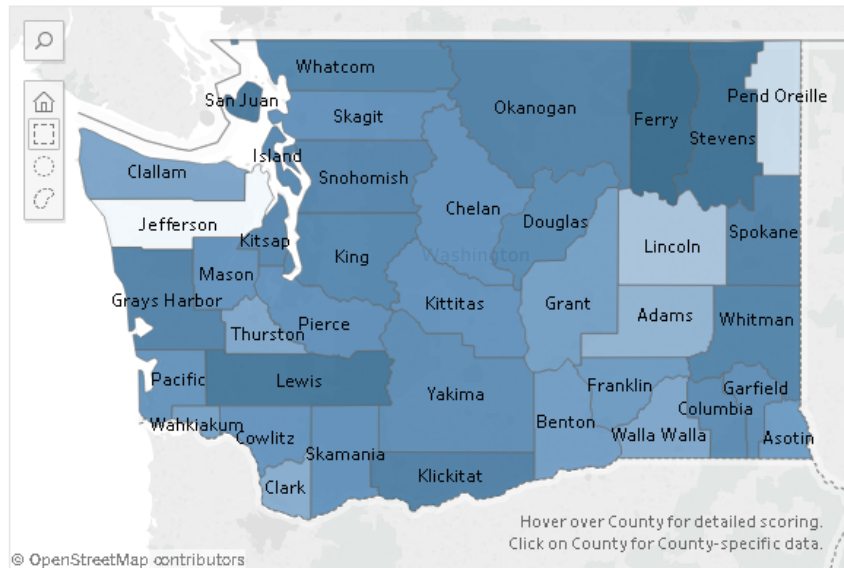- Annual Point In Time Count – 24-hour survey of people living without permanent housing

County Performance Report Cards

https://public.tableau.com/profile/comhau#!/vizhome/CountyReportCardWinter2018/ReportCard

The Big Questions

Given resources, how can we best respond to homelessness? Who should we serve and how should we serve them? Can we better use existing resources or leverage additional resources?

How can the community create an environment that supports ending homelessness?

What helps most

- Additional resources
- Adequate supply of housing
- Affordable, rent-restricted housing
- Community education and advocacy on housing and homelessness issues
- Support for siting shelters and housing in areas of high opportunity

Other Resources to Reduce Homelessness

- Real Estate Excise Tax

- HB 1406

- Veterans Assistance Funds

- Behavioral Health Sales Tax

- Surplus Property

- Voter-approved sales or property tax

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