

Washington Homelessness Housing & Assistance Act

Contact Information:

State of Washington, Department of Commerce
P.O. Box 42525, Olympia, WA 98504-2525
Contact: Tedd Kelleher (360-725-2930)
teddk@commerce.wa.gov
<http://www.commerce.wa.gov/site/474/default.aspx>

The Setting:

State Population: 6,664,195 in 2009
King County Population: 1,916,441 in 2009
Homeless Population: In Washington State there were 22,619 individuals counted as homeless one night in January 2010. Over the course of a year the total number of homeless persons in the state is estimated to be 40,000-50,000 or more.

Highlights:

Washington state is unique in increasing and dedicating revenues from the document recording fee to counties throughout the state to implement their ten-year plans to end homelessness. The passage of HB 2163 and HB 1359 represents a tremendous victory and collaboration between the Washington Coalition for the Homeless, the Washington Low-Income Housing Coalition and many others.

Overview of the Program:

The Washington State Legislature passed the Homelessness Housing and Assistance Act (HB 2163) in 2005, directing local governments to develop ten-year homeless plans with a goal of eliminating homelessness and cutting existing homeless in half by July 2015.

The Act requires County governments to:

- Develop a ten-year plan to reduce homelessness by 50 percent.
- Conduct an annual point in time count of homeless persons.
- Report progress implementing plans annually to the State of Washington Department of Commerce (previously the Department of Community, Trade and Development).
- Use the local portion of the document recording fee to reduce homelessness.

Prepared by: The Housing Trust Fund Project
Center for Community Change
www.communitychange.org/our-projects/htf
contact: mbrooks@communitychange.org



The Act also directed the Department of Commerce to develop a ten-year homeless plan outlining statewide goals and performance measures. The Department of Commerce has primary responsibility for planning and support for state implementation of the plan and is to:

- Work with the Interagency Council for the Homeless and the Affordable Housing Advisory Board to develop a ten-year plan to reduce homelessness by 50 percent by 2015.
- Coordinate the annual point in time count.
- Produce an annual report on the performance measures used to measure state and local plan implementation.
- Provide technical assistance to counties.
- Pass through 85.5% of the state portion of the document recording fee to local governments to reduce homelessness.
- Implement the Homeless Management Information Systems to collect client data used to measure program, county and state performance.

Revenue Sources:

HB2163 created a \$10 document recording fee to fund local and state implementation of the Homelessness Housing and Assistance Act. Sixty percent of the funds stay with the counties and 40% goes to the Department of Commerce.

HB1359 added an additional \$8 document recording fee with 90% of the revenues staying with the Counties and 10% going to the state Department. The funds must be used to directly accomplish the goals of the ten-year homeless plan created by each County. The remaining funds go to the Department of Commerce for homeless housing programs.

The local portion of this fee has generated approximately \$20.2 million per year. The state portion has been around \$8.6 million per year and goes into the Home Security Fund.

Eighty-four percent of the funds managed by Commerce are being passed back to County governments to support local projects to reduce homelessness. Funds not passed back to Counties are being used to implement the intensive data collection, performance measurement, planning, technical assistance and program management required by the Act.

Use of the Funds:

The legislation enables counties to use a portion of their funds for administrative costs. Under HB2163, 2% of the funds in the County can be used for administrative costs for its homeless housing programs. Under HB1359, allowable administrative costs were increased to 6%.

All thirty-seven counties throughout the state of Washington participate in the homeless programs.

The funds may be used by counties (or participating cities) for activities that contribute to the goals of the ten-year plan to end homelessness.

The Department of Commerce is also allowed a set percentage for administrative costs. Other activities it must conduct include creating the statewide homeless housing strategic plan, measuring performance, providing technical assistance to local governments, and managing the homeless housing grant program.

The grant program is to assist in providing housing and shelter for homeless people including, but not limited to: grants to operate, repair, and staff shelters; grants to operate transitional housing; partial payments for rental assistance; consolidated emergency assistance; overnight youth shelters; emergency shelter assistance; and the homeless housing grant program--the Home Security Fund.

Accomplishments:

The Department of Commerce 2008 Annual Report is available and reports on activities of the Department under the Act. Counties (and participating cities) provide their own independent reports and the following pages reflect activities from King County.

The State's 2008 Annual Report reports on primary output measures:

- Number of new homeless beds (including voucher supported private market housing) developed since 2006: 3,969 (11% of the unmet need).
- Number of people provided homeless housing and/or services in 2007: 68,642.

Among the other accomplishments for the year, the report identifies:

- A Supportive Housing Institute that provided pre-development training and technical assistance to eight project teams from mostly rural low capacity/high need counties.
- In cooperation with the Department of Corrections \$3 million supported three re-entry housing pilot projects to serve up to 165 high-risk, high-need offenders.
- \$1 million to implement 32 beds of new transitional housing for youth aging out of the foster care system.
- Funded an additional 1,300 beds of innovative projects in fifteen counties testing approaches to provide stable housing for homeless people and help them attain self-sufficiency.
- The Department of Veterans Affairs opened a 40-bed transitional housing program to reintegrate homeless veterans into the community.

This report was prepared by Matthew Leber, consultant, and Mary Brooks of the Housing Trust Fund Project/Center for Community Change. The report is made possible by funding from the Oak Foundation and the Butler Family Fund.

The Homelessness Housing and Assistance Act (RCW 43.185C) passed in 2005. Funding legislation can be found in: 2005 ESSHB 2163 and 2007 ESSHB 1359.

King County Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness

The Ten-Year Plan lays out a series of five key strategies and actions, with clear goals and measurable outcomes:

1. Prevent homelessness
2. Help people move rapidly from homelessness to housing
3. Increase the efficiency of existing systems
4. Build public and political will
5. Measure and report progress

Prevent homelessness:

- Local prevention programs helped more than 5,000 people with emergency assistance. Bellevue, Kent, Kirkland and Seattle all increased homeless prevention funding, as did the Seattle Foundation, Medina Foundation and United Way of King County.

- Outreach services to homeless people and access to treatment services improved. Discharge planning for people exiting hospitals and jails was enhanced. These improvements helped to provide the stability crucial to preventing homelessness.

Help people move rapidly from homelessness to housing:

- More than 4,600 individuals in almost 3,000 households were able to leave homelessness. These successes included people in nationally recognized programs that help people “graduate” from service-intensive housing to affordable community housing.

- A total of 662 new units or dedicated subsidies opened in 2008, with another 1,242 in the pipeline. A cumulative total of 3,344 units opened or in the pipeline exceeds the entire ten-year plan goals of most major cities.

Increased the efficiency of existing systems:

- The Funders Group, comprised of all the major funders committed to ending homelessness within King County, formed in 2008 to align resource and planning efforts focused on housing production and system efficiencies.

**A ROOF
OVER
EVERY
BED
IN KING
COUNTY**



Build public and political will:

- United Way of King County and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation are pursuing major initiatives around ending homelessness, helping to keep this issue at the forefront of awareness. The Committee to End Homelessness continues its Speakers Bureau and education and outreach efforts across the county.

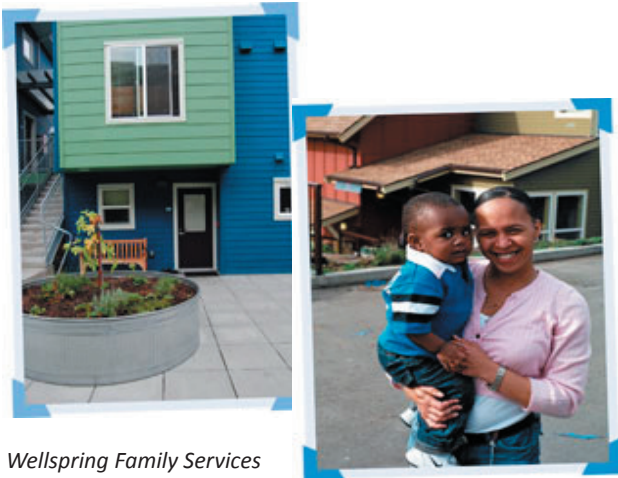
Measure and Report Progress:

- The first Safe Harbors information management system report was issued continuing a tradition of detailed reports on point-in-time count of homeless persons.

- Downtown Emergency Service Center won the 2007 Maxwell Award for Excellence for 1811 Eastlake, a “housing first” program for 75 homeless men and women with chronic alcohol addiction. It is the first of its kind in Washington State to address the needs of alcoholics who are the heaviest users of crisis services. The project included a \$400,000 Robert Wood Johnson

Foundation grant to evaluate the effects of the project, and the data generated through that evaluation is being used nationwide to promote this approach.

- The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Sound Families program, serving families in King, Pierce and Snohomish counties issued its final report, including a detailed evaluation of participant's housing stability and lessons learned. From the report: 1,487 families (4,455 individuals) were served as of June 2007. Of these, 64% had been homeless before, some four or more times. Among those successfully completing the transitional stay within their program, 89% were able to secure permanent housing after exit. Full time employment tripled from entry to exit.



Wellspring Family Services

Rapid Re-Housing for families, an expansion of our “housing first” approach, is one of our strongest innovations for 2009 and a major emphasis in our strategy to end homelessness.

This represents a turn-around from the traditional approach that viewed families who were homeless as people in need of ‘fixing’ and responded with a continuum of housing and services that moved them along, like a conveyor belt, from emergency shelter to transitional housing to permanent housing.

In 2009, local partners launched the Rapid Re-Housing Pilot Project, funded in part by \$1.9 million through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. In 2010, a portion of these funds will be used to help 150 households quickly return to housing stability.

Rapid re-housing recognizes that many households become homeless simply as a result of a financial crisis or

Three keys to Success

“I never thought I would be homeless, but when I got laid off from my job I couldn’t pay my rent and had to start staying with friends. I just want to get back to work.” -- a homeless person.

Those who developed the Ten-Year Plan incorporated proven strategies from across the country. The three key strategies -- customized to meet the unique needs of homeless single adults, youth and families -- are:

1. Prevent homelessness: By helping people stay in long-term housing, they can confront the problems that can lead to homelessness. Providing services such as rent assistance, job training and case management to individuals before they become homeless does, in fact, help them stay in their homes.
2. Move people quickly to housing with supportive services: By moving homeless people into housing and then providing integrated, supportive services, they will have a much better chance of achieving long-term stability and self-sufficiency. This includes the “housing first” model that has proven extraordinarily effective across the nation.
3. Build the public and political will to end homelessness: By creating the vision of a community free of homelessness -- and devliering on that vision -- we will generate the community-wide creativity, resources and volunteers needed to resolve this problem.

**-- Committee to End Homelessness
in King County Brochure**

following a domestic conflict. They can usually remain housed with limited assistance. By helping them return to permanent housing as soon as possible with only those services that are absolutely necessary (instead of a lengthy process of creating “housing readiness”), they avoid all the negative outcomes associated with prolonged homelessness. This opens beds for others who need them, and reduces the public and personal costs of homelessness.

--2009 Annual Report, CEH King County



McDermott Place provides 75 permanent affordable units in the Lake City neighborhood of Seattle for homeless individuals, with 38 of the units designated specifically for veterans. The service-enriched apartments help residents obtain the services they need to maintain stable housing and provide opportunities for them to access education and employment services.

The ground floor of McDermott Place houses North Helpline, a new Lake City Foodbank, and a free medical clinic staffed by RotaCare volunteers. The project is named in honor of Washington state congressman Jim McDermott, a trusted friend of affordable housing in the Pacific Northwest.

McDermott Place is operated by the Low Income Housing Institute.

Feb. 3, 2011 King County Press Release

King County awards \$21.3 million countywide to create affordable and supportive housing projects.

Housing awards create jobs from construction of 495 new units of housing around King County.

Creating housing opportunities for hundreds of local individuals and families in need, King County Executive Dow Constantine today announced \$21.3 million in grants and loans to create nearly 500 units of affordable housing and fund permanent supportive housing development across the county.

“These funds will create an estimated 600 family-wage construction jobs and boost the local economy, while providing safe and affordable housing to hundreds of local families struggling in this economy,” said Executive Constantine, who also serves as co-chair of the Governing Board for the Committee to End Homelessness in King County. “Thanks to the strength of our regional partnerships, we move one step closer to our goal of ending homelessness in King County.”

Capital dollars will help create 495 new and preserved units of affordable housing, including 225 units specifically planned for households that are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Supportive services and rental assistance funding will help end the cycle of homelessness for another 730 very vulnerable persons.

Construction of the affordable housing is funded by a variety of federal and local sources:

- The voter-approved Veterans and Human Services Levy,
- The Regional Affordable Housing Program, a dedicated local source derived from a state-authorized surcharge on document recording fees,
- Homeless Housing Act funds, a state-authorized surcharge on document recording fees specifically for homeless housing,
- Local King County Housing Innovations for Persons with Developmental Disabilities funds, and
- Federal funds administered by the King County Consortium HOME Investment Partnerships Program.

The \$21.3 million administered by King County was part of a Combined Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for Homeless Housing announced in July 2010. This was the sixth countywide combined notice of funding availability (NOFA) process for capital, operating support, rental assistance and services funding for low-income housing and proposals that meet the goals of the Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness. Each year, public and private funders join together to refine and streamline the competitive process for applicant agencies and coordinate award decisions across funders.