

Housing & Homelessness



Photo provided by The Sophia Way.

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Themes

Bellevue, like other communities in the Puget Sound Region and other high-cost communities in the country, is grappling with housing insecurity. These challenges have been exacerbated by the pandemic and rising inflation. Additionally, Bellevue's rapid growth has increased the demand for housing and pushed up housing prices in the area.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), households paying more than 30% of their income for housing are considered cost burdened. Households paying more than 50% of their income for housing are considered severely cost burdened and may have trouble affording other necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care. Broadly speaking, homelessness is the situation of an individual, family, or community that lacks stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate means and ability of acquiring it.

The percentage of Bellevue residents that are severely cost burdened by rent has risen significantly from 15.4% in 2019 (representing 22,803 residents) to 18.2% in 2022 (representing 27,960 residents).

Demographic data relevant to housing cost burden is presented in **Figure 23** and **Figure 24** below, illustrating disparities by race/ethnicity both for who is more likely to rent versus own and who is more likely to be cost burdened.



Figure 23. Percent of cost burdened homeowners in Bellevue, by race/ethnicity (Department of Housing and Urban Development, Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (HUD CHAS), 2015-2019)

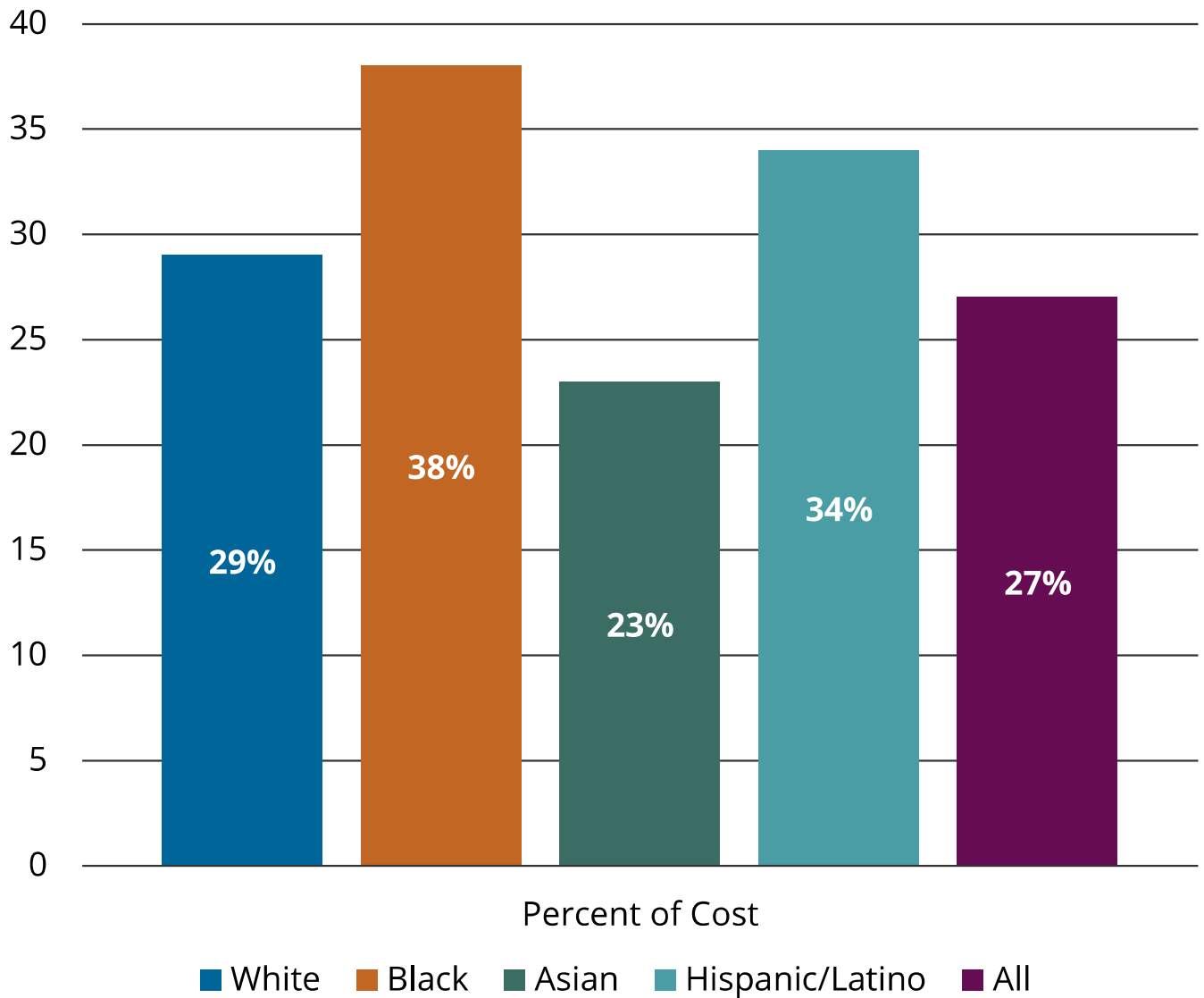
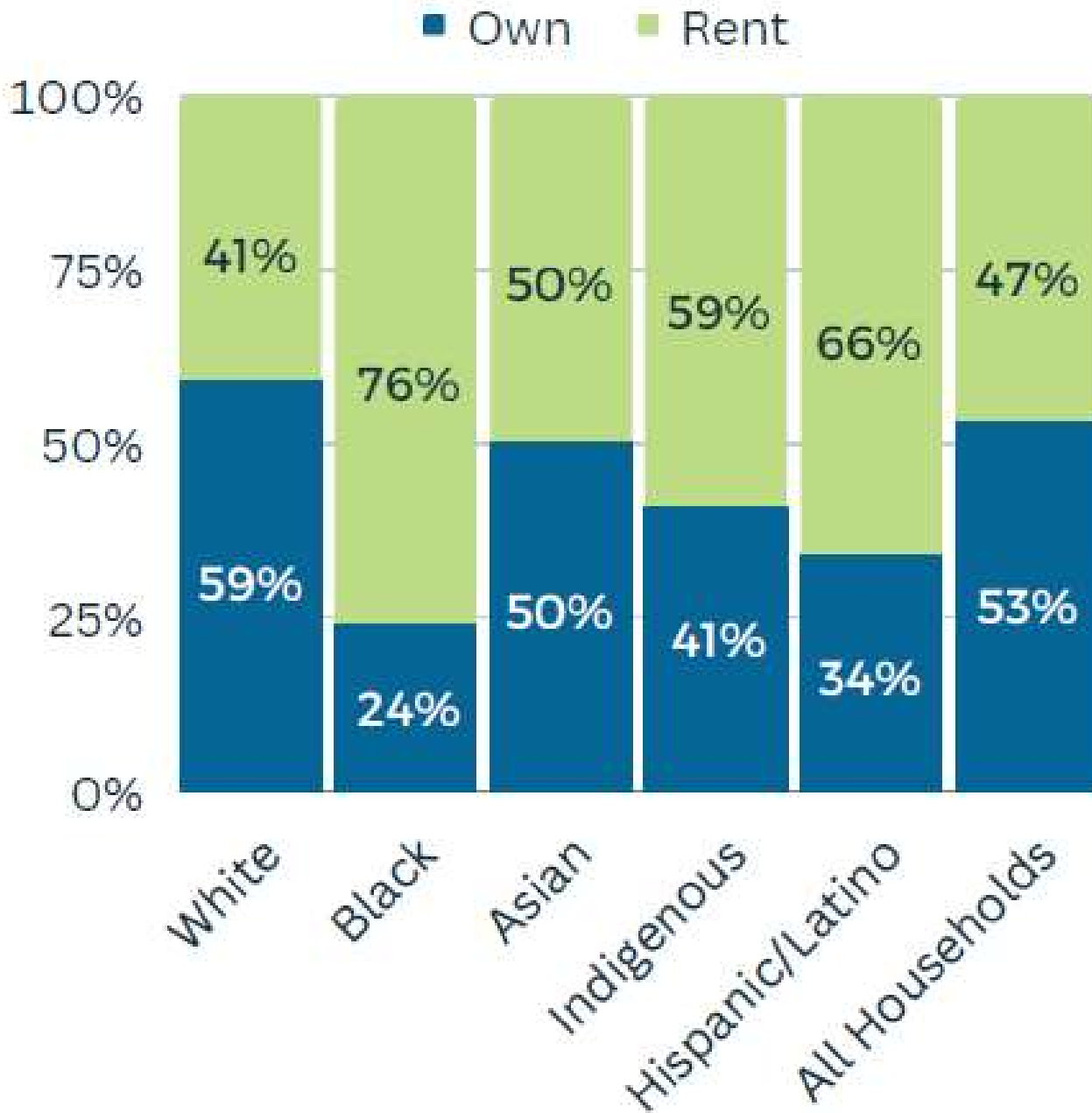


Figure 24. Percentage of homeowners vs. Renters in Bellevue, by race/ethnicity (American Community Survey, 2020).

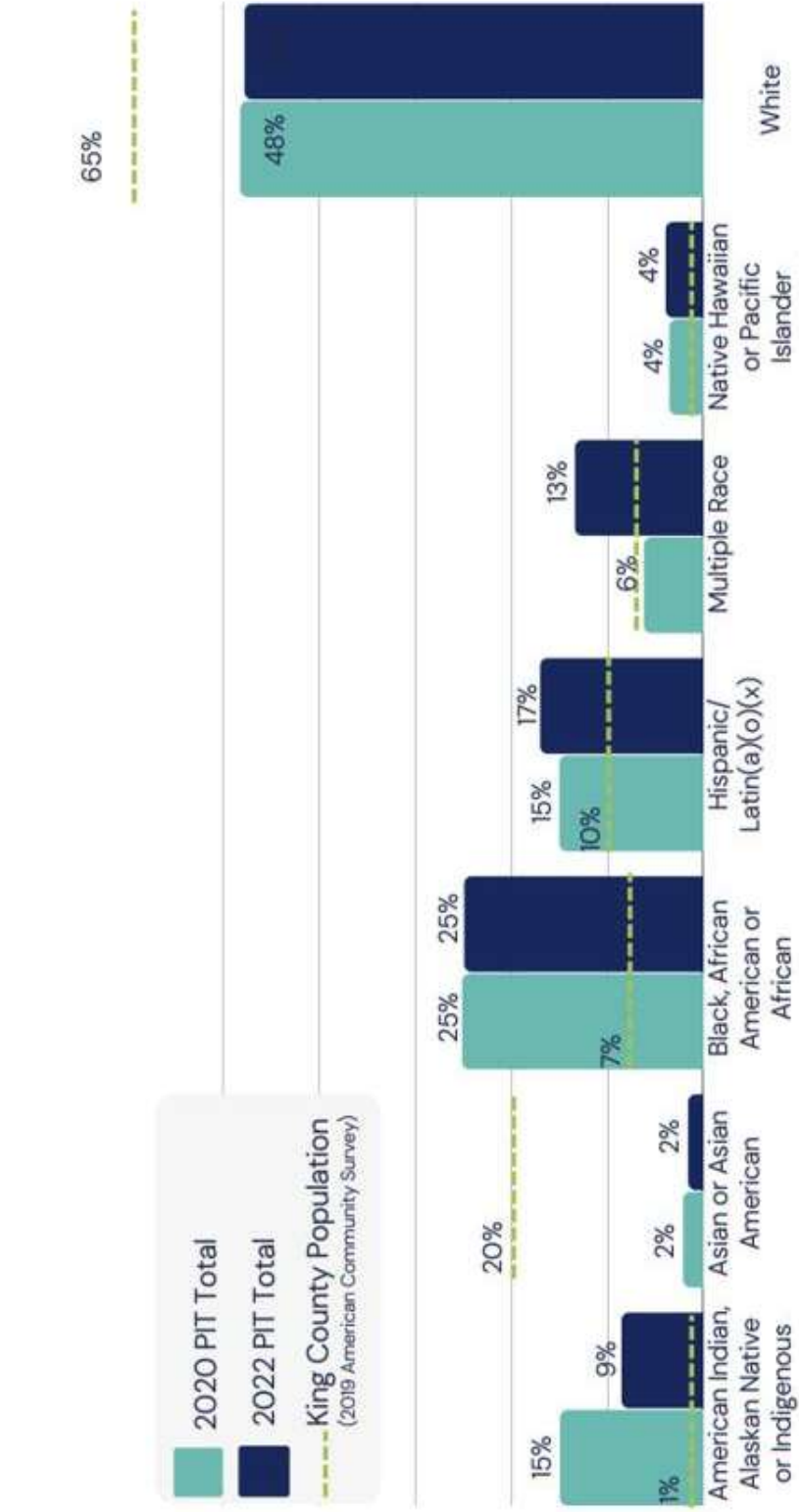


The 2022 Point in Time (PIT) Count conducted by the King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA) showed an increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness in King County from 11,751 in 2020 to 13,368 in 2022.⁵ This is a one-night count of unhoused individuals. While a national standard, this methodology is widely understood to be an undercount. The King County Department of Community and Human Services Cross Systems Homelessness Analysis found that 40,871 individuals experienced homelessness during 2020. This number pulls from several databases to estimate the number of people that experience homelessness at some point during the year and is intended to serve as a supplement to the PIT Count (which is a snapshot in time vs. any time during the course of a year) and is the number that King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA) holds itself accountable to.⁶

There are also significant disparities about who is more likely to be experiencing homelessness. Using data from the 2022 PIT count, individuals identifying as American Indian, Alaskan Native or Indigenous individuals; Black, African American, or African; Hispanic/Latino; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, as well as individuals identifying as more than one race were overrepresented in King County's population experiencing homelessness (i.e., larger percent of unhoused population than County population overall (**Figure 25**). Similarly, individuals living with disabilities and those experiencing behavioral health challenges are more likely to experience homelessness (**Figure 26**).



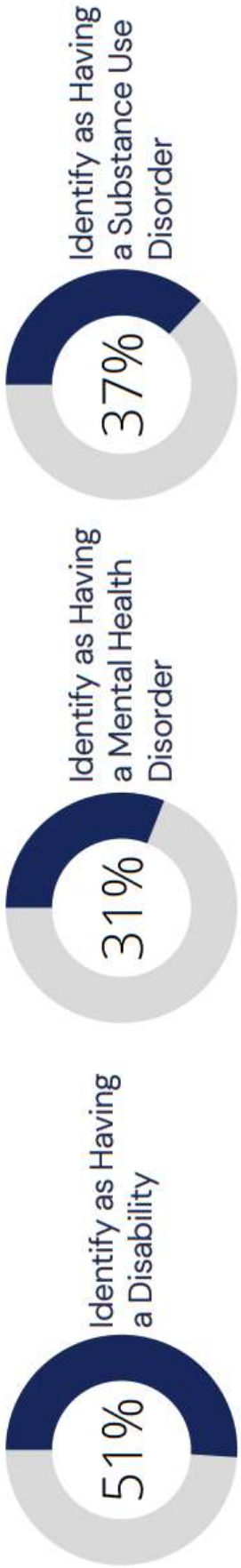
Figure 25. Disparities in homelessness for King County residents, by race/ethnicity (2020 and 2022 PIT Count, 2019 American Community Survey)⁷



*HUD requires submission of race and ethnicity as separate categories. Here, we have included households identifying as Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x) with the HUD-required race categories. Since these questions are asked separately, a respondent may identify as Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x) and in another category represented in this chart.



Figure 26. Percent of unhoused individuals by disability and behavioral health (2022 King County Point in Time Count).



Bellevue School District has seen a significant increase in students experiencing homelessness in the last year (**Figure 27**). Data from the District indicates that during the 2022-23 school year there were 663 students identified as homeless.⁸

Homelessness in the Bellevue School District is primarily driven by families facing eviction, natural disasters, disability, unexpected illness, unemployment, fleeing violence, and poverty. The District's Office of Homeless Services indicated that the increase is largely attributable to housing costs, including increasing rent and high move-in costs. When families of the district are priced out of housing it frequently leads to households "doubling up." Approximately 70% of current students experiencing homelessness are forced to stay in a temporary location with friends or relatives, which increases instability for all household members and has educational impacts for students. Amongst students experiencing homelessness, there are disparities by race/ethnicity (**Figure 28, Figure 29**). Of the students who were identified as experiencing homelessness during the 2022-23 school year, 66.2% identified as Hispanic, 9.15% as Black/African/American, 5.3% as two or more, 2.16% as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander and 11.5% as White.⁹



Figure 27. Trend in number of students experiencing homelessness in Bellevue School District (Data from Bellevue School District¹⁰)

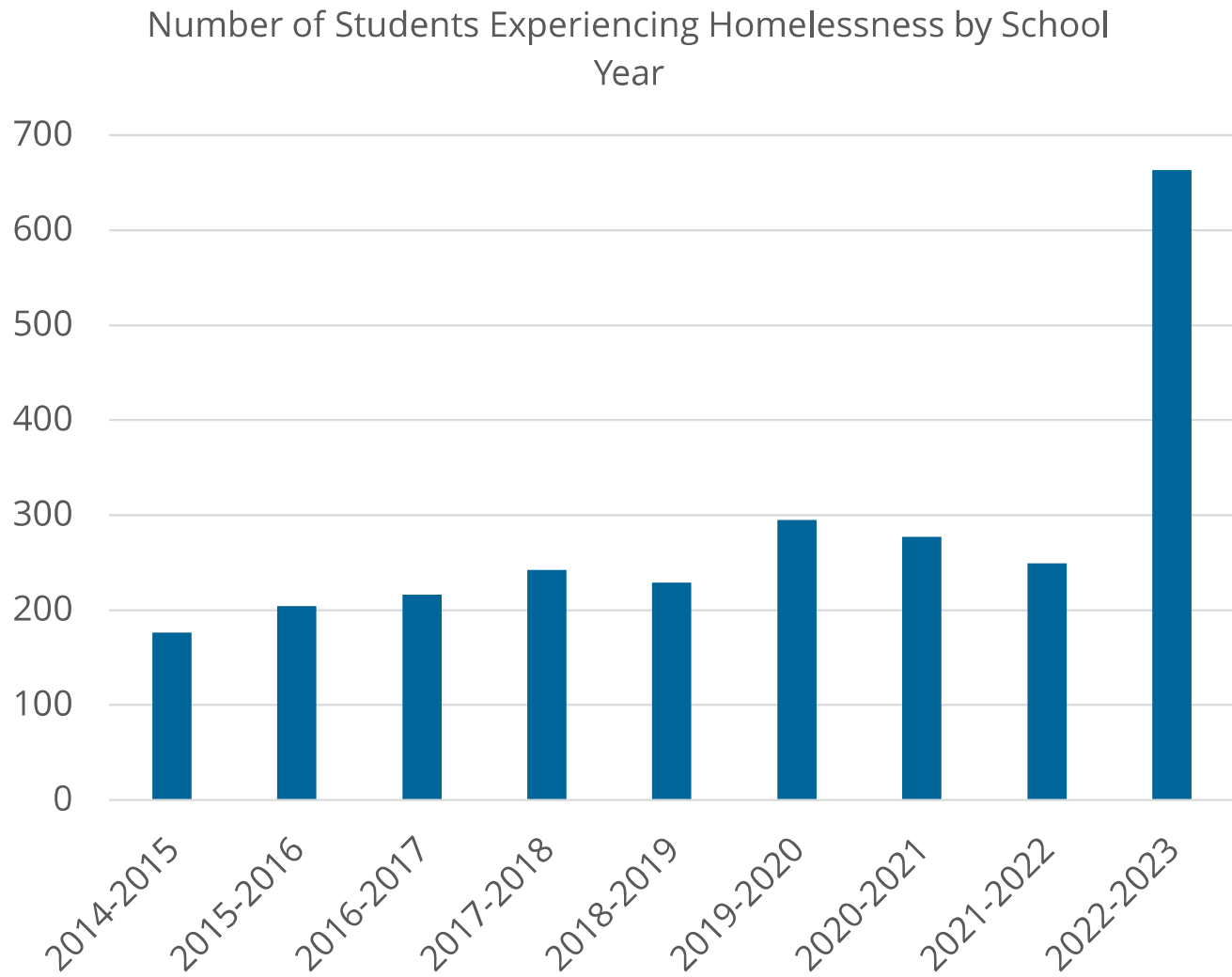


Figure 28. Percent of students experiencing homelessness, by race/ethnicity (Bellevue School District, 2023)

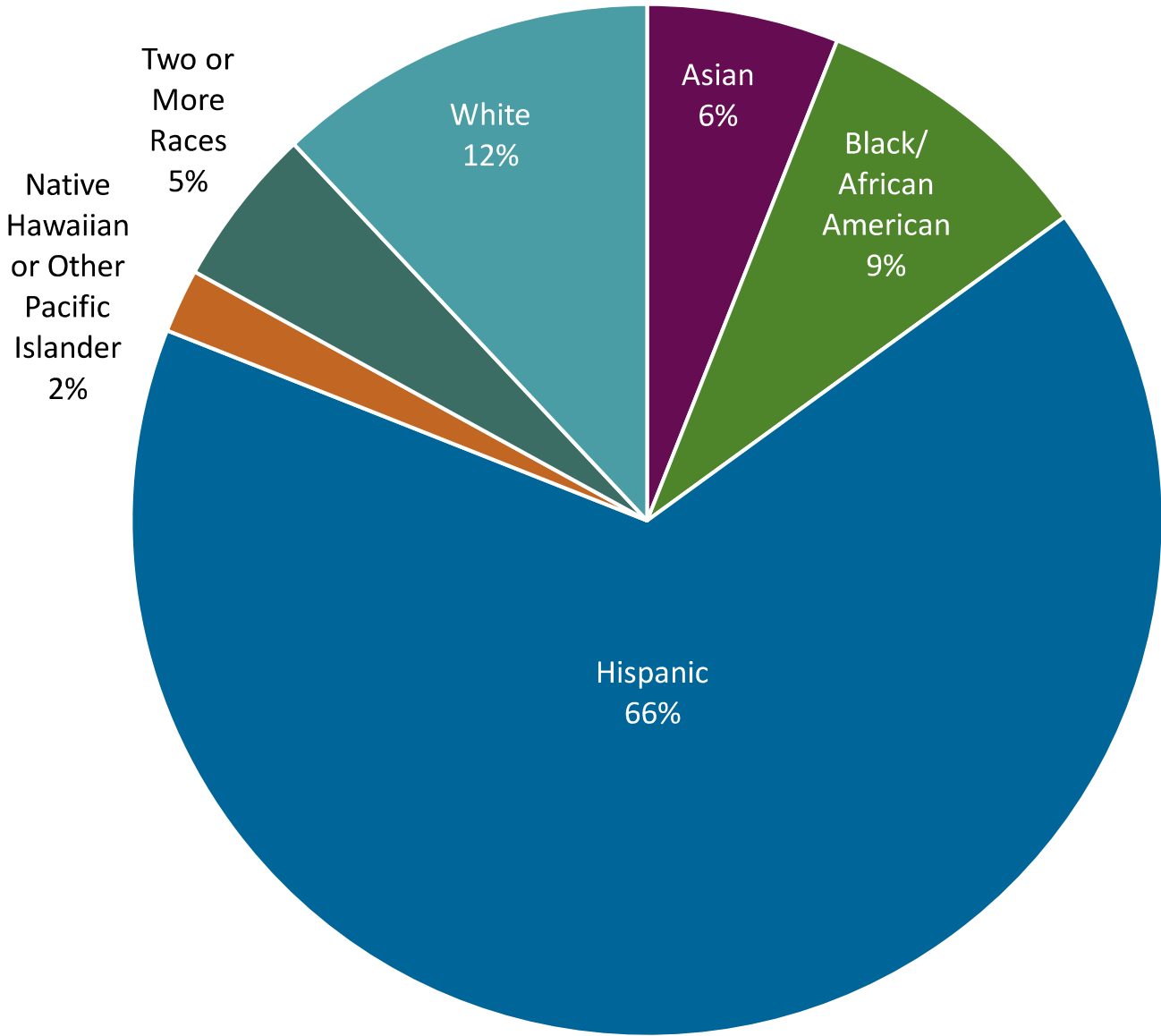
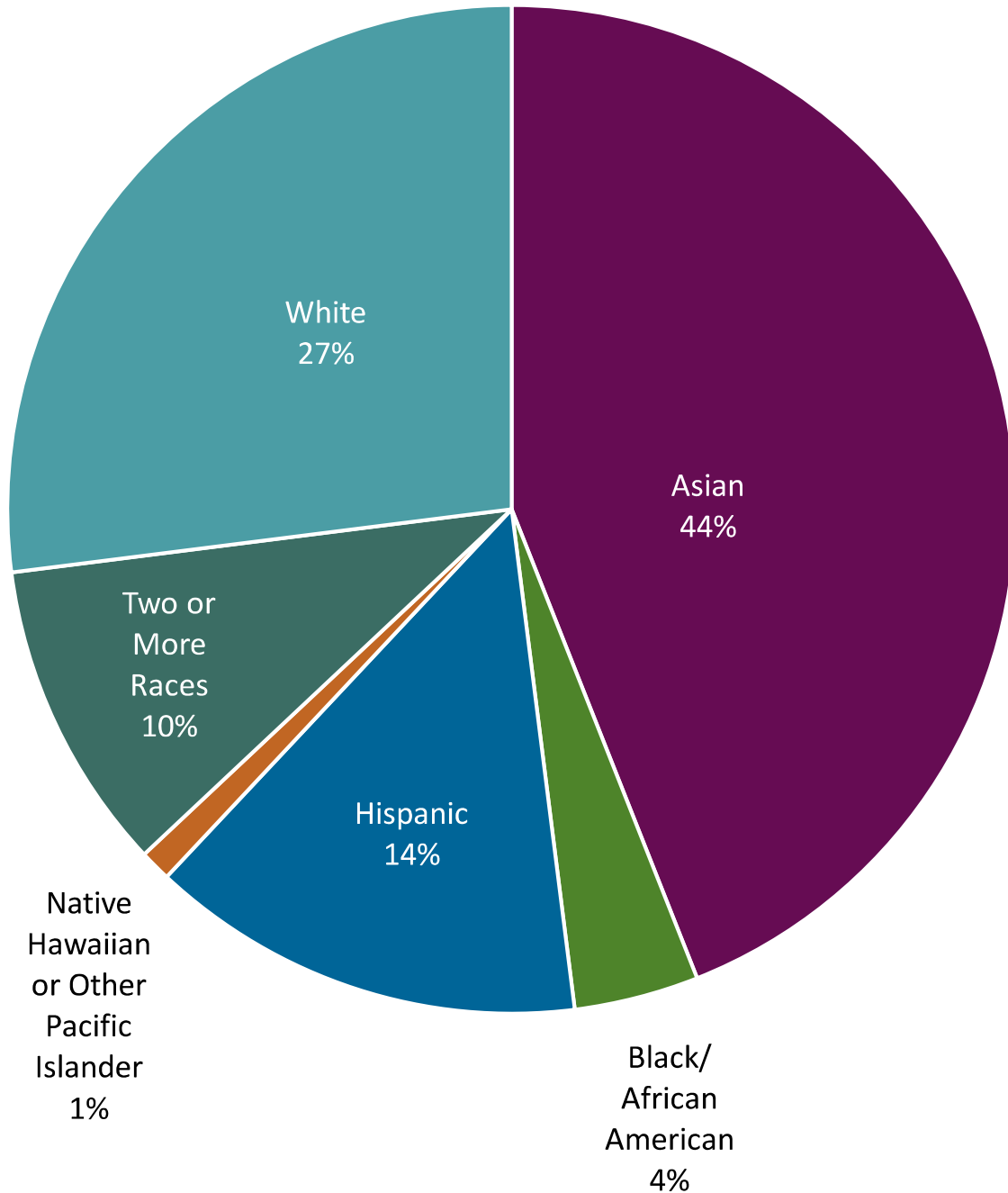


Figure 29. Race/ethnicity of Bellevue School District Students (Bellevue School District, Fall 2022)



Among community survey respondents, support to address housing insecurity was the service that the greatest number of individuals identified having sought during the past two years. When asked about whether they were able to find assistance to obtain affordable housing, only 33% who reported seeking this service said they were able to find the help that they needed in their community. Less than a third (32%) felt the amount of time they had to wait for assistance was reasonable and only 44% felt that they were able to find the service in a place they could travel to in a reasonable amount of time. Finally, less than half (47%) felt they were able to receive help from an organization that supported their cultural needs and only 38% were satisfied with the service they received.

When asked if they were able to find assistance to maintain housing or pay bills, 58% of individuals who reported seeking this service said they could find the help they needed in the community and 44% felt that the amount of time they had to wait to receive assistance was reasonable. When asked about of the distance they had to travel to receive services, nearly two-thirds (63%) felt they were able to find the service in a place they could travel to in a reasonable amount of time, and 54% were satisfied with the quality of the service they received. Finally, two-thirds (68%) of those surveyed seeking assistance to maintain housing or pay bills agreed that they were able to obtain services that met their cultural and language needs.

Older adults identified that affordable housing or housing that meets the needs of seniors requires some specific attention, as well as the need for additional transportation support for this age group. For older adults, phone-based apps such as Uber and Lyft were not optimal given the challenges with using technology many experience.

Service Trends

Below are examples of service trends in the areas of housing and homelessness. These examples are intended to provide a snapshot of this



service area and are not a comprehensive reflection of available services in Bellevue.

- Bellevue, along with its regional partners through the KCRHA and ARCH (A Regional Coalition for Housing), has been focused on building out the continuum of care to serve people experiencing housing insecurity in the region. This means investing in different types of housing and services that reflect different needs among the population. A recent example of this includes the **Eastgate Housing Campus** which opened over the last year and includes multiple strategies to build out the housing continuum including:
 - **Plymouth Crossing**: the first Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) development on the Eastside which will house 92 individuals who have experienced chronic homelessness
 - **Porchlight**: a new 100-bed men’s shelter and day center with supportive services
 - **Polaris at Eastgate**: an affordable housing development that will have 353 studio to three-bedroom units in two mid-rise towers
- The City is currently developing a **Safe Parking Pilot Program** that will serve individuals living in their vehicle in the City of Bellevue. The program has space for up to 20 vehicles and will offer immediate support to people forced to live in their car, including by offering access to a day center with bathrooms, laundry and kitchen facilities, and wireless internet. While offering those immediate services, the program will also help participants to search for long term housing. The pilot will be hosted on City-owned property at 515 116th Ave NE.

