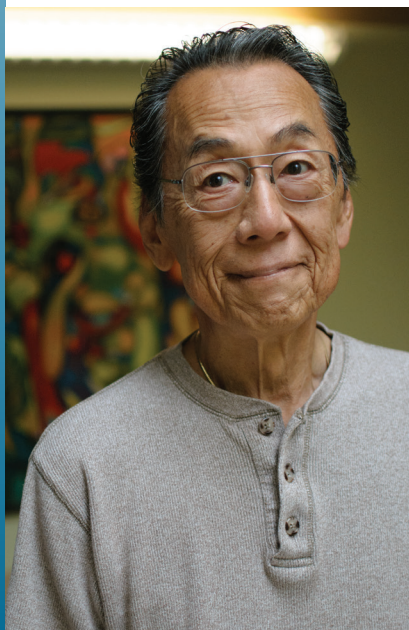


# Goal Areas



# Goal #1: Food to Eat and Roof Overhead

## Why is this Goal Area Important?

Basic needs like food, shelter and clothing are critical for people to thrive and grow, and vital for a healthy community. This is particularly true for children, as food insufficiency has a multitude of consequences for school-age children such as poorer health, poorer academic performance which can lead to grade repetition and an increase in psychological issues, as well as being overweight and obesity.<sup>1</sup> Adults, too, tend to perform better in the workplace if they have a healthy diet. Workers who ate healthful meals and exercised on a regular basis had better job performance and lower absenteeism.<sup>2</sup> Many in Bellevue continue to struggle to meet basic needs. Vulnerable populations such as children, older adults, ethnic minorities, and low-income households are disproportionately affected by food security, despite the extensive private and public food safety net in the United States.<sup>3</sup>

Homelessness is a crisis in King County – in 2015, on a given day, nearly 10,000 people experience homelessness in King County and almost 40% are living unsheltered.<sup>4</sup> During the winter of 2014-2015, the men’s winter shelter in Bellevue served a total of 449 unduplicated men and the shelter for women/families served 194 adults and 106 children.<sup>5</sup> A 2013 national study found predictive factors for community rates of homelessness, including housing market, safety net, economy, demographics and transience. The study found a 15% increase in metro areas and a 39% increase in suburbs and rural areas per \$100 increase in median rent. In December 2014, The Seattle Times reported an additional surge in rents with Bellevue’s median rent at \$1,630.<sup>6</sup>

## What’s Working?

- In 2014, there were 10,090 Bellevue residents who received Basic Food (Washington’s food stamp program), 7.5% of the City’s population.<sup>7</sup> Bridge To Basics is a WithinReach program and is a collabora-

tion between WithinReach and United Way of King County. They work with Hopelink to connect clients with other services such as Basic Food/food stamps, utility assistance, free or low-cost children’s health insurance, child care for working parents, job training resources, and free and low cost banking services.<sup>8</sup>

- Local emergency financial assistance providers, like the Salvation Army, Catholic Community Services, Solid Ground and Hopelink, reported that they provided services 1,355 people in Bellevue in 2014, largely through one-time rental or mortgage assistance to avoid eviction or foreclosure. They also aided with utility bills, car repairs, prescription drug costs and food vouchers.<sup>9</sup>
- In 2014, Hopelink’s Bellevue Center food bank distributed 871,016 pounds of food to low-income individuals in our service area. Among the clients that received food at the Food Bank were 3,337 Bellevue individuals (1,356 families) who had a total of over 39,000 visits to the food bank (average of 11 food bank visits per individual).<sup>10</sup> Emergency Feeding Program distributed 19,468 emergency food packs to Bellevue residents.<sup>11</sup> Renewal Food Bank distributed 231,000 pounds of food in Bellevue to 27,627 people in 2014. The number of homeless families more than doubled from 2013 to 2014 and they are helping between 240-270 families every week.<sup>12</sup>
- Between 2005 and 2014, (10 years) Eastside affordable housing developers and service providers created 448 housing units for families, 259 for seniors, 188 for homeless persons, 43 units for youth and young adults, and 30 for persons with special needs. Additionally, the ARCH Trust fund is participating in the Regional Equitable Development Initiative Fund which will help secure sites in emerging Transit Oriented Development areas. No specific numbers can be given as to the number of units that will be created using this source.<sup>13</sup>

- The Bellevue School District is participating in the Summer Food Service Program, which provides breakfast and lunch at no charge to children 18 years of age and younger. Meals are offered at Stevenson and Lake Hills elementary schools.<sup>14</sup>
- Bellevue Nourishing Network aims to fill the existing gaps that leave people hungry by weaving together the efforts, stories, and ideas of individual and organizational networks; employ the skills, tools and resources to sustain community-driven problem solving and network weaving over time. Examples of current efforts include Back Pack Meals for Kids --weekend food support for kids in Bellevue Schools and filling requests for hot meals at teen programs and homeless shelters.<sup>15</sup>

## Food Security and Hunger Prevalence

- Food security means access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the State of Washington ranks 37th in food insecurity among the 50 states, with 14.3% of Washington's households classified as food insecure and 5.6% as very low food insecure.<sup>16</sup>
- The percentage of students receiving free and reduced-cost lunch can also help measure community food security. According to Bellevue School District, the total percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced price lunch assistance has decreased to 19.0% as of October 2014. This compares to 21.2% in October 2013.<sup>17</sup>
- There are 7 schools in the district where at least 30% of their students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, and 10 schools reported that at least 20% of their students qualified.<sup>18</sup>

## Service Trends

### Food Banks, Food Stamps and Meal Programs

- In 2014, Renewal Food Bank had 11,587 visits to the food bank and fed a total of 27,627 people. In 2015, they are currently on pace to feed over 30,000 people.<sup>19</sup>
- Between 2010 and 2012, the number of individuals using the Bellevue food bank at Hopelink decreased. However, in the last few years, this trend appears to have plateaued, and the number of clients seeking services is slightly higher than from 2012. The need in the community is still very high - as evidenced by the high number of households who are eligible for the food bank (earning less than 185% of federal poverty level), and they continue to work to increase access and reduce barriers to our food bank services. Hopelink continues to view the food programs as a supplemental support for many low-income families which helps to stabilize their family.<sup>20</sup>
- Emergency Feeding Program of Seattle and King County (EFP) provides emergency food bags through distribution partners (faith groups, schools, etc.). EFP bags are not intended as an ongoing source of supplemental nutrition, but rather as an emergency response to hunger crises. The agency has seen a slight decrease from 2010

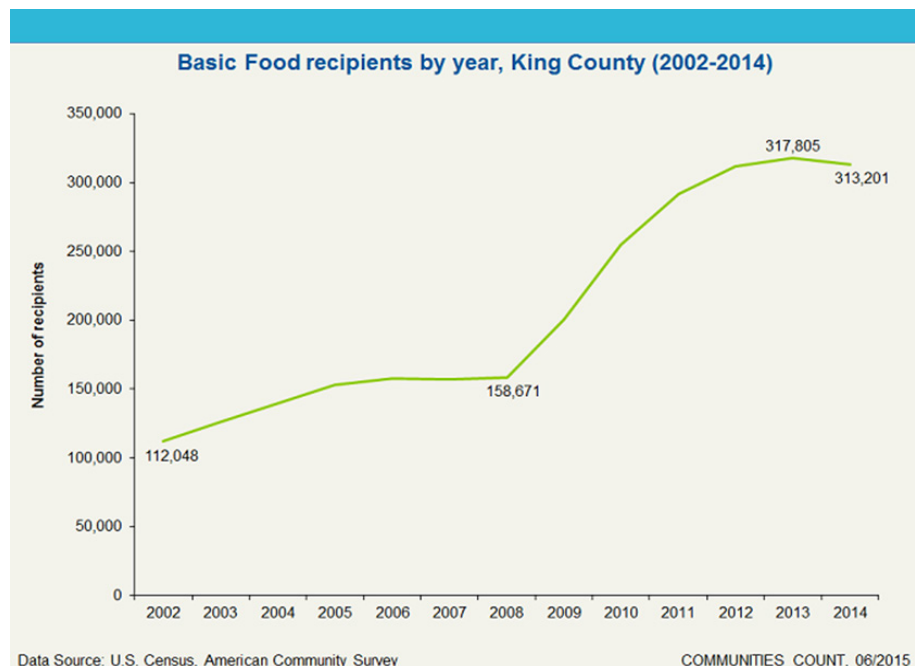
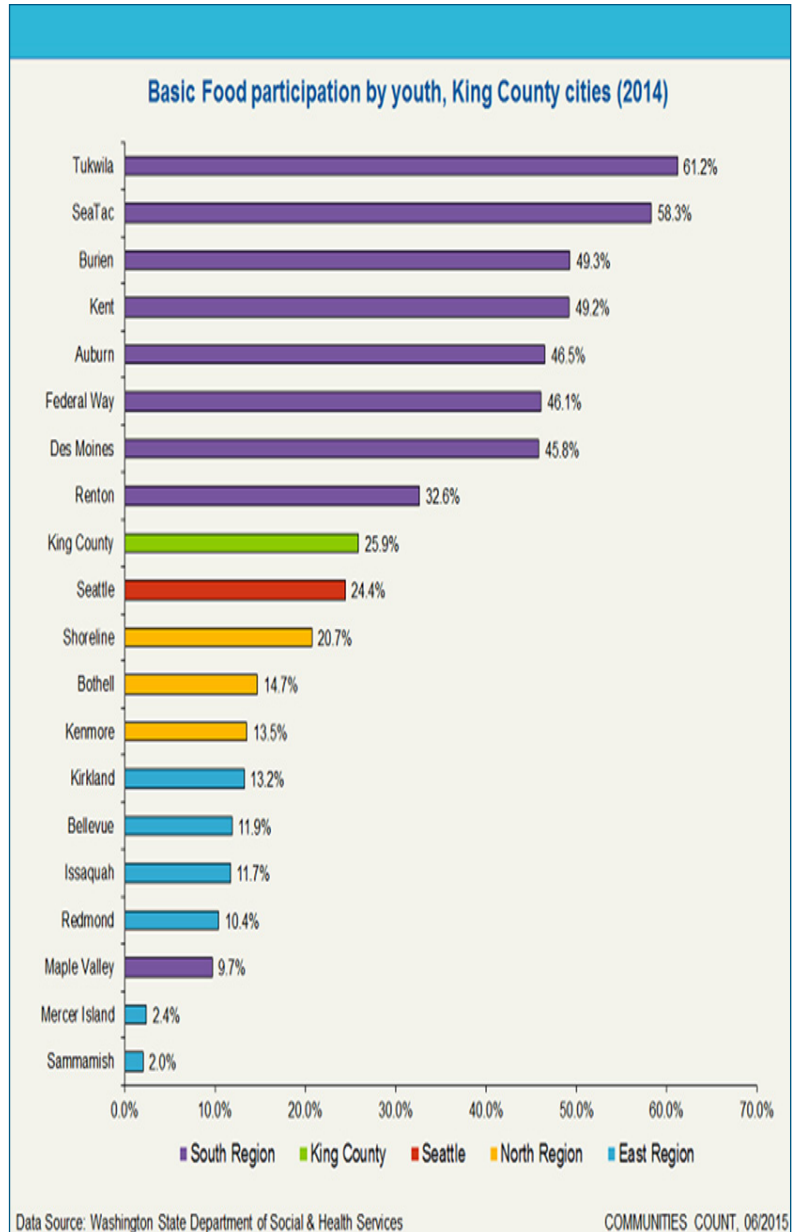


Figure 1

to 2012, from 24,000 to 22,000 delivered food bags, with a slight increase as of October 2013 to 16,000 food bags and an increase to 19,468 in 2014.

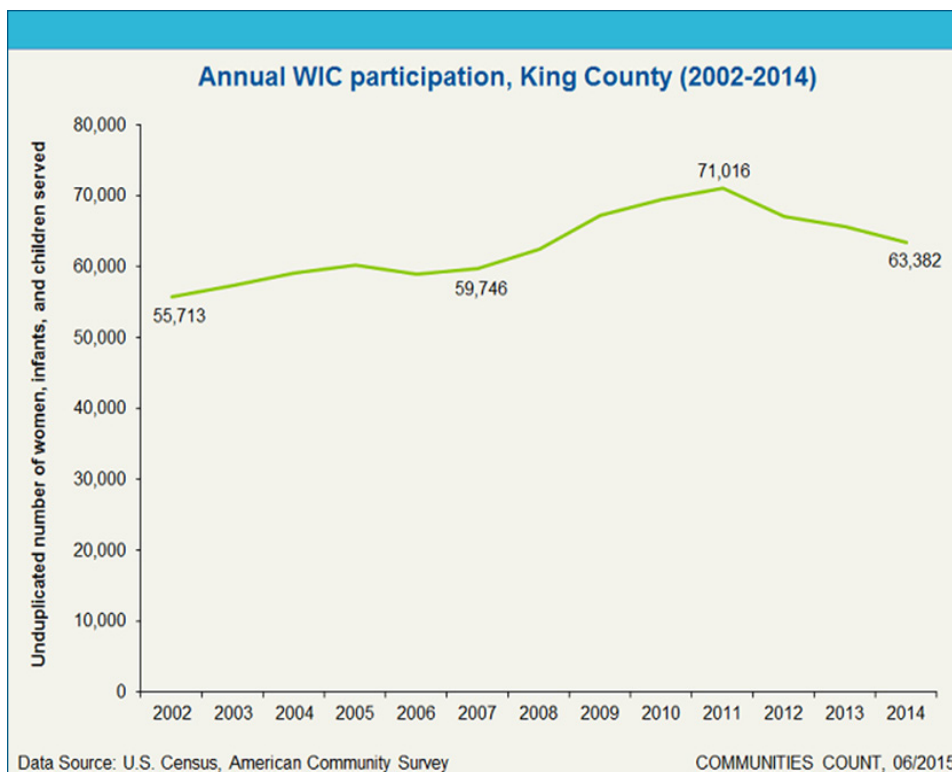
- The Salvation Army operates a weeknight meal program in the Crossroads neighborhood. Program staff report that they served about 60 per night in 2014 and 2015 although the number has reached as high as 80 people per night. They also are seeing more children than in past years, up to 15 to 25 per night.<sup>21</sup>
- Basic Food includes the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), previously known as “food stamps,” and the state-funded food assistance program for legal immigrants. Five years after the “official” end of the Great Recession, the need for food assistance has barely started to go down.<sup>22</sup>
- The number of Washington residents receiving food stamps has increased significantly (34%) in the two year period of 2012-2014. In 2014, 1.5 million people received food assistance, compared to 1.1 million in 2012.<sup>23</sup>
- As shown in Figure 1, in King County, the total recipients for the Basic Food program was relatively stable between 2013 and 2014, from 317,805 persons in 2013 to 313,201 in 2014, just over a 1% reduction.<sup>24</sup> However, the number of King County households participating in the Basic Food program was still almost double the number in 2008, and close to three times the number in 2002. The increase from 2008 to 2009 was in part due to broadening of the Basic Food income limit to 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (from 130%). With this eligibility change, plus the growing impact of the Great Recession, Basic Food participation jumped 26% in 1 year (from 158,671 in 2008 to 200,589 in 2009).<sup>25</sup>
- The number of Bellevue residents participating in SNAP has fluctuated over the

years. In 2005, that number of Bellevue residents rose to 5,117, decreasing to 4,152 in 2007, increasing to 7,860 by June 2010. By June 2012, the number had increased to 9,792 (25% increase), and then slightly increased to 10,090 in 2014 (3% increase).<sup>26</sup>



**Figure 2**

- As shown in Figure 2, in 2014 more than one quarter of King County children (106,470 individuals) participated in the Basic Food program. This included close to one half of all children (birth to 17 years) in Tukwila, SeaTac, Burien, Kent, Auburn, Federal Way, and Des Moines. Presenting only the percentage of children served



priced meals were in South King County.<sup>29</sup>

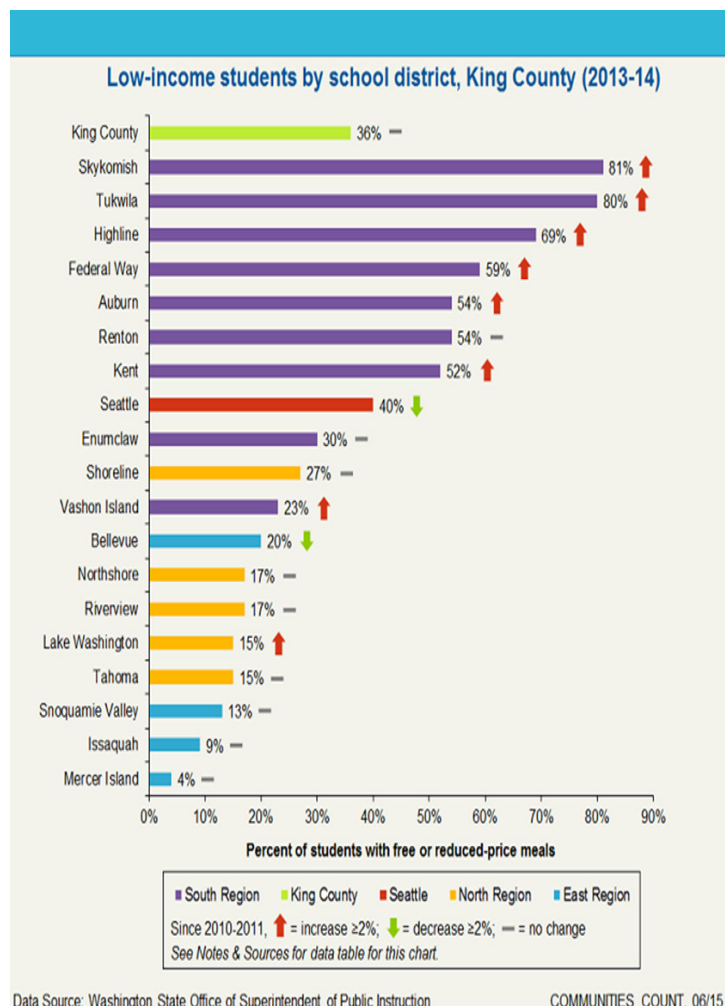
### Emergency Financial Assistance

- Emergency financial assistance continues to be a need for low- to moderate-income Bellevue residents.
- In 2014, the City’s Utility Discount Program provided utility discounts and rebates for 1,208 low-income seniors and disabled residents who receive water, sewer and drainage services from the City of Bellevue. In 2014, the Utility

**Figure 3**

can deflect attention from real need in relatively prosperous communities. For example, 11.9% of children in Bellevue = 3,079 children; and 10.4% of children in Redmond = 1,291 children.<sup>27</sup>

- As shown in Figure 3, participation in WIC (the Federal Special Supplemental Nutrition program for Women, Infants and Children) continued to rise for 2 years after the Great Recession officially ended (June, 2009), and still hasn’t returned to pre-recession levels.<sup>28</sup>
- As shown in Figure 4, in the 2013-2014 school year, 36% of King County students (99,114 individuals) qualified for free or reduced-price school meals. Compared to 2010-2011, this represents an increase in number (from 96,129) and no change in the percentage of qualifying students.
- The only two districts in which the percent of eligible children decreased were Seattle and Bellevue, cities that have become increasingly unaffordable for low-income families. With the exception of Skykomish (with a May 2014 public-school enrollment of only 37), all districts where more than half of all students qualified for free or reduced-



**Figure 4**

“The food people get at food banks is not always culturally appropriate so more vouchers are needed for fresh food and produce so people can shop for themselves.”

*Key Informant Interview, City of Bellevue Wraparound Services Program Staff*

Tax Rebate Program provided refunds of utility taxes to 1,221 low-income residents.<sup>30</sup>

- Hopelink’s Energy Assistance Program saw a decrease in the number of households who have been completely shut off from their heat source. Between 2013 and 2014, the number of household without heat dropped from 206 to 134 (35%). The warm winters over the last couple years has decreased the bill cost for households in our area, making the cost more manageable for clients to seek assistance before their account is shut off. The warmer weather also means the annual heat cost for clients is reduced, which has dropped the average grant amount per household. However, the number of low-income households seeking energy assistance demonstrates that there is still a need for assistance (40% increase between 2013 and 2014).<sup>31</sup>
- The King County Housing Stability Project (KCHSP), operated by Solid Ground, makes one-time loans and/or grants to homeowners and tenants in danger of losing their housing due to short-term financial difficulties. This program also provides loans or grants to homeless families and individuals who need assistance moving to permanent housing, and limited assistance for other types of moves. In 2014, this program served 31 Bellevue households. A total of \$35,443 was provided to Bellevue residents in need of move-in or eviction prevention assistance.<sup>32</sup>

## Homelessness

### Prevalence

#### Data on Homelessness from One Night Count

- Each year, the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness conducts a One Night Count of the homeless in King County to provide a snapshot of the problem and track trends over time. The 2015

count conducted in January found a total of 3,772 individuals sleeping unsheltered and outside. This is a 21% increase when compared to the same areas counted in 2014. Residents of Tent Cities are included in the unsheltered count.

- In 2015, the One Night Count found 134 unsheltered individuals in urban East King County (including portions of Bellevue, Kirkland and Redmond). Compared to the 178 individuals counted in 2014, this represents a 33% decrease.<sup>33</sup>

#### Data on King County’s Point-In-Time Count of Homeless Young People

- An estimated 5,000-10,000 youth experience homelessness during the course of each year in King County. On any given night, approximately 1,000 young people are homeless. Count Us In is a point-in-time count of homeless young people by a collaboration of multiple homeless youth service providers and key community members. In King County, 824 youth and young adults were counted as homeless or unstably housed in January 2015. Of this total, 303 youth and young adults identified as homeless and unstably housed and 521 were staying in shelter or transitional housing programs.<sup>34</sup>
- A new Count Us In partner in 2015 was King County Juvenile Detention because it’s recognized that young people who are incarcerated often have a history of housing instability. Of the 54 youth surveyed, 26 (48%) had a history of homelessness/instability.<sup>35</sup>

#### Data on Family Homelessness from Family Housing Connection (Coordinated Entry)

- Family Housing Connection (FHC), the countywide coordinated entry system to house homeless families, began operation in April 2012. In its first year over 3,700 homeless families were assessed, including 248 families who were currently without shelter and sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation as of July 5, 2013.<sup>36</sup>

- As of October 2014, there were 1,009 families on the Family Housing Connection placement roster waiting for a referral to emergency housing.<sup>37</sup> As of February 2015, there were 846 families on the placement roster. Of those, 568 families reported staying in a place not meant for human habitation and 278 families reported staying in shelter.<sup>38</sup>
- As of July 30th, 2015, in East King County there were 54 families staying in places not meant for human habitation and awaiting referral to emergency shelter, and 16 families currently in emergency shelter awaiting a longer term housing referral. Included in this total were 15 Bellevue families staying in places not meant for habitation and awaiting referral to emergency shelter, and 5 families currently in emergency shelter awaiting a longer term housing referral.<sup>39</sup>
- Since its inception, FHC has undergone a number of design and practice changes (including the addition of Diversion Services at initial assessment in 2014). However, despite these policy and practice changes, larger changes were needed to make the system more effective and efficient for homeless families. In August 2014, the Committee to End Homelessness (CEH) engaged a consultant to complete an analysis of the current coordinated entry system for families and make recommendations for refinement. Some of the challenges the consultant identified include:
  - o Referral and matching process is set up to fill units/openings, not to house people experiencing homelessness;
  - o Assessment tool does not effectively triage or prioritize;
  - o Assessment process length and does not collect information needed to make matches;
  - o Clients often lack documentation needed for housing and no one is tasked with helping them get it;
  - o High and multiple screening criteria lead to many unsuccessful referrals, and some families receive no referrals;
  - o Data system not integrated with HMIS, impacting accuracy, posing challenges with reporting and inability to automate matching function; and
- o Lack of clarity about governance and decision-making process; many issues being worked out on a “one-off” basis.
- Some of the data analyzed included the following:
  - o 853 families were on the placement roster on November 4, 2014. Of these, 586 were recorded as unsheltered, while 267 were in an emergency shelter. The roster was reduced dramatically in 2014, from more than 4,000 families at the start of the year to 1,010 at the start of August, through a combination of diversion and updating of entries. Since that time the roster has continued to shrink, despite the addition of new families each month.
  - o Of the 1,112 families on the roster as of September 12, 2014, nearly 70% (766) had been on it for more than 6 months and 30% (342) had been on the roster for 18 months or more.
  - o More than 130 families on the roster in October 2014 had never received any referral.
  - Data was also requested about the average time between key events in the referral process:
    - o The median time from first contact to assessment is about 14 days.
    - o The median wait from assessment to first referral is about 100 days.
    - o The median time from the referral to a disposition of that referral (accepted or denied by either the program or family) is 9 days.
    - o The median time from assessment until last referral is more than 200 days. That is twice as long as the time to first referral because many families require more than one referral before being accepted into a program.
    - o The total time elapsed for those who are exited from the roster from first touch to exit date is 315 days.
  - While the consultant’s report recommended several short-term and necessary changes to the current system, the consultant ultimately recommended broad structural changes, which should result in improved coordinated entry and assessment capacity and experience for families and providers.<sup>40</sup>

## Data on Homeless Students in Bellevue School District

- The McKinney-Vento Act is federal legislation, in effect since 1987, that ensures the rights and protections of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The purpose of the Act is to ensure that homeless children and youth are enrolled in and succeed in school. The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children and youth as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.”<sup>41</sup>

Between the 2008-2009 and 2013-14 school years, Washington State experienced a 56% increase in the number of enrolled homeless students reported by school districts.<sup>43</sup>

- In 2014, the number of homeless students in East King County was 737, or 12% of the total number of homeless students in King County as compiled by the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).<sup>44</sup>
- In the 2014-2015 school year, the Bellevue School District reported 224 homeless students. Of these 224 students, 110 were

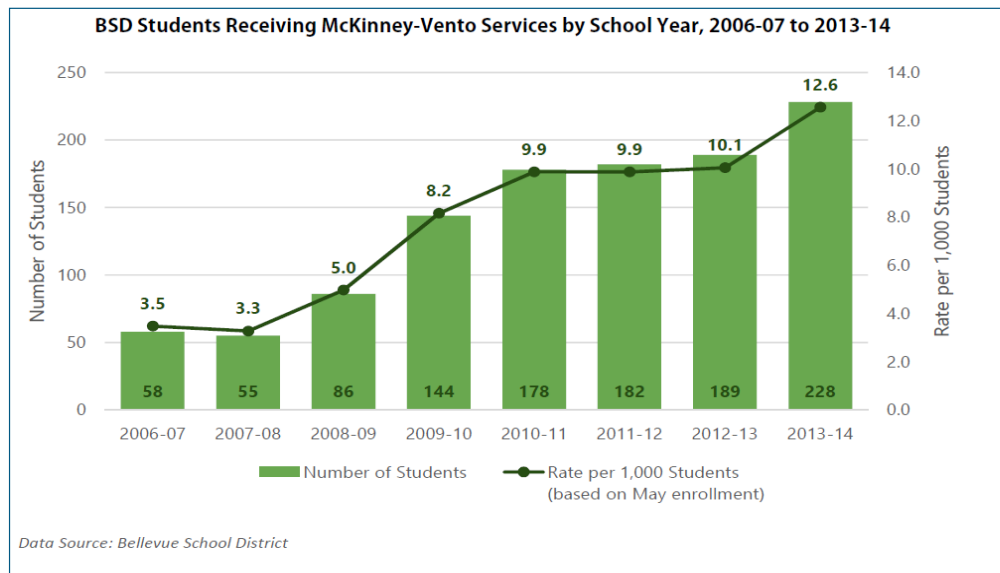


Figure 5

- As shown in Figure 5, while the percent of students in BSD receiving free or reduced-price lunch had been in decline since peaking at 22% in 2010-11, the number of homeless students continued to grow. This increase was not explained by growth in the district population, since both the total number of students experiencing homelessness and the rate per 1,000 students increased. In the 2013-14 school year, 228 students (12.6 per 1,000 students) received McKinney-Vento services.<sup>42</sup> Statewide that year, the numbers were even more alarming with over 32,000 homeless students.

living in emergency shelters or transitional housing, 102 were living in “doubled up” housing situations (for economic reasons and cannot afford a place of their own), 7 students were living unsheltered in a car or tent, and 5 were living in a hotel/motel.<sup>45</sup>

## Service Trends King County Committee to

### End Homelessness (CEH) The Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness and the new All Home Strategic Plan 2015-2019

- In 2005, the Committee to End Homelessness was formed in King County, and adopted a 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness (2005-2015). These plans were promoted by the Federal Government and eventually required by Washington State. King County’s plan focused on preventing homelessness, coordinating countywide, building political will, securing 9,500 units of housing, providing culturally competent services, and measuring progress.
- The plan set an aspirational goal for the community. Over the past decade, the community responded with unprecedented partnerships and results. Nearly 40,000

“We are seeing the biggest needs in food. The requests for breacktime/mealtime and holiday boxes is rising.”  
*Community Conversation, Bellevue School District Staff*



people exited homelessness for stable housing, and 85 percent stabilized in that housing for at least two years. More than 5,700 units of housing were secured, and Seattle/King County now has the third most housing for the homeless in the nation.

“Resources for a single person is limited compared to families. Connecting them to services is really limited.”  
*Key Informant Interview, Jubilee REACH staff*

- Innovative public/private partnerships were developed, including the Campaign to End Chronic Homelessness, Landlord Liaison Project, Family Homelessness Initiative, and the Homeless Youth and Young Adult Initiative. Funding has increased through state and local levies, businesses, faith communities, nonprofits, local governments, and people experiencing homelessness came together like never before to address the crisis of homelessness.
- However, in 2015 on any given day, nearly 10,000 people are experiencing homelessness in King County, and almost 40 percent are unsheltered. People are homeless on average for more than 100 days, and they return to homelessness after being housed nearly 20 percent of the time. Racial disparities are stark, with Native Americans seven times more likely to experience homelessness than Whites, and African Americans six times more likely. People experienced homelessness in every zip code in King County last year, and 87% were originally from King County and 97% from Washington State.<sup>46</sup>
- In September 2007, the East King County Plan to End Homelessness

estimated the need for 820 housing units for single adults, 930 units for families, and 96 units for youth and young adults. Since 2007, a total of 70 shelter beds for single adults and 114 units housing for individuals and families were funded through the ARCH Trust Fund.<sup>47</sup>

## Emergency Shelter & Housing for Single Adults

- “Emergency Shelter,” according to a federal definition, means “any facility with overnight sleeping accommodations, the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless.” There is an extensive network of emergency shelter facilities in Seattle/King County, but demand far exceeds availability, especially for homeless families as noted above.
- The Governing Board of the Committee to End Homelessness approved the recommendations of the Single Adult Shelter Task Force in January 2013 to adopt a shelter strategy as part of the solutions to end homelessness, recognizing the roles of shelter and supporting policy changes and system coordination needed to create a more effective crisis response system and a roof over every bed in King County. Key recommendations of the Shelter Task Force included increasing shelter capacity as well as nightly Winter Shelter outside of Seattle.

YEAR-ROUND FACILITY BASED SHELTER BEDS	City of Seattle	South King County	East King County	North King County	Total
Men	860	50	30	---	940
Women	334	9	21	---	364
Individual Adults (Men/Women)	500	---	---	---	500
Young Adults	65	12	20	---	97
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,759</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,901</b>
	92%	4%	4%	0%	

Source: King County Inventory of Homeless Units and Beds, Spring 2015  
**Figure 6**

- The Single Adult Advisory Group was created in Spring of 2014 “to develop and guide the implementation of a plan to create pathways to housing for single adults experiencing homelessness.” Its purpose was also “to include the development of robust crisis response strategies to meet the immediate survival needs of unsheltered individuals.”<sup>48</sup>
- As shown in Figure 6, ninety-two percent (92%) of the year-round emergency shelter beds are located in Seattle and 71 beds (4%) are located in East King County.<sup>49</sup> The year-round inventory does not include temporary beds (winter shelters and severe weather shelters), hotel/motel voucher programs, or tent city/encampment communities and safe-parking programs, as these living arrangements are not indoor shelter or housing options.
- Congregations for the Homeless (CFH) operates a year-round emergency shelter program with comprehensive case management for single homeless men. This is the only Eastside shelter for single adult men, capped at 35 beds per night. The shelter rotates each month between different congregations, primarily in Bellevue. CFH also provides subsidized housing for a total of 70 men. Twenty-three (23) of the men are living in scattered site apartments and 47 men are living in 8 leased houses with trained house managers.<sup>50</sup>

“We need a drop in center for the weekends. On the weekends you have about 200 homeless men walking around the city.”  
*Congregations for the Homeless shelter resident*

- The Sophia Way operates a six-month intensive shelter program for 21 single women per night, offering case management to help clients overcome barriers to independence, and providing transitional and non-time limited housing opportunities for women who experience chronic homelessness. Their goal is to help women move from temporary shelter to transitional and permanent housing as quickly as possible. Two housing programs are offered – Sophia’s Home, providing rental assistance in apartments, and Holly House, a community residence. Other services include the Pathways Program (employment support) and the Companion Program.<sup>51</sup>
- Hopelink operates Kenmore Place, the only family shelter in North King County. It recently reopened in August 2015 after extensive renovations which increased the number of units from 9 to 11.
- There are two Eastside shelters for runaway and homeless youth and young adults and youth in crisis, both operated by Friends of Youth. Youth Haven in Kirkland is licensed staffed residential home for up to 12 youth, ages 11-17. In addition, The Landing is an overnight shelter for young adults age 18-24 in Redmond open seven nights a week, the only emergency shelter for young adults on the Eastside. The young people who access The Landing are too old for traditional youth services, yet too young for adult shelters. Case managers and shelter staff help the young adult residents find resources including transitional living programs, food and clothing, pregnancy support, employment, medical care, education, and counseling.<sup>52</sup>
- Tent City 4 consists of homeless adults who form temporary encampments to live together as a self-managed community. Tent City 4 sets up on land owned by faith communities for several months before moving to another location. Since first arriving on the Eastside in Spring 2004, the camp has maintained a consistent presence on the Eastside, locating in Bellevue, Bothell, Issaquah, Kirkland, Mercer Island, Redmond, Woodinville, and unincorporated King County. The resident population of Tent City 4 fluctuates based upon the time of year and the location; however, they consistently have 60-70 individuals.<sup>53</sup> In November 2012, Camp Unity Eastside was established as a new nonprofit temporary encampment organization. Its residents were previously affiliated with Tent City 4. To offset the cost of operating and handling the responsibilities that come from offering a place to reside, shower, eat, and safety, each Camp Unity resident pays a maintenance fee of \$30.<sup>54</sup>

- There is currently one safe parking program for homeless on the Eastside and a pilot program that opened in the summer of 2015. A vehicle camp for families is located at Lake Washington United Methodist Church in Kirkland and, as of July 2015, they were serving 21 families per night (26 adults and 10 children). The families include single women, single women with children, and couples with children. There are 4 families with children.<sup>55</sup> A second safe parking six-month pilot program began in the summer of 2015 at Our Savior’s Lutheran Church in Issaquah. Six parking spots are designated for families who must live in their cars while searching for employment and longer term housing. The spaces are reserved only for families or single women. No single men will be accommodated.<sup>56</sup>
- In 2008, the City of Bellevue initiated a Severe Weather Shelter (SWS) after a homeless man died from exposure in downtown Bellevue. After two years, the weather-activated Severe Weather Shelter evolved into the nightly Eastside Winter Shelter (EWS). There are currently two Eastside Winter Shelters, one for men and the other for women with children and families, with a capacity of 100 per night for men and 50 for women/women with children/families. This exceeds the year-round shelter capacity of 35 men and 21 women per night. During the winter of 2014-2015, a total of 449 were housed in the men’s shelter and 194 adults and 106 children were housed in the women/families shelter.<sup>57</sup>
- Through the City of Bellevue’s leadership, in the winters of 2013-2014 and 2014-2015, the Eastside Winter Shelter for men was located in property leased by the City from Sound Transit in the Bel Red area (Spring District). With a significantly larger space, the number of homeless men served more than doubled from the winters of 2012-2013 and 2011-2012 when the shelter was located at St. Peter’s United Methodist Church in Bellevue.
- Bellevue is working with the cities of Redmond and Kirkland, in collaboration with the Eastside Human Services Forum and the two winter shelter providers, Congregations for the Homeless and The Sophia Way, to help site the two winter shelters for the next few years until permanent shelters are developed and operational. A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) has committed \$700,000 in capital funding for a permanent winter shelter space for men and siting efforts are underway in Bellevue. The City of Kirkland is taking the lead on siting the permanent winter shelter for women. A permanent shelter for youth and young adults is currently located in the City of Redmond.
- The Committee to End Homelessness convened the Single Adult Coordinated Entry Operational Leadership Team to oversee the development of a coordinated entry system for Single Adults aligned with the all-population coordinated entry system using a progressive engagement approach approved in the CEH Strategic Plan for 2015-2019. This group reports to the Single Adult Advisory Group.<sup>58</sup>

### Shelter for Homeless Veterans

- The final tally from the One Night Count in January shows a notable reduction in the number of homeless veterans and people with chronic homelessness. Compared to 2014, the number of veterans without shelter decreased by nearly 15%, and the number of chronically homeless people without shelter declined by over 30%.<sup>59</sup>
- With funding from the King County Veterans and Human Services Levy, the King County Veterans Program designed an eligibility checklist to increase the efficiency of sheltering homeless veterans, resulting in a 95% success rate in helping veterans get a shelter bed when needed.<sup>60</sup>
- The King County’s Regional Veterans’ Initiative reported that there were 800 former-

“Veterans Services for housing only allowed 2 years then the vets have to go to market rate housing. The assumption is that with other supports that will be enough time. But with rents going up, if you are only making \$10 an hour, it is not possible to get affordable housing here.”  
*Congregations for the Homeless shelter resident*

ly homeless veterans permanently housed in 2014 and 426 veterans were housed between January to June 2015. However, 300 new units in the private rental market are needed in order to meet their goal of ending veteran homelessness by December 31, 2015.<sup>61</sup>

- Congregations for the Homeless, which operates the low-barrier winter shelter for homeless men, estimates that 10% of the men served in that shelter are veterans.<sup>62</sup> (Note: for more information on this topic, please see the Veterans section in this report.)

## Family Homelessness Initiative – Transitional Housing and Rapid Re-Housing

- The Family Homelessness Initiative (FHI) is a countywide endeavor to prevent and end homelessness among families with children. The Initiative is led by the King County Department of Community and Human Services, guided by the Committee to End Homelessness (All Home), and supported by Building Changes and The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. In addition to the coordinated assessment and entry for families, called the Family Housing Connection (FHC), the initiative is focused on retooling programs that provide crisis response services to homeless families (emergency shelters and transitional housing) with a goal to establish a system with shorter homeless episodes and more prevention, diversion and rapid re-housing services.
- The Family Homelessness Initiative is at a critical juncture in 2015. The community is undertaking a comprehensive approach to systems change, including innovative strategies and ambitious goals to prevent and end family homelessness in King County. Perhaps the most significant systems shift is right-sizing the existing homeless system to one that provides interventions that best match the needs of families experiencing homelessness (having the right type/number of interventions to match the local typology of homeless families).
- Efforts are underway to implement and support local providers and funders in participating in this systems change. Significant expansion of interventions that provide rapid access to permanent housing is critical to creating the right mix but will require the realignment of existing resources rather than relying on new funding. This will result in freeing up more intensive (and expensive) interventions for families that need them, while also allowing us to serve more families system-wide. The goal is to “right-size” the system, shortening homeless episodes and increasing prevention and rapid rehousing services. Twenty-eight agencies (representing 100+ projects/1,000+ units of time-limited housing) are participating in the realignment process. This process requires two parallel bodies of work – one at the system level (refined models, assumptions, system goals and targets, etc.) and one at the agency/project level (stock, funding, mission/expertise, etc.). It is believed that the timeline and approach will balance the need for momentum and provide time to thoughtfully undertake the larger system transformation.
- In the first phase, a smaller group of agencies were selected to participate in an in-depth, funder-involved process of evaluating “how to” realign their transitional housing stock to permanent housing. All other agencies will begin efforts to adjust their service approach to the extent needed to align with the refined program models.<sup>63</sup>
- The King County Family Homelessness Initiative has determined that it will continue to keep transitional housing for special populations, including youth and young adults, domestic violence, and immigrants and refugees. All other transitional housing units will go through system transformation with the focus being on permanent affordable housing and permanent support housing. Five agencies with the largest number of transitional housing units,

“There is not enough affordable housing; families want to move elsewhere to find more affordable housing but they do not want to leave the school community that is important to them and their children.”

*Community Conversation, Fiestas Parenting Group, Stevenson Elementary School*

including Hopelink and the YWCA in East King County, are participating in system transformation work with the support of funders and the Family Homelessness Initiative.<sup>64</sup> In addition Friends of Youth and Imagine Housing are participating on the Family Homeless Initiative Advisory Group, where they review and provide feedback on new models, shift in our continuum, and areas needing focus.<sup>65</sup>

- Rapid re-housing (RRH) is reported to be a cost-effective strategy that can help many families successfully exit homelessness and maintain permanent housing. RRH reduces the length of time people experience homelessness, minimizes the impact of homelessness on their lives, and facilitates their access to resources and supports in the community. Communities that have successfully employed RRH have freed up significant resources to address the needs of homeless families. Early evidence suggests that between 80% and 90% of all homeless families can be served effectively within a RRH framework, including families with a broad range of conditions, challenges, and situations. The key tenets of rapid re-housing include coordinated entry and assessment, progressive engagement (starting with least intensive services and progress to greater services only when necessary), housing services and short-term rent subsidy, usually lasting from three to six months.<sup>66</sup>
- Rapid Re-housing (RRH) and Diversion are two models being used to quickly divert families out of homelessness. In King County, all families are screened by Family Housing Connection (FHC) for Diversion services, which provide the household with resources so they are diverted from entering the homeless system. RRH offers families resources to obtain permanent housing, employment services, and a short term rental subsidy.<sup>67</sup>
- The Rapid Re-Housing for Families Pilot launched in November 2013. The pilot's goals are to reduce the length of time families experience homelessness and to expand rapid re-housing, enhancing housing options for homeless families. The local pilot is designed to transition homeless families into permanent housing quickly by offering: a) short-term rental and move-in assistance; b) housing search and stabilization services; and c) individualized employment services. As of July 2015, nearly 150 homeless families have moved to housing with assistance from the Rapid Re-Housing Pilot so far. An additional 52 families are currently enrolled in rapid re-housing and looking for housing. Forty-six percent (46%) of families who have found housing thus far moved in within two months of enrolling and more than 60% moved into permanent housing within three months of enrolling. By comparison, the average length of stay in transitional housing for families in 2014 was over 15 months.<sup>68</sup>
- Each year across the country, it's estimated that more than 150,000 families experience homelessness and are forced to seek emergency shelter for themselves and their children. In July 2015, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) published the short-term results of a study designed to examine how homeless families in emergency shelter responded to various interventions designed to help them exit homelessness. HUD's Family Options Study found that 18 months after enrolling into the study and being randomly assigned to one of four interventions, the homeless families offered a housing voucher experienced significantly better outcomes than those families randomly assigned to any of the three other options, e.g. rapid re-housing, transitional housing, or usual care.<sup>69</sup>
- The Shelter to Housing Project, funded with a System Innovation Grant from private philanthropy, is intended to assist families in resolving their episode of homelessness and transition out of shelter more quickly. Shelters will support families in identifying creative solutions to exit shelter quickly and

“Clients need advocates who can help them fill our complicated applications for services. Staff or interns do not always have time to do that.”  
*Community Conversation, Bellevue Fire CARES*

will focus on preparing families to qualify for housing in the private rental market. Flexible funds will address a range of needs including but not limited to fees associated with obtaining identification records, background and credit checks, application fees and one time assistance with move in costs and rental or utility arears. These same strategies can assist families in expediting their transition to other homeless housing should the family need to. Each shelter provider will continue to work quickly to engage families in addressing their immediate needs related to the crisis of homelessness, and will begin identifying potential solutions families self-identify to resolve their homelessness. Similar to strategies utilized in Diversion, shelter staff will work with each family to develop a housing stability plan and explore options the family can identify to help them end their episode of homelessness as quickly as possible.<sup>70</sup>

- The goal of the Diversion Pilot (funded by Building Changes and the City of Seattle Human Services Department, in partnership with the Family Homelessness Initiative) is to divert families who are living in places not meant for human habitation from having to enter the shelter system whenever possible -- moving families quickly from the street to housing while freeing up our limited shelter resources for those families that are most vulnerable with no other housing options. Diversion case managers will provide a combination of direct services and financial assistance to families, resulting in an alternate safe and stable housing arrangement. Services provided may include:
  - o Mediation with a family member or friend
  - o Connect the family with resources such as child care, employment and other mainstream resources that may assist them in obtaining housing
  - o Mediation or negotiation with a previous or potential landlord
  - o Help the family brainstorm creative, alternate solutions to shelter
  - o Assist with housing search<sup>71</sup>

## Homeless Youth and Young Adult Initiative

- The Homeless Youth and Young Adult (YYA) Initiative is King County’s community-wide response to prevent and end homelessness among young people. The Initiative is led by All Home (formerly King County Committee to End Homelessness), with involvement and support from agency and government leaders, private philanthropy and the public sector, and input from homeless and formerly homeless young people. The Comprehensive Plan to Prevent and End Youth and Young Adult Homelessness in King County represents a countywide community effort to create a more coordinated response system to help homeless young people – quickly connecting them with family when it is safe and appropriate to do so, or providing connections to safe housing. Friends of Youth is a key partner in the Plan from East King County.
- The Comprehensive Plan Refresh is an update to the 2013 Comprehensive Plan which identified the community’s vision to end homelessness among youth and young adults in King County by 2020 and the 18 month implementation strategy to begin delivering on this vision. Some of the key accomplishments highlighted in the report included the following:
  - o Homeless YYA Initiative staff were hired and the initiative endorsed as an Investment Priority of All Home (formerly The Committee to End Homelessness)
  - o Prevention and early intervention services were expanded, e.g. National Safe Place and Project SAFE
  - o Coordinated engagement was launched, called Youth Housing Connection (YHC) in July 2013. As of April 2015, YHC transitioned from being operated by Catholic Community Services to management by the Seattle-King County Continuum of Care.<sup>72</sup> (Note: for more information on this topic, please see the School Aged Children and Youth section.)
- Friends of Youth’s New Ground Totem Lake (NGTL) opened in August of 2014. NGTL provides transitional housing for 10 homeless young adults, ages 18-21 who are

struggling with severe barriers and significant amount of time on the streets. This housing program is designed to serve the highest need young people who are experiencing homelessness and is the only low barrier housing program for young adults in East King County. The goal of the program is to provide stability to young people while they address their mental health and chemical dependency needs while also developing their independent living skills. Once young people are ready, case managers work with them to find safe and stable housing in the community. New Ground Kirkland provides transitional housing to up to 9 homeless young adults, ages 18-21. Clients live in their own apartments and work closely with their case manager to set goals, complete their GED, high school, or enter college courses, obtain employment, apply for health care and benefits, and much more on an as-needed basis. The Landing is the only young adult shelter in East King County. In the last calendar year, Friends of Youth increased the bed capacity at the Landing to twenty beds a night in response to growing demand. Youth Haven is the only under 18 shelter in East King County. In 2014, the aforementioned New Ground programs provided 4,030 bed nights to formerly homeless young adults. The Landing and Youth Haven shelters provided 8,962 bed nights to youth and young adults experiencing homelessness.<sup>73</sup>

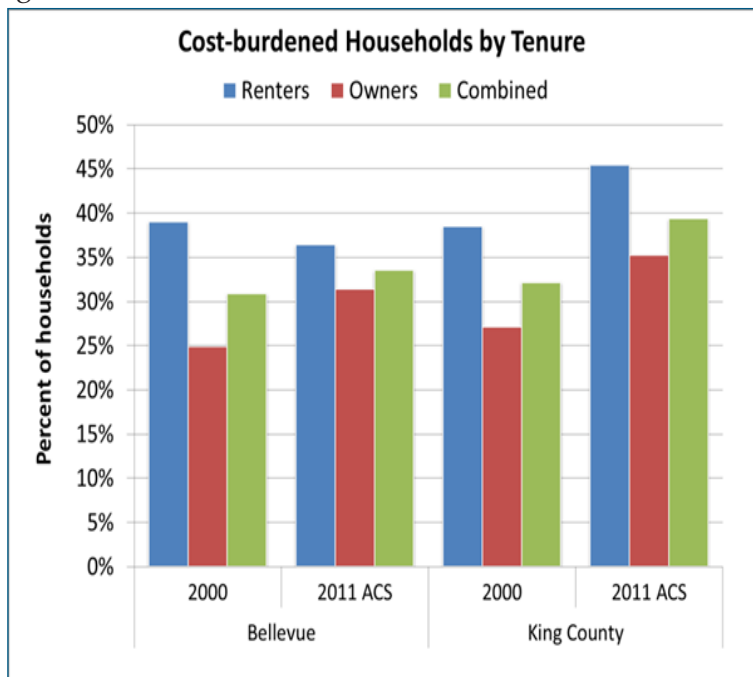
- Between 6% and 11% of youth and young adults nationwide identify as LGBTQ, according to the Williams Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles law school, which studies sexual orientation and public policy. However, 22% of King County homeless people ages 12 to 25 are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning/queer, or LGBTQ. Shelters are a short-term solution and the Committee to End Homelessness reports that, every night in King County, 428 beds are available for youth. Almost every night, all the beds are filled, yet at least 124 young people are still sleeping outside.<sup>74</sup>

## Affordable Permanent Housing Prevalence

- Bellevue’s housing values were among the five highest in the state in 2010-2012, and locating affordable housing was a challenge for more than a third of Bellevue’s residents.<sup>75</sup>

“We are getting more requests for affordable housing and utilities assistance.”  
*Community Conversation, Eastside Pathways, Lifespring Staff*

- Housing is defined as affordable if its occupants pay no more than 30% of their income for rent and utilities or for mortgage, taxes, and insurance. According to the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), households who pay more than 30% of their income for housing are considered cost-burdened. Households who pay more than 50% of their income for housing are considered severely cost burdened, and may have trouble affording basic necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.



**Figure 7**  
**Data Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), CHAS data.**

- Based on an East King County report by ARCH in 2013, nearly 62,000 households (34%) are cost-burdened, e.g. paying more than 30% of their incomes for housing. This is nearly a 15% increase over the number reported by ARCH in 2011. Over 25,000 of these households pay more than half their income for housing, making them severely cost-burdened.<sup>76</sup>
- In Bellevue, about 34% of renter households and 29% of owner households are cost burdened, paying more than 30% of their household income for housing. About 16% of renter households and 13% of owner households in Bellevue are severely cost-burdened, paying more than 50% of their household income for housing.<sup>77</sup>
- As shown in Figure 7, the percentage of cost-burdened renter households in Bellevue has slightly decreased while the percentage of cost-burdened and severely cost burdened owner households has increased (2011 compared to 2012 ACS).<sup>78</sup>

## Service Trends

### Provision of Affordable Housing

- Bellevue is working towards a housing supply that will meet the needs of all economic segments of the community, as established in coordination with the King County Growth Management Planning Council and adopted in the Countywide Planning Policies. The Countywide need for housing by percentage of Area median Income (AMI) is: 16% of housing supply affordable at 50%-80% of AMI; 12% of housing supply affordable at 30%-50% of AMI; and 12% of housing supply affordable at 30% and below AMI.<sup>79</sup> Since the Countywide Planning Policies were adopted in 1993, approximately 3,480 units of new or preserved affordable housing and Section 8 housing have been created and/or are in the process of being made available. This includes market-rate units in Bellevue with and without regulatory incentives and Direct Assistance units funded by Bellevue through A Regional Coalition for Housing-ARCH.
- In 2014 Bellevue helped create or preserve about 105 low income units and 61 moderate income units. Most of these units received Bellevue Direct Assistance through the ARCH Housing Trust Fund, including Friends of Youth in Kirkland, Habitat in Sammamish, Providence/SRI senior housing in Redmond, KCHA Patricia Harris Senior Apartments in Redmond, and KCHA Bellevue Manor Senior Apartments near downtown Bellevue.
- In 2013 Bellevue helped create or preserve about 28 low income units and about 6 moderate income units. Most of these units received Bellevue direct assistance through the ARCH Housing Trust fund, including Imagine Housing Senior Housing and Friends of Youth in Kirkland. As shown in Figure 8, Bellevue has helped create or preserve a total of 1,996 units between 1993 and 2013.
- The City accomplishes its affordable housing production largely through the regional consortium, ARCH. Actual production is influenced by market factors, as well as cyclical variations in projects submitted to ARCH. The measure of the effectiveness of using Bellevue's housing dollars, leveraging the City's fund with external investment, measured especially high in 2013 – more than 20 times the target. However, like other Eastside cities, Bellevue struggles to meet its affordable housing need. In 2013, fewer affordable housing projects were funded in expectation of several significant projects in 2014, including an additional funding cycle to preserve two Section 8 senior apartment buildings. Through the Comprehensive Plan update the City is looking to gauge the effectiveness of current affordable housing tools, and evaluate additional tools as needed.<sup>80</sup>
- In June 2015, the Bellevue City Council adopted the city's first-ever multi-family tax exemption (MFTE) for projects in certain areas. Seattle and other cities have similar MFTE programs under which developers agree to set aside a certain percentage of units for lower-income people. Under Bellevue's MFTE program, developers will be exempt for 12 years from paying property taxes on the affordable units they build in downtown, the Bel-Red area, Eastgate, Crossroads Village and the Wilburton



Affordable Housing Units Created in Bellevue, 1993-2013				
Target Population	Direct Assistance	Regulatory Incentives	Market	Total
Low-income (50% of median)	866 units		8 units	874 units
Moderate-income (80% median)	512 units	371 units	1,239 units	2,122 units
Total Units	1,378 units	371 units	1,247 units	1,996 units

Source: A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH). 2015.

Figure 8

commercial district. The city estimates the program will result in the construction of up to roughly 45 affordable units a year. To get the tax break, developers have to make a fifth of the units in their projects affordable. Half of the units would be set aside for people who make \$37,680 a year or less and the other half set aside for those who bring in around \$42,000 a year or less.<sup>81</sup>

## Housing Choice Voucher Availability (Section 8 Vouchers)

- King County Housing Authority (KCHA) administers the federal Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance program. Section 8 vouchers help people with low incomes rent homes on the private market. With a voucher, people pay at least 28%, but not more than 40% (in the first year), of their household income for rent and utilities. KCHA pays the difference between their portion of the rent and the amount their landlord requests. If they qualify for a voucher, they can use it to rent from any landlord in King County willing to take part in the program. In some cases vouchers may also be used to rent in incorporated Seattle or Renton, or outside of the county. However, as of March 2015, KCHA's Section 8 waiting list is closed. There were 2,500 applicants for the current list chosen by a random lottery drawing.
- During a two-week period ending Feb. 10, 2015, more than 22,600 households applied for just 2,500 spots on the King County Housing Authority's waiting list for Section 8 rental assistance. The last time the agency opened the waiting list, in 2011, it received nearly 25,000 applications, and that was when eligibility requirements were looser.
- Bellevue has approximately 870 older adults, disabled, and families with children benefiting from Section 8 Housing Choice vouchers, which provides over \$11.2 million annually to local landlords through federal Section 8 subsidies. The average income of a family receiving a Housing Choice Voucher is \$13,600.
- KCHA administers 340 units of subsidized family housing for very low-income households in Bellevue. Eastside Terrace (50 units), College Place (51 units) and the 8 single-family homes constitute units operated under the Public Housing program. The average income of a family living in public housing is \$18,100. Beyond the Public Housing Program, KCHA owns three communities with project-based Section 8 in Bellevue (Spiritwood Manor, Hidden Village and Newport Apartments) that provides an additional 231 units of housing. The Housing Authority also provides 1,357 affordable workforce housing units in Bellevue financed with tax credits and/or tax-exempt bonds. These housing units do not receive operating subsidies from HUD.<sup>83</sup>

The agency no longer gives vouchers to non-disabled adults without children, no matter how poor. The 22,615

recent applications represent 50,100 people, including nearly 22,000 children, more than 12,000 senior citizens and people with disabilities and more than 800 military veterans. The King County Housing Authority serves Seattle and the rest of the county. The Seattle Housing Authority, which serves only Seattle, last accepted Section 8 applications in 2013, when it created a waiting list of 2,000 households. It received about 24,000 applications.<sup>82</sup>

Average Rents in King County and East King County (\$)							
2007-2015							
	March 2009	March 2010	March 2011	March 2012	March 2013	March 2014	March 2015
East King County	1,259	1,165	1,222	1,288	1,362	1,474	1,577
King County	1,065	1,017	1,049	1,098	1,173	1,270	1,371
Difference	194	148	173	190	189	204	206

Source: Dupre + Scott. (March 2015). The Apartment Vacancy Report.

Figure 9

## Rental Housing Market

- From the perspective of tenants, the rental market is increasingly difficult: rents are expected to continue to rise, although the size of concessions is growing. They averaged \$580 in 2014 and \$480 in 2013. Almost 80% of properties surveyed pass through water and sewer charges to residents and most also pass through garbage costs. Parking is likely to become a more valuable commodity through, since new construction is putting in an average of less than one parking space per unit.<sup>84</sup>
- The Washington State minimum wage in 2015 is \$9.47/hour. Washington's minimum wage applies to workers in both agriculture and non-agricultural jobs, although 14- and 15-year-olds may be paid 85% of the minimum wage (\$8.05).<sup>85</sup>
- The City of Seattle approved a \$15 per hour minimum wage in June 2014, making Seattle the first major city in the United States to take such an action to address income inequality. Beginning April 1, 2015, the legislation phases in a \$15 per hour minimum wage annually over 3 to 7 years, depending on employer size.<sup>86</sup>
- Statewide, to afford a two-bedroom apartment without spending more than 30% of their income on housing, a household had to earn \$21.69 on average. In the Seattle-Bellevue area, that estimated figure is \$27.21.<sup>87</sup>
- Despite the ongoing increase in new apartment buildings across the region, rents are still rising. The average one-bedroom rent in King County is \$1,266, up 8% over

the past 12 months, according to a new report. But March's vacancy rate of 3.2% was the lowest in nearly two decades, and

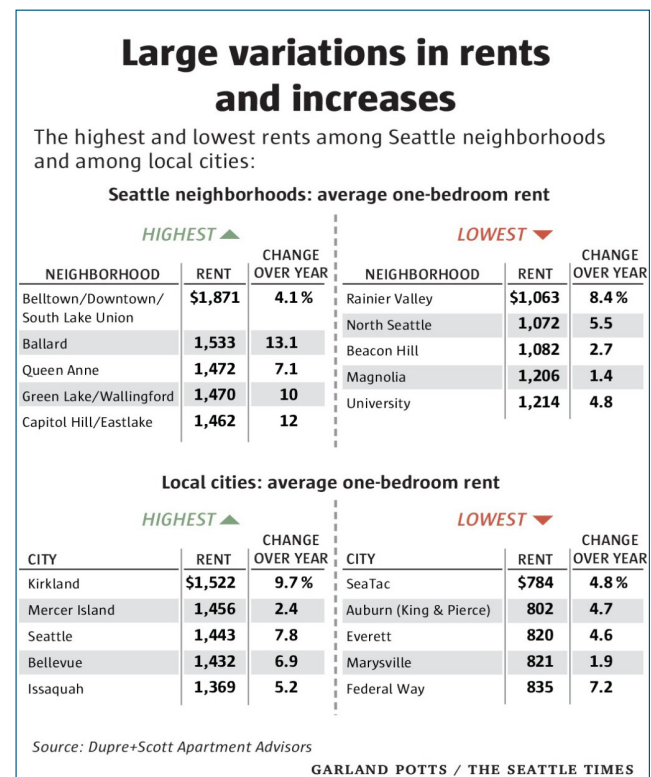


Figure 10

the 8% annual gain in rent was still more than double the average annual gain from 1998 to 2012. The countywide average rent masks huge variations in what renters are paying across the region.

- As shown in Figure 10, among the major cities, Kirkland's one-bedroom rent of \$1,522 was the highest, followed by Mercer Island, Seattle, Bellevue and Issaquah. These rents don't include utilities or parking.<sup>88</sup>

- East King County continues to have the highest average rents compared to other parts of the county. In March 2015, the average Eastside apartment rent was \$1,577, while the King County average was \$1,371.<sup>89</sup>

### Decreasing Vacancy Rates

- Vacancy rates are often used as an indicator of future rent prices. If vacancy rates are low, rent prices tend to increase due to scarcity of available units; if vacancy rates are high, rent prices decrease as owners attempt to fill unoccupied units. The market vacancy rate is 3.5% in the Puget Sound region, down from 3.8% in the fall of 2014 and close to the 3.6% level from a year ago. The rate of rent growth has slowed a little; rents rose 2.6% in the region since September 2014 and are 7.4% higher than a year ago. New construction costs more and typically gets a rent premium of more than 40%.
- With all the new construction opening this year and next year, higher rents in new units will create an inflated rent trend. For example, although the overall average rent rose 7.4% in the region over the past 12 months and 2.6% in the past 6 months, when new units are excluded, rents rose 5.7% and 1.9%, respectively.<sup>90</sup>
- In Bellevue and King County, vacancy rates decreased between 2009 and 2015, as rent increased.<sup>91</sup>

### Increasing Rental Rates in Bellevue

- Figure 11 shows a breakdown of apartment rents in Bellevue between March 2011 and March 2015 and compares them to the entire county. Bellevue’s rent for a two-bedroom apartment increased significantly (30%) between 2011 and 2013, which was slightly lower than the increase in King County rent for a two-bedroom apartment (32%).

### Affordable Home Ownership

- According to data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), median contract rents in Northeast Bellevue, Northwest Bellevue, and in the area of South Bellevue south of the annexation area are the highest at over \$1,500. Home values throughout Bellevue are generally unreasonable and inaccessible for most low- and moderate income households. Homes are most “affordable” from north of I-90 through the geographic center of the city into the Crossroads area, but even these median home values ranged from the high \$200,000s to \$500,000. Otherwise, throughout most of the rest of the city, median home values ranged as high as the mid-\$700,000s. Extreme West Bellevue was most unaffordable with a median home value of nearly \$850,000.<sup>92</sup>
- The median price of King County single-family homes sold in July 2015 decreased by 3% over the month of June to \$485,000.

Area	Rents in Bellevue (\$)											
	Studio			1 Bedroom			2 Bedroom (1 bath)			3 Bedroom (2 bath)		
	March 2011	March 2013	March 2015	March 2011	March 2013	March 2015	March 2011	March 2013	March 2015	March 2011	March 2013	March 2015
Bellevue – East	746	836	943	917	1,077	1,229	1,074	1,238	1,397	1,454	1,632	1,961
Bellevue – West	950	1,129	1,241	1,371	1,505	1,684	1,509	1,695	1,945	2,663	2,548	2,579
Bellevue – Factoria	N/A	694	1,170	930	1,032	1,268	1,150	1,268	1,510	1,485	1,700	1,937
King County	825	958	1,133	950	1,074	1,266	977	1,105	1,294	1,343	1,474	1,674

Source: Dupre + Scott. (March 2015). The Apartment Vacancy Report.

Figure 11

The drop occurred after King County's median home price hit a post-recession peak of \$500,000 in June 2015.<sup>93</sup>

- The median sale price for homes in Bellevue for April to July 2015 was \$645,000. This represents an increase of 4.5%, or \$27,500, compared to the prior quarter and an increase of 4.9% compared to the prior year. Sales prices have appreciated 31.6% over the last 5 years in Bellevue.<sup>94</sup>
- It is increasingly difficult for moderate-income households and first-time homebuyers to purchase a home, particularly in East King County. In response, federal, state, and local governments; non-profit organizations; lenders; and private developers have developed a number of strategies to assist low and moderate-income homebuyers. Local homeownership assistance programs use several different strategies: 1) provide cash in the form of down payment loans or lower interest rates to help buyers afford home costs; 2) lower construction costs by smaller lot or unit sizes, by offering developers waivers from regulations, or by using surplus land; and 3) lower purchase costs through development subsidies and sweat equity from buyers and volunteers.
- A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) funds a program called ARCH East King County Down Payment Assistance that helps homebuyers with the down payment of their home. This program also receives funding from King County and the Washington State Housing Finance Commission. Down payment assistance helps close the affordability gap for homebuyers in East King County, providing assistance that can be used to help purchase homes on the open market or price-restricted homes through various local land use incentive programs. The program requires homebuyers to take a homebuyer education class and receive financial counseling. It provides funds as deferred loans, to be paid with interest, and recycles funds through loan repayment, maintaining long-term value of the loan program. ARCH East King County Down Payment Assistance has been in existence since late 2005 and has already helped over 60 first time, income-qualified

homebuyer households achieve homeownership.<sup>95</sup>

## Legislative and Policy Changes Affecting Basic Needs and Housing Issues

- Total Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding across the country continues to fluctuate. In 2012, Congress again reduced funding for the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program which resulted in a 12.7% reduction in Bellevue CDBG funding after a 16% reduction in 2011. In 2013 and 2014, CDBG funding for Bellevue remained relatively flat and there was a 6% increase CDBG funding for 2015. Bellevue's entitlement award for 2015 was \$613,370.
- The 2015 Washington State Legislature invested \$75 million in the Housing Trust Fund in the 2015-2017 Biennium for affordable housing to those most in need, including people with mental illnesses and disabilities, veterans, seniors, homeless families with children, homeless youths, and farmworkers. They also invested \$15 million in weatherization of homes owned by low-income homeowners. In addition, the Legislature provided full funding for Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) and Aged, Blind and Disabled (ABD) program which will allow people with temporary disabilities in King County to be eligible for housing subsidies, bus passes and personal hygiene items that will keep them from homelessness. In addition, a 9% increase in TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) cash grants was approved.<sup>96</sup>
- The 2015 State Legislature's transportation package also included significant new dollars for affordable housing and services in the Puget Sound region. The bill required that at least \$20 million be provided for affordable housing near transit and established that 80% of the surplus properties in light rail stations must be made available for affordable housing. Through a change in state law, approximately 65% of Sound Transit surplus land and "air rights" (the area above a transit station) must be transferred to local governments, housing

authorities and nonprofit housing community organizations to build new housing for people with low and moderate incomes.

- The Legislature also voted to give counties and other jurisdictions the ability to seek a voter-approved 0.1 percent local sales-tax increase to generate revenue for affordable housing for people with mental illness or developmental disabilities, senior citizens, veterans and others in critical need. Part of the new funds will also be used for mental-health-treatment programs and other basic services.<sup>97</sup>

## Community Perceptions

- This was the ninth consecutive phone/online survey in which lack of affordable housing (as a community problem) received the greatest percentage of major and combined major/moderate ratings, at 68%, considerably higher than the 51% reported in 2013. The percentage of respondents rating homelessness as a major or moderate problem changed from 28% in 2013 to 30% in 2015.<sup>98</sup>
- In the phone/online survey, results confirm that meeting basic needs continues to be a concern for Bellevue residents, not too different in the surveys two and four years ago. Forty percent (40%) of respondents rated the issue of people having jobs that do not pay enough for the basics of food, shelter, and clothing as a major or moderate community problem. This is 5% higher than the 2013 survey and the same percentage as the 2011 survey.<sup>99</sup>
- In the 2015 survey, 20% of respondents rated hunger as a major or moderate problem in Bellevue, compared to the 21% reported in 2013 and 22% reported in 2011.
- In regard to Bellevue residents' ratings of problems in their households, 11% of respondents noted not being able to find affordable child care, 6% rated not having enough money to pay for housing, 5% rated inability to pay dental bills, and 5% of respondents rated inability to pay doctor bills.<sup>100</sup>
- In the 24 Community Conversations conducted, many participants mentioned issues related to housing, both in terms of

affordable housing and housing for homeless. The increase in the number of homeless, particularly in the Crossroads area, was noted with the need for more hygiene services since the Day Centers for homeless do not operate on weekends and the bathrooms in the park are locked at night.

- Families are still being victimized by landlords especially if they do not speak English. Repairs are not made and, if people complain, they are threatened with eviction so victims are afraid to complain.
- Lack of affordable housing was also a major theme in key informant interviews, along with the difficulty in finding housing using Section 8 vouchers. Accommodating the cultural needs of shelter residents was also noted, as well as the need for storage lockers for homeless.
- In key informant interviews and surveys from faith communities, the need for housing, food, help with utility bills, and transportation was also reported. A place to park cars for overnight sleeping was also mentioned by several faith communities.

## Implications for Action

- The lack of affordable housing continues to be perceived by residents as the top community problem in Bellevue. Housing prices continue to rise and this trend is likely to continue in the future.
- Rising housing prices means single family homes in Bellevue have in most cases become out of reach for households earning the median wage. Little relief is found in the rental market as rental rates are also continuing to increase.
- There continues to be a significant need for housing affordable for moderate-income households (also termed workforce housing) on the Eastside as well as housing for low-income (30% of median income or below). While efforts are currently underway for a dedicated location(s) for the Eastside Winter Shelter(s), this will take several years to implement and, in the interim, finding suitable sites for the shelters will continue to be a challenge.
- The impact of the system changes occurring through ALL HOME (formerly the King

County Committee to End Homelessness) on the Eastside are still unknown. With coordinated entry systems now required by the federal government for all populations (families, single adults, and youth/young adults), it is possible that Bellevue and Eastside residents will no longer be served by Eastside programs. In addition, the results of rapid re-housing and diversion programs have yet to be determined whether they are successful in preventing people from becoming homeless or serving them quickly once they do.

- The need for food assistance has not decreased significantly since the recession ended and will likely continue in the future.

## Endnotes

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