

Thurston County 2022 Point in Time Count Homeless Census Report

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Executive Summary

Unsheltered homelessness is a crisis in which many of our most vulnerable neighbors find themselves. We learn about this population by looking at statistics and gathering information from the individuals experiencing homelessness. The Point in Time Count (PIT) seeks to answer the question— how many people in the community are unsheltered or residing in Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing?

The short survey issued through the PIT is a glimpse into experiences of homelessness. The PIT data in this report and the data collected in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), helps build a better understanding of those experiencing homelessness in our community.

In this report we discuss the methodology of the Point in Time Count (PIT) during 2021 and 2022, as well as the data and conclusions that can be drawn. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted how the PIT was conducted during these two years. Some of the standard practices of the past Point in Time Counts could not be implemented safely, which directly impacted the results.

The PIT steering committee needed to remain nimble while planning the event to make adjustments based on recommendations from Public Health officials and changing COVID-19 emergency conditions. A heartfelt thanks goes out to everyone who engaged with the Point in Time Count over the last two years, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and for those considering participating in the future. This is a community effort, that cannot be successful without the support and efforts from everyone involved.

Thank you,
Arielle Benson
Homeless Program & Grant Specialist
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I said, and I very much meant, that no person that lives in this nation should sleep on the streets or under a bridge or by a waterside. We need people to have shelter.

Marcia Fudge, Secretary of Housing & Urban
Development

Definition of Terms

Chronically Homeless Individual

An individual with a disability who has been continuously homeless for one year or more or has experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the last three years where the combined length of time homeless on those occasions is at least 12 months.

Congregate Shelter

Is an emergency shelter where the residents share a common sleeping area.

Continuum of Care (CoC)

A local planning body responsible for coordinating the full range of homelessness services in a geographic area. Thurston County is part of the Balance of State CoC.

Emergency Shelter

Is a facility with the primary purpose of providing temporary shelter to for homeless people. Can be nigh-by-night or continuous stay.

Encampment

An outdoor area , either private or public, where multiple tents, man-made structures, or other impromptu dwellings are situated. Also in this report as “camp” for short.

Disability

Is self-identified for the point in time count. There is no verification required.

Homeless

A person who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Housing Inventory Count (HIC)

Provides an annual inventory of beds that assist people in the CoC who are experiencing homelessness or leaving homelessness.

Non-Congregate Shelter

Is an emergency shelter that provides private sleeping space, such as hotel or motel room.

Occupancy Rate

Is the percentage of available beds that are occupied on the night of the PIT count.

People in Families with Children

Are people who are experiencing homelessness as part of a household that has at least one adult (age 18 and older) and one child (under age 18).

Sheltered Homelessness

Refers to people who are staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, or safe havens.

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (under 18)

Are people in households with only children who are not part of a family with (other) children or accompanied by their parent or guardian during their episode of homelessness, and who are under the age of 18.

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (18-24)

Are people in households without children, who are not part of a family or accompanied by their parent or guardian during their episode of homelessness, and are between the ages of 18-24.

Unsheltered Homelessness

Refers to people whose primary nighttime location is a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for people (e.g. abandoned building, doorway, vehicle, park).

Vehicle/RV

Any car or Recreational Vehicle, whether self-powered or towable that is utilized as a primary place of habitation. Also called liveaboards, or homestead vehicles.

Veteran

Refers to anyone who self-identifies as having served in the armed forces of the United States.

What is the Point in Time Count Homeless Census?



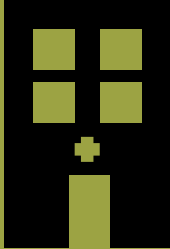
The annual Point in Time Count (PIT) is a census of all people experiencing homelessness across the nation, including Thurston County. It is mandated by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It normally takes place during the last ten days of January, and requires counties across the nation to collect data and count how many people are experiencing homelessness.

In the State of Washington, each Continuum of Care (CoC) is responsible for conducting and managing its PIT; King, Pierce, Snohomish, Chelan, and Spokane County each consist of their own CoC. The remaining 34 of Washington’s 39 counties make up the Balance of State CoC. This is important to note, as Thurston County has limited flexibility in the way the count is conducted, as it is a part of the Balance of State CoC.

Who is included in the count?

The PIT collects data on people who are unsheltered (without any place to sleep), sheltered (sleeping in an emergency shelter), transitionally housed, or in an institutional type setting without a permanent address to return to upon exit (staying in a jail or hospital).

Not included in the count are individuals staying with friends and family or those in other alternative living situations that are not considered unsheltered, like hotels that are paid for with their own funds.

Unsheltered	Sheltered	Institutional
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encampments• Streets/Doorways• Vehicles/RVs• Abandoned Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emergency Shelter: continuous stay and night-by-night• Hotel rooms utilized as emergency shelter• Transitional Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jail• Hospital• Other treatment or long term stay facility

Why do the Point in Time Count?

The Point in Time Count is a window into understanding who, and how people are experiencing homelessness in our community. It is conducted alongside our community Housing Inventory Count (HIC). By doing these simultaneously, we get a snapshot into a single night in our County, where we can look at our available housing and shelter options and the number of our unsheltered homeless, and assess for any gaps between those two figures. Basically, how many available beds are there vs. how many folks there are unsheltered.

Our local data is combined with the rest of the Balance of State for Washington, and then reported to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, to be included in the National Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR).-This lets us look at and measure local, state, and national level trends in homelessness.

The AHAR is provides data to decision makers, so they can strategize the use of available resources and plan for building capacity moving forward. The PIT helps shape our understanding of homelessness, each year, and over time in Thurston County.

How does homelessness in Thurston County compare to the state and the nation?		
AREA	NUMBER OF HOMELESS	RATIO OF HOMELESSNESS
United States	580,466*	18 per 10,000 people**
Washington	22,923*	29.7 per 10,000 people**
Thurston County	724	22.4 per 10,000 people
*Data from 2020 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR)		
**Data from 2020 Decennial Census		

The Point in Time Count remains one of the most consistent touch points on measuring active homelessness in the community and it remains a vital piece of our data infrastructure on homelessness. Other efforts and data sources provide insight into homelessness in addition to the Point in Time Count.

Conducting a census of homeless individuals each year has led to some standardized practices and approaches, which includes using our Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) as the primary source of data for Transitional Housing and Emergency Shelter occupancy on the PIT night. Facilities that do not participate in HMIS are provided paper surveys and encouraged to complete them with all individuals in residence.

Partnerships & Processes

The Point in Time Count (PIT) is made successful through community partnerships—the more widespread the effort, the better the count that has resulted. For 2022, the steering committee met monthly starting in October 2021, and then increased to meeting weekly as the count approached.

2022 Steering Committee Members

- Partners in Prevention Education (PiPE)
- Housing Action Team
- Community Action Council of Lewis, Mason & Thurston Counties
- Love Abounds Here
- City of Lacey Mobile Outreach Team
- Lacey Police Department
- City of Olympia
- Thurston County Public Health & Social Services
- Community Youth Services
- Community Health Plan of Washington
- Family Support Center
- Olympia Mutual Aid Partners (OlyMAP)

Steering committee members engaged with local jails, hospitals, school districts, and regional service providers to include as many folks as possible in the PIT. Not all of entities regularly capture information on homelessness status, so part of this effort is in advocacy and education.

The hope is to continue to build a more inclusive count, by looking at current gaps, and building capacity with various organizations over the year. The Point in Time Count, while it happens over the course of just seven days, is built on the efforts of service providers and volunteers in the months leading up to it.

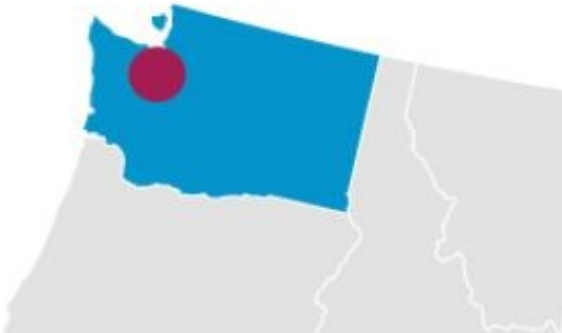
In the time leading up to the count it was not clear if HUD was going to grant a waiver due to the COVID-19 pandemic, like in 2021. However, HUD quickly indicated that was not going to be the case. As another variant of the COVID-19 virus (Omicron) surged, the possibility of rescheduling the event from its normal January date became the main focus of discussions.

The Department of Commerce requested an extension from HUD in mid January, which was granted, allowing the count to be moved to February 24, 2022. The steering committee met every Monday through January and February, to stay coordinated, and ensure the most recent guidance was being taken into consideration.

PIT Timeline

August 2021

The Thurston County Point in Time Count steering committee is formed from jurisdictional and non-profit agency representatives. Planning ensues for volunteers, multiple events, and a comprehensive survey.

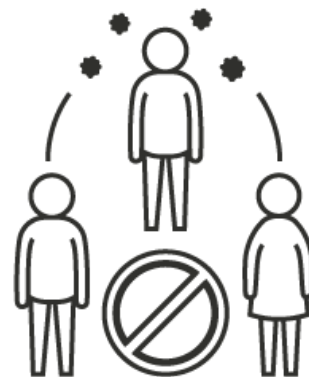


December 2021

The Omicron variant of COVID-19 is increasing in spread with its high rate of transmissibility. Low masking and low vaccination rates in the homeless population increases concerns of safe PIT count implementation.

January 2022

The peak of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 surge is expected to overlap with the end of January PIT Count. The Balance of State asks HUD for an extension, and it is granted.



February 2022

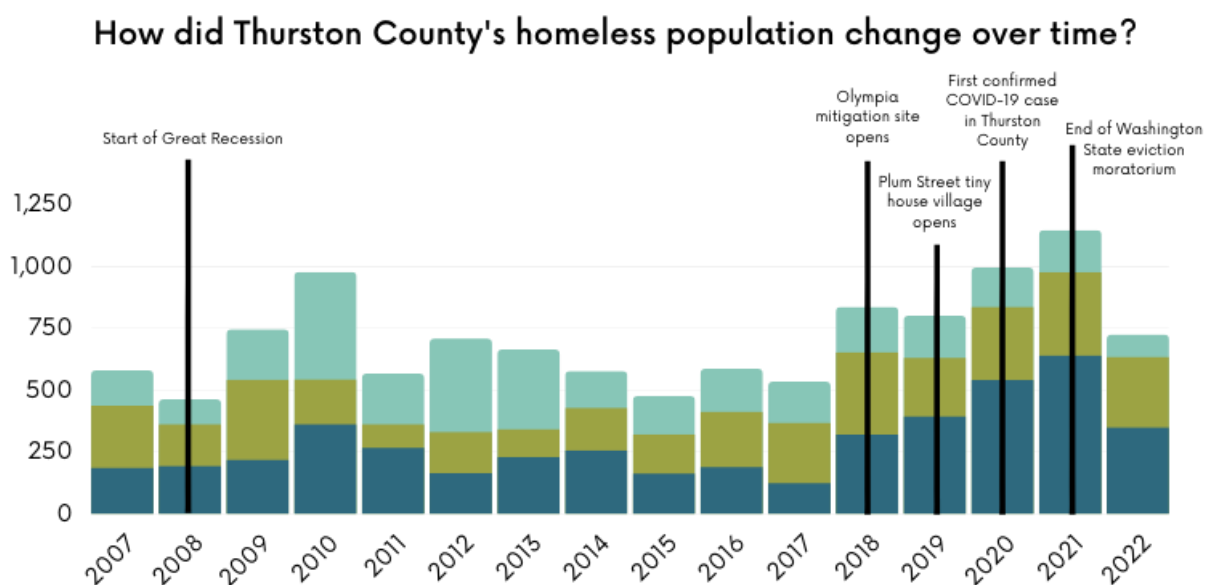
The Point in Time Count takes place starting on February 24 and continues through March 2, 2022. Outreach teams and a small number of volunteers conduct the unsheltered count.

Covid-19 Impacts on 2021 & 2022 PIT Counts

The COVID-19 pandemic directly impacted the way the counts were conducted in both 2021 and 2022. This change in methodology challenges conclusions that can be drawn specifically from these two years, but overall the PIT is structured to allow for annual comparisons and tracking of trends over time. The COVID-19 emergency in Thurston County began in March 2020, after the 2020 PIT count had been finalized. The 2021 PIT count was scheduled for the end of January 2021, and at least early on in 2020, was expected to move forward.

As the pandemic continued to increase in scale however, it became clear that requiring CoCs to conduct the unsheltered count, was going to be a challenge logistically, to do so safely. There were new variants emerging, vaccines were not yet in place, and there were a lot of safety concerns. In recognition of these challenges, HUD waived the unsheltered count in 2021. It became optional, and the Balance of State in Washington chose to take advantage of that waiver, and not require a formal unsheltered count.

For 2021 Thurston County decided to move forward with a non-traditional unsheltered count, leveraging existing relationships between service providers and those with lived experience in the various camp communities. It was done without a survey, in the method of a head count, with some opportunity for very basic demographic information to be captured.



Homelessness in Thurston County was highest in the late 2000s and from 2018 to 2020 and coincided with large-scale events, such as the Great Recession, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the end of the Washington State eviction moratorium (though the number of homeless recorded this year is significantly lower than the level recorded in 2020).

In 2022, the planning process began looking at opportunities to host in-person events for the first time since the pandemic began. Events have been shown to be a key component of successful Point in Time Counts. In-person events encourage engagement, build awareness of the PIT, and can lower concerns, fears, and barriers with consent.

As the planning process continued, Public Health Officials deemed a conservative approach to the PIT was safest. Up to the time of the event, vaccine adoption and masking adherence remained low in the houseless population. As an extra precaution, this meant holding no events, and a very limited survey to capture only the required data elements, to limit the amount of direct in-person engagement time.

The PIT team conducting the survey, was mostly staff from outreach organizations, who were already regularly going into camps, and familiar with participants.

Other than the logistical impacts of holding the count in the midst of a pandemic, there may have been social impacts on those conducting the survey and those participating in the survey. We did not have a mechanism in place to formally measure hesitancy due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the survey results show an increase in folks who refused consent for data entry into HMIS.

This undercuts the results, and makes it more difficult to get an accurate and robust count. When a person is counted for the survey but refuses consent for data entry into HMIS, there is a chance they may be counted more than once. This is due to the survey taking place over multiple days, at multiple agencies.

Housing should be treated as a human right. Many Americans ask, 'Is it possible to end homelessness?' The answer is, yes, the United States can end homelessness by fixing systems — not by blaming the people being failed by them.

Jeff Olivet, USICH Executive Director

Trauma Informed Service — the human cost of data

The Point in Time Count (PIT) surveys individuals experiencing homelessness. The survey includes questions that can be personal and uncomfortable. The planning and implementation of the event include intentional practices to minimize harm.

Being trauma informed in the Point in Time Count does not look the same as being trauma informed in a clinical setting. While we can be thoughtful in how we approach the PIT, there are limitations and practical realities that have to be dealt with. As such, being trauma informed for the PIT is about recognizing and clarifying what it is and what it is not, doing our best to maximize results while not prioritizing them over the rights and comfort of those being interviewed. The PIT is used as a vehicle to leverage resources into the community, and to reduce the possibility of re-traumatization and harm.

What is trauma? There is no one universal definition of trauma, but the most often cited definition, is from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

The transactional nature of the Point in Time Count requires an individual to trade their story, their personal details, and to identify their status openly to strangers in order to gain access to goods and resources. There is often a specific incentive offered, as a gift for their time, but also in recognition of the trauma inherently possible in reliving one's story. The result is messy, and many people refuse to consent.



The COVID-19 pandemic caused the community to reflect on who was conducting surveys, and ways to maximize reach, while minimizing potential negative impacts, especially across encampment communities.

The pandemic changed the utilization of volunteers as the primary vessel of engagement and reach. This shifted to primarily a mix of trained outreach workers, city and county staff, and individual's with lived experience of homelessness from within specific encampments.

There is a recent recognition that individuals who are living in encampments also have a right to privacy, and to have a measure of control over engaging with, and inviting large amounts of strangers into their community.

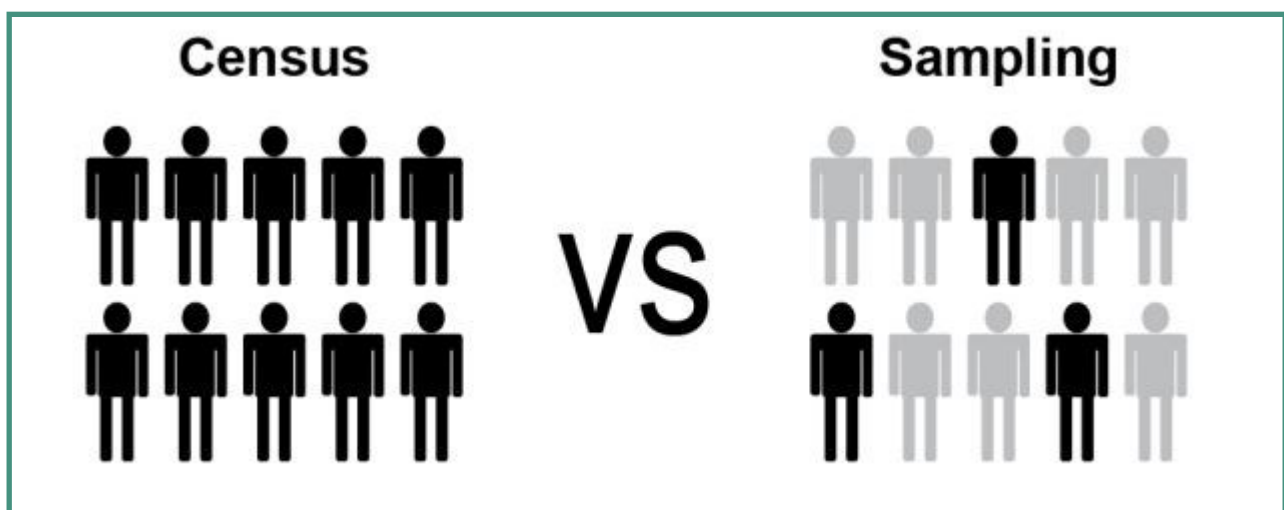
There are practical hazards that need to be taken into consideration as well, in steep, wet, dark, and often unforgiving terrain, for volunteers who are unfamiliar with the area. This includes various encampment boundaries, the presence of yards, traps, toilets, burn pits/piles, and other natural dangers.



Methodology of the Point in Time Count

The methodology of the Point in Time Count (PIT) changes slightly each year as new best practices are learned, community relationships are built, and to meet the changing landscape of where folks are experiencing homelessness across the county.

For the 2022 unsheltered count, Thurston County chose a full-census survey approach of known locations. This means that instead of only asking a limited number of individuals to do the survey, we tried to have as many people as possible engage, and we went to where we knew people were.



Rural areas and places where encampments were not known to be were not included as a part of this count. The focus was on the main jurisdictional and urban growth (UG) areas (Lacey, Tumwater, Olympia, and Yelm), population centers, and Washington State Department of Transportation Rights of Ways where there are known encampments. While a census of these locations was feasible, to cover the entire geographic region of Thurston County was not practical.

Ongoing relationship building and bringing best practices in rural outreach and PIT engagement to all of Thurston County will help capture a population of folks in those areas that would otherwise not be counted.

Utilizing a survey, and not doing a single night count, meant that we had the full seven days to try to engage with as many individuals as possible. This length of time also helped us structure the PIT to align with existing outreach into the encampments. Homeless service providers also engaged individuals accessing services over those seven days, to ensure they had the opportunity to complete the survey.

Along with the survey, the number of homestead vehicles are counted. The survey includes of individuals who reported staying in an RV/vehicle on PIT night.

The PIT survey has shifted in length over the years, always capturing the minimum data requirements, to better understand who and how individuals are experiencing homelessness. Questions about where they came from, their last permanent address, and how long they have been in Thurston County have historically helped us understand the flow of homelessness in the community.

The survey includes questions about causes of homelessness, income sources, health and family situation, and what services they have attempted to access. The range of questions goes from very broad to extremely personal and this can have an impact on survey responsiveness. Each individual is trained to conduct the survey through a Trauma Informed lens and many people still choose not to answer some questions.

Data quality requirements mandated by HUD and the Washington State Department of Commerce can present a barrier. Meeting the minimum requirements of complete information, can be a struggle if individuals only use street names or do not want to provide something as personal as their date of birth. Even if they agree for entry into HMIS, without enough minimum identifying information, they cannot be included in the PIT.

Common Issues in Data Collection

Full First & Last Name

- Partial, street name, or nickname given
- Hearing people correctly, and spelling — especially with complicated names

Date of Birth

- Lack of trust; often not provided
- Incomplete data
- Clearly inconsistent with actual age

Race, Ethnicity, Gender

- Takes rapport building for individuals to open up about their identity
- Categories and ways to capture this have historically not been broad enough
- Even under ideal circumstances this data is often not collected completely or correctly

The Survey & Gear Distribution

The survey was conducted by individuals over the course of multiple days and at known encampment areas. While there were no large community events to drive engagement, there were incentives items handed out to participants.

The incentives provided for those engaging in the survey, included a hand-crank rechargeable solar flashlight, hygiene kits (shampoo, conditioner, soap, comb, hand sanitizer, toothbrush, toothpaste, tampons/pads), snack kits (water bottle, protein bars, fruit snacks), and the larger encampments were also provided meal sized burritos.

In total:

- ♦ 295 meal sized burritos
- ♦ 370 hand-crank rechargeable flashlights
- ♦ 800 hygiene kits
- ♦ 800 snack kits
- ♦ 210 (I count!) buttons



The buttons were an effort to give folks a way to visually identify they had completed the survey, so that they were not asked again to complete one as they accessed regular services.

Resource flyers were included in every survey binder, to be handed out as needed. The resource flyers included information about local shelter, meal services, and other local programs and service organizations. Those conducting the PIT survey could provide the flyers and point out specific information if individuals asked.

Warm meals and food have been found to be one of the largest drivers of interest and engagement with those doing the outreach to engage folks with the PIT surveys.

The encampment surveys were conducted largely by three organizations: Olympia Mutual Aid Partners, Partners in Prevention Education, and Love Abounds Here. Volunteer support from the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Community Action Council of Lewis, Mason & Thurston Counties, Wisdom Ministries, and a limited number of community advocates helped add additional capacity and rounded out the scope of the count. Each jurisdiction took on helping to coordinate their own count, including their vehicles and RVs, parks, and other areas.

Olympia

- City of Olympia staff engaged throughout the planning process. On PIT day, along with a team of volunteers, a core group of staff completed a full census in the early morning through the downtown corridor. They determined the area to be covered in advance, and used maps. The teams proceeded to engage with as many individuals as possible to complete the survey.
- Key areas on the west side of Olympia were patrolled to help capture everyone within the city limits.
- Parking enforcement and the Olympia Parks Department were also engaged to help identify individuals, and vehicles noted as active dwellings.

Lacey

- The City of Lacey Mobile Outreach Team (MOT) engages in regular outreach throughout the City of Lacey and its various forested and other managed lands. The MOT conducted the PIT count, upon a very strong foundation of existing relationships, and knowledge of where individuals were located.
- The City of Lacey maintains a strong presence across its jurisdiction in the areas known to host encampments.
- Lacey Police Department and parking enforcement

Tumwater

- The City of Tumwater relies on regular staff positions from within its' various departments to coordinate the PIT count. Without a dedicated outreach team, the Tumwater count has relied on regional partners and volunteers.
- The Tumwater Police Department and Parks department supplied a map of locations where encampments were known to be, or had been previously located. This was used as the starting point for the volunteer teams.
- A small group of volunteers conducted the Tumwater surveys, across known vacant areas, as well as commercial areas and transportation corridors.

Yelm

- Love Abounds Here (LAH) helped organize a community resource fair on February 25, 2022. During this event a meal and supplies were provided for those who attended, and the incentive items for those who participated in the survey.
- The LAH team canvass across the Yelm community, ensuring resource distribution, an opportunity for individuals to access the survey and connect to resources.

Thurston County is in the Washington State Balance of State, which means there have historically been certain limitations in the amount of freedom in PIT decision making and planning. An example is the desire to use an online or digital survey tool locally, rather than paper —something other CoC's across the nation have successfully implemented. However, it has not been adopted across the Balance of State so Thurston County cannot adopt this method.

There are many issues with paper surveys, including weather and water damage and illegible responses. There are safeguards put in place, but surveys and data have been lost due to damage as a result of improper handling. We continue to advocate for approaches to the PIT that make it easier for volunteers, and the data to be as accurate as possible.

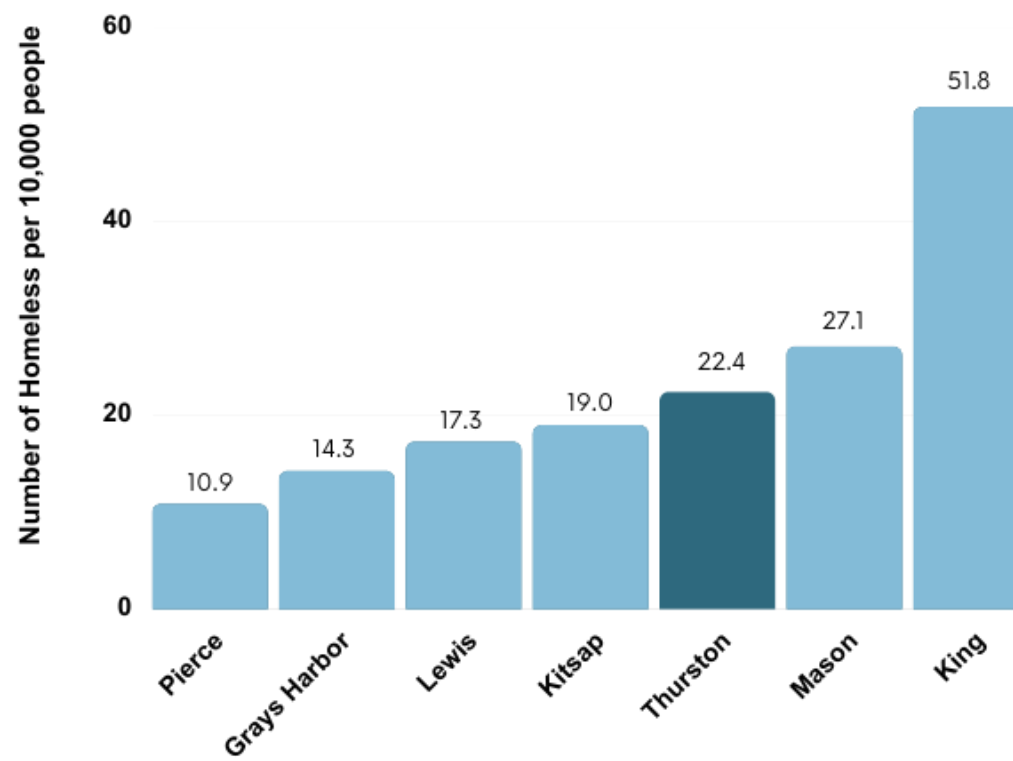
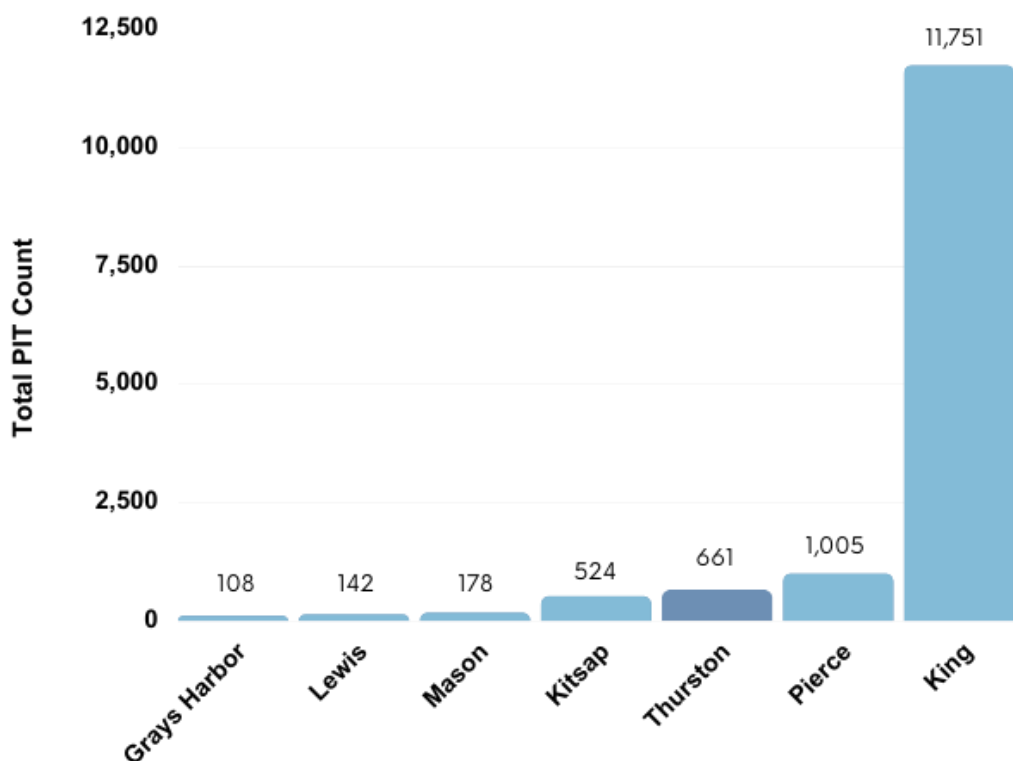
Volunteers are a core strength and weakness in conducting the PIT count. Without volunteers the count would not be as robust as it has consistently been. Volunteers enable the count to take place. While some volunteers have experience working with unsheltered individuals, this is often the first time many of the volunteers are entering encampments.

Without rapport, or at a minimum an established relationship, engaging in quality data gathering can be a challenge. It can be even more challenging for PIT volunteers without experience working with the homeless population or in encampments. Many participants have filled out a similar surveys numerous times, with no discernible impact on them and have little to no interest in participating.



Thurston County has the third highest PIT Count in the region. King County has the highest.

How does homelessness in Thurston County compare to nearby counties?*



*Data for all counties except Thurston County from 2020 PIT Count reports, compiled by Washington State Department of Commerce

Findings

The findings from the Point in Time Count reflect only part of the stories that are being lived by our houseless neighbors. The information gathered about those in transitional housing and emergency shelter, and those who are unsheltered — living in places not meant for human habitation, their vehicle/RV, etc.



The Point in Time Count data goes through an extensive process of deduplication to ensure that no individual is counted twice. This process looks across programs at the local level in Thurston County, as well as statewide in the rest of the Balance of State HMIS system, and within the individualized reporting CoC’s (such as King and Snohomish counties).

Individuals who are Consent Refused, but who otherwise provide enough differentiating and identifying information, may still be included in the count. We align our reporting with the final Commerce report, and do not include individuals who do not meet the formal criteria to be included, such as those doubled up and couch surfing. We have surveys from these individuals that will be detailed later in this report, but they are not included in the formal count.

How many homeless people in Thurston County are sheltered vs. unsheltered?



From the Housing Inventory Count, and general community tracking, we know that shelter utilization across the community is generally over 85%. Capacity went down slightly during the COVID-19 pandemic, as physical distancing, and other service changes were implemented.

The data reported here is from what was collected in surveys, and from the Homeless Management Information System. There is also data from other auxiliary sources, which are specifically cited as they are referenced.

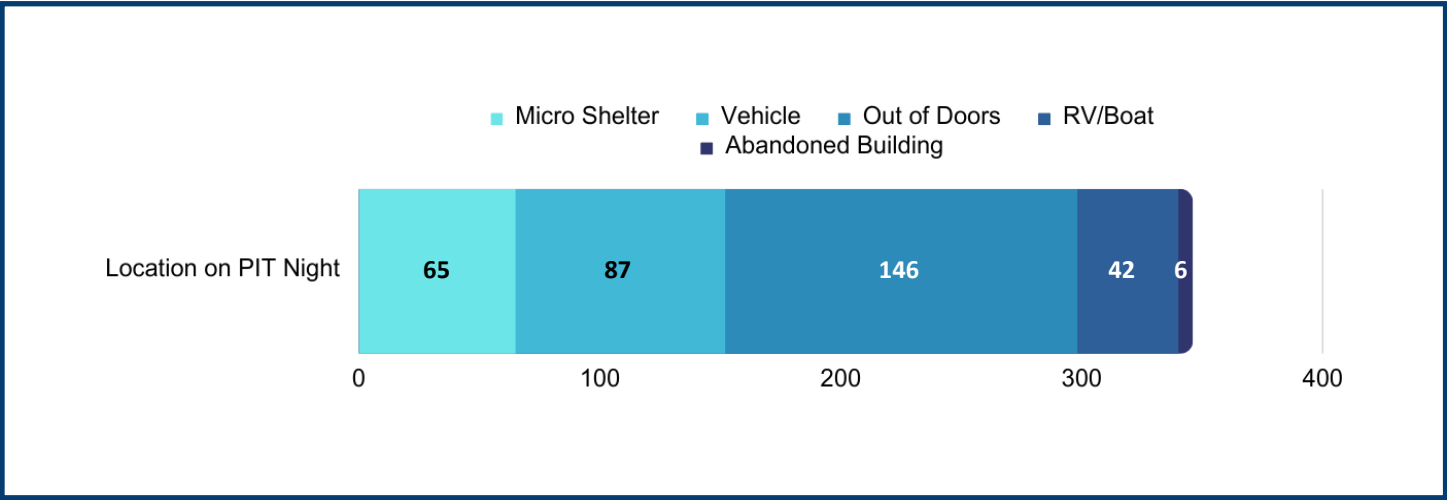
There were a few incidences of individuals completing the survey more than once, which were accounted for in the findings. If demographic information or other answers provided did not match, we prioritized the first survey conducted, and then captured any new information from the second survey.

It's not always clear if participants are immediately eligible to be included in the PIT. There are a number of individuals who meet the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness, but not the formal HUD definition to be included. 59 individuals who were surveyed reported either being doubled/up couch surfing, or being in hospital, jail, or other treatment facility on the PIT night.

Where did folks stay on PIT night?

Surveys were conducted in encampments and at service sites during regular business hours.

129 individuals were surveyed that had stayed in a vehicle or RV/Boat, and **146** out of doors.



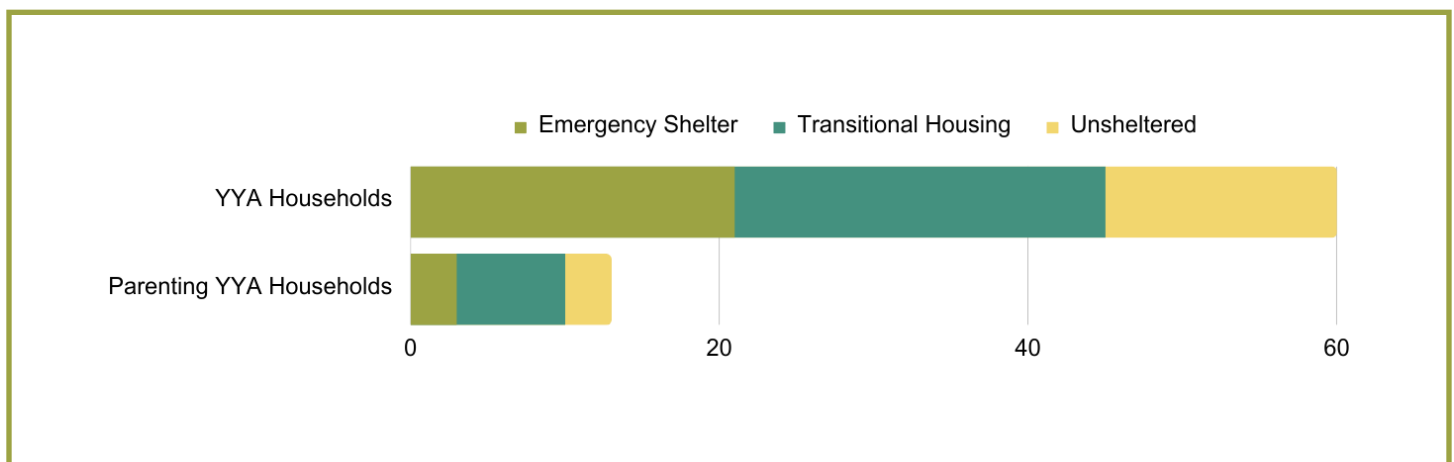
86 homestead vehicles were counted. While these inhabitants were not directly surveyed, it is assumed that at least some of these individuals were captured in those surveyed. The demographics of those in vehicles was close to the larger population.

There were 71 males to 57 females captured, and slightly more families. There were 66 Households with at least 1 child, and 62 single adults.

Youth and Young Adults (YYA)

There were 60 youth households captured in the PIT Count. These are individuals up ages 24 and under. Age 25 is considered an adult in the homeless crisis response system.

Parenting YYA Households are cases in which the Head of Household is a Youth and Young Adult (YYA) with at least one child.

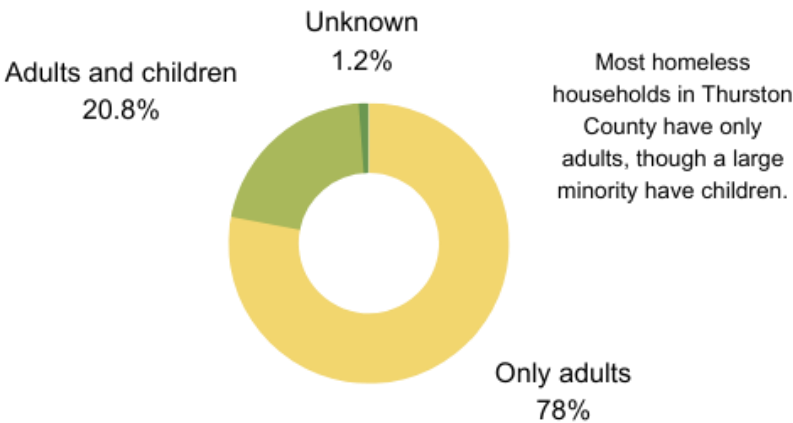


Youth and Young Adults	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Unsheltered	Total
Total Households	21	24	15	60
Total Persons	22	24	15	61
Total Persons (under 18)	7	0	0	7
Total Persons (18-24)	15	24	15	54
Female	9	12	6	27
Male	9	9	9	27
Gender Non-Conforming	3	3	0	6
Questioning	0	0	0	0
Transgender	2	2	1	5
American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous	0	2	0	2
Asian or Asian American	0	0	0	0
Black, African American, or African	2	3	2	7
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0
White	9	17	11	37
Multi-Racial	10	2	1	13
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	15	15	11	41
Hispanic/Latino	4	9	2	15

Unsheltered Households

In 2022, there were **346** individuals included in the formal unsheltered count. In addition to these 346, we captured **31** individuals who were doubled up/couch surfing, and **20** who were residing in local hospitals and jails. **231** individuals identified being homeless for one year or more, and **33** were identified as chronically homeless.

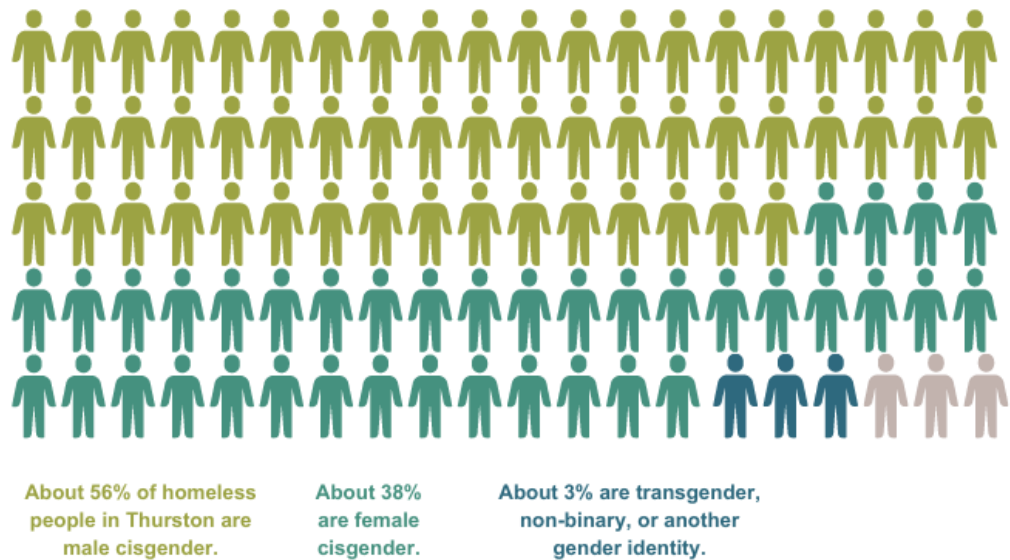
How did Thurston County's unsheltered homeless population differ by household type?



In PIT data collection, it is easier to capture single adults than families. Families tend to rely on friends and family more often, as well as living in cars or vehicles instead of tents.

We see in the chart below that the unsheltered population remains predominantly male, which is more often to be in single adult, or non-children households.

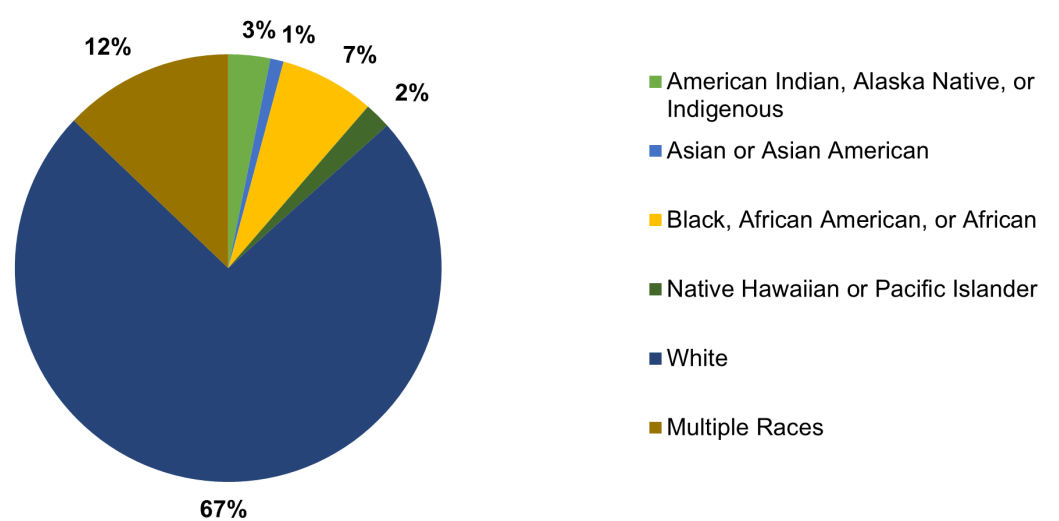
How did Thurston County's homeless differ by gender identity?



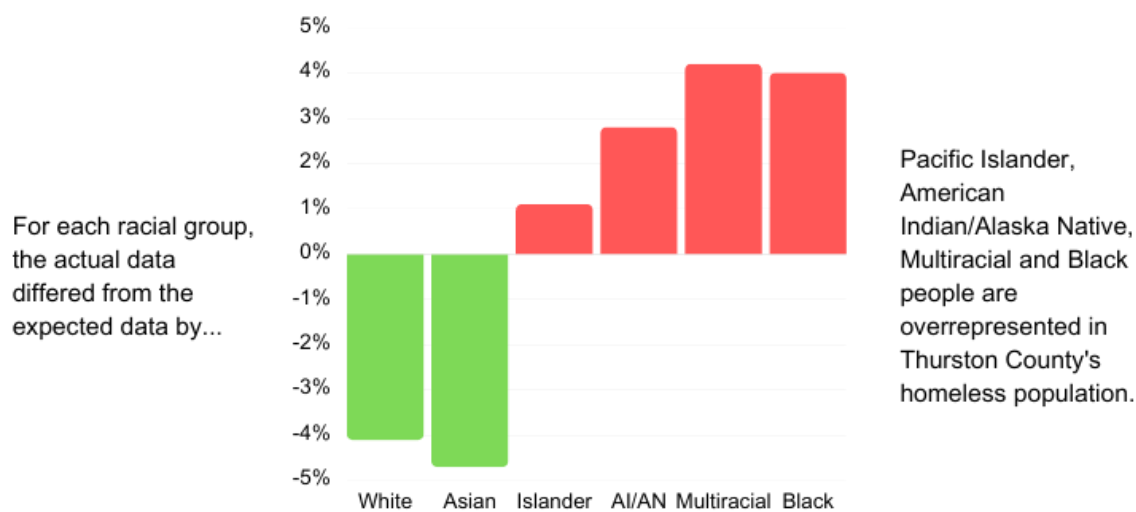
Thurston County is almost 80% white, according to data from the most recent American Community Survey (ACS). Around 13% of individuals identified as Hispanic or Latina/x/o. However, while we do see a majority of those experiencing homelessness are white, it is not in the same proportion as the community racial makeup as a whole.

In the second chart below, you see that White and Asian people have a lower than expected percentage of the homeless population, while all other minority groups are overrepresented.

How did Thurston County's homeless differ by race?



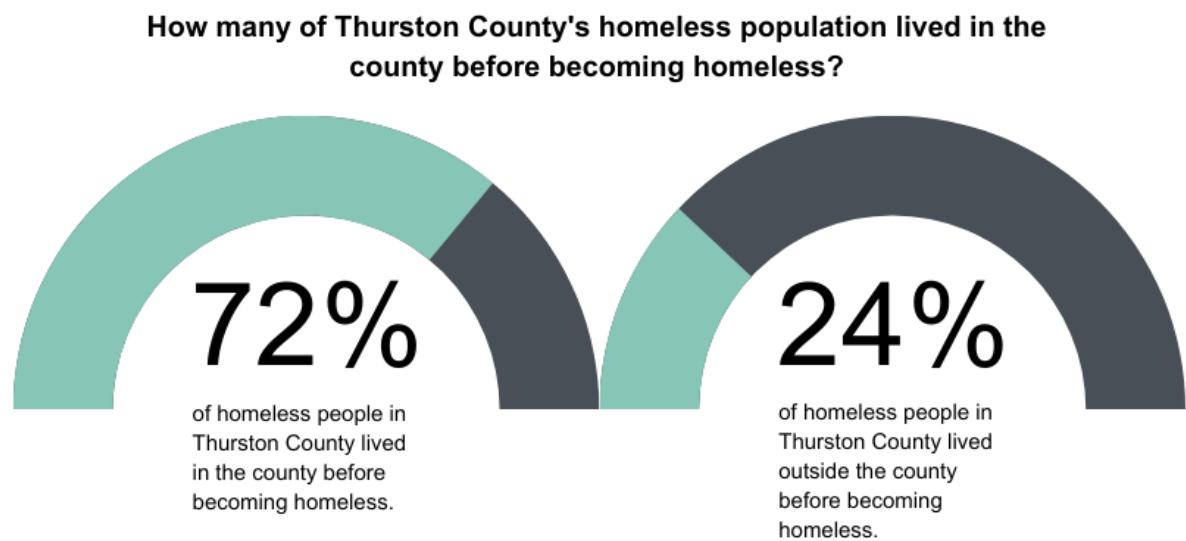
How did the actual data compare with the expected data?



Data from American Community Survey (ACS) population estimates.

What else does the data tell us?

In Thurston County the majority of individuals who experience homelessness are from Thurston County.



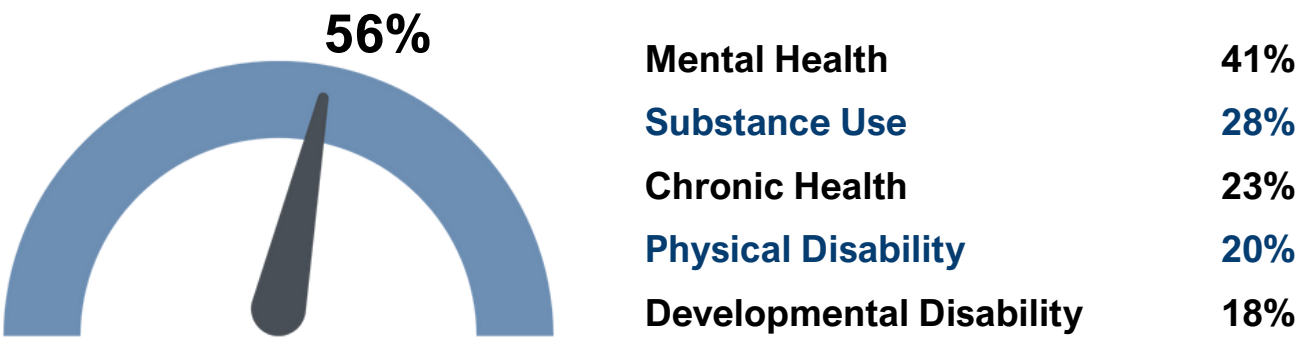
How many veterans are experiencing homelessness?



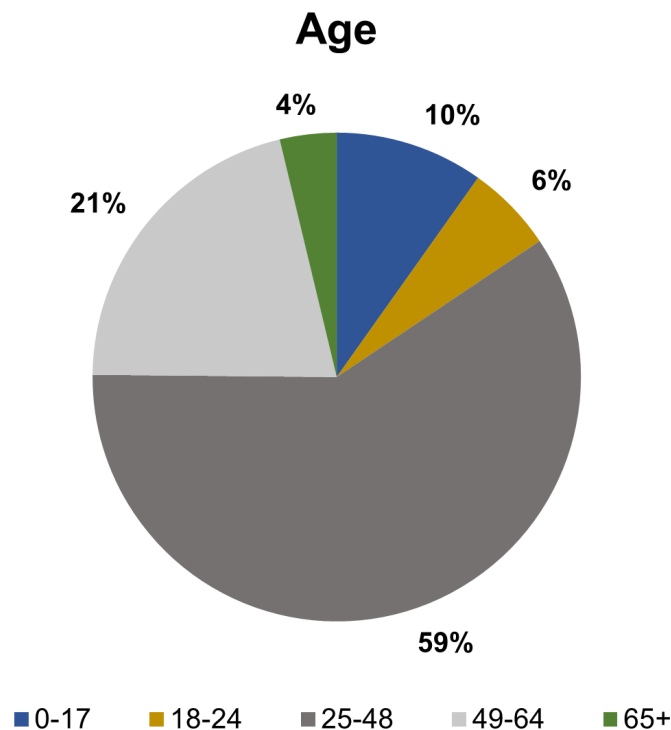
1 in 33 people experiencing homelessness in Thurston County is a veteran.

Chronic Health and Disability

Out of the 346 individuals counted, 199 individuals reported some sort of physical or mental health concern.



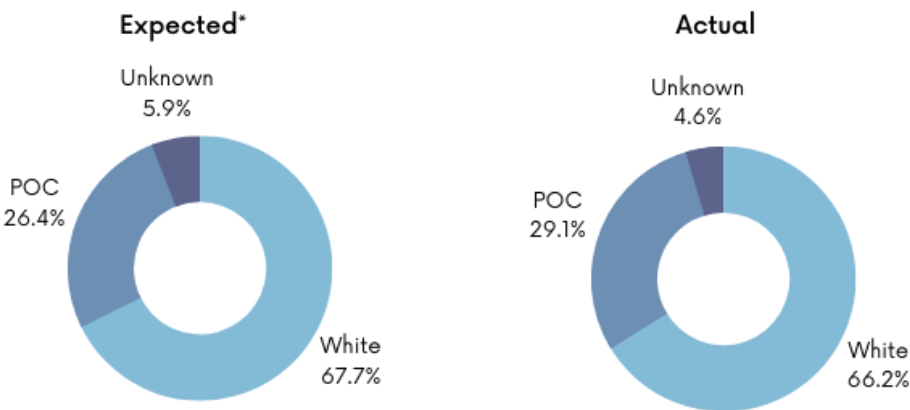
Individuals who are ages 25-48 made up the majority of those surveyed. 16% of those captured were Youth and Young Adults, which we know is not an accurate snapshot. Youth and Young Adults are difficult to capture in the Point in Time Count, and there was not any specific YYA programming or events during the 2022 count.



Domestic Violence

15% of those experiencing unsheltered homelessness reported actively fleeing Domestic Violence. When this is further broken down by race, we find that BIPOC—Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color– are much more likely to report experiencing Domestic Violence.

How Likely Were Different Racial Groups in Thurston County's Homeless Population to Flee Domestic Violence (DV)?



*Calculated using chi-square.
**Statistically significant at p < 0.05.

Sheltered Households

Sheltered Households are those who stayed in emergency shelter (ES), either continuous stay or night by night, or transitional housing (TH). Emergency shelter is a short-term, temporary housing solution that gets individuals out of unsheltered homelessness.

In Thurston County, tiny homes at Plum Street Village, hotel and motel rooms, private or semi-private shelter rooms, and large shared dormitory spaces are all a part of our sheltering system. These shelter programs have different requirements and serve different populations. A large gap remains between available shelter beds and the number of unhoused individuals.

The following tables detail the number of individuals counted on the night of the PIT and additional the information gathered.

Emergency Shelter

Agency	Program Name(s)*	PIT Count
Catholic Community Services	CTH Emergency Shelter (<i>Drexel</i>)	9
Community Youth Services	CYSHope; CYSYoung Adult Shelter	18
Family Support Center	FSCFamily Support Shelter; FSCESG-CV Hotel/Motel Vouchers; FSCExpanded Shelter; FSC-2163 Cold Weather Shelter; FSCMotel Vouchers	87
Interfaith Works	IFWUnity Commons; IFWUnity Commons Expanded	41
Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI)	LHIPlum Street Village; LHI Hope Village	23
Olympia Mutual Aid Partners (OlyMAP)	OMAHotel Vouchers	46
SafePlace	SAFSafePlace—Shelter; SAF-SafPlace—Hotel/Motel Vouchers	18
Salvation Army	VATResident Beds ES (PIT)	7
Union Gospel Mission (UGM)	UGM Emergency Shelter (PIT)	17
	Total Emergency Shelter Count	266

*The programs listed are those current at the time of the Point in Time Count. Those with (PIT), indicate programs that do not regularly participate in HMIS. For a current list of projects and included providers in HMIS please visit the [Commerce Agency Lookup Dashboard](#).

Transitional Housing (TH)

Transitional Housing (TH) is defined as up to 24 months of time-limited supportive housing. After years of implementation and centering best practices, we've learned that TH works well for the youth and young adult (YYA) population, but not for all single adults and families.

This is reflected in the fact that the majority of TH beds in Thurston County are focused on YYA, and provided through Community Youth Services.

Agency	Program Name	PIT Count
Community Youth Services	CYSRISE Transitional; CYSECHO Transitional; CYSTLP Transitional; CYSIYHP	41
Low Income Housing Institute	LHIFleetwood TH	8
	Total	49

How many sheltered homeless are chronically homeless?

The federal HUD definition of chronic homelessness,

A homeless individual with a disability as defined in section 401(9) of the McKinney-Vento Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11360(9)), who:

- Lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter, and
- Has been homeless and living as described for at least 12 months* or on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years, as long as the combined occasions equal at least 12 months and each break in homelessness separating the occasions included at least 7 consecutive nights of not living as described.

Nearly 40% of individuals in Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing met the definition of Chronically Homeless.

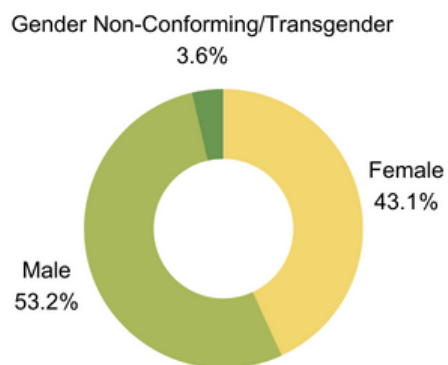


Demographics in Shelter

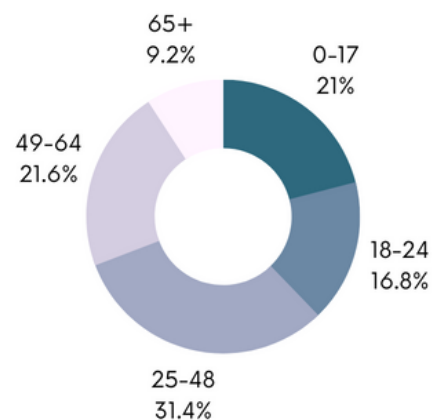
In Thurston County shelters, we see a slightly different story for which demographic populations are receiving services than those that reside in unsheltered locations. The following graphs detail the core demographics of this group on PIT night.

For more in-depth information, the Emergency Shelter (ES) and Transitional Housing (TH) populations, excluding a few non-participating projects, are captured in regular reporting both quarterly and for each State Fiscal Year (July 1—June 30)¹.

Gender Identity

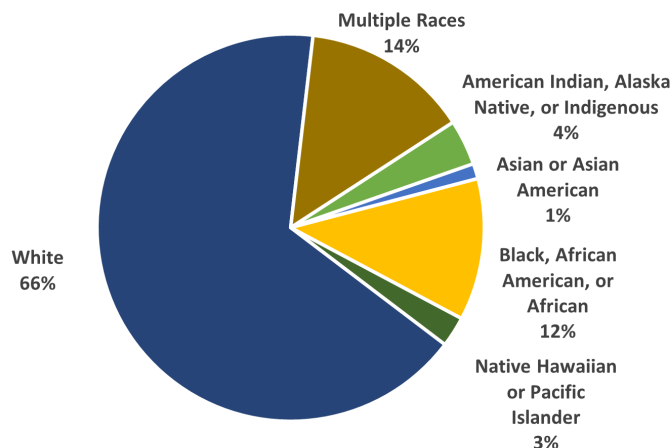


Age



There were slightly more females reported in ES (43%), than unsheltered at 38%. This could be from the fact that there are shelter programs that serve higher proportions of females than males: with higher percentages of female led family groups, and a larger percentage of females that identify as fleeing Domestic Violence.

Racial Identity



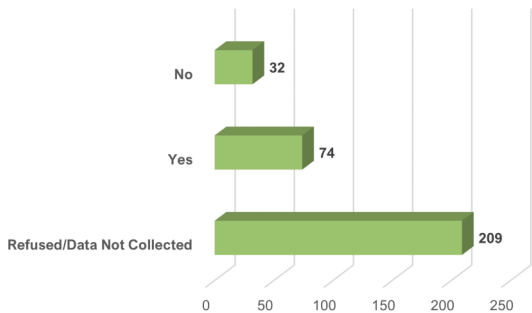
Around 15% of Thurston County's sheltered population identify as Hispanic or Latina/x/o.

1: <https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/departments/public-health-and-social-services/social-services/office-housing-homeless-prevention/accountability>

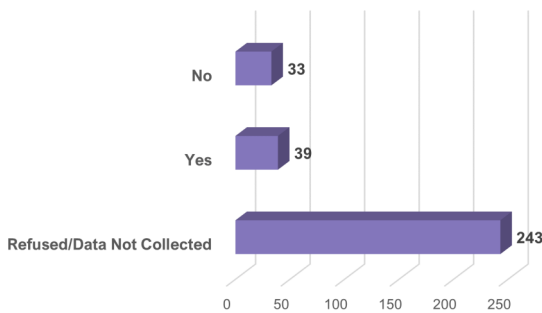
What Health Conditions were reported?

The data below is self-reported and identified by the individual participants within these shelter programs. There is no verification required.

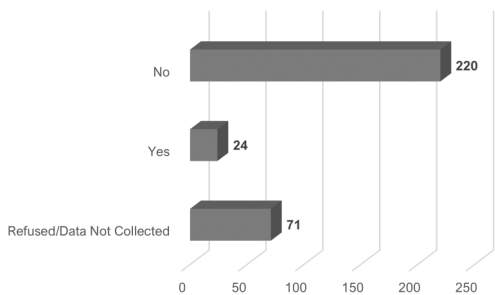
Mental Health



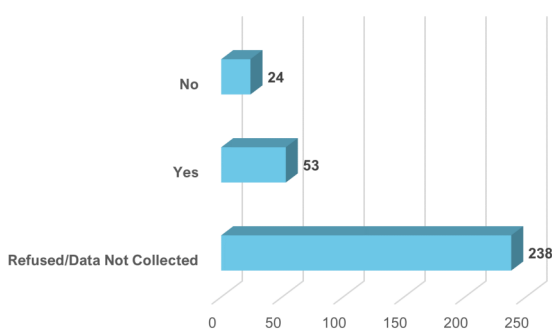
Substance Use



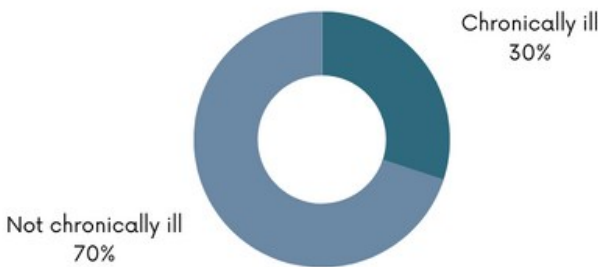
Developmental Disability



Physical Disability



How many sheltered homeless have a chronic illness?



About one third of sheltered homeless in the 2022 PIT Count reported that they have a chronic illness such as diabetes or heart disease.

Chronic Illness, Mental Health, and Physical Disability are the highest reported incidences of health conditions. This aligns with the research and literature that discuss the extensive and negative long-term health impacts of living unsheltered, including high incidences of trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)¹.

There are many compounding factors for the negative health impacts among the homeless population. Some of the main reasons are loss of access to healthcare, lost or stolen prescriptions, and an inability to prioritize self-care due to the need to focus on survival. National mortality data show that these impacts are highest for individuals age 50 and above to experience homelessness for the first time.

1: National Health Care for the Homeless, *Homelessness & Health: What's the Connection?*. February 2019. <https://nhchc.org/research/publications/>

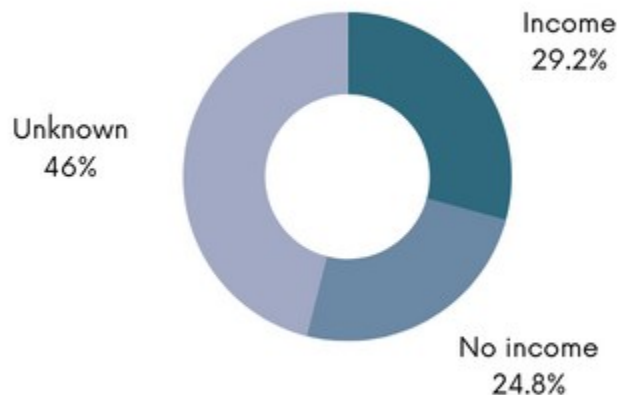
Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

When individuals indicate that they are actively fleeing domestic or intimate partner violence, sexual assault, human trafficking or stalking, certain protocols are followed in handling the data. It is deidentified when entered in the Homeless Management Information System, which means only information that could not be used to identify the person can be reported.

The number of individuals who reported actively fleeing was about the same for sheltered (6%) and unsheltered (9%), though there is a presumption that this number is an under representation of the true count.

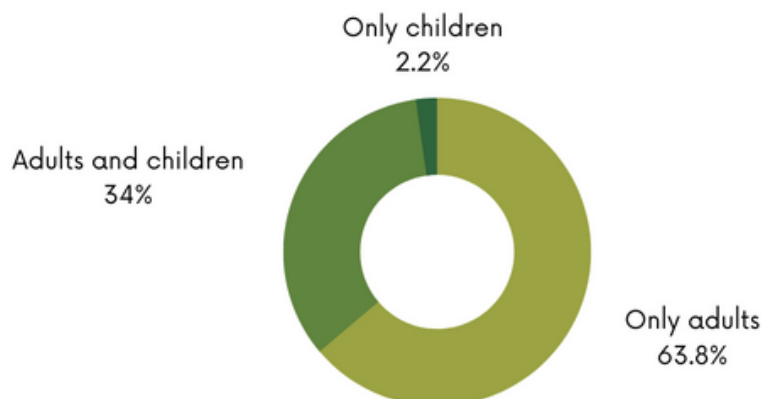
How many sheltered homeless have an income?

At least a third of sheltered homeless have income from a job, social welfare, or other source, and nearly a third have no income at all*.



*Data was refused or otherwise not collected on this question for 145 people (about 46% of the total counted sheltered homeless population in Thurston County).

How did Thurston County's sheltered homeless population differ by household type?



Most sheltered households are made up of adults 18 and above, though around a third have children.

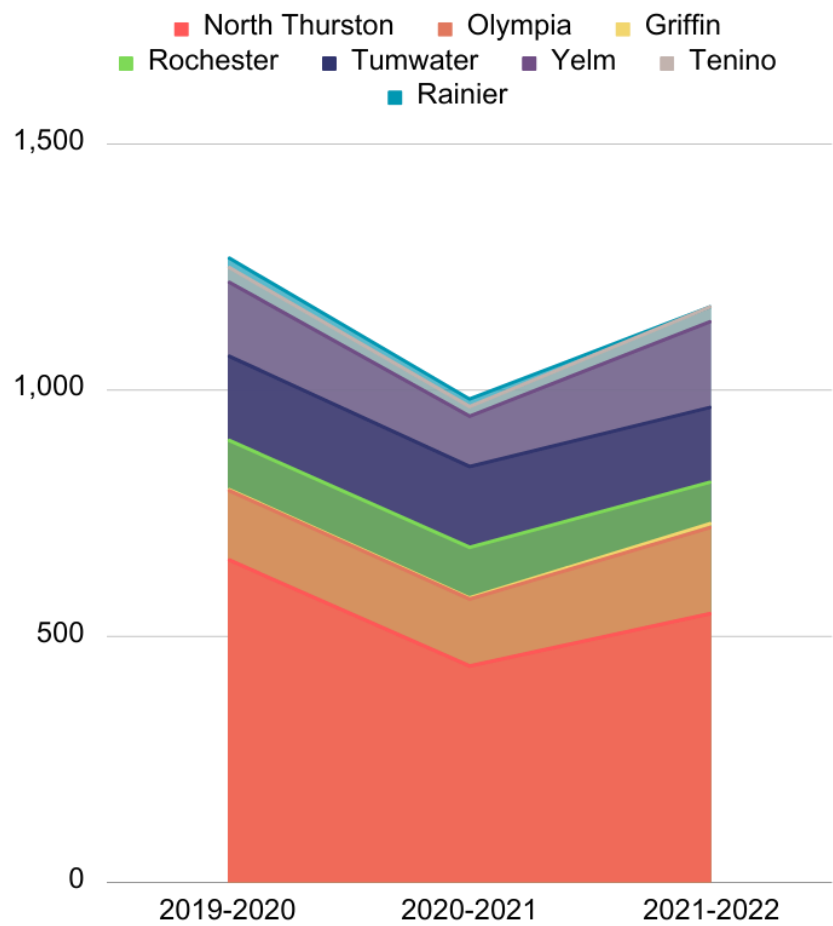
School Data

The McKinney Vento act has an expanded definition of homelessness that applies to homeless youth. This definition includes those that are staying with friends and family. This can mean when a family or child is doubled up with another family or couch surfing. The numbers reported by the Office of the Super Intendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), include this expanded definition.

Thurston County has eight school districts, which all utilize Skyward, the state school data management system. The chart below details the numbers of individuals who enrolled during the past three school years, from 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.

This data represents all enrolled students over the entirety of the school year. When examined alongside the Point in Time Count data, it helps to round out the picture of who and how folks are experiencing homelessness in our community, and the number of homeless students in Thurston County.

How many homeless students enrolled in each school district?



*Data gathered from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State Report Card.

Conclusion & Ongoing

The Point in Time Count (PIT) is an annual event that surveys homelessness across our community.

Each year the Point in Time Count looks a little different as we improve our methodology and understanding of best practices. This impacts the analysis of trends and can make drawing conclusions from the data more challenging. The PIT remains one of our best data sources on homelessness, even with the known gaps and flaws.

While the data and methodology may not be perfect, we do our best to capture every person experiencing homelessness. Each number seen in this report represents someone—an individual, a person. We understand that each person carries a lifetime of experience that cannot be captured in this five-minute survey.

The effort of the PIT is to make sure we have enough information from each person for them to be included in the data, and that, in the process, we make connections with our understanding of homelessness in Thurston County.

Driving down certain roads in Thurston County, you can see tents, smoke from fires, and visible signs of encampment support – porta potties and dumpsters. We know people are there and we know that their experience goes far beyond what can be seen from afar. The data tells us that there are more men than women living unsheltered in Thurston and that BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color) individuals are over-represented in our homeless population.

The data shows that most individuals experiencing homelessness lived locally, in Thurston County prior to becoming homeless. Knowing that most of our homeless population is from here shifts conversations about upstream prevention. We can examine how to support better individuals that may be struggling to keep or maintain their housing to prevent them from becoming homeless.

Thurston County is shifting economically. As the median household income continues to increase, the rents increase too. Rising rents can make it more difficult for individuals to afford their homes and cause them to slide into homelessness.

The PIT is like a thermometer, an annual gauge for measuring shifts in the homeless population in our community. The data gathered during this event each year helps inform our community's coordinated response to homelessness.



Volunteer & Community Partner Recognition!

Thank you to everyone listed for your engagement and support of the 2022 Point in Time count! And to everyone not listed who supported the effort, thank you! This truly is a community effort each and every year, and we could not do it without you.

- Eric Harrington, PIT Intern
- Keylee Marineau, Thurston County PHSS
- Thomas Webster, Thurston County PHSS
- Cody Anderson, Thurston County PHSS
- Jacinda Steltjes, Thurston County PHSS
- City of Olympia Homeless Response Team
- Partners in Prevention Education
- Love Abounds Here
- Olympia Mutual Aid Partners
- Rick Walk, City of Lacey
- Brad Medrud, City of Tumwater
- Todd Anderson, City of Tumwater
- Lacey MOT Team
- Lacey Policy Department
- Tumwater Police Department
- City of Olympia Police Department
- Prossy Balome, Community Health Plan of Washington
- HUD-VASH, Balance of State Team
- Community Action Council of Lewis, Mason & Thurston Counties
- Community Youth Services
- Interfaith Works
- Family Support Center of South Sound
- Senior Services of South Sound
- St. Michael's Parish
- Thurston County Food Bank
- InterCity Transit
- United Way of Thurston County
- Union Gospel Mission
- Salvation Army
- Wisdom Ministries
- Cami Jones, Volunteer
- Sharon Shaw, Volunteer
- Paul S., Volunteer
- Jillian King, Volunteer
- Harriet Strasberg, Volunteer
- Eliza Cobbs Ramsey, Volunteer
- Anna Schlect, Volunteer
- Danny Stusser, Volunteer
- Jill Dole, Temple Beth Hatfiloh Homelessness Task Force, Volunteer

Where is this survey being taken? City _____ Area _____ Time _____

Enumerator (You! & Organization): _____

**ARE YOU OR ANYONE IN YOUR FAMILY GROUP CURRENTLY FLEEING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: YES/NO
OR UNDER THE AGE of 13 WITHOUT PARENT OR GUARDIAN? IF YES, DO NOT COMPLETE SECTIONS IN GREY.**

1. First name _____ Last Name _____

2. Date of Birth _____

3. Where did you sleep on the night of Thursday February 24th? (circle the answer that best applies)

a. On the street or sidewalk

e. Temporarily staying with friends/ family

b. In a vehicle

f. Jail, Hospital, or Detox facility

c. Abandoned building

g. Emergency Shelter

d. In an RV or boat lacking power/water

h. In an outdoor encampment (tent, structure)

e. Other: _____

4. Where was your last PERMANENT address? City _____ State _____

5. Have you or anyone in the household been continuously without housing for a year or more?

Yes (skip to Question 8)

No

6. Have you or anyone in the household been without housing 4 or more times in the last 3 years?

Yes

No (skip to Question 9)

7. Do these times without housing, added together, amount to a year or more? **Yes** **No**

8. Does any person who answered yes for either 6 or 7 have a disability? **Yes** **No**

Gender: Male (**M**), Female (**F**), Transgender (**T**), A gender that is not singularly 'Female' or 'Male' (**N**), Questioning (**Q**), Doesn't Know (**DK**), Refused (**R**)

9. Gender: _____

Race: White (**W**), Black, African, or African American (**B**), Asian or Asian American (**A**), American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous (**I**), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (**H**), Doesn't Know (**DK**), Refused (**R**)

10. Race: _____

11. Hispanic/Latin(a)(o)(x) **Yes / No**

12. Veteran **Yes / No**

13. Household Type: Household without Children ☐: Household with Children ☐: Household with only Children ☐

Additional Household Members: (*For Health Conditions see question 14)

a. **Person 2: Name** _____ **Relationship to survey taker** _____
Gender _____ **Race** _____ **DOB** ____/____/____ **Hispanic** **Yes / No** **Veteran** **Yes / No**
Health Conditions: _____

b. **Person 2: Name** _____ **Relationship to survey taker** _____
Gender _____ **Race** _____ **DOB** ____/____/____ **Hispanic** **Yes / No** **Veteran** **Yes / No**
Health Conditions: _____

c. **Person 2: Name** _____ **Relationship to survey taker** _____
Gender _____ **Race** _____ **DOB** ____/____/____ **Hispanic** **Yes / No** **Veteran** **Yes / No**
Health Conditions: _____

14. Health Conditions: (Circle ALL that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| a. Psychiatric or Emotional Conditions | e. Physical Disability |
| b. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) | f. Intellectual Disability/Memory Impairment |
| c. Drug or Alcohol Abuse | g. Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) |
| d. Chronic Health Problems | h. AIDS/HIV Related |

Client Release of Information and Informed Consent

IMPORTANT: Do not enter personally identifying information into HMIS for clients who are: 1) in DV agencies or; 2) currently fleeing or in danger from a domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault or stalking situation; 3) are being served in a program that requires disclosure of HIV/AIDS status (i.e.; HOPWA); or 4) under 13 with no parent or guardian available to consent to enter the minor's information in HMIS.

*If this applies to you, **STOP- Do not sign this form.***

This agency participates in the Washington State Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) by collecting information, over time, about the characteristics and service needs of people facing homelessness. **RCW 43.185C.180 and RCW 43.185C.030**

- To provide the most effective services in moving people from homelessness to permanent housing, we need an accurate count of all people experiencing homelessness in Washington State. In order to insure that clients are not counted twice, we need to collect four pieces of personally identifying information. Specifically, we collect: **name, birth date, and race/ethnicity**. You may also choose to provide your social security number. However, signing this form does not require you to do so. Your information will be stored in our database for 7 years after the last date of service. If you have questions about collection of data or your rights regarding your personally identifying information, contact the HMIS System Administrator at: (360) 725-3028
- We use strict security policies designed to protect your privacy. Our computer system is highly secure and uses up-to-date protection features such as data encryption, passwords, and two-factor authentication required for each system user. There is a small risk of a security breach, and someone might obtain and use your information inappropriately. If you ever suspect the data in HMIS has been misused, immediately contact the HMIS System Administrator at: (360) 725-3028
- The data you provide may be combined with data from the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and Education Research and Data Center for the purpose of further analysis. Your name and other identifying information will not be included in any reports or publications. Only a limited number of staff members, who have signed confidentiality agreements, will be able to see this information. Your information will not be used to determine eligibility for DSHS programs. Washington State HMIS system administrators have full access to all information in HMIS. This includes the Department of Commerce staff, designated HMIS system administrators, and the software vendor.
- By signing this form, you acknowledge and allow Department of Commerce staff to obtain additional records of information from other state agencies with which there is a data sharing agreement (DSA) on file between Commerce and the other agency. Our DSA guides data transfer and storage security protocols. If DSAs are in place, Commerce is authorized by you to obtain, add to HMIS, and use for evaluation purposes any other data you have provided to other Washington state agencies.
- Your decision to participate in the HMIS will not affect the quality or quantity of services you are eligible to receive from this agency, and will not be used to deny outreach, assistance, shelter or housing. However, if you do choose to participate, services in the region may improve if we have accurate information about homeless individuals and the services they need. Furthermore, some funders MAY require that you consent to provide your personally identifying information in HMIS in order for you to receive services from that funding source.

I understand the above statements and consent to the inclusion of personally identifying information in HMIS about me and any dependents listed below, and authorize information collected to be shared with partner agencies. I understand that my personally identifying information will not be made public and will only be used with strict confidentiality. I also understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time by filing a 'Client Revocation of Consent' form with this agency. I understand that I may obtain a copy of my signed consent form from this Agency (including forms signed electronically).

Dependent children under 18 in household, if any (Please print first and last names):

Client Signature (Parent/Guardian)

Client Name (Print clearly)

Date

Agency Staff Name (Print clearly)

Initials

2022

Point in Time Census Preliminary Data Report

OFFICE OF HOUSING & HOMELESS PREVENTION

THURSTON COUNTY, WASHINGTON

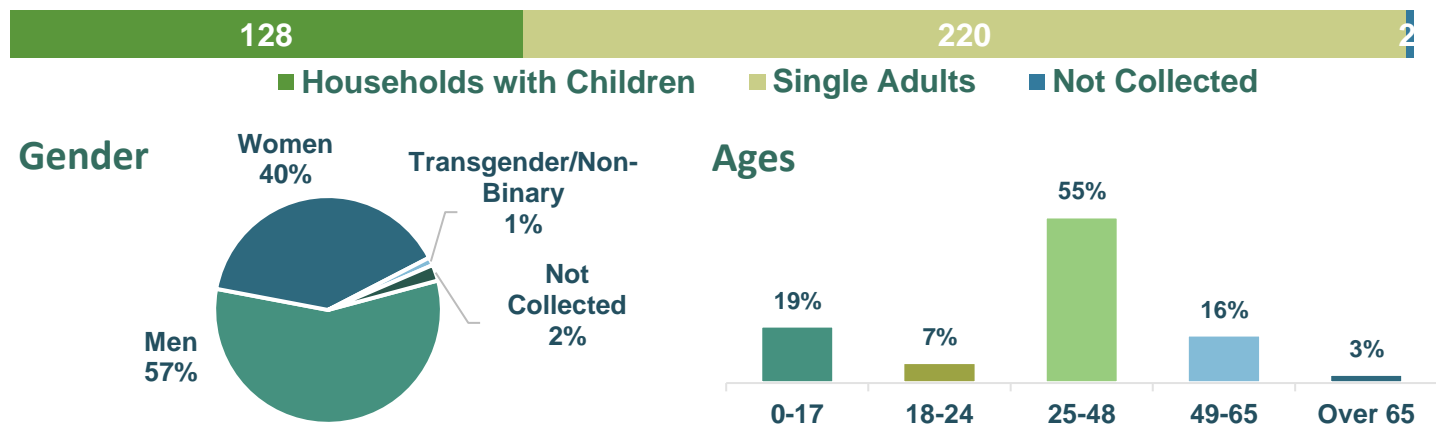


Once each year, the Point in Time (PIT) Census counts how many people are experiencing homelessness nationwide. This year Thurston County conducted the PIT on February 24th, delayed from the normal date in January due to the expected peak of the COVID-19 Omicron wave.

The 2021 and 2022 PIT counts are a story of the COVID pandemic. In 2021, the count was based on observation and no surveys were conducted. In 2022, we engaged in an abbreviated survey, but many people are missing from this total number, as they did not consent to being surveyed. This report also does not capture those doubled-up (staying with friends and family) nor those who were in a jail or hospital who don't have a permanent address.

Who are the unsheltered neighbors we surveyed?

(352 unsheltered individuals)



Where did they sleep on February 24th?

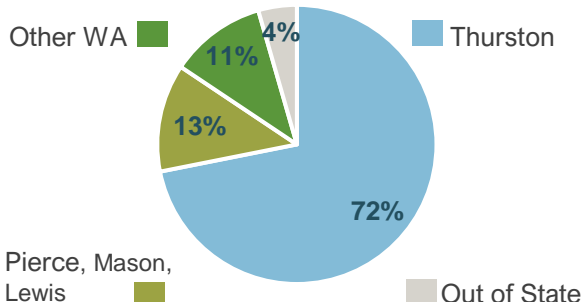


What else did we learn?

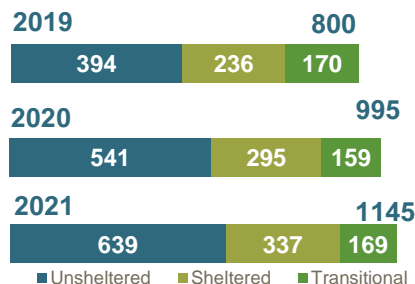
Frequency of Health Conditions



Last Permanent Address



PIT Over the Years



Contact Information
 Keylee Marineau
 Program Coordinator
 keylee.marineau@co.thurston.wa.us

***This data is not final. The Department of Commerce will release its final numbers and report later in 2022.**

Report & Data by
 Arielle Benson
 Homeless Program & Grant Specialist
 arielle.benson@co.thurston.wa.us

2022

Point in Time Census Preliminary Data Report

OFFICE OF HOUSING & HOMELESS PREVENTION

THURSTON COUNTY, WASHINGTON



Veterans
5%

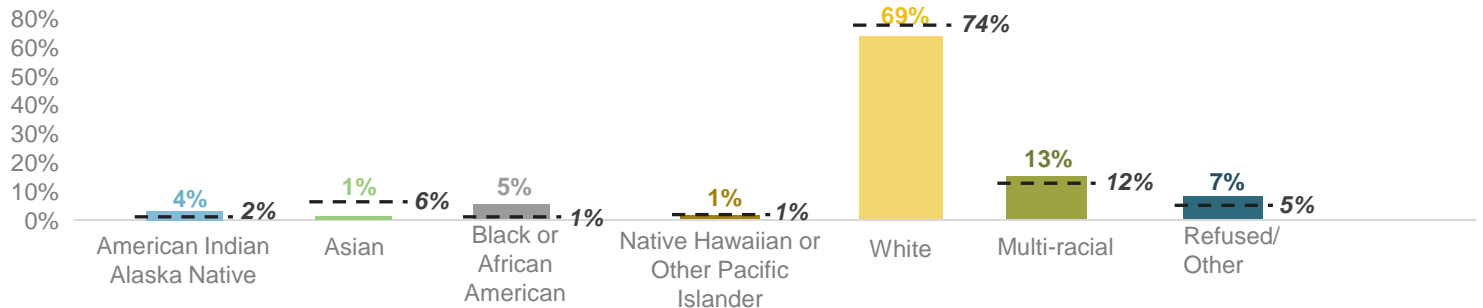


Domestic Violence
17%



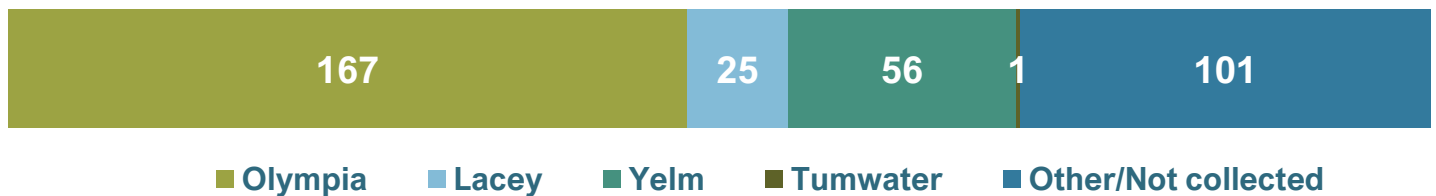
Hispanic/Latin
17%

Which races are under or over-represented in the homeless population?



*Dashed lines are the expected percentage based on Thurston racial demographics from the 2020 Decennial Census.

What cities are folks staying in?



How accurate are these data in describing homelessness?

While the PIT is a valiant annual effort to ensure everyone experiencing homelessness is counted, it is inevitable some individuals will be missed or they are not eligible to be counted. The most common reasons a person is not counted are:

- They do not consent to have their data collected for the count, are currently fleeing domestic violence, or are an unaccompanied minor under the age of 13.
- They do not meet the more restrictive HUD definition of homelessness: excludes those staying temporarily with a friend or family member.
- They consent, but do not provide enough information to be deduplicated.
- They stay in a non-HMIS participating shelter.
- They are absent when enumerators pass through the camps.

The PIT count is a critical tool for the community to understand the scope and scale of homelessness, but it is only one piece of a much larger puzzle.

What else happened with the PIT count?

- **370** solar, hand-crank, rechargeable flashlights were distributed
- **295** meal sized burritos were distributed into the encampments
- **800** hygiene kits were directly distributed, or donated to outreach organizations
- **86** homestead vehicles were found and counted
- Surveys were collected over 7 days, to ensure as many folks participated as possible

Contact Information
Keylee Marineau
 Program Coordinator
keylee.marineau@co.thurston.wa.us

***This data is not final. The Department of Commerce will release its final numbers and report later in 2022.**

Report & Data by
Arielle Benson
 Homeless Program & Grant Specialist
arielle.benson@co.thurston.wa.us