

EVERYONE COUNTS!



Whatcom County Homeless Count

A POINT-IN-TIME CENSUS OF HOMELESS RESIDENTS

March 2008

Sponsored by:

Whatcom County Health Department

Whatcom County Homeless Coalition

City of Bellingham Planning and Community Development

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Executive Summary

2008 is an exciting year for advocates of ending homelessness in Whatcom County. Even as this report is being written, the County's new Homeless Services Center is taking shape. A project director was hired in March and the new program will be up and running this summer. Still, new projects of this scope take time to gear up to full potential and we predict it will be 2010 before we see a significant impact on annual homeless count statistics. Read more about this project on page 29 of this report.

Homelessness in Whatcom County

At any point in time, at least 1,326 people in Whatcom County are homeless. We estimate that this single point-in-time estimate translates to nearly 4,000 adults and children who experience homelessness on an annual basis¹. Throughout the year, hundreds more face the prospect of losing their homes due to precarious financial conditions, domestic violence, health crises, and chronic mental health and chemical dependency conditions. People being released from psychiatric hospitalization and incarceration face challenging community re-entry issues. Furthermore, the rising cost of housing and stagnant wages increases the risk of people losing their housing, and makes it increasingly difficult to find affordable housing.

The 2008 homeless count

This year more than 50 agencies participated in the homeless count, which occurred during the week of January 21. As you read this report, please keep in mind that point-in-time counts generally underestimate the number of those who are homeless because:

- A point-in-time is just a "snapshot" and may not capture all those who are cycling in and out of homelessness over the course of a year.
- It is difficult to find where all the unsheltered people reside. It is impossible to know all the places that might provide unconventional shelter (i.e. tents, abandoned cars) for one night.

How many are homeless?

This year we counted:

- 1,326 homeless persons (a *person* may be part of a family household, or an unaccompanied individual)
- 891 homeless households (a *household* may include one or more persons)

Who are the homeless?

The 2008 homeless population is as diverse as the larger community population: they are old and young, male and female, unaccompanied individuals, and families. Of those counted this year:

- 74% of homeless households include only one person
- There were 156 families with children; the median² family size is 3 persons
- 74% of homeless families with children are single-parent families (87% of these parents are female)

¹ Please see Appendix B for information about how this estimate was derived.

² The median value is, essentially, the midpoint. Specifically, in a group of measurements (e.g. family size, age) arranged from lowest to highest, the median is the middle value if the number of measurements is odd. If the number of measurements is even, the median is the average of the two middle values.

In terms of age and sex:

- 45% of all homeless persons are female
- Ages ranged from less than one year old to 74 years old
- Median age of all homeless persons is 22 years
- Median age of unaccompanied homeless persons is 35 years

Homeless youth

Homelessness among youth may result from family problems, economic problems, and residential instability. Some youth become homeless with their families, others leave home after years of physical and sexual abuse, strained relationships, parental neglect, addiction of a family member, or their own chemical addiction.

- 482 persons under 18 years old were counted
- 22% of all homeless persons are less than 10 years old
- 161 persons counted are 16 to 21 years old
- 180 persons are 16 to 24 years old
- At least 64 homeless youth (age 13-24) are unaccompanied

Community re-entry

Homeless Count survey respondents were asked if they had been discharged from an institution within the last six months. Altogether, 149 said they had been released from jail, inpatient substance abuse, mental health treatment, or juvenile detention.

- 19% had been released from jail
- 7% had been released from inpatient substance abuse treatment
- 3% had been released from a psychiatric hospital
- 1% had been released from juvenile detention

Shelter

Homeless survey respondents told us where they slept the previous night:

- 30% temporarily living with family or friends
- 22% in transitional housing
- 12% in emergency shelter
- 9% out of doors
- 7% in a motel (using a voucher)
- 6% in a vehicle
- 6% in jail
- 1% in an abandoned building
- <1% in juvenile detention
- 1% in some other place

Chronic homelessness

To be considered chronically homeless based on HUD's definition, a person must be an unaccompanied individual who has been homeless for 12 months or more OR has had more than three episodes of homelessness in the last three years, AND has been sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation, AND has one of the following disabling conditions (mental disorder, substance abuse disorder, permanent physical or developmental disability).

Based on HUD's definition, 113 persons, or 13% of all homeless households, are chronically homeless. This is certainly an undercount since many survey respondents did not supply enough information to determine whether or not they met all of the HUD chronic homelessness characteristics.

The number (and percent) of counted households with any of the HUD characteristics include:

- 265 (30%) have been homeless for 12 months or more
- 148 (17%) have had four or more episodes of homelessness in the last three years
- 512 (57%) households have a person with a disabling condition
- 248 (28%) have been sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation and/or in emergency shelter
- 142 (16%) were unsheltered

Top reasons for homelessness

Homelessness results from a complex set of circumstances that require people to choose between food, shelter and other needs. In fact a plurality (41%) of respondents to this year's homeless count reported three or more reasons for their homelessness. Mental illness and substance abuse disorders top the list of factors leading to homelessness

- 30% Mental illness
- 42% Alcohol or drug use
- 26% Unable to pay rent or mortgage
- 25% Family break-up
- 18% Victim of domestic violence
- 21% Lost job
- 14% Temporary living situation ended
- 24% Convicted of a felony
- 15% Medical problems
- 12% Poor credit rating
- 12% Lack of job skills
- 21% Discharged from an institution

Comparisons to 2007

Compared to 2007, Homeless Count partners counted similar numbers of homeless persons and households this year. The number of homeless persons increased from 1,298 to 1,326. Over the same period, the number of homeless households increased from 871 to 891. It is worth noting here that count partner agencies exerted a similar, high level of effort in 2008 as in 2007.

Dedication

This report is dedicated to the memory of Lyle Stork, a passionate and committed community leader and friend of the mentally ill and the homeless. Lyle's life and work made real the belief that Recovery is possible and that those he touched at the Rainbow Center have worth and something to offer the community. He worked closely with the Homeless Coalition and community to support the annual point-in-time count and planning to end homelessness. His gentle presence and quiet resolve will be missed but not forgotten.

Acknowledgements

The Point-in-Time Homeless Count is a remarkably complex undertaking. It is even more remarkable considering the fact that the vast majority of the effort requires individuals and organizations to volunteer their labor. Obviously we do not have the space to list all of the volunteers here, but you can view a list of the participating agencies in Table 12 on page 31. We thank them all for their eager participation this year.

Many individuals and organizations contributed greatly to the success of this year's Homeless Count. In particular:

- The Rainbow Center, its acting director, Sharon Summers, and Rainbow Center members delivered a great event that was enormously important to engaging unsheltered individuals and other homeless persons who otherwise would have gone uncounted.
- Elected officials, including Whatcom County Executive, Pete Kremen, and Bellingham City Councilman Barry Buchanan pitched in to help make the Rainbow Center event a great success.
- 25 community volunteers who staffed food and meal programs and helped with street outreach.
- Jim Cozad, Past Board President of the Interfaith Coalition, was responsible for making it all come together again this year.

Finally, we would like to thank the homeless individuals and families who responded to this year's Count. Responding to the survey requires time and effort, but more importantly, it asks that each person share a part of their very personal story with the whole community. Without these stories, we know very little about the complexities of homelessness or how we, as a community, can respond.

Introduction

At any point in time, in Whatcom County, there are at least 1,326 persons without a place to call home. However, annually, nearly 4,000 adults and children experience homelessness in our communities.

At any point in time, at least 1,326 people in Whatcom County are homeless. We estimate that this single point-in-time estimate translates to 3,941 adults and children who experience homelessness on an annual basis.³ Throughout the year, hundreds more face the prospect of losing their homes due to precarious financial conditions, domestic violence, health crises, and chronic mental health and chemical dependency conditions. People being released from psychiatric hospitalization and incarceration face challenging community re-entry issues. Furthermore, the rising cost of housing and stagnant wages increases the risk of people losing their housing, and makes it increasingly difficult to find affordable housing.

The Point-in-Time Homeless Count

The Point-in-Time Count is a census of homeless persons. It is conducted over a very short period of time to reduce the chance of counting people twice. The Count is sponsored by the Whatcom County Homeless Coalition, Whatcom County Health Department, and the City of Bellingham Planning and Community Development Department. This year more than 50 agencies participated in the count, which occurred during the week of January 21.

Homeless census data derived from this count is useful for characterizing the homeless population in our community. Knowing approximately how many families with children, unaccompanied youth, and unsheltered veterans – to use just a few subgroup examples – helps Homeless Coalition members plan for homeless services.

With the advent of the County's new Homeless Service Center, the count will also be used as one measure of this program's impact on the community's collaborative efforts as described in the *10-Year Plan to End Homelessness*.

The Count is also required by Washington State and federal laws as a condition of receiving financial assistance to fund homeless services.

Point-in-time count limitations

National research indicates that point-in-time counts generally underestimate the number of those who are homeless because:

- A point-in-time is just a "snapshot" and may not capture all those who are cycling in and out of homelessness over the course of a specific period of time (e.g. annually). Furthermore, an annual "snapshot" may miss any seasonal fluctuations that may occur in our communities.
- It is difficult to find where all the unsheltered people reside. It is impossible to know all the places that might provide unconventional shelter (i.e. tents, abandoned cars) for one night.

³ See Appendix B for how this estimate was derived.

Number of homeless individuals and families in Whatcom County

54% of all homeless persons in Whatcom County are members of a homeless family; 46% are unaccompanied homeless persons.

At a single point in time in late January 2008, a total of **1,326 persons** were homeless in Whatcom County. They are members of **891 households**. For the purpose of this homeless count, households are divided into two categories: *homeless individuals* and *homeless families*. Homeless individual households are unaccompanied single persons and homeless families are households that include more than one person (e.g. couples, single-parent or two-parent families with children).

This year, 73% of the homeless households were unaccompanied homeless individuals. Altogether, there were 604 unaccompanied homeless individuals, including 64 youth (age 13 – 24) and 540 adults (Table 1). Homeless individuals comprised 46% of the overall homeless population at this point in time. Persons in homeless families totaled 722, including 418 youth (age 0-17)⁴ and 304 adults. They accounted for 54% of all homeless persons.

Table 1 Homeless count by individual or family status and age group

	Homeless Individuals			Homeless Families			Total
	Single adult	Single youth	Subtotal	Adult in family	Youth in family	Subtotal	
Total	540	64	604	304	418	722	1,326
% of Total	41%	5%	46%	23%	32%	54%	100%

Characteristics of homeless persons and families

Household size and family status

Of the 891 homeless households counted, 619 included no children; 156 included families with children; an additional 64 are unaccompanied homeless youth, and 52 youth had insufficient information to determine their household/family status (Table 2). Most (74%) families with children are single-parent families, the vast majority of which (87%) include the female parent. Among families with children, the household size ranged from two to six. The median household size of families with children was three persons.

⁴ Note that we use different age groups for youth in the unaccompanied homeless individual category (13-24) versus the homeless family category (0-17). We use the higher age limit for the *individual* category to account for the number of unaccompanied young persons who are homeless and may be eligible for certain assistance programs.

Table 2 Household size and family status

Household size (persons)	Households with no children	Families with children (0-17)	Unaccompanied youth (13-17)	Youth with missing information about household status	Total
1	540	0	64	52	656
2	55	57			112
3	18	56			74
4	4	26			30
5	1	11			12
6	0	6			6
7	0	0			0
8	1	0			1
Total	619	156	64	52	891

Age and sex

Just under half (45%) of homeless persons counted are female. Ages ranged from less than one year old to 74 years old. The median age of all homeless persons was 22 years. The median age of unaccompanied homeless persons was 35 years.

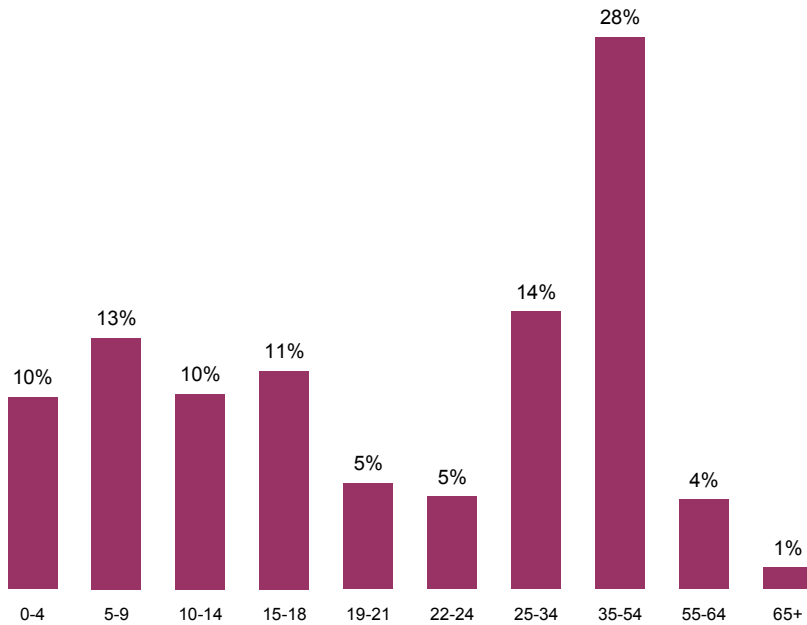


Figure 1 Age distribution of homeless persons

The 482 minors counted this year comprise 40% of the homeless population, with 268 children under 10 years old accounting for 23% of all homeless persons (Figure 1). Seniors, age 65 and older make up just 1% of the homeless population.

Disabling conditions

Homeless count survey respondents were asked to list which of ten disabilities applied to each member of their household. The most prevalent disabling conditions were substance abuse disorder and mental illness, each affecting one in four (25%) of the homeless population (Figure 2). Twelve percent listed a permanent physical disability. Twenty percent listed a dental disability. Five percent listed a developmental disability. Four percent listed a temporary physical disability. Three percent listed a vision disability. Two percent listed a literacy disability. One percent listed an other disability. One percent listed HIV/AIDS.

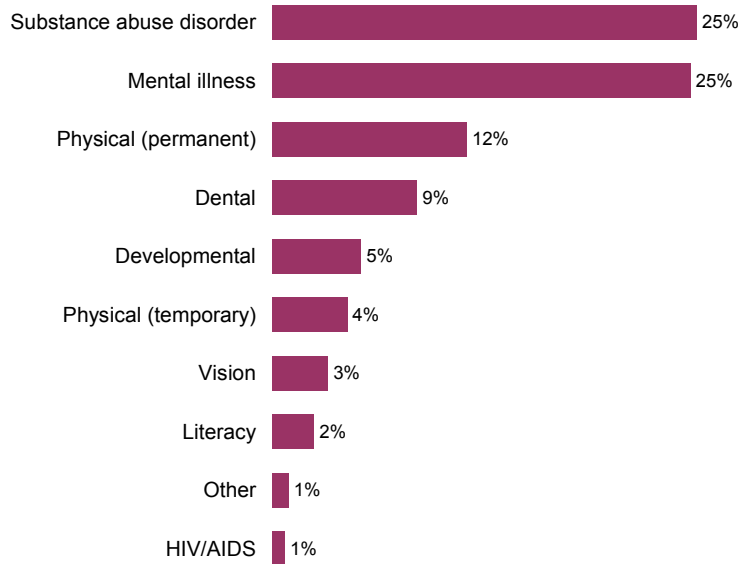


Figure 2 Homeless persons with disabling conditions

Additional analyses show that a substantial number of homeless persons face the challenges of co-occurring disorders (Figure 3). Those who report a mental illness disability are nearly three times as likely (49%) to also report a substance abuse disorder compared to those with no reported mental illness (18%).

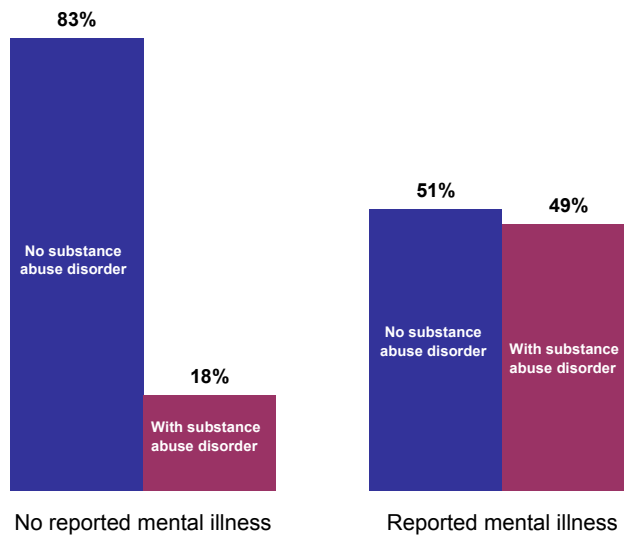


Figure 3 Co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse disorder among homeless persons

Characteristics of homelessness in Whatcom County

67% of the counted homeless households had their last episode of stable housing in Whatcom County.

Geographic distribution: location of previous residence

Respondents were asked to say where they last had stable housing for six months or more. Only 548 of the 891 households answered this question. Of those who answered, 33% listed a location outside Whatcom County. Of the 367 households that listed a Whatcom County location, 255 had last lived in stable housing in Bellingham (Figure 4). Ferndale (34), Blaine (28), and Lynden (21) were the next most frequently cited locations of last stable housing.

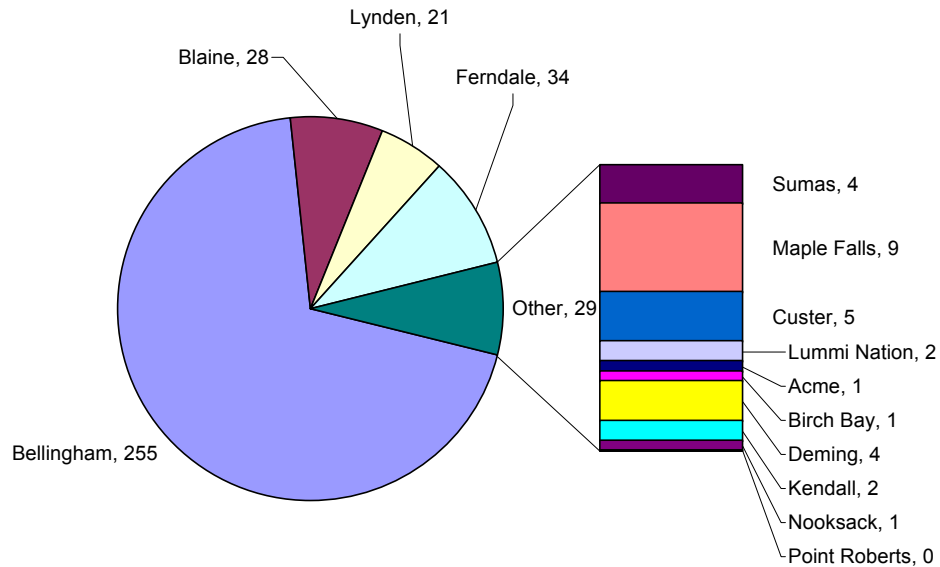


Figure 4 Number of homeless households by location of previous residence (n=548)

Community re-entry

Homeless Count survey respondents were asked if they had recently re-entered the community after being discharged from a residential institution within the last six months. Altogether, 226 (or 17% of all homeless households) said they had recently re-entered the community after release from a jail, inpatient substance abuse or mental health treatment, or from juvenile detention (Figure 5).

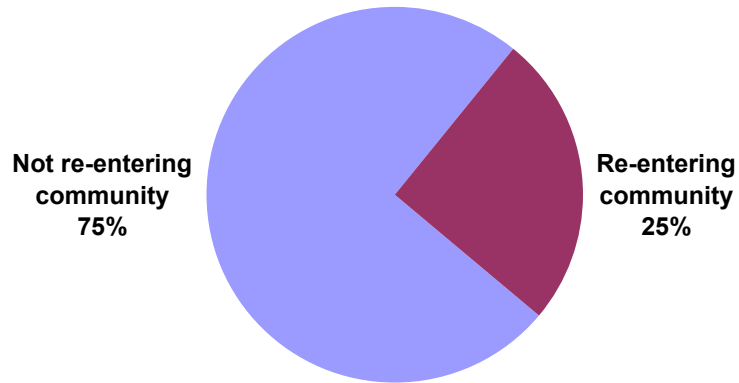


Figure 5 Homeless survey respondents re-entering community from a residential institution

Of the 226 respondents who had been released from any of these three types of residential settings, more than half (62%) had been released from jail (Figure 6). Just under a quarter (24%) of re-entering respondents had been released from inpatient substance abuse treatment; 11% were released from a psychiatric hospital, and 3% from juvenile detention.

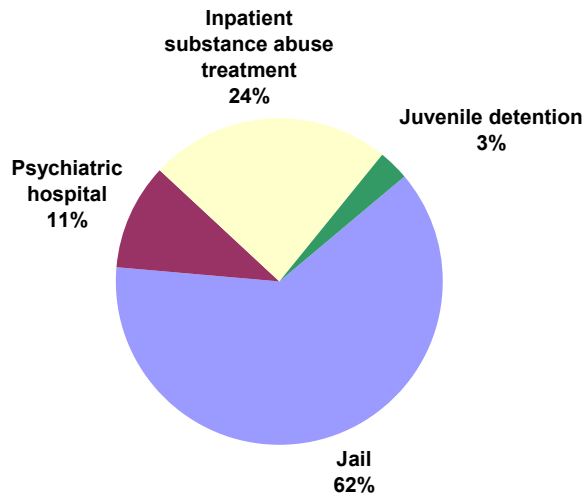


Figure 6 Institutions from which re-entering respondents were discharged (N=226)

Sources of shelter

In 2008, homeless households found shelter primarily with other households (32%), in a transitional housing facility (24%) or an emergency shelter (14%) (Figure 7). Smaller proportions are housed temporarily in a motel (7%) or in jail (7%). Homeless households are considered unsheltered if they spend their nights out of doors (9%), in a vehicle (7%) or in an abandoned building (1%).

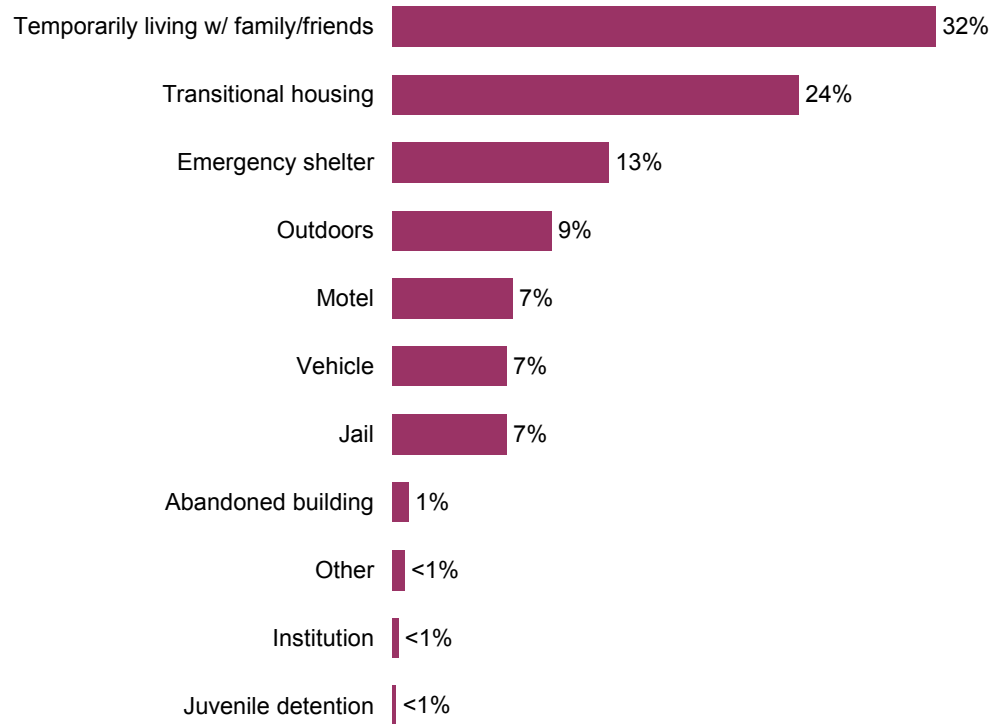


Figure 7 Source of shelter the night before the homeless count

Chronic homelessness

To be considered chronically homeless based on HUD’s definition, a person must be an unaccompanied individual who has been homeless for 12 months or more OR has had more than three episodes of homelessness in the last three years, AND has been sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation, AND has one of the following disabling conditions (mental disorder, substance abuse disorder, permanent physical or developmental disability).

Based on HUD’s definition, 113 persons, or 13% of all homeless households are chronically homeless (Table 3). This is certainly an undercount since many survey respondents did not supply enough information to determine whether or not they met all of the HUD chronic homelessness characteristics listed as items 1-4 in Table 3.

As shown in Table 3, long duration homelessness (30%), disabling conditions (57%), and being unsheltered (28%) are much more prevalent than would be assumed if one only looked at the number of HUD-defined chronically homeless.

Table 3 Chronic homelessness by HUD criteria

Chronic homelessness criteria	Number	Percent of all homeless households (N=871)
1. Homeless 12 months or more, OR	265	30%
2. Had 4 or more episodes of homelessness in last 3 years	148	17%
3. Has a disabling condition*	512	57%
4. Been sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (unsheltered)	248	28%
Chronically homeless (a homeless individual who meets criteria 1 OR 2, AND 3 AND 4)	113	13%

* Mental disorder, substance abuse disorder, permanent physical or developmental disability

Reasons for homelessness

Homelessness results from a complex set of circumstances that require people to choose between food, shelter and other needs. In fact, 40% of respondents to this year’s homeless count reported three or more reasons for their homelessness. Mental illness and substance abuse disorders top the list of factors leading to homelessness that were reported by Whatcom County homeless households in 2007 (Figure 8). Further analyses also showed substance abuse disorder and mental illness were commonly reported as co-occurring disabilities (Figure 3).

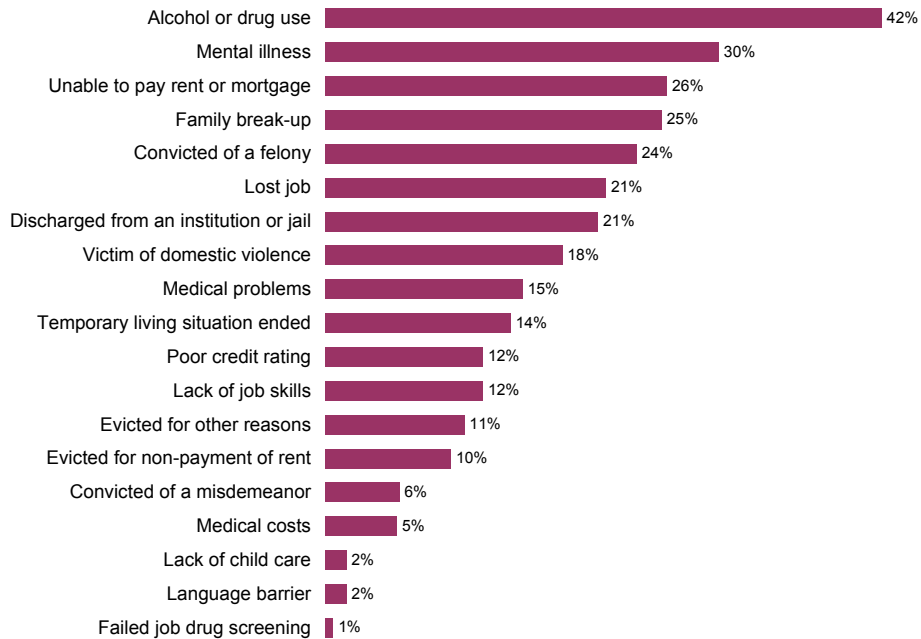


Figure 8 Reasons for homelessness

Sources of income

Contrary to popular belief, a substantial proportion of homeless households are employed (25%). However, nearly the same proportion (24%) have no income at all (Figure 9). Three public assistance programs comprise the most common sources of income for Whatcom County’s homeless: SSI (19%), TANF (15%), and General Assistance - GAU/GAX (14%).

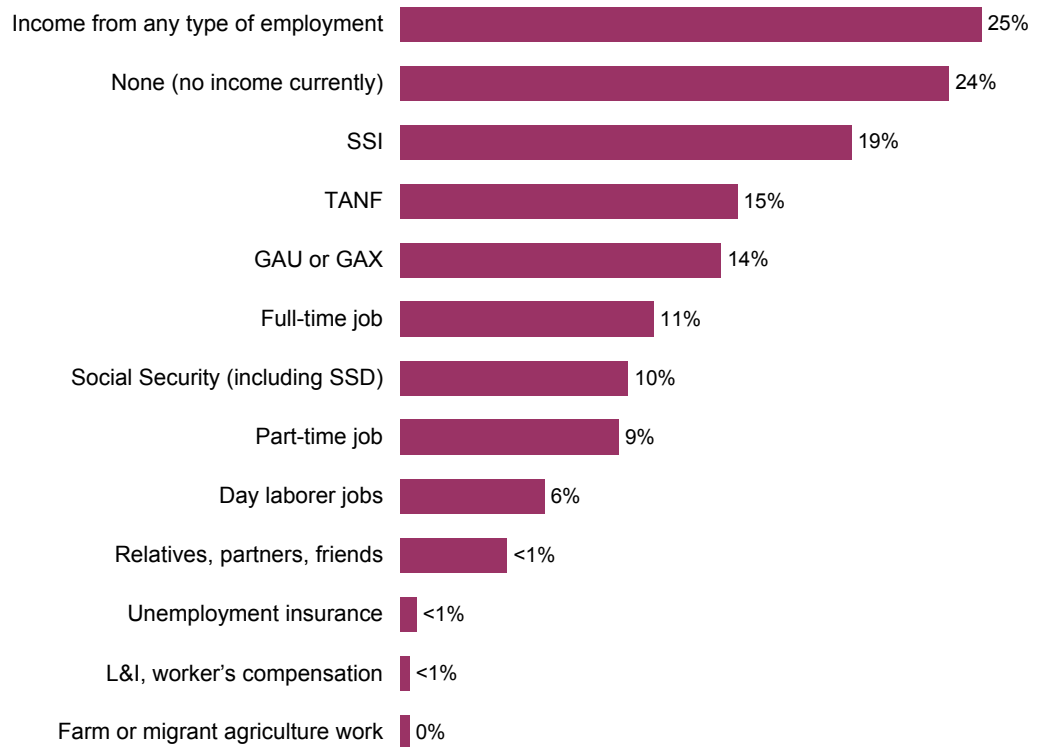


Figure 9 Sources of household income (N=681 households)

Characteristics of homeless subpopulations

The homeless subpopulations described below include households that may have special housing and supportive services needs. As our community looks forward to improving services to end homelessness, it becomes increasingly important to understand the situations and experiences of households within these groups.

Much of the data in the sections below are derived from data in Table 4 through Table 11, which can be found on pages 20-23.

Unaccompanied youth

We counted 64 unaccompanied homeless youth in this year’s count. They ranged in age from 13 to 21 years old (median age is 17); 61% are female. Compared to all homeless persons, unaccompanied youth are more likely to seek shelter with another household (57%) and less likely to be found in emergency shelters (2%) and unsheltered (13%). These youth are also most likely to report family break-up (52%) as a reason for their homelessness.

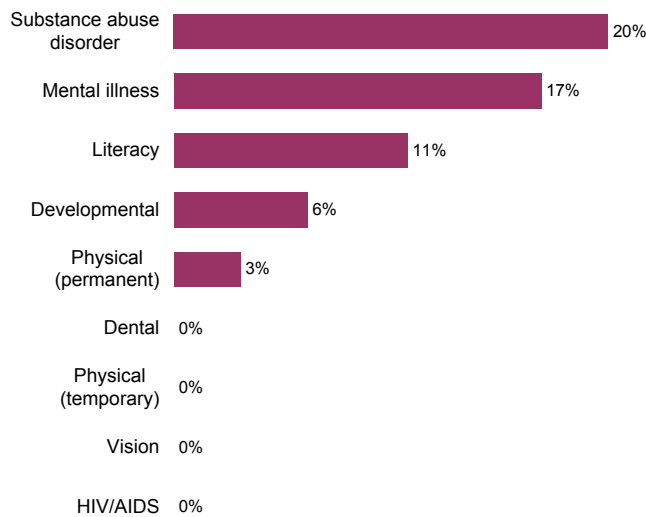


Figure 10 Unaccompanied youth with disabilities

Homeless families with children

Homeless families that include adults and children are highly likely to report eviction as a reason for their homelessness (25%). Their adults are the least likely subgroup to be re-entering the community from a residential institution (13%). Homeless families are also highly likely to be earning income from either a full-time (15%) or part-time job (15%), and they also commonly receive TANF (56%).

Domestic violence survivor households

There are 125 households that reported domestic violence as a reason for their homelessness.⁵ Only 20% of this subgroup’s adult respondents are male. About two-thirds of these households (66%) have children. About a third of this group’s households (32%) are sheltered in transitional housing programs. Their top reasons for becoming homeless are domestic violence (100%), inability pay for housing (30%), family break-up (36%), and alcohol or drug use (34%).

Chronically homeless persons

Compared to the overall homeless population, the chronically homeless (according to HUD’s definition) are older and more likely to be male. Among the 113 individuals who meet HUD’s definition of chronically homeless, 71% are males, and their median age is 43 years old. This subgroup exhibits a high prevalence of mental illness (42%) and substance abuse disorders (26%). Compared to the overall homeless population, the chronically homeless are much more likely to have a permanent physical disability (32%) and dental problems (19%).

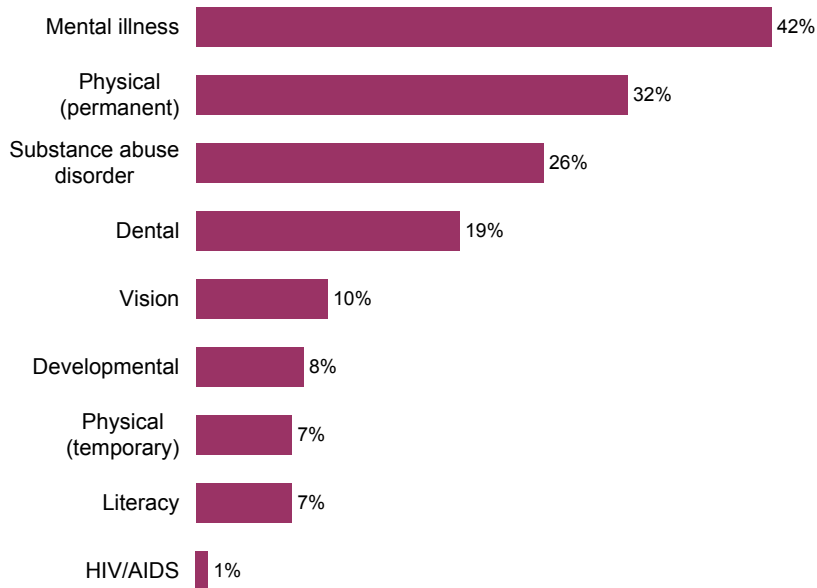


Figure 11 Chronically homeless individuals with disabilities

⁵ Please note that a survey respondent was considered to be a domestic violence survivor if she/he listed domestic violence as a reason for his/her homelessness. There may have been more survivors in the sample.

Chronically homeless individuals are more than three times as likely as the overall homeless population to be unsheltered (58%). They comprise the subgroup most likely to report substance abuse disorders (35%) and inability to pay their rent (32%) as reasons for their homelessness. Regarding income sources, chronically homeless persons are as likely as other homeless households to report full time employment (11%), but, as a group, are more likely to report having no sources of income (19%). SSI is the most common income source (23%) within this homeless subgroup.

Veterans

This year's point-in-time count located 98 households that include a homeless veteran. The vast majority are unaccompanied individuals (88%) and male (93%). Their median age is 46 years old. Mental illness (56%) and substance abuse (37%) are quite common in this homeless subgroup. Homeless veteran households are about three times more likely than the overall homeless population to have a permanent physical disability (36%) and to have dental problems (24%).

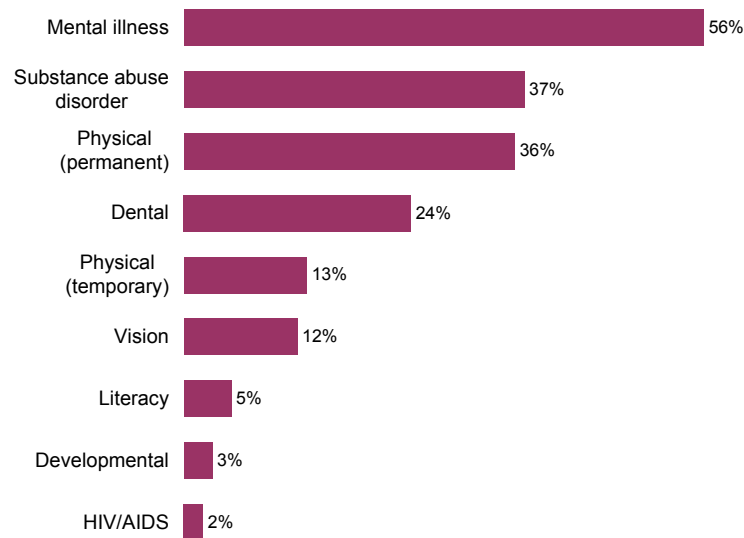


Figure 12 Homeless veterans with disabilities

Among all shelter categories, veteran households are most likely to report being unsheltered (29%). They comprise the subgroup most likely to report that they are homeless due to losing a job (36%), mental illness (40%), and medical problems (25%). They are also the most likely group to have any disabling condition (85%).⁶ Almost a third (31%) of the homeless veterans counted this year have been recently released from a residential institution, and they commonly reported having SSI (33%), GAU/GAX (27%) or no source of income (20%).

⁶ For the purpose of this report, we use HUD's definition of "disabling condition" to include mental illness, substance abuse disorder, or permanent physical or developmental disability.

Unsheltered households

Homeless count partners encountered 142 unsheltered persons sleeping in places not meant for human habitation (e.g. abandoned buildings, vehicles and out of doors). Compared to the overall homeless population, persons who are unsheltered have substantially higher prevalence of nearly all of the listed disabilities, especially mental illness (49%), substance abuse disorders (37%), permanent physical disabilities (32%) and dental conditions (30%).

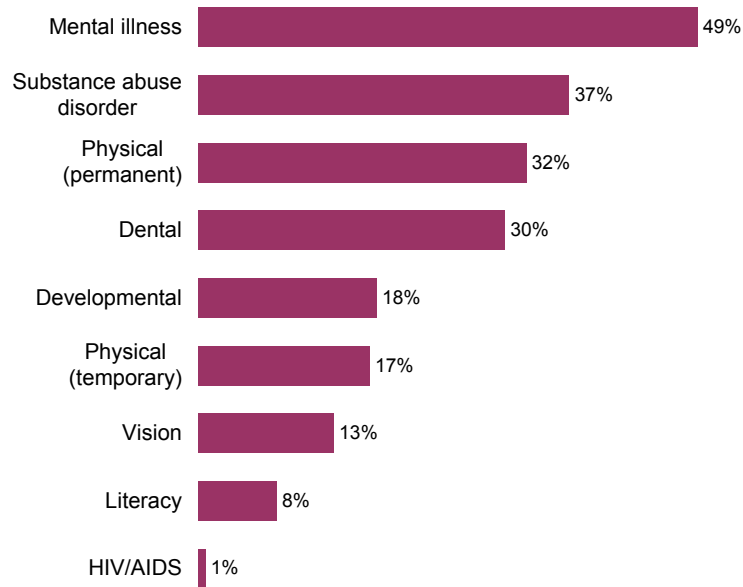


Figure 13 Unsheltered homeless persons with disabilities

The unsheltered commonly reported that a substance abuse (34%) or mental health disorder (31%), losing a job (33%) and inability to pay rent or mortgage (31%) were factors that led to their homelessness. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of persons who are unsheltered have at least one disabling condition, and 44% are chronically homeless based on HUD's definition. Many have no income (27%), and the income sources they rely on most commonly are SSI (27%), GAU/GAX (15%), and Social Security (including SSD) (13%).

NOTE: much of the data referenced in the section above that describes homeless subpopulations can be found in the following series of tables. Also note that the size of a particular subgroup (indicated by "N=X") changes for different tables because for some survey questions, fewer people within that group provided answers.

Table 4 Source of shelter used by homeless households in selected subgroups

Shelter	Families with children (N=153)		Survivors of domestic violence (N=125)		Unaccompanied youth (N=47)		All homeless households (N=838)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Emergency	10	7	22	18	1	2	106	13
Transitional	53	35	40	32	11	23	199	24
With other household	49	32	34	27	27	57	266	32
Motel	22	14	12	10	1	2	59	7
Jail	0	0	3	2	0	0	56	7
Unsheltered	15	10	15	12	6	13	142	17
Residential institution	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	<1
Juvenile detention	1	<1	0	0	1	2	2	<1
Other place	3	2	0	0	0	0	6	1

Table 5 Reasons for homelessness reported by homeless households in selected subgroups

Reasons for homelessness	Families with children (N=141)		Survivors of domestic violence (N=125)		Unaccompanied youth (N=44)		All homeless households (N=698)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Mental illness	11	8	36	29	9	21	207	30
Alcohol or drug use	45	32	42	34	13	30	293	42
Unable to pay rent/mrtge	35	25	37	30	12	27	180	26
Family break-up	43	30	45	36	23	52	177	25
Domestic violence	54	38	125	100	5	11	125	18
Lost job	27	19	22	18	0	0	148	21
Temp. living sit. ended	22	16	20	16	3	7	98	14
Felony conviction	11	8	8	6	3	7	164	24
Medical problems	15	11	20	16	0	0	104	15
Poor credit	24	17	23	18	0	0	83	12
Lack of job skills	17	12	13	10	8	18	83	12
Discharged from inst.	9	6	9	7	0	0	144	21
Eviction	35	25	22	18	3	7	125	18

Table 6 Chronic homelessness and re-entry characteristics of households in selected subgroups

Chronic homelessness and Re-Entry	Families with children (N=156)		Survivors of domestic violence (N=125)		Unaccompanied youth (N=64)		All homeless households (N=891)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
>12 mos. Homeless	45	29	43	34	7	11	265	30
>3 times homeless	16	10	18	14	4	6	148	17
Disabling condition*	62	40	72	58	20	31	512	57
Chronic (HUD)	16	10	12	10	6	9	113	13
Re-entering community								
Any residential facility	20	13	25	20	6	9	226	25
Jail	11	7	13	10	2	3	171	19
Psychiatric hosp.	1	1	5	4	0	0	29	3
Inpatient treatment	12	8	12	10	3	5	66	7
Juvenile detention	3	2	1	1	2	3	8	1

* Mental disorder, substance abuse disorder, permanent physical or developmental disability

Table 7 Income sources reported by households in selected subgroups

Income sources	Families with children (N=144)		Survivors of domestic violence (N=120)		Unaccompanied youth (N=46)		All homeless households (N=681)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Full-time job	21	15	11	9	9	20	74	11
No income	16	11	18	15	24	52	161	24
Unemployment	4	3	1	1	1	2	5	1
TANF	80	56	51	43	0	0	99	15
Relatives or friends	7	5	3	3	6	13	31	5
L&I	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	<1
Social Security	6	4	12	10	0	0	67	10
SSI	12	8	15	13	1	2	132	19
GAU/GAX	3	2	12	10	0	0	94	14
Part-time job	22	15	15	13	8	17	64	9
Day labor	3	2	3	3	0	0	42	6
Agricultural work	1	1	0	0	1	2	3	<1
Other source	5	3	8	7	0	0	46	7

Table 8 Source of shelter used by homeless households in selected subgroups

Shelter	Chronically homeless (HUD) (N=113)		Unsheltered (N=142)		Veterans (N=96)		All homeless households (N=838)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Emergency	7	6	0	0	21	22	106	13
Transitional	21	19	0	0	20	21	199	24
With other household	14	12	0	0	13	14	266	32
Jail	6	5	0	0	10	10	59	7
Motel	2	2	0	0	3	3	56	7
Unsheltered	66	58	142	100	28	29	142	17
Residential institution	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	<1
Juvenile detention	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	<1
Other place	1	1	0	0	1	1	6	1

Table 9 Reasons for homelessness reported by homeless households in selected subgroups

Reasons for homelessness	Chronically homeless (HUD) (N=109)		Unsheltered (N=131)		Veterans (N=89)		All homeless households (N=698)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Mental illness	27	25	40	31	36	40	207	30
Alcohol or drug use	38	35	45	34	28	31	293	42
Unable to pay rent/mrtge	35	32	40	31	28	31	180	26
Family break-up	31	28	27	21	21	24	177	25
Domestic violence	12	11	15	11	6	7	125	18
Lost job	35	32	43	33	32	36	148	21
Temp. living sit. ended	12	11	18	14	18	20	98	14
Felony conviction	19	17	27	21	12	13	164	24
Medical problems	23	21	29	22	22	25	104	15
Poor credit	17	16	24	18	18	20	83	12
Lack of job skills	16	15	26	20	12	13	83	12
Discharged from inst.	6	6	18	14	10	11	144	21
Eviction	27	25	31	24	20	22	125	18

Table 10 Chronic homelessness and re-entry characteristics of households in selected subgroups

Chronic homelessness and Re-Entry	Chronically homeless (HUD) (N=113)		Unsheltered (N=142)		Veterans (N=98)		All homeless households (N=891)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
>12 mos. Homeless	102	90	70	49	50	51	265	30
>3 times homeless	38	34	51	36	33	34	148	17
Disabling condition*	113	100	103	73	83	85	512	57
Chronic (HUD)	113	100	62	44	25	26	113	13
Re-entering community		0		0		0		
Any residential facility	35	31	43	30	30	31	226	25
Jail	28	25	35	25	28	29	171	19
Psychiatric hosp.	7	6	11	8	6	6	29	3
Inpatient treatment	5	4	6	4	8	8	66	7
Juvenile detention	0	0	2	1	0	0	8	1

* Mental disorder, substance abuse disorder, permanent physical or developmental disability

Table 11 Income sources reported by households in selected subgroups

Income sources	Chronically homeless (HUD) (N=106)		Unsheltered (N=128)		Veterans (N=89)		All homeless households (N=681)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Full-time job	12	11	7	5	7	8	74	11
No income	20	19	35	27	18	20	161	24
Unemployment	1	1	2	2	0	0	5	1
TANF	7	7	5	4	2	2	99	15
Relatives or friends	1	1	4	3	4	4	31	5
L&I	0	0	1	1	1	1	3	<1
Social Security	15	14	16	13	12	13	67	10
SSI	24	23	35	27	29	33	132	19
GAU/GAX	18	17	19	15	24	27	94	14
Part-time job	10	9	6	5	4	4	64	9
Day labor	10	9	14	11	10	11	42	6
Agricultural work	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	<1
Other source	7	7	8	6	3	3	46	7

Previous year comparisons

Number of homeless

Compared to previous years, the number of homeless persons is increasing gradually, while the number of homeless households remains relatively stable, fluctuating from a high of 922 in 2006 to a low of 871 in 2007 (Figure 14).

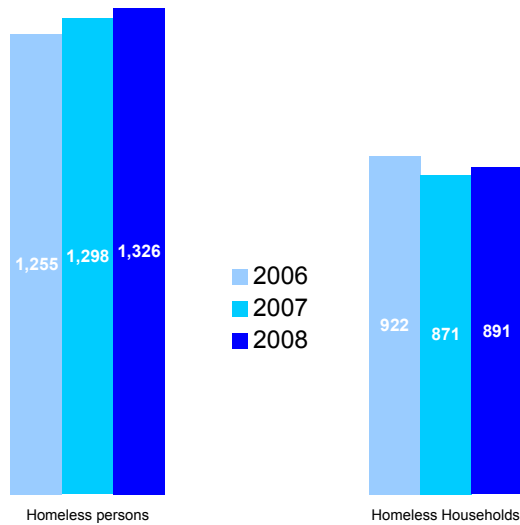


Figure 14 Overall homeless count 2007 - 2008

The relative composition of the homeless population between unaccompanied persons and person in homeless families is shown in Figure 15.

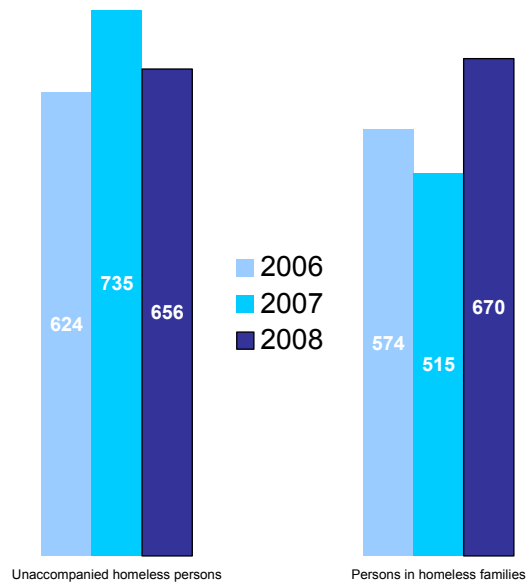


Figure 15 Homeless persons by household configuration 2006 - 2008

Age

Compared to previous years, the proportion of the homeless population in the youth age group 13 – 20 was high in 2008, and the proportion in the 13-17 age group appears to be rising steadily (Figure 16).

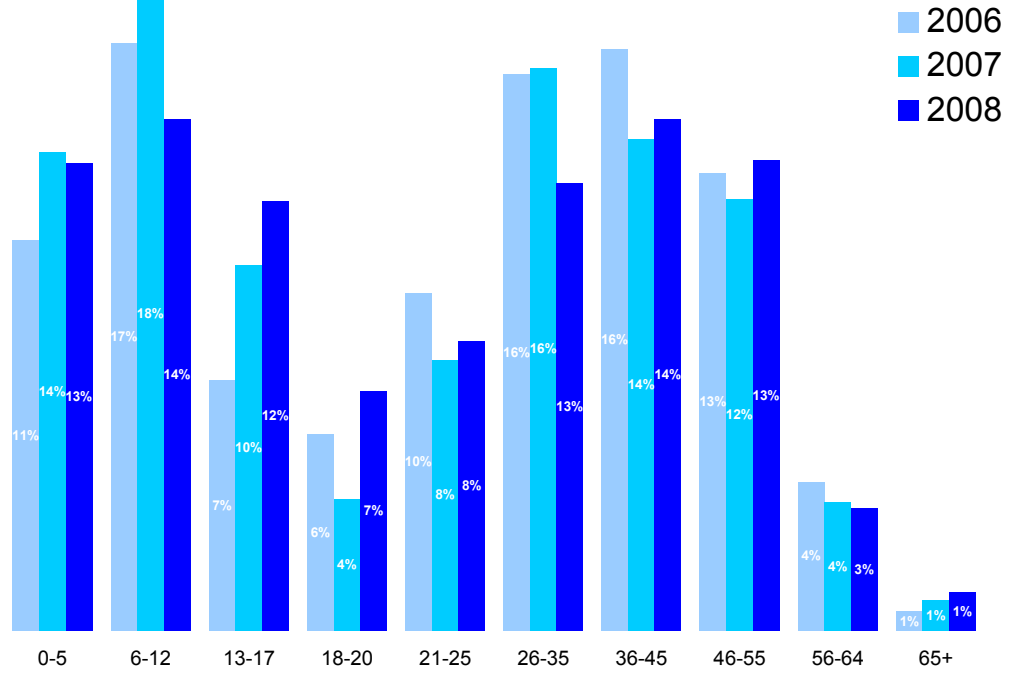


Figure 16 Age distribution of homeless persons, 2006 - 2008

Reasons for homelessness

The distribution of reasons for homelessness is similar in 2008 to the findings in 2007 (Figure 17). There are large differences in only three categories: felony convictions, discharge from jail or other institution, and alcohol or drug disorder. These differences are largely due to the greater number of persons counted this year by the Washington State Department of Corrections, which provided information on 102 homeless offenders who re-entered the community from state prisons (compared to only 41 persons in 2007).

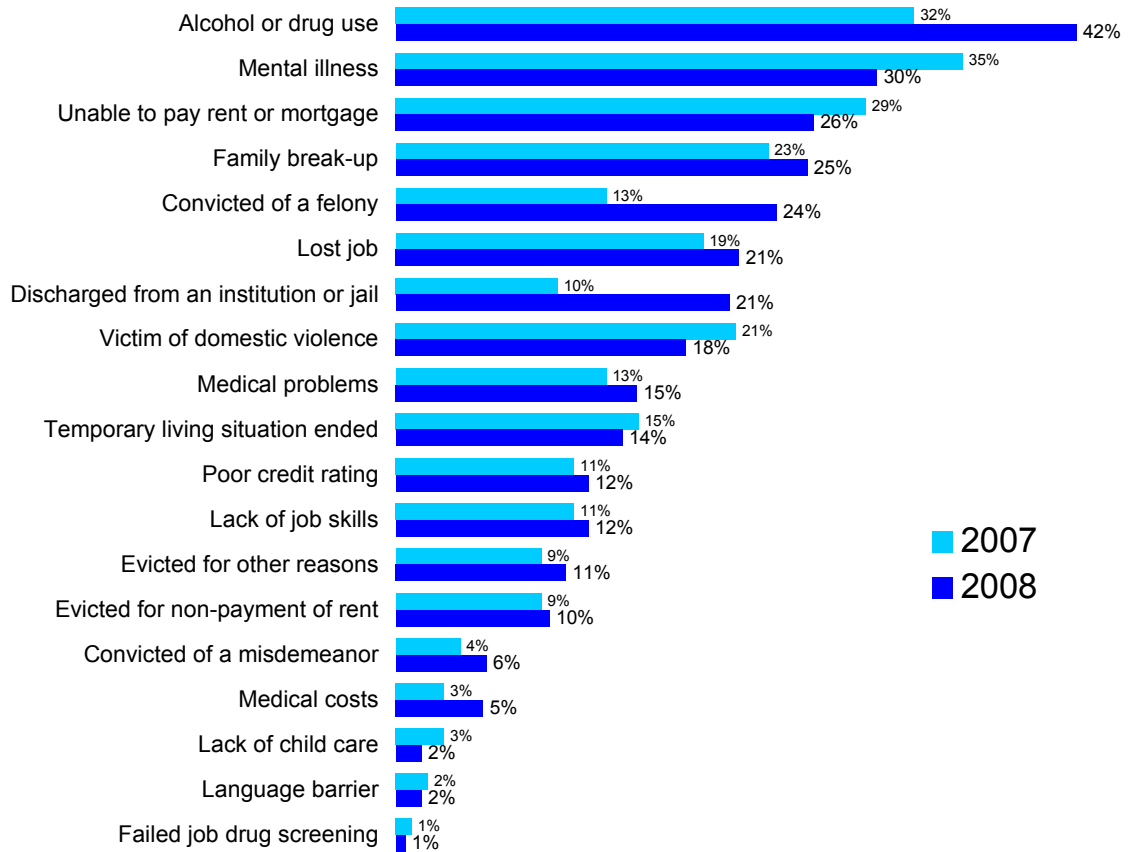


Figure 17 Distribution of reasons for homelessness, 2007 and 2008

Shelter

The distribution of homeless persons who sought various shelter types indicates several trends (Figure 18). The proportion of homeless households counted at each point in time who sought temporary shelter with another household has increased steadily from 25% in 2006 to 37% in 2008. The proportion of households counted in transitional and emergency shelter has decreased, and the percent of persons who were unsheltered has stayed about the same.

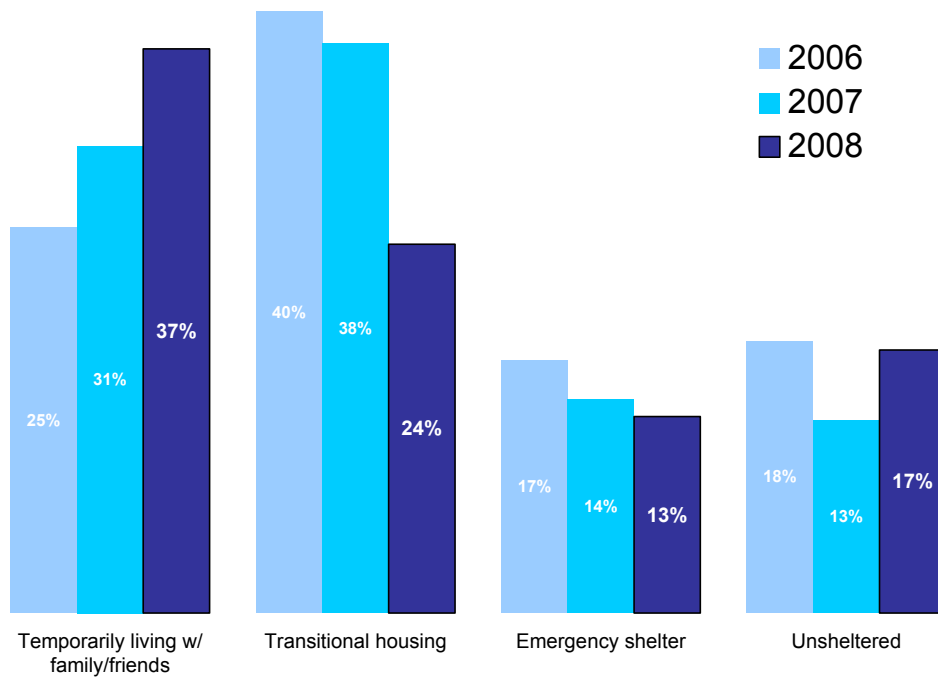


Figure 18 *Distribution of shelter types among homeless persons, 2006 - 2008*

Reducing homelessness in Whatcom County

Current homeless assistance

The Whatcom County Coalition for the Homeless (WCCH) is a consortium of public and private agencies and non-profits that collaborate to create a system of homeless housing and services. The ultimate goal is to move homeless families and individuals to permanent housing and self-sufficiency. This system is called the Continuum of Care. The WCCH oversees the implementation of the local Continuum of Care and makes recommendations for filling gaps in services. Figure 19 depicts examples agencies and their services that comprise the local Continuum of Care.

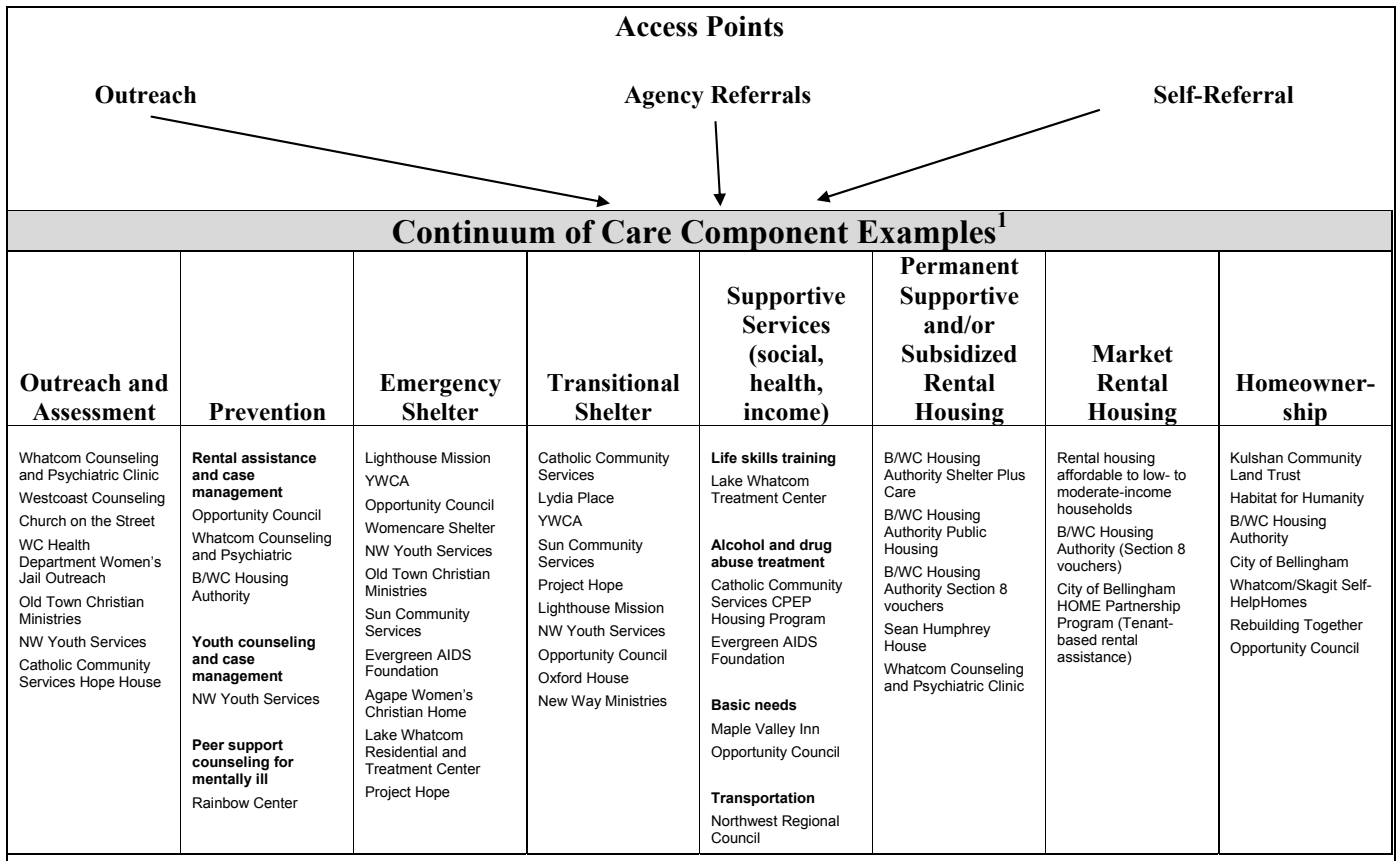


Figure 19 Examples of Whatcom County's homeless continuum of care services

Continuum of care resources that exist in Whatcom County developed over many years through the commitment of countless organizations and individuals, many of whom are volunteers. Up until this time, what has been lacking is a comprehensive system for coordinating and directing those resources and talents to focus sharply on ending homelessness in Whatcom County.

Passage of the Homeless Housing Assistance Act of 2005 changed the way many local jurisdictions respond to homelessness. It created new funding and required county governments to develop concrete strategies to cut homelessness in half by 2015. Whatcom County, Bellingham, and the Homeless Coalition conducted a series

of planning activities to identify homeless services gaps and propose solutions. These activities culminated in a major grant award to help our community implement new strategies to end homelessness.

Ending homelessness: a look ahead

Whatcom County recently received two three-year state grants totaling approximately \$2.6 million to improve the way our community responds to homelessness. The proposed Whatcom County Homeless Services Center (WCHSC) project adapts evidenced-based models of homeless prevention, rapid re-housing, jail diversion, and focused re-entry planning to transform our current continuum of care from managing homelessness to ending homelessness. Key components establish new commitments to increase access to supportive and mainstream services that are vital to retaining permanent housing.

As called for in the revised 2008 Whatcom County’s 10-year Plan to End Homelessness, this project proposes a shift in focus from emergency response strategies to prevention and long term housing. This systems-change approach, affecting all homeless subpopulations, increases the efficiencies of the existing homeless housing infrastructure which consists of low-rent housing, transitional housing and emergency shelter. At the same time, it saves money by diverting some individuals away from high-cost institutional facilities.

Under this new approach, our community is committed to homeless prevention, rapid re-housing, institutional discharge planning, and supportive services.

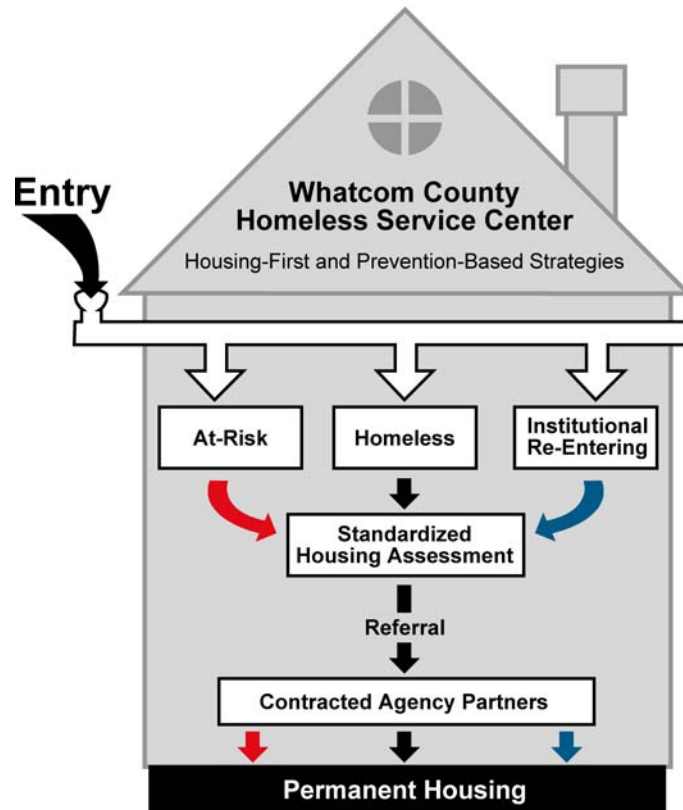


Figure 20 Schematic depiction of the proposed Whatcom Homeless Services Center

Homeless count methodology

Overview

The Point-in-Time count relies on numerous volunteers and voluntary participation by many agencies countywide. Essentially, the methodology of the count includes three components: (1) coordination and training, (2) data collection, and (3) data processing.

Coordination and training require that all agencies identified as having a role in the County's continuum of care be contacted and recruited to participate in the count. Then participating agencies receive instructions for that year's count and are given data collection tools most appropriate for their situation (e.g. paper survey forms or online database access for direct data entry). Coordination also includes event planning and implementation. For the last three years, free pizza dinners were hosted by Rainbow Center in downtown Bellingham and widely advertised to attract unsheltered and other homeless households that would have been missed by other coordinated count activities.

Data collection activities include having clients fill out the survey questionnaires or having agency staff enter client information directly into the online Point-in-Time Count database. In some cases, agency staff complete paper questionnaires for their clients.

Beginning in 2007, some participating agencies entered their homeless clients' data in an online database that facilitates data processing tasks.

Data processing begins when the paper survey questionnaires are delivered to the County's contracted data analyst or when the data is entered by participating agency staff into the online database. Data from paper forms is added to the online database and then the data is "cleaned." Cleaning includes several processes designed to detect data entry errors and identify and remove duplicated survey respondents⁷. The cleaned data is then imported into special software to facilitate statistical analysis.

⁷ Duplicated survey respondents are identified using automated and non-automated processes that rely on unique identifying data derived by combining fields of data such as sex, date of birth and initials.

Participating organizations

More than 50 organizations participated in this year's count by collecting information from their homeless clients, or by conducting outreach for the count (Table 12).

Table 12 Agencies that participated in the 2007 and 2008 Counts and number of homeless households they counted

Participating Organization	2007	2008
Bellingham School District	95	117
WA Dept. of Corrections	41	102
Opportunity Council	112	79
Rainbow Center	65	79
Lighthouse Mission	40	59
Lake Whatcom Treatment Center	69	38
Northwest Youth Services	4	38
Whatcom County Jail	32	37
Maple Alley Inn	0	29
Agency unknown	26	27
Brigid Collins House	31	21
CAST	0	17
Family Community Services (Lynden)	18	17
Blaine School District	28	15
YWCA	46	15
Bellingham Food Bank	7	14
Ferndale School Dist.	13	14
Hope House	19	14
Bellingham Police	2	13
Lummi Housing	9	12
Whatcom Counseling and Psychiatric	63	11
Meridian School Dist.	13	9
New Way Ministries	5	9
Womenscare Shelter	8	9
Bellingham Comm. Meal Program	15	8
Salvation Army	4	8
Westcoast Counseling	5	8
Nooksack School Dist.	8	7
Lydia Place	9	6
Mt. Baker School Dist.	7	6
CCS Recovery Center	0	5
Nooksack Tribe	0	5
Old Town Christian Ministries	0	5
Sean Humphrey House	0	5
Sun Community Services	5	5
Ferndale Police Dept.	1	4
Lummi Health Center	0	4
Lynden Project Hope Food Bank	2	4
Northwest Regional Council	0	4
St. Joseph Hospital	2	4
St. Joseph Outreach	4	4
Blaine Police Dept.	0	3
Total	871	891

Data assumptions and limitations

National research indicates that point-in-time counts generally underestimate the number of those who are homeless because:

- A point-in-time is just a “snapshot” and may not capture all those who are cycling in and out of homelessness over the course of a specific period of time (e.g. annually). Furthermore, an annual “snapshot” may miss any seasonal fluctuations that may occur in our communities.
- It is difficult to find where all the unsheltered people reside. It is impossible to know all the places that might provide unconventional shelter (i.e. tents, abandoned cars) for one night.

Furthermore, due to survey item nonresponse (when a respondent skips one or more of the Point-in-Time Count survey questions), some of the analyses are based on only a subset of all homeless households counted. For example, only 681 of all 891 households responded to the income source question. This large subset may or may not accurately represent the larger population of homeless households.

Recommendations for future homeless counts

Homeless count coordination

- **Begin early.** As recommended after the 2007 Count, the process needs to begin in October. We did begin in October this year and the process worked well. Each November’s Homeless Coalition meeting should devote a considerable part of the agenda to the upcoming Point-in_time Count.
- **Increase and retain agency participation.** Count coordinators should update and add to the database of participating agencies. Social service agencies tend to have large turnover of employees, and every year brings new programs to the community. In early November, e-mails and follow-up phone calls should be made to all agencies to update contact information and to recruit for greater agency participation.
- **Outreach to remote areas.** We should strive to have more events like the “Pizza Feed” or a Soup Kitchen outside of Bellingham. The east county area and northern part of the county may be poorly accounted for in this and previous counts. This will require advanced planning and local participation. We should involve the Faith Community in helping us plan and under take these events. These events need not only involve food but opportunities to supply homeless individuals with basic needs and ways to connect to services.
- **Reach out to the Faith Community.** We should continue to reach out to the Faith Community for their help and participation in this event. We sent letters to 161 Clergy this past year. We should involve them in helping to plan and implement events outside Bellingham as well as getting them information on the local problems of homelessness and opportunities for their involvement.

- **Increase understanding about the Count.** Events such as community meals should have a Homeless Coalition member in attendance to answer questions about the survey and its purpose. Explaining the process and procedure helps to alleviate fears, increase response, and reduce the potential for misunderstandings about the Count.
- **Invite homeless persons to help coordinate events.** We should continue to try to involve homeless individuals in the process of planning and implementation of the event. Our success at the Rainbow Center “Pizza Feed” is due in large part by the involvement of their members in planning, greeting, staffing, advertising and clean-up for the event. We could also invite homeless individuals to help our Street Ministries during the count as well as participate at Food Bank and meal locations.
- **Increase awareness about, “who is homeless.”** We need to continue to get the word out that “couch surfers” and those who “double-up” with another household are homeless. This is a population that is hard to reach and the general public may not be aware that there is a large subpopulation of homeless individuals and families that often go uncounted and may not be considered homeless by the average citizen.
- **Use the Count as an opportunity to inform the public.** We should continue our efforts to use the event as an educational tool on homelessness in our community. Now that we have more flexibility in the ways we can analyze and report data to tell a story about local homelessness, we should increase educational outreach to community organizations, Faith Communities, as well as the media through print publications, “talk radio”, and other outlets.

Homeless count data collection and processing

This year’s Point-in-Time Count continued using a new data storage and reporting system that is managed locally, providing Whatcom County with much more flexibility in data analysis and reporting. Next year may bring another significant shift in how data is collected, stored and reported. With the advent of the new Homeless Services Center, Whatcom County now has its first homeless management information system. While it is unlikely that all agencies will be using this system in early 2009, the fact that there is a local, operating HMIS system has implications for how future counts are conducted.

Future Point-in-Time counts can be further improved by implementing these additional strategies:

- **Integrate the new HMIS system into the count.** Steps should be taken as early as possible in 2008 to determine how best to use the HMIS system to facilitate the point-in-time count. The Homeless Services Center and Homeless Coalition could convene a joint committee to develop the next count using HMIS.
- **Re-focus the count on unsheltered and persons doubled-up with another household.** Even with HMIS at full implementation, the unsheltered population and others (e.g. people who are doubling up with another household temporarily) will elude any homeless count because

they may not be listed in the HMIS system. Therefore, future coordinated Point-in-Time counts should focus most of their efforts on these populations.

- **Consider using additional count strategies that are successful elsewhere.** One good example of this is Clark County's use of the public transit system to find and engage homeless persons. Another example is Clark County's addition of an open-ended question to the survey questionnaire that asks generally what each homeless household needs or wants most.
- **Train participating agencies to improve their data collection.** Training would focus on two issues: First, to encourage more of the agencies who use staff to complete survey forms to use the online data system. Second, taking steps to limit item nonresponse to particular survey questions. Participating agency staff should be trained to ensure that their clients complete the survey questionnaires as completely as possible.

Appendix A: Homeless Point-in-Time Count Questionnaire

2008 Whatcom County Point-in-Time Homeless Count

Instructions: For each individual in your household, please provide the person's sex, date of birth, initials and any disabilities. Victims of domestic violence – only fill in gender and birth year.

Individual	Sex	Date of Birth			Initials (first, middle, last)	Disabilities	
		Month	Day	Year			
Individual #1	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female					<input type="checkbox"/> Physical (permanent) <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health <input type="checkbox"/> Visual (uncorrected) <input type="checkbox"/> HIV/AIDS <input type="checkbox"/> Dental (untreated)	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical (temporary) <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol or drug abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Individual #2	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female					<input type="checkbox"/> Physical (permanent) <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health <input type="checkbox"/> Visual (uncorrected) <input type="checkbox"/> HIV/AIDS <input type="checkbox"/> Dental (untreated)	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical (temporary) <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol or drug abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Individual #3	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female					<input type="checkbox"/> Physical (permanent) <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health <input type="checkbox"/> Visual (uncorrected) <input type="checkbox"/> HIV/AIDS <input type="checkbox"/> Dental (untreated)	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical (temporary) <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol or drug abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Individual #4	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female					<input type="checkbox"/> Physical (permanent) <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health <input type="checkbox"/> Visual (uncorrected) <input type="checkbox"/> HIV/AIDS <input type="checkbox"/> Dental (untreated)	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical (temporary) <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol or drug abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Individual #5	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female					<input type="checkbox"/> Physical (permanent) <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health <input type="checkbox"/> Visual (uncorrected) <input type="checkbox"/> HIV/AIDS <input type="checkbox"/> Dental (untreated)	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical (temporary) <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol or drug abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Individual #6	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female					<input type="checkbox"/> Physical (permanent) <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health <input type="checkbox"/> Visual (uncorrected) <input type="checkbox"/> HIV/AIDS <input type="checkbox"/> Dental (untreated)	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical (temporary) <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol or drug abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Individual #7	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female					<input type="checkbox"/> Physical (permanent) <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health <input type="checkbox"/> Visual (uncorrected) <input type="checkbox"/> HIV/AIDS <input type="checkbox"/> Dental (untreated)	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical (temporary) <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol or drug abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Individual #8	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female					<input type="checkbox"/> Physical (permanent) <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health <input type="checkbox"/> Visual (uncorrected) <input type="checkbox"/> HIV/AIDS <input type="checkbox"/> Dental (untreated)	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical (temporary) <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol or drug abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> Other

*****PLEASE TURN OVER AND COMPLETE SIDE 2 OF THIS FORM*****

Agency or event: _____

Has anyone in your household ever served in the Armed Forces of the United States?

- Yes
- No

If YES, which individual(s)? Us the "Individual #" from other side of form: _____

Is anyone in your household receiving Veterans Administration benefits?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

If YES, which individual(s)? Us the "Individual #" from other side of form: _____

Where did you stay last night? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

- Emergency shelter
 - Temporarily living with family or friends
 - A vehicle
 - Abandoned building
 - Jail
 - Juvenile detention
 - Motel (using a voucher)
 - Transitional housing
 - Out of doors (street, tent)
- Other place? (PLEASE DESCRIBE)

What month and year did you become homeless? MONTH _____ YEAR _____

How many times have you become homeless over the past 3 years? _____

Where did you last live in an apartment, room or house for six months or more?

CITY _____ STATE _____

Have you been released from any of the following in the last six months? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- Jail
- Psychiatric hospital
- Inpatient substance abuse treatment
- Juvenile detention

What has caused you to become homeless? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- Victim of domestic violence
- Lost job
- Medical costs
- Convicted of a felony
- Poor credit rating
- Mental illness
- Medical problems
- Alcohol or drug use
- Lack of child care
- Language barrier
- Aged out of foster care
- Evicted for non-payment of rent
- Evicted for other reasons
- Unable to pay rent or mortgage
- Convicted of a misdemeanor
- Family break-up
- Failed job drug screening
- Temporary living situation ended
- Discharged from an institution or jail
- Lack of job skills

Other reason? (PLEASE DESCRIBE)

What are your household's sources of income? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- Full-time job
 - None (no income currently)
 - Unemployment insurance
 - TANF
 - Relatives, partners, friends
 - L&I, workman's compensation
 - Social Security (including SSD)
 - SSI
 - GAU or GAX
 - Part-time job
 - Day laborer jobs
 - Farm or migrant agriculture work
 - Other income? (PLEASE DESCRIBE)
- _____

Thanks for your help! Your response will help us improve services to homeless persons.

Appendix B: Annual demand for homeless services methodology

Computing annual homeless need from point-in-time count

Point-in-time homeless counts are very useful for characterizing local homeless populations; however, they severely underestimate the total number of people who experience homelessness over the course of a year. For planning purposes and to develop a more robust and useful estimate of the potential demand for homeless services, we used the following methodology adapted from Burt and Wilkins (2005).⁸

The Formula

To project from point-in-time (PIT) estimates to estimates of the annual prevalence of homeless people we used the following formula:

$$A + ((B * 11) * (1-C)) = \text{annual estimate}$$

Where:

A = PIT count of currently homeless (CH) people – including adults and children

B = number of CH adults and children who 1) became homeless within last month, whether for the first time or not

C = proportion (expressed in decimals – i.e., 15% = .15) of CH adults and children in A who have had a previous homeless episode within the past 12 months.

It is important to understand what this formula says.

“B” and “(B*11)” – this part of the formula asks you to supply the number of people whose current homeless spell began within the past month.

You need to know “B” because you are going to *assume* that, in *every month* of the year to which you are projecting, the same number of people enter homelessness. If you make this assumption, you can multiply “B” by 11 (the remaining number of months in a year) to get the number of people who were not homeless at the time of the count, but whom you expect to become homeless month after month during the course of the next year.

“C” and (1-C) – *Problem*: Some people will become homeless more than once during the coming year. If you only use “(B*11)” as the projection, you will overestimate because the projection will double-count these people with more than one spell during a year.

⁸ Burt, M.R. and C. Wilkins. 2005. Estimating the Need: Projecting from point-in-time to annual estimates of the number of homeless people in a community and using this information to plan for supportive housing. Corporation for Supportive Housing

2007 Whatcom County Point-in-Time Homeless Count

We don't know how many people *will* become homeless more than once during the next 12 months, but we can *estimate* this by estimating how many in our current count had one or more *additional* homeless episodes during the past 12 months.⁹ We can use this knowledge to partially correct for the duplication that our projection would otherwise produce.

That's why the formula includes the element "(1-C)," to reduce the projection to account for the probable effects of multiple spells of homelessness within the coming year.

The Calculation

We counted 1,326 currently homeless persons, so **A = 1,326**.

168 of these persons had just become homeless within the past month. We had missing data on some homeless households that did not allow us to estimate when they had become homeless, so we assumed that the proportion of those with missing data was the same as that for households who supplied this data. So **B = 168 (those we know from the data) + 89 (those we estimate from the households with missing data) = 257**.

7.5% percent of the currently homeless people in A had a previous homeless episode within the past 12 months (see footnote below). So **C = .075**.

Applying these findings to the formula, we get:

$$A + ((B * 11) * (1-C)) = 1,326 + ((257*11) * (1-.075)) = 3,941.$$

So in this example, the PIT count is 1,326 and the annual estimate is 3,941. So we estimate that the number of people who experience homelessness annually in Whatcom County is approximately three times the number of people counted at a point in time ($3,941/1,326 = 2.97$).

⁹ For this count, we asked how many additional homeless episodes people had in the past 3 years, so to estimate how many had additional homeless episodes had in the past year, we simply divided that number by 3. Specifically, 300 persons had an additional homeless episode in the past 3 years, so $300/3=100$ persons who we estimate had a previous homeless episode in the past 12 months. In our formula, therefore, $C = (100/1,325) = 0.075$.

Agency or event: _____

Appendix C: Inventory of emergency shelter and transitional housing

Appendix: Housing Activity Charts

NOTE: See Page 45 for description and explanation of the following tables which are required Plan components.

Type Of Housing	Status	Resource/Provider	Program/Facility	Target Pop A	Target Pop B	Target Income	Location	Fam Units	Fam Beds	Indiv units/b eds	Rental/ Owner Units	Rental/ Owner Bedrooms
Emergency Shelter	Existing	Opportunity Council/Interfaith	Apartment (unnamed)	FC			Ferndale	1	4			
Emergency Shelter	Existing	Evergreen AIDS Foundation	Barney Wood Fund	SMF/FC	AIDS		Bellingham			9		
Emergency Shelter	Existing	Opportunity Council/Interfaith	Disciples House	FC			Bellingham	1	7			
Emergency Shelter	Existing	Agape Woman's Christian Home	Emergency Housing	FC			Bellingham	4	16			
Emergency Shelter	Existing	Lighthouse Mission	Emergency Shelter	SM			Bellingham			80		
Emergency Shelter	Existing	Opportunity Council/Interfaith	Garden St. House	FC			Bellingham	1	7			
Emergency Shelter	Existing	Opportunity Council/Interfaith	Interfaith Little House	FC			Bellingham	1	4			
Emergency Shelter	Existing	YWCA	Larabee Residence	SF		<80%	Bellingham			9		
Emergency Shelter	Existing	Evergreen AIDS Foundation	Motel Vouchers	SM/F	AIDS		Bellingham			26		
Emergency Shelter	Existing	Opportunity Council	Motel Vouchers	FC			Bellingham	68	226			
Emergency Shelter	Existing	Lydia Place/Interfaith Coalition	Our Savior's House	WC			Bellingham	1	6			
Emergency Shelter	Existing	Northwest Youth Services	Safe Home Program	YM/YF			Bellingham			5		
Emergency Shelter	Existing	Old Town Christian Ministries	Stepping Stones - Seasonal Motel Vouchers	SM/F or FC			Bellingham					
Emergency Shelter	Existing	Womencare Shelter	Womencare Shelter	SF/FC	DV	<80%	Bellingham	5	18			
Permanent	Existing	Opportunity Council	Kateri Court	FC		<30%	Bellingham				8	8

Type Of Housing	Status	Resource/Provider	Program/Facility	Target Pop A	Target Pop B	Target Income	Location	Fam Units	Fam Beds	Indiv units/b eds	Rental/ Owner Units	Rental/ Owner Bedrooms
Supportive Housing												
Permanent Supportive Housing	Existing	BWCHA	Meadow Wood Townhomes		disabled	<30%	Bellingham				10	30
Permanent Supportive Housing	Existing	Sean Humphrey House	Permanent Supportive Housing	SM/F	AIDS	<50%	Bellingham				6	6
Permanent Supportive Housing	Existing	BWCHA	Shelter + Care (Sponsor Based)	SM/F							112	112
Permanent Supportive Housing	Existing	BWCHA	Shelter + Care (Veterans)	SM/F	VET						14	14
Permanent Supportive Housing	Existing	BWCHA	Shelter+ Care (Tenant Based)	SM/F							21	21
Permanent Supportive Housing	Existing	WCPC	Tenant based Section 8 Permanent Housing	FC							14	28
Transitional Housing	Existing	Opportunity Council	2060 units	FC		<30%	Bellingham	4	16			
Transitional Housing	Existing	Opportunity Council	Community Transitional Housing	FC			Bellingham	8	26			
Transitional Housing	Existing	Opportunity Council	Dorothy Arnold Giesecke Place	SF, FC	DV		Bellingham	21	35	6		
Transitional Housing	Existing	Lake Whatcom RTC	Emergency Housing	SM/F	SMI		Bellingham			67		
Transitional Housing	Existing	Sun Community Services	Gladstone House	Mixed	SMI		Bellingham			5		
Transitional Housing	Existing	CCS	Growing Together	FC			Bellingham		2			
Transitional Housing	Existing	CCS	Growing Together	FC			Bellingham		2			
Transitional Housing	Existing	New Way Ministries	Housing for Single Mothers w/Children	FC	DV		Bellingham	7	14			
Transitional Housing	Existing	YWCA	Larabee Residence			<50%	Bellingham			27		

Type Of Housing	Status	Resource/Provider	Program/Facility	Target Pop A	Target Pop B	Target Income	Location	Fam Units	Fam Beds	Indiv units/beds	Rental/ Owner Units	Rental/ Owner Bedrooms
Transitional Housing	Existing	WCPC	Rental Subsidies Supportive Living Program	Mixed	SMI					3		
Transitional Housing	Existing	Opportunity Council	Rental Subsidies to Landlords using HOME TBRA	FC				4	19			
Transitional Housing	Existing	Oxford House	Substance Abuse After-Treatment/ Clean and Sober Housing	SM/F			Bellingham			25		
Transitional Housing	Existing	Sun Community Services	Sun House	SM/F	SMI		Bellingham			6		
Transitional Housing	Existing	Project Hope	Transitional Housing	FC			Bellingham	7	16			
Transitional Housing	Existing	Lydia Place	Transitional Living Program	FC		<50%	Bellingham	7	18			
Transitional Housing	Existing	Northwest Youth Services	Transitional Living Program	YM/YF, FC			Bellingham	2	4	18		
Transitional Housing	Existing	Opportunity Council	WA Families Fund units	FC		<30%	Bellingham	4	16			

Inventory Totals					
Type of Housing	Fam Units	Fam Beds	Indiv Beds	Rental/ Owner Units	Rental/ Owner Bedrooms
Emergency Shelter	82	288	129	0	0
Transitional Housing	64	168	158	0	0
Permanent Supportive Housing	0	0	0	185	219
Total	146	456	287	185	219

NOTE: The following codes are used in the table above to denote any target populations served by each facility.

Facility Target Population A:

SM=only Single Males (18 years and older)

SF=only Single Females (18 years and older)

SMF=only Single Males and Females (18 years and older with no children)

FC=only Families with Children

YM=only unaccompanied Young Males (under 18 years)

YF=only unaccompanied Young Females (under 18 years)

YMF=only unaccompanied Young Males and Females (under 18 years)

M=mixed populations

Facility Target Population B: additional characteristics

DV=only Domestic Violence victims

VET=only Veterans

HIV=only persons with HIV/AIDS

Appendix D: Whatcom County Homeless Count Report to CTED

March 30, 2008**Whatcom County 2008 Point-in-Time Homeless Count Report to
Washington State Department of Community, Trade and
Economic Development****1. Briefly describe your efforts to count unsheltered persons.**

Whatcom County coordinated this year's homeless count with over 50 organizations, many of which provide outreach and services to unsheltered persons. Those organizations helped to locate and collect data from the unsheltered population. We also organized and advertised an event – a free pizza dinner – to encourage unsheltered persons to participate in the count.

2. Briefly describe how you minimized the duplication of those that were counted.

We minimized duplication by coordinating count activities so they were limited to a point in time that lasted just a few days, with most counting occurring on one day. We also deployed a computer routine that uses respondent initials, date of birth, and sex to search for and delete duplicate persons from the data.

3. What quantitative data or qualitative impression do you have on how complete the count was in your county?

We believe the count was accurate for the sheltered population; however, the unsheltered population is an undercount. While we cannot reasonably assess the degree of undercount, we think that there may be a more severe undercount of unsheltered homeless persons in the more remote regions of our county where there tends to be limited homeless outreach and engagement services. Some service providers also suspect that we may have an influx of homeless persons seasonally, so the unsheltered numbers may be larger during the warmer months.

Part 1: Homeless Population	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Temporarily Living with Family or Friends
	Emergency	Transitiona I		
Number of Families with Children (Family Households):	32	54	15	49
a. Number of Persons in Families with Children:	107	153	51	148
b. Number of Single Individuals and Persons in Households without Children:	168	225	147	253
(Add Lines Numbered 1 & 2) Total Persons:	275	378	198	401
Part 2: Homeless Subpopulations	Sheltered		Unsheltered	Temporarily Living with Family or Friends
	Emergency	Transitiona I		
a. Chronically Homeless	9	27	62	14
b. Mentally Disabled	42	113	71	77
c. Persons with alcohol and/or other drug problems	35	103	53	116
d. Veterans	24	30	28	13
e. Persons with HIV/AIDS	2	6	1	0
f. Victims of Domestic Violence	75	74	24	59
g. Unaccompanied Youth (Under 18)	2	5	1	26
h. Physically Disabled	36	35	46	23
i. Seasonal Agricultural Workers	0	0	2	1
j. Persons with both substance use and mental health problems	20	55	32	40
k. Senior citizens (aged 65 or older)	3	2	6	1

*Due to missing data about shelter from some homeless count survey forms, these numbers may not exactly match those reported elsewhere in Whatcom County's 2008 Point-in-Time Count report. For example, we counted 1,326 homeless persons, but the total persons in Part 1 above equals only 1,252 because survey forms representing the remaining 74 persons lacked data on where that household sheltered the night before the count.