

2018 Homeless Snapshot

Thurston County funds an annual "Point-in-Time-Census" to capture how many individuals are homeless and when possible, how they came to be in that situation.



The January 2018 census identified 835 homeless persons, including 320 individuals, families, and unaccompanied youth without access to shelter of any kind.



In November 2018, the City counted approximately 310 individuals sleeping outdoors or in tents in Downtown.

The annual Point-in-Time Census provides critical information to help identify response strategies, apply for funding, prioritize work efforts, and measure the impact of our community's response to homelessness.

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Homelessness Response

Increasing homelessness in Olympia and throughout Thurston County is an issue of significant public concern. Like many cities across the country and particularly on the west coast, the City of Olympia is challenged to respond. In 2018, the City developed a new line of programs to address homeless related issues and their impacts, and hired its first Homeless Response Coordinator.

Regional and community partnerships are critical to developing an effective response to this crisis.

Home Fund: In 2018, voters approved a sales tax increase to fund building permanent supportive housing for the most vulnerable and homeless members of our community. It will be several years before we see completed projects, so in the interim the City is partnering with others to take more immediate action.



Immediate Actions

Supporting the Move to a 24/7 Shelter System

The City is providing funding to move two existing shelters to a 24/7 operation.

- In addition to providing overnight shelter, **Community Youth Services (CYS) Rosie's Place** will open its doors to youth during the day.
- In addition to expanding their overnight shelter beds, the **Salvation Army** will upgrade their building to provide a safe, comfortable place for individuals to be during daytime hours.

Supporting a Vibrant Downtown

The City of Olympia is committed to our community's vision for a vibrant Downtown, which includes effective and compassionate ways to address the impact homelessness has in the Downtown.

- **Secure Storage.** With partners, the City will establish secure storage facilities that keep individual's personal belongings safe and dry, while minimizing sidewalk debris.
- **Safe and Welcoming for All.** The City will continue to invest in maintaining safe and welcoming public spaces by funding the expanded Police Walking Patrol, Downtown Ambassadors, and Clean Team and a new mobile crisis response unit better equipped to handle issues such as mental illness.

Mitigation Sites

- **As a first step** to manage the growing, unsustainable and immediate situation of downtown encampments, a temporary "transition site" will be set up on a City-owned parking lot at Olympia and Franklin. This site will include basic hygiene services, orderly setup, safety protocols, a code of conduct and on-site host(s).
- **This is not a permanent end state.** This step will facilitate safety, public health, dignity, along with improved enforcement of camping and behaviors in the downtown core and other areas. The City continues to look for other, more viable locations for temporary and safe camping.



Photo Courtesy of The Low Income Housing Institute

Fostering Emergency Housing Partnerships

- **Plum Street Village.** A new tiny home village will have 40+ individuals onsite. The units will be secure and private for individuals and couples without children. The site will also be equipped with a hygiene trailer and services tailored to the specific needs of the residents.
- **Emergency Housing Ordinance.** In 2018, the City Council adopted an emergency ordinance that allowed for the establishment of temporary emergency shelter site on faith-based, non-profit, or government property, subject to a permit.
- **Faith Community & City Tiny House Pilot Partnership.** The City is partnering with several faith-based communities to support the establishment of additional emergency housing villages on their properties.

Developing a Homeless Response Plan

Beginning in early 2019, the City will host a process to determine how we, as a community, will respond to long-term impacts of homelessness. This process will engage citizens, non-profits, private sector, and government agencies from throughout the region in a dialogue to identify together the most effective, impactful, and sustainable solutions to addressing homelessness and its impacts. Stay up to date by signing up for our enews at olympiawa.gov/subscribe.



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