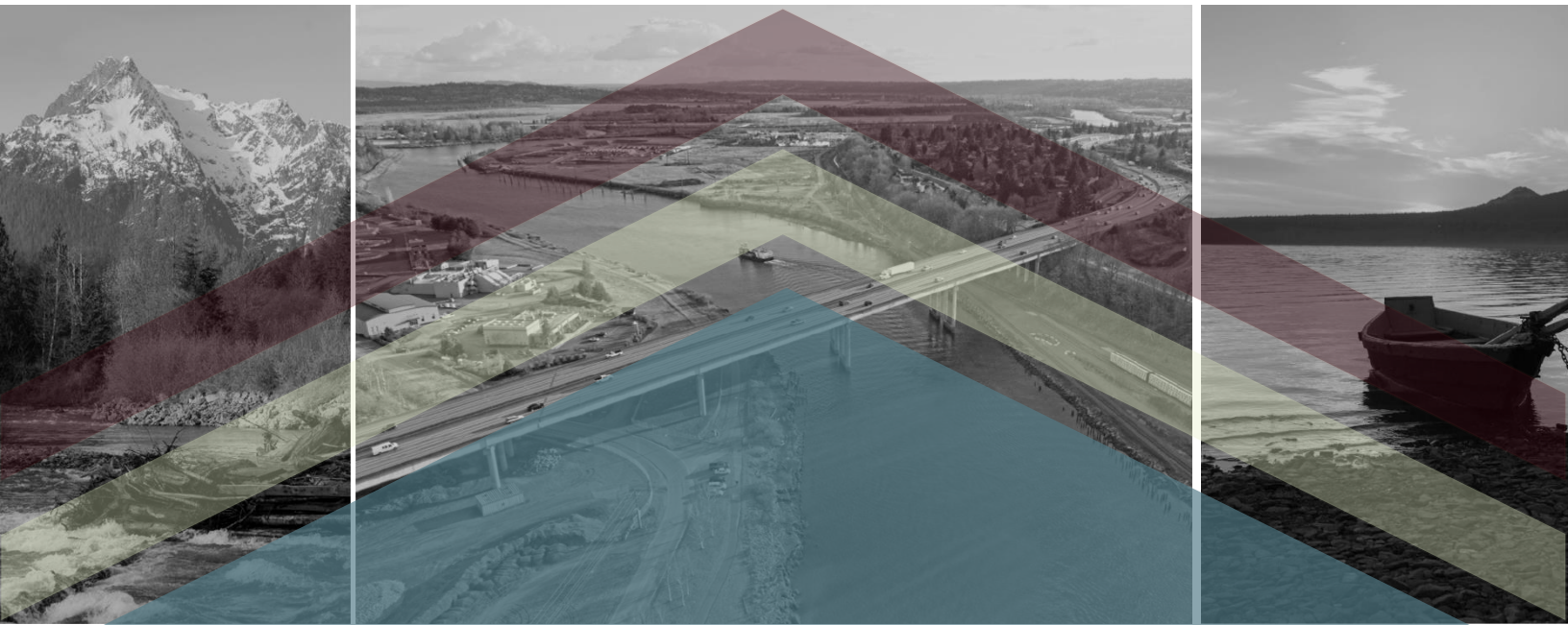
Point-in-Time Count Summary

For the night of January 22, 2018

Snohomish County



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Mission Statement

The Partnership to End Homelessness leads a collaborative, comprehensive and cohesive system of care that eliminates homelessness in Snohomish County.

Vision

Every Person in Snohomish County lives in safe, stable, and affordable housing with access to necessary services and economic opportunity.

For additional information on the Partnership to End Homelessness, access the link below:
https://snohomishcountywa.gov/2191/PEH-CoC-Board

The first thing people ask about homelessness is, "How many people are homeless?" I have found that, regardless of the answer or the methodology used to arrive at the answer, people remain dissatisfied. The experiences we can count don't line up with the suffering people are witnessing. Everyone has that friend or relative who is fighting a battle that they don't have the resources to overcome, and our humanity says, "Someone should help them." Yet the fact remains that, because the homeless housing system is intended for crisis response and the need in our community is so great, housing assistance resources are limited to those with the greatest service needs. So, what are people really asking and what answers can we provide? Rather than a static count of people who are homeless, instead I think that people want to know, "Are there fewer people experiencing homelessness than there were? What are we doing to address homelessness? Are we moving in the right direction? Does everyone have affordable housing?" This report aims to answer those questions.

Jess Jorstad
Lead Data and Program Analyst

2018 Point-in-Time Summary

Snohomish County remains one of the fastest growing population centers in the United States with an estimated **801,633** residents. There are more people in this one county than reside in Alaska, North Dakota, Vermont, Wyoming, or Washington D.C. Our county population continues to steadily grow at a rate of 45 persons per day, 317 per week, 1,375 a month and **16,500** per year.[1]

Everett is the state's 6th largest city with a population of over 101,000, and areas along the Interstate 5 corridor are continually planning for new housing developments and transportation hubs. Unemployment is consistently below **4.5%** month-after-month.

Data collected, while not a complete census, show that the majority of homeless persons surveyed are originally from Snohomish County. They continue to face housing crises related to family crisis, job loss, substance abuse, and lack of affordable housing.

After reviewing data of persons in Snohomish County, a picture of homelessness emerges. A person living unsheltered out of doors, or in a shelter program in the County is highly likely to be a chronically homeless, disabled white male in their mid-30s to early 40s. They are also single, childless, and became homeless after a family or economic crisis.

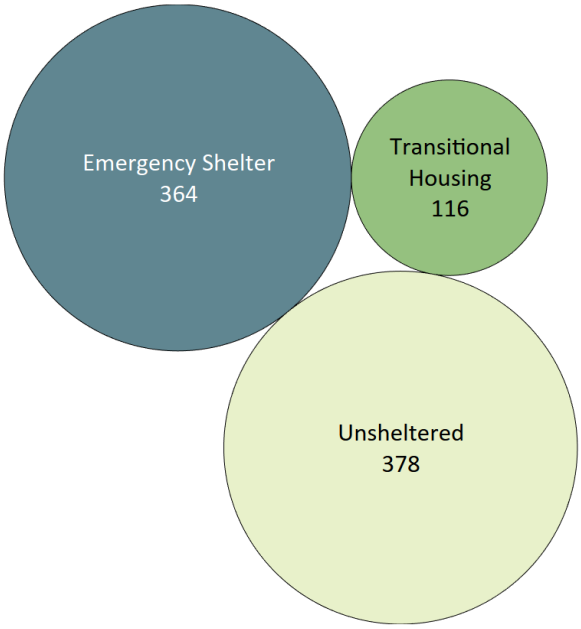
This year there was a **27%** decrease over last year in the number of unsheltered persons surveyed. While the Point-in-Time count fluctuates each year, the overall trend remains upward with an increase of almost 10% since 2013.

The availability of housing with lower barriers to entry, supplemented by supportive services, continues to increase. There was a net gain of **161** persons assisted by rapid rehousing on the night of the Point-in-Time count. Guidance to increase efficiency and effectiveness continues as programs are analyzed. Implementation of these strategies over time will continue to enhance community response and reduce homelessness.

[1] "Population grows at fast pace in 2017." *Puget Sound Regional Council*, July 10, 2017, https://www.psrc.org/whats-happening/blog/population-grows-fast-pace-2017.

Point-in-Time Quick Fact Sheet

On the night of Monday, January 22, 2018, **858** persons in Snohomish County did not have a permanent place to sleep. These numbers included **378** unsheltered persons, **364** persons in emergency shelters, and **116** who were enrolled in transitional housing.



Chronically Homeless

A person is chronically homeless if they are disabled and have been continuously homeless for a year or more.

They are also considered chronically homeless if disabled and have experienced homelessness, four times, in the past three years.

- **71.4%** (270) persons who were unsheltered, were chronically homeless.
- **26.6%** (97) persons in emergency shelter, were chronically homeless.

Age Ranges

- Unsheltered persons surveyed ranged in age from **18 months** to **72 years**, averaging 42 years.
- Sheltered persons were between **5 days** and **76 years**, averaging 31 years.
- When limiting to just adults, the average age for unsheltered (43 years) and those in emergency shelter (45 years) is quite similar, while adults in transitional housing averaged 33 years.

Basic Demographics

- **92.6%** (350) of all unsheltered persons were adults.[2]
- **95.7%** (335) of adults surveyed were unsheltered and without children.
- A majority (**68.6%**) of households surveyed stayed out of doors the night prior. Other households reported sheltering in a vehicle (**27.8%**) or in an abandoned building (**3.6%**).
- Males comprised **67%** of the adult unsheltered population.

Why We Count in January

The Point-in-Time count occurs on one night within the last ten days of January. This timeframe was originally selected by HUD as it is the time of year when shelter use typically peaks. Interviewing unsheltered persons during the winter months leads to a more realistic picture of chronically homeless unsheltered persons in the community[3].

- Temperatures ranged from a low of **39°** to a high of **44°** countywide during the count which is not atypical.
- Rainfall at Paine Field measured **.61"**on the day of the count, second only to the 2016 count which measured .8".

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[2] *Adults* - Persons above the age of 18, regardless of household composition.

[3] "A Guide to Counting Unsheltered Homeless People." *HUD Exchange*, Oct. 2004, https://www.hudexchange.info/onecpd/assets/File/Guide-for-Counting-Unsheltered-Homeless-Persons.pdf.

Section I: Introduction

The local Point-in-Time (PIT) count has been conducted on a single night in January annually since 2006, as required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This count should be considered an indicator of overall trends and not an exhaustive census of homeless persons in Snohomish County. As the lead agency for the Everett/Snohomish County Continuum of Care (CoC), Snohomish County Human Services Department (HSD) is responsible for conducting the count and submitting the data found in this report to HUD. Information regarding the Everett/Snohomish County CoC may be accessed here: https://snohomishcountywa.gov/720/Continuum-of-Care-CoC

How We Counted

The PIT count consisted of a sheltered[4] count, which assessed how many persons were staying in homeless housing, in addition to an unsheltered[5] count. Trained volunteers utilized paper surveys to conduct the unsheltered count.

The sheltered count was generated through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) database into which agencies continuously enter client-level data about persons in homeless projects. Non HMIS-participating sheltered programs complete program level surveys for inclusion.

Volunteers and Staff

As in previous years, the county was divided into four quadrants, a youth-focused site as well as survey capabilities at many of the local homeless services providers. Paired volunteers worked in only one defined area, visiting encampments, food banks, community resource locations, and areas where persons experiencing homelessness were known to congregate.

Survey collection was overseen by experienced housing and homeless services agency staff, referred to as Leads for each quadrant. Volunteer survey takers typically committed to three hour shifts between 8:00am and 8:00pm in a quadrant of their choosing, while Leads ensured adequate coverage. Individuals contacted by volunteers had the option to decline an interview and were thus not included in the count. In 2018, **243** members of the public volunteered their time for the local PIT count.

Why the Count Matters

Communities that receive McKinney-Vento (federal) and Homeless Housing and Assistance Act (Washington State) funds are required to conduct an annual count.

Point-in-Time count results, along with other related data and information, help to inform the local homeless response system for addressing needs and making progress toward goals to prevent, reduce, and end homelessness. Snohomish County's Strategic Plan[6] has been adopted by the Partnership to End Homelessness, the governing body for the Continuum of Care. The vision is that every person in Snohomish County lives in safe, stable, and affordable housing with access to necessary services and economic opportunity.

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[4] *Sheltered* – spent the night prior to survey in emergency shelter or transitional housing.

[5] *Unsheltered* – spent the night prior to the survey on the streets, in an abandoned building, a tent, car, or other place not meant for human habitation.

[6] https://snohomishcountywa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/46516/Strategic-Plan

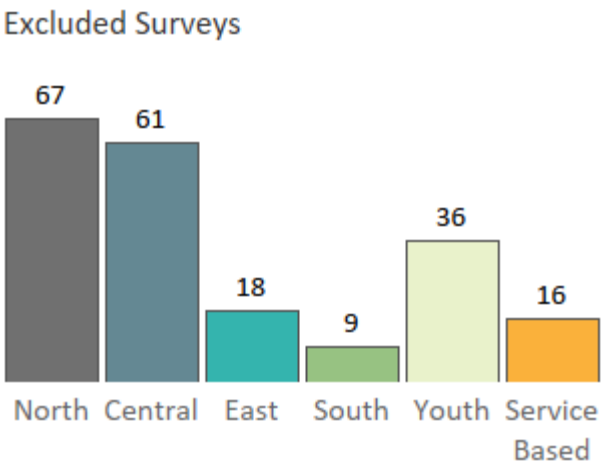
Section II. Data Quality Methodology

To prevent double counting of individuals while respecting privacy, the first two letters of the first and last name, along with a middle initial and date of birth, were logged for each person.

When persons did not wish to provide their date of birth, volunteers were asked to estimate age for the data analysis purpose of determining whether a respondent was an adult or child.

Exclusions

There are essential data elements to validate a survey and include the information in the annual count. Surveys were excluded if staff were unable to determine if the respondent was an adult or child (no date of birth – **12**), that they were in Snohomish county the night of the PIT (no response to "Which City did you sleep in last night?" – **11**), or they were not literally homeless (doubled up or otherwise precariously housed – **198**).



Some surveys collected had two exclusions, such as unable to determine age and living doubled up. The graph to the right shows the number of unique surveys (207) excluded by quadrant.

Data Entry and Accuracy

County staff visited all staging locations across the quadrants to collect completed survey forms as volunteers returned from their shifts. Additional technical assistance plans were in place to correct validation issues if reoccurring errors were found on groups of incoming forms. Employees from Snohomish County HSD then entered all collected surveys into a secure database for further auditing and analysis.

Definition Change – Domestic Violence

This year HUD updated the Point-in-Time count to include "those who are currently experiencing homelessness because they are fleeing domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking" – as opposed to last year's reporting on survivors who had *ever* experienced those circumstances.

Per HUD, this change was intended to improve the accuracy in the count of individuals and families' currently experiencing domestic violence and who qualify as homeless as a result of[7]:

1. Fleeing, or attempting to flee;
2. Having no other residence; and
3. Lacking the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

[7] "New Resources on Counting Survivors of Domestic Violence in the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count." *HUD Exchange*, January 12, 2018, https://www.hudexchange.info/news/new-resources-on-counting-survivors-of-domestic-violence-in-the-point-in-time-pit-count/.

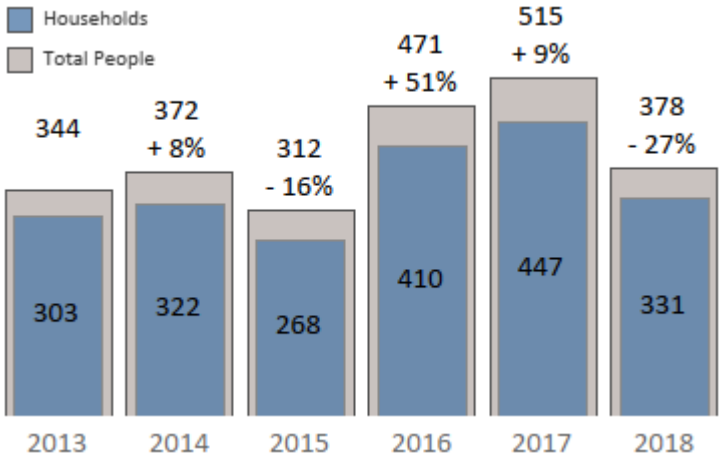
Section III: Unsheltered Summary, 2018 PIT Count Data

The annual count is used as a tool to help our local Continuum of Care better understand the circumstances that caused a housing crisis and provide adequate services for those who are not already enrolled in homeless housing programs. By collecting quality data, action to reduce homelessness can be undertaken while also measuring the impact of services offered.

Using data from the count, we are also able to see the impact of policy changes and economic conditions, such as connecting eligible persons to disability benefits and affordable housing options.

Unsheltered

Snohomish County has experienced an overall increase of **9.9%** in unsheltered homeless persons surveyed since 2013, from **344** to **378**. In 2018, there was a **26.6%** decrease from the 2017 count. The number of households surveyed has increased proportionally (9.2%) from 303 in 2013, to **331** in 2018.



Families

Persons in families[8] were **8.6%** of survey respondents (2.4% of households). Of the **8** families surveyed in the unsheltered count, all 8 had spent the previous night sleeping in a vehicle.

Individuals

Adult-only households comprised **88.6%** of the unsheltered population[9]. Of this total, **71.8%** slept out of doors. Additionally, **4.5%** of the total unsheltered adult population were unaccompanied young adults between the ages of 18 to 24.

Unaccompanied Children & Young Adults

There were **5** unaccompanied children[10] and an additional **17** unaccompanied young adults[11] who completed a survey. These two populations were typically white or multi-racial, non-Hispanic males. This year, no unaccompanied youth or young adults identified as a non-binary gender.

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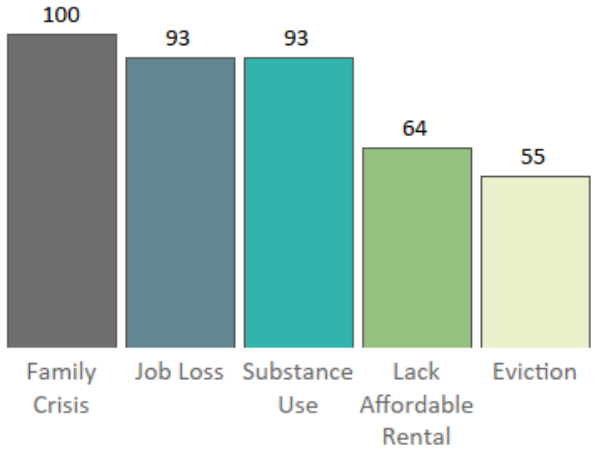
[8] *Family* – household with at least one adult and at least one minor child.

[9] *Individuals* – households without children, may be comprised of one or more adults.

[10] *Unaccompanied child* – person 12-17 years of age without a guardian present and living on their own.

[11] *Unaccompanied young adult* – person 18-24 without dependent children who are not presenting for services or sleeping in the same place as their parent or legal guardian.

Reasons for Homelessness



Respondents were asked to identify the factors which contributed to their household becoming homeless. Unlike surveys prior to 2017, responses were not limited to the top three. Instead, households were asked to provide all relevant factors and then identify the main reason. Households were asked to identify up to twenty-two factors which led to a housing crisis. Many identified more than **5** factors and one household identified **15** factors

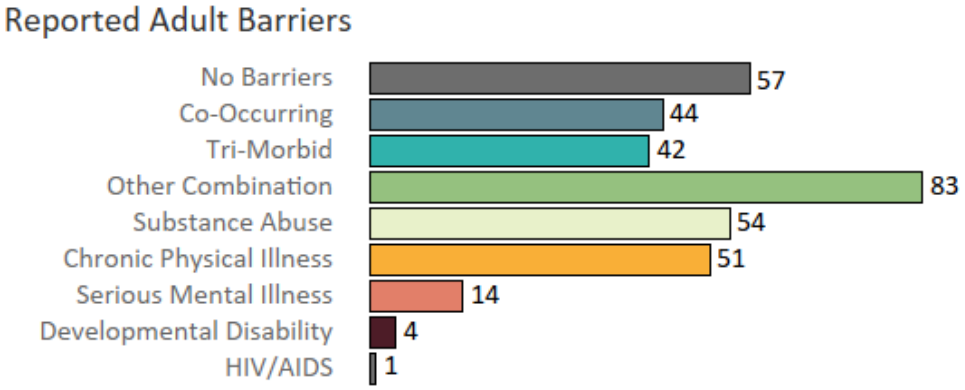
No new response options were added for 2018.

When all responses were counted and combined across all quadrants, **family crisis** was the most frequent response in Snohomish County. The top five reasons for all adult households combined, county-wide are shown in the graph above.

Disabling Conditions

Of the 350 unsheltered adults surveyed, **293** (83.7%) reported at least one disabling condition and **124** (35.4%) adults reported one single disabling condition. This is an increase from 2017 where 73.7% of adults reported at least one disabling condition and 34.6% reported one singular condition. Adults who completed the 2018 survey without identifying any conditions totaled **57** (16.3%) on the night of the Point-in-Time count.

Analysis of unsheltered surveys show that **44** (12.5%) adults qualified as having a co-occurring disorder[12] and **42** (12%) were tri-morbid[13]. By comparison, in 2017, 9.3% of adults had a co-occurring disorder and 6% were tri-morbid. A further **83** (23.7%) adults during the 2018 count had some other combination of barriers, but were not co-occurring nor tri-morbid. An example would be an intellectual disability and chronic physical illness.



[12] *Co-occurring disorder* – diagnosed as having both mental health and substance abuse issues.

[13] *Tri-morbid* – diagnosed with a combination of mental health, substance abuse, and physical health issues.

Previous Night's Stay and Last City of Permanent Residence

For unsheltered persons who were surveyed, **43.9%** (166) reported spending the previous night in Everett. Of that group, **60.2%** (100) of persons reported Everett as their last place of permanent residence. In 2017, 35.7% reported spending the previous night in Everett, while 53.3% of that group stated Everett was their last permanent residence.

Data collected were limited by several factors, including but not limited to:

a) The extent to which volunteers were able to locate persons experiencing homelessness.
b) Willingness of homeless participants to answer survey questions
c) Volunteers' understanding of the question they were asking and the respondent's understanding of the questions they were answering. No definition is provided to respondents regarding how "city of last permanent residence" is defined, aside from an area lived in for six consecutive months. Answers vary by respondents' interpretation of that and other terms within the survey.

Completeness of answers slightly decreased over the 2017 survey in which 16 out of 515 persons (3.1%) did not answer this question or provide enough detail to determine last permanent residency. This year, 25 persons out of 378 (**6.6%**) could not determine where their last permanent residence was located.

Municipal Boundaries

When an unclear answer was given in regard to last city of permanent residence or previous night's stay, staff performed research to determine municipal bounds. For example, if a respondent had said, "Silver Lake area" as last permanent residence, this significant landmark and surrounding neighborhood is within the boundaries of south Everett and would be counted as Everett.

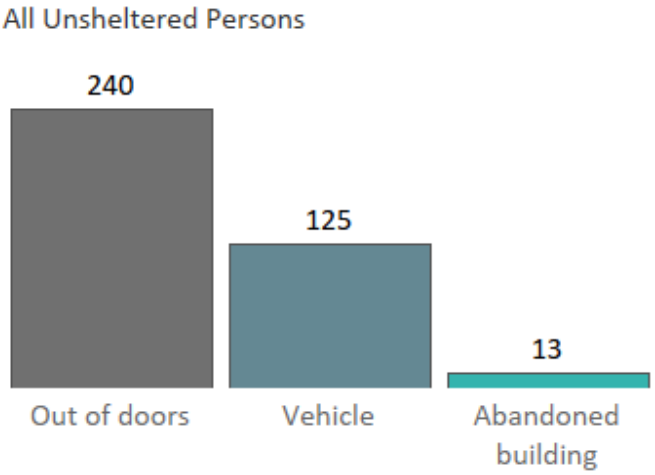
	Where was your last permanent residence?														Grand Total
Where did you sleep last night?	Edmonds	Everett	Granite Falls	Highway 2 Corridor	Lake Stevens	Lynnwood	Marysville	Mill Creek	Mountlake Terrace	North County	Snohomish	Balance of State	Other US State	Unknown	
Edmonds				1		1						1	1		4
Everett		100		1	4	3	17	3			3	16	8	11	166
Granite Falls			17				4			3		1		1	26
Highway 2 Corridor		1		19		1			1			6	1	8	37
Lake Stevens					1									1	2
Lynnwood		2				13			2	2		3			22
Marysville	1	6	2	2		1	20			8		9		3	52
Mill Creek						1									1
Mountlake Terrace		1				1			2			2		1	7
North County	2	3		1			7			39		4			56
Snohomish		3									2				5
Grand Total	3	116	19	24	5	21	48	3	5	52	5	42	10	25	378

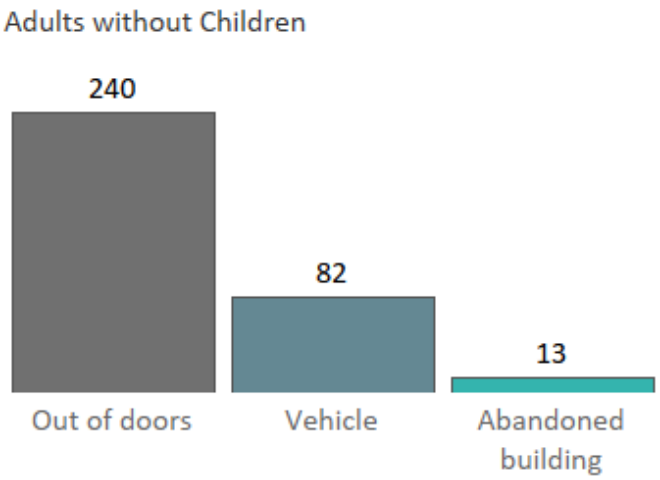
If a respondent stated they last slept in, or last had permanent residence in Arlington, Darrington, Oso, or Stanwood - this was included with the North County count. Likewise, if a respondent stated Gold Bar, Index, Monroe, Startup, or Sultan, this was incorporated into the Highway 2 Corridor count.

Sleeping Unhoused

Respondents were asked where they stayed on the night of January 22nd. The intent of this question is to validate the survey as unsheltered, if they reported sleeping on the street, in a tent, an abandoned building, or a vehicle.

When accounting for all unsheltered persons, the majority of persons (**63.5%**) stayed out of doors the night prior.





Adults without children present typically slept out of doors, with **71.6%** doing so. This graph does not make a distinction between adults sleeping solo and those adults who had grouped together with other adults for resource sharing and protection. However, adults surveyed were usually alone.

Households with children under the care of an adult did not sleep out of doors at all, **100%** stayed inside a vehicle. This statistic was limited in significance due to the small sample size **33** persons in **8** households with children.

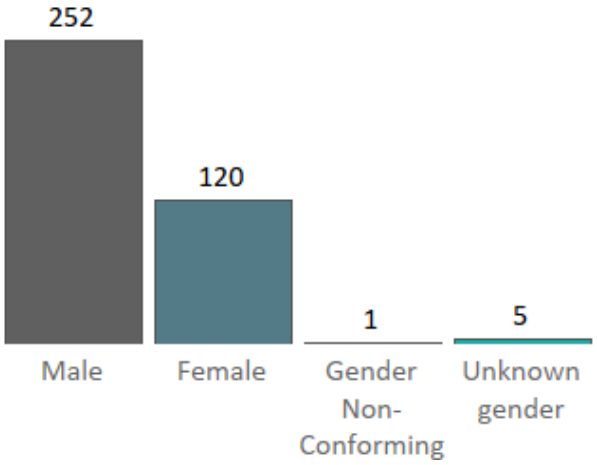
In past years, unaccompanied children below the age of 18 sought shelter wherever available. In 2018, all **10** persons in 7 households stayed inside a vehicle.

Historical PIT Weather Data

The 2018 PIT count night was significantly wetter than most years. This table compares National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) historical temperature data from Paine Field against the local unsheltered count for the last five years.

Year	PIT Count	Rainfall	Low Temperature
2018	378	0.61"	39°
2017	515	0"	32°
2016	471	0.8"	44°
2015	312	0.03"	42°
2014	372	0"	37°

Unsheltered Demographics – Gender

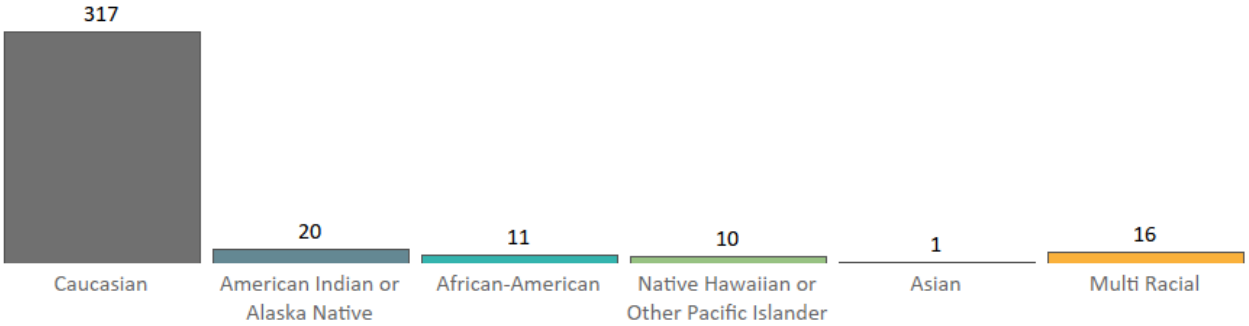


Responses shown are as the respondent self-identified. In the cases of unknown gender, the client either refused to respond, or the survey taker did not mark an option.

For the 2018 count, HUD replaced the "Does not identify as Male, Female, or Transgender" option with "Gender Non-conforming." This updated gender option replaced "Other" in 2017. When comparing year-over-year responses, these revisions should be treated as equivalent.

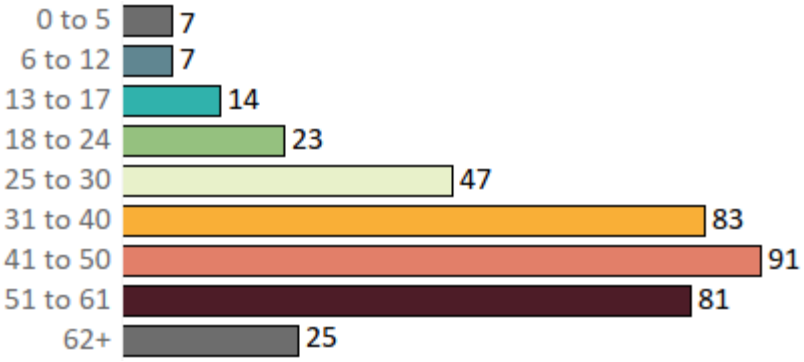
Unsheltered Demographics – Race

Race options remain as federally defined in 2004. Responses are as the respondent self-identified. Survey takers were trained to not assign a race to an individual, and 3 respondents did not identify a race.



Unsheltered Demographics – Age

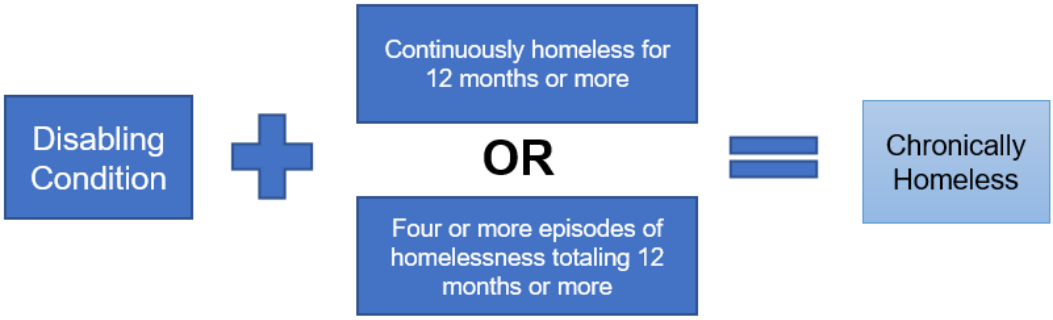
Respondents were asked to provide a date of birth. For those who refused or were unable, volunteers were asked to estimate age for the purpose of determining whether respondent was an adult or child. This year's count found that **7.4%** (28) of all respondents were children, whereas last year 15.5% or 80 out of 515 were below the age of 18.



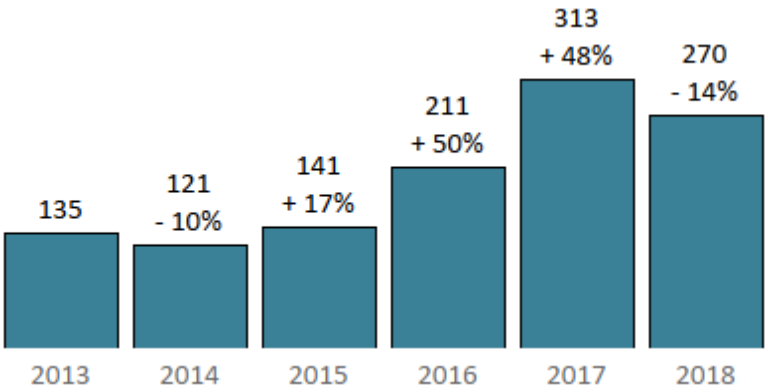
Chronic Homelessness

The number persons in households that are experiencing long periods of homelessness (a total of 12 or more months continuously or four separate occasions totaling 12 months over the last three years) as well as having one or more members with at least one disabling condition has increased from 135 to **270** (100%) since 2013. During this same period, unsheltered homelessness has increased 9.9%.

Chronic homeless status represents **71.4%** (270 of 378) of all persons surveyed in 2018. By comparison, in 2017, 60.8% of all persons surveyed (313 of 515) were chronically homeless.



This type of homelessness is considered to be **chronic**,[14] and the strategies to intervene are more complex than for those assisting a household experiencing homelessness for the first time. In 2018, there were **210** chronically homeless individuals, **3** were unaccompanied minors. An additional **60** persons were in **21** chronic families.[15] Of those 60 persons in families, **22** were children living with a parent or guardian.



[14] *Chronically homeless individual* – someone with a disability who has been homeless (streets, vehicle, abandoned building, shelter, etc.) continuously for at least 12 months or on at least four separate occasions in the last three years where the combined occasions total a length of time of at least 12 months.

[15] HUD provided updated guidance prior to the 2017 Point-in-Time count. Now if the adult or youth head of household qualifies as chronically homeless, then *all* persons in the household should be counted as chronically homeless, regardless of whether or not the other household members are also disabled.

Section IV: Comparing the Point-in-Time Count to Coordinated Entry

Coordinated Entry is a process for people to access the homeless prevention, housing, or other services that they need. Coordinated Entry incorporates uniform screening and assessment, prioritization and program matching, as well as connections to mainstream services to help those seeking to access available programs more effectively. This data source is important to look at in regard to the PIT, as statistically significant data points may emerge. Program managers may pivot focus and increase outreach efforts to concentrate on populations who do not contact the Coordinated Entry system, but who would benefit from services. Locally, Coordinated Entry is branded and referred to as "Investing in Futures."

Eligibility

Coordinated Entry homeless housing navigation is available to individuals and households living in homeless shelters or places not meant for human habitation. This includes the street, in cars, tents or other structures that are without plumbing. Individuals and households who are at-risk of homelessness (will be living in a shelter or place not meant for human habitation in the next 14 days without assistance) are eligible to work with a Homelessness Prevention Navigator.

Housing Navigation Services

Housing Navigators work with individuals and households who are experiencing homelessness to locate and maintain housing. Because housing resources are scarce, housing navigators focus on stabilizing the majority of households through the use of short-term interventions and connections to mainstream services. Housing navigators also connect those who need long-term housing and support to the appropriate programs to meet their needs.

Prevention Navigation Services

Homelessness Prevention Navigators work with Coordinated Entry participants to identify a strategy for staying housed. They help households address and resolve their immediate barriers to housing stability. This may include budgeting, negotiating with a landlord, identifying subsequent housing options and connecting participants with mainstream services to address issues such as lack of income, employment, or health insurance.

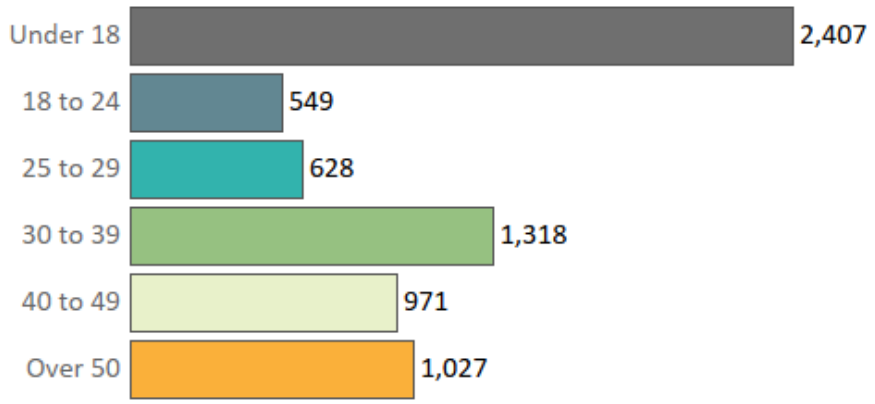
Coordinated Entry Access

Individuals and households who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness and who want to connect with available homeless prevention, housing, and mainstream services may contact 2-1-1 or any Coordinated Entry site for an intake assessment. If eligible to work with a Navigator, a referral will be made to the navigation site that is best able to meet the household's needs.

While Coordinated Entry sites are open to all eligible households, specialty sites have been designated to work with specific populations and regions within Snohomish County. These sites have been selected to serve specific populations and regions as they are familiar with the resources available to that population or area.

Coordinated Entry Demographics Data for Persons Active in 2017

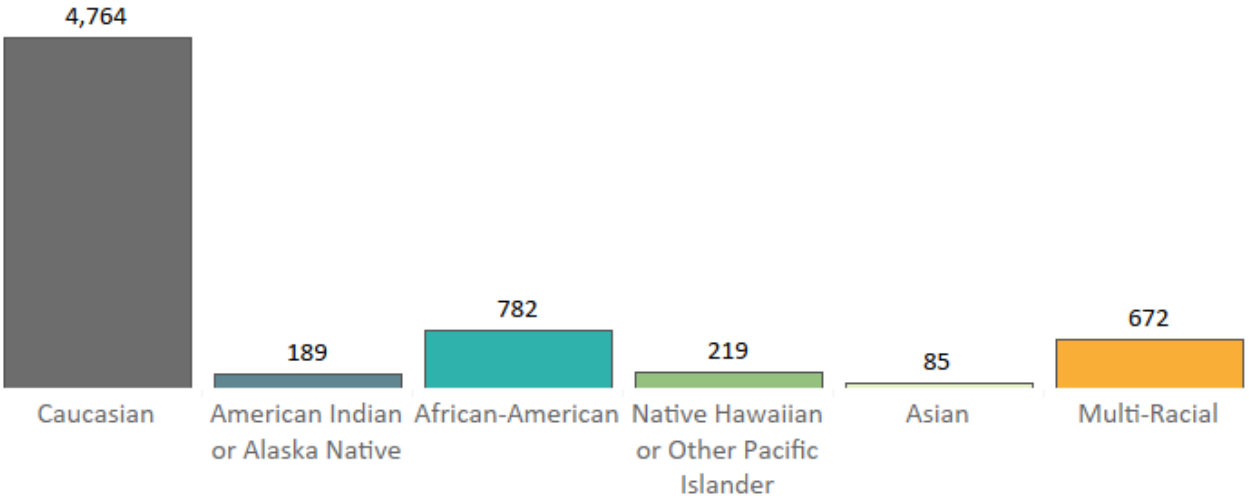
In comparison to the unsheltered count, Coordinated Entry data, when viewed by age, had a higher number of children and persons in their 30s who experienced homelessness. These numbers include enrollments that continued from 2016 as well as new enrollments.



Coordinated Entry and Race

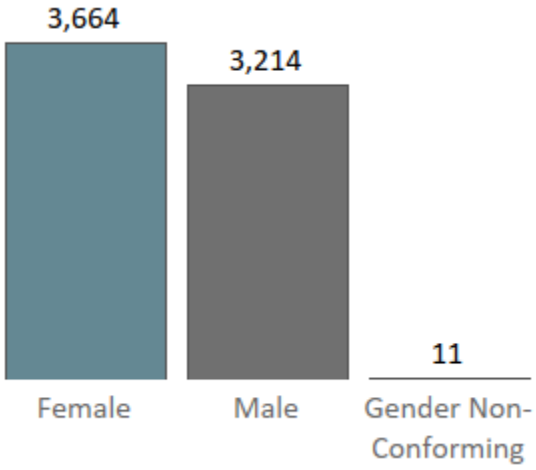
When exploring race data, subtleties appear. Here, Caucasian persons remain in the majority (at a lower rate, **70.9%**) than the Point-in-Time count (83.9%), however African-Americans are disproportionately represented at a significantly higher rate (**11.7%**) than in the unsheltered Point-in-Time count (2.9%). Additionally, Pacific Islanders entered Coordinated Entry at a higher volume than Native Americans. This is a reversal of the Point-in-Time count, where twice the number of Native Americans (20) completed the survey when compared to persons identifying as Pacific Islander.

As in the unsheltered count, Navigators are trained to not label persons who are unsure of or unable to identify their race. Not included here are **178** persons whose race was unidentified.



Gender Identity

Females comprised a slight majority (**53.1%**) of those who enrolled in Coordinated Entry, a sharp contrast to the Point-in-Time count where males were two-thirds (66.7%) of the population surveyed.

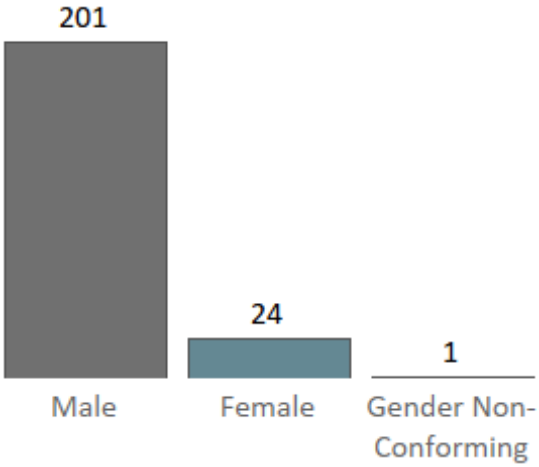


Veteran Status

Of the **6895** persons who were active in Coordinated Entry in 2017, **3.2%** (226) were veterans.

For reference, 8.5% (32) of unsheltered respondents reported they were veterans.

Here, males were 88.9% of the veteran population, which is similar to the unsheltered Point-in-Time count where, 87.5% of veterans identified as male.



Section V: Sheltered Summary, 2018 PIT Count Data

A sheltered count is generated through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), a database into which participating agencies continuously enter client-level data about persons in emergency shelter[16] and transitional housing.[17] Non HMIS-participating sheltered programs are also contacted for inclusion.

Emergency Shelter Capacity

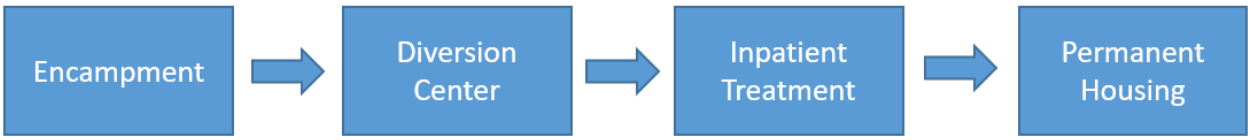
On the night of the Point-in-Time count, no cold weather shelters were opened. Historically, cold weather shelter beds had been utilized only during the 2017 count, with 41 of 58 (70.7%) beds occupied due to dangerously low temperatures.

During the 2018 count, 10 agencies had **475** beds year-round beds available for persons experiencing homelessness. These beds served homeless youth, families with children, adult men and women, domestic violence victims and veterans. Of these 475 beds, 364 (**76.6%**) were utilized on the night of the count by persons in 245 households.

New Shelter Program in 2018

In mid-2018, an additional **44** year-round shelter beds for single men and women will be made available[18]. The Snohomish County Diversion Center is intended for persons living in encampments, suffering from addiction, and who may be struggling with untreated mental health needs. This program will be funded through the Chemical Dependency and Mental Health Sales Tax.

Participants will be identified by the County's law enforcement embedded social worker teams. While at the Center, participants will be assigned a case manager, complete individual medical and behavioral health screening, and be connected to services. Placements at the Diversion Center are expected to be short-term of up to 15 days, before moving into addiction treatment and then permanent housing through an integrated rapid re-housing program.



[16] *Emergency shelter* – any facility whose primary purpose is to provide temporary or transitional shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless for 90 days or less.

[17] *Transitional housing* – A type of supportive housing used to facilitate the movement of homeless individuals and families to permanent housing. Generally, homeless persons may live in transitional housing for up to 24 months and receive supportive services that enable them to live more independently. Transitional housing can be provided in one structure or several structures, at one site or in scattered sites.

[18] Information regarding Snohomish County Diversion Center: https://snohomishcountywa.gov/4006/Diversion-Center.

Transitional Housing Capacity

On the night of the count, 7 agencies were serving **116** homeless persons in 83 households via transitional housing. Persons served were those living with HIV/AIDS, pregnant or parenting youth, single youth and young adults, domestic violence victims, and single persons.

By definition, persons staying in transitional housing are homeless, but cannot qualify as chronically homeless. That program type is meant to provide interim stability to permanent housing.

The slight increase in transitional housing enrollments over last year is the result of program changes and increased communication with non-HMIS participating agencies. Since 2013 however, transitional housing enrollments continue to decline as the community shifts the homeless response toward permanent housing options through rapid re-housing.

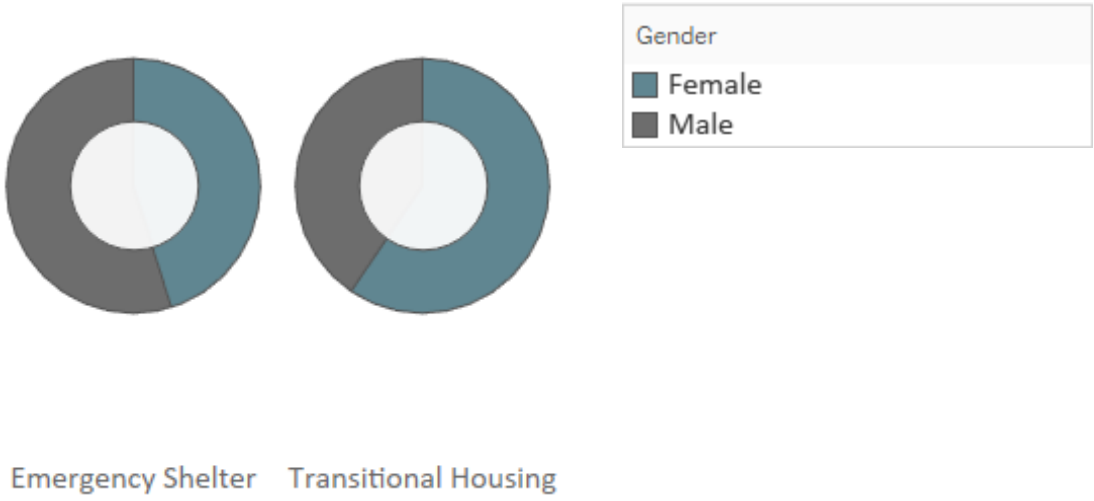
Sheltered Demographics

Collection of self-identified race and ethnicity information has been a required HMIS data element since July 2004. Clients are permitted to refuse to identify, as seen in the case of **4** persons this year who reported their ethnicity but not race. A comparison of sheltered programs is readily available by combining data from HMIS and surveys from non-HMIS participating programs. Responses are shown as a distinct count of persons enrolled on the night of January 22, the local Point-in-Time count.

Sheltered Programs and Gender

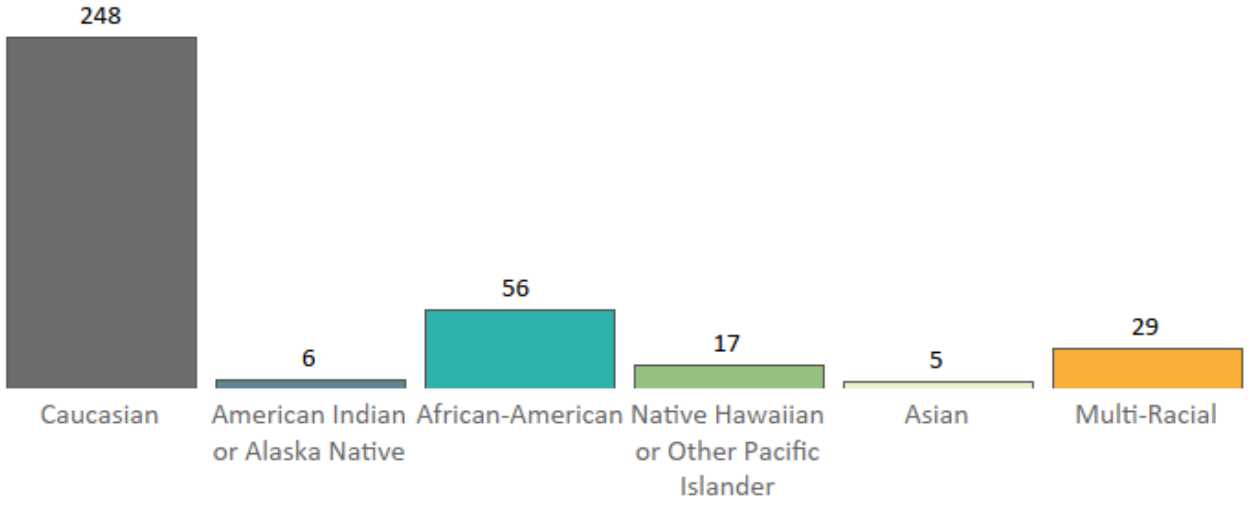
On the night of the count, **54.7%** (199) of persons enrolled in emergency shelters were male, **45.1%** (164) were female, and **1** person identified as gender non-conforming.

By contrast, enrollments in transitional housing programs were majority female at **59.5%** (69), while males made up **40.5%** (47) of the population. No persons in transitional housing self-identified as transgender or gender non-conforming.



Emergency Shelter Enrollments by Race

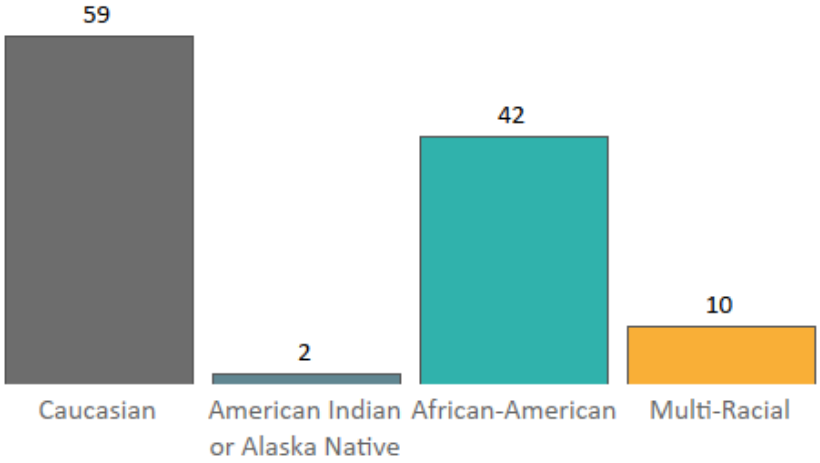
Persons seeking emergency shelter were majority Caucasian at **68.1%** (248). African-Americans were also significantly represented at **15.4%** (56). There were 3 persons who did not identify a race.



Transitional Housing Enrollments by Race

Within transitional housing programs, Caucasians were in the majority at **50.8%** (59) and African-Americans were majority-minority at **36.2%** (42).

Of interest in this data set is that no persons of Pacific Islander or Asian descent were enrolled in this program type. Also for this program type, 3 other persons did not identify their race.



Hispanic Persons in Sheltered Programs

Persons of Hispanic descent, regardless of race, comprised **10.6%** of the combined sheltered program populations. Of those 51 persons, **45** (88.2%) also identified as Caucasian. In the HMIS, persons are not asked their national origin.

Snohomish County Census Size

The United States Census Bureau publishes estimated demographic data at the county level for non-national census years. Data used is from the latest public dataset available,[19] the Census estimate for county population is **801,633** persons. With that figure, persons in emergency shelter were **0.045%** and persons in transitional housing were **0.015%** of the county population.

Snohomish County Race Demographics

A comparison of the county demographics against enrollments in emergency shelter and transitional housing are shown below.

Population	Caucasian	American Indian or Alaska Native	African-American	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Asian	Multi-Racial
Snohomish County	79.2%	1.6%	3.3%	0.6%	10.7%	4.6%
Emergency Shelter	68.1%	1.6%	15.4%	4.7%	1.4%	8.0%
Transitional Housing	50.9%	1.7%	36.2%	0.0%	0.0%	8.6%

This comparison of the data sets are notable as persons of Asian descent were under-represented in the count of homeless persons while other minority populations were over-represented.

Section VI: Veterans Summary

Per HUD guidance, unsheltered respondents were asked if they had ever served in the United States military. Persons in shelter were asked if they ever served on active duty while in the military.

- **32** unsheltered veterans were surveyed, 1 of whom had children in the household.
- **20** veterans were staying in emergency shelter; 1 was a single veteran family with teenagers.
- Veterans surveyed ranged in age from **32** to **67** years old.

Unsheltered Veterans

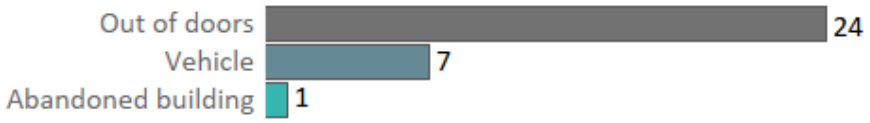
This year's count surveyed **32** unsheltered persons who identified as a United States military veteran; down from 44 the year prior, a decrease of **27.3%** that parallels the general homeless count decrease of 26.6%. A single veteran household with children was surveyed and is included in this grouping of 32. The table below illustrates the percent of homeless persons surveyed who were veterans, year-to-year.

Year	Percent Veterans	Unsheltered Veterans	Unsheltered Count
2018	8.5%	32	378
2017	8.3%	43	515
2016	7.6%	36	471
2015	10.3%	32	312
2014	9.4%	35	372

[19] https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/snohomishcountywashington/PST045216

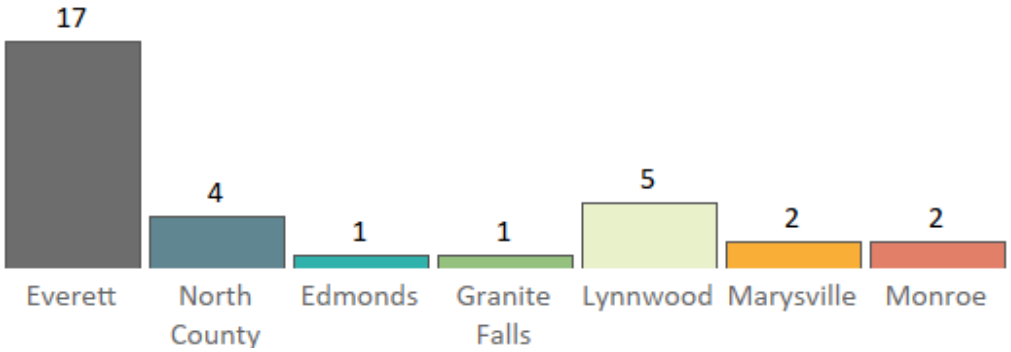
Where Veterans Slept

The majority of veterans slept out of doors and alone. The single adult with children present in the household slept in a vehicle on the night of the count.



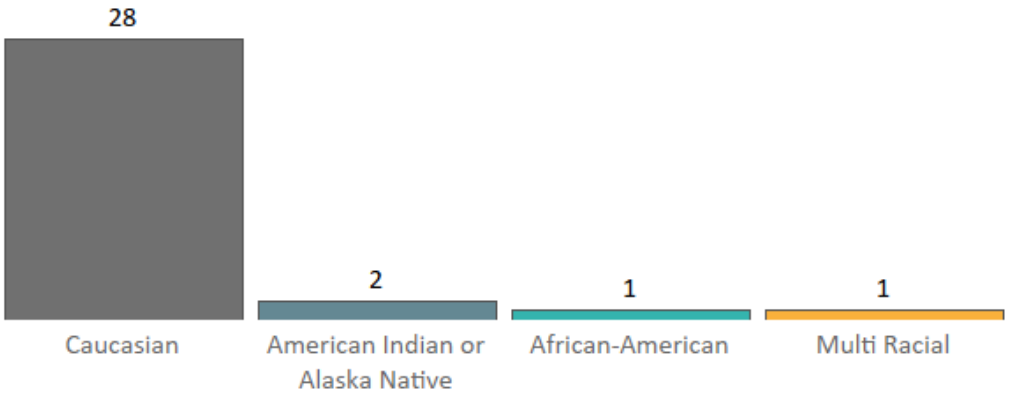
Cities Where Veterans Slept

Veterans reported sleeping unsheltered in 7 cities throughout the county, with 53.1% (17) in Everett. Note that unsheltered non-veteran respondents reported sleeping in 12 separate cities.



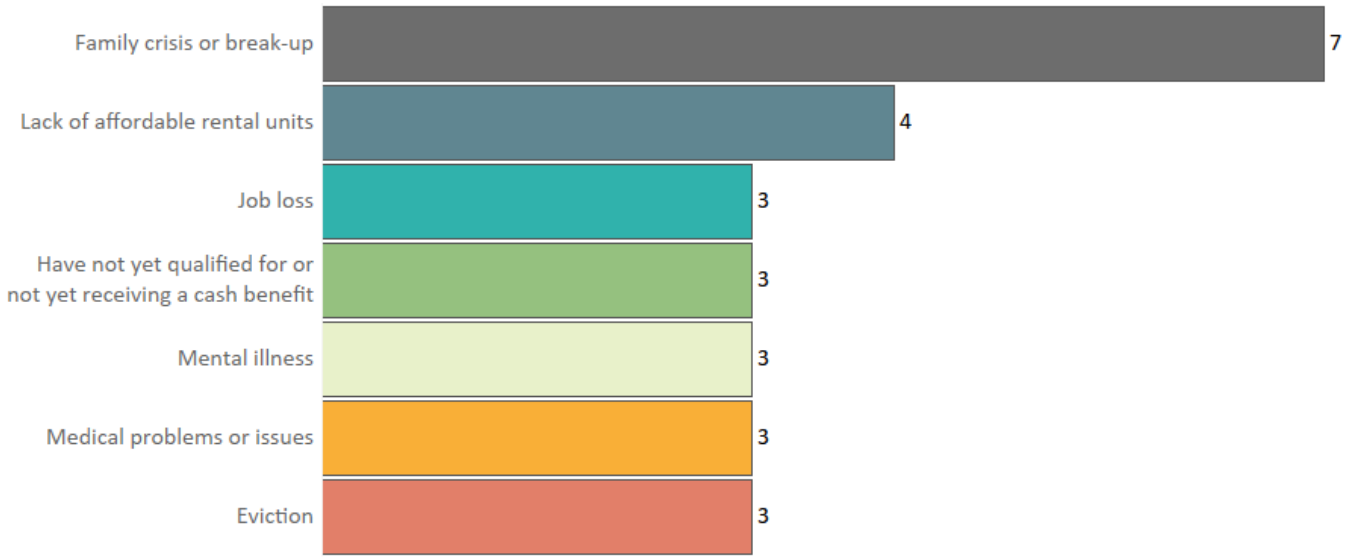
Veteran Demographics

Of the 32 unsheltered veterans, only **1** identified as female, down from 3 the year prior. Veterans ranged in age from **32** to **67** years of age on the night of the count. While unsheltered veterans were not asked where or when they served, this range of ages would cover periods from Vietnam to current conflicts.



Why Veterans Became Homeless

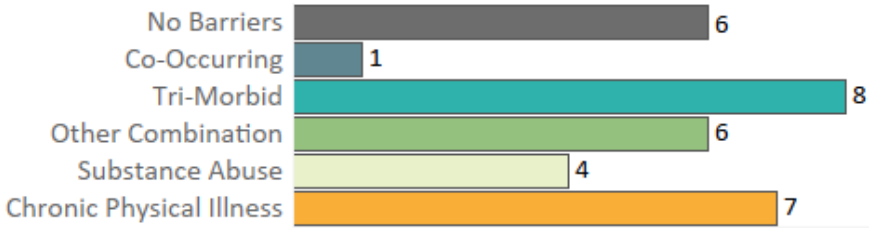
When veterans were asked the main reason for their homelessness, family crisis or breakup was the primary reason. The top reasons are shown below and are similar to the main unsheltered population surveyed. There were ten different reason categories cited, with two veterans not identifying a main reason.



The one household with children stated it was due to lack of affordable rental units.

Barriers Faced by Unsheltered Veterans

The majority of veterans (**81.3%**) were living unsheltered with one or more barriers. A full quarter of veteran respondents qualified as tri-morbid, with diagnoses related to mental health, substance abuse and physical health issues.



Veterans in Emergency Shelter

This year's sheltered count includes **20** military veterans who at one time served on active duty; down from 22 the year prior. A single veteran household with two teenagers slept in an emergency shelter.

Sheltered veterans were typically male (**95%**) and Caucasian (**80%**) or African-American (**15%**). There were **4** (20%) chronically homeless veterans. By comparison 26.6% of persons in emergency shelter were chronically homeless on the night of the count.

Year	Percent Veterans	Sheltered Veterans	Sheltered Count
2018	4.2%	20	480
2017	4.0%	22	551
2016	4.5%	22	489
2015	6.2%	32	517
2014	5.2%	30	577

Veterans in emergency shelter ranged in age from **35** to **65** years of age. No veterans were enrolled in a transitional housing program.

The table above illustrates the percent of homeless persons in emergency shelter or transitional housing, who were also veterans, year-to-year.

Local Veteran's Programs

For the second year in a row, Snohomish County Veterans Assistance funded a Low Barrier Veterans Shelter program. This in the form of emergency shelter vouchers in conjunction with tailored case management services from former senior-enlisted personnel.

A partner provider offers two Supportive Services for Veteran Families programs. One of these programs is focused on homelessness prevention and the other on rapid rehousing. Additionally, this provider has permanent supportive housing dedicated to veterans which opened in 2016.

Section VII: Unaccompanied Children and Young Adults

Unaccompanied children, young adult, and parenting youth subpopulation data are reported separately to HUD, as their experiences with homelessness are different than adult populations. Trauma of youth and young adult homelessness is often compounded by additional barriers in accessing health care, education, employment, and stable housing. Additionally, homeless youth are at a higher risk for trafficking, victimization, and assault[20].

Unaccompanied Children

On the night of the count, there were **10** unaccompanied children who went unsheltered, and all reported sleeping in a vehicle. Of interest this year is that **3** children formed a group and slept in Arlington, and 1 of those children qualified as chronically homeless.

An additional **2** chronically homeless children grouped together and slept in Granite Falls.

The other **5** were found to have been staying alone, and reported sleeping in Arlington, Edmonds, Lynnwood, and Granite Falls. Of these 5 singles, **3** were chronically homeless.

There were **14** unaccompanied children stayed in emergency shelter (5) and transitional housing (9). Those enrolled in emergency shelter were majority male, while female individuals made up the majority of transitional housing enrollments. An older teen in emergency shelter identified as gender non-conforming.

[20] The National Network for Youth, Human Trafficking and the Runaway and Homeless Youth Populations, https://www.nn4youth.org/wp-content/uploads/Homeless-Youth-and-Human-Trafficking.pdf.

Reasons for Child Homelessness

Respondents were asked to identify the factors which contributed to their homelessness, by providing all relevant factors and then identifying the main reason. Persons may have potentially identified between one and twenty-two factors which led to a housing crisis.

There were five main reasons cited for homelessness among unaccompanied children. Those reasons were substance abuse (**4**), domestic violence (**2**), lack of affordable rental units (**2**), eviction (**1**), and family crisis (**1**).

All of the children who reported substance abuse, domestic violence, or a lack of affordable units as the main cause of their homelessness were also chronically homeless. Chronic homeless status could not be determined for 2 of the children due to incomplete surveys.

Parenting Youth and Young Adults

From unsheltered respondents, no youth under the age of 18 surveyed were found to be parenting. A single young adult between the ages of 18-24 went unsheltered with a dependent child.

In emergency shelters there were **6** parenting young adults in 5 households (one parenting couple) with a total of **10** dependent children. Transitional housing programs served **3** parenting youth under the age of 18, each with a dependent child.

Youth and young adult parents were majority female (89%), Caucasian (56%) or African-American (33%) and non-Hispanic (78%).

There were **3** parenting young adult households in emergency shelter that qualified as chronically homeless. The single unsheltered household did not meet the definition.

Unaccompanied Unsheltered Young Adults

On the night of the Point-in-Time count there were **21** unaccompanied, unsheltered adults under the age of 25. Their average age was 21 years and were majority male (**76%**) and also Caucasian (**76%**). This group comprised **6.2%** of the total (335) unaccompanied adult population.

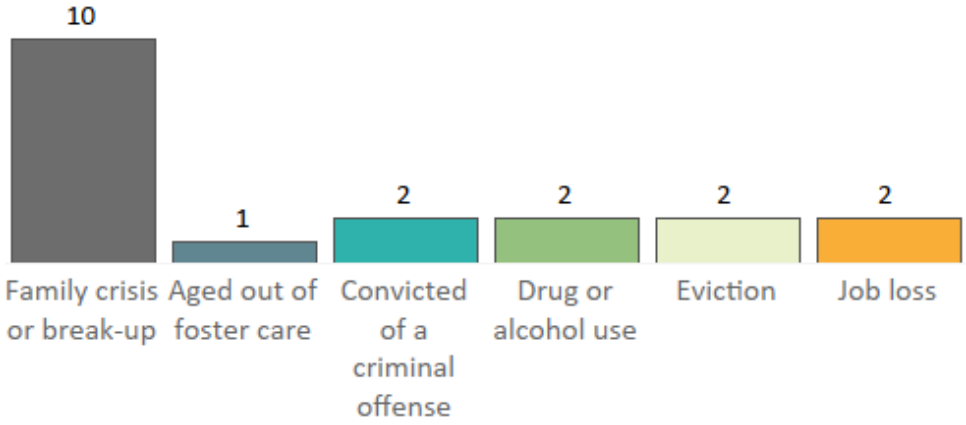
Where Homeless Young Adults Slept

Unaccompanied young adults did not report sleeping in an abandoned building this year, sleeping instead out of doors (**15**) or in a vehicle (**6**).

They reported sleeping in communities throughout the county; with **7** persons in Everett, **4** in Sultan and the rest in various other areas.

Why Young Adults Became Unsheltered

While 2 young adults did not cite a main reason for their homelessness, 19 persons cited **6** main reasons out of a potential 22 options. Family crisis was the overwhelming reason at **52.6%.** Of these 10 persons who cited family crisis, **7** were chronically homeless at the time of the count. There were 6 other young adults who were chronically homeless for a total of **13** (62%).



Young Adults in Emergency Shelter

On the night of the count, there were **8** young adults in emergency shelter, **6** in a men's shelter and **2** in a women's shelter. They ranged in age from 20 to 24, with an average of **22.5** years old. All were non-Hispanic and Caucasian, except for **1** non-Hispanic African-American man.

Transitional Housing for Young Adults

There were **17** unaccompanied young adults enrolled in transitional housing during the Point-in-Time count, with 12 in a program dedicated to this population and operating at full occupancy. Of the other 5 persons, **4** were in housing dedicated to substance abuse recovery and **1** was in housing for persons with severe mental illness transitioning back into the community.

The HMIS shows that on the night of the count there were **9** women and **8** men enrolled. They were majority Caucasian (**13**) with **2** identifying as African-American. Most were non-Hispanic, however **4** young adults self-identified as Hispanic and Caucasian.

Precariously Housed Youth

While not required for Federal reporting purposes, Snohomish County has precariously housed unaccompanied youth data available for analysis. Contact with these youths was incidental and not a complete census, as volunteers instead actively sought unsheltered persons. While this population is highly transient with no permanent home, they do not meet the literal definition of homelessness.

Precariously Housed Unaccompanied Children

Surveys collected show there were **35** unaccompanied, precariously housed children below the age 18, they ranged in age from 15 to 17, with an average of **16.3** years. While the definition does allow for other living arrangements such as paying for one's own motel, all 35 children reported that they were temporarily staying with family or friends[21].

This population was majority Caucasian with **27** (77.1%) self-identified as such. There were 2 youth who refused to identify a race and 1-2 each who identified as African-American, Pacific Islander, or multi-racial. There were no children who identified as non-binary and **19** (54.3%) were female.

Substance abuse was identified by **9** children, however only **3** stated it was the main reason for their homelessness. This group had **3** who did not identify a main reason, and 21 who stated it was either due to family crisis (**12**) or their status as an out of home youth(**9**).[22] Other reasons cited with 1-2 responses each were eviction, job loss, lack of affordable rental units, medical problems, temporary living situation ended, and immigration status.

Precariously Housed Young Adults

In addition to the precariously housed children surveyed, there were an additional **21** young adult respondents between the ages of 18 to 21, with an average of **19.4** years. Temporarily staying or living with family and friends were reported by **20** persons, with **1** young adult staying in a motel/hotel paid for by self at the time of the count.

With **2** refusals to identify race, **1** self-identified as Asian and **1** as African-American, the remaining **17** (80.9%) were Caucasian. In regard to gender, **11** (52.4%) identified as male, **1** as gender non-conforming, **3** refusing, and the other **8** as female.

Substance abuse (**3**) and serious mental illness (**5**) barrier responses were low in this population. "Family crisis" and "job loss" tied as the main reason for homelessness, with **4** responses each. Other reasons cited with **1-2** responses each were lack of affordable rental units, out of home youth, substance abuse, eviction, and relocation from another state. There were **6** persons who did not identify a main reason.

[21] Temporarily staying with family or friends – terms used may have been "couch surfing" or "doubled up."

[22] In this instance, an "out of home youth" is one who has been forced to leave their guardian's home. Terms used may include "ran away" or "kicked out."

Section VIII: Voices of the Homeless

When meeting with volunteer survey takers during the Point-in-Time count, respondents were given the opportunity to write about how homelessness has impacted them or their families. A few of their stories can be found here.

"Being homeless has only hurt me from the way other people treat/view me because I'm homeless. I've had people (regular people) throw food and garbage on me for being homeless. The sleeping outside doesn't hurt me the way I'm treated by everyone around me. If people treated me and the rest of us homeless people better it would help us see ourselves as better people and help us want to be better people."

"I became homeless in March of 2017 due to helping others with a place to stay. I was evicted as a result. Being homeless isn't easy because almost anywhere you go there is a risk of trespassing, there is a lack of in places to go to hang out maybe dry off and get warm bottom line it just sucks."

"There is no romanticizing homelessness. The experiences are harsh and unsafe. Any feelings of security are lost in the mire of false comradery. It's easy to get down on yourself, family and community cultivating on unhealthy environment for everyone. Backpacks are shunned and stereotypes abound. The only sense of comfort is in the pity party you may be a part of. And no one cares about your name."

"Since 2005 I have had two major surgeries and a number of other serious health problems. My health problems have made my job search over the past 13 years extremely difficult. I have not been able to find steady employment during this time. I have filed for Social Security Disabilities twice, each time when I was recovering from surgery. These claims were repeatedly denied by Social Security. My health problems have become worse and am filing a new claim with Social Security. I am attempting to find free legal assistance because without good legal representation I doubt that I can win my Social Security case. Free access to legal assistance, I believe is essential to winning your claim."

"Traumatic life event that have not been dealt with in a healthy manner. Losing brother who was 28 to a heroin overdose was a shock. Still grieving 4 years later and need help getting over loss."

"The best part of homelessness is the feelings you have about how you never want to be in that position again. To be aware of the actions that caused the homelessness and the power to reverse the road you're on has been a huge eye opener. Leading to a different mindset altogether and it is good to share these experiences to help others avoid the same pitfalls."

"I never grew up with, when asked the question 'What do you wanna be or do when you grow up?' I never said, hey I'd love to be homeless and jobless. But after getting laid off almost 10 years ago I just haven't been able to recover, and having a felony over my head, that happened over 16 years ago still stands to be somewhat of a big detour for me, no matter how long ago it was. I guess in the employer's way of thinking is once a felon always a felon, really that's how I feel, and living the homeless life is not a lifestyle, it's a grueling every day, watch your back , don't trust anyone, homeless stealing from the homeless, always trying to find shelter."

Section IX: Stories from our Volunteers

Without the efforts of our volunteers, the Point-in-Time count would not be successful. To share their stories, each was given the opportunity to leave a written statement, a sampling of which is included here.

"This was my first experience working with the homeless here in Washington. It was a cold (40°), long winter day as we gathered in a group of 6 volunteers to seek out some of our homeless friends in the Sultan area. We walked a total of 4 miles and found only one person to survey. We found 4 empty encampments, all of which had not been used recently. Although we gathered only one survey, it was great getting to know new neighbors and trying to help in this worthwhile effort. I will be back for future events. Thank you for the work you're doing!"

"Really enjoyed the experience. Met nice people. They were very thankful."

"I feel blessed to be able to participate in helping find solutions for homelessness. Thank you for the opportunity. The most glaring thing I have realized is that any one of us could become homeless at any time. The people that I interviewed were warm and friendly even with all the daily challenges they live with. They are the true warriors, strong and generous. We really need more resources for mental health, addiction, and housing."

Questions about Homelessness in Snohomish County?

Requests for additional information may be sent to:

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Jackiem.anderson@snoco.org

Jess Jorstad
Lead Data and Program Analyst
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Snohomish County