



**2007 POINT IN TIME COUNT**

**OF**

**HOMELESS PERSONS**



## **2007 Point in Time Count of Homeless Persons Snohomish County**

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We want to recognize the hundreds of volunteers from across  
the county who interviewed the individuals and families represented in this document.

## 2007 POINT IN TIME COUNT OF HOMELESS PERSONS

*Prepared by the Snohomish County  
Homeless Policy Task Force Point in Time Count Committee*

**ON JANUARY 26<sup>TH</sup>, 2007 IN SNOHOMISH COUNTY,  
2666 INDIVIDUALS WERE COUNTED AS HOMELESS**

- 890 (33%) were children under the age of 18, compared to 717 in 2006.
- 800 (30%) were in families with children, compared to 1027 in 2006.
- 1893 (71%) individuals were unsheltered.
- 739 (28%) individuals were sheltered in emergency/transitional housing or using motel vouchers.
- 34 individuals had an undetermined living status due to multiple selections.<sup>1</sup>
- 293 (11%) individuals in the jail reported they would be homeless upon release.
- 98% of survey respondents reported at least one disabling condition
- 552 (20%) were single adults



## **CHRONICALLY HOMELESS<sup>2</sup>**

- 250 were identified as chronically homeless

## **SINGLE MOTHERS<sup>3</sup>**

- On average spent four years homeless
- 55% reported a mental health issue
- 28% reported experiencing domestic violence

## **JAIL POPULATION**

- 54% reported a substance abuse issue
- 15% reported having both mental health and substance abuse issues

## **TOP REASONS FOR HOMELESSNESS SELF-IDENTIFIED**

**Job loss (30%) and inability to pay rent (25%)**

## **TOP NEEDS SELF-IDENTIFIED**

**43% need more affordable housing**

### **Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup> See Current Living Status Chart.

<sup>2</sup> Chronically homeless is defined as; a single adult with a disabling condition who has been homeless for a year or experienced four episodes of homelessness in three years.

<sup>3</sup> 228 single mothers represent 12% of the individuals identified.

## INTRODUCTION

The impetus for the Point In Time (PIT) count is two fold. The Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that a PIT count be conducted every year in January. Additionally, the 2005 Homeless Housing Assistance Act (HB 2163) gave responsibility to each county in Washington State to develop a ten year plan to reduce homelessness by 50% by the year 2016, with the requirement to conduct an annual census of homeless persons.

Many communities refer to this as a Point in Time Count of homeless persons because the count is conducted on one day of the year. The Point in Time Count Committee of the Snohomish County Homeless Policy Task Force has organized the county's homeless count since 2004.

The Snohomish County community considers an individual to be homeless if he or she:

- Does not have a decent and safe shelter or sufficient funds to purchase a place to stay.
- Is living in an emergency or transitional shelter or temporarily with friends or family ("couch surfing").
- Is living in a dwelling lacking drinking water, a restroom, heat and/or the ability to prepare hot food.

The Point In Time Count for 2007 significantly improved over the last two years of data collection due largely to the number of agencies and volunteers that participated in the process. Data collection was greatly improved as a result of countless hours of work by the Point In Time Committee prior to the count, and the dedication of volunteers who participated in gathering accurate data in an effort to truly illustrate the level of need in our community. It is evident homelessness is not decreasing in our community and we must move forward with the plan to end homelessness.

The Snohomish County Human Services Department, Office of Housing, Homelessness and Community Development, along with the Homeless Policy Task Force, launched **Everyone @ Home NOW; A Strategy for Ending Homelessness by 2016** in June of 2006 with the support of Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon, Senator Patty Murray, Congressman Rick Larsen and United States Interagency Council on Homelessness Director Phillip Mangano.

The Homeless Policy Task Force has accomplished much in the last nine months. Efforts to increase collaboration have been successful among service providers and mainstream resources. Workgroups have been established and are working diligently to bring together information and identify gaps in services. Key services are being funded and the needs of homeless individuals and families are being addressed.

However the community has a long way to go to successfully put an end to homelessness in Snohomish County. In the fastest growing community in Washington State housing prices continue to increase and further deepen the divide between those who are homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless and those who earn a living wage.

We have 250 individuals who are chronically homeless. This means they have been homeless for more than a year or had four episodes of homelessness in three years and some form of disabling condition. On average, this group experiences homelessness nine times in a three-year period. The typical cost to support an un-sheltered chronically homeless individual annually is over \$100,000 due to the immense amount of service dollars they absorb by using shelters, emergency rooms, jails and other supportive services. The real cost of providing housing and supportive services is significantly less and yields more positive results.

The results of the 2007 Point In Time count demonstrate a continued need for our efforts.



## **SURVEY**

Individual information was collected for all of the members in homeless households, including initials, dates of birth, gender, age and disabilities. The majority of the data however was collected at the household level. This data included whether or not anyone in the household was a veteran; the date the household became homeless; the number of homeless episodes in the past year, and past three years; self-reported causes of homelessness; location of last night's stay, needs, and household sources of income. All respondents self-identified the results.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The count was conducted on January 26, 2007, from the hours of 5:00 AM to midnight. To explain the Point In Time Count, and to encourage individuals to fill out a survey on the day of the count, signs were posted ahead of time at various high traffic areas around the county and in most of the facilities serving the homeless population.

## **STREET COUNT**

The street count component of the census included centralized locations for each of the four regions in the county: North, East, South and Central/Everett. Volunteers at these centralized locations asked homeless individuals to fill out a survey and offered them a range of items from clothing, to coffee, to hot meals. Volunteers also traveled to various locations around the region to survey homeless individuals. Homeless heads of household were asked to fill out a survey about themselves and all other household members. If the individual declined to fill out a survey, or the volunteer determined it might be dangerous to approach an individual, the tally sheet method was used to collect information. With this method, the genders and ages (whether the individual was a child or an adult over the age of 18) of visible household members were recorded on the tally sheet.

## **FACILITY COUNT**

In addition to the street count, homeless individuals were asked to fill out surveys at food banks, emergency shelters, transitional housing facilities, detoxification and drug treatment centers, the county jail, school districts and family support centers. If a homeless head of household declined to fill out a survey, the facility employee took note of the genders and ages (whether a household member was a child or an adult over the age of 18) of all of the household members, and recorded the information on a tally sheet.

they entered jail or expected to be homeless upon exiting jail. Information was collected on indiv on incarcerated individuals only and did not include family member information.

### **SURVEY RESPONSE RATE**

Of the 2,666 individuals who were counted, 315 heads of household filled out the survey, representing a total of 1,352 household members. This meant the remaining 1,314 individuals were counted through the 'tally' method. As noted above, the tally sheet identified the individual's gender (if known), whether the individual was a child or an adult over the age of 18, and the individual's household type.

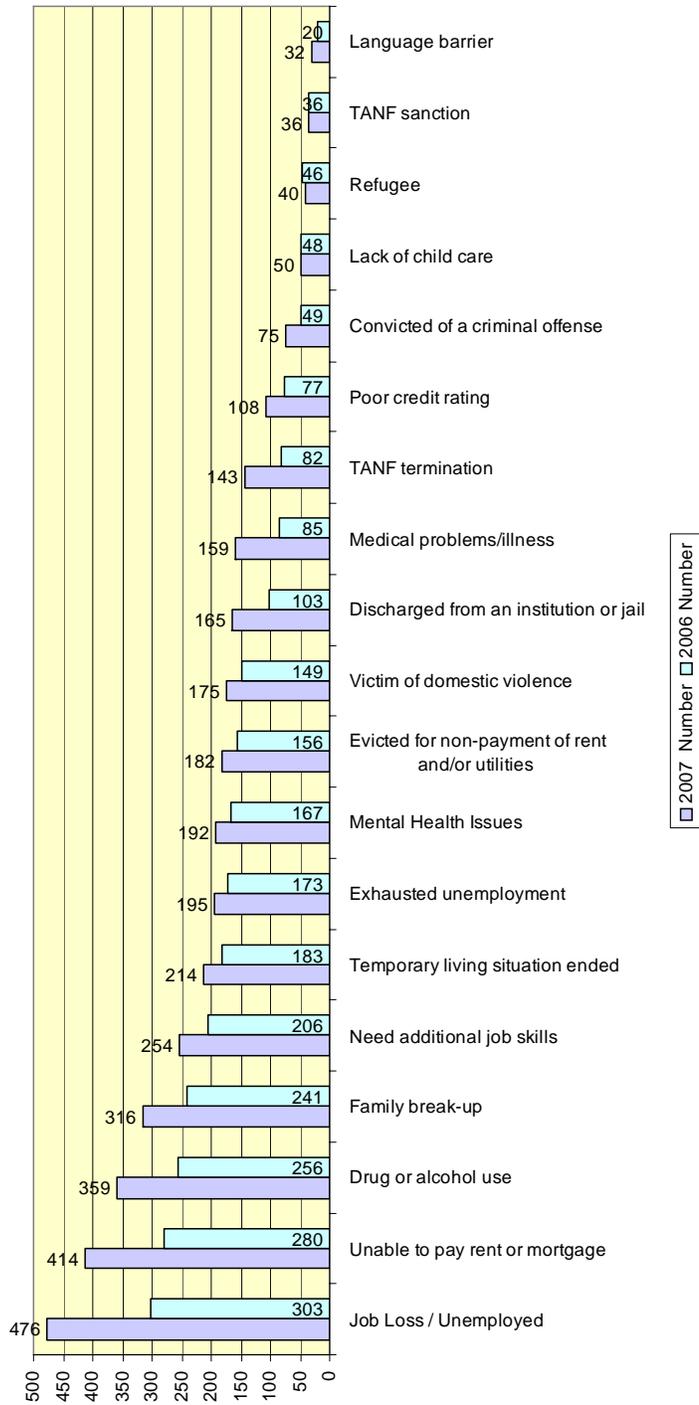
### **CONSTRAINTS OF THE DATA**

This analysis represents all of the homeless households found on January 26, 2007, but it is unlikely this is a comprehensive count of all homeless persons in the county. Also, since the count was conducted during one day of the year, the data only provides a snapshot of homelessness in Snohomish County. It is therefore important to keep in mind that not only is the total number of homeless individuals fluctuating, but the types of homeless individuals and households may vary drastically from month to month and season to season.

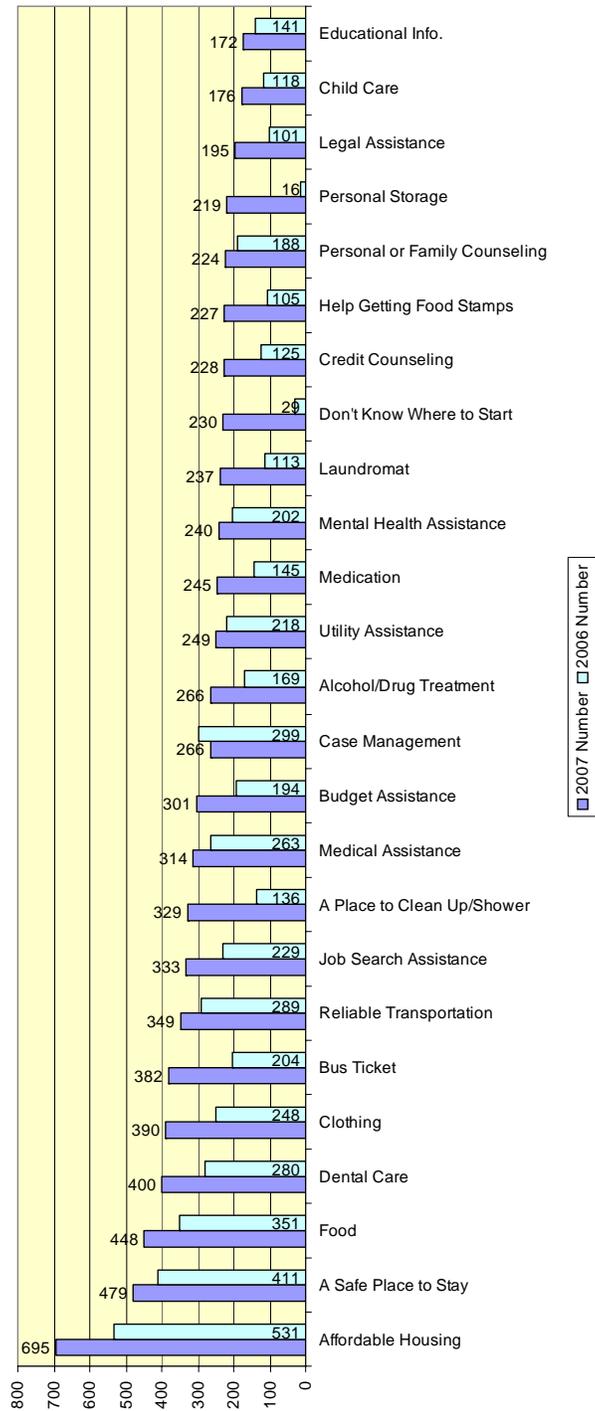
More surveys were obtained from facilities than the street count, which indicates the data analysis more closely represents homeless individuals and families who were already connected to community resources. Factors that could have influenced a homeless individual's likelihood of filling out a survey include: the way a volunteer approached them; whether or not they were first asked if they were homeless; if they were sleeping, intoxicated or mentally ill, and cultural factors. It is also likely there were individuals not located because they were living in hard to find areas.

Also, some of the questions on the survey were open to interpretation. This included sections on individual disabilities, homeless chronicity and self-reported causes of homelessness. Since this information was self-reported, it was difficult to standardize the information. Another section of the survey asked the head of the household how many episodes of homelessness the household had experienced in the past year and in the past three years; but the survey did not define what an episode of homelessness was. If survey respondents interpreted a homeless episode in different ways, the data analysis results would be skewed. Self-reported causes of homelessness posed the same challenges as self-reported disabilities. One individual may have selected remote factors contributing to their homelessness while others may have only selected factors they thought were instrumental causes.

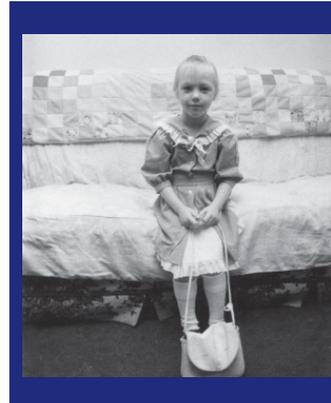
**CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS (SELF-IDENTIFIED)\***



**NEEDS OF HOMELESSNESS (SELF-IDENTIFIED)\***



<b><u>SINGLE WOMEN W/CHILDREN</u></b>		
<b>Individuals</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
With Mental Health	126	55.26%
Avg years homeless	4	0.89%
Domestic Violence	64	28.07%
Substance abuse	53	23.25%
Lack of job skills	12	5.26%
Need childcare	7	3.07%
<b># of Respondents</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>100.00%</b>



### **SINGLE WOMEN WITH CHILDREN**

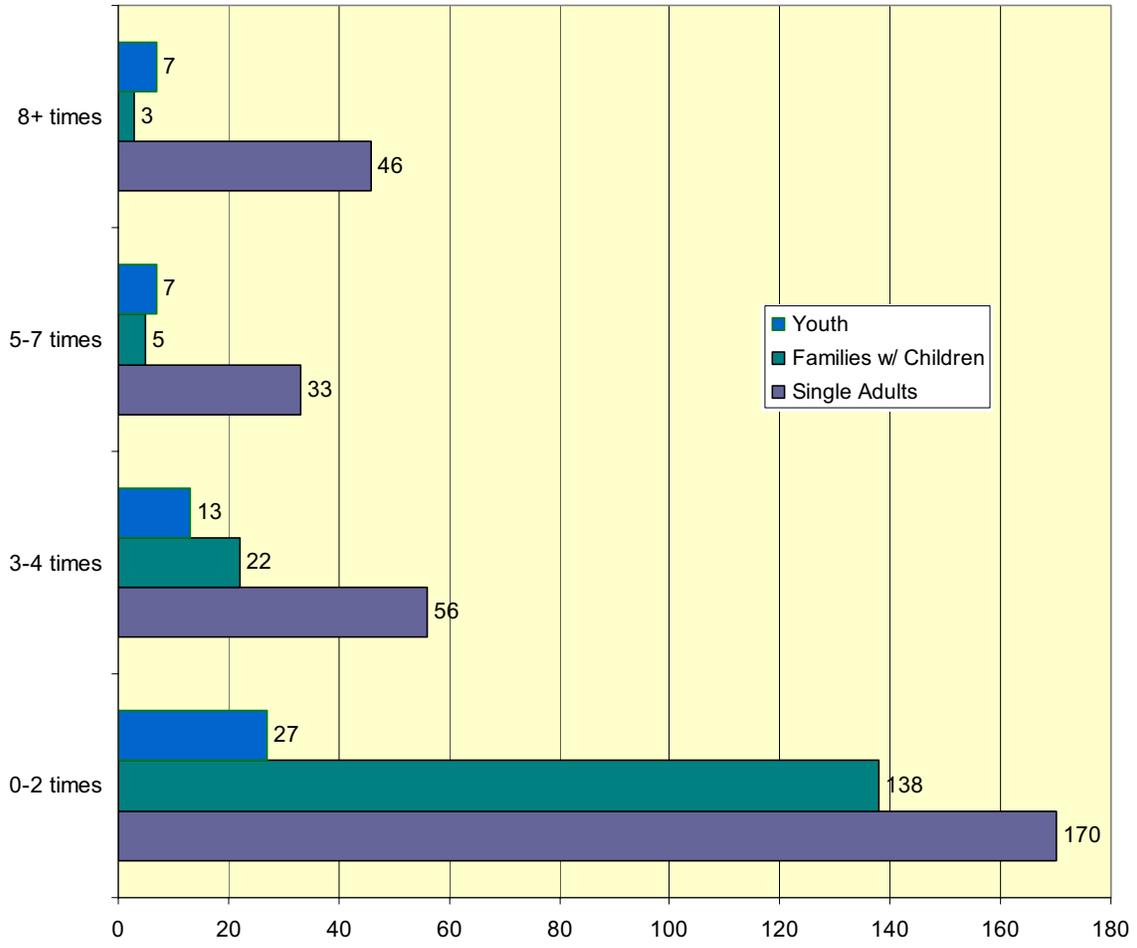
600 individuals, or 22% of the entire homeless population, reported living in families headed by a single mother. 55% percent of these women were living with a mental illness. 28% reported having experienced domestic violence and 23% reported having a substance abuse issue. Further detail is not available regarding the severity of their circumstances.

<b><u>JAIL POPULATION STANDOUT DATA</u></b>		
<b>Individuals</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Mental Health	61	20.82%
Substance Abuse	160	54.61%
Dual Diagnosis	44	15.02%
<b>Total</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### **DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SNOHOMISH COUNTY CORRECTIONS INMATES**

293 individuals were incarcerated on the night of the count and reported they would be homeless upon release. Many stated they would live with family, friends or in an emergency shelter. The needs of this population varied greatly yet most cited the need for increased job skills. 54% of the jail population who reported being homeless were also dealing with substance abuse issues.

### Episodes of Homelessness in Last Three Years



## 2007 PIT SURVEY DATA\*

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	2007				2006				
	Individuals		Households		Household Type	Individuals		Households	
	#	%	#	%		#	%	#	%
<b>Unidentified Type from Tally Sheets **</b>	<b>1314</b>	<b>49.29%</b>		<b>0.00%</b>					
<b>Families with Children</b>					<b>Families with Children</b>				
Single Mother w / kids	600	22.51%	228	7.71%	Single Mother w / kids	688	26.20%	273	10.40%
Couple w / kids	173	6.49%	55	1.86%	Couple w / kids	307	11.69%	78	2.97%
Single Father w / kids	27	1.01%	16	0.54%	Single Father w / kids	32	1.22%	13	0.50%
<b>Sub Total Families W/ Children</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>30.01%</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>10.10%</b>	<b>Sub Total Families W/ Children</b>	<b>1027</b>	<b>39.11%</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>13.86%</b>
<b>Single Adults</b>					<b>Single Adults</b>				
Single Men	136	5.10%			Single Men	359	13.67%		
Single Women	85	3.19%			Single Women	193	7.35%		
Multiple Member Household w / and w / o kids	4	0.15%	4	0.14%	Multiple Member Household	154	5.86%	60	2.28%
Couple without kids	24	0.90%	12	0.41%	Couple without Kids	76	2.89%	38	1.45%
Young Adult (18-21)	39	1.46%			Unaccompanied Youth (18-21)	46	1.75%		
Unaccompanied Youth (13-17)	26	0.98%			Unaccompanied Youth (13-17)	37	1.41%		
Unknown	238	8.93%			Unknown	734	27.95%		
<b>Sub Single Adults</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>20.71%</b>			<b>Sub Single Adults</b>	<b>1599</b>			
<b>Sub Total Homeless</b>	<b>2666</b>	<b>100.00%</b>		<b>0.00%</b>	<b>Sub Total Homeless</b>	<b>2626</b>			
<b>New Data for 2007***</b>									
Corrections- Men	238	8.04%		0.00%					
Corrections- Women	52	1.76%		0.00%					
Corrections -Unknown	3	0.10%		0.00%					
Subtotal Homeless in Jail	<b>293</b>	<b>9.90%</b>		<b>0.00%</b>					
<b>Total</b>	<b>2959</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>10.65%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2626</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>17.59%</b>

\* The methodology for data analysis differed greatly from 2006 to 2007. The data for 2007 was analyzed differently than 2006. \*\*Tally sheets were incorporated by Household type in 2006 data. \*\*\* Included in the 2007 count was the jail population if they indicated they would be homeless upon release.

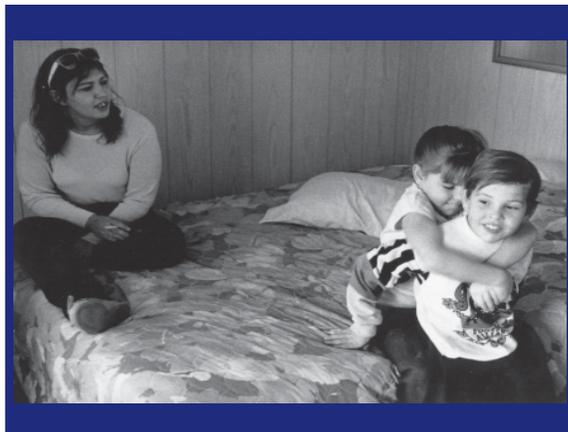
AGE RANGES*			
Total Individuals over age 18	1079	52.35%	
Total Individuals under age 18	489	23.73%	
Total individuals age 50-76	123	5.97%	
Total individuals age 24-49	779	37.80%	
Total individuals age 18-23	175	8.49%	
Total individuals age 13-17	118	5.73%	
Total individuals age 0-12	371	18.00%	
Unknown age	29	1.41%	

\* Does not include tally sheet data.

CURRENT LIVING STATUS	2007					2006 *			
	Individual		Households			Individual		Households	
	#	%	#	%		#	%	#	%
Unsheltered # from Tally Sheets	1314	45.10%	230	28.54%					
Unsheltered # from Surveys	543	18.35%	117	14.52%	Unsheltered	365	23.80%	325	32.80%
Transitional Housing *	923	31.19%	210	26.05%	Transitional housing	528	34.40%	240	24.20%
Emergency Shelter *	291	10.00%	213	26.43%	Emergency Shelter	262	17.10%	184	18.60%
W/Family or Friends	174	5.98%	222	27.54%	W/ Family or friends	197	12.80%	130	13.10%
Hotel or Motel	63	2.13%	44	5.46%	Hotel or motel	71	4.60%	38	3.80%
<b>Sub-Total**</b>	<b>3308</b>								
Jail	293	9.90%			Jail	unkwn		unkwn	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3601</b>	<b>113.60%</b>	<b>806</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>1536</b>		<b>990</b>	

\* Transitional and emergency housing providers did report how many clients were served on the night of the count and the numbers within this table are an accurate representation of utilization for this point in time. Unsheltered individuals included those who slept in abandoned buildings, vehicles, tents or outside.

\*\* The current living status of individuals surveyed is not reflective of the total number of homeless counted. Many respondents did not indicate housing status on their surveys, or they indicated multiple possible living situations.



DISABILITIES DATA	2007		Individuals	2006	
	#	%		#	%
Untreated Dental	389	24.39%	Untreated Dental	362	13.79%
Substance Abuse	377	23.64%	Substance Abuse	374	14.24%
Mental Health	240	15.05%	Mental Health	474	18.05%
Physical Permanent	204	12.79%	Physical/Medical Perm	320	12.19%
Uncorrected Vision	162	10.16%	Visual (uncorrected)	223	8.49%
Physical Temporary	109	6.83%	Physical Temporary	218	8.30%
Developmental	57	3.57%	Developmental	165	6.28%
Literacy	25	1.57%	Literacy	143	5.45%
HIV/AIDS	8	0.50%	HIV/AIDS	62	2.36%
<b>Total w/at least one disability</b>	<b>1571</b>	<b>98.50%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>31.1%</b>

ids  
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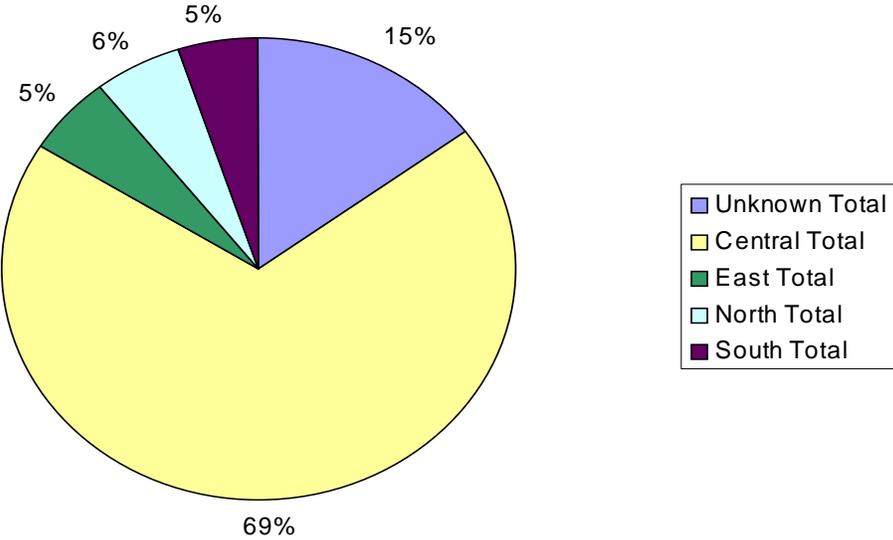
<b>CHRONICALLY HOMELESS DATA</b>		
<b>Individuals</b>		
	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Mental Health	92	5.77%
Substance Abuse	153	9.59%
Disability	110	6.90%
Unsheltered	139	11.46%
Average # of Incidents per individual during past three years	9	0.56%
<b>Total CH</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>15.67%</b>
National statistics show that the chronically homeless population usually represents about 10%		

**CHRONICALLY HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS**

250 Individuals were identified as being chronically homeless. Of these, 41 were in emergency shelter, 27 were in transitional housing, 139 were unsheltered and 29 were living with family or

**GRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF HOMELESSNESS**

**Geographical Distribution of Homelessness**





Produced by  
Snohomish County Human Services Department  
on behalf of the  
Homeless Policy Task Force