



THURSTON REGIONAL HOUSING NEWSLETTER

A new quarterly newsletter about affordable housing and homeless response efforts in Thurston County, Washington.

FALL 2025



THURSTON REGIONAL HOUSING COUNCIL UPDATES

Homeless Services Emergency Fund

Every funding cycle, Thurston Regional Housing Council (RHC) sets \$200,000 of homeless services funding aside as the Homeless Services Emergency Fund.



While the annual funding contracts support regular, ongoing homeless services, the Emergency Fund is intended to support unforeseen expenses that impede those services from being delivered.

The RHC most recently approved an Emergency Fund request of about \$51,000 from Interfaith Works to make repairs after a fire damaged a unit at Sandy's Flats, the former Olympia Inn. The fire was quickly contained, and no one was injured, but left the need for repairs.

"No one should lose their housing because of an emergency beyond their control. The Emergency Fund is a critical safety net that keeps services stable and responsive to urgent needs—keeping people safe, housed, and connected to the stability our community deserves," said Emily Clouse, Thurston County Commissioner and Chair of Thurston Regional Housing Council.

In the past, this fund has been used to address urgent plumbing issues in shelter facilities, to address safe burning at encampments, and to supplement hazardous weather funding during years when hazardous weather funding was spent out, as examples.

"The Emergency Fund was absolutely critical when the plumbing for the showers in the youth shelter went out," said Derek Harris, Executive Director of

Community Youth Services. “One emergency can hit a nonprofit organization hard and the Emergency Fund is a way for our Homeless Response System to have support when those sudden and urgent needs arise.”



DATA CORNER

Thurston County's Point-in-Time Count

Every January, Thurston County Office of Housing & Homeless Prevention leads the Point-in-Time Count (PIT Count). Local jurisdictions, organizations, businesses, and volunteers work together to conduct a census of Thurston County's homeless population on a single night. While the count represents the single night, the process of gathering the information takes place over the course of a week, conducting surveys, doing outreach, and holding events to drive engagement. The PIT Count started in 2006 and is required by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Thurston County 2025 Point-in-Time County Homeless Census Report is now published and available to the public. The 2025 PIT Count reflects a system under consistent strain and a community still grappling with housing affordability, systemic inequities, and resource limitations. While shelter and outreach programs continue to meet critical needs, many individuals remain in unsafe, unsuitable or unsheltered conditions. View the full [2025 PIT Count Report](#).

The 2025 findings reaffirm the need for culturally responsive and trauma-informed interventions, as well as expanded prevention, diversion, and permanent housing. The findings also highlight the importance of data systems that reflect the complexity of lived experience and uphold dignity for people. Addressing homelessness requires sustained, coordinated action.

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT ANNUAL HOMELESS CENSUS



SNAPSHOT 2025

883 TOTAL INDIVIDUALS COUNTED

389

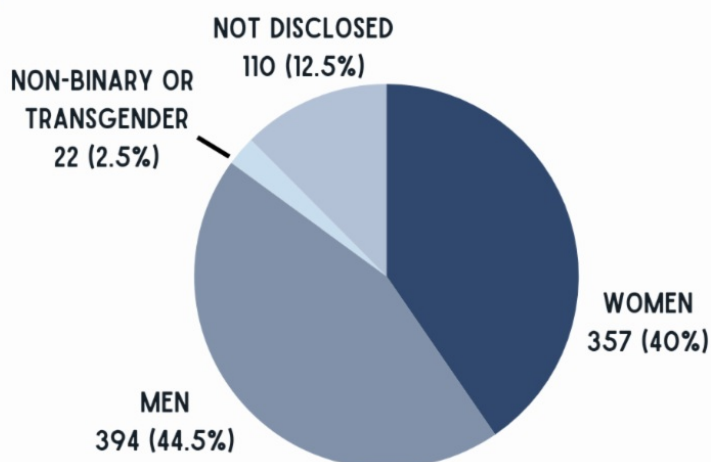
UNSHELTERED

454

IN EMERGENCY
SHELTER

40

IN TRANSITIONAL
HOUSING



123

UNDER AGE 18

160

FLEEING DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE

There are volunteer opportunities, and opportunities for local non-profits to partner with Thurston County Office of Housing & Homeless Prevention for a winter/survival gear drive in the months prior to the count.

Email pitcensusteam@co.thurston.wa.us for more information.



IN FOCUS

Cold and Hazardous Weather Response

Thurston County Public Health & Social Services Department (PHSS) declares a Hazardous Weather Event when temperatures or weather conditions are expected to become

unsafe for people living outside.

PHSS works closely with local shelter providers to ensure they have the capacity to expand to meet the demand of additional shelter guests and extended hours before making the declaration.



Thurston County has relatively mild weather most of the year, but most years there are at least few and sometimes several days of freezing or very hot temperatures. The declaration of a Hazardous Weather Event allows funding specifically for hazardous weather response to be used by homeless service providers during the declaration. Hazardous weather can include extreme heat, snow, and freezing temperatures.

Get ready for cold weather season

It's time to get ready for cold weather. To keep our unhoused community safe from freezing temperatures, Interfaith Works converts Sergio's Place from a day center into a temporary overnight shelter during Hazardous Weather Events. These events, especially when they occur over several days, put a heavy strain on shelter staff. Volunteers are highly needed during these emergency events. Community members are encouraged to support the local hazardous weather response efforts.

During a Hazardous Weather Event, Olympia Mutual Aid Partners (OlyMAP) receives funding to provide critical shelter-in-place outreach. Rather than encouraging people to leave encampments and head to shelters, OlyMAP staff and volunteers go directly to where unhoused individuals are staying. They distribute essential cold weather supplies—such as sleeping bags, tents, hand warmers, and warm clothing—and offer connection to services and health and safety check-ins. This outreach ensures that even those who choose or need to remain where they're currently living unsheltered are supported with life-saving resources during extreme weather conditions.

Become a volunteer

Interfaith Works Homeless Shelter Monthly Volunteer Training

The second Saturday of every month from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Interfaith Works Administration Office: 110 11th Ave SE Olympia, in the basement of The United Churches of Olympia. The training includes basics on harm reduction and trauma informed care and always comes with coffee and donuts. Walk-ins are welcome or you can [register](#) online. Learn more at iwshelter.org/volunteer.

Volunteers with OlyMAP work alongside staff to assist with direct outreach, supply distribution, basic office tasks, and more. Learn more at www.olymap.org/volunteer.

Donate supplies

Donating supplies during the cold weather season is another great way to contribute to hazardous weather response.



Donations accepted during regular business hours at Sergio's Place. Tuesday-Saturday from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. at 3501 Mary Elder Rd NE. (Sergio's Place donation collection entrance). No parking on Martin Way. For more information contact: 360-706-2287

Cold weather donations needed: blankets, twin/single bed sheets, ramen, non-perishable snacks, instant coffee, creamer, hot tea, hot chocolate, disposable cups and utensils, socks,

long johns, underwear, tarps, ponchos, hand warmers, sleeping bags, tents, gloves/mittens, hats, warm clothing.

Learn more about donating with:

[Interfaith Works](#)

[OlyMAP](#)



HIGHLIGHTS

Opportunity for public comment on Thurston County's Local Homeless Housing Plan

Every five years, Washington State Department of Commerce requires jurisdictions to submit a Local Homeless Housing Plan. This plan was developed with input from a group of stakeholders, including the [Lived Experience Housing Steering Committee](#). The public comment period for Thurston County's draft plan for 2025-2030 ends on October 21, 2025.

[Learn more](#)



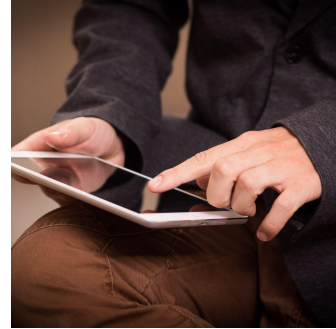
Thurston Home and Garden Newsletter

Did you know Thurston County offers an email newsletter on Home and Garden topics? Sign up and receive the newsletter every other month. Learn simple, low-cost ways to keep your home and yard healthy and safe for your household and our community.

[Sign up today!](#)

Take the 2025 Community Health Assessment

Thurston County is conducting its 2025 Community Health Assessment to better understand local health needs, strengths, and challenges. Housing and health are deeply connected, and your input can help guide future programs and services. Please take a few minutes to complete the anonymous survey [here](#):



City of Olympia holds forum on housing affordability

In late May, the City of Olympia and Council of Neighborhood Associations co-hosted a forum for community members to discuss housing affordability in Olympia. More than 60 people attended the event. Read about what city staff learned from the [housing affordability discussions](#).

City of Lacey sells property on Mullen Road for development of affordable housing

The Lacey City Council voted unanimously to sell a 5.32-acre site at 5025 Mullen Rd. SE Lacey to the Housing Authority of Thurston County for \$1. The Housing Authority plans to build about 60 cottage-style housing units for low-income seniors and multigenerational families. 36 rental units will be for seniors with incomes in the 30% and 50% Area Median Income (AMI) ranges; up to 24 multigenerational units will be developed for households with incomes less than 80% AMI.



[Learn more](#)

save the date for the

Thurston County Homebuying Expo



Date: November 8, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Lacey Community Center
6729 Pacific Ave SE
Lacey, WA 98503

Mark your calendars! Come prepared to **learn more about what it looks like to buy a home in Washington.** We'll have everything from workshops to resource tables. Be sure to join us!

Presented by:

CITY OF **LACEY**



HOUSING DEFINED

Thurston County Local Home Fund

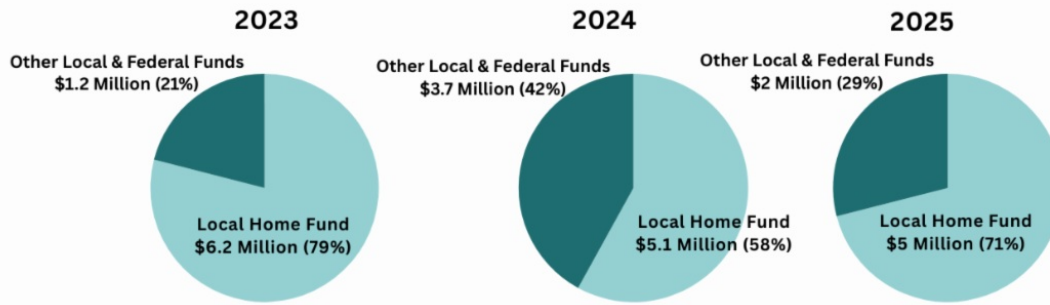
In 2018, City of Olympia voters approved a one-tenth of one percent sales and use tax to fund affordable housing construction, housing, and behavioral health-related services, creating the Olympia Local Home Fund. In January 2022, the Thurston County Board of County Commissioners passed a similar ordinance authorizing the same sales and use tax for most of the remainder of the County.

In December 2022, the City of Olympia and Thurston County signed an Interlocal Agreement to combine the funds. Olympia retains 35% of this revenue to support existing services and staffing, while the remaining funds are allocated to the Thurston County Local Home Fund.

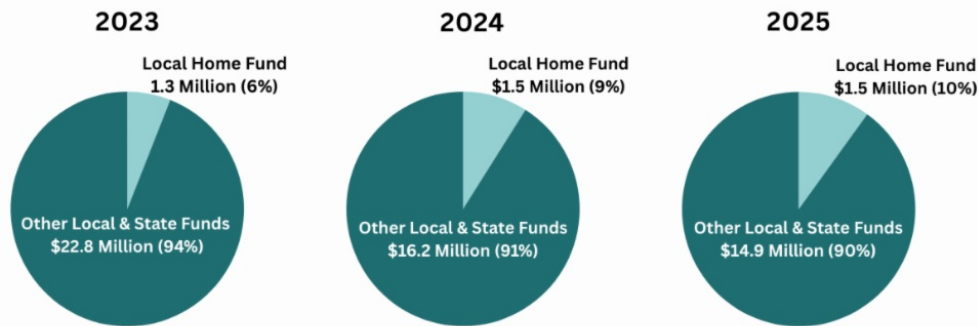
Thurston County Local Home Fund: Over the Years

The majority of the Thurston County Local Home Fund supports increasing affordable housing in Thurston County, and a smaller amount fills gaps in homeless services funding.

Thurston County Affordable Housing Funding



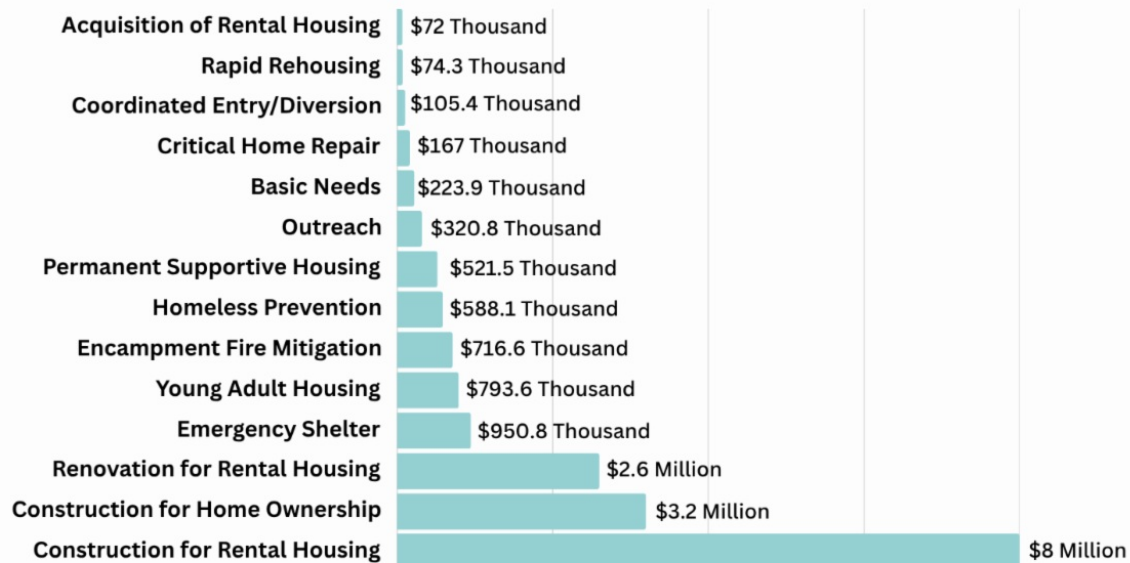
Thurston County Homeless Services Funding



The Funding Process

Each year, organizations respond to a Request for Proposals with their applications for use of the funds. The two advisory boards to the Thurston Regional Housing Council (RHC) review and score the applications and make their recommendations to the RHC. Then the RHC makes the final recommendations to the Thurston County Board of County of Commissioners for approval.

2023-2025 Thurston County Local Home Fund Allocations



2023-2025 Affordable Housing

Thurston County Local Home Fund has contributed to 13 affordable housing projects. These types of projects take many years to complete. The funding has

been allocated, but most of these projects currently remain in progress.

307

**Units for Rental
Housing**

140

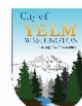
**Units for Home
Ownership**



HOUSING & COMMUNITY RESOURCE LINKS

- **Eviction Defense Line: 1-855-657-8387**
- [Northwest Justice Project](#)
- [Sound Legal Aid](#)
- [Dispute Resolution Center Housing Services](#)
- [Thurston County Community Connections & Care Guide](#) (available in multiple languages)
- [Thurston County Community Resource List](#)
- [Thurston County Resource Hub](#)
- [Thurston County Shelters List Flyer](#)
- [Thurston County Coordinated Entry Program](#)

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Thurston County Public Health and Social Services | 412 Lilly Road NE | Olympia, WA 98506-5132
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