

# THURSTON REGIONAL HOUSING NEWSLETTER

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

## SPRING 2026

### In this issue you will find:

- Thurston Regional Housing Council's 2025 Annual Report
- How homeless data is managed
- Information about the Built for Zero movement
- The principles of trauma-informed practice
- Highlights and resources related to homelessness and community services



## THURSTON REGIONAL HOUSING COUNCIL UPDATES

### Regional Housing Council 2025 Annual Report

Thurston Regional Housing Council (RHC) has published its 2025 Annual Report. This annual report details the homeless services and affordable housing funding contracts approved by the RHC.

Some 2025 highlights from the report include:

- New [vision, mission, and values](#) finalized by the RHC
- The development of [Thurston County's Local Homeless Housing Plan for 2025-2030](#)
- Partnership with the [Black Home Initiative](#)

[View the full report](#)



## DATA CORNER

### What is HMIS?

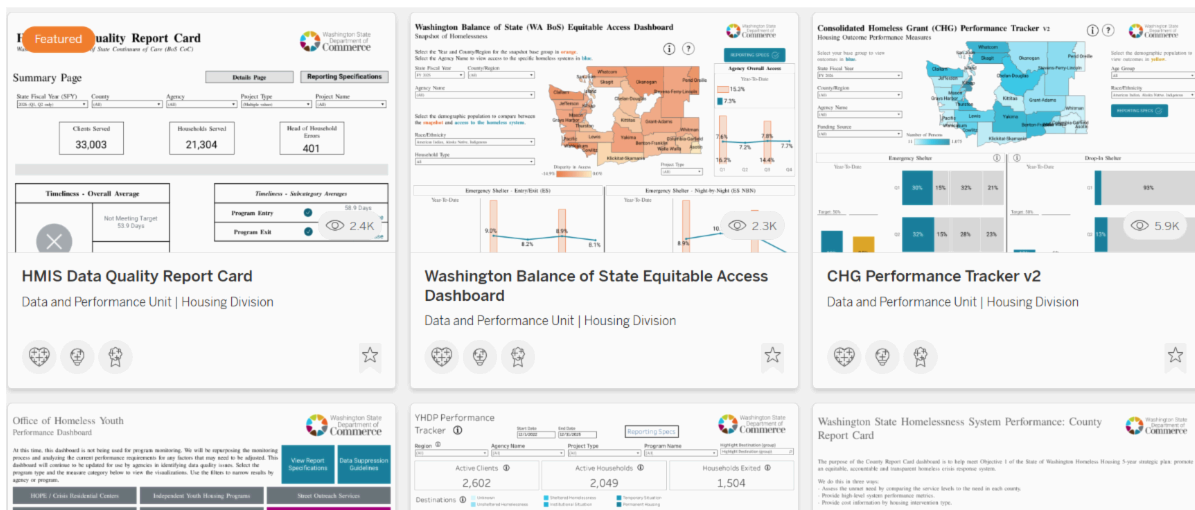
[Homeless Management Information System](#) (HMIS) is a critical tool used by homeless and housing service providers to collect, manage, and analyze data related to housing assistance. HMIS is used nationwide and supports efforts to end

homelessness by ensuring coordinated, data-informed services or individuals and households who are already experiencing homelessness or at risk of losing their housing.

This system tracks information that allows homeless services providers to identify eligibility for certain programming and to track outcomes for people who are receiving services. This includes how people exit the system, whether they exit to housing, exit to homelessness, or exit due to loss of contact. People who are fleeing domestic violence and others who do not consent to entering their information into the Washington State Homeless Management Information System database are still able to have a consent-refused profile where their demographic information, and program eligibility is still able to be entered, while their personally identifying information such as name and birthdate are not visible to providers, or to County, or State government employees.

The data from HMIS is used to improve service coordination and housing outcomes, and to help us know how well we're staying in touch with people while they remain waiting for program availability and intake.

Check out Washington State Department of Commerce's [HMIS Data Dashboards](#) to learn more about available data.



## IN FOCUS

### Built for Zero in Thurston County

Thurston County is part of [Built For Zero](#), a national movement and [methodology](#) led by [Community Solutions](#) that helps communities measurably end or reduce homelessness through real-time, data-driven strategies. Thurston County joined the Built For Zero movement in November 2021 as a commitment to transforming its homeless response system and working toward [functional zero](#), a state where homelessness is rare and brief for specific populations.

As part of this work, Thurston County has achieved key milestones in building quality [by-name data](#).

This means the community now maintains a comprehensive, real-time list of all people experiencing homelessness including

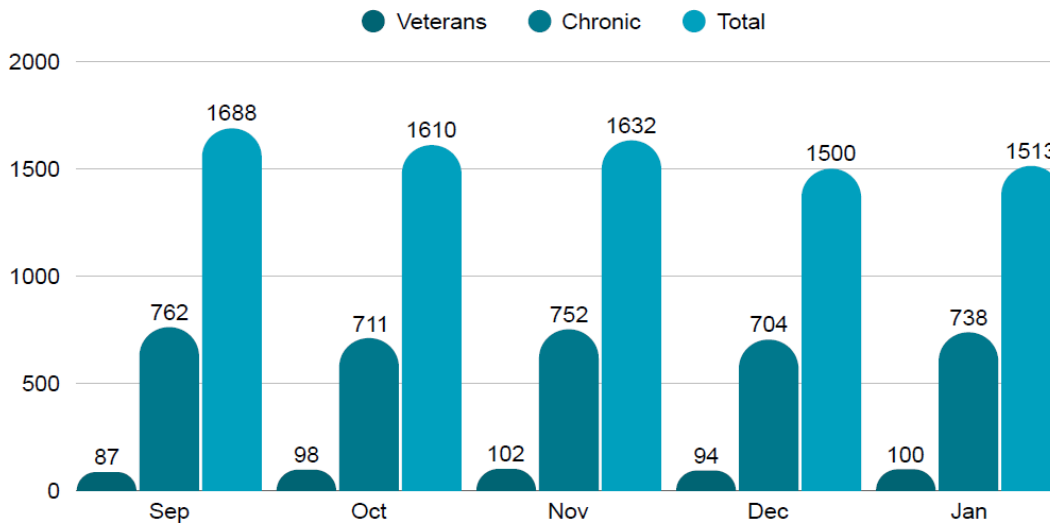
veterans, single adults, and those experiencing chronic homelessness. This allows local partners to track needs, coordinate services, and measure progress more effectively than with traditional annual counts.

This data foundation supports ongoing work to improve systems. Built for Zero Thurston County also consists of weekly case conferencing among service providers that:

- enhances collaboration across nonprofits, government agencies, outreach teams, and others
- enables matching people more quickly with housing and support tailored to their circumstances.

Thurston County's ongoing Built For Zero efforts remain focused on reducing Veteran and chronic homelessness and using shared, high-quality information to guide equitable decisions and outcomes.

## Homeless Single Adult Totals: Active & System Enrolled



These totals reflect the people who access the Thurston County homeless response system and agree to data collection.



## HIGHLIGHTS

### Thurston County Homebuying Expo

Learn about resources to make your homeownership dream come true. The expo will have workshops and resources tables.

# Thurston County Homebuying Expo

Learn about resources to make your homeownership dream come true. We'll have workshops and resource tables. Come join us!

Presented By:



Date: April 18, 2026  
Doors Open: 10:00am  
Time: 10:00am - 2:00pm  
Location: Olympia Center  
222 Columbia St NW  
Olympia, WA  
Cost: Free to attend

Pathways to Homeownership  
Workshop Schedule:  
11:30am - 1:00pm

Sponsored By:



<https://tinyurl.com/ymzchcdw>

April 18, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the Olympia Center, 222 Columbia St. NW Olympia, WA  
[tinyurl.com/ymzchcdw](https://tinyurl.com/ymzchcdw)

## Community Care Guides

**Thurston County Community Connections & Care Guides** are an amazing collection of local resources for residents of Thurston County. They are available in multiple languages.

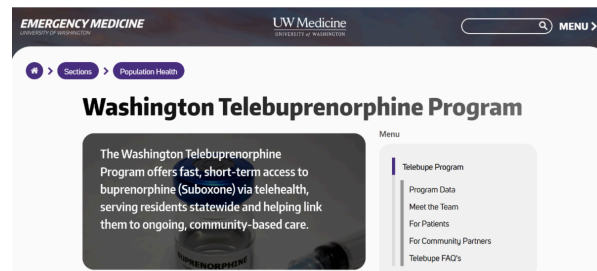
You can view the guides online or request hard copy booklets at [tcpshs.pio@co.thurston.wa.us](mailto:tcpshs.pio@co.thurston.wa.us).



## Washington Telebuprenorphine Program

The **Washington Telebuprenorphine Program**

- offers fast, short-term access to buprenorphine (Suboxone) via telehealth
- helps link them to ongoing, community-based care
- is free and available to anyone in the state of Washington over age 13 who has opioid use disorder.



## Together We Parent - Support Group

Join a community of parents walking together through the highs and lows of pregnancy, postpartum, and beyond! **Together We Parent** is a support group that meets on Zoom on the third Wednesday of every month from 10-11:30 a.m.



# HOUSING DEFINED

What Does "Trauma-Informed" Really Mean?

In conversations about homelessness and housing stability, you've likely heard the phrase "trauma informed." It's become common language across service systems, but what does it MEAN? And more importantly, what does it look like in action?

At its core, a **trauma-informed approach** recognizes that many people seeking housing or services have experienced significant trauma. Trauma can include experiences of domestic violence, childhood abuse, racism, community violence, incarceration, medical crises, forced displacement, chronic poverty, and the daily stress of living unsheltered. These experiences affect how people interact with systems, make decisions, and build trust.



Rather than asking, "What's wrong with this person?" a trauma-informed approach asks, "What has this person experienced, and how can we respond in a way that promotes their safety, their dignity, and their choice?"

### **The Core Principles of Trauma-Informed Practice**

There are five core principles of a Trauma Informed Practice (TIP). While organizations may each frame it slightly differently, trauma-informed work is generally grounded in these key principles:

#### **1. Safety**

People feel physically and emotionally safe. These spaces are predictable, respectful, and free from unnecessary confrontation or humiliation. Safety is more than a compassionate value; it is an evidence-based stability strategy.

#### **2. Trustworthiness and Transparency**

Policies and processes are clear. Expectations are communicated upfront. People understand what is happening and why. This can be as simple as having codes of conduct, for both clients and staff, in plain view of those receiving services.

#### **3. Choice and Voice**

Participants have meaningful options and input into decisions that affect their lives, whether that's housing location, service plans, or meeting times. Trauma often involves loss of control. Restoring decision-making power and autonomy stolen by trauma is clinically and structurally significant.

#### **4. Collaboration**

Services are done with people, not to them. Staff recognize participants as partners in problem-solving. Meeting people where they are currently in their journey through homelessness and not where the provider wants them to be for ease of service delivery.

#### **5. Empowerment**

Strengths are centered, and past resilience is acknowledged. We identify and apply their strengths to achieve their goals, rather than focusing on fixing weaknesses or deficits. The goal is to build confidence and stability as opposed to compliance for compliance's sake.

Trauma Informed Practices combined with a harm reductive approach is a key element of the homeless response system in Thurston County. While at times criticized for "enabling unproductive behavior," both anecdotal and long-term studies show that long-term positive outcomes increase when a trauma informed approach is followed. These approaches also require that we invest in both our workforce (to



provide trainings and support emotional/physical wellbeing) and in services developed overtime to maintain outcomes.

### Sources

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2014). [SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach](#)

Felitti, V. J., et al. (1998). ["Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction](#)

[to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults"](#) American Journal of Preventive Medicine

Kushel, M. B., et al. (2003). ["No Door to Lock: Victimization Among Homeless and Marginally Housed Persons"](#) American Journal of Public Health

Tsemberis, S. (2010). [Housing First: The Pathways Model to End Homelessness](#)



## 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](#)

## THURSTON REGIONAL HOUSING NEWSLETTER



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

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email & social marketing for free!