

Building the Foundation

INVESTING IN SOLUTIONS FOR THE
STATEWIDE CRISIS OF HOMELESSNESS



State investments
in housing and
services over the
past two years

Special focus
on the 2022
legislative
session

Statewide and
regional program
successes

Funding
opportunities for
more permanent
solutions



A CHALLENGE SEATTLE REPORT | JANUARY 2023



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Executive Summary

IN 2021, CHALLENGE SEATTLE issued a report entitled, *Chronic Homelessness: A Crossroad*, in which we shared data showing that homelessness is a statewide crisis with those struggling with chronic homelessness increasing by 27% every year. In 2020, an estimated 23,000 Washington residents were living without permanent shelter—a number made worse by the pandemic. In urban and rural areas, eastern and western counties, and across all age groups, too many Washington residents are experiencing homelessness.

We identified best practices from other jurisdictions and confirmed that the best solutions are individually focused, and thus it takes time to get it right. Success begins with leadership, funding, and partnerships to lay the foundation.

House Washington was created in late 2021 to advocate for support from the Governor and Legislature to address the homelessness crisis with funding for housing (both emergency and affordable), as well as critical services. House Washington is comprised of business, local elected leaders, and housing advocates from across the state—all committed to partnership to address the challenge.

The Governor and Legislature answered the call for leadership and funding in the 2022 legislative session with historic appropriations to lay the foundation for success in addressing the homelessness crisis. They made historic investments in the Supplemental Capital and Operating funds toward services and emergency and affordable housing, in addition to providing more funds in the biennial budget. Some of the funding was available from the federal American Rescue Plan Act. In this report, we summarize each of the mechanisms funded over the last two years, along with continuing needs for each, success to date, the priorities of voters, and next steps.

While only months have elapsed since most of those funds were made available, we can report that state and local governments are executing through partnerships with clear indications of success. The partners have focused on doing it right, not simply pushing the challenge down the road.

The voters then and now have identified homelessness as a top priority for the Legislature.¹

- 81% of Washington voters rank homelessness as a high priority for the state legislature.

SHOULD STATE GOVERNMENT DO MORE TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS?

82% of voters say the state should do more

- 82% believe that state government should be doing more to address homelessness.
- Voters believe that all levels of government need to do more to address homelessness, with state government at the top of the list. Nearly two-thirds of voters recognize that this crisis is not just a local problem; it is a statewide problem as well.
- People see the connection between homelessness and affordable housing. More than 80% agree that homelessness is at least somewhat impacted by the housing affordability challenge.

State and local governments have partnered with the private and nonprofit sectors to make immediate progress. They remain committed to building on this foundation to eliminate both youth and adult homelessness.

With continued leadership and funding from the Governor and Legislature, together we can be successful.



Christine Gregoire
Challenge Seattle CEO
Former Washington State Governor

¹Challenge Seattle public polls, October 2021 and December 2022



The House Washington Approach



HOUSE WASHINGTON was created in late 2021 following the Challenge Seattle report entitled, *Chronic Homelessness: A Crossroad*. It is made up of business, local government leaders, and housing advocates statewide, all of whom are committed to advocating for state investments in emergency and affordable housing and critical services. These investments can open the door for people across the state to access health care services, supportive housing, and mental health and substance abuse treatment.

Chronic homelessness is especially challenging and prevalent across the state.

Tragically, the number of people struggling with chronic homelessness has increased by 27% every year for the last five years. It's crucial to interrupt this cycle now, and we are committed to doing so. Individuals experiencing chronic homelessness are defined as having a disability and have been homeless for long or frequent amounts of time.² Because they can be struggling with physical disabilities, behavioral health disorders, and/or serious psychiatric and emotional conditions, they are the hardest to reach, stabilize, and house. Communities need well-coordinated housing options and support services to help those who are trapped in this cycle, and to prevent others from being similarly trapped.

We are united in developing a statewide, government-led approach to both the current emergency and its underlying causes.

The Governor and Legislature answered the call for help with record investments in 2022. It is already helping to create the structures and relationships needed to stabilize families and individuals—including needed coordination among government entities and service providers to address these complex challenges. They are providing both housing and services for those struggling with chronic homelessness. House Washington supports research that shows that one of the most effective ways of reducing and preventing all kinds of homelessness is to have enough affordable housing in the community. As one of the cornerstones of the state's investments, the Governor and Legislature took action to expand the available housing options.

This is hard work, but homelessness is solvable.

Interagency coordination, the use of best practices, and intense data collection are strengthening the ability of local governments and nonprofits to house people. Public-private partnerships are also developing innovative approaches that are being utilized across the state. New strategies are already emerging from the state's investments, and increased data-gathering and reporting are ensuring accountability.

House Washington is proud to be working together and making progress on a problem that affects people and communities in all corners of Washington state.

²The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines an individual as experiencing chronic homelessness if they have a qualifying disability and have been homeless for either a) 1 year or longer or b) have experienced at least 4 episodes of homelessness totaling 12 months out of the last 3 years. (Challenge Seattle)



State Investments for Community-Based Solutions

THE STATE’S affordable housing investments are managed by the Department of Commerce, which provides the oversight and accountability to ensure real progress.

PROGRAM	2022 FUNDING	DESCRIPTION	2021-23 BIENNIUM PROGRESS
Housing Trust Fund	\$114M	<p>\$308M (2021-23 biennium):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$238M Competitive “traditional” • \$20M Portfolio preservation • \$30M Direct appropriations • \$10M Competitive cottage communities • \$10M Continuing affordability 	<p>AWARDED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$276M to develop/preserve 5,000 units • 75 competitive projects • 20 direct appropriations <p>PENDING COMMITMENTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$25M Homeownership
Rapid Capital Housing Acquisition	\$240M	<p>\$360M (2021-23 biennium):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$261M Competitive • \$45M Rights-of-Way Safety Initiative • \$28M Direct appropriations • \$10M Cost increases 	<p>AWARDED \$256M to acquire 2,100 units:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 competitive projects • 13 direct appropriations • 4 right-of-way projects • 11 projects occupied <p>PENDING COMMITMENTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$88M open RCHA application round
Apple Health and Homes	\$60M	AHAH pairs housing with existing Apple Health/Medicaid-funded health and supportive services	Office being created at Commerce; application available February 2023
Crisis stabilization facilities	Over \$125M	Behavioral-health facilities are desperately needed; this is a start	\$160M was awarded to thirty-four community-based behavioral health facilities, creating 798 new beds
Behavioral health and outreach workforce investments	\$155M	Facilities are not enough; we need highly trained providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$100M for behavioral health workforce stabilization (through the Health Care Authority) • \$55M for eligible service provider stipends
Outreach services	\$55M	Adding resources to existing community-based outreach services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$45M dedicated to right-of-way outreach services • \$10M for community-based organizations to help people access benefits



State Investments for Community-Based Solutions

HOUSING FOR WASHINGTON FAMILIES

FOR WORKING FAMILIES across our state and in many other states, affordable housing options are increasingly more difficult to find. People at all income levels are experiencing the strain, and too many are simply unable to keep up.

And while significant effort and actions are being taken to address homelessness, the cost will continue to grow, and success will not be sustainable without addressing the affordable housing crisis in our state. By increasing the amount of affordable housing options in all our communities, we can help Washington families avoid losing their homes in the first place.

Washington state dedicated \$768M for emergency and affordable housing investments in the 2021-23 biennium³, and used a variety of mechanisms to serve people and communities in all regions.

- \$420M Rapid Capital Housing Acquisition.
- \$288M Housing Trust Fund.
- \$45M Affordable Housing Development Connections.
- \$10M Continuing Affordability (rural housing preservation).
- \$2.5M Transit Oriented Development.
- \$2M Mobile Home Communities Preservation.

With new public and private housing options coming online across the state, it will be easier for people to find affordable housing and stay home in their communities.

RAPID CAPITAL HOUSING ACQUISITION

The Rapid Capital Housing Acquisition (RCHA) program is focused on acquiring newly built and existing properties—hotels, motels, and apartment buildings—that can be quickly purchased or renovated to provide shelter and housing for those experiencing homelessness.

RCHA funds help organizations acquire property that they can quickly convert into enhanced emergency shelters, permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, long-term housing, youth housing, or other appropriate shelter.



In just six months (July-December 2022), more than 7,100 units of new housing were funded by the Housing Trust Fund and the Rapid Capital Housing Acquisition program. More is on the way.

The 39 acquisition projects (July-December 2022) include:

- Apartments (61%).
- Hotels/Motels (31%).
- Shelter and transitional housing (6%).
- Single family homes (2%).
- 15 closed contracts.
- 11 projects occupied to date.

The RCHA program has been successful in helping to quickly take advantage of economic and market conditions, while also addressing emergency needs. While those conditions are not indefinite, the program has been successful in providing both emergency shelter and quickly standing up more permanent housing solutions.

THE HOUSING TRUST FUND

The Housing Trust Fund⁴ (HTF) investments are competitive awards to develop and preserve housing across the state. They leverage public and private funds to increase the state's overall housing supply in both urban and rural settings. New construction takes longer to build, but is a permanent, high-quality investment in Washington state communities. It also serves a wide variety of people, including individuals and families experiencing homelessness, people needing supportive housing, seniors, veterans, farmworkers, and people living with developmental or other disabilities.

NEXT

To maximize local funding, match tax credit allocations, and advance local priorities, the HTF pipeline needs continuing significant investment.

³Washington State Department of Commerce presentation. \$768M reflects biennium spending, including the 2022 supplemental budget, which House Washington supported.

⁴Washington State Department of Commerce Housing Trust Fund



State Investments for Community-Based Solutions



APPLE HEALTH AND HOMES

NEARLY 70 PERCENT of unhoused Washingtonians are living with a complicating medical condition. Those conditions include chronic diseases (such as diabetes), physical disabilities, substance use disorders, psychiatric and emotional illnesses, and more.

Medical conditions get worse when people don't have safe shelter, which compounds the medical crises that cycle them in and out of local emergency rooms. Inadequate shelter and treatment accelerates a worsening of people's physical and mental health.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

Apple Health, the state's Medicaid provider, already funds many supportive services designed to slow that spiral. But until now, housing has never been connected to services. To connect those two needs, the Legislature created the Office of Apple Health and Homes.

The Washington State Department of Commerce manages the program and distributes funds through a competitive and transparent process. Working closely with the Health Care Authority (HCA), the program pairs housing with existing Apple Health-funded supportive services.

Apple Health and Homes has five major components:

- Treat chronic homelessness as a medical condition.
- Invest in preventative services, reducing costs to, and pressure on, local emergency systems.
- Create more supportive housing statewide.
- Expand the capacity of supportive housing providers.
- Ensure oversight and accountability through the Office of Health and Homes.

While still in development, this program is a road toward developing permanent supportive housing for people with more complex needs.

NEXT

Housing is the first step in stabilizing health, but it must be paired with the right services to cut down the need for emergency care as the only place for help.



State Investments for Community-Based Solutions

STATE RIGHTS-OF-WAY SAFETY INITIATIVE

IT'S VISIBLE in all parts of the state: people experiencing homelessness have settled in dangerous situations near state highways.

The state's Rights-of-Way Safety Initiative⁵ is a partnership of state⁶ and local governments and nonprofits that focuses on transitioning people who are living in a state-owned right-of-way (ROW) to safer, and optimally permanent, housing. Since the initiative was launched in July 2022, more than 150 people have already been moved into housing or shelter, and right-of-way sites are being cleaned and restored to safety.

Progress is underway in King, Thurston, and Pierce counties, where individuals are being housed and encampments are being resolved.

In December 2022, the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI)—in coordination with WSDOT, the Department of Commerce, the City of Tacoma, and Pierce County—used state ROW funds to move 30 people into Tacoma hotels.

One of the primary goals is to keep people from moving to yet another public and unsafe location. Although time-intensive, the most effective and permanent approach is to connect individually with residents, get to know their needs, and find a shelter or housing situation with services that fit. When that happens, they are more likely to stay housed, and we make progress on the ultimate goal of reducing unsheltered homelessness.

NEXT

The approach works to resolve unsafe encampments. Based on the progress being made with the most complex populations, additional sites have been identified for outreach and resolution. Continued funding of this safety initiative will also help make site-recovery improvements permanent.



The Rights-of-Way Safety Initiative began in July 2022. More than 157 individuals from eleven encampments have moved to housing or shelter (150 are still housed).



\$160 million was awarded to thirty-four community-based behavioral health facilities, creating 798 new beds.

CRISIS STABILIZATION

In 2021-23, \$160M was awarded to help support the acquisition, renovation, or new construction of desperately needed behavioral health facilities.⁷ These funds support:

- Children and minor youth.
- Dementia care.
- Intensive behavioral health.
- 90/180-day civil commitments.
- Enhanced services facilities.

Even with these important investments, Washington is far behind in meeting the need. In every corner of our state, people are getting sicker because they can't get the early interventions or the continuing care they need.

Our failure to provide enough behavioral health facilities hurts not only our homeless neighbors, but too many Washingtonians.

Young people struggle with school and fall into violence, elderly people are neglected, and the working "sandwich" generation is alone in trying to meet their needs.

NEXT

Health services need to be a continuing focus for the Legislature, if we are going to end the cycle of despair that has trapped too many Washington families.

⁵<https://wsdotblog.blogspot.com/2022/09/washingtons-right-of-way-safety.html>

⁶Washington State Departments of Commerce and Transportation and the Washington State Patrol

⁷Washington State Department of Commerce Presentation – House Washington - 11/21/2022



Outreach Services and Workforce



IN ADDITION to increasing the number and types of housing options available, critical services are essential to move people out of homelessness. The Legislature recognized this by providing \$45M in funding for outreach services as part of the state’s Rights-of-Way Safety Initiative.

The people who do this outreach—and other homeless services providers—are on the frontlines of this work, getting to know people and helping to connect them with the services and housing that will stabilize them. This can be extremely arduous work, and the providers themselves need support. In 2022, the Legislature took steps to support the current workforce, and to do the research needed to expand the workforce in the future. Specifically, it:

- Provided \$100M in funding to the Washington Health Care Authority to community behavioral health providers for workforce stabilization.
- Provided \$55M for eligible homeless service provider employees who work directly with people experiencing homelessness.
- Funded a workforce study to develop a full-scale picture of provider pay and benefits, caseloads, comparable jobs, and training and supervision needs. The contractor will analyze the results of the research and work with an advisory committee to develop recommendations to help ensure this workforce is well-prepared for its important work.
- Funded a workforce trauma study. Homeless service provider staff working in permanent supportive housing, shelters, and outreach, disproportionately suffer from workplace stress and trauma. The 2021 Legislature provided funding to better understand

the impacts of workplace stress and trauma and conduct a series of surveys, focus groups, and conversations with workers, and recommendations are expected to be delivered in Spring 2023.

- Funded a new statewide Pre-Apprenticeship Training Program with ANEW to provide stipends and material to skills centers, pre-apprenticeship training programs, Tribes, and technical colleges to introduce and train students in the construction field by building tiny houses (micro shelters) for homeless people. Fifty tiny houses were completed by December and transported to LIHI for tiny house villages for homeless families and individuals.

NEXT

Workforce shortages continue to be a challenge. Results of the studies should inform policymakers about needed actions to expand the workforce.



Pre-Apprenticeship students in the Tulalip Tribes TERO Vocational Training Center building a tiny house for homeless people. Materials for each tiny house cost \$4,200. State program provides funding through ANEW.



Regional Highlights - Clark County

RAPID HOUSING resources were used by the Vancouver Housing Authority⁸ to open a year-round shelter run by Catholic Community Services of Western Washington. The building, which used to be a Howard Johnson hotel, was purchased with a combination of Tribal, county, city, state, and nonprofit funds.

Like many other projects across the state, Bertha Cain Baugh Place is opening as a shelter, providing immediate safety to those struggling with homelessness. In several years, however, the facility will be converted to affordable housing to provide a more long-term solution.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Clark County will also receive needed investments in behavioral health services for both youth and adults.⁹ A new adult outpatient treatment facility will receive a needed \$2M direct appropriation, while a youth outpatient facility will receive almost the same. The youth facility will include 20 therapeutic offices.

For these and all other facilities, additional services will help those who are unhoused and, in the long run, interrupt the cycle of mental health crises and help people move forward in a more stable life.



Near Vancouver, Bertha Cain Baugh Place, formerly a Howard Johnson hotel, is opening as a shelter run by Catholic Community Services of Western Washington

⁸ [VHA dedicates its newest homeless shelter - Vancouver Housing Authority](#)

⁹ Washington State Department of Commerce



Regional Highlights - King County



KING COUNTY has already recognized and responded to one of the great challenges: the need to look regionally, rather than hyper-locally, for solutions. The development of the King County Regional Homelessness Authority (KCRHA) is a major step forward in finding ways to solve, rather than simply displace, the crisis of homelessness.

Partnership for Zero is a public-private partnership that includes KCRHA, We Are In, business, and philanthropy that helps match people with housing and services that fit. The initiative is committed to developing new approaches that can be scaled to county and state levels, and that can be used in both urban and rural areas. People have complex reasons for living without homes, and those needs must be addressed in order to stabilize them.

Through the Partnership for Zero initiative, trusted individuals—most of whom have lived experience—build relationships with unhoused individuals. They use a “by-name list” to match the right housing and services to the individual. The centralized Command Center provides a tried and true “crisis” response to homelessness. This

comprehensive approach provides transparency and accountability to the public. It is intended to interrupt the cycle of homelessness in urban, suburban, and rural King County.

It is time-intensive to know people’s individual names, problems, and needs, and then to track comprehensively all the available housing (and housing restrictions) and the right services that are available. However, it is the best approach to ending the cycle of chronic homelessness. Substance abuse disorders can be treated; disabilities can be monitored; pets can be cared for—all creating foundational stability for individuals and communities.

The first development of the approach was in urban areas of King County, but this is not an urban-only approach. Many people live unhoused in rural areas as well, and planning is underway to reach out to rural King County communities in 2023.

State funds have added needed strength to the KCRHA program:

- Of six encampments prioritized for resolution, one is fully resolved and another is close.
- Nearly 900 people are being directly engaged in assessments that will match them with the right services.
- There is a focus on permanent housing, with the goal of minimizing the reliance on temporary shelter.¹⁰
- Landlord incentives make it easier for housing providers to make more affordable units available.¹¹



HOUSING COMMAND CENTER (HCC)

The HCC recognizes homelessness as what it is: a civic emergency that requires a centralized coordination of activities, agencies, and resources. Daily coordination of activities and a housing-first approach is making it faster to help people get on the path to permanent housing solutions. Once again, Washington state is on the forefront of creating a national model. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is on the ground, putting emergency-management approaches used during natural disasters to work on the crisis of homelessness. This organizational structure and approach can be continued in King County, and replicated anywhere. Learn more about the Command Center [at kcrha.org](https://kcrha.org).

¹⁰ November 2022 Partnership for Zero board packet

¹¹ <https://kcrha.org/landlord-incentive-package/>



Regional Highlights - Pierce County

IN RESPONSE to Pierce County's urgent need for more emergency and affordable housing options, a combination of city and state RCHA funds are enabling LIHI to acquire the Heron Apartments in Tacoma. With 82 studio and one-bedroom apartments, there will be room for both affordable workforce housing and supportive housing for the formerly homeless.

Other Pierce County projects include:

- A major Pierce County project is the Candlewood Suites in Lakewood. This is urgently needed shelter space now, but in several years, will convert to permanent supportive housing. The 83 hotel suites have in-unit kitchens plus common space in the building, and the project is already funded for acquisition and three years of operations. The project prioritizes people living in state right-of-way.
- A tiny house village of 58 units will also be operated by LIHI, providing needed housing options for formerly homeless people. Pierce County will contribute ROW capital and operating funds to set up and operate the village for three years.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Pierce County is also opening up new behavioral health facilities. Nearly 160 new beds are being added, as the result of eight competitive grants.¹²

- 3 Enhanced Services Facilities.
- 3 Intensive Behavioral Health Facilities.
- 1 Residential Treatment Facility.
- 1 Specialized Dementia Care Facility.

Washington state is dramatically under-resourced when it comes to behavioral health services, and these facilities and more are desperately needed to stabilize those in crisis.



A combination of City of Tacoma and state RCHA funds enabled LIHI to acquire the Heron Apartments in Tacoma

¹² Washington State Department of Commerce



Regional Highlights - Spokane County

CAMP HOPE, once the state's largest encampment¹³, was a confluence of people with complex challenges and situations. Eight out of ten residents are from Spokane, and nearly 60% had lived in the county more than a decade.

Now it is the center of a coordinated approach. With a variety of funding sources and in partnership with many regional service providers, the Empire Health Foundation (EHF) has stabilized the site. Individuals are being matched with the best shelter and service options that meet their needs.¹⁴

In just a few months, more than 325 people have left Camp Hope (a decrease of about 70 percent from when occupancy was capped in late October¹⁵). The coordinated, one-on-one support has been effective in connecting people with services and shelter. While there are still about 138 people left, intensive outreach continues to be done by the EHF, which is leading the work under a state contract.

“While Camp Hope is now much smaller, supportive services like counseling, behavioral health and medical care, and substance use disorder treatment will continue until the encampment is closed,” according to EHF.¹⁶

In addition to connecting residents with needed services and housing, the state and its partners are continuously cleaning the site and removing debris. Tens of thousands of pounds of debris were removed in December, after people started transitioning out of Camp Hope into shelters and housing.

The role of state government agencies has been crucial. Many people without housing are entitled to support, such as through veterans' programs. But someone without housing may not have a birth certificate or other identification, making it impossible for them to claim their benefits.

The Departments of Licensing and Health have teamed up to directly engage residents and restore their documentation. This eliminates a major barrier to accessing services and for many, is the crucial first step toward stability.

i

FROM SAFETY TO HOUSING

Spokane does not have enough housing for everyone at Camp Hope. Safety and security measures are filling the gap while housing options are developed. The site now has a perimeter fence, 24/7 security, resident ID badges, and accountability agreements—all of which make the site safer for residents and neighbors.

Meanwhile, shelter and housing options are rapidly being developed. The Catalyst project, which opened in December, immediately provided beds for 100 people moving out of Camp Hope. The Trent Center is also adding beds and cold-weather housing.

¹³<https://crosscut.com/news/2022/10/spokanes-camp-hope-center-political-storm>

¹⁴Empire Health Foundation - 1/9/2023 update and <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/uncategorized/commerce-makes-final-right-of-way-safety-initiative-funding-awards-to-city-and-nonprofit-proposals-in-latest-step-to-ward-closing-camp-hope/> (about Catalyst)

¹⁵Empire Health Foundation - 1/9/2023 update

¹⁶Empire Health Foundation - 11/3/2022 update



Regional Highlights - Thurston County

THURSTON COUNTY is getting Rights-of-Way Safety Initiative funds to quickly make new shelter and housing options available.

The City of Lacey, Washington State Department of Commerce, and Thurston County are partnering with LIHI to purchase, convert, and operate the Lacey Days Inn as an enhanced shelter. The former hotel is fully funded for acquisition and three years of operations, and it was purchased in January 2023. The property will be dedicated for 40 years to sheltering people experiencing homelessness. In the long term, the plan is to convert the building into permanent supportive housing, which is essential for helping those with complex needs, such as disabilities, to stay housed.



The Lacey Days Inn is being converted into an enhanced shelter



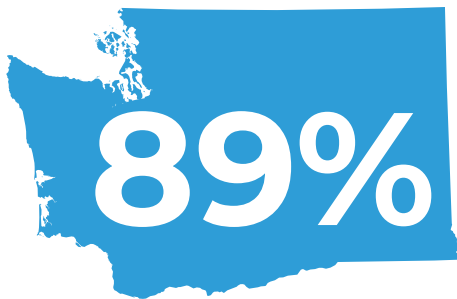
The Public Perspective

WASHINGTONIANS SUPPORT ACTION AND INVESTMENT

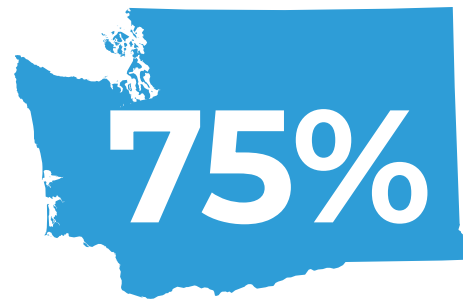
IN A RECENT SURVEY conducted by Moore Information and EMC Research (950 interviews, conducted December 2022), voters understand the solutions are complex, and they support continued investment and specific policies to address homelessness.



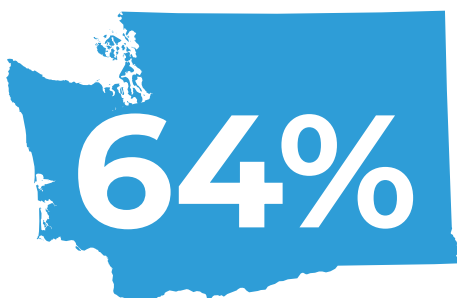
support increasing state spending on programs that help address homelessness.



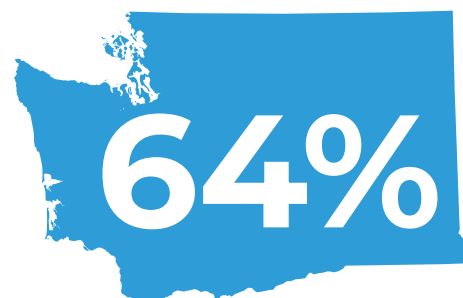
favor improving and expanding **access to behavioral health services and substance abuse treatment** to help address a major barrier to stable housing



want more **crisis stabilization facilities and emergency housing** to help people living outside quickly move off the streets



back **acquiring and building housing units** to help people move into safe, stable permanent housing



agree with providing **emergency rental assistance** to keep people from becoming evicted



The Road Ahead



WASHINGTON RESIDENTS recognize homelessness is a statewide problem that needs state leadership and investments. They also understand there is an urgent need to address current homelessness, and a longer-term need to help address low- and middle-income housing affordability. Increased funding for effective services, better coordination among government agencies, and improved housing policymaking are all commonly recognized as essential components of solutions. These investments can make a real and lasting difference in people's lives.

Homelessness is not a new problem, but one that has reached crisis levels statewide. While there are early signs of success from a good biennium and unprecedented 2022 session, more needs to be done.

Youth homelessness is a prime example of the lasting benefits of these investments. Increased services have increased graduation rates for homeless youth, reduced the number of youth becoming homeless after leaving foster or inpatient care, and reduced the need for other public services later in life. Those are permanent benefits to both the individuals and the state as a whole.

One of the other significant needs is Washington's universally recognized shortage of behavioral health facilities and providers. Expanding access to behavioral health services can similarly reduce pain and cost over a lifetime.

Governor Inslee made addressing the crisis of homelessness and the supply of affordable housing a major priority in his proposed 2023-25 biennial budget. The Legislature can build on previous investments and do the same. To solve the homelessness crisis in our state, it will require continuing leadership, funding, policies, and partnership.

With a much-needed foundation, sustained commitment and partnership, we can House Washington.

Challenge Seattle would like to thank Washington State Department of Commerce Director Lisa Brown and her team for providing information and doing careful review of the budget and program descriptions included in this report.

We also thank the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI), WeAreIn, and the Empire Health Foundation for sharing their successes and insights. Additional information was gathered from the Washington State Department of Licensing, the Vancouver Housing Authority, Partnership for Zero, and the King County Regional Homelessness Authority, and Crosscut.

Moore Information and EMC Research helped us understand public sentiment and Sound View Strategies compiled the data and helped us tell this very important story.

Finally, we thank the office of Governor Jay Inslee for use of the photograph on page 4, and we thank LIHI for the photograph on page 9.

